UC San Diego

UC San Diego Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

To Walk on Worn-out Soles: The 2005 International Istanbul Biennial and the Global Drift of Twenty-First Century Art

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/52d4t989

Author

Schum, Matthew Robert

Publication Date

2015

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

To Walk on Worn-out Soles:
The 2005 International Istanbul Biennial and the Global Drift of Twenty-First Century Art

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Art History, Theory and Criticism

by

Matthew Robert Schum

Committee in Charge:

Professor Norman Bryson, Chair
Professor Teddy Cruz
Professor Michael Davidson
Professor Grant Kester
Professor Sheldon Nodelman

2015

©

Matthew Robert Schum, 2015

All rights reserved.

The Dissertation of Matthew Robert Schum is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Chair

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

2015

Dedication

For Robert and Lee, wanderers before I.

Epigraph

It is because Humanity has never known
where it was going that it has been able
to find its way.

Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist*

Table of Contents

Signature Page.....iii

Dedication.....iv

Epigraph.....v

Table of Contents.....vi

Vita.....vii

Abstract of the Dissertation.....viii

Preface *Istiklal Çadessi*.....1

Introduction *Dériville*.....8

Chapter 1 *Walking in the City: The 2005 Istanbul Biennial*.....22

Chapter 2 *Anti-Social Drifting*.....32

Chapter 3 *The Biennialism of Perennial Critique*.....44

Chapter 4 *Contemporary Art & Audience: Exhibition Sites for the 2005 Biennial*...68

Chapter 5 *The International & the Everyday: Select 2005 Biennial Projects*.....86

Chapter 6 *Encounter Before Object: Drifting in Time*.....132

Chapter 7 *Siting Optimism After 2005: The 2007 & 2009 Istanbul Biennials*..... 151

Chapter 8 *Viewership & Shadow-Work*.....190

Conclusion *At the Margin*.....249

References.....254

Vita

2004 Bachelor of Arts, Simon Fraser University

2015 Doctor of Philosophy, University of California, San Diego

Field of Study

Major Fields: Art History (Contemporary Art and Criticism)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

To Walk on Worn-out Soles:
The 2005 International Istanbul Biennial and the Global Drift of Twenty-first-Century Art

by

Matthew Robert Schum

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History, Theory and Criticism

University of California, San Diego, 2015

Professor Norman Bryson, Chair

This dissertation draws upon the curatorial tenets of *Istanbul*, the 2005 Istanbul Biennial. The dissertation aims to make observations about visual art reception in the early twenty-first century. To this end, the focus is audience: namely, how it collectively absorbs and formulates meaning when faced with art in offsite exhibitions removed from the traditional enclosure of the art museum. Audience members in urban exhibitions such as 2005's Istanbul Biennial resemble older forms of urban wandering central to history modern art, embodied in the figure of the flaneur. As *Istanbul* exemplifies the globalized visual art distribution system by the cultivating an ambulant and recurrent audience, it also characterizes visual art's progressive elements. *Istanbul* stands as a model for how itinerant communities and unconventional exhibitions can displace artworks themselves as primary resources. Unlike art movements defined by historical objects, the affective dispersal of reception has redefined contemporary art in the last two decades.

Preface
Istiklal Çadessi

If an outsider visiting Istanbul wishes to find where East and West meet, it is surely at an intersection somewhere along Istiklal Street. From the sheer, narrow streets meeting at the base of Galata Tower to Taksim Square, draped in crimson and crescents, strung with banners bearing Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's ageless face, this one street in Istanbul's central district of Beyoğlu blends impressions of the Ottoman's chief stronghold and imperial department stores, fast food, and fast fashion. The tourist will find the same implacable ruins of Empire as can to be met with across Europe, from the Bosporus to the Thames. The worldly traveler will notice capital flourish here as it does everywhere. The city presages its own peculiar version of a future where we can expect that nothing "East" or "West" will survive distinctly. An Istanbul removed from the myth, firmly of this world and familiar with the dominant world economy has been on the rise for many years now. Antiquity figures as a sideshow. An outsider disabused of Eurocentric notions of decline in this East would, on a casual first stroll, begin the slow process of absorbing the past on Istiklal. This outsider may well arrive at a conclusion that finds our capitals devoid of exoticism and yet sees how spectacle-culture awaits them everywhere.

In this way of seeing things, everything belongs to the contemporary moment, and remnants of history, even as they linger, exist only to be synchronized in the service of a global scheme. Like many places, Turkey is a republic of the free-market, one that has remained in a state of endless modernization and redevelopment since its first

government was formed after the Turkish War of Independence in 1920. It now belongs to a consortium of non-places whose reach spans territories greater than any country. Turkey has many of the same problems facing other major economic powers. Istanbul is a prime example: it can change quickly, adapting and harnessing the latest wave of development as a commercial center. The city has been retrofitted with boutiques that fill shopping malls in America, pedestrian plazas in Western-European styles, and all the features of gentrification that have been imported here. Name brand stores are incorporated indiscriminately into local architecture, whether the ornate vestiges of the past or the drab cement facades so hastily constructed across the Greek and Turkish Mediterranean in the second half of the twentieth century.[1]

My first research trip as a graduate student was in 2006. A recent phase of redevelopment was cloying its way through the European side, high and low clothing? outlets had arrived to serve the fashion hungry. The impression of walking Istiklal included the pervasive sound of slamming jackhammers. Bustling throngs of shoppers, commuters, and loafers from across the city muffled the noise of new construction echoing in alleyways.. This trend of redevelopment has continued with remarkable pace by any standard, and has generated hostility and unrest. A standoff at Gezi Park rocked the country in 2013, as violent protests broke out between rioters and the many police

[1] It is ironic that Le Corbusier's flexible stacked cement "Dom-ino" facades found across the region, including Greece and the Balkans, were inspired by wooden pillar buildings found in Turkey (and now largely missing in the parts of Istanbul where they used to stand). Introduce quotation with a signal phrase. "In the Dom-ino model, flexibility is not only a positive quality, but also a fundamental apparatus of social engineering that controls the economic development of supposedly spontaneous settlements from the Brazilian favelas to the Turkish *gecekondu*. First of all, while it exploits the cheap informal labour force, Dom-inos are also based on industrially produced raw materials that drive the profit back to larger scale corporations." For more see: Pier Vittorio Aureli, Maria S. Giudici and Platon Issaias, "From Dom-ino to Polykatoikia" *Domus*, (no. 962, October 2012).

officers standing ready along Istiklal on a daily basis. International problems surface occasionally, proving the extent to which Anatolia remains a geopolitical focal point. Beyoğlu's restless corridors have long attracted recreational travelers and people living in exile. They come from the region and from afar.

In 1958, Henri Lefebrvre asked, "[w]ill there ever be anything great which is not dehumanized–or a form of happiness which is not tinged with mediocrity?" as he established his *Critique Everyday Life*.[2] For Lefebvre, mediocrity concerned a Western-style of capitalist exploitation versus a Soviet brand of unrealized Communist potential. His analysis of everyday life entailed looking at life as it was lived, commonly, rather than hovering comfortably at the level of economic abstractions, industry's commanding heights, and the theoretical formulas of academicians. Above all, looking for society in its trivial details could uncover its actual nature, telling us why it systematically replaces the old for the new without evidencing improvement. Lefebvre's purpose in analyzing mundane aesthetic choices appears in the sentence following, when he sees outside his suburban Paris window that, "[t]he picturesque is disappearing with a rapidity which provides the reactionaries with an ample supply of ammunition for their proclamations and jeremiads. Above all it is being reduced to its vile essence: poverty."[3] He would not be the first to point to the fact that the deprivations of laissez-faire social policies are self-serving.Yet he goes on here to critique everyday life in the West both for its machinations, its impoverished disjointed expressions of community, and for a modern tendency towards nostalgia and neglect:

---

[2] Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, (Verso: London; 1991), 43.

[3] Lefebvre, 43-44.

> What used to be its spark of beauty—the primitive diversity of everyday man, the generosity of his nature, the many-faceted local eccentricities, the brutal, swarming tumult—that beauty has disappeared. It has become congealed into so many museum pieces floating on the muddy ocean of destitution. What disappointments await the naive traveller to the famous cities of the fabulous East! Were all those old story-tellers lying? Did they see things differently then? Can things and people have changed so much? The eagerly awaited wonders, the marvelous surprises, the ruins, the monuments, the stories from the *Thousand and One Nights*, the folksongs and dances—they are no longer enough to colour the spectacle and transform it for us. Naples, Baghdad, Calcutta: the same sun shines down on the same rags, the same running sores. The myths have disappeared, the rituals and magic spells have lost their glamour. All we can see now are the destitute masses, and the ignoble apparatus of domination which lies over them, the unlovely art of power. There is nothing left to seduce us. Everywhere a bare-faced display of force: rifles, armoured cars, policemen.[4]

From his vantage overlooking a Paris in which decline and progress are indistinguishable, Lefebvre warns that his country looks no different than former, less advanced nations in earlier times. A mindset of faded romanticism and apathy long ago bled the community of its rituals and led the charge of colonialism, both internally and across "the fabulous East." The police, meanwhile, always riot-ready, erect barricades to ensure decisions affecting communities of all sizes elaborating further "the unlovely art of power" that is capitalism.

Offering an alternative to the orthodoxy of critical theory, *The Critique of Everyday Life* finds its charge in how power expresses itself in seemingly trivial things.

It is in the common features of everyday things that a cityscape possesses a visual language. In the midst of that language, a wanderer emerges. This provides one of the instrumental observations driving this dissertation. Forever a student of society's

---

[4] Lefebvre, 44.

collective failings and the exteriority that marks dysfunction, this ambling imbiber of images arrives at places where contemporary art takes refuge in the upheaval that capitalism cultivates.

Beyoğlu, in other words, provides a contemporary experience. In the years following the 2005 Biennial, artists and curators enjoyed many opportunities to intervene in the flow of everyday life. This was not done to find the marvelous in the common (as modern artists such as the Surrealists had done in the tradition of Baudelaire), but to return visual art to a realism it has lost in its commodification, glamorization and market-driven mediation. Visitors who can enjoy all of Beyoğlu's pleasures are those who sit in the shade of cafe awnings, enter beneath storefront signs and theater marquees, moving along Istiklal between illuminated signs and alleyway street lamps. Beyoğlu is democratic because in that it exists only temporarily. It is a place where the parallel lines of communal livelihoods and the impersonal rituals of transaction intersect at increasingly sharp angles. These are the liminal junctions where art finds spaces to stage its occupations.

Istanbul has long attracted drifters. Its unrivaled landmarks and geography call them, as does the cairn of the crowd that unrelentingly gathers above views of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. As a pedestrian mall, Beyoğlu's Istiklal Street welcomes strollers of all economic backgrounds, functioning as a quintessential expression of everyday life, rendering art fluid and the economy dynamic. The stage of Istiklal presents endless adaptations between people and the built environment. In its current status, Istiklal is a historical point of convergence . It is where all classes of workers in Istanbul

—students, tourists, transients, guests, and inveterate denizens of all sorts—rub elbows for the sake of soaking in the aura of a place, a name. The sensibilities drawn out from contemporary art suggest that there is a labor to this state of absorption. It is a major city like others partially overrun by capitalism's mediocrity and partially holding onto its many romantic stripes painted long ago in the streets and the imaginations of outsiders. Grand pedestrian marketplaces can be found elsewhere in the eastern and western Mediterranean. This central axis, though, localizes the tourist and internationalizes the local unlike any other.

I offer these initial sentiments in the tradition of Lefebvre, as a critique of everyday life. Displacement is a contemporary condition, nearing universal proportions, reorganizing privilege and the working-classes alike. In offering this doctoral dissertation, I affirm the deliverance that visual art still offers adherents. Visual art's shift from stationary objects to a productive displacement.[5] Industry, often used as shorthand for "the art world," thus refers to art's role in what economists call the tertiary sector of the economy: that is, the service economy as voluntary affective labor.[6] The related term "productive" here refers to what preserves contemporary art's relevance in culture and economics. Displacement, the key term, refers to fieldwork in a diversity of locations, including viewership, for seekers of cultural capital; connoisseurship for those with

---

[5] Objects are made and central to the emergent system. But they are marked by a decreased level of distinction as art (defined by nearly any objective criteria). Cultivating an expanded experience of seeing art for diversifying publics, rather than procuring art objects, defines the primary role of the industry in the current century under consideration here.

[6] On affective labor see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, (Penguin; New York: 2004), 150.

capital; and research of all descriptions (whether amateur artistic research or the work of scholars).

Introduction
Dériville

Engineering attention and finding productive displacement through art has roots in utopian thinking. Visionary architect and Situationist International associate Constant Nieuwenhuys[7], for example, abandoned painting to develop a theory of endless wandering as a way out of art's futility. The theory and art that resulted was heavily influenced by Lefebvre, another associate of the Situationists.[8] From painting, Constant reversed the modernist tactic of grafting lived experience of the city upon the canvas. Instead, he put perspectival space in motion at the feet of a deracinated agent capable of manipulating the built environment as might a potter at the wheel. His concept of a *New Babylon* cut a page from Malevich's Supremacist dreams of a unifying architecture and Lissitzky's goal-oriented creations. Inspired by the everyday systems developed by refugees in need of moveable architectures in unfamiliar countries, Constant sculpted maquettes out of volumetric plinths, dividing and communicating interchangeably as shelter and semaphore on the landscape. As he saw it, New Babylon is "a camp for nomads on a planetary scale," unencumbered by modern administration or what he called a "utilitarian society."[9] In Constant's text for *New Babylon*, a future design appears already written in a preexisting infrastructure facilitated by creative nomads on an endless

[7] Usually referred to by his first name.

[8] See Michel Trebitsch, 'Preface' to *Critique of Everyday Life*, (Verso: London; 1991).

[9] Constant Nieuwenhuys, *For an Architecture of Situation*, (Haags Gemeetenmuseum, 1974).

dérive.[10] Abandonment and production are indistinguishable parts of the artistic endeavor for Constant.

Freedom from the rule of the time clock presents the first key to achieving this changeability. There is no talk of money after a presumed revolution in form. Human ingenuity will proceed regardless of bureaucratic utility. As Constant writes of his ludic society, "[w]ith productive work disappearing, collective timekeeping has no more *raison d'etre*; the masses will, on the other hand, have a considerable amount of free time."[11] Artists replace citizens just as the use of canvases and beaux arts materials dissolve into an endless exchange, mobile in its minimal organizational form, like a festival removed from all traces of Gregorian time. Constant's wanderers possess the solar dispositions of seasonal creatures, with antennas tuned to his satellite architectures.

Another way to envision wandering described in *New Babylon* (Originally titled *Dériville)* is to imagine the drifter in a late-modern city, where work consists primarily of absorbing cultural signs and symbols. The main objective of this culture, ironically, is its own erosion. This is not nihilism so much as the drive toward new beginnings. How else does the wanderer arrive at the blank slates envisioned by the Supremacists perfectly aligning form and function?

---

[10] The *dérive* or drift through the city identified a primary practice of the artistic group the Situationist International (as least in the late-1950s). It entailed the rapid passage through a city's "varied ambiences" in which "one or more persons during a certain period of time drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there" in a city such as Paris. See Debord, "Theory of the *Dérive*," *Internationale Situationniste*, (no. 2, December 1958). This is essential information, and should be incorporated above.

[11] Constant Nieuwenhuys' *New Babylon* translated version available at http://www.notbored.org/new-babylon.html (accessed September 2015).

One way to envision the current state of art would be to imagine that the objects and environments in art exhibitions are representative of a general (some would say unconscious) drive in society towards the unknown exemplified by New Babylon. This refinement that Constant so brilliantly captured is unencumbered by the confluence of art and economics. Creative people have become unmoored from productive time; networking has become a situation where life is happening in a specific place but without a specific function. The distinction between work and leisure, art and commerce, has been lost. Wandering accentuates this unlikely confluence of ideologies mingling in a suspended state of displacement, and moving visual art towards the type of post-mercantilism Constant dreamed of in the 1960s.In part, this is a wanton delusion fostered by art's lingering utopianism: a break from culture that turns art forward (in response to society's conservative conformity to the arts industry). These artistic attitudes are attributable to the nineteenth century obsession with the past that meant overturning tradition. In turn, we see this skepticism adopted by avant-garde artists in the early twentieth century, who considered failure a prerequisite to moving art into the twentieth century.

We find practice especially in the case of Duchamp. The readymade extends painting, first, by moving the point of view beyond single-point, into perspectival space, as in his rejoinder to Cubism, *Nude Descending a Staircase*. The artist lurches beyond the immobility of the painter's gaze as well. The readymade was a mirror putting vision in motion as the agent-artist reflected whatever subject matter might fill or be excluded from the canvas. David Joselit has called this prismatic space that cloaks the everyday

thing in the aura painting (as readymade) “an infinite regress[ion]” or “aporia of measurement in which organic form is disciplined into proto-geometry.”[12] The purpose is to capture the inorganic body-double through painted space (the nude in *Nude Descending a Staircase*) and, later, everyday objects through a painterly lens which has absconded from the historical framework of the canvas. While this desirable confusion of art and mundane things may only occur in glimpses (three turns of a chocolate grinder, a motion of the tongue behind a cheek in profile, a storefront mannequin mistaken for an acquaintance) it entails a “the displacement of the body by commodity” for those few brief seconds.[13] In Duchamp’s anti-art reflected objects as uncanny producers—lifelike in their own right—art makes space by implanting the vitality of everyday life in the tomb of the gallery.

Every impulse, activity or mundane errand, every thought of the artist that comes before or after making a painting may later become art, and the artist will, eventually, have curators, writers and Public Relations firms to justify this realm of creativity as a domain of free reign legitimizing their intellectual property (as art). In the final analysis, these gestures may only be a defense against the “displacement of the body by commodity” by external, market-driven forces that placate and palliate the life force of the artist. Duchamp, like many of his contemporaries, embraced the absorption of art into economic trivialities as an iconoclasm and anarchism of minor objects measuring space in the built environment, lending a pleasurable, even philosophical ambiguity to lived experience. Here, Duchamp’s art entered what Joselit deems its “immensurability": a

---

[12] David Joselit, *Infinite Regress*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 5-6.

[13] Ibid., 6.

conceptual space scrambling art's measurable traditions using whatever means available. Such perversions of traditional art requires the realm of the commodity to arrive at the readymade. An immensurable space is the terrain of the wanderer, of Constant's nomads living on the periphery of conventional communities.

This displacement of art and the artist is also reflected in to Foucault's work, as for instance when he remarks that

> The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history: with its themes of development and of suspension, of crisis, and cycle, themes of the ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world. The nineteenth century found its essential mythological resources in the second principle of thermodynamics. The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed.[14]

The second thermodynamic principle states that entropy is shared across the connected parts of a machine. Foucault relates the general fascination with turning points in history and the shared burden of marking the passage of time. His is an age of escape, disappearance, and dispersal across the surface of societies becoming increasingly superficial, aestheticized by the rituals of the consumer. He devotes the rest of this essay, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" to warning against losing connection to informal, unsanctioned and alternative spaces, what he calls "heterotopias." Heterotopias are simply places where utopias can be glimpsed or anticipated in the juxtaposition of subcultures with the mundanities of mass culture: the commune, the library, the spa, the club, the brothel, the speakeasy, the casino, the liberated colony, the carnival, the picket,

---

[14] See Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," in *Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff, (Routledge; New York, 1998), 229-237.

the protest, etc. Democracy has ushered in a more lateral society in which power flows less directly than it did in previous, more hierarchical centuries. Power is therefore largely composed in and through spaces of exclusion, and accumulation. Introduce quotation with signal phrase. “Opposite these heterotopias that are linked to the accumulation of time, there are those linked, on the contrary, to time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival. These heterotopias are not oriented toward the eternal, they are rather absolutely temporal.”[15]

Two art-related points can be drawn from this general theory. First, the art industry consists of a wide range of organizations, museums chiefly, that consider the enclosure of art as accumulations of time. Second are those organizations, those spaces, that are “absolutely temporal,” such as biennials. In this second realm, art is exhibited in alternate environs, heterotopias. These organizations are often at their best when aligned with the mentality of a festival. That is, a space that allows viewers to explore, become lost, and experience a brief suspension of time. Foucault mentions the fairgrounds on the outskirts of town as a model. In general, the terrain in this second scenario requires a wanderer, rather than a contained viewer enclosed in a single museum complex.

The conditions of this split tends to de-formalize art, setting it up for contextual confusion about its purpose, on the one side, reinforcing history, on the other, deconstructing history, expanding and dispersing its innumerable interpretations and immeasurable purposes. Since Duchamp’s early breakthroughs (and the decades it took for them to be appreciated and canonized), visual art on both sides of the Atlantic has

---

[15] Foucault., 230.

occasionally exhibited strains of thought that can only be considered retrograde, defunct, punchless, or even deceased. Critics have long specialized in finding new ways to say that their experience of a current art exhibition offers nothing new, beyond rote appropriation. Contemporary art is often in danger of being irrelevant to the near or the far, and in the service of neither the past nor of the present.

Thus, the critical mind often lurches towards a nonexistent visual art that has yet to constitute itself as historically in-tune, forward-looking, or cognizant of the present in its own right. As a result, contemporary art and criticism tends to repackage history, over and over. It proceeds as the Surrealists often did, by taking from outside cultures and juxtaposing their appropriations with popular culture items. Viewers are expected to accept each appropriation as a gift from the image-superstructures that give each age a cosmopolitan psychology. An aestheticization of consumption emerges from this consumer culture.. Duchamp’s principle of selection is distinct from rote consumption, and asserting this distinction is one of the contemporary artist's primary roles. The crucial point here is that reversion in art, unlike mercantile productions, functions as social critique. Sublimating American corporate culture, advertising and finance serves as an ambiguous critique of visual culture. Art, I would argue, cannot be contemporary unless it delimits an alternative space or history. Combined with visual art’s increased reliance on

the experience of exteriority or spectacle—of life in a marketplace—one outcome of this perennial hindsight is that visual art calls forth the return of the flaneur.[16]

Given that the following sees this figure reemerge in sophisticated new formations of viewership, a quick review of the original concept is in order. To describe the concept Charles Baudelaire says of the flaneur that the "crowd is his element, as the air is the of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite."[17] In the follow I imagine this passionate spectator evolving, becoming more perfect and at home in the multitude. Upon this return, our wanderer does not occur as a fully-fledged, self-same replica of a nineteenth-century bohemian *flâneur* but, rather, as a malleable creative agent equally self-conscious of his or her subjectivity, as in Baudelaire's time, and always nodal in consideration of his or her viewership between "the fugitive and the infinite," as the critic describes their obsession with contemporaneity. The return of the flaneur is an

---

[16] Neologisms such as Nicholas Bourriaud's "semionaut" (from the book *Postproduction*, first published 2002, defined below) could be considered identical to the wanderer defined here in many regards. The old term flaneur has been retained, nonetheless, to denote three aspects: First, an agent still of the past, not yet etherized or totally interpolated as a subject or viewer, who is drifting with one foot in the real, physical urban world and one foot in the art-text world of signs and sign systems.. Second, without idealizing or prioritizing a technological realm through which the wanderer drifts unbridled, the lingering flaneur denotes a disposition of idleness, a concern with the ascendent ease of global awareness and travel, and that visits high-functioning professionals on an endless *dérive*. The flaneur*, that is to say,* remains with us as something yet to be fully consumed and in turn made démodé. He symbolizes a corrupting influence specific to the arts industry, one that can make ambivalent loafers of militants, A bohemian sense of exceptionalism haunts the contemporary artist. The new flaneur protests through his or her invisibility, criticizing the deluge of signs and values that promote privilege and prefigure the him- or her- self as a generator of the current art industry. Third, the flaneur conflates the artist and the viewer. This artist-viewer's activity provides an extension of the avant-garde subcategory of anti-art that has become has dominant in the last century. It blends critique and capital, whereby acts of consuming and producing are blurred as representations of art.

[17] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, (London: Phaidon; 1964), 9.

intersubjective diffusion of imagery that performs a service on the periphery, no matter how central viewership is to institutions. Anyone is a flaneur who, in Baudelaire's words, "makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distill the eternal from the transitory."[18] In the original Parisian context, the flaneur appraised the contradictions of citified life at the dawn of modernism by communing with its blend of discipline and chaos, decorum and violence mixing together on the figurative canvas of a street pigmented by the multitude. Amidst the crowd the flaneur observed denizens replacing old lifestyles in rapid succession with new consumer rituals into their subsistence as though life depended upon it. Baudelaire saw this affecting artistic practice as it too relied upon scanning and appropriating for its coveted appeal to modern viewers. The common result today is artwork that takes cover in the camouflage of familiar (found art) forms. Thus the flaneur herein relates to what Walter Benjamin saw as the advent of a strange empathy, one that prioritized purchasable objects. As Benjamin writes in The Arcades Project: "[e]mpathy with the commodity is fundamentally empathy with exchange value itself. The flâneur is the virtuoso of this empathy. He takes the concept of marketability itself for a stroll. Just as his final ambit is the department store, his last incarnation is the sandwich-man."[19] The first incarnation may indeed have perished, as Benjamin says, with the conflation of the urban advertisement and the urban wanderer. But, like an updated product line mirroring previous models, I treat the flaneur as an ineradicable feature of art viewership after nineteenth- and twentieth-century modernism. I focus on its return in large international

[18] Ibid., 12.

[19] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, (Cambridge: Harvard Press; 2002), 448.

art exhibitions. Throughout, I also treat this flaneur-like viewership as an outgrowth of Surrealist found art practice and the Situationism *dérive* or aimless drift across the city that connects modern art strategies to tactics of contemporary viewership.[20]

The Surrealists are especially important because they offer a model for what wandering means. Their retreats into everyday Parisian life sought to evoke the periphery of a collective consciousness. They did so by cultivating a suspension of consciousness that could interrupt the artifice of official art history. This state of exteriority divined a latent energy in démodé objects of limitless (immensurable) proportions. To André Breton and the Surrealists, a revolution could be found in borrowed images. These appropriation tactics served as the basis for poetry and experimentation within strict, social organizations (including the Communist Party), as well as formal intellectual structures(such as academic art history). Reaching a state of psychic suspension through apprehension casts them as wanderers. They also thought a personable form of revolution was accessible through the happenstance of dream recollection and appropriation.

Mixing art and poetry, Surrealism anticipated art as a daily practice of post-studio wandering. This suspended attention, incidentally, is precisely what the social aspect of the art industry entails. The Surrealists explored their inherently bourgeois drives in the things they found on walks, running errands, drinking with friends, or entertaining patrons. For the avant-garde, the parentage of revolt resided in daydreams and day trips, and something monstrous residing in mundane objects that fill the houses of others. That the avant-garde represented a consumer cult is one possible misreading of what is to

[20] The invocation of the flaneur, so central to sentimental notions of the bohemian artist, also calls attention to visual art's continued reliance on old myths critiqued in the following.

follow. The Surrealism movement presaged many reintegrations of consumer goods into visual art in the post-readymade era that is now well underway. Duchamp's incisive revolt is now a century old. Following its arc, the contemporary artist relies again and again on a formulaic collision: minor object meets art history. These recurrent tactics of the historical avant-garde that resuscitate history using prosaic forms present the raw material of a conceptual art began roughly a hundred years ago. Adherence to this formula on the creative end has made appropriative measures a requirement, and drifting a mandate.

The rite of drifting is vital to the rituals of the visual art industry . Partially artistic and partially economic in its inextricable (immeasurable) calculations, the ceremony of wandering is an endless task. One might consider it a reformed version of the tamer, quainter duty in a less aggressively global, more patriarchal era of twentieth-century development: the Grand Tour. It is a phenomenon nurtured by the airplane that shuttles drifters between time zones to the next unmissable whirlwind of art-capital.

Beginning from the idea that a primary strain of conceptual art entails using found objects from daily life as art subjects, and that some kind of this decontextualized consumerism resurfaces over and over again as the crux of an anti-modern or postmodern praxis, I will argue that a reprisal of the nineteenth century practice of flanerie has become essential for artists. Why? In part, it is because contemporary art retains patriarchal contours of privileged classes that reinforce nineteenth century notions about the privileged condition of art.Travel, wandering, drifting through cities or educational ranks of universities while navigating academic discourses all have become prerequisites

to proximity to art and to an industry that subsists in trading increasingly complicated shares of attitudes, in the alchemical formulation of Szeemann, Beuys, et al.[21]

Today, flanerie no longer represents a pastime of the déclassé, the anti-social aristocrat or the lumpen proletariate. Rather, wandering responds to an "absolutely temporal" form of organization. As Frédéric Gros concisely explains the peculiar artistry described by Walter Benjamin above: "the *flâneur* subverts solitude, speed, dubious business and consumerism."[22] This general role coincides with the role of the artist on many accounts, and has remained consistent even while scale has multiplied in terms of the terrain of this subversion since the nineteenth century. The flaneur subverts consumerism by wading into its mass displays, exhibits, and spectacles. A related idea of the "semionaut" central to French critic-curator Nicolas Bourriaud's notion of "postproduction" art describes the "protocols" of this subversive artist-reader implied in the return of the *flaneur*. As he writes, "[t]he processes in question here do not consist of producing images of images, which would be a fairly mannered posture, or of lamenting the fact that everything has 'already been done,' but of inventing protocols of use for all existing modes of representation and all formal structures." Rather, Bourriaud continues,

> [i]t is a matter of seizing all the codes of the culture, all the forms of everyday life, the works of the global patrimony, and making them function…The activities of DJs, Web surfers, and postproduction artists imply a similar configuration of knowledge, which is characterized by the invention of paths through culture. All three are "semionauts" who produce original pathways through signs…This recycling of sounds, images, and forms implies incessant navigation within the meanderings of cultural history, navigation which itself becomes the subject of artistic

[21] The reference is to the art and beliefs that followed Harold Szeemann's 1969 exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*, which will be discussed below as a major influence on art biennials.

[22] Frédéric Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*, (Verso: New York; 2015), 178.

> practice. Isn't art, as Duchamp once said, "a game among all men of all eras?" Postproduction is the contemporary form of this game…Likewise, the contemporary work of art does not position itself as the termination point of the "creative process" (a "finished product" to be contemplated) but as a site of navigation, a portal, a generator of activities. We tinker with production, we surf on a network of signs, we insert our forms on existing lines. What unites the various configurations of the artistic use of the world gathered under the term postproduction is the scrambling of boundaries between consumption and production.[23]

Lastly, subversion in a world after production cannot be considered leisure, work, or in any way as simple labor. Despite its elitism, art does not belong to a single class. It manifests the unseen toil of the affective laborer motoring a subset of the economy built on intellectual property, art, and exhibition. The social purpose of this consumption-based labor, while quasi-anthropological, varies. Nonetheless, its aims are joining and quantifying audiences and therefore adding to cultural capital–whether at the individual, national, tribal or even international level. To drift is to see something first; it is antecedent to witnessing and then relocating objects, forming a discourse rooted in a rootless, material culture. The notion that drifting or wandering remains central to participation in contemporary art points to the fact that exhibitions, like images, have no sole original point of production to which formal artistic qualities could be reduced as a school or category of visual art—just like the random pieces that combined to create the first readymade. The wanderer's inauguration into discourse (the temporary space of an extant art exhibition) always entails an additional missed point of synchronicity—an essential calendar even or exhibition elsewhere—that may be partially recovered by the flight to the next experience. The new flaneur, like the older historical one deemed so

---

[23] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*, (New York: Lukas & Sternberg; 2005), 18-19.

essential to early avant-garde art, must flit to where some small charge of energy that the marketplace alone possesses may be recovered.

Chapter 1
Walking in the City: The 2005 Istanbul Biennial

"Istanbul: A Metaphor, a Prediction, a Lived Reality, an Inspiration" read promotional material for the 2005 Istanbul Biennial. Co-curators Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun had isolated Beyoğlu as a site of everyday critique. As they wrote of the introductory concept: "half of the Biennial is made up of work from elsewhere around the world. These act as comparisons and conflicts with Istanbul itself, allowing the visitors to see this city more clearly through other urban and rural narratives. Many of these artists are based in cities with a strong historic connection to Istanbul, from Cairo to Prishtinë, Almaty to Berlin."[24]

In the vein of Lefebvre, the site provided a meditation on where art and life was headed in a young century. Beyoğlu, in particular, had special potential, due to its liminal qualities: it was a place where artists could test what distinguished visual art from other visual manifestations of culture in consumer settings. As a city with a population of somewhere around fifteen million, Istanbul explored how a biennial could develop new tactics that might seem closer to life as it is lived. To the curators, Istanbul provided an opportunity to broaden visual art's increasingly narrow parameters.

They point to how Istanbul, throughout the exhibition, remained a metaphor for the failings of contemporary art by making real incursions into everyday life. The curators willfully encouraged people to drift away from the art if it failed to be as intriguing as the city, allowing the audience to decide whether art succeeded in its

[24] Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, "Istanbul: A Metaphor, a Prediction, a Lived Reality, an Inspiration" on the official IKSV 9th Istanbul Biennial website http://9b.iksv.org/english (last accessed July, 2015).

traditional obligations. Their curation fixed upon no firm concept other than utilizing the whole city for an exhibition space and as an interlocutor for the city. The event would occur away from landmarks, including the *Hospitality Zone* in the dockside former warehouse at Antrepo, where local artists and art schools curated the show. Some critics found this directorial egalitarianism "a gesture that felt strategic rather than heartfelt."[25] But the curators had larger ambitions than pleasing the critics. They envisioned art ideas and the psychological affects of city ambiances overlapping, so that "[t]he walk between . . . venues should also be seen as a part of the Biennial experience with a few public works but mostly with the fabric of this area of Istanbul to inspire our visitors and serve as a way for them to shift their observation of the city for a moment under the influence of the biennial artists."[26]

Signaling their 2005 intent with the simple title, "Istanbul", site locations for the Ninth Istanbul Biennial were scattered throughout the Beyoğlu district. As a larger setting that could produce meaning that exceeded individual artworks, the 2005 Biennial presented a model of of collective authorship. Artists were encouraged to appropriate from a the creative text of the city, in what they saw as a historical moment. A pedestrianism inspired by *Istanbul* could look past contemporary art's limitations to the marvelous residing in the mundane arts of living. Drifting provides the necessary tactic to find the intersection of these two fields, lending the exhibition a larger, somewhat romantic pedestrianism, and recalling an earlier era, wherein viewers adopted the quasi-anthropological gaze of the flaneur, who in the mid-nineteenth century walked the streets

---

[25] Jörg Heiser, "City Report: Ninth Istanbul Biennial," *Frieze*, (November-December, 2005), 74.

[26] Ibid.

to collect expressions of contemporary life. That we are not in Paris but in *Istanbul*—meaning that the drifting envisioned by the curators in 2005 is fueled by contemporary artworks arrayed across Beyoğlu. One could argue experimental displacements of artworks outside museums and outside Western confines allow artists' ideas to be visible in ways they may not in traditional exhibitions. Alternation outside the white cube (though not hostile to it) is the Biennial's recent legacy. This legacy would be quite different in the fold of Paris, a former capital of modern art and a focal point of a good deal of art history.

Within Kortun and Esche's scheme, contemporary art could be mistaken for its ancillary rituals of viewership. At some point in the early twenty-first century visual art may have finally been overawed and overcome by its reception, and this is a central preoccupation of this dissertation. The 2005 Biennial connects the older discourse of walking, strolling, and drifting to a revised, sophisticated action of artistic movement and exhibitionary production. Experiments with reception are at the heart of regional discourses of art and the politics of its trade as an industry. The concept of the 2005 Biennial attempts to break free from the industry's normal contours. The curators cultivated a brand of artistic infiltration, cosmopolitan and harmless though it may be. This activity, while innocent, has considerable import. Flawed by the elitism that follows decades of intense commodification, investment speculation, and eurocentrism, the visual arts industry remains the heir of modern exhibitionism and avant-garde art history. Art removed from machinations of streamlined commerce (in a biennial, for example) forms a horizon line where a city's specific history meets a general canonical art history. Any

resounding connection between these two key elements will determine the Istanbul Biennial's critical reception, favorable or unfavorable, in any given year.

These elements are, in Boris Groys' terminology, the organization's "politics of installation." That is, an exhibition's ability to stage artworks that seem historically relevant and germane to society—rather than to circulate as high-priced, but ultimately forgettable, commodities. By default, these politics appeal to audiences interested in something other than collecting.[27] Kortun and Esche understood this distinction. In their leftist, tongue-in-check way, they extended the installation to include all of Beyoğlu. "The 2005 Istanbul Biennial," they wrote, "promises a distinctive approach to the burgeoning phenomenon of international biennials, one that is rooted in the place it is shown while always looking out at what is relevant for the rest of the world."[28] Drifting to gain a picture of the rest of the world remained a recurrent subtext in many localized artworks in Istanbul Biennials between 2005 and 2011. Contemporary art is understood thereby to contrast these recent Istanbul biennials to the older francophone forms of drifting. In both eras, wandering leads to art to the offsite of space of the everyday. Often, of course, this begins outside the refined space of the academy, the museum or the gallery; at street level, or acing the storefront window. Drifting comprises an ageless sub-genre of many literary movements and art discourses dating back to the Peripatetics. The ambling viewer or artist must not stay an outsider indefinitely. It is one phase in a larger creative process for the artist, writer, curator and viewer, alike.

---

[27] See Boris Groys, "The Politics of Installation," *e-flux Journal*, (no. 2, January, 2009), http://www.e-flux.com/journal/politics-of-installation (accessed July, 2015).

[28] Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, "Istanbul: A Metaphor, a Prediction, a Lived Reality, an Inspiration" on the official IKSV 9th Istanbul Biennial website http://9b.iksv.org/english (last accessed July, 2015)

Unlikely as it may seem, Esche and Kortun are right to suggest that a minor activity, such as walking the streets of Beyoğlu, might be the precisely correct means of broadening debate about "the politics of installation."[29] The following pages seek to discover the contemporaneity of Visual art in the staged setting of the marketplace. A varied economy charges art intellectually and liberates its interventional potential. Though it may not be considered militant, this mode of art viewing, nonetheless, asserts itself amidst spectacle, outside the confines of museums or galleries. What is perhaps most curious about this interventionist sub-genre is how it incorporates what it is most ideologically opposed to. Again, in the vein of Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life*, artists often proceed in order to evaluate aesthetic expression of the most pedestrian varieties: commodity items, tourist zones, shopping malls, popular culture of all kinds. While opposed, ostensibly, to all forms of economic and cultural poverty, visual art organizations, biennials in particular, hardly avoid its locales. Poorer neighborhoods and derelict buildings serve as temporary art spaces of choice, sometimes before they are redeveloped by big business as a result. This phenomenon is ubiquitous in contemporary art.

This case study focuses squarely upon Istanbul. The advantage of this locale is that, it gave contemporary artists an opportunity to work in an offsite settings where layers of history were available to the contemporary artistic imagination. Beyoğlu in particular offered the inveterate art consumer an opportunity to be consumed in turn by the city.

---

[29] Groys.

Kortun and Esche's *Istanbul* toned down curatorial aspirations compared to other biennial schemes. The 2005 exhibition plan avoided historical monuments that had been integrated into previous iterations of the biennial (like the previous Eighth Biennial, which used the *Ayasofya).* Exhibiting in everyday settings meant moving the organization precisely to the locale where visual art had often declined to find its subject matter, into the realm of the commoner and away from not the sultan's palace). Discounting white cube galleries, monuments, or historical sites meant that *Istanbul* forced spectators to get lost, to become consummate with the rhythms of Beyoğlu. Kortun and Esche's reversal of typical biennial consumption demanded personal impressions and apprehensions of the newly-conceived Biennial spectator. The officially programmed and sanctioned story, and the incidental take, blended in a new discourse emphasizing the temporary nature of the biennial experience. Istanbul itself became the primary lens through which contemporary art would be viewed 2005. The metropolis became the site of a future unfolding—not in the region but across the globe—instead of a piecemeal past, precariously resurrected for the faddish tourist ad nauseam.

Fully embracing the the present moment encouraged participants to engage by wandering between art installations and Biennial venues. Many would not have noticed the slight adjustments in what was in many regards a biennial like any other. Initiates explored as a group how the larger context acquired tension that art discourse itself often lacks. Istanbul, its problems and charms outside the clichés of East meeting West, gave careful observers a chance for the momentary "shift in observation." The goal was shared

knowledge of a specific place. Shared presence was offered as the definition of a contemporary exhibition.

In all, there were fifty-three artists. The over-riding premise was that artwork and exhibitions should align with the informal agency of the everyday, anonymous ‘arts’ that comprise a city; a city full of people, always working, otherwise occupied. The art crowd thus constituted was largely indistinguishable, although their minority belied a setting of overwhelming magnitude.

Istanbul is an environment requiring many adjustment to and a constant process of acclimation that could easily have been detrimental to the to exhibition’s success. In 2005, the curators intentionally built a pedestrian logic into the Biennial announcing their intention that“[a]s you walk between the various venues, you will encounter the city—we hope through different eyes from usual, as a result of the images and imaginings with which the artists have filled your head”[30] Added to the occasional provocations and consternations of artistic proposals, one could expect to get lost in Istanbul looking for venues. By design, the potential for disorientation would disarm the viewer over a period of hours or days, a slight but important restructuring of viewership as compared to similar exhibitions. Such an uncompromisingly subjective experience encourages a mode of reception that subtly reframes the encounter with art. The exhibition is temporary, an unrepeatable structure that relate to other ways of physical consumption. This is the second fundamental point here: Art consumption is fundamentally different than ordinary [I'm avoiding 'average' for what I hope are obvious reasons] consumption.

---

[30] Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, “Introduction,” *9th International Istanbul Biennial*, (IKSV; Istanbul: 2005), 9.

Can art in the twenty-first century be characterized as exceptional when compared to native consumptive in the general economy? Art for a long time has wondered if it really need be. Art fair planners think not. The 2005 Biennial questioned how art rehearses the politics of its installation, enmeshed in the space but conceptually separate from everyday consuming.

Different precepts are required to navigate an art exhibition compared to other commodity displays in storefronts and retail displays. Art's conceptualism: its tendency to deconstruct inherent qualities in formal terms to arrive at new aesthetic or philosophical definitions of art, make this inevitable and since the readymade, this has often involved a negative definition about what art is not (a mass-produced commodity, for example).

Similar points could be made about navigating the city. Istanbul asks that one develop a sensitivity native to its objectivity alone. In fact, this is the case everywhere, it is only more pronounced here. Each great city, like each great artist, must be met with unique sensitivities relating to what Michel de Certeau would call a spatial rhetoric. This is perhaps what the curators of *Istanbul* had in mind with their conception of pedestrianism: "The long poem of walking manipulates spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither foreign to them (it can take place only within them) nor in conformity with them (it does not receive its identity from them)."[31] As de Certeau describes it, the walker is the reader of an urban space that inevitably makes the metropolis fit into a personal logic of use, moment by moment. Art provides a similar intimation to initiates localized in its rhetorics, histories, and discourses. Existing in both

[31] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley; University of California Press; 1988). 101.

the abstract and physical dimensions that compose the walker's subjectivity, one cannot walk in any city without interfacing and incorporating elements of the overall organization: these elements may be infrastructural—bridges, stoplights, freeways, tolls, canals, roundabouts, one-way streets, or alleyways; they may be natural—rivers, peninsulas, parks, forests, oceans, mountains; linguistic and alphabetic barriers; architectural—historic or recent, vertical or sprawling; there are ancient and there are modern plans. Each moment in a city entails becoming slightly more institutionalized to its ways and "spatial organizations." Variety does not stop with the last cement truck though. Certeau's "spatial rhetoric" concerns a rapport the individual develops with official manifestations of the spatial organization. Over a lifetime, the walker continually redefines a collective everlasting moment (that is the countervailing like of the metropolis), occurring and recurring simultaneously as users introduce microscopic forces to those bearing down upon them.

By adding this pedestrian discursive backdrop implied that walks between venues could be an appropriated space. In the way curators Kortun and Esche emphasized, the Biennial in 2005 came with a special opportunity to do more than consume art, but to also make something like a spatial rhetoric in the short time visiting viewers had on their itinerary. The closing paragraph of the biennial catalog explains what is at stake in this spatial rhetoric beyond the usual politics of installation: "We hope this Biennial will be understood as a way of seeing Istanbul through the eyes of others, and thereby incorporating another's vision into an intimate view of this place. In doing so, it will hopefully provoke a new awareness of some common perceptions of a reassessment of

the personal clichés that we all carry in our heads. This is what we believe art can do to and for us, and how it can, in its own way, change the world."[32] While serving as an explanation for the Biennial, this also implies a critical and collective sense of self-awareness that can be shared with those in attendance: that Istanbul would soon change, that it could not longer be located by its landmarks and that as a primary point upon a map of world cities undergoing globalization in a region of primary interest in was in danger of being another place homogenized by capital investments. Perhaps, the curators implied, the same could be said of international visual art as the art shown in biennials, museums, art centers and art fairs seemed to be facing homogenization via capitalization.

[32] Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, "Introduction," *9th International Istanbul Biennial*, (IKSV; Istanbul: 2005), 9.

Chapter 2
Anti-Social Drifting

The 2005 Istanbul Biennial, then, possessed a collective authorship borne out of drifting. Pedestrianism is a discourse as much as an activity. It levels the crowd and equalizes the masses. Pedestrianism helps to mediate art history and contemporary art exhibitions, especially experimental, noncommercial art events, such as biennials.

Drifting has its roots in a tactical form of wandering that preceded contemporary art, and modern art for that matter.[33] Michel de Certeau took compatriot Henri Lefebvre's ideas into account from a literary perspective when developing his notion of a tactic. Different than the strategies of dominant institutions, financial or civic, tactics concern the customization of social space and collective tools. For Certeau, tactics are slight subversions blended into common practice of any sort: this may be speaking a second language and adding mechanical structures of an unrelated dialect, cooking a foreign dish as fusion with native cuisine, adapting technical skills to home craft or hobbies, filching redundant capital from the workplace, watching the landscape as though riding a train were cinema or reading the book of the city while walking down the street. In every instance, a tactic is a creative appropriation made available by large dominant "strategic" structures. What makes Certeau's tactics relevant to contemporary art (beyond their reliance upon appropriation—contemporary art's principal image-making tactic) is their unsanctioned behavior that describes something benign in its immediate occurrence, but may be revolutionary over time. As Gros sees this subtle subversion: "The urban stroller

[33] Bosch's *Wayfarer* provides an excellent starting point for tracing the trope of the wanderer in European religious art, suggesting that the creative wanderer is *sui generis* as old as cave painting.

is subversive. He subverts the crowd, the merchandise and the town, along with their values . . . The stroller's walking activity is more ambiguous, his resistance to modernity ambivalent. Subversion is not a matter of opposing but of evading, deflecting, altering with exaggeration, accepting blandly, and moving rapidly on."[34] The stroller's exquisite mobility places the walker in an attitudinal space redolent of his or her social relations, objectifying these social realities as human relations intersecting with economic customs. These are mostly hidden to the individual inhabitant who has internalized the conditions of everyday life. The wanderer, ideally, attempts to see these localizations with the fresh eyes of an outsider.

As Nietzsche writes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "I go new ways, a new speech has come to me; like all creators, I have grown weary of old tongues. My spirit no longer wants to walk in worn-out soles."[35] This deftly illustrates the burden of conveyance at any time, based on the social pressures and the conventions of a given medium. Nietzsche's prophet anticipates a new era in which the creative individual participates in the arts, an era in which relentless travel and wandering are essential to remaining aware of the immodesty guiding art in any era—this immodesty propels the artist, writer, or timely thinker otherwise but it does not consume them entirely.

An arts professional wanders an exorbitant amount today and affording the exorbitance is a key indicator of distinction within the field of contemporary art. Success is virtually dependent upon perpetuation. The wandering fostered by biennials liberates

---

[34] Gros, 177-178.

[35] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, (New York: Modern Library; 1995), 109.

the hidden travail in artistic production from the monotonous pass-porting of international flight. “To walk on worn-out soles” means, in our time, something new: ceaselessly observing and being observed as conspicuously as possible in the recognized field of visual art, in order appear as a member of an exclusive community. Producing art has become secondary to the work of viewing it. Today, art is an industry driven largely by the mechanics, the logistics, and the economies of this double viewing. Viewership, thus understood, is how we replicate what was once called taste.

Art has long been enshrined in the spectacle of its consumption. Knowing visual art today requires joining many thousands of professional viewers who have global reach, specialized persons who can drift in nearly any zone. They impel others to watch from a street corner in any city across the globe. Their attention drifts from the academic press to the trade magazine, and from the white cube to offsite exhibition. And, of course, they do some of their most crucial work from within the confines of their email inbox: sending or receiving invitations, joining the online forums that shape and mediate audiences and curate collectors and orchestrate key moments of patronage. For those actively engaged in the field of art, travel on a worldwide scale and drifting endlessly is a requirement for participant players, even if, like education of other sorts, this requirement is undertaken more easily by the well-heeled. Drifting instantaneously in the city and virtually is the equalizing force art sells to participants, its true export. Whether one can afford to drift remains their burden. Drifting is required of all who wish to enter art’s professional ranks —regardless of heritage, class, education, or social status.

Contemporary Biennials are in part an outgrowth of the *Großausstellung*, or great exhibition, pioneered by the revered Swiss curator Harold Szeemann. *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form: Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information* at Kunsthalle Bern in 1969 featured a cast of largely American artists working in the wake of Minimalism. Widely influential over the last two decades, Szeemann's exhibitions are, however, now receiving canonization as artworks in their own right.[36] By this time, art had become dematerialized: an artistic idea could be the equal of an image or sculpture created by the same maker. *Live in Your Head* asserted once and for all that the role of the modern artist is to invent and relish the invisible, a conception that has come to dominate the avant-garde. Kunsthalle Bern served as a stage for impressions that could work on the viewer both as material forms, and proposals or "attitudes" in the sculptures of Arte Povera, Earth, Conceptual, and Process artists included.[37] Szeemann recalled in an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist,

> [t]here is a published diary of *Attitudes* that details my trips, studio visits, the installation process. It was an adventure from beginning to end, and the catalogue, discussing how the works could either assume material form or remain immaterial, documents this revolution in the visual arts. It

[36] This effort began at conferences and in symposiums in European in an informal though learned manner with curators like Hans Ulrich Obrist. Over the last few years a formal academicizing of Szeemann's work has begun. principally at the Getty Research Institute, which recently purchased his archives.

[37] *Attitudes* included: Carl Andre, Giovanni Anselmo, Richard Artschwager, Thomas Bang, Jared Bark, Robert Barry, Joseph Beuys, Alighiero Boetti, Mel Bochner, Marinus Boezem, Bill Bollinger, Michael Buthe, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Paul Cotton, Hanne Darboven, Jan Dibbets, Ger van Elk, Rafael Ferrer, Barry Flanagan, Ted Glass, Hans Haacke, Eva Hesse, Douglas Huebler, Paolo Icaro, Alain Jacquet, Neil Jenney, Stephen Kaltenbach, Jo Ann Kaplan, Edward Kienholz, Yves Klein, Joseph Kosuth, Jannis Kounellis, Gary B. Kuehn, Sol LeWitt, Bernd Lohaus, Richard Long, Roelof Louw, Bruce McLean, Walter De Maria, David Medalla, Mario Merz, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Claes Oldenburg, Dennis Oppenheim, Panamarenko, Pino Pascali, Paul Pechter, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Emilio Prini, Markus Raetz, Allen Ruppersberg, Reiner Ruthenbeck, Robert Ryman, Frederick Lane Sandback, Alan Saret, Sarkis, Jean-Frédéric Schnyder, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Keith Sonnier, Richard Tuttle, Frank Lincoln Viner, Aldo Walker, Franz Erhard Walther, William G. Wegman, Lawrence Weiner, William T. Wiley and Gilberto Zorio.

> was a moment of great intensity and freedom, when you could either produce a work or just imagine it, as Lawrence Weiner put it.[38]

As Szeemann searched in his introduction to situate the practitioners of this novel approach, he cites legacies as diverse as those of Duchamp and Pollack, of Fluxus Happenings and even the counterculture of the hippies. As he understands it,

> [m]any anti-social ideas, on the one hand the tendency to contemplation, and on the other the celebration of the physical and creative self through action, can be seen at work in this new art. Additional parts of the pattern can be found in Europe: the lack of a real centre has persuaded increasing numbers of artists to remain in their home towns and to work against all the ideas and principles of the society in which they found themselves.[39]

The exhibition served as a staging ground, or simply a stage (Szeemann started in theater before curating), for ongoing action.[40] Szeemann frames the exhibition as a centripetal arena in de-centered world of visual artists, working under the influence of insights that come with historical shifts in what media and what settings may constitute artwork after midcentury.

Ultimately, the opportunity arose because of new money. Philip Morris was the main sponsor of Szeemann's groundbreaking exhibition. As he recounted, after the 1968 exhibition *12 Environments* (featuring Andy Warhol and Christo among others),"the people from Philip Morris and the PR firm Rudder and Finn came to Bern and asked if I would like to do a show of my own. They offered me money and total freedom. I said

---

[38] Hans Ulrich Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating*, (Zurich: JRP/RIngier; 2008), 87.

[39] This quotation is taken the quote from press materials provided by Prada Foundation on the occasion of their 2013 re-staging of *How Attitudes Become Form* in Venice, organized by the curator Germano Celant, architect Rem Koolhaas and artist Thomas Demand.

[40] The idea of staging rather than displaying art in the gallery derives from curator Carlos Basualdo's readings of Szeemann's work, for example in *Michelangelo Pistoletto: From One to Many,* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; 2010), 18.

yes, of course. Until then I had never had an opportunity like that."[41] Many critics focus on the selection of dispersed artists committed to arcane processes that befit Szeemann's tertiary subtitle—"Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information"—neglecting the inconvenient facts of Curatorial Freedom Offered by Big American Money or New Statements in International Art Financed by Leading Tobacco Corporation. Corporate financing is the reality facing any curator in the wake of Szeemann, and finance has always ensured art's successful diffusion. We ignore the dubious money underwriting contemporary art, contenting ourself with its promise; we bracket the proprietary matter of artworks to dwell upon its provocations; we revel in this double-sidedness, that ensures the free passage of our trailblazing leaders around the world.

How else does this most seminal of contemporary art exhibitions—the exhibition that may well initiate the current era of contemporary art—inform the ambulant art viewer under discussion?[42] First, *Live in Your Head* had the importance of mounting a major event outside the art centers of the day, such as Amsterdam, New York, Cologne, or Venice (later, Szeemann would direct 1972's *Documenta* 5 and consolidate Kassel's status as a contemporary art landmark). Second, *Live in Your Head* indicated how serious viewers could expect to become devoted drifters like Szeemann, pilgrims of a sort, hopeful of visual art's emancipatory potential. This ambulation was fundamental to progressive art by 1969. Seeking the ultra-newness that Szeemann cultivated (attitude as form, as it were) means living on the periphery, not geographically but in a visual

[41] Obrist, 88.

[42] Attesting to its influence, the Walker Art Center explored the globalization of contemporary art with a title paying homage to Szeemann: *How Latitudes Become Forms: Art in a Global Age* (February 9 - May 4, 2003). Prepared by several curators on a "Global Advisory Committee," the organizers included Vasif Kortun and the 2007 Istanbul Biennial Director, Hou Hanru.

communications industry that draws one out with art's own expansion, promoted everywhere by the Rudder and Finns as promise, whether in remote locales or in and around capital cities. Third, as the exhibition relates to the loosely guided tenets of the 2005 Istanbul Biennial, breaking down expectations as artistic practice lead immediately to informal barriers. Since this show, fluid formalisms have been associated with international exhibitions. This allows them to serve as containers of art as well as obscure "attitudes" that later will be refined discourses.

This is all to say that since 1969, contemporary art exhibitions have been ill-defined entities. Instead of traditional curating we have staging, which has other implications. If actions are to be ongoing over the course of an exhibition (as many were in the Bern show), the effect could further remove the formal structures that separate audience and artist. Joseph Beuys invited this confusion of distinct roles as a means of engaging art socially. Part of the art form, for audience and artist, arises simply by defying expectations—placing the audience in a communal debate about national politics instead of the exhibition hall, for example.[43]

Kortun and Esche capitalized on this legacy of defiance in 2005, turning the viewer away from the role of artist and curator toward the city itself, letting it curate the show in part with the ultimatum that the audience must wander the city. Wandering thus became the problematic prerequisite guiding contemporary art. As an upending, Szeemannesque search at the periphery of art's meanings and geographies, Art

---

[43] In 2012 I interviewed Kassel Dirk Schwartzs, a local photographer who was involved with Beuys' *Documenta* 5 performative artwork, *Bureau of Direct Democracy* (BDD). The *Erweiterter Kunstbegriff* built on the breakthroughs of the few previous years. See "The Legacy of Beuys' *Erweiterter Kunstbegriff*" at http://haudenschildgarage.com/documenting-documenta-a-garage-project-with-matthew-schum/15/#the-legacy-of-beuys-erweiterter-kunstbegriff (accessed July, 2015).

inadvertently updated urban drifting along the way.. The troubling subtext is that this wandering is of course possible regardless of the art on display. Focusing on drifting instead of artworks alone allows for an understanding of a paradoxical visual arts industry, one that is in fact post-industrial and built on its own shared consumer rituals. Given the conditions in Istanbul in 2005, viewers (including artists) became harbingers—drifters who could fragment our expectations of both art and cities in brief instants of artistic invention. Unlike in Szeemann's time, the manner in which contemporary art functions in cities today responds to the powerful role of the crowd. The Situationists called this activated viewership psychogeography: a means of regenerating a discourse of daily experience—with the import of visual art in mind—and is an example of a streamlined appropriative artistic process or attitude.Ivan Chtcheglov (not Guy Debord) invented the terms that eventually formed a Situationist theory of "psychic geography" (antedated in a variety of ways by the Surrealists). Like many artists before him, Chtcheglov accentuated impermanence in his understanding of the city.. In a melange of poetry and visual signs he scanned the city, and witnessed its decay. Like Szeemann's latter-day iconoclasts, Chtcheglov understood that artists build many things but that they are anathema to those of the lower strata who maintain shops and the elites who build cities above them. His theory of art used varied creative energies to target civil structures. For this early psycho- geographer, the artist intuited a plastic world that could always be altered, if not materially, then conceptually and lexically. His words were those of an outsider, not a French national in the capital of modernism. His premise give artists everywhere a utopian reign over the earth to advance creative ends by every means

imaginable. Though published by the Situationist International, Chtcheglov's words in the 1953 *Formulary for a New Urbanism* is one of the last great Surrealist texts:

> All cities are geological; you cannot take three steps without encountering ghosts bearing all the prestige of their legends. We move within a closed landscape whose landmarks constantly draw us toward the past. Certain shifting angles, certain receding perspectives, allow us to glimpse original conceptions of space, but this vision remains fragmentary. It must be sought in the magical locales of fairy tales and surrealist writings: castles, endless walls, little forgotten bars, mammoth caverns, casino mirrors. These dated images retain a small catalyzing power, but it is almost impossible to use them in a symbolic urbanism without rejuvenating them by giving them a new meaning. Our imaginations, haunted by the old archetypes, have remained far behind the perfection of machines. Various attempts to integrate modern science into new myths remain inadequate. Meanwhile abstraction has invaded all the arts, contemporary architecture in particular. Pure plasticity, inanimate, storyless, soothes the eye. Elsewhere other fragmentary beauties can be found—while the promised land of syntheses continually recedes into the distance. Everyone wavers between the emotionally still-alive past and the already dead future. . . . In Chirico's paintings (during his Arcade period) an empty space creates a full-filled time, it is easy to imagine the fantastic future possibilities of such architecture and its influence on the masses. Today we can have nothing but contempt for a century that relegates such blueprints to its so-called museums.[44]

The principal activity of the inhabitants of future cities will be the continuous *dérive*. "The changing of landscapes from one hour to the next will result in complete disorientation. . . Later, as the gestures inevitably grow stale, this *dérive* will partially leave the realm of direct experience for that of representation."[45] Chtcheglov's millenarian tone was no ruse: he was arrested for plotting to blow up the Eiffel Tower. Art's future resided in the street. The decorum of the museum had to be confronted with a

---

[44] Ivan Chtcheglov, "Formulary for a New Urbanism," *Internationale Situationniste*, (no. 1, October 1953). The idea of ghosts being everywhere in the city is in-line with the urban thinking of Michel de Certeau, who saw a fealty charging the city for resident denizens and the departed long after they had moved-on or been pushed out of residence.

[45] Ibid.

controlled militancy. The *dérive* introduces a new roving class of artists committed to iconoclasm. Following these iconoclastic artists an audience eventually follows; finally, their tactics are vindicated and their works gain the prestige a vaunted place in the museum.As Chtcheglov's derision of the Eiffel Tower indicates, developing art praxis means breaking away from landmark architecture and the tourist–consumerism encouraged by the powers that be—in museums, in white cubes and filling the streets with monstrosities designed by committee. Moderns such as Chtcheglov were already thinking beyond this. His drifting went past anti-modernism and called for an anti-product art. The endless *dérive* means just this —an ongoing reconnoitering in the cold war of aesthetics.

Not so long ago, contemporary art arrived at other visual iterations of iconoclasm —within Pop Art, Minimalism, Conceptualism, and in its trysts with post-readymade appropriation art in the 1980s. All this was quickly co-opted and sterilized and made to fit within existing systems of art tourism and consumption. Today, the art-imbued walker enters a psychic landscape and global geology with limited purchase on their own lives. This wanderer may enter this landscape by recomposing what Chtcheglov calls the "catalyzing power of dated images"—that is, largely by appropriating an aspect of the semiotic terrain they drift through. As Chtcheglov describes it, this terrain is not an array of colors, as in a tube of oil paint. This mediated landscape is made of media and it creates a mental image. Both the internal and external images are composed of commonplace occurrences and images, reproduced as art, reified as readymade things filling marketplaces one day and landfills the next. In the 1950s, Chtcheglov saw artists

were already doomed to observe, represent, and reify the incomplete promise of art in a society debauched by its "already dead" futurity. Cities are dioramas of ruin, together forming an artificial "landscape whose landmarks constantly draw us toward the past," he said. For the drifter, history is stares back as the intelligence of mindful, inanimate, sentient things.

The new type of flaneur we have been considering relishes the failures of Western "progress" while contributing inadvertently to its advancement. One of the things that made Istanbul an alluring offsite was that it could not be confused with such idealism. It also fits with the aesthetic sympathies of art that exercised conceptualism through a formal appreciation of entropy—whether seen as ancient ruins or the hodgepodge of neoliberal development. That is, the Biennial stood in defiance to the rote consumption of the past to look at the current moment.

This consumption-based art was part of the historical avant-garde's illustrations of progress. In this case cosmopolitan life was future-oriented: Italian Futurism sought to show labor of all kinds in unison, moving together with the speed of industrial advancement; Expressionism in various formal experiments sought new intellect, unburdened by the strictures that had guided the beaux arts; Dada's iconoclasm sought alternate politics in the unutterable, and this mysticism formed artistic communities critiquing the senseless conclusions of a "Great War". In their disjointed novellas, found art, collage, and painting, the literary approach of the Surrealists , protested middle class values that blended art with ludic games and aimless walks. In each case, but especially with the Surrealists, a cultivated urbanism instigated a new kind of authorship, one that

reversed the idea of originality that had often been conceived as native to a work of art, created by an individual maker. As these separate perspectives on the past take on a new appearance, they are perpetuated by the temporary communities formed by walkers and this is the mobile site of one key discourse informing art. Contemporary art under these conditions allows the drifter to apprehend these forces working in unison as a marketplace. Behind the *Großausstellung* (calling the wanderers into the fold) is the incomprehensibly larger financial organs that fund it. To see such harmonies take shape as a biennial or even a lavishly funded remake of Szeemann's landmark *When Attitudes Become Form* broadens visual arts culture by joining the crowds that grow biannually.

Chapter 3
The Biennialism of Perennial Critique

This chapter offers a review of the intellectual terrain of the twenty-first century drifter through recent debates in the visual arts industry that revolve around the culture of biennials and what has been called "biennialism." Ralph Rugoff offers a convenient starting point with the criticism that,

> [t]he new global-style curators are prone to dismiss exhibitions with a local focus as examples of 'regionalism', a bête noire of current practice. Instead, they prefer to play out the role of jet-set *flâneur*. As twenty-first century connoisseurs, their trump card is that they possess information available to only a small number of people, because few can manage to spend the time, money and energy constantly traveling the globe in order to stay on top of a growing number of ever-changing local scenes.[46]

Here, biennialism is clearly synonymous with the ambitious international exhibitions made in the wake of Szeemann, and typifies the contemporary age of the *Großausstellung*. Sprawling shows in Kassel and Venice that in their scale and budget replicate the World Fairs of hundred years ago consist of a great deal more than artwork. They also require the construction of venues, the occupation of state infrastructure, the redrawing of maps and guides to usher the art masses among accommodations built many months in advance. Services drawn from the tertiary sector of the economy replicate tourism and give rise to derisive connotations to the word biennial. The scale of this economy means that, all too often, an exhibition can feel like a theme park full of gimmicks.

[46] Ralph Rugoff, "Rules of the Game," *Frieze*, (January, 1999), 47.

Concomitantly, however, many biennials also pay special heed to world politics. Curators' proposals are often lent an ideological scope as they respond to the realistic needs of artists during the installation process. The burden of art history comes second to pragmatics. the curator must be doubly mindful: of the material conditions of the critical field, and of the service economy, as they collide in slow motion.[47] When this complicated form of authorship takes familiar shape and pronouncements seem empty, rhetorical, or formulaic, the exhibition often fails. If the thematic seems forced, the audience will discern that the artworks are at odds with the curatorial scheme. Moreover, any viewer who has regularly attended international group shows is liable to find that any critique a biennial may offer is contrived and predictable. Biennialism may involve the monotonous work of shuttling between countries for art's unrewarding insights but, in an uncanny way, these service conditions are the circumstances from which exhibitions (and theories) of art have taken shape since the end of the twentieth century.

Biennialism's roving curator leapfrogs continents, but just as easily drifts through historical territory, reciting bits of art history, conducting interviews, making studio visits, writing exhibition texts, and composing essays and proposals. These are the extremely broad parameters that set the drifter in motion, crossing oceans and traversing the annals of Western thinking to arrive at a provisional understanding of art today.

Along with the "jet-set flaneur" Ralph Rugoff also anticipated changes that would see the topography of the curator increase to nearly unlimited proportions. With the globalization of contemporary art, the mega-show has obtained dramatic prominence:

---

[47] Esche and Kortun's *Hospitality Zone* for the 2005 Istanbul Biennial made a wry comment on these service-economy conditions while providing half of their largest venue to guests for conferences, informal meet-ups and other programming.

> 1997 produced ten international biennials in cities around the world. These exhibitions helped create a conspicuous platform for curators, who were called upon to make sense of a rapidly expanding art world in which traditional critical criteria no longer applied. At a moment when a malaise lingered around the future of the contemporary art museum, the curator appeared as a potential saviour figure.[48]

In place of the all important artist, borne from the ateliers of the masters, we have upstart curators declaiming how artistic trends follow destabilizing social and economic forces, within which "the migratory artist has become [merely] a notable fixture."[49] In place of critical criteria, principles such as govern formalism and technical innovation, we have critical theory and cultural studies. Rugoff notes the curator, qua 'saviour,' may refer to himself as a "typical global man," an every-man, in the tradition of curator Szeemann, and later, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Hou Hanru.[50] There is always something outstanding about the local. For example, how comprehensive a picture could anyone create of the city they live in or hail from, when it comes to a history of migration, settlement, architecture and art, for example? The curator can rarely present an accurate picture. And the exhibition is never considered deeply rooted in the community by local artists. Accepting this limit is part of curating. With this in mind, Rugoff succinctly sums-up biennialism when he writes that ambitions and intellectual pretenses in international exhibition often combine to create "shows that seem unsatisfyingly fuzzy and intellectually timid, failing to add up to more than the sum of their parts."[51]

---

[48] Rugoff, 47.

[49] Ibid.

[50] See: Hou Hanru and Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Cities on the Move*, (Hatje Cantze; New York: 1997).

[51] Rugoff, 45.

To combat efforts perceived as timid in Istanbul, for example Hou Hanru's Tenth Istanbul Biennial, curated in 2007, the Croatian-based feminist collective WHW (the acronym for their full name, What, How and for Whom), mounted the Eleventh Istanbul Biennial as a response to a Western model. Biennialism, in short, is difficult to distinguish from honest efforts to critically assess the role of biennials. Here is how WHW described their push against it and art under western-style neoliberal capitalism and in the guise of western art history:

> Our focus was primarily on regions of the Balkans and former Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Middle East, and North Africa, in which the relationship with Western "mentors" and a dependence of avant-garde art practices on validation from the Western art systems still largely define the context of contemporary art. We developed the exhibition across two interconnecting trajectories, one responding to a hegemonic Western model of the role and position of contemporary art and its history, as perpetuated by a globalized system of art institutions [sic] and market networks that regulate them, and the other to artistic and cultural practices that critically assess the commercialization that tends to dominate life under conditions of neo-liberal capitalism. We tried to break away from the predictability of biennialism: the "reporting on contemporary art" that biennials are supposed to provide in an overview of new and recent production. Instead of historicizing or perceiving past bodies of knowledge as either redundant or failed, the exhibition maintains the tension between the past and present, and includes artists of diverse generations and works from different periods.[52]

We can compare this statement to an earlier attempt at radicalization with the FiftiethVenice Biennale in 2003, *Dreams and Conflicts: The Viewer's Dictatorship*, which was an early attempt to present viewers with a critically engaged biennial model. The recurrent question that ultimately defines biennialism is whether curating can, in fact, function as criticism, instead of just reportage. The roundtable conversation that took

---

[52] Michelle Dizon, "Conversation with What, How, and for Whom," *Xtra*, (Spring, 2010), 30.

place just after the 2003 Venice Biennale are often considered s emblematic of the problems associated with the roving global curator. One comment fromThe 2003 Venice Biennale Curator, Francesco Bonami, captures the terms of debate: "If true revolution changes the rules on how to change the rules, then we must arrive at terms that transform the very concept of the exhibition."[53] Few professionals in the art world refer to revolution today, however much artists themselves make incursions into social justice issues. Nevertheless, there has been a certain embrasure of social criticism at the curatorial level. These endeavors usually imagine exhibitions as a left-leaning social form spurring debate with the public. Under the aegis of temporary public intervention, these curatorial coalitions make art installations meant to get to the core of problems that are social, aesthetic, or both. Breaking out of the museum mould, curators have in the last two decades attempted to use short-term exhibitions to forge communities willing to advance topics that are either unpopular or verboten in political circles. This might include expensive (and unprofitable) artworks made in the name of social justice or hosting untested artists from out of the art-world mainstream. In a given year, many biennials across the globe can be found nurturing art practices that push the acceptable limits of conventional art forms. In Bonami's terms, they change the rules on how the rules are written by pushing visual art into architecture, music, dance, performance, craftwork, and the culinary arts, for instance. Whether the results foster art that is generally thought to be good or bad, the real problems arise in what one artist called a

---

[53] Francesco Bonami quoted in Tim Griffin, "Global Tendencies: Globalism and the Large-scale Exhibition," *Artforum*, (November 2003), 152–167, (with James Meyer, Catherine David, Okwui Enwezor, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Martha Rosler, and Yinka Shonibare).

"certain type of anti-institutional gesture [that] has in many cases become the sole banner under which business can go on as usual."[54] Rugoff too was unimpressed::

> You have to wonder, at this point, whether it is even possible to organize a provocative, thrilling, joyous, challenging Biennale—or if there is something inherent in this enterprise (perhaps a corrosive grandiosity of purpose?) that inevitably leads to dismal results. One small starting-point might be to lighten up as well as to simplify. The Biennale isn't a roadmap for world peace or a cure for cancer; it's a display of artworks, and its curators need to find ways of more intelligently engaging the audiences for this work who, far from being dictators, are collaborators in this elaborate cultural ritual of exhibition-making.[55]

Institutions and curators had little distinction in the two decades leading up to this rise of the independent curator. The transformation resolved upon a the jet-set middleman who did much more than select art. Rather, he or she set in motion a new discursive and contextual pattern, namely working outside typical Western-defined confines, as WHW described above. Okwui Enwezor, another interlocutor in the roundtable, has made a career out of repackaging exhibitions by rerouting the ambivalence many feel towards elite, Euro-centric art institutions, in part, by using his own Nigerian background and incorporating art of the African Diaspora into his curating. For Enwezor, stepping outside the paradigm of the Western cannon is key. He acknowledges how exhibitions-as-critique may nurture a "parasitical relationship" with institutions of power, but contends that this began to change in the 1990s as curators found new inspiration.[56]

---

[54] Sven-Olav Wallenstein, "Institutional Desires," in *Art and its Institutions: Current Conflicts Critique and Collaborations*, ed. Nina Montman, (Black Dog Publishing: London: 2006), 16.

[55] Ralph Rugoff, "50th Venice Biennale Review, *Frieze*, (September 2003), p. 76.

[56] Part of this can be blamed on Duchamp's mid-century revival, which renewed a rejection of painting and overly theorized expressionism (such as Clement Greenberg's) from firebrand artists.

As artist Martha Rosler brought to his attention, the adoption of a curatorial brand of critical-institutional role carries the risk of disparaging artists as the primary deliverers of discourse and meaning,. Artist-critics do much more than curators have done to refocus historical perceptions; traditionally at least. Enwezor responded archly: “If I'm reluctant to treat the artist as an absolute god,” he quipped, "it's only because I find it difficult to press myself into the false idolatry of the artwork as the only meaningful theory and speculative object in an exhibition.”[57] In his view, clearly, the exhibition itself is a speculative object.

Biennialism derives precisely from the controversy surrounding this point. It also entails an indictment of recent artists and curators, who are deemed equally guilty of walking back critical stances and equivocating in their politics. Enwezor adds:

> There's a kind of McCarthyism today, in which any exhibition of ideas with topicality is treated like an epithet: the monstrous, the untouchable... the [idea of the] curator as Goliath and the artist as David is rather surprising. It simply repeats a familiar stereotype. I wish that this opposition between artists and curators could be put in better perspective. As a curator, I have no interest in subordinating or instrumentalizing an artist's work, even if I concede that once you treat works of art like objects and don the curator's hermeneutic hat, the work in question may be used to prove a theory, explore a hypothesis, or test an intuition.[58]

The roving curator challenges the primacy of the artist and his or her artwork. Enwezor adds that while some artists may have sacrificed authenticity for institutional support, this legitimization allowed them to perform critical role and political gestures, this is occasionally an imperious, American brand of Western art making, one that principally serves opportunistic critics and art speculators. This in turn triggers institutionalized

---

[57] Enwezor, “Global Tendencies,” 160.

[58] Ibid.

forms of ironic critique, from Pop-Art to the neo-avant-garde. Readymade strategies and appropriation art, for example, may have seemed antithetical to the very notion of aesthetics, but self-determined, anti-aesthetic tactics were co-opted by robust markets and institutions, who seamlessly added trickster strategies to the cannon. Meanwhile, there is plenty of power to go around, at least in the eyes of the non-artist. Not only did the curator rise to redefine the institution of contemporary art, she or he emerged as symbols, brands, of critical rigor, auteur-like, who reformed exhibitions. Vitally, they did so in collaboration with nonwestern agents. Curatorial roles for not western actors been exponentially enlarged in the age of the biennial; and they may make Western artists uneasy when they, the lead inquirers"question why the political is such a taboo in art."[59] The notion of the primacy of the artwork means that the artist, inherently Western and vaguely leftist, holds a monopoly on the presentation and resolution of politics in the field.

Conversely, Vasif Kortun and Charles Esche co-curated their biennial in 2005 in Istanbul with respect to these politics by attempting to enjoin the public and resident artists alike to ask the questions. They initiated quotidian elements first by sponsoring more social art projects. In a 2005 talk given at the University of California San Diego, during the exhibition InSite (between San Diego and Tijuana), Kortun maintained a practical tone about every attempt and every failure in the complicated delivery and "servicing" of the exhibition.[60] Esche and Kortun had attempted, he said, to be open and

---

[59] Ibid.

[60] Vasif Kortun's talk delivered November 11, 2005, Institute of the Americas, University of California San Diego.

public about their exhibition at every step of the process, from the moment the venues were proposed (as municipal clerks for the city granted and then took away venues in some cases), as they chose artists, and offered them residency in Kortun's contemporary art center, Platform Garanti. If not quite laterally organized, it became clear as he described the biennial that the year leading up to the opening of the 2005 Biennial was, in his estimation, an exercise in transparency. Press releases were constant throughout, announcing changes in venue, concept and projections for new plans. Additionally, the curator offered admissions of failure regarding a curator's ability to really address the power structures bearing down on an emergent city, like Istanbul, or the average person striving to make their place within it. This created a kind of colloquium around the exhibition before it even began (instead of a thematic spin on globalization or visual art on the exhibition). Esche and Kortun seem to have envisioned this as something other than a promotional tool for their city or for their careers (though it did no harm to these, either). This was a critique of institutions in general, not just art institutions, which rarely do business out in the open.Town Hall style meetings were held to bring in the local population, inviting proponents of all stripes to advocate about points of interest or contention piqued by the biennial. The curators thereby reached a much larger and transient population than is customary in the days leading up to the opening. In other words, they saw the biennial as a dialogue from the beginning.

Instead of focusing on politics, the 2005 Istanbul Biennial contended with provisionality, freeing it of spurious critical pretense and making it more urbane and approachable. "This is about the city you know as much as the art you don't" was the

slogan in 2005 Nevertheless, as one critic put it after listing the surfeit of procedural subtleties offered by the curators of the Ninth Biennial, "these mechanisms, the heavy-handed political agenda resulted in a sadly staid textbook biennial—discursively intense and aesthetically impoverished."[61] The curators accepted this, even asserting that failure at some level to address society at large was a byproduct of proposals coming from the field of art. Reducing the scale and spectacle of a sprawling biennial becomes a contradiction in terms and an exhibition open to failure includes the inevitable critique that it's another example of trite biennialism.

The 2003 Venice Biennale oscillated between what *Istanbul* did later in 2005–showing the unconventional, militant and political artists–alongside the rote and the sellable. The scale of the budget is much larger, but arguably the biennials must seek equilibrium just as a gallery must in order to survive. The structure of the 2003 Venice Biennale, by Francesco Bonami, presents another example of the trouble with biennials. Despite their many varied efforts, it is hard to say whether a more engaged (local and international) public was cultivated in the 2000s. Another somewhat hostile review again summed up the problem: "Making one's way through the seemingly endless Arsenale . . . it was hard to see how a welter of exhibitions was any more sensitive to art and its audience than a single focused show might have been."[62] Bonami's Venice Biennale was indeed an array of parceled spaces. Spread among nearly a dozen curated shows by various teams of organizers, the fractured space lavished in the biennale's nationalisms. Ultimately, Bonami seems to have attempted to present a world of disparate, artistically-

[61] Nuit Banai, "A Poetry of Small Gestures," *Art Papers,* (January-February 2006), 46.

[62] Scott Rothkopf, "In the Bag," *Artforum*, (September 2003), 176.

unaligned nation-states. Reworking the traditional plan was an attempt to liberalize the Biennale's classic structure. The curator self-consciously rejected the monocratic shows of auteurs like Szeemann by distributing curatorial autonomy to a bevy of curators, their counterparts, and subcommittees. Yet, this approach is analogous to instigating artistic reforms led by curators *and* artists without replacing the bureaucracy that fundamentally defines the office of the chief curator.

One problematic element of these reforms came in the layout. The most politically engaged portion of the show, *Utopia Station,* was mounted outside the Arsenale, in its sculpture garden area. Organized by writer and historian Molly Nesbit, curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, and artist Rirkrit Tiravanija, it comprised of artistic inquires about urgent issues of the day in the port side garden beyond the colossal Arsenale building. Of this edgier, political and aspirant section, critic Rothkopf asked rhetorically, "what could have been more 'fatally separate' than a cloistered space at the end of a kilometer-long Venetian Arsenale accessible only to the most devoted pilgrims?" He answered that "despite several admirable contributions and an appealing air of optimism, the overall presentation suggested a sort of troubling solipsism couched as activism, an insider's conversation in the guise of global outreach and engagement."[63] Artist activists willingly impounded themselves in a utopian suburb outside of the main exhibitions. An old arsenal building whose foreboding architecture naturally daunts the outsider, *Utopia Station* seemed to inspire a search for something worldly and ulterior, but failed to actually offer "examples of radicality from the past in order to posit ones for the future,"

[63] Ibid., 176.

according to *Artforum*'s Tim Griffin.[64] The interconnected shows presented a kind of feudal scheme in which the art closer to the old beaux-arts led to their contemporary clansman ensconced in the yard beyond the castle inviting the peasants to enact fantasies of revolt. The title suggested ernest appeal and sarcasm about the inertia surrounding artistic expression. Today the 2003 website for this exhibition still exists. It offers artist posters to printout and an illustrative text by the curators. The latter focuses on a debate between Theodor Adorno and Ernst Bloch in 1964 concerning the legacy of utopian thought versus its unlikely praxis in the future.[65]

Biennialism concerns complex trends in previous international shows. In practice, away from the critical theory, these trend involve experimenting outside museums inside other unconventional exhibition spaces. Past Istanbul Biennials, for example, took landmark historical sites as venues. Biennialism in Istanbul, therefore, eventually critiqued the use of such buildings. It seemed curating in a monument casts the imperious structure as an indelible force of history that impedes the exhibition's capacity to appear contemporary.Symbolic relationships between the architecture and infrastructure, in other words, conspire to occlude the bold tactics of both the 2003 Venice and some of the Istanbul Biennials. New exhibits can even be occluded by mid-twentieth-century buildings; so the problem is not merely with ancient artifacts [or edifices?] . The gravitas can be managed by increasing the historical intricacy for the viewer, [for example by . . . .] Many complained that the too-familiar structures in the 2003 Venice Biennale

---

[64] Tim Griffin, "Left Waiting," *Artforum*, (September 2003), 180.

[65] It is worth noting that Brecht plays a prominent role in the curators' text, which is relevant to the theme of the 2009 Eleventh Istanbul Biennial by WHW to be discussed in chapter 7. See: http://www.e-flux.com/projects/utopia/about.html (accessed September 2015).

stifled the artist and the viewer alike. The the ambitions of curatorial vision may indeed be drowned out by prominent architecture, but this need not be inevitable. Bonami's curated section within the Arsenale presented an exhibition of painting that consisted mostly of acknowledged or canonical talents. By contrast, the biennial two years later "gathered many more emerging artists and artists' collectives than most others, and more experimental, activist-driven, or ephemeral work as well. Some of the work was even almost too casual, and thus unfortunately easily missed."[66] Not only was some of the art inconspicuous and understated, the venues were rather difficult to find, blending the host neighborhoods and the exhibition. Embedding art in this urbanist fashion, as already remarked, is a direct response to biennialism—to the 2003 Venice Biennale, specifically—and it rethinks the politics of installation that define Venice as a traditional site in other years.

This discussion intends to create a context for Kortun and Esche's *Istanbul* as another remedial approach to biennialism. For some, this entailed a scheme that was far too fractured. One reviewer self-consciously declared, "Seldom has a biennial been so hard for the peripatetic critic to give an analytic account of. There are many reasons for this. The first was the eclecticism of the selection.… The second reason, linked to the first, was the lack of a central thematic axis around which the whole exhibition could be structured." He goes on to describe this anti-biennial as an "infinity of approaches to reality," in which frustrations we likely to set in for the viewer: "The exhibition was a case-in-point demonstration of the evils of unthinking globalization on the biennial

[66] Regine Basha, "Singularity and the City of Delicate Balance," *Art Papers* (January/February), 42.

circuit, which over the past decade has become far too dependent, thanks to the weight of Occidental guilt, on knee-jerk responses such as making a principle of de-hierarchization and the Third World imperative."[67] This imperative would seem to be a consolatory contrast to the utopian outpost attempted in Venice in 2003 given that Istanbul is at least a global place not a tourist outpost. But some saw "a crossroads, with none of the directions leading to a better place."[68] *Istanbul* retained little of the typical structure of which biennials or group exhibitions consist.

Instead of inadvertently reinstating a Grand Biennale (with politics at the end of the road) in the guise of Venice's sit-in, curated in an ostentatious yet vaguely political style that some complained hardly resisted the immutable trappings of Venetian architecture, Esche and Kortun's *Istanbul* arrayed sites in order to disperse the conversation. Though some may have found it burdensome, it reframed art through a set of locations that staged "Third World imperatives" in places of modest in appearance. While comparing the two biennials is difficult, both shuttled contemporary art between political demands, responding to the present-day while managing to what extent the crowd was to be held in the unforgiving arms of antiquity. The other option would have been to return *Istanbul* to monuments and using landmark architecture reads differently in each city. Unlike Venice's neat place in European history, Istanbul's landmarks, conversely, serve political agendas to this day. In a rapidly changing country, an emergent civic identity in Istanbul contrasts the rest of Turkey and Anatolia. Istanbul continues to grow after population booms in the last twenty years to over ten-million. By the final

---

[67] Paul Ardenne, "Review of the 9th Istanbul Biennial," *Art Press* (no. 318, December 2005), 74-75.

[68] Ibid., 75.

years of the twentieth century, Istanbul was a bona fide megalopolis—this is where the curators placed *Istanbul*. The challenge was to figure out if can art intervene in such conditions. Attempting to capitalize on the ancient city's mystique, past biennials used architecture to invite the gaze of the West.

Before 2005, 2003's *Poetic Justice* Istanbul Biennial tried to have it both ways: the increasingly touristic Istanbul Biennial gave slight hints of critiquing the institution. But it too was marred by some of the same problems Bonami faced in Venice. One Istanbul-based critic Erden Kosova, wrote of the 2003 Istanbul Biennial scheme that:

> Curator Dan Cameron tried to correct this romanticized image by injecting a set of documentary-style video works that dealt directly with political issues—the title of the show, 'Poetic Justice', was indicative of a more balanced approach. Yet, the remarkably poor use of the majestic interior of the Hagia Sophia as one of the exhibition venues clearly indicated that there was a need for self-criticism within the biennial structure itself. Inviting Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun to curate the ninth biennial was seen as heralding a more sober approach. Esche has been a leading figure in the re-politicization of contemporary art practice in Europe, and Kortun had already produced a wide-ranging criticism of the previous biennials. Their programme included major structural changes: instead of using historical sites that appealed only to tourists, the biennial would put itself right at the heart of the urban flux.[69]

Here we sense the absurdity of biennialism: contemporary art is charged with exorcising visual art's Eurocentric (neo) avant-gardism, extracting it from tourism, keeping political commitments, assuaging provincial opinion makers, and attracting the public and the initiated professional viewers by making a convincing group of installations on a relatively low budget in one of the world's most famous buildings (a sixth-century cathedral converted to mosque in the fifteenth century).

---

[69] Erden Kosova, "City Report," *Frieze* (no 95, November / December 2005), 125.

Again, considering the 2005 biennial, its focus on the non-site of the drift (instead of the Hagia Sophia, for example), *Istanbul* attempted to extricate the viewer and therefore the discourse from the bathos of biennialism. The simple solution was to make local politics speak internationally without overstepping the limits of Istanbul's own developing art community. Venues were respectful of localisms that were sure to be challenge for outsiders navigating the city (as indicated by commentators above). To briefly map the installation, Platform Garanti on Istiklal served as a central location. From its place on Istiklal the Biennial swung towards Tophane near the broadening Bosphorous beyond the Golden Horn, through the junction of Tünel, down to the Galata Tower and down further to the waterfront at Karaköy, and then back up towards the tower the Sishane area. (This route will be discussed further below.) These spaces placed art in a variety of neighborhoods, some working-class, where locals actually lived. Simple as this was, it amounted to a new approach that employed areas away from touristy sites, like the Hagia Sofia.

One example of a location that entailed a drift for visitors and artists alike was the former municipal Tobacco Warehouse building. Some compared the roof to Swiss cheese. The exhibition in the Tobacco Warehouse building created a temporary community of drifters and passersby for the artists installed there. One artist, Ahmet Ögüt, described this location's importance to him as a local artist.[70] It brought him, a native, to a block of Beyoğlu that he'd never visited prior. This liminal area served at the time as a place of discovery for all participants, even the local businesses, as he described it. The

[70] Unpublished interview conducted at Platform Garanti October, 2006.

neighborhood was altered as a result of the location chosen by Esche and Kotrun. An impromptu café was made by a neighborhood shopkeeper across from the venue to serve artists food or tea while installing and working. Later, it served exhibition-goers. Ögüt regarded his presence initially as a bit of an encroachment on the then secluded neighborhood. But the curiosity of locals and that of the international artists working in the neighborhood led to some form of reciprocal exchange, un the end. This later was passed on to the viewers as an example of experiencing everyday life. As a cohort, they formed a kind of vanguard for Esche and Kortun's dispersed exhibition. (Clearly this sort of planning could be done in Venice if something both local and political were desired outside the traditional Venice venues.) Not only were artworks installed in the disused building, but the artists were installed in the neighborhood, if you will. Whatever these encounters amounted to as an exhibition, at the very least, the ritual of tea or coffee was first involved, where all politics are inherently local.

Whether the artistic incursion was viewed as fortuitous or not was left for the critics to decide. The arrangement forewent the typical hospitality offered by decompression zones or VIP lounges in form of sponsored cafés. Viewers and artists alike had to allow the local options to fill the void, which drifting always leads to. In this case, outside the old Tobacco Warehouse building, a café emerged organically in an entrepreneurial spirit where a temporary market was met by a temporary service.

Istanbul shared similar goals with Bonami's 2003 *Dreams and Conflicts*. Nonetheless, it met those goals in an organic fashion, with the reflective gaze of the locals meeting the wanderers as entered their neighborhood. Dispersing venues

throughout the city re-imagine politics through existing infrastructure—not merely an advanced art trying to infuse its politics into a traditional form of culture, such as the Venice Biennale. Without a central location, the Istanbul exhibition avoided a sequestered environment that the obdurate frame of the Arsenale proves to be for each Venice Biennale (of which there are plenty of options in Istanbul). Add this flexible infiltration of the city to a less hermetic exhibition organization (announcing delays and plans in equal order) and the architecture matched the informal public speaking forums that took place outside the timeframe of the exhibition and art opening—over the course of the year prior to inauguration. Public space was created in a so-called *Hospitality Zone* (the title of this artist-led exhibition riffed on VIP rooms), where some collective programs with community members were initiated outside curatorial oversight and given space of hanging out and hosting discussions in a third space. This approach to zoning replaced gift shops, and cafés. Provisionality was politics. It was sought in the talks, venues, literature, and so on. *Istanbul* self-consciously avoided biennialism materially and thematically to enable the work of artists and the itinerant, laboring viewer to wade into everyday environs. Instead of landmark architectures overwhelming art, a critique of biennialism through everyday life served as an organizing principle.

In a sense, *Istanbul*'s was more than a critique of biennials or a rejection of industry standards (which seems to ask curators to be all things to all people accepting their role as quasi artists). In an informal conversation in 2006 walking down Istiklal, Charles Esche told me he deemed these retractions as adjustments to biennial expectations. His approach is that of "Modest Proposals." He uses this borrowed phrase

to refer to curatorial practices that maintain a sense of scale befitting the specific locality. These modest (decidedly not modernist) proposal ask artists to consider the immediate surroundings. Esche's modest proposals intervene in the city. They also reconfigure the scale of possibility by avoiding anything sensational or lofty. Nonetheless they stay true to the curator's leftism. His twenty-first century Realism boils down to 'pauses' in the capitalist system. Esche strikes a reformist tone. He suggests art exhibitions should engage autonomous viewers within a group structure, or temporary community, briefly, personally and with optimistic humility about contemporary art's potential. This replaces the idea of the autonomous artist or work against the world. The basic premise of this "modest proposal" approach could be seen in *Istanbul.* Lastly, contextual or situational art interventions of this sort remove art from its postmodern enclosure within theory in favor of the chosen site.

It also has to do with curatorial options that opened in Europe after the Cold War and the disillusionment that followed the failures of institutional Communism. In many places, small scale exhibitions or exhibitions in places without proper cultural infrastructure were the only option. It would seem to Esche that in a time defined by market liberalization and our supposedly enhanced economic freedom social life remains localized and tribal. The idea of the his modest proposition emerges from modest communities. Mass-media and capital encircle and connect the world; but they do so without retaining the promises of egalitarian principles. Esche places contemporary social art practices in a new yet Realist paradigm that is decidedly post-populist, and post-twentieth century in mentality. What this means in practice is that neither art nor politics

in the usual art-world sense can be relied upon to raise consciousness as a public good, as they perhaps ought to in a more perfect world.[71] It is neo-Realist in the sense of maintaining the anti-capitalist pause. This skepticism is little more than healthy apprehension. Actual art possessing social and political gravity in favored instead of art discourses that adopt a planetary scale fit for a public relations campaign (too often, the fate of large- scale exhibitions of all kinds). This notion of a new Realism may be a way out of biennialism and its occasional failure as a critique of everyday life. That is, art exhibitions presented in full awareness that they are one of many intellectual products that must constantly adapt to material conditions and contextual (urban) forces—not just art-market trends. Again, the 2005 Biennial set up offsite exhibitions as a curatorial tool in the city of Istanbul. This set the stage for later biennials to create the temporary communities that merge invisibly with the regular temporal registers of the marketplace —old shipping warehouses, old shopping malls, old primary schools, old theaters, old apartment buildings.

This update to older forms of drifting is not only a means to experience contemporaneity. European avant-gardes are replaced with a roving public from across the world in this new Realism. These are advanced guards, nonetheless.

To offer concluding remark to this chapter, the curators of *Istanbul* created a precedent. It promoted a type of attention available in the casual retentions of a walker. These interactions come alongside contemporary artwork that few other contemporary biennials, such as Venice, could offer. I take this a kind of new Institutional Critique at

---

[71] See Charles Esche, *Modest Proposals*, ed. Serkan Özkaya, (Baglam Publishers: Ankara: 2005).

the level of revising the biennial institution weary of biennialism. In the case *Istanbul* and the biennial organization (IKSV), this means challenging art by exposing it to everyday life and the ideological structures materializing in everyday norms. These emerge as immanent outgrowths of art history and the advance of new economic zone, such as Istiklal. Looking closer at the 2005 Istanbul Biennial confirmed suspicions that I had about curating and biennialism: namely that modes of Institutional Critique and conceptual art pioneered in the 1970s and 1980s had been embraced in contemporary art to such an extent that they were compulsory modes of participatory viewership, especially at the level of the curator; this entailed constant movement to reclaimed sites of alternative witness, congregation, and therefore political aggregation. Dislocation is an essential part of this modest mode of critique performed in Istanbul in 2005. Institutional Critique has since midcentury meant relocation in many instances, offsite settings (à la Smithson), and art in incongruous places outside of the white cube.

As for biennialism, it is an institutional condition best compared to real world conditions—not the import of fulfilling avant-garde art history. These individuals give a prominent image to the broad interests of these support structures (even when they are focused on other, modest things). But there is more to the intellectual property of the viewer. In an interview with Vasif Kortun in 2006, he explained to me how the so-called rise of the curator resulted from the Cold War ending.[72] Biennials created networks via institutions that did not yet exist and these nearly invisible institutions are the inheritance of the current generation. Having a smaller, more nimble institution to stage new art to

[72] Interview discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

audiences scenarios in "provisional" institutions embodied a spirit of critique. Part of my argument is that this critique can be characterized as movement alone. Clearly, this relation to the mundane public realm is something that larger museums have little purchase upon (in comparison to biennials, hence their niche as an exhibition type). The year 1991 was a starting point, unleashing drifting professionals to travel elsewhere in order to collect ideologies that had been inaccessible in the Cold War period.[73] The drift, in a continental sense, was therefore the aftermath of nation-states realigning for many within a larger expansion of Europe and the globe. This happened culturally quite quickly in the arts, while economic integration remains an ongoing project to this day. The opportunity to institutionalize emergent histories drove the new *Großausstellung* and lent curators their revolutionary hopes. History, arguably, remains in a state of suspension after the Cold War.

This suspended state allowed curators to test ideas through art. Simply giving artists this mandate is what *Istanbul* had to offer as a site of critique. Visual art served as an educational tool for all involved in a quickly dispersing professional class of artists, many from the periphery. Other destinations gathered force and a network of art locations took shape. It is not a new history so much as a critical approach to how world events refresh older ideas about art.

The curators put it this way in the reader that accompanied the 2005 Biennial *Istanbul*:

> [W]hile 365-day-a-year institutions have a more vital role in local situations, the biennial can identify and define a position for art in the

> public consciousness and create the conditions from which it can be further explored…. In this sense, Istanbul is not only the subject of this biennial but also its operational field. Istanbul, as a city in radical flux, has become rectified bride on course for a ruthless marriage with privatization. In the process, it has been attracting exhibitions of scale, new museums and media-savvy sports events... To resist [privatization and event culture] in part, the biennial, and through it, the city has to provide the artists with a set of conditions to which they can respond personally.[74]

A biennial is, ideally, a means of identifying and recruiting of latent energies and histories into artistic and curatorial practice. Their next sentence notes that, "[t]his [resistance] leaves open the possibility that artists can create new visibility for marginalized or hidden elements that are not usually considered suitable subjects for cosmopolitan celebration, with the resulting artworks then placed back into the city to incite further reaction."[75] Thus, when the crowd does show up, whether it is a director from a large museum in a major city or a writer from a nameless community arts blog, a flexible exhibition orients the audience within a city as a peculiar historical construct, if not a critique of the everyday. Their impressions play their own minuscule part to complete the artistic work within this field.

Okwui Enwezor reinforces this when he explains that curating binds an array of artworks into a format like a novel collects a set of fictional scenarios and "speculative objects" in a book.[76] The biennial is a medium of sorts that cuts and pastes other institutional memories from elsewhere, for a temporary audience, also from elsewhere.

---

[74] Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, "The World is Yours," *Art, City and Politics in an Expanding World*, (Istanbul: IKSV: 2005), 25.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Enwezor, "Global Tendencies."

Audiences increasingly sophisticated, specialized in being all kinds of audiences depending on where they have wandered. Curating is a mode of re-contextualizing history, replacing criticism as institutional critique. Art institutions like audiences create patterns of shared desires—desires, which, according to Enwezor, are derived "from the total absorption of life into various formats of display. We live in an exhibitionary context at the moment. We are each in different ways always embedded in a potential exhibition, from the mall to the high street."[77] Critic Claire Bishop has commented on this phenomenon, calling this act of connecting art to other forms of consumption, "a sense of dislocation in which we perform ourselves performing."[78] With these many issues in mind, the following chapter gives a further reading upon context in this provisional or modest use of space by spectators.

[77] Okwui Enwezor Interviewed by Paul O'Neill, *Curating Subjects*, (London: Open Editions; 2007), 121.

[78] Claire Bishop, "Live Installations and Constructed Situations: The Use of 'Real People' in Art," *Verksted*, (no. 7, 2006), 82.

Chapter 4
Contemporary Art & Audience: Exhibition Sites for the 2005 Biennial

The following provides more detail of structural adjustments made to the 2005 Biennial by Curators Esche and Kortun. As mentioned, a dispersal of exhibition venues was one key way that the 2005 Istanbul Biennial was reformatted. Art critics in attendance described how a biennial might capture the prevailing zeitgeist through urban intervention. As art critic Claire Doherty wrote at the time, "their [Kortun and Esche's] curatorial gambit was marked by a cautious and considered methodology. They propose to work together 'on an exhibition structure that folds out of and reveals its context – the city of 'Istanbul', by commissioning artists to respond both to the 'urban location and the imaginative charge that this city represents for the world'." Doherty further summarized needed adjustments in the field of exhibition making: "[i]f the experience of the exhibition does little to harness the dynamism and energy of those first encounters between artist and situation, artist and site, artist and first audience, no amount of good intentions on behalf of the curator will sustain the attention of the biennial's broad and increasingly sophisticated audience."[79] Istanbul would seem consistent with what Doherty here deems the "immediacy of situation, site, and first audience."[80] Biennials often take two basic forms of exhibitory immediacy, Doherty's terminology. The first is to occupy preexisting museums and *kunsthalles* that preserve visual art in a hermetic

[79] Clair Doherty, "Location Location," *Art Monthly* (no. 281), November 2004, 21.

[80] The idea of a first audience suggested (but not developed) by Doherty is key to appreciating the notion of drifting developed in the following. This simple notion entails extremely complicated rituals of communication and exchange. A "first audience" may be defined as those individuals and those institutional offices routinely invited to attend art openings of locally and internationally agreed upon importance. On a month-to-month basis of the annual art calendar, this group comprises an avant-garde of the current contemporary art world.

atmosphere. White cubes reinforce art as rarified in exhibitions designed to contrast the external/urban world outside. In the second case, immediacy happens at an everyday level in offsite venues. The latter battles visual art's perceived elitism. A biennial may be said to be an intervention when it extends museological space past the museum's walls to the urban fabric of the city. It is a type of exhibition that can, ideally, transcend an exhibitory dialectic created by the traditional museum, in other words. Typically a biennial consists of both white cube enclosures and up to as many as several offsite spaces/street level/public projects. The offsite spaces routinely serve a mimetic function reflecting on the urban conditions they incorporate as well as the conditions or politics of art display in standard institutions. Usually the interventions presented outside of the white cube integrate distinct elements of the immediate culture or industry nearby. Some kind of communion with the ambient commercial rhetoric is used as a barrier or filter that ultimately reinforces the presentation as art.

The use of makeshift spaces did not begin with the artworks in *Istanbul* that characterized it as interventionist. One very notable work from the British artist Mike Nelson was included in curator Dan Cameron's *Poetic Justice*, the 2003 Istanbul Biennial. In an old workshop, Nelson constructed a chain of linked antechambers, narrow passageways, and false walls to form a labyrinth. A makeshift guide served as a kind of treasure map for visitors that led them there through an equally labyrinthine neighborhood outside the hidden art installation. The work clearly influenced the 2005 Biennial. This is apparent in how Nelson set his work away from the 2003 Biennial's primary location in the Sultanahmet, a district comprising Istanbul's central tourist area

containing the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia and other attractions. Walking to Nelson's offsite work also involved navigating one of the world's largest garment districts in an array of small, family-owned cottage factories, fabric makers and large distributors, some of them very old, situated alongside other larger fast- and fine fashion businesses. This spectrum of enterprises serves the entire region bordering Turkey with traditional dress and the European fashions filling familiar outlets across the globe.

For the uninitiated wanderer, Nelson's work pushed the exhibition off the biennial map. *Magazin: Büyük Valide Han*, as it was called, traced ambiances in a neighborhood itself being refashioned daily as businesses address modern fashions, and on streets that date back to antiquity. Nelson's set-up for the work more or less ensured various art-seekers never found the space. In either case, the wanderers were left to explore the neighborhood. If they did find the right address number, the results inside were disorienting. At the inner most chamber, Nelson installed a photographer's dark room complete with infrared bulbs and laundry lines hanging from the ceiling. This pre-exhibition space included a lack of usual exhibition markers, such as wall text. Nothing clearly indicated if the viewer had reached the intended site. Those who never made it ended-up wandering around, peering into textile shops, asking for clues from unwitting locals and peering at their own reflections in storefront windows. Getting lost en route to the piece generated a unique discourse around the work, including the neighborhood location, that is now part of urban legend that followed that particular biennial.

A review written at the time by the curator Peter Eleey, described Nelson's installation as an almost invisible public project, "near the Grand Bazaar, in a decrepit

16th-century workshop." In describing his traverse of the district, Eleey's text reinforces the collective dynamic that underpins this type of drift inducing art installation located out of bounds. The necessity of confronting the city presaged the recoil of usual contemporary art confines from within the white cube. Eleey describes reaching the innards of Nelson's architectural installation and the displacement he felt as a viewer:

> [a]fter a confusing search in one of the city's more chaotic neighbourhoods, I was shown into a terrifyingly dark room that appeared to be a makeshift photo lab. Hung all over the walls were pictures that were revealed, once my eyes had adjusted to the light, to be images Nelson had taken of the very neighbourhood through which I had just been wandering. I learned from the work's guardian that very few of the complex's residents and workers knew of the piece's existence, which was just fine—it is the foreigner's experience of Istanbul that, in a complication of the Orientalist dynamic, becomes the content of Nelson's piece.[81]

The statement presents this contemporary art viewer as an outsider in Istanbul, facing an "Orientalist dynamic." Instead of a presentation within the safety of the Sultanahmet the work imposed the terms of the resident economy upon the culture seeker. To face the artwork was facing one's displacement as a consumer of art.

Though it cannot be confirmed by an outside source, this work in essence set the stage for the expansiveness of the 2005 Istanbul Biennial. Its "Orientalist dynamic" tailor made for western voyeurism. Nelson's piece took psychological structures and made them literal. Orientalism here links to shifts in the global perception that followed world events in 2001.[82] Nelson made a visual reprocessing lab or darkroom that spoke to this

---

[81] Peter Eleey, "8th Istanbul Biennial" in *Frieze*, (no. 80, January-February), 2004.

[82] Orientalism denotes the imitation of life in Asian, Middle Eastern and African societies in art and literature to suit stereotypes, whether racial or cultural, projected by westerners. See Edward Said, *Orientialism*, (New York: Vintage Books; 1979).

new confluence and conflict of world cultures without specific reference or overt political terms. It also spoke to the layers of history gathered at the site near the bazaar but not nestled within it. Western versus Eastern collects as a double exposure first to the neighborhood and then to its representation. The viewer takes the analogous position of the camera as the city imposes itself on the "film" of the viewer's experience. *Magazin: Büyük Valide Han* places the traveler in a heightened state of self-detachment sensitive to their own 'dynamic' objectification.

Nelson restaged the piece in 2011 for the British National Pavilion under the new title *I, Impostor*.[83] Writing about the project for the Venice Biennale, curator Dan Cameron described the original context of the Istanbul work. Nelson's installation connected to an even deeper global culture when it "occupied two rooms within the Büyük Valide Han, a 17th-century caravanserai where teams of traders and their goods, servants and livestock, from various points along the Silk Route and other far-flung destinations, would make temporary encampments while they carried out their transactions in the city."[84] Then, in a somewhat paranoid impression, Cameron describes the effect of the darkroom as hinging on capturing the viewer, alienating them, and, indeed, inscribing the audience in reversed western voyeurism:

> Because the visitor's experience in 'discovering' the darkroom is invariably tied to the process of navigating the streets of Istanbul, a secondary reading of the photographs [hung in the central dark room] begins to set in as we examine them more closely. Inevitably, some of the places in the photos correspond to places we have passed through and stopped to visit, either en route to the han or as part of the Biennial

[83] For more visit, http://venicebiennale.britishcouncil.org/timeline/2011 (accessed March, 2015).

[84] Dan Cameron, "Memories of Tresspassing," in *British Pavilion: Mike Nelson: I, Impostor*, (British Council; London: 2011), 31.

> itinerary. This seemingly serendipitous discovery becomes more eerie when we stop to consider that it is impossible to determine when the photos were taken. The dawning realisation that our own journey has coincided with the photographer may have been shadowing us, unseen: a stalker, or a private detective, or an eccentric. And even if he (surely) is none of those things, the absence of any apparent use-value for the images hovers over the installation like an unspoken question—and at its hidden core is the remote but nonetheless tantilising idea that the photographer is really oneself.[85]

Being lost while possibly having been trailed corresponds closely to what Eleey called the "dynamic of Orientalism" as the gaze of the outsider turns in on itself. This dislocation does not bear down on the audience as exasperation alone. Rather, disorientation precipitates a sense of synchronicity as an unfamiliar neighborhood mapped in advance of one's own arrival. Apprehension is itself experienced, as one recounts time spent moments ago being out of synch with one's guiding senses in a new environment.

Critic Rachel Withers had this way of describing this mapping of subjectivity through national identity when she wrote about the 2011 recreation of *Magazin: Büyük Valide Han* in Venice as *I, Impostor*: "[t]he usual European perspective on Istanbul is as a bridge between western liberal capitalism and the Islamic world. In the Renaissance, though, Venice was viewed along similar lines – the Italian city-state's eastern allegiances earned it the hatred of its European neighbors. They believed the Venetians were inciting a Turkish invasion. Venice is one of those places that reveals the porosity of European

[85] Ibid.

cultural identity."[86] But, Withers also noted the quick slippage from this historical view to personal discomfort and bodily-awareness in the cramped spaces:

> [w]hen we "read" Nelson's installation, we're invited to let our sense of its authorship, its authenticity, slip and slide in a quasi-literary fashion. I, Impostor's mystery photographer is clearly an admirer of Atatürk: the Turkish reformer's portrait presides over his workbench. He's a narrative invention, Nelson's Islamic (maybe Pamukian) alter-ego. But the work can also be read as a fictionalization of his earlier self, as an interrogation of the status of his own memories of Venice and Istanbul, and as a reflection on art's representation of both personal and global histories.[87]

As wanderers, there is a sense of intersection—the personal within the political worlds. Nelson captures the disruptive power of drifting as a tactic, pushing visual art viewership away from its standard features. With Nelson's precedent set in place in 2003, the question in 2005 and afterward became how curators and artists would follow. Nelson's vague Orientalism would become art that employed Istanbul's psychogeography to deal with current moment and recent history.

Halil Altinder's *Miss Turkey* dealt with separate aspects of the ostracized in an offsite work for the 2005 Biennial. It was staged as impromptu skits and street performances occurring unexpectedly along Istiklal, "from one end to the other, imaginary moments that fleetingly disrupt the mundane and the routine; a beauty queen bikes up and down the street, and two businessmen break into a rap dance."[88] In documentation of one street performance, a masked gunman can be seen hiding near an ATM machine; in another two fighters wearing boxing gloves duke it out. These are

---

[86] Rachel Withers, "Mike Nelson at the Venice Biennale," for The Guardian, June 3, 2011, http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/jun/03/mike-nelson-venice-biennale (last accessed March, 2015).

[87] Ibid.

[88] Vasif Kortun, *9th International Istanbul Biennial*, (IKSV; Istanbul: 2005), 88.

spontaneous eruptions marked by the absurd. There is also layered set of locational subtexts underlying the work as well. As Kortun described the work, he also explains the significance of the setting for the Ninth Biennial:

> Beyoğlu's main street, Istiklal Cadessi, is an everyday theater of the unexpected. It is the most institutional are in Istanbul, the first pedestrianised, and the first wide, straight street; full of consulates, art and cultural centres, banks and bookshops. But it is also a street with a violent history of capital, leisure, prostitution and clandestine activity. No other street in the world witnesses a demonstration each and every day of the year, from the stubborn endurance of the Saturday Mothers to the locally-sanctioned marching bands. The street also has an amazing density of undercover cops, pickpockets, sharks, lookouts, con artists and the like. Sometimes Istiklal Caddesi is also the beautiful gutter of the city, with its freaks performers and spontaneous happenings.[89]

Kortun's final sentiments here call to mind a Baudelaire finding beauty in the "gutter of the city" and Fluxus "happenings." Altindere's performances are themselves odes to the spontaneous activity. What may not be legible to the outsider/westerner is how they refer back to dislocation within Turkey. This sense of dislocation relates to Altindere and other Kurdish artist from the eastern city of Diyarbakir, who made a name for themselves first as participants in this and other biennials. As a Kurdish minority simply walking down the Istiklal speaking Kurdish could raise eyebrows given the tensions that exist over this nation within Turkey. Kortun speaks to this tension when he writes that "art it seems can never compete with the intensity of everyday life, nor hope to do so. The video is Altindere's ode to the street with which, like so many immigrants to this city, he has long identified."[90] Describing the artist as an immigrant in Istanbul is no exaggeration. These

---

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid.

are just one aspect of the deep divisions running between Anatolia and Istanbul. As the curator framed it, the work highlights how Istiklal represents the liberalized European side of the city and Turkey to the entire Near East. The street truly is at the greatest remove from the rest of it; but does not substantively changing the reality of discrimination for those who come to this part of Beyoğlu to avoid it. Even in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ottoman times this neighborhood stood as a gathering and dividing point on the world map.

As one of numerous registers of *Istanbul*, *Miss Turkey* is indicative of how the 2005 Biennial incorporated a political issue into the Biennial. Other aspects of division were drown out by the artist. A beauty queen on a bicycle, for example, might be a comparison to the balancing act of gender. The neighborhood of Tarlibasi, directly parallel to Istiklal a block away but separated by a busy thoroughfare, does not resemble the tourist zone to this day. Nevertheless, this neighborhood was undergoing changes along with Istiklal in 2005. It now borders the stadium village of the Galatasaray soccer franchise, which officially moved there in 2011. All these aspects seemed to be tacit consideration for Altindere's skits in the streets. Tarlibasi was then one of the city's few gay-friendly areas. While Altindere never openly or publicly connected these things, the beauty queen and the area's reputation for drag queens would be difficult to miss as a subtext, informing what seems to be his own take of the psychogeography of Istiklal. Additionally, the artist staged other interventions that became the video work, such as a boxing match, which may be making light of the occasional street violence that can occur on Istiklal at certain times. Figuratively, the idea of urban beautification and beauty-

queen competitions may also be converging in *Miss Turkey*. In this case, Istiklal serves as the cincture around Beyoğlu, wrapped, as it were, like a sash around a contestant just as the city (or at least its European side) entered an aggressive and irreversible process of gentrification and European integration.

To step back from a reading of Altindere's work, it is worth qualifying *Miss Turkey* within the two basic terms of encounter offered by any biennial mentioned above– the institutional context and the anti-museological offsite–as it managed to combine both. In addition to what the work means, its placement synthesizes the dialect of white cube versus offsite exhibition making by first intervening at the street level and then in the conventional blackbox video installation. While *Miss Turkey* provides some sense of how the Ninth Biennial situated itself locally and in a broader context, it may fail in what Doherty deemed the essential task of any curatorial plan to bring the audience to the immediacy of a first encounter with a subject. As for the engagement of the city, it does what Kortun called charging the street, incorporating aspects of the local culture and drawing attention to the national antagonisms embedded in the everyday encounters. But, importantly, it "charged" the street before the "first audience" was present. Except for those who happened upon the work or were apart of the group the artist invited during the performances, the ambient energy Altindere's work channeled could not be experienced by the biennial audience beyond the video.

This particular work inflected the two basic choices of institution and offsite in a synthetic manner. Dwelling on these two basic options as a guide the decision-making for both artist and curator, *Miss Turkey* points to the discursive terms of the site, Istkiklal.

The requirement of tactical engagement with the city seems to require more that the mere staging of museum installations in our era. To return to Doherty, there is little sense of encounter redefined audience in many white cube exhibitions. There is none of what Doherty saw as the necessity of harnessing dynamism and urban energy "between artist and situation, artist and site, artist and first audience." Artists creating the initial, extra-institutional phase of research in the city, work as a kind of advanced guard for a biennial exhibition. They investigate places that will eventually enter into the fold of the exhibition, as the artwork begins and ends by invocation of a locational text. In the Michel de Certeau sense of reading the built environment of the city as though it were a text, the rhetoric of a biennial (as established in *Miss Turkey*) sought an aesthetic as much as atonement with the intensity of the everyday world along Istiklal.

As Esche and Kortun wrote another elaboration of these ambitions:

> As you walk between the various venues, you will encounter the city. We have sought to vary the ways with which you encounter the art, giving each space or each floor its own quality and particular experience. One idea behind this biennial is to join the rather abstract notion of art's relation to personal and social change to the actual conditions of a city that is going through a hectic transformation in much the same way as other planetary cities, but with its own unique dynamic.[91]

Doherty's notion of finding dynamic first encounter should be considered a key criteria here. Again, the curators end their introduction on the following note: "We hope this Biennial will be understood as a way of seeing Istanbul through the eyes of others, and thereby incorporating another's vision into an intimate view of this place."[92] The

---

[91] Ibid.

[92] Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, Vasif Kortun, *9th International Istanbul Biennial*, (Istanbul; IKSV: 2005), 9.

curators' words touched on an issue dogging contemporary art in the early twenty-first century. Namely, what seemed to be visual art's diminishing relevance in a changing world driven by impressions of unfathomable violence, war and intractable political regressions in world politics. Hence the modest thesis of their biennial seemed to start from scratch. However problematic Istanbul's economic revitalization, no one could spend time in the city and say it was driven by the same divisions or political allegiances that plagued other parts of the region, West or East, in 2005. To a large extent, this alternative condition was understood as something that could not be described, only experienced. A visual art biennial could highlight aspects of the this experience (as Altindere had). Implicit in this thesis of living vicariously through artists' responses to an anomalous city, viewers drifting around Beyoğlu were to dream of what contemporary art and life could be outside of the marketization of both. Whereas art united users and viewers elsewhere in a familiar landscape of established (mostly western) art institutions, this biennial would instrumentalize the city as a new urban consciousness. One that was still negotiating its role as a "planetary city" as an art-world outlier. Though Istanbul and Turkey's image would change notably in art circles after this exhibition (coinciding with shifts in international geo-politics after 2005 and Turkey's revived economy), the Istanbul Biennial was presented in 2005 as a place to generate new formats and types of (first) encounter. These new encounters would create new fleeting communities around images. These images were contemporary because they were in Istanbul and the city was germane to an early twenty first-century moment of transformation in the region, sandwiched between the major powers of the world (hegemonic and counter-hegemonic).

In part, Kortun, as native to the city, sought to provide proof of Istanbul's exceptionalism, which was neither wholly European, Islamic, or entirely in-tune with Turkey. In practice, this meant challenging the organization to move beyond its comfort zone. For this task, Kortun ensured that biennial sites would exist outside the infrastructure the biennial foundation IKSV typically endorsed—this is a key aspect of using any biennial to curate institutional critique. Reconfiguring institutional boarders by situating the biennial in the marketplace ensured *Istanbul* could not be served as a museum-friendly art affair. Kortun laid out a path in advance of the audience that thrust the viewer into the commotion of the street. Exhibiting or staging art around Istiklal served the curators' criteria because this is where "planetary" transformation was most palpable. This was a more interesting container for art than a white cube alone.

Again, this structure nonetheless took shape in the heart of the European side, from the Galata Tower to Taksim Square. As discussed, Beyoğlu's street life itself presents an array of microcosms built by the unwitting conservators of everyday life found in anywhere: magazine and booksellers, café restauranteurs, storekeepers, and bar owners—the petite bourgeoisie. They were a mirror for the other type of middle class that composes the middle ranks of the international art world. These mundane spaces intimated the provisional circumstances the curators had developed as a foil for their "first audience." This amounted to an exhibition occupying a handful of offsite venues as the city readied for inclusion into a global economy.

The curators' approach to inventions translated into using artists to interact with this changing landscape as both a reality and a metaphor for globalization. These creative

wanderers acquainted themselves with the city through extended research residencies several weeks long in some cases. There were a few appreciable results to this approach that are worth discussing. *Istanbul* began by encouraging artists to interact directly with the material, everyday life in an ancient city facing contemporary forces. This approach had the key goal of reifying clichés dating back to Istanbul when it was Constantinople (330-1453, CE) that guided western narratives about the place. In fact, outside these clichés, artists veered towards a "Turkish experience," inconsistent with western or eastern art and literature—artists nurtured the image of Istanbul as a Romanesque relic only in jest (for example Serkan Özkaya's *David (Inspired by Michelangelo)* to be discussed in chapter six).

Also this meant that the curators' reflexive approach to the city built upon longer research stays for participants, which ruled out the inclusion of many big names in the art world. This is because most already-established artists would be too busy to suspend their studio production or add extended time in Istanbul to their work/travel/exhibition itinerary. Thus the Ninth Biennial would be led (actually not nominally) by emerging artists who were able to retain or return to residency research regularly and occasionally produce projects in the city that took a few months to complete. This condition lent biennial participant artists to drifting through the city even before it opened.

Then Platform Garanti (now Salt Beyoğlu) was art center residing in a former branch of the Garanti Bank where Kortun served as director. Platform had the advantage

of being in a central place along Istiklal.[93] Though there were only two artists (Yael Bartana and Hüseyin Alptekin), Platform became the hub before and during the Ninth Biennial in part because artists residencies had been located in studios above the galleries. Platform served as a meeting place for curators and artists to debrief. Later this was the case with viewers among the "first audience."

Since the biennial venues resided in older neglected buildings off of Istiklal, it was necessary to travel from between offsite locations. Istiklal framed the city and exhibition from within one of many Istanbuls on-view. In each environment, from the museum space at the art center to the dilapidated off-sites, the loose concept of provisionality nurtured the experience of a "first audience." It took shape only after days of wandering and thus presented a unique temporal aspect of getting used to the city. Part of the idea was that each site had long ago gathered and absorbed the neighborhood energy just outside, just below. Tütün Deposu or, old Tobacco Warehouse in Tophane[94], the Deniz Palas Apartments[95] in Sishane looking towards the Golden Horn, and the port

---

[93] While Platform was one of the traditional meeting places for the art communities in Istanbul and for newcomers, both during and between biennials, there was an additional *Hospitality Zone* in 2005 on the second floor of Antrepo No.5 intended to provide a neutral third space or informal stage within the official program.

[94] Tütün Deposu included artists: Jakup Ferri, Luca Frei, Johanna Billing, Flying City, Tintin Wulia, Alexander Ugay, Maria Eichhorn, Ahmet Öğüt, Pavel Büchler and the collective Oda Projesi.

[95] Deniz Palas Apartments artists included: Jakup Ferri, Phil Collins, Silke Otto-Knapp, Servet Koçyiğit, Paulina Olowska, Lukas Duwenhogger, Khalil Rabah, Nedko Solakov, Michael Blum, Johanna Billing, Pilvi Takala and Gardar Eide Einarsson.

side shipping warehouse[96] Antrepo no. 5, and another Garanti Bank Building,[97] both near the Karaköy ferry terminal led to other smaller installations in the Bilsar Building, near the Deniz Apartments and on the street within the appropriately titled *En Route* section.[98] Entirely walkable between, these venues created a dispersed arena of attention for a contemporary art exhibition goer. The curators had in essence entwined the attentive reader of the city within Istanbul. At the intersection of the real and the allusive *Istanbul*, some viewers would surely find only one or the other; but between sites and artworks, a collective pedestrianism was made a primary concern—a psychogeography unlike any other available to a curator or artist working on a project in another place. This led to unwitting bystanders finding themselves included in art's new age flanerie: a mode of informal membership and exchange with a temporary community or "first audience" that persists only in each ambling moment. It is parallel to the preexisting marketplace just outside each of then nondescript location, but it stops at the hotel and inside the venues.

The temporary community or "first audience" shared knowledge and encounters with 53 artist projects. Given that most of these artists would have been unknown at the

---

[96] Antrepo 5 artists: Daniel Bozhkov, IRWIN, Erik Göngrich, Cerith Wyn Evans, Smadar Dreyfus, Hala Elkoussy, Şener Özmen, Ahlam Shibli, Mario Rizzi, Alexander Ugay and Roman Maskalev; with the fifth floor "Postionings" section called "Free Kick," curated by local artist Halil Altindere with artists Songül Boyraz and Peter Höll, Erkan Özgen, Nurullah Görhan, Ferhat Özgür, Hatice Güleryüz, Ahmet Öğüt, Hüseyin Karabey, Belmin Söylemez, Demet Yoruç, Merve Berkman, Cengiz Tekin, Gülşah Kılıç, Neşe Çoğal, Erinç Seymen, Murat Tosyalı, Ramazan Bayrakoğlu, Gülsün Karamustafa, Canan Şenol, Vahit Tuna, Bashir Borlakov, Özlem Günyol, Selim Birsel, Hakan Onur, Taner Ceylan, Mustafa Kunt, Berat Işık, Fatma Çiftçi, Burak Delier, Köken Ergun, İnci Eviner, Hunera Berxwedani, Nejat Satı, Sefer Memişoğlu and Osman D. Bingöl.

[97] Garanti Building: Jakup Ferri, Solmaz Shahbazi, Hatice Güleryüz, Axel John Wieder and Jesko Fezer in tandem, Daniel Guzman, Jon Mikel Euba, David Maljkovic, Wael Shawky, Halil Altindere, Chris Johanson, Gardar Eide Einarsson, RUANGRUPA, Nedko Solakov, Yaron Leshem, Sean Snyder and Yochai Avrahami.

[98] Bilsar Building installation consisted of Dan Perjovschi and Ola Pehrson; the "En Route" artists were Daniel Bozhkov, Pawel Althamer, Serkan Özkaya, Karl-Heinz Klopf, Otto Berchem and SUPERFLEX with Jens Haaning.

time, we can imagine their obscurity blended with the urban look of the curators askance, to the daily workers in Beyoğlu facing within the overarching, impersonal concerns of the city itself.

In a 2006 interview conducted with Kortun, he described some of the decisions and some of the material conditions underlying the criteria he and Charles Esche developed. He noted that, "We couldn't come up with a title that would reduce the idea of the exhibition in an intelligent way, and I am weary of catchy titles that double up as labels. So we wanted a title that was a bit redundant, and a bit boring: 'Istanbul: Ninth International Istanbul Biennial taking place in Istanbul for Istanbulites, for the Istanbul look'," Kortun said with a smile and continued:

> The strategy was to downplay certain things like the arrogance of Istanbul and the physical sites of the exhibition, downplay the Istanbul which is in a kind of global city race, downsize the physical sites of the exhibition. Not using huge white walls was a way to create a sense of provisionality. The intention was to do just enough but not more in terms of refurbishing the spaces. The size and scale of the actual exhibition areas were also downplayed. We did not work much with artists or galleries. So galleries, museum boards, and collectors were not involved. It was more egalitarian and democratic, and this showed in the exhibition. It showed at the opening and with those coming in because they were not members of the museum boards, collectors or private parties. It was kind of like a get together without the big bang. There was no big bang. There was no great event. I think that was in a way consistent throughout the project.[99]

It also downplayed the arrogance of a growing global contemporary art industry and its monopoly on visual art, everywhere. Kortun here describes an approachable exhibition resisting the spectacle of exhibition culture and the spectacle of Beyoğlu in equal measure. It sought to embed new artworks in a loose curatorial view, one more concerned

[99] Matthew Schum, "Vasif Kortun: Istanbul qua Istanbul," *Fillip*, (no. 6, Summer 2007).

with a city being developed in a rather violent manner. Thus by working closely with artists over extended periods, the curators made implicit that this exhibition was not meant to tell the story that the municipal planners in Istanbul seemed to want to tell, over and over. *Istanbul* need not show the friendlier side of the city. Renowned landmarks that dot the city guided previous biennials, not this one. The tourist board could lure the tourist themselves to relish the past. The Ninth Biennial also refused to cater to already established international artists and challenged unknown artists to find their own fleeting sense of internationalism on the ground level (such as Altindere's *Miss Turkey*). The ambitions were loose, but not without constraints. Fundamentally, giving emerging artists the opportunity to invent their own agenda, their own incomplete picture of *Istanbul*, within Esche and Kortun's framework gave this biennial exhibition its new location along a well-trodden path. *Istanbul* worked within "the actual conditions of a city that is going through a hectic transformation" as the curators put it above.

In the next chapter I turn to artistic examples that created their "intimate view of this place" and temporary worldview using offsite environs and everyday objects.

Chapter 5
The International & the Everyday: Select 2005 Biennial Artworks

The following chapter highlights artworks from the 2005 Istanbul Biennial. Each exemplifies how found material, objects, images of artists fit into borrowed spaces. They include a gangster movie, a rock band, the moon on a video billboard, a religious text recited in a bodega, and a memorial museum to the mistress of a world leader. Artworks here present an image of a shared world. Each offers a twist on art viewership in the twenty-first century that supports the notion of mobile gaze entering and making use of media from everyday life. Drifting in contemporary art entails more immersive environments and longer itineraries between many locations. As days-long drifts a biennial aims at a comprehensive experiences that are citywide. In this sense the exhibition combines to create a counteractive medium appropriating spectacle culture across a discursively loaded set of urban contexts. Artworks chosen below exemplify how a cityscape becomes a mediascape and an ulterior terrain of history. As a set of artworks, they shared similarities in their tactical reliance upon found objects to make art.

To introduce a thesis that will guide the dissertation henceforth, I wish to note that though biennials are conceived as curatorial projects united by thematic rationalizations, the artworks brought together by the curators of any large group show come from a set of media and subset of interests too diverse to allow for a cohesive argument. In light of this limitation (which creates a barrier to studying contemporary art exhibitions as artifacts in general) this chapter proceeds in its own ambling way to uncover and describe notable artistic sources cited as re-contextualized images/artworks. The knowledge produced in

uncovering sources is the work behind contemporary art production *and* viewership. The isolation and production of this knowledge distinguishes art viewership from other types of consuming. It is a form of labor, which will be discussed in detail in the final chapter eight of this dissertation. To absorb and describe artist sources, needless to say, is not an art history in a traditional sense—it is not neoclassical artists made of classical parables.[100] To trace contemporary art back to its originary source and imagery in the case of appropriation art, even when these influences seem frivolous, we may find, "Little by little, the contradictory signs of servitude and revolt are revealed in all things," as Georges Bataille wrote of the everyday objects residing in Dalí's painting.[101] Something vaguely similar gives art unity today in the production of objects and the production of knowledge that they induce, intentionally or inadvertently. The artworks below recycled consumer materials, à la Duchamp, to reexamine common features of visual cultures. This type of appropriation art thus asks the viewer to see a creative labor in the act of artistic recycling. As labor moves outside of the traditional workplace, displacement and drifting become primary experiences, I would argue. I would also argue that the tactics for recycling visual culture is highly sophisticated in the contemporary art industry—perhaps more than others, such as the entertainment industry, even if that art is occasionally frivolous and cynical creative product.

If in the autumn of 2005 you were to walk down Istiklal from the central hub at the Platform Garanti art center towards Tünel, you would find an illuminated sign upon

---

[100] Indeed, one often strains to make any viable connection between the contemporary art object and the precepts guiding recent art history.

[101] Georges Bataille, "The 'Lugubrious Game'," in *Visions of Excess*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2008), 27.

the rooftop down a side street. It exemplifies how this Ninth Biennial intervened with alterations to the immediate surroundings of Beyoğlu. Norwegian artist Gardar Eide Einarsson placed this illuminated sign upon the Deniz Palas Apartments (biennial venue). In capital letters it read, THE WORLD IS YOURS, using old-fashioned bulbs. The sign replicating a scene from a famous Howard Hawks' film–*Scarface*, to be discussed below–was visible from a pedestrian area, including the thoroughfare. In the surrounding streets as people traveled between Pera, Tarlabaşi, and Dolapdere, the ambiguous pronouncement seemed both out of time and out of place. Overlooking the waterway below the piece exemplifies to how contemporary artists commonly create meaning through displaced symbols.

Like many younger artists working today, Einarsson sees his images are not his own, but appropriations capable of representing ideology.[102] He seems to have little more explanation to offer elsewhere. Wandering individuals chasing the Ninth Biennial in this case are themselves the distinguishing factor, viewers complete the work simply by knowing who made it and that the decontextualized sign was placed there because there is a biennial. Einarsson's sign addresses the audience shuffling below, sardonically adopting a voice of power. The image transmits ideology by adding mass-media imagery to the exhibition. It is an arcane gesture of inexplicable significance beyond being a readymade.

Functionally, though, the piece rezoned the area around the sign as central to the 2005 Biennial. The "world" is the keyword to consider here. First, Einarsson's piece

---

[102] Trinie Dalton, Gardar Eide Einarsson, 2008 Whitney Biennial Blog, https://whitney.org/www/2008biennial/www/?section=artists&page=artist_einarsson (accessed July, 2015).

exudes "a postmodern condition" popularized in French Poststructural philosophy and infused in art theory to explain new forms of readymade and conceptual art.[103] That is, it finds artistic meaning by incorporating, copying, and refashioning historical images as relocated signifiers. Once de-contextualized they are figments of larger narratives that shape society and grant discursive power to art of this sort, which no matter how absorbed into other signs is defined as art because it has been dislocated. This work typifies a general state of displacement as displaced signs or images. These images replicate the mass-media but distribute the signs or image in the specialized space of art exhibitions driving the popular-culture friendly arts industry. This mode of authorship was long ago theorized as an essential aspect of postmodern culture by Fredric Jameson.[104] Einarsson fits the bill by proposing the world *is* yours, all you have to do is be an artist and make this sign, *see*. The contradiction that one employs content from the past as a pastiche to assert their artistry advances a trickster's sense of irony, in the Jameson sense. Regarding this content as a viewer thus requires acquisition of the backstory driving the work.

Copying, quoting, and sourcing in generational cycles differs from other functional means of artistic communication, on television for example. These visual art procedures have advanced considerably between Pop Art and the "pictures generation" that came out of New York City in the early-1980s. Found art has been embraced by the market and institutionalized in art collections to create a reliable mode of address for

---

[103] See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition : A Report on Knowledge*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[104] See Fredric Jameson "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, (Seattle: Bay Press; 1983), 111–125.

artists. As production moved towards recycling in the 1990s, biennials helped to make appropriated content the signature of many artists' intellectual property. This approach served as a unifying designation for visual art's international products as well. The roving viewer stands below Einarsson's sign bemused by his international brand of appropriation art. Amusement would seem to stand as its essential meaning.

Perhaps *The World is Yours* adopts a playful attitude towards the artistic mandate of arrogation itself. If so, Einarsson's sardonicism appropriates the very tactic of appropriation that made Pop Art provocative, for a time. These tactics have become the gestures and unmoored themes that fill biennials. By 1985 Martin Kippenberger was already playing with this cynicism in works such as *Buying America and Selling El Salvador* at Metro Pictures in New York. He perfected the anti-art gestures of his time. His mockery left nothing to the imagination: the artist is he who feels it is his right to appropriate everything around him. Eventually the world in its entirety becomes his artwork, incorporating the globe into his oeuvre, effortlessly, with the help of world-class galleries and cultural institutions.[105]

Yet Einarsson was then a relatively unknown artists making an artwork made for Istanbul. If it comments on the superficial rehashing of mass culture as art, as does any appropriation art, what does it mean in this particular place? *The World is Yours* addresses viewers through the localization of a famous Hollywood movie in Istanbul. It interpellates the passersby with a ripple in the mediascape of the city, perhaps announcing the arrival of global capital. This is not the usual address coming at the usual consumer as

[105] Here I have in mind *Metro-net*: Kippenberger's worldwide subway connecting various arbitrary and not-so arbitrary points on the globe, such as Syros, Dawson City, Leipzig, Tokyo, Münster, and Kassel, as an artwork.

ads, brand names, state symbols, sports franchises, and the like. It simply beams its ambiguous foreign message at the crowd, from on-high, from some metastable entity that has the world to give you. In this light, it is a performative voice. It echoes visual and cultural supremacy, even global hegemony, right in the heart of Beyoğlu.

The World is Yours arrived in 2005 as an already mediated product, steeped in popular culture, from the domain of two American auteurs. The sign was a set piece in Howard Hawks' 1932 film *Scarface* and in Brian De Palma's 1983 remake. Both films contain different versions of this now legendary sign. Einarsson's version closely resembles the Hawks version. When he updated the Hawks original of a sadistic prohibition-era gangster driven mad by ambition, power and jealousy, De Palma added a populist twist suited for the maverick cinema of the late-1970s. De Palma's *Scarface* in updates Chicago and an Italian immigrant in Miami in the guise of Cuban Tony Montana. Montana. In both cases, the protagonist ditches his working-class roots by amassing power and a fortune moving up the ranks of a shadowy drug cartel.

As a Norwegian, Einarsson, grew up far removed from President Reagan's drug wars dramatized by De Palma. America's administration of immigration, the Cuban embargo, cable television, and the campy action films that represented a new era of mass-entertainment spectacles for the household, fueled by the invention of the VCR, would not be immediate contexts for the images in his homeland. The work is not an homage rooted in experience, therefore; nor is it an artwork directed at those who grew up in the States, whether in Hawks' or De Palma's time. Einarsson arrogates dominant visual culture itself, as an outsider, as a creative rover who needn't have good reason to make

the sign—only the means to do so. He is quoting a sign from the first film that became a decorative light fixture in the second. In the latter, Montana's palatial mansion glorifies American kitschiness, stands in for the rugged man's meteoric rise to wealth or celebrity. This perversion of the American dream comments upon the contagion of American individualism, which is spreading globally by 2005 to Istanbul and beyond. Cuba's communist shores may as well double for the sands of the Middle East. "The World is Yours" serves as an analogy, the tip of the iceberg of America's wanton materialism engulfing the planet. Scarface is the ultimate symbol of a rising *nouveau riche* class that would define the 1980s. De Palma's filmmaking celebrates absurdity and decadence in Hollywood, as does the contemporary artist evidently here mocking the imagine populating his industry.

De Palma's film is a jab at Hollywood's insane industry, of men and women driven mad by the vengeance of other arrivistes in constant competition. *Scarface* is anyone who had to endure resentment, mistrust, or mistreatment as an outsider along the way to fame. He presents an organic intellectual who has climbed the ladder of success and proven his sophistication, only to be corrupted by exposure to the hierarchy he has scaled. His version of *Scarface* show a man who destroys himself by mastering the system. In this sense, the film and the art work can be read as critiques of their respective industries that have lost their former aura and gone mad.

The Biennial text explained Einarsson's *The World is Yours* is "a promise so hollow that it verges on cruelty... With the obvious shortcomings of its offer, the sign

addresses a key element of any biennial: the naïve notion of self- empowerment."[106] In the context of the Biennial, the curator continues, "slogan both nurses a sense of entitlement and serves as a dark greeting. At a time when the production and distribution of art is becoming even more geographically decentralized and no single city can rightly claim to be the capital of contemporary art, any city whatsoever is free to place itself at centre-stage."[107] These aspects of mass-media signifiers and meaning production include distribution inherently. Distribution manifests darker forces driving the itinerant artist/ viewer/professional as they emplacement themselves elsewhere, drifting about, measuring (or in this case altering) the unique registers of psychogeography existing here and there across the globe. The curator's description offers his own apprehension about some vague, resolutely global "slogan [that] equally greets the city's aspirations of self-empowerment and the artists' idea of the biennial as a career opportunity."[108] Addressing the larger conceit of an exhibition making the personal political within Istanbul's transformation into an art nexus, the text also makes clear that the work was chosen to send a message about shared expectations, individually or civically: "Einarsson's work implies the question of whether the periphery is able to challenge the centre, or whether the periphery still has to follow the discourse of the centre, or come to the centre in search of legitimization."[109] The Ninth Biennial in this light self-consciously legitimates

---

[106] Charles Esche, "Gardar Eide Einarsson," *9th International Istanbul Biennial* (Istanbul: IKSV; 2005), 53.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Ibid.

(appropriation) art as a distribution system for an audience as well as an aspirational city that itself will be instrumentalized.

Instead of a product or brand being the purpose of the announcement, we have an artist expropriating an imaginary item (from a 1932 film based on a 1929 crime novel remade in 1983 into a super violent action film celebrated for its sets depicting the garishness of the United States in the early-1980s). Decontextualized as such, Einarsson appropriated material makes for an ambiguous announcement, one that highlights the codicillary role contemporary artists often play as public figures today. They address passersby as the receivers of breaks in consumer patterns. Being an incomplete formulation or figment within a saturated visual arena such as Beyoğlu allows the sign to stand-in for an official form of "legitimization." This somehow lends appropriation artworks aura or distance—the "search for legitimization" in the curator's words. Though one could argue it is only a signal for a speeding up of reproduced imagery that the viewer or artist can never overtake, the chase goes on. The piece evidences artistic tactics related larger phenomena in visual culture -namely how images themselves wander, take on a life of their own, and how artists today serve as transistors for their latent energies.[110]

I began with *The World is Yours* because it offers insight into how an urban exhibition can differ from other types of exhibitions by inciting travel within a city. This travel approximates a much larger field of distribution that will remain hidden from view. This ambiguous encroachment by the artwork summons the drifting art crowd,

---

[110] For more on the anthropomorphic travel of images see, W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*, (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

scrambling the usual messages found in entertainment zone around Istiklal with a sign appropriated from Hollywood. Standing beneath the decontextualized sign for a few brief moments, they gaze up at what the curator calls the "search for legitimization" introduced by Einarsson. In this consumer concourse replete with cosmopolitan brands, establishments opened by global restaurateurs and tourist cafes and gathering points, the artwork creates a brief ripple in the everyday. It being within the marketplace remains key to the infringement implied in Einarsson's fictive address. In the collective presence of this art crowd, a temporary and (therefore contemporary) community forms daily for the run of the show. Somewhat unwittingly, the artist asserts contemporary art's prerogative to reclassify and re-visualize countercurrents, such as Hawks' and De Palma's, all the while remaining situated within "planetary" trends that pass for signs of globalism. The employment of Hollywood marginalia creates an equally marginal and temporary meeting point. This temporality is contemporary art's power as an ambiguous arbiter of interventions relocating signifiers from the past that assemble itinerant communities.

A final remark on how the curators' notion of how Einarsson's addresses "the question of whether the periphery is able to challenge the centre." *The World is Yours* concerns how readymade signifiers externalize the experience of the wandering viewer. This drifter always remains further from the marketplace than the thing introduced there under art's coded language. Proximity and acquisition within the field of commodity good is key to these latter-day readymade techniques. Arjun Appadurai called this

irresistible flood of relations in everyday settings the social life of commodities.[111] What, we might ask, is the difference between the Einarsson work and seeing a young man wearing a *Scarface* t-shirt bearing De Palma's villain as Al Pacino? It is uncertain. Both are viewers and presumably fans of *Scarface.* Additionally, the context created by contemporary art transmutes the words into its own native currency and the subset of urban wanderers there as art viewers carry it with them as witnesses. If the shirt represents a certain psychic disenfranchisement consistent with the appeal of violent movies and video games teenagers sometimes love, the obsession of the artist reads quite differently.

Einarsson's liberties and the permissions that make his world legible were authorized as anti-art long ago with the invention of found art. Surrealists, for example, refined the inversion of taste championed by Duchamp (as the readymade) as a final move in the endgame of aesthetics. In this case the power of the artist resides in a transferal of mind and attitudes onto things. Increasingly, this power of creative mind is reserved for curators to explain if art viewers consuming in the shadows of a consumerist society (like this location for Einarsson's piece) care to ask what the work is really about. Contemporary artists like Einarsson participate in the art world only to offer banal statements as retread shapes. These reinforce the intentionally low fidelity Duchamp saw intervening between artwork and commodity: that is, there's no telling what distinguishes the future artwork from other images or things. This lack of fidelity between image, intention and taste remains prone to perversions. Einarsson pinpoints a social condition of

---

[111] See Appadurai introduction to "Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge University Press; New York: 1986)

discontinuity between the imposition of the thing and the artist's relation to the sign (as compared to Hawks or De Palma). It is a gap in artistic intention and cultural meaning that characterizes contemporary art. This disconnect can only be repaired by the social relay of reception. This is the endpoint or lasting purpose of many biennial artworks. In *The World is Yours* we see failure, again, built into the exhibition. It ensures that the appropriated thing serves as a marker of art's power capable to relocate the apprehender, the crowd, the wanderer even if it does so by dint of weak or impotent sign. And it begins with Einarsson's own global drift from present-day Scandinavian context to global import of a 1930s Hollywood film credited with helping to invent the genre of the gangster film.

Likewise, in relation to the genre of art here pioneered by Duchamp's readymade, its ideological power, according to Pierre Bourdieu affected viewer reception as a "work made not twice, but a hundred times, by all those who are interested in it, who find a material or symbolic profit in reading it, classifying it, deciphering it, commenting on it, combating it, knowing it, possessing it."[112] This remaking many times over of the *world*, in the case of *The World is Yours*, is not just the stuff of found art but an announcement of what guides the progressive art exhibition at the level of artistic media. A new idea about Istanbul lived in new iterations of old tactics that socialized commodity things.

Imagine now walking from Tarlabasi from the Deniz Palas Apartments and down the fish market street, through the crowd, and arriving at a night club at the end of the Nevizade arcade. The artwork in question was by British artist Phil Collins for the 2005 Biennial. *The World Won't Listen* meditates upon popular music—and with it typical pop

---

[112] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production," in *Essays on Art and Literature*, (Polity Press; London: 1993), p. 111.

song subjects such as intimacy, love, and loss.[113] This section will continue therefore with themes of the planetary and the appropriated, though the relationships here are quite different than those Gardar Eide Einarsson re-contextualized with his intervention in the Beyoğlu above the Deniz Apartments. I move to this work to show how another artist in the exhibition borrowed popular culture references to reflect upon the formation of subjectivity in the current era. "Absolute subjectivity is achieved only in a state, an effort, of silence (shutting your eyes is to make the image speak)," wrote Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*, and I want to apply this idea to singing karaoke.[114] For Barthes, images speak most poignantly to viewers when they animate an intimate memory. This state of transport is brief and ineffable, resembling mystical silence as Barthes describes it.

For *The World Won't Listen*, Phil Collins created his karaoke machine devoted to a sole English rock band, The Smiths. This work had a previous incarnations before the 2005 Istanbul Biennial. The initial version staged in 2004 in Colombia came after first recording the songs without lyrics with session musicians in Bogotá. A later karaoke bar (recorded as a video art piece in each case) took place in Indonesia in 2007. In each version, volunteers sang karaoke to some of the The Smith's best known songs. Finding recruits by using newspaper ads and posting bills around each city invited singers and viewers to the events. Collins staged the piece in one of Istanbul's many clubs. The artist gathered a cohort from an extensive Smiths' fan base that truly has no boundaries. For the eventual video piece shown as a black box screening room in the Ninth Biennial, karaoke

---

[113] The tile is taken from a 1987 compilation album by the band forming the basis of artist's own karaoke playlist.

[114] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, (Hill and Wang; New York: 1982), p. 55.

singers performed their rehearsed versions of Smiths hits. *The World Won't Listen* is, at its heart, a fan-based subculture drawn from around the city and represented as time-based music television of a sort. Collaborating with singers, this recital of sorts eventually became a video that has been shown widely after the Ninth Biennial—his greatest hit.

The Smiths have grown to be the definition of an eighties indie pop sound exhibiting an enduring fan base. Their appeal never fit neatly into mass-culture, yet they can be considered a leading voice of a generation for many, including Collins. Below I'll describe how their musical ingenuity captured 1980s angst specific to a moment of rising conservatism and political unease in England. The Smiths' own politics were at their core punk even while their music had none of the *sturm und drang* that defined the tele-musical movement. They are known for expressing understated savvy fitting their working-class backgrounds in Manchester. The band took a less-is-more approach to the compulsory demands of cultivating fashionable music in the MTV era. Lead by guitarist Johnny Marr, their sound was uncommonly harmonic for an era characterized by heavy synthesizer and electronic drum tracks.

Their debonair front man Morrissey made a quick impression as a rascal and a wordsmith. In his sincere melodies hid an acerbic politics, and behind his crooning a mercurial character. Morrissey wrote songs about maudlin, tawdry, sometimes tragicomic vignettes, plucked from everyday life. His elliptical stories were crossed with wit and innuendo, borrowing witticism from the likes of Oscar Wilde, phrases from postwar films like "A Taste of Honey" and "Billy Liar" and the songs of Leonard Cohen.[115] His talent

[115] The Smiths on "The South Bank Show," Season 11, Episode 3 (October, 18, 1987).

and good looks distracted from his disdain of the ruling class, including recording industry overlords, whom he lampooned on occasion. Though his political and personal proclivities made Morrissey an icon in gay communities on both side of the Atlantic and a regular figure on rock magazines channeling the suburban angst of youngsters caught in the culture wars of the silent majority, the singer's personal orientations were left obscure. Morrissey never celebrated his sexuality in clear terms, nor by any means lived closeted by it.

Conversely, an outspoken, class-consciousness drives the songs' lyrics. Morrissey used music to exploit disesteem felt in 1980s by English and American youth and has since gained similar currency in every corner of the globe. The Smiths are part of an era of upheaval, time-stamped by the ruling Thatacherites, who orchestrated a massive redistribution of wealth to upper classes and industrialists, reorganized the workforce and dismantled the power of organized labor. All this happened with the UK, like the USA, transitioned to a post-industrial economy.

In this regard, unlike Einarsson's *The World is Yours*, Collin's appropriation artwork employs popular culture differently. The difference in these mostly incomparable pieces consists of how the entertainment zone environment around the central street of Istiklal folded around the work as viewers engaged with the piece. Collins does not float above the crowd: *The World Won't Listen* is the crowd. Still, the urban context surrounding both artworks describes key aspects of the experience they provided to the Ninth Biennial's wandering audience. Collin's enlists Smiths fans in Istanbul and they are also a primary audience of the work as part of what be a piece in the group exhibition.

Performances occurred at a club called Balans, located on a central Beyoğlu arcade. The Navizade arcade lies along a series of central urban corridors near Istiklal. As a main line of bustling high-end restaurants and casual cafés, trendy discotheques, dive bars, boutiques and tourist dinners seem crammed together and stacked one atop the other, and the narrow ruckus passageway occasionally becomes impassable on weekends. The throngs that move between music street adjacent to the produce market packs viewers and tourists among many attractions in a highly compressed urban space, producing an anomalous visual and soundscape. It is something like a giant mirror of the crowd that ricochets in the alleyways converging at the Nevizade. This tributary flows into the droning river of pedestrians passing by on Istiklal.

Amongst these ambient conditions, one begins here to appreciate what an uncommon art world experience the artist and curators fostered with *The World Won't Listen*. The Navizade, as one of many gathering places off Istiklal that form a network of stopping points from Taksim Square to the Galata Tower and the Karaköy ferryboat terminal below it, served as one of many reorienting through-line of the 2005 Biennial. It may seem incidental, but the Collins' karaoke artwork in the club exemplifies a successful intervention. Blending with in and adding to the preexisting marketplace of the Nevizade and its music venues made the appropriation unpretentious and approachable to rock-band aficionados. The simplicity of the work finds devotees belting out songs they love for an artist who shares their zeal.

For the passersby, walking in the outdoor corridor of the Nevizade absorbs you, jars you, asserting Istanbul's uncommon energy at its heart. The simple point is that few

places amplify the crowd as this site does. It is an experience indicative of larger impersonal forces at work in the city that make it unique and the exhibition waded into the realm of spectacle unabashedly with *The World Won't Listen*.

Invisible yet tangible forces reside in places like the Nevizade. They are those that Walter Benjamin animated in his work on Paris, wherein older environs, "were joined by optic ones, such as are supplied by the advertising pages of a newspaper or the traffic of a big city. Moving through this traffic involves the individual in a series of shocks and collisions. At dangerous intersections, nervous impulses flow through him in a rapid succession, like the energy from a battery."[116] After its great nineteenth-century renovation, Paris could not be said to offer only thrills and stimulating environs, it was also an alternator for the overstimulated individual to reform subjectivities and recharge it. Recourse to these external stimulants grew in society to antidepressant levels, making new entertainments and spectacles essential to assuaging and sustaining the overstimulated mind. These transformations meanwhile maintain the extra-sensitive yet blasé denizen drifter who intellectualizes the onslaught of the city and arrogates its energies and products their own advantage.[117]

In light or Collins' singers coming out of the woodwork to celebrate their favorite band, as latter-day versions fitting Benjamin's description of early-twentieth century cineastes, Benjamin writes that this synthesizing external stimulation had an essential purpose: "[t]here came a day when a new and urgent need for stimuli was met by film. In

---

[116] Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *The Writer of Modern Life*, ed. Michael Jennings, (Cambridge" Harvard University Press; 2006), p. 191.

[117] See George Simmel, "The Metropolis and Urban Life," in *The Cities Culture Reader,* ed. Malcolm Miles, Tom Hall, Iain Borden, (Routledge: London; 2004).

a film, perception conditioned by shock was established as a formal principle. What determines the rhythm of production on a conveyor belt is the thing that underlies the rhythm of reception in the film."[118] Benjamin's ideas cast the wanderer-subject as always studying his or her own subjectivity through entertainments, which provide a reprieve from irrepressible, external stimuli, generated spontaneously by the city. Situated within a growing industrial complex that would eventually invade domestic life, Benjamin saw Parisian society in transition, reinventing spiritual needs through the kind of devote consumption Collins' artwork captures so perfectly in the guise of twenty first-century Smiths fans. Viewership itself came packaged in complex configurations, as if it were an assembled appliance zooming down an assembly line, in Benjamin's telling. It was made for the individual that receives and redistributes the distractions of the day among his fellow viewer-receivers and stayed informed at all times, until he can recite these developments by heart. The Nevizade represents Turkey's own version of an industrial entertainment complex, transferring capital and delivering human resource in the form of viewers along the conveyor belt of Istiklal.

Collin's work is complicated by the fact that it begins in the karaoke-bar and ends with a video of the karaoke event in the black box. *The World Won't Listen* in Istanbul begs the question of how, in Benjamin's estimation, an "urgent need for stimuli was met by film" has evolved into more complicated forms of entertainment and stimuli everywhere. How does what Benjamin saw as the need for constant reprisals of visual and popular culture evolve over the course of one hundred years? To turn the question

---

[118] Ibid.

towards an older artwork that also waded into spectacle culture, can this foray into popular culture by Collins relate to other nightclub scenes in art, such as perhaps the most famous—Edouard Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*? This Manet work represented modernism at a moment of crystallization: art and consumer culture at a drastic turn towards intense commodification and the monetization of art and life. It is apparent even at this nascent phase of spectacle (1882) that a consumer culture would thrive with the colonial intelligence of commodity arts—of which popular music is perhaps the purist formation to date. This intelligence threatens to engulf attention in an ever-expanding larger marketplace, even painting and visual art. In the Manet work, we see the famous image of a barmaid, the libations she has on offer and the top-hatted man in a mirror peering out from behind her. The bar and the mirror serves as an image of a future subjectivity, one whose life is based on an endless series of entertainments and transactions. As exemplified by *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, art historian T.J. Clark sees visual art as having already dislodged itself from the fold of traditional subject matter by 1886. Art is therefore modern or contemporary when it depicts everyday life in its truly fractured state of constant consumption. Clark frames these cultural conditions as part of a general societal capitulation to commodity and entertainment. This surrender is powered by, "the middle class in the later nineteenth century, and even the early years of the twentieth, [that] had not yet invented an imagery of its own fate, though in due course it would do so with deadly effectiveness: the world would be filled with soap operas, situation comedies, and other small dramas involving the magic power of

commodities."[119] Collins' work adds to this tradition of delving into everyday life to capture more general conditions related to market capitalism, its plagues, pleasures and ulterior desires. He does this, arguably, with an old modernist equation that creates a contemporary representation by reordering a consumer product/procedure—here celebrating a rock band's music in a club and singing karaoke. *The World Won't Listen* interjects real-life into the fold of the biennial by intervening within entertainment sector. In doing so, the piece also obfuscates some of contemporary art's elitism and academicism, productively displacing the art viewer as drifter across signs and cityscapes.

Comparably, in the words of Georges Bataille, more than merely art, Manet's work in its time exemplified renewal by locating viewership outside officially sanctioned structures and typical subject matter found in nineteenth-century painting: "when this vast didactic [academic and monarchical] structure [informing art]—erected and renewed time and again in the form of castles, churches, palaces and works of art calculated to awe the masses and bend them beneath the yoke of authority—lost its power to sway. It fell to pieces, its message was shown up as mere grandiloquence, and the once obedient masses turned away in search of something else."[120] What they turned to was deeper interest in life as it is lived everywhere. We see a glimpse of that in the form of Smiths' fans in the Collins' work. It is only the latest turn away from the dominant order of the day, away from a dominant structure that is found wanting from the perspective of visual

---

[119] T.J. Clark, "A Bar at the Folies-Bergère," in *The Painting of Modern Life*, (Princeton University; 1984: Princeton New Jersey), 229.

[120] Georges Bataille, *Manet*, (New York: Skira/Rizzoli, 1983), 38.

art; it is turn towards the newest return to something else, towards the mirror reflecting purchasable things, strewn across a bar next to a bottle of Bass beer, complete with its brand name emblazoned on the famous canvas.

The everyday user amidst the crowd in the karaoke bar and video, likewise, locates the ever-roving art audience in the non-denominational church of 1980s Brit pop. It is as fluid a social structure as what T.J. Clark saw in the work of Manet and his contemporaries. The unremarkable subject matter—from bars and cabarets to balconies and street corners—found in Manet, Degas, Seurat, Caillebotte and others liquidated the pretenses of high art. Much later, the Collins piece distributes a comparable sensibility in the form of his collaborators, reaching out to passersby in he video and through their voice. They carry on in their own way the Benjaminian notion of the essential distractions[121] driving a new economy, while expressing modes of subjectivity and individuation that lend the urban entertainment complex its sophistication. In the social art history terms of Clark, this arrogation of difference, sensible even in Seurat and Manet's cabaret scenes, could make class fluid, temporarily, not forever but for the duration of the song. This is the displacement insidiously delivered to the roving art biennial audience and it was also apart of an earlier era, presaged by painters. The art intervention here serves to level social differences by critiquing traditional art forms, even while ambiguously serving a higher order of spectacle culture.

Put simply, occasionally the import of contemporary art boils down to how gathering an alternative crowd. This other displaced crowd is a critique of how the crowd

---

[121] For a recent reinterpretation of this concept see Eli Friedlander, *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 2012), 157-189.

gathers around visual art otherwise. This traversal happens under the unremarkable circumstances of commodity and consumption in the Balans nightclub.[122]

As a closing remark on Collins, one that returns to the experience of subjectivity offered by Barthes in the opening quote above—"Absolute subjectivity is achieved only in a state, an effort, of silence (shutting your eyes is to make the image speak)"—the intersubjective image here does not simply turn inward or shut the eyes in some mystical reflex. It makes art anew by turning artwork over to viewer, to the obverse side of art making—to the mirror that is the marketplace. These Smiths songs replayed in the Istanbul club externalized the inner world of the fan. This externalization seen in the video is the subject matter of the piece. The artists tailor-made the music to fit a very specific set of consumers. While these consumers may give a pretext for the realization of an artwork, they show the everyday arts of the common people (making something their own in the de Certeau sense of appropriation). Their silenced state as one fragment of attention within a visual subculture has here been re-cultivated by Collins, allowed to make an image speak, in Barthes' sense, through long, unseen mediations activated by the camera. This reapplication of collectivity is not based on a simple type of artistic repurposing, as Einarsson's found text from a Hollywood film may represent. Rather, *The World Won't Listen* relies upon a minuscule means of production—the entertainment council of a karaoke machine. This artwork could be considered a rebuttal of Adorno's culture theory. Or the Collins piece may confirm Adorno's predictions that advanced

---

[122] Claire Bishop further established Collins as a new purveyor of the changing terms of "site" through crowds and the collaborations that biennials nurture. See Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn and its Discontents," in *Artforum*, (February 2006), 179-185. Most of the artists in the article emerged from a European biennial network.

capitalism homogenizes subjectivity as a means of control, no more apparent than in the subcultures of latter-day consumer republics gathering together as marginal alt-consumers like these Smiths fans. Selfhood, nonetheless, has no option but to seek self in the outlets provided. Here, the artist invented a new outlet for one night in Istanbul. Collins' work thus highlights something lost in the cynical prejudices of critical theory: fashions today procure temporary, irreplaceable communities where otherwise there would be none at all. They are comprised of viewers, wanderers of international unities, living outside the majority culture.

Moving on to the first floor of the Garanti Building at the base of the steep hill that leads towards Tünel and Istiklal Street, there visitors found a video work by Egyptian artist Wael Shawky. This work dealt tacitly with consumerism in an age of growing religious division. Sticking with the themes of drifting and appropriation, Shawky's *Cave* reverses the traditional structure of found art: instead of the imported image or object having some fetishized, extra aesthetic, or transcendent value conjured by the artist's placement of the thing in the white cube, a religious text is here dislocated outside its normal confines. Shawky uses the setting of a bodega to recast a religious fable.

His title, *Cave*, refers to the Greek legend *The Cave of the Seven Sleepers* (also known as *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus*). It tells of seven youths entombed alive for being heretical Christians in a time before Christianity was an officially sanctioned religion. As the story goes, the night before their execution, they were sealed away in a cave behind a great boulder. In the darkness they slept. Rather than a night's sleep, hundreds of years pass for the sleepers in the cave. Upon waking, roused by a landowner

planning to use their grotto for his cattle and believing their slumber had been only one night, the hungry recusants send one of their members to the marketplace for food. They believe that this will be their last meal, as they expected to be summoned and executed later that day. Ignorant of his centuries slumber and on his errand to fetch food in Ephesus, the man is amazed as he enters Ephesus. This prodigal son finds a city unlike the one he had known prior. Emblems of the old religion have vanished. In their place he finds crucifixes around villager's necks and crosses on rooftops. Incredulous as he pursues his errand, he himself finally incites the curiosity of a peddler serving him when he attempts to pay for the provisions with ancient money. Emblazoned on the coin is the mark of the Roman Emperor Decius (reign 249-251 AD) a persecutor Christians. The merchants gather to ask where one might have found such a relic. Realizing he has been miraculously transported, he returns to tell his cohort they are saved from their fate. It was not only the unexpected signs of devotion but the unlikely coins that proved they had magically escaped their death sentence. The metaphorical cave that transports the sleepers serves as an envelope of redemption, encouraging believers to hold out hope for the eventual righting of history.

In his video shot in an Istanbul bodega, Shawky employs his training as a youth in Koranic recitation to tell a Muslim version of the fable, quickly reciting the *Surah* containing the tale of the sleepers as he paces through the store. There are some textual subtleties to note. Whereas the Christian fable stresses of the miracle of resurrection passed on through enduring faith, the version found in the Koran impresses upon the reader the otherworldly nature of belief, existing outside of the terrestrial time humanity

experiences. The value of things on earth never includes permanence; it cannot be retained indefinitely in possessions. Rather, it is always partially evolving and hidden from mankind's view, like the sleepers, and existing beyond the sensible world. Faith's purchase or knowledge may only be measured by God alone, as emperors and empires come and go. The coinage that exposes the shopper also relieves him of his fate because it no longer has value in a revitalized (Christian) world.

How do we understand this video and *Surah* in the setting of a convenience store? Perhaps the artist points to the absurdity of our present religious wars in the context of a consumer culture, which seems to be the only ruling ideology. By imagining one of the sleepers awaking and journeying not to the ancient agora in Ephesus, but rather finding what the marketplace has become, a bodega full of convenience food, Shawky situates the fable on the lowest rung of a global economy, amidst processed foods, soda, brand names, empty signs, and affects. The bodega where food corporations sell and advertise their extraneous products of little nutritional value as food and billions in marketplace value is also, perhaps, where life or spirituality has zero relevance. As Shawky moves through the aisles lined with food, the artist replays his version as though one of the seven that goes to town. Bombarding the viewer with the rhythmic delivery pits religious representation against the price tags, brand names, trademarks, and logos lining the shelves. The incongruity of the two sign systems presents a total disunity of possible values, religious or monetary, that exists on a planetary in the current era. A sense of anachronism central to the *Seven Sleepers of Ephesus* recasts the fable today as a look at the alien values behind everyday consumerism meeting the Koranic recitation. The piece

creates a tension, therefore, between irresolvable, incongruous, utterly persistent belief systems: one, a free-market ideology, mystifies commodity foods and the other, religious adherence, animates a sacred text.

By expropriating this fable to the store, Shawky also asks the viewer to consider what an ancient believer might make of this strange marketplace. What would a modern sleeper, one who just emerged from centuries in hiding experience reintroduced to this world of ours? What redemption awaits him in the signs displayed in our times? As the speed of capitalism increases, exceeding the speed of human comprehension, ambition or belief, what does a displaced and devoted spirit rejoin?

Shawky's work suggests that this marketplace contains the ambivalent beliefs, of what I've framed as a new wanderer or flaneur. He appears as a generic ur-type from past times uprooted from the beliefs of his class and without a guiding legend. Encountering our world after hibernating, he collects the appearances of others, looking for his comparable Sign of redemption. Just as it was in *The Seven Sleepers*, blessed to awake in a Christian instead of Roman world, the wanderer seeks his old credit in the new ways of the world, as an artist, a writer, a curator, a passionate observer. The sleepers' transportive desideratum would seem in the reading of the artwork to take place recurrently, all the time, presenting hidden arrivals of new seekers, occurring in the milliseconds of attention that drive the larger economy. Biennial curator November Paynter put this succinctly in the exhibition catalog:

> [i]n his real-time performance Shawky manages to collapse the hierarchy of religion and language. He delivers the *Surah* with such authority that, despite the oddness of the event, not one of the supermarket's shoppers bat an eyelid in his direction. The story of the seven sleepers bridges religion

> and culture, acting as a metaphor to describe the speed of capitalism (represented here by the supermarket), and its isolating effect on the individual.[123]

This metaphorical bridge also analogizes the productive displacement of biennial artists testing and critiquing everyday life in the marketplace, in my estimation.

To summarize the writing in this chapter midway, we have seen three different versions of appropriation art as examples of the 2005 Istanbul Biennial and biennial art in general. As was the case in the Shawky piece, the social divisions expressed by a shadow of mass-media underpins each selection and each location of subject matter—places where consumers routinely find images reflective of their world. Whereas modern art broke out of formal patterns that had long held visual art apart from reality as an academic, religious or noble sign system, art today looks to these everyday environs to comment on social divisions. If art today has the ability to objectify the sentiments an advanced economy cherishes most, what often fills the field of contemporary art are observations on the loss of a visual culture of some description: so far it has been Hollywood cinema (gangster films specifically), Brit pop music, and piety. Each imports images along with the strangeness of their belief systems, as exemplified by the Shawky piece in a supermarket.

This symptomatic art after-modernism uses fables, ancient texts, parables and commodity readymades to return loaded images as pastiche. They recuperate a given history to give the contemporary moment context.[124] Anything can be appropriated and

---

[123] November Paynter, "Weal Shawky," *9th International Istanbul Biennial* (Istanbul: IKSV; 2005), 76.

[124] Again, I am thinking here of Frederic Jameson's influential ideas on the recurrence of history in the modern versus post-modern era, see: Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*, (New York: Verso, 1998).

thrust on to the screen or veritable stage of the international exhibition. Progressive artworks often assert an authority to comment upon the trivial as a tip of the iceberg, about which global economy or social divisions may be better understood. For this type of visual artist, a tactical field analogous but different to the role of the ethnographer creates a privileged position (which I see analogized by a new flaneur for viewer and artist). This tactical place in an urban terrain, such as Istanbul, allows the artwork to advance new sites of a research and psychogeographies, nearly anywhere.

Another example can be found in a 2005 Istanbul Biennial project entitled *A Tribute to Safiye Behar*. I read it as a critique of everyday patriarchy in the guise of a Jewish feminist reformer who never was in fact a real person. It is a creation of Israeli artist Michael Blum. Walking once again along the Refik Saydam thoroughfare back to the Deniz Apartments, one found an apartment cum museum to an important intellectual. The Ninth Biennial catalog description reads as follows:

> Blum's project is the product of a long period of research ... and is the first time this important Marxist and feminist has been recognized in Turkey. The apartment becomes a museum to another kind of history, one that seems to tell a different story to the familiar facts surrounding the establishment of the Turkish Republic and subsequent history.... Its presentation suggests analogies with similar museum houses such as Trotsky's in Mexico City, Freud's in Vienna or Marx's in Trier.[125]

Through the familiar form of a biographical museum, the artist here reverses the history order with the incipience of major cultural reforms in Turkey owing to an obscure person. The memorialization recreates the viewer in a domestic setting, paying tribute through "original diaries, photographs, furniture, and documents from the Melik Tütüncü

---

[125] Esra Sarigedik Öktem, *9th International Istanbul Biennial* (catalog guide (Istanbul: IKSV; 2005) p. 43

collection."[126] Importantly, the work intertwines her accomplishments with the power and legacy of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk by acknowledging her essential role in the construction of paternalistic order still dominating the country, especially at that time, and its still controversial liberal social reforms.

As a previous unknown, visitors are asked to suspend their disbelief about never having heard of Behar and to appreciate the location as the home of one of Atatürk's closest advisors and a mistress. She did not, in Blum's telling, merely play the role of a shadow-worker[127] charged with entertaining guests or feeding an inimitable sovereign. Rather, she gave the forefather of modern democracy in the region some of his most progressive ideas and encouraged reform—such as the enfranchisement of women voters in Turkey in 1934.

A real appreciation of Behar's supposed legacy requires an abridged history of her supposed lover. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) was head of state for 15 years, from 1923 to 1938. A seminal reformer, Kemal's early political ambitions give us the term "Young Turk." As a revolutionary turned reformist, his reign took on a progressively more autocratic character. Unafraid to summarily oppress minorities or expunge political opponents mercilessly, he meanwhile modernized life in Ankara and Istanbul. Turkey still struggles to resolve the conservative beliefs of Turkey's silent majority with his divisive reforms. In the 1920s when, according to Blum's piece, he supposedly loved Safiye Behar, he was a debonair war hero and above all a man most unlikely to be a world leader given he had been born in an undemocratic empire. Photos of Atatürk remain ever present

[126] Ibid.

[127] This term is defined in detail in chapter 8.

across the country in cafés, shops, on university campuses and, of course, ministerial offices. Likewise, to this day his face graces nearly every Turkish coin and note. Much of this admiration is very much still felt by citizens; Atatürk's appeal is that his reforms were visionary, unwavering, populist, idealistic, nationalist, euro-centric and revolutionary, all in one. Nonetheless, in what remains a conservative country in many regards, the visual culture surrounding Atatürk was arrived at as one reaches the pit of a stone fruit: how he lived his life was for many decades discarded to favor his hardened posthumous status as icon. Michael Blum's project takes advantage of his iconic status for a *détournement*, showing Kemal's softer side through this invented lover.

The future Atatürk may have had in mind in his earlier years lives in the attributes that artist Michael Blum lent to the character Safiye Behar as well. Their image together —one fictional, one real—analogizes change in the country after one of the world's largest empires fell. We are asked to imagine them planning together to dissolve the Caliphate along with the Sultanate in 1923, "fully aware of the strong feelings provoked by the issue."[128]

In these shifts in history, Behar is the muse behind the museum and the rational proponent behind the political restructuring of the Muslim world after Kemal. She was there when he made his most stunning secular reforms. Behar and Atatürk are the harmonious, multicultural identity the empire bred, at times, but modern Turkey is accused of later expunging. Both reconstructed images are infused with the philosophy Kemal read as an ambitious student. As one author characterizes changes that actually

---

[128] A.L. Macfie, *Atatürk*, (New York: Longman; 1994), p. 139.

took place: “Atatürk was a competent commander, a shrewd politician, a statesman of supreme realism. But above all, he was a man of the Enlightenment. And the Enlightenment was not made by saints.”[129] Behar is one path Kemalism could have taken and, perhaps, almost did. Instead the path to modernization that asserted government over religion chose the faustian bargain of a military partnership.

To give some context to the time Behar is aid to have lived in Turkey. One biographer noted, “Kemalism as the reform of Islam [was] a reform which abrogated all the rules of the religion except those which relate to worship... As a result, a new form of Islam, illogical in theory but viable in practice—Islam-within-secularism—gradually developed in Turkey.”[130] In Atatürk’s liberalization outward signs of belief were restricted or banned, just as the Caliphate was dismantled to avoid any threat to the symbolic power of the nation from the religious establishment. (It is worth noting that Shawky’s reference to the Seven Sleepers in their cave may also be read as a response to secularism imposed like a religion by the Turkish state.) In the end, Kemalism blended his utilitarianism with aesthetic virtues consistent with European bourgeois lifestyles—for example he famously outlawed women’s veils in universities and traditional fez was disallowed in public places in an effort to stamp out Turkish stereotypes. This latter provision made way for the dandyish bowler hat to be adopted by men walking down the Grande Rue de Péra (as Istiklal was formerly called).

---

[129] Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey*, (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 2000), 528.

[130] Mango, 535.

Though striking in its duplicity (imposing secularism with religious fervor), the pragmatism of Kemalism that Blum manages to comment upon is by no means unique to modern history in Turkey. Any public image derived from a leader's self-styled persona nearly always contradicts the organization behind it. The cut of a debonair suit is preferable to facing the details of how politicians campaign, crushed political foes or amass power. Political success, in the final analysis, is measured by whether the living person becomes a real icon. Politicians are, like other commodities, things we are forced to consume for lack of other choices. This includes the narrative or sales pitch that attends each figure. In any country, a political survival depends upon a blend of fact and fiction, illusion and reality—Atatürk is no exception. Yet herein lies the lingering appeal of distributing, reinforcing, and consuming enduring political people as images: heads of state that once seemed unchallengeable eventually seem mortal, vulnerable, deprecated, and démodé commodity-images. Blum plays with this ambiguity by fabricating a previously unknown chapter in the Turkish leader's private life.

A Tribute to Safiye Behar comments upon the phenomenon of compulsory consumption filtering Atatürk's image in Turkey. It reaches us not though a propaganda poster or statue but through one woman's domestic environment. Reframing Atatürk's legacy in this way, Blum shed light on the shadow-work behind one man's accomplishments. "Ultimately, the 'historical construction' that Blum offers gives the illusion that Safiye Behar's house is a real museum, rather than an artwork created for this exhibition. It is the uncertainty between these two modes of presentation that allows

the work to take flight in our imagination."[131] That is to say, the work comments upon the issue of social documentation by blending fact with fiction. As another artwork based on appropriation of one man's image and legacy, the tactic of productive consuming resurfaced as more than a theme in this work of contemporary art. It is also a work that subverts Atatürk's grand narrative.

The invention of Behar points to significant changes in how Atatürk's icon became a salable brand name after the autocratic 1980s. That is, Atatürk's image has gone from a conventional tool of state propaganda to commodity fetish according to historian Esra Özyürek. Her research finds that the effective (and affective) desacralization of the leader began in the 1990s. Force-feeding the public Atatürk's legacy as an imprint of imperial design has had desirable social outcomes, especially since the 1980 coup. According to Özyürek, "More than seventy years after his death, Atatürk still keeps his citizens under surveillance through millions of painted and sculpted busts that decorate public spaces throughout the country."[132] Romanesque busts of Kemal found in squares, such as Taksim, from his own time fulfill a traditional form of deification as well as enclose the onlooker in an ancient power relation, substantively religious in nature. The success of the imperial and modern styles of iconography in Turkey has led to commercializing the leader in the post-modern sense. Özyürek comments that,

> newly popular and commercialized Atatürk paraphernalia [differ from] traditional representations, which occupy public places owned by no one (and, thus, owned by the state), [in that] the miniature representations are displayed in private businesses, homes, and, more important, on the bodies

[131] Öktem.

[132] Esra Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey*, (Durham: Duke University Press; 2006), 116-117.

> of private citizens, all outside the direct authority of the state. In such miniature forms, Atatürk's representations, although still icons of the state, become a part of the bourgeois subject's domestic sphere. Significantly, these images are privatized through the act of purchase on the market by individual citizens. Possessing and displaying a miniaturized and commercialized Atatürk image in private indicates a personal relationship with the state that an individual citizen chooses to activate through the market mechanism of consumer choice.[133]

Nearly one hundred years after his rise to power he is finally Westernized, it would seem, as a middle class has purchase on the bourgeoisification of Atatürk.

The memorial to Safiye Behar advances this tokenism one step further, making the old guard image of Atatürk seem avant-garde once more. Blum accomplished this by situating his legacy within the life of a previously unknown Marxist Feminist Jewish intellectual. His composition of her character as a form of self-conscious self-design, is decidedly fictional and would have been subaltern while functioning as superstructural reforms.[134] A *Tribute to Safiye Behar* goes beyond the peculiars of her profile, or even Atatürk's posthumous metamorphosis for that matter, and speaks to the State power taking on the consumable, everyday approachability of the commodity. The installation, in short, adds to the humanization of the autocrat. It brings those who might empathize with Behar, her politics and erudition, into proximity with Atatürk. Blum also joins the ranks of the anonymous forces in Turkey responsible for reinvigorating him as postmodern altarpiece and parenthetical family member—as a liberated commodity intimated by a rising bourgeois class in Turkey. As Özyürek explains, there is a

---

[133] Özyürek, 104-105

[134] Subaltern here refers to the critical theory terminology derived from Antonio's Gramsci's use of the word, of social groups and forms of intellectual affinity in each era which lose enduring political agency and representation on their own original terms when they are by need of force absorbed by the hegemonic order of the day.

phenomenon in which "Kemalist families willingly include Atatürk's image among their family photographs, turning him, through their own deliberate choice, from a national and stately ancestor imposed on them into a familial one embraced voluntarily."[135] Memorializing him as a kind of lost family member parallels the occasionally surreal marketization of Atatürk found in contemporary Turkey. This Özyürek deems his market miniaturization, moving futuristically from stately bust to tchotchke. This line of thinking runs through Blum's fiction of a "Jewish feminist Marxist living in Istanbul in the early 1900s" who helped rewrite Turkish history along with her lover.

A final detail to the project: the artist did not stop at simply resurrecting the character from a presumed cover up or willfully forgotten past; he made the museum in her honor. As mentioned in the Ninth Biennial catalog, Blum "created the apartment using original diaries, photographs, furniture, and documents" gathered from a collection belonging to a relative, the architect Melik Tütüncü. This relative of Behar living in the US received her when she relocated in the late-1930s, following Kemal's death. Ina 20 minutes video included in the biennial, "Melik Tutuncu, Chicago-based architect of Turkish origin, talks about his grand-mother, Safiye Behar, a Jewish Marxist feminist who had a 30 year-long affair with Mustapha Kemal Atatürk and influenced many of the reforms he was implementing in the 1920's, which founded modern Turkey," according to materials Blum has since posted on his artist website.[136] These various approaches to creating a contemporary image of a president adopt the visual tropes and strategies of Atatürk's most devoted middle-class supporter. Behar thus serves as a surrogate, unreal

---

[135] Özyürek, 105.

[136] Available artist's website, http://www.blumology.net/meliktutuncu.html (last sourced March, 2015).

yet subversive as an image, for the repressed labor that completes a given mass-cultural figure. Both common consumerism and the artist's rewriting of history offer counterpoints to other markets, styles and updates, driving some of the contested images still fought over in Turkish society. As Özyürek explains,

> In the 1990s, having Atatürk monuments in city centers was not enough for Kemalist citizens and groups to express popular support for the founding father... To counter the appearance of Islamic symbols in the public sphere, and the acceptability of Islamic identity indicated by the consumption of such symbols, Kemalists carried their icons from the conventional realm of the state into the private realm of civil society, the market, and the home. Some of the these spheres did seek a public audience, but they were all marked by a deliberate engagement of private citizens in embracing Atatürk's symbolism, rather than being under the direct control of the state.[137]

Blum, like many contemporary artists, uses the realm of domestic consumption or shadow-work to draw these lines of social division together in his artwork *A Tribute to Safiye Behar*.

Moving again from the Deniz Apartment and the backdrop of the Golden Horn to the neighborhood of Tophane ant the Tutün Deposu, Tobacco Warehouse, we are moving also from a piece about an inner world of domestic life and state power in Blum, to the vulnerability of travel, especially the customs associated with bringing a foreigner into one's home. The custom of receiving all travelers as vulnerable innocents is an old Christian theme, and what the Greeks called *xenia* or *theoxeny*. This artist's 2005 Istanbul Biennial project explored other feelings of displacement, of being an outsider while encountering a mysterious labyrinthine city and having nowhere to hide. Czech artist Pavel Büchler borrowed these themes out from Franz Kafka's *The Castle.* Excerpts could

[137] Özyürek, 100.

be heard blaring intermittently from antique megaphones mounted on the attic beams of the Tobacco Warehouse. Interestingly, these quotations were "read" by a computer equipped with speech recognition software. The content of the actual fragments that Büchler chose are fragments that describe the nomadic aimlessness of the vagabond that recurs in Kafka's writing. One excerpt heard from the megaphone in the exhibition informs the protagonist that not being "from the village, you aren't anything." The derision moves from the xenophobic to philosophic by turns, as in one utterance the antagonist says that the wayfarer that, actually, you are not nothing, "you are something, a stranger, a man who isn't wanted and is in everybody's way." The notion of being outside yet in the way is an essential feature of the alienated modern being in the midst of the urban crowd. Kafka found is own means of expressing it.

Curator Charles Esche described the work's approach to alienation in contextual terms: "Booming out through the antique speakers, the text recalls old factory or street propaganda announcements, this one declaring that assimilation is impossible and the stranger will always remain on the outside. Büchler is particularly interested in the different resonances it can have in the different cities where the work is presented: in a city of migrants and Byzantine codes of behavior like Istanbul, or in a more provincial old European capital like Bern, it should have a particular resonance."[138] A resonance carries though in each mention of a place, it seems, in a plot describing an everyman attempting to gain access to a mysterious fortified village. This barrier may be understood as an analogy for alienation from any society and social ostracism fits into the discourse

[138] Charles Esche, "Pavel Büchler," *9th International Istanbul Biennial*, (Istanbul: IKSV; 2005), 191.

of the *gyrovagues*. In this sense, I read the Büchler work as related not to a specific sites or national features, exactly, but in part related to the experience of walking through the streets, anywhere, as a foreigner.

Beyond the general experience of social alienation Büchler's installation of megaphones also captures a prevalent feature of pedestrian life in Istanbul. Cities address pedestrians differently. Often the walker meets signs along a heavily trafficked route in the city. Add to this in Istanbul a sound-scape that often addresses captive and passing crowds with the din of noises. On Istiklal a passerby is hailed by a myriad of announcements. Though the megaphones Büchler employs resemble those placed upon mosque obelisks, the randomized experience of interpellation in Istanbul and especially Beyoğlu is decidedly commercial. On Istiklal, the soundscape may be peddlers selling produce or collecting junk, a muezzin calling the faithful to prayer, a business hailing the walker with techno beats, an amplified TV coming from a sports bar, a troubadour giving it his all in one of the acoustic music cafes, buskers, the thump of trendy clubs, vendors and restauranteurs corralling tourists, newspapermen shouting to offer the news and lottery tickets, the occasional protest forming a throng on Istiklal, or police directing pedestrian traffic from PA speakers mounted on motor bikes and armored vehicles moving through the dense crowd. In this context, Büchler's focused use of language adds another voice, another address in the immersive environment. The work points to the actual fact that there is no supreme voice in most places. There is only the the competition for authority found on a street like Istiklal. Even the state is partly alienated, unable to claim ultimate authority over the din that completes marketplace as a spectacle.

With this measured dissonance, Büchler puts in concert, if you will, a hierarchy of voices by repurposing the familiar themes of Kafka for his sound installation, where the center and the periphery are in opposition and, also, in close contact.

Büchler juxtaposes consumer versus state sanctioned noise to contrast the changing shape of technology. Using old Marconi sound projectors constructed in the 1920s, he leaves the audience to resolve the anachronistic computer voice coming forth from the speakers. We have here different tools for the relay of ideological positions used in separate technological eras. Added to the speakers and the software is the technology of the book. The latter underwent significant changes with the development of modern literature and novels in particular, which were used to deal more directly with the experience of modern alienation that Kafka made central to his storytelling. All three media represent different stages in the evolution of message making and therefore subjectivity. The artwork focuses on how language can be catalyzed, changed and represented from one artistic medium to the next by the contemporary artist drifting across history, media, and through countries—finding what is appreciable as an outsider.

In the end, this productive displacement of media and viewership in the attic of the Tobacco Warehouse provides what the curators of the Istanbul Biennial called a more intimate view of the city. Here it relates to the city's unique soundscape that addresses the local and the outsider differently as they roam through Beyoğlu. This transference—from the banal enticement of consumer birdcalls in the forest of the marketplace—we may imagine the menacing voices of repulsion that haunted the character known simply as K. in *The Castle*. That is also to say that the marketplace cannot have power if its authority

is somehow, at its core, reachable and susceptible to redress by the atomized citizen. Perhaps this is what globalization means in our world—a process as much as place of asymmetry. This is what K. found in the fortified village designed to attract the outsider by repulsing him. Büchler offers this portrait of a global city without a center and no clear point of entry.

We walk now towards a moon on a video billboard atop a skyscraper overlooking the Golden Horn in Beyoğlu. Pawel Althamer's piece for Istanbul brings us to the top of the city in a piece that elongates the panoptic view offered citizens on the top balcony of high rise buildings. By depicting the moon on a massive advertising screen, the artist suggests an even higher view than that of skyscraper buildings. It is also an inverse view of the commodities often depicted in advertisements. The billboard format, commonly used to magnify products, here advertises the least salable object on the edge of our earthly realm.

Replacing the commodity with the moon calls to mind a world that used to be divided differently: that is, when the earth was the center of the universe, hanging by a golden chain as the Christians once saw it. As it relates to the metaphor of the all- seeing–eye that has become a central trope in our time, this older notion of the universe dreamed up by the Church held the endless expanse of the stars in a realm between the moon and God's creation. The supralunary realm beyond and the sublunary below, or beneath the moon, schematized what was seeable and knowable to humanity and what was knowable only to God. In short, this cosmic scheme divided the measurable world and the realm of infinite expanse. From the moon, the world is another singular thing, nameless, or

misplaced in the space of nearly infinite darkness. Althamer replaces the modern fascination with views from above, canceling the panoptic height by broadcasting a higher vantage of the moon upon the building. Althamer suggests that like the limit set by the Christian imagination in the Middle Ages, our society is schematized in no less ridiculous a fashion. Instead of that infinite space beyond the moon, we might seek our audience and our participation in the infinitesimal spaces for deviation de Certeau saw everywhere in the invisibility of the modern city:

> These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and identifiably other.[139]

Certeau encourages a tactical instrumentalization of the overlooked and blind spaces found in the everyday. This space is not that of the free citizen, exactly, it is the public property of the still un-colonized spaces that can be utilized because they remain heteroclite and impervious to the normal rules that impose center on the periphery. One such barren space is Althamer's billboard, as the jumbotron turned over to artistic designs exemplifies.[140] As wth previous works discussed in this chapter, Althamer's appropriation creates a productive displacement of the codes usually governing the marketplace that attract and locate meaning and. therefore, the meandering viewer in the realm of a

---

[139] de Certeau, 93.

[140] In 2006 curator (now art dealer) Sylvia Kouvali first organized a yearlong series atop the Marmara Pera Hotel as the public art platform "Yama" or Patch.

contemporary city or contemporary art. This displacement through intervening artistic signs recodes urban space unsanctioned by official signs and structures, whether governmental or economic. This is the collaborative matrix of repurposed signs and spaces that intervention art wades into—a collective space where audiences and artists rethink the rationalization of the city on art's specific terms. In this tactical arena, we can insert ourselves as viewers to extract a more present reading of the world or the city at the moment. This happens through other means all the time, according to de Certeau.

In conclusion of this chapter on the 2005 Istanbul Biennial, this group of artists each worked in liminal spaces. As a whole the exhibition could be seen as a rebuttal of urban disciplinary space and panopticism: that is, an overturning of the notion that public spaces function as mechanisms of discipline narrowing vision to a self-censuring final conclusion.[141] In fact, this concept is partly visual and partially an outgrowth of a confessional Catholic culture that makes incidental details of supposed transgressions (sin) utterable, administrative, and discursive. The role of the biennial is to present artworks "at the point of their instantaneous contact with power."[142] Urban space always opportunes the seized of authorship in its irrepressible collective process of production (one and the same with production in many cases). Giorgio Agamben writes in an essay included in the Ninth Biennial catalog that spectacle culture takes away the common uses of language and replaced it with its own mediated currency. I believe he saw these

---

[141] See Michel Foucault *Discipline and Punish*.

[142] For more on this other reading of Foucault's panopticism, see "The Lives of Infamous Men," in *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York: New Press; 1997), pp. 157-175.

statements as germane to art because artists deal with this predicament and find news ways to make media speak. As Agamben writes:

> [wh]ereas under the old regime the estrangement of the communicative essence of humans took the form of a presupposition that served as a common foundation, in the society of the spectacle it is this very communicability itself; humans are separated by what unites them. Journalists and mediacrats are the new priests of this alienation from human linguistic nature.[143]

But so too are artists, in positive light—as are informed viewers. Althamer's *The Moon*, for example, deploys a metaphor searching for a higher tier of vision, a spectacle inconsistent with this new apostasy of total panoptic visibility or completely mediated world. Art as always categorically incomplete, failed, can yet remain resistant to the new order of the market that arrives in all sites of articulation ready to speak. *Istanbul* sought a field of new potential (*poesis*) becomes momentarily viable.

Walkers viewing the works described and many others in 2005 passed along the path laid before them by biennial artists, and in this the audience developed spatial practice, even if a temporary one. A force akin to what de Certeau describes as the collaborative authorship of everyday walkers therefore completes an exhibition of this scale. Much of this collaboration foregoes any overarching curatorial theme, because it breaks into as many reads as there are viewers. This is accumulation based on place, encounter, and the creative reservoirs of the wanderer. Ideally, the viewer-wanderer can shift the relations contained within the artwork and the change idealized labor of art viewing in stride. As the curators wrote in introduction, "This biennial is not a tool for

---

[143] Agamben, from "Coming Community," in *Art, City, and Politics in an Expanding World*, (IKSV: Istanbul; 2005), 334.

selling the city to global capitalism but an agency for presenting it to its citizens and others with eyes awry."[144] They seem to mean looking at the world through alternate politics and impressions outside the disciplinary structure of advanced capitalism. Yet, as de Certeau notes, any cultural activity that supplants marginality always depends upon the larger disciplinary apparatuses it wishes to overturn (like the redundant megatron billboard repurposed as a space for artwork).

Another example is the naming of a city through rediscovery. This part of Beyoğlu was once the Grand Pera district. In this there is an eclipse or a further liberalization of space creating unforeseeable consequences. On this point I cite the concept offered by the 2005 Curators: "We approach this area from left field so to speak, eliminating any reference to this semi-colonial period by using smaller sites and spaces and literally allowing the exhibition to be swallowed by the neighborhood."[145] Again, in addition to regular gallery space, these new names were sites for art in Beyoğlu that consisted of an old tobacco warehouse, a former customs building, vacant apartments, among other unconventional spaces. In this rerouting of viewership, the Ninth Biennial set participants on a path of spatial negotiation. The exercise is a Situationist throwback to the *dérive*. Though not identical, navigating the district via the exhibition plan amounts to developing new forms of signification peculiar to *Istanbul* within the exhibition structure. In order to realize a more realistic set of 'pauses' in the capitalist system, the curators sought a collective autonomy including viewership. The basic premise of this

---

[144] Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, "The World is Yours," *Art, City and Politics in an Expanding World*, (IKSV: Istanbul; 2005), 24.

[145] Ibid., 27-28.

approach during Istanbul is power in small assemblies that had not yet been incorporated into the expanding global market but were laid adjacent to the marketplace (these relationships to space have changed significantly since 2005).

Curators Esche and Kortun imagined something along these as they rethought using Istanbul as an exhibition site within the existing market system,

> [t]he control systemology of capitalism is less secure here, brand name products are copied relatively freely, the micro and macro-scales of the free market live uneasily side by side, and the conflicting interests of citizens and capital are generally more visually obvious than in western Europe. The art projects commissioned in Istanbul all include some of this reality within their boundaries, sometimes almost invisibly, but it is never entirely absent.[146]

Istanbul is a manifestation that became a mode of everyday critique as art production. This manifests in artistic acts of redeployment or appropriation. This productive displacement was something of a zeitgeist around 2005. Irit Rogoff epitomized the enthusiasm of this update to everyday critique in the realm of visual art in this way: "we have moved from criticism, which is a form of finding fault and of exercising judgment according to a consensus, to critique, which examines the underlying assumption that might allow something to appear as convincing logic, to criticality, which operates from an uncertain ground of actual embeddedness."[147] It would seem that for criticality to happen, as Rogoff describes it, the creative process cannot be entirely premeditated or based on professional specialty alone; it must be opened to processes that shift roles as producers and this "embeddedness" begins, in my estimation, as productive viewership. I would argue that shifting the role of the consumer is key to recuperating some notion of

---

[146] Ibid., 28-29.

[147] Irit Rogoff, *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver; 2006), 17.

critique today (as will be discussed in the final chapter). In material terms, this shift begins with the endgame of "fair use" and appropriation art. That is, an awareness of how appropriation has made art consumer-based in its inherent and recurrent cosmopolitanism. Central to this cosmopolitanism is the recurrence of wandering between artworks and venues, such as those described here. This recurrence heightens the role of spectators as participants who also rediscover meaning in the dispersed signs and sites of the exhibition (even in the absence of definable meaning beyond the purpose of the biennial). These drifters intervene and, in the de Certeau sense, make use of preexisting conditions to actually emplace an illusory *Istanbul* within Istanbul.

Chapter 6
Encounter Before Object: Drifting in Time

Istanbul's curatorial tactics and artistic projects, such as those discussed in the previous chapter, involve changes in visual art. Specifically, art's dematerialization was a point of considerable contention in the years surrounding *Istanbul*, as various notions of art-as-encounter were being theorized anew. The influential term Relational Aesthetics advanced by French curator and critic Nicolas Bourriaud became influential when it recorded a generational art movement emerging in the mid-1990s when some visual art abandoned traditional art objects. Relational Aesthetics consist, instead, of art projects that gather viewers to relating in an art-world context that may be indistinguishable from other everyday environs. In the book *Relational Aesthetics*[148] Bourriaud contested that artists like Maurizio Cattelan, Liam Gillick, Pierre Huyghe, Gabriel Orozco, Jason Rhoades, Angela Bulloch, Rikrit Tiravanija, Vanessa Beecroft, and others, had broadened contemporary art's parameters to new fields of inquiry and interaction outside pure objecthood. Visual art was newly aestheticized as purely social. Relations had taken over to the extent that each was artwork/artist represented their own brand of socially spatialized field, engineered by conceptualism. An intersubjective sociality specific to joining contemporary art firsthand served to reflect socio-economic forces instead of the formal hermetics of art history or refined taste. Often this work was very similar to curating—of curated shows presented as related to the artist's work. This added a new

[148] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* (Paris: Les Presses du réel; 2002). First published in 1998 with an English translation appearing in 2002.

social form of value to capitalized artists and to the non-art object. This savvy cosmopolitan brand of art has not gone away.[149]

In part Bourriaud's influential writings attempted to explain how artists continue to unseat their traditional role of through the co-optation of everyday life: à la Marcel Duchamp's notion of artistic selection, Yves Klein's *Anthropométries* and alchemical experiments selling the ether as creative voids that gave the buyer exposure to the artist, or even the spectacle of Allan Kaprow's Happenings. Many other historical precedents that came before Bourriaud's circle could be considered relational art. For this perceived oversight the curator was lambasted. Much of the distain came from *October* journal and art historians in the US, who allegedly his explanation of his chosen artists and the implications of their work emerged out of his own curatorial interests.[150] Additional counterarguments saw Bourriaud as out of touch with the ubiquity of conceptual and appropriation art inclusive of sociality in museums, galleries and biennials, of which so-called relational aesthetics were merely another product of.

In light of this re-contextualizing of art, it is important to note that offsite encounters in Esche and Kortun's exhibition did not seem to fit into this "relational"

---

[149] Critic Claire Bishop has recently published a thorough critique of what might be called the cult of the contemporary conceptual artist that has led to artist-curated exhibitions, in which as she puts it, "are based on an introversion that labors to keep meaning withheld from the viewer, and as such unchallengeable—as the saying goes, you can't argue with taste. It is therefore nearly impossible to draw a clear distinction between artist-curated exhibitions and an exhibition-as-artwork. ... The result is an ambiance that you just kind of feel rather than understand. The artist's recourse to his own experience gives the works a frisson of historical significance, but this is ultimately grounded in biography and sensibility, two authority-granting aspects of the author-function that have long been criticized as regressive." We are left with an art for artist's-sake, not so different than *l'art pour l'art*, that serves to consolidate taste around a known commodity, as though the (in this case, artist-curated collection) exhibition were a deal not different than an athlete endorsing a product we know they are being pay to wear or promote. See Bishop, "History Depletes Itself," *Artforum,* (vol. 54, September 2015) 324-329.

[150] For the editorial board's summary on how out of step with history Bourriaud was perceived to be see George Baker's Introduction to "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" by Claire Bishop, in *October* (No. 110, Fall 2004), Pages 49-50.

category of aura rubbing with the art crowd. Instead we can see in the first case that, and this is true especially for Esche, encounters with everyday life on the streets of Istanbul through Istanbul sought a new kind of Realism derived through the site-specific interventions that Kortun favored. As they wrote in their essay for the 2005 biennial reader, *Art, City and Politics in an Expanding World*:

> Shifting from the historical city centre to the Beyoğlu and Galata area also marks a change in the direction of the event's address, pointing less towards the interests of sophisticated, historical tourism and more towards the reality of the city. We needed to locate the Biennial outside of event culture. This is not only Istanbul's problem but also the problem of tourism's role in the economy, and how the city is normalized, regulated, demarcated, and its local undesirables made invisible. Since the cultural sector has always been good bedfellows with tourism, the practice and distribution of contemporary art has always run the risk of instrumentalising itself as an affirmative force. To undermine this to some extent, we were quite aware of the location of the exhibition and sought to avoid investing in the zone of tourism, as well as inverting the relationship of the individual visitor on the site.[151]

If these interventions too quickly evaporate into the fabric of capitalism, as many "relational" artworks do and they remain more abstract than real, *Istanbul*'s success as a model depended upon using the institution as a test site for untested artists. Duration is a key element to *Istanbul*, in short.

To ensure adequate exposure and proximity within the city, again, half of participating artists carried out extended residencies. The remaining artists were brought from outside Turkey, but not necessarily from beyond its shared region in Eastern Europe. Artists in this model are encouraged to drift in the city in order to draw from

---

[151] Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, "The World is Yours," *Art, City and Politics in an Expanding World*, (IKSV: Istanbul; 2005) p. 28.

Istanbul, often coming from neighboring countries to create a regional context for art and politics. Some of these regional links were historical connections between national polities that date back to Ottoman times with the Balkans. Some are part of the modern reform movements in the Middle East, such as Turkey's Kemalist topdown model of liberalization as it effected previous administrations in Egypt. While some others are at once historical and contemporary, such as Anatolian immigrant workers connection to Germany and the influx of Turkish workers to the EU. Yet the exploration of Turkey's history in the Ninth Biennial avoided a unified historical treatment—preferring instead to offer minor histories and picture the micro-politics of art production.

Albanian artist Jakup Ferri was an example of an artist shuttling between regional connections and what may be perceived as a minority history in Europe, especially as reference points during and after the Cold War in his country. Ferri cultivated his aesthetic as a personal narrative that explored subjectivity in novel ways. In one piece, entitled *Save Me, Help Me*, the artist creates a kindred relationship between himself and so-called peripheral artists. In this work, Ferri sits before a video camera reviewing his own artistic portfolio and speaks as though pleading to a curator. Acting self-conscious and unprofessional, his desperate appeal in the video draws attention to the commercial disconnection artists trained outside of Western European may feel. Ferri is mocking the desire to be accepted in the mainstream by also acknowledging the ambivalence many artists feel about acceptance as an outsider in the "art world." Playing on his commercial potential as an eastern European in the globalizing market of biennials, he nonetheless walks a line between self-portrait and caricature. Ferri parodies himself as a peripheral

(international) artist-type in a purposely-executed amateur video. The work speaks directly to the complicated nature of being represented at a biennial artist, or representing any possible subject as an artist who will inevitably be seen through the lens of nationality. Instead of the conviviality or sociality of relational aesthetics, Ferri treats viewers to a work about social anxiety.

If Ferri's work considers how forces of history subject artists to personal narratives seemingly written in advance of self-expression or practice, Egyptian artist Hala Elkoussy maintains a broader sense of regional dislocation through depicting landscape—though, again, we are still in proximity to Istanbul. Also working in video, painterly compositions fill the screen as the artist films Cairo's outskirts traveling in a minibus, these found landscapes mix the barrenness of razed yet still vacant sites of development with the variegated palette emerging in unearthed surfaces reminiscent of Land Art. The dry, torn-up earth provokes an otherworldly, vanquished space that remains as at a distance. Elkoussy maintains a steady focus that preserves the position of the viewer in the stability of the camera's detached view. Neither the artist's perspective nor the land itself resembles the fixity of a place. Yet, that sense of place establishes familiarity as a construction site. Encounter here references landscape within a politics of locality and its dislocation via transformation.

Though it is a stretch, both of these ways of working exploring identity (Ferri) at the furtherest reaches of one's gigantic city (Elkoussy). They united are as forms of self-imposed dislocation analogous to the dislocation imposed on the viewer by the dispersed exhibition within Beyoğlu. Contrasting these artist projects to a viewer's sense of

proximity while experiencing the world between the exhibition sites relegates them to the primacy of the *Istanbul* that the Ninth Biennial attempts to construct. As such, moving between venues provides a *dérive* and social relations grounded in the backdrop of artist works in their exhibition settings. In a Situationist mode, the *dérive* brings an urban subject into contact with the city, as "a psychogeographical relief, with constant currents, fixed points, and vortexes which strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones."[152] It can be argued that having a destination (each exhibition site) or being unfamiliar with the city removes the biennial from any true definition of a Situationist drift or *dérive* through the city. This is a *dérive* but not of a strict Situationist type. Debord's theory makes allowances for a drift that includes a "necessary contradiction," which amounts to submitting to unavoidable necessities and the demands of the city. This contradiction also acknowledges a subject's own inner experience cannot be completely abandoned or emptied out, as Debord seemed to wish for. A more pragmatic idea of drifting is relevant to *Istanbul*.

As for *Istanbul*, it was the curators' hope that impressions such as these would be with the audience as it cut through neighborhoods and psychogeographic zones, such as Galata and Tophane. The herd of an audience set towards destinations in an exhibition plan would seem antithetical to the theory of *dérive*. On the other hand, it is the path of recalibration replete with the city's dominate or disciplining forces meeting the variation of the viewer's own guesswork. As a set of relations based in proximity and a space of physical negotiation, walking in the exhibition's context rewrites (in the sense relative to

[152] Debord, "Theory of the *Dérive*," *Internationale Situationniste*, (no. 2, December 1958).

de Certeau's notion of walking as reading) the texts of urban layout and curatorial master plan. A biennial finds its constituency as they mirror select parts of cityscape occupied by specific artists. The exhibition would seem to be attempting to re-inhabit subjective dimensions in turns that are ultimately urban, as the walker multiplies known space as self-appropriative expressions of disorientation.[153]

Kortun suggested in a talk during InSite 2005 that viewers were, whether they knew it or not, tracing the very path that (Western) neoliberal development was taking in his hometown. They were following a trail of invisible expansion from the central street of commerce, Istiklal Cadessi, where Platform sits in a former bank building, to the still unoccupied areas in the densely populated hilly district, becoming more fertile, block by block, with each new development. One reviewer described the results inside one of the exhibitions (*Free Kick*) in this way: "The overall tone was very dark and, one assumes, deliberately at odds with the touristic vision of Turkey."[154] Museums are outlets of permanence, systematic tools of excision, holding at bay all aspects of temporariness found outside its exterior. One expects to find the opposite at a biennial, which changes every two years, precisely to maintain a lack of permanence.

The 2005 Biennial took this essential ingredient of biennial impermanence to an extreme in many of the projects and venues. Ahmet Ögüt exemplified this spirit when he transformed cars with colored construction paper in *Someone Else's Car*. Ögüt performs a *détournement* on the cars by transforming them with the most provisional materials into

---

[153] From the *Oxford American Dictionary*: disorient: from French *désorienter* 'turn from the east'.

[154] Eleanor Heartney, *Art in America*, (Dec. 2005), 56.

taxicabs and police cars. Unassuming drivers return to their vehicles to find them caricatured by their new drapery. The envelope is as harmless as it is disarming. For the few moments of uncertainty, it rearranges reality. The everyday is interrupted while the driver confronts the artist's materials and shreds them to get inside and drive on their way.

Biennial does something similar at its best: asking artists and viewers to instrumentalize and distribute themselves, preemptively, continuously, in order to meet the demands of the market and to understand art's constantly changing role in the marketplace, tracking the changing shape of contemporary art. Thus when artists, art buyers writers, curators, and marketeers from across the globe converge momentarily to observe an international exhibition, such as a biennial or an art fair, it is to my mind a reprisal of nineteenth-century style resistance to a world moving faster than can be accounted for. Flanerie, as a tactical strolling, so central to how nineteenth- and twentieth-century alienation has been theorized in art, links the self- and urban development. It is a process of self-mediation in a rich and diverse media environment that must include art forms. This link via the city walker afforded critical theory a conceptual vehicle or archetypal viewership through which a series of modern changes could be accounted for—by Walter Benjamin for example. The flaneur is, then, a mythic form of subjectivity anyone may pursue, or put-on if you will. He is above all a notion of displacement applicable to all participants in the visual arts. He is also a key link to the discourse of painting that has been filtered into all our latter-day ways of looking in the twentieth century. The disjointed experience of wandering packaged modern art into a

unified discourse that offered an alternative to dominant culture in this shadowy figure. The resultant archetype accomplished various feats at once: the wanderer did not merely travel between buildings but between artworks and the venues that held them, as though he were the sun moving between noon and midnight. He was not artist but the shadow of all creators that gave us modern art. Aimlessness in the form of the flaneur became the subsumed in modern art's patent brand of orientation as mediation.

Flights into contemporary life may be quite anachronous, in other words, requiring that we adopt a critical stance made for a bohemian artistic world that no longer exists and that, at a minimum, the art historical wanderer pursues as fleeting version of visual art's former self. In any case, the wanderer seeks clarity, above all, about his or her ambivalence to the broader economy—or the very need to play this wandering role. This is especially the case as contemporary art nurtures illusions about art's difference from the larger economy—not as a market but as a theater of exchange, wherein innovation in the field of art exhibitions becomes hypertrophy of the very system it attempts to critique. Yet, this ambivalence, often an unseen elephant in an exceedingly white room, informs contemporary art, lending art its subversive tactics. Hence the renewal of flanerie that continues to be received, exhibited, and produced by participation in art as transient communities lending a crowd to a culture of events that are always occurring elsewhere: in Mexico City, in London, Gwangju, in Marrakech, Pittsburgh, Rio, Kabul, Kassel, Sydney, Lyon, Shanghai, Sharjah, and, in the old places like Paris and New York.[155]

---

[155] I use event here as a counterpoint to describing art an insular "process," a prevalent late- modern art word designating a realm of intellectual/material production belonging to a given artist which resists ideological attachments.

The case study I have chosen for this event culture, though it could have been any number of locales, is Istanbul. Contemporary art exhibitions like 2005's *Istanbul* that incorporate municipal terrain in semi-orchestrated drifts reflect a condition of intense mobilization and uncertainty in a visual arts industry, increasingly closer in its parallel lines to the inner workings of the marketplace into which it intervenes as difference. Part of this self-mobilization mirrors how cities manifest a mass-distribution of goods, wherein products, images, ideas, and people incorporated from elsewhere arrive and then disperse again. The willing participant experiences a similar objectification, even distribution. Arbitrarily spanning state boundaries, bursting through cultural barriers, and returning to territories that serve only to dislocate art, turns the new flaneur into a wayward art monk: a baseless, self-trafficking subject, reminiscent of the *gyrovagues*. These were the devoted yet leaderless wanderers of the Middle Ages condemned to rely on Christian hospitality (in which strangers must be received as though they were receiving Christ himself). But contemporary drifting is more than a hospitality industry.

It is part of how art has long intervened in what today is the offsite, in both the built environment and in the language of advertising and commerce that defines the city. I am thinking of artworks similar to what was found in 2005 in Istanbul: they required a individual consumer to occupy a space that is otherwise incongruent with visual art and the politics of installation in white cube galleries.

We see this consumer-based interventionism in the early twentieth-century, whether it is the antigravity of Kurt Schwitters' architectural Merzbau bricolage made from curbside detritus gathered during neighborhood strolls, André Breton's early

writings that made Paris and Surrealism synonymous in *Nadja* and *L'amor Fou*, or Marcel Duchamp's post-readymade Surrealist window displays in 1940s storefronts. These interventions continued midcentury with the Situationist International, Arman's cubic assemblages made of wasted domestic refuse and, again, Allan Kaprow's urban Happenings in interstitial spaces in the city, such as the work *Yard*. The expansion in the 1960s includes Claes Oldenburg's molten art gallery *The Store* in a storefront, Ed Ruscha's encyclopedic walk/drive *Every Building on the Sunset Stripe*, and even Lee Friedlander's take on street photography, which filled the frame of the photo with fine art compositions resembling cubist abstractions. Starting in the 1970s, artists made New York the definition of contemporary art when they removed their art from the white cube, thus adding to the prerequisite of current art including some kind of drifting further afield of previous art (exhibition) spaces and subject-matter. I am thinking of Gordon Matta-Clark's splits, Hans Haacke's slum-lord exposé that complicated his Guggenheim show in 1971, Adrian Piper's early street performances, and Martha Rosler's photoessay *On the Bowery*. In the 1980s, Jenny Holzer introduced *Truisms* on t-shirts and Times Square LED light boards that marked body and building with political signage indiscriminately. The 1990s saw Felix-Gonzales Torres' representations of intimacy and loss expand onto a commercial billboard. Krzysztof Wodiczko's projected glyphs upon government and corporate facades that insinuate ideology. Rachel Whiteread's exfoliated monuments consisting of negative space were also aimed at contemporary art drifters with interests that extended beyond the museum. Thomas Hirschhorn's so-called "Altars" on the streets of Paris pretended to be made by admiring passersby. All of these artworks relied upon an

audience willing to drift to apprehend the work outside the museum. Each artist listed resists and reworks the everyday appearance of the city and the white cube. Visual art serves therefore as a subversive, if temporary means, of authorship combating the anonymous authority of the marketplace and an opportunity to chose one's trajectory.

What might be worth considering here is that instead of a united aesthetic or look in each case art may be characterized through similar notions of appropriated tactics (not merely tactics of appropriation). The mandate of reuse driving contemporary art in the marketplace suggests that a tactic not the production of static images often guides art. These are usually practices of drifting that go hand in hand with a global distribution of viewership, in biennials for example. Mobility lends contemporary art its communicability of experience and grant art power as a renewed discourse and history.

The contemporary art biennial relies upon the marketplace for its critical thrust. For example, the 2005 work *David (Inspired by Michelangelo)* for the Istanbul Biennial by Istanbul-based Serkan Özkaya installed in the Istiklal pedestrian area in Beyoğlu remade a life-sized sculpture of the masterwork *David*. The work in the street outside of a museum, and far from Florence, Italy called attention to the dominance of western culture. Its artifacts are so precious they are made into kitsch trinkets and reproduced endlessly. Their shrunken size means that they can be exported and dispersed around the world. These replicas become a kind of propaganda asserting a dominant history. Özkaya reverses this equation: his kitsch remake was anything but portable. Additionally, the physical artwork itself remains beyond the reach of the non-westerner or outlying viewer Özkaya identifies himself with in this case. *David (Inspired by Michelangelo)* is therefore

about global awareness and incommensurate attitudes towards art history in the twenty-first century as western attitudes. The work made its point in the street, viewed outside of a museum context. *David (Inspired by Michelangelo)*, like other works of this kind, necessitated proximity to the marketplace and to drifters. They are flaneurs there to witness images, as one might see a new film, in a world constantly advanced, paradoxically, by recycling borrowed images like Özkaya's *David*. This image transgresses art history by highjacking it. A skillful appropriation of space and imagery is the tactical key to the work.

Increasingly divergent forms of art and anti-art add to the inertia of the (art) marketplace that draws the wanderer. Art provides a special sense of participation, one that is separate from daily consumption. Engaging with art in a biennial context (like Istanbul) doubles as both critique and a type of post-labor. You have either seen and experienced the intervention or you have not; you may transmit the discussion and discourse around the object or you may not. This makes art viewership a productive aspect of art making that is disengaged from the material process of creating things—paintings, sculptures, videos, etc.—but essential all the same. This production by bystanders is the non-coercive labor that completes the exhibition. Art staged as an alternative concept within the banality of the marketplace. The closer we are to art's anomalous productions, the more we are within its separate society. This takes work—drifting of the sort only a devoted flaneur can endure. Especially when artwork is installed outside a gallery space or outside the artist's studio and therefore within the

marketplace that envelops all private space, art is capable of critical reflection upon the market.

Walter Benjamin's investment in art concerned primarily this sense of history as decay—one is always walking amongst ruins. Certain images, no matter how decayed, will never go away, as Özkaya's own *David* proves. Differing from the flaneur of the past, embodying an exclusively male gaze, the flaneur driving contemporary art discourse today distributes its privileged knowledge as a mobile self-institution—or individual intertwined in set of institutions, which they may or may not work for. In a given city, these institutions embark upon a group activated flanerie, inadvertently, as the crowd fulfilling the additional requirement of intercontinental travel. The experience on the ground is to experience visual art's coterminous exhibition calendars, to pinpoint art's incongruous urban milieus and to witness the unveiling of its offsite venues as a crucial actuation—perhaps as a main actor therein. At best, this urban activation allows new generations of contemporary readers to generate a discourse that breaks with the normal patterns of consumer life, creating itinerant communities that share the illusion of collective authorship with artists and curators, in a collaborative act of viewership, mutual reception, exhibitory completion, and critical enterprise.

In conjunction with large exhibitions and the dispersal of professionals along an international network of key sites and preselected venues, urban wandering at present also describes a primary means to disseminate local sensibilities. This purposeful yet unfastened wandering is a way of creating collective images that verge on being universalized (or globalized to use today's more terrestrial terminology) by technology,

communication and promotion. It is a means, in other words, to stay one step ahead of recurrence and the reproducibility that has defined art after modernism as contemporary. In the Duchampian sense of artistic intent belonging to viewers in the final instance, this collective meaning-making leads to a distribution of sensibilities irreducible to art as a formal object or merely a brokered economy. Biennial art is built on the premise of being more than an organ of capitalism. In the marketplace it is an extension of an institutional vector spread between countries making economic permutation different than regular capital. These claims and spaces of difference rely on us being there, on wandering, on occupation, on decoding and on the non-coercive mental labor of new aesthetic consumption that encloses creative production. This is the case regardless of the distribution of art's latest sensibilities on the internet. The web only adds to its sense of distance that makes drifting essential.

This reappraisal of flanerie does not happen as a deliberate or conscious update of the literary discourse of street wandering that influenced visual art before, during and after modernism. It happens unconsciously, as artists introduce lost stories that have been smothered by the dominant economy, which prefers clichés and rumors to history in a place like Istanbul, Paris or New York. Drifting acts to silently cleave fact from fiction. As Michel de Certeau theorized, the creative walker returns inadvertently to the story of a city seeking its outgrowths not merely as apartment homes or infrastructure of corporate facades, but as real lives. Artists concern themselves with stories that may give life to new interventions. "Stories diversify, rumors totalize," according to Certeau, because, "[t]he dispersal of stories points to the dispersal of the memorable as well. And in fact,

memory is a sort of anti-museum: it is not localizable. Fragments of it come out of legends. Objects and words also have hallow places in which a past sleeps, as in the everyday acts of walking, eating, going to bed, in which ancient revolutions slumber."[156] And that is to say, "what can be seen designates what is no longer there."[157] Art in this sense connects to history lost and invisible toil that fragments places throughout time, which redevelopment everywhere papers over. Remembering is a requisite part of new art production, defining its potential success as an aftereffect of marginal lives and resiliency, as de Certeau sees it. Creating such memories is symptomatic of tactical adjustments and ideological leanings that have long been a part of a critical discourse looking for ways to persist artistically in the midst of an automated visual culture.

A certain maintenance of critical thought occurs in this throwback to the flaneur. The biennial can produce momentary abandonment rarely found in everyday life. As such art as drifting involves taking leave of art's obligatory enclosures—the museums that domesticate not just artwork but memory and attention. Drifting artists, curators, critics, and viewers are actively exposed (like film in a camera) not to art alone but to what makes it is what composes the city. Drifting removes the cultural sign of division that plagues visual art: it is, in short, a conventional means to evade, bypass, sidestep and dodge the homogenizing purview that conflates neoliberal development, institutional enclosure and academic conventions compromising visual art. This is possible because a biennial (like Istanbul's) stands as an ancillary organization between institutions.

---

[156] Michel de Certeau, "Walking in the City," *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley; University of California Press; 1988), 107-108.

[157] Ibid., 108.

Different from the boulevardier of the past, then, the drifter experiences visual art's coterminous exhibition calendars (the 2005 Biennial or the next Venice Biennale or Documenta), to absorb art as interposed urban milieux (such as Mike Nelson's *Magazin*) and to witness the unveiling of its environed groupings as generational activations that allow consumers of this culture to create itinerant communities (the exhibition *Free Kick* in 2005 or Oda Projesi's neighborhood projects), which, again, share the illusion of collective authorship with artists and curators in a collaborative act of viewership. Ironically, this contingency joining artist to viewer in the shared space of the crowd situates art within the marketplace: by marketplace I mean a theater of exchange where, in the words of Arjun Appadurai, "commodities, like persons, have social lives."[158] With this sociality in mind, the marketplace therefore implies an art reliant on a physical location outside the museum or gallery where exchange is no longer routinized as art. Marketplace, importantly, denotes also a dividing line public in space and private space, where the landowning- and working-classes mesh, the local and the foreigner safely convene. Lastly, in the peripatetic tradition of the Greeks (the Aristotelian outgrowth of Socrates' venerable interviews around Athens), walking in the marketplace has been an essential part of gathering knowledge from firsthand experience consistent with being a part of the public culture. Though it is also largely a function of the state, the marketplace serves to neutralize social relations. Throughout history, this confluence of shared power and public engagement makes it a magnet for protest and destruction, as well. It is for these reasons a key location of visual art cultures and exhibitions.

---

[158] See Appadurai, "Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge University Press; New York: 1986)

With all relations acquiring the fleeting nature of everyday life focused by art in the marketplace, the conceptual gaze of visual art increasingly resembles the flaneur. As latter-day descendants traipse across the globe making the invisible boundaries of the free-market apparent as art products and audiences (gathered offsite but not entirely deinstitutionalized) that also promote a sense of "community" with initiates and would-be initiates. These are the means by which the shared illusion of public engagement and art's roving temporary community makes art contemporary. I am here thinking of Boris Groys, who wrote of:

> a dimension of mass culture which is often overlooked, that becomes particularly manifest in the context of art. A pop concert or a film screening creates communities among its attendees. The members of these transitory communities do not know each other—their structure is accidental; it remains unclear where they have come from and where they are going; they have little to say to one another; they lack a joint identity or previous history that could provide them with common memories to share; nevertheless, they are communities. These communities resemble those of travelers on a train or airplane. To put it differently: these are radically contemporary communities—much more so than religious, political, or working communities.[159]

The latest flaneurs live outside the imaginary and the priceless milieu of the museum and in a liminal space separate from the normal communities, as Groys describes it. They receive key updates in exhibitions like Istanbul, via the ceremony of exhibition driving contemporary art in a progressive direction.

Naturally, these wanderers no longer conform to being either foreign or local; nor are they italicized, French, exclusively white, male, privileged and scopic, creatures, inherently aristocratic or reluctantly bourgeois. If only these keywords from the past

---

[159] Boris Groys, "The Politics of Installation," in *Going Public*, (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011), 61-62.

could be employed, our task of connecting the modern to the contemporary modes of creating in art would be much easier. Rather the specter of the flaneur reflects the in-between spaces. Here de Certeau's notion of readership meets advanced forms of labor which reside in the shadows of the marketplace. Attracted to alternate sitings of the traditional marketplace where the old flaneur would have haunted, temporary communities represented by international art exhibitions avail the transient reader-user within the crowd to hidden forms of community and therefore labors that have evolved into being the primary images of advanced art, beginning in the nineteenth century. This viewership generates its discourse by bridging modern art with contemporary life; by considering how artistic tactics help us understand the changing shape of non-coercive labor—especially as labor and perception become increasingly indistinguishable.

The museum remains an essential domain persisting from a former time in all this, as it refers visual art back to a dialectic of contemporary art as drifting and museological (stationary) art. Visual art has the advantage of comprising institutions and the anti-institutions on both fronts, sanctioning roving viewership and within traditional settings. Whether couched in the epochal flaneur or the sub-genres of art that fill key movements– Dada, Surrealism, the Situationist International–or even a little known Armenian artist's biennial project that does not conform to a Western art movement of any kind, drifting as a tactic addresses the imperative politics of viewership as perception continues to be defined by the (occasionally redeeming) values of everyday life and the labor of consuming.[160] The drifter traces how art becomes closer to life each biennial year.

---

[160] See *Ontological Walkscapes* (2009) by Yerevan-based artist Karen Andreassian, included in the 11th Istanbul Biennial.

Chapter 7
Siting Optimism After 2005: The 2007 & 2009 Istanbul Biennials

To return to contemporary art in Istanbul after the 2005 Biennial, the perspectives below were gathered on consecutive trips to the Istanbul Biennial as both researcher and critic. They are kaleidoscopic in part because every biennial emerges as its own mosaic. In this one can note that a critique of a biennial is often a critique of both the surface and the underlying format. It is also a critique of one the few alternative structures attempting new engagements with contemporary art. The vague concept in 2005 became its strength by foregoing the necessity of orchestrating pithy curatorial thematics (as was the case in 2007 and 2009). Themes too often dress exhibitions in pretenses that have contrary effects, imposing theoretical and historical distance upon singular artworks. The 2005 biennial found success in the act of taking inspiration not from philosophical sources but the immediate surroundings and material conditions artist were able to make-do with. The anti-theme was that the politics of exchange guiding life outside any gallery or museum are likely to be more illuminating or radical (especially in Istanbul) than any invocation of a radical art can be on its own.

Entitled *Not only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War*, the 2007 Biennial consisted several smaller exhibitions and four primary venues: a newly created art and cultural campus called Santral Istanbul, the familiar Antrepo 3 warehouse, a midcentury concert hall, the Atatürk Kültür Merkezi or Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM), and a huge open air shopping center called the Istanbul Manifaturacilar

Çarşisi or Istanbul Textile Traders' Market (IMÇ). I will focus on a reading of the latter in the following.

Curator Hou Hanru wrote in his directorial statement for the 10th Istanbul Biennial that in his estimation,

> the most exciting and innovative works and events are being produced in numerous non-western regions, rather than in the established Western centers. The phenomenon of the proliferation of biennials in the non-western world is an obvious and powerful expression of the rise of such fresh and different voices. Founded 20 years ago, the Istanbul Biennial has been an 'avant-garde' of this new wave. No doubt, its creation should be understood as a part of the modernization project of Turkey, in her search for both internal cultural development and international status.[161]

Hanru extolled art coming from China and other parts of Asia, including Turkey, as a new Eastern avant-garde. On the ground the exhibition began where Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun left off in 2005. His Biennial stayed in the Beyoğlu district. It reused 2005 venues Antrepo 3 and, as a secondary venue, the Tobacco Warehouse. Viewers again drifted in and around Taksim, Tünel, Galata, Tophane, Karaköy and across the Golden Horn to the IMÇ in nearby Eminönü. For Hou Hanru, gentrification along the familiar these axes, including Istiklal, presented a portal of aggressive globalization ushering in a new Istanbul and art world.

Hemispheric integration, from East (optimism/activism) to West (war/hegemony), came in a somewhat strained title: *Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War*. The title reworked the pre-millennium call to arms uniting the anti-globalization movement in the 1990s: "Another world is possible." The Tenth

---

[161] Hou Hanru, *Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary—Optimism in the Age of Global War*, (Istanbul; IKSV; 2007), 24.

Biennial thus began with noble goals. These ambitions were ostensibly to confront the growing uncertainty of the twenty-first century implicitly caused by American unilateralism. Ostensibly, Hou Hanru attempted to re-contextualize US-led imperialism in the Middle East with the critical optimism contemporary art could provide; but, given the magnitude of one over the other, the concept of empire seemed the context for art, not the other way around. Instability worldwide met artistic experimentation within the curatorial notion of Eastern optimism (even utopianism) as alternative modernisms. Venues reflected this dynamic:

> They symbolically and physically mirror the various facets and models of urban modernization in the city, embodying the political, social, economic, industrial and cultural realms. In these sites, the utopian project of republican revolution and modernization meets with the lively, ever-changing and 'chaotic' reality in the most vivid fashion, at once harmonious and conflicting, and ultimately electrifying. They are sites where the top-down vision of the modern city clashes with the bottom-up imaginations and actions to defend and promote difference, hybridity and vitality in real life. The hegemonic 'official' modernism has to confront the vital force of the multitude—a synergy of truly multiple modernities.[162]

This exuberance was not always tangible on the ground and the curator frames alternates modernities with only vague allusions that are nonetheless easy to sympathize with. For Hou Hanru, the thrust of contemporary art is ecumenical in a sense: it is there to offer alternative purviews to the moral cancer of empire. A subtext of the exhibition offered in his public statements implied that instead of emanating from within a West gone awry, beholden at that time to a reactionary culture fracturing under the weight of 9-11, the East was comparatively unburdened and had the potential to be a remedial influence on world

[162] Ibid., 26.

culture, along with grassroots activism. Therefore, art that is sympathetic to anti-global movements should look in that other direction, away from Western modernism, across the Bosporus, towards Hou Hanru's native country, China, and everywhere in-between.

Turkey could be considered part of Hanru's parallel nonwestern globalism. Istanbul provided a compelling modernity among many less understood, even "utopian republican revolution" (presumably Kemalism) as he saw it, because it still embodied a raw globalism in transition: not refined into the homogeneity found elsewhere in the West.

By projecting an easterly inclination the Tenth Biennial mirrored a path Hanru had himself followed when he relocated to Paris from Beijing in 1990. Failed utopian aspirations that defined much of the twentieth century would seem to have still have potential in the East. Solutions to global turmoil brought on by Western expansion were sought in social, cultural, and developmental changes that defined the long arch of Istanbul's modernization. As the curator writes in the introductory text, the city is "a perfect example of successful modernization beyond the Euro-centric perspective."[163] In short, the idea was that Turkey should drift east. Since 2007, there is ample evidence that "modernization" in Turkey has been at once isolationist, easterly, westerly and less than perfect or successful, as in every large nation especially former empires. The curator's sentimentalism for modernism rehearsed during this biennial occasionally seemed misguided and accommodating—instead of optimistic.

---

[163] Ibid, 21.

Beyond modernism and "global war" the 2007 Biennial presented art interacting with other loaded terms. These terms framed contemporary art as a movement towards "realisible utopia" as well. That Turkey could be admired for its "[Kemalist] utopian idealism" in the curator's words.[164] In addition to attributing these progressive preoccupations with the city's growing art sector (whose gains came from the collecting classes of Europe and America), the curator applied to Istanbul postmodern virtues that felt incongruously Western for an exhibition fixed along an nonwestern course. The city he wrote represented "dynamic and different modernities" that "invent new local conditions facing the challenge of globalization."[165] Yet, again, this seemed to ignore internecine conflict and rather minimal immigrant populations (that have since grown) in a changing but then still homogenous protectionist country by most appearances.[166]

These pronouncements might have seemed to be yet another celebration of Istanbul's enchanting past as a global crossroads, allowing viewers to drift between an urbane Europe and a wiser Asia. But by posing a developing localism against a monstrous international, Hou Hanru risked overplaying contemporary art's importance. Guarded optimism about art impact the world's most wrenching issues in the twenty-first century (an "age of global war") gave programming a provocative if hard-to-realize edge. Rather than urban utopias, idealisms, and 'modernities' the curatorial terminology and scheme served at best as a prompt to wander in the city, again.

---

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid., 21.

[166] The conflict in the east of the country has only gotten worse while since 2007 Turkey does have larger foreign-born populations (separate from refugee crises) arriving from the region. See: *Turkish Migration Conference 2015*, eds. Guven Seker, Ali Tilbe, Mustafa Okmen, Pinar Yazgan, Deniz Eroglu Utku and Ibrahim Sirkeci, (London: Transnational Press; 2015).

In the realm of art production, Hanru seemed to want to ask specifically how visual artists, as an international contingent moving beyond the deeply entrenched traditions of Western art history, would respond to an increasingly reactionary world. Will they respond or will they conform? The reader can decide how this question has been answered since 2007, but, at the time, in the curator's view, contemporary art had a redemptive capacity, especially in the theater of Istanbul—its too positioned as an alternative social structure within its own nation. Istanbul packaged as not just the intersection of two hemispheres but a physical line demarcating an ideological move away from (Western) imperialism implied that the political efforts of Ataturk, Europe's historical avant-garde as well as the promise of "free-market" strategies at the radical limits that define Empire were coefficients in a new emergent era born of (post)modernisms. The force of this emergence Hanru stated, "directly echoes the claim of the multitude—a whole consisting of singularities, a multiplicity of groups and subjectivities—founded on the common value of love, as is defended and promoted by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt."[167] Representing or curating love in the company of these conditions was a tall order, even while the impulse to tie these strains together is understandable, given the sort of raw potential tangible in the city at the time. But an expansion of visual art's discourse of Hardt and Nergi's post-Marxist millennial theory seemed far too optimistic.

A boom in Istanbul at the time presented an interesting dilemma that both this Istanbul Biennial and the 2005 explored in detail: namely, how the contemporary art

[167] Ibid. 24.

exhibition as a form could adopt a civic purpose as a soundboard for public discourse resonates abroad. An important distinction between 2005 and 2007: the Istanbul Biennial curators Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun worked to put art interventions ahead of the curve of development, whereas the 2007 Biennial appeared to be behind it, responding to gentrification. The latter 2007 exhibition avoided the complications of Turkey's internal expansion, fueled by a rising middle class' embrace of neoliberal international capitalism and conservative politicians. This omission of class dynamics so evident in Turkey at that moment was hard to miss given the chosen themes in the concept and supplementary literature. Omissions of this sort, which often employ critical theory, making a mousse of critical theory *such as Hardt and Negri) are not uncommon in contemporary art exhibition texts. The effect, though, amounted to a biennial that seemed symptomatic of biennialism with every generic reference to globalization, at odds with conditions on the ground and out-of-sync with the modesty heralded by the Ninth 2005 Biennial.

Perhaps wisely, artists in Hanru's Biennial invoked global war as American/ Western with calling attention to Turkey's massive military, or such things as its reliance on subsidizing the economy with military spending (not unlike the U.S. or China). For example, the artworks in the exhibition did nothing to address Turkey's strategic alliances with imperialism, the West, or its regional partners. Especially noticeable was the avoidance of topics that might explore Turkey's relation to its neighbor countries, the turmoil that might spill into Eastern Anatolia from Western-led conflicts in Iraq, the status of Kurds in Turkey, and Kurdistan itself. On the other hand, omitted topics such as the relationship to the EU (in ascension discussions with Turkey at the time), issues such

as free trade, agriculture, Cyprus, humane prison reform, fiscal restraint, or religious militancy and other obvious starting points to any discussion of Turkey and globalization, let alone global war, left the biennial feeling discursively hollow. Surely, the exhibition was under no obligation to explicitly relate to such complicated issues. But why then invoke global war in the title became the question. Unfortunately, this led to the routine charge of biennialism: curators talk big without delivering on their politic commitments. The inability of visual art to address reality came into view in the noticeable avoidance of pressing issues facing Turkey and a region bracing for the aftermath of a protracted Iraq War. This missed chance presented a familiar disjuncture between the international art world and the globalizing world of nations and financial entitles. The exhibition in a sense dealt with global war by turning away from it towards alternative modernisms.

When I interviewed Hou Hanru at the San Francisco Art Institute in early 2008, I started by mentioning the obvious—that new invocations of globalization had been the primary theme in his work. He laughed as though this were a gross understatement given that the curator had built a reputation divining and displaying what this illusive term might mean, especially as contemporary art from the East. Exhibitions he has produced around the world typify an era of stylized internationalism that is progressive in terms of leftwing proposals and offering diverse groups of artist to research and launch a space of collective experimentation.

For this reason I began the interview[168] by asking Hou Hanru to reflect upon his story, moving between China and France for many years. Major political shifts that led to

[168] The following quotations are taken from my *interview Global Warming: Interview with Curator Hou Hanru*, available online at http://haudenschildgarage.com/the-2007-istanbul-biennial-with-matthew-schum/15/#global-warming-interview-with-curator-hou-hanru (last accessed April, 2015).

his transient practice as an independent curator and, lastly, how the *China/Avant-Garde* exhibition at the National Gallery in Beijing blended the political and artistic climate in China around the time of the Tiananmen Square protests in June 1989. Hanru gave a reflective response, thinking of the time leading up to his departure from China in 1990. He noted that, "In the early and middle eighties, we were looking for a way to break through all the constraints of the established academic or official arts by looking to modernist and contemporary art. I belong to a group of artists and critics who work on the kind of self-organizing first avant-garde art movement in China." This type of work has been called a kind of cannibalism[169]: art outside the West that elsewhere takes on deracinated methods, modes, and imagery taken from the European avant-garde. Hanru goes on to say that "The Chinese avant-garde movement has always been about relating itself to the world." This is not an endorsement of Western culture. Rather, it is the essential condition of dislocation that visual art demands of the maker—artist, curator or otherwise—in his telling. "So going to live in France," Hanru continued, "like many others from Huang Yongping to Chen Zhen—and we had in the United States Gu Wenda—for all these people, I think the personal ambition was to be a part of the global situation, rather than simply representing China. That actually shows contemporary art moving from a more national kind of perspective to a much more global one." It also shows the interspersing of borrowed tactics and media moving between continents—drifting. Generating new forms of content meant globalized appropriation art for these curators and artists. This dislocation of physical boundaries as a material condition has

[169] I take Hou Hanru's reference to invoke Brazilian Oswald de Andrade's 1928 *Cannibalist Manifesto*.

become emblematic of art since the 1990s. In this sense, we understand what Hou Hanru and Hans Ulrich Obrist meant by their seminal exhibition *Cities on the Move*, which, if there was any question prior, announced the arrival of "global curators" in the late-1990s. Hanru goes on to note, in the 1990s:

> [It]was also the moment after the Cold War that people [began] to look at the relationship between the western world and the non-western world through a different perspective. People [in art] started looking into post-colonial issues: issues of migration, identity, and modernization, especially modernization outside the western world. When you look at that, it is important to understand that globalization is not simply a prevailing American or Euro-American model. It is also a lot of other possibilities that have been circulating the world—coming back to influence even the western world.

With a great deal of formative work in mind, I asked how Hanru viewed the changing role of the curator since that time. He replied that he belonged to a generation of curators who came from this very particular moment of social and political transition in the visual arts industries pivot to a global system:

> you have people coming from so-called non-western backgrounds to become part of this discourse, a part of this dynamism: you have people like Okwui [Enwezor], Vasif [Kortun], and many other people. In the meantime, we basically have invented a profession, somehow, that didn't exist. I mean, before our generation you have of course Harold Szeemann and few—very few—others who have been independent. The artistic event becomes a platform to talk about social issues or the transformation of the world—all from a particular perspective, using particular languages. [Making exhibitions] somehow becomes a new laboratory of social change. This is one way to understand the role of a curator in the current moment. That is what, perhaps, forced us to invent a new role for ourselves. You might say the name of the curator has obtained a whole new meaning.

The invention of this new type of professional was an epochal product that emerged out of material conditions, including the need to escape. As Hanru puts it: "After the 1990s, it

doesn't matter which generation you belong to; you have to deal with the fact that art is from Latin America, from Asia, from Africa, and has become a very important part of the system. From here, it's inevitable that people have to travel to China, to, I don't know, Mali—to wherever in order to understand what is happening there." This decentralized system concerns much more than acquiring cultural capital and this captures his sense of alternate modernism quite well. When asked if internationalizing was a matter of capitalizing upon institutional needs, Hanru drew a distinction, "I think when you look at the big picture, the whole post-colonial discourse, the whole debate of globalization has helped to create a new intellectual knowledge, and intellectual inspiration to redefine our job. So, I think there is a very interesting interaction, and this interaction generates people who are specialized in organizing these kinds of events. And you might call them curators." The drifting curator occupies a roving positioned here as an extra-institutional entity, always on the move, facilitating a conversation about the world the viewer lives in, as well as playing the traditional role of deciphering the hermetic world of the artist.

I then asked how organizing in Istanbul presented a unique circumstance. In his words, he "tried to make [the Biennial] disappear and integrate into the flux of everyday life. This is why we have the program from day to night. It is not only for the art lovers coming to amuse themselves. It's really about making it accessible to everyone living in the city—anytime, in any context." This offering to the average urban dweller corresponds to the micro-politics of consumption that the role of the curator could institutionalize. This places art and the biennial in psychogeographic terms: a biennial is an invitation to an inevitable and countervailing *dérive* that mingles both properties, fit to

the needs of a twenty-first century audience. Hou Hanru represents an update to contemporary art brought about by a new curator class. Their exhibitions restructured the peregrination required of any contemporary art professional. Curators aligned art and political discussion across continents as an outgrowth of these institutional needs.

Hou Hanru's exhibition "World Factory" at the Istanbul Textile Traders' Market(IMÇ) exemplifies some how these general shifts in art converged in a single site at the 2007 Biennial. *World Factory* aligns with the Situations axis of anti-consumption that Surrealists had adapted from the Parisian tradition of the flaneur and Hanru made all these connections in our 2008 conversation: "The IMÇ was totally conceived as a shop space. So rather than the conventional exhibition, it is a shopping experience. This shopping is not about consuming. It is about understanding how the artwork can produce a new relationship when it goes into a place like this." It feeds off the energy of the transaction in a traditional space of production to observe and to be observed, not to buy or to produce in any strict terms.

As a structure, the IMÇ housed family-run businesses in a huge open air shopping center carved out of brutalist cement slabs. The cloistered scene at IMÇ was a disarming environment. High brow contemporary art next to the garment makers, cottage industries, and vendors selling anything from pricey cutlery to imported dollar-store commodities, appeared to be an insensitive quip about art fairs. The contrast of the permanent and the temporary occupants made conspicuous impostors out of biennial visitors, highlighting, quite uncomfortably, the contrast between global reality and global art. The Tenth Biennial's disconnected program in the IMÇ allowed some installations to stand alone,

negating any intentional relation to other art works (or workers) in their midst and, though secluded in massive mall, each manifested the conceptualism of labor abstracted. As a coordinated set of approximate distances consistent with the global curator's sense of international connectivity here met the realness of a depressed old mall. Contemporary art here fetishized the laborers as ancillary installations made with traditional garments.

This is not merely a critique of the *World Factory* concept at IMÇ but a predicament for art exhibitions that blend intellectual labor and real manual workers. This venue pointed out that contemporary art professionals in settings like the IMÇ create a strong contrast as nonproductive consumer-based producers. Hanru's exhibition at the IMÇ exemplifies the mandate of shadow-work[170] that converts consumption into appropriations of collective space and personal time. Art is no exception, as it marshals taste and selection, even in a setting like this one. Art in contrast to the blue-collar laborers working in their family shops managing various goods for conservative clients made a caricature of these laborers still seemingly stuck in a previous century, as compared to the well-heeled drifting to see an exhibition promising new modernities.

World Factory, nonetheless, contained some works sensitive to these material concerns of labor and class that overwhelmed the atmosphere of the IMÇ. For example *Informal Economy Vendors* by Julio César Morales was one of few artists to take inspiration and supplement the storefront aesthetic found at the IMÇ campus. Morales appropriated Mexican street art and Constructivist graphic language that made for an unexpected congruity between the artist's wall pieces and the hodgepodge storefronts

[170] A concept discussed at length in chapter 8.

designed by storeowners. Morales created a site-specific piece that capitalized upon the white space framing the entire shopping center in cement walls. The artist comprised *Informal Economy Vendors* with their black linear and figurative motifs made in painterly signatures that suggested a slow explosive movement outward—as though the pieces were not fixed to the wall but an animation. The silhouetted bodies and objects in profile seemed pieced together like so many bones ready to be reconfigured as another shape. There was a rudimentary, almost childlike element to these raised figures. They blended in by invading the walls with a graphic tableau. Instead of avoiding the topic of labor, *Informal Economy Vendors* abstracted labor literally as street vendors in profile.

Part of the freshness in the Morales' work came as a subconscious, if legible aspects comparable to a graffiti writer's disdain for the oppressive architecture that frames residents everywhere in urban areas—here the workers. Whereas Hanru celebrated the structure's original "utopian" image, avoiding the weariness found in all corners of the IMÇ. Morales also managed to import a visual language from a separate hemisphere. Was it modernism? The street vendors were a convincingly global connection to the notion of a *World Factory*: the imported imagery redirected attention towards preexisting local sensibilities.

To return to the 2008 conversation with Hanru, I reiterated the argument I have just made. I wondered how the IMÇ as a "shopping experience" may have established unsettling relationships between contemporary art and family owned shops. Asked if it was an insensitive display of the "politics of globalization" in how it effect real people, very much living a global reality, caught in a machine that gives back little for a great

deal of work, and if contemporary art ever represents "global reality" beyond the abstract, Hou Hanru responded that "it is really important to create a possibility for those people who are living the everyday reality, under the influence of a market economy, to understand from an intellectual perspective what their life is. If art makes sense to these people, maybe it is a way to stimulate their thoughts by having this experience. To allow them to think about their life in a different way."[171] The underlying curatorial thesis here concerns the future perversion of labor as contemporary art. This Istanbul Biennial brought viewers closer to modernism as outdated kinds of work, as much as it might bring them closer to the a illusive labor entailed in making art. I asked Hanru if it did not work in reverse, were not the biennial-goers the ones with access to the world of the workers? "The intention of using the site, which is totally beyond the tourist map, was really to bring people there to understand that art is not something in the ivory tower," said Hanru. Anyone who visited the city "should be there [IMÇ] if you really want to understand why the Istanbul Biennial makes sense; it is because you have to look at this reality." What is not clear in this is how staging an art exhibition in such circumstances imposed, interrupted, or short-circuited art's discontinuous relation to the actual daily reality of demanding, repetitive, craftsmanship or even sweatshop-types of labor .

With these progressive concerns fielded, Istanbul-based artist Burak Delier brought various critiques of capitalism to life in *PARKALYNCH*. He did so while offering an illustration of the intentions behind Hanru's IMÇ *World Factory* installation. The project, presented a multimedia focused upon the centerpiece of a padded jacket hung in

[171] I've stated my own skepticism to this approach and what it risked as seeming like a condescension to locals. It rehearses arguments concerning the artist as ethnographer, see Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer," *in Return of the Real*, (MIT Press: Cambridge; 1996), 171-203.

a storefront. It was made with reinforcements commonly used for motorcycle gear designed by Delier. *PARKALYNCH* was made by an invented company called ReverseDirection: Counter-Services catering to a militant clientele in need of specialty-made gear for protestors. As the name suggests, the jacket is meant to protect against mob violence (lynching). It is tactical weaponry to counter the anti-assembly riot gear police use to disperse demonstrations. In limited number, the parkas made for the 10th Istanbul Biennial hung unpretentiously in a standalone storefront separate from the larger group installations at included in the *World Factory* exhibition. From the outside, it could have been missed easily or taken as another store selling sporting or skateboard gear.

My first encounter with *PARKALYNCH* occurred unawares wandering on Istiklal Caddesi, where Delier had intermittently hung large posters as though they were advertisements—like the bills used to promote rock concerts in many cities. What they seemed to sell was rebellion itself in an image depicting a protestor in a black and white checkered mask and a blood-red overcoat. Her body in an archer's pose drawing the bow of a cocked slingshot. A modernized David faces an unseen Goliath. Delier's advertisement crystalized an image and an affect, iconic and real, as all effective advertising should do. Added to the crisp image of the revolt-ready protester, an imposing typeface complimented the tableau above a stark black background.

There was nothing generic in Delier's invocation of the international. Its extension of real world problems advanced knowledge about mob violence as a regional tradition. In patient conversation, Delier spoke to visitors in his shop gently reframing a history in Turkey that has been neglected or actively repressed in some cases. It was not

for the artist a matter of Turkey only (though the history of his country was his main reference). In general, the artist saw the creation of the jacket line as something for potentially all kinds of users—even his many new neighbors in the IMÇ may find need for one someday, he said with a wry smile. The point seemed to be that one never knows in the current era when oppressive measures spawned by a government or a reactionary mob may visit the average citizen's life.

When asked for specifics, the artist referred to numerous incidences of mob violence in his country, which would be well known to Turks in many cases, involving protestors, religious minorities, or ostracized ethnic groups in Turkey who had been scapegoated or ruthlessly attacked. As he spoke, these incidents seemed vivid in his mind, as though he witnessed each scene dating from the 1920's, the 1990's and more recent times. He told me all this in an interview in his storefront installation during the 2007 Biennial: "in the political history of Turkey there are many lynch attacks—some in the 1920, 1930s, 1950s—and in the last two or three years there has been twenty or thirty lynch attacks on the street. Usually, they are on people who hand out political pamphlets or who want to make declarations to press. People come together and lynch them, want to beat them, want to kill them." The word lynch was used loosely, but the historical point is clear. He went on:

> Some information about Turkey: in 1921, the founder of the Turkish Communist Party is killed. On his way to Ankara, there were three lynch attacks on the road and he survived. Afterward, he is killed in Trabzon in a lynch attack. There is Ali Kemal 'The Traitor,' who was criticizing the nationalist movement and wanted the protection of western countries for Turkey. He was killed in a lynch attack. These are political murders organized by the state. In 1955, there is the 6th and 7th of September incidents, the state brings people in trucks from Anatolia to Istanbul—to

> Beyoğlu. This is where all the minorities lived, the Jewish people, the Greek people, the Armenian people, and they had shops. At that time in Turkey, trade was in their hands and they controlled the money. The state brought Anatolian people in trucks to destroy their shops and kill people. That is also a lynching. My work directly refers to these historical events. This is related to Turkey, but it's also related to political things in the Middle East. In the Middle East lynching has a very psychological effect. In lynching people, you don't control yourself [as a perpetrator of violence]. Who killed this man? It is not known. No one is guilty. In this way you lose your control; you lose your consciousness in doing this.

On the other hand, despite this storied history of transience and itinerant internationalism, there is a simple message to Delier's anti-terror anti-art: "I want to make a very normal thing. It's not original, but it has a function. It's like life: something for people, for everyone. [*PARKALYNCH*] is [art] not simply for people who have reach, who can reach to buy from galleries." It is for people who expect to be trampled upon in the act of asserting their rights and those who can appreciate the conceptual reach of his "ironic commodity," as he put it. For Delier the salable thing incorporates the revolt underlying consumerism everywhere: "It is important to make something that is on sale, available in this shop. In this context, it is very political, because underlying its necessity is the violence in our society."

PARKALYNCH should not be framed only as a palliative to violence. This is only the most obvious reference here—police barricades protecting the citadels of wealth in city squares the world over—from Tiananmen to Taksim to Zuccotti. *PARKALYNCH* also reacts to the insidious empathy violence of the marketplace that abstracts, ruthlessly, "not so much with buyers as with its price. But precisely by this means, the flaneur becomes attuned to the commodity; he emulates it entirely. In the absence of any market demand for him–that is, of any price attached to his services–he makes himself home in

purchasability."[172] While this may seem a conflation of the early-modern flaneur with the postmodern protestor, in fact, it marks the evolution of dissipated classes mirroring the abstraction Benjamin speaks of–the déclassé masses reaching a global scale of redundancy. Motivated by his own unharmonious relation to the economic system Delier draws attention to the failure of the market system that occasionally ends in violence, extroverted and insidious. *PARKALYNCH* uses the logic of the commodity to exhibit what the disenfranchised might truly require as consumers.

Another work at the IMÇ shopping center fit the environment because it matched the environment of business and toil that occupied the workers in their workspaces. It was Ömer Ali Kazma's cross-section of labor practices, called *Obstructions*. The five videos were set, respectively, in a brain surgery clinic, a clock master's shop, a potter's studio, a steel mill, and a slaughterhouse. Mounted upon three walls installed behind glass doors, Kazma summed up his elliptical realism as a "family" in the wall text. Opening the glass door to the partitioned video installation was an arresting experience in part due to grim scenes and squeals coming from one video. It recorded the inner workings of a slaughterhouse. Here t facts of meat indeed obstruct from the other more silent acts (or family members) showing other types of labor ion the other video displays. Beyond the repulsion that the sight of a dying animal struggling might instill, a morbid curiosity about methodical killing seemed slowly to transfix each new viewer that entered the video room as I sat at length in the installation. Spilled fluids erupt from livestock long after they are hung to die: the artist trains his camera on each mechanical process of

---

[172] Walter Benjamin, "Exchange with Adorno on *The Flâneur*," in *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings vol. 4*, ed. Michael Jennings, (Cambridge; Harvard; 2006), 208.

the harvest. We watch as appendages tumble down a metal shoot; disorderly piles of goat heads gather in some lower level of Hades fitting a George Bataille fantasy never put to the pages of *Documents*. Kazma clearly attempts to resist sentimentalizing all the work on display here. Yet he finds balance in the camouflage five channels provide and in the mechanism of recording itself. The saws, pinchers, industrial skin-peelers of the factory workers that so efficiently break apart the animals from a perfect distance that serves as a metaphors for the action of the camera. The slaughterhouse functions formally as a desensitizing device within the ensemble of the installation.

Again, the irresistible scenes in the abattoir that first demand attention transform slowly into a rhythm. It then emerges across several channel as this requisite sense of distance sets-in. Appropriately titled, these *Obstructions* pull the viewer in with a familiar kind of pathos (found in PETA videos) mitigated by a certain logos contained in the order of the spectrum of labor on display. Life and mind in symbiosis with the machine is Kazma's mediation. Attention drifts from the grisly killing to the smooth mechanics of watchmaking, the spinning wheel of a ceramicist's studio, an MRI scan and so on. Once attention shifts, and each specialized activity became more clearly individuated and simultaneously blended with the others, the *Obstructions* shone through as a meditation on the human capacity to manipulate reality, infinitely, regardless of materiality, or structure. Each type of labor, it is worth noting, represented a modern realm, whether as an industrial process or technical specialization. Refreshingly, these were not framed in utopian but realist terms. Kazma described each video in his little media democracy in the wall text: "None of them lie, hide the ugly bits, or distort the truth for comfort as

commodified fantasy does. As individual videos, they might negate so that as a group, they can affirm from a higher position." The piece, in other words, created an operatic hum of people adapting to their environment through worldly noises made by machines that make their masters who they evidently are. It was a narrow and neutral look at workers working, but that extended an inadvertent sympathy to the people actually trapped in the stalls and storefronts of the IMÇ. The intellectual work of viewership is quite foreign in these setting, uncomfortably so.

Aside from Kazma, other artists found ways to match practice with political import in Hanru's laudable grasp at a "global" location for contemporary art. Artist Ursula Biemann's *Black Sea Files* video installation at the IMÇ was a portrait of the Caspian oil region, drawn by pipelines stretching from Azerbaijan to the eastern Mediterranean in Turkey. We see is everything peripheral to a major petrol artery. The devastating wake of development is predictable, but captivating due to the artist's unsentimental attention to detail. By no means reportage, Biemann depicts turmoil amidst lands ruined by pollution, corrupt black markets and human entanglements, such as prostitution and human trafficking that came with pipeline. Though documentary at heart, the video maintains a sensitive predominantly filmic touch to information, allowing characters removed briefly from their witness of others to drive a cyclical narrative about the nation born of the pipeline, calling strangers from Russia to Iran, Central Asia and Turkey. One senses that on different days different stories might have been captured when different traveler may have met the drifting Biemann. The randomness of these encounters contrasted nicely with the chaos of the urban center outside the IMÇ. One

knows of course Istanbul is a likely destination or point of transit for these "trafficked" persons.

What Biemann calls "secondary sceneries" of an internalized globalism pits the Black Sea and larger Caspian region's remote landscape and transient laborers (of every description) against a massive infrastructural endeavor. A new periphery emerges that attempts to comprehend a thing too big and harmful to lands and populations to truly understand. The pipeline's administration becomes an acephalous giant without reasonable awareness of its sum parts, let alone victims. This dividing line in both political and geographic terms along the pipeline, shifts from the visible to the subterranean, as much as east to west. The video is a disciplined observation, active though never didactic. It gave life to the ulterior world of Black Sea and the identities forming as what the artists titled "geo-bodies," in a setting of visually sublime and, of course, consisting of unlimited natural resources.[173] Biemann connected Istanbul and its Bosporus to an eerie phase of hyper-development landscape overwhelming the human in favor of the fossil-fuel necessity that underlies the pipeline.[174] If the world seemed more interconnected in the modest, self-contained gestures of the *Obstructions*, we could say the same of Biemann's more complicated ethnographies: they expose the indiscriminate nature of globalization as they are infused with the information creating "geo-bodies" and hybridizing the labor shaping them. It was here in these works that the curatorial

---

[173] The Ancient Greeks called it hyperborea and was shrouded in uncommon mystique. Biemann captures this sense of dislocation in her drift across the perimeter of the Black Sea.

[174] The artist has a website where her work, including this one, can be sampled: http://www.geobodies.org (accessed September 2015)

aspirations seemed to share common cause in exposing a new hyperborean empire—an ulterior but by no means promising modernism emerging from the East.

At the heart of the Tenth Istanbul Biennial resided the unlikely idea of optimism in the age of global war. Inevitably the exhibition would appear uneven because globalization metastasizes insidiously in the unseen corners of the globe, such as the Caspian region, just as it spreads its influence in the intangibles properties of foodstuffs, medical devices and the meticulous workmanship of wristwatches Kazma captured. In this telescoping between the macro and the micro, the exhibition placed urban renewal at the core of global strife. *Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary: Optimism in the Age of Global War* never went beyond the role of observation that itself becomes a form of externalization a biennial is meant to intervene in as counterpoint to dominant modes of representation of cultural imperialism.[175] How to actively participate in what a biennial ponders as a needed politics always a dilemma, yet, unlike *Istanbul*, any effort to understand the critical or institutional role of the biennial as a measure of global transformation in Istanbul was less pronounced in 2007.

By 2009, the biennial institution had changed. After the acclaim of 2005, the foundation gained a higher profile in the four years following, as the city itself entered a new phase of (post-stagflation) prosperity. Institutional homogenization seemed inevitable to a degree. Yet, even in 2009, the Istanbul Biennial had remained a notable alternative to older institutions and biennials in Europe and North America. Again in

---

[175] A dictionary definition of the term externalization relates to both the macro- and micro-politics that Biemann and Kazma's separate video projects brought to life. That is, to move something outside original borders and especially to add a human function outside the human body.

2009, the curators set out to make a politics out of intervening in the city; yet only one of three main venues had not been used in the previous two biennials.

The curators, a Croatian collective of female curators by the group name "What, How & for Whom," known as WHW (pronunciation not anglicized), were obviously frustrated by this perceived retrenchment amidst in other areas of expansion of IKSV's operations.[176] They made sure the public took note of their dissatisfaction that they were forced to make less radical moves as curators by the IKSV foundation. A "wish list" entitled "Top 5 Venues Wish List (Not Realized Due to Bureaucratic, Financial and Security Reasons)" of other more desirable biennial homes came in the exhibition guide as a frontispiece and as a wall text in the Tobacco Warehouse posted as giant banner (along with a myriad of other relevant biennial-era statistics, composing a graph of institutional self-critique). The information read as savvy and self-conscious, as though falling short of the exhibition-makers' political commitments had to be confessed and blame shared by the nameless policymakers, bureaucrats, financial agents and security monitors who curtailed WHW. An example of two unrealized venue locations was the closed (and previously bombed) U.S. Consulate General in central Istanbul as well as the disused, astonishing, and later suspiciously burned Haydarpasa Train Terminal. The second is a prominent waterside landmark on the ferry that commuters ride from Karaköy to Kataköy (European to Asian Istanbul). Both venues would have been symbolically charged containers for an international exhibition due to their geopolitical associations, coordinates and urban histories.

---

[176] Members consist of curators Ivet Curlin, Ana Dević, Nataša Ilić, Sabina Sabolović, and designer Dejan Kršić.

The spontaneity that filled previous exhibitions seemed missing from the 11th Biennial due to the reuse (again) of 2005 venues. Their curatorial mapping of the city felt quite familiar. The result was that instead of a "modest" Istanbul that was closer to reality and swallowing up but not overwhelming the art, the 2009 exhibition seemed consumed by the politics of a preferred city image that previous biennials had helped to create between 2003 and 2009 as an entertainment zone off Istiklal.

If a biennial doesn't persistently reintroduce the urban texture to local and foreigners through art, the exhibition will turn back towards exhibitions that could have been staged anywhere, or simply travel to Istanbul from abroad. This tactical element was not lost on WHW and they clearly had bigger plans to incorporate the latent energies of city-spaces into their exhibition. It is a process that can be described as a fight against the sameness of doing exhibitions in the same place every two years for the indefinite future. WHW were pushed into familiar venues, it seems, such as Antrepo 3 and the Tütün (Tobacco Warehouse) used in 2005, which had by then been totally remodeled. As mentioned, the old American Consulate and Haydarpasa would have been game changers: politically charged and architecturally grand. Also under consideration, the Beaux Arts Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture, could have located the art in a former era of cultural development in Istanbul. Some sensed that these missed chances pointed to contemporary art's capture by conservative or weary forces overseeing municipal spaces, reflecting tension in rightward swing of politics in general at the time across much of the nation.

Enter Bertolt Brecht, the thematic muse of the 11th Istanbul Biennial. The invocation of the internationally beloved *Three Penny Opera* by Kurt Weil and Bertolt Brecht from 1928 gave the exhibition a sense of time warp, as though the Bulkans were again emerging from the Soviet era.[177] Using Brecht had advantages as a unifying thread of anti-imperial ideas in artwork (to be discussed below). The move united the history of the Left, performance and humor found in he biennial. The downside being that the interwar politics Brecht represents seemed somewhat anodyne amidst the turmoil of 2009. *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* references a song in the musical *Three Penny Opera*. In a contemporary art biennial the theme added to a sense that the twenty-first century had yet arrive.[178] Brecht allowed WHW an opportunity to repeat his slogan, "A bourgeoisie is a criminal and criminal is a bourgeoisie." Yet the ideological fascia of anti-bourgeois sentiments around the exhibition felt toothless, rather propagandistic, like formulas wartime presidents utter to rally supporters. Interwar theater and Communist sympathies felt far removed from global problems. What may have been heartening for audiences during Berlin's interwar audiences here missed the mark. Or worse, it pointed a finger at the globetrotting criminal-bourgeois biennial crowd without taking ownership of their own complicity in the business. If the curators did not make it for these globetrotters (and I suspect they did not) what audience had they in mind? Perhaps it is too literal and

---

[177]There were various other methodological approaches rehashing Cold War politics in programmed talks and panel discussions. At one panel with Irit Rogoff and Brian Holmes, among others, Charles Esche went to so far as to say that as flawed as the Soviet Union was, back then the world at least consisted of two eyes as veritable world views, instead of just one American-led hyper-capitalist oculus.

[178] The chorus of the song goes as follows and is by no means irrelevant to the plight of many today: "What keeps mankind alive? / The fact that millions / Are daily tortured, stifled, punished / silenced oppressed. / Mankind can keep alive, thanks to its brilliance / In keeping its humanity repressed. / For once, you must try not to shirk the facts: / Mankind is kept alive by bestial acts."

one's not really meant to wonder, but *What Keeps Mankind Alive?* prompted a question of whom this Biennial addressed with such a question.

This does not mean that some works pieces did not fit quite well within the proposal of biennial as militant container. How did politics express themselves as art installation in this biennial?

A call to arms and absurdity (in Dada, Surreal or Brechtian sense) filled the Argentine collective Etcétera's large installation of their so-called *Errorist Kabaret* (mocking the war on terror). The installation blended stage and exhibit in the activist group's playful reprise of the Cabaret Voltaire, the club hosting a mix of international dissidents (including heroes of the Turkish Left) and recognizable avant-garde artists as silhouette cutouts. When I interviewed Movimiento Etcétera about their recent foray into contemporary art amidst their new installation, days before the opening of the 2009 Istanbul Biennial, they answered my questions by telling stories. Perhaps the most important was the following about the founding of the International Errorist Movement after an IMF protest in Buenos Ares:

> We started making photos on the beach. We were playing on the beach [in our protest costumes]. We were playing and overhead flew a helicopter and then a big plane. And we *pik-pik-pik* shot at it with our fake guns. Then, after that, *woo-woo warr* [the noise of sirens]. The cops jumped out and announced that this [beach] is a forbidden zone. They asked us who we are and we say, 'We are Errorists. We said we can't kill anyone with this [the toy guns in their hands].' They said that the airplane was Air Force 1. 'Bush was in it.' Eventually we were let go and before the cop left he said, 'Please, next time do not point your guns at President Bush.' At that moment, we started to understand that error is something good. Error is good. Hence the name, mocking the president's war on terror.

When, later in our interview, I asked Frederico Zuckerfield and his partner Loreto Garin, if it was strange to go from street riots to biennials, Zuckerfield said "I am a context artist." We can understand in art that "the context is the most important, for sure." Here the avant-garde and other political heroes and martyrs presented a brief history of opposition to other forms of social regression. Art can serve as that tipping point, just as protest can, he implied. Even if this means showing at biennials, reform is often imperfect. Art is an indispensable means of distribution similar in spirit if not form to other means of insurrection. The piece in the Eleventh Biennial established a lineage between Etcétera's activist work in Argentina to the famous Cabaret Voltaire, Dada's birthplace in Zurich. Harking back to Dada made sense as an Etcétera forebear because it was first among art movements in the twentieth century to invert political rhetoric (against the official discourses rationalizing World War One). *The Errorist International* by Etcetera returned to these paragons to reclaim their activism. As Zuckerman put it, "For us, the theater and visual art was a pretext to put people in this kind of cathartic moment" of making art and nourishing revolt. Seeing the "the old past and the present past," as Guzman put it, looks back at history as those in the cabaret would see it, as a series of more or less fortunate errors. These so-called Errorists accept misshapen outcomes as history and their own foolhardy attempts to shape those global outcomes while trying represent the truth behind political calculations that effect millions—everyday citizens erring through their own humble lives.

Other artists added a mix of activism, ethnography and *détournement* to the politically minded exhibition at Antrepo 3. The artist collective *What Is To Be Done?*

presented videos that deconstructed and reenacted Cold War personages. These familiar leaders including icons like Vladimir Lenin came back from the grave to invent new *tableaux vivants* in performances. In Mounira Al Solh's piece, a modest yet brilliant video made in the glimmer sun by the Beiruti seaside, featured middle and older aged men describing their bonds formed in a swimming club on the Lebanese Mediterranean. As for the prompt, *What Keeps Mankind Alive?,* Al Solh actually seemed to answer the question, tongue-in-check, with each swimmer expressing his masculinity through his bond to the sea and his pals. Throughout the exhibition, a political content emerged with sensitive artists taking subjects from their immediate surroundings. The themes drew distance from Brecht, giving the exhibition a sense that the world may not be as cut and dry today as it was in the late-1920s.

Artur Zmijewski made this complication picture apparent in his *Democracies*—an overwhelming video installation strung over several channels showing collected footage from numerous protests. On medium-sized flat screen monitors, we see and hear unrest from the West Bank, Israel, Poland, Germany, Northern Ireland, and Africa, among other locations. These scenes captured protests signaling our era. As an whole, the media cluster formulated protest as a bodily discourse, the lingua franca of which is unmistakable the drifting crowd set in motion. Inside this Warsaw-based artist's immersive cacophony it each demonstration appeared as though it were happening in real time. It was also a "rhetoric, visual identity, and the representational language of social discord that follows public political events."[179] In the Zmijewski installation, it seemed

[179] What, How and for Whom, *11th Istanbul Biennial Guide*, (IKSV: Istanbul: 2009), 271.

odd the words bourgeoisie and proletariat were being bandied about in the Eleventh Biennial text. These words are relics compared to the demands populations put in motion in *Democracies*. They seek the kind of catharsis Etcétera staged. Zmijewski showed. Our world is a map of constant activism, the repetition of which "reveals the highly problematic nature of the democratic process in the public space that shows serious signs (for example, the level of religious penetration into the public sphere) of closing down political potential," according to the curators.[180] For these were not only leftwing resolutions.

In this sense, the Brecht theme proposed an outdated Marxism for contemporary problems. The impotence of this leftism at this moment in 2009 seemed obvious enough to border on a kind of self-censorship. At their opening press conference, WHW admitted the options are few in the arts industry and the fight must go on. In this sense, they were an especially candid directors. They provided information to their hungry critics and accepted their criticism, from both the left and the right. In addition to the aforementioned wish list of venues, the ultra-transparent Biennial they organized came with a preemptive bevy of statistics, including the male/female ratio, age groups, countries of origin (notably with only one South American inclusion was Etcétera), full disclosure of monetary distributions, and other metrics that proved the biennial met institutional-critique standards. Hardliners, the few remaining Marxists and other militants on-hand, drawn to but not drawn in to the Leftism on display in 2009, no doubt saw a defensive ruse at every turn, self-exoneration or simply a tally of attrition.

---

[180] Ibid.

Yet, WHW curated pragmatism in their Biennial and credibility to a group clearly uncomfortable with the limitations of their own position as curators. It was transparency versus the soft repression that beleaguers most any cultural agency or bureaucracy. In this battle of creative and technocratic wills one can imagine it is easier to curtail a biennial curator than it is to organize a large-scale exhibition. Brecht aside, transparency, in fact, comprised a sub theme in the 2009 Istanbul Biennial rarely seen in these types of shows. The curators fully enjoyed their right to incite the biennial bray, from within and without, and from the Left and the Right.

This chapter will close with a close read of an artist's project from 2009 that seemed to avoid biennialism and transcend the atmosphere of a bygone political era. The work will be described at greater length because it ties to urban wandering and also because it did seem especially relevant to the larger political issues of the moment—both globally and in Istanbul. It dealt firsthand with conflict in the region along with themes relevant to the lingering mandate of the 2005 Biennial (which asked artists to make international statements with provisional means, materials, and contexts).

Wafa Hourani's architectural installation *Qalandia 2087* gave value to drifting as a tactic in the form of a multimedia sculpture. It is the culminating third and final installment in the series (including *Qalandia 2047* and *Qalandia 2067*). The eponymous setting is Qalandia, a refugee camp in Palestine. By the artist's own description, his work is science fiction. His Qalandia exists in the future like the setting of a sci-fi novel. Like sci-fi, it analogizes aspects of the present day. The artist recycles most of the materials to create sculptural models. Other materials used in the assemblage include wood,

cardboard, wire, glue, plastic figurines, matchbox cars, mirror glass, and the architectural photos taken by the artist.

The three-part chronicle begins in 2047, a century after the Qalandia camp was, in reality, founded, following the 1947 Civil War. Qalandia (alternately Kalandia) remains a village. Today, the preexisting municipality holds little over 1,000 in population, yet includes 10,000 displaced refugees in the adjoining refugee camp. *Qalandia 2087* transports these extant conditions, camp, and checkpoints to the year 2087.

The soft-spoken artist states matter-of-factly in performative orientations introducing his art to curious audiences that the present day encampment resembles an open-air prison.[181] Due to the lack of services and work in the camp, the displaced residents currently assemble daily in the long cues leading to and from a main checkpoint. Yet, Hourani's descriptions of the protracted conflict are delivered in the same subdued tones as descriptions of his artistic choices. The unperturbed artist seems to already exist in the future, when the semi-permanent encampment near Ramallah will no longer be an intersection of drawn-out war. In his telling, this reality finally occurs exactly one hundred years after the first *Intifada*. The airport, which was designated for Israeli use in 1967, will not be a military outpost for occupying forces and the last stone will have been thrown from the opposing side. Checkpoints no longer consume the time of either the civilians or the soldiers caught in middle of the conflict.

Hourani's homeland will consist of healthy, self-governing communities. *Qalandia 2087* envisions one place, one neighborhood, in a totally remodeled society.

---

[181] All artist quotes come from an interview with Hourani that was recorded over several sessions onsite at Antrepo 3, September 2009.

The result is a microcosm where a culture of resistance finds what's beyond the horizon of struggle. Once the current impasse between Israel and Palestine ceases, a unified horizontally organized government will have replaced internal factions, such as Hamas and Fatah. In this other Qalandia, the segregating wall (a most prominent psychogeographic feature in the landscape today) has been replaced by the world's largest mirror. Instead of cultural quarantine, a giant image of the community shines back and intensifies the sun. Hourani's mirror allegorizes a nation that has become self-affirming. A separate "mirror garden" exists where one can go "to meet themselves," says the artist.

The 1987 uprising seemed to have a special meaning for the artist. It was then that an outpouring began to take shape. Taking the rock in the hand meant taking self-control of the community's destiny. Moving to the center of the small town he's constructed, a monument has been erected in a small plaza. The statue there is not of some personage but a cast piece of earth to honor the first rock thrown in the *Intifada* one hundred years prior. This monument hails inhabitants of Qalandia 2087 with the moment "when," according to the artist, "the Palestinians realize that the most powerful thing they used is the stone." The stone "is stronger than any bomb," because it is a form of self-expression that has suffices free expression in the face of occupation.

Hourani's remodeled vision is a means of creating spatial stories in a marginalized nation facing perpetual conflict. In the Biennial, the viewer could look and pass by unaffected; but they could not enter Hourani's new city without talking to the designer. As he points, his stories come in part from his upbringing in Hebron and Ramallah,

where he began taking photos at age thirteen. The artist studied film in Tunisia hoping to present these stories in motion picture, but eventually abandoned film for his three-dimensional his assemblage, which includes his own photos of the built environment. Like any maquette, these little towns have a quality of provisional appearances. They include matchbox cars and sketched apartment complexes constructed with an amateur's careful and imperfect tact. They are unremarkable architectural models that function as fragments of complete visions and whole communities hard to begin to imagine under the present conditions in Gaza or the West Bank.

The subtle propositions that come out of speaking with the artist can be understood best in his specific use of photography. This medium thrusts his work beyond the categorical look of a train set or dollhouse. To make the *Qalandia* maquettes a setting is first scouted, pictures are taken of exteriors and buildings onsite. The pictures of the existing city serve as placeholders for the future he envisions. The work begins as he walks through the refugee camp, photographing. These photos are then pasted on as the exterior surface of the maquette buildings composing the town. He takes pictures of anonymous residences at close range, merely framing the exterior of a wall itself. The artist describes this as allowing neighborhoods, houses, and facades to tell a story through the worn objects themselves.

Hourani's use of photography has the power to place the viewer at an intersection where the past and the present recede and his work. In this sense it fits well with words Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes offered, respectively, on photography. Sontag called picture-taking a kind of "sublimated murder" and described how the double image of the

world that the camera produced turned people "into objects that can be symbolically possessed," in this case, Palestine. Sontag continues: "Just as the camera is a sublimation of the gun, to photography someone is a sublimated murder—a soft murder, appropriated to a sad, frightened time."[182] Yet, Hourani reverses these dynamics, turning the refugee camp into refuge. It sublimates, surely, but in reverse fashion to Sontag's notion of a symbolic possession undercut by sadism or asymmetrical power in images of war or death. Photography here opens the window to a resident, highly localized use within the symbolic possession of disputed territory. Barthes also believed that photographs allow the experience of "becoming an object," and compared this transformative objecthood to "a micro-version of death (of *parenthesis*)."[183] Yet, the artist projects a state of suspension positively: not a morbid blink of an eye as Barthes recoils from the violence of the flashbulb. It is the transmogrified language of Hourani's *Qalandias* that have already experienced things much worse than individual mortality. Hourani, in short, appropriates his own photos, taken on many trips to the neighborhoods, to recycle an image of Palestine. He activates the community to-be with images taken from objective conditions. In this case, "becoming an object," as Barthes described, allows photos of Qalandia to be woven into a future anticipating renewal. However fanciful his new city becomes in his narratives, the brick-and-mortar past remains a visible trace. Realism creeps into what otherwise could be viewed as his utopian model. This brighter future never sheds its implacable past.

---

[182] Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, (New York: Picador; 1977), 98.

[183] Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography, (New York: Hill and Wang; 1982), 14.

In talking to Hourani, it became clear that the work expresses something comparable to de Certeau's notion of local authority: an appropriative and memorial

> discourse that makes people believe is the one that takes away what it urges them to believe in, or never delivers what it promises. Far from expressing a void or describing a lack it makes room for a void. In that way it opens up clearings; it 'allows' a certain play within a system of defined places. It 'authorizes' the production of an area of free play (*Spielraum*) on a checkerboard that analyzes and classifies identities. It makes places habitable.[184]

On game board-like surface of his miniature encampment, each addition to the future Qalandia produces "a crack in the [totalitarian] system that saturates places with"—this is the prerogative of the "local authority."[185] It asserts what oppression from without destroys—new legends (as on a map and in the sense of folklore) carried from the past into the present, which the drifter in urban space can activate. This includes today's refugees and those displaced who find themselves the "object of a witch-hunt, by the very logic of the techno-structure. But their extermination (like the extermination of trees, forests, and hidden places in which such legends live) makes the city a 'suspended symbolic order'."[186] If the habitable city is thereby annulled in these circumstances, inhabitants in a place where signification languishes, then *Qalandia 2087* resists by emplacing its designs and beliefs into the fold. The artist deploys the installation as a discursive tool to tell his own fictional version of the story through documentary fragments. The artistic vision here corresponds more closely than usual to Benjamin's angel of history, looking back at catastrophe in Paul Klee famous *Angelus Novus*. From

---

[184] de Certeau, 105-106.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Ibid.

ruin Hourani carves out new symbols. The principle desire of the intervention is seemingly to change the city first conceptually, not physically.

An important detail Hourani mentioned was that the actual pictures of closed windows and shutters in the city, taken as he walked the streets of Qalandia and Ramallah were always open in his version. Like the gigantic mirror representing communal self-reflection replacing the infamous wall dividing the warring sides, the photographs of closed windows made to be open represent an open society facing the outside world. This "adding to the Palestinian archive" as the artist says of his 3-D model, presents "life inside photography and inside the images," and determines, "how the future will configure in our imagination."

This translation of photography to and from an everyday setting, charged by world events, connects with the tenets of walking in the city laid out in this dissertation: Hourani uses media as a method of spatial appropriation and integrates visual elements into a model structure that will never be actualized. The artist seemingly has no designs on altering the place it represents without first changing the imaginary components that inform it as a sign system—with a name, history, culture, and built environment. It intervenes without attempting to reoccupy the streets in a programmatic fashion. Terrain here is redrawn in an entirely formal manner. His visual materials collected while walking augment the impression of the real with the social imaginary he lays out in the maquettes. By first pulling from the existing structure and topography, the photos reflect what he calls his mode recycling "photo-life." It is the core of his artistic transformations. Photo-life is alive in that the imagery has been removed from the immediate past and

changed in each installation to reflect a new version of the community, becoming a countervailing object as well as discourse. Using photographs as sculptural material dissolves the spatial and temporal isolation he sees in his community while also rehearsing the volatility that defines life under conflict, as he described it.

When I suggested that his idea was an optimistic model he corrected me saying it was not utopian. "I critique the Palestinians in a way," he said pointing to his model. "As you can see there is still some darkness. There are still some windows that are not open yet. But I believe in the Palestinians. That is why I give them a mirror. I believe they will achieve and find a way out of this confusion." There is one audience Hourani addresses above others, as he told me, "When I make art, I make art first for the Palestinian people."

To conclude this chapter, I quote Brian Holmes, who wrote that the art today emerge not out of "bourgeois self-denial," but subjectivities responding to global entities that "build 'worlds' not only for their consumers, but also for their employees—that is to say, imaginary systems of reference, both ethical and aesthetic, as well as architectural environments, communications nets, security systems, etc., all aimed at maintaining the coherency of the firm and its products under the conditions of extreme global dispersal."[187] A biennial is a counter model to this reality. A situation such as this precipitates many questions about whom or what artists are working for (or against) and what art is made by and for. Perhaps instead of projecting Brecht's skepticism onto the art organization of the twenty-first century, "a deeper question is how to initiate psychic

---

[187] Brian Holmes, "Do-It-Yourself Geo-politics," *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination After 1945*, eds. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis: 2007), 284.

deconditioning and disidentification from the corporate worlds—contemporary equivalents of the Dadaist drive to subvert the repressive structures of the bourgeois ego," says Holmes: for the results of this awareness can lead only to "a popular, militant cartography of living conditions in the postmodern information economy, created by people who produce that economy on a day-to-day basis."[188] In all likelihood consuming along some altered path of content, which is (like art) virtual, urban, and textual, will produce this "popular militant cartography." A radical consumerism, in other words, is hinted at here. This pairing may seem odd, but perhaps contemporary art with its heavy reliance on the found, the readymade and its attempts to reify literature, philosophy and lost histories as imagery, installation and performance, may point to how radical absorption might become in the future.

As for exhibitions, radicalizing consumption means in practice making something like what Mike Nelson constructed in Istanbul in 2003 and later Esche and Kortun encouraged: an infiltration of the city to the point of disappearing a biennial. Dissolving not the art but the exhibition into a set of specific marketplaces, and the art crowd within other larger 'free-markets'. This attachment to the marketplace, paradoxically, allows art to be underground, as *Istanbul* proves. Exhibitions might aim at becoming an infrastructure indistinguishable from the sign systems and structures that threaten visual art's reigning distinction from visual culture.

---

[188] Ibid., 285.

Chapter 8
Viewership & Shadow-Work

By appropriating images from the mass media, using everyday materials or household wares, or incorporating recognizable people or things from popular culture, visual art today often revels in the topic of compulsive attention and habitual consumption. The association is at least as old as the '60s–the 1860s, that is–and yet art is never thought of as consumptive.

Charles Baudelaire, like his friend Édouard Manet, sought refuge in the turbulence of everyday life. Both explored the city to use it as fodder for their artistic livelihood. In the splendor, diversions, rituals, and the sullen depravity Paris occasionally exhibited, these men of the crowd distinguished themselves as tastemakers and revealed a society advancing towards an unpredictable, anti-aesthetic commercialism. Portraits, poems and images pilfered from the most tawdry environs and vulgar contexts strike the memorable note in their work. Only the true artist could make out of everyday life the subject matter that truly spoke to modern and universal men, Baudelaire proclaimed in *The Painter of Modern Life*; and *The Bar at the Folies-Bergère* presents an audacious example of how this brazen mode could be successful.

In his own writing, Baudelaire embraced the contradictions that camouflaged the so-called man in the crowd, where social turmoil makes occasions a new vital poetic response. His celebrated bohemianism contrasts sharply with the stern seclusion of his contemporary, Friedrich Nietzsche, for example. Debasement was inevitable, claimed Aestheticism; the modern artist must assiduously choose his corruption. Refinement of

sort meant two things for this roving poet/artist: the commodity came to dominate the individual pervader of objects, and the saleable became synonymous with the desirable. Baudelaire's Paris contained not one unmerchantable soul. Grim as his poetic vision may be, he drew poetry from the predicaments of common experience to subsume the banality of modern life in verse, as he wrote in his dedicatory poem to *Les Fleurs du Mal*:

> In repugnant things we discover charms;
>
> The Devil pulls the strings by which we're worked:
> By all revolting objects lured, we slink
> Hellwards; each day down one more step we're jerked
> Feeling no horror, through the shades that stink.
> …
> In each man's foul menagerie of sin —
>
> There's one more damned than all. He never gambols,
> Nor crawls, nor roars, but, from the rest withdrawn,
> Gladly of this whole earth would make a shambles
> And swallow up existence with a yawn…
>
> Boredom! He smokes his hookah, while he dreams
> Of gibbets, weeping tears he cannot smother.
> You know this dainty monster, too, it seems —
> Hypocrite reader! — You! — My twin! — My brother![189]

In this phantasmagorical refraction of everyday life the denouement ultimately culminates in boredom—Baudelaire extinguishes the debauched charms of the city. Quotidian aspects of the everyday take nightmarish shape. Paris was, for him, modern life's a epitome: an immutable, tyrannical realm that overwhelmed and decimated the senses until all that they supported—sanity, virtue, society—finally imploded, leaving only fleeting, scarcely agreeable rarified pleasures or purchasable things.

---

[189] Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, (translation Robert Stark).

Finding his religion in literature or painting required a pilgrim's mobility, one that allowed Baudelaire to stay above the fray—intellectually if not physically. The new professionalism he foresaw required nearly unlimited reserves of concentration and ample time to traverse the city, which he conceived as a microcosm of the whole world. In each daily quest he might acquire the finest wares of the best artist's studios, and it suited his need to abscond from society, to find parties and forbidden parlors, where painters mingled with their subject-matter, and into the international cafes that lined the boulevards where he could learn the latest news and gossip.

A semblance of this archetypal flaneur activity remains in the art-world today. For Baudelaire, reconnoitering led often to a poetic blend of empathy and revulsion that compounded his native art with capitalism. Something of this legwork still occupies art, but not often for the viewers themselves. Reading the catalogs of recent international group exhibitions presents a dizzying array of near ethnographies, always at pains to they can be construed as mere anthologies, mere curatorial projects, mere art exhibitions. As a recent catalog for the 29th São Paulo Biennial made clear, inviting artists from across the globe was not about "focusing extensively on the other and the distant," as would have suited a nineteenth-century taste for exoticism; rather, "the strategy is to place greater emphasis on the symbolic place and time from which the curatorial discourse derives—namely, Brazil in a time of rapid global geopolitical reorganization . . . it is a case of suggesting a possible understanding of the political character of art by positing the modern and contemporary art produced in Brazil as a kind of example or model."[190] This

[190] Agnaldo Farias and Moacir dos Anjos, "There is Always a Cup of Sea to Sail in," *Catalogue of the 29th Bienial de São Paulo*, (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo: 2010), 22-23.

shift to the near, instead of the far, is a key linkage between the modern and the contemporary. The adjustment has typical features and upon closer inspection the organizers present the *prix fixe* menus of artists and themes that biennials are so often criticize for offering. Yet the overlapping audiences that wander from art fair to biennial and back again, year-to-year, have desires that are essentially modern—to uncover the remarkable in the commonplace. This is the experience of the contemporary flaneur alternating the repetition of daily consumption and seeking out the world in the microcosm of an international exhibition in a renowned metropolis. There is no religion left; but the quest for the truly new and international has religious fervor.

In their *prix fixe* biennial menu, curators Agnaldo Farias and Moacir dos Anjos gathered a group of artists (primarily) who were well-known and had shown widely elsewhere: as Turner Prize nominees and winners like Tacita Dean, Douglas Gordon, and Steve McQueen; icons like Nancy Spero and Hélio Oiticica; biennial international artists like Francis Alÿs, Ai Weiwei, Yael Bartana, The Otolith Group and Artur Zmijewski; conceptualist Joseph Kosuth; even the legendary filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard. A celebrity intelligentsia that connects market and institution drives this ancillary aspect of the arts industry, nominating and legitimizing contemporary art. This intelligentsia was born in the modern era, as artist-poet-critics. Curators are not bohemians of nineteenth century. Istanbul is not Paris. Yet, the routines that govern art today are a quest for the subcultural in the spectacular, the southern in the northern, an African experience in a central German city. The above curators again typify of this vanguard the “approximation between celebrated works from European/North American tradition and works by artists

representing non-hegemonic traditions" have become hegemonic.[191] Such pronouncements are typical in recent years in part due to the inertia of an art discourse that is, in another paradox, a result of its globalization. In attempts to resolve art's problematic relation to capital, while wishing to represent the promises that elude democracy, especially outside of art capitals, art is stuck somewhere in the middle: not only between the free market and its freedoms of self-rule, but also between contemporary forms of artistic usage, and old habits of looking that come to us from the past.

Viewers drift between these topics and invocations of a global culture under different pressures depending upon origin. They work under very different auspices than the famous *bohèmes* who gave us a modernism (which,I will argue below, still lingers). What must be said of this Brazilian or other biennials (as emblematic of the fatigue some call biennialism) is that it has remained "a capitalist showplace, and [that] what is marketed and on show is money in the form of art"[192] The conservative critic and author of these remarks, Donald Kuspit, was then especially annoyed that Marx's *Capital* was read aloud for the duration of the exhibition at the most recent Venice Biennale: "Marx, after all . . . is just another sensational product of capitalism these days, another advertisement for it. He admired it as much as he criticized it."[193] As viewers and professionals, we are all, in Kuspit's paradoxical reading, doomed to art's "critical hypocrisy" as bystanders. To humor ourselves, we might imagine, as Kuspit did, Marx's

[191] Ibid., 25

[192] Donald Kuspit, "Hypocritical Protest: Karl Marx at the Venice Biennale," *Brooklyn Rail*, (June, 2015), 70.

[193] Ibid., 70.

ghost strolling around, and happening upon his words being read aloud amid the echo and spectacle of the Biennale. To return to what Farias and dos Anjos described as their principal task as critic-curators—to work outside hegemony and the dominant traditions of globalization—how does one understand the beguiling hegemony of the art's industry as a viewer? Specifically, what relation do we each have with the labor art entails as we cruise through cities following the vector of a biennial? I suspect this has much to do not just with artworks and their reproduction, but the willful appropriation of reception.

To characterize the dominant labor behind a project as elusive as an international biennial, I first propose to consider the idea of errands and breaking from the drudgery of everyday life. For example, the *dérive* by Guy Debord theorized walking across the city as a kind of unproductive anti-work. It counteracted the self-discipline that constitutes the narrow purview of modern life, and the affective patterned behavior each denizen must enact. The *dérive* breaks out of the habitual cycles of consumer-work that lie hidden in daily life, ultimately disempowering the creative mind with the pathological repetition of consumption. Debord's *Theory of the Dérive* was formulated from diagrams he came across in a magazine. A sociological report tracked a Parisian youth, finding that, "[h]er itinerary forms a small triangle with no significant deviations, the three apexes of which are the School of Political Sciences, her residence and that of her piano teacher."[194] Adding trips to the grocery store, petrol station, or café could expand this pattern, year after year, into a square, a star, an octagon, etc. "Such data," Debord says, amounts to "a modern poetry capable of provoking sharp emotional reactions (in this particular case,

[194] Guy Debord, "Theory of the *Dérive*," *Internationale Situationiste* (no.2, 1958), 62.

outrage at the fact that anyone's life can be so pathetically limited)."[195] This sense of hampered curtailment (and the bourgeois undertones of the young woman's routine) inspired the aimless *dérive* across the city. If data and information have replaced poetry in the everyday life of the metropolis, the wanderer in Debord's vision traverses a path that is incapable of itineration. The individual should be liberated from rote numeration, even when it comes to basic aspects of their daily life. Abandoning the expected cycles of consumption represented by the triangle thus became the more labyrinthian, untraceable path of the aimless *dérive*. Only from those separate points of observation could a psychogeography emerge. This is the space that the interventionist international exhibition aspires to today. More precisely, it is the anti-geometrical remedial graphing and social mapping of city life that defines a biennial's primary objective (as opposed to the simplistic draw of the art object in a solo artist's exhibition) as drawn by the curatorial administration behind it.

Debord notes in his theory a failed attempt at wandering untaken by a handful of artists in 1923 following the Surrealist approach (it remained one of the more concrete examples of the practice in all of Situationist writing, whereas the Surrealists wrote entire novels about drifting). The mistake was, according to Debord, to begin their experimental wandering outside of town. Debord ignored the extensive literature on wondering found earlier in the movement,especially in the initial, more poetic phase of Surrealism in the mid- to late-1920s. Beginning in the suburbs, making no further attempt to discuss the topic of wandering in an art-historical sense, he then insisted that his *Theory of the*

[195] Ibid., 62-63.

Dérive exists "at the opposite pole" in the heart of the urban spectacle. A *dérive* is possible only in a metropolitan context. It is a primary and interpretive means to explore the contours of the city outside the divided consciousness of the bourgeois consumer-subject. Whatever their differences as movements, the two groups agree on the urgency of contesting the ordered cartographic limits placed upon the individual by bourgeois society. Both movements devised ways to redirect consumer routines and displace commodity logic and its familiar systems of value. This describes an aspect of their lasting influence. In short, both movements divined an alternate city-scape that would scupper the drudgery of everyday consumer life. These alterations to daily life that have influenced contemporary design, architecture and art often use the *dérive* as a starting point. Though producing very different results, I have made the case above that the tactical approach grew out of Baudelaire's poetry and art criticism. Clearly, the Surrealists stayed closer to this more bohemian approach indebted to the older figure of the flaneur.

Debord asked his artistic companions to "drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."[196] The novellas of André Breton demonstrate how the tenets of the *dérive* may be seen in action (for Debord lays out the theory without illustrating the outcomes to the same degree as his predecessors). In *Nadja*, the routine of conscious control that defined the triangular pattern of the young Parisian woman depicted in the magazine is thwarted.

---

[196] Debord, 62.

Instead, the narrator's consciousness is suspended for days in order to reconfigure psychic life out of urban patterns. Nothing is bought along these walks that has redeemable use-value. Breton's trail as he wanders through Paris is untraceable, resembling one of André Masson's unruly automatic drawings. Both Surrealist and Situationist wandering involve escaping the pattern of self-imposed discipline that harbors the individual self. In his more cited *Theory of the Dérive*, Debord frames the discipline and rhythm represented by the triangle as the unfortunate and universal byproduct of student life.[197] Breton mocks these bourgeois forms of self-delimitation in his own wandering when he explores the insanity of urban life by replacing the outlines of millions of anonymous people with the routines of a specter, Nadja herself

Breton's surreal version of romance, relies entirely on the unplanned stroll in his earlier novels. These books satirize mid-1920s courtship that still depended upon the outmoded promenades of single men and women locked elbow to elbow, likely to marry. Away from the gentile public gardens and civic squares, and into the intense hovels of Paris, Breton's anti-promenades led to an "emotional disorientation."[198] In these texts, Debord's re-theorization of *flanerie* has changed little. Like all Surrealists, Breton seeks out disruptions in psychic life which he externalizes: these unconventional images narrate the constraints of daily life and deconstruct the conventional novel. Breton's automatic poetry derives from improvised transactions in flea markets or meditations upon found objects. These items allow the artist to revive them, charging obsolete commodities that constitute a moribund shadow economy with artistic energy. In turn, this obsolescence

[197] The conspicuous symmetry of this triangle is what Ivan Illich would later call shadow-work.

[198] Debord, 63.

reflects back to the reader in the incommensurability notions of value (artistic and economic) that shape modern life.

The decorations that outfit Nadja's boudoir provide an excellent. We are led to believe that one day—perhaps when she is committed to an asylum at the end of Breton's book—the objects found in her bedroom will be dispersed through flea markets before they are finally interred in landfills. Nadja here serves as an allegory, an embodiment of the ill-fated subject who can divine but not fit in to the marketplace (Paris) because of surplus desires not her own. Over the course of the book we understand that she too is economically redundant, suitable for the alchemical fantasies of visual art alone. Breton's walks with his partner through *her* world, a shadowy semblance of Paris that she constructs daily, showing the city to be a place that is pervaded by the neuroses of capitalism, which colonizes the senses at every moment of weakness. Certainly, the narrator wishes to be like her, capable of the desire he imagines bounding within inanimate things. Without Nadja, desire itself is an indecipherable element in the city. In the central pronouncement of the novella, one that seems vital to Breton's own development of a Surrealism capable of interrupting consciousness and re-routing desire, he reflects on how in the mystifying presence of Nadja it can only be experienced vicariously: "Even while I am close to her, I am closer to the things which are close to her," he says.[199] Decorations in her bedroom and sentimental items like jewelry, knickknacks and glimmering trinkets seem more substantial to the narrator, a real (even

[199] André Breton, *Nadja*, (New York: Grove Weidenfeld; 1988), 104.

pure) state that kindles the poet's unyielding, unloving fascination towards his companion.

The flaneur of Surrealism connects an artistic practice to a world outside the economy of art.[200] This leap encompasses the expanse of the world economy, and a locale, a localism, and a deterritorialization of modernism (as sketched by Farias and dos Anjos). This drifter traditionally accounted for much of the atmosphere of a modern city (fin de siècle Paris, midcentury New York). This critic-at-large has existed in each modern age. This specter of modernism fills the pages of contemporary art and culture magazines and academic journals today. Urbanism specialist Clare Lyster writes that the flaneur "was a 'stroller,' a wealthy and educated idler who spent time exploring the new urban experiences that a large, sophisticated city had to offer–especially the exotic shopping arcades that emerged there in the early to mid-nineteenth century, selling luxury goods in narrow, roof-lit interior streets that sliced through the dense fabric of the city." Lyster continues by calling attention to consistent rehashing of the theory,

> To many the *flâneur* also came to typify a lazy bourgeois, who, unlike his working-class counterpart, could investigate the city because he had nothing else to do. For others, the *flâneur* was not only the personification of a new technological sensibility (he took great interest and pride in the iron structure and glass panels of the arcade roof), but was also a victim of modernity. His detached spectatorship represented the alienation and

---

[200] The recursive tendencies of this art-world mode of production and reception were documented in a brief digest by Martha Buskirk, Amelia Jones and Caroline A. Jones. In it they document the recursive tendencies of this art-world subjectivity by scrutinizing the philology of the portmanteau art-word 'readymade: nNouns: *readymade* and *relic*; verbs: *reanimate, recast, recollect, reconstitute, reconstruct, re-create, reenact, refabricate, refinish, reinstall, reinvent, remake, remix, repatriation, reperform, rephotograph, reproduce* and *represent*. See the December 2013 issue of *Artforum* (127-130). The complications discussed in the article connect to the flaneur under discussion here for he/she is without original and indeed a species of a culture replaced by reproducibility. As the authors conclude, "the *re* in representation poses the deepest questions about what art is in relation to the world of beings and things."

> disengagement felt by the citizens of the city as a result of the capitalist values that underpinned the industrial metropolis.[201]

This conventional description of the flaneur explains the usefulness of the term: it describes someone learned, certainly curious and defiantly lazy, someone not beholden to the demands his own middle class, who studies the marvels built by the working-classes and marvels at the complacent citizenry who buttress his own bourgeois comfort . Aspects of this subjectivity extend to all facets contemporary artistry : to the privilege of unimpeded viewership, to the rites of critical observation, to membership of participatory audiences that complete an artwork and, finally, to all the dominant labors within the ranks of the art industry.

Mike Nelson's *Magazin*, Phil Collin's *The World Won't Listen* and Michael Blum's *A Tribute to Safiye Behar*, each exemplify in an artistic intervention completed by an audience of the roving viewers. They may be enticed, but skeptical of international art exhibitions proffering leftist values; nevertheless, they supply the arts economy with its currency of artwork. Eighteenth century versions of this type of observer already existed; they included déclassé nobles (the original flaneurs).[202] Today, the flaneur typology serves a more refined purpose: to maintain art's paradoxical discourses, at once exploring art's relationship to the working-classes of the world, while catering to a privileged, extraordinarily international audience—some of whom can easily afford to be there while others merely hope to be able to pay back, someday, what they borrowed to attend in the

---

[201] Clare Lyster, "The Logistical Figure," *Cabinet* (no.47, Fall 2012), p. 59.

[202] Hieronymus Bosch's painting *The Wayfarer* (c. 1500) at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam utilizes a similar trope as it was conceived in the Middle Ages.

first place.[203] Akin to a new form of flanerie, wandering outside the usual rituals of consuming Debord critiqued has become a key aspect of, or a right of, membership into this class of viewers, even a way of life. Through their collective gaze, these ubiquitous viewers o inhabit the first or developed world with ease.. This gaze, however, has been undergoing a process of globalization since Baudelaire's time. The new flaneur in the marketplace, at once complicit and repulsed, gains cultural capital in pursuit of art. By cultivating a willful displacement and duality of mind comparable to the flaneur's attraction and repulsion in the marketplace, the contemporary wanderer acquires a critical distance that legitimizes the work. This creates a common state of ambivalence. As Andrea Fraser explains the crisis in belief in the art world in her contribution to the 2012 Whitney Biennial *There's No Place Like Home*:

> I myself have long argued that the critical and political potential of art lies in its very embeddedness in a deeply conflictual social field, which can only be confronted effectively *in situ*. From this perspective it would seem that the apparent contradictions between the critical and political claims of art and its economic conditions are not contradictions at all but rather attest to the vitality of the art world as a site of critique and contestation, as these practices develop in scope and complexity to confront the challenges of globalization, neoliberalism, post-Fordism, new regimes of spectacle, the debt crisis, right-wing populism, and now historic levels of inequality. And if some or even most of these practices prove ineffectual, or readily absorbed, with their truly radical elements marginalized or quickly outmoded, new theories and strategies immediately emerge in their place—in an ongoing process that now seems to serve as one of the art world's primary motors of content production. With each passing year, however, rather than diminishing the art world's contradictions, these

[203] Debt services the lateral structure of viewership in the visual art industry today: interns, writers, students and the often sentimentalized "emerging artists" alike live on borrowed time and debt (often in the form of student loans) to make their entrée into contemporary art.

theories and practices only seem to expand along with them.[204]

Some commentary will be needed to accomplish this shift between quite different texts.

In Walter Benjamin's *The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,* the flaneur embodies the 'capitalist values that underpinned the industrial metropolis'. That is, he embodies modern attention, distraction, absorption, participation, and the values of critical engagement and productive alienation.[205] These keywords still signal art's prerogative of outsiderness as compared to traditional forms of labor. For art requires something quite different—embeddedness as Fraser put it. The new flaneur is anything but a typical wage-earner. Part of this may be choice, but often the flaneur's apparent idleness arises because of the precarious value of his or her labor in the art economy or elsewhere.

Somewhere along the line the flaneur, so highly stylized in theory, lost the element of frankness (an irony that would not be lost on Baudelaire). Walter Benjamin cataloged the importance of art made using the tactic of wandering and drifting attention, including his own unfinished *Arcades Project,*a model for how urban investigation presents a loose theory of modernism's ungainly vanguards, extending to today's artistic

---

[204] See: Fraser's article at (accessed September 2015): whitney.orgfile_columns0002/9847andreafraser_theresnoplacelikehome_2012whitneybiennial.pdf

[205] The idea of productive non-participation is as old as modernism, exemplified in the late nineteenth century by Joris-Karl Huysman's *À rebours.* Withdrawal has new proponents as a feature of contemporary art following recent institutional critique. Fraser contends, for instance, that "The most prevalent and in some ways effective defenses against the conflicts of the art field . . . may be various forms of detachment and displacement, splitting and projection . . . Conversely, we may locate what is good elsewhere, in a 'real world' or 'everyday life imagined as less conflicted or ineffectual and where we also may try to relocate ourselves" as Fraser write in *There's No place Like Home*.

research.[206] Framing wandering as a reflection of the interwar period, Benjamin's search for a new critique of consumerism entailed remembering the West that existed prior to the World Wars. The tensions existing between capitalism and the avant-garde art were already to be found inBaudelaire.. Ever since, the notion of the flaneur has undergone a further process of deracination parallel to globalization, in the increasingly complicated discourses that claim the inheritance of modern art.

In her well-known characterization of what she deems the "flaneur/artist" Griselda Pollock writes, "The flaneur symbolizes the privilege or freedom to move about the public arenas of the city observing but never interacting, consuming the sights through a controlling but rarely acknowledged gaze, directed as much at other people as at the goods for sale. The flaneur embodies the gaze of modernity which is both covetous and erotic."[207] Contemporary art may now purport to have abandoned the chauvinism that formerly constructed the social sphere, but the question of how this gaze has been construed since remains. The flaneur/artist may have lost his masculinity along with his nationality over time, but his or her bohemianism has remained staunchly middle and upper-class. Without intending to discard the importance of the historical typology advanced by Pollock or what this pivotal trope meant in Benjamin's theory of history, our

---

[206] For a European explanation of the concept see the *Text Zur Kunst*, "Artistic Research," issue (no. 82, June 2011). A good description of the problems with this model in what Claire Bishop calls, "One of the biggest trends in contemporary art since the '90s," is that artistic research practices "recuperate overlooked histories and marginal figures. This approach arose in part as a response to critiques of postmodern presentism, and in part as a way to explore alternative (often utopian) models of knowledge and existence. Such artistic research has been facilitated by the rise of digital technology, while, at the same time, the aura of the archive serves as a compelling counterpoint to our daily interface with the screen. But the work of artist-historians is often marked by melancholic, nostalgic relationships to previous eras, especially the '60s and '70s, when many of these artists were born." See Bishop, "History Depletes Itself," *Artforum,* (vol. 54, September 2015), 328.

[207] See Griselda Pollock "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," in *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art*, (London: Routledge; 2003), 70-126.

reflection upon the modern wanderer must be further dislocated in our time as a figment of productive-consumption serving a pre-existing social and economic order, and doing so freely and more prevalently than ever, both as a type of intellectual laborer found to be historicizing the present moment a worldwide scale, as curator and as artist.

Drifting describes two types of observation: one occurs at the level of skimming or perusing texts, as one flips through a magazine or channel surfs while watching television; the other type of awareness occurs in the, marketplace, exhibition, or the actual agora. Gathering knowledge and associations in both types entails a non-coercive, subordinate, partially autonomous observer. Wandering, in the largest sense, sets-up a tangential relationship to everyday life and cultural objects. This duty orients the consumer to a constantly emerging realm of media that require updated tactics of observation.[208] These tactics sever the citizen from strict routines that consumer society presents as essential. In addition to common forms of monetization, advanced labor relies on insidious forms of purchase as social life, which remain irreducible to traditional forms of control. Tactics such as drifting relate to these other dominant forms of labor found in society.

Urban drifting for Benjamin highlighted the alienation of the wage-laborer, but also extended this to the artist. The Situationist *dérive* made a pointed alternative to the

---

[208] Again, following Lefebre, tactic is the central distinction formulated by Michel de Certeau's own critique of the everyday: "I call a 'strategy' the calculus of force-relationships which become possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an 'environment.' A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper (*propre*) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, "*clientèles*," "targets," or "objects" of research). Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model. I call a "tactic," on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a "proper" (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other." Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (University of California Press: Berkeley; 1984), xix.

rising consumer economy. Considering the larger implications of Benjamin's wanderer or Debord'd *Theory of the Dérive*, an idea that I believe needs to be added to the discourse of drifting is shadow-work and immaterial labor. These two concepts link art wandering to dominant forms of labor.The term comes from Ivan Illich, the Austrian-born social critic and renegade priest. He is probably known best in contemporary art discourse for his 1971 book *Deschooling Society*. Ten years after rethinking western civilization's failed approach to education, Illich wrote *Shadow Work* (1981). At root, the shadow-work concept evolves out of the unseen labor that compose domestic rituals. According to Illich shadow-work hides in plain sight in that it: "comprises most housework women do in their homes and apartments, the activities connected with shopping, most of the homework of students cramming for exams, the toil expended commuting to and from the job. It includes the stress of forced consumption, the tedious and regimented surrender to therapists, compliance with bureaucrats, the preparation for work to which one is compelled, and many of the activities usually labeled 'family life'."[209] In Illich's theory, surplus economies ever reliant on overproduction replace subsistence-living with wage-labor and wage-labor that begets shadow-work. For Illich, a livelihood built on wages has the potential to make full-time consumers out of earners. Illich explains its dissemination this way: "The frustrating task of the housewife became the organization of compulsory consumption. The existence of which is becoming typical for men and children in the 1980s and was already well known to a growing number of women in the 1950s."[210] Bracketing women out of the wage economy was only the beginning. This

[209] Ivan Illich, *Shadow Work* (Boston / London; M. Boyars: 1981), 8.

[210] Illich 20.

shift in roles in the late twentieth century managed to decentralize the labor. The logic that collectively generates what we call capitalism moved away from monolithic administrations of labor to dispersed ones.

The shadow-worker advances the externality of the marketplace to its furthest limits from within the home by making use of ample free time found in a postindustrial societies, along networks of likeminded (redundant) workers.[211] I'd contend this is especially the case in highly literate, culturally elite classes, such as the precarious laborer in visual arts: emerging artists, underpaid writers, aspiring curators, students, and administrators of all stripes. Enfranchisement of these global citizen transpires only in times of investment and in activities that support wage-earners and the expenditures of others—such as major exhibitions. As Illich writes, shadow-work is not "underpaid wage

---

[211] One example is changes in postgraduate education and the reliance of the university system upon shadow-workers. For many this process involves internalizing the technical jargon not of the intelligentsia, but the foreign language of administration. Securing what's euphemistically called financial aid or wrangling with those bureaucracies who marshal the discourses associated with annual compliance, all this Weberian business is added to associated intellectual work: accessing scholarly information from libraries-cum-databases, handling peer reviews, grading apprentice students as a service provider, attending seminars and giving papers at academic conferences without expecting living wages in many cases. The point is hardly that these are or should be joyless activities or that submition does not in the end benefit the laborer and her society; rather Illich's point is that the demands of self-betterment increase to unmanageable levels as the free market externalizes its labor force in externalized as a self-service economy. The essential resources required in order advance intellectually or economically become privileges sought at one's own expense, without the expectation of subsidy or sure benefit to public welfare. This environment of self-service creates exponential offshoots of Illich's hidden labor often disguised as a public good or merely entertainment. The invisible workforce armed with prerequisite cultural currency and entirely self-sufficient emerges already refined by the proclivities adopted by the nuclear family. For this unit provides the chief engine of shadow-work; not because procreation is a burden in itself but seemingly because even supplying a healthy meal involves increasingly sophisticated forms of knowledge that must be embedded into daily routines across advanced society. Additionally the family faces compliance with health insurance and the universe of legal abstractions governing proprietorship and indemnity rights, home improvement, installing seemingly mandatory forms of entertainment for the family, monitoring schoolwork, buying sporting goods, diluting the chemicals that go along with household chores and sanitation imposed upon the shadow-worker. Part of Illich's concern is that all these duties exist in maintaining a semblance of a normal life that will remain illusive, like piety for the devote. This attendance to perfection occurs often in the absence of suitable wages for either household head. Nonetheless, every family inevitably creates their own peculiar stylization and methodology of unity. The advanced economy bases this almost entirely upon consumption, including levels of education, from kindergarten to highest degree.

labor; its unpaid performance is the condition for wages to be paid."[212] Labor in the contemporary art industry today works under these condition.. Indeed, much of what the aspiring professional may be expected to know or expound upon, in conversation or writing, comes in forms of viewership, consumption, connoisseurship, even curating and art making, that could be defined as shadow-work because they do it not for needed practice or apprenticeship, but in expectation of income, career and other professional dividends at a later date. Wandering remains a form of productive absorption and recitation that re-cultivates the waywardness of the old flaneur.[213] This is due to our increased efficiency, de-hierarchical social structures and the indistinguishable character of productive consuming.

Artistic examples that capture the complicated relations entailed in everyday shadow-work as it relates to mass-media consumption comprise a trans-historical canon. Yet, few artists in the United States have brought the societal issues that define contemporary times like Martha Rosler has since the 1970s. Her 1975 *Semiotics of the Kitchen* anticipates the hybrid forms of labor Illich found disconcertingly mandatory. This video artwork deals with housework, what Illich deems the prototype of later, more complex forms of shadow-work.. In the six-minute piece, Rosler demonstrates the use of kitchen utensils as though she were illustrating heavy machinery in a technical manual.[214] The artist moves in rote depersonalized gestures as though she were a drill sergeant.

---

[212] Illich, 100.

[214] Another excellent illustration of artwork critiquing what Illich calls shadow-work is Suzanne *Lacy's Learn Where the Meat Comes From* (1976). See: http://www.suzannelacy.com/learn-where-the-meat-comes-from (accessed September, 2015).

Viewers are cast as apprentices unfamiliar with the most common tools found in the kitchen. Her stoic gestures parody the pliant domestic homemaker that consumer culture invented in the United States in the post WWII years. She seems dissociated from the environment. Her literal performance with the utensils transforms them into ritual tools. It is a *détournement* of daytime TV that exhibits nothing of the decorum that guides cooking shows. Rosler's character seems anything but natural in the kitchen. Instead of ease and decorum, this mechanical version of the homemaker, counterpart to the husky male wage-worker, confronts the camera with the coldness of a conscript mimicking dressage. The aproned young American driving the new economy has become a robot.

She becomes as wooden as the fixtures that fill the housewife's domain. As Illich explains, in popular culture, shadow-work is hidden in comparison to wage-labor due to subtle yet powerful forms of linguistic involution that make it the compliment of productive toil. Part of this can be blamed on the mythology that surrounds the advent of the modern nuclear family, supporting the surplus economy, as though the housewife were an eternal creature that had always resided in the kitchen. As Illich writes, euphemism "scatters it [shadow-work]. Strong taboos act against its analysis as a unified entity. Industrial production determines its necessity, extent and forms. But it is hidden by the industrial-age ideology, according to which all those activities into which people are coerced for the sake of the economy, by means that are primarily social, count as satisfaction of needs rather than as work."[215] These needs expand to subsume many aspects of personal life in the maintenance of cultural literacy and social relevance.

---

[215] Illich, 8.

Semiotics of the Kitchen contests the silent assumptions of satisfaction involved in occupying the office of the housewife. It is automatic. The strident movements represent restraint that lies behind the etiquette and laboring that are one and the same as the economy of the kitchen. Rosler disconnects these familiar tools from their basic functional uses to create the impression of an estranged shadow-worker—an economic alien with no clear iconography, as does the wage-earner. Rosler's video scrambles the social norms found in mass media that formulate the supposedly maternal aspect of kitchen work.

What is suggested as she knifes letters in the air before the camera is a countervailing potential residing within the consumer. A caged violence simmers on the surface of the kitchen as well as within the artist as a despondent semiotician. In her ambivalent affectation, the "semiotics" here illustrate what Illich implies by shadow-work: namely that it is a cover for violence and chauvinism,. Confronted by a mercenary force within Rosler's housewife, in other words, the piece dispels the euphemism that encloses this shadow- worker. Power is packaged as a familiar image that articulates, through letters and language, the enhanced rudiments of compliance that seem to be veering out of control.

Illich had an illuminating line to describe his era's misapprehension of labor. He wrote that, "Economists understand about work no more than alchemists about gold."[216] In equal measure plosive and explosive, the Rosler's housewife elucidates if not what shadow-labor is, at least what it looks like in practice, and what it serves as a specter in

[216] Illich, 13.

the free-market system. While wage-labor obscures (or more precisely outshines) shadow-work, relegates it to an unacknowledged category of occupation.

Wage labor also veils the deeper divisions that the preservation of social norms require. We find this theme localized in Rosler's *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* photomontages made first between 1967 and 1972, and again in the *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful, New Series* of 2004. These connect domestic consumption (and the semi-repressive voluntary shadow-work) to US wars such as Vietnam during the Cold War and, later, US war campaigns Iraq and the Middle East. After an initial phase of making montages of current events, Rosler explained in a 1994 essay how she came to this work in the late 1960s:

> I began making agitational works 'about' the Vietnam War, collaging magazine images of the casualties and combatants of war—usually by noted war photographers in mass-market magazines—with magazine images that defined an idealized middle-class life at home. I was trying to show that the 'here' and the 'there' of our world picture, defined by our naturalized accounts as separate or even opposite, were one. Although some of these works contrasted women's domestic labor with the 'work' of soldiers, others simply dealt with women's reality and their representation: women with household appliances, or *Playboy* nudes in lush interiors. In all these works, it was important that the space itself appear rational and possible; this was my version of this world picture as a coherent space—'a place' . . . The overlay of 'place' and 'the body' (often woman's body) and their relationship to discourses of power and knowledge have often been driving issues in my work.[217]

In this reversal of agitational propaganda, labor relations run through the collages taking center. Rosler convenes an absurd division of labor, careering across the globe, compartmentalized by gender, whereby the work of the latest US conscript performs for

---

[217] Martha Rosler, "Place, Position, Power, Politics," in *Decoys and Disruptions*(MIT Press; Cambridge: 2004), 353-355;372.

his domestic keeper. In this analysis, artificial constructs of (inherently gendered) types are fortified by other distinct types of toil imagined no less precisely than the interiors themselves; the cold intricacy of homewares furnishes deluded individuals with an imaginary, homespun liberation. We also see in these collages the conflation mentioned above: for the shadow-worker and the warrior, the reward is the same: liberation. As the artist conflates the domains that divide the domestic worker from the foreign terrain of the conscripted conquerer, a larger, global set of borders disrupt our expectations. It is this intrusion that ensures the sense of "overlay" and "body" Rosler sought to create with these "agitational works." Something disturbing must be expected from photographs taken in a combat zone. *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful*, though, addresses the violence inherent in the the domestic ideal. domestic space and its gendered partnerships are evolutionary tropes emerging from within the vagaries of industrial expansion that are behind the midcentury home.

The artist returned to the series in 2000s in response to the Iraq War—both the war-scapes and the interiors are treated as interchangeable. Rosler's collages contrast an unblemished America pitted against abject suffering elsewhere presents not only the face of a military superpower (that is also a super-consumer expending treasure and lives for spurious purposes) but, also, the consumer avant-garde buoying the economy at home by dint of aspirational home improvement. Both put the citizen in a position of gallivanting consumer enabling the colonizer.

This dialectic of Empire and Home conflated to the colony and war-zone cuts to the heart of Illich's economic theory. To him the illness of industrial society is that it

cherishes what it destroys.[218] Colonial rule that would turn an enemy population into a workforce for overseas manufacture is a key aspect of an advanced country playing a role in the global free-market economy. Rosler's collage work conjoins contradictions as both domestic gendered space and the telescopic extension of war as a general theater of expenditure. The terminology of apartheid here may seem overstated, and the actual system of racial oppression Illich had in mind when he wrote *Shadow Work* revolves around less overt, more civilized forms of division structuring daily life. In his words, "subtler forms of apartheid can blur our vision for the *mysterium inequitates* always inherent to them."[219] These subtler forms of apartheid may be infinitesimal policies of national defense, laws and political campaigns that constitute the economy and instill the labor practices that conserve society.

Rosler highlights where the personal, national and global converge in everyday life. Over the years her work has often shown how the micro-politics of the shadow-worker connects to larger issues. In particular, how shadow-work functions as a personalization of spectacle. Another example can be found in her live performance for Paper Tiger Television, *Martha Rosler Reads "Vogue"* (1982, running time 25:45 minutes). In a deceptively simple work, the video begins with an establishing shot of the artist sitting and reading *Vogue* magazine. For the majority of the video a single shot over the artist's shoulder captures her turning the glossy pages of *Vogue* (the type of magazine she had used previously as fodder for her collage work). As she turns each page to reveal

---

[218] Related to Rosler's collages, much of Vietnam was destroyed to preserve it from the threat of Communist influence, for example.

[219] Illich, 22.

the perfume and models in her fashion magazine, Rosler provides a live monologue addressing the central question, "What is *Vogue*?" Here are some of her answers:

> It is a magazine for women, for the woman who wishes and wants and hopes and identifies with her social betters: with the rich, with the upperclass, with royalty, with comfort, with luxury, with having it all—with having it all, all, all: clothes, fur, perfume, liquor, men—expensive men—expensive perfumes—liquor, sex, romance, love. It is theater, drama, celebrity. It is superlatives. It is revelations. It is designer chic. It is shopping. It is hoping. It is dreaming and spending. It is the you that you knew you were always meant to be. It is *Vogue*. *Vogue*: worldwide circulation 1, 217, 453 with editions published in Italy, Great Britain, France, Australia, and special editions for kids, men, and patterns. A full-page ad in black-and-white costs $8,100.[220]

The monotonous, repetitive, self-generative interview addresses these signifiers of consumer life in the magazine at the level of a detached narrative, one so obvious and domestic as to be a tautology: *Vogue* is *Vogue*. Each word is also an echo of art's own material promise . In the passage following the quotes above, Rosler excerpts a story from the pages of *Vogue* about how a villa in Italy was a perfect reflection of its owner, Cy Twombly. The home inflects his personality to such a degree that being in the same domestic space is "like talking to myself," says the artist performing in the video quoting Twombly.

Many complicated negotiations go along with a simple act like looking at a magazine, including an interpellation of the individual and a conscription of subjectivity that underlies its address to the onlooker. Rosler actively inhabits the psycho-geographical aspects of the consumer here, the key tactic tying artwork to the larger field of social life. Whatever her critique of the magazine, she is not addressing it from a

---

[220] Martha Rosler, *Martha Rosler Reads "Vogue,"* 1982, (video, TRT: 25:45).

distance. She is occupying it from within its own rubric, confronting its self-image. Shadow-work establishes itself in a state of enlightened awe and acceptance of the social norms that guide its essential blend of cosmopolitanism and nostalgia. These tropes have been parading in the pages of *Vogue* for over a century. This one publication is only a single example, a leader in its own industry informing the visual culture of the shadow-worker. Rosler presents the voice of a disembodied gaze giving a delirious monologue in which subjectivity duplicates the imaginary mindset of the market. Her performed affirmations address the magazine at a subconscious level, drifting through the registers of selfhood that compose the dreamworld of the fashion industry.

Feminist criticism uncovers the machinations that disempower real persons in favor of expedient economic subjects; or, in Illich's terms, an image (of maternity or masculinity) not only idealizes, it obscures, conceals or cancels out, by replacing a nuanced understanding of life with sentimentalized tropes.[221] The artworks being discussed reintroduce a realm of overshadowed labor into the field of visual art. As a chief example, in the 1970s and 1980s Martha Rosler sought to dispel the biases that define functional roles for women and other shadow-workers. She challenged conventional depiction of women as a subclass of workers typically paired with the ideal male laborer.

---

[221] Lauren Berlant has built a contemporary theory around this key term elaborating upon some of Illich's themes: "Sentimentality is not just the mawkish, nostalgic, and simpleminded mode with which it's conventionally associated, where people identify with wounds of saturated longing and suffering, and it's not just a synonym for a theatre of empathy: it is a mode of relationality in which people take emotions to express something authentic about themselves that they think the world should welcome and respect; a mode constituted by affective and emotional intelligibility and a kind of generosity, recognition, and solidarity among strangers." See Earl McCabe, "Depressive Realism: An Interview with Lauren Berlant," in *Hypocrite Reader: Realism Issue* (no. 5, June 2011).

Prior to feminist and progressive art, several artists worked (albeit less consciously) in this same vein of hidden drudgery, revealing how consumerism suspends the contradictions required of its subject.[222] The complications of shadow-work are at once traditional, bourgeois, and, being highly individualistic, corruptible. That is to say they relegate the aleatory practice of consumerism to a self-styled artistic discipline.[223] The fundamental acts of this unappreciated creativity are selection, chance, and expropriation. In her artwork, Rosler advances the dominant practices of making-do. She chooses subjects and media (magazines, television, war, and domesticity) that validate the idea of leisure (cooking, perusing a fashion magazine) and draw attention to the constant labor of upkeep they require.

Shadow-work provides the social context for the art-work that is made today, but it also figured into earlier art movements' attraction to mundane activities, such as the Surrealists' interest in window-shopping. Different than the novels, the Surrealists later group exhibitions sought to implant this activity in the experience of the art exhibition. Even then, a critical awareness seems to have been lurking. Though not a developed theory of shadow-work, this conflation of consuming and art viewing placed the Surrealists purview in-line with a critique of the economy. It made them contemporary with their time. The birthright of all artists, they seem to be saying, is to abandon wage-

---

[222]Baudelaire wrote about these contradictions in his work by showing cosmopolitan individuality covering over cosmetic imperfections and class distinctions in the circumlocutions of difference that construct life in modernity. See: Deleuze and Guatarri "1440: The Smooth and the Striated," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2003), 474-500.

[223] What Michel de Certeau theorized to be an unruly area of life parallel to work and subsistence, but impossible to regulate. See his "General Introduction" to *The Practice of Everyday Life,* xi-xxiv.

labor to pursue an ideal that occasionally resembles something like shadow-work as studio art. This abandonment is still the essence of a certain brand of art making today.

If Illich's contention that wage-labor begets shadow-work, then industrial wage-labor constantly updated shadow-work through the course of its dominance: it was through the wage-laborer that the shadow-worker became a socially engineered form of employment predicated upon constant engagement with the palliative of consumer products. Whether ordering French perfume or a teak coffee table, a porcelain tea service or a mid-century bedroom; whether visiting the psychiatrist, chiropractor, or dermatologist, Illich defines shadow-work as socially sanctioned division that becomes a voluntary forms of enclosure.. Its prevalence relies on the perception that a traditional culture has been superseded by an informal or elective economy that shares its essential character. The mimesis of desire within the marketplace is essentially a replication of the past which cannot be reduced to the primitive structures of advertising within commodity culture. Ever new consumer rituals depend, instead, upon the mystification of tradition so that a man's wages actually compensates for the loss of a patriarchal role that predated modern living arrangements and nuclear families. That is, the head of the household is replaced by the wage-earning servant exploited as capital. Industrialization for the woman, conversely, introduced living in the shadow of this male worker who collects wages elsewhere. Though the housewife becomes a first example of shadow- work, this shadow condition will become a general condition upon which a divided or surplus economy is entirely reliant. Mystifying this change in roles, a contentious social narrative around labor generates continuity where there is none. Much of this continuity relies

upon nostalgia alone—for what a man used to be or a woman ought to be. Suffice it to say that here in the United States, for example, a midcentury housewife shares little with her midcentury or preindustrial counterpart. The housewife invention was a subjectivity quickly naturalized, feminized, and essentialized—and this went hand-in- hand with all bodies being commercialized.

Given that social discourse is prone to distortion, especially throughout modern industrialization and its unjustifiable human toll, sophisticated forms of political calculation appear as newspaper headlines, television, magazines, and books capable of handling and normalizing the endless redefinition of labor (reality TV drama being a recent example of shadow-work's universalization that began with the quiet dramas we call soap operas), it has often been the case that contemporary visual art can comment upon the rerouting of subjectivity contained within (mass-)media communications. Art becomes its alternative not as another essentializing voice of shadow-work, but through the mimesis of desire already shared by the crowd. Think of Richard Hamilton's 1956 collage work as an example of what came to be called "pop" art; it's critical appraisal of postwar life advertised, if you will, in the title of the now-canonical collage work, *Just What Is It that Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?*. Produced in 1956 for the *This is Tomorrow* exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery, curated by Bryan Robertson with the Independent Group serving as the anchor of the group show, Hamilton from cut scraps of the *Ladies' Home Journal* published as a monthly from 1883–2014 as one of the original Seven Sisters group of magazines made for housewives. These seven familiar titles included *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Good Housekeeping, Family Circle*, *Redbook*,

Woman's Day, *Ladies' Home Journal* and *McCall's*. They were often installed at eye-level on grocery store magazine racks found at the checkout. These are magazines made for shadow-workers in articles that explain and essentialize their roles as consumers in the same way in which an automotive magazine might appeal to the brawny job of classic car restoration for a male audience. An inevitable loss of connection to the past is central to Illich's theory. This in fact is the key to marginalizing the productive citizen into the role of submissive observer—precisely the terrain where the flaneur makes his stand. In this sense, the consumer is always in part an economic outsider and the outsider is in the first and last instance a patient in need of a remedy provided by the economy: whether the consumer is the addict or the convalescent and whether or not a given therapy can be purchased or constructed by the replication of a "traditional family." The more advanced the economy—or dissimilar to subsistence living in Illich's thinking— the more obscured work itself becomes, wrapped as it is in a nostalgia for what the society cannot replicate as an ideal. Art is no exception to these material conditions.

Hamilton acknowledges this in a short statement for the exhibition *This is Tomorrow*, which sets out to abandon the temporal constraints of thinking of art in advanced or futuristic terms, "Tomorrow," he wrote in a mini manifesto four sentences long, "can only extend the range of the present body of visual experience."[224] There is in this statement something almost Buddhist in its insistence on contemplating the present

[224] The full statement by Hamilton contributed to the 1956 "This is Tomorrow" exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery reads: "We resist the kind activity which is primarily concerned with the creation of style. We reject the notion that 'tomorrow' can be expressed through the presentation of rigid formal concepts. Tomorrow can only extend the range of the present body of visual experience. What is needed is not a definition of meaningful imagery but the development of our perceptive potentialities to accept and utilize the continual enrichment of visual material." See Richard Hamilton, "Group 2 Statement," in *Salon to Biennial – Exhibitions that Made Art History*, (Phaidon; London: 2008), 367.

moment, forever. Yet, Hamilton anticipates the contemporary art to come: that is art which defines itself, *pace* Greenberg, by consuming and expropriating kitsch, adopting architectural ingenuity of the modern home, and staking out art's future not in echoing the clichés of the historical avant-garde.

A great deal of connoisseurship is in order from this point onward—I have made the case above that this tendency had begun long before this mid-twentieth century apotheosis—and I want to be clear about how this viewership may connect to the broader category of problematic labor nurtured in capitalist societies, as defined by Illich. To be clear, shadow-work is not wage theft; it is not underpayment for services, such as apprentice teaching in the classroom, night cleaning in office buildings, or knocking on doors for NGOs or political campaigns or illusive commissions on products promoted by the traveling salesman. It is not an indefinite internship at a fine art gallery or an advertising agency. Shadow-work is that which must be done in order to have the cultural currency Hamilton praised as "the present body of visual experience," a concept no doubt more or less identical to Guy Debord's notion of "spectacle." Without this cultural capital accrued in the daily doses of the visual field of culture (that Hamilton defined as the ideal fodder for new art), the average citizen will find modern life difficult. These observances are the things that keep the individual from becoming himself démodé. Whatever the size of the on-job recompense, great or small, all shadow-work pays the observer the same—nothing. It is requisite labor maintained in order to have a social position—or, more specifically, to allow the consumer to position themselves within a landscape of possible media—those that inform a homemaker how to reinvent their household. One could even

argue that the extra productivity of any economy is absorbed by the full-time-worker-turned-consumer and that shadow-work goes hand-in- hand with economic redundancy.

Additionally, there is the required observation entailed in compliance with health and insurances and the universe of legal abstractions governing proprietorship and indemnity rights, home improvement, installing seemingly mandatory forms of entertainment for the family, monitoring schoolwork, buying sporting goods, diluting the chemicals that go along with household chores, and sanitation imposed upon the shadow-worker. Part of Illich's concern is that all these duties exist in attendance to maintaining a semblance of normality. Occasionally, these requirements multiply in the absence of suitable wages for observers. Shadow-work revolves all the while of one's own peculiar stylization—a methodology of consumption, you might say, that begins for the patient-parent-consumer in their own early adulthoods. What Baudelaire saw as the somewhat frivolous gymnastics of the toilet designated "to fortify the will and discipline the soul" become global import/export set of business practices in the twentieth century, ranging from fashion and cosmetics to self-help, primary and post-secondary education, media literacy across an increasing broad spectrum of formats, and, of course, art appreciation. Attached to shadow-work, therefore, are the private fortunes and corporations that help create the guidelines, terms and discourses that gender, admonish, recommend, and fortify the health and knowledge of the enlightened consumer. These are sophisticated systems irreducible to oppression that formalize daily life into discrete rituals. They excel at universalizing previously informal modes of self-betterment, education, and remedial

arts and entertainments behind today's insidiously constructed extensions of empire.[225] Ultimately, a sense of mandatory participation in the spectacle of modern life is the work, the shadow life, of the willing laborer.

Another primary example would be the invigilation of smart phones, tablets, and other electronics that require constant supervision, maintenance and notable shares of attention and disposable income. Surely, few items are as essential to the early twenty-first century artist-curator-wanderer than these mesmerizing devices. What sets traditionally defined labor apart from its hidden counterpart is the comparative and requisite visibility of the worker.[226] Shadow-work entails work that precedes and follows one's appearance on the job. In this sense of visibility, a banker arrives looking the part of a banker. The athlete too plays the part, especially because he demands the attention of millions of hidden shadow-labors absorbing and memorizing his stats[227] Shadow-work, though everywhere, does not amount to a comprehensive form of consumption. One has many choices when considering how their daily life will be shaped by these compulsions.

A self-allotted aggregate of one's own surplus labor embeds itself into the micro-economy of each form of labor that the individual integrates into their life. This

---

[225] These often come in the form of "media empires" to use a term prevalent today.

[226] Spawning a corollary fascination with self-discipline and schemes of surveillance popularized in the 1970s by Michel Foucault. See *Discipline and Punish: Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Pantheon Books; 1977).

[227] For the athlete is the penultimate commodity (and fine art's only rival in this category of abstracted market value) perfected to the current phase of capitalist economy to highest degree. The most successful among them rarely fails to resemble his or her type—even occasionally possessing the birthright of surnames congruent with their chosen sport—there are hockey names and soccer names, American football names, and unforgettable gymnasts seemingly born to be Olympiads and indelible basketball stars—all these forms of appreciative visibility are not native properties; they are the engineered reliquary of sophisticated visual culture industries that require legions of shadow-workers to absorb their ancillary media, statistics, news reports and, of course, to (been seen) participating in the spectacle of viewership, in "World Cups," "Super Bowls," "World Series," and other "global" productions.

aggregate we could call the blessing and curse of individualism—the right to pick and choose how compulsive consumption will fill one's day over a lifetime of observance.[228] The latest fad of reality TV, besides saving network production costs, is an outgrowth of shadow-work which allows the viewer to enter the field or "present body of visual experience" as a participant image-maker. These formats do not persist only as profit margins; they concern the margins of the televisual psychogeography across which the shadow-worker is always traversing. A land once only reserved for those explored called stars—rock stars and movie stars.

Commemorative observances of sports, music, TV and cinema provide ready examples; yet the hidden labor of compulsive consumption, often camouflaged as elective leisure time, cuts deep into the very structure of the nuclear family—all those topics of management one might read about in articles filling ladies' magazines. It is therefore the interpretation stuff of dreams and psycho-therapy. Whatever its form, this insidious labor remains so faint in its palpable aspect of compliance that it remains unapproachable. For it purveys by as a mirror image of expenditure, not drudgery itself: if it is housework then it is also decorating and renovating the home and the imposition of epicureanism or art collecting that is expected of the wealthy; if it is routine apparel shopping then it also means reciting brand names and designer trends as those ambient fashions ruling everyday life (that seep into the visual arts not since Pop Art in the 1960s but Realism in the 1860s, when Baudelaire wrote *The Painter of Modern Life*); and if it is the requirement of postgraduate education shadow-work involves internalizing technical

[228] I use the word observance to refer to attentions once reserved solely for religious observation that have been colonized by other dominant systems of voluntary control (or observance).

jargon and foreign languages, wrangling with administrative bureaucracies, accessing scholarly information from increasingly inaccessible libraries-cum-databases, handling peer reviews, grading apprentice students, attending seminars, and giving papers for academic conferences. The point is hardly that these are all joyless activities or that submitting does not in the end benefit the laborer and her society; rather Illich's point is that the demands of self-betterment increase to unmanageable levels as the free market externalizes its labor force in fashioning a self-service economy. The essential resources required in order advance spiritually or economically become privileges sought at one's own expense, without the expectation of subsidy or public welfare.

This environment of self-service creates exponential offshoots, according to Illich's theory of hidden labor. The invisible workforce armed with prerequisite cultural currency and entirely self-sufficient emerges from the ever-refined unit of the nuclear family to form its own temporary communities of observation. The machinations of this invisible work, then, manifest indirectly as shared interest. Audience, in my estimation, provides a chief example of the shadow-work that will continue to characterize progressive visual art (as opposed to the limits of the art object). It is also in line with newer theories of immaterial labor or affective labor. Affective labor is essentially added onto traditional goods and services as a communicative intellectual component. For example, according to Hardt and Negri, "It is common to say that journalists and the media in general not only report information but also must make the news attractive, exciting, desirable; the media must create affects and forms of life."[229] We might think

[229] Hardt and Negri, 108.

about art in relation to this description of journalism. The art industry defines labors through reception. Often identifying older (sentimentalized) forms of artistic production as related to the latest exhibitions. This is often the case even though these works ostensibly have no connection beyond invented concepts and legitimizing visual-artistic "conceptualism." Contemporary art is, like the news, increasingly more affective (as opposed to creative or informational in a traditional sense) in order to be line with today's mediated societies and the shadow-work of plugged-in citizenry.

With the above illustrations in mind, we might consider the inordinate amount of hidden labor associated with participation in an increasingly volatile and informal arts industry mirroring the precariousness of the immaterial/shadow-labor economy. "In general," writes Hardt and Negri, "the hegemony of immaterial labor tends to transform the organization of production from linear relationships of the assembly line to the innumerable and indeterminate relationships of distributed networks." Information collecting along networks in the art industry also emblematize the post modernized drifter. In order to meet the demands of surplus economy art museums, schools, nonprofits, galleries, and spaces have been reshaped along with the notion of art production. In the field of contemporary visual art, the distribution of immaterial/ shadow-work exists in adopting the role of interactive consumer, whose main occupation is remaining up-to-date with art and retransmitting proof of that up-to-date-ness. It is shadow labor required of all that blurs the role of amateur viewer and titled professional.[230] Seeing art exhibitions, knowing the names of primary, secondary, and

[230] This blurriness describes a good deal of art on-view in the current era. I am commenting on the necessity of consuming and retransmitting not arguing for more or less "professionalism" in visual art.

tertiary players at any given moment, in gallery districts in each city or museums spread across continents traces and validates these organizations and artists within a micro politics.

Art mirrors affective labor practices in how converts viewership in to appropriation: all the borrowed references come from this reign of shadow-work that both viewer and artist must submit to. Art that blend everyday life, popular culture and politics with erudite and arcane fields of knowledge is often difficult to decipher without consulting the servicers of these works (whether gallery or curator). In this, the difference between art that quotes subversive material or images in order to advance a critique the artist has made their own and that art which appropriates in order to maintain an appearance of rebellion can be difficult to distinguish. Meanwhile, the shadow-worker/ viewer further distends the ambiguous messages of appropriation art in social media forums and so on.[231] Dissension or not, radical or reductive, a great deal of the shadow-work I'm referring visual art to here entails decipherment these lines. [232]The burden of the shadow-worker framed here is that everyone today is required to be an enabling critic: the artist or curator moves beyond that predicament, in part, by monetizing their shadow-work and concentrating their influence.

Within the broader context here, chasing after the latest art in gallery districts or absorbing canonical literature in school only forecloses art projects only briefly—as the

---

[231] This would seem to be a rather precise example of what Debord meant by individuals being unable to relate except through images in a "society of spectacle." Artist Isaac Julien, for example, staged a performance at throughout the 2015 Venice Biennale that was a reading of Marx's *Capital*. This was not about re-reading a text but experiencing/discussing the performance of it as art.

[232] As Claire Bishop, recently wrote of this tendency, "The ready-made object is injected with history-as-readymade: Both are presented as wholesale, without further complication." See "History Depletes Itself," *Artforum,* (vol. 54, September 2015), 328.

artist, writer or curator expands upon their own version of what Richard Hamilton called the constant expansion of the "present body of visual experience." To be able to intervene and transmit the discourse that made art modern (and now makes it contemporary) all shall be made flaneurs, however briefly or interminably depends on the person. One either submits to the industry's unwritten codes of compliance by absorbing contemporary art's irrational, unrestricted, anti-academic codes of immaterial labor and paradoxical value or they do not participate.

Yet, this requisite wandering, what ever each individual's purpose, will expand only as far as the expectation of shadow-work for many participants. Immaterial labor may be considered dominant, as Hardt and Negri explain it: "Just as in that [previously dominant economic] phase all forms of labor and society itself had to industrialize, today labor and society have to informationalize: become intelligent, become communicative, become affective."[233] This switch from production away from the primacy of the object to the intellectualization of art describes it current politics. The art object in some cases becomes secondary to its communicative properties brought home by a service industry —in full force at present day art fairs, for example.

In Illich's view, shadow-work characterizes the illness of an industrial society that can only cherish what it destroys. Whether that sentimentality recalls religious morality or the time before the absolution of God, the loss of "good women" or "real men" the need to consume concerns a constant renewal of remedial processes, products and services. Capitalism's basic cycle begins with a deleterious effect followed by

---

[233] Hardt and Negri, 109.

compensatory action. This may explain the culture industry and its roots in nostalgia: programs and music providing visitations to former eras, always better appreciated after they have come and gone and are recovered again as a history to be found in recycled and purchasable products. Whether it is sold as love songs, or a film about an innocent world that predated a war, this expanded sense of social cohesion and, at its core, idealized compassion, in fact destroys romance.

Breton's Surrealist novel records this phenomenon to a degree. When he and Nadja walk the streets, their fleeting companionship reroutes the expectation of a consummate relationship as their aesthetic relation to the city concerns their sole connection to one another. They are in short, a pastiche of man and woman in the ancient act of courting. All this occurs in a way that can be considered anti-modern in that it fails to conform to the dictates of a typical heteronormative exchange. Illich describes the modernism resisted on these ground as an inevitable and "uniquely modern bifurcation in nineteenth-century work ideology that establishes a previously unknown apartheid between sexes: he, primarily the producer; she, primarily private-domestic."[234] Wandering for days intends upon loosening such categories and as they lose substance, Debord's concept of "necessary contradiction," perceivable to the drifting wanderer, sets in and "the domination of psychogeographical variations by the knowledge and calculation of their possibilities," avoid the trappings of spectacle culture, however briefly.[235] In this reprieve from the shadow economy, the inspired drifter succumbs to the dream world Breton sought and that Nadja embodies. In Paris, she found psycho-

[234] Ivan Illich,16.

[235] Debord, 62.

aesthetic conduits (not so different from Debord's psychogeography) invisibly worming their way through every material, in every skewed impression she had. This democracy of surfaces involves a "submission to certain contingencies of time and place… [that are in total] the finite representation of a torment that may be eternal."[236] Perhaps this eternity resembles the boredom of the would-be revolutionary caught in the overpowering illusions of a bourgeois marketplace. It matters little. Whatever the case, it stops short of life as usual in the city.

To be clear, a Situationist "reading" the city would never frame things in such romantic and catholic terms as Breton. Yet the attempt to break away from the monotony of daily life presents the same basic strategy connecting both types of wandering, the Surrealist and the late addition to the historical avant-garde by Situationists. A preponderance of walking texts, comparable to flanerie, in each case connects anti-modernism to a state of suspended non-consumption. As comparisons, one gets a sense from both the Situationist and the Surrealist literature weaving together art and everyday life that the city is inaccessible (like its purblind shadow-workers are invisible to each other). That is, until the inspired wanderer pushes their own consumer-driven boundaries to explore the full artistic potential of the irrepressible marketplace (whatever the era or form in question). At every turn, the space of the city attempts to incite some desire for the citified consumer even though it never really can—just as Nadja cannot be had, let alone saved by Breton. Like the city, she is a psycho-spatial mark upon his comparatively limited consciousness. This venturing into the terrain Nadja uncovers, it could be argued,

---

[236] Breton, *Nadja*, 12.

was later turned into what Debord called *psychogeography*. With quite different motivations, in any case, both movements explored this tactic and were nearly identical in action on the ground.

As Illich contends, the ordered limits Surrealism and Situationism pushed against in everyday life become more imposing. These are inverted time limits of a sort: as capitalism matures attention and consuming become more domesticated by any means, including the consuming of intellectual products like visual art. It occurs insidiously in the registers of information that comprise the billions of routines consumers engage each day, simultaneously, in a galaxy of shadow-work—commuting, grocery shopping, submitting to health care[237], exercising, as the case may be. Shadow-work fuels the psychic and physiological motor modern life and creates a general field of economy and therefore politics. It is from this hidden realm of toil, I'd argue, that artists after midcentury draw from to find their idiosyncratic praxis as "contemporary" creators.

For the city itself, like the consumer, comprises a self-generated image to be maintained forevermore in a state of becoming, like the shadow-worker, bearing indifferent impositions of systems designed to conserve and replicate grand illusions, specifically those that may disinter history from the regular time occupied by inhabitants. And the city, like the individual, becomes a relic of itself. Nadja was a diviner of these past selves, thing and being alike. Interwoven divisions of this kind marked by so many striations of past enterprise are the subtext to Illich's theory. His concern are those micro-industries that make history possible for the triumph of the wage-worker earner (and his

[237] True to his religious roots in the Church, perhaps, Illich was high skeptical of the medical industry he saw growing in the West as another profit-driven marketplace.

employers). In this shift to shadow-economy Illich shift his gaze away from the familiar terrain of Fordism or Taylorism.[238] The wanderer and the shadow-worker meet on this common terrain, where the rest of the world occurs outside the sweatshop, off the factory floor.

Debord said as much about the common issue with intervening in anyone's daily life, "a *dérive* rarely occurs in its pure form: it is difficult for the participants to avoid setting aside an hour or two at the beginning or end of the day for taking care of banal tasks."[239] The point here being that this inertia, defined by Ivan Illich as shadow-work, is so integrated as to be second nature. And what the *dérive* combated and in its own way updated as a quasi-artistic strategy aimed at rerouting what he called spectacle coming out of veritable image factories at midcentury. If one uses this criteria to appraise artistic work as a series of tactics and not products in a world overloaded with objects, then it is clear that Surrealism and Situationism, as primary canonical examples, were each movements devoted to the demystification of a labor comparable to shadow-work. Reordering this labor if not combating it defined the very idea of the International for the Situationist and the Surrealist alike. Some of the best known purveyors of this blocked revolutionary potential residing in consumer items were Surrealists. To frame Surrealist art in this way is to shift a common misconception of it as an art movement intent upon accessing the unconscious (which in Freud's theory of the human psyche is impossible). Surely it was indeed artwork based on objectifying the psychic tensions that compose

---

[238] In the last decade art theory, criticism and history has moved even further away from Marxist readings to others, such as affective labor theory, which Illich presaged with *Shadow Work*.

[239] Debord, 64.

desire in the individual and discontent in the citizen (consumer). Instead of solely channeling some inveterate psychology or subjective interiority, these artists released disorder from the surface of the commodity-thing. It is there that the mind gathers energy in the objectifications that drive economy and (returning to the concerns of Baudelaire and Manet) reroute the madness of the crowd. In terms of found objects and imagery, much of the Surrealist movement conforms to a basic tactic, pulling the marvelous from with the bromide wasteland of everyday things.

In their search for meaningful alterity, they were truffle hogs of a generalized and subterranean discontent growing in unshapely clusters beneath the aging facades of an interwar Paris. As another war neared, Surrealist collaborations moved beyond the individualism that had in earlier years amounted to showcasing their defiance in the literal and figurative playing of parlor games. Though the movement is probably best known for earlier works in painting, it had matured substantively by the 1930s in sophistication and public visibility. It is in group-exhibitions that the Surrealists at last formed underground tunnels capable of bridging various discourses that went far beyond unorthodox readings of Freud. Rather, they read their art world through the commodity world of the everyday stroller running errands.

That is, they began to place as much emphasis on the movement's root word as its prefix, arriving at a balance of Realism interfaced with the original intensity of the marvelous. Yet, what changed in late Surrealism was how they worked as collaborators and conveners of alternative exhibitory spectacles singularly capable of alternating capitalist experience. These attempts at rethinking art exhibitions transformed the domain

of the viewer described above as that of the shadow-worker into a field of artistic endeavor. Consuming and producing became inextricably linked. Earlier efforts, such as Breton's seminal novella *Nadja* (1924), discussed above, gave way to a late-1930s resurgence, when the group moved away from a literary manifesto and poetic collage phase to one in which they coalesced around group display as a mainstay:

> Surrealism had moved from an initial focus on poetry to an emphasis on painting in the 1920s to an obsession with disturbing and exotic objects in the mid-'30s—notably displayed in 1936 at the Paris gallery of tribal-art dealer Charles Ratton and in major Surrealist exhibitions at London's New Burlington Gallery and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The 1938 Paris show continued the progression into the total environment, foreshadowing Surrealism's embrace of the exhibition as its most distinctive art form in the 1940s.[240]

Added to this evolution, it can be said that in the culmination of the movement with its flair for collective work, *Exposition Internationale de Surréaliste* curators André Breton and Paul Élaurd were able to stage an exhibition that would anticipate what art openings could offer as alternative consumer events for the rest of the twentieth century. That is to say the *Exposition Internationale de Surréaliste* presented many mediums that worked harmoniously as responses to the changing shape of a cosmopolitan city being overrun not by industrialism but consumerism.

This was not an exhibit of paintings in a whitewashed room. As a collective break from the pressure of modern living, especially in relation to its shadow-work, the consumer friendly *Exposition Internationale de Surréaliste* contained paintings,

---

[240] Bruce Altshuler, "Exposition Internationale de Surréaliste," in *Salon to Biennial – Exhibitions that Made Art History*, (Phaidon; London: 2008), 281.

drawings, sculptures, installations, sets, and performances. Exhibitions rarely approach art from as many angles.

One key element the organizers also cultivated was a blockbuster opening night, which seems to have drawn interest from nearly every strata of Parisian society in 1938. According to reports made at time, a long cue of an estimated 3,000 people waited to enter opening night. It eventually turned into a fracas fit for a Black Friday brawl. The January crowd entering on Rue du Faubourg Saint- Honoré, would have first encountered an ivy covered automobile in the courtyard featuring mannequins crawling with snails as passengers all lit from within like a diorama. This was Salvador Dalí's *Taxi Pluvieux*. As an establishing piece, the *Rainy Taxi* announced the extent to which Surrealism and consumerism were by the late-1930s inextricably intertwined. The snails and ivy were suggestive of ruins and a fight against the natural world.

The theatrical show presented an entirely immersive space that, as a group effort, connected Surrealism to subject matter whose content called upon everyday life for the illusion of its dream world. This is a departure from the way it is commonly taught in art history as dreams relayed in single point perspective on the canvas. Commodities appropriated and decontextualized for the exhibition reached for a connection to the revolutionary side of consumerism. Trucking into the psyche of the artists, viewers went straight through the consumer universe of the 1930s in their walkthroughs of the exhibition. The spectacle inside the venue included more mannequins and many store-bought items transformed. This was the case right down to artist Man Ray's use of handheld flashlights for lighting. Marcel Duchamp hung 1,200 bags of lump coal. The

floor was covered in masonry sand by Wolfgang Paalen. A master bedroom set with a phonograph for a nightstand played a laugh track with a dummy's leg emerging from the amplifying horn in Oscar Domínguez's *Never*.

Today the show stands as a harbinger of the insidious reliance visual art has on the destabilizing force of the marketplace in its most conservative incarnations, year after year. Exhibitions since that time have increasingly sought to reflect back to the viewer the complex economic forces that infect the material realm of artists and consumers alike, in a more emphatic way than, say, Manet had in 1882 in his famous incursion into the nightlife of Paris with *Un bar aux Folies Bergère*. And, looking back, the objects in the "Exposition Internationale de Surréaliste" reflect also the rise of a new kind of labor, consumerist in nature, aimed at an increasingly self-reliant audience emerging out a "liberated" marketplace. As the definition of labor and work changed, so the working artist changed in kind. The encroachment of shadow-work upon daily life goes hand in hand with an encroachment upon the normative economy with the creative and potentially riotous potential of the arts in general—visual, music or literary.

In this closing example, I would like to propose that artists associated with the Surrealists movement seemed to understand this change in society quite well, especially as their artistic aims and tactics matured. Critics writing about *Exposition Internationale de Surréaliste* reinforce this unprecedented ability to address the modern shopper/ shadow-worker and, not-so-surprisingly, they do so while belittling women.

Their art advocates for the aesthetic appeal of common household materials that would later invade conceptual art. One example finds a critic describing how the show

thoughtfully hailed a new diminutive kind of viewer: "the visitor's entire attention—especially if the visitor is a lady—is drawn to the dummies with all their zany accoutrement, near the bed in the vicinity of the stagnant water not far from the coal sacks hanging all over the place (that kind of decoration really costs a bundle these days) or over by the knickknacks so patiently copied from the ones alienists supply their unfortunate patients with."[241] Artistic choices are described in this review as debauched, druggy, and feminized due to the domestic character of a typical end user. They are provocative, in other words, because they fall short of a heroic kind of painting or sculpture that would have been presumably more legible to the working-critic/wage-earner. "No need for twenty-five lessons to master Surrealist decoration and art—you can pick them up in no time," the critic continues, peeved by the kind of deskilled of art already found here in the 1930s; "And when you're on vacation and it's raining, you can do a cut-price Surrealism with everyday bits of junk from the attic."[242] Here the critic, Raymond Lécuyer for Le Figaro Littéraire, doubts the legitimacy of the work, downplaying the shock effect he seems to think the artists were after with a quip about housework. Art-making would be as earth shattering as cleaning the attic or playing a board game if we were following Surrealist art to a logical conclusion. Yet, Lécuyer unknowingly reinforces the strength of the work found in the artists' perhaps subconscious connection to the rising empire built upon the ever-expanding toil not of working men but shadow-workers. This potential connection is evident in what the

---

[241] Raymond Lécuyer, *Le Figaro Littéraire*, January 22, 1938: quoted in *Salon to Biennial –Exhibitions that Made Art History*, ed. Bruce Altshuler, (Phaidon; London: 2008), 293.

[242] Ibid.

Exposition Internationale du Surréaliste organizers called the Plus belles rues de Paris. These "streets," organized like a thoroughfare leading to a central square, opened to the main staging area found in the main showroom that the viewer reached after walking down a mannequin-lined corridor. Each dummy decorated in the latest Surrealist "fashion" by core members, composed the Rue Surréaliste. Additionally, the rue contained street signs denoting names of places and people that were inspirational to the artists: such as the no-longer extant Rue de la Vielle Lanterne, stomping grounds like Porte de Lilas; influential figures like writers Comte de Lautréamont and Gérard de Nerva, and fourteenth-century alchemist Nicolas Flamel. While these references exhibit a familiar bohemianism, the lifeless figures standing before the street signs along the Rue Surréaliste were, to my mind, something else.

The dummies substantiate the transference of artistic élan onto the consumer thing that is so central to the social object cultivated by Surrealism, instantiated by having the parallel lines of the flaneur and shadow-worker decussate. As totem of commodity ritual, the mannequins armature performs its ritual pageantry as only uncanny nudes can do, by turning the consumer desire of the automaton outwards: the storefront fixtures are de-territorialized placeholders for the infinitesimal mutations of fashion—high, low, vintage, modern, and so on—staged here as the anxious and incongruous formal patterning of shopper-flaneurs (namely, Yves Tanguy, André Masson, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, and Joan Miró among others). The figures, numbering sixteen in all, remake a mythological Atlas in Masson's contribution to the rue with a figure bearing the world as commodity-dream, its face enclosed in a birdcage. A shadow-worker cum

Laocoön, entangled in a swarm of little ophidian protrusions, the artist dopplegänger that was Rrose Sélavy in Duchamp's case, in Tanguy's seems both monstrous and vulnerable, like a frayed rope wrapped around a capstan attached to a frigate. These mannequins evidence a late Surrealism reflecting seriously on the consequences and direction of the world, further perverted by myths of modern heroism yet reveling in the inverse distain of the crowd championed by Baudelaire. As Sheldon Nodelman has written,

> Mannequins (like their kindred, automata) held a particular fascination for the Surrealists as vehicles for fantasy and the projection of desire. They also served as emblematic incarnations of a particular mode of desiring increasingly dominant in modern experience--that of commodity fetishism, as first diagnosed precisely in regard to the shop windows of nineteenth century Parisian *grands magasins* and *passages*... The bizarrely adorned maidens of this entrance gallery were in fact to be understood as streetwalkers (no doubt a tacit sneer at art's commodity status, which, as we know, Duchamp fiercely despised). This much is indicated not only by their lineup in waiting, backs to the wall, but by the attachment upon the wall above each one of a facsimile Parisian street sign--creating a mixture of real and fantastic street names suggestive of favorite Surrealist themes.[243]

Artists in this earlier vein of appropriation conflate the kitsch and the revolutionary, as is apparent in these re-contextualization of consumer goods found everywhere in galleries today. Creative gestures of this sort, then as now, come with the recuperated benefit of contrasting the intellectual property of art to its bourgeois norms.

---

[243] See Nodelman, "Disguise and Display: Recent Publications Detail a Long Neglected Aspect of Marcel Duchamp's Seminal Oeuvre—Installation Design as a Work of Art," in *Art and America*, March 2003, 2-18.

This tactical retrenchment is of course not about the actual things appropriated but rather their displacement to the inner sanctum of the artist's world and/or curated exhibition space. The measure of the artwork, and its maker entailed, even in the 1930s, transforming the consumer thing into something other than itself, something "surreal" that portrays the artist within but above the bourgeois (or conservative) sensibilities supplying the economy with art and the artist with a livelihood. Duchamp exploited this duplicity. His art embodied perversions of a clerical denial that art under capitalism entails: namely to be a prophet not an entrepreneur. As others saw it: "He is thus in the same situation as the commodity. He is unaware of this special situation, but this does not diminish its effect on him; it permeates him blissfully, like a narcotic that can compensate him for many humiliations. The intoxication to which the *flâneur* surrenders is the intoxication of the commodity immersed in a surging stream of customers."[244]

This was not a favorable review of the *Exposition Internationale du Surréaliste* but Walter Benjamin in the culminating passages of his thesis on the flaneur—*The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire*. It may shed more light upon the Surrealist movement in the late-1930s than Baudelaire. In these exhibitions, the antics of the Surrealists came off as portraits of Benjamin's blissful consumer; the arrival of this bliss became its own intellectualized refinement. Benjamin presciently saw this development and critiqued it as it permeated visual art from all directions and with specially alacrity in Surrealism.

---

[244] Walter Benjamin, "Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," in *The Writer of Modern Life*, ed. Michael Jennings, (Cambridge; Harvard, 2006), 85.

Reliance upon consumer objects and modes of alternate consumerism were evident from Surrealism's inception to the later exhibitions. *Nadja* being a prime example of the earlier work, it expresses an emergence of the broad range of ideological considerations found in the *Exposition Internationale du Surréaliste*. An earlier presage came in Breton's 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism* describing mankind as confounded by its dreams in equal measure to the objects that populate the space of daily life everywhere beside the modern artist (figments like mannequins). This confused "inveterate dreamer" is an artist because he is irked even in repose by a material world that sees man "daily more discontent with his destiny, has trouble assessing the objects he has been led to use." Increasingly for enfeebled man, reality represents modernity as his passivity within a groundswell of "objects that his nonchalance has brought his way, or that he has earned through his own efforts, almost always through his own efforts, for he has agreed to work."[245] That is to say, the immanence of production will fall upon him in a deluge as unstoppable as the happenstance violence of a dream. He will awake to record this violence without second-guessing his own domestic arrangements (like the "apartheid" of the shadow- versus wage-worker). What consigns man to his subconscious life is the nonchalant accumulation of waking life that informs his dreams—his consumerism that invariably modulates the very senses surrendered to the tyranny most expedient to the external world he knows as society. He, the artist-dreamer, becomes more given over to a paradoxical desire that Illich describes as nostalgia for the loss of history, even an idealism for war found in the avant-garde. He does not realize, in Breton's words that,

---

[245] André Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), (Ann Arbor; University of Michigan, 2001), 3.

"The marvelous is not the same in every period of history: it partakes in some obscure way of a sort of general revelation only the fragments of which come down to us: they are the romantic ruins, the modern mannequin, or any other symbol capable of affecting the human sensibility for a period of time."[246] Surrealism framed the affectation of the stand-in model as a primary example of externalized desires eclipsing reality as true agency. He sees them as comparable to ruins that might pique our interest with their naked irretrievable quality (like a de Chirico, no doubt). These dummies served as colonnades buttressing an economic world to come.

To conclude, this chapter connected modern to contemporary art and life by reflecting on social changes in labor. These changes began to appear in art and criticism around the time of Baudelaire and Manet. What some considered the devolution of academic styles in western art ties to larger shifts in social fashions placing unprecedented demands upon individual attention. These demands present new forms of labor that eventually become insidious. I argue that art itself was reformulated as work addressing types of laborious consumption that lie hidden within the larger economy, paradoxically because they are so prevalent. As the imposition of these mandatory forms of labor embed themselves into daily life, subjectivity is divided by personalized economic zones. As the notion of marketplace becomes synonymous with the dissembled agency of pre-given socio-economic types that persisted in the past, the more priceless the past appears as illusion or fashion.

---

[246] Breton, 16.

Ivan Illich claims the primary instance of this hidden economy conformed to the invention of the domestic partner as housewife uncompensated laborer,[247] whose primary (ideal) economic function was consuming, entertaining and being entertained. But shadow-work also explains earlier types of uncompensated laborers, such as the *incognito* consumer of the flaneur Baudelaire described in one of the more known passages in the *Painter of Modern Life*:

> His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world—impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define. The spectator is a prince who everywhere rejoices in his incognito.

Born of the demands of the modern world, he exemplifies those laborers for whom spectatorship would be a primary occupation. This once male type bridges the redundant *ci-devant* bohemian to the later domesticated forms of economic redundancy. They remain alike through time only in their relation to shadow-work, a nebulous though essential aspect of our cultural and economic selves. These are individuals at the

---

[247] Visual art has a long tradition of picturing daily life and consumption within the creative nexus of the home. One could even say the modern tradition of finding the marvelous in the mundane began there, not in the street. I am thinking of the reclusive tendencies of Nabis painters like Édouard Vuillard and Pierre Bonnard, who made the home a site of inspiration. This domestic drifting, as we might call it, continues in the contemporary era. For how this constitutes a needed anti-heroic art quite separate from the calculated approach found in the wake of Duchamp see Jan Verwoert's lecture at Glasgow School of Art (April, 2010) "Why are Conceptual Artists Painting? Because They Think it's a Good Idea" at https://vimeo.com/60549110 (accessed September, 2015). As he sees it, instead of fictions concerning the end of history, heroic choices to be made or the delivery of great ideas through art, the courageous intellectual worker knows they are lost in the weave of making and reception that constructs modest convivial cohabitation. Instead of messianic time, he considers a less polemically charged temporal limits for art: "It is rather the time of dealing with the dust that gathers in the domestic space that we inhabit together with these works—and of a time in which modernity has not ended, but continues to challenge our thinking like the dirty dishes and dirty laundry." See also Verwoert's primary artist example Frances Stark, including her writing *The Architect & the Housewife* (London: Book Works; 1999).

frontlines of societies absorbing and responding to technology. They receive modern painting, early cinema, television and the digital machines of progress that ensured if western society could not democratize its citizenry, it would democratize new media. Their attention constitutes in both cases their primary form of cultural capital.[248]

The results today are easy to see. Individuals engage with popular media on constant strolls (in the de Certeau sense of walking as reading) that invade and redefine the terms of visual art each year. These different kinds of vision were always tied inextricably to alternate subjectivities defined increasingly by the attributes of labor subdued by the coolness of capitalism's latest offerings. Again, the aimless flaneur is an analogy as much as an actual type of individual, who, without a clear role in society, makes his occupation shadow-work of sorts by default. The art economy, like the many apparatuses that power visual-life in our society, perfectly situates these hidden spheres of labor into exchange. Art is often drawn from the realm to essay upon them and to mock them and, in the parlance of today's contemporary art, to research them artistically. Even though antiquated, Manet's fractured composition *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* serves as a marker of this intersection of waywardness and constant consumption showing us the world as back-reflected screen. That is, an image of society consuming itself and art taking on the role of highlighting economic as spiritual or intellectual life. The art commodity registers

---

[248] Bernard Stiegler has theorized these alternate forms of self construction through media and care of the self in light of constant mediation, as he writes: "The capture of attention by technological means is a global phenomenon (affecting all continents), a massive one (affecting all generations and all social strata) and totally new: the length of capture has now reached 6 hours a day in the USA, not to mention the phenomena of hyper-attention, to use the term of Katherine Hayles, which provoke a splitting of attention between several media simultaneously, and which motivate the Kaiser family foundation to modify its figures – increasing the average number of hours to 8 and a half per day for American adolescents." See *Biopower, Psychopower and the Logic of the Scapegoat* (2008) published at http://www.arsindustrialis.org/node/2924 (accessed September, 2015).

the acceleration of this confluence and in its displacement calls for the shadow-workers how must consume the object for it to be more than commodity thing.

Crystalized in the collective choices that the Surrealists made in their time is the coming age of the shadow-worker. By the 1930s, capital cities like Paris are one hundred years removed from the revolution of urban industrialization and displacement that define Haussmannization under Napoleon III.[249] This type of urban planning went along with other types of mid-nineteenth-century innovation. Equally violent is the inherent misogyny implicit in the flaneur gaze, apparent in the late Surrealism just discussed.

The mannequins are a reflection of artistic types of consumption—or artists as the consumers we all inevitably are. In hindsight these figures presage the intricate, sophisticated manner in which art as consumption would be defined—height of which is not the gendered dandy (male artist), but the faceless flaneur (anonymous viewer) who journeys to the marketplace to absorb the crowd. For the flaneur is not there on the scene of emergent visual culture or art merely to purchase (as an art collector might according to the age-old dictates of their class as unrivaled consumer). In this state of absorption converting observation of the commodified into dream-image (in the case of Surrealism), certain artists went on to convert our general duty as shadow-workers into a critical practice. As Illich points out, the system of shadow-work cannot be adequately actualized on a societal level without retaining some purchase on the always-revolutionary force of violence (sublimated, reified, repackaged, whatever the case may be). The same divisions

[249] See David Pinkney, "Napoleon III's Transformation of Paris: The Origins and Development of the Idea," *Journal of Modern History* (No. 2, June, 1955), 125–134.

that maintain the isolation of the individual ensure the hazards of the crowd. His/her agency as a wanderer resides in navigating these distinct possibilities.

Found Art has for the last century divined artistic mastery in the conventionalism of the consumer object as the revolutionary-mind made manifest. Here lies the artist's connection to shadow-work: the mapping of disestablishment through what Benjamin deemed a special brand of allegory borne by commodity things, of that allegorical relationship which "bears traces of the rage needed to break into this world, to lay waste its harmonious structures."[250] The strangeness of economic norms starts not with art but those items expressing normality. The result is that one may always engage in art by claiming to be a diviner of an antithesis art's economy.

The mannequins above show how normative objects can be theorized (in the Surrealist sense) as artistic depictions of revolutionary intent while being entirely integrated with a larger sign system of marketplace. For this reason, they seem to be more than projections of male desire upon the female commodity-corpse. They may also be appreciated as portraits or caricatures of each artist's own consumer self—a doppelgänger that all are required to possess in the future, either in terms of an artist persona or early twenty-first century meme-selves.[251] In this endless doubling of ourselves, the harmony of shadow-work entails how "profits for capitalists are derived

---

[250] Walter Benjamin, "Central Park," in *The Writer of Modern Life*, ed. Michael Jennings, (Cambridge; Harvard, 2006), 149.

[251] Boris Groys has written on later versions of self-objectification central to the consumer-citizenship of individualism under the term "self-design." As he explained the concept in 2009: "Today, everyone is subjected to an aesthetic evaluation—everyone is required to take aesthetic responsibility for his or her appearance in the world, for his or her self-design… self-design is a practice that unites artist and audience alike in the most radical way: though not everyone produces artworks, everyone *is* an artwork. At the same time, everyone is expected to be his or her own author." See "Self-Design and Aesthetic Responsibility: Production of Sincerity," *E-flux Journal*, (no. 7, June, 2009) at http://www.e-flux.com/journal/self-design-and-aesthetic-responsibility (accessed September, 2015).

from compulsory consumers just as power of professionals and bureaucrats is derived from disciplined clients," according to Illich.[252] This means that the artist who traditionally gains tactical advantage by instigating disharmony in the Weberian ranks of the art museum/institution by temporarily employing their own noncompliant gaze from without can also trace this doubling of vision back to the ambivalence symbolized by flaneur. In the end, the artist may only critique their own double within the ranks of the visual art industry.

Art does not "advance" for the same purposes as it did in the historical movements of the nineteenth-century. Thus reference to the flaneur serves as one theoretically distributed model of art's reproducibility in this case. There are others. Though clearly outdated, this type has not vanished; its prevalence today concerns the need for passively adaptability producers who produce by viewing. It shows art at the intersection of other equally prevalent discourses where a marginal audience experiences life in the marketplace. Part of being contemporary is taking pilgrimage. In art these experiences of the outcast recycle urbanity as a recasting of an older religious type of wanderer. The bohemian flaneur remains an unshakeable archetype. He is not merely male. He is a being who understands art better than artists, who, after being spiritualized by commodity culture and the catechism of art school, strives to gain indirectly from the economy (as artists must do directly through sales and dealings with traders). S/he is being who retains the power to be as ever changing as the everyday consumer must be.

---

[252] Illich, 20.

Like the fashions that fill storefronts, department stores, and museum halls, an incongruous aesthetic program has different requirements each year, week, month, day. The deviance of the consumer impulse behind the *dérive*, for example, shares a kinship with the flaneur, the Surreal wanderer of dreams of capitols, as it does with the daily shopper running to the store. Yet, this through-line of connections has rarely been accounted for in its orbit as a historical confluence, digression, or discourse interpenetrating within its loop of reincarnation.[253] The omission of the viewer's historical marginality only points to the fact that the machinations of shadow-work may account for the how visual art has alternated just like the rest of the economy as an ever-emergent etiquette of consumerism, which may or may not amount to a force for progressive regardless of its alignment to marginal forms of life and representations thereof.

Shadow-work began as a gendered form of disestablishment in the nineteenth century, but, according to Illich, slowly became universal, "reaching further into both men's and women's lives to leave no one's day completely unclouded." Thus, to consider the shadow-worker, or his/her forebear the flaneur, as strictly gendered or of definitive class today only reinforces the prevalent misunderstandings that limit our reading of art as artistic action. Each year since the birth of modernism the flaneur has gained increasingly diverse potentiality, subjectivity, as especially global type of wanderer. Yet visual art in its still largely Western definition has never lost its connection to the flaneur. A redefinition of the viewer similar to that which has been underway in redefining our

[253] Benjamin, for example, attempted to analyze the flaneur in relation to a nineteenth-century Marxist theory of factory-line labor that did not go as far as the Surrealists did with their later group exhibitions that placed class-consciousness in the context of juxtaposed consumer objects.

expectations of the artist is in store. To consider shadow-work today to be "purely women's work, tout court, would be the fifth and ultimate mystification," says Illich, as he advances one of his most damning assessment of capitalism, noting that "it becomes obvious that shadow- work is by now far more common in our late industrial age than paid jobs."[254] The consequences of this in art effect everything from education to how we manage the opening of an international biennial—that is, VIP flaneur*s* first, the second-class loafing public second.

Perhaps it is true, then, that visual art could have something to tell us about the predicament of shadow-work as art bridges the local and international economies that fill the life of each receiver.

[254] Illich, 20.

Conclusion
At the Margin

This dissertation drew conclusions about recent art by reflecting on the construction of viewership. This seemed a necessity because art viewership remains illusive and shrouded in cosmopolitan mystique in each new recursive strain of contemporaneity theorized as art and rolled into discourse.[255] I have characterized its currency as above all fleeting. My approach has been to understand viewership (modeled in the case of biennials) as a medium designed to intervene and to express group cohesion through motility, both somatic and social in nature. The necessity to drift amidst artworks and between venues intervening in a city is a means today to for visual art to compose a temporary community that (briefly) shares a picture of the world and, perhaps, ideological sympathies (so far as they can be expressed by contemporary artworks that are often uprooted from history).[256] Elaborate organizational models are tested in these exhibitions to meet specific aspirations. Namely, attempts are made to understand a globalism expressed by both the artworks and the people that flock to see it. These exhibitions experiment with ephemeral experience. They also organize viewership as labor explore how art exhibitions today still respond to increasingly complex urban living conditions and the politics of everyday life in cosmopolitan centers.

---

[255] I have used discourse throughout this dissertation following Michel Foucault's theories on the generation of social influence. It denotes shared abstractions leveraged by individuals and affinity groups within the art industry capable of granting art meaning. These abstractions are discursive to the extent that they grant power by staging exhibitions, publishing books and articles, launching academic programs, hosting seminars on institutional and specialized topics and so on.

[256] For an ethnography on "temporary communities" that form around media spectacles and for a corollary to how the visual arts industry forms "imaginaries and public spaces" see Anthony D'Andrea ethnography of illegal raves in Ibiza in the late-1990s: "Neo-Nomadism: A Theory of Post-Identitarian Mobility in the Global Age," in *Mobilities* (No. 1, March 2006), 95–119.

As anomalous as Istanbul remains, it shares with other important world cities the ability to place regional experience in a far-reaching context. This is what Okwui Enwezor has called a "critical regionalism." As compared to the provincialism of dominant economies or art cities, "critical regionalism" asserts its nonaligned character as a parallel addition to the larger idea of the "art world."[257] This resistance has been a part of past Istanbul Biennials. By gathering foreign visitors and residents in the alpha city, the progressive exhibition transports viewers beyond customary divisions, be these geopolitical in the notional or actual East or West, the Southern or Norther Hemisphere, religious strife imposed by so-called silent majorities, or the more banal politics that govern mass-media or the arcane procedures behind the installation of contemporary art. By its fleeting nature, contemporary art audiences often orient towards marginality on a broad scale across many artistic and organizational platforms and in many places simultaneously. This is its unique power.

The current art industry brings artworks and curatorial themes into closer proximity to what de Certeau deemed a "silent majority." As he wrote in introduction to his The Practice of Everyday Life, which guided my project: "Marginality is today no longer limited to minority groups, but is rather massive and pervasive; the cultural activity of the non-producers of culture, an activity that is unsigned, unreadable, and

---

[257] As he explained in a 2013 interview, "Critical regionalism, I mean, not as a form of withdrawal, but in the provincial sense that Chakrabarty is arguing. His point is illustrated in the dissolution of the imperial architecture, if you will, of what used to be called "the art world." Now, there are so many different worlds. Of course, this does not mean that they all have equal power, equal influence, or equal epistemological force. Rather, it means that while the so-called centers are doing their thing, these other art worlds continue doing theirs. They do not close up shop and say, well, the real art world is over there, there is nothing for us to do here." See Terry Smith, "Okwui Enwezor, World Platforms, Exhibiting Adjacency, and the Surplus Value of Art" *Talking Contemporary Curating,* ed. Leigh Markopoulos, (Independent Curators International: New York; 2015), 93.

unsymbolized, remains the only one possible for all those who nevertheless buy and pay for the showy products through which a productivist economy articulates itself. Marginality is becoming universal. A marginal group has now become a silent majority."[258] The author is careful not to suggest a land of shared conditions, declaring this does not mean the majority "group is homogenous." This majority is joined by appropriation. "The procedures allowing the reuse of products are linked together in a kind of obligatory language, and their functioning is related to social situations and power relations. Confronted by images on television, the immigrant worker does not have the same critical or creative elbowroom as the average citizen."[259] The social situations and images embedded in contemporary art have been my focus, using the biennial in Istanbul as a case study. Both strategic and tactical engagements emerge in the arts industry that biennials represented at the time of initiating this project. Whether biennials can be related to what de Certeau calls the "increased deviousness" of this silent majority is questionable. Yet, viewership cultivated by an organization and realized by the engagement of the arts-viewer do seem to shed light on how artistic "reuse" lays a foundation for how exhibitions formulate and override a functional or "obligatory language" in contemporary institutions. To these politics of consuming I have related the absorbed wanderer amidst the drifting art crowd at an international exhibition, a spectacle of viewership enveloped by competing discourses attempting to keep art germane or pertinent to new, visual cultures. These emergent cultures supply opportunity for new forms of what Ivan Illich called shadow-work, a term he coined, "to speak about

---

[258] de Certeau, xx.

[259] Ibid.

transactions which are not in the monetized sector and yet do not exist in pre-industrial societies."[260]

The heightened attention borne by art exhibitions increases in sophistication each biennial. It also amounts to a generative "non-monetized and complimentary hemisphere" of toil. The purpose of this attention is not production. Its purpose is providing the custodial means to regulating the meanings and therefore value that emerge from the market economy (broadly within visual culture and, of course, within visual art). This notion of maintenance related here to shadow-work would appear to be a missing terminology relatable to the older discourse of the flaneur, who is a shadow cast by larger economic forces. Art today encourages the initiate to be a flaneur of sorts. Updating this dispossessed connoisseur wrought in the critical tradition of Walter Benjamin may be preferable to critique. Consumers may occupy the role once reserved for critics singlehandedly today.[261] This splitting of productive time and productive consuming is not merely a phenomenon of media. It is the generation of new forms of currency. These currencies are invented by inverting critique as connoisseurship. This tactic has influenced art making since at least Duchamp, who turned his failed painting career into an anarchic object designed for ridicule, critique, and the generation of a new discourse around the role of selection—something related but different than what curating implies today as an institutional structure and freelance trade. Drifting and the

---

[260] Illich, 1.

[261] The shadow-work of filling out the comments section at the end of online news stories exemplifies both the loss of practiced criticism and its liberalization. This too relates to a tactic and a kind of drifting in the de Certeau sense of everyday use.

opportunity to convert redundancy into shadow-work laid the groundwork for the mandate of reuse that guides contemporary art.

Visual art has changed considerably since this project began. Nonetheless, we still find temporary communities led by international exhibitions gathering to drift in cities such as Istanbul.[262] These communities disperse nearly as quickly as they form make their own sense and therefore use out of consumer rituals and appropriated imagery. Willingly or not temporary communities have replaced art movements. In doing so, they unwittingly inherit the obligation of shadow-work to make a viable currency out of we call contemporary art.[263]

---

[262] Again, these are untraditional "communities" related by transience and spectacle, as Boris Groys puts it: "The members of these transitory communities do not know each other—their structure is accidental; it remains unclear where they have come from and where they are going; they have little to say to one another; they lack a joint identity or previous history that could provide them with common memories to share; nevertheless, they are communities. These communities resemble those of travelers on a train or airplane. To put it differently: these are radically contemporary communities—much more so than religious, political, or working communities." See "The Politics of Installation," in *Going Public*, (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011).

[263] As Hal Foster explained the defining lack of substance behind the term in 2011: "The category of "contemporary art" is not a new one. What is new is the sense that, in its very heterogeneity, much present practice seems to float free of historical determination, conceptual definition, and critical judgment. Such paradigms as "the neo-avant-garde" and "postmodernism," which once oriented some art and theory, have run into the sand, and, arguably, no models of much explanatory reach or intellectual force have risen in their stead. At the same time, perhaps paradoxically, "contemporary art" has become an institutional object in its own right: in the academic world there are professorships and programs, and in the museum world departments and institutions, all devoted to the subject, and most tend to treat it as apart not only from prewar practice but from most postwar practice as well." See: Hal Foster, "Questionnaire on 'The Contemporary,'" *October* 130 (Fall, 2009). 3.

References

—Pier Vittorio Aureli, Maria S. Giudici and Platon Issaias, “From Dom-ino to Polykatoikia” *Domus*, (no. 962, October 2012).

—Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, (Verso: London; 1991).

—Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, (Penguin; New York: 2004).

—Michel Trebitsch, ‘Preface’ to *Critique of Everyday Life*, (Verso: London; 1991).

—Constant Nieuwenhuys, *For an Architecture of Situation*, (Haags Gemeetenmuseum, 1974).

—Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, (London: Phaidon; 1964).

—Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, (Cambridge: Harvard Press; 2002).

—Guy Debord, “Theory of the *Dérive*,” *Internationale Situationniste*, (no. 2, December 1958).

—Constant Nieuwenhuys, *New Babylon*, http://www.notbored.org/new-babylon.html.

—David Joselit, *Infinite Regress*, (Cambridge: MIT Press; 1998).

—Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” *Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff, (Routledge; New York, 1998).

—Frédéric Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking*, (Verso: New York; 2015).

—Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*, (New York: Lukas & Sternberg; 2005).

—Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, “Istanbul: A Metaphor, a Prediction, a Lived Reality, an Inspiration” on the official IKSV 9th Istanbul Biennial website . http://9b.iksv.org.

—Jörg Heiser, “City Report: Ninth Istanbul Biennial,” *Frieze*, (November/December, 2005).

—Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley; University of California Press; 1988).

—Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, “Introduction,” *9th International Istanbul Biennial*, (IKSV; Istanbul: 2005).

—Hans Ulrich Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating*, (Zurich: JRP Ringier; 2008).

— Carlos Basualdo, *Michelangelo Pistoletto: From One to Many,* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art; 2010).

—*How Latitudes Become Forms: Art in a Global Age* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center; 2003).

—Matthew Schum, “The Legacy of Beuys’ *Erweiterter Kunstbegriff*” http://haudenschildgarage.com/documenting-documenta-a-garage-project-with-matthew-schum/15/#the-legacy-of-beuys-erweiterter-kunstbegriff .

—Ivan Chtcheglov, “Formulary for a New Urbanism,” *Internationale Situationniste*, (no. 1, October 1953).

—Ralph Rugoff, “Rules of the Game,” *Frieze*, (January, 1999).

—Hou Hanru and Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Cities on the Move*, (Hatje Cantze; New York: 1997).

—Michelle Dizon, “Conversation with What, How, and for Whom,” *Xtra*, (Spring, 2010).

—Tim Griffin, “Global Tendencies: Globalism and the Large-scale Exhibition: Roundtable with James Meyer, Catherine David, Okwui Enwezor, Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Martha Rosler, and Yinka Shonibare,” *Artforum*, (November, 2003).

—Sven-Olav Wallenstein, “Institutional Desires,” *Art and its Institutions: Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations*, ed. Nina Montman, (Black Dog Publishing: London: 2006).

—Ralph Rugoff, “50th Venice Biennale Review, *Frieze*, (September 2003).

—Vasif Kortun, Lecture, November 11, 2005, Institute of the Americas, University of California San Diego.

—Nuit Banai, “A Poetry of Small Gestures,” *Art Papers,* (January-February 2006).

—Scott Rothkopf, “In the Bag,” *Artforum*, (September 2003.

—Tim Griffin, “Left Waiting,” *Artforum*, (September 2003).

—Regine Basha, “Singularity and the City of Delicate Balance,” *Art Papers* (January/ February 2005).

—Paul Ardenne, “Review of the 9th Istanbul Biennial,” *Art Press* (no. 318, December 2005).

—Erden Kosova, “City Report,” *Frieze* (no 95, November / December 2005).

—Charles Esche, *Modest Proposals*, ed. Serkan Özkaya, (Baglam Publishers: Ankara: 2005).

—Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, “The World is Yours,” *Art, City and Politics in an Expanding World*, (Istanbul: IKSV: 2005).

—Paul O’Neil, “Okwui Enwezor Interview,” *Curating Subjects*, (London: Open Editions; 2007).

—Claire Bishop, “Live Installations and Constructed Situations: The Use of ‘Real People’ in Art,” *Verksted*, (no. 7, 2006).

—Clair Doherty, “Location Location,” *Art Monthly* (no. 281, November, 2004).

—Peter Eleey, “8th Istanbul Biennial” *Frieze*, (no. 80, January-February, 2004).

—Edward Said, *Orientialism*, (New York: Vintage Books; 1979).

—Dan Cameron, “Memories of Tresspassing,” *British Pavilion: Mike Nelson: I, Impostor*, (London: British Council; 2011).

—Rachel Withers, “Mike Nelson at the Venice Biennale,” *The Guardian*, (June 3, 2011), http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/jun/03/mike-nelson-venice-biennale.

—Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun, Vasif Kortun, *9th International Istanbul Biennial*, (Istanbul; IKSV: 2005).

—Matthew Schum, “Istanbul qua Istanbul: Interview with Vasif Kortun,” *Fillip*, (no. 6, Summer 2007).

—Georges Bataille, “The ‘Lugubrious Game’,” in *Visions of Excess*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2008).

—Trinie Dalton, “Gardar Eide Einarsson,” 2008 Whitney Biennial, https://whitney.org/www/2008biennial/www/?section=artists&page=artist_einarsson.

—Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition : A Report on Knowledge*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

—Fredric Jameson "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, (Seattle: Bay Press; 1983).

—Charles Esche, "Gardar Eide Einarsson," *9th International Istanbul Biennial,* (Istanbul: IKSV; 2005).

—W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*, (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

—Arjun Appadurai, "Commodities and the Politics of Value," *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge University Press; New York: 1986).

—Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production," *Essays on Art and Literature*, (Polity
Press: London; 1993).

—Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, (Hill and Wang; New York:
1982).

—The South Bank Show, Season 11, Episode 3 (October, 18, 1987).

—Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *The Writer of Modern Life*, ed. Michael Jennings, (Cambridge" Harvard University Press; 2006).

—George Simmel, "The Metropolis and Urban Life," in *The Cities Culture Reader,* ed. Malcolm Miles, Tom Hall, Iain Borden, (Routledge: London; 2004).

—T.J. Clark, "A Bar at the Folies-Bergère," *The Painting of Modern Life*, (Princeton University; 1984: Princeton New Jersey).

—Georges Bataille, *Manet*, (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 1983)

—Eli Friedlander, *Walter Benjamin: A Philosophical Portrait,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 2012).

—Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn and its Discontents," *Artforum*, (February 2006).

—November Paynter, "Weal Shawky," *9th International Istanbul Biennial* (Istanbul: IKSV; 2005), 76.

—Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998*, (New York: Verso, 1998).

—A.L. Macfie, *Atatürk*, (New York: Longman; 1994).

—Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey*, (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 2000).

—Esra Özyürek, *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey*, (Durham: Duke University Press; 2006).

—Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks Vol. 1*, (New York: Columbia University Press; 1992).

—Michel Foucault *Discipline and Punish*, (New York: Vintage Books; 1995).

—Michel Foucault, "The Lives of Infamous Men," *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York: New Press; 1997).

—Giorgio Agamben "Coming Community," *Art, City, and Politics in an Expanding World*, (IKSV: Istanbul; 2005).

—Irit Rogoff, *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* (Frankfurt am Main: Revolver; 2006).

—Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* (Paris: Les Presses du réel; 2002).

—Claire Bishop, "History Depletes Itself," *Artforum,* (vol. 54, September 2015).

—George Baker, Introduction to Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" *October* (No. 110, Fall 2004).

—Debord, "Theory of the *Dérive*," *Internationale Situationniste*, (no. 2, December 1958).

—Eleanor Heartney, *Art in America*, (December, 2005).

—Boris Groys, "The Politics of Installation," *Going Public*, (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011).

— Karen Andreassian, *Ontological Walkscapes* (2009).

—Hou Hanru, *Not Only Possible, But Also Necessary—Optimism in the Age of Global War*, (Istanbul; IKSV; 2007).

—*Turkish Migration Conference 2015*, eds. Guven Seker, Ali Tilbe, Mustafa Okmen, Pinar Yazgan, Deniz Eroglu Utku and Ibrahim Sirkeci, (London: Transnational Press; 2015).

—Matthew Schum, *Global Warming: Interview with Curator Hou Hanru*, http://haudenschildgarage.com/the-2007-istanbul-biennial-with-matthew-schum/15/#global-warming-interview-with-curator-hou-hanru.

—Oswald de Andrade *Cannibalist Manifesto* (1928).

—Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer," *in Return of the Real*, (MIT Press: Cambridge; 1996).

—Walter Benjamin, "Exchange with Adorno on *The Flâneur*," in *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings vol. 4*, ed. Michael Jennings, (Cambridge; Harvard; 2006).

—Ursula Biemann, http://www.geobodies.org

—What, How and for Whom, *11th Istanbul Biennial Guide*, (IKSV: Istanbul; 2009).

—Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, (New York: Picador; 1977).

—Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography, (New York: Hill and Wang; 1982), 14.

—Brian Holmes, "Do-It-Yourself Geo-politics," *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination After 1945*, eds. Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis: 2007).

—Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, (New York: Dover; 1994).

—Agnaldo Farias and Moacir dos Anjos, "There is Always a Cup of Sea to Sail in," *Catalogue of the 29th Bienial de São Paulo*, (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo: 2010).

—Donald Kuspit, "Hypocritical Protest: Karl Marx at the Venice Biennale," *Brooklyn Rail*, (June, 2015).

—Guy Debord, "Theory of the *Dérive*," *Internationale Situationiste* (no.2, 1958), 62.

—André Breton, *Nadja*, (New York: Grove Weidenfeld; 1988).

—Clare Lyster, "The Logistical Figure," *Cabinet* (no.47, Fall 2012).

—Andrea Fraser, *There's No place Like Home*, whitney.orgfile_columns0002/9847andreafraser_theresnoplacelikehome_2012whitneybiennial.pdf

—Joris-Karl Huysman, *Against Nature*, (New York: Oxford University Press; 1998).

—*Text Zur Kunst*, "Artistic Research," issue (no. 82, June 2011).

—Griselda Pollock "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and the Histories of Art*, (London: Routledge; 2003).

—Ivan Illich, *Shadow Work* (Boston / London: M. Boyars; 1981).

—Suzanne Lacy, *Learn Where the Meat Comes From* (1976), http://www.suzannelacy.com/learn-where-the-meat-comes-from.

—Martha Rosler, "Place, Position, Power, Politics," *Decoys and Disruptions,* (MIT Press; Cambridge: 2004).

—Martha Rosler, *Martha Rosler Reads "Vogue,"* 1982.

—Earl McCabe, "Depressive Realism: An Interview with Lauren Berlant," in *Hypocrite Reader: Realism Issue* (no. 5, June 2011).

—Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guatarri "1440: The Smooth and the Striated," *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2003).

—Richard Hamilton, "Group 2 Statement," in *Salon to Biennial – Exhibitions that Made Art History*, (Phaidon; London: 2008), 367

—Claire Bishop, "History Depletes Itself," *Artforum,* (vol. 54, September 2015).

—Bruce Altshuler, "Exposition Internationale de Surréaliste," in *Salon to Biennial – Exhibitions that Made Art History*, (Phaidon; London: 2008).

—Raymond Lécuyer, *Le Figaro Littéraire*, January 22, 1938: quoted in *Salon to Biennial –Exhibitions that Made Art History*, ed. Bruce Altshuler, (Phaidon; London: 2008).

—Sheldon Nodelman, "Disguise and Display: Recent Publications Detail a Long Neglected Aspect of Marcel Duchamp's Seminal Oeuvre—Installation Design as a Work of Art," in *Art and America,* (March 2003).

—Walter Benjamin, “Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” in *The Writer of Modern Life*, ed. Michael Jennings, (Cambridge; Harvard, 2006).

—André Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), (Ann Arbor; University of Michigan, 2001).

—Jan Verwoert, “Why are Conceptual Artists Painting? Because They Think it’s a Good Idea” at https://vimeo.com/60549110.

—Frances Stark, *The Architect & the Housewife* (London: Book Works; 1999).

—Bernard Stiegler, *Biopower, Psychopower and the Logic of the Scapegoat* (2008) http://www.arsindustrialis.org/node/2924.

—David Pinkney, “Napoleon III's Transformation of Paris: The Origins and Development of the Idea,” *Journal of Modern History* (No. 2, June, 1955).
[246] Walter Benjamin, “Central Park,” in *The Writer of Modern Life*, ed. Michael Jennings, (Cambridge; Harvard, 2006).

—Boris Groys “Self-Design and Aesthetic Responsibility: Production of Sincerity,” *E-flux Journal*, (no. 7, June, 2009) at http://www.e-flux.com/journal/self-design-and-aesthetic-responsibility (accessed September, 2015).

—Anthony D’Andrea,“Neo-Nomadism: A Theory of Post-Identitarian Mobility in the Global Age,” in *Mobilities* (No. 1, March 2006).

—Terry Smith, “Okwui Enwezor, World Platforms, Exhibiting Adjacency, and the Surplus Value of Art” *Talking Contemporary Curating,* ed. Leigh Markopoulos, (Independent Curators International: New York; 2015).

—Hal Foster, “Questionnaire on ‘The Contemporary’,” *October* 130 (Fall, 2009).