

In an important article of 1990 Kobena Mercer referred to the “burden of representation” that black artists were forced to carry, an expectation that cast them as spokespersons for a culture in its entirety.¹ In Mercer’s view this predicament was grounded in a misguided notion of culture “as a fixed and final property of different racial groups.”² Mercer’s observation registers an important shift in the concerns of art historians and cultural theorists, which had centered on the asymmetrical relations of power that determined the terms of visibility of non-Western art in institutional spaces and intellectual discourses of the West. While the access, or rather its absence, of non-European artists to global exhibition

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circuits and their presence within stories of art in the West were a central issue of contention in the 1980s,³ visibility itself was no longer an issue when Mercer wrote his piece. Following the *Magiciens de la terre* show of 1989, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin at the Centre Pompidou in Paris—its controversial assumptions notwithstanding—the proliferation of exhibitions and biennials in and beyond Euro-America have contributed to

showcasing artists from across the world within these displays.⁴ This visibility has been buttressed, in turn, by a booming market for non-Western art.

The concern of art-historical and art-critical writings has instead shifted to the conditions that make visibility possible, to the structures and individuals who ensure entry into global art circuits and exhibition spaces. The critical gaze has been directed to selection processes and the values which underpin them and work as a filter for works that come from the non-European world. The “burden” in Mercer’s words is part of a politics of cultural identity wherein the terms of inclusion of the “other” are contingent upon notions of “authenticity” and recognizable ethnic origins. However, this too changed, according to Mercer, by the turn of the century.⁵ Today global markets marked by “multicultural commodity fetishism” and “exhibitionism”⁶ have created conditions of “hyper-visibility”⁷ for non-European art and have resulted in a “trade-off” wherein younger artists evade issues of identity and political engagement having gained access to “an art world in which eth-

nicity was admitted through an unspoken policy of integrated casting.”⁸

In the following I address the issues of identity and representation brought into focus in the globalized world of contemporary art from the perspective of the challenges they pose to the disciplinary and conceptual scaffold of art history. Drawing upon the practices of a sampling of modern/contemporary South Asian artists, this essay undertakes a search for other positions and analytical categories to furnish art history with an architecture of agency which can adequately narrate ways in which art negotiates locality and deploys it to disrupt notions of authenticity.

Art in the contemporary world enjoys an unbounded space in ways that are unprecedented. The notion of art itself has undergone an explosion of sorts. Today the list of artifacts and media that have entered the domain of art appears to be infinitely elastic: it includes everyday consumer goods, wrapped monuments, digital images, synthesized sounds, animal performances, human embryos, and acts of self-mutilation. This expansive usage is shared by communities of viewers across the globe and is sustained by contemporary practices of collecting, curating, displaying, and writing which proliferate through biennials, art journalism, and the art market and work to facilitate this ubiquitous understanding of the concept of art. Writings on globalization have attempted to find theoretical models to describe this phenomenon. One of the most influential voices hailing a world without boundaries is that of Arjun Appadurai, whose theory of global flows involves a rejection of localized, bounded cultures. A term used by him and others is “deterritorialization,” or the transcending of the political and territorial frontiers of the nation-state in the wake of the highly accelerated media connectivity of the present as well as of transnational migrations of peoples, commodities, and cultural products.⁹

Yet the notion of permanent flux and unboundedness does not permit us to look more closely at the dialectic between the dissolution of certain boundaries and the reaffirmation of other kinds of difference, of how deterritorialization is invariably followed by reterritorialization.¹⁰ In the case of art, the consensus about what makes a kitchen utensil or a starving stray dog kept captive in exhibition space a work of art is dependent on certain shared knowledge and values, all of which rest on the authority of particular institutions, individuals, theories, and expertise, which

then mediate to ratify objects as “art.” The boundary which exists today is not between the ways individual nations or cultures view contemporary art, but cuts across national and geographic divisions. Today we encounter a new divide between those who enjoy access to authoritative knowledge about art and share the values of autonomy and transgression ascribed to it, and those who do not. This boundary cuts through a transnational and connected art world: it is often produced by fissured constellations within the locality, can generate conflict, controversy, and censorship, which in turn become global issues. The Danish cartoon controversy, the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, the assaults on the Indian artist M.F. Husain, or the forced detention of Ai Weiwei are all examples of conflagrations that have erupted within fractured public spheres where today’s global vocabularies about autonomous, interventionist art do not find a uniform resonance.

The cartography of contemporary art, which encompasses several continents and encounters with diverse visual cultures, poses a substantive challenge to art history, a discipline whose academic practice hinges on geographically discrete definitions of culture invested in notions of nationality and ethnicity. The unprecedented mobility and global connectivity of contemporary art and artists demands more than a simple extension of scholarship beyond regional frames to explore global dimensions of artistic production. It calls for explanatory paradigms that meaningfully address issues of multiple locations, palimpsestic temporalities, and processes of transcultural configurations, all of which challenge existing models of binarism and diffusion where culture is seen to flow from metropolitan centers of the Western world to absorptive peripheries. The increasing fluidity of visual modes in contemporary art practice has at the same time pluralized languages with which artists address audiences at different locations as they underscore their right to create new and transgressive languages with which to speak. Obstacles encountered in the form of publics divided according to the possession of cultural capital with which to access and decode, respond to, and question this multiplicity of artistic idioms necessitate new ways of theorizing locality beyond its role as a mere marker of identification or a site of retrogressive nostalgia.

Scholarly responses to these challenges have come from various disciplinary and theoretical positions. The lead has been taken by anthropol-

ogists, cultural theorists, and practitioners from the emergent field of curatorial studies. Their writing has primarily focused on institutional structures, on the power of those who make up the “artworld”¹¹ and wield authority, expertise, and resources to be able to control the inclusion and exclusion of objects in/from the domain of “art,” a power which further exists as part of a nexus with the expanding art market. A spate of investigations of biennials and mega-exhibitions during recent years has analyzed curatorial strategies and the formation of value judgments both constituted as well as transmitted by media and scientific writings on art.¹² An early and influential work has been that of John Clark who coined the notion of the “curatoriate” to designate a network of curators who exercise absolute power while creating circuits of exchange, determining conditions of access to shows, and establishing international canons.¹³

Research on hierarchies and forms of dependence created by global institutions has further directed its attention to artistic responses and forms of capitulation to spectacles of exotic difference built into the visual culture of global capitalism. A frequent observation, made from a variety of theoretical positions, is the charge that institutional structures, together with the art market, have promoted a tendency to self-orientalization among artists from outside of the West. Our attention is drawn to the nexus between the logic of global circulation of contemporary art and the recourse artists seek to the local as a space of authenticity and nostalgia. For international success would appear to demand both a use of contemporary genres and media as well as restaging of “traditional” concerns easily recognizable and consumable as authentic ethnic markers.¹⁴

These questions remain a challenge to art history; at the same time they call for a readjustment of perspective from exclusively focusing on institutional structures at the expense of artistic agency. While artists do participate in broader contemporary dilemmas and enter into dynamic relationships with a host of institutions and practices, art history is committed to a deeper engagement with their specific intellectual and emotive trajectories. Locating artistic processes within a historical *longue durée* framework is an aspect which disciplines like anthropology and sociology have tended to leave unexplored. However, the disciplinary strengths of art history lie precisely within the field of the pictorial and

in engaging with strategies of the visual, dependent though the discipline may be on synergetic relationships with other scholarly practices. To what extent is art history itself complicit with practices of inclusion and exclusion within the art world? Can it be “globalized,” and if so, how and by whom?

While there have been several responses to the call to make art history “global,” taking stock of these is a slippery exercise for there are as many interpretations of the term global as there are people who use it. A recent collection that records the proceedings of an art seminar is a good example of the babel of voices and positions.¹⁵ Global art history, as it emerges from these interventions, has been variously read: as a discipline to be practiced uniformly across the globe, one that would subsume “local” art, alternatively as an inclusive discipline—also labeled world art history—that would encompass different world cultures, or one that searches for the lowest common denominator to hold together humans across time and space who have been making art for millennia “because our biological nature has led us to do so.”¹⁶ The epithet “global” is at times equated with conceptual imperialism, at others with multicultural eclecticism. Among the more established positions in this emergent field is the concept of world art history which resonates with that of “world literature” as it has been charted by scholars such as David Damrosch and Franco Moretti.¹⁷

Constraints of space prevent me from a fuller discussion of the different positions and publications that have appeared to date under the rubric of world art history;¹⁸ at this juncture I will confine myself to a summary of two important recent articulations in the field. The first is the ambitious survey of 707 pages authored by David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*¹⁹, which aims, in the words of John Onians, “to put the world in a book.”²⁰ Discarding chronology as an orienting principle of his work, Summers organizes six out of the seven of the book’s chapters around thematic concepts—places, space, facture, planarity, virtuality, and images—which he considers universally applicable to all art irrespective of its geographical and cultural location. These abstract notions serve as a lens through which selected (inevitable in spite of the book’s volume) studies from across the world are assembled into a masterful synthesis. The attempt to bring together an array of culturally diverse experiences

within the framework of concepts—with genealogies that go back to classical antiquity and Immanuel Kant—whose histories and underpinnings remain unquestioned ends up being one more variant of a master narrative, this time expansively charted to include the “world” within its fold.²¹ As a methodological and pedagogical move expansion does not by its analytical intent undermine the frameworks it seeks to transgress, or at best does so only tangentially.

James Elkins’ critique of the Eurocentric premises of Summers’ *magnum opus* establishes his credentials as belonging to a school of thought sensitive to the epistemological violence that the use of “Western” conceptual frames inflicts on non-European cultures. Instead, Elkins advocates the use of each tradition’s core concepts, “indigenous terms,” whose incommensurability and untranslatability are assumed. He extends this relativist position to even argue that interpretive frameworks that draw on the disciplines of psychoanalysis, literary criticism, feminism, semiotics, linguistics, or anthropology are in view of their “Western” origins not equipped to write histories of non-European cultures; these histories would need to draw on “indigenous” disciplinary and theoretical models. Not without arrogance Elkins proceeds to demonstrate how this could be best put into practice.²²

Taking a translated excerpt from the seventh-century Sanskrit text *Vishnudharmottara Purana*, to cite one example, Elkins reads this lexical fragment as the source of a universally valid definition of the image in Indian art for all times to come.²³ Alterity, in true Orientalist fashion, ends up as frozen and ahistorical. Overlooking norms of serious research that would be stringently applied to any study of concepts in European art history, Elkins in this case does not consider it necessary to problematize the genealogical history of this particular text fragment, made accessible by Orientalist scholarship of the nineteenth century and then read through the nativist-nationalist perceptions of Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy. Nor does he address the problems specific to this genre of writing in the Indian context. The Indian textual tradition surrounding art chiefly consists of writings which prescribe the formulae and processes for the correct making of things. The *Silpa Sastras*, from which the translated fragment of the *Vishnudharmottara Purana* used by Elkins has been drawn, offer normative principles for a range of practices; they are inchoate in themselves, though they can be usefully mined

for the nuggets that discuss those objects and practices which interest scholars of art. A socially and historically embedded understanding of this tradition of texts—their reception, interpretive shifts over centuries and across the breadth of the Indian subcontinent, their variegated translations into everyday artistic practice—is a primary requirement for research.

A number of questions beg to be answered: How reliable is the explanatory potential of partial and individual lexical representations, singled out without explanation from a vast body of texts and read as standing for an undifferentiated “tradition”? Do concepts not need to be recovered from a broader dynamic between text and practice that have evolved historically? More seriously, Elkins’ extreme relativism does not take account of the ways disciplines and concepts themselves have traveled beyond their points of “origin” and in the process grown beyond their parochial roots. Transcultural histories—of concepts, disciplines, and art practices—unfortunately do not find a place within a program to write an additive world art history by placing entire “cultures” or “civilizations,” both terms whose nineteenth century genealogies remain unquestioned, next to each other as distinct units, treated as incommensurable.

More recently, Hans Belting has proffered a definition of “global art” that provides a useful impulse to reexamine the foundations of the discipline of art history. According to Belting, the category “global art” can be meaningfully deployed to include those contemporary artistic productions emanating from the non-Western world which become publicly accessible through exhibitions and mega-shows.²⁴ The collapse of canonical certainties which the very visibility of such works and the modes of their framing and reception induce, the progressive disjunction between a plurality of art forms and practices, and the focus of a discipline and its values which claim universality, become an important source of reflexivity for investigations through art history, beyond the confines of the contemporary. While art history in the West has been practiced as a grand Hegelian narrative of progress, a narrative that emerged with the Enlightenment and the industrial nation-states of the nineteenth century and evolved in tandem with museums to construct a model history of Western heritage, the newly independent postcolonial nations of the non-West assiduously cultivated a narrative framed by the

nation, with their museums buttressing through their displays the idea of unique and incomparable achievements of ancient civilizations, now cast as the nation's heritage. Both positions are mutually constitutive and rest on similar canonical premises. Both these variants of art historical writing are framed within discrete cultural units—be they national or civilizational—and subsume experiences of cultural braidedness under the taxonomic categories of “influence,” “borrowing,” or “transfer.” Here a notion of “global art history” conceptualized as transcultural can provide a way to rethink existing disciplinary frameworks.

A transcultural history of art goes beyond the principle of additive extension and looks instead at the transformatory processes that constitute art practice through cultural encounters and relationships, whose traces can be followed back to the beginnings of history. Casting art history in a global/transcultural frame would involve questioning the taxonomies and values that have been built into the discipline since its inception and have been taken as universal. To begin with, this would necessitate a closer and more critical empirical examination of artworks labeled “Buddhist” or “Islamic” or “Renaissance” or “Modernist,” and require constituting new units of investigation that are more responsive to the logic of objects and artists on the move. In this and other senses a transcultural history of art rejects a principle of mere inclusion to argue instead for a change of paradigm. Rather than postulate stable units of investigation which exist next to each other and are connected through flows or transfers, the problem of how these units themselves are constituted needs to be systematically addressed. If we proceed on an understanding of culture that is in a condition of being made and remade, historical units and boundaries cannot be taken as given; rather, they have to be constituted as a subject of investigation, as products of spatial and cultural displacements. Units of investigation are constituted neither mechanically following the territorial-cum-political logic of modern nation-states nor according to civilizational categories drawn up by the universal histories of the nineteenth century, but are continually defined as participants in and as contingent upon the historical relationships in which they are implicated. This would further mean approaching time and space as non-linear and non-homogeneous, defined through the logic of circulatory practices.

Looking at the world through a transcultural lens would mean bring-

ing back excluded materials and questions to center stage: in what ways did the presence of objects, not always categorized as “art” from the regions of Asia, Africa, or South America, within collections of European elites, artists, or museums and their modes of reception, reuse, sale, and display prove to be constitutive of cultural achievements associated with major art movements such as the Renaissance, Rococo, or Cubism? Such a view has the potential to destabilize many of the values that underpin the discipline of art history and as such have remained unquestioned for too long. The modernist elevation of “originality” to measure creativity and the ensuing dichotomy between the “original” and “copies” or “derivations,” for instance, continues to be a cardinal value that informs scholarship in the field. However, a view of historical processes over centuries brings out the centrality of imitation/emulation as a site of cultural practice across regions. Imitation can be a creative form of relating to migrant objects, forms, and practices, of dealing with difference, of acknowledging authority, or of dialogical practice.²⁵

The conceptual category of modernism itself, for long viewed as a quintessential European phenomenon which then “spread” to the rest of the world, has undergone critical scrutiny in recent years. Studies of modernism “from the peripheries” have questioned its monolithic nature and argued for an expanded definition that would include the artistic experiments of modernist artists in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.²⁶ The engagement with visual practices beyond the metropolitan centers of the West raises further questions: How is our understanding of modernist and avant-garde art practices reconfigured if viewed as emanating from networks of multiple centers across the globe, adding New Delhi, Bombay, Shanghai, Rio de Janeiro, Seoul, or Tokyo to Paris, Berlin, and New York? To what extent can we explore transcultural fields of artistic production as emerging from a multipolar and yet entangled modernism that was generated in Europe and beyond, often cutting across the colonizer–colony divide to connect with critical currents that were pan-Asian, too?

Recasting modernism as a global process involves going beyond an “inclusive” move to question the foundations upon which the notion of the modern has been constructed and to undermine the narrative that hinges upon a dichotomy between the West and the non-West and makes the latter as necessarily derivative, or views it as a series of distant,

“alternative” modernisms. Instead of coining a host of modernisms—Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan—all understood as parallel streams that never meet and bring in national or ethnic units through the back door, a global view of modernism regards these as enmeshed with the others, which allows us to begin asking to what extent such entanglement was constitutive for a Western avant-garde. Can European modernism be historically studied without situating it within the larger, complex political and cultural determinations of colonialism and global connections that made its emergence possible? Dismantling the master narrative of modernism would mean fixing anew its chronological signposts which in the present discourse depend on the gap between the already developed modern and the “not yet,” trapped in a perpetual effort to “catch up.” Instead it is in the “elsewheres” and the “not yet” that a global modern could be sought and found.²⁷

In challenging an approach that takes national cultures as units to be juxtaposed, compared, or connected through transfers, the agenda of global art history is to fashion narratives on art movements such as modernism out of a specific national art history in which they have been contained, theoretically as well as institutionally, in the very structures of academic disciplines and university departments. Yet the histories of colonized regions of the world inevitably bring back the nation as one frame within which modernism’s critical edge has been appropriated. Modernism was imposed on the non-Western world as a form of Eurocentric universality that made up the hegemonic operations of imperialism. At the same time the critical, affirmative, and reflexive potential of the concept energized anticolonial resistance that pluralized, inflected, and translated its metropolitan meanings within the frame of an emergent national culture. To become legible, the idea of the avant-garde requires a set of preexisting powerful codes and institutions, cast as outdated and academic against which to rebel. In sites without such established structures, modernism involved at the same time creating new institutions such as artists’ collectives, exhibition spaces, journals, and a language of art criticism. The nation also played an important role as locality, as a site or territory to be wrenched back from the global constellation of empire.

On the other hand, nation building in South Asia during and following decolonization was torn apart by dilemmas which in many ways

provide a counterexample to Benedict Anderson's thesis that the modern nation is a universal, secularized formation.²⁸ Violent exclusions and conflicts, the drawing up of new maps by administrative authorities partitioning South Asia into individual nation-states, as well as physical, rhetorical, and symbolic struggles, all provided a site and a host of subjects for a passionate body of works that make modern art outside of its metropolitan centers a set of complicated, contradictory, and variegated experiments working both within the nation and using modernist reflexivity to lay bare the fissures within the mythical imagined community.

During the phase of nation building, both during the anticolonial struggle and the euphoric years following decolonization, the identity of the artist on the Indian subcontinent was modern and secular. The nation provided an ancient past, a body of myths, and iconic anchors which could be invoked and successfully translated into modernist idioms to occupy a secular aesthetic space, as we see for instance in the art of M.F. Husain and his peers of the Progressive Artists Group, founded in 1947.²⁹ Modernity then existed in symbiosis with a tradition which, through its invocation of sacred myths and symbols, was invented as a part of nationalist resurgence and therefore secularized. Discussions of a distinctive Asian modernity are indeed framed within this discourse of a relationship, at times harmonious, at times tense, between "modernity" and "tradition" that is then used to demarcate the "Asian" from the "Western" avant-garde—the latter reduced to a well-worn opposition between tradition and modernity.

Tradition continues to be effectively deployed in relation to more recent contemporary art, in strategic operations which fuse notions of "authenticity" with a consumerist commoditization of cultural difference, sustained by the "biennial effect" and the pulls of the art market.³⁰ This brings us back to Kobena Mercer's "burden" with which this essay opened. For Asian artists the quandary of being modern could be a double bind; where living up to the demands of being avant-garde and transgressive goes hand in hand with the compulsion to be recognizably other or national. The need to establish such credentials is as powerfully sustained from within: by the anxiety to reaffirm national identity in relation to the colonial past as well as to the homogenizing fictions of contemporary globalism. Indeed, cultural essentialisms of various sorts are nurtured by forces that work in mutually constitutive ways to make tra-

dition a fraught term, also in view of its appropriation by right-wing nationalist or fundamentalist forces.

And yet the approach to this constellation can be further complicated through bringing back agency, autonomy, and artistic experiments with both subjecthood and form center stage. The latter dimensions, all too frequently subordinated via a Foucauldian analysis to the overweening power of institutions and curatorial strategies, often enact a difficult process of working out antinomic relations between the self and society. The refusal by artists of available and easy ideological positions prompts a fuller exploration of the meanings and possibilities of tradition, perceiving it as a carrier of memories which could be reinterpreted to reimagine the past and create new analogues for conceiving the future. Terms such as “hybridity” or “in-betweenness,” often used in scholarly writings to theorize non-Western artistic practices, are not very helpful here, given their inflationary use and overall imprecision. More importantly, taking refuge under the cover of a “seamless multiculturalism,” they do not come to grips with the quality of unhinging or disintegration that mark agency when used to disrupt the stability of familiar signifiers of tradition.³¹

One important matrix for the comprehension of individual subjectivity and how it addresses the world is location, seen as a complex accretion of factors ranging from gender, language, class, and education to memories, routines, and visions. Together these afford an individual a measure of belonging, of containment in bounded spaces which remains in tension with the desire to transcend the limits of historical location and to address the world. As opposed to the scapes of Appadurai that presume a polarity between complete spatial flux and bounded local spaces, a transcultural intersection of the two allows one to transcend this opposition and to identify new spaces that come into being as a result of crossing older boundaries while redefining them. Such spaces make cultural difference more sharply focused and liveable in specific ways and create a way for the artists to problematize these questions within the work of art itself. While locality stands for rootedness and memories, it is precisely the transcultural mobility of the actors which engenders a new awareness of location on the interstices of spaces, cultures, and practices. It allows freedom from straightjackets of national, antiimperialist, or communitarian consciousness in which artists have

found themselves locked, and shows the way to question the ethics of the nation-state itself.³² This awareness of location means viewing the site as both a space to enact aesthetic practice and a discursive field; this is an enabling position that opens the way for self-reflexive agency. It becomes the site where what Okwui Enwezor terms “the will to globality” can unfold.³³

In the remaining part of this paper I will draw upon the works of a necessarily small sample of South Asian artists whose practice is part of a search to make the world a home so that location and mobility can morph more freely. The examples span a century, beginning with the early decades of the twentieth century, when artists had begun to engage systematically with modernism. The period traversed is one of dramatic social and political change, from decolonization, the onset of euphoric developmental politics following independence, the emergence of the mass media, through to economic liberalization and the heightened global connectivity of the present; at the same time it bears witness to the exacerbation of ethnic, political, and religious violence. All of these impinged on the different ways in which artists grappled with the modern, how they inflect and reconfigure tradition, and deploy location as a powerful tool to contextualize the creative process as embodied experience. The lives of some of the artists whose work I look at span more than one generation and highlight thereby the need for different chronological signposts across the globe to demarcate transitions from the modern to the contemporary. That the examples I have chosen are women artists is not entirely fortuitous. Changing national formations in South Asia, the more lively aspects of global culture make a space for the inclusion of gender discourses from which to critique the nation and its violent exclusions. Feminist scholarship’s holistic critique of universalizing positions has allowed women artists to deploy their praxis to dismantle the politics of representation beyond a critique of “woman as image” to address core questions about aesthetics and representation.

The first artist, Amrita Sher-Gil (1913–1941), belongs to the early phase of Indian modernist art and has posthumously become a legendary figure in historiography, which casts her as a founder figure of Indian modernism. During recent years Sher-Gil’s oeuvre has gained international visibility, through exhibitions at the Tate Modern in London and then at the Haus der Kunst in Munich. Sher-Gil’s life has all the

ingredients for the making of a legendary figure: she was the first Indian professional women artist of the twentieth century; she was highly talented, stunningly beautiful, and died tragically at the age of twenty-eight.³⁴ Amrita Sher-Gil was of mixed parentage: her father Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, a Sikh, belonged to the landed gentry of Punjab in Northern India, her mother Marie Antoinette came from a Hungarian middle-class educated family. Amrita was born in Budapest in 1914 and spent the first eight years of her life there until the family decided to emigrate from war-ravaged Hungary to India in 1921. Sher-Gil's biographers do not cease to point out that otherness was a lived experience for the young artist. Trained in Paris, she was aware of being perceived as exotic, referred to as "la petite princesse hindoue,"³⁵ while at the same time participating in the experiments and new idioms of artists of the bohème. Her identity as woman introduced another source of marginality, especially in view of the deeply gendered language of the avant-garde in its celebration of masculine genius and its representation of the exotic female body. All these roles—as Eurasian, as artist, and as woman—gave Sher-Gil's art and her prolific correspondence a reflexive quality, a reflexivity so intrinsic to the critical edge of a global modernism.

Many of these issues lie at the heart of the painting I look at, *Self Portrait as Tahitian* (1934) (see pl. X, this volume, p. XX). The work is now on display in the new galleries of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi. It was exhibited in the recent show at the Haus der Kunst in Munich, curated by Chris Dercon.³⁶ Surprisingly this work, often reproduced for its striking visual power, has not received the closer attention it deserves;³⁷ it has been cited as an example of Sher-Gil's fascination with Paul Gauguin's art³⁸ and dismissed together with her oeuvre as derived from Western models.³⁹ A more careful look at the painting's many layers and the difficulty in accommodating it within a national artistic practice reveals the work as a bold intervention of a young female artist, an attempt to locate herself within the global currents of avant-garde modernism. The work could indeed be read as a critical engagement with Gauguin's art and a particular stream of the postimpressionist avant-garde, which acclaimed him as a promethean artist and founder of a new aesthetic. Gauguin appears in many of Sher-Gil's letters; she traveled to London to see his works in the National Gallery.⁴⁰

As an artist, Gauguin was celebrated for his visualization of the

“primitive, untouched feminine beauty” of Tahitian women as incorporating an ideal of purity that was posited against the hypocrisy and constrictions of European bourgeois society. His access to Tahiti—its landscape and its people—where he arrived in 1889 in search of an earthly paradise was made possible by its annexation as a French colony shortly before that.⁴¹ It is this imbrication between artistic genius and power to recast the other in paint as exotic femininity, a power relationship that admits of no reciprocity, that Amrita Sher-Gil’s self-portrait dressed as a Tahitian confronts.

Sher-Gil locates herself squarely as both the exotic feminine other and at the same time reclaims for herself the privilege—generally not available to a woman artist—of painting such subjects. Her act, then, unsettles familiar fashionable dichotomies between the European artist and the exotic other, between artist and model, between masculinity and its opposite. At the same time the portraiture of the self, proclaiming her creative agency as artist, brings back prerogative and self-consciousness into the act of representation. Her tactile physicality emerges from the enveloping shadow of a male viewer; it contrasts also with the flimsily sketched references to fashionable *chinoiseries* in the background, which refer once again to the distancing of alternative civilizations into objects. Many signs signal a distance from Gauguin’s images of exotic femininity while it is being ironically invoked—above all, the absence of floral and fruit metaphors which evoke ripe fertility and squarely locate the primitive in the heart of unspoiled nature. The averted gaze of the model would suggest that the exotic here does not erase personality, rather it enhances it. Finally, the all-encompassing shadow of the implicit male viewer becomes a foil against which her palpable bodily presence can be placed. To create the shadow, Sher-Gil makes use of a technique she learned and now appropriates from European oil painting, a visual element not present in Indian pictorial forms before the coming of European art. By complicating the European celebration of an alien exotic, the image we are confronted with threatens to destabilize the gender and ethnic transactions built into metropolitan art practices.

With her articulate and passionate persona, Amrita Sher-Gil became a legendary name as the first major woman painter in India, an iconic figure who gave a feminine face to the histories of modernism in South Asia. However, after the 1930s, apart from a few rarely documented

instances of women artists,⁴² it was only from the late 1980s onwards that women came to forcefully occupy a space in Indian contemporary art. Their practice has broken new ground, as it has pushed artistic language beyond the limits of the possible. In the work of Nalini Malani, for instance, gender and history are two constituents of the same compound; nationhood, sovereignty, and religious identities are viewed in terms of their elisions and as articulations of the forms of violence into which they translate in everyday lives. Born in 1946, Nalini Malani is an active, practicing artist based in Mumbai, whose work has won considerable international visibility and acclaim, and who forms a generational bridge of sorts between the “modern” and the “contemporary.” Malani’s work combines ethical resistance with a disavowal of universalisms, be they national or global; it confronts the entire force of icons and allegories and refracts the “burden of representation” by giving it an ironic, at times scathing profile.

I will confine myself to but one example chosen from Nalini Malani’s very diverse work, an oeuvre which draws upon narratives and figures from cultures in and beyond the home—Medea, Mad Meg, Sita, or Alice—to create a new form of cosmopolitanism which, though having recourse to myth or tradition, incisively prizes it open to confront it with the rawness of lived experience. A video installation of 2003 entitled *Unity in Diversity* echoes the familiar slogan of nation building.⁴³ It shows a pleasant living room setting in an upper middle-class home—with red walls and lamps exuding a gentle light—going back to the heyday of national sentiment signaled through the familiar framed photograph of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi on the wall. The title refers at the same time to a famous painting by Raja Ravi Varma of 1893, *The Galaxy*, composed of three rows of sumptuously clad women in regional dress, adorned with jewelry and displaying musical instruments, all of which are redolent of regional diversity harmoniously fused into a national symphony. This image of national virtue, of cultures living in harmony, was the Indian showpiece exhibited at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1883. In Malani’s version of the theme individual musicians are torn out of their orchestrated group portrait, startled by the sounds and sights of a century later. They blend in and out of a new collage composed of faces of our troubled present, scarred by religious violence, showing an overlap between nation coming into

being and the post-nation. Malani consciously uses video and installation to reposition the figures, to use the play of sound, and the effulgence of light to recreate the effects of loss, of memories, fears, and dreams. Text fragments from Heiner Müller, Antonin Artaud, and the voice of an Indian middle-class male speaking English all draw the viewer into the struggle for survival. Like so much of Malani's work, this too is anchored in the reality of present-day India, in this case the genocide of Muslims in Gujarat that had ripped apart the national fabric some months earlier; at the same time it refers to violence unleashed by belligerent nationalisms across the globe, from Hiroshima to Kosovo.

While Malani's practice strives to create a new poetics of materiality through her use of video installations, painted glass, revolving Mylar cylinders, and collaborative theatrical productions, the work of Nilima Sheikh (born in 1945) privileges the delicacy of traditional idioms, especially the miniature—its detail, chromatic glow, and love of ornament. Both Malani and Sheikh belong to the same generation and see their work as a refusal of a hospitable national space. Both belong to a group of those women artists who have learnt to use "the body as gesture"⁴⁴ to desacralize, break sexual taboos, and transgress the rules of modernist aesthetic, both breaking open the female body and then making it whole again in an act of profound reparation. Sheikh's work is marked by an abiding attachment to "the poetics of affection."⁴⁵ It is animated by the belief in the potential of art to destabilize the symbolic buttresses of the nation-state and to scramble and repudiate its territorial self-definitions.

The subject of Kashmir has figured centrally in Nilima Sheikh's recent work: a group of paintings executed on hanging scrolls, suspended from the ceiling and reaching the floor, make up a continuing project exhibited in various phases.⁴⁶ The paintings have been conceptualized as a dialog with poetry, notably with the work on Kashmir of the young contemporary poet Agha Shahid Ali, who died in 2001. Kashmir, a location caught in the crossfire of three contending nationalisms, a site of violence, dispossession, and loss, also becomes an object of desire, a dream, and a path to reach back to and restore the utopian wholeness of pre-nation-state geographies. Sheikh's work is replete with references to poetry, flashes of remembered images, the filigree effect of light piercing through lattice screens, and musical modes which she recovers for her work by following the premodern cultural flows across China, Tibet,

Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent, the trails of Buddhism, of glazed tiles and miniature painting, which held Kashmir and South Asia within a larger loosely bounded Eurasian contact zone.

The Kashmir paintings entitled *Firdaus* [Paradise], though intended to recreate the *thangka*, draw equally on a language of dense concentration, reminiscent of manuscript painting; they are not controlled by compulsions of linear narrative and focus on affect rather than mimetic form. A striking panel is *Firdaus II* (2004) (see pl. X, this volume, p. XX) in which the central image is that of a group of three figures, welded into an intimate group bonded by a shared melancholic longing. The central figure is androgynously rendered, the curving right arm and hands with elongated fingers echoing a visual memory of the Virgin holding a child in innumerable miniatures that made their way into Mughal albums.⁴⁷ Gently, the figure bares its breast to reveal a vision that follows the shape of the map of India and is dotted with lush, undulating landscapes, mountains, flowing streams, Chinese clouds, a nestling village with the shrine of a saint. The map itself could be read both as archive as well as “counter archive of affect.”⁴⁸ The power of the image, as it resonates with subtle chromatic play, comes not only from the reference to the breast as site of affect, but through the artist’s use of androgyny to create both vulnerability and to place the image beyond the established registers of fixed gender identity.

I wish to conclude this essay with the example of an artist, whose work powerfully underscores “the aporias of the self and the social”⁴⁹ as it goes to the heart of subjectivity and gendered identity, bypassing the nation. I refer to Naiza H. Khan, a young artist (born in 1968) based in Karachi for whom the realities of postcolonial Pakistan are refracted through the prism of patriarchy and religious fundamentalism. The fraught and even more contingent nature of the nation in Pakistan has meant that modernist art here has not been fired by any kind of national imaginary, and artists have sought other paths to negotiate the relationship between mobility and locality. “The use of clothing in my work,” says Naiza H. Khan, “began as a strategy to explore the emotional content of the body through attire. Lingerie, armour, straight jackets, and other imagined pieces create multiple identities or personae. These objects address contemporary anxieties and desires at a time when ideas about the ‘self’ seem unstable and rapidly shifting.”⁵⁰

Naiza H. Khan's professional practice includes teaching, curating, running artists' workshops, and creating an Internet platform for Pakistani artists living across the world. Vasl, an artists' collective she leads, works to provide exhibition spaces in a setting where the infrastructure for art practice has to be created from scratch.⁵¹ Here I will cite one example from Khan's diverse range of works that shifts the location of art from the exclusive space and reception of the gallery to an urban non-site, which the work of art reclaims in a gesture challenging women's exclusion from such spaces. The project *Henna Hands* (1997–2003) involves drawing fragmentary silhouettes of the nude female figure in various positions deploying stencils of henna patterns (see pl. X, this volume, p. XX). The latter are a mass-produced commodity sold in the bazaars of South Asia which have become a modern shortcut to the traditional and time-consuming practice of adorning hands with henna, an art practiced by women on ritual and festive occasions.⁵² *Henna Hands* moves between the sequestered world of feminine time and aesthetic skills of the past and the raw urban fabric of present-day Karachi. The patterns, which evoke memories of lattice screens in traditional elite homes and tombs of Sufi saints, are now transferred to the peeling walls of the city, which they share with advertisements for male hairdressing saloons, computer training courses and cigarettes, handbills for political demonstrations, surrounded by debris and decay.⁵³ The bleakness of the contemporary setting works as a powerful vehicle to render art both an object in urban space as well as a mode of address that constitutes that space. The mechanically reproduced stencil pattern, implicated in memories of women's time and bonds, is the mode of a non-nostalgic feminine journey into the heart of a gendered public space. The combination of the non-traditional and traditional builds a relationship with the past in a move of destabilization: feminine bodily art practices intrude upon and reclaim public space, urban culture, and the skin of the city itself as a site for artistic interventions.

This selection of examples of artistic practice presented here shows the path chalked out by artists towards a critical rearticulation of tradition that in the end breaks with existing tropes of both the avant-garde and the world of commoditized cultural difference. Confronted today with the politics of "hyper-visibility" referred to at the beginning of this article, the artists discussed have retained the notion of identity at the

heart of their practice, while infusing the latter with a sense of ethical responsibility. The creation of new global networks around the drive to undermine both the histories and geographies of authenticity and in turn disrupt the aesthetics of global multiculturalism has been outlined by Ranjit Hoskote, whose “biennials of resistance” provide an alternative vision to Clark’s all-powerful “curatoriate.”⁵⁴ Located in transitional societies, such low-budget biennials are no longer a space of spectacular display, according to Hoskote, but a discursive environment, “a kind of theatre which allows for a staging of arguments and investigations of our shared, diversely veined and demanding contemporary condition.”⁵⁵ This argument is sustained by Okwui Enwezor’s belief that an alternative culture of mega-exhibitions would produce a new kind of spectator whose gaze is “counter-hegemonic” or “counter-normative,” in that it deviates from spectatorial totality and brings forth alternative and empathetic ways of reimagining and rearticulating art.⁵⁶ While this ideal might still underestimate the power of global commoditization that fissures societies across the world, it is evident that both expressive practice and future vision have moved beyond the politics of packaged ethnicity. The burden now lies with art history to sharpen its conceptual tools and create a language to provide these practices with a disciplinary anchor.

Notes

- 1 Cf. Kobena Mercer, "Black Art and the Burden of Representation," in: *Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art & Culture*, 10, vol. 4, Spring 1990, pp. 61–78.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 3 Cf. Rasheed Araeen, *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-war Britain*, exhib. cat., Hayward Gallery, South Bank Centre, London, 1989.
- 4 On *Magiciens de la terre* cf. Rasheed Araeen, "Our Bauhaus Others' Mudhouse," in: Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *Contemporary Art and the Museum: A Global Perspective*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2007, pp. 150–162; as well as reviews in *Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art & Culture*, 6, vol. 3, Spring 1989, special issue *Magiciens de la terre*.
- 5 Cf. Kobena Mercer, "Ethnicity and Internationality: New British Art and Diaspora-based Blackness," in: *Third Text: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art & Culture*, 49, vol. 13, Winter 1999/2000, pp. 51–62.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 55.
- 9 Cf. Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in: Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, London, 1996, pp. 27–47.
- 10 For a critique from the perspective of social theory, cf. Josiah McC. Heyman and Howard Campbell, "The Anthropology of Global Flows: A Critical Reading of Appadurai's 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy'," in: *Anthropological Theory*, vol. 9, no. 2, June 2009, pp. 131–148.
- 11 The term was coined by Arthur C. Danto, "The Artworld," in: *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 61, no. 19, October 1964, pp. 571–584.
- 12 An excellent anthology is Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, and Solveig Øvstebø (eds.), *The Biennial Reader*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2010.
- 13 Cf. John Clark, "Biennials as Structures for the Writing of Art History: The Asian Perspective," in: Filipovic / van Hal / Øvstebø 2010, pp. 164–183. An earlier version of this article was published as "Histories of the Asian 'New': Biennials and Contemporary Asian Art," in: Vishakha N. Desai (ed.), *Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century*, Clark Studies in the Visual Arts, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2007, pp. 229–249.
- 14 Cf. Irene Below and Beatrice von Bismarck (eds.), *Globalisierung, Hierarchisierung. Kulturelle Dominanzen in Kunst und Kunstgeschichte*, Jonas, Marburg, 2005; Gennifer Weisenfeld, "Reinscribing Tradition in a Transnational Art World," in: *Transcultural Studies*, 1, 2010, available online at: <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ojs/index.php/transcultural/article/view/6175>, accessed 07/19/2011.
- 15 Cf. James Elkins (ed.), *Is Art History Global?*, Routledge, London, New York, 2007; James Elkins, Zhivka Valiavicharska, and Alice Kim (eds.), *Art and Globalization*, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA, 2010.
- 16 John Onians, "Introduction," in: John Onians (ed.), *Atlas of World Art*, Lawrence King, London, 2008, p. 11.
- 17 Cf. David Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2003; David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongiseni Buthelezi (eds.), *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2009; "Introduction to World Literature," available online at: <http://learner.org/courses/worldlit/>, accessed 07/19/2011; Franco Moretti,

- Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900*, Verso, London, 1998; Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” in: *New Left Review*, 1, January/February 2000, pp. 54–68; Franco Moretti, “More Conjectures,” in: *New Left Review*, 20, March/April 2003, pp. 73–81. I am grateful to my colleague Rudolf Wagner for the latter two references. Cf. also “Stanford Literary Lab,” directed by Matthew Jockers and Franco Moretti, available online at: <http://litlab.stanford.edu/>, accessed 07/19/2011.
- 18 This was a concern which went back to the early twentieth century and merits closer study. Cf. Ulrich Pfisterer, “Origins and Principles of World Art History: 1900 (and 2000),” in: Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried van Damme (eds.), *World Art Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches*, Valiz, Amsterdam, 2008, pp. 69–89. I have addressed these issues at some length in “Kunstgeschichte und kulturelle Differenz: Erweiterung oder Paradigmenwechsel?” in: *Kritische Berichte*, theme issue “Universalität der Kunstgeschichte,” ed. by Monica Juneja, Matthias Bruhn, and Elke Werner, 2012 (forthcoming).
 - 19 David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*, Phaidon, London, 2003.
 - 20 John Onians, as quoted from: Elkins 2007, p. 42.
 - 21 Cf. James Elkins, review of David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*, in: *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 86, no. 2, 2004, pp. 373–381.
 - 22 Cf. James Elkins, “Different Horizons for a Concept of the Image,” in: *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge et al., 1998, pp. 188–209.
 - 23 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 200–208.
 - 24 Cf. Hans Belting, “Contemporary Art as Global Art: A Critical Estimate,” in: Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.), *The Global Art World: Audiences, Markets, and Museums*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern, 2009, pp. 38–73; Hans Belting, “Was bitte heißt ‘contemporary’?” in: *Die Zeit*, 21, 05/20/2010.
 - 25 For a nuanced study of the migration of material objects and the multiple practices that ensue from mobility, cf. Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and the Medieval “Hindu-Muslim” Encounter*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2009. For a global perspective on the appropriation and translation of the notion of the “classical” in monumental architecture of modern world capitals, cf. Monica Juneja, “The Making of New Delhi. Classical Aesthetics, ‘Oriental’ Tradition and Architectural Practice: A Transcultural View,” in: Rudolf G. Wagner and Sally Humphreys (eds.), *Modernity’s Classics*, Springer, Heidelberg, 2011 (forthcoming).
 - 26 A recent study from the perspective of South Asia is Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: India’s Artists and the Avant-garde 1922–1947*, Reaktion Books, London, 2007. Cf. also the important collection of essays by Geeta Kapur, *When was Modernism? Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2001.
 - 27 These issues figured in the lecture series, “Multi-Centred Modernisms—Reconfiguring Asian Art of the Twentieth and Twenty-first centuries,” organized at the Cluster of Excellence “Asia and Europe in a Global Context: Shifting Asymmetries in Cultural Flows” at Heidelberg University during the summer term of 2011. Its proceedings are being published, cf. Monica Juneja and Franziska Koch (eds.), “Multi-Centred Modernisms—Reconfiguring Asian Art of the Twentieth and Twenty-First centuries,” in: *Transcultural Studies*, 1, 2010, available online at: <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/ojs/index.php/transcultural/article/view/6181/1764>. To date, the published articles include contributions by James Elkins, Genifer Weisenfeld, and Hiroyuki Suzuki (1, 2011). Cf. also Rebecca M. Brown, “Response [to Partha Mitter]: Provincializing Modernity: From Derivative to Foundational,” in: *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 90, no. 4, 2008, pp. 555–557.
 - 28 Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of*

Nationalism, Verso, London, 1996.

- 29 On the history of the Progressive Artists Group, cf. Yashodhara Dalmia, *The Making of Modern Indian Art: The Progressives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, New York, 2001; Geeta Kapur, "Dismantled Norms: Apropos an Indian/Asian Avantgarde," in: Kapur 2001, pp. 365–414. On the work of M.F. Husain, cf. Sumathi Ramaswamy (ed.), *Barefoot Across the Nation: Maqbool Fida Husain and the Idea of India*, Visual and Media Histories, ed. by Monica Juneja, 1, Routledge, London, 2011.
- 30 Cf. Weisenfeld 2010.
- 31 Cf. Kapur 2001, pp. 395–399.
- 32 Cf. Geeta Kapur, "Globalisation and Culture," in: *Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art & Culture*, 39, vol. 11, Summer 1997, p. 30.
- 33 Okwui Enwezor, as quoted from: Ranjit Hoskote, "Biennials of Resistance: Reflections on the Seventh Gwangju Biennial," in: Filipovic / van Hal / Øvstebø 2011, p. 312.
- 34 A recent biography of Amrita Sher-Gil is Yashodhara Dalmia, *Amrita Sher-Gil: A Life*, Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 2006. Cf. also Mitter 2007, pp. 45–65; Kapur 2001, pp. 4–15; Vivan Sundaram (ed.), *Amrita Sher-Gil: A Self-Portrait in Letters and Writings*, 2 vols., Tulika Books, New Delhi, 2010.
- 35 Mitter 2007, p. 51.
- 36 *Amrita Sher-Gil. Eine indische Künstlerfamilie im 20. Jahrhundert*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, October 3, 2006 – January 7, 2007.
- 37 While mentioned in Kapur 2001, it is ignored in Mitter's account (Mitter 2007). A very recent study of this work—which overlapped with the writing of this article—is Saloni Mathur, "A Retake of Sher-Gil's *Self Portrait as Tahitian*," in: *Critical Enquiry*, vol. 37, no. 3, 2011, pp. 515–544.
- 38 Cf. Dalmia 2006, p. 30, pp. 148–150, p. 194.
- 39 An excerpt from a panel discussion which featured the artist's works exhibited at the Haus der Kunst in Munich and broadcast on the TV channel 3sat was the subject of a presentation made by Chris Dercon at the ZKM Summer Academy "Global Studies: Art and Visual Media Today" at ZKM | Karlsruhe, June 18–20, 2010. The tenor of the panel reinforced the view of the derivative nature of Sher-Gil's art: "Es scheint mir, alles vom Westen abgekupfert zu sein." [It seems to me that it is all copied from the West.] This paper has grown out of a presentation I made at the ZKM Summer Academy, where I responded to the terms of that discussion.
- 40 Cf. Sundaram 2010, vol. I, p. 108.
- 41 Cf. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Going Native: Paul Gauguin and the Intervention of Primitivist Modernism," in: *Art in America*, vol. 77, no. 7, July 1989, p. 125.
- 42 The work of Sunayana Devi (1875–1962) has been discussed by Mitter; cf. Mitter 2007, pp. 36–44.
- 43 Some visuals of this multimedia installation are reproduced in the exhibition catalogs *Global Feminisms* and *New Narratives*. Cf. Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin (eds.), *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art*, exhib. cat., Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY, Merrell, London, New York, 2007, pp. 80f.; Betty Seid, with contributions by Johan Pijnappel, *New Narratives: Contemporary Art from India*, exhib. cat., Chicago Cultural Center, Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, 2007, pp. 76–78.
- 44 The term has been used by Geeta Kapur as the title of chapter 1, cf. Kapur 2001, pp. 3–60.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- 46 A recent show was held in New Delhi at the Lalit Kala Akademi in August/September 2010. Among earlier exhibitions was the itinerant show curated by Chaitanya Sambrani, *Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India*. Nilima Sheikh's Kashmir paintings have been discussed by Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Territory of Desire: Representing the Valley of Kashmir*, University of

- Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2009, chapter 6.
- 47 The transcultural journeys of this motif have been discussed in my article, “The Breast-feeding Mother as an Icon and Source of Affect in Visual Practice—A Transcultural Journey,” in: Axel Michaels and Christoph Wulf (eds.), *Rituals and Emotion*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2011 (forthcoming).
- 48 Kabir 2009, p. 199.
- 49 Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 2010, p. 177.
- 50 Naiza H. Khan, as quoted from: Salima Hashmi (ed.), *Hanging Fire: Contemporary Art from Pakistan*, exhib. cat., Asia Society, New York, 2009, p. 98.
- 51 Cf. www.naizakhan.com, accessed 07/20/2011.
- 52 Cf. Dadi 2010, p. 202; Naiza H. Khan, “Naajo Mehndi and Henna Hands,” in: Saima Zaidi (ed.), *Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009, pp. 132–139.
- 53 Reproduced in Dadi 2010, p. 202. Cf. also Naiza H. Khan, “Naajo Mehndi and Henna Hands,” in: Saima Zaidi (ed.), *Mazaar, Bazaar: Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, Karachi, 2009, pp. 132–139.
- 54 Cf. Hoskote 2011, pp. 306–321.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 308.
- 56 Cf. Okwui Enwezor, *Großausstellungen und die Antinomien einer transnationalen globalen Form*, Berliner Thyssen-Vorlesung zur Ikonologie der Gegenwart, Fink, Munich, 2002; reprinted as “Mega-Exhibitions and the Antinomies of a Transnational Global Form,” in: Filipovic/van Hal/Øvstebø 2010, pp. 426–445.