

Arts in the Margins of World Encounters

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Curating and Interpreting Culture



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Prologue

Arts, world encounters, markets and marginality: a decolonising perspective

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Forms of art created in so-called marginal regions and contexts get too little recognition in the national and global art worlds. Whereas the anthropological case studies of this edited volume impressively problematise this fact with respect to different world encounters and their colonial histories, in the prologue we try to explore the reasons behind it. We do so with a decolonising stance, in particular by challenging the hegemony of the West with its specific canonical views on art. As a first step, we look at the fascinating dialogue between anthropology and art that has intensified during the last decades, in particular at the concept of the agency of art and making art as social and cultural practice. Then we consider the history of the relation between art and marginalised people in the context of the development of capitalism and Western centric ideas about art, and search from an anthropological perspective for alternatives. Finally, we delve into the issue of local or regional arts, margins and decolonisation in the contexts of museums and development. We advocate a stronger dialogue between the field of art and the field of development and promote the idea of “aesthetic democracy”. Thereby, we also introduce the three parts of the book: re-creating art conventions in the margins of world encounters; appropriating and resisting the global art world; and new forms of art and ethnography in museums and development.

Keywords: regional art, margin, social agency, decolonialisation, aesthetic democracy

“This is an intervention. A message from that space in the margins that is a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonized/colonizer. Marginality as site of resistance.”

bell hooks

“Marginality as a Space of Resistance”, in *Out There: Marginalization in Contemporary Culture* (1990, 343)

In this edited volume we present innovative contributions on intricate forms of art that are given insufficient recognition in national and global contemporary art contexts. Most of the contributions were initially submitted and discussed in the panel “Arts on the Margins of World Encounters” at the 18th IUAES Conference with the title *World (of) Encounters: The Past, Present and Future of Anthropological Knowledge* that took place from 16 to 20 July 2018 in Florianopolis, Brazil. The book consists of ten chapters written by scholars in the field of anthropology. The chapters deal with a wide variety of art forms, such as clay figures, textiles, paintings, poems, and theatre performances, based on committed anthropological fieldwork in Brazil, Martinique, Rwanda, India, Indonesia, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Some of these art forms are often called “traditional”, but we think that they are better understood when we relate them to processes of modernity and contemporaneity. The relationship of local or regional arts, marginalisation, tradition and contemporaneity is hardly systematically dealt with in recent publications on art and anthropology. The people and the works, we are focusing on, are marginalised in different ways, due to various processes and structures of social and political inequalities, locally, regionally, nationally and transnationally. The artistic actors are living in allegedly peripheral areas, they are categorised as ethnic minorities, or as people with immigrant background or disabilities. Often, these social inequalities and discriminations result from long histories of uneven encounters of trade and exploitation between colonial powers and local populations. We also take into account that the term “margin” itself is contested, as the last chapter in this volume intriguingly shows.

Over the last decades and earlier, many excellent outlines on the anthropology of art have been published (e. g. Bell 2017; Coote and Shelton 1992; Kisin and Myers 2019; Morphy and Perkins 2006; Price 1989). Well-known illuminating edited volumes by Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright especially deal with issues of film, video and photography by contemporary artists from an anthropological perspective (Schneider and Wright 2006, 2010, 2014). As indicated, we focus on visual and performative arts. In doing so we pursue a relational approach of persons and things with a stress on agency and social relations (Gell 1998; Sansi 2015, 2018; Strathern 1998). We refrain from an approach of “inbetweenness” (Basu 2017), as this concept departs from binary

thinking and unintentionally may reify it. We are less experimental than the fascinating thought-and-practice provoking volume *Between Matter and Method: Encounters in Anthropology and Art* (Bakke and Peterson 2018). Our main interest is also not in the exchanges between local artists and those of European descent, as in a recent important volume by art historians on “modernisms” (Harney and Phillips 2018).

Instead, our intention is to focus on arts that were and are to a large degree marginalised. Thereby, we try to grasp that marginality is a particularly constructed inclusive analytical site of creativity, power and inclusion in the vein of bell hooks’ introductory quote above. At the same time, we acknowledge with Anna Tsing that, although being a site of creativity, marginality is often constituted as an excluding site with little or hardly any visibility, appreciation, and recognition on the global stage (Tsing 1993, 1994). In dealing with the paradoxes and tensions of marginality, we also tackle and problematise the movements of marginalised art to global centers. In doing so, we can expand on aspects of important earlier studies on Aboriginal arts that have experienced trajectories from craft to “fine art” or “experimental art” since the 1980s (Biddle 2018, Morphy 2007, Myers 2002).

We basically are confronted with hierarchical or unequal relations of different sites and different domains of art, work and life of artists, art works and participative external actors. These relations are often born out of colonial and postcolonial encounters. At the same time, we assume with other scholars (Blanes et al. 2016; Bourriaud 2002; Sansi 2015) that art practices entail micro-utopias, i. e. the process of making art enables to imagine the social in different terms. Moreover, we build on anthropological studies of contemporary art that reject universalising notions and canons of art but look at them as locally or regionally determined (Fillitz and van der Grijp 2018). Through our specific decolonised view on art, encounter and marginality, we hope to enrich the current debate among scholars and practitioners of art and anthropology.

Encounters between anthropology and art: basic arguments and concepts

Since the 1990s, with the booming of the market of contemporary arts (Smith 2009), the dialogue between anthropology and art has intensified (Sansi 2015). As a reaction to the commercialisation of art and to civil society movements, many artists started to define their work as “social practice”. They increasingly worked in public spaces, with social groups in participative ways on issues of political relevance. In a leading article “The Artist as Ethnographer” (1995), Hal Foster discussed the growing interest of artists in anthropology and ethnography and initiated the “ethnographic turn” in art. Vice versa, anthropologist borrowed from arts. For example, by considering fieldwork as a

form of social intervention, coined as “ethnographic conceptualism” (Sansi 2015, 146–150).

We present here some important arguments and concepts of the current anthropology of art that frame the following contributions. Theoretically and practically, a crucial point of departure of the book is the agency of persons and things, also problematised by scholars of material culture (Henare et al. 2007; Gell 1998; Strathern 1998; Tilley et al. 2006). Material things evince shifting agencies depending on the social relationships in which they enact, and especially depending on how they interact with commodity chains and processes of commoditisation, and anti-commoditisation or the process of becoming gifts (Appadurai 1986; Sansi 2017; Tsing 2015; Binsbergen and Geschiere 2005).

Certain objects may advance to works of art, due to their technological virtuosity, the complex intentionality of the makers, and the particular transactional quality of their aesthetics. Thus, we can identify art objects according to the influential anthropological theory of art by Alfred Gell (1998, 1999 [1992], 1999 [1996]). There has been a lively debate about Gell’s work during the last decades. Several anthropologists have commented on Gell’s work and presented alternative ideas or approaches to art. For example, James Leach (2007) maintains that Gell posits an individual mind within a single person as the source of creativity, which he questions. Howard Morphy (2007, 2010) departs from a cross-cultural category of art as action and focuses on the aesthetic experience right from the beginning, which Gell explicitly does not. Tim Ingold (2013) does not adhere to looking at the work of art as an “object” of ethnographic analysis in a context of social relations, which he ascribes to Gell. But he concentrates from a phenomenological perspective on the correspondence of the practices of art and anthropology, on their “movement of growth or becoming” (Ibid, 8). Like Gell, Philippe Descola (2018) is interested in how material objects are invested with agency, and he develops an own theory of figuration. Nevertheless, he conceded Gell’s theory to provide “a means to escape the Eurocentric iconological criteria of occidental aesthetics” which he qualifies as “an immense merit” (Ibid, 27).

Even considering these alternatives, we think that Gell’s work continues to be an unexhausted and eminently rich source of inspiration from which we can tap and critically proceed further to make innovative studies, as important publications by both anthropologists and art historians have shown until today (e. g. Chua and Elliott 2013; Kùchler and Carroll 2020; Osborne and Tanner 2007; Pinney and Thomas 2001; Sansi 2015). Particularly, his approach is highly revealing with regard to ethnographic micro-analyses and continues to enable fresh insights in new contexts with complex and subtle power relations which the chapters drawing on Gell in the volume demonstrate.

We present now some of Gell's basic notions and concepts. Let us begin with his approach to aesthetics and his concept of methodological philistinism. What does methodological philistinism mean? It is a cross-culturally applicable methodology and implies an epistemological break with aesthetics, which is at the centre in most theories of art. As a legacy to British social anthropology, in his book *Art and Agency* Gell created an anthropology of art that focuses on "the network of social relationships in the vicinity of art objects" (Gell 1998, 25). He distances himself from scholars that look at representational aesthetic and semantic properties of art objects in a cultural context (cf. Morphy 1994, 2007, 2010). That does not mean that Gell is disinterested in ideas and values of aesthetics or in meaning, as he could easily be misunderstood. But these aspects make only sense for him within the social relationships of the cases that are studied, as aesthetics and symbolic meaning vary according to these relationships. He compares this approach with the anthropology of law. That is not the study of the ideas of right and wrong of other people but of the process of litigation in which such ideas may be put forward. Gell criticises the "indigenous aesthetics" programme, a legacy of Boasian cultural anthropology, by saying that "it tends to reify the 'aesthetic response' independently of the social context of its manifestations (...)" (Gell 1998, 4). He sees art as a system of action, and art works as performances, that intend to change the world. Thereby he reflected on both contemporary artworks after Duchamp and on indigenous artefacts and artworks, such as Asmat shields, Maori painting and Melanesian lime-containers. Instead of symbolic communication, he stresses agency, intention, causation, result, and transformation (Gell 1998, 6). Even objects with complex patterns should not be judged principally according to their aesthetic qualities. For example, intricately decorated lime-containers of Melanesian big men are locally primarily considered as "vehicles of personhood, to be owned, exchanged, and displayed". Gell argues: "The aesthetic properties of a lime-container are salient only to the extent that they mediate social agency back and forth within the social field" (Gell 1998, 81).

The concept of methodological philistinism was introduced in the groundbreaking article "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology" (Gell 1999 [1992]). There, he proposed already that similarly as a break with theology in the anthropology of religion, we should make a break with aestheticism, or more precisely with Western art cult, in the anthropology of art. Alternatively, Gell suggested considering the various arts first and foremost as parts of a technical system. He called that system "the technology of enchantment". This again was based on "the enchantment of technology", meaning the power of technical activities of casting a spell over us. It is generally difficult to grasp the making of artworks, he asserted, they are easily perceived as magical, and the artist as an occult technician. But the creative agency of the artist is always connected to a social collectivity. The social

complex, assemblage of social relations, or encounters in the vicinity of artworks were later conceptualised as the “art nexus”, including material things, called indexes, and their possible prototypes, artists, and recipients (Gell 1998, 12–27).

Moreover, intentionalities play a crucial role in Gell’s theory, on which he elaborates in his second important article “Vogel’s Net”. He analyses a Zande hunting net, showcased in an exhibition by Susan Vogel in 1988, and other hunting traps as artworks. Devices such as these embody ideas and communicate meanings, as transformed representations of the social relationship of the hunter and the prey animal. In this article, Gell goes so far as to characterise artworks in general as traps and to make the complex intentionalities of the actors in the art nexus a defining criterium of artworks (Gell 1999 [1996], 203).

As already indicated, Gell deals with art phenomena from a micro-relational perspective on persons and things, whereby things “do duty” as persons do (Gell 1998, 9). Similar as British anthropologists like Marilyn Strathern (1998), he builds on Marcel Mauss’ theory of the gift: “Given that prestations or ‘gifts’ are treated in Maussian exchange theory as (extensions) of persons, then there is obviously scope for seeing art objects as ‘persons’ in the same way” (Ibid, 9).

In his book *Art, Anthropology and the Gift* Roger Sansi discusses important aspects that “complement” Gell’s theory (Sansi 2015, 18). Although his focus is on Western contemporary art, these aspects are also important with respect to the local or regional arts that we deal with. Sansi departs from Strathern and Gell, in that he looks at what art does in the process of production. But he argues that not only intentionality but also chance and bricolage play a role. This is particularly relevant in the history of art since Dadaism and Surrealism, and in anthropology these aspects have been put forward by Lévi-Strauss. Particularly for Duchamp choice of his ready-mades meant chance, and art is found in the encounter, or the event, less in the object. For Lévi-Strauss the issue of chance and the term bricolage became pivotal in his study *The Savage Mind* (1966). The mind continuously transforms contingent events into structure. In this process, chance plays an important role. Our book thus draws on Mauss’ and Gell’s transactionism, intentionality and agency, but at the same time we acknowledge the importance of chance and bricolage.

Moreover, Sansi complements Gell’s theory, and is important for us, in that he points to the importance of “devices” that are associated with “regimes of power” (Sansi 2015, 59). Interestingly, artistic devices in current forms of participatory art can function as a mechanism of domination but also of empowerment. With a somewhat different approach, but also looking at art works as an extension of the agency of their makers, Fred Myers (2002) has already earlier pointed to the regime of the art market and the governmental regime, particularly educational institutions, as powerful contextual spheres of social life. These regimes enabled

the recognition of the value of the acrylic paintings of the Western Desert Australian Aboriginal people, and their inclusion into the global art scene. Thus, we can infer that, apart from specific contemporary manifestations of participatory art, most art works themselves do not contain including or excluding mechanisms, but their “social-relational matrix” does (Gell 1998, 7). And particularly the (failing) institutional entanglements have a dominating or empowering effect (Myers 2002; Sansi 2015).

We suggest that it is essential to problematise issues of local and global encounter, including hierarchisation and marginalisation, much deeper than has been done to date (cf. Kisin and Myers 2019; Sansi 2015; Schneider 2017). Indigenous art is often discursively and practically positioned in the margins of the art world and of mainstream society—and thus in the margins of past, present and probably future world encounters. In a similar way this is the case with folk art and art brut which are the subject of some of the articles. In recent contemporary art theory, the dynamism of interpersonal social encounters in situations of everyday life, with the participation of the public is considered as highly fruitful, and relations of equality are stressed (Bourriaud 2002). Sansi and others comment that hierarchies are not necessarily weakened but strengthened, also in participative non-commercial or gift-like art encounters (Sansi 2015). Nevertheless, as we have seen, in the production of art promises of a different future, or micro-utopias, may gleam (Sansi 2015, 157). Based on Gell and Sansi, we thus argue that art builds social relations both through gifts and commodities, that art works are produced both through intentionalities and chance, or bricolage, and that art-making enables micro-utopias. This is particularly important when it comes to the issue of development and art on which we elaborate below.

In this volume we look at arts in a global context. Regarding globalisation we distinguish different phases, for example those related to processes of colonialism, post-colonialism and neoliberalism. They shape interpersonal encounters in different ways. As already mentioned, in the anthropology of art today much attention is given to the “global modern” and the “global contemporary” in art (Schneider 2017). But to what extent is the contemporaneity of “traditional” arts, or “folk arts”, presently acknowledged in the art world? Our strong impression is that this is hardly the case, despite current efforts of cooperation between “alternative artists” and anthropologists (Schneider 2017). We suggest that “folk arts”, including forms such as outsider art, are still marginalised, and thus continue to be positioned, discursively and in social practice, in the margins of the global art world. Moreover, we would like to point out that both artists and anthropologists tend to create subtle, mostly implicit but consequential binaries between “folk arts” and “contemporary arts”. This is even the case, when “traditional arts” are part of or point of departure of exhibitions, or when they are

included in projects of transcultural art research and art collaboration. Some examples presented in the edited volume by Schneider (2017) bring that clearly to light.

The most revealing example for our discussion here is a collaborative project in art research and art production between Bhutan and Switzerland (Bucher et al. 2017a), starting from Gell's premise that art is social action. A group of Bhutanese and Swiss art teachers and art students met in both countries to present their concepts of local Buddhist "traditional arts" and European exclusive "contemporary art" respectively, theoretically and practically, and subsequently that they made a joint mural in Bhutan. The authors, who are the teachers of the project, explicitly contend that they are not interested in existing and imaginary dichotomies, such as we vs. others and contemporaneity vs. tradition. In a similar vein, the result of the discussions was that "both forms have their traditions *and* are contemporary, suggesting that their usual designations are somewhat misleading and imply value judgments" (Bucher et al. 2017a, 173). These assertions, nevertheless, do not remove the impression of many following statements that the concepts tradition and contemporaneity implicitly are still of questionable relevance, if not in the joint artwork itself, then still in the knowledge and social practices of the participants. In a conversation three years after the project, one of the Swiss teachers admitted that to create a setting on equal terms was difficult due to the "highly judgmental terms (within art discourse) of 'contemporary art' and 'traditional art'" (Bucher et al. 2017b, 186), despite the solution mentioned above. And the other Swiss teacher said that the individual artist's ego of Swiss students hindered a deeper engagement with the Bhutanese context (Ibid, 185).

Through the creation of dichotomies between "traditional" and "contemporary" art forms, the former are more or less devaluated, mostly implicitly, with the problematic result that their dynamics and factual potential as contemporary art are excluded. And it has economic consequences as well. It still seems difficult to go beyond a metropolitan conversation between contemporary art and anthropology, as Schneider (2017) and others (Fillitz and van der Grijp 2018) have the merit to advocate.

Let us come back, again, to the issue of arts, social transformation and marginality. Not only in the making of contemporary arts micro-utopias emerge. This is even more the case in "arts in the margins" that we are dealing with in this volume. As already hinted to, we are interested in the "creative living" in the margins. This is a site of paradoxes of constraining and empowering moments, of heterogeneity and dispute, as Tsing reminds us, and it cannot be understood without its wider interconnections. Correspondingly, she asserts: "The 'local' is a form of positioning in the regional, national, and global, and 'local' here is contested" (Tsing 1994, 286). Thereby, she also brings

the important issue of gender into play. From a somewhat different angle, but with a similar emancipatory stance, the black American author bell hooks makes us understand that from the “lived experience” in the margins, not only informed by gender but also by race, artists may use their creativity “to imagine alternatives, new worlds” (hooks 1990, 341). Marginality is thus much more than a site of deprivation. It can be a “site of radical possibility, a space of resistance”, and most important in our view, it can be a site of remembrance “giving us ways to speak that de-colonize our minds, our very beings” (hooks 1990, 341, 342).

Re-creating art conventions in the margins of world encounters

All the chapters in this volume depict how historically, socially and politically marginalised people live with and within art practices. In order to illustrate how art and anthropology can be harnessed to change a site of vulnerability into that of possibility and resistance, in the following we would like to consider historically the relationship between art, anthropology and marginalised people in a broad perspective.

In his article dealing with the modern visual arts, Gell points out that the formative period of modern visual art (i. e. 1890–1925) coincides exactly with that of anthropology, in which the intellectual currents that created the distinctively “modern” sensibility in visual arts were active (Gell 2013 [1985], 88). In spite of this historical homology, modern visual art and anthropology have followed related but different trajectories concerning people and their artefacts in the areas marginalised by Western mainstream society. In the early formative period, artists like van Gogh and Gauguin went beyond the boundaries of their familiar lives to experience marginalised areas. In the later formative period, avant-gardists such as Picasso and Léger, living in Paris, the world capital city at that time, came to appreciate “enchanted” artefacts from the marginalised “primitive” areas. The main providers of these artefacts were often anthropologists. In contrast, anthropology left armchairs and established the methodology of long-term fieldwork in “primitive” areas as an indispensable part of its discipline. While anthropological practices were carried out in the political milieu of colonisation, as was critically illustrated in *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986), modern Primitivism in Western art was also realised against the backdrops of colonial politics and hegemonic consumerism, as Clifford points out:

“Picasso, Léger, Apollinaire, and many others came to recognize the elemental, ‘magical’ power of African sculptures in a period of growing *négrophilie*, a context that would see the irruption onto the European scene of other evocative black figures: the jazzman, the boxer (Al Brown), the *sauvage* Josephine Baker” (Clifford 1988, 197).

As the Western artists and art world have appropriated non-Western artefacts as artworks, non-Western people have likewise appropriated Western art and its system of museums, art schools, collectors, dealers, appreciators and so on in the context of power imbalances which has historically marginalised non-Western people. In the 19th century, Western art was appropriated by the non-Western young elites under the strong influence of colonial governments such as the Dutch East Indies (Suwarno 2010, 14–16), or the governments of the newly formed modern states such as Japan. Due to a combination of the strong governmental influence and crises of identity, those young elites were willing to appropriate Western art. Through global encounters in the formative period of modern art, the mutual appropriations between the non-West and the West began—specifically by the avant-gardists, who belonged to the middle-class, and by the non-Western elites.

After the Second World War, art education and appreciation, which had tended to be monopolised exclusively by the upper classes, became popular among the masses as well, in both the West and the non-West. Since then, the mutual appropriations have spread even further. They might have been positive if the relationship between the non-West and the West were equal and reciprocal. However, since the aesthetic judgements are mostly based on Western art world-centred criteria, there is always a tendency that existing marginalisation and inequalities are intensified.

As mentioned above, despite the historical homology, modern art and anthropology have followed distinctively separate trajectories. The criticism against orientalism and second-wave feminism in the 1970s as well as the shock that the book *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986) brought about in the 1980s led anthropology toward self-reflection. It was seriously disputed whether anthropology was possible in terms of political correctness and epistemological relevance. As a result, anthropologists relativise and scrutinise their own viewpoints strongly in order not to take their ethnocentric view as universal. In contrast, it seems that artists and other art experts in the mainstream art world are not sceptical about the universality of art and their aesthetic judgements (Foster 1995; Nagaya 2104, 35).

Clifford puts forward a critical consideration of an exhibition entitled *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* held at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York in December 1984 (Rubin ed. 1984). In the exhibition, the artworks by modern Primitivists and “tribal” artworks were displayed side by side according to their affinity and appeal to modern taste.

“The affinities shown at MOMA [*sic*] are all on modernist terms. The great modernist ‘pioneers’ (and their museum) are shown promoting formerly

despised tribal ‘fetishes’ or mere ethnographic ‘specimens’ to the status of high art and in the process discovering new dimensions of their (‘our’) creative potential” (Clifford 1988, 195).

According to Clifford, the MoMA exhibition is based on Western modern aesthetic judgements and allegedly on humanistic generosity. It ignored “Third World modernisms” and the “disturbing questions about race, gender and power” (Clifford 1988, 195, 197).

This method of display, putting ethnographic artefacts and Western artworks side-by-side, has also been adopted by other exhibitions such as *Magiciens de la Terre* held at Pompidou Centre, the National Modern Art Museum, in Paris in 1989 (Shimada 2018, 53–54). In 2006, former French president Jacques Chirac opened the Quai Branly Museum. With high-tech lighting and devices, and without explanation of the ethnographical background or colonial deprivation, the museum displays artefacts from non-Western marginalised, non-occidental or non-oriental areas in such a way as to make the artefacts look not only exotic but also stylish like high-grade commodities. The effect produces an atmosphere reminiscent of an amusement park. Visitors enjoy consuming their experiences in the museum with the museum shops and restaurants. With the exception of Australian Aboriginal paintings, it can be pointed out that since most of the items were collected during colonial times and the “Third World modern arts” are not included, the museum, especially its permanent exhibition, seems to enhance tacitly the superiority of the West over the areas where those items originated from (Yoshida 2007; Kawada 2007; Ogino 2009).

The non-marked category “art” or “Kunst” has worked as an exclusive category in the art world, which has influenced mainstream society—the Western, colonising, developed, metropolitan, urban and upper-middle-class society—in the globalising world. For example, crafts, souvenirs and kitsch are all excluded from art. Although the concept of art is specific to this kind of mainstream society, it is regarded as essential and universal. As long as the art world acknowledges them, any artefacts can be artworks. If Shelly Errington’s conception is applied, not only the works created by Western artists but also those created by non-Western artists can be categorised as “art by intention,” while non-Western enchanting artefacts appreciated in the circles of the modern Primitivism have become “art by appropriation” (Errington 1998; Svašek 2007, 11). Modern or contemporary artworks produced intentionally by non-Western artists tend to fit poorly in the Western centred art world. When those artefacts produced outside the art world are admitted into the art world, they are given marginal positions indicated by particular, often devaluing, labels such as primitive art, tribal art, folk art, naïve art, art brut, pop art (Becker 1984; Danto 1964, 1988, 1992; Gell 1999 [1992]; Svašek 2007). Even in these

cases, the license of being art is issued by the art world based on its own aesthetic judgement.

Against this backdrop, displaying in authoritative art institutions “Third World modern arts” by intention (Chapter 5), artefacts with ritual performances based on non-Western cosmology (Chapters 2 and 6), everyday goods of the marginalised people (Chapter 8), performances by excluded people like refugees (Chapter 9), and shamanistic art practices (Chapter 6) is disturbing and subverting not only to the art world but also to mainstream society. In other words, the performative display of these objects and performances can ignite the world to change (cf. Butler 1999). It is from this perspective that all the contributors to this volume explore marginalised people’s “art” practices. Especially, the chapters in the first part of this book argue how those “art” practices can enrich and even re-create art conventions through world encounters.

Appropriating and resisting the global art world

Even within or in the margins of the art world, there have been various “art practices” challenging, contesting, resisting and trying to change the hegemony of the mainstream art world and mainstream societies since the formative period of modern art. In the late 19th century, some artists left their hometowns to search for innovative inspiration by marginalising themselves from mainstream society. This tendency has often been referred to as Bohemianism, which still lingers to provide us with popular images of artists (Firth 1992). In the early 20th century, avant-gardists, such as Dadaists and Surrealists, emerged. The word “avant-garde”, which was first used as a military term to mean the frontier between “our land” and the enemy’s land, then came to be used to mean socialists, and was finally applied to people who tried to go beyond the frontier of the conventions of art. In this generation artists also placed themselves on society’s margins.

Since the formative period of art, while various art movements denying the authority of the art world have emerged with hopes to democratise and improve the world dominated by the mainstream society with “art” as cultural capital, the artworks and discourse that these movements produced have ironically been reincorporated into the art world (Minami 2014). The art market has played an indispensable role in the process of reincorporation.

Following the end of the Cold War, the neoliberal economic system has extended its influence, and economic disparity has spread, leading to a greater number of people living insecure lives (Abramovitz 2014; Ferguson 2009; Standing 2014). Under these historical conditions, the role of the art market has been enhanced, which in turn deprives the art movements of their resisting

power. Claire Bishop, an art historian and art critic, points out that in the beginning of the 1990s the “social turn” in art occurred and artists’ interest in participation, collaboration and multitude in global arenas resurged as political reaction to the abasement of communist regimes (Bishop 2012).

In his article in *Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology* (Marcus and Myers 1995), Hal Foster, an art historian, pointed to the artists’ growing interests in identity, otherness and its representation in which, artists thought, ethnographers (anthropologists) were experts. As mentioned above, he expressed this change as “ethnographic turn” in art (Foster 1995). This implies that artists carry out their socially engaged projects in much the same way as anthropologists do fieldwork. However, in doing so, they may end up projecting their own vision on “others” inadvertently without awareness. It is because they have not questioned or criticised the “universality” and authority of art in what they are doing as artists. Using this argument, Foster warned artists of the danger of the patronisation of the concerned community in carrying out a socially engaged project in the vein of postcolonial and postmodern art resistance. In the article “The Author as Producer” Walter Benjamin provided a similar warning to authors in the socialist resistance movement (Benjamin 1978 [1934]). While Foster pointed to the limits of art, Marcus and Myers disenchanting and politicised art by showing “in contemporary cultural life, art is becoming one of the main sites of cultural production for transforming difference into discourse” (Foster 1995; Marcus and Myers 1995, 34; Sansi 2015).

In the recent decades, however, art has become more and more enchanting, and art practices have globally flourished in various spheres. The three kinds of entangled currents producing the unprecedented flourishing of art practices may be differentiated: pro-neoliberal, contra-neoliberal, and currents driven by the international organisations such as the United Nations and UNESCO, which we will see later.

The West-centred art world has spread its horizons recently. It has been keeping “art” exclusive, while going hand in hand with art-like consumer (sub)cultures such as fashion, design, animations, comics and so on. In the neoliberal climate, the art market has become one of the most important arenas for investments and has been looking for *terra incognita* in artworks to satisfy the ever-changing tastes of dealers and art consumers. Accordingly, the range of commoditisation of artworks has been expanded. Even in developing countries, extremely rich people have appeared and have become art collectors, not only for investment purposes but also for prestige and moral acknowledgement. New middle classes have also emerged and demonstrated a class distinction by appreciating West-centred art (Miyazu 2014; Hook 2014, 2017).

With the advent of the 21st century, stylish museums for Contemporary Art such as the Quai Branly Museum in Paris, France, the 21st Museum of

Contemporary Art, in Kanazawa, Japan, and the Museum of Modern Art and Contemporary Art Nusantara in Jakarta, Indonesia, have increased worldwide. Well-designed shops, cafes and restaurants are set up in the museums, in one way or another linked to galleries and art fairs, which aim at selling artworks. The acts of appreciating art are in a sense embedded in a series of activities and the lifestyle of consumer culture. Cyberspace and social media play indispensable roles in the flourishing of visual arts. Art agents such as museums, galleries, art fairs, art magazines and so on spread real-time information on visually attractive homepages. Social media platforms make it possible even for small organisations and individuals to spread and respond to written and visual information. Through cyber space and social media, people have developed new ways of experiences (Miyazu 2014; Benjamin 1968 [1936]). Stephane Martin, the president of Quai Branly Museum, says “there are no partitions between corners nor fixed routes in our museum. Visitors can walk around freely. While a conventional ethnological museum is a book and visitors read it page by page, our museum has been evolved into that like a cyber space” (Martin 2007, 82). The great popularity of Quai Branly Museum might be explained in part by its space design which may be more closely aligned with the new ways of experiences.

Against the neoliberal currents, which further marginalise vulnerable people, such as the poor, refugees, ethnic minorities, the disabled, immigrants, the indigenous, and people in postcolonial conditions, various socially engaged art movements have been advocated and initiated. Of these art movements, some try to promote dissent to uncover the difficult reality as Bishop radically proposes (Bishop 2012), while others are more moderate, and aim to foster “friendship cultures” as Nicolas Bourriaud suggests (Bourriaud 2002), or to adapt to the current situations as many art management promoters recommend (Helguera 2011).

The flourishing of art has attracted the attention of many scholars. A special issue entitled *Artification* was published in an online journal *Contemporary Aesthetics* in 2012. The contributors are scholars and practitioners in various fields, such as philosophy, education, aesthetics and mass media. In the introduction, the editors of the special issue, Naukkarinen and Saito, propose to use the neologism “artification” to refer to “situations and processes in which something that is not regarded as art in the traditional sense of the word is changed into (...) something that takes influences from artistic ways of thinking and practicing” (Naukkarinen and Saito 2012, 1). Moreover, they “believe that the concept of artification is useful for understanding a topical and important cultural phenomenon that currently affects our ways of thinking about art and its relation to other spheres of culture” (Ibid.). The articles in the special issue argue how useful artification is in such fields as business, scientific

research, natural history museum, health care, welfare, sports, environmental activism and education, which lack creativity or other features typical of art.

In a volume entitled *Aesthetic Capitalism*, the contributors, who are mostly engaged in cultural sociology and social aesthetics, argue that because the 2008–2010 Global Financial Crisis revealed that “the age of the post-industrial economy was over” and various advanced economies turned out to be much less high-tech or info-tech, “aesthetic capitalism” works as “the promise of something on the horizon” (Murphy and de la Fuente 2014, 1, 7). They maintain that the innovative, creative and inspiring faculty of aesthetics and art is important to understand and activate the economies and the world, based on the assumption that capitalism is the necessary condition at present and in the future (Murphy and de la Fuente 2014).

Although investors in the art market, art critics in the media, curators of museums opened recently, artists participating in exhibitions, radical and moderate art activists, and scholars in various fields related to art all have diverse politico-economic stances, they seem to share the Western centric idea of the creative, innovative and inspiring power of art, and focus their concerns mostly on Western urban issues. With this in mind, what can anthropologists do for the marginalised people highlighted in the chapters of this volume?

Since the above-mentioned art-related experts influence the public greatly, it is important for anthropologists to form a dialogue with them in order to resist the hegemony that tends to marginalise the people whom the experts unconsciously tend to leave outside their scope. For the dialogue, first of all, anthropologists should draw the experts’ attention to the issues, including those dealt with in this volume, in the right and relevant ways. It seems that Clifford’s critical consideration and Gell’s persevering analysis concerning “art” are still so inspiring not only to anthropologists but also to the art-related experts. If anthropologists can develop their considerations and analyses, it will help to facilitate such a dialogue. Gell’s as well as Clifford’s analytical and critical insights can work as “catalyst to further exploration, innovation and, most intriguingly, cross-disciplinary engagement” (Chua and Elliot 2013, 17).

Besides forming a dialogue with art-related experts, anthropologists can also witness, accompany and even collaborate with the marginalised people resisting and appropriating the hegemony amidst the flourishing of art practices, the entangled currents, ambiguous consumer cultures and the discursive cyber spaces of the globalising world today.

Anthropologists’ engagements with marginalised people as witnesses, companions and collaborators are not at all static or determined. This is because they are always part of a process in which anthropologists are likely to be displaced not only in their “fields” but also in their places of origin as was the case

with Michel Leiris (Clifford 1988, 165–174). As Clifford suggests in his book *Routes*, practices of displacements might emerge as constitutive of cultural meanings, and people's movements and encounters keep marginalising and centring as two sides of the same coin in entangled ways (Clifford 1997, 3). While the West has been geopolitically centred since the time of colonisation, endeavours to decentre the West among many native peoples have been going on simultaneously. Especially the native histories of survival, struggle, and renewal have become widely visible since the late 1990s and the native endeavours to centre themselves in their life are much activated in the 20th century (Clifford 2013). The art-culture system, in which the West has divided the artefacts of virtuosity into artworks by Western individuals and cultural artefacts by non-Western collectives, has been challenged and subverted. The museums, which were exclusively places for the art-culture system, have often turned into contact zones for diverse people and collections to encounter in innovative and democratising ways (Clifford 1988, 1997, 2013). In this vein, the chapters in the second part of this volume argue how marginalised people's art practices appropriate and resist the global art world in the marginalising-centring dynamism.

Even in the global academic world of anthropology, movements, encounters, centring and marginalising have been occurring. As in the global world in general, the West has been centred from the beginning of the history of the global academic world of anthropology in the early 20th century. Because writing has been the most important process in anthropology, the fact that English has played a role in the common language has unmistakable significance. In other words, the academic worlds of the English-speaking countries, especially the UK and the US, have been centred in the global academic world of anthropology. While it is quite typical that for non-native speakers the use of English is accompanied by some difficulty, both as a matter of language as well as the challenges associated with converting ways of thinking, it is also true that the global academic world in English is open to whoever uses the language in academic writings and presentations. In a sense, like museums, this could work as a contact zone for anthropologists of diverse linguistic, national, cultural, social, economic and political backgrounds, whose encounters may innovate the global academic world and even the academic worlds of English-speaking countries. All the contributors of this volume are in a marginal positionality with regard to the global academic world of anthropology in terms of languages and scholarly careers. We hope our volume based on our encounter at the 18th IUAES Conference in Brazil will work as an academic contact zone, and our hybridity will make some contribution to the study of arts in the margins of world encounters.

New forms of art and ethnography in museums and development

If “margins”, as suggested above, can be sites not only of exclusion, but also of resistance, it is important to ask in what ways that can be possible. To this question there are many potential answers. As the essays in this volume suggest, one of the main means through which art can act as resistance not only to the state of marginalisation itself, but to the conditions that have created that situation, is precisely what might be termed “aesthetic resistance” — creating forms, objects and performances that challenge the “canon” and represent embodied forms of imagination materialised in ways that are significantly different from the conventionally defined qualities of art. Essentially, this is what is meant by the term “polycentric aesthetics”. That there is not one centre from which aesthetic values flow, and which retains the right of definition but many, each one of which is valid in its own terms. In other contexts, art can be activist: quite self-consciously opposing economic structures (typically capitalist ones), the negative impacts of globalisation, particular political formations or practices which are deemed to be oppressive or unjust (e. g. Raunig 2007). This latter stance often links the arts to the question of “development” and the role that they may play in advancing humane and sustainable forms of such development. At yet another level questions of both cultural appropriation and of the role of museums arise. The problem of potential or actual cultural appropriation is a complex one. The arts have always borrowed from one another across cultures. But the question of when artistic appropriation becomes akin to “biopiracy”—the illegitimate taking without acknowledgement or compensation the biological, intellectual or artistic property of others—is a vexed one. In a globalised world where access to knowledge about alternative art forms is easily available through the internet, publications, documentary films, and travelling exhibitions, that is hard to resolve. Situations in which indigenous artists have few legal or other resources to defend the originality and integrity of their productions, are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and appropriation, and this is an issue that should be constantly kept in mind when discussing the arts presented in this volume and parallel cases from around the world (Anderson and Geismar 2017; Brown 1998; Geismar 2013).

But keeping this in mind, the two questions of the relationship of arts from the margins of global encounters to, on the one hand “development”, and on the other representation in museums both locally and internationally, can be fruitfully explored in relation to the empirical and interpretative contents of the book.

The arts and development

Classical paradigms in the field of development studies have been heavily economicist. Even the subject of the sociology of development has tended to emphasise social structure (issues such as class, caste and gender) at the expense of discussions of culture as actually practiced. That would include areas such as religion, and most certainly the arts. Slowly however, a paradigm shift has begun to occur. We see that not only in academic writing on the subject in the areas of a more holistic approach to development studies (Clammer 2015), in the anthropology of development, and comparative cultural studies, particularly those interested in manifestations of “popular culture”. We also see that in publications by mainstream multilateral institutions such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These two have made a concerted effort to not only highlight the role of culture in development, but to concretise this through encouraging the recognition and stimulation of what they have termed the “creative economy”, or local cultural industries including crafts, studio art, theatre, dance, music and film making. These cultural industries are not only important aspects of culture worth preserving and publicising, but they are also powerful routes to poverty alleviation and to the creation of self-respect (UNESCO/UNCTAD 2008; UNESCO/UNDP 2013).

It is not only scholars but also UN agencies and in many cases NGOs who are pursuing this route: many governments are beginning to do the same. A visitor to Delhi for example who is interested in the large range of Indian indigenous arts, can find a large government-run dedicated centre, a virtual shopping mall in fact, on the periphery of the major Connaught Place shopping area, with many floors of paintings, carpets, furniture, brass-work, wood carving, textiles, pottery, and local herbal products, teas and fashions. Similar centres can be found in other major Indian cities and represent concerted efforts to market art forms (and to preserve and stimulate them) that are otherwise inaccessible to the average visitor without travel to provincial towns or remote villages.

Quite apart from this bureaucratic stimulation and marketing of local art forms, has been the rapid expansion of the market for “tribal art” in India, a phenomenon perhaps parallel to the virtual invention (as a marketable and museum-enabled form) of Aboriginal art in Australia. Such art is now widely shown in dedicated art museums, sold in specialised galleries and is easily available for purchase at outlets in the cities, including in such venues as the Craft Museum in central New Delhi, and various crafts fairs. The advent of the internet has made access to images of a huge range of art forms instantly possible, and many on-line outlets now exist through which such art can be bought, whether through what are in effect virtual galleries or through NGOs

that have set up marketing networks for the sale of arts and crafts that they have themselves stimulated. A number of such organisations now exist for marketing the art of the marginalised and the handicapped in Africa and elsewhere.

This expansion, however, also raises the question of “tourist art”: the production of art forms thought by their creators to appeal to the tourist market, a phenomenon apparent wherever such tourism occurs. This raises a number of interesting questions implied by many of the case studies in this book: not only of appropriation, but also of authenticity. Such work is clearly indigenous but produced for a largely foreign market. Should this be read as an example of local entrepreneurship, as promoting exactly the kind of artistic activities that UNESCO among others recommends, or as an aesthetic sell-out, producing ersatz work of low artistic quality for purely commercial reasons? Such a question cannot be easily answered as it involves a complex constellation of aesthetic judgements, local and global economics, the rights and autonomy of local artistic communities and social policy. Nevertheless, it hovers at the edges of the situations analysed in many of the essays in this book, and of any discussion of “art from the margins”, and links the discussion here to both older debates about “ethnic” and tourist arts initiated principally by Nelson Graburn (Graburn 1976), and which have re-appeared more recently in debates about the position of art in postcolonial situations, in which the power of the global economy still influences and distorts what is possible politically, economically and artistically in formally independent nations (Phillips and Steiner 1999).

Incorporating such approaches, which build on the kinds of art forms discussed in this volume (specifically in Chapter 8), extend the scope of anthropology itself in fresh and important directions. These include a dialogue between the anthropology of art and the anthropology of development, and by doing so drawing attention to the central role of culture in any holistic approach to development, promoting the idea of what might be called “aesthetic democracy”—the genuine co-existence of alternative forms and systems of artistic production and appreciation, and promoting empowerment, re-skilling and the active preservation of cultural forms, not as monuments, but as living expressions of artistic creativity. Such approaches not only link up with contemporary discourses of sustainability (not only economically, but equally because a good case can be made for the position that cultural diversity is as important as biodiversity for the future of our planet), but with post-colonial discourses as well. Post-colonial theorising about culture has been heavily literary and has overwhelmingly focused on the written word: visual cultures and performance have been given much less attention. But as the cultural critic and scholar of “Third Cinema”, Rey Chow has cogently put it:

“What is needed, after the ethical polemic of Said’s *Orientalism* is understood, is the much more difficult task of investigating how visuality operates in the postcolonial politics of non-Western cultures besides the subjugation to passive spectacle that critics of orientalism argue.” (Chow 1995, 13).

The chapters in this book are in large part, answers to that question. The notion of “exhibition” also raises the question of public representation, and in particular the role of the art gallery or museum in showing the forms of art discussed in this book, an issue that again some of the chapters address.

It has long been recognised that museums are highly political spaces: what they show (or fail to show), how what is shown is presented, and how it is explained or justified, are critical questions, often concealing deeply ideological questions. As the Indian scholar and theatre director Rustom Bharucha rightly argues, museums can all too easily “freeze” a dynamic reality and in so doing produce an ahistorical and distorted view of the culture and artefacts being represented (Bharucha 2002). They ideally have positive educational roles, and even democratic ones by making available aspects of history and culture either largely unknown or the preserve of the elites, and in the context of this book, of making accessible the arts of cultures that have fallen for the most part outside of the mainstream of art history and criticism (Karp et al. 1992; Sylvester 2009). Recognising these dangers, many museums now very consciously attempt to present the art of the “margins” in its proper cultural and historical context and to give such art equal status with conventionally recognised “high art”.

Good examples include the Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal, India, a gallery that shows side-by-side modern and contemporary Indian painting and the tribal arts of India, the juxtaposition creating a fascinating dialogue between the two traditions. Very close by, also in Bhopal, is the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, which is a museum devoted entirely to “tribal arts”. Around the world numerous other examples can be found: in Paris, France, the Musée du quai Branly (which contrasts interestingly with the main ethnographic museum in Paris, the Musée de L’Homme), in El Salvador the Museo AJA de Culturas y Artes Populares para la Ciudadanía Global y Planetaria (the AHA Museum of Folk Arts for Global and Planetary Citizenship) (Desmond and Benavides 2013), or in New Caledonia the architecturally remarkable Tjibaou Cultural Centre designed by Renzo Piano for the indigenous Kanak people.

In commenting on the issues raised by such museums, Arun and Gita Wolf in discussing the work of the Indira Gandhi museum in Bhopal introduce the concept of “symbolic inversion”. That means the viewing of the world from the aesthetic perspective of the “margins” by those artists who in their words

“remain outsiders and are seldom invited to participate in dialogues around culture and representation” (Wolf and Wolf 2015, 144). In their book, based on an analysis of the tribal arts in the museum in question, they argue that new and hybrid art forms can and do emerge from multicultural milieus in which different art forms are brought into contact with one another, and that museums have a critical role in mediating an inclusive and authentic pluralism. This points them towards developing what they term an “innovative curation pedagogy” in which “crafts” are seen as authentic art forms, and in which the pluralism of which they have spoken is practised. At the same time, it is recognised that in the context of a globalised world in which tribal artists are often excluded or situated on the periphery, “the challenge becomes to face rather than ignore this dispossession while trying to find more egalitarian ways of conducting dialogues” (Wolf and Wolf 2015, 12). When this is done well, museums of the art of the “periphery” can sow the seeds of the rejuvenation of those art forms and can create conversations around and between cultures.

The fundamentally political nature of museums, intersecting with their formal cultural and artistic roles, has of necessity to be included in any discussion of the presentation of art from the “margins” (Karp and Lavine 1991; Karp et al. 2006). This in turn has implications for art education (Hanley et al. 2013): if “Third World” art students are expected to be exposed to the art of the West, it is only reasonable that Western art students should be exposed to the art of the “rest”. They would indeed receive great stimulation from their exposure to “alternative” aesthetic systems and expressions at the same time as art students anywhere are exposed to critical pedagogies and a heightened awareness of the social and political contexts of art production and consumption, including that of “minorities” in the so-called advanced countries.

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