READING OBJECTS IN THE CONTACT ZONE

Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler,
and Anna Sophia Messner
Editors

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was a constant confirmation for the timeliness and relevance of cross-cultural art history and visual studies.

Utrecht, December 2019
Eva-Maria Troelenberg

Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler and Anna Sophia Messner

On the 'Objectscape' of Transculturality. An Introduction

One of the major challenges facing art history in recent decades has been the issue of globalization and its cultural implications—with regard to both retrospective historical narratives and contemporary methods. As art production, art audiences, and scholarship on art and visual culture are becoming more and more internationalized—and, indeed, transcultural—a (self-)critical analysis of disciplinary standpoints seems more important than ever and is at the center of ongoing discussions within and beyond academia. Over the past decades, a significant and extensive body of literature has been published on issues of art history in times of globalization and accelerated cultural exchange (see e.g. Elkins 2007; Zijlmans and Van Damme 2008; Casid and D'Souza 2014; Bachmann et al. 2017; Dornhof et al. 2018). Research initiatives, projects, and institutions tackle the major challenges facing art history and related disciplines by reconsidering historically conditioned Eurocentrisms from a critical postcolonial perspective and focusing on transcultural processes in the field of art. This anthology is rooted in a project that was developed in close connection with such initiatives: the Max Planck Research Group "Objects in the Contact Zone. The Cross-Cultural Lives of Things"—which was carried out at Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz—Max-Planck-Institut between 2011 and 2018.

Like most research initiatives with transcultural agendas, "Objects in the Contact Zone" has operated within a limited time frame, and the question remains how critical transcultural approaches will become established and institutionalized in the coming years and how they will be reflected in art history curriculums. Empirically and methodologically, the "map" of transcultural art history still has many blank areas and the transcultural paradigm is far from being standard. There is, by now, a critical mass of scholars who have been trained in—often temporary—programs on transcultural art history. Many of these scholars are still in the early stages of their careers, yet aspire to rise in the ranks of their respective faculties. Hence, there is much to suggest that in the not too distant future transcultural approaches will be normalized and productively integrated into the humanities.

Far from claiming to provide a comprehensive survey of the field of "art history in a global context," or a historiographic introduction into transculturality in art history (see e.g. Bachmann et al. 2017; Juneja 2018),

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this volume follows a "hands-on", object-based approach, as it assembles a wide range of case studies to create a compilation of readings of paradigmatic objects developed by the individual research projects of the research group's fellows and students. Complementary to this, a set of "key terms" provides an instrument to introduce important concepts for the study of transcultural visual cultures and art histories, reflecting the dynamic moment of ongoing debate. The publication is intended to exemplify a format of interaction between advanced academic research and emerging scholars. It shows how advanced students can be involved in research projects and develop their own perspective, thereby actively shaping future developments in an evolving field. As such, this approach is very much in line with the rise of research master programs and graduate schools that promote reciprocity between teaching and research.

Mapping Transcultural Art History

We consider transculturality as a cultural phenomenon, thus as a subject for study—but not in the sense of an unconditional fact as it were. Rather, we want to look at the "concrete modalities of processes and the dynamics inherent to it" (Bachmann et al. 2017, 15; with a reference to Flüchter and Schöttli 2015). Accordingly, transcultural research is associated with a multi-layered approach. It links various regional, cultural, and historical contexts and, in the process, draws on a wide range of scholarly approaches and insights. It aims to leave behind national, civilizational, or disciplinary principles. In the traditional, academic study of art and artistic practices from so-called other cultures, such principles can constitute a form of "epistemological violence" that often works in the context of asymmetric power constellations of colonialism (Bachmann et al. 2017, 15). A perspective that considers transculturality both as a subject for study and as a critical method allows a more nuanced, differentiated, and reciprocal understanding of exchange and encounter, and it takes into account multiple factors and constellations of power. It thus seeks to unravel processes of transfer, appropriation, adaption or also rejection and allows us to tell art histories across space and time, as the travel of objects and ideas always adds new layers of significance (see Juneja 2011, 2012, and 2018). Such a reciprocal understanding of transculturality avoids the trap of naïve and primarily affirmative notions of mobility or even entanglement (as recently criticized by Gänger and Osterhammel 2020) that are often still informed by Eurocentric notions of progress and expansion. Methodologically, we thus aim at a set of methods, transgressing national or disciplinary boundaries and conventional research areas. This does not mean that local or regional expertise become obsolete or secondary. On the contrary, associated competences (language skills, intimate knowledge of the field, etc.) are necessarily of eminent importance, but regional expertise should not be understood and practiced as an unconnected entity. In line with

this, the model of scholarship put forward by transcultural research is not based on comparison, but on a relational perspective. It focuses on transfers between cultural spaces, always placing the object in relation to its specific local and historical context of perception. This includes processes that can be read in terms of appropriation, creolization, or a range of concepts linked to the observation that cultural spaces are not homogeneous entities but in a constant process of exchange and therefore share inextricably interwoven histories.

A relational approach also reflects the premise that the past is no longer understood as one single story and the need to explore the ramifications and possibilities, in both cultural and social terms, of a horizontal historical landscape of multiple histories. Viewing historiography as more than the study of the writing of history and of written histories, the contributions in this volume reflect on both traditional and alternative histories of representation. The chapters look at displays, objects, encounters and remains that are not necessarily only text-based and fall within, outside of, and in between established canons. Accordingly, the notion of "reading objects" as spelled out in the title of this volume, is not limited to a logocentric understanding—it rather is meant to address historical and contemporary processes of performing, placing, and looking at a conceptually wide range of objects. One important objective of the research represented in this volume is to think about the ensuing contingencies of agency and perception. It looks at space, time, people, and things in visual and material terms—and reviews historical narratives, in order to question established ontological and epistemological categories and to explore contemporary methods of (re)thinking transcultural histories (for this premise see also Troelenberg and Chatterjee 2018).

The Paradigm of the Case Study

The objects discussed range from antiquity to the present, while the frameworks of perception are predominantly modern ones, from the 1800s to present. This is based on the idea that methodological-theoretical perspectives in the field of transcultural art history need to be developed inductively drawing on an existing, broad, transcultural research practice. Rooted in art history and visual studies, this research centers the object and its visual and material impact. In order to fully grasp this impact or agency of the object, our work includes the methods and perspectives of neighboring disciplines from relevant area studies as well as museology, history, archaeology, or anthropology. It taps and critically questions both institutional and informal collections and archives and their conditions of perception: What is the difference between an image or an object we encounter in a national museum, and one we find in a forgotten suitcase? What is the range of intellectual and practical instruments we need in order to find, reach, and understand such different constellations

of encounter? Which questions can we answer with these case studies? Within the project "Objects in the Contact Zone", some scholars were, for instance, initially interested in a certain material quality of an artwork, and they needed to understand the transcultural context in which it was produced, circulated, or collected in order to make sense of this material. Other scholars were interested in a particular historical moment of cross-cultural encounter, and they found that an object or an image might tell the story of this encounter—not as a mere illustration, rather as a material or visual source in its own right, whose 'eloquence' is always bound to a historical constellation as it plays out across both time and space. Lorraine Daston has described such epistemic processes in her study on "Things that Talk": "[...] things in a supersaturated cultural solution can crystallize ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. These thickenings of significance are one way that things can be made to talk. But their utterances are never disembodied. Things communicate by what they are as well as by how they mean. A particular cultural setting may accentuate this or that property, but a thing without any properties is silent." (Daston 2004, 20). In this sense, the book's project can be seen as making a case for the contextualized case study and its potential to challenge, but also expand and develop the theoretical and methodological frameworks of art history beyond a linear, additive, or comparative history of techniques, styles, and iconographies. In that sense, placing objects in dynamic contact zones productively destabilizes conventions and academic cultures that, for a long time, were used to "read[ing] a 'culture' off a thing in a glass case" (Juneja 2018, 469).

The choice of examples in the volume altogether reflects the staggering presence of non-European objects particularly in European or North American collections. It thus hints at a historical and material reality which is directly linked to asymmetries of power during and in the aftermath of colonialism. While this does put heavy emphasis on so-called western institutions and agencies, the volume thus also represents a problem-constellation that can contribute to current debates on privileges of access and interpretation, on ownership, and restitution (Sarr and Savoy 2018).

In order to tackle this problem-constellation, we adapt the notion of the "contact zone" and develop it further by linking it directly to objects. This idea initially started out from the premise that non-European objects, which are displayed and stored in museums or collections and reproduced, described, analyzed, and categorized through visual media and arts, are situated in a contact zone. Mary Louise Pratt introduced the notion of contact zones as places of asymmetrical, but potentially reciprocal spaces of encounter, negotiation, and also conflict. This was crucial for the understanding of a transculturalism which works in multiple directions, breaking up simplistic binaries of East and West or centers and peripheries, and thus questioning traditional linear narratives of history (Pratt 1992). While Pratt focused on textual analysis, the anthropologist James Clifford connected this reciprocal understanding of contact zones

into the realm of museum theory and practice (Clifford 1997). Museums, particularly those whose histories and collections were entangled with colonialism and imperialism, found a way to address their contested heritage by understanding themselves as contact zones. In a very practical, concrete sense, the museum as contact zone became a place for different stakeholders to meet, discuss and negotiate new, reciprocal practices and heritage policies beyond the colonial appropriation and representation of artefacts. At the same time, artefacts, interpreted in dialogue or translation between different communities, can be understood as materialized contact zones. Subsequently, the nexus between museum and contact zone also became a conceptual term of postcolonial practice—and, one could critically argue, over time is has become a topos which museums use to signal an attitude of collaborative, postcolonial self-critique. However, as has for instance been argued by Robin Boast, this can't undo the lasting "asymmetry [that] is built, literally and figuratively, into our institutions" (Boast 2011, 66). Any collection, display, and documentation of artefacts and artworks remains entrenched in power relations. It is for this reason that we work with case studies that first center objects or groups of objects, and then we expand the analytical gaze towards these objects' agencies and layers of meaning as they play out under shifting institutional, political, and historical conditions of representation. We thus ask, on the one hand: What does an object do, metaphorically speaking, by way of its intrinsic material and aesthetic qualities? On the other hand, we critically question the conditions of display or representation that may make an object speak, but also may silence, change, enhance, challenge, or obscure what it says or means. Accordingly, looking at "objects in the contact zone" for us opens a space to critically expound the dynamics at play in a multi-layered concept of transculturation.

Object-driven

Objects as loot, gift, fetish, relic, commodity, work of art, and collection piece embody processes of exchange and social interaction between individuals, cultures, and societies. Their mobilization, de- and recontextualization, evaluation and presentation, appropriation and consumption materialize social relations. The high interdisciplinary potential of the notion of the object connects art history with anthropology, religious studies, sociology, economic history, museum studies, etc.

In his seminal volume *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1986), anthropologist Arjun Appadurai draws on the research of his French colleague Marcel Mauss. In the now classic "Essai sur le don" (1923/1924) Mauss thoroughly theorized the notion of the gift pointing to the profound sociality of exchanging material objects. Appadurai developed Mauss' insights into an analysis of the flows of cultural goods in the globalized world. In a similar vein Nicholas Thomas (1991) has extended the

binary polarization of gift / commodity to the model of a dynamic simultaneity of different concepts of object and ways of dealing with them. As Thomas has demonstrated, notions of value-making can be expounded productively through a context-based focus on materiality. Bruno Latour has extended the argument that to understand the relationship between humans and objects is to understand social relationships: he has proposed to profoundly rethink the notion of the object in favor of the theoretically more open notion of the "thing," arguing that the social is not exclusively a human affair but that it emerges as an actor-network that connects all kinds of entities, including humans, and objects (2005). This is of course against the backdrop that classical concepts of agency are based on the idea of an intentional subject, which is constituted in demarcation from passive objects. In questioning this distribution, objects and other entities are admitted to also have the ability to be active, to also become carriers of agency.

The notion of "object" that is shared in our group and the present case studies is informed by this academic debate around the status of materiality and its mobility, adopting it for the discipline of art history in a cross-cultural context. Considering materiality as a unifying element of the anthology, we effectively seek to question the "common distinction between works of art, artefacts and 'pure' material objects, goods or commodities," a distinction traditionally central to canonical Western concepts of art history (Saurma-Jeltsch 2010, 12). It is about tackling the question of how "[...] human and object histories inform each other" (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 169). Following Esther Pasztory's argument for a "cognitive interpretation of things," the approach transcends conflicted or historically charged notions of "art" and thus goes beyond a terminology that inevitably becomes contested when moving to the cross-cultural field (Pasztory 2005, esp. 4). It also transcends simple models of "stimulus-response" or "influence," and essentialist theories of "exoticism" or "Orientalism" by following a potentially asymmetric, but basically reciprocal or polycentric, working hypothesis of transculturation. In doing so, it seeks to move towards a concept of "migratory aesthetics" (Bal and Hernández-Navarro 2011).

Reflecting on the notions of "object" and "thing," this project suggests a variety of connotations from the physical to the philosophical and from claims for objectivity (or objectivation) to entanglement that can be addressed by one and the same entity over time and space and from different constellations of perception (see, e.g., Pointon 2004). This approach allows distinguishing between a range of epistemic variations within a field of reciprocal exchange. Additionally, the emancipation of objects as agents opens up a perspective on more complex relations of the distribution of action and power that does not force itself into the dichotomy of active / passive and not to attributions such as human / thing, human / animal, animated / inanimated, intention / tool, perpetrator / victim, oppressor / oppressed, and center / periphery.

The contact zones that the objects of our research reside and move in create particular conditions of encounters, perception, and reception as

a result of the object's provenance or biography and the recipient's predispositions and intentions (Kopytoff 1986; Gell 1998; Osborne and Tanner 2007) as well as the object's own "aura" or aesthetic eloquence (Saurma-Jeltsch and Eisenbeiß 2010). Objects are understood as a fulcrum between material migrations and social relations. These observations may pertain to single objects, but they can also address more complex object constellations such as museum displays or urban structures that potentially shed significant light on the transcultural production of knowledge. All case studies are united by a diachronic perspective that considers the object itself and its historical setting on an equal footing with, and in relation to, its agency and reception history across time and space to the present day.

Our examples can be placed within and between various geographical contexts and thus map modern transcultural histories and pre-histories of our present globalized art world (Juneja and Kravagna 2013). They open up a geographically, temporally, and conceptually multi-faceted "objectscape" of transculturality (on this notion see also Juneja and Grasskamp 2018, 11). Connecting the idea of "scapes" (Appadurai 1990) to the analysis of cross-cultural object itineraries, we seize on the current heightened awareness of the destabilized and deterritorialized state of cultures as both a challenge and chance that can lead to a better understanding of alternative histories. Taking its cue from objects and their biographies, our approach opens up a very tangible dimension within a larger landscape of "cultural flows" (Appadurai 1990) and global connectivity. In this way, it addresses both the epistemic potential of the "aesthetics of difference" (Schmidt-Linsenhoff 2014) and the asymmetries and misunderstandings that can emerge when objects move and / or become transformed, thereby entering cultural contact zones (see e.g. Maihoub 2015).

The concept of the "objectscape" also allows us to respond more productively to the post-global condition and its spaces and networks. Within this condition, we operate with terms such as "cross-cultural" or "transcultural," "transregional," and "transnational." We use them to describe cultures of encounter, but also to locate us in a methodological field. In both respects, such terms do potentially still bear an echo of historically generated, politically motivated notions of difference and distance: the concepts of culture, region, and nation speak of closed or circumscribed entities and borders. Transgressing or crossing them, both as a lived experience and as an intellectual enterprise, will therefore understand borders and differences not in a limiting sense, but rather as landmarks of epistemic significance and potential. As Monica Juneja has argued with a particular eye on the discursive concept of "culture," "the prefix 'trans-' enables an emancipation from this concept" (Juneja 2018, 466). This appears related to a dynamic, epistemically productive dimension of "border thinking" (Mignolo and Tlostlanova 2006). The idea of the "object-scape" allows us to look at objects and images as a materialization of social relations which develop, shift, and indeed migrate across time and space. Placing objects in an 'objectscape' supports our relational perspective. It transcends any additive or comparative

understanding of 'global art history' which tends to include non-Western regions or cultures merely as an extension of the map and object-canon of an academic discipline, seeking to signal cosmopolitan virtues without fully acknowledging the need for a systematic reconsideration of canons, terms, and concepts (see e.g. Pfisterer 2008; for a deeper historiographic critique of such additive positions see also Juneja 2018, 464).

This leads directly to another critical question that deserves increased attention: To what extent are some projects of "global" art history still Eurocentric in themselves? And how, if at all, is global or transcultural art history relevant for scholars based in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, or for those working on indigenous cultures or First Nations in North America or the Pacific? As Pauline Bachmann et al. have pointed out when looking back to the early twentieth-century, pre-history of transcultural art history, "[w]ithout non-European agents and the relatively unknown interpreters, merchants, collectors, intellectuals, and artists, there would not have been any basis for transcultural exchange" to begin with (Bachmann et al. 2017, 12). Against this background, a diachronic perspective seems crucial: teleological models of art and cultural history typically lead up to a normative idea of modernism and contemporaneity and its agents—and even proponents of transcultural or global modernity tend to understand the present and the recent past as a culmination of cross-cultural exchange and connectedness. The distances between geographies, cultures and agents may thus appear 'smaller' today than they used to appear one or two decades ago—however, this hardly does justice to the complexity of standpoints and perception modes between past and present. Focusing diachronically on the 'lives of things' and their object-biographies across time and space allows us to tie in with a concept of transculturation which addresses the "specific dynamic between distance and proximity that operates within individual and different historical periods and different sites across the globe" (Juneja 2018, 470).

Reading Objects in the Contact Zone

Against this larger theoretical and disciplinary background, the object essays in this volume are loosely grouped according to formal criteria such as media, material, or function. At the same time, our sections consider the dynamics between moments of production and perception in the itineraries of objects: What is the potential of an object, what response does it trigger in a certain context, how does it elicit shifting resonances over time? Bearing in mind the pitfalls of chronological / teleological, taxonomic, or geographical classifications, and hierarchies, we seek to avoid the curricular categories and genres of art history which are rooted in often static European concepts of art. For example, the term "sculpture" is not appropriate for a mask that was, in fact, part of a costume and, indeed, a whole performance involving dance and music. The juxtaposition of varied case studies in each section demonstrates both the conceptual potential and

the challenges of a transcultural art history seeking to productively expand traditional disciplinary categories.

Economies of Photo-Objects

By understanding photographs as three-dimensional visual and tactile objects that are active in time and space (Bärnighausen, Caraffa et al. 2019), the essays in this section focus especially on notions of circulation, multiplication, and appropriation with regard to photographic practices. **Anna Sophia Messner** discusses "Migratory Memories: A Suitcase as Photo Archive" by reading it as a "lieu de mémoire" of the Holocaust. The suitcase and the photographs appear as a micro photo archive relative to the macro-historical context of visual culture and socio-political history in both Germany and Palestine / Israel, and at the same time as an archival object whose physical map(ping) constructs an autobiographical memory. In "*Portrait of Space*," **Katharina Upmeyer** analyzes "Lee Miller's Photograph as Surrealist Contact Zone" between Egypt, Europe, and the US by pointing to surrealist aesthetics and artistic practices as well as notions of appropriation, exile, and loss. And in "Two-Faced: Translations of a Portrait of Abdülhamid II," **Erin Hyde Nolan** examines the circulation, cross-cultural translation, and networks of exchange in imperial Ottoman portrait photography, demonstrating this genre's capacity to embody multiple and subjective identities when translated across material platforms and cultural borders. **Elahe Helbig** discusses the configurations of power based on the example of a "Photograph of Mozaffar al-Din Mirza from an Italian Mission to Persia." Asking about the construction of political iconography and the definition of dynastic-national identity through photography, she examines the interplay between visual spheres and social spaces and their multiplication.

Utility and Representation

This section reflects on the cross-cultural transfer of aesthetics and motifs in an applied-arts context. Historically, such objects were often representative or, indeed, luxury objects that ended up in museums, i.e. in a space that opens up complex temporalities of perception. This is the case in **Theodore Van Loan**'s essay "Multiple Temporalities and the Scene of Time: A Pair of Wooden Doors at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo." Van Loan examines the role of time, duration, and visual perception, developing a historiographic critique regarding the (re)construction of the past lives of objects. **Maria Sobotka** analyzes "Displaying Cross-Culturality: A Water Basin from Mosul in Berlin," by focusing on notions of hybridity and the "masterpiece discourse" surrounding this piece in its modern museum context. At the same time, the Chinese and Mongolian imagery decorating the thirteenth-century northwestern Iranian water basin is illustrative of the historical transcultural

exchange between China and the Islamic world. **Matthias Weiß**' essay "Cytherian China" interprets an export piece produced in China for the European market as a case of appropriation that can be read as a reverse "Chinoiserie" or "Europerie" and, in doing so, offers an exemplary conceptual discussion of exchange processes and their trajectories and terminologies.

Building Transcultural Modernity

The case studies in this section discuss ideas and theories of modernity, utopia, appropriation, and translation in the context of nation-building processes. In her essay on "The Weizmann House: Staging the Nation-Building Process of Israel," **Sonja Hull** examines the architectural design of the presidential residence against the background of Erich Mendelsohn's utopian idea of an "East-West synthesis" as well as the symbolic role of the building in the Zionist nation-building process. **Cristiana Strava** analyzes "Critical Appropriations of Modernity" based on the example of "Michel Écochard's 8 × 8 Meter Housing Grid, Hay Mohammadi, Casablanca." Against the background of anti-colonial movements in the 1950s, the *bidonvilles* (slums) of Casablanca served as a laboratory for modernist architectural utopias and experiments with new urban planning and architectural forms.

Displaying Stories in the Contact Zone

This section focuses on the installation of objects in museum displays. The display as a research object in its own right concerns modes of (re)presenting objects and placing them in a (new) context. Each museum display reveals a decision—consciously or unconsciously—to tell a particular story. **Eva-Maria Troelenberg** looks at "A Lunar Sample Display in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi" as an example of "Constellations of Memory and Representation" that visualizes modern Arab identity as situated in between the global and local, tradition, and modernization. **Alison Boyd** analyzes "A Modernist Display at the Barnes Foundation" in Philadelphia that combines objects from various cultures and periods. Her essay focuses on the ways in which "foreign" objects are appropriated in this particular setting of reception and reads the display as a form of "Curating Formalism, Primitivism, and Democracy." **Westrey Page** asks how prehistory is translated in the 1937 exhibition of "Rock Painting Facsimiles in the Museum of Modern Art" in New York. She discusses the exhibition project as conceptualized straddling disciplines (art history and cultural anthropology) and identifies "empathy" as a central approach of the exhibition in presenting objects remote in time and place. **Lea Mönninghoff** discusses "*stazione* (2008–2009)," an artistic intervention by Palestinian artist Emily Jacir for the 53rd Venice Biennale, as "A 'Non-Existing Existence' in the Contact Zone" that highlights the diverse cross-cultural contact zones linking Venice to the Arab World.

Figurative Objects, Trajectories, and Valuations

This section looks at four three-dimensional figurative objects whose individual provenances and histories of reception demonstrate how transcultural trajectories are connected to notions of economic and cultural value. **Frederika Tevebring**'s essay "Baubo on the Pig: Travel across Disciplines" focuses on a small terracotta statuette most likely from Hellenistic Egypt that, today, is in the Altes Museum in Berlin. Tevebring looks at the object's modern afterlife and how modern interpretations have become ancient truths. **Felicity Bodenstein** follows "The Global Market Trajectories of Two Brass Leopards from Benin City (1897–1953)." Stolen during the British military expedition to Benin City in 1897, these pieces have a telling ownership, market, and display history and, today, are among the "masterpieces" of the Nigerian national collection in Lagos. Bodenstein investigates how the price development of the pieces has been linked to their trajectories. A figure representing the Vodun divinity Gou is the subject of **Kerstin Schankweiler**'s essay "Double Trophy: *Gou* by Akati Ekplékendo." This sculpture is discussed as an example of a transcultural art history on three levels: that of the material of European origin used in creating it; that of its context of production and usage as a power figure against enemies; and, finally, that of the object's canonization in museums in France. **Rhea Blem** examines "The *Batcham Mask* and its Display at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich" and traces the mask's "Becoming a Masterpiece." Taking a critical look at the reception and display of African arts and aesthetics in contemporary "Western" museums, she asks how a shift towards a nonlinear understanding of art history might be achieved.

Iconographies of Encounter and Translation

This section looks at cultural flows and agencies embodied in iconographic choices and, in doing so, examines the epistemic value of figural painting from a cross-cultural perspective. **Lisa Heese** analyzes "*The Camposanto in Pisa* by Leo von Klenze: The Encounter between a Classicist Architect and an Islamic Artwork" by pointing out how the inclusion of an Islamic bronze griffin into an idealized classicist exhibition ensemble resulted in its artistic transformation. Based on the example of Muhammad Hasan's *Mother and Child*, **Janna Verthein** discusses the iconography of a painting alluding to the visual formula of a Madonna against the background of the beginning cultural shift in nineteenth-century Iran. Taking up a Christian subject, yet giving the mother and child facial features and clothing that met Persian standards of beauty, the painter did not simply translate the subject of the Madonna into Qajar painting, but, in fact, endowed it with new meaning. In her essay "Portrait of Ali Pasha: Cultural Mobility on the Periphery of Empire," **Emily Neumeier** describes "micro-movements" across imperial boundaries as relevant to the formation of taste in Ottoman borderlands. In a context

which might at first sight be deemed peripheral we thus find trajectories, triangulations, and entangled experiences that transcend binary notions.

Perceptions between Image and Text

The contributions to this section discuss examples where the cross-cultural and the cross-medial intertwine. In her essay "The Arts of Science in the Contact Zone: A Satirical Picture," **Sria Chatterjee** examines a print by Gaganendranath Tagore from a portfolio of "satirical pictures" published in 1921 and titled "Reform Screams." Beyond the general context of political feeling and social reform in pre-independence India, this specific print addresses the presence of environmentalist thinking and thus reveals a contact zone that is not just geographic but also connects human and nonhuman worlds. **Tom Young** focuses on "The Behar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbooks" that were produced in the context of colonial India. He reads these albums as materializations of the social relations between British members of the Behar School of Athens and local Indian artists. They tell the story of a social practice through which colonized and colonizing individuals engaged with one another, creating a conceptual space where ideas about who should be enfranchised within colonial civil society could be put into question. **Isabella Krayer**'s essay "Between the Visual and the Aural: Elias Canetti's *The Voices of Marrakesh*" concludes the series of object essays with a rather unusual object for art historical research: a book without illustrations. The novel is based on a trip Canetti took to Marrakesh in the 1950s and describes a European traveler's encounter with a foreign culture within a colonial context. Throughout the book, however, the visual and the aural are continually foregrounded and placed in tension with each other, displaying a keen awareness of the cultural pitfalls of sight while simultaneously offering a countermodel.

Towards a Map of Terms and Concepts

Taken together, our case studies can bridge the theoretical space between cross-cultural studies and visual culture phenomena and inspire critical reassessments of established narratives, categories, and terms.

For this reason, the volume also includes a collectively prepared section that contains key-terms for cross-cultural visual studies. They outline critical concepts that were applied, developed, and consolidated in relation to the respective fellow's projects and thus can function as a glossary to the object essays. Each object essay contains cross-references to its relevant key-terms. Most of these terms—for example, "hybridity" and "appropriation"—have been coined in related fields of research and theory. They have been discussed as key concepts, for instance in postcolonial studies or art history (Ashcroft et al. 2013; Nelson and Shiff 2003). What we aim for,

however, is to introduce these concepts even more pointedly into the field of transcultural art history. Hence, they not only provide practical definitions but also outline the relevance and usefulness of the concepts as critical terms for writing art and visual history across cultures. In some cases, this has led to shifts of terms or, indeed, to new coinages, such as "object ethnographies." Given the dynamic, transformative character of the overall perspective, it is not a closed list of terms, but rather open-ended, inspiring further elaboration, expansion, or new extensions in various directions. As the key-terms have been developed in the context of concrete, case-based transcultural research, they—together with the object essays—form an interconnected conceptual field that gives contour to an academic practice of a transcultural art history.

Apart from presenting the results of a six-year research project, we hope this book will be especially valuable as a teaching instrument that goes beyond the scope of common periodic or regional categories. As a whole, the mosaic of object histories in this book provides an exemplary survey of approaches for the practice of a transcultural art history in relation to neighboring disciplines, i.e. in a productive exchange with, for example, anthropology, area studies, literature, and historical studies. It is our hope that this reader will encourage research discussions and further increase the visibility of innovative transcultural approaches and of the study of phenomena and processes of cultural exchange within the academic community.

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PART I

Economies of Photo-Objects

Figure 1: Suitcase containing photographs by Alice Hausdorff.

Anna Sophia Messner

Migratory Memories: A Suitcase as Photo Archive

Abstract The chapter examines a suitcase as photo archive whose physical map(ping) constructs an autobiographical memory that informs us about its history as well as of the larger historical context. The unfolding of the layers of photographs provides fragmentary insights into the life and work of the forgotten photographer Alice Hausdorff who escaped Nazi-Germany and went into exile in Palestine / Israel. Furthermore, they construct an aesthetic, iconographic, social, and historic matrix, presenting a previously missing female perspective on the cultural sphere of the Weimar Republic and the Zionist nation-building process in Palestine / Israel which will be inscribed into the canon of photography studies.

Keywords Photography, Archive, Memory, Cultural Transfer, Gender

Messner, Anna Sophia. 2021. "Migratory Memories: A Suitcase as Photo Archive." In *Reading Objects in the Contact Zone*, edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Anna Sophia Messner, 18–25. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 9. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.766.c10397

About ten years ago, an old brown leather suitcase filled with photographs and letters was found on a rubbish heap in Haifa, Israel, and brought to a private photograph collector near Jerusalem. The collector does not provide much information in his account of the incident, instead emphasizing the almost mythical aura enveloping the suitcase, its contents, and its recovery, presuming it was the original suitcase of a woman photographer who escaped Nazi Germany in the 1930's. After her death, the suitcase was thrown in the garbage, according to the collector. When the suitcase was opened, it was found to contain a trove of documents bearing witness to the life and work of its forgotten owner, Alice Hausdorff: Photographs taken in Berlin in the 1920s and in Israel from the 1930s to the 1960s, as well as correspondence between the photographer in Israel and her artist friend Franz Winninger in Berlin.

Adding to the shroud of mystery surrounding the suitcase and its putative former owner is the fact that the photographer is not mentioned in the literature on photography in either Israel or Germany. This exclusion from the canon of photography studies is characteristic of a generation of German-Jewish women photographers who participated in and shaped the artistic and emancipatory avant-garde movements of the Weimar Republic and who were then forced to escape the Nazi regime and immigrated to Palestine in the 1930s. As a symbol of travel, migration, and storage, the suitcase and its contents as well as its negligent handling and recovery reflect the status of those forgotten photographers in both collective memory and scholarship.

Against this background, the suitcase and its contents may be analyzed as a photographic micro archive (‣**Photo Archive**) regarding the macro-historical context of the visual culture and socio-political history of the Weimar Republic and Palestine / Israel.

This essay aims to do just that on the basis of the theoretical and methodological framework developed by Gabriella Giannacchi in "Archive Everything," where she suggests "that archives should be read as 'material' archeological sites" (Giannacchi 2016, 27). Thus, "both objects in the archive and archives as objects [...] can be thought of having social lives, entailing biographies and associated narratives" (112). The archeological approach allows us to construct timelines and establish relationships to the remains of the past (31–32). In this sense, Giannacchi understands "archives as laboratories for memory production" (57) where memories are constructed based on traces of the past and their reinterpretation, thereby creating future memories (58–59).

A close reading of the object will serve to uncover the various layers of the previously unknown photo archive in both material and historical terms, in order to create a narrative of a previously missing perspective. In this micro-historical (‣**Microhistory**) case study, the object will come to be seen as illustrative of the macro-historical context and, as such, it will inscribe itself into the canon of photography studies and collective memory in both Germany and Israel.

The initials "AH" and the name "A. Hausdorff" written in white letters on the front of the suitcase point to the presumable owner of the suitcase, Alice Hausdorff. The name was probably added to make it easier to identify her luggage, which would have been necessary during its transport together with other people's suitcases. Based on this assumption, we can speculate that Hausdorff used the suitcase to carry her personal belongings while fleeing Germany. Like most German-Jewish refugees who escaped Nazi Germany, she probably boarded a ship to Palestine which was a British Mandate at the time. In exile, the suitcase became a place of storage. The photographs, documents, and letters preserved in the suitcase provide fragmentary insights into the life and work of Alice Hausdorff. Her birth certificate provides us with the date and place of her birth: December 15th, 1899 in Gleiwitz (today Gliwice in Poland). In the 1920s, she worked as an independent photographer in Berlin, focusing primarily on commercial photography. In the early 1930s, she escaped Nazi Germany and settled in Tel Aviv and later in Haifa, where she worked as a photographer for newspapers, Zionist magazines, the Habimah Theatre, and the Women's International Zionist Organization.

The suitcase held a total of nineteen boxes containing photographs. The inscriptions on the boxes indicate that Alice Hausdorff used 13 × 18 cm Kodak film, while the trademark "Made in Great Britain" suggests that her photography equipment was imported from Britain. The boxes also bear handwritten inscriptions probably by the photographer herself, some of which are in German, some in Hebrew, and some in a combination of both languages. Using descriptors such as "Settlement and Architecture," "Habimah," or "Gertrud Kraus," they refer to the contents of each box. They also provide some insight into Alice Hausdorff's use of language in everyday life in exile. Like most German-Jewish immigrants, the so-called Yekkes, she probably never gave up the German language and used it on a daily basis in conversations with other immigrants from German-speaking countries as well as in her correspondence and private documents, while Hebrew was used in official or business contexts and only when necessary.

The photographs by Alice Hausdorff offer a wide variety of iconographic, aesthetic, historical, and social perspectives. A yellow folder labeled "Kodak A-G – Berlin SW 65" holds photographs from Berlin and is probably the only folder she took with her to Palestine. In terms of subject matter and aesthetic language, the photographs reflect her involvement in avant-garde cultural movements of the Weimar Republic such as "New Vision" and "New Woman," where the field of photography, in particular, offered women independence and mobility (Kühn 2005). In Berlin, Alice Hausdorff focused on commercial photography and aesthetic experiments, whereas in Palestine / Israel her iconographies are related especially to the cultural, economic, and social nation-building process (▸**Nation**) and notions of the "Orient." Her interest in theater, on the other hand, is a common thread running through her entire photographic production in Berlin and Palestine / Israel.

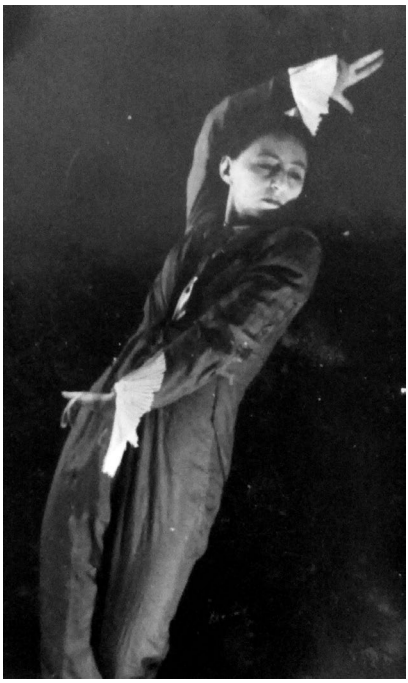

Figure 2: Alice Hausdorff: *Untiteled (The Dancer Gertrud Kraus)*. Photograph.

Of special interest are the experimental dance photographs and photographic portraits of actors of the Habimah theatre, particularly of the Viennese dancer Gertrud Kraus (see Fig. 2). Kraus escaped the Nazi regime in 1935 and immigrated to Palestine where she became a pioneer of modern expressionist dance (Jewish Women's Archive 2017). This dance style, as well as the experimental dance photography associated with it, were important artistic expressions of avant-garde cultural life in the Weimar Republic. Brought to Palestine/Israel by German-Jewish immigrants, expressionist dance and the aesthetic language of dance photography were appropriated by Israeli dance and visual culture. The close friendship between Hausdorff and Kraus, moreover, points to their involvement in the socio-cultural network of German-Jewish immigrants in Palestine/Israel, who cultivated German language and culture even in exile (Zimmermann 2005).

In other photographs, Hausdorff adopted stylistic elements of "New Objectivity," "New Vision," and documentary photography, depicting subjects that were widespread in the visual culture of the period. In some photographs, for instance, she takes up the topos of the pioneer (see Fig. 3) who embodied the notion of work as a sacred obligation for the Zionist undertaking, or she addresses socio-political issues such as the immigration of various ethnic Jewish groups from the Diaspora to Palestine (Le Vitte-Harten 2005). The images reveal an ethnographic interest in

Figure 3: Alice Hausdorff: *Untiteled (Workers)*. Photograph.

the anthroposphere and everyday activities as well as in the ethnic and cultural diversity of the population in Palestine / Israel, attesting to Alice Hausdorff's fascination for the "other." Against this background, the suitcase and its content may be read not just as an archive but also as an archival object whose physical map(ping) constructs an autobiographical memory that informs us about its history (Giannacchi 2016, 182) as well as of the larger historical context.

The suitcase as object is entangled with notions of movement and storage. In the context of this case study, the suitcase is both a material entity and a symbolic object linked to notions of migration, escape, journey, and exile and inscribed with personal as well as collective experiences of hope, loss, and displacement. As a portable object, it was carried by the migrant, the photographer Alice Hausdorff, and multiple vehicles on the escape route from Germany to Palestine, crossing borders, time, and space. As a container, it was filled with the migrant's personal possessions that serve as memories of the lost home, as exemplified by the paper folder holding photographs from Berlin. In exile in Palestine, the suitcase was used as a place of storage, thus becoming an archival space where past, present, and future memories meet and materialize in photo objects (Dogramaci 2013, 235–236; Morley 2000, 44–46; Schlör 2014, 76–92).

As three-dimensional visual and tactile objects, the photographs may thus be read as carriers of knowledge, experience, and affect relating to

the fate of a German-Jewish woman photographer, the socio-cultural life of the Weimar Republic and Palestine / Israel, and Holocaust-induced flight and exile (▸**Affect**). Those dimensions are inscribed into the bodies of the photographs and shape their biographies and identities. As agents, the photographs participated in the process of migration and actively circulated in social, political, and institutional spaces, such as the socio-cultural network of the Yekkes, Zionist institutions, and newspapers, or archives. At the same time, their aesthetics, performative qualities, and iconographies exemplify notions of cultural transfer from Germany to Palestine / Israel relating to the visual language as well as experimental and avant-garde concepts of "New Vision" and "New Objectivity." In the new environment of Palestine / Israel, the novel aesthetic language was then absorbed into the existing culture, creating a new hybrid visual language (▸**Hybridity**). In terms of visual culture in Germany and Israel, the photographs discussed here construct an aesthetic, iconographic, social, and historic matrix, presenting a female perspective (▸**Gender**) on the cultural sphere of the Weimar Republic, the 'Orient,' and the Zionist nation-building process in Palestine / Israel. The archive materializes and generates those narratives.

The suitcase as photo archive may be understood as a diasporic archive which, according to Gabriella Giannacchi,

> has the potential to transform our reading of [...] processes of marginalization, making it possible for oppressed cultures to be brought to light and their histories to be rewritten. [...]. The diasporic archive in fact shows that [...] it is also what it is not, what was left out, what was destroyed or hybridized [...] and, [...] what is still open to interpretation. In other words, the diasporic archive entails essential absences: it is intrinsically unstable, but also unfinished, in progress, potentially able to initiate a knowledge revolution (Giannacchi 2016, 95).

Despite its inestimable value in terms of material and visual culture, the suitcase and its content were neglected for decades. Reasons for this may have been socio-political, based on gender and exclusion. While Alice Hausdorff participated in and shaped avant-garde cultural life in the Weimar Republic and in Palestine / Israel, she was at the same time a minority, both as a Jewish woman in German society and as a German woman in Israeli society. Thus, the photo archive discussed here may be read as a symbol of loss and absence. It constitutes a "lieu de mémoire" of the Holocaust that, while remaining invisible, is referred to in terms of a confrontation with its consequences and its aftermath. At the same time, the photo archive delineates a "found object." As W. J. T. Mitchell writes: "The secret of the found object is [...] the most intractable kind: it is hidden in plain sight [...]. Once found, however, the found object should [...] become foundational" (Mitchell 2005, 114). Therefore, the recovery of the suitcase and its contents from the rubbish heap and their transfer to the archive

may be understood as an auratization of the profane, a process of ascription of meaning. As an archival object, it may be read as a sign, symbol, or icon (Dogramaci 2013, 245) or "as a closely woven palimpsest of [...] shifting meanings in material culture" (Edwards and Hart 2004, 60) with the potential to reshape the canon of photography studies in both Germany and Israel.

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Figures

Fig. 1–3: © Buki Boaz Collection of Israeli Photography, Israel.

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Figure 1: Lee Miller: *Portrait of Space, Al Bulwayeb, near Siwa*, *Egypt 1937 [E1905]*.

Katharina Upmeyer

Portrait of Space: Lee Miller's Photograph as Surrealist Contact Zone

Abstract Katharina Upmeyer's chapter focuses on the emergence and reception of the famous photograph *Portrait of Space* taken by American photographer Lee Miller in 1937. Due to its publication in the surrealist magazine *London Bulletin* in June 1940, it became an emblem of exile. This reduction contradicts, however, its origin as a surrealist photograph first and foremost negating also other possible interpretations. It will be shown how it functioned as a contact zone between the surrealist movement in Europe and in Egypt highlighting also the artists' network that spanned globally. Moreover, it analyses the perception / appropriation of Egypt by the surrealists.

Keywords Cultural Transfer, Orientalism, Appropriation, Expanded Contact Zone, Networks

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On 13 October 1937,[1] American photographer Lee Miller took one of her most renowned photographs titled *Portrait of Space*. The vast Egyptian desert is seen through a torn mosquito tent to which an empty picture frame is attached. Although it seems as if there is no sign of life in this area, a sand road running from the bottom left to the horizon on the right offers a trace of civilization. In the vast sky, which dominates the picture, clouds take on the shape of a bird. The image exudes an intense sense of isolation and forlornness, throwing its inherent creativity and freedom into sharp relief. This may be one of the reasons why E. L. T. Mesens decided to publish the photograph in the surrealist magazine *London Bulletin* in June 1940, opposite to the Paul Delvaux painting *Les Phases de la Lune* (1939) and Paul Éluard's poem "Exile," (Haworth-Booth 2007, 141). As a result, the image became not just an emblem of the displacement and fundamental loss experienced in exile but, more importantly, a symbol of creative freedom. Numerous scholars have analyzed *Portrait of Space* in terms of Miller's psychological state during her stay in Egypt. Patricia Allmer, moreover, sees in Miller's photograph a deliberate deconstruction of the patriarchal colonial gaze which had dominated the Orientalist (▸**Orientalism**) view of Egypt since the eighteenth century. Against this background and based on a close reading of the photograph, this essay focuses on the reception of the image during the Second World War. In the process, it aims to identify the ways in which the image functioned as a surrealist contact zone with regard to Surrealism in the West as well as in Egypt itself.

The composition of *Portrait of Space* with the torn mosquito tent specifically points to a (positive) effect of exile described by Edward Said in his famous essay *Reflections on Exile*:

> The exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers, which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory, can also become prisons, and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience (Said 2013 [2000], n.p.).

Unlike many other artists of the period, Miller was not forced to emigrate due to the political situation in her country, but deliberately chose Egypt as her new home because of her marriage with the Egyptian businessman and engineer Aziz Eloui Bey in 1931. The frequent reading of *Portrait of Space* as an image of exile and displacement is based mainly on Miller's statements in her correspondence. The term "exile" which appears in a letter to Roland Penrose, the British surrealist and Miller's future second husband, describes her rather negative perception of Egypt in terms of being displaced from the surrealist network (Burke 2007) in Europe and

1 Mark Haworth-Booth convincingly proposes this date based on a postcard Lee Miller sent from Siwa to Roland Penrose on October 13, 1937. See Haworth-Booth 2007, 133.

the fashion world in the United States (Conekin 2013) where, as a model and photographer, Miller had been a fixture of both the American and the French *Vogue* in the late 1920s and early 1930s. These circumstances also suggest a date for *Portrait of Space* after her trip to Europe in 1937. She spent most of the summer of that year in France and England with, among others, Roland Penrose, Picasso, and Man Ray, meeting Magritte and Paul Delvaux, and reconnecting with the surrealist network (Haworth-Booth 2007, 132).

But can Miller's photograph really be reduced to an emblem of exile, as it was perceived following its publication in the *London Bulletin* in 1940? A close analysis of its composition and subject demonstrates that it is first and foremost a surrealist photograph. Clearly, Miller was particularly interested in the boundary between interior and exterior space marked by the torn fly screen. This is indicated by four variations of the photograph preserved at the Lee Miller Archives in England. The particular focus of the final composition causes that boundary to be blurred, creating a sense of "in-betweenness"—a device frequently used by surrealist artists to achieve "transcendence" and "sur-reality." The Egyptian desert is presented in a romantic, "primitive" (‣**Primitivism**) light suggesting natural nativeness, a state advocated by the surrealist avant-garde as an antidote to modern, industrial society. The tent itself, moreover, refers to a nomadic life or "nomadic space," as Patricia Allmer terms it (Allmer 2013, 2). Against this background, it becomes evident that Miller's composition incorporates surrealist elements and, in some ways, even explicitly references works by other surrealists. Especially her acquaintance with Magritte in 1937 is of significance for *Portrait of Space*, as Miller's photograph shows similarities in composition and form to Magritte's 1936 painting *La Clef des Champs* (see Fig. 2). To date, this influence has not received any attention. We do know that Magritte saw *Portrait of Space* at Roland Penrose's house in Hampstead in April 1938 and took inspiration from it for his 1938 painting *Le Baiser* (Haworth-Booth 2007, 141).

Magritte's painting *La Clef des Champs* similarly offers a view of a landscape through a broken window. According to André Breton, windows and mirrors signify freedom, and Magritte's title, *La Clef des Champs*, alludes to a figure of speech which in French means "liberation" (Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza. n.d.). It seems possible that Miller saw Magritte's painting in Belgium or discussed it with him. The appropriation of Magritte's composition plays an important role in the reception of *Portrait of Space* as an emblem of exile and creativity during the Second World War. The way in which the photograph was then contextualized in the *London Bulletin* in 1940 further underscored the state of "in-betweenness" of the exile. Furthermore, because the exile crosses borders of experience and thoughts, as Edward Said writes, the experience of "borders" played an important role for expatriate surrealists. This is prominently illustrated by Marcel Duchamp's so-called *Mile of String*, a work he created for the exhibition *First Papers of Surrealism* organized by André Breton in the United

Figure 2: René Magritte: *La Clef des champs*, 1936, oil on canvas, 80 × 60 cm, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

States in 1942 (see also Eckmann 2013, 35). Duchamp's installation consists of a dense web of twine crisscrossing the exhibition space and creating a palpable sense disorientation and displacement for visitors to the exhibition (see Eckmann 2013, 35). Miller's photograph also challenges the boundaries of the medium by depicting a motif that appears to hover between life and death, reality and dream, perception and imagination, past and present. She thus appropriates (‣**Appropriation**) an aesthetic and symbolic language, which references the ideas of Surrealism. The desert is depicted as a timeless and monotonous place, devoid of any modernity and untouched by the development that changed Egypt in the 1930s. Miller's visualization of the Egyptian desert is thus consistent with the surrealist view of Egypt and of the "Orient" in general: "Ancient Egypt thus becomes one of the various pre-Modern cultures, along with those of the Americas, Oceanic, and the British Columbian cultures for example, that are seen to appreciate more fully the aspects of the human experience neglected in the modern Occident, including the integration of the mythical, the oneiric, and the magical into the very economics of the everyday" (Roberts and Allmer 2013, 3). André Breton celebrated the "Orient" as an antipode to the rationalism and capitalism of the "Occident": "Orient, victorious Orient, you

who have only symbolic value, do with me as you please. Orient of anger and pearls! Orient, lovely bird of prey and of innocence, I implore you from the depths of the kingdom of shadows! Inspire me!" (Antle 2006, 5).

Yet Miller's image specifically contradicts the Orientalist (▸**Orientalism**) notion of Egypt as a mere agglomeration of archaeological sites and famous monuments, a view notably conveyed, for instance, by the frontispiece of *Description de l'Égypte* (1809–1829).[2] This encyclopedic work had been commissioned after Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798 and came to be a symbol not just of the territorial, but also of the scientific penetration of this country. In *Portrait of Space*, all the famous Egyptian monuments so often featured in Orientalist photographs and paintings[3] have disappeared, leaving nothing but the void of the desert.

Against this background, it is important to note that Miller's photograph(s) functioned as 'contact zone' (▸**Expanded Contact Zone**) not only for the surrealist avant-garde in Europe, but also for the early surrealist movement in Egypt. In recent years, scholarly interest in surrealism in Egypt has increased, yet research mainly focuses on the Art and Liberty Group. In the late 1930s, several artists met in Cairo to discuss recent developments in art and signed a manifesto, espousing surrealist-influenced ideas; in 1938, the poet Georges Henein and other Egyptian surrealists then officially founded the group *Art et Liberté* in Cairo.[4] Miller had regular contact with these "rebels," as her letters to Roland Penrose indicate (Miller January 23/27, 1939). In those letters, she also mentions a collaboration with Georges Henein for a planned "semi-surrealist magazine" (Miller January 30, 1939), but the increasingly dangerous political situation prompted Miller to abandon the idea again in 1939. Still, her important role as an intermediary between the Egyptian surrealists and the surrealist avant-garde in Europe should not be overlooked (see also Bardaouil 2017, 11). Roland Penrose would send her the latest surrealist magazines and books that, in turn, brought the surrealists in Egypt into contact with, and allowed them to participate in, contemporary surrealist trends in Europe. At the same time, those artists could study surrealist artworks by Picasso and Man Ray in the original in Miller's house in Cairo. In this way, the ideas and concepts of the surrealist avant-garde in

2 In this context, Allmer argues that Miller deconstructs the colonizing gaze onto Egypt. See Allmer 2016, 4; see also her important publication, Patricia Allmer, *Lee Miller: Photography, Surrealism, and Beyond* (2016). However, it should be emphasized that this deconstruction can be regarded only as a side effect; Miller's focus was clearly on artistic production and playing with aesthetic norms.

3 For a (critical) overview on this topic, see Maria Golia, *Photography and Egypt* (2010); Derek Gregory, "Emperors of the Gaze: Photographic Practices and Production of Space in Egypt, 1839–1914" (2003).

4 Art and Liberty's manifesto of December 22, 1938 was also published in the *London Bulletin* in April 1939 with a preface titled *From Egypt* written by Roland Penrose. See Sam Bardaouil, *Surrealism in Egypt: Modernism and the Art and Liberty Group* (2017, 10). For further information on the Art and Liberty Group, see also Bardaouil, Sam, and Till Fellrath, *Art et Liberté: Rupture, War and Surrealism in Egypt (1938–1948)* (2016).

Europe—with Paris at its "center"—spread and migrated to its perceived "peripheries" such as Egypt (‣**Cultural Transfer**). In fact, a photograph by the Egyptian artist Mamduh Muhamad Fathallah titled *Peak* (1944–1945) shows similarities in composition to Miller's photograph *Portrait of Space*,[5] but while appropriating (‣**Appropriation**) Miller's composition, Fathallah decontextualizes the scene. Miller's impact on Egyptian art still requires further analysis. However, Miller's picture perfectly fits to the issues generated by the Art and Liberty Group artists. In order to criticize the nationalist exploitation of Pharaonic Egypt, they challenged the beholder's common perception of ancient monuments and artifacts via playful compositions and absurd juxtapositions.

In 1939, Miller left her husband and moved to London to be with Roland Penrose. She never returned to Egypt but continued to portray space and countries in her photographs documenting the destruction caused by the Second World War. As inherent in *Portrait of Space*, all these pictures demonstrate a state of "in-betweenness". In this regard, Miller's photograph can be considered as a key to her entire oeuvre.

Figures

Fig. 1: www.leemiller.co.uk.
Fig. 2: VEGAP, Madrid © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2020.

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Erin Hyde Nolan

Two-Faced: Translations of a Portrait of Abdülhamid II

Abstract In 1869, the Abdullah Frères studio in Istanbul made a portrait of the Ottoman Prince Abdülhamid Effendi. When Abdülhamid II ascended the throne in 1876, this photograph was copied, appropriated, and disseminated in various formats. One such carte-de-visite depicts the sultan with a full beard when he sports only a mustache in the original image. The manipulation of this image provides a lens for understanding portraiture as a medium that embodies multiple and subjective identities (even of the same person) that also move across material platforms and cultural borders. By tracing the translation and cross-cultural circulation of the Abdullah Frères image, this chapter reveals networks of exchange as formative to the imperial portrait photograph.

Keywords Portrait, Photograph, Translation, Cross-cultural, Imperial

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In 1869, the Abdullah Frères studio in Istanbul made a photographic portrait of the Ottoman Prince Abdülhamid Effendi. This image shows him wearing a frockcoat and fez. His hand rests on a marble table and a gold pocket watch laces through his vest. When Abdülhamid II ascended the throne in 1876, this photograph was copied, appropriated, and disseminated in various formats. One cropped carte-de-visite version depicts the thirty-fourth Ottoman sultan with a full beard, when he sports only a mustache in the original photograph. Like a studio prop or theatrical costume, this additional facial hair reshapes Abdülhamid II's likeness, anointing his role as a sage and pious leader. The 1869 photograph presents Abdülhamid as an Ottoman prince, but the manipulation and publication of this same image seven years later transforms his presentation into that of a sultan. The reuse of the Abdullah Frères photograph thus activates an idealized and abstract notion of a modern dynastic identity. Abdülhamid II emerges from this material adaptation not as an individual transformed by his position, but as an immortal icon. Because portraiture is governed by referential norms, this photograph functions as an index not only for Abdülhamid II, but also for an Ottoman imperial heritage. It therefore provides an important lens for understanding portraiture as a medium capable of embodying multiple and subjective identities (even of the same person) (‣**Hybridity**) when translated across material platforms and cultural borders (‣**Circulation**). By tracing the translation (‣**Translation**) and cross-cultural circulation of the Abdullah Frères image, this essay reveals networks of exchange as formative to imperial portrait photography.

As a ruler, Abdülhamid II was passionate about photography, applying it to nearly all manner of courtly affairs. He relied equally on the medium's documentary and reproductive faculties. The sheer number of photographs collected during his reign (36,535) testifies to the Hamidian court's fervent interest in photographic image making. The unique and highly crafted albums sent to the United States and Britain in the wake of the 1893 Chicago World's Columbia Exposition further demonstrate this fascination. Ali Riza Bey, a military photographer who authored sections of these volumes, was hired to run a studio and laboratory installed at Yıldız Palace in 1894. Photographs thus became both indispensable and ubiquitous tools in a constellation of devices through which Abdülhamid II managed the empire.

While the Hamidian court invested so purposefully in photography, the sultan averted his own face from the camera's lens.[1] Only three photographic portraits of Abdülhamid are known—all made before his coronation in 1876.[2] These include the aforementioned 1869 Abdullah Frères

1 Few painted portraits of Abdülhamid II were made during his lifetime. The two to which I refer are oil paintings in the Topkapı Palace Museum Collection 17/126 and 17397. Renda 2000, 530–531.

2 As far as I am aware, no official photographic portraits were made during his reign. Bahattin Öztuncay suggests that a "glass dispositive" of Abdülhamid II

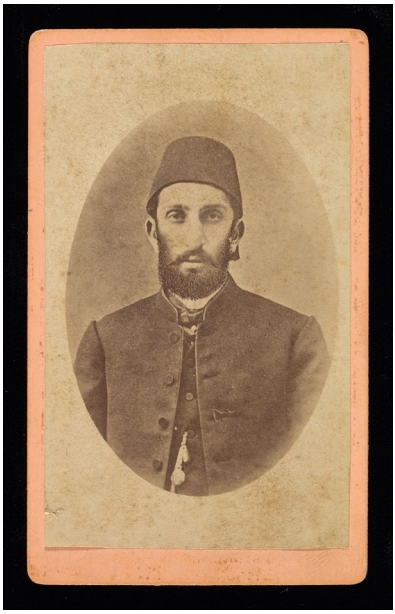

Figure 1 (left): *Modified carte-de-visite of Abdülhamid II*, original photograph by Abdullah Frères, 1869.
Figure 2 (right): Sultan Abdülhamid II, photographer(s) unknown, 1876.

image as well as two earlier portraits made in Buckingham Palace by the British firm W. & D. Downey while Abdülhamid was touring Europe with his uncle, Sultan Abdülaziz, in 1867 (Davison 1963; Şehsuvaroğlu 1949). Nonetheless, this small corpus of photographs participated in professional networks that engaged with an international language of portraiture, photography, and imperial power (Micklewright 2013, 7). This contradiction—a leader obsessed by photography who refused to have his photograph taken—complicates the many forms, iterations, and translations of Abdülhamid's portraits.

All three of these portraits were circulated as carte-de-visites. Invented in 1854 by the French photographer André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, mass-produced carte photographs came from a camera with multiple lenses, which facilitated the making of several portraits in one sitting. Inexpensive commodities, carte-de-visites were wildly popular and required a short production time (McCauley 1985; Darrah 1981, 24; *The Year-book of Photography and Photographic News Almanac*, 1864). They overwhelmed the nineteenth-century visual economy, penetrating the private lives of Europeans and Ottomans alike. As modern 'calling cards,' these commercially produced photographs migrated between cosmopolitan centers, initiating a phenomenon known as 'cartomania.'

While they are often dismissed as formulaic, the carte's prescribed composition and repetitive ordinariness systematized a global network of portraiture. Their standardized format allowed for readability in diverse contexts. The normalization of poses and studio props afforded the sitter agency through their own self-presentation, and in turn, the viewing audience familiarity with such forms of presentation. The use and reuse of Abdülhamid II's 1869 portrait exemplifies these visual patterns that are integral to photographic portraits, especially to carte-de-visites. Few as they may be, his portraits demonstrate the particular flexibility of Ottoman identity in the late nineteenth century. Even when portraying the same print or person, these different images register multiple levels of meaning by containing "the Self of repetition, the singularity within that which repeats" (Deleuze 1994, 23). In other words, the photographs of Abdülhamid II were imprints of personal likeness, presenting a culturally and temporally specific yet universally legible tradition of photographic portraiture.

The repetition and reproduction of the sultan's portrait exploits the rareness of his photographic image. Like the 'bearded' carte, these interpretations and their process of translation reveal the portrait's use value and capacity to formulate knowledge. This is especially true when photographs of Abdülhamid II were inaccurately labeled. A color chromolithograph from ca. 1876 portrays Murad V, Abdülhamid II's brother, but is erroneously titled "Abdu-l-hamid, II. Sultan of Turkey." This engraved

exists and is based on a photograph by Abdullah Frères in 1875–1876. See Öztuncay 2011, 59.

portrait by the British G.J. Stodart is based on an 1869 photograph by Abdullah Frères where Murad dons a plain uniform adorned with one medallion.[3] This example of mistaken identity reveals the extent to which Ottoman selfhood was derived from the costume and not the face. Here Murad's fez, frockcoat, and medal mirror the ensemble worn by Abdülhamid in his own 1869 Abdullah Frères portrait. Unlike in Japan where imperial portraits were believed to *be* the emperor, Ottoman examples emerge as "relational object(s)" intimately tied to their performative qualities (Edwards 2010).

Abdülhamid II took the notion of relational photography quite literally. He used portraits of his children—who were photographed numerous times throughout his reign—as surrogates for himself. On September 13, 1878, he sent an album of royal family portraits to Queen Victoria that included several photographs of his own children.[4] With the album he included a letter, stating: "This intimate souvenir of my family is intended to remind you of the fidelity and profound attachment that I have to the grand and glorious British Empire"[5] (Abdülhamid II n.d.). Like the student portraits in the albums that he gifted to Britain seven years later, Abdülhamid II's own children perform as proxy for him. However, the reflection of the sultan's own facial features and familial resemblance seen in images of his offspring complicate this form of photographic surrogacy.

Celebrity albums filled with card-mounted portraits were wildly popular with royal families (and equally fashionable with the general public). Photographs of Abdülhamid II would have been collected by both European and Ottoman audiences and added to portfolios like the *Album Contemporaine Européen*. A copy from 1865 by Justin Lallier reveals the collection process: Pages reserved for sovereigns have four ovals printed with country names and royal crests, indicating where to glue a portrait of a Turkish ruler, for example. The last pages are dedicated to noblemen and administrators. These contain ten empty rectangles, each stamped with a corresponding number, arranged to simulate a wall of portraits hung salon-style, one on top of the other. Abdülhamid II's personal collection contains similar albums, including one with portraits of celebrated foreigners such as President Lincoln, Nasir al-Din Shah, Queen Victoria, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and the Guangxu Emperor of China (İÜK, Album 90899). This and other volumes like the *Album Contemporaine Européen* codified diplomatic networks, operating as nineteenth-century "face books." They reflected the capacity of the photographic album to manufacture social connections and forge relationships across geographic, political, and spatial borders (Bann 2011,

3 The text around the portrait reads: "Engraved by G.J. Stodart from a Photograph, William Mackenzie, London, Edinburgh & Glasgow." NPG, D47408.

4 Similar albums exist in the İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi: 90894, 90898, 90902.

5 RA VIC/MAIN/H/47. The exact date of this letter is uncertain. It is hand-written in French on stationary with the sultan's initials "AH."

7–29).[6] Thus, we see imperial portrait circulation as a shared and global activity (‣**Cultural Mobility**).

Heightened by the unbridled circulation of these photographs, the flexibility of image production and reproduction dissolved pre-existing technical boundaries, blending the visual practices of drawing, wood engraving, and photography (Beegan 2008, 8). On Abdülhamid II's 1869 Abdullah Frères portrait, the in-painting of his beard and subsequent re-photographing of the original print shifts the authoritarian gaze away from the artist / subject relationship toward the communal performance of making, taking, and disseminating photographs. It is this shift that implicates the multiple hands involved in shaping the sultan's likeness, including the hand that drew the beard or clicked the shutter whose names and studios we do not know. Nonetheless, the photographic portrait is subject to multiple chains of translation from the creation of the first print to its last reproduction (Belknap 2016, 9). It is precisely through these translations that Abdülhamid II's photographic likeness develops a haptic dimension. With touch, these cartes traversed technological, geographic, and cultural boundaries. They were not made only to be seen, but also to be held, painted, pocketed, smelled and sung to. The migration of Abdülhamid II's portrait—from one hand to another, from the studio to the parlor, from the counter to the album page—reveals the power of photography to shape not only an emperor's likeness, but also the social and historical imaginary.

Figures

Fig. 1–2: © Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (96.R.14).

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6 They mimic the early modern practice of portrait prints portraying great men, such as popes, sultans, and emperors. The Mughal Akbar (r. 1556–1605) commissioned portraits of his courtiers, for example, who were multicultural in makeup, including Persians, Uzbeks, Afghans, Rajputs, Jesuits who belonged to Shia, Sunni, Hindu, and Christian faiths. See Beach 2012; Brand and Lowry 1985; Roy and Losty 2013.

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Figure 1: Luigi Montabone: *Principe ereditario di Persia Vicere*, *Tebriz*. Albumen print from a collodion negative, June 22nd, 1862 / printed October 29, 1865, 25.8 × 22 cm.

Elahe Helbig

Transnational Encounters: A Photograph of Mozaffar al-Din Mirza from an Italian Mission to Persia

Abstract The photograph of the Persian hereditary prince Mozaffar al-Din Mirza embodies a synthesis of distinct visual spheres interacting with one another in a transnational space of artistic creation. The politically defined objective of Luigi Montabone commissioned to photograph the Italian diplomatic mission to Persia in 1862, the visual politics of the Persian sovereign and their encounter in the social space of the freshly proclaimed crown prince gives rise to a political iconography of power consolidation and dynastic national identity. Yet, the subsequent reception of the photograph epitomizes the process of meaning construction in heterogeneous social spaces.

Keywords Luigi Montabone, Qajar Iran, Temporal Semantic, Political Iconography, Transnational Encounter

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The photograph of the Persian hereditary prince Mozaffar al-Din Mirza (1853–1907) is from a photographic album with the descriptive title "Ricordi del viaggio in Persia della Missione Italiana 1862" (The Photograph Album of the Italian Diplomatic Mission to Persia 1862). This photograph is a synthesis of distinct visual spheres interacting with one another in the transnational space of artistic creation. In question are, first, the politically defined objective of the photographer, Luigi Montabone (?–1877), who was commissioned to record the diplomatic mission; second, the visual politics of the Qajar ruler Naser al-Din Shah (r. 1848–1896) intending to construct a dynastic identity both domestically and transnationally by uniting modernity with conservatism; and, third, their encounter in the social space of the Crown Prince Mozaffar al-Din Mirza, freshly proclaimed and yet frail for the years of uncertainty about the royal line of succession. The interplay of those previously parallel spheres and spaces gives rise to a political iconography that, in the photograph, defines a power constellation and sense of dynastic-national identity: the sovereignty of Naser al-Din Shah emanating from the portrait is transferred to and transforms the perception of Mozaffar al-Din Mirza. Yet, the photograph is of interest not just for the time-transcending interaction of visual spheres but also for the dynamic transformation of the image in its subsequent reception in heterogeneous social spaces. Its reception reveals the variety of demystifying contexts and processes of generating meanings in spaces of cultural encounter or "contact zones."

On April 21st, 1862, a diplomatic mission of the newly founded Kingdom of Italy (1861–1946) headed for Persia. Its objective was to attain strategic alliances on a geopolitical scale and tap untouched economic trade potentials. In addition to diplomatic, military, and trade sections, the mission also included a group of interdisciplinary scientists as well as two photographers, the Piemontese Luigi Montabone and his Venetian assistant Alberto Pietrobon (active 1862–1887), lending additional weight to the mission's political pursuits. Provided with the latest equipment, the photographers were specifically commissioned to illustrate the final mission report with images of political and diplomatic encounters and, secondarily, archaeological monuments, inscriptions, and portraits of important personalities. In addition, they were instructed to produce visual documents "meet[ing] the needs of the various professors, the naturalists in particular" (Piemontese 1972, 260–261).

The itinerary of the Italian mission to Tehran, the capital of Qajar Iran, retraced an ancient trade route that has been central for centuries not only for trade purposes but also for the cross-cultural exchange of ideas, innovations, and artistic productions (‣**Cultural Transfer**). Treading such historical paths, the mission headed from Genoa via the still heavily Persian-influenced city of Yerevan and across the Araxes River, the Perso-Russian border politically enforced by Russia, to Tabriz, their first destination in Persian territory, which they reached on June 20st, 1862. There, in the capital of the north-western province of Azerbaijan, they encountered

a rather special political environment: Following a long established tradition, public celebrations had been held just a few days prior to mark the proclamation of the eight-year-old Prince Mozaffar al-Din Mirza as heir to throne of Persia and Governor-General of Azerbaijan (Piemontese 1972, 258, 294; Amanat 1997, 400–402). During an official audience granted to the delegation on June 22nd, Montabone produced a number of photographs of Mozaffar al-Din Mirza, his advisers, ministers, and dignitaries, including the portrait discussed here.

The photograph of Mozaffar al-Din Mirza was taken in the courtyard of the royal palace *Bag-e Shomal* (North Garden), as indicated by the brick pillar at the far left. Yet the intentionally furnished space with the tableau next to Mozaffar al-Din Mirza and carpets covering the ground evoke the impression of an interior. The parallel patterns of the larger carpet, though partly interrupted by the smaller one, add a sense of spatial depth. The lines fanning out across the lower area of the photograph direct the gaze towards the sickly, lifeless prince, who is placed along a horizontal line running across the center of the image. Dressed in a velvet tunic elaborately embroidered with floral designs and patterns and wearing a tall black astrakhan hat, Mozaffar al-Din Mirza is shown frontally, the chair to his right, the painting to his left. While the prince's right hand rests on the chair, his left grabs the hilt of his sword in a gesture of authority. The angled arrangement of the tableau suggests a break with the traditionally frontal presentation of a subject and inevitably shifts the attention to the painting and its subject: Naser al-Din Shah as he is towering on his horse, his gaze intently fixed on the viewer. The equestrian portrait makes the King tower protectively and authoritatively over his heir. This intra-pictorial composition entails a change in perception: as the gaze follows the directionality of the trotting horse, it returns to Mozaffar al-Din Mirza whose image is now endowed with a sense of power and authority emanating from the portrait of Naser al-Din Shah. By means of this special setting, Montabone created an image of transnational significance that simultaneously asserts Naser al-Din Shah's sovereignty and consolidates Mozaffar al-Din Mirza's position as heir to the throne and as Viceroy of Persia.

The portrait of Naser al-Din Shah is paradigmatic for the correlation between socio-political changes and dynastic visual traditions. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a profound cultural revival unfolded as Qajar rulers sought to legitimize their claim to power by invoking the glorious Persian past. This revival manifested itself in myriad life-size murals and oil paintings of a glorified ruler, often surrounded by his sons, chiefs of the Qajar tribes, domestic officials, or foreign envoys (Diba 1998, 32–35). From the mid-century on, however, the dynastic iconography moved away from monumental imagery in lineage of traditional kingships. Instead, it turned towards promoting an image of a sovereign who unites modernity with conservatism to renegotiate Persia's standing on the geopolitical landscape. As a result of this shift in image politics, a local school of small-scale portraiture emerged during the 1850s and 1860s, whose visual language,

whilst rooted in traditional Persian imagery, incorporated a European-style academic painting (Diba and Ekhtiar 1998, 239–241).

Wearing a semi-European-style uniform with a tall hat and an imperial aigrette, Naser al-Din Shah towers on his horse, drawing all attention from the rugged landscape and the city portal in the background to himself. Contrary to the traditional iconography of rulers engaged in heroic battle or hunting, which had been prevalent from pre-Islamic to early Qajar equestrian portraits, paintings such as this tended to depict the King in a more moderate, personal manner. During Naser al-Din Shah's rule, equestrian portraits thus functioned as individual affirmations of the sovereign's power. Even though it has not been possible to identify with certainty the painter of the equestrian portrait in Montabone's photograph, it bears close affinity to the local school of portraiture founded by the Georgian Akop Ovnatanian (1806–1881 / 1884), who enjoyed the patronage of the Persian court for many years and later moved to Tabriz. (‣**Cultural mobility**). This school distinguished itself by blending the canons of Georgian, Russian, and Persian court painting (Diba and Ekhtiar 1998, 245).

At the prince's court, the visual sphere embedded in the equestrian portrait of Naser al-Din Shah meets a very different one, that of Luigi Montabone, the photographer. Montabone's photographic perspective is informed not just by aesthetic considerations but also by the geo-political agendas of both the Qajar court and the Italian Kingdom. Conflating cultural and political codes, Montabone places the equestrian portrait of Naser al-Din Shah next to the Crown Prince in a metaphorical allusion to dynastic continuity and national identity. In doing so, he draws on a visual language of power to construct a transnational image of a sovereign Iran that is qualified as a suitable ally of the Kingdom of Italy. Montabone's photograph of Mozaffar al-Din Mirza is thus the point of intersection of a threefold interaction between various visual spheres meeting in a space of cultural encounter that, in terms of image making, transcends national boundaries.

The contact inherent in the photograph is echoed across heterogenous social spaces of reception. Multipliable ad infinitum, the dynamic reception of this and other photographs from the diplomatic mission in Italy deserves further mention. Upon its return from Persia, the diplomatic mission was ridiculed for having failed to meet its political and economic objectives. Similarly, the scientific achievements and knowledge transfer, considerable though they were, were not noticed, let alone appreciated (Piemontese 1972, 301–302). While the politico-economic context of the mission gradually sunk into oblivion, Montabone's photographs were widely published, exhibited, and marketed (‣**Circulation**). Their popularity in Italy was driven by the contemporary public demand for views of historic sites and ancient cultures (‣**East / West**) that had prompted photographic firms such as Borgi and Alinari to undertake their own photographic expeditions to Egypt, Syria, and the Holy Land (Tomassini 1996, 57–59).

A series of short articles about the mission published in *La Gazzetta del Popolo* between April and November 1863 set in motion the circulation of Montabone's photographs. Interestingly, these articles preceded the official albums presented to the Persian King in 1864, the King of Italy, and other personalities (Bonetti and Prandi 2013, 29). The presentation of the photographs at the 1867 world's fair in Paris and at the 1868 National Exhibition in Turin greatly contributed to their dissemination. Further fueled by the increased publication of European travelogues about Persia from the mid-nineteenth century, the demand for Montabone's photographs grew steadily, culminating in orders of complete copies of his albums, for instance by Queen Sophie of the Netherlands (1816–1877) (see Jansen 2004, 9). Remarkably, Montabone's photographs were also translated (‣**Translation**) into other media, with the images being placed in new semantic relations: The photograph of Mozaffar al-Din Mirza, for example, served as the model for a woodcut of the Persian king and his heir, which was published in *L'Illustration* in 1869 (Bonetti and Prandi 2013, 30–31). As a matter of fact, even Montabone himself evoked new semantic relations for his photographs, particularly through his use of the Persian lion-and-sun emblem as a paradigmatic analogy. Issuing from a complex genealogy of Zoroastrian, Jewish, Shi'ite, Turkish, and Persian symbols and domains of signification, the centuries-long use of the Lion-and-Sun culminated in its adoption as the official emblem of Qajar Iran in 1836 (Najmabadi 2005, 63–79). While traveling Persia, the delegation must have encountered the emblem as it was widespread across various media, ranging from Qajar insignias to visual decorations. By using the lion-and-sun emblem in his photographic imprints and as hallmarks on his cabinet cards, Montabone caused the emblem to be perceived in a new light independent of its cultural-political significance as an iconic symbol of Iranian national identity (‣**Nation**) (for examples see Barjesteh van Waalwijk van Doorn 2004, 23, 27; Cavanna 2013, 21).

Despite the widely accepted authenticity and objectivity of Montabone's photographs—and the fact that they therefore transcended the common tropes of 'Orientalist' photography—the social space of their reception in Italy and the West was largely shaped by a constellation of graduated power and a European vision of the 'Orient' (‣**Orientalism**). In this additional dimension of cultural encounter, the semantics of Montabone's photographs was defined independent of the mission's political agency. While Montabone integrated visual spheres to create transnational images of power that appealed to both Qajar Iran and the Kingdom of Italy, their political meaning became obsolete in the social space of reception. This illustrates how a process of constructing meaning multiplies across cultural encounters or "contact zones" through the interaction of visual spheres and social spaces.

Figure

Fig. 1: © Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice.

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PART II

Utility and Representation

Theodore Van Loan

Multiple Temporalities and the Scene of Time: A Pair of Wooden Doors at the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo

Abstract Art objects are staged and stage themselves in ways that express various types of time and duration. The pair of wooden doors from the Fatimid period discussed in this chapter are staged in a way that make the layered and fragmented condition of temporality central to the experience of seeing them. This chapter unpacks these layers. It includes discussion of epigraphic and stylistic dating, practices of conservation and display, and the visual impact of physical fatigue. All together these layers constitute a dynamic and fluid scene with the object as both an active participant and passive recipient in their constitution.

Keywords Temporality; Materiality; Islamic Art; Ornament; Museum Display

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Doors inhabit an unstable mode of existence. They are static fixtures within built space, but lack the permanence possessed by structural form. They are liable to be dismantled, fragmented, or otherwise modified (▸**Detail**). The doors ordered between 996–1021 A.D. by the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim for al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo are no exception. The set was removed from al-Azhar circa 1903 to become one of the first holdings of the new "House of Arab Antiquities," later known as the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (Mostafa 1961, 1–3; O'Kane 2012, 8–11; Sayour 2017). Like some of the many examples of Fatimid woodwork that have survived in modern collections, and *in situ*, the doors overtly show their wear. These fatigued surfaces open up a scene of time, one that is arrested, but never entirely stilled, by museum display. Despite the stasis conferred by methods and technologies of conservation, photographic documentation, among other means, these two doors flit between multiple temporal modes and chronologies.

This short study will examine the roles of time, duration, and visual perception (▸**Visuality**) as they pertain to the doors both within their current setting in the Museum of Islamic Art, and in the cultural milieu at the time of their commissioning. In so doing, it will engage questions of epistemological limitations of museum display, the conceptual variable of time, and how it relates to (re)constructing the past lives of objects.

Each of these doors, made of Turkish pine and measuring 3.25 meters high and 1 meter wide, are composed of essentially two parts: an undergirding body and seven carved inset panels (Bloom 2007, 63–65; O'Kane 2012, 78; Sayour 2017). Each panel is inserted into the door frame either horizontally on its own or is vertically paired with another. Each also has a corresponding counterpart symmetrically placed on the other door. The top horizontally placed panels on each door contain an inscription rendered in floriated Kufic script, a style common to the Fatimid period where the designs of certain letters carry vegetal embellishments. The translation, responsible for the date attribution, is as follows: "Our master, commander of the faithful, the Imām al-Ḥākim bi-amr Allāh, blessings of God be upon him, and upon his pure ancestors and his descendants" (Van Berchem 1903, 630).

The panels below the inscription carry a variety of different types of vegetal and geometric ornament all characteristic of the Fatimid period, with a decorative repertoire developed from Coptic and Tulunid visual traditions (Contadini 1998, 111–113). The two sets of vertical panels that straddle the horizontal midpoints of the doors are carved in what is called the "Beveled Style." This term, used most conventionally to describe Abbasid era stuccowork in Iraq, refers to the smooth and contoured carving employed in the rendering of the tendrils in these panels (Bloom and Blair 2009, 280).

It is impossible to know where exactly these doors would have been situated in al-Azhar. The mosque complex has undergone much modification since the Fatimid period, and none of the original entrances have

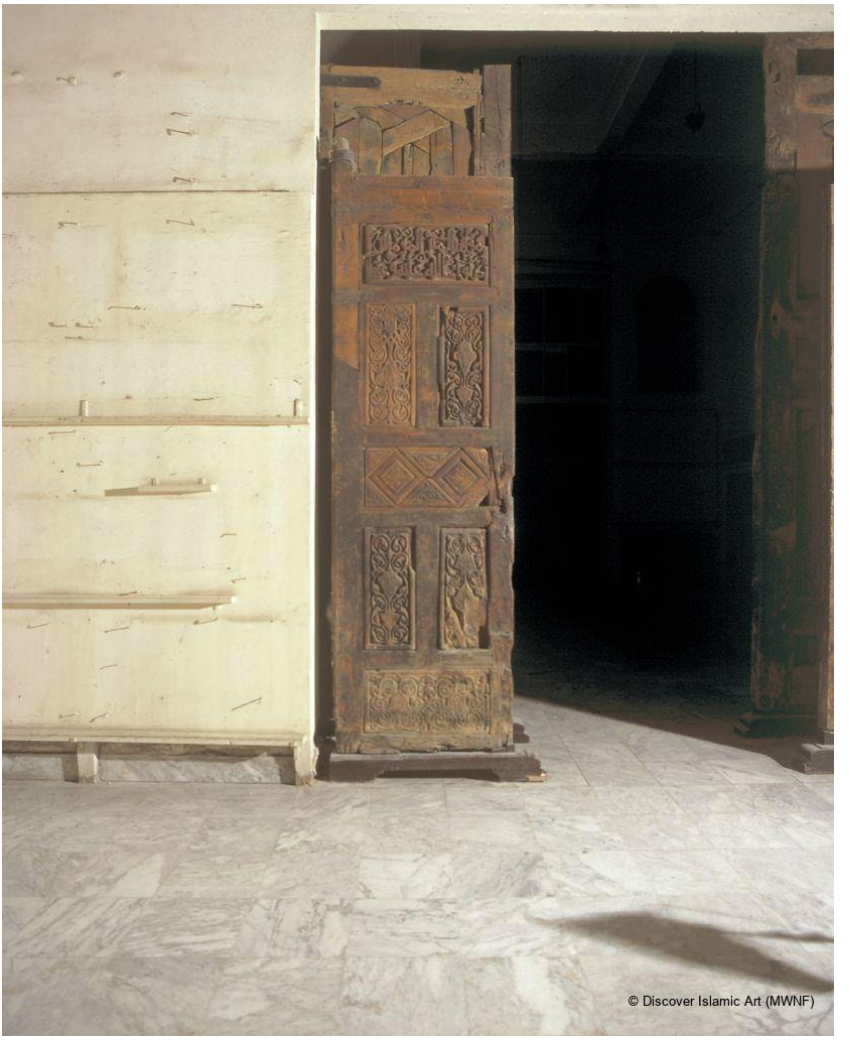

Figure 1: *Pair of carved wooden doors*. 996–1021 A.D. Turkish Pine, height 325 cm, width 200 cm. Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, inv. 551.

been preserved (Bloom 2007, 65). However, the size of the doors and the dedicatory inscription to the Fatimid Caliph would perhaps indicate that they were intended for the main entrance or another similar and visually prominent place. Today, they are installed in Gallery 4 of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (O'Kane 2012, 78).[1] As seen in an image of the gallery, the leaves are mounted straddling a doorway between exhibition halls, presumably in an effort to mimic their original context. According to the 1961 *Short Guide* to the museum, the doors were situated in a comparably transitional space; as framing the entrance to "Hall 6," then reserved exclusively for woodwork (Mostafa 1961, 36).

Probably the most noticeable feature of the doors is their advanced state of wear and fatigue. This fatigue is by no means consistent; there appears to be a great deal of variation between the panels. The two at the very top, which carry the inscription, are the best preserved of the entire set. Below these are four iterations of 'beveled-style' compositions, and each has been worn down to a different degree. The panel on the far left appears to be almost flat, while that on the far right retains deep contours. Something similar occurs in the lower set of vertical panels across the two doors. In between these two sets, the horizontal panels with inscribed rotated squares are missing pieces: a small corner piece in the lower right of the left-side panel, and both corners of the right-side panel. The bottom horizontal panels on both sides are also very worn down, however, the panel on the right to a much greater extent.

These marks of fatigue, by and large, define the contemporary viewing experience of these doors. The missing pieces in the two centrally located horizontal panels show us the method by which they are put together and, in turn, give us a new perception of each panel's relationship to the door frame; that they are, in a sense, impermanent fixtures upon it. In fact, when we look at some comparative examples of Fatimid woodwork, we see that one cannot necessarily assume that the doors and the carved panels are contemporaneous, as in the case of the doors of the Fakahani Mosque in Cairo, where the panels were dated to the Fatimid period and the doors to the eighteenth century (Bloom 2008, 240). With respect to these doors, there is no evidence that they are not contemporaneous with the panels. However, at the experiential level, a disjuncture is created; a visual suggestion is made by the variable wear of the panels that they might not be of the same time and/or place. While this disjuncture occurs as a result of the formal characteristics of the doors, their placement within a museum context only supplements this element of temporal instability.

Within the Museum of Islamic Art, this instability is reinforced by the presence of other pieces of woodwork that have become detached from

1 It is important to note that the museum has undergone further restoration and has reopened since suffering damage from a nearby car-bomb attack in January 2014.

their respective doors—their original settings. Several such examples exist in the collection that would have originally been mounted in doors (O'Kane 2012, 48). Moreover, these pieces are currently displayed in galleries nearby where the doors are installed. For the museum viewer, a kind of cognitive operation takes place whereby the visual harmony of the doors disintegrates, as each panel is also thought of as a discrete object, as well as part of a whole.

Most obviously the variable fatigue distributed across the panels of the doors serves as an index of use. It tells the viewer that these doors were at one level, simply furniture, vulnerable to the elements and the whims of their viewership. When taken into the confines of a museum collection, they are brought into a world of, perhaps, more disinterested viewing, one where their past status as objects of use becomes secondary to their placement within stylistic chronologies, as was articulated above with terms such as 'beveled style' and 'floriated Kufic,' and their dating attribution based upon the foundation inscription.

Thus, there are three different conceptions of time operating upon the doors: the absolute attribution to the reign of Caliph al-Hakim from the inscription, the stylistic markers that point to the doors' inclusion into the chronologically broader category of 'Fatimid woodwork,' and finally their worn-down and eroded panels as markers of sustained use over time. It is only within the museum space that the trans-temporal condition of the doors becomes readily perceivable. Each mode of temporality is layered upon the doors by different means, and all project their temporality in different ways.

The inscription, a dedication to the Caliph al-Hakim, is of a type commonly found on Fatimid monuments. It was composed at a time when public text was one of the primary ways in which rulership was visually articulated (Bierman 1998). Not only did the inscription serve to praise the ruler, but it also cemented his authority as a religious figure. The inscription serves as an explicit temporal marker, inextricably linking the production of the doors to the time of the reign of al-Hakim. This was an attribution that would later gain additional charge for modern art historians, as it could serve as a benchmark, whereby other objects lacking inscriptions could be dated on the basis of formal comparison. It is in this way that objects with foundation inscriptions attained an authoritative status within the museum context.

'Stylistic time' is not, of course, inherent to the object but generated through the correspondence between the door panel's formal traits and those traits that are thought to exemplify a given period of artistic production. In the case of Islamic art, these time periods are most often defined by political dynasties. In this case, these include the aforementioned 'beveled style' and 'floriated Kufic' script, both of which are associated with Fatimid period woodwork. It is important to note that the function of form here is a diagnostic one that enables the placement of the doors in their proper chronological position. Indeed, we can think of form in a linguistic sense,

just as Gülru Necipoğlu does, speaking of the "semiotics of ornament" in her study of a Timurid-period scroll used by architects for pattern-making, where given designs and patterns on buildings came to signify the dynastic powers that patronized them (Necipoğlu 1995, 217–223).

The physical fatigue upon the doors, as mentioned above, is an indexical marker of use and the passage of time. The visual impact of this fatigue is central to understanding the experiential dimension of the doors but is next to irrelevant in the establishment of temporal attribution and, thus, its meaning within the museum collection. It is this ambivalence toward the physical nature of the object, and the tension created by this ambivalence that defines its ontological existence within the museum (‣**Resilience**). The source of this tension is the lack of relevance that one's visual experience of the doors has for its museological classification. Its wall label places it within the Fatimid period, while its appearance implies a sustained history of use over time that subverts its attribution to being of *one time*. Yet, these signs of wear legitimate the doors as being of an authentic past, though one that requires a label to name (‣**Heritage**).

Within museum studies, art objects tend to be interpreted along semiotic lines. In defining the art object in the museum as "*simultaneously* referential and differential," Donald Preziosi refers to the museum object as it is staged both in relation to other objects within a given collection, and in relation to its maker and cultural sources (Preziosi 2006, 53). Both of these relations, oscillating in the mind of the viewer, are connected to multiple temporalities; chronological, stylistic, and indexical traces of cultural pasts. This case demonstrates the necessity of taking into account the experiential dimension as one considers how time is layered and coalesced around the museum object.

Figure

Fig. 1: Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo © Museum With No Frontiers / Discover Islamic Art.

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Figure 1: The Dragon Phoenix Basin (second half 13th century, Mosul [Iraq]: hammered brass; Museum für Islamische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz [SMBPK]).

Maria Sobotka

Displaying Cross-Culturality: A Water Basin from Mosul in Berlin

Abstract A water basin from Mosul in the Museum für Islamische Kunst Berlin functions as an example for the representation, display, and reading of cross-cultural objects in the museum. By reflecting on the presentation of the basin over time, former and current trends of exhibiting objects with cross-cultural historical backgrounds in the museum become obvious. Still being appreciated mainly for their beauty and craftsmanship, such objects oscillate between their perception as so-called masterpieces as well as their perception of being testimonies of mutuality in exchange in a broader context.

Keywords Cross-Culturality, Display, Masterpiece, Hybridity, Othering

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The first object visitors to the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin encounter is a late thirteenth-century water basin from Mosul. The basin is richly decorated[1] and exceptional in size—83 cm in diameter at a height of 21.5 cm—making it a real showpiece. Most likely produced during the reign of the Ilkhanids (1256–1353) for the purpose of ablution at dining tables, the brass basin has a flat bottom and a distinctive scallop-shaped edge, gently flaring outwards into twenty-four segments, each of which features a different pictorial subject. The interior is lavishly ornamented, while the exterior walls are plain. Hence, the decoration was enjoyed above all when the basin was in use. The main motif is the impressive image of a paired dragon and phoenix in the round medallion in the center. Four friezes showing various aspects of courtly life encircle this medallion and are followed by a poetic inscription on the outer rim that glorifies the unknown former owner, clearly a ruler. Trapezoidal, circular, and square-shaped illustrations alternate, with their arrangement relating to the shape of the bowl as a whole. One of the friezes is surrounded by a decorative ornamental interlace with Arabic characters. The spaces between the images are filled with all kinds of decorative patterns. These become increasingly smaller and detailed towards the edges (‣**Detail**), while at the same time being less accurately outlined. Due to wear and tear, the basin is missing its former inlays in silver and gold. As a result, the individual illustrations cannot easily be differentiated, resulting in a slightly confusing and obscure overall picture. Besides fighting, hunting, or amusement scenes accompanied by geometric or fantastic motifs, one focus is the depiction of animals and animal combat. The choice of animals and their manner of representation clearly draw on East Asian models (Enderlein, 1973, 8–9), as evidenced also by the image of the paired dragon and phoenix symbolizing the Chinese imperial couple.

Today, the basin is prominently placed at the start of the visitor circuit of the Museum für Islamische Kunst. It is presented in a glass case, its interior surface facing the beholder. Strikingly, the most recent display also features a Chinese porcelain lidded box (Fig. 2) dating from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). The small box with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decor in the five-colour palette *(wucai)* is on loan from the Museum für Asiatische Kunst in Berlin and shows similar images of paired dragons and phoenixes. The display thus emphasizes the cross-cultural nature of the large brass piece and, as such, appears to be a prelude to the museum's vast array of exhibits that may be categorized as 'Islamic,' but in fact correspond with other cultural-geographical realms (and museum departments). The basin is presented not only for its aesthetic qualities, but also put into a wider cultural context. This reflects recent developments in the display and study of material culture (Bruhn, Juneja, and Werner 2012)—and might open interesting perspectives for display strategies in museums. Aiming to exemplarily elaborate this, this essay looks at the

1 For a detailed description, see Sarre 1904; and Enderlein 1973.

Figure 2: A lidded box from China (Ming Dynasty, Wanli Era [1573–1619]; Jingdezhen: porcelain, painted with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decor in the five-colour palette *(wucai)*; on loan from the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preußischer Kulturbesitz [SMBPK]).

object's history,[2] including its various exhibition presentations and its role in publications.

The Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin acquired the basin in 1845 from an unknown art dealer. In 1906, it entered the collection of the newly founded Museum für Islamische Kunst. For the period from 1845 until 1906, we lack any information whether—and if, in what form—the basin was exhibited. Undoubtedly, Friedrich Sarre, the first director of the new museum, was responsible for the acquisition. The information we have for the period from 1906 / 1910 until 1992 is vague. Most likely, the focus during this entire period was on the object's aesthetic qualities, largely leaving aside its context. An article on the basin written by Sarre (1904) is a good example: The author's focus on the craftwork and emphasis on the size of the object and its most delicate inlays is reflective of the art historical *zeitgeist*. Not surprisingly, Sarre included the basin in his list of just eight objects for the major exhibition "Masterpieces of Muhammadan Art" he curated in Munich in 1910. This exhibition with its focus on a 'masterpiece' paradigm (‣**Masterpiece**) was instrumental in elevating the piece from the level of applied art to that of "fine art" (Troelenberg 2010, 60). This approach remained valid for many decades and was still reflected in

2 Many thanks to the Museum für Islamische Kunst, especially to Ute Franke, Gisela Helmecke, Yelka Kant, and Miriam Kühn, for their help in gathering all the relevant information on the object's history and reception.

a 1973 article by Volkmar Enderlein, the head of the collection at the time, who finally provided provisional sketches of the basin's imagery, which were added to the information panel. After the collections and displays were reorganized in the winter of 1992, following Berlin's reunification, the basin was displayed in one of the exhibition halls of the museum, presented directly on the wall in an upright position facing the beholder. This was possible only because the object was mounted between two glass display cases that flanked it on either side, thereby protecting it. This mode of presentation offered an unobstructed view of the inner surface of the basin with its worn inlays. In 2001, it moved to the very center of the museum's entrance area and the mode of presentation changed once again. For safety and conservatory reasons, it was exhibited horizontally and placed inside a glass case, making it almost impossible to decipher the rich decoration. In 2009, brief labels and professionally drawn image outlines were added, though apparently not very well received by visitors as they felt overstrained, the museum acknowledges. During renovation work in the museum's entrance area in May 2017, the basin moved to the right wall and changed its position back to upright. Besides the usual museum labels in German and English, graphic renderings of some of the imagery, and the inscription with its translation, the current display features, for the first time, a text touching on the object's transcultural character. In combination with the related Chinese piece, this presentation improves visibility and emphasizes a more contextualized cross-cultural reading.

The current display draws attention to the basin's role as a document of an important and interesting period in Islamic history: the Mongol invasions. The Mongols, whose actual ethnogenesis remains open until today, were a Central Asian nomadic tribe with the largest cohesive land empire in history in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Kollmar-Paulenz 2011, 13). Not only did they conquer and unify China where they reigned as the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), they also occupied most of West Asia where they established themselves as the so-called Ilkhanids. Il-khan means 'smaller Khan' and refers to the subordination to the Great Khan in China (Yalman 2001). The reign of the Ilkhanids was characterized by the opportunity of secure trade. A boom in maritime goods exchange provided a tremendously fertile ground for cultural production and economic expansion. Along with the trade in mercantile goods, religious ideas, folk tales, and customs as well as imagery were transmitted orally, via manuscripts, or as illustrations on ceramics and metalwork (Yalman 2001). In their new role as rulers of a vast empire, the Mongols searched for a way to legitimize their power. They pursued a tentative policy of adaptation and acculturation (Johnson n.d.), notably resorting to Chinese motifs and imagery to shape their Imperial image, as Kadoi has pointed out (2009, 15). Initially, craftsmen and their customers were interested mostly in the imitation of Chinese technologies and materials, Kadoi adds, but over time a shift of interest to visual imagery can be observed (2009, 15). In the case

of our water basin, we see an object whose shape and design reflect standards that had been developed in the region before the Mongol invasions, but whose ornamentation obviously incorporates iconographic motifs and formulas typical of Chinese art (von Gladiß 2012, 95).

The study of Chinese motifs and visual imagery in the art of the Ilkhanids reveals that most objects took on truly hybrid forms (‣**Hybridity**), showing the profound effects on local artistic production. In this sense, our basin demonstrates the high technical bronze art skills of workshops in and around Mosul, which were especially famous for a metal inlay technique called *tauschieren*. Using this very technique, they created an entirely new artistic vocabulary by including popular East Asian fortune symbols alongside Islamic courtly symbols in a magnificent basin such as this. Rather than serving to exoticize the objects, the introduction of such new imagery was proof of productive mutual interaction. Motifs were incorporated individually and carefully readapted to their new context in a way that still bore witness to their origins. As a result, the basin reveals a tremendous richness of imagination and establishes a fascinating visual interplay between traditional Mosul bronze art and Chinese iconography, reflecting the Ilkhanids' highly cross-cultural lifestyle. The seemingly natural way in which the imagery was integrated additionally emphasizes the fruitful intermingling—a sound and smart combination making for a productive hybridity. In this regard, the basin may be seen as evidence of the establishment of a new Imperial iconography derived from China, which helped Mongol rulers legitimize their political power in the territories they controlled.

The presentation of the basin over time in Berlin reflects former and current trends of exhibiting objects with cross-cultural historical backgrounds in the museum. For a long time, such objects were—and still are—appreciated mainly for their beauty and craftsmanship, that is as masterpieces (‣**Canon**). This notion obviously has not become obsolete, as the museum label explains: "Technically, the basin, ascribed to workshops in Mosul, is also a masterpiece. The ornaments engraved in the brass and inlaid with silver and gold wire once shimmered brightly on the darker body." However, this view is blended with the more recent tendency toward increased contextualization. Yet while the Chinese influence on Islamic art is mentioned, the cross-cultural context is not explained in greater detail: "Islamic art has adapted a variety of cultural influences since its formation. […] Paper, porcelain and silk came from China, while the Islamic world was known for metalwork and glassware. Chinese motifs, among them dragon and phoenix, found their way into the figurative canon of Islamic art in the wake of Mongol conquests in the thirteenth century." Here, the aim of focusing on a cross-cultural reading of the object would have gained from putting greater emphasis on reciprocity and pointing more explicitly to mutuality in the exchange. This is also in line with the current call for a greater focus on embedding 'non-European' art objects—a widely used, but quite questionable term—in so-called contact zones and networks of

connectivity, in order to avoid *othering* (‣ **Othering**) and thus move towards a truly global art history (Bruhn, Juneja, and Werner 2012).

The information panel further reads: "Models for the transfer of motifs into Islamic art possibly were objects such as this box with the 'five color' design from a later period. In Chinese culture the dragon and phoenix symbolize the royal couple and were seen as a fortunate omen—did they convey the same message in Islamic art?" The last sentence leaves room for varying interpretations. It could be understood as one of the rare examples where a museum encourages its visitors to think for themselves. But the statement may also make visitors feel left to their own devices. And other factors may add to their possible confusion. Firstly, the porcelain box is dated later than the basin, which seems rather odd, considering that the box is used to demonstrate the model function of Chinese imagery for Islamic art. Secondly, the issue is not really taken up in the subsequent visitor circuit, thus withholding opportunities for visitors to come up with an answer. If it is, in fact, the museum's intention to encourage visitors to think for themselves, it needs to provide further information. Otherwise, the museum should not be surprised if asked what it intends to achieve with this comparison, if not a better understanding of the objects shown.

Current developments represent a good start in approaching cross-cultural objects in the museum by widening the focus from a mere presentation as masterpieces to a broader context. In this sense, the inter-departmental cooperation between the Museum für Islamische Kunst and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst points to a welcome trend in reinforcing the cross-cultural reading of museum objects. A meaningful comparison should lead to greater insight, as dictated by the very mission of museums, which is an educational, if not an epistemological one.

Figures

Fig. 1: © Museum für Islamische Kunst – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Photo: Johannes Kramer.

Fig. 2: © Museum für Asiatische Kunst – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Photo: Maja Bolle.

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Figure 1: Plate showing Pilgrims to Cythera, China, Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Yongzheng period (1723–1735), ca. 1730 / 1735. Porcelain, onglaze colors, h. 2.8 cm, d. 22.6 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum, 1902,252.

Matthias Weiß

Cytherian China

Abstract Though, or since, this plate is a piece of export porcelain made in China, the model for its main motif is a widely distributed engraving by Paris-based artist Bernard Picart showing a pilgrimage to Cythera—the utopian island of love. Analyzing the object as a whole, the notions of travelling and seduction are not limited to this depiction. Still a proof of the European china craze and the efforts of Chinese manufacturers to fulfill that need, it rather evidences the complex interactions of economic interests, scientific inquiry, and artistic rivalry as well as the limitations of such mutual exchange processes.

Keywords Encre de Chine (schwarzlotmalerei), Europerie, Export porcelain (chine de commande), Famille rose (yangcai), Isle of Cythera

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A visitor to the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin who is familiar with rococo styles and iconographies might easily identify this plate as a piece from the mid-eighteenth century, even though the depiction of some of the details may seem a bit odd. Framed by various round ornamental borders, the group in the center is reminiscent of the *galanteries* invented by Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721). Well known from paintings and their graphic reproductions, similar scenes appear on porcelain from the manufactures in Frankenthal and Meissen (Lübke 2013). The plate from Berlin, however, does not draw on Watteau. Its model is a drawing kept at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (see http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O892090/a-courtier-pouring-wine-for-drawing/), or, more likely, a copperplate engraving in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum 2017; Weiß 2017, no. 48; Fig. 2). Conceived and executed by Bernard Picart (1673–1733) and first distributed in 1708 by the Paris-based publisher Gaspard Duchange (1662–1757), the motif became so popular that its transfer to porcelain was quite common, as examples from Germany illustrate (Ducret 1972, 96).

Following Picart's invention quite closely, three figures dominate the scene on the plate: a winged Amor holding up a torch and a male-female couple whom the boyish god guides to the island called Cythera—the mythical birthplace of Amor's mother, Venus, and presumably the isle seen in the background of this depiction. In the early eighteenth century, the departure to Cythera was understood as a search for a utopian place of love and requited love (Cowart 2001; Dickhaut 2014), here visualized mainly by the intense exchange of gazes, but also by the cavalier offering a drink from a bottle gourd and the lady accepting it. Other elements remind us of the fact that the concept of Cytherian love originally meant prudent love, that is, a love balancing carnal and spiritual desires. The coats and the walking sticks indicate that the three travelers are pilgrims, while the torch raised by Amor and the church-like building on the island make it clear that their undertaking can only be accomplished in matrimony (Held 1985, 7–8, 61; Dickhaut 2014, 321). At the same time, while travelling from one medium to the other, the motif underwent minor but important changes: In Picart's drawing, the woman uses a scallop shell (like the ones on the hat and coats) as a drinking vessel, which confirms that she is taking part in a pilgrimage. In the engraving, the scallop shell is replaced with a vulva-shaped snail shell, which underscores the phallic appearance of the approaching bottle gourd and thus foregrounds the sexual aspects of the journey—anticipating the trivialization of the concept of Cytherian love as libertine seduction in the late eighteenth century and beyond (Dickhaut 2014, 325–326). On the plate, however, the cup is neither a snail nor a scallop shell, but an unidentifiable and therefore neutral container, which significantly reduces the sexual allusion.

When considering the object as a whole, we find that the notion of travelling—and seduction—is not limited to the depicted subject of two pilgrims about to embark to the utopian island of love. The familiar composition clearly originated in Europe, but the plate itself was molded and decorated

Figure 2: Bernard Picart: *Pelerins de l'Isle de Cithere*, 1708. Etching, h. 9.6 cm, b. 12.9 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1921-273.

in China. Being one of an uncountable number of export pieces, it is evidence of the porcelain craze that first took hold in Europe in the seventeenth century. While desperately attempting to get behind the secrets of porcelain production, shiploads of the so-called 'white gold' were imported from China (and, to a certain extent, from Japan), making Chinese sellers and Dutch traders wealthy. In order to fulfil the wishes of their clients at home, European merchants provided the artists at Jingdezhen and other centers of porcelain production with books and prints (Howard and Ayers 1978, vol. I). These obviously included Duchange's reproduction of Picart's pilgrimage.

As it happened, the situation began to change the same year Picart's print was published. In 1708, Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682–1719) and Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus (1651–1708) finally succeeded in producing hard porcelain in a European laboratory. Just two years later, Augustus II the Strong (1670–1733), the Saxon Elector and King of Poland, founded the first European manufacture in Meissen that, starting around 1720, was followed by numerous other production sites, including in Vienna (1718), Stockholm (1726), and Doccia near Florence (1735). In other words, when the plate with the image of pilgrims to Cythera left a Chinese kiln between 1730 and 1735 (or possibly about ten years later), the production of porcelain was no longer an Asian arcanum. Nevertheless, the import of porcelain from China continued to play a vital role, as the output of the European workshops was not sufficient to satisfy market demands and artists in Europe looked for models to copy or, indeed, outdo. Because

the Chinese had the advantage of a tradition of more than a thousand years, the objective of surpassing the quantity and quality of their production was not easy to achieve. Though a piece of mass production, the plate showing pilgrims to Cythera illustrates this: The porcelain is thin enough to let light through; the color palette is elegantly confined to black, gold, and various shades of iron red; and the paint is applied as gently as possible—features which evoke a sense of rococo-ish lightness and playfulness.

At the same time, though, the subtlety of the painted scene in terms of sexual allusions may be attributable to the fact that the Chinese artist did not appreciate the subject in all its dimensions. What is much more noteworthy is that the artist, intentionally or not, combined his European model with Chinese elements such as the boats, the roof of the church-like building, and, most of all, the delicately dabbed-on leaves of the trees. This creates a 'Chinese' setting of sorts for the scene as a whole, suggesting that the utopian island of Cythera is now no longer found in the Mediterranean but much further east, in China. On the production side, such a subversion of the subject by translocating it is unlikely to have been deliberate. As mentioned, pieces such as the plate showing pilgrims to Cythera were mass produced for the delectation of European clients, and the painter most likely did not care about the spiritual or physical nuances of the concept of the Cytherian love. In this sense, there is good reason to classify the work as an europerie (‣**Europerie**), a neologism coined by Bruno Kisch in 1937 to describe—primarily but not exclusively—the adaptation of European styles and motifs in Chinese porcelain production intended for sale overseas. In terms of reception, however, the combination of a well-known European topic with a Chinese setting may have resulted in a conflation of the two. And this may, indeed, have been quite meaningful to customers in the West, if we keep in mind that Voltaire (1694–1778) and others idealized the so-called Middle Kingdom as a utopian place where all the shortcomings of their own societies had long been overcome.

From an even larger transcultural perspective, a plate such as the one showing pilgrims to Cythera reveals the mutuality and complexity of exchange processes, especially during the period when both the Europeans and the Chinese frequently appropriated and re-appropriated motifs as well as techniques from one another. This is especially evident in the use of ornaments and color: As we learn from a January 1722 letter written by the Jingdezhen-based Jesuit François Xavier d'Entrecolles (Yin Hongxu, 1664–1741), the Chinese were unsuccessfully experimenting with black painted decoration (d'Entrecolles 1843, 316). Around the same time, a technique of black-enamel painting called *schwarzlotmalerei* was developed in Europe, that German *hausmaler* preferably used on white wares imported from China rather than on porcelain from the newly established factory in Meissen. Presumably, those hybrids (‣**Hybridity**) were sent back to Guangzhou in order to be copied by Chinese painters, although the technique was perfected—and adopted for *chine de commande*—only later as a direct result of the Viennese du Paquier period (1719–1744). Yet another

feature of the du Paquier manufacture was the decorative border of *laub- und bandelwerk*, which was based on two series of engravings by Paul Decker (1677–1713). Continually modified and varied, its main elements were strapwork, palmettes, trelliswork cartouches or foliate scrolls (Le Corbeiller 1974, 68). In the case of the plate from the Kunstgewerbemuseum, the strapwork is supplemented by little cornucopias and a golden shepherd border.

Looking not just at *encre de chine* pieces (see Howard and Ayers 1978, vol. II, no. 354; Goldsmith Phillips 1956, 137) but also at polychrome examples showing the same Cytherian arrangement (see Beurdeley 1962, no. 122; Howard and Ayers 1978, vol. II, no. 353; Jörg 1989, no. 80; Litzenburg 2003, no. 155), a similar argument may be made. Today, the correct name for this type of decoration is *famille rose*, a term that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century (Jacquemart and Le Blant 1862, 77–78) to distinguish a color palette dominated by different shades of pink, white, and yellow from an earlier one (the so-called green family or *famille verte*). Used from around 1720 on, the Chinese called this new palette *yangcai*, meaning "foreign colors", most likely in reference to the fact that the craftsmen at the Imperial kilns developed the recipes for their new tints in collaboration with Jesuit missionaries (Kerr 2000). Taking all this into account, europeries like the polychrome and *encre de chine* plates showing pilgrims to Cythera cannot be dismissed as merely copying figural motifs and lavish ornaments, but also need to be understood as sharing technical expertise such as the invention and application of new painting techniques—which had tremendous impact on Chinese taste as well. Therefore, the history of (export) porcelain should be written as a multi-layered history or as entangled histories (‣**Entangled Histories**) linked primarily by economic interests. Nonetheless, the history of the elaborately decorated plate from the Kunstgewerbemuseum Berlin and all related pieces in other collections throughout Europe and the United States is not just about selling tableware, but also about scientific inquiry, artistic rivalry, and a utopian idea of love, with the latter at the same time showing the limits of such mutual exchange processes.

Figures

Fig. 1: © SMB, Kunstgewerbemuseum, Dietmar Katz.
Fig. 2: © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

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PART III

Building Transcultural Modernity

Figure 1: Erich Mendelsohn, Weizmann House, 1934–1936, Rehovot, Israel, exterior view.

Sonja Hull

The Weizmann House: Staging the Nation-Building Process of Israel

Abstract In 1934, Chaim Weizmann, the President of the Zionist Organization and later first President of Israel, commissioned Erich Mendelsohn (1887–1953) to build his residence on a hilltop in Rehovot, a small-town southeast of Tel Aviv. The Weizmann House served not only as a private home, but also as a stage for formal and social gatherings and has now found its place in the nation's history. Erich Mendelsohn, a German-Jewish architect, strove for an architectural language adapted to the specific environment, combining local building traditions with the paradigms of modern Western architecture. Mendelsohn's design for the Weizmann House illustrates most clearly his proposition of an East-West synthesis.

Keywords Architecture, 20th century, Nation building, Cultural transfer, Israel

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The Weizmann House stands isolated on a hilltop in Rehovot, a small town southeast of Tel Aviv that, in the 1930s, was surrounded by orange plantations and offered an unobstructed view of the Mediterranean Sea to the west and the Judean Mountains to the east. A sketch by Erich Mendelsohn (1887–1953), its German-Jewish architect, reconstructs the path of a visitor to the house from four perspectives—each accompanied by descriptions of the visitor's point of view: "street ascending to the house," "in the curve before the house entrance," "in front of the house," and "the loop"—pointing to the careful calculation of perspective. The building is presented to the visitor, who is ascending along a meandering path, from all sides—as if it were a sculpture on a pedestal. As a result of the constantly changing viewpoint of the observer, a dynamic tension is created during their approach.

The private residence of Chaim Weizmann was built between 1934 and 1936. Weizmann, head of the World Zionist Organization, commissioned Mendelsohn not just with the planning of the building but also with the design of the surrounding landscape. This gave Mendelsohn the freedom to steer the approaching view. The property was acquired in April 1934 at the urging of Vera Weizmann, the wife of Chaim Weizmann, who was the driving force behind the project. She was well aware of the value of the property due to its exceptional location: "I was buying the view" (Weizmann, V. 1967, qtd. in Heinze-Mühleib 1986, 91).

Erich Mendelsohn had already achieved international recognition for his work when the political events in Germany forced him to leave Berlin in 1933.[1] He subsequently lived and practiced in London and Jerusalem until he finally emigrated to the United States in 1941. Previously established relationships to influential Jewish emigrants, such as Chaim Weizmann and Salman Schocken, secured Mendelsohn his first commissions in Palestine. The client's social standing determined the representative character of the Weizmann House, which therefore must be seen not just as a private home, but as the residence of a Zionist leader. The representative function only increased after Weizmann became president of the newly founded state of Israel in 1949 and the house came to serve as the presidential residence. The originally intended—and later projected—significance and especially the highly symbolic role the building was destined to assume in the nation-building process (‣**Nation**) are illustrative of the building's unique biography. A closer look at the building's architectural characteristics will further clarify how Mendelsohn's design concept of an "East-West

1 A frequent point of reference for Mendelsohn's architecture is one of his first commissions, the Einstein Tower in Potsdam, Germany (1919). A series of department stores built in the 1920s in Stuttgart, Chemnitz, and Nuremberg for the German-Jewish businessman Salman Schocken incorporate design principles for which Mendelsohn would gain recognition: Dynamic tensions achieved by streamlined facades respond to the urban surroundings, and a functional arrangement of the interior layout ensures efficient utilization of space.

Figure 2: Erich Mendelsohn, Weizmann House, 1934–1936, Rehovot, Israel, inner courtyard with swimming pool.

synthesis" is realized in reference to the location and how this specific form of cultural transfer (‣**Cultural Transfer**, ‣**East / West**) paved the way for the Weizmann House to become part of Israel's national history.

At the time, the only buildings in the immediate vicinity of the residence were the Agricultural College and the Daniel Sieff Research Institute, which was founded in 1934 by Chaim Weizmann and came to be known as the *Weizmann Institute* after 1949. Both buildings were also erected according to designs by Mendelsohn (Zevi 1999, 271–272). Beyond the representational function of the residence, landscape and climate were thus the only two external factors of relevance for the design. The walls of the U-shaped building are composed of whitewashed interlocked blocks of stone which are arranged symmetrically around the open courtyard. A utility wing attached to the northeast corner of the house breaks with the otherwise strict symmetry of the compound but is cleverly hidden from the eyes of the approaching visitor. The axis of symmetry runs from east to west and opens the inner courtyard towards the west, allowing the coastal winds to circulate within. The courtyard is flanked by two single-story wings that, together with the covered terrace to the west, obstruct the view of the inner courtyard, thus giving the building a closed and introverted character. The inner courtyard with pool is the cooling center of the house and all rooms have large windows opening to it. At the same time, the external walls prevent direct exposure to the sun. Small oculi windows rhythmically structure the facade and create a dialogue between openness and closure, providing ventilation, natural lighting, and views without exposing the interior to climatic conditions or revealing it to the surroundings (see Fig. 2).

The spiral staircase at the center of the building visibly extends beyond the height of the building, introducing a vertical axis. The verticality of the semi-cylindrical stairwell is further reinforced by vertical slats that shade the interior from the sun's glare and at the same time turn the central stairwell into an iconic design element; during the day they create a decorative light pattern inside and at night the experience is reversed, as a crown of emanating light rays adorns the hilltop building. This element was new to Mendelsohn's work and appears here for the first time on the exterior of a private residential house, pointing to its intended representational character. The semi-circular motif of the stairwell is taken up again on the opposite east side of the building in a half-round bay window on the second floor. The generously proportioned rooms on the ground floor, the large entrance and dining areas and, flanking the inner courtyard, a library and living room contrast with the small private rooms on the upper floor. In planning the building, Mendelsohn placed great emphasis on minimizing the size of the private rooms, yet without neglecting the comfort and individuality of the inhabitants. This design principle is already evident in the planning of his own house *Am Rupenhorn* in Berlin (Mendelsohn 1931). The symbolic function of the Weizmann House as the political and social stage of the President of the Zionist Organization—and later President of Israel—is reflected in its overall design, particularly in the floor plan and the towering staircase.

The oculi, discussed earlier as an adaptation to climatic conditions, are particularly striking design elements. The circular shape of these windows may be seen as symbolically charged. The similarity to the portholes of large ships is obvious. Additional features reinforce this symbolism: The single-story wings flanking the inner courtyard appear like the hull of a ship and the staircase towering over the rest of the building like the ship's bridge. How is this symbolism to be interpreted? At the time, ship motifs were a common modernist design element, often referring to machine aesthetics and futuristic thinking. But in this case a different motivation is more likely. A ship implies movement. On the one hand, this points to Mendelsohn's design principle of dynamism and, on the other, to the movement of the Jewish people. The majority of Jewish immigrants came by ship to Palestine or *Eretz Israel*, as the area was also called by the Jewish inhabitants—the land of their salvation. The ship can be seen as a metaphor precisely for that intermediate state of limbo between departure and arrival (Heinze-Greenberg 1999, 251).

Mendelsohn who, like most German Zionists, was a follower of the strand of cultural Zionism advocated by Martin Buber in opposition to political Zionism, did not believe in the viability of a Jewish state, but was concerned about the identity crisis of modern Judaism. Martin Buber explains in his early writings that the "great spiritual traditions" of the Orient would balance out Western excesses of materiality and that the Jews serve as mediators for this mission (Nitzan-Shiftan 1996, 164). This statement serves as a basis for the East-West synthesis subsequently

professed by Mendelsohn. In his travels to Palestine, Mendelsohn was fascinated with the architecture of the organically formed Arab villages (Heinze-Greenberg and Stephan 2004, 87) and analyzed cultural traditions in depth, an approach rejected by many Zionist architects (notably those associated with the "Tel Aviv Chug"). Mendelsohn's designs in Palestine in the 1930s combine the adaptation to climatic conditions and local traditions with contemporary advances in Western building technologies. The Weizmann House embodies this synthesis. The building's calm and introverted character owing to the closed wall surfaces and its static, cubic character are a result of this leitmotif. During his time in Palestine, Erich Mendelsohn aspired to create a new architectural language adapted to the specific environment and combining local building traditions with the paradigms of modern Western architecture. In a pamphlet titled *Palestine and the World of Tomorrow*, Mendelsohn writes: "Palestine of today is symbolizing the union between the most modern civilization and the most antique culture. It is the place where intellect and vision, matter and spirit meet. In the arrangement commanded by this union, both Arabs and Jews, both members of the Semitic family, should be equally interested" (Whittick 1956, 132).

Mendelsohn was not alone in this architectural approach. The German architect Bruno Taut, in his book *Lessons on Architecture*, which he wrote while in exile in Istanbul in 1937, similarly claimed that a building could at the same time be "modern" and "traditional" and that common fashions can be overcome only if local preconditions are taken into account (Taut 1937, 61, 184). Mendelsohn always saw himself first and foremost as an architect and put his profession above everything else (Heinze-Greenberg and Stephan 2004, 124). Because he emigrated to the United States in 1941 and never returned to Palestine, Mendelsohn ended up playing a minor role in the nation-building process of Israel where opposing ideals soon gained prevalence. In the 1950s and 1960s, in particular, architecture was used to reinforce the progressive image of the Zionist state. Redeeming the soil and building the land were means to engineer a new society for the people. Modernism in Israel during the 1920s and 1930s must be seen as a pluralistic movement. Labels later used to describe it, such as *Bauhaus* or *International Style*, fail to account for the diversity of architectural approaches to building in the new surroundings. The absence of a shared Jewish visual heritage in the Diaspora and the lack of an immediate past or local Jewish culture gave rise to a variety of architectural approaches against a self-chosen backdrop. Just as there are multiple strands of Zionism, it is important to recognize the multiple forms of modernity. Any discussion of modern architecture in this time and space must also grapple with history and ideology.

As the residence of the President of the Zionist Organization and later first President of Israel, the Weizmann House served not just as a private home but also as a stage for formal and social gatherings. Unlike many other buildings built by Mendelsohn during his years in Palestine, the

Weizmann House has found its place in the nation's history and is preserved as a public memorial and museum open to visitors.[2] Children's tours dealing with "numerous topics, such as the symbols of the State of Israel, the institution of the Presidency, and the importance of education and science" (Weizmann House 2017) are offered at the site, thus continuing the building's narrative as a center of Israeli national identity.

Mendelsohn's design for the Weizmann House illustrates most clearly his demand for a dialogue with and adaptation to the *genius loci* and surroundings. His proposition of an East-West synthesis is an attempt to bridge the gap between biblical Palestine and the modern Western world. Different architectural languages are juxtaposed. A tension between introversion and openness is created: a sculptural volume defined by closed walls punctured by purposefully placed windows is contrasted with the interior view of an airy, open courtyard dominated by the monumental stairwell. A deliberate steering of the gaze is involved in creating such a work of art. Mendelsohn himself said about House Weizmann: "It is a house absolutely of our time, [...] and yet adapted as a residence in a subtropical climate. This, I feel, is a type of home which will again, after two thousand years, become popular throughout the Orient, as it was when Judea was a Roman Province" (interview in the Evening Standard, July 31, 1937, Heinze-Mühleib 1986, 112).

Figure

Fig. 1–2: © bpk / Kunstbibliothek, SMB.

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2 By contrast, the private residence of Salman Schocken in Jerusalem, which was built at the same time as the Weizmann House in 1934–1936, has been converted beyond recognition.

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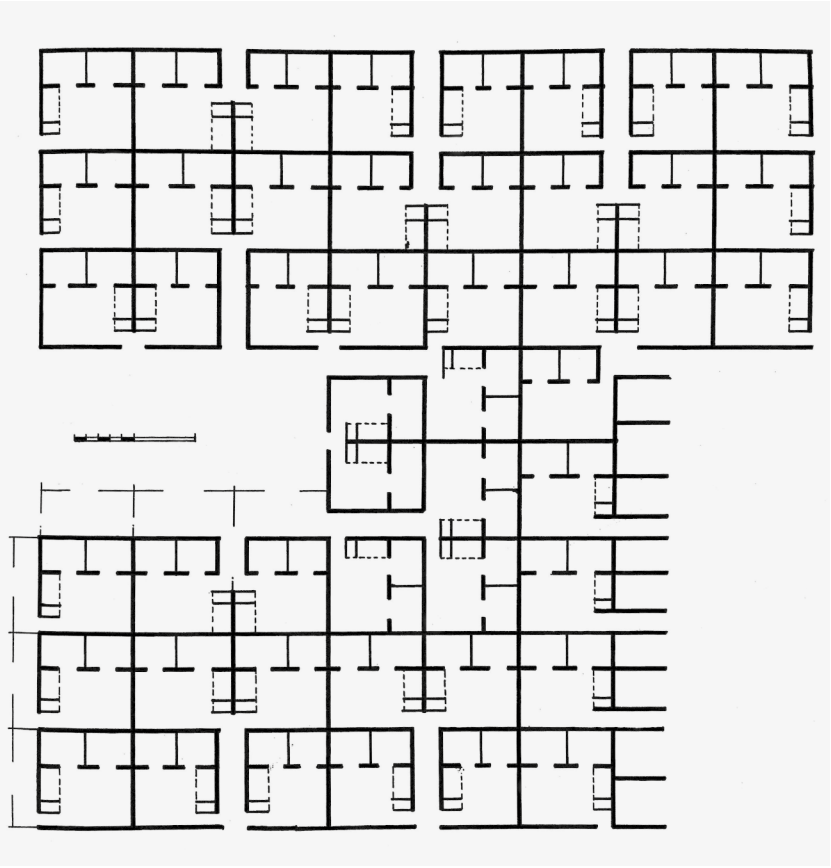

Figure 1: A sketch of Écochard’s grid.

Cristiana Strava

Critical Appropriations of Modernity: Michel Écochard's 8 by 8 Meter Housing Grid, Hay Mohammadi, Casablanca

Abstract Using an object ethnography approach, in this chapter I focus on an emblematic colonial planning and housing instrument designed by the head of the urban planning service in 1950s Morocco. Combining attention to historical and transnational dimensions with the ethos of ethnographic work, I unravel the conditions behind the grid's design, materialization, transnational circulation, and later appropriation and rich transformation in the hands of its eventual inhabitants. As such, my intention is to explore and illuminate the contributions of multiple actors and to shed light on the complicated entanglements between emblematic colonial materialities and the postcolonial lives grafted onto them.

Keywords Appropriation, Margins, Morocco, Modernism, Object Ethnography

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In the 1950s, Casablanca's *bidonvilles* (slums) became the birthplace of a new architectural wave that caught the imagination of a group of young architects coming out of the *Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne* and transformed the city's margins into a canvas for utopian fantasies that contested the conventional norms of high modernism. Built on the gaping holes of a colonial era quarry, Hay Mohammadi (formerly known as *Carrière Centrale*) played a central part in these developments, and later became known as a mythical neighborhood in the history of Morocco through its association with revolutionary colonial housing schemes and decades of post-independence political abuse and social struggle.

Home to North Africa's oldest and once largest slum, Hay Mohammadi served as a 'laboratory' for this experimentation with new urban planning and architectural forms just as anti-colonial sentiment and local labor unions were exerting increasing pressure on the French authorities (Rabinow 1989). One of several celebrated projects, the 8 by 8 meter grid designed by Michel Écochard as an urban planning concept for the reorganization of the growing *bidonvilles* was widely acclaimed at the time for the way it addressed a "problem of technique and of conscience for France" (Écochard 1950, 6). Each plot would replace the slum dwellings with a standard two-room home arranged around an open patio projected to accommodate one family.

This essay takes an object ethnography (‣**Object ethnographies**) approach in unraveling the conditions behind the grid's design, materialization, transnational circulation, and later appropriation (‣**Appropriation**) and transformation in the hands of its eventual inhabitants. As such, the intention in the brief space allowed is to explore and illuminate the contributions of multiple actors—local and transnational—and to shed light on the complicated entanglements between emblematic colonial materialities and the postcolonial lives grafted onto them (‣**Decolonizing**).

Born in France at the turn of the twentieth century, Michel Écochard (1905–1985) was a prolific architect and urban planner, practicing in places like Syria and Lebanon (1931–1944), Pakistan (1953–1954), and French West Africa (1959–1963), before and after his Moroccan post. His life and work have been the subject of several studies (see Verdeil 2012; de Mazieres 1985), the most thorough of which argues that Écochard was a representative figure of a new class of international 'urban experts' that was formed on the African continent between the 1950s and 1970s (Avermaete 2010a).

During his brief tenure in Morocco (1947–1953), Écochard experimented with a new approach to urban planning that led to the large-scale creation of new housing estates based on his standard 8 by 8 meter *trame* (grid). Elaborating on Le Corbusier's principle of "housing for the greatest number," Écochard rejected the mechanistic concept of "*machine à habiter*" and instead proposed a design for an "urban tissue" that would "invite appropriation," allow for transformations, foresee demographic growth, and evolve into a community over time (Écochard 1955b; Avermaete 2010b, 155).

Drawing on ethnological research about Moroccan settlements that had been gathered by the colonial apparatus but also from qualitative studies of the existing slums (cf. Berque 1959), Écochard advocated a solution based on 'neighborhood units,' each of which could house up to 1,800 inhabitants—a significant number for an administration that was trying to deal with a growing *bidonville* population. This was a particularly acute problem in Hay Mohammadi, whose population of 56,667 made it the densest *bidonville* in the country at the time (Écochard 1955a). Each neighborhood unit would be contained inside the housing grid composed of 8 by 8 meter plots or 'cells' (see Fig. 1), which could theoretically allow for multiple arrangements and combinations (Eleb 2000, 57). Loosely inspired in this way by the vernacular architecture of rural Moroccan homes,[1] this design can also be seen as an oblique way of helping 'mediate' the transition from a rural mode of life to an industrial urban existence, and making it easier for Moroccans to "acclimate to modernity" (cf. Cohen and Eleb 2002, 320–321).

Écochard's grid became widely celebrated at the time in international forums such as *Architecture Moderne* for the manner in which it was seen to incorporate local typologies with what were considered modern, universal standards of space, hygiene, rest, education, and work (Smithson and Smithson 1955; Cohen and Eleb 2002). Many commentators at the time hoped the concepts developed in Morocco would travel to France where they could invigorate ideas about urban life and its organization, and it could be argued that the architecture of the French *banlieues* indeed owes much to these early colonial experiments (von Osten 2010). Écochard did, in fact, export the conceptual ideas of "housing for the greatest number" and the formal design of the grid as part of later commissions for developing refugee housing in Karachi (1953) and a master plan for a 'modernized' Dakar (1963) (Avermaete 2010a).

As these later uses of the grid demonstrate, the ability of the design to articulate solutions to 'potentially volatile' populations such as slum dwellers or refugees was a central feature of its popularity. Developed at a time of growing anti-colonial unrest in Morocco, the grid and its power to order and control both space and people cannot be divorced from its local political context. Although Écochard never mentioned the political situation in his writings, he could not have been oblivious to it, and architecture historians argue that he rather saw his role as that of a humanist technocrat, paving the way for further development (Eleb 2000; Avermaete 2010b). Moroccan architect Aziza Chaouni seems to agree with this evaluation, emphasizing the fact that it was Écochard himself who pushed the colonial administration to act on the issue of housing for the local population (2011,

1 The vernacular movement in architecture garnered international attention in 1964 with Bernard Rudofsky's *Architecture without Architects,* which glorified the genius of builders who knew how to translate the "traditional" circumstances of their communities into built form. See also Sibyl Moholy-Nagy 1957, and John F. C. Turner 1977.

Figure 2: Rooftop view of the appropriated grid.

62–63). It is clear, however, that such humanist ideals existed alongside an increasing depoliticization of urban planning practices, as Écochard and his team never questioned colonialism as such, only its neglect of 'indigenous populations.'

Unanimously hailed as visionary at the time, almost seventy years later the buildings are particularly poised to illuminate questions about transculturation, as they can be seen both figuratively and literally as archives of the rich transformations and accumulations of a unique contact zone (‣**Expanded Contact Zone**). Specifically, the case of the Hay Mohammadi developments is considered to be an exceptional example of a transcultural movement in architecture, or what Tom Avermaete has termed "another modernism" (2005), that, in contrast to the universalist agenda of high modernism, took as its inspiration not only 'traditional' North African built forms but also the messy, contingent architecture of slums. The housing estates the grid gave birth to, it was hoped, could breed a new society, neither French nor African.

As the families originally re-housed in the grid dwellings grew and socio-economic conditions for the working class worsened in the years following independence, the grid began to develop vertically. The spaces above the open patios were gradually covered to allow for the building of further floors, each new level indexing a new generation in the history of the neighborhood's demographic expansion. Colorful window shutters and networks of clotheslines now animate the once sparse (see Fig. 2), blank white walls of Écochard's geometric designs. Interiors have been equally transformed in response to personal and economic necessity (see

Figure 3: Domestic interiors in the appropriated grid.

Fig. 3). Satellite dishes mushroomed on both the roofs and the buildings' façades, as the grid developed into a palimpsest and archive of the community's growth.

However, the recovery of Écochard's legacy and designs during the late twentieth century as part of emerging trans-national heritage-making discourses and practices has moved away from an appreciation of such contingencies and chosen to evade questions about the structural conditions which have led to the complete appropriation (‣**Appropriation**) and transformation of the original grid dwellings. The architectural sketch of the grid and its aura have been and continue to be powerfully deployed and celebrated by various stakeholders as emblems of Casablanca's synonymous relation to modernity, frequently juxtaposed with images of urban informality as a way of pointing towards the city's fall from modernist grace.

Such dichotomous visions often emerge in the efforts of local architectural heritage preservation associations, which describe the area as an 'open-air museum' but are less inclined to give equal weight to the lived-in grid, decrying the material appropriation and transformation of the original dwellings by an historically marginalized and impoverished community (Strava 2016). But it is ultimately by paying attention to these new articulations of everyday uses and transformations of Écochard's grid that we can access deeper understandings of the historical dynamics that continue to animate such contact zones. Current inhabitants are only too aware, and frequently proud, of their neighborhood's history and heritage, yet they must also contend with the enduring effects of structural and

political violence that continues to mark everyday lives and spaces in the area (Strava 2017). As such, these buildings challenge facile understandings of heritage (‣**Heritage**) and foreground crucial issues pertaining to which types of 'contact' and 'exchange' are considered desirable by those with the institutional power to curate such questions and inspire productive approaches towards ongoing appropriations.

Figures

Fig. 1: Écochard, Michel, 1955b, p. 105. *Casablanca: Le Roman d'une Ville.*
Fig. 2–3: Collaborative photo-archive generated via a photo-voice exercise with neighbourhood inhabitants, 2014.

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PART IV

Displaying Stories in the Contact Zone

Figure 1: Installation view, photographs / mixed media, National Museum of Al Ain / Abu Dhabi, after 1973.

Eva-Maria Troelenberg

Constellations of Memory and Representation: A Lunar Sample Display in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi

Abstract This chapter looks at a wall display which was on view since the 1970s in Abu Dhabi's first national museum in the oasis town of Al Ain. Created in the aftermath of the United Arab Emirate's independence, this display combined traditional visual topoi of the Arab Peninsula with photographic and material testimonies of modernization and progress. Its historical narrative, presented as an almost 'Warburgian' image atlas, thus comprises a long history ranging from pre-Islamic times to the contemporary age of space exploration. As such, it represents a dynamic constellation of history which goes beyond the binary notions of tradition versus progress or the 'global' versus the 'local' which are often prevalent in Orientalist discourses. At the same time, it represents the region's entanglement with the fossil-driven economies of the late twentieth century.

Keywords United Arab Emirates, National Museums, Photography, Orientalism, Space

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A prominent part of the display in the main hall of the National Museum of Abu Dhabi in the oasis town of Al Ain consists of a wall featuring a remarkable mixed-media installation. It combines images of the region with a moon rock sample collected during NASA's Apollo 17 mission, which was conducted shortly after the opening of the museum in the early 1970s. Wide to the point of being panoramic, the wall that frames this display invokes a simplified version of traditional local architecture, mirroring the type of façade that can be found in many fortresses throughout the eastern parts of the Arabian peninsula and in the old Al Jahili fort of Al Ain, which once had served as a temporary home for the museum collections. This simple clay-built type of structure is characterized by crenellated exterior walls with protruding towers or buttresses. In a highly stylized interpretation of such models, the brown- veneer display wall inside the museum is horizontally framed by a cream-colored dado and top frieze and vertically structured by a symmetrical sequence of staggered wall sections. This results in a wall composition of upright rectangular fields graded against each other all in all translating architecture into a picture surface.[1] Each of the wall sections features five to six sizable black-and-white photographs showing landscapes or generic scenes of everyday life in Abu Dhabi.

According to the short captions written in Arabic and English, the photographs mostly date from the 1960s. In them, seemingly timeless representations of deserts, oases, and camel caravans alternate with obvious manifestations of modernity or contemporaneity such as infrastructural facilities (a school, a postal office), or modern means of transportation (cars and tire tracks in the sand). While not free from nostalgia, the photographs, taken in a reportage-like style, thus go beyond the common tropes of Orientalist image-making (Nochlin 1983) in that they link traditional notions to a de facto modern texture of Abu Dhabi.

Despite all efforts, it has been impossible thus far to conclusively identify the author of the photographs.[2] Regardless of this, the photo archive presented on the museum wall is to be considered part of a larger movement characterized by the documentation of changing topographies, social conditions, and heritage concepts on the Arabian Peninsula. This movement emerged in the wake of the oil boom and the ensuing economic and cultural changes around the mid-twentieth century. Hence, the photographs can be seen as an integral part of the visual language of Arab

1 In terms of method and aesthetics, this mode of presentation appears related to dioramic display cases such as those in the Hall of Asian Peoples in the Natural History Museum of New York, opened in 1980, whose effect oscillates between the neo-Orientalist and the postmodern (Bal 1992).

2 I thank Westrey Page who tapped a number of important hints and sources to resolve this issue that, in general, illuminated the cultural genesis of the museum. The fact that they did not materialize in a clear answer concerning authorship can be considered exemplary for the problems we often face when dealing with objects beyond the usual art historical canon with its clear-cut lineages and catalogues raisonées.

modernity. Both local photographers and travelers were involved in these photographic endeavors (see e.g. Pitt Rivers Museum 2011; Rashid 1997).

The photographs at the Al Ain museum are a fundamental component of the institution's narrative: they mirror the decade just before the opening of the museum in its present state in 1971. The founding of the National Museum in its current location was taken as a signal for establishing other museums throughout the Arab Emirates and may be considered an important element in the pre-history for the more recent museum and heritage 'boom' in this part of the world (Exell and Rico 2014; Nayadi 2011). It was certainly no accident that the opening of the Al Ain Museum coincided with the date the Emirates gained independence from British dominion. The period around the mid-twentieth century leading up to this caesura was crucial for the modernization of the region (see e.g. Hindelang 2016). The increasing exploitation of fossil fuels and infrastructural investments brought with them an interest in archaeological excavations and the role of cultural heritage for modern Arab identities—an interest that, as the example of this museum shows, extends as far back as the pre-Islamic period (Jahiliyya). The site of Al Ain had primarily gained attention in this context for being the location of several prehistoric burial mounds. Consequently, the earliest artefacts in the museum collection are from the Neolithic period. Yet, as the photographs show, the institution also, from the outset, looked at contemporary culture and modern means of representation. As Mohammed Amer Al Nayadi, the Director of Historical Environment at the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, explains, the museum holds a large archive of documentary photographs that serve as a memory device for local traditions and vernacular life (2011, 33)—and that likely were the source for the wall installation.

What is most interesting about the museum display, however, is that its narrative does not confine itself to the dichotomy of the global and the local, tradition and modernization, but goes a decisive step further. At the center of the wall installation, marking the location where the gateway of the historical fort it references would be, is a white surface that formally seems to be both central to and distinct from the entire structure. This surface, framed in dark brown, contains a small display case featuring a basalt stone sample collected on the Apollo 17 mission. Embedded in a translucid acrylic sphere, the fragment is mounted on a wooden plaque along with a small flag of the UAE and captions in Arabic and English, which inform the viewer about the journeys of both objects. The first caption, referring to the flag, describes the political framework, stating that it "was carried to the Moon aboard Spacecraft America during the Apollo XVII mission, December 7–19, 1972. Presented to the people of the UNITED ARAB EMIRATES From the people of the United States of America. RICHARD NIXON 1973". The second caption tells us: "This fragment is a portion of a rock from the Taurus Littrow Valley of the Moon. It is given as a symbol of the unity of human endeavor and carries with it the hope of the American people for a world at peace." The commemorative plaque is one of many:

All American states and territories as well as 135 states worldwide received a fragment of the moon rock mounted, framed and captioned in largely the same way (Wikipedia 2017; Office of Inspector General 2011, 17).

As hinted at by the date, 1973, this very prominent presentation of the lunar sample in Al Ain was likely a slightly later addition to the original layout of the museum, deliberately giving the piece pride of place over other diplomatic gifts. This assumption is further supported by a set of color photographs surrounding the lunar sample display. Arranged in a pyramid pattern, these include photos of the Apollo 17 crew right next to the showcase and, above it, images of planets, among them the famous "blue marble" shot, the first full view of the earth from outer space, taken during the Apollo 17 mission (Bredekamp 2011). The uppermost row of images, however, is dedicated to the space shuttle Discovery, specifically to Discovery's fifth flight in June 1985. The local significance of this mission is made clear by the central image, the one sitting at the top of the pyramid. It portrays two astronauts in bright blue NASA spacesuits. The two men can be identified as Sultan Salman al Saud and Abdulmohsem al Bassam. Al Saud is a member of the Saudi royal family and was the first Muslim astronaut, while al Bassam was his back-up. Al Saud participated in the Discovery mission as a so-called "payload specialist". Apart from his responsibilities as a crew member, he executed experiments and took photographs of the Arabian Peninsula from the space shuttle, which were then used for scientific purposes (Spacefacts 2016).

It would be interesting to read this historical moment of the first Muslim entering outer space against the long history of astronomy, astrology, and related traditions in Islamic culture, beginning with the idea of the meteoric origin of the black stone embedded in the Ka'aba in Mecca, and the reading of the stars, which both technically and metaphorically was an important cultural technique in many centers of Islamic civilization since the middle ages (King 2012). For the purpose of this short essay, however, I would like to focus on the immediate contemporary frame of reference provided by the display at the National Museum of Al Ain. As a whole, the presentation spells out an Arab identity between past, present and future, or between memory-making and contemporary representation. This identity-building function is reflected in the museum's motto, written over the entrance: "Whoever has no past has neither present nor future." Of course, this claim attributed to Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, emir of Abu Dhabi and first president of the independent UAE, may seem like your typical universalist truism that is to be expected from heads of states when asked to coin a motto for their national museum—just as the peaceful mission statement linked to the lunar rock sample is a staple of political rhetoric.

However, considering that the museum was founded at a crucial moment in history when the Arab Emirates gained political independence, this almost post-Warburgian combination of photo archives on a museum wall does, in fact, articulate the link between past, present, and future in a significant way. The Emirates sought to define their position within

a world order increasingly informed by an accelerating economy that was driven, not least, by the exploitation of fossil fuels, the most important resource of the region. On a global scale, the expansive, progress-oriented spirit of the age manifested itself probably most strikingly in the conquest of outer space, which was not just a technical challenge but also a continuation of the imperial age, a powerful symbol for competing agencies and power-relations. This is usually described within the framework of ideological competition on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain, where the achievements of astronautics and space technology were translated into important cultural codes and signs within rivaling philosophies of history. The generosity NASA exhibits in providing and permitting the use of images from its lunar missions is, to this day, illustrative of the degree to which these endeavors were entrenched in the representation of political agencies and power constellations (‣**Constellations**) of the late modern period (Tietenberg and Weddigen 2009, 4).

As our example shows, it is interesting to also consider the positions in between the two large geopolitical "blocks" that shaped the landscape before 1989: The museum display from the 1970s–1980s demonstrates how a rapidly emerging country such as the UAE, with its small and hitherto peripheral and colonized territory, but with enormous economic potential, defined its place in the world by responding not just to modern techniques of representation such as museum display and photography, but also to certain cultural and political codes. In the particular context of Abu Dhabi, this creates a juxtaposition or combination of two grand narratives, both of them spelled out in a relation between space and time. One is the traditional notion of the desert, associated with liberty, endlessness as well as timelessness, and the lure of the seemingly impenetrable (Bevis 2010). Those Orientalist clichés (‣**Orientalism**) are already challenged, however, by the black-and-white photographs in the display, which show deserts and oases as theatres of contemporaneity, connected to the modern world. In this context, the second narrative, the modern penetration of outer space, is therefore not a counter-narrative, but rather an almost typological analogy, a more-than-plausible linking of local Arab history to contemporary world history, and to visions for the future.

The result is not lost in a mere imitation of representational codes and media—rather, the museum display described above establishes the visual and iconographic syntax of a contact zone that speaks to the conditions of local history, its current changes at a particular point in history and its potentials for the future. As such, it might be considered an example of resilient identity-building (‣**Resilience**) at the moment of independence. From today's point of view, it has become apparent that such a position was susceptible to the enticements of teleological progressivism. Looking at the results of the "oil boom" that was to follow, with all its political and social implications, one might ask when and where ensuing developments in the Persian Gulf region reached a critical dialectic between resilient development and hyper-progressive economic growth.

On the whole, this brief case study aimed to provide insight into what might be understood as a basic constellation of modernity on the path to globalization: Spelled out between local Arab history and the universalism of an emerging "world culture," the narrative of the museum display registers far more than merely a process of "Westernization" through museum or technology (▸**East / West**). Rather, it testifies to progressive transculturalism as well as the challenges and continuing asymmetries of cultural and economic globalization.

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Figure

Fig. 1: Photo: Eva-Maria Troelenberg, 2013.

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Alison Boyd

A Modernist Display at the Barnes Foundation: Curating Formalism, Primitivism, and Democracy

Abstract The collector Albert Barnes (1872–1951) put heterogenous objects—from African sculpture to modernist paintings to utilitarian ironwork—into contact with one another by carefully composing them into art "ensembles." This chapter examines three different ways to analyze one of Barnes's ensembles. It investigates the explicit ways that Barnes used aesthetic formalism to bring together objects in his display but, also, the implicit ways that his ideas about American democracy and primitivism undergirded the relationships that he structured between not only the objects in his collection but also the people that he brought together in his galleries.

Keyword Primitivism

Boyd, Alison. 2021. "A Modernist Display at the Barnes Foundation: Curating Formalism, Primitivism, and Democracy." In *Reading Objects in the Contact Zone*, edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Anna Sophia Messner, 101–107. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 9. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing.
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In the Barnes Foundation galleries in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which were installed first in Merion, Pennsylvania from 1924–1951 and locked into place at the collector Albert Barnes's death, unexpected sets of objects are arranged in such tight proximity that the viewer must grapple with them within multiple sets of relations. Barnes understood himself, in a sense, to be doing work akin to that of an artist as he brought objects together so that each wall functioned as a carefully arranged composition. Along a wall in gallery 22, the curve of the elongated neck of a Modigliani female figure rhymes with the shape of the handle of a nineteenth-century American ladle hung parallel to it. Two Kota reliquary sculptures, two Bamana masks, and two small Picasso heads are spaced along the center of the wall, which draws attention to repetitions in surface patterns across these objects: From the grid of hatch marks on the painted figures' noses and cheeks, to the linear striations that groove the faces of the wooden masks to the series of embedded almond shapes that delineate the eyes in both the Kota sculptures and the Picasso paintings. These relations multiply through the Barnes Foundation's tightly installed displays as they link across objects from different times, places, and mediums (‣**Canon**). While Barnes was arranging the heterogeneous objects he collected, he was simultaneously bringing unexpected groups of people together in the galleries. The foundation grew out of aesthetic courses that he and his staff taught to his factory workers in the 1910s—who were primarily African-American men and white women—and he refused entry to anyone he viewed as elite, arguing that the foundation was created only for the "common man." This entry briefly examines three different modalities by which to analyze how this display "ensemble" constructs contacts between the objects: Barnes' explicit use of aesthetic formalism, but also the implicit ways that his ideas about American democracy and primitivism undergirded the relationships he structured between both objects and people in this gallery.

Lecturing in the 1920s, Barnes insisted that students analyze the formal similarities, "the merely factual appearances of things," qualities such as "color, line, light, and space" of the objects that he had arranged so carefully and intentionally (Barnes 1937, 55). He argued for a purely aesthetic approach to art that was dominant especially in Anglo-American art criticism in the early twentieth century, often termed formalism. He emphasized how this approach to art, supposedly reliant only on the sense of sight, prioritizes the viewer's experience in front of art. The gallery discussed here was intentionally designed to be small; this was both to bring the viewer close to the artworks but also to bring the artworks close to one another. It was not content (a man with a large nose; a sculptural depiction of a face) or art history (Picasso painted the heads in 1907 and they have been analyzed in terms of the development of cubism; an artist from the Mbamba group of the Kota people created the reliquaries either to be part of a shrine or for the tourist market in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century and a sculptural element of each of them was mounted on wood around 1920) that Barnes wanted us to see, but similarities in plastic form across his display.

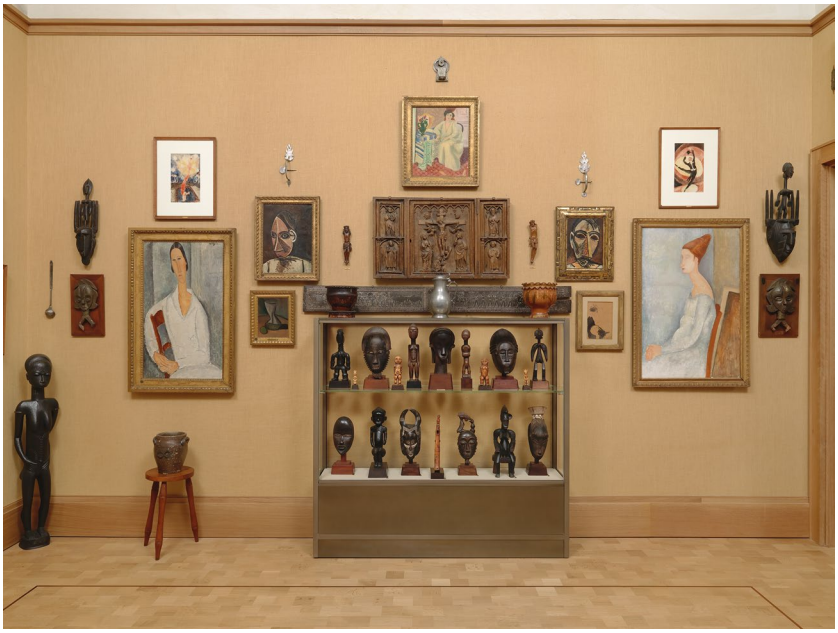

Figure 1: Barnes Foundation, ensemble view, room 22, south wall, Philadelphia, 2012.

The way Barnes placed these objects into contact with one another also depended, however, on the foundation's mission to provide democratic education based on the practices of the pragmatist philosopher, John Dewey, its first head of education. The displays, therefore, manifest some of the particular social, cultural, and political dynamics through which those pragmatic ideas about democracy arose in the United States in the 1920s.

The foundation is most famous for its collection of modern art and the displays have been criticized for being random or chaotic rather than offering a coherent concept of modernism, especially in contrast to the linear mode of display made canonical at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Barnes' solution for a modern and democratic way to display art, however, depended on there being contingent relationships between objects, whereby it was the viewer's job to discover associations between them. Barnes grafted John Dewey's philosophy—that to create democratic citizens you needed to provide an open-ended education based on experiential learning—onto his own formalist aesthetic method. He believed that a student who "learned how to see" in his galleries could approach all of life with that same highly attuned critical awareness. According to the mission statement, the foundation was for "people who are ordinarily considered to be barred, by their race or station in life, from participation in any but mechanical and servile activities." The idea of democratic education was explicit in the foundation's program to educate working-class people in aesthetics with the intention that it would enable them to participate in the American project not just as laborers but as contributors to "the spiritual values in civilization" (Mullen 1925).

The promotion of democratic education can also be read more implicitly, however, in how this display itself collapses categories of high and low art. Hanging a humble iron ladle next to a Modigliani fine arts painting, a simple metal handle above a carved wooden crucifixion, or a "primitive" Bamana mask next to a Picasso can be seen as a welcoming gesture to the "common man" who, like these objects, would rarely elsewhere be found in an art gallery. Dewey wrote,

> Art is ceasing to be connected as exclusively as it was once with [...] paintings on the walls of the well-to-do. To my mind, one of the most significant phenomena of the present is recognition that art reaches into the lives of people at every point; that material wealth and comfort are in the end a form of poverty save as they are animated by what art and art alone can provide. A necessary part of this changed attitude is the breaking down of the walls that so long divided what were called the fine arts from applied and industrial arts (Dewey 1937, 95).

For Dewey, this new and "revolutionary" experience of art by a wide range of people required that they learn to engage with a more egalitarian spectrum of objects, such as those in this display.

A third modality for reading the relationships between objects on this wall, namely primitivism (**‣Primitivism**), is integral to, but also undermines, Barnes' vision for democracy in this gallery. Like democracy, primitivism was an organizing principle for how Barnes understood both people and objects to relate. Barnes collected works by primitivist artists such as those seen here by Modigliani and Picasso. More to the point though, through his display ensembles he forwarded a theory by which objects deemed "primitive," first and primarily African sculpture, could provide "joy and instruction" for artists and viewers who wanted to understand or create modern art. The foundation's catalogue, *Primitive Negro Sculpture*, which Barnes heavily edited, stated: "By 1907, the European art-world was ready to discover African Sculpture [...]. After catching the spell of its vigorous and seductive rhythms, no artist can return to academic banalities" (Guillaume and Munro 1926, 130; 134). The display makes the same argument as the catalogue. 1907 was the year that Picasso painted the two works found in this gallery, which are framed on the wall and in the vitrine below them by African sculpture. It was the same year Picasso famously described himself as being terrified by an encounter with a vitrine of African sculpture at the Trocadero museum. And the same year that Picasso painted *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon*, for which these are probably studies, and which is now widely treated as "the first unequivocal twentieth-century masterpiece, a principal detonator of the modern movement" (Richardson 1991, 465). The term "discover," with all of its connotations of colonial exploration and exploitation, as well as the market savvy of a good collector, is also significant.[1] African sculpture ensconced in this display was intended to act as proof of the genius of modern artists like Picasso who "discovered" it and Barnes' understanding of its significance to modern art, and as a pedagogical tool for the viewer to be able to have a similar insight.

The idea that primitive art could provide "joy and instruction," however, was not limited to the objects in the collection but also mapped onto how people at the foundation were understood to relate to one another. Barnes spoke of his African-American students/workers as aesthetically and spiritually inspiring in terms that paralleled the role he assigned to the African objects in the collection.

> For twenty-five years I worked side by side with a group of Negros in a chemical laboratory, and I learned that I could depend upon them to do well what they should do, and I nearly always had the added aesthetic pleasure of seeing them make a vivid drama out of the task. If we learn the lesson that the obvious fact needed to give interest and color to our prosaic civilization is precisely the poetry

1 For a critical analysis of this rhetorical construction in which modern Western artists "discovered" so-called primitive, folk, or indigenous arts, see Gikandi 2003 and Mitter 2008.

> and drama which the Negro actually lives every day, it is incredible that we should not consent to form a working alliance with him for the development of a richer life [...] (Barnes 1936, 386).

Barnes' paternalistic and demeaning impulse to see African Americans as "artists in living" (Barnes 1924) who brought color to modern American society functioned according to the same logic in which Barnes wrote that African sculpture provided a new "stimulus" and "access to energy" for modern European art (Barnes and De Mazia 1933, 16); and it reveals a fundamental hierarchy inherent in his notion of democratic education. Both African Americans as people and African sculpture as objects were treated as catalysts rather than as equal and equivalent actors at the foundation (‣**Agency**).

Barnes believed that bringing "primitive" and "folk" arts into relation with both his modern art collection and his ancient art and old master paintings would encourage a more open and democratic vision. At the same time, primitive and folk remained categories that were defined by and for a narrowly imagined subset of modern Western artists. A lineage of Western fine arts remained central to the foundation's narrative even when Barnes and his colleagues were challenging it. In this way, although Barnes invited previously marginalized arts into the collection, it was to put them in the service of a particular Western modern art and vision in ways that erased their own specificity (‣**Appropriation**). Analyzing this ensemble according to the multiple ways it put objects into contact with one another can, therefore, also show us the shortcomings of Barnes' promotion of democracy and a socially engaged modernism in the 1920s–1940s. His insistent idealistic assertion of the terms "democracy" and "modernism" papered over differences in how objects—and by extension people—were unevenly positioned according to their identities in his own galleries and the United States more broadly.

Figure

Fig. 1: Photo: © 2020 The Barnes Foundation.

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Figure 1: Installation view of *Prehistoric Rock Pictures in Europe and Africa*, April 28th to May 30th, 1937. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Westrey Page

Translating Prehistory: Empathy and Rock Painting Facsimiles in the New York Museum of Modern Art

Abstract Taking the 1937 MoMA exhibition "Prehistoric Rock Pictures in Europe and Africa" as its starting point, this chapter examines how Alfred H. Barr's exhibitionary practice interacted with the cultural theory of German ethnologist Leo Frobenius to render images of a pluralistic Otherness—here referring to cultures and people distanced by time, geography, or both simultaneously—empathetically accessible. This empathetic engagement—both in the galleries and in the translation of rock art in the field—is investigated as an approximating strategy that has deeper ramifications for the object in the contact zone.

Keywords Leo Frobenius, Alfred H. Barr, MoMA, Facsimile, Copying, Prehistoric Rock Painting, Othering, Translation, Empathy

Page, Westrey. 2021. "Translating Prehistory: Empathy and Rock Painting Facsimiles in the New York Museum of Modern Art." In *Reading Objects in the Contact Zone*, edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Anna Sophia Messner, 108–115. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 9. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.766.c10411

In 1937, the New York Museum of Modern Art exhibited over 150 rock painting facsimiles[1] produced by field painters accompanying the expeditions of German ethnologist Leo Frobenius (1873–1938). Although similar copies had been displayed in museums across Europe, this exhibition, entitled "Prehistoric Rock Pictures in Europe and Africa,"[2] had the unique touch of Alfred H. Barr (1902–1981), the MoMA director at the time. This essay considers how Barr's exhibitionary practice interacted with Leo Frobenius' cultural theory to render images of a pluralistic 'Otherness' (‣**Othering**)—here referring to cultures and people distanced by time, geography, or both simultaneously—empathetically accessible. This empathetic engagement not only permeated the galleries of the MoMA, but also the translation of rock art in the field, and it emerges as an approximating strategy that has deeper ramifications for the object in the contact zone.

The art historical cornerstone of Alfred H. Barr's 'white cube' formalism emphasized, as he claimed, the "comparison of various artistic experiences," which pared down contextualization to enhance aestheticization (Meyer 2013, 160–162). This photograph illustrates how the 1937 exhibition exemplified this method: With little background information, intimate lighting, no frames and no copyist attribution, the facsimiles nearly became the rock walls themselves. The monumental copies shown here were of paintings in Southern Rhodesia, today Zimbabwe. The Mtoko cave scene—to the right—exhibits layers of actors and activity, coordinated according to some inaccessible logic, while the copy from Makumbe on the left seemingly picks up the darkly shaded, compacted cylindrical forms in this 'procession' and magnifies them in their own kind of floating sequence. The black, padded seating before the expansive canvases provided a point to pause and wonder at these formal properties, enabling the moment to experience and compare them, as Barr desired, with modernist works.

In coordination with the exhibition, the fourth floor of the MoMA displayed modernist artists—among them Paul Klee, Hans Arp, and Joan Miró—and Federal Art Project facsimiles of Native American pictographs from California.[3] The sheer vastness of time and space thus placed in dialogue, the 'artworks' (or rather their originals) spanning three continents and 30,000 years, further contributed to the nearly sacred atmosphere of the galleries. In the opening of the exhibition's catalogue, Barr wrote of the "deeper and more general magic" emanating from the facsimiles of prehistoric art, how they evoked a "familiar atmosphere of antediluvian first things, a strenuous Eden" (Museum of Modern Art 1937, 9–10). The copies additionally exuded a Romantic aesthetic, using mixed techniques

1 To be completely accurate, the images were facsimiles of facsimiles produced by an assistant shortly before the MoMA show; they were intended to be sold to the museum after the exhibition. See Kuba 2016.
2 For more on this exhibition see Seibert 2014, Meyer 2013, and Kuba 2016.
3 While Douglas C. Fox, Frobenius' American colleague, did most of the hanging of images with Dorothy C. Miller, Alfred H. Barr added the modernists and had set the precedent for this style in previous exhibitions.

to achieve meticulous layers of faded lines, cracks, and scratched surfaces of the rock walls, congruous with Frobenius' conception of rock paintings as energy-laden "monumental ruins" (Frobenius 1921, 124). In underlining the decontextualized expanse of time and sense of global unity, the exhibition minimized didactic specificity to augment the images' mystery and inscriptional flexibility facing an observer's empathetic gaze.

This malleability also stemmed from the approach towards images and Otherness developed by Leo Frobenius, whose admirers reflect the difficulty of placing his work along spectrums of colonizers and seemingly anti-Eurocentric thinkers of his day. Although this essay cannot thoroughly review Frobenius and his cultural theory, which he amended and contradicted, the notions of history and culture in his *Kulturmorphologie* as experiential entities and the role of images in carrying and simultaneously preserving the spirit of a culture are central to the analysis of connecting to Otherness in aestheticized yet emotionally-laden contact zones.

Frobenius held that all cultures are animate organisms, living independent of human intervention and cycling through the same life stages that its inhabitants do—infancy, young adulthood, and old age. To him, an ideal cultural researcher intuitively experiences a vast and living spectrum of feeling, tapping into the same energy that lives in the early stage of every culture but that subsists like an active sediment, emerging in later stages and prompting creativity (Kramer 1995, 98–99; Frobenius 1921, 112). In other words, within Frobenius' theory, modern subjects stand before a concept of history that is both perceptually and emotionally accessible (Stravinaki 2016). A communion is possible through the gateway of the image, and, indeed, this intimate engagement with the past is desired to revitalize the 'mechanistic' present.

A critical part of this engagement, however, rested in the 'translation' (‣**Translation**) of any given art form, which had to capture and preserve its spirit. In recalling what he once witnessed among the Baluba in Central Africa, Frobenius observed how good storytellers did not use lifeless 'literal translations' (1921, 20–21). Rather than the story being carried by lexical units, he saw that it was through evoking the intuitive listener, by engaging their soulful substance, that the story became alive and, in this sense, comprehensible. In the catalogue to the MoMA exhibition, Frobenius similarly commented on images:

> The fact remains that every picture, whether carved into the rock by prehistoric man, drawn by a child or painted by a Raphael, is alive with a certain definite spirit, a spirit with which the facsimile must be infused. (1937, 19)

Images thus also required a living, intuitive engagement from their 'translators'. Color photography, though a viable option for recording rock paintings, was rejected as a mode of capturing their essence. While there was also a practical component to this, Frobenius attacked the 'mechanistic' (as

opposed to intuitive) culture he observed in the contemporary Western world and directly likened photography to a dry and all-too rational tool for objects that were imbued with a powerful spirit. The predominantly female copyists working for Frobenius (see Fig. 2) were thus to be precise but intuitive beholders, approaching images to enliven them once again through a kind of co-experience.[4] Thus, while Barr created a decontextualizing aesthetic space, Frobenius provided translations that re-captured the 'spirit' of rock images, which at the same time presupposed an empathetic engagement as a call to greater comprehension and allowed later viewers to better bridge Otherness themselves.

Evaluating such an engagement benefits from examining the etymology of 'empathy' (‣**Empathy**), as it helps illuminate the politics of connecting with 'Otherness.' While German Romantics used the verb form to denote a harmonious "feeling-into" with nature, the *Einfühlung* ('empathy') into inanimate objects was theorized in the late nineteenth century notably by Robert Vischer and Theodor Lipps, the latter of whom formulated the definition of empathy that was first translated into English in 1909. Lipps identified forms as hosting life themselves and described empathy as the "objectivated enjoyment of the self": the ego is taken with the "life potentiality" that lives in the apperceived object and infuses itself into it (1906; Mallgrave and Ikonomou 1994, 29). Empathy emerges here as an ego-driven, imperializing relation to the outside world that engenders a very particular kind of 'co-experience.'[5] Frobenius reflects an affinity for the holistic connection with nature among Romantics. But even more so, he epitomizes the common trait to formulations of empathy that Edith Stein summarized in 1917 as being given the experience of others and their internal states (Stein 1917, 7). Frobenius' theory of living, accessible cultures and his practice of achieving 'understanding' of them resonates with these stations along 'empathy's' etymology in a way that illuminates its ramifications as an approximating tool. In the context of the facsimiles, this approach collapsed epistemological distance to objects of prehistory and enabled inscription into narratives of unity, cultural similarity, or, specifically in Barr's exhibition, modernism.

The 1937 MoMA show thus conjoined two practices—Barr's formalism and Frobenius' empathetic approach to images and culture—in a way that exposed prehistoric images to appropriative gestures. Their unknowability, furthermore, pronounced in Alfred H. Barr's formalistic exhibitionary practice, intensified the intuitive, empathetic call to understanding.

4 For more on the copyists of Frobenius' expeditions, including their backgrounds and particularly the largely female composition of the team, see Seibert 2014; Kuba 2012; Stappert 2016. For more on Frobenius' ideas about gender, see Franzen, Kohl, and Recker 2011, 79; Streck 2014, 170–173.

5 Although Lipps saw empathy as having a pro-humanity character, Christiane Voss has argued that the animation or autonomy of the object in his theory is always dependent on the perceiving beholder. Voss has also used the term 'imperialistic' to describe empathy (Voss 2008).

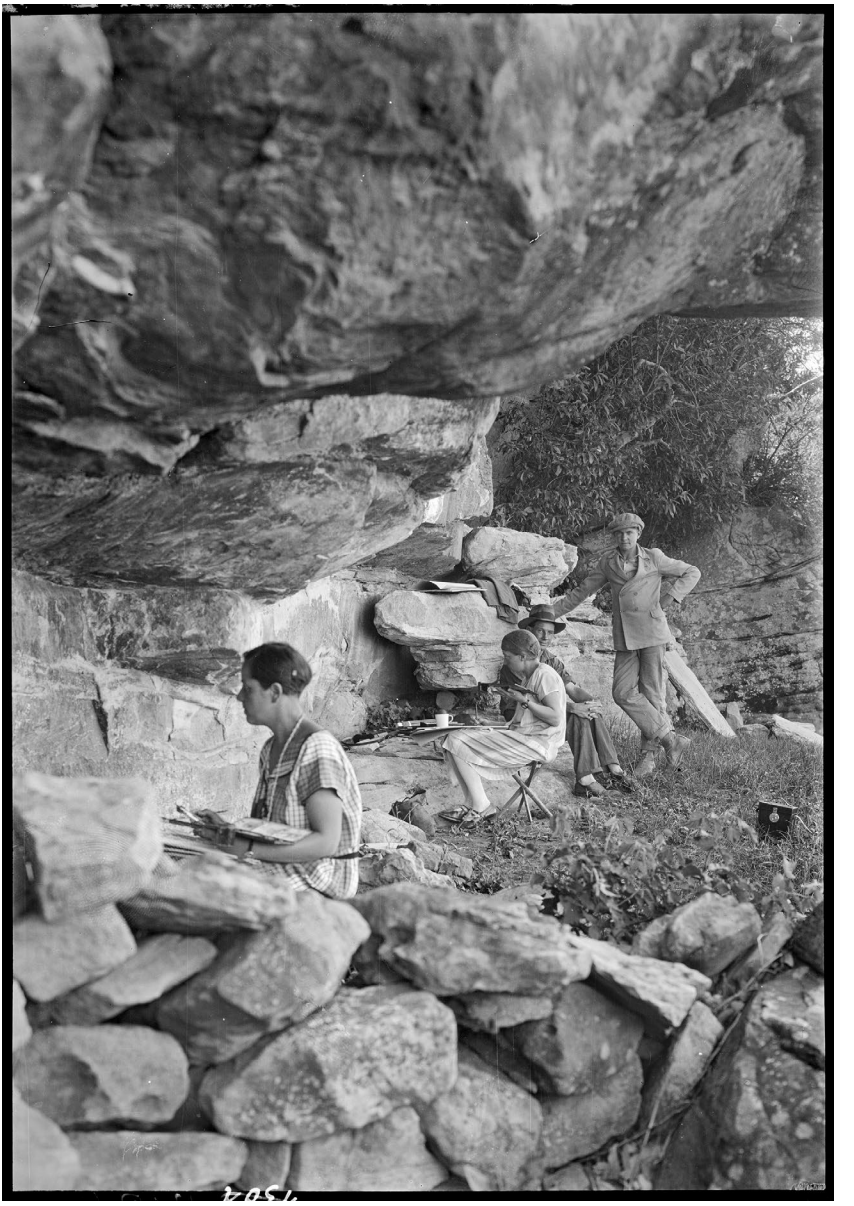

Figure 2: *Maria Weyersberg and Elisabeth Mannsfeld copying paintings on Farm Heldenmoed, South Africa during the Ninth German Inner Africa Expedition (1928–1930).*

'Otherness' was thus conglomerated in a display of apparent timelessness and soulful communion, complementing Leo Frobenius' theory of the accessible, animate spirit of culture and history. These approaches, read with an eye to 'empathy', render images of Others into a malleable counterpart in the aesthetic exchange, imperialized, in a sense, by the beholder.

Figures

Fig. 1: Photo: Soichi Sunami. DIGITAL IMAGE © 2019 The Museum of Modern Art / Scala, Florence.

Fig. 2: © Frobenius-Institut, Frankfurt a. M.

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Figure 1: Emily Jacir: *stazione*, 2008–2009, Public intervention on Line 1 vaporetto stops, Venice, Italy. Commissioned for *Palestine c/o Venice*, collateral event of the 53rd International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Veneza.

Lea Mönninghoff

A "Non-Existing Existence" in the Contact Zone: Emily Jacir's *stazione* (2008–2009)

Abstract With discussing the contribution of the artist Emily Jacir for the 53rd Venice Biennale 2009 *stazione* (2008–2009), this chapter will discuss the impact of the cancelled intervention and the artist's alternative artistic outcome. Taking the brochure Jacir created in reaction to the cancellation of her intervention in the urban space of Venice, as an object representing the narrative of her project, this chapter will discuss both the brochure and Jacir's planned artistic intervention with reference to the notion of Venice as an urban contact zone.

Keywords Cross-cultural Exchange, Cultural Transfer, Emily Jacir, Entangled Histories, Urban Contact Zone

Mönninghoff, Lea. 2021. "A 'Non-Existing Existence' in the Contact Zone: Emily Jacir's 'stazione' (2008–2009)." In *Reading Objects in the Contact Zone*, edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Anna Sophia Messner, 116–122. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 9. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing.
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stazione is a public intervention which was slated to take place at the 53rd Venice Biennale.
It was abruptly and unexplainedly cancelled by Venetian municipal authorities and remains unrealized." This statement written on the wall and the acrylic display box below it with brochures in Italian, English, and Arabic (see Fig. 1) are the only objects remaining from Emily Jacir's artistic intervention *stazione* (2008–2009).

The brochure is a map of the city of Venice, handed out to visitors in the "Palestinian Pavilion" during the 53rd Venice Biennale 2009. It guides interested individuals through the city center of Venice to all the places where Jacir's intervention was supposed to have taken place. Arriving at these places, they will see—nothing. All that is there is the information in the brochure to explain Jacir's artistic project. What remains is the lack of an artwork, a lack that is symbolic of Jacir's work as part of the first Palestinian participation at the Venice Biennale, the lack representing the act of cancellation and the map a highly symbolic object of resistance as a subversive artistic response to this. Both are part of the discursive potential of Venice as a contact zone. It is the "non-existing existence" of the project—a term borrowed from Jean Fisher (see Fisher 2009, 7)—which points to its non-existence as a result of the cancellation and at the same time to its existence as a result of the brochure, giving the project its lasting importance.

Mary Louise Pratt defines contact zones as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (Pratt 1991, 34). *stazione*, and especially the brochure, are part of this meeting, clashing, and grappling. Taking the brochure as an object representing the narrative of Jacir's project, this essay will discuss both the brochure and Jacir's planned artistic intervention with reference to the notion of Venice as an urban contact zone.

To show how *stazione* would have worked—and how the brochure still works—in the contact zone of urban Venice, it is useful to have a closer look at the artwork itself. There are four dimensions to *stazione*:

1. The visible result of the Arabic names being added to the various vaporetto, or waterbus, stops (cancelled before realization).
2. Jacir's two-year artistic research project about historical cross-cultural exchange between the Arab world, specifically Palestine, and Venice and its impact today.
3. The text for the catalogue accompanying the *Palestine c/o Venice* exhibition, in which Jacir explains the project and presents some of her research findings.
4. The brochure with the map, which was added after her project was cancelled by the vaporetto company ACTV, including photographs of each station with the translations as if they had been realized (see Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Emily Jacir: *stazione* 2008–2009. Public installation on Line 1 vaporetto stops (S. Marcuola). 2008–2009, digital photograph.

stazione was planned as one of six artistic statements in the exhibition *Palestine c/o Venice* curated by Salwa Mikdadi. Jacir's original intention was to add translations in Arabic to the Italian names of all vaporetto stops along Line 1. Line 1 runs through the Grand Canal and passes various monuments whose architecture is exemplary for the cross-cultural exchange between Venice and the Arab world. The Arabic names would "put them [the Arabic translations] in direct dialogue with the architecture and urban design of the surrounding buildings, thereby linking them with various elements of Venice's shared heritage with the Arab world" (Jacir 2009, 48). The artist's intention was to show and evoke the city's cross-cultural history (‣**Entangled Histories**) and cultural transfer (‣**Cultural Transfer**) with the Arab world, specifically Palestine, and to create a space for discussions about a future connection by emphasizing this "shared heritage."

Jacir hoped that the Arabic names at the vaporetto stops would have been the starting point for a new discussion about Palestine's and Venice's "cross-cultural fertilization" (Jacir 2009, 48). Looking at the digitally reconstructed pictures of these stops with the Arabic names included in the map, one realizes that Jacir's intervention in this public urban space would have invoked various associations for visitors (Biennale goers as well as citizens of Venice and tourists): On the one hand, the Arabic calligraphy could have appeared as a "mystical" element (Blankenship 2003, 61) pointing to the history of the two regions. On the other hand, they also could

have functioned as a provocation, as some viewers—and, perhaps, also some organizers responsible for the cancellation—would have associated the Arabic signage with anxieties about the effects of contemporary Arab migration, rather than considering the shared history Jacir was interested in. Added to specific stops along the Grand Canal, the Arabic translations would have highlighted specific architectural monuments near these places, such as the Doge's Palace, the Ca' d'Oro, and the Torre dell'Orologio, which embody the cultural transfer between Venice, the Arab world, and the Eastern Mediterranean in the fifteenth century. It is beyond the scope of this article to study these architectural exchanges in depth, but it should be noted that buildings such as the Ca' d'Oro, rather than simply adapting "Eastern" architecture, are, in fact, hybrid constructions composed of individual memories from the trade routes and traveler's accounts and resulted in the "layered architectural heritage" of Venice (Wood 2017, 135; see Howard 2000, 142–146). In addition to highlighting the architectural exchange, this artistic project also points to exchanges between Palestine and Venice in the fields of science, medicine, cartography, and philosophy. With Venice having served as the principal port for pilgrims to start their maritime journey to the "Holy Land"/Palestine since the Middle Ages (Howard 2000, 190), Jacir presents the city as an important station for the cross-cultural transfer between these regions. As yet another consequence of the cross-cultural history of Venice and Palestine, the numerous Arabic words that were absorbed into the Venetian dialect (and are still in use today) serve as evidence of the "multiple, plural, shifting, and eclectic" boundaries of the Mediterranean linguistic space (Dursteler 2016, 46–47).[1] Hence, it is the aspect of language, in particular, that Jacir's artistic research relates to the contemporary situation. With more than 246 million speakers, Arabic is the fifth most-spoken language in the world, and yet Arabic translations at touristic attractions outside the Arabic-speaking world are a very rare sight, including Venice. By adding the Arabic names to those very public spots along the Line 1 vaporetto, *stazione* would have alluded to this "non-existing existing" language (non-existing in the sense of not visually existing) in the urban display of Venice. In other words, it would have referred to the shared history yet at the same time highlighted the absence of those mutual moments in contemporary Venice. More than any other aspect of the work, this act of translation could have sparked provocation and conflict.

This brings me back to the brochure and the map. With the cancellation of the project, the idea of showing the "rich history of cross-cultural fertilization" (Jacir 2009, 48) between Palestine and Venice in this secular and reconciliatory way in public urban space remained unrealized. But

1 Due to the vivid exchange between Venice and Palestine, Venetian influence on Palestinian culture was, of course, also significant. It was a permanent process of exchange, changes, and appropriation. See for this wider view on the cross-cultural history of Venice and various Arabic countries: Wood 2017, 134–141.

I would argue that, in creating the brochure, Jacir ignored the cancellation of her project and actually opened up a new space for future discussions—discussions about cross-cultural exchange in historical, present-day, and future Venice as a contact zone.

As a guiding tool, a map is always a selective and highly subjective document—which at the same time makes it so effective in allowing the past to become part of the present of the map user (Woods 1992, 1). Jacir's map is going a step further: "And when they [the visitors] arrived [at the planned places of Jacir's project], they would discover it wasn't there, with my intention being that maybe sometime in the future people will think it was there, because I created this brochure [suggesting] that it actually happened, when it didn't" (Jacir 2015, n.p.).

In creating a map to guide the visitors to the absent artwork, Jacir's intention was to create a new fictive past for the unknown future. Even though the cross-cultural Arabic-Venetian past cannot be part of the present, the map still upholds the idea for the future. The object of the brochure still exists and will exist. Because the brochure was produced, the space for showing cross-cultural exchanges between Palestine and Venice also still exists—the map functions as an artifact for this "never-happened happening" and for the "never-shown shown" presence of Arabic-Venetian cross-cultural interaction in contemporary Venice.

The map indeed extends this space to allow for a contemporary discussion about cross-cultural exchanges. Representing the "meeting, clashing and grappling" of the different parties in the contact zone (ACTV, the artist, the Biennale organizers, etc.), the map will remind viewers in the future of the "highly asymmetrical relations of power" (Pratt 1991, 34). In this way, the brochure opens up a space for new discussions and negotiations in the contact zone of the urban space of Venice today: As a place representing historical as well as contemporary cross-cultural exchange symbolized by the "non-existing existing" Arabic translations, and as a place for ongoing meetings, discussions, and conflicts negotiating the relationship between the Venetian and Palestinian cultures. The map will be a part of this.

Figures

Fig. 1: © Emily Jacir.
Fig. 2: © Emily Jacir 2009, Courtesy: Emily Jacir.

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PART V

Figurative Objects, Trajectories, and Valuations

Frederika Tevebring

Baubo on the Pig: Travel across Disciplines

Abstract In the mid-nineteenth century, the Altes Museum in Berlin acquired a small terracotta statuette of a nude woman riding on a pig. Although it is likely from Ptolemaic Egypt, little can be said for certain about the object—which makes its name, "Baubo," particularly curious. The object, after all, resembles a character by the same name in Goethe's *Faust*. But was, in this case, Goethe inspired by antiquity, or rather antiquity inspired by Goethe? By untangling Baubo's modern biography, this chapter critically illustrates the mutual influences between ancient studies, literature, and collecting in the nineteenth century.

Keywords Faust I Walpurgis Scene, Baubo, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, James Millingen, *Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica*

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In the depot of the Altes Museum in Berlin is a small terracotta statuette featuring a nude woman riding sidesaddle on a pig. The object is likely from Hellenistic Egypt, although little can be said with certainty about its ancient and modern history. It is filed as TC4875 but known as "Baubo on the Pig," named after a mythical Greek woman said to have exposed herself to the goddess Demeter. Although the object itself is stored away and largely forgotten, it continues to exercise an indirect influence in literary studies and archaeology. A similar pig-riding Baubo appears in Goethe's *Faust I* and the statuette in Berlin has given name to a type of ancient figurines often found in excavations in Egypt. How these modern and ancient manifestations of Baubo relate to each other, however, is far from obvious. This brief essay will not attempt to uncover the ancient history of Baubo on the Pig—despite all efforts, this remains impossible—but rather examine the object's modern afterlife and how modern interpretations have come to be ancient truths. Mapping the influences and associations of Baubo leads us to the entangled and mutually influential histories (**‣Entangled Histories**) of creative and scholarly approaches to antiquity and confronts us with a possible instance not just of antiquity inspiring poetry but also, indeed, of modern poetry shaping antiquity.

Baubo on the Pig appears in the museum's ledger in 1848 where it is registered as "Baubo." As is common for objects acquired in the early to mid-nineteenth century, there is no information about the seller or provenance. The statuette is a mold-made terracotta figure in the form of a woman, nude save for a veil, riding a pig with her legs spread wide. Her right hand supports her lifted leg while her left hand holds an unidentified object with vertical slats. Similar squatting figures (with or without pigs) have been found in Egypt, where Greek craftsmen had introduced small-scale terracotta production in the fourth century BC. The statuette in Berlin likely comes from this tradition. The name associates the female figure with a myth first attested by late antique Church Fathers. Claiming to recount a pagan tradition, Clement of Alexandria, Arnobius, and Eusebius write that Baubo was one of the locals who welcomed Demeter at Eleusis as the goddess was searching for her abducted daughter Persephone. In her grief, Demeter refused all offers of food and drink until Baubo eventually managed to cheer her up by lifting her robes and exposing herself. Today, the museum's catalogue expresses reservation about the pig rider's identity. This is understandable, since the statuette does indeed have little to do with the myth. Baubo cannot reasonably be naked if she is also lifting her clothing, and although pigs did play a role in the cult at Eleusis there are no accounts about them being ridden. More than any ancient account, the Berlin Baubo recalls a modern literary counterpart, a witch mentioned in Goethe's *Faust I.*

Towards the end of the first part of *Faust,* Faust and Mephistopheles travel to the Blocksberg to take part in the annual Walpurgis night fest, where witches gather to dance with the devil. As they are finding their way there, they hear the storm of witches gathering to fly to the mountain.

Figure 1: *Baubo on the Pig*. Provenance unknown. Terracotta; 11.8 × 8.5 × 3.5 cm. Berlin, Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, TC 4875.

Witches' Chorus
The witches ride to Blocksberg's top,
The stubble is yellow, and green the crop.
They gather on the mountainside,
Sir Urian comes to preside.
We are riding over crag and brink,
The witches fart, the billy goat stinks.

Voice
Old Baubo comes alone right now,
She is riding on a mother sow.

Chorus
Give honor to whom honor's due!
Dame Baubo, lead our retinue!
A real swine and mother too,
The witches' crew will follow you.
(Goethe 1808: 3962–3967. Translated by Kaufmann, 1962)

Heading the witches' procession in Goethe is the venerable Dame Baubo, riding on a pig. The passage is curious for several reasons. Although Goethe often incorporates ancient figures in his work, *Faust I* is firmly set in a medieval Germanic context. Baubo is an exception, a VIP guest invited from ancient Greece to lead the party of German witches. Moreover, Goethe wrote the Walpurgis scene in the final years of the eighteenth century and the first part of *Faust* was published in 1808, about fifty years before the terracotta statuette appeared in Berlin. To bridge this time gap, we must acknowledge at least the possibility that, in this case, Goethe did not borrow from antiquity but, instead, shaped the interpretation of this ancient object through his fiction.

The relationship between the Berlin pig rider and Goethe's witch is further complicated by the fact that neither resembles ancient accounts of Baubo. This riddle, however, has not been much cause for concern in Goethe scholarship (the exception being Otto Kern who, like me, cannot offer a conclusive explanation of which Baubo inspired which; Kern 1897). Commentaries on *Faust* treat Baubo as one of the many Greek figures borrowed by Goethe. The explanations consistently stress her association with sexuality. It is explained, for example, that Baubo is, "a bawdy nurse and 'personified vulva'" (Schöne 1994, 349), a "Greek goddess of a phallic cult" (Swanwick 2013), or "a form of personification of the vulva as a symbol of fertility" (von Wilpert 1998). The notion that Baubo is a personified vulva, however, does not fit with the ancient accounts. Yet this characterization is derived, via a detour, from the Berlin pig rider and Goethe's text.

The Berlin statuette is first mentioned in an 1843 article by James Millingen. Millingen was a Dutch-British citizen who had settled in Italy

after a career in banking in France. In Italy, he began collecting and publishing antiquities, some of which he sold to museums in northern Europe. There is no mention of the statuette before this article and Millingen's argument for why it should be identified as Baubo gives the clear impression that this had not been suggested previously. This, together with the fact that Millingen was well connected with the Berlin museum establishment, makes it likely that Millingen not only sold the statuette to Berlin himself but also named it. Millingen's argument for why the statuette depicts Baubo is circular and relies on unsupported assumptions about the cult at Eleusis. His argument revolves around the unidentified object in the woman's left hand. Millingen identifies it as a comb, reminding the reader that the Greek word for comb, κτείς, like the corresponding Latin word *pectin,* was used as a euphemism for the female genitalia. The object, he suggests, is a symbolic vagina and, therefore, this statuette proves that such an object was displayed at the Eleusinian mysteries in reference to Baubo's meeting with Demeter. Together with the obscene posture, he concludes, the symbolic vulva identifies the figure as Baubo. It also—and this is where Millingen's argument becomes circular—reveals that Baubo was represented as a vulva at Eleusis. Being the seller of the object, Millingen would have had ulterior motives for holding the object up as a key to the rituals at Eleusis and his argument has been refuted at least since the early twentieth century (for example, by Perdrizet). More than any ancient narrative about Baubo, Millingen's Baubo recalls Goethe's *Faust*, a work that Millingen, who moved in the circles of German intellectuals surrounding Goethe himself, was most certainly familiar with.

The similarities between Goethe's and Millingen's Baubo and the holes in Millingen's argument make it likely that Millingen recognized Goethe's Baubo, rather than any ancient figure from the myths surrounding Eleusis, in the pig rider. Yet despite being incorrect, Millingen's article has had a lasting impact that continues to this day. The statuette in Berlin is still known as Baubo and, even more important, following the publication of it by Millingen, "Baubo" has become a label denoting a large group of ancient statuettes. These so-called "Baubos" are small figurines in the form of female figures squatting or spreading their legs and gesturing towards their vulva. They are often found in archaeological excavations and mostly date back to Ptolemaic Egypt (similar ones have also been discovered across the Mediterranean, above all in southern Italy). Their findspots are either unknown or too general to allow conclusive or general arguments about their function: living spaces, rubbish heaps, and occasionally graves. While there is no reason to believe that these objects were known as Baubo in antiquity, they continue to be denoted as Baubo figurines in excavation reports and museum catalogues. Yet since it is agreed that they do not depict a mythical figure named Baubo, the label is deployed as a conscious misnomer, often applied with reservations expressed in square brackets or prefaced by "so-called." In the case of these objects, "Baubo" is not a name

denoting a mythical figure, but a label identifying a certain iconographical type. This type, however, is not clearly defined. Similar Egyptian figures show squatting clothed females or naked males, but the label "Baubo" is reserved for those figures that gesture towards or otherwise are considered to draw attention to their vulva. The label identifies these figurines as a discrete type and has solidified the association between the name Baubo and the vulva. Thus, Millingen's argument is repeated, even though his conclusion has been rejected.

Millingen's name for the pig rider has become an iconographic label defined by the sexual gesture. The ubiquity of these "Baubo figurines" and their interpretation has been so influential that the name Baubo is often explained as a personification of the vulva rather than as a reference to an ancient mythical narrative. This is the ancient Baubo described in commentaries to Goethe's *Faust*, but it now becomes clear that Goethe, in fact, helped fabricate the ancient tradition that the commentaries uncritically infer he borrowed from. While the commentaries assume a linear relation of influence, a past uncovered by ancient scholars and borrowed from by art, a closer look reveals a more complex relationship that is circular rather than linear. Goethe creates Baubo as much as he borrows her.

Goethe's and Millingen's roles in shaping the associations linked to the name Baubo have been largely forgotten. This is in part because their contributions are not considered scholarship: Goethe's use of Baubo is fictional and Millingen's misidentification is attributed to him being a "mere" collector and autodidact. Their work does not fit into a narrative of increased understanding of the past. However, as this brief outline of Baubo's modern history shows, the interdependencies between investigating and shaping the past are rarely linear. This was especially true in the early nineteenth century, when academic fields as we know them today were still taking shape and the methods of, and rationales for, knowing the ancient past were being negotiated between art and scholarship. This symbiotic relationship was reflected in the first international archaeological society, the *Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica* in Rome, of which Millingen was one of the founding members and Goethe an honorary member. The institute would develop into the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), but at its inception it included artists and collectors alongside renowned philologists and archaeologists such as Wilhelm von Humboldt and Eduard Gerhard.

Today, the *instituto*'s efforts to bring together scholarly and creative approaches to antiquity might be labeled cross-disciplinary, but for the members of the early institute, understanding ancient culture was inherently a creative endeavor. To the generations of Goethe and Millingen, the objective of studying the past was to shape the present and future culture. This necessarily involved not just objective knowledge of antiquity, but also a creative shaping of it. The Berlin research group *Transformationen der Antike* (SFB 644) has coined the term Allelopoiesis (‣**Allelopoiesis**) to describe the process by which modernity and antiquity define each other.

For Goethe, and to some extent also for Millingen, the active process of selecting and shaping the ancient referent was seen as inherent to the engagement with the ancient past. Baubo on the Pig stands in the contact zone (‣**Expanded Contact Zone**) between various disciplines as we understand them today and tracing the object's history takes us back to their intertwined and interdependent histories.

Figure

Fig. 1: © Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Photo: Johannes Laurentius.

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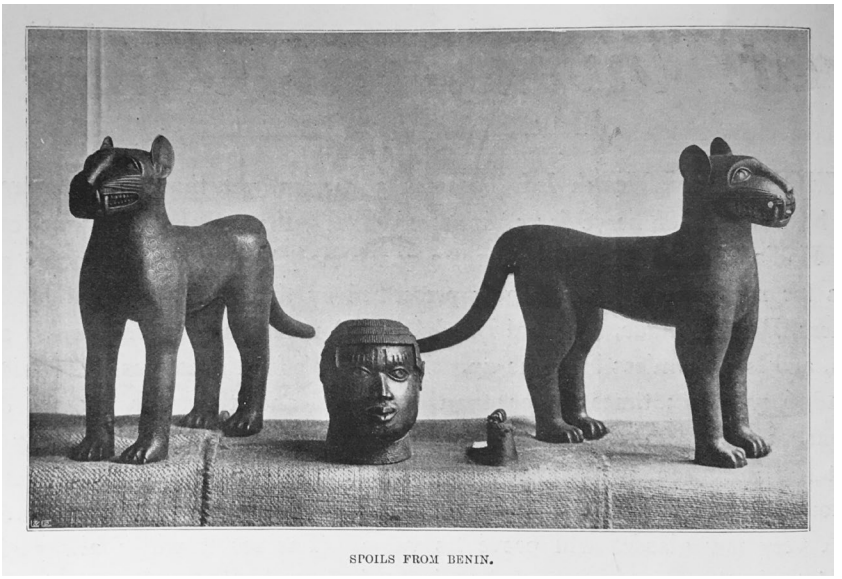

Figure 1: This clipping from *The Illustrated London News* (August 7th, 1897, p. 194) shows a pair of leopards, 50 × 79 × 15 cm and 49 × 77 × 14 cm, respectively.

Felicity Bodenstein

The Global Market Trajectories of Two Brass Leopards from Benin City (1897–1953)

Abstract The art market trajectory of these two brass leopards, looted in Benin in 1897, illustrates the relationship between processes of commodification and changes in the narratives about African art; processes that are often visualized in the readily communicating circuits of commercial galleries and museum exhibitions. Read in direct relationship to their successive displacements, the price history of these objects attests to the stark economic asymmetries, as well as to the difference of their cultural meaning, between the place from which the piece originated and the place where it is today and to the long history of enrichment that such objects provide through their commodification.

Keywords Benin City, Leopards, Benin Bronzes, Art market, Provenance, Resale

Bodenstein, Felicity. 2021. "The Global Market Trajectories of Two Brass Leopards from Benin City (1897–1953)." In *Reading Objects in the Contact Zone*, edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Anna Sophia Messner, 132–139. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 9. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing.
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The invasion of Benin City, referred to in British sources as the "punitive expedition" of 1897, was largely motivated by the ambitions of British colonial administrators to expand their control over the trade routes going through the Edo territory that was ruled over by the Oba Ovonramwen (ca. 1857–1914). It deeply transformed the longstanding trade relationships that had existed between that area and Europe since 1486 and the arrival of the first Portuguese explorers (Igbafe 1979; Home 1982). It also led to the commodification (‣**Commodification**) of a very specific group of objects related to the royal house of Benin City and its guilds. Reception histories have tended to focus on the writings of critics and on such admittedly central figures as Felix von Luschan for their role in evaluating these objects, but there is another evaluation process that is explicitly related to the market and its actors, one that can be read in the biography of the pair of brass leopards represented in this image.

The objects, produced at the court of Benin (and that continue to be produced today) were an intrinsic part of the cult of ancestors and the decoration of the palace and chiefs' homes, and in absence of written documents served to chronicle the history of the kingdom. The "Benin bronzes" were virtually unknown in Europe at the time of the events of 1897; yet British administrators who had regularly visited the court, notably to negotiate the 1892 trade agreement that lead to the conflicts of 1897, knew of the ample existence of these pieces in brass and ivory.

The history and conditions of their dispersal after the events of February 1897 are as famous as they are lacunary due to the absence of exhaustive lists of what was taken, a fact that has led to the proliferation of estimate figures that have constantly risen since, ranging from 2,400 to 10,000. The objects were divided into official and unofficial loot or booty. Part of this was sold in bulk, the other part left in Benin in the personal baggage of expedition members (Bodenstein 2020). Several dealers of *ethnografica* specialized in the resale of pieces that they acquired from individual officers and civil members of the expedition. Here we will follow the case of two of these objects, a pair of brass leopards, in order to understand the kinds of lives these royal antiquities came to lead as commodities on the Western art market.

The first available image of the objects whose trajectory we will follow from Benin City, to Paris, New York, and all the way back to Lagos appeared in *The Illustrated London News* of August 7, 1897, to report on the "Spoils of Benin." It features a large pair of brass leopards placed on either side of a male bronze head. The caption reads:

> These are thought to be symbolic objects connected with the hideous sacrificial rites of Benin, and are of especial interest owing to the strong traces of Egyptian influence in their workmanship, testifying to a civilisation far older than the Portuguese colonisation of the country three centuries ago (*The Illustrated News*, 1897).

Gisela Völger explains the ties between leopards and sacrificial practice as related to the fact that many aquamaniles used for cleansing purposes in ritual contexts took the form of leopards (Plankensteiner 2007, 279–280). This pair are not however aquamaniles but representations of power. The photo with its caption is exemplary of common public discourse surrounding the objects; the issue of human sacrifice, in particular, was indeed generally used as a larger justification for the military actions taken against the town and its inhabitants. Similar brass leopards were sold in relation to this sacrificial narrative, and in one account of sales at the auction house of Henry Steven's one can read: "Three pounds bought the two leopards between which the victim had to lay his head – at the time of the capture of the city they were wet with human blood" (Allingham 1924, 185). In terms of finishing and detail, the leopards illustrated here are generally considered to be two of the finest of the bronze leopards taken in 1897 (at least twenty such bronzes exist in collections today) and would doubtlessly have initially been sold for a higher price than the ones quoted from the Steven's sale. The *Illustrated News* article identifies the leopards as the property of Matthew Hale of Hale & Son and they were sold for the first time by their auction house on the 18th of August 1897 for the price of £53 (Hale & Son 1897, 7).

The pair was sold again in 1930 by the French art dealer Charles Ratton for £700 (approx. $3,400) at the sale of George W. Neville's collection at Foster's auction house in London (Fosters 1930, 9; see Fig. 2); Neville had accompanied the Benin Expedition (Coombes 1994, 31). It is interesting that the leopards went from Hale & Son to the private collection of Neville as it is often assumed that he had himself brought the object back, yet the case of the leopards proves that members of the expedition sometimes augmented their collection of trophies after their return to Britain. A rare photograph of Neville's sitting room shows the leopards on either side of an amply decorated fireplace, with a wall plaque that was also later bought by Ratton and that had a long and illustrious career on the art market before being bought by the Musée de quai Branly in 2002 (Inv. 70.2002.4.1).

The leopards were part of a wave of acquisitions made by Charles Ratton (1895–1986) and his colleague Louis Carré (1897–1977) who seized upon the opportunity of sales provided by a downturn in the economic situation of the British upper class to acquire large numbers of Benin pieces, which had until then remained in private hands. Georges-Henri Rivière (1897–1985), employed at the Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro (the future *Musée de l'Homme*) since 1928, accompanied Ratton on more than one occasion, buying and then donating to the museum. It was Rivière who developed the idea of inviting Ratton (Laurière 2008, 398) to organize an exhibition that was set to be the first in a series of prestigious temporary events designed to bring new life to the Trocadéro Museum which had been in decline for some decades.

Planned to last for two months, the exhibition "Royal Bronzes and Ivories of Benin" was prolonged due to its success and the leopards were

Figure 2: *A Catalogue of the Highly Important Bronzes, Ivory, and Wood Carvings from the Walled City of Benin, West Africa, Forming the Collection of the Late G. W. Neville, Esq., of Weybridge, a member of the Benin Punitive Expedition, who himself removed them after the capture of the City in 1897*.

the most prominently placed pieces in the exhibition, majestically framing the exhibition entrance, echoing the manner in which their protective and symbolic power would have been harnessed to frame a royal altar or the entrance of an important building in Benin City. On this occasion, they were insured for 100,000 francs each, which was equivalent at the time to £1600 for both[1], more than twice their recent acquisition price. Judging by the press illustrations, they were clearly the focal points of the 1932 show, and though they stayed in Ratton's possession until 1935, they did not leave the Trocadéro immediately after the exhibition. He left them on loan there for the section on West Africa and he also allowed them to be presented at other exhibitions such as "L'art animalier rétrospectif" (A History of Animals in Art) held at the Musée d'histoire naturelle in 1934.[2] In 1935, they joined Ratton's collection that went on a prestigious tour in the United States where they were exhibited at the Pierre Matisse Gallery and the Museum of Modern Art, insured by this point for £14,000. In 1936, Louis Carré, a close colleague of Ratton, bought them both for the "special

1 All of the historical currency conversions have been made using the calculator of: http://www.historicalstatistics.org/.
2 Archives du Musée d'histoire naturelle, correspondance Ratton 2 AM1 K81 d.

price" of 80,000 francs (Paudrat 2007, 242); the equivalent of ca. £1000 in 1936, this price indicates that Ratton's gains were indeed only quite marginal in this instance, suggesting that the exchange may have been part of a larger financial arrangement between Carré and Ratton.

Carré's archive provides quite a diverse set of documents more generally dedicated to the subject matter of leopards. Sent to him in New York by an assistant in 1949, those documents provide a sense of how he developed the marketing strategy for this pair in particular.[3] His description of Ratton's leopards as "a pair of exceptional beauty" was supported by all kinds of images relating to the representation of such felines, including an article from the New York Herald on "Cheetah Racing", and animal photography of trained leopards. These images possibly served Carré's arguments on the particular naturalism of these figures and on the history of the interactions between leopards and humans. The accompanying text notes: "The taste for wild beasts has always been very highly developed in the princely courts of all times." Its main argument was to draw the distinction between the symbolic importance of the representation of the panther versus the leopard, the latter being an animal that could be much more easily tamed. Man's power over such a wild animal is described as a measure of civilization. Carré uses this argument to distinguish Benin culture from notions of the "primitive" (‣**Primitivism**). By comparing the importance of the leopard in Benin culture to that of its role in all major antique civilizations, he places Benin art on an equal footing with Persia, Greece, and Rome (‣**Masterpiece**). In particular he emphasizes the unicity of these pieces:

> The twin leopards of the Louis Carré collection are the most important pieces known to have come from the Royal Palace of the city of Benin, destroyed in 1897. [...] These bronze leopards are unique in Benin art as well as in the whole history of art. Such sculptures of leopards have never been found elsewhere (Carré 1948).

In 1952, Carré sold them to the colonial institution in Lagos that would later become the National Museum. The acquisitions register shows that the purchase was made from the Louis Carré Gallery, New York for a total of £7,133 for both. This was by far the most expensive acquisition made in prevision of the creation of one of Nigeria's first national museums, driven mainly by the initiative of Kenneth C. Murray, Edward Harland Duckworth, and Bernard Fagg (Hellman 2014), who created a general service of Nigerian antiquities in 1943. The establishment of the museum's collections was based on important efforts to collect material inside of Nigeria, but also and in particular to buy back objects taken from Benin City in 1897. Murray's *Draft Notes for a History of the Museum,* conserved in the archives

3 Carré, Louis. 1948, typed document entitled "The Twin Benin Bronze Leopards." Fonds Louis Carré, DA001294/63817, Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris.

of the National Museum in Lagos attest to the many financial negotiations that he undertook in order to allow for these acquisitions to be made; the price of the leopards was equivalent to more than the budget of £5,000 that he had initially negotiated for the construction of the whole museum. This unrealistic figure—that fortunately rose to about £100,000 for the overall cost of the museum—gives a sense of the value of the leopards in the context of the financial constraints in developing a national collection in Nigeria at this time. They were rapidly considered as some of the most important pieces in the museum when it opened its doors in 1957 (Nigeria and Federal Ministry of Research and Information 1959, 26).

Each step is accompanied by a considerable gain in commercial value. Today the leopards are among the objects that the National Museum in Lagos lends regularly to major international exhibitions on African art, despite the fact that it rarely, if ever, receives such loans in return (‣**Heritage**, ‣**Return**). Benin City, and its national museum some three hundred kilometers from Lagos, did not benefit from the wave of acquisitions made in the 1950s, as priority was given to the museum situated in the colonial capital. The trajectory of these pieces illustrates the relationship between processes of commodification and the evolution of narratives about African art; processes that are often visualized in the readily communicating circuits of commercial galleries and museum exhibitions. Read in direct relationship to their successive displacements, the price history of these objects attests to the stark economic asymmetries, as well as to the difference of their cultural meaning, between the place from which the piece originated and the place where it is today and to the long history of enrichment that such objects provide through their commodification.

Figures

Fig. 1: Lagos: National Museum, inv. nos. 52.13.1 and 52.13.2.
Fig. 2: Messr. Foster, Thursday May 1st, 1930, Lot 50, description, p. 9.

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Figure 1: Akati Ekplékendo: *Gou*, ca. 1858. Iron, wood, h. 165 cm.
Paris, Pavillon des Sessions, Louvre.

Kerstin Schankweiler

Double Trophy: *Gou* by Akati Ekplékendo

Abstract The unique life-size figure, discussed in this chapter, represents the Vodun divinity Gou, the god of iron, smithing, and war of the Fon people. It was attributed to Akati Ekplékendo, an artist from Doumé (today in the Republic of Benin) who was enslaved and brought to the royal court of Dahomey around 1860. In 1894 it was stolen and brought to France. Today it is exhibited in the Louvre in Paris. The *Gou* figure will be considered as an example of a transcultural art history on three levels: 1. The materiality that was used to create it; 2. Its context of production and usage; 3. Its canonization in museums in France.

Keywords Akati Ekplékendo, Gou, 19th Century African Art, Dahomey, Royal Arts, Transcultural Art History, Récupération

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This unique life-size figure represents the Vodun divinity Gou, the god of iron, smithing, and war of the Fon people. It was attributed to Akati Ekplékendo, an artist from Doumé (today in the Republic of Benin) who was enslaved and brought to the royal court of Dahomey around 1860.

The Dahomey kingdom had its center in Abomey and was founded in the seventeenth century. It existed until the end of the nineteenth century, when the French colonized it. The research of Suzanne Preston Blier concluded that the Gou figure had been commissioned by King Glèlè (1859–1889) in tribute to his father, King Guezo (1818–1858) (Blier 1990). Recent research, however, is convinced that King Glèlè seized not only the statue but also its sculptor Akati Ekplékendo from Doumé during a military intervention around 1860. King Guezo had already unsuccessfully tried to conquer Doumé to the northwest of his kingdom's capital, Abomey. Later, King Glèlè's diviner explained that the magical power of Gou protected Doumé, which is why the king became interested in the figure and its creator. The sovereign then sent spies to learn about the statue in order to be able to seize it and protect himself from his own enemies (Biton 1994; Beaujean-Baltzer 2007).

After introducing the Gou figure and describing its function within the royal court of Dahomey, the object will be considered as an example of a transcultural art history on three levels: 1. The materiality that was used to create it; 2. Its context of production and usage; 3. Its canonization in museums in France.

The life-size figure represents a striding man wearing a royal war tunic (called *kansa wu* in Fon, Blier 1990, 49). It stands with oversized bare feet on a thin plate that serves as a base for the figure. Thin legs and raised, bent arms emerge from its voluminous garment. The figure holds a royal ceremonial sword in its right hand and a rounded gong or a bell in the left. The face is reduced to essential features and appears not so much warlike as peaceful; with its eyes closed, it seems introversive. The figure wears a type of crown on his head that consists of a slightly skewed round plate with various objects attached to it. Hanging down from its center is a chain with a cylindrical bell at its end. Metal objects *en miniature* decorate the crown and characterize the god: weapons, tools, and iron icons (described in detail by Adandé et al. 1999). This presentation of miniatures is reminiscent of the so-called *asen* that served as memorials for the deceased in Fon culture (Blier 1990). *Asen* include iconic miniatures, sometimes figurative depictions or small scenes characterizing and symbolizing the ancestors. In family shrines, *asen* were often grouped (together with empowerment figures, so-called *bocio*), and this form of ancestral worship was also practiced at the royal palace. The same room where the Gou figure was installed also included an *asen* in memory of the Dahomey troops killed in battle (Blier 1990, 49).

Not much is known about the function of this figure. The sculpture can be read as a *bocio*, since offerings were made in front of it before battles to release power or to restrain forces of danger and evil. It was very likely

made to be moved, because it is not massive. The iron plate of its garment is very thin and rests on an inner support structure (See Delafosse 1894 and Adandé et al. 1999 for detailed drawings). It probably was brought to the battlefield during war and placed on a hill. It is said to have shouted "Watch out!" whenever danger approached (which is why it was referred to as *agojie*, meaning "watch out above") (Blier 1998, 117). The bell on the chain suggests that there was also an acoustic aspect to it, and it is even possible that the bell was supposed to hit the figure's garment, which itself has a bell-like shape. This feature points to the psychological importance of noise in battle. The performative aspect of 'sculpture' in the arts of Africa is particularly interesting and important, yet often ignored in presentations in Western Museums.

Interestingly, the sculpture is forged from scrap metal of European origin: Old steel plates from ships, rails (Beaujean-Baltzer 2007), and, presumably, slave chains. It is a particularly early example of recycling in the arts. The artist has combined a variety of techniques: forging and hammering of metal parts as well as nailing, spiking, and riveting. The material in which artists worked defined their social status in society, as there was a hierarchy of materials. Iron played an important role for royal iconographies. For some of the kingdoms in central Africa, it has been proved that smiths enjoyed the highest prestige and were so highly respected that even kings claimed to have descended from smiths or, at least, been capable of forging (Vansina 1984, 51). Iron mining and ironworking in Africa is documented throughout its history, but starting in the seventeenth century, iron imports became relevant in the coastal areas. The Gou figure may also indicate the growing import of cheap scrap metal from Europe in the colonial era.

What is fascinating about the object is that slave chains were used to make it. The collar of the tunic's upper part is reminiscent of a neck ring used in slave trade. During the heyday of the slave trade (local as well as transatlantic), the main goal of military conflicts was to capture as many people as possible and sell them to slave traders. The linking of slave chains to the God of War thus seems quite fitting.

To this day, recycling in the arts plays a significant role in the Benin art scene (Adandé et al. 1999). Contemporary Benin artists such as the Dakpogan brothers (Théodore, b. 1956 and Calixte, b. 1958) link their work to the royal blacksmith tradition (in the city of Porto-Novo) and retain the close connection between forging and recycling. This artistic approach in contemporary art from Africa is called *récup-art (art de la récupération)*, describing the practice of re-using found and used objects (mostly from 'foreign' sources) in sculptures, assemblages, or installations—a practice not confined to Benin (see Harney 2004; Kart 2013). The notion of *récupération* means recovery or recycling and indicates processes of appropriation (‣**Appropriation**) for one's own purposes, with a witty, often ironic touch added to it. It underscores the creative and functional capabilities of objects as well as the often transcultural history or biography inscribed into them.

Remarkably enough, the adaption and appropriation of 'foreign' materials and their reference to a (mostly oppressive) history of exchange between Europe and West Africa already played a role in the arts of the mid-nineteenth century.

Récupération generally signifies a cultural technique of everyday life that is widespread in African societies and the source of an informal economy that is of eminent social importance. Often, this concerns consumer articles that flood the African market after having been dropped from the economic cycle of affluent industrialized countries (‣**North / South**). These items are creatively transformed and repurposed. Used in this way, such materials, unlike industrially recycled materials that are turned into smooth, clean, and 'faceless' raw material, tell stories of their provenance, mobility, journey, or previous use.

In retrospect, the aesthetic quality of the Gou figure is that of *récupération,* even though this concept was not yet articulated in the nineteenth century. The piece has a fragmentary and assembled character. The materials used are partly left in their original form (like the chain, screws, bolts, and nuts). The function of the reutilized objects is not limited to their material aspect, but also includes their iconic implications. This allows for a two-pronged interpretation: the scrap metal of European origin was without doubt used for pragmatic and economic reasons, but at the time its use was also relevant to warfare and the negotiation of power relations. By appropriating this material, the kingdom could show that they had far-reaching trade ties and were connected to commodity cycles at a time of beginning globalization.

The fact that we know the name of the artist who created the Gou figure is rather unusual. Akati Ekplékendo was taken prisoner, brought to Abomey, and enslaved. In the capital of the Dahomey kingdom, he worked in the royal blacksmith workshop. Joseph Adandé points to the importance of enslaved Yoruba artists for art production in Dahomey in the nineteenth century.[1] Given the mobility of objects and people in the pre-colonial era, this provides a starting point for a trans-local art history of the region. The figure was originally produced in a context of violent confrontation and war where one group tried to protect itself and its identity by fighting off another. The object was first decontextualized when it was brought to Abomey as a trophy, and at the royal court it was appropriated for the first time. Not surprisingly, it was reinterpreted as a royal symbol.

Between 1892 and 1894, the palace in Abomey was seized by French troops and Dahomey was turned into a colony. In this context the Gou figure was, once again, taken as a war trophy, this time by the French captain Fonssagrives who brought it to France and, in 1894, donated it to the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro, the first anthropological museum in Paris (the history of the musealization of "Gou" has been thoroughly

1 Adandé presented this argument in a lecture given at the Freie Universität Berlin on December 2, 2014.

Figure 2: Installation view of the exhibition *African Negro Art*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 18, 1935 through May 19, 1935. Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, IN39.1.

reconstructed by Beaujean-Baltzer 2007.) Fonssagrives indicated that he had found the sculpture in Ouidah, a seaside town that was one of the most important slave harbors on the African west coast. It is likely that King Behanzin, who came to power after Glèlè, had taken it there for a fight against the French, but because his soldiers died in spite of it, the figure was thought to have lost its efficiency and therefore left in Ouidah.

The Gou sculpture is closely intertwined with the history of public ethnographic collections in Paris, as it passed through three institutions with very different concepts and collection and exhibition policies. As part of the Trocadéro collection, it was regarded as an ethnographic object and object of science. Yet at the same time it served to represent the French colony of Dahomey and its conquest in the temporary exhibition "Ethnographie des colonies françaises" (1931) at the Trocadéro. As early as the 1930s, two major exhibitions also reinterpreted "Gou" as a work of art. It was included in the 1930 Paris "Exposition d'art africain et d'art océanien" and in the famous 1935 exhibition of "African Negro Art" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (see Fig. 2). The Paris show was put together by the surrealist poet Tristan Tzara and two art dealers, Charles Ratton and Pierre Loeb, the former specialized in African, Oceanian, and pre-Columbian art and the latter in modern art. This suggests that the Gou figure and other objects were associated with the avant-garde and, indeed, also highly sought-after on the art market. Keeping in mind that French artists of the time (**‣Primitivism**) frequently visited the Trocadéro and appropriated the aesthetics

of the ethnographic objects for their own artistic purposes (Picasso being the most prominent example), we can better appreciate the role avant-garde art played in interpreting and assessing objects of this kind. "African Negro Art" then reinforced the unequal association, as it aimed to show the "artistic importance" of African objects for contemporary Modernist art in Europe and America (Sweeney 1935).

In 1937, the collections of the Trocadéro museum, and "Gou" with them, transferred to the newly established Musée de l'Homme. Given the latter's orientation towards physical anthropology and focus on the development of mankind, this institution added yet another layer of meaning. In 2000, the Pavillon des Sessions (the Department of the Arts of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas) at the Louvre opened as a satellite for the Musée du Quai Branly (which took over the ethnographic collections of the Musée de l'Homme but did not open until June 2006). "Gou" was selected as one of the "masterpieces" for this presentation. Summarizing the migration of this object from Dahomey to France, Beaujean-Baltzer writes: "A century later, Gou entered the Louvre by accumulating the status of god of iron, spoils of war, work of art, avant-garde work and masterpiece" (Beaujean-Baltzer 2007) (‣**Masterpiece**). This "masterpiece" of "African art" is indeed a product of the contact zone on both a local and global level.

Returning to the figure's context in Dahomey, something else becomes obvious: Even at the time of its production in the mid-nineteenth century and while being used as a power figure, the Gou sculpture may already be seen as a "modern" artefact or artwork in its own right. In Dahomey and Fon culture, its production meant a departure from tradition and innovation, as the god of iron had previously been represented by a non-figurative mound of earth with pieces of iron sticking out of it (Adandé et al. 1999). The anthropomorphic depiction is thus a manifestation of an aesthetic modernity in West Africa marked by transcultural exchange in the contact zone (‣**Multiple Modernities**). The fact that this contact zone is still very much politically contested became evident in 2016 when the Republic of Benin officially claimed repatriation of objects from Dahomey in French public collections that had been taken during the colonial era, including the Gou figure (‣**Return**). Thus, the object biography of this famous piece remains open-ended.

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Figures

Fig. 1: © bpk / RMN – Grand Palais / Hughes Dubois, inv. 94.32.1.

Fig. 2: © 2020. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York / Scala, Florence.

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Figure 1: *Helmet mask, batcham / tsesah*, Master of the Bamileke region, Cameroon, Bamendjo, 19th c., Wood, 72 × 51 × 37 cm, diam. 19.5 cm, Museum Rietberg, RAF 721, Gift of Eduard von der Heydt. Provenance: Gustav Umlauff, Hamburg (before 1914); Sally Falk, Mannheim (1920); Karl Nierendorf, Berlin (ca. 1920–1924); Eduard von der Heydt Collection (1924–).

Rhea Blem

Becoming a Masterpiece? The *Batcham Mask* and its Display at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich

Abstract This chapter presents a critical discussion of the display of the so-called *Batcham mask* at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich in 2016, and links this to its reception and canonization in a Euro-American context. The mask's masterpiece status and its decontextualized presentation are found to obscure parts of its biography. Many open questions remain concerning the object's history before reaching Europe, its fabrication and intended purposes, but also the colonial circumstances surrounding its acquisition, its trading and subsequent entrance into the collection of Eduard von der Heydt, the founding donor of the museum. This chapter seeks to investigate these gaps in information and attempts to recontextualize the mask by redirecting the focus onto its 'original' context. Lastly, it explores possibilities for alternative approaches to discussing its history and contemporary display within a local environment.

Keywords Batcham / tsesah, Bamileke Mask, Masterpiece, Eduard von der Heydt, Provenance, Primitivism, Museum Display, Object Biography

Blem, Rhea. 2021. "Becoming a Masterpiece? The 'Batcham Mask' and its Display at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich." In *Reading Objects in the Contact Zone*, edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Anna Sophia Messner, 148–154. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 9. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing.
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At the heart of the permanent display of African art at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich stands an object that has come to be referred to as the *Batcham mask*.[1] It is presented as one of the 'highlights' of the collection, suggesting that a significant amount of prestige is associated with its possession.

The wooden mask is of considerable size and was designed to fit on top of the wearer's head. A crest of accentuated eyebrows rises steeply upward from the forehead, forming two elongated arcs whose semi-circular shape is emphasized by parallel lines that converge centrally. Their calm, rhythmic quality is echoed by vertical lines reminiscent of baleen bristles, which form a mouth, and ears. The eyes are oblong and large and have small perforations in their surface. The cheeks correspond inversely to the bulbous nostrils, which are reduced to two demi-orbs on either side of the nose.

Positioned at a central point against a black partition wall, the *Batcham mask* is presented in an aestheticized manner and isolated from the rest of the collection. In a brief exhibition video featuring Lorenz Homberger, former curator of the Africa and Oceania Department, the mask is hailed as an "ingenious masterpiece of an African artist" (Museum Rietberg 2013a). Emphasis is given to its monumentality, fine workmanship, and provenance, thereby embedding it in a value system of commodified art (‣**Commodification**). By describing the interplay of convex and concave surfaces as "cubist" and "modern," this presentation participates in a rhetoric that reads a modernist primitivism (‣**Primitivism**) onto the *Batcham mask* (Museum Rietberg 2013a). While the piece is visually striking, its mode of display deprives it of any other sensory values, as it barely allows a 360-degree view of the mask. The official photograph of the mask functions as an extension of the exhibition space, reinforcing its emphasis on the visual. This ocularcentric focus, combined with sparse background information, is characteristic of European cultural conventions and is directly linked to the museum's institutional past.

The Rietberg's core collection consists of objects amassed by the banker and collector Eduard von der Heydt, which he donated to the city of Zurich in 1952; the *Batcham mask* was part of this founding gift. The collector showed limited interest in the original cultural contexts of the works (Von der Heydt 1947; Fehlemann 2002). His writings bear witness to a general imperialist attitude marked by an "interest in collecting with the aim of presenting a global overview rather than by a concern with social structures" (Kravagna, in Kazeem 2009, 136–137). This attitude still informs the approach evident in the exhibition video, when it admits that regrettably

1 These observations are based on an analysis of the state of display in 2016. I am aware of the simplifications implied in the term "African art", which presumes cultural homogeneity of vast areas, and of categorizing ascriptions such as *Batcham* or *Bamileke*, which are often remnants of colonial administrative shorthand. Here, the mask will nonetheless be referred to throughout as *Batcham*, as this is the name, which has established itself in the literature and the space of the Museum Rietberg.

little is known about the function of the *Batcham mask* yet fails to further discuss this lack of information (Museum Rietberg 2013a).[2]

Carl Einstein first published the mask in the 1921 edition of *Negerplastik* (Harter 1969, 411), thereby contributing to the object's reception in a primitivist context, as well as to its singularization (Kopytoff, in Appadurai 1986). This in turn paved the way for its inclusion in the seminal 1934–1935 exhibition *African Negro Art* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which pioneered the by now firmly established conventions of display (Sweeney 1935). The show marked a turning point in the life of the objects shown there, an irrevocable change in their meaning; it "transformed [them] from indexes of another way of life into masterpieces of world art" (Paudrat, in Rubin 1984, 164) (‣**Masterpiece**).[3] Views of the exhibit show the mask positioned on an unlabeled cylindrical pedestal in a white cube (MoMA Archives 2017). In placing the works in an artificial vacuum outside of time and space, this overtly aestheticizing presentation was formative for subsequent museological practice relating to African art. Today's minimalist display at the Rietberg, as well as the official photograph of the mask, reflects this pattern of decontextualization.

For all the attention given to prominent owners, dealers, collectors, and publications linked to the mask, its mode of display today reveals comparatively little about its life before leaving Cameroon. We have little specific information regarding the mask's original context, and also its function has been a subject of uncertainty in the literature. Nor has the exact age of the piece been established; it is dated very generally as "nineteenth century," a vagueness it shares with many contemporary pieces due to difficulties in dating wood and a lack or loss of records.

It was recently ascribed to the western Bamileke kingdoms, Bamileke being a blanket term used for several diverse societies living in parts of the Cameroon grasslands (Museum Rietberg 2013a). Currently titled "Batcham Mask of a Bamendjo master,"[4] the consensus is that it was manufactured at the latter location but probably commissioned by a Batcham chiefdom (Illner et al. 2013, 150). The mask's obscure origin and

2 This primarily concerns the display in the year 2016. The presentation has, apart from some minor adjustments, such as the removal of the exhibition video, remained in this state until 2019. It seems safe to presume that plans for the rejuvenation of the permanent exhibition are underway.

3 A later edition of William S. Rubin's book on *Primitivism in 20th Century Art* reinstated the mask as part of the new canon of internationally renowned African art (1984, 138).

4 In 1993, Jean-Paul Notué proposed the alternative title 'tsesah' for a similar mask previously in the Welcome collection and later at the Fowler Museum in Los Angeles. Nonetheless, the term 'Batcham' was by that time firmly established and has continued to prevail in connection with these and similar masks in the space of the museum until the 1990s (see Notué 1993; Biro 2018). Recently, the Museum Rietberg has adapted its description of the mask to include 'tsesah'. This move indicates an awareness for these problems and shows a concerted effort to use language that references the cultural context in which objects were made and used. Many thanks to Michaela Oberhofer for pointing me towards this term and for her valuable literature advice.

function is indicative of the complex dynamic of economic and artistic exchange occurring in the area, as both "these two chiefdoms, and Batcham in particular, were located at important cross-roads linking the four corners of the Bamileke region" (Harter 1969, 416). It is possible that the mask was manufactured in an entirely different part of the area but brought to either Batcham or Bamendjo as a result of such inter-regional transfers (Biro 2018, 127–130). Since courts routinely exchanged gifts, confusion regarding the birthplaces of objects could have arisen even before their removal from the African continent (von Lintig 1994, 110).

What is certain is that the *Batcham mask* was firmly embedded in a courtly environment (Illner et al. 2013). Bettina von Lintig further contextualizes the mask in comparison with a heterogeneous group of related pieces found across the Bamileke area (Illner et al. 2013, 108–109). She considers the fractal partitioning of the face as characteristic of "night masks" of the highland Bangwa in the western Bamileke region (Illner et al. 2013, 110). Together with similar examples, the mask is thought to have played a role in certain inaugurations and royal ceremonies (Illner et al. 2013, 144). Contrary to what its display might suggest, it was not conceived as 'pure sculpture' but would have been part of a complete multi-sensory performance embedded in a web of political and religious symbolism.

The mask's provenance is well documented and vaunted in both the literature and the exhibition video, but only from its time of arrival on European shores. Major gaps in the history of the mask confront the viewer with issues concerning colonial history and the migration of objects. Under what circumstances did its source communities part with it? With whom and with what other cargo did it travel and how did it eventually find its way into the possession of a German collector?

There seems to be a tension between the void of missing background information about the mask and the way it is staged as an "icon of world art" (Museum Rietberg 2013a). Against this backdrop, the *Batcham mask*'s presentation at the Museum Rietberg raises the question of how to move beyond its historical meaning as a trophy (‣**Decolonizing**)?

How, then, might such a recontextualization of this object be achieved? It seems crucial not to erase the inherited remnants of colonial discourse, but instead to become aware of and reveal them. Viewers could be directly confronted with the issues stemming from the circulation of non-European objects and aesthetics. Colonial appropriation practices should be made explicit in the display (‣**Appropriation**). In other words, the mask should be *discussed*, not simply *shown.* This would include sketching the paths of migration of the *Batcham mask*, recognizing its biography before its arrival on European shores and disclosing the circumstances under which the transfers took place. Furthermore, the information gap should be acknowledged and articulated. Uncertainties or missing sources, a common issue for objects collected across the African continent around the

turn of the century, should be discussed as well, as they are symptomatic of broader patterns. Once acknowledged, the 'absence' of sources could reveal a great deal about the way these objects were interacted with in the past.

On a conceptual level, this would involve an interactive exploration of colonial histories, representational strategies of the 'Other' (▸**Othering**), and an explicit questioning of past and present display practices. Even though the 'original' context of the mask is bound to have developed and changed, a dialogue could be initiated with the Bamileke source communities; this could, for instance, take the form of research collaborations with museums in Cameroon.[5] Lastly, the mask's status in its local context must be re-evaluated. No region of this earth escaped the effects of colonialism—Switzerland is not unconnected to imperialism and colonial history (see Purtschert and Fischer-Tiné 2015). Perhaps a more direct discussion of Zurich as a center of trade and finance could be initiated, along with the acknowledgment of colonial legacies in Swiss industries.

The notion of museums as 'contact zones,' as "spaces of ongoing encounter between colonizer and colonized," implies a potential for transformation (Clifford qtd. in Edwards 2006, 253).[6] Clearly, such transformative processes are complex, long-term projects. Nonetheless, with regard to the Museum Rietberg's permanent exhibition and the *Batcham mask*, there is certainly room for a renegotiation of display practices and for initiating a conversation about not just the mask, but the collection as a whole. A departure from the masterpiece rhetoric could open up new avenues for discussing the conception, acquisition, and travel of objects such as the *Batcham mask*, so as to begin to explore the complexities of their biographies.

Figure

Fig. 1: Photo: Rainer Wolfsberger; © Museum Rietberg.

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5 Such cooperation projects are in fact in process with the Palace Museum of Foumban i.a. (Oberhofer in Laely et al. 2018).

6 More recent exhibitions, such as *Perlkunst aus Afrika: Die Sammlung Mottas* (June–Oct. 2018), begin to take into account such questions and have explored the entangled histories of the artefacts and objects displayed.

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PART VI

Iconographies of Encounter and Translation

Lisa Heese

The Camposanto in Pisa by Leo von Klenze: The Encounter between a Classicist and an Islamic Artwork

Abstract The article deals with the painting *The Camposanto in Pisa*, by the classicist Leo von Klenze, which contains the Pisa Griffin—an Islamic artwork with a cross-cultural itinerary and one of the most discussed objects of Islamic metalwork due to its uncertain provenance and function. To understand Klenze's perception of the unique medieval griffin, the chapter concentrates on the manner of depiction in terms of style and composition. Thus, the painting and its analysis also give an idea of the reception of a mysterious Islamic artwork, through a Western and neoclassicist lens in 1858.

Keywords Encounter, Reception, Spolia, Pisa Griffin, Leo von Klenze

Heese, Lisa. 2021. "'The Camposanto in Pisa' by Leo von Klenze: The Encounter between a Classicist and an Islamic Artwork." In *Reading Objects in the Contact Zone*, edited by Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Anna Sophia Messner, 157–163. Heidelberg Studies on Transculturality 9. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.766.c10419

In 1858, the famous neoclassicist architect Leo von Klenze (1784–1864) painted his imposing view of the Camposanto in Pisa. Showing the west wing of the Camposanto (completed 1358, Piazza del Duomo, Pisa), the painting provides an accurate rendering of the architecture and part of the collection it housed, even including a visiting mother and child. Its impressive attention to detail and range of colors are characteristic of Klenze's painterly oeuvre. This particular painting, however, warrants a closer look, as it is a document of the history of the reception of a unique medieval object with a cross-cultural biography and itinerary: the Pisa Griffin.

One of a row of exhibited objects, the Pisa Griffin is depicted at the bottom left. An object of Islamic manufacture presumably created in the eleventh century and featuring an Arabic inscription, the bronze griffin is striking in appearance due to its size, monumental posture, and rich decoration. The latter is divided into well-defined zones of scales, stylized feathers, and ornaments. On account of its uncertain provenance and function, the Pisa Griffin is one of the most discussed objects of Islamic metalwork (Dodds 1992, 216–218).

The mysterious griffin has been linked to many places of origin, including Fatimid Egypt, Fatimid North Africa, Sicily, and Iran. In the eleventh century, Pisa rose to become a very powerful republic, wielding great maritime power and maintaining trade networks throughout the Mediterranean world. As a result, any provenance of the griffin is conceivable and at the same time controversially discussed based on stylistic analysis or, alternatively, on inscriptions at Pisa Cathedral. Most likely it was made in Al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) as a decoration for a fountain and taken by the Pisans as a spoil of war on an expedition to the Balearic Islands (1113–1115) (Dodds 1992, 216–218). In Pisa, it was then put on display as a trophy like so many other spolia (‣**Spolia**) and placed prominently on top of a small column rising from the gable above the apse of Pisa Cathedral (nowadays, it is replaced by a replica). More recent studies have called its function as fountain decoration in question, suggesting instead that the griffin was designed to emit noises through its mouth and hollow inside (Contadini, Camber, and Northover 2002; Contadini 2012). Doubts have also been raised about its identification as a war trophy; instead, a Christian interpretation by the Pisans reflecting local cultural beliefs has been proposed (Balafrej 2012).

In 1828, after centuries on top of the cathedral, the bronze griffin was removed and placed in the Camposanto, the fourth and last building raised on Piazza del Duomo, in the location of an older burial ground said to contain holy earth and used as a depository and exhibition hall. There one could find sarcophagi, sculptures, spolia, vases, epigraphs, frescoes, and other artworks from different periods and cultures.

Leo von Klenze prominently included the unique and mysterious griffin sculpture in his painting of *The Camposanto in Pisa*, a decision that is quite remarkable for an artist with such strong neoclassicist leanings. Working as the court architect of King Ludwig I of Bavaria, Klenze had designed,

Figure 1: Leo von Klenze, *The Campsanto in Pisa*, 1858, oil on canvas, 103.5 × 130.5 cm. Die Pinakotheken, München.

among other buildings, the Glyptothek and Alte Pinakothek in Munich, the New Hermitage in St. Petersburg and also developed the exhibition and display concepts of those museums (Lieb and Hufnagl 1979; Von Buttlar 1999). In light of those classical interests, it was common at the time for architects, painters, and art collectors to take the "Grand Tour" to be exposed to and draw inspiration from the cultural legacy of classical antiquity and the Renaissance. Leo von Klenze visited Italy several times to study classical architecture, making countless sketches and drawings he would subsequently use in architectural designs or paintings. Around 1854, he visited the Camposanto and its collection in Pisa (Lieb and Hufnagl 1979; Von Buttlar 1999). His detailed depiction of the wooden roof construction, the traceried cloister arcades, and the floor and his precise rendering of the perspective in his 1858 painting testify to his passion for architecture. His use of colors and of the light entering through the Gothic windows on the right bespeaks his painterly concerns. Based on his work as a curator, he was also interested in the collection and its display; this is how the Pisa Griffin must have caught his attention.

Hence, the painting provides a record not just of the Camposanto's collection, but also of Klenze's encounter with the unique medieval griffin and, by extension, the meeting of different historical, geographical, temporal, cross-cultural, and aesthetic categories. This essay aims to discuss those various encounters by analyzing compositional and stylistic elements of Klenze's painting that are linked to his notions of an ideal exhibition space and his aesthetic thinking, in order to illustrate how he perceived what to him was an outlandish object (‣**Exoticism**) and how he made sense of it in terms of his more canonical interests (‣**Canon**).

Of course, the painting does not tell us anything about Klenze's thoughts and feelings upon seeing the griffin for the first time. Did he touch it and immediately make a sketch of it, or did he initially, perhaps, fail to notice it? The painting does not reflect his immediate reaction, but rather an extended reception, as it is a deliberate artistic realization that involved translating the object into a new medium and integrating it into a new composition.

What the painting does tell us is that Klenze was particularly interested in the Pisa Griffin. An analysis of his painting style and choice of composition clearly shows that the striking bronze sculpture had made a strong impression on the painter, so much so that he placed the griffin in a prominent position. Though shown at the lower left, Klenze uses light and proportion as compositional elements to highlight the sculpture. With the vase just to the left of it being in the shadow, the illuminated griffin appears all the more prominent and, as a result, bigger than the other objects. Especially relative to the space as a whole and the two figures on the right, it is obvious that Klenze scaled up the griffin whose actual height is just about one meter, or 3.2 feet. The bronze griffin also contrasts strongly with the marble sculptures beyond it in terms of material and color, making the griffin the most conspicuous object in the room. Furthermore, in iconographic

terms, the griffin stands out as a mythic creature among mostly Christian, antique, and profane sculptures. Its illumination and increased size create a monumental effect.

As a whole, Klenze's painting of *The Camposanto in Pisa* alludes to several object biographies, since a number of the items on display are clearly recognizable: In front of the back wall and in the row of exhibited objects on the left, for instance, are marble sculptures by Pisano and Lorenzo Bartolini, several reliefs, and vases aside from the bronze griffin. The back wall itself features a fresco by Piero di Puccio showing Christ as a *syndesmos* figure holding the cosmos which, at the same time, is his body. To the right of it are Old Testament frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli. On the left wall we also see marble grave slabs and epigraphs as well as additional frescoes, some alcoves, and parts of the chain of the port of Pisa. Easily identifiable as the northern part of the west wing, the depicted section of the Camposanto includes closely observed architectural elements. While this suggests a sense of actuality, we realize upon closer examination that Klenze, in fact, rearranged the objects for his painting. More precisely, he left out objects that were actually located in this part of the west wing and added objects from other locations in the Camposanto. Thus, the bronze griffin is shown in a location different from its actual place of display among a number of objects lined up in the east gallery (Baracchini 1993). The fact that Klenze included it in his painting thus points to his particular interest in the object and its particular function as part of the painting's aesthetic message.

Klenze's special interest in the bronze griffin is also evidenced by several sketches that show the sculpture from different perspectives (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Klenzeana, IX, 7/36 and IX, 14/12, published in Lieb and Hufnagl 1979, 132, figs. Z 301, Z 302). Yet those sketches differ stylistically from the ones he did of architectural elements such as capitals, temples, or wall decoration. Those he would copy in great detail to create precise drawings, rather than just records of travel memories, and perhaps use them on a later occasion in his architectural designs.

The sketches Klenze made of the griffin indicate that he was interested less in the sculpture's formal aspects of texture and pattern or its Arabic inscription than in its outlandish appearance and unusual subject. The painting, in turn, suggests that Klenze was more concerned with depicting the entire space and the arrangement of objects in it, which contrasts the bronze griffin with ancient and local work, most of it in marble. Clearly, his intention was not to provide a detailed image of the griffin but to show the impact the sculpture had in the space.

At the same time, the inclusion of the bronze griffin in the painting serves to meet what Klenze had described as the two main requirements for an ideal museum space. The first of those was the need to show the development of world culture by including artworks from various periods (Von Buttlar 1999, 121). In this regard, the Pisa Griffin stands for Islamic and medieval handicrafts, thus providing a geographical and historical reference alongside local, ancient, and contemporary artworks. In a way, the

deliberate incorporation of the Pisa Griffin may even be compared to the use of spolia in architectural structures in order to create a historical and cultural reference or a reinterpreted symbol (‣**Spolia**).

Klenze's second requirement was the need to create aesthetic variety, so as to offer visitors a better and more comprehensive experience of art (Von Buttlar 1999, 121–123). Accordingly, he focuses mainly on the arrangement and variety of the objects, in order to contrast different aesthetic ideals and, indeed, different approaches to creating material and color contrasts and juxtaposing the familiar and the foreign or "mystic."

The outlandish appearance of a medieval artwork like the Pisa Griffin fit in well, as the Middle Ages were often described as foreign or "other" (‣**Othering**) in the nineteenth-century West (Ganim 2005, 83–107). For all his keen interest in classical antiquity, there was also a place for the Middle Ages or a medieval ideal, including mystical aspects, in Klenze's studies and works.

As indicated earlier, Klenze was interested rather in representing visual otherness and foreignness than in highlighting a specific culture or the Oriental character of an object. His presentation mode is, in fact, quite neutral, with all objects similarly placed on pedestals in a row. The complex decoration of the walls behind the objects in the form of colorful frescoes, grave slabs, epigraphs, and the decorative floor patterns were equally important elements. In this way, the arrangement as a whole allowed for a variety of views and visual experiences, creating an overwhelming impression that would amaze the visitor and thus make him more receptive to art, which was precisely what Klenze imagined an ideal museum ought to achieve (Von Buttlar 1999, 122).

In Klenze's painting as in his exhibition concept, the function of the griffin was not to offer details regarding its biography, provenance, and previous functions, but to present an artwork in its visual otherness. In comparison to the other objects, only the griffin required a greenish color in the painting caused by its metal body. Its appearance is more rigid than that of most marble sculptures and also figures in the frescoes due to the impressive folds in their robes. Even its essence as a mythical animal stands out from other exhibits such as Christian sculptures, for instance a Mary with Child (both headless), the Christian frescoes in the back, and even profane ones such as the Pisan port chain or presented vases. Klenze successfully used the griffin through its visual otherness—of shape, material, treatment—and unique character relative to the other objects and the surrounding space, in order to create a powerful visual impact and aesthetic experience.

To create this idealized exhibition ensemble in his painting, Klenze selected all objects and architectural details he found interesting and important during his visit to the Camposanto. This approach is similar to that of a neoclassicist architect who collects ideas and individual architectural elements in his sketchbook and subsequently incorporates those elements he deems most fitting in the design of a new building. In the same

manner, Klenze moved the griffin from its original location in the east wing to the west wing and added or omitted other objects. In this sense, the griffin with its transcultural itinerary is joined by Klenze as the painter, and, indeed, by the painting as a mobile storage medium in functioning as agents of cultural transfer.

Figure

Fig. 1: © bpk / Bayrische Staatsgemäldesammlungen.

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Figure 1: Attributable to Muhammad Hasan, *A Mother and Child,* Qajar dynasty, Iran, ca. 1810–1830 (Sotheby's, London, Sale L04626, Lot 24, 12 October 2004).

Janna Verthein

Qajar Women and Madonnas? *Mother and Child* by Muhammad Hasan

Abstract The Qajar era produced a number of paintings that mirror the increasingly close contact Qajar Iran had with European countries and therefore with a Christian European painting tradition. Among them are several depictions of a woman with a child that have in the past been identified as interpretations of the Virgin Mary. A range of factors seem to support this claim while suggesting that this type of painting at the same time differs from most European Madonna-type images in a way that represents notions of gender and family in Qajar society.

Keywords Gender, Iran, 19th Century, Entangled Histories, Translation

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Several paintings from the period between 1797 and 1834 when Fath-Ali Shah Qajar ruled in Iran show a mother and her child in a way that resembles European iconographies of the Virgin Mary and Jesus. In the 1830s, Muhammad Hasan created an oil painting of a woman with a young girl that fits this tradition. The motif of mother and child was popular, and, while these paintings often resemble each other, some of them include closer references to the motif of Mary and Jesus than others. A painting signed by Muhammad Sadiq, for example, dated around the 1820s, shows a mother, her child, and an angel, with an inscription identifying the former two as Mary and Jesus. Both Diba and Floor comment on the use of the Madonna motif in Qajar painting: Floor remarks on the change of clothing colors and lower-cut décolleté that will often make the reference hard to recognize (1999, 139); Diba describes the painting discussed here as a Christian Madonna reinterpreted "as a luscious court beauty" (Diba and Ekhtiar 1999, 208).

Unless they are referencing specific historic or religious scenes, these images tend to have descriptive titles that seem to serve no other purpose than making them easier to identify. Most of the Madonna-like paintings of the time are referred to as "Mother and Child," with occasional mentions of other depicted objects.

In Muhammad Hasan's work, the child is standing on an elevated surface in the foreground holding an apple. The stylized facial features of both figures with thick, dark eyebrows that arch up from the nose bridge almost to the lines of their black hair make them look nearly identical. They have taut red cheeks and dark lines surrounding their almond-shaped eyes—a common way of depicting both male and female faces in the early Qajar era. Both lower their heads slightly as they look upwards out of the image. The woman is holding on to the child's left arm and hip. The young girl wears a transparent shirt, pearl earrings, and brown gloves[1]. The woman's tunic is decorated with floral ornaments and beads and leaves her breasts exposed. Her bead-studded headdress and pearl necklaces feature red gemstones. She also wears a long, dark skirt with a floral pattern, and the almost empty background shows only brown wall and floor surfaces, with a window in the center opening to a uniformly dark blue sky.

Iranian painters had already incorporated European motifs by the eighteenth century (‣**Appropriation**), but during the Qajar dynasty, artists took an even greater interest in foreign images. At the same time, images of women were created in greater quantity for the decoration of palaces and bathhouses (Floor 1999, 81), and Christian iconography became a popular motif especially for lacquer-painted objects such as pen boxes. Assumed to have been created in the first decades of the 1800s, Muhammad Hasan's painting stems from a time when the Shah and his sons extended their

1 In this image, it seems as if her hands have been dipped in brown paint. However, gloves of this type appear in a number of paintings of the time, often with bead-trimmed openings that stand out from the wrists.

patronage of the arts. The large-scale portraits commissioned by Fath-Ali Shah demonstrated not just his wealth and power, but also served a diplomatic purpose when given as presents to other leaders, such as Napoleon I (Raby 1999, 11–14). In the production of artworks that could add to the power and prestige of the Qajar court, focus shifted towards the study of European painting, and at several points during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah, the royal family sent groups of students to Europe and Russia to learn about foreign painting techniques (Balaghi 2001, 165). Concurrently, European artists would be invited to Persia to create portraits of court officials and work with Qajar painters; Muhammad Hasan thus met French painter Jules Laurens during the reign of Muhammad Shah Qajar (Diba and Ekhtiar 1999, 221–222). Although little is known about the exact way in which this exchange affected Qajar painters—accounts tend to focus on the introduction of technology and photography, the latter being introduced to Qajar Iran in 1839 (Scheiwiller 2016, ch. 1)—the constant supply of new information undoubtedly helped catalyze the Qajar style.

While the increasingly close contact to Europe suggests that these Madonna-like paintings were directly inspired by European sources, it is also possible that they emerged from the contact with Mughal collections.[2] Although Najmabadi (Diba and Ekhtiar 1999, 82) notes that the Mughal collections focus on more erotic depictions of Mary, the way these images were treated by groups and individuals suggests that, overall, they were perceived first and foremost as religious.

As mentioned, paintings of the Virgin Mary and child were also being produced in the Mughal empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with many of them resembling European representations. It is entirely possible that, as a result of wars waged by the Safavids or Nadir Shah, images from Mughal collections found their way to Iran and, thus, came to influence Qajar painters in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as was the case with other Mughal artifacts[3]. That said, the Qajar images stray far from the traditional religious character of the Virgin and Child that continued to prevail in the Madonna representations in the Mughal empire, where they originally served as religious legitimation for emperor Akbar in the sixteenth century (Vollmer 2015, 9–10).

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2 The Mughal emperor Jahangir had a religious interest in the Madonna. He was reported to have brought back images of the Virgin Mary from his travels and to have asked others to bring him specific images that he would have copied by painters and keep in his rooms. Several miniatures show Jahangir holding images of the Madonna (Findly 1993, 215). Among Hindus, the Madonna was already a popular religious figure and many followers of Hinduism would pray to her. Because of her role in the Quran, she was also familiar to Muslims. People of different religions would visit and offer prayer to images of the Madonna placed in churches throughout the empire (Findly 1993, 215).

3 One of the most famous war trophies from that time would be the Peacock Throne taken by Nadir Shah (Canby 1993, 117). While not used by the Qajars, its appearance is at least similar to the Sun Throne, commissioned and used by Fath-Ali Shah Qajar.

Regarding the more revealing attire in these Qajar paintings, one could argue that images of the Virgin Mary in European art often have a sexual connotation as well, and that this sexuality is simply more overt in these painting by Persian artists, who may have sensed and simply exaggerated that particular aspect in their creations. Najmabadi (Diba and Ekhtiar 1999, 77) suggests that Persian painters' contacts with European women, as well as their exposure to Orientalized European portrayals of Persian women, may have been responsible for the sexualization of the female breast as seen in Qajar paintings. Tanavoli (2015, 12–16) writes about the Farangi woman—an impression of European women held by Iranian men that was in part formed by the import of nude paintings and photographs, starting around 1600—and also about the interested reception of European women's clothing with unveiled hair and faces during the 19th century. His description supports the notion that images of European women in Iran played a role in an increasingly sexualized public image of women's bodies.

At the same time, the Qajar Madonna-like paintings were not particularly well received among European viewers of Persian art at the time. Considering these works ungraceful, critics claimed this to be one of the more unfortunate effects of the European influence on Persian painting (Diba and Ekhtiar 1999, 78).

The gaze at the viewer, which was introduced into Persian painting in the seventeenth century by Muhammad Zaman (Najmabadi 2001, 95), gives the image an inviting nature. The outward gaze became particularly popular among Qajar painters (Najmabadi 2001, 96), which has led Najmabadi to theorize about a new meaning Persian painters attributed to their Madonnas, connecting the motif to family structures in Qajar Iran: Najmabadi suggests that, as a result of being excluded from the intimate "family space" at a young age and thus forced to grow up without much affection, men tended to idealize this lost world and long to be a part of an intimate emotional environment again that would allow them to have tender, loving relationships with their mothers (Diba and Ekhtiar 1999, 81). The gaze at the male viewer thus serves as an invitation to be part of this world once more.

The fact that these Qajar works overwhelmingly feature female children further supports the notion that male society longed for inclusion into a female familial sphere. Another painting titled "A Family Group" (see Fig. 2) even shows a male observer looking at a mother and child through a window, creating a stark separation between the male and female worlds. While similar facial features of both mother and daughter in these images are common, the strong resemblance of the two figures in Muhammad Hasan's painting suggests they might not be so much portraits as a representation of the female part of society.

When discussing European elements in Qajar painting, it is important to mention the shift in the perception of gender and beauty that is reflected in paintings. For example, several paintings from the early Qajar

Figure 2: Artist unknown, *A Family Group,* Iran, ca. 1810, Oil on Canvas, 15.49 × 10.16 cm, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ouseley Album 297, No. 8.

period show both young men and women with red cheeks and big eyes, evincing a similar—albeit not identical, as Scheiwiller (2016, ch. 1) points out—standard of beauty for both men and women. Moreover, paintings depicting young men alone—most famously scenes involving Joseph—focused entirely on male beauty, portraying men as objects of decoration. Najmabadi (2001, 92) analyzes the shift from images showing both men and women with (made-up) feminine features to beauty becoming a trait exclusive to women. Portraits of Qajar leaders of the second half of the nineteenth century follow a more European idea of masculinity and avoid small waists or long eyelashes. Over time, men disappeared from images intended primarily for decoration and aesthetic delight. This has been linked to the decreasing acceptance of homosexuality and homoerotic images due to growing European intolerance (Najmabadi 2001, 98–99). The images of mothers and daughters can therefore be seen as part of the increasingly female depiction of beauty (‣**Gender**).

The painting by Muhammad Hasan is in many ways representative of the beginning cultural shift in nineteenth-century Iran, influenced to a great extent by increasing contact to other regions. As the result possibly of both closer study of European art and exposure to Mughal collections during wartime, it also becomes an example of entangled history (‣**Entangled Histories**) connected to the spreading of Madonna-type images. When considering the motif as it travelled to the Mughal empire, it is appropriate to speak of translation (‣**Translation**). Yet in the case of Qajar Iran, where the mother and child were given facial features and clothing that matched contemporary Persian standards of beauty, the Christian subject was not just translated, but also endowed with new meaning. The way the image hints at a female world inaccessible to men would not have been obvious to non-Persian viewers who noticed above all the overt sexual nature of the image. Thus, the Qajar take on the Madonna motif is a deliberate appropriation of the iconographic formula with the goal of conveying a different message.

Figures

Fig. 1: © Photo courtesy of Sotheby's, 2020.
Fig. 2: The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Ouseley 297, no. 8.

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Figure 1: Spiridon Ventouras: *Portrait of Ali Pasha*, 1818. Oil on canvas, 71 × 58 cm. Private collection, Athens.

Emily Neumeier

Portrait of Ali Pasha: Cultural Mobility on the Periphery of Empire

Abstract This study examines an early nineteenth-century portrait of the Ottoman provincial governor Ali Pasha, who ruled a border region that is now northern Greece and southern Albania for almost forty years. The governor commissioned this oil-on-canvas painting from the Christian artist Spiridon Ventouras, a Greek-speaking Christian hailing from the Ionian Islands, which lay just beyond the borders of the empire. While Western European-style portraits are known to have been produced for several Ottoman sultans throughout the centuries, until that point such a painting initiated by a Muslim notable beyond the sphere of the imperial court in Istanbul appears to have been unheard of. Ali Pasha's portrait stands as a unique expression of self-presentation on the periphery of empire, not only in the act of commissioning the work itself but also in the depiction of the governor decked out in an array of finery that serve to evidence his political and economic status. Furthermore, this painting participates in a wider pan-Adriatic aesthetic that transcends both imperial and confessional boundaries, calling into question a paradigm of mobility that assumes an encounter or exchange between two fixed cultures.

Keywords Ottoman Empire, Greece, Ali Pasha, Portraiture, Cultural Mobility, Periphery

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In 1818, the Ottoman governor Tepedelenli Ali Pasha summoned the painter Spiridon Ventouras to his court in Preveza, a port city on the Ionian Sea today located in Greece. At the time, Ventouras was residing on the island of Lefkada, whose main town directly faces Preveza across a small bay. After making his way to the vizier's waterfront palace, the artist was granted an audience with Ali Pasha and allowed to make preparatory sketches (Themeli-Katifori 1960, 206). Four months later, the encounter between painter and pasha resulted in an oil-on-canvas portrait that is approximately life-size. Surrounded by an intricate gilded frame, which could quite plausibly be original, the governor confronts the viewer with a commanding gaze, his lips drawn taut and eyebrow half-cocked. Shown as a seated half-figure, Ali Pasha poses against a dark ground, his luxurious fur mantle and velvet cap almost dissolving into the black behind him. Ventouras has managed to capture the governor's characteristic swagger, which I argue played no small role in Ali Pasha's attaining a prominent socio-political position within the empire and even a level of international celebrity. Weighed down with an impressive collection of finery and precious objects, the man depicted here sits calm and confident in the spotlight.

There are many examples of Western-style canvas portraits ordered by the Ottoman sultans, from the famous fifteenth-century depiction of Mehmed II attributed to Gentile Bellini to several paintings produced for Mahmud II only a decade or two after Ali Pasha's portrait was completed (Kangal and Işın 2000). These portraits, however, seem to have remained the singular prerogative of the imperial ruler, and do not reflect a wider trend of images commissioned by Ottoman elites. Although there has been much recent work done on the exchanges between European and Ottoman artists at the Sublime Porte, the fact that Ali Pasha—a provincial governor who came to power outside of the more traditional circles of the imperial court—invited Ventouras to his domain and ordered such a painting appears to be a rather extraordinary case within the field of Ottoman visual culture.

Taking the portrait of Ali Pasha as its point of departure, this essay investigates questions of circulation (‣**Circulation**) and mobility—the movement of both persons and objects from one geographic location to another—in early modern art. I aim to put pressure on assumptions frequently underlying discussions of cross-cultural exchange, particularly the overwhelming focus on royal court production and the view of cultures as distinct and separate entities. Towards this goal, I take up Stephen Greenblatt's call to resist what he describes as the "compartmentalization of mobility," that is, a tunnel vision in which significant moments of mobility are strictly limited to particular times and places, while, "in all other contexts, [scholars] remain focused on fixity" (2010, 3). In order to locate these new contexts for mobility, I propose to focus on cultural zones found on the periphery (‣**Periphery**) of empire, where one might find trajectories, triangulations, and entangled histories (‣**Entangled Histories**) that suggest a mode of analysis

moving beyond a "clash of cultures." More to the point, when scholars discuss mobility and transcultural exchange in the context of Ottoman art and architecture, they often speak about the movement of foreign artists and objects at the highest level of Ottoman society, i.e. the imperial court in Istanbul. In contrast, this portrait of a provincial governor is the product of what could be considered "micro-movements" across imperial boundaries, which indicate the existence of a common regional taste, rather than the interface between two fixed cultures.

The unusual or perhaps even transgressive act of Ali Pasha sitting for his portrait executed in a style that some Ottoman viewers might have described as *alafranga* (or "in the European fashion") can best be explained by the border context from which this painting emerged. Ali Pasha and his sons served as provincial governors and controlled the region of Epirus—what is now northwest Greece and southern Albania—for almost forty years, from 1784 until Ali Pasha's death in 1822, when he was ultimately accused of treason and assassinated by order of Sultan Mahmud II. In the early nineteenth century, Ali Pasha's *de facto* capital city of Ioannina (Ott. Yanya) came into its own as a cosmopolitan hub situated on the western frontier of the Ottoman Empire. Under the governor's rule, this town hosted a vibrant multi-confessional elite of merchants, intellectuals, scribes, military officials, and religious leaders. Many of these individuals, especially the Christian traders and academics, had been educated abroad in other nearby urban centers—primarily Venice and Vienna—and continued to maintain connections that transcended imperial boundaries.

Ali Pasha's portrait invites an investigation of how these trans-imperial connections contributed to the formation of taste in the Ottoman borderlands. In the painting, the governor is attired in a rich costume, with a vest and black velvet cap embellished with dense gold embroidery, a specialty of the craftsmen in Epirus that was exported to western and central Europe. On his right hand, Ali Pasha also wears a ring, its dark color suggesting either an emerald or sapphire, or perhaps a seal that he would use to officiate documents. This hand rests on a pistol, an object that was often imported from France or Britain and then subsequently embellished by local craftsmen with an outer casing of rich gold or silver filigree work.

Evidence for Ali Pasha's material wealth in the form of textiles, jewelry, and fine weapons can also be found in an abundance of archival documents in both Athens and Istanbul. When the governor died in 1822, a number of inventories were drawn up in Ottoman Turkish to account for all of the movable property found in the multiple palaces that Ali Pasha owned in Ioannina—a comprehensive view of a pre-eminent household's material culture. Two registers in particular (BOA D.BŞM.MHF.d. 13344 and 13346) reveal a taste for European import items such as gilded table clocks, jeweled pocket watches, guns, mirrors, and cut-glassware. The registers also list objects flowing from eastern trade connections, such as sable furs from Russia, shawls from Lahore, and large ceramic vessels from Myanmar. These Ottoman property registers thus establish the image of Ioannina as

a place with a robust mercantile economy. In the same way, the portrait of Ali Pasha also serves as a kind of inventory, documenting objects of mobility that were evidently considered markers of status.

Rather than turning to Istanbul for cues in fashion, Ali Pasha did not have to look much further than his own court, as well as his neighbors on the Ionian Islands. If Ali Pasha's territory was located on the north-western frontier of the Ottoman mainland, then directly on the other side of that political border were the Ionian Islands—including Lefkada, the home of the painter Ventouras. When Ali Pasha first came to power, the Ionian Islands had long been held by the Venetians, but after Napoleon's invasion in 1798 this area became a revolving door of occupying French, Russian, and British forces. This jockeying for a foothold in the Eastern Mediterranean was at least in part motivated by what European diplomats characterized as the "Eastern Question," i.e. the anticipated disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The vizier thus entered a fraught geopolitical arena, with international powers bitterly squabbling over territory quite literally on his doorstep, and immediately sought how to turn the situation to his own advantage.

Taking into consideration this highly charged political dynamic, we now turn to what is perhaps the most fascinating aspect of this portrait: the large medal pinned to Ali Pasha's vest, boasting an enormous cut diamond in its center, surrounded by fifteen smaller diamonds set into a black enamel casing. This same medal is described by the British traveler Thomas Smart Hughes, who was granted an audience with Ali Pasha in Ioannina in 1814. Hughes remarked that "The dress of the vizir [...] appeared costly but never gaudy; [...] he has bought a diamond from the ex-King of Sweden at the price of 13,000 l., which, with a number of others, he has had formed into a star, in imitation of one which he saw upon the coat of Sir Frederick Adam: this he now wears upon his breast, and calls it 'his order'" (1820, Volume II, 58). Sir Frederick Adam was a military officer who would eventually be appointed as British High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, and from Hughes' account it can be understood that he had at least one meeting with the governor. At such a high-stakes encounter—the British had great interest in Ali Pasha and his ability to curb the French in the region—there is no doubt that Adam would have come in full regalia, including medals awarded by the British crown. Thus, within this painting there is represented on the very person of the vizier the exchange of both objects and fashions across a razor-thin imperial border.

Finally, the act of commissioning a portrait itself serves as a notable example of Ali Pasha's engagement with regional taste, which could be thought of as a shared Italianate-Adriatic zone of visual culture. Despite the numerous portraits of Ali Pasha that circulated in European books in the first decades of the nineteenth century, this painting remains the only known instance of the governor himself initiating such a likeness. Because Ventouras was from the Ionian Islands, this painter who was brought in to create Ali Pasha's portrait could also be considered part of a community in

the Venetian "borderlands." The majority of the population on the Ionian Islands were Orthodox Christians, but the longstanding Venetian influence in this region meant that its inhabitants participated in a wider Adriatic cultural zone, many being fully bilingual in Italian and Greek as well as traveling to Venice (which had the first major Greek printing press) for both intellectual and mercantile opportunities. Like many young men on the Ionian Islands, Ventouras was sent to Venice for his education, where he studied painting for ten years before he returned home in 1795 (Themeli-Katifori 1960, 203).

Once back in Lefkada, Ventouras not only became well known as an accomplished painter of icons for local Orthodox churches, but also gained a reputation as a portrait artist, capturing the likenesses of local officials and clergymen alike. Ventouras' renown evidently extended across the narrow strait that divided Lefkada from the Ottoman Empire, to Ali Pasha's court in Ioannina. In 1818, the governor asked the Ottoman consul in Lefkada, Marinos Lazaris, to make arrangements for Ventouras to cross the strait and come to the port of Preveza. After this meeting, the finished painting was finally transported in the summer of 1818 to be presented to the governor at one of his palaces in Ioannina.

The fact that Ioannina was a flourishing cultural center in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is no secret to Greek historians who have devoted particular energy to situating Ioannina within the broader context of what is commonly referred to as the "Greek Enlightenment." This line of scholarship, however, tends to focus exclusively on the Christian communities in Ioannina, and explains the consumption of luxury goods and the patronage of artists as a phenomenon occurring in spite of the Ottoman "occupation" of the region. Yet, I would like to suggest a revised view of the Ottoman period, acknowledging the agency of the governor as a partner of the Christian elites (‣**Agency**), facilitating and encouraging these trans-imperial connections by opening the cities of Vlora and Preveza as free ports as well as rebuilding the main road networks that connect these towns with the provincial seat in Ioannina.

Objects such as Ali Pasha's canvas portrait or the piles of imported luxury items described in Ottoman registers cannot be fully explained by an East/West (‣**East/West**) discourse of mobility, which paradigmatically considers cross-cultural transfers only at the highest political levels, the various courts of imperial rulers. While the Ottoman capital in Istanbul stands as an important center for trans-regional cultural exchange, the patterns of cultural fashioning and consumption in Ioannina during the time of Ali Pasha are perhaps better understood as a shared regional tradition that existed on both sides of imperial borders straddling the Adriatic. Ali Pasha summoning Ventouras from Lefkada to Preveza, even though technically a trans-imperial exchange, in reality only required a 45-minute journey by rowboat. There is no question that these geopolitical borders were well known and observed by the various actors on the ground—and, if one looks through diplomatic archives, these boundaries were often

vehemently contested and fought over. Nevertheless, what I have aimed to demonstrate is that scholars should be wary of relying too heavily on the monolithic designations these boundaries suggest when discussing moments of cultural production in areas on the periphery. In the case of Ali Pasha, the governor was not necessarily interested in having a portrait done in the "Western" or "*alafranga*" style, but rather the regional style, the style in which every important figure in the immediate area, whether a colonial officer on the Ionian Islands or a local archbishop, participated. This border zone accommodated a diversity of individuals of multiple confessions, language backgrounds, and ethnicities. In a similar manner, the portrait of Ali Pasha serves as a visual capsule, recording not only the likeness of the governor but also the confluence of both objects and moments of encounter at his court—a portrait of a pasha, but also of the periphery itself.

Figure

Fig. 1: Private collection, Athens.

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PART VII

Perceptions between Image and Text

Sria Chatterjee

The Arts of Science in the Contact Zone: A Satirical Picture

Abstract This chapter focusses on a print by the artist Gaganendranath Tagore done in 1922, which features the biophysicist Jagadish Chandra Bose and his experiments in plant science. Considering the overlapping networks of art, science, and nationalist politics within a particular sphere in early twentieth-century British India, the chapter explores the connections between human and non-human contact zones as well as questions around religion and science and the politics of colonial knowledge between the metropole and the colony.

Keywords Art and Science, Expanded Contact Zone, Plants, Caricature, Nationalism, Politics

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The object I focus on in this short essay is a black and white print by Gaganendranath Tagore (1867–1938) from a portfolio of "satirical pictures" published in 1921 by Thacker and Spink titled *Reform Screams*. While the portfolio serves to establish a context of political feeling and social reform in pre-independence India through satire, the print I have chosen allows for access into a contact zone that is not only geographic but also one that lies between human and non-human worlds (‣**Expanded Contact Zone**). In this image, Gaganendranath depicts the Indian scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose (1858–1937) who pioneered the investigation of radio waves and experiments in plant science. Bose is particularly remembered for his experiments that proved that both organic and inorganic matter respond to external stimuli. Titled *Inanimate Scream*, Gaganendranath's picture provokes questions related to religion and science and the politics of colonial knowledge between the metropole and the colony. Through the web of relations and displacements (both geographic and disciplinary) the object unspools, this essay explores the relevance and future of the concept of the contact zone in contemporary art history.

The central figure in this black and white print is seated in the mountains, seemingly elevated and held up by the range of cliffs around him. From his hand, a spark like an inverted thunderbolt spreads tiny waves across the landscape. The figure with its outline of curly locks and sparse facial features sports an obvious third eye on his forehead. Around him, the trees and plants are alive. Two skinny plants, drawn as active anthropomorphic creatures in mid-protest, march behind him. With big shouting mouths, they wear bands around their waists with the words "Strike" in English and a speech blurb of sorts that asks for "chanda," a monetary subscription for a cause. In the foreground, smaller plants writhe and move. On the far left, a little plant moves away from the mighty lotus beside it, whose flat leaves proclaim "vande mataram," the title of a poem in praise of the motherland composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in the 1870s, which went on to become a politically active slogan in the struggle for Indian independence, having been sung at the Indian National Congress by Rabindranath Tagore in 1896. On the other side of the lotus, the Desmodium, also known as the Telegraph plant, seems to move its leaves in a synchronized dance to a call to "agitate," and on the far right, the Mimosa plant (also known in Bengali as *lajjabati lata* or the "shy plant") twists away from itself to a chant of "shame shame."

So, what is really going on in the busy frame of this image and how does it spill out into the political and scientific context of early twentieth century Bengal? Providing a concise context for the work of Gaganendranath Tagore and his milieu, this object allows me to explore the relationships between art, science, and political irony. The often-wary reception of Bose's work both in India (by Indians who sneered at his practice in Western science and choice of working in Britain) and in the West (by the scientific

Inanimate Scream:—Inanimate nature responding to the Professor's musings.

Figure 1: Gaganedranath Tagore: *Reform Screams, Satirical Pictures*. 1921. Thacker and Spink.

community wary of his affinity to Indian philosophy), Bose's contested positions in both worlds were ripe for double meanings and irony in the caricature form.

Gaganendranath Tagore was born into the illustrious Tagore family in 1867. His brother Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951) and uncle Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) were amply involved in the intellectual and creative fervor that characterized the early years of the Indian freedom movement in elite Bengali circles. The condition of being colonial in these circles was a particularly complex one. The intellectual elite behind the processes of Indian modernism were caught, between embodying the very fruits of colonial education, knowledge systems, and fiscal relationships based on land revenue that profited the landed gentry, on the one hand, and the burgeoning struggle for India's independence and independent identity, on the other. I argue that Gaganedranath's caricatures are a site not only for these formal, social, and political tensions, but also a creative strategy that may be understood as a self-reflective coping mechanism in a world in flux. His caricatures range from the harshest social critique of Bengali society highlighting the contradictory and exploitative ways of the "westernized," educated Bengali male, to violent political events, and humorous, yet, more sober takes on Gaganendranath's illustrious contemporaries. It is in the last category that my object falls. Having moved away from the lampooning quality of the grotesque figures of his earlier portfolios such as those in Adbhut Lok (The Realm of the Absurd 1917), this series of caricatures holds the self at ironical distance, laughing good-naturedly and yet with a certain trepidation at the intensely embedded structures of the individual educated Bengali scientist and intellectual in colonial forms of knowing and being. As Sanjukta Sunderason aptly puts it: "colonial caricature prompted self-ironical laughter that erupted through a 'fertile relationship of contradiction' with what the historian Ranajit Guha calls the 'braided temporalities of the colonial city, which remained irretrievably split between the time of the colonized and the colonizer'" (Sunderason 2016, 4).

The Bichitra club (active between 1916 and 1920) met on the southernmost verandah of the Tagore family mansion in Jorasakho. It became a semi-organized society of sorts for the Tagores, especially Abanindranath and Gaganendranath and their friends and students, where experimentation in the creative arts was the primary goal. It stood for a capricious intellectualism where the distinctions between art, design, home, and stage were constantly being challenged. Gaganendranath's cartoons came out of the Bichitra Club moment and are reminiscent of his early black and white ink sketches of 1907–1911. While Gaganendranath's pre-1917 watercolors and his post-1921 Cubist works have been regarded as his consistent and major contributions to Indian modernism (‣**Multiple Modernities**), his caricatures primarily circulated (‣**Circulation**) as portfolio prints and were sometimes reproduced in journals such as the

*Modern Revie*w and *Prabasi* ("Expatriate") (Sunderason 2016, 10). The intimate circle of important friends of the Tagore household included, among others, the scientist Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose, the chemist Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray, the educator Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, and Sir Surendranath Banerjee, one of India's earliest political leaders during the British Raj, all of whom were to become not-so-subtle subjects of Gaganendranath's sketches.

J. C. Bose was a close friend of Rabindranath's and visited him often in Calcutta, at the Tagore estate in Selidah and then in Santiniketan (Tagore, 1981). In Bose's professional life, Rabindranath helped secure funding for Bose's continued scientific research in Britain from the Maharaja (Prince) of Tripura, a state in northeastern India. Educated at St. Xavier's College in Calcutta, Bose went on to England to earn several degrees in the sciences from Cambridge and the University of London. His professors at Cambridge remained supportive of his research and sponsored him to the Royal and Linnean Societies. Bose's research in microwave physics was readily accepted and used by his European contemporaries (Patrick Geddes 1920). In fact, it was Bose's Mercury Coherer that was used by Gugliemo Marconi, the Italian scientist and inventor of the modern telephone, to receive the radio signal in his first transatlantic radio communication experiment (Shepherd 2009, 106). Yet his plant researches were met with hostility by the mechanistic materialist philosophy of science that prevailed in Victorian Britain. The prominent electrophysiologists at the time were reluctant to accept Bose's conclusions that all plants possess a nervous system, a form of intelligence, and a capacity for remembering and learning (Shepherd 2012, 196). Bose's ideas attracted neovitalists who saw the future of biology in metaphysics, such as the biologist and urban planner Patrick Geddes, who lived and worked in India. In the correspondence exchanged between Bose and Tagore, it is evident that, for Bose, his research in science, especially his experiments in plant physiology, was not divorced from but in conversation with ideas of life and living mechanisms in Indian philosophy. Arguing that all matter had life-like properties, Bose claimed that "at the source of both the inner and outer lives is the same Mahashakti who powers the living and the non-living, the atom and the universe" (Bose, quoted in Nandy 1995, 29). The epitaph to Bose's first scientific monograph, *Response in the Living and Non-Living* (1902), reads: "The real is one: wise men call it variously." In quoting a well-known statement from the Rig Veda, Bose implied that he believed his electrographic discovery that the animate and the inanimate world are one was an affirmation of the unity of life that the Vedas proposed (Brown 2016, 104).

Bose's scientific stance was soon to become a political one. Legitimizing science not simply as a knowledge system created and ratified only by the West, but as a discipline perfectly compatible with and perhaps bound to Eastern philosophy, his work set into motion a new kind of nationalism embraced and disseminated by political figures

such as Rabindranath and the monk Vivekananda. In a letter written to Rabindranath in 1901, Bose acknowledges his commitment to the freedom struggle and demonstrates the links between biology, philosophies of science, and colonial politics. "I am alive with the life force of the mother Earth", he writes, "I have prospered with the help of the love of my countrymen. For ages the sacrificial fire of India's enlightenment has been kept burning, millions of Indians are protecting it with their lives, a small spark of which has reached this country [Britain] (through me)" (Sen 1994, 92).

Gaganendranath's caricature of Bose seated in the mountains with a third seeing eye conflates him with the Hindu deity Shiva who resides in the Kailash mountain range. Considered a continuation of the Vedic deity Indra, who was associated with lightning and thunder, Shiva's third eye and trident standing in for the forces of creation and destruction reinforce Gaganendranath's reference to the god-like capacities of the scientist, innovator, and holder of knowledge in the higher realms that remain inaccessible to the lay person, while placing Bose in the almost comic position of playing god. This element of theater comes alive more urgently in the rhythmic and coordinated response of the plants to Bose's trident / electricity transmitter. Functioning as an obvious link to Bose's research and inventions in electricity, the waves emanating from the trident animate and hold the visual plane together with a kind of eerie electromagnetic energy. The plants dance as if under the spell of an external force, and while their moves are supplemented with seemingly political slogans, their inability to really act fulfils the pathos and self-irony that likens the plant subjects to colonized Indian subjects. There is a revolution waiting to happen on multiple fronts and yet it is stalled in a state of semi-autonomy. Gaganendranath's attention to detail also signals his interest in Bose's research. While the lotus (Nelumbo nucifera) activates a reference to Indian myth and culture, the Desmodium and Mimosa plants come straight out of Bose's research. The Desmodium Gyrans (now Codariocalyx motorius, known in Bengali as *Bon charal*) has a trifoliate leaf, whose two small lateral leaflets make spontaneous gyrations of regular periods, causing the plant to "dance" when presented with external stimulus or, indeed, spontaneously due to turgor increase and decrease in its own cells (Shepherd 2012). Another plant capable of rapid movement, the Mimosa Pudica responds to touch, sudden temperature change, the start or end of a constant current, and induction shock. Having performed various experiments with the Desmodium and Mimosa to record plant movement and physiological changes, Bose's main conclusions were that plants have a well-defined nervous system, receptors for stimuli, conductors (nerves) which electrically code and propagate the stimulus, and effectors, or terminal motor organs (Shepherd 2005, 610–611). By bestowing life and decision-making abilities upon the vegetal muteness of plants, it was as if Bose had brought to light the suspended condition of speech and non-speech in the colonized subject.

Mary Louise Pratt writes that the concept of the "contact zone" is "an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historic disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect" (Pratt 1992, 8). If, for Pratt, a "contact" perspective is about the ways in which "subjects are constituted in and by their relations with each other" (Pratt 1992, 8), I argue for an expansion of the way in which subjecthood is understood to explore the relations between human and non-human subjects. In Gaganendranath's caricature, the constitution of the subjects takes place in a messy tangle of relations that complicate imperial relations and geographic trajectories with epistemological practices entrenched in colonial systems. The act of speech in the contact zone therefore becomes one that must consider the formations of subjecthood in an active zone of contact that dissects ideology and epistemic formations, taking both human and non-human subjecthoods seriously.

Figure

Fig. 1: Photo: Sria Chatterjee.

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Figure 1: Three *Behar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbooks*, published on the Behar Amateur Lithographic Press, Patna, between ca. 1828 and ca. 1830. Of various sizes, internal compositions, and artists, but predominantly the work of Sir Charles D'Oyly (1781–1845). Yale Center for British Art: T 448.5 (Folio A); Folio A 2011 110 Copy 1; Folio A 2011 110 Copy 2.

Tom Young

Art and Sociability in Colonial India: The *Behar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbooks*

Abstract This chapter examines a series of lithographic scrapbooks, published between 1828 and 1830 by the *Behar School of Athens*—an amateur art society founded in the Indian city of Patna. The majority of prints in these albums were produced by the society's president, Sir Charles D'Oyly (1781–1845). However, they also contain works signed by two local Indian artists: Jairam Das and Seodial. This chapter explores how the inclusion of these artists conformed with a discourse of "improvement" adopted by the *Athenians*, but contradicted the persistent denial of colonial civil society by both British MPs and East India Company officials. In exploring this contradiction, it argues that art is not only produced in "contact zones," but has the potential to instantiate them.

Keywords East India Company, Amateurism, Lithography, Sir Charles D'Oyly, Colonial Sociability

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Between 1828 and 1830, a remarkable series of lithographic albums were published on a private press in the city of Patna—the provincial capital of Bihar, and an important center for opium and indigo production in the East India Company's Bengal Presidency. Time and circumstance have scattered these albums across the globe (**Circulation**): They now lie in the storage rooms of Indian museums; in the British Library's former India Office Collections; in the Yale Center for British Art; and, I suspect, in more private collections than those that I have so far been able to discover.[1] While uniformly entitled the *Behar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbook*, each album contains an idiosyncratic assortment of around thirty lithographs depicting Orientalist fantasies of India. Ancient mosques and temples crumble under the tangled canopy of banyan trees (see Fig. 2); portraits of proud, jewel-bedecked *Rajas* are bound beside coy 'native beauties'; age-worn boats meander down the lush banks of the river *Ganga*. One print captures a tiger hunt roaming through the dense Indian jungle, rifles bristling from the safety of an elephant's *howdah*; in another, the evening shadows lengthen over a pastoral scene of Bihari villagers, mud huts, and Gilpin-esque cattle.

These romanticized scenes were published by the Behar School of Athens, an amateur art society founded in Patna on July 1, 1824, "for the promotion of the Arts [...] and merriment of all descriptions" (*Proceedings* ca. 1824–1826, 1). The lithographs were produced on a private press established in the house of the society's president and Patna's Opium Agent, Sir Charles D'Oyly (1781–1845), and are predominantly his work and that of his wife Elizabeth, with a number of contributions by the society's vice president Christopher Webb Smith.[2] A voluminous manuscript detailing the various activities of the society, entitled *The Proceedings of the Behar School of Athens,* reveals that the Athenians took their foundational claim to "promote the arts" remarkably seriously. The members cultivated an explicitly professionalized self-image, emulating the successful strategies that metropolitan art institutions had used to raise artistic standards in Britain. The manuscript includes extensive details about the society's impressive

1 I have been able to trace several editions in the BL: five manuscripts with little provenance (X445/1; X445/2; W35/3; X445/3; and a manuscript entitled *Selection from the Early Experiments of the Bahar Amateur Lithographic Press*); several albums associated with James Munro Macnabb, husband of Lady D'Oyly's cousin Jane Mary (X1168 A&B; X1169; W6938; and P.2481, a large manuscript with assorted prints); a collection associated with Lady D'Oyly (W.35); and a large manuscript entitled *Indian Scraps* with several prints associated with the Behar Lithographic Press (X.294). For these, see Losty 1989. A loose collection of prints is also in the BL collection (P1819-1822). I have additionally located several albums in collections around the world: one in a private collection in England; another in a private collection in Patna; several editions at the Yale Center for British Art; a version in Patna Museum, Patna; and a copy in the Victoria Memorial, Kolkata.

2 No monograph has been devoted to D'Oyly, despite his talents being recognized in several biographical articles. See Losty 1989. Crucially, no scholar has comprehensively engaged with the most important resource related to the artist, the 339-page *Proceedings of the Behar School of Athens* (ca. 1824–1826).

Figure 2: Sir Charles D'Oyly: *Near Hadjepore*, printed c.1828–1830, lithographic print, published in: *The Behar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbook,* (Patna: Behar Amateur Lithographic Press, c.1828–1830).

collection of "Old Master" paintings, often stressing how such collections allowed Anglo-Indians to copy from "masterpieces" (‣**Masterpiece**) and therefore practice the pedagogic methods traditionally taught in European art schools. It also mythologized the professional artist George Chinnery (1774–1852), the society's patron, who in several panegyrics was framed as the "Sir Joshua of the East," capable of raising the standard of Anglo-Indian painting in the same way that Sir Joshua Reynolds had raised the standard of Britain's own national school through its institutionalization at the Royal Academy (*Proceedings* ca. 1824–1826, 255).

Comparing themselves to metropolitan institutions lent credibility to the Athenians' claims to "call forth dormant abilities" (*Proceedings* ca. 1824–1826, 69), but it also aggrandized their dilettantism in the same way that discourses about "improvement" had legitimized the social value of metropolitan institutions—through the idea that a nation's "school of art" (‣**Nation**) reflected its prestige and power, alongside determining the morality or "politeness" of its public. In light of this, I think we should understand the *Scrapbooks* as an attempt to physically manifest the Athenians' claims to have pioneered "the extension of intuitive talent and the cultivation of the Art in the East" (*Proceedings* ca. 1824–1826, 18). By distributing the albums, the Athenians publicly demonstrated the "polite and useful" talents they had fostered in Patna, thereby casting their activities as both beneficial to Anglo-Indian civil society, and, more abstractly, as a reflection of "national prestige."

If this was the case, however, then the "improvement" discourse adopted by the Athenians contradicted one of the fundamental ideologies legitimizing British colonialism. For, officially, a public was never supposed to develop in Company India, even less a sense of nationhood. Still wary about the loss of the Thirteen Colonies, both MPs and the Company's Court of Directors were well aware that any acknowledgement of a public or civil society in India meant tacitly accepting claims for greater civil liberties, such as constitutional rule or political representation. Such claims were anathema, and instead the peculiar authoritarianism of British rule in

India was underwritten by the conceit of "enlightened despotism"—widely considered a necessary evil for governing India's "barbarous or semi-barbarous" inhabitants (Mill 1856, 322–323). Art's ability to "civilize" society in India, potentially even to cultivate "civilized" Indians, compromised the supposed necessity of the East India Company's unrepresentative, "despotic" rule.

This ideological disjuncture might not have been so stark if the society's ambitions had been strictly limited to white, British officials, but the *Scrapbooks* show that this was not the case. Several of the prints bear signatures written in the Persian *Nasta'liq* script, revealing the names of two local Indian artists: Jairam Das, and his elder brother Seodial (see Fig. 3). The fact that both of these artists were included as signed contributors like any of the other "official" Athenians seems remarkable during a period in which Indian artists were widely believed incapable of drawing *ad naturam*. If the *Scrapbooks* were intended to manifest the Athenians' foundational ambition to "cultivate the arts of the East"—indexically exhibiting the polite and useful skills that they had fostered amongst Patna's local public—then they clearly demonstrated that local Indians like Jairam Das and Seodial could be incorporated within this "politer" society. Crucially, as the ability to naturalistically depict the countryside became increasingly associated with British "national character," such prejudices became highly politicized. British politics, like British landscape painting, was seen to imitate "natural principles." Unable to draw from nature, Indians were accordingly demeaned as lacking the aptitude for "rational" politics.[3] Yet D'Oyly had explicitly challenged these racist stereotypes in the *Proceedings*, writing as a fictionalized visitor to his house in Patna, who, upon meeting Jairam Das and Seodial, reported:

> Of the talents of these young men I had frequently heard; the eldest as a copyist of miniatures, and the youngest of taking original likenesses. Of the truth of the imitative limner's proficiency, I made no doubt, but I confess, I did not so entirely give credence to the assurances of the younger brother, but, in one moment, he showed me the folly of unbelief, for he held in his hand an unfinished miniature of a young lady [...] whose lovely face was portrayed with so much life & spirit that I immediately exclaimed "upon my soul, that is excellent" (*Proceedings* ca. 1824–1826, 44).

Seen in relation to the political valences of naturalism during this period, D'Oyly's presentation of Jairam Das—the youngest Indian artist—as an imaginative or creative agent, working freely from nature and unfettered from the servitude of copying other images, appears undeniably political. Indeed, after seeing his portrait miniature, D'Oyly's character even

3 The infamous culmination of these stereotypes can be found in John Ruskin's "Two Paths" lecture, published in Ruskin 1859.

Figure 3: Jairam Das: *Portrait of an Indian Man,* c.1828–1830, lithographic print, published in: *The Behar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbook,* (Patna: Behar Amateur Lithographic Press, c.1828–1830).

calls him "my new-made native friend" (*Proceedings* ca. 1824–1826, 44). "Improved" through art—potentially even "politically rational"—Jairam Das seems to have been given an ambigous place within the sociability of the Behar School of Athens, and this sociability is materialized and publicized in the physical contents of the *Scrapbooks*.

Crucially, historians have defined the 1820s as a distinct "moment" of Liberal reform in India, a period in which the rights and nature of an Anglo-Indian public became an increasingly pressing concern (Bayly 2012). Notably, D'Oyly enjoyed personal connections to several important "reformers." He had been close friends with the Radical journalist James

Silk Buckingham (1786–1855), whose portrait hung in his drawing room at Patna. Buckingham had reviewed D'Oyly's artistic publications in his *Oriental Herald*, recommending them to a "public" of "the tasteful and liberal among our Countrymen in the East" (Buckingham 1826, 316). Through his second wife, D'Oyly was related to the Liberal-leaning Governor-General Francis Rawdon-Hastings (1754–1826) who, as a series of scrapbooks and watercolor albums in the British Library reveal, was himself part of a wide social network with whom D'Oyly and the Athenians exchanged drawings, which included Colonel James Young—a friend of the Bengali reformer Rammohan Roy (1772–1833) and a notable Radical in his own right.[4] If the Athenians' *Scrapbooks* thus publically asserted their institutional efficacy in "civilizing" a public in India, then it is possible that this public would have been conceived in the same way as these political reformers conceived it: as uniting Europeans and "civilized" Indians (like Jairam Das) into a cohesive social body able to self-determine, which deserved, and potentially even gained parliamentary representation in Britain. This is not to say, of course, that the Athenians were not involved in the colonization and economic exploitation of the subcontinent—they were. But I want to suggest that the *Scrapbooks* reveal the way individuals living "on the spot" in India could use art and the discourses associated with it to put forward a unique view of the country's future, one in which an Anglo-Indian civil society that challenged the logic of "enlightened despotism" could achieve—to quote a letter that D'Oyly sent to his godfather Warren Hastings—"an independence of spirit" (D'Oyly 1813).

To conclude this analysis on a broader theoretical point, I think that the *Behar Amateur Lithographic Scrapbooks* demonstrate two things about "transculturation" and the capacity of art historians to escape the analytical frame of the nation-state. The first is that art is not only produced in "contact zones" (Pratt 1991) but has the potential to *instantiate* them. Art objects formed the material basis for a number of social practices and affected these practices through their affordances: the specificities of their facture, genre conventions, or modes of reception. The collaborative *Scrapbooks* should therefore be understood as the material ground for a social practice through which colonized and colonizing individuals engaged with each other, generating the conceptual space in which ideas about who should be enfranchised within colonial civil society could be put into question. Secondly, I think it is only in reconstructing individuals' lives and lost social practices at the level of personal experience like this that we can add texture and nuance to the "big narratives" a transnational art history should strive to answer. In the instance sketched here, a remarkable archive demonstrates that a network of individuals living in North India responded to their unusual lives in the "contact zone" by adopting metropolitan discourses that actually challenged domestic conceptions of

4 These scrapbooks and watercolor albums include: WD 4043; Add. Or. 4302-6; WD 4402; WD 4401; P2984; P2481.

"national" sovereignty. The *Scrapbooks*, therefore, provide a counterpoint to various scholarly accounts of nineteenth-century art's implication in the rise and consolidation of the nation-state, alongside a useful historical precedent for studying the current rise of transnational corporations or multi-state actors developing alternative forms of cultural sovereignty. As the issue of "regaining" sovereignty recently became one of the cruxes of the United Kingdom's EU membership referendum, it is worth remembering that objects like the *Scrapbooks* reveal how the idea of national sovereignty was contested even as the British Nation-State crystalized into a recognizably modern form.

Figures

Fig. 1–3: Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

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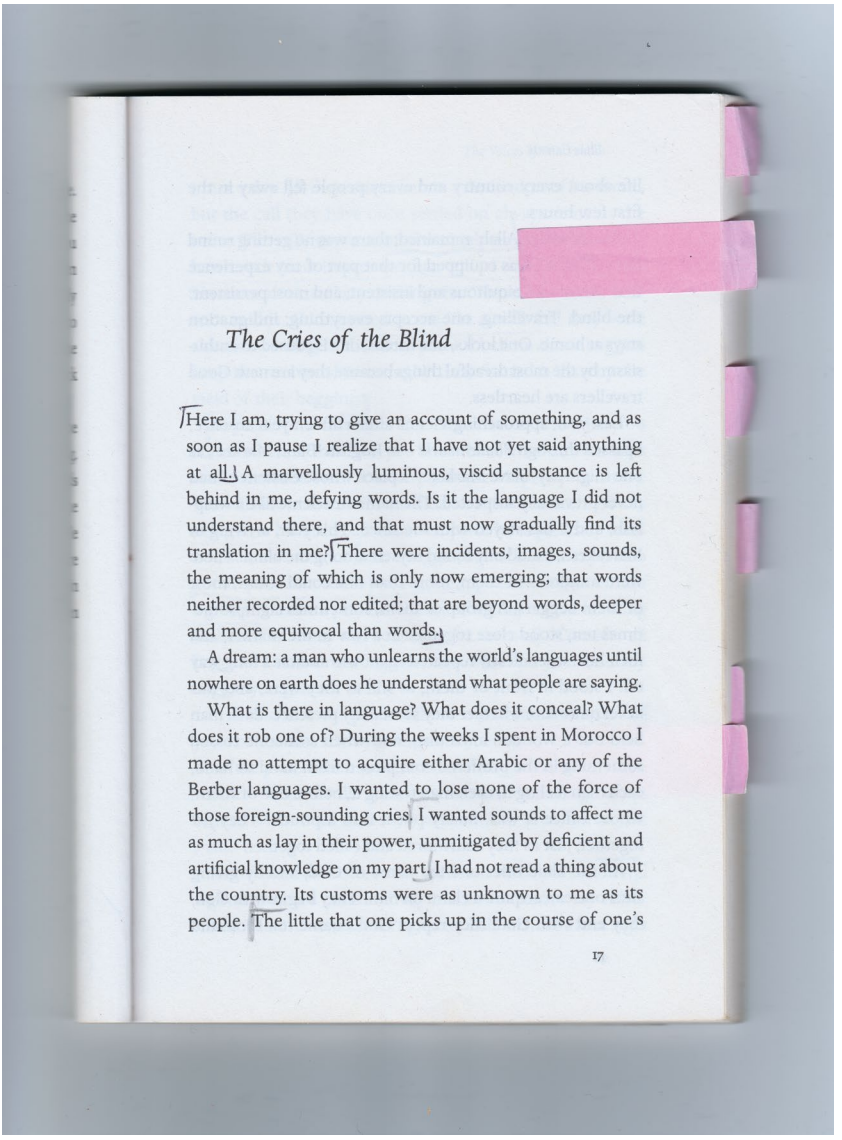

The Cries of the Blind

Here I am, trying to give an account of something, and as soon as I pause I realize that I have not yet said anything at all. A marvellously luminous, viscid substance is left behind in me, defying words. Is it the language I did not understand there, and that must now gradually find its translation in me? There were incidents, images, sounds, the meaning of which is only now emerging; that words neither recorded nor edited; that are beyond words, deeper and more equivocal than words.

A dream: a man who unlearns the world's languages until nowhere on earth does he understand what people are saying.

What is there in language? What does it conceal? What does it rob one of? During the weeks I spent in Morocco I made no attempt to acquire either Arabic or any of the Berber languages. I wanted to lose none of the force of those foreign-sounding cries. I wanted sounds to affect me as much as lay in their power, unmitigated by deficient and artificial knowledge on my part. I had not read a thing about the country. Its customs were as unknown to me as its people. The little that one picks up in the course of one's

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Figure 1: Elias Canetti: *The Voices of Marrakesh: A Record of a Visit.* 2012. [1967]. London: Penguin Books, p. 17. Translation: Marion Boyars Publishers 1978.

Isabella Krayer

Between the Visual and the Aural: Elias Canetti's *The Voices of Marrakesh*

Abstract This chapter is concerned with the deconstruction of the visual, and by extension visuality, as a hegemonial concept and takes Elias Canetti's *The Voices of Marrakesh: A Record of a Visit* (1967) as its subject. Already in its title, Canetti emphasizes hearing rather than seeing. The book, which is divided into fourteen short-story-like chapters, both fragmentarily and phenomenologically describes Canetti's experiences and encounters in Marrakesh from the perspective of a foreign visitor. Ultimately, *The Voices of Marrakesh* is concerned with language itself, as it poetically displays and enacts the culturality of the senses through a complex web of encounters.

Keywords Elias Canetti, The Voices of Marrakesh, Deconstructing Visuality, Aurality, Fragmentary Perception

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In 1954, Elias Canetti (1905–1994) accompanied an English film crew on a three-week trip to Marrakesh, where the latter were producing a fictional drama called *Another Sky* (Görbert 2012, 95). Thirteen years later, in 1967, Canetti published one of his best-selling books, *The Voices of Marrakesh: A Record of a Visit,*[1] recounting in fourteen short-story-like chapters what he had experienced while discovering the city on his own. The book is characterized by a strong interrelation between the visual and the aural. In terms of its autobiographical character, *The Voices of Marrakesh* is consistent with Canetti's oeuvre as a whole; more generally though, it describes a European traveler's encounter with a foreign culture, and because Morocco was still a French colony at the time,[2] this automatically places the book in a colonial context.[3] However, not just the historical circumstances speak of colonial issues, as the book also belongs to the genre of travel writing that has been extensively examined and conceptualized by Mary Louise Pratt (2008). According to Pratt, colonial European travel writing, while meant to bring distant places closer to the European readers as an experience, *de facto* produced asymmetrical power structures, "creat[ing] the imperial order for Europeans 'at home'" (2008, 3). Moreover, such travel writing recounts the experiences of a paradigmatic figure, pointedly dubbed by Pratt as the "seeing-man": "He whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (2008, 9). Seeing and writing are thus intertwined with each other, meaning that what is described is not neutral observation, but a socio-culturally constructed visuality (‣**Visuality**).

Pointing towards the concept of an expanded contact zone (‣**Expanded Contact Zone**), this object distinguishes itself from the others in this volume as it transcends the more traditional notions of the object as material and visual—especially within the discipline of art history. The narrative, which takes the form of a phenomenological exploration, is here approached from a perspective of cultural analysis that aims to unhinge established relations in order to point towards alternative relationalities and methodologies. Bridging the apparent disparity of this object, it is the notion of visuality that serves as the starting point for our discussion of *The Voices of Marrakesh*. The very title of the book emphasizes hearing rather than seeing, and throughout its chapters the visual and the aural are continuously foregrounded and juxtaposed, pointing to an awareness of the cultural pitfalls of sight while simultaneously offering a counter model. *The Voices of Marrakesh* incorporates, thematizes and explores the status of objecthood on a more abstract level, *enacting* both its own and its object's cultural and historical entanglement.

1 It was first published in German as *Die Stimmen von Marrakesh: Aufzeichnungen nach einer Reise* and appeared in English in 1978.
2 Morocco would regain its independence just a year after the events described in the book.
3 For an extensive overview, see Görbert 2009 and 2012; for a discussion considering issues of interculturality, see Durzak 2013, and Fetz 2009.

Visuality is closely linked to power structures. Especially in colonial contexts, the visualization of a colony through, say, travel writing is an "imaginary, rather than perceptual" process which entails the manifestation of "the authority of the visualizer" located in the alleged cultural center (Mirzoeff 2011, 2). This can be glimpsed in the chapter "The Dahan Family", when Canetti meets the aunt of Élie, a young man he encountered: "She put me in mind at first glance of the kind of Oriental women Delacroix painted. She had the same elongated and yet full face, the same eyes, the same straight, slightly overlong nose" (1978 [1967], 67–68). This reference to the painter Delacroix testifies to the workings of imperial visualization, revealing Canetti's own vision as constructed. Delacroix, whose paintings are generally thought to be accurate depictions of what he saw, in fact often painted from memory and pursued a literary aesthetic ideal (Noon 2015, 27). North Africa was thus regarded as a source for narrative material that implicitly produced a cultural hierarchy, one ultimately taking the form of the imaginary (‣**Orientalism**). Canetti acknowledges this by referring to an instance of such an aesthetic ideal.

A kind of assimilatory reversal of this notion occurs in the second chapter when Canetti visits the souks: "Their activity is public, *displaying* itself the same way as the finished goods" (1978, 19–20, emphasis original). The narrator is amazed by all the goods the market offers and describes how the trading itself becomes an object on display. He continues by drawing a comparison: "In a society that conceals so much, that keeps the interior of its houses, the figures and faces of its women, and even its places of worship jealously hidden from foreigners, this greater openness with regard to what is manufactured and sold is doubly seductive" (1978, 20). Canetti highlights the visibility of the open and explains how it is in fact the visible itself that is enticing. What is more, he is wary of the fact that what he sees is a (self-) representational staging of goods for visitors: It is imaginary. What happens at the market is thus a broadly defined visuality: "[…] the ways in which both what is seen and how it is seen are culturally constructed" (Rose 2012, 2). Canetti questions the visible he is offered, for he realizes its artificiality as visuality.

In offering itself, the open thus stands in stark contrast to the hidden in the city of Marrakesh. While "neither doors nor windows" obscure the visitor's gaze in the streets, "[t]he houses are like walls" (Canetti 1978, 20, 35). What is inside is isolated and hidden. The availability and perceptibility of the city is therefore discontinuous and fragmentary (‣**Fragment**). *The Voices of Marrakesh* mirrors this in its structure, for each of the fourteen narrative threads is a fragment, a totality in itself but characterized by a discontinuous relationship to the whole. It is not meant to represent the whole, but rather a facet of what Canetti has encountered there, revealing him as the perceiver. Sibel Bozdoğan (1988, 41) calls such an approach an "experiential sequence" (‣**Affect**). Referring to Le Corbusier's *Voyage d'Orient*, she explains that "[h]is primary preoccupation is less the Orient than the harmony of place and time and the understanding of his own

self in it" (1988, 38). This also applies to *The Voices of Marrakesh,* as Canetti thinks *about* the city rather than picturing it. Through the discontinuous, he considers both his relation to the city and the manner of representing it. Thus, the spatio-temporal discontinuity that constitutes the city meshes with visuality, as the impossibility to perceive a totality is acknowledged.

While Bozdoğan (1988) refers to a visual source, Canetti takes this notion a step further and away from the visual. This is already suggested by his verbal description of Marrakesh, which effectively creates a tension between verbalization and visualization. By making *voices* central to the title of his book, moreover, Canetti points to sound as offering an alternative, immediate, and subject-related mode of perception, thereby implying a critique of the predominance of the visual. Because sight does not require "incorporation [of] or a physical contact" to its object, it is considered to be the most objective sense; linked to rationality, it involves a hierarchization of the perceiver and the perceived (Hertel 2016, 184). By contrast, Hannah B. Higgins (2017, 218) puts forward the notion that sound is not so much associated with "translation or interpretation" as itself a thing to be perceived. This idea is conveyed when Canetti encounters the blind ("The Cries of the Blind"): "I wanted to lose none of the force of those foreign-sounding cries. I wanted sounds to affect me as much as lay in their power, unmitigated by deficient and artificial knowledge on my part" (1978, 23). Here, he realizes the immediacy of perception potentially inherent in hearing that is affective rather than illuminative. Yet, even though he refuses to understand the Arabic or Berber languages, "the word 'Allah' remain[s]" (1978, 23), providing him with his most pervasive experience:

> They begin with God, they end with God, they repeat God's name ten thousand times a day. [...] The calls are like acoustical arabesques around God, but how much more impressive than optical ones. [...] Repetition of the same cry characterizes the crier. You commit him to memory, you know him, from now on he is there; and he is there in a sharply defined capacity: in his cry. You will learn no more from him; he shields himself, his cry being also his border. [...] But the cry is also a multiplication; the rapid, regular repetition makes of him a group (1978, 24).

It is in this encounter that the tensions between vision, knowledge, and language become evident (‣**Expanded Contact Zone**). The blind are deprived of their vision and reduce themselves to the aural and the transcendental; and they do so in an organic, infinitely expandable manner that both defines and augments them. Their cries are perceived as an approximation to God taking the abstract form of an ornament. The directness of the aural thus allows for absorption and experience, for interpretation, however, only after the fact. In describing the above, Canetti exemplifies how the blind men's aggrandizement of God becomes an abstraction transcending meaning.

In *Die Provinz des Menschen* (first published in German in 1973 and in English as *The Human Province* in 1978), Canetti notes after his return from Marrakesh that "Since my trip, a number of words have been charged with so much new meaning that I can't utter them without provoking major turmoil inside myself" (Canetti 1993, 199). He speaks of meaning language cannot grasp, for the experiences in Marrakesh have unhinged familiar meanings and conventions. As a representational medium, then, language is reevaluated, and the mode of perception is questioned insofar as the dominance of the visual is destabilized. In this regard, *The Voices of Marrakesh* anticipates postcolonial writing in being marked by a sensory focus that counters the visual and disrupts literary genre conventions (Hertel 2016, 192). Voices belong to individuals; they are polyphonic and perceived not as detached but as immediate. It is this immediacy that reveals—albeit often from within—the pitfalls of a visuality which, tellingly, emerged precisely in order to overcome great distances. The focus on the other senses as exhibited in *The Voices of Marrakesh* thus points towards a decentering of visuality with the promise of creating a balance in which the subject and its relation to its surroundings is foregrounded, in order to allow meaning to proliferate.

Figure

Fig. 1: Photo: Isabella Krayer.

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Key-Terms

Affect

In recent years, the "affective turn" in the humanities and social sciences has involved a focus on affects and emotions in scholarly analysis. Theoretical approaches and definitions in the fields of emotion research and affect studies are, of course, many and diverse (see Gregg and Seigworth 2010). In general, a new awareness of affect seems to have gained in relevance in the twentieth century under the influence of global mediatization and exchange, mobility, and migration.[1] While affectivity and emotionality, to date, have not played a major role in art history, a growing body of work combining affect studies with postcolonial studies—for example the writings of Sarah Ahmed—inspires a transcultural perspective in art historical research and renders affect and emotion relevant as categories.

Objects in the contact zone are obviously linked to affective and emotional processes, practices, and politics, as can be paradigmatically shown in the field of photography, a central medium of modern transculturality. Recent research in photography studies points to the importance of both the affective turn and the material turn to exploring the history of the photographic image. Those "turns" have contributed significantly to larger debates about the understanding of photographs as three-dimensional tactile and visual objects in their own right, as bearers of embodied and lived experience and emotions as well as of knowledge, in addition to the representational quality of the photographic image, i.e. its notion of indexical, experiential, and evidential truth (Geismar and Morton 2015). Tactile values of photographs are emphasized with reference to photography's literal origin of "light-writing," which generates the polarity of vision and touch in their ability to activate and perform relations between human beings and communities (Olin 2012).

At the same time, the affective dynamics of digital photography and its global distribution through social media also became a subject for research (Andén-Papadopoulos 2014; Schankweiler 2016). Here, the focus is not on tactile values but on online image practices (liking, sharing, and commenting). Photographs, or images in general, seem to play a crucial role in the "affective economies" (Ahmed 2004) of the present age and for networks of social relations. Relationships, affects, and emotions lend images their importance and meaning. Due to their widespread circulation across cultures and nations, transcultural aspects are obviously inscribed into photographs—be it the digital image of today or the photographic object in, say, colonial times (Poole 1997). The relationship of photography and affect "indicates a matrix of the subjectivities of experience, embodiment and emotion of all parties of the anthropological encounter—both observer and observed, as they intersect" (Edwards 2015)—especially with regard to the social lives of photographs in cross-cultural and non-Western contexts and the asymmetrical power relations in colonial settings where photographic objects serve as a medium of social interactions and cross-cultural or, indeed, colonial encounters (Edwards 2015).

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ENDNOTE

1 See the work of the CRC 1171 "Affective Societies" at the Freie Universität Berlin.

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Agency

The definition of agency has become a key site of methodological contention within the humanities and social sciences. Traditionally reserved for human actors, theorists have sought to broaden the term's parameters, thereby challenging the dominance of the 'Liberal Humanist Subject' in academic scholarship, and circumventing the racial and sexual prejudices that have historically informed the idea of agenthood in 'Western' philosophy.

In art history, the notion of non-human agents has been influential since the publication of Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (1998). In this work, Gell devalued the importance of aesthetics and semiosis, and privileged instead the manner in which art objects function causally within society. His account is premised on four key terms—or structural positions—that configure what he defined as the "art nexus": The artist; the index (work of art); the prototype (the 'real' object represented); and the recipient (beholder). Each of these positions can function as an "agent," or a causal actor, as well as the object on which an agent acts, which Gell calls the "patient." The various combination of these structural positions affords multiple "art-like situations." Gell's aim was to avoid appealing to systems of cultural convention when interpreting art objects, and to achieve an understanding of art "as a system of action, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it" (Gell 1998, 6).

Gell's approach complemented a range of art-historical studies focused on the ways that people have historically engaged with inanimate objects *as if they were* living beings (Freedberg 1989; Belting 1990; Mitchell 2004; van Eck 2015). Nevertheless, such scholars have frequently stressed how the 'experience' of the aesthetic is crucial to understanding how objects have exercised agency over beholders, whilst equally asserting the importance of historically specific cultural conventions in shaping aesthetic affect—thus contradicting Gell's insistent calls to minimize the importance of these very issues (Layton 2003; Osborne and Tanner 2007). Most significantly, Gell's approach essentially precludes several of the discipline's more traditional concerns, particularly the histories of stylistic and iconographic change. Art historians who have sought to apply Gell's methodology have frequently struggled to avoid exploring the ways "cultural frameworks" inform how art objects were produced or received. Most applications of Gell's theory thus reorient art-historical analysis towards the political nature of art and the power dynamics it mediated within social structures, rather than fundamentally realigning the ontological or epistemological bases on which traditional art history is conducted.

The last two decades of art-historical scholarship have also been influenced by a radical rethinking of agency within posthumanist and new materialist scholarship. The term 'critical posthumanism' denotes a collection of approaches that emphasize the agency and responsiveness of non-human actors, both natural and artificial. The field has been dominated by Bruno Latour, whose

actor-network theory deconstructed the logic of the "Humanist agent" by examining the agency of various non-human "actants" (Latour 2005). Similar concerns are shared by new materialists such as Rosi Braidotti and Jane Bennett, who have drawn upon the philosophies of Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Deleuze and Gauttari in order to attribute "agentic capacities" not only to non-human actors, but to inanimate matter more generally—conceptualizing nature as possessing an "autopoietic," agentive life force, despite its lack of "soul" or "mind" (Braidotti 2013; Bennett 2010). As the title of Latour's actor-network theory implies, critical posthumanist and new materialist approaches largely conceive of agency as "distributed" within a network or "assemblage" (Latour 2005). The 'liberal humanist subject' is deconstructed by asserting the supposed fallacy of 'autonomous' action, and emphasising instead the 'collaborative' constitution of agency.

This redefinition of agency has significant potential for transcultural studies of art. "Distributed" accounts of agency undermine the rationale for examining an artist's primary intentions, and instead lend theoretical weight to studies focused on the various meanings an art object can accrue within multiple social relationships. Consequently, an object's 'meaning,' as well as its capacity to affect society, can be conceptualized as distributed across time and space—produced as it travels within, or between, "contact zones" (Pratt 1991; ▸**Expanded Contact Zone**). In this paradigm, 'reading' an object becomes a matter of recognising the multiple "agentic capacities" that have come to bear on a work of art's inception, production, and reception, thereby uncovering what Arjun Appadurai has termed the object's "social life" (Appadurai 1986).

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Allelopoiesis

The term "allelopoiesis" was introduced by the Berlin-based research group "Transformationen der Antike" (SFB 644, active between 2005 and 2016). The neologism combines the Greek words *allelon* (mutual, reciprocal) and *poiesis* (produce, create) and denotes the interdependent relationship between ancient and post-ancient cultures (Helmrath, Hausteiner, and Jensen 2017). The term was coined as part of an attempt at widening the

concept and study of "reception." To this end, allelopoiesis is meant to shift the emphasis from the horizon of the reception sphere to the reciprocal relationship between ancient and post-ancient eras. The term is an expression of the ways that the active and selective engagement with ancient ideas and sources has shaped the very definition of "antiquity." Hartmut Böhme (2011) uses the concept in his discussion of the mutual influence between Freud and Aristotle. Aristotle, Böhme admits, was not a psychoanalyst, but after Freud, psychoanalytical models have become so prevalent in literary analysis that any reading of Aristotle will recognize the philosopher's arguments as following a psychoanalytical framework. Aristotle's writing influenced Freud, but the post-Freudian Aristotle has become increasingly psychoanalytical.

The term "allelopoiesis" reflects an effort within cultural studies, increasingly prevalent since the 2010s, to introduce terms that stress non-hierarchical and non-linear relations of influence. A comparable term is the Swedish concept of "*antikbruk*," meaning "use of antiquity" (Siapkas and Iordanoglou 2011, 9–42; Siapkas 2017). Like allelopoiesis, *antikbruk* refers to the modern interests that shape approaches to the—mostly material—past. Allelopoiesis and *antikbruk* are terms by means of which academic discussions can avoid being constrained by questions of correct responses to ancient originals. Instead, they provide a vocabulary with which to discuss post-ancient investments and ideologies that have shaped our notion of antiquity.

In line with this, the term "allelopoiesis" could also offer a way to consider the influence of classical scholarship on post-colonial studies. The very notion that culture is something that can be studied was shaped by early European scholarly approaches to antiquity. The possibility of a receiving culture shaping the perception of the culture it observes or responds to is of particular relevance to cultural studies. The term also provides a way to describe the process through which modern (Western) cultures have used the foil of cultural or historical "others" to define themselves (‣**Othering**).

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Appropriation

The term "appropriation" refers to modes of taking possession, of making something one's own; as such, it is a relational term indicating that something is taken from one group or person and comes to belong to or be the property of another. Appropriation can be physical, intellectual, or symbolic, and can be considered an essential aspect of the dynamics of transcultural interactions and the tension between "own" and "foreign."

Its value as a concept is related to the broad range of phenomena it can refer to, from outright stealing to the most complex issues of artistic and epistemic authorship and transcultural exchange. Generally understood in opposition to assimilation, it can be seen as "a process whereby dominant groups may be criticized and challenged

when they borrow the cultural forms associated with subordinate groups" (Ziff and Rao 1997, 7). It can thus be used to indicate brutal exploitation and hegemonic dominance. This political usage has tended to consider appropriation as a way of reinforcing existing power structures and, thus, to deal with cultures and artistic realizations as closed systems. This has led to a preference for such terms as "hybridization" or "transculturation" in the description of cultural dynamics, but with the loss of emphasis on power asymmetries.

Yet, the term "appropriation" in our understanding, because it focuses on power relations, can also point to their potential reevaluation. In this sense, appropriation describes both a practice and a strategy that contributes to creating new or subverting pre-existing power dynamics. Arnd Schneider observes that one key advantage of the term, especially in transcultural analyses, is its capacity to situate us at the level of collective and individual actions: "The focus on appropriation, as an individual strategy and practice, is required in order to recalibrate theories of globalization and hybridization, which do not sufficiently focus on individual practices" (Schneider 2006, 19). Robert S. Nelson established appropriation as a critical term for art history (Nelson 2003) and stressed its usefulness, especially when compared to traditional art historical ("power-neutral") terms like "influence" or "borrowings": "Taken positively or pejoratively, appropriation is not passive, objective, or disinterested, but active, subjective, and motivated" (Nelson 2003, 162).

For this discussion, we explicitly connect the notion of appropriation to material objects—as a concept for transcultural art history, material appropriation can be seen to represent many levels of social and cultural relations. Hans Peter Hahn identifies different elements in the process of the appropriation of things (acquisition / adoption, material and cultural transformation, (re)qualification, incorporation, tradition making [Hahn 2005, 103]) and describes it as a spectrum of actions that can be taken, ranging from mere usage to complete metamorphosis. As such, appropriation has been part of an avant-garde repertoire of artistic strategies at least since the beginning of the twentieth century. In the 1980s, "appropriation art" became a style in its own right within American conceptual art, one focusing on working with copies and quotations, sampling or paraphrasing existing art works to reflect on concepts such as originality, innovation, and authenticity, and questioning value systems such as the canon of art history. In transcultural contexts, appropriation practices similarly allow for the confrontation of different value systems and the subversive questioning of cultural standards in the global art system.

Physical displacement as part of collecting and display practices represents another set of appropriation processes (or practices) and a research field of transcultural art history. It is essential to understanding the dynamics, desires, and politics of art collecting and ownership, be it private or public, and particularly the formation of "universal" collections that have brought together material objects from different cultures. Since the 1980s, an ever-recurrent debate on "Whose culture?" (Appiah 2009) has questioned the legitimacy of the holdings of major archaeological and anthropological collections, producing both positive and negative narratives of appropriation. The notion of such museums as sites for transcultural exchange and encounter has been proposed in contrast to the metaphor of the "cannibal museum" (Gonseth, Hainard, and Kaehr 2002). These debates imply that ownership is no longer considered a neutral state and issues of physical appropriation have merged with the notion of cultural appropriation.

The notion of appropriation is a key term for transcultural art history and its examination of objects in the contact zone, because it articulates difference. The decontextualization and recontextualization inherent to appropriation practices opens up new meanings whose analysis helps to identify

changes in relational dynamics across social, cultural, and political spheres.

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Canon

In philology, the history of literature, and theology, the concept of the "canon" goes back to late antiquity. It describes a certain set or body of texts that is regarded as normative or defining. In parallel, art criticism and art history developed a body of artists and works that are considered very influential and the "backbone" or "core" of art. The canon thus creates a self-affirming notion of "greatness" or of certain formal and social norms linked to the question of what is art and who is to be considered an artist. Accordingly, the concept of the canon is intrinsically tied to the empirical database of art history as well as to the value assignments of the discipline. More recently, art history has developed a more critical and dynamic take on the canon, emphasizing that it has never been truly stable and defined, but shaped by transnational, transcultural, or historical dynamics (Locher 2012). This critical approach was already adumbrated in postcolonial positions that drew attention to the exclusive implications of Eurocentric canon formation (Mitter 2013 [1977]). Around the same time, feminist art history began to criticize androcentric categories resulting from the often self-affirmative circular reasoning of canon concepts (see e.g. Nochlin 1988; Troelenberg 2017). This went hand in hand with critical feminist artistic interventions that pointed out racial and gender inequality in the art and museum world (see, for example, https://www.guerrillagirls.com/).

In the visual arts, there is not only this notion of the canon as an empirical body or data set, but also a different, though closely related concept. The term "canonical" can also imply a sense of measure, proportion, and interrelation. In the history of art and architecture, it was used especially during the Renaissance with reference to the work of the ancient Greek sculptor Polykleitos and has ever since been applied with a focus on a mimetic approach to the human body, its relation to both the natural world and the built environment as well as in theories of ideal proportion and imitation. Particularly before the advent of abstraction, this sense of measure has served as one of the benchmarks of "great art" within the empirical canon. Because mimesis and imitation have been a primary concern in Western art traditions, but less so in non-European cultures, this notion of a canon has often been identified as an anti-modern and / or Eurocentric category, not just with regard to the subject but also to the manner of representation. One

reaction to this has been the formation of alternative or complementary canons (e.g. Iskin 2017; see also ‣**Multiple Modernities**). Considered in purely methodological terms, the concept of the canon can thus be a very dynamic one, as it tells us something about the relation of parts to the whole or to one another. Hence it is not surprising that, as an epistemic concept, it entered the fields of musicology, logics, and ethics where it was now no longer understood as a merely technical, but as a conceptual "guideline" that is responsive to historical change. Accordingly, canon critique doesn't necessarily imply the revision or abolishment of historical canons, but rather a potential openness to expansion in empirical, formal, and methodological terms. A critical assessment of canons and canonical thinking can be a very viable function of a discipline now shaped by a post-structuralist, post-modern, and post-colonial history of ideas: Issues such as the relation of parts to the whole, the question of measure, of variety and unity, or variety within unity, are immanent to the concept of the canon. At the same time, they resonate with some of the most vividly debated demarcation lines of cross-cultural art history.

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Circulation

The term "circulation" signifies the movement (cyclical, circular, or otherwise) of objects, images, ideas, materials, and people across cultural, temporal, and spatial borders. Circulatory patterns and the objects that occupy them, therefore, connect seemingly disparate social, political, cultural, and religious spheres as well as vast territories of land. As such, circulation establishes and facilitates cross-cultural contact zones. It is critical to understand the multiple dimensions of materiality involved in such exchange as well as how materials move through time and across space. In this way, the state of transit—how, where, when, and why things circulated and not only that they did—emerges as fundamental when considering objects in the contact zone. Moreover, this element of portability, as Jennifer Roberts suggests, is integral to the historical, social, and spatial context in which these works circulated (2014). Such emphasis on passage and mobility within the framework of the contact zone—particularly for photographic material that is most often printed, pocketed, and reproduced repeatedly—encourages a reading of these objects as legible (or illegible) in various cultural settings and puts them in dialogue with each other allowing for exchange across land, space, and time. Arjun Appadurai's model provides an important and useful "new perspective on the circulation of commodities in social life [...] [that] focuses on the things that are exchanged, rather than simply on the

forms or functions of the exchange" (Appadurai 2016, 3; Gell 1998).

Particularly in the field of Islamic art history, scholars have addressed patterns and pathways of portability as early as the Medieval period. This historic assessment of global networks, particularly through gift and diplomatic exchange across the body of the Mediterranean, sheds light on the transnational movement of objects, ideas, and imagery (Fetvacı 2013; Hoffman 2007; Necipoğlu 2000; Rothman 2014). Later, circulation shifted with the changing nature of mobility in the eighteenth and nineteenth century due to industrialization, the rise in capitalism, and the grand scale of trade and traffic (Bahrani, Çelik and Eldem 2011; Ersoy 2015; Fraser 2017; Hamadeh 2008; Micklewright 2003; Roberts 2015). This is especially true for printed media developed during this modern period. For photography, lithography, the illustrated press, and the postcard, the migratory experience is central to their nature as mechanically produced objects. By looking at the migration of images and ideas both inside and outside of capital centers, we can ask questions about a shared visual language (or languages) and thus form a more broad-based analysis of collective (although not monolithic) experience. This "decentered" approach to circulation presupposes connections and relationships beyond national borders or capital centers, and in turn, builds bridges to other areas of art historical inquiry and theoretical investigation. In the digital era, the notion of circulation (online, in social networks etc.) has become highly topical and moves away from an object and material-centered approach to travel and migration.

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Commodification

Commodification refers to the process by which an (art) object comes to acquire the status of commodity, one that allows it to be exchanged for a price that is negotiated by a variety of actors. It can be considered in opposition to relational processes such as gifting; commodities themselves can be defined by contrast to inalienable objects and gifts, categories in turn defined by the fact that they are outside of circuits of commercial exchange and serve interpersonal relationships or civic purposes. Following the supply and demand of the market, commodification processes typically involve a decontextualization or disembedding of objects as well as their appropriation (‣**Appropriation**) in new contexts, deeply affecting the meanings and the interpretations that determine the values attributed to such (art) objects.

Though rooted in Marxist conceptions of the commodity, the expansion of the noun to define a process is quite recent, and as an operational term in cultural studies and art history, commodification gained considerable attention from the volume of essays, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Appadurai 1986), that was largely responsible for establishing the study of commercial object value beyond Marxist issues of production and work value. Art in particular, but also luxury goods have proven extremely important for anthropologists and sociologists in developing a better understanding of the constructed nature of capitalist value-making processes. The economy based on the increase of an art or heritage object's value was recently defined by Boltanski and Esquerre as "enrichment": A collection process that does not produce anything new but rather "enriches" things that already exist, principally by associating them with narratives that tend to affirm their singularity (Boltanski and Esquerre 2017, 11).

Objects that circulate in the international art and antiquities markets lead imminently transcultural lives that can be observed in the practices and strategies that seek to augment their value by responding to the tastes and imaginaries of potential buyers often far-removed from their place of production. These include aesthetic and epistemic revalorizations or, indeed, transformations of their materiality, for example through restorations that change their physical aspect.

The discretion with which commodification processes and related commercial gains are dealt with in art history, archaeology, or anthropology can be seen as generally characteristic of the working of the art market itself (Bourdieu 1977, 4). In the last two decades, however, art market studies have thrived, and a growing body of work has begun to deal with the history of trade in rare and prestigious art objects as an integral part of the global turn (Dacosta Kaufmann, Dossin et al. 2016; De Marchi and Van Miegroet 2006; Phillips and Steiner 1999).

Another aspect of the commodification of art and culture that has received increasing attention is related not so much to the displacement and the trajectories of traded objects as to the movement of persons in the growing tourist industry (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1997; Errington 1998) and how it produces conditions not just for new forms of transcultural exchange but also for cultural essentialism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009). It has become increasingly clear that issues of cultural representation, exoticization, and authenticity cannot be understood without taking into account the strategic role of such phenomena in commercial strategies (MacCannell 2013).

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Constellation

The meaning of the term "constellation" is derived from its use in astronomy: The observation of the stars has resulted in the description of interrelations and patterns that are not necessarily inherent in the cosmos, but rather defined by the viewpoint from earth at a certain position and moment. Since the age of Enlightenment, philosophical debates have underlined the potential irrationality or subjectivity of any interpretation of the stars. This becomes an important aspect for the conceptual use of the term, as it speaks to the "contingency of the empirical" (McFarland 2011, with reference to Adorno, 475–476). In this vein, Kant uses the image of *Sternbilder*, or constellations, when expounding objective vs. subjective epistemics of orientation. Since every act of orientation needs a fixed point (the North Star), the concept of "constellation," on the face of it, implies a strong hierarchical order, a defined and directed viewpoint. Yet, thinking in constellations is also characterized by a dynamic temporal and spatial dimension, as it operates with the notion of change in the sense of a cyclical, repetitive order. Suggested as a term analogous to "collection," "arrangement," or "ensemble" (McFarland 2011, 473), constellation proves to be a fertile metaphor for the study and analysis of material culture and its epistemic rules of perception (see also Krauß, 2011).

Adopted by thinkers such as Benjamin, Adorno, and the ensuing postmodern discourse, the concept of constellation finds its continuation in the twentieth-century history of ideas where it serves to spell out relations between parameters such as social determination, the unconscious, and memory. In this sense, the concept is closely related to Benjamin's notion *Denkbild* ("image of thought") or Warburg's notion of *Bildgedächtnis* ("image memory") (see Schuller, 2011). Applied to the field of visual and art historical studies, it thus can be used to describe artistic manifestations in relation not only to each other, but also to the world and across time, yet without necessarily implying any predestination or teleological determinism.

Accordingly, the temporal and spatial dimension implicit in the historical understanding of the term "constellation" becomes increasingly dynamic and, indeed, "messy" and multidirectional in its modern interpretation. The reference to constellations nowadays tends to suggest an expansion into the field of cultural difference or intercultural dynamics. Okwui Enwezor has described the paradigm of a

"postcolonial constellation" (Enwezor 2003) consisting of dichotomies and relations that transcend the realms of subjectivity and creativity that have shaped definitions of art and its autonomy in Western discourse through to modernity. Based on this paradigm, he examines exhibitions and curators as substrates of an outright "age of constellation" (Enwezor 2003, 58–59). While Enwezor concedes that artists, curators, and institutions and their particular viewpoints always shape the constellation of any exhibition, he also underlines that these viewpoints must be understood and spelled out as intertwined, multiple agencies. The concept of a "postcolonial constellation" therefore provides the potential to restrict the power of overarching hierarchical viewpoints and perspectives. As such, it can supersede the panoptic, directed gaze that has informed visual culture since the nineteenth century (Enwezor 2003, 75; see also Mitchell 1989), while ultimately serving as a central paradigm for an age of cross-cultural communication.

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Cultural Mobility

This term was initially coined (Sorokin 1959) and continues to be used by scholars in the mainstream social sciences to refer to the role that culture plays in upward or downward social mobility. This model presumes a vertical hierarchy of class positions and that individuals can be located within or move between these social strata according to, among other factors, their capacity to consume cultural goods such as education and outward signs of wealth like expensive clothing or luxury travel. Notably, according to the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1979), the concept of cultural mobility could be considered something of an oxymoron, as he maintained that factors of taste—the aesthetic preferences that produce a cultural sphere—are taught and internalized at a very early age, rendering true social mobility difficult and ensuring the durability of the upper classes through its cultural dominance.

More recently, and perhaps more relevant for the purposes of this volume, the literary historian Stephen Greenblatt (2010) has co-opted the phrase to situate cultural studies squarely within the "mobility turn" that has been gaining purchase across the humanities and social sciences over the last decade. Greenblatt is thus responding directly to the wider emergence of what John Urry (2007), among others, describes as the "mobilities paradigm": An interdisciplinary movement that places emphasis on networks, transportation, flows, and migration. This focus on people, objects, or ideas on the move—a natural development in the postmodern age of globalization—is intended to correct a long-standing tendency within academe to assume insularity or fixity when describing models of social structures.

Despite the title of his edited volume, *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, Greenblatt does not attempt to develop the concept of "cultural mobility" as a robust theoretical term in and of itself,

but rather prefers to prescribe a number of objectives for future scholars of mobility studies with regard to culture. Most significantly, he calls for the identification of new contact zones "where cultural goods are exchanged" and the attendant group of mobilizers—"agents, go-betweens, translators, or intermediaries"—who facilitate these processes of exchange (Greenblatt 2010, 251). Yet Greenblatt advises that scholars must also be prepared to account for the indisputable appeal of the local, sedentary, and autochthonous in these new contact zones. Additionally, within the mobilities paradigm, one should balance the concepts of contingency versus fate, addressing the "intense illusion that mobility in one particular direction or another is predestined" (Greenblatt 2010, 16).

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Cultural Transfer

Michel Espagne coined the term "cultural transfer" in the 1980s. Within this framework, Espagne offers to rethink the relationship between the center and the periphery, incoming and outgoing parties, and the relationship between influence and power (Espagne and Werner 1988).

The most basic definition would be to conceptualize cultural transfer as the global mobility of words, concepts, images, persons, money, weapons, and other things. Such a pragmatic understanding, indebted to Stephen Greenblatt's notion of "cultural mobility," is offered as a starting point for interdisciplinary debate on transfer processes (Greenblatt 2009, 2). However, cultural transfer does not mean transfer between static and essentialized "cultures" or the transfer of objects and ideas as they already are, but their reinterpretation, rethinking, and re-signification. Thus, Peter Burke significantly extended the term "cultural transfer" with the concept of "transculturation" emphasizing this exchange in transcultural processes (Burke 2000). It is not a one-way influence, but a reciprocal transfer and appropriation, which generates a new "hybrid" culture.

Central to cultural transfer research is that it refrains from using the concepts of "nation" and "state" and, instead, employs the term "cultural zones" to stress that those entities do not exist in a purely homogenous form. Each cultural zone is the result of a merging of different interwoven cultural elements. Cultural transfer is thus closely linked to the "entangled histories" approach (‣ **Entangled Histories**). In studying cultural transfers, it is important to identify enclaves of exchange and their agents (Werner and Zimmermann 2006).

Hence, the most promising use for the concept of cultural transfer is in subverting the positivist notion of national entities and identities. While cultural transfer studies initially were preoccupied with describing interconnections between Central European nations, the concept has since been applied to more dynamic (global, local, continental, areal, etc.) cultural formations. Postcolonial and gender-related approaches help to acknowledge interactions in transcultural dynamics and question the contexts and power constellations in which such interactions took place (Mitterbauer 2011).

In the process of transfer and migration from one cultural situation to another, objects fall into a new context and take on new meaning. Accordingly, the transfer of aesthetic forms, knowledge, and ideas can be

understood as an act of acculturation, appropriation, and cultural exchange, resulting in a new hybrid aesthetic. The notion of "migratory aesthetics" (Bal and Hernandez-Navarro 2011) opens a framework to investigate aesthetic and socio-political dimensions of migratory cultural products and objects that are active in social, political, and institutional spaces and networks.

The focus on these dynamics emphasizes the movements, relations, translations, and entanglements in the production of art and artefacts as well as in the formation of art histories. The concept of cultural transfer offers a process-oriented approach and a cultural framework for the discipline to apprehend this process and integrate it into the analysis of objects and concepts.

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Decolonizing

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines decolonization as the "withdrawal from its former colonies of a colonial power; the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies." The key words in that definition are "withdrawal" and "acquisition," terms that connote sober financial transactions carried out by mutual agreement. While the term came into being to describe a historical process in the twentieth century (Jansen and Osterhammel 2017) that, contrary to clean text book and dictionary formulations, was a messy, often violent process "[pitting] imperial rulers against colonial subjects" and often "anticolonial nationalists against one another" (Kennedy 2016, 2), "decolonizing" as a verb has since been used as an active process in academic scholarship. Attempts to decolonize a field include the critique and deconstruction of the dominance of colonial and imperial epistemological structures within a field, for instance, art history. Making the important distinction between the decolonial and postcolonial, Walter Mignolo constructs decoloniality as an analytic, endowing it also with programmatic power by moving "away and beyond the post-colonial," because "post-colonialism criticism and theory is a project of scholarly transformation within the academy" (Mignolo 2007, 452). Thus, theorist of art and archaeology, Yannis Hamilakis argues that "the decolonization of Greek archaeology is its divorce from both the colonial ideology and practice and the national imagination." How does the process of decolonization work in this case? It "requires," Hamilakis writes, "the emergence of a range of counter-modernist archaeologies, a process that paradoxically necessitates a reconnection with some of the elements of these pre-national archaeologies" (Hamilakis 2008, 2). While Hamilakis attempts to produce a new methodological framework for archaeology, Hannah Feldman's recent study on art and representation in twentieth-century France provides another

useful way to understand decolonizing as a process. Reframing the decades that have until recently been characterized as "post-war," that is, a continuing state of conflict, by highlighting "the significance of subaltern political agendas on establishing modern French visual and spatial cultures" (Feldman 2014), her project illustrates the relationship between temporal categories constructed within art history and what it means to mobilize "decolonizing" as a verb in the construction of art historical narrative.

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Detail

The detail is a category whose status has varied throughout history. Lexical definitions highlight both its subordinate nature as a minute part of a greater whole and its dynamic character (e.g. expressions such as "going into detail"; OED 1., 4.a.). This use shows an inherent polarity of significance and insignificance. Indeed, in classicism the detail stood in stark contrast to the "Ideal" as being void of any "particularities," carrying a somewhat negative connotation (Schor 2007, xlii). Further testifying to the notion's inherent tension, the detail can be traced discursively in the history of photography, where the concept lies at the core of the dispute around the medium's status as an art or science (see e.g. Daston and Galison, 2006, 125–137; Denton 2002).

Since the nineteenth century, it has gained increasing independence with regards to its relation to a whole (Olbrich et al. 1989, "Detail"). It has become a point of departure for free associations and interpretation, thereby acquiring the ability to point beyond itself towards the abstract and a larger context. One genre in which this becomes evident is the essay (Sandywell 2011, 272). In visual discourse, Alois Riegl's book *Stilfragen* (1893) employs the same strategy of putting details in larger contexts, arguing that one object can be representative for the *Kunstwollen* or "will to art" of an entire culture (Troelenberg 2011, 227). Thus, a downside, especially within visual discourse, is that the detail is reduced to the status of example, and this seems to ring particularly true within a cross-cultural paradigm. After Edward Said (1978, 712) coined the subcategory of the "Oriental detail" to highlight the exhaustive attention awarded to it as part of an "Oriental essence" in Orientalist scholarship, Linda Nochlin subsequently famously introduced this notion into art history in her essay "The Imaginary Orient," where she critiques the obsession of Orientalist painting with adding such "authenticating details" (Nochlin 1983, 122). The "Oriental detail" emerges here as a critical term that, though springing from the imagination, still lays claim to veracity. This tension is a general quality of the detail, as it points to the relation between the individual and the directed gaze, ultimately revealing the efficacy of what might be called a "generalizing detail."

A more affirmative take is offered by Naomi Schor in her book *Reading in Detail* (Schor 2007 [1987]), where she historically traces the emergence of the detail since classicism and methodologically inscribes it with the feminine as a contraposition to the phallocentric ideal, in order to assert the detail's importance and—once again—growing independence in post-modernist culture; a view shared by Mieke Bal (2006, 13–17) who posits that feminist discourse applied to a detail is capable of circumventing the generalizing mechanism.

Nochlin and Schor's more or less contemporary characterizations stand in tension to each other and exemplify the detail's historical, geographical, and inherent ambiguities and ambivalences. Its status as part of a whole and connection to ideologies is what ultimately renders the detail a problematic category. Even when construed as independent, it is always sustained by other agencies. At the same time, it is this very quality that lends the detail a potentially constructive and powerful discursivity.

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East / West

The terms "East" and "West" have historically been used to differentiate between the geographic expanse of Europe (writ large) and the Near, Middle, and Far East. This ambiguous and spatially amorphous terminology remains rooted in nineteenth-century Orientalist rhetoric, colonial ideology, and European expansionism (Shalem 2012). With his seminal book, *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said introduced a critical assessment of East / West relations, proposing an unequal power dynamic between the European and non-European lands (‣**Orientalism**) (Burke and Prochaska, 2008). In the years since, many publications have worked to complicate and problematize the binary structure of Said's approach to Orientalism, including the notion of provincializing Europe and, more recently, the concept of shared cosmopolitan exchange across geographical space regardless of regional boundaries (Bozdoğan and Necipoğlu, 2007; Chakrabarty 2000; Hackforth-Jones and Roberts 2005; Fraser 2017; Makdisi, 2002). Postcolonial and transcultural studies have established a polycentric map that charts multidirectional flows of cultural exchange (‣**Circulation**). This transcends deep-rooted, polarizing

language and works to revise issues of terminology. It emphasizes the movement of images and ideologies across time and space, rather than just from place to place, thus transcending both national borders and the assignment of artists into national schools (‣**Nation**).

By questioning fixed labels and utilizing geographically specific terminology, we can reorient the conversation away from the myth of a world that is divided longitudinally into supracontinental blocks of "East" and "West" (Lewis and Wigen 1997). One solution—as is debated by scholars in the field of Middle Eastern studies—is perhaps to name the city we are talking about—Isfahan, for example, instead of East, or Paris rather than West. Thus, when we shift the way we speak and write, we expand not only the semantics of art history but also the epistemological binaries that limit reciprocal exchange, while at the same time enhancing how knowledge is formed through cross-cultural contact by moving beyond the spatial and cultural constructs of the Orient and Occident, East and West. This shift allows for the discussion of objects to be more than simply "Eastern" or "Western," revealing their material journeys and migratory histories to be multi-dimensional, multi-cultural, cosmopolitan, and politically complex narratives, and thus untethering these loaded terms from their Eurocentric and Orientalist heritage.

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Empathy

The uses and definitions of "empathy" are often vague and variegated, which is evidenced by the craze over the term in both popular and academic realms in recent decades. Today's most common understanding of empathy links closely with its etymological cousin and English precedent "sympathy," which was put forth by David Hume and Adam Smith in the eighteenth century as a kind of fellow feeling, enabling comprehension of another person's thoughts and thereby a more ethical response to them. "Empathy" itself was first translated into English from the German *Einfühlung* in 1909 (Curtis 2009, 11, n. 2), a term that involves a more all-encompassing, corporeal response. This is due in part to *Einfühlung's* substantial role in nineteenth century aesthetic discourse. Whether relating to the perception of objects, images, and spaces or to the understanding of other people, "empathy" surfaces as a recurring experiential and epistemological

instrument within art historical and transcultural studies.

Einfühlung's roots reach back to the late eighteenth century. For Herder, the verb denoted a possibility to understand, "feel-into," bygone cultures, while early German Romantics like Novalis came to regard it as a kind of spiritual merging with the natural world (Currie 2011, 83). Nineteenth-century philosophers, psychologists, and physiologists then analyzed the act of perceiving objects and spaces, its bodily involvement and, later, its subjective emotionality, in light of *Einfühlung* (Mallgrave and Ikonomou 1994). As the nascent art historical field was substantiating itself as a more "scientific," academic discipline, a generation of art historians were drawn to *Einfühlung* studies, including those that employed laboratory results to explain the experience of art. Similarly, the legacy of late nineteenth-century aesthetics inspired phenomenological and hermeneutic usages of empathy, thereby shifting its meaning towards "interpersonal understanding." The most prominent example of an art historian reacting to notions of empathy is Wilhelm Worringer's *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (1907).

The discovery of mirror neurons in the 1990s catalyzed a resurgence of studies that incorporated empathy into their analytical vocabulary. The scientific findings suggested that humans and non-human animals were soft-wired to experience the mental state of others, and thus our species was, above all, pro-social. Moreover, empathy came to be seen as a concept capable of bridging the sciences and humanities, inspiring many forays into aesthetic experience both by art historians and neuroscientists (e.g. Onians 2008). This ultimately cast empathy as a central figure within debates over interdisciplinarity in general and affect studies in particular.

While empathy and mirror-neuron discourse in relation to images received critique for its positivist epistemology, an "anti-" or "against"-empathy camp has also recently resisted the popularly promoted aspects of empathy as a kind of moral guide and cure-all for human conflict. Within transcultural studies, Carolyn Pedwell then evaluated empathy from various angles, including as a reductive "affective technology for 'knowing the other'," which can work to benefit the interests of globalized corporations and neoliberal agendas (Pedwell 2014, 8). Empathy thus emerges as an ambivalent yet critical term in analyzing the contact both between individuals and the objects they encounter.

Westrey Page

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Entangled Histories

When Frantz Fanon stated that "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World" (1963, 102) and when Walter Mignolo titled his book about the colonization of the so-called New World *The*

Darker Side of the Renaissance (1995), both pointed to the fact that the history of Europe or the West can only be understood as a relational one. To accommodate this from a methodological point of view, several suggestions have been made from the late 1990s on. Historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam began to write "connected histories" about the cultural, economic, and political interrelations between Eurasian empires of the early modern age (1997). Shortly afterwards, social anthropologist Shalini Randeria argued the case for what she calls "entangled history" or "entangled histories" (1999 and 2002, respectively), shifting her attention to the modern era and a global field. In collaboration with historian Sebastian Conrad, Randeria broadened and refined her concept (Conrad and Randeria 2002). Together with cultural anthropologist Regina Römhild, she adapted it to contemporary conditions (Randeria and Römhild 2013). Around the same time as Conrad and Randeria, historian Michael Werner and sociologist Bénédicte Zimmermann presented their idea of an *Histoire croisée*, which raises similar questions based on a critique of notions like *internationaler Vergleich* (international comparison) and *Transfergeschichte* (history of transfer) (Werner and Zimmermann 2002).

In her 1999 essay, Randeria lists four reasons for adopting her concept of entangled history. First, presuming multiple modernities enables us to discuss different notions of modernism in Europe and outside; it allows us to compare different non-Western cultures or societies and focus on bilateral as well as multilateral configurations (‣**Multiple Modernities**). Second, considering more than one modernity and accepting colonialism as a vital part of the—material and ideological—construction of Europe generates the need for historical re-considerations. Third, a pluralistic attempt offers the opportunity to account for the heterogeneity within non-Western societies and shed light on the presence of Europe in non-Western cultural contexts. Fourth, more attention must be paid to questions like: Who is talking? What language is being used? What categories are being applied? After all, defining and employing the instruments of discourse is an essential factor of cultural hegemony (Randeria 1999, 93–94). In their introduction to the anthology *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus* (Beyond Eurocentrism), Conrad and Randeria add other aspects such as the importance of discussing the—often quasi-colonial—interactions within Europe. They stress that entangled histories do not just concentrate on commonalities or reveal processes of sharing, but also investigate the marking of distinctions and notions or acts of separation. This means that "interaction" should not be misunderstood as implying benevolence or equality, because most of those interactions (even within Europe) have been structured in asymmetrical, hierarchic, or violent ways. More generally, the focus of the authors is less on the history *of* entanglement and more on history *as* entanglement, as the interacting entities are a product of their interdependencies (Conrad and Randeria 2002).

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Europerie

Considering similar terms like "européennerie" (Thomas 2009, 115), "europeanoiserie" (Kleutghen 2012, 83), and "euroiserie" (Hay 2015, x), "europerie" seems to be not only the easiest to pronounce, it is also by far the oldest one. It was coined in 1937 by Bruno Kisch who primarily used it to describe Chinese export porcelain that was decorated according to European tastes, as well as Europeanizing objects that were produced for the home market and favored by domestic customers for their exotic appeal (‣**Exoticism**) (Kisch 1937, 274–276).

Ignoring this latter aspect, Erich Köllmann (1954, 446) did not regard Kisch's neologism as a suitable counter term to the much more common "chinoiserie"—an expression that recently has been challenged from a post-colonial perspective (Weststeijn 2016, 13). Still, there are a number of reasons to stick to the noun "chinoiserie" and its derivations. First, the word, which is French in origin, has to be respected as a historical one that came into use at the peak of the phenomenon itself, in the mid-eighteenth century (Köllmann 1954, 439). Second, it emerged around 1750, a time when Europe and China still met at eye level. Third, although the terminology was not consistent during the second half of the eighteenth century, the French did make a distinction between artefacts imported "from China," for which they used the phrase *de la Chine*, and European works in "Chinese fashion," which they described as *façon de la Chine*, *à la chinoise*, or *lachinage* (Köllmann 1954, 439–440). The same holds true for the organization of the Kupferstich-Kabinett (print room) of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, where more than two thousand woodprints from China and other Asian countries were kept separate from the chinoiseries and labelled as "*La Chine*" and "*La Chine Europeenne*," respectively (Bischoff 2017, 23). The naming as well as the collecting or storing practices indicate that there was—at least in some environments—an awareness of the fact that chinoiseries were the result of a mediated gaze or of appropriation (‣**Appropriation**). In other words, just as the chinoiserie tells us something not about China, but about the way Europe *saw* China at a specific moment in their long-running entangled histories, the europerie tells us something about China's awareness and imaginations of Europe at a certain time (‣**Entangled Histories**).

As Kisch explained and later authors like Hay, Kleutghen, Thomas and others have further elaborated (using the variety of terms mentioned above), europeries and chinoiseries function complementarily—which means that,

in both cases, analysis has to take into account aesthetic and economic aspects as well as technical, social, and political issues. Expanding our view, the term "europerie" may also have potential to serve as a counter term to "turquerie" and "japonaiserie". And it is up to future research to, perhaps, apply and adapt it to the exchanges between Europe and other regions or cultural contexts like Persia, the West African kingdoms (including Dahomey and the Benin Empire), or the Aztec culture in the early modern age and beyond.

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Exoticism

Exoticism can be understood as one of a constellation of discourses by which Europeans have engaged with and represented racial and cultural differences. Related artistic movements include primitivism (‣**Primitivism**) and the more specific and geographically bound movement, Orientalism (‣**Orientalism**). The term "exotic" was first used in Europe in the fifteenth century to denote things—imported foreign flora and fauna, not people (Célestin 1996, 217). The term "exoticism" was coined in the early nineteenth century to describe both European experiences with foreign people and the translations and representations of those encounters back home.

Art historian Carol Sweeney argues that the primitive and the exotic are the two primary generic categories into which the vast majority of encounters, colonial or otherwise, between Europeans and those they deemed "others" can be divided (‣**Othering**). Temporally, the exotic and the primitive both reflexively stand in for the past in relationship to a European present that is seen as developing and changing while the time of the "other" stands still (Fabian 1983, 1). Sweeney, however, makes the distinction that the "primitive" was more often associated with ideas of a pre-rational savage, while discourses of the "exotic" were more concerned with "difference as emblematic of a paradisal 'elsewhere', a geographical otherness characterized by plentitude and harmony" (2004, 8–13). Broadly speaking, these different categories of the "other" have also often been split along geographic

lines. As Hal Foster writes, it is typically a case of "malefic Africa versus paradisal Oceana" (1985, 53). The Middle and Far East, Polynesia, and Islamic North Africa have been most often categorized as exotic, whereas sub-Saharan Africa and its diasporas in the Caribbean and the Americas have been treated as primitive. Peter Mason, alternatively, describes exoticism as diverging from Orientalism insofar as it depends on the decontextualization and recontextualization of its object and is therefore "indifferent to ethnographic or geographic precision and tends to serve imaginative rather than concretely political ends" (1998, 3). While it is questionable whether Orientalism is always concerned with an accurate representation of its subject and whether exoticism can be disassociated from the politics of colonialism, this differentiation points to how exoticism is most strongly associated with a nineteenth century European engagement with the "other" in terms of romantic fantasies and as a source for formal and thematic motifs.

Within art history, exoticism has been most often used to describe movements within the decorative arts. The term denotes both radical cultural or racial difference and the process by which this otherness is experienced by a traveler and translated, collected, displayed, represented, or otherwise domesticated for consumption back home. Exoticism developed hand in hand with the rise of international exhibitions in the West in the nineteenth century. During this period, "exotic" objects were also held up as a model of art uncorrupted by industrial capitalism (Oshinsky 2004).

In the 1950s, as postcolonial thinkers and political activists diagnosed European representations of otherness as a tool of colonial power, exoticism became a key point of their critique (Forsdick 2001, 28). In the essay "Racism and Culture," Frantz Fanon argues that exoticism was used as a means to simplify, objectify, and neutralize colonized cultures. He criticizes the denial of coevality between European countries and their "others" as an explicit strategy in support of colonial power (Fanon 1967). These interventions have deeply shaped postcolonial critiques of exoticism. More recently, exoticism has been positioned in opposition to other models for cultural encounter such as hybridity (‣**Hybridity**) and related processes like creolization and diaspora, which are premised on the production of new transcultural forms rather than exoticist encounters that depend on notions of essentialized cultural difference (Bhabha 1994, 56).

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Expanded Contact Zone

Mary Louise Pratt defines "contact zones" as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (Pratt 1991, 34). She writes that the term "contact zone" is "an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historic disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect" (Pratt 1991, 8). If for Pratt, a "contact" perspective is about the ways in which "subjects are constituted in and by their relations with each other" (Pratt 1991, 8; see also Pratt 2008), it is useful to think of recent work that has broadened the scope of academic scholarship to take both human and non-human subjects seriously. The expanded contact zone takes Pratt's formulation further to consider how the co-presence of humans with other biological creatures as well as hybrid, digital, and technological life forms plays out in a contact context. Donna Haraway, for instance, has, throughout her career, highlighted the role non-humans play in shaping technoscience and reshaping our notions of subjectivity, gender, kinship, and species-being. She claims that these non-humans are not passive recipients of human agency but socially active partners (Haraway 1997). The relationship between human beings and technologies is not one of exploitation but of mutual adaptation (Haraway 2007). The intersection of the trajectories of forms of human and non-human life has engaged a wide range of contemporary scholarship in anthropology, the environmental humanities, and increasingly in art history studies.

The expanded contact zone also allows for a deeper and wider scope with which to understand asymmetrical power relations at crucial meeting points between encounters of biological and techno-capital processes and subjects. Anna Tsing's work on the matsutake mushroom, for example, provides an incisive account of the relation between capitalist destruction and collaborative survival within multi-species landscapes (Tsing 2015). In the realm of art and museum studies, the art exhibit "The Multispecies Salon," that traveled from San Francisco to New Orleans to New York City, attempted to ask, through artworks and anthropological modes of inquiry, what happens when natural and cultural worlds intermingle and collide (Kirksey 2014). New modes of inquiry into such encounters have given the contact zone new life, while at the same time providing a longer historical scholarly trajectory in which to examine these evolving relationships.

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Fragment

Traditionally, the fragment is the remnant of a decomposed whole, the result of fragmentation and closely intertwined with time. As such, it has

a history and symbolizes ephemerality (Tronzo 2009). Ruins, in this sense, are fragments *par excellence* and many texts indeed use the two terms interchangeably (e.g. Schnapp 2014; Böhme 1989). Paradigmatically, the fragment points to death, lost cultures, and memory, to a violent "tearing apart" and destruction (Glauch 2013, 53). It is what is presently left: archaeological, material, and thus collectable. Since the second half of the eighteenth century, philology has become increasingly interested in the fragments of ancient societies as a way to understand them (Most 2009, 15). In a more abstract sense, the term "fragment" can also denote a text. The German Romanticist Friedrich Schlegel, for example, famously introduced the textual—that is, "created" (Tronzo 2009)—fragment as a literary form complete in and of itself (Most 2009, 15–16), thus in a way foreboding the (post-)modernist focus on the fragmentary, particularly with regard to aesthetics, notable examples being Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* and, in the visual arts, Analytic Cubism. Benjamin (1988 [1933]) also discussed how the fragment became entrenched into the discipline's methodological foundations, for instance through the writings of Alois Riegl. The fragment contains and entails cultural and historical meaning that can be scaled up to "broader contexts" (Lang 2006, 151). Materiality and meaning, through time then, become inextricably intertwined. Hence, the fragment emerged as a trope or metaphor of (Post-)Modernity in various fields in the humanities (for art history see, for example, Nochlin 1994).

The notion of the fragment thus rests on two pillars: a bygone past and abstract thought, with the aspiration to both completion and division. The problematic nature of the fragment as a means to extrapolate history lies in its claim to represent a totality. Especially with regard to the notion of eurocentrism, this understanding has been strongly disputed. In this respect, the fragment is often spoken of in terms of discontinuity, for example with reference to the *de facto* "discontinuous history of imperial meaning-making" (Pratt 2008, 7). The created fragment, in turn, acknowledges its discontinuity and embraces it on the grounds that the perception of a whole is impossible (Balfour 2009). As a category, then, the fragment encourages a reevaluation of modes of perception in the sense that all fragments, even remnants, are created.

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Gender

Transcultural studies have served as a productive interlocutor for gender studies in efforts to examine the contingency of the terms by which gender, race, ethnicity, and class are studied and debated as closely interwoven and relational categories. Still, many theorists of postcolonialism have for a long time ignored the gendered dynamics of imperialism (McClintock 1995). The lingering effect of Orientalism's Western male gaze in producing stereotypes of eastern women is well documented (e.g. Ahmed 1982), but at the same time Said's model of Orientalism has also been criticized for its binary notion of power structures which hardly allows for the kind of multilayered or differentiated viewpoints that describe aspects of gender and difference (‣**Orientalism**). McClintock argues that "Sexuality as a trope for other power relations was certainly an abiding aspect of imperial power" (1995, 14), as colonial women experienced the power structures of imperialism very differently than colonial men.

Scholars such as Lowe (1994), moreover, have shifted the discussion to a focus on Orientalism's heterogeneity and the many voices and varying power structures it involves. These transcultural perspectives on women and Orientalism have drawn attention to the active role of women both in determining the image of the other and in renegotiating gender roles in the empire through the encounter with the colonized other.

Reina Lewis has emphasized the importance of theorizing and studying the history of the terms "race," "ethnicity," and "gender." A critique that takes the contingency of these terms into account would, she argues, avoid models of binary opposition in feminist discourse, for instance of bad imperialism and good feminism (Lewis 1996). In *Gendering Orientalism*, Lewis offers the critique that most cultural historiographies of imperialism analyze Oriental depictions *of* women, while completely ignoring the perspectives of women themselves. Her work shows that women indeed took part in Orientalist cultural production and that the dynamics of the imperial discourse influenced their work. Since women did not have direct access to male positions of Western superiority, their work resulted in representations of cultural difference that are distinct from those usually focused on in Orientalist scholarship. While Lewis' work focuses on the role of women and the category of gender in the context of Orientalism, her argument can readily be extended to other situations of cross-cultural contact. Analyzing the production and reception of representation by women is particularly crucial as it develops an additional layer of ideological interrelation of both race and gender in the colonial discourse (Lewis 1996).

In a related argument, art historian Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between the variety of gendered perspectives in colonial discourses and visual representations, as this further reveals a wide range of viewpoints. She points to the importance of avoiding binary oppositions of a female vs. male gaze and, instead suggests analyzing the visual production of women as individual aesthetic decisions made at certain points in history (Schmidt-Linsenhoff 2010).

The projects of McClintock, Lowe's, Lewis, and Schmidt-Linsenhoff are indebted to and exemplify an intersectional approach that shifts the focus to the intertwined processes by which notions of gender, race, ethnicity, and class are produced and instrumentalized in intercultural encounters. These interdisciplinary discussions also shed light on feminism's origins in a Western,

liberal context and on questions of the term's status or usefulness as a benchmark in transcultural discussions (cf. e.g. Weber 2001). Starting in the 1970s, women of color, in particular, have therefore criticized the eurocentrism of feminism and demanded the "recognition of racial difference and diversity among women" (McClintock 1997, 7). In the context of both transcultural studies and gender studies, the approaches outlined above involve asking how gender and race were negotiated within transcultural encounters.

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Heritage

In the contemporary period, heritage has been normatively read and understood through the framework provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the "legacy" of material objects, natural landscapes, and ecosystems, and, more recently, intangible attributes inherited from past generations, whose safeguarding is considered paramount for present and future generations (UNESCO, 25 C / 4 1989, 57).

Such international documents, conventions, and recommendations as the one setting out the guidelines for the nature of world heritage also exist as part of a longer genealogy of efforts made towards studying, classifying, and protecting material culture across the world, prompted by fears of its destruction and looting during times of conflict. These genealogies reflect first and foremost the fact that heritage, its identification, documentation, conservation, and promotion has always been transnational in nature, owing to the contexts in which encounters with cultural diversity and difference emerged: those of imperial and colonial enterprise. A critical reevaluation of existing ideas and approaches to heritage is therefore needed.

Middle Eastern heritage, for example, has tended to be overwhelmingly associated in the popular imagination as well as in scholarly writing and archaeological work with the antique period and the unearthing, preservation, and protection of its material traces in the region. In recent decades, the region has been depicted as "a repository of precious archaeological resources constituting a universal world heritage, but a heritage that requires control and management by Western experts and their respective governments" (Meskell and Preucel 2008, 315).

The categorization and delineation of heritage sites and objects is intimately related to colonial practices and ideas about "tradition" and "modernity." Examples abound about how the classification and preservation of Middle Eastern objects, buildings, or crafts under different colonial regimes were central to discourses that sought to portray a particular image of the societies under their rule.

An emerging focus on the critical reassessment of the production of cultural heritage as well as the entanglement of material and immaterial

heritage has meant that, in recent decades, concerns about and analyses of heritage sites and practices have been able to offer more complex accounts of the legal, moral, cultural, affective, political, and increasingly economic (due to its inclusion in tourism and real-estate circuits) stakes for local and transnational actors involved (Herzfeld 2010; Falser and Juneja 2013).

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Hybridity

Hybridity is a term often used in relation to migration and syncretism and understood as a result of adaptation, fusion, or mixing. Accordingly, hybridization is considered a process that unfolds when coexistence becomes interaction, thus describing moments, dynamics, or intermediate realms that eventually result in transformation. It can have a temporal dimension referring to transitions between historical periods, but also a more geographical or culturalist one (Burke 2009). Like many of the terms and concepts that seem to have experienced a particular boom since the most recent wave of transcultural studies, "hybridity" was, in fact, already a familiar term in academic debates around the beginning of the twentieth century. Initially relevant mostly to scholars of religious studies or literature, then studied by scholars of Afro-American or Latin-American cultures, the concept was later taken up by anthropologists, before migrating on a larger scale into cultural history and related disciplines since around the turn of the millennium.

It is important to note that an awareness of hybrid phenomena has had a fundamental impact on the way we look at internal diversities of cultures such as that of Europe, which had long been regarded as rather monolithic or centralized entities (Burke 2016). At the same time, hybridity has become an increasingly crucial category for transcultural processes.

The most important—and probably most debated—use of hybridity concepts is now found in postcolonial theory where they are linked to an understanding of cultural spaces beyond static homogeneity (Bhabha 1994; Sieber 2012). In this context, hybridity's connotation as a reciprocal, though not necessarily symmetric, constellation that emphasizes deliberate or immanent agency on both sides, while also accounting for the power relations typically inherent in colonial exchanges (Burke 2009; 2016), becomes a substrate of transcultural modernities (Sieber 2012, 103).

The use of the term "hybridity" is often intertwined with metaphors categorized by Peter Burke (2016, 21) as either metallurgic ("melting pot"), linguistic ("creolization"), or culinary ("salad"). Yet the most critical figure of thought in this context is probably the connotation conjured up by the binary between "hybridity" and "purity," which is a value-free model in the realm of chemical or biological sciences, but can become value-laden and problematic when translated into cultural history or anthropology, as it has the potential of being linked to judgmental othering or, indeed, to racist agendas in terms of both real politics and historical interpretation (Ha 2005; Steward 2011).

Hybridity can therefore even be considered a kind of litmus test for the quality of cross-cultural studies, as its productive epistemic potential can only exceed its problematic connotations when used in an argument that, on the whole, is at a safe distance from any hierarchical or essentialist thinking. Under these conditions, the term "hybridity" is most commonly and productively used as a methodological tool for the analysis of new or for the reinterpretation of known material. Moreover, we find it applied as an adjective to characterize cultural and artistic practices, archaeological traces, or objects in the transcultural field—an approach that, in turn, is able to shift our understanding of the spaces, temporalities, and trajectories in which said objects are located or circulate (see e.g. Wolf 2009, ▸**Circulation**). Accordingly, "hybridity" may also be understood as an underlying paradigm for the multitude of methods in current interdisciplinary humanities and their dynamics and interrelations (see Preston Blier 2005). In sum, the notion of "hybridity" provides a test case for the intersections between the content and shape / structure of critical postcolonial thinking (see Sieber 2012, 99).

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Masterpiece

The "masterpiece" in art historical discourse describes a unique work of art that is considered one of the finest, outstanding examples in relation to a particular aspect or a certain period, artist, or style. There is no single definition of the term, but, generally speaking, a masterpiece not only is claimed to be of central importance to art history, but also meets universally applicable aesthetic criteria—predominantly aesthetic standards of Western art.

In the past, the term "masterpiece" was regarded above all as an indicator of an artwork's "museum quality" (Danto 1990, 112). This for a long time concerned mainly Western art objects. The very basic concept of the masterpiece can be traced back as early as Plato's *Ion*, where Socrates draws a strict line between arts and crafts and points to disparate quality characteristics for art production (Danto 1990, 119). Etymologically, the term "masterpiece" derives from the Dutch word *Meesterstuk* or, alternatively, the German word *Meisterstück*, referring to a piece of work craftsmen in medieval Europe produced to apply for guild membership. Accordingly, the term is closely linked to the person with the highest

professional qualification in crafts in a guild, the master craftsman.

Hans Belting (1998) stresses the rise of the concept of masterpieces following Hegel's definition of something absolute and unconditional with the development of the arts in general. The emergence of autonomous artworks only emerged later and goes hand in hand with the birth of modern art, art museums, and the canonization of art in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Belting 1998, 11). Depending on the context, different concepts of the "masterpiece" oscillate between a more technical, material, and a more idealistic notion.

Art historians have discussed the concept of the masterpiece and its many implications in-depth and recent debates reconsider the notions of masterpieces and canons (**‣Canon**) as based on Vasari and the Western tradition (Locher 2012, 32). At the same time, anonymous yet technically outstanding artworks in other traditions are also considered masterpieces, suggesting that quality can be objectively determined (Halbertsma 2007, 22). To help themselves and to prove authenticity, people referred to these anonymous artists as "masters" of for example specific regions (Vogel 1980, 133–142). As the art historical canon has opened itself up to greater diversity since the modern period, the classical canon is still referenced today, but often in terms of a critical historiographic reconsideration (Harris 2006, 185–186).

The perspectives of postcolonial or gender studies with their emphasis on functions of both aesthetic and social differences have contributed to this critique by questioning established yet vague criteria such as "greatness" (Troelenberg 2017). Museum practice, particularly in the wake of the postcolonial turn, is currently very much confronted with such questions, as the notion of the museum as an idealistic "temple of masterpieces" is being increasingly challenged by its understanding as a place of active exchange (Troelenberg 2017).

The key issue does not seem to be the identification of masterpieces in art history and museum practice, but rather the question of why concepts such as "masterpiece" are used and what their usage implies (Danto 1990, 112).

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Microhistory

Amidst the polarized swirls of historiographical discourse in 1970s Italy, a group of scholars affiliated with the Bologna periodical *Quaderni Storici* first coined the term *microhistoria*. In

a canonical series of books published in the 1980s, the group developed the concept further to denote a methodical and theoretical practice of historical research. By means of in-depth study of historical particulars, it reconstructs history from the bottom up. As such, it forms a counterpoint to the generalizing meta-narratives and distorting large-scale quantitative analyses of macrohistory.

In its early stages, the concept of *microhistoria* witnessed significant definitional and methodical discrepancies. Looking back, Carlo Ginzburg described it as the label of a historiographic box still waiting to be filled with content (Ginzburg 1993, 169). Methodologically, microhistorical studies start out from the analysis of particulars, be it individuals, small-scale social networks, or enveloped case studies. In the process, they reveal previously unobserved factors from which it is possible to induce well-founded assertions about the overarching connections and fundamental questions of history (Levi 1991, 97–98).

In a nutshell, microhistorical studies evince three main characteristics: 1) a focus on particular areas of study, but not in the vein of a mere investigation of historical details; 2) an emphasis on the agency of individuals as opposed to abstracting history into impersonal structures; 3) the induction of broader connections from the particular. On the historiographical stage, microhistory evolved as a reaction to quantitative models of social history that presume patterns to consistently weave through historical periods.

Since the 1960s and 1970s, contemporary cultural anthropology increasingly honed in on questions of daily life, oral history, and cultural-historical topics. Such aspects cannot be decoded by means of general and universally valid rules but only through an understanding of individual entities and their interrelated functioning in a systemic frame of reference (Magnússon and Ólafsson 2017, 4–5; see also Magnússon and Ólafsson 2013).

Unconstrained by rigid methodical or theoretical rules, microhistorical perspectives spread across various fields in the 1980s and 1990s. While the German school evolved from empirical investigations of daily life, Americans focused on individuals' agency in effecting social change. These developments were, and still are, accompanied by critiques of microhistorical approaches that, among other issues, center on the inductive reasoning from the particular to the general (Appuhn 2001, 107–111).

Microhistorical methodologies have meanwhile made major inroads in areas beyond the realm of historical studies, including in novel, interdisciplinary fields such as cultural studies. In each of those fields, microhistorical studies aim to counterbalance methodological nationalism, determinate structuralism, and Eurocentrism. Hence, they do not serve merely to complement a global historiography, but rather shed a new light on global history through detailed knowledge of specific sources, agents, and entities (‣**Agency**). Moreover, by studying historical particulars of transregional and global scope, asymmetrical relations and differences can be addressed critically (Epple 2012). This suggests applying microhistory as a theoretical axiom to transcultural studies and discourses on global art, which requires rejecting any conception of cultures as ethnically contained and territorially confined spaces and allows a better understanding of the concepts, agency, and mobility involved in the production, display, and reception of images and objects. Cultures are thus placed in an overarching, global context, while taking into account their continuously unfolding transformations and dynamic intertwining (‣**Entangled Histories**).

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Multiple Modernities

In the twentieth century, the concept of modernity has been constitutive for the social sciences as an organizing paradigm that focuses on a fundamental reorganization of the relation between state and society, including central spheres like economy, religion, and culture (Eisenstadt 2000). The dominant understanding of modernity—as the designation of an epoch and as a conceptual term for paradigmatic social change ("modernization")—has been tied to the idea of a uniform and teleological societal development characterized by industrial technological progress, secularization, and enlightenment. At the same time, it was conceptualized in opposition to the "pre-modern" and to "tradition." As a consequence, all societies that did not conform to the normative European model were excluded from being modern. Imperialism, of course, provided the material basis for this rationale. In contrast to this, the Israeli sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt (2000) coined the term "multiple modernities" and pushed for a theoretical reconsideration of the very idea of "modernity": "The essential idea behind the multiple modernities thesis is that 'modernity' and its features and forces can actually be received, developed, and expressed in significantly different ways in different parts of the world" (Smith 2006, 2).

The theoretical premise of European modernization as a blueprint for the world has also had serious consequences in other disciplines. In art history, it meant that European art (from the last quarter of the nineteenth century on) could be, and indeed was, considered modern and avant-garde, while non-European art was not. The new theoretical foundation of a plurality of modernities and modernizations opened up new ways for art history in a global context (Moxey 2009). Starting at the end of the 1990s, exhibitions like "Die Anderen Modernen – Zeitgenössische Kunst aus Afrika, Asien und Lateinamerika" (*The Other Moderns – Contemporary Art from Africa, Asia and Latinamerica*, House of World Cultures, Berlin) (Hug 1997) challenged the European canon (‣**Canon**) of "modern art." But while the notion of "other" modernities still seems to stabilize the dominance of Western modernity as the center of development, the concept of "transculturality" puts forward a relational perspective. Modernity has always been entangled (Randeria 2005 ‣**Entangled Histories**) and modern art could only emerge in the contact zone. Recent approaches in art history, such as Kobena Mercer's "Cosmopolitan Modernisms" (2005) or Christian Kravagna's concept of "transmodernity" (2017), emphasize that contacts and cooperations in the twentieth century were a prerequisite for the relevant artistic practices. In case studies focusing on the era of anti-colonial and anti-racist movements, Kravagna highlights artistic and theoretical counterprojects and -narratives to the exclusivity of Western modernity. The fact that the project of decentering Western Modernity is still far from being completed underscores the relevance of transcultural approaches in art historical research.

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Nation

There is no generally accepted definition of a "nation," nor is there any general consensus on the time from which one can speak of a "nation." Peter Alter (1985, 19), for example, questions the very possibility of a systematic definition of the term. Early conceptions of nation defined it as a group of people who shared history, traditions, and culture, sometimes religion, and usually language. Scholarly discussions revolve principally around different conceptions of the nation: the political nation, the civic nation, and the nation defined by culture. Benedict Anderson's publication *Imagined Communities* (1983) offers a much-quoted reference and useful starting point for the debate. In his view, nations are imagined communities and thus not natural entities, but rather fictitious and phantasmal structures.

In general, a sense of a nation as a "cohesive whole" results from the presence of collective elements which are rooted in the nation's history, such as traditions, memories of national experience, and achievements or visual codes, for example national symbols and flags (see Smith 1991, 14).

The often-referenced definition by Deutsch, "Eine Nation ist ein Volk im Besitz eines Staates,"[1] suggests that the foundation of a state precedes the nation's establishment. Nation-building outlines the social developments that are necessary to construct national unity. The term was first established in the 1950s regarding western industrialized countries (see Almond 1960; Pye 1962; Deutsch 1966). Since the 1990s, the term nation-building is commonly used in research on nationalisms. It is to be understood in a narrower sense than "nation formation" (James 1996), the broad process through which nations come into being. At the same time, it is crucial to differentiate between the terms "state-building" and "nation-building." While a nation often consists of an ethnic or cultural community, a state is a political entity with territorial boundaries and a high degree of sovereignty. Many states are nations, but there are many nations that are not fully sovereign states (Richmond 1987). The nation itself may be fictitious (see Bhabha 1990), but nonetheless nationalisms construct strong myths and uniform narratives suppressing phenomena that do not correspond to the guiding ideas of the respective nation. "Since every search for identity includes differentiating oneself from what one is not," writes Seyla Benhabib, "identity politics is

always and necessarily a politics of the creation of difference" (Benhabib 1996, 3–4). There is—in an essentialist sense—no such thing as one national identity. Different identities are discursively constructed according to audience, setting, topic, and substantive content. National identities are therefore malleable, fragile, and, frequently, ambivalent and diffuse (see Smith 1991, 3–8).

With the formation of nation states in the modern era, the relationship of art and nation became an important issue as "it serves as an indicator of social and political change" in the "search for renewed identity and national consciousness" (Karnouk 1988, 1). Particularly in the age of post-colonialism, the process of decolonization and nation-building required new narratives and forms of cultural and artistic expression in the newly independent nation states of the former colonized countries. In search for national art and modernity, different cultural movements in Africa, for instance, liberated themselves from "European cultural imperialism" and "sought inspiration in African forms, themes, and history" (Enwezor 2001, 13–14; see also Chatterjee 2007). In many societies, the visual arts remain the source of nationalist imagination. Through objects, artists reflect on nationalism and identities—not only as a personal experience but also as realities and metaphors. The artistic outcome concerns the aesthetics emerging from the concepts of nations and not—or not necessarily—the concepts themselves.

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ENDNOTE

1 A nation is a people in possession of a state.

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North / South

The terms "North" and "South" have been introduced as a result of the reordering of the global map at the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s to conceptualize the relationship of and binary opposition between Euro-America and

Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Middle-East. In recent decades, these terms have come to be used and established as a system of classification in various fields such as academic scholarship and politics in order to describe and define countries with "high and low human development indexes" or "spheres amalgamating countries that donate (global North) or receive foreign aid (global South)" (Angosto-Ferrandez 2016, 16). Against this background, it is important to note that, in a cultural context, the word "South" has become accepted as a substitute for terms such as "Third World" or "Developing World" (Wolvers et al. 2015) and phrases such as "East / West" (‣**East / West**) or "the West against the rest" (Hall 2007). The binary opposition of "North" and "South," in particular, has been controversially debated since its inception, as has the term "South" itself, especially in view of its terminological precursors. Thus, on the one hand, "South" emphasizes empowering aspects, as it is understood as less hierarchical or evolutionary, notably in the context of globalization. On the other hand, there are obvious limitations to this binary concept and its definition not just with regard to geographical boundaries, geopolitical classification systems, or economic divisions (Wolvers et al. 2015), as some countries oscillate geographically and economically between "North" and "South" and others show internal social, political, and cultural differences that are as crucial as those between countries of the "global North" and the "global South" (Angosto-Ferrandez 2016, 17).

In the postcolonial era, the dissolution of colonial power relations and the rise of globalization and transnationalism became increasingly important for the production and reception of contemporary art from the "South" (Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009, 18–19). Okwui Enwezor sees the growing interest in contemporary art and culture especially from so-called "marginal" regions of the "South" as an effect of the geopolitical changes in the late 1980s. Furthermore, he argues that the emergence of contemporary African art is a "consequence of the crisis of traditional African art due to colonialism" and "of the encounter with new paradigms of artistic production generated by African responses to European modernity" (Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009, 12).

The year 1989 in particular marks an important turning point with regard to the reordering of the global art map: Transnational exhibitions such as "Magiciens de la Terre" in Paris and biennials such as the third edition of the "Bienal de la Habana" in Cuba established transnational, "North-South" as well as "South-South" networks. In the years that followed, artists and art practices from the "South" became increasingly visible and an important, prominent part of the contemporary global art world (Filipovic 2010). The notion of an encounter of different cultural spheres with regard to a geographical mapping of the contemporary art scene was also highlighted in the title and the topics of the magazine of documenta 14, "South as a State of Mind." Against the background of the humanitarian crisis, the two cities hosting the 2017 edition of documenta, Kassel and Athens, were understood as "real and metaphoric sites [...] where the contradictions of the contemporary world, embodied by loaded directionals like East and West, North and South, meet and clash" (Latimer and Szymczyk 2015). According to Monica Juneja, it is especially the "cartography of contemporary art, which encompasses several continents and encounters with diverse cultures," that constitutes an important challenge for art history which, as a discipline, is rooted in and built upon strict geographical definitions of culture (2011, 276).

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Object Ethnographies

The study of material culture has been at the origin of several cognate disciplines (archaeology, anthropology, art history, museum studies), all of which have developed related and, at times, competing interpretations of and theorizations for dealing with objects, broadly defined. Two major and still influential theoretical directions were outlined in 1986 by Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff in a collected volume that introduced the idea of "the social life of things" as a means of going beyond Marxist understandings of commodities and goods intended for circulation. By focusing on "things-in-motion," Appadurai sought to illuminate the processual nature of value-creation, as well as the potential of all things to be commodified (1986, 5, 13). Kopytoff's "cultural biographies" were similarly process-oriented, aiming to illustrate the contexts and cultural processes through which objects became invested with various registers of meaning and value. In Kopytoff's view, in order to be able to understand these registers it is necessary to examine the biographies of "things" beyond moments of production and exchange.

Building on this conceptual work and analytical conclusions, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's "ethnographic objects" helped spur further ways of thinking, particularly about the construction of museum objects and practices as part of processes of detachment (1991). Similarly, in recent decades, scholars of material culture, art historians, and anthropologists have produced crucial theoretical reflections and nuanced accounts of "things" ranging from ethnographic objects to performance art (Buchli 2002; Henare et al. 2007; Schechner 2003). Associated with the "material turn," these approaches engaged for the first time directly with the "thingness" of objects, allowing for a sustained focus on the sensory and material properties of artefacts. This recent and growing body of work has made it possible to research and write about objects in a way that fleshes out social history, culturally constructed meanings, aesthetic aspects, and politics of engagement.

While this body of work acts as a necessary corrective for the methodological imbalances produced by earlier commodity-focused approaches (Appadurai 1986; Miller 1995), it continues to be divided along either object-focused or biography-focused lines of inquiry (Hahn and Weiss 2012; Hoskins 2006, 78). Moreover, dealing with objects, especially ones whose

histories of production, provenance, circulation, and display are entangled in what might be termed "politically inexpedient" contexts (Smith 2007)—which is frequently the case with transcultural art histories—requires further rethinking of the methodological tools at our disposal.

A move from object biographies towards object ethnographies can help balance previous display and performance-centered approaches with the methodological apparatus and self-reflexive stance of the ethnographer. Such an ethnographic approach to the study of material culture would not simply add ethnography to already established methods of dealing with objects, but instead synthetically and symmetrically combine two methodological practices and traditions. Within this framework, objects and their histories are understood as contingent, context-bound, co-produced, and co-productive of dynamic social, cultural, aesthetic, economic, and political relations. This approach aims to balance a focus on the material properties of an object with a close attention to the micro-histories, mundane processes, and constellations of actors engaged and entangled with the object or objects in question.

In the context of transcultural object histories and trajectories where the "things" in question exist in a complex web of relations of production, circulation, and meaning, such ethnographic approaches to object biographies have the ability to make visible previously hidden processes and relations, while making room for ambiguity and ambivalence. As such, they do not preclude aiming for deep and "holistic contextualization" (Miller 2016) that can work against tendencies to fetishize and fix the meaning of material culture. By requiring that objects always be considered through their placement within relationships and networks of production and engagement, bio-ethnographic analyses can help foster much-needed nuanced and critical accounts of material culture.

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Orientalism

The term "Orientalism" was originally applied to Western philological and historical studies focusing on the so-called 'East' and particularly its scriptures. In artistic and art historical contexts, it also frequently serves as an umbrella term for representations of the Muslim world or Asia, mostly in traditional costume, painting, and photography. At the same time, it covers the appropriation of Islamic or Asian styles, particularly in the applied arts and architecture. "Orientalism" can thus be a geographical reference to the aesthetic or decorative systems of diverse regions reaching from the Maghreb (North Africa), the southeastern Mediterranean, and the Middle East via the Iranian world and Central and Southeast Asia to Japan and China. With the rise of postcolonial studies, and especially since Edward Said's groundbreaking work of the late 1970s (Said 1978), the term "Orientalism" has taken on a decidedly critical connotation, underscoring often asymmetric relations of power, knowledge, and representation, particularly in imperialist and colonial contexts. Said's argument has itself triggered lively debate and controversy (e.g. Macfie 2000). While increasingly differentiated, the discourse on Orientalism has revealed imaginary or generalizing narratives about "the Orient" that involve an implicit association with the feminine, with backwardness, or with binary ideas of the exotic picturesque vs. Western rationality. Critical post-colonial research thus demonstrates how Orientalism has operated—and often still operates—as an instrument for Western modernity's teleological idea of historical ascent and development: The orientalist subject—whether presented in affirmative and idealized, or in ridiculing or vilifying ways—is routinely seen as the ultimate other that stands outside modernity (‣**Multiple Modernities**).

While Said refers mostly to academic and literary Orientalism, his reassessment of the term has also led to an increasingly critical approach toward Orientalist art and design (see e.g. Sievernich and Budde 1989; Nochlin 1989; Benjamin 2003; Del Plato and Codell 2016; Koppelkamm and Mueller 2015; Pouillon and Vatin 2015; Troelenberg 2018). The wide qualitative range of scholarly work on Orientalism is linked to several aspects deriving from the subject itself as well as from its academic context: For one, Orientalism is very much shaped by different national histories and scholarly cultures. Thus, many manifestations of French Orientalism are to be considered against the immediate background of colonialism, while German Orientalism generally appears much more characterized by an indirect, often idealistically or spiritually informed approach. For another, there is a certain dialectic inherent in Orientalist art: iconographically, in terms of its preference for non-figurative patterns, many examples of Orientalist art carry strong historicizing or romanticizing connotations. In their decorative approach to what is often labelled as 'ornament', they often do not do justice to the complex meanings of non-naturalistic systems of representation which carry cultural significance, such as the vegetal motives subsumed under the term 'arabesque'. At the same time, however, numerous nineteenth and twentieth-century artists have regarded the reference to non-European source cultures as a gateway to abstraction, a catalyst in the search for modern style (e.g. Brüderlin 2001). Yet another important aspect is that scholarship is becoming increasingly aware of Orientalism's multidirectional trajectories that go far beyond the notion of the so-called Western world as the only receiving end. The growing interest in multiple modernisms worldwide has shed important light on the more local functions of Orientalism, for instance related to modernization processes within the Islamicate world (see e.g. Troelenberg 2015), as well as on transregional Orientalisms beyond the common "East-West" demarcation lines (e.g. López-Calvo 2012).

As these very general observations already suggest, there is no single homogenous manifestation of

Orientalism in art, but rather a multitude of Orientalisms across space and time that are directly interrelated with the multiplicity of transcultural modernity. (This key-term is partly derived from Troelenberg 2018).

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Othering

The term "other" has a long tradition in the humanities and social sciences. It emerges across disciplines as a mental construct based on perceived differences from a subject's identity, i.e. in many ways an antithesis that plays out on intersubjective, interpersonal, or societal levels.

The notion of the other can be found among idealistic philosophical beliefs as early as Pratyabhijñā philosophy (fl. ca. 925–950 AD) (Ratié 2007, 314). Hegel brought the discussion to a new level by focusing on self-consciousness and its relation to the construction and distinction from others (Popal 2009, 67). Psychoanalysis then further probed the other's role in intrapersonal development; while Freud focused largely on sexual identity (Hall 1997, 237), Lacan, as pointed out by Evans (Evans 2002), emphasized subjectivity and distinguished between the "big Other"—with a capital "O"—and the other with a lowercase "o," indicating their inherent power relations. Here, the O/other is a kind of external consciousness or point from which the subject sees itself. While the "other" is a reflection or projection of the ego (illusory otherness), the capitalized "Other" designates fundamental alterity, an otherness that exceeds the imaginary (Evans 2002, 38–40).

Othering as a key term for postcolonial studies was coined above all by Gayatri Spivak (Popal 2009, 67). Spivak (1985) investigated power relations in the larger context of imperial discourses and described the process through

which colonization creates otherness. Following the Lacanian differentiation of O/other, her usage of Other describes the colonizing Other, the oppressor, whereas the other is the so-called "mastered" subject. For Spivak, the formation of the O/other is a mutually dependent process in which the O/other are established simultaneously (1985, 133–139). Continuing the mapping of other/ing within postcolonial and cultural fields, Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 1994, 66–84) underlined the paradox of stereotypes and the creation of otherness, while others investigated the fetishism, voyeurism, and the "regimes" of representation involved in othering (Hall 1997, 264–276).

Some fields have especially arisen to challenge the effects and mechanisms of othering inherent to their own disciplines. Johannes Fabian's metacritique of anthropology (Fabian 2002), for instance, identified how its writing relegates persons of study, others, to an earlier, more primitive temporality, while anthropologists are understood to exist here and now. This denial of coevalness for the other also relates to a geographical distancing and the traditional distinction between centers and peripheries (Fabian 2002, 25–37). Recent calls for more global approaches in art historiographical debates reveal the field's struggle to position "non-European" art in their canon (**‣Canon**)—a canon shaped in no small part by nineteenth-century nationalist German art history survey books (Shalem 2012). Western art remains the principle focus and persistent point of departure of so-called global art histories where art not originating from Europe is still viewed as "the other" (Shalem 2012; Leeb 2012), as the widely used term "non-European" illustrates. Many scholars suggest that, in order to move towards a truer "global" approach, it is critical to teach and perceive (art) histories of diverse times and regions not as if they existed independently, but rather as being embedded in networks of connectivity, in contact zones.

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Periphery

The term "periphery," which can be qualified as a border zone or outer edge, suggests a binary geographic model in which there is a core area surrounded by a perimeter region. Thus, this theoretical concept can be defined equally by what it is not: central, innermost, median.

The center / periphery model was first introduced by sociologists in the 1970s to explain economic networks and structures. In his multi-volume magnum opus, *The Modern World-System,* first published in 1974, Immanuel Wallerstein imagined the concept of center / periphery on a global scale. Building on the work of Karl Marx, Fernand Braudel, and Andre Gunder Frank, Wallerstein argued that, beginning in the early modern period and continuing until the present day, a "core" of several dominating capitalist countries, primarily those of Europe and North America, emerged in economic and political relation to areas that were on the "periphery" or a developing "semi-periphery," i.e. Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The fundamental concepts of this world-system theory subsequently found life in a range of disciplines across the humanities. The division of the world between center and periphery, the haves and the have nots, was swiftly identified by theorists like Edward Said (1978) as the heart of colonial and postcolonial discourse. As a result, the veneer of impartiality suggested by a model based on space or topography began to be questioned, with subsequent generations of academics working to uncover the subjective nature of and imbalance of power within colonial structures. What's more, scholars like Said and Homi Bhabha (1994) noted the inherent ambivalence and instability of this binary configuration, and a number of theories such as transculturation, intertextuality, and hybridity have emerged to refuse and deconstruct a strict boundary between center and periphery, especially in terms of cultural production.

Most recently, the concept of the "periphery" has been marshaled to describe understudied material within the imagined geography of a particular branch of study, all part of an effort to globalize or de-center the humanities tradition at large. Within art history, the call to question the long-standing eurocentrism in the field has been particularly resonant (Elkins 2007). Various critics have called to dismantle or at least heavily revise the conception of a hierarchical artistic canon (‣**Canon**) that has been so dominant within the discipline. At any rate, the ongoing search to incorporate actors and material on the periphery prompts researchers to continue working to construct a truly "horizontal" history of art.

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Photo Archive

As many scholars have already acknowledged, photography is about materiality, seriality, multiplicity, and the mechanized industrial production of images. If so, what are the organizing structures for these vast and uncontainable bodies of photographic objects? The archive, as an informational and intellectual resource, provides an institutional framework for understanding the management of photographs as well as the networks in which they

circulated (Derrida 1996; Sekula 1986). The archive has been imagined as a broad historic "depot" for the storage and transmission of historic material. It is, according to Robin Kelsey, "not an institution or set of institutions, but rather a system enabling and controlling the production of knowledge" (Kelsey 2007, 9). Archives unify not only knowledge or information through text and image, but whole territories of empire (Richards 1993). In addition to being bodies of information and documentation, photo archives operate as image ecosystems and transnational interlocutors that connect cultures, people, ideas, and institutions; as such, they constitute an important category for a transcultural art history. Within the archive, as Elizabeth Edwards has so eloquently noted, "there is a dense multidimensional fluidity of the discursive practices of photographs as linking objects between past and present, between visible and invisible and active in cross-cultural negotiation" (2001, 4). By thinking and reading photographs as three-dimensional objects that are active in social, political, and archival spaces and networks, they emerge as agents in complex and international migratory processes. These migratory experiences shape cultural, spatial, and temporal borders as well as become inscribed into the body of the photographic archive. In other words, it is in archival spaces that photographic biographies are enacted (Caraffa and Serena 2015, 9). Based on their biographies in various collections, photographs (and their related hierarchies of value) emerge as objects shaped by a reciprocal rather than a unilateral discourse. Whether telling tales of dormancy or display, the archive generates histories of photography that are intimately entwined with institutional narratives and political discourse. To this end, especially in modern transcultural contexts, photographs and photographic archives can be placed within an institutional milieu, which in turn illuminate mechanical representations (and their myriad reproductions) as symbols of a national, historical, and temporal imaginary. In the digital age, the photographic archive is confronted with new challenges and forced to ask new questions. The more recent emergence of boundless and pervasive photographic images complicates their storage, circulation, and deletion within Internet and social media archives (Baladi 2016).

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Primitivism

The term "primitive" has historically meant many different things: From an early Christian usage to mean simply "original," to a negative connotation in the Enlightenment as an early stage of human development, to an inverted celebration of that very quality by some twentieth-century thinkers, or, alternatively, for others a belief that primitive art and experience were a universal

spiritual quality. Therefore, the term "primitive" and, by extension, "primitivism" are best understood according to their political valences and uses in a particular context (Pan 2001, 29).

Within art history, the term "primitivism" has been most used to describe "the interest of modern [Western] artists in tribal art and culture, as revealed in their thought and work," in which, in parallel to Orientalism (‣**Orientalism**), "it refers not to the tribal arts in themselves, but to the Western interest in and reaction to them" (Rubin 1984, 1). This twentieth-century artistic mode of primitivism has often relied on geographic constructions of difference (i.e. center / periphery ‣**Periphery**, ‣**East / West**, Africanism) and, perhaps even more crucially, temporal ones. Primitivist thinking often claims "temporal distance" and denies coevalness between the primitive "Other" (‣**Othering**) and the modern subject even when they are contemporaries (Fabian 1983, 1). Within this social and political context, definitions of primitivism run the gamut from calling it "a function of colonial discourse" (Araeen 1987, 8), to a "reciprocal relationship" that consists of "modalities of empathy" (Severi 2012, 27). As Ruth B. Phillips has argued, primitivism's very ambiguities allowed it to function not simply as a tool of the colonial West but as "the primary engine of modernism's global dissemination" enabling modern art's "global adaptability" as it was employed for different reasons by artists all over the world (Phillips 2015, 6). As Partha Mitter has pointed out, however, these visual "borrowings" between cultures are often received differently, which reflects social, cultural, and political asymmetries. Accordingly, in what Mitter terms the *Picasso manqué syndrome*, while Picasso has often been deemed a genius for looking to African sculpture to inspire cubism, an African artist is likely to be treated as belated or inauthentic if she looks to cubism to inspire her own art (Mitter 2008, 534–538).

Primitivism has served in the twentieth century as both a mechanism for artists, curators, academics, and collectors to freeze other cultures as part of a permanent past, whether to demean or celebrate them as such, and as a way for artists to explore and re-evaluate—albeit under uneven conditions—new content and forms from both their own and others' visual traditions. In these ways, a critical and analytic study of how primitivism works, in both historic and contemporary contexts, can reveal underlying assumptions, stereotypes, and ideologies that structure aesthetic practices and the reception of art.

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Resilience

The term "resilience," which describes the capacity to bounce back after a deformation, to adapt to uncertainty, or to recoil and recover from changes and setbacks, has its primary, very empirical origin in

the technical sciences and engineering. As a concept—or a paradigm often referred to as "resilience thinking"—it is also integral to the language of psychology, sociology, and a number of related fields. It is most commonly used in the context of policies towards international development and global change and has come to be employed particularly since the financial crisis of 2008 (Brown 2016). To date, resilience does not appear to be very established yet in written scholarship on visual studies or art history, but we may currently witness the migration of this concept into our discipline: Recently, "resilience" has been appearing with significantly increasing frequency (see e.g. Meyen 2015).

The fact that resilience seems to be increasingly moving center stage in the critical humanities as well as in artistic practice—particularly where they engage in critical contemporary debate—might in itself be an interesting indicator for the self-conception of academic and artistic agency today. Resilience thinking has, for instance, been criticized for opening the doors to neoliberal individualization of risk and responsibility and lacking awareness for change-inducing power structures and resulting asymmetries. At the same time, resilience as understood in psychology and philosophy is framed in terms of empowerment and emancipation (Nida-Rümelin and Gutwald 2016; Bollig 2014). It is thus a polyvalent term that links diverse epistemic frameworks between the first and second modernity.

Resilience addresses the relation between individual identities and systems, which often plays an important role in cross-cultural exchange processes. As the paradigm of resilience thinking becomes relevant in moments of change and especially change-inducing crisis, it may provide a productive, though not celebratory or affirmative approach to colonial and post-colonial constellations. Spelling out a processual, diachronic perspective, it links the notions of *longue durée* and the microhistorical (‣**Microhistory**), thus reconciling two paradigms of the humanities that often stand in opposition to one another.

The concept of resilience also has a particularly prominent function within the framework of ecosystems; in this context, interesting observations about a so-called "edge effect" have been described, underlining the notion of resilience in the sense of an adaptive capacity in transitional areas (Turner et al. 2003). In encapsulating border phenomena between different cultures and ecosystems alike, this provides a close analogy to the concept of contact zones (‣**Expanded Contact Zone**), describing cultural diversity and flexibility as a result of productive exchange and border crossing.

Resilience thinking provides a potentially very broad epistemic framework for art history and visual studies. This means that the relation between art or visual practices and the concept of resilience is by no means unambiguous or unidirectional. For instance, artistic techniques and practices as well as artworks and artifacts can survive (or be resurrected) through multiple practices of resilience—a mechanism that may be considered an active and reciprocal response to claims for asymmetric, often institutionally framed "salvage paradigms" (Clifford 1989). In turn, these practices can shape and enhance resilient identities of communities or individuals in situations of crisis. Thus, it may be not only an analytical tool but also a policy device that feeds into notions of cultural heritage and canons, challenging privileges of interpretation.

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Return

In her foundational study, *The Return of Cultural Treasures*, Jeannette Greenfield (1989) privileged the term "return" over repatriation or restitution, writing that it "may also refer in a wider sense to restoration, reinstatement, and even rejuvenation and reunification" (Greenfield 1989, 368). The term "return" can, in fact, be used to encompass cases of both restitution and repatriation. Restitution tends to refer to cases that allow for a return to an owner based on property rights and is most often the term employed when dealing with displaced art works in situations of armed conflict, notably "Nazi-looted art," while "repatriation" is largely used in relation to returns based on ethical considerations pertaining to human remains and sacred objects in indigenous communities (Bienkowski 2015, 433). The notion of return encompasses the phenomenon of the physical return of objects as one aspect of a broad set of practices that are essentially related to ethical rather than legal considerations. According to Michael Skrydstrup, "[r]eturn is not a debate about reparation in a judicial sense, but about goodwill, ethics and what is at times referred to as 'natural justice'" (2010, 63). It can also be usefully related to the notion of "recovery" bridging from the physical to the symbolic impact of return, as it points to the "healing through the restoration of cultural losses and the psychic damage those losses have caused" (Coombes and Phillips 2013, I). In James Clifford's *Returns* (2013) it appears as a much larger process of resilience and decentering.

"Return" is thus particularly useful when thinking about historic cases, notably related to colonial contexts which lie outside the bounds of current legal jurisdictions. Practices related to return include dialogue with source communities and former owners, and they situate museum collections in an essentially social and relational perspective, tying objects back to former contexts (Bouquet 2012, 152) and leading to the development of new and specific ritual forms of return ceremonies which have become an object of study in their own right (Roustan 2014). The notion of return potentially unsettles not only the object's perceived permanence of place but also the ontological and epistemological interpretations produced by the museum. In particular, it contributes to dissolving the notion of specimen, as the process of return implies focusing on specific trajectories that lead to stronger individuation of objects, a process that is particularly exemplary in the case of human remains. It also underlines the museum's role as a form of soft power, calling on new actors and forms of curation, producing objects with more hybrid or heterogeneous biographies and identities that question traditional categories of classification.

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Spolia

The term "spolia" designates reused ancient materials, most often stones incorporated into newer buildings. In antiquity, the term denoted war booty or spoils. An extension from "hide", it suggests an analogy between taking the armor from a fallen enemy and skinning an animal. The current meaning was introduced by sixteenth-century antiquarians. In a 1519 letter to Pope Leo X, Raphael uses the word "spolia" to educate the pope about how to recognize high quality ancient works in a context of lesser artistic quality (Kinney 1997, 122).

In the European context, the circulation of and trade in spolia was particularly widespread from late antiquity until the thirteenth century. The reasons were often practical, as ancient sites were used as quarries while at the same time being acknowledged for their historical value. The study of spolia emerged in the 1930s and has focused on the incentives behind the reuse of older materials. The term's martial origins link it to the practice of taking objects from other cultures separated in space, time, or politics from one's own. In scholarship, the use of spolia has often been explained either as a deliberate reference to the ancient past or as a matter of pure practicality. With regard to the latter, it is often assumed that the desacralization of pagan buildings stripped them of all meaning and reduced them to quarries (Sanders 2015; Kiilerich 2005). However, the prominent reuse of pagan spolia in many medieval churches suggests that those "foreign" elements were reinterpreted through a Christian lens and given new importance (Esch, 2005).

Recent scholarship has shifted away from describing spolia as a purely practical or illicit practice, instead considering them as an example of a form of local engagement with the past that falls outside academic categories (Brilliant and Kinney 2001; Siapkas 2017; see also ‣**Allelopoiesis**). The usefulness of the term "spolia" has also been questioned. Based on the term's origin in Renaissance antiquarianism and its close association with the reuse of ancient Greek and Roman materials, it does not seem able to adequately reflect ancient or non-European notions of the significance of reused materials (Kinney 1997, 118).

It should also be considered whether all reused objects transferred into a new context can be seen as spolia, including, by extension, ideas, captives, architectural forms, ornaments, or portrayed objects, since of all these function as topographical and historical references.

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Translation

Traditional notions of the translation process emphasize the search for and use of equivalencies across languages to render an original text comprehensible to a foreign audience. Schleiermacher, Goethe, and, later, early twentieth-century thinkers, however, began to deconstruct the unilateral notions inherent to this view that translations should resemble the inalterable and authoritative original (Langenohl, Poole, and Weinberg 2015, 175–179). Walter Benjamin, for instance, unsettled the stability of the original by describing translation as calling out both languages into a kind of third space between them, heightening self-reflection in the process, and opening the languages to mutual transformation. Literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin then re-assessed the construction of meaning itself, arguing that it is produced in dialogue between subject and world. In this analysis, all situations or stagings of a text, including translational ones, release potential for new meaning.

These radicalizing notions of translation began to migrate beyond literary theory, supported by poststructuralist and postcolonial approaches. The traditional "cultural translation" practiced by anthropologists, which searched for corresponding phenomena across cultures to "learn" them like a language (Burke 2009, 55), increasingly witnessed criticism that resisted the conception of cultures and languages as fixed, homogeneous entities, and rather highlighted the negotiation and change at play within social and cultural encounter. This critical shift amounted to what Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere announced in 1990 as a "cultural turn" in translation studies, while Doris Bachmann-Medick (2009) proclaimed a "translational turn" within cultural studies. These "turns" involve a focus on bilateral transformations within encounters and the valorization of deeper entanglements, displacements, and multiplicities. They also maintain an awareness of and resistance to hegemonic forces and the tendency towards "monolingualism," which would insist on others finding corresponding meanings to a "Western" original "language" (see Hall and Chen 1996).

Translation, particularly in reference to its definition as the movement or conversion of things to another place or into a new medium, also frequently traces object mobility, its "routes" rather than "roots," as James Clifford (1997) famously wrote. Objects here are thus conceived as translated and translating entities whose meanings arise in negotiations and histories of cultural encounter. Museums can similarly be read as translating institutions; by inscribing objects into narratives that are comprehensible to a foreign audience, they function through the creation of spaces that are palpable or "real" to the new

observer. The perceived authenticity of the object thus relies on the translation, which can be seen as a kind of spectacle or performance, of the original object.

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Visuality

The term "visuality" emerged in the early nineteenth century to describe a metaphorical way of seeing, tying it to the notion of understanding (Mirzoeff 2011, 2). The *OED*, for example, defines visuality as "[t]he state or quality of being visual or visible to the mind; mental visibility." The paradigm of visuality, albeit akin to visual theories and methodologies (see e.g. Rose 2012), is highly asymmetrical, as it presupposes a center of perception where an object can be mentally grasped and rendered recognizable, ultimately involving the agency of "the authority of the visualizer" (Mirzoeff 2011, 2). Knowledge and sight are thus historically intertwined, making visuality a quality of history itself (and pointing beyond this to Michel Foucault's notion of "discourse"). In recent decades, visuality has been criticized as being culturally constructed. Many authors have discussed this notion, including John Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (1972), W. J. T. Mitchell in his numerous publications on image and picture theory, and Nicholas Mirzoeff in *The Right to Look* (2011). This debate is fueled mainly by the fact that Western culture in particular is defined by ocular-centrism, having favored sight as "the noblest sense" since antiquity (Sandywell 2011, 591). In his discussion of the 1889 World's Fair, Timothy Mitchell (1989, 221) exemplifies this condition of the "Western World" as a "thing to be viewed" and constructed with an agenda of representation.

What we see is determined by how we see, and this poses a number of problems. Sight, originally thought to be the most objective sense, is now "presented as highly unreliable" (Hertel 2016, 184–185). Detecting a crisis of visuality in all areas of visual culture, Mirzoeff (2011, 6) pointedly notes "that the visibility of visuality is paradoxically the index of that crisis." This crisis is a result of the realization that the correlation of sight, knowledge, and authority is, in fact, a misconception based on imagination. As such, visuality increasingly coalesces with the notion of spatial thinking and with semiotics, where a dialectic between the icon (after Charles S. Peirce) and visuality becomes evident (Bal 2006, 21–24).

In postcolonial criticism, visuality has been more closely defined and inscribed as a historical mode of perception and of establishing power by colonizers (e.g. Pratt, 2008). This

field-specific use carries a pejorative connotation, although a reversal can be observed where sight is moved away from its mental property towards its corporeality (Mirzoeff 2011; Hertel 2016). In cultural theory, by comparison, Mieke Bal (2002; 2006) uses the term in its most basic definition as a "mental image," thereby pointing to its metaphoricity. By extension, this points to areas worth rethinking in terms of visuality: language as charged by visual tropes, and narrative theory, both dimensions related to the mental and the imaginary. The underlying implication is for visuality to be deconstructed and methodologically reevaluated not with regards to sight, but to language.

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9

HEIDELBERG STUDIES ON TRANSCULTURALITY

The cultural effects of globalization constitute one of the most important challenges for the discipline of art history today. The aim of this publication is to take a critical look at art historical narratives. Based on transcultural object biographies, the volume brings together analyses of objects and images that circulate in transcultural contact zones: their histories of origin, circulation and perception slice through space and time. The histories of these objects and images thus demonstrate in exemplary fashion how knowledge and understanding can be generated, communicated or also challenged in cultural contact zones. Hence, the publication is designed as a methodological contribution to a transcultural art and cultural history. It is also conceived as an instrument for teaching and contains a critical-discursive glossary of key-terms that combines theory and practice of transcultural art history.

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