

# Globalisation and the arts: the rise of new democracy, or just another pretty suit for the old emperor?

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## Abstract

This paper addresses the topic of the globalisation of the arts and concerns brought about by the advent of post-colonial art and theory. Utilising the actual theoretical discussions on globalisation and aesthetic pluralisation, the writer investigates the ways in which contemporary visual arts serves to challenge existing Western aesthetic theory. The writer uses contemporary Australian Aboriginal arts as an example of modern hybrid world art that has sought to keep ancient traditions alive while at the same time transforming these old aesthetic forms to better fit the criteria and needs of the global art scene. When considering these transformations, she also points out how the globalisation of the arts still retains much of the old colonial power structures, although this power makes itself visible in partly new forms.



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**Keywords:** *post-colonial art; colonialist aesthetics; globalisation; visual culture; capitalist world-system*

In an article included in a book titled *Global Theories of the Arts and Aesthetics* (2007) Arthur Danto suggests that the modern aesthetic theory, most notably in its Kantian forms, represents a kind of aesthetic colonialism that came to its end in the late 1950s and early 1960s, along the death of modernism. As Danto's text calls to mind, those who followed Immanuel Kant's theoretical premises of pure aesthetic contemplation and good taste argued for quite a long time that so-called primitive societies were simply aesthetically retrograde in their taste, and could only develop their cultural

acts and ideals by imitating the more civilised cultures. In Danto's view, this imperialist ideology of the aesthetic—as Terry Eagleton has called it—came to an end along the rise of pop-art, minimalist art, and the new tendencies of institutional aesthetics in the 1960s, which all suggested that artists and theorists should finally give up the ideals of pure and high and to allow also philosophical aestheticians to make their “hands dirty” with the everyday life including junk, bedclothes and rags, automobile tires, hamburgers, sexuality, minority politics, and so on. What

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resulted was a historically new pluralism of values and viewpoints that Danto, along with many others, terms “postmodernism”.<sup>1</sup>

An important aspect of Danto’s text, although by no means an original one in 2007, lies in his notion that modern aesthetic theory was not in fact pure or universally valid at all, but participated instead in many ways in the supporting and reproduction of colonialist ideology by prioritising the Western ideas of universally valid disinterested contemplation and pleasure and suppressing the value of all other views. One of the best known tenets for this ideology in the 20th-century modern art scene was the American critic Clement Greenberg. Like Kant, he was sure that universally valid artistic quality could only be judged by “qualified critics” who agreed on what was good and what was not. As Greenberg wrote in 1961: “Quality in art can be neither ascertained nor proved by logic or discourse. Experience alone rules in this area—and the experience is, so to speak, of experience”.<sup>2</sup> Like Danto recalls, there is very little doubt that Greenberg saw himself as one of the most experienced critics of this kind. He even boasted once that though he knew very little about African art, for example, he believed that he could almost unfailingly manage to pick out the two or three best pieces of art in a group. If disagreement with the Africans would exist, in Greenberg’s view it would result in their different beliefs that had little to do with aesthetic qualities as Greenberg understood them. Needless to say, he saw his own understanding of these qualities as more developed than the ones posed by the Africans.<sup>3</sup>

In many other cases, the colonialist attitudes towards “non-Western” cultures and their art have been expressed even in more brutal forms. The European settlers in Australia, for example, refused for almost two centuries to believe that Indigenous art—or “Aboriginal” art, as they called it—could exist at all due to the lower intellectual capacities of these creatures. According to the imaginary of the Europeans who invaded Australia in the late 18th century, the “new” continent they found was literally speaking *terra nullius*, an empty land that was not owned by anyone because there were no people, only some savages who could thus not make claims for owning the land or having culture, not to even mention high art. Against this ideological background, it is not surprising that, for example, in 1837 Sir George Grey declined to believe that an

impressive series of Wandjina rock paintings was made by Indigenous Australians. Much in a similar spirit, although not trying any more to deny the true roots of many remarkable local artworks, A. W. Grieg comments in 1909 that “the artistic enthusiasm of these savages is beyond all reasonable expectation”.<sup>4</sup> Similar attitudes were expressed throughout the colonised world, and the situation started to change only after the Second World War when many colonies became independent. This change gave rise to a new period in art history that I will term post-colonial art in this text.

In the following, I will consider more closely some central arguments of the colonialist aesthetics and its relation to the racist evolution theory that was created in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to legitimatise the colonialist expansionism. As the reader will notice, my relation to Danto’s interpretation is quite reserved. As I see it, the colonialist power still has a strong hold on the cultural peripheries and semipheries, not least in the field of art, but it appears today in slightly new forms; namely, as a global capitalist marketing machinery to which cultural “otherness” is often not much more than a promise of something “exotic” that, at the moment, sells well. This notion is not meant to suggest that the post-colonialist art and critique would be vain. Instead, I propose that the aims of much contemporary art—be it explicitly political or not—is still often incompatible with the logic of the global marketing, no matter how pluralistic this system presents itself to be. In this text, I will derive my examples mainly from the field of Australian Indigenous art that has attracted worldwide attention since the 1970s, but still offers serious challenges for all those who tend to think that the times of colonialist aesthetics would be over.

## COLONIALIST AESTHETICS AND ITS CRITIQUE

An interesting notion in the field of contemporary arts is that, while in the West many thinkers and artists have been fighting for some decades now to open up the highly selective modernist notion of the “high art” towards a more complex and neutral notion of the “visual culture”, in many former colonised cultures exactly the opposite is happening. In Australia, for example, the white settlers denied the artistic value of the Indigenous

artistic production for almost two centuries. In the late 19th century, some ethnographers got interested in the artefacts of the Indigenous Australians and started to collect their works. At this stage, embryonic interest in the anthropology of the “non-Western” cultures was not linked to the term “art”, however, and this largely remained the case until World War II. Most of those white people who collected or saw the Aboriginal’s cultural productions—their large-scale and often abstract “desert paintings”, engravings on wood, or some other traditional artefacts, such as paintings on bark, and so on—simply regarded their works as being part of a religious and mythical visual culture that could not, properly speaking, be called “high art”.

There existed, of course, a number of ideological suppositions behind these acts of appreciation. Firstly, many 18th- and 19th-century European white male theorists argued—following, Comte de Gobineau’s influential four volume *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853–1855), and also adapting parts of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859)—that the white “Aryans” stood on the highest steps of civilisation and could only degenerate through breeding with other “races” that were at a lower state of human societal development.<sup>5</sup> In this categorisation, the “negroid” variety stands on the lowest footstep of development, and the “yellow race” is situated in the middle part, which is defined by Gobineau by terms such as “apathy” and cultural “imitation”—while his own “white race” occupies the highest biological and intellectual pinnacle, as a result of its innate or natural superiority in all dimensions of human existence. As Gobineau sees it, being originally separated by geography, these three races have gradually become blended and new descendants that can be described as “racial mixtures” have seen the daylight. He and his followers do not greet this mixing of the blood with joy or new hope, but rather see in it the dystopic future image of a “complete degeneration that will await humanity as its unalterable fate”. In Gobineau’s *Essays*, race is even turned into the key variable for understanding such remarkable events in human history as the development and fall of civilisation, the outbreak of wars and revolutions, and the formation of modern nations.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, many ideals of the modern philosophical aesthetics that were formulated in the late 18th-century European philosophy were already by origin colonialist, racist, and also misogynist by nature. One interesting example of this can be found in Immanuel Kant—who never travelled far from his hometown or married—who praises his white colleague Hume for reporting that, when considering the anthropological characteristics of different races and cultures, we should pay attention to the fact that amongst those hundreds of thousands of negroes who had been transported from Africa to the West since 1500, there had not been one single person who would have shown talent in high arts, science, or some other “noble” principle. Against this notion Kant concludes that, white and black people are indeed as different as their skin colour suggests. Unlike those numerous white men who show taste for “excellence”, the negroes “love idolatry” and are “in every sense extremely vain and talkative” by nature.<sup>7</sup>

In Kant’s racist imaginery, the aesthetic superiority of the white men is also closely linked to the nationalist ideology. As he denotes, among all nations and races, it is only the Germans and the Englishmen who are equipped with “good taste”, while people such as those who live in South America, for example, are by nature “unresponsive” or “impassive” and “phlegmatic”.<sup>8</sup> The same applies in principle to all women, who are in Kant’s view emotional, natural, and vainglorious by their innate nature and may thus serve the human race best by admiring and taking care of the most talented part of it, which is, the white men.<sup>9</sup> For Kant and his Enlightenment program, the notion of the cultural “other” is thus already by definition something negative or lower, and therefore needs to be controlled and educated.

Although it is not possible to go in detail into Kant’s complex and detailed aesthetic theory here, it is worth noting that his famous idea of the “subjectively universal” character of the aesthetic judgement, presented in his *Critique of Judgement* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 1790), has also been criticised for its overtly West-centred character. As Kant argues, all aesthetic judgements that aim to express the sublime or beautiful character of the perceived object are special in a sense that they are at once based on subjective feeling and make claims for their universal “righteousness”. What Kant means by this, is that when we are to make claims

of, say, the beauty of the sunset or a piece of “fine art”, we want to take this claim as a kind of truth with which others should agree. Thus, my individual judgements are put forward as examples of common sense; that is, as something that can be shared by all and I attribute them the *exemplary* validity.

As Kant sees it, the universal character of the aesthetic judgement is due to the sameness of men’s mental powers. Although he differentiates the aesthetic judgement from the objective (cognitive) ones he nevertheless suggests that it arises in each case from the same cognitive apparatus. Therefore, all existing people in the world should also *be similarly affected* by the same objects of beauty. Hence, aesthetic sense (*Sinn*) must be understood as an *ideal norm*, a presupposition with which my judgement should accord, and the delight expressed in the judgement is “rightly converted into a rule for everyone” (§22). From this reasoning Kant concludes that, we might even define expressions of good taste “as the faculty of estimating what makes our feeling in a given representation *universally communicable* without the mediation of a concept” (§40).

In Kant’s view, aesthetic judgements are rooted on the faculties of a judging subject. It is exactly for this reason why he also proposes that beauty can not be considered literally as a *property of an object* or in terms of social consensus (see also §58). It is instead in the nature of especially talented men (genius) where we are to find the true roots of beauty and fine arts. Consonantly with this, Kant goes on, *genius* may be defined as the “faculty of *aesthetic ideas*”, and this serves at the same time to point out why it is “nature (of the individual) and not a set purpose, that in products of genius gives the rule to art (as the production of the beautiful)”.<sup>10</sup>

Genius, then, the peculiar guardian and guiding spirit given to some men at their birth, do not merely imitate but create new rules; rules that can be gathered from the performance (*Tat*), i.e. from the aesthetic product, which other free subjects may use to test their own talent, letting it serve as a model, not for imitation but for *following* (§47). His work is, in a word, to furnish rich *material* for products of fine art, and to elaborate and *form* this material along the lines of *academic* training, so that it “may be employed in such a way as to stand the test of judgement” (§47; yet, academic

training is not enough for Kant, it must work in liaison with natural gifts of an individual).

Seen in its historical context, Kant’s aesthetic premises are radical: unlike the earlier theories of imitation, he states that the aesthetic judgement is not tied to imitating nor can it be built on some external canons of beauty (like neoclassical judgements)—for both Platonic and neoclassical views posit an external standard of purpose, which is alien to aesthetic attitude in the Kantian sense of the term. With no exterior purpose admitted and no given exterior ideal of beauty allowed, each work of art must generate its own singular standard and its own internal purpose. As we know, this idea has been very influential for all later form-centred modern art and language, and is still often repeated in the analyses of the modern art and aesthetics.

The most serious problem of Kant’s account is embedded in the fact that he makes vast generalisations about the nature of the aesthetic judgement, and, as Arnold Berleant has pointed out, provides a deceptive theoretical order that enthralls both transcultural understanding and experience.<sup>11</sup> A similar kind of critique is also put forward by Michel Foucault—although in slightly different terms—who argues that we simply cannot interpret the whole world in terms of universally valid statements or reasoning, because there exists *a plurality of different rationalities* that are incompatible with each other.<sup>12</sup>

By pluralising reasoning and epistemology, Foucault also wants to draw attention to the fact that the Western notion of reason (or *Sinn*) can easily lead to all kinds of acts, not only to those that are good and valuable. As he puts it, we should not forget that “it was on the basis of the flamboyant rationality of social Darwinism that racism was formulated, becoming one of the most enduring and powerful ingredients of Nazism. This was, of course, an irrationality, but an irrationality that was at the same time [...] a certain form of rationality”.<sup>13</sup> For Foucault, the plurality of reasons does not necessarily mean that individuals may not use their reason to criticise other rational practices in public. In other words, by pluralising reason Foucault is not arguing that “anything goes”. Instead, for him, the pluralisation of critique is rather a necessary moment in the formation of individual autonomy, but such critique cannot be grounded on universal common “manhood” or

“reason” because this would ignore individual differences as well as the elements of rational disintegration within the subject itself and within reason.

Much in a similar spirit, Joseph Margolis draws attention to the fact that when philosophers and aestheticians dispute in the “Enlightened” spirit among themselves whether something is really appropriate to the aesthetic point of view or not, they actually favour some specific data without reflecting critically the presuppositions and interests inherent in their judgements. As he writes,

Philosophers have quite regularly disputed among themselves whether this or that is really appropriate to the aesthetic point of view. It may then be that statements about the aesthetic point of view are actually elliptical summaries of findings upon this or that set of *favoured* data—which some philosophers at least will have thought to be related in an important way to our concern with fine art; other philosophers, appearing to dispute the very meaning of the aesthetic, may either be disputing those findings or providing alternative findings for other sets of data”.<sup>14</sup>

Thinking about the same issue, Thomas McEvelley punctuates that, in fact, this kind of limited epistemological perspective embodies just one more “imperialist ruse to force the rest of the world into imitation of Western sensibility”.<sup>15</sup> As Ria Lavrijsen on her turn comments, the idea of universal communicability stimulates, first of all, the process of assimilation, reducing all other views to the essentialising and often static notions of “others”, “exotic”, “traditional”, or “tribal”.<sup>16</sup> There is, in other words, not much space, if any, for the epistemological other to emerge in these theoretical discussions. Needless to say, this kind of theoretical perspective is even today one of the most effective means to legitimate the acts of the colonialist, racist and misogynist imagery and deeds.

Another ideological factor that effected the devaluation of the colonial arts was the seemingly different notion of “art” in Europe and “non-West” in the 18th and 19th centuries. While at that time, the white European settlers were primarily interested in realist landscape paintings, portraits, and Platonist ideas of imitation—or, alternatively, relied on Kant’s and his followers definitions of

disinterested and pure aesthetic pleasure—for the Indigenous Australians, for example, art was (and still often is) a way to practice ritualistic and mythical collective ceremonies through singing, dancing, and drawing images that are often abstract, totemic, or disappearing by nature. Despite that different tribes do have different traditions, their artistic acts, also known as “Dreamings” or “Dream time”, were typically closely connected to the land, sacred places, and ancient narratives that told about the deeds of the first “supernatural” beings who precede all Aboriginal human beings.<sup>17</sup> Many visualisations of these stories also act as maps, and might for example show where the ancestors had found food, water, and shelter.

In the light of these differences—and also following the racist ideology that stressed the superiority of the white race and their culture—colonialist Europeans regarded the Aboriginal art at best as ethnographic evidence of the barbarians or savages. Because the Aboriginals’ visual culture could not by definition count for Europeans as “art”, the assimilation policy of the Australian government did its best to destroy these ancient ceremonial practices.<sup>18</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s, most of the remaining Aborigines were forced to move into the settlements that were created artificially in the most isolated parts of Australia, to learn the “white ways”. The life conditions in these camps were extremely harsh and many problems followed from this policy, including a breakdown of Aboriginal social order, constant unrest, chronic health problems, and the highest infant mortality in the world.<sup>19</sup>

Until 1969, even 1970, most Aboriginal children were taken from their parents as part of the assimilation program to be brought up in white families and church missions. The individuals who belong to these “stolen generations” (1869–1969) were occasionally encouraged to practice their visual skills to become craftsmen and to make paintings on boomerangs, didgeridoos, and such. Mainly, however, they worked in all sorts of communal service jobs without getting any proper payment for their work. Since they had no citizenship before 1967, they were not allowed to leave these settlements and the practicing of their traditional ceremonies and art were forbidden by the law. In these cultural conditions, no one seemed to think really that the remaining Aboriginals could

ever become “true artists”, since high art was already by definition something beyond their ethnic, racial, and social reach.

Into this deeply colonialist and racist culture was also born the first European style Aboriginal artist Albert Namantjira, who became widely known for his watercolours and landscapes. Born into poverty at Hermannsburg Lutheran mission in 1902, he had learned to paint by watching the white Australian Rex Battarbee working in the 1930s. Battarbee also encouraged Namantjira to go on with painting after having realised the artistic gifts of this young man. By the mid-1940s Namantjira, a former “camel boy”, had become Australia’s best known Aboriginal. He was celebrated as a poster boy and national folk hero who seemed to fulfil the governments’ utopia of the native assimilation. Namantjira even awarded the Queen’s Coronation Medal in 1953 and was presented to Queen Elisabeth II the next year. As the anthropologist T. G. H. Strehlow put it, in a foreword to a book on modern Aboriginal art in 1951, Albert had “destroyed the myth of the constitutional inability of the Australian native to learn from and apply the methods learnt from Europeans”.<sup>20</sup>

Not everyone agreed, however. Namantjira was also strongly criticised by various white art critics who seemed to pay much more attention to his Aboriginal roots than to his works. Many of those who praised his artistic skills were not totally free from the colonialist attitudes either: they simply believed that the best thing for an Aboriginal artist to do was to imitate the European canon of art whose aesthetic value they regarded to be prior to all others. Namantjira’s work was also repeatedly criticised for not imitating the European art perfectly. Only quite recently, there have emerged new interpretations suggesting that, perhaps he did not even want to copy the European art as such, but also hoped to express in his paintings something of his own indigenous roots.<sup>21</sup> As Ian Burn and Ann Stephen comments, in the writings of white critics, there are typically no references at all to Aboriginal visual culture or art, all comments are expressed in the formal and stylistic terms of European art. As they correctly comment, this kind of positioning of Namantjira as merely an imitative artist leads easily “to the cultural erasure of difference in Western eyes”. Seen in this way, the resemblance of Namantjira’s paintings to a Western

landscape tradition was also read as “a denial of a self-consciously Aboriginal intentionality (other than that involved in the choice of the subjects)”.<sup>22</sup>

This attitude was properly called into question only along the rise of the so-called post-colonial debates on art, and the widening of the notion of art to include a wider selection of non-Western visual cultures. In Australia, however, this development was preceded by some ethnographers and modern artists who were first to suggest that the visual culture of the Indigenous Australians could actually be viewed as art.

### FROM ETHNOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE TO HIGH ART

Among a few early disagreeing voices who were not attempting to deny the artistic value of the Aboriginal visual culture was the white Australian artist and art critic Margaret Preston (1875–1963) who, perhaps as first a white person, insisted in 1925 that there is “no loss of dignity in studying and applying myself to the art of the aboriginals in Australia”. Preston even went so far as to suggest that since Aboriginals had never seen or known anything culturally different from themselves, their own traditional art should be seen as a true spring of the great national Australian art. As she puts it, relying also on the formalist aesthetics of Roger Fry and Clive Bell that were popular at that time, “it is on the primitive natural forms that we must depend”. She also stresses that, even though we should appreciate and seek for the original “natural forms” in art, in our returning to the “primitive art” we also need to bear in mind that the art of the Aboriginals “is to be used as a starting point only for a renewal of growth, and a gradual selection must take place to arrive at the culmination”.<sup>23</sup>

Very much ahead of her time, Preston has in mind here a vision of a truly transcultural, even “global”, artistic turbulence that would raise the Australian art to its maximum degree. In her imagination, the “future art of the world of Australia” is born from a new openness to the culturally different Aboriginal art, and not the opposite, the black man’s imitation of the European art, as the colonialist ideology suggested. Referring also to the transcultural modern art of France and some other transcultural modern art cultures, she asks, somewhat provocatively:

Would France be now at the head of all nations in art if her artists and craftsmen had not given her fresh stimulus from time to time by benefiting from the art of her native colonies, and not only her own colonies, but by borrowing freely from the colonies of other countries?

Java has been drained to provide fresh ideas for the craftsmen of the great nations. The indigenous art of Cochin China has given modern sculpture in France a new life. Germany has a national peasant craft, her agrarian policy keeping this always for her. These people have always been the base of German art, but even with such an asset, the art papers of Germany are full of illustrations of the native crafts of Central Africa, showing the need of fresh stimulus and a return to simple symbols. In the beginning was the rough idol crudely carved from wood by the negroes of the Upper Nile centuries ago, and in the end the limpid, smooth, perfect sculpture of the Greeks. So why be scornful of our own heritage?<sup>24</sup>

Even though Preston is sometimes in pain with bringing these transcultural visions harmoniously together with her flaming nationalist feelings, it was quite revolutionary to suggest in the 1920s in Australia that the *future world art of the country* cannot be a mere copy of the European heritage, but needs to be created on the grounds of what already exists there, and is thus also locally specific (unique Australian landscapes and nature, Aboriginal traditions of drawing, and using colours and shapes, etc.). In the end, Preston dreams, “surely someone will arise who, continually seeing only such simple symbols around him, will apply them in a manner that will make us an individual land in art, as Spanish art is always Spanish, as Italian art is always Italian, etc.” In this process, Preston recommends everyone learn from the domestic teachers, including Aboriginals’ cultural products.<sup>25</sup> She followed this idea also in her own art, allowing the influences of the Aboriginal culture to be seen in her modernist paintings.

Another important figure in the Australian cultural scene who attempted to heighten the aesthetic appreciation of the Aboriginal arts was an anthropologist Professor A. P. Elkin (1891–1979). Also devising the federal government’s assimilation policy, he suggested in the 1930s—along with his colleague Frederic D. McCarthy—that race relations in Australia could

be improved by popularising an appreciation of the aesthetic value of Aboriginal art.<sup>26</sup> In 1941 McCarthy, on his turn, organised a major exhibition “Australian Aboriginal Art and its Application” at the David Jones’s art gallery. Owing much to Preston’s earlier thought, this exhibition included works by several white artists, architects, and designers, as well as the European-style water-colour works of Albert Namatjira.<sup>27</sup> Against the mainstream colonialist and nationalist ideals of his time, Elkin stresses in his foreword to the publication that was sold in the exhibition that the Aboriginal art can also be seen in terms of aesthetics, despite its strong embeddedness in magical and religious rituals.

Whether or not primitive art arose solely out of man’s need to gain the co-operation or service of religious and magical powers, or also out of some innate appreciation of the beauty of form, we can say that the aborigines do possess an aesthetic sense. The contemplation of various designs which they have never seen before does draw from them the remark that these are beautiful or pretty. But it is not easy for us to decide to what degree they distinguish beauty for its own sake from its religious or magical significance. When a native says he is engraving a shield to make it “pretty”, he may be merely endeavouring to satisfy the white inquirer without revealing the mythological and magical purposes which he has in view. On one occasion when I showed some natives a bull-roarer, they referred to its pretty pattern, and then at once commenced a sacred chant. Evidently the prettiness belonged to the sphere of ritual and belief, and my experience suggests that Australian aboriginal art arises for the most part out of, and finds its meaning and significance in, this sphere.<sup>28</sup>

Still another important early spokesperson for the Aboriginals’ aesthetics was a German–Australian Jewish anthropologist and lawyer Leonhard Adam (1891–1960) who suggested in an article titled “Angry Penguins” (Autumn 1944) that there exist possibilities for a new kind of post-colonial Aboriginal art. Like A. W. Grieg in 1909, Adam is simply astonished about the Aboriginals’ rich and diverse art traditions, as well as their “innate talent” not only for drawing, but for all kinds of “learning ability when art is concerned”.<sup>29</sup> As Adam notices, these “primitive” or “semiprimitive” craftsmen seem to be able to copy easily with all kinds of



artistic techniques and expressions when foreign works and techniques are shown to them. This, he concludes, shows indeed exceptional ability to model from a new environment, and to adapt to new conditions. To confirm this, Adam tells a story of Aboriginal youngsters who had made quite impressive sculptures out of clay without any training in its material or technique (the Aboriginals' traditions did not include sculpting at that time). He also admires the modern sculptural spirit of a young and talented "sculptress" Kalboori Youngi, a member of the Pitta Pitta tribe in Central Western Queensland.<sup>30</sup>

Adam, like Elkin and Preston, understands well that the roots of Aboriginal arts go hand in hand with the history of their belief systems and living styles. When considering these connections, he states that the Aboriginals' disintegration of their tribal communities might also present a true threat to them, and at the worst even to abolish their mythology, beliefs, and art.<sup>31</sup> To prevent this from happening, he suggests that the Aboriginals' adaptation to "modern conditions" should be gradual, if possible. Referring to the policy adapted in the British West Africa, Adam also believes that their art should be protected from the colonialist rulers. In this respect he, just like Elkin and Preston, clearly turn the discussion towards what has been later termed the post-colonialist perspective—they are seemingly worried about the negative effects of the colonialisation, and even fear that the Aboriginal art and culture will disappear completely as a result of colonialisation.<sup>32</sup>

Yet, Adam, like many other early ethnographic spokespersons of the Aboriginal arts, also leaves his own position in the colonialist power networks and epistemology unobtrusively untouched. All of a sudden, he goes on arguing that the Aboriginals' old custom of associating art with their own belief-systems could actually be torn apart. As he sees it, the Aborigines may be taught "to become conscious of the aesthetic merits of the graphic art of their ancestors and to continue and develop their art technique". Yet, the most delicate task for the missionary and teacher, in Adam's view, is "to convert the Aboriginal into Christian faith without spoiling the spiritual background of his art". Hence, they need to keep their art but to learn "the white ways". How this new combination of the European and Aboriginal belief-systems could be created—and *why* it should be created—is not

explained by him. He simply ends his considerations by suggesting that, "it should not be too difficult ... to combine Christian religion with primitive mythology. ... It must be possible to ... turn mythical beings into legendary or even historical persons".<sup>33</sup>

In the midst of all contemporary debates on post-colonialist aesthetics and globalisation it is, of course, easy to see what is wrong with Adam's vision of the new transcultural Aboriginal art: in his imagination, the Aborigines are not free to make their own artistic choices, but are rather seen as a possible fuel for new kind of arts and crafts business and industry. Like Greenberg and Kant, Adam also sees himself and his colleagues as a prerogative critic of the "non-Western" art. When the Aboriginals will be adapted to the new "modern" order, this process should, in his view, be controlled by "educationists trained in Ethnology, or Cultural Anthropology"; that is, by himself and his colleagues. Moreover, as he sees it, this path will not actually lead Aboriginals to the venues of high art, but to the arts and crafts markets, opening a wide field for future developments including the utilisation of their traditional decorative designs for commercial purposes. With this goal in mind he goes on to suggest that "*schools for the teaching of weaving and other handicrafts be instituted, and that the manufacturing of rugs, and carpets, decorated with aboriginal patterns, would become an aboriginal industry of some importance*".<sup>34</sup> The same colonialist gesture has also been repeated elsewhere, for example in Africa, where the black artists' adaptation of the Western art canon in the beginning of 20th century was not celebrated by the Western colonisers who thought that it was artistic crafts, not high art, which the Africans were supposed to make.<sup>35</sup>

## THE ARTISTIC PRIMITIVISM

Something similar was also repeated in the artistic primitivism of the early 20th century. The primitivists believed widely that life had been better and also more ethical in the earlier stages of mankind, and that the civilised and technologically developed Western cultures could only learn from the primitive peoples. The new responsiveness to "primitive" art was also much more than aesthetic. As an art historian Meyer Schapiro comments in



his text “The Nature of Abstract Art” (1937), it presented a whole complex set of moral values, longings (back to the “nature” and “authentic”), and conceptions of life (modern escapism, decadence, nostalgia, etc.) that sought fulfilling. According to Schapiro, these imaginary cultural values had little to do with real primitive cultures. Instead, they presented a new kind of cultural imperialism in which “the arts of the savage victims were elevated above the traditions of Europe”.<sup>36</sup> Schapiro describes the double character of this cultural activity in the following words:

The new respect for primitive art was progressive . . . in that the cultures of savages and other backward peoples were now regarded as human cultures, and a high creativeness, far from being a prerogative of the advanced societies of the West, was attributed to all human groups. But this insight was accompanied not only by a flight from the advanced society, but also by an indifference to just those material conditions which were brutally destroying the primitive peoples or converting them into submissive, cultureless slaves. Further, the preservation of certain forms of native culture in the interest of imperialist power could be supported in the name of the new artistic attitudes by those who thought themselves entirely free from political interests.<sup>36</sup>

Consciously or not, the spokespersons of primitivism also repeated a whole series of racist stereotypes of the “authentic”, “child-like”, and “innocent” savages without paying attention to those material, ethical, and juridical injustices that the colonialist era had created and still cherished. By pointing out these facts, Schapiro wished to show also that “pure” modern art bore within itself at almost every point signs of the changing material and psychological conditions that had created modern European culture and art—a notion that was strongly denied by the Kantian aestheticians of the time<sup>36</sup> (see also Ratman<sup>4</sup>).

For many modern artists, distant colonies and their primitive cultures offered new places to flee—and, as Schapiro denotes, also new territories to exploit. One of the best known examples of this is a French painter Paul Gauguin who escaped European civilisation and technology to the French colony of Tahiti. For Gauguin—who soon became a role model for many other Western male

artists—Tahiti presented an earthly Arcadia, a place where simple lifestyle was “naturally” connected to free love, gentle climate, and naked nymphs (which he loved to portray). Gauguin himself emphasised repeatedly that what he wished to do, first of all, was to celebrate Tahitian society and to defend the Tahitians against European colonialism.

As many of his critics pointed out later, the issue was not quite that simple, however. While living in Tahiti, Gauguin took several adolescent mistresses, the youngest of them being only 13 years old. He also saw sexual freedom—and even all freedom—merely from the male viewpoint, and overemphasised in many of his painting the erotically attractive character of the Tahitian women.<sup>37</sup> In the light of these notions, Gauguin can also be seen as a representative of an ideology (primitivism) that includes “dense interweave of racial and sexual fantasies and power both colonial and patriarchal”, as Abigail Solomon-Godeau puts it.<sup>38</sup> In this respect, primitivism seems to be also analogous to Exotism and Orientalism, which Edward Said has described as a tendency to produce monolithic and degrading fantasies of the “East” and its people, fantasies with no corresponding reality.<sup>39</sup>

Despite these problems, the primitivist movement was also important in a sense that it clearly amplified the aesthetic appreciation of the savage or primitivist cultures in the West, and also widened the Western scope of “arts”. Moreover, all those artists who in the early 20th century sought inspiration from the primitive—Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Henri Matisse, Paul Gauguin, André Derain, Henry Moore, the German expressionists, and many others—showed that *also white artists* imitated other cultures (unlike Gobineau, Kant, and others had argued), and, actually, the “primitive arts” had a lot to offer in this respect. With the help of these influences, for example, the modern Western artists were finally able to tear away from the copying of idealised classical forms (neoclassicism), and Platonist aesthetics that demanded artists to imitate reality either faithfully or beautifully. By looking to African, Japanese, Chinese, Caribbean, and some other tribal arts, modern artists tried to express new ideas that were not limited by the three-dimensional world of conventional representation (rules of

Renaissance perspective and classical sculpture, for example), but stressed instead the constructed nature of all artistic representation and language (Cubism, German expressionism, Fauvism, etc.), and the new spiritual possibilities of the Western arts. As we know, this development—which also bore marks from the 19th-century European aestheticism of Walter Pater, Stephan Mallarmé, Oscar Wilde, Charles Baudelaire, and some others—gave rise also to the abstract modern painting in the early 20th century.

Unhappy with the aspects of the Western culture that they experienced as repressive, many primitivist modern artists also sought inspiration from the art of untrained painters and children, who were also believed to be more closely connected to interior emotional realities than those who had been trained in the conventional Western art academies. In this group of artists, national folk traditions often became of crucial importance, resulting in a certain naivety (but also dissonance) in the artistic expression. One well-known example of this is the Russian composer Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (1913), which presents a “primitivist” pagan rite: a sacrifice of a human being in pre-Christian Russia. Through the usage of dissonance, polytonalities, and repetitive loud polyrhythms, Stravinsky wished to express something of the “Dionysian” modernism and its abandonment of restraints and taboos, so dear to all “civilised” modern culture. The results were simply radical at their time and changed the language of modern art irreversibly.

In the colonies that became independent after World War II, there soon arose a strong interest in the new “post-colonial” discussions that considered the effects of the colonialist power on both local and global cultures.<sup>40</sup> Aesthetic theory and art were also partly reformed in this process. In addition to the new post-colonialist perspectives, the 1960s and 1970s debates on feminism, environment, post-structuralism, postmodernism, and ethnic and political minorities all opened up new aspects on what was to be considered as “aesthetic” or “art”. If we stop here for a while to think about this new “pluralism” or “globalisation”—as Danto terms it—the notion of the post-colonial “impure” or “hybrid” art arises easily to the centre.

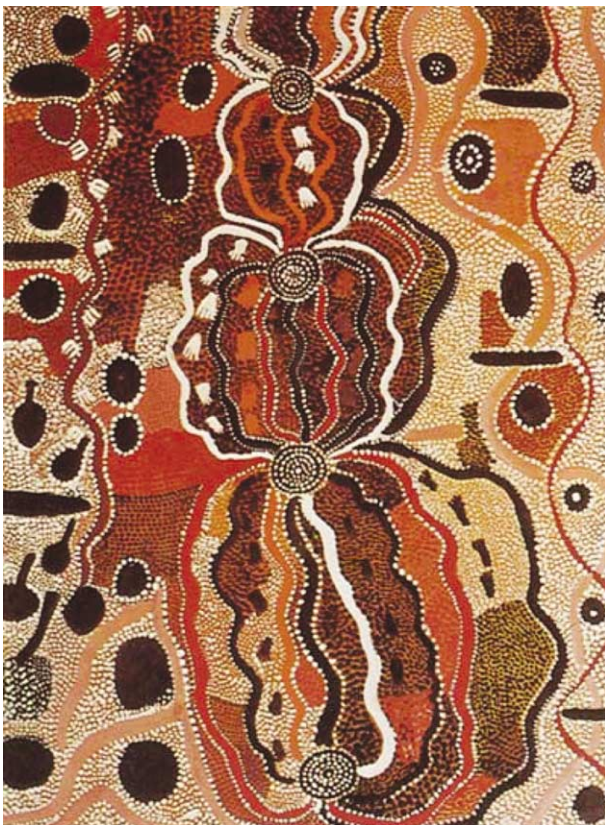
## FROM AUTHENTIC TO HYBRID ART

When the first acrylic “modern” Aboriginal paintings came for sale in the early 1970s, many Indigenous people were not happy to see that these works displayed the secret-sacred elements of their culture to outsiders (non-Aborigines). From the perspective of their traditions, this was not only forbidden but also dangerous: it threatened to break the immutable plan of descent; that is, the link of the initiated man with his or her totemic ancestor. Soon after these first experiences with the “Western artworld”, the Aboriginal artists became more careful in their images, and created new ways to screen or mask such sacred elements. The Westernised version of their art that followed—the one we now know as “Aboriginal art”—was thus for them a watered down version of their traditional visual culture, one that could be brought and sold for general exhibitions. As Judith Ryan comments, this development led soon to some remarkable changes in their artistic working techniques and aesthetics, increasing, for example, the “dotting” of the works:

In order to camouflage ancestral designs or masks, the Papunya Tula artists chose to paint in the background, reflected in Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula's *Emu Dreaming* 1974. It was no longer left stark, as on a cave face or *tjurunga*. At first, arcs and hatched motifs were applied, then dotted sections. Dots had been of little intrinsic importance in the earliest paintings, except as an enlivening layer to make the lines “flash” or “quiver”. It was as if the designs were being dressed up or heightened by moving edgings of dots, as in Charlie Tarawa Tjungurrayi's *Old man's Dreaming at Mitukatjirri* 1972.<sup>41</sup>

The unexceptional enthusiasm of the remaining Aboriginals to paint resulted (in the 1970s and 1980s) in the creation of new kinds of artistic communities, which had begun to organise materials for the artists, selling and promoting of their works, art advisers, and various communal welfare tasks. Currently these communities are typically owned by the artists themselves, and they also function as social aid centres for the communities. Most of the first “modern” Aboriginal painters; that is, artists who started to work with the European materials and techniques and to sell their artworks, were in their 70s or 80s when they

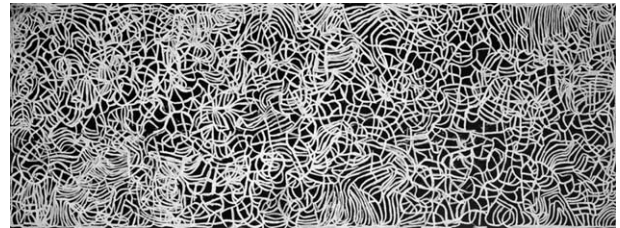
had begun their work. One of the best known artists of this group is Emily “Kame” Kngwarreye (ab. 1910–1996), who was born in the Utopia desert community in the Northern Territory, and begun to paint at the age of 79, without having seen any Western artworks before. Some old men who participated in the white art teacher Geoff Bardon’s now famous painting project in Papunya Tula (1971–1972) also became internationally famous painters. The following image is done by one of them, Old Mick Tjakamarra, who depicts here a children’s water dreaming with a possum story.



Old Mick Tjakamarra  
*Children’s Water Dreaming with Possum Story*, 1973  
45 × 58 cm

When Kngwarreye started to paint in a summer course organised in the Utopia desert in the late 1980s, her works arose immediate interest among Western critics, and within a few years time, she had become one of the most prominent and successful artists in the history of Australian art. Unlike most Aboriginal artists, who favoured the

“dotting” technique at that time, Kngwarreye created her own artistic style in which the dots were more layered and varying in size and colour. Later on, her artistic language went through several changes in style, emphasising sometimes linear and horizontal lines (often representing a river and terrain), and sometimes using thin or large brushes.



Emily Kngwarreye  
*Big Yam Dreaming*, 1995  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
291.1 × 801.8 cm, Collection National Gallery  
of Australia

Through the use of introduced Western materials and techniques, the art of the Aboriginal people began the transition from the religious and private to the public and commercial domain. And all of a sudden, here it was, the dream of Margaret Preston coming true: modern Aboriginal hybrid world art that kept both the ancient traditions alive and transformed these very old aesthetic forms to better fit the criteria and needs of the actual global art scene.<sup>42</sup>

What this transition from “traditional” or “authentic” to “global” also needed was money and international art market. When this factor was effectively linked to the the Aboriginal arts during the 1980s and 1990s, art dealers, auction houses, and collectors became an important part of the transformation of the Aboriginal art into a globally celebrated product. A 1989 report on the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has estimated that the Aboriginal art market has exceeded 30 per cent each year in the period from 1979–1980 to 1986–1987 onwards.<sup>43</sup> The quick rise of the prizes can be explained, at least partly, by the expansion of the tourism, purchases by galleries and museums, and by a boom in the Australian and international fine art markets.<sup>44</sup> Altogether, the growth in the Aboriginal art sales is well



documented by the fact that, while in 1980 the Aboriginal art market had been estimated to be worth 2.5 million dollars, in 2007 one single painting was sold at Sotheby's in Melbourne for 2.4 million dollars, and in 2008 the art industry around the Aboriginal art was recorded to be worth 400–600 million per year sales. The number of art-making communities has also grown from one or two in the early 1970s to around 100.<sup>45</sup>

From the 1960s onwards, there have also emerged a number of Indigenous Australian artists, who link their work to particular political issues, such as the colonialist history of Australia, war on terrorism, or contemporary expressions of racism. These “post-colonial” artists have also caused a new kind of change in our perceptions of the functions of the Aboriginal arts. As these works and ongoing artistic projects clearly evidence, the Aboriginal artists are not necessarily any more tied to their ancient art forms and belief systems, but might as well operate in the context of contemporary Western political art and its specific belief-systems.

At an early example of this stands a political art project of the Yolngu people of North-East Arnhem land who lobbied the House of Representatives in Canberra to prevent a French mining company taking over their lands in order to get bauxite. The work consisted of typed and signed petitions that were written both in Gumatj and English on paper and framed by traditional bark paintings. Although the company in the end won the battle, the press coverage and public controversy that resulted from this act has later been seen as an important factor in the land right movement of the Aboriginals.<sup>46</sup> Later on, artists such as Gordon Bennett, Julie Dowling, Tracey Moffatt, Fiona Foley, Richard Bell, Sally Morgan, Robert Campbell Jr, Trevor Nickolls, and the late Lin Onus have shown strong interest in the studies of their hybrid identities, political rights, and sufferings of the Aboriginals, as well as the history of interaction between the black and white people in Australia and elsewhere. How, then, does the post-colonial situation present itself in the works of these artists? In the following, I will offer a few examples of this by interpreting some works of Gordon Bennett and Julie Dowling.

## POST-COLONIAL ART

Seen in the wider perspective, the concept “post-colonial” has been, at least from the 1970s onwards, closely linked to the attempts to focus on the cultural effects of European colonisation since the 16th century. Yet, the term does not literally suggest that the times of colonialism would be over, but far more that the occupying powers of the former colonisers have been contested and challenged widely by the aesthetic, ethical, and political expressions of the marginalised. Following McCarthy's and Dimitriadis' analysis, I will therefore interpret the term “post-colonial” here as a product of “colonial histories of disruption, forced migration, false imprisonment, and pacification”, as they formulate it.<sup>47</sup> Since all subjects that have experienced the effects of colonialist power—be they of Australian, Canadian, American, African, Indian, Chinese, Finnish, or some other origin—co-articulate necessarily both colonial and post-colonial histories and epistemologies, I propose that these two cannot be separated in their art either, even though their histories and present political situation differ significantly from each other.

There seem to be at least three typical features that characterise the artistic imagination of the post-colonial subjects. Firstly, many of them wish to undermine the forms of power that colonialism has imposed on themselves and their families and friends, be this power discursive/epistemological (scientific, popular or artistic representations of the savages, education, etc.), or openly violent (massacres, imprisonment, torture, contempt). What this also means is that in the works that are linked with the colonialist experiences and histories, the eye of the third world is turned critically on the coloniser's acts and knowledge, and the earlier objectifying (racist, Orientalist) gaze is replaced by more polyglot angles and points of view.<sup>48</sup> Sometimes the post-colonialist artists also use the logic of the objectifying gaze as a strategy to “look back”, and to turn the epistemological violence of racism and imperialism against the colonisers or some other oppressing group of people (as is the case in the “Occidentalism” art that, for example, despises the cultural history and historical agents of the West). In this respect, we

might also term many post-colonialist artworks counterhegemonic.

Secondly, the work of post-colonial imagination tends to deconstruct the rationalist or Enlightened narrative of modernity and modernisation that has relied strongly on a binary logic that differentiates the “West” from “non-West”, “civilisation” from “primitivism”, “high” from “low”, “centre” from “periphery”, “enlightened” from the “unenlightened”, and “developed” from “undeveloped”. In much post-colonial art, the almost sacred story of Western modernisation becomes a story of the yoking opposites that undermine the Enlightenment perspective by linking it to various “subterranean acts of atavism and brutality”, as McCarthy and Dimitriadis put it.<sup>49</sup> Relying also on the existential experiences of the split colonialisised subject, the post-colonial artworks often express a kind of double or triple register that is deeply embedded in the survivalist practices of the dominated people.<sup>50</sup> Unlike the Western artistic canon, which has been extremely reluctant to integrate into itself any official remarks of the “foreign” or “non-Western” influence, post-colonial contemporary art is already a hybrid by definition, a melting pot of encounter in which all cultural signs and acts of signification are marked by twinnedness of the speaking subject and other.<sup>51</sup>

Third, there is a tendency in much post-colonial arts to reconstruct the discursive power of colonialism through acts of mimicking or apéry. As Homi K. Bhabha suggests, within the economy of colonial discourse, mimicry emerges as an ironic compromise, one that presents the colonised subject as *almost the same, but not quite*—that is as, Anglicised, rather than as English, for example. Working against the colonialist imagination that produced its cultural Others through demand for identity, stasis, and Enlightenment rationality (never plural rationalities), mimicry is constructed around ambivalence and slippage, continuous excess, and difference. In this sense, it expresses certain double articulation also by appropriating the Other in the same time as it visualises power.<sup>52</sup>

Examples of the post-colonial art that expresses the first two aspects of post-colonial imagination can be found in the works of George Bennett (1955–) who is, at the moment, one of Australia’s leading artists. Bennett’s body of work presents a

wide variety of techniques and mediums, including painting, video, printmaking, photography, performance, and installation. Although his interest is often directed primarily towards the political and social problems of his own surroundings in the urban Australia, he also attempts to visualise how colonialist power works through various distorting discourses and representations, and to produce artistic counterimages to these representations. Bennett, whose Aboriginal heritage comes from his mother’s side, and whose father is white, has also given voice to a certain discomfort with being seen as a spokesperson for Aboriginal people only. In a manifesto (or, actually, “manifest toe”, as Bennett himself calls it) he gave out in 1996, he speaks of his hope “to avoid banal containment as a professional Aborigine, which both misrepresents me and denies my upbringing and Scottish/English heritage”.<sup>53</sup> As a reaction to this, he even adopted an alter ego in 1999 by the name “John Citizen”. Unlike the artist called Bennett, who addresses in his works complex social and political problems, John Citizen produces works as an Australian “everyman”, showing interest in design magazines, home interiors, mail order catalogues, and such.

Like in the work of many post-colonial artists, Bennett’s visual language is a hybrid that connects elements from the traditional Aboriginal Australian art (dotting, and traditional yellows and reds that we associate with Aboriginal art today), and the aesthetic tradition of the “Western” artists (Margaret Preston, Immants Tillers, Mike Kelley, Jean-Michel Basquiat, etc.). The discursive counterstrategy he uses in many of his works is clearly inspired by the postmodern and post-structuralist discourses, which both question the authoritative systems, discourses, and structures that aim to define and fix knowledge, belief, and identities. Already in an early work titled *The Coming of the Light* (1987) Bennett refers ironically to the heroic stories—including paintings—of the colonisers who saw the first missionaries and white seamen as literally bringing light to the dark and savage world of the Aboriginals. As we know, in the Christian tradition, light is strongly associated with goodness and righteousness while darkness presents evil and bad. This metaphor, also dear to the Enlightenment thinkers, is literally torn apart in Bennett’s work.



Gordon Bennett, *The coming of the light*, 1987  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, (a-b)  
152.0 × 374.0 cm (overall) Collection of the  
artist, Brisbane © Courtesy of the artist  
Photography: Brenton McGeachie

What we see in Bennett's piece of art, is a visualised challenge against the Enlightenment rhetorics and violence. The painting is divided into two equal-sized parts that present two different views to the story of Enlightenment. On the right, Bennett presents a familiar icon of a (white) hand that holds a torch, bringing light to the darkness and promising all humans better society and future. This light is also reflected to a black panel whose writing has become messy and practically impossible to read. The other white hand on the opposite panel holds a dog's collar that also functions as a hangman's noose for a black jack-in-the-box figure—suggesting that the same pair of hands brings at the same time the darkest of the dark: violence and death to those who are regarded as “unenlightened”. The systematic, rationalising and “modern” character of the Enlightenment thought is presented in the image by the letters A, B, C, and the highly controlled black-and-white rows of windows and houses in the background. The controlling power that these symbols present does not enrich the lives of the Aboriginal “Jacks”, however, but rather suppress their own knowledge and belief systems and culture.

In a sense, *all heads* that are depicted in Bennett's painting are torn apart by the same racist and colonialist history. Seen in this way, they express a kind of double or triple register that is embedded in the survivalist practices of the dominated people, but these registers are also constantly recreated in the current post-colonial situation. What this also means is that, for both white and black people in the image, the return to the precolonialist past has become impossible.

Instead, their subjectivities are marked by the same symbolic systems of power that reside in language, commerce, and culture, and rule Western systems of thought. Yet, it is also clear that the most extreme violence is experienced by the black figure, while the white people merely stand still in the background with eyes wide open.

In a series of images called *Untitled* (1989), Bennett attempts to show how colonialist visual representations might also be used to undermine the power they express and maintain. In this case, Bennett has connected the colonialist visual representations of the “new continent” with irritating words that disturb the canonical reading of these images. The “discovery” or “settlement” of Australia is presented here with symbols that are familiar to many generations of Australians, including tall ships, the landing of Captain Cook to Botany Bay, and scenes that bring out the violence that often occurred between colonisers and the colonised.



Gordon Bennett *Untitled (dismay, displace, disperse, dispirit, display, dismiss)*, 1989 oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 6 panels, each 30 × 30 cm Museum of Contemporary Art, Gift of Doug Hall 1993 Image courtesy of the artist, Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Milani Gallery, Brisbane © the artist

The six key words Bennett connects to these traditional images are all written in bold letters and capitals: DISMAY, DISPLACE, DISPERSE, DISPIRIT, DISPLAY, AND DISMISS, drawing attention to the negative suffix “dis-”. In the two first images, the words “dismay” and “displace” suggest that we might challenge the Anglo-Saxon version of history by interpreting the arrival of the European settlers to Australia, not as a heroic



discovery of a new continent, but as something that arose fear among the natives, and led to their displacement of their homes. By placing the word “disperse”—used earlier by the white settlers to express the killing of the Aboriginal people—under the third image that depicts killing of an Aborigine with an axe, and by connecting the words “dispirit” (meaning also depressing, demoralising, and casting down) and “display” (exhibiting openly in public view; but also communicating) to the images of slavery, public battle, and drinking, Bennett brings forth the disfortune and misery brought by the Europeans to the Indigenous people.

In the last, almost completely black image that is connected to the word “dismiss” (cease to consider, put out of juridical consideration), Bennett’s intentions may be interpreted in several ways. Firstly, the black square can be read as an absolute form of absence of the black voices in the colonialist Australia, but it also refers to Malevich’s (1878–1935) famous icon of modern art that has ceased to present the world through the objectifying or “realist” eye, and turns instead towards the inner spiritual reality whose life is not reducible to the expressions of Enlightenment rationality. Altogether, Bennett’s piece of art effectively questions and re-examines the language and representation that are used to make history, suggesting alternative ways to understand the world also. This presentation is not specifically “Aborigine”, but needs to be seen instead as one expression of contemporary post-colonial art, which grows from the colonialist past of the Aboriginal people, and reflects their present living conditions that continues to be miserable.

### THE MIMIC MAN

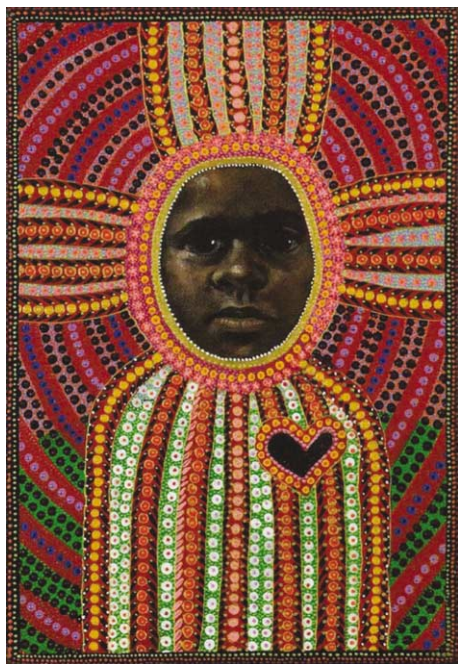
Examples of artistic mimicry or mockery—the third aspect of the post-colonial art I wished to take up here—are many in the field of contemporary art. As Homi K. Bhabha comments, all arts that mimic the colonial power share a discursive process by which the slippage or excess that is produced by the ambivalence of mimicry (it is almost the same, but not quite) not only “ruptures” the discourse, but also becomes transformed into an uncertainty that “fixes the colonial subject as ‘partial’ presence”.<sup>54</sup> To cite the words of the Moroccan writer and philosopher Abdelkébir Khatibi, we could also describe this post-colonial subjectivity in terms of

cultural hybridity, taken that this term is not understood as some sort of celebratory or happy hybridity, but far more an experience of a deep cultural chiasm that is born of the tensions between education and colonial language, alienation and inalienation, tradition and modernity. As Khabiti puts it, we should assume this broached identity, “in a lucidity of thought that lives on the chiasmus, on this schism [schize]”, for it is this very tension that keeps us attentive to the gap (*schism*) between facets of one’s inherited identity and the ways in which this identity might be traversed.<sup>55</sup>

A well-known artistic example of such hybridity or partiality is V. S. Naipaul’s novel *The Mimic Man* (1967). In this book, the narrator, a colonial minister called Ralph Singh, embodies the psychological and political problems of the colonial subjects in the post-colonial world. Born in an imagined island of Isabella in West-India, but educated in the English school system, he presents a split colonial subject who is neither a true Indian, nor an Englishman. This imminent cultural homelessness makes Singh feel lost and isolated in Isabella, far from the “more developed” centres of the colonial power. The same experience is actually shared by all those who remain in Isabella: despite their new independence, people do not feel free but lost and forgotten. Due to their colonial education, they continue to think that England is still the symbol of order, and that their own culture, if there is any, is simply inferior to it. In this cultural atmosphere, the whole population of Isabella suffers from dislocation, fragmentation, and the loss of identity. Desolate Ralph both recognises and criticises his colonial mimicry, but also understands that he cannot stop it as he is also himself a specific product of a particular socioeconomic formation that we know as colonialism.<sup>56</sup>

A similar kind of “multi-axial politics of positionality”, as Lindsey Moore has termed it, is a typical feature of many contemporary artworks.<sup>57</sup> One interesting example is offered by an Australian artist Julie Dowling (1969–) whose works materialise well the artistic strategies and forms of imagination that express something essential from the post-colonial situation of the Aborigines. In an approximately 150 series of works that present the images of the “lost generations”, Dowling combines surrealist, social realist, and pop art elements to the Aboriginal visual patterns (dotting, circles, etc.) and traditional icon painting to the portraits

of the Aboriginal children. Unlike the traditional icons that were painted by pious Christians and present “windows” onto the divine via the presence of Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary, and the Saints, in Dowling’s images we face a different problematic agenda. As Jeannette Hoorn formulates it, “in this series, the artist returns time and again to her disenfranchised countrymen and women, to the fate of those who were taken away, to the victims of a racist law and order system, to her grandmothers whose culture was destroyed”.<sup>58</sup>

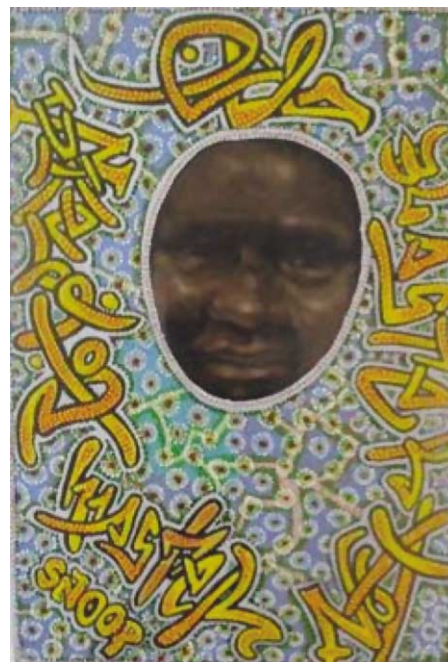


Julie Dowling, *Icon to a Stolen Child: Fetish*, 1998  
synthetic polymer paint and red ochre on  
canvas 40.5 × 27.5 cm, private collection

What Dowling—whose own family had been separated and removed for three generations by the Australian assimilation politics—wished to do with the icon series was to recreate the symbols and rhetorics of the icon art from the perspective of the colonised Aboriginal subjects. It is also worth noticing that the Aborigines had been oppressed, not only by the colonialist government, but also by the Catholic and Lutheran churches that worked in close cooperation with the state. By replacing the Christian saints and holy figures by the faces of the Indigenous children who were fostered out to the church missions and white families, Dowling makes visible a social trauma that can still be seen in the Aboriginals’ lives. As the artist comments on these works:

The reason I paint portraits is to break down barriers between individuals. When a person views a portrait, she or he is forced to acknowledge the image of another human being. These images reflect the subject’s flaws, their fears, their history, their beauty, their inner-emotion and their existence.<sup>59</sup>

The deployment of graffiti in *Icon to a Stolen Child: Perth* (1998) undermines also Dowling’s unorthodox and reflective relation to Christian icon art. As Hoorn emphasises, Dowling’s icons are actually not so much authentic windows on to the past either, but far more “uncanny” works that tend to provoke “the viewer to contemplate the meaning of conventional religious iconography”.<sup>60</sup> In these works, the tradition of Christian icon art is turned into a polyglot visual space that is iconographically impure or hybrid. This feeling gets even stronger when one focuses on Dowling’s usage of the visual materials. Instead of merely painting her icons on wood or canvas, she is melting together technicolour textile of signs, and references that are sourced from West African and Celtic art, Western Desert painting, kitsch and popular culture, and so on. Even the pigments glimmer and glean through her usage of substances such as plastic and blood.<sup>61</sup>



Dowling: *Icon to a Stolen Child: Perth*, 1998  
synthetic polymer paint and red ochre on canvas  
40.5 × 27.5 cm, private collection

In a painting titled *Her Father's Servant* (1999), Dowling offers us another kind of visual rhetoric of the post-colonialist art—and also mimicking. In this painting, we see a group of five people, whose skin colour and ethnic background is hard to define. In the middle of the pictorial space clearly stands, however, a young black girl who has been dressed up as a white man's servant (in this costume, she actually looks like an ethnic drag). A white bonnet on her head draws attention to the blackness of her skin, as well as to her oppressed position in the family. This main figure in the image is Dowling's great-grandmother Mary, whose status at home changed dramatically after her father remarried. In the situation that looks like a birthday celebration, Mary is serving all others and her status in the family is clearly lower than that of her stepmother and siblings. The skewed perspective of the picture, and the obscure colours and shadows in the room all enforce the feeling that the home in the image is not a safe or cosy place for Mary. As a symbol of power and violent force, her father's plate is even holding a long shimmering knife that looks more like a weapon than something to be used with the cake.<sup>62</sup>



Dowling: *Her Father's Servant*, 1999  
synthetic polymer paint, red ochre and  
blood on canvas  
100 × 120 cm, National Gallery of Australia

Seen in the wider perspective, *Her Father's Servant* draws attention to the naturalisation of the family and its “civilised” customs, suggesting that these

ideals are also forms of discourses or writing; that is, specific cultural artefacts whose truth-claims can be challenged. At the same time, in Dowling's image, this alienation from the “normalising” discourse brings forth the broken and split character of the colonial subject, her homelessness in her own home, difficulties to feel connected, experiences of alienation; that is, her oppression and cultural emptiness.

Similar kinds of artistic hybrids are now presented all over the world. For example, many artists who have their roots in Africa have migrated to the United States, England, France, Germany, or some other parts of the world, and produce works that may best be introduced via the terminology of hybrids, ambivalence, transculturalism, diaspora, and fragmentation. Like in Australia, these artists do not have a single common source for their “Africanity” that would have its roots in the pre-colonial African traditions. Instead, their old belief-systems and traditions are often present in their works, but become melted in new and unexpected ways to the influences that are of other origins.<sup>63</sup> Another inspiring example of contemporary art that builds its reality on the complex tensions between localism, traditions, and transcultural “wordliness” comes from China, whose artists—either living in China or in the West—have become very successful in the global art market after the reformist agendas of Deng Xiaoping (“socialism with Chinese characteristics”) instigated from the mid-1980s onwards.<sup>64</sup>

When these hybrid identities are presented in the context of post-colonial art, they tend to undermine and question the naturalised truth-claims of the colonialist epistemologies, and to offer in their place a more ambivalent view in which the perceived object (colonial subject) is only partially present. Following Sarat Maharaj's analysis, we could also say that there is always an element of “untranslatability” in the new mixtures of identity of this kind. What this also means is that the colonial subjects presented in the acts of mimicking do not entail any fixed or easily understandable meanings. Rather, they suggest that we see a (re)presentation of a living human individual whose essence should not be narrowed down into some new celebratory and reductive term. When considering these remarks, we should pay specific attention to the unfinished character of these new hybrid identities, and read them also as a self-



unthreading force that might also be used against themselves (to undermine their essentialisation as hybrids, for example). At any rate, the result is an open-ended identity that is shot through with expressions and intimations of the untranslatable.<sup>65</sup> What this means, in more concrete terms, is that their future as subjects is open.

## *The Art World Inc.* – NEW DEMOCRACY OR ANOTHER PRETTY SUIT FOR THE EMPEROR?

All you need to survive in this game is  
deep pockets.  
And never forget that this is black art for  
white people.  
That's the nub of it.

—Hank Ebes, a multimillionaire and a proprietor of Aboriginal art

Does the post-colonial art and critique present then the death of the colonialist aesthetics, as Danto suggests in his text? The answer is not simple. On the one hand, the hegemony of the colonial powers and Western modernism was undoubtedly broken and split in the aftermaths of World War II, when many colonies gained independence and new kinds of aesthetic discourses and artists entered the most important venues of the Western art culture. New kinds of “global” art exhibitions also started to occur during the 1980s and the 1990s in the form of international biennials or triennials, and also single art exhibitions—such as *Magiciens de la terre* in Paris (1989)—that raised issues connected with the history of Western colonialism and empire, and paid special interest to the models of curating art, trying to seek alternatives to the ways in which Western museums had previously exhibited its cultural others and its own culture.<sup>66</sup> Yet, at the same time, it also seems that the colonialist power—the siamic twin of the capitalist “world-system” (Wallerstein)—has merely got a new pretty suit on in the form of an institution that Charlotte Bydler terms *The Art World Inc.* (2004),<sup>67</sup> and of which Noël Carroll uses the expression *The Artworld International* (2007, 136).<sup>68</sup> In the following, I will present a few concluding remarks on this issue.

A short glimpse to the actual “globalised” art venues already evidenced, despite much talk on the pluralisation, postmodernisation, and globalisation of the arts, the power structures inside the contemporary art world are not necessarily very different from those of the colonialist period. First, to be able to get through in the business; that is, to get an important job as an artist, curator, artistic director, critic, or an art education specialist, you still need to be schooled in the Western aesthetics, to speak English, French, or German as your mother tongue, to live in the cultural centres of the West (or at least be well connected to them), to have very good networks, and, if possible, a personal agent, assistant, or a dealer who knows how the current art business works. As a Dutch art historian and curator Maarten Bertheux formulates it, dominant Western art still “sets out its norms, while at the same time pretending to be entirely open to anything new. Meanwhile modern art curators are faced with being acquainted with just a small section of art-production beyond the existing centres”.<sup>69</sup>

In the current art world-system the artists, critics, and curators have, in principle, the freedom and right to submit their works in equal competition with the most prominent members of this market place. Yet, in reality, already a lack of citizenship practically turns down one's possibilities to participate in the activities of many globalised art venues<sup>70</sup>—not to even mention the problems caused by the lack of “proper” schooling, or “wrong” mother tongue, religion, and cultural background. Furthermore, in the much celebrated shrinking or globalised world, covered by new technology and fast transportation, already a short step over the border of the nation-state is for many artists extremely dangerous, if not simply impossible. Hence their possibilities to become heard and seen in the global art venues are very limited. A fact that is often forgotten in the theoretical debates on globalisation is that, actually only roughly one-third of the world's population has access to modern information and travel technology—and thus to the Western “modernity”.<sup>71</sup> For the vast majority of the existing people, the idea of shrinking the distances cannot be much more than a somewhat strange theoretical ideal.

The exclusiveness of the art world is also repeatedly realised in the general reluctance of many nation-states (although not all) to open

international competition for important positions in art museums and media, or even to discuss the homogeneity of power networks in the field of institutionalised arts.<sup>72</sup> As Ulf Hannerz also comments, contemporary cosmopolitan culture is at the moment rather elitist and protean, offering those who manage to travel from the periphery to the metropolises a specific authority as “beentos”, and marking those who don’t as passive agents of the periphery. In many cases, the influence and exchange between the periphery and the metropolitan agents do not flow evenly, but instead tend to turn the former into receivers rather than managers of meaning.<sup>73</sup> What I would like to add to Hannerz’s analysis is that there are also cases, such as the contemporary Aboriginal arts, in which those who live in periphery are allowed to “manage meanings”, but the recirculation and consumption of their work, as well as the economic bonus gained by it, still profits mostly other people than themselves.

For those artists who are not part of the power centres, the struggle for acceptance might also become even more difficult when their works are titled as culturally different. As Bertheux cleverly notices, this places them in a paradoxical situation where, “on the one hand, their art is valued when it fulfils a vaguely romantic criterion such as ‘authentic’. But on the other, the ‘language’ is expected to adhere to current views on contemporary art”; that is, to the aesthetic standards and criteria that are still defined on the grounds of Western art and its specific rationalities.<sup>74</sup> This kind of result is described by an art historian Benjamin Buchloh as an “ethnographical fallacy”. Participating in a debate on the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* that tried to question the old barriers between Western and non-Western aesthetics, he asks:

But isn’t it precisely once again the worst ethnographic fallacy: it communicates for *us*, therefore it is relevant for the exhibition. Worse yet: it smacks once again of cultural (and political) imperialism to request that these cultures deliver their cultural products for our inspection and *our consumption*, instead of us making an attempt to dismantle the false centrality of this approach and to develop criteria from within the needs and conventions of these cultures.<sup>75</sup>

What Buchloh also means to take up in his critical comment is that, as soon as they are taken to the global art markets, many “indigenous” or “non-Western” cultural products lose their uniqueness and become reduced back to the logic of the Same—that is, European, capitalist, and also colonialist logic of aesthetic consumption and onselling. The recategorisation of non-Western visual products from the category of ethnographic artefacts (or visual culture) to “high art” is indeed problematic, since in the context of ethnography the objects are usually exhibited next to various other things that also have cultural functions, while in the art galleries these connections are broken and the objects are linked and used in the context of Western belief-systems.

Furthermore, the selection of the non-Western art objects also tends to emphasise the visual similarity to Western pieces of art, as art critics and curators who work as gatekeepers naturally use European conventions of appraisal in order to justify their selections of non-Western artworks.<sup>76</sup> In the light of these notions, it is not surprising that, for example, Emily Kame Kngwarreye and many other successful Aboriginal artists are repeatedly praised as Aboriginal versions of Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Sol LeWitt, and other Western “geniuses”.<sup>77</sup> The models for “superior” or “excellent” in arts have thus largely remained Western.

What this also means, is that despite much talk on pluralism and globalisation, in reality, the social and religious functions of the non-Western art—be it Aboriginal Australian or something else—are not considered very seriously in the Western art venues, and it is highly questionable that they could even be performed and maintained in its context (for example, the ephemerality of the Aboriginal traditional Dreamings, and their secret myths and stories that are not allowed to be shown to the non-Aboriginal people). Thinking about this issue, some critical voices have argued that Indigenous Australian visual culture cannot be described in terms of “art” at all, because this leads to the destruction of the authentic Aboriginal culture.<sup>78</sup> This view is somewhat problematic as well, however, since there really is no one essential or fixed Aboriginal artistic tradition either on which we could refer to as authentic. Instead, it really seems that all cultures, also traditional

“non-Western” ones, are amalgams of different genetic and cultural traits and thus have not “pure” or “authentic” essence.<sup>79</sup>

As the analyses of Chin-Tao Wu (2002) and Juliet Benhamou-Huet (2008) point out, at worst, the much celebrated plurality and globalisation of arts is today realised in the rich business corporations’, museum corporations’ (Guggenheim, for example), individuals’ and institutions’ willingness to shop art in the “exotic” peripheries and semi-peripheries, and to gain maximum profit of this new imported aesthetic gold. Chin-Tao Wu calls this new interest in the cultural other the “expansion mania”, which, in her view, fits very well to the logic of the global capitalism and earlier colonial expansionism. As she crystallises her point:

The terms of reference may have changed, but the cultural superiority and the financial exploitation remain the same in this new game of cultural globalism. Globalism may have its validity as a utopian ideal, but the overseas expansion of American art institutions that we have witnessed over the last few years is the antithesis of idealism: it has been an exercise in pragmatism in which cultural imperialism and multinational capitalism have joined forces to consolidate existing hegemonies.

It is also interesting to notice that the corporate world in America, Britain, and some other rich countries now exercise more power over high culture and art than ever. As Chin-Tao Wu also comments, it is surely not an inconsiderable matter that multinational corporations have “successfully transformed art museums and galleries into their own public relation vehicles” by taking over the functions and social status that cultural institutions have earlier enjoyed in the Western societies. In this new system, business influence is, in her view, “well advanced in every phase of contemporary art—in its production, its dissemination and its reception”.<sup>80</sup>

The neoliberalisation and “boom” of the arts that begun in the 1980s has turned money and art sale prices into the most important news, ignoring the (potentially also critical) contents and aesthetic qualities of the works. Observing this development, Benhamou-Huet denotes ironically that, art itself is still far too “elitist to excite planetary interest. But money for art, that’s another matter”.<sup>81</sup> Unlike in the modernist era and before it, when art

was mainly bought by rich connoisseurs and institutions, in the contemporary postmodern consumer society, the target group of art marketing consists of all kinds of wealthy individuals. The strength of the current global art business is largely based on this high number of consumers—but, at the same time, it is exactly this very feature of the contemporary art institution that might also lead to the rapid collapse of the global art markets as the frequent changes in the market occur.<sup>82</sup>

If we link these notions back to the Australian Aboriginal art once again, it is hard not to notice that the labour division around their art seems to be indeed very much in line with the ones created by the world-systems of capitalism and colonialism. That is, the few rich centres still hold the power to judge, to buy, and to collect “Aboriginal art”, and to gain the economic profit of it, while the Aboriginal periphery—where most of the artists still live—has remained extremely poor and undeveloped. Along with poor schooling and lack of jobs, alcoholism, petrol sniffing, domestic violence, STDs, and chronic health problems are continuing to intensify the Aboriginals depression and isolation. Moreover, the wounds and traumas of the “stolen generations” still haunt many individuals, families, and kins causing difficult psychological and social problems. As Benjamin Genocchio reports, against this background, it is not surprising that the Aboriginal people are nearly 20 times more likely to be in jail than other Australians, and already the Western Australia’s Aboriginal prisoners make up almost half of the state’s prisoners despite that they represent only 2.7 per cent of the adult population.<sup>83</sup>

As a reaction to the investigations by *The Australian* newspaper into the vast exploitation of Aboriginal artists in the Alice Springs area, the Australian government launched a Senate inquiry into the Aboriginal arts and crafts industry at the end of 2006. According to Greg Mallyon, the manager of World Vision’s Birrung Gallery in Sydney, their own independent research pointed out that about 60 per cent of commercial galleries in Sydney and Melbourne deal wholly or partially in art that is produced in unethical circumstances.<sup>84</sup> This situation has also created uncertainty about the authenticity of the artworks: there are several reports of the cases in which the Aboriginals are held captive and forced to copy the works of the big-name artists, for example, or have been forced



to paint for white art dealers without getting any payment for their work.<sup>85</sup>

In the light of these notions, it seems reasonable to argue that, even though there is at the moment more transcultural and transnational activities in the field of arts and culture than ever before—already due to the fact that there is now more nations, people, and ways to connect them—the new world culture of art is not born from the free flow of goods, information, images, knowledge, and people who participate in the exchange. Instead, the art world-system and its functions are held together by shared but also exclusive aesthetic discourses—common manners of behaving and speaking of art—and by a common capitalist economy system; that is, “a market for the labour of the cultural workers, and an international division of labour”, as Bydler puts it.<sup>86</sup>

As the competition in this labour field increases, the art world-system needs to expand, just like all capitalist world-systems do, and new exotic “goods” are needed to bring home for display, analysis, and ongoing recirculation. The strength of this system is that this kind of world-economy is not loyal to any local or national party, and thus might really succeed in its attempts to overcome the limits of the national in art. Moreover, wide economic interest in the arts also increases artistic production, and makes many counterhegemonic art projects possible as well. On the other hand, the current system seems to create new kinds of artificial centres for “world art”, and to turn them into new kinds of art shopping venues, where everything that comes out from the semiperiphery or periphery—be it Aboriginal art, Finnish art, or something else—is described and experienced as “exotic”, and, therefore, as valuable.<sup>87</sup>

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

As Niru Ratman comments, seen in the wider context, it is no wonder that the new post-colonial attitudes towards art have arisen at a time when the whole world has been quickly changing under the set of forces that are now often termed “globalisation”.<sup>88</sup> Museums and collectors all over the world have started to show growing interest in “foreign” or colonialised visual cultures that they had overlooked earlier as lower art, or as mere ethnographic material, and various political minorities—be they ethnic, indigenous, sexual, or

something else—have also been pushed towards the centre of art politics and visual representation.

Yet, it also seems clear that the end of the colonialisation is still an ongoing struggle, not something we would have passed. At the moment, the dominating “Western” art world does perhaps better acknowledge the influence of the “non-West” to the Western thinking and art, but, at the same time, it is clearly not ready to give these cultural others equal status in its institutions and power networks.<sup>89</sup> In other words, there still exists an art world-system that is anchored in economically strong nation-states and corporations, and their economical and political interests.<sup>90</sup>

Recently, there have emerged some suggestions to change this uneven system of the capitalist art market towards a more democratic stance. As Benjamin Genocchio comments, for example, one of the options under discussion in communities is for indigenous people to become better involved in the distribution and marketing—not just production—of their artworks.<sup>91</sup> Genocchio also proposes that all countries should accept the artist tax called *Droite de Suite*. This royalty system has been introduced to the art world and politicians already after the first World War in France where the artists demanded to have between 2 and 5% share of market resales of their works. In countries where the artist’s resale rights are protected by *Droit de Suite*, his/her heirs get a royalty each time a work is resold during the artists lifetime and even during the 70 years following her/his death.<sup>92</sup>

*Droite de Suite* is now existing in some states in the United States (in California, for example) and since 2006 in all European Union member states—but not in Australia and many other parts of the world.<sup>93</sup> The weakness of this tax system is that it easily leads to support only a few successful late-career artists and beneficiaries of deceased artists’ estates. The poverty of many Aboriginal artists for example—most of whom earn less than US\$2,000 per annum—would not necessarily be diminished remarkably by this change. Yet, as Wally Caruana, the former chief curator of Aboriginal art in National Gallery of Australia remarks, there is at least a race-based “moral imperative” for the art market to introduce such a payment for indigenous artists, which grows from a sense of the outrage over their poverty as rich art collectors push prices to new highs.<sup>94</sup> *Droit de Suite* would also guarantee better living conditions for at least some artists and

their families, and is thus one possible means to remedy socially difficult situations in the field of art.

In many cases, problems also arise out of the indigenous cultural heritage. For example, in most Aboriginal traditions, elderly people are expected to take care of various responsibilities, and even to provide for their extended families that may easily include 50 persons. As a result, old Aboriginal artists often produce as much as they can, and those who live on their earnings do nothing that would count as work. The reason for this is not, of course, simply the laziness of the rest of the population, but also the deep societal problems caused by the colonialist period, and the forced settlement living that has led to a series of problems in the life style and health of the Aboriginals. However, some cultural changes would evidently need to occur in these communities also before the situation may change for better.

The Cinderella stories of globalised artworks that succeed in the venues of contemporary capitalist art market—be they “Indigenous” or whatever—does without doubt bring the aesthetics of various others into our attention. Moreover, it can be argued that, in the current cultural and economic climate, many of the art works we now enjoy would never have been realised without the capitalist marketing system and its international money flows. Nonetheless, to interpret the values of capitalist corporations or rich art investors as synonymous with the values of the entire culture or community—or to see them as serving any kind of generalised emancipation or freedom—would be “to have swallowed a large piece of ideological bait whole”, as Paul Wood expresses it.<sup>95</sup>

As Wood also comments, it is not easy to decide what all this adds up to and to formulate a carefully considered response. On the one hand, there are good reasons to be well aware of the dangers of the globalised art world-system, and to see as clearly as possible the values and means that give breath to its “expansion mania”. Yet, most art lovers would purportedly rather have all the works produced with the help of a current art world-system than not. It seems that we are left with a certain double consciousness here. As Wood cleverly comments, we seem to exist “inside the whale” (as George Orwell has also denoted), and only time will tell if arts and critical thinking will have the capacity and the desire to cause indigestion.<sup>96</sup>

## NOTES

1. Arthur Danto, ‘Embodied Meanings, Isotypes, and Aesthetical Ideas’, in *Global Theories of the Arts and Aesthetics*, ed. Susan L. Feagin (Malden, MA, and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), 122–4.
2. Clement Greenberg, ‘The Identity of Art’, in *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 4: Modernism with a Vengeance (1957–1969)*, ed. John O’Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 118.
3. Danto, ‘Embodied Meanings, Isotypes, and Aesthetical Ideas’, 124.
4. Niru Ratman, ‘Exhibiting the “Other”: Yuendumu community’s *Yarla*’, in *Frameworks for Modern Art*, ed. Jason Gaiger (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press in association with The Open University, 2003), 213–4. See also Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions: Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 112.
5. Ratman, ‘Exhibiting the “Other”’, 214.
6. Manfred Steger, *The Rise of the Global Imaginary. Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 65–6.
7. Immanuel Kant, *Emmanuel Kant: Aphorismes sur l’art de vivre*, ed. Jean-Paul Bertrand (Paris: Editions du Rocher, 1798/1990), 150.
8. *Ibid.*, 17.
9. *Ibid.*, for example, 73–89.
10. Kant analyses the idea of genius in detail in the second book of *Critique of Judgement* (Analytic of the Sublime), see, for example, § 46–50.
11. Arnold Berleant, ‘Re-thinking Aesthetics’, in *Filozofski vestnik, XX* (2/1999–XIV ICA). Proceedings of the XIV International Congress of Aesthetics, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 29.
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13. Michel Foucault, ‘Space, Knowledge, Power’ (1982), interview, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 249.
14. Joseph Margolis, *Philosophy Looks at the Arts. Contemporary Readings in Aesthetics*, ed. J. Margolis. 3rd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1962/87), 2.
15. Thomas McEvilly, ‘The Tomb of the Zombie’, in *Strategies for Survival—Now! A Global Perspective on Ethnicity, Body and Breakdown of Artistic Systems*, ed. Christian Chambert (Lund: the Swedish Art Critics Association Press, 1995), 310.
16. Ria Lavrijsen, ‘Introduction’, in *Global Encounters in the World of Art. Collisions of Tradition and Modernity*,

- ed. Ria Lavrijsen (The Netherlands: Royal Tropical Institute, 1998), 15.
17. Judith Ryan, *Mythscape. Aboriginal Art of the Desert*, catalogue (The National Gallery of Victoria, 1989), 26.
  18. Benjamin Genocchio, *Dollar Dream. Inside the Aboriginal Art World* (Pahran, Australia: Hardie Grant Books, 2008), 5. See also A. W. Jose, *Builders and Pioneers of Australia* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1928), 134.
  19. Bardon, Geoffrey 1989. The Gift that Time Gave. Papunya Early and Late, 1971–72 and 1980. In *Mythscape. Aboriginal Art of the Desert*. Ed. by Judith Ryan. National Gallery of Victoria.
  20. Cited in Gennocio, *Dollar Dream*, 55.
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  22. Burn and Stephen, 'Albert Namantjira: The White Mask', 229.
  23. Margaret Preston, 'The Indigenous Art of Australia', in *Modernism & Australia. Documents on Art, Design and Architecture 1917–1967*, ed. Ann Stephen, Andrew McNamara, and Philip Goad (Victoria: The Miegunyah Press, 2006/1925), 156.
  24. Ibid.
  25. Ibid., 159–60.
  26. See A. P. Elkin, 'Foreword', *Australian Aboriginal Decorative Art*, in *Modernism & Australia*, 2006/1938.
  27. *Modernism & Australia*, introduction to A. P. Elkin, 375.
  28. Elkin, 'Foreword', 376–7.
  29. Leonhard Adam, 'Has Australian Aboriginal Art a Future', in *Modernism & Australia. Documents on Art, Design and Architecture 1917–1967*, ed. Ann Stephen, Andrew McNamara, and Philip Goad (Victoria: The Miegunyah Press, 2006/1944), 451, 453.
  30. Ibid., 457–8.
  31. Ibid., 454.
  32. The term 'post-colonial' was originally used to refer to the post-independence phase of the previously colonised countries in order to analyse the effects of colonisation on these cultures. Gradually, various post-colonial local uses of the expression "art" started to enlarge its scope and usage. For example, in Nigeria, artists such as Ucke Okeke began to focus on the traditional arts of Igbo people, in order to express some possible new forms for post-independence Nigerian art. (See C. King and N. Durbridge, 'Modern Art in Nigeria: Independence and Innovation', in *Views of Difference: Different Views of Art*, ed. C. King, New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press in association with The Open University, 1999); and Ratman, 'Exhibiting the "Other"', 218.
  33. Adam, 'Has Australian Aboriginal Art a Future', 455.
  34. Ibid., 456–7.
  35. Catriona Moore, 'Margaret Preston at Home', in *Radical Revisionism*, ed. Rex Butler (Brisbane: Institute of Modern Art, 2005), 202; Lavrijsen Ria, 'Introduction', in *Global Encounters in the World of Art*, ed. Ria Lavrijsen (The Netherlands: Royal Tropical Institute, 1998), 9.
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  38. Ibid., 315.
  39. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978/2003), 4.
  40. See also Ratman, 'Exhibiting the "Other"', 218; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008/1994), for example, 124–5.
  41. Ryan, *Mythscape*, 28.
  42. On the birth of the Aboriginal modern "painting movement", see also Ryan, *Mythscape*; Genocchio, *Dollar Dream*; Susan McCulloch and Emily McCulloch Childs, *Contemporary Aboriginal Art. The Complete Guide*, 4th ed. (China, Everbest Printing Company: Australian Art Books, 2009/1999). Genocchio's book also includes a lot of detailed information about the development of the Aboriginal art markets (see, for example, Genocchio 2008, 69–72, 76–84, 99–116).
  43. Department of the Aboriginal Affairs, *The Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Industry*, Report of the Review Committee (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989), 17.
  44. Genocchio, *Dollar Dream*, 39.
  45. Ibid., 5, 13, 39.
  46. Ratman, 'Exhibiting the "Other"', 218.
  47. Cameron McCarthy and Gregory Dimitriadis, 'Art and the Postcolonial Imagination: Rethinking the Institutionalization of Third World Aesthetics and Theory', in *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* (31:1 & 2, January–April, 2000), 233.
  48. Ibid., 234.
  49. Ibid., 235.
  50. Paul Gilroy, 'Cruciality and the Frog's Perspective', *Third Text* 5 (1988–1989): 33–44. See also Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 121–31.
  51. McCarthy and Dimitriadis, 'Art and the Post-colonial Imagination', 235.
  52. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 122.

53. Gordon Beckett, 'The Manifest Toe', in *The Art of Gordon Bennett*, eds. Ian McLean and Gordon Bennett (Roseville East, NSW: Craftsman House/G+B Arts International, 1996), 9–62.
54. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 123.
55. Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other or the Prosthesis of Origin*. Trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 9; see also Lindsey Moore, 'Minding the Gap: Migration, Diaspora, Exile and Return in Women's Visual Media', in *Contemporary Art in the Middle East*, ed. Paul Sloman (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2009), 34.
56. Selwyn R. Cudjoe, *V. S. Naipaul: A Materialist Reading* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 100.
57. Moore, 'Minding the Gap', 26.
58. Jeanette Hoorn, *Strange Fruit, Testimony and Memory in Julie Dowling's Portraits*, catalogue (Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, July 24–October 14, 2007), 14.
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63. Okwui Enwezor, 'Between Localism and Worldliness', in *Global Encounters in the World of Art. Collisions of Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Ria Lavrijsen (The Netherlands: Royal Tropical Institute, 1998), 31–40.
64. Suhanya Raffel, 'The China Project', 15–23; Thomas Berghuis, 'Performance Art in China', 35–47, both articles are published in *The China Project. Three Decades* (Australia: Printpoint, 2009).
65. Sarat Maharaj, 'Perfidious Fidelity: the Untranslatability of the Other', in *Art of the Twentieth Century. A Reader*, ed. Jason Gaiger and Paul Wood (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, in association with The Open University, 1994), 297–304.
66. Ratman. Exhibiting the 'Other': Yuendumu community's *Yarla*', in *Frameworks for Modern Art*, ed. Jason Gaiger (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with The Open University, 2003, 207–251), 213–6; Catherine Ugwu 'The Art of the Conflict', in *Global Encounters in the World of Art. Collisions of Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Ria Lavrijsen (The Netherlands: Royal Tropical Institute, 1998), 67–77.
67. Charlotte Bydler, *The Global ArtWorld Inc. On the Globalization of Contemporary Art*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Figura Nova Series 32. (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2004).
68. Noël Carroll, 'Art and Globalisation: Then and Now', in *Global Theories of the Arts and Aesthetics* ed. Susan L. Feagin (Oxford (UK) and Malden (USA): Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 131–43.
69. Bertheux, 'The Paradox of Freedom in Modern Art' (1998), 47. See also Bhabha in Ria Lavrijsen, 'Video-Interview with Homi Bhabha in the ICA in London for the MED URBS VIE Conference' (Rotterdam: The Rotterdam Arts Council and the City Council, December, 1992).
70. Bydler, *The Art World Inc.*, 150; Carroll, 'Art and Globalisation: Then and Now', 135.
71. Lavrijsen, 'Introduction', 17.
72. Bydler, *The Art World Inc.*, 55.
73. Ulf Hannerz, 'Scenarios for Peripheral Cultures', in *Cultures, Globalization and the World-System. Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. A. King (Houndmills and London: Macmillan; Binghamton: SUNY, 1991), 107–28.
74. Bertheux, 1998, 48. See also Carroll, 'Art and Globalisation: Then and Now', 137.
75. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Jean-Hubert Martin. 'Interview', *Third text; Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture* (London) 6 (1989): 19–27. (Special issue on "Magiciens de la Terre" translated from *Les cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne*).
76. Ratman, 'Exhibiting the "Other"', 222–3; Bertheux, 'The Paradox of Freedom in Modern Art', 47.
77. The art of the Indigenous Australians was earlier read quite commonly through reference to Western modernism. See, for example, an art critique Kay Larson's text in the *New York Magazine* (1988) in which the writer says that: "Aboriginal art at its best is as powerful as any other abstract painting I can think of. I kept remembering Jackson Pollock, who also spread the emotional weight of thought and action throughout the empty spaces of his canvases." (Quoted in Ratman, 'Exhibiting the "Other"', 234.)
78. Ratman, 'Exhibiting the "Other"', 225.
79. See also Gilroy, 'Cruciality and the Frog's Perspective'; McCarthy and Dimitriadis, 'Art and the Postcolonial Imagination', 235; Enwezor, 'Between Localism and Worldliness', 39.
80. Ibid., 2.
81. Benhamou-Huet, *The Worth of Art* (2) (New York: Assouline Publishing, 2008), 16.
82. Ibid., 13.
83. Genocchio, *Dollar Dream*, 6.
84. Ibid., 46.
85. Ibid., 44–5. See also Russell Skelton, 'Hope the Victor in a Fight with Desolation', *The Sunday Age* 22 (2005): 8.
86. Bydler, *The Art World Inc.*, 35. See also Carroll, 'Art and Globalisation: Then and Now', 135–43.
87. Bydler, *The Art World Inc.*, 35.
88. Ratman, "Exhibiting the "Other"', 213.
89. Noël Carroll, 'Art and Globalisation: Then and Now'. in *Global Theories of the Arts and Aesthetics*, ed.

Susan L. Feagin (Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 131–43.

90. Bydler, *The Art World Inc.*, 15–6.

91. Genocchio, *Dollar Dream*, 216–7.

92. As a well-known auction house, Christies informs in its netpages, these royalties are calculated using a sliding scale of percentages of the sale price, net of tax. For auction companies, the sale price is the same as the hammer price; that is, the price without the premium. However, the total amount of royalty on any one sale or lot shall not exceed €12,500. This sum of money is thus the maximum any individual artist or heirs can get from one reselling. These resale royalties are not subject to VAT and they do not apply when the hammer price is less than

€1,000. This directive is still controversial in some European countries too, especially in the UK where it is applied only to the works of living artists. In 2012 *Droit de Suite* will be extended also in the UK to apply to an artist's works for a period that covers 70 years after his death.

93. See also Genocchio, *Dollar Dream*, 111–2.

94. Cited in *Ibid.*, 172.

95. Paul Wood, 'Inside the Whale: An Introduction to Postmodernist Art', in *Themes in Contemporary Art*, ed. Gill Perry and Paul Wood (London: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 2004), 39.

96. *Ibid.*, 38–9.