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Discipline
Nº 4.5

TarraWarra Biennial 2016: Endless Circulation

The work that goes into producing Discipline is largely undertaken on Kulin Nation land. Discipline acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the first and continuing custodians of this land, and pays respect to their Elders and Ancestors.

FOREWORD

Five of the following seven essays are adapted from papers given as part of the *TarraWarra Biennial 2016: Endless Circulation* lecture series. This series was formulated as an extension of the Biennial, and as a site for delving into its research focus on the physical, economic, visual, virtual and discursive channels through which artworks circulate today, and the iterative structures of journals and recursive exhibitions (like biennials, triennials and documenta).

To this end, Charles Green & Anthony Gardner presented a summary of their research findings on the contemporary exhibition phenomena of biennials, triennials and documenta;
Chari Larsson analysed the complex temporality of postage stamps and their distributive ontology, focusing on the work of contemporary British artist, Steve McQueen; Astrid Lorange & Andrew Brooks interpreted the work of Biennial artists Vernon Ah Kee and Vincent Namatjira, alongside Sydney artist Clare Milledge, in regard to the informal, collective, discursive modality of gossip; Chris McAuliffe charted the opposing strains of circulaphilia and circulaphobia under the signs of late modernist and contemporary art making reference to Richard Dawkins's theory of memes; and Léuli Eshrāghi and Tina Baum returned to the theme of recursive exhibitions and institutions of art, and the ways in which Indigenous voices are at once central to the enterprise of contemporary art and yet are often systematically marginalised from important positions of curatorial power. (Unfortunately, Tina Baum was forced to cancel her lecture at the last minute.) In addition, we include two new commissions: an essay by artist and writer Clementine Edwards on the work of Melbourne artist Ceri Hann, whose pocket-sized 'tokens from the knowledge casino' are passed from hand-to-hand; and a report on Eshrāghi's paper and the very particular context that he established for its presentation by the Melbourne-based writer Sarah Werkmeister.

TarraWarra Museum of Art and the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, were the principal supporters of the lecture series and this attendant publication. Creative Victoria also supported the production of new work

by the Victorian artists included in the Biennial. We thank them immensely for their contribution.

The lecture series was presented at numerous venues in and around Melbourne throughout the duration of the exhibition at TarraWarra Museum of Art (19 August–6 November 2016). Thanks to our colleagues at the National Gallery of Victoria, who hosted Charles Green's lecture; to our Program Partner and long-term collaborator, Gertrude Contemporary—with particular thanks to Shae Nagorcka, Mark Feary and Christine Tipton; to TarraWarra Museum of Art, which hosted Chris McAuliffe's lecture—with special thanks to Hanna Hamilton (for technical support), Eliza Ordinans (for promotion), and to Tony Dutton, Anthony Fitzpatrick and Nicola Stairmand (for everything); and to Blak Dot Gallery, which hosted Léuli Eshrāghi's lecture on its sunny lawn—particular thanks to Blak Dot's director, Kimba Thompson, for her generosity.

Each of the speakers and writers—Clementine Edwards, Charles Green & Anthony Gardner, Chari Larsson, Astrid Lorange & Andrew Brooks, Chris McAuliffe, Léuli Eshrāghi, and Sarah Werkmeister—thank-you for taking the time to respond to the themes of the exhibition with such creativity and intellectual rigour.Thanks also to our two guest respondents to lectures: Tara McDowell (who responded to Charles Green's lecture) and Giles Fielke (who responded to Chari Larsson's).

Warmest thanks to Discipline's designer, Robert Milne, for the countless email-outs, website management, and to Robert and Fabian Harb for the elegant design of this publication.

Discipline's project manager and editorial assistant, Amelia Winata, oversaw the Biennial's special lecture series. We cannot thank Amelia enough for her professionalism, enthusiasm, dedication, intellect, wit, and more.

Lastly, I thank TarraWarra Museum of Art's director, Victoria Lynn, also the exhibition's co-curator, for her enduring commitment to the collaboration between the TarraWarra Biennial and Discipline journal, her cogent curatorial vision, her expertise in exhibition-making, and her warm and generous mentorship throughout.

—Helen Hughes, 2016 (Co-editor, with Nicholas Croggon and David Homewood, *Discipline*. Co-curator, with Victoria Lynn, *TarraWarra Biennial 2016: Endless Circulation*)

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TarraWarra Biennial 2016: Endless Circulation

THE EXHIBITIONS THAT CREATED CONTEMPORARY ART

Anthony Gardner & Charles Green

INTRODUCTION

Two main questions overlap in this paper. First: what is the impact of biennials on contemporary art? And second: how have biennials changed in the course of the appearance of contemporary art? To map in preliminary answers to these questions, we will sum up what we see was played out in different biennials between 1955 to now.[1] In 2012, veteran curator and frequent biennial director René Block delivered a keynote lecture at the World Biennial Forum in Gwangju, one of the first such globally networked forums dedicated to thinking about the past, present, and future of biennials (and which, needless to say, was also intended to take place biennially). During his presentation, Block argued that contemporary artists had escaped dependency on the ever-accelerating art market through the artistic freedoms offered by the biennial circuit.[2]

We would argue the contrary: that dependency on the ever-accelerating art market and the artistic freedoms offered by the biennial circuit have increasingly been entwined since the 1970s and, at times, mutually productive while at other times bitterly divisive. The growing shift towards artistic play and education programs at biennials for children, such as the astonishingly popular Kids APT at the Asia-Pacific Triennial in Brisbane, was merely the tip of the iceberg in contemporary art's postcritical populism at one end of the spectrum, with political activism at the other. Biennials adopted populist and activist politics and reveled in the imperative that contemporary art be critical, cosmopolitan, experimental, networked, and memorable all at the same time. Yet this inconsistency risked uncertainty about biennials' intentions and resources, and the kinds of angry artist boycotts over corporate and state sponsorship that threatened the biennials at both São Paulo and Sydney in 2014. Biennials were in no way separate to the workings of the art market, nor to broader corporate interests and operations, and became less so over the period. That was one of the narratives that evolved between the 1950s and today.

There are a variety of biennial formats. Each has appeared in turn as an answer to a set of problems and contingencies, whether these were artistic, political, or economic, but always in relation to globalisation (a process that we carefully distinguish from globalism, as the desire to be recognisably global).

But how have biennials changed in the course of the appearance of contemporary art?

PART 1

First, we must encounter curator Harald Szeemann's great *documenta 5* of 1972. documenta is the flagship of surveys of contemporary art. *documenta 5* was the first meta-exhibition, and Szeemann one of the first star-curators (or auteur curators) in contemporary art. He self-consciously re-created documenta not as a simple survey of art, nor as the means to link Germany to modern art once more, as it had been founded to do after the tragedies wrought by Nazism. This was a momentous shift in curatorial ambition, but one that also bracketed the place of art within a curator's field of vision, somewhat to many artists' dismay. Harald Szeemann established still-dominant curatorial methodologies for understanding and exhibiting contemporary art. His exhibition was a *statement*, akin to a work of art in itself, and was the precursor of what Maria Lind has called 'the curatorial.'[3] *documenta 5* and, in a wider sense from this point on, biennials in general presented themselves as neither 'the enemy' nor 'the system.' They were now to become the spectacular sites where cultural and political change would be described and debated, as if biennials were social laboratories.

Next, we can examine the two most durable examples of the Second Wave of biennials, the biennials of São Paulo and Sydney. These post-Venice biennials emerged along the supposed 'edges' of twentieth-century art history, yet sought to bring the modern North Atlantic art to the South. Both cities experienced the processes and problems associated with importing traditional biennial models to 'peripheral' locations, and the means by which those models were redeveloped for local and modernising purposes. In São Paulo, this was the Venice Biennale's model of a central exhibition framed by national pavilions. Sydney, on the other hand, chose a theme-driven showcase of international art interspersed with a scattering of local artists. At the 1979 editions of each, local artists and activists wondered if a globally focused biennial that nevertheless avoided real change and substantial local connections was worthwhile. At a time when regional artists were working in a cultural geography of destabilised but still crushingly hegemonic centre/periphery relationships, both biennials were conflicted in their relationships with local artists. The 1979 Biennale of Sydney, however, saw two innovations: it dispensed with organisation by nationality and it experimented with the tropes of collaboration and cross-cultural exchange that were to become later so important in biennials. Then

we must backtrack: we must focus on the important South–South history of global biennials preceding the biennials in Havana, in the decades prior to the 1980s. We located their long history in the postwar arc from decolonisation to an emergent globalism from 1955 on, and understood the landmark 1986 and 1989 Havana biennials within that resistant stream of cultural, art-historical, and international reconstruction. The Bienal de La Habana was founded in 1984 but remodeled in 1986 and 1989 to include art from Africa and Asia alongside works from Latin America and the Caribbean. But we must also address the serious underplaying of the emergence of biennials around the world in the years prior to 1989. We arrive at the Bienal de la Habana only after the very substantial history of pre-Havana biennials of the South that led up to, and presaged, the Bienal. For Bienal co-curator Gerardo Mosquera, Havana's remodellings during the 1980s were meant to create an international axis of exchange among cultures that were not aligned to First or Second World political states. This was simply the last stage of biennialisation's semi-forgotten second wave of biennials of the South, which developed across the global South in the 1950s and 1960s, in the wake of the Venice Biennale's and the Carnegie International's establishment in the 1890s. The Bienal de La Habana was one of the later attempts by a cultural institution to challenge the US–USSR binary of Cold War power, to create so-called 'South–South' exchanges and an alignment of 'non-aligned' cultures as an alternative model of global cultural networks.[4] Biennials like those in Havana or across the South sought to develop ties between 'non-aligned' cultures through inclusive surveys of 'contemporary world art.' In both instances, networks developed in collaborative practices, in artworks, in their curatorial framing, or through opportunities for informal gatherings such as the bars that dotted the Bienal de La Habana and that were designed precisely for inter-collegial networking.

This leads to the institution of the regional biennial, in particular at the Asian biennials of the late 1980s and 1990s that surveyed the region for the first time, revising our understanding of the relationships between nascent formulations of 'globality.' During those years at the end of the Cold War, the complex histories of each nation's art, each with very different and separate modernisms, were combined to try to define an Asian contemporary art. But it was no accident that these exercises in regional self-definition were mounted in two nations—Japan and Australia—at the periphery of Asia with troubled relationships to the region. The two triennials that we need to focus on, first at Fukuoka (the Asian Art Show) in 1989 and then at Brisbane (the Asia-Pacific Triennial, or APT) in 1993, were self-consciously historical

and synthetic, melding the signifiers of both tradition and contemporary history. Both the Asian Art Show and the APT, hosted by city- and state-funded art museums and conceived in a spirit of regional boosterism, were designed to soft-pedal the divisions between artists' nationalities and to showcase the correlations between art practices across Asia and the Pacific.

So in turn, we must address the mid-1990s, post Cold War appearance of biennials at sites of crisis or in their extreme aftermath, through which biennials navigating the 'edges' became necessarily political in nature, either promoting political agendas or searching for new ones. In the European Union emerged a nomadic biennial, Manifesta, to bridge the post-Cold War divide between Eastern and Western Europe, and equally to heal the split between Europe and North Africa. From there, we can see the fragility that attended new international biennials in a traumatised and economically fragile location, specifically during the period immediately after the end of apartheid in South Africa in the mid-1990s. And finally we might describe an extreme form of a small biennial, one that was completely itinerant and which adopted an adversarial relationship to the biennial circuit: The Emergency Biennale in Chechnya.

And at the start of the twenty-first century we come to another, epochal documenta, at *Documenta11* (2002). Its director, Okwui Enwezor, produced a meta-exhibition across various sites, not just in documenta's usual home in Kassel, Germany, in which each was called a Platform. Enwezor's exhibition had both activist and scholarly aspects: he demonstrated that the idea of an avant-garde was never simply something of the North Atlantic centre. This was also an exhibition at which it became clear that globalisation had prompted an unparalleled curatorial specialisation in which internationally focused curators such as Okwui Enwezor, Hou Hanru, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Charles Esche, or Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev now exercised an unmatched authority over contemporary art's discourse. In a stream of early twenty-first-century biennials across the globe, they, like Enwezor, attempted to redefine the existing canon of modern and contemporary art, ranging backwards and forwards rather than across the terrain of the present and, at least as important, redefining their audiences' engagement with art itself as something entangled with politics and geography through complex public programs that merged with the exhibitions themselves. We return to the original art biennial, the Venice Biennale. But with the 2003 Biennale, we can see that Venice, locked into its original format of national pavilions chosen

by each nation and augmented by increasingly large and important survey exhibitions chosen by the director, adapted to the changes in biennials that we have been describing, in the conjunction of two modes of curating that were themes throughout this book: biennial directors' delegations of authority through collaborations with other curators, and the power of star-curators. But to understand Venice in 2003 we must look further east and slightly earlier, to Tirana in 2001, where Edi Rama (the city's mayor and, later, Albania's prime minister) and curator Edi Muka worked with the Milan-based magazine and publisher *Flash Art* to create the Tirana Biennale. Biennials in what had been communist Europe responded, as had other biennials, to the political, aesthetic, and cultural predicaments that underpinned the end of the Cold War. They needed to produce new models for exhibiting art and politics after the demise of two of the main forms of cultural infrastructure (the communist state before the period 1989 to 1991 and, from 1991 to 1999, the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art). So state and non-governmental organisations created and supported biennials as a sign of national progress. Next, Western European companies, including commercial art publications, invested in Eastern European biennials, not least *Flash Art*'s sponsorship of Tirana's and Prague's Biennials in the early 2000s. The 2003 Venice Biennale, self-consciously 'globalist' rather than cosmopolitan in its selections, had been preceded by the biennial in Tirana that road-tested 'globalism' as an unstable curatorial combination, with unexpected and problematic results given Tirana's almost nonexistent budget.

After the Great Recession, there was a shift from 2008 on towards a peripheralism, or 'world art,' inclusive of art and experimental practices from around the world but structured by a curatorial corps of biennial curators. The term 'experimental' was widely used, especially in China, to stand in not just for an avant-garde but also for a social laboratory. The term 'peripheralism' suggests how biennials resolved the problem of catering to two geographically differentiated audiences, two artistic groupings, and two art worlds or systems: the local, regional, and peripheral on the one hand, and the 'international' (though, in reality, primarily North Atlantic) on the other. These two types of art world intersected at each biennial that we examined, but though they remained differentiated from each other they became less and less easily distinguishable, since globalisation produced and actively sought site-specific, 'local' results rather than the broad-brush effect of homogenisation. Moreover, after the 2008 Great Recession, we saw that biennial networks began to present an image of contemporary art's globalisation that was highly conflicted: at the same time as local images and contexts were constantly threatened in biennials with the fate of being subsumed into globalised economies, so biennials also became sites—sometimes self-consciously and self-critically, other times cynically—for the analysis of those economies' seemingly all-consuming force, and protests against their power.

So, how had biennials functioned in the construction of contemporary art? They had created and enabled a world-picture of art that was globally networked without necessarily being a mere handmaiden to globalisation (for servant status was one of the risks associated with the globalist yearnings of biennials) and which was entwined with the motifs of laboratory-like experimentation and global peripheralism. We observed the gradual development and vast expansion of a complex, internally differentiated public for contemporary art that flocked to biennials worldwide in search of—and finding—communal, highly social experiences of experimental art that were, at the same time, spectacular and intimate. We saw that biennials began to appropriate the signs of politics, of teams, and of experimentation, matching these to a conventionalised idea of artistic imagination that was, in effect, postcritical and peculiarly spectacular, by which we mean that biennials became very public contexts for spectacular audience intimacy. Simultaneously, and against the reign of cynicism that this might imply, biennials moved beyond the survey model that the Venice Biennale had invented, evolving into whole new modes and experimental forms. The global embrace of neoliberal capitalism had not precluded dramatic developments in the critical, self-reflexive curatorship of contemporary art. Curators, more than art historians, were now reformulating art history along global lines.

What gave biennials their popular reach, but also their agitations and their imagining of alternatives? The answer, clearly, was located in the social realm (and in the constructed conviviality) that biennials often inhabit. More specifically, it lay in the exceptional new history of curatorial innovation that answered the evolution of this environment of itinerancy and movement, rather than in the aesthetic or the technological domains per se, though both were continually inflected with the desires of artists, curators, and even civic leaders to map a sense of regional connectedness. Ultimately, to be connected meant to be in biennials or to produce them. It was these exhibitions, rather than individual artworks, that successfully changed the (contemporary) art world as well as changed the way we think about cultural experience. For as we increasingly saw, the economic globalisation that enabled

biennials at the same time depended on extravagant conglomerations of international and local artists. This was linked to the ability of capitalism to cohabit with authoritarianism and neoliberalism, masking control with the spectacular. There was no need for political convergence towards freedom, as Ai Weiwei's experience in Shanghai in 2000, and then later, demonstrated.

A scattered, restless, expanding, globalising art world had internalised the conditions of the experimental as an alternative to both the traditional and the perpetual avant-gardist, having re-identified and recycled these conditions as contemporary. Biennials then sublimated both provocation and intervention so that, by the early twenty-first century in some parts of the world and especially in venues such as the Kids APT, they now resided as the signifiers of a constructed and, on occasion, child-like intimacy. It was an ingenuous intimacy that substituted symbolic power for social affect and yet admitted genuinely critical art, in particular after the 2008 Great Recession, into its spectacular midst. Across the world's biennials, this had been cynical, pragmatic, and idealist, all at once.

From the 1950s onwards, it had largely been through biennials that the possibilities and problematic issues of modern and contemporary art have appeared with the most urgency. It had been through biennials, above all, that a new aspect of contemporary art, the curatorial, has appeared, together with new typologies of exhibition-making. Since 1972, it was through biennials, triennials, and documenta that contemporary art migrated from its often hermetic, often politically reconstructive, avant-garde and experimental origins into the realm of the spectacular, garnering global public attention to contemporary art. And as we are seeing now, in the early twenty-first century, biennials may also be leading the reconsideration and reconstruction of art's histories towards properly global narratives.

PART 2

So what is the importance of this list? Until recently, the connections between Australia and the so-called international art world, along with its associated art criticism, and noting that we have also called this particular art world the North Atlantic art world, have usually been seen through the lens of centre–periphery relationships. Here, however, we have explored these exhibitions as a succession of resonances and contacts between international contemporaneities. Over our book, *Biennials, Triennials, and documenta: The Exhibitions that Created Contemporary Art* (2016), we insisted on the contemporaneousness of art made in smaller provincial centres such as Havana, Cairo, Medellin, Melbourne and Sydney compared with the equivalent provincialism of a larger centre, New York. Though, of course, a vastly larger art world province than Sydney or Melbourne, New York was supercharged in its pretensions to universalism courtesy of the Cold War. But in the late 1960s, Australian art became (self-) consciously contemporaneous with American and European art (as did art in Japan, parts of Eastern Europe and South America) and would be so with art potentially as innovative and significant from this point onwards. Revealing this contemporaneity requires a bottom-up approach to local art histories, defying the tendency of Australian art historians to expect to see derivative art and to label it according to imported ideas of how art would develop. In Australia, such imported expectations include the idea that advanced art would gradually dematerialise from late modern, then minimal and postminimal art, progressing towards conceptual art. Instead, we must obdurately insist on the transnational, lateral nature of contact and resonance between artists and across borders, and the alternate trajectories that different narratives take. This means refusing the blinkers that assume belatedness at the periphery and mimicry of the centre.

We will now import, more or less wholesale, Reiko Tomii's vocabulary and conceptual framework through which she elaborated the art-historical idea of multiple contemporaneities in her account of equally 'marginal' or 'peripheral' art worlds in provincial, 1960s Japan in her important book, *Radicalism in the Wilderness* (2015), and particularly in her first chapter.[5]

Tomii eloquently sets out the same problems that historians of Australian art face, including that of revising accepted wisdom, so we shall digress in order to summarise a few of her key points. She writes, 'If the first task of this book concerns local history, the second task involves world art history—how to incorporate this local study into a global narrative of postwar art.'[6] She goes on to explain—and we would completely agree—that making a simple acknowledgement that a local artist's practice is pioneering, and then arguing that it should be added to a global list of key artists, has been proven inadequate. She points to many examples of major exhibitions supposedly with a global focus, in the wake even of research and exhibitions that established a 'local' artist's historical importance (much as *Global Conceptualism* at Queens Museum of Art in 1999 did with Sydney conceptualist, Mike Parr), still go on to ignore any perspective beyond the North Atlantic except in the most token way. We can point to supposedly

definitive books, such as the notorious *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (2005), which willfully ignored, trivialised or dismissed anything beyond canonical North Atlantic avant-gardism.[7] Back in the mid-1960s and well into the 1970s, Americans saw the proliferation of gestural abstraction as the triumph of American painting whereas others saw it as a shared transnational experience. In fact, Tomii suggests, we might think of Abstract Expressionism as yet one more local manifestation of gestural painting.[8] She asks, how can we create transnational art histories that bridge the inevitable silo of national art history, connecting the local to the global? For a start, she answers, 'It cannot be overstated that the more global we want to be in our investigation, the more local we need to be in our attention.'[9]

Next, she reasons, 'it becomes an important task for world art historians to seek out and examine linkable "contact points" of geohistory.'[10] These contact points might be actual interactions or connections across geographic boundaries, or they might be synchronous or almost synchronous visual and conceptual similarities or resonances. Connections can be obvious, especially since from the mid-1960s on, air travel was increasingly ubiquitous (and the critical demands both in 1960s Japan and in 1960s Australia that art be measured against international yardsticks were so insistent), but the resonances that we retroactively find were all too often willfully dismissed as mere evidence of belated influence by arbiters at the centre or their local apologists, including in the period we are discussing.

Instead, she offers the following method: 'As a foundational tool, comparison of connections and resonances creates contact points that puncture the established Eurocentric narrative.'[11] These would be the building blocks of a world art history that is truly transnational. They require, Tomii insists, re-examining moments in art history and narrating them anew. The caveat, as Tomii points out, is that though such a global framework can be global in its 'resonances' (for us, understanding 1970s Australian art with reference to contemporaneous art in Japan or Korea, for instance), Australian artists and writers almost exclusively 'connected' with North Atlantic art and art writing in practice in their lived writerly and artistic experience, though not exclusively and less and less. But the US and Europe constituted their principal frame of reference and the benchmarks against which they measured themselves. So, in Australia as in Japan, 'neither the perception nor the reality of "center–periphery hegemony" ever disappeared,' even as at the same time, as we

have ourselves shown in our work on biennials that curators were consciously creating Third World and then pan-Asian networks and then South-to-South networks from 1955 onwards.[12]

PART 3

This is what we will turn to in our final remarks. Back in 1997, at Biennale director Okwui Enwezor's exhibition, *Trade Routes: History and Geography: 2nd Johannesburg Biennale* (1997), that city was the site of intense disagreements about the role of a biennial of contemporary art and the restlessly roving international art world circuit in a time of crisis, and South Africa did not host any international biennials for nearly twenty years after *Trade Routes*. The rejection was obvious to visitors. In hindsight, and in particular after the post-2008 experience of the global recession, during which floods of money not unexpectedly washed into the top end of the international art world, Enwezor's enthusiasm for the anti-hegemonic possibilities of globalisation (and art) would come to seem optimistic, as had his 1997 disinterest in the exceptional nature of the apartheid (and now postapartheid) struggle to many South Africans; his exhibition had been rejected both on the neoliberal right as a fiscal extravagance, and on the nationalist left as an internationalist extravagance. He was already quite aware, back in 1997, of the latter criticism, pointing out that new systems contain traces of the old: 'It would appear that one can't endorse globalisation without borrowing from the antecedent rhetorics of colonialist exploitation.'[13] His immediate method had been to make colonialism central to world history and art, allowing him to construct an artistic and intellectual framework focusing on former colonies, which remain places marginalised by Europe's and the United States' historical narratives. This was a genuine achievement.

Over the next fifteen years, and especially after his great *Documenta11* in 2002, a contradiction appeared, though. How could globalisation both be unprecedented but also so thoroughly connected to colonial histories? For it seemed then, and in retrospect the same is true almost twenty years later, that Enwezor and the majority of other biennial directors had imagined that their (and our) contemporaneity was exceptional, and that fluidity, trade, and economics, rooted in the violence and hatred of centuries before, might now soften the contours of conflict. What was really unprecedented about the contemporary? For fluidity, trade, and economics, even if rooted in the violence and hatred of centuries before, now softening the contours of conflict, had been the illusions

of the generation of 1914 at the height of colonialism as well. Has nationalism and the fierce desire to demarcate borders faded? Or has it returned with a vengeance both in the developed West's and a morally corrupted Australia's border policing, and with previously unforeseen and trumped-up appeals to atavistic nationalisms in Donald Trump's USA, in the Brexiteers' Great Britain, in Asia, in China, and across the South? In that 1997 essay and exhibition apparently so concerned with trade and globalisation, Enwezor and his Johannesburg artists discussed economics and money very little, positioning economic trade solely as an impetus for the social and cultural exchange that was his focus.

This was not to be the case at Enwezor's *Documenta11*, five years later or his Venice Biennale of 2015, titled *All the World's Futures*. Both *Documenta11* and *All the World's Futures* saw globalisation and its impact on locality very differently and more darkly than the earlier *Trade Routes*. Yet even at that early point in his extraordinary career of curatorial experimentation, Enwezor had, it turned out, presciently selected art that explored themes of migration, cultural traffic, and sites of crisis—themes that would only become more pressing but which he, and we, would come to understand more bleakly and which we would expect artists to be concerned with.[14] If the final words of this lecture have explained that his biennial had occurred at a moment in 1990s South Africa when attention from the restlessly moving international art world biennial circuit meant, in truth, very little, we would also point out that the same is just as potentially true and equally damaging today. Almost twenty years on, the disagreement about the role of a biennial of contemporary art in a time of crisis remains immensely fraught and equally challenging.

ENDNOTES

1 See our book, Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, *Biennials, Triennials and documenta: The Exhibitions That Created Contemporary Art* (Boston: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016).

2 René Block, 'We Hop On, We Hop Off: The Ever-Faster, Spinning Carousel of Biennials,' in Shifting Gravity: *World Biennial Forum No. 1*, ed. Ute Meta Bauer and Hou Hanru (Ostfildern: Hanje Cantz, 2013), 104–109; this volume emerged from the World Biennial Forum No. 1, held during the 2012 Gwangju Biennale and convened by the Netherlands-based Biennial Foundation. Other forums on biennials had certainly taken place already—most notably, the symposium and publication *Das Lied von der Erde*, organised by René Block while he was director of the Museum Fridericianum in Kassel from 1999 to 2000, and the Bergen Biennial Conference, *To Biennial or Not to Biennial?*, held at the Bergen Kunsthall in 2009 (which then formed the basis for *The Biennial Reader*). However, these were ultimately one-off events, rather than the institutionalised, intentionally perennial and itinerant World Biennial Forums organised by the Biennial Foundation. See *Das Lied von der Erde*, ed. René Block (Kassel: Museum Fridericianum, 2000); see also *The Biennial Reader*, ed. Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebø (Bergen & Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz and Bergen Kunsthall, 2010). More recently, see *Making Biennials in Contemporary Times: Essays from the World Biennial Forum No. 2*, ed. Galit Eilat, Nuria Enguita Mayo, Charles Esche, Pablo Lafuente, Luiza Proença, Oren Sagiv, and Benjamin Seroussi (Amsterdam and São Paulo: Biennial Foundation, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo and ICCo [Instituto de Cultura Contemporânea], 2015).

3 Maria Lind, '"Performing the Curatorial: An Introduction,"' in Maria Lind (ed.), *Performing the Curatorial*, ed. Maria Lind (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 9–20.

4 See Geraldo Mosquera, 'The *Third Havana Biennial* in its Global and Local Contexts,' paper presented at 'Exhibitions and the World at Large' symposium, Tate Britain, London, 3 April 2009, authors' notes; Dermis P. Léon, 'Havana, Biennial, Tourism: The Spectacle of Utopia,' *Art Journal* 60, No. 4 (Winter 2001), 68–73.

5 Reiko Tomii, *Radicalism in the Wilderness: International Contemporaneity and 1960s Art in Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2016).

6 Ibid., 9.

7 See Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Hal Foster, and Rosalind Krauss, 'Introductions: Poststructuralism and Deconstruction' in *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 40–48; for critical reviews see Norman Bryson, 'Review: *Art Since 1900*,' *frieze* 92 (June–August 2005); also see Nancy J. Troy et al., 'Interventions Reviews,' *The Art Bulletin* 88, No. 2 (2006): 373–389. Since the 1970s, the four American-based authors of *Art Since 1900* dominated international discourse on modern and contemporary art, together authoring this seminal, though breathtakingly Euro-American-centric, history of modern art. Following the Lynda Benglis/Robert Morris scandal that had unfolded over the pages of *Artforum* in 1974, Rosalind Krauss—along with cinema theorist Annette Michelson—founded the contemporary art journal *October* in 1976. The founding of *October* ushered in a new generation of art criticism that was fiercely rigorous: in relation to formalism (Krauss, Bois); to cultural, political and historical

concerns (Buchloh); and in the establishment of new paradigms such as architecture or ethnography for the interpretation of art (Foster). These four critics formed the core of the *October* editorial board, enjoying a hegemonic voice that is only now, with the more sustained introduction of cultural critique after globalisation, being challenged.

8 Tomii, 15.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 16; the next sentences paraphrase Tomii's argument in following pages, especially 16–22; her examples of misinterpreted resonances include Japanese hole-digging that was misattributed to Walter de Maria's influence, and the coincident appearance of Capitalist Realism in both Japan and Germany.

11 Ibid., 22.

12 Ibid., 44. See Gardner and Green, *Biennials, Triennials and Documenta*, and in particular our chapters two and three, both of which bear directly on the period under discussion in this paper and constitute exactly such an exploration of precise connections and resonances.

13 Enwezor, 'Introduction. Travel Notes,' 7.

14 For this position, defining contemporary art as an 'enterprise culture,' see Greg Sholette, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 2011); for an abridged historical perspective on this US activist position, see his 'Introduction' and in particular 1–20; it should be clear by now that we do not completely disagree with the description of the global art biennial circuit that he outlines on 86 of *Dark Matter*, but find it highly incomplete, since it excludes the more important contingencies and affects that operate worldwide; he writes that 'this machine-like circuit resembles the deregulated operation of deregulated finance capital: invest in an underdeveloped region of the globe, boast that capital has made infrastructural improvements and increasing multiculturalism' (86); for a more thorough, though intellectually related description of the contemporary art world's enterprise culture of 'projects,' 'precariats,' networks, and employment uncertainty, see Lane Relyea, *Your Everyday Art World* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013).

STEVE MCQUEEN'S GHOSTLY SURVIVALS

Chari Larsson

> Art images circulate in the human community, and to a certain extent we can say that they are made to be understood: at the very least, they are addressed to, shared among, acquired by others.[1]
>
> —Georges Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, 2005.

INTRODUCTION

What is *Nachleben* (afterlife) for French image theorist and art historian, Georges Didi-Huberman? Didi-Huberman takes up Aby Warburg's concept in line with his general project of rethinking art history's disciplinary foundations. Working against a linear narrative of continual improvement, images circulate, returning from the past to haunt the future with a ghostly intensity. Warburg first deployed this methodology in 1905; how does Didi-Huberman reactivate this mysterious and enigmatic term? In Warburg's hands, *Nachleben* spelled the return of pagan antiquity in Renaissance iconography, placing existing disciplinary models of time and temporality under pressure.

In a 2013 essay discussing the theme of sovereignty in filmmaker and artist Steve McQueen's *Queen and Country* (2007–), Didi-Huberman described the postage stamps comprising the work as 'tiny, vivacious pieces of *Nachleben*.'[2] McQueen's decision to use postage stamps as a commemorative form raises important questions pertaining to the distribution and ongoing circulation of images. This paper is in two parts. Drawing on Didi-Huberman's broad proposal of a phantom-like model of art's history, this paper will argue that McQueen's work enters into a ghostly economy of dissemination and return. The first section will discuss the stamps in terms of traditional state portraiture. As official bearers of state ideology, McQueen's decision to utilise postage stamps draws on the historical authority of state portraiture to reactivate this genre, as well as undermine it. The second section will examine the stamp in terms of an imprint and a counter narrative to mainstream art history.

PART 1

In 2003, English artist Steve McQueen was selected as an official war artist by the Imperial War Museum to document the war in Iraq. His task was to travel to the war zone, and produce a work of art about the British

Five of the seven essays in this issue are adapted from papers given as part of the *TarraWarra Biennial 2016: Endless Circulation* lecture series. This series was formulated as an extension of the Biennial, co-curated by Victoria Lynn, Helen Hughes and Discipline, and as a site for delving into its research focuses on the physical, economic, visual, virtual and discursive channels through which artworks circulate today, and the iterative structures of journals and recursive exhibitions (like biennials, triennials and documenta).

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