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Kunstwollen: A Contemporary View

Local, Global, Transcultural

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Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of global art and art history by studying the effects of globalization on contemporary art and culture after 1989 in relation to Alois Riegl's concept of *Kunstwollen*. The essay considers transculturation and the return to nationalism and fascism as two products of globalization and tries to define the *Kunstwollen* of the contemporary art in relation to globalism, nationalism, and transculturalism in three phases: Global Contemporary *Kunstwollen*, Local Contemporary *Kunstwollen*, and Transcultural Contemporary *Kunstwollen*. It might be problematic to talk about the *Kunstwollen* of contemporary art as not limited to a specific worldview, culture, nation, location, style, or medium; thus, through Global Contemporary *Kunstwollen*, I describe the characteristics of contemporary art as global in relation to how we define a work of art as contemporary. By "Local Contemporary *Kunstwollen*," I mean the characteristics of each culture's contemporary art that, on the one hand, are linked to their *Weltanschauung* and their national, cultural, and historical values, and, on the other hand, to the global contemporary *Kunstwollen*. In contrast to Local *Kunstwollen*, which in a certain way is linked to nationalism, Transcultural *Kunstwollen* originated in the transcultural background of the artists and not in their national roots. Transcultural *Kunstwollen* is the result of the transcultural worldview of individual artists transcultural art; thus, it refers to the art of those artists whose worldviews are not limited to a single culture, nation, and location.

Preface

The essay starts by introducing the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905) who was one of the key figures of the Vienna School of Art History where for the first time art history became an independent academic discipline during the mid-1800 and early 1900. The reason that I refer to Riegl is that he was one of the first art historians who more than 100 years ago argued that the task of the art historian is to understand why a work of art has been produced in a particular way and what that means for the spectator. He insisted on recognizing the cultural values and the historical aesthetic of a work of art instead of judging it based on personal taste and current aesthetic standards, which is something that many art historians and critics still need to learn. Riegl was the first who wrote on oriental carpets, ornament, and unpopular periods, such as late Roman and Dutch art. He was also the first who took a psychological approach to art history to define the importance of the role of the viewer in the creation of an art work. Henri Zerner in *Alois Riegl: Art, Value, and Historicism* 1976 wrote, "Riegl attacked all the fundamental convictions of traditional art history. . . . Riegl's monumental effort to confront all these issues remains unmatched today and continues to demand consideration. . . . He completely reopened the field of art history." His ideas are embodied around his concept of *Kunstwollen*, defined as the way in which each culture perceives and interprets the world based on its inner drive (which changes with nation, place, and time). A culture's *Kunstwollen* is linked to its *Weltanschauung*, which defines not only its artistic style but also its government, law, science, philosophy, and religion in a specific historical period. By *Kunstwollen* he wanted to introduce a universal method that could be applied to any historical period in any place.

More than the creative drive within each culture that shapes its artistic style, what interested me in Riegl's concept of *Kunstwollen* was the idea of perceiving the world through our senses and interpreting it in relation to our worldview. That's why while the first chapter is dedicated to Riegl and his ideas; the second chapter begins with a scientific view of perception. In short, our perception of the outside world starts in our sensory organs. The visual perception begins with the eye that receives the visual information from the outside world and projects a two-dimensional image onto the retina which converts it into neural codes. The brain analyzes the received information in the light of past experiences and creates internal representations of the external world. What we see in our minds is different from what we see with our eyes. The human brain is not a passive receptive machine that only mirrors the reality of the external world, but it is a creative system that recreates the outside world inside of us. As writes Eric Kandel "vision is not simply a window onto the world, but truly a creation of the brain" (Kandel 2012, p.236). And that echoes what Riegl said about *Kunstwollen*: "Yet man is not just a being perceiving exclusively with his sense (passive), but also a longing (active) being. Consequently, man wants to interpret the world as it can most easily be done in accordance with his inner drive (which may change with nation, location and time). The character of this *Wollen* is always determined by what may be termed the conception of the world at a given time [*Weltanschauung*]...." (Riegl 1985, pp. 24-25). Therefore: Man's interpretation of his perception of the world is linked to his past experiences which have their roots into the historical, cultural, local and national values of the time and the place where he was born and grown-up. Hence, the art of his time represents those values that are linked to his worldview.

The chapter then continues by discussing how globalization and the advent of technology during the late 1980s and the early 1990s influenced our perception of the world and changed the traditional notion of time, location, and culture. At the end it introduces transculturalism and the return of nationalism as two products of globalization which reflect in the art of our time:

Globalization began in the late 1980s and the early 1990s when the Berlin Wall fell, the cold war ended, and the revolutions of 1989 put an end to Communist rule in several countries. Along with those changes in geopolitics, the advent of transportation and communication technology, methods and materials of language learning from computer programs to online language courses and applications, study abroad and student exchange programs, and both forced and voluntary migration sped up the globalization process. The

development of the internet and real-time technology changed the notion of time and place. Today, we do not only live in a specific geographical place on the earth, but we also live in a borderless virtual world where we can communicate with other users around the globe. All of those changes facilitated communication and cultural exchanges, encouraged intercultural relations, and empowered transculturalism. But at the same time, it challenged the traditional notion of culture as the product of a specific nation's perception of the world at a specific historical time in a specific geographical place, and that empowered nationalism and gave birth to neo-fascism and populism.

Transculturation is the result of the Wollen (will) to go beyond local and national culture to redefine the personal identity with the identity of one's choice. A transcultural human wants to take control of her own destiny and to choose his own beliefs, thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Transculturation is the outcome of the courage to live outside one's national, traditional, sociocultural, political, and geographical comfort zones. It points toward a multi-dimensional worldview that is not limited to a specific time, culture, location, or nation. Fascism and nationalism, by contrast, are the result of the fear of losing one's local and national culture, the pre-existing identity that one has inherited from the time and location in which s/he was born. Unlike transculturalism, fascism comes from the fear of living outside of existing national, traditional, sociocultural, political, and geographical comfort zones. The outcome of fascism and nationalism is a one-dimensional worldview that is limited to a specific time, location, nation, and culture. While nationalism is a return to the past, to the pre-global era; transculturalism is a way towards the future, to the post-global era.

What happened in the world after globalization which influenced our perception of the world and empowered transculturalism and nationalism happened also in the world of art. The third chapter studies the trilogy of global, local, and transcultural contemporary Kunstwollen:

In 1989, meanwhile, contemporary art, which was initially a product of American culture that later spread in Europe, through exhibitions such as *Magiciens de la Terre*, *The Other Story*, *China/Avant-Garde*, and *The Third Havana Biennale* broke through Western borders and became global. Since then, contemporary art has become an international structure through which each culture represents its own artistic vision. In this essay, I define three manifestations of the Kunstwollen of contemporary art: Global Contemporary Kunstwollen, Local Contemporary Kunstwollen, and Transcultural Contemporary Kunstwollen. It might be problematic to talk about the Kunstwollen of contemporary art as a kind of art that is not limited to a specific worldview, culture, nation, location, style, and medium. Thus, by using the term Global Contemporary Kunstwollen, I intend to describe the characteristics of contemporary art as global. With the term Local Contemporary Kunstwollen, meanwhile, I am referring to the characteristics of each culture's contemporary art that are linked to both the Weltanschauung of their national, cultural, and historical values and to the global contemporary Kunstwollen.

The examples of local contemporary Kunstwollen explored in this essay are the contemporary art of three countries where I had the chance to live, study, and teach fine arts: The United States of America as the cradle of contemporary art; Italy as a European example; and my native country, Iran, as a non-Western example. Transcultural Kunstwollen is the result of the transcultural worldviews of individual artists. The term Transculturation, coined in 1940 by the Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz Fernández (1881-1969), means unifying several cultures and creating a new one. Transcultural art, thus, is the creation of artists whose worldviews are not limited to a specific culture, nation, or location but are informed by their transcultural backgrounds. In contrast to Local Kunstwollen, which is linked to nationalism, the Transcultural Kunstwollen is originated in the transcultural background of the artists and their multi-dimensional worldview, and not in their national roots. The two examples of transcultural artists studied are Francesco Clemente and Shirazeh Houshiary.

Chapter One

Alois Riegl, Historical Methodology and Key Ideas

1. Positivism and The Vienna School of Art History

Alois Riegl was in effect, on all fronts a genuine intellectual hero, whose attitude are so dangerously close to the kinds we might wish to emulate as to make him worryingly appropriable as “our contemporary”.

_ Jaś Elsner, *The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901* (2002)

Positivism is a philosophical theory that is based on experiments, observation, and valid scientific evidence, rather than metaphysical thoughts and speculations. It has been founded by the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) in the early 19th century. By the mid nineteenth century the university of Vienna founded the School of Art History. The school’s emphasis was on the serious study and analysis of all historical sources and art works through the renunciation of aesthetic preference in order to impose the history of art as a “Positivist” historical-critical science.

Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg (1817-1885) is considered the founder of the Vienna School of Art History. In 1847 Eitelberger became a lecturer, five years later in 1852 he was awarded the extraordinary professor, and in 1863 was appointed as the first full professor of art history at the University of Vienna. He was also the founding director of the Imperial Royal Museum of Art and Industry. The department had a close collaboration with museums and the monuments office. Hence, just like Eitelberger, most of the key representatives of the Vienna School worked also at museums and/or monuments office. The school was also closely connected to the Institute of Austrian Historical Research (Institut für österreichische Geschichtsschreibung) established in 1854 by Albert Jäger (1801-1891) in Vienna, where scholars such as Moritz Thausing, Franz Wickhoff (1853-1909), Alois Riegl, and Max Dvořák (1874-1921) studied.

The second full professor and chair of art history at the Vienna School was Eitelberger’s student Moritz Thausing. In 1868 Thausing became curator of the collection of drawings and engravings at the Albertina Museum in Vienna. In 1873 he was nominated as the extraordinary professor, and in 1879 he was appointed as the full professor of art history in Vienna. Under the influences of the connoisseurial methods of his friend Giovanni Morelli (1816-1891), Thausing believed in the separation of historical research from aesthetics. And in this regard, he played a crucial role in establishment of art history as an independent discipline.

Giovanni Morelli was an Italian art critique and politician who studied in Switzerland and Germany. In 1836 he graduated in medicine, and in 1838 he taught anatomy at the University of Munich. Morelli believed that each artist has his/her own particular style that an art historian expert could identify. Thanks to his background in medicine, and his knowledge of human anatomy, he developed the “Morellian” method for identifying the “hand” of an artist through studying and analyzing the particular anatomical details such as ears, hands, feet, and etc. Morelli’s method provided a “positive” scientific approach towards art history.

After Moritz Thausing, his students Franz Wickhoff and Alois Riegl continued the Morellian method. Wickhoff’s research in particular was more based on the Morellian technique. In 1897 Franz Wickhoff became

the curator of textiles at the Imperial Royal Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna, where he met Giovanni Morelli and became more interested in his ideas. Just like Riegl while working at the museum in 1882 he became a lecturer, and in 1885 when he was promoted to extraordinary professor, he left the museum. And, finally in 1891 he was appointed full professor of art history. Wickhoff's first and best-known work titled *Die Wiener Genesis (Vienna Genesis) 1895*, is a study of late antique art from Roman to early Christian art. This book along with Riegl's *Die spättrömische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn (Late Roman Art Industry) 1901*, were the first books of this kind. As Michael Gubser puts in Wickhoff's book "reflected the Impact of Riegl's *Problems of Style (1893)* and anticipated the themes of *Late Roman Art Industry (1901)*" (Gubser 2006, p.116). After Riegl's death his position as the chair of the School of Art History was occupied by Max Dvořák (1874-1921) in 1909. Julius von Schlosser (1866-1938) then followed in 1922 and Hans Sedlmayr (1896-1984) in 1936.

The Vienna School of Art History (*Wiener Schule*) had an important role in the development of art history as an independent discipline. The results of the innovative approach of the Vienna School towards art history was the rise of a new generation of scholars who opened the doors of studying the art of a wide range of periods and regions such as late antiquity, Roman, Baroque, early Christian, Islam, and etc. from the Orient to the Occident in both major and minor arts. Based on studying the historical resources, and avoiding personal taste and aesthetic preference. They formed the foundations of the modern art history, and the school has remained as the forefront school of art history until the beginning of the second world war, when many of its famous scholars got killed or forced into exile. Today at the University of Vienna, in front of the department of art history, there is a monument created by Hans Buchwald, that recalls all exiled and murdered scholars of the school.

Among all members of Vienna School of Art History, Alois Riegl remains as one the most innovative, multicultural, and aesthetically liberal art historian. The first chapter is therefore dedicated to Riegl, his historical method, and his theories, in particular *Kunstwollen*, and the role of beholder.

2. Riegl's Childhood and Education

Alois Michael Riegl was born on 14th January 1858 in the city of Linz, in Upper Austria, to Katharina Mayr and Johann Riegl. He was the youngest member of his family. His brother Alexander was born in 1855, and his sister Augusta Anna was born in 1853. The children were grown up under serious Catholicism. Instead of playing with toys, as a child, his father forced Alois to study; consequently, when he was only four years old, he knew how to read and write. Unfortunately, there is not enough information about Riegl's private life, what we know is mostly related to his profession as an art historian. All we know is that he had a quiet, and shy personality, and later his deafness increased his loneliness.

His father Johann was born on 15th May 1823 in Bohemia. He studied in Prague and Vienna. After finishing the university, he started working as an official in tobacco administration in Linz, where he married Katharina on 10th October 1852. Later he was transferred to Zabolotiv, and Galicia, where Alois attended a Polish-speaking Gymnasium. After his father's death in 1873, Alois and his family returned to Linz.

In 1875, when he was 17 years old, Riegl moved to Vienna to study law at the University of Vienna. But instead he took courses in history and philosophy, and finally, in 1878 he changed his major to history. He attended courses taught by important professors such as the Herbartian philosopher Robert von Zimmermann (1824-1898) who was a student of the German philosopher and the founder of modern pedagogy Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), Max Büdinger (1828-1902), Franz Brentano (1838-1917), and Alexius Meinong (1853-1920).

In 1881 he got the admission from the Institute of Austrian Historical Research (Institut für österreichische Geschichtsschreibung) directed by the German-Austrian historian Theodor von Sickel (1826-1908). There, he studied art history with the Austrian art historian Moritz Thausing (1838-1884) the student of the first professor of art history at the University of Vienna Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg (1817-1885). In 1883 Riegl graduated from the Institute, and on December 7 was awarded a doctorate of philosophy. His dissertation which unfortunately is lost now was on the Romanesque Church of St. Jacob, Regensburg.

Career and Publications

Riegl went to Rome for six months on a fellowship where he had this chance to deepen his knowledge on art history. In 1886 Alois found his first job as assistant curatorship at the Imperial Royal Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna (today MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts / Contemporary Art), where he worked for eleven years until 1897. The museum has been founded in 1863 by Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830-1916), based on the model of the South Kensington Museum (today's Victoria and Albert Museum) in London; and Rudolf Eitelberger von Edelberg, who is considered as the founder of the Vienna School of Art History became the museum's director. After one year in 1887, Riegl became the director of the textile collection of the Museum.

His first publications on textile and oriental carpet developed from this experience. In 1889 he wrote an essay on the Egyptian textile collection of the Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna and published it as a catalog titled *Die ägyptischen Textilfunde im K. K. Österreich Museum / allgemeine Charakteristik und Katalog von Alois Riegl*. Two years later, in 1891 coinciding with the Vienna's Oriental Carpet Exhibition, he published his first book *Altorientalische Teppiche (Antique Oriental Carpets)*. As one of the first books on carpet studies, Riegl's book laid a solid foundation for a modern approach to the oriental carpet studies. In this book, he analyzed the evolution of decorative motifs in oriental carpet, and this prepared him for his second book *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik (Problems of style: foundations for a history of ornament)* published in 1893. In this book, he analyzes the history of ornament from ancient Egyptian to Europe and Islamic arabesque. He argues that the development of the ornamental style is independent of

the external technical and material development, and it comes from an internal humanistic drive. This idea led him towards the development of Riegl's famous concept of *Kunstwollen* in his second book *Die spättrömische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn (Late Roman art industry)* 1901. *Kunstwollen*, often translated as "the artistic will", is an inner drive that leads the artistic creativity, changes from time to time, and nation to nation, and shapes each eras art, thus, each period has its own *Kunstwollen*. In his third book *Das holländische Gruppenporträt (The Group Portraiture of Holland)* 1902, Riegl explored the Dutch *Kunstwollen* through works of Holland group portrait painters of the 16th and 17th century such as Rembrandt and Frans Hals. According to Riegl, these artists changed the relationships between the spectator and the artwork.

While working at the museum in 1889, Riegl also became a lecturer at the University of Vienna's School of Art History. After 5 years in 1894, he was made (*extraordinarius*) extraordinary professor of art history, and in 1897 Riegl became (*ordinarius*) full professor, and eventually, he had to give up his job at the Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna. As Julius von Schlosser puts in, he was unhappy with this decision and told his student Max Dvořák that he felt he has lost his real profession.

In 1902 Riegl left the university and became the head of the Central Commission for the Preservation of National Heritage Sites. This new position forced him to think about diverse ways of preserving the remains of the past. In 1903, he expressed his thoughts and ideas in *Der moderne Denkmalkultus. Sein Wesen und seine Entstehung (The Modern Cult of Monuments, Its character, and origin)*. In this long paper, Riegl talks about the need to protect the monuments based on their related value and introduces a wide value system. Unfortunately, his innovative ideas on this field have never been materialized.

Three years later, on 17th June 1905, Alois Riegl died from cancer when he was only 47 years old. Some of his unfinished works such as *Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom (The development of Baroque art in Rome)* and the *Historische Grammatik der bildenden Künste (Historical grammar of the visual arts)*, were published after his death.

List of Riegl's major books:

- *Altorientalische Teppiche (Antique Oriental Carpets)*, 1891
- *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik (Problems of style: foundations for a history of ornament)*, 1893
- *Die spättrömische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn (Late Roman art industry)*, 1901
- *Das holländische Gruppenporträt (The Group Portraiture of Holland)*, 1902
- *Der moderne Denkmalkultus. Sein Wesen und seine Entstehung (The Modern Cult of Monuments, Its character, and origin)*, 1903
- *Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom (The development of Baroque art in Rome)*, 1908
- *Historische Grammatik der bildenden Künste (Historical grammar of the visual arts)*, 1966

For the complete list of Alois Riegl's publications please refer to Evelyn M. Kain and David Britt, *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (1989), p. 384-92.

3. Influences on Riegl

Alois Riegl grew up in a multicultural and multilingual environment that often played a key role in his perspective of the world. His mother was from Linz, Austria, and his father was born in Bohemia in the present-day Czech Republic, who studied in Prague and Vienna, and he was able to speak German, Slavic, and French. Following his father's job transfers to Zabolotiv, and Galicia, some of Alois's early education was in the Polish language. In Vienna, he studied art history under the best art historians of his time. Staying in Rome on a fellowship opened his eyes towards Roman art, and working at the museum, put him directly in touch with applied and Oriental art. Teaching at the Vienna School of Art History where for the first-time art history has been institutionalized and taught in the "Positive" scientific manner, built Riegl a strong foundation for his scholarship, and made him one of the most influential art historian of his period.

Riegl and Materialism

In 1893 Riegl published his second book *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (*Problems of style: foundations for a history of ornament*). In this work, Riegl goes against the "materialistic" theory attributed to the German architect and art theorist, Gottfried Semper (1803-1879). In his monumental book *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten oder Praktische Ästhetik* (*Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics*) 1860-1862, Semper emphasizes on the importance of the material and technique in the formation of artforms. Semper's followers or Semperians, however, believed that style was the direct result of the development of materials and techniques of production.

"Whereas Semper did suggest that material and technique play a role in the genesis of art forms, the Semperians jumped to the conclusion that all art forms were always the direct product of materials and techniques. "Technique" quickly emerged as a popular buzzword; in common usage, it soon became interchangeable with "art" itself and eventually began to replace it. Only the naïve talked about "art"; experts spoke in terms of technique" (Riegl 1992, p.4).

In *Stilfragen*, Riegl traced the history of ornament and demonstrated a continuous, and uninterrupted evolution of motifs from the Near East, to medieval Europe, and Islam. For Riegl, this unbroken continuity was the result of the creative artistic drive, not the development of materials and technique. Man's artistic creativity uses materials to produce artworks.

One of Riegl's inspirations in *Stilfragen* was the American art historian William Henry Goodyear (1846–1923), who in 1891 published a book on the history of ornament titled *The Grammar of the Lotus: a New History of Classic Ornament as a Development of Sun Worship*. According to Riegl, Goodyear did not care about the Semperian theories on material and technique as the origin of art, and he never mentioned Semper's name in his entire book. Riegl notes "Goodyear was the first to argue that all antique vegetal ornament, and a good deal more, was a continuation of ancient Egyptian lotus ornament. The driving force behind the ubiquitous diffusion of this ornament was, in his opinion, the sun cult" (p.7). Riegl questions the dominant role of the sun-cult Egyptian symbol on all antique ornament and mentions symbolism as just one of the factors of ornament evolution. "However, by proclaiming symbolism the sole and decisive factor, Goodyear makes the same mistake as the materialists who single out technique in this way. Moreover, both interpretations share an obvious desire to avoid at all costs the purely psychological, artistic motivation behind decoration" (p.8).

Neither Semper's materialism nor Goodyear's symbolism, for Riegl, the creative artistic impulse_Kunstwollen, was the origin of art. And this was the genesis of Riegl's concept of Kunstwollen as "artistic will, urge, intention, volition, or..." that he continued to develop in his second and third major books *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901), and *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (1902).

Riegl and Formalism

Formalism in art history is the study of form in a work of art (which has been created through visual elements such as color, line, shape, space, texture, value, etc.) separated from the concept and material of a work of art. Alois Riegl's approach towards art history, especially in his first two major books, was based on formalism. Some art historians such as Kimberly Smith found the roots of Riegl's formalism in neo-Kantian philosophy, and some like Michael Gubser refer it to the aesthetic philosophy of Riegl's teacher Robert von Zimmermann (1824–1898).

Kant and Neo-Kantian philosophy

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was one of the most influential philosophers of the 18th century, and one of the most important figures of Western philosophy. In the mid-19th century, there was a return to his ideas by the neo-Kantian philosophers and thinkers. Drawing from the neo-Kantian philosophy, the German art critic and theorist Adolph Konrad Fiedler (1841-1895) developed the concept of "pure visuality". Based on Fiedler's concept of "pure visuality" the visual appearance of an object achieves us before and separate from its content and material. Each artist perceives the "pure visuality" differently and expresses his/her perception through the visual elements such as form, shape, line, color, value, space and texture. Thus, art cannot be the imitation of reality, but creating a new one based on the artist's understanding of the world; accordingly, each artist develops his/her artistic style.

For Riegl an individual artist's interpretation of nature has its roots in his/her social-cultural background. The way each culture perceives and comprehends the world in each period effects the artistic style of that nation in that time, and that's because of *Kunstwollen*. Riegl's *Kunstwollen* (art+will) – the artistic will – is an inner force that is fuelled by the cultural and historical values of the time, expressed through visual elements as an artform, creating each period's style. This *Wollen-WILL* changes according to the time, people, and place; therefore, each epoch has its own *Kunstwollen* that is unique and unrepeatable. Riegl puts in:

“Creative *Kunstwollen* regulates the relation between man and objects as we perceive them with our sense; this is how we always give shape and color to things (just as we visualize things with the *Kunstwollen* in poetry). Yet man is not just a being perceiving exclusively with his sense (passive), but also a longing (active) being. Consequently, man wants to interpret the world as it can most easily be done in accordance with his inner drive (which may change with nation, location and time). The character of this *Wollen* is always determined by what may be termed the conception of the world at a given time [*Weltanschauung*] (again in the widest sense of the term), not only in religion, philosophy, science, but also in government and law, where one or the other form of expression mentioned above usually dominates”. (Riegl 1985, p.231)

Fiedler's theory has shifted the attention from the content to the form and gave birth to the method known as formalism, through which many art historians like Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945) approached the artworks by focusing on the form, style, and visual aspects rather than the content, meaning, and material. One of the theorists influenced by Fiedler was the German sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand (1847-1921) who also was Fiedler's close friend. In 1893 Hildebrand published *Das Problem der Form in der Bildenden Kunst* (*The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*), which was based on the theory of visual perception. He puts in that everyone has visual perception and imagination, but an artist is the one who can turn the visible part of nature into an artwork. In this work, Hildebrand argues how seeing an object from distance is different from seeing it from near-by.

Hildebrand's essay had a strong impact on Riegl. Influenced by his concept of "near" and "distant" view, in *Late Roman art industry* Riegl developed the *haptisch* (haptic, tactile), *optisch* (optical), and (optic-haptic)

terms, for describing the development of antique art from haptic to optical, which will be fully discussed further.

Herbart and Zimmermann

German psychologist, philosopher, and educator Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) is considered as the founder of modern pedagogy. In 1794, he graduated from the University of Jena. After a couple of years moved to Interlaken in Switzerland, and worked as a private tutor until 1800. There he met the Swiss pedagogue and educational theorist Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) who was a critique of the traditional educational system. Herbart finished his doctoral studies at the University of Göttingen, where he worked as a lecturer from 1802 to 1804. He became the extraordinary professor in 1805. In 1809 he was appointed Immanuel Kant's successor as a professor at the University of Königsberg. Even though Herbart mostly taught in Göttingen and Königsberg, his theories on pedagogy known as Herbartianism, impacted Austria's philosophy, psychology, and educational system. His ideas developed through Austria by his followers not only because they started teaching at diverse universities, but also because they used Herbartian educational theories in their teaching.

One of his followers who is considered as Austria's leading advocate of Herbart's theories and philosophy was Czech-born Austrian philosopher Robert von Zimmermann (1824–1898), who was Alois Riegl's professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna. In 1861, Zimmermann started teaching at the University of Vienna as the professor of philosophy. Inspired by the philosophy of Herbart, during the years between 1858 to 1865 Zimmermann published his major work titled *Ästhetik*, through which he developed his own philosophy of formalism in art.

The concept of *Vorstellung* (presentation) which had an important role in Zimmermann's philosophy, was a combination of mental image (an image created in our mind), and a representation or presentation (image of a real object in our mind), and had two important aspects: concept and development. As Michael Gubser explains "as concept, a *Vorstellung* had objective form and material; it could be analyzed as something independent of subjective perception... as a mental production, *Vorstellung* had origin and development, viz., temporality" (Gubser 2006, p.100). According to Zimmermann concept was the domain of aesthetic, and development was in the realm of philosophy. Zimmermann's aesthetic philosophy was based on the separation of form and content. Although form is dependent of material, however, it represents itself through visual elements (line, color, shape...), and not as a material object; therefore, form has its autonomous aesthetic qualities. That's why Zimmermann's aesthetic philosophy was absolutely formalist, and his influence on Riegl's formalism who took two courses of psychology, and history of philosophy with him was inevitable.

Riegl and Hegel

Several art historians such as Wolfgang Kemp, Margaret Olin, and Margaret Iverson read Riegl's *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (1902) through the ideas of the great German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) who was one of the leading figures of German idealism, and one of the most important philosophers of all times.

After a totally formalist approach in order to define the Kunstwollen of antiquity in his two first major books *Problems of Style* (1893), and *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901); in his third major book *The Group Portraiture of Holland* (1902), Riegl chose a more psychological approach to define the Kunstwollen of Dutch art during the 16th and 17th century. In this book, Riegl discussed the relationship between the work of art and its beholder and developed his famous concept of "attentiveness" as a psychological element that connects the

portraits inside the painting to the spectator. Riegl describes the connection of the figures inside the painting as "internal coherence" (*innere Einbeit*), and the relationship of the figures with the viewer as the "external coherence" (*äußere Einbeit*). Attentiveness, therefore, works as a bridge that links the "internal coherence" to the "external coherence", and defines the role of the beholder in the Dutch art.

Margaret Olin notes, Riegl in his private notes defines aesthetics as the "relation of parts to the whole. Relation of parts among themselves" (Olin 1992, p. 156), and relates the relation of the beholder to the work of art to art history. By his emphasis on the role the beholder in completing the work of art, Riegl, therefore, introduced a kind of "historical aesthetic", that in one hand studies the relation of formal elements inside the painting as "internal coherence", and in the other hand studies the relation of painting and the viewer as "external coherence". This combination of aesthetics and art history or "historical aesthetic", not only had nothing to do with the theories of Kant, Herbart, or Zimmermann, but it especially was against the Zimmermann's ideas on separating aesthetics and art history as two different fields of study. Here, according to Wolfgang Kemp, Riegl gets closer to Hegel:

"on the function of the work in relation to the viewer, we read in Hegel's *Aesthetics*:
"However much it may constitute a coherent and rounded world in itself, the work of art as a real, isolated object is not *for itself* but *for us*, for a public that looks at and enjoys it".
Hegel relates these two functions, *for itself* and *for us*, in a way that betrays unmistakable traces of normative classicism: "Both, the tranquil self-sufficiency and the address to the viewer, must of course be present in the work of art, but the two sides must maintain the most perfect equilibrium" (Kemp 1999, p.12).

Kemp argues that based on Hegel's concept of art "*for us*" and art "*for itself*" Riegl developed his concepts of "external coherence" and "internal coherence". But the difference between Riegl and Hegel is that for Hegel art "*for us*" and art "*for itself*" belong to the same work, while Riegl's "external coherence" and "internal coherence" are two diverse kinds of work.

Riegl compares Italian art with the Dutch art and notes that the Italian art was based on narrative and history painting, but Dutch artists were more into portraiture. While portraiture creates a relationship with the beholder and invites him/her to complete it, history painting is independent and has nothing to do with the viewer. In fact, portrait painting has both "internal coherence" (compositional), and "external coherence" (its relation to the beholder), but history painting has just "internal coherence" and is independent of the viewer.

In her book *Alois Riegl, Art history and Theory* (1993), Margaret Iversen analyzes Riegl's distinction between history painting, and portraiture through Hegel's ideas on the difference between painting and sculpture. According to Hegel, the statue as a three-dimensional object is totally independent of the viewer. The viewer can decide to stand far or close, move away, or walk around it. Painting as a two-dimensional surface exists as a pure appearance for the viewer who can perceive it from a fixed distance and not from anywhere. Thus, for Riegl portraiture addresses itself to the beholder, while history painting exists for itself, independent from the spectator.

4. Kunstwollen

As discussed in previous pages, Kunstwollen is the most famous concept developed by Alois Riegl in his three major books: *Problems of Style* (1893), *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901), and *The Dutch Group Portrait* (1902). The German term, Kunstwollen (art + will), had a variety of translations in English as “artistic will, urge, intention, volition...”, or “will to art”, “will to form”, “will of art”, “art drive”, and etc. Riegl’s Kunstwollen is the creative drive that shapes each era’s art, that changes according to nation, location, and time, and is linked to the Weltanschauung (worldview) of that era. Hence, each epoch has its own Kunstwollen that rules all art media of that era. In order to understand the art of the past, we need to find out why the art object has been produced the way it is, and what it meant for the viewer. Therefore, all artworks, no matter whether they are fine arts (painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture), applied, or decorative arts and ornament, must be treated and studied equally. Understanding this ‘historical why’ leads us towards recognizing the Kunstwollen of each epoch.

Kunstwollen of Ancient Art

In *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901), Riegl studied the evolution of antique art through three periods: Egyptian art, classical Greek art, and late Roman art, in four categories of architecture, sculpture, painting, and decorative arts.

Before discussing the Kunstwollen of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome; let's talk about some keywords that help us to understand Riegl's ideas better. In Chapter Two, we talked about Adolf von Hildebrand's *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture* (1893), and its influences on Riegl. Now let's see how he influenced Alois Riegl. Hildebrand in his book introduced the concepts of "near view" and "distant view" as following: When we look at an object from far away, we can see the whole thing, but not as a three-dimensional object, we see it as a flat two-dimensional image just like a photo, and that according to him is "distant view". Now, when we get closer and look at the same object our vision cannot grasp the whole thing, we can only see the whole through our eye movement, and that's what he called "near view" which is three-dimensional. Drawing from Hildebrand's concepts of near and distant view, in *Late Roman Art Industry*, Riegl developed his own version which is different from Hildebrand. According to Riegl, when we look at an object from the *Nahsicht* (near view) all the silhouettes and shadows that create the illusion of depth disappear, thus, what we perceive is just a two-dimensional surface. When we go far away, and we look at the same object from *Fernsicht* (distant view) what we perceive is again two-dimensional. Hence, to perceive the object as a three-dimensional, Riegl introduces the third view, which stands in between the near and distant view, that's what he called *Normalsicht* (normal view). Therefore, instead of going far away from the object, if we move a little away from it, we can perceive it as a three-dimensional object, and not a flat surface. So, our perception of the objects, according to both Riegl and Hildebrand all depends on our distance from the object.

After understanding the meaning of *Nahsicht* (near view), *Fernsicht* (distant view), and *Normalsicht* (normal view) let's see what's the role of these terms in Riegl's historical method of analyzing the development of ancient visual arts. Riegl argues:

“The art of antiquity, which was directed toward the greatest possible objectivity in the representation of material individual objects was compelled, whenever possible, to avoid the representation of space as a negation of materiality and individuality not because of awareness that space was just a notion in the human mind, but rather because of the instinctive urge to limit space as much as possible in the naïve search for pure sense of comprehension of material essence... Hence, the ancient civilized nations intended the

visual arts to be responsible for the representation of objects as individual material phenomena not in space, but on the plane". (Riegl 1985, pp. 24-25)

To explain this better he categorized the development of the ancient art (among the civilized nations) in three phases:

1- At the first phase of the ancient Kunstwollen was just like a two-dimensional contour drawing on paper. The object at this phase was presented with an outline attached to its flat background. The best expression of this kind is the ancient Egyptian art. The perception of the objects in this period is *Nahsicht* (near view), that means all shadows are disappeared and eye needs to get as close as possible to the surface in order to perceive it. This perception is close to the sense of touch, and that's why Riegl called it "tactile" plane.

2- By adding a little value to the contour drawing of the first phase, the drawing gets a slight sense of three-dimensionality, but it is still attached to the flat background. Thus, at the second phase of the ancient Kunstwollen, the object presented on the plane gets a partial three-dimensionality. Half-shadows appear but they do not cover the surface completely. The perception of the objects in this period is *Normalsicht* (normal view). This perception according to Riegl is "tactile-optical", and is manifested in its purest way in classical Greek art.

3- If we continue working on chiaroscuro, adding more value, and creating more depth at the drawing of the second phase, it will get a full sense of three-dimensionality. That's how the objects are presented in the third phase: in their full three-dimensionality. But even at this level, the 3D objects are still on the plane and not in space. Deep shadows emerge and cover the tactile plane. Therefore, the plane is not tactile anymore, but as Riegl says it is "optical-colorful whereby the objects appear in *Fernsicht* (distant view) to us and whereby they also blur into their environment" (Riegl 1985, p. 26). Thus, the perception of this phase is "optical", that in its purest way is represented in late Roman art.

Architecture

According to Riegl the Kunstwollen of the architecture of ancient Egypt has been purely expressed through the tomb-type of the pyramid. As he writes: "any of the four sides permit the beholder's eye to observe an always unified plane of an isosceles triangle, the sharply rising sides of which by no means reveal connecting space behind" (Riegl 1985, p. 27). When we look at the pyramid, we see flat triangular walls rising from the earth with no connection to any other structure with almost invisible entrances. That's why in Riegl's idea "the pyramid should be called a *Bildwerk* (sculpture) rather than a *Bauwerk* (building)" (p. 27). In fact, from the outside we cannot see the inside, there are no windows, there is no connection between the interior, and the exterior, everything looks flat. While the inside is full of columns attached to the ceiling, the outside walls pop up as tactile.

The classical Greek temple's outside is completely different from the Egyptian pyramid. If the pyramid was a tactile object with uniform walls, the Greek temple opens up itself to space by a columned porch leading to the entrance of the temple. Thus, the unified tactile surface has been broken down into a series of forms. The best way to perceive them that allows us to see both details and the whole is the normal view. "In the Greek columnar house, we see the first recognition of three-dimensionality, shadow, and space" (p. 29). Even though compared to the Egyptian pyramid the Greek temple pays more attention to space, but according to Riegl there is still a limitation of space, and the Greek temple could not achieve the architecture's main goal which is creating space.

Finally, in describing the Kunstwollen of the late Roman architecture, Riegl first refers to Pantheon in Rome (built on the first half of second century A.D.) as the representation of the full three-dimensionality. Unlike the Egyptian temple which was a like a sharp triangle with flat walls, in the Pantheon restless curves create

depth; and instead of the partial shapes in the Greek columnar, the Pantheon distributes all small parts within the whole. The innovation of the Pantheon, as Riegl puts in is "the one enclosed space it contains". He continues "wherever one looks as one enters, the walls of the side of the vault of the cupola..., everywhere one sees planes altering depth never isolating themselves into a single shape, but rather continuously returning to themselves. Thus, the beholder shapes his idea of space..." (p. 31).

Following the Pantheon's innovations, the next step in the development of the late Roman architecture according to Riegl was the Minevra Medica temple that dates back to the 4th-century. The main innovation of the temple of Minerva Medica are the windows. As we discussed before the perception of the Egyptian art was based on the *Nahsicht* (near view), and classical Greek perception on *Normalsicht* (normal view); in both cases, the window looks like a hole in the wall destroys the tactile plane. That's why the construction of windows in ancient monuments has been avoided until the late Roman period which adopted the *Fernsicht* (distant view) perception and in Riegl's words: "made shadowy hollows with their rhythmic change...and the bright part of the wall in between them appears on the same plane as coherent optical units" (pp. 33-34). The innovation of the windows played two important roles in the ancient late Roman architecture: first, it made a relation between the interior and exterior space. Second, created a new optical decorative system based on the play of the dark shade and light walls.

Sculpture

After recognizing the Kunstwollen of the antique architecture at the first chapter of *the Late Roman Art Industry*, at the second chapter, Riegl continues with investigating the Kunstwollen of ancient sculpture through Egyptian, Greek, and Roman reliefs. He starts the chapter by introducing the Arch of Constantine reliefs (built-in 315 A.D in Rome) as a start for the development of the Kunstwollen of the late Roman art.

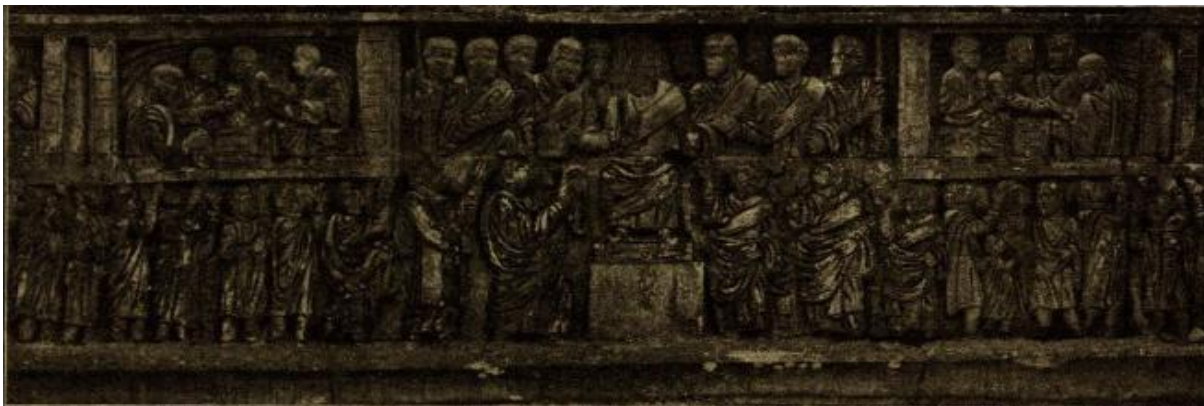


Fig.1 The Arch of Constantine, Rome, Italy

In comparison with the art of classical Greek, the Arch of Constantine reliefs (fig.1) lacks "beautiful animation" which was one of the main characteristics of classical relief. Riegl argues that even though figures are ugly, motionless, and disproportionate, but they are animated through the contrast between light and dark. "Hence, even extreme animation does, indeed, exist (one should just look at the irregular, sketchy treatment of the drapery fold), because it is based on momentary optical impression. It is not beautiful (according to classical terms which mean based on the tactile modeling in half shadows)" (p.55). The Constantinian artist intentionally chose to outline the figures harsh and unanimated to separate them in space, and provoke "the optical impression of a rhythmic change between light and dark". Riegl defines the Constantinian art "the last transitional phase in ancient art. It made way for a new artistic perception mediating between objects

and space, and freeing, in fact, space per se..." (pp.56-57). In order to understand the process of this development, it is necessary to understand the historical relationship between Constantinian and previous reliefs, let's start with the oldest one: the Egyptian.



Fig.2 sunk-relief, Ancient Egypt

The Egyptian relief captures the individual form and represents it with a contour line on the tactile plane (fig.2). There is no distinction between the figure and the ground, they are attached to each other. The outlined figures on the flat surface represent no depth, no shadow, just the two dimensions of height and width. As Riegl writes: "ancient Egyptian art considers principally just height and width (relations of the plane), but not depth (relation of space)" (p. 58). Therefore, if we go far away, we won't be able to see them, the only way to perceive them is the *Nahsicht* (near view). The main goal of the Egyptian art was creating balanced, proportional figures connected to the plane, the composition was mainly a "symmetrical sequence", and the main visual element that the ancient Egyptian artist used was the line, which was usually drawn straight, and only if needed turned into the curved outline. Riegl defines the beauty of the Egyptian art "in the strict proportionality of the parts and in their unified control through unarticulated and uninterrupted and, when necessary, regularly curved outlines" (p. 60). The problem of Egyptian art according to Riegl was the separation of figures from each other. Even though they were well connected to the plane, but there was no connection between the individual shapes with another one.

The problem has been resolved during the Classical Greek period, which it's an achievement in Riegl's words was "the emancipation of space relations: projections and recession and as their artistic consequence overlap, foreshortening, and shadows" (p. 61). In classical Greek period figures were not isolated outlined individual forms connected to the ground, and limited to the height and width, rather they started raising

from the flat ground and got a slight sense of three-dimensionality and movement (fig.3). Unlike the Egyptian art that figures were just moving to the right and left, in Greek art, they got closer to each other and started moving upward and backward. Although figures were in active motion, they were still attached to the material background, but the ground was different from Egyptian art. In Greek art, projected figures from the ground broke the single tactile plane of the Egyptian art into several partial planes. Consequently, shadows appeared, and for the first time, an optical element has been accepted in the visual arts. And that was the transition from the pure tactile Egyptian antique art to tactile-optical classical Greek art, and from *Nahsicht* (near view) to *Normalsicht* (normal view). Riegl writes: "these shadows were not so deep that they would be only optically effective and not tactilly controllable, which means that one did not just have to guess what these shadows would hide, but one was always able to see their ground" (pp. 62-63).



Fig. 3 Riders from the Parthenon Frieze

Finally, from the early Roman empire, it was not possible to see the ground of the shadows anymore (fig.4). Riegl explains: "these are no longer the tactile planes partially in shadow, which we perceive, but they are evidently all shadowy, dark (colorful) phenomena, which at first evoke only an optical impression in the beholder, and only via the detour of experience (reflection) they give knowledge about the existence of a tactile ground hand a touchable, plane-like projection" (p. 67). Unlike the Greek art which was tactile-optical, at this period deep shadows appeared and covered the ground, and that was the passage from the tactile-optical to the pure optical perception, and from *Normalsicht* (normal view) to the *Fernsicht* (distant view). Egyptian art created the individual shape through an outline on a tactile material plane. The viewer had to

get close to perceive the artwork from *Nahsicht* (near view) which was close to the sense of touch. In the classical Greek period, reliefs started to grasp a spatial sense and movement, half-shadows appeared and covered some parts of the tactile plane, the result was tactile-optical perception, which combines two senses of touch and vision. The perception of the early Roman art relied on the sense of sight, Riegl explains: “now the art of the early Roman Empire with the gradual removal from the *Normalsicht* abandoned little by little the immediate incentive for the sense of touch and left the report about the material _ spatial existence of objects_ to the visual sense” (p.73).



Fig.4 Portonaccio sarcophagus with a battle

Moving from *Nahsicht* (near view) to *Fernsicht* (distant view) was moving from the sense touch to the sense of vision. While, from the *Nahsicht* (near view) we perceive the material object, from the *Fernsicht* (distant view) we perceive their visual appearance. And that's why Riegl defined the ancient Egyptian as the most materialistic period in ancient art when the artwork was represented as a two-dimensional touchable object. During the Greek period when art started expressing not only two dimensions of width and height but also the third dimension of depth, the perception of the materiality for the viewer decreased. Consequently, the more art went towards the three-dimensionality, the figure in a work of art in Riegl's words “increasingly dematerialized”.

The last aim of development of the ancient art, which was isolating the three-dimensional figure from the ground, has been finally reached during the late Roman period. At this period figures separate themselves sharply from the plane and rise from the ground in full three-dimensionality. As Riegl notes:

"The figures are not born out of the ideal material plane, diagonally grown from it in a three-quarter profile, but are, so to say, pasted on the ground. The ground is no longer the artists complement to the shape serving as its necessary foil, but rather something which is alien to the shape which is inserted as independent element between the figures. With one word: ground became space" (p. 98).

So, the Kunstwollen of the late Roman art would be defined as the three-dimensional figures rising from the ground that works as space. Ground which is neither tactile nor tactile-optical, but it is optical-colorful.

Painting

Riegl argues that the late Roman painter's intention was the same as the sculptor. And since the process of the development of the late Roman wall painting was almost the same as the sculpture relief. Thus, in chapter three of the *Late Roman Art Industry*, he studies the development of mosaics and book illumination.

According to Riegl, the oldest mosaics demonstrate the *nahsichtig* (near view) achievement, but by a gradual increase of the size of the tesserae, they turn into *Fernsicht* (distant view) just like broad brushstrokes in a painting. The best example of this progress is the mosaics of the Salone of the Villa Borghese in Rome, that show the gladiators fighting with animals. By looking at these mosaics we don't see so many colors, we see color strips separated from each other. Figures have a sense of three-dimensionality, but they are not connected, they are spread on the flat background and not in the space. These mosaics in Riegl's words "are essentially polychromy and not purely coloristic" and that's because "each band of color has its own meaning to maintain" and that's the aim of the late Roman art: "isolation and not connection" (p.134). That proves even after the passage from the tactile perception to the optical-color the late Roman art is still "directed toward the maintenance of the individual shape and its parts rather than a modern transposition into infinite space" (p.135).



Fig.5 Miniature paintings. Joseph in front of the pharaoh. Viennese genesis.

Riegl continues by analyzing diverse mosaics, such as the mosaics of Santa Costanza in Rome made in the 4th century, mosaics of the apse of Santa Pudenzina from the 4th century as one of earliest Christian mosaics in Rome, and the mosaics of the Santa Maria Maggiore from the 5th century. Through the latter, he depicts a new kind of frontality in the late Roman art which he calls axiality. As he writes: "the figures turn out of space toward the beholder either fully or in a $\frac{3}{4}$ frontal view, but they turn the pupils of their eyes in an artificial

manner to the side which attracts their attention in accordance with the content" (p.137). Frontality was one of the main characteristics of ancient Egyptian art. In the Egyptian painting, the figure is drawn with a side view of the head, hips, arms, legs, feet, and front view of the eyes, shoulders, and torso. The differences between the frontality in ancient Egyptian art and late Roman art was in the latter frontality was optical and aimed to provoke "an impression of spiritual animation", while the Egyptian frontality tactile with no "sign of spiritual life", but both were "based on a clear perception of the individual shape" (pp.137-138). Riegl describes the artistic role of axuality as a way that brings the unconnected individual figures into relation with each other. For example, when a group of figures was about to talk to each other instead of turning their heads to the profile view they communicated through their eyes, by turning their pupils to the side. The best example is the (fig.5) from the Genesis.

As an example of the mosaic work of the middle of the 6th century, Riegl refers to the mosaics from San Vitale in Ravenna. In the scene that represents Justinian and Maximian he defines two kinds of compositions: first, a composition on the plane, that contains just vertical and horizontal forms. Second, special composition, in which figures step out of space and look straight at the viewer, foreground figures step on the feet of the background figures, it seems that the artist just wanted to separate individual figures on space instead of connecting them. What is missing in the late Roman art period is spatial unity. Although the late Roman art was not looking for spatial unity, but it was in search of the natural reality in life just like classical and modern art. "Classical antiquity (and its continuation until the earlier Roman Empire) searched the tactile reality of the individual object in the Nahsicht (near view) to the Normalsicht (normal view) without consideration of space... the art of the Roman Empire directed toward the optical reality of objects without consideration of space" (p.140).

The Art Industry

The last chapter of the Late Roman Art Industry is about the Kunstwollen of the art industry and decorative art that Riegl explores essentially through the metal works for which he mentions two reasons. First, because it is not possible to study all types of the late Roman craft in this book. Second, metal gives the artist the possibility to explore diverse stylistic forms such as sculptural, plastic, painted, engraved, etc. Riegl continues by analyzing three main types of metal works: perforated works, the notch, and garnets encased in gold.

Perforated works

He divides the perforated works into four classes and studies the relationship between the plane and projections, and the development of the Greek tendril as the main element of the motive decoration. In the first class of the ancient perforated works belong to the pre-Augustan Greek art the height of the projections is higher than the second class, and the composition is based on the symmetrical unity and a balance between motion and motionless. The second class appears with lower reliefs and returns to "greater immotion in silhouette lines of the whole as well as in the composition of the curves" (p.149). In the third class of perforated metal works (belong to the middle Roman style) the borderlines between projections and the ground disappeared and the eye perceives the ground and pattern equally. In Riegl's words "the ground itself becomes patterns" (p.151). In the works of the fourth class which belongs to the late Roman period, one perforated metal plate is put upon a not perforated one. Here the first one works as the pattern and the latter as the ground. The difference between these works and previous works is that here the patterns are not projected from the ground, they are placed on top of it.

The Notch

Riegl introduces bronze as the second art medium used by advanced Roman Empire to express its coloristic *Kunstwollen* and continues by explaining the relationship between pattern and ground and its differences with the perforated works. As an example, he analyzes a bronze buckle (fig.) and mentions that the decoration of this buckle is different from all ancient art. Riegl argues "characteristic is the lack of any horizontal plane; there are just lines without width, which form the highest reliefs as well as the deepest engraving...the entire plane appears, so to say, to be made out of notch-like ridges and depressions..." (p.164). Here we have both reliefs (ridges) and engraving (depressions). For example, among the motives the guilloche is made by depressions, while the tendril is made through ridges; therefore, we can hardly decide which one is the pattern, and which one is the ground. Riegl believes that the goal of the art of that period was "hiding the relation between ground and pattern and the subsequently developing lack of clarity of the ornamental motive" and replacing it by "the continues rhythmic change between light and dark" (p.165). The result just like the perforated work is the coloristic effects of light and shade. But the difference between the perforated metal works and the bronze one is that in the perforated works "the light pattern and the dark perforated ground remain the same without changes"; while in the bronze works light and shadowy sides change through the movement of the object.

Garnets Encased in Gold

Riegl continues identifying the *Kunstwollen* of the late Roman decorative arts through the works made by red garnet and gold, and the relation between pattern and ground in those works. He argues that in these works, gold works as a pattern, and red garnet as ground. Thus, just like the perforated and notched works, the goal was "the superficial hiding of the relationship between ground and pattern" (p.184). Even though these works are a combination of the garnet inlaid in gold with the perforation and notch in metal, but the rhythmic change between light and dark has been reduced to a minimum. The reason is that here the coloristic effect is achieved by color itself instead of the light and shadow of the relief. That shows that the late Roman art is dominated by colorism while the previous periods were polychromy.

Riegl compares the colorism of the late Roman with classical, and Near Eastern art, and notes while the polychromy of the classical antiquity was based on clarification of natural and connected patterns; the colorism of late antiquity used unconnected, and unnatural patterns, and was meant to "hide the patterns as much as possible by emphasizing the ground" (p.185). Egyptian art, on the other hand, used zig-zag pattern that divided the plane into geometrical shapes separated from each other through diverse colors or lines. Here, just like the late antiquity the borderlines between pattern and ground became blurred, the ground became a colorful pattern, and the pattern became ground. The main difference between ancient Egyptian polychromy and the colorism of the end of antiquity is that in the first one everything (pattern and ground) was meant to be motionless, while the second one wanted to show everything (pattern and ground) in motion. And that's because as we discussed before during the late Roman period the ground became space. As a result, unlike the Egyptian ornaments which were flat, tactile, connected to the ground; the garnet ornament were optical three-dimensional motives, separated from the ground. The garnets inlaid in gold according to Riegl are "the most mature form of expression of the coloristic *Kunstwollen* in metal", and have their "origin within the late Roman art among the Mediterranean nations" (p.192).

The Leading Characteristics of The Late Roman *Kunstwollen*

In the final chapter of the Late Roman Art Industry, Riegl suggests that in order to understand the *Kunstwollen* of each era, apart from studying the artworks and monuments of that period, there is another medium that

art historian must pay attention too, and that's the literary resources of studios of that period who knew about the art of their time. Therefore, he refers to St. Augustine ideas on beauty, unity, and rhythm, and their relation to late Roman art. For St. Augustine unity is the expression of beauty in different art forms, and rhythm is the medium through which unity is expressed.

As explained before, the late Roman Kunstwollen just like the ancient Egyptian and classical Greek Kunstwollen was meant to capture the individual shape on the plane. Riegl notes that the medium that the late Roman art used to create individual shapes and create a unity was rhythm. Rhythm according to Riegl exists when shapes are standing next to or above each other, and not behind one another, because in this case shapes overlap and cover each other. That's why "an art which wants to present units in a rhythmic composition is forced to compose on the plane and avoid deep space. As all ancient art, so also late Roman art strove for the representation of individual unifying shapes via a rhythmic composition on the plane" (p.223). But as we saw there was a big difference between the Kunstwollen of the late Roman art and that of the previous periods (ancient Egyptian, and classical Greek art). And the difference was the late Roman art wanted to show individual units in their full three-dimensionalities. Thus, through the play of light and dark, shadows of the individual shapes turned the ground into a colorful space. Consequently, individual figures got connected with each other via what Riegl called colorful rhythm, which was diverse from the linear rhythm belonged to the previous periods of antiquity.

After studying about the Kunstwollen of the late Roman art, we realized that the inner drive that leads the Kunstwollen of that period dominated all visual arts (architecture, sculpture, painting, decorative arts) equally. This inner drive in Riegl's words is "identical with other major forms of expression of the human *Wollen (will)* during the same period" (p.231). The notion of Kunstwollen as how man perceives the world and interprets it based on his own inner drive that changes with nation, location, and time, is connected to the *Weltanschauung (worldview)* of that epoch which structures religion, philosophy, science, government, law... and art. According to Riegl the development of the ancient *Weltanschauung (the ancient conception of the world)* was in parallel to the development of three periods of the ancient art discussed in the Late Roman Art Industry.

Kunstwollen after Alois Riegl found different interpretations. The exact meaning of the term remained always debatable among Riegl's followers and they never agreed about it. Henri Zerner in *Alois Riegl: Art, Value, and Historicism (1976)* mentions two kinds of interpretations of Riegl's Kunstwollen. The first interpretation which is based on the neo-Kantian philosophy is by the German art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968). In his interpretation of Kunstwollen, Panofsky tried to avoid any metaphysical interpretation of it. According to him, each art object contains the cultural and historical characteristics of the time and place in which has been created; an art historian has to study all these facts behind each artwork as much as possible.

The second interpretation of Kunstwollen has been expressed by the Austrian art historian Hans Sedlmayr (1896–1984). Sedlmayr's interpretation is Hegalian, he defines Kunstwollen as "a truly creative force; it then appears as what we might call a *deep structure*. The art historian first has to discover this informing principle, which will then make it possible for him to understand the surface phenomena" (p.180).

5. Dutch Kunstwollen and Role of the Viewer

Alois Riegl's approach towards art history in his two major books was formalist, but in his third major book *The Group Portraiture of Holland (1902)*, Riegl chose a both formalist, and psychological approach towards Dutch art of the 16th and 17th century. In this book, Riegl describes the characteristics of the group portraiture of Holland by comparing it with Italian art.

Riegl defines the group portrait of Holland as "a series of portraits of individuals. At the same time, however, it is expected to express clearly the characteristics of the particular organization involved and the nature of the situation that is temporarily uniting the figures into a group" (Riegl 1999, p.62). He explains the differences between group portraiture and other types of portrait by comparing the group portrait with family portraiture and friendship portraiture. The first one includes one portrait and can be found in Egypt and Romans; and the second one which usually elaborates two or more portraits were mostly produced in Italy and Flanders. A group portrait instead, unites several portraits in one picture and it is the specialty of Holland for two reasons: first, lack of action among the figures makes them look so passive and boring for their taste, second, other countries were mostly influenced by Italian art which was used to produce history painting; thus, they had no interest in group portraiture of Holland. Riegl describes the characteristics of group portraiture of Holland in comparison to Italian art by dividing them into two categories, the first category is psychological elements, and the second one is formal elements.

Psychological elements

Riegl mentions three psychological attitudes that could be expressed in every work of art as will (*Wille*), emotion (*Gefühl*), and attentiveness (*Aufmerksamkeit*).

Will, is the manifestation of action, and every action is dependent on the will. By perceiving the external world as something "objective" and against the man, will separate the man from the external world and forces him to conquer it. Therefore, will has an active relationship with the outside world. The second attitude, Emotion has a passive relationship with the external world. Using Riegl's words it lets the man be "either attracted or repulsed by the external world's sensuous pleasure" (p.75). Compared to the active will which was objective; emotion is more subjective (depends on the inner experience of the viewer). Attentiveness, the third psychological state, is subjective because it allows the man to become open to the external world and as Riegl says "not in order to subjugate it, to unite with it in pleasure or to recoil from it in pleasure, in pure, selfless interest" (p.75). Hence, attentiveness is both passive and active. It is passive because it "allows external things to affect it without attempting to overcome them"; it is active because it "searches things out, though without attempting to make them subservient to selfish pleasure" (p.75). Riegl defines two different kinds of coherence in a work of art: "internal coherence" (*innere Einbeit*), which is the unity among the figures inside the painting, and "external coherence" (*äußere Einbeit*) the unity of the painting and the viewer. Attentiveness works as a vehicle that links the figures within the picture to the viewer outside the painting.

The role of three psychological states in Italian and Dutch art

In Italian Renaissance paintings, figures are interacting with each other. They are as Riegl explains "always subordinated within their own subgroups, and these, in turn, are related to the main action" (p.78). Action, as discussed before is the expression of the will. Thus, according to Riegl, the Italian art is dominated by "will, action, and subordination", and wants to "place will which is most closely allied with action, on an equal

footing with emotion and attentiveness" (p.77). In Italian paintings the coherence is internal. These paintings are independent of the viewer. If Italian paintings are dominated by will, and figures are united through action and subordination; the Netherlandish painters used coordination to portray passive figures disconnected from one another. Lack of action, in fact, is the main characteristic of Dutch paintings, not only in group portraits but even in all other forms of painting in Holland. Dutch artists avoided action and replaced it with the psychological aspect of attentiveness. Through the gestures and gazes, the viewer unifies with the painting. Therefore, group portrait of Holland's coherence is both internal and external. Their completeness is dependent on the viewer.

Even though producing individual portraits were common among the Italian artists, group portrait in its pure form as produced in Holland, has never been developed in Italy, and it remained the specialty of the Dutch painters. The main reason for it was that the Italian artists were more concerned about showing action in their paintings. Therefore, as soon as more than one portrait appeared in the painting, the Italian painter thought he needs to unite them through subordination and action. Consequently, as Riegl puts in "Italian figures lack the disinterested attentiveness that is a prerequisite of group portraiture" (p.96). However, the Venetian school (Scuola Veneta) according to Riegl, was an exception, because in contrast to the Florentine school (Scuola Fiorentina) which was concentrated on emotion and action, the Venetian painting which was described as an art of being, has been characterized by an absence of emotion, or inner feeling. That's why group portraiture in Venice has been developed more compared to the rest of Italy.

Formal elements

After comparing the Italian history painting, with the group portrait of Holland through the psychological elements, Riegl continued the comparison through the formal elements, named composition; and mentioned three compositional differences between Italian history paintings, and group portraits of Holland.

Riegl argues: "art history distinguishes between two types of three-dimensional space: first, there is cubic space, a property of solid bodies, and then the free space between the figures" (p.82). Italian painters tried to show the figures in cubic space; therefore, they invented linear perspective. Conversely, in Holland, artists paid more attention to the free space between the figures; consequently, they developed the atmospheric or aerial perspective. The second difference between the Italian and Holland composition was, Italian artists used pyramidal composition, that through a diagonal line connected figures within the painting. Since Dutch artists did not want their figures to be connected to each other, instead of pyramidal composition they placed the figures "in rows stacked one on top of the other" (p.82). And finally, Italian artist wanted to show the figures as complete units; thus, they portrayed them through "rhythmic, ordered lines". In Holland, on the other hand, artists wanted their figures to move freer in space; hence, they represented them with rough outlines.

Three stages of development

In his analysis of the history of the group portraiture of Holland, Riegl chose to study the schools of Amsterdam, and Haarlem; because in the one hand, they were forefront cities in Holland's cultural development, and on the other hand, the group portraits were more distributed in those cities. Riegl divided his analysis of the Dutch group portraiture, and its relationship with the viewer into three periods of historical development as following: The first period of group portraiture in Holland from 1529 to 1566, the second period of group portraiture in Holland from 1580 to 1624, and the third period of group portraiture in Holland from 1624 to 1662.

The first period of group portraiture in Holland (1529-1566)

The subject of the first group portraits of this period are those incorporated groups that their members as Riegl writes “were willing to give up some of their own individuality and freedom in order to work together toward some collective, practical, secular, and public-spirited purpose” (p.101). They wanted to stay together and defend their people against enemies, and that idea was actually the base of group portraits of the earliest stage of the first period. Riegl defines the group portraits of the first period as “transitional” as they link the religious art of the 15th century to the secular art of the 17th century. And divides the civic guard group portraits produced during the first period in Amsterdam into two series. The first series has been produced between the mid-1530s to the early 1550s, and the second series started in 1550s and ended in 1566. The works of the second series according to Riegl, work as a bridge between the first and the second period.

Riegl calls the first period of group portraiture of Holland “the symbolic period” with “external coherence”. As one of the examples of the group portraits of this period, Riegl studies *The Civic Guard Group Portrait of 1529* by Dirck Jacobsz, which is considered as the earliest civic guard group portrait known today (fig.6). In this painting, there are portraits of 17 civic guards, they are wearing caps, standing firmly, and staring at the viewer, with no movement, and no action apart from their hands' gestures. The painting is divided into two parts by a horizontal line. Eight figures are on top, and nine below. Two of the figures of the bottom are holding guns in their hands, one man is extending his hands towards the viewer. One of the men on top has a quill in his hands. Two other men put their hands on the shoulder of the man next to them, that's the sign friendship. Another three men's hands do nothing but resting on the railing. In this painting, apart from some slight hand gestures there is almost no physical activity. Riegl notes:

“By calling attention to the complete lack of physical activity, by neutralizing the hands (the organs of grasping and appropriating things), the figures are totally absorbed in a purely psychological state of attentiveness. One could, therefore, describe this gesture as the negation of action, as a manifestation, so to speak, of nonactivity...This type of pictorial conception, as we will see, is characteristic of the entire first period, which I call the symbolic period” (p.103).



Fig.6 Dirck Jacobsz. *A Group of Guardsmen*, 1529, oil on panel, 119.3 × 174.4cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

All the gestures in the painting are meant to communicate with the viewer. All men apart from one, are looking at the viewer. This painting is not complete without the participation of the viewer. That's why the coherence of the symbolic period is external. But the point is each figure is looking at a different point, as there are several viewers out there. Thus, although the viewer plays an important role, and all figures seem to be interacting with him/her but as Riegl puts in "the singularity of the viewing subject is missing" (p.104).

After discussing the pictorial conception characteristics of Jacobsz's painting, in analyzing the composition of the group portrait, Riegl talks about two Italian elements of subordination and symmetry. The figures are all standing vertically, and are linked together horizontally. By looking at the eight figures on the top row we realize that every four figures on each side are turning towards the center and each other. The empty central space between every four men according to Riegl is "the subordinating element" on the upper level. In contrast to that, there are nine figures on the lower level, therefore, the central space is occupied by one of them which is surrounded by other eight men. If the painting was organized based on dominance and subordination, the central man must be recognized as the captain, but surprisingly he is not. The painter did his best to minimize the dominant position of the central figure by pushing him back behind other figures. As we see his head looks shorter than the others, we only see a small part of his chest, and only one of his hands. Hence, subordination in group portraits of the first period is neutralized and is different from the Italian one.

Before talking about symmetry in the composition of the Jacobsz's civic group portrait. But first let's see what Riegl says about symmetry:

"In the symmetrical arrangement, two objects have to correspond in height and width-the dimensions that define a plane. Symmetry, therefore, is tied to a plane: figures standing at different depths do not appear symmetrical. Depth, though, is the most subjective of the three dimensions: height and width are evident from a single figure alone, whereas (cubic) depth (of solid bodies) has to be imagined. Finally, distances of depth (the effects of free space), at least in the case of figures that move, are completely dependent on the moment at which a viewing subject perceives them, whereas height and width are relatively stable and lasting values" (p.109).

As mentioned in the previous pages the Italian painters of the Renaissance tried to show the figures in cubic space, while the Dutch artists preferred the free space between the figures. And that's exactly how the Dutch artist turned down the symmetry in his painting. Riegl explains "he worked against symmetry in a plane by staggering the figures in free space and by exploiting the subjective aspect of composition that breaks down the plane..." (p.110). In Jacobsz painting, the background has been kept intentionally dark. This dark background in the one hand links the figures together, and on the other hand, creates a deep contrast with the lighter color of the hands and faces of the men, so it seems that they are moving freely in the space. Another innovation in Jacobsz's work compared to the older group portraits is the free space between the figures' heads and the top of the frame. Therefore, in the Dutch group portrait of the first period "the introduction of central symmetry was accompanied by an increased emphasis on free space" (p.111). Riegl calls this "the symbolic-symmetrical phase" of the group portraiture of Holland.

The Emergence and Significance of Genre Painting in Holland

Riegl argues that the passage from the religious art to the secular art of the 16th century especially in Protestant Germanic regions occurred during the last years of the first period of group portraiture in Holland. Although, because of the iconoclasm during this period the religious art was violently rejected; the Dutch artists, however, did not completely give up producing religious images, but as Riegl writes:

"they began to conceive of their religious paintings more and more in terms of subjective experiences accessible to the viewer and less as objective events divorced from personal

realm. One need only think of Rembrandt in this context. His religious works depict ordinary occurrences that could happen to anyone in everyday life... In the visual arts, we use the term *genre* to describe this way of handling great historical events" (p.167).

Genre painting simply means depicting the scenes of everyday life of ordinary people, as they are doing daily activities. Riegl introduces Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525/1530-1569), and Pieter Aertsen (1508-1575) nicknamed "Tall Pete", as two founders of the genre painting in Holland. He argues that the invention of genre painting also influenced the group portraiture, and some of the group portrait painters especially during the second phase of the first, symbolic period of group portraiture used the pictorial conception of genre painters such as Aertsen. The impact of the genre painting on the group portraiture continues during the second period of group portraiture in Holland, thus, Riegl calls this period "genre period".

The second period of group portraiture in Holland (1580-1624)

In the composition of the paintings of the second period of group portraiture in Holland, known as genre period, the two Italian elements of subordination and symmetry grew stronger. According to Riegl, during this period the civic guards which used to have religious affiliations turned out to become a military organization. As a result, in the new group portraits, we can easily recognize the captain. "From now on, the captain, the lieutenant, and the standard-bearer are the three ranks that are almost always represented as clearly as one could wish" (pp. 173-174). And that means the growing role of subordination in the group portraits of the second period. Riegl mentions two paintings one by Dirk Jacobsz, and another one by Cornelis Ketel as two examples of genre paintings and writes: "Both of these works attempt to combine composition based on rows with a more spatial arrangement, as well as to combine a symbolic conception with a momentary, subjective expressiveness by means of livelier physical movements, while at the same time introducing a stronger form of subordination" (p.174).



Fig.7 Cornelis Ketel, *The Company of Captain Dirck Jacobsz Rosecrans and Lieutenant Pauw*, 1588, oil on canvas, 208 × 410cm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

In the group portraits of the first period and before, there were just half-length figures, that's because as Riegl explains "the artists of Holland did not want anything to compete with the face of the sitter, least of all the legs, which suggest movement and thus can easily become a source of distraction. For them, the face was the mirror of the soul and by far the most important aspect of any portrait" (p.174). Here, in the *Civic Guard Group Portrait of 1588 by Cornelis Ketel* (fig.7) for the first time figures have been portrayed as full-length. In this painting we see 13 civic guards standing, looking around. Some of them are looking at the viewer, some of them not, but none of them looks at another one. It seems more like they are in an everyday life scene, than a historical or religious event. As we see, all of them are carrying weapons. But in contrast to the symbolic period, that weapon had a symbolic role, and the choice of it was restricted, here we see a wide range of weapons such as lances, shields, muskets, flamberges, daggers...That shows how this painting is diverse from the symbolic period's group portraits.

As mentioned, unlike the symbolic period, in the genre group portraits it is easy to recognize the captain, the lieutenant, and the standard-bearer. In Ketel's painting's foreground, we see three men. In the left-center of the painting there is a man in a dark outfit, who is looking at the viewer, and holding a spear in his right hand, and with his left hand, he is pointing to two other men standing there in the foreground. It's not difficult to understand this man is the captain and two other guys are the lieutenant and the standard-bearer. It seems that the captain is introducing them to someone outside the painting: the viewer. And that's what creates the "external coherence" of the genre painting. Riegl argues that all other men are involved in the introduction of the lieutenant, and the standard-bearer by the captain, and calls this new subject in group portraiture as "presentation". Since this kind of presentation does not occur in real life; "therefore, the pictorial conception of the work is still basically symbolic, that is, not subjective and not realistic, in spite of a few qualities that begin to make it look like genre painting" (p.177). Although because of the captain's dominant role, this painting is based on subordination, since the other men in the picture seem to be doing what they want, instead of being under command we still see a kind of coordination in this painting. The composition according to Riegl is still based on symmetry which means figures are depicted on the plane but compared to the earlier works here for the first time the figures are getting more spatial expression. If in the older group portraits, the figures seemed to be attached to each other, here they are getting more spatial detachment and movement.

Riegl argues that in this work we find two completely new things: the physical movements of the figures, and diagonals, which are the result of the movement. He mentions three main resources for the diagonals in this painting as weapons, figures' poses, and tilted heads. If in the elder group portraits orientation of the figures and their heads were vertical, in Ketel's painting the heads are tilted towards different angles and create diagonals. Riegl notes that the vertical heads are the expression of will, while tilted heads and bodies are the expressions of emotion, and that indicates the growth of the emotional expression in the second period of group portraiture in Holland. The increase of the diagonal lines in the picture, according to Riegl is the growth of the subjectivity in the group portraiture:

"The verticality of the figures' position emphasizes the objective isolation of each individual, and therefore greatly enhances the desired portrait quality by understanding the autonomy of the sitter... Diagonal lines, in contrast to vertical lines, are subjective: they function mainly as connectors that tie the verticals together, and this act of relating disconnected objects as always subjective. Since, however, like all lines, diagonals are two-dimensional and do not operate spatially, they still have a role to play in images that are objectively conceived" (pp.182-183).

Riegl introduces will and emotion as the two sources for human physical movement and notes that for the Dutch artist, only the figures' physical movement could demonstrate their emotions or inner feelings. That's why the artists of the second period started working on diverse ways of showing physical movement in their paintings. The main problem of the painters of this period according to Riegl was, on the one hand, depicting

physical movement, and on the other hand, relating the figures in the plane. Consequently, in Amsterdam, some artists like Pieter Isaacs (1569-1625) tried to show actual physical movement like the Italian artists; and some like Aert Pietersz (1550-1612) meant to depict inner feelings through the physical movements.

Group Portraiture in Haarlem



Fig. 8 Frans Hals, *The Banquet of the Officers of the St George Militia Company*, 1616, 175 × 324 cm, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem

Apart from Amsterdam, among all other cities in Holland Haarlem played an important role in developing the group portraiture and the Dutch Kunstwolln. By insisting on their own traditions, artists from Haarlem developed their own way of producing group portraits diverse from painters from Amsterdam.

In contrast to the Amsterdam artists which were mostly concentrated on psychological aspects of the group portraiture, the Haarlem artists were more into dealing with the formal and physical aspects. Another difference between the two schools of art in Holland was the way each of them wanted to show human emotions. Riegl explains "on a psychological level, however, the kinds of human emotions that did appeal to the painters of Haarlem were the ones that bonded people together and were expressed in lively physical gestures. By contrast, the painters in Amsterdam were more interested in exploring ways to capture the level of human experience that takes place deep in the mind, in the realm of individual feeling" (p.202).

The main difference between the two schools of arts in Holland, however, was between their pictorial conception of group portraits. In Amsterdam, artists preferred the external coherence, while in Haarlem the pictorial perception was based on both internal and external coherence. As we discussed, the painters of the Amsterdam during the first and the second period of evolution of group portraiture; arranged the figures in the scene as they were communicating with the viewer outside the painting, there was no interaction among the figures. Therefore, the coherence of the painting was external. Haarlem artists, on the other hand, divided the larger group into smaller units, while each unit had its own internal coherence, some of the figures also communicated with the viewer and created the external coherence.

One example is *The Group Portrait of the Civic Guard of Saint George, 1616* (fig.8) by one of the most important artists of the Haarlem school Frans Hals (1582-1666). In describing his works Riegl notes that just like any other Haarlem painter, Hals wanted to show both internal and external coherence in his group portraits. Thus, as we see in this picture, he broke down the whole group of eleven guardsmen into smaller subgroups of two or three. While the members of the smaller group are communicating with each other (internal coherence), some of the figures are looking at the viewer (external coherence). Riegl continues that for Hals was important "to make it clear that all the figures share the same time and place" (p.321), and the best way to do that was engaging them in a "common activity, either with each other or with the viewer" (p.321). Here in this painting, the figures are gathered together at the table and are having food and drink, while talking and listening to each other some of them are also looking at the viewer. Hence, they are present at the same space and doing the same thing at the same time.

The third period of group portraiture in Holland (1624-1662)

The artists of Haarlem school succeeded to establish both internal and external coherence. While the Amsterdam painters were mostly concerned about the external coherence and did not pay attention so much to the internal coherence. At the same time both schools' main problem during the second period of group portraiture in Holland according to Riegl, was "establishing external coherence in space and time" (p.221). In the earlier group portraits of Holland, in the one hand, the figures in the painting were not looking at the same point as there were many viewers out there, which means lack of unity of space. On the other hand, it was not clear if the actions of the figures in the painting were happening at the same time, and that means a lack of unity of time. In Haarlem, the artist who faced this challenge, and unified the space and time through portraying figures sharing the same place and time was Frans Hals.

During the third period of group portraiture in Holland, which Riegl calls "dramatic" period, the artist who succeeded to build both internal and external coherence was no one but Rembrandt (1606-1669). Riegl notes:

"Nevertheless, Rembrandt's ultimate goal was to attain a perfectly resolved external coherence with the viewer... He must have realized early on in his career that complete and well-defined external coherence- meaning the connection between the viewer and the figures depicted in the painting-depends on an already resolved internal coherence-meaning a subordinate relationship among the figures portrayed. This subordination was the prerogative of Italian art: it was, therefore, the point at which the Italian manner and Rembrandt's artist intentions intersected" (p.253).

Compared to all other Dutch artists of that time, Rembrandt probably was the most influenced by Italian art. The roots of Italianism in Rembrandt's art according to Riegl, goes back to his young hood when he left his hometown Leiden and went to Amsterdam to study with "Pieter Lastman (1583-1633), who had been to Italy" (p.253). Rembrandt's main achievement was taking the Italian element of subordination and making it his own, the result was a new fully and richly developed painting in Holland. Riegl notes "Rembrandt was essentially the agent of the artistic volition (Kunstwollen) of his nation and times, albeit an agent of genius, and at times of consummate achievement" (p.254).

The Anatomy Lesson of Dr.Tulp, 1632 (fig.9), is a great example of a group portrait in which Rembrandt establishes internal and external coherence through the use of subordination. There are nine figures in this painting, Dr. Tulp, seven surgeons, and a dead body. As we see, while Dr. Tulp is lecturing, six surgeons are listening to him carefully, and one is looking directly at the viewer and pointing to Dr.Tulp by the finger of his right hand. Here the internal coherence has been made by the group of seven men who are listening to the professor, and the external coherence has been created by the eighth man who is making contact with the

viewer outside the painting. Riegl argues that subordination in this painting creates two kinds of relationships: "first, that between Dr. Tulp and the seven surgeons, who all subordinate themselves to him as lecturer; secondly, that between the uppermost surgeon and the viewer, whereby the viewer is subordinated to the surgeon, and, by extension, to Dr. Tulp as well (p.256).

The Night Watch, 1642 (fig.10), is another group portrait by Rembrandt. In the foreground of this painting we see the captain and the lieutenant, and in the background the rest of the guardsmen. The captain is ordering the march to the lieutenant standing beside him by his left hand's gesture. Riegl argues that apart from the lieutenant who "truly looks as though he is subordinating himself directly to the captain on a psychological level" (p.265), the other men don't act the same way. Instead, they behave in a way which shows that they are ready to march. "The actions of all the men clearly communicate the message that everyone is on the move, something that all interpretations of this painting have in common, as is already apparent in the old title of the work, *The Night Watch*, meaning an evening march" (p.267).

The captain's subordination creates the internal coherence of the painting. But, as Riegl notes in this painting "the subordinating effect of the spoken word (in this case, the command) operates directly on a psychological level only for one figure (the lieutenant); for all of the others, it takes the form of physical activity" (p.267). Just the lieutenant's gesture shows he has received the order, as we see him standing by the captain and looking towards him. The other men just act as they know what is going to happen: they will receive the captain's order by the lieutenant in a bit, and they will march.

In the other group portraits, the external coherence was established through the eye contact of the figures inside the painting, with the viewer outside the painting. In this group portrait, none of the figures is looking towards the viewer, but we still feel that they are communicating with the viewer. Riegl explains that external coherence in this painting has not been created by the figures' glances at the unseen viewer, but it's the captain's gesture that creates external coherence. "Here, the figures' attentiveness is individual and specific. The hand of the captain extended straight out toward the viewer, is the clear signal that the whole troop of guardsmen, in the next instant, will dutifully carry out the given command and march out into the space of the viewing subject" (p.271).

Rembrandt's *The Staalmeesters*, 1662 (fig.11), according to Riegl is a painting that represents "the final point of the evolution" (p.286) in the group portraiture of Holland. Among the six figures represented in this painting, the five men sitting behind the table are regents, and the one standing by the wall in the background is the servant. The regent in the middle who is subordinating the others by talking is the spokesman. While he is looking to the left, the other men are looking out at the viewer. In this painting, internal coherence has been established by the regents' subordination to the spokesman, and external coherence has been made by the figures' subordination to the viewer. This painting according to Riegl is "the ideal group portraiture" of Holland, as he writes: "the figures charged with establishing internal coherence are the same ones responsible for external coherence, which is now perfectly specific in time and space" (p.285).

During the first period of the group portraiture in Holland or the symbolic period, the coherence was external and the Dutch artist resisted against the Italian elements of subordination and symmetry. Throughout the second period named the genre period, the Haarlem artists established both internal and external coherence, while the Amsterdam painters remained interested only in the external coherence. The problem of group portraiture in Holland for "establishing external coherence in space and time" (p.221), remained unsolved until the third period, named by Riegl as the dramatic period, when Rembrandt has found the solution for building both internal and external coherence that demonstrated itself in *The Staalmeesters*. That's why Riegl calls him "the agent of the artistic volition (Kunstwollen) of his nation and times, albeit an agent of genius, and at times of consummate achievement" (p.254).

Kunstwollen of Hollandish painting

In the preface of *The Group Portraiture of Holland*, Riegl criticizes the modern scholars who judge the group portraits based on the taste of their time and pay attention only to those group portraits (like those of Rembrandt) that are closer to the "standards of the modern taste" (p.63). Riegl argues the duty of the art historian "is not simply to find the things in the art of the past that appeal to modern taste, but to delve into the artistic volition (Kunstwollen) behind works of art and to discover why they are the way they are, and why they could not have been otherwise. And we know that group portraiture is the one category, more than any other, that will reveal the true nature of the artistic volition of Holland" (p.63).

In defining the Dutch Kunstwollen, Riegl argues that the Dutch artists were the first who paid attention to the role of the viewer in the work of art. Thus, they started painting in a way that involved him/her in completing the work of art in two ways. On the one hand, by painting the forms and shapes of the figures and objects within the free space that is united with them, and on the other hand, by using tools such as the figure's gaze and/or gesture in capturing the viewer's attention. Therefore, the Kunstwollen of Dutch art could be defined as painting "free space and attentiveness" (p.366).



Fig.9 Rembrandt, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632, 169.5x216.5 cm, Oil on canvas, Mauritshuis, The Hague



Fig.10 Rembrandt, *The Night Watch*, 1642, oil on canvas, 363 x437 cm, Amsterdam Museum



Fig.11 Rembrandt, *De Staalmeesters*, 1662, Oil on canvas, 191.5× 279 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

This is a reproduction of the painting 'The Family of Philip IV' by Diego Velázquez. The scene depicts the royal family in a grand, dimly lit room. Philip IV stands on the left in dark armor, holding a sword. The Infanta Margarita is seated in the center in a white gown. To her right, the Infanta Elisabeth is seated, and the Infanta Maria Theresa stands. A large dog lies in the foreground. The room features large paintings on the walls and a doorway in the background showing another figure.

The following pages are about the role of the viewer in one of the most important paintings of the Western art *Las Meninas* (fig.12), by the great master of the Spanish Golden age of art Diego Velázquez (1599 -1660) who was the court painter of the King Philip IV of Spain (1605-1665). *Las Meninas* which in Spanish means

The Ladies-in-waiting, is 318 cm × 276 cm (125.2 in × 108.7 in) and today takes part of the Prado Museum's collection in Madrid. This group portrait is definitely one of the most talked-about paintings that caused many different analysis and interpretations since it has been produced in 1656.

This oil on canvas group portrait shows Diego Velázquez's studio in the Royal Alcazar of Madrid, where many paintings by great masters are hanging on the wall. At first glance, one might see nine people in the room as three young girls, two dwarfs in the foreground, two men and a woman in the middle ground, and a man in the background, and a dog in the foreground. But the fact is right beside the door, almost in the center of the painting, there are two more figures, a man and a woman in the mirror. Thus, we have eleven people in the painting. On the right there are two dwarfs, the boy is teasing the dog, and the girl is staring at the viewer. Right beside the dwarf girl, there is a lady-in-waiting or court lady who is looking at the viewer. Then in the center of the painting, there is the five years old princess Margaret Theresa, who also is looking at the viewing subject. Right beside the princess, on the left, there is another court lady, who is kneeling and offering her a drink. Behind her in the midground of the painting we see a man with a mustache in a black suit who is standing by a huge canvas. While holding a pallet and some paintbrushes in his right hand, and another paintbrush in his left hand, staring outside the painting. This man is no one but Diego Velázquez himself. Still in the midground, there is the princess's chaperone who is talking to a bodyguard in a black suit, who is standing behind the female dwarf looking at the spectator. In the background we see a man in black in the doorway, standing on the steps, one of his hands are on the curtain, his face is in the profile, and gaze aims at the viewer. And finally, in the mirror on the wall between the painter and the open door, under the two large paintings, the viewer can see the reflected images of a man and a woman: King Philip IV and Queen Mariana.

As mentioned the reflected image in the mirror shows the upper body of the king and queen. But where exactly the royal couple is standing? In front of the mirror? This is one of the most debating questions among art historians. A number of them said yes, they are standing in front of the mirror and the image we see is the direct reflection of them. Other critiques believed what we see in the mirror is the reflection of the painting on the canvas in front of the painter. And finally, another group of scholars suggested that the image in the mirror is the reflection of the painting on canvas, King Philip IV and Queen Mariana are still standing there posing for the artist, and that's what the other figures are looking at.

The lightest parts of the painting are the foreground and the background, and the darkest part is the top half of the painting. As we see the light in this painting comes from the right part of the painter's studio. In the foreground, it comes from the window beside the dwarfs, and in the background, it probably comes from another window where the man is standing through the door. The light creates two internal triangles by guiding the viewer's eyes through the painting. An imaginary line from the male dwarf's head to the man in the background and the princess creates the first triangle. The second triangle starts from the princess, goes up first to the painter, then to the bodyguard, and gets back to the princess again. It seems that Velázquez wanted to focus on the young Margaret Theresa as the central point of the painting.

There are many different ideas and theories about the focal point of the painting. Some historians suggested the princess as the focal point, because horizontally she is in the center of the figures, and it is the brightest figure in the painting. Some introduced the mirror as the central point because it is in the center of the back wall. And, other scholars believed that the vanishing point is the focal point of the painting. And finally, some art historians like Leo Steinberg in *Velázquez' Las Meninas (1981)* argue that the painting has more than one focal point:

"Ask where the center is, and the answer returned by the picture is not any one point, nor any two, but three and four; it depends on what you are centering... Three centers, nicely triangulated: the canvas as a physical object, the perspectival geometry, and the depicted chamber-each maintains its own middle. Three kinds of centers, which in a simple painting

might have remained coincident to avoid unnecessary confusion, are here deliberately dispersed" (p.51).

The figure arrangement in the painting could be seen in different ways: as groups of two or three, or based on what they are doing or where they are standing, it really depends on how you want to look at it. Leo Steinberg arranges the figures "according to what they see" (p.53) in three groups: the first group includes the princess, court lady, and the female dwarf. The second group is composed of the male dwarf, the kneeling court lady, and the princess's chaperon. And the third group, of the bodyguard, the painter, and the man on the stair. Each group creates a triangular composition. The first group in the foreground see what is in front of them. The people in the second group are busy playing, talking, or servicing (the princess) see less. And the figures of the third group see everything, they see both what is in the front, and what is on the canvas. They are the only ones who know the secret of the mirror. Steinberg writes: "Lastly again, the three adult outfielders: they are so placed with respect to the painter's canvas that they alone see a complex of interrelations, or two worlds at a glance-their own and another; a stage to serve in and a painted equivalent purely visionary" (p.53).

Through the Riegl's gaze

Now let's study the painting through the Riegl's theories. As noted before Riegl divided the group portraits of Holland into three periods. In the first period or "the symbolic period" the artist used symbolic elements (gestures, objects...) to connect the figures into the same group in the painting. In the second period, or "the genre period", figures got together in daily activity (lunch, dinner...). And the third period, or "the dramatic period", action and subordination made the interrelation between the figures. *Las Meninas* shows a moment of the daily life in the painter's studio in the Royal Alcazar palace captured by Velázquez on a huge canvas. What brings the figures together in this scene is the Velázquez's painting and probably the royal couple posing in front of him. Hence, *Las Meninas* could be considered a genre painting.

Riegl defined two kinds of coherences in the pictorial conception of the group portraiture of Holland. External coherence as the connection of the viewer and the figures in the painting. And, Internal coherence as the connection between the figures inside the painting. The Dutch artists created the external coherence usually by making the figures looking directly at the spectator, and capturing his/her attention. During the first and second periods, most of the figures portrayed in the paintings were looking directly towards the viewer. But the problem was each of them was looking at a different point as there was more than one viewer out there. During the third period, however, the figures started to focus on one point, which means to one viewer.

External coherence in *Las Meninas*

Six figures in this painting are staring at the same point outside the painting. The female dwarf, the lady-in-waiting, the princess, the painter, the bodyguard, and the man on the back stairs. All of them are making eye contact with us. They are looking at us, as we are looking at them! They connect us to the painting. Through their gazes "we see ourselves seen" (p.51).

Internal coherence in *Las Meninas*

As discussed before internal coherence was the specialty of the Haarlem school's artists. They broke down the entire group into smaller units, each unit had its own internal coherence. Means the members of the smaller units were interrelated to each other. At the same time, one or more of the members of the group was looking at the viewer. Thus, the coherence of the Haarlem group portraits was both internal and external.

In Amsterdam instead, the problem remained unsolved until the third period and the emerging of Rembrandt. He was the one who succeeded to establish the internal and external coherence in time and space. The main aspect of internal coherence was subordination, which was an Italian element. The Hollander painters were interested in coordination. Rembrandt was the first Dutch artist who took the Italian element and made it his own. In *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, 1632, for example, all the members of the group are listening carefully to the doctor, while at the same time one of them is looking at the viewer. The internal coherence of the painting has been established by the doctor who subordinates the group, and external coherence has been established by the one who is looking at the viewer and subordinates him/her.

In *Las Meninas* we see several groups of two and three, the king and queen, the woman and the bodyguard, dwarfs and dog, the princess and her ladies-in-waiting. But the point is there is no internal coherence among these groups, as it seems that no-one cares about the other one, no-one is listening to another one. The dog doesn't care about the boy who is teasing him, the female dwarf doesn't care about any of them, instead she is staring at the spectator, or in other words, she is subordinating him/her. The bodyguard doesn't listen to the woman who is talking to him, and he is just looking at the viewer. The princess also is looking at the beholder and doesn't care about the court lady who is offering her a drink in a tray. All that shows a lack of internal coherence and subordination. No-one seems to subordinate oneself to another one, instead most of the figures inside the painting subordinate the viewer outside the painting and establish a strong external coherence.

But there is still one figure, one man who is subordinating everyone in and outside the picture including the dwarfs, the dog, the court ladies, the princess, the woman, the bodyguard, the man in the background, the king and queen, the painter, and the viewers. He is the one who subordinated even the critiques, art historians, and philosophers who wrote about the painting during the last three and a half centuries, and the one who will subordinate those who will write about the masterpiece in the future. He is no-one but Diego Velázquez. He is the one who is present in and outside the painting, the one who arranged the scene in his studio in the Royal Alcazar in 1656. Even if it seems no-one is subordinated to him directly in the scene, all the figures in the group portrait are indirectly subordinated to him, because he is the one who arranged them, he is the one who painted them. Therefore, we can say internal coherence in *Las Meninas* is indirect!

Velázquez successfully created a group portrait and established internal and external coherence. He paints himself while painting another painting in his studio. He is standing there behind the canvas with his pallet and paintbrushes in his hands, staring at us while he is painting. As we are staring at him while he is doing it. We are seeing each other while he is painting. Leo Steinberg writes about Velázquez's painting:

"It creates an encounter. And as in any living encounter, any vital exchange, the work of art becomes the alternate pole in a situation of reciprocal self-recognition. If the picture were speaking instead of flashing, it would be saying: I see you seeing me-I in you see myself seen-see you seeing yourself being seen- and go beyond the reaches of grammar" (p.54).

Las Meninas is about seeing and being seen. It is a painting about painting; as Michel Foucault wrote: "the representation as it were, of Classical representation" (1973, p.17). Echoing Foucault's definition of *Las Meninas*, W.J.Mitchell called it a "metapicture" (1994, pp.58-64). He explained metapictures as those "pictures that refer to themselves or to other pictures, pictures that are used to show what a picture is" (p.35).

The painting inspired not only many scholars to write about it and analyze it, but many painters such as Francisco Goya (1746-1828), John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), Salvador Dali (1904-1989), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), and... who paid homage to it by painting their own versions of it.

7. The Beholder's Share: Riegl, Kandel, Koons

This part is about the role of the viewer, but not in the works of the 16th and 17th centuries' artists, but in the works of one of the world's chief contemporary artists Jeff Koons. As a genius who turns kitsch and banality into expensive and controversial artworks, Jeff Koons does not need a long introduction. Born in York, Pennsylvania, on January 21, 1955, the American artist is famous for his stainless-steel sculptures of *Puppy*, *Rabbit*, and huge floral sculpture *Balloon Dog*. His work explores themes such as ready-made, kitsch, pop culture, and sexuality. Jeff Koons became the holder of the latest record of the most expensive living artist, when on 15 May 2019 at Christie's New York during its post-war and contemporary art sale, his *Rabbit* (1986) (fig.13) sold for \$91,075,000.



Fig.13 Jeff Koons, *Rabbit*, 1986, stainless steel, 41 x 19 x 12 in. (104.1 x 48.3 x 30.5 cm.)

In 2017, Koons has been selected as the first Artist-in-Residence at the Columbia University's Mortimer B. Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute. Where he had the possibility to explore the science of brain and mind, and had scientists visiting his studio and exchanging ideas with him. The winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine Dr. Eric Kandel who also is the co-director of the Zuckerman Institute, explained the goal of the Zuckerman Institute by inviting Jeff Koons as the first Artist-in-Residence was making a bridge between brain science and art.

In a conversation between Jeff Koons, Ann Temkin, and Dr. Eric Kandel titled *An artist's creative process in action*, at the New York Historical Society, on January 26, 2017. Jeff Koons explains how he always wanted to find a psychiatrist, somebody involved with the mind to write about his work. He used to watch Dr. Kandel on the *Charlie Rose show*, so he decided to contact him to come and see his work. After visiting his show where Koons's *Gazing Ball* series were on display (Fig. 14-15). Eric emailed him and said "Jeff, I went, I saw your exhibitions today, and I am blown away. You really have contributed to the beholder's share".



Fig.14 Jeff Koons, Gazing Ball (Manet Luncheon on the Grass), oil on canvas, glass, and aluminum, 160 x 206.4 x 37.5 cm, 2014-2015

In the *Gazing Ball* series, Jeff Koons attached a blue glass shining ball on the classical sculptures and paintings of the great artists of the past such as Titian, El Greco, Courbet, Manet, and ... so, when you look at the work of art you see yourself in the gazing ball, and you become a part of it (fig.16). According to Jeff Koons, "The beholder's share is the art. You know, that's where the value is. It's not in that object – that object can just stimulate, excite – but the art is the perception that the individual has for their own lives, their own meanings

and how they can expand their parameters and move forward." Then he explains that how Dr.Kandel's explanation of the historical context of the beholder's share in the theories of Alois Riegl, helped him to put what he has been doing for years in the art-historical frame.



Fig.15 Jeff Koons, Gazing Ball (Farnese Hercules), plaster and glass, 326.4 x 170 x 123.5 cm, 2013

Eric Richard Kandel was born on November 7, 1929, in Vienna, Austria. Although, when he was only 8 years old, he and his family left Vienna and went to the United States after the Nazis annexation of Austria, Austria's capital city's impact on his mind and intellectual life has remained. His interests in three Austrian modernist artists: Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), Egon Schiele (1890 -1918), and Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980), the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), and Vienna 1900, in the one hand. And the Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute's goal to link the brain science with other disciplines, on the other hand, led him to explore the beholder's share from the scientific view to show how human's brain perceives art.

In his book *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present, 2012*, Dr.Kandel tackles the problem by focusing on portraiture of the Vienna's modernist artists of the late 1800, and early 1900, in particular Klimt, Schiele, and Kokoschka. In his book *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present, 2012*, Dr.Kandel tackles the problem by focusing on portraiture of the Vienna's modernist artists of the late 1800, and early 1900, in particular Klimt, Schiele, and Kokoschka.

According to Dr.Kandel, these artists tried to represent the unconscious of their models and communicate it to the viewer through painting the "facial expressions and hand and body gestures". At the same time in Vienna Sigmund Freud "used psychoanalysis to delve beneath the conscious minds of his patients and reveal their inner feelings". Thus, their attempt was "both paralleled and were influenced by similar efforts at the same time in the fields of biology and psychoanalysis" (Kandel, 2013). Therefore, the portraits of the three Austrian artists could be considered as the best examples that show how art, psychology, and science can interact and enrich each other.

Dr.Kandel introduces Alois Riegl as a bridge between art and science. In his conversation with Jeff Koons, he argues that Riegl was the first one who said: "art history is going to die unless becomes more scientific, and the science it must direct itself to is psychology and the problem it needs to focus on is the beholder's share". The beholder's share or the role of the viewer, as we discussed in the previous chapter is the psychological way that the viewer finishes the painting in his/her mind. Kandel continues that after Riegl two of his followers Ernst Kris (1900-1957), and Ernst Gombrich (1909 -2001) argued that each viewer interprets the work of art in his/her mind different from another one. That's because our brain interprets the visual perception based on our personal experience. Kandel writes:

"In addition to our built-in visual processes, each of us brings to a work of art our acquired memories: we remember other works of art that we have seen. We remember scenes and people that have meaning to us and relate the work of art to those memories...These insights into perception served as a bridge between the visual perception of art and the biology of the brain" (Kandel, 2013).

When we look at someone's face our brain goes through the process of analyzing forms, lines, value, color... so, we can guess the person's age, sex, and emotions. The reason that our brain reacts to the portraits of the Austrian artists According to Dr. Kandel is that "our brain contains specialized cells that respond powerfully to the exaggerated facial features these painters portrayed" (Kandel. 2013). In fact, everything happens in our brain, what our eyes perceive, our brain recreates based on our past memories, and experiences. Thus, as Kandel puts in "the real eye of the beholder is the brain itself" (Kandel, 2013).

8. Conclusion

Alois Riegl's great impact on art history is undeniable. He influenced many art historians and theorists such as Erwin Panofsky, Wilhelm Worringer, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Kris, Ernst Gombrich, Gilles Deleuze, Karl Mannheim, and many others. Walter Benjamin has been extremely impressed by Riegl's *Late Roman Art Industry* and called it as one of the four must read books of all times. As he writes:

“epoch-making work [that] applied with prophetic certainty the sensitivity and insights of expressionism (which occurred twenty years later) to the monuments of the late Imperial period, broke with the theory of “periods of decline,” and recognized in what had previously been called “regression into barbarism” a new experience of space, a new artistic [Kunstwollen]. Simultaneously, this book is one of the most striking proofs that every major scholarly discovery results in a methodological revolution on its own, without any intention to do so. Indeed, in the late four decades no art historical book has had such a substantive and methodologically fruitful effect”. (Benjamin, cited in Y. Levin 1988).

In his *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels (The Origin of German Tragic Drama, 1928)* Benjamin applied Riegl's historical method to the German literature of the 17th century. His famous essay (*Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*) *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction 1935*, also could be seen as another adaptation of Rielian methodology to the modern era when cinema was born. As Jay Hetrick in *What is Nomad Art? A Benjaminian Reading of Deleuze's Riegl 2012* writes “cinema would simply be an expression of the Kunstwollen of the era, or ‘mode of perception’, which is itself inseparable from the broader Weltanschauung or ‘mode of existence’”.

Driven from Riegl's kunstwollen, Karl Mannheim developed his concept of Weltwollen (will to the world). Just like Walter Benjamin, Mannheim also has been strongly inspired by Riegl's art historical methodology in the *Late Roman Art Industry*. Mannheim puts in:

“the horizontal differentiation of the concept across media (architecture, painting, sculpture, decorative art), the ‘temporal differentiation of the Kunstwollen of successive periods’ (oriental, classical, late antique), and the correlation of these with contemporary philosophy and religion to produce a kind of ‘Weltwollen’ or ‘Kulturwollen’, all traced back to a set of ‘differentiated germinal forms’ of which the diverse Wollen are logically derivable ‘meaningful variations’”. (Mannheim, cited in Tanner 2009).

In a more recent example, the Nobel Laureate Dr. Eric Kandel by referring to the Vienna 1900 and its modernist artists, psychologists, and scholars, in his book *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present, 2012*, explored the relationships between art and science. Kandel mentions Riegl as the major figure and the first art historian who attempted to bridge art and science. In his lecture at the American Academy in Berlin in September 9, 2015, Kandel called Riegl a hero who has been “amazingly unappreciated by art historians, particularly contemporary art historians outside of the German speaking world”.

Riegl's cosmopolitan character and his liberal aesthetic points of view along with his beliefs on equality of all art forms (painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture, craft...), and judging the art of each era based on facts and figures that represent the Kunstwollen of that period, plus his especial attention on the ignored periods and arts such as oriental art, late Roman and early Christian art, Dutch art, and etc. makes him an exceptional scholar who was far ahead of his time, and closer to our era. The era that according to the German art historian Hans Belting the contemporary art works as a global art that gives possibility to the cultures which have been always outside of the mainstream of the Western modern art to represent their contemporary art.

Now the question is, if Kunstwollen is the creative drive within a culture which is related to its worldview, and changes based on time, location, and nation, what is global art's Kunstwollen? Next chapters will try to answer this question.

Chapter two

Kunstwollen: A Contemporary View

Life is a constant struggle between the individual ego and the surrounding world, between subject and object. Civilized human beings are not content with a passive role in relation to the objective world, with its power to influence every aspect of life. Art (in its broadest sense) allows them to replace the objective world that is beyond their control with an alternative realm that they can freely define on their own terms.

_ Alois Riegl, *The Group Portraiture of Holland*, 1902

1. Collective perception

As discussed in chapter one, the German Neo-Kantian philosopher and theorist Adolph Konrad Fiedler by developing his concept of “pure visibility” argued that we perceive the external world as visual appearance, as lines, color, tone, value, texture, form... and not as a material object. The artist is the one who perceives the “pure visibility” and represents it through visual elements, thus, what s/he creates is not a replica of the existent world but a new world created based on his/her comprehension of the world. The artist writes Fiedler “is called upon to create another world besides and above the real one, a world free from early conditions, a world in keeping with his own discretion. This realm of art opposes the realm of nature” (Fiedler, cited in Ionescu 2014). The world appears to us first as an image, from the image of the world artist creates its own images, accordingly, the artistic style is the result of the artist’s understanding of the world.

As Kimberly A. Smith in her essay *Real Style: Riegl and Early 20th-Century European Art 2005* argues, from Fiedler’s notion of art as a result of an individual artist’s conception of the material world, Riegl moved to the art as the manifestation of each culture’s perception of the world in a specific historical time. The term Kunstwollen, writes Smith “enabled Riegl to define style as the product of not only individual but collective perception” (A.Smith 2005, p.18).

“Creative Kunstwollen regulates the relation between man and objects as we perceive them with our sense; this is how we always give shape and color to things (just as we visualize things with the Kunstwollen in poetry). Yet man is not just a being perceiving exclusively with his sense (passive), but also a longing (active) being. Consequently, man wants to interpret the world as it can most easily be done in accordance with his inner drive (which may change with nation, location and time). The character of this Wollen is always determined by what may be termed the conception of the world at a given time [Weltanschauung] (again in the widest sense of the term), not only in religion, philosophy, science, but also in government and law, where one or the other form of expression mentioned above usually dominates”. (Riegl 1985, p.231).

If Kunstwollen is linked to Weltanschauung (world view) which shapes not only art but law, religion, philosophy, science, government, and consequently defines the culture and the society of that time, then art is not the result of the individual artist’s perception, but the whole society. And that’s why Riegl believes that art is incomplete without the participation of the spectator, the beholder and the artist together create the work of art. The artist’s creation is connected to the viewer’s response. Thus, art is a collective cultural product and is the result of the interaction between the artist and the society at a particular period. Since each age has its own cultural and historical values, hence, each epoch’s art is unique and different from another era’s art.

2. Perception: A Scientific View



Fig. 16 Alois Riegl

Ernst Kris

Ernst Gombrich

Eric Kandel

With the turn towards psychology, the theory of art began to take cognizance of the difference between the physical world and its appearance, and, subsequently, of the further difference between what is seen in nature and what is recorded in an artistic medium.... What is seen depends on who is looking and who taught him to look. (Rudolf Arnheim, cited in Kandel 2012).

Riegl argued that man perceives the world through his sensations, interprets it in his own way (which is connected to the world view of his time) and creates works of art. But how does the human brain perceive the external world? How does that perception become art? How does the viewer perceive the work of art? These are the questions that the recipient of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, Dr. Eric Richard Kandel tries to answer in his book *The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present*, 2012. Kandel finds the origins of what he calls “the ongoing dialogue between art and brain science” (Kandel 2012, p.2) in Fin-de-siècle Vienna in three phases:

The first phase according to Kandel, started with the exploration of the “unconscious mental processes” between, in the one hand, two members of the Vienna School of Medicine Sigmund Freud (1856 -1939), and Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931), and on the other hand, three modernist artists Gustav Klimt (1862-1918), Egon Schiele (1890 -1918), and Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980), who were all influenced by the head of the Vienna School of Medicine Baron Carl von Rokitansky (1804-1878). The second phase began by linking art to the science of psychology by three members of the Vienna School of Art History Alois Riegl, Ernst Kris (1900-1957), and Ernst Gombrich (1909-2001), who were all focused on the problem of the beholder’s share. The third phase that continues until today is a biological analysis of the beholder’s share: “an understanding of our perceptual, emotional, and empathic responses to works of art” (p.2).

Kandel introduces Alois Riegl as the first art historian who attempted to connect art history to science. As noted in chapter one Riegl developed the concept of the beholder’s share in his third book *The Group Portraiture of Holland, 1902* by studying the group portraits of the artists such as Rembrandt, and Frans Hals, and he argued that the beholder’s participation is necessary to complete the work of art, without that, art is incomplete. This idea influenced the next generation of art historians at the Vienna School of Art History, particularly Ernst Kris, and Ernst Gombrich who also concentrated on the role of the spectator in shaping the work of art. And this was the foundation of the “cognitive psychology of art” and “a new approach to the

mysteries of visual perception and emotional response incorporated that approach into art criticism" (p. 190).

Two years after getting his doctorate degree in art history from the University of Vienna, in 1924 Ernst Kris met Sigmund Freud. It was then that Freud realized that Kris had the capacity to work as a psychoanalyst, thus, he encouraged him to work both as an art historian and a psychoanalyst. Influenced by Riegl's ideas on the beholder's share, Ernst started working on "the perceptual processes of the artist and the beholder" (p.191). Kris developed Riegl's theory by arguing that the beholder not only perceives the artwork but also recreates in his/her mind, thus, each viewer's response to the work of art is different from another one. Kandel writes:

"Kris argued that when an artist produces a powerful image out of his or her life experiences and conflicts, that image is inherently ambiguous. The ambiguity in the image elicits both a conscious and an unconscious process of recognition in the viewer, who responds emotionally and empathically to the image in terms of his or her own life experiences and struggles. Thus, just as the artist creates a work of art, so the viewer re-creates it by responding to its inherent ambiguity. The extent of the beholder's contribution depends on the degree of ambiguity in the work of art" (p.191).

Kris's ideas on how the viewer recreates his/her own version of art after perceiving it reminds us the Roland Barthes's famous essay of *The Death of the Author* (1967). Barthes argues that the reader recreates the meaning of the text in his/her mind after reading it. Hence, s/he becomes the new author. The author's death begins as soon the reader starts reinterpreting the text in his/her mind, and that's the beginning of the birth of the reader as a new author.

In 1931 when Ernst Gombrich just received his doctorate in art history, he met Kris who shared with his theories of the role of the beholder, derived from Riegl and encouraged Gombrich to apply psychological thinking to his art critical work. Accordingly, as writes Kandel "Gombrich began to develop a multipronged approach to art, combining insights from psychoanalysis, Gestalt psychology, and scientific hypothesis testing" (p.197). The Gestalt psychology has been created by three psychologists: Max Wertheimer (1880-1943), Wolfgang Köhler (1887-1967), and Kurt Koffka (1886-1941) in 1910 in Berlin Germany. Gestalt is a German word that means form, or configuration. Gestalt theory is based on the idea that the whole is more important than the individual parts of something. That means when we look at something, for example an object, a person, or a painting our brain responds to the whole, and that's because individual parts affect each other. What we perceive and understand from the outside world is because of our brain mechanism which is the result of the long evolution. Writes Kandel: "young children can interpret images because they are born with a brain whose visual system has a set of innate, universal cognitive rules for extracting sensory information from the physical world, similar to the rules that allow children to acquire grammar" (p.200). This is called the "bottom-up" visual processing, the visual information that we receive because of our visual system that has been built into our brain.

The German physicists Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz (1821-1894) who influenced Gombrich, was the first scientist who studied visual perception. Helmholtz argued that in order to turn a two-dimensional image received through our visual system, to three-dimensional reality, our brain needs more information. Thus, our brain goes through the process of guessing and hypothesis to draw information from our past experiences. He called "this top-down process of hypothesis testing *unconscious inference*. Thus, before we perceive an object, our brain has to infer what that object might be, based on information from the senses" (p.203).

By combining the bottom-up visual processing of Gestalt, and Helmholtz's top-down information processing Gombrich arrived at this point that what we perceive is different from what we interpret. What we interpret from what we see is based on our past experiences, memories, personal roles, and our cultural value system.

That's why he writes "there is no "innocent eye": that is, all visual perception is based on classifying concepts and interpreting visual information" (p.204). Gombrich referred to the ambiguous figures made by Gestalt psychologists to prove that the act of seeing is just interpretive. One example was the duck-rabbit figure made by Joseph Jastrow (1863-1944) who was a Polish-born American psychologist (fig.17). Depending on what the viewer's eye concentrates on, this figure in the one hand represents a duck, and on the other hand, represents a rabbit. What changes by switching the eye movement is not the image, but the viewer's interpretation of the image.

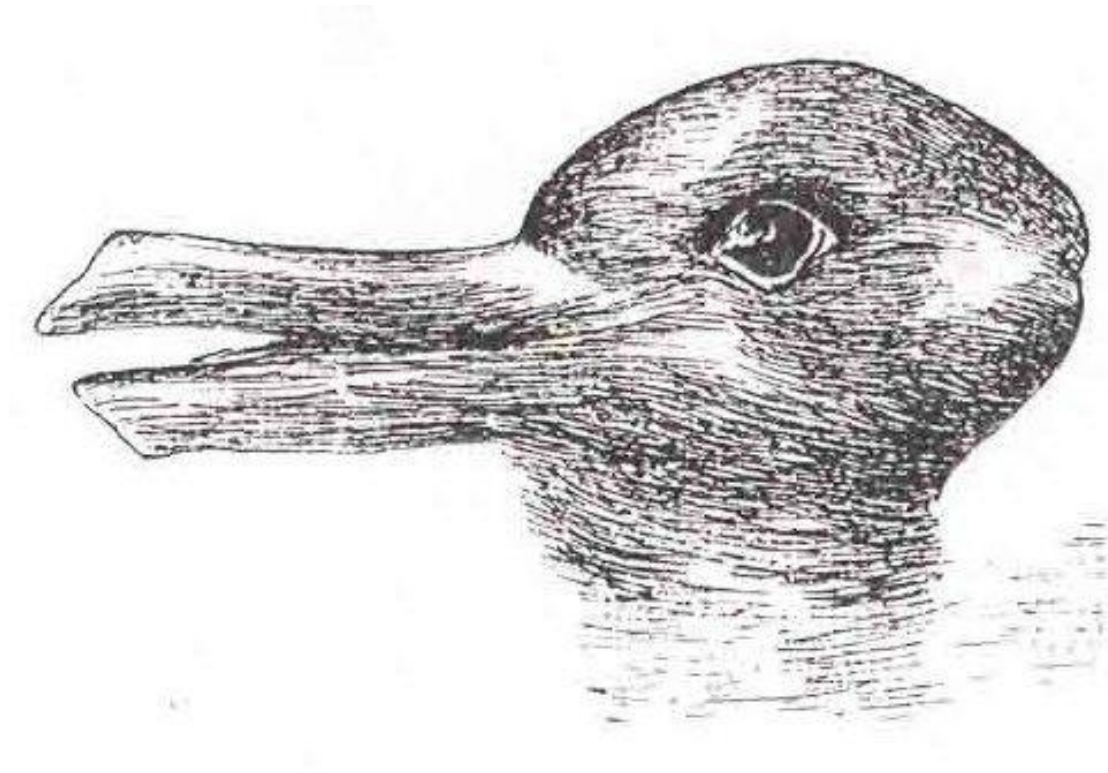


Fig. 17 Duck-Rabbit

Another image examined by Gombrich, was the Necker cube (fig.18), by Swiss crystallographer and geographer Louis Albert Necker de Saussure (1786 -1861). As we look at the picture, we see a three-dimensional cube, but in fact, it is just a two-dimensional line drawing. What we see is just the optical illusion of the three-dimensionality. That shows the human brain's ability to create a three-dimensional figure out of a two-dimensional one. Another example was the figure created by the Italian psychologist Gaetano Kanizsa (1913-1993) known as the Kanizsa triangle (fig.19). By looking at this picture we see two triangles overlapping each other, but there are no triangles. Based on our memories and past experiences our brain interprets these forms as triangles and constructs them in our mind.

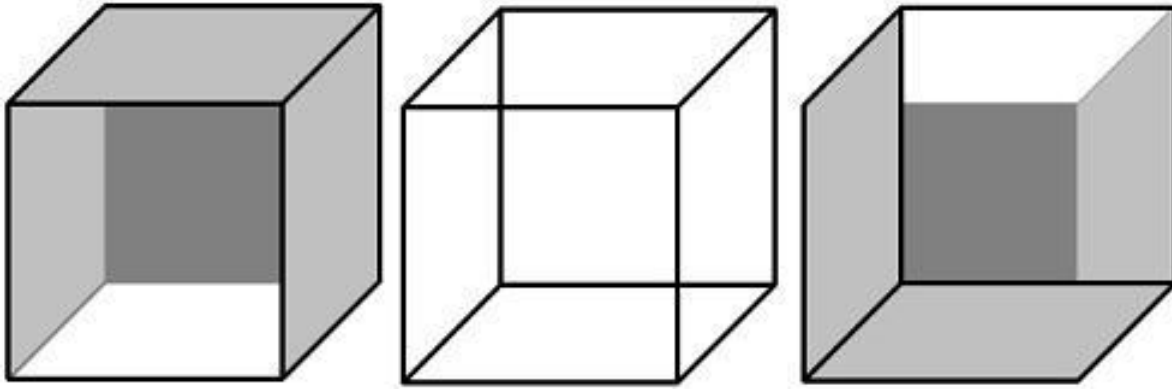


Fig.18 Necker cube



Fig.19 Kanizsa triangle

Kandel argues that “Kris and Gombrich’s view of the brain was a modern version of Kant’s theory that sensory information allows reality to be invented by mind” (p.205). But how does the brain process the information? Kandel writes:

“The brain first processes the information it receives from the sensory organs: information about vision from the eyes, sound from the ears, smells from the nose, taste from the tongue, and touch, pressure, and temperature from the skin. It then analyzes this incoming sensory information in light of past experience and generates an internal representation, a perception of the outside world... All the sensory information that comes into the brain—vision, hearing, touch—is converted into *neural codes*: that is, patterns of action potentials generated by nerve cells. Seeing a baby’s face, watching it smile...all of these are the result of different firing patterns of neurons in different combinations of neural circuits in our brain” (pp.231-232).

Kandel continues by exploring the question if our brain is like a picture album, and if we have a picture of the objects of the world in our brain. To answer this question, he refers to Richard Gregory and Francis Crick’s answers. Gregory argued that there is no picture of an object of the outside world in the brain, but a hypothesis “that reflects as the conscious experience of seeing” (p.232). Crick’s answer was also similar to

Gregory's, he noted that we have "a symbolic representation- a hypothesis" (p.233) of the visual world in our brain.

As discussed above, visual perception starts from the eye as the receiver of the visual information, that projects a two-dimensional image of the outside world on the retina. The retina converts the visual information into neural codes. In order to create the internal representations that each of them stands for something from the external world, our brain goes through the process of guessing and hypothesis, by referring to our memory, and our past experiences. Kandel puts in "what we see in "the mind's eye" goes dramatically beyond what is present in the image cast on the retina of our real eye" (p.234). In fact, the information we receive from the eye is not enough to construct the outside world in our minds. Therefore, our brain adds more information and creates the image we perceive. What we see, thus, is not what we receive through the eye, it is what we create in our mind.

The biological findings, together with Ernst Kris and Ernst Gombrich's studies proved that the human brain is not a passive receptive machine that only mirrors the reality of the external world, but it is a creative system that recreates the outside world inside of us. As writes Kandel "vision is not simply a window onto the world, but truly a creation of the brain" (p.236). And that's echoes what Riegl said in *the Late Roman Art Industry* that we mentioned above: "Yet man is not just a being perceiving exclusively with his sense (passive), but also a longing (active) being. Consequently, man wants to interpret the world as it can most easily be done in accordance with his inner drive (which may change with nation, location and time)" (Riegl 1985, p.231). Man's interpretation of his perception of the world is linked to his past experiences which have their roots into the cultural and historical values of his time and place. Hence, the art of his time represents his conception of the world in relation to those cultural and historical values. As time goes by, our perception of the world changes, those values change, our worldviews change, as a result, art changes. How does our perception become art? How does art change in relation to the cultural and historical value changes, technological advent, and political issues? Let's explore the answer from the anthropological and art historical view.

3. Perception, Image, Art

We are intensely visual creatures, and we live in a world that is largely oriented to sight. We search for a mate, food, drink, and companionship using information provided by the retina. In fact, fully half of the sensory information going to the brain is visual. Without vision we would have no art... (Kandel 2012, p.238).

As we mentioned in previous pages, we perceive the objects of the external world through our senses. Visual perception starts from the eye that detaches information from the outside world and portrays them on the retina, which converts them into neural codes. Our brain then goes through the top-down process by comparing them to previous experiences, memories...and finally, creates the internal representations – images. Consequently, each person's mind is full of images received via perception or created through visualization, and imagination, and the artist is the one who is capable of materially representing them as artworks. That doesn't mean that art is only the product of the artist's imagination or visualization, the same is true even if s/he is doing life drawing/painting. That means by looking at the model, the artist first perceives, and then through the brain's creativity mechanism creates the image in his/her mind. Thus, what s/he creates is not mirroring the real model in front of him/her, but a painting or drawing of the image created in his/her brain. It's a representation of an internal representation.

According to Plini the Elder in *The Natural History*, BOOK XXXV, drawing has been invented by a young woman who first traced around the shadow of her departing lover by a piece of coal from the fire on the wall. Jacques Derrida (1930_2004) in *Les Mémoires d'aveugle* (*Memoires/Memories of the Blind*) 1993 relates the origin of graphic representation to the absence or invisibility of the model. In his opinion drawing originates in blindness. He argues: "Butades does not see her lover, either because she turns her back to her...or because he turns his back to her, or because their gazes simply cannot meet...she is blind to him as she draws" (p.49). And that's about all drawing. The model cannot be seen at the same moment of drawing. There's a delay between looking at the model or object and mark making. "The mark relies on memory. And when memory is invoked, the present object is ignored: the artist is blind to it" (Collins 2012, p.146). The artist draws the image that's in his/her mind and not what is in front of him/her.



Fig. 20 Joseph Benoit Suvée, *Origin of Art of Drawing*, 1791

Charles-Pierre Baudelaire (1821_1867) in *The Painter of Modern Life* 2010 argues that "all true draughtsmen draw from the image imprinted in their brain and not from nature" (p.21). The artist interprets "the

impression produced by objects on his mind” by painting and drawing them, and “the viewer becomes the translator of a translation...” (ibid). For the viewer who doesn’t know the story behind the outline drawing on the wall, the drawing is just the representation of a profile of a man. For the one who knows the story, the drawing represents the gesture of a young woman traced the shadow of her lover who was about to leave on the wall. But for Butades, the outline on the wall represents an immediate passionate moment full of unsaid and undone. A moment that is gone: the moment when two lovers were together, the painful moment of his departure; their separation. A sketch that represents her lover’s absence, and his memory!

4. Image, Medium, Picture

The German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859_1938) who is the founder of phenomenology, in his phenomenology of the image, argues that the image is composed of three fundamental parts: the material carrier, the image-object, and the image-subject. In Plini’s story, the material carrier is the wall, the image-object is the optical appearance as a line, and the image-subject is the profile of a young man represented by a line on the wall. By separating the material carrier from the immaterial image-object and subject, we realize that image is nothing but a *visual semblance* materialized and fixed on the wall through a line by a piece of charcoal. As John Berger (1926_2017) in *Ways of Seeing* (1972) puts in “an image is a sight which has been recreated or reproduced. It is an appearance, or a set of appearances, which has been detached from the place and time in which it first made its appearance and preserved_ for a few moments or a few centuries” (p.9). What distinguishes image as an immaterial appearance in our mind, from the picture as a physical object through which image becomes visible to us as W.J.T. Mitchell suggests is the medium. He argues “the difference between an image and a picture, for instance, is precisely a question of the medium. An image only appears in some medium or other-in paint, stone, words, or numbers” (Mitchell 2005, p.203).

The German art historian Hans Belting defines the “human body as a living medium that makes us *perceive, project, or remember* images and that also enables our imagination to censor or to transform them” (Belting 2005, p.306). Perceived images from the outside world take part of our inner memory archive. We both have and create images inside of our bodies via perception, imagination, visualization, and remembering. “The images of memory and imagination are generated in one’s own body; the body is the living medium through which they are experienced. In turn, the distinction between *memory* as the body’s own image archive, and *remembrance* as the body’s own generation of images has implications for this body experience” (Belting 2014, p.11). Our body as the Belting says is “*the natural locus of images*” (p.27). Our inner images turn into pictures and become visible to the world through the use of a medium, the need to make them visible or physical ended up in the invention of visual media. In Butades’s case, a piece of charcoal from the fire and the wall proceeded the invention of drawing. The subject _the young man_ is absent, but his image is present through its medium. Image and medium are both present, but they refer to the absence of what they represent. No image can be seen without a medium as Belting explains “I propose to speak of image and medium as two sides of the same coin, though they split in our gaze and mean different things. *The picture is the image with a medium*” (p.10).

In chapter one, we talked about the debate between Semper’s followers who believed that art is the result of the technical and material advent, and Riegl who argued that art is the result of Kunstwollen-man’s inner creative drive. But if images are invisible immaterial representations created via perception by our brain and they live in our memory archive, and medium is the material and technique that we use to make the images visible and transmits them to the world. Then art cannot be the product of the material and technique, but as Riegl said man’s creativity uses technique and material in order to produce works of art. In the next pages we will see how man’s creativity used technological advent and created different art forms from the traditional to the new media art.

5. Image, Language, Writing

W.J.T. Mitchell in *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986) mentions there is a verity of things that we call images that do not necessarily have something in common, he suggests that images are like a “far-flung family”. Therefore, he comes up with the idea of “family tree” where the word image as likeness, resemblance, and similitude is divided into five branches of Graphic (pictures, statues, designs), Optical (mirrors, projections), Perceptual (sense data “species” appearances), Mental (dreams, memories, ideas, fantasmata), and Verbal images (metaphors, descriptions) (Fig.21).

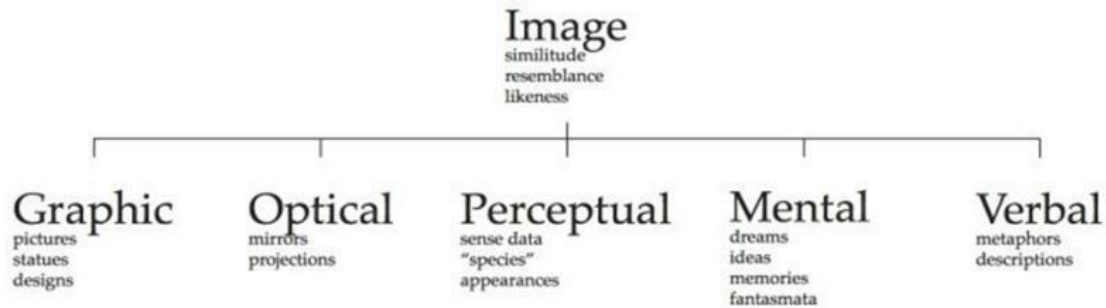


Fig.21

Graphic, Optical, and Perceptual images are material pictures, while Mental and Verbal images are images in our mind and language. Mitchell demonstrates the following figure to show how do those images get into our minds (Fig.22):

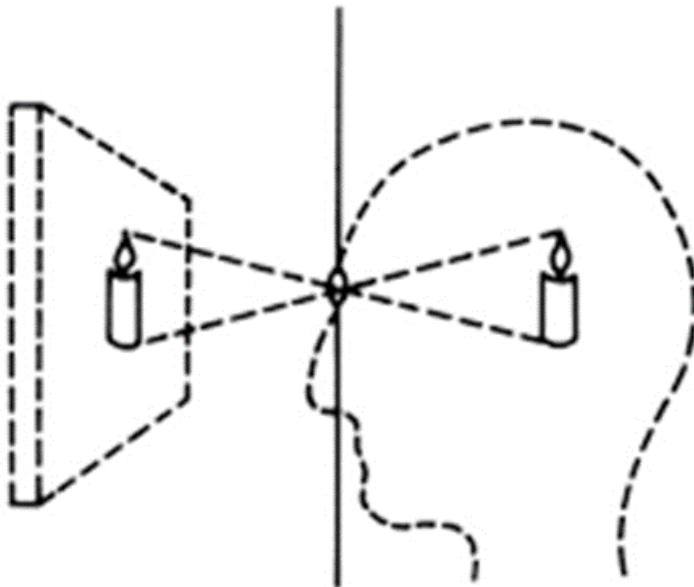


Fig.22

“ The figure should be read as a palimpsest displaying three overlapping relationships: (1) between a real object (the candle on the left) and a reflected, projected, or depicted image of that object; (2) between a real object and a mental image in a mind conceived (as in Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, or Hume) as a mirror, *camera obscura*, or a surface for drawing or printing; (3) between a material image and mental one. It may help here to imaging the diagram as three overlapping transparencies, the first showing just the two candles, the left one real, the right one an image; the second adding the human head to show the mental introjection of the depicted or reflected candle; the third adding the frame around the “real” candle to make it mirror the imaginary status of the candle on the right...” (Mitchel 1986, p.16).

The figure shows that it is the human mind and consciousness perceives images. Mitchel explains “if there were no more minds, there would be no more images, mental or material...It is because an image cannot be seen *as such* without a paradoxical trick of consciousness, an ability to see something as “there” and “not there” at the same time” (p.17).

The image of the external world becomes internal through the bottom-up and top-down visual processing, and the internal images become external through their proper media. But the mediality as Hans Belting argues goes beyond the visual realm. "Language transmits verbal imagery when we turn words into mental images of our own. Words stimulate our imagination, while the imagination, in turn, transforms them into the images they signify, in this case, it is language that serves as a medium for transmitting images" (Belting 2005, p.306). As we use visual media to produce visual material images, we use language to convey verbal images.

By referring to the Canadian scholar William Hugh Kenner (1923_2003) who said a verbal image is just “what the words actually name”, Mitchell continues to say: “this is the assumption that what words signify are the “mental images” that have been impressed on us by the experience of objects. On this account we are to think of a word (such as “man”) as a “verbal image” twice removed from the original that it represents” (Mitchell 1986, p.22). Therefore, *verbal image* is the image of a *mental image* which itself is an image of an object. By replacing the passage from the world to mind to language, with the movement from one kind of sign to another, Mitchell comes up with the “illustrated history of the development of systems of writing” (p.27), from picture to pictogram, ideogram, and finally the phonetic sign. If visual media and language make mental images visible and transmit them to the world; writing makes language visible, it represents the absence of voice. Writing is the picture of speech, and it can be located under the branch of Graphic Imagery in Mitchell’s “family tree”.

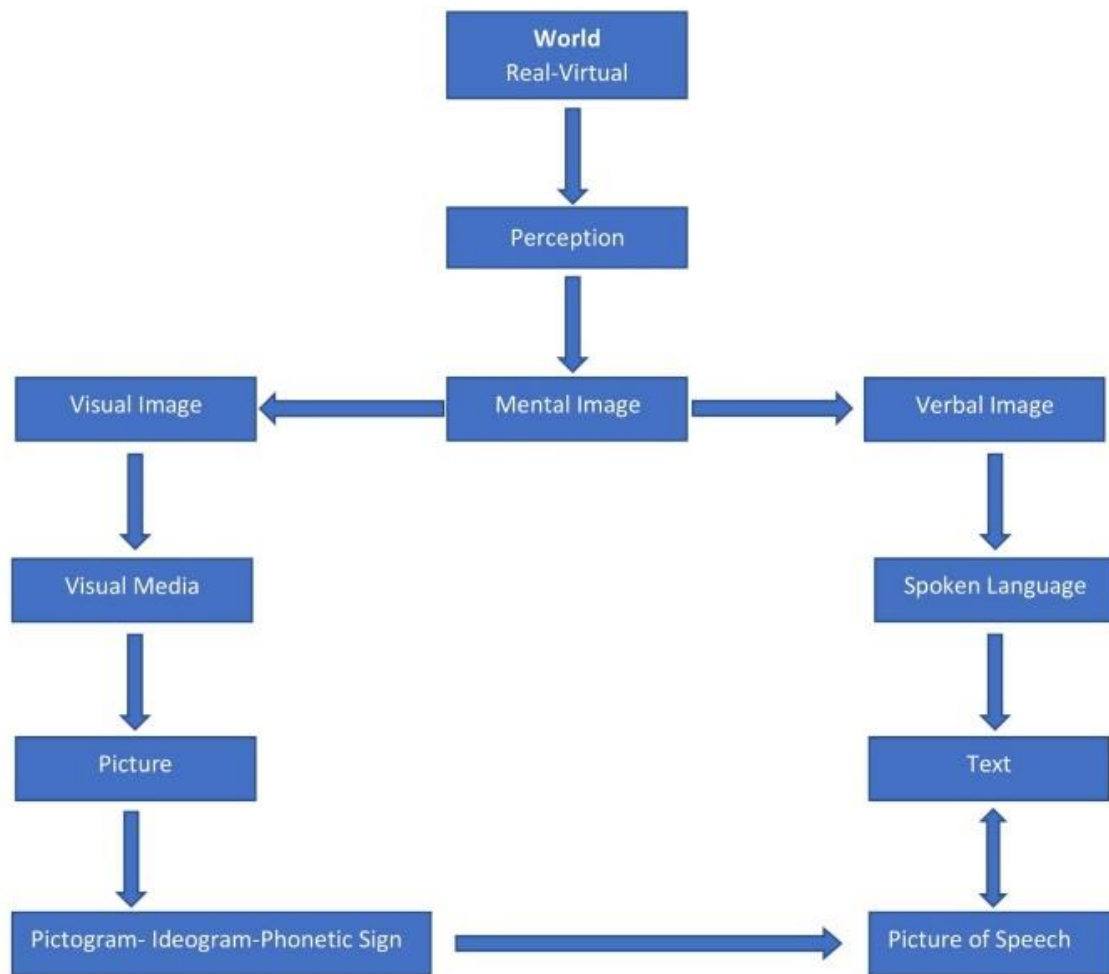


Fig. 23

In the art of many cultures especially the Oriental ones, text has always had an important role. For example, in China calligraphy has the same importance of painting and poetry and they usually work together (fig.24). Representing text as an artwork as calligraphy pieces continue in the Chinese contemporary art, some examples are the works of artists such as Gu Wenda, Qiu Zhijie, Xu Bing, Lee Ung – no, Sun Ping, and... (fig.25).



Fig.24 Li Shi, *Part of Eight Views of Xiaoxiang*, 12th-century scroll, 30 x 400 cm. Ink on paper

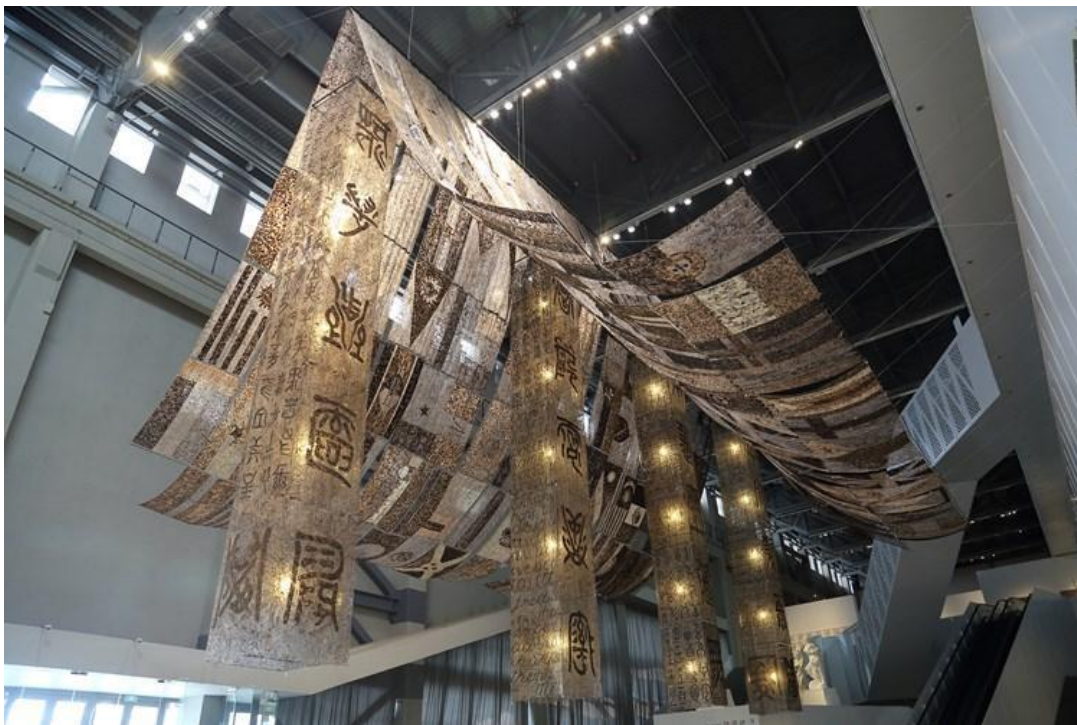


Fig.25 Gu Wenda, *United Nations - Man and Space*, 1999-2000

Using text and image in Iranian art goes back to the ancient reliefs and inscriptions and painter-prophet Mani's *Arzhang* and Persian miniatures (fig.26). In Iran, poetry as the national art influences all other arts, music, calligraphy, architecture, sculpture, and painting, are all sorts of visualizations of a poem. Thus, text in Iranian art is usually a poem that painting and Persian calligraphy, hand in hand work together to visualize it for the viewer/reader (fig.27). The juxtaposition of text and image mostly titled *Naghashi-Khat* (*Calligraphic*

Painting), started by the *Saqqā-Khaneh* movement artists during the 1960s continues through the contemporary Iranian art (fig.28).

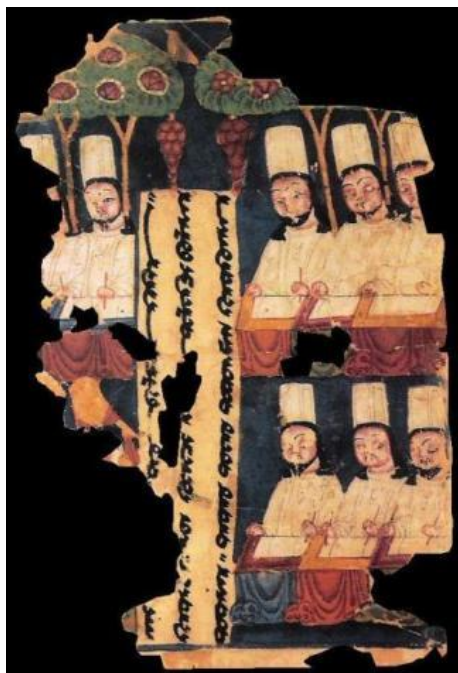


Fig. 26 Musicians and Singers, From Manichaean Book, 8th/9th century



Fig. 27 Rustam sleeps, while his horse Rakhsh fends off a tiger. Sultan Mohammed, 1515–20

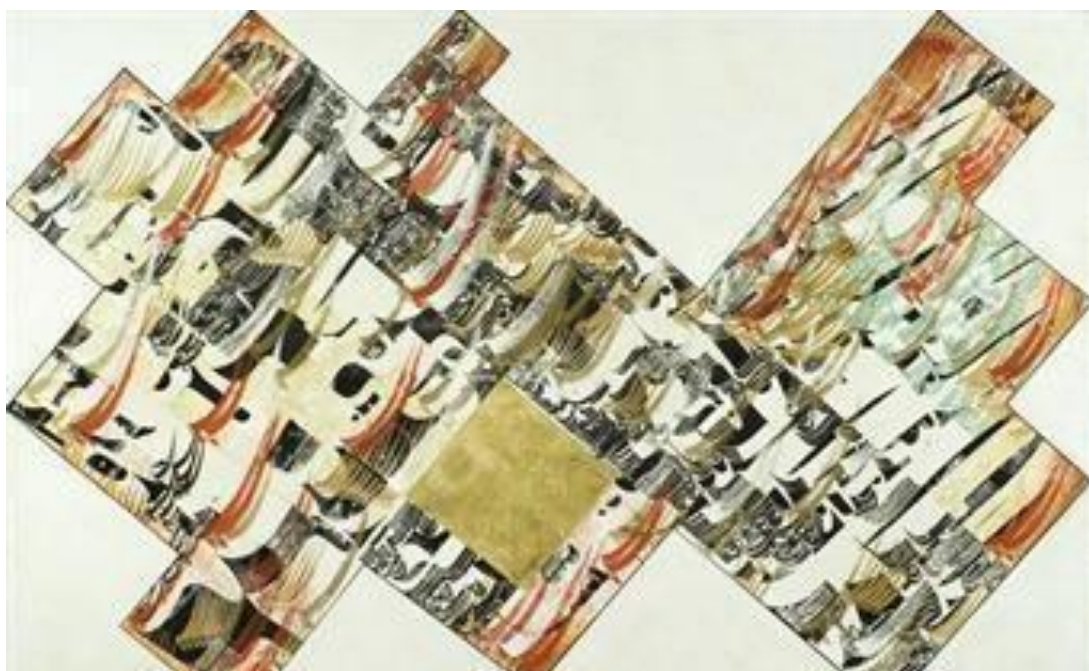


Fig.28 Faramarz Pilaram, *Untitled*, Oil and gold leaf on canvas, 51-77inches, 1976

Since in Islam the representation of faces in a certain way is forbidden, Arabic calligraphy which is used to write Islam's holy book Quran (Allah's words) turns out to be the chief Islamic art, and therefore, the main decorative element of mosques (fig.29-30).



Fig.29 Kufic script in an 11th-century Qur'an

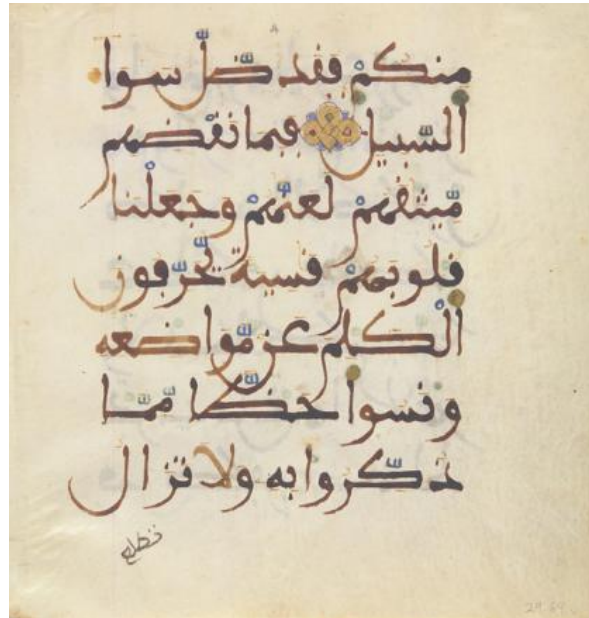


Fig.30 Maghribi kufic script in a 13th-century Qur'an

In the West, the invention of printing on the one hand, and the advent of typography on the other hand, blurred the distinctions of text and image in modern Western art. During the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the artists of the modern art movements such as Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and Suprematism, started to use text in their paintings and collages (fig.31-32).



Fig.31 Gino Severini, *Nord-Sud*, 1912, Oil on Canvas

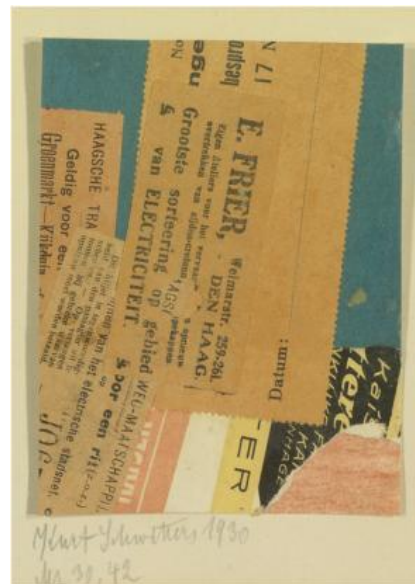


Fig.32 Kurt Schwitters, *Merz 30, 42*, 1930, collage



Fig.33 René Magritte, *The Treachery of Images*, 1929, Oil on Canvas

René Magritte's famous painting *The Treachery of Images* also known as *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* 1929, challenged the boundaries of painting and writing (fig.33). Calligrams of poets like Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), and Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898), laid the foundations for the visual/verbal experiments of concrete and visual poetry in Western modern and contemporary art (fig.34-35).

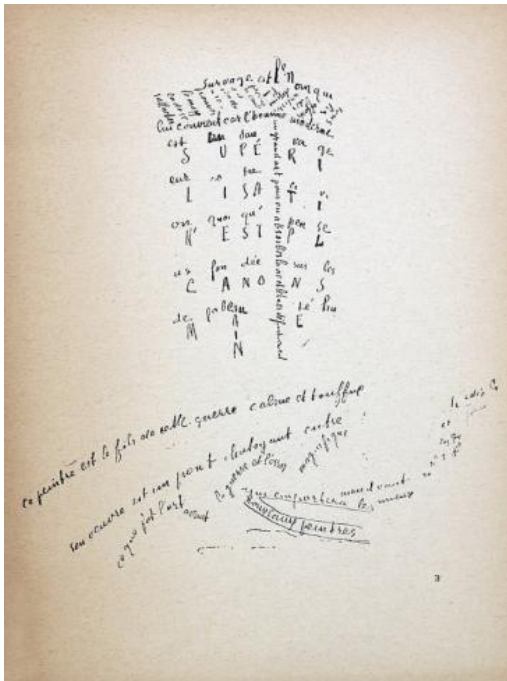


Fig.34 Guillaume Apollinaire, calligram



Fig.35 Lamberto Pignotti, *la rivoluzione toglie il dolore*, 1965

By the beginning of contemporary art, the new interests for collage in the works of the Nouveau Réaliste artists such as Mimmo Rotella (1918-2006) gave birth to Décollage in art during the 1960s. The integration of text and image played a crucial role in the works of Pop artists. Many contemporary painters such as Jasper Johns, Cy Twombly (1928-2011), Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988), Anselm Kiefer, and...combined their paintings with writing and produced what Michel Butor called Pictuscripts (Butor 1993, p.25). Kiefer's work is the best example of connecting poetry to painting. His two famous works *Margarethe* 1981, and *Shulamite* 1983, which manifest the Romanian poet's Paul Celan's poem *Death Fugue*, perfectly demonstrate the integration of painting and writing in order to visualize a poem in contemporary western painting (fig.36-37).



Fig.36 Anselm Kiefer, *Margarethe*, 1981, Oil, acrylic, emulsion, and straw on canvas, 280 × 400 cm

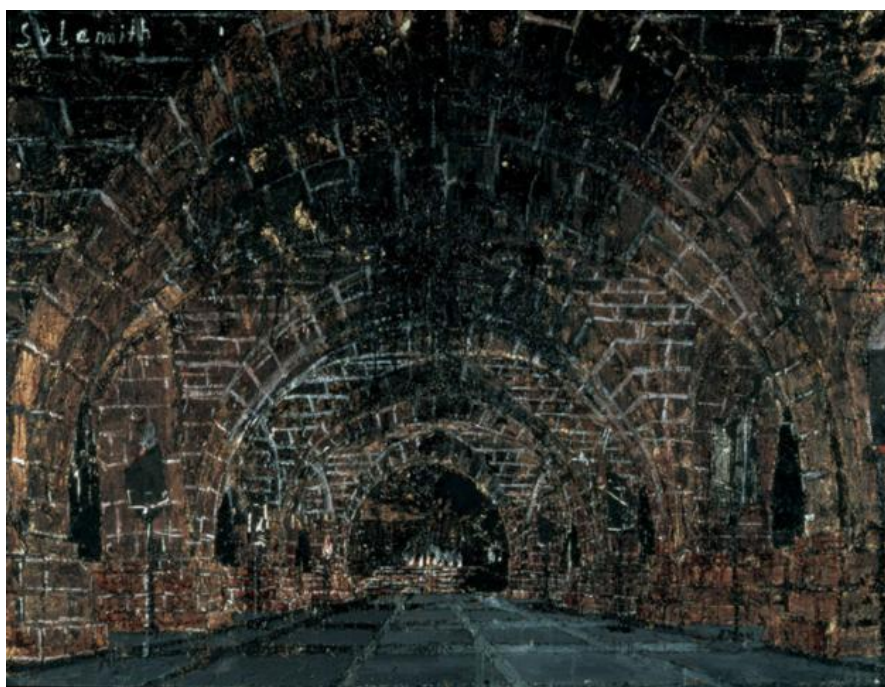


Fig.37 Anselm Kiefer, *Shulamite*, 1983, oil, emulsion, woodcut, shellac, acrylic, and straw on canvas, 541 x 368.3 cm

Basquiat's work, on the other hand, brought graffiti and street art into the realm of painting (fig.38). And finally, in the works of conceptual artists, especially those of the *Art and Language* group painting have been replaced by writing. Thus, text has been represented as image (fig.39).

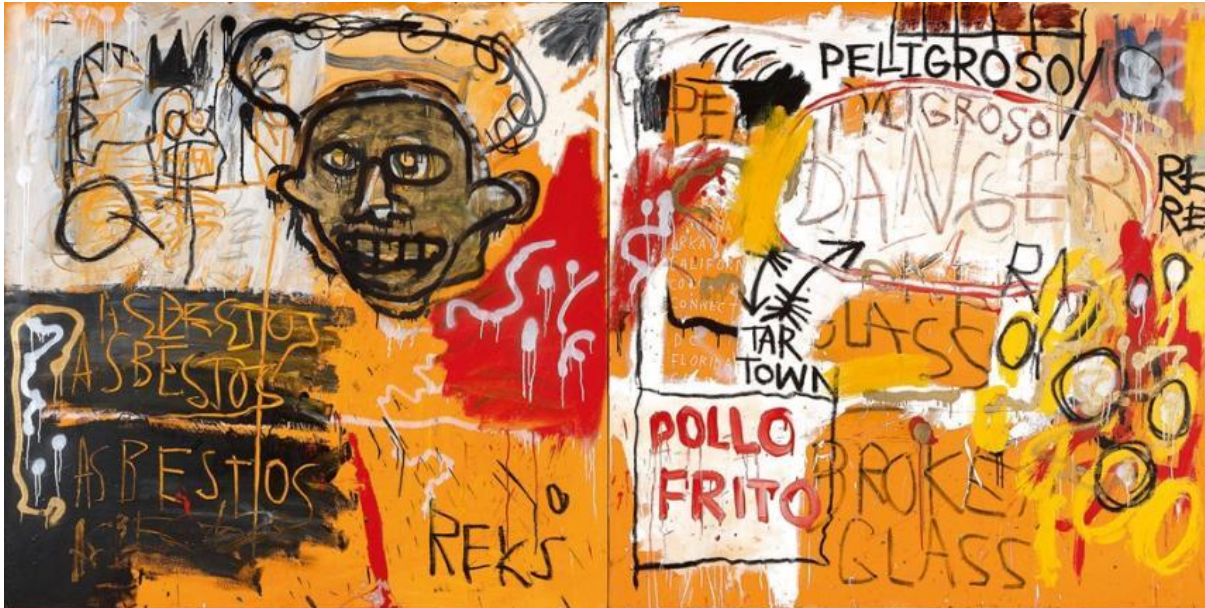


Fig. 38 Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Untitled (Pollo Frito)*, 1982

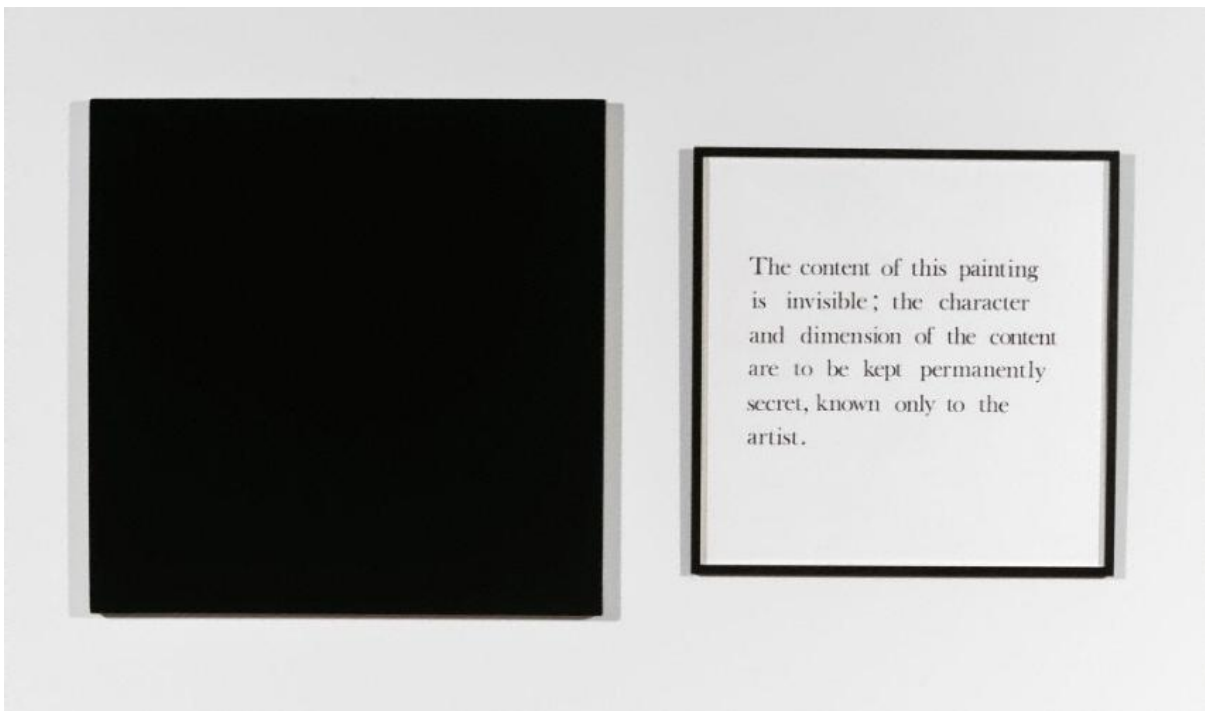


Fig.39 Mel Ramsden, *Secret painting*, 1967-1968, oil on canvas and photostat

6. Image, Text, Technology

Your face, like a vision, in my mind would form and fade
I kiss the face of the moon from far away.
Till the morn, I paint the picture of your face
On the canvass of the eyes, while sleepless I lay.

Hafez Shirazi

The realization of images, verbal or visual, is impossible without the involvement of the voice and the hand. As voice transmits verbal images through language, hand produces representational or abstract signs (drawing and writing) through the visual media. In the *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, Jean Jacques Rousseau mentions the Boutade's story and relates the invention of drawing and speech to love as he suggests:

"Love, it is said was the inventor of drawing. Love also might have invented speech, though less happily. Dissatisfied with speech, love disdains it: it has livelier ways of expressing itself. How many things the girl who took such pleasure in tracing her lover's shadow was telling him! What sounds could she have used to convey this movement of the sick?" (Rousseau 1986, p.6).

Here in this story, the departing lover and all things that she could have told him has been replaced by the traced line, that represents not only the absence of the lover but the voice, and unspoken words of the young woman. A trace fueled by love and passion, generated by the gesture of the hand and body is the mother of both drawing and writing.

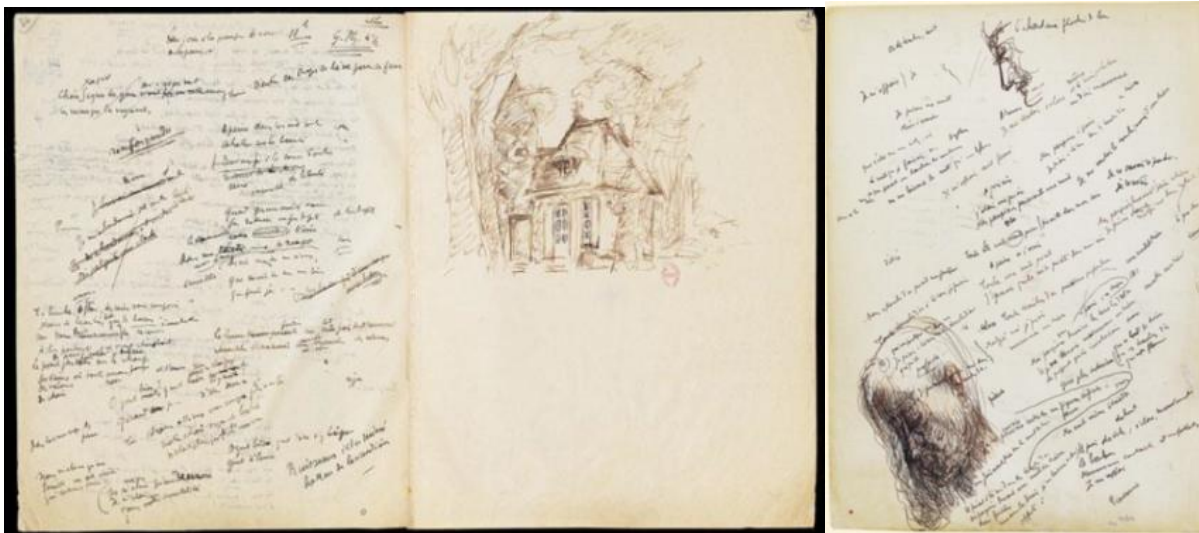


Fig. 24 Paul Valéry, Cahiers/Notebooks

For more than 50 years, every morning in the dawn the French poet, and philosopher, Paul Valéry (1871_1945) contributed something (writing-drawing) to his *Cahiers/Notebooks* that by the time of his death in 1945, there were 261, amounting to some 28,000 pages (Fig.24). For Valéry the handwriting process is "a matter of sketching" in three steps of gesture, eye movement, and dance:

"First, a graphic gesture, which seems to be perfectly independent at first sight, sets down on paper the multiform variety of arabesques that a pen as an extension of the hand or the whole body, is capable of inventing...Next, there is a certain gaze which one could call

“divided” seems to characterize the act of inscription... The eye follows the hand, hand follows the eye, and they are obsessed by the activity of the other... The whole project seems to be to see without seeing. Finally, the poet leads us to the main idea of pleasure of writing as liberation, a desire that he formulates as a “dance”, as an energy lavishly spent by a body vibrantly drunk with its uncontrolled movement” (Bourjea 1993, p.137).

The process of sketching for Valéry, as an immediate passionate act, dance of the eyes, hands, and the body with a tool on a surface, in order to stop a moment, express an idea or feelings by writing or drawing it; could be compared with what Martine Reid calls “textual genetics or the pre-text” which is “the study of beginning, of that which is the prelude, the germ of the written word, of rough drafts...that refers back to the person who wrote it, and to his day-to-day existence” (Reid 1993, p.3). In *All Writing Is Drawing: The Spatial Development of the Manuscript 1993* Serge Tisseron relates the genesis of mark-making (drawing and writing) to the manual pleasure and the hand's gesture as “an essential movement by which thought learns how to think itself through...and the author disinvests himself from the self and transfers it to the text...”(p.36). Both sketch and pre-text contain the essence of the author’s mind and soul expressed by his/her hand, they are unique, personal, and unmatched by any of the others. What makes them unique and personal according to Georges Roque is *the truth of the hand*, as he argues: “there’s [a] sort of truth of the hand, which never lies and which reveals the state of mind of the person who is writing or tracing _ a truth of the hand which drawing and writing have in common” (Roque 1993, p.47). The truth of the hand is the author's existence and presence in the text or drawing, which through the development of media technology, this truth has been lost. Roland Barthes once said “writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin...the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins...the birth of the reader must be paid for by the death of the author” (Barthes 1987, pp.142-146). Today, in the era of digital and technical reproducibility as Martin Reid affirms “the author can no longer recognize himself, or rather he can no longer recognize his own voice” (Reid 1993, p.10). That’s exactly what conceptual artists during 1960s and 1970s, especially those of the *Art and Language* group wanted: by typing their thoughts and ideas instead of painting or writing them, they wanted to replace thought in place of feelings. The artist according to them, was not supposed to express his/her feelings via his/her personal artistic skills through the traditional media (specifically painting), s/he was expected to use language and express his thoughts and ideas (fig.39-40). Thus, art turned out to be idea and entered in the realm of philosophy. In the light of the advent of technology, the next generation of conceptual artists started to explore a verity of media such as photography, video, performance, installation, and etc.



Fig.40 Joseph Kosuth, One and Three Chairs (1965)

The move from manuscript into typescript, and computoscript, and from drawing, and painting to photography, film, and video, was the passage from the manual media to the technical media, the passage from the hand to machine. And that's what Valéry calls the danger of detachment, as he continues "what pen stroke linked together, the printing press sets apart" (Valéry cited in Ried, p.10). While manual media carry the visible signs of the activity of the author's hands, the technical media completely detach the artwork from the author's signs of existence. The technological reproduction according to Walter Benjamin (1892_1940) in his famous essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* 1936, destroyed what he called *aura*, as the uniqueness of the work of art, and its presence in time and space. Because in his idea "even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking one element: its presence in time and space. Its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (Benjamin cited in Manghani 2013, p.160). In *Ways of Seeing* John Berger argues:

"the uniqueness of every painting was once part of the uniqueness of the place where it resided...when the camera reproduces a painting, it destroys the uniqueness of its image. As a result, its meaning changes... Its meaning multiplies and fragments into many meanings...when a painting shown on a television enters into each viewer's house... and the atmosphere of his family. It becomes their talking point. It lends its meaning to their meaning. At the same time, it enters a million other houses and, in each of them, it is seen in a different context..." (Berger 1972, p.19).

Berger continues "because of the camera, the painting now travels to the spectator rather than the spectator to the painting. In its travels, its meaning is diversified" (p.20). Inside the old or the new media, images are always present. As Hans Belting says "they migrate across the boundaries that separate one culture from another, taking up residence in the media of one historical place and time and then moving on to the next, like desert wanderers setting up temporary camps" (Belting 2014, p.17). This movement of images from one media to a newer one is what Belting calls *intermediality*.

Marshall McLuhan (1911_1980) in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, published in 1964, reminds us not only images live inside of their media, and move from one media to another, but there is also a connectivity between the old and the new media, as he writes: "the "content" of any medium is always another medium. The content of writing is speech, just as the written word is the content of print, and print is the content of the telegraph" (McLuhan 1964, p.9).

Echoing McLuhan's ideas Jay David Bolter, and Richard Grusin in their book *Remediation: understanding new media* (2000), introduced the term *remediation* to describe the interconnection between new and old media in the digital era. While new media upgrade older media, older media renew themselves through the new media. From the early 1990s, digital technology renovates the notion of traditional photography and dominates the world of imagery, and that's according to W.J.T. Mitchell the beginning of the "Post-Photographic Era" (Mitchell 1992). Digital photography transforms analog photography from paper to digital data by disembodiment images from the photo printing paper and transferring them onto a screen. Digital cameras provide the possibility to take high-quality pictures and see them immediately in an instant on the screen, consequently, we can decide to save or delete them. Digital photos can be stored on removable flash memory cards, and easily transferred to computers or portable hard disks. They can be reproduced through the copy and paste command with no risk of quality loss. By using programs such as Adobe Photoshop we can edit digital files, and resize them. If needed, we can also print them on paper. The old media of painting uses photographs as resources to renew itself (fig.41). While photorealist painters reproduce analog photographs on canvases by using traditional painting techniques (fig.42), hyperrealist painters utilize digital photos modified by different imaging software to create the illusion of reality (fig.43). Remediation, according to Bolter and Grusin "does not destroy the aura of a work of art; instead it always refashions that aura in another media form" (Bolter & Grusin 2000, p.75).



Fig.41 Gerhard Richter, *Family*, 1964, Oil on Canvas



Fig.42 John Baeder, *John's Diner with John's Chevelle*, 2007, oil on canvas



Fig. 43 Pedro Campos, *untitled*, oil on canvas

7. World of Images

The advent of digital communication in the late 1980s and real-time technologies in 1990, combined with the spread of the internet and the World Wide Web, along with the invention of portable devices such as laptops, cellphones, tablets, and etc. On the one hand, revolutionized the world of communication, and information; and on the other hand, it gave birth to new and various forms of interactive arts, internet art, computer art, virtual art, locative art, game art and etc.

After introducing seven mass media as Print from 1500s, Recordings from 1900s, Cinema from 1900s, Radio from 1920s, TV from 1950s, Internet from 1990s, and Mobile phones from 2000s; in his book, *Mobile as 7th of the Mass Media: Cellphone, cameraphone, iPhone, smartphone (2008)*, Tomi T Ahonen argues how newer mass media of the internet and mobile phones can offer equivalent content of previous media and steal their audiences. As he writes: “the sixth mass media, the internet can offer all of the main content types of previous five mass media ...we can read books, magazines, and newspapers online; we can view movies; we can listen to radio and podcasts, we can view TV content in clips, video streaming and, IPTV; and yes, we can download the digital equivalents of recordings e.g. MP3 files, MPEG movies, computer software, videogames etc.” (Ahonen 2008, p.58). Apart from providing all that older media could offer, Ahonen mentions three significant innovation of the internet as “interactivity, search, and community/social networking” (ibid), that makes the internet unique and completely diverse from the former mass media. In describing the 7th mass media, Ahonen defines cellphone as the most powerful mass media that not only “can replicate everything that all previous six mass media can do” (p.59), but it has seven unique benefits: “Mobile is the first personal mass media, is permanently carried, is always-on, has a built-in payment mechanism, is available at the point of creative inspiration, has the most accurate audience measurement, and captures the social context of media consumption” (pp.60-64).

Thanks to our mobile phones (iPhone, Smartphone...), today, the internet like an invisible line that connects the globe is in our pocket. Therefore, we are not only connected to the world, and able to communicate with other connected users wherever around the globe; but through our mobile phone’s camera, we are also able to capture the moments of our life as images, videos, and... and share them in real-time with other users via social media and diverse messaging apps. What would Butades do if she was armed with today’s technology? She would probably take a selfie with her departing lover, or even make a video, or story and share it on social media, so people could comment and probably show their sympathy. Two lovers could stay in touch via their smartphones or iPhones, texting each other, sending each other voice messages and photos, they could snapchat and simply make video phone calls.

In *Paragone*, Leonardo da Vinci argues that painting is superior to poetry because while reading poetry’s content takes time, painting reveals all parts of its appearance in an instance to the viewer’s eyes. Today, through real-time technology not only image and text, but also voice and video eliminate geographical borderlines, fly from one part of the world to another, and reach the audience at the same time. The “originality of that moment when we see, hear, read, repeat, revise” is what Douglas Davis calls aura of the work of art at the age of digital reproduction. Today’s life happens in the interaction between the real and virtual worlds. Technology in our era challenges the traditional notions of time and place, far and close, absence and presence, original and copy, hand and technology, man and machine, art and communication, true and false, fake and real, and war and peace.

W.J.T Mitchell in *Picture Theory (1994)* argues that there has been a shift toward visual in contemporary culture, that he calls “the pictorial turn” as a postlinguistic, postsemiotic, rediscovery of the picture (Mitchell 1995, pp.11-16). He suggests two reasons for this change, first the development of the visual and cybernetic technology, second, the fear of images and their power. He continues:

“the fantasy of a pictorial turn, of a culture totally dominated by images has now become a real technical possibility on a global scale...CNN has shown us that a supposedly alert, educated population (for instance, the American electorate) can witness the mass destruction of an Arab nation as little more than a spectacular television melodrama, complete with a simple narrative of good triumphing over evil and a rapid erasure from public memory. Even more notable than the power of the media to allow a “kinder, gentler nation” to accept the destruction of innocent people without guilt or remorse was its ability to use the spectacle of that destruction to exorcise and erase all guilt or memory of a previous spectacular war” (pp.15-16).

Georges Bataille relates the birth of humanity to the discovery of art and the death of humanity to the advent of the sciences of experimentation and war (Buchanan 2011, pp. 14-15). Today’s war is the war of images. Images in Belting’s words “colonize our bodies”, they control us. Images are everywhere, we are surrounded by them. Today’s (using McLuhan’s book title) War and Peace in the Global Village is strongly related to images. We perceive them not only from the real world but also from the virtual world and media. We live in images of the world, and the world of images. What happens to art in such a world?

8. Art at The World of Images

As argued in the previous chapter, in *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (*Problems of style: foundations for a history of ornament*) published in 1893, after studying the history of ornament from ancient Egyptian to Europe and Islamic arabesque; Riegl noted that the evolution of motifs has unbroken and continues history. This uninterrupted continuity according to Riegl was not the result of technical and material advent, but was the product of the man’s inner creative drive, which he called *Kunstwollen* translated as “artistic will, urge, intention, volition...”, or “will to art”, “will to form”, “will of art”, “art drive”, and etc.

The biological studies, and the psychological founding of Ernst Kris and Ernst Gombrich on the one hand, and the ideas and theories of scholars such as Edmund Husserl, Hans Belting, and W.J.T Mitchell on the other hand, proved us that images are immaterial representations invisible in our minds. What makes them visible and turns them into art objects is called medium, which is the material and technique that we use. In *the Group Portraiture of Holland 1902*, Alois Riegl noted “Civilized human beings are not content with a passive role in relation to the objective world, with its power to influence every aspect of life. Art (in its broadest sense) allows them to replace the objective world that is beyond their control with an alternative realm that they can freely define on their own terms” (p.365). The desire or the WILL to create works of art, to make the inner images visible, to interpret the objective world end’s in the creation of visual media. Thus, it is not the material and technique that creates the work of art, it is the Will to Art-Kunstwollen- that tames the materials and creates works of art.

In *Die spättrömische Kunstindustrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* (*Late Roman art industry*) 1901, Riegl defined *Kunstwollen* as man’s perception and interpretation of the world in relation to his inner drive which is linked to his worldview and cultural and historical values that change according to time, nation, and location. Through the studies of Kirs and Gombrich, and biological foundlings we realized that visual perception does not simply happen through our eyes. Our brain analyzes the visual information we receive from the outside world through our eyes and matches them to our previous experiences and recreate images in our mind. Through the roles of our universal vision, when we look at a tree for example, with slight differences, we all see almost the same thing, but our interpretation which is linked to our personal experiences might be totally different from each other. Our personal experiences have their roots in our background, they are shaped based on cultural values of where we were born, grown-up, lived and... Therefore, each artist’s art is linked to the cultural and historical values of where s/he comes from.

Today, through the advent of the internet and real time technology we do not only live in a specific geographical place on the earth, but we also live in a borderless virtual world. In this virtual world, we can encounter and communicate with people in other geographical places around the world. We can be present at the same time in different places, and exchange information in different ways in no time. The virtual technology in recent years, facilitated communication and cultural exchanges, opened the new doors to intercultural relations, and empowered the transculturalism. But at the same time, it challenged the traditional notion of culture as the product of a specific nation's perception of the world at a specific historical time in a specific geographical place. Thus, in the one hand, created new cultural relations that led the world towards globalization, and on the other hand, caused the new cultural conflicts and as a result, gave birth to neo-fascism and nationalism. At the age of images, therefore, the traditional notion of time, place, and culture has been changed. Consequently, our perception of the world is not limited to a particular time, place, and culture, its rather linked to a broader global perception, which shapes the art of our time as a kind of art that is not limited to a particular nation, country, continent, culture, style, and medium.

In his studies of the beholder's share, Gombrich realized that in perceiving the work of art the human brain does not only compare the perceived information through the retina to the previous experiences, but it also matches it with images of the paintings perceived in the past in our memory archive. He argued that "every painting owes more to the other paintings the viewer has seen than it does to the world actually being portrayed" (Kandel 2012, p.212). Thus, the new art has its roots in the old one, that's why the art history of each location and culture is like a connected unbroken line.

In Europe, because of two reasons the art and art history of the European countries has always been close to one another, first because they have lots of common cultural and historical values; second, they are closer to each other compared to the countries of the bigger continents, as a result, the cultural and artistic exchanges were easier. During the late 19th century and the early 20th century some European artists such as Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), Henri Rousseau (1844-1910), Paul Klee (1879-1940), and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), got inspired by the images from "the other" cultures produced the artworks which were unique and new compared to the previous Western works of art. Picasso's inspiration of African sculptures and masks (fig.44) portrayed in his famous masterpiece *Les Femmes d'Alger* created in 1907 (fig.45) and laid the foundation of the Cubism in Western art, is a great example of how images perceived from other cultures from other parts of the world can influence the artists' perception and affect their artworks. This period which is called "Primitivism" played a crucial role in developing Western Modern Art. Hans Belting puts in:

"Primitivism was the longing for an alien and even superior art where art, in the Western sense, had existed. The exclusively formal appropriation of African masks and "fetishes" resulted in a perception that separated image and medium. Picasso and his friends never reproduced any African figures as such but, rather, transferred African forms to Western media, such as oil painting" (Belting 2005, p.318).

Primitivism is one example among many that show how artistic and cultural encounters can result in new perception, and create a new visual vocabulary. Today, however, at the epoch of the "pictorial turn", technology influences our conception of the world by facilitating communication and information exchange. Through the social and mass media we receive images from all other parts of the world, from different cultures and nations. Hence, our interpretation of the world is not limited to where we live and the places we visited. As a result, today's art cannot be limited to a local perception, but a global one.



Fig. 44 African Fang mask



Fig.45 Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version O)*, oil on canvas, 244 x 234 cm

Hans Belting in his essay *Contemporary Art as Global Art, a Critical Estimate 2009*, by referring to Jean-Hubert Martin's 1989's exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris when for the first time works of Western and non-Western artists shown together; introduces the contemporary art after 1989 as a global art that through its system contemporary art of all nations circulate around world. In the next pages the changes that contemporary art went through after the late 80s and the early 90s will be discussed, and the question of whether there is a global contemporary art history at the age of global contemporary art will be answered.

9. What makes something art?

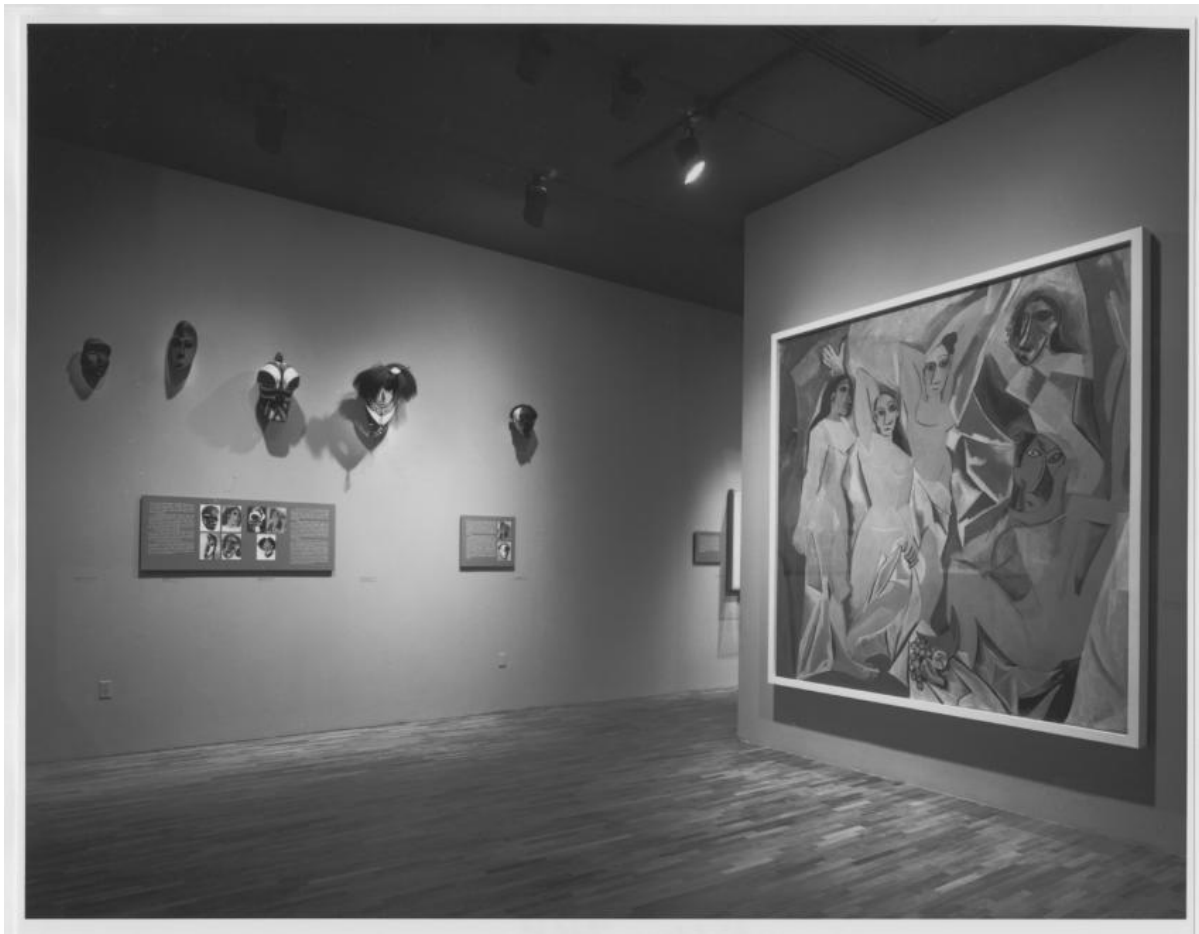


Fig. 46 Installation view of the exhibition, *"Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, MOMA, 1984

In the *Group Portraiture of Holland 1902* Alois Riegl argues that although group portraiture has been viewed as a specialty of Holland, among the many survived group portraits, only those of Rembrandt captured the attention of the modern scholars. And that's because art historians judge the works of art based on "the standards of the modern taste" (Riegl 1999, p63). He criticizes this kind of judgment and argues that we should not judge the artworks based on our personal taste and the aesthetic judgment of our time; instead, we need to find out what those works meant for the artists and the viewers of their time. We have to find out why those works have been produced. Riegl writes:

"Yet, some of us are convinced that the mission of our discipline is not simply to find the things in the art of the past that appeal to modern taste, but to delve into the artistic volition (Kunstwollen) behind works of art and to discover why they are the way they are, and why they could not have been otherwise" (ibid).

Based on Riegl's ideas all kinds of art (major and` minor), from all eras, and all places, have the same value, and they must be treated in an equal manner. Riegl did this in his own scholarship by paying special attention to neglected arts and art periods such as Oriental art, ornament, late Roman art, Dutch art... As Margaret Iversen notes: "Riegl turned from what were regarded as the pinnacles of artistic accomplishment, the art of classical antiquity and of the Renaissance, in order to champion these "others" of art history" (Iversen 1993,

p.18). For example, Riegl was the first art historian who wrote about Oriental carpets. His first *book Altorientalische Teppiche (Antique Oriental Carpets)* 1891 was the first of its kind which has been published at the same year of the Vienna's Oriental Carpet Exhibition at the KK Austrian Trade Museum in Vienna. Riegl also contributed in the catalog of the exhibition which has been published a year after the show. As Kurt Erdmann in *Seven Hundred Years of Oriental Carpets* 1970 writes "from 1870 to 1890 the knowledge of the existence of antique carpets was kept secret in order not to spoil the chance of cheap purchases. Not a line was written at that time" (Erdmann 1970, p.36). Riegl's writings and the Vienna exhibition ended up in the sale of the Ardabil carpet in 1892. In that sale the Ardabil Carpet which is one of the largest and oldest Persian carpets have been sold to the Victoria and Albert Museum of London by £2,000.

As we will see in the following pages, paying equal attention to all arts, from all places and eras did not happen until the late 1980s and early 1990s. Or it's better to say it just started to happen in that time and it is still a *work in progress* in the world of art and art history. The debates around two exhibitions in New York City during the 1980s that we will be discussing below, brings us back Riegl's ideas and proves that he was far ahead of his time, and maybe even our time! I would like to cite Margaret Iversen's words before we go to the main discussion of this chapter. She writes:

"His insistence on recognizing the historical character of the aesthetic judgment was a pioneering effort and is now being extended to the art of peoples out of the mainstream of western civilization that had formerly been of interest only to archaeologists and anthropologists" (p.6).

In 1984 William Rubin curated an exhibition titled *The Primitivism in 20th Century Art* exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City- MoMA. The exhibition was intended to demonstrate how the tribal artifacts influenced modern artists and Western modernism. But it ended up by introducing the African artifacts as inferior art or even non-art, and western modern art as high art. Hence, it raised many criticisms towards the museum and the organizers of the show. The American art critic Thomas McEvilley (1939-2013) for example, blamed the museum for not taking African tribal art seriously and criticized them for not displaying labels or explanatory wall texts to show their influence on European modern art. In his critical essay *Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief* 1984, McEvilley argued that the exhibition "shows Western egotism still as unbridled as in the centuries of colonialism and souvenirism. The Museum pretends to confront the Third World while really co-opting it and using it to consolidate Western notions of quality and feelings of superiority".

In 1988 Susal Vogel curated the show *Art/ Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections* at the Center for African Art in New York City as an attempt to bring back discussion around the *Primitivism* show in MOMA. This exhibition was linked to a symposium that brought up the question of *What makes something art?* As an answer, McEvilley wrote "the so-called primitive art "is the only context left, which brings up the question of what is art." As a result, he -proposed "anthropology as a cultural critique, not forcing objects from other cultures into our categories, but rather allowing those objects to raise questions about ours." The author concluded: "The fact that we designate something as art means that it is art for us, but says nothing about what it is in itself or for other people" (McEvilley cited in Belting 2013). These exhibitions and the debates around them challenged the Western and modernist notion of art which has dominated the art world for a long time and prepared the road towards a new definition and a new kind of art.

10. Contemporary Art After 1989



Fig.47 Magiciens de la terre at the Grande Halle, Parc de la Villette, Paris 1989

Thirty years ago, in 1989 the year that Berlin Wall fell down, several events affected the art world and laid the foundation of what today is called global art. One of these events, and probably the most important one was an exhibition curated by the French art historian and curator Jean-Hubert Martin titled *Magiciens de la Terre* (*Magicians of the World*). The exhibition took place at the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris and was scheduled to open on May 18, 1989. In this exhibition, for the first time, the works of both Western and non-Western artists have been exposed together in an equal manner. Among the 100 artists selected by Martin almost half them were from centers of the world of art or the United States of America and Europe (mostly western Europe), and another half of the participants were from the rest of the world and many of them were totally unknown in the contemporary art world. All of the artists selected by the curator to exhibit in the show were alive at the time of the exhibition.

Martin's intention by organizing the show was to decentralize the world of art from western dominance. He argued that "we went to treat contemporary art production on a global, worldwide scale" (Martine 1989, p.152). Artists have been represented by individuals, first by their biographies and explanation of their artworks, and then a short indication of their geographical region. This show was a response to several exhibitions such as *The Primitivism in 20th Century Art* exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City- MoMA curated by William Rubin in 1984, that according to many other art critics was a colonial art project and was intended to extend the superiority of the western art. The American art critic Thomas McEvilley (1939-2013) for example, blamed the museum for not taking African tribal art seriously and criticized them for not displaying labels or explanatory wall texts to show their influence on European modern art. In his critical essay *Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief 1984*, McEvilley argued that the exhibition "shows Western egotism still as unbridled as in the centuries of colonialism and souvenirism. The Museum pretends

to confront the Third World while co-opting it and using it to consolidate Western notions of quality and feelings of superiority”.

Because of the low number of visitors (less than 300,000) and the catalogue which has not been translated into English in the words of the French cultural theorist Annie Cohen-Solal “for the audience at large around the world, *Magiciens de la Terre* became a legendary show-a great many were *discussing* it without having actually *seen* it” (Cohen-Solal 2014). Today, after thirty years *Magiciens de la Terre* remains the first truly global exhibition that brought together artists from all over the world and revolutionized contemporary art. As the American art historian Pepe Karmel writes: “What began in 1989 with the Parisian circus of *Magiciens de la Terre* has now become a non-stop art festival in East Asia, South Asia, Australia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe” (Karmel cited in Madžoski 2015).



Fig. 48 Traditional paintings by the Yuendumu (aboriginal community in Australia) and in the background 'Red Earth Circle', a work by Richard Long at the Grande Halle, Parc de la Villette, Paris 1989

Artists who participated in the exhibition were:

Marina Abramović, Dennis Adams, Sunday Jack Akpan, Jean-Michel Alberola, Dossou Amidou, Giovanni Anselmo, Rasheed Araeen, Nuche Kaji Bajracharya, John Baldessari, José Bédia, Joe Ben Jr, Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Gabriel Bien-Aimé, Alighiero Boetti, Christian Boltanski, Erik Boulatov, Louise Bourgeois, Stanley Brouwn, Frédéric Bruly Bouabré, Daniel Buren, James Lee Byars, Seni Camara, Mike Chukwukelu, Francesco Clemente, Marc Couturier, Tony Cragg, Enzo Cucchi, Cleitus Dambi, Neil Dawson, Bowa Devi, Maestre Didi, Braco Dimitrijević, Nick Dumbrang, Efiimbelo, Nathan Emedem, John Fundi, Julio Galan, Moshe Gershuni, Enrique Gomez, Dexing Gu, Hans Haacke, Rebecca Horn, Shirazeh Houshiary, Yong Ping Huang, Alfredo Jaar, Nera Jambruk, Ilya Kabakov, Tatsuo Kawaguchi, On Kawara, Anselm Kiefer, Bodys Isek Kingelez, Per Kirkeby, John Knight, Agbagli Kossi, Barbara Kruger, Paulosee Kuniliusee, Kane Kwei, Boujemaâ Lakhdar, Georges Liautaud, Felipe Linares, Richard Long, Esther Mahlangu, Karel Malich, Jivya Soma Mashe, John Mawandjul Cildo Meireles, Mario Merz, Miralda, Tatsuo Miyajima, Norval Morrisseau, Juan Muñoz, Henry Munyaradzi

Claes Oldenburg, Nam June Paik, Lobsang Palden, Wesner Philidor, Sigmar Polke, Temba Rabden, Ronaldo Pereira Rego. Chéri Samba, Sarkis, Raja Babu Sharma, Jangarh Singh Sharma, Bhorda Sherpa, Nancy Spero Daniel Spoerri, Hiroshi Teshigahara, Yousuf Thannoon, Lobsang Thinle, Cyprien Tokoudagba, Twins Seven Seven, Ulay, Ken Unsworth, Chief Mark Unya, Coosje Van Bruggen, Patrick Vilaire, Acharya Vyakul, Jeff Wall, Lawrence Weiner, Ruedi Wem, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Jimmy Wululu, Jack Wunuwun, Jie Chang Yang, Yuendumu, Zush.



Fig. 49 *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain*, Hayward Gallery, London, 1989–90

Another controversial exhibition at the same year was *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain* which first held at the Hayward Gallery in London from 29 November 1989 to 4 February 1990, then went to the Wolverhampton Art Gallery from 10 March to 22 April 1990; and finally, to the Manchester City Art Gallery and Cornerhouse, 5 May to 10 June 1990. Curated by the Karachi born, London-based artist Rasheed Araeen (whose work was on display at the same year at the *Magiciens de la Terre*), the show brought together the works of 24 British visual artists of African, Caribbean and Asian ancestry including Ahmed Parvez, Anwar Jalal Shemza, Aubrey Williams, Avinash Chandra, Avtarjeet Dhanjal, Balraj Khanna, David Medalla, Donald Locke, Eddie Chambers, Frank Bowling, Francis Newton Souza, Gavin Jantjes, Iqbal Geoffrey, Ivan Peries, Keith Piper, Kumiko Shimizu, Lubaina Himid, Mona Hatoum, Rasheed Araeen, Ronald Moody, Saleem Arif, Sonia Boyce, Uzo Egonu, and Yuanchia Li. Among them, there were only four women artists (Sonia Boyce, Mona Hatoum, Lubaina Himid and Kumiko Shimizu) and that brought up lots of criticism towards Araeen. The exhibition was divided into four sections: 'In the Citadel of Modernism', 'Taking the Bull by the Horns', 'Confronting the System', and 'Recovering Cultural Metaphors'.

The project was first presented to the Hayward Gallery by Araeen in 1978 when the Hayward Gallery's programming was managed by the Arts Council of Great Britain that rejected the project. During Margaret Thatcher's conservative government in the UK, the rise of anti-racist activists on the one hand, and the British Black Arts Movement made the exhibition possible in 1989. By raising the question of why the British black

and Asian artists have been excluded from the British modern art history, *The Other Story* played a significant role in “opening up a cosmopolitan perspective on British diasporan art” (Fisher2009).

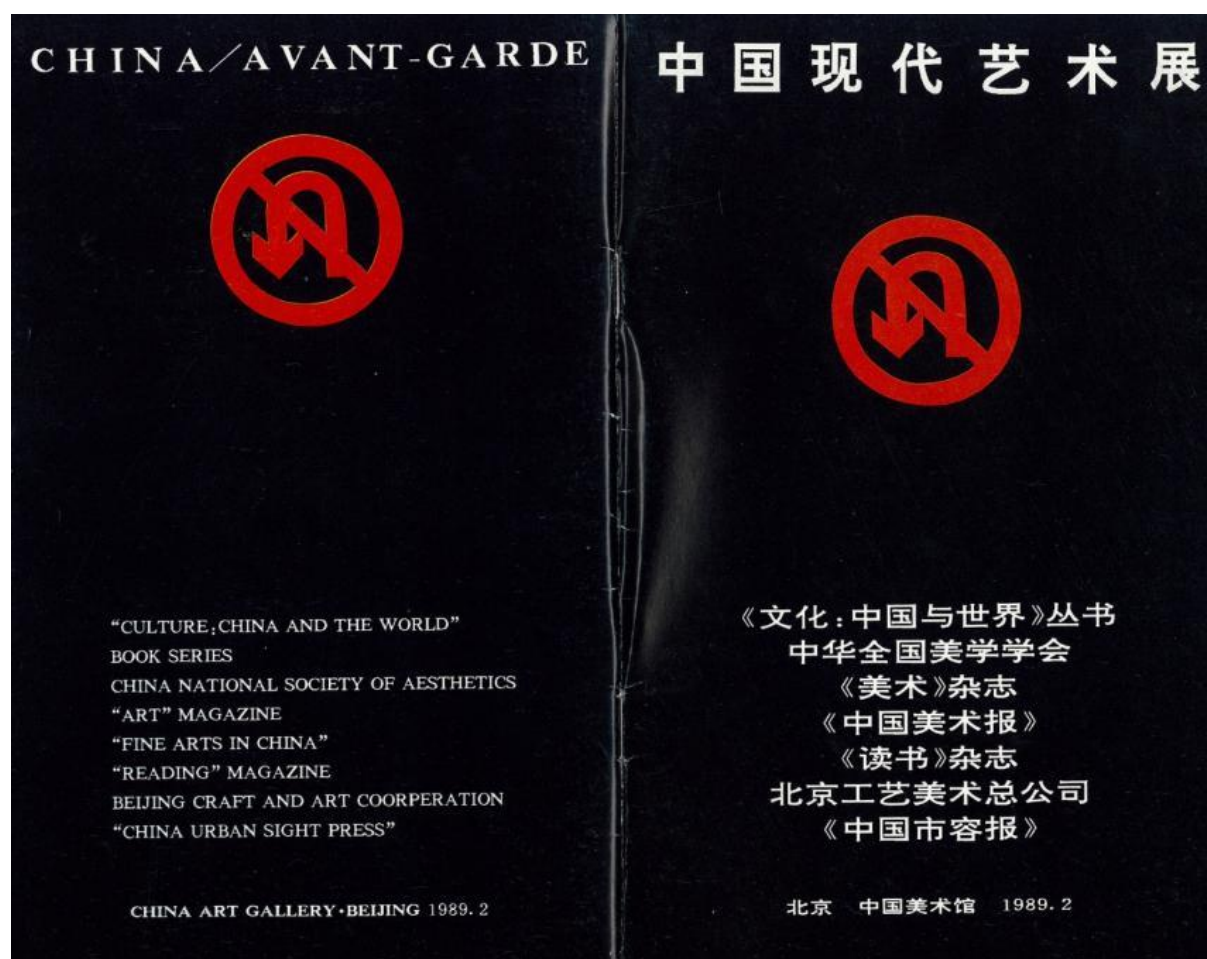


Fig.50 Cover of *China/Avant-Garde* exhibition catalogue 1989

The *China/Avant-Garde* Exhibition opened on February 5, 1989 on the eve of Chinese New Year, at the National Art Museum of China curated by Gao Minglu was another important exhibition of the year 1989. In this show more than 186 contemporary artists from all over China gathered together to exhibit almost 300 works of art. The exhibition got closed only three hours after the opening when two artists Xiao Lu and Tang Song shot their own installation works with as a part of their performances. The show reopened after three days but in the end, it has been forced to shut down due to an anonymous bomb threat.

Another event was the third Havana Biennial from October 27 to December 31, 1989. The main theme of the Biennale was the *Tradition and Contemporaneity in the Art of the Third World*. More than 300 artists from 41 countries participated in this event. The two volumes of the book *Making Art Global* introduce two exhibitions as the main contributions to the globalization of contemporary art. The first volume of the *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989, (Exhibition Histories)* published in 2012. In this book, Rachel Weiss and other authors (Luis Camnitzer, Coco Fusco, Geeta Kapur, Charles Esche) introduce the Third Havana Biennial as one the first important contemporary art exhibitions outside the western art world that influenced the globalization of the contemporary art and redefined the biennial model. The second volume

which published in 2013 is titled *Making Art Global (Part 2): 'Magiciens de la Terre' 1989 (Exhibition Histories)* focuses on Jean-Hubert Martin's exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Grande halle de la Villette in Paris as the first global art exhibition inside the western art world.



Fig.51 The cover of the 3rd Havana Biennial catalogue 1989

Martin's *Magiciens de la Terre* brought the artists from the peripheries to the center and exhibited their works side by side of the artists from the center. Rasheed Araeen's *The Other Story* championed the works of the artists who were in the center, but because of racism they were out of the mainstream of the center. *China/Avant-Garde* represented the Chinese interpretation of contemporary art, which proved that art was not limited to Western countries anymore. And the third Havana Biennial emphasized the works of the artists who were always excluded from the mainstream of the art world by exhibiting their works out of western countries.

11. Global Art and Global Art History

The *Magiciens* project led into no man's land where we still are and where we navigate with the help of provisional terminology.

_Hans Belting, *World Art to Global Art. View on a New Panorama* 2013



Fig. 52 Édouard Manet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863



Fig.53 Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party*, installation

Modern art was a European art movement started in 1863 when Édouard Manet (1832-1883) showed his painting *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* in the Salon des Refusés in Paris (fig.52). After the second world war, New York City replaced Paris as the center of the western art world; where during the late 1950s and early 1960s under the attack of many radical avant-garde art movements, modern art ended and it has been replaced by contemporary art. Modern art is considered to be the art of none other than the *white western man*. Until the rise of the feminist art movement women artists were invisible in the art world. Galleries usually denied exhibiting their works. Many of them used to sign their works by a male nickname to be able to sell their artworks. During the 1960s and 1970s, the feminist art movement rebelled against the white male-dominance over western art and art history, as a result, women artists started to get visibility within the art market and contemporary art history. After women, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, finally the artists of the color, and non-western artists entered into the contemporary art system. Art after 1989 broke the walls of the Anglo-European dominance and expanded around the globe.

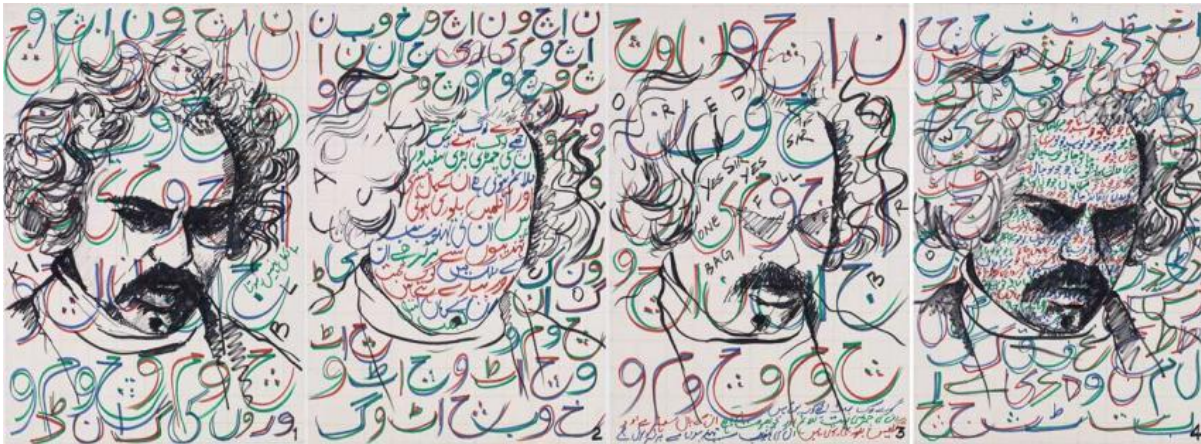


Fig.54 Rasheed Araeen, *Ethnic Drawings*, Pencil and pen on paper, 4 parts, each, 79 x 53.3cm, 1982

Hans Belting in his two essays *Contemporary Art as Global Art: A Critical Estimate 2009* and *From World Art to Global Art. View on a New Panorama 2013*, describes the concept of *Global Art* and its differences with *World Art*. He argues although global art and world art are mostly used synonymously, they are totally different from each other. Belting defines world art as art from all epochs and all parts of the world, which is considered as the heritage of mankind, that might be found in Western museums but not necessarily art museums. As he writes "In fact, world art included the art of every possible provenance while at the same time excluding it from Western mainstream art – a colonial distinction between art museums and ethnographic museums" (Belting 2013). Global Art according to Belting is contemporary art after 1989 which started by the *Magiciens de la Terre* in Paris. And "it is guided by the intention to replace the center and periphery scheme of a hegemonic modernity, and also claims freedom from the privilege of history" (Belting 2013).

Belting compares global art by the internet and notes that "new art today is global, much the same way the world wide net is also global. The internet is global in the sense that it is used everywhere, but this does not mean that it is universal in content or message. It allows for free access and thus for a personal response to the world" (Belting 2009, p.2). Just like the internet, global art is not limited to a specific geographical place, instead, it goes beyond any borderline and represents different interpretations by different artists with diverse cultural backgrounds and worldviews. In this case, global art is exactly the opposite of modern art which was Eurocentric and tended to exclude the art of non-Western artists. Unlike modern art that meant in Belting's words "only form without any subject matter" (p.10), global art breaks every formal role of modern art and reveals a new kind of art that replaces the formal issues by representing the contemporary subject matters by a wide verity of media from performance, installation, film, video, painting...to mixed media. Therefore, entering into the global art world doesn't need any formal and/or art historical background, it rather demands the ability of "critical analysis of today's most debated (or neglected) issues" (ibid).

Breaking the formal roles of modern art was actually breaking from the linear art history that has been guiding Western art until the end of modernism. Belting explains art history "was designed for modern readers who wanted to study art via a history of art forms" but after modernism "the cult of objects considered works of art shifted to the experience of events in time and space that escape a linear art history with the nineteenth-century idea of evolution" (p.6). In 1958 Allan Kaprow (1927-2006) in his influential essay, *The Legacy of Jackson Pollock*, wrote:

"The young artist of today need no longer say "I am a painter" or "a poet" or "a dancer." He is simply an "artist." All of life will be open to him. He will discover out of the ordinary things the meaning of ordinariness. He will not try to make them extraordinary. Only their real meaning will be stated. But out of nothing he will devise the extraordinary and then maybe nothingness as well. People will be delighted or horrified, critics will be confused or amused, but these, I am sure, will be the alchemies of the 1960s".

Thus, after modernism art history, even in the West has been challenged by the new notion of art. Belting refers to his previous books *The End of the History of Art? 1987*, and *Art History after Modernism 2003*, and addresses global art, as a new kind of art that comes after history and goes against the traditional art history. Global art not only denies following art history's linear guidelines, but by growing in places with no art historical background creates new art worlds. Each of these new art worlds has a different cultural and historical background, and therefore, a different conception of contemporary art. Global art, therefore, challenges the traditional notion of Western art history and emerges a fresh approach.

By not following Eurocentric world art history, global art, not only demands a new approach towards art history, but it also questions the old role of the museum as a place to exhibit world art history and emerges a new concept of the museum as a place that exhibits global art. Consequently, the passage from the Museum of Modern Art or MOMA to Museum of Contemporary Art or MOCA, and the growth of museums of contemporary art, biennials, and auctions around the world was inevitable. Belting argues:

"The MOCA is by implication global, as it celebrates contemporary production as art without geographic borders and without a history in terms of Western modernism. The art market followed when Christie's and Sotheby's in recent years introduced 'Contemporary' and 'Postwar' as new categories in their auction catalogs that replaced Modern as the familiar trademark of Western art. In Asia, art museums are being built at the same speed at which biennials were founded in the two preceding decades" (p.8).

Belting argues that building new museums is not enough to promote art in new art worlds for their local audiences if they are not linked "with the cultural experience of the general public" (p.9). Hence, he suggests the more localized activity in relation to the general public by showing "visual culture or popular production from their own environment" instead of mainstream art.

In 2006 Hans Belting and Peter Weibel started the project *GAM – Global Art and the Museum* at The ZKM | Centre for Art and Media Karlsruhe. The aim of the project explained by the Curator and Project Manager of ZKM's GAM Andrea Buddensieg "was to launch an examination of a process which brought about the transformation of art production, extended to a global level, as well as the transformation of art museums". The project continued in 2006 and 2007 by bringing together the representatives of museums in two international conferences to discuss "the challenges to the art museum in the age of globalization". In collaboration with the Goethe Institute the project organized a series of workshops in different cities around the world. In Sao Paulo, the theme of the workshop was the global turn in contemporary art collections. In New Delhi, the role of art history, and Hong Kong the emergence of new regions of art. Belting refers to New Delhi's workshop and the question of *How Global is Art History Today?* And writes:

"In the debates, the global competence of an implanted model of Western art history was denied in the case of India. The debates touched on several trajectories that today are controversial in India. Counter-narratives increasingly replace narratives of Western modernism with different concepts such as the return to national narratives of Indian art. There was agreement among the participants that colonial history still unduly dominates the cultural topics in India and guides the attention to long-time experiences with foreign art, while native traditions and aesthetics have little space in today's art history" (p.7).

In order to answer the question if art history could be global and resolve the crisis of art history in global era, in the one hand, Belting suggest to "rewrite art history in the West as well in order to respond to a new audience that looks at Western art with other premises", and on the other hand, he emerges the "need to encourage other, new narratives with a local perspective of art history that abandons obedience to the colonial gaze of former world art studies" (Belting 2013).

James Elkins in his book *Is Art History Global? 2006*, tries to answer a series of questions such as: What is the shape, or what are the shapes, of art history across the world? Is it becoming global — that is, does it have a recognizable form wherever it is practiced? Can the methods, concepts, and purposes of Western art history be suitable for art outside of Europe and North America? And if not, are there alternatives that are compatible with existing modes of art history? In order to answer these questions, he comes up with ten different arguments, five against the idea that "art history is, or could become, a single enterprise throughout the world", and five in favor of it. He argues that due to the variety of local approaches and various

interpretations of contemporary art it is not possible to use the Western model of art history as a single method all around the globe. Thus, he emphasizes on local practices of art history in different parts of the world, and the necessity of connection and sharing method between them. He writes:

“a global art history would be very approximately comparable to science. A field like physics, for example, can be said to share a rigorously defined set of assumptions and protocols no matter where it is practiced. A worldwide practice of art history would have a looser, less quantitative version of that kind of coherence: it would be a field some of whose assumptions, founding texts, interpretive protocols, and institutional forms are compatible wherever they are taught” (Elkins 2006, p.4).

The answer to the question of whether art history could ever become global or not? could be yes. Through intercultural exchanges, local practices and sharing methods. In the academic field of art history a few universities such as the University of East Anglia in the UK, and the Leiden University in the Netherlands, tried to expand their research by offering world art studies programs. But the only academic institute that offers the research field of Global Art History is the Cluster of Excellence "Asia and Europe in a Global Context. The Dynamics of Transculturality" at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. As explained by the professor of global art history Monica Juneja in her interview with Mariachiara Gasparini 2018 “the program brings together scholars investigating connected histories of Europe and Asia from the theoretical perspective of *transculturality*”. Transculturality or transculturation, she explains “denotes in our understanding a process of transformation that unfolds through extended contacts and relationships between cultures”. The program, she continues “understands “global” as transcultural. It works to re-define the units of art history, away from national frames and following the logic of the movement of agents, objects, and practices. Finally, it involves a de-centering of the discipline, and introducing multiple vantage points of view rather than proceeding with Europe as the sole center. This agenda involves rethinking basic concepts of the discipline which were framed in a European context and are now applied to the rest of the world”.

12. Conclusion

Kunstwollen was Alois Riegl's main concept, as a particular culture's collective perception of the world which is linked to its Weltanschauung, and changes based on time, location and nation. Therefore, each era's art is unique and non-repeatable. Thus, for Riegl all arts (major or minor) from all eras and locations were important and deserved equal attention. An art historian's main task was recognizing the cultural and historical context of a work of art to find why the artwork has been produced and what it meant for the artist and the spectator of its time. Kunstwollen as man's creative drive first was mentioned in *Problems of Style* (1893) as a response to Semperians' materialistic ideas, and then it has been developed in Riegl's *Late Roman Art Industry* (1901), and *The Dutch Group Portrait* (1902).

As mentioned in chapter one in details, in *Late Roman Art Industry* Riegl based on Hildebrand's concepts of "near view" and "distant view" developed his own version of *Nahsicht* (near view), *Fernsicht* (distant view), *Normalsicht* (normal view) and argued that our perception of the objects depends on our distance from them. He then studied the Kunstwollen of the art of antiquity in three periods of Egyptian art, classical Greek art, and late Roman art, in four categories of architecture, sculpture, painting, and decorative arts. He argued that at the first stage of ancient Kunstwollen which has been expressed in Ancient Egyptian art the perception of the objects is *Nahsicht* (near view). In this phase, all the silhouettes and shadows that create the illusion of depth disappear, thus, what we perceive is just a two-dimensional surface. In order to perceive it, the eye needs to get as close as possible to the surface. This perception is close to the sense of touch, and that's why Riegl called it "tactile" plane. The perception of the second stage of the ancient Kunstwollen according to Riegl was *Normalsicht* (normal view) which stands between near and distant view. Here the half-shadows appear and create a sense three-dimensionality, but they do not cover the material ground completely. Riegl called this perception that according to him was manifested in its purest way in classical Greek art "tactile-optical". The third and the final stage of the ancient Kunstwollen, according to Riegl manifested in the art late Roman empire. At this stage, objects are still attached to their material ground, but they are represented in their full three-dimensionality; as a result, deep shadows emerge and cover the tactile plane. Therefore, the plane is not tactile anymore, but it is "optical-colorful" and the objects appear in *Fernsicht* (distant view) to us. Thus, the perception of this phase is "optical".

In contrast to his previous works which his approach was completely formal, in *The Dutch Group Portrait* Riegl chose a both formalist and psychologist approach to define the Kunstwollen of the group portraits of Holland during the 16th and 17th century, mainly in Amsterdam and Haarlem by comparing it with the Italian art of the 15th and 16th century. Riegl defines two different kinds of coherence in a work of art as "internal coherence" (innere Einbeit), and "external coherence" (äußere Einbeit). The former is the unity among the figures inside the painting, and the latter is the unity of the figures and the viewer. Attentiveness (Aufmerksamkeit) according to him works as a vehicle that links the figures within the picture to the viewer outside the painting. Riegl argues that in the Italian paintings all figures are subordinated to one figure, and they are interacting with each other independently from the viewer. Thus, the coherence of Italian art is internal. In contrast to that, the coherence in Dutch art is external, which means the viewer's participation in order to complete the painting is necessary. Which represents Holland's society in the 16th and 17th century which was a democratic country based on respect, equality, and shared responsibility. Therefore, the Dutch artist treats the figures inside the painting, and the viewer outside the painting in an equal manner. The Dutch group portrait is incomplete without the participation of the viewer. As mentioned before Riegl was the first art historian who tried to link art history to the science of psychology. His emphasis on the role of the beholder in completing the work of art influenced other scholars, in particular, Ernst Kris and Ernst Gombrich to continue his path of incorporating their art historical methods with psychology and science.

As discussed in chapter two, Kris, Gombrich, and biological studies proved that our visual perception is based on our brain's creative process. The brain receives visual information from the eyes, then it compares it with

previous personal experiences and creates an internal representation of the external world. Through the use of medium our internal representations become external, they become works of art. Thus, our perception as Riegl said is not passive, and our interpretation of the world is linked to our worldview shapes the art of our time. As these values change according to time, people, and place, our definition of the world changes, and as a result, our art changes.

The advent of the communication and transportation technology changed the traditional notion of time and place, and facilitated communication and cultural exchanges, and consequently, influenced our conception of the world. The technological advent on the one hand, and political changes of the world (the end of the cold war, and the fall of Berlins wall) during the late 80s and early 90s on the other hand, influenced the art world and turned the contemporary art to global art. A kind of art that just like the internet goes through the geographical borderlines, and ignites diverse local interpretations that represent each nation's contemporary art. Global art as mentioned before not only challenged the dominance of western art, but it also challenged the traditional notion of linear western art history. Because in the one hand, represented things that have never been considered as art before, and on the other hand, it raised in the parts of the world where art history (in the Western notion) has never been a concern. Therefore, it emerges a fresh approach toward art history which is not based on the single Western method, but it is the result of many local practices and sharing methods.

In this essay, by referring to Alois Riegl I am not arguing that Riegl's historiographical method can solve today's crisis of art history. His method and his concept of *Kunstwollen* might be even considered old fashion and non-applicable to contemporary art. But I believe his brave and innovative character who went against the art historical notions and methods of his time, by writing about the art of the "others" and neglected art periods, and his emphasis on recognizing the cultural and historical context of the works of art, instead of judging them based on the personal taste, cultural values, and standards of our time; could make him a great example for those art historians who want to try a new approach towards the traditional and conventional notion of art history. In the next chapter, I will talk about Global Contemporary *Kunstwollen*, Local Contemporary *Kunstwollen*, and Transcultural *Kunstwollen*. It might be problematic to talk about *Kunstwollen* as the aesthetic drive of a particular culture that shapes the artistic style of their age, to define the *Kunstwollen* of an art with no specific style, that belongs to nowhere and everywhere. Thus, by Global Contemporary *Kunstwollen* I intend to describe the characteristics of the global art which are the same of contemporary art. Local Contemporary *Kunstwollen* represents the characteristics of each culture's contemporary art which is linked, in the one hand, to their cultural and historical values, and on the other hand, to the global contemporary *Kunstwollen*. Transcultural *Kunstwollen* is the result of the transcultural experiences of the artists with high cultural intelligence, whose worldview and their conception of the world is not tied to a single culture, location, and nation.

Chapter Three

Global, Local, and Transcultural Contemporary Kunstwollen

Every man is an artist: Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the death line: to dismantle in order to build A SOCIAL ORGANISM AS A WORK OF ART. This most modern art discipline – Social Sculpture/Social Architecture – will only reach fruition when every living person becomes a creator, a sculptor, or architect of the social organism.

_Joseph Beuys

1. Global Contemporary Kunstwollen

Since the beginning of modern art in 1860s Paris has always been the capital of Western art during the 20th century. After the second world war which started in 1939 and ended in 1945, Europe and Paris could not play the same role anymore. Because of the post-war problems that destroyed Europe many Avant Gard artists, and scholars such as Marc Chagall (1887-1985), Josef Albers (1888-1976), László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946), Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), George Grosz (1893-1959), Max Ernst (1891-1976), Salvador Dalí (1904-1989), Diego Rivera (1886-1957), and etc. immigrated to the United States, and mostly to the New York City. Consequently, by the end of World War II, the capital of western modern art has moved from Paris to New York. The establishment of Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1929, and The Guggenheim Museum in 1939 in the New York City, together with a wide number of collectors and art dealers, and the flood of immigrant artists and intellectuals to the city, laid a solid foundation for the born of a new kind of art rooted in American life and culture.



Fig.55 Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917



Fig.56 Robert Rauschenberg, *Canyon*, mixed media, 1959

After Abstract Expressionism which was the first post-war American art movement promoted by the American art critic Clement Greenberg (1909-1994) during the 1940s in New York City. Most of the post-war art movements between the 1950s to 1980s rebelled against abstract expressionism and its main medium “painting”. Consequently, by representing a wide range of media questioned the notion of modern art and broke away from its formal aesthetic. The result was the end of modern art and the birth of contemporary art, started in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States and continued by European responses till the late 1980s when contemporary art expanded around the world and became global. In this chapter, I'm not intending to repeat the history of art from the late modernism until today. I just want to briefly determine the characteristics of contemporary art. What makes a work of art to be recognized as a contemporary artwork? That is the question that I want to explore in this part.

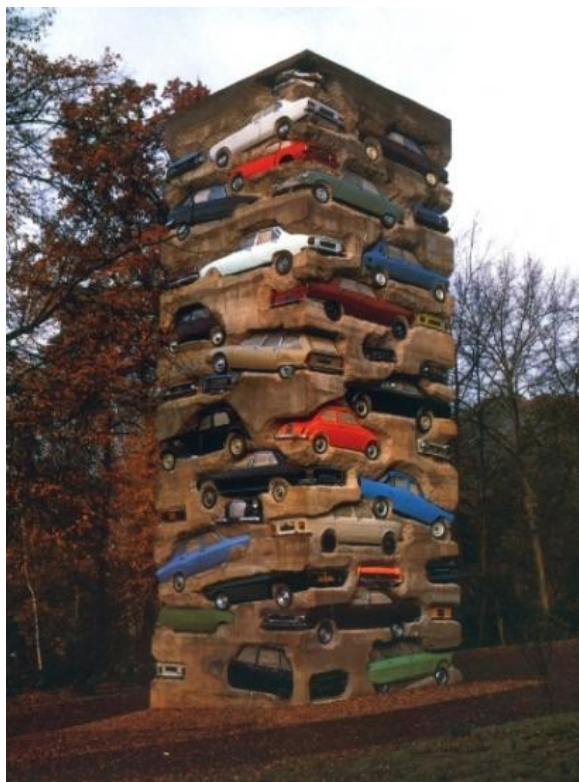


Fig.57 Arman, *Long Term Parking*, 1982

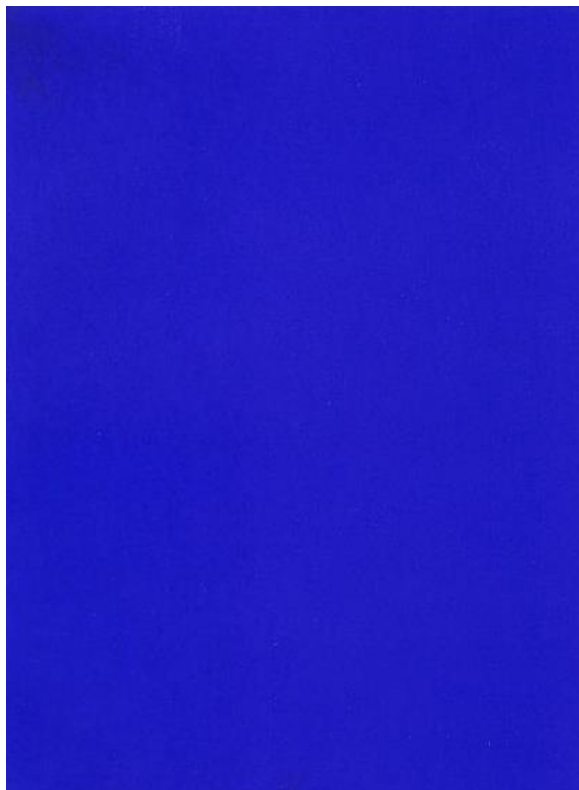


Fig. 58 Yves Klein, *IKB 191*, 1962

In 1917 Marcel Duchamp chose a normal urinal, called it *Fountain*, signed it as ‘R. Mutt 1917’, and submitted it for an exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in New York (fig.55). Although the piece has not been rejected by the board, it has been removed from the show. By choosing an ordinary object, signing it as a work of art, and showing it in an exhibition, Duchamp disembodied art from the artist’s hand and questioned the notion of art and aesthetics. He invited the viewer to see the urinal in a new way and ask him/herself if this is a work of art. Art was not art without the viewer’s response. This piece as one of the most debated works had a strong impact on Avant-Gard art and artists after Duchamp. Influenced by the ideas of Marcel Duchamp, the American Neo-Dadaist artists Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), and the musician John Cage (1912-1992), rejected the emotionally charged paintings of abstract expressionism, and formalist aesthetics of modern art. Robert Rauschenberg used found objects, junks from the streets, clothing, newspapers, pictures, etc. in his combine paintings (fig.56). These works blurred the boundaries between painting and sculpture. By his white paintings in 1951 he made a strong statement against abstract expressionism and the medium of painting. In these works, the content has been reduced to nothing. There

is just a white canvas. Jasper Jones chose to paint readymade images such as flags, targets, and...in these works there is no formal aesthetic of the European abstract painting, and no self-expression of the American one. He did not create anything; he just reproduced an image of "things the mind already knows". And John Cage's 4'33" reduced art to nothing but silence or the sound of life. Neo-Dadaist attempts challenged the borderlines between art and life. A path that had been followed by the artists of Nouveau réalisme in the 1960s by using real objects in their *décollage* and *assemblage* works. The attempt to connect art with life's reality forced artists to give up painting as a media that creates the illusion of the three-dimensional reality on a two-dimensional canvas. Consequently, they started trying different media from monochromatic canvases to readymade, *assemblage*, *décollage*, objects of daily life, to happenings, actions... The rise of several radical art movements during the 1960s to 1970s destroyed the dominance of painting and put an end to modern art.



Fig. 59 Joseph Beuys, *I Like America and America Likes Me*, performance, 1974

Pop-art which started in the late 1950s in the United Kingdom and early 1960s in the United States insisted on impersonality and detached itself from the emotionality of the abstract expressionism and self-expression of its artists. Pop artists started using banal imagery from popular culture and mass media. They used advertising, comic strips, graphic designs from magazines, cartoons, daily objects, images of celebrities, mass media, luxury, fashion, design, and... Pop-Art blurred the distinctions between banal kitschy images of mass media and popular culture and high art (fig.60). Minimalism attacked to abstract expressionism and tried to completely remove expression, emotion, and gesture by reducing art to a simple geometric machine-made material object (fig.61). Conceptual art replaced imagery with language and writing. Detached the art from the artist's touch. Dematerialized art by turning it into an *idea*. Art became a concept, became philosophy (fig.62). Later post-minimal, post-conceptual, and neo-pop artists continued exploring the boundaries of new media that gave birth to a wide variety of arts such as body art, neon art, performance art, installation art, text art, sound art, video art, land art, etc. Institutional critique artists rebelled against galleries, museums,

and institutions that exhibited, bought, or sold their art. Public art took art to the public place, and land artists brought art to nature.



Fig. 60 Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Diptych*, silkscreen, 1962

Although during the 1960s and 1970s every new art movement was against painting, and no avant-garde artist used it as their primary medium. But from the early 1980s painting came back to the contemporary art world in the name of Neo-expressionism. Unlike the late modern art painting which was abstract, without any subject, and followed the formal roles of modern art and linear art history; contemporary painting was representational, subjective, and did not follow any specific style (fig. 63-64). During the 1990s by the rise different types of art such as contextual art, relational art, dialogic art, and...or what American artist and writer Suzanne Lacy called “New Genre Public Art”; art became a sort of social activity and artist turned to a social activist. The birth of the internet created a new public space, and as a result, a new public art called net-art or internet-art where communication itself becomes the goal of art was born.

So, contemporary art does not follow any particular aesthetic style, and it is not limited to any particular media. A contemporary artwork: could be produced by a mixture of diverse media. It doesn't need to be the product of the artist's hand, it could be made by someone else, or it could be produced by a machine. It doesn't need to be permanent; it could be temporary like land artworks. It doesn't need to be an object, it could be just an experience like performance art, happenings, actions, or a social activity. It can talk about anything from the banality of popular culture to serious contemporary and historical issues. The originality of the contemporary artwork is not in the artist's hand or the medium that s/he uses but, in the idea, or the concept that the artist wants to express, and the viewer's response to it. Unlike the modernist artist who used a particular medium to express a personal feeling and follow the formal roles of modern art; the contemporary artist can choose among a verity of media the one that best expresses her/his concept to involve the spectator. Therefore, the Kunstwollen of contemporary art or Global Contemporary Kunstwollen could be defined as *conceptual* which is dependent to *the beholder's response*.



Fig.61 Carl Andre, *PYRE (ELEMENT SERIES)*, 1971



Fig.62 Terry Atkinson, Michael Baldwin, *Loop*, 1968



Fig.63 Georg Baselitz, *Schlafzimmer (Bedroom)*, 1975



Fig.64 Mimmo Paladino, *Candelabro con 22*, mixed media, 1989

2. Local Contemporary Kunstwollen

Art finally returns to its internal motifs, to the constitutive reasons for its work, to its place of excellence, which is the labyrinth, understood as work within, as I drove continuously into the substance of painting.

_Achille Bonito Oliva

Contemporary art as mentioned before started in the United States during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Until the 1980s when the return of the painting happened in Europe, the United States of America was the leading culture of the contemporary art world. During this period, apart from a few European art movements such as Nouveau Réalisme in France, and Arte Povera in Italy, most of the important contemporary art movements raised from New York City. After the second world war, just like in politics, the United States wanted to control and lead the art world. The American culture wanted to produce a totally American art. The first attempt to make this dream come true ended up in shaping Abstract Expressionism. But painting was the European art's specialty, and it was the result of the evolution of the linear European art history. It didn't have strong roots in American art and culture. Hence, to write a new art history a break from the old art history was necessary. In order to lead and not to follow, in order to create something new, something completely American; the American artists started trying different media, and challenged the traditional notion of art and the ancient medium of painting. The birth of the new art was the price of the death of the old one. Thus, modern art died and contemporary art was born. Modernism died, and post-modernism began. Accordingly, contemporary art's Kunstwollen is rooted in American culture and post-war American society.

The first break from the American dominance of contemporary art happened in 1981 by an exhibition titled *A New Spirit of Painting* at the Royal Academy in London, that followed by another exhibition in 1982 in Berlin named *Zeitgeist* are considered the first contemporary painting exhibitions that brought the painting back to the international art scene. In these two shows, most of the artists were European. The new painting termed Neo-Expressionism was the rebirth of the European expressionist tradition and was the first contemporary art movement that was not dominated by American art and culture. As mentioned in chapter two in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, when the cold war ended, and the Berlin wall fell, through the exhibitions such as *Magiciens de la Terre*, *The Other Story*, *China/Avant-Garde*, and the *third Havana Biennial: Tradition and Contemporaneity in the Art of the Third World* all in 1989, contemporary art which once was only American expanded itself around the world and became global. Just like an international language that helps people from different countries, cultures, and languages communicate with one another and express their ideas; global contemporary art gives the possibility to different cultures, and nations to represent their own version or their local contemporary art. Each local contemporary art is rooted in the one hand, in the local cultural and historical values, and on the other hand, it is linked to the global contemporary Kunstwollen. Although contemporary art in its genesis was American, today under the roof of global contemporary art American contemporary art is just another local contemporary art like many others out there.

At this part, I would like to briefly explore the local contemporary Kunstwollen, or characteristics of contemporary art of three different countries where I lived, studied and taught fine arts: my home country Iran, the United States, and Italy. As mentioned above contemporary art started from the United States, then moved to Europe and finally developed into the rest of the world. Thus, I'd start first with the American contemporary Kunstwollen as the cradle of contemporary art, then then I will compare it with the Italian one as a European example, and finally, I will write about the Kunstwollen of the Iranian contemporary art as a non-Western example.

3. American Contemporary Kunstwollen

What's great about this country is that America started the tradition where the richest consumers buy essentially the same things as the poorest. You can be watching TV and see Coca-Cola, and you can know that the President drinks Coke. Liz Taylor drinks Coke, and just think, you can drink Coke, too.

_Andy Warhol



Fig. 65 Thomas Hart Benton, *America Today-Instruments of Power*, tempera on wood, 1930-1931

The roots of the first attempts to create an American Art could be found in the American Regionalism, and Realism movements. Started in the Midwest states during the Great Depression in the early 1930s and ended by the 1940s when the second world war began. In order to create new American art, Regionalist artist rejected the European modern art and returned to the representational and narrative painting. They focused on rural American life scenes to involve the American people with their art and make their work popular among them. The main artists of the movement were Grant Wood (1891-1942) whose famous painting *American Gothic* 1930 became a cultural icon that depicts the strong spirit of the American farmer during the hard time of the Great Depression (fig.66), Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975), and John Steuart Curry (1897-1946).



Fig. 66 Grant Wood, *American Gothic*, 1930



Fig.67 John Steuart Curry, *Baptism in Kansas*, 1928

Unlike the Regionalist artists who celebrated rural American life in the heartland of the United States, American realist painters of the Ashcan School and The Eight in the early 20th century were more interested in depicting urban life in New York City. Scenes such as the life of the working class, immigrants, people walking on the streets, boxing and wrestling matches, etc. The most famous artists of this school were Robert Henri (1865–1929), George Luks (1867–1933), William Glackens (1870–1938), John Sloan (1871–1951), Everett Shinn (1876–1953), George Bellows (1882–1925), and Edward Hopper (1882–1967).



Fig.68 George Bellows, *Both Members of This Club*, 1909



Fig. 69 Edward Hopper, *Gas*, Oil on canvas, 1940

Neither of the two movements captured international attention. They both remained locally recognized. And they got retrograded in the light of the European modern art. After world war II, when Europe got destroyed and many European artists and scholars immigrated to the United States of America and in particular New York City; everything was ready to fulfill the American Dream. The American Will or Desire to create a totally American art and taking the lead of the art world manifested itself in Abstract Expressionism. In contrast to the American Realism and Regionalism that rejected the European modernism, and portrayed the American life in the rural and urban sceneries in a realistic style, Abstract Expressionism accepted the European modernism and made an American version of it. In the works of Abstract Expressionist artists, the Americanism did not reveal itself through the representational scenes of American life, but it has been expressed through the American artists' feelings and the support of the American art market and policies.

The next generation of American artists particularly Neo-Dadaists rebelled against personal emotionality of abstract expressionist artists and tried to fill the gap between reality and illusion, art and life. Their attempt pushed art more and more towards the demonstration of daily American life. The best manifestation of the post-war American life is in Pop-Art and somehow in Minimalism. Pop-art as discussed before began in the late 1950s in the United Kingdom and early 1960s in the United States. Unlike abstract expressionism, Pop-art was representational, but the images of Pop artists were totally different from the traditional figurative paintings. They were not created by artists. Pop artists used images of the American popular culture and mass media and reproduced them in their works with different mechanical techniques.

The main American pop artists were Andy Warhol (1928-1987), Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997), James Rosenquist (1933-2017), and Claes Oldenburg. Each of these artists had a different approach. Andy Warhol who was perhaps the most famous American pop artist used a variety of media but his best-known pieces are his silkscreen prints of Celebrities, Campbell's Soup, Coca Cola, and Brillo Boxes (fig.70). Roy Lichtenstein's works were based on comic strips and cartoons reproduced through a very mechanical technique on canvas (fig.71). Rosenquist was famous for his collage paintings. His paintings are the juxtaposition of the images from advertisements and mass media (fig.72). Oldenburg is best known for his "soft-sculptures" of daily objects especially fast food (fig.73). Pop art brought back the images of daily American contemporary life to art, but at the same time detached them from the artists' hands and attached them to mechanical ways of reproduction.



Fig. 70 Andy Warhol, Brillo Box (Soap Pads), Synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen ink on wood, 1964



Fig.71 Roy Lichtenstein, Whaam!, Acrylic paint and oil paint on canvas, 1963



Fig.72 James Rosenquist, President Elect, Oil on Masonite, 1960–61/1964



Fig.73 Claes Oldenburg, Two Cheeseburgers, with Everything (Dual Hamburgers), Burlap soaked in plaster, painted with enamel, 1962

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a return to figurative and realistic painting by rising first Photorealism and then Hyperrealism movements. Although their subjects were somehow close to the realist painters of the early 20th century, there are strong differences in the ways they produce their paintings. Instead of painting the real-life scenes, photorealist and hyperrealist artists used photos as the resources of their paintings. Photorealists used a video projector to project analog photos onto canvas to be able to trace them and reproduce the exact image of the photograph on canvas (fig.74). Hyperrealists used high-resolution digital photos edited by different computer programs to create a new form of reality (fig.75). Therefore in these paintings, the artist's hand just works as a machine, and painting becomes a sort of mechanical reproduction of other images produced by the camera.



Fig.74 John Baeder, *John's Diner with John's Chevelle*, oil on canvas, 2007



Fig. 75 Magda Torres Gurza, *La hora del té*, oil on canvas

Since Abstract Expressionism none of the American contemporary art movements were based on the artist's craftsmanship skills and self-expression, instead, they chose mechanical and technological ways of art production. In all American art movements from Regionalism and Realism to Neo-Dada, Conceptual Art, Minimal Art, Pop-Art, Photorealism, Hyperrealism, and Neo-Pop Art the Desire-Will to create an originally and totally American Art manifests itself mainly in two ways. First in their imagery, which is what they show in their representational works of art. From the rural and urban American life scenes of Regionalist and Realist painters to the images of contemporary American society in the works of pop, photorealist, and hyperrealist artists, all we see is America. Second in the mechanical ways of production and reproduction of the artworks which demonstrate American contemporary life's ties and dependence on technology. Thus, the Kunstwollen of contemporary American art could be defined as the mechanical and technological reproduction of popular features of American life and culture.

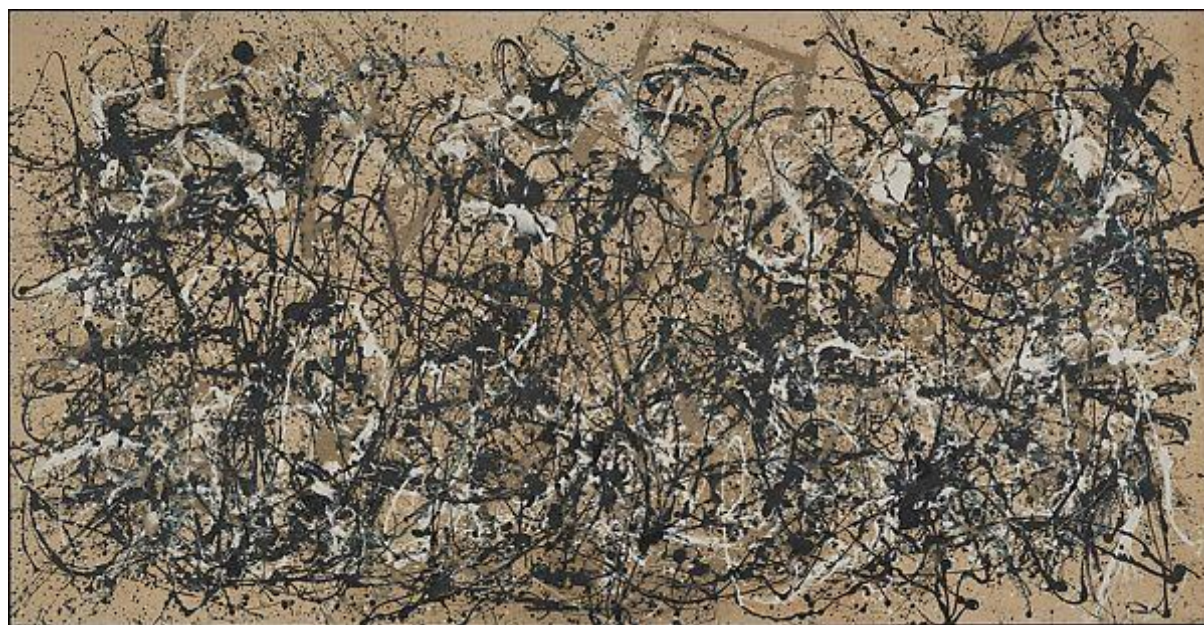


Fig.76 Jackson Pollock, *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, Enamel on canvas, 1950

The purest manifestation of Kunstwollen of American Contemporary Art could be found in the works of three American artists: Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), Andy Warhol (1928-1987), and Jeff Koons. Jackson Pollock represents the Kunstwollen of the first period of American contemporary art which I would like to define as the *Heroic Period*. During this period which started from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, Americans not only created *The American Art*, but they started taking control of the world of art. Andy Warhol represents the Kunstwollen of the second period of American contemporary art, the period of *Dominance*. Started from the early 1960s to the early 1980s, during this period American art dominated the art world. Anything produced outside of New York was considered provincial and non-important or even non-contemporary. Jeff Koons represents the Kunstwollen of the third period of American contemporary art which started from the early 1980s and continues until today. I call this period, the period of *Control*. During this period which started by the return of the painting from Europe in the early 1980s, and continued by the globalization of contemporary art after 1989; American art lost its complete dominance over the art world and since then it tries to control it by the power of art market and auctions around the world.

The works of the Neo-Pop artist Jeff Koons represent the Kunstwollen of today's American Contemporary Art as mechanical and technological reproduction of American popular culture and its power over the art market in the best way possible. He is the heir of American contemporary art's tradition. Many critics compare him with Andy Warhol and consider him as the most successful artist since him. In his work, as mentioned in chapter one he explores the same themes of pop-artists such as ready-made, kitsch, pop culture, and sexuality. None of his pieces, from his stainless-steel sculptures of Puppy, Rabbit, and monumental floral sculpture Balloon Dog to his paintings, are not produced by himself. They are usually produced by machines or his assistants. Jeff Koons is among the bestselling living contemporary artists. Since 15 May 2019 when his *Rabbit 1986* sold for \$91,075,000 at Christie's New York, he holds the record of the most expensive living artist (77-78-79-80).



Fig. 77 Jeff Koons, Popeye, 2009-2011



Fig. 78 Jeff Koons, Balloon Dog, oil on canvas, 1995-1998



Fig.79 Jeff Koons, Michael Jackson and Bubbles, 1988



Fig.80 Jeff Koons, Elephant, mirror-polished stainless steel with transparent color coating

4. Italian Contemporary Kunstwollen



Fig. 81 Luciano Fabro, Italia dell'emigrante, 1981

As a tribute to the Italian history and spirit, with all its contradictions, developed at a time when the country was going through a period of unprecedented changes. In this sense, the Art Povera recovered objects, images, and traditions that belonged to the past, in reaction to this rapid transformation.

_Nicholas Cullinan

As mentioned before contemporary art was a break from the linear art history, it freed art from its connections with the past, it replaced the high art with everyday objects and the artists' craftsmanship skills with the artists' ideas. Thus, art became a concept, it became something like philosophy. According to scholars such as Arthur Danto, and Hans Belting traditional art and art history both came to an end, and a new era began. The new era and the new art were the results of the American Kunstwollen during the two periods of *Heroic* and *Dominance* from the late 1940s to the early 1980s. During these two periods, American first created the American art, then took the lead of the art world, and finally dominated the art world for a few decades. During that time the American Kunstwollen - the mechanical reproduction of the American popular culture and mass media - controlled the art world. Any work of art that did not have those characteristics was not considered contemporary.

In 1967 at the Galleria La Bertesca in Genoa, Italy an exhibition titled *Arte Povera e IM Spazio* curated by the Italian art critic Germano Celant aimed to introduce Art Povera as an Italian and European contemporary art

movement which was rooted in Italian art history and culture. Via several exhibitions around the world, the movement soon became internationally recognized. The movement has been seen as an Italian rejection of Americanization of contemporary art and culture by returning to Italian cultural and historical values. As Giovanni Lista writes "The movement was born as a rejection of the Italian artist towards pro-American modern culture, as a reaction to the change of society, as an act of resistance to the weight of American culture in order to reaffirm Italian artistic identity" (Pratesi, Ciglia & Pirozzi 2015, p.79). He continues by confronting the new media art the Italian artist "becomes aware of the value of its own historical and artistic identity" (ibid) which unlike the American identity has been shaped by centuries of history.

Arte Povera was composed of a group of Italian artists including Giovanni Anselmo, Alighiero Boetti, Enrico Castellani, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Luciano Fabro, Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Marisa Merz, Giulio Paolini, Pino Pascali, Giuseppe Penone, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Emilio Prini, and Gilberto Zorio. In contrast to American Minimalism that reduced art to geometrical machine-made material objects, and Conceptual Art which detached art from its physical materiality and reduced it to an idea; the Italian artists of Arte Povera used "poor" or cheap materials such as earth, wood, iron, rags, plastic, industrial waste, rock, glass, and... in their works as a reaction to the industrialization of art (fig. 81-82-83). By distancing themselves from mechanical reproduction of works of art they made a humanistic approach towards nature and art history. According to Maddalena Disch Arte Povera was a new approach to humanism. "A vital approach and an intuitive naturalness, which is deeply rooted in Italian culture and the humanistic tradition" (p.100).



Fig. 82 Giovanni Anselmo, *Untitled*, 1968



Fig.83 Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Standing Man*, Silkscreen on steel,

Another Italian reaction towards the American art and culture's dominance over the art world was around the end of the 1970s and the early 1980s with Transavanguardia which was an Italian art movement composed of five painters Sandro Chia, Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, Nicola de Maria and Mimmo

Paladino, selected by Achille Bonito Oliva to announce the return of the Italian artists to what he called the Italian *National Art: Painting*. Bonito Oliva invented the term “Transavanguardia” to challenge the concept of the avant-garde as the development of art as a continuous, progressive and straight line. He explains, “while the avant-garde, in all its post-war variations, developed according to the evolutionary idea of linguistic Darwinism whose ancestors were to be found in the historical avant-garde movements, the Transavanguardia, on the other hand, operates outside of these obligatory conditions, following the nomadic attitude of the reversibility of all past languages” (Vergine 2001, pp. 245-246). He refers to mannerist artists of 1500 who after Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo, instead of continuing the invention of new methods referred to old Renaissance methods, modified it from within and used it for themselves. He argues that the Italian Transavanguardia does the same. Instead of going forward and invent something new. They refer to memory, they go back to history, they use the artistic languages of the past to revive contemporary painting. Thus, Transavanguardia does not deny the avant-garde, it just wants to enrich it with historical, and traditional values of *genius loci* or anthropologic identity of the artist (fig. 84-85).



Fig.84 Sandro Chia, *Water Bearer*, Oil paint and pastel on canvas, 1981



85. Francesco Clemente, *Self-Portrait*, Oil on linen, 1980

While Arte Povera was an Italian/European response to American dominance over the contemporary art world, Transavanguardia was not only a response to the Americanization of art and its anti-history and anti-painting tradition, but it was a national answer to Arte Povera as an international Italian art movement. Bonito Oliva “accuses Arte Povera of perusing an internationalist utopia ... all aimed to break through the national boundaries ...has led to the loss and alienation of the deepest cultural and anthropological root. The critic instead claims a national origin for art: different arts are more or less national, and in connection with the natural side of the people.” (Bonito Oliva cited in Pratesi, Ciglia, & Pirozzi 2015, p.112). Contemporary art as a sharp moving forward line does not allow the artist to look back, denies the past, goes against history and humiliates it. Since each country's art is nothing but the reflection of its history, culture, traditions, and it's economic, political and geographical conditions; thus, this anti-history art has no attraction for the old

historical countries. As a response, they return into their historical past, appreciate it and apply it to their contemporary art.

The approach towards the past and cultural and historical heritage in Italian art that during the 70s and 80s showed up by Arte Povera and Transavanguardia continues into present Italian art as the main characteristic of Italian contemporary art. The project of Italian Pavilion Biennale di Venezia 2015 called *Codice Italia* which went through the theme of memory was a great example of this tendency (fig.86-93). The curator Vincenzo Trione gathered artists from different generations (from champions of Art Povera, and Transavanguardia to young artists) each of them, by their need for continuity with the past, harks back to memory in order to offer the avant-garde the possibility of going beyond its own prerogatives, disengaging it from the destructive fury of the present. The curator argued, "What brings them together is the need to break free from the dictatorship of the present, which is similar to a blackboard on which an invisible hand endlessly effaces constantly different events. More or less intentionally, they cultivate precise lineages: their gestures contain secret cross-references to the history of art (from archaeology to twentieth-century experimentalism). They choose, therefore, to walk through the rooms of a past that creeps into current events. As an archive of fragments. That they want to summons. Here. Now." (All the World's Futures 2015, p.92).

In 1982 an exhibition of the works of the artists of both movements Arte Povera and Transavanguardia held in the Guggenheim in New York City titled *Italian Art Now: An American Perspective*. Diane Waldman the curator of the show "put the Italian contemporary art under the sign of complexity, which mirrors that of the country, and underlines it as its particular character, linked to the different regional realities and the continuity between the old and the new: the Florentine Renaissance and the Roman-Greek heritage still resonate in the present" (Pratesi, Ciglia & Pirozzi 2015, p.116). As it does in the Italian daily life, just like walking in the streets where the Renaissance and Roman monuments and modern buildings unite together, today and yesterday are both present in Italian life and art.



Fig.86 Francesco Barocco, Untitled, 2015

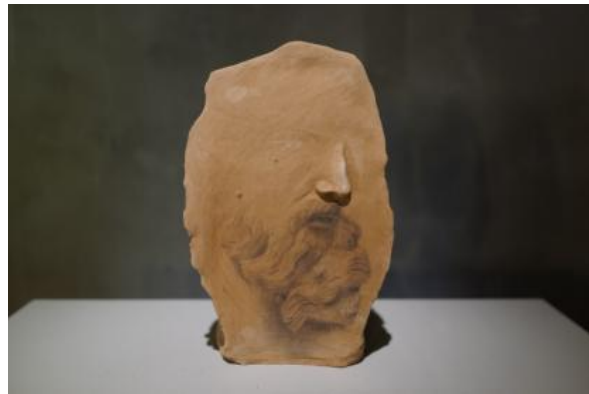


Fig.87 Francesco Barocco, Untitled detail 2015



Fig.88 Mimmo paladino, Untitled, 2015



Fig.89 Mimmo paladino, Untitled detail, 2015



Fig. 90 Vanessa Beecroft, Phantom limb stone garden, 2015



Fig. 91 Luca Monterastelli, A Melancholy of Meat, 2015



Fig.92 Nicola Samori, Lienzo, 2014



Fig. 93 Nino Longobardi, Untitled, 2015

Italian contemporary art could be seen as exactly the opposite of the American one. If American contemporary art is like a moving forward line towards the future with no interest in the past and history, Italian contemporary art has no problem by going back to the past and bring it to present. If American art is based on mechanical reproduction, the Italian one is mostly manual. If American contemporary art looks for images from daily American life, popular culture and mass media; Italian contemporary art looks for images in its regional and national history, traditions, and mythology. Thus, the Kunstwollen of the Italian Contemporary Art could be defined as a nostalgic manual dialogue with history in order to integrate past and present, old and new, national and international, and traditional and contemporary.

One of the best examples of the Kunstwollen of the Italian Contemporary Art is in the works of one of the most controversial Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan. Born on 21 September 1960 in Padua, Italy, Cattelan is probably the most internationally recognized, and the bestselling living Italian artist who lives and works between Milan and New York. Through his sculptures, installations, actions, and performances he criticizes politicians, social hierarchies, and the economic interests that dominate contemporary life. Just as Jeff Koons who turns kitsch and banality into expensive and controversial artworks, Cattelan turns irony and provocation into artworks and shocks the viewer. For instance, in *A Perfect Day* 1999, he attached the Milanese gallery owner, Massimo De Carlo, on a wall with gray adhesive tape (fig.94). At the end of the preview, De Carlo ends up in the emergency room. His *Three children hanged in Piazza XXIV Maggio* 2004

shocked and frightened Milan's citizens (fig.95). While three dressed mannequins with bare feet and their eyes wide open were hanging from a tree in the center of Milan, one of the pedestrians who climbed the tree to take them down fell and broke his leg.



Fig. 94 Maurizio Cattelan, *A Perfect Day*, 1999



Fig.95 Maurizio Cattelan, *Untitled*, Piazza XXIV Maggio, Milan, May 5 – June 6, 2004

As one of the most radical and controversial Italian contemporary artist, Cattelan does not break its ties with history and traditional Italian art. Unlike Jeff Koons whose statues are mostly the iconic characters of the popular culture, toys, and objects of daily American life, Cattelan's works are realistic figures that remind us of the figures of traditional Italian paintings and sculptures. *Him* 2001, is a hyper-realistic sculpture made by Wax, human hair, suit, polyester resin composed as a body of a small schoolboy and the head of the Adolf Hitler kneeling with hands interlaced in front of him, looking at the sky and prying (fig.96). The sculpture usually has been installed at the end of a hallway or room with his back towards the spectators. So, in order to see it, they need to get closer, and that's when the surprise happens: it is not a schoolboy, its Adolf Hitler's statue. In this work with a hyper-realistic statue, Cattelan takes us to one of the darkest chapters of human history and makes us feel that horrible moment of meeting Hitler. *Him* 2001 was sold at auction by Christie's in 2016 for \$17,189,000. In 2001 Maurizio Cattelan's *L.O.V.E* has been installed in Milan's Piazza degli Affari in front of the Stock Exchange building, Palazzo Mezzanotte, which is fascist-styled. *L.O.V.E* which stands for *liberta, odio, vendetta, and eternita* (freedom, hate, revenge, and eternity) is a marble statue of a hand extended in fascist salute but apart from the middle finger, all other fingers have been cut. So, what we see is a middle finger in front of a fascist-styled building of the financial sector in Italy (fig.97). The work raised many interpretations a middle finger towards fascism, towards the financial world, towards the viewer, or maybe all of them. Here again, Cattelan refers to history, not only to the fascism but also to Renaissance and Michelangelo. The marble he used is the Carrara marble, the same that Michelangelo used for his famous statues. The hand has been sculpted in Renaissance style which reminds us of the hands of Michelangelo's David (fig.98-99). As we see Cattelan's works represent all characteristics of Italian contemporary art's *Kunstwollen*, a dialog with history, art history, and juxtaposition of past and present, and contemporary and tradition.



Fig.96 Maurizio Cattelan, *HIM*, Wax, human hair, suit, polyester resin, 101 x 41 x 53 cm, 2001



Fig.97 Maurizio Cattelan, *L.O.V.E.*, white Carrara Marble, roman travertine, 1100 x 470 x 470 cm, Piazza Affari Milano, Italy, 2001



Fig. 98 Maurizio Cattelan, *L.O.V.E.*, 2001



Fig.99 Michelangelo Buonarroti,details from David, 1501-1504

5. Iranian Contemporary Kunstwollen



Fig.100 The Behistun Inscription, authored by Darius the Great, Mount Behistun, Kermanshah, Iran, from 522 B.C. to 486 B.C

Much I have suffered in these thirty years,
I have revived the Ajam with my verse.
I will not die then alive in the world,
For I have spread the seed of the word.
Whoever has sense, path and faith,
After my death will send me praise.

_Ferdowsi

History of Iranian art has been divided into two parts: from the Paleolithic era until the Arab/Muslim conquest of Persia (633–651), and after the Islam's conquest until today. During the first period all kinds of art from music, architecture, painting, weaving, pottery, calligraphy, metalworking and sculpture have been produced; but after the Islamic conquest of Persia most arts (music, figurative painting, sculpture, etc.) have been banned, libraries have been burnt, Persian traditions have been forbidden and the Persian language has been overshadowed by Arabic. The only art that could be produced in silence was poetry. Therefore, poetry became the manifestation of an attempt to save the national identity, national language, and traditions.

The first poet who tried to create a book of national epic of Iran was the Zoroastrian poet Abu Mansur Daqiqi who was born in c. 935 in Tus, Khorasan. But unfortunately, after writing only 1,000 verses of his *Shahnameh* (*The Book of Kings*) he has been killed, and the book remained unfinished. After Daqiqi's death in 977, another poet from Tus named Ferdowsi Tusi (c. 940–1020) followed his footsteps and continued his

unfinished work. Finally, after thirty years of intensive work Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* (*The Book of King*) which is the world's longest epic poetry created by a single poet has been completed in 1010CE. In all this monumental book which tells 62 stories in 990 chapters, and is composed of 100,000 lines and 50,000 couplets, Ferdowsi tried to avoid any Arabic word that came into the Persian language after the Arab invasion of Persia. As he writes:

For thirty years, I endured much pain and strife,
I awaken the Ajam by this Persian [language].

In this poem, he describes how he suffered for thirty years in order to save the Persian language from Arabic. The word Ajam is Arabic means Non-Arab and Persian. In this national epic book, Ferdowsi tells the mythical and historical past of the Persian Empire from the creation of the world until the Islamic conquest of Persia, and by inventing a hero called Rostam he brings the national confidence back to Iranians. Later the epic poems of *Shahnameh* have been written on weapons to inspire warriors to visualize themselves as heroes (fig.101).



Fig. 101 Persian Khula Khud Warrior Helmet n Shield, Steel, Iron, Gold, Silver, Early 19th Century

The role of the poet as the saver of national identity is not limited to the classical poetry. During the Iranian Constitutional Revolution that took place between 1905 and 1907, and ended in the establishment of a parliament in Persia (Iran) during the Qajar Dynasty, poets were the forefront (many of them have been assassinated or imprisoned) and poetry was the voice of the revolution fighting for nationality and freedom, which is continuing until today. The following poem by Ahmad Shamluo (1925-2000) who was arguably the most influential poet of contemporary Iran, to the contemporary Iranian artist Iran Darroudi is a great example of this kind. In this poem, the poet creates a verbal image of freedom for the painter and encourages her to paint it.

For Iran Darroudi and her colorful struggle

Painters before you
Created many deer through a mixture of leaves
And a flock of sheep in a mountainside
With a shepherd hidden in the vagaries of clouds
On the mountaintop.

Or in a full and simple manner they portrayed a hunger, stricken reindeer suffering in a colorful and smoggy forest.

Paint us the lines of similarity:
The sigh, iron and quicklime
And the smoke, the lie and the pain
For silence is not our virtue.

The silence of water can be drought
And the cry of thirst,
The silence of wheat can be hunger
and the victorious cry of famine
Just as the silence of the sun is darkness.
But man's silence is the absence of God, the absence of the universe.

Paint us the cry!
Paint my age

In the curve of a ship with a lash, stroke of pain!
My neighbor, this stranger with hope and God,
Our respect which, turned into mere coins, is sold away.

We had at our beck all the words of the world and yet,
Did not say a worthy thing
For in all that we said, one word was absent: Freedom!

We did not pronounce it
But you paint it!

Ahmad Shamlu
March 1973

After the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, Persian poetry also has faced a revolution. Many poets rebelled against the Classical Persian prosody. The chief figure of these poets was Nimā Yushij (1895-1960), who is considered the father of modern Persian poetry, known as "New Poetry" or "Nimaic Poetry." He broke the traditional rules of Persian classical poetry that had dictated the fixed-length of a verse by manipulating rhythm and rhyme. Consequently, freed Persian poetry from conventional prosodic rules. The evolution of Persian poetry by its separation from the traditional rules has been continued by Nima's successors. Among them, Ahmad Shamluo has founded "Sepid poetry" (sepid, "white") or "White Poetry" movement. In "White Poetry" which is a radical departure from Classical Persian prosody, the rhythm and rhyme have been disappeared and been substituted by the natural music of the words. In his poetry, Shamluo mixed the

colloquial language with the language of Persian classical poetry and created a new language, where current issues and classical ancient myths blend into each other.

Writing poetry in Iran was not limited only to the professional poets, but even kings, scientists, philosophers, historians, and...even mullahs write poetry. Even though the most resources of Persian literature have been burnt after the Arab and Mongol invasion of Persia, the oldest surviving examples of Persian poetry are the Zoroastrian Gathas, consisting of seventeen hymns composed by the great poet-prophet Zarathushtra around 1200 BC. Unlike western philosophy which is based on Phonocentrism and the search for truth has claimed precedence over literature's concern with styles, forms, figures of speech, etc. Persian philosophy from Zarathushtra to Omar Khayyam (1048-1131), Attar of Nishapur (c. 1145 – c. 1221), Rumi (1207-1273) and... has used poetry and poetic language. Poetry in Iran does not only belong to history or books but it takes part of the daily life of the people and goes everywhere, it appears on death announcements and gravestones, wedding card invitations, on the walls, on clothes, bags, tattoos, behind the cars, on carpets, craft, ceramic tiles, objects of daily life, packets, and... (fig.102-109). During thousands of years of history of Iran, poetry and especially the national epic poems of Shahnameh worked as a connecting line between people from different ethnic groups with different religions, and languages who have been living in the ancient land of Iran for centuries and defined them a common national identity. That's why Iranian people admire poetry as their national art and love their poets; they respect them as their national prophets by building them amazing monumental mausoleums (fig.110-117). The following poem is called *O You Ancient Land, I Love Thee* (1989) by Mehdi Akhavan Sales (1929 -1990) who was one of the pioneers of the New Poetry in Iran. This poem is a poem about poets and poetry. The poet of the poem adores his native land and its poets and their poems.

From all meaningless earthly possessions, if I acclaim
Thee oh ancient land, I adore

Thee oh ancient eternal great
If I adore any, thee I adore

Thee oh priceless ancient Iran
Thee oh valuable jewel, I adore

Thee ancient birthplace of the great nobles
Thee famous creator of the greats, I adore

Thine art and thoughts shines through the world
Both thine art and thine thoughts I adore

May it be legend or history
Critics and ancient stories, all I adore

Thine fantasy, I worship as truth
Thine reality, as news I adore

Thine Ahuramazda and Yazatas, I revere
Thine glory and Faravahar, I adore

To thine ancient prophet, I take an oath
Who is a bright and wise sage, I adore

The noble Zarathustra, more so than
All other sages and prophets, I adore

Humanity better than him has not seen and will not see
This noblest of humanity I adore

His trios are the greatest guide for the world
This impactful yet brief guide, I adore

This great Iranian was a leader
This Iranian leader I adore

He Never killed, nor asked others to kill
This noble path I adore

This truthful ancient sage
Who went beyond the legend, I adore

The eternal intellect of the glorious Mazdak
From all angles and aspects, I adore

He died bravely in the war with injustice
That just lion-heart I adore

Global and just thoughts he had
More of his thoughts in our path I adore

Praising thine great Mani
The artist and messenger I adore

That painter of the higher spirits
The truth of his paintings I adore

All types of your fertile lands
All your fields, deserts, springs and rivers I adore

Thine brave and noble martyrs
Who were prides of the humanity, I adore

With the help of the morning breeze, their spirits
Made of Iron, I sense and I adore

Their exciting thoughts which had turned the centuries
Upside down I adore

Their works of experience and messages
Or maybe a few lines of news I adore

Those legendary noblemen of
Just a few in each century, I adore

All thine poets and poems
Same as the morning breeze I adore

Thine Ferdowsi, the legendary literary tower he erected

placed in the hall of fame and glory, I adore

Thine Khayyam, the eternal anger and passion he created
In our hearts and souls I adore

Thine Attar, the pains and mourns he created
Takes away our breaths I adore

From that admirer of Shams, the passion
That enflames the heart, I adore

From Sa'di, Hafez and Nizami
All the cheers, poetry and fruits I adore

Great art thine Rasht, Gorgan and Mazandaran
The same as Caspian Sea I adore

Great art thine Karoun River and Ahvaz
Sweeter than sugar I adore

Glory to thine great Azerbaijan
That first step to danger I adore

Esfahan, thine half of the world
More than the other half I adore

Great art Khorasan the birthplace of the wise
With all my heart and soul, that vast land I adore

Great art thine beautiful Shiraz
The center of talent and art I adore

Thine lands of Kurdistan and Baluchistan, same as
The noble fruit tree I adore

Great art thine Kerman and Southern borders
Thus dry and wet, sea and desert I adore

Afghanistan, our same roots which is a garden
In the hands of better than the best I adore

Soqd and Kharazm and their deserts
Alas Qajars had lost, but I adore

Thine Iraq and the long strips of Persian Gulf
Similar to the wall of China I adore

Our ancient Caucasia to Iran
A son in father's house I adore

Thine yesterday's legend and tomorrow's dream
In each its own, both I adore

Thus better than these two, art thee alive
Thine today's entity I adore

Thine beauty and depth were on top of the world
That ultimate value and danger I adore

Once more arise to the maximum depth
This new color and beauty I adore

Not Easternization, Not Westoxication, Not Tazi-fication
For thee O Ancient Land I adore

Until the world remains, victorious thou shalt be
Strong, awake and fortunate thou shalt be



Fig. 102 Poetry on clothing



Fig. 103 Poetry as tattoo. Poem of Omar Khayyam



Fig. 104 Poems behind the cars



Fig. 105 Poems behind the cars



Fig. 106 Poems on gift bags



Fig. 107 Poems on ceramic bowl, Kashan, 13th -14th century AD



Fig. 108 The Ardabil Carpet, unknown artist, Persia, dated 946 AH, Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Fig.109 Ardabil Carpet (detail), Poetry on Carpet



Fig.110 Mausoleum of Ferdowsi (940–1020 CE), Tus, Iran



Fig. 111 Mausoleum of Omar Khayyam (1048 –1131), Nishapur, Iran



Fig. 112 Mausoleum of Hafiz Shirazi (1325/26–1389/90), Shiraz, Iran



Fig. 113 Mausoleum of Saadi Shirazi (1210_1291/92), Shiraz, Iran



Fig. 114 Mausoleum of Attar of Nishapur (c. 1145 – c. 1221), Nishapur, Iran



Fig. 115 Mausoleum of Baba Tahir (11th century), Hamedan, Iran



Fig. 116 Mausoleum of Rahi Mo'ayyeri (1909–1968), Tehran, Iran

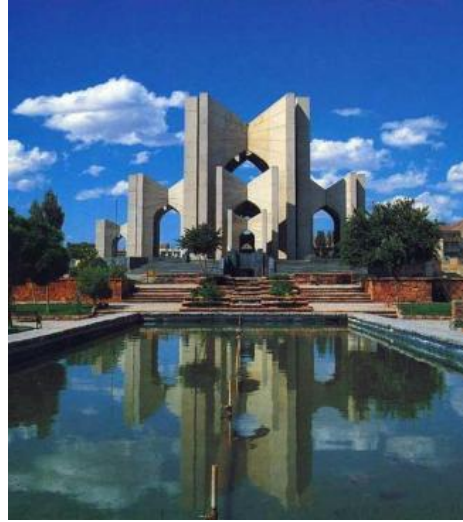


Fig. 117 the Mausoleum of Poets, tombs of over 400 poets, Tabriz, Iran

Although thanks to the efforts of Daqiqi and Ferdowsi Persian language as an Indo-European language has been saved from Arabic which is a Semitic language, Persian script has died after the Arab Muslims conquest of Persia. Modern Persian script, therefore, has been developed from the Arabic script. That's why for those who can't read Arabic or Persian they seem the same. In Islam, the representation of the face of God (Allah) and/or prophet Mohammed is forbidden, but writing Koran - the words of Allah - with beautiful handwriting is encouraged. As Allah says in Holy Koran "He Who taught (the use of) the Pen—Taught man that he knew not" (Koran, 96/4-5), "And if whatever trees upon the earth were pens and the sea [was ink], replenished thereafter by seven [more] seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise" (Koran, 31:27). Therefore, calligraphy as the art of beautiful handwriting became the main art in Islamic countries.

In Iran apart from Koranic calligraphy, Iranians invented different styles of Persian calligraphy to write poetry. The most dominant Persian Calligraphic style is called "Nasta'liq" which is popular in all Persian language countries for writing poetry. Nasta'liq has been invented by the Persian calligrapher Mir Ali Tabrizi (1360-1420) during the 14th century (fig.118), it has been developed by great masters such as Mir Emad (1554-1615) (fig.119), Mirza Reza Kalhor Kermanshahi (1829-1892) (fig.120), and... Out of Nasta'liq developed "Shekasteh Nasta'liq" (broken Nasta'liq) style that compared to Nasta'liq is less legible and more improvisational and expressive. There are different ideas on who invented Shekasteh. Some say it has been invented by Morteza Qoli Khan Shamluo, and others say by his student Shafia of Herat (d.1676), but the one who truly brought the style to perfection was Abdul-Majid of Taliqan (1737-1773) (fig.121). All three have been poets and calligraphers. Koranic calligraphic styles developed intending to write Allah's words. Therefore, they represent the strictness of religion and its rules, which must be respected perfectly, without any personal interpretation (fig.122). Nasta'liq and Shekasteh Nasta'liq, on the other hand, were invented to write poetry. Despite having similar characters, the script is loose, free, and interpretative, which gives the artist the freedom of self-expression. They are two opposite methods to visually represent an idea and transmit it through the stylistic form: the first one is the strict one of religion and the word of God which binds everyone into something closed and immobile; the second one is the independent and emancipated one of the freedoms of poetry.



Fig.118 Mir Ali Tabrizi, *Khusraw u Shirin* by Nizami, Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, ca. 1400



Fig. 119 Mir Imad, ink, watercolour, and gold on paper, c. 1600

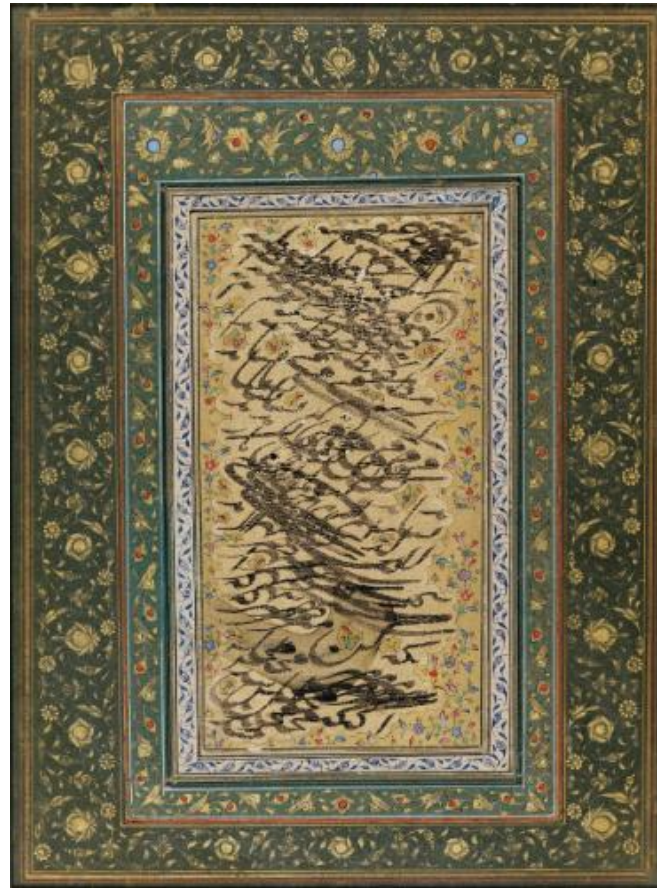


Fig.120 Mirza Reza Kalhor Kermanshahi, *Siyah Mashq*, ink, gouache and gold on paper, 19th century

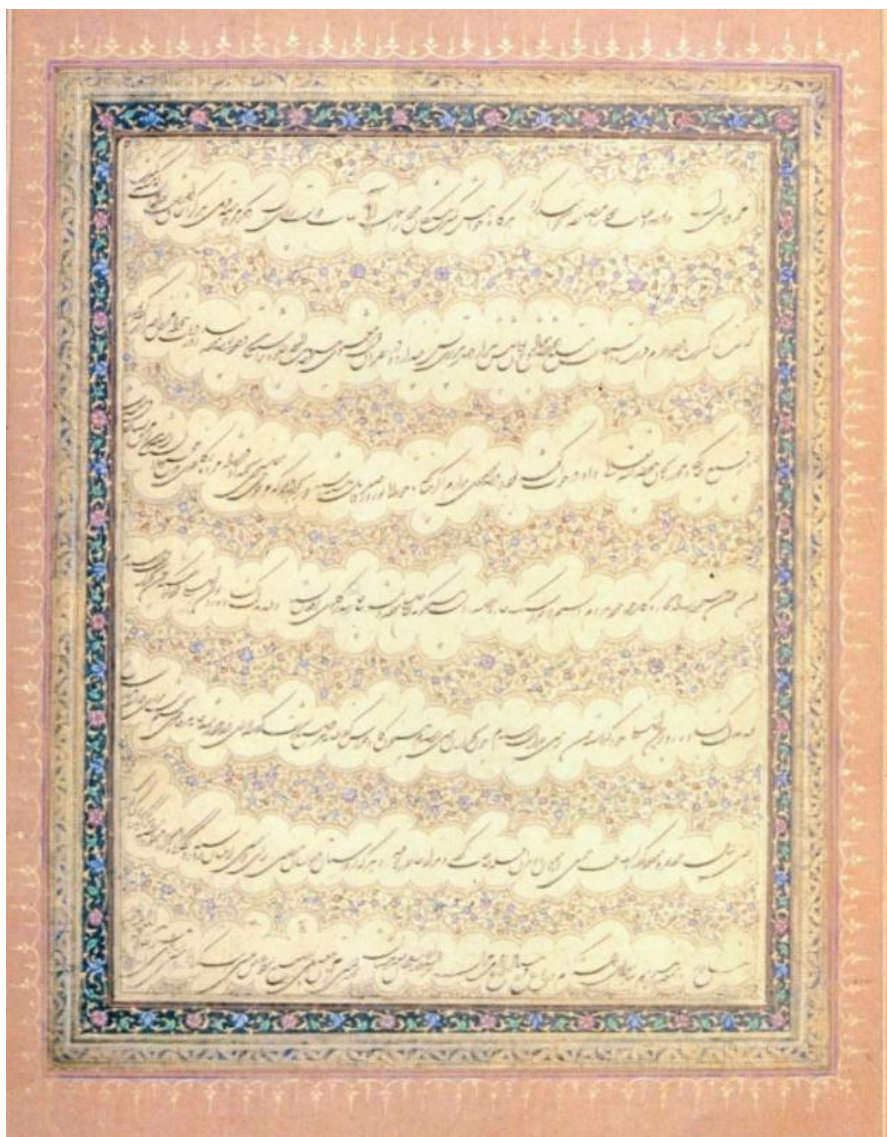


Fig.121 Abdul-Majid of Taliqan, ink gouache and gold on paper, 18th century



Fig. 122 Umar Aqta, Section of a Qur'an Manuscript, Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, late 14th–early 15th century

In 1965 Dick Higgins (1938–1998) who was an American artist, composer, writer, publisher, poet, and co-founder of the Fluxus movement published his famous essay of Intermedia (fig.123). Intermedia was described as not another media, but as something that stands between two different media and connects them to define, in Higgins words "works which fall conceptually between media that are already known" (Higgins 2001). For example, "the ready-made or found object...suggests a location in the field between the general area of art media and those of life media" ... "happening lies between collage, music, and theatre" (ibid). Higgins distinguishes intermedia from mixed media and argues that mixed media works are those that have been produced by more than one medium for example, "paintings which incorporate poems within their visual fields, for instance. But one knows which is which". He continues:

"In intermedia, on the other hand, the visual element (painting) is fused conceptually with the words. We may have abstract calligraphy, concrete poetry, "visual poetry" (not any poem with a strong visual element, but the term is sometimes used to cover visual works in which some poem appears, often as a photography, or in which the photographed visual material is presented as a sequence with a grammar of its own, as if each visual element were a word of a sentence, as in certain works by Jean-François Bory or Duane Michaels)" (ibid).

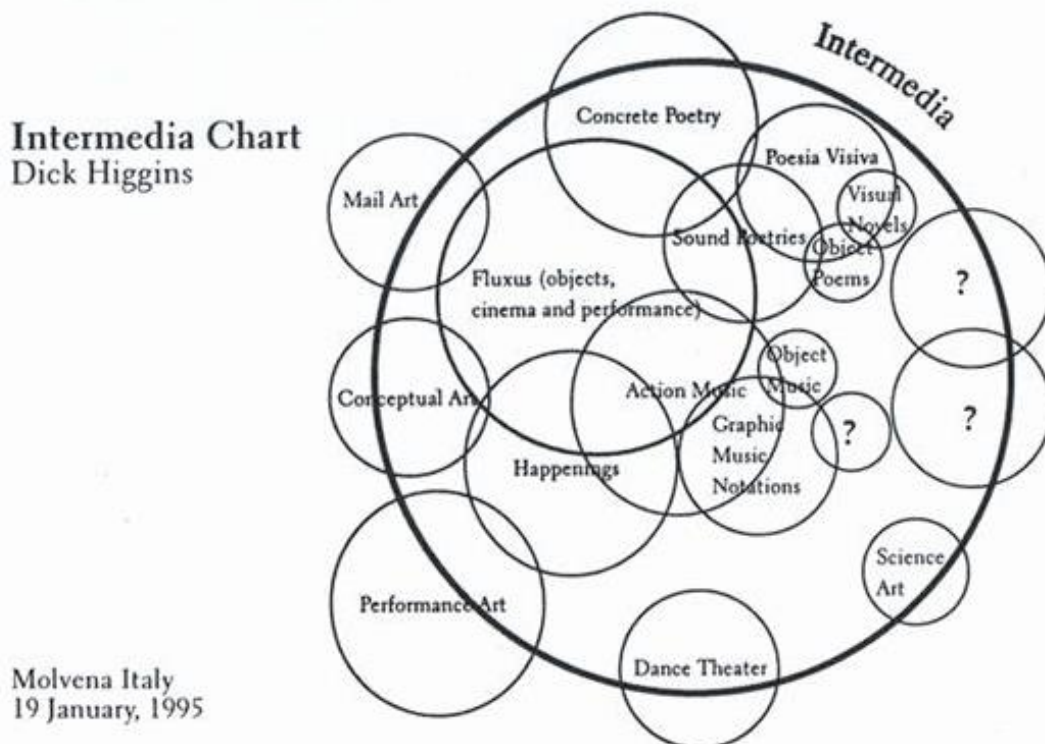


Fig. 123 Dick Higgins's Intermedia diagram, Molvena Italy, 1995

Therefore, Persian calligraphy and two styles of Nasta'liq and Shekasteh Nasta'liq could be considered as intermedia, and because of three reasons, they both could be defined as visual poetry. The first reason is their content which is poetry. The second is their visual appearance (which is aesthetically appealing), and their improvisational and expressive nature. The third reason is they have been invented to visualize poetry and transfer it to the viewer/reader. Hence, Persian calligraphy could be interpreted as visual poetry that stands between visual arts and poetry and connects them to each other.

Poetry as the national art influences not only calligraphy but also all other arts, music, architecture, sculpture, and painting, which are all sorts of visualizations of a poem. Even though in Persian traditional music singers usually sing classical poems, but in many cases, singers sing contemporary poems with the classical musical instruments and vice versa. Many elements of ancient architecture still show up in contemporary architecture, calligraphic inscriptions of poems engage with architecture works as an element of design. Painting and sculpture are connected to the Persian miniatures where drawing, painting, and calligraphy (images and words) get together to visualize verbal images created by poets. Poetry is like the blood in the veins of Iranian art and culture.

The first approaches towards contemporary art in Iran appeared during the late 1950s and the early 1960s by the work of young artists such as Parviz Tanavoli, Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, Faramarz Pilaram (1938-1983), Massoud Arabshahi, Mansur Qandriz (1935-1965), Nasser Oveisi, Sadeq Tabrizi, and Zhazeh Tabatabai, who combined their works with traditional decorative elements of Iranian popular culture. In 1962 the art critic Karim Emami (1930-2005) used the term *Saqqakhana* to describe this new trend of Iranian contemporary art (fig.124). The artists of the Saqqakhana School of Art used already existing elements from religious objects, objects of daily life, texts from ancient, literary, and religious books, and calligraphic elements in their two and three-dimensional artworks. Out of works of artists such as Charles Hossein Zenderoudi (fig.125), and Faramarz Pilaram (fig.126) who used calligraphy in their works another style of calligraphy named Naghashi-Khat (Calligraphic Painting) has been developed. Nashaghi-khat is a style that brings calligraphy into the realm of Western abstract painting and sculpture and stands between calligraphy and painting, old and new, traditional and contemporary, and Orient and Occident.



Fig.124 Nasser Oveisi, *Five Goblet- Dance*, Oil on Canvas, 100 x 200 cm, 1960

The search for a national art, that on the one hand is rooted in the traditional culture of Iran, and on the other hand meets the international standards of contemporary art was the biggest concern of Iranian artists. The solution to create such an art was to return to the cultural and historical values of Iran and express them through an international and contemporary language. Iranian contemporary art, builds a bridge between Iranian history, mythology, and traditional art and culture and the Western contemporary language of art. Just as American artists look for their sources of imagery in American popular culture, and reproduce them in diverse mechanical ways which echoes the technological spirit of American contemporary life and culture; Iranian artists look through the Iranian popular culture which is linked to the old history and culture of their ancient land and revive them in their contemporary works of art. Thus, the Kunstwollen of Iranian

Contemporary Art could be explained as a poetic approach toward bridging cultural and historical values to the international standards of contemporary art. A bridge between tradition and modernity, national and international, East and West, and local and global.

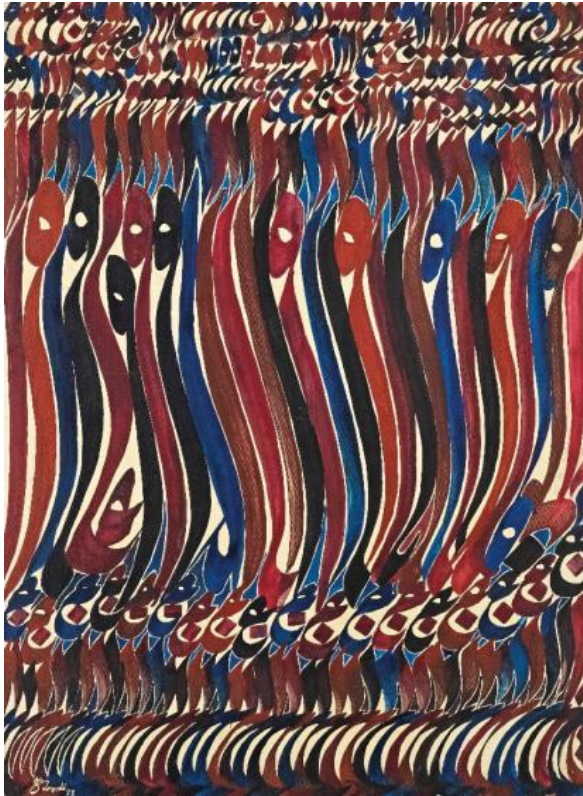


Fig. 125 Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, Abyaneh, acrylic on canvas, 1973



Fig. 126 Faramarz Pilaram, Untitled, Ink, graphite, watercolor, metallic paint, and gold leaf on paper, 1977

One of the Iranian contemporary artists whose work can represent the Kunstwollen of Iranian contemporary art is Parviz Tanavoli. He was one of the chief members of the Saqqakhana movement and is considered the father of Iranian modern sculpture. Tanavoli was born on 23 March 1937 in Tehran. Studied sculpture in the Brera Academy of Milan under the Italian sculpture Marino Marini (1901-1980) and graduated in 1959. After his graduation, he moved back to Iran and taught sculpture at the Tehran College of Decorative Arts. Tanavoli taught sculpture for three years from 1961 to 1963 at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD). After his return to Iran, he has been appointed as the director of the sculpture department at the University of Tehran until 1979. He lives and works between Vancouver and Tehran since 1989. His work has been displayed in the most important museums and galleries around the world and takes part in many public and private collections.

Tanavoli's work has a strong connection with the cultural, mythological, historical and artistic heritage of his country. It was first Marino Marini (who himself was inspired by the art of the Etruscan) that taught him how the art of the past can enrich the present. In his return to Iran after his studies in Italy, Tanavoli realized that despite ancient bas-reliefs due to the strict Islamic prohibition of representational art there is no sculptural legacy in Iran. The only sculptor that literary resources have referred to was the legendary Farhad the Mountain Carver who soon became Tanavoli's hero. The story of Farhad whose love story with the Armenian princess Shirin who was the love of the King of Persia Khosrow Parviz (ruling from 590 to 628) and later

married him and became the queen has inspired several poets from Ferdowsi and Nizami Ganjavi (1141–1209) to many contemporary poets. The legend began around the historical Mount Bisotun in Kermanshah province in the West of Iran. When king Khosrow realized that the sculptor was in love with the princess, gave them the impossible task of curving stairs out of rocks, so if he could make it, he could marry Shirin. Farhad accepted the challenge and started curving the mountain. Yet Khosrow sent him an old woman with the fake news of the Shirin's death. He believed the lie and fell from the rocks and died (fig.127). "Some years later Islam conquered Iran and forbade all representational art. Farhad was thus my own nearest ancestor, though he had died 14 centuries before my birth.... To me Farhad was no mere votary of love who carved an entire mountain for the love of Shirin; he was a sculptor par excellence" (Tanavoli 2011, p.6) (fig.128,129).

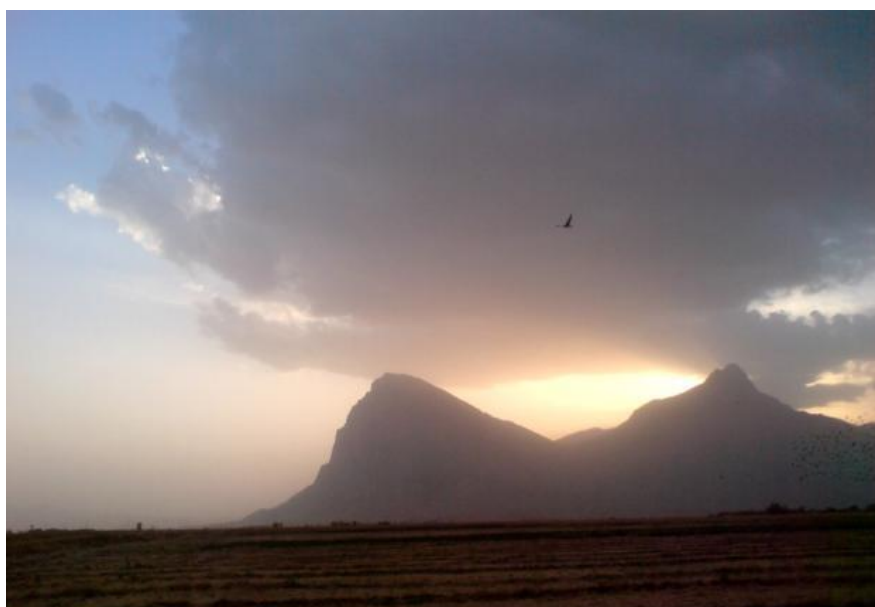


Fig.127 A view from the Mount Bisotun near Kermanshah, Iran, Photo by the author



Fig.128 Parviz Tanavoli, *Fall Of The Mountain Carver*, Concrete and Bronze, 1975

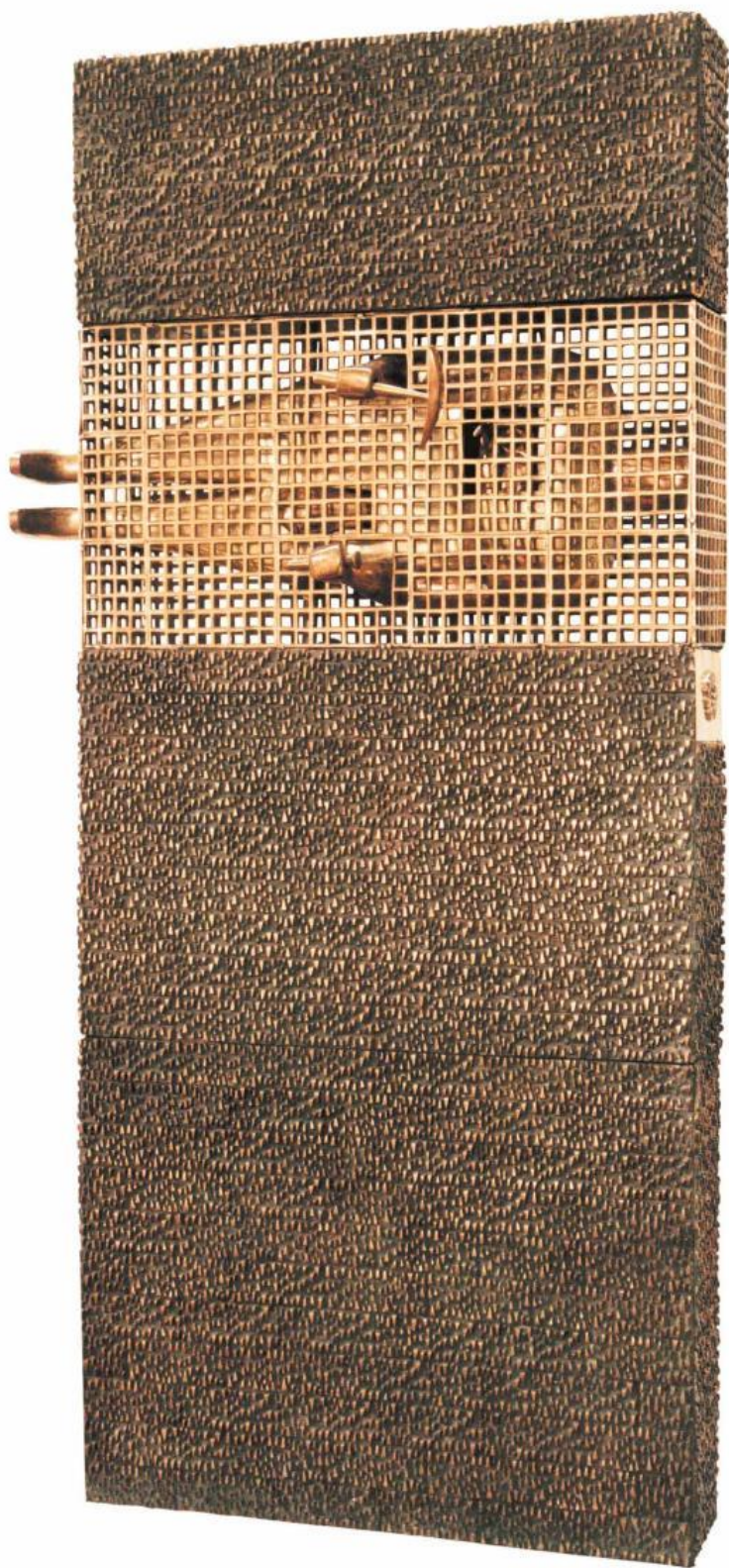


Fig.129 Parviz Tanavoli, *Monument for Farhad, The Mountain Carver*, Bronze, 1976

Tanavoli's most well-known works are his "Heech" statues (fig.130-135). Heech in the Persian language means nothing. He argues that in response to the works of some young artists who covered their canvases with calligraphy and stated membership in Saqqakhana movement, he decided to give up using calligraphy, or limit himself in using just one word. "For a long while, I contemplated what this singular word should be, until finally, heech suggested itself" (ibid, p7). In contrast to the concept of nothingness in Western philosophy or the works of several Western artists such as Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol, his Heech, he stated:

"was the nothingness of hope and friendship, a nothingness that did not seek to negate. In my mind, it was not life that amounted to nothing, but rather nothing that brimmed with life itself. Another feature that enhanced its appeal for me was the lovely proportionate shape of heech. Like the human figure, it was soft and pliable and could easily assume different positions such as reclining or sitting on a chair or leaning against a table... This opened a new portal to me through which I was ushered by heech itself" (ibid).

Tanavoli's Heeches are three-dimensional statues of the word Heech written in Nasta'liq style of calligraphy produced in different sizes and different materials such as stainless steel, bronze, fiberglass, and neon. Persian calligraphy which is visual poetry in Tanavoli's work becomes three-dimensional. While the fiberglass and neon Heeches ignite a dialogue with pop-art, the stainless-steel and bronze stay in the realm of traditional sculpture. Heech lies between poetry, philosophy, history, and mythology of ancient Persia and contemporary art. It stands between contemporary sculpture and traditional Iranian craft. Heech is a bridge between past and present, old and new, tradition and modernity, and national and international. Heech represents the local Kunstwollen of Iranian contemporary art in a global context.



Fig. 130 Parviz Tanavoli, *Standing Heech*, bronze, 2007



Fig.131 Parviz Tanavoli, *Heech And Cube*, Bronz. 2007



Fig.132 Parviz Tanavoli, *Heech And Chair II*, Bronze, 1973



Fig.133 Parviz Tanavoli, *The Winding Heech*, Bronze, 1999



Fig.134 Parviz Tanavoli, *Red Heech Lovers*, Fiberglass, 2003



Fig.135 Parviz Tanavoli, *Neon Heech*, 2012

6. Transcultural Contemporary Kunstwollen

All who love are related

reach me your hand in trust
you, neighbor of pain

sing a song with us in trust
you, neighbor of pain

_Ahmad Shamluo to the imprisoned Nelson Mandela, 1988

As discussed in chapter two, after 1989 when contemporary art crossed the Western borderlines and became global, each country represented its own version of contemporary art. Artists around the globe started producing artworks that on the one hand, were linked to the global contemporary Kunstwollen, and on the other hand, to their local Kunstwollen. The development of communication technology and mobile devices of communication challenged the traditional notion of time and location. Increasing mobility and means of transportation, methods, and materials of language learning from computer programs to online language courses, and mobile applications, study abroad and student exchange programs, forced and voluntary migration fostered ways of communication and cultural encounters and exchanges, and led the world toward globalization. All that in the one hand, gave birth to neo-fascism and nationalism, and on the other hand, to transculturalism.

The term transculturation was created in 1940 by the Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz Fernández (1881-1969) in his book on the history of tobacco and sugar in Cuba: *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el azúcar* (*Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*) based on the article *Nuestra America* (1881) by José Martí (1853-1895). Ortiz argues that the Transculturation is “the product of a meeting between an existing culture or subculture and a migrant culture, recently arrived, which transforms the two and creates in the process a neoculture, which is also subject to transculturation ...the process necessarily involves the loss or *déracinement* of a previous culture (partial deculturation) and, furthermore, the resulting development of new cultural phenomena (neoculturation)” (Ortiz cited in Onghena 2010, p.182). Unlike interculturalism which is the relationship between two or more different cultures while their differences stay the same, and multiculturalism which contains different cultural societies within a dominant one; transculturalism extends through different cultures, unifies them and creates a new one. As Lamberto Tassinari, the co-founder of the Canadian transcultural magazine *ViceVersa* writes: “Contrary to multiculturalism, which most experiences have shown re-enforces boundaries based on past cultural heritages, transculturalism is based on the breaking down of boundaries. In many ways transculturalism, by proposing a new humanism of the recognition of the other, based on a culture of *métissage*, is in opposition to the singular traditional cultures that have evolved from the nation-state” (Tassinari cited in Cuccioletta 2001/2002).

Transcultural human's identity, therefore, is not tied only to one specific culture or ethnic group, but is linked to his/her transcultural experiences. It's the result of living outside of the geographical borderlines where s/he was born. It's the result of encountering other cultures, learning different languages and communicating with people from different nationalities, ethnic groups, with diverse religions, languages, and worldviews. It is the result of high cultural intelligence, and interacting with the *other*. Transculturation takes courage. The courage to live outside the national and traditional comfort zones. Not everyone who moves abroad is capable of doing that. Many people take their homelands and their ethnic identity with themselves wherever they go. They change just the geographical place of their life. Consequently, while their external world

changes, the internal one remains the same. As we see for example in multicultural countries where people from different cultures bring their ethnic identity and build a small version of their home country while they follow the dominant culture's rules. Transculturation thus, happens inside the individual's mind who not only goes beyond the geographical borderlines, but goes beyond his/her national, traditional, and sociocultural dos and don'ts, and gives up the stereotypical prejudgments of the *others*, by encountering them and communicating with them. Transculturation is the act of re-birthing oneself with a new identity. Not the identity built by sociocultural, political, and geographical obligations, but the identity of one's choice. Transculturation is a passage from one-dimensional worldview to a multi-dimensional one.

Alois Riegl argued that *Kunstwollen* is the result of a particular culture's perception and interpretation of the world in a specific time and place which is rooted in their worldview that shapes not only their art but also their government, law, philosophy, science, religion, etc. Based on his ideas, art is the product of a collective perception of a particular culture in a specific historical period, not an individual artist's perception of the world. Art is a cultural product. In contrast to that, transcultural art is the result of an individual artist's perception of the world, that is rooted in his/her personal worldview that goes beyond a specific time, location, nation, and culture. Hence, transcultural *Kunstwollen* is the opposite of the local one which is linked to local cultural, historical, traditional, and national values of a particular nation in a specific location and time. Transcultural *Kunstwollen* is linked to the individual artists' world experience and their transcultural background. Transcultural artworks are different from the works of those artists represent something from another cultures in their artworks. For instance, neither Parviz Tanavoli's *Heeches*, nor Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* are not transcultural works of art. Picasso took the images of the African art and represented them through the Western media of oil on canvas, and Tanavoli through the Western technique and notion of contemporary art turned the Persian calligraphy into an international contemporary art piece. Tanavoli's work manifest's the *Kunstwollen* of Iranian contemporary art. In the following paragraphs, I will introduce two transcultural artists and their artworks.

7. Francesco Clemente

I left Italy because I had no affinity with Catholic and Marxist ideas. I was looking for a vantage point, a place in which being 'outside' would allow me to see the 'inside'.

_Francesco Clemente

When Achille Bonito Oliva described Transavanguardia as a return to the past in order to enrich the present. He insisted on the artist's return to not only the deep national roots but also to the regional and provincial roots or *genius loci* (the spirit of the place). Therefore, according to Bonito Oliva the Transavanguardian artists' inspiration was not only rooted in the Italian heritage but also in their home towns' cultural and historical background. But each artist's approach towards the past and his birthplace is different. Mimmo Paladino's art is linked to ancient European art and history, to his city (Benevento) and different cultures that shaped it from the early Christian and Romanesque periods. But at the same time, he looks at the most important artists from the early Renaissance, up to the most modern ones. Sandro Chia also believes that tradition is important. In his case, he is more interested in all European modernism, specifically Italian painters like De Chirico and the Futurists. Chia bears within himself the images of Florentine art, seen as a child, but presents them with a combination of modernist styles that sometimes recalls Fauves, sometimes Cézanne. Enzo Cucchi, on the other hand, defines himself as extremely tied to the *genius loci* of the small-town Marche, where he was born and grown-up. As a landscape painter, in his paintings he shows the environment of his region, he talks about its places and their traditions. The main theme of his works is the skulls and cemeteries, seen by him simply as natural elements of the landscape, numerous in his territories,

typical images of the villages of the province. Unlike Paladino, Chia, and Cucchi, who are more tied to the art and history of the past and particularly the Italian and European ones, Francesco Clemente's approach towards life and art is totally contemporary and transcultural.

Francesco Clemente was born on 23 March 1952 in Naples, Italy. In 1970 he moved to Rome to study architecture at the Sapienza University of Rome, but instead, he has concentrated on painting and never graduated in architecture. In Rome, he came to contact with contemporary artists such as Luigi Ontani, Alighiero Boetti, and Cy Twombly. A year later after his first solo exhibition in 1971 at the Galleria Valle Giulia in Rome, he traveled to Afghanistan with Alighiero Boetti. In 1973 he visited India for the first time, a country that had a strong impact on his worldview. Since then he returned there again and again to India. Between 1973 to 1978 he opened his studio in Madras where he attended Theosophical Society. His interest in India was not only spiritual but he was also interested in local popular culture and crafts. Thus, between 1980-1981 in collaboration with Indian miniaturists, he produced the *Pinxit* series of miniatures in gouache on handmade paper. In these works, Indian miniaturists painted the decorative elements (fig.136,137). Clemente's work came into international attention during the early 1980s by his participation in the Venice Biennale in 1980. He has been considered as one of the leading figures of the "return to painting" during the 80s and his work has been shown in two historic exhibitions of *A New Spirit of Painting* at the Royal Academy in London in 1981, and *Zeitgeist* at the Martin-Gropius-Bau in 1982 in Berlin. After relocating to New York in 1981 where he met contemporary artists such as Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat, and poets like Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg, John Wieners and Rene Ricard. During those years he collaborated with Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat on group painting projects (fig.138) and completed three book projects with Beat poet Allen Ginsberg (fig.139). During the 80s he continued returning to India and traveled to Asia, South America, Egypt, etc.



Fig. 136 Francesco Clemente, *Pinxit*, Gouache on antique paper, 1981

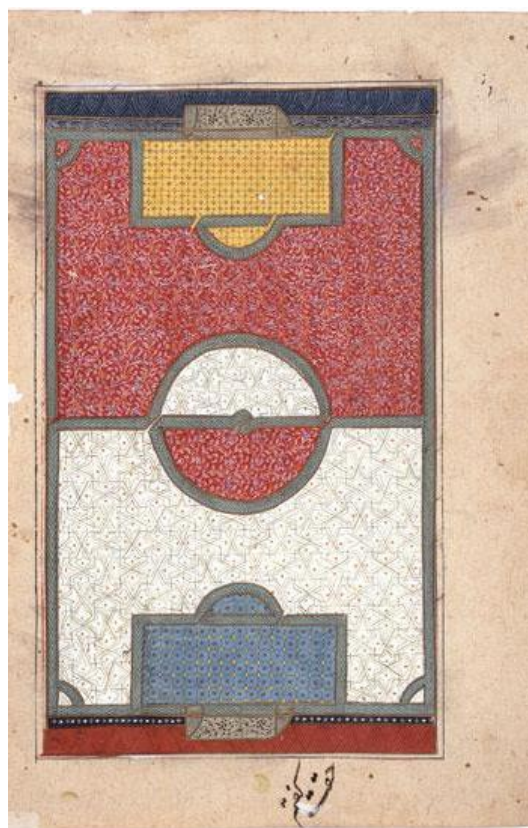


Fig. 137 Francesco Clemente, *Pinxit*, Gouache on antique paper, 1981



Fig. 138 Jean-Michel Basquiat, Francesco Clemente and Andy Warhol, *Origin of Cotton*, oil, acrylic, silkscreen ink and masking tape on canvas, 1984

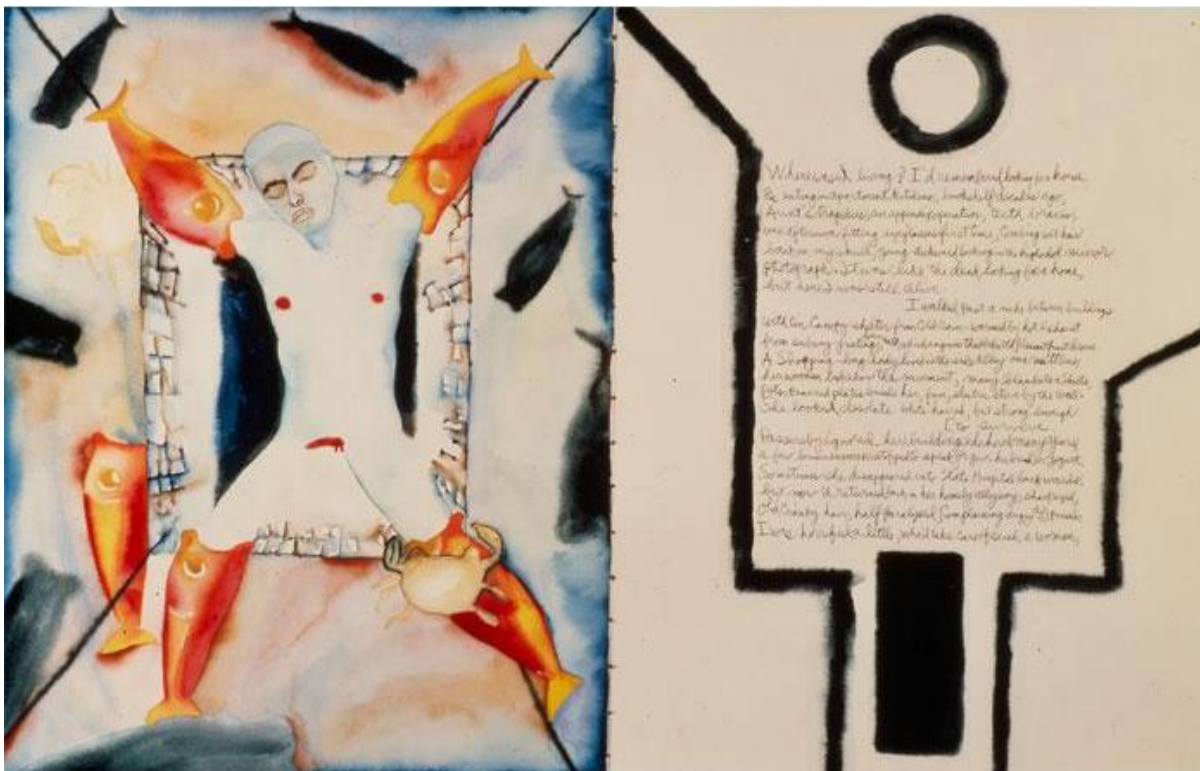


Fig.139 Allen Ginsberg, Francesco Clemente, *White Shroud*, Ink, pencil, watercolor on paper, 1983

Unlike other Transavantguardian artists who refer to history and art of the past, national and regional heritage and *genius loci*, Francesco Clemente explores contemporary and non-Western issues through themes such as human body, portrait, self-portrait, sexuality, dreams, myth, spirituality, and non-Western art and culture. Clemente's artworks perfectly reflect his nomadic lifestyle and his transcultural world experience from Naples to Rome, India, and New York. His art stands between East and West and goes beyond his national and regional *genius loci*. Via his collaborations with local Indian artists to the most Avant-garde American artists and poets, and using non-Western symbols and themes in his works, Clemente's art stands between East and West and goes beyond his regional *genius loci*. Through his portraits, he pays homage to his contemporaries such as Allen Ginsberg (fig.140), Robert Mapplethorpe, Keith Haring, Kiki Smith, Toni Morrison, etc. Clemente's Tents manifest his nomadic lifestyle during the last 40 years, and his ties to India, Indian art and culture. Tents are large scale installations created in cooperation with Indian craftsmen. Each interior surface has been decorated by painting and embroidery (fig.141,142). While his watercolor and miniature on paper series 2017-2018, represent Clemente's relations to India and Indian art and culture (fig.), his *Napoli É* watercolor series 2018, demonstrates the artist's ties with his hometown (fig.143,144). Clemente's fascination with poetry and non-Western art and culture is not limited to the American Beat Generation and India, for example in 2010 inspired by the Persian poet Farid ud-Din Attar (c. 1145 – c. 1221) he made two watercolors of Attar's literary masterpiece *The Conference of the Birds* 1177 (fig.145,146) which is a poem that tells the story of all the birds in the world that set off in search of the mythical bird Simurgh to become their king. After crossing seven valleys only thirty will arrive at the place where the Simurgh lives, but they only find a mirror that reflects their images. All the poem is a metaphor for the man who seeks God, led by a Sufi (the hoopoe who in this case it represents the wisest among the birds) that eventually discovers that God is a part of everything, and also of himself. The work is based on the wordplay between Simurgh which is the name of the bird, and the Simurgh which in Persian means thirty (si) birds (murgh).

Francesco Clemente's art is a great example of transcultural Kunstwollen which is not limited to a particular culture or place, but to the artist's transcultural worldview which on the one hand, is linked to the Italian tradition of figurative art, and on the other hand, is connected to the artist's transcultural background.



Fig. 140 Francesco Clemente, *Allen Ginsberg*, Watercolor on paper, 1982-1987



Fig. 141 Francesco Clemente, *'Museum' Tent*, Tempera on cotton, embroidery, hand stitching, bamboo poles, wood finials, ropes, iron weights 600 x 400 x 300 cm, 2012-2013



Fig.142 details from *'Museum' Tent*, 2012-2013



Fig.143 Francesco Clemente, *XIII*, Watercolor and miniature on paper 45.72 x 60.96 cm, 2017

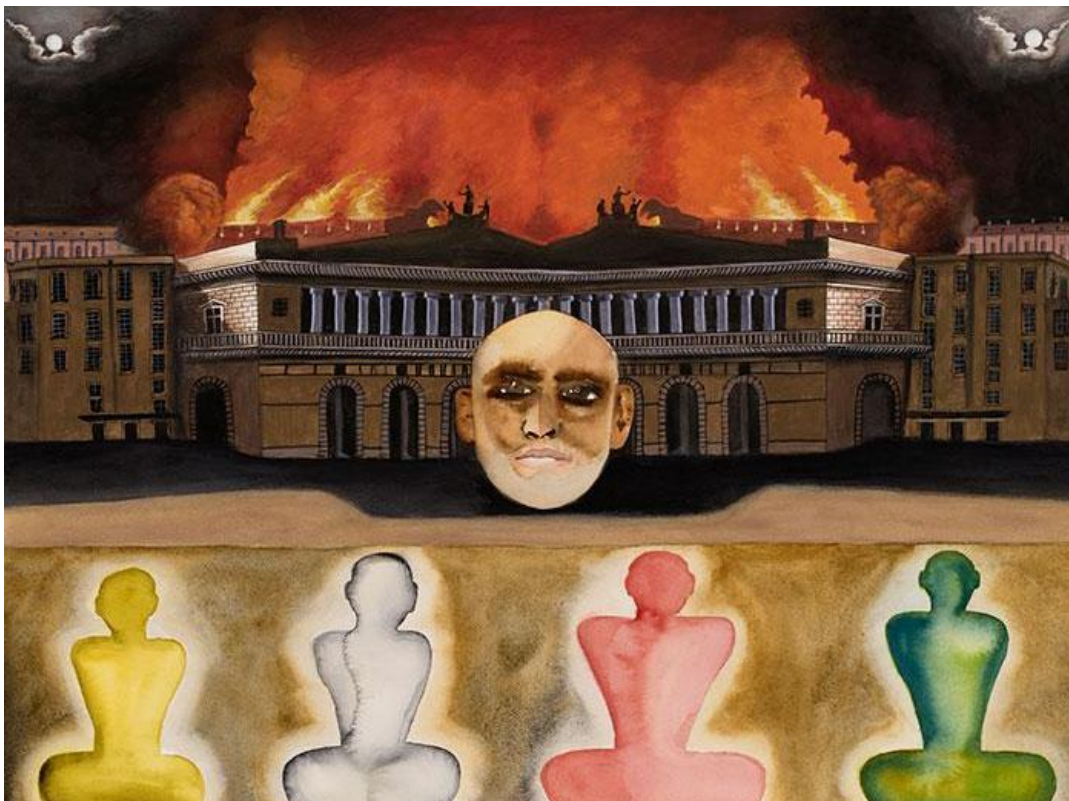


Fig.144 Francesco Clemente, *Napoli É XVI*, Watercolor on paper 45.7 x 60.9 cm, 2018



Fig.145 Francesco Clemente, *After Attar's 'The Conference of the Birds' V*, watercolor on paper, 2010



Fig.146 Francesco Clemente, *After Attar's 'The Conference of the Birds' II*, watercolor on paper, 2010

8. Shirazeh Houshiary

I set out to capture my breath, to find the essence of my own experience, transcending name, nationality, cultures.

_ Shirazeh Houshiary

Another example of transcultural art could be seen in the works of the Iranian born London based artist Shirazeh Houshiary. She was born on 15 January 1955 in one of the oldest cities of ancient Persia, Shiraz. When she was 18 years old in 1974, she moved to the United Kingdom to study fine arts. She joined the London's Chelsea School of Art (today's Chelsea College of Art and Design) and studied there from 1976 to 1979, and was a Junior Fellow at Cardiff College of Art, Wales from 1979 to 1980. Along with the other British artists such as Stephen Cox, Tony Cragg, Barry Flanagan, Antony Gormley, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Alison Wilding, and Bill Woodrow, Shirazeh Houshiary emerged with the New British Sculpture movement in the early 1980s. She was one of the artists of the *Magiciens de la Terre* exhibition in Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Together with the British sculptor Antony Gormley, Scottish painter Peter Doig, and the Irish video artist Willie Doherty, Shirazeh was a nominee for the 1994 Turner Prize for her installations *Enclosure of Sanctity* 1992-93 and *Licit Shadow* 1993. In 2008 she has designed a new East Window in stainless steel and glass in London's St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church (fig. 147).



Fig. 147 Shirazeh Houshiary, *East Window*, St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, 2008



Fig. 148 Shirazeh Houshiary, *Chord*, Stainless Steel, 2015

Houshiary began her artistic practice as a sculptor and installation artist and then she transitioned to making painting, drawing, and animation. Her sources of inspiration vary from Sufism to architecture, Persian calligraphy, and poetry, especially in the work of the 13th-century Persian mystic poet Rumi (1207-1273), Islamic art, to science of physic, Renaissance painting, classical music, and Western modern art and the works of artists such as Kazimir Malevich, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Agnes Martin, and Constantin Brancusi. Her pieces *Chord* 2014 and 2015 show the artist's ties with classical music (fig.148). In the *Beating of her Wings* 1987 series, the artist used black and silver acrylic paint, pencil and collage on brown wrapping paper to collages that depict the poem taken from Rumi's book *Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi (The Works of Shams of Tabriz)* (fig.149). Words in her later works turned into more abstract shapes to create intricate patterns. For example, in her painting *Touch* 1999 inspired by Rumi's philosophy words are written with white graphite over a black surface. They are intentionally repeated to produce abstract patterns on the canvas (fig.150). In another painting titled *Soar* 2015, the repeated abstracted words create the pattern and vanish into the canvas (fig.151). "These words are not about meaning, because actually, they dissolve, you can't really read them. But they're more about...the contradiction of saying 'I exist,' 'I don't exist,' like breathing... I mimic, in a way, the inhalation and exhalation of breath. That's why they are pulsating like a generative force" (Houshiary 2015).



Fig. 149 Shirazeh Houshiary, *Beating of her Wings II*, Acrylic paint, paper and graphite on paper, 1987



Fig. 150 Shirazeh Houshiary, *Touch*, Acrylic paint and graphite on canvas, 1999

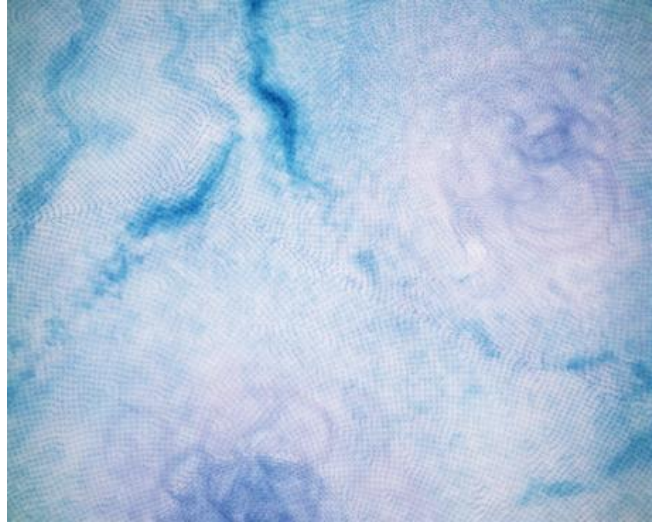


Fig.151 Shirazeh Houshiary, *Soar*, Pencil and pigment on white aquacryl on canvas and aluminium, 2015

In her new paintings, Houshiary first uses water and pigment on canvas to create the first layer of spontaneous, uncontrolled and chaotic shapes and then continues with her marking over the uncontrolled forms on the surface as the second layer. The finished painting is the result of the accidental and uncontrolled shapes created by water and pigment, and accurate patterns made by the artist (fig.152). In a video produced by Lisson Gallery for her 2017's exhibition, she explains that "there is a friction and collision between the two, and to fuse the two takes a lot of energy... This fusion is the most interesting part of this body of work. They express the infinity of the large, and they also express the infinity of the small. So, they both exist simultaneously in these paintings". When we look at these paintings from far away, we see a watery and cloudy space, when we get closer, we see details, we see precise and well-defined spaces. These paintings challenge the one-sided points of view. They prove that the reality is not always what we think, and our thoughts, opinions, and beliefs, are not always right. In her Tate talk 2014, Shirazeh Houshiary explains:

"if we learn about this tension in life then the decisions, we make are not one sided anymore... because one of the problems we have is we only see one side...we only see one way. And then we make a decision. That's why we have so much trouble in the world. We have a tendency as a human species to say we are certain about our belief whether is a religious belief, political belief psychological, economical...and we think we know. And actually, the reality, if we really want to look carefully, the reality is uncertain. Our perception feeds it into that direction. So, it's this doubt and uncertainty the core of what I do".

Houshiary's work is a manifest against one-dimensional world view, about being sure of what is not certain. If we learn to doubt about what we are sure of, and try to see the reality from different angles, then we can start to see beyond the conventional sociocultural clichés and develop our transcultural identity.

Veil 1999 is a black square painting, what the viewers see at the first glance is just black surface made by acrylic on canvas, but by paying more attention they start seeing words written by pencil on canvas that express Sufi thoughts (fig.153). Shirazeh Houshiary argues that the *Veil* "is a protest against knowing", first we think we know there is nothing, but a black square, then we realize that there is space and infinity. She continues " I want to see art that has ambiguity and makes me think about my own evolution in the world that I live, and my place, and space, and time in this universe..." (Houshiary, Tate talk 2014). *Breath* 2013 is a video installation that includes four video screens on the walls. Each of them shows a choreographed breath of vocalists from four religions of Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The work involves the viewer

into diverse cultures (fig.154). The act of praying, she explains” is like the beginning to express oneself to words and music...it’s like the genesis of consciousness of different cultures” (ibid).



Fig.152 Shirazeh Shoushiary, *Portal*, Pigment and pencil on black Aquacryl on canvas on aluminium, 2018

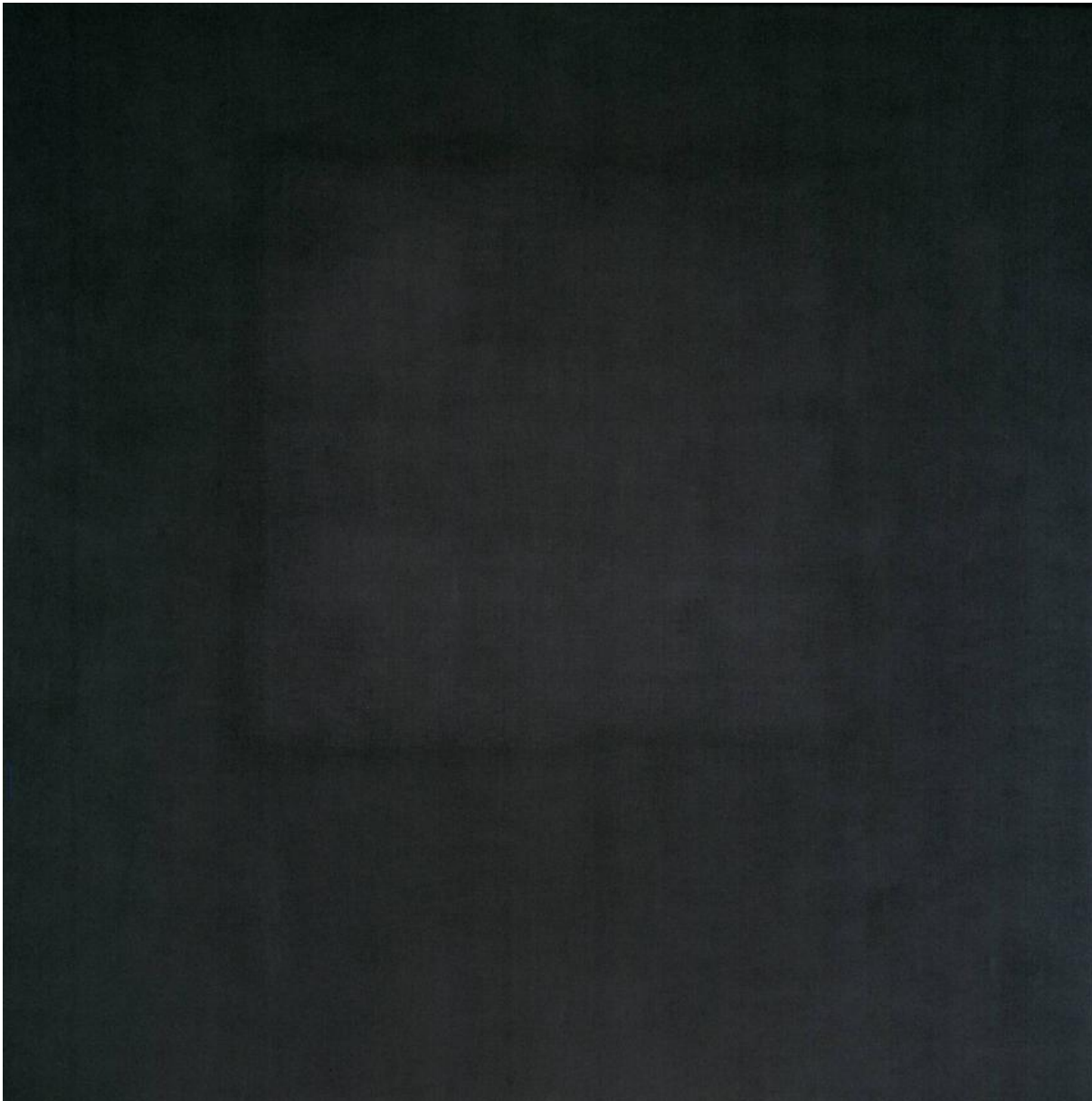


Fig. 153 Shirazeh Houshiary, *Veil*, Acrylic paint and graphite on canvas, 1999

Unlike her fellow artist Shirin Neshat (born in 1957 in Qazvin, left Iran in 1975 to study fine arts at the UC Berkeley) whose work manifests Iranian diaspora, and femininity in relation to Islamic rules which meets the art market and the political world's interests; Shirazeh Houshiary's work expresses a deeper, borderless and cosmopolitan view of the world. Her works go deep into human issues and make a dialogue with everyone beyond gender, nationality, religion, and color. As she argues in her interview with Diana d'Arenberg 2018: "We're all unique and the same. It's like droplets of water. All the droplets in the ocean are different, and yet they are the same. It's quite amazing. I was surprised when I discovered this, that each droplet has a unique shape. No two droplets are the same". From the metaphysical Sufi world to contemporary physic, from Persian poetry and calligraphy to modern and contemporary art, from Shiraz to London, from Orient to Occident, from drawing, painting, and sculpture to installation, film, and animation, Houshiary's world is not tied to one single culture and nation. Thus, her work communicates with every human beyond her/his nationality, religion, and culture. Shirazeh's work exemplifies perfectly the Transcultural Kunstwollen which

is tied to her transcultural worldview which is the result of her life experience from Shiraz to London. “I’m actually a Londoner. I’ve lived here most of my life...Quite frankly, I like to be a nomad” Houshiary affirmed when she was talking about her nationality in her conversation with Simon Frank 2015.

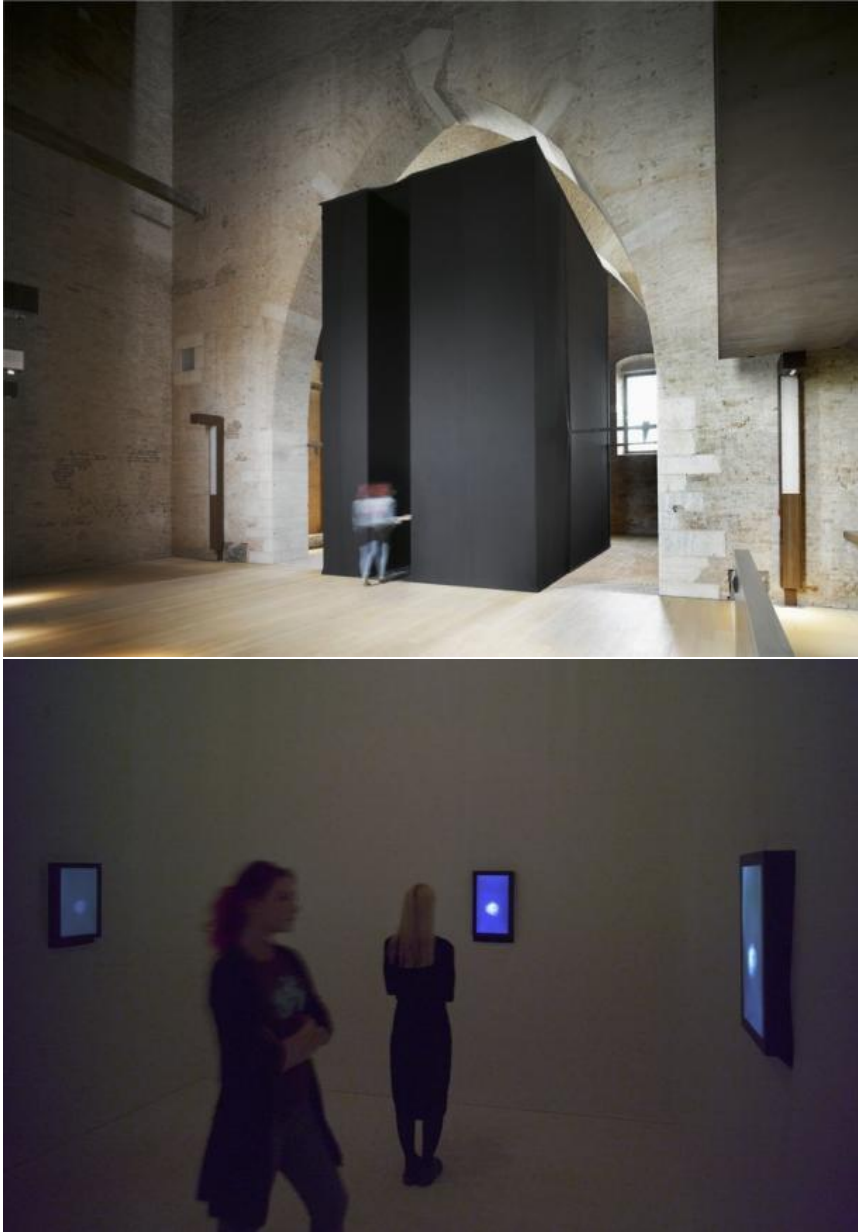


Fig.154 Shirazeh Houshiary, *Breath*, Video installation, 2003

9. Conclusion

In this chapter three types of Kunstwollen have been studied: Global Contemporary Kunstwollen which is *conceptual* and dependent *on the beholder's response*. Local Contemporary Kunstwollen which is rooted in the one hand, in the local cultural, historical and national values of a particular culture, and on the other hand, it is connected to the global contemporary Kunstwollen. And Transcultural Contemporary Kunstwollen which is the result of the individual artist's world view and its connection to the global Kunstwollen.

As mentioned, several times in previous chapters the advent of virtual technology, means of transportation, language learning methods, forced and voluntary migration, on the one hand, facilitated communication and cultural exchanges, intercultural relations, and finally, empowered the transculturalism; and on the other hand, gave birth to neo-fascism, nationalism and populism. Transculturation is the result of the Wollen (will) to go beyond local and national culture to redefine the personal identity, to re-birth with the identity of one's choice, not the one which is the result of the time and location where one was born. Transcultural human wants to take control of its own destiny, wants to choose his/her own beliefs, thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Transculturation is the outcome of one's courage to live outside the national, traditional, sociocultural, political, and geographical comfort zones. Transculturation is the way towards a multi-dimensional worldview which is not limited to a specific time, location, and nation. Fascism and nationalism, on the other hand, are the result of the fear of losing one's local and national culture, the fear of losing the pre-existing identity that one has inherited from the time and location where s/he was born. Unlike transculturalism, fascism comes from the fear of living outside the national, traditional, sociocultural, political, and geographical comfort zones. The outcome of fascism and nationalism is a one-dimensional world view which is limited to a specific time, location, and nation, it is limited to a particular geographical place and its traditions, its national cultural and historical values. It is limited to its *genius loci*.

Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin wall and the beginning of globalization new walls are being built and we are facing neo-fascism, nationalism, populism, and terrorism around the globe. When I was in the US, I faced the rise of Donald Trump his radical nationalist ideas, travel bans, the wall of Mexico and... In Italy, I experienced the fascism, nationalism and populism. Today when I'm writing these lines I am in my native country Iran; I came to visit my family and friends, a week ago after people's manifestation against the rise of the gas price the government disconnected the internet all around the country and I'm not sure even if I will be able to email my thesis to my supervisor and referees on time. While in many Western countries the narrow-minded populist politicians and leaders use the power of the internet and real-time technology to brainwash people and use their votes in favor of their fascist goals and their economical interests, in countries such as North Korea, Russia, Iran... the fear of communication, information exchange, and cultural developments forced the governments to build a virtual wall around the country. All that is because the existence of populists, dictators and fascists is linked to the one-dimensional mentality of people whose worldview is limited to a particular geographical location and its national and traditional cultural and historical values. If fascism is a return to the pre-global era transculturalism is a way towards future, to the post-global era.

Alois Riegl defined Kunstwollen as the aesthetic drive of a particular culture in a particular time and location which is connected to their worldview that shapes not only their artistic style but their government, law, religion, science, philosophy, and etc. Today, contemporary art as global art is not limited to a specific culture, location, artistic style, or medium, but it works as an international structure through which each culture represents its own version of contemporary art which on the one hand, is linked to their local Kunstwollen and on the other hand, to the global one. After discussing different types of Kunstwollen we realized that every local Kunstwollen, in a certain way, is linked to nationalism. American always wished to create an American art, after their success, they dominated the art world with their national art called contemporary art. Italian's response to americanization of contemporary art was a return to Italian national and regional

cultural values which showed up in Arte Povera and Transavanguardia. Among two, Transavanguardia was strongly tied with nationalism as Achille Bonito Oliva insisted on not only national and but even regional and local origins for art. He argued that “ for the first time after Futurism, Transavanguardia created an image that represents the national Italian culture to the world...” (Bonito Oliva cited in Pratesi, Ciglia, & Pirozzi 2015, p.114). Iranian contemporary art also was the representation of national art through an international language. In contrast to the local Kunstwollen, the Transcultural one is originated in the transcultural background of the artists, and not in the national roots of where they come from. In contrast to Bonito Oliva’s emphasis on *genius loci*, Francesco Clemente’s work, while keeps its ties with the Italian tradition of figurative painting, goes far beyond his hometown and extends from India to New York and it is not tied to one single culture and nation. Shirazeh Houshiary’s work although keeps its ties with Persian poetry and calligraphy extends from Shiraz to London and goes beyond a single culture, nation, and tradition. These artists did not abandon their cultural origins but they moved beyond them and created new cultural values.

More than 100 years ago, Alois Riegl criticized those art historians who judge the art of the different places and periods based on their personal taste and the aesthetic standards of their time, and emphasized that the task of the art historian is to find out why the artworks have been produced the way they are, and what they meant for their viewers. Art history after modernism as mentioned before entered into crisis, because as Hans Belting argued contemporary art broke away from the formal roles of modern art, and did not follow the linear progressive Western art history. After 1989 when contemporary art became global, art history faced stronger challenges because contemporary art raised up in places with no Western art historical background. Therefore, as many art historians such as James Elkins and Hans Belting argued global art emerged a new approach towards art history which is not based on a single Western method but based on different practices around the globe and sharing methods between art historians all over the world, just like science. Art history after globalization of contemporary art needs a multi-dimensional approach which is not limited to one single method and theory, and transculturation as "seeing oneself in the other" (Cuccioletta, 2001/2002) is the key that helps us to see the world from the other’s view and understand them instead of judging them. Art and art history will not become transcultural unless we become transcultural.

Chapter Four: Interviews

In this chapter I interviewed different scholars whose research interest is related to the topic of my thesis. The chapter includes interviews with Henri Zerner, Jas Elsner, James Elkins, John Onians, **Matthew Rampley**, Margaret Iverson, Margaret Olin, Michael Gubser, Peter Weibel, Wilfried Van Damme.

1. Interview with Henri Zerner

Henri Zerner is a French art historian, author, museum curator and the Professor Emeritus of history of art and architecture at the University of Harvard. And former curator of the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His influential article *Alois Riegl: Art, Value, and Historicism*, 1976, is among my resources.

MV: In your influential 1976 article, *Alois Riegl: Art, Value, and Historicism*, you argued that outside of German-speaking countries (except Italy), Riegl was not very influential, but that he “regained in some quarters his reputation as holy prophet.” Since your article was written in the 1970s, what do you think about Riegl’s reputation in 2020?

HZ: You are in a better position to answer this than I am because being old and occupied with other issues I am not able to keep up with the literature.

MV: You wrote, “Riegl attacked all the fundamental convictions of traditional art history. . . . Riegl’s monumental effort to confront all these issues remains unmatched today and continues to demand consideration. . . . He completely reopened the field of art history.” Matthew Rampley, in *Art History and the Politics of Empire: Rethinking the Vienna School* (2009), defined Riegl as “cosmopolitan, progressive, and aesthetically liberal.” Jas Elsner, in *The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901* (2002), introduced Riegl as “on all fronts a genuine intellectual hero whose attitudes are so dangerously close to the kinds we might wish to emulate as to make him worryingly appropriable as ‘our contemporary. . . .” Do you think Riegl was far ahead of his time, maybe close to our time? Why? Why not?

HZ: I do not believe that any author or artist is “ahead of his/her time” ; an author or a text can be so to say more or less activated by later generations; you might say more or less relevant or inspirational. I do not see why as Jas Elsner writes we should worry about appropriating Riegl as our contemporary. Of course one can have a historical view and understanding of Riegl as an author in the context of his time, his social position, the culture of 1900 Vienna, etc. But the text of Riegl exists today, it is cotemporary and valuable as such.

MV: In her book *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, Margaret Iversen wrote, “His insistence on recognizing the historical character of aesthetic judgment was a pioneering effort and is now being extended to the art of peoples out of the mainstream of western civilization that had formerly been of interest only to archaeologists and anthropologists.” she also argued that “Riegl turned from what were regarded as the pinnacles of artistic accomplishment, the art of classical antiquity and of Renaissance, in order to champion

these ‘others’ of art history.” Do you think we can find the basis of what today is known as “global art history” in Riegl’s worldview?

HZ: I find the term “global art history” very confusing but on the whole, yes, I would say that Riegl’s thought offers an opening to “global art history” in the diverse meanings that the term might be given.

MV: Based on your knowledge of Riegl’s ideas and concepts of art history, if he was a contemporary art historian, how do you think he would write about today’s art history?

HZ: I must admit that this is a question that does not make much sense to me, it is of the same kind as asking If Shakespeare lived today would he be a movie director rather than a playwright? The answer that comes to my mind is the French dictum “Si ma tante en avait, ce serait mon oncle” (If my ant had balls it would be my oncle).

MV: Is there any contemporary art historian who you would compare with Riegl?

HZ: I am not sure how wide the contemporary category goes. I am sure you know the recent writers on art much better than I do. In the second half of the 20th century I would say that comparison with Riegl’s role would probably go more to a philosopher like Jacques Derrida than to any art historian.

MV: What do you think about Riegl’s concept of Kunstwollen? Do you think it is applicable to today’s art history? Why? Why not?

HZ: As I believe I stated in what I wrote, Riegl used the term Kunstwollen in a very flexible way. Most of the time I think one could understand it as a deep aesthetic orientation, perhaps more basic than specific stylistic traits (if this means anything at all). In that sense I suppose it might be of some use.

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of Kunstwollen: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

HZ: I cannot answer this without having read any of your thesis. The only spontaneous reaction I have is to question the concept of Global contemporary art while the distinction between Local and Transcultural is clear. But again, I would perhaps not have this problem if I had the text of the essay.

MV: Do you have any suggestion that you think would help me develop my research?

HZ: The fundamental contribution of Riegl seems to be the explosion of any universal system of value and this I would think is fundamental to your thesis. If the term (concept??) of Kunstwollen is inseparable from this radical move then it can be a useful tool for your thesis.

2. Interview with Jas' Elsner

Jas' Elsner is a British art historian and classicist who studied at the universities of Cambridge, Harvard, and London. He is Professor of Late Antique Art at Oxford University and Humfry Payne Senior Research Fellow in Classical Art at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He was Senior Research Keeper in the Empires of Faith Project on art and religion in late antiquity, at the British Museum from 2013 to 2018. He has been a Visiting Professor in Art History at Chicago since 2003, and since 2014 also at the Divinity School. Since 2009 he has been an Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2017 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. He is currently a member of the overseeing committee of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. He is Professor of Late Antique Art at Oxford University and Humfry Payne Senior Research Fellow in Classical Art at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He was Senior Research Keeper in the Empires of Faith Project on art and religion in late antiquity, at the British Museum from 2013 to 2018. He has been a Visiting Professor in Art History at Chicago since 2003, and since 2014 also at the Divinity School. Since 2009 he has been an Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2017 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. He is currently a member of the overseeing committee of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. His research interest varies from Greek, Roman, early Christian and Byzantine art and archaeology; the reception of material culture in texts, museums and collecting; art and text, including inscriptions, rhetoric and ekphrasis; art and religion; to the history of art history/archaeology; and pilgrimage.

MV: My thesis begins with a quote from your 2002 essay *The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901*, Alois Riegl “was in effect, on all fronts, a genuine intellectual hero whose attitudes are so dangerously close to the kinds we might wish to emulate as to make him worryingly appropriable as “our contemporary.” Can you explain more why you think like that?

JE: Unlike Strzygowski, Riegl appears to have been liberal and his views assimilable to liberal democracy and multicultural pluralism. Remember I published in 2002 — a long time before Trump and Brexit and the horrors we are descending to so fast in the post 2008 crash world. But, as you must know from reading me — I do not agree with R about *Kunstwollen* (which is a dangerously reactionary concept, used largely for bad purposes): I am wholly with Panofsky's critique of it.

MV: Based on your knowledge of Riegl's ideas and concepts of art history, if he was a contemporary art historian, how do you think he would write about today's art history?

JE: No idea. The world has changed and you cannot translate a person and his views (deeply integrated in a holistic *Weltanschauung* of its time) into a different context.

MV: Is there any contemporary art historian who you would compare with Riegl?

JE: Not really. R was a universal art historian — with interests in high art but also craft (carpets, metalwork), and incredible breadth. Most contemporary scholars are much narrower, less theoretical and less prone to risk-taking.

MV: In Alois Riegl and Classical Archaeology, you discussed Riegl's influence on archaeology. Do you think he influenced art history or archaeology the most?

JE: Interesting question. He had no influence on the kind of archaeology that has nothing to do with texts (pre-historical). He had huge influence on Classical archaeology, esp. in the German speaking world. That is continuing. He was strikingly influential on both the Viennese School (which pursued concepts of Kunstwollen at least until Pöchtl in the 1970s) and on the Warburgians through Panofsky (whose third stage of Iconology is effectively a reformulation of R.'s K). Through Benjamin he was then later influential on the left and esp Marxist types like T.J. Clark).

MV: What are Riegl's effects on your own work?

JE: He invented late antiquity, my specialist field. He was wrong about much, and that wrongness is instructive. He was always very clear that one's work is triangulated by the current world and contemporary context: in this he was right and inspiring.

MV: What do you think about Riegl's concept of Kunstwollen? Do you think it is applicable to today's art history? Why? Why not?

JE: K is wrong. Both as fact (i.e. the psychological drive cannot go with underlying cultural factors and neither can be evidenced in the style or appearance of objects) and moreover as ideology: K enabled horrible racist essentialisms (esp in Nazi art history). So it must be resisted. It remains present because most people believe there are ways of reading a culture's deeper structures or meanings (to choose the favoured Sedgwickian and Panofskian terms) through visual/archaeological evidence. I have seen no proof of this assumption, although it is rife. That makes it all the more pernicious.

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of Kunstwollen: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

JE: I hate them all! But where there is a valuable subject is the fact that on some level there is a world art now (not only a market but interconnection through the internet and mutual influence by artists across the globe). That is different from any earlier time, and is in dialogue (destructive dialogue I fear) with all forms of localism. So ultimately (and tragically) your 3 types may soon become one.

MV: Do you have any suggestion that you think would help me develop my research?

JE: Difficult to say from the general statement because one always needs the specific instantiation to understand the theoretical position in art history...

3. Interview with James Elkins

James Elkins is an American art historian and critic who teaches in the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism, at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His writing focuses on the history and theory of images in art, science, and nature. Some of his books are exclusively on fine art (What Painting Is, Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?). Others include scientific and non-art images, writing systems, and archaeology (The Domain of Images, On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them), and some are about natural history (How to Use Your Eyes). Recent books include What Photography Is, written against Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida; Artists with PhDs, second edition; and Art Critiques: A Guide, third edition.

MV: During my studies and, later, while teaching fine arts from Iran, Italy, and the U.S., I realized that what defines something as a piece of contemporary art is broadly the same, but the concepts and the subjects change based on factors such as cultural and historical values, political situations, religion, geography, life style, and law. That's why each society's contemporary art is different. After finishing my academic studies in Florence, I moved to the U.S. to earn my MFA, and there I felt national differences between notions of art more than ever. It was tough for me to develop an artistic project because of differences between my worldview and conception of art and that of the American audience. This precious experience added another dimension to my worldview and my conception of contemporary art. During my studies in the U.S. I had two main problems. The first problem was that audiences would judge the work of art based on their definition of contemporary art, which was linked to their cultural and historical values. The second problem was that I had difficulty explaining the concept behind my work because of my unfamiliarity with their worldview. They needed to stop judging what was not comprehensible to them, and I needed to learn to explain myself in a more understandable manner. We both needed to stop judging each other based on our respective cultural backgrounds. All those experiences shifted my thinking to the question of what makes something art, especially what makes us define something as a contemporary piece of art. I decided to seek the answers to my questions through a research project. Surprisingly, I realized that my two problems were the very problems of today's global art history: on the one hand, it is still dominated by Anglo-American art history; on the other hand, many other cultures, especially non-Western ones, have not develop their own art history methods. Although contemporary art became global after 1989, art history is still not global. To make art history global, Hans Belting called for "new narratives with a local perspective of art history," and you suggested a worldwide exchange of local art historical methods, similar to the exchange of research in the sciences. Is Art History Global? was published almost 13 years ago, in 2007. What do you think about it now? Do you see any progress being made?

JE: May I answer in 3 parts?

(a) Your own experiences are interesting, but I would need more information to understand them. You attribute problems to national / international differences. But your problems communicating could also be (1) knowledge of history, theory, and criticism on your part, and on your instructors' parts, and (2) the exact institutions, because they differ. My recommendation is: try to get more experiences like the one you had. Try different countries, different institutions. Be careful about drawing conclusions about national and global issues based on two experiences! (b) To answer whether "progress" has been made, I have to explain my more recent work. My new book on the subject is The Impending Single History of Art: North Atlantic Art History and its Alternatives. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020.) "Progress" has been made, but I do not think it is a good thing. There is now a nearly uniform way of writing art history, the all art writing will be uniform. However, theory, and criticism worldwide, and I think in a generation (c) note that I am talking about art history, theory, and criticism, not the teaching or criticism of studio art (as in your MFA).

MV: How do you confront this problem in your teaching methods? Have you ever had difficulty teaching art history to international students with different cultural backgrounds? If yes, how did you overcome it?

JE: We have many international students. Last year I taught students from Italy, Sweden, India, Korea, Iran, Jordan, China, Ethiopia, Mexico, Argentina, Portugal, Poland, Ukraine, and others. The general strategy is to learn from the student how they understand their culture, how they were educated, what books they read, etc. If the student is academic (studying to be an art historian, critic, or theorist) I try to find out every book they were assigned, and what they know about their country's art. If the student is studying studio art, I try to find out what they know and think about art history of any nation. I then change my own instruction to complement and augment the students' perspectives.

MV: What do you think about Riegl's concept of Kunstwollen? Do you think it is applicable to today's art history? Why? Why not?

JE: It could be applicable: but I am not sure you need it: I.e., you can describe what interests you, without relying on Riegl. If you do rely on Riegl, you will need to check your thesis with Riegl experts, like Margaret Olin or Richard Woodfield. They might advise you the same way: you can begin from his concept, but then go ahead and find your way without him.

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of Kunstwollen: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

JE: See first answer, (a).

MV: Do you have any suggestion that you think would help me develop my research?

JE: Same as first answer, (a): you need more empirical evidence. Maybe you could apply for residencies stay a few weeks, or a semester, in academies in Amsterdam, Helsinki, London, Dublin, Lund, Munich, Vienna, Porto... they would be easy to visit from Modena. It is also possible to be invited to Cape Town, Beijing, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, etc. -the more information you have, the better.

4. Interview with John Onians

John Onians is a British art historian and the Professor Emeritus of World Art at the University of East Anglia, Norwich. He studied at the University of Cambridge and at the Courtauld and Warburg Institutes, London. His interest range from Italian Renaissance architecture, Greek and Roman art, to experimentation with broad approaches to art as a worldwide phenomenon, such as art geography. He is the pioneer of neuroarthistory, neuroarchaeology, neuroanthropology and neuromuseology. He was founding editor of the journal *Art History* (1978-88) and he edited the first *Atlas of World Art* (2004). His books include *Bearers of Meaning. The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (1988) and *Classical Art and the Cultures of Greece and Rome* (1999), *Neuroarthistory: From Aristotle and Pliny to Baxandall and Zeki* (2008), *European Art: A neuroarthistory* (2016).

MV: During my studies and, later, while teaching fine arts from Iran, Italy, and the U.S., I realized that what defines something as a piece of contemporary art is broadly the same, but the concepts and the subjects change based on factors such as cultural and historical values, political situations, religion, geography, life style, and law. That's why each society's contemporary art is different. After finishing my academic studies in Florence, I moved to the U.S. to earn my MFA, and there I felt national differences between notions of art more than ever. It was tough for me to develop an artistic project because of differences between my worldview and conception of art and that of the American audience. This precious experience added another dimension to my worldview and my conception of contemporary art. During my studies in the U.S. I had two main problems. The first problem was that audiences would judge the work of art based on their definition of contemporary art, which was linked to their cultural and historical values. The second problem was that I had difficulty explaining the concept behind my work because of my unfamiliarity with their worldview. They needed to stop judging what was not comprehensible to them, and I needed to learn to explain myself in a more understandable manner. We both needed to stop judging each other based on our respective cultural backgrounds. All those experiences shifted my thinking to the question of what makes something art, especially what makes us define something as a contemporary piece of art. I decided to seek the answers to my questions through a research project. Surprisingly, I realized that my two problems were the very problems of today's global art history: on the one hand, it is still dominated by Anglo-American art history; on the other hand, many other cultures, especially non-Western ones, have not develop their own art history methods. Although contemporary art became global after 1989, art history is still not global. To make art history global, Hans Belting called for "new narratives with a local perspective of art history," and James Elkins suggested a worldwide exchange of local art historical methods, similar to the exchange of research in the sciences. What do you think about it?

JO: Your presentation of the problem is clear and useful, but I am not sure that the concept of *Kunstwollen* is the best way to engage with it. The idea of *Kunstwollen* was productive when introduced by Riegl, but by now it is too vague and impressionistic, and its reference to 'will' doesn't relate to any contemporary framework. Similarly, there is much that I like about the work of Belting and Elkins, but in my view they are not standing far enough away from the problem. They are both too focused on the linguistic element in the study of art, which is why they can only think in terms of regional traditions.

MV: How do you confront this problem in your teaching methods?

JO: My own approach involves going back to the neural activity which precedes all linguistic expression.

Of course, current accounts of neuroscience do have roots primarily in a European tradition, but their content is now formulated on the basis of international norms, much like physics or chemistry. I suppose my model in many ways is biological, like Darwin's. He had a new understanding of the life of plants and animals only because he had observed more examples of more of them in more different conditions than anyone else. I study the making of and the response to art above all by treating those activities as behaviours and relating them to their contexts, both social and natural. I try to explain the variations between them by looking for neural explanations for the correlations I observe between those behaviours and their contexts.

MV: Does your World Art Studies at the University of East Anglia suggest a solution to the problem of global art history?

JO: Everyone in the department will have their own approach. Most colleagues follow accepted models like those invoked by Belting and Elkins, but to my mind the first thing we have to do is to free ourselves from the idea that the best way to get access to the human mind is through language. Since there are too many languages and too many documents for anyone to master, this is simply not a viable way to conceive of a global art history. The advantage of a neuroscience-based approach is that, because it requires only an understanding of the universally accepted principles governing neural formation of the individual, it can be applied to any place and time.

MV: What do you think about Riegl's concept of *Kunstwollen*? Do you think it is applicable to today's art history? Why? Why not?

JO: My earlier answers suggest how I engage with this issue. Essentially, I think that Riegl was trying to get a new grasp on general trends in art, which was a major advance, but he had no way of explaining the trends he found. He was, however, closer to a solution than he realized. By talking about 'wollen' he hints at the study of preferences, and we now know that 'preferences' are the product of variations in neural exposure.

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of *Kunstwollen*: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

JO: Yes, I think these are all useful categories. I would just go further than you in trying to explain them. In my view each results from a different neural exposure. A global *kunstwollen* is the product of exposure to art and environmental conditions that are international. A local *kunstwollen* is the product of a primary exposure to art and environmental conditions that are more local. A transcultural *kunstwollen* is the product of exposures to art and environmental conditions that are changing.

MV: Do you have any suggestion that you think would help me develop my research?

JO: I think that you are genuinely ambitious in trying to rethink the problem of how to understand the variations in art as a worldwide phenomenon. I would say keep going. But above all I would urge you to trust your own instincts, which are much richer than most people's because they have been shaped by an exception range of experiences. Your history is a bit like Darwin's on his voyage around the world. If I was studying you I would want to understand how your different experiences have affected your personal neural formation. If you can understand that for yourself you may find a new key to help others.

5. Interview with Margaret Iversen,

Margaret Iversen is Professor of Art History and Theory at the University of Essex. Her first book was on one of the founders of Art History as a discipline: *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (1993). Her research interests varies from Contemporary Art and Theory, Photography since the Sixties, Psychoanalytic Aesthetics, Historiography of the History of Art History.

MV: Why did you decide to write about Riegl?

MI: I was interested in using my background in philosophy in an art historical context. Knowledge of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer is useful for understanding Riegl.

MV: In your opinion, what are Riegl's most important effects on art history (or any other field)?

MI: The idea that there is not one single aesthetic but many and that these are related to the context of the art.

MV: In your book *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, you wrote, "His insistence on recognizing the historical character of aesthetic judgment was a pioneering effort and is now being extended to the art of peoples out of the mainstream of western civilization that had formerly been of interest only to archaeologists and anthropologists." You also argued that "Riegl turned from what were regarded as the pinnacles of artistic accomplishment, the art of classical antiquity and of Renaissance, in order to champion these 'others' of art history." Do you think we can find the basis of what today is known as "global art history" in Riegl's worldview?

MI: Riegl thought that one should try to understand the art of a place and time without preconceptions of what counts as good art. He asked 'What is distinctive about this work or style?'

MV: Based on your knowledge of Riegl's ideas and concepts of art history, if he was a contemporary art historian, how do you think he would write about today's art history?

MI: See answer to 5.

MV: Is there any contemporary art historian who you would compare with Riegl?

MI: See Leo Steinberg's 'Other Criteria'. He is arguing against the imposition of Greenbergian formalism on new work such as Rauschenberg and uses Riegl to support this. Steinberg does not write about other cultures but he thinks that the culture of USA has changed post-war with new technology, etc.

MV: What do you think about Riegl's concept of Kunstwollen? Do you think it is applicable to today's art history? Why? Why not?

MI: The idea of art of different local traditions having its own specific aesthetic was a radical idea in 1901 when classicism reigned supreme. My feeling is that today these sorts of unconscious bias are less prevalent, but it would be good to expose them if they are.

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of Kunstwollen: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

MI: I'm not sure I can help you there. Riegl was interested in determining a specific aesthetic ideal for a certain cultural context, so you would have to ask yourself if such specific ideals still exist.

6. Interview with Margaret Olin,

Margaret Olin is a Senior Research Scholar with an appointment in Yale Divinity School as well as in the Department of Religious Studies, the Program in Judaic Studies and the Department of the History of Art. She was a professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the departments of Art History, Theory and Criticism, and Visual and Critical Studies from 1986 until her arrival at Yale in 2009. She is the author of *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (Penn State Press, 1992), *The Nation Without Art: Examining Modern Discourses in Jewish Art* (University of Nebraska, 2001), and co-editor of *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

MV: Why did you decide to write about Riegl?

MO: I wanted to understand the roots of formalism, which struck me, a former student of photography who wanted to use photography to change the world, as a strange and unwelcome way to approach art. I began with the Vienna School of art history and eventually narrowed it down to Riegl. I became interested when, in a medieval course, I read a book on Byzantine art by Hugo Buchthal, with a forward by Oskar Kokoschka. The artist exclaimed over the importance of Riegl and, I believe, Wickhoff.

MV: In your opinion, what are Riegl's most important effects on art history (or any other field)?

MO: For me, it boils down to taking seriously the "applied arts," and if not erasing the distinction between them and the "fine arts," at least introducing a measure of equality between them. I also think he was able to interpret abstraction in a way to work ethical values into it. His ideas about the relation between the beholder and the work of art were influential, first (perhaps) in fields other than art, for example to former student Martin Buber, but eventually later in the 20th century, to art historians looking for an alternative to the notion of the autonomous work of art. He exemplified the ability to look closely and apply the results of close looking to meaningful ideas about life, history, ethics.

MV: Matthew Rampley, in *Art History and the Politics of Empire: Rethinking the Vienna School* (2009), defined Riegl as "cosmopolitan, progressive, and aesthetically liberal." Jas Elsner, in *The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901* (2002), introduced Riegl as "on all fronts a genuine intellectual hero whose attitudes are so dangerously close to the kinds we might wish to emulate as to make him worryingly appropriable as 'our contemporary. . . ." Do you think Riegl was far ahead of his time, maybe close to our time? Why? Why not?

MO: Yes, he was "aesthetically liberal," but I don't know that he should be called a hero (perhaps no one should). Like many great thinkers, he can be read differently in different times. And of course, many aspects of Riegl are overlooked when he is lionized. For example, he held ethnocentric ideas, thought certain races were more advanced than others; that some were more altruistic naturally and others more egoistic; that for that reason, peoples passed along the torch to other, more advanced ethnicities in what counted, to him, as progress. I don't think that art historical thought is in some kind of race, in which some thinkers are ahead or behind. Unlike me, Riegl presumably believed in progress in art (and also art historical writing), otherwise he would not have said that there was only progress, nothing but progress, and never decline. I just find some art historical figures more interesting as conversation partners than others. Part of this is that some figures are able to change their minds, so to speak, mid history. Riegl is one of those who can be read in different ways and do seem to change their mind, and I was excited at moments in the archives when I saw him change

his mind. The fact that Riegl is for this reason and others enjoyable to converse with suggests what perhaps Jas Elsner means when he says that Riegl is a hero.

MV: Is there any contemporary art historian who you would compare with Riegl?

MO: That's not an easy question to answer. You might get a better answer from someone who deals with some of the same issues he dealt with. There are certainly many who are equally as interesting, but I am not sure why it would be interesting to compare them.

MV: Today after almost 28 years of publishing your book *Forms of Representation* is there anything that you would like to add or change about it?

MO: I haven't read my book in years. I imagine that if I did I would find much to grimace over, and perhaps to change. I have written occasional essays over the years about Riegl since I wrote my book, and I think that it is possible to consider some of them as revisions, some as expansions, of the book.

MV: What do you think about Riegl's concept of *Kunstwollen*? Do you think it is applicable to today's art history? Why? Why not?

MO: I would not rule out trying to apply the idea of a *Kunstwollen* to works of art made nowadays. But the *Kunstwollen* does seem to assume a certain unity. If you want to apply the idea to the internally contradictory art, the straining at or against unity in a good deal of contemporary art, you would have to have an idea of the *kunstwollen* as capable of internal strains, ruptures, and contradictions. This is plausible, but I am not sure how useful the *Kunstwollen* is if interpreted that way. I would rather borrow Riegl's eyes, and use his intense abilities to look closely, and wield them on an attempt to formulate a new way of looking at art.

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of *Kunstwollen*: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

MO: This allies very closely to the way Riegl thought about 17th group portraits. An artist like Rembrandt who, according to Riegl, allowed themselves to study the art of another culture, Italy, for example, might be interpreted in such a way as to exemplify a transcultural *Kunstwollen*. If this is considered one of the secrets to Rembrandt's great genius, then perhaps that indicates a preference for this kind of *Kunstwollen*.

MV: Do you have any suggestion that you think would help me develop my research?

MO: You are almost done, but it strikes me that the research can't develop unless you try to apply it to specific artists, art forms, nations or groups. Unless you apply it, that is, to something/someone specific.

7. Interview with Michael Gubser

Dr. Michael Gubser received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, and he is the professor of Intellectual history, Central and Eastern Europe, and international development at the James Madison University of Virginia. His main research interest is the European intellectual history, phenomenology, and international development. His book *Time's Visible Surface: Alois Riegl and the Discourse on History and Temporality in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 2006, is among my resources.

MV: Why did you decide to write about Riegl?

MG: I backed into Riegl. I was originally intending to write a dissertation on historical writing in Vienna aimed at countering the Schorske thesis that Viennese modernist culture was a historical. In the process, I discovered Riegl and was struck by the richness of his writing. Quickly, he became the centerpiece of my dissertation on conceptions of time and history in Vienna – which later became my first book. After the change of focus from historians to an art historian, I had to do much intensive study of art historical and art historiographical literature, but my work and approach nonetheless came out of the ancillary field of intellectual history, which tends to focus more on philosophy and social theory than on art history.

MV: In your opinion, what are Riegl's most important effects on art history (or any other field)?

MG: As per the remarks above, I am most interested in Riegl's implications beyond art history, though he has been slow to move beyond that discipline for a variety of reasons. His eye for detail is stunning and his ability to translate that detail into language eloquent. I was struck by how he discerned historical and philosophical nuances in even the slightest decorative pattern. One of the things that attracted me was, following Margaret Olin, Riegl's 'ethical' attitude toward artworks. In his estimation, the artwork was not an insentient object, but a partner in dialogue, an 'Other' deserving of respect and attention. The art object had its own subjectivity, perspective, and position in the movements of history and discourse. I still find this a powerful idea, and one that dovetails with Walter Benjamin's thoughts as well as numerous poets from the twentieth century (I'm thinking of Francis Ponge and the voices of things here). To me, Riegl's attentiveness and descriptive approach also evoked Husserl's phenomenology – both were Brentano students – and I still see Riegl as phenomenological *avant la lettre*. Indeed, it was this point that led me to my subsequent book on phenomenology as an ethical and social philosophy. In this regard, Riegl's art history points far beyond art history alone and toward broader philosophical, historiographical, ethical, and social themes.

MV: Matthew Rampley, in *Art History and the Politics of Empire: Rethinking the Vienna School* (2009), defined Riegl as "cosmopolitan, progressive, and aesthetically liberal." Jas Elsner, in *The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901* (2002), introduced Riegl as "on all fronts a genuine intellectual hero whose attitudes are so dangerously close to the kinds we might wish to emulate as to make him worryingly appropriable as 'our contemporary'. . . ." Do you think Riegl was far ahead of his time, maybe close to our time? Why? Why not?

MV: Is there any contemporary art historian who you would compare with Riegl?

MG: As noted above, the most intriguing question for me was whether Riegl's art history anticipated or bore affinities with the descriptive approach pioneered by Husserl in his phenomenology.

MV: What are Riegl's effects on your own work?

MG: I think I noted these above.

MV: What do you think about Riegl's concept of Kunstwollen? Do you think it is applicable to today's art history? Why? Why not?

MG: This was a particularly interesting question for me when I worked on Riegl. Many interpreters hold a broadly historical and formalist understanding of the Kunstwollen as a drive internal to art history whereby innovations in one era gradually – through a process of steady working out and working through – point the way toward new innovations in subsequent eras. Thus, art history had its own internal integrity and is not simply an expression of the wider cultural context or Zeitgeist (although of course different volumes by Riegl exhibit somewhat different understandings.) While I agree with this, what I found interesting was what this 'global Kunstwollen' might suggest about art and vision at the micro-level, that is, how the Kunstwollen worked within individual artworks, suggesting a kind of tension or temporal motion visible even within frame of individual works – a forward movement of time, the push of unresolved aesthetic problems, and the pull of barely intuited innovations, even within apparently static individual canvases. Thus, to reinforce your question below, while I agree that the Kunstwollen has a global historical meaning, I also think it has powerful local implications.

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of Kunstwollen: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

Note from MG: I have not worked on Riegl in many years, so I will only address some of the questions below, those that I feel I can answer.

8. Interview with Peter Weibel

Peter Weibel is an Austrian artist, curator, and media theorist. From 1984 until 2017, he has been a professor at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. From 1984 to 1989, he was head of the digital arts laboratory at the Media Department of New York University in Buffalo, and in 1989 he founded the Institute of New Media at the Städelschule in Frankfurt on the Main, which he directed until 1995. Between 1986 and 1995, he was in charge of the Ars Electronica in Linz as artistic director. From 1993 to 2011 he was chief curator of the Neue Galerie Graz and from 1993 to 1999 he commissioned the Austrian pavilion at the Venice Biennale. He was artistic director of the Seville Biennial (BIACS3) in 2008 and of the 4th Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, in 2011. From 2015–2017, he was curator of the lichtsicht 5 + 6 – Projection Biennale in Bad Rothenfelde.

Peter Weibel was granted honorary doctorates by the University of Art and Design Helsinki, in 2007 and by the University of Pécs, Hungary, in 2013. In 2008, he was awarded with the French distinction »Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres«. The following year he was appointed as full member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts Munich, and he was awarded the Europäischer Kultur-Projektpreis [European Cultural Project Award] of the European Foundation for Culture. In 2010, he was decorated with the Austrian Cross of Honor for Science and Art, First Class. In 2013 he was appointed an Active Member of the European Academy of Science and Arts in Salzburg. In 2014, he received the Oskar-Kokoschka-Preis [Oskar-Kokoschka-Prize] and in 2017 the Österreichische Kunstpreis – Medienkunst [Austrian Art Prize – Media Art]. In 2015 he was appointed as Honorary Member of the Russian Academy of Arts in Moscow.

Since 1999, Peter Weibel is Chairman and CEO of the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe and since 2017 director of the Peter Weibel Research Institute for digital Cultures at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. His writings in the catalogues of the ZKM's exhibition were very influential on me.

MV: During my studies and, later, while teaching fine arts from Iran, Italy, and the U.S., I realized that what defines something as a piece of contemporary art is broadly the same, but the concepts and the subjects change based on factors such as cultural and historical values, political situations, religion, geography, life style, and law. That's why each society's contemporary art is different. After finishing my academic studies in Florence, I moved to the U.S. to earn my MFA, and there I felt national differences between notions of art more than ever. It was tough for me to develop an artistic project because of differences between my worldview and conception of art and that of the American audience. This precious experience added another dimension to my worldview and my conception of contemporary art. During my studies in the U.S. I had two main problems. The first problem was that audiences would judge the work of art based on their definition of contemporary art, which was linked to their cultural and historical values. The second problem was that I had difficulty explaining the concept behind my work because of my unfamiliarity with their worldview. They needed to stop judging what was not comprehensible to them, and I needed to learn to explain myself in a more understandable manner. We both needed to stop judging each other based on our respective cultural backgrounds. All those experiences shifted my thinking to the question of what makes something art, especially what makes us define something as a contemporary piece of art. I decided to seek the answers to my questions through a research project. Surprisingly, I realized that my two problems were the very problems of today's global art history: on the one hand, it is still dominated by Anglo-American art history; on the other hand, many other cultures, especially non-Western ones, have not developed their own art history methods. Although contemporary art became global after 1989, art history is still not global. To make art history global, Hans Belting called for "new narratives with a local perspective of art history," and James Elkins suggested a worldwide exchange of local art historical methods, similar to the exchange of research in the sciences. What do you think about it?

PW: You describe the situation correct. The conception of art is dependent on historical contexts and cultural history. But these concepts have changed from epoch to epoch, from continent to continent. Therefore,

there is no obligation that we believe in and continue historic traditional concepts of art. My idea is that the concept of art of the future should move towards technology and science because both are the true universal languages. Art is claimed to be a universal language, but in fact it is not. The universal concept of art is an illusion. The universal language is science and technology. When you are a pilot of an airplane, it does not matter whether you are a man or a woman, whether you are a Muslim or a Christian, whether you are black or white, whether you are German or Russian. You have just to know how to use the manual and to follow the rules of the manuals. Only then, when you speak the language of the machine, the machine can fly. The laws of science like gravitation or electro magnetic forces etc. are universal and valid in the same way for all people whether you are Muslim or Christian, black and white etc. Therefore, only art that has a tendency to technology and science can jump away from the trap of the dialectics of global and local. Art must become trans-cultural.

MV: In your article “Globalization and Contemporary Art,” published in the exhibition catalogue The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds, you used the term rewriting instead of clash or confluence to describe the process of globalization. Today’s world is facing the rise of nationalism and the birth of neo-fascism. Do you think this phenomenon is a part of the process of rewriting, or does it represent the end of globalization?

PW: The phenomenon to describe has something to do with the end of the European expansion. Since 500 years, this very small continent consisting of different nations and empires called Europe has expanded with violence, with military forces, with market, with exchange of goods all over the world supported by scientific inventions and military tools. Europe became the hegemon of the World. The effect was globalization and colonization. Now we are entering the phase that I call post-Europe: The end of colonization and the end of globalization by Europe. Therefore, we can speak of post-globalization and post- colonization. Other continents like China have also powerful technology and tools available to rule the world. Europe does not rule any more the world. Therefore, European nations want to restore the old situation to be in power. The rise of populism, nationalism and neo-fascism is a reaction to the end of European hegemony. This is part of what I call rewriting program. But in that sense: If a culture is not capable to rewrite itself, it will be rewritten. This is my analysis. Europe is not rewriting itself, it is rewritten in a restorative process back in the historical past situation.

MV: ZKM’s projects and publishing have had a strong influence on me and my understanding of global contemporary art. How do you see ZKM’s effects on global art and art history?

PW: The aim of ZKM is in fact - thank you for your understanding - to correct art history which is dominated too much by the market and by European concepts of art. Europeans think art is an invention of Europe. Europe prefers painting as a dominant art form, because of its tradition. All other artistic articulations, which do not follow the canon established by painting, are neglected, marginalized and suppressed, not only extern-European, but also intern-European art practices.

I think the exhibitions and the catalogues of ZKM had really an effect in reframing art history and changing the hierarchy of genres. Finally, media are accepted at least at a minimum in the artworld.

MV: What do you think about Riegl’s concept of Kunstwollen? Do you think it is applicable to today’s art history? Why? Why not?

PW: I think Riegl's concept of Kunstwollen is of no use for the contemporary artworld.

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of Kunstwollen: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

PW: I think your typology: Global, local and Transcultural is very good, but there is a difference between global and local on one side and transcultural on the other side. Global and local are termini which describe historical and cultural contexts, in a certain sense also national contexts, for example "arte povera" by the term already suggests that it is an art practice from Italy. The term "Pop Art" correctly demonstrates that it is an U.S. American art practice. It seems that culture, be it local or global, can be related to nations. Transcultural is a concept beyond nationalism. Technology is transcultural. Art in the future should be transcultural.

9. Interview with Wilfred van Damme

Wilfried van Damme is a Dutch art historian who teaches at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society. He received his PhD from the University of Ghent in 1993 with a dissertation outlining an anthropological approach to aesthetics. His field of interest ranges from world aesthetics, to world art studies, the anthropology of aesthetics, the anthropology of art, and the history of the Western study of art and aesthetics outside the West. For the last few years, his focus has been on world art studies: the global and multidisciplinary study of visual artistic phenomena.

MV: During my studies and, later, while teaching fine arts from Iran, Italy, and the U.S., I realized that what defines something as a piece of contemporary art is broadly the same, but the concepts and the subjects change based on factors such as cultural and historical values, political situations, religion, geography, life style, and law. That's why each society's contemporary art is different. After finishing my academic studies in Florence, I moved to the U.S. to earn my MFA, and there I felt national differences between notions of art more than ever. It was tough for me to develop an artistic project because of differences between my worldview and conception of art and that of the American audience. This precious experience added another dimension to my worldview and my conception of contemporary art. During my studies in the U.S. I had two main problems. The first problem was that audiences would judge the work of art based on their definition of contemporary art, which was linked to their cultural and historical values. The second problem was that I had difficulty explaining the concept behind my work because of my unfamiliarity with their worldview. They needed to stop judging what was not comprehensible to them, and I needed to learn to explain myself in a more understandable manner. We both needed to stop judging each other based on our respective cultural backgrounds. All those experiences shifted my thinking to the question of what makes something art, especially what makes us define something as a contemporary piece of art. I decided to seek the answers to my questions through a research project. Surprisingly, I realized that my two problems were the very problems of today's global art history: on the one hand, it is still dominated by Anglo-American art history; on the other hand, many other cultures, especially non-Western ones, have not develop their own art history methods. Although contemporary art became global after 1989, art history is still not global. To make art history global, Hans Belting called for "new narratives with a local perspective of art history," and James Elkins suggested a worldwide exchange of local art historical methods, similar to the exchange of research in the sciences. What do you think about it?

WVD: There are hidden assumptions underlying all approaches to the scholarly study of a given phenomenon, including art. These assumptions become more clear as time moves on -- intellectual history shows that scholars living in a given timeframe, within a given tradition, work within the limits of a particular paradigm of which they were themselves usually hardly aware. We may come to the same conclusion when we confront the scholarly approaches of a particular tradition with the approaches developed in other traditions. The problem with analyzing art historical approaches in this manner is that we have few, if any, analyses of alternative approaches -- approaches other than those developed in the West. I think Elkins wrote on Chinese approaches to art history. But even Elkins would conclude, I think, that most traditions outside the West practise art criticism rather than art history (meaning here the scholarly discipline concerned with art, including its history). I have been open to alternative approaches, thinking along the lines of alternatively conceiving of art, and hence studying art, as a processual or dynamic phenomenon rather than a static phenomenon. Or as a phenomenon that may involve senses other than the eye. These thoughts on potential alternative approaches in art history are inspired by learning about, say, African art and the way it is dealt with in African cultures (albeit it not scholarly, but artistically and aesthetically).

MV: How do you confront this problem in your teaching methods?

WVD: Lack of proper analyses of alternative approaches (see under 1) limits the systematic attention one can presently give to the issue. I do try to make students aware of the various processual dimensions of the visual arts (statues may be created to be carried around in processions, say, rather than being made to be placed in a museum or gallery, and be contemplated there).

MV: Does your World Art Studies at the University of Leiden suggest a solution to the problem of global art history?

WVD: Not quite! We do try to raise awareness of the many issues involved (and hope for creative contributions by the future scholars we train).

MV: What do you think about Riegl's concept of Kunstwollen? Do you think it is applicable to today's art history? Why? Why not?

WVD: I cannot claim any serious knowledge of Riegl's concept of Kunstwollen. At a superficial level, yet one that is very interesting from a global perspective on art, it would seem to refer to the universal tendency, perhaps 'innate' drive, of human beings to create visual and other art forms. From that perspective, it would be interesting to learn more about what cross-cultural child psychology or related branches of ethology have to say about the development of artistic inclinations in children worldwide. But I assume that this is not quite what you have in mind ...

MV: In my thesis, as I explained above, I define three types of Kunstwollen: Global, Local, and Transcultural. Do you have any ideas about them?

WVD: Is transcultural Kunstwollen a part of global Kunstwollen?

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