Cultural Development? Cultural Unilateralism? An Analysis of Contemporary Festival and Biennale Programs

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In his seminal work, *Relational Aesthetics,* Nicolas Bourriaud suggests that the fundamental essence of contemporary art practice and criticism is no longer based on the study of the object in isolation, but on the discursive characteristics that art and its situation can initiate—the ways in which art transforms from object to encounter and simultaneously reflects the concerns of artist, audience, and the cultures that umbrella both (2002, 11–18).[1] In works, such as Yukinori Yanagi's 1990 installation, *World Flag Ant Farm* (see figure 1), the static nature of the piece—its placement on the gallery wall, its materiality, its physical presence—is far less noteworthy than the work's visible transformation over time. As ants are introduced to the work, they ceaselessly burrow through colored sands that are meticulously sandwiched between thin layers of plexiglass. Via small connective tubes, the ants move from flag to flag in unpredictable, unscripted trajectories, and the imagistic integrity of each flag disintegrates as the ants continue their explorations. Importantly, Yanagi's work evidences the entangledness of cultures (symptomatic of globalization and increasingly complex networks of communication), but it also anticipates the

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FIGURE 1. Yukinori Yanagi, *World Flag Ant Farm*, 1990. Image courtesy of the artist and Fuji Television Gallery, Tokyo, Japan.

ultimate futility of contemporary cultural autonomy and integrity. The installation metaphorically alludes to the impossibility of containing meaning or establishing the supremacy of one ideology over another—effectively illustrating contemporaneity as a function of flux and discursivity. Thus, its inclusion in the 1993 Venice Biennale was timely in both political and aesthetic ways—both nourishing to the belief in a European Union freer of established boundaries and illustrative of the biennale as a potential forum for cultural development and exchange, reflecting greater interests in processes, negotiations, and permeabilities than in the primacy of a single culture, tradition, or style.

Nevertheless, Yanagi's work, for all of its engagement with multiculturalism and migration, prompted acute protests from the Italian community because the ants introduced to the display died after having no means of escaping this constructed spectacle. It is, perhaps, too simple to do as Giorgio Verzotti did in his October 1993 review of the biennale and accuse Yanagi of using art—even the entire biennale—as a means of base self-amusement (Verzotti 1993).[2] What is more difficult is to examine the grassroots responses that such art produces and to note how insular contemporary festivals and biennales can become as they juggle their spectatorial appeal as cultural juggernauts attempting to please the masses with their perceived charge of taking the pulse of an ever-changing, "global" contemporary art scene. What remains a matter of concern is how such large-scale exhibitions serve as visual and organizational paradoxes: professing the importance of multiculturalism and

national identity of individual artists and works, while simultaneously corralling these different works and creative agendas with overgeneralized, innocuous, or cryptic themes (such as the 2004 São Paulo Biennale's "Free Territory," the 2004 Sydney Biennale's "On Reason and Emotion," or the 2003 Tate Triennial's "Days Like These").[3]

The subsequent effect is a dilution of specific agendas, ideas, and concerns raised by artists working in specific milieus and a contortion of those works into the pseudo-framework of murky curatorial rhetoric. While some exhibitions—such as Richard Grayson's 2002 Sydney Biennale, *(The World May Be) Fantastic*—focus on projects and agendas that "are fantastic, partial, various, suggestive, ambitious, subjective, wobbly and eccentric to normal orbit" (2002, 11), many also fail to acknowledge the inherent pitfalls of mass exhibition, as Grayson's wobbliness is stabilized by the anchoring, normalizing presence of the major cultural institutions that host festivals and biennales (and the individuals and organizations that underwrite them). Moreover, Grayson's vision of showcasing experimental or idiosyncratic works must always be read through the overarching "reputation" and "tradition" that informs most biennale and festival programming. In the end, Grayson's establishment of an eccentric/normal binary and his assertions that the biennale confronts that binary do little to challenge the hackneyed tensions between centrality and marginality in art, culture, and exhibition. Although Grayson notes in his catalogue essay that "[e]ach artist in this . . . show . . . brings with them [sic] a cosmology, a system of thought or action that serves to lever open other possibilities and worlds," such possibilities and acts of world- and meaning-making always confront the unspoken requirement of institutional approbation and the loss of those artists whose visions do not correspond with those of curator, administrator, or venue (2002, 14).[4] The result has been a movement away from the work of art as a catalyst for critical, often-subversive thinking, toward a privileging of exhibitions that fabricate what Chilean-Australian artist and critic Juan Davila calls "a tyranny of appearance . . . a transnational market of images of homogeneity that includes all differences and 'transgressions'" (1996, 120).[5] More worrying still is the frequency with which fantasies of cultural unilateralism or inauthentic hybridities are inculcated in visitors to such exhibitions.

I contend that many contemporary festivals have failed to map the ways that contemporary art resists the standardizing influences of mass exhibition and remains deeply entrenched in the cultural conflicts and transformations that cannot be adequately historicized, cataloged, interrogated, or incorporated under the aegis of the contemporary "festival" or "biennale." Given such a conundrum, do contemporary festivals and biennales serve as worthwhile forums to chart cultural, artistic, and curatorial developments, or do they restrict works and agendas that would otherwise be counterintuitive to and critical of the institutions that exhibit them?

The contemporary art festival walks a fine line between celebrating individual concerns, national identities, and cultural traditions and prophesying their conceptual dismantling through the inclusion of works that challenge unilateral understandings of art. Caught in the middle of these tensions are viewers, who, according to some critics, are the first casualties of massive exhibitions. Néstor García Canclini's observations seem to suggest that the large-scale festival ultimately encourages the viewer to resign as an active participant in the formulation of meaning, as the pointed nature of many artists' agendas is foiled by the presence of so many competing interests and perspectives. Canclini writes:

> Thinking today is, as always, thinking difference. . . . We need images of transits, of crossings and interchanges, not only visual discourses but also open, flexible reflections, which find a way between these two intense activities: the nationalist fundamentalism which seeks to conjure magically the uncertainties of multiculturalism, and [those] globalizing abstractions of the art market and the mega-exhibitions, where one loses the will and desire for reformulating the manner in which we thought. (2002, 187–88)

It is difficult to imagine how the contemporary biennale convincingly exhibits and maps the presence and development of these aesthetic and cultural differences, especially considering that the organizers of the 1895 Venice Biennale—the template for future contemporary biennale programming—invited only those artists whose works exhibited qualities that either complied with or reified Italian tastes and technical sensibilities informing the production of "good" art. Those that stepped across the line, such as Giacomo Grosso's entry, *Supreme Meeting* (strangely consisting of a coffin surrounded by four female nudes), found themselves—as in Grosso's case—included, but marginalized through their placement in isolated rooms and ill-illuminated hallways in the pavilion, or excluded altogether from exhibition.[6]

Thus, while the concept of the biennale seems to be based on an initiation of extended cross-cultural discourse, curators and administrators organizing the exhibition's structure find themselves having to articulate quite pointedly, as they did in Grosso's case in 1895, "We *unanimously* reply: no, the painting will not offend public morals" (La Biennale di Venezia 2005; emphasis added). Given that these blanket determinations of works' moral, compositional, and cultural compliance or transgression were determined exclusively by a board of Venetian "men of letters," it comes as little surprise that 110 years later, the Guerrilla Girls—invited for the 2005 Venice Biennale, bizarrely titled "Always a Little Further"—continue to draw convincing parallels between the exhibition's mammoth yet always and already exclusionary program, its usual rejection of art that "present[s] puzzles [and] illuminat[es] juxtapositions or unanswered questions that allow the viewer room to change her or his mind," and the broader surfacings and implications of sexism *out-*

side the context of the biennale (Guerrilla Girls 2005, 124). The Guerrilla Girls were concerned not only with the increasingly touristic and spectatorial ambitions of the Biennale that, in their opinion, had watered down the corrosive nature of issues artists were examining in their works, but also that such large-scale exhibitions frequently fail to illustrate the resonances between works in the gallery and the specific, divergent ideas that prompted the creation of works in the first place.

The Guerrilla Girls rightly map sexism and institutional(ized) exclusion as systematic practices that extend beyond the contexts of exhibition into the discourses and happenings of everyday life. For example, their 2003 work, *The Women's Terror Alert*, hijacks the color-coded, threat-based warning system created by the Department of Homeland Security and redeploys it to draw attention to more pressing concerns and inequities in a specific cultural and sociopolitical context (see figure 2). Contrary to comments made by Rosa Martínez (cocurator of the 2005 Venice Biennale) that the biennale should be

Figure 2. Guerrilla Girls, *The Women's Terror Alert,* 2003.

"an exhibition that does not simply strive for a concept or a gratifying visualization, but is rich in thought and pleasure" (2005), the Guerrilla Girls openly critiqued such an aesthetically focused curatorial posture as being more anaesthetically informed (Hartman 2004). Given the Guerrilla Girls' open disagreement with the historical practices of the biennale program, one wonders what ultimately happens to the group's interventionist tactics when their works—originally intended to be affixed to billboards or bus shelters—are displayed in museum.[7] Does the notion of contemporary greatness so frequently aligned with the biennale maintain its viability when so much contemporary art functions less as a situated object and more as a fleeting "intervention" or "happening" that resists institutionalization and documentation? Do biennale programs acknowledge the connective tissue between those works that are invited to participate in an admittedly regulated forum and the zeitgeist that is frequently anathema to conventional artistic, curatorial, and museological practices and agendas?

These questions prompted a group of students in Sydney to think about the practices and ideologies of contemporary Australian artists and their relative "fit" (or lack thereof) with the 2004 Sydney Biennale program. Despite biennale curator Isabel Carlos's commitment to engage with works that "create a total physical and psychological experience" and to establish a forum that "seeks inclusion more than exclusion," these students discovered that the seemingly straightforward theme of "On Reason and Emotion" created a troublesome binary that did little to illuminate contemporary artists' approaches and concerns (2004, 24–27). Somewhere between the Sydney Biennale's clearly articulated (or, rather, falsely fantasized) "origins" and "ends" and its diametrically opposed poles of "reason" and "emotion," the students found that interstitial space, ephemerality, and formlessness often impelled them and informed their varying motives. They accepted and relied upon a pointed evasion or rejection of conventional paradigms of large-scale exhibition and museumification as a means of effectively interfacing with artist, artwork, viewer, and culture. Accordingly, they forged what curator Okwui Enwezor calls a "diagnostic toolbox [that] actively seeks to stage the relationships, conjunctions, and disjunctions *between* different realities: between artists, institutions, disciplines, genres, generations, processes, forms, media, [and] activities" (2002, 55). Like Enwezor, the students viewed the Sydney Biennale as a force of inauthentic conjunction and isolation that necessarily involved them, if only because their works and ideologies were excluded from the biennale's "official" program of events.

As a result of the perceived breach between practice and institutionalization, these students, along with other like-minded artists, created a loose collective known as The Network of Uncollectable Artists, or NUCA.[8] Their mission was to provide a forum for local artists whose works, performances, acts,

or interventions were ill-suited to the Sydney Biennale's structured frameworks of documentation and display. Allowing anyone to submit works for consideration, the NUCA collective judged submissions on a numerical scale that concomitantly adopted and mocked the conventional, binary thinking that tends to pervade institutional aesthetic judgments and established new systems of valuation that acknowledged the works' overall connectedness to culture and to both conventional and nonconventional paradigms. Their "1–5" scale—examining anonymity/authorship, site difficulty/easiness, done-for-love/done-for-money, do-it-yourself/reliance on funding—allowed works to be numerically referenced using baseball card-style ratings (see figure 3). The fifty projects with the highest total scores were documented on cards, packaged in groups of five with a piece of peculiarly flavored orange bubble gum, and sold for three dollars by students carrying the cards inside trench coats.

It bears noting that one of the artistic interventions included in the students' collector card series was the "art-as-terror" attack executed by Dave Burgess and Will Saunders, in which "No War" was painted on the sails of the Sydney Opera House (see figures 4a and 4b). Their gesture and use of the Sydney Opera House—designed to draw attention to Australian Prime Minister John Howard's unpopular decision to support the United States' invasion of Iraq—compares interestingly with Isabel Carlos's use of the landmark as a spectatorial backdrop for a decidedly apolitical piece of performance art.

STATS EXPLAINED:

AUT	AUTHORSHIP:	AUTHORED	0	1	2	3	4	5	ANONYMOUS
SIT	SITE:	UNSPECIFIC	0	1	2	3	4	5	SPECIFIC
DIF	SITE:	EASY	0	1	2	3	4	5	DIFFICULT
DNG	DANGER ELEMENT:	SAFE	0	1	2	3	4	5	DANGEROUS
TME	TIME:	PERMANENT	0	1	2	3	4	5	EPHEMERAL
NTW	NETWORKING:	SOLO	0	1	2	3	4	5	CONNECTED
LUV	LOVE OR MONEY?:	MONEY	0	1	2	3	4	5	LOVE
MTL	MATERIALITY:	MATERIAL	0	1	2	3	4	5	IMMATERIAL
UGL	AESTHETICS:	BEAUTIFUL	0	1	2	3	4	5	UGLY
POL	POLITICS:	APOLITICAL	0	1	2	3	4	5	POLITICAL
D.I.Y	D.I.Y:	FUNDED	0	1	2	3	4	5	D.I.Y.
LEG	LEGEND:	ROOKIE	0	1	2	3	4	5	LEGEND
SUC	OVERALL:	FAILURE	0	1	2	3	4	5	SUCCESS

SUM OF ABOVE SCORES ÷ 65 x 100 = NUCA! RATING 0 - 100.00

Figure 3. Network of Uncollectable Artists, *Stats Explained* Collector Card, 2004.

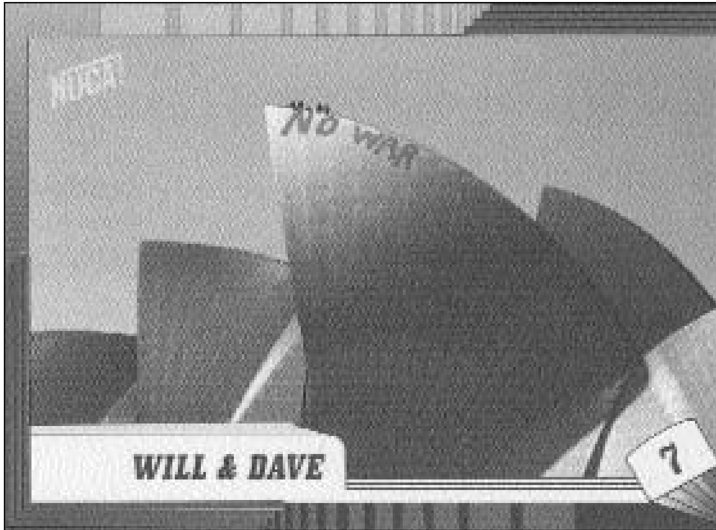

Figure 4a. Will Saunders and Dave Burgess, *No War*—as documented by the Network of Uncollectable Artists (Card #7), 2003 (act), 2004 (documentation).

As part of the biennale festivities, Carlos commissioned Jimmie Durham's performance piece, *Still Life with Stone and Car*, in which a crowd gathered in front of the Sydney Opera House to gawk at a mammoth, face-painted boulder that was dropped repeatedly on a shiny, used Hyundai Excel (see figure 5). In an interview with the artist, Australian art critic Nikos Papastergiadis asked Durham, "You sat in the car before and then you said 'I'm sorry this is about to befall you'?" And the artist simply replied, "Yeah" (Papastergiadis 2004, 46). The absurdity of this performance—satirically dubbed by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as the Biennale's "mangled masterpiece"—coupled with the clear staging of the event (from press releases and "photo opportunities" to the rent-a-fence keeping onlookers from getting too close to the spectacle), underscored the problematic nature of a biennale concerned more with appeal than with substantial interrogation of contemporary art practice. In an age of political acrimony, both engagements with the Opera House demonstrated how art could unabashedly engage with contentious contemporary issues or just as easily sidestep them altogether.

So entrenched was the Sydney Biennale in being "something" to everyone that it lost any sense of connection with the social and political landscapes in which it operated, potentially slipping into what critic Blair French blandly described as a "modest, polite, attractive, sometimes quirky" event (French 2004, 65). Contemporary art is indeed quirky, but it is not necessarily due to

Figure 4b. Network of Uncollectable Artists,
***Statistics for No War*, 2004.**

flaws or failures in its inspiration or execution; its quirkiness, as NUCA discovered, surfaces due to unpredictable discursive collisions that many contemporary artists celebrate and that festivals and biennales contemplate but rarely embrace consistently.

Memorable to me was NUCA's inclusion of work by a collective of artists known as Stealth Video Ninja, who travel in a jalopy known as "Seymour the Wondervan" and project unexpected images and political statements on the sides of homes, businesses, and government buildings in a now-you-see-it-now-you-don't manner. Their approach stymies notions of permanence and eschews the objectification of art and fashions instead every visible surface as a potential canvas. As opposed to the biennale that locks works within a specific period of exhibition and within a specific theoretical framework in an official catalog, Stealth Video Ninja promises an ongoing and unstructured engagement with cultural and political unilateralism—ensuring that art remains reactionary and responsive rather than passive and stagnant.

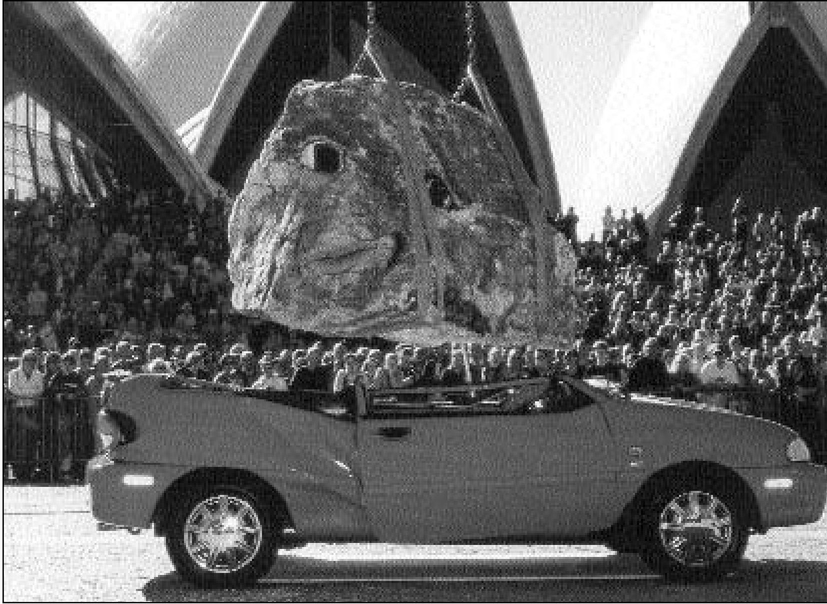

Figure 5. Jimmie Durham, *Still Life with Stone and Car*, installation in the forecourt of the Sydney Opera House, Australia, 2004.

The rich potential of ephemerality helped other artists in the NUCA series, such as Bec Dean, to map relationships between artistic gestures and the urgencies of contemporary life with which they must interact. Her use of variable message boards to display messages from those caring for people with HIV/AIDS both alludes to the tensions between presence and absence and demonstrates the need for art to serve as a bridge between those living with the disease and those who continue to believe that it does not impact their lives. As viewers expect these roadside signs to warn them of road hazards and dangerous driving conditions, they are instead presented with the conditions and conflicts of our time—conditions that the world of biennales and festivals have been increasingly prone to fashion as homogenous, inoffensive, or unsophisticated in nature. If, as Jean Christophe Royoux suggests, art is "pure visual material [with] something else hidden beneath it," Dean's work demonstrates that the "something else" serves as a crucial counterpoint to curators' and viewers' expectations regarding the form and function of a "pure art" (Royoux 2000; Carlos 2004, 26).

It follows that Royoux's "something else hidden beneath" seems to be the most fertile territory for future festival and biennale development—an acknowledgment that the production of art, the manner and mode of dissemi-

nating images and ideas, and the subsequent surveys of art and artists' ideological trajectories, obstacles, and breakthroughs are not always seamless, symbiotic occurrences. The contemporary festival or biennale necessarily finds itself entangled in a web of individual, collective, and institutional interests, perhaps best summarized in a question posed by Jürgen Habermas:

> Does not the recognition of cultural forms of life and traditions that have been marginalized, whether in the context of a majority culture or in a Eurocentric global society, require guarantees of status and survival—in other words, some kind of collective rights that shatter the outmoded self-understanding of the democratic constitutional state, which is tailored to individual rights and in that sense is "liberal"? (1998, 204–5)

As applied to the art exhibition, Habermas' observation intimates that the institution must be able to serve as guarantor of the preservation of collective cultures and multiple viewpoints, while ensuring that its mission never becomes the function of individual autonomy and exclusionary aesthetic judgment. Habermas' question would also imply that contemporary festivals must function less as monological enunciations of cultural conditions and conflicts and more as provocateurs that openly encourage and facilitate responses both within and outside the contexts of the exhibition itself.

To date, some festival programs have at least acknowledged the need to think about the traditional exhibition in terms of its potential to incite change and to encourage self-criticality. Like the 2005 Venice Biennale, the 2004 São Paulo Biennale, titled "Free Territory," acknowledged the vulnerabilities associated with large group shows and included artists who used their work as a platform for biennale criticism. Thai artist Navin Rawanchaikul openly invited attendees to contribute to the "biennale idea donation board," so that biennale visitors could construct an alternative vision—*their* vision—of a successful contemporary art exhibition. As Rawanchaikul hypothesizes, "The results will reveal the integrative potential of this project and moreover the contextual relation between cultural production and everyday life" (*26th Biennale of São Paulo* 2004, 206). Nevertheless, it bears mentioning that the area cordoned off for the writing of these suggestions was closed on the four days that I attended the biennale. As unpredictable and unregulateable as visitors' responses might have been, the biennale administrators' ability to open or close this area designated for criticism and suggestion clearly demonstrated how Rawanchaikul's allusion to artistic autonomy and the creation of a forum open to the input of exhibition attendees can always be trumped by institutional decrees and actions.

Other conflicts surfaced as I viewed this exhibition, especially when I experienced a work by Brazilian installation artist Rosana Palazyan, who commissioned a man to attend a hand-cranked music box and to give to those who ventured up to him a fortune plucked out from a tray by a trained parrot.

A familiar site on the streets of São Paulo, these fortune-telling birds are usually owned by the homeless and indigent and are used to make a living. In the work for the biennale, however, good fortunes are substituted with bits of paper containing random, garbled sayings spoken by the homeless and mentally ill of São Paulo—a group of people perhaps most unlike the typical visitor to the exhibition. Recalling Joseph Cornell's *Fortune Telling Parrot* (c. 1937–1938), this performance piece was clearly designed to establish a more interactive link and sense of tension between the glitz of the biennale and the growing problem of homelessness in São Paulo—a tension exacerbated by the performance's situation next to the kiosk selling biennale catalogs for the equivalent of US$50 (an amount that managed to feed me for all seven days I was in the city).

Works such as these, or Kurimanzutto's *Friendly Capitalism*—in which the 2002 Gwangzhou Biennale catalogue was photocopied and offered to visitors at a fraction of the original catalog's cost—illustrate the crossroads at which large-scale contemporary exhibitions now find themselves: an area that São Paulo Biennale curator Alfons Hug has called a geographical, sociopolitical, and aesthetic no man's land (2004, 31). They are exhibitions that in the same breath damn the effects of capitalism and relentless commercial greed and survive by seeking them out. Perhaps this ideological tension is not sufficiently summarized by Hug's coining and acceptance of the conflicted term "unstable zones," zones that exist through his simultaneous referencing of impoverishment and productivity, of demarcation and permeability within the biennale (2004, 31). Perhaps Hug could learn from artists that he chose for the biennale, such as David Rokeby, who are motivated by and openly accept Bourriaud's fluid, relational aesthetic—artists who create works fueled by the visitors, movements, and migrations that are all too frequently eclipsed by the materiality and permanence of the cataloged art object or the staged art event. Rokeby's installation takes surveillance images of visitors to the exhibition and transforms them into a digital projection of unstructured, pixelated ooze—an imagistic stew in which presences and identities shift between varying states of clarity and illegibility. Just as Rokeby's work illustrates that the integrity of the individual image can be disrupted by artistic intervention and manipulation, contemporary festivals and biennales must also acknowledge that their agendas carry with them the potential to both document and domineer contemporary art practices. As large-scale exhibitions become more firmly entrenched in contemporary culture and become better known for the events they stage and the art they showcase, they must also demonstrate an unflinching willingness to engage with those artworks and viewpoints that openly challenge their relevance, authority, and tenability. Only then will audiences realize that contemporary art is not always an act of bland understatement, frivolous entertainment, or rubber-stamped consensus that con-

sciously avoids any and all dissension, but rather it is a constellation of meaningful and unexpected happenings in culture that can be both satisfying and unsettling to its viewers.

KEYWORDS

arts festival, biennale, contemporary art, curatorial practice, exhibition art, globalization, museum

NOTES

1. For continued discussion of relational aesthetics and theories of form, see, especially, Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*, 11–24. Bourriaud's application of this theory to the situational reading of works of art and the organization of biennales since 1990 can be found in his "Art of the 1990s: Participation and Transitivity," *Relational Aesthetics*, 25–40.

2. For further reading on the controversy surrounding Yanagi's installation and its contextualization with other contemporary art practices, see Charles Overby, "Peace Museums, Museums, and the Arts—As Means for Generational Learning," from The Third International Conference of Peace Museums, November 6–10, 1988. Available at http://www.article9society.org/pp-08.pdf (accessed May 2006). In addition to his concerns with global interaction and interconnectedness, Yanagi also documents the same mass transformations, deteriorations, and movements at the levels of both nation (see *Union Jack Ant Farm*, 1994) and individual (see *Wandering Position*, 1997, in which the artist followed a lone ant in a 5-meter^2 enclosure and faithfully mapped its meanderings with a red crayon). For other artists working with the concept of "damage" to national flags and the notion of flags as conceptual "non-objects," see particularly Jon Ippolito, "What's in a Flag? John Napier's *net.flag*." Internet Art at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Available at http://www.guggenheim.org/internetart/internetart_index.html (accessed May 5, 2006).

3. For further discussion about biennale rhetoric—including metadiscourse, local and global mediations through the "language" and jargon employed by biennales, and curatorial agendas in large-scale exhibitions—see *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-War Europe,* ed. Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipovic (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005). See especially, Hou Hanru, "Toward a New Locality: Biennials and 'Global Art'," 57–62; Boris Groys, "Multiple Authorship," 93–100; and Camiel van Winkel, "The Rhetorics of Manifesta," 219–30.

4. For an excellent review of the 2002 Biennale of Sydney, see Ian North, "Review: *(The World May Be) Fantastic*, 2002 Biennale of Sydney," *Artlink: Contemporary Art Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (2002): 81–82. North is especially critical of the sense of separation between the exhibition and the social issues and political injustices with which it engages. North comments, "We tell stories to describe the world, for survival purposes, and form them to express our wishes, as waking dreams. If Grayson has tripped over a Zeitgeist, as he has happily suggested to the press, surely it is more shaped by escapism than [by] a true absence of values. An urgent impulse to bail out explains this exhibition's triumph better than a lack of anti-capitalist rallying points. . . . Yet at some level most Australians must be registering the damage being done in this country alone to the poor, Indigenous people and refugee children. The Biennale inadvertently reflects a country and world more self-harmed than happily at play: a comedic counsel of despair, it offers much diversion but if we reflect on Grayson's words we wind up laughing on the wrong side of our faces" (81).

5. For further discussions about cultural identity and mediation through curatorial gestures, see especially Mari Carmen Ramirez, "Constellations: Toward a Radical Questioning of Dominant Curatorial Models," *Art Journal* 59, no. 1 (2000): 4–21; and Mari Carmen Ramirez, "Brokering Identities: Art Curators and the Politics of Cultural Representation," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Grossberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, 21–38 (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

6. For further information about the interdisciplinary nature and history of the Venice Biennale, see Enzo di Martino, *The History of the Venice Biennale, 1895–2005: Visual Arts, Architecture, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theatre* (Venice: Papiro Arte, 2005).

7. For further reading about the Guerrilla Girls and their interventionist strategies with respect to art institutions and practices, see Guerrilla Girls, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls* (London: Rivers Oram/Pandora, 1995); Guerrilla Girls, *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art* (New York: Penguin, 1998); and Guerrilla Girls, *Bitches, Bimbos, and Ballbreakers: The Guerrilla Girls' Illustrated Guide to Female Stereotypes* (New York: Penguin, 2003).

8. For a review of the Network of Uncollectable Artists and further details of their project, see Royce W. Smith, "Calling All Anti-capitalist Pashtivists, Fluxus Reincarnators, and Crafty Billboard Operators: Documenting the Uncollectable," *Artlink: Contemporary Art Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2005): 84; Lucas Ihlein, "NUCA (The Network of Uncollectable Artists)," in *Resistance through Rituals*, ed. Lisa Kelly, 23–26 (Melbourne, Australia: West Space, Inc., 2004).

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