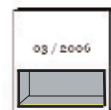


Towards a new Orientalism

The process of economic, social and ideological changes that China is undergoing at the present has had a significant effect on world economy. It is also changing the balance of global powers by challenging the supremacy of the West. Even if the most radical changes are taking place in China, other countries such as India and Singapore are significantly opening up to the rest of the world. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at the height of the colonial expansion of Great Britain and France throughout the Middle East, India, Southeast Asia and China, there was a keen interest on everything oriental, specially in arts, which was labeled as “Orientalism.” In terms of postcolonial critique, this phenomenon has now acquired negative connotations due to the imperialist and westernizing interpretation of Eastern cultures. Nowadays, with the transformation of China and India into economic powers in their own right, a new fascination with the East has emerged, especially regarding China; some see it as a menace, others view it with optimism because it represents the failure of “Maoism” and constitutes another player in the balance of global powers. Some works in the exhibition such as those by Fernando Bryce, Allora y Calzadilla, Zhao Bandi, Cao Fei, Hai Bo, Felipe Barbosa, and Jonathan Horowitz, can be read in this context.

Each one of the works exhibited here points towards the dynamics and side effects of globalization, some even seem to desire to prescribe solutions, as in the case of Thomas Hirschhorn and his apology of anarchism; in any case, they all warn about the grave consequences of inclining the balance of power in favor of only one of the forces in tension that define the new order of things in our contemporary world.



GLOBALIZATION

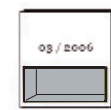
INDICATIONS | SIDE EFFECTS | WARNINGS

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GLOBALIZATION

INDICATIONS | SIDE EFFECTS | WARNINGS

Brian Alfred
Allora & Calzadilla
Zhao Bandi
Felipe Barbosa
Hai Bo
Fernando Bryce
Christoph Büchel
Carolina Caycedo
Gardar Eide Einarsson
Cao Fei
Luis Gispert
Isa Genzken
Dan Graham,
Arturo Herrera
Jonathan Horowitz
Thomas Hirschhorn
Alfredo Jaar
Gabriel Kuri
Matthieu Laurette
Nikki Lee
Nelson Leirner
Mark Lombardi
Nicola López
Cildo Meireles
Sarah Morris
Muntadas
Takashi Murakami
Paulo Nenflidio
Rivane Neuenschwander
Hélio Oiticica
Gabriel Orozco
Martha Rosler
Mika Rottenberg
Tom Sachs
Yinka Shonibare
Reena Spaulings
Superflex
Aaron Young

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GLOBALIZATION: INDICATIONS | SIDE EFFECTS | WARNINGS

The ubiquity of the term “globalization” in every sphere of everyday life defies attempts at its definition, since the term acquires different meanings when employed in different contexts. Nevertheless, as an integral part of the contemporary world, from the way the garments we wear are fabricated, to the outsourced call centers where we dial for customer service, and the presence of the internet in our lives, we could affirm that globalization is an epistemological construct in itself, a way of experiencing and knowing the world. Undoubtedly, there is no shortage of debate on globalization; some see it in a positive light, as an aperture to other cultures which, in the process, minimizes the cultural, political and economic hegemony of the West; others see it as a negative force, as an instrument of capitalism that displaces the idea of the nation-state in favor of the corporation. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their book *Empire* speak of a new form of global sovereignty that is brought about by the blurring of boundaries, and define it as “Empire.” For Hardt and Negri, Empire is not one single country or a group of countries, but rather a “decentered and deterritorialized apparatus” in which identities become hybrid, hierarchies become flexible and the spatial divisions between the first, second and third world have disappeared so that we find the first world in the third and vice versa. In this new order of things, capital emerges as the main operative dynamic which regulates the dissemination of information, money, and cultural and economic exchanges in the contemporary world.

Art has also felt the effects of globalization, most notably in the way the peripheries have found their way into the mainstream of international discourse and the biennials that have sprung up around the world in places like São Paulo, Havana, Gwangju, Sydney, San Diego / Tijuana, among others, even though some of these biennales have been taking place for decades. However, this exhibition deals with how contemporary artists approach the dynamics of globalization in their work, and examine the incidence of this phenomenon in many aspects of contemporary life, from the division of labor to the conflicts created by the expansionist policies of the corporation.

This exhibition presents a selection of works from the Berezdivin collection that reflects some of these concerns on behalf of the artists. On one occasion Thomas Hirschhorn said that one “must not make political art but rather make art politically” and this way of making art is a common denominator in the works present in the exhibition. While at the same time they explore the conventions and specificities of different mediums such as painting, sculpture, photography, installation and video, these works touch upon a variety of issues and many of them have different possibilities of reading and meaning. For this exhibition four thematic indexes have been established that group different aspects of globalization. Some of the works can be read in term of one or more of these indexes since they contain multiple references to these aspects of globalization.

Flux ■

One of the most significant aspects of globalization is the constant flow of persons, goods, information and money. This has increased exponentially with the advances in technology in the fields of transportation and communication and implies a greater incidence of “flux” in many spheres of contemporary daily life, as well as a change in our perception of space, culture and identity; cities tend to become megalopolises, collapsing under the influx of immigrants and other people attracted to them by job opportunities; space tends to become homogeneous, airports are a prime example of this homogenization of space; migratory flows influence local cultures bringing foreign influences to urban centers which become more cosmopolitan, this also implies a hybridization of identity and culture which will become all the more evident in future generations; global consumerism patterns are developed and disseminated via the circulation of brands all over the world; information becomes accessible in an immediate way through the internet and other mass media, which contributes to the dissemination of cultural forms around the globe. The works of artists such as Mark Lombardi, Muntadas, Alfredo Jaar Cildo Meireles, Matthieu Laurette, Allora & Calzadilla, Martha Rosler, Luis Gispert, Takashi Murakami, Tom Sachs, Nikki Lee, Paulo Nenfliodio, Arturo Herrera, and Nicola Lopez, operate within this framework of ideas.

Economies ■

Globalization is above all an economic phenomenon that can be translated into other areas of daily life. In the same way that the industrial revolution brought about the mechanization of society and a true and effective division of labor, the technological advances of the modern world have intensified these dynamics of postindustrial society, especially in regard to the division of labor. At the present, capitalism has become the driving force behind globalization; multinational corporations have emerged as the entities of power that regulate global dynamics and their policies are felt even in the most remote places. In a way, corporations have come to substitute the model of the nation-state and actively promote deterritorialization by practices such as outsourcing. However, the structures that operate on the margins of the corporation are increasingly interacting with it, establishing symbiotic relationships between formal and informal economies. The works of Dan Graham, Sarah Morris, Brian Alfred, Allora & Calzadilla, Mika Rottenberg, Felipe Barbosa, Superflex, Carolina Caycedo and Rivane Neuenschwander, all touch upon these ideas.

Conflict ■

Conflict is one of the most noxious “side effects” of globalization. Since 9/11 we are going through one of the most convulsive moments in recent history, however, the war taking place in several parts of the world is not the only form conflict that we find in the present. Globalization has stirred a discontents over its trade treaties, migration, the hegemony of the corporation and their role in the conflict in the Middle East, the expansion of capitalism, the monopoly of brands, among others. Mass media such as the internet serve as platforms for the organization and action of activists groups that strive to establish alternative forms of governance and thus resist the power wielded by multinational corporations. The works of Isa Genzken, Christoph Büchel, Dan Graham, Gardar Eide Einarsson, Aaron Young, Hélio Oiticica, Yinka Shonibare, Thomas Hirschhorn, Jonathan Horowitz, and Gabriel Kuri address this set of issues.