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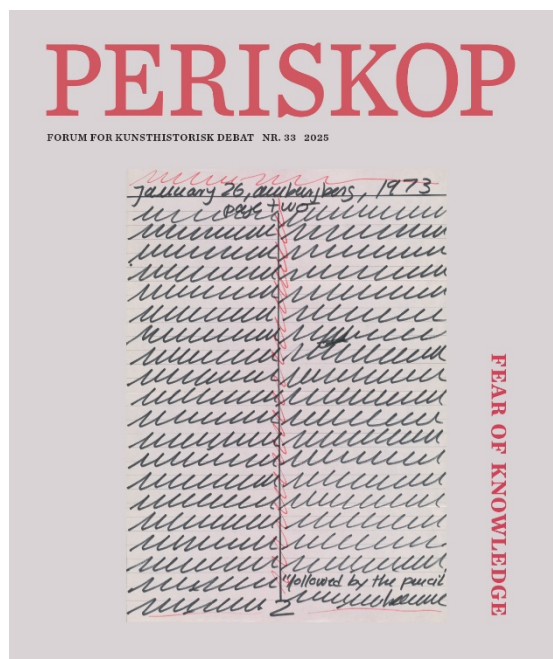
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Forfattere: Thomas Laval

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Where to Look (?):

Bypassing Hegemony of Knowledge with Installation-Exhibitions from Fareed Armaly and Renée Green

At the close of the last century, the presentation of certain artists within Western art institutions often came entangled with the broad and ambiguous label of “postmodernity” – a term that, rather than clarifying, tends to obscure the specificities of their practices. Famously used by the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard and later expanded by literary critic and theoretician Fredric Jameson, “postmodernity” has offered limited analytical traction for understanding artworks produced during a time of deep epistemological and geopolitical shifts. Jameson’s influential distinction between neoconservative and critical postmodernism – one embracing the aesthetics of late capitalism, the other offering a poststructuralist critique – while helpful in mapping certain tendencies, proves reductive when applied to a globalizing art world marked by expanded circulation, hybrid perspectives, and increasing challenges to Eurocentric frameworks. More than fitting artworks into such categories, the urgent task lies in examining how artists and exhibitions negotiated these new conditions and shaped alternative forms of meaning-making.

In this light, the rise of the *curatorial turn* offers a more precise lens. Rather than focusing solely on styles or movements, attention shifts to the exhibition as a site of knowledge production and cultural negotiation (O’Neill and Wilson 2007, 2010, 2013; O’Neill 2016). The year 1989 stands out as a critical juncture, marked by large-scale exhibitions such as *Magiciens de la terre* (Centre Pompidou and La Villette Hall, Paris), *The Other Story* (Hayward Gallery, London), the *Third Biennial de la Habana* (various locations, Havana), and *China/Avant-Garde* (National Art

Museum of China, Beijing). Some favored North-South exchanges, sometimes in an outdated way in the display chosen and the discourse surrounding the works (*Magiciens de la terre*), others proposed South-South circulation that had never been explored before (*Third Bienal de la Habana*), others revealed an obliterated art scene (*The Other Story*), or a little-known and contested one (*China/Avant-Garde*). These shows have since been widely discussed, as landmarks in the reconfiguration of contemporary art on a global scale, as well as for the shaping of the curatorial discourse that comes along their enactment. Yet, to fully grasp the implications of this moment beyond these milestones, one must also consider initiatives of artists proposing exhibitions-installations presented in the more restricted place of commercial galleries or marginal spaces. These autonomous projects, albeit at times collaborative, allow to leave behind the much-discussed curatorial discourse carried by major exhibitions and concentrate on the porosities of exhibition-making when grasped and practiced by artists. This focus, supported by a growing retrospective interest in artists' postcolonial initiatives, brings to light singular epistemological and political positions within – and against – the dominant narratives of the time (Stilling 2013; Probst 2022).

On the occasion of this special issue of *Periskop* dedicated to the potential “fear of knowledge” translated into the work of artists, I propose to tackle the above-mentioned aspects through the study of two art installations that take the form of exhibitions: the first one from 1989 by Fareed Armaly (1957–) and the second one from 1992 by Renée Green (1959–). Both of these exhibition-shaped works, often approached through their relative proximity with an extension or second wave of Institutional Critique, were yet never analyzed as frameworks of knowledge whose display and content enable revelation of the negotiations operated ahead. Both reveal theoretical and practical engagements taken by artists within the Western art scene, that expand perspectives on the internationalization of the art world, and foster a move away from normative Eurocentric epistemologies of knowledge. Each of them mobilizes quite distinctly from one another and almost simultaneously, artifacts, objects and writings, which seem to constitute an early form of “epistemic disobedience” as conceptualized by semiotician Walter D. Mignolo through their distant positioning vis-à-vis the pillars of Western knowledge (Mignolo 2009).

The Context: from New York to Cologne

October journal and its main editors played a key role in legitimizing a generation of artists who, aligned with the “critical” postmodernist vein, were to be recognized as a second generation of Institutional Critique.¹ Art historian Nicolas

Heimendinger analyzes that the term was gradually coined in the pages of the journal in the early 1980s, through the conceptualization of the works from artists including Michael Asher, Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren and Hans Haacke, all of whom will be part of the first generation of Institutional Critique (Heideminger 2016, 52). Working throughout the 1960s and then the 1970s, they focused on exposing and challenging the power structures, ideologies, and mechanisms of the art world by questioning museums and galleries in how institutions shape artistic value, control narratives, and reinforce social hierarchies (Buchloh 1999, 140).² *October* editor Benjamin Buchloh grouped these artists under the term “situational aesthetics” in 1982, while Douglas Crimp referred to them as “Critique of the museum institution” in 1984, and the definitive term “Institutional Critique” appeared in 1987 in an issue of *October* dedicated to Marcel Broodthaers (Heideminger 2016, 53). Its emergence acted on the porosities of its own institutionalization. “Octoberists” Buchloh and Craig Owens’ teaching at the Independent Study Program (ISP) of the Whitney Museum of American Art and at the School of Visual Arts (SVA) in New York, where Andrea Fraser, Renée Green and Mark Dion were enrolled, played an important role in the direct transfer of concepts and approaches from first-generation artists to what would later become a second generation. The dissemination of the discourse, of and on Institutional Critique in the New York context, led a generation of young artists to claim and act on this influence beyond the Big Apple. Their rise to prominence was confirmed across the Atlantic in the early 1990s, in Germany’s burgeoning new art scene. Among the artists of the second generation were Dion, Fraser, Green, Christian Phillipp Müller, Fred Wilson and to some extent Fared Armaly. Their work was supported by the journal *Texte zur Kunst*, founded in 1990 on the model of *October* by Isabelle Graw and Stefan Germer, and by the Galerie Nagel in Cologne. In short, what can be understood as a second generation of Institutional Critique comes into being when the discourse about the first generation from the 1960s is forged and institutionalized, twenty years on, and the direct transmission to artists at the start of their careers establishes a foundation on which to build upon, in order to extend and renew it.

Before situating the locus of epistemological detachment and disobedience lent to Walter D. Mignolo in the work of the two artists, there is a need to recognize the widely shared doubts about the Western paradigm of knowledge concomitant to the flourishing of the prefix post- to many historical and theoretical movements. In the introduction to *The Location of Culture* published in 1994, Homi K. Bhabha locates the culmination of postmodernity in the understanding of the epistemological limits of most universalist ideas from the humanities.

[1] Fareed Armaly, *The (re) Orient* (1989) 2021 version, mumok, Vienna. Image rights: Fareed Armaly. Photo: Kevin Ferdinandus mumok collection



Essentially ethnocentric, they exclude a series of individuals perceived as dissonant, which includes women, colonized beings, minority groups, and the bearers of policed sexualities, among others (Bhabha 1994, 4). Echoing this critical awareness towards knowledge, a certain skepticism regarding science, history and institutions was to be found among artists, and more widely among activist groups, academics and intellectuals, marking a widely shared attitude in the early 1990s.

This spread dubiousness allows a follow up and a continuity from the first generation to the second generation of Institutional Critique. The first group of

artists addressed the “innocence” of space and the accompanying presumption of a universal spectator subject (albeit in possession of a corporeal body). Taken as a framework to elaborate on how we envision and interact with artworks, it coincides with the conceptualization of the act of viewing by Ernst Gombrich in 1960 which, according to him, necessarily departs from a preset of suppositions (Mitrovic 2013, 72). He formulates his views on visuality under the influence of the philosopher of science Karl Popper, to whom perception is comparable to the scientific acquisition of knowledge since hypotheses precede observations, which ensures that “it is through the falsification of our suppositions that we actually get in touch with reality” (Popper 1972, 360). If it is impossible to separate observation from the theoretical elements of interpretation, there is then a necessary task to dismantle the prerequisites one applies to objects, artifacts, and artworks.

The legacy of Conceptual art and the first generation of Institutional Critique, as well as a growing distrust of Western knowledge, opened up a breach: artists would translate their doubts and questioning in their work on the basis of situated research anchored to specific fields of knowledge or artifacts.³ The protagonists of the second generation followed up on the questioning of the “innocence” of the exhibition space and its counterpart of a homogenous and universal spectator subject supported by the first generation, to propose practice-based responses to ambivalent and unquestioned objects and sites, and now subject to inquiry (Kwon 1997, 87).⁴ This same idea of an impossible detached and neutral standpoint, and understood as a point of departure for further work, is mentioned by Mignolo under what he calls “*Zero point epistemology*”, which takes this questioning to a wider framework, namely epistemological (Mignolo 2009, 163).⁵

As Graw notes in an article dedicated to Armaly, Dion, and Fraser, Conceptual art was a point of reference, a pioneering element that needed to be surpassed in order to address specific issues inscribed in space (Graw 1990, 168). The work of these artists will move in the direction of this surpassing, based on critical research into our relationship to knowledge that follows on from the skepticism towards the Western construction of knowledge designated by Bhabha. Bearing in mind this horizon to be investigated by artists, strategies are manifold and one must acknowledge the occasional permutation of artists becoming curators at times.⁶

(Re)Orient: Where to Look

The two installations at stake in this article are presented in the form of exhibitions. They challenge our relationship with knowledge, and more specifically, our access to it through its mediated condition, whether through written words,

objects, cultural policies or the discourse that surrounds them. The first one is from Armaly, an Arab American artist, curator, author and editor who works and lives in the United States and Berlin and explores the politics of culture, identity and representation. His project entitled *(re)Orient* was first presented in 1989 at Galerie Lorenz in Paris, and was shown in an updated version in 2021 at the Mumok in Vienna, on the occasion of its entry into the museum collection.⁷

A *Postscript* edition was published in 2023, including texts, interviews and reproductions that document and continue the reflection initiated by the installation. For the artist, *(re)Orient* is a way to situate the role of contemporary exhibitions within the postcolonial discourse that emerged in the 1980s. At the time, the project drew lessons from recent writings that had shaped postcolonial studies – in particular Edward Said and Stuart Hall – to question the institutionalization of this new notion in Western museology, through the example of the Louvre, but also the media and photographic treatment in the West of the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) (Said 2003). More than thirty years later, the Lebanese context having changed, the artist Akram Zaatari (1966–) was invited to dialogue with the original exhibition, with a photographic work and a text that addresses image representations and their mediatic treatment during the war. It highlights a vision of perpetual ruin for wartime Beirut, as well as the reconstruction and archive projects that succeeded the Civil War (Zaatari 2023). In this exhibition-installation, Armaly indicates his theoretical positioning by summoning elements from the visual arts, popular culture, written narratives and artifacts from different eras, just as an exhibition curator would, a role he would occupy later in his career.⁸

From a formal point of view, and in its most current form at the mumok, *(re)Orient* is a quasi-autonomous exhibition room within the museum's exhibition space. Surrounded by four walls, the space features an entrance that mimics that of the Galerie Lorenz, above which is added a fragmented reproduction of an engraving, that of the *Ruins of Hieraconpolis* published in Vivant Denon's account of his trip to Egypt during the Napoleonic campaigns (Denon 1802). Once inside, within a segmented space, heterogeneous elements are on display, including: an excerpt from Jean-Luc Godard's film *Bande à part*, in which the protagonists attempt to beat a speed record in a race through the galleries of the Louvre; a 1916 artillery shell on which military vehicles are engraved as they travel from the Egyptian pyramids to Jerusalem, another instance of foreign military travel to Egypt; a small two-dimensional Venus de Milo, the original being housed in the Louvre, there illustrating the museum/culture section of a Letraset catalog whose universal character was then pointed out; computer-

generated maps of the Lebanese Civil War; a myriorama, created in collaboration with Regina Möller, depicting landscapes such as those broadcasted in the media in the 1980s featuring modernist buildings, explosions, planes in flight and urban pictograms; a 1887 collotype by Edward Muybridge in which a moving man with a bayonet appears fragmented on one of the plates, an anomaly in the series; several pedestals supporting mirrors installed backwards and in front of which stands a camera on a tripod; finally, a large circular table with empty book covers bearing the word *Voyage* on the spine, and whose covers allude to various publications, from Napoleon's vision of the Orient as seen through the eyes of Denon, to former French President Charles de Gaulle's 1942 "journey" to Lebanon and Syria, to a 1989 advertisement for the book *Description de l'Égypte* (1809) sold at the then brand new Institut du Monde Arabe, which is part of the Grand Projet pour la Culture, like the Louvre Pyramid.⁹ [1]

How can we make sense of all these precise elements yet heterogeneous in forms, dates and context? All of them operate a back-and-forth between past and present to be measured by the visitor. What becomes noticeable is the persistence of power plays translated outside the strictly politico-military exercise, in objects that belong to the public and cultural domain. Reproductions and objects referring to the campaigns led by Napoléon in which Denon was involved and then exhibited at the Louvre serve to highlight the Western colonial enterprise nourished and empowered by a reductive, fantasized vision of the Orient, as Said theorized. The more recent artifacts take part in the continuity of this violence, a postcolonial perspective on the visual and cultural productions of this fin de siècle. The Venus de Milo from the Letraset plate points to a peculiar understanding of culture and the museum, a notable bias in the visual embodiment of these notions.¹⁰ The Louvre's new pyramid, opened in 1988 to the public, and designed by architect Ieoh Ming Pei as part of the "Grand Louvre" project, conjures up a historical dialogue that resonates with the present day.¹¹ What continuity for the Western gaze, from Napoleon's journey to Egypt to what is being built today to perfect the place for preserving the artifacts marked by this imperial history? The mobilization of the various objects acts as a memorial archive: each artifact carries the discourse and vision of an era, from colonial violence to new forms of soft power. They call into question the universalist ambitions of the Western institutional apparatus. Using the medium of the exhibition, Armaly's project puts into practice and deconstructs the perspective on objects that, up until the time of his first *(re)Orient* exhibition, had remained mute in their respective contexts, from popular culture to the fine arts, untroubled by the questioning of the violence they nonetheless carry. As Marianna Hovhannisyan

notes in her essay on *(re)Orient*, the exhibition functions as a positioning system for visitors, requiring them to take positions as particular social subjects through and vis à vis these objects (2023, 137). The reference and quasi tutelary figure Hovhannisyan and Armaly both refer to is Stuart Hall recognizing the necessary question of positioning as a racialized subject in the face of narratives of the past (Hall 1990). Born of Palestinian and Lebanese parents, and the first person in his family to be born in the United States, Armaly engages his personal history in this positioning as much as that of all those whose destinies are marked by forced displacement and migration.

The spatial organization of the exhibition is an important factor in understanding the way in which knowledge is handled. Accessible through a door, the space is enclosed, with blind, windowless outer walls. The architecture of the space, punctuated by inside walls to form a path in which each artifact cannot be missed, leads to an almost solemn experience with the objects, a form of encounter that encourages confrontation. The architectural choice for the exhibition display clearly designates the artifacts to be considered and further emphasizes the eclecticism and variety of what is shown, inviting visitors to position themselves. Spatialization is then matched by the fragmented nature of the objects, most of which are presented in the form of extracts or taken from series. The artist's research culminates in the meticulous selection for the elements shown in the exhibition, which reinforce their heterogeneity in forms, dates and context. Armaly's role is that of a curator-researcher, bringing together objects that seem to have nothing in common, but whose didactic correspondence is made possible by the artist's discourse on them as well as the exhibition display. Scattered, mostly in the form of carefully selected extracts, and presented in a closed, solemn space, the objects contribute to a realistic, albeit pessimistic, postcolonial perspective. Artifacts are taken as the source of investigation for the biased knowledge they carry. They allow the falsification of our suppositions and corroborate the mistrust that must be guarded against these objects when approaching them. As visitors we are invited to confront the unspoken, the forgotten, and leave the official discourses about them behind. *(re)Orient* is an opportunity to build upon Said and Hall's decolonial theoretical positioning with an exhibition that reveals their theoretical intertwinement in specific objects through their historical and current condition. With Armaly's installation, the fear of knowledge is to be found when knowledge itself, encrypted in objects and artifacts, is not questioned in relation to the imperial and colonial history it is contingent to. What is to be feared lies in the pristine official discourse, whose counterpart is a post-hegemonic and postcolonial approach that unveils a more realistic perspective.

Import/Export Funk Office: Where to Look?

A few years later in 1992 at the gallery Christian Nagel in Cologne, with which Armaly collaborated in the early 1990s, Renée Green presented *Import/Export Funk Office* for the first time.¹² Green, an American artist, writer, and filmmaker, works from a broad range of media including sculpture, architecture, photography, prints, video, film, websites, and sound, which often converge in highly layered and complex installations.

Import/Export Funk Office is one of them, engaging two theoretical and political tutelary figures, Angela Davis and Theodor Adorno, as well as a close collaborator, the German critic and theorist Diedrich Diederichsen.¹³ The installation can be understood as an exhibition that takes the visitor back and forth between the USA and Germany, via two emblematic figures who themselves spent time in both countries. During the Second World War, Adorno went into exile in California, like many Germanic writers, before returning to Germany in the 1960s (Goetschel 2020). During his stay in the USA, and particularly in



[2] Renée Green, *Import/Export Funk Office*, 1992. Installation view at Galerie Nagel Draxler, Cologne. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin/Cologne Donation to MOCA LA by Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann Photo: Andrea Stappert

Los Angeles, he expressed his unpopular views on jazz music, which are often mentioned in connection with his writings on culture (Witkin 2000). As for Davis, she studied philosophy in Frankfurt from 1965 to 1967 with key thinkers of the Frankfurt School, notably Herbert Marcuse and Adorno. It was during her stay in Germany that she saw a photograph of the Black Panthers in Oakland, California, which acted as a trigger. Seeing the raised fists, berets and black leather jackets, combined with their political agenda, Davis decided to return to the U.S. to become a political activist. These two figures enable Green to summon up the terrain of cultural exchange and flow that immediately challenges a static understanding of notions of identity and nationality. The movement of artistic circulations and cultural transfers on a national and international scale is at the heart of the artist's research. This is reflected in the exhibition's presentation of a substantial number of documents, including archives, books, magazines, texts, audio cassettes and videos.

Green takes funk, hip-hop and, more generally, African American and Afro-descendant music as the object of her investigation and extends it more broadly to the cultural spheres they pertain to. For this project, she collaborates with Diederich Diederichsen, then director of the German music magazine *Spex*. She employs a quasi-academic methodology, at the crossroads of anthropology and sociology: like a documentary filmmaker, she produces video recordings of conversations between Diederichsen and Greg Tate, Joe Wood, Brian Cross, Medusa, Andrea Clarke, and Arthur Jafa, as well as between herself and George Lipsitz, Ingo, Black Madrid and John Outerbridge, all shot in between Cologne, New York or Los Angeles. Musicians, critics, authors, all are involved in shaping and interpreting hip-hop and funk music. She adds a questionnaire on rap music, gathering testimonials from New Yorkers about their relationship with this ubiquitous musical style, as well as from German citizens who were gradually discovering it. These recordings are available for viewing on television sets in the center of the room. Over twenty-six hours of interviews have been compiled in total.

The exhibition is arranged concentrically in the space. Surrounding the televisions are open metal shelves on which are placed books, magazines and audio-cassettes thematically intersecting with African American music and activism. These filled shelves give the impression of a library as much as an archival repository. The documents come from the personal collection of Diederichsen, who was interested in Afro-American history, culture, literature and music at that time, as well as from the artist's personal library.¹⁴ Entitled *Collectanea*, Green's selection of works from the German critic's library and her own illustrate the

contradictions that occur within the cultural economy of import and export and are translated here in an idiosyncratic way. Renée Green has followed the migration of hip-hop culture and its icons, from 1960s black nationalism and notably images of Davis, to the moment she creates this installation.

Beyond the library, on the walls of the gallery Nagel space is another part of the installation entitled *Lexicon*. It corresponds to sixteen boards on which are inscribed American slang terms: they cover the beatnik years from the 1950s to the early 1960s, the slang of the hippies and counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s, through to the African American slang of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Overlapping meanings between the different eras are indicated by colored dots that designate the definitions in use at the time. For each of the plates, there's a twin plate with definitions of slang terms, written by Green, which combine references to the different eras and are translated into German. *Lexicon* is a pedagogical tool, designed to enable everyone to understand the semantic correspondences and the counter-cultural dimension of slang, right up to the present day. Finally, two other television sets are installed in the room, allowing visitors to listen to audio tracks from the protagonists of funk and hip-hop music.

The exhibition differs from Armaly's in its spatial conception and the message it conveys, particularly in regard to the handling of knowledge. *Import/Export Funk Office* is conceived as a totally open space, with no picture rails to obstruct the view or the moving in space [2]. This choice implies and conditions a different positioning for visitors. Instead of moving through the space towards a necessary encounter with a specific artifact synonymous with positioning oneself, visitors are invited to wander around, orienting themselves to a selection, or rather, a groping discovery of the documents to be explored. This aspect coincides with the very large number of documents presented – text, audio and video – making the task, if not hazardous, certainly time-consuming. On the other hand, unlike Armaly and its sporadic, fragmented presentation of documents, Green chooses the form of exhaustiveness: the interviews, more than twenty-six hours long, are presented in their entirety and so are the books, magazines and audio tracks. The abundance of documents is thus matched by their exhaustiveness, even if they are selected from particular libraries. As art historian Claire Bishop recently reminded, Green is suggesting the necessarily collaborative, networked aspect of knowledge, a pre-Internet model that is hypertext: a non-sequential form of writing based on links between verbal and visual information, which has become the main structural protocol of the Internet (2023). Diederichsen and Green, both involved in and enthusiasts for African American music and counterculture, made it possible to exhibit what corresponded to what critics perceived as

almost the entire body of knowledge on the subject at the time (Diederichsen and Green 2017). The installation, concentrically organized from its center, thus offers a panoramic view of the documentary resources summoned up by the artist, verging on thematic exhaustiveness. For the visitor, this spatialization offers a synoptic vision which leads to an extensive overview that does not necessarily include an explanation of what comprises the vision. In the specific case of the knowledge contained in the documents assembled by Green, this synoptic aspect comes into play: the visitor, at the center of the installation, can benefit from this overview of knowledge, without being provided with the necessary explanations for each element that composes it. However, the *Lexicon* section of the installation, which traces the genealogy of slang words with a pedagogical aim, slightly differs in this respect.

Epistemic Disobedience by Way of De-westernizing Knowledge

Armaly and Green are proposing two exhibitions which, through their layout, offer two distinct takes on the way in which knowledge is approached. The first selects specific objects and artefacts that, at first glance, bear no relation to one another, thus making visible the distances that separate them. This sporadicity and eclecticism reveals the gaps and lacunae in the discourse that surrounds them, in an opaque, closed space. It draws attention at specific loci to reveal the questionable and contested condition of their existence, and prompts visitors to position themselves in relation to them. The exhibition thus shows Armaly's distrust of knowledge, understood as an imperialist monolith, to which his work responds by highlighting its intrinsic biases. For her part, Green, in collaboration with Diederichsen, brings together a very large number of archival and newly produced documents, presented in their entirety in an open space, around music and African American counterculture. The artist's proposal is geared towards completeness, an abundance that allows visitors to browse, pick and choose where they wish, yet without allowing them to go round it all. *Import/Export Funk Office* is conceived as a space to trigger attention to marginalized forms of musical culture that have suffered from systemic oppression cutting across the layers of contemporary history.

The two installations, though distinct in their spatialization, both expose visitors to certain knowledge, contained in documents and artifacts, and which, by virtue of their socio-historical condition, occupied and occupy a marginal place at the time of their presentation, as a counterpoint to hegemonic and widely spread knowledge. Armaly and Green are driven by a critical concern for what is available to know about different objects, and their work establishes

a response from a postcolonial positioning. While Green's focus on music and African American activism differs from Armaly's investigation of the history of violence embodied in the objects of the "Universalist" Museum and the major projects that frame them, both engage in a reflection on the epistemological and semantic roots of culture in the broadest sense.

The heritage of Conceptual art and the first generation of Institutional Critique paved the way for critical and contextual questioning on the innocence of cultural goods and their setting, to be then updated in 1989 with further details channeling a post-hegemonic endeavor. Mignolo's epistemic disobedience offers a relevant framework to understand Armaly's and Green's research work in the exhibitions. The core idea behind this concept is made clear by the Argentinian semiologist: "Epistemic disobedience means to de-link from the illusion of the *'Zero point epistemology'*" (Mignolo 2009, 161). He conceives this form of insubordination as the enactments stemming from an awareness of the effects of the experience of global projects aimed at colonizing knowledge through language, culture, categories of thought and belief systems. Both artists coincide with this distancing from systems of power by making space, literally, to reveal marginalized knowledge and reveal its conditioning. Aware of what is available in each of their fields of investigation, they both go beyond an unsatisfactory state of the art to propose alternatives that only await the visitor's meeting.

Mignolo branches in two the directions in which his concept of epistemic disobedience is then applied. He considers a de-westernizing direction, following intellectual and politician Kishore Mahbubani's terminology, as well as a decolonial one. The first one unfolds within the globalization of a type of a capitalist economy as named so in both liberal and Marxist vocabulary. It consists of shifting the locus of the enunciation of the "rules of the game", which are no longer called by Western players and institutions. In this respect, both Armaly and Green operate this shifting, one by calling back objects that have been misleadingly portrayed in discourse and have them talk anew, and the other by giving voice to marginalized groups through multi-media documents, archival and newly produced ones. Their work, however, cannot entirely subscribe to the decolonial direction indicated by Mignolo. The latter clearly inscribes in it the cost of life and what he calls "the civilization of death" hidden in the rhetoric of the Modernity and its consequences within institutions. The artists' research, situated in the imperialist knowledge carried by designated artifacts and sphere of cultural productions, certainly underscores the absent and never betided realistic discourse about them, yet cannot address frontally the violent and deadly condition of colonized beings. In placing their investigation as such, they

operate an epistemic disobedience by way of a de-westernization of knowledge, and pave the way for what is attested in concomitant and in more recent works which, at times, establish a clear agenda of actions, targeting a resolute decolonial program.¹⁵

ABSTRACT

The article explores how artists and occasional curators Fareed Armaly and Renée Green's installations challenge the dominant Eurocentric paradigms of knowledge through the medium of exhibition. Situating their works within the second wave of Institutional Critique, from New York to Cologne, it then details the way in which they offer two very different takes on exhibition setting through the display of documents and objects they propose. Contextualizing the two works within a shared skepticism towards Western epistemology noted by Homi K. Bhabha in the early 1990s, the paper argues that both installations enact a form of "epistemic disobedience" as conceptualized by Walter D. Mignolo by revealing the biases of institutional knowledge production and offering alternative frameworks for understanding cultural history. Through spatial and conceptual strategies, Armaly and Green demonstrate how exhibitions can function as sites of resistance, reshaping the ways knowledge is constructed and disseminated beyond dominant discourses.

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NOTES

- 1 Launched in 1976, *October* is an academic journal specializing in contemporary art, criticism, and theory, published by The MIT Press, that became an influential vehicle for the debate surrounding the emergence of postmodernism.
- 2 Another genealogy is designated by Alexander Alberro (2009).
- 3 Most of the artists from the second generation of Institutional Critique will be gathered in a large-scale exhibition addressing the situated aspect of their work: *Kontext Kunst. The Art of the 90s*, at the Neue Galerie im Künstlerhaus in Graz, Austria, and curated by Peter Weibel (02.10.-07.11.1993).
- 4 The remark on the visitor's impossible innocence also overlaps with the impossible omniscient vision carried by the most sciences and analyzed in Donna Haraway's famous article on situated knowledge. Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3: 575-99.
- 5 Mignolo refers to Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez (2007), who describes this scheme as "the *hubris of the zero point*".
- 6 The endorsement of curatorship by artists has its own history of experimentations and practices, see (Filipovic 2017).
- 7 Galerie Lorenz, a former commercial gallery, existed between 1987 and 1996 in Paris and notably presented works from John Armleder, Martin Kippenberger, Heimo Zobernig, Steven Parrino, Mark Dion, Erwin Wurm and Miguel Chevalier.

- 8 Fareed Armaly was artistic director/curator of the Künstlerhaus in Stuttgart from 1999 to 2002.
- 9 Letraset was a British company known primarily for the manufacture of type sheets and other graphic elements using the dry transfer lettering method. Myriorama is a children's game invented in the 19th century, involving the construction of a multitude of possible landscapes using cards that can all be assembled together.
- 10 There is also a historical imperialist dimension, which is particularly topical at a time when most of the big European Museums are asked to return stolen artifacts to their countries of origin.
- 11 The "Grand Louvre" is one of the "Grands Travaux" defined by former French President François Mitterrand (President between 1981 and 1995), along with the new Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Bastille Opera House and the Grande Arche de la Défense.
- 12 Galerie Christian Nagel (today Galerie Nagel Draxler), founded in Cologne in 1990, fostered a strong orientation towards the new institutional critique and presented works from Michael Krebber, Andrea Fraser, Heimo Zobernig, Mark Dion, Kai Althoff, John Miller, Martha Rosler, and later Joëlle Tuerlinckx and Guillaume Bijl.
- 13 In 1995, at the Leuphana University in Lüneburg, Green developed a digital version in CD-ROM format, compiling all the audio, video and textual sources presented in the exhibition, as well as new ones produced for the occasion. *Import/Export Funk Office* was envisaged as a long-term evolutionary project, to be completed over time. Green even envisioned a potential existence on the web (Green 1995).
- 14 Specifically, Diederichsen was interested at that time in the history of blues music, the civil rights movement, Houston A. Baker, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Michele Wallace, as well as free jazz and hip-hop.
- 15 As examples, for the French context (Cukierman, Dambury, and Vergès 2018); for the British context (Grant and Price 2020); for the US context (Copeland, Foster, and Joselit 2020); and in a broader context and approach (Mignolo and Walsh 2018).