

INTRODUCTION

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Artists all over the world responded to the changing conditions of 20th-century life by approaching their work with a questioning attitude. This underlying attitude was one of the defining features of modernism, giving rise to a proliferation of artistic movements, styles and forms. *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* revisits the broad historical period in which modernist attitudes took shape in different national and cultural environments. Travelling through moments of crisis and innovation, it reveals the dynamic interplay between different cultures as a constant thread that weaves in and out of the story of modern art as a whole. Taking different geographical regions and time periods as their chosen focus of enquiry, each contributor comes back to our contemporary moment with questions that address the limitations of our available knowledge about modernism's cross-cultural past.

As the first volume in a new series of art historical studies, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* offers a fresh approach by showing how a shared history of art and ideas was experienced differently around the globe. Setting the tone for the critical exploration of the interactive relationships that have always been present between the western centre and societies hitherto placed on the periphery, this book introduces the overarching scope of *Annotating Art's Histories* as a series of interventions that sets out to question the depth of our historical understanding of cultural difference in the visual arts.

Over the past two decades there has been a significant growth of interest in the work of artists from non-western countries and from minority backgrounds within the West. Such interest reflects the impact made by recent generations

of artists, critics and curators who have brought questions to the visual arts that are critically informed by their culturally diverse identities. Today matters of difference and diversity are a commonplace – in a way that they were not twenty or thirty years ago – and the widespread acknowledgement of multiple identities in public life has enriched our experiences of art and has enlivened the entire setting of contemporary reception and debate.

Take a brief look over the past two decades and one could observe that the shifts brought about by identity politics in the 1980s, and global trends in the 1990s, have affected the art world just as all other areas of cultural and social life have been affected. Standing back from the hurly burly of recent change, one observes that the apparent acceptance of cultural difference as a permanent fact of life in western societies amounts to an immense shift in world-views. Where 'society' can be said to be formed by a general agreement or consensus about what constitutes reality, what comes into focus is a lop-sided shape for the 20th century as such. For the first sixty or seventy years of the last century, reality was agreed upon and thus governed by a monocultural consensus, which has given way, over the last thirty years, to a world in which multiculturalism is increasingly held to be the social norm – even if the post-modern condition of permanent argument and dissensus comes with it as an inevitable corollary.

The sequence of international exhibitions that have marked out the growing interest in non-western and minority artists on the part of the metropolitan art world – '*Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern*' (1984) at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; *Magiciennes de la Terre* (1989) at the

Pompidou Centre in Paris; the controversial Whitney Biennial of 1993; and *Documenta XI* (2002) in Germany – gives one a measure of the ways in which multiculturalism and globalisation have become virtually 'normal' in the contemporary visual arts. On closer scrutiny, however, a whole range of unanswered questions also come to light. Why does 'the contemporary' so often take precedence over 'the historical' as the privileged focus for examining matters of difference and identity? Does the heightened 'visibility' of black and minority artists in private galleries and public museums really mean that the historical problem of 'invisibility' is now a problem solved and dealt with? To what extent has the curating of non-western materials in blockbuster exhibitions led to visual culture displays that may actually obscure the fine art traditions of countries that experienced colonialism and imperialism? In a situation where the aspiration to be all-inclusive has become the official watchword of institutional policy, has the very idea of 'inclusion' now become a double-edged sword?

Pursuing such questions, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* suggests that there is more to the material histories of the visual arts than our contemporary moment seems to imagine. Taking account of the three-fold interaction among non-western artists, minority artists within the West, and western art movements that have engaged with different cultures, the range of perspectives brought together in this book begins to map out the critical pathways between past and present addressed by the series as a whole. While the encounter between post-colonial studies and contemporary art writing has created a distinct field of enquiry into cross-cultural aspects of the visual arts, the resulting state of play has tended

to push art history into something of a quandary. On the one hand, traditional methods of research have been challenged by the rise of visual culture as a wider paradigm of critical enquiry, as well as by the range of concerns with cultural difference often grouped together under the heading of post-colonialism. Conversely, the interest in colonial history explored by contemporary artists and theorists alike has generated considerable interdisciplinary insight and yet the prevalent tendency to roam across the cultural sphere at large – taking in literature, film, photography and popular culture – has left the specific realm of the fine arts relatively untouched, especially as regards the lives and works of non-western and minority artists during the broad historical period of modernism between the 1890s and the 1980s.

Annotating Art's Histories sets out to address the gaps in our understanding of 20th-century art by restoring the work of art to the centre of investigation. Rather than seeking to fulfil an ideological programme for a totally 'inclusive' global art history – whatever that might be – the creative ambition for the series is to bring together research and scholarship that foregrounds close attention to individual artists and the institutional contexts in which their ideas and works were forged. Building upon the existing literature in the field, the series examines specific topics of enquiry with newly-commissioned writings whose themes and concepts have been developed in a symposium convened around each subject. In this way, the series raises questions for both the more conservative aspects of art history as a humanities discipline as well as for the theory-driven orientation in contemporary studies that often loses sight of the actual object of experience, even though the insights generated

by the overlap between visual studies and post-colonial studies clearly inform the investigations that each volume undertakes.

This introduction describes the artistic and intellectual context in which the series unfolds. Rather than attempt a definitive survey, it sketches the field of enquiry created since Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) inaugurated the post-colonial turn. Casting a critical eye over the key tendencies that have arisen in art history's responses to post-colonial questions, it is a partial and provisional review of how we have arrived at the current state of play with regards to understanding cultural difference, not as an arbitrary irrelevance that detracts from the 'essence' of art, nor as a social problem to be managed by compensatory policies, but as a distinctive feature of modern art and modernity that was always there and which is not going to go away.

Mapping various pathways through the field, as laid out in the bibliography, the starting point lies in a consideration of the language used in naming the general phenomena apprehended by such terms as 'the global', 'the international', 'the cross-cultural' and 'the culturally diverse'. Could 'the cosmopolitan' serve as a conceptual tool capable of cutting through the congested, and often confusing, condition created by these competing vocabularies? How can a case study approach to hitherto 'minor' 20th-century artists be reconciled with the wider insights generated by the critique of modernism associated with post-colonial and post-modern approaches? Can traditional art history genres, such as the survey and the monograph, be adapted to take account of cross-cultural dynamics, or do such concerns call for a wholly different approach to cultural chronology and artistic agency? Whereas 20th-century literature frequently

accepted voices from different cultures into the modernist canon, why did painters and sculptors encounter such a long-standing struggle with canon formation in the visual realm? Indicating some of the ways in which each chapter responds to these topics, this introduction situates *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* as a critical contribution to the field of cross-cultural studies in the history of the visual arts.

Critically Cosmopolitan

Discussing the reception of modernist art in colonial India, Partha Mitter argues that the widespread European fascination with the so-called primitive actually assisted the critical development of a counter-modern discourse that called the authority of western 'progress' into question. Far from the rigid dichotomy of self and other found in the tendency towards historical generalisation in certain strands of post-colonial theory, Mitter's historical enquiry into colonialism and nationalism in Indian art, as it developed from the 1890s to the 1920s, reveals a rather different story in which identities are constantly modifying one another in the very moment of their mutual encounter.

The communications revolution that brought about new forms of transport and travel at the turn of the century enabled individual and collective movement across national boundaries that almost always opened up the possibility of two-way traffic. The Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore struck a chord with audiences in Europe and Latin America and, for their part, modernists such as Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee stimulated widespread interest when their works were exhibited in Calcutta in 1922. In proposing a notion of the 'virtual cosmopolitan' to account

for such cross-cultural patterns, Mitter shows how a historiography of modern art can advance out of the limitations of a Eurocentric world view by examining the unintended consequences of modernisation. The interrelationship between these three terms – modernism, modernity and modernisation – indeed forms one of the key motifs of this book.

While the cosmopolitan evokes the idea of a world-citizen, and suggests an outlook that is open and receptive to what is strange or foreign, the term was thoroughly imbued with pejorative connotations in 19th-century Europe. Often used to identify the mobility of wealthy élites who were seen to exist 'everywhere and nowhere' with little or no loyalty to the nation-state, the term also appeared in *The Communist Manifesto* (trans. 1888), as Paul Overy notes, where Marx and Engels re-accentuated it to describe the international dimensions of a market economy constantly expanding its search for raw materials and new consumers across the world. In the vocabulary of modern politics, 'internationalism' arose as an alternative, where it suggested class solidarity against the global march of industrial capitalism. Overy's study opens up a further aspect to the over-determined relationship between colonialism and modernism: the way 'whiteness' comes to be visible as a problem of identity when it is thrown into crisis. The modernist architecture of the 1927 Weissenhofseidlung model housing project adopted elements from North African and Middle Eastern cultures, but when such features provoked an anti-orientalist backlash in pre-Nazi Germany the volatile conditions of European modernism in the 1930s were revealed to cut across left/right distinctions. At what point did avant-garde confidence in revolutionary

internationalism give way to the institutionalisation of modernism as the International Style?' This well-established question receives an altered inflection in light of Overy's account of the 'white walls' of modernist architecture as a complex signifier of the cosmopolitan that arose in a period when the identity of 'Europe' itself was thrown into crisis by fascism and nationalism.

Twentieth-century traumas of global warfare and unfinished revolution are often evoked to explain the mid-century migration of modernism from European cities such as Paris, Vienna and Berlin to the United States and New York after 1945; but one could also observe that the converse journey of artists moving from colonial periphery to western metropolis has received much less art historical attention, even though it further highlights an on-going narrative of two-way traffic. The coexistence of different modernisms, in the plural, comes out as a core feature of the Caribbean milieu addressed by Michael Richardson and Lowery Stokes Sims. Where the cross-cultural fusion of African and European elements in the Caribbean region inspired the Cuban painter Wifredo Lam, and attracted surrealists such as André Masson and André Breton, the contrasting emphases taken in these two chapters highlights a perspectival approach in which the relevance of the past to the present is drawn out in different ways. Lam's refusal to perceive ancestral rituals and modernist painting as mutually exclusive interests made him post-modern *avant la lettre*, according to Sims; whereas Richardson argues that the universalist ethos of the surrealist outlook led to an affinity with the Negritude poets of the 1940s that has, in turn, been rejected by an insular conception of 'créolité' in recent Francophone debates.

'Cosmopolitanism evokes mixed feelings', writes James Clifford in response to cultural studies debates that have tried to reinflect the term so as to investigate what could be called a 'cosmopolitanism-from-below', in which perspectives on mass migration, exile, asylum, and border-crossing feature prominently. Where cultures and identities are no longer understood as 'essences' fixed by the laws of nature, but are lived and experienced as 'worldly, productive sites of crossing: complex, unfinished paths between local and global attachments', Clifford's notion of a *discrepant cosmopolitanism*, 'gives us a way of perceiving, and valuing, different forms of encounter, negotiation, and multiple affiliation rather than simply different "cultures" or "identities"':²

In Ann Gibson's chapter on the abstract painting of Norman Lewis, and my chapter on the collages of Romare Bearden, the conflicted experiences of African American artists in the New York art world of the 1940s and 1950s can be seen to bear out some of the difficulties of 'encounter, negotiation and multiple affiliation' in a social world that was polarised by boundaries of 'race' and ethnicity. Even as the careers of these two black artists complicate the received assumption that minorities were simply excluded from the unfolding development of modernism at large, the story behind the Spiral group – which Lewis, Bearden and Hale Woodruff formed after the 1963 March on Washington led by Martin Luther King – presents a fascinating instance of how the relationship between art and politics was articulated without relying on a notion of an avant-garde. In a situation where artists from minority backgrounds had been seen as culturally 'backward', we find that the notion of historical time as a linear, homogenous chronology (which underpins the 'advance

guard' as a combative frontier that pushes towards the future) was implicitly contradicted in the experience of African American artists who addressed the historic freedom struggles of the 1960s that redefined the very meaning of blackness as a significant figure of difference in the modern imagination.

With the first English translation of Ferreira Gullar's 'Theory of the Non-Object', which was highly influential in the Brazilian neoconcrete movement of the late 1950s, Michael Asbury demonstrates another facet to this altered view of historical time. The discrepant time-scale, whereby Gullar's interest in gestalt psychology and phenomenology pre-dated similar concerns on the part of minimalism in North America in the mid-1960s, does not so much reverse the traditional art historical concern with primordality – who did or said what first – as it interrupts the sequential model of artistic chronology that many modernist art historians have inherited from the past. Indeed, where differences of culture, ethnicity or nationality interrupt the received narrative of 20th-century art, and thus introduce a critical 'differance' in the Derridian sense of delaying the closure of the signifying chain, what we find is not a wholly 'other' object of study that is somehow foreign or strange, but rather different ways of seeing that ask us to look and think again about art that is held to be familiar and taken for granted.

Offering the first explication of the philosophy of art put forward in C.L.R. James' essay on 'Picasso and Jackson Pollock' (1980), which has been overlooked until now by art historians and post-colonial critics alike, David Craven gives us a glimpse of what a truly 'worldly' account of modernism and modernity might look like. As Craven reveals, the subtle contrasts that James

makes in his readings of *Guernica* (1938), on the one hand, and *Autumn Rhythm* (1950), on the other, encapsulate a grasp of 'world culture' that goes far beyond our contemporary clichés of mere inclusion and wrestles instead with the 20th century's core dilemma, as Robert Rauschenberg expressed it in his often-cited statement: 'Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. (I try to act in that gap between the two).'³ In the sense that each of the modernist paradigms brought their questioning attitudes to bear precisely on this gap between art and life – worrying away at the frame that separates the picture plane from its perceptual surroundings, as Gullar puts it – the related historiographical duality between formalist and contextualist approaches is questioned by Craven's evocation of Mikhail Bakhtin's 'dialogical' method of enquiry.⁴

If the formal analysis of Heinrich Wofflin's *Principles of Art History* (1915, trans. 1950) sought to provide the discipline with a scientific basis of objectivity that was then modulated by the liberal humanist iconography of Erwin Panofsky, the social histories of art associated with Arnold Hauser, Frederic Antal and Meyer Schapiro placed the emphasis on the social contexts in which art transforms various materials in the process of producing meaning in different visual languages.⁵ Perhaps there is a parallel here with Peter Wollen's writing on the concept of 'two avant-gardes' (which was actually addressed to the history of modernist cinema).⁶ The drive to optical purity and the unconditional autonomy of the art object associated with such formalist critics as Roger Fry, Clive Bell and Clement Greenberg was constantly offset by the cut-and-thrust interventionism of constructivism, futurism, dada and surrealism as movements

that sought to challenge the given realities of everyday life. Where would cultural difference feature in such a narrative? In the sense that the dialogue between art history and post-colonial studies has entailed a massive critique of the Eurocentric assumptions that were often masked by the supposedly value-free search for 'pure' form as a guarantee of aesthetic value, it might seem that the answer lies firmly in the contextualist axis. This foregrounds the institutional basis of artistic production and reception as material practices that are immanent to the power relations of the societies in which they arise. But, on the other hand, without attention to specific matters of form, would art not be reduced to images that can only illustrate their contingent contexts?

In the sense that contemporary studies in visual culture could trace a genealogy to the so-called New Art History of the 1970s, and to John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972), the 'linguistic turn' brought about by the introduction of methods from semiotics, and subsequently post-structuralist theories of discourse, attempted to cross the binary divide between contextualist and formalist choices. Above all, feminist interventions overturned this either/or dichotomy by questioning the 'additive' model that assumed that artists hitherto excluded on account of gender could be simply added in to a pre-existing narrative without understanding why they were left out in the first place. Such historians as Norma Broude, Whitney Chadwick, Linda Nochlin and Griselda Pollock initiated a major paradigm shift by questioning 'the canon as a discursive strategy in the production and reproduction of sexual difference',⁷ and hence a third option was created, which examines the history of art to explore the constitutive role of representation in

the social construction of reality and in the lived experiences of modern subjectivity.

Coming back to our contemporary moment, one might say that each of these critical developments has contributed to a conversation in which matters of cultural difference can now be moved on from the reactive critique of Eurocentrism and brought into a proactive relationship with a range of artistic traditions and lineages that are worthy of study in their own right. Each of the contributors to *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* performs such a move by virtue of the quality of attention given to individual artists, their words and their works, and the specific contexts in which they acted as 'world-citizens' who were curious to explore the creative potential of cultural differences. While 'the cosmopolitan' undergoes a semantic transformation on this critical return journey through 20th-century art, it is important to emphasise that the term is not being proposed as an evaluative or judgemental banner heading (in the sense that it is a good thing if you have it, too bad if you don't). Equally important is to acknowledge the number of regions that are missing from the book's coverage – Africa, the Arab world, China, Japan, Russia and Eastern Europe, First Nations in Australia and Canada, among others. In this respect, while the series aims to facilitate connections and comparisons among established and emerging areas of research (across a range of genre that includes interviews and translations), the premise that the history of art across the entire world should be 'programmed' by inclusion at each and every turn is one that we call into question.

Like the additive model before it, the contemporary ideology now surrounding the notion of 'inclusion' creates a pressure to pursue

this goal as an end in itself, as if 'inclusion' was the end of the story. In contrast to the prevalent anthology model in contemporary publishing, which often aspires to be all-inclusive even at the risk of overwhelming the reader with information overload, each incremental step taken in the development of *Annotating Art's Histories* as an ongoing series seeks to overcome the barriers of specialisation (whether disciplinary, geographic, or identity-based) by making a long-range commitment to a consistently critical approach to the cultural history of art.

But what are the needs and expectations that anthologies, like large-scale survey exhibitions, aim to fulfil? Against the backdrop of the previously mentioned sequence of international exhibitions that has marked the institutionalisation of cultural diversity in the world of contemporary art, the next section offers a review of the encounter between the discourses of art writing and the driving concerns of the post-colonial turn.

Art History and Post-colonial Studies

In the twenty-five year period between writing *Orientalism* (1978) and his death in 2003, Edward Said's approach to the study of literature and culture has exerted considerable influence. His particular focus on western perceptions of the Middle East was addressed in *The Question of Palestine* (1983) and *Representing Islam* (1987), and the broad scope of his critically humanist outlook informed *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), but it was *Orientalism* that signalled a decisive turning point in intellectual life. Arguing that,

without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand

the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period,

he defined it as a 'network of interests [...] governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections'.⁸ By demonstrating that language played a primary and formative role in the discursive construction of 'the Orient' as an object of colonial knowledge, Said's methods issued a break from Marxist theories of ideology and the dependency model of Third World studies, both of which assumed a pre-existing reality that was merely distorted or mystified by hidden political interests. By virtue of employing post-structuralist concepts that attributed a 'world-making' role to representation,⁹ this approach not only highlighted the importance of cultural practices in the discursive formation of colonial history, but also encouraged a degree of theoretical transferability to a wide range of world-historical situations.

Hence in the first phase of post-colonial studies, such texts as Tzvetan Todorov's *The Discovery of America: The Question of the Other* (1982), which went back to 1492 to show how European Renaissance identity was shaped by the Amerindian encounter; Gayatri Spivak's *In Other Worlds* (1985), which examined materials from 19th-century colonial India; and the "Race", *Writing and Difference* (1985) collection edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr, each contributed to a paradigm-shift that displaced previous methods of cross-cultural enquiry in anthropology, the sociology of 'race' and

ethnicity, and the critique of neo-colonialism. While several important art historical studies made use of approaches that pre-dated the post-colonial turn, including Partha Mitter's *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (1977) and Hugh Honour's multi-volume series *The Image of the Black in Western Art* (1989), it may be said that Linda Nochlin's, 'The Imaginary Orient' (1983) marked one of art history's initial responses to Said's distinctive methods of enquiry.

Bringing her analysis of 19th-century realism to bear on orientalist paintings, Nochlin's account of the naturalistic depiction of exotic scenes that served as a screen upon which a mythological 'timelessness' deflected attention from the chaotic upheavals instigated by French military campaigns in North Africa, concurred with Said's approach. Her insights into Delacroix's romanticist orientalism, as seen in *Death of Sardanapalus* (1827–28) with its underlying fantasy of masculine omnipotence in which female bodies, like colonised countries, could be owned or disposed of at will, introduced issues of gender and sexuality that had not been uppermost in Said's account. Further studies in the context of the Arab world, such as Mallek Allouah's *The Colonial Harem* (1985), extended such insights, while others, such as John MacKenzie's *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (1995), have flatly rejected Said's framework.

Just as Nochlin wrote in response to a 1982 exhibition, Hal Foster's 'The "Primitive" Unconscious of Modern Art, or White Skins, Black Masks' (1985) was one of many responses to William Rubin's 1984 MoMA exhibition. 'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art proved to be a flashpoint for a range of criticism that galvanised at the point where post-colonial thought met the

cultural politics of various 'identity' movements. In the mid-1980s context, the far-reaching impact of new ways of understanding the legacy of the colonial past cut across any clear disciplinary distinction between art criticism and historical analysis. On the one hand, although Foster's criticism marked the first moment at which post-colonial concerns were taken on board by historians of modernism, it was not until the mid-1990s that in-depth approaches to primitivism were developed. During the first phase of the dialogue between post-colonial studies and art criticism it may be said that the epistemological break triangulated by the post-colonial, the post-modern and post-structuralist theory was in many ways led by artists themselves. In Britain and the United States, the philosophical critique of Eurocentrism was sharpened by criticisms of exclusionary practices in contemporary arts institutions. The artist Rasheed Araeen, for instance, established the journal *Third Text* in 1987 and subsequently curated *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-war Britain* (1989), which was the first historical survey of its kind. In this volatile milieu, in which different constituencies were each coming to terms with the changing attitudes signalled by the ubiquitous prefix 'post', texts such as Homi Bhabha's 'The Other Question – The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse' (1983) were equally influential in providing a new vocabulary for cultural criticism, even though they were not primarily addressed to the visual arts as such. Hence, on the other hand, what arose from the interdisciplinary conversations generated in this period came to be identified as 'visual culture'. Before looking at some of the insights and blind spots of the visual culture paradigm, it is important to take account of the concept of

'otherness' that emerged as the key concept in this major epistemological shift.

Whereas Nochlin followed Said's historical analysis to question the accuracy or veracity of western depictions, it was precisely the model of representation as adequation or correspondence to reality that Homi Bhabha challenged. As collected in *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha's essays introduced deconstructionist methods from Derrida and psychoanalytic theories from Lacan to augment the Foucauldian approach that Said had taken. Drawing on traditions in continental philosophy, this innovative framework helped to establish the examination of the relational positions of self and other in the symbolic realm of language as the defining axis of a new vocabulary in cultural criticism. With richly productive insights into the ambivalent dynamics of fear and fascination surrounding the ego's relationship to the imaginary other; into the way that stereotypes act according to a logic of fetishism in which the ego's dependence on the other is denied and disavowed, even as its illusion of omnipotent control is anxiously maintained; and, above all, with his insights into the importance of the gaze in the looking relations of the colonial scene, Bhabha's contribution was highly influential across several disciplines.

Significantly, the concept of fetishism also animated Foster's critique of MoMA's 1984 'Primitivism' exhibition, which proposed that formal and morphological affinities among tribal artefacts and modernist art were evidence of universal patterns in human perception. Suggesting an analogy between the extractive economy of imperialism and the de-contextualisation of non-western objects, mostly not intended to be exhibited for

aesthetic contemplation as art, Foster's contribution sought to reveal the interdependent relationship of modernism and colonialism that was historically disavowed by Eurocentric ideologies that upheld a formalist doctrine of absolute autonomy.

Where notions of fetishism cut across Marxist and Freudian fields of enquiry, and had been further reinflected by feminist art writing, the psychoanalytic orientation in the analysis of 'race' and representation played a doubly important role. On the one hand, such an approach paved the way for the rediscovery of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952, trans. 1967), which had revealed the complex entanglement of coloniser and colonised as two faces of an inter-subjective structure that in Fanon's view recast the account of mutual recognition storied in Hegel's master/slave dialectic. This approach informed the politics of representation that was acted upon by artists from post-colonial and diaspora backgrounds throughout the 1980s. On the other hand, however, the battery of concepts associated with the post-structuralist focus on self and other had the outcome of elevating the analysis of representation out of any one empirical reference point, such that art, film, photography or literature could all equally serve as 'texts' to be taken as raw material for the overarching contextualist orientation of the visual culture paradigm.

In light of the double meaning of 'representation' as both a practice of depiction and a practice of delegation – both of which pertain to the relationship of art and politics – the tendency that endowed the critical analysis of self and other with a wide degree of theoretical transferability undoubtedly contributed to the breakthrough moment of the late 1980s.

Where Araeen addressed the continuity of a Eurocentric mind-set across the historical crisis of modernism in 'From Primitivism to Ethnic Arts' (1987), the critic Michelle Wallace echoed this wide-ranging purview in her essay on 'Modernism, Post-Modernism and the Problem of the Visual in Afro-American Culture' (1990). The survey of African American, Latino American and Native American artists in *The Decade Show* (1990) was complemented by the New Museum's anthology *Out There: Marginalisation and Contemporary Culture* (1990).

In the European context, the pluralist approach taken by curator Jean-Hubert Martin in *Magiciennes de la Terre* (1989) responded to MoMA's anachronistic view of primitivism by prominently featuring a variety of contemporary non-western materials (even if they were mostly craft objects). While the exhibition's controversial reception generated insightful responses in the writings of critic Thomas MacEvilley in *Art and Otherness* (1992), and Susan Hiller's *Myths of Primitivism* (1991) anthology, *Magiciennes de la Terre* marked the point at which metropolitan arts institutions took the critique of Eurocentrism on board by turning to 'the global' as a programming framework that would both redress the omissions of the past and incorporate the discourse of identity brought into circulation by contemporary art. Whereas the attempt to curate on the basis of identity politics had led to the highly divisive reactions that arose in response to the Whitney Biennial of 1993, to which Homi Bhabha contributed the essay, 'Beyond the Pale: Art in an Age of Multicultural Translation', the global turn characterised by the growth of the international biennale exhibition circuit in such locations as Australia, South Korea, Turkey and South Africa proved to be the more

prevalent institutional means for seeking a resolution to the questions raised by post-colonial concerns. Such developments were the subject of critical analysis in Jean Fisher's edited collection, *Global Visions: Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts* (1994) which featured the views of such practising artists as Jimmie Durham and Everlyn Nicodemus, as well as art historians such as Sarat Maharaj and Judith Wilson.

In this second phase of dialogue, one could observe a complementary relation between visual culture and art history where both sought to re-examine the historical construction of cultural difference in diverse practices of representation. The focus on self and other that provides the principal theme for such studies as Maria Torognovic's *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (1990) and *Negrophilia: Black Culture and Avant-Garde Paris* (2001) by Petrine Archer-Straw, was matched by the critical study of the gaze in ethnographic photography, as seen in Elizabeth Edwards' anthology on *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920* (1992). The study of collecting undertaken by James Clifford in *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) was followed by Timothy Mitchell's 'Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order' (1988); Annie Coombes' study of British institutions in *The Invention of Africa* (1993) and the wide-ranging remit of *Colonialism and the Object* (1998) edited by Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn.

Art history surveys undertaken in light of post-colonial critique, such as Colin Rhodes' *Primitivism and Modern Art* (1994), and texts that revise the curriculum, such as the Open University book on *Primitivism, Cubism and Abstraction* (1993), have revealed that the

phenomenon was always more than a style, a school, or a phase, as primitivism was of foundational importance for the very birth of modernism. The innovative study of visual and literary materials in Sieglinde Lempke's *Primitivist Modernism: Black Culture and the Origins of Transatlantic Modernism* (1998) also serves to demonstrate the paradoxical role that primitivism played as a catalyst for artists of colour, an important point often lost sight of when the critique of Eurocentrism is pursued as an end in itself.

Questions for Visual Culture

In the sense that the global turn of the mid-1990s brought about a fusion between the discourses of the international and the multicultural, it may be said that a third phase of *rapprochement* in the dialogue on cultural difference and the visual arts has led to the current consensus on inclusion. Characterised by the blockbuster exhibition genre and the anthology format in arts publishing, the drive to be all-inclusive has, however, been an ambivalent and uneven affair.

At the very moment when post-colonial studies were taken to task in critiques launched by Benita Parry and Aijaz Ahmed, amongst others,¹⁰ prominent art critics such as Lucy Lippard and Robert Hughes took contrary views on the significance of diversity in the arts, which had given rise to the so-called 'culture wars' in which the very language of public debate was thrown into crisis.¹¹ In the sense that 'inclusion' has come to provide a settlement to these disputes, it is important to underline the choices that are now available in terms of a vocabulary for understanding the changing relationships between art and society in the 20th century.

The detailed account provided in the preceding section has been necessary because without informed choices for a critical vocabulary for dealing with matters of cultural difference, we find that old orthodoxies are merely reproduced with new contents. The comprehensive scope of Edward Lucie-Smith's *Race, Sex and Gender in Contemporary Art: The Rise of Minority Culture* (1994) ratified the growing interest in diversity on the part of public institutions and the international art market. The nomenclature of 'racial minorities' that appeared in Lucie-Smith's subsequent survey of art since 1945, *Art Today* (1999), is, however, somewhat puzzling because it is widely understood that there are no such things as 'races' – the very term is a historical product of the discourses that made monocultural world-views appear to be 'natural' in a bygone era when western hegemony went unquestioned.

Turning to the ways in which teaching and research in art history have taken these questions on board, this introduction draws to a close by considering three tendencies that are symptomatic of unresolved issues in this field of study. The first concerns uneven patterns in the production of knowledge. Where the area-studies model institutionalised the academic study of art in pre-colonial periods for such regions as the Indian sub-continent, imperial China, and pre-Colombian art in the Americas, other cultural regions such as Native North America, Aboriginal Australia and continental Africa have only come into view as fields of study within the past ten to fifteen years. One of the ways in which such disparities have been addressed has been through anthologies that offer a compendium of writings around a geographically defined topic. *Chinese Art at the Crossroads* (2002), edited by Wu Hung, which

questions the traditionalist focus that tends to minimise attention to modern art in China and its diasporas, exemplifies an intellectual response that takes these uneven conditions into account. On the other hand, the very title of *Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Marketplace* (1999), a first of its kind anthology edited by curator Okwui Enwezor and artist-cum-historian Olu Oguibe, hints at some of the pressures of supply and demand that inform the choices and decisions frequently made in the name of inclusion.

While the integration of continental Africa into the international art world has been long overdue, and Enwezor's and Oguibe's groundbreaking initiatives have sought to redress this imbalance, the privileged focus that 'the contemporary' enjoys as that which 'talks back' to the colonial discourse of the past has the unwitting outcome of obscuring earlier periods in the first half of the 20th century. Far from being a matter of individual intentions, one finds this pattern – whereby art of very recent provenance is held to counter-balance representations from the colonial era – across the field as a whole. In *The Third Text Reader on Art, Culture and Theory* (2002), an editorial decision was taken to omit monograph-style articles on individual artists and, as a result, attention to modernist history, although present, is overshadowed by the sheer quantity of material that primarily concerns identity issues in contemporary politics.

Secondly, the rise of visual culture has compounded this tendency. While many competing approaches each take a different emphasis, the study of representation that proceeds on the view that medium-specificity has been historically transcended often tends to feature cultural difference in the medium

of photography and film rather than the visual arts *per se*. *Visual Culture: The Reader* (2002), coedited by Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, foregrounds photography as the medium for addressing 'race' and ethnicity, while Nicholas Mirzoeff's *The Visual Culture Reader* (1997) features writings on 'visualising race and identity' as a counterpart to 'visual colonialism'. The tendency to interpret the post-colonial as 'talking back' to the discourse of self and other, as defined by the power relations of the colonial scene, even results in situations where actual works of art are shown but not discussed at all – as is the case of Gavin Jantjes' *Untitled* (1989), a painting that quotes a fragment from *Demoiselles D'Avignon*, that appears on the cover of *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (1993), edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, but which received no discussion in the anthology itself.

Thirdly, to what extent do the origins of post-colonial studies in literary criticism precipitate a textualist approach that entails 'scanning' visual culture for predetermined contents? The problem here is that 'reading' visual culture not only tends to conflate the history of art with the treatment of history by contemporary artists, but also that the aesthetic dimension of the work of art is made secondary to the variety of 'meanings' that the interpreter can find in it. Jean Fisher addressed this reductive tendency in 'The Work Between Us' (1997) by questioning the limitations of the linguistic model, but it is significant that Partha Mitter had previously pinpointed the way in which theories of "'colonial discourse" suffer from a sense of pre-destination'. Where Mitter suggests that 'the past... is a form of otherness', and that historians of the arts 'respond

imaginatively to the ineluctable "foreignness" of the past',¹² it may be said that the avoidance of close attention to modernist practices on the part of non-western and minority artists throughout the 20th century as a whole is reinforced by the predominant style of a critique of Eurocentrism that endlessly returns the discussion to western artists and institutions.

Modernism as a Story of Migrations

Building on some of the lines of enquiry reviewed in this introduction, and raising questions for the field of cross-cultural studies along the way, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* takes a look at some of those missing modernists hitherto squeezed out of the picture. Have we now arrived at a place where comparisons and connections can be made between previously separate areas of research? While the prospect of comparative study is clearly on the agenda of some promising recent developments,¹³ the response to this question indicated by the contributions to this book suggests that it may be more valuable to leave the connective dots open to reflection rather than attempt to close up 'world art' in a programme of total inclusion. Nonetheless, four distinct strands weave in and out of this return journey through various moments in 20th-century art.

Migration as a historical feature of modernism: Revealing the earliest known use of the term 'modernismo' in 1888, by Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío (1867–1916), David Craven has elsewhere demonstrated that the circulation of the term in Guatemala, Peru and Spain predated its appearance in the western European context, where 'the most common



term for modernism in the teens and twenties was simply “the new art” (“el arte nuevo” or “die neue Kunst”).¹⁴ Without returning to philology, such evidence offers alternative ways of understanding the fluid state in which a variety of modernisms coexisted prior to the institutional narratives of the post-1945 period. Echoing Raymond Williams’ view in *The Politics of Modernism* (1989), that it was in, ‘a generation of “provincial” immigrants to the great imperial capitals that avant-garde formations and their distanced, “estranged”, forms have their matrix’,¹⁵ Craven suggests the history of modernism is best viewed as a delta, rather than a homogenous mainstream. Like Mitter and Overy, he finds the definition of modernism put forward by Perry Anderson¹⁶ – in which the break with naturalistic conventions in academic art, the proximity to social revolution, and widespread fascination with technology emerged as key facets of a new attitude to art – as providing a viable starting point for examining historical similarities and overlaps that were obscured by the subsequent institutional equation of modernism with European and American formations. By virtue of being able to conjoin two or more disparate cultural and geographical spaces, a migrant perspective cuts across the nation-state as the primary basis of identification and affiliation and points to the role of both the city and of knowledge-based élites as sociological conditions of access to art education and professional patronage on the part of non-canonical artists.

Primitivism as counter discourse:

Embedded with reference to the ‘invented traditions’ thesis and the ‘imagined communities’

thesis in historical and cultural studies, Mitter’s highly productive notion of primitivism as a discourse of the counter-modern resonates with Lowery Sims’ insights into a ‘second wave’ of primitivism on the part of artists in the African diaspora. In contrast to the self and other axis of post-colonial theory, the detailed investigations into the cultural transformation of artistic sources that were made available by the two-way traffic of modernisation casts the question of agency in a different light. Whereas the political discourse of anti-colonial nationalism in India provided one set of conditions for the re-articulation of the primitive in the critique of western ‘progress’, could it be said that a certain degree of complicity with the discourse of primitivism on the part of the Harlem Renaissance generation of African American artists points to a converse situation in which agency was activated by an appropriation of an imagined ‘Africa’ marked by such tropes as irony, parody and repetition?

Stylistic choices and contingent contexts:

While visual studies often use literary methods to examine modernist art, the contextualist approach that seeks to tease out recurring stylistic affinities across paintings, poetry and novels has seldom featured in the visual culture paradigm. While my chapter attempts to trace such links between Romare Bearden’s collages and Ralph Ellison’s writings, the scope of Michael Richardson’s chapter and his previous work as editor and translator of *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean* (1996) points to an approach in which the literary and the visual may illuminate one another without being reduced to equivalent expressions of culture or identity. In this respect, attention to

the genealogy of concepts of 'style' may open a critical passageway between art history and cultural studies. Where formalist historians such as Wofflin and Riegl sought to dis-articulate 'style' from the evolutionist framework of the 19th century, where it was saturated with racist and nationalist values, the disciplines of linguistics and anthropology played an important role in Shapiro's anti-hierarchical conception of art as a visual language, which in turn influenced the notion of style as an expression of sub-cultural resistance or dissidence. Ann Gibson's view that the theoretical insights of post-colonial studies can be reconciled with the empirical study of overlooked minority modernists by actually looking at their work for the first time – as her *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (1997) does in detail – articulates a constructive reply to calls for historical revision that remain abstractly rhetorical. In so far as 'style' mediates the contingent contexts of material production, it provides a conceptual bridge to the aesthetic dimension of the art object that cannot be reduced to matters of representation.

Chronotopes of modernity:

The figurative presence of Bakhtin and his dialogical method hovers over many of the exit routes suggested across the book as a whole in terms of finding ways out of the current predicament of cross-cultural approaches to the history of art. Defined in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975, trans. 1981) as 'an optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring',¹⁷ the term pertains to Michael Asbury's reflections on neoconcretism in 1950s Brazil, which question the temporal logic of 'deferred action' that Hal Foster evokes

to account for the neo-avant-garde of the North American scene. Although other contributions also express doubts as to notions of historical time as developmental 'progress', and thus question the evaluative claims made for various avant-garde formations, the use of chronotopes to explore the multiple time-scales of diaspora life in Paul Gilroy's study of *The Black Atlantic* (1993) nonetheless resonates with the view of temporal deferral as a characteristic of historical trauma. To what extent might Bakhtin's chronotopes shed light on a world system that was perpetually vulnerable to crisis, according to Enrique Dussell, even though the hegemony of Eurocentrism strained to 'manage' the illusion of unbroken continuity from 1492 to 1945?¹⁸ Because chronotopes are time-space categories to be found in cultural forms themselves, rather than in abstract systems that aspire to objective measurement, how might our understanding of modern art be altered and modified once their presence in individual works of art is taken into account? En route to modernism's cross-cultural past, this is a question that we are only now beginning to ask.

1. The Third Manifesto of the De Stijl movement in 1921 placed the emphasis, 'not [on] the spirit of socialism nor that of capitalism, but rather an "International of the spirit which is spiritual"': Hans Belting, 'The Unwelcome Heritage of Modernism: Style and History', in *Art History After Modernism*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 2003, 34. See also Paul Overy, *De Stijl*, London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991.
2. James Clifford, 'Mixed Feelings', in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins eds, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1998, 362 and 365. Other contributions to this debate include Homi Bhabha, 'Unsatisfied Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism', in Peter C. Pfeiffer and Laura Garcia-Moreno eds, *Text and Narration*, Columbia S.C.: Camden House, 1996, and 'Cosmopolitanism', *Public Culture*, vol. 12, no. 13, 2000.
3. Robert Rauschenberg quoted in Lucy R. Lippard, *Pop Art*, London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 1966, 6.
4. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* [1975], Austin: University of Texas, 1981; see also M. Bakhtin/P.N. Medvedev, chap. 3, 'The Formal Method in European Art Scholarship', in *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1985.
5. Heinrich Wofflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art* [1915], New York: Dover, London: Bell & Hyman Ltd, 1950; Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* [1939], New York: Harper & Row, 1972; Arnold Hauser, *The Philosophy of Art History*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959; Frederick Antal, *Essays in Classicism and Romanticism*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966; Meyer Schapiro, *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and the Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text*, The Hague: Mouton, 1973.
6. Peter Wollen, 'The Two Avant-Gardes', *Studio International* (November–December 1975), in *Edinburgh '76 Magazine*, 1, London: British Film Institute, 77–85.
7. Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, 26; see also Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?', in Thomas Hess and Elizabeth Baker eds, *Art and Sexual Politics*, London and New York: Collier Macmillan, 1973; Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* [1981] London: Pandora, 1986; Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, New York: Harper & Row, 1982; Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*, London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 1990.
8. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London and New York: Routledge, 1978, 3 and 8.
9. See Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, New York: Basic Books, 1975 and *The World, the Text and the Critic*, London: Faber, 1983.
10. Benita Parry, 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse', *Oxford Literary Review*, 9 (1 & 2), 1987; Aijaz Ahmed, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, London: Verso, 1992; Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.
11. Lucy R. Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*, New York: The New Press, 1990, Robert Hughes, *The Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993; see also Brian Wallis, Mariane Weems and Philip Yenawine eds, *Art Matters: How the Culture Wars Changed America*, New York: New York University Press, 1999.
12. Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 8.
13. In the UK, the Arts and Humanities Research Board has provided support for a major initiative in comparative studies on Art and National Identity in India, Japan and Mexico (1860s to 1940s) coordinated by Orianna Baddeley (Camberwell School of Art), Partha Mitter (University of Sussex) and Toshio Watanabe (Chelsea School of Art). The website created by the project on Globalising Art, Architecture and Design History features information and contacts as well as a keynote speech by Donald Preziosi, 'Grasping the World: Conceptualising Ethics after Aesthetics', www.glaadh.ac.uk.
14. David Craven, 'Modernism', in Maryanne Cline Horowitz ed., *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, New York: Scribners & Sons, 2005 (in preparation).
15. Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, London: Verso, 1989.
16. Perry Anderson, 'Modernity and Revolution', *New Left Review*, no. 144, 1984.
17. Mikhail Bakhtin, 1981, op. cit. 425–26.
18. Enrique Dussell, 'Beyond Eurocentrism: The World System and the Limits of Modernity', in Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi eds, *The Cultures of Globalization*, Durham N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 1998, 3–25.