

Good
Night,
and
Good
Luck.

Good Night, and Good Luck.

PREFACE

Paula Bruzzi

In October 1940, in a time when England was under German bomb attacks, Princess Elizabeth ended her first broadcast speech by saying “Good night and good luck to you all”. This farewell quote was a popular greeting among English citizens, in a period in which seeing each other the next morning was uncertain. During the 1950’s, when the United States were dominated by the anti-communism policies of senator McCarthy, the war reporter Edward Murrow adopted the quote as a catchphrase to end his TV transmissions. In 2005, George Clooney used the same phrase to title a film dedicated to Murrow’s story. By portraying the reporter’s political battles, the movie brought to light not only his initiatives to reveal the obscure aspects of McCarthyism, but also his concerns about the use of television as a mere means of entertainment.

The exhibition “Good night, and Good Luck” recalls Murrow’s quote six decades later — in a historical period in which alienation and freedom of expression have once again become subjects of debate. In a time when digital connectivity and image circulation turned out to assume a central place in our societies, it addresses the hidden processes that undergo what is often “given to be seen” within the contemporary conflicts. It is a matter of questioning the invisible aspects that rule this increasingly visual reality, and by doing so, groping paths that could possibly allow us to leave the condition of lethargic spectators to become real political actors.

In a world in which images of progress, happiness and well-being are continuously created to disguise the real condition of economical, social and environmental unsustainability, the exhibition undertakes the potentialities of art in bringing to the gaze other possible visions and perspectives. Faced with the absence of any easy alternative that could guarantee a sustainable and promising future, it is an attempt to propose an ironical approach for a world that turns to be ironic for itself.

Featuring works that converge aesthetic and politics, within historical and contemporary contexts, it is an invitation to think about the power of the image to manipulate and to distort, but also about its potentialities to reveal and to resist.

With the text “Performative images: from representation to action” Paula Bruzzi addresses this issue giving an overview perspective on how image can possibly work as a performative

tool that acts within reality, rather than a fixed, external and representational system that serves only to reaffirm its given structures. By analyzing the concept of representation from a philosophical approach, she gives an initial contribution on how the visual sphere impacts our everyday lives — placing image both as a device to control and as a possible tool for resistance.

Chiara Argentino retakes the discussion about representation to expand it into a broad consideration about the subjective criteria through which we read images, by arguing on how the idea of “truth” works, in this process, as a construct rather than as a given fact. In her text “The power of images” she discusses how image has been historically used as one of the major tools to create consensus — and, on the other hand, how some contemporary artists managed to critically deconstruct this idea.

Based in the same perception that in the contemporary world, image production is deeply related to the consolidation of structures of power, Livia Zaffalon brings the discussion about representation to the very space of the cities. With the work “One image one city”, she presents the urban space as our main visual environment, creating an imagetical comparison between eight global cities — New York, Mumbai, Buenos Aires, Tokyo, São Paulo, London, Vienna and Paris. Using image itself as the main analytical tool, she depicts the concept of “global cities” by proposing five different visual perspectives of these selected urban spaces: the satellite photography, the space of public circulation, the façades, the iconic buildings and the postcards.

In opposition to these over-represented cities, we have, though, cities and actors that have been historically excluded from global representation. This is the main subject of the work “We are not welcome here: a research on socio-economical and political implication on migration”, developed by Aderonke Akinyele. By analyzing the exhibition “We are not welcome here” (2016) — a video installation proposed by the Nigerian artist Ngozi Schommers — and “Imaginary Landscapes” (2016) — a collage display developed by Swiss based artists Stefan Baltensperger and David Siepert — Akinyele retakes the argument of the globalized world in order to problematize the turbulent and yet invisible frontiers that rise within its dynamics. By doing this, she discusses, in a critic approach, the issues of displacement related to migration and how, within this processes, life has been often reduced into “trash”. While in Zaffalon’s work what is at

stake is the space’s image itself, Akinyele presents, through a non-image, a paradoxical process of actors inclusion and non-inclusion in specific border spaces.

With the work “Black Art Market, the appropriation and illicit trafficking of antiquities and the hidden nefarious purposes that consolidate the management of exerting power in this field”, Nelly Fili gives another perspective to the subject. By taking over the globalization issue from the aspect of the commercialization of works of art and antiquities, she brings the discussion to the art field and its invisible dynamics. When tracing polemic processes of illicit trade of historical art pieces, she gives an important contribution on how the ideas of appropriation, ownership and “status” usually go hand in hand with these practices that constitute, in the end, a crime against humanity and its cultural heritage.

In the work “What is behind an Art Collection” Paola Aluzzi takes, somehow, a similar path. By presenting an extensive set of interviews given by collectors from all over the world, she expands, through the specific ground of the art market, the discussion about image and its power implications. Far beyond the art collections visual content, what is at stake in her work is the diversity of cultures, citizenships and backgrounds that underlies the collectors’ impetus into acquiring and collecting visual art. While taking the collections as a result — a sort of visual collage that reflects personal invisible motivations — she composes a paradoxical testimonial about the power issues that undergo humankind’s dynamics and its masks.

María de los Ángeles Donoso’s text “The issue of translation in the appropriation of visual language” concludes this catalogue by expanding the discussion about the visual media to language. Based on the idea that “an image is worth more than a thousand words” she describes works of art that challenge the traditional dynamics of the art field in order to introduce fundamental political questions. Some of them can be reformulated as follow: in a world dominated by an excluding visual and language empire, who has the concession to participate? More to the point, which are the invisible forces that undergo the management of what, in the contemporary world, is given to be seen? This remains, indeed, the essential interrogation we would like to address in this exhibition.

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Essays

“The most humble of us lives surrounded by a princely retinue of delegates and representatives. Every night, on television, our representatives in Parliament talk on our behalf. We have delegated to hundreds of non-human lieutenants the task of disciplining, making, and moving other humans or non-humans — lifts, cars, trains, machines. Hundreds of scientific disciplines and instruments constantly bring far away places, objects and time to us, which are thus represented — that is presented again — for our inspection. In dozens of books, movies, plays and paintings, human and non-human characters represent us with our violence and our fears, populating our world with crowds of friends and enemies” (LATOUR, 1988, p.15-16)

Although often taken for granted in our daily lives, the concept of representation has been largely discussed throughout philosophical history. From Martin Heidegger to Gilles Deleuze, passing through Bruno Latour and Jacques Derrida, many are the theorists who, at some point, focused their reflections on how this system of thought is implied in modern social dynamics. Their propositions could be traced back to the emergence of Plato’s theory of an “Ideal world of forms” — which is, according to Deleuze, what prepared, together with Aristotle’s metaphysics, the ground for the establishment of the so-called representational regime. Since then, it is believed that not only the way we see the world, but also the forms in which we think about it have profoundly and irre-

trievable changed. For this shift, Descartes’ postulations have also played an essential role. Indeed, Heidegger, in the article “The age of the world picture” (1977), assumes the Cartesian system as the one to inaugurate the basis of the representational paradigm.

As commented by Barbara Bolt in her “Art beyond representation: the performative power of images” (2004), Heidegger’s idea is that, by organizing the world into a schema, Descartes ended up reducing it to a picture. With this, the modern world turned to be substantially different from the earlier Greek one: if the latter was based on “presence” and, consequently, on a non-representational regime, the former, driven by Cartesian rules, started to rely on representative models — which could then be determined and modulated by man. The world had, thus, been turned into an image, and, as so, as a fixed, man-centered and yet a merely contemplative environment. Indeed, according to Bolt, what is at stake in all this postulations about representation are precisely the ideas of fixity and mastery. And it is specifically against these concepts that, although with different approaches, Heidegger and Deleuze will, at some extent, oppose their thoughts.

If Heidegger’s critics on the representational regime are based on the idea that, within it, man is turned into a *subiectum*, set aside, alienated to the — now objectified — world, Deleuze’s concerns about it lies mostly on its fixed and hierarchical nature. In opposition to that, he suggests a system of thought based on the idea of fluidity, movement and connection. These model is nominated “rhizome”, while the representational one is situated under the counter-idea of “arborescent system”. If both models differ one from another it is because

whilst in the arborescent one there is a strong sense of unity — a main branch controls all possible expansions — in the rhizome, on the contrary, the idea of unification is diluted. In such a system any point can (and should) be connected to any other, regardless of their position or nature. So, while an arborescent system is related to a structured and confined schema, a rhizome is, on the other hand, a multiple and moving network that operates without any sort of hierarchy.

Ultimately, the idea of Deleuze, together with Felix Guattari, is to think how thought could be liberated from the destructive and paralyzing bonds of representation and pre-established structures. Their challenge is to operate a way of thinking that would privilege multiplicity over totalitarianism, movement over stability and, finally, performativity over representation. In this perspective, their formulations work as a real political manifesto: it is a matter, in the end, of giving space to the emergence of other, plural, active and non-hierarchical possibilities — leaving behind a whole tradition based on representational systems.

Somehow, my intent here re-takes their provocation, bringing to the gaze the specific field of image production. My question, then, can be formulated as follows: how can image possibly act as a moving, multiple and performative process rather than a fixed, totalitarian and representational system? More to the point, to what extent could it, instead of representing given structures, be a tool to the creation itself of alternative realities?

In order to address this question it must be said, however, that image has historically been largely connected with the idea of representation. Both concepts are so deeply

intricate that, when dealing with visual creations of any sorts — whether they are drawings, paintings, videos, photographs or visual installations — we still nowadays hardly raise doubts concerning their representational status. It comes instead naturally, as a given fact: when observing a visual construct, we seem to be inescapably, at some level, involved with representation. Image appears to be, thus, the quintessential representational tool, and if our intent is to investigate any possible alternative from the representational system of thought, discussing about it emerges as an important, if not crucial, step.

This operation seems to have become even more urgent nowadays, in a time when image production turned out to assume a central place in our societies, permeating not only aesthetics, but also political, social, geographical and economical relations. Indeed, according to Nicholas Mirzoeff (2016) we have been producing, in recent times, a new form of apprehension of the world, based on the visual sphere and largely enhanced by the massive amount of images made, viewed and continuously circulated through the Internet everyday.

“Every two minutes, Americans alone take more photographs than were made in the entire nineteenth century. As early as 1930, an estimated 1 billion photographs were being taken every year worldwide. Fifty years later, it was about 25 billion a year, still taken on film. By 2012, we were taking 380 billion photographs a year, nearly all digital. One trillion photographs were taken in 2014. There were some 3.5 trillion photographs in existence in 2011, so the global photography archive increased by some 25 per-

cent or so in 2014. In that same year, 2011, there were 1 trillion visits to YouTube. Like it or not, the emerging global society is visual” (MIRZOEFF, 2016, p. 5).

The way we seem to seize and think about the world turned out to be more visual than ever. It is in the visual sphere that we seem to build ourselves — individually and socially — and it is through images as well, within this process of subjectivity constitution, that we happen to be continuously manipulated and controlled. Compelled by the huge amount of visual stimulus that, daily, stir us into following this or that lifestyle, we find ourselves in a tempting and yet apathetic reality. Within it, all we seem to be able to do is standing still as simple observers, in the illusion that, by pursuing devotedly the imagery we are exposed to, we will finally be able to take part in this controlled universe, and with some luck, even change its rules.

Visual production turns to be, so, one of contemporary society’s most fundamental battlegrounds. From that inference, a central question emerges: within this scene, who holds the “concession to play”? Could we leave this lethargic “zombie” condition, as argued by Giorgio Agamben, to be real actors of the present visual reality? Well, it seems quite clear that in order to assume such a challenge we have necessarily to confront, at some point, image itself as a tool of rupture, instead of a representational device.

For that we present here four art researches: four different visual strategies that could potentially open space to interrogate image as a fixed and descriptive tool — situating it, instead, as a possibly active political actor. What is at stake is to think about these images as performative processes rather

than as passive representational objects. Re-staging Deleuze’s ideas, it is a matter of reflecting on how, by bringing to the gaze the invisible forces that shape reality, this visual material can possibly call into question pre-established structures and ideas.

1) “The Dead Commercials” derives from an abandoned 35mm film, found in Milano in 2011. By restoring the film, the artists could discover images from commercials of six products: Tantum Angelini, Groupama, Lega del filo d’oro, Diffusionetessile, Foxy Mega and Lipton Tea Time. The operation of deconstructing the film narrative by dividing it into single isolated images revealed a grotesque, if not monstrous, angle of its visual content. Initially made to create desire around the consumption of commercial products, the film was turned, then, into a set of images of absurd situations. The ironical approach that places consumerism together with horror references, is evoked also by another installation that features the work: the sentence “The more voices there are, the more spin there is” written in a gallery wall with the film clips. It retakes the script of the film “Diary of the Dead” and its confrontation of media by means of strategies typical from horror films.

If by stripping the film images from their original visual function the work calls into question the representational regime itself, by placing consumers as living dead horrifying characters it reclaims the assumption, by ordinary people, of a more active and performative role in contemporary world. Instead of accepting and reproducing the condition of visual “zombies”, the artists call us, through the very use of image, to re-stage our forces into the creation of other, less passive, imaginaries and possibilities.

1 “The Dead Commercials”. Discipula. Mirko Smerdel. 2015
Courtesy of MLZ Art-Dep

2 “Landscape”. Stefano Serretta. C-print in paper fine art 70 × 100 cm. 2015



1



2

2) “Landscape” is a printed image composed by two monochromatic blocks and a desert landscape background. Part of the series “Western Hero (s)”, the picture plays with the communicative strategies of the Islamic State group and with the way they are meant to inspire a sense of identity and community. Flat colors instead of figurative forms. By disabling us to operate an immediate association of the content with our pictorial repertoire, the image seems to provoke an inevitable rupture in the stereotyped way we tend to look at the contemporary conflicts. To place the so-called “terror strategies” beyond the simplifying bonds of representation is, thus, a strategy to claim a whole reconsideration of the pre-established symbolical statements about its dynamics.

3) “Landscape Of Khiam” is a series of 14 photographs taken by the artists Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige in the detention camp of “Khiam” (Lebanon) after the 2006 war. The camp, which had been entirely destructed in 2000, featured at this time a set of steel boards with images that represented the space before it had collapsed: placed upon the ruins, these objects were aimed to work as exhibition supports, turning the devastated scene into a sort of museum. In despite of their intent to describe the camp’s previous physical condition, the pictures they bear happen to be, though, very low representative. Concentrated in details, they showed very little of the general situation of the former camp, creating a sort of lacking narrative of how it used to be.

The 14 photographs taken by the artists were focused specifically on the documentation of this material. In the very operation of capturing and putting these images side-by-side, the artists manage to perform their latency — placing them not

as visual testimonials of the war effects, but, instead, as witnesses of the impossibility of any fixed, stable, representational construct of the war conditions.

4) “Khiam 2000-2007” is an installation composed by two videos. In both of them, all we can see are the shifting images of six former detainees of the “Khiam” detention camp seated on a chair. No image of the space in question can be viewed. What we have, instead, is the crossing sound of the detainees’ personal testimonials about the space. It is through their spoken fears and the explanation of their surviving strategies that we actually “see” the camp and its condition of inescapable isolation. This non-representational approach — which is due to the fact that until 2000 no image of it had ever been produced — creates a sort of “performative image” of the space, raising possibilities to the emergence of flexible and multiple interpretations of its dynamics. By not simplifying its content into immediate images, the artists maintain the camp as a still obscure territory — enabling the spectator to experience it in all its complexity.

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3 “Landscape Of Khiam”. Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige. 14 Photographic print on Dibond 120 × 90cm in size. 2007.

4 “Khiam 2000-2007”. Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige. Film. Duration 103 minutes. 2007.



3



4



- The reason I'm in town is because of a Kansas City Shuffle.
- What's a Kansas City Shuffle?
- Kansas City Shuffle is when everybody looks right and you go left.
- Never heard of it.
- It's not something people hear about. Falls on deaf ears mostly. But this particular one's been over 20 years in the making. No small matter. Requires a lot of planning. It involves a lot of people. People connected only by the slightest of events. Like whispers in the night..in that place that never forgets even when those people do. It all starts with a horse...

(Mr. Goodkat tells the story...)

- Fuck. Shit. Jesus.
- Fuck. shit Jesus" is right.
- I don't understand. Why did they kill Max's family?
- New outfit in town. They didn't want somebody else betting on a fixed horserace with them. Trying to make an impression.
- That's a fucking story man.
- Charlie Chaplin entered a Charlie Chaplin look-a-like contest in Monte Carlo and came in third. Now that's a story. This... This is something else.

- So that's a Kansas City Shuffle?
- No. It's just the inciting incident. The catalyst. This — is a Kansas City Shuffle: they look right ... And you ... go left. Sorry about that son.¹

From "Lucky Number Slevin" script.

The main focus of this research is the analysis of the ways in which images have produced, and continue to produce, real effects (often unconscious) in daily life of people, in their judgements, behaviours and choices. Such effects are independent from the fact that images are true representations of an event, or are arbitrarily constructed.

I want to consider some exemplary researches of contemporary artists, who put under discussion the concept itself of faithful representation of reality, "playing" with images taken from multiple fields such as the web, social media, art history, domestic and/or historical archives and personal memories. The artistic researches I want to discuss are elaborating an

1 The Kansas City Shuffle move was introduced in the 2006 film, "Lucky Number Slevin", direct by Paul McGuigan, by the character of Mr. Goodkat (Bruce Willis). It's used to refer to a kind of con game. Specifically a con in which a combination of distraction and cunning cause the mark to turn their attention away from the plot which proceeds in the opposite direction.

During the film's opening credits, in a bus terminal, a young man is approached by Goodkat (Bruce Willis), who tells the story of Max and the Kansas City Shuffle: two decades earlier, Max borrowed money from the mob to bet on a fixed horse race, only for the horse to die mid-race. To set an example to make sure nobody else would try to bet on a fixed race, the mob killed Max, his wife and young son Henry. Goodkat concludes his speech saying that a "Kansas City Shuffle" is a misleading double bluff, while, taking advantage of a moment of distraction, kills the young man.

intermediate level between reality and fiction, where images become free from the social or metaphysical duty of unveiling the "truth" or representing the realm of the real. The exemplary researches presented here will allow us to question the criteria themselves through which we read images, and to learn how to read beyond and under their appearance. Furthermore I want to underline the way how our ways of seeing are often influenced in an unconscious way based on criteria of selection and on inclusion-exclusion mechanisms that cannot be completely neither subjective or objective.

"I was interested in the image as information, and equally in how that information was unreliable or subjective. Various ideas of classification and systems of interpretation created different versions of reality."²

In most of the cases, when an artwork is based on archive material or on the reflection of the concept itself of the archive, the artist is not concerned so much about authenticity of such documents. This is for example true for the work of the Lebanese Walid Raad: for the archivist project "The Atlas Group" he assembles together historical and imaginary documents about the lebanese wars.



Walid Raad, "We Decided to Let Them Say 'We are Convinced' Twice (It was More Convinced this Way)", 2002

The documents are attributed to people that really existed, but indeed they are artist's creations. Raad points out that the works of art, such as historical documents, do not only have value for what they reveal, but even more for what they hide or evoke. Moreover he invites viewers to think about the responsibility inherent in the condition of the spectator, that is a witness and also an interpreter.

When artists underline such aspects, they question the criteria themselves through which we attribute a sense of "truth" to images. In this cases the observer of the artwork can now personally experience the passage from a condition in which s/he "believes" something (for example if certain images are the true representation of a historical fact) to a condition in which s/he realizes that it is an arbitrary construction made up by the artist. Such an experience in the observer is not guaranteed; it can happen that the he stays in the initial belief and never gets to the next level. But such risk is necessary: staying in the "false" believe must be "real" in order to be understood as an actual possibility from which it is possible to redeem.

The fact of having at one's disposal a big number of images can orientate the artist's choice and intervention towards a procedure that frees somehow the image from its historical context, making it a more autonomous entity, and allowing new forms of use, following different criteria, either aesthetic, or based on psychological association, or even on chance.

An interesting case is, on the other side, when fictional images are created to validate an history or a point of view or a system of

2 Zoe Leonard & Elisabeth Lebovici "The politics of contemplation"

believe. Probably one of the most famous and clearly example is “The Fae Richards Photo Archive” (later become a movie under the title of “The Watermelon Woman”), a collaborative work by artist Zoe Leonard and film-maker Cheryl Dunye in which the two have produced a rich photographic archive rebuilding the whole life of Fae Richards, an African-American actress born in the early 20th century from the childhood until the old age.



Zoe Leonard, “The Fae Richards Photo Archive”, 1993–1996

This use of photographic and archival conventions and the act of falsification allows Leonard and Dunye to talk about political issues and to fill a gap of information recorded in real life, as Dunye herself declared: “The Watermelon Woman came from the real lack of any information about the lesbian and film history of African-American women. Since it wasn’t happening, I invented it”.³

What is relevant in this kind of art is not to establish the philosophical or scientific border between true and false, but the fact of questioning the way how the idea of “truth” is established, is constructed, within each of us. Beyond all the simplistic judgements that interpret the individuation of the truth as an inevitable passage for a political emancipation (either of the individual or of the social class), much of contemporary artistic research

invites us — often using the strategy of irony — to realize that there cannot be any emancipation without questioning our own prejudices, and without analysing the conditioning influences that, through the images, we constantly receive, mostly without being aware of them.

Infact, in a social way politics, media, advertising etc. images have been always used as one of the major tools to convey evident meanings that were supposed to create or obtain public consensus, while, at the same time, hiding relevant factual elements that were presumably unacceptable and therefore, need to slip through in a hidden way. As the American social critic and political activist Noam Chomsky makes clear is that one of the 10 ways⁴ of imposing social control by the forces that have the political and economical power is the “strategy of distraction” which consists in diverting public attention from important issues by flooding the media with insignificant information, and therefore preventing or moving away the public interest from areas of essential knowledge.

Political powers has constantly used such a strategy operating on the two different levels of what is evident and what is hidden, or of reality and its manipulation. Going back in the ancient times, for example, the emperor Augustus used visual arts (choosing to show himself in the vest of the traditional characters of the Republican peri-

3 www.archivesandcreativepractice.com/zoe-leonard-cheryl-dunye/

4 in “The Ten Strategies of manipulation” noam-chomsky.tumblr.com/post/13867896307/noam-chomsky-10-strategies-of-manipulation-by

5 Most of the examples in the text refers to the Christian Religion because in this one the conflict between iconophile and iconoclastic instances is widely evident.

od, familiar and loved by the Romans) not only to obtain the general consensus, but in order to let the massive political transformations enter into the social fabric of Romans in a subtle way.

Also Religions, as forms of power, have used the suggestive ability of images and visuals to instruct the masses and to convey a given system of thoughts and beliefs to people, mostly unable to read and write, and belonging to different ethnic groups that spoke different languages. In Catholicism⁵, for example, churches were decorated by fresco cycles, and illustrated books — not by chance called in Latin *Biblia pauperum*, paupers’ Bible — circulated around the countries. The stories represented in them, the style, the technique and the religious iconography language of a certain historical period tends to make such iconography becomes the object of veneration of the viewers, and therefore authentic representation of a reality of faith, ignoring or not considering that it is the expression of the imaginary of a single artist, and his geographical and social context, or at least of an artistic trend. The image, in this sense, becomes not only the witness of the truth of the dogma, but also an active and effective presence, capable of influencing behaviours and beliefs of masses of believers.



Angela Strassheim, “Untitled (Horses)”, 2004

In order to fight such power that permeated the visual dimension of iconography, different forms of religious iconoclasm tried to erase the image from the sacred places, with such a violence that their actions obtained the paradoxical consequence of making iconic images’ power more and more relevant. A contemporary case, particularly complex not only in a religious but also in a socio-political way, is the ISIS’s destruction of antiquities at the Mosul Museum and the ancient city of Nimrud, Iraq. Here, the choice made by Islamic fundamentalists to show the destructive act on a global scale through videos, then broadcasted by media around the world, it would seem paradoxically denying the own iconoclastic assumptions, both because it represents a clear recognition of the importance of cultural antiquities destroyed, and because the choice of media attention the gesture made undoubtedly goes in an iconophile direction.

The complexity of the problem in question arises from the fact that some rumors have questioned the veracity of these images, assuming that the fundamentalists have actually sold the original antiquities to fund their cause, destroying copies in front of cameras. This definitely put us in the position to question the relationship between media image and truth of the facts.



ISIS’s destruction of antiquities at the Mosul Museum and the ancient city of Nimrud, Iraq

Nowadays, the exploitation of the image, with its characteristics of being widely spread in the social context but at the same time not always identifiable in its meaning and intentions, is a typical strategy of contemporary advertising industry that, in many cases, induces new needs in viewers, by using images that are not directly connected with the product to be promoted.

Advertising experts have been often accused to make secret use of subliminal images to influence the spectators choices⁶.



The Cool Couple, “Cool People Love Poodles”, 2014

But the event that characterises in a fundamental way contemporary culture is the mass circulation of images, through their industrial reproduction and the broadcasting in the system of the mass-media. Such circulation is so spread out, both spatially and timely, that it has brought images to become more significant and more present in “real life” than the reality itself. Mass culture images have increasingly occupied, in the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, new territories, new power, new forms of contextualization.

⁶ Images are defined “subliminal” when, inserted in a sequence of stills, for example in a movie, they appear for a time that is too short to be perceived consciously by the human eye

An example of an artistic trend that has given evidence to this process is that of the so-called Pop Art, that has been especially prominent in American and British contexts during the 60’s. The most famous and meaningful artist of this trend, Andy Warhol, has used the “archive” of the star-system icons, brands of famous products completely absorbed into popular daily imaginary, as well as images of people in power (dictators, politicians, etc.) that were elaborated and visually treated as if they, too, were commercial products or celebrities, changing their visual connotations (dimensions, colours, composition) and removing the subjects from their given context.



Andy Warhol, “Mao (II.93)”, 1972

He clearly positioned himself in a territory that is intermediate between celebration and critique of mass culture; an artist who has in fact represented an agent of a further diffusion of the mass imagery as well as an ironic and in some cases pitiless de-structor of its psycho-social power. This new icons seem in fact to convey an affection and a recognition of a positive cultural value, that were probably embodied by Warhol himself as a cultural actor. At the same time his work also seems to communicate a deep and acute sense of awareness of the lack of reality of those images.

The warholian image, its “indecidibility” between a consensus towards the values of consumerist

society, on one hand, and critical deconstruction of the same society, on the other, unveils the fundamental deceitfulness permeating the images that surround us. For these reasons Andy Warhol’s work can be considered very relevant for all those artists, from Clegg & Gutmann to Walid Raad who, starting from the late ‘80s, have explored the images of power and the power of images with a critical attitude.

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Walid Raad, “We Decided to Let Them Say ‘We are Convinced’ Twice (It was More Convincing this Way)”, 2002

Walid Raad’s work appears, at first glance, like a collection of archival materials related to known historical facts, such as the civil war in Lebanon in the 80s. In front of his photographic work, the observer is brought, automatically, to interpret what he sees according to criteria that are derived from knowledge that is mediated by events seen on television or read in the newspapers, and therefore pre-suppose of being in faced with documentary images of destruction and war, even when what you see is not at all clear. The deeper you dig into the work of Raad — and a similar argument could be done to other contemporary Lebanese artists like Akram Zaatari and Rabih Mroué — the more you are taken by a sense of uncertainty as to the veracity of the first interpretation it tends to wane and images become subtly pervaded by a sense of absurdity, of improbability, fiction.

Angela Strassheim, “Untitled (Horses)”, 2004

In her series “Untitled” the American photographer combines art-historical and biblical references.

The work “Untitled (Horses)” incorporates dread and humor in a playful image that refers to the Christian concept of the apocalypse: true believers will be raptured into heaven while the unsaved will remain on Earth for a period of chaos and violence. In the photograph, toy horses (a reference to the apocalypse) seem to flee from a young girl who is bathed in light, wearing costume wings, and reading a small Bible. To her right,

a boy sleeps peacefully, while another child lurks underneath the bed to her left.

This case tells how religious iconography becomes part of the personal archive of images: Strassheim re-elaborate it, creating a dimension in which the childhood imagination mixes with the iconographic translation of the story told by the sacred text; the result is an intermediate image between a scene verifiable in reality (a little girl playing with toys) and built one with the purpose to convey a message (the scenical representation of the Apocalypse).

Clegg & Guttman,
“Grand Master”, 1985



In their works, the two artists imitate and deconstruct the typical rituals behind the representation of authority. Their classical and apparently affirmative representations of people with power should be interpreted as different ways of visualizing an analytical and deconstructive practice engaging with the mechanisms of authority.

In “Great Master” they have hired an actor to play poses typical of portraits of characters of power, placing him on a visibly constructed and unrealistic background. The reflection here is focused on the fictional and controlled construction of the image of power.

The Cool Couple, “Cool People Love Poodles”, 2014

We started a series on poodles. When Silvio Berlusconi bought a poodle as gift for his new girlfriend, the sells of poodles in all Italy raised of about 20%. Dudù, as the dog was named, became in less than a year a celebrity and many gossip magazines dedicated articles to its life, tastes and love stories. It is interesting a comparison between such articles and the decreasing of freedom of expression in Italy in recent years. From The Cool People website (thecoolcouple.co.uk)

ONE IMAGE ONE CITY
Livia Zaffalon

About

Given that the city is our main visual space, that is made of symbols and that reflects the current power structures, this research attempts to illustrate, through images of the urban space, the similarities and differences between eight global cities, displaying in a playful way the current stage of the human development and possibly the direct or not so direct relation between one city’s power versus one city’s identity.

The cities

“For most people, seeing our world still means first and foremost seeing our city” — Nicholas Mirzoeff, *How to see the world*, Basic Books, 2016. Page 156.

To study our cities is to study our visual environment and this is becoming increasingly more accurate. Today the urban population has outgrown the rural population worldwide. Overall, around 51% of the 7 billion people on the planet live in cities, according to the United Nations. Since the industrial revolution this mass migration and urbanization has been taking place in older, more consolidated, cities such as London or Paris, where this process is internationalized and becoming faster and faster in all parts of the globe.

At the end of 2011, the most populated country in the world had 690.79 million people in the cities, against 656.56 million people in the field, said the National Bureau of Statistics. City dwellers now represent 51.27% of the total population, which is 1.347 billion people. Even in Brazil, classified as a developing

country, where the major international assets are based in agricultural monocultures, the rural population represents only 15% of the total population.

Brussels, Chicago, Singapore, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Milan, Moscow, New York, Paris, Seoul, San Francisco, São Paulo, Shanghai, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto and Washington are cities with great importance in some level or another. The title of Global City may be given to those cities that possess some standard characteristics such as business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience, political engagement and innovation.

These “conditions” have one thing in common. The global city is a node, a center connected to the rest of the world, where its power is measured based on the influence it may have—economically, political and military, the so called “hard power” (force and finance) that is the tangible power of influence, based on quantitative, such as population size, military equipment, etc. Another type of power, the “soft power”, is an intangible power of influence by ideas, knowledge, values, ideology and culture, based on the current communication networks — the internet, mass media — produced and proliferated into the cities and that don’t need intermediation to take place, a people-to-people connection.

And what is the global city? The global cities no longer have physical boundaries, they are regions in itself, it’s difficult to tell where its boundaries lie.

It is a node, a conjunction, an agglomeration of services, people, commerce, communication, everything, and as such, they also concentrate the problems and contradictions within the urban space — economic inequality and

mass migration may result in urban segregation with the creation and proliferation of informal constructions, slums, high criminalities rates, social inequality to name a few social problems, and even the environmental problems such as air pollution, floods, water and earth contamination, lack of proper urban structures such as sewers systems, paved streets and lightning, to name a few. Entire neighborhoods pop up in such a speed, that puts to earth the expression that Rome was not build in one day.

When it comes to identity, even tradition, global cities are more similar to each other than to cities of the same country and the same culture; are financial and economic production centers interconnected by the network flow of information and money. The intense movement of goods and capital, the circulation of people and groups in all directions and regions have created conditions for economic territorial detachment and rootlessness cultural identity, misaligning or dissipating borders, the visible and the invisible ones.

In this context, questions may arise such as — can a global city still be recognized and identified in a globalized word? And is it related to its power of influence? Are we losing identity and culture? Or are we creating a new culture?

Still, those cities are our learning ground. São Paulo, Mumbai, New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, Vienna, Buenos Aires — these eight cities were picked among index lists that rank the cities as globally or not, in order to give a good comparison possibilities and displayed in a similar way, that methodologically shows this patchwork net that characterize interconnected cities.

The study approach will be of illustrating these eight cities by picking some architectural related

themes such as satellite images, street images, façades using everyday images — Google maps, Google earth, postcards, etc — displaying the positive and negative aspects.

The changes

The world is changing too quickly, we spend our lives fitting in the best categorized wealth formulas — exercising, working and eating in order to use the leisure time to buy things you didn't even knew you need it. In the global network, culture and information are in one level or another available (censorship still takes place in several countries and access to digital information, even thought expanding, is still an intangible tool in some regions), but the way it is manipulated has contributed to transform the society into an detached, jelly mass, unconscious of its real depravations, with a sense of living into a democratic nation, but the real institutional of powers are concealed between the lines, between the visible and invisible that we have to learn how to highlight from the constant visual flow that surround us.

This essay will not try to give closed solutions or final answer to these questions, but will address the questions visually. This is an exercise to learn to look more carefully to our surroundings — the urban space, in order to be more attentive and more aware of ourselves and responsible to what is been done to our world, in a tangible manner (urban space) and in a intangible one (economical and political structures that coordinates our efforts towards their interests). But to keep the faith as the American journalism Edward R. Murrow used to put during the II World War — “Good night, and good lucky.”

The patterns

1 Plan photograph

Today, as long as you have an internet connection, you have the world in your pocket. The satellite imagery are a technological tool available for everyone today. Most used as a location device, but may also become an instrument for planning in itself, as a means of study and reflection about the future human interventions on the planet with its preservation in mind. The images used were taken from the Google Earth.

2 Sidewalks and streets

The public circulations areas, are spaces where humans behave as a coherent collective group in a organized manner, so that the circulation of people and vehicles flow properly — cars, motorcycles, pedestrians, bicycles, trams, riquixás, and so on. Some cities have more private transportation options, while others provide larger sidewalks with more public transportations choices such as trams, buses and subways.

3 Façades

The wall that confine our space and mold our physical perception can be made of several materials and colors — brick, concrete, glass, cardboard, etc) and it may be more technological, an in skyscraper buildings that controls the UV radiations, or just a cardboard working as a wall for a precarious house, common in some slums.

4 Iconic buildings

They are usually ancient symbolic constructions but there is also a current trend related to the construction of iconic buildings in large, global cities, characterized

by the current scenario of global competition between cities, working as trademarks and a result of commoditized culture.

5 Postcards

A historic iconic building.

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Satellite photography

- 1 London

2 Mumbai

3 New York

4 Paris
- 5 São Paulo

6 Tokyo

7 Vienna

8 Buenos Aires



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Sidewalks and streets

- 1 London

2 Mumbai

3 New York

4 Paris
- 5 São Paulo

6 Tokyo

7 Vienna

8 Buenos Aires



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Sidewalks and streets

- 1 London

2 Mumbai

3 New York

4 Paris
- 5 São Paulo

6 Tokyo

7 Vienna

8 Buenos Aires



1



2



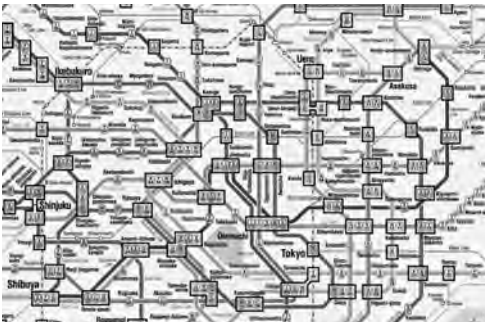
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4



5



6



7



8

Sidewalks and streets

- 1 London

2 Mumbai

3 New York

4 Paris
- 5 São Paulo

6 Tokyo

7 Vienna

8 Buenos Aires



1



2



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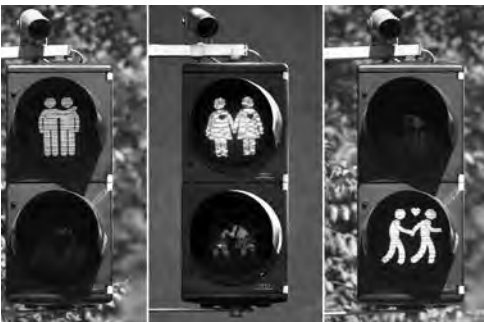
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7



8

Façades

- 1 London

2 Mumbai

3 New York

4 Paris
- 5 São Paulo

6 Tokyo

7 Vienna

8 Buenos Aires



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Iconic buildings

- 1 London

2 Mumbai

3 New York

4 Paris
- 5 São Paulo

6 Tokyo

7 Vienna

8 Buenos Aires



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Postcards

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| 1 London | 5 São Paulo |
| 2 Mumbai | 6 Tokyo |
| 3 New York | 7 Vienna |
| 4 Paris | 8 Buenos Aires |



1



3



5



7



2



4



6



8

WE ARE NOT WELCOME HERE Aderonke Akinyele

A research on socio-economical and political implication on migration

Migration has prompted growing interest as the number of migrants worldwide has increased, and the economic, social and political implications of migration for developing and developed countries assert themselves. However, while migration is often analyzed in terms of the “push-pull model”, which looks at the negative push factors which drive people to leave their countries and the positive pull factors which attract them to their new destinations, discussions on the consequences of migration always tended to focus on the negative impacts on the sending source country alone. However, migration creates both opportunities and risks for the sending and receiving countries, thus it is imperative that a holistic approach be given to discussions on the socio-economic impacts of migration (Katseli et al, 2005). The movement of people, particularly labour from one country to another creates for the two countries both negative and positive socio-economic effects. For the receiving countries, the positive benefits from immigration are the infusion of ‘cheap labour’ into their economies and the cross-fertilization of cultures. In terms of cost, the increasing flow of foreign immigrants often leads to a distortion of the labour markets and social tensions such as crime, unemployment, public welfare burden and other security concerns. International migration also has its social dimension, which gives a negative social externality on sending countries.

Migration can positively affect economic development if properly

managed. It is therefore necessary that the appropriate policy environment be created to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of managed migration. Managed migration facilitate the movement of people that is most likely to bring development while also acting to protect migrants from abuse and exploitation as well as restricting people who migrate simply to survive.

For most migrants, if not all; a decision was taken at one point in time to return home based on certain considerations. However, motivations will vary from person to person. In the majority of cases, the decision to return would depend on the existing socio-economic circumstances of the migrant at a point in time as well as on perceptions of the future prospects upon return. Thus, it could be induced by policies of source or host country.

Looking at issues with political and socio-economic coherence, for the most part, been descriptive in nature and comparatively; little attention has been paid to solve the problems.

Ngozi Schommers, a Nigerian Artist, stretches the issues of displacement to battle for survival in the exhibition titled “We are not welcome here”, where most times; retreat is unimaginable, yet the frontier of dreamland appears like a mirage. Being a citizen in Germany, a country at the receiving end of refugees from the Middle East, and perhaps parts of Africa, Schommers has an opportunity of first hand information. She recalls how her contact with some of the refugees started when she arrived Germany two years ago.

From Schommers observation of the activities of the migrants and refugees, some of “who were her neighbours” she distils the constraints of the people “to adjust to the restrictions of space”



in the host country. Apart from those displaced as a result of wars in their homelands, the other set of self-inflicted displaced persons and economic refugees’ are still on the increase in Europe despite dwindling resources of most of the unwilling host countries.

Ngozi Schommers’ works explores issues of migration, social-economics ideas, political, religious, identity, cultural and other human actions and influences.

She says: “displacement” that is perhaps unavailable as people “always move from place to place in search of greener pastures or simply just to survive”. In her video installation represented by images in this catalogue, she addressed the abduction of the Chibok girls in Nigeria and our reactions as humans and citizens towards that event.

Her subjects became non-important; seen as trash or human waste. It took the cries of their families for something to be done. Working on this piece, she wondered what news should be aired and the ones that are simply propaganda. In the video representation, the trash bags are basically the idea of how we see human lives as trash; they also represent the luggage of some of the refugees traveling within Europe. She then gave a highlight on the migration issues facing the world. Her Video Installation further tackles the aftermath of migration; how do we see or treat and accept returnees, after they have returned?

While making the video, she realised; most people do not show concern for others’ day-to-day existence. In her views, she stated; “If we do not properly integrate people, we will generate bigger problems”.

In the same line, Baltensperger and Siepert — Swiss based artists — also addressed these issues in *Imaginary Landscapes* (2015), a

collage photography exhibition on borders. They made a critical reflection on social, cultural and political issues and stress the boundaries of these problems in various countries through their re-constructed images. In their own words: “We demand that art does not only question, but also carry the responsibility to shape society”.

Ngozi Schommers’ Statement: “I think of how my subjects construct their lives. I see and understand their innocence or lack of it, manipulation, struggle, neglect and curiosity. I tend to fuse these varying human lives together, because at the end of the day no matter how individualistic we may be, we all still live together in the same universe as humans.”

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BLACK ART MARKET, the appropriation and illicit trafficking of antiquities and the hidden nefarious purposes that consolidate the management of exerting power in this field
Nelly Fili

“An open and unrestricted space. A space that belongs to the people. But, what is representative of people? What truly belongs to the people?”
— Bill Balaskas (This is a public space, 2008-2009, Digital Video, 0’ 17” (Loop-play). Courtesy of the artist and Kalfayan Galleries, Athens-Thessaloniki.)

Undoubtedly, nowadays, power is being exerting by the manipulation of visual images and the use of all kind of seemingly authentic profiles. Especially in the art field and the art market this phenomenon constitutes the concrete coherent framework which incorporates the dominance of the aesthetic value and function of cultural goods, defined in monetary/commercial terms.

Particularly in the case of antiquities and ancient artworks, their twofold valuation, in terms of their reception and appreciation as both marketable goods and inspired masterpieces, makes them often the subject of such activities as appropriation, ownership, commercial and social promotion, illicit trafficking, economic and political superiority, etc.

Art galleries, auction houses, dealers, collectors, sponsors, museums, cultural and other foundations, politicians, media, invisible lobbies and powerful individuals act as a dynamic whole into contact with a total system which forms the motive power of controlling and managing the fluctuation of “supply” and “demand”. The antiquities and ancient artworks appear as

fancy, desirable objects with the power of providing their owner (either individuals or institutions) with aesthetic pleasure, intellectual and social prestige and financial gain. This unseen vicious dynamic, based on a complex grid of cultural, political and economic values, with established mechanisms, moves the threads of the “commercialization” and “marketing” of antiquities. It brings benefits and profits by turning the ancient artworks into marketable goods and commodities, while the criteria of their aesthetic value influence their commercial evaluation. As a result, it seems to impact the way the public perceives the ancient works of art and their aesthetic and artistic notion.

It was only recently, for instance, that the Parthenon Marbles and the campaign of their return were put into the centre of general interest and debate due to Gucci’s Instagram project *#Guccigram*. This social media campaign invites artists to reimagine works of art by juxtaposing them with the luxury label’s new *Gucci Blooms* and *Gucci Caleido* prints. The artists involved in the project are given total creative freedom to intervene in iconic paintings and historical monuments — such as the Parthenon Marbles — embellishing them with Gucci fabrics and accessories.

Viewed in this perception, the Parthenon Sculptures of the Western and Eastern Parthenon Pediments, through the technique of photo shop, were reproduced and transformed into “fashionable” consumer goods, by the social media campaign of Gucci, and got caught in the “absurd” global commercialization of cultural goods.

“Attending the childbirth of the goddess Athena, Dionysus, wearing colorful shorts, holding a lady’s bag and having a

flower on his ear, enjoys himself taking selfie photos with his mobile. Cecrops, dressed like hippies, Ilissos wearing women’s accessories and next Kalliroi with her iphone, are watching the dispute between Poseidon and Athena for the Athens city...”¹



Photo source: *#Guccigram* project, [instagram.com/gucci/](https://www.instagram.com/gucci/)

Of course, there was powerful reaction from the Hellenic part against the Gucci fashion house, especially from the Club for UNESCO of Piraeus and Islands (a Hellenic nonprofit and nongovernmental organization that aims to foster intercultural awareness, understanding, cooperation and solidarity according to the principles and ideals of UNESCO).



Photo source: [instagram.com/gucci](https://www.instagram.com/gucci/)

¹ Gtp/headlines, Gucci Social Media Campaign Slammed for ‘Artistic Vandalism’ of Parthenon Sculptures. December, 2015. [news.gtp.gr/2015/12/30/gucci-campaign-slammed-artistic-vandalism-parthenon](https://www.news.gtp.gr/2015/12/30/gucci-campaign-slammed-artistic-vandalism-parthenon)

Specifically, the Club for UNESCO of Piraeus and Islands underlined “that the *#Guccigram* project promotes the Gucci designs with “complete apathy” on the cultural and symbolic value of the Parthenon sculptures by the use of photographs for commercial — marketing purposes of the ancient marbles”. Moreover, it added that the *#Guccigram* project was “fooling with the struggle of the Greeks for the return of the Parthenon Sculptures from the British Museum” and called for Gucci to withdraw the images of the Parthenon sculptures from the campaign.

Consequently, the debate of the Parthenon Marbles’ campaign was unconsciously been promoted and placed into the centre of the global interest through their transformation into commercial commodities and appropriation of their image by a “Kitsch” pseudo-art reproductive approach whose essential function is to flatter, soothe and reassure the consumer. It constitutes a form of popular art but cheap and crude and has an essential attribute of interdependency.



Photo source: [instagram.com/gucci](https://www.instagram.com/gucci/)

Hence, a research on the Black Art Market can be connected to the above appropriation of antiquities and ancient artworks. A team of art dealers used to restore antiquities using a “Kitsch” pseudo-art reproductive method popular in the 1920’s. It concerns the

“Frederick Schultz’s case, a New York dealer and president of an ancient art gallery who arranged to purchase smuggled antiquities from a British restorer by the name of Jonathan Tokeley-Parry who reportedly smuggled more than 3,000 antiquities out of Egypt, during the early 1990’s. His method was to make the objects look like cheap reproductions and tourist “Kitsch” souvenirs by covering them in plastic and then applying gold leaf and black paint.



(Archeology Magazine)
Left: sculptured head of 18th Dynasty pharaoh Amenhotep III was dipped in clear plastic and painted to look like tourist souvenir Right: by Tokeley-Parry, and sold in 1993 for \$1.2 million

The Tokeley-Parry/Schultz team restored the objects, created fake documentation, in order to have them as originating from an old collection, called the Thomas Alcock Collection, dating from the 1920’s, and then sold them in the international market. Labels for the collection were dipped in tea to give them an aged appearance.

In general, aimed either at removing or hiding their true origin and provenance or obscuring their illicit trafficking and exportation to a foreign territory, real or fictitious manipulations and appropriation of masterpiece antiquities and ancient artworks are usually taking place in the, so called, global Black Art Market, empowering and benefiting by their liberal trade.

The illegal actions and transactions that characterize the murky trade in precious cultural objects constitute the crime of laundering and the invisible and hidden part of the art world. In this frame of globalization and trade liberalization, the illicit trafficking of antiquities is enormous, crosses all borders and constitutes an issue of ever increasing proportion.

Although the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (an umbrella agreement signed by 120 countries, under the terms of which, antiquities for sale must have a legal and documented collecting history that dates back to 1970 or earlier) was a real turning point, the illicit trade still exists and dealers have devised ever more devious ways and paths to creating a seemingly authentic profile for objects they are dealing in. Top auction houses in London and New York are involved by being the mediator through which the dealers sell and buy the same objects back to add both to the price and trading history. Such cultural objects may appear in the collection of well-known museums or respectful private collectors.



Laundering phenomena in cultural goods trafficking. (SAFE)
www.savingantiquities.org

According to 1970 UNESCO Convention, mentioned above, items found to have been looted can be repatriated to their countries of

origin, if their illegal recent travel can be proved without doubt. As a result, between 2005-2007, some of the most prestigious museums and private collections, from worldwide, announced the return of hundreds of antiquities and some 130 masterpieces have been repatriated, among them the Getty Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, Boston Museum and Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

But what was the invisible situation, whereby museums were giving items back to the nations where they originated, and what was the real reason, behind the scenes, of these repatriations which have been communicated to the general public as magnanimous acts? Did they, in fact, take place as a result of pressure? And, yet, was it maybe because many of these antiquities have previously appeared through the most well-known auction houses in London and New York?

Undoubtedly, no museum wants its reputation to be ruined based on rumors — or even facts — that it possesses in its collections objects that are in effect stolen goods; and certainly no collector desires to give away a masterpiece of a collection that has also cost a great sum of money.

But on the other hand, it is all about the status that goes with ownership that some well-known museums and collectors are far too reluctant to learn more about the history or the provenance of the objects they acquire; and it is the motif of money that some of the leading auction houses does not examine the origin of the objects they appear in their glossy catalogues. However, the past years premier auction houses have adopted, at least formally, such procedures and diligence programs in order to minimize the risk of selling looted art. The lack of suitable certifica-

tion and certain provenance of an object, its appearance in Polaroid pictures just after excavation, the fact that has never being studied, catalogued or authorized to be exported by the Authorities of the country of origin, add arguments to its illicit excavation and illicit trading.

Black Art Market is all about “laundering” the object. Partly is based on the attribution of an inherently false and arbitrary value to the object that, visibly, is put for auction for the purpose of selling it and then repurchasing it through a front or through a company of convenience; something that alters the market value of an entire class of objects, of equal cultural interest, and usually limits the time that someone is able to claim the object, which is often very short.

Moreover, the “ancient art laundering” has been a successful practice among museums for many years whereby dealers loaned objects to less-known museums as an act of favor for a certain period, before selling them to major museums. The objects being on public exhibition, usually for a short period, helped the dealer to take advantage of the fact that no third party raised any claim.

A very well-known Black Art Market case concerns J. Paul Getty Museum, the former curators of which, Robert Hecht and Marion True, were charged with conspiracy and handling in relation to an illicit traffic of archaeological items of huge proportions, in July 2005. J. Paul Getty Museum was accused of condoning the flow of illegal antiquities by manufacturing fake documentation to satisfy its own requirements for provenance, for a large collection of more than 300 objects of Greek, Roman and Etruscan origin, it acquired, whereas in fact the provenance for 90 per cent

of these objects was unknown. This case has marked the beginning of a new policy, regarding acquisitions, on the part of many American Museums who have, since, repatriated many cultural objects to the country of their origin.

The tremendous crime of Black Art Market consists of looting and trading cultural goods by illegally excavated them and ripping them from their context, their entity and the environment they laid for thousands of years. Consequently, this is not just a crime against the law but a crime and a catastrophe against the humanity, who is the only owner of heritage and culture; a crime against history, due to the irreparable loss of information that surrounded the illegally excavated and stolen items.

In the current version of globalization, commercialization and appropriation of cultural goods, we ourselves end up as victims.

Hence, humanity will forever face the loss of important historical information and suppression of knowledge about the past and become poor in terms of cultural vigor.

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WHAT IS BEHIND AN ART COLLECTION

Paola Aluzzi

“Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else.”
Leonardo da Vinci

“Good Night and, Good Luck.” an ironic way of wishing someone success when it’s obviously impossible to achieve. A protective symbolic phrase to keep us away from all manner of negative influences.

Beneath this quote lie stories of uncertainty and a crisis of values during different periods of time. A world history built by human kind; our own history. And, as you read, we are writing ours today, in our every day life, emerged in a world that lives and changes at an immense speed with global communications, a world that learns and speaks through images, the internet whose communication devices have become a ‘must have’ to be a part of this world, to be visible. But the reason we do or don’t do certain things is moved by our own invisibility. Yes, it is our emotions, instincts and intelligence that pushes us to do, to walk in certain directions, to achieve, to transcend, to help, to acquire, to share, to admire, to love...

A diversity of cultures, citizenships, different ages and backgrounds is the result of what we are about to read. It exposes the invisible part of human kind, which despite our differences, are all the same, we cry, we smile, we love, we hate, we are confident and we fear. This duality is part of human kind. Our “fil rouge” is in this case our human essence, which we are, and how we are moved to effect and to achieve goals in life. The visibility; the art pieces in museums around

the world. The invisibility; the emotions that move a collector to acquire their pieces.

After reading these interviews, we will never be able to see an art piece in a collection by just seeing the beauty of the piece itself, or by the story behind the piece, nor by seeing what the artist wanted to express through it, or even what we can interpret as a spectator. A fifth point of view must be perceived, through many pieces, of stories and emotions which all together are making a whole. “The Collector,” who he is, his personal story, his childhood, his first acquisition, his passions, obsessions, fears and desires. Art collecting might be related to a personal story, as in a beautiful collage, or might be the pieces of a puzzle missing to complete oneself by fulfilling a sense of emptiness, or might show the complexity of humankind with different masks as in a play on a theater, or It can fulfill the ego.

Gratitude is the feeling that I would like to express to all the interviewees, for their time, for the enthusiasm to share with us a part of their life, their humanity, their essence, their stories and the stories behind the pieces, the invisibility of their private collections.

The awareness of our own passions and emotions will lead us to a better understanding of who we are, and hopefully it will also direct us to make better decisions ourselves, today and for upcoming generations. In farewell, we hope we have been able to make a difference.

Interview with
MARIA ALBANI
CARPANETO (Italy)



With a female collector's point of view, Maria shares with us her love of beauty, which she has felt since childhood, and how she started her collection moved by a hunger for the knowledge to better understand the attraction she felt for contemporary art.

As I want to start from the very beginning Maria, where were you born?

I was born in Milan, located on the Lombardy region at northern part of Italy.

How was the environment where you grew up, your parents, brothers and sisters, your family?

I am the firstborn of four siblings. We were all raised with a strong love for beauty. My father was a mathematician, he had a strong and deep sense of culture, ranging from literature to philosophy and from music to art. He had also been associated with one of the most brilliant Italian editors, Vanni Scheiwiller, and thanks to him, I had the privilege to meet many contemporary artists and poets. On the other hand, my mother had developed a strong passion for archeology and Homeric poems.

What were your main interests as a child and as a teenager?

I loved classic dance so much, that I dreamed of becoming a professional dancer. Literature was also one of my main interests, especially Russian.

When was the very first time that art attracted your attention?

Concerning antique and modern art, I don't remember a specific moment because I have been visiting museums and archaeological sites ever since I was a child. On the other hand, when I first encountered contemporary art, in summer of 1972 at Venice biennale, I was really shocked!

What piece of art was the first one you bought?

It was a Carlo Belli's abstract work; He was the author of Kn, the influential manifesto of abstraction published by Edizioni del Milione in 1935. The close cousin of the sculptor Fausto Melotti

Where you moved to buy the piece by its beauty or uniqueness or by the story behind the piece?

The reason for acquiring it was the will to possess a small fragment of those fruitful years, the legendary 1930s whose fervor in the arts and architecture I had the chance to know about directly from the voices of their protagonists, Carlo and Fausto.

How did it happened?

I was attending the University, where I was studying Classical Letters, when I met Carlo Belli in Rome. This encounter changed also my course of studies. I wanted to

acquire one of his drawings. It was a beautiful piece and I persisted in my insistence to own it. I am pretty sure that he was amused by that odd negotiation he concluded with a penniless student, which I was at that time.

How did you feel with this first acquisition?

That little abstract piece changed me. In that moment I felt I would follow art for my whole life and I instantly made a decision to change my study course in order to better understand Contemporary art, in which I eventually got my degree.

I would like to go back in time to the first civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt or Greece when they started to collect certain objects from the people they conquered. It was of course the beginning of collecting objects which were of particular interest to them. These objects represented a sense of power because these pieces were the result of a conquest. So ever since then an art piece might evoke power by the piece itself or through the moment of the acquisition.

Have you ever felt this kind of power at the moment of acquiring a certain piece of art work?

Uhm... A feeling of a conquest... but not for itself and never for a sense of power, but for the acquisition of the piece. I would prefer to say a loving conquest.

I'm thinking ... it must be a very exciting moment, being at an art auction and winning the bid on a piece you wanted to buy.

Definitely yes, winning a bid on a piece is exciting but only in the sense of being the final step in a process involving research on the piece which evokes special emotions related to your personal psyche.

Is it the adrenaline rush of acquisition what moves you to buy art this way?

Not always, I think buying at auctions can trigger perverse mechanisms.

Where and how, do you usually buy art?

I share this art passion with my husband and we usually buy art together at galleries and fairs. We like to create a bond with professionals and we enjoy meeting the artists in their atelier and in that way we learn more of their creative process.

Do you have a team to help and advise you what pieces to buy or do you like to handle the whole process by yourself?

We like to handle the process by ourselves and by comparing our thoughts with gallery owners, collectors and curators who are also good friends.

How many pieces of art are in your collection?

Sincerely, I don't know!

Do you see your art collection as an investment or/and a cultural heritage?

We have never bought art pieces as an investment but only for aesthetic satisfaction and intellectual stimulation.

As a prelude to the next question I would like to go back in time once more. During the period of the Roman Empire when they were amazed by the beauty of Greek art and sculpture emperors like Julius Caesar, Nero, Pompey and many others started creating their own art collections. As original pieces were difficult to acquire, they started to commission copies to be made. So a voluminous trade in copies and fakes arose in order to satisfy the demand.

The black market in art was born. Since that time, the art field has been dealing with looters in the black market, especially when we speak of antiquities. We can't deny its existence; even the museums buy unique pieces from the black market. The question is: what is the process involved in verifying the authenticity of a piece?

In case of recent works the relationship of trust with the gallery is enough, for other pieces we verify the authenticity in the raisonn  catalogue, by certificate of authenticity, and we also look for an exhibition history and their provenance.

What kind of art are you interested in buying for the upcoming years and are you following a particular direction?

We follow emerging and well known artists, especially on abstract art.

Will you ever stop collecting?

Never, it's part of me!

What emotions do you experience when you are in front of your art collection?

It is a mosaic of emotions, feelings and different moods that each piece has given us and continues to give us.

Is there any famous quote you like or you feel related to in some way?

“To my father I owe my life, to my mentor a life worth been lived”
— Alexander the Great.

Interview with
FABIO CHERSTICH (Italy)



It was during a very nice chat where I interviewed Fabio Cherstich that I perceived a very creative man and a passionate researcher for stories behind the art piece. In this interview he will expose more of what is behind his art collection.

I would like to start this interview from the very beginning.

Fabio, Where were you born?
I was born in 1984 in the city of Udine in the northeastern of Italy, in the middle of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region.

How was the environment where you grew up, your parents, brothers and sisters, your family?

I was an only child to my parents, I had no siblings. In my family there wasn't an art collecting tradition. My father and mother worked as employees. My grandfather was a significant character to me and I think he was the main influence on me collecting art. He was my

maternal grandfather and had a framing business and I enjoyed going to this place and being around him, so my house was always well decorated with many paintings and pictures on the wall. I have to confess that not all the pieces were beautiful, some were ugly, but always with a beautiful frame. So ever since then, I don't like to have empty walls.

What were your main interests as a child and as a teenager?

I've always had a very clear idea of what I wanted to be when I grew up, so, my interest at that time was the theatre. My thanks to an illuminated music teacher who introduced me to the opera and made me discover the world of musical theater and to my mom that bought me tickets for the whole opera season.

After those experiences my passion for the theater arose. And I was oscillating between becoming a scenographer, which is very linked to the work with images, or becoming a theater director who works analyzing dramaturgy texts and is directly related to actors, not only in the visual area but in the psychological and emotional understanding of the characters, coordinating the costumes and in general interdisciplinary work with the whole theater play. So I decided to become a theater director and a scenographer.

When was the very first time that art attracted your attention?

I think it was during the elementary school, I was less than 10 years old and my mother gave me a beautiful book of Picasso's works. Besides that I also had a passion to design and to play with Lego toys. I found myself to be a creative person.

I discovered a passion for creating things, drawing pleasure from that activity, as I do now in my work as a scenographer.

What piece of art was the first one you bought?

My first acquisition was a photographic series of Beatrice Marchi.

How did it happen?

At that time I was working on a theater in Saint Petersburg Russia and it was the first time that I was well paid for my work and as I already had the idea to start an art collection I felt this was a good time to initiate it. I wrote to a friend of mine, Vincenzo Latronico who knows very well the Jung Contemporary art scene in Italy and asked him for advice in buying a good art piece and he told me about Beatrice Marchi and Tomaso De Luca. So my first art acquisition, following my friend's advice, was a series of photographs by Beatrice Marchi.

Where you moved to buy the piece by its beauty or uniqueness or by the story behind the piece?

I've always like the stories behind the piece. The research process and investigating are for me a playful time which I enjoy very much. I don't like simple and easy things. As it happened with one of my favorite artist Patrick Angus. It happened in 2012 while at was at dinner with my friend Tomaso De Luca and we start talking about art, he showed me on the screen of his cell phone an art work by Patrick Angus and for me it was love at first sight. After two months researching him I finally contacted the curator Lee Ortega from The

Regional art museum of Fort Smith Arkansas, who gave me the best contact she could, the telephone number of Betty Angus, Patrick's mother, so I called her immediately.

We had a nice chat about my interest in her son's artwork and we hang up with a promise that I would go and visit her in Arkansas. After two years I found the perfect moment to travel to Arkansas and I went with a friend of mine, Carlotta Managio, who is a photographer and who embraced this project with joy. First we arrived in New York in search of Douglas Blair Turnbaugh, Angus' mentor, who has in possession of all the art works Patrick produced during the 80's. He gave us another contact, Robert Patrick, who is also an art collector and was Patrick's friend. We went to his house in the Hampsons where he showed us Patrick's art works, I was, and remain, astonished by the pieces. After this visit we continued with our trip to Arkansas where we finally met with Betty Angus and she showed us Patrick house-museum.

Even the garage was full of beautiful paintings, very well placed on the walls. During the morning Carlotta and I worked on Patrick's art and at night we had talks with Betty. After 3 amazing days in Arkansas we return to Texas. I had a call from Douglas telling me that there was interest from a gallery owner, Thomas Fuchs, to produce an exhibition of Patrick's works. I was so happy that other people in the art field were interested in Patrick's works. Arriving in Milano I involved Ana Siccardi in the project of the rediscovery and relaunch of Patrick Angus work which she enthusiastically embraced. On November 2014 I flew back to Arkansas and Betty told me she had received a call from a German gallery owner showing interest in Pat-

rick's works. I felt like a bomb was about to explode around this whole theme. However, by this time Betty perceived our true passion and love for Patrick's works and our desire to relaunch him in Europe, so we closed a deal and we flew back to Italy where we organized an exhibition at LOOM gallery in Milano as his first solo show in Europe. We also published a book for him.

I would like to go back in time to the first civilizations such as Egypt, India and Greece when they started to collect certain objects from the people they conquered. It was of course the beginning of collecting certain objects which were of a particular interest to them. These objects represented a sense of power because these pieces were the result of a conquest.

So ever since then an art piece might evoke power by the piece itself or through the moment of the acquisition.

Have you ever felt this kind of power at the moment of acquiring a certain piece of art work?

I don't like the word power. I would change it for the word; possibility. That's the way I feel when acquiring an art piece. I feel the possibility of collecting, the possibility of supporting a good and talented young artist, the possibility of investing to have an art collection. I hope someday it can be shared with the public. I like the idea of sharing my collection with the public interested in art and willing to learn the story and the research made behind the pieces.

Do you like to buy art at auction houses? I think it must be a very exciting moment, being at an art

auction and winning the bid on a piece you wanted to buy.

Yes, I bought a piece by ORLAN at an auction house and I can say I enjoyed it, but it is not really special for me to buy art in this way.

What is the process involved in verifying the authenticity of a piece?

I rely on the artists directly or if they are dead I rely on his family. I always ask for a certificate of authenticity for the piece which is the official and common practice.

What kind of art are you interested in buying for the upcoming years, are you following a particular direction?

My collection has three main lines, one is encompassed by historic artists who are represented in art through themes of identity; sexual, cultural and political, such as, ORLAN who is about self portraits and art works that represent different personalities as happens on stage, or to disguise, using masks and works which transform their identity. I find it closely linked to the theatrical scene. The artists in this line are; Urs Luthi, Michel Journiac, Pierre Molinier, Luigi Ontani, Joan Jonas, ORLAN, Regina José Galindo, Luigi Presicce, Chiara Fumai and Venjamin, a young Russian artist.

The second line is made of young Italian artists, almost all friends of mine, such as; Tomaso di Luca, Lisa Dalfino, Giulio Frigo, Beatrice Marchi, Mattia Bosco, Danilo Buccella, Santo Tolone, Nicolo Bruno and Luca de Leva. The third line, is about Patrick Angus with over 80 art pieces, works made by mixed techniques, water color, graphite designs and large scale oil paint-

ings. I am also willing to buy Emanuelle Mocarrelli art.

Will you ever stop collecting?

I don't think so.

What emotions do you experience when you are in front of your art collection?

My thoughts, when I am in front of my collection, are; that fortunately it is not yet complete.

Interview with RODRIGO RIVERO LAKE (Mexico)



A charming personality with a remarkable art background in ancient art, and art dealing, with more than five books published. Rodrigo is one of the most well known antiquarians in the art field in Mexico. His art collection has been part of many exhibitions in museums around the world. With great enthusiasm Rodrigo shares with us, in this interview, what is behind his art collection.

I would like to start this interview from the very beginning. Rodrigo, where were you born?

I was born in Mexico city, which is located in a large valley at the center of Mexico.

How was the environment where you grew up, your parents, brothers and sisters, your family?

I grew up with a very nice family, my father was a diplomatic, a man

with solid convictions and values. He was a romantic and political dreamer and an extremely polite person, as was my mother. They were both fantastic people! They had noble souls and very refined personalities. I was the youngest of 4 siblings, all males. I lived a life of work in an environment of well educated people, although in those times we were short of money.

What were your main interest as a child and as a teenager?

I loved history, so I started to deal with old objects at a very young age, trying to understand the message of human development and refinement through art pieces and through history.

When was the very first time that art attracted your attention?

I was 9 years old, and we moved to Milan, Italy where I lived for almost a year. My father was The Mexican General Consul. I was amazed by all the art and beauty that was displayed in the city.

What piece of art was the first one you bought?

The first piece I bought, was a wooden barroque console.

Where you moved to buy the piece, by its beauty or uniqueness, or by the story behind the piece?

I was moved by both, I usually find that beautiful pieces have fantastic stories. And beautiful tales always have a fantastic object in them.

How did it happened?

I used to walk around my block in Mexico city. A couple who owned

an antique art business lived close by and I enjoyed visiting them. I remember I was curious about everything so they told me a story of of almost every piece they had on display. So I started helping them cleaning and polishing the antiquities, and they promised me that I was going to be paid someday. Several years later when the woman died the piece came into my hands as a heritage. They remembered how much I liked that console and all the time I spent with them.

Do you like to buy at auction houses? I'm thinking... It must be a very exiting moment, wining the bid on a piece you wanted to buy.

Yes it is fantastic! That feeling when you are at an auction, bidding for some piece that you already feel its yours, and everything happens so fast, that your reaction has to be faster, until you listen to the final hammer and he points at you. Then you feel a spiritual relief, but after that exciting moment, it is followed by another moment, when I say to myself; "How the hell am I going to pay for this". It's a feeling compare to a fox trying to run away from a hundred dogs.

Is this the adrenaline rush of acquisition what moves you to buy art this way?

Yes, and no, I think it is a very exciting moment, but I find I feel stronger when I connect to a certain piece which will move me to buy it at any place.

Do you have a team to help and give you advice to know what pieces to buy or do you like to handle the whole process by yourself?

Yes, I have a team that helps me, but I am the final eye, who decides.

How many pieces of art are in your collection?

More than 20,000 pieces.

Do you see your art collection as an investment or/and a cultural heritage?

I think for me, buying art is an addiction, more than anything else.

As a prelude to the next question, I would like to go back in time, during the period of the Roman Empire when they were amazed by the beauty of greek art and sculpture, emperors like Julius Caesar, Nero, Pompey and many others started creating their own art collections.

Since original pieces were difficult to acquire, they started to commission copies to be made. So a voluminous trade in copies arose in order to satisfy the demand. The black art market was born. Since that time, the art field has been dealing with looters in the black art market, especially when we speak about antiquities.

What is the process involved in verifying the authenticity of a piece?

Mostly, I follow my personal instinct, it is my guide. But there are special pieces where you have to do research, to consult, to hear and to learn. Experience is a master in this field.

What kind of art are you interested in buying for the upcoming years, are you following a particular direction?

Architectural elements from India and Mexico, as well as pieces that can tell me a story which I am curious about.

Will you ever stop collecting?

Never.

What emotions do you experience when you are in front of your art collection?

I always ask myself when I am at my warehouse; "Who on earth bought this 28 foot door and The Facades from the Royal Muslim Houses?, and The Baroque altar pieces?". It's a never ending story.

Interview with GREGORY PAPADIMITRIOU (London)



A successful businessman with a large passion for, and an expert in, the art field with a collection of over 1,000 paintings. Gregory loves to attend major art exhibitions around the world in search of new art concepts and emerging artists. In a very interesting conversation Gregory let us know what, in his mind, is behind his art collection.

I would like to start this interview from the very beginning. Gregory, where were you born?

I was born in Athens, Greece.

How was the environment where you grew up, your parents,

brothers and sisters, your family?

I grew up together with my older sister in our family house in Psychiko, Greece. My mother was Swiss and a person that really influenced my behavior towards art collecting.

What were your main interests as a child and as a teenager?

My main interests were playing tennis, horse back riding, music and collecting stamps.

When was the very first time that art attracted your attention?

I was always attracted to art due to the fact that I grew up in a home full of art.

What piece of art was the first one you bought?

The first piece of art that I owned was a painting by Niko Kessanils, a famous Greek painter.

Where you moved to buy the piece by its beauty or uniqueness or by the story behind the piece?

I was moved by the uniqueness of the piece and the emotions it made me feel.

How did it happen?

We visited the artist at his studio, and although he had many works lying around, I fell in love with that specific one.

How did you feel with this first acquisition?

Happy and proud.

I would like to go back in time to the first civilizations such as

Egypt, India or Greece when they started to collect certain objects from the people they conquered. It was of course the beginning of collecting certain objects which were of a particular interest to them. These objects represented a sense of power because these pieces were the result of a conquest. So ever since then an art piece might evoke power by the piece itself or through the moment of the acquisition.

Have you ever felt this kind of power at the moment of acquiring a certain piece of art work?

Yes indeed this is a very strong feeling, and I was lucky enough to feel it a few times in my life. I prefer not to share the exact details, but during a major art fair, I was approached by an art dealer who offered me a very rare art work. I only had a few moments to decide, but let's just say that a few seconds were enough for me to say yes.

I'm thinking it must be a very exciting moment, being at an art auction and wining the bid on a piece you wanted to buy.

To be honest with you, I have not been buying from auctions that much. I prefer the feeling of hunting in new galleries and discovering the new emerging artists.

Is this adrenaline rush of acquisition what moves you to buy art this way?

The adrenaline rush is always present! When you buy in auctions or when you buy in galleries.

Where and how, do you usually buy art?

I personally prefer to do my own homework. I do not have an advisory team for my collection. I gather all the information needed from my personal research, visits to art shows and exhibitions and from various discussions I have with other fellow collectors!

How many pieces of art are in your collection?

Let's just say that it is a big collection.

Do you see your art collection as an investment or/ and a cultural heritage?

I started my collection out of interest in the arts and out of the passion I have in collecting. I never looked at it as an investment, but to be honest the results have surprised me and keep surprising me every single day.

As a prelude to the next question I would like to go back in time once more. During the period of the Roman Empire when they were amazed by the beauty of Greek art and sculpture. Emperors like Julius Caesar, Nero, Pompey and many others started creating their own collections.

As original pieces were difficult to acquire, they started to commission copies to be made and fakes arose in order to satisfy the demand.

The black market in art was born. Since that time the art field has been dealing with looters in the black market, especially when we speak of antiquities.

What is the process involved in verifying the authenticity of a piece?

As I usually collect art works from living artists, I do not worry about that part. Of course I always try to keep an eye on the correct provenance and to be provided the correct paperwork from the gallery or the art dealer.

What kind of art are you interested in buying for the upcoming years, are you following a particular direction?

I love emerging artists from new galleries. I am always curious in what the next show will be and what young artists will come up with to really impress the public.

Will you ever stop collecting?

No, I will never stop!!!

What emotions do you experience when you are in front of your art collection?

I feel that my art collection has a sense of humor... I think if someone really looks into every single item, they will understand many things about my character and my interests.

Is there any famous quote you like or you feel related in some way?

My favorite quote on arts is one by Sir Winston Churchill when asked to cut arts funding in favor of the war effort, he replied: "Then what are we fighting for?"



My first impression of Denis was of a very polite and well educated young man. It was a pleasure to get to know him. When I first talked with him over the phone I was touched by his spontaneity during which he discussed what is behind his art collection.

I would like to start this interview from the beginning. Where were you born Denis?

I was born in Sochi, a city in Krasnodar Krai, Russia located on the Black Sea coast near the border between Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia.

How was the environment where you grew up, your parents, brothers and sisters, your family?

My hometown now has a multicultural atmosphere but at that time there was a lack of a hybrid culture and also a lack of fine art. I grew up during the 1990's, after the collapse of The Soviet Union and within the collapse of Russia's controlled economy. My childhood was poor as was everybody during that period of time in Russia. My parents were trying to make money, but my grandparents used to tell me "Money means nothing". So they spent all they had buying me books and tickets to theater performances. In those days we missed no exhibition presented in my hometown.

What were your main interests as a child and as a teenager?

During my childhood I spent all my time reading books and playing with toys. Our family was always moving from one place to another, so I didn't have the opportunity to make long term friends, and, I became fond of collecting stones, which eventually became my first collection. I brought home all kinds of stones that grabbed my attention. There were small ones and big ones. Sometimes we didn't have enough room in our apartment for the biggest stones, so I had to make a deal with my father and promise him I would change my approach, just collecting small size stones.

When was the very first time that art attracted your attention?

I always liked going to the museum with my grandmother, but I was not interested in paintings or pictures. I was interested in knowing the story behind the antique pieces, like, how the piece was recovered and how they managed to bring it back and show it to the public. I also found very interesting reading about ancient times and archeology. I thought of canvases as artifacts.

At university I had an art history course and I remember my teacher who was a very old woman and unfortunately nobody paid attention during her lectures. In an effort to support her, I remember telling her that her lessons were very important. As homework she asked us to go to several museums and exhibitions and told us to take notes so that we could discuss them with her in class. She was not able to walk correctly even for short distances. So in this way, as she was not able to go to the museums, we were bringing back to class

everything that was happening in the art world. In this way she could see all the exhibitions through our eyes and experiences. All of this helped the art world became very attractive to me.

What piece of art was the first one you bought?

My first acquisition was a piece from Voligamsi.

Where you moved to buy the piece by its beauty or uniqueness or by the story behind the piece?

I bought my first piece at an auction house and during the pre auction exhibition I fell in love with the piece.

How did it happened?

My first auction was like a roller coaster, I felt I was too young and without enough money to be there. But it was a period of time in Russia after the beginning of the economic crisis, so everybody was very cautious on spending their money. That provided me an opportunity.

I'm thinking it must be a very exciting moment, being at an art auction and winning the bid on a piece you wanted to buy, is this adrenaline rush of acquisition what moves you to buy art this way?

I do like auctions. They are very exciting but I am trying not to allow the sense of revelry to take over. I don't like to be controlled by any obsession.

How did you feel with this first acquisition?

After the sale process was finished, I went to the nearest bar, and my first thought was; " Why have I

done it?, am I crazy?, isn't this too expensive? ". But as soon as it was delivered to my apartment, and I saw it, I realized that from that precise moment and onward, my life had been changed.

I would like to go back in time to the first civilizations such as Egypt, India or Greece when they started to collect certain objects from the people they conquered. It was of course the beginning of collecting certain objects which were of a particular interest to them. These objects represented a sense of power because these pieces were the result of a conquest. So ever since then an art piece might evoke power by the piece itself or through the moment of the acquisition.

Have you ever felt this kind of power at the moment of acquiring a certain piece of art work?

I don't feel power, I just feel a difference between myself and other people. These art pieces are becoming part of my personality. Now I feel that I am becoming more complete than I used to be.

Where and how, do you usually buy art?

I like to buy art at auction houses, because there you can see how art is alive. For me, auctions are the most honest way to sell and buy art at a fair price. I prefer to buy there, rather than at galleries.

How many pieces of art are in your collection?

I have around 40 pieces.

Do you see your art collection as an investment or/ and as a cultural heritage?

I see both, but investment is secondary.

What is the process involved in verifying the authenticity of a piece?

I collect contemporary art, almost all my pieces are from the 70's and they are not popular pieces among a wide audience. Of course you have a risk when buying without a document. But for me collecting is the risk of our time.

What kind of art are you interested in buying in the upcoming years, are you following a particular direction?

I still don't have a particular direction and I hope to find it in the coming years. As I don't like borders and limits its difficult for me to attach to something predefined.

Will you ever stop collecting?

I don't allow this possibility. I suppose I will collect all my life, maybe at a different pace.

What emotions do you experience when you are in front of your art collection?

Every artist has a memory, your first emotion, your money, your time. I feel my life is very interesting as well as my collection, because it represents a collage of my life.

Interview with PRINCE
YEMISI ADEDOYIN SHYLLON
(Nigeria)



"Art collecting is a habit, arising from a burning passion. For me, this passion has become an obsession", were the words of Prince Yemisi Adedoyin Shyllon. It has been an honor and a pleasure to know what is behind the biggest art collection of African art, situated in Lagos, Nigeria, with over than 62,000 pieces. One of the most important goals for Prince Yemisi is to increase the awareness and appreciation of African art.

As I want to start from the very beginning, Prince, where were you born?

I was born in Lagos and spent the early part of my life mostly at No.2 Oyekan Street, Yaba, in the Mainland of Lagos of Nigeria.

How was the environment where you grew up, your parents, brothers and sisters, your family?

My father grew through the clerical ranks to become an accountant with the Nigeria Port Authority, while my mother was a primary school teacher. I had my primary school at the St Patrick's Catholic school in Yaba and my secondary school at the Lagos City College also in the Yaba area of the Mainland of Lagos. Our home at Yaba was close to the Yaba College of Technology where visual art is offered at the college. As I grew up, I traced and copied drawings and pictures in Magazines as a child.

What were your main interests as a child and as a teenager?

As earlier stated, I love art. I used to draw a lot as a child. In fact, I have a younger cousin who developed a career in the advertising profession engendered by his drawing association with me in our growing years. He is today, a copy artist in an advertising company. I still draw and can be found drawing forms at idle moments during board meetings. My main interest therefore as a child, was like every normal child. I enjoyed school and I looked forward to outperforming others at school.

When was the very first time that art attracted your attention?

Art has always been in me like I stated earlier. I also recall as a kid that I used to decoratively display the empty containers of used face powders, with beautiful and colorful pictures of women on the bodies of the containers. I used to beautifully arrange them on the walls around my father's house and on returning from school, if any of the powder containers was missing, I would become very sad, uncooperative and sullen. That is the closest I can claim, that associates me to eventually becoming an art collector.

What piece of art was the first one you bought?

My first purchased piece of art in mid-seventies (1970s), is a wooden stylized female form, bought from an art student of the Yaba College of Technology, in which college library I used to read, during holidays as a student of the University of Ibadan.

Where you moved to buy the piece by its beauty or uniqueness

or by the story behind the piece?

At that time, there was no issue about beauty or uniqueness. I just bought the artwork in fulfillment of my innate desire to own such a piece of value. I was not moved by anything that has to do with beauty or uniqueness. The best I can say, is that the price was attractive enough, for me to have parted with the pocket money meant for my feeding in buying artwork.

How did it happened?

On one of my visits, as a student of the University of Ibadan, to the demonstration center of visual art of the Yaba College of Technology, I met this equally young student of art, willing to part with his untitled work to an unknown novice, who expressed interest in buying his created work of art.

How did you feel with this first acquisition?

I had a feeling of achievement, satisfaction and fulfillment.

I would like to go back in time to the first civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt or Greece when they started to collect certain objects from the people they conquered. It was of course the beginning of collecting objects which were of particular interest to them. These objects represented a sense of power because these pieces were the result of a conquest. So ever since then an art piece might evoke power by the piece itself or through the moment of the acquisition.

Have you ever felt this kind of power at the moment of acquiring a certain piece of art work?

With me, the buying of art has nothing to do with conquest. It doesn't evoke power. It only evokes satisfaction and fulfillment. It evokes a feeling of acquiring something of pleasure, the satisfaction of a burning passion for art and also the feeling of having added value to one's life.

I'm thinking ... it must be a very exciting moment, being at an art auction and winning the bid on a piece you wanted to buy.

It can be very exciting and fulfilling when you buy a piece of art at an auction. Firstly, I have experienced the occasion of attending an auction, at which I strongly sought to acquire an original deep etching artwork of a famous Nigerian artist (David Dale). I strongly desired to own the work, which I had closely examined at the preview to the auction. Consciously or unconsciously, I got enmeshed competing against another potential buyer who equally strongly desired the artwork. I ended up paying double the reserved price for the piece of art. At the end of it all, I felt a sense of fulfillment but equally, felt ripped off.

I blamed the outcome on my uncontrolled compelling emotions, in my buying process. Generally, purchasing a piece of art at an auction, offers the potential buyer, the opportunity of a preview, enough opportunity for analyzing the offered price and properly assessing the artworks. It provides enough time for a self-assessment by the potential buyer of his ability to pay for the work vis-à-vis competing financial needs and enough notice for deciding whether or not to buy the artwork. Hence, when a collector gets involved at an art auction by partaking in the bidding process, he finds himself engrossed in the bid-

ding process until the process goes beyond the upper limit of the price which the collector is prepared to pay for the artwork. Generally, after succeeding in the bidding process, collectors usually feel elated. One ends up feeling, being in possession of a prized collection.

Is it the adrenaline rush of acquisition what moves you to buy art this way?

No, it does not generate an adrenaline rush in me. It merely involves a predetermination of wanting to acquire a piece of artwork to add to my existing collection. This is especially so, with such collectors as me, who only continue to buy merely for the purpose of filling the historical context of their collection. Hence, I buy on the basis of calculated and predetermined purpose in mind, which is generally meant to fulfill the predetermined goals within my collection.

Where and how, do you usually buy art? Do you have a team to help and advise you what pieces to buy or do you like to handle the whole process by yourself?

I buy artworks from auction houses, exhibitions, commission, brokers/agents, galleries, other collectors, the estate of past collectors and all such other sources of acquiring art works in and outside Nigeria. I also buy from auction houses during my sea cruise trips around the world. I read extensively about the art history of the world and I get myself acquainted with developments in visual art, so as to be able to make reasonable buying decisions. The whole process of buying artworks is solely handled by me.

How many pieces of art are in your collection?

I hold over seven thousand (7,000) works of modern and contemporary artworks covering paintings, life-size and mini bronze, wood, metal, stone, fiber glass sculptural works. My collection covers African artworks and works from outside Nigeria. In addition I hold over fifty five thousand (55,000) photographic shots of Nigeria's fast disappearing cultural festivals which are currently stored in hard disks.

Do you see your art collection as an investment or/and a cultural heritage?

My art collection is seen from the view point of contributing to the promotion of global cultural heritage and the propagation of Nigerian art and culture to the world.

As a prelude to the next question I would like to go back in time once more. During the period of the Roman Empire when they were amazed by the beauty of greek art and sculpture emperors like Julius Caesar, Nero, Pompey and many others started creating their own art collections. As original pieces were difficult to acquire, they started to commission copies to be made. So a voluminous trade in copies and fakes arose in order to satisfied the demand. The black market in art was born. Since that time, the art field has been dealing with looters in the black market, specifically when we speak of antiquities. We can't deny its existence, even the museums buy unique pieces from the black market.

The question is: What is the process involved in verifying the authenticity of a piece?

Since I generally buy modern and contemporary works of art from art auction houses, exhibitions, directly from artists, collectors and the estate of demised artists, the buying process does not require serious authentication. However, when it relates to the acquisition of traditional artworks, this is where the element of provenance about the artworks, significantly matters. With these, I rely on experts with the Nigerian National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) and the experience of other traditional art collectors.

Some number of my traditional African artworks in metal, have been subjected to thermoluminescence analysis, while those made from biological materials, such as wood, have been carbon dated. However, the experience of buying fake works at the very early stage of my collection of traditional artworks, cannot but be mentioned. It must be admitted that, mistakes were made and on association with experts at NCMM, such errors were discovered and the works were subsequently discarded and destroyed.

What kind of art are you interested in buying for the upcoming years and are you following a particular direction?

My plan for upcoming years, is to continue to update my collection with a view, to filling discovered voids in the theoretical art historical context of my collection and to continue to update the works in terms of contemporary developments of visual art in Africa.

Will you ever stop collecting?

It would be very difficult for a collector to stop collecting. Art collection is a habit arising from a burning passion. For me, this

passion has become an obsession. Hence, it would be very difficult to stop collecting, I still collect on a regular basis and I hope to continue collecting for the rest of my life.

What emotions do you experience when you are in front of your art collection?

I derive the feelings of fulfillment, achievement, pleasure and satisfaction from art collection. The decorative effect of artworks cannot be over emphasized. More importantly, my sense of satisfaction arises from contributing my little quota to promoting the culture of Africans and preserving the heritage of the African continent. This gives me a lot of emotional satisfaction and fulfillment.

Is there any famous quote you like or you feel related in some way?

“There are more valid facts and details in the works of art than there are in history books”
— Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin (1889-1977) (My Autobiography 1964)

THE ISSUE OF TRANSLATION IN THE APPROPRIATION OF VISUAL LANGUAGE (part 1) María De Los Ángeles Donoso Respaldiza

In the 21st century the phrase “an image is worth more than a thousand words” keeps more truth than ever. In a society that has adopted this mode in a dogmatic way and transformed it into almost a lifestyle, the visual image has become the communication tool for excellence.

Even though nowadays images have appropriated most of the different ways of expressing ourselves, this phenomenon started decades ago. In the past, English language built a supremacy over the other tongues up to the point of almost neglected them as a valid expression system.

Never the less, in only one society or in a hyper connected one, is a challenge to have more than one “global” system of communication. The outcome of this day’s reality is simple; if yesterday everything had to be done in English, today, everything should be done by images. Little by little, the sight is developing and ruling the empire of expressions.

This essay will deal, in a first movement, the issue of the English language supremacy in order to understand some of the inconvenient of having one expression system over the other ones and then go in depth into the consequences that the appropriation of visual language might bring to our society.

Before starting the subject, it is important to clarify the concept of translation and why it was chosen as a title to this text. The online Cambridge dictionary defines translation as “something that has change from one language to another, or the act of doing that”¹. Taking

in consideration that all along this paper we will treat the different means of expressions as languages, the signification of the word translation applies perfectly to the main idea of this essay; how different mode of expression have to change into another expression parameter.

The English language supremacy is neither a recent discovery nor an isolate event. As most of the hegemonies along history, the privilege that one culture or society achieves over others is usually because of it’s political and economical power. Almost every century there has being — and probably will be — a stronger force that is able to bend, modify and sometimes manipulated events in its favor.

After the Second World War, for example, United States of America introduce the European Recovery Program or also known as the Marshall Plan which mainly consisted in a financial aide to help rebuilt Western Europe after the war.

It is possible to consider that incident as the starting point of the English language supremacy. Once the USA enter in a strong and definitely way into the European scenario, slowly it became an active actor into European, and therefore, into the global construction of the future. Always having the bank’s vaults at its favor, the North American power managed to make everything and everyone adjust under his model. Nations that didn’t have English as a native tongue, had to learn it. Businessmen that didn’t know the language had to adopted it as their own. For a long time, in order to be part of the international world, it was imperative to play by the English rules.

Already in the nineties, the strong capitalism economical sys-

¹ dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-italian/translation

tem along with the beginning of the Internet era, made the English language “vital” for everybody. As Marina Grzinic and Sefik Tatlic proposed in their book *Necropolitics, racialization and global capitalism. Historicization of biopolitics and forensics of politics, art and life*:

“In rearticulating a history of global capitalism and its borders, I can state that the so-called multicultural ideology of 1990s global neoliberal capitalism was a declaration of the existence of the other worlds, but only and solely for the installment of a second step, which was the iron logic of the imperialism of circulation. In order to do this, an accelerated process of dispossession was put to work, which cleaned away and evacuated each and every difference through formalization”²

In other words, the process of acknowledgement always went with a process of appropriation. If the ruling model recognized the existence of others, he immediately started a process to translate its originality into the rules and forms that he has already dictated. The authors continue their analysis into the art world.

“These two stages are excellently captured in the field of the contemporary art by an art project (...) In the 1990s, Mladen Stilinovic (conceptual artist) declared: *An artist who cannot speaks English is NO artist*. This sentence, written on a piece of fabric, as his artwork, excellently depicted the initial multicultural logic of neoliberal global capitalism of the 1990s. It was an interest in a specific way that had to use the “common English language” translation regardless

of (and at the same time it seemed not to matter) how well it was used.”³

Mladen Stilinovic (Belgrade, 1947) refers to this peace in his personal website under the title of words and slogans⁴. He claims that

“the subject of my work is the language of politics, i.e. its reflection in everyday life. These works are not just made up. I would like to paint. I paint, but the painting betrays me. I write, but the written word betrays me. The pictures and words become not-my-pictures, not-my-words, and this is what I want to achieve with my work not-my-painting. If the language (the colour, the image, etc.) is possessed by ideology, I too want to become owner of such a language. I want to think it with consequences. This is neither a criticism nor ambiguity. What is imposed to me is imposed as a question, as an experience, as a consequence. If colours, words and materials have several meaning, which is the one that is imposed, what does it mean and does it mean anything-or is it just idle run a delusion? The question is how to manipulate that which manipulates you, so obviously, so shamelessly, but I am not innocent either-there is no art without consequences”⁵.

Given space to the spectator to analyze and decided if *An artist*

2 Grzinic M. and Tatlic S. *Necropolitics, racialization, and global capitalism. Historicization of biopolitics and forensics of politics, art and life*. Lexington Books, 2014. United States of America. Page 151

3 Idem

4 mladenstilinovic.com/works/5-2/

5 First time published in the catalogue of the solo show, Studio of the Gallery of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 1984

- 1 Jaar, Alfredo. “A logo for America”, 1987 and 2014. Neon projection, New York
- 2 Ferri, Jakup. “An artist who cannot speaks english is no artist”, 2003. Video projection courtesy of the artist and andriesse Eyck Gallery, Amsterdam

- 3 Stilinovic, Mladen “An artist who cannot speaks english is no artist”. 1992. Courtesy of Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven



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3

who cannot speak English is no artist (1992) corresponds an ironical, protest or resigned approach to the establishment, Stilinovic's slogan comments on an apparently global reality. Something that almost everybody takes as an underlying truth.

Finally we can realize that the "English language's empire" has covered all the aspects of the international society. Artists all around the globe must adopt the ruling tongue and serve it. In a very subtle but consisted way, English managed to manipulated other worlds and realities and appropriated them.

It is important to specify right now, that the starting point of this international English has not remained unchanged. Over the years and decades, it has mutated itself until the point of creating it's own empire and rules. Taking the words of Alix Rule and David Levine in *International Art English*, "the internationalized world relies on a unique language. Its purest articulation is found in the digital press release. This language has everything to do with English but is not English. It is a largely an export of the Anglophone world and can thank the global dominance of English for its current reach."⁶ Even though Rule and Levine's essay is an effort to proof, in Hito Steyerl words, "without statistical doubt that IAE is deviant English" the main idea stays put; "no gallery in Salvador da Bahia, no project space in Cairo, no institution in Zagreb can opt out of the English language. And language is and has always been a tool of Empire".⁷

Eleven years later, Jakup Ferri (Pristina, 1981) will continue with Stilinovic's inquiries of a globalized art world. Changing the support of the art work, this 22 years old artist at that time will make in 2003 a

home video taking as reference and title *An artist who cannot speak English is no artist*.

"The awareness of the political situation; the invisibility of my country within the art world and the alienation from western art from which art students like myself suffered, resulted in a series of video's where I deal with this problematical case. It resulted in videos created with certain spontaneity and desire to experiment. I reflect on them more as 'test' videos. I used myself as the main protagonist in the peripheral artist. Often the videos exist of just one shot.

Using my own appearance seems a necessary strategy. I show myself far away from art-history, trapped in my own house, neighborhood and my room. I wanted to challenge my own reality. Also my physical appearance distracts from the political weight and creates an imaginary space for a more universal and psychological interpretation, thus showing an absurd vision on humanity".⁸

Choosing English as his expressive tool, Ferri engages himself in a monologue for the audience. In an effort to tell a story apparently about his own life and or experiences -in a language that he does not really master- the viewer is able to pass from the content of what the artist is trying to say, to the way that he is saying it. The process of communication has failed in the

6 Rule, A. and Levine D. *International Art English*. On the rise -and the space- of the art world press release. Triple Canopy, July 2012. <https://www.canopycanopy-canopy.com/contents/international-art-english>

7 Steyerl, H. *international Disco Latin*. E-flux, May 2013. www.e-flux.com/journal/international-disco-latin/ Steyerl, H. *international Disco Latin*. E-flux, May 2013. www.e-flux.com/journal/international-disco-latin/

8 andriesse-eyck.com/artists/7

sense that Jakup Ferri is not able to adopt and appropriated the ruling language. But, by not doing so, he is able to shows a deeper subject; the essential role that language has in the international artistic world and emphasis the fact that we're the ones that have done it. "After the fall of the communist regimes in Easter Europe at the beginning of the 1990s the borders open up for artists too, and they were confronted with a freedom that was limited by the language of the West. In the video work Ferri carries Stilinovic's observation through in an ironic manner".⁹

More usually than never, an empire is eager to get as far and as deep as he can. The notorious influence that English made in Europe was also spread in the other continents. Communist's countries such as China or Russia at one point used the the language of capitalism. No corner of the world was left uplifted. English got everywhere. And not far behind come the United States of America.

This phenomenon created a sort of association between the English language's kingdom and the US's one. At the same time that English tongue appropriated other societies, the North Americans did a similar job with other countries and cultures. Little by little, the people of the United States started to call themselves — and make other call them — *Americans*, as if they where the only ones in the continent.

Both of these issues of over or hyper appropriation are deeply linked. In a more categorical way than Stilinovic and Ferri, the Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar (Santiago, 1956) made a statement about the neglected attitude that this force translation and appropriation implies. In 1987,

9 www.dehallen.nl/en/exhibitions/jakup-ferri-2011-english/

and then again in 2014, his work *A logo for America* was screen in the Times Square billboards. Using the shape of the United States country and its flag, he wrote two phrases under each one of them; this is not America and this is not America's flag. Mixing image and words, Jaar projects in yellow neon — as if it was a kind of publicity — one of the more forgotten truths: one country does not equals a continent; one language is not useful for the entire world. In the process of appropriation, the identity of each particular piece can get lost.

In a crazy desire of efficiency there is no place for originality. A world that does not allows originality banners any creative process. It does not matter if this appropriation is being done by a speaking tongue or a visual image; translate everything into a unique system means the end of all honest type of expression. And there for, it means the end of art.

Good night, and good luck.

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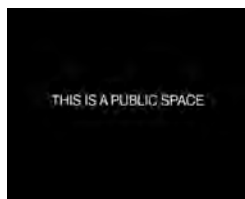
Artists

BILL BALASKAS

Balaskas (b.1983, Thessaloniki) is a Greek artist living and working in London. He is currently a PhD candidate and has recently completed his thesis in the programme of Critical Writing in Art & Design of the Royal College of Art, in London. The main ideas encountered in his practice are irony, humour and the interrogation of spectacle, through the fuse of which he explores subjects with a strong political character.

Recent solo exhibitions (selection): Kalfayan Galleries, Athens-Thessaloniki (2016); De Bijloke, Gent (2015); Art International, Istanbul (2014); Re Map 4, Athens; Kasa Gallery, Istanbul (2013); Kalfayan Galleries, Athens-Thessaloniki (2012); Institute François, Thessaloniki (2011); Jewish Museum, London; Sketch Gallery, London (2010). Recent group exhibitions (selection): MACBA Museum d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; ARTIUM Basque Museum Center of Contemporary Art, Vitoria; Galeria Municipal do Porto Almeida Garret (2016); CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid; Les Chiroux, Liege; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; MUSPAC, L'Aquila, 10th Mildura Biennale; State of Concept, Athens (2015); BOZAR, Brussels; John Hansard Gallery, Southampton; Transmediale, Berlin; Le CENTQUATRE, Paris; TENT, Rotterdam; Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland; Museo di Roma, Rome; Technopolis, Athens; The Red Room, Baltimore (2014); 4th Thessaloniki Biennale; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens; Vetlanda Museum; Nordic House, Reykjavic (2013); Surface Gallery, Nottingham; Vetrinj Mansion, Maribor; Musée des Abattoirs, Toulouse; Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh (2012).

Bill Balaskas is represented by Kalfayan Galleries, Athens-Thessaloniki. www.billbalaskas.com



“This is a Public Space”, 2008-2009, digital video, 0' 17" (loop-play). Courtesy of the artist and Kalfayan Galleries, Athens-Thessaloniki

What is a “public space”? In theory, it should be a spatial experience of democracy: an agent of well-being for all members of our societies, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic level. An open and unrestricted space. A space that belongs to the people. But, what is representative of people? What truly belongs to the people? In an age in which the new urbanity of capitalist development and the politics of terror have together transformed the way we conceptualize ourselves and our environments, the answers to such questions are anything but granted. This is a Public Space attempts to expose the ambiguities emerging from the characterization of spaces as “public”, whilst pointing towards the expansion of their definition as a means for their democratization.

At a time when new socio-political movements seek to reclaim urban spaces through the use of new technologies, the screen — the most powerful spatiotemporal medium of our age — might be a good place from where to begin this effort. The conjugation of the phrase “I can own it” in the video, underlines not only the opportunities emerging in the current historical conjuncture, but, also, the challenges that we are likely to face by conflicting, or even hostile trends.

DISCIPULA

Founded by MFG Paltrinieri, Mirko Smerdel and Tommaso Tanini in 2013, Discipula is a collaborative research platform operating in the fields of contemporary photography and visual culture.

Working across a range of practices and media, Discipula delves into the production, use and consumption of images and explores the interweaving of fact and fiction in the process of meaning making.

As a means through which to bring art projects outside conventional and institutional spaces and to question the distinctions between creation and production, Discipula is committed to designing, self-publishing and distributing its works as limited edition books and other printed matters. Discipula's work have been exhibited internationally at the Műcsarnok (Budapest), Format Photography Festival (Derby), Photo 50 — London Art Fair, Krakow Photo-month, Tokyo Institute of Photography and more.

www.discipulaeditions.com



“Efficacy Testing Stream”, 2015, UV prints on PET film, 200 × 120 cm; Inkjet print on transparent paper, 50 × 40 cm; Video PAL stereo, 24'46". MFG Paltrinieri / Mirko Smerdel / Tommaso Tanini.

Courtesy of MLZ Art-Dep

Consisting of a installation of a series of digital prints on

PET, Efficacy Testing Stream stems from an appropriative gesture: a series of food stock images purchased on eBay are mounted as a single magmatic flow in which the layering of visual levels removes the neatness and, as a result, the effectiveness of the photographs. Created to sell edibles, the images, now on the verge of illegibility, become a disturbing visual backdrop for a voice-over that, simulating hypnosis techniques, delivers a long list of articles and essays on ethic and political issues related to food. By subverting the mechanisms that regulate the elements of communication in advertising, Discipula upset its function, turning the installation into an open invitation to information-gathering and conscious food consumption, seen as a cultural and political element in human life, as well as its nourishment. Text by Francesca Lazzarini

GIUSEPPE ABATE

Giuseppe Abate (b.1987, Bari, Italy) is an Italian artist.

Solo exhibitions (selection): Spazio A quadro, Rome, Italy (2013); Le Muse Factory gallery, Adelfia, Italy (2013); Cannaviello Art Studio, Milan, Italy (2013); Open Space Catanzaro, Vertigo arte, Cosenza, Italy (2013); G.LAN space / Laboratori Urbani di Locorotondo, Bari, Italy (2012). Group shows (selection): Artcore Gallery, Bari, Italy (2015); Museo della montagna, Torino, Italy (2015); A plus A gallery, Venice, Italy (2015); Fondazione Bevilacqua la Masa, Venezia, Italy (2015); Michael Shultz gallery, Berlin, Germany (2014); Serra dei Giardini della Biennale, Venice, Italy (2014); Dolomiti Contemporanee, Casso, Italy (2014).

www.giuseppeabate.tumblr.com



“Zapping”, 2016, book

Zapping is a way of enjoy television, which is to constantly and quickly change channel. In this case there isn't a button to push, neither hundreds of channels: only ten pages to riffle and five pop-up to look. When we think “animated book”, we think children's books. I used this technique to tell one of my story, something that i have hear in news cast, a fairy tale with an unexpected turn and one that tells nothing.



“Ogni uomo convive con la bambina che è stato”, 2015, embroidery

Freud is an icon. In popular culture Freud's image appears often, mostly talking about psychic disorders, difficult childhood or sexual problems. This image is so common that we are used to recognized in a white beard and circular eyeglasses the psychoanalyst stereotype.

The “half cross stitch” is an easy technique to learn. Grandmothers and mothers have taughts it over the years to their girls. I learned to sew by “half cross sticht” at the age of 28 years. The title of this work is a revaluation of a Freud's beautiful sentence “every adult lives together with the child that has been”.

JAKUP FERRI

Jakup Ferri (b.1981, Prishtina, Kosovo) lives and works in Amsterdam and Prishtina. From the situation of its natal Pristina and the western art world, invisibility and isolation are two of the main ideas that influenced the content and appearance of his work.

Solo and group exhibitions (selection): 2016 — Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum, Trondheim (2016); Ludwig Museum—Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest (2016); Bradwolff Projects, Amsterdam (2016); andriesse eyck galerie, Amsterdam (2016); andriesse eyck galerie, Amsterdam (2015); Amsterdam Art Drawing, Amsterdam (2013); Weingrüll, Karlsruhe, Germany—solo (2011); De Hallen, Haarlem—solo (2010); Taipei Biennial, Taipei (2010); The Center for Historical Reenactment, Johannesburg, South Africa (2010); International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia (2010); Village Green, Southend on Sea, UK (2010); Schijnheilig, Amsterdam (2010).

jakupferri.blogspot.it



“An Artist Who Cannot Speak English is No Artist”, 2003, video. Courtesy of the artist and andriesse eyck galerie, Amsterdam, Holland

In the video work *An Artist Who Cannot Speak English Is No Artist* Ferri engages in a monologue in front of the camera in English — a language that he has not really mastered. The artist, then still only 22 years old, tells the viewer a story that appears to be about his life and his ideas about being an artist. But

because of his faulty English, which prevents him from getting his story across well, the emphasis comes to lie on the essential role that language plays in the international art world. Ferri borrowed the title from a famous work by the Croatian artist Mladen Stilinovic, from 1993 who used this pointed aphorism to summarise the problems of a globalised art world. After the fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 1990s the borders opened up for artists too, and they were confronted with a freedom that was limited by the language of the West. In this video work Ferri carries Stilinovic's observation through in an ironic manner. From: hallen haarlem gallery.

MARCO CERONI

Marco Ceroni (b.1987, Forli, Italy), lives and works in Milan. He gets the MA in Visual Arts and Curatorial Studies at NABA (Milan, 2014). He has done his first solo show *Throw Up* at Adiacenze in Bologna (2014). He has exhibited in different collective exhibition including *Teatrum Botanicum*, PAV, Torino, *Open-VIR*, Viafarini, Milano (2016), *L'opera irraggiungibile*, Artissima Fair, Torino, Away, private house, Monza (2015), *The space in between us*, Villa Vertua, Nova Milanese (2014), *Disumanesimi*, Galleria Biagiotti, Firenze, *Day Dream Factory*, DOCVA, Milano (2013). He was guest in some art residences as *VIR-Viafarini* in residence, Milano (2016).

In Marco Ceroni's work there are fragments of manipulated reality with traces of truth that conforms a potential image of a parallel and very different present. He is creating discontinuity by amplifying contradictions and composing other figures by adding hybridation after hybridation in order to create a rough in a provisional reality. www.marcoceroni.com



“Denti d'oro” 2016, golden car rim sculpture

An abandoned object is abstract and removed from the ordinary through the gold color. A set of possible stories intertwine in a sculptural form. A set of possible stories intertwine in a sculptural form.



“Bling Bling”, 2016, picture

In the darkness taking of an undefined space it sees a golden form. A burned car turns into another object: a precious stone that populate a borderlands.

STEFANO SERRETTA

Stefano Serretta (b.1987, Genova, Italy) lives and works in Milan. After a first university degree in Modern and Contemporary History he gets a Master degree in Visual Arts and Curatorial Studies at NABA Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan. His research explores the belief systems of the contemporary society through operations of analytics voyeurism. Most recent exhibitions, personal and collective: *Placentia Arte*, Piacenza, Italy; *VIR Viafarini-In-Residence*, Viafarini, Milano, Italy; *Farmacia Wurmkoos*, Ses- to San Giovanni, Italy; *GlogauAIR*, Berlin, Germany; *Almanac*, Torino,

Italy; Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, Genova, Italy; Palazzo Ducale, Genova, Italy.
www.stefanoserretta.com



“Bam”, 2016, intervention on post stamp (Afghanistan, 1951). 2 × 3 cm

With a razor blade is scraped away from the postage stamp the printed image at its center, fully respecting its support and its outline.



“Landscape”, 2015, offset press on c-print. 100 × 70 cm

Poised between brand strategy and faith propaganda communication of terrorist group Daesh threatens the ideological vacuum by shorting imaginary from Hollywood tints. It is the most sophisticated levels of spectacle of Terror. An horizon which began with online video of the beheading of James Foley, where the uniforms of the executioner (black) and the prisoner (orange) were made absolute by the symbolic value of colors, besides the idea of nation, a prelude to a global civil war.



“Friends”, 2016, different kinds of bills. Ø cm 145. Photo Marco Fava

In-course world currencies, almost exotic lures, alternating in a hypnotic -and potentially endless- path. The mandala recalls that circle of folklore and abuse, awe and fear that the capitalist economic model, our main reference, imposed on diametrically opposed cultures. The exercise of a meticulous and ritual repetition is reversed in a dizzying spin on a very well known circuit, which is, however, presented as mystical and strange.

STEFAN BALTENSBERGER AND DAVID SIEPERT

Zurich based artists Stefan Baltensperger (b.1976, Switzerland) and David Siepert (b.1983, Germany) have been working collaboratively since 2007. With their artistic practice, Baltensperger and Siepert critically reflect on social, cultural, and political issues. They immerse themselves into systems, aiming to make them visible and to manipulate them. The focus of their work lies within the political and the understanding of social structures.

David Siepert grew up in the Black Forrest in Germany and later moved to Switzerland. Stefan Baltensperger grew up in Zurich, Switzerland. Both Baltensperger and Siepert attended the Aarau + Basel School of Fine Arts, as well as the graduate Fine Arts program at Zurich University of the Arts.

The work of Baltensperger + Siepert is exhibited both nationally and internationally in galleries as well as institutions. Aside from their own artistic productions, Baltensperger + Siepert also foster a curatorial practice.

www.baltensperger-siepert.com



“Imaginary Landscapes”, 2015, collage, 46 × 68 cm

Imaginary Landscapes is based on photographs of national borders that Baltensperger + Siepert found on the Internet. To remove the borders the artists physically cut the photographs into pieces and then rearranged, what was left to create new, imaginary landscapes. With *Imaginary Landscapes* the artists question common structures and the idea of the national state.

The sometimes poor quality and low resolution of the images reference that they were taken from the internet. The algorithms of online search engines, such as Google, Baidu or Bing helped to shape the image pool Baltensperger + Siepert used as an archive for this series. Accordingly the images represent the most talked and written about borders, zones of conflict and regions renegotiating national and cultural borders.

Through the gesture of removing border installations and the re-creation of alternative landscapes, Baltensperger + Siepert open a new eld for imagination to claim its space and create “thinkabilities” of the in between.



“Desire Lines”, 2014 ongoing, chalk on paper, 30 × 40 cm

The line and its aesthetic expression has a long tradition in art history. A simple stroke, a line, is able to open up worlds or keep an artist's attention for his/her whole life.

For the series *Desire Lines* we asked asylum seekers in Switzerland to draw their individual routes from their home country to where they are now. We placed a paper on top of a map and had the asylum seekers draw their journeys. The results are simple lines, which detached from their context are nothing but a formal aesthetic reference. But within the context of those people these lines tell stories about precarious lives, personal tragedy, and the hope for a new life in a new and better world.

THE COOL COUPLE

The Cool Couple is an artist duo founded in late 2012 by Niccolò Benetton and Simone Santilli. Their work focuses on the daily relationships people have with various forms of collective representations, in an attempt to highlight the friction points in contemporary imagery. The idea of photography as a collective behavior leads the artists to the use of a variety of languages, ranging from video installation to sculpture. The Cool Couple's work has been exhibited at CCC Strozzi-na, Florence, Italy; Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice, Italy; Unseen Photography Fair, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Circulations Festival, Centquatre, Paris, France; Les Rencontres des Arles and MACRO Museum in Rome, Italy.

In 2014, they won the Francesco Fabbri Award for contemporary photography and were shortlisted at Kassel's Dummy Award. In 2015 TCC won Grazia dei Prize, was selected for Plat(t)form program at Fotomuseum Winterthur and short-listed for the Discovery Award at

Les Rencontres des Arles festival.
They are currently artists in resi-
dence at Careof, Milan.
www.thecoolcouple.co.uk



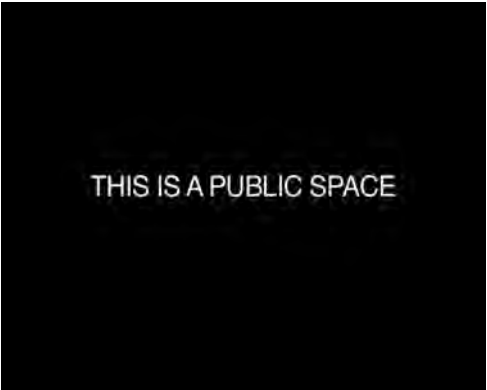
“Flying Mat, Power #1” (detail),
2016, 63 × 180 cm, sublimation
print on textile, mat. Part of
“Karma Fails”, 2016, site specific
installation
A plus A gallery

The declining Western capitalism
turned Eastwards looking for inspi-
ration and what it found was a huge
business. As Lordo Rinzler, found-
er of MNDFL, one of the trendiest
meditation studios in NYC, says:
“it’s no longer your spiritual friend
saying you should try meditation,
it’s your doctor.”

It’s a natural development for
the networked society, the roots of
which can be found in 1970s Silicon
Valley counterculture, deeply in-
fluenced by Eastern meditation. As
capitalism appropriated of it, such
an ancestral practice became a
trendy tool to increase economical
profit, labour exploitation, soldiers
performances, and to reduce the
costs of welfare or insurance pre-
miums.

Soft powers rising today grow
on the collapse of social contract,
turning all problems into a person-
al test for the good life. Meditation
perfectly fits the selfish ideology of
wellness, where personal produc-
tivity and healthy living are status
symbols. We smile at life while the
world burns.

- 1 Bill Balaskas, “This is a Public
Space”, 2008-2009, digital video,
0’ 17” (loop-play). Courtesy of the
artist and Kalfayan Galleries,
Athens-Thessaloniki



1

- 2 Stefano Serretta, "Landscape", 2015, offset press on c-print. 100 × 70 cm
- 3 Stefano Serretta, "Friends", 2016, different kinds of bills. Ø cm 145. Photo Marco Fava



2



3

- 4 Giuseppe Abate, "Ogni uomo convive con la bambina che è stato", 2015, embroidery



4

- 5 Marco Ceroni, "Denti d'oro", 2016, golden car rim sculpture



5

- 6 Marco Ceroni, "Bling Bling", 2016, ink-jet print, 90 × 60 cm



5

6



- 7 Stefan Baltensperger and David Siepert, "Imaginary Landscapes", 2015, collage, 46 × 68 cm



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ARTISTS

- 8 Stefan Baltensperger and David Siepert, "Desire Lines", 2014 ongoing, chalk on paper, 30 × 40 cm



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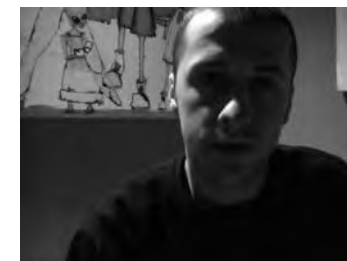
- 9 Discipula, "Efficacy Testing Stream", 2015, UV prints on PET film, 200 × 120 cm; Inkjet print on transparent paper, 50 × 40 cm; Video PAL stereo, 24':46". MFG Paltrinieri / Mirko Smerdel / Tommaso Tanini. Courtesy of MLZ Art-Dep



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ARTISTS

- 10 Jakuop Ferri, "An Artist Who Cannot Speak English is No Artist", 2003, video. Courtesy of the artist and andriess eyck galerie, Amsterdam, Holland
- 11 The Cool Couple, "Flying Mat, Power #1" (detail), 2016, 63 × 180 cm, sublimation print on textile, mat. Part of "Karma Fails", 2016, site specific installation A plus A gallery



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Good Night, and Good Luck.

28th September 2016
A plus A Gallery
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