

That is, *all non-places are places, qua non-places*, not in addition or palimpsestically, since they derive their meaning, qua negations, internal to boundaries of physical contiguity. They register the manifestation of relations other than those of locale within a locale. This is what makes it possible for Augé to name and to list non-places. However, this dialectical interiority of non-place to place tempers the radicalism of the negation, and inhibits the theorization of the positive content of what is qualitatively new, in terms of the spatial logics of non-places. This is because, for Augé, despite the importance of signs — and their intimation of a *purely* communicationally defined space — it is ‘traveler’s space’ that is the ‘archetype’ of non-place.<sup>14</sup>

The new forms of social relations determined by digital communication technologies exceed the anthropological conception of place not only at the level of identity-forming meanings, but in a more strictly spatial respect: in their negation of the dependence of spatial relations on physical contiguity. If one thinks about non-places in the context of the final item on Augé’s list — ‘the complex skein of cable and wireless networks that mobilize extraterrestrial space for the purposes of communication’ — they appear not as ‘empty’ or ‘solitary’ places, but as new spatializations of place constituted qua places through their relations to another spatiality, the ‘space of flows’. On Castells’s conception, this is a new spatial logic grounded in ‘the transformation of location patterns of core economic activities under the new technological system . . . the rise of the electronic home and the . . . evolution of urban forms’. It governs ‘flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interaction, flows of images, sounds and symbols.’<sup>15</sup> It would seem that certain non-places are best conceived, not as a simple negation of the meaningfulness of place, but as the product of a dialectic of the space of places (in general, including non-places) and the space of flows, which is equally as constitutive of flows as it is of the (non-)places through which they flow. As Sassen has emphasized, digital networks are heavily dependent on the ‘embeddedness’ of material infrastructures at nodal points throughout the network. This points to the mediating role of informational/global cities as ‘spaces of contemporaneity’ in the literal sense of being places where different times come together, nodal points of connection between multiple temporalities. In this respect, the dialectic of places and flows is the spatial register of our now-global contemporaneity.

The institutional spaces of art partake of the post-metropolitan character of these non-places through the network structure of what is increasingly a globally transnational artworld. This is a historical development of the deep-rooted immanence of metropolitan spatial experience to modern art, both in its formal structure and conditions of

identity.’ As such, it is characterized by abstraction, yet it remains experientially concrete. We could think of it as an updated spatialization of the early Lukács’s romantic sense of modernity as ‘transcendental homelessness.’<sup>10</sup> Its passing inhabitants orientate themselves within it primarily through relations with *signs*. This ‘invasion of space by text’, mainly taking the form of signs conveying ‘instructions for use’, is understood to produce a ‘solitary contractuality’ as its distinctive mode of social existence. Such instructions — ‘Take right-hand lane’ or ‘You are now entering the Beaujolais region’, are two of Augé’s examples — may be prescriptive, prohibitive or informative. They may be in ordinary language (what the philosophers call ‘natural’, as opposed to ‘ideal’, languages), or, increasingly, in codified ideograms. And they invariably convey the messages not of individuals but of institutional authorities of various sorts, whether explicitly stated or only vaguely discernible.<sup>11</sup>

Augé’s non-places are the dialectical residue of the dual negation of place by itinerancy and textuality. This is a productive notion, with, as we shall see, interesting resonances with twentieth-century art history. However, Augé’s presentation of the concept is both theoretically ambiguous and critically ambivalent. Theoretically, it equivocates between an abstract and a dialectical conception of negation. Critically, it oscillates between a backward-looking romanticization of an anthropological conception of place and a forward-looking ‘supermodern’ ethnology of solitude. This is the result in part of the restrictions of an anthropological perspective, and in part, of a conflation of the spatialities of travel and new communications technologies, respectively.

‘The non-place’, Augé writes,

. . . never exists in a pure form: places reconstitute themselves in it; relations are restored and resumed in it . . . Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten.<sup>12</sup>

Yet if non-place never exists in a pure form, as an absolute negation or annihilation of place, this is surely not a contingency, but because it can only coherently be construed as itself, intrinsically, a special, paradoxical type of ‘place’. A non-place is constituted as a type of place by its *immanent* negation of the anthropological sense of place as a space that generates identity-forming meanings out of the permanence (that is, generational continuity) of the physical contiguity of its boundaries. (On Castells’s definition, a place is ‘a locale whose form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity.’)<sup>13</sup>

spatial dimension of the textuality of the metropolis. Only the magazine works, however, in their 'embedded' context within magazines in circulation (rather than retrospectively displayed) displace modern art space itself from its primal gallery location back into social space.

However, it would be naive to believe that this transgression of literal or empirical gallery space constitutes a violation of the ontological character of art-space instituted by the gallery in its classical modern form. As O'Doherty argued, 'the empty gallery . . . [is] modernism's greatest invention' because the white cube is 'the single major convention through which art is passed.' However, it is precisely that: a convention that constitutes a particular mode of attention. The 'undifferentiated potency' of its space is the 'sophisticated convention' of a culture 'which has cancelled its values in the name of an abstraction called "freedom".' As a result, space is now 'not just where things happen; things make space happen.'<sup>21</sup> The space that art-things make happen is the art-space that renders them intelligible as art, *wherever it is*. As such, it makes them recognizable as art, and open to institutional validation. There is a set of reciprocal relationships here between the object/act, the space it creates, and the institutional validation associated with that space's recoding in terms of an ontological structure derived from modern art's primal gallery space (what Smithson called the non-site). In this sense, once modern art-space is historically established in its basic structure through what O'Doherty aptly called 'the placelessness and timelessness' of the gallery's 'hysterical cell',<sup>22</sup> art can transform all kinds of place into art-space (that is, art non-place), by bringing it into relation with gallery conventions – in the way in which, for Smithson, 'site' is a dialectical *product* of the non-site. The white cube is thus not only 'a unit of esthetic discourse',<sup>23</sup> it establishes the ontological structure of art-space, which must subsequently be *reinstated* by each work, in each instance, *wherever* it is located. This is one of the things that is meant by the 'autonomy' of the work of art. Contemporary art produces (or fails to produce) the non-place of art-space as the condition of its autonomy and hence its ability to function as 'art'. Art cannot live, *qua* art, within the everyday as the everyday. Rather it necessarily disrupts the everydayness of the everyday from within, since it is, constitutively, both 'autonomous' and a 'social fact'.<sup>24</sup> It is the ongoing search for productive forms of this duality that has driven art beyond the confines of the literal physical space (the place) of the gallery into other social spaces. Textualization was the first significant mediating practice through which this transformation in the spatial ontology of the work of art occurred. What has become known as the 'architecturalization of art' was an accompanying process; it contains the conditions for an extended textualization of art within itself.

reception. As Brian O'Doherty has put it: 'The city provided the materials, models of process, and primitive esthetic of juxtaposition – congruity forced by mixed needs and intentions. On this account, the city is the indispensable context of collage and of the gallery space. Modern art needs the sound of traffic outside to authenticate it.'<sup>16</sup> The mythos of the city is the organizing principle of collage; and collage is at the core of a generic (non-medium-based) modernism. The gallery itself, however, in its classical modern form as the 'white cube', is a self-enclosed, self-insulating space. And it is in its specific character as a self-enclosed, specialized place that the gallery appears as an exemplary non-place, in Augé's sense. It is constituted by a dual negation of place-based social functions by itineracy and textuality: the itineracy of the viewer, passing through, the neutrality of the space, and the textuality of the work. The work is 'textual' here both in the general sense in which modern art is necessarily constituted, in part, by the discourses that surround its works (and never more so than when its claims are purely optical), and in the particular sense of the eruption of text within the visual arts themselves, first in 1912 through the 'polyphonic space' of the collage (with newspaper and tickets, in particular) and later in the language-based Conceptual art of the 1960s.<sup>17</sup>

There is an 'invasion of space by text' here, within art itself, that parallels quite precisely the invasion of space by text that Augé takes to be constitutive of non-places. It can hardly be coincidental in this regard that what I have previously (and separately) argued was the first-ever exhibition of conceptual art, was Yoko Ono's *Instructions for Paintings* exhibition in the lobby of the Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo, in May–June 1962,<sup>18</sup> which precisely mimics the 'instructions for use' of the signs characteristic of non-places. This exhibition was the culmination of a whole series of pre-Fluxus works by La Monte Young, George Brecht, Ono and others, taking the form of instructions for use. The genre developed in a post-Cagean musical context, where it appears as the 'event score' or 'word piece'.<sup>19</sup> Ono's originality lies in her transposition of it into the context of visual art. Such language-based works extract the urban textuality of signage and re-present it, reflectively, in art spaces as a new art form. This is an artistic appropriation of an anonymous form of social communication that is tied to a specific kind of urban space, and which produces a distinctive kind of spatiality for the artwork. This is a different but closely related form of spatiality from other, more canonically 'Conceptual' language-based works, such as Dan Graham, Robert Smithson and Mel Bochner's magazine works (1966–70), Joseph Kosuth's Pop typography (*Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)*, 1967–8), and Art & Language's aesthetic of administration (*Index 001*, 1972).<sup>20</sup> Each of these textualizations of art articulates a different

a socio-spatial *effectivity*. It represents art's social being-in-the-world, its aspiration to effect change. Architecture is an emblem of the aspiration to what Jeff Wall has called a 'modernism with social content'.<sup>26</sup> For art, one might even say, architecture in general holds open the original hope of Soviet Constructivism: namely, 'to realize the communist expression of material structures'.<sup>27</sup> In this respect, architectural aspects of contemporary art problematize artistic autonomy in so far as, on Adorno's account at least, powerlessness is the price of autonomy. They raise the possibility of 'post-autonomous' works, or at the least, a post-autonomous functioning of autonomous works: works that would partake in the dialectic of autonomy – that is, is the dialectic of art and anti-art within the work – in such a way as to mediate it reflectively with the contradictory social functions of art space, to determinate practical as well as artistic effect. The difficulty, of course, is to produce such works that are *critical* rather than merely affirmative of the social practices with which contemporary art is increasingly associated: urban and regional development, and tourism and cultural policy more generally.

From the point of view of our concerns here, it is the spatial aspect of this socialization that is most important. In particular, 'architecture' should no longer be understood to refer to one or the other side of the opposition between design/plan and building. It cannot be identified exclusively with the space/place of either the design/plan or the building. Rather its deepening historical ambiguity is crucial. The term 'architecture' is distributed *across* conception and materialization, in the traditional senses. This is a particularly prominent aspect of early, proto-conceptual works by Sol LeWitt and Mel Bochner, for example, which exhibited plans and diagrams as 'sketches' – intermediate forms. More generally, architecture stands for a *material organization of social space in the present* at both conceptual and practical levels. Postminimalist contemporary art (from 'object' to 'field') aspires to a *free formation of social space* in this dual imaginary and actual sense. We can see the consequences of this ambiguous architectural spatial form for the ontology of the artwork when we look at the place of architecturalization in the history of contemporary art.

Recent historiography of the art of the 1960s and 1970s has registered the growing importance of the works of Dan Graham, Robert Smithson and Gordon Matta-Clark in the genealogy of current practices. Indeed, their works are frequently cited within current practices themselves, albeit more often for reasons of legitimation than as material for a historically reflective art.<sup>28</sup> Yet the critical meaning of this new pre-eminence is rarely explored. It is to be found, I think, in the way in which their respective experimental relations to architecture led to a fluid *multiplicity of forms of materializations* of works that produces a

### *Architecturalization: three questions*

If 'sculpture' is an ontologically redundant category in contemporary art (despite its perennial curatorial revival as a way of presenting the very works that rendered it redundant), 'architecture' is a term without which contemporary art would be hard-pressed to continue to exist. If, as Duve has argued, in the nineteenth century, 'painting' was the name for art (and thereby the most ontologically privileged of medium-specific categories), in the 1960s something like 'architecture' became, if not the new name for art, then certainly, for many, its model. Similarly, just as it was by appropriating (and notionally reapplying) the name 'painting' to readymades that Duchamp invented a generic art, so it has been by appropriating (and notionally reapplying) the name 'architecture' to various art activities that art since the 1960s has transformed its spatial ontology. These practices have strong conceptual components. Like textualization, architecture was thus a mediating practice that combined an expansion and transformation of art's spatial ontology, with a conceptual turn. Architecture has been a primary bearer of the conceptuality of contemporary art. In this regard, architecturalization appears as one of an accumulative series of architectural revisions of the art of the 1960s, the most important of which have been those stressing the roles of *performance*, *conceptual photography*, and the *internationalism* of the US-centred artistic community of the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>25</sup> Each is bound up with the conceptual character of contemporary art. There is a complex multiplicity of interacting lineages of negation at work here in the art of the 1960s that converge into the problematic of postconceptual art, of which these successive historiographical revisionisms represent the four currently most significant aspects.

The relationship of contemporary art to architecture gives rise to three specific questions: What is the function of 'architecture' in the *discourses and practices* of contemporary art? What is the place of architecturalization in the *history of art* since the early 1960s? What does the prism of 'architecture' contribute to the *criticism* of contemporary art?

First and foremost, for Western art since the Second World War – locked in the prison of a restricted understanding of its autonomy – architecture has functioned as a *signifier of the social*, of the functionality or practicality of form: economically, technologically and politically. In this respect, architecture – like design more generally – is an *archive of the social use of form*. As such it functions as a gateway to, and metonym for, the urban in its fullest sense, which is to say, for modernity. In particular, as a signifier of the social, via the urban, architecture offers a 'privileged access' to the contemporary via the technologies of social production. The architectural aspect of contemporary art is thus that of

both its necessarily limiting *actual* spatializations, and the nonetheless *unlimited* spatial possibilities of *future* realizations. In short, where are the borders of the work?

In conceptualizing this phenomenon, there is a spatial deficit in the established critical discourses of conceptual art as a result of its polemical absolutization of anti-aestheticism. In this respect, architecturalization, or the use of 'architecture' as a model for the work of art, is the antidote to the *spatial deficit* of the self-understanding of Conceptual art (as a movement), which was at the same time a socio-political deficit. (This is Jeff Wall's main claim for the importance of Graham's work: that in relation to other conceptual work, it renders visible the 'defeatism' implicit in this deficit.) On the other hand, there is a conceptual deficit in all conceptions of contemporary art that fails to reflect on its specifically conceptual character. Ironically, it is an undialectical conception of 'site' (the failure to recognize the constitutive role of non-sites in all sites) that is perhaps the greatest culprit here, in producing a simplistic and moralistic conception of 'site-specificity'.<sup>29</sup> It is accompanied in much current art discourse by its temporal twin, a misunderstanding of historical experience embodied in the moralism of so-called memory-work (discussed in the next chapter). 'Art as place' and 'art as memory' are the two main forms of de-conceptualization in contemporary art criticism and practice.

The question of the 'borders' of the work is the question of its unity. So what limits the multiplication of material elements of the work? Nothing immanently material, I would say, but only the character of their representation at a non-site. Increasingly, this representation is primarily photographic. 'Architecturalization' and the mediation of photographic documentation are processes that run in tandem in the constitution of the postconceptual character of contemporary art. In mediating the plan and its actualization, architecture itself draws attention to this unifying role of photography as document, construction, and everyday cultural form – not least, because of the importance of transience (demolition).<sup>30</sup> It is with respect to its role in unifying a diversity of materializations that the documentary function of photography models the ontology of the postconceptual work. Wall has made the case here with respect to photojournalism, in the context of painting in his essay on On Kawara.<sup>31</sup> A similar case can, I think, be made with respect to architectural photography, in the context of the transformation of 'sculpture' into the generic constructions of contemporary 'installations'. We can take as an example here the difference in principle between two bodies of work that have frequently been critically received in similar terms, as interrogations of spaces defined by

form of artistic spatiality beyond, yet nonetheless still tied to, 'objects': a spatiality defined by relations between practices, materials and forms – an 'ideal' space in relation to which the multiplication of materializations of an individual art-idea is in principle unlimited. (This is the fourth feature of postconceptual art, listed in Chapter 2, above – the expansion to infinity of the possible material forms of art, consequent upon the destruction of medium as a category of artistic ontology – condensed here into the individual work itself.) It is the self-consciousness of art's conceptual character, at play in the appropriate relation to 'architecture', that grounds this multiplication of materializations, and thereby, the transformation in the spatial ontology of the work of art that it involves. This multiplication profoundly problematizes precisely 'where' any particular work of art of this kind should be considered to be 'located'; in the same way that photographic technology problematizes the spatial site of the photograph, as we saw in the previous chapter.

For example, if we ask 'Where is Dan Graham's *Homes for America?*' we can find it, currently, distributed across at least four sites or forms, with numerous, often disjunctive, individual material instantiations: 1. as a slide show, first shown at the Finch College 'Projected Art exhibition' (November 1966), and increasingly again, in various venues, from the late 1990s; 2. as Dan Graham's original paste-up for *Arts Magazine*; 3. as actually published in *Arts Magazine*, with the photographs by Walker Evans; and 4. as a revised paste-up produced for exhibition after 1970. The work itself is distributed *across* these four material forms, as constituted by various exhibition practices and histories of reproduction. (This is the fifth feature of postconceptual art, listed in chapter 2: the distributive character of its unity.) Ironically, given that it was a 'magazine work', but unsurprisingly given the commercial logic of the art market, the art institution has privileged its two most 'individual' forms; the original paste-up for *Arts Magazine* and the revised paste-up produced for exhibition – downgrading the actualization of the 'original' conception (the magazine version) to a reproduction.

If we ask the same question of Robert Smithson's *Floating Island* (discussed in Chapter 4, above), a sketch from 1970 (Fig. 11), we are confronted with the fact that its idea was first 'realized' only thirty-five years later in September 2005, many years after Smithson's death, on the occasion of his retrospective in New York (Fig. 12). The openness of time infinitizes the work's inherently plural spatial possibilities. The borders of the work are historically malleable. (This is the sixth feature of postconceptual art.) This raises the question of how the work's conceptuality unifies it, in relation to

their 'betweenness': those by Gordon Matta-Clark and Rachel Whiteread. This superficial phenomenological similarity is cut by the difference between the radically *transcategorical*, postconceptual work of Matta-Clark and the restored medium-specificity and essential conservatism of Whiteread's revival of modernist sculpture.<sup>32</sup>

The transcategorical character of Matta-Clark's work is manifest in its articulation of the relations between multiple elements of his practice: performance, documentation and construction. Think, for example, of the relationship between the architectural photograph known as *NYU Checkerboard* (1974) and the subsequent performance/event documented as *Window Blow-Out* (1976); or the way in which his most famous work, *Splitting* (1974), generates multiple materializations as an actualization of an imaginary photomontage (Fig. 13), documentary photography (Fig. 14), and a basis for a form of documentary photomontage (Fig. 15), which soon morphs back into artistic photomontage (Fig. 16). Similarly, *Bingo* (1974) combines building cuts (performance/event), documentary photos, documentary (Super 8) film, and photoworks, in a way that was surely generative for Graham's important work, *Alteration to a Suburban House* (1978) – although the mutual influence of Michael Graves's cutaway Princeton house should also be acknowledged there. The critical point is that it is the *plurality of spatializations* that preserves the conceptuality of the postconceptual work by breaking the identification of the work with any particular material instantiation.

Compare these practices of Matta-Clark's with the traditionalism of Whiteread's 'architectural' sculptures. Architecture is rendered immediately sculptural in a peaceful coexistence of received forms, rather than working critically on conventional forms to generate wider possibilities for practice. From the point of view of the art's postconceptual character, Whiteread's most important work, *House* (1993), was only saved as contemporary art by the combination of its function as a relay for public debate, and its ultimate destruction. Demolition appears here as a condition of its critical art status.

With regard to contribution of 'architecture' to the criticism of contemporary art, we may thus say that it lies in its clarification of the spatial dimension of the ontology of postconceptual work and its reorientation of the narrative of critical paradigms away from the modernism/postmodernism dyad to the three-stage movement from (medium-specific) modernism via (architecturally mediated) conceptual and postminimal art to a (generic) postconceptual art. Furthermore, it problematizes the relationship of contemporary art's conceptuality not only to its own aesthetic dimension but also to other social practices. Attention to the architectural mediations of the field of contemporary art teaches us that the network of relations between materializations (and the ultimate indifference in the ontological significance of different types of materialization – 'plan'/'object') *constructs* the 'space' of each work. Hence, we may extend our account of the work's construction of its own art-space, above, with the maxim: *To each work its own spatiality – singular in its temporal instantiations and relations, but social and conceptual in its elements and structures of relations.*

The kind of art space produced by the distributed totality of such works is not that of a simple non-place like any other (although non-place is its condition), but something more akin to what Deleuze called 'any-space-whatever' (*un espace quelconque*).

Any-space-whatever is not an abstract universal, in all times, in all places. It is a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, the principle of its metric relations or the connection of its parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. It is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible. What in fact manifests the instability, the heterogeneity, the absence of link of such space, is a richness in potentials or singularities, which are, as it were, prior conditions of all actualizations, all determinations.<sup>33</sup>

In Deleuze, 'any-space-whatever' is derived as a type of cinematic space: specifically, the space associated with one type of affection-image (which is itself one of three kinds of movement-image). It is 'the genetic element

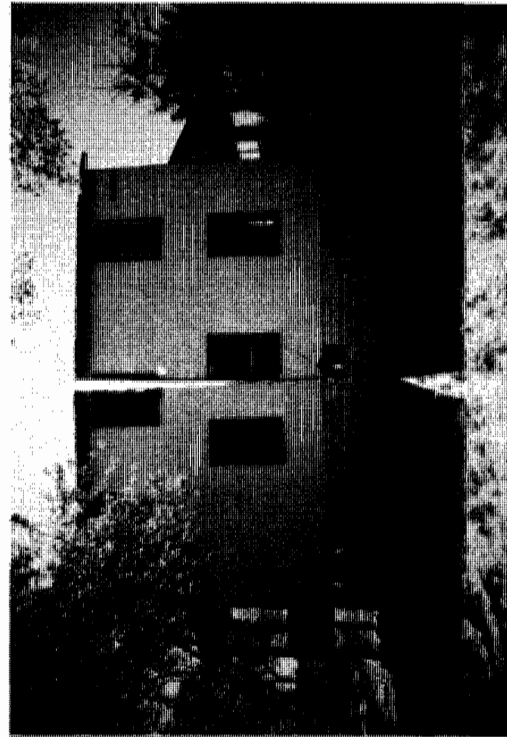


Fig. 13: Gordon Matta-Clark, *Splitting*

of the affection-image' and itself has two states, 'always implied in each other': 'disconnection and emptiness'. However, Deleuze identifies its 'proliferation' not only with a certain cinematic practices, but also:

independent of the cinema . . . the postwar situation with its towns demolished or being reconstructed, its waste grounds, its shanty towns, and even in places where the war had not penetrated, its undifferentiated urban tissue, its vast unused places, docks, warehouses, heaps of girders and scrap iron.<sup>34</sup>

These are the historical conditions of Italian neo-realism and the French New Wave as cinemas of the urban everyday, associated in Deleuze's narrative with the crisis of the action-image and the transition from the movement-image to the time-image.<sup>35</sup>

From the standpoint of our interests here, it is less the specifically cinematic articulations of this kind of space that are important (although they are relevant, as we shall see in the next chapter: art time is not unlike the time of the time-image) than the relations between its historical conditions and its philosophical structure: the fact that it is 'a question of undoing space, as well as the story, the plot or the action', as a function of 'an event which exceeds its actualization in all ways.'<sup>36</sup> Any-space-whatsoever is the *space of presentation* of what Deleuze calls 'a power-quality' or 'potentiality'. Neither concept nor intuition, such a potentiality is 'a set of singularities' which present 'pure powers' or qualities in such a way as to 'combine without abstraction' all possible actualizations of them, without actualizing them.<sup>37</sup> This is a semiotic quality of a particular kind of image (Deleuze's examples are *rain* and the *bridge of Rotterdam* in some of Jorge Iven's films) which carries any-space-whatsoever with it, as its constructed condition.

We can see in the spatiality of the postconceptual work a similar combination of aesthetic, logical and virtual aspects (albeit one less concerned to disavow the abstraction inherent in this combination) produced by the peculiar nominalism of contemporary art, its radical individualism, to which reference was made in Chapter 3. If Hegelian dialectics was a mediation of nominalism and realism (Adorno),<sup>38</sup> what we have here is the distributive logical form of a new type of *post-Hegelian mediation of singularizations*, whereby the universals at stake are themselves constituted, deconstituted and reconstituted by the process of mediation. This is, in fact, in one respect, *more* singularizing than Deleuze's semiotic conception. For when Deleuze asks himself, 'what maintains an *ensemble* in this world without totality or linkage?', he replies: 'The answer is simple: what forms the *ensemble* are *clichés*, and nothing else. Nothing but *clichés*, *clichés* everywhere . . .'<sup>39</sup> This may be

true of the cinematic language of time-images, in its autonomy and everydayness, but the artwork depends upon a more complex set of social structures (artworld) to maintain it, precisely, in its singularizations — not least, the institution of private property.

*To each work its own spatiality — singular in its temporal instantiations and relations, but social and conceptual in its elements and structures of relations.* This means that the only answer to the question, asked of a postconceptual work, 'Where is the work of art?' is 'Anywhere or not at all'. It is in the spatial radicalism of this 'anywhere' that the general structure of postconceptual art provides the ontological condition for more recent, particular developments in the spatial ontology of works of art associated with urban project work and transnationalization.

Thus far, I have treated textualization and architecturalization as the main two practices mediating contemporary art with social space. Yet 'architecture' is a historically limited, and in many ways conservative coding of the social space of the built environment. In fact, in a historical narrative of the expansion of the spatial range and conception of twentieth-century Western art, it would seem to correspond to only the first two of four main phases:

- 1 the 'environmentalization' of painting and sculpture, from Matisse<sup>40</sup> to Kaprow, via muralism, up to the minimalists' investment of negative space — a movement still grounded in the interior;
- 2 the expanded significance of architecture for a generic concept of art via the constitutive ambiguity of the design/building (conceptualization/materialization) relation — the moment of Graham, Smithson and Matta-Clark, discussed above;
- 3 the post-architectural urbanism of various kinds of project work and the functional redefinition of site, based on an awareness of the constitutive role of non-sites (Mark Dion and Andrea Fraser might serve as examples);
- 4 the transnationalization of art via its production for, and inscription within, a transnational art-space that mediates the global dialectic of places, non-places and flows, via the institutional forms of the *market*, the *large-scale international exhibition* (biennale, triennale, etc.) and the *migrancy of artists*.

It is to the third and fourth of these stages — post-architectural urbanism and transnationalization — that I now turn.

*Construction and expression*

What does it mean for the art in an exhibition when that exhibition is conceived as an 'instrument of investigation' into its site and a means of cultural and economic 'reinvigoration' of the surrounding area? What does it mean, that is, for our understanding of it as art, rather than the occasion for the pursuit of a set of independently defined social goals? What does it mean not only that this *might* be so (that an exhibition might be so conceived), but that it *is* so, and moreover, as a matter of course? What does it tell us about contemporary art that such a contextualization is a normal part of art's cultural functioning and, furthermore, that it is a central part of art's *critical* functioning as art? What does it tell us about what art is; that is, about what art has become? And what does it tell us about what art is becoming?

One set of answers to these questions revolves around the concept of construction. With the renewed convergence of artistic and architectural practices since the 1960s, and the ongoing subjection of architecture to urbanism, 'construction' has re-emerged as the main term through which art approaches urbanism, via architecture. At the same time, philosophically, where once it was notions of design, foundation and, later, 'ground' (*Grund*) that bound philosophical thought metaphorically to architecture, now, in the wake of various critiques of philosophical 'foundationalism' (be they historicist, pragmatist, contextualist, or deconstructive in form), it is construction that most often plays that role. And construction, it is argued, is a process that is fraught with contingency, with the indeterminacies of dialogue, and the 'mystery of applicability'.<sup>41</sup> This critique of the original architectural metaphor of philosophy broadly corresponds to changes within architecture itself.

If Western philosophy has been in one of its central impulses but 'another name' for the will to architecture, historically, this took the form of a will to the first principle, an intellectual absolutization or idealization of the *techné* (skill) of the *architectón* (the original or principle craftsman): design. But the *techné* of the architectón is no longer to be identified with design. Today, with the subjection of architecture to urbanism (planning), and of urbanism to the tripartite logic of capitalist economics (production, circulation, consumption), [n]othing is less relevant to the reality of architecture than the idea that it is the realization of a design *qua* idea.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, it never was, outside of an absolutist ideology of architecture, which derived its credibility from its inscription within a particular system of power. In the early twentieth century, for Le Corbusier, the architect became 'an organizer, not a designer of objects'; after the crisis of the modern movement (the crisis of the ideological function of architecture as utopian planning), the architect has

become a technician and organizer of building production.<sup>43</sup> Thus it is construction in its most general sense that 'architecture' has become.

Out of a growing interplay between the theoretical discourses of philosophy, architecture, art and urbanism, the idea emerges of a 'new constructivism'. In the 1950s it was asked, 'What is existentialism?'; in the 1960s and early 70s, 'What is structuralism?'; in the late 1970s and 80s, 'What is poststructuralism?'; 'What is deconstruction?' or 'What is postmodernism?' Now, increasingly, we ask, 'What is constructivism today?'<sup>44</sup> To answer this question, it is necessary, first, to return briefly to an earlier phase of constructivism: the Russian Constructivism of the 1920s. For it is there that we find the dialectic of constructivism outlined in its elemental form. And just as Russian Constructivism was split at the outset, between a radically political, Soviet social variant and an interpretation that returned it to its art-historical condition (formalism) — with which it remained identified in the West until well into the 1970s<sup>45</sup> — so the idea of a new constructivism comes in differing theoretical and ideological variants today. In particular, on the one hand, there is a *philosophical* constructivism and libertarian architectonics that follows the thought of Gilles Deleuze, which would place philosophy, art, architecture and urbanism on a single 'plane of immanence', breaking with socio-historical analysis to affirm simultaneously a new philosophy, a new architecture and a new conception of the work of art, at the level of thought alone.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, there is that dense network of historical and conceptual ties that links a certain postconceptual *art criticism, practice and exhibition* to the Constructivism of the 1920s, while at the same time registering a definitive distance from it. The former re-enacts the ideology of the avant-garde at its most abstract, as the permanent invention of beginnings, in the 'positive', non-dialectical form of 'an experimental art of singularizing space' — a singularization which, as such, that is, without concept, can ultimately be no more than *aesthetic*.<sup>47</sup> The latter works through the historical contradictions of Constructivism under the changed conditions of the present. What follows sketches the conceptual shape of this latter working-through as the tentative emergence of a 'post-autonomous' art. This is an art that, if it is to be more than ironic, increasingly depends upon the constructivism of its exhibition context.

The principle of construction refers to the building up of an object through a combination of independently pre-existent parts. Long familiar in architecture, mathematics and philosophy,<sup>48</sup> it was first applied to artistic production in the early years of the second decade of the twentieth century, in the cubist pictorial compositions, collages, *papiers collés* and reliefs of Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. However, it only became explicit as a general principle of artistic production — independent of a critical dialogue with traditional forms — on the basis of

Vladimir Tatlin's self-consciously abstract counter-reliefs of 1914–15, which inspired the explicitly designated spatial 'constructions' of Ivan Klyun and Lev Bruni of 1916–17, and laid the formal basis for the constructivism to come. As a formal principle, construction is independent of any particular materials. It is central to a non-visual art such as music, for example. Nonetheless, a certain *kind* of materials is required, since construction presupposes the independent 'givenness' of the elements of the constructive process as self-sufficient objects or units. This type of materials is intrinsic to the technologies and division of labour of manufacture. This connection is central to the social meaning of construction, which derives from both the formal principle and the historical condition of the constructed materials.

It is for this reason, for example, that it is important to distinguish the 1915–19 'constructions' of the Russian artist Naum Gabo (whose formalist works were long synonymous with constructivism in the West) from even the early work of Tatlin. As one commentator has put it:

Whereas Tatlin's starting point was an interest in the qualities of the materials and their juxtaposition and interaction in space, Gabo's was a precise analysis of the structure of form and its internal spatial implications. He began with the idea or image which he then executed in a formal material. There was no exploitation of the *objet trouvé* or any chance combinations of materials.<sup>49</sup>

It is this relative indifference to materials that is the basis of the social and political indifference of Gabo's formalist version of constructivism, set out in *The Realistic Manifesto* (1920). It contrasts sharply with the social utilitarianism and polemically anti-art stance of the First Working Group of Constructivists, founded the same year, with which the term is more properly, and richly, associated. For construction is a rational-instrumental process with historically specific social, material and technological conditions. The 'factual rationalization of artistic labour' that it meant for the First Working Group also meant (reflecting on these conditions) integrating artistic labour into the total social labour out of which its principle arose (machine labour), as part of a collective practice of 'social construction'.<sup>50</sup> This is the central, guiding concept of Constructivism: social construction, the realization of 'the communist expression of material structures'.<sup>51</sup> And the materials of those structures were, principally, those of the industrial technologies of the day. Hence the emblematic significance of an early, pre-Constructivist work of Tatlin's such as *Selection of Materials: Iron, Stucco, Glass, Asphalt* (1914), which, while 'non-utilitarian', nonetheless still has more affinities with the laboratory work of Constructivism proper (formal

experimentation within the horizon of social use) than with Gabo's self-sufficient interest in pure spatio-temporal forms.

In its broadest historical meaning, construction is a manifestation of that wider process of societal rationalization theorized by Max Weber as means-end or instrumental rationality (*Zweckrationalität*), which was generalized by the Frankfurt School into the dominant principle of modern societies. In fact, Weber himself applied this theoretical framework to the analysis of musical developments as early as 1911 in *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music* (although it was not published until 1921). In this respect, construction embodies a historical structure of social experience that is a condition of significance in modern art in general. However, there are complexities involved in its artistic use that make it a profoundly dialectical affair. These have to do, first, with the contradictory political dynamics and implications of formalism; and second, with the relationship of construction to expression, which lies at the heart of the question of materials, in both formalist ('non-utilitarian') and social utilitarian applications of the principle.

Formal construction was a historical and conceptual condition of social-utilitarian or revolutionary Constructivism. For formalism destroyed the conventional symbolic attributes of traditional artistic media, as a condition for its rearticulation of their material elements on the basis of a complete freedom of relations (aestheticism). This opened up the contrary possibility of a utilitarian deployment of forms (rationalization). Indifference to the traditional uses and significations of materials was thus the condition of *both* formalist-aestheticism *and* anti-aesthetic instrumentalization: the two opposing currents within constructivism itself.<sup>52</sup> This was a politically contradictory process in two ways. First, formalist construction became a metonym for the freedom of experimentation associated with social revolution; but it was 'anti-revolutionary' in its social confinement of such experimentation to the domain of 'art', cut off from the everyday life and needs of the people. Second, the principle of rationalization is itself inherently politically contradictory. In the revolutionary moment of an anti-traditionalist collectivism, it could appear unambiguously progressive – as it did to the First Working Group – as agreement about social ends overshadowed disputes over means. But in the more clearly transitional period of the New Economic Policy and after, its instrumentality could equally denote alienation: alienation from the social process of determining means. 'Revolutionary' constructivism could then appear as a form of unfreedom in comparison with the aesthetically unlimited (albeit socially confined) scope of formalism. This is the Cold War reading of Soviet Constructivism. And, indeed, the experimental character of Constructivism was inevitably compromised by the practicalities



of social production, as the distinction between Constructivism and Productivism (constructive artistic labour and production-art) dissolved as the 1920s progressed. The consolidation of new social forms became a constraint upon forms of construction, and experimentation retreated, back to the non-utilitarian domain. This is the familiar dialectic of the historical and the neo-avant-gardes: 'art into life' versus the autonomy of the artwork.<sup>53</sup>

The first contradiction above (between the revolutionary and anti-revolutionary aspects of formalism) was temporarily mediated by the idea of 'laboratory works' – formal exercises undertaken not for their own sake but as research for future instrumental uses. But the second contradiction, internal to the social process of rationalization under conditions of scarcity, was intractable. It led, inevitably, to the restoration of an independent artistic domain. The politics of that domain were, however, henceforth put on a new footing. For it became a political requirement of the good faith of the artwork that it in some way confront the bad faith of its own autonomy (its withdrawal from the social domain), reflectively, within its own structure. Indeed, subsequently, elsewhere, under the conditions of the capitalist cultural industry, this would become a condition of autonomy itself. Hence the centrality of the dialectic of art and anti-art, internal to the modernist work, to its status as art – the critically constitutive role of anti-art within contemporary art. Art had to become 'critical' once it had failed to become universally actual, if it was to continue to be associated with both the freedom and the social possibilities for critically significant expression that it had acquired in the formalist/aestheticist critique of tradition. From that point on, critical artistic meaning became inextricably but problematically tied to the question of the relationship of the individual artwork to the rationality (and irrationality) of social forms. This problematic relationship is manifest internally, within the work, in the dialectic of construction and expression. It appears externally, at the level of cultural form, in the contradictory character of the social space of art.

For all its interest in materials, motivated by their technological potential and everyday uses (including pleasure in technological forms), the utopian presuppositions of revolutionary Constructivism inhibited it from seeing in materials the site of a possible contradiction between construction and expression. For Constructivism, revolutionary-utilitarian construction was *immediately* communist expression. There was an identity of economic function and political meaning. As economic function and political meaning diverge, however, and economic function becomes the site of social conflict, construction enters into opposition to expression. This opposition

appears within the (non-utilitarian) artwork in the fact that the very principle of construction seems to negate the materials' immanent capacity for expression. As Adorno put it:

What distinguishes construction from composition in the encompassing sense of pictorial composition, is the ruthless subordination not only of everything that originated from outside the artwork, but also of all partial elements immanent to the work. To this extent construction is the extension of subjective domination . . . [It] tears the elements of reality out of their primary context and transforms them to the point where they are once again capable of forming a unity, one that is no less imposed on them internally than was the heteronomous unity to which they were subjected externally . . . if the synthesis of construction is to succeed, it must in spite of all aver- accede in themselves to what is imposed on them . . . This is the utopia of construction; its fallibility, on the other hand, is that it necessarily has a penchant to destroy what it integrates and to arrest the process in which it has its life.<sup>54</sup>

This contradiction is not contingent but structural. It arises out of the contradictory character – the irrational rationality – of instrumental reason itself. For the concept of rationalization to which Constructivism was, at least initially, bound (prior to Tatlin's late 'organic' constructivism) was that of the domination of nature. It had no consciousness of the dialectic of Enlightenment rationality. This dialectic determines the primary meaning of expression as expression not of communism, but of *suffering* (an increasingly important theme in Adorno's later work).<sup>55</sup>

The subjugation of the elements of the work to the constructive principle expresses the suffering of an inner nature subjected to the domination of the concept, for which the rational side of the subject is itself the agent. Construction is not simply logical in form, but as such, a *mimesis* (imitation) of rationality. Constructivism is a negative expressionism. It is thus *through*, rather than as a 'corrective' to construction that expression occurs – 'construction gains expression through coldness'<sup>56</sup> – but only negatively and individualistically. On the other hand, to the extent to which construction in art is successful (that is, imposes its principle of organization through, as well as against, its elements, in a reflective process of what Adorno calls 'determinate irreconcilability'), it represents 'the effort to bear up under the suffering of alienation by exceeding it on the horizon of an undiminished and thus no longer violent rationality'. This is its continuing, if fragile, utopian function: its 'anticipation of a reconciled condition'.<sup>57</sup>

Ultimately though, the principle of construction, essential to the ability of modern art to express social form, seems fated to drive that art into an impasse not unlike that of Constructivism itself. Constructivism took for granted the rationality of construction. Adorno takes for granted the irrationality of this rationality. He thus attributes the compromising of the experimental dimension of constructivism (which was the effect of a socio-political restriction on utilitarian form) to the principle of construction itself: 'constructivism no longer grants any role to inspiration (*Einfalls*), which is unplanned arbitrariness . . . [This is] the fatality inherent to rationalization'.<sup>58</sup> It is the restoration of the recognition of 'unplanned arbitrariness' that is the goal of the new philosophical constructivism of Deleuze. Yet on Adorno's account, construction cannot eradicate the mimetic basis of the artwork (construction in art *imitates* the form of logicity). This regulates the application of the principle of construction in an undetermined, or at least, unconscious or 'free' way. This is precisely the advantage over utilitarian forms of artistic labour of non-utilitarian art's 'functionlessness'. Unplanned arbitrariness is in this respect ineradicable from the work of art. The threat is thus a threat to art itself. The problem becomes how to find new artistic materials and new forms of construction capable of expressing the latest forms of social (ir)rationality, autonomously, yet in a way which is nonetheless at the same time critical of the social limitations imposed by the current institutionalization of autonomy itself. The solution, more often than not, is via *the urban*. This is the critical problematic of that contemporary art – postconceptual art – which is grounded on a continued working through, transformation and development of the contradictions of constructivism; contradictions which are exemplary of those of the historical avant-garde more generally.

*Art as displaced urbanism: capitalist constructivism of the exhibition-form*

One way of reading the critical trajectory of the European and North American art of the 1960s and 1970s is as a displaced repetition of a series of relationships between art forms and movements of the 1920s and 1930s. However, this has generally been understood in terms of the repetition of 'artistic paradigms' – grid formation, monochrome, ready-made, collage, assemblage, photomontage – rather than in terms of the contradictory conceptual structure of the artwork itself.<sup>59</sup> There has thus been a tendency in this work to identify a break with the dialectic of historical and neo-avant-gardes at precisely the point at which it reimposed itself most intensely, moving to a new stage of development, in the practice of an art of institutional critique.<sup>60</sup>

From the standpoint of the contradictory structure of the artwork, the movement from Minimalism, via Conceptual art, to Institutional Critique appears as a displaced repetition of the movement from formal construction, via Constructivism, to the functionalism of Productivism. Institutional critique appears as a political functionalism turned inward, against the social relations of autonomy that are responsible for art's lack of 'productivity' and social impotence. But it is also thereby a functionalism which is turned against the institutional conditions of its own functioning as critique – 'critique' being the one function compatible with art's functionlessness: the function of functionlessness itself. Institutional critique can only be an art of direct practicality by restricting itself to a terrain on which critique is the only form of practicality, the only social use-value: autonomous art. However, it thereby implicitly affirms the critical value of the art institution, the political conditions and social impotence of which it simultaneously exposes.<sup>61</sup> Ironically, this helps the institution to survive its own critique. The very existence of this critique within the institution – the institution's acceptance of institutional critique – negates the practical function of that critique, although not its intellectual value. Institutional critique thus strengthens and develops the art institution.

At one level, this appears as failure: the liquidation of its aspiration to be immediately social or directly practical, a deepening of the sense of art's social impotence, even within its own highly restricted domain. At another level, however, as a critical artistic practice, it appears as a *constructed mimesis* of the ability of cultural institutions within developed capitalist societies to sustain and recuperate their own critique. Its so-called 'failure' is an operative dimension of this critical functioning. There is thus an additional irony here (an 'irony of irony', in Schlegel's sense): the irony of the ironic failure of institutional critique as a political practice is that it thereby succeeds critically as art. It succeeds in giving artistic expression to the irrational rationality of the art institution: the basis of its critical rationality in irrational (oppressive) socio-economic forms. Using institutional forms, histories and relations as artistic materials, and developing new forms of construction – establishing new relationships between the elements of its materials – it expresses an existing form of social (ir)rationality, autonomously, yet in a way which is nonetheless at the same time critical of the current institutionalization of autonomy itself. Furthermore, by expanding the range of artistic materials to include the social relations and practices of institutions, it renders explicit the hitherto repressed social side of the ontology of the artwork. However, by restricting its focus to established forms of art-institutionality (principally, the museum and the gallery), institutional critique retains the defensive structure of

self-reference characteristic of formalist modernisms. It thus combines aspects of Formalism and Productivism, but it lacks the key element of Constructivism: social construction. It is in this respect that the 'urban turn' within post-conceptual art practice and curation represents a new departure, in so far as it aspires to the broader social canvas of something like a new constructivism of the exhibition-form.

As Wall has argued with regard to Dan Graham's work (but the point is a general one), 'architecture' (understood here as 'the discourse of siting the effects of power generated by publicity, information and bureaucracy in the city') 'emerges as the determining or decisive art form, because it most wholly reflects institutional structure, and influences behaviour through its definition of positionality.' The city thus becomes 'the single grand subject' of art, at the precise point at which it becomes informational/global in form, and art becomes correspondingly postconceptual.<sup>62</sup> The idea of influencing behaviour through 'definitions of positionality' is a difficult one, and the aspect of Wall's account which is perhaps most specific to some of Dan Graham's work. But it is in 'influencing behaviour' that the constructivist aspect appears. A more explicitly constructivist position would construe such influence more directly, in terms of the construction not only of situations, but of social relations and practices as well. These are changes in the social relations of artistic production and the social character of exhibition space that involve taking cultural forms of an evermore extensive character as the objects of a new constructive – that is organizational – intent. We can see the beginnings of such constructions in recent transformations in the social space of art associated with the idea of the 'functional' or 'informational' site.

On James Meyer's account:

The functional site may or may not incorporate a physical space. It certainly does not *privilege* this place. Instead, it is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and textual filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist's above all). It is an informational site, a palimpsest of text, photographs and video recordings, physical places, and things . . . It is a temporary thing, a movement, a chain of meanings and imbricated histories . . .<sup>63</sup>

In this context, 'the work' is 'not a single entity, the installation of a given artist in a single place', but 'a *function* occurring between . . . locations and points of view, a series of expositions of information and place.' 'Site' becomes 'a network of sites referring to an *elsewhere*.'<sup>64</sup> This is a negative, still-locational description of what is actually a new,

distributional spatial form, with its own (relational) positive effects, derived from the *organizational relations* that constitute such work.

Such art is Constructivist – and hence 'post-autonomous' – to the extent that it has an immanently artistic, as well as a functional, institutional logic: that is, to the extent that there is a simultaneous emergence of definitions of social function and new artistic forms. Jeff Wall has described 'functionalist' or 'post-autonomous' art as work that

achieves its functional purposes by means of being a work of art and taking on the form of a work of art, albeit experimental in form . . . that is, it responds to no external functional or practical command, it is freely chosen and made by the artist. The artist chooses to make his or her work useful in some way, or even just to pretend it might be useful to act 'as if' it could be useful. This pretense invents possible functions, and presents them to the public, which might not otherwise have thought of them. In this light, post-autonomous art is only a liminal type of autonomous art.<sup>65</sup>

There are thus two discrete senses in which we may speak of 'functionalist' art, which come together in recent practice: the conventional constructivist sense of an art *performing* a social function, to which Wall refers, and Meyer's more recent spatial, dis-located sense of art *existing* as a communicational function 'between locations and points of view, a series of expositions of information and place.' The latter is a necessary historical corrective, not to Wall's constructivism, but to his liberalism: his delegation of functional goals to individual artistic decisions. These are more plausibly conceived as being the overdetermined outcome of a range of structural institutional pressures, and curatorial and career decisions, as well as individual artistic choices – especially when we conceive autonomy as a resistant property of the work, rather than an attribute of the artist. The contemporary project-based urban art of international exhibition spaces is largely the outcome of negotiations between artists and curators, museum or exhibition authorities, and corporations, councils and governments (at local, regional, national and international levels). These practices of organization, co-ordination and negotiation – whether they are about 'production' or 'installation', the difference between which is increasingly tenuous – are crucial mediators of art with urban social forms. At their broadest, they articulate a new kind of exhibition space: a capitalist constructivism of the exhibition-form.

If the white cube remains the major *convention* through which contemporary art passes, the *social space* through which it encounters this convention is predominantly that of the international exhibition,

as a temporary network of a huge range of works, articulated in thematic clusters across a string of sites. These sets of sites might be geographically stable (like the Venice Biennale), have shifting boundaries, or be nomadic (like Manifesta). In this expanded and distributional spatial context, the exhibition has become the basic unit from which it is possible to conceive of relationships between art and ideology ushered in by technologies, to the detriment of the individual work.' And the constructive technologies are no longer just those of manufacture, but primarily communicational. This is no longer the exhibition as 'store' (the original, oft-revived Constructivist metaphor), but the exhibition as 'set', within a general remodelling of the cinematic in line with digital technologies.<sup>66</sup> The curator functions as director and the works of art function as elements of the constructive process of exhibition building. Such works are intrinsically double-coded: they have their own ('liminally autonomous') significations and modes of experience, and they have the more fully 'post-autonomous' meanings that accrue to them as a result of their place within the overall (often quite chaotic) logic of construction of the exhibition. This is a logic that is itself contradictory: divided between the presentation of the collective exhibition-value of the works and their putative use-values as models within a speculative programme of social construction. Such programmes are uneasy amalgams of art, economics and politics. But then, what is 'culture' but such an amalgam? The use-values of individual works – and the programme itself – may, or may not, survive to be 'consumed' after the exhibition. But it is the horizon of expectation that they might, that the exhibitions depend upon for their constructive force. This horizon of expectation is increasingly a transnational one.

#### *Transnationalization: art industry*

The transnationalization of art via its production for, and inscription within, a transnational space mediates the global dialectic of places, non-places and flows, via the institutional forms of the *market*, the *large-scale international exhibition* (biennale, triennale, etc.), and the *migrancy of artists*. This is a profoundly contradictory process whereby art-institutional and market forms must negotiate the politics of regionalism, postcolonial nationalism and migration, overwriting the general spatial logic of postconceptual work with global political-economic dynamics. There has never been so much art as there is today – so much art produced, reproduced, exhibited, documented, shipped, stored, bought, sold and destroyed. And there has never been so many, or so geographically dispersed, regular, large-scale exhibitions of contemporary art.

They form the nodes of the network structure of a now globalized Western artworld.

As argued in Chapter 1, above, in recent years, the globally transnational character of an art space has become the primary marker of its contemporaneity, and it has thus become incumbent upon art with a claim on the present to situate itself, reflexively, within this expanded world. The coming together of different times that constitutes the contemporary, and the movement across social spaces that make up the transnational, are the main axes along which the social meaning of art is to be plotted today. In bringing together geopolitically diverse forms of social experience that have only recently begun to be represented within the parameters of a common world, these institutions have created genuinely novel kinds of cultural space. It is this heightened awareness of the known-but-previously-unrepresented that provides the context of today's biennales, such as the 2006 Sydney Biennale, *Zones of Contact*, which epitomized many of these features. With its title's connotations of anthropology and warfare – the theoretical and practical aspects of colonial expedition, respectively – the exhibition projected the world as a postcolonial network or matrix of 'contact zones'. However, this was no longer the 'classical' postcolonialism of the period following the Second World War – the postcolonialism of anti-imperialism and national liberation, the postcolonialism of the Cold War, which is now better thought in terms of ongoing processes of decolonization. Rather, it is the postcolonialism of 'after 1989' – the postcolonialism of a global neoliberalism. This is postcolonialism not of the 'elsewhere' of Meyer's still negatively locationally defined functional sites, but of what Okwui Enwezor has called 'the terrible nearness of distant places', a postcolonialism of proximities, both imagined (through 'the spectacular mediation and representation of nearness') and actual (through the presence within metropolitan centres of migrants from the margins).<sup>67</sup> Indeed, especially in relation to China, our conception of it should be extended to include returning migrants, artists in particular. As Ackbar Abbas has argued, 'culture is not just placed elsewhere, but . . . it is everywhere, displaced; it may even be at home . . . It is not a question of homelands *versus* displacement, but homelands *plus* displacement . . . all places, including homelands, are – to coin a neologism – displaced.'<sup>68</sup> This new, post-1989 postcolonial situation involves both a new anthropology and new forms of war.

Structural anthropology provided an ontology for decolonization by maintaining multiple cultures on a single plane of significance.<sup>69</sup> The postcolonial condition requires an anthropology of a more radically transcultural kind: a transnational and translational study of the cultural, focused on the production of new kinds of social subjects, whose actions

are distributed across time and space more widely and with greater complexity than ever before. The new biennales both contribute to, and are prime objects for, such studies. They contribute to them by bringing together art from across the world into the same physical space. They are objects for study in so far as they exemplify the conditions (and hence the restrictions) under which practices of such nationally and transnationally diverse origin come to occupy the same national space. For the most significant 'zone of contact' here is not represented within or by the artworks; it is that transcribed by the relations between the works and the biennale itself. This is the real 'contact', the place of translation, representation, negotiation and power. In this anthropological sense, contact is a site of risk, at which the stakes and meaning of exchange are uncertain. There is much to be gained, and much also to be lost. But the risk is not equally distributed.

As a consequence, the geopolitical diversity of the art that is assembled in exhibitions like *Zones of Contact* is a complex one. Some of the works may purport (or be purported) to represent the social space of either its own or its maker's origins. But the more successful an artist, the less likely they are to live and work in their country of origin, or indeed in any single place. (Twenty percent of the artists in *Zones of Contact* no longer lived or worked in their country of origin, and their movement was overwhelmingly 'inwards', from the periphery to Europe – especially, Amsterdam and Berlin – and New York.) The transnational postcoloniality represented here is thus of a general cultural kind. It is at least as much associated with displacement as it is with the social conditions within previously colonized territories themselves. Indeed, notoriously, it is precisely displaced postcolonial subjects who can most successfully represent themselves as 'native'.<sup>70</sup> The native itself, on the other hand, (in so far as the term retains a meaningful referent in such an interconnected world) can acquire its status as 'informant' only by being represented as such, by others, within international cultural spaces.

This is one of the main functions of the new biennales: they are cultural representatives of the market idea of a global system of societies. They mediate exchange relations with artists via the latest cultural discourses of 'globalization', in order to put the latest version of the contemporary on show.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, by virtue of their power of assembly, international biennales are manifestations of the cultural-economic power of the 'centre', *wherever* they crop up and *whatever* they show. In short, they are the Research and Development branch of the transnationalization of the culture industry. For currently, it is only capital that projects the utopian horizon of global social interconnectedness, albeit in the ultimately dystopian form of the market.

This gives the new international biennales an emblematic status. They are emblems of capital's capacity to cross borders, and to accommodate and appropriate cultural differences. Art labour is variable art capital. Furthermore, currently, it is *only* capital that immanently projects the utopian horizon of global social interconnectedness, in the ultimately dystopian form of the market. However, for all these social determinations, it is still the art-character of the works on show – their particular ways of 'showing', their individual lack of self-evidence – that makes all this possible, that raises it above the status of an extended series of world exhibitions. In particular, it is the ultimate *extra-territoriality* of art (which is part and parcel of its illusion of autonomy, and its *socially produced* ideality) that makes this recent art of multiple and complex territorializations possible.

It is a distinctive feature of the new trans- and international art spaces that art appears *within* the culture industry, as part of distinctively capitalist constructivism. There is a new kind of coexistence of art and the culture industry: a transnational *art industry*. Contemporary art is at the forefront of a rapid expansion of this transnational art industry. It is in the term 'art industry' that the contradictory character of the new international spaces of contemporary art is most directly expressed. For, from the standpoint of the critical tradition, the very phrase 'art industry' suggests one or more of three main things: a collapse of autonomous art into commodity-production (one version of the famous 'end of art'); a restriction in the use of the term 'art' to its pre-modern connotation of craft or techné; and an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. To understand something of the *objective* character of this contradiction, its developmental dynamism and its productivity, it is necessary briefly to recall the salient features of its canonical presentation in the 'Culture Industry' chapter of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, composed in 1942, in the middle of the Second World War.<sup>72</sup>

Horkheimer and Adorno coined the phrase 'the culture industry' as an alternative to 'mass culture', in order to draw attention to the continuity of social form between the products of twentieth-century mass culture and those of industrialized commodity-production more generally. Their purpose was to distinguish mass culture from the 'popular' culture or 'low art' (which was more spontaneously related to the people) that preceded it.<sup>73</sup> As industrialized mass culture, the culture industry was to be equally distinguished from 'art' in its modern, critical, institutionalized sense as 'autonomous' – autonomous, that is, in its production of meaning, from the dictates of church, state, politics and markets alike. This threefold distinction of popular culture, culture industry, and autonomous art has been the subject of considerable

debate and no small amount of simplification and misunderstanding – much of it the result of misjudgements of the rhetorical form of Horkheimer and Adorno's original presentation. From the point of view of our concerns here, three things in particular should be emphasized. First, these are not three 'pure' forms: the terms distinguish cultural products and practices on the basis of whichever of the three rationalities dominates within the productive logic of each particular work. Second, 'autonomous' art has always been for sale, as a commodity, in the market. (Historically, the market is the *social basis* of art's autonomy from its previous social functions.) Autonomous works of art are thus always *also* commodities – always already 'post-autonomous', in Wall's sense. Their difference from the products of the culture industry is not commodification as such, but rather the fact that the latter are commodities 'through and through'. The latter are *produced*, rather than just circulated, as commodities – that is, in order to be exchanged – in a manner that determines the structure of the product by the anticipation of its market. Third, art's commodification is the source of contradictions within the autonomous artwork, contradictions between its immanent artistic logic and its saleability. These are contradictions that the artwork must mediate and ultimately *incorporate* into what Adorno called 'the law of form', if it is to achieve autonomy. Autonomy is never a 'given'. In so far as it exists, it is the individual achievement of each work: the victory of technique (the principle of internal organization) over social conditions. Autonomy is the achievement, in each instance, of the production of a law of form.

Furthermore, as is clear from Adorno's later *Aesthetic Theory*, this reflective incorporation of social conditions into the immanent logic of works of art should not be conceived merely negatively, as a constraint upon some original artistic freedom. Rather, this very dependence or 'heteronomy' gives both *life* and *social substance* to the work. It gives *life* because it is the struggle of technique with 'extra-aesthetic' materials (including the projection of conditions of circulation and reception) that animates the work. This includes the residual presence within works of unincorporated elements – itself a paradoxical part of the modern work's law of form, by which it avoids falling into the false formal coherence of 'beauty'. It gives *social substance* to the work because the reflective incorporation of the social conditions of reception into the immanent logic of works of art is one of the main determinations of their 'content', alongside the social form of their technologies and techniques of production. Only if art has social content of this kind will its ultimate 'asociality' – the fetish-like, illusory self-sufficiency of its product – function as a 'determinate negation of a determinate society'.<sup>74</sup> Only thus will art be truly 'critical'.

The incorporation of contemporary art into the cultural industry, via the new inter- and transnational spaces of art, changes the social conditions within which autonomy is to be achieved. It thereby alters the immanent contradictions within works of art, the formal mediation and articulation of which will determine the character of their 'autonomy' (or lack of it), and hence their critical status. In itself, this dictates neither the 'end of (autonomous) art' nor its survival. All it dictates is the changed conditions to which works must respond if they are to wrestle autonomy out of facticity. (One of these changed conditions is that the culture industry itself no longer only makes 'mass' products, but exhibits a highly sophisticated differentiation into market sectors – including, paradoxically, autonomous art, for which it is now the distributive mechanism.) There are grounds for believing that autonomy is becoming ever harder to achieve. The appropriation and standardization of new artistic forms occurs with ever-increasing speed; and the integration of the different aspects of the culture industry – art, fashion, mass culture, advertising, tourism – is far greater than previously. But these are also grounds for believing that this system itself has an increased need for autonomous art, with which to feed its need for 'the new'. Hence the search for new social 'heterogeneities', to transform into artistic materials, that has been characteristic of the expansion of the international artworld over the last two decades, and the means for its gradual de-nationalization. This process has been massively reinforced by the extension of the world market, subsequent to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the take-off of state capitalism in China.

The new international biennales of contemporary art are inscribed within an updated ('transcultural') anthropological problematic of the plurality of cultures and the universality of sense. However, art's universality is not socially structural, like the anthropologist's 'sense', but historical, socio-spatially conditioned, and ultimately individual in kind. If, as we have argued, following Adorno, modern art is characterized by a decline in the binding power of mediating universals (mediums, forms and genres), and the individual work has come increasingly to bear the burden of mediating its relations to the universality of 'art' directly – to produce artistic universality out of its own (individual) law of form – the exhibition-form has to some extent compensated with new mediating social functions, not necessarily directly, but contextually. Rather than the invention of new mediums (Krauss) or the positivist reduction of 'art' to a proper name (Duve),<sup>75</sup> it is increasingly the transnational exhibition-form that fulfils the requirement of providing social meaning. The art market may still be trading in individual works, but it is the exhibition that is the unit of artistic significance, and the object of constructive intent. In the new international

biennales, individual works generate meaning and affect relationally, as components of this new kind of art space. It is up to curators, with their power of assembly, to ensure that such spaces retain their lack of self-evidence – that they remain spaces of uncertainty, of not knowing in advance. Increasingly, since the 1960s, the modern art museum has attempted to take account of and to institutionalize such uncertainty through the notion of ‘project space’. However, this institutionalization of the project as a unit of art discourse (today, increasingly the transnational project) has generally involved its contradictory appropriation to a *locational*ly conceived exhibition-space.

### *Project space*

The growing recognition that contemporary art ‘lives’ through its opening onto the future has led to the creation within art institutions since the 1960s of specific, demarcated spaces for the exhibition of ‘projects’. The notion of project space has generally been approached empirically, within the terms of a history of art institutions.<sup>76</sup> However it can also be approached philosophically, in relation to the histories – converging and diverging – of the concepts of art and project. For as we saw in Chapter 2, above, the philosophical history of the modern concept of art, as the bearer of a distinctive form of metaphysical experience, encompasses that of ‘the project’ at its source, in the Jena Romanticism of the 1790s, through the idea of art as being, in principle, ‘forever becoming, never completed’.<sup>77</sup> Subsequently, in Heidegger’s work of the late 1920s, the philosophical concept of project detached itself from an artistic context and became associated with the structure of human being as Being-in-the-world. This existential notion of project (identified in Heidegger’s writings with the German term *Entwurf*, rather than *Projekt*)<sup>78</sup> casts a new light back onto the Romantic conception of the artwork, which appears from this standpoint in a more radically temporal-existential (rather than metaphysical or onto-theological) guise. It is just such a temporal and existential conception of art that came to the fore in that process of the destruction of conventional, medium-based conceptions of the ‘fine’ or beautiful arts, from the late 1950s through to the early 1970s, known as the art of the Sixties. As it had previously come to the fore, contemporaneously with Heidegger’s early writings, but at some considerable geopolitical distance from them, in Russian Futurism and Soviet Constructivism.

Each of the terms associated with the institutional history of project space – *new*, *young*, *original*, *experimental*, *innovative*, *initiative*, *difficult*, *controversial*, *speculative*, *risky*<sup>79</sup> – derives its basic cultural significance

from its place within the constellation of early Romanticism. A philosophical interpretation of project space must thus start there, with Friedrich Schlegel’s characterization of a project as a ‘fragment of the future’, in the passage with which we concluded Chapter 2:

A project (*Ein Projekt*) is the subjective embryo of a developing [literally, ‘a becoming’] object (*eines werdenden Objekts*). A perfect project must be at once wholly subjective and wholly objective, must be an indivisible and living individual. In its origin, wholly subjective and original, only possible in precisely this spirit; in its character, wholly objective (*objektiv*), physically and morally necessary. The feeling for projects – which one might call fragments of the future – is different from the feeling for fragments of the past only by its direction: progressive in the former, regressive in the latter. What is essential is the ability to idealize and to realize objects (*Gegenstände*) and immediately and simultaneously: to make them whole (*ergänzen*) and partly carry them out within oneself. Since transcendental is precisely whatever relates to the joining or separating of the ideal and the real, one might very well say that the feeling for fragments and projects is the transcendental element of the historical spirit.<sup>80</sup>

The project, then, for Schlegel, combines (1) a temporal registration of the necessary incompleteness, and hence striving towards the future, of the reality of the work of art (what we might call its inherently *processual* character: it is directed towards an end that it has not reached, and cannot reach) with (2) an ideal image of its completion, from which it derives its meaning as the partial realization of something ideal, or a ‘becoming object’ (*eines werdenden Objekts*). Projects are articulated combinations of ideas and processes of actualization. As such, a project is the temporal equivalent to – and futural dimension of – the spatiality of the fragment. Just as one may say that, for Schlegel, the fragment *is* the work of art; so one may say that for him, a work of art *is* a project. Art *lives* only in its incompleteness, as project.

The temporality of the project is thus more pervasive than is suggested by Schlegel’s contrast between projects as ‘fragments of the future’ and what one may surmise to be ruins, ‘fragments of the past’; although Schlegel’s reduction of this difference to one of mere direction (*Richtung*) hints at a complexity that is not elaborated. It is, however, of direct relevance to the issue of project space, since within the museum of modern or contemporary art, project space is demarcated in contrast to other exhibition spaces, usually for permanent collections and temporary exhibitions of completed works, which we might associate with ‘fragments of the past’. We may therefore suppose that this conception

of the project might have something to tell us about the artistic status of such 'fragments of the past', as well as the project space from which they are differentiated.

The Romantic concept of the fragment was constructed on the basis of the appropriation, affirmation and generalization of the ruin as a category of modernity (in opposition to the nostalgic neo-classical appropriation of the ruin initially provoked by the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum in the mid-eighteenth century). From this point of view, projects are something like – to borrow a phrase of Robert Smithson's – 'ruins in reverse': buildings that 'rise into ruin before they are built.'<sup>81</sup> Projects embody the futural impulse conveyed by the constitutive incompletion of the fragment, as such, whatever its 'direction' in chronological time. The direction of the feeling for fragments of the past may be 'backwards' (*regressiv*), but the *feeling* is different *only* in this respect. Fragments of the past are thus, structurally, within themselves, as *futural* (as 'projective'), qua fragments, as fragments of the future are (projects). It is just that their futurity must be interpretatively retrieved, constructively, as part of their afterlife, since they are no longer *subjectively inhabited in their process of production* (as projects are, as 'embryos' of developing or 'becoming' objects), but in their reproduction. The real problem for 'fragments of the past' is not that they lack futurity, but that they are not generally received as fragments at all, in the Romantic sense, but rather as *completed* works – whether whole or partial: cultural treasures or 'heritage'.<sup>82</sup> The fragment, we might say, *rescued the ruin from the past*, for the future. In their difference from the spaces of permanent collections and temporary exhibitions alike, project spaces *antiquate* those spaces.<sup>83</sup> And they do this, not simply by virtue of the dynamic opposition between the new and the old (the modern way of producing a difference between 'the living' and 'the dead'), but in terms of their specification of the artistically 'living' as partaking in the structure of a project: processes of immanent, ongoing realizations of the ideal, 'forever becoming, never completed'.

Heidegger's existential concept of project pertains not to art but to '*Dasein*' (literally, 'being-there'), the philosophical term he used to denote his very particular conception of human existence – relegating the standard modern philosophical opposition between 'subject' (or 'I') and 'object' to the history of metaphysics. Unlike a subject, *Dasein* is always already in the world, a Being-in-the-world. However, in so far as the production of art is a human activity, it falls within the purview of Heidegger's analysis of the 'projective' structure of human existence. This allows us to deepen the Romantic conception of a project, existentially, and thereby to radicalize, as well as to generalize, our sense of its temporality; and with this, to modify, or reflect, its political meaning.

Beyond the teleological structure implicit in the notion of a project as something projected towards an end, 'projection' has a number of specific meanings in different disciplinary contexts: in particular, geometry, neurology, psychophysiology, psychology and psychoanalysis.<sup>84</sup> When he occasionally draws upon this semantic history, Heidegger uses the term *Projektion*. When he is thinking existentially, however, he uses *Entwurf* (or the cognate verb *entwerfen*), which connotes not merely the teleological structure of directedness towards an end, or the movement of displacement of an end, but also something being thrown (*werfen*). It is thus associated with the existential condition Heidegger calls *Geworfenheit* – 'thrownness' – which, alongside projection, is one of what he identifies as four existential structures of *Dasein*'s state of being. In Being-in-the-world, Heidegger argues, *Dasein* is thrown 'into its "there"', and this existential thrownness is a 'movement' of throwing that 'remains in the throw'. As such, *Dasein* is characterized by Heidegger as 'thrown projection'. And what it projects, in being thrown, is its possibilities. As Heidegger puts it: 'projection, in throwing, throws before itself possibility as possibility, and lets it *be* as such.' *Dasein* is thus the kind of Being in which 'it is its possibilities as possibilities.' As such it is 'constantly "more" than it factually is'. As 'being-possible' we are 'existentially that which, in [our] potentiality-for being, . . . is *not yet*.' In other words, we are essentially futural beings.<sup>85</sup> Project space recognizes this futurity *as* possibility.

The terminology grates and the prose appears barbarous (in translation at least), but this is an important philosophical redefinition of what we are, in terms of projecting: we *are* projecting.<sup>86</sup> Projecting projects possibilities as possibilities. And the being of possibility is freedom. This has a number of consequences for the way in which we might think about project space.

In the first place, given this temporal-existential deepening and generalization of the concept of project, it appears peculiar that art institutions should have come to designate certain restricted spaces wholly by their appropriateness for the presentation or exhibition of projects. After all, if human existence is a thrown projection, and all critically significant works of art are fragments/projects, what else are art institutions exhibiting? The corpses of dead projects, it would seem. All art-space in critically functioning art institutions should be project spaces of one kind or another, philosophically speaking. To the extent that art *lives*, art-space is project space: the space of presentation or exhibition (the Romantic *Darstellung* translates the Latin *exhibito*) of being as possibility, through individual instances (including collectively individual instances) of projects: ideas suspended in the movement of their realization as 'becoming objects', which thereby exhibit an



ambiguous objectivity (semblance). As Adorno put it: 'The fact that artworks exist signals the possibility of the nonexisting. The reality of artworks testifies to the possibility of the possible.'<sup>87</sup>

But what of the character of project space itself, not as a mere receptacle for the exhibition of projects through the presentations of their materials, but as a mode of spatialization? Is there a distinctive spatialization corresponding to the temporalization of the project? The Constructivist metaphor – revived in the 1960s – was the laboratory. The Constructivist laboratory was a space of experimental activity upon forms (projects), 'divorced from life', but undertaken from the perspective of the prospective transition to an experimentation that has 'a basis in reality', that is to say, is internal to a social function.<sup>88</sup> Divorced from the perspective of such a transition, it regresses to a space of merely aesthetic experimentation and display.

Project space in its current institutional sense is no Constructivist laboratory. However, the question of its specific spatialization is raised by the debates about site specificity (both inside and outside the museum and the gallery) since the 1970s. On the one hand, as a reaction within the museum to the external pressure of the new artistic practices of the 1960s, project space is a relatively conservative phenomenon: the setting aside of a physically demarcated space within the existing architecture of the museum, within which the new practices can be 'showcased'. This is a symbolic function. The role of the museum as the 'non-site' is to represent the site. On the other hand, as a space inhabited or possessed by the new practices, project space becomes subject to the new forms of spatialization immanent within those practices: specifically, those of the 'functional' or 'informational' site.<sup>89</sup> The networked space of the functional site erodes the distinction between site and non-site, upon which the dialectic of Smithson's practice, for example, depended.

Apart from being spaces of installation, performance and documentation, in addition to the exhibition of 'objects' in the broadest sense (including film and video work, in particular), project spaces become hubs in informational networks, in which the social relations conditioning artistic practices of various sorts are increasingly laid bare as an inherent part of those practices themselves – in the wake not only of the new communicational technologies, but primarily, the sedimentation of institutional critique into a dimension of contemporary art practices, in general. In this respect, the architectural qualities of the physical space become of decreasing significance for the art function of these spaces, as the distinction between art practices and more general cultural and communicational (media) forms becomes less a matter of material means than of the conceptual and strategic logics of the individual instances of the practices. The contemporary, socio-historical forms of

the general existential structure of 'the project' come to the fore, along with its situational conditions, organized by relations between individual and collective praxis,<sup>90</sup> in which the once curatorial but increasingly directive role of the museum is of growing significance. (This is no longer 'the artist as producer', or even 'the curator as producer', so much as 'the museum as producer'.) The existential and social structure of the project itself becomes the carrier of artistic reflection.

The specificity of the practices associated with project space is thus threatened on three sides: by their lack of distinction from contemporary art in general, by their curatorial overdetermination, and by their dissolution into artistically indifferent modes of communication. Some may bemoan the uncertainties of this situation, brought about by the erosion of clearly spatially structured cultural classifications and divisions. Yet it is the ground upon which the possibility of the social (and thereby critical) significance of contemporary art depends. Such is the current direction of 'the transcendental element of the historical spirit'.

## THE MYTH OF REMOTENESS FROM THE MARKET

Notes on Berlin's Rise as an Art Metropolis



Dachterrasse des / roof top bar at Soho House, Berlin

The inventory of Berlin myths is familiar: the city's citizens are bohemians who enjoy plenty of creative leeway; it is forever unfinished, open, and not least importantly, still pretty cheap. But Berlin's status as the obvious city of choice for many expats, artists, and other creatives is also due to the promise of success these myths convey: Where someone lives and works has become an important parameter for strategies of (self-)marketing. In Berlin, the semblance of remoteness from the market becomes a location factor; as the world of work is reorganized in line with the paradigm of the creative industries, symbolic capital becomes an economic asset.

Isabelle Graw examines the tendencies of the past few years, in which Berlin's art world has been more and more open about its accumulation of capital and its embrace of glamour and VIP culture, and analyzes the abiding discrepancy between the city's reality and its promises.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

For some time now, Berlin has been widely seen as Europe's art capital. More artists live here than in any other city.<sup>1</sup> In terms of the number of galleries, too – reportedly, the city now boasts approximately 400 local galleries – Berlin would seem to be about to displace New York from the top spot.<sup>2</sup> Such stories of Berlin's success, however, disregard the question of how, and even whether, local contexts still affect the production, reception, and distribution of art. What is the significance, if any, of the location and the local scene in an art world universally described as “globalized”? In the following analysis, I will attempt to clarify, in a theoretical first step, this “question of location”. In a second step, I will retrace the brief history of Berlin's rise as a competitive art

## DER MYTHOS DER MARKTFERNE

Anmerkungen zum Aufstieg Berlins zu einer Kunstmetropole

Das Inventar der Berliner Mythen ist bekannt: Bohemistische Lebensentwürfe, kreative Freiräume, das Unfertige, Offene und nicht zuletzt Günstige prägen den Ruf der Stadt. Dass es für zahlreiche Expats, Künstler/innen und Kulturschaffende heute eine Selbstverständlichkeit ist, nach Berlin zu ziehen, hat aber auch mit den Erfolgsversprechen zu tun, die diese Mythen transportieren: Ist doch der Wohn- und Arbeitsort zur wichtigen Größe in (Selbst-)Vermarktungsstrategien geworden. In Berlin wird die vermeintliche Marktferne zum Standortfaktor; im Zuge der Umstrukturierung der Arbeit im Sinne der Kreativwirtschaft wird symbolisches Kapital zum ökonomischen.

Isabelle Graw untersucht die Entwicklungen der letzten Jahre, in denen auch die Berliner Kunstwelt immer offener Kapital akkumuliert, sich hin zu Glamour und VIP-Kultur entwickelte – und analysiert Berlins bleibende Spannung zwischen den realen Gegebenheiten in der Stadt und dem, was sie zu sein verspricht.

## 1. EINLEITUNG

Berlin gilt längst als europäische Kunstmetropole, da hier mehr Künstlerinnen und Künstler als in jeder anderen Stadt leben.<sup>1</sup> Auch was das Aufkommen von Galerien anbelangt – es sollen mittlerweile etwa 400 ortsansässige Galerien sein –, scheint Berlin einer Stadt wie New York demnächst den Rang abzulaufen.<sup>2</sup> Doch in all diesen Erfolgsmeldungen bleibt die Frage ausgeblendet, welche Auswirkungen der jeweilige lokale Standort auf künstlerische Produktion, Rezeption und Distribution noch haben kann. Welche Bedeutung kommt dem Lokalen, dem Geschehen vor Ort, in einer stets als „globalisiert“ beschriebenen Kunstwelt eigentlich noch zu? Die nun folgende Untersuchung sucht diese „Standortfrage“ in einem ersten Schritt theoretisch zu klären, um in einem zweiten Schritt die kurze Geschichte des Aufstiegs Berlins zu einer konkurrenzfähigen

Kunstmetropole nachzuzeichnen. Als Sinnbild für diesen Übergang könnten die von Ulrich Gutmair in seiner Berlin-Studie viel beschworenen Branchen fungieren, die zu Beginn der 1990er Jahre im Stadtbild omnipräsent waren und Freiräume verhielten.<sup>3</sup> Inzwischen scheint noch jede Brache mit einem Townhouse bebaut worden zu sein.

Die Perspektive, die für diese Überlegungen eingezeichnet wird, ist die der teilnehmenden Beobachtung. Denn als Herausgeberin von *Texte zur Kunst*, also einer Zeitschrift, die im Jahre 2000 von Köln nach Berlin umgezogen ist, bin ich in das beschriebene Geschehen involviert. Womöglich haben wir – die Mitarbeiter/innen und Autoren/Autorinnen – es streckenweise sogar mitgeprägt. Dennoch möchte ich eine Form der „involvierten Distanz“ zu diesem Geschehen reklamieren, eine Distanz, die niemals absolut sein kann und immer wieder aufs Neue situativ und auf der Basis der eigenen Involviertheit ausgehandelt werden muss.

Zur zentralen Triebfeder des Berlin-Hypes werde ich die Vorstellungsfigur erklären, dass in Berlin nicht das Geld, sondern die Kunst zu Hause sei. Diese Vorstellungsfigur, die Berlin wahlweise mit dem authentisch künstlerischen oder mit transgressiven, bohemistischen Lebensstilen – kurz, mit dem (scheinbar) Marktfernen schlechthin – assoziiert, werde ich jedoch einer eingehenden Überprüfung unterziehen. An einer Stadt wie Berlin lässt sich m. E. hervorragend demonstrieren, wie die als „alternativ“, „minoritär“ oder „bohemistisch“ empfundenen Lebens- und Arbeitsstile jenseits ihrer faktischen Errungenschaften zugleich auch jenem Anforderungsprofil entsprechen, das im „vernetzten Kapitalismus“, wie ihn der Soziologe und die Soziologin Luc Boltanski und Eve Chiapello treffend charakterisiert haben, besonders gefragt ist.



Vor dem Club / in front of the club „Friseur“, Berlin-Mitte, 1995

metropolis. For an emblem of this transformation, consider the omnipresent unused lots in early-1990s Berlin that symbolized the city's promise of creative freedom, as Ulrich Gutmair's study of Berlin has emphasized.<sup>3</sup> By now it feels like every last one of them is taken up by a newly built townhouse.

The perspective I will adopt in the following reflections is one of what is known as participant observation. As the publisher of *Texte zur Kunst*, a magazine that moved its offices from Cologne to Berlin in 2000, I have been involved in the history under consideration. Here and there, the journal's staff and writers may even have left their marks upon it. Nonetheless, I would like to claim that I have maintained a form of "involved distance" from the events and processes in question – a distance that can never be absolute and must be renegotiated in each particular situation on the basis of one's own involvement.

I will claim that the mainspring of the Berlin hype, is the idea that it is art, not money, that is at home in this city. This trope, which associates Berlin now with artistic authenticity, now with transgressive and bohemianist lifestyles – in short, with (the semblance of) remoteness from the market as such – merits thorough scrutiny. Ber-

lin, I will argue, exemplifies the ways in which lifestyles and artistic practices that are felt to be "alternative", "minoritarian", or "bohemian", their undeniable accomplishments notwithstanding, simultaneously conform to a professional profile that is in high demand in what the sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have aptly described as "network capitalism."

Did artists' self-image prepare the ground for this demand profile or facilitate its rise? Or did the two emerge in parallel processes? That is a question for further reflections that are beyond the scope of the following remarks. Berlin's very reputation for being "poor but sexy", as Mayor Klaus Wowereit memorably put it, implies a distance from the market that, I believe, ultimately fuels the marketing of what is made here. For a striking example of how the fortunes of initially bohemian visions of life have risen, consider

Tim Renner's career: The former music writer ascended to the position of managing director at Universal Music's German division, and now Wowereit has appointed him to head Berlin's cultural policy administration. His extensive network in the "culture scene", it seems, qualifies him to divvy up the scarce funds allotted to the promotion of culture among the applicants.



Townhouses am / at Hausvogteiplatz, Berlin

Ob das künstlerische Selbstverständnis dieses Anforderungsprofil vorbereitet oder begünstigt hat oder ob es parallel zu ihm entstanden ist, wäre im Anschluss an diese Überlegungen zu diskutieren. Schon der Ruf dieser Stadt als „arm, aber sexy“ nach dem geflügelten Wort von Klaus Wowereit, des Regierenden Bürgermeisters, impliziert eine Marktferme, die m.E. letztlich Wasser auf die Mühlen der Vermarktung des hier Produzierten ist. Als Symptom für den gestiegenen Wert von ursprünglich eher bohemistischen Lebensentwürfen sei auf die Karriere von Tim Renner verwiesen. Nachdem er vom Musikjournalisten zum Geschäftsführer von Universal Music Deutschland aufgestiegen war, wurde er zuletzt von Klaus Wowereit zum Kulturstaatssekretär der Stadt Berlin berufen. Eben aufgrund seines engen Kontakts zur „Kulturszene“ scheint er prädestiniert dazu zu sein, die knappen Förderungsmittel unter den Antragsstellern zu verteilen.

## 2. STANDORTFRAGE

Die Bedeutung des „Standorts“ für künstlerische Produktion ist alles andere als geklärt. Auf dem Markt der Institutionen, zu dem ich Museen, Kunstvereine, Großausstellungen oder Gruppenausstellungen zähle, besteht z. B. die Neigung,

den Herkunftsort einer künstlerischen Arbeit zu einem der zentralen Faktoren zu erklären, was im Falle von Berlin womöglich damit zusammenhängt, dass es jenseits des Standorts kaum verbindende Kriterien gibt, die das hier Produzierte auszeichnen. Als besonders extremes Beispiel für eine solche Fixierung auf den Herkunftsort wären Ausstellungen wie „Based in Berlin“ (2011) oder zuletzt „Painting Forever!“ (2013) zu nennen – Ausstellungen, die den Standort Berlin entweder mit einer inhaltlichen Klammer verwechseln oder mit unterkomplexen Medienvorstellungen assoziieren, so als würde dieser Standort selbst einen Zusammenhang stiften, ein Kriterium abgeben.

Dass jemand in Berlin „lebt und arbeitet“, kam hier einem Bedeutung generierenden Faktor gleich. So als wäre die Ortsangabe per se dazu in der Lage, etwas über künstlerische Arbeiten selbst auszusagen, Sinn zu stiften und dadurch die Sehnsucht nach Orientierung und „Bedeutung“ zu befriedigen. So wie die Stadt die Kunst mit Bedeutung auflädt und entsprechend als bedeutungsstiftend missverstanden wird, kommt es aber auch umgekehrt zu einer Aufwertung der Stadt durch Kunst. Entsprechend wird von Kulturpolitikern auf das bloße Vorhandensein von

## 2. THE QUESTION OF LOCATION

The significance of "location" for artistic production very much remains an open question. For example, in the institutional market – the market of museums, *Kunstvereine*, large-scale exhibitions, and group shows – there is a tendency to enshrine the place of origin of a work of art as crucial. In the case of Berlin, this may also be because, beyond the location as such, there are virtually no shared standards that set the city's output apart. Particularly extreme examples of this fixation on the place of origin include the exhibitions "Based in Berlin" (2011) and, more recently, "Painting Forever!" (2013), which either confused location with substantial consistency or associated the city with an insufficiently complex concept of media, as though the label "made in Berlin" by itself indicated a form of coherency or defined criterion.

The fact that someone "lives and works" in Berlin effectively operates as a generator of meaning, as if merely specifying the location tells us something about the art, engendering significance and satisfying our desire for orientation and "meaning." And as the city charges the art with meaning and is therefore misread as the source of that meaning, the art conversely enhances the value of the city. That is why cultural policy makers like to point to the pure existence of "contemporary art" in Berlin as though it were a badge of honor.

In contrast with this extreme symbolic investment in the site of production and the attendant overestimation of its explanatory power, "location" is sometimes also radically undervalued and considered not even worth mentioning – for example, in the auction business. Auctions deal primarily in artist's names detached from their

local and social conditions of production. So they disregard the fact that a phenomenon such as "Kippenberger" cannot be understood in isolation but must be seen as an element in a specific local formation, one that, in Kippenberger's instance, gallerists are a crucial part of. Still, even in this setting – where questions of value-formation are paramount – the matter of location is not as irrelevant as it may seem at first glance. A work's association with a city – or even more particularly with a bohemian "scene" or underground formation tied to that city – can contribute decisively to enhancing the symbolic value on which its market value is inevitably premised.<sup>4</sup>

What is attributed to certain locations – and since the turn of the millennium, Berlin has without a doubt been such a location – is a particular symbolic radiance, one that lends additional significance also to the local artistic production. When a cultural producer remarks that he or she hails from Berlin – from a city that currently plays the role of a vital center in the art world's imagination and promises commercial success – he earns bonus points that also redound to his work's advantage. What is created in Berlin then seems *ipso facto* more valuable and more significant than art made in other German cities such as, let's say, Essen or Kiel: A sort of self-fulfilling prophecy.

And from a perspective of artistic production, too, what I would call context – the social, economic, and institutional circumstances in which an artist works – tinges his or her artistic practice, though without determining it outright. But as Jacques Derrida has demonstrated, contexts can never be defined in absolute terms,<sup>5</sup> and so their reconstruction, inevitably guided by subjective projections and the interests at hand, can never

„Gegenwartskunst“ in dieser Stadt so verwiesen, als käme dies einer Auszeichnung gleich.

Neben dieser extremen Aufladung und Überschätzung des Produktionsorts, der allein schon aussagekräftig sein soll, kann dieser ebenso gut radikal unterschätzt und gar nicht erst für der Rede wert erachtet werden, so etwa im Auktionsgeschehen. Auf Auktionen sind es in erster Linie Künstlerinnen, die losgelöst von ihren lokalen und sozialen Produktionsbedingungen isoliert herausgegriffen und behandelt werden. Auktionen blenden folglich aus, dass ein Phänomen wie „Kippenberger“ nicht isoliert betrachtet werden kann, sondern als Teil einer bestimmten lokalen Formation angesehen werden muss, zu der in diesem Fall auch maßgeblich die Galeristen zu zählen sind. Offenkundig ist die Standortfrage auch an dieser Stelle – im Hinblick auf Fragen der Wertbildung – keineswegs so unbedeutend, wie es auf den ersten Blick erscheint. So kann die Zuordnung zu einer Stadt und mehr noch zu einer mit dieser Stadt assoziierten bohemistischen „Szene“ oder Undergroundformation entscheidend zur Anreicherung jenes Symbolwerts beitragen, der im Marktwert einer künstlerischen Arbeit stets vorausgesetzt ist.<sup>4</sup>

Bestimmten Orten – und zu einem solchen Ort ist Berlin zweifellos seit der Jahrtausendwende zu zählen – wird eine besonders hohe symbolische Strahlkraft zugeschrieben, was ihre lokale künstlerische Produktion ebenfalls mit Bedeutung auflädt. Wenn ein Kulturproduzent angibt, aus Berlin zu kommen, einer Stadt mithin, die im Imaginären der Kunstwelt augenblicklich die Rolle eines so vitalen und Markterfolgs in Aussicht stellenden Kunstsentrums spielt, dann verschafft ihm dies Pluspunkte, die seiner Arbeit ebenfalls angerechnet werden. Das in Berlin Produzierte

erscheint dann per se wertvoller und bedeutungsvoller zu sein als das in anderen deutschen Städten – sagen wir Essen oder Kiel – Entstandene. Eine Art Selffulfilling Prophecy.

Aber auch aus produktionsästhetischer Sicht färbt der Kontext, worunter ich soziale, ökonomische und institutionelle Rahmenbedingungen verstehe, auf künstlerische Praxis ab, ohne sie jedoch vollständig zu determinieren. Kontexte sind jedoch – dies hat Jacques Derrida gezeigt – niemals absolut bestimmbar.<sup>5</sup> Ihre Rekonstruktion kann aus diesem Grund immer nur eine annähernde und vorläufige sein, von subjektiven Projektionen und einem gegenwärtigen Interesse geleitet. Deshalb würde ich vorschlagen, den lokalen Produktionsort analog zu Walter Benjamins Metapher für Baudelaires Verhältnis zur Masse als eine „verborgene Figur“ aufzufassen, die in jeder kulturellen Produktion latent arbeitet, gelegentlich in ihr aufscheint und dabei mehr oder weniger deutliche Spuren hinterlässt.<sup>6</sup>

## 3. VERÄNDERTE KOORDINATEN

Wir haben gesehen, dass der Standort beides sein kann – einflussreich und ohne Einfluss, sichtbar und unsichtbar. Er tritt in Vermarktungsprozesse ein, um aus ihnen zugleich herausgestrichen zu werden, er reicht in künstlerische Produktion hinein, ohne sie jedoch vollständig zu determinieren. Bestimmten Standorten wird jedoch – und dies im Unterschied zu anderen – ein enormes bedeutungs- und damit auch wertstiftendes Potenzial zugeschrieben. Jene Orte, die zuvor an der Peripherie des internationalen Kunstmarkts lagen, können z. B. zu einem Zentrum künstlerischer Produktion erklärt werden – wie zuletzt China oder Indien. Indessen gelten nicht alle Peripherien als gleichwertig vielversprechend. In der gängigen



„Painting Forever!“, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2013, Ausstellungsansicht / Installation view

be more than approximative and preliminary. That is why I would suggest that we conceive the location of artistic production as a “hidden figure” analogous to Walter Benjamin’s metaphor for Baudelaire’s relation to the crowd: A figure that is at work in any cultural production, usually latent but occasionally discernible in its more or less distinct traces.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. ALTERED COORDINATES

We have seen that location can be both influential and inconsequential, visible and invisible. It enters into processes of marketing and is simultaneously effaced by them; it effectively reaches into artistic production, though without altogether determining it. Certain locations, however – and this distinguishes them from others – are said to possess an enormous capacity to engender meaning and, hence, value. For example, places that used to be peripheral to the international art market – most recently, China and India – can be declared new centers of artistic

production, although not all peripheries are equally promising. The widespread enthusiasm for globalization, however, largely fails to take such differences into account. In his critique of this enthusiasm, the French sociologist Alain Quemin has noted that an artist who strives for commercial success still stands to benefit greatly from settling in an art-world center like New York.<sup>7</sup> What has changed is that such hopes for commercial success are now also invested in cities like Berlin and, most recently, Brussels. Berlin, in particular, not only holds out the prospect of accumulating symbolic capital (reputation, *succès d’estime*); more than that: It is associated with “future” and the “power to shape it.” In contrast to other centers of the art world such as New York or London, it feels like not all seats have been assigned in Berlin, and the hierarchies are not yet entirely set in stone (although of course they exist). The field is being resorted and barriers seem less impenetrable than elsewhere. Moving to Berlin, you stand a real chance of

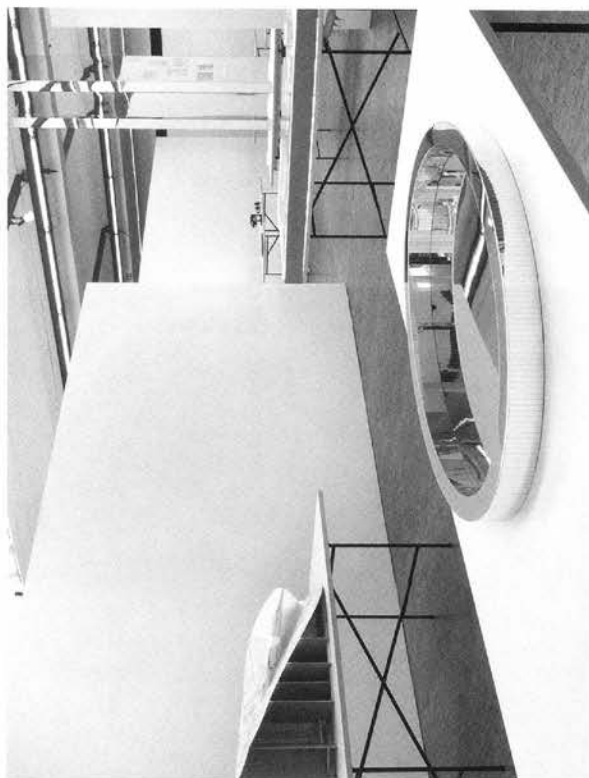
Globalisierungsemphase werden solche Differenzierungen jedoch zumeist ausgeblendet. Auch der französische Soziologe Alain Quemin hat in seiner Kritik an der gängigen Globalisierungsemphase festgestellt, dass sich der nach Markterfolg strebende Künstler heute immer noch tunlichst in Kunstzentren wie New York niederlassen müsse.<sup>7</sup> Nur sind es inzwischen eben auch Städte wie Berlin oder zuletzt Brüssel, die diese Rolle des Markterfolg verheißenden Hoffnungsträgers spielen. Speziell Berlin stellt nämlich nicht nur die Anhäufung von symbolischem Kapital – etwa in Form von Reputation und Achtungserfolg – in Aussicht, sie ist mehr noch mit „Zukunft“ und „Gestaltungsmacht“ assoziiert. Im Unterschied zu anderen Kunstzentren wie New York oder London scheinen die Plätze in Berlin noch nicht vollständig vergeben zu sein und die Hierarchien – obgleich sie natürlich bestehen – noch nicht ganz festgeschrieben. Das Feld sortiert sich, und die Barrieren erscheinen weniger undurchlässig. Wer nach Berlin zieht, kann deshalb berechnete Hoffnung auf die Erlangung einer einflussreichen Position hegen, auch im Sinne einer Einwirkung auf die zukünftige Verfasstheit des Kunstbetriebs. Die Kunstszene präsentiert sich, anders gesagt, weniger als monolithisches Ganzes, in dem sämtliche Würfel bereits gefallen sind, denn als offenes und stets im Flux sich befindendes Gebilde, in das es sich potenziell noch einklinken lässt. Zwar erschweren die ortsansässigen Galerien dem Neuankommeling zunächst oft die Teilhabe an ihren konzertierten Aktionen (wie dem Gallery Weekend oder jenen Messeteilnahmen, wo Berliner Galerien im Auswahlkomitee sitzen), doch hat sich der Novize bewährt und eine Art Initiationsritual durchlaufen, stehen die Chancen nicht schlecht, dass er schnell integriert werden wird.

Wenn auch „Berlin“ immer noch nicht zu den zentralen Handels- und Umschlagplätzen der Gegenwartskunst gehört, so stellt es sich doch als eine Art Möglichkeitsraum dar, der die Perspektive von institutioneller Anerkennung und die Hoffnung auf erfolgreiche Vermarktung in Aussicht stellt. Anders wäre der nicht abreißen wollende Zustrom von jungen Expats wohl kaum zu erklären. Es sind nicht nur zahllose Absolventen/Absolventinnen der deutschen Kunsthochschulen, die mittlerweile mit großer Selbstverständlichkeit nach Berlin ziehen, so als wäre das föderale Prinzip in Bezug auf künstlerische Produktion vollständig ausgehebelt. Es sind vielmehr ganze Heerscharen von internationalen „kreativen Nonkonformisten“, wie sie Ulrich Bröckling treffend genannt hat, die sich in dieser Stadt niedergelassen haben.

### 4. DAS HOHELIED DER SELBSTVERWIRKLICHUNG

Dieser Aufstieg Berlins zum kreativen Zentrum steht m. E. in einem unmittelbaren Zusammenhang zu der Erhebung von „Kreativität“ zu einem „Heilswort der Gegenwart“ (Bröckling).<sup>8</sup> Auch von Arbeitern und Angestellten wird inzwischen ein gewisses Maß an Kreativität verlangt, wobei sich die Vorstellung, die man sich vom „kreativen Arbeiter“ macht, am Modell des selbstbestimmten arbeitenden Künstlers orientiert.<sup>9</sup> Entsprechend dem traditionellen Künstlerbild hat auch der kreative Arbeiter möglichst flexibel, mobil und eben kreativ zu sein. Er soll zudem eigenverantwortlich arbeiten und sich dabei auch noch selbst verwirklichen. Je deregulierter und prekärer die Arbeitsverhältnisse, desto gefragter ist dieser Typus des kreativen Arbeiters, der prototypisch im Berlin-Mitte der späten 1990er Jahre anzutreffen war. In dieser viel beschworenen „Grün-

Kunstmesse / art fair  
 „ABC“, Akademie der Künste,  
 Berlin, 2009



attaining a position of influence that will also allow you to leave your mark on the art business. In other words, the art scene presents itself not as a monolithic totality where all dice have already been cast, but rather as an open and fluid structure with trends the new arrival might latch on to. Initially, the established local galleries often make it hard for newcomers to participate in collective events such as Gallery Weekend or to get a booth at art fairs where Berlin galleries are represented on the selection committees, but once a novice has proven his mettle and undergone a sort of initiation ritual, chances are not bad he will soon be integrated.

If "Berlin" has not yet become one of the central hubs of the contemporary art trade, it nonetheless appears to be a space of possibility of sorts, offering prospects of institutional recognition and a successful market launch. There is no other way to explain the unending influx of young expats. It is not only that for innumerable graduates of Germany's academies of art, moving to Berlin has become the obvious next step, as though federalism had been abolished with respect to artistic production. Entire armies of international "creative nonconformists", as Ulrich Bröckling has aptly called them, have also made the city their home.

#### 4. AN ODE TO SELF-REALIZATION

Berlin's rise as a creative center, I believe, is immediately connected to the ascendancy of "creativity", one of the "salvific words of the present".<sup>8</sup> White-collar and even blue-collar workers are now expected to show a certain amount of creativity; the image of the "creative worker" is modeled on the artist's self-determined practice.<sup>9</sup> Like the artist as traditionally imagined, the

creative worker is called upon to be as flexible, mobile, and – yes – creative as possible. Moreover, he is expected to be self-reliant and self-realizing in his work. The more deregulated and precarious labor conditions become, the greater the demand for this type of creative worker, whose prototypical incarnations populated Berlin's Mitte district in the late 1990s. During this period, widely hailed as a second *Gründerzeit*, a model was born that is still omnipresent: The startup. Its pioneers conducted their online businesses and consulted on one thing or another on public display in their cheaply rented storefronts. They worked late nights and weekends, too, of course – the perfect fusion of labor and leisure. Every dinner was simultaneously a team meeting, no conversation was free of instrumental undertones: Chatting was tantamount to brainstorming. In the art world's eyes, this identity of "leisure" and "work" is nothing new – the two coincided for visual artists in the early modern era, half a millennium ago. If you reread Giorgio Vasari's *Vite*, you will find that he already praised artists like Raphael and Giotto for subordinating their lives to the exigencies of their art.<sup>10</sup> Even then, the boundary between life and work was fluid. Still, it remains remarkable that this situation – the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno calls it the "post-Fordist condition" – became the prevailing model in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup>

We might say that Berlin's startups were a test run of sorts for a new set of demands that has since increasingly shaped the labor markets. But this model has also led to a change in corporate structures, which now prefer flat hierarchies and seek to maximize flexibility – the key currency of post-Fordism – through so-called work-life balance programs.

derzeit" entwickelte sich das noch heute omnipräsente Modell der sogenannten Start-up-Firma, die in damals noch billigen Ladenlokalen für alle sichtbar ihre Internetgeschäfte abwickelte und Beratungsaktivitäten entfaltete. Bis in die späte Nacht hinein und natürlich auch am Wochenende wurde hier gearbeitet – Arbeit und Freizeit fielen vollständig in eins. Jedes Abendessen war zugleich eine Teamsitzung, jedem Gespräch wohnte ein instrumenteller Zug inne, da es mit Brainstorming einherging. Aus der Sicht der Kunstwelt ist dieser Zusammenfall von „Freizeit“ und „Arbeit“ nichts Neues – schließlich fielen Privat- und Berufsleben schon für den bildenden Künstler der frühen Neuzeit in eins. Es lohnt sich, in diesem Zusammenhang Giorgio Vasaris *Viten* wieder zu lesen, denn für Künstler wie Raphael oder Giotto wurde hier schon behauptet, dass sie ihr Leben den Erfordernissen ihrer künstlerischen Arbeit unterordneten.<sup>10</sup> Die Grenze zwischen Kunst und Leben war damals schon fließend. Bemerkenswert ist jedoch, dass diese Bedingung, die der italienische Philosoph Paolo Virno als „postfordistische Lage“ bezeichnet, in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts zur allgemein vorherrschenden wurde.<sup>11</sup>

Man könnte sagen, dass die Start-up-Firmen Berlins eine Art Testlauf für ein neues Anforderungsprofil abgeben, das inzwischen Konjunktur auf den Arbeitsmärkten hat. Dieses Modell hat aber auch einen Wandel der Firmenstrukturen bewirkt, die inzwischen flache Hierarchien bevorzugen und durch sogenannte Work-Life-Balance-Programme eine größtmögliche Flexibilität – Leihaltung des Postfordismus – erreichen wollen.

Entsprechend ist es für die „kreativen Nonkonformisten“ der heutigen Zeit durchaus möglich, von zu Hause aus zu arbeiten und zwischendurch ein Café aufzusuchen, wo auch andere kreative Nonkonformisten vor ihrem Laptop sitzen. Zumeist haben sie auf einem jener Hochstühle an den „Gemeinschaft“ signalisierenden Holztischen der neueren Cafearchitektur Platz genommen, um auch während der „Mittagszeit“, die dem fordistischen Arbeiter noch heilig war, ihrer Arbeit nachzugehen – eine Arbeit, die in erster Linie aus Informationsverarbeitung, Networking und Kommunikation besteht. Der von Berlin-Besuchern oft kolportierte Eindruck, dass in dieser Stadt noch authentisch „rumgehungen“ und die Zeit, tagsüber stundenlang Latte macchiato schlürpfend, in Cafés totgeschlagen würde, verkennt jedoch den



And so many of today's "creative nonconformists" are free to work at home; occasionally they will dip into a coffee shop, where other creative nonconformists are already sitting at their laptops. Most of them have taken a seat on one of the bar stools lining the high wooden tables that, in contemporary café interior design, signal "community", and keep busy during their "lunch break", a sacred institution in the eyes of the Fordist worker of the past. Their work primarily consists in processing information, networking, and communicating. Yet the impression, reported by many tourists visiting Berlin, that its residents continue to be authentic practitioners of "hanging out," killing hours and hours of daytime by sipping latte macchiatos in cafés, fails to register

the rising economic value of such immaterial activity. Chatting and coffee shop interaction, after all, require the deployment precisely of those sensory, cognitive, and emotional capacities today's "capitalist command" (Maurizio Lazzarato) seeks to incorporate into the economic process. The post-Fordist economy aims to skim and absorb even the most intimate facets of our everyday lives – personal encounters, social relationships, recreational activities. It wants the entirety of who we are. Seen in this perspective, neither Berlin's culture of "hanging out" nor its nightlife, renowned across the globe for its accessibility and variety, are exempt from processes of economic exploitation. The city's countless clubs no doubt afford space for transgressive practices

gestiegenen Wert solch immaterieller Aktivitäten. Gerade beim Chatten und Interagieren im Café kommen schließlich jene sinnlichen, kognitiven und emotionalen Kompetenzen zum Einsatz, die sich das „kapitalistische Kommando“ (Maurizio Lazzarato) heute einzuverleiben sucht. Es sind noch die intimsten Facetten unseres Alltagslebens – persönliche Begegnungen, soziale Beziehungen, Freizeitgestaltung –, auf deren Abschöpfung die postfordistische Ökonomie zielt. Sie will uns ganz. Aus dieser Sicht betrachtet ist weder die in Berlin zu beobachtende „Rumhängekultur“ noch das für seine Zugänglichkeit und Vielfältigkeit weltweit gerühmte Berliner Nachtleben aus Verwertungszusammenhängen ausgenommen. Zwar bieten die zahllosen Clubs der Stadt zweifellos Räume für transgressive Praktiken und abweichende Identitätswürfe. Doch neben diesen Freiräumen muss die lebendige Clubszene Berlins auch als eine Bühne angesehen werden, auf der das Leben gleichsam zur Arbeit geht.

Je besser vernetzt, informierter und stilsicherer der kreative Nonkonformist, desto höher die Chancen, dass sich sein symbolisches Kapital (Insiderwissen, Ausgeherfahrung, Kontakte) eines Tages in ökonomisches transformiert. Firmen wie Adidas stellten denn auch zu Beginn des Jahrtausends bevorzugt gut informierte Mitte-Hipster ein, eben weil diese über den Rohstoff „Information“ verfügten und mit den Vorlieben und Konsumpraktiken eines Milieus vertraut waren, dem in Konsum- und Stillfragen eine Vorreiterrolle zugesprochen wurde. Wenn „Information“ und „Kommunikation“ in einer postfordistischen Ökonomie als „Königinnen der Produktivkräfte“ (Paolo Virno) anzusehen sind, dann ist Berlin der Ort, der über diese Produktivkräfte nahezu unbegrenzt zu verfügen scheint.

## 5. BERLIN ALS DAS ANDERE DES MARKTES?

Das Nachdenken über Berlin ist eine Art Volkssport, dem sich Neu- wie Altberliner begeistert hingeben. Da alles im Fluss ist, muss auch alles erörtert werden – angefangen von neuen Bauvorhaben und gestiegenen Mietpreisen bis hin zur wechselnden Beliebtheit von Restaurants, Bars oder dem Niedergang des vormals angesagten Fitnessstudios. Speziell Kulturschaffende haben jedoch die fatale Neigung, über Berlin so zu sprechen, als handele es sich dabei um ein pflegebedürftiges Kind, für das wir alle Sorge tragen müssen. So hatten schon die Fürsprecher der von Constanze Kleiner und Coco Kühn initiierten „temporären Kunsthalle“ 2008 dieses Vorhaben mit dem Fehlen eines Ortes für Gegenwartskunst in Berlin zu begründen versucht.<sup>12</sup> Diese Sorge, dass sich Berlin der zeitgenössischen künstlerischen Praxis verschließen würde, mutete angesichts von zahlreichen ortsansässigen Institutionen, die sich just der Gegenwartskunst verschreiben (wie die Kunstwerke, die nGbK, der Hamburger Bahnhof etc.) einigermassen befremdlich an. Doch die erklärte Absicht, den in Berlin lebenden und arbeitenden Künstlern/Künstlerinnen endlich ein Forum zu geben, wurde von kulturpolitischer Seite erhört: Am 29. Oktober 2008 eröffnete die Temporäre Kunsthalle auf dem zentralsten Platz der Stadt – dem Schlossplatz, in unmittelbarer Nähe zum damals beinahe vollständig abgerissenen Palast der Republik – und schloss nach zwei Jahren am 31. August 2010. Wenn auch nur vorübergehend, schien so die Kunst buchstäblich an die Stelle der sozialistischen Utopie getreten zu sein.<sup>13</sup> Ein solcher Vorgang scheint in keiner anderen Stadt vorstellbar. Man stelle sich nur vor, dass der symbolträchtigste Ort New Yorks – das Ground-Zero-Gelände – der Gegenwartskunst zur

and deviant projections of personal identity. Such spaces of freedom notwithstanding, Berlin's lively club scene must also be seen as a stage on which life itself, as it were, goes to work.

The more networking connections, information, and sense of style the creative nonconformist has at his or her disposal, the better the chances that he or she will one day transform this symbolic capital (insider knowledge, nightlife experience, contacts) into economic capital. That is why, in the early years of the new millennium, corporations like Adidas hired well-informed Mitte hipsters. They commanded "information," that elusive natural resource, and were intimately familiar with the preferences and consumer practices of a milieu credited with a pioneering role in matters of consumption and style. If "information" and "communication" must be regarded, in a post-Fordist economy, as the "queens among productive forces" (Paolo Virno), then Berlin is where these productive forces seem available in almost infinite amounts.

##### 5. BERLIN AS THE MARKET'S OTHER?

Thinking about Berlin is a popular sport; both recent newcomers to the city and long-time Berliners play it with abandon. Everything is in flux, and so everything merits discussion and argument – from new construction projects and ever-higher rents to the rise and fall in popularity of restaurants and bars and the demise of yesterday's hot gym. Cultural producers, however, are in the particular and fatal habit of talking about Berlin as though it were a high-maintenance child that needs everyone's care and attention. Advocates of the Temporäre Kunsthalle, a project Constanze Kleiner and Coco Kühn initiated in 2008, argued that Berlin lacked a dedicated space for contempo-

rary art.<sup>12</sup> Given the numerous local institutions devoted precisely to the latter (Kunst-Werke, the Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst [nGbK], the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, and so on), this anxiety that Berlin might not welcome contemporary artistic practices would seem rather strange. But the organizers' stated intention – artists living and working in Berlin would finally be given a forum to present their work – met with approval from higher powers in cultural policy. And on October 29, 2008, the Temporäre Kunsthalle opened its doors on the city's most centrally located square, the Schlossplatz, in the immediate vicinity of the Palace of the Republic, the former seat of the East German parliament, whose demolition was then nearly complete. The space closed down two years later, on August 31, 2010. For a brief while, it was as though art had literally taken the place of the Socialist utopia.<sup>13</sup> This sort of transformation would seem to be inconceivable in any other city:

Just try to imagine New York making its most symbolically powerful site – Ground Zero – available for contemporary art. The initiative ABC (art berlin contemporary), launched in 2008 by a small circle around the gallery owners Martin Klosterfelde and Alexander Schröder, likewise leaned heavily on a rhetoric of Berlin advocacy to buttress its legitimacy. This "survey of contemporary art", we were told again and again, had one beneficiary, Berlin itself, and the invited participants were expected to return the favor by contributing to this effort to shore up and enhance the city's location value. There are two interesting aspects here. One, the mere reference to "Berlin" unleashed and bound collective energies. Berlin assumed the role of a utopian project that was highly promising in and of itself: Even those who

Verfügung gestellt würde. Auch die von einem kleinen Kreis um die Galeristen Martin Klosterfelde und Alexander Schröder im Jahre 2008 entwickelte Initiative namens ABC (art berlin contemporary) hat sich rhetorisch primär mit ihrem Engagement für diese Stadt zu legitimieren gesucht. Über diese „Überblickschau für Gegenwartskunst“ war immer wieder zu hören, dass man sie allein für Berlin mache, wobei im Gegenzug von den eingeladenen Teilnehmern erwartet wurde, dass man sich nun ebenfalls für dieses Projekt zur Rettung und Aufwertung des Standorts engagieren würde. Interessant ist nun zweierlei: Dass der bloße Verweis auf „Berlin“ schon kollektive Energien freisetzt und bindet. Berlin nimmt dabei die Stelle eines utopischen Projekts ein, das an sich schon vielversprechend sein soll. Wenn man sich auch sonst kaum für emanzipatorische Ideale engagiert, ist doch die bloße Anrufung dieser Stadt schon positiv konnotiert: Berlin als Inbegriff des Guten, Wahren und Schönen, darin

nur „der Kunst“ vergleichbar. So wie der Wert der Kunst im Kunstmilieu außer Frage steht, schien auch „Berlin“ über jeden Zweifel erhaben. Und analog zur Beschwörung eines idealistischen Glaubens an die Kunst hatte auch diese Berlin-Phase den willkommenen Nebeneffekt, von jenen ökonomischen Interessen abzulenken, die einem Projekt wie der ABC selbstredend zugrunde liegen. Schließlich handelte es sich hier um eine Verkaufsausstellung, vergleichbar der „Arts Unlimited“ auf der Art Basel. Die Veranstalter legten jedoch großen Wert darauf, den merkantilen Aspekt ihres Projekts – etwa durch fehlende Preisschilder und den Verzicht auf Messekojten – herunterzuspielen. Der Rekurs auf „Berlin“ fungierte dabei wie zur Bekräftigung eines interesselosen Engagements, das ich den Akteuren/

Akteurinnen im Übrigen keineswegs vollständig absprechen möchte, von dem gleichwohl festzuhalten bleibt, dass es zum festen Bestandteil jeder Kunstmarktretorik gehört. Je mehr man sich allein für „die Kunst“ zu engagieren vorgibt, so als wären Marktbedingungen ihr äußerlich, desto positiver wird sich dies auf ihre Vermarktung auswirken. Da Berlin in dem Ruf steht, eine Art „ökonomiefreie Zone“ zu sein, taugt diese Stadt besonders gut zum Fluchtpunkt für zahlreiche idealistische Visionen, die letztlich eine Triebfeder der Vermarktung sind. Gerade weil das in Berlin Produzierte über den Nimbus des Marktfremden verfügt, ist es so begehrt. Zahlreiche in Berlin lebende Künstler versorgen diesen Markt mit einem Authentizität verheißenden Nachschub an Gegenwartskunst, der zugleich Bohemefantasien nährt. Vor diesem Hintergrund wird es nachvollziehbar, dass es zahlreiche Galerien nach Berlin zieht – sie müssen hier gewissermaßen mindestens über eine Dependence verfügen. Seit den späten 1990er Jahren ist ein Großteil der Kölner Kunstwelt in mehreren Schüben aus Köln nach Berlin abgewandert – ich selbst und die vorliegende Zeitschrift ebenfalls. Der Höhepunkt dieser Umzugswelle war um das Jahr 2008 herum erreicht – mit den Neueröffnungen der Berlin-Filialen der Galerien Daniel Buchholz und Captain Petzel (einem Joint Venture der Kölner Galerie Gisela Capitain und der New Yorker Galerie Friedrich Petzels) sowie mit der Verlagerung der Zentrale der Galerie Sprüth/Magers, die ihre Kölner und Münchener Filialen zugunsten von Berlin aufgegeben hat. Auch zahlreiche US-amerikanische Galeristen – wie etwa Peres Projects – haben ihren Standort nach Berlin verlagert.

Das oft beklagte Fehlen einer ausgeprägten Sammlerschaft vor Ort fällt auch insofern kaum



otherwise showed little commitment to emancipatory ideals were expected to respond to the positive connotations invoked by the very name of a city – Berlin as the embodiment of the good, the true, and the beautiful, comparable only to “art as such.” Just as the value of art goes unquestioned within the art world, “Berlin,” too, seemed immune to doubt. And two, in analogy with the incantations of idealist belief in art as such, this emphatic belief in Berlin had the welcome side effect of deflecting attention from the economic interests that obviously underlay a project such as ABC. After all, this was a sales exhibition, not unlike Art Basel’s “Arts Unlimited.” The organizers, however, made a point of downplaying the mercantile aspect of their project – there were no price tags and none of the booths familiar from art fairs. The references to “Berlin” functioned to affirm their selfless dedication. It is not that I would altogether deny that such dedication was in fact part of their motivation: Still, we should note that it is an indispensable part of the art market’s rhetoric. The more actors in this market pretend to act out of pure devotion to “art as such,” as though the conditions of the market were extrinsic to it, the greater the positive effects for the marketing of the same art. Berlin’s reputation as a sort of “non-economic zone” predestines it to become a screen for the projection of various idealistic visions – visions that ultimately power the marketing of art. The very aura of remoteness from the market that sets art made in Berlin apart is what makes it so desirable. Numerous artists living in Berlin cater to this market with a steady supply of work that promises authenticity and nourishes fantasies of bohemian life. This helps explain why many galleries are drawn to Berlin – it is almost imperative for them to at least open

a branch in the city. In several waves starting in the late 1990s, much of the Cologne art world, including myself and this journal, has migrated to Berlin. The trend culminated around 2008, when Daniel Buchholz’s Berlin branch and Captain Petzel, a joint venture of Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne, and Friedrich Petzel, New York, opened; Sprüth Magers closed down its offices in Cologne and Munich and moved its headquarters to Berlin. Several American galleries, including Peres Projects, have relocated to Berlin as well.

Gallery operators like to complain that the city lacks a real collector class, but that is a negligible problem because Berlin plays the part of a central node in a worldwide network. In the perspective of the global art market, Berlin functions as an outsourcing destination where production expenses are low – distribution and sales take place elsewhere, preferably at the numerous international art fairs now held almost every week in one city or another (Brussels, Dubai, Marseille, and so on).

#### 6. THE END OF REMOTENESS FROM THE MARKET

In the past few years, however, it has been increasingly difficult to maintain the illusion that the money is in some imaginary other place. Wherever you go in the city, you cannot miss the fact that the international investors have arrived. The number of luxury hotels has grown, and real estate developers offer what are now called “townhouses” and high-end apartments tailored to the needs of art collectors. Lifestyle clubs like Soho House satisfy the desire for exclusivity and cater to upper-class youngsters who like to dine at restaurants like the Grill Royal, which blends a décor suggestive of an upmarket bordello with the atmosphere of a VIP zone. For years, the



Shuttle-Service am / Shuttle service at the Gallery Weekend, Berlin 2014

ins Gewicht, als Berlin die Rolle eines zentralen Knotenpunktes innerhalb einer globalen Vernetzungsstruktur spielt. Aus der Sicht des globalen Kunstmarkts fungiert Berlin als eine outgesourcte Billigproduktionsstätte. Hier wird günstig produziert – Vertrieb und Verkauf finden woanders, bevorzugt auf den zahlreichen internationalen Messen statt, die inzwischen im Wochentakt in zahlreichen Städten (Brüssel, Dubai, Marseille etc.) eröffnet werden.

#### 6. DAS ENDE DER MARKTFERNE

Allein in den letzten Jahren ist es zunehmend schwieriger geworden, das Geld in einem imaginären Außerhalb zu verorten. Denn schon optisch spürt man es an jeder Ecke, dass die internationalen Investoren diese Stadt für sich entdeckt haben: Die Zahl der Luxushotels hat zugenommen, vielerorts werden „Townhouses“ angeboten oder auf die Bedürfnisse von Kunstsammlern zugeschnittene Luxusapartements. Lifestyleclubs, wie das Soho House, setzen auf

Exklusivität und eine Jeunesse dorée, die gerne in Restaurants wie dem Grill Royal speist, das an ein Edlibordell erinnert und die Atmosphäre einer VIP-Zone verströmt. War die Sammlung Hoffmann jahrelang die einzig öffentlich zugängliche Privatsammlung gewesen, so gibt es jetzt zahlreiche Sammler (Haubrock, Schürmann, Olbricht), die entweder Ausstellungsräume betreiben oder – wie Christian Boros in seinem Bunker – ein eigenes Privatmuseum eröffneten. Es wirkt zuweilen so, als müsse man über ein Schaufenster in Berlin verfügen, um überhaupt zu existieren. Auch die Luxusmode hat Berlin für sich entdeckt – zunächst war ihr Fluchtpunkt der Stadteil Berlin-Mitte, genauer: jenes Bermuda-dreieck zwischen Münzstraße, Mulackstraße und Rosenthaler Straße, das in den letzten Jahren eine Transformation durchlief, die der des Viertels SoHo in New York nachempfunden zu sein schien – vom ehemaligen Kunstzentrum zum Fashiondistrict. Hinzu kamen die Friedrichstraße und der Gendarmenmarkt, wo sich Boutiquen

Hoffmann Collection was the city's only publicly accessible private art collection, but now there are several collectors who either operate exhibition spaces (Haubrok, Schürmann, Olbrecht) or set up their own private museums (Christian Boros's bunker). It sometimes feels like you need to have a showcase in Berlin to even exist. High-end fashion, too, has discovered Berlin; it all began in Mitte, and more precisely, the Bermuda Triangle between Münzstraße, Mulackstraße, and Rosenthaler Straße, whose transformation in the space of a few years seemed to have been modeled on that of New York's Soho, another former art hotspot turned fashion district. Then came Friedrichstraße and Gendarmenmarkt, put on the map by boutiques like The Corner and Quartier 206. By now, the more renowned designer boutiques, like Andreas Murkudis's, have left for the western part of the city, migrating first to Potsdamer Straße and most recently also to the Bikini Haus. The Bermuda Triangle, meanwhile, is now in the hands of upper-middle-class labels like Comptoir des Cotonniers, American Apparel, and Acne.

In light of this shift, it would not seem an overstatement to speak of an exodus of luxury fashion to west Berlin: With the exception of boutiques like Apartment and The Corner, the high-end labels (Hermès, Yves Saint Laurent, Gucci) have withdrawn to Kurfürstendamm; Friedrichstraße has lost its luxury appeal. Well-heeled Berliners, the kind who do not just have the money but are also willing to spend it on luxury fashion, first among them the so-called "rich Russians" tend to live in the western districts, and so these businesses go where their clientele is. A similar trend has emerged in the art world, with several gallerists now preferring western districts like

Charlottenburg: Galerie Daniel Buchholz's Berlin branch was first, followed by the Mathew Gallery and Max Hetzler, who inaugurated not one but two galleries in the area in 2013.

#### 7. COOPERATE TILL YOU DROP

The decisive difference between Berlin and a gallery neighborhood such as New York's Chelsea is that Berlin's galleries are scattered all over the city rather than being concentrated in one geographical area. Visitors who want to go on a tour of Berlin's galleries will have to prepare for a long walk – from Wedding to Schöneberg, from Kreuzberg to Mitte, from Charlottenburg all the way to Strausberger Platz. With some galleries, the impression is hard to avoid that they chose locations as far "off the beaten track" as possible in order to lend geographical credence to their claim to singularity. While some galleries thus engage in solitary efforts to set themselves apart – a strategy not everyone can afford – others form clusters: Multiple galleries open in one building, as on Lindenstraße, or in one another's immediate vicinity, as along Potsdamer Straße. They band together without getting in each other's way; they mark their respective territories and nonetheless stay in touch. In any case, each gallery seems to develop its own biotope – an aggregate of parallel universes. Moreover, the audience of one gallery has no idea what is going on next door, where its ideas of what constitutes art may well be trampled upon. This pluralization and internal differentiation of the art world reflects a fundamentally new structure. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu still thought that the "artistic field" was constitutively agonistic – that is, defined by opposing camps such as traditionalists vs. avant-gardists. But these unambiguous front lines have been

wie The Corner oder das Quartier 206 angesiedelt hatten. Nur sind inzwischen die renommierten Designerboutiquen wie die von Andreas Murkudis in den Westen der Stadt, genauer, in die Potsdamer Straße abgewandert, und zuletzt ins Bikini-Haus. Im Bermudadreieck dominieren dagegen inzwischen gehobene Mittelklasse-Labels wie Comptoir des Cotonniers, American Apparel oder Acne.

Es scheint vor diesem Hintergrund nicht übertrieben, einen Exodus der Luxusmode in den Berliner Westen zu konstatieren: Mit Ausnahme von Boutiquen wie dem Apartment oder The Corner sind sämtliche Edellabels (Hermès, Yves Saint Laurent, Gucci) nur noch auf dem Ku'damm präsent, wohingegen die Friedrichstraße ihren Luxusappeal verloren hat. Insofern, als die besonders wohlhabenden Berliner, die nicht nur Geld haben, sondern dieses mehr noch für Luxusmode auszugeben bereit sind, in den Westbezirken der Stadt leben – allen voran die sogenannten „reichen Russen“ –, sucht man sie auf diese Weise unmittelbar zu adressieren. Parallel zur Modeindustrie steuern auch zahlreiche Galeristen inzwischen bevorzugt westliche Viertel wie Charlottenburg an – angefangen von der Galerie Daniel Buchholz, die hier ihre Filiale eröffnete, über die Galerie Mathew bis hin zu den neuen Räumen der Galerie Max Hetzler, der hier im Jahre 2013 gleich zwei Galerien eröffnete.

#### 7. KOOPERIEREN BIS ZUM UMFALLEN

Der entscheidende Unterschied zu einem New Yorker Galerienviertel wie Chelsea ist darin zu sehen, dass sich in Berlin die Galerien über die ganze Stadt verteilen, statt sich geografisch zu verdichten. Wer einen Galerienrundgang machen will, wird eine lange Reise antreten müssen – von

Wedding nach Schöneberg, von Kreuzberg nach Mitte, von Charlottenburg zum Strausberger Platz. Man gewinnt zuweilen den Eindruck, als ob sich einzelne Galerien möglichst „weit ab vom Schuss“ platzieren würden, um dadurch ihre Singularitätsbehauptung geografisch zu untermauern. Neben diesem solitären Bemühen um Abgrenzung, das man sich auch leisten können muss, kommt es aber auch zur Bildung von Galerieclustern – mehrere Galerien siedeln sich entweder in einem Galeriegebäude, wie etwa in der Lindenstraße, oder in unmittelbarer Nähe zueinander an, wie etwa in der Potsdamer Straße. Man tut sich zusammen, ohne einander in die Quere zu kommen; man sondert sich ab und bleibt doch im Kontakt. Jede Galerie scheint ohnehin ihr eigenes Biotop herauszubilden – lauter Parallelwelten. Das Publikum der einen Galerie weiß auch gar nichts davon, was in der anderen passiert, obwohl seine Vorstellungen von „Kunst“ dort möglicherweise mit Füßen getreten werden. Was sich in dieser Pluralisierung und Ausdifferenzierung des Kunstbetriebs widerspiegelt, ist seine grundlegend neue Verfasstheit. Während der französische Soziologe Pierre Bourdieu noch davon ausging, dass das „künstlerische Feld“ agonal verfasst, also durch gegnerische Lager (etwa Traditionalisten versus Avantgardisten) charakterisiert sei, ist an die Stelle dieser eindeutigen Fronten ein hoch ausdifferenziertes und segmentiertes Gefüge getreten. Dies bedeutet jedoch nicht, dass Konkurrenzverhältnisse etwa aufgehoben wären. Man kämpft nur nicht mehr mit offenem Visier, sondern eher verdeckt. Es liegt an dem in einer vernetzten Welt herrschenden Kooperationsimperativ, dass direkte Auseinandersetzungen und deutliche Antagonismen um jeden Preis vermieden werden müssen. Besser, man verdirbt es sich mit niemandem,

replaced by a highly differentiated and segmented structure, although competitive relationships have hardly become obsolete. Combatants merely no longer exchange blows openly, preferring hidden attacks. That is a consequence of the cooperation commandment that governs a networked world – direct altercation and explicit antagonism must be avoided at any cost. Better not to alienate anyone, for today's enemy might be tomorrow's indispensable partner in a cooperative venture. It is a myth, then, that people in Berlin's art world are especially fond of contentious debates and critical engagement of one another's actions. If they have something negative to say, they bitch behind each others' backs – and in this regard, Berlin is no different from any other place. Another factor is the lack of occasions and locations that would foster unforeseen encounters and open hostilities. There is no one bar – with the exception, perhaps, of the Paris Bar for the older generation and, for the short year that it was open, the Times bar for the younger set – where, by tacit agreement, everyone comes together. And if, at the party after an opening, we meet someone we have a bone to pick with, we avoid open confrontation – better to abide by the cooperation commandment that rules in the networked world. Hardly anyone can afford to play the maverick, let alone stick rigidly to an original program for decades. A global art market makes cooperation partners a necessity, and be it only to spread risks and expenses – by sharing a booth at an art fair or by setting up a joint branch gallery. But the trend toward multi-branch galleries and branch offices founded and operated in collaboration by two galleries must also be seen as symptomatic of structural changes in the art world. A "business" conducted primarily by individual retailers

has been transformed into what I would call, in analogy to Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry, an "industry engaged in the production of visuality and meaning."<sup>14</sup> Large corporations such as the Gagosian empire strive for predominance in this industry – through massive expansion and the opening of international branch locations, among other measures. But even galleries in the midlevel segment increasingly feel compelled to expand, by renting additional exhibition space and/or founding a spin-off in another city – and for them Berlin is the place to be right now.

But this expansionist tendency is also an expression of the general doctrine of growth: Every entrepreneur is told that he must expand to remain competitive. Marx already noted that competition "forcibly enjoins" the immanent laws of capitalist production upon every individual capitalist.<sup>15</sup> Today, the same law commands the creation of major art corporations that maintain presences in numerous locations. That is why "expand or die" is the name of the game among the protagonists in today's New York art world.<sup>16</sup>

#### 8. EXCESS, SELF-DESTRUCTION, AND THE POWER OF POTENTIALITY

What predestines Berlin as a location for such demonstrative presence is not so much immediate economic incentives, but rather a cultural promise. By opening a gallery here, an art dealer signals that he or she is more interested in "art" than in money. Berlin with its oft-invoked and near-mythical "cheap rents" (in reality, rents in some neighborhoods have long matched those in cities like Munich or Hamburg) is thought to be the city of artists – where they live, rent large studios, and exchange ideas about their work. The

denn der Feind von heute könnte derjenige sein, den ich morgen dringend als Kooperationspartner benötige. Es ist somit ein Mythos, dass in Berlin besonders kontrovers diskutiert und sich miteinander kritisch auseinandergesetzt würde. Wenn überhaupt, dann lästert man hinter vorgehaltener Hand – wie überall. Auch präsentieren sich kaum Gelegenheiten oder Orte, die die unvorhergesehene Begegnung samt Konfliktaustragung begünstigen würden. Es gibt keine Bar (mit Ausnahme vielleicht der Paris-Bar für die ältere Generation, oder für den kurzen Zeitraum von einem Jahr die inzwischen geschlossene Times Bar für die jüngere Generation), auf die sich etwa alle geeinigt hätten. Und selbst wenn man im Anschluss an eine Ausstellungseröffnung auf der Party auf jemanden trifft, mit dem man eigentlich ein Hühnchen zu rupfen hätte, wird diese Auseinandersetzung zugunsten des in einer vernetzten Welt herrschenden Kooperationsimperativs vermieden. Kaum jemand kann es sich leisten, als Einzelkämpfer zu agieren oder gar über Jahrzehnte hinweg an seinem ursprünglichen Programm rigide festzuhalten. In einem globalen Kunstmarkt ist man auf Kooperationspartner angewiesen, schon um sich Risiko und Kosten zu teilen – sei es auf Messen, in Form eines gemeinsam betriebenen Messestands, sei es mithilfe der Bildung einer gemeinsamen Filiale. Diese Entwicklung hin zum Filialwesen, bei der sich zwei Galerien zum Zwecke der Gründung eines Ablegers zusammenschließen, ist aber auch als symptomatisch für die strukturellen Veränderungen des Kunstbetriebs anzusehen. Von einem einzelhändlerisch organisierten „Betrieb“ hat er sich in das verwandelt, was ich in Anlehnung an Adornos/Horkheimers Begriff der Kulturindustrie als „Visuallität und Bedeutung herstellende Industrie“ bezeichnen würde.<sup>14</sup> Es sind Großun-

ternehmen wie das Gagosian Imperium, die in dieser Industrie die Vorherrschaft – auch durch massive Filialbildung – anstreben. Aber auch die Galerien aus dem mittleren Segment sehen sich verstärkt dazu gezwungen zu expandieren, indem sie entweder einen zusätzlichen Ausstellungsraum anmieten und/oder einen Ableger in einer anderen Stadt, zurzeit eben vorzugsweise in Berlin, gründen.

Dieses Expansionsbestreben ist aber auch Ausdruck jener Wachstumsdoktrin, die jedem Unternehmer einschärft, er müsse expandieren, um wettbewerbsfähig zu bleiben. Schon Marx konstatierte, dass die Konkurrenz jedem individuellen Kapitalisten die immanenten Gesetze der kapitalistischen Produktion „aufherrschen“ würde.<sup>15</sup> Und dieses Gesetz befiehlt heute, sich zu korporativen Großunternehmen zusammenzuschließen, um an mehreren Orten zugleich Präsenz zu zeigen. „Expand or die“ lautet entsprechend die derzeitige Devise unter den Akteuren und Akteuren der New Yorker Kunstwelt.<sup>16</sup>

#### 8. EXZESSE, AUTODESTRUKTION UND DIE MACHT DER POTENZIALITÄT

Was Berlin als Ort für diese Demonstration von Präsenz prädestiniert, sind weniger unmittelbare ökonomische Anreize als ein kulturelles Versprechen. Wer sich hier ansiedelt, sendet das Signal aus, dass es ihm weniger ums Geld als um „die Kunst“ geht. Denn Berlin soll aufgrund seiner viel beschworenen und geradezu mythischen „billigen Mieten“ (die in Wahrheit in einigen Vierteln längst das Niveau von Städten wie München oder Hamburg erreicht haben) eben die Stadt der Künstler sein, die hier leben, große Ateliers mieten und sich miteinander austauschen. Dem Klischeebild zufolge soll Berlin über

stereotype has it that Berlin boasts undamaged Bohemian structures, an animated nightlife scene, and a culture of lively critical engagement.

Yes, of course, people in Berlin party excessively and head out night after night; especially the expats who have settled in the city and the Easyjet set (check out Tobias Rapp's trenchant portrait). So the question is: How does this penchant for debauchery – from which young female artists, needless to say, are not exempt – go together with what I have described as the professionalization and corporatization of the art business? I believe the one and the other are two sides of the same coin. The noisy companionship and late-night dancing on bar tables, fueled by heavy drinking and drug use, is one side; but the transformation of the art world into a global industry must be recognized to be the flipside. The eccentric and unpredictable behavior of the actors on the art world's stage reflects the unpredictability they claim for their products, and cranking up the former serves to highlight the latter. True art, after all, is said to be priceless. And indeed, what is at stake in works of art cannot be translated one-to-one into economic categories. It is the irreducible aspect of art whose only adequate reflection on the business side is unorthodox behavior (opulent festivities, regular collective drinking binges, networking while hung over) – a business behavior that is almost inconceivable in other spheres of society. There, too, people party hard and use drugs to make the pressure bearable. The art world, however, is one of the few social environments in which a high degree of self-destruction and offensiveness are virtually mandatory.

Still, it would be a mistake to believe that Berlin's entire cultural scene is out partying night

after night. There are the moments of neobohemianism being played out at the bar around the corner; but there is also a neobourgeois retreat into the comforts of privacy, practiced by people whose lives resemble those of busy managers or who have started families (or both). Moreover, as an alternative to the established bar scenario, including the artist's stylized self-representation as an "urban bum" (Mercedes Bunz), there is now a nightlife scene of "movers and shakers" lusting after commercial success who have come to dominate the art world, a development that reflects the increasing popularity of commercially viable contemporary art and the growing attention it has received in the media. This trend toward a new art scene – politically questionable, devoted to celebrity, decadent, and enthusiastically interested in fashion – was fostered by the

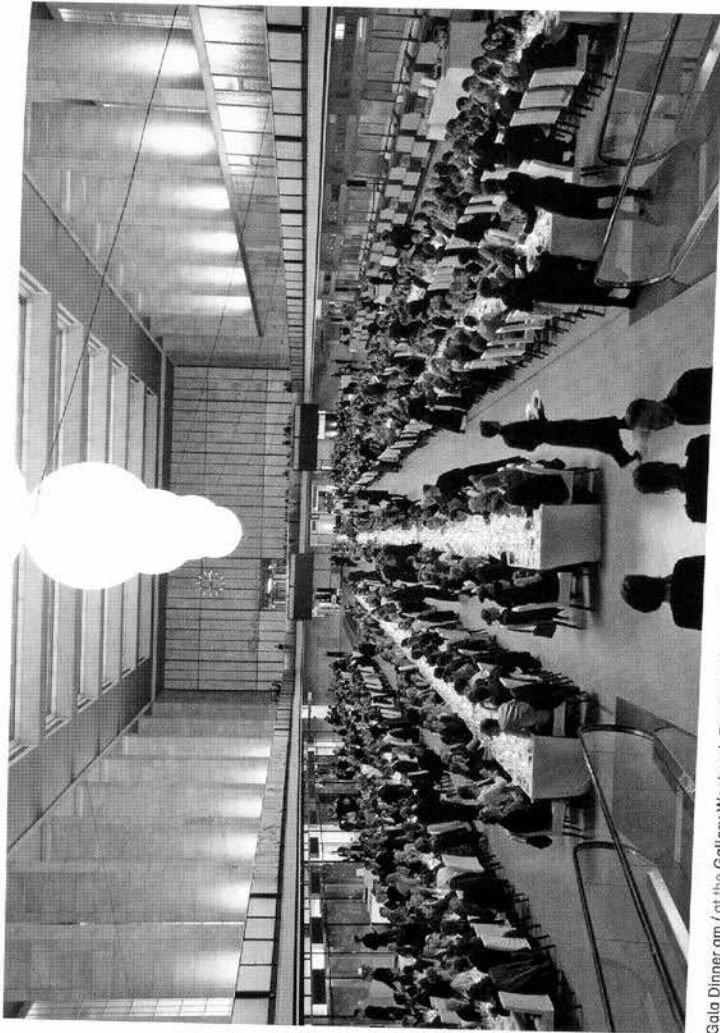
launch, in 2007, of a German edition of *Vanity Fair*; its unofficial headquarters was the restaurant Grill Royal, which opened the same year. *Vanity Fair* – a sort of *Bunte* with added emphasis on lifestyle – soon folded, to be replaced in 2011 by the German *Interview*. Grill Royal, by contrast, thrived and even added a second venue, the popular Pauly Saal at the former Jewish girls' school on Auguststraße, which offers a more intimate setting for gallery dinners. A joint venture of Boris Radczun, the art collector and frame dealer Stephan Landwehr, and the gallery owner Thilo Wermke, Grill Royal was originally founded to provide a more adequate locale for the art world's business lunches and post-opening dinners and quickly became the new hangout for the more solvent sectors of the art and fashion scenes; its kid brother, the Pauly Saal, is perpetually booked as well. Regardless of whether the artists to be celebrated style themselves as bohemians or entrepreneurs, the

intakte Bohemestrukturen, ein vitales Nachtleben und eine lebendige Auseinandersetzungskultur verfügen.

Natürlich trifft es zu, dass in Berlin exzessiv gefeiert und allabendlich ausgegangen wird, zumal von den hier ansässigen Expats und dem von Tobias Rapp treffend beschriebenen Easyjetset. Die Frage lautet jedoch, wie diese Lust am Exzess, den natürlich auch junge Künstler/innen an den Tag legen, mit der von mir behaupteten Professionalisierung und Korporatisierung des Kunstbetriebs zusammengeht? Das sind m. E. zwei Seiten derselben Medaille. Die Trinkelage, Drogenexzesse und das gemeinsame Singen oder Gröhlen auf dem Tisch ist die eine Seite, als deren andere Seite ist die Verwandlung des Kunstbetriebs in eine globale Industrie zu betrachten. Je exzentrischer und weniger berechenbar das Verhalten der Akteure/Akteurinnen, desto mehr vermag dies die von ihnen ja ebenfalls reklamierte Nichtberechenbarkeit ihres Produkts zu unterstreichen. Kunst soll schließlich nicht mit Gold aufzuwiegen sein. Und tatsächlich lassen sich künstlerische Arbeiten nicht eins zu eins in ökonomische Kategorien übersetzen. Es ist ihr irreduzibles Moment, dem letztlich nur ein unorthodoxes Geschäftsgebaren (opulente feste, regelmäßige kollektive Besäufnisse, Netzwerken mit Hangover) gerecht zu werden vermag – ein Geschäftsgebaren, das in anderen gesellschaftlichen Feldern kaum denkbar wäre. Auch dort wird zwar exzessiv gefeiert, und auch dort greift man auf Drogen zurück, um den Druck auszuhalten. Der Kunstbetrieb ist jedoch eines der wenigen Milieus, wo ein hohes Maß an Selbstzerstörung und Transgression quasi zum Pflichtprogramm gehören.

Man ginge jedoch gänzlich fehl in der Annahme, wenn man glauben würde, dass sich in

Berlin der gesamte Kulturbetrieb die Nächte um die Ohren schlägt. Neben den neobohemistischen Szenarien in der Eckkneipe ist ein neobürgerlicher Rückzug ins Private derer zu konstatieren, deren Leben entweder dem eines viel beschäftigten Managers gleicht oder die eine Familie gegründet haben (oder beides). Hinzu kommt, dass das gängige Kneipenszenario inklusive Selbststilisierung zum „urbanen Penner“ (Mercedes Bunz) in den letzten Jahren um eine andere Form des Ausgehens erweitert wurde. Nach Markterfolg lechzende „Mover und Shaker“ (Ulif Poschardt) dominierten mehr und mehr auch das Kunstmilieu, worin sich die gestiegene Popularität der markterfolgreichen Gegenwartskunst auch in den Medien widerspiegelte. Begünstigt wurde diese Entwicklung hin zu einer politisch fragwürdigen, celebrityorientierten, dekadenten und fashionbegeisterten Szene durch die Gründung der deutschen Ausgabe von *Vanity Fair* im Jahre 2007, die von der Eröffnung des Grillrestaurants Grill Royal gleichsam flankierend begleitet wurde. Während die *Vanity Fair* – eine Art *Bunte* mit mehr Lifestyleorientierung – schnell wieder eingestellt wurde, um im Jahre 2011 vom *Interview Magazine* Germany abgelöst zu werden, hielt sich das Grill Royal, um mehr noch in Form der Gründung des beliebten Pauly Saals in der ehemaligen jüdischen Mädchenschule in der Auguststraße zu expandieren, das einen intimeren Rahmen für Galeriendinner verheißt. Ursprünglich wurde das Grill Royal gemeinsam von Boris Radczun, dem Kunstsammler und Rahmenhändler Stephan Landwehr sowie dem Galeristen Thilo Wermke gegründet, und dies mit dem Ziel, den Business-Lunches und After-Opening-Dinners der Galerien einen geeigneten Rahmen zu verschaffen. Schnell avancierte es zum neuen Treffpunkt der finanz-



Gala Dinner am / at the Gallery Weekend, Flughafen / airport Tempelhof, Berlin 2014

Grill Royal is often the venue of choice for their opening-night parties. Then again, the bar at the corner pub where the transgressive-bohemian artist used to get wasted is not really that far away from the Grill Royal's bathroom, in which today's entrepreneurial artist does his blow – again, the lines have become blurry. Everything that has long been normal in New York's art world – the embrace of the celebrity principle, enthusiasm for fashion, collaboration with lifestyle magazines, corporate business structures – has long found its way to Berlin as well. The crucial difference is that there are no limits to excess in Berlin. The more anecdotes circulate about a particularly wild night in Berlin, the firmer everyone's belief becomes that art is *per se* transgressive and exempt from rational considerations.

And what about the theorists and intellectuals, another cohort we associate with Berlin? Many freelance curators and writers indeed live here, and they have contributed greatly to establishing the symbolic value of Berlin's art production

without profiting directly from its rising commercial value. Yet it is not as though their symbolic capital were never transformed into economic advantages. If some of the curators and authors who call Berlin home receive lucrative commissions to do a show or write an essay, they owe it in part to the location in their byline: "Berlin." The majority of Berlin's art historians and cultural critics, however, are commuters, earning a living by teaching in other cities. You can see them at many an art-show opening party, but they are rarely the last ones to leave – they will have to catch the train to work in the morning. For them, living in Berlin means feeling that they are part a place where the sky is the limit. They can believe they live at the center of the world even if they actually stay at home all the time or spend only a few days a week in Berlin.

Since the turn of the millennium, and even more in recent years, Berlin has produced symbolic values like vitality, free time, a bohemian attitude toward life, extravagance, excess, com-

kräftigeren Kunst- und Modeszene, und auch sein kleiner Bruder, der Pauly Saal, ist stets ausgebuht. Unabhängig davon, ob sich die hier gefeierten Künstler einen bohemistischen Habitus geben oder ob sie dem Typus des *entrepreneurial artist* entsprechen – das Grill Royal erweist sich immer wieder als Ort der Wahl für ihre Eröffnungsfeier. Allerdings ist der Weg von der Eckkneipe, in der sich der transgressive Bohemekünstler früher betrank, zum koksenden *entrepreneurial artist* auf dem Klo des Grill Royal im Grunde genommen nicht weit – fließende Übergänge auch hier. All das, was in New York längst zur Realität des dortigen Kunstbetriebs gehört – Offenheit für das Celebrity-Prinzip, Modebegeisterung, Kooperation mit Lifestylezeitschriften, korporative Unternehmensstrukturen –, hat längst auch in Berlin Einzug gehalten. Mit dem entscheidenden Unterschied jedoch, dass dem Exzess hier keine Grenzen gesetzt sind. Je mehr Anekdoten über eine exzessiv verbrachte Nacht in Berlin zirkulieren, desto mehr festigt dies den Glauben an die Kunst als das *per se* Transgressive, von rationalen Erwägungen Ausgenommene.

Und was ist mit den Theoretikern und Intellektuellen, die mit dieser Stadt ja ebenfalls in Verbindung gebracht werden? Hier leben schließlich zahlreiche freie Kuratoren/Kuratorinnen und Autoren/Autorinnen, die maßgeblich zur Herstellung des Symbolwerts der Kunst beigetragen haben, ohne unmittelbar von ihren Wertsteigerungen auf dem Kunstmarkt zu profitieren. Gleichwohl ist es nicht so, dass sich ihr symbolisches Kapital niemals in ökonomisches transformieren würde. Wenn einige der hier ansässigen Kuratoren/Kuratorinnen und Autoren/Autorinnen mit lukrativen Aufträgen und Textangeboten konfrontiert werden, dann verdankt

sich dies auch ihrem Standort „Berlin“. Die Mehrheit der Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaftler führt indessen ein Pendlerleben, da sie ihr Geld in anderen Städten lehrend verdienen. Man sieht sie zwar auf zahlreichen Eröffnungspartys, doch sie werden kaum die letzten sein, die nach Hause gehen, da sie am nächsten Morgen früh den Zug zu ihrer Arbeitsstätte nehmen müssen. Hier zu leben bedeutet auch für sie, sich den dieser Stadt zugeschriebenen Möglichkeitsräumen zugehörig zu fühlen. Man glaubt sich auch dann noch am Nabel der Welt, wenn man konsequent zu Hause bleibt oder nur wenige Tage pro Woche in Berlin weilt.

Seit der Jahrtausendwende und verstärkt noch in den letzten Jahren wurde in Berlin ein hohes Maß an symbolischen Werten wie Lebendigkeit, verfügbare Zeit, bohemistisches Lebensgefühl, Verschwendung, Exzesse, Kommunikation und Kreativität produziert. Fast man die globale Finanzkrise von 2008 in erster Linie als eine Erschütterung des Glaubens an die Marktwerte auf, dann gewinnen derartige Symbolwerte natürlich an Bedeutung. Sie unterfüttern die Marktwerte und reichern diese mit Glaubwürdigkeit an. Womöglich hat sich der Kunstmarkt auch deshalb als so krisenresistent erwiesen, weil seine Produkte in derartigen Symbolwerten fundiert sind, weil diese Symbolwerte, respektive die ihnen zugrunde liegende Annahme von symbolischer Bedeutung, im sozialen Universum der Kunst in Hülle und Fülle produziert werden. Und eine Stadt wie Berlin stellt natürlich eine solche Produktion von symbolischer Bedeutung, die in Symbolwert umschlägt, in Aussicht. Bezeichnend ist jedoch, dass Mythos und Realität bei diesen Symbolwerten nicht nur auseinanderfallen, sondern auch ineinandergreifen. Sie befeuern sich

munication, and creativity in great volumes. If we regard the 2008 global financial crisis as being primarily about a profoundly rattled confidence in the values of the markets, such symbolic values obviously take on greater significance. They bolster market values and enhance their credibility. Perhaps the art market has proven so resilient in the current crisis also because its products are grounded in such symbolic values – because these values, or the presumption of symbolic meaning on which they are based, are being manufactured in large quantities in the social universe of art. And what a city like Berlin promises is exactly this production of symbolic meaning that translates into symbolic value. Characteristically, though, the myth and the reality of these symbolic values are not only different things but also intertwined: As I have tried to show, they fuel one another. Yet like the symbolic value of art, which implies a double ascription of significance and commercial value, the qualities associated with Berlin cannot be diagnostically located in its reality. Like art itself, it is charged with enormous symbolic significance, and as with the work of art, its value and its significance are always negotiated and produced elsewhere. Berlin, then, remains a projection screen – one whose distinction is that it encourages the expectations people bring to it without ever entirely living up them.

This text is an updated, revised, and abridged version of an essay I wrote in 2009 for the catalogue raisonné of the Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection on occasion of the exhibition "Compass in Hand" at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Translation: Gerrit Jackson

#### Notes

- 1 Sieglinde Geisel, "Labor für die Gegenwartskunst: Eine temporäre Kunsthalle auf dem Berliner Schlossplatz belebt die Debatte um einen definitiven Standort", in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, November 19, 2008.
- 2 Conny Becker, "Wie Berlin die internationale Konkurrenz einholt," in: *arts magazine*, November 3, 2008.
- 3 Ulrich Gutmair, Die ersten Tage von Berlin: Der Sound der Wende, Stuttgart 2013.
- 4 For a more complete discussion of the dynamic interplay between "symbolic value" and "market value" see my book *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*, transl. by Nicholas Grindell, Berlin 2009.
- 5 See Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in: *Limited Inc*, Ixanon 1988, pp. 1–23.
- 6 See Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", in: *Selected Writings*, Vol. 4: 1978–1940, ed. by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Mass. 2003, p. 321.
- 7 Alain Quémén, "The Hierarchies of Countries in the Contemporary Art World and Market: An Empirical Survey of the Globalization of the Visual Arts", in: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 17, no. 283, 2006, pp. 35–57.
- 8 Ulrich Bröckling, "Kreativität," in: Das unternehmerische Selbst: Soziologie einer Subjektivierungsform, Frankfurt/M. 2007, pp. 152–79.
- 9 Cf. Pierre-Michel Menger, *Portrait de l'artiste en travailleur: Métamorphoses du capitalisme*, Paris 2002.
- 10 See Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, transl. by Julia Conway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Oxford 1991.
- 11 Paolo Virno, *The Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, transl. by Bertoletti, Cascaito, Casson, Los Angeles, New York 2004, p. 12.
- 12 See Carsten Krohn, "Das Gebäude als Zeichen: Eine neue Kunsthalle auf dem Schlossplatz in Berlin", in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, October 31, 2008.
- 13 The Schlossplatz is now a huge construction site: The Berlin City Palace is being rebuilt. This is not the place for me to address the debate over this project.
- 14 See Graw, *High Price*, op. cit.
- 15 See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol. 1, transl. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/>.
- 16 See John Kelsey's press release announcing Stewart Uoo's show at Galerie Daniel Buchholz, February 2014.

gleichsam gegenseitig, wie ich zu zeigen versucht habe. Dennoch lässt sich analog zum Symbolwert, der eine doppelte Zuschreibung von Bedeutung und Wert impliziert, das mit Berlin Assoziierte nicht an dieser Stadt selbst dingfest festmachen. Wie auch die Kunst ist sie enorm symbolisch aufgeladen, und wie bei einer künstlerischen Arbeit wird ihr Wert und ihre Bedeutung stets *wonders* ausgehandelt und produziert. Berlin bleibt demnach eine Projektionsfläche, deren Besonderheit darin besteht, dass sie die auf sie geworfenen Projektionen nährt, ohne sie jedoch jemals vollständig einzulösen.

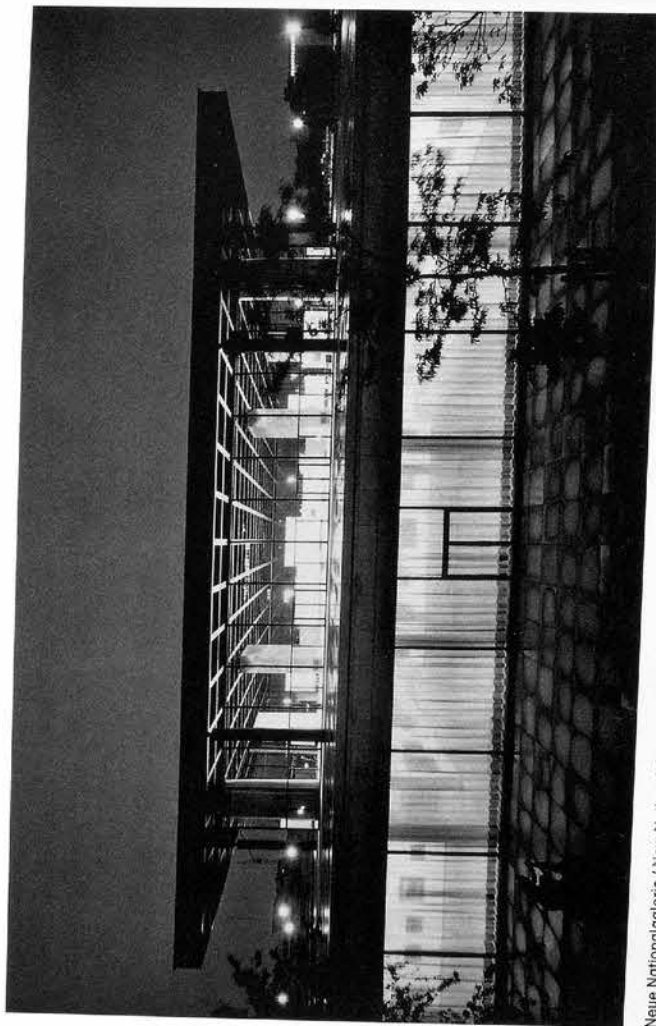
Dieser Text ist die aktualisierte, überarbeitete und gekürzte Version eines Essays, den ich im Jahre 2009 für den Catalogue Raisonné der Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection anlässlich der Ausstellung „Compass in Hand“ im Museum of Modern Art, New York, verfasst habe.

#### Anmerkungen

- 1 Sieglinde Geisel, „Labor für die Gegenwartskunst. Eine temporäre Kunsthalle auf dem Berliner Schlossplatz belebt die Debatte um einen definitiven Standort“, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 19. November 2008.
- 2 Conny Becker, „Wie Berlin die internationale Konkurrenz einholt“, in: *arts magazine*, 3.11.2008.
- 3 Ulrich Gutmair, Die ersten Tage von Berlin. Der Sound der Wende, Stuttgart 2013.
- 4 Ausführlich habe ich das spannungreiche Wechselverhältnis zwischen „Symbolwert“ und „Marktwert“ in meinem Buch „Der große Preis. Kunst zwischen Markt und Celebrity Kultur“, Köln 2008, behandelt.
- 5 Jacques Derrida, „Signature, Ereignis, Kontext“, in: ders., *Randgänge der Philosophie*, Wien, 1998, S. 325–351.
- 6 Vgl. hierzu: Walter Benjamin, „Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire“, in: ders., *Charles Baudelaire*, Frankfurt/M. 1992, S. 103–149; hier: S. 114.
- 7 Alain Quémén, „The Hierarchies of Countries in the Contemporary Artworld and Market. An Empirical Survey of the Globalization of the Visual Arts“, in: Alexander Mejschik/Peter Melchior et al. (Hg.), *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 17. Jg., Heft 283, Innsbruck 2006, S. 35–57.

- 8 Ulrich Bröckling, „Kreativität“, in: ders., *Das unternehmerische Selbst. Soziologie einer Subjektivierungsform*, Frankfurt/M. 2007, hier: S. 157–179.
- 9 Vgl. hierzu: Pierre-Michel Menger, *Kunst und Brot. Die Metamorphosen des Arbeitnehmers*, Konstanz 2006.
- 10 Vgl. hierzu: Giorgio Vasari, *Künstler der Renaissance. Lebensbeschreibungen der ausgezeichneten italienischen Baumeister, Maler und Bildhauer*, Köln 2002.
- 11 Paolo Virno, *Grammatik der Multitude*, Wien 2005, hier: S. 11.
- 12 Vgl. hierzu: Carsten Krohn, „Das Gebäude als Zeichen. Eine neue Kunsthalle auf dem Schlossplatz in Berlin“, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 31. Oktober 2008.
- 13 Inzwischen wird hier das Berliner Stadtschloss wiederaufgebaut, wobei ich die Diskussion darüber aus Zeit- und Platzgründen an dieser Stelle nicht aufgreifen werde.
- 14 Vgl. hierzu: Graw, *Der große Preis*, a. a. O.
- 15 Vgl. hierzu: Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Bd. 1, Berlin 1984, S. 618.
- 16 Vgl. hierzu: Presstext von John Kelsey für die Ausstellung von Stewart Uoo in der Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Februar 2014.

## STATEMENT ON THE EXHIBITION- AND COLLECTION POLITICS OF THE BERLIN NATIONAL GALLERY



Neue Nationalgalerie / New National Gallery, Berlin

Inexplicable programming choices, impermeability, and virtually no interaction with major local and international artistic approaches and discourses: These are accusations that are often leveled against Berlin's museums. But what are the structural difficulties that give rise to these problems?

Susanne von Falkenhausen's statement focuses on the Nationalgalerie institutions, especially the Neue Nationalgalerie and the Hamburger Bahnhof, to analyze the palpable lack of resolve that has hampered the exhibition and collection policies of these museums in recent years. What remains of a museum's role when it disregards contemporary discourses, the history of its own collection, and its public mandate? Simplistic curatorial projects that are designed to draw attention but turn out to have little substance reveal failings that, due to the mechanisms of canonization that remain in force, have long-lasting consequences.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the state of the collections of the Nationalgalerie (henceforth: National Gallery) has not developed for the better. With the Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum Berggruen, Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg, Friedrichswerdersche Kirche, and the Alte und Neue Nationalgalerie (Old and New National Galleries), the National Gallery collections are dispersed across six institutions – a structural decision that stems from financial necessity (although it alludes to a “synergistic effect” as business administrators like to call austerity measures). Due to this structure, Udo Kittelmann, the institutions' meta-director, must attend to not only the art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but also that of the nineteenth. None of these institutions is therefore led with the competence that could

## STATEMENT ZUR SAMMLUNGS- UND AUSSTELLUNGSPOLITIK DER BERLINER NATIONALGALERIE

Befremdliche Programmierung, fehlende Durchlässigkeit, kaum Anknüpfungen an in der Stadt und international präsente künstlerische Ansätze und Diskurse – das sind Vorwürfe, die den Museen Berlins häufig gemacht werden. Doch welche strukturellen Schwierigkeiten liegen diesen Problemen zugrunde?

In ihrem Statement analysiert Susanne von Falkenhausen am Beispiel der Nationalgalerie, insbesondere der Neuen Nationalgalerie und des Hamburger Bahnhofs, eine in den letzten Jahren sichtbare Unentschlossenheit in der Ausstellungs- und Sammlungspolitik. Was bleibt von der Rolle eines Museums, wenn es sich nicht an Diskursen, Sammlungsgeschichte und öffentlichem Auftrag orientiert? In plakativen, kurzzeitigen kuratorischen Projekten manifestieren sich Versäumnisse, die durch die immer noch gültigen Kanonisierungsmechanismen dauerhafte Auswirkungen haben.

Seit dem Mauerfall hat sich die Lage der Sammlung der Nationalgalerie nicht zum Besten entwickelt. Mit Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum Berggruen, Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg, Alter und Neuer Nationalgalerie sowie Friedrichswerderscher Kirche sind ihr sechs Institutionen zugeordnet – eine Strukturentscheidung, die stark nach „Synergieeffekt“ aussieht, wie Sparmaßnahmen im Verwaltungsjargon genannt werden, aber wohl schlicht aus der Not geboren ist. Mit Udo Kittelmann haben diese verschiedenen Häuser den zentralen Metadirektor erhalten, der sich aufgrund dieser Struktur nicht nur um das 20. und 21., sondern auch noch um das 19. Jahrhundert kümmern muss. Anstatt dass die Institutionen also einzeln wirklich kompetent, das heißt aus der intensiven Kenntnis der Einzelinstitutionen heraus geleitet werden könnten, entsteht – weil man es gerade nicht besser finanzieren kann oder man nicht mehr Stellen im Plan hat – eine unglückliche Ambivalenz zwischen Zentralisierung und Zersplitterung. Im Programm der

letzten Jahre schlägt sich das so nieder, dass auf der einen Seite eine Vielzahl kleiner Ausstellungen gezeigt wurden, während es sich bei größeren Ausstellungen fast immer um Übernahmen handelte. Das auf Dauer angelegte Zeigen des Sammlungsbestandes geriet dagegen seit dem Mauerfall ins Hintertreffen gegenüber einer hektisch und eigenartig planlos wirkenden Ausstellungsaktivität.

Der Eindruck der Zersplitterung liegt einmal an den Sammlungsstrukturen selbst. Die Neue Nationalgalerie-West hatte erst unter Werner Hafmann, also nach 1967, angefangen, substanzuell Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts zu sammeln. Der Etat war nicht groß, die Sammlungsbestände waren lückenhaft. Unter der Leitung von Dieter Honisch aktualisierte sich das Profil dann etwas in Richtung High Modernism und ansatzweise in Richtung Neoavantgarde der 60er und auch 70er Jahre. Dadurch, dass man nach 1989 die Stränge Ost und West zusammenbinden musste, wurde diese ohnehin nicht besonders dichte Struktur dann komplett durcheinandergewirbelt. Erste Hängungen der Sammlungsbestände, in denen eine Begegnung zwischen Ost- und Westkunst inszeniert wurde, fanden in den frühen 1990er Jahren statt.

Insgesamt ergibt sich für mich seither der Eindruck, dass man die Sammlung des 20. Jahrhunderts kaum noch in ihrer Konsistenz sehen kann, wie dies noch in Westberlin in der Neuen Nationalgalerie der Fall war. Dadurch ist ihr ein Bürgerbezug verlorengegangen, den sie früher noch hatte – jeder konnte sich immer wieder seine „Lieblingsbilder“ ansehen. Das Zeigen als eine der Kernaufgaben staatlicher Museen findet seitdem weniger in der Dauerpräsentation der Bestände statt als vielmehr vor allem in einer Art

Megan Francis Sullivan, „GG#1 (How many)“, 2014



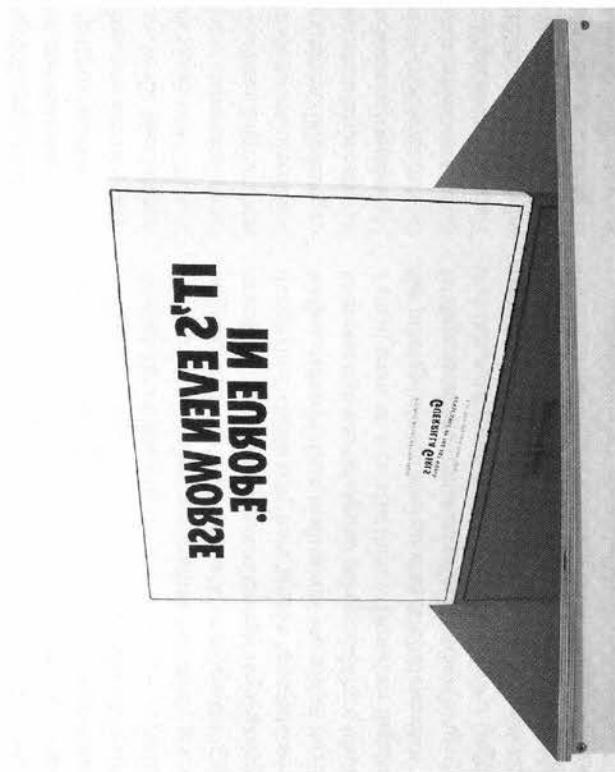
be derived from an intimate familiarity with its respective individual role and position. Instead, perhaps due to insufficient funding or personnel, there is an unfortunate ambivalence between centralization and fragmentation. This has had an effect on recent years' programming in that many exhibitions have been quite small, whereas all the larger ones have been shows on loan. Since the fall of the Wall, the consistent presentation of the collections has been neglected; a hectic, idiosyncratic, and aimless exhibition program has dominated in its stead.

The impression of fragmentation partially stems from the structures of the collections themselves. The New National Gallery in what was then West Berlin only seriously began collecting twentieth-century art under the direction of Werner Haftmann in 1967. The budget was not large,

and the collection had many gaps. Under the leadership of Dieter Honisch, the institution oriented itself somewhat toward High Modernism and the neo-avantgarde of the 1960s and 1970s. However, this by no means airtight collection was thrown into complete disarray after 1989, when the holdings of the East and West had to be merged. The first exhibitions that afforded a confrontation between the art of the East and West took place only in the early 1990s.

Overall, it seems to me that the city's collection of twentieth-century art can no longer be seen consistently in the way it was still possible in the case of the New National Gallery in West Berlin. As a result, the collection has lost the close relationship to its viewers – the citizens – that it previously enjoyed, when visitors could visit time and time again to see their favorite paint-

Megan Francis Sullivan, „GG#2 (It's even worse)“, 2014



Dauerbeschuss durch unterschiedlichste Ausstellungsformate, die sich auf die Bestände der Privatsammlungen im Hamburger Bahnhof, vor allem der Sammlung Flick, beziehen. So entsteht kein Profil mit Wiedererkennungswert, sondern eine kleinteilige, unübersichtliche Abfolge von Ausstellungs-„Events“ ohne ersichtliches Konzept. Besucher werden durch bemüht wirkende Operationen kurzatmiger Sichtbarkeit angelockt – ein Symptom: die möglichst reißerisch klingenden Titel, die weder dazu angetan sind, den Bürgern und Bürgerinnen der Stadt zu vermitteln, dass dies ihre Nationalgalerie ist, noch den Touristen und Touristinnen, was sie bei einem Besuch erwarten könnte. Es gibt also für die Kunst der Moderne und Gegenwart in den Häusern der Nationalgalerie weder eine kontinuierliche Arbeit mit den Sammlungsbeständen noch eine konsis-

ternte Ausstellungspraxis. Damit hängt zusammen, dass sich keine Kanonisierungsprozesse qua Filmm, Kuratieren und Zeigen entwickeln können – eine andere Kernaufgabe einer solchen Institution. Es hat den Anschein, als wäre man momentan damit zufrieden, Material zu haben, mit dem Ausstellungen mit krasser Titelgebung und ein paar großen Namen gemacht werden können. Mit diesem Material könnte man aber auch gut recherchierte Ausstellungen zu bestimmten Themenkomplexen oder künstlerischen Strömungen oder Bewegungen bestreiten. Im Moment resultieren solche Aktivitäten jedoch meist in kleinen Kabinetausstellungen, die vorzugsweise in den Seitengalerien des Hamburger Bahnhofs gezeigt werden. Dies erweckt den Eindruck, als wolle sich die Nationalgalerie jugendlich gerieren und den Berliner Galerien mit der Emulation ihres



ings. The State Museums now understand their task of exhibition not in the consistent presentation of the collection, but in the consistent bombardment of various exhibition formats that relate to the private collections in the Hamburger Bahnhof – especially the Flick Collection. What consequently emerges is not an institutional profile with any recognition value, but a fragmentary, unclear sequence of “exhibition events” devoid of any apparent overarching concept. Effective eye-catching advertisements lure visitors – an example is the exhibitions’ sensationalist titles that neither communicate to city residents that the National Gallery is theirs nor explain to tourists what to expect in a visit. With both modern and contemporary art in the National Gallery system, there is neither sustained attention being paid to the collections, nor is there a consistent exhibition practice. Consequently, the filtering, curating, and exhibiting necessary for canonization – critical tasks of such a major art institution – have not developed. There is the sense that the National Gallery is currently satisfied with merely having material that it can use for exhibitions with catchy titles and a few big names. With this material, however, it could also mount well-researched shows exploring complex themes, artistic currents, or movements. Up to now, such work results mostly in small exhibitions that only appear in the Hamburger Bahnhof’s side galleries. This gives the impression that the National Gallery wants to seem younger and thereby compete with Berlin’s commercial galleries by emulating their exhibition formats. Despite all this, there have been highlights, such as the tiny Tomas Schmit exhibition (why not a large one?) or Nina Canell and Rolf Julius’s exhibition “Lautlos”; but they have been small-scale shows and nothing

more. Ulrike Grossart’s “1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – Umgebung” (2000) and Heinz Emigholz’s “Die Basis des Make-up” (2007/2008) were bolder. Both were great as monographic exhibitions, but they had nothing to do with the collections.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that these institutions constantly get bogged down in details and lack sufficient energy to engage in substantial examinations is partially due to the fact that they have always been understaffed. None of these institutions can afford to keep researchers who spend years working with a small team on a certain theme. However, that is the prerequisite for professional exhibitions with fantastic catalogues that actually say something and that we have come to expect from other large institutions like MoMA and the Centre Pompidou. Large individual or thematically organized exhibitions that showcase the strengths of the collections (without necessarily having to rely exclusively on their holdings) have been absent. What has been clear since the 1980s is that the major contributions of important female artists would not be presented at the National Gallery – for example, in the 1990s, a Louise Bourgeois exhibition could have been organized. Hilma af Klint does not help as a consolation, a very early modern position whose monographic exhibition was on view in summer 2013; also an exhibition that was a loan. This suggests a certain provincialism that weighs heavily on the State Museums despite all their claims on the modern and contemporary. I have the impression that the National Gallery with its no-concept minor exhibitions, has long lost the patience and courage for the canonization that turns an exhibition space into a museum. For example, now that the Marzona collection, which focuses on Conceptual Art, a field that has been traditionally neglected in Berlin, is finally shown

Ausstellungsformats Konkurrenz machen. Es gibt hier durchaus Highlights, wie z. B. die Mimiausstellung zu Tomas Schmit (warum keine große?) oder Nina Canells und Rolf Julius’ Ausstellung „Lautlos“ – aber das sind Werkstattschau und mehr nicht. Ulrike Grossart’s Ausstellung „1, 2, 3, 4, 5 – Umgebung“ im Jahr 2000 erschien da schon gewagt oder auch die Werkausstellung „Die Basis des Make-up“ (2007/2008) von Heinz Emigholz. Beide waren großartig als einzelne Werkausstellungen, allerdings hat das nichts mit den Sammlungen zu tun.<sup>1</sup>

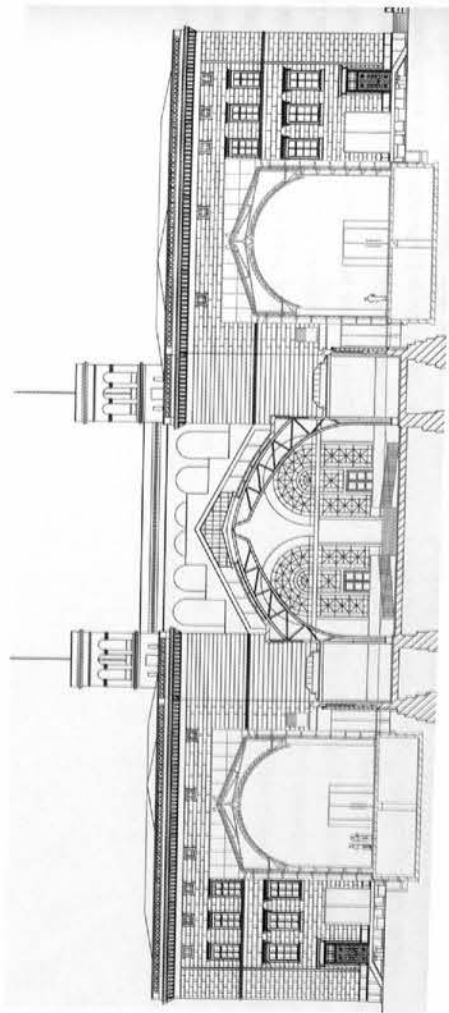
Dieses Sich-Verzetteln und der mangelnde Atem für substanziellere Auseinandersetzungen hängen wohl auch damit zusammen, dass die Häuser – immer schon – personell unterbesetzt waren und sind. Keine dieser Institutionen kann es sich leisten, Wissenschaftler über Jahre mit einem kleinen Team an einem Thema forschen zu lassen. Das wäre die Voraussetzung für sehr professionelle Ausstellungen mit tollen Katalogen, die wirklich etwas zu sagen haben, so wie wir dies aus anderen großen Häusern wie dem MoMA oder dem Centre Pompidou kennen. Große Einzelausstellungen oder auch thematisch organisierte Konzepte, welche die Schwerpunkte der Sammlung herausstellen, fehlen, wobei diese ja nicht ausschließlich aus den Sammlungen bestückt werden müssten. Was seit den 80er Jahren außerdem klar ist: Große Einzelpositionen von wichtigen Künstlerinnen – so hätte man in den 90er Jahren eine Louise-Bourgeois-Ausstellung machen können – werden in der Nationalgalerie nicht gezeigt. Da hilft auch Hilma af Klint als Trostpflaster nicht, die im Sommer 2013 gezeigt wurde, eine Position der ganz frühen Moderne, und, nebenbei gesagt, eine Übernahme. Das trägt zur Provinzialität bei, die trotz allem Anspruch

gerade auf dem Komplex Moderne und Gegenwart der Staatlichen Museen lastet.

Ich habe den Eindruck, dass die Nationalgalerie mit ihrem konzeptlosen Klein-Klein zeigt, dass ihr der lange Atem – und der Mut – fehlen für jene Kanonisierung, die aus einem Ausstellungshaus ein Museum macht. Beispiel: Nun wird zwar endlich die Sammlung Marzona gezeigt, deren Schwerpunkt bei der in Berlin traditionell eher ungeliebten Konzeptkunst liegt und die mittlerweile nicht mehr als private Leihgabe in der Sammlung „gastiert“, sondern qua Schenkung zur Sammlung gehört (ein ungeheurer, seltener Vorgang), was aber nicht in einer großen, kompakten Thementausstellung zu dieser in Berlin selten zu sehenden Kunst mündet, sondern verhackstückt wird zu einer Serie von kleinen, über einen langen Zeitraum in kleinen Räumen gezeigten Einzelschauen. Wer wird da bitreschön immer wieder hingehen, um begreifen zu können, was da ist? Da fehlt eindeutig der Mut, diese Gelegenheit zu nutzen, gleich mehrere Kernaufgaben zu bedienen: die Aufgabe der „Aufklärung“ der Öffentlichkeit (eine etwas altmodische Vokabel, aber „Information“ greift doch ein bisschen zu kurz) über eine Kunstströmung von essenzieller Bedeutung über das 20. Jahrhundert hinaus; die Verankerung der Sammlung in ihrer international bedeutenden Qualität im Gedächtnis der Öffentlichkeit (in deren Besitz sich diese Sammlung ja schließlich befindet); und eben die Aufgabe, als die Institution mit dem längsten Gedächtnis in der Wertungshierarchie des Kunstsystems bereits Ergebnisse jener Filterung zu präsentieren, die als Kanonisierung so gerne verpönt wird.

Jetzt könnte man erwidern: eine solche Vorstellung von der Funktion des Museums sei veraltet und mein persönlicher Standpunkt

Architekturzeichnung für den Umbau des Hamburger Bahnhof zum Museum für Gegenwartskunst durch / Architectural drawing for the reconstruction of the Hamburger Bahnhof building into a museum of contemporary art by Josef Paul Kleihues, 1990–1994

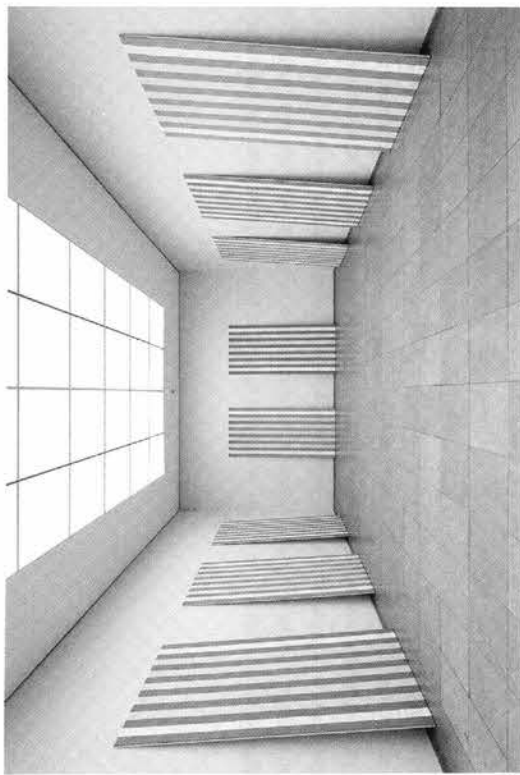


as a gift to the museum and not just on private loan (a rare event), it was not introduced with a large, thematic exhibition, but hacked to pieces and presented as a series of small individual shows within small rooms over a long period. Who honestly would repeatedly visit the museum in order to grasp what is actually in the Marzona collection? The National Gallery simply lacked the courage to actually use this opportunity to fulfill multiple critical tasks: The "enlightenment" of the public (an antiquated word, but "information" falls far too short) to an artistic current of essential importance to the twentieth century; the establishment of the collection as internationally important in the minds of the public (which technically owns the collection); and the presentation of the results of a particular art-historical filter, which is frowned upon as canonization.

One could argue that such an imagination of the function of the museum is old-fashioned and my personal standpoint conservative. Canonization has long been a *bête noire* (and simultaneously a secret dream, as far as one's own work is concerned) for a rebellious, anti-bourgeois art scene and art history. That remains true. But a museum, let alone a National Gallery, is an institution at the end point of canonization. If we did not want a museum to be this, we must abolish

it; everything else would simply be hypocritical. Thus, we would have to confront ourselves with the dissatisfaction with what happens in this institution: Why are we not satisfied? Could it be because of the National Gallery's denial of the museum's most basic function? Of course, canonization entails fossilization; however, without it, societal memory – with its perpetual fluidity and changes – would be impossible. Canonization is a process that we cannot escape – it has long applied to more than just the upper bourgeois, elitist history of art hits. After all, canonization occurs to other things as well, such as philosophy, discourse, and political aims. I would no longer count the National Gallery's collections as a factor in constructing a national disposition. Historically, they belong to a process of nation building, but, as in the case of the large Kunstverein collections in Bremen or Hamburg, they have also existed for the sake of the citizens, and, as such, they should stay visible. Here is where I place the task of the museum. The collections require a certain continuity, focus, and thematically oriented work, but the National Gallery clearly lacks the courage to supply this, because that would require making decisions about its selections and orientation. This is evident in Kittelmann's curatorial undertakings, in which exhibitions serve as lighthouses that

Daniel Buren in der Sammlung Marzona / in the Marzona collection, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin 2014, Ausstellungsansicht / installation view



konservativ. Kanonisierung war für eine sich als widersständig und antibourgeois gebende Kunstszene und -wissenschaft lange eine *bête noire* (und gleichermaßen heimlicher Traum, was das jeweils eigene Werk betraf), und das ist in Ordnung. Ein Museum, und gar eine Nationalgalerie, ist aber qua Institution ein Endpunkt solcher Kanonisierung. Wenn wir sie nicht wollten, müssten wir diese Institution abschaffen; alles andere wäre Heuchelei. Und so müssen wir uns auch konfrontieren mit der Unzufriedenheit über das, was in dieser Institution geschieht: Warum sind wir unzufrieden? Könnte das nicht auch daran liegen, dass gerade dieses Leugnen ihrer ureigentlichen Funktion der Grund ist? Kanonisierung bedeutet Verfestigung, das ja, aber ohne diese ist auch ein gesellschaftliches Gedächtnis – und ihr unausgesetztes Verflüssigen und Verändern – unmöglich. Kanonisierung ist ein Prozess, dem wir nicht entgegen können; sie ist längst nicht mehr nur diese (groß-)bürgerliche und elitäre Hitgeschichte der Kunst. Es werden ja auch andere Dinge kanonisiert, wie Philosophien, Diskurse, politische Ziele. Ich würde die Sammlungen der Nationalgalerie auch nicht mehr als Faktor in der Konstruktion einer nationalen Gesinnung abtun wollen. Historisch gehören sie zwar zum Prozess der Nationalonsbildung, aber sie sind auch – genau wie die

großen Kunstvereinsammlungen in Bremen oder Hamburg – eine Sache der Bürger/innen, und als solche sollten sie sichtbar sein. Hier sehe ich den musealen Auftrag. Dafür ist eine gewisse Kontinuität, Kompaktheit und thematisch orientierte Arbeit mit den eigenen Beständen erforderlich, zu der hier offenbar der Mut fehlt, denn das bedeutet auch, Entscheidungen zu Auswahl und Richtung zu fällen.

In Berlin fehlt für solche Belange aber der Blick nach innen, es wird nur nach außen geschaut. An den kuratorischen Unternehmungen von Udo Kittelmann wird dies deutlich: Ausstellungen müssen Leuchttürme sein, die über die Grenzen Berlins hinaus scheinen; dass ein Licht nach unten in die Stadt fallen könnte, ist nicht so wichtig. Aber auch diesem Blick nach außen gelingt kein diskursiver Außenbezug, außer vielleicht in der Form von Übernahmen, wie eben z. B. mit Hilma af Klint. Was fehlt, ist eine mehr als bloß punktuelle Anbindung an aktuelle Diskurse. So lässt sich im sammlungsunabhängigen, projektierten Kuratieren zwar eine „Kunsthallisierung“ der Museen beobachten; Kunsthallen jedoch, die ja ganz ohne Sammlung arbeiten, leisten diese Anbindung durchaus, sie sind sogar darauf angewiesen, um ihre Existenz zu legitimieren, denn sie haben ja eben keine Sammlung.

shine beyond the borders of Berlin – whether a light falls within the city is not so important. But this view outward does not entail any references to exterior artistic discourse outside of perhaps shows on loan, such as Hilma af Klint. What is missing is more than a mere occasional link to current discourse. In this project-based curating which does not connect to a collection, we can diagnose a transformation of the museum towards a Kunsthalle. However, curators in Kunsthallen must make these connections to external discourses to legitimize their existences, since they do not have and therefore cannot work with permanent collections. Thus, we find ourselves in a paradox: The National Gallery neither behaves correspondingly to its status as a museum nor can it legitimate itself through the Kunsthalle process of working through discourse. It sits in between these two institutional roles.

Symptoms of this uncertainty of roles are evident in curatorial idiosyncrasies that neither fit in one category nor another: For example, the three exhibitions that have showcased the New National Gallery's twentieth-century collection since 2010 (each exhibition is shown for one-and-a-half years). The somewhat gimmicky subheadings within "Der geteilte Himmel – Die Sammlung 1945–1968" suggest a seemingly strained, pseudo-popular account; they cram the works into a homogenized narrative, which is incidentally the worst form of canonization. This emphasis on sensationalism and narrative did not do the works justice; it actually shows that the National Gallery has little trust in either the capacity of the visitor or the quality of the artworks shown.

Criticism is always easier to provide than an alternative. Many of the National Gallery's problems stem from a lack of funding: Money needed

for curatorial work, money needed for individual productions. Today, the structure of museum sponsorship, which was already intensely criticized in the 1980s, can only produce what is supported privately or through corporate means. The public consequently has no basis for negotiation, or *forza contrattuale*, as Italian unions describe it. The public is powerless in the face of private money. While in the United States, something like a MoMA Board of Trustees exists, wherein the negotiation between individual private donors occurs, in Berlin, only a few people administer the form and content of canonization in all the National Gallery's collections. All in all, this leads to the undoing of the museum as a public entity.

Translation: Kristie La

Note

<sup>1</sup> Of course the architecture of the New National Gallery and Hamburger Bahnhof are challenges to the organization of exhibitions. Due to Josef Paul Kleihues's design, the Hamburger Bahnhof possesses a gigantic central hall, which either auratizes or extinguishes whatever is shown within it, as well as the wings on either side, which also serve to suffocate the works on view. To use the hall correctly, one must employ colossal dimensions, like Tomás Saraceno's "Cloud Cities" (2011/2012). The hall in the New National Gallery, built by Mies van der Rohe, is just as challenging to employ. One cannot simply conquer it with large-scale works. The 1960s building has proportions well-suited for twentieth-century art: Its hall is an optimal space for high-modernist sculpture (but not paintings). In contrast, something like figurative sculpture is completely lost when displayed in the large hall of the Hamburger Bahnhof – for example, the exhibition "Body Pressure", which was on view there from May 2013 to January 2014.

Ihre Legitimation gründet sich in der ständigen Auseinandersetzung mit der aktuellen Situation im Kunstsystem. Und so landen wir bei einem Paradoxon: Die Nationalgalerie sieht sich weder in der Lage, ihrem Status als Museum gemäß zu agieren, noch kann sie ihr Kunsthallen-Operat durch eine entsprechende Arbeit am aktuellen Diskurs legitimieren. Sie sitzt zwischen den Stühlen dieser institutionellen Funktionen.

Symptome dieser Rollenverunsicherung sind wohl auch gewisse kuratorische Eigenarten, die weder in das eine noch in das andere Raster passen wollen: so etwa im Fall der drei Ausstellungen zur Sammlung des 20. Jahrhunderts in der Neuen Nationalgalerie, die seit 2010 für jeweils einhalb Jahre gezeigt wurden. Die etwas marktschreierischen Zwischenüberschriften in „Der geteilte Himmel – Die Sammlung 1945–1968“ suggerierten ziemlich verkrampt pseudopopuläre Erzählungen, sie zwängten die Arbeiten in homogenisierende Narrative (nebenbei gesagt, die schlechteste Form der Kanonisierung). Die Fokussierung auf Sensation und Narrativ wird den Arbeiten wirklich nicht gerecht; sie zeigt zudem, dass das Zutrauen in Motivation und Wahrnehmungsfähigkeiten der Besucher ebenso gering ist wie in die Qualitäten der Arbeiten selbst.

Kritik ist immer leichter als ein Alternativkonzept. Vieles hängt am Geld: Geld für kuratorische Arbeit, Geld für Eigenproduktionen. Durch die Sponsoringstruktur, die ja in den 80er Jahren intensiv kritisch diskutiert wurde, kann heute nur gemacht werden, was von privater oder unternehmerischer Seite gefördert wird. Die öffentliche Hand hat damit keine *forza contrattuale*, wie die italienischen Gewerkschaften das nennen, keine starke Verhandlungsbasis. Sie ist machtlos gegenüber den privaten Geldern. Und während es

in den USA etwa im MoMA ein Board of Trustees gibt, in dem immerhin noch eine Aushandlung zwischen den einzelnen privaten Geldgebern stattfindet, sind es in Berlin Einzelpersonen, die über ihre Sammlungen im Museum Einfluss auf die Strukturen und Inhalte der Kanonisierung ausüben. Insgesamt trägt dies alles dazu bei, das Museum als öffentliches Prinzip zu unterlaufen.

Anmerkung

<sup>1</sup> Natürlich sind Neue Nationalgalerie und Hamburger Bahnhof auch architektonisch für Ausstellungszwecke problematisch. Nach den Entwürfen von Josef Paul Kleihues hat man im Hamburger Bahnhof diese riesige Halle – die alles, was man in ihr zeigt, entweder auratisiert oder abtötet – durch die kleinen Galerien an den Seitenflügeln erweitert, die meiner Ansicht nach genauso einen Killer für Arbeiten darstellen. Will man die Halle richtig nutzen, ist man auf riesige Dimensionen angewiesen, wie etwa Tomás Saracenos „Cloud Cities“ (2011/2012). Die Halle des Mies-van-der-Rohe-Baus der Neuen Nationalgalerie ist ebenfalls schwierig: man kann sie sich nicht einfach durch Großformate untertan machen. Dieser Bau aus den 60er Jahren hat Proportionen, die sich für die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts sehr gut eignen. Die Halle jedoch ist im Grunde genommen ein Raum für hochmodernistische Skulptur, nicht für Bilder. Dagegen wirken etwa die figurativen Skulpturen, die in der Ausstellung „Body Pressure“, Mai 2013 bis Januar 2014, in der großen Halle des Hamburger Bahnhofs zu sehen waren, dort völlig verloren.

## Die Trümmer des Deutschen Wohnzimmers

Henrike Naumann im Gespräch  
mit Andreas Brandolini

**Henrike Naumann** Während meiner Studienzeit empfand ich die Trennung zwischen angewandter und freier Kunst als unnötig starr. Ich wurde 1984 in Zwickau geboren, habe zuerst Bühnenbild an der Hochschule für Bildende Künste Dresden studiert, anschließend Szenografie an der Filmhochschule Babelsberg und arbeite seit 2011 als Künstlerin. Möbel waren schon immer das Medium meiner Wahl. Was ich mit den Möbeln versuche, ist nicht nur über das Design und die Motivation dahinter zu sprechen, sondern diese darüber hinaus noch zu interpretieren, aufzuladen und zu fragen: Kann man durch Möbel über Politik und Geschichte sprechen? Meine Arbeit ähnelt der einer Archäologin: Möbel und Objekte sind für mich dokumentarische Formen. So thematisiere ich in meinen Installationen, welche gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen der postmoderne Bauboom ab 1990 für das Leben der Menschen in der ehemaligen DDR hatte oder was Möbel aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus mit uns machen, wenn sie mit den Hinterlassenschaften der Postmoderne zusammen in einem Raum eine anachronistische Vergangenheitsstudie und Bestandsaufnahme aufzeigen.

Mit dem Fall der Mauer zog die Postmoderne in Form von billigen Kopien in die Wohnwelten der neuen

Bundesländer ein, ein Thema, das ich in vielen meiner Installationen aufgreife. In der Tat haben mich erst die postmodernen Kopien zu der Beschäftigung mit den Originalen bewegt. Ich habe mich der Postmoderne quasi rückwärts, über ihre Hinterlassenschaften, genähert.

Andreas Brandolini, du bist 1951 in der sächsischen Stadt Taucha geboren, hast in den 1970ern Architektur an der Technischen Universität Berlin studiert, welche zu dieser Zeit stark dem Funktionalismus verpflichtet war. Die Kritik an dem zum Formalismus gewordenen (Neo-)Funktionalismus wird schnell zu einem zentralen Thema für deine Arbeit. Nach zweijähriger Praxis als Designer und Architekt bei Produktentwicklung Roericht in Ulm hast du dich 1981 selbstständig gemacht, eine Lehrstelle der Hochschule der Künste Berlin angenommen, 1982 zusammen mit Joachim B. Stanitzek das Projekt Bellefast – Werkstatt für experimentelles Design in Berlin gegründet und von 1986 bis 1993 das Brandolini – Büro für Gestaltung geführt. Es folgten Lehrtätigkeiten an der Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach, der Technischen Universität Graz, der Architectural Association London, dem Royal College of Art London und der Universität São Paulo. Von 1989 bis 2017 hast du als Professor an der Hochschule der Bildenden Künste Saar in Saarbrücken im Studiengang Produktdesign mit dem Schwerpunkt Möbel- und Ausstattungsgedesign gelehrt.

Wie würdest du dein Verhältnis zur Tradition der Ulmer Schule beschreiben? Hat sich dieses Verhältnis über die Dauer deiner künstlerischen Praxis verändert?

Andreas Brandolini Ich habe in Ulm meine gesamte Schulzeit verbracht. Da entging mir als Jungendlicher natürlich nicht, was an der Hochschule für Gestaltung gemacht wurde. Unterstützt wurde das noch durch einen Freund, dessen Eltern an der Hochschule maßgebend beteiligt waren. Sein Vater betrieb dort, neben der Lehre, auch ein eigenes Designbüro. Das weckte mein Interesse und hat bestimmt dazu beigetragen, selbst einen Gestaltungsberuf zu ergreifen.

Gegen Ende meiner Schulzeit fing ich an zu verstehen, was an der Hochschule gelehrt und gemacht wurde. Ich begriff, dass sie in der Tradition des Bauhauses stand, dass der Gestaltungsprozess – egal ob es sich um ein Haus oder ein Feuerzeug handelt – ein rationaler Prozess ist, bei dem es darum geht, funktionale und konstruktive/technische Zusammenhänge zu erkennen, um zu einem angemessenen Entwurf zu gelangen. Das klang sehr verlockend für mich, weil es den Gestaltungsprozess aus dem Himmel ästhetischer Eingebungen auf die Erde des Mach- und Erklärbaren herunterzuholen schien (auch für mich selbst). Mittels abstrakter Form- und Kompositionsübungen wurde das formale Repertoire für die Umsetzung der in den Analysen – das heißt im Kontext von Funktion,

Handhabung und Technologie – erarbeiteten Entwurfs-ideen abgesteckt. Das war das ästhetische Fundament. Dies geschah in klarer Abgrenzung zur Kunst, die bei den meisten Dozent\*innen und Student\*innen als verpönt galt – es sei denn, sie war „konkret“.

Während meines Studiums an der Technischen Universität Berlin merkte ich bald, dass die Rahmenbedingungen für Architektur sehr viel komplexer sind, als dass ich sie mir mit einfachen Formeln umfassend erklären könnte. Eine große Rolle spielte die immer lauter werdende Kritik an der damals vorherrschenden Stadtplanungspraxis, ganze, historisch gewachsene Stadtquartiere für Neuplanungen abzureißen und gesichtslose Trabantenstädte an der Peripherie zu errichten. Dies führte nicht nur dazu, mich mit Altbauseinerung als Alternative zu beschäftigen, sondern auch verstärkt mit Bau- und Stadtbaugeschichte. Ich wurde mir der kommunikativen Funktion von Architektur bewusst. Nahrung dafür lieferte Robert Venturi mit seinen Büchern *Complexität und Widerspruch in der Architektur* (1966) und natürlich *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972). Das waren echte Tabubrüche, welche gängige Architekturdiskussionen veränderten und auch mich dazu ermutigten, nach dem Studium experimentelle Wege der Gestaltung zu suchen. Hinzu kamen Ende der 1970er- und 1980er-Jahre radikale subkulturelle Bewegungen, vor allem in der Musik, der Mode und der freien Kunst. Es herrschte eine tabulose Aufbruchsstimmung

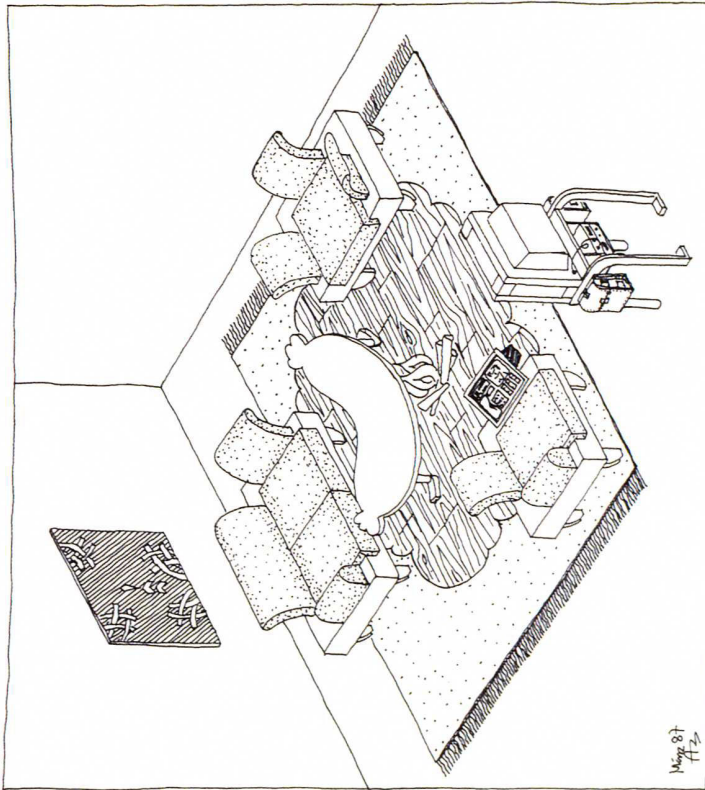
– ein Befreiungsschlag von der Nachkriegs- und Wirtschaftswunderkultur. Dazu wollte ich auch, mit meinen Mitteln, einen Beitrag leisten.

Heute ist der Diskurs sehr viel heterogener und diverser. Durch die Postmoderne ist das Spektrum funktionaler und ästhetischer Ansätze der Gestaltung enorm vergrößert worden. In noch stärkerem Maße hat die sich rasant entwickelnde Digitalisierung in Planung und Ausführung das Bauen und das Product-design verändert. Es sind heute Dinge möglich, die damals noch nicht einmal gedacht wurden, außer in den Filmen, Büchern oder Comics der Science-Fiction. Die Anforderungen an Architektur und Design sind sehr viel komplexer geworden und mit den tradierten Arbeitsweisen des Funktionalismus nur noch bedingt zu beantworten – es sei denn, er wird modisch als Lifestyle zelebriert. Was angesichts der fortschreitenden Globalisierung allerdings wieder verstärkt Thema geworden ist, ist die Frage nach Tradition, Identität, Diversität und natürlich auch dem Klimawandel. Das verfolge ich mit großem Interesse, zumal manche der angebotenen Antworten sehr viel subtiler und vielfältiger geworden sind.

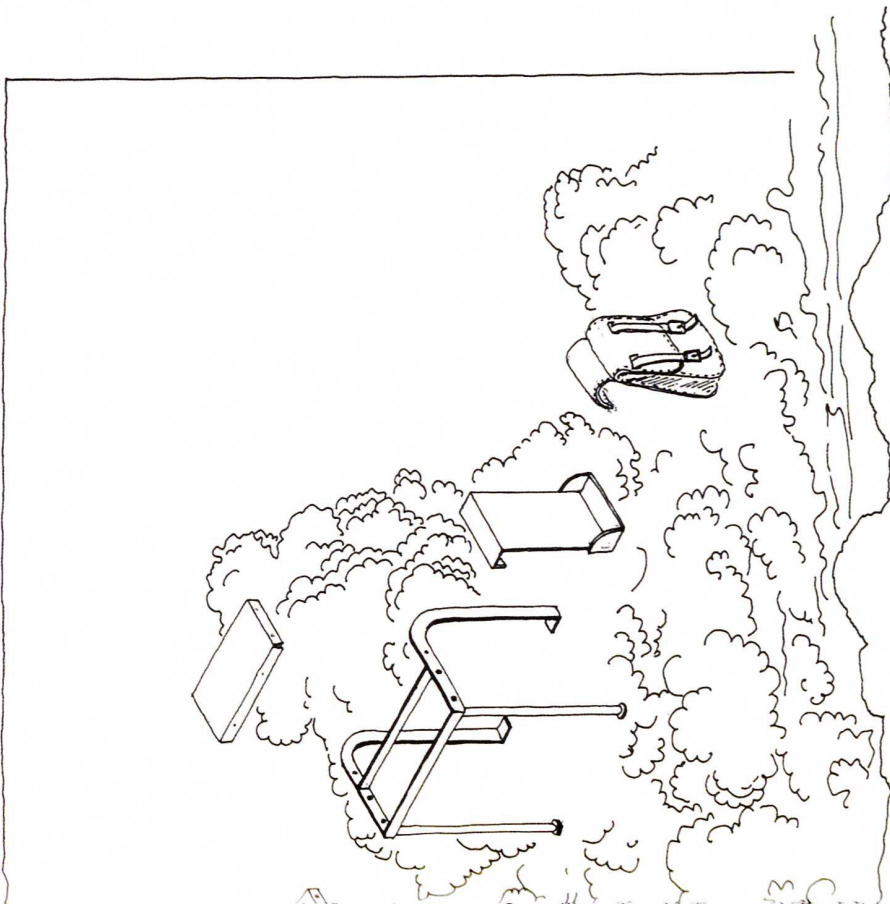
<sup>HN</sup> Du giltst als Mitbegründer des avantgardistischen *Neuen Deutschen Design* der 1980er-Jahre. Deine Installation *Das Deutsche Wohnzimmer*, welches 1987 auf der documenta 8 gezeigt wurde, hat viel Beachtung

gefunden. Zu sehen ist eine Wohnzimmerszene: eine Zweisitzer-Couch und zwei Sessel sind um einen beibeiten, wurst-förmigen Tisch platziert, der große Lagerfeuerterpich unter ihnen spendet Gemütlichkeit. Etwas außerhalb des Teppichumrisses steht der sogenannte *Pony-Express*, ein Fernseher mit seitlichen Satteltaschen, handwerklich gefertigt aus Leder. Referenzen aus unterschiedlichen, scheinbar weit entfernten Epochen treffen aufeinander und formen ein anachronistisches und doch vertrautes Gefüge. Das archaische Motiv des Lagerfeuers wurde in das bürgerliche Wohnzimmer integriert, der Fernseher wurde als Nachrichtenreiter aus dem Wilden Westen zu einem fast persönlichen Boten des digitalen Zeitalters.

Besonders spannend finde ich an dieser Arbeit die Verquickung verschiedener Ebenen und Epochen, den Mix unterschiedlicher Zeichen und kultureller Referenzen, welche eine Komplexität und Uneinheitlichkeit bewusst verdeutlichen. In einem Interview hast du gesagt, dass Bücher über vergangene Designepochen immer den Schein erwecken, damals sei alles homogen gewesen – eine grobe Vereinfachung und Verkürzung. So wird zum Beispiel lieber vom „Nazistil“ gesprochen, anstatt die verschiedenen, disparaten Designelemente nach ihrem Ursprung und ihrer Kontinuität zu befragen. Dies würde einen ständigen unbequemeren Prozess der kritischen Bewusstseinsmachung bedeuten.



Andreas Brandolini, *Das Deutsche Wohnzimmer*, Zeichnung, 1987



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# PONY-EXPRESS

Andreas Brandolini, Pony-Express, Zeichnung, 1987

