

Online-Workshop 27. – 28.10.2021

Infrastructures of Producing, Transporting and Logistics in Transnational Perspective

Burcu Dogramaci und Ursula Ströbele

27.10.2021

14.00

Burcu Dogramaci (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München) and Ursula Ströbele (Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, München)

Welcome + Introduction

Panel 1 mobile studios

Over the centuries, artists have frequently drawn inspiration from traveling and embarking on research trips to remote regions searching for specific motifs and territories, working *in situ* for specific exhibition projects and in residencies worldwide or finding themselves compelled to leave their home country due to political or religious persecution. The panel *mobile studios* seeks to explore these different reasons, working practices, trails and infrastructures that are expressed in artistic nomadism, mobility, exile or forced migration, translocation but also loss of artworks, materials, and tools. Academies, workshops and art schools beyond the traditional institutions in a global context, such as the Académie Lhote, École Municipale des Beaux-Arts in Casablanca, the Feminist Arts Program at Cal Arts, Black Mountain College or the Pond Farm represent vital sites of education, production and collaboration, as well as shared or transferred knowledge and time-based studio practices that are also considered in the panel.

14.30

Simone Wille (Universität Innsbruck)

Transregional trails of artistic production

My paper will discuss three South Asian mid-century artists' trajectories along formal and alternative pedagogies, philosophies and mechanisms of artistic production as encountered along their journeys from South Asia to Europe in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Their artistic productions will be viewed against the backdrop of infrastructure—art school, atelier, hotel room, the quarry, the workshop, the print studio—and set in relation to decolonization. I am interested in asking to what extent the move away from hierarchically organized institutional settings towards horizontally aligned networks of production shaped not only the individual artist's career but contributed to postwar modernism on a broader scale.

15.15

Oscar E. Vázquez (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois)

Migrating Models: Academies, Duplication and Dissonance

Academies and schools of art belong at the top of the list of quintessential infrastructural elements defining modern art. Most academies and training institutions have been studied either in terms of particular moments or artists, or in terms of longer historical narratives of their history, and innocent of the political, administrative entanglements of the larger art world. However, a few more recent studies exceptions have pointed to new ways of considering these institutions in terms of exchanges and dissemination of models and curriculum.

In this talk I will examine a few case examples of horizontal exchange as a way to reevaluate the model of genealogy. Specifically, I will focus on the particular role of plaster casts and models for copying as a practice within the curriculum and disciplinary spaces of academies and schools of art in Latin America. A comparison of a few Latin American academies' adoption and use of plaster models with their sources, and the differences found from one site to another, informs us of how academies responded and changed to local political and aesthetic needs. Beyond simply thinking in terms of a global art history, this talk highlights the importance of transmission, mobility and dissemination of pedagogical and physical models in arts training in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Latin America and Europe.

- Coffee break -

Panel 2 the accompanied object

In order to be seen and received, works of art have to leave the place where they were created and find their way to institutions. Or they leave their collections to be exhibited in other places. Objects are packed/crated, made safe for travel, shipped by a transport company and often accompanied by couriers. Infrastructures thus enable the global mobility of objects, challenged by borders and duty restrictions. Although the accompanied change of location has presumably been one of the constants of art and its history since the beginning, the topic of transporting art in the modern and contemporary periods has only recently come into the focus of research. At the same time, attention has already been paid for some time to looted art or art objects seized under National Socialism.

This section deals with the conditions and practices of transporting art works. The techniques, actors and modes of action that enable the mobility of objects will be examined. The specificity of individual genres will also be considered, i.e. how are sculptures and paintings transported, what challenges do installations pose, and what about the transport of immaterial works? Additionally, to what extent is mobility already being considered in art production? And do works exist that are conceived themselves from the outset as transportable and thus placeless, as constantly accompanied traveling objects?

16.30

Lynn Rother (Leuphana Universität, Lüneburg)

Driving L'Arlésienne: Transporting Paintings during National Socialism

Moving works of art during National Socialism is firmly anchored in our visual memory. Mostly men, mostly uniformed, carrying or unpacking framed paintings dominate our imagination, underpinned by historic black and white photographs. However, provenance research over the past 20 years has painted a different picture of what transporting artworks at this particularly turbulent historical moment looks like: whether as exhibition loans, potential trade goods, or household items, cultural objects have been transported across borders officially and unofficially, partly by the owners themselves, partly by third parties, partly professionally, partly amateurishly and riskily by women and men. This is evidenced by memoirs, export and import documents, but also by material traces on the objects. The talk will present select examples in order to fathom the existence and use of formal and informal infrastructures and the extent to which paintings and their materiality are both a function of these infrastructures, as well as a constitutive factor of them.

17.15

Monika Dommann (Universität Zürich)

Handle with Special Care: The Art of Logistics

- Break -

18.30

Die Kunst der Logistik. Politische, ökologische und andere Herausforderungen

Paneldiskussion mit den Künstler*innen Anke Doberauer (Akademie der Bildenden Künste, München) und Andreas Greiner (Berlin), dem Registrar Luis Müller Philipp-Sohn (Museum Ludwig, Köln), dem Kunstlogistiker Thomas Schneider (Hasenkamp, Köln/Frechen) und der Kuratorin Stephanie Weber (Lehnbachhaus, München)

Moderation: Burcu Dogramaci und Ursula Ströbele

28.10.2021

12.00

Burcu Dogramaci (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München) and Ursula Ströbele (Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, München)

Welcome to day 2

Panel 3 performing the making

This section is dedicated to the making of modern and contemporary art, looking at the relationship between art making, the time and place of making, local traditions and contemporary conditions.

While in many cases art is still made behind the closed doors of the studio, there are also many examples in the history of the 20th century of cooperative and publicly visible, transparent and interactive art production in workshops, communities, actions and happenings. In these cases, the gesture of production often becomes an action that is exhibited at the same time.

We are interested in all forms of art production that understand (performative) making as part of the work, e.g. networked (analogue/digital), cooperative and participatory art. This includes medialisations such as textual and visual documentations of art production, screening and broadcasting or artworks with animals, for which artists initiate the crucial preconditions of the setting and then leave it to the partially auto-generative work to 'act' on its own. But also artistic positions which have recently been named as pioneering, especially for contemporary art and design in Africa (Making Africa, exh. Vitra Design Museum, 2015; Flow of Forms/Forms of Flow, ed. Kerstin Pinther/Alexandra Weigand, 2018).

12.15

Sophia Prinz (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Zürich)

The artist's business or artistic research at the lower end of globalization

When the artist duo Zheng Mahler met "the Bull" at Chunking Mansions (a market complex in Hong Kong) in 2013, they could not have known that they would soon become partners in a complex trade deal between Somalia, Hong Kong and Zurich.

Supported by the Johann Jacobs Museum, Zheng Mahler pursued a research project that dealt with the growing economic and social entanglement between China and Africa. Less concerned with the high-profile infrastructure projects of the Chinese government everybody can read about in the newspaper, the artist duo became fascinated by the inventive and daring business practice of small traders who commute between the two continents. "The Bull", a young asylum seeker from Somalia, was one of them. Besides brokering mining rights, he had built up a lucrative business in abalone, a sea snail that is considered a delicacy in China but could since Fukushima no longer be imported from Japan. One day, "the Bull" came up with an offer: he would support Zheng Mahler with their exhibition-project in Zurich if they would join his trade company in return....

The presentation looks into the respective roles of the parties involved in this endeavor: Zheng Mahler, "The Bull," the Museum, and, last but not least, the abalone. It also delves into "trading" as a not so new way of curating.

13.00

Zoe Zhang (China Design Museum, Hangzhou)

Popular magazines: A Cradle of China's Modern Collage and Design

At the beginning of the 20th century, some Chinese artists who studied modern art in Europe returned to Shanghai and then declared to reform Chinese art radically by organizing art groups, issuing manifesto and making exhibitions. However, the influence of these professional artists was limited to small elite circles.

On the contrary, some young men, who never had fine art training, had to devote themselves to the creation of art and design for the most popular magazines in Shanghai such as Modern Sketch, Modern Miscellany in the 1930s. Those magazines pioneered in using lots of photos and comics. As the infrastructures of art production, the magazines and the idea of its publisher (Sinmay Zau) deeply influenced the artists.

When the capitalism of print, film and photography flourished in Shanghai, the popular magazines developed quickly and had a huge impact on the public. Those young artists created Chinese modern collage by integrating traditional form of collage (a literati's ink game "Eight Broken") with photojournalism, advertising photography, montage techniques. The Popular magazines also brought new ideas of western modern design to those artists. Some comic/collage artists of the magazines became the early researchers and practitioners of modern design in China.

- Break -

Panel 4 invisible and overlooked structures of production

In a global world where growth, speed and circulation increases value, the flow of goods and digital data has become currency itself and mainly determines the market systems. Today, trade has moved from objects to immaterial production of data and continuous information exchange. These inherent supply chains and forced mobility are mainly provided by decentralized technologies, e.g. clouds, deep-sea data and fiber optic cables, server farms in 'unknown' places and other modes of publicly invisible and overlooked infrastructures. This panel focuses not only on digital art, using the various possibilities of the Internet, social media platforms and other interfaces, but also on analogue art forms such as fax art, mail art or concept art, that leave behind established object aesthetics in favor of innovative forms of collective authorship. Questions of accessibility, algorithmic governmentality, control and power relations also need to be addressed here.

14.00

Inge Hinterwaldner (Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, Karlsruhe)

Software-based: how far does the fundament carry?

For a quarter of a century, artworks have existed that reflect the Internet in terms of content and form, and that exist on the Net themselves. The aim of this paper is to examine this particular technological environment. If we understand the Internet as a multi-layered fabric of protocols, regulations, software services, and technologies, it is not very surprising that this complex constellation is constantly subject to change. It is a dynamic field in which new standards are constantly being created, security holes are being closed, and programs are being updated. In the midst of this volatile infrastructure 'dwell' the Internet artworks. An outcry shook the respective creative communities when, for example, the company that launched Lytro Illum, a special digital camera whose innovative features were seen only through proprietary online viewer, discontinued this service on November 30, 2017. As a result, all works created with it were abruptly no longer visible. The same happened with the suspension of Adobe Flash in January 2021. Under what conditions can an artistic statement be stabilized when, in addition to the rapidly changing content of the global web, the technical basis is also constantly shifting? What strategies do artists develop in the face of the fact that as the software on which they based their works retires, their works become dysfunctional as well? Do they leave the ruins of software-based collateral damage as testimonies to their times? Do they adopt an attitude of care and keep bringing the work up to date – even though necessarily in a changed form? What does this mean for the concept of the work and of authorship?

14.45

Barbara Preisig (Universität Zürich)

Calling the Clay

These days, exhibition visitors are invited to participate in composting workshops, to practice Feldenkrais exercises in front of artworks, or to plant a communal garden together with the artist. In many contemporary art projects one can observe the attempt to modify relationships to Nature, to more-than-human Species, to precolonial heritages. Art seems to be less an object of perception itself, but a mediator for a different relationship to the world. The need for immediacy and concreteness contrasts with the digital infrastructure that always accompanies these projects to further mobilize them within the globalized art system. In my contribution I will discuss some unnoticed relationships between physical and digital spaces within chains of production of contemporary art. How are collective, non-verbal experiences translated and transformed in order to make them communicable? How does materiality manifest itself in the digital realm? I will elaborate on these questions along Jorge González engagement with pottery making. The artist aims to share and disseminate experience-based knowledge about marginalized vernacular material culture rooted in Puerto Rico. In workshops with local artisans, the artist invite the participants to experience a holistic and embodied relationship with the clay of the archipelagan region.

Interestingly, the local rootedness of González' engagement with clay is contrasted by the global outreach of his artistic activities. During the last two years he has been involved in different online based platforms of collective work and exchange, such as Under the Mango Tree, and participates in international

exhibitions, online art fairs, academic discussions. On these partly virtual journeys between Kassel, Athens, New York, and Shantiniketan, Puerto Rican pottery making undergoes massive formal and material changes: from shared experience in the workshops to a handcrafted vessel, presented at an online art fair, to a discursive reference witnessing struggles against climate change and colonial histories. What does it mean to call the clay in zoom based artist talks, virtual round table talks and online exhibitions?

What infrastructure, disciplines, instruments, languages and practices are needed to make pottery making communicable? What is left of the vernacular knowledge when single ceramic pots are presented in an online exhibition at Art Basel Fair? And finally, is this case study exemplary of how contemporary art travels?

- End of workshop -

Link for the workshop (no registration needed):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85659345839?pwd=UmFZYU0xN1NxmGJlMjlQM054NXgvZz09>. Meeting-ID: 856 5934 5839 | Password: 148258.