DEMOCRACY EQUALITY CULTURE BEYOND THE NATION STATE

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Chen Liqin, Worker at a chili drying spot in the desert, Bulongji, Gansu, 2007
Courtesy of Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery / Mathias Braschler and Monika Fischer

THE "ITALIAN ANOMALY" AND A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

Over the last few weeks great relevance has been given by the European press to the "Italian anomaly". Lately, the attention has shifted to the problematic situation of the media in the country, and the danger of a distortion of one of the fundamental mechanisms of any democracy, namely the freedom and pluralism of information. A lack of a European response to the intimidation of the press in Italy poses a direct threat to the right of liberty of expression throughout the European Union, and limits the authority of any European condemnation of censorship in the rest of the world.

The starting point is well known: Italy is the only Western democracy where the prime minister exercises direct control over three television channels he owns and indirect control over three public channels, as well as owning several newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and the largest publishing house in the country.

To these well-known facts a number of additional, worrying events have been piling up over the last few months, culminating in an all-out offensive of the Italian prime minister against the few organs of the press that still vehemently critique his and his government's positions.

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ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPH:

The Chinese, Mathias Braschler and Monika Fischer
July 18th – Sept 10th 2009,
Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery, Beijing, China

The exhibition features a selection of 40 to 50 portraits depicting the extensive and contradictory spectrum of today's China. Ranging from the portraits of the mighty industrialist in Chongqing to the poor coal miner in Shanxi Province, the subjects are captured in their habitual environment.
www.parisbeijingphotogallery.com

editorial

THE "ITALIAN ANOMALY" AND A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT

► *Continued from front cover*

Here are just some of the recent facts:

TELEVISIONS

1. Nearly 90% of Italian television is comprised by the state television channels, Rai1, Rai2, and Rai3, and the Mediaset private channels Rete4, Canale5, Italia1, owned by Berlusconi.

2. In a recent meeting at his own private villa, Berlusconi personally selected the main directors of the public channels and the directors of the evening news editions of these channels.

2. While the exercise could be repeated for most of the newly appointed figures, here are two quotes from the new director of Italy's leading evening news, TG1, Augusto Minzolini:

On Berlusconi: "He wears a blue jersey and has the firm hand of the worksite master, of the head of the fire brigade, of the military chief, but also the comprehension of the priest. Berlusconi gets exalted in emergencies. His attitude is 'the politics of action'".

The largest opposition party, on the other hand, is characterized negatively: "The truth is that the Democratic Party was born antiquated. The world runs, the centre-left stays still".

3. One of the historical founders of TG5, Enrico Mentana, was recently and abruptly fired by Berlusconi's Mediaset group over the running of his political program "Matrix". Here is a letter sent by Mentana to the head of the television channel he worked for, written a few months before being fired and soon after Berlusconi's latest election: "Our dinner ended a few hours ago. It was a mistake to invite me. I felt out of place. There was all the first bench of the newsdesk, but I did not hear a word about journalism for even a minute. It seemed a Thanksgiving dinner... an electoral Thanksgiving. All those around me had voted in the same way... it was obvious, as it was obvious to congratulate each other for their contribution towards this good end... I no longer feel at home in a group that seems an electoral committee, where everyone thinks in the same way, which is precisely why they have been put there."

NEWSPAPERS

Berlusconi's statements against particular newspapers opposed to his government are well known. Recently, however, there has been an escalation of what may only be called an attempt at intimidation:

1. Speaking in front of a congress of young industrialists, Berlusconi encouraged companies not to advertise in newspapers hostile to his positions, claiming these same papers are responsible for exaggerating the reach of the economic crisis in Italy. Not only does this represent unprecedented interference by a head of state, but the matter is worsened by three considerations: a) the large advertising budget of 'state' companies, the directors of which are appointed by the Berlusconi cabinet and seek its goodwill; b) Berlusconi's large commercial empire and its advertising budget; c) Berlusconi's interests as editor of competing newspapers, radio, and television stations, all seeking advertising revenue.

2. Following a number of revelations this summer over Berlusconi's relation with escorts and showgirls and his using State flights for their transportation to private parties, all amply reported by the international media, Berlusconi has sued Italian newspapers La Repubblica, and L'Unita, and European newspapers El Pais and Le Nouvel Observateur, in total claiming in excess of three million euros. He is said to also be investigating suing The Times Newspaper of London.

3. Following repeated criticism over Berlusconi's personal life and his government's approach to questions of migration by the newspaper of the Italian catholic bishops, Avvenire, Berlusconi's own newspaper, Il Giornale, published an unsubstantiated report accusing the director of Avvenire of having threatened the wife of a man with whom he allegedly held sexual relations. The slander campaign has led to the resignation of the director of Avvenire, Dino Boffo.

INDEPENDENT REPORTS

1. In its latest 2009 report, Freedom House classified Italy as only "partly free", isolating in particular the political interference in the system of information

2. In its own latest report on freedom of the press in Italy, Reporters without Borders contend that Berlusconi "increases political interference" in the "editorial line" of the public and private news channels, "fostering self-censorship on the part of a section of the profession".

3. The Italian association of journalists calls the recent legal proceedings against L'Unita "an attempt to strangle a newspaper of the opposition"

4. Aidan White, secretary-general of the International and European Federation of Journalists, writes in a recent press statement that: "[Berlusconi] puts press freedom at risk by trying to use the law to intimidate journalists and to stifle media reporting."

> **"LACK OF A RESPONSE TO PRESS INTIMIDATION IN ITALY WOULD THREATEN ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTS OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY"**

In Italy, a more or less sophisticated process of media manipulation risks depriving citizens of the means to form a reasoned opinion on and check the actions of those in power. The legislation governing 'freedom of the press' remains intact and fully apt to a twenty-first century democracy. The problem lies in the application of such legislation, the acts of political intimidation and attempts at distortion of the advertising market, and a continuous contamination of the personnel of media organs with individuals loyal to current Prime Minister Berlusconi. In a country where television channels represent the only source of information for over 80% of the population, control over the media does not necessarily have to assume the draconian and totalitarian nature of its twentieth century precedent. Manipulation of the principal, "mass" media of a country can today perfectly co-exist with the maintenance of dedicated 'indian reserves' of opposition, flag-bearers of a merely procedural freedom of expression.

The Italian example has consequences far beyond Italy. Lack of a European response to the attacks on the liberty of expression and thought in Italy would threaten one of the fundaments of democracy throughout Europe. It puts in jeopardy progress made in former Soviet countries welcomed into the Union with regards to freedom of expression and of the press, and weakens any European condemnation of censorship or press intimidation on its borders and further abroad. In the context of what seem to be increasing attempts to limit the freedom of expression even in several Western countries which claim to be the homelands of liberty, the Italian example is potentially pernicious, and a Europe-wide response is demanded.

CAMPAIGN FOR THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

A lack of a European response to the recent intimidation of the press in Italy [see editorial starting cover page] poses a direct threat to the right of liberty of expression throughout the European Union, puts in jeopardy progress made in former Soviet countries welcomed into the Union with regards to freedom of expression and of the press, and limits the authority of any European condemnation of censorship in the rest of the world. The European Institutions have the authority to condemn intimidation of the press in Italy, and the potential to open legal proceedings.

European Alternatives is launching a campaign to pressure Members of the European Parliament in the Committee on Civil Liberties to open an investigation into the possibility of a breach of media freedom and pluralism in Italy. If, following the investigation, a breach is deemed plausible by a majority of members of the Committee, we are calling for the European Parliament to express a vote on the matter in plenary assembly. If the vote confirms the possibility of a breach, we are demanding for the dossier to be passed on to the European Council according to the procedure laid out in Article 7 of the Treaty of Nice.

TO KNOW MORE AND SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN, VISIT:
www.euroalter.com/pressfreedom

About European Alternatives

EUROPA is the journal of European Alternatives, a transnational civil society organsiation advocating the emergence of a positive transnationalism in the cultural and political sphere, and promoting intellectual and artistic engagement with the idea and future of Europe.

European Alternatives organises events, discussions and projects throughout Europe and beyond, and organises an annual festival in London.

www.euroalter.com

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european alternatives

news from the movement

BUILDING A COMMON FUTURE BEYOND LOCAL AND GLOBAL

SARA SALERI

As the debate about a "common European identity" has been intensifying since EU enlargement, in European countries expressions such as "national" identity, traditions and culture seem to be especially resistant, and continue to be widely used – and misused.

This is particularly true when dealing with immigration policies in many European countries, where being familiar with those "national" issues is one of the main prerequisites to obtain citizenship. The UK Border Agency has even published Life in the United Kingdom: A Journey to Citizenship, a handbook to prepare for the naturalisation test, which treats issues varying from the legal age to vote to the behaviour in a pub, or the origins of a cultural icon such as Santa Claus.

In Italy, where immigration laws are taking a dramatic turn, the debate about national culture becomes more provincial and even grotesque, with a Minister of the Republic, member of the Northern League Party, declaring the necessity of teaching regional dialects in school to preserve Italian values.

What system of principles underpins this kind of policies?

First, a represented dichotomy between an "authentic local" and a supposedly disruptive "global" plays a key role here, the nostalgia towards the past is enhanced, together with the fear of present and future changes; "the past" is idealised and becomes a fetish to be preserved as such. This crystallization is precisely the second deviation of these politics of identity: there's a struggle to define – to set a clear border between what is and what is not "tradition", or "national roots". And this continuous reference to a definition ignores or tries to hide the simple fact that tradition, and cultural memory, are not something given, but are built and negotiated by different actors, through mechanisms of remembrance and oblivion.

To challenge these dominating views, it is essential to subvert this paradigm, thinking about history, traditions and memory in a different and more complex way.

First of all, we have to review our idea of the past, exploring the possible relation between different memories, different experiences and narrations of the same past, conveyed by different groups and communities. That can refer for example to different roles in the past – just think about the different stories of the past narrated by the colonizer or the colonized.

This is absolutely crucial, but it is not enough, a more radical step must be taken, recognizing the processual nature of history and the constructed nature of memory: building a new culture – with a shared memory – is possible if a common experience can be recast into a future dimension. Building a common memory, thus, implies acting in the present, reading the pasts, and imagining a shared possible future. We must accept this challenge, looking for new and creative ways to move from a conservative idea of a "history of the past" to a dynamic model of a society actively living in History.

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPH:

Zanele Muholi - Kalmplex, Toronto, 2008

Silver gelatine print

© Zanele Muholi. Courtesy of Michael Stevenson, Cape Town.

Faces and Phases

Zanele Muholi works predominantly on perceptions of gender, sexuality and identity. Her photographs challenge the public's perceptions of female and male identity and the notions of sameness and difference. Faces and Phases is a series of black and white portraits of black lesbians from different countries. Zanele started the series in 2007 in South Africa and, in the aftermath of homophobic and xenophobic attacks that took place in Johannesburg and Capetown in 2008, decided to expand to other countries. Her photographs aim at capturing 'the subtle complexities that challenge our prejudices due to ignorance and hate'. Some of her shows have led to strong debates in South Africa, where same sex civil unions are allowed but still coexist with practices and actions of extreme violence against women, homosexuals and transgendered.

July-August 2009, Brodie/Stevenson gallery, Craighall, Johannesburg, South Africa, More info: http://www.michaelstevenson.com/contemporary/artists/muholi.htm

TURKEY AND EUROPE: HALF A CENTURY IN THE WAITING ROOM

BELEN GONGORA

Turkey applied for associate membership of the European Economic Community in 1959, when this only counted the six founders (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). Half a century in the waiting room and the enlargement prospects for Turkey still at a standstill. It is not surprising then that some have qualified these tortuous negotiations lasting for half a century as "a sad anniversary of 50 years knocking on Europe's door".

Turkey applied before Ireland, the UK and Denmark, but negotiations have experienced a death-slow tempo and there is not a clear and straightforward path for the long standing relationship between Turkey and the EU. Indeed, it was not until December 1999 when EU Helsinki Council recognised Turkey as an EU candidate country on an equal footing with other candidate countries and not until October 2005 when the formal opening of Accession negotiations with Turkey started.

Since then the EU has only closed provisionally one chapter, opened negotiations on seven chapters, but also decided that eight relevant chapters will not be opened and no chapter will be provisionally closed until Turkey has fully implemented the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement (Turkey's restrictions regarding the Republic of Cyprus, mainly on the free movement of goods, including restrictions on means of transport). There are 35 negotiation areas to cover. The issue of Cyprus continues to be a major obstacle to negotiations, but not the only one.

There is no doubt that Turkey is an exceptional case: there is no other example of such a long process for any other candidate state. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that he is tired of "maybes" and "buts" and he refuses the proposal of a "privileged partnership" by France and Germany: "We have been waiting for fifty years for entering Europe. From now on, we want a sharp answer. Some of the leaders are first saying something, and then they make a correction and claim that they didn't say so. We have been tired of comedies. I will never accept a privileged partnership. We want full membership into the EU."

> "THE EU SHOULD ALSO LEAD BY EXAMPLE AND SHOW A MORE INCLUSIVE AND POSITIVE APPROACH TO A MORE DIVERSE AND OPEN EUROPE."

The Nabucco project might place Turkey as a key ally to curb Europe's over-dependence on Russia, but it might also be an asset for EU membership. Jose Barroso has said, "I believe that with the arrival of the first gas this agreement will open the door to a new era between the EU and Turkey". It might be considered that this project has encouraged the view that Europe needs Turkey more than Turkey needs Europe.

Turkey's case is in sharp contrast with the fast-track application of Iceland. Turkey should surely demonstrate further its determination to join the EU with words and facts. But this is not only Turkey's task: the EU should also lead by example and show a more inclusive and positive approach to a more diverse and open Europe.

JO LEINEN

REFORM OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY:
The issue of the electoral system

Transnational electoral lists and personalisation of European politics are required to involve citizens in a shared political space

For the first time in 2009 the European Parliament together with the European Commission joint forces for setting up a true European election campaign. TV and radio spots were produced in different languages, featuring renowned personalities and picking up political issues of equal importance all across Europe. They included questions on how much of a fortress citizens want the EU to be, what energy mix is preferred or whether genfood should be on the dinner table.

Despite these efforts, voter turnout on June 7th remained low. Analyses of the campaign clearly showed that instead of a European campaign with competing European political parties focusing on European issues and presenting their different political concepts, there were 27 national campaigns, focusing mainly on national issues.

The low turnout during the elections shows that new efforts are required if we don't want to further create distances between the European Union and its citizens. There is a structural problem that must be addressed quickly. Apart from certain European provisions such as proportional representation, the elections to the European Parliament are based on national legislation. They take place on different days and under different regimes. Consequently, they are rather a combination of 27 national elections than truly European elections. Once again, the elections that were meant to be about European topics have been decided by issues that are mostly national. It makes it difficult for voters to grasp the European dimension of the European elections. There is a structural gap between the mandates of the MEPs and the way they were nominated and elected. But as long as the parties put up lists that only consist of national candidates, the election campaigns will keep on focussing on national issues. This has to change for the next polls in 2014.

We have to move forward and create a real European Electoral System, if we want to re-instil interest in the citizens, along with a sense that their vote on the European level does matter and can bring about change. We need transnational European lists of candidates of the European Political Parties, i.e. two votes for each citizen, one for national lists and the other one for European lists. Thus, the EU would receive a double legitimacy. The national lists would respect the role of the member states inside the European Union. The European lists would be a strong instrument for the development of a real pan-European debate and at the same time strengthen the European democracy and its legitimacy. Parties would have to pick European candidates, eventually adding a whole new, cross-border dimension and creating an understanding among themselves, their members and voters that the EU is more than just the sum of its members.

In order to europeanize the European Elections we also need to make sure that a real European electoral campaign is possible. The EU is not a second rate institution, trailing somewhere behind nation-states but an important player in the world; and, more importantly, the chief decision-maker for inner-European issues, such as the internal market, the common currency or environmental affairs. Decisions from the European level have direct impact on the everyday life of each EU citizen, e.g. passenger rights, cross-border health care, CO_2 emissions for cars, health standards at the place of work or food safety.

We have to find ways to re-integrate citizens in European debates, involving them in the huge task of creating an EU that lives the values of solidarity, democracy, equality and respect of human rights. European integration will not be brought about by bureaucracy or technocrats harmonising industrial standards but by real, sometimes heated political debates, exchange of ideas and cross-border people-to-people contacts. We need to move away from the top-down processes towards a bottom-up approach. Restructuring the European electoral system will be an important starting point in this regard; beginning at the very core of the campaign – with the timely and democratic preparation of the lists of candidates. It is not acceptable that only a few weeks before the elections, the electorate in some countries still doesn't know who their candidates are and what the alternatives are. It results in the total lack of thorough and informative campaign, which in any case would be crammed into a space of only two or three weeks and leads people to believe that European politics only happen shortly before elections. The missing synchronisation of debates and activities between the countries hinders the emergence of a true European debate, too. In addition, it is unacceptable that in some cases the party lists are drawn up by exclusive, intransparent party circles. It is therefore crucial that we develop EU-wide minimal standards for the establishment of the lists of candidates that include a well ahead deadline as well as rules on how to integrate the members of the parties in the decision making process.

"A CONTROVERSIAL AND OPEN DEBATE ABOUT POLITICAL CHOICES IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ANY DEMOCRACY. WE NEED TO ALLOW EUROPEAN CITIZENS TO DECIDE WHO WILL GOVERN THEM."

But European lists can only be one aspect of this new system. Apart from the lack of a European debate, the campaign for the European Elections suffered under something else: there was not enough personalization. It was unclear to the citizens what personnel changes would occur after the elections and how much of an impact a majority shift in the European Parliament can have on the composition of the European Commission. Once the Lisbon Treaty enters into force, new provisions will apply that link the nomination and election of the Commission president to the results of the European elections, thus transforming the voter's voices and choices into political realities that impact the direction of the development of European integration. If we want to raise the interest of the electorate and demonstrate the political alternatives, the European Parties must put forward their candidates for the position of the President of the "European Government" (i.e. Commission President) *prior* to the elections. This would be the most effective way to achieve a real politicization of the European Elections because it would lead to a much higher presence of European topics in the media and a pan-European dialogue about these personalities and their programmes. The voters could then better judge the strengths and weaknesses of the different parties and candidates in Europe and take a more informed decision. A controversial and open debate about political choices is fundamental to any democracy. We need to allow the citizens to express their choices about the political forces that will govern them on the European level.

Ever since the 1960s changes in the electoral system to the European Parliament have been the topic of many debates among the EU's heads of state and governments and leaders of national political parties, being aware of the immense impact they can have on the nation-state's role in the European set-up, with the attention of voters shifting away from the national towards the European level. As a result, these changes have often been stalled and progress remained slow or altogether absent. However, as the European level is assigned more and more tasks because many modern challenges can no longer be solved at the national level, it is crucial that these new powers and competences of the European Commission and the European Council are matched with the necessary parliamentary control. A control based on democratic legitimacy, brought about by conscious choices of a high number of informed voters, which in turn are the result of open, pan-European debates by European Political Parties offering alternative solutions to European questions. In the new legislature, the European Parliament should as quickly as possible start with the preparations for a new electoral system towards the next European elections in 2014. The debate has to start now!

Jo Leinen is a Member of the European Parliament for the Party of European Socialists.

Muge, Fortune-telling man

CRYPTIC OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

VÉRONIQUE FOULON

Herodotus tells us about the debate between Otanes, partisan of democracy, Megabyzus, champion of oligarchy, and Darius, speaking in favour of monarchy.

Otanes expresses his preference for a system of government which implies legitimacy, equality and the accountability of magistrates who must explain their actions and decisions in front of the majority of the people. Megabyzus, on the other hand, believes in the doctrine that Popper would call "historicism" or the doctrine of the chosen people, in which aristocracy or a group of citizens amongst what he designates as "the best citizens" would make all decisions because they would make the best decisions unlike what he calls "the frivolous throng". Finally, Darius criticizes oligarchy as allowing enmity inside the group of citizens constituting the government and democracy as contributing to corruption. The defender of the people must, according to him, inevitably be unique and thus a monarch.

In our times where representative democracy is structured around competition between political parties, we might forget that the question of democracy has a long history of discussion and is a multifaceted topic. The aforementioned debate is said to have taken place in the Persian Empire no later than in the second half of the 6th century BC. In spite of how long deliberations about democracy have been in existence, we have still many lessons to draw and are constantly trying to learn again how to deal with what we share in the public sphere as wisely and as fairly as possible according to the values we believe in, be it honesty, integrity, liberty, equality, collectivity, human rights. Every change of the public sphere necessarily implies a change in the way we get involved in its time and space.

European democracy has now been for

TIME FOR A CITIZENS' EUROPE

PIERRE CALAME

The European Union is a world example of national reconciliation, but it can no longer rely on institutional compromise. A radically democratised citizens' Europe is called for

When the European community was created just after the Second World War, it had to be innovative in its form of governance to reconcile the European interest and national sovereignties. Therefore the power of proposition was dissociated from the power of decision: the European Commission was formed with the responsibility for declaring the common interest and given the monopoly over the power of proposition, and the power of decision remained in the hands of the member states.

This innovation has allowed the European Union to construct itself and to enlarge in a remarkable manner, despite multiple crises.

But the times have changed. Neither this foundational innovation, nor the growing role taken by the European Parliament, nor successive treaties which have attempted to adapt the European institutions to the new realities and new challenges of Europe, have allowed the emergence of an authentically democratic Europe. Despite their oaths of pro-European engagement, the heads of the member states over at least the last 10 years have not ceased to weaken the Commission, to limit the work of the college of commissioners, to extinguish the capacities of initiative of the European civil servants by means of constraining procedures – in a word, to drive the union towards a inter-state mode of functioning.

The way the European parliament is elected, on the basis of national lists of candidates, tends to turn the Parliament itself into a space of confrontation between national interests. The interminable negotiations over the contingent of deputies allocated to each member state are an indication that in the Parliament it is the representatives of the nations who express their sentiments rather than representatives with political preferences or with the desire to give to Europe the future it merits.

Is it surprising, in these conditions, that the Commission and the European institutions, when they try to get closer to the Europe of its citizens, have almost always tried « from the top down », from the institutions towards the citizens, rather than the other way around? They try to « explain » European politics to the citizens and to convince them of their benefits, rather than empowering citizens to have their own visions of Europe and to become the inventors of its future politics. Thus instead of a democracy we are given a politics of institutional communication.

The net result is that every opinion poll reveals at the same time an attachment of citizens to the European Union – even if they expect protection against globalisation rather than for a project for a common future – and a disaffection with regards to the European institutions, illustrated by the very high rate of abstention of the young in the most recent European parliamentary elections in 2009.

The European democratic deficit is even more disquieting because the European Union is an example at a global level. No world governance which is at once democratic, legitimate and efficient can be conceived without the progressive construction of regions of the world, between 10 to 20 maximum, entering into dialogue with one another. No serious perspective can be based on the dialogue between 200 sovereign states as disparate as China and the United States on the one side and Bhutan, Nepal and Vanuatu on the other. The European Union remains the most developed example of regional integration: without a citizens' Europe, there is no perspective of democratic world governance.

I want to sketch in response a series of considerations. Without wanting to underplay the importance of institutional reforms, such as the choice of the different commissioners by the president of the commission in order to recover a capacity of initiative against the member states, or the election for the parliament on the basis of European lists, I will concentrate on citizens' initiatives.

These initiatives have to respond to the great challenges of our times, because democracy becomes a caricature of itself when it tries, under the pretext of participation, to make citizens debate secondary questions whilst the important decisions which concern the future are taken by cliques of experts. What are these great challenges ? Firstly, globalisation and therefore the relations between the regions of the world. Secondly, the conception itself of European governance. Thirdly, the transition from the current model of development, which is not viable, to sustainable societies. Also the great scientific and technical choices. Finally, the reform of political structures of Europe.

The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation has led citizen's projects in several of these areas. The China-Europa forum and our websites http://www.citizenspanel.eu/, a citizens' panel on the future of rural areas, and www.challengeforeurope.eu, launched at the time of the recent parliamentary elections, are examples.

Tomorrow's European governance has to be a multi-level governance. The recent initiative of the committee of the Regions which tries to promote such a governance is promising in this respect. No real problem in our societies can be treated at a single level. It is not that the European problems are all on one side, and on the other there are the local problems. The development of a multi-level schema of governance would change radically the nature of European political debate, assuring its continuity from the local level to the European level.

“ THE TIME HAS NOW COME WHERE THE COMMUNITY OF EUROPEAN CITIZENS MUST ESTABLISH ITSELF AND THE CITIZENS MUST BE ABLE TO DEBATE WHAT KIND OF EUROPE THEY WANT AND WHAT ROLE THEY WOULD LIKE IT TO PLAY IN A WORLD THAT IS IRREVERSIBLY INTERDEPENDENT. ”

The transition to sustainable societies will imply much more than just a “climate and energy package.” We have to reconsider the finalities themselves of production and exchange. The European Union was created in 1953 for historic reasons - in particular the failure of the European Defence community – on the basis of the common European market, the removal of customs barriers and the levelling of the conditions for competition. But these are not the profound finality of Europe, which is peace. The common market and the Europe are nothing but means to an end. In the new stage of its history, Europe is alone in a position to reinvent the foundations of the economy and this should be the object of a vast citizen's debate.

Choices in science and in technology will determine the future of our societies. There are often removed from public debate. But we have seen, in the case of GM crops, citizens inviting themselves into the debate and imposing strong restrictions on the development of these crops despite the overtly pro-GM attitude of the Commission and most of the member states. How can we organise such a public debate on such technical questions? The response, which also responds to the problem of the reform of political structures of Europe, consists in two complimentary initiatives: citizens' panels, and multi-language internet sites of information and debate.

Beyond these different modalities to support democracy, there is a need for what we call a European Assembly of Citizens, which should be created as quickly as possible. Governance has two functions: the first is to direct a community which is already formed, the second is to allow the forming of a community. This second function is the most important, because no community of shared interest is automatic. The member States directed the rapid growth of Europe. It had to be that way. But the time has now come where the community of European citizens must establish itself and the citizens must be able to debate what kind of Europe they want and what role they would like it to play in a world that is irreversibly interdependent.

Pierre Calame is Director General of the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation.
www.fph.ch

Go Home, 2006
The photographs on this spread were taken in Chongqing, the biggest city along the Yantzi river in the Three Gorges area in China, by Chinese photographer Muge.
For more photographs of the series, visit: www.mugephoto.cn

Muge, A passenger ship on the Yangtze River

several years at a turning point. One needs to clarify how and where it is possible and sensible for those who are living in Europe to take advantage of the practice of democracy that has been made available to them at a transnational level.

Would the European arena provide us with the possibility of a hitherto untested democratic experience beyond the mean and destructive potential of a misleading nationalism into which our society can always lapse again?

European citizens did not see June's parliamentary elections as a way of expressing themselves democratically. In 2009 turnout has reached a record low in participation. But the real threshold, from a majority to a minority of the voters voting/ going to the poll, is 1999, when for the first time less than 50% of the voters expressed themselves.

If there might have been ineffective channels of information regarding the project of the EU due to politicians and the media, one other harm certainly comes from the belief that our condition, our lives and wellbeing should miraculously change while we are waiting for politicians to do what we want them to do, i.e. be active instead of us. But politicians are only representatives and do not prevent people at a local, national and transnational level getting involved.

Democracy is an unfinished work/ is a work in progress. We must always distinguish between the use which is being made of the word democracy as a common ideal, and its practice.

According to Pierre Rosanvallon, “to overcome the current crisis will require more transparency, accountability and participation of the citizens. When dealing with the regulation of the economy or trying to solve social issues, democracy must always be in our sights”.

Democracy must always be in our sights as opposed to a particular group of interest in the name of which democracy and sovereignty can be manipulated like a vain word and consequently threatened for reasons that come down to those distincly introduced at first glance in the deliberation between the three Persians by Megabyzus and Darius. But, do we really want to live and act in a democracy or will we constantly relegate it to being merely an idea?

EUROPE AND HER IDEA

DENIS GUÉNOUN

The idea of Europe can only be the universal, which itself is a negation of all European 'particularity'. In this apparent paradox contemporary Europe can find its historic mission as a transnational force in a nationalist world

THE IDEA

He who looks for the idea of Europe finds the universal. The positive content of the culture which is elaborated in what we call "Europe" doesn't consist in anything other than in the determination, the investigation, the exploration of what is most general and what is most widely shared: the intelligible unity of the natural world, the communal condition of human beings. This approach is not one of taking for granted but a process of continual expansion: the universal is won in thought and in practice by an extension to new physical spaces and by a transfer to new domains of sense – in sciences, in the arts, by the invention of norms. The discovery of the world, the production of rights: the universal is a universalisation, a journey underway. Europe is a place and a pathway.

Now, this assertion conceals a profound paradox: because, if it is faithful to its intimate and positive energy, "Europe" is a process of opening. The official conditions of integration into Europe do not include any linguistic, religious, racial conditions, nor, what it perhaps more surprising, any determinate geographical markers. The only limits are those of sense, or of right, and they are open to the universal (civil liberties, human rights), that is to say to what removes limits. The boundaries of Europe are in fact defined in terms of access. One might fear therefore that Europe defines itself by that which breaks it or at least alters it, undoes its figure, its contours, its form itself. But inversely, when Europe looks to present itself as an identity, or as a constructed space, it is forced to give itself confines, and therefore to exclude from itself an entire world outside: and Europe is thereby unfaithful to its positive and constructive vocation. To say it more briefly, the contradiction is perhaps this: either Europe is faithful to what inspires her, and she denies herself as Europe (as the continent, as a map), or she inscribes herself within limits and a figurative design, and she interrupts the movement of universalisation which she carries and which essentially animates her.

All potential European politics is caught in this tension: when it looks for a European identity it denies the motor impulse of Europe, which is its opening; when it does not regard anything but the universal, it seems to dissolve what is European itself, its own capacity to distinguish itself.

The observation is not only speculative. It regards concrete history. Since modern times (since she exists as Europe), Europe doesn't have any other history than that of her becoming-a-world. The idea of a continental history of Europe is a fiction that has been constructed afterwards. The entire history of Europe consists in projects for the world: from the great discoveries to the constitution of colonial empires, there is no notable period, just occasional halts and pauses, in which the planetary enterprises of Europe were not active. From this point of view the last two centuries speak volumes: the future of the three great European inventions is that of their becoming world-wide: Revolution (and its manifestation as world-wide revolution, and in particular the communist revolution, an idea of Europe of which the durable realisations are found in Moscow and Beijing); the Nation (and its proliferation as nationalism, for which colonialism paved the way, because colonialism introduced the form of the Nation, in its preferred figure of the Nation-State, to the entire surface of the planet); and last but not least Capital itself, which now covers the entire world with its fabric, with a further double European invention as its leading force: the United States of America and its unprecedented empire. East, South, West: three expansions of Europe to the extremes of the world.

> **"THE OFFICIAL CONDITIONS OF INTEGRATION INTO EUROPE DO NOT INCLUDE ANY LINGUISTIC, RELIGIOUS, RACIAL CONDITIONS, NOR, WHAT IT PERHAPS MORE SURPRISING, ANY DETERMINATE GEOGRAPHICAL MARKERS. THE ONLY LIMITS ARE THOSE OF SENSE, OR OF RIGHT, AND THEY ARE OPEN TO THE UNIVERSAL."**

One might fear therefore that the idea of reflecting on what Europe contains as a continent just reduces itself to the management of a residue: what rests of Europe when her global projects (socialism, nationalism, capitalism) escapes and free itself from their source, from the city where they was born.

THE ÉPOQUE

Does all that only concern the past? Have the future of the globalism and the future of the universal definitively moved to another terrain than that of the history of Europe? Should we think, for example, of international law, and the instances responsible for producing and developing it, as the privileged institutions in which the universal is produced, and that Europe is therefore condemned to the status of a regional instance, of a second grade?

This is not certain. First of all, international law, and, for example, the United Nations, as their names indicate, deal with the universal as a system of relations between nations. They are forced to address themselves to the fact of the nation, forced to take the nation for granted. Now, one of the principal questions of the moment is the possibility of going beyond the form of the nation. That is one of the keys of the universalisation which is underway. The nation ensnares the universal in specific attachments: territorial, ethnic or religious – the universal becomes national in the knotting together of a paradoxical and strained link between religion, race and territory. In many ways, the form of the nation state is in many ways a hindrance for the development of new processes of universalisation (egalitarian, juridical, moral, cultural). Now, Europe in its actual phase of history is a new form of post-national construction, or at least a form of advanced transnationalism. From this point of view, Europe is a (trans)formation underway which presents a quantum of innovation, of historical invention, intrinsically different from, for example, the globalism of the United States, which is a national globalism, articulated on the back of the national form of the United States of America. The USA is an original or singular national entity which is relatively new: but it is a nation, and it declares itself loudly as one. With regards to the United Nations, it is constituted in an inter-national space, in a world made as the collection of nation states. Europe, on the other hand, can call upon its transnationalism, which is undergoing an innovative elaboration, to think of itself as being in an advanced stage of its own becoming-universal.

Secondly, Europe is not on the edge, but precisely on a frontier between civilisations. Thus it is not false to say, like Etienne Balibar, that Europe is a frontier. This frontier is one of the most important of the moment because it is largely one of the frontiers between "the Occident" and "Islam". This frontier is internal to the history of Europe for many reasons: first of all because Islam was a fundamental component in the compost laid in medieval Europe. Secondly, because the relation of Europe with Islam has intimately marked the heart of European history in many dimensions: the Europe of the West and Maghreb, the Europe of the East and Turkey, the Balkans, etc. These confrontations do not mark external front, but internal frontiers. Algeria is an internal frontier of France, as Turkey is of the German world, as Pakistan is of England, and so on. This bordering is of course manifested in a way that is particularly striking in the urban future of today's metropolises. The European future cannot come about but by the democratisation of its relation with Islam, that is to say as the affirmation of one of the dimensions the most difficult, and therefore the most productive, of today's universalisation. This is why the question of the adhesion of Turkey, which will tomorrow be the questions of the Maghreb or of Israel-Palestine, raises one of the eminent vocations of the Europe in process of becoming, a powerful contribution to the possibility of a democratic and pacific universalisation of the world that is coming about.

As a new transnational construction, and as a democratic pacification of the relation between the West and Islam, Europe is today one of the most inventive construction sites of a new relation to the universal.

THE THEME

If there is a need to find a "theme" with which to mobile Europeans, we must be careful about looking for a "myth". For several reasons: firstly because a myth is not created voluntarily. Myths cannot be created by the desire, and even less by the decision, to mythologise. Secondly because the principal use of myths in the modern époque, at least in the political sphere, has been for mythification. And lastly because the desires to rehabilitate myths have systematically been associated with the most regressive politics – those the least European, in the sense in which I have defined the word.

We can also see a reason less obvious, and which touches at the heart of the question. It is not certain that the amount of energy a human collectivity mobilises to engage in an idea is in proportion with its adhesion to an image or representation. Kant thought, for example, that the non-figurative character of the god of Islam or of Judaism explains in large part the faith, the fieriness and the enthusiasm of those who follow these religions. The ardour of the religious passion appeared to him therefore not to be restricted or restrained

Brian Griffin, Siouxsie, Rotherhithe Studio, London, 1984

but on the contrary to be activated by the absence of a figure of the divine, which is itself the fruit of the biblical interdiction of images. This is why he took this interdiction to be the most sublime commandment. Thus we should avoid ceding too quickly to the very widely spread opinion that in order for Europeans to engage in favour of Europe they have to be given resplendent, gratifying images, which are thoroughly mythic.
For Europe then, and even if the affirmation seems provocative, we can't see any other theme which will mobilise the energies of militant citizens than the universal as such. This merits more attention that one might think. Effectively:

1 There are today perhaps not so many political entities, established or in the process of becoming, which can assume the figure of the universal as such as part of their preferred thematics. Europe is one of the rare places where it is possible to consider oneself as part of the community of men without limits and without any reserves. The singularity of Europe, since we are looking for it, is perhaps in the vigour, the ancientness and the permanence of this universalism, and it is uncompromisingly a priori character, with all the effects that this brings about – a sense of justice, of equality, of concern for the planet, hostility to the death penalty, hostility to war etc..

"AS A NEW TRANSNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION, AND AS A DEMOCRATIC PACIFICATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN THE WEST AND ISLAM, EUROPE IS TODAY ONE OF THE MOST INVENTIVE CONSTRUCTION SITES OF A NEW RELATION TO THE UNIVERSAL."

2 There is perhaps nothing in the hypothesis which leads to a dissolution or a demobilisation of energies. It is perhaps precisely the opposite: we don't see many young Europeans take to the streets in order to affirm their affinity for as we, Europeans. A neo-particularism, a neo-nationalism of continental dimension will not raise much passion. But, on the other hand, it is not impossible that passions will be raised when it comes to affirming oneself as a human being – or even, in certain respects, as a living creature – in solidarity with every person and every community in as much as it is human, without reservations. And it is possible that a great pride in Europe as such will be born if it shows itself as one of the places which favours this vision of humanity.

3 In any case neither neo-nationalism, nor continental identities, nor religious fundamentalism, nor the interventionism of capital, nor even juridical inter-nationalism can claim an uncompromising concern for all human individuals, for the moment of transcendence which can be recognised in each human individual and perhaps, beyond this, even to nature itself. In this way (to suggest a specific application) the radical opening of Europe to Islam, to Judaism and to the Christian patrimony – if it chooses to affirm these places of democratisation and pacification at once internal and bordering – will perhaps allow it to take the unique position of welcoming with equal beneficence Israelis and Palestinians. European universalism is perhaps here capable of proposing an end to this nationalist and 'civilisational' confrontation apparently without any solution. That is not nothing.

Therefore we shouldn't hastily conclude that the absence of particular content or identity will imply that the European engagement lacks fighting spirit or force. The French revolution affirmed itself by means of a universal theme – the Declaration of the Rights of Man makes no mention of either France or the French. It can't be criticised for lacking vigour.

Denis Guénoun is a playwright, poet and philosopher, and author of Hypothèses sur l'Europe.

LES RENCONTRES D'ARLES:

40 Years of the Rencontres celebrates the fortieth anniversary of the photographic show in Arles. In addition to bringing together the artistic directors who helped the exhibition develop over time it celebrates the talent of Robert Delpire.
Concurrently, "40 Years of Radical Change" shows photographers whose initial Rencontres exhibitions were controversially at variance with the accepted standards of the time featuring, amongst others, a retrospective of Duane Michals' work and Nan Goldin, whose *Ballad of Sexual Dependency* had a huge impact when shown originally.

Les Rencontres d'Arles,
40 ans de rencontres, 40 ans de ruptures,
July 7 – September 13, 2009, Arles, France
www.rencontres-arles.com

BRIAN HOLMES

THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION

With the pervasive trend towards the commodification of knowledge under intellectual property law, what is being challenged is the very ideal of the educational-cultural sphere as the locus of mutual understanding in a pluralist society

In his extraordinary book The Great Transformation (1944), the economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi maintained that in all known societies prior to that of nineteenth-century England, exchanges of goods were embedded in an institutional mix, indeed in a human ecology: there was no separation between specifically economic calculations and a broader set of social reciprocities regulating the care and reproduction of land (i.e. the natural environment), labor (the human body/mind) and money itself (whether the cowrie shells of the Trobriand Islanders, or the fiduciary currencies of nation-states). Polanyi showed that the development of English economic liberalism, propelled by the industrial revolution and extended to worldwide dimensions by the gold standard, had effectively disembedded the economy from society, transforming land, labor and money into what he called "fictitious commodities," continuously bought and sold on a supposedly "self-regulating market."

Why are these three commodities any different from the average widget? The thing that makes them "fictitious" in Polanyi's sense is that their production and sustainable reproduction is not ensured by market mechanisms. Land that isn't cared for beyond the cycle of a cash-crop or a mineral dig can be durably blighted by misuse; labor with no life-support outside the workplace can be physically destroyed by downward pressure on wages; and the very medium of exchange, money, can be discredited by speculative trading of promissory notes without regard for the institutions from which their value derives. All these phenomena, which had been observed since the Industrial Revolution, were experienced at their cruelest extremes during the early twentieth century, most acutely during the Great Depression of the 1930s – and Polanyi, whose book was a history of the rise and fall of the gold standard, was hardly alone in identifying the liberal doctrines of free trade and self-regulating markets as the underlying causes of the wars themselves.

In the finance-driven, networked economy of the postnational competition regimes, it is necessary to add a fourth "fictitious commodity" to Polanyi's list of three (land, labor and money). This fourth fictitious commodity is knowledge, in a spectrum of forms ranging from science, technology and law to literature, cooking and everyday know-how. Its production depends on long-term institutionalized learning and teaching experiences, publicly available libraries, archives, museums and databanks, internalized modes of individual self-cultivation, urban spaces of improvisational or structured group interaction, processes of hybridization between different cultural traditions, the constitution of critical and dissident discourses ranging from punk rock and poetry slams to networks of concerned scientists or alliances of traditional and organic farmers, and so on through a near-infinite spectrum of practices whereby objective observation, theoretical abstraction, individual expression and patterns of social solidarity are laid down in complex traces and artifacts that can be taken up and transformed by successive individuals, groups and generations. The impossibility of completely functionalizing this subtle interweave of practices and motivations is obvious, and was recognized throughout the long era of national institution-building, from the early nineteenth century onwards in most parts of the Western world.

The expansion of the state's cultural and educational mandate, and its hesitant extension to class, gender and ethnic groups that were formerly excluded from representation, brought new conflicts and challenges to this institutional mix, which undertook a difficult period of transformation in the wake of 1968 and the decade of unrest that followed. It is precisely this "difficulty of representation," precluding any simple reiteration of supposed national icons and values, that has been the source of most vitally engaging developments in culture over the last thirty years; and the same kind of questioning has even extended into a reevaluation of certain economic and technoscientific functions. However, with the educational streamlining of the Bologna process, with the corporate sponsorship and instrumentalization of the arts and sciences, with the retooling of national cultural institutions for the transnational tourist market, and with the pervasive trend towards the commodification of knowledge under intellectual property law, what is being challenged right now is the very ideal of the educational-cultural sphere as the locus of a problematic quest for mutual understanding in a pluralist society. Indeed, the commodification of knowledge is the driving force and central goal of the Schumpeterian competition state, to the precise extent that the leading edge of capitalist production is redefined as technological and managerial innovation (particularly in the financial sphere). All the flowerings of human aspiration and experience can then be treated not just as commodities, but as investments in an entrepreneurial self, as the economist Gary Becker has shown with his notion of "human capital." One of the ways Europeans now experience capital failure is when education and culture come packaged with a price tag that disfigures them, even when it doesn't leave them completely out of reach.

Luan Xiao, Work No.5, mixed media installation, 2008, 45x45 cm

Paradoxically, the damage caused by this capitalization of knowledge is at once a primary factor in societal blindness, and a chance to bring the new states of human coexistence under the neoliberal regimes to visibility. The collaboration of artists with social scientists, labor organizations and ecology movements during the recent cycle of antiglobalization counter-summits, and now around the theme of the "precariousness of existence" in the flexible economy, has marked a step forward in the ability to name and describe the effects of the neoliberal transformation process. Art has become one of the means of investigation, akin to social science, but irreducible to it. Similarly, a transnational organization such as Attac, whose economic critique has gained a certain influence in social-democratic countries like Norway, seeks to make visible the negative influence of a stateless, privatized currency on the fundamental realms of human labor and the natural environment, but also on the cultural-scientific domain that constitutes a second nature or an artificial environment (just as necessary as the air we breathe – and as likely to be polluted). When artists begin to explore the operations of capital, and to point directly to instances of capital failure, they are participating with their own expressive methods in a complex response to the gradual installation of the competition regime, imposed as a single set of exclusive and increasingly intolerant rules for the difficult and irrevocably multiple states of human coexistence in society. The process of exploring and interpellating these currently invisible states is one aspect of the broader effort to constitute social formations that might act in common, having not only shared objective interests but potentially even an interest in each other.

The problem, however, is not only the gradual phasing-out of national cultural institutions, together with their outdated canons of beauty and elitist ideals of identity. The deeper problem is that in order to survive as exploratory and transformative practices, and in order to generate enough interest and involvement to reconstitute a socialized cultural sphere under fresh auspices, the contemporary arts have to throw off their blatant or subtle dependence on the new corporate-oriented institutions that promote an opportunistic and flexible subjectivity. And this is easier said than done, as shown by the ambiguous relations between cultural producers on the museum circuit and activists seeking forms of organization for precarious labor. Because it's easy to invest in a little anguish over the biopolitical instrumentalization of one's own creativity, in order to produce a new niche product for the originality markets. And it's just as facile to criticize that investment. Indeed, hyperindividualization and the capitalization of everything seems to be the very formula for the breakdown of solidarities, and the emergence of liberal-fascism. What's more complicated – as those involved in different aspects of the precarity movements are discovering – is to create lines of invention and critique that reinforce each other in their differences, across professional and class divides. In this respect, the role of knowledge producers in recreating an ability to say "we" is potentially decisive. By pursuing a new transvaluation of the old national values, it may be possible to arrive at what is now lacking: a sustainable constitution of multiplicity. But there is no assurance whatsoever that this potential will be realized.

Brian Holmes is a writer and theorist.
This text is part of his forthcoming book "Continental Drift", which can be followed on: www.brianholmes.wordpress.com

WHAT'S NEW AT EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES?

European Alternatives runs projects, campaigns and events throughout Europe and beyond. Amongst our forthcoming projects are the following:

• **POLIS 21:** Citizens Culture and the Boundaries of the New City. A series of events and artistic interventions over October and November 2009 taking place in London, Athens, Zagreb and Belgrade, looking at forms of exclusion in public space and the possibilities for transnational artistic interventions.

• **TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS IN EUROPE**: Over autumn 2009 and Spring 2010, a series of conferences to consider crucial questions for the future of transnational politics in Europe, including events on transnational political parties in Berlin, on transnational trade unions in Warsaw, and on the cultural dimensions of European foreign policy in Paris.

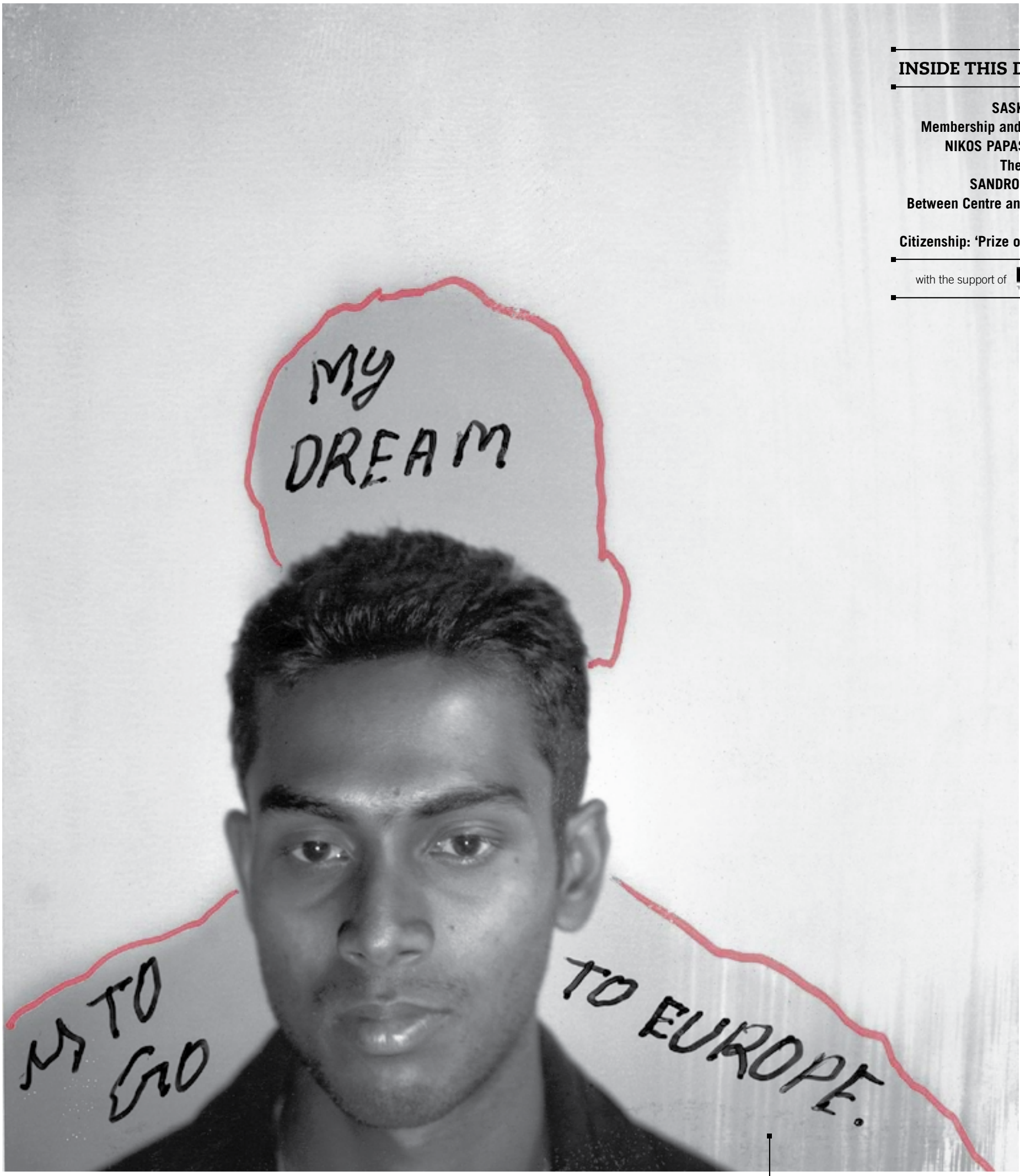
• **EUROPEAN POLICY CONFERENCES AND PAMPHLETS:** European Alternatives is organising a series of four conferences in the UK to debate current European Commission policies and propose alternative policies in four areas: democracy; climate change and energy; the commemoration of democratic transition in Eastern and Central Europe; jobs and employment. The conferences will bring together representatives of the Commission with civil society and academics, and be followed by policy pamphlet publications.

• **TRANSNATIONAL DIALOGUES:** The launch of an internet platform hosting dialogues between artists, writers and intellectuals from across continents on crucial cultural and political questions of our times. Following from our China-Europe workshop in Beijing which launched the transnational dialogue initiative, a series of workshops will be organised in Brazil in autumn 2009.

European Alternatives is a membership organisation which welcomes the active participation of its members in our activities. To join for just £10/10€ and to find our more, see: **www.euroalter.com**

DOSSIER:

CITIZENSHIP IN MOTION



Jim Goldberg: Bangladesh. Dhaka. 2007.
Man at a recruitment center.
From exhibition "Open Sea", 16 Oct 2009 – 17 Jan 2010, The Photographers' Gallery, London

The first UK solo exhibition of the Magnum photographer Jim Goldberg documents the experiences of refugees and immigrants from war torn, socially and economically devastated countries searching for stability and the promise of a better future in Europe. Through innovative use of image and text Goldberg narrates the intimate and frequently violent stories of their past and present experiences. The exhibition features marked and destroyed Polaroids, written on by the subjects they portray, with faces and features often scratched out and coloured in. The larger scale colour photographs depict landscapes from the subjects' countries of origin, reflecting his interest in the motivations behind migration and the conditions for desiring escape.

The status of citizenship in Europe is in limbo. The unresolved tension between the universal aspirations of human rights and the particularity of citizenship by birth have yet to produce any new conception of citizenship in an integrated Europe.

The migrant to Europe falls directly into this space of limbo, which means that no consideration of citizenship in Europe is today possible without a direct consideration of the status of the migrant. Despite mobility being recognised as one of the most productive forces of our age many migrants are still perceived as a 'problem', responsible for their fate and a disruption to the norm of a settled life. They are increasingly subjected to mechanisms that produce specific forms of immobility, culminating most visibly in the administrative detention system that has been established across Europe. Migrants are increasingly expected to 'translate' themselves into the culture of their host country, as an inflated notion of national 'culture' is increasingly used to make 'citizenship tests' to which only migrants are subject. If human rights alone are too thin to establish the European polis, the recourse to essentialist notions of cultural identity is a troubling souvenir of Europe's recent history.

This dossier aims to look beyond essentialist paradigms to a flexible notion of citizenship. As is highlighted several times in the course of this dossier, a flexible idea of geography is required to understand the labour, information and power flows which are constituent of the present global interrelations of peoples. The notions of "centre" and of "periphery" are no longer suitable to understand these interrelations. If Europe is to fully inscribe itself as a transformative force in global politics, it has to fully take into account new forms of global patterning and movement which set the conditions for the actions of citizens individually and together. In addition to new geographical understanding of spaces for citizenship, the new imaginative resources required for citizens to make sense of their membership of a polis cannot be underestimated, resources which art can be called upon to provide.

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Between Centre and Periphery
UMUT EREL
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with the support of

MEMBERSHIP AND ITS POLITICS:
When the outsider expands the formal rights of citizens.

SASKIA SASSEN

The tension between the formal status and the normative project of citizenship reinforces views of citizenship as an aspirational project that includes effective rather than formal equality and increasingly comprehensive social membership.

The growth of anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe is renationalizing membership politics. While ideologically strong, this renationalizing of membership is becoming institutionally weak as the EU is increasingly strong institutionally. And although the EU level is still thin compared to that of the national state, it is beginning to alter the articulation between citizenship and the national state. The institutional development of the European Union and the strengthening of the European Human Rights Court are a partial denationalizing of what has historically been constructed as national. What is significant is that this denationalizing is also fed by the emergence of multiple actors, groups, and communities increasingly keen on broader notions of political membership: they are unwilling automatically to identify with a national state even when they are citizens of that state. This is not a rejection of the national state nor a full embracing of the EU. It is a more complex distancing between the citizen and the state. This distancing is partly triangulated by some of the EU institutions, by the human rights regime, and by the ascendance of transnational civil society.

These institutional and subjective transformations in the EU clash with that other strong trend, the renationalizing of membership. Can the new, often virulent anti-foreigner nationalisms intensify even as the institutional settings of membership are becoming partly denationalized. Can growing discrimination against the alien coexist with a strengthening of the right to have rights –as is illustrated by the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights when it confirms rights of immigrants that national legislatures had tried to withdraw. And can the ideological renationalizing of citizenship coexist with the Europeanising of membership and multiple transnationalisms for identity politics?

Citizenship has historically grown and expanded through the claim-making and the demands of the excluded, be they minoritized citizens or immigrants. Further, by expanding the formal inclusions of citizenship, the national state itself contributed to create some of the conditions that eventually led to EU citizenship. At the same time, with the neoliberal ascendance of the last two decades, the state itself has been changing. One feature of this change is reduction of social obligations to citizens in the name of the neoliberal "competitive state." Thus today's states are less likely to do the legislative and judiciary work that in the past produced expanded formal inclusions. This may in turn lead to even weaker attachments of citizens to their national states. Also claim-making will increasingly be directed at other institutions, such as the European Court of HumanRights.

The tension between the formal status and the normative project of citizenship has also grown. For many, citizenship is becoming an aspirational project that should include effective, not only formal equality, and where social membership should be increasingly comprehensive. Civic globalization and human rights are further feeding this tension and therewith furthering the elements of a new discourse on rights.

These developments signal a shift in the analytic terrain for addressing the question of rights and membership, of authority and obligations. Here I examine some of these issues through a particular lens: the actual complexity of immigrant membership in Europe, especially if we take a sufficiently long temporal framing.

" Unlike the "citizen," the "immigrant" or, more formally, the alien, is constructed in law as a very partial, thin subject. "

BENEATH NEW NATIONALISMS, A BLURRING OF MEMBERSHIP POLITICS.

Unlike the "citizen," the "immigrant" or, more formally, the alien, is constructed in law as a very partial, thin subject. Yet the immigrant and immigration are actually thick realities, charged with content. In this tension between a thin formal subject and a rich reality lies the heuristic capacity of immigration to illuminate tensions at the heart of the historically constructed nation-state and national citizenship. These tensions are not new, historically speaking, but as with citizenship, current conditions are producing their own distinct possibilities. Further, the changes in the institution of citizenship itself, particularly its emergent debordering of formal definitions and national locations, has implications for the definition of the immigrant. Confronted with postnational and denationalized forms of citizenship, what is it we are trying to discern in the complex processes we group under the term immigration? On the other hand, the renationalizing of citizenship narrows what we might refer to as the customary definition of the citizen and thereby that of the immigrant.

As a subject, then, the immigrant filters a much larger array of political dynamics than its status in law might suggest.

Working with the distinctions and transformations discussed thus far, we can discern the possibility of two somewhat stylized subjects that destabilize formal meanings and thereby illuminate the internal tensions of the institution of citizenship, specifically the citizen as a rights-bearing subject. On the one hand, we can identify a formal citizen who is fully authorized yet not fully recognized. Minoritized citizens who are discriminated against in any domain are one key instance. This is a familiar and well-researched condition. On the other hand, we can identify a type of informal citizen who is unauthorized by the law yet recognized by a potential community of membership, as might be the case with undocumented immigrants who are long-term residents in a community and enact membership they way citizens do. Thus, unauthorized immigrants who demonstrate civic involvement, social deservedness, and national loyalty can argue that they merit legal residency, and often get it. But even if they do not gain legal residency, we can posit a condition akin to informal citizenship that binds long-term residents, even if they are undocumented immigrants, to their communities of residence.

These are dimensions of formal and informal citizenship and citizenship practices that do not fit the indicators and categories of mainstream academic frameworks for understanding citizenship and political life. The multiple dimensions of citizenship engender strategies

Duane Michals, Joseph Cornell, 1972 from Les Rencontres d'Arles

for legitimizing informal or extra-statal forms of membership. The practices of these undocumented immigrants are a form of citizenship practices and their identities as members of a community of residence assume some of the features of citizenship identities. Supposedly this could hold even in the communitarian model, where the community can decide on whom to admit and whom to exclude, but once admitted, proper civic practices earn full membership.

EUROPE AND ITS MIGRATIONS

It is a fact that the immigrant groups of the past are today reasonably well absorbed, though there are important differences. These older immigrant groups, dating three or four generations back or centuries back, have given us many of today's citizens. They are not the issue in today's debates. But in their time, they were the issue.

Today the argument against immigration focuses on questions of race, religion, and culture, and it tends to see cultural and religious distance as the reason for the difficulty of incorporation. And this can be seen as rational. But in sifting through the historical and current evidence we find only new contents for an old passion: the racialising of the outsider as 'other'. Today the 'other' is stereotyped by difference of race, religion and culture. Equivalent arguments were made in the past when migrants were broadly of the same religious, racial and cultural group: they were seen as not fitting in with the receiving society, as having bad habits, the wrong morals, and not practicing their religion correctly. Migration hinges on a move between two worlds, even if within a single region or country – such as East Germans moving to West Germany who were seen as a different ethnic group and one with undesirable traits.

There is strong evidence of a cyclical character to anti-immigration politics and the clouding of the issues that comes with it. For centuries Europe's major economies have gone through rapid cycles of great demand and then severe expulsion, only to fall back into high demand a few decades later. In the recent past, a country like France had a desperate need for immigrants during the first world war (using Algerian immigrants in its armies) and the reconstruction in the 1920s, only to move into aggressive anti- immigrant politics in the 1930s, to then wind up once again with acute needs for foreign workers in the late 1940s, and so on. In my reading of the features of that history and the current conditions described above, this cyclical history may well still be playing its part. If we consider the growing demand for low wage workers and sharp population decline in today's EU, it is easy to see that we might actually switch to a phase of sharp demand for more immigrant workers in a decade, if not sooner.

When Italy(1990), Portugal(1991) and Spain (1992) became part of the EC free movement area, it meant integrating what had been major senders of migrants to the north, barred from further entries for work by 1973. The policy change generated widespread fears of invasions by masses of poor workers and families. In retrospective we can see how wrong this fear was. In fact, more immigrants returned home to Spain, and Italy, and Greece, and Portugal, and fewer emigrated to the North than had been expected. This was partly because now they were free to circulate and partly because their economies were developing in ways that incorporated their people.

The same is likely to hold with the much feared migrations from the new EU members in the East. Indeed the latest figures indicate that up to 50 percent of the Polish migrants who came to the UK after EU enlargement have recently returned to Poland (Pollard et al. 2008). People with deep grievances in their home countries are far more likely to emigrate permanently than those who might be low income but are fully fledged members of their communities. We have considerable evidence showing that being low income is not enough by itself to leave your community.

We also know that many low income migrants want to come every year for a few months and then go back to their communities. Thus EU enlargement enables far more circular migration and reduces trafficking among authorized nationalities. Perhaps the best story here is that of the Polish women who teamed up to take care of cleaning and housekeeping in Berlin households. Each wanted to spend a minimum amount of time in Berlin, no matter its comforts, and then go back and live their real life. So teams of four organised for each to spend three months in a given household, and rotate annually (Lutz 2007). The best strategy for the rich EU countries so worried about receiving masses of low-wage, poorly educated workers from the new EU members, is to do whatever can be done to ensure their broad based development.

There is one set of communities for whom this will be inadequate: the Roma. Europe has failed the Roma for centuries. All those struggles fought in the name of civil society and civic rights fundamentally excluded the Roma. This will have its own backlash effect. Today we are paying the price for our historic neglect and, often aggression. There are significant numbers of very poor Roma in some of the new EU member countries, and centuries of exclusion have left their marks. Enlargement must be a wake-up call: we need to think of the Roma as part of our future.

At the same time, the Roma also illuminate a key feature of our history of migrations in Europe: it has usually been particular groups who are at the core of a country's emigration, rather than massive generalised flows from poverty to prosperity. In the early 1990s after the so-called Berlin Wall went down, Germany received over two million migrants from Eastern Europe and Russia, but the vast majority were ethnic Germans and the rest mostly Roma.

There were no high numbers among other nationalities. Similarly, the Turkish emigration to Germany, for instance, consisted largely of particular groups of minoritised Turkish, including Turkish Kurds. In brief, these were not indiscriminate movements from poverty in the East to wealth in the West. These two groups were motivated by very specific and long-term historical minoritizing insde their countries of origin.

MIGRATION AS EMBEDDED PROCESS

Establishing whether labour migration is an integral part of how an economic and social system operates and evolves is, in my view, critical to develop the politics of membership. The logic of this argument is, put simply, as follows: If immigration is thought of as the result of individuals in search of a better life, immigration is seen by the receiving country as an exogenous process formed and shaped by conditions outside the receiving country. The receiving country is then saddled with the task of accommodating this population. In this view as poverty and overpopulation grow in the rest of the world, there may be a parallel growth in immigration, at least potentially. The receiving country is here portrayed as a passive bystander to processes outside its domain and control, and hence with few options beyond tightening its frontiers to avoid an 'invasion'.

“ The multiple dimensions of citizenship engender strategies for legitimizing informal or extra-statal forms of membership.”

If, on the other hand, immigration is partly conditioned on the operation of the economic system in receiving countries, the latter can implement domestic policies that can regulate the employment of immigrants. Thus, if a country such as the US seeks to make manufacturing more competitive by making production cheaper using sweatshops, it is a participant in the formation of a sweated immigrant workforce. Also the growing demand for low-wage service workers in the new growth sectors of developed economies is a domestic condition. In both cases, the receiving country is not a passive bystander to the immigration process. Further, there is something these governments can do beyond controlling borders –they can make those jobs more attractive to resident immigrants and to citizens. Finally, at the global scale, receiving countries need to recognize that when they outsource jobs to low-wage countries they are building bridges for future migrations from those same countries. Yes, immigration happens in a context of economic inequality between countries and poverty in the emigration country. But poverty by itself is not enough to lead to emigration. Poverty is activated as a migration push factor – through organised recruitment by employers in the richer country, by neo-colonial bonds, etc.

The economic, political, and social conditions in the receiving country contribute in many ways to set the parameters for immigration flows. Immigration flows may take a while to adjust to changes in levels of labour demand or to the saturation of opportunities, but will always tend eventually to adjust to the conditions in receiving countries, even if these adjustments are imperfect. Thus there was a decline in the growth rate of Polish immigration to Germany once it was clear that the opportunities were not as plentiful, and this movement was replaced by circular migration in many East to West flows, including from the former East Germany to West Germany. The size and duration of flows is shaped by these conditions: it is not an exogenous process shaped only by poverty and population growth elsewhere, and hence autonomous from the accommodation capacities of receiving countries.

A major addition to this making of in-migration flows on the part of rich countries is the devastation brought about by the IMF and World Bank restructuring programs beginning in the 1980s. These have destroyed the traditonal economies of already poor countries. Under the banner of modernizing their economies and opening them up to global trade, these programs undermined local, less modern firms and replaced jobs with imports. The emergence of a whole new set of migrations to Europe from Sub-Saharan Africa is deeply linked to these devastations of modernization.

There are implications for the politics of membership when we recognize that receiving countries participate in the making of in-migrations. One of these implications concerns the right of these immigrants not to be seen as criminals and illegitimate human beings. A second implication is that the working classes of Europe which have suffered so many losses over the last twenty years, should direct more of their anger to the key economic and political actors who have engineered and supported these devastating programs.

Concluding, the history of intra-european migrations shows us that over time many persecuted immigrants became the parents and grandparents of Europe's citizens. And perhaps most importantly, this history shows us that the work of incorporating the outsider was also the work that expanded the formal rights of citizens and made Europe an open society. But every generation went through its conflicts and hatreds directed at whatever the new nationalities entering Europe. In the 1970s it was the Italians, the Spanish, the Portuguese. Now this seems almost inconceivable. But the hatreds are there and directed to a whole new generation of foreign nationalities and cultures. The challenge of ensuring that Europe's society remain an open one will require, once again, the making of expanded inclusions. These will only strengthen the rights of citizens and strengthen openness.

Fig.1: Ten most numerous citizenships of non-EU immigrants, 2006

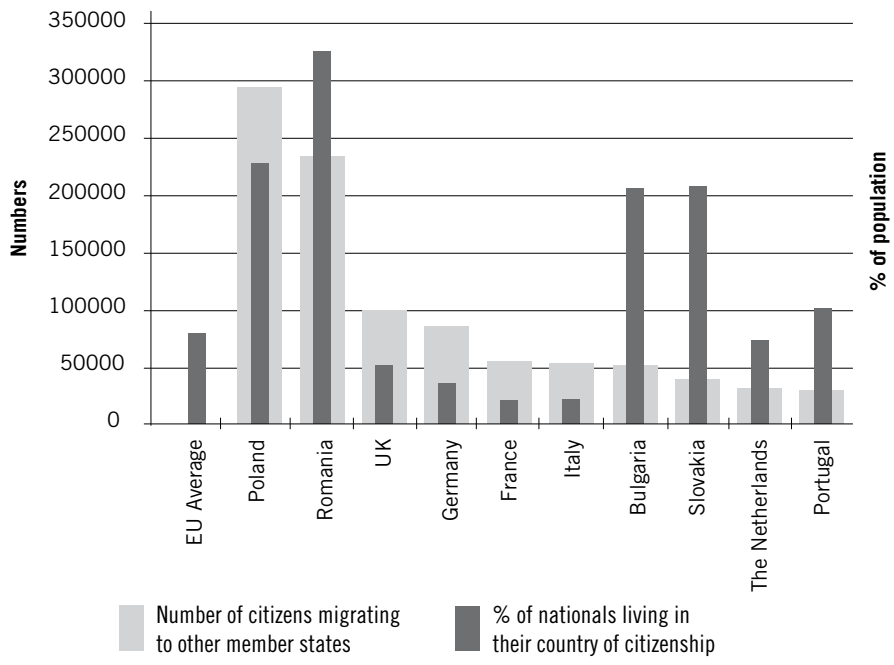


Fig.2: Immigrants from non-EU to EU citizenship, 2006

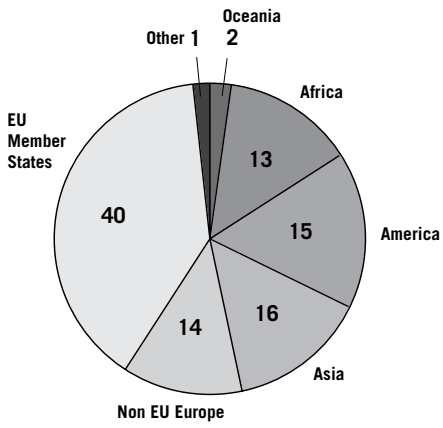


Fig.3: Median age of immigrants in the EU, 2006

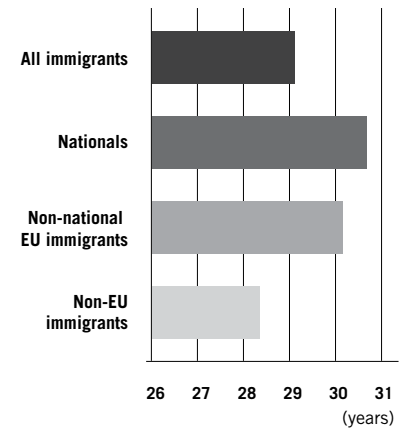
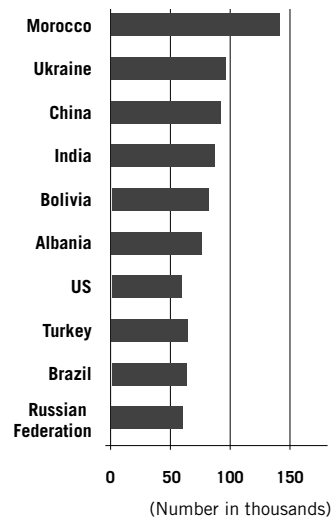


Fig.4: Ten most numberous citizenships of non-EU immigrants, EU-27, 2006



Eurostat estimate from Population and Social Conditions by Anne Herm, Eurostat, 98/2008

THE ROLE OF ART IN IMAGINING MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

NIKOS PAPASTERGIADIS

The political significance of art increasingly lies in promotion of a democratic dialogue between different people that can relate local experiences to global processes

There are now two paradigms that are used to explain the effects of migration and define the agency of the migrant. Since the late nineteenth century the sociological and political discourse on migration has followed the core assumptions of nationalist ideologies that defined sovereign states as comprising a population that was both settled within a defined territory and in possession of a unique cultural identity. This viewpoint was also premised on a metaphysical claim that the abandonment of a nomadic lifestyle for fixed settlement was a developmental stage in human evolution. It was also framed by a mechanistic understanding of the negative relationship between movement and equilibrium: human movement was thereby seen as a depletion of energy as well as a threat to the integrity of borders and the stability of social entities. Hence, migration was considered as a deviation from the normal conventions of settled life, and the migrants (or as Oscar Handlin termed them, the 'uprooted ones'), were at best seen as the victims of external forces, or at worst perceived as suspect characters that sought unfair advantage over the residents and posed a threat to the prevailing social order. This tendency is also evident in sociological accounts on migration that express overt sympathy for the needs of migrants, but then describe them as 'people with problems'. Even when migration has been acknowledged as a crucial feature of modernisation, it was usually framed as if this process was finite, and adjustment was a mere transitional phase. Hence the 'problem with migrants' begins with the assumption that migration is a disruption to the norm of settled life, and that the desired destiny of a migrant is to become a citizen of the nation. Given these negative assumptions on the effects of migration and the status of migrants, it comes as no surprise that the public debates have tended to focus on the degree, rather than the legitimacy, of the imposition of limitations on immigration, restrictions on political entitlement, and the subjection of migrants to additional tests in relation to their biological and cultural fitness.

In the past decade a paradigm shift has enabled a new discourse on migration and migrants. The state-centric views on belonging have been challenged by new transnational perspectives on the formation of social spaces and a redefinition of the universal definitions of human rights. The teleological claims on social evolution that privileged, what Harald Kleinschmidt called 'residentialism' have been discredited, and there is now both a finer appreciation of the complex feedback systems that arise from cross-border movements, and an affirmative valuation of the role of cross-cultural interaction in re-vitalizing and ensuring the viability of social structures. From this perspective migration is now seen as a dynamic and often ongoing feature of social life. Similarly, migrants are no longer typecast as either passive victims that are 'pushed and pulled' by external forces, or deviants that threaten social order. It is therefore more appropriate to consider the way migrants plot their journeys and utilise extensive networks of information as part of the normal and conscientious efforts by which people dignify their lives. In Hardt and Negri's spirited defence of a new form of critical agency migrants are pioneers of what they call the 'multitude' and, as Kleinschmidt argues, the new discourse on migration has the potential to extend the notion of citizenship to 'universalistic principles of human rights irrespective of loyalty to a particular institution of statehood'.

Art always plays critical role in our understanding of politics and ethics. Without an imaginative reach towards the other, there would be no basis for extending our capacity to recognise our mutual equality and determine acceptable paths of conduct. I am not seeking to define the function of art as a political legislator or a social regulator. That would be absurd. However, I do uphold the view that art can explore the conditions of belief beyond a rational calculation of cost and benefit, as well as test the boundary between the permissible and the forbidden. In short, I will argue that aesthetic imagination precedes and frames the possible political and ethical choice. And we should recall, that if, as claimed by Benedict Anderson that artists were at the forefront of imaging the form of national consciousness that led to the construction of the nation state, then we should consider very seriously the post national forms of belonging that are currently being developed by artists.

After the 2005 riots in Paris, immigrant activist Nico Sguila declared: 'I am a migrant. I do not want to integrate. I want to be who I am.' It is precisely the kind of comment that makes cultural conservatives and progressive multiculturalists panic. The rejection of integration is immediately seen as either a failure of the state to offer a stronger basis for national affiliation, or the inability of multiculturalism to generate more inclusive modes of cultural belonging. When Nico Sguilia declares 'I want to be who I am', he could be seen as threatening to oppose the national demand for solidarity and dismissing the civic promise of equality. Sguilia's comment at first glance seems to justify the fear that there is now a generation of youth that has turned its back on the state. They neither seek to gain access to more of its resources nor reform its operational logic. On the contrary, they are creating new imagined communities that have no relation to the territorial and bounded form of a national society. Sguilia's declaration is both a rejection of the state and a proclamation that there is an alternative space for the realisation of the self. He already claims possession of the fullness of the 'who I am' while also protesting against the forces that block the wish of the who 'I want to be'. His identity proceeds by rejecting the city and nation as places in which identity is formed by coming together—'I do not want to integrate'—and proclaims an identity that is perpetually in motion: 'I am a migrant.' These paradoxical declarations also occur in the context of both a fightback against the populist backlash that minorities now experience, and an assertion of their awareness of the state's dependency on foreign labour and investment. However, this claim of rejecting integration and demanding the autonomy of identity is also expressive of an agency that occupies a complex topology.

Two North African bedouins using the internet at the top of a fortress in Morocco. The Fadaiat, www.fadaiat.net.

“ Art plays a critical role in our understanding of politics and ethics. Without an imaginative reach towards the other, there would be no basis for extending our capacity to recognise our mutual equality and determine acceptable paths of conduct.”

The ambivalence of place that Sguilia articulates within his identity is in fact a consequence of what Ulrich Beck calls the zombification of the state. As Sguilia claims to be in but not of the place he simultaneously affirms the identity that comes in the context of mobility and asserts a right to define his human value in terms that exceed state-centric parameters. Sguilia decrees his right to preserve identity as a universal right. This proclamation takes a double twist: he claims to have access to the rights that are defined by the state, but also insists that his identity rests on rights that are above and beyond the state. By rejecting integration into the mechanisms of the state, Sguilia does not disavow the hope of realising his identity in the context of others; he simply rejects the claim that the context of his community is confined to the coordinates of the nation-state.

Nico Sguilia was born in Argentina and now lives in Spain. He is a member of the project Indymedia Straits of Gibraltar, a group composed of activists, artists and cross-disciplinary thinkers. The codename for the project is Fadaiat, which means in Arabic 'through space', 'satellite dish' and 'space ship'. Located in a medieval castle on the edge of the militarised south-eastern border of the European Union, this project sees itself as a 'mirror-territory of the transformations taking place in the world'. The idea of the project is both utopian and instrumental. Through its coalition of artists and activists it has created a No-Border media laboratory that is engaged in mapping border flows, critiquing the new militarised border economies and developing links with both local protests on migration issues and international human rights organisations.

Throughout the diverse actions of the Fadaiat, the free flow of information is seen as the 'connector' between people from different places, and for people on the move. Given linguistic differences between the various members, the project has also embarked on an ambitious effort to devise a communication system based on universal spatial-visual symbols. This project has set out to learn from and hijack the symbolic codes that have been developed to promote global capital, and to re-direct them towards the interests of migrants. While this collective is opposed to the existing modes of regulating migration, their method of opposition is not an outright confrontation with global capitalism, but a form of resistance that reassigns value back to the activities that migrants execute in their everyday lives. This method of resistance draws from a system that is generated by diasporic networks, and in this new social space the collective claims to forge a 'new territory for global democracy'. This rejection of the state is thus creating a space that is very different from the void in which only zombies can roam. The Fadaiat collective rejects the conventional definition of the border as simply a demarcation point that separates different entities. It is not just an imaginary line that becomes a geo-political division, but rather a 'crossed-place', where mixtures intensify and new 'social practices put pressure on established limits'. Hence the border is not a fixed location where one form ends and another begins, but a 'threshold' in which transformation occurs in multiple and unpre-

Zanele Muholi - Miss D'vine I, 2006
Lambda print, 86,5 x 86,5 cm
Collectie Michael Stevenson Gallery, Kaapstad.

The image is part of the exhibition *Rebelle: Art and Feminism 1969-2009* in the museum for modern Art in Arnhem (the Netherlands), proposing a retrospective on feminist art. It featured works by about eighty artists from different generations, including some of the most famous feminist artists of the seventies such as Valie export (Genital panic, 1969) or the Cuban American artist Ana Mendieta's (1948-1985). But its originality was to present not only works from European and American artists but also recent pieces from Middle Eastern and African artists, such as the Iranian artist Shadi Ghadirian and its series entitled 'like everyday' (domestic life), 2002 or the south African artist Zanele Muholi (Miss Divine, 2006).
For more information, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, www.mmkarnhem.nl

dictable ways. This vision of the border identity is linked to the ambition of hijacking the info-capital networks in order to create a new ecology between bodies and communication systems. In this utopian model, the Fadaiat collective claims that agency is shaped by the freedom of the cyborg: 'Our modernity has its own mobile borders, which, as always, are in search of the other: the external other that we call nature, and the internal other—subjectivity, ourselves in plural.'

The Fadaiat project is one of many collective art projects that have emerged in the context of neo-liberal society. A common characteristic in many collectives from this period has been the identification of the transversal relationship between subjectivity and location. The fullness of subjectivity is no longer presented as an achievement that can only be gained after the overcoming of alienation, or even in the process of being connected between different places, but rather it is posed as occurring the midst of the subject's movement across and through space. Hence, the forms of solidarity that emerge in these encounters follow from a prior commitment that cross-cultural communication can produce a recognition of mutual human worth, rather than proceeding from the quasi-mystical assumption that being born in a specific place and having acquired specific cultural traits is the basis of one's exclusive identification with 'a people'. It is no longer where you are from, or even where you are at, which matters; it is more about the way we communicate with others. The new paradigm on migration is, from this perspective, not a nostalgic reclamation of a previous form of belonging, nor is it attempting to assert its validity within the existing terms of the national citizen. It announces a new and radical form of identity that defines itself through its mobility and interactivity with others.

The discourse on the political significance of art is still trapped in a debate over whether or not it can make a distinctive difference in the overall social context. For instance, Brian Holmes, one of the most optimistic advocates of the affirmative role played by artists in social transformation, argues that the appropriation of the internet, and in general the hijacking of the new communication technology, has inspired the deployment of subversive performances, mobilised information through global networks, initiated new self-organised counter-globalization tactics, enabled collaborative research on emerging issues, encouraged activists to converge on common sites, prompted legal and medical experts to offer support to artists and protestors, provided the means to document and disseminate accounts of events that would otherwise be ignored or distorted by the mass media. In short, he claims that artists, like all the other participants in the movement of networked resistance, were motivated by the belief that personal involvement at a micro level would facilitate global change, and thereby realise the paradoxical social democratic and individualist axiom of 'do-it-yourself geopolitics'.

It is my contention that this level of critical attention has a tendency to miss the point of collaborative art practice. Here, the effects of art tend to be registered only to the extent that they appear outside of its own, apparently autonomous, field. Is art only of value when it transforms or reflects the social? This question presumes that art is external to the existing forms of the social and must do something to the social in order to have a viable function. The place and function of art, as always, operates within the social. However, the new collaborative movements have sought to take an active role in social change, not by means of radical intervention or critical reflection, but through the mediation of new forms of public knowledge.

Contemporary artists have become increasingly aware of the pitfalls of making universal claims, and the limitations of confining the meaning of their practice to local perspectives. Their attention is focused toward the promotion of a democratic dialogue between different people that can relate local experiences to global processes. Within this context the artists neither claim to possess a superior knowledge that they will deliver to the public, nor do they aim to extract the raw information from the local context and then develop this into an aesthetic form with global purchase. While the projects are usually documented, the status of the documentary text or image also blurs the conventional distinction between a purely aesthetic art object, and a factual document, as well as providing a fundamental challenge to art criticism. However, these collaborative social practices and even their attendant documentary forms provoke serious methodological questions for art criticism. How will art history acknowledge the status of the non-durable, site-specific work that passes through the experience of just a handful of people? Whose witness statement will be necessary to validate the artist's intentions and evaluate that projected outcomes of these aesthetic moments?

BEWTEEN CENTRE AND PERIPHERY: THE LABYRINTH OF CONTEMPORARY MIGRATIONS

SANDRO MEZZADRA

The categories of centre and periphery, of north and south, are increasingly unable to photograph contemporary economic, political, and cultural inderdependence. The transnational experience of contemporary migrations points to the necessity of a new interpretative paradigm.

BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

Centre and periphery are "spatial" categories; they refer, as much in historiography as in the social sciences, to the hierarchical organisation of the relation between social, cultural, economic, and political units differently collocated in a given space. This reminds one of the image of a geographical map, on which these relations would be visualised. In recent years, however, the modern "cartographic reason" has been radically critiqued from a variety of standpoints, which have questioned its capacity to reflect the most significant processes modifying the configuration of contemporary global space. At the centre of these critiques we do not simply find, as has been the case for a long time in the critical studies on geography and the "production of space", the accusation of the implication of the "cartographic reason" in the projects of exploitation and domination that have characterised the history of modern capitalism and the system of states. What is rather pointed out today is a deficit of representation, an inability of the traditional cartographic instruments in registering the main coordinates of what increasingly appears like a real spatial revolution.

One of the chief protagonists of Italian geography, Franco Farinelli, has proposed the image of the labyrinth to represent the dilemmas faced today by his discipline. The labyrinth is a particularly suitable image to account for a situation in which the increasing difficulty to organise the representation of space around a centre, or a plurality of centres, is matched by the continuous multiplication of the scale and dimension on which the processes of connection and division of the different spaces are articulated, adding a new "profundity" to contemporary global space.

This is a question that finds a direct counterpart in the field of traditional "international relations". In an important article on "Foreign Affairs", Richard R. Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, has traced a merciless assessment of the defeat of American unilateralism, that is to say of the project of "unipolar" order followed by the Bush administration. Haass, however, does not expect for the future years the coming to be of a "multipolar" variant, but instead, what he calls a "telluric movement with respects to the past": the progressive installment of a real "non-polarity", of "a world dominated neither by one or two, nor by a certain number of states, but instead by dozens of actors possesing and exercising different kinds of power". The "non-polarity" corresponds not only to the obvious difficulty to isolate the "centres" around which international relations would be organised, but also, coherently with our discussion, to the multiplication of the actors of the system. The non-polar order is in fact characterised, Haass explicitely affirms, by the loss of the monopoly of states as exclusive protagonists of international politics. Regional and global organisations, large multinationals, "global cities" and NGOs, networks and "guerrilla" organisations are some of the new subjects that have entered as determining actors in the system of international relations, profoundly complicating its structure. "Power", Haass comments, "is currently in many hands and in many places". Randomness and "turbulence", in the specific sense given to this concept by James Resenau, seems to be destined to characterise such a system, affecting the very concepts of centre and periphery.

We find a similar situation in trying to analyse the geography of contemporary capitalism, which is also characterised – as many analysts have pointed out – by a series of processes directly challenging the consolidated analytical models of the "international division of labour"and any attempt to offer a precise cartography of the relations between centre and periphery. In other words, the spational hierarchies around which contemporary global capitalism is structured have also assumed a "random" character unknown in previous historical moments. Structurally unstable, the hierarchical relations between the different spaces on which the global circuits of capitalist accumulation are articulated have ceased to connect relatively homogeneous areas according to the classical modalities of imperialism, unequal exchange, and dependence. What once were called "developing countries" are today far from forming a homogeneous "periphery" or a compact "third world"; now increasingly differentiating one from the other, they have often known within their own boundaries the creation of areas and sectors perfectly integrated in global networks living next to other areas and sectors suffering great difficulty when not risking downright "exclusion". This finds a relatively precise correspondance in the evolution of the economic geography of the main "Western" countries. Instead of imagining a spatial organisation of capitalism according to which the most "advanced" (productive, financial, managerial...) functions would be condensed in certain "central" areas, and the most "backwards" functions in others ("peripheric" and "dependent" on the first), it is worth taking seriously the hypothesis that we are currently faced with the affirmation in large part of the world of a hybrid economic and social structure, in which what makes the difference is the proportion between the different functions, all of which are however tendentially present at the same time.

"Every attempt to give a graphic representation of the migratory phenomenon is doomed since the start, unless one wanted to represent something like a plate of spaghetti"

If faced with these processes the traditional concepts of "centre" and "periphery" seem to lose much of their explanatory potential, this does not mean, obviously, that global space is about to become "smooth", homogeneous. Over the last years, in fact, attempting to integrate and correct an image of globalisation constructed around the metaphor of "fluxes", a series of etnographic analyses have underlined the different shades and cracks characterising global space. Particular attention has been paid to the crafting of the "channels" that make determinate fluxes possible while obstructing others, focussing on the processes that continuously reproduce "enclaves" and open "lateral spaces" for the production and circulation of goods, in the context of a globalisation tha proceeds discontinuously, in "jumps", connecting and disconnecting at the same time spaces and subjects, economics, cultures, and societies.

It is no longer a paradox, in this sense, that the processes of globalisation be accompanied by a continuous multiplication of borders, but with a fundamental transformation in their nature: borders themselves, while still catastrophically closing everyday on the bodies of women and men in transift, in the Mediteranean as in the deserts between the United States and Mexico, seem to assume new characteristics of instability and randomness. Many scholars, consequently, have proposed to assume precisely the figure of the border as a fundamental point of view, empirically as much as epistemologically, to analyse the processes of globalisation and the spatial revolution these determine. And so extremely violent tensions, lines of conflict, relations of power and exploitation, scandalous inequalities in the distribution of wealth, come to the light exhibiting a growing complexity that makes it increasingly difficult to interpret the spatial coordinates of these global processes making use of rigid, fixed categories such as centre and periphery, North and South.

THE SPACES OF MIGRATIONS

All the problems briefly discussed in the preceeding section assume a particular relevance for what concerns the reality of contemporary migrations. Still in the after-war period, for example, it was relatively easy to isolate the dominant fluxes of migrations, with stable areas of departure and arrival that defined specific "migratory systems". Today, on the contrary, "the fluxes go in all directions", and, as has recently been noted by two Italian sociologists, Pugliese and Macioti, every attempt to "give a graphic representation" of the migratory phenomenon is doomed since the start, "unless one wanted to represent something like a plate of spaghetti".

The difficulty in producing stable and coherent maps of the routes followed by migrants in their voyage to Europe is, afterall, explicitely recognised by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), one of the most influential and authorative think tanks researching policies of border control and migration in Europe. In the context of the so-called "Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit-Migration" (MTM), an informal process coordinated by the ICMP with a plirality of countries from the two shores of the Mediterranean (with the participation of the UNHCR, the European Commission, Europol, Frontex, as well as, to underline the "global" relevance of the project, Australia as an observ-

ing country), one of the fundamental objectives was represented presicely by the production of a continuously updated "interactive map" of migratory fluxes crossing the Mediterranean. The unpredictability and randomness of the movements of the migrations are explicitely assumed as central challenges by the cartographers of the ICMPD, who in turn are attempting to lay down new instruments of knowledge suited to the definition of a new model of migration governance, more accurately corresponding to the needs of the "flexible" labour market. And they seem to actively make us of the numerous experiments of "counter-cartography" born in the last few years from the confluence of political activism and artistic practices in anti-racist and migrant movements.

The concept of "turbolence", which we have previously recalled in the context of international relations, has been used a few years ago by an Australian scholar, Nikos Papastergiadis. At the centre of his analysis lies the continuous multiplication and growing unpredictability of migratory circuits, which challenged the whole idea of a "migratory system", as well as an analysis of the transformations that affect the more slippery planes of "belonging" and "identity". These two planes cannot, of course, be separated with any rigid, clear-cut division: one of the most significant developments in the literature on migrations of the last few years has been precisely the development of the concept of "transnationalism". This concept efficiently underlines how the sense of belonging, the symbolic universe that gives meaning to the life and experience of migrants, increasingly tends to be distributed between a plurality of spaces, setting up unpredictable connections between places that can be easily identified on a geoprahical map, while at the same time producing truly innovative social, cultural, and political spaces. Already in 1991, working on Mexican migrations to the United States, the anthropologist Roger Rouse had indicated the necessity to attentively explore the "alternative cartography of social space" of the transnational migratory circuits. It is evident how this cartography is once again irreducible to the rigid relation bewteen centre and periphery: even where, for example precisely in the case of Mexican migration to the United States, some "migratory systems" seems to channel movement from a "periphery" towards a "centre", the daily experience of migrants rewrite that movement, giving it a novel meaning – and making of Chicago, for example, an extreme Northern appendix, a "periphery", of Mexico.

It would be a mistake to reduce to the "cultural" plane of identity and belonging the relevance of transnational social spaces produced by contemporary migrations. These are spaces that have an enormous economic impact, evident, for example, when we take into account the volume of migrants' remittances. But even beyond this aspect, and beyond the controversial question on the role played by remittances in stimulating or depressing development in the countries of origin of the migrants, the economical aspects of networks, circuits, and transnational spaces are such as to make problematic, again, analytical instruments such as those discussed of centre and periphery.

Anybody wanting to study the transnationalism of Bolivian migrants in Buenos Aires, for example, could not limit himself to investigating the processes of economic marginalisation, cultural stigmatisation, and territorial segregation that are extremely evident in, for example, a villa such as Bajo Flores. He should instead push to the suburbs and visit a place like "La Salada", in Lomas de Zamora, where a couple of nights each week a gigantic informal market takes place – the largest in Latin America, according to an article published on "La Nación", with a weekly turnover estimated around 9 million dollars. Here one does not really feel in the "periphery" of Buenos Aires, but rather in the "centre" of El Alto, in Bolivia. Even better: one feels to be at the centre, a totally random centre given the informality of the place, of one of those "alternative cartographies" that Rouse mentioned back in 1991. While public buses incessantly drop ever more buyers from the most remote Argentinean provinces and even from beyond the national border, the ethnographer could observe that to the nucleus of Bolivian merchants who originally "founded" the market of "La Salada" a whole set of migrants from other Latin American countries has been added. And the same ethnographer could have fun drawing the labyrinth of the routes followed by the foods on sale on the stands and carts, discovering at the same time that inside of "La Salada" real homegrown "brands" have been born, a phenomenon definitely more interesting than the usual copying of the most celebrated global brands.

Clearly, we should not take a naively apologetic attitude towards the dynamics sustaining a space such as the one here briefly analysed. Reconstructing the paths followed by the goods on sale in "La Salada", as I was just suggesting, would undoubtably unveil terrible stories of exploitation in clandestine workshops (which, after all, even many large brands often do not disdain to use), stories of violence and labour conditions close to slavery. The point, however, is that "La Salada" can be taken as a symptom of a whole series of processes that are materially reconfiguring, through practices of mobility and migration, the Latin American space, decentreing it and complicating its structure and constitution. Once more, we are faced with formidable conflicts and tensions, but also with the opening of a field of opportunity that should be taken into account by any project of regional intregration.

Similar processes can be found in other parts of the planet, for example in relation to the Chinese diaspora or the role played by the so-called system of "bodyshopping" in the management of the transnational mobility of the Indian workforce, employed in the top-end sectors of information economy and communications in Sydney as in Singapore, in the United States and in many European countries. Each with its own specificities, these and other examples that could be brought up show that contemporary migrations are a fundamental factor in producing that multiplication of levels, of scales, and of dimensions that makes global space profoundly heterogeneous. And they show that it is precisely through migrations that this heterogeneity marks the transformations of citizenship and labour markets in the very "national" spaces themeslves. It is worth repeating that there is nothing idyllic in this representation: on each plane opeate mechanisms of control and systems of hierarchies, relations of domination and exploitation. The condition of migrants, in Buenos Aires as in Milan, in Los Angeles as in Beijing or Johannesburg, shows how much violence is daily unleashed in the functioning of these mechanisms and the reorganisation of these relations. But the concepts of "centre" and "periphery" are everyday less able to read this reality, extrapolating the crucial challenges we are facing today.

Thomas Florschuetz, Untitled (Palast) 53, 2006, 183 x 228 cm, C-print, Diasec Courtesy of Galeriem, Bochum, Germany
Part of the Rencontres d'Arles, www.rencontres-arles.com

CITIZENSHIP: 'PRIZE' OR PRACTICE?

UMUT EREL

By explicitly enshrining the earned nature of citizenship, the government implicitly regulates and calls to order existing citizens. The experience of migrant women from Turkey offers an alternative

The British Home Office's website announces that new earned citizenship laws, will come into effect in late 2009, if agreed by parliament. The idea of earned citizenship combines the management migration regime where entry is based on a points system, allowing mainly those defined as skilled migrants entry. This is combined with a three stage system of acquiring citizenship, so that anyone living in the UK is required to earn the right to stay and in the different stages of acquiring British citizenship will be entitled to different degrees of social citizenship.

This is problematic in many ways: Presenting British citizenship as a privilege, in Browns words a 'prized asset' that must be earned, calls on the 'newcomers' who want to acquire citizenship or even the right to permanent residence to demonstrate their ability to belong to Britain by speaking English, knowledge of the UK, being in employment, bringing up acceptable, i.e. non-criminal, children, and demonstrating active citizenship and an engagement with the wider society. If, and only if they can prove they fulfil these requirements they qualify for British citizenship. One aspect of presenting this long (6-10 years) and arduous route to citizenship for newcomers is to inculcate in those who already are British citizens a sense of how privileged they indeed are to already have this prized possession.

However, by explicitly enshrining the earned nature of citizenship, the government implicitly also, of course, regulates and calls to order existing citizens. This affects in particular ways racialized citizens who, in everyday situations, are still required to prove that indeed they are citizens rather than non-entitled immigrants. Questions about citizenship, and how long one has been in the country, say, when registering for a doctor's surgery, activate and keep active the assumption that some citizens have more to prove than others that they belong. Indeed, the question of shared values is presented as at the heart of the citizenship agenda. And while these values are presented as universalistic rather than narrowly national or ethnic, the underlying assumption is that some citizens (non-Muslim, white, educated, economically active) are more predisposed than others to embrace and embody these shared values. Indeed, in some ways the universalistic discourse of equality and democracy is claimed as a national British or European property.

At the same time that these changes to the meanings of citizenship and possibilities of accessing citizenship are taking place, the academic field of citizenship studies is burgeoning. Yet, there is a disjuncture between academic debates on inclusive citizenship attempting to mobilize 'citizenship' as a concept to democratize an ever-widening range of social relations on one hand and current governmental attempts in Europe to increasingly construct citizenship as a privilege. One way in which academic debates on inclusive citizenship can connect effectively with political debates on citizenship practices is by taking seriously and making relevant the experiences of citizenship of those that have been excluded or marginalized.

Here, I suggest some ways in which the experiences of migrant women from Turkey who arrived from the 1970s to late 1980s can be harnessed for an understanding of citizenship that can address the promise of citizenship as a democratizing practice rather than a privilege. I am not suggesting that this particular group of migrant women can contribute the most incisive insights on the relation between migration, gender and citizenship. Indeed, I'd like to caution against homogenizing the category of migrant women and, of course, new and diverse forms of mobility and migrant incorporation (say of migrants with temporary residence, of undocumented migrants, of accession country migrants) generate not just different, stratified statuses of citizenship but also different citizenship practices. Thus, what I provide here is not an 'exemplary' account of how to 'do' citizenship more critically. But it is a situated account of how (some) migrant women's practices can help us reconceptualise notions of citizenship.

Migrant women are laying claim to citizenship practices. Though marginalized from the nation as legal or cultural outsiders, they create new meanings of belonging. While there has been considerable debate on the changing meaning of belonging to a national society with accelerating transnational relations, migrations and the experience of 'new ethnicities' there has been little, if any, attention paid to how migrant women themselves re-define the concepts of postnational, multicultural or transnational citizenship. Migrant women as emerging subjects create new, counter-hegemonic citizenship practices across boundaries of class, gender, ethnicity and nation. Just consider the following examples: Pınar, a single mother in Germany carefully builds a cross-ethnic family of choice. While she wants her daughter to learn the Turkish language and cultural practices, cultural pluralism is the core value she wants to transmit to her daughter. Selin challenges community representatives' and leaders' lack of democratic accountability. She incisively critiques that the British multicultural system's reliance on community organizations reproduces intra-community power relations of gender, class and ethnicity. These women's lives, both through their actions and as life-stories, help us to theorize the meaning of citizenship. Migrant women's citizenship practices can serve as evidence that alternatives to exclusionary practices of citizenship are possible and exist, though they might not be readily recognized as such.

> *"Migrant women as emerging subjects create new, counter-hegemonic citizenship practices across boundaries of class, gender, ethnicity and nation."*

Citizenship is most often viewed primarily as a status of rights-bearing subjects. The formal citizenship rights matter, of course. Stratified statuses of residence or citizenship have far-reaching implications for the ways in which migrant women have access to education, work, choices about their sexual identities and family life and opportunities to social and political activism. Yet, I contend we must consider the idea of rights claiming in conjunction with 1) migrant women becoming subjects with agency, which includes developing knowledges about themselves and the world in which they live which are often, though not necessarily, critical of dominant forms of knowledge and 2) becoming political/ cultural/ working/ caring/ sexual subjects, so that citizenship is not limited to a formal political arena but extends to the ways in which migrant women claim rights, and produce new ways of linking the cultural, the sexual, the arena of work to aspects of participation and belonging. This can help understand the political culture of migrants and help to achieve accurate representation of migrant collectivities in order to bring about the full democratizing potential of citizenship discourse.

Let me clarify the interrelatedness of these aspects through an example: in the 1990s, Birgül, who did not hold formal German citizenship was repeatedly faced with the undermining of her ability to work as a doctor because of the difficulties of obtaining and renewing work, professional and residence permits. It is this experience of lack of status, which propelled her into becoming a political subject through establishing anti-racist campaigns. When as a non-citizen she was refused permission to open a surgery, she took the matter to court. She successfully argued that the law foresees health provision for the population (Bevölkerung), not just the nation (Volk). This population encompasses migrant women from Turkey, and Birgül argued that access to a female, Turkish-speaking gynaecologist should form part of their entitlement to healthcare. This can, of course, be read as an instance of Birgül's rights claiming, in the sense that she claimed her right to open a surgery while she was a denizen rather than a formal citizen. Yet, I think such a reading would be limited. It misses out on the way in which she becomes a political subject. As a political subject she does more than gain the right to practice her profession in a setting of her choice. She questions the nationally bounded provision of healthcare. This challenges the supposed neutrality of the provision, as she points out that gender, ethnic, linguistic and cultural sensitivity matter to migrant women's health. In this instance, Birgül's act went beyond rights claiming to re-evaluating the substance (culturally and gender-sensitive provision of local health provision) and subject (the ethnically heterogeneous population rather than the ethnically homogeneous nation) of rights. Birgül's act took place although - indeed because – she did not hold formal citizenship, yet, it constitutes a transformative citizenship practice.

Indeed, citizenship practices of becoming subjects with agency and substantiating their capacities as political, cultural, caring etc. subjects enable migrant women to make rights claims. By demanding respect for their practices of education, constructing skills, sexual identities, family relations and political activism, they create a social consciousness that the exclusions they experience are unjust, thus transforming our notions of justice and extended or creating new notions of rights.

Migrant women's life-stories reflect on their position near the boundary of citizenship. At times they claim a view from outside, at times from inside, or, indeed both. These perspectives are empirically significant as they highlight how citizenship as a lived experience is constructed. More than this, such perspectives shed a critical light on how boundaries of belonging and rights are constructed and substantiated (or not). It is in these processes of making and negotiating boundaries, that particular forms of agency are recognized and conferred legitimacy. The negotiation of boundaries furthermore shapes which kind of subjectivities count as properly expressing 'political', 'caring', 'working', 'cultural', 'sexual' capacities and whether and how these aspects are recognized. Citizenship is one important instance of recognition, not only on the level of national belonging, but as things stand, even in terms of recognition of whether one is seen to properly embody/ enact subjectivity. In this sense, we are faced with a paradox: the ability to go beyond the 'national', be it in terms of competences (linguistic, cultural, etc.), emotional orientations, political and ethical subjectivities is valued for those who are recognized as full 'citizens'. Yet, those who have by virtue of their migration crossed national boundaries are denied recognition as subjects with agency to change the societies in which they live and beyond, as our methodological nationalism fails to view them as subjects with agency. The migrant women's (political, cultural, caring, working, ethical, etc.) capacities are mis-recognized, most often as a lack thereof. One might, of course, argue that these capacities and ways of being agentic do not qualify as 'citizenship' practices, as they do not engage with the state and rights-claiming activities. I argue that migrant women's ways of acting politically, socially, culturally and sexually require us to extend the idea of rights and should be seen as citizenship practices. These women engage with the boundaries of citizenship and thus are part of its very constitution. If our current conceptions of citizenship cannot make sense of their lives, 'citizenship' risks becoming reified as a national privilege. It ceases to be a momentum concept and turns void of its analytic and political potential to democratize an ever-wider range of social relations and socio-political sites. In this sense, research can challenge notions of citizenship 'earned citizenship'. This earned citizenship policy undermines practices of citizenship that migrant women already engage in. Yet, making migrant women's interventions socially visible challenges narrow notions of citizenship as a 'prize'.

GENDER AND CIRCULAR MIGRATION

NICOLA FLAMIGNI

Circular migration, allowing migrants to temporarily come to Europe to work and then return to their country of origin, is widely recognized as the new frontier of migration policies, especially for what regards low-skilled migration. Receiving states hope to meet their labour market needs without having to permanently incorporate newcomers, while sending states would maximize remittances gains while keeping under control the problem of brain drain. Theoretically, governments would stimulate circularity and avoid the risk of seeing temporary workers overstaying through a set of policies such as the selection of workers with the right skills and the guarantee of the annual renewal of the contract for those workers who comply with the terms. But a highly controversial case in Spain demonstrates how practice remains far ahead of policy.

The municipality of Cartaya, Andalusia, has implemented since 1999 a seasonal worker programme in cooperation with Marocco and Senegal. The European Union also supported the project, which was meant to open legal channels for foreigners to work in strawberry harvesting. The agreement lasted only three years, from 2005 to 2007, when the European Commission decided to not renovate the funding. This decision could look paradoxical if we think that 2007 was the year the programme was finally successful in establishing circularity, while in the first years only a small percentage of workers went home after their contract expired.

To understand this decision we have to consider that in 2007 the programme changed the terms of agreement with the third countries and started to select only married women with children in their home country, in the belief that this would provide enough of an incentive not to overstay their work period in Europe. That year almost ninety percent of the workers returned voluntarily, and today the programme is still one of the most successful in Europe. But this new selection process warns us of the potential discriminatory nature of the game.

European Alternatives just published a report on circular migraiton: check out: www.euroalter.com/research

END OF DOSSIER

EMANUELE GUIDI

INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN KRENN

Conversation with an artist who keeps on challenging contemporary society with provocative projects and innovative interventions in public space

Martin Krenn is an artist and activist, whose interest in socio-political subjects leads him to produce a wide spectrum of actions that range from process-based and participatory projects to a more investigative-like research. By curating shows, conferences and/or internet platforms, he expands and continuously questions the concept of 'public space' with particular focus on the urban context. Krenn's engagement with issues such as immigration, racism, Nazi history and its legacy unfolds through the examination of the relationship between images and their role in the creation of ideologies. In this sense, his endeavor is directed at investigating and generating strategies of knowledge production as a form of resistance and an alternative to the current short-memory culture.o the current short-memory culture.

Emanuele Guidi: I'd like to start with a topic I think is very relevant to your practice: the use of imagery and communication in media campaigns (both with commercial and political purposes) that are nowadays used to build and promote precise identities – city, national, and European - with the result of excluding those ones which do not correspond to the subscribed image. A sort of 'politics of silence' that tends to direct the viewer's gaze by ' not acknowledging conflicts'...

Martin Krenn: Media Campaigns and political campaigns tend to simplify issues in order to draw attention to the topic. This can also be seen in campaigns of the "independent critical left". There is often a dilemma whether a campaign should be more process orientated, in order to raise awareness and to investigate how to work together and raise awareness of the overseen issues around the main topic, or a campaign should be focused on the result – where one just wants to win the battle in a more or less pragmatic way.

If the aim is to fight structural oppression and power relations it is necessary to reflect on the structural conditions of the campaigning group itself. Who can take part in it? What are the power relations between the members of the group? Who is responsible for what? Who will benefit from the campaign? And many other questions ... To take this in consideration takes a lot of time and activists don't get paid for their work.
If the aim of the campaign is not that complex, i.e to prevent the privatization of a public building/place, a more pragmatic strategy, of everyone participating in the campaign working on the same goal might work well. However, when the first step is done and the privatization is prevented other questions arise automatically: Who has access to that saved public space now, shall we continue the campaign on a broader level and so on.

EG: In your work *City Views* you react to these media campaigns trend by engaging in dialogue with migrants and promoting a different imaginary of the everyday city. And in *Misplaced Histories* you bring back to light some inconvenient historical information that has been 'hidden'. Do you see yourself, and more generally art, as an (potential) awareness and knowledge producer?

MK: I think art has the potential to produce awareness and knowledge especially in the visual field (but not exclusively). Artists are trained - or train themselves - to understand 'the language' of images. In my work, I am very interested in the relation between text and image and in their ideological, political, historical and social implications.
In the series *Misplaced Histories* I photographed, with a field camera, well known locations like the Giant Wheel in Vienna, the Munich Stadtmuseum or the Berlin Zoo. All of them were 'Aryanised' properties. In addition to the photos I did research on questions concerning restitution and the politics of memory. The research was done in a kind of journalistic way: I wrote open letters to responsible persons and new owners of the robbed properties and I also got in contact with other researchers and victims.
In *City Views*, a 'work in progress' that I've realized in cooperation with city dwellers from migrant background in European cities, locations that are associated with emancipation and also those which exclude the public presence of migrants were sought out and dealt with in photo-text series form. During the visits to the cities I asked city residents to participate in the project and to lead personal tours through their city and suggested the respective locations as motifs. The way that the photographs were taken (distance, choice of lenses, angle, etc.) was determined together. After the photos have been taken, the participants complement their selected motifs with statements, which then were used as a part of the photo-text series.

EG: In your work you are very committed to anti-racist and anti-nazism campaigns, (*Monument of the "Aryanisation"*, 2005), as well as very dedicated to migrants rights (*Right to stay*, 2007). The two are very related issues, which should be a priority in the European political agenda. What's your position with regards to the new nationalisms in Europe, confirmed in the last European elections, and the role of culture in this context?

MK: Firstly, I think that the 'New Nationalisms in Europe' has a strong relation to the economic failures of capitalism, which became visible to everyone in Europe during the course of 2006, when these failures finally culminated in the first global economic crisis of this century. Secondly, the "New Nationalism" is possible because of the lack of serious education about the Nazi-History in Europe. This becomes particularly clear in Austria and Germany, where Neo-Nazi movements especially attract young people. I really believe that the main problem of Neo-Nazism is an educational one. It is not enough just to give some information about the Third Reich and the Nazi atrocities and to show some shocking visual materials. The education about Shoah and Genocide has to have an absolute priority in school.

EG: In your practice you often tend to use means typical to media campaigns (posters in public space, internet, etc.) to formalize/express your ideas. In the same way you organize conferences and curate shows. Is it a *mimetic* approach to experiment and question the existing formats? Do you think that by appropriating the formats there lays the risk of reproducing the same power relations?

MK: : I think that no matter what you are doing you always risk reproducing the same power relations. Even if your aim is to produce dissent as much as possible you have to accept that dissent is perfectly integrated in the capitalistic machine. Therefore, it is not a general question whether to use appropriation or to question the existing formats. This depends very much on the project, the art piece or the campaign. My personal interest also very much lays in investigating micro politics and in developing and creating new formats of knowledge production in between the movements.

EG: Is the field of arts and culture a genuine 'public space' where a plural and an agonistic (C. Mouffe) dialogue can be developed or do you think that sometimes there is a risk of creating an in-house discourse?

MK: I personally believe that completely "normal people" are rebels. I think it is up to us to discover that in every human being already resides a potential for emancipation. Therefore I prefer to be involved in plural and agonistic struggles in which I have the possibility to take part in a discourse and I can both talk with and learn from everybody in and outside the art field.

"I AM VERY INTERESTED IN THE RELATION BETWEEN TEXT AND IMAGE AND THEIR IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS."

EG: OK, but I am afraid that within a certain artistic/activist scene, let's say where more or less everybody's share the same positions, or at least agree on common principles, a sort of exclusion of the opposite opinions can spontaneously generate, impeding in this way a real open democratic confrontation...

MK: Well, that is a very interesting point. However, I don't think that we all share the same positions and secondly we change and correct our ideas/opinions from time to time depending on our new experiences and researches.
But on a broader level I agree with you and think that the leftist discourse also excludes people from the outside: Especially people who simply do not agree with the basic principles.
Though most of these movements try to be open as much as possible it is also understandable that they cannot be open for everyone.
But it is also a class issue, it is much more difficult for people to take part in this discourse, if you have a bad economic and/or social situation.
So, I don't see the main problem in "preaching to the converted", what's more important it seems to me is to focus on micro politics and the power relations within the movements. Micro politics are creating nearly invisible forms of inclusion/exclusion, yet they often seem to be overlooked. In order to create a space for a "real open democratic confrontation" I think that we have to find ways of dealing with these micro politics. As a result the movements/campaigns would become much more effective and revolutionary, which is important especially during the time of the capitalist crisis.

Institutional Racism, billboard-object in front of the Viennese state-opera exhibition in the Kunsthalle Exnergasse, 1997
A project by Martin Krenn & Oliver Ressler, Monument of the "Aryanisation", 2005, www.martinkrenn.net

STEPHEN WRIGHT

TOWARD AN EXTRATERRITORIAL RECIPROCITY:

Beyond worldart and vernacular culture

In an era characterised by the dematerialised flux of information and imagery, and a previously unheard-of degree of individual mobility, it becomes necessary to clarify how artistic activity engages with territory, both physical and metaphorical

To an unprecedented extent, the condition of many artists and artworlders today is one of mobility. If ever you stop to think about it, you cannot but be baffled at how much artworlders travel (though of course if you're an artworlder you won't have time to think too long). This underscores a genuine disparity between the realities of the artworld and the rest of the planet and, by extension, the extraordinary privilege enjoyed by art in the global economy. But what sort of "privilege" is it to be obliged to accept, indeed *to be obliged to desire* a condition of perpetual exile? The attendant globalisation of artistic subjectivity, which is of course quite in keeping with the sort of biennialitis that seems to have infected so many large cities around the planet, has had a significant impact on the sort of art being produced.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that while art's role in the *commercial* economy may be growing, it remains negligible. This raises a paradox: for if the permanent mobility characteristic of the artworld is not, strictly speaking, driven by commercial necessity (artists are not part of the global capitalist class), then what actually is the underlying function of all this moving about? Certainly there is an ideological component, by which the apparent gratuitousness of moving art around becomes, for state funding agencies and corporate benefactors, evidence of their altruistic and humanistic values. But that alone scarcely explains the extent of the mobility of that rising class now ambivalently referred to as the "cognitariat", and of which artists and their ilk are a key component.

If one looks at the proliferation of residency programmes, seminars, workshops, biennalia and international exchanges that characterise the institutional artworld – which, because they are invariably underwritten by public institutions or benevolent foundations, enjoy a semblance of usefulness and, at the same time, because they take place elsewhere, give off an aura of adventurousness and audacity – one is tempted to conclude that art itself is highly mobile. Yet the fact remains that while the artworld enjoys exceptional mobility, art itself rarely moves out of the seraglio of the artworld – and when it does so, it is with such fanfare that it in effect takes the artworld framing devices with it. In other words, in its forays beyond the borders of the artworld, art actually colonises new territories of the lifeworld, and then proceeds to bring the artefacts it has gleaned back into the referenced spaces of art. Because when art strays beyond the confines of its artworld framing devices, something truly strange happens: it is no longer seen as art; it is stripped of its artistic self-evidence. And that invisibility is not something the artworld can easily forebear. However some art-*related* practices are doing just that, and accepting the consequences. Stealth operations based on what I shall call "extraterritorial reciprocity" – that one might well describe as "spy art" – are cropping up here and there, and accepting to trade off their coefficient of artistic visibility for a higher degree of efficacy in the real. At first this appears a strange strategy: why should art not assert itself for what it is? Part of the answer, I think, is that art constantly faces the debilitating charge that that's *all* it is, that *it's just art* – not the potentially dangerous real thing. But to understand how we got to this critical point, we need to examine the different self-understandings that current art practices have with regard to territory.

In our era characterised by the dematerialised flux of information and imagery, a previously unheard-of (though, as I suggested, scandalously one-sided) degree of individual mobility, diffuse and plural forms of creativity – all key components of the neo-capitalist economy – the link between artists and territory has lost whatever self-evidence it may have had. It is in this thoroughly new context, which may sometimes feel more like the disappearance of context altogether, that it becomes possible, and indeed necessary, to clarify how artistic activity engages with territory, both physical and metaphorical.

For in a metaphorical sense too, has the notion of "territory" itself – as in the "territory of art" – not become eminently problematic? To take but one example, the radical deskilling that has characterised so much of the art production over the past century has landed us in a paradoxical situation: art criticism has so thoroughly lost its bearings that it has become difficult not only to evaluate the relative merits of what artists are doing, but to even situate it as *art*. Though not necessarily undisciplined, art seems to have become an *extra-disciplinary* practice, sprawling far beyond the circumscribed borders of any given "territory." It is in this expanded sense of the term that I want to consider the various relationships between territorial attachment and contemporary artistic expression.

To this end, we might define three basic postures, which very roughly correspond to three historical moments as well as three kinds of artmaking, all three of which coexist within contemporary artistic production. In each of these three "families," one finds more or less the same number of eminent artists, and though I do favour the latter, I do not wish to imply any strict hierarchy between them. For *vernacular artists*, activity is territorialised, the context

"FOR THE WORLD ARTIST, THE VERNACULAR ARTIST'S OBSESSION WITH BRINGING ART BACK TO ITS CONTEXT OF ORIGIN IS TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ART TO FUNCTION OUTSIDE THIS TERRITORY."

Cotton Candy, Rasha Kahil, Beirut, 2009. For more of Kahil's photography, see: http://rashakahilblog.blogspot.com

being an integral part of the productive framework; *world artists*, on the other hand, seek to wrest art free from any territorial rootedness, concerned with pitting origins against subsequent development; *artists of extraterritorial reciprocity* deliberately expatriate themselves not only from their geographical territory but from all the usual symbolic terrain that is customarily reserved for art: by refusing both territorialisation and deterritorialisation, their propositions are animated by a constitutive mobility and what I would call, following an expression of the French philosopher Maurice Blanchot, "elusive implication" (which is very different from twentieth-century style *engagement*). In practice, of course, one finds a good deal of overlap and interpenetration between these three aesthetic (and profoundly ethical) attitudes – just as one does amongst territories themselves. But that need not inhibit us from delineating them a bit more closely.

Vernacular artists perpetuate age-old traditions which they invigorate and enrich with formal innovations taken from other cultures, thanks to the intermingling made possible – indeed inevitable – by modernity. Many artists today live their historical moment with deep intensity even while using the visual *vernacular* specific to their place and time. Their work – whether installation or painting or whatever – integrates and reflects in one way or another the symbols of a consciously accepted heritage and identity. For them, art depends upon its inscription in a context that is at once more extensive and more intensive than what art alone can provide.

mains and inviting other currents of knowledge to irrigate the field of art. As they see it, art has now integrated literally everything – other disciplines, other materials of all orders – and no longer needs to retrench itself behind borders of any kind. Nothing whatsoever links art with a specific geography, and all that links it to its own history is a certain aesthetics of decision-making, specific to each artist.

Typically, vernacular or territorial artists accuse world artists of encouraging the emergence of a sort of consumerist multiculturalism: world music and world fiction are not seen as the expression of universalisation but as symptoms of a planet-wide standardisation, which barely tolerates, here and there, like unavoidable ripples on an otherwise seamless surface, the odd flash of regional identity. As territorial artists see it, the meaning of an artwork is intrinsically bound up with the time and place of its production: the artist is – at most – but the co-author of his or her work, which, like the artist, bears the indelible stamp of a particular time and place.

Conversely, world artists adopt a normative and aggressively hostile position toward any notion of territorial rootedness. They have nothing but cutting sarcasm for those whom they see as snugly at home in the quiet mass of a particular culture, clinging to the visual idiom typical of some particular region – and are somehow incredulous that anyone make a virtue out of the necessity of happening to be from somewhere; they rail against those who take no account of the boundless labyrinth of cultures and languages, through which the French

"FOR THE VERNACULAR ARTIST, WORLD ARTISTS ENCOURAGE THE EMERGENCE OF A SORT OF CONSUMERIST MULTICULTURALISM, AN EXPRESSION OF A PLANET-WIDE STANDARDISATION."

Drawing upon a modernist paradigm, *world-artists* are immersed in the present of rapidly changing societies. They see their work as reflecting the confusion of a world that has lost its bearings. Generally speaking, however, this loss is experienced without anguish or despair. On the contrary, these artists – in keeping with the modern insistence upon individual freedom – seek to free themselves from any geographical or social determinism. Their aspiration is to produce work that is *autonomous* with regard to context, emphatically breaking ties with their formal and cultural heritage – without necessarily renouncing it per se – thereby giving free rein to autonomous expression.

Breaking with the modernist paradigm, artists of *extraterritorial reciprocity* undermine the whole issue of topography inasmuch as they refuse not only geographical borders but borders of all kinds, including those separating art from what is not art, from other and sundry social undertakings. Like vernacular artists, they are suspicious of any talk of autonomy; like world artists, they decline any inheritance. Their artistic practice does not necessarily culminate in the production of works, but nor is it exclusively process based. Rather, these artists see art as a system for producing meaning, which is most effective when engaged in overstepping borders and setting up extradisciplinary "production sites," outside the territory of any given discipline. By displacing the creative centre of gravity toward artistic *activity* – originating in an artistic attitude or idea, before spreading amongst a broader usership – these artists seek to challenge the specificity of art as work on a unique object (painting, sculpture), by activating other domains and inviting other currents of knowledge to irrigate the field of art. As they see it, art has now integrated literally everything – other disciplines, other materials of all orders – and no longer needs to retrench itself behind borders of any kind. Nothing whatsoever links art with a specific geography, and all that links it to its own history is a certain aesthetics of decision-making, specific to each artist.

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It would be abusive, however – and by no means my intention – to portray vernacular artists as the fundamentalists of the artworld (and it would be only slightly less abusive to depict world artists as the jet set of the artworld); on the contrary, territorial artists stress the need for cultural relativism in the face of the massive homogenisation which they see occurring on a planetary scale. And this attitude is by no means confined to art. "In order to progress," wrote the justly celebrated anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, "people have to work together; and in the course of their collaboration, they gradually see an identification in their relationships whose initial diversity was precisely what made their collaboration fruitful and necessary."

I quote Lévi-Strauss because he really cannot be accused of territorial chauvinism or narrow-mindedness (no one in the domain of anthropology went further in the deconstruction of institutionalised racism) and because he somehow manages in a single sentence to sum up the whole question of how and why and under what circumstances we collaborate – which is course linked to the very raison d'être of art-making, if seen as more than a merely individualist pursuit. But underlying Lévi-Strauss' point is a somewhat contorted Hegelian logic of synthesis whereby collaboration is fruitful because there is an initial difference, and the very fact of collaborating, instead of pushing that difference to a higher level, is liable to reduce it to its lowest common denominator.

For the world artist, the vernacular artist's obsession with constantly bringing art back to its context of origin is tantamount to saying that it is impossible for art to function outside this territory. In fact, maintains the world artist, it is precisely its ability to affect us through a combination of emotion and knowledge – and to do so independently of any context, any particular territory – that is the defining quality of autonomous art. However important the conditions of its emergence may be, the effects it produces here and now are infinitely more so. With staunch allegiance to the precepts of modernity, world artists may even go so far as to argue – following the phenomenological tradition in general and Maurice Merleau-Ponty in particular – that an artwork is meaningful *only outside* its original context, leaving the initiative to the constitutive gaze. The white cubes that characterise the architecture of our galleries and museums, devised for the neutral exhibition of artworks, seem to enjoy a hand-in-glove fit with the purposes of world artists.

Like vernacular artists, artists of reciprocal extraterritoriality situate art in a bigger picture. But for them, this defining territory is not given: it has to be created. Their practice consists of implanting certain aspects of the general economy into the symbolic economy of art, encouraging the creation of a broader, extradisciplinary context. These artists have become real-time managers of the semiotic contingencies that arise in the course of their various undertakings. Their point is not merely to do away with an alleged autonomy of the artwork, but to confront the know-how specific to the field of art with competencies stemming from other fields of knowledge, thereby establishing a reciprocity between art and the sciences, or between art and political activism, and in so doing, dislocating the borders, interests, conventions and habits that maintain them in place, thereby prompting innovative collaborations. I use the admittedly clumsy term "extraterritorial reciprocity" because it names rather precisely the logic I have in mind: like nature, art abhors a vacuum and rushes to fill it. But in doing so, it creates its own vacuum that can be filled by an activity from a different field of human endeavour. In other words, in going "extraterritorial," art vacates its convention-bestowed territory in the artworld, leaving it open for other activities, as it sets up shop in a different domain in a gesture of reciprocity. This is an art without a territory, which operates in the intersubjective space of collaboration. Yet that "space" is really no space at all, or only in the metaphorical sense of the term, as when we speak of "public space"; it is probably more accurate to speak of a "time" of collaboration and intervention – a "public time," the time of common yet heterogeneous purpose. But the geographical model, with its cartography of partially overlapping territories, has the advantage of providing a tangible picture of what artists of reciprocal extraterritoriality are really after. "Always implicated, and yet elusive," as Maurice Blanchot once put it. Constitutive mobility. Elusive implication.

Stephen Wright will continue his reflections in the next issue of Europa with a discussion on Public Time.

PETER MÖRTENBÖCK

THE ART OF LIVING WITH STRANGERS:
Risk Taking in the Space of Flows

Postfordist landscape regime entails security conscious design, counter-terrorist architecture as well as immaterial strategies to regulate the increasing elasticity of borders and flows of movement

Fallen Fruit, Street Bananas, David Burns, giclee print, 16"x20", 2004. www.fallenfruit.org

Whether in the form of transnational political initiatives, global economies, new technologies or urban social movements, networks are the distinctive characteristic of spatial organisation in the 21st century. Cities, regions, countries and continents are being experienced less and less as fixed territories and increasingly as fluid and contested landscapes, formed and mobilised by networks of interacting realities. But the dependence of such networks on the interests of the global market raises the question as to whether its politics of diffusion, segmentation and splintering is rendering it impossible to share cultural values or whether life in parallel universes is capable of generating new forms of sociality and solidarity. In particular, as the logic of globalisation seems to prevent any kind of cultural, political and indeed material bridge being built between the different characteristics of this landscape: While the neoliberal economy orients itself to risk taking, those who enjoy its benefits seek shelter in communities of securitisation, which are increasingly detached from the risks of the surrounding society and from market fluctuations. Risk management and safety concerns have become top priorities in programming urban environments. Closer attention to this dynamics is all the more urgent, as, from the perspective of the global market economy, cities are increasingly becoming a commercial formula, spatial products that can be assembled, dismantled and relocated to a new place. Entrepreneurial risks are often avoided by locating economic activities wherever a community is willing to safeguard the business, while labour disputes result in outsourcing abroad. Replacing the city, the much more flexible concept of community is now capturing our attention as the new level of reference. This transformation is critically advanced by a new culture of security-conscious design which designs fear into our cities.

Perhaps the most striking example in recent years are urban safety guidelines incorporated in the training of design professionals to reduce the risk of terrorist attacks without affecting the aesthetic appeal of the urban environment. In 2008 The British Home Office has launched a national programme to train all key designers of major public buildings in counter-terrorism. 'Argus Professional', a National Counter Terrorism Security Office initiative, is aimed at encouraging architects, developers and designers to consider counter-terrorism protective security in the concept design stage of their projects. Buildings are to be designed with panic rooms, truck-bomb barriers and limited glazing to prevent or mitigate terrorist attacks. The British prime minister promised to "work with architects and planners to design safer areas, using blast-resistant materials and enhancing physical protection against vehicle bomb attacks." Work on fortification of the British Treasury against the threat of car bombers is now underway. Likewise, retrofitting work at railway stations, airports and other public transport hubs is being accelerated.

Following this political move, the Royal Institute of British Architects and a number of partners, including the Royal Society of the Arts and the British Home Office, jointly launched a competition that asked architecture students to think creatively about counter-terrorist features as integral parts of building blueprints. 'Public Spaces, Safer Places: Designing in Counter-Terrorism' called for design responses for a public space in the aftermath of a fictitious terrorist attack in the centre of a major European city. Backed by the Design Against Crime Research Centre at Central St Martin's College, London, the competition pleas for paying more attention to pro-active counter-terrorism planning so that security is built in rather than bolted on: Terrorism security is to be validated as a design challenge along with place-making and aesthetics, as an answer in equal measure to the specifications of elegant, busy and animated public space – the winning entry to this competition being praised for combining 'inspiring symbolism with an ingenious, tactical organisation of space.'

These developments have to be seen against the backdrop of policies dat-

ing back to the 1970s which aimed at regulating urban behaviour through specialised design strategies, in particular the American 'defensible space' concept, a design manual that has been strongly backed by the insurance industry, the police and politicians, and has been adopted by many European governments as tool in aid of safe urban environments. Focusing on ownership and control of the environment, the concept basically marks out clear territorial boundaries and renders strangers a source of danger for 'vulnerable' places. Since the early 1990s, Secured by Design, the influential UK Police flagship initiative supporting the principles of 'defensible space', has helped to transform thousands of commercial, housing and public sector developments into high-security enclaves. While the USA maintain specialised national training centres, such as the disaster centre facilities at Camp Dawson, West Virginia, to stage terrorist situations against the backdrop of a replica three-block urban landscape, the European logic of action – military, political or architectural – seems to lie in an implementation of replica elements in real urban space. Its artful disguise of mock urban features is to propagate a visual culture of innocent looks: barriers that double as planters, concrete bollards in the shape of giant letters and Chinese Cypress trees of the kind planted at Canary Wharf in London. Apparently, these trees are very good at absorbing the kinetic energy of a bomb blast and don't make the environment look sinister but foster a 'feeling of well-being', another term regularly woven into government rhetorics to promote security-led design.

It may come as no surprise that, in the mind of security officials, the urban landscape looks like a product catalogue of items that serve as a defence against violence and fear. Strikingly, though, the aesthetic deceit in composing this environment allows for an almost unmappable intrusion of forces into our lives and into the structure of urban cohabitation. Everything that is visible and pleasing to the eye is being turned into the 3D interface of a much more powerful command line operating in the background. This transformation demonstrates how in the war against abstract enemies the limits of security measures are rendered indeterminate, both spatially and temporally. Wars against abstract concepts or social practices are acts of governmentality, indistinguishable from other forms of political activity. Reproducing all aspects of social life, they can be extended anywhere. Thus, the European politics of urban securitisation has emerged seamlessly, in connection with the global economic demand for continuous and flexible response to the space of flows and today gains ever more popularity with those who regard the flexible administration of urban societies a useful means to regulate and control newly emerging space-time-assemblages.

Part of a programme that is transforming urban life under the aegis of safety, the quest for civilian 'decency', 'security' and 'well-being' mobilises a form of biopower which reinforces social hierarchies along prevalent value systems and opinion polls. Instead of engaging with a geopolitical situation that cuts across separate categories of violence and peace, the city of fear seeks to isolate and ghettoise zones of unregulated violence from purified and patrolled zones of harmony. It is not without reason that cities are entrenched in military imagery and that the resurgence of this imagery comes at a time of social deregulation. From battle fields to strategic lines, from frontier areas to no-go zones, the combined ideologies of social orchestration and urban planning have always conjured up a language of military warfare to legitimate violent acts of urban transformation and eviction. As new conflicts emerge from this complicated fabric today they direct our attention towards the new ways in which the presence of social exteriority is constituted and expressed.

"WHILE THE NEOLIBERAL ECONOMY ORIENTS ITSELF TO RISK TAKING, THOSE WHO ENJOY ITS BENEFITS SEEK SHELTER IN COMMUNITIES OF SECURITISATION."

In fact much of the European debate on counter-terrorism planning is not new at all, but has been well rehearsed in the USA, particularly in the wake of 9/11. A prime example of its implementation into the urban fabric is the Staples Center, a privately financed and controlled multi-purpose arena in Downtown Los Angeles, which has shaped a new understanding of urban spatial organisation: dozens of large-scale sculptures and an uninterrupted sequence of some hundred man-sized planters surrounding the building's apron regulate the stream of visitors and defend the arena against the threat of an attack. What at first sight may look like decoration is the minutely calculated camouflage of crisis planning hidden behind a normalising façade. The Staples Center is a showcase project of US-American terrorism prevention in the urban realm and as such has been hosting numerous conferences on technologies for homeland security. Aesthetic adornment has become a strategic instrument of the politics of normalisation and naturalisation in support of the invisible city of privatised infrastructures and technological flows. That way, late capitalist dominance enters a new phase in which the visible shape of the urban landscape diverts our attention from the interaction between governmental, institutional and commercial forces in the operating system of newly programmed urban ecologies. New forms of security landscaping that include bits of living infrastructure as performative organic machines are institutionalised as the dominant reality of the global North, as a prism through which we experience the social and cultural production of this fragmented civic formation. The more fragmented this landscape becomes, though, the more effort it requires to create new identities that promote the fusion of reality and capital as a political model.

But Los Angeles, a city obsessed with protection on all levels of land use planning, is also a place that is not short of alternatives to security-conscious environments, many of which voiced by a new generation of environmental art practices. One of them, Fallen Fruit employs fruit as a catalyst in its investigations into neighbourhood dynamics, civic processes and new forms of community formation. Fallen Fruit's work originated in mapping 'public fruit': fruit trees growing on or over public property in Los Angeles. This public fruit is not only considered a symbol of hospitality and fertility, it also encourages us to unveil and ultimately change a range of hidden relations between those owning resources and those who do not; between property, land use and the common good; between the nature of the city and the nature in the city. Maps of local public fruit have been followed by nocturnal neighbourhood fruit tours, community fruit tree plantings, communal jam-making and Public Fruit Park proposals in Hollywood, Los Feliz and downtown LA – the latter rejected by the authorities for 'security concerns'. Similarly, Urban Rangers, a Los Angeles based group of geographers, artists, curators and architects, unsettles the securitised landscapes of the Southern Californian coastline by offering educational campfire programs, guided hikes and safaris that challenge the public-private boundary of Malibu beaches – twenty miles lined with secured private development.

If these projects constitute a form of activism, this is an activism that relies on mimicking rather than replacing, supplanting rather than reversing, repeating and multiplying rather than erasing that which they attack. Devoid of any aspiration to govern, they instigate transformation by way of performatively undermining the coherent identity of 'secure' urban spaces. Here, at the nexus of politics and aesthetics, art projects take on the task of breaking into the boundaries of spatial order by modifying the modalities of experience, conception and communication. They expose the fictitious and unpredictable character inherent in any form of spatio-political arrangement by making use of the entitlements, symbols, aesthetics and rituals that usually accrue from the practice of government. The intervention of artistic and creative forces into the security-led deformation of the urban environment takes effect as it interferes in the struggle between expressions and imaginings of geopolitical situations and thus creates a new discourse.

In the Networked Cultures project, an international platform of artists, architects, curators and theorists, we have aimed to reconsider cultural transformations by examining the potentials and effects of such networked spatial practices (www.networkedcultures.org). The 'Networked Cultures Dialogues', a series of screenings, installations, exhibitions, interventions and debates, have linked locations around the globe, asking how networks of collaboration in the arts can provide a setting for the emergence of a more responsive political system. From May 2008 these public events have been hosted by institutions as diverse as the Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York, the cultural centre Proekt_Fabrika in Moscow, the Whitechapel Gallery in London, the Israeli Center for Digital Art in Holon or the Pro qm bookstore in Berlin. The common thread connecting these manifestations is the search for an architecture of possibilities, something that forms the guiding principle for the many praxes and projects brought together by Networked Cultures – initiatives that have been engaged over the long term in instigating a process of cultural appropriation of urban space and citizenry from the periphery. Numerous meetings, discussions and collectively organised events have been devoted to the modelling of structures within which spatial self-determination can take place. Who decides on the design of a collectively used space? Who controls access? Who takes responsibility for maintenance? Who is permitted to enter? Here, as elsewhere in networked urban initiatives, instead of fortifying and protecting the physical city, architecture expands and invents the means that it deploys: it uses a bricolage of art, propaganda, city policies and social relationships in order to intervene manipulatively in the context intended for urban renewal.

Outside the context prescribed by authorities, legal frameworks and security policies, unplanned and self-empowered formations have emerged whose architecture is usually accorded a subsidiary role because it only takes on efficacy in connection with a network of participants – with the gatherings of residents; with collective actions; with the extension of the space of action in international exhibitions; with the utilisation and transformation of the created structures; with the myths that enable a community to emerge and the myths in which the community continues to exist. Against the horizon of security-led planning operations, what such projects actively embrace is risk taking: not risk in economic terms but the fundamental risk that lies at the heart of an open society and highlights the fact that there is no perfect environment shapeable via art and architecture which could take the sting out of the pain associated with the experience of otherness. Exposure to the unknown and the uncertain is a basic experience that cannot be purged by aesthetic formation. Architecture can never elude the confrontation with uninvited guests. It can neither circumvent nor plan this experience just as it cannot fully determine the ideal site of urban cohabitation. What the networked laboratories of unsolicited and fearless urban engagement clearly demonstrate is that social interaction is not a state that can be planned and therefore is available not as a blueprint but only as a political possibility.

EUROPA

ART AND THE CITY:
Beijing seminar

Lorenzo Marsili
Transnational questions and transnational answers

The seminar organised by European Alternatives together with Abitare China and the China-Europa Forum last summer in Beijing is a further testament to our belief that the most pressing political and artistic questions of our time can only be tackled through the formulation of trans-cultural answers and the creation of transnational networks of activism and knowledge-production. The themes discussed were many; on the first day we looked at different strategies and examples of "engagement" in the European and Chinese artistic spheres, we then moved on to analyse the differt relations to the nation and the "national" in the two contexts, and finally discussed the perception of "globalisation" and the meaning of "global artists"; the second day was devoted to the city, with discussions on different forms of artistic interventions in public space, the different conceptions of the "city" as a shared space of sociability in Chinese and European history, and finally a glance at the figure of the flaneur, attempting to overcome its untranslatability in Chinese and identify a common way of living the city beyond productivist concerns.

All the themes shared a common objective, and namely the attempt to go beyond mere comparative analyses, to surpass the simple exchange of perspectives behind entrenched national barriers, aiming instead to isolate a core set of themes equally crucial in both Europe and China, initiating a process leading to shared alternative positions and suggestions.

This process has only just begun, and we invite you to take part.

On this page are short reflections from some of those taking part in the worhops. The full list of participants includes Mi You, Baskar Mukhopadhyay, Stephen Wright, Huang Rui, Shu Yang, Sonya Dyer, Lu Jie, Wuwei Chen, Fei Qing, Gideon Boie, Liang Jingyu, Bert de Muynck, Miao Yu, Zhuma Yujiang, Ran Ping, and Shuyu Chen.

Niccolo Milanese
The ends of dialogue and the beginnings of being together

European Alternatives is essentially a transnational initiative which happens to find its starting point in Europe but which regards the world. China and the Chinese have since the beginning of the initiative been for us a point of comparison, of reflection and of fascination. Although this comparison of cultures is justified in its own terms, our own perspective cannot be disassociated from a certain number of anxieties and fears of widespread amongst people in Europe which are attached to the rise of China as a perceived threat to jobs, prosperity and "security". If China is felt to be a threat it is because the rules of global interaction are still thought of largely in terms of competition – be it between nations or between corporations – not in terms of cooperation.

In bringing together participants from several continents in Beijing this summer for several days of discussions surrounding the responsibilities of artists and intellectuals in society our goal was to bring together a group of people who see it as the responsibility of cultural actors to redefine the rules of global interaction between peoples, to invent new paradigms of communication and imaginative and real spaces for being together. This is a long-term engagement, and one that by definition extends irrespective of geographical or political boundaries.

TAKE PART ONLINE

In the belief that Europe cannot be defined by its borders, and attempting to forge alliances transnationally, we regularly hold events and projects in several countries in the world. Follow up on the development of our initiatives in China, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia by visiting w**ww.euroalter.com** and **www.euroalter.com/china**




Stephen Wright
On extradisciplinary collaboration

Collaboration, if it is to be fruitful, must be founded on an initial diversity. Though it may feel more natural to collaborate with groups and individuals with whom we have much in common, collaboration itself has little to gain from that commonality – for neither party really has much to offer the other and collaborating soon appears unnecessary. Today, when "interdisciplinary" collaboration has become a fact of life in the self-reflective world of research in academia and beyond, this has become more than a theoretical issue: it may even make such initiatives a smithy for testing larger-scale modes of community building. Needless to say, developing a collaborative community on the basis of difference rather than sameness poses some significant challenges. Yet it is relatively straightforward for open-minded members of one discipline to engage in inter- or transdisciplinary collaboration with similarly unbiased colleagues from another: biologists, like sociologists, mathematicians, philosophers and historians work within disciplines with an established canon of texts and references acknowledged by their scientific community. One may certainly contest the paradigms and even the canon as a whole (indeed to some extent, one is expected to) but if one is to be taken seriously, one must engage with them critically.

Art, on the other hand, while not exactly undisciplined – as it is sometimes suggested by those who are apt to dismiss it as a form of knowledge production – is not a discipline. Indeed art almost constitutionally resists attempts to discipline it. While it has its internal rigour, and a history, in fact many histories, this does not make art a discipline the way art history is. All of which makes collaboration between art and academic disciplines or activist practices, indeed between art and anything, both particularly interesting and singularly ticklish. For though there has been a commendable tendency to promote collaboration between, say, art and economics, the fact that art stands outside any constituted discipline means that this mode of collaboration can only be explicitly extradisciplinary, that is, beyond the confines of any discipline. Extradisciplinary collaboration is inherently experimental, because each initiative must generate its own methodology. But above all, it is premised on a unique dynamic of skill-crossing and sharing, that is, on the *fundamental equality between competence and incompetence*. Only in an extradisciplinary framework could one make such a claim – whose conditions of possibility lie in the radical deskilling that has characterised art of the past century. It is only when challenged by an incompetence (what is a question if not an often calculated incompetence?) that a competence is called upon to question itself, raising the exchange up a notch. In this respect, extradisciplinary collaboration is a deliberative form of community building and knowledge production – and a genuine alternative to expert culture.

Stephen Wright is a philosoper and art critic

Bert de Muynck | Moving Cities
The burden of building too many squares

Two weeks after a short exploration of the tensions between the European and Chinese perception of public and private space, the China Daily newspaper published an article entitled "City Squares Miss Urban Life." In it the Xinghai Square in Dalian illustrates the urban space-race China's cities are involved in. The Xinghai Square is three times bigger than Beijing's Tian'anmen Square and is the largest city square in Asia. The article identifies the following set of problems emerging from this example: *"Inspired by Dalian, other cities have sped up city square projects to improve their images. (...) Local officials often seek the largest, not the best squares, which simply copy Western models without any creativity or consideration of local conditions. (...) Some underdeveloped cities like Jixi in Heilongjiang province have faced huge financial burdens by building too many squares."* While it is common to discuss the perception that Chinese cities miss urban squares – and connecting to that a whole set of political, cultural and civic values, problems and sensitivities – it seems that actually the opposite is happening. In that regard the fascination for Beijings' Tiananmen Square is understandable. To many it appears to be China's only Square as it is easy to read in its history and outlook the blueprint for all private and public activities happening on any square in any Chinese city. In "Remaking Beijing" (Reaktion Books, 2005) reknowed Chinese art critic Wu Hung scans the artistic, political and architectural history of Tiananmen and explains his agenda as following: "I use the term 'political space' in both senses, as an architectonic embodiment of political ideology and as an architectural site activating political action and expression. Defined as such, an official political space such as Tiananmen Square inevitably lies within the dominant political system and helps to construct this system; but it also stimulates public debate and facilitates opposition." Have we been looking at the wrong Square in order to understand the new relations between private and public life that are enfolding in many Chinese cities? The article in China Daily concludes that in Jixi, to collect enough money for the construction of the square, the city embezzled the road construction fund as well as reduced the wages of construction workers. It is the ongoing construction of new city squares in China that should stimulate debate about the direction China's public and urban life is taking. Beijing may be exemplary to understand political space, but it is clear that Dalian has subtly altered the strategy; size matters.

Bert de Muynck is an architect, writer and co-director of MovingCities. He lives and works in Beijing, China, since 2006. For more info: http://movingcities.org

Miao Yu
The Flaneur in China

One of the issues raised during the seminar was whether it is possible to recuperate the concept of the "flâneur" in contemporary China. Several Beijing residents in the audience immediately exchanged sad faces to one another. Indeed, with the exception of the old city center, Beijing's urban landscape is frequently interrupted by multiple highways, leaving only a hostile environment for the urban pedestrians. Beijing is no longer a city that provides walking pleasures. However, should we take the notion of the "flâneur" literally as an urban walking figure? Largely a conceptual creation of Walter Benjamin, the late 19th-century flâneur is more than a social type, rather an important epistemological figure situated in the declining dream world of the Parisian arcades. Benjamin makes this figure deliberately avoid Haussmann's new boulevards, loiter in the shopping arcades and spend time by gleaning archaeological fragments of the recent past. His slow temporal mode is out of synch with Haussmann's boulevard, a new landscape based on the logic of speed, circulation and social control. In my opinion, it is the flâneur's anachronism to the new Paris that, in part, defines him an epistemological figure. Benjamin's purpose is certainly not nostalgia for the "golden era" of flâneurie, but the critical knowledge necessary for a revolutionary break from history's most recent configuration.

The context of Benjamin's flâneur in the late 19th-cetnury Paris has interesting parallels to contemporary China. Just like Haussman's urban project was masterminded by the dictator Napoleon III, what enables China's radical demolition and full-throttle development is also an authoritarian regime obsessed with erecting architectural icons. The glittering icons have replaced the historical courtyard buildings, the collective dan-wei housing of the 60s and the 70s, and even some of the iconic buildings of the 1980s—these waste architectures, each registered with utopian imaginations of the past, are quickly turning into rubbles by the bulldozers. How does the juxtaposition of demolition and the rising urban skyline speak about the fates of our past utopias? Are today's Olympic icons going to end up as tomorrow's graveyards? As an observer of Chinese contemporary art, I can't help noticing the proliferation of ruin and ruin-like images centered on the phenomenon of urban demolition. A notable attempt from the Chinese artists is that they have deliberately rendered both demolitions and future developments into dialectical "ruin" images. And the juxtaposed layers of time and space on the imaginaries of the "ruin images" in Chinese contemporary art can shed lights on the epistemological configuration of contemporary China.

Miao Yu is a Ph.D. candidate in Art History at McGill University and doctoral fellow at Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. She is currently researching her dissertation on the images of urban destruction and urban waste in Chinese contemporary art since the 1990s. She has a love-hate relationship with her city of residence, Beijing.

Huang Rui
Urbanism as Art Practice

During the workshop we visited the "baitasi", the white pagoda in Beijing. The area is very interesting; effectively cornered by the second ring road to the South, and the so-called "Wallstreet of Beijing" to the West. But there we still see old Beijing houses, inhabited by traditional residents and migrant workers alike, all crammed into that area. And the white pagoda is one of the few remaining structures from the Yuan dynasty...it is a parallel time to when the city of Beijing was first built. Intellectuals, artists, and archtects may feel the pressure of the coming tranformations in the district. There are two ways to go: the area can be demolished and rebuilt with modern architecture like the "Wallstreet" zone, relocating the residents to other areas of the city; or the area can be rebuilt to its heyday of 7-800 years ago, when it boasted rivers and courtyards for chinese officials. We see in this case two very different options to deal with history and its economic implications.

And here I want to make a proposal. In attempting to reconstruct the district faithful to its past, we need to research this past, its ways of life, the events that have taken place along the way... otherwise we are left with a touristic reconstruction of old houses that is terribly shallow and merely commercial, as has happened south of the Tiananmen area. I call for an organised network for this project. Urban palnners, architects, artists and intellectuals were all involved and-collaborated in the realisation of 798 [Beijing's central artistic district, which arose out of an abandoned factory complex]. This spirit must be revived. And creative urban reconstruction, too, is to be considered an art form.

Huang Rui is an aritst, the artistic director of Thinking Hands, and one of the founders of 798 district in Beijing

Chen Wu Wei
The Invisible Galaxy of Public Space

When wandering around the street corners, ashes along the sidewalk, moss on the roof tile, scent of the jasmines, laughters of kids... every sensation accumulated from daily life transcends into memories spontaneously. Static or dynamic, visible or invisible, everything around us participates in the moulding of our experiences.

Unfortunately, power and discipline segregate our perceptions towards space into pieces. Space faces dilemma regarding to its identity. Memorials, squares, parks, buildings... are they defined by residents or the authority? Preservation, demolition, reuse, release,... how do we expand the boundary of space for public participation instead of propaganda usage? In the digital era, besides the debates of preserving or rebuilding, new thoughts shall be employed as alternative choice to augment and document beyond the physical space. By means of social media, open source, mobile device, projection, etc., mixed information are able to map, navigate, expand and penetrate the existing space like another invisible galaxy. Time and space can be compressed and superimposed, memory and being are connected through tracking and positioning; we absorb and digest these data in blinks. Through this invisible galaxy which contains dynamic information and multi-user capacity, we have the chance to re-explore and re-exam the functionality and understanding of the same space we have. Sights, touches, smells and other sensations come along in the journey. As one of millions, our existence at this moment might be mapped into someone else's memory, or being transmitted to another stage as a double. It is the moment that we realize - our thoughts float and intersect, like the particles inside a capsule.

Chen Wu Wei is a media art lecturer from Hong Kong Design Institute

Gideon Boie
AND THE BAVO COLLECTIVE
Do you really want to join us? It is up to you!

The many exchange projects these days between Europe and China tend to 'orientalise' the specific framework in which Chinese people operate. Stress is then laid upon the still almighty, invisible power the Communist Party entertains over the back of ordinary citizens – something that supposedly counter speaks the new freedoms people enjoy in the new China. As such the new openness in China today – exemplified for instance in the willingness to listen to the demands and desires of the people – seems to paradoxically strengthen the firm grip of power rather then weakening it. We claim however that this paradoxical logic is not reserved for Chinese subjects alone, but should be analysed as a local characteristic of a contemporary and global shift – a distortion, if you want – in the execution of power.

A key scene in the documentary 'The Corporation' allows us to understand this logic in its Western manifestation. In this scene, we follow a group of otherglobalist activists as they organize a sit-in in the backyard of former chairman of Royal Dutch Shell, Sir Mark Moody-Stuart in order to protest against the malpractices of multinational oil companies. To their utmost surprise, the chairman revealed himself as a passionate critic of the oil industry, displaying a clear insight into the many inconvenient truths behind this notoriously dirty industry. Moreover, he claimed that they were not telling him anything he had not already thought of himself and that he therefore did not need activists for that. The real question, he retorted, is what they were going to do about it. In this way, Sir Moody-Stuart put the ball back in the activists' court while at the same time making himself an indispensable link in the chain by making them aware of the fact that although they might not have the power to change anything, he did!

So, what we encounter here is a new way in which the ruling order mobilizes society. The shrewd tactics of the former chairman of Shell consists in not only being more critical than the activists but also in accusing them of shrugging away in the face of the enormous challenges ahead: 'if you really think things are so bad, then stop complaining and put your money where your mouth is!' In short, every criticism is interpreted as an unconscious wish for constructive cooperation and, consequently, every critic is treated as a possible ally in finding solutions to remedy the cracks in the system. In other words, it creates an atmosphere of horizontality, the feeling that both ruler and ruled are on an equal footing, engaged in a dialogue, and eager to complement each other's capabilities. Consequently, critical actors are seduced into collaborating amicably with their usual enemies about possible solutions to the many problems at hand.

Gideon Boie is co-founder of the collective for radical architecture BAVO

Sonya Dyer
Thoughts on a Summer Seminar

My personal experience of the China Europa Forum can be described by contradictory adjectives such as exciting, frustrating, intense, enriching, confusing and moving. That is to say, it did what a brief exchange of ideas is supposed to do in many ways – confuse and enlighten in equal measure.

Although I never quite shook the feeling that the 'Western' contingent didn't quite share as much of ourselves – or at least our own situations in our own countries - as our Chinese counterparts were expected to. For me, the most interesting exchange was on the second day, during a discussion on the notion of public space. The conversation came about when one of our Chinese colleagues explained a particular project he had developed involving a group of artists engaging in 'micro-performances' in Tiananmen Square. The artists mainly interacted with random people in the square through these one-to-one performances, experiencing a mixed reaction from the individuals they were trying to interact with. For Westerners, Tiananmen Square is mainly associated with the protests in 1989 (known as the June Fourth Incident in China), as exemplified by the infamous 'Tank Man' photograph of an unknown man standing before a group of tanks.

Tiananmen seems to have a particular hold on the Western liberal / neoliberal imagination as an example of the Chinese systems brutality and inflexibility. What was interesting to me was the exchange that followed. Responses covered the spectrum, from the person who repeated the Governmental line that 'the Government are the parents and the People are the children,' to another who questioned the value of Tiananmen's perceived value as the symbolic public space in Beijing. In the light of all the new, often Olympic-related architecture in Beijing, this argument suggested, wasn't it a bit old fashioned to focus on Tiananmen? Why not engage with people in one of the new spaces? What is the value of these intimate exchanges – what's the point of only affecting one person in a sea of people? This was the most passionate exchange of the entire weekend, and it was an exchange largely – if not entirely - between the Chinese participants. Conversely, it resonated with me more than anything else. In particular, it made me think about Brian Haw and his anti-war protest (originally an anti Iraqi sanctions project) In Parliament Square. Of how often I had seen him engaged in conversation with an individual or two, of all the cars that honked their approval of him as they drove past. And of course, how the British government went as far as to change the law to prevent anyone from protesting within a mile of the Houses of Parliament as a result of his presence. I see Brian Haw as an example of the power of protest, and how an individual can affect the politics of an entire country/culture.

Sonya Dyer is an artist and the coordinator of the ‹art and politics› programme at Chelsea College, University of the Arts, London

JÖRG COLBERG

INTERVIEW WITH RIO BRANCO

Conversation on photography, art, and photojournalism with one of Brazil's most outstanding artists

Miguel Rio Branco's work embodies the riches, complexity and sensuality of Latin America. His photographs do not attempt to hide the desolate side of life, but instead show pain, loneliness, violence and death, subjects that his extraordinary command of the intense colours and lighting transforms into beauty and poetry.

Jörg Colberg: When people hear "Magnum" I think many of them will think of classic b/w photojournalism. With its use of often very vibrant colour, your work clearly doesn't fall into that category. And since you have a background as a director of photography for movies I'm wondering how much that also contributed to the development of your own photographic style?
Miguel Rio Branco: I see that Magnum is growing into a dynamic creative force with many individual paths and not only in the traditional photojournalistic way.
My own work was never only about colour since after painting, in the beginning I did most of the time both, black and white and colour, as well as experimental films (New York 1970-72). In 1980, while living in São Paulo, my archives burned, and what was left were mostly the colour slides that were travelling with me. The dramatic use of colour relates a lot to my painting background. But painting is not only the background since I am still painting again since the mid-eighties.
The other link is with cinema and music. I was never really aware of the big names in photography until 1974, and this is after already six years of using photography as my main medium.

JC: Do you focus a lot of your attention on Latin America, an obvious choice for you, and if yes why?
MRB: I've always focused on what is around me. I was never really very much into the immediacy of certain subjects. I did Latin America when I was in Brazil (not as a Latin American), New York when I was in New York, Paris when I was in Paris. So: definitely I was never really focusing on Latin American subjects because of a need for identity or something like that. Since I was the son of a diplomat I lived in Portugal, Switzerland, New York; and my grandmother was French. I feel very much as being part of a whole.

JC: Often, the boundary between the pure fine-art photography and photojournalism is not that clear. When I look at your work I'm under the impression that you never really worry about what your actual role is but that you instead focus on creating the kinds of images you want to see.
MRB: The boundary between fine art and photography is clear at least to me. Between fine art and photojournalism it is the same. What I have seen lately is mostly commercial (photography), or technical or photojournalism, becoming "ART" just because of its size or because of who in power says that this or that is ART. To me Art is a question of: first, having something to say from the inside that has nothing to do with description of reality, reality being just the material thing that the camera captures.

JC: So when fine-art photographers go to places like New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, take photos there, and then exhibit the work in museums or galleries – is it art? Or is it journalism, even though the photographic language used is clearly taken from the art world and not from photojournalism?
MRB: I think that it is not the fact that your work is being exhibited in the Museum that makes it a work of Art. I don't think Museums are free from influences by curators linked to galleries, and from the speculation of the powerful art market.

JC: You have been a member of Magnum for quite a while. How did being a member of Magnum benefited your work, and, looking back, how do you view its evolution since when you joined?
MRB: I've never become a member really. My status is that of a correspondent; you could call this a collaborator maybe. I have some of my work distributed by Magnum, and still enjoy meeting some of the members, mostly whenever I go to Paris. I stayed a nominee for two years, 1982 and 1983, and then I felt the need of not having to prove anything about my needs to create. I was back in Brazil, in Bahia, and getting back to painting.

JC: I think we are currently witnessing what one might call the transformation of Magnum into something different, even though I will not attempt to define what that might be. But it seems that with Magnum's inclusion of photographers who very clearly originate in the pure fine-art world and with "citizen journalism" becoming ever more prevalent - anyone with a camera can now shoot a newsworthy photo (i.e. the photos taken by the passengers of the bombed subway in London). What do you see as the role an agency such as Magnum is going to play in the future?
MRB: I was never a real photojournalist, mostly a documentary photographer. For a while I thought a document was interesting. Since the beginning of the 1980's I was already speaking about the freedom of possibilities that using photography in poetic statements with total control of editing was giving a photographer/artist. The personal work was always more important to me than the document. Magnum is possibly only the agency, with VU maybe being another one that sees that the originality of each photographer is now more important than the fact that anyone around a disaster with a cell camera can document any disaster.

JC: I am under the impression that there is a development towards what you call banality and clichés, and I'm wondering what photographers can do about it. Editorial photographers experience being squeezed out of contracts, and I think the emphasis on digital and on photography being democratic (whatever that actually is supposed to mean). How can photographers counteract that trend?
MRB: I guess the only way is to have the need of being yourself, with your own identity, and not only look into the market's needs. Cultural projects are open fields to show the world, mostly by showing its own creator's needs of expression. The originality of each artist makes the difference, and not only the way a photographer can do an assignment well. I was always pro this difference and I guess this moment now is very open to this new field of expression.

Voyage Fugu 2007_2008
170x115cm.jpg, geometria do desejo versão

Geometria do Desejo
2007_2008
Ed. 1-5 poliptico 5 fotos
(dim. variadas)

Divagações de um Fugu Delirante
Sílva Cintra Gallery, August 27 – September 26
Rua Teixeira de Melo, 53, Ipanema - Rio de Janeiro
Miguel Rio Branco's most recent photographic work, from which the images on this page are taken, is currently on display in Rio de Janeiro at the Sílva Cintra Gallery. The photographs emerge from a special project carried on in 2007 and first presented at Tokyo's Museum of Contemporary Art, whereby Rio Branco was invited to photograph the Japanese capital and Daido Moryama worked in Rio de Janeiro.
www.silviacintra.com.br/

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In the Next Issue of Europa:

SERIES: EUROPE AND THE OTHER
Celebrated philosopher Gianni Vattimo will continue our series of reflections on the relation between Europe and its outside.

FEMINISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY
Following on from the recent interview with Nancy Fraser, we continue our investigation of the potentials of feminism in the new century.

LATIN AMERICA & REGIONALISM
Two articles will be looking at the question of regional blocs and the participation of social movements, with a particular comparative eye at the Latin American reality.

DOSSIER: ART & THE CITY
Reports on cities torn bewteen global flux and the erection of new borders, with a focus on questions of nationalism, migration, and ethnicity.

With the support of the European Parliament. This publication reflects only the views of its authors.