CHAPTER 4

CURATING GLOBALITY/ PRODUCING LOCALITY

The postcolonial today is a world of proximities. It is a world of nearness, not an elsewhere.
Okwui Enwezor (2002b:44).

By the latest count historical mega-exhibitions like Documenta and the Venice Bienniale now share the global stage with more than 200 (Heartney 2005:73) international biennials. This proliferation of global shows offering exotic locations and artists from around the globe has, according to art critic Eleanor Heartney (2005:73), created a kind of "anxiety" to attract critical attention in the art-world. The curatorial approach to an international exhibition has never been more vital to critical success. Kassel has the tactical advantage of being conceived of as a serious venue, given the historical weight of Documenta, the longer planning-frame and lower frequency of the event (only twice a decade as apposed to every other year) and the large budget for the exhibition.[1] Yet, even for Documenta the curatorial vision remains critical to the long-term effect of an exhibition that aims for global impact.

As international mega-exhibition the extraterritorialised Documenta 11 not only *reflected* globalism and *managed* global flows in the art-world, by legitimising theory and the careers of artists of the global panoptic; it also *staged* globalism as a theme in its discursive platforms and artworks dealing with globality. The curatorial approach of Documenta 11 was nevertheless a critical globalism, questioning the 'global' with a view to the 'local'. It is the contention of this chapter that the expansive globalising project of Documenta 11 at the same time localised the focus of the mega-exhibition, thereby rearticulating notions of art production in the interstices between the global and local imaginaries.

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[1] David (Griffin et al 2003:156) jokingly refers to the fact that people go to provincial Kassel simply for a specific exhibition and not to buy Italian shoes or visit the Academia like in Venice and asserts that Documenta is "unique […] as a space where […] you can develop a statement (and a real production structure) and find ways of implementing it".

An analysis of the curatorial positioning towards globalisation discourses and exhibition practices will track Documenta 11's own positioning within a decentred art network that create new mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. The impact of Documenta 11's postcolonial positioning in approaching globality and the implications for the production of locality in especially peripheral cultural production sites will form the core of this chapter. The critical focus will be whether this localisation constituted a counter-flow to co-optation and assimilation in globalising dynamics and, if so, to what measure this Documenta facilitated a critical moment in the mega-circuit.

4.1   GLOBAL ASPIRATIONS

The exponential growth of international mega-exhibitions is, according to Enwezor (2002c:51, emphasis added), motivated by a "*will to globality*" that is often informed by "traumatic historical ruptures" (Enwezor 2002c:47).[2] Some large-scale exhibitions should, however, be understood in terms of the discourse of modernity and modernisation, claims Enwezor (2002c:50), with art being approached by postcolonial states as "the contemporary manual for exiting peripheralization". The example of the São Paulo Bienal, founded in 1952, is sited by Enwezor (2002c:51) as presenting "the view of Brazil's continuity and contiguity with European culture" by showing Western avant-garde art together with home-grown artistic innovations. On both these scores aspirations to be global and modern, while nonetheless articulating some national identity of the country hosting the mega-exhibition, could be regarded as an expression of the cultural dynamics in contemporaneous globalisation.

The coexistence of national, transnational and post-national identifications in a plurality of cultural trajectories which contract and expand across various

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[2] Enwezor 2002c:48) asserts for instance that the Kwangju and Johannesburg Biennials have been created at "critical moments in the political and social transitions of South Korea and South Africa", similarly to Documenta's formation in response to World War II. Enwezor (2002c:48) locates the impetus for South Africa's 'will to globalise' in the "end of apartheid […signifying] to the rest of the world that the ground for the work of the imagination, as a fundamental part of a society in transition towards democracy […], is an important part of the transition".

borders, mirror globalisation processes as the site of conflicting simultaneities. Distinctions between home and abroad, arrival and departure, native and foreign, indigenous and imported, roots and routes are breaking down and the very notion of *origin* is severely compromised as cultures are becoming increasingly heterogeneous on local and global levels. According to cultural theorist Lawrence Grossberg (1996:169), "[t]he new global economy of culture entails a deterritorialisation of culture and its subsequent reterritorialisation, and challenges culture's equation with location or place". At stake are ideas about culture being located in unitary formations. Globalisation theorist Roland Robertson (1997:85) claims that thinking about culture has been limited by the "myth of cultural integration", asserting that viable societies are "normatively integrated, with culture performing the major function in that regard". This myth is shown up by globalisation, which requires flexible ways of locating culture and "interrogates the understanding of culture as a site of belonging with the idea of culture as a process of transition and becoming" (Chambers 1996:53). An assessment of globalisation therefore requires examining culture production in terms of location, dislocation and relocation, as well as place, displacement and replacement.

While the unitary location of culture in nation-states is under pressure and contemporary nations have to contend with what Bhabha terms "dissemiNation",[3] debates on national narratives, however, do not spell the end of the nation in any real sense of post-nation.[4] Nation-states not only created the conditions for globalisation, but are also an indispensable aspect

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[3] Bhabha develops this notion in "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation", printed in both *Nation and narration* (1990) and *The location of culture* (1994). Dissemination is not only influenced by the transnational conditions of culture formation in the wake of the transnationalisation of people, but the inherent flexibility of culture and, especially what (Bhabha 1990:3) postulates as the "impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force". Maharaj (2001:1), in his introduction of Bhabha at Platform 1 in Berlin, interpreted the notion of 'dissemination' as "the nation liquidised", as "liquefying, dissolving, melting, [and] mixing a new scene of maceration in which new identities are produced outside outdated archaic and obsolete notions of nation and identity with which we are lumbered by birth".

[4] Curator-critic Geeta Kapur (1994:40) expounds the fact that citizens in the First and Third Worlds approach 'the national' differently – while internationalists in the First World perceive the national as "not only a lost cause but also a negative hypothesis", for the Third World "the international is a firmly hyphenated term: the national is their express concern and determined reality".

of globalisation.[5]   The idea of the nation is both imposed from above by the state and also constituted by its citizens as, what social anthropologist Benedict Anderson (1991:6) terms, "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". In order for Anderson's imagined communities to perform on the transnational level, a global imaginary is required. It is in terms of this imaginary that nation-states and national cultures position themselves with strategies of isolation or adaptation, cognitive of what Robertson (quoted in Buell 1994:299) phrases as "*global callings* (their unique geocultural or geomoral contributions to world history)". For the art world its own global aspirations, and indeed callings or missions, are situated within these globalisation parameters. Institutions, curators and artists orientate themselves both transnationally and nationally whilst coming to terms with the realities and pressures of globalisation processes that simultaneously free up and limit positionalities.
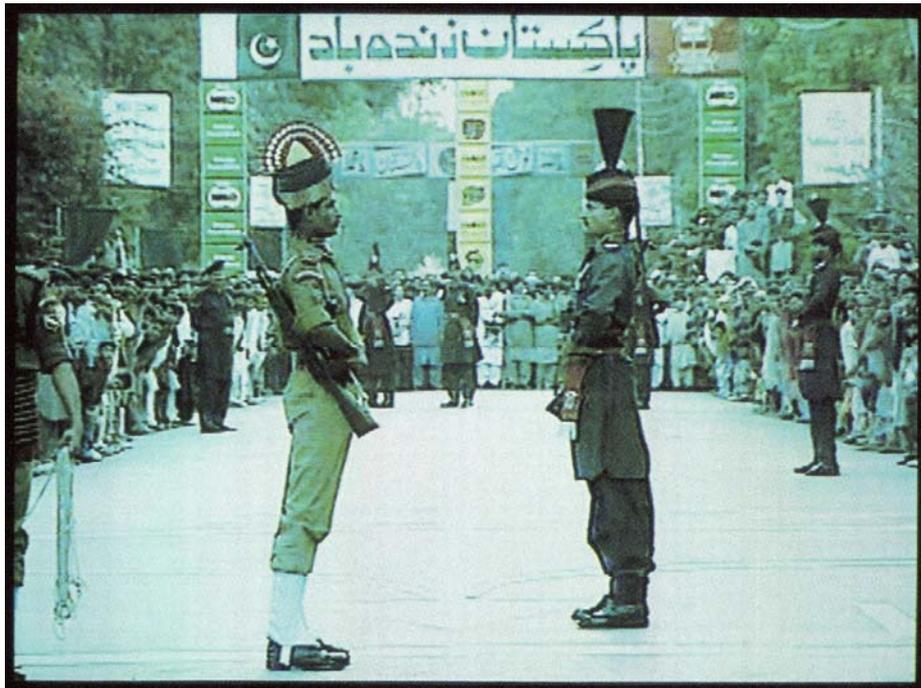

Figure 14: Amar Kanwar, *A season outside*, 1997.
Still from video (30 min.)
Museum Fridericianum, Kassel.
(*Documenta 11_Platform 5: Exhibition venues*. 2002:58).

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[5] World-system theorist Immanuel Wallerstein (1997:96) maintains with the creation of nation-states an "inter-state system" formed in which no "no-man's lands" were left, thus codifying every aspect of the individual citizen's existence, and that this division of the world into similarly managed units makes interlinking in a global system possible.

Documenta 11 engaged with these complex issues in Kassel with the inclusion of two works addressing postcolonial nationhood and identity formation in India and Palestine respectively. Indian filmmaker Amar Kanwar's *A season outside* (1997)(Figure 14) deals with how issues of nationality, essentialised identities and conflicts have been performed since partition in 1947. Taking the border post at Wagah on the India-Pakistan border as a focal point, the work contrasts the elaborate ritual opening and closing of the border with the movement of ordinary people, individuals who have the choice to question or to get caught up in collective narratives and enactments.

Figure 15: Fareed Armaly with Rashid Masharawi, *From/To*, 2002.
Installation-view.
Documenta-halle, Kassel.
(*Documenta 11_Platform 5: Exhibition venues*. 2002:13).

Compared to the lyrical approach of Kanwar, the commissioned installation of Fareed Armaly and Rashid Masharawi *From/To* (2002)(Figure 15) follow a very different transdisiplinary methodology to engage with the multi-layered

Palestinian experience since 1948.[6] Starting out from the topography of a single stone – according to Armaly (2002:549) the stone represents the smallest unit of landscape and is the icon of resistance to occupation – it's digitised, triangulated lines were translated as a map on the floor inside and outside the spaces allocated to this work in the Documenta-Halle. Armaly (2002:549), a first-generation American of Palestinian and Lebanese origin, claims the experience of the topos of *Palestine* as non-fixed space emerges in diasporic "correspondences" of roots and routes. Varied correspondences were created in the exhibition space by the inclusion of postcards, maps and three videos by filmmaker Masharawi, who was raised in the Shati refugee camp and remained living in the Occupied Territories.[7] His *Checkpoint*, a single camera take at eyelevel of traffic at the Ramallah-Al Quds Israeli checkpoint, captured the familiar narrative of tanks, soldiers and ordinary people preparing for enforced closure. The emotional impact of the videos exploring living conditions of occupation contrasted with the dry logic of mapping to heighten the disjunctures between space and displacement, permanence and transience, monolithic representations and fractured identities. The work also reveals, in now small measure, its own routes in the flows between national and transnational spaces; between Northern institutional art practise and disenfranchised temporality.

Documenta 11's own mapping of the gaps, shifts and contradictions of a globalised world will be discussed in the next section with reference to specific orientations towards globality in the art world. An expanded, decentred art network could, on the one hand, offer greater inclusivity and open out the field of representations. However, notions of transnational representation could, on

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[6] *From/To* was first conceived as a collaborative dialogue in 1999 for the Witte de With Center for Contemporary art in Rotterdam, linking refugee-camp fieldwork, research centres and films from Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Europe and America, according to Armaly (2002:549).
[7] Elements included with Masharawi's videos – *Checkpoint* (2002) (colour, sound, 50 min), *Homemovie* (2002) (colour, sound, loop 3 min. 20 sec), *Waiting* (2002)(colour, sound, 10 min) – were *Dealing with the past, creating a presence, picture postcards of Palestine* (1999); *On thematic cartography* (2002); a separate screening of Auguste and Louis Lumière's *Journey through Palestine* (1987) and Tewik Salah's *The Dupes* (1972); an on-demand digitsed film program; on-site computer installation with websites and texts.

the other hand, rather than freeing up art production, act as new mechanisms of exclusion.

4.1.1 Mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion

The growth of an international art circuit showing art from diverse production sites was made possible by the postmodern opening for previously marginalised artistic communities outside European and American centres developing after the ground-breaking exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* in 1989 at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.[8] Yet the growing decentred circuit of mega-exhibitions around the globe has resulted in the art world's own version of a "new geography of centrality and marginality" (Sassen 1998:XXV) at work in the globalised economy. A North-South axis still determines that "connections only happen inside a radial and hegemonic pattern around the centres of power" (Mosquera 1994:133) with access to the expanded marketplace of the art-world superstructure mimicking the hierarchies of global capital. Mosquera (1994:133) describes this condition as "axial" globalisation and the spaces traversed between global destinations as "zones of silence" with little or no access to global centres or to one another. Depending then on one's position on the global grid, globalisation in the art-world might be viewed as less transterritorial participation than transnational institutional diversification, more a case of expanded market than inclusivity.

Transnational distribution circuits, bolstered by the concomitant formation of theoretical notions of a "new internationalism"[9] and "international advanced art" (Enwezor 2002c:51),[10] act as globalised mechanisms of inclusion and

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[8] See discussion of the critique of this exhibition in Chapter 1.

[9] Notions of a "new internationalism" as post-multiculturalism are explored in Fisher, J (ed). 1994. *Global visions. Towards a new internationalism in the visual arts.* Internationalism, as applied to paradigmatic artists, is further explored by curator Gavin Jantjes in *A fruitful incoherence. Dialogues with artists on internationalism* (1998).

[10] Enwezor (2002c:51, emphasis added) maintains the will to be global risks spectacularisation when international exhibitions "seek to embed the peripheral spaces of cultural production and institutional articulation in the trajectory of international discourse" without seeking to "bring about a more complex understanding of artistic movements to local publics through the symbolic use and exchange of forms and ideas of *international advanced art*".

exclusion. Making the success of a transnational exhibition dependent on a kind of international meta-language of art has the implication that 'locals' everywhere need to learn to speak it in order to be heard. Jantjes (1998:16) defines "internationalism" in terms of hybridity and syncretic culture formations as the confusing moment after Babel: "If visual art is a form of language, with its own syntax grammar and concept of time, our contemporary art today resembles the moment immediately after Babel." Whilst this position shifts the discourse away from a centre-periphery binary, it could result in a drive to speak art "Esperanto", according to artist Marlene Dumas (Jantjes 1988:55), or, what Mosquera (2001:27) refers to as, "Art English". Mosquera (2001:28) claims "by the nineties, a sort of 'postmodern international language' had been instituted, prevailing over the so-called international scene even while its coinage as a dominant code denies *de facto* the pluralist perspective of postmodernity". In Documenta 11 the inclusion of artworks that question the parameters of such a homogenised art language to some extent subverted its functioning. However, by insisting on the notion of international advanced art in its selection criteria, Documenta 11 could be regarded as in full compliance with art-network dictates.

On the one hand more artists from – what used to be called – the peripheries are shown in international exhibitions than ever before. Access to a biennial could in fact favour artists from marginal localities above those at global centres. Geers (2005:6) maintains in this regard that as a result of the influx of curators and critics with the two Johannesburg biennials South African artists met "more curators of greater importance than any artist in London or New York" between 1994 and 1997, leading to international careers for some with "previously unimaginable privilege", "unheard of production budgets" and the chance of showing their work "in every corner of the globe, and exchanging ideas with the world's best critics, curators, artists and collectors". The 'global show' also positively impacts the local art scene through transcultural contact and dialogue around art production. Artist-curators David Koloane and Sipho Mdanda (2004:39) sum up the benefits of the biennials to the South African art community as that "more works from the African continent were shown" and artists "saw and experienced various arts approaches from a vast

resource that the biennales brought". As contact zones between global and local circuits of art production, Enwezor (2002c:46) frames biennials as "important scenes of cultural translation and transnational encounters between artists, art markets, institutions, and various professionals".

On the other hand, globalised exchanges are doomed to be unequal, limited by global gate-keepers, partial distributions and sheer serendipity. Kathryn Smith (2001:73) expresses the artist's view of globalisation form the bottom up:

> Events predicated on 'cultural dialogue and exchange' often end up as desperately one-sided, frustrating and limited in terms of productivity. As such, young local artists without the means to travel abroad often feel as if they are producing in a vacuum.

For Koloane (quoted in Martin 2004:30) globally unconnected artists who do not conform to the "new internationalism" and "international language" of large-scale exhibitions are marginalised by "the new exclusion". Curator Francesco Bonami (Griffin et al 2003:162, emphasis in original) remarks how artists nowadays "land in good galleries only *after* a solid career in the biennial system". The international art circuit marginalises as it empowers, by continuously widening the gap between mobile artists who are better informed and have more opportunities to refine their work and those stuck with a limited horizon – limited by the lack of infrastructure, the availability of publications, opportunities for dialogue and local galleries with access to an international market. This results in divisions impacting the production of locality as artists fall in two distinct groups: "those who have functioning international careers and those who do not" (Geers 2005:6). These artists with international careers tend to form a transnational class of nomadic producers, whose work perpetuate an international style. Documenta plays no small part in this: What Documenta giveth, Documenta also taketh away. Artists included in Documenta 11 now have international careers, while others remain marginalised. It could also be argued that the curators of Documenta 11 from the outset selected artists that, for the most part, belong to this group of nomadic producers and therefore had limited impact as inclusionary project.

Against expectations from artists in the South that Documenta 11 would be "'our' Documenta" (Geers 2005:130) and commentators in the North questioning the inclusivity of a Documenta that represented diasporic artists,[11] a case could be made that Enwezor at least steered clear from any notion of "authentic" representations while accentuating the value of transnational aesthetic principles. While the inclusion of artists who speak the 'international art language' indubitably excluded locals who don't, it also created openings for cultural translation in a transcultural field and, in particular, a refiguration of modernity as Western trope. Practitioners representing marginal production sites, if not necessarily working in them, emerged in this Documenta as participants in transmodernities. Thus Documenta 11 avoided both the pitfalls of essentialising differences and relativism in transcultural curating, thereby engaging effectively with one of the most pressing demands in a deterritorialised space of cultural production: coming to terms with essentialisms.

4.1.2 Representation in a decentred art network

As a sign of the deterritorialisation of the contemporary art world, "citizenship […] is measured by the number of frequent-flier miles one chalks up" (Lee 2003:167) – for artists, curators, critics, art dealers and viewers on the art-tourism track alike. This transnational focus could be attributed to at least three distinct factors: the cultivation of difference in the postmodern multicultural agenda; the constitutive effects of globalisation forces; and the embracing of globalism by the art community.

Multiculturalism's politics of difference has impacted the global sphere in perverse ways. Whereas it certainly opened up the field of representation, it also led to the commodification of the Other by the art market, forcing notions

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[11] Thomas McEvilley (2002:82), for instance, questioned how artists who have lived and continue to live outside their country of birth should be dealt with in a head-count of participation ratios.

of fixed identities along ethnic and national lines. For Mosquera (2001:30, emphasis in original) "greater plurality" and "greater circulation and legitimation of art from the peripheries" in the wake of multiculturalism "responded less to a new consciousness than to a tolerance based on paternalism, quotas, and *political correctness*". This resulted in neoexoticism from the centre and self-othering by the peripheries:

> [T]oo frequently, value has been placed on art that explicitly manifests difference or that better satisfies the expectations of otherness held by postmodern neoexoticism. This attitude has stimulated the *self-otherising* of the peripheries in which some artists – consciously or unconsciously – have tended toward a paradoxical self-exoticism (Mosquera 2001:30-31, emphasis in original).

Inclusion in a global market ruled by multiculturalist logic comes at a price as artists are expected to perform packaged identities.[12] South African artist Thembinkosi Goniwe (2003:35) protests being defined by the "burden of racial representation" and having to speak for a "collective black experience". Besides being limited by a totalising approach of some notion of 'black art' (Goniwe 2003:35), the artist is further put in an absurd position of collaborating with "mechanisms of institutionalized racism" (Goniwe 2003:37).[13]

Responding to multiculturalism's essentialising-imperatives, artists are increasingly reluctant to show their birth certificates, if not the stamps in their passports, in their work. In curatorial practices, also, the shift away from origins create, according to artist Yinka Shonibare (Griffin et al 2003:154), a further opening to "prioritize the aesthetic and political concerns of artists rather than their origins." Thus the approach to art production is corresponding to the "polyglot and migrant" (Canclini 1998:378) shape of fluid identities dislocated from unitary formulations of space and temporality. As

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[12] British/Jamaican art historian Petrine Archer-Straw (2003:100) maintains the curatorial tendency to 'package' art from peripheries like 'the Caribbean' makes it "difficult to determine the extent to which the image we are projecting is one that has been selected internally as opposed to externally".

[13] In this regard Goniwe (2003:37) asserts: "[T]he life of a black South African artist is an absurd novelty – always in invention and reinvention by those in positions of authority. The black artist participates in a constant struggle: having to fight his/her way out of the periphery by carving a route to the center regulated by the white gatekeeper".

such art production locally and globally reflect the globalising forces of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation of culture across national boundaries and identities. This transnationalisation of the aesthetic sphere shifts the discourse to the "in-between" (Bhabha 1994:224)[14] and "in transit" (Canclini 1998:377). Canclini (1998:377) poses that a "poetic of the transitory" circumscribes artworks that "overflow […] territories, because the works' journeys make its external resonance a component of the message". It is in this moment of 'going with the flow', of global projection, that art moves from mirroring global flows to become an active globalising force.

The art world's embrace of its global mission can manifest in, what art historian Pamela Lee (2003:166) formulates as, global*ism*: "an ethos, an aesthetic, or a kind of period style". In her view this extends from "imagery of globalization […], the aesthetics of passports and Coca-Cola" (Lee 2003:166) to a "colonial logic underwrit[ing] the expansion of the art world's traditional borders as if the art world itself were gleefully following globalization's imperial mandate" (Lee 2003:165). In this respect the large-scale international exhibition functions as an instrument of neocolonialism, according to artist Martha Rosler (Griffin et al 2003:161), maintaining it is "a grand collector and translator of subjectivities under the latest phase of globalization". This expansion manifests in what (Mosquera 1994:135) describes as "curating the world"[15] as well as the colonising of other cultural domains and the 'lifeworld' outside the gallery. Penetration of the market seems to be the aim, rather than critical responses to the culture industries.

When the institutional structures of the art world begin to resemble that of transnational corporations the gap for a critical encounter with globalisation

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[14] Bhabha (1994:216) formulates the global as a multifarious site for the production of singularities, translation and multiple identities in terms of double-frames: "Cultural globality is figured in the *in-between* spaces of double-frames: its historical originality marked by a cognitive obscurity; its decentred 'subject' signified in the nervous temporality of the transitional, or the emergent provisionality of the 'present'."

[15] Mosquera (1994:135) references anthropologist James Clifford when maintaining "the restless desire and power of the postmodern West to curate the world has now begun", indicating that the anthropological desire to 'curate the other' has turned into curating the world.

becomes very narrow indeed. In order to open up the possibilities of formulating the "strong, critical responses" Enwezor (2002b:45) advocates to global hegemonies, Lee (2003:167) claims that a self-critical re-examination of art's global positioning is imperative:

> [O]ur most urgent challenge is to account more critically for the way the art world has internalized the conditions of the global as its daily habitus: its institutional, political, and economic imperatives as well as its artistic and critical ones. And we need to productively rethink the 'art world' as itself a mode of immanent global production, not just a passive mirror reflecting the sweeping geopolitical changes thought to remain outside it.

It is doubtful, however, whether such a critical self-examination could produce enough distance – a critical territory 'outside' – to the global order. The curatorial project of Documenta 11 could, nonetheless, be considered as precisely such an attempt to rethink the influence of globalising forces and the exhibition's own role in particular as globaliser in transnational art networks.

4.1.3 Localising a globalised Documenta

In a sense Documenta 11 produced localities in its exhibition structure by opening up spaces where the particular resisted being reduced to the universal. Critic Tim Griffin (Griffin et al 2003:153) states:

> Enwezor's globalism […] was in Kassel linked to the acute value of regionality and difference, where the emergence of the local and particular precluded the possibility of any unifying system or thematic but nevertheless comprised a field of what could be called 'minor knowledges'.

Even if Documenta 11's transnational circuitry predisposed it to be global in intent, it is local in content, leading Jan-Erik Lundström (2003:59, emphasis in original) to conclude that "in our time of uncertainty, instability, hybrid and fluid identities, *Documenta 11* was indeed an exhibition of place, of culture's anchorage in space".

Such localising of the global is not only an expression of the fluidity of contemporary societies, but a necessary condition for the production of difference. It creates spaces for the "production of new localities in order to make them significant in the modern world, or to generate different modernities" (Hanru 2003:36). The transcultural viewfinder of Documenta 11's constellation of postcolonial public spheres was specifically set to bring local contexts and histories into focus. As such, the curatorial aim of providing mooring against anchorless "transnationalisation, translocalization, and denationalization of the international contemporary art economy" (Enwezor 2002c:45) could indeed be regarded as successful. While approaching transnational and transcultural space as space of displacement, Documenta 11 nevertheless underscored the locatedness of speakers, production sites and artworks. It is the contention of this study that the particular engagement with locality could be considered the strongest curatorial statement against rampant globalism in the mega-exhibition circuit. The following two sections engage in detail with curatorial localising strategies that distinguish this Documenta among contemporary exhibitions and evaluate the positive contribution of a postcolonial approach.

4.2   PROVINCIALISING THE GLOBAL

Globalising Documenta meant *provincialising* Documenta, in the sense which cultural historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2001:190) formulates the postcolonial task as provincialising "Europe".[16] In this context Documenta 11 dealt with place as palimpsest, as the complex successive historical inscriptions that, especially in non-Western cultural sites, archives disruptions of modernity in space as well as time. Thus locality can be read as "a constant trope of difference […], a continual reminder of colonial ambivalence, of the separation yet continual mixing of the colonizer and colonized" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin

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[16] For Chakrabarty (2001:191) the provinsialising project comprises an understanding, firstly, of Europe's annexing of the notion "modern" as an integral part of its own imperialist history and, secondly, that Third World nationalistic thinking has been partners in universalising this conception of modernity as European. He (Chakrabarty 2001:192) advocates "writ[ing] into the history of modernity the ambivalences, contradictions, the use of force, and the tragedies and ironies that attend it".

2000:179). By conceiving Documenta 11's platforms as a "rigorous review of what the 'global' actually is in relation to *different spaces of production*" (Enwezor, Griffin et al 2003:159, emphasis added) consequently entailed approaching the global, first and foremost, as postcolonial space.

Such a positioning calls for a clear definition of ethical engagement on the global level. The transnational and transcultural imaginary is experienced as cosmopolitanism by those regarding themselves as global subjects and is informed by the trope of the traveller or stranger. Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah (2005:222) maintains an ethical discourse of cosmopolitanism should steer away from "the diversitarianism of the game warden, who ticks off the species in the park, counting each further one a contribution to his assets".[17] Responsible cosmopolitanism, in this view, involves not only knowing about other subjectivities in the global world, but as fellow-travellers to consciously engage 'strangers'. What distinguishes the experience of strangers, according to cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiades (quoted in Chambers 1996:53), is that "[t]he stranger's vision is enlightened, not because he has transcended his origins but because travelling has revealed the chiasmus within the certitudes of belonging". Living in globalised communities, where the distance between strangers has shrunk, we all have a sense of becoming, what psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva calls, "strangers to ourselves".[18] We are confronted with "new modalities of otherness" (Kristeva 1991:20) and in this moment of experiencing otherness we can, according to Bhabha (1996:202), "assum[e] a more worldly, or what is now termed 'global' responsibility". Bhabha articulates the space of the global imaginary, conceived of as both "imagined and unimagined community" (Bhabha

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[17] Appiah (2005:222) makes the distinction between "moral" and "cultural" cosmopolitanism, or an approach of "universalism" and "impartialism", stating "[t]he discourse of cosmopolitanism will add to our understanding only when it is informed by both of these ideals: if we care *about* others who are not part of our political order – others who may have commitments and beliefs that are unlike our own – we must have a way to talk *to* them".

[18] In *Strangers to ourselves* (1991:191) Kristeva extends Freud's notion in *Das Unheimliche* (1919) of "that agony of frightened joyfulness, that has been called *unheimlich*, that in English is *uncanny*, and the Greeks quite simply call *xenos*" to the "foreign" and the contemporary experience of foreigners. Kristeva (1991:192) claims: "The ethics of psychoanalysis implies a politics: it would involve cosmopolitanism of a new sort that, cutting across governments, economies, and markets, might work for a mankind whose solidarity is founded on the consciousness of the unconscious – desiring, destructive, fearful, empty, impossible".

1996:201), as a space of ambivalence in which a "translational" cosmopolitanism (Bhabha 1996:204) can be constructed. From this position commonality is not given, but achieved at a cost to those constructing cosmopolitan identities.
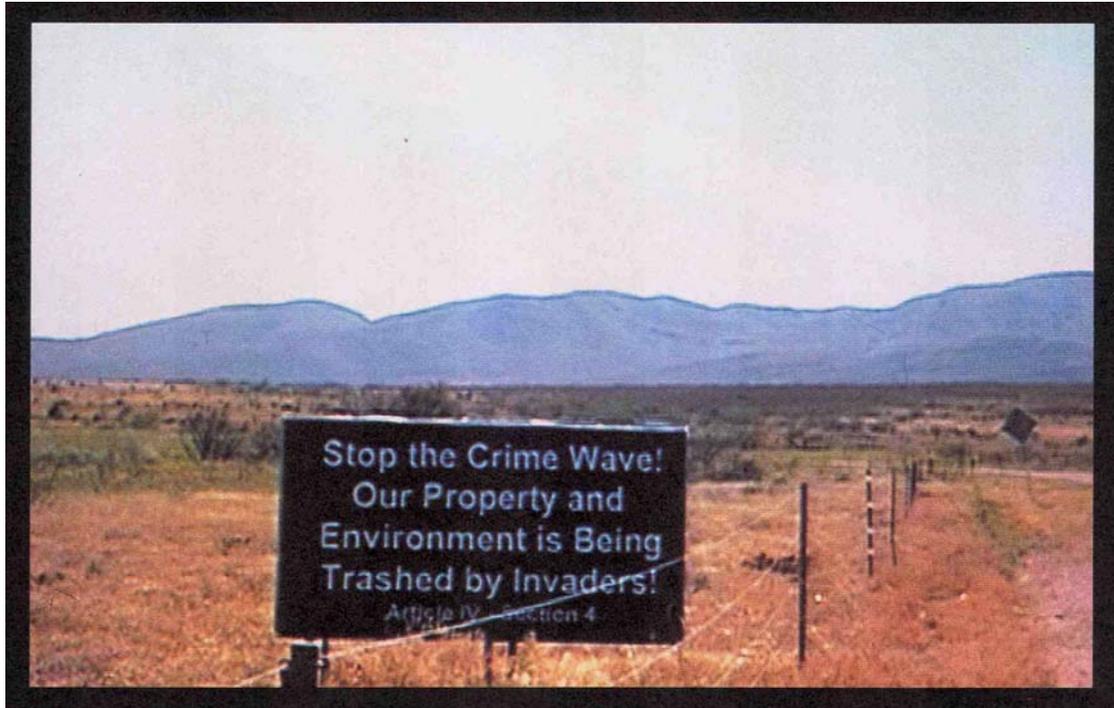

Figure 16: Chantal Akerman, *From the other side*, 2002.
Super 16 and video transferred to DVD: film installation for 18 monitors and 2 screens, real time video broadcast.
(*Documenta 11_Platform 5: Exhibition catalogue* 2002:163).

For Documenta 11 an ethical interrogation into fragmented global living conditions in a postcolonial commons entailed, in the first place, to diminish the distance between localities. Such a sense of proximity in the exhibition space could, and did indeed in the spaces of Documenta 11, facilitate understanding of and tolerance for cultural differences. *From the other side* (2002) (Figure 16) – Chantal Akerman's multi-screen installation of film and video about illegal immigration of Mexicans across the US border into the harsh Arizona desert – linked the artistic space of Documenta with the 'other side' of the real border through a live broadcast. For the opening days of Documenta a continuous loop of a film-image was projected onto a screen near the border, which was in turn filmed and broadcast live in Kassel. This

seamless use of technology to traverse borders in the Northern aesthetic space poignantly underscored the provisional reality of the interviewed Mexicans, locked into an unequal dynamic which some pay for with their lives. As such, Belgium-born Akerman engaged with displacement and proximity in a way that could open up a critical space for viewers to reconsider a border conflict on the other side of the world in a more immediate sense.

4.2.1 Proximity as global condition

The pivotal notion of proximity in the context of Documenta 11 is theorised in terms of "the terrible nearness of distant places" (Enwezor 2002b:44). By making nearness the prevailing mode of globalisation, Enwezor highlighted the inequalities of globalisation processes and, at the same time, that an ethical response was needed:

> From the moment the postcolonial enters into the space/time of global calculations and the effects they impose on modern subjectivity, we are confronted not only with the asymmetry and limitations of globalism's materialist assumptions but also with the terrible nearness of distant places that global logic sought to abolish and bring into one domain of deterritorialized rule. Rather than vast distances and unfamiliar places, strange peoples and cultures, postcoloniality embodies the spectacular mediation and representation of nearness as the dominant mode of understanding the present condition of globalization.

The fact that Documenta 11 questioned the *ethics* of power relations expressed in global disparities is considered a major gain by art historian Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie (2005:86). Approaching globality in terms of "nearness, not an elsewhere" (Enwezor 2002b:44) has the further advantage of constructing an ethical space in which new cultural forms and counter-histories can be negotiated.[19] As such, postcolonial space "is the site where experimental cultures emerge to articulate modalities that define the new

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[19] Enwezor (2002b:44) argues in this regard that global postcolonial space is not "a vulgar state of endless contestations and anomie, chaos and unsustainability, but rather the very space where the tensions that govern all ethical relationships between citizen and subject converge".

meaning- and memory-making systems of late modernity", claims Enwezor (2002b:44). By emphasising proximities, rather than elsewheres in postcolonial space, the focus can therefore be shifted from broad global strokes to localising contexts and temporalities. Ultimately it renders any notion of a cultural core and peripheries nonsensical in a global modernity where "local details *everywhere* remind us of their global positionality" (Chambers 1996:57, emphasis in original).[20] A closer investigation of Platform 4 in the next section will examine how this focus on nearness, on abjection and an ethical response to troublesome proximities, impacted the global project of Documenta 11.

4.2.2 Cities on the edge of globalisation[21]

In a sense African cities are the extreme paradigmatic contexts of localities where the 'global' meets the 'postcolonial' and as such exhibit the conjunctures and disjunctures of globalisation. Platform 4, *Under siege: Four African Cities – Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos*[22] raised the question whether these conditions entailed the creation of new modernities, rather than the conventional approach to Africa as pre-modern and in need of modernising through the munificence of globalising forces. The curators (*Documenta 11_Platform 4…* 2002:20) state:

> We must ask ourselves whether there are modernities outside the reactive 'alternatives' to the West: modernities that emerge out of postcolonial histories and global phenomena, but which also engage different kinds of understanding of wealth, subjectivity and the social

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[20] Cultural theorist Iain Chambers (1996:57) argues that the notion of a pure, essential core can not be extracted from the actual travels of cultural phenomena in "global transit, translation and transvaluation", rendering the "rhetoric of alterity" hollow. He (Chambers 1996:57-58) claims: "In absolute difference the rhetoric of alterity locates a pure otherness waiting to be filled by the presence of our desires […] like the 'empty' wilderness […] waiting to be settled and domesticated and brought into the redemptive time of our history".

[21] Documenta 11's engagement with South American cities in the form of a research project published outside the framework of the five platforms – Silva, A. (ed). 2003. *Urban Imaginaries from Latin America. Documenta 11*. Translated by V Martin. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz. – is not discussed in this section, since this publication focuses primarily on the imaginary constitution of these cities.

[22] Platform 4, a conference and workshop, was held in Lagos in March 16-20 2002.

sphere so often taken for granted when approaching modernity and globalization.

Questions about alternative modernities impact on the way art produced in Africa should be viewed and presented within a globalised art network, especially since globalisation is conceived in the North as a shift towards a spatial orientation in which time has been compressed to present space.[23] Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1998:45) concludes that even if the "[s]hrinking of space abolishes the flow of time", the experience of a "perpetual present" differs greatly for those empowered and those made structurally redundant by globalisation, namely the "'globalized' rich" and the "'globalized' poor". He (Bauman 1998:45, emphasis in original) maintains the global aristocracy, who are not constrained by space in its physical or virtual forms, "live in *time*", while the masses with nothing but time on their hands, "live in *space*". Consequently the concept of home, according to Bauman (1998:46), means dematerialised space to the rich and decomposed time to the poor. Any notion of the post-historical paradox, of living in continuous contemporaneity, therefore might be meaningless to people cut off from the benefits generated by globalisation. Especially for Africans experiencing globalisation as intensified unequalisation, "time and space have not collapsed", maintains Sheila Bunwaree (2002:1), sociologist of development for CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa).

The curators of Documenta (*Documenta 11_Platform 4…* 2002:14) defines the "crisis" of African cities in terms of "spatial entropy, a decline in infrastructure, the unravelling of traditional institutional and social networks, the erosion of state capacity to provide adequate social amenities, [and] inequality of access to economic and political capacities". The predicaments seem to outweigh the promises presented as a series of paradoxes, of what Bunwaree (2002:1) describes as "multiple D's and R's" – on the one hand

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[23] The notion of globalisation as 'space-time compression' – first developed by geographer David Harvey in *The condition of postmodernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change* (1990) – is expressed by anthropologist of science and curator Bruno Latour (2004:[sp]) in terms of a spatial turn. Latour (2004:[sp]) claims we live in a "time of cohabitation", in which there is no progress and nothing disappears, and that the politics of time has ended since we have moved into a "politics of space".

decay, destruction, decadence and dilapidation, and on the other reconciliation, renewal, reconstruction, resilience and resourcefulness.

Referencing co-cultural theorist Anthony King's work on urbanism, Frederick Buell (1994:137, emphasis in original) postulates that the colonial city might, in a reversal of time, be the global city's future as the conditions of inequality and fragmentation of the periphery are replicated in global centres:

> [C]olonial circumstances represent, in fact, not the past of which the core is the modern future, but a new global future that the core is only beginning to recognize. The peripheries are thus not behind but *further along* the developmental timeline.

African cities coming to terms with colonial pasts and global futures are subsequently situated not at the edge of globalisation processes as the level of their participation in the global economy would suggest, but rather at the very centre of producing coping mechanisms in a globalised world. In an "increasingly urban continent" (*Documenta 11_Platform 4…* 2002:17) with forty percent of the African population living in cities, African cities lay bare the human cost of deterritorialising and reterritorialising in cities of both the North and South. They reveal the "increasing urbanization of poverty" (*Documenta 11_Platform 4…* 2002:18), show contemporary cities as contested "collision points between tradition and modernity" (*Documenta 11_Platform 4…* 2002:17), and display urban spaces as cites of "desire, nostalgia, or paranoia" (Bremner 2002:165).

In Kassel the effects of globalisation were most striking in works referencing cities of the South. Olumuyiwa Osifuye's *Selected Feature Photographs of Lagos* (2002) show how individuals make do in a city in crisis, in the space between structural collapse and renewal. Similarly Jean-Marie Teno exposes the empty promise of global prosperity for the developing world in *Vacances au pays* (A trip to the country) (2000). Showing the degradation surrounding the two 'modern' concrete towers in Cameroon's capital Yaoundé, Teno's first-person cinematic work questions the roles of postcolonial functionaries and the impact of a global economy in the stagnation experienced by his countrymen.

Figure 17: David Goldblatt, *Silencers for sale and fitting, Esselen and Banket Streets, Hillbrow*, 2002.
C-print, 40 x 29,5 cm
Kulturbahnhof, Kassel.
(*Documenta 11_Platform 5: Exhibition catalogue* 2002:307).

The photographic images of both David Goldblatt, *Jo'burg Intersections* (1999-2002) (Figure 17), and Kendell Geers, *Suburbia* (1999), depict Southern financial capital, Johannesburg, as a city divided along Western and African imaginaries. Goldblatt frames 'exclusive' developments, such as the Dainfern-estate, Shingara Sands Bush Lodges and the 'Tuscan' gambling paradise Montecasino – amplified with quotes from developers' publicity – with images of an informal settlement, rubbish dump, silencers fitted and corn roasting on the side of the road. Geers presented 36 images of facades to suburban homes, each 'protected' by versions of barbed wire, electrified fences and armed response warnings. At Platform 4 architect Lindsay Bremner (2002:165) referred to Johannesburg as a city "being remade as a collection of juxtaposed fragments", with a "new spatiality of fixed identities and logics of discrimination" (Bremner 2002:160). She (Bremner 2002:160) offered an explanation of why 'Italy' became an urban model for wealthy

South Africans: it confers a sense of stability and timelessness while distancing inhabitants from real history, it carries the promise of *la dolce vita,* and Italy represents the urbane value of being civilized. In between "sanitized fragments and idealized reflections of global capital", Bremner (2002:171) maintains, ordinary people are reconnecting the divided apartheid city in an emerging "improvised spatiality".

In the township, inner-city, suburb, *quartier* and *cités* people devise diverse adaptive survival strategies of improvisation of "Do-It-Yourself", described by curator Hou Hanru (2003:37) as the "main source of sustainability, the main force in the revival and continued development of today's post-planning cities". This view of globalisation is 'from the bottom up', as it were, situated in "unstable space" (De Boeck 2002:246) and driven by a "frontier logic of mutation" (De Boeck:245). Through localisation processes new urban landscapes emerge, of "*villagization*" (De Boeck 2002:258) and novel ethnicities, but also of imaginary constructs of the city in the order of "ghosts" (Simone 2002a:[sp]) or the "shadow, spectre, reflection" (De Boeck 2002:281). Urbanist AbouMaliq Simone (2002a:[sp]), keynote speaker of Platform 4, formulates the conditions of identity creation in a city like Douala, Cameroon, in which conventional urban and social structures have collapsed, as ghost-like. He (Simone 2002a:[sp]) maintains against the backdrop of the "ghost-like character of the international financial economy", for the majority of Africans depending on the informal economy and services "the only way to take charge of the city is as ghosts". Living as ghosts mean "[t]he boundary between what is actual and what is possible is effaced, is taken apart as that which never happened but could, is remembered as it is about to happen now" (Simone 2002a:[sp]). Anthropologist Filip de Boeck (2002:281) posits Kinshasa's invisible "second city", governed by the occult and mystery, mirrors "the way in which the second or 'shadow' economy has taken over the first or formal economy". The main crisis of societies marginalised by globalisation is defined by De Boeck (2002:284) as the "slippage" between the real and its double and the eventual "*liquidation* of the double, the unwholesome coalescence of the reflecting sides into one, or the gradual take-over of one by the other" (De Boeck 2002:285, emphasis in original).

The global pressure of transmigrations manifest in African cities, as elsewhere, in conflicts between locals and non-locals who reterritorialised vacated spaces, like the *flatlands* in the inner-city of Johannesburg. Maxine Reitzes (2002:216), policy researcher at the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa, investigated xenophobia in the context of conflicts in perception of Johannesburg as a "world-class city" versus an "African city". Reitzes (2002:215-216) claims "[t]he project of forging a post-apartheid South African national identity tend to be informed by 'othering' non-South Africans", who are perceived as "threats to hard-won inclusive citizenship rights and entitlements". Migrants from other African countries, however, regard "certain rights as portable" (Reitzes 2002:217), lay claim to a common black identity, appeal to former political alliances and consider the Southern African region to be a single economic entity. French researcher Antoine Bouillon (2002:86, emphasis in original), who worked in Durban and Johannesburg, expounded the fact that "South African black people have historically been denied access to *both* the *city* and *citizenship* at the same time". Bouillon (2002:89) maintains while South African "would-be 'city-zens'" are territorialising previously forbidden terrain, in staging their citizenship "a border has to be constantly re-performed to give substance and effectiveness to national identity" (Bouillon 2002:93). Bouillon (2002:93, emphasis in original) argues "*an alternative enunciation of citizenship*" based on "basic human rights" may be called for in order to treat all non-nationals – migrants, immigrants and refugees – equitably and to do justice to the "*constituent human rights dimension*" of the notion of citizenship that "renders the actual definitions and implementations of citizenship in local nation-state contexts forever questionable".

Rather than supplying a litany of the wretched of the earth, Documenta 11's public sphere dealing with African cities elaborated on the unadulterated conditions of globalisation and what the terrible nearness of distant places could mean in the context of a European exhibition aiming for global relevance. Platform 4 could also be regarded as a demonstration of resistance strategies to the stranglehold of globalisation forces through the

focus on particular production of localities.[24] Inclusion of artworks produced under these conditions further contributed to provincialising the cultural discourse around Documenta 11.

4.3 PRODUCTION OF LOCALITY

The localising project of Documenta 11's constellation of public spheres could be construed as a central strategy in resisting global hegemonies. Contrary to criticism of the exhibition being "given over to ethnographic material" (Robinson 2002:[sp]), the curatorial approach was not inclusiveness based on geographical distances covered and outer-reaches embraced, but rather on the *production of locality*. This section will deal specifically with the possibilities and limits of the local as site of resistance for cultural production and will also evaluate attempts by Documenta-artists to construct a transnational digital space of refuge and opposition.

4.3.1 Site(s) of resistance

In the rhetoric of globalisation the *local* is constructed as the site for the production of difference or singularity in opposition to the universalism of the *global*. When this opposition rests on assumptions that "the global entails homogenization and undifferentiated identity whereas the local preserves heterogeneity and difference", assert Hart and Negri (2000:44), it presupposes a "false dichotomy between the global and the local".[25] This

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[24] Enwezor (2002b:52) claims in this regard that the four African cities under discussion "express paradigmatic contexts of intense production of locality (neighborhoods, associations, imaginaries of religion, and circuits of mediatic representations)".

[25] Any rigid distinction between the 'global' and 'local' is untenable, as contemporaneous globalisation is constituted by a chain of mutually-constructive, conflicting simultaneities. Jameson (1998a:xii) defines globalisation as "an untotalizable totality which intensifies binary relations between its parts". The sense of simultaneous movement in opposite directions while doubling back, of reassigning dynamics from above and below, of *both… and…*, leads Bhabha (2002:355) to describe globalisation discourse in terms of a "contiguous, double horizon […] shuttling back and forth between continuity and contiguity". This shifting double horizon of "conflictual *contiguities*" (Bhabha 2002:354) is alternatively expressed as a Janus-face by Hall (1997a:27), for whom "[g]lobal and local are the two faces of the same movement

dichotomy is based on "a kind of primordialism that fixes and romanticizes social relations and identities" (Hardt & Negri 2000:45).[26] Globalisation plays out as the interpenetration of the global and local with locality produced on both local and global levels, with no 'outside' to the process. Hardt and Negri (2000:45) suggest "[g]lobalization, like localization, should be understood instead as a *regime* of the production of identity and difference, or really of homogenization and heterogenization". Defined from this position, the global and local refer to "different networks of flows and obstacles in which the local moment or perspective gives priority to the *reterritorializing barriers* or boundaries and the global moment privileges the mobility of *deterritorializing flows*" (Hardt & Negri 2000:45, emphasis added).

To escape the circular logic of the global-local dichotomy, the local is more productively discussed in terms of the production of locality.[27] Referencing Appadurai, Hardt and Negri (2000:45) describe the production of locality as "the social machines that create and recreate the identities and differences that are understood as the local". Appadurai's (1996:178-179) notion of the production of locality is linked to sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies's use of *Gemeinschaft*,[28] 'neighbourhood', to refer to "the actually existing social forms in which locality, as a dimension or value, is variably realized". For Appadurai (1996:179) neighbourhoods are "situated communities characterized by their actuality, whether spatial or virtual, and their potential for social reproduction"

from one epoch of globalisation". Political theorist James Rosenau (2003:4) expresses globalisation in terms of an "endless series of distant proximities in which the forces pressing for greater globalization and those inducing greater localization interactively play themselves out". The notion of interactivity, rather than mere simultaneity, is also stressed by globalisation theorist Roland Robertson (1997:73), who defines globalisation as "a massive twofold process involving *the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism*". In this view the transnational and national, the global and the local, the impersonal and the communal, homogeneity and difference, "pace and space" (Rosenau 2003:5) are mutually constituted.

[26] Grossberg (1996:176) maintains the identification of the local as the "site of specificity" and the "site of agency (difference, resistance)" presupposes "prior identification of subjectivity, subject positions (identity) and agency, leading to "fetishisation of the local".

[27] "Glocalization", a Japanese marketing term from 1980s (King 1997:x), is used by some authors to describe the two-way process of globalisation. This term adds no insight into the direction or conditions of flows, but instead obscures the uneven realities of globalisation.

[28] Tönnies conceived of the distinction between community and society in *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, first published in 1887. The notion of *Gemeinschaft* is exemplified by the house as the focus of the family or neighbourhood, a homogeneous entity bound by close bonds and beliefs. *Gesellschaft*, the larger civil society or nation, is represented by the city, in which ethnicity, class and race are contested.

and, differing from Tönnies, he (Appadurai 1996:178) approaches locality as "primarily relational and contextual, rather than as scalar or spatial". The notion of contextuality encapsulates the problems with the production of locality on a global scale, since neighbourhoods function as "contexts and at the same time require and produce contexts" (Appadurai 1996:184).[29] Locality can thus only be produced and reproduced with reference to the non-local or global. Any possibility of change or "new contexts" relies on these "dynamics of conjunctural change" (Appadurai 1996:185). 'Locality', in this view, is not a space but a "relational achievement" (Appadurai 1996:186). Therefore, even if the local seems to be dwarfed by the global in the processes of globalisation, locals retain some form of agency in the production of their locality.
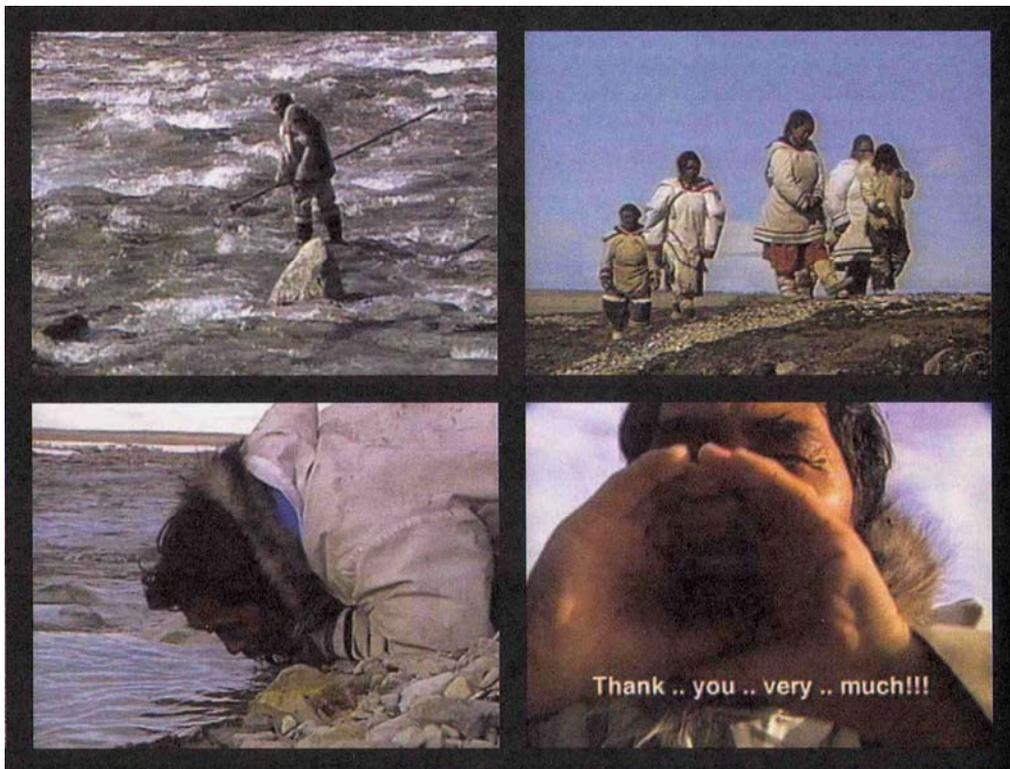

Figure 18: Igloolik Isuma Productions, *Nunavut* (Our land), 1994/95.
Stills from episode 8: Avamuktalik (Fish swimming back and forth).
Video, colour (28 min. 50 sek.)
Binding-Brauerei, Kassel.
(*Documenta 11_Platform 5: Exhibition catalogue* 2002:354).

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[29] Appadurai (1996:184) maintains as "meaningful lifeworlds" neighbourhoods function as "multiplex interpretive site[s]", but "[i]nsofar as neighborhoods are imagined, produced, and maintained against some sort of ground (social, material, environmental,) they also require and produce contexts against which their own intelligibility takes shape".

Improvising resistance to homogenising forces of globalisation was at the heart of Documenta 11-artworks dealing with the reterritorialising of identities. Creating independent community-based media for the new arctic territory Nunavut[30] is the project of Igloolik Isuma Productions, a Canadian Inuit film production company. Aimed at a primary Inuit audience, *Nunavut* (Our land, 1994/95) (Figure 18) – 13 half-hour episodes of a dramatic TV series – dealt with life in the Igloolik community in a soap opera format. By mixing fiction with instruction the series does not only entertain, but endeavours to preserve oral traditions and traditional ways of living through a form of storytelling adapted to a globalised age. According to the company's website http://www.isuma.ca/ an additional aim is the creation of jobs in this isolated community.

A similar focus on expression of group-identities and active empowerment is at the heart of the projects of the Senegalese collective Huit Facettes.[31] The artists' involvement with workshops, such as painting on glass, pyrography, ceramics, batik dyeing, carving, weaving, embroidery and mural painting in rural communities was presented at Documenta 11 in the form of documentation in *Hamdallaye!* (1996-2002). In the socio-cultural centre established by the group in the village of Hamdallaye, Samba M'Baye, a local self-taught painter of frescoes, was assisted to decorate various huts and the main building. His signs and shapes were developed as basis for a graphic register to establish a personalised visual alphabet for the village.

Apart from innovative tactics to produce locality, these works share common ground in their rejection of modernist notions of commodified art production. They show an art practice that effectively distances itself from the forces and demands of global cultural industries through engagement with local social issues. For artist Kan-Si (*Huit Facettes…* 2002: 570) art production in sites of

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[30] The aboriginal lands Nunavut – an area of 2 million square kilometres, nearly one fifth of Canada – was granted self-rule on 1 April 1999, according to the official website http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/.
[31] Huit Facettes was formed by 8 artists in Dakar, Senegal, in 1996 and the current members are Abdoulaye N'Doye, El Hadji Sy, Fode Camara, Cheikh Niass, Jean Marie Bruce, Mor Lisa Ba, and Amadou Kane Sy (Kan-Si) (*Documenta 11… short guide* 2002:114).

intense production of locality has to be positioned socially and be judged accordingly:

> Artistic work that aspires to engage with social issues certainly contributes in one way or another to the development of the 'real word' [...] Such contribution will have to be perceived differently and in a wider sense, just as the notion of a work of art can be understood more in terms of process than as finished cultural object, to be instantly consumed (seen, appreciated or indeed judged).

The skill transfer and developmental aspects of this form of art practice relocates it against globalising dynamics to connect with globalised art's forgotten public, the "poor in Africa [who] have become the disappeared of globalisation" (Enwezor 2005:41). Such a utilitarian view of art also realistically engages with the weak position of contemporary African artists working on the margins of a globalised art economy. A showing of these works in Northern Kassel, therefore, indeed serves as counter-position to "modernism's historical contradiction between art's claim to aesthetic autonomy and its social relevance", as it is framed by critic Nadja Rottner (*Documenta 11… short guide* 2002:114).

4.3.2 Limitations of the local

In terms of a global frame, the limitations put on the production of locality – in cultural peripheral zones or in spaces outside the grid of globally powerful centres – render the local as the "site both of promise and predicament" (Dirlik 1989:85). Devising strategies of resistance within and across these parameters is the greatest challenge for cultural practitioners intent on producing locality with their own work.

The promise of locality is linked to what historian Arif Dirlik (1989:90) describes as "localized consciousness," constituting "the local as the site for working out 'alternative public spheres' and alternative social formations". For Dirlik (1989:87) postmodern debunking of meta-narratives, such as that of

modernity and modernisation, resulted in both a "reassertion" of the local and the "restoration" of the histories formerly thought irrelevant:

> Rather than an inexorable march of global conquest from its origins in Europe, the history of modernization appears now as a temporal succession of spatially dispersed local encounters, to which the local objects of progress made their own contributions through resistance or complicity, contributing in significant ways to the formation of modernity, as well as to its contradictions.

This reinstatement-project runs into a predicament, maintains Dirlik (1989:90), because persistent structures of domination maintain conditions for manipulation on political and cultural levels. Thus, even if the breakdown of the theoretic framework of modernism empowered local narratives, from the vantage point of global capitalism the local is not "the site of liberation but manipulation" (Dirlik 1989:96).[32] This characterisation rings true for the former 'Third World' or South, but does not keep track of the predicaments of deterritorialised, diasporic and transnational "translocalities" (Appadurai 1996:192) created by globalisation. For Appadurai (1996:199) "[t]he many displaced, deterritorialized, and transient populations[…] are engaged in the construction of locality, as a structure of feeling, often in the face of erosion, dispersal, and implosion of neighborhoods as coherent social formations". Constructing and reconstructing local narratives under these conditions, complicated by divided loyalties and lack of commitment (especially in transient communities), are truly fluid and precarious, in both global centres and peripheries.

The production of locality is inscribed by an awareness of the bigger picture, of some sense of the 'global'. Awareness of the local is, in turn, heightened by globalisation. Strategising locality, however, has to entail more than the simplistic marketing slogan of 'Think globally, act locally'. The 'global' is not a homogenous field,[33] neither is the 'local' uncontested.[34] For African cultural

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[32] Through "domestication" in different localities transnational corporations "mystify the location of power", thereby making resistance more difficult, claims Dirlik (1989:95).

[33] Stuart Hall (1997b:67) maintains "'the global' is always composed of varieties of articulated particularities", defining the 'global' as "the self-presentation of the dominant particular".

producers especially, framed by modernism to be poor echoes of Western excellence or, at most, ventriloquist dummies,[35] this presents a challenge. Cultural theorist Ioan Davies (1998:137) identifies the "tactic of simulacrum", of inventing and packaging the fake for those searching for the authentic, as a localising strategy for "Africans [who] are faking themselves both for themselves and others". It is, however, a precarious victory to pull one's own strings in the hope of not being manipulated, a parodying strategy heading into the ghostly realm where the "double" gets liquidated (De Boeck 2002:284). Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o advocates 'indigenisation', taking the best from the global and appropriating it to empower the local.[36] This position oversimplifies the translation of cross-cultural symbolic systems, and Buell (1994:243, emphasis in original) contends by primordialising the 'global' Ngũgĩ's "stategy of globalist indigenization" could also be described as "*re*-tribalization or *re*-traditionalization' and as such is ambiguously forward and backward looking at the same time". Buell (1994:243) refers to Spivak's use of the term "'strategic' essentialisms", and of the "use of the notion of primordial continuity to create and mobilize a community" as another formulation of this strategy. The 'primordial locality' can, however, never be 'pure' and localising notions of identity, tradition, and indigenisation are globally produced, marking localising strategies as intrinsically ambiguous. Dirlik (1989:98) proposes a "critical localism", excluding "romantic nostalgia for communities past, hegemonic nationalist yearnings of a new kind […], or historicism that would imprison the present in the past".

However daunting the globalising grip might be, Hall (1997b:68) proposes that hegemony "is never completed".[37] The uncertainty contained in the

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[34] Jameson et al (1998:375) argue "totalizing narratives of the local" need to be deconstructed in the face of the "polysemy of cultural hybridization".

[35] Culture critic Olu Oguibe (1999:19) expounds how the "master narrative" allows the African artist little space for "his and not his master's voice", projecting him as "an echo, as the displaced sound of percussive fracture" (Oguibe 1999:18) and reiterating "ventriloquy as a structure of reference for Western attitudes towards African artists" (Oguibe 1999:20).

[36] In *Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African literature* (1981) Ngũgĩ argues for the translation of Western texts into African languages like his own Gĩkũyũ and against Africans writing in English for a Western audience.

[37] Hall (1997b:68) maintains the moment of fulfilment escapes 'the hegemonic project, the historical project, in which is lodged a variety of differences but which are all committed either

multifactorial, polycentric global system further opens up possibilities for local action to cause global upset "despite the enormous disparity in size between the two frames" (Buell 1994:321). Buell (1994:298) suggests that in order for localised activism (agency not constructed as necessarily unified or deliberate) to be effective, "[w]e should think both more locally and more globally", constructing resistance "below and above the nation". Given the mutually-constructive double horizon of globalisation-dynamics and the inevitably relational construction of locality, resistance cannot be situated in the 'local' exclusively. Indeed, the practice of what Buell (1994:298) terms "global-localisms" – such as ethnic, religious, gender, environmental, occupational, and virtual affiliations – show "increasingly decentred [and deterritorialised] strategic boundaries". Cultural resistance to global hegemonising forces might be better located, to paraphrase Hardt and Negri (2000:45), as *both* reterritorialising barriers *and* reterritorialising flows.

4.3.3 Digital public sphere

The Documenta-website and artists working in, or referring to, the digital domain explored the idea of creating global-localist resistance strategies in the form of a transnational public sphere for the production of locality in cyberspace. Art historian Reesa Greenberg (2005:94) praises the discursive expansion of Documenta 11 through online discussions, even though the website was constructed as "site for communication rather than parallel or alternative display". Although Greenberg (2005:94) would like to see the Web used as a fully constituted platform, she concedes that this might represent a "fetishization-of-technology trap" in the framework of Documenta 11, given the unequal access to, and lack of control of, technology by the non-West.

The members of the Delhi based Raqs Media Collective (Raqs Media Collective 2002a:581) – Monica Narula, Shuddhabrata Sengupta and Jeebesh Bagchi – position their work explicitly in the digital commons: "The

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in a dominant, or a subaltern position, to a single historical project" when it declares "its boundaries to be coterminous with the truth, with the reality of history".

act of locating [our work] in the public domain of the digital commons is both to contribute to non-proprietorial and non-territorial ways of looking at space and at art/work, and also to contribute to an existing body of interventions in 'free culture'".[38] Raqs' works present as open source and can be modified by the public as a "'rescension' [a version ready to be considered by itself] – a networked narrative which can give rise to another networked narrative (which is neither a clone nor a copy of the 'original) without being a replacement of the first" (Raqs Media Collective 2002a:581).
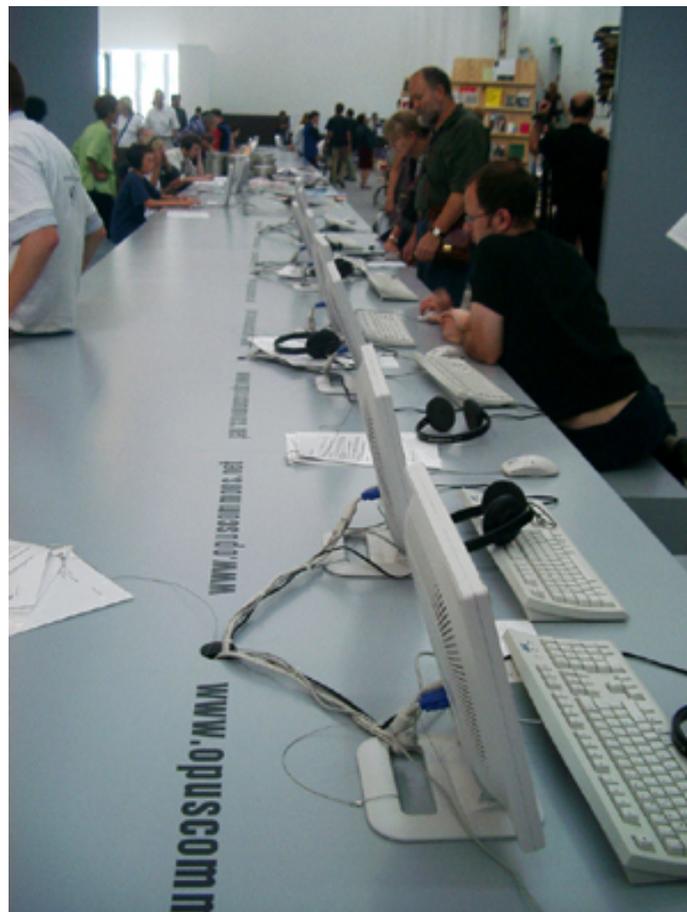
Figure 19: Raqs Media Collective, *www.opuscommons.net*, 2002.
Documenta Halle, Kassel.
(http://www.opuscommons.net/templates/doc/index.html).

For Documenta 11 they set up www.opuscommons.net, where viewers could contribute to an aesthetic lexicon of and for the exhibition (Figure 19). The

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[38] Raqs Media Collective (2002a:581) subscribes to the Free Code/Software movement as members of the media initiative Sarai – according to http://www.sarai.net/ the notion of *sarai* as space where travellers shelter and meet translates as a digital space for research, networks, partnerships and hybrid cultural practices.

facilitation of an open-ended collaborative creative space connects to the group's investigation of urban spaces in which the "syntax of time-space co-ordinates connects the city as a location to the abstractions of other spaces and times" (2002c:1). Another work shown at Documenta 11, *28º28N' / 77º15E::2001/2002, An installation on the coordinates of everyday life – Delhi, 2001/2002,* expressed through an assemblage of video, text, sound, print and signage the way inhabitants experience space and the restrictions placed on their movements – the fragility of a living commons. Stickers in four languages – Hindi, English, Turkish and German – were put up on the streets of Kassel with messages such as: "You are entering a zero-tolerance zone. Make no trouble here", or "Access denied. Have you registered with the relevant authorities?" Common urban experiences link the localities of Delhi and Kassel thanks to globalised media.

Notions of a digital production of locality, however, fall outside the grasp of the globalised poor, "the 'structurally redundant' [for whom] real space is fast closing up" (Bauman 1998:45). In the Documenta-Halle a constructed passage and entrance connected the work of the Raqs collective literally and conceptually with Cameroon-born installation artist Pascale Marthine Tayou. In *Game station* (2002) Tayou played scenes from Yaoundé on ten monitors accompanied by a network of headphones leaking a global muddle of sound from radio frequencies around the world. The headphone-highway strung up overhead like a crow's nest of rudimentary telephone and power lines in a 'Third World' locality, as well as the network of TV's (actual and drawn) and projection screens, delineated gaping inequities in 'the game' for the Northern audience of Documenta and people living in the South.

An interesting work by the two Singaporean artists Woon Tien Wei and Charles Lim Yi Young of Tsunamii.net pushed the limits of the artwork while literally "walking" the Internet. Their *alpha 3.4* (2002) consisted of digitally recording the walk from Kassel to Kiel, the physical location of the Documenta server. The movements of the walker were tracked by GPS (Global Positioning System) and changes in IP numbers (identification numbers assigned to each computer linked to the Internet), the browser, mapping

software and pinging tracer program were shown on four LCD screens in the Binding-Bauerei. According to a Tsunamii.net-interview (2002:1) a webcam was installed to "see" the documenta.de webserver as a "real object in real space" working against the perception created of the Internet as intangible and borderless. By drawing attention to physical objects and distances, the artists effectively engaged with dictates of geopolitics and the centralising of technology.

These works revealed the promise and predicament of an inclusive, digital Documenta. Cyberspace certainly offers strategic advantages of decentring and deterritorialising discourses, yet the abstraction built into this transnational commons could deny specificity when it is approached as a-historical or supra-contextual space.[39] The digital domain could also be constituted as a space of exclusion if the inequalities in techno-globalisation are ignored by the North. Awareness of the possibilities and limitations for art practice to engage with transnational and localised production of locality, of reterritorialising and redirecting barriers and flows, is particularly significant in the context of global exhibitions. For the most part, curatorial focus on the production of locality, rather than the production of globality, could be the key to privileging resistance strategies in the globalised exhibition. It could also be deemed imperative if transcultural curating is to be more than an expression of globalism, multicultural management and cultural correctness. The next section will evaluate how different localities were put in relation to each other; how the act of translation within the spaces of Documenta 11 was approached.

4.4 TRANSLOCAL CURATING

Curatorially Documenta 11's approach to transnational space as the translocal space in which the production of singular localities can impact

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[39] Artistic director of transmediale (the international media art festival held annually in Berlin), Andreas Broeckmann (1997:1), poses that any approach to cyberspace as a translocal *independent* locality is problematic, since this form of idealised nomadism could lead to being "translocal and lost", rather than gaining from visiting one another's homes.

discourses and art practice, established Enwezor and his team of co-curators as innovators in contemporary curatorial practices. Meeting the demands of a globalised art world for expansion, yet undermining dynamics of the culture industries for facile translations between cultures, Documenta 11 set out to create complexity and density. This section will deal with how the curatorial project engaged with notions of cultural translation and what relevance this had for the selection and reception of artworks in the exhibition.

4.4.1 The curator as translator

A decentred, but expanded, global art network especially impacts the function and scope of curating as organising and translational principal. Globalisation has, according to critic and curator Alex Farquharson (2003:8), created "a demand for a new breed of curator – forever on the move, internationally networked, interdisciplinary in outlook, in command of several languages" and with the ability to "discern patterns and directions in an increasingly accelerated, expanded cultural field". The diasporic curator, like Enwezor, has the added advantage of being credited with special insight into transcultural translation, as transnational curating and viewing, for that matter, are both translational. The "meta-curating" (Farquharson 2003:9) of artists working in a multiplicity of localities is shifting and redefining the discourse of contemporary art to be increasingly, what curator Hou Hanru (2003:36) defines as, "(1) multi-transdisciplinary, (2) multi-transcultural, and (3) a merging of art and real life to generate new distinctions between private and public spheres".

The complexity and scope of the expanded artistic field seem to spill over notions of "exhibition" or "show", limited by what David (Griffin et al 2003:158) describes as the inherent "three unities of classical theater: unity of time, unity of space, unity of narrative". Alternative notions such as "constellation of public spheres" (Enwezor 2002b:54) adapted from the political arena, or the "'construction site', 'laboratory', 'think-tank' and 'distribution channel', metaphors borrowed from the lexicons of industry, the media, corporate

culture and science" (Farquharson 2003:8), are being put forward by curators from diverse cultural fields.[40] Curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist (2001:127) proposes the notion of "an energy plant, a *Kraftwerk*",[41] referencing the idea of "the museum on the move" of Alexander Dorner, director of the Hanover Museum in 1920s. Obrist (2001:128) claims the instability of systems and environments in non-equilibrium physics is a metaphor for contemporary society, and he therefore favours pre-formalist notions of the exhibition as laboratory in order to show "the limits, boundaries and the porosity of places where knowledge and culture are produced" (Obrist 2003:151). Whatever form curators[42] choose to *interact with*, rather than *show* art, the emphasis seems to be on multiplicity, connectivity, flexibility and unpredictability.

It is in the curatorial approaches to complexity that possible transgressive strategies to hegemonies emerge. Obrist (2003:150) suggests that by opening-up the "connective possibilities" of exhibition structures the logic of the culture industries can be subverted:

> At a moment when collaboration between museums and different exhibitions is more and more driven by economic reasons and the rentability of globally shipped, packaged shows, I see an urgency and necessity to think about non-profit driven, brand-orientated, but art-oriented interconnectedness.

For Hanru (2003:36-37) the creation of alternative art spaces as "alternative contexts" offer the possibility of flexible "new paradigms of art language" that could break with the globalised art network and its hegemony of the "high-modernist tradition of the white cube and post-minimalist, post-conceptual forms". Enwezor's localising strategies achieved precisely these goals in instances where multiple connections between singular sites of cultural

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[40] Mosquera (2001b:123) refers to the phenomenon of curators from outside the traditional field of art as a "discourse of inflation", maintaining the "curatorial boom has attracted people from other fields who frequently use art just as a base to build their ideas about something else".

[41] Obrist (2001:129) maintains "the traditional exhibition is essentially still modelled on Renaissance curiosity cabinets (*Wunderkammer*)".

[42] Given the complexity of contemporary exhibitions, curators increasingly tend to work in teams, leading Hanru (2001:77) to assert: "The time when one curator could dominate a project is past; it is now a time of collaboration, exchange, and sharing."

production were formed; when alternative art practices, forged in alternative contexts, were represented. The focus on alternative production of localities ultimately undermines hegemonising by "the dominant particular" (Hall 1997b:67). It also establishes a transcultural framework in which the gaps in translation – the very limits of translatability – are underscored, thereby subverting "diversitarianism" (Appiah 2005:222) in the exhibition space.

4.4.2 Interrogation versus fragmentation

Documenta 11's curatorial contributions to the discourse of globalisation, multiplicity, diversity and transnational curating become more evident if compared to Francesco Bonami's fiftieth Venice Biennial in 2003, titled *Dreams and conflicts: the dictatorship of the viewer*. For Bonami (2003:XXII) globality manifests overwhelmingly as a threat to "individuality and uniqueness", with the result that "a new Romantic dimension of inner awareness is rising from the breaking wave of globalization". Bonami (2003:XXI-XII) coined the ungainly term "glomanticism" for the approach to a "new reality somewhere between Globality and Romanticism, where economics and information finally intersect within the complexity of an individual's identity and emotions". Privileging inward, individual experience, Bonami (2003:XXII) proposed a "dictatorship of the viewer" and favoured an exhibition structure showing a "polyphony of voices and ideas". He (Bonami 2003:XXI) claims: "The 'Grand Show' of the 21st century must allow multiplicity, diversity and contradiction to exist inside the structure of an exhibition".

Besides the obvious solipsistic and romantic nostalgia, 'glomanticism' also suffered from the "curator's somewhat disingenuous characterization of this approach as a viable form of political resistance" (Rothkopf 2003:177). Art critic Scott Rothkopf (2003:177) maintains Bonami's position was "indicative of an art world haunted by its impotent relationship to recent geopolitics yet understandably anxious to frame art as a socially redemptive practice". By assuming an oppositional stance to globalisation, yet at the same time

refusing to examine his 'Grand Show's' relations to globalising forces, Bonami became complicit to the very forces he professed to oppose. Griffin (2003:246) summarises this quandary as:

> [A] strange tension within this Biennale was generated by the attempt to contemplate some position 'outside' culture, suggesting a possibility for revolution that the very notions of globalism underpinning the exhibition would deny.

By contrast, Documenta's platforms positioned art production in the broader cultural praxis and by acting as instruments of "rigorous review" (Griffin et al 2003:159) of globality, possible ways of resisting complex globalising forces were thoroughly examined. This not only grounded the discourse, instead of withdrawing into a romantic subjective realm, but also created a framework to engage with cultural difference for the exhibition in Kassel. For Bonami 'localising' took the shape of a fractured structure of eleven separate exhibitions by eleven curators, who presented "a series of intentionally dissonant presentations, several of which were organized in classic World's Fair style by continent or region" (Rothkopf 2003:176). Diversity here comes close to compartmentalisation and harks back to visual colonialism. Intentionally aiming for heterogeneity could also result in a kind of artificial production of locality in the exhibition context compared to Documenta 11's engagement with the very real production of often abject localities. This led Griffin (2003:246) to conclude "the Biennale event itself was deconstructed in a way that was more surface or motif than living fact, and the play with the exhibition's form here generally did not succeed".

Both Documenta 11 and the fiftieth Venice Biennale aimed for open-ended, anti-totalising approaches to global representation, but whereas the first resonated as strong curatorial direction, Bonami's vision was criticised as pushing multiplicity to the point of incoherence. Enwezor and Bonami's views of global curatorship were virtually diametrically opposed: whereas Enwezor "insist[ed] on the responsibility of the curator to make legible statements by means of the exhibition" (Griffin et al 2003:156), Bonami (2003:XXII) aimed not to "contain the complexity of the world and weave visions into a curatorial

interface". By leaving the production of the exhibition's meanings to the 'dictatorship of the viewer', Venice became victim to sprawling fragmentation of work by 400 artists. In comparison Documenta 11's rhizomised exhibition spaces could be regarded as "an instructive counterexample, insofar as that exhibition suggested a cogent, if somewhat overstated, curatorial viewpoint, which rather than stifling the artworks generated meaningful connections among them" (Rothkopf 2003:177). Bonami's refusal to supply a translational framework could be blamed on what Rothkopf (2003:177) describes as "the mistaken assumption that a focused curatorial argument is […] necessarily 'hegemonic'".

Rather than performing the fragmentary dynamics indicative of cultural globalisation, the curators of Documenta 11 approached the global exhibition by interrogating globality with a view to *what is lost* in translation; between a multitude of cultures being deterritorialised and reterritorialised across local and global frames, as well as in artworks dealing with the conflicting predicaments and promises of these processes.

4.4.3 Lost in transnationalisation

The artworks included in Documenta 11_Platform 5 were not of the globalisation-as-period-style variety, of what Lee (2003:166) terms "the aesthetics of passports and Coca-Cola". In a sense Documenta 11 was about that which is fought for and got lost in transnationalisation.

If the works deal with passages and journeys, they present the human view of globalisation processes. Allan Sekula's *Fish Story* (1990-1995) is an epic, transoceanic undertaking of photographing harbours, port cities and the shipping trade integrated with the history of representation of maritime themes. By personalising the mapping of global flows on the high seas, abstract processes can be told and viewed as personal stories. These visual narratives, meta-commenting on traditional depictions of panorama and detail, are no mere photojournalism, but emphasise the all too human view through

the disjuncture of still photography and the technological sophistication of a global transport network. In contrast, the installation of Multiplicity, *Solid sea* (2002), expressed the ambivalent sense of a globalised sea as petrified rather than fluid, solidifying inequalities and identities. The multidisciplinary research project by a Milanese agency of architects, geographers, artists, urban planners, photographers, filmmakers and sociologists drew an atlas of the Mediterranean as not a fluid space of cultural exchange, but as solid territory of commodified trajectories and identities. The group claims on its website (2002:[sp]) that interactions between regulated bands of water at different depths happen as "short circuits" with reference to the sinking of a clandestine fishing boat with 283 illegal immigrants on board in December 1996 near Sicily – an event vehemently denied by authorities for years. Ghostly smuggling routes intersected with the fishing trade only when remains and affects of the dead appeared in fishing nets. The work emphasised that no attempt had yet been made to retrieve the remains of those not 'on the map'. The theme of skewed mapping of globalised territories was further elaborated on in the film of Pavel Braila, *Shoes for Europe* (2002), documenting the three hour-long process of changing train wheels from Russian to standard gauge at the Moldavian-Romanian border and in Ulrike Ottinger's film *South east passage: a journey to new blank spots on the map of Europe* (2002).

The collaborative project of Alejandra Riera with Doina Petrescu, *Fîlmek kû nikare bê avakirin. Un film non réalisable,* 2002, was an innovative effort to engage with globalised art making across borders. Petrescu (born in Romania) and Riera (born in Buenos Aires) worked with the problems encountered by Kurds in Turkey and the situation of Leyla Zana – the first Kurdish woman to be elected to the Turkish Parliament but then incarcerated for using Kurdish and wearing Kurdish colours.[43] Their installation of "a non-realisable film" included photographs, film and text to investigate the decontextualisation and recontextualisation of information. Complex issues of translatability as well as the limitations and ethical obligations of transcultural representation were thus addressed.

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[43] Zana was released after a decade in prison on 9 June 2004 (Kurdish political prisoner… 2004:[sp]).

Localised effects of global ecological issues conspicuously revealed the disparities of globalisation. American Michael Ashkin showed 133 gelatin silver prints in *Untitled (New Jersey Meadowlands Project)* (2001/02) of deserted industrial wasteland – the wasted spaces of overgrown parking lots, fenced-off yards of derelict factories, obsolete construction sites, abandoned railroad tracks. The miniaturised grid of images, each 10 x 25,5 cm, conversely monumentalise the scale of degradation, the scope of economic and social entropy. Whereas Ashkin's work could be considered a dystopian narrative, the collaborative project of landscape architect Julie Bargmann and artist Stacy Levy, *Testing the waters* (launched in 1995), involved the environmental remediation of an area contaminated by a coal mine in Vitondale, Pennsylvania, into a park. The systems employed to treat acid drainage were approached in the gallery space as six boxes – containing coal and contaminated earth and water – fronted with glass panels on which maps and information were sandblasted. This documentary tracing was continued at the actual site, called Litmus Gardens, where the clean-up is treated not as erasure but as revealing the history and processes of regeneration. The post-industrial site was thus converted into a living monument.

For Ravi Agarwal, living in New Delhi, environmental justice for the South is the most pressing issue. His photojournalistic images index living conditions in sites marginalised by global capital, especially the low-wage workers in the state of Gujarat – agricultural, quarry and sex workers; migratory people on a lorry, on the bus, taking the train; community life of slum dwellers in front of a skyscraper, a girl wearing tribal make-up, a union focussing on dalit or 'untouchable' workers. Agarwal is also the founder of Toxics Link, a community-based exchange on chemical safety and waste management. Art and activism thus combines to expose the incongruous rules for waste management in a globalised economy that geographically separate sites for production, consumption and disposal of goods. While the overdeveloped North becomes cleaner the South gets dirtier, as not only unregulated production site, but the recipient of waste trade.

Figure 20: Cildo Meireles, *Disappearing / Disappeared element*, 2002.
Ice trolleys and water popsicles.
Friedrichsplatz, Kassel.
(*Documenta 11_Platform 5: Exhibition venues* 2002:192).

Whilst the discussed works seriously engaged with the effects of globalisation
and meaningful connections between localities were made by their inclusion
in the framework of Documenta 11, it has to be pointed out that the curators
also succumbed to trendiness in their selection process. The work of
Brazilian Cildo Meireles, for example, added more to the visual impact of the
scene outside the exhibition venues than to the engagement with global
discourses inside. His *Disappearing element / Disappeared element* (2002)
(Figure 20) consisted of packaged popsicles of pure water, sold for 1 Euro
each by vendors pushing ten carts around Documenta-venues. Ostensibly
this work referenced scarcity and abuse of limited resources by bringing the
debate to the Documenta audience, who by purchasing a popsicle/artwork

became complicit to the supply-and-demand chain of the market for both clean water and art. The self-referential cleverness of this over-exposed work left the visitor high and dry, as it were, without transcending the actual exploitation of a resource. Conceptually, the difference 'disappeared' between volunteers clad in Documenta's T-shirts selling art-popsicles and vendors peddling bottled water.

4.5   CONCLUSION

The discussed artworks included in Documenta 11 seem to share a certain critical positioning, not only to globality but especially to the art world's globalised practices. As such, they meet Enwezor's (Griffin et al 2003:154) requirement of constructing a globalised exhibition around "serious interaction with artists and practices that are not similarly inscribed [by the global paradigm]" and have the potential to transcend superficial expressions of fashionable globality. In general, a case can be made that the selection of works dealing with displacement and transmigrations, cities of the South, reterritorialising of identities, construction of a digital commons, passages and journeys, globalised art making and ecological issues indeed constituted a critical engagement by Documenta 11 with globalisation processes. If an exhibition is to add to the discourse of globality rather than to the increasing noise level of global art festivals, such a committed questioning of the conditions of globalisation and its own place in globalising processes is not an indulgence but an imperative.

Documenta 11's localising-project not only interrogated specific conditions of globality and resistance strategies to cultural homogenisation, but in particular created a framework to engage with difference transculturally. The anti-totalising strategies of Documenta 11's curatorial project notably circumvented the trap of, what art historian Johanne Lamoureux (2005:72) terms, the exhibition's inherent "fetishist rhetoric of display and its effects". Lamoureux (2005:72) atrributes this to, firstly, the "anthropology of proximity" that subverted exaggerated notions of distance and the possibility of exotisising otherness; secondly, by valuing "the wandering of hybrid producers" that

undermined over-evaluation of individual creativity and accentuated the cultural complexities of globalised, postcolonial trajectories. While this latter gain has to be measured against the exclusionary effect of the selection of 'wandering producers', it cannot be denied that Enwezor's Documenta destabilised any essentialist reception of artwork produced in non-Western localities.

The inclusivity achieved by Documenta 11, the weight assigned to different sites of production and sensitivity created to the conditions for the production of a multiplicity of localities, presented a innovatively different take on the globalised large-scale exhibition. Documenta 11 also succeeded in meaningful ways to re-focus the event away from an expanded market to a critical engagement with globalisation. The contention of this study is that the major achievement of provincialising strategies was to circumvent the dynamic of mega-exhibitions that supply a showcase of difference – what could be considered "quantitative internationalisation" (Mosquera 2001:27) or a "calculus of difference" (Maharaj 2003:80) which would limit transculturality to a global form of multiculturalist management of diversification.

By constructing an ethical space to encounter difference within a Northern institution Documenta 11's curators provided marginalised voices, first and foremost, with a sensitised audience. Enwezor (2001:243) contends the postcolonial question of "Who should speak?" is beside the point, as the subaltern is and has been speaking. It is rather now a question of "Can the subaltern be heard?" and "To whom does s/he speak? Spivak (Spivak & Gunew, 1990:59) suggests this question would be more productively framed as "Who will listen". Being listened to seriously, without being categorised and limited to a specific speaking position, is crucial, she claims. The extended postcolonial discourse around this Documenta in the popular press and on radio and TV in Northern Europe, in particular, contributed to sensitise Documenta-visitors to the timbre of different voices. It could be argued that through the strategy of creating proximity – of reterritorialising barriers and flows – Documenta 11 created a context for the reception of art from the non-West and West alike.