

Exhibiting the Postcolonial Constellation

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Documenta11, the fifth Platform of which, the exhibition in Kassel, opened in June 2002, was the first international mega-exhibition since 9/11. Enwezor had been appointed artistic director four years earlier, on the strength of his achievement in exhibitions such as the Johannesburg Biennale in 1997. The Documenta11 catalog opens with several pages of news imagery within which 9/11 registers as one event within the current world chaos. The exhibition itself follows, accepting that it will live amidst that chaos but also implicitly promising to point some pathways through it. Enwezor was conscious that, in Catherine David's 1997 edition, documenta had become not only the world's leading exhibition of global contemporary art but also the meta-exhibition for all such showings.¹ Undaunted, he took up this legacy, from outside of it, then sought to exceed it, as he explains in his introductory essay to catalog, entitled "The Black Box":

"As an exhibition project, Documenta11 begins from the sheer side of extraterritoriality: firstly, by displacing its historical context in Kassel; secondly, by moving outside the domain of the gallery space to that of the discursive; and thirdly, by expanding the locus of the disciplinary models that constitute and define the project's intellectual and cultural influence."²

Indeed, he and his team set out to overrun the limits of the art exhibition as it was then known.³ The boldest move – because it was structural – was to conceive of the exhibition as consisting of five "platforms" – places on which to debate, and do so politically – locating four of them *outside* Kassel – three of them outside "The West" – and to stage them *before* the display at Kassel, since 1955 the single location of each quinquennial iteration. While attendance at these workshops was of course small – not least compared to the 650,924 who came to Kassel – they attracted the leading thinkers for concentrated discussions and resulted in a powerful set of publications. "Democracy Unrealized" (Vienna, March 15–April 20, 2001; Berlin, October 9–30, 2001) challenged the presumption that the implosion of the USSR between 1989 and 1991 meant that liberal democracy allied with free market capitalism was, as many were claiming, the only and best model for current and future societies, arguing instead that democracy was "a work in progress".⁴ "Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation" (New Delhi, May 7–21, 2001), explored the potential for establishing justice through the new forms of mediation – notably the "truth commissions" in post-apartheid South Africa – that had arisen in the aftermath of state violence and genocide throughout the twentieth century. "Créolité and Creolization" (St. Lucia, January 13–15, 2002), took up the celebration of Caribbean polycentrism by Martinican intellectuals of *créolité* as "the interactional or transactional aggregate of Caribbean, European, African, Asian, and Levantine cultural elements, united on the same soil by the yoke of history".⁵ Noting that "In recent years, through waves of migration and displacements, creolization has emerged as a dominant modality of contemporary living practices, shaping patterns of dwelling that are crossed and differentiated by massive flows of images and cultural symbols expressed through material culture and language", the Platform suggested that a critical *créolité* might be the best approach to thinking our contemporary conditions.⁶ "Under Siege: Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, and Lagos" (Lagos, March 16–20, 2002) rejected the characterization of postcolonial cities as "unsustainable, chaotic, and unmanageable" in favor of seeing them as sites for the writing of "new texts of resilience, survival, and growth".⁷

None of these public forums was an art exhibition. Conversely, the displays of artworks at the venues at Kassel, the fifth Platform, were not academic workshops. But the five Platforms, taken together, were a display of discursivity, of thinking the world, debating it, and changing one's thinking, of acting in the world, debating one's actions, and changing them. What had this to do with art? Artists act not only in making works of art but also by negotiating with curators about showing them, and by changing their subsequent work in response to responses about how it looks while out in the world. Thinkers do likewise. By bringing together the most critical thinking about the contemporary world with the most critical art being made within it, Enwezor sought to conjure a space that encompassed both critical thinking and critical art practice, that showed them *at work* in relation to each other. He called this space (drawing from the Martinican manifesto) a "critical envelope" and (from Jürgen Habermas) a "public sphere". Both phrases name the domain that mediates between the individual and the larger powers that be. As names, they are imperfect characterizations of a necessary reality, as all such formulations must necessarily be.

What did Enwezor see as the limitations of the modern art exhibition? What drove him to strive to bring about another (I would say contemporary; he would say "aftermodern") exhibitionary form?⁸ Throughout his essay, he rejects the in-the-last-instance aestheticism that, he believes, underscores the modern exhibition. He refuses any presumption as to art's autonomy, especially the claim that art must "stay above politics". About this he says: "Such a call is not only perversely conservative but, more importantly, it misunderstands the nature of the critical energy that drives the conditions of artistic production, dissemination, and reception across a multiplicity of institutional and non-institutional frameworks today".⁹ Contemporary art is not neutral, nor is it one thing, therefore contemporary curating cannot be either. The exhibitionary form itself must change to meet the challenge that the art is posing. A "unified vision" of art today is impossible to project in an exhibition, precisely because it does not exist in the real world. Similarly, the modernist narrative of disrupting artistic tradition by avant-garde innovation is, Enwezor believes, an equally constraining illusion. Both give exhibitions the false role of normalizing and rendering uniform "all artistic visions on their way to institutional beatification".¹⁰

The alternative kind of exhibition that Enwezor required, he believed, a "spectacular difference" to mark it as genuinely other. What was that? On the face of it, Enwezor seems to be saying that Documenta11 should take a form that would make it stand out against other contemporary mega-exhibitions, while also being one of their kind, like it or not. Fair enough. Yet he also had in mind Guy Debord's famous condemnation of capitalist commodity culture, *The Society of the Spectacle*, specifically Debord's insight that the function of spectacle is "to bury history in culture", a process against which critical practice must intervene.¹¹ A critical exhibition must, therefore, intervene by introducing into the culture of spectacle a sharp awareness of the ongoing relevance of historical differentiation – not least, several reminders about how difference came into the world, and does so now.

Above all, this difference is not singular. It is the difference of the multitudes, as distinct from the totalization that globalizing Empire seeks to impose; it is the counter-models and "experimental cultures" constantly created by "those placed on the margins of full global participation".¹² In his conclusion, Enwezor set out what Documenta11, as an expanded exhibition, hoped to achieve.

"The collected result in the form of a series of volumes and the exhibition is placed at the dialectical intersection of contemporary art and culture. Such an intersection equally marks the liminal limits out of which the postcolonial, post-Cold War, post-ideological, transnational, deterritorialized, diasporic, global world has been written. This dialectical enterprise attempts to establish concrete and imaginative links with the various projects of modernity. Their impact, as well as their material and symbolic ordering, is woven through the procedures of translation, interpretation, subversion, hybridization, creolization, displacement, and reassemblage. What emerges in this transformation in

different parts of the world produces a critical ordering of intellectual and artistic networks of the globalizing world. The exhibition as a diagnostic toolbox actively seeks to stage the relationships, conjunctions, and disjunctions between different realities: between artists, institutions, disciplines, genres, generations, processes, forms, media, activities; between identity and subjectification. Linked together the exhibition counterpoises the supposed purity and autonomy of the art object against a rethinking of modernity based in ideas of transculturality and extraterritoriality. Thus, the exhibition project of the fifth Platform is less a receptacle of commodity-objects than a container of a plurality of voices, a material reflection on a series of disparate and interconnected actions and processes.”¹³

Statements of intent are one thing, achieving them in an actual exhibition is another. Did Documenta11 live up to its stated goals, fall short of them for reasons beyond its control, or was it, as some alleged, a Westernist show in blackface?¹⁴

I take “the exhibition” to be all five Platforms. I was not able to attend the first four, but few would dispute that the topics tackled were, and remain, among the most important of our times. I know the work of most of the participants, and thus can attest that their contributions to the published proceedings make them volumes that can stand alongside the most comprehensive and searching, specialist surveys of their subjects.¹⁵ Platform5, the exhibition of around 450 works by 117 artists shown across seven venues at Kassel, 70% of which were commissioned for the occasion, was larger and more dispersed through the city than previous editions. Was it so broad in its ambition that it could not fail? Can something be “critical” if the criteria for falsifying it are so multiple?

For me, a defining moment occurred in the documenta Halle, in the installation *From/To* by Fareed Armaly and Rashid Masharawi. Armaly, an artist of Lebanese-Palestinian descent, born in the US and resident in Stuttgart, designed a floor grid of orientations based on territories claimed by Palestine, while Masharawi, a Palestinian filmmaker, born in the Shati refugee camp and resident of Ramallah, presented a program of Palestinian film. The projection space included an illuminated wall map showing the actual locations of Israeli settlements on the West Bank. It became obvious at a glance that Israel was establishing “facts on the ground” that would make the two-state solution supposedly desired by all parties a practical impossibility. An informed, free press would have made this known to all, but these were the months after 9/11. The War on Terror had been declared by the oligarchs then, as now, in command of nations, including those from which the majority of perpetrators and the victims came — respectively, Saudi Arabia and the United States. Information inimical to their interests was systematically eclipsed, even in “free” societies. In the United States, where I was living, opposition was rare, and when exceptional intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky and Susan Sontag raised their voices against the tide of misinformation, mindless patriotism, and fearful retreat from critique, they were pilloried.¹⁶ Since then, the reactionary regression then emergent has reaped its deadly harvest: rouges became the leaders of one state after another in many countries throughout the world, including several “free market”, “social democracies” in Europe and, during the time of Trump, in the United States.

Offering politically sensitive information that is otherwise suppressed is a worthy aim for any kind of publication, but is it appropriate for an art exhibition? Commenting on Enwezor’s claims, British black activist Rasheed Araeen posed this question directly: “Can mere subject matter – [here he invokes the struggle of the oppressed] – confront and change the language in which it is inserted adequately and still produce something new and different in terms of art?”¹⁷ Read on, Rasheed. In the documenta Halle in 2002, *To/From* was complemented by Meschac Gaba’s installation *Museum of Contemporary African Art: Library*. A collection of books on Africa and especially African art, and some sculptural objects, it made vividly present the unexpected richness of its subject – so many books, on so many artists, such a lively scene, who knew? Yet the chandeliers made of burnt and discarded volumes, and a coffin-like reading table, hinted at the external reality. On the African continent, there were few such libraries, and

(at the time) no museum devoted to contemporary African art. Nor any with a museum shop, which he also showed, with nothing for sale. In Africa itself, cultural energy was manifest in the work of both individuals and artist groups who actively worked to ground artistic practice in local communities. Adjacent to To/From, Huit Fchettes, an artist collective based in Dakar, showed the outcomes of their work in rural areas of Senegal, specifically in Hamdallye, where they workshopped the painting of murals on village houses with imagery developed as a unique, local alphabet. Next, New Delhi-based Raqs Media Collective presented *28°28' N / 77°15' E:: 2001–2002. An Installation on the Coordinates of Everyday Life*, which consisted of videos, text, sound tracks, printed matters, signage and writings on the walls that explored the complex relationships between visual information and the operations of laws in urban settings, from New Delhi to Kassel. In contrast, they also created an online space OPUS, a free “digital commons” for unfettered creativity. Since 2002, Gaba has shown various rooms from his imaginary Museum in several exhibitions, including *The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds After 1989* (ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2011), and in museums such as the Tate Modern. Huit Fchettes have continued their practice in Senegal and shown its outcomes in exhibitions co-curated with Clementine Déliiss. And RAQs has extended its deconstructive approach to explorations of contemporary realities, desires and dreams through numerous installations, performances, and curated exhibitions, including the Shanghai Biennale 2016–2017.¹⁸

Works such as these definitively announced the second message of Documenta11: that the art of the Rest of the World had not only arrived in Europe, it was now setting the agenda for art everywhere, and that agenda was one of critical globality. A sure measure that this message got through was the trouble that many commentators took – after noting the Nigerian origins but New York base of the artistic director and similar profiles among the curatorial team – to count the places of birth of the artists involved, and then go on to chart where they now lived and worked. A *New York Times* report entitled “Documenta11: The retro-ethno-techno exhibition: The silence is broken” pointed out that “most of the show’s Third World participants live in Europe or America and have frequently lent an exotic touch to international exhibitions”.¹⁹ Thomas McEvelly’s “rough count” gave 25 from the US, 34 from Europe, 6 from the former USSR, Africa 14, Asia 16, and Latin America 9. Australian Aboriginal artist Destiny Deacon seems to have been ignored. As well, “Some artist collectives are not counted because of ambiguities”.²⁰ While most conceded that the representation from 45 countries was unprecedented, this caviling over origins expresses concern about exactly the world changes that Enwezor highlighted in his introduction and his team constantly emphasized in their commentaries: most of these artists are members of diasporas – like Enwezor himself, they were shaped by situations of travail. A more pertinent set of figures are provided by Ruth E. Iskin. Noting that the first documenta included no artists from outside the West, she went on to observe that “the second (1959) included 3%; in Documenta11 (2002), 22% of the participants were artists living in non-Western countries and 43% were born in such countries”.²¹ Indeed, she credits Documenta11 with “establishing its own canon”, one that “differs significantly from any Western canon of contemporary art”.²²

My idea that there are at least two broad currents within contemporary art, first precipitated in the 1980s by the emergence of Australian Aboriginal art as a broad-scale movement, was cemented by this exhibition. That it was a diverse aesthetic regime grounded in a world historical, geopolitical change was confirmed. In *What is Contemporary Art?* I heralded it as “The Postcolonial Turn”, the outcome of years of increasingly successful resistance to colonization. It was, and remains, a key critical counter on a worldwide scale to neoliberal globalization, then reaching its ascendancy.²³ Nevertheless, replacing the winners while keeping the same structures in place was a trap long laid by the dominant powers that be. Something more was at stake: a world in which we were all, in all of our differences, genuine contemporaries. And if, within that, artistic canons have to be identified, they should be made up of the art that responded with acuity and flair to the kinds of concerns Enwezor called for in the conclusion I cited earlier.²⁴

Stuart Hall saw clearly the kinds of political struggles that were necessary to bring this about, and to sustain it. His comments on Documenta11, which I cited in *What is Contemporary Art?*, are worth repeating:

“One of the transformatory things in the last two decades has been the way in which the thematics of visual representation have been massively rewritten from the margins, from the excluded; and this is precisely the contest being played out within that global circuit of cultural production... This year’s documenta got ambiguous press because it did not show the best that has been thought and said and written in Western Europe, which is what you expect from a big international modern art show. You walk through all these halls and we see massively excluded discourses, images, including forms of representation using the media, using multimedia, using modern forms of technology in order to give voice to the marginalized, the migrant, the endlessly mobile, the homeless.”²⁵

These voices appeared, powerfully, at the core of each venue. They were, initially, spoken by women. In the two main ground floor salons of the Fridericianum, Doris Salcedo was paired with Choreh Feyzdjou, recently deceased, to whom the entire exhibition was dedicated. Between them, on the three floors of the Rotunda, a major project by Hanne Darboven, obsessive numerologist, linked aspects of the work of the two other women, and also served to separate them. Of a Jewish family in Tehran, Feyzdjou moved to Paris to study in 1975 and remained there until her death in 1993. Her installation *Boutique Product of Choreh Feyzdjou* was a years-long accumulation of hand-made objects using re-cycled materials, stored artworks, half-filled and closed packaging, everything stained, worn, blackened by use, marked up to indicate despairing neglect. In its overwhelming scale yet utter intimacy, the voices listed by Hall resonated within it. Across the entrance hall, Salcedo’s installation *Tenebrae Noviembre 7, 1985* evoked the occasion when the Columbian army and Bogatá police stormed the Supreme Court building that had been occupied the night before by rebel commandos. They did so with overwhelming force, setting the entire building on fire, killing the 35 guerillas but also 53 justice officials and visitors. To suggest the impacts on these bodies, Salcedo showed melted furniture, fused together into grotesque shapes, and merged with pylons that blocked avenues of escape. Both installations revealed the impact of social and political forces on individuals: in Feyzdjou’s case, she demonstrates their effects over time, one person’s lifetime; in Salcedo’s, unnamed, unseen individuals are obliterated by their chance presence at an event precipitated by forces roiling the society of which they are members, and over which they have little control. Such matching of registers — the private and the public, personal and political, Europe and elsewhere — along with much switching between them, occurred throughout Documenta11. The curatorial style of the coterminous, historical, critical exhibition, pioneered by Enwezor in the preceding five years, was now reaching out to become global in scope.²⁶ Could this succeed, could it be sustained across all venues, could one visitor take it all in?

The Bindung-Brauerei, a converted brewery, gave densely-layered, provisional yet affirmative answers to these questions. On entering, one soon found oneself in a long corridor lined with monitors hung above eye level, each screening one of the 13-part television series *Nunavut (Our Land)*. Made by Igloodik Isuma Productions, a mostly Inuit filmmaking cooperative, it showed a mix of plain, poetic, and quixotic narratives based drawn from the lives, work, myths and imaginings of Inuit peoples living at Igloodik, in far northern Canada. Next, a suite of rooms displayed the entirety of Allan Sekula’s photographic series *Fish Story 1989-1995*, a now-classic rumination on fishing as an international industry. Book-ending this display at one end was a room of Candida Höfer’s large Cibachromes of European museums and libraries; at the other, drawings and small sculptures by Louise Bourgeois. Sekula told me that he was, at first, shocked and displeased by this arrangement. He understood his critical realist studies of workers’ experience to be opposed to Höfer’s elegant records of privileged spaces. As well, his photographic series were informed studies of social being, not inner-directed ruminations in the manner of Bourgeois. He objected, but Okwui told him to wait and the logic would become evident. It did; it is the same one

that set the scene for the entire Platform by pairing Feyzdjou and Salcedo. It enriches our understanding of Sekula's art by bringing out two distinct dimensions that the artist, at that stage, did not fully recognize as informing his work. It enriched his practice by opening him to the aesthetic dimensions of his imagery and to the poetic potential of the written and spoken texts that he wrote to accompany his photographs.

Cross-currents of a similarly surprising, acute and generative kind could be found throughout the building, which was divided into several rooms. Although most of them showed the work of one artist, with installations and videos predominating, juxtapositions of rooms kept turning into insightful conjunctions. Gabriel Orozco's *Beginnings*, an anthropological museum-type space displaying rough ceramic artefacts from an unspecifiable civilization, appeared alongside Georges Adéagbo's *Explorer and Explorers Confronting the History of Exploration...! The World Theater*, which sounds like a candidate for an atemporal, ahistorical exhibition. It was the opposite: it collected hundreds of artefacts, records, publications, images, commentaries and political tracts showing the exploration of Africa to be the colonialist enterprise that it was.

One of the few large rooms was dominated by Yinka Shonibare's sculptural group *The Grand Tour*: headless mannikins dressed in resplendent Africa print outfits, indulging in mindless hijinks. It was a mild mockery of the condescension of the English aristocracy who toured the ancient monuments of Europe during the eighteenth century, while drawing their income from their colonies in India, Africa and Asia. In the next room, however, Steve McQueen's video *Western Deep* brought this exploitation up to date in harrowing terms. Filmed in the TuTona goldmines near Johannesburg, the world's deepest, it follows the miners down three and a half kilometers, less to record their work at the face, more to show their daily routines and habits of adjustment to a form of life that the end of apartheid has not changed. Long sequences show lines of miners in gym gear going through exercise routines. Colors are few and glaring, sounds are random and violent. The cost to their bodies and minds of the extraction of labor from both is graphically evident. As a concentrated set of images, it paralleled the impact of Jeff Wall's lightbox photograph, *After "Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison (The Preface)*, 1999–2001, among his most powerful works, and outstanding in this exhibition.

Artur Barrio's private space in a post-apocalyptic city versus Asymptote Architecture's digital skylines; William Kentridge and Isaac Julien on the productivities of displacement; Luc Tuymans vis-à-vis Eilja-Liisa Ahtija on the *unheimlich*... flows and blockages of many kinds kept on coming throughout this building, as they did in the other venues. Some connections reached across venues: between Alfredo Jaar and Tania Bruguera, for example, both of whom used blinding light set against darkness to make their points about official distortions of truth. Similarly, there were resonances between Luis Camnitzer and Sanja Ivekovic: the searching studies of cruelty in his *Uruguayan Torture Series* and her *Personal Cuts*, 1982, with its painstaking implication that narrow identities are a kind of self-mutilation.

Only two works directly referenced 9/11. Moroccan-born, Paris-based photographer Touhami Annadre was in New York during the attack but chose to show images taken in nightclubs in the days following. These celebrations of life are printed in deep black and are framed in the same way. In a tower room of the Fridericianum, LA artist Raymond Pettibon including imagery alluding to the attacks in a few of the fragments torn from drawing pads, notebooks, dairies and magazines that he pinned up on the walls. The half-crazed thoughts of media trolls, the fetid outpourings of diseased imaginations in the US, Germany and the Middle East, appeared in these images and in statements scrawled across the walls and window. Seemingly random, and apparently personal, this display was neither. Rather, it was the most accurate portrait in Documenta11 of the fear, anger, and venom then disturbing the dreams of many throughout the world.

In contrast, a spirit of tentative utopianism was evoked at the Kulturbahnhof through comprehensive surveys of works by Constant, the COBRA group artist and architectural designer of the New Babylon, and the fantasy cities of Bodys Isek Kingelez, who modelled his hometown, Kinshasa, and world cities, such as New York, as splendid heavens of hope. This pairing echoed Catherine David's inspired mini-retrospectives of Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark – whose work, in 1997, was scarcely known in Europe and the US – adjacent to detailed displays of the speculative urbanism of Aldo van Eyck, Archigram, Archizoom, and Rem Koolhaas. In 2002, these connections resonated in rooms by Isa Genzken, *New Buildings for Berlin*, in contrast to the activist earnestness of Park Fiction. David Goldblatt's photo series *Jo'burg Intersections* 1999 and Kendall Geers' *Suburbia* 1999 paralleled other unsparing records of cities divided by race or caste, such as those of Indian photographer Ravi Agarwai, filmmaker Anwar Kanwar, Chantal Akerman's video *From the Other Side*, Hanoi video. If handing out flavorless icicles for free was a dud gesture toward public art by the otherwise brilliant Brazilian conceptualist Cildo Meireles, Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* project, part of a set of useful structures (library, meeting place, monuments) erected in a deprived guest-worker's neighborhood during the artist's residency there, actualized utopian desire in a contested, controversial, but forthright way.

The myriad aspirations listed in Enwezor's conclusion fall short of universality: an exhibition can be about so much, too much, but still not be about everything. Nevertheless, Documenta11 had some distinctly different anchors in what might appear to be everything but were not: a constant performance of reading through the *Deutsche Wortbücher*, the German Dictionary; a similar reading from On Kawara's date books; Hanne Darboven's *Kontrabasssolo, Opus 45*, 1998–2000 (4004 drawings, one photograph and one crystal skull); and Maria Eichhorn's Public Limited Company, a corporation established to raise 50,000 Euros for no purpose other than showing the process of doing so, effectively stalling the process. Set in relation to these, quietly anchoring the brewery site – and my (and, from our conversations, Okwui's) reading of the entire exhibition – Bouabré Frédéric Bruly's comprehensive series of drawings (748 in all), symbols based on his own and his people's languages, two sets of them, *Knowledge of the World*, 1982 and *Alphabet Bété*, 1990. The message here is what we have experienced since entering the Fridericianum. The black box is open. Fortress Europe, your portals are useless, the barbarians are already inside the gates, and have been for centuries, ever since you embarked on your colonizing adventures. We are living not only among you but also within you. We can show you how to world picture. Look around you, look at this!

References

- 1 On the 1997 documenta, see, for example, Masao Miyoshi, "Radical Art at documenta X", *New Left Review*, no. 228 (March–April 1998), p. 51–61.
- 2 Okwui Enwezor, "The Black Box", *Documenta11, Platform5* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2002), p. 42.
- 3 The curatorial team consisted of Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Mark Nash and Octavio Zaya, each of whom have since forged significant careers as curators and/or educators. Meeting as a team every six weeks during the years leading up to the show, attending all of the platforms, and working on the publications and installation together, a consistent curatorial style was achieved. For basic details about the exhibition, see „Retrospective“ at <https://www.documenta.de/en/retrospective/documenta11>. A synoptic review plus all works illustrated may be found at http://www.artlinkart.com/en/artist/exh_yr/a33bzwlq/8cahvtp.
- 4 Enwezor, "The Black Box", p. 50.

- 5 Jean Barnabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, *Écolge de la créolité* [In Praise of Creolness (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), p. 87.
- 6 Enwezor, "The Black Box", p. 51.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- 8 See Okwui Enwezor, "Modernity and Postcolonial Ambivalence", in Nicolas Bourriaud (ed.), *Alter-modern: Tate Triennial* (London: Tate Publishing; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2009), p. 39–40. For this Africa-led modernity to arrive, he believed, colonization would need to have vanished from the entire world. In lieu of that, exhibitions should show struggles towards that state, and prefiguration of it.
- 9 Enwezor, "The Black Box", p. 53.
- 10 Enwezor, "The Black Box", p. 43.
- 11 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* [1967] (New York: Zone Books, 1994), p. 137. Enwezor cites a passage from Debord about this dynamic in "The Black Box", p. 43.
- 12 Enwezor, "The Black Box," p. 45. Here, Enwezor draws on the theorizations of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); and on Frantz Fanon's postcolonial critique.
- 13 Enwezor, "The Black Box", p. 55.
- 14 For this range of views, see Massimiliano Gioni, "Review: Documenta11", *Flash Art*, no. 225 (July–September 2002), p. 106-107; Rasheed Araeen, "In the Heart of the Black Box", *Art Monthly*, no. 259 (September 2002), p. 17; and Sylvester Okwunodu-Ogbechie, "Ordering the Universe: Documenta11 and the Apotheosis of the Occidental Gaze", *Art Journal*, vol. 64, no. 1, (Spring, 2005), p. 80–89.
- 15 They were all published by Hatje Cantz in 2002.
- 16 See Noam Chomsky interviewed by Suzy Hansen, "On the Afghanistan War, American terrorism, and the Role of Intellectuals", *Salon.com*, (January 16, 2002), at <https://chomsky.info/20020116/>; Susan Sontag, "Tuesday and After; New Yorker writers respond to 9/11", *The New Yorker*, (September 24, 2001), at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/09/24/tuesday-and-after-talk-of-the-town>. I arrived in the United states on September 10, 2001, for a fellowship at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, devoted to an exploration of disjunctive pictorial structures in the art of the Post-Impressionists as precursor to early twentieth century abstraction. On that day, I changed my topic to what, through several iterations, became *The Architecture of Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
- 17 Araeen, "In the Heart of the Black Box", p. 17.
- 18 On Gaba, see <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/meschac-gaba-8313>; on Huit Fachettes, see, for example, https://www.afterall.org/online/_artist-as-curator_collaborative-practices_symposium_ar

tists-as-model-engineers_laboratoire-agit_art/#.XRrG3y2B10s ; on RAQs, see <https://www.raqsmediacollective.net>, and <http://sarai.net>.

- 19 David Galloway, "Documenta11: The retro-ethno-techno exhibition: The silence is broken", *New York Times*, (June 15, 2002), at <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/15/style/IHT-documenta-11the-retroethnotechno-exhibition-the-silence-is-broken.html>.
- 20 Thomas McEvilly, "Documenta11", *Frieze*, (September 9, 2002), at <https://frieze.com/article/documenta-11-1>. 14 artists are missing in this count.
- 21 Ruth E. Iskin, *Re-envisioning the Contemporary Art Canon: Perspectives in a Global World* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis; New York: Routledge, 2017), 9. The subsequent documenta, # 12 in 2007, rated even better, as Iskin goes on to note "46% of the artists were living in non-Western countries and 56% were born outside the West."
- 22 Iskin, "Re-envisioning the Contemporary Art Canon", p. 26.
- 23 Terry Smith, "What is Contemporary Art?" (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), chapter 9. My dialogues with Okwui since we met in 1997 as co-curators of *Global Conceptualism* were crucial to this realization. They found one of their most influential public forms in the conference that we, along with Nancy Condee, staged in Pittsburgh in 2004, the outcomes from which appear as our jointly edited *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), in which Okwui's classic statement of his basic position, "The Postcolonial Constellation", may be found.
- 24 His call parallels Iskin's for "pluriversal canons", although it is more critically focused. See her "Introduction: Re-envisioning the canon: Are pluriversal canons possible?" in Iskin, *Re-envisioning the Contemporary Art Canon*.
- 25 Stuart Hall and Michael Hardt, "Changing States: In the Shadow of Empire", in *Changing States: Contemporary Art and Ideas in an Era of Globalization*, ed. Gilane Tawadros (London: iniVA, 2004), p. 135. Hall's essay "Democracy, Globalization, Difference", was the first. essay in *Documenta11 Platform 1, Democracy Unrealized*, Okwui Enwezor et al. eds. (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Kantz, 2002), 21–36.
- 26 Enwezor had been developing it since *In/sight: African Photographers, 1940 to the Present* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1996), *Trade Routes: History and Geography*, 2nd Johannesburg Biennial (Johannesburg: Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, 1977), and *Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945–1994* (Munich: Villa Stuck, and other venues, 2001-2).