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Yinka Shonibare MBE's Critiques of Empire and His Reception in Four Transnational Case Studies

Johanna Wild
University of New Mexico

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Johanna Wild

Candidate

Art and Art History

Department

This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

Approved by the Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Kirsten Pai Buick, Chairperson

Dr. Ray Hernández-Durán

Dr. Nii Quarcoopome

Dr. Charlotte Klunk

**Yinka Shonibare MBE's Critiques of Empire and His
Reception in Four Transnational Case Studies**

By

Johanna Wild

M.A., North American Studies Program, Art History Minor
Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Bonn, Germany

DISSERTATION

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with *Critical Interventions. Journal of African Art History and Visual Culture*. My paper on Shonibare's photographic work, "Re-enacting Tropes of Black Masculinity in Yinka Shonibare MBE's *Diary of a Victorian Dandy*," will be published in an upcoming special edition of *Critical Arts* titled *Asserting Creative Agencies through the Sartorial: (Re)fashioning African and Diasporic Masculinities*, which is edited by Dr. Leora Farber.

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YINKA SHONIBARE MBE'S CRITIQUES OF EMPIRE AND HIS RECEPTION IN FOUR TRANSNATIONAL CASE STUDIES

By Johanna Wild

M.A. North American Studies Program,
Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Bonn, Germany
Ph.D., Art History, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

ABSTRACT

In the wake of art history's "global turn", the installation art of Yinka Shonibare MBE has obtained vast visibility in the established centers of contemporary cultural practice in Europe and beyond. Shonibare is best known for his *tableau vivant* installations of mannequins that reenact canonized paintings and historical events culled from European modernity. Dressed in deceptively "African" Dutch Wax fabrics, Shonibare's phenotypically ambiguous and headless mannequins ensnare audiences with a semblance of "exotic" difference, but ultimately resist the fixity of national, cultural, racial and, in some cases, gendered categorization through an incessant semiotic slippage. In his book, *The Culture Game* (2001), Olu Oguibe singled out Shonibare for having successfully *subverted* the desires and machinations of a pluralist contemporary art world, which grants black artists visibility on the condition that they perform their cultural/racial difference in relation to an unmarked, white center.

My dissertation scrutinizes interpretations that ascribe an *a priori* subversive effect to Shonibare's work. I provide four transnational case studies that examine how his installations challenged hegemonic notions of nationhood, Empire, difference and differentiation on London's Trafalgar Square in England; at the Berlin National Gallery in Germany; at the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, France; and in a public park in Lagos, Nigeria. I contend that the historically different racisms and conceptions of Empire in England, France, and Germany, and the experience of colonialism in Nigeria, have resulted in distinct solutions to questions of postcolonial nationhood, multiculturalism, and cultural differentiation today, that must be taken into consideration when evaluating the critical potential of Shonibare's "unbound" work. My historically and geographically situated, transnational case studies of Shonibare's institutional framing and reception seek to refine Okwui Enwezor's conception of contemporary art as a "deterritorialized" field, by demonstrating how Shonibare's "unbound" work is variably "reterritorialized" in the locations where he becomes "visible."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Introduction.....	1
National Museums, Citizenship and the Articulation of Race Discourse....	5
Postmodern and Postcolonial Critiques.....	7
Museums and the Deconstruction of Institutional Racisms.....	16
Nationalism, Transnationalism, and Globalization.....	22
Chapter Summaries.....	24
Excursus: Yinka Shonibare's Emergence on the Art Scene, The Burden of Representation and Dutch Wax Fabrics.....	34

CHAPTER ONE: BRITAIN

Introduction: Setting the Stage— Trafalagar Square and British Maritime Nationalism.....	47
The Fourth Plinth Programme and the Production of (National) Space....	50
Irony's Edge and the Subversive Potential of Parody.....	54
<i>Nelson's Ship in a Bottle</i> as a Parody of British Maritime Nationalism.....	59
The Ambiguous Iconography of the Ship in British Culture.....	61
Visualizing and Institutionalizing British Maritime Nationalism.....	64
The Slave Ship in British (Visual) Culture.....	71
British Diasporic Evocations of Ships and Marine Imagery.....	73
Conclusion: Multicultural Normalization and the Limitations of Shonibare's <i>Nelson's Ship in a Bottle</i> as Parody.....	81

CHAPTER TWO: GERMANY

Introduction: <i>Who Knows Tomorrow</i> at the Berlin Nationalgalerie.....	94
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Recovering German Colonial History and the Issue of “Race” in Postcolonial Germany.....	101
Shonibare’s Installations as Hybridizations of the Friedrichswerder Kirche’s “Effective White Power Field?”	113
Homi Bhabha’s Concept of Hybridity.....	117
Hybridity and Its Discontents.....	121
Exhibition Programming for <i>Who Knows Tomorrow</i>	131
Conclusion: Who Knows Tomorrow? Horst Köhler and Germany’s “New” Scramble For Africa.....	136

CHAPTER THREE: FRANCE

Introduction: <i>Jardin D’Amour</i> at the Musée Du Quai Branly.....	143
Modern Spectatorship and the Male, Imperial Gaze.....	151
The “Neoprimitivist” Gaze at the Musée du Quai Branly	156
French Museums, Nationhood and Universalité.....	160
Yinka Shonibare MBE’s <i>Jardin D’Amour</i> and the Trope of the Postcolonial Gaze Reversal.....	166
Conclusion: The Reassertion of Colonial Dualisms as Exclusionary Mechanism.....	178

CHAPTER FOUR: Nigeria

Shonibare and Nigerian Artists in a Contemporary (Art) World.....	181
Anticolonial Nationalism in Modern Nigerian Art.....	187
Biennials and Globalization.....	198
Global Contemporaneity at <i>Documenta 11</i> : “Empire”, Deterritorialization, and Itinerant Artists	200
Defining the Field of Contemporary African Art: Okwui Enwezor’s and Chika Okeke-Agulu’s <i>Contemporary African Art Since 1980</i>	211

The Romanticization of Deterritorialization and Nomadism.....	216
Shonibare in Lagos.....	223
The Migratory Movement of Shonibare's <i>Wind Sculpture</i> series and the Performance of Authenticity in Global Art Contexts.....	229
CONCLUSION.....	237
REFERENCES.....	242
FIGURES.....	261

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the artwork of Yinka Shonibare MBE (b. 1962) has obtained vast visibility in the established centers of contemporary cultural practice in Europe and beyond. Shonibare works in various media including painting, photography, film, drawing, and sculpture, but is best known for his eye-catching *tableau vivant* installations of phenotypically ambiguous mannequins that reenact canonized paintings, historical events and episodes culled from European modernity. While his mannequins don eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European dress designs according to the time period they reenact, their attire is tailored from deceptively “African” fabrics. With their ravishing theatricality, their disorienting lack of heads, and the recognizability of their iconic re-presentations rendered strange through the semblance of “exotic” difference, Shonibare’s installations seek to defy the fixity of national, racial, cultural, and, at times, gendered markers through an incessant slippage of meaning. His “unbound” installations have become a visual short hand to the discourses of globalization, deterritorialization, Empire, and postcolonialism and can be found in museum collections, galleries, and biennials in Europe, the United States and, more recently, China and South Korea.¹ The ravenous demand for Shonibare’s invariable installations has continued unabated since he first developed his signature style in the late 1990s.

¹ A selection of solo and group exhibitions he has participated in can be found in his CV on his artist’s website at http://www.yinkashonibaremb.com/resources/content/page_content/4/YINKA_SHONIBARE%20cv.pdf

The year 1989 is generally recognized as a historical marker that initiated paradigm shifts in art history and the art world at large.² The East-West binaries that had structured both the economy at large and the art world specifically during the Cold War were dismantled in favor of the global consolidation of a triumphant neoliberal capitalism advocating deregulation and global “free” trade. This economic shift was paralleled by the embrace of large-scale multicultural exhibitions in Europe and the United States, the establishment of a global network of biennials, the emergence of independent curators who introduced artists from outside of the European orbit on international platforms, and postcolonial efforts to “decenter” Eurocentric art institutions and their biased conceptions of art and art history.³ In this context of a “global turn” in the arts, the artworks of Yinka Shonibare have been readily commissioned, exhibited, and inserted as “institutional critiques” by museums seeking to expand and reflect on their Eurocentric collecting and display practices.

Yet, the question of how the art establishment’s shift toward global inclusivity and multicultural normalization is to be evaluated has been hotly debated among politicized artists and scholars since then.⁴ In the context of a contemporary art world that thrives on pluralism, institutional marginalization is

² Sophie Orlando, “Artistic Categories and the Situation of Utterance: The Period from 1989–1994 in Great Britain,” *Critical Interventions* 12 (Fall 2013): 6–19; Olu Oguibe and Okwui Enwezor (eds.), “Introduction,” *Reading the Contemporary. African Art From Theory to Market Place* (London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 1999), 8–14.

³ Stuart Hall, “The Neoliberal Revolution,” *Cultural Studies* 25, no. 6 (2011): 705–728; Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated. The Story of Contemporary Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Terry Smith, *Contemporary Art. World Currents* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2011).

⁴ Kobena Mercer, “Black Art and the Burden of Representation,” *Third Text* 4, no. 10 (1990): 61–78; Rasheed Araeen, “A New Beginning. Beyond Postcolonial Cultural Theory and Identity Politics,” *Third Text* (2008): 3–20.

now often less of a problem than institutional insistence that artists who were previously marginalized on the basis of race or gender perform their 'difference' in relation to an unmarked, yet hegemonic, white, male center. Have the institutional inclusion and the hyper-visibility of certain artists previously marginalized on the basis of race or gender, such as Shonibare, significantly altered the traditional notions of nationhood, difference and differentiation defining mainstream institutions and art history, and could their integration be read as a success? Or have the hegemonic narratives remained relatively "unscathed" with artists such as Shonibare merely added into pre-existing frameworks as tokens of difference in an expanded discourse of a global contemporaneity that remains attached to Eurocentric philosophies of history, narratives of modernity, and aesthetics? In his book, *The Culture Game* (2001) art historian Olu Oguibe singled out Yinka Shonibare as an artist who has successfully outsmarted the predicament of the "culture game", which persistently requires black artists to perform their difference in relation to an unmarked, centered whiteness.⁵ He suggests that Shonibare strategically exploits the dichotomy of "otherness" by readily staging exotic African "authenticity" for European audiences, only to deconstruct it in a semiotic slippage that resists and hybridizes the fixity of racial, national, cultural categorizations. Yet, Oguibe's evaluation of Shonibare's art ascribes an a priori "subversiveness" to Shonibare's installations that hinges on the artist's stated intentions, without considering what it is that his artworks actually *do* once they

⁵ Olu Oguibe, "Double Dutch and the Culture Game," *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 33-44.

become situated and received in a given time and place and within a specific institutional framework. This dissertation provides four transnational, comparative case studies that locate Yinka Shonibare MBE's work within the context of his framing and reception in one exhibition respectively, in museums and public sites in England, France, Germany, and Nigeria. I examine how his works served to challenge traditional notions of nationhood, Empire, and intersectional categories of difference and differentiation in the locations under consideration.

National Museums, Citizenship, and the Articulation of Race Discourses

As key emblems of modernity, museums and public memorial sites play an essential role in the performative reproduction of national identity and Empire. In the course of the nineteenth-century, they came to serve as educative and civilizing agencies that were to establish a sense of national continuity and coherence among a diverse populace.⁶ Because the birth and growth of nation-states, the foundation of national museums and the creation of public monuments in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries coincided with European colonial and imperial expansion, European museum landscapes also came to function as tools and constitutive representations of Empire that metonymically made an increasingly expanding world visually available to its

⁶ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum. History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Simon J. Knell et. al. (eds), *National Museums. New Studies from Around the World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

citizens through exhibitions.⁷ In the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment drive to classify and categorize the world was combined with the scientific elaboration of race theories and the adoption of historicizing frameworks that, as a whole, embedded art exhibitions, ethnographic displays, and natural history exhibits within narratives of historical progress and development.⁸ In his classic account of the nation as “imagined community”, Anderson argued that subjects in Europe’s incipient capitalist nation-states increasingly became aware of their temporal co-existence and confraternity with various anonymous others, by reading the same newspapers and novels in the same, standardized language and thereby establishing shared (national) frames of reference.⁹ While European nations were modern inventions, the unifying symbolic force of the nation was projected into an ‘immemorial past’ through the elevation of specific, preexisting cultural systems as definitive of the nation. Once these were adopted as “official nationalisms”, their performative repetition served to repress and obscure the diversity of conflicting and competing interests internally stratifying the nation.¹⁰ If, as Benedict Anderson suggested, the concept of the nation took shape in “homogenous, empty time”, then European humanists and anthropologists situated non-European populations living contemporaneously in other parts of the

⁷ Annie H. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

⁸ Tony Bennett, “Der bürgerliche Blick,” *Die Ausstellung. Politik eines Rituals*, ed. by Dorothea von Hannemann and Carolin Meister (Zurich-Berlin: diaphanes, 2010), 47-78, 62f.

⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 24.

¹⁰ Homi Bhabha (ed.), “Introduction: Narrating the Nation,” *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 1-7.

world in the European past or even completely outside of history.¹¹ As Johannes Fabian demonstrated in his study, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes its Object* (1983), the populations European anthropologists encountered and studied in the rest of the world were perceived to inhabit an earlier, more primitive stage of development, although potentially situated on a trajectory towards the state of civilization already achieved by Europeans.¹² While stereotypes about non-European 'Others' have always circulated, the eighteenth-century provided racial hierarchies and typologies with a scientific veneer.¹³ Although not universally accepted, advocates of post-Darwinian biological determinism came to view the colonized in terms of a fixed biological inferiority, which served to designate them as subhuman.¹⁴ The Eurocentric self-conception as the epitome of civilization and the concomitant denial of full humanity to other populations inhabiting the planet was institutionalized through the distinction between art, ethnographic, and natural history museums. While the former displayed European art as autonomous, creative expressions by individual *subjects*, the latter ordered anonymously produced material cultures and human

¹¹ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 37ff.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ David Bindman, *From Ape To Apollo. Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Sarah Eigen and Mark Larrimore (eds.), *The German Invention of Race* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2006).

¹⁴ Andrew Zimmerman and Glenn Penny have argued that among anthropologists in Germany, notions of biological evolution were conspicuously absent. Adolf Bastian and Rudolf Virchow rejected universal theories about human history based on "speculative theorizing" in favor of comparative, empirical studies. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture. Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Andrew Zimmermann, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2001); Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom. Towards the Human After Man, its Overrepresentation—An Argument," *The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 257-337.

specimen as *objects* representative of a specific cultural groups for the delectation of Europe's disciplinary and/or spectacle-hungry gaze.¹⁵ In this fashion, as historian Andrew Zimmermann has put it, "the 'self' of humanism and the 'other' of imperialism were twin births".¹⁶

Postmodern and Postcolonial Critiques

While museums were long assumed to be authoritative institutions that objectively and truthfully represented the nation, its past, and the world at large, since the 1980s and 1990s, postcolonial and postmodern critiques have redefined museums as poetic and political spaces that perform acts of cultural symbolism to shape their subjects as citizens.¹⁷ Postcolonialism and postmodernism are two historically related, yet antagonistic critical discourses that simultaneously emerged in the academic field of the 1980s.¹⁸ Robert C. Young has proposed that, in the context of decolonization, mass migrations, and economic globalization, "postmodernism can best be defined as European culture's awareness that it is no longer the unquestioned and dominant center of the world," an awareness that has been marked by, "the loss of the sense of an

¹⁵ Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently. A History and Theory of Identification in the Visual Arts* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 23-24.

¹⁶ Andrew Zimmermann, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 3.

¹⁷ Simon Knell, "National Museums and the National Imagination," in *National Museums*, 4. Donald Preziosi, "Narrativity and the Museological Myths of Nationality," *Museum History Journal* 2, no. 1 (2009): 37-50; James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Iain Chambers et. al., *The Postcolonial Museum. The Arts of Memory, the Pressures of History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

¹⁸ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books), 349.

absoluteness of any Western account of history.”¹⁹ Postmodernism stresses the disappearance of Europe’s progressive grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment, the weightlessness of history, consumerism, and deploys pastiche to perform a critique of modernity and humanism from within the European intellectual tradition.²⁰ Conceived by one of its most important theorists, Fredric Jameson, as the “cultural logic of late capitalism”, postmodernism thrives on heterogeneity, fluctuating meanings and textual play, while rejecting modernity’s notion of the coherent bourgeois subject, artistic originality, and depth of meaning.²¹

Outside of Euroamerican academia—and by some within it—postmodernism has been criticized as a Western idea that emerged at institutions in Europe and the United States and in which, despite all proclaimed intentions, Eurocentric attitudes are still defining.²² Artist and scholar Evelyn Nicodemus’ reluctance towards postmodernism is not atypical in this regard:

We the Africans, can only watch from outside the performance of Western remorse. But when western thought jettisons the helms and stays – enlightenment, reason, morals, the subject as acting and answerable in history – when it seems to let the notion of a creating author/artist disappear behind text and textures, then we do not want to follow. We cannot, as Edward Said has worded it, like the post-modernists seize upon an ahistorical weightlessness. We are still

¹⁹ Robert C. Young, *White Mythologies. Writing History and the West* (London: Taylor Francis Group, 2004), 51.

²⁰ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition. A Report on Knowledge*, transl. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1984); Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991). Jameson defines pastiche as the imitation of an artistic style which is no longer conceived as having an original, but neutrally repeats or celebrates rather than mocks and critiques the precedent.

²¹ Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Capitalism*, 5f; Homi Bhabha, “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern. Questions of Agency,” in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 245—282.

²² Olu Oguibe, *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 16.

concerned with modernity, we are anxious about how we are going to keep up with life itself.²³

The academic inauguration of postcolonial theory is generally dated to the publication of Edward Said's study *Orientalism* in 1978, although anti-colonial books penned earlier by Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James and others have retroactively been included under its heading.²⁴ While postcolonial theories and critiques also target a Eurocentrically conceived modernity and humanism, they are articulated *in response to* postmodernism by intellectuals from the former British colonies working at British and U.S.-based universities. In the afterword to the second edition of *Orientalism*, Said argued that, other than postmodernism, postcolonial theorists wish to hold on to grand narratives and humanist values to critique colonialism's epistemic violences and to articulate yet untold, subaltern histories and modernities rendered invisible by Eurocentrism.²⁵ In the meantime, early postcolonial theories by Said and others have been subjected to critiques for their totalization of power differentials that pit a dominant colonizer against a subordinated colonized, both of which remain internally undifferentiated and locked in perpetual struggle.²⁶ Edward Said's later work and the postcolonial theories of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha marked a paradigm shift away from simplistic binaries of colonizer/colonized, inside/outside, the West/the rest, self/other.²⁷ Black feminist critiques initiated considerations of how

²³ Everlyn Nicodemus, "Inside. Outside," in *Seven Stories About Modern Art in Africa: An Exhibition*, ed. by Clementine Deliss (Paris and New York: Flammarion), 31.

²⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

²⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 349.

²⁶ Young, "Disorienting Orientalism," in *White Mythologies*, 158-180.

²⁷ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

both “camps” are internally fractured by other subjectivities.²⁸ Kimberle Crenshaw, who coined the term “intersectionality”, suggested that we cannot accurately understand experiences of discrimination and oppression if we assume that they take place along a single axis of categorization.²⁹ Class, gender, race, ethnic, national, and a myriad of other possible affiliations need to be analyzed in their crosscutting multidimensionality if we wish to understand the complex dynamics of social hierarchies and oppression. Postcolonial theorists now trace acts of resistance and complicity on the part of the colonized and seek to retrieve subaltern histories, but also emphasize that the European metropolises themselves were significantly altered by the colonial encounter since the sixteenth century. The “Other” cannot be externalized but must be reconceptualized as an integral part shaping the “Self”. For this reason, concepts such as hybridity, diaspora, creolization, syncretism, contact zones, ambivalence, and cultural undecidability, some of which will be engaged in the following chapters, stand at the center of postcolonialism today. They seek to do justice to the complexities of subject-formation, while also resisting ethnically or nationally closed and centered analyses. As cultural theorist Stuart Hall phrases it, what is at stake in postcolonialism is a rereading of “colonisation as part of an essentially transnational and transcultural ‘global’ process — and it produces a decentred,

²⁸ Hazel Carby, “White Women Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood,” *Black British Cultural Studies. A Reader*, ed. by Houston A. Baker, Manthia Diawara and Ruth H. Lindeborg (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 61-86.

²⁹ Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins. Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241–1299; Stuart Hall, “Gramsci’s Relevance to the Study of Race and Ethnicity,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10 (June 1986): 8.

diasporic or “global” rewriting of earlier, nation-centred imperial grand narratives.”³⁰

Despite major differences between postmodernism and postcolonialism, the two critical discourses share a debt to poststructuralism, in particular to the writings of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. The latter acquires a special relevance with regard to Shonibare’s work, because his theory of deconstruction provided a means of unraveling the binary categorizations on which Eurocentric epistemologies are based. Jacques Derrida and the poststructuralists broke with the Western philosophical tradition from Plato to structuralism by vehemently rejecting the logocentric belief in the existence of some foundational truth, essence, or fixed structure that is key to all our thought, language and experience.³¹ Derrida argued that a “transcendental signifier” of this kind does not exist and that there is no “truth” or “essence” beyond language or text. Derrida’s concept of “deconstruction” suggests that we give meaning to our realities through binary oppositions such as male-female, white-black, colonizer-colonized, culture-nature, but that in the “centered” ontological belief systems of Western civilization, one binary in this oppositional pair tends to be repressed in favor of the other.³² Derrida proposed that dominant “truths” within a given discourse can be “decentered” through the exposure of the antagonistic binary

³⁰ Stuart Hall, “When was the Postcolonial? Thinking at The Limit,” in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (eds.), *The Postcolonial Question. Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London: Routledge, 1996), 242–260; 247.

³¹ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory. An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 112.

³² Jaques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” in *Writing and Difference*, ed. by Alan Bass (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

that had to be repressed in order for the discourse to function in the first place.³³ This process, which he called deconstruction, would unleash an open-ended play of signification and result in the temporary displacement of binaries. In its emphasis on the incessant play on meaning and its explicitly anti-humanist stance, some have deemed poststructuralism incompatible with postcolonial efforts to recuperate humanist values for the decolonial struggle and to narrate histories from the other side of the colonial difference.³⁴ As people in the Third World aimed to liberate their countries from imperial oppression, it was humanist ideals to which they appealed and meta-narratives of national coherence which they sought to create. While scholars such as Terry Eagleton and Robert C. Young have argued that, for Derrida, deconstruction is a political practice, for others, post-structuralism seemed to evade political questions and ethics.³⁵ If meaning was never fixed, but was perpetually deferred, how could there be any determinate truth or principle around which to organize politically? Yet, Gayatri Spivak's work has demonstrated deconstruction as a postcolonial mode of reading and Stuart Hall has argued that poststructuralism still allows for the *strategic* assumption of specific political identities. He proposed that

[i]f signification depends upon the endless repositioning of its differential terms, meaning, in any specific instance, depends on the contingent and arbitrary stop - the necessary and temporary 'break' in the infinite semiosis of language. This does not detract from the original insight. It only threatens to do so if we mistake this 'cut' of identity - this *positioning*, which makes meaning possible - as a natural and permanent, rather than

³³ Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 281.

³⁴ Ibid.; Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 123f; Spivak, "The Postmodern Condition: The End of Politics?" in *The Post-colonial Critic. Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. by Sarah Harasym (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 24.

³⁵ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 123f; Young, *White Mythologies. Writing History and the West* (London: Taylor Francis Group, 2004).

an arbitrary and contingent 'ending' - whereas I understand every such position as 'strategic' and arbitrary, in the sense that there is no permanent equivalence between the particular sentence we close, and its true meaning, as such.³⁶

My dissertation is particularly attentive to two critiques leveled at postcolonialism. First, postcolonial theories have been faulted for their universalization of Anglocentric assumptions. Scholars such as Elle Shohat and Robert Stam have argued that when “postcolonialism” is applied to a range of geographically and temporally distinct phenomena, ranging from white settler colonies in Australia or Canada, the diasporic presence of formerly colonial “subjects” in European nation-states, and post-independence “Third World” countries such as Nigeria, then very different national and racial formations are homogenized.³⁷ I contend that the historically different racisms and colonialisms in England, France, and Germany, and Nigeria’s history as a British colony, have resulted in distinct approaches to questions of postcolonial nationhood, difference and differentiation today, that must be taken into consideration in evaluating the critical potential of Shonibare’s “unbound” work. The second critique of postcolonialism, articulated by postcolonial critics such as E. San Juan Jr., Achille Mbembe, and Arif Dirlik, among others, stipulates that postcolonialism’s idealist preoccupation with articulating “hybrid” and “diasporic” identities and deconstructing stereotypes in Euroamerica, has taken place at the expense of analyzing persistent material

³⁶ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation,” in *Black British Cultural Studies. A Reader*, 210-223; 216.

³⁷ Elle Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994), 37-39.

inequalities and epistemic power differentials defining today's global capitalism.³⁸

Achille Mbembe notes that

Economic explanations of contemporary social and political phenomena have all but disappeared, all struggles have become struggles of representation. [...] everything has become "network" and no one asks anymore about the market and capitalism as institutions both contingent and violent. Only rarely is there recourse to the effects of the *longue durée* to explain the paths taken by different societies and to account for contradictory contemporary phenomena.³⁹

It has become standard practice to point out that the prefix "post" in postmodernism and postcolonialism does not denote a decisive space-clearing gesture but also demonstrates significant continuities.⁴⁰ Although countries like Nigeria gained political independence from direct colonial domination in the mid-twentieth century, power was passed to westernized African elites that retained the economic and political structures in place, so that the economic asymmetries of the colonial period and an international division of labor were reinscribed.⁴¹ By defining colonialism as "the conquest and direct control of other peoples' land, which is one particular phase in imperialism," we can conceive of postcolonialism in a temporal sense as following direct colonial rule, while simultaneously acknowledging that imperialism persists and "is now best understood as the globalisation [sic] of the capitalist mode of production, its penetration of

³⁸ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 5; Arif Dirlik, "How the Grinch Hijacked Radicalism. Further Thoughts on the Postcolonial," *Postcolonial Studies* 2, no. 2 149—63; E. San Juan, Jr. *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

³⁹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 6.

⁴⁰ Jameson, *The Cultural Logic Of Capitalism*, xi.

⁴¹ Robert C. Young. *Postcolonialism. An Historical Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 46; Frantz Fanon, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1965).

previously non-penetrated parts of the world, and the destruction of pre- or non-capitalist forms of social organization.”⁴² Postcolonial studies are thus concerned with multiple activities, priorities and positions that include the varied experiences of diasporic populations in Europe, as well as the postcolonial realities of subjects in the former colonies. These positions cannot and should not be homogenized. For the purpose of this study, I follow Robert C. Young in comprehending postcolonialism in the broadest possible terms, as analyzing “the material and epistemological conditions of postcoloniality” that “seek to combat the continuing, often covert, operation of an imperialist system of economic, political, and cultural domination.”⁴³

Given the convergences and divergences of postmodernism and postcolonialism, should Shonibare be considered as a postmodern or a postcolonial artist? In her survey text on *Contemporary African Art*, Sidney Littlefield Kasfir likewise questioned: How postmodern is contemporary African art?⁴⁴ She suggests that postmodernism presumes a conscious awareness of “Western” modernism, its accomplishments and limitations, so that only artists who are familiar with this “Western” modernism might be classified as “postmodern.” Since Shonibare is steeped in the discourse of postmodernism and because his work is preoccupied with deconstructing stereotypes of black people in Europe though his engagement with European modernity, he is part of

⁴² Young, *Postcolonialism*, 58; Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory. An Introduction*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 2.

⁴³ Young, *Postcolonialism*, 58.

⁴⁴ Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, *Contemporary African Art* (London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000).

a group of contemporary African artists that has been invoked as both postcolonial and postmodern. It is thus important to keep in mind that, just because a person is associated with one end of the colonial difference, this does not automatically mean that he or she necessarily identifies with that position epistemically.⁴⁵ Whether Shonibare's artworks primarily work in the interest of postmodern or postcolonial concerns is thus a central question this dissertation seeks to determine.

Museums and the Deconstruction of Institutionalized Racisms

In the discipline of art history and within the European museum landscape, postmodern and postcolonial critiques have affected the museum in different ways. In an attempt to dismantle the reputation of museums as bastions of Eurocentrism and white privilege, postmodern approaches have embraced a relativist parallelism of cultures that is based on the assumption of pre-existing cultural differences and results in all-inclusive "global" art exhibitions.⁴⁶ These globalizing exhibitions in European museums have been critiqued as sites that reinscribe difference and that, as Homi Bhabha has suggested, "too easily become part of the globalizing West's thirst for its own ethnicity, for citation and

⁴⁵ Ramón Grosfoguel, "Decolonizing Postcolonial Studies and Paradigms of Political Economy. Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality," *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 1 (2011), not paginated. Available at <http://dialogoglobal.com/texts/grosfoguel/Grosfoguel-Decolonizing-Pol-Econ-and-Postcolonial.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Homi Bhabha, "Postmodernism/Postcolonialism", in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by Richard Shiff and Robert S. Nelson (University of Chicago Press, 2013), 307-322; 319.

simulacral echoes from Elsewhere.”⁴⁷ If a thorough institutional decolonization is desired, it does not suffice to expand the canon by exhibiting artists deemed “non-European” on equal footing with European artists in a postmodern gesture celebrating heterogeneity. A postcolonial critique requires a thorough reconsideration of how colonial exhibition practices, Eurocentric ordering principles, disciplinary divisions and knowledge systems, as well as traditional notions of nationhood have served to articulate and inscribe conceptions of absolute cultural/racial/gendered difference in the first place and how these categorical differences served to shape a national “self”.⁴⁸

In her book, *Subject to Display. Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (2008), art historian Jennifer González suggests that visual histories of a nation’s past as presented in museums and elsewhere, contribute to the performative reiteration of categorical notions of difference.⁴⁹ My study rejects the nineteenth-century concept of race as a biological fact, as a categorical division separating humans into types through legible external and/or internal differences.⁵⁰ I derive my understanding of race from cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who defined it as a discursive formation that emerges at the intersection of language, thought, and regimes of (visual) representation that, as

⁴⁷ Bhabha, “Postmodernism/Postcolonialism”, 321.

⁴⁸ Alexandra Karentzos, “Postkoloniale Kunstgeschichte. Revisionen von Musealisierung, Kanonisierung, Repräsentation,” in *Schlüsselwerke der Postcolonial Studies*, ed. by Julia Reuter and Alexandra Karentzos (Wiesbaden: Springer VS 2012); 249-266.

⁴⁹ Jennifer A. González, *Subject to Display. Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 2.

⁵⁰ Maureen Maisha Eggers, Grada Kilomba, Peggy Piesche, Susan Arndt (eds.), *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland* (Münster: Unrast Verlag, 2005).

a whole, serve to categorize humans as racial types.⁵¹ This means that, prior to categorization, races do not exist in the world as clearly bounded, fixed, internally coherent groups.⁵² Race, like gender, is a cultural construct that implicates us all and that is preserved through our ritual reenactments of racialized and gendered identities in relation to and at the expense of each other. Therefore, the “raced” and “gendered” subjects that race and gender discourses purport to *describe* are in fact performatively *re-produced* in the course of social interaction.⁵³ To better distinguish race and gender as socially constituted processes from essentialist conceptions that comprehend race and gender as biologically inherent, the terms ‘identification’ and ‘differentiation’ might be preferable to terms such ‘identity’ and ‘difference’ due to their implicit suggestiveness of temporality and agency.⁵⁴ Race and gender must be conceived as empty signifiers that are imbued with different meanings within different social formations and times.⁵⁵ While race is not only manifested visually, González emphasizes the central importance of visibility and image cultures in rendering racial categories as seemingly self-evident.⁵⁶ She argues that these categorical distinctions can become naturalized as “unwritten

⁵¹ Stuart Hall, “Subjects in History: Making Diasporic Identities,” in *The House that Race Built*, ed. by Wahneema Lubiano (New York: Vintage, 1998), 289-299.

⁵² Zine Magubane, “Which Bodies Matter? Feminism, Poststructuralism, Race and the Curious Theoretical Odyssey of the Hottentot Venus,” *Gender & Society* 15, no. 6 (December 2001): 816—834; 824.

⁵³ Howard Winant, “The Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race,” *Only Skin Deep. Changing Visions of the American Self*, ed. by Coco Fusco and Brian Wallis (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003).

⁵⁴ Amelia Jones, *A History and Theory of Identification in the Visual Arts* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 236.

⁵⁵ Challenging Media, “Race, the Floating Signifier: Featuring Stuart Hall”, accessed November 20, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMo2uiRAf30>.

⁵⁶ González, *Subject to Display*, 5.

laws” that may have very tangible effects on the definition of membership in communities and forms of hierarchy and oppression.

I follow González in suggesting that contemporary installation arts, such as Shonibare’s, might lend themselves to the deconstruction of naturalized race and gender discourses and exclusive national identities, in their ability to function as “environmental microcosms that have a metonymic relationship to the social spaces they mimic and critique.”⁵⁷ Installation arts do not comprise a specific medium, but can subsume various media, ranging from video, performance, painting, sculpture, architecture, found objects, etc., which the artist assembles to create a spatial experience into which the viewer physically enters.⁵⁸ While contemporary installation art grows out of Dada art actions, happenings, and environmental arts of the 1950s and 1960s, installations became a pervasive art form in the context of the globalization of the 1990s.⁵⁹ The contemporary popularity of installation arts derives, in part, from the viewer’s need to phenomenologically experience installation art in situ and, frequently, in relation to a larger containing space so that, more than any other art form, installation arts have been able to compete with mass media by requiring the spectator’s physical presence.⁶⁰ Because installations are a spatial art form that engages the viewer psychologically, phenomenologically, and/or politically, the spectator becomes part of the work as a politically and culturally situated actor, a

⁵⁷ González, *Subject to Display*, 9f.

⁵⁸ Claire Bishop, *Installation Art. A Critical History*, 2nd ed. (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), 6.

⁵⁹ Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated. A Story of Contemporary Art*, 24.

⁶⁰ Boris Groys, “The Topology of Contemporary Art”, in *Antinomies of Art and Culture. Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, ed. by Terry Smith, Nancy Condee and Okwui Enwezor (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

'participant observer' who is both constituted by and constitutes the work in question.⁶¹

In her survey *Installation Art. A Critical History* (2008) Claire Bishop notes that installation arts are closely associated with the deconstructive tendencies of poststructuralist theory and seek to contrive a moment of decentering that implicitly assumes the viewer as a priori centered.⁶² Shonibare's installations function through the visual citation of familiar cultural and historical events of the European past that, in the course of repetition, violate shared expectations through the introduction of incongruous differences or clashes of style. By repeating or doubling iconic European images and events of modernity but incorporating references to what had to be repressed in order for a Eurocentric narrative of modernity to function in the first place, Shonibare seeks to deconstruct its unmarked "whiteness". To do so, his installations often, but not exclusively, deploy headless mannequins, which are arranged in a *tableau vivant* fashion. The term *tableaux vivants* is of French origin and means "living pictures." Historically, *tableaux vivants* were arrangements of costumed, live individuals or groups that posed to evoke recognizable art works or scenes from literature, history, or mythology as a form of popular entertainment.⁶³ These scenes were motionless and usually silent, although they were sometimes accompanied by music, and performers were expected to hold their poses for at least thirty seconds. While originating in antiquity, the *tableau vivant* experienced a revival in

⁶¹ Bishop, *Installation Art*, 133.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ John McIsaac, "Tableaux Vivants and Triviality in the Writings of Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Johanna Schopenhauer, and Fanny Lewald," *Monatshefte* 99, no. 2 (2007): 152-176; 152.

the eighteenth-century aristocratic entertainments of Lady Emma Hamilton and peaked in popularity in Europe in the 1890s.⁶⁴ In this context, they came to be associated with femininity and trivial entertainment and were inscribed at the lower end of an explicitly gendered high/low cultural divide.⁶⁵ Performances were organized casually as parlor games or, toward the late nineteenth-century, staged more professionally to paying audiences at public theaters.⁶⁶ As a popular culture form that allowed for engagements with cultural history and experimentation with the fluidity of different identifications that often tested the boundaries of the socially acceptable, the tableau vivant lent itself to Shonibare's own artistic investigation of subject formation in a globalized world and his engagement with art hierarchies. Bishop argues that by exposing us to the condition of our always-already decentered subjectivities, installation arts, as discrete spaces contiguous or "metonymic" with the larger social spaces they inhabit, might activate us to be more equipped to negotiate our relationships with the world and other people.⁶⁷ It is in this sense that this dissertation examines how Shonibare's "unbound" installations served to challenge traditional notions of nationhood, difference and differentiation in England, Germany, France, and Nigeria.

⁶⁴ Brenda Assael, "Art or Indecency? Tableaux Vivants on the London Stage and the Failure of Late Victorian Moral Reform," *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4 (October 2006), 744-758.

⁶⁵ McIsaac, "Tableaux Vivants and Triviality," 152.

⁶⁶ Assael, "Art or Indecency?" 744-758.

⁶⁷ Bishop, *Installation Art*, 133.

Nationalism, Transnationalism, and Globalization

While I deploy nation-based frameworks to attend to the specificities of Shonibare's reception, I acknowledge that the nation-state has been severely fragmented through transnational articulations from above and below. The symbolic force of the modern nation-state is undergoing massive challenges and transformations as a result of the clashing forces of economic globalization, decolonization, mass migration, unprecedented technological interconnectivity, and subnational ethnic identities clamoring for succession.⁶⁸ Because these interdependent developments have resulted in the increasing capacity of populations everywhere to inhabit "imagined worlds" that transcend the boundaries of nation-states, some scholars, such as anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, have predicted the incipient disappearance of the nation-state as a relevant unit of analysis.⁶⁹ Historian Fatima El-Tayeb has further argued that Europe's implicit investment in "whiteness" is a continent-wide pattern that cannot be explained solely within national contexts.⁷⁰ As the European Union is attempting to fashion a common transnational identity, the smallest common denominator it can agree upon is often the exclusion of its "non-European Others" who are rejected on the basis of an essentialist understanding of cultural incompatibility that masks economic exclusions.⁷¹ The failed interpellation of these "Others" into Europe's national public spheres, has in turn resulted in the

⁶⁸ Terry Smith, *Contemporary Art. World Currents* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2011), 12.

⁶⁹ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large, Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996).

⁷⁰ Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2011).

⁷¹ El-Tayeb, *European Others*, 20.

articulation of transnational, diasporic collectivities and imaginaries of belonging that further complicate geographies of race with their transcendence of national boundaries.

While my study ascribes to a cultural transnationalism that seeks to reconceive culture as an object of knowledge that transcends restrictive national bases, in light of the postcolonial critiques outlined above, I also acknowledge that current conceptions of nationhood and cultural difference are rooted in geographically and historically specific colonialisms that must be examined in situated case studies. After all, the forces of economic globalization have not simply resulted in an homogenization and standardization of culture everywhere. Rather, it is through the negotiation of global trends through a specific situatedness that “locality” is produced, a process that Roland Robertson has aptly described as “glocalization”.⁷² I comprehend the nation as an imagined and narrated construct that is projected into “times immemorial”, but that also requires perpetual performative repetition because its discursive boundaries are always already perforated, unstable, and contested by competing domestic and transnational articulations.⁷³ National identities have always been articulated in engagement with various ‘Others’: First, through differentiation from colonial subjects that were once located on the periphery of Empire and who have now come to inhabit the former imperial metropolises. Second, in demarcation from domestic “Others” (the sexually deviant, the mentally ill, religious minorities,

⁷² Roland Robertson, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” *Global Modernities* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 25-44.

⁷³ Homi Bhabha, “Introduction. Narrating the Nation,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 1-7.

working-class populations, etc.) who came to form a “constitutive outside” within the nation’s borders. Lastly, national identities were fortified in the context of an inter-European rivalry for (colonial) hegemony and, in the case of Nigeria, through decolonizing efforts through and against British imperial power.⁷⁴ Nations are always woven together through various transnational threads, in fact, it is through the tracing of these threads that the nation emerges as a bounded historical entity, which is “imbricated in structures and processes that connect it to regions and potentially every part of the world.”⁷⁵

Chapter Summaries

As noted above, the historically different racisms and colonialisms in Britain, Germany, and France have resulted in distinct approaches to postcolonial nationhood, difference and differentiation today. These will be considered in detail in the respective chapters, but are briefly and comparatively outlined here. Since the mid-nineteenth century, British articulations of nationhood and Empire have rested on the cultural ideology of race and the polarities of “blackness” and “whiteness”.⁷⁶ The British colonial policy of “indirect rule” in places such as Nigeria imposed a centralized colonial administration, but ruled through

⁷⁴ Ulrike Lindner, Maren Möhring, Mark Stein, and Silke Stroh, “Introduction,” *Hybrid Cultures, Nervous States. Britain and Germany in a (Post)colonial World* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*; Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies. Colonial Conquest, Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997); Pascal Blanchard, Nicolas Bancel, and Sandrine Lemaire (eds.) *Colonial Culture in France Since the Revolution* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2014).

⁷⁵ Patricia Clavin, “Defining Transnationalism,” *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (November 2005): 421-439; 432.

⁷⁶ Young, *Postcolonialism*, 34ff.

indigenous institutions and leaders.⁷⁷ While this allowed for a relative non-interference with local cultures, it was also based on the assumption that the colonized populations were inherently inferior, could not acquire the educated and civilized status of the British, and would forever remain “the white man’s burden”.⁷⁸ In the aftermath of decolonization and large-scale, post-war labor migrations from the Commonwealth to Britain, cultural differences within British society have continued to be articulated through the language of race.⁷⁹ As the British empire disintegrated and the migration of colonial subjects forced the nation to reckon with its colonial history, Britons clung to the status symbol that had come to signify their inherent superiority, “their white skin and the immutable cultural difference it seemed to signify.”⁸⁰ In recognition of the constitutive links between nationalism and racism, scholars in Black British cultural studies such as Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy began to articulate Black Britishness in relation to a wider diaspora and formed political solidarities with black populations in the Caribbean, the Americas, Africa and elsewhere. At the same time, they sought to trouble the presumed “whiteness” of British nationhood and insisted on the centrality of the slave trade and imperialism to any understanding of British modernity. The strategic embrace of diasporic articulations of difference

⁷⁷ Toyin Falola, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 223.

⁷⁸ Young, *Postcolonialism*, 32f.

⁷⁹ Paul Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in The Union Jack. The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation: Diaspora Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press, 2007).

⁸⁰ Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation: Diaspora Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press, 2007), 6.

eventually contributed to the British adoption of multiculturalism as a state policy under the New Labour governments of the 1990s.

My first chapter on England examines Shonibare's installation, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* (2010), which was featured on London's Trafalgar Square from May 2010 to January 2012. Trafalgar Square is a Victorian memorial site that commemorates the British naval victory over Napoleonic troops at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. This victory enabled Britain's subsequent naval supremacy and allowed for the expansion of her Empire in the course of the nineteenth century. The square's sculptural program features a central victory column to Admiral Horatio Nelson, who commanded the British troops, and includes plinths in the square corners displaying monuments to military officers that were centrally involved in the British expansion of Empire. As such, Trafalgar Square is a spatial expression of a defensive British maritime nationalism that reached a height during the Napoleonic Wars. The square represents the maritime realm as a sphere of white, male heroism, while black, women's and working class geographies are obscured. Shonibare's installation recreated one of Britain's most celebrated naval seacrafts, Admiral Horatio Nelson's *HMS Victory*, but placed it in a bottle and vaguely pointed beyond the square's Anglocentrism through his deployment of Dutch Wax fabrics for the sails. I read his installation as a parody that simultaneously complemented and ironized the white, patriarchal nationalism manifested on the square, by ambivalently signifying on the fractured iconography of the ship in modern and contemporary British (visual) culture. According to British maritime art historian Geoff Quilley, this ship

iconography reflects the economic and political philosophies of Britain's eighteenth-century commercial empire and is split between seascapes celebrating British naval power and maritime commerce as a white, male preserve, on the one hand, and liberal, abolitionist imagery of slave ships pillorying the slave trade, on the other.⁸¹ Meanwhile, contemporary diasporic articulations of history in Black British culture have deployed the slave ship and "the Black Atlantic" as primal metaphors of transnational cultural expressions to transcend the conflation of the British nation with "whiteness".⁸² I situate the reception of Shonibare's installation within the contemporary tensions of diasporic articulations of history and culture and British multicultural normalization.⁸³ I conclude that Shonibare's parodic installation was ultimately recuperated into the hegemonic national narrative, which, at the time, prized signifiers of difference as symbols of Britain's inclusivity and global reach.

In contrast to Britain, multiculturalism has not been adopted as an official state policy in either Germany or France.⁸⁴ Until recently, Germany's comparatively brief, thirty year colonial history was overshadowed by a commemorative culture dedicated to the Nazi era and the post-war reality of a

⁸¹ Geoff Quilley, "Art History and Double Consciousness: Visual Culture and Eighteenth-Century Maritime Britain," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 48, no. 1 (Fall 2014): 21-35, 23.

⁸² Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁸³ Pauline Schnapper, "British No More? The Political Debate on Englishness (1997-2007)," in *Englishness Revisited*, ed. by Floriane Reviron-Piégay, 205-217 (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2009).

⁸⁴ Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others. Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xvii.

geographically and ideologically split nation.⁸⁵ Because Germany lost its colonies in the aftermath of World War I, contrary to Britain and France, Germany did not undergo the experience of decolonization and it has no substantial colonial populations in its midst that would have vocalized colonial histories and issues. Instead, a sizable Turkish minority defines Germany's multicultural constitution and, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, questions of nationhood and difference have been articulated primarily in ethnocultural and, more recently, in religious, rather than in racial terms.⁸⁶ When a partitioned Germany was reunified in 1990, postwar intellectuals such as Jürgen Habermas opted for Germany's dissolution into a transnational European identity and sought renewed affiliation with "Western" political culture and Enlightenment values, rather than taking on the challenge of defining a positive conception of nationhood that could accommodate heterogeneity.⁸⁷ Anxieties about the increasing cultural diversity within Germany, which is the result of post-war labor migrations primarily from South and Eastern Europe, has prompted the positing of a centered German "Leitkultur" (dominant culture) to which Germany's minorities must adhere by attending state-mandated integration courses.⁸⁸ Although scholars in German academia initially considered Anglophone postcolonial theories irrelevant to their pursuits, significant change has been underway since the 1990s as scholars in

⁸⁵ Schmidt-Linsenhoff, Viktoria. "Warum hat die kritische Kunstgeschichte in Deutschland den Postcolonial Turn ausgelassen?" in *Kunst und Politik. Jahrbuch der Guernica Gesellschaft* 4, Schwerpunkt Postkolonialismus (2002): 7-16.

⁸⁶ Lindner et. al., "Introduction," *Hybrid Cultures, Nervous States*, xxxiv.

⁸⁷ Andreas Huyssen, "The Inevitability of the Nation. German Intellectuals After Reunification," *October* 61, The Identity in Question (Summer 1992): 65-73.

⁸⁸ Markus Schmitz, "The Current Spectacle of Integration in Germany. Spatiality, Gender and the Boundaries of the National Gaze," *Hybrid Cultures, Nervous States*, 253-276.

the disciplines of German Studies and History in particular have embraced transnational approaches, have considered the lingering impact of colonial history on conceptions of German nationhood and have begun to study the Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia.⁸⁹

My second chapter on Germany considers Shonibare's installations, *Scramble for Africa* (2010) and *Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald Shooting* (2007), which were featured as part of the 2010 exhibition, *Who Knows Tomorrow* at the Berlin *Nationalgalerie*. *Who Knows Tomorrow* was organized with the dual aim of contemplating the place of Berlin in the European colonization of Africa and examining how art might contribute to the overcoming of (art) historical constructions and stereotypes. Shonibare's "unbound" installations were inserted into the *Friedrichswerder Kirche*, which featured a permanent display of early nineteenth-century neoclassical sculptures of German notables from the Enlightenment and classical era within the architectural framework of a Neogothic church. While a post-unification German national identity has been primarily articulated as part of a transnational European identity, historian Fatima El-Tayeb has shown that Christianity and "whiteness" are the smallest common denominator by which this transnational European identity continues to be defined.⁹⁰ This ideological "whiteness" traces a linear, Eurocentric history from ancient Greece through Christianity and the Enlightenment to the emergence of modern, capitalist nation-states, while

⁸⁹ Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, "Kunst und kulturelle Differenz oder: Warum hat die kritische Kunstgeschichte in Deutschland den postcolonial turn ausgelassen?" *Kunst und Politik. Jahrbuch der Guernica Gesellschaft*, vol. 4 (2002): 7-16.

⁹⁰ Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others*, 8.

Europe's factual religious and ethnic diversity is not acknowledged.⁹¹ 'Whiteness' is asserted as humanist, progressive, democratic and invested in gender equality, while racism, fascism, and colonial history are either denied as defining constituents of German and European modernity or conceived as momentary aberrations.⁹² I deploy *Kritische Weißseinsstudien* to frame the *Friedrichswerder Kirche* and its permanent display as an "effective white power field", which Shonibare's "unbound" installations evoking slavery and colonial history, sought to hybridize in Homi Bhabha's sense of the term. Yet, the limitations of contemporary evocations of cultural hybridity have been outlined by Robert C. Young, Kien Nghi Ha, and others, and are consulted here to explain the reception of Shonibare's installations in Germany.⁹³

Since the French Revolution, French national identity has been informed by the egalitarian assumption of the fundamental sameness of all human beings.⁹⁴ A centralized administration of the colonies and an assimilationist *mission civilisatrice* was believed to bring even "backward" colonial populations into the fold of French culture and civilization.⁹⁵ French national identity today continues to regard political citizenship as a unifying force through which its

⁹¹ El-Tayeb, *European Others*, 6.

⁹² Susan Arndt, "Weißsein. Die verkannte Strukturkategorie Europas und Deutschlands," *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland*, ed. by Maureen Maisha Eggers, Grada Kilomba, Peggy Piesche, Susan Arndt, 24-28 (Münster: Unrast Verlag: 2005), 24-25.

⁹³ Kien Nghi Ha, *Hype um Hybridität. Kultureller Differenzkonsum und postmoderne Verwertungstechniken im Spätkapitalismus* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2005).

⁹⁴ Nadine Pippel, *Museen kultureller Vielfalt, Diskussion und Repräsentation französischer Identität seit 1980* (Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript Verlag, 2013), 11.

⁹⁵ Blanchard et. al., "The Creation of a Colonial Culture in France, From the Colonial Era to the Memory Wars", *Colonial Culture in France Since the Revolution*, ed. by Pascale Blanchard, Sandrine Lemaire, Nicolas Bancel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 8-9.

various subjects are rendered equal, while potentially divisive considerations of cultural and ethnic differences are banned from the public sphere and, hence, from museum displays.⁹⁶ Yet, the decolonization of the French empire and significant migrations to France did not go hand-in-hand with a decolonization of the French nation itself.⁹⁷ While initial efforts are underway that analyze how an imperial culture was fully formed with the establishment of the Third Republic in the 1830s, French academia and the French education system continue to treat French national history and colonial history as independent fields of study.⁹⁸ Therefore, the official assertion of a homogenizing French Republican culture masks a hegemonic “whiteness” that symbolically dispossesses France’s minorities of history and agency.⁹⁹

My third chapter on France considers Shonibare’s installation *Jardin D’Amour* (2007), which was commissioned for the contemporary galleries of president Jacques Chirac’s then newly opened *Musée du Quai Branly* in Paris. This museum has been subjected to vast critiques for presenting France’s ethnological collections within a neoprimitivizing architecture that reinscribes alterity, while simultaneously decontextualizing the exhibits by framing them in a discourse of cultural equality and aesthetic universalism. Sally Price and Nélia Dias have shown that the institutional decisions manifested at the *Quai Branly*

⁹⁶ Nélia Dias, “Cultural Difference and Cultural Diversity: The Case of the Musée du Quai Branly,” in *Museums and Difference*, ed. by Daniel Sherman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 124-154.

⁹⁷ Achille Mbembe, “Provincializing France?” *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 93.

⁹⁸ Sandrine Lemaire, “National History and Colonial History. Parallel Histories (1961-2001),” in *Colonial Culture*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard et. al, 420-432.

⁹⁹ Blanchard et. al., eds. *Colonial Culture since the French Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

are informed by French conceptions of nationhood, universality, and difference.¹⁰⁰ Shonibare's *Jardin D'Amour* installation reenacted the painting cycle *The Progress of Love* (1771-72) by French Rococo artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard in his signature style. His *Jardin D'Amour* was interpreted as a "postcolonial gaze reversal" that inserted a European artwork into this "temple of alterity" and evaluated it through the gaze of the "Other".¹⁰¹ I demonstrate how this interpretation reinscribed a dualism that serves to flatten colonial history into a story of colonizers pitted against colonized. It discursively neutralized Shonibare's work, which is expressive of the ambivalences of colonial discourses that result from the intersectional stratifications of colonizer and colonized by class, gender, and/or sexuality, and reintegrated it into French notions of absolute cultural difference.

Nigeria's current national boundaries are the product of British colonial fiat. In 1914, the British colonial administration amalgamated its Northern and Southern Protectorates and the over two hundred different ethnic groups living within its borders, under a centralized British colonial administration.¹⁰² The praxis of "indirect rule", in which different regions were governed through traditional chiefs and institutions, who were appointed by and overseen by British colonial officers, resulted in the regional competition for power in the center that

¹⁰⁰ Sally Price, *Paris Primitive. Jacques Chirac's Museum on the Quai Branly* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Nélia Dias, "Cultural Difference and Cultural Diversity: The Case of the Musée du Quai Branly," in *Museums and Difference*, ed. by Daniel Sherman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 124-154.

¹⁰¹ Bernard Müller, "Le « Jardin d'Amour » de Yinka Shonibare au Musée du Quai Branly ou: quand "l'autre" s'y met," *ceroart*, accessed August 8, 2016 <http://ceroart.revues.org/386?lang=en>.

¹⁰² Toyin Falola, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

continues to plague postcolonial Nigeria today.¹⁰³ Colonialism resulted in the inscription of ethnicity as a central marker of identity and difference that did not exist in this form prior to colonization.¹⁰⁴ This regionalism and ethnic particularism has been exacerbated by the uneven distribution of wealth and resources within Nigeria itself and its neocolonial economic underdevelopment within a globalized economy.¹⁰⁵ As a result, ethnic identifications and Pan-African articulations continue to compete with a weak and often dysfunctional Nigerian nation-state that has failed to successfully serve or interpellate its citizens as subjects.

My final chapter on Nigeria examines how “contemporary African art” has been narrated into a “global” conception of contemporaneity by independent curator Okwui Enwezor through recourse to themes of deterritorialization, border-crossing, and an emphasis on diasporic and “nomadic” artists such as Shonibare.¹⁰⁶ Critics have noted that Enwezor’s curatorial discourse paradoxically emphasizes the deterritorialized “globality” of the art world, while he curates exhibitions that privilege diasporic artists situated outside of Africa, such as Shonibare, and that primarily circulate in Euroamerica. This asymmetry incited Africanist art historian Sylvester Ogbechie to question: “Where is Africa in contemporary African art?”¹⁰⁷ I consider how the discourses of

¹⁰³ Toyin Falola, *A History of Nigeria*, 70f.

¹⁰⁴ John Picton, “Undressing Ethnicity,” *African Arts* (Autumn 2011): 72.

¹⁰⁵ Neo-Colonialism was first defined by Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah as early as the 1960s in his book *Neo-colonialism. The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1967), ix.

¹⁰⁶ Okwui Enwezor, “The Black Box”, *documenta 11: Platform 5* exhibition catalogue, ed. by Heike Anders and Nadja Rotter (Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002).

¹⁰⁷ Sylvester Ogbechie, “Where is Africa in Contemporary African Art?” *Savvy. Art. Contemporary. African*. Ed. 1, (Re-)mapping the Field: A Bird’s Eye View on Discourses (2011): 24-31.

“deterritorialization” and “nomadism” fail to account for the persistent material asymmetries that define access to and mobility within our “global” planetary system, while also obscuring the ways in which artists such as Shonibare are “reterritorialized” in the course of institutional framing and reception in Europe. While Shonibare returned to the country of his youth after a thirty-year absence in 2011 to deliver an artist talk in Lagos, the temporary installation of his *Wind Sculpture VI* in a public park in Lagos in November 2016 marks his first exhibition here. Versions of his *Wind Sculpture* series have been installed in public spaces in major metropolises in Europe and the United States and, now, in Africa. I critically engage the concept of nomadism in relation to Shonibare’s *Wind Sculpture* series. I close the chapter by considering how his *Wind Sculpture VI* might be received in Nigeria, where Dutch Wax fabrics are among the most popular textiles and, therefore, would not be fetishized as markers of “exotic” cultural difference.

Excursus: Yinka Shonibare’s Emergence on the Art Scene, the Burden of Representation and Dutch Wax Fabrics

As a British citizen born to Nigerian parents in London in 1962, Yinka Shonibare spent his childhood and youth among Nigeria’s postcolonial elite in Lagos. Coming of age in the vibrant and cosmopolitan Lagos of the 1960s and 1970s invigorated by the “oil boom”, Yinka Shonibare returned to England for secondary and tertiary education at the age of seventeen, attending the Byam Shaw School of Art (now Central St. Martins School of Art and Design) from 1984 to 1989 and

obtaining his MFA from the University of London's Goldsmiths in 1996.¹⁰⁸ Shonibare commenced his art studies in the context of two opposing developments that defined the British art scene of the 1980s: a politicized Black British Art movement, on the one hand, and the art establishment's resultant embrace of a multicultural institutionalization, on the other.¹⁰⁹ Following the National Black Art Convention organized at Wolverhampton Polytechnic in 1982, British-born artists descending from Britain's former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia had unified under the strategically adopted, political identity "Black British Artists." Influenced by the US Black Arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Midlands-based art school graduates Eddie Chambers, Claudette Johnson, Keith Piper, Donald Rodney, Marlene Smith, Sonia Boyce, among many others, formed a *community of resistance* based on their joint experiences of racism and institutional marginalization in Britain.¹¹⁰ In contrast to the U.S. context, "blackness" was originally mobilized in Britain as a strategic sign that came to include all British-born individuals that had borne the experience of racialized exclusion, whether their familial affiliations were located in Asia, the Caribbean, or Africa.¹¹¹ Faced by an increasingly racist discourse under the regime of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, which attempted to externalize

¹⁰⁸ Olu Oguibe, *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 36-37.

¹⁰⁹ Rasheed Araeen, "A New Beginning. Beyond Postcolonial Cultural Theory and Identity Politics," *Third Text* 14, no. 50 (2008): 3-20; 3.

¹¹⁰ For a summary of the movement's various stances by some of its former members, see David Bailey, Ian Baucom, Sonia Boyce (eds.), *Shades of Black. Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Eddie Chambers, *Black Artists in British Art. A History Since the 1950s* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

¹¹¹ Judith Wilson, "Triangular Trades: Late Twentieth Century 'Black' Art and Transatlantic Cultural Commerce," in *Shades of Black*, ed. by David Bailey et. al., 89-102 (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2005).

these British-born individuals as 'Other' by scapegoating them for the ills of British society, these artists sought to represent a new black subjectivity and articulate an ethnocentric, counter-hegemonic aesthetic that addressed the histories of slavery, imperialism and racism.¹¹² They lobbied for the creation of specifically black gallery spaces, while also deploying the emergent framework of postcolonial critique to speak out against institutional marginalization and the Eurocentric structure of British art schools.

Shonibare recounts that, as a member of a privileged family stemming from Nigeria, and a relative newcomer to British race discourses, he could not identify with the militancy of the Black British Art Movement. Given his family's aristocratic descent from the nineteenth-century Lagosian Yoruba king Kosoko and his elite upbringing, Shonibare felt more akin to Europe's upper classes than to the militant black British artists of the 1980s, although he repudiated the class-demotion that his blackness seemed to imply in Britain. He explains:

I come from a wealthy African family and that probably explains my ease in identifying with the European aristocracy. My father was a judge and you could say that my family was a typical upper-middle class one from Lagos. My family also descends from a king called Kosoko; he kept slaves and lived in the Itafaji area of Lagos Island [...] In Nigeria, the social differences are quite apparent. The wealthy live in the best areas in plush houses with lots of servants and chauffeurs. They have a guard to watch over the house. You have your own cook.¹¹³ [...] There was a European mentality in our household and of course we had a Mercedes. At the time, image was very important to successful Nigerians. I think we had about six cars and only used the Mercedes on weekends. [...] In Nigeria I was open to a lot of experiences: I was living in Lagos, a contemporary society, and I could watch American programs and just

¹¹² Rasheed Araeen, "Black Art: A Discussion with Eddie Chambers," in *Black British Culture and Society. A Text Reader*, ed. by Kwesi Owusu, 239-254 (London and New York: Routledge, 200).

¹¹³ Bernard Müller, "Interview with Yinka Shonibare MBE," *Yinka Shonibare, MBE. Jardin D'Amour* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), 6.

basically be a citizen of the world—show interest in many things simultaneously—I did not have to choose. Then, when I moved to Europe, to my surprise, I had to choose. I believe that my blackness began when I stepped off the plane in Heathrow. I did not have a notion or a concept of blackness until I stepped off that plane.¹¹⁴

Shonibare's upbringing in Lagos as a privileged man among the upper echelons of society certainly made class and gender rather than race his defining social determinant.¹¹⁵ Because Shonibare had grown up in Nigeria feeling inferior to no one and had moved to London with a solid sense of class-based entitlement, his experience in Britain differed from those of the self-proclaimed Black British artists.¹¹⁶ Shonibare rejected what he perceived as their separatist Afrocentrism and the politically "didactic" nature of their art. However, his artistic emergence coincided with a shift in black British cultural politics in the late 1980s that cultural theorist Stuart Hall described as a transition from a "representation of politics" to the "politics of representation" that Shonibare would come to embrace.¹¹⁷ While the former was based on a binary model in which stereotypical, Eurocentric representations of black life were countered with "positive" images of blackness, the latter complicated the dualism of a purportedly homogenous "blackness" and an opposed "whiteness". Adherents of the "politics of representation" came to recognize that subjects are always intersectionally stratified along racial, ethnic, gendered, sexual, and class lines. At the same time, colonial discourses are

¹¹⁴ Okwui Enwezor, "Yinka Shonibare. Of Hedonism, Masquerade, Carnavalesque, and Power. A Conversation with Okwui Enwezor," in *Looking Both Ways. Art of the Contemporary African Diaspora*, ed. by Laurie Ann Farrell, (Gent: Snoeck Publishers, 2004), 163-177; 166.

¹¹⁵ Oguibe, *The Culture Game*, 36.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities", in *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. by David Morley and Kuan Hsing-Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996); 441-449.

marked by the ambivalent doubling of fear and desire, which are partially internalized by the victims of racism, so that any stable political categories are complicated on multiple fronts.¹¹⁸ The “politics of representation” position comprehends “representation” as not merely reflective of an outside reality or a pre-existing identity, but as playing a constitutive part in shaping it. The endless semiotic slippage that Shonibare’s installations seek to unfurl project identity as a *durational praxis* that is, as Stuart Hall described it, “never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside of, representation.”¹¹⁹ Rather than rendering positive images of blackness, Shonibare’s “politics of representation” is primarily concerned with blurring, shifting and defying the presumed stability of essentialist categorizations through the processes of merging and hybridization.¹²⁰

Yet, during his art school education, Shonibare was confronted with the institutional expectation that his art must represent “black concerns” or replicate “African identity” early on. A self-proclaimed global citizen, Shonibare initially produced paintings about Mikhael Gorbachev’s political reform movement *Perestroika* in the Soviet Union of the mid-1980s that, in the Cold War era, had implications for the world at large.¹²¹ During a review session, one of his art professors faulted Shonibare for the lack of references to Africa in his work,

¹¹⁸ Hall, “New Ethnicities”, 442 f; Stuart Hall, “Gramsci’s Relevance to the Study of Race and Ethnicity,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10 (June 1986): 5-27.

¹¹⁹ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence&Wishard, 1990), 222-233; 222.

¹²⁰ Robert C. Young, *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 22f.

¹²¹ Enwezor, “Yinka Shonibare. Of Hedonism,” 166f.

suggesting he create art related to where he comes from. Shonibare noted that he soon became aware that he was situated in a double bind. He relates that,

I think it was during my art school education that I realized I was not going to be allowed to be a universal, anonymous artist—if there is such a thing, but that was my utopian view. [...] If I made work about being black I would simply be considered an artist that makes work about blackness, if I did *not* make work about being black, people would speak of me as an artist that does not make art about blackness.¹²²

Yet, his attendance of Goldsmiths also steeped him in postmodern and poststructuralist theories—he recalls reading Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Jean Baudrillard in particular—who offered theoretical tools for deconstructing the essentialisms seeking to confine him.¹²³ In an effort to comprehend what “Africanness” represents in the contemporary British imagination and to respond to the predicament of the “burden of representation”, Shonibare visited one of the most African places in London he could think of: the “African” stalls on Brixton Market. It is here that he discovered Dutch Wax fabrics, which he would subsequently adopt as his artistic brand name and whose material histories have subsequently shaped the mantra of Shonibare scholarship.¹²⁴

Dutch Wax fabrics have served as signifiers of African identity since the decolonization and civil rights movements of the 1960s, when many Africans on the continent and in the diaspora began wearing clothing tailored from these

¹²² Enwezor, “Yinka Shonibare. Of Hedonism,” 166f.

¹²³ Rachel Kent, “Time and Transformation in the Art of Yinka Shonibare MBE,” in *Yinka Shonibare MBE*, ed. by Rachel Kent (Munich: Prestel, 2014), 8.

¹²⁴ Shonibare’s strategic deployment of Dutch Wax fabrics was first described in Kobena Mercer, “Art That is Ethnic in Inverted Commas,” *FRIEZE*, first published in Issue 25, November/ December 1995. Available at <https://frieze.com/article/art-ethnic-inverted-commas?language=en>.

brightly patterned textiles to signify black pride and power.¹²⁵ Merchants on Brixton market informed Shonibare that, despite their presumed “Africanness”, Dutch Wax fabrics were originally inspired by handcrafted Indonesian batiks and have been commercially produced in Netherlands and England since the nineteenth century. A predecessor of the contemporary Dutch manufacturer Vlisco began industrially producing fabrics inspired by the intricate designs of handcrafted Javanese batiks in an effort to compete with indigenous producers in what was then the colony of the Dutch East Indies. When the industrially produced Dutch Wax fabrics failed on the Indonesian market due to imperfections resulting from their commercial dying process, European merchants began marketing these textiles to buyers in West and Central Africa. Over the years, as European producers began adapting the fabric designs to local aesthetic preferences to improve sales, the fabrics became solidly integrated into West African consumption structures. They are still prominently featured on West African markets and are available in all larger metropolises around the world with a larger African diasporic presence. In the meantime, patterns of production have shifted again, so that cheaper, lower quality versions of these fabrics are now also produced in China by the ABC company, while the Europe and Africa-based company Vlisco distributes “high-end” versions of these textiles which function as important signs of social status in West African societies.¹²⁶ Although these boldly patterned, varied fabrics feature a broad range

¹²⁵ The material history of Dutch Wax fabrics is outlined in Nina Sylvanus, “The Fabric of Africanity. Tracing the Global Threads of Authenticity,” *Anthropological Theory* 7 (2007): 201-216.

¹²⁶ Sylvanus, “The Fabric of Africanity,” 208f.

of iconographies that communicate proverbs and messages about politics, interpersonal relations, and technological modernity to West African wearers and viewers, Shonibare has repeatedly asserted that the culturally specific meanings and social uses of these textiles are of secondary relevance to his installations.¹²⁷ Instead, his work seeks to demonstrate the impossibility of demands for cultural purity in a world that has been globalized for centuries. By deploying the material history of the fabrics, he seeks to expose how cultural ‘authenticity’ is constructed for fetishistic consumption through the repression of complex object lives and social norms of usage.¹²⁸ In this fashion, outside of the realms where Dutch Wax fabrics are culturally “legible”, they come to circulate as “empty” signifiers of racialized difference that primarily serve to rejuvenate consumers and viewers who yearn for exotic remnants of “the real” in a world that is increasingly mediated by technology. As Jennifer González has noted,

Just as living humans can be conflated with material culture, so material culture can acquire the racial status of humans. Objects, in other words can become epidermalized. The process of epidermalization is one in which the object is positioned in history, in a collection, in the marketplace, or in a museum display as racially defined.¹²⁹

As such, Shonibare’s deploys Dutch Wax fabrics as *epidermalized* materials that betray their complex backgrounds.

Olu Oguibe suggests that Shonibare exploited the predicament of “the culture game” to his own benefit by simultaneously providing and defying the exotic cultural difference that his professor and a global art market desire,

¹²⁷ John Picton, “Undressing Ethnicity,” *African Arts* 34, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 66-73; 69.

¹²⁸ Kobena Mercer, “Art That is Ethnic in Inverted Commas,” *FRIEZE* 1995. Available at <https://frieze.com/article/art-ethnic-inverted-commas?language=en>; Sylvanus, “The Fabric of Africanity,” 212.

¹²⁹ Gonzalez, *Subject to Display*, 5.

through his deployment of Dutch Wax fabrics as his identifying brand name. By clothing headless, phenotypically ambiguous mannequins with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century dress designs tailored from these Dutch Wax fabrics, and arranging these mannequins in *tableaux vivants* that reenact scenes from modern European (art) history, Shonibare provides “unbound” bodies that seek to resist national, cultural, racial, and, at times, gendered categorization. He strategically exploits the dichotomy of “otherness” by readily staging exotic African authenticity for European audiences, but then deconstructing it in a semiotic slippage that intends to undo its fixity. Oguibe infers that Shonibare’s work

succeeded in outwitting and *subverting* the desires and machinations of the culture of difference that is at the heart of the global-contemporary art machine. [...] Having *broken the code of the culture game*, Shonibare subsequently transformed his fabric into a signature, a product identity, again manifesting his sophisticated understanding of the devices of success in the metropolitan culture industry.¹³⁰ [my emphases]

Since Oguibe penned his analysis of Shonibare’s work in 2001, Shonibare has been thoroughly absorbed into the mainstream art establishment. He was included in the 1997 touring exhibition *Sensation. Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*, which featured the collection of advertising mogul Charles Saatchi. Saatchi’s strategic patronage and promotion of the artists that he came to dub “young British artists” [yBa’s] facilitated their domination of the British art scene in the course of the 1990s.¹³¹ Through his participation in the exhibition, Shonibare was initially loosely associated with the yBAs, many of whom, such as

¹³⁰ Oguibe, *The Culture Game*, 40.

¹³¹ For a critical discussion see, Julian Stallabrass, *High Art Lite* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).

Damien Hirst, graduated from Goldsmiths briefly before him. In the meantime, Shonibare has distanced himself from the yBa's by arguing that he was never one of Saatchi's favorites.¹³² Yet, this early association provided him with visibility and his installations certainly share some of the characteristics distinguishing the yBa works, which art historian Julian Stallbrass circumscribed as including mass media engagements, a conceptual approach packed in a visually accessible and spectacular form, the deployment of irony and ambiguity, and a surface radicality that never resolves into an explicit position-taking.¹³³

At the same time, Shonibare benefited from the multicultural normalization of British cultural politics, which resulted in the establishment of new institutions such as the International Institute of Visual Arts [INIVA] in London, and the enthusiastic embrace of pluralism in the art world at large in the course of the 1990s. Shonibare emerged on an international platform as a central representative of the field of "contemporary African art", which was narrated for Euroamerican audiences through the efforts of independent curator Okwui Enwezor. His inclusion in Okwui Enwezor's *documenta 11* in Kassel, Germany, in 2002, catapulted Shonibare into the Euroamerican art network and, since then, he has been invited to exhibit his work in a continuous flurry of solo and group exhibitions.¹³⁴ Today, Shonibare is not only widely represented in the art

¹³² Andrew M. Goldstein, "Yinka Shonibare on Art, Africa, and Why He's so Fond of the Queen," *artspace*, December 20, 2014, accessed May 24, 2016, http://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/meet_the_artist/yinka-shonibare-interview-52566.

¹³³ Julian Stallbrass, *High Art Lite* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 4f.

¹³⁴ His CV documenting his exhibition history is available on his website: http://www.yinkashonibaremba.com/resources/content/page_content/4/YINKA_SHONIBARE%20cv.pdf

collections of major institutions in the Euro-North American art network, but he has also been honored with a mid-career retrospective organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, Australia, which subsequently travelled to the Brooklyn Museum and the National Museum of African Art in the United States in 2009.¹³⁵ He is currently represented by the Stephen Friedman Gallery in London, the James Cohan Gallery in New York and Blain/Southern in Berlin. In 2004, he was nominated for the Tate Museum's prestigious Turner Prize and, in the same year, he received the royal decoration 'Member of the British Empire' (MBE) in acknowledgement of his cultural contributions to the British nation. Shonibare noted,

Even though I make work about power, the so-called establishment and so on, I was made a Member of the British Empire. I am now Yinka Shonibare MBE, and of course there was the question of whether I was going to refuse the honor. The poet Benjamin Zephaniah, who is of Caribbean origin, had refused - I think it was an OBE. In the end, I felt that, given what my work is about, to have actually been acknowledged and honored by the establishment was quite interesting. And I felt it was more useful to accept it than to refuse it. Maybe I'm a bit old-fashioned, but I think it's better to make an impact from within rather than from without. In a way I feel flattered, because I never really thought the establishment took any notice of what artists did.¹³⁶

More recently, on September 24, 2013, Shonibare was appointed a Royal Academician, thereby becoming a member of the most venerable, time-honored institution of British art. As the quote above serves to demonstrate, Shonibare very self-consciously performs and inhabits his prestigious decorations, deploying the apparent paradox of his association with these traditional British institutions for his artist identity by insisting he be called Yinka Shonibare MBE

¹³⁵ Rachel Kent (ed.), *Yinka Shonibare MBE*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Prestel, 2014).

¹³⁶ Anthony Downey, "Yinka Shonibare", *BOMB* 93 (Fall 2005); available at <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2777/yinka-shonibare>.

(RA). He thereby extends the slippage of his artwork to his performances-of-self, ambivalently posing as a representative and a critic of the British establishment at the same time. As such, he confidently inhabits the ambivalences of colonial discourses.¹³⁷

While Oguibe issued Shonibare's hypervisibility as a success for black cultural politics in 2001, others, such as British artist, activist and founder of the critical art journal *Third Text*, Rasheed Araeen, remain skeptical. Reflecting on over two decades of critical engagement with "Western" culture and its inability to come to terms with the colonial past and a postcolonial world, Araeen argued in a 2008 article that, despite the recognition of some artists of non-European descent in the "Western" art establishment, the latter has fundamentally remained the same. In a statement that might describe Shonibare, although he is never explicitly named, Araeen remonstrates that,

[t]he real issue is the way others are accepted and accommodated by the dominant culture [...] We only have to look at the contemporary art scene to see what our recognized young artists are doing. It is pathetic: most of them are acting like juveniles, clowning and buffooning, wearing their respective colorful ethnic dresses and carrying cultural identity cards, they are happily dancing in the court of the ethnic King Multiculturalism. Having thus achieved their recognition, and being celebrated with the Turner Prize, the hybrid children of multiculturalism are in no mood to upset the establishment. They don't even want to know that art has a historical responsibility, that it has a subversive function, which can only be achieved if one is able to penetrate the system and challenge its structures.¹³⁸

Araeen dismisses Shonibare's artistic generation of the 1990s, which followed the explicitly politicized Black Arts Movement of the 1980s in which Araeen was

¹³⁷ Raphael Chikukwa and Michele Robecchi, "Profile: Yinka Shonibare MBE," accessed July 19, 2016, <http://www.contemporary-magazines.com/profile89.htm>.

¹³⁸ Araeen, "New Beginnings", 6-7.

involved, for having lost political traction in favor of being received on a transcultural, “global” art scene. Meanwhile, Oguibe’s evaluation of Shonibare’s works as “subversive” hinges on the artist’s stated *intentions* without considering what it is that Shonibare’s art works actually *do* once they circulate in various public spheres, as they become situated in specific institutional frameworks within a given time and place. As a result, possible readings of Shonibare’s work are delimited by prescribing an apriori radical destabilization of signifiers, on the one hand, or dismissing him on the basis of his lacking political commitment and his willingness to accommodate the mainstream, on the other. My dissertation takes Oguibe’s claim of Shonibare’s “subversiveness” and Araeen’s critical assessment of the immutable sameness of the art establishment’s institutions as a starting point, and shifts the focus from Shonibare’s intentions to situated analyses of his institutional framing and reception in four locations where his work has become “visible.”

CHAPTER TWO: BRITAIN

Introduction: Setting the Stage —Trafalgar Square and British Maritime Nationalism

The unveiling of Yinka Shonibare MBE's installation, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* (2010) on London's Trafalgar Square took place on May 24, 2010, beneath unusually sunny skies (Fig. 1–2). A crowd of journalists, art enthusiasts, and curious spectators had gathered around the veiled artwork towering on its monumental plinth, to witness London's then-mayor Boris Johnson present this latest public art commission amongst public cheering and applause. Towering above the heads of Londoners until January 31, 2012, Shonibare's installation featured a spectacular 30:1 replica of the naval battle ship *HMS Victory* floating on a blue plastic ocean and contained within an acrylic bottle. Mounted on a wooden platform that concealed a ventilation system, the bottle's corked mouth was secured with a red wax seal displaying the artist's initials (Fig. 3). Shonibare's rendition of this famous naval battle ship in the form of a common seaside souvenir would have been enough to turn heads. But it was the use of his signature Dutch Wax fabrics for the billowing sails that particularly accentuated the installation against the gray square with its Victorian sculptural program featuring the likenesses of national heroes and the muted classical façade of London's National Gallery poised behind it. In acknowledgement of the installation's marine theme, one of the fabrics deployed for the sails was replete with nautical references (Fig. 3). It featured stylized red anchors and explosive orange-yellow gunfire blasts within a rhomboid pattern formed by crossing yellow ropes against a blue background. The second fabric design was more abstract

and deployed earthy tones and organic shapes. Thickly outlined orange and brown areas vaguely resembling landmasses in cartography had circular shapes interspersed along their borders suggestive of further gun firing or explosions.

Nelson's Ship in a Bottle assumed a prominent position in London's urban landscape and was commissioned by the Fourth Plinth Programme. Funded by the government's main cultural body, the Arts Council England, the Fourth Plinth Programme is a public art competition that has biannually rotated works by established contemporary artists on Trafalgar Square since 2005. As the fourth commissioned work in the series, Shonibare's, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* distinguished itself from its precedents as the first site-specific work that made explicit reference to the historical event commemorated on Trafalgar Square—Admiral Horatio Nelson's naval victory over Napoleon's Franco-Spanish fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Although the victory at Trafalgar had cost Nelson his life, it established Britain's naval supremacy at sea and allowed for the further expansion of British imperial power.¹³⁹ To commemorate this incisive event, planning for Trafalgar Square was initiated in the late 1830s, although its construction would not be completed until the late nineteenth century.¹⁴⁰

Trafalgar Square is a roughly oblong-shaped, Victorian-era *lieu de memoire* that is flanked by London's National Gallery to the North and otherwise enclosed by busy streets that spill into a large roundabout at its southern end

¹³⁹ Rodney Mace, *Trafalgar Square. Emblem of Empire* (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 2005), 49ff.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

(Figs. 4–5).¹⁴¹ Shonibare’s reimagined *HMS Victory* complemented the Square’s masculinist monuments of naval and imperial heroes with a representation of one of the most recognizable and celebrated military sea crafts in British history, the vessel from which the Battle of Trafalgar was won under the leadership of Admiral Horatio Nelson (Figs. 6–7). Shonibare’s installation stood in direct relation to the square’s centerpiece, a granite likeness of Admiral Nelson surveying the city of London from a-top a 170-foot Corinthian victory column. The cubic base of, *Nelson’s Column* (1843) is decorated with four bas-reliefs of Nelson’s heroic deeds in battles, including the Battle of Trafalgar, and is “guarded” by four reclining, bronze lions facing outward from each corner. Each of the square’s corners is further marked by a large plinth, which feature effigies of imperial officers General Sir Charles Napier (1856) and Henry Havelock (1861), both of whom had been involved in the consolidation of Empire in India, and an equestrian sculpture of king George IV (1843) in the northeastern corner. The fourth, northwestern plinth, which now rotates contemporary art works under the auspices of the Fourth Plinth Programme, had originally been intended for an equestrian statue of the “sailor king” William IV, which never materialized due to lack of funds.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoires”, *Representations*, no. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989): 7-24.

¹⁴² Elsbeth Joyce Court, “Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle. Fourth Plinth Commission, Trafalgar Square, London, May 24, 2010—January 31, 2012,” *African Arts*, vol. 47, no.2 (Summer 2014), 86-90.

The Fourth Plinth Programme and the Production of (National) Space

Since its construction in the mid-nineteenth century, Trafalgar Square has functioned as England's "front room".¹⁴³ In light of its easy accessibility through public transportation and its proximity to governmental headquarters, it has served as a space where the nation's social and political aspirations have been given palpable expression, both in political demonstrations challenging the status quo and in public announcements by the establishment.¹⁴⁴ In the postcolonial era and in the aftermath of large-scale migrations to England from the British Commonwealth, the Square's celebratory monuments to white, male officers, who had once been key agents of Empire and who had violently suppressed colonial populations, appeared anachronistic to some. Boris Johnson's predecessor, London mayor Ken Livingston, had suggested the removal of the sculptures and their displacement to less prominent positions in the cityscape in 2000, using the inability of London's citizens to even identify the historic individuals commemorated as proof of their irrelevance.¹⁴⁵ This suggestion met with substantial conservative protest and was not granted, but also threatened to whitewash history without addressing the lingering implications of white supremacy on the lives of postcolonial subjects in the present.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, Shonibare's installation on the Fourth Plinth was preceded by the short-

¹⁴³ Mace, *Trafalgar Square*, 15.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 1; Shanti Sumartojo, "Britishness in Trafalgar Square: Urban Place and the Construction of National Identity," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 9, no. 3 (2009): 410-428.

¹⁴⁵ Deborah Cherry, "Statues in the Square: Hauntings at the Heart of Empire," *Art History* 29, no. 4 (September 2006): 660-697.

¹⁴⁶ Shanti Sumartojo, "The Fourth Plinth. Creating and Contesting National Identity in Trafalgar Square, 2005-2010," *cultural geographies* 20, no.10 (2013): 67-81; 67.

term insertion of a fiberglass maquette for a sculpture of Sir Keith Park, a Second World War royal air force commander. The latter owed his temporary stint on Trafalgar Square to the efforts of London mayor Boris Johnson, who had lent political muscle to the Sir Keith Park Memorial Campaign.¹⁴⁷ The campaign's spokesperson had requested that Sir Keith Park be honored on Trafalgar Square, which was, so he argued, conceived as a place for wartime commemoration and not intended as a "contemporary art fair."¹⁴⁸

What these public debates about the representations and uses of the urban landscape, the recognizability of its sign systems and its significance for national identity make evident is that space, both in its physical materiality and in its imaginative configurations, is socially produced.¹⁴⁹ Spaces such as Trafalgar Square do not merely provide static physical containers for changing human complexities, but are themselves produced by subjectivities and psychic states. Moreover, space is always sexually, racially, and economically differentiated, so that, as Katherine McKittrick has argued, racism and sexism are not just bodily or identity-based, but also spatial acts.¹⁵⁰ As a concentrated spatial expression of British maritime nationalism which represents the maritime sphere as a preserve of white, masculinist heroism, Trafalgar Square exemplifies how the places we traverse on an everyday basis often disguise important black, female, and working class geographies and histories and thereby implicitly serve to render

¹⁴⁷ The Sir Keith Park Memorial Campaign, accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.sirkeithpark.com/campaign.aspx>; Sumartojo, "The Fourth Plinth," 74f.

¹⁴⁸ Sumartojo, "The Fourth Plinth," 75.

¹⁴⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, transl. by Donald Nicholson Smith, 3rd ed. (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991).

¹⁵⁰ Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds. Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xviii.

these bodies un-geographic. But Trafalgar Square's Victorian architecture and sculptural program do not only occupy space, but are reversely occupied by succeeding generations who leave their marks upon it and who might either destabilize, alter, forget, or reenact the nation's acts of collective remembrance.¹⁵¹ Therefore, the insertion of public art works into Trafalgar Square's existing system of signs and its reception by diverse audiences, at least in theory, provided the potential for shattering the integrity of its patriarchal, Anglocentric, nineteenth-century representational scheme. It opened up a differential space in which other geographies might imaginatively be mapped and counter-narratives of the British nation could be elaborated.

In this context, I read Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* as a parody of the British maritime nationalism manifested on the Square and in British visual culture as a whole. I follow Linda Hutcheon in understanding parody *not* as "ridiculing imitation", but define parodic practice as "repetition with a critical distance that allows for ironic signaling of difference at the very heart of similarity."¹⁵² The "ironic edge" of Shonibare's work is an effect of his rendering homage to an iconic symbol of British nationalism through his historically accurate recreation of a miniature *HMS Victory*, which is offset by his simultaneous deployment of various distancing gestures that render the ship strange. This "difference at the very heart of similarity" served to ironicize not only the *HMS Victory*, which his installation repeats, but also signified on the national

¹⁵¹ Ian Baucom, *Out of Place. Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 5.

¹⁵² Linda Hutcheon, "The Politics of Postmodernism: Parody and History," *Cultural Critique*, no. 5, Modernity and Modernism, Postmodernity and Postmodernism (Winter, 1986-87): 179-207; 185.

heroes honored on the rest of the square. No unanimous agreement exists on how the political efficacy of ironic and parodic interventions is to be evaluated.¹⁵³ Feminist and postcolonial scholars such as Judith Butler and Homi Bhabha have defined parody (or what Bhabha calls mimicry) as political strategies that, under certain conditions, have the capacity to transgress and subvert hegemonic social norms.¹⁵⁴ However, there is also a long history of scholars and thinkers that conceive of parody and irony as conservative devices that ultimately serve to reassert the status quo. Arguments for parody as a politically subversive act have often focused on the intentions of the parodist rather than examining the social effects of parodic intervention.¹⁵⁵ In an effort to determine the latter, this chapter will embed Shonibare's, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* within the discourses of reception upon its unveiling.

In 2004, Divya-Tolia Kelly and Andy Morris revisited Kobena Mercer's 1990 article on the black artist's "burden of representation" to reevaluate the relationship between British institutions and black artists in light of the significant visibility gained by Yinka Shonibare. With the hindsight of more than a decade, the authors reflected on Shonibare's practice in relation to Mercer's argument that, rather than racist exclusion, artists such as Shonibare face the challenge of having to subvert the multicultural norms of British institutions that include them on the basis of their absolute "difference." The authors ultimately conclude that

¹⁵³ For a survey on the history of irony see, Claire Colebrook, *Irony* (London: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁵⁴ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁵⁵ Moya Lloyd, "Parody, Politics, and Performativity," *Theory, Culture & Society* 16, no. 2 (April 1999): 195-213, 199.

we may be witnessing the emergence of an effective counter-normalisation and the realization of what Stuart Hall has defined as a counter-strategy within the politics of representation that works ‘*within* the complexities and ambivalences of representation itself and tries to *contest it from within*. [...] Through the story of the batik’s spatial circulations, Shonibare not only challenges its ‘origins’ and its ‘authenticity’ but by this he also directly disrupts the meaning of the multicultural norms through working them back against themselves and exposing the reductive ways in which they operate.’¹⁵⁶ [my emphases]

As will be elaborated below, Shonibare’s installation ambivalently signified on the iconographies of the ship in British (visual) culture and the differential economies and opposing narratives of British history and culture for which they stand. As such, *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle* is indeed situated “within the complexities and ambivalences of representation itself”. But my chapter argues counter to the interpretation above that, rather than disrupting the meaning of multicultural norms, Shonibare’s *Ship* was ultimately recuperated into hegemonic, twenty-first century conceptions of British nationhood defined by multicultural normalization.¹⁵⁷

Irony’s Edge and the Subversive Potential of Parody

In her book, *Irony’s Edge. The Theory and Politics of Irony* (1994), Linda Hutcheon distinguishes irony and parody by proposing that “irony is a miniature (semantic) version of parody’s (textual) doubling”, so that irony’s edge is what gives parody its “critical dimension.”¹⁵⁸ In this sense, Shonibare’s, *Nelson’s Ship*

¹⁵⁶ Divya Tolia-Kelly and Andy Morris, “Disruptive Aesthetics? Revisiting the Burden of Representation in the Art of Chris Ofili and Yinka Shonibare,” *Third Text* 18, no. 2 (2004): 153-167; 157.

¹⁵⁷ Kobena Mercer, “Ethnicity and Internationalism,” *Third Text* 13, no. 49 (1999): 51—62.

¹⁵⁸ Hutcheon, *Irony’s Edge*, 3.

in a Bottle can be read as a parody of an important symbol of British nationalism, while he deploys individual visual ironies to produce an overall parodic effect. Conventional definitions of irony have tended to understand it in terms of a semantic inversion, in which the unstated/ironic meaning is substituted for its stated/literal meaning in the course of reception. In distinction to this, literary scholar Linda Hutcheon proposes that irony works not through an either/or substitution or inversion, but takes place at the point of tension between the said and the unsaid or, in our case, the seen and the unseen, which continue to rub against each other.¹⁵⁹ Because there is no such thing as an intrinsically ironic statement, Hutcheon conceives of irony as a communicative strategy that deploys inclusive, relational, and differential semantics. Irony is inclusive because her model defines irony as the (inclusive) tension between the unsaid and said, which together produce a third, the ironic, meaning. It is relational, because irony's communicative success relies on its occurrence within delimited, pre-existing discursive communities who are able to "get" the implicit message on the basis of shared norms of communication, while others outside of the discursive community might (mis)read it quite literally. Finally, the ironic message is differential because it opens up the possibility of two different meanings, which can be, but do not have to be, oppositional. Hutcheon further lists a number of markers or structural signals of ironic meaning, which include violations of shared knowledge, contradictions within a given work, clashes of style, the deployment of citation and repetition, and the conflicts of belief between what we suspect an author's and our position is and what he or she in fact states.

¹⁵⁹ Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 12.

Feminist and postcolonial critics such as Judith Butler and Homi Bhabha have interpreted parody (or mimicry) as a strategy with subversive potential in its ability to reenact or mimic hegemonic race and gender constructs, but with a difference. Butler proposed that gender and, by extension, race identities, do not externalize an interior, biological essence, but that they are socially reproduced through stylized, performative re-enactments.¹⁶⁰ If we are all complicit in the perpetuation of social norms through our compulsive and repetitive performativity of naturalized gender and race identities, then the subversive capacity of parody lies in the blurring or hyperbolic exaggeration of expected social norms in the course of performative reiteration. She writes,

In the place of original identification which serves as a determining cause, gender identity might be reconceived as a personal/cultural history of received meanings subject to a set of imitative practices which refer laterally to other imitations and which, jointly, construct the illusion of a primary and interior self or parody the mechanism of this construction.¹⁶¹

Butler notes that parody is successful when performative reiteration with a difference serves to expose the constructed and imitative nature of normative conceptions of race and gender. The task is to reveal the performativity of normative gender roles and race identities as such, by repeating them with a parodic excessiveness that destabilizes their naturalized status and demonstrates their incapacity to contain the factual complexities of the world.¹⁶²

While Butler identifies the potential for critical agency in performative reiteration,

¹⁶⁰ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theater Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 519-531.

¹⁶¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), 188.

¹⁶² Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 202-203.

she rejects the common inference that we are thus utterly autonomous, voluntarist agents that invent and embody an unlimited range of potential identities in an “anything goes” fashion, as misguided.¹⁶³ Instead, attempts at subverting the performativity of race and gender constructs always take place in the context of, and in critical engagement with, the constraints of socially prescribed, discursive norms and traditions that precede and punitively constrain the performer. If a parodic repetition of gender and race norms does not automatically incite a radical rethinking of existent categories and if parody is therefore not automatically subversive, then how might we discriminate between a parodic performance that is recuperated by hegemonic discourses and that serves to consolidate the status quo and a parodic performance that is indeed conceived as a menace to the normative order?¹⁶⁴

Hutcheon argues that, ultimately, in light of irony’s transideological openness to conflicting interpretations, irony’s effects can only be evaluated through an analysis of who is using and attributing it and at whose expense irony is seen to take place. One option is to turn to the temperament of the ironist to determine the oppositional or conciliatory message of the (visual) statement. After all, irony is to be distinguished from mere ambiguity because, from the point of view of the ironist, irony transmits both information and an *evaluative attitude* about that information, its “critical edge”. However, Hutcheon and other feminist critics emphasize the central importance of decoding the recipients’ subject positions and, hence, irony’s participatory hermeneutics in evaluating the political

¹⁶³ Lloyd, “Performativity, Parody, Politics”, 197.

¹⁶⁴ Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 189.

capacity of specific parodic events. As Hutcheon notes, “Nothing is ever guaranteed at the politicized scene of irony.”¹⁶⁵ Irony is often employed in “contact zones” where cultures meet and grapple with each other, and which tend to be marked by highly asymmetrical relations of power. Here, ironies can become the tool of critical subcultures, which deploy irony to fortify a sense of “amiable community” at the expense of the hegemonic mainstream. However, at its best, parody does not only fortify pre-existing discursive communities that are marginalized within a hegemonic formation, but leads to the performative production of new interpretive groups that did not exist prior to these recitation practices.¹⁶⁶ In summary, parody takes place in engagement with established, normative representations, which are simultaneously repeated and desubstantialized through the introductions of difference “at the very heart of similarity” in the process of reiteration. Parody functions through an excessiveness that renders the constructed nature of social norms evident. But because irony is characterized by a transideological openness, in which two potential meanings continue to rub against each other, the politically subversive “effect” of a parodic intervention can ultimately only be gaged through a consideration of its reception. I therefore turn to the speeches given and the press statements released on the occasion of the presentation of *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle* on Trafalgar Square, to examine whether Shonibare’s parodic repetition of the *HMS Victory* posed a challenge to hegemonic conceptions of British nationhood by creating new interpretative communities.

¹⁶⁵ Hutcheon, *Irony’s Edge*, 15.

¹⁶⁶ Lloyd, “Performativity, Parody, Politics”, 208.

Nelson's Ship in a Bottle as a Parody of British Maritime Nationalism

Throughout the process of preparing his conceptual installation, Shonibare stayed in close contact with the Admiralty and then-keeper of the *HMS Victory*, Peter Goodwin. The historical *HMS Victory* has been preserved and can be visited in the Historic Dockyards in Portsmouth, England, today, where its interior serves as a museum of the Royal Navy.¹⁶⁷ Shonibare studied the original closely, in an effort to get the details of the canons, the sails, and the decorative schemes just right.¹⁶⁸ A company specializing in art fabrication, MDM Props, assisted Shonibare in the materialization of *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* by constructing the ship's wooden replica with minute attention to historical detail, complete with three masts, eighty mounted guns, and thirty of the thirty-seven sails rigged for battle. The exhibition of *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* on the imposing Fourth Plinth, adjacent to the heroism of Admiral Nelson's victory column thus played into, and repeated, the normative, patriarchal maritime nationalism otherwise deployed on the square. Yet, the insertion of the stately ship into a bottle, floating on a kitschy plastic ocean, also equated his rendition of the *HMS Victory* with a mass culture of wondrous seaside souvenirs in a Pop Art fashion, thereby ironicizing the imposing status of this naval vessel in British history. *London Printworks Trust* custom-made two replicas of the Dutch-Wax fabrics used for the sails in this installation.

¹⁶⁷ Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory. Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 17.

¹⁶⁸ Charlotte Higgins, "Yinka Shonibare Celebrates Nelson's Victory on Fourth Plinth", *The Guardian*, May 24, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/may/24/shonibare-fourth-plinth-ship-bottle>.

The oft-recounted story of Shonibare's deployment of Dutch Wax fabrics constitutes a visual irony itself, which rests in their ready assumption as signifiers of African identity, although their global material history is meant to demonstrate the very impossibility of claims to cultural purity and authenticity. While audiences initiated into the discourses of contemporary art might have been familiar with Shonibare's ironic deployment of these fabrics, a vast public commuting by and traveling across Trafalgar Square on a daily basis would have read these fabrics quite literally, as objects affiliated with and expressive of "African" culture. Although the nautically-themed iconography of one of the fabrics used for the sails of *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* recalled the loud, colorful patterns of the Dutch Wax fabrics Shonibare usually purchases on London's Brixton market, its color scheme of bright blues, reds, and yellows and its deployment of anchors and ropes also shared a visual affinity with Royal Navy insignia and British nationalist heraldry. The second fabric, with its deployment of earthy oranges and browns juxtaposed in organic patterns, was more in line with the color schemes one often sees applied in exhibitions of "traditional" African art in Europe. Shonibare's deployment of "epidermalized" textiles suggesting racial difference in the recreation of this central symbol of a British maritime nationalism, served to evoke the long history of Britain's multicultural constitution, but also situated the ship in relation to marine vessels deployed in the slave trade. Jon Snow, a journalist and Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group member paradigmatically summarized the ship's polyvalence: "In one fell swoop this totemic sculpture

brings together thoughts of empire, slavery, liberation, and the very fibre of maritime heritage, adding a hugely important multicultural dimension.”¹⁶⁹

The Ambiguous Iconography of the Ship in British Culture

Because enunciation is always produced within codes that have a history, the differential semantics ascribed to Shonibare's, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* can be analyzed by considering the iconographic history of the ship and the sea in British visual culture.¹⁷⁰ Maritime art historian Geoff Quilley notes that the study of British marine imagery,

confronts the viewer with the shocking semiotic proximity and exchangeability of two systems [...] for visually representing the same object—the ship—that were and are generally held to be distinct and disconnected. It gestures to a dialectical opposition in the representation, not so much of the ship, but of the commerce for which the ship stands as a sign, and to the fact that commerce had, and has, a very elusive and tenuous material form.¹⁷¹

Quilley notes that, in the eighteenth century, the iconography of the ship and visual representations of the maritime sphere were fractured into “two systems” which continue to occupy “a deeply ambivalent and contradictory place in British culture.”¹⁷² On the one hand, the eighteenth-century genre of marine seascapes and other maritime visual cultures, which acquired an explicitly patriotic meaning

¹⁶⁹ Stephen Friedman Gallery, “Permanent New Home Secured for Yinka Shonibare, MBE's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* as Public Appeal Succeeds,” Art Fund Press Release, April 23, 2012, <http://www.stephenfriedman.com/artists/yinka-shonibare-mbe/news/permanent-new-home-secured-for-yinka-shonibare-mbes-nelsons-ship-in-a-bottle-at-the-national-maritime-museum-greenwich>.

¹⁷⁰ Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities”, in *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 442-451, 446.

¹⁷¹ Geoff Quilley, “Art History and Double Consciousness: Visual Culture and Eighteenth-Century Maritime Britain,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 48, no. 1 (Fall 2014): 21-35, 23.

¹⁷² Geoff Quilley, “Introduction. British Art and the Maritime Museum,” *Art for the Nation. The Oil Paintings Collections of the National Maritime Museum*, ed. by Geoff Quilley (London, National Maritime Museum, 2006), 1-17.

in the course of the Napoleonic Wars, represented, reflexively and constitutively, the various phases of British imperial navigation and exploration, her naval power, and the expansion of her commercial trade of world goods on the basis of an emergent finance capitalism. The visual cultures of this first “system”, which range from oil paintings to various forms of popular cultural expressions, tended to represent ships, circum-Atlantic seafaring, and naval warfare as the preserve of a heroic, white masculinity that rendered the bodies of black seamen, pilots, slaves, and women, who also circulated in this maritime sphere, invisible. It is this first visual “system” of British maritime nationalism that is epitomized in Trafalgar Square’s sculptural program and its hagiography of Admiral Nelson, as well as in British painter J.M.W. Turner’s nineteenth-century canvas featuring the HMS Victory, *The Battle of Trafalgar* (1824), which will be considered here as an art historical progenitor for Shonibare’s installation (Fig. 8).

On the other hand, the iconography of the ship has also been deployed for liberal critiques of the slave trade formulated by the British Abolitionist Movement in the late eighteenth century. The most iconic image that exemplifies this “second” system is the engraving, *Description of a Slave Ship* (1788), an image whose affective power was of central importance to the British abolition of the slave trade in 1807 (Fig. 9).¹⁷³ The *Description of the Slave Ship* served to elicit a worldly, melancholy liberalism among British audiences that aspired to bear witness to the violences of modernity. As such, it served not only as a counter-narrative to the excesses of the first system described above, but, as the primary pictorial memorial site for the British involvement and abolition of the slave trade,

¹⁷³ Wood, *Blind Memory*, 16f.

it continues to be reproduced in a proliferation of cultural contexts today.¹⁷⁴ While these two visual “systems” have been artificially kept separate in the disciplines of art history and cultural studies, Quilley argues that they, in fact, worked together to enable and dialectically encode the economic and political philosophies of Britain’s commercial empire, namely, an emergent finance capitalism with global extensions and a worldly, liberal melancholy that witnessed its excesses.¹⁷⁵

Since the 1990s, maritime themes and ship motifs have once again found a prominent place in contemporary culture, and have become especially prevalent in African, Black British and other diasporic literatures, visual arts, and philosophies of history.¹⁷⁶ Paul Gilroy’s much-cited study, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), deploys the concept of the ‘Black Atlantic’ and the image of the ship in motion across it, as a guiding principle for his study of the transnational articulation of black expressive cultures.¹⁷⁷ The iconography of the ship is ubiquitous in contemporary visual arts and has appeared in the work of Keith Piper, Mary Evans, Donald Rodney, Godfried Donkor, Lubaina Himid, Ndidi Dike, and Romuald Hazoume, among others, with many, but not all, deploying the, *Description* as an afterimage of the slave trade.

¹⁷⁴ Wood, *Blind Memory*, 16; Quilley, “Double Consciousness and Art History”, 21.

¹⁷⁵ Quilley, “Double Consciousness and Art History”, 24.

¹⁷⁶ Huey Copeland, *Bound to Appear. Art, Slavery and the Site of Blackness in Multicultural America* (University of Chicago Press, 2013); Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, “On an Beyond the Colour Line. Afterimages of Old and New Slavery in Contemporary Art Since the 1990s,” in *Slavery in Art and Literature. Approaches to Trauma, Memory and Visuality*, ed. by Birgit Haehnel and Melanie Ulz (Berlin: Frank und Timme, 2010), 59-92.

¹⁷⁷ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

How is this profusion of ship iconographies and maritime themes in contemporary black British, African, and diasporic art and culture to be explained and how does Shonibare's, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, relate to this? If the "fractured" visual history of British marine imagery and ship iconography described by Quilley dialectically encoded and enabled eighteenth-century economic and political philosophies, then how is Yinka Shonibare's contemporary deployment of ship iconography and his reception on Trafalgar Square to be situated in relation to this fraught history of British maritime imagery?

Visualizing and Institutionalizing British Maritime Nationalism

Geoff Quilley's scholarship is invested in demonstrating how the dialectic between the nationalist construction of commercial seafaring and naval warfaring as a white, male preserve and the simultaneous existence of a "black Atlantic" were negotiated in imagery depicting British maritime navigation and exploration, encounter and conflict.¹⁷⁸ In his study, *Empire to Nation. Art, History, and the Visualization of Maritime Britain, 1768-1829* (2011), Quilley traces the ideological formation of the British maritime nation and the history of its visualization through select case studies. Before delving into a brief consideration of how the British maritime nation was constituted and documented through visual representations, the term "Britain" and its relation to the terms "England" and "United Kingdom", which are often used interchangeably in colloquial speech, must be briefly sorted out. As Linda Colley has shown, a sense of "Britishness" was forged in the

¹⁷⁸ Geoff Quilley, *Empire to Nation. Art, History and the Visualization of Maritime Britain, 1768-1829* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press and the Paul Mellon Center for Studies in British Art, 2011), 87.

aftermath of the 1707 Act of the Union, which joined England, Scotland, Wales, and, eventually, Northern Ireland, in a parliamentary union which is referred to as the United Kingdom.¹⁷⁹ Colley notes that older loyalties and internal discord have continued to coexist within the Union, especially in light of Ireland's status as a British laboratory of Empire and as a result of England's hegemonic conflation with "Britain".¹⁸⁰ Yet, a sense of commonality between these disparate cultures was forged in the context of a series of massive wars between 1689 and 1815 that united Britons in an anti-French sentiment. Britain's changing relation to her overseas empire in this time period, which was defined by the loss of the North American colonies and the simultaneous expansion of political authority through the introduction of new models of colonial rule in India, further served to foster a sense of national cohesion.¹⁸¹

British maritime nationalism was defined by the assumption that, given its insular status, Britain was providentially sanctioned and its peoples naturally predisposed "to achieve military and commercial glory as a maritime nation."¹⁸² The accumulation of commercial wealth through the trade in world goods was seen to be protected by British naval power and enacted under the special balance provided by England's liberal constitution and the Anglican Church.¹⁸³ In his study *Empire to Nation. Art, History, and the Visualization of Maritime Britain*,

¹⁷⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

¹⁸⁰ Colley, "Britishness and Otherness: An Argument," *Journal of British Studies* 31, no. 4, Britishness and Europeaness: Who are the British Anyway? (October 1992): 309-329.

¹⁸¹ P.J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires. Britain, India and America, 1750-1783* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹⁸² Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 7.

¹⁸³ Nikolaus Pesvner, *The Englishness of English Art* (New York, Frederick A. Praeger: 1955), p. 13-14. <https://archive.org/stream/englishnessofeng00pevs#page/6/mode/2up>

1768-1829, Quilley suggests that the nationalist fervor elicited by the Napoleonic Wars, which extended from 1793 to 1815, was accompanied by a shift in British maritime imagery. Initially, the sea was represented as a conduit to commercial Empire, in which national and colonial identities were conceived in much more fluid terms and appeals to the principle of “Englishness” extended throughout the British Empire. For instance, during the American War, the colonial merchant classes in the American colonies and the Caribbean, and the artisanal and lower merchant classes associated with Wilkite protests in the metropolis, deployed the rhetoric of “true Englishness” against the authority of the British government, whose aristocratic bias and predisposition to decadence, excessive luxury, and tyranny, was seen to betray the nation’s commercial interests.¹⁸⁴ In this period, patriotic ideologies of a British maritime nationalism cut across colony and metropolis. They were articulated by an emerging commercial merchant class rather than being territorially confined to the nation in a class-transcending fashion that would have required identification with the aristocracy. These transoceanic, imperial expressions of an incipient national identity were frequently visualized through references to the sea, as representations of the ship and its crew became tantamount with the good of the nation.¹⁸⁵ For instance, George Townshend’s 1756 satirical print, *The Pillars of the State*, presents caricatures of the Whig statesmen Duke of Newcastle and Henry Fox in profile, both framed by gallows between which a ship has been suspended, or “hanged”. Images of overturned ships and shipwrecked “ships-of-state” in

¹⁸⁴ Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 90.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 98.

satirical prints implied that, “to neglect Britain’s naturally maritime character is to misgovern.”¹⁸⁶

The Napoleonic Wars prompted a shift to images of the sea as a *defensive barrier to the nation* that served to visually demarcate the nation from its wider imperial sphere. An isolated Britain that had lost its American colonies but maintained a hegemonic position in the Caribbean, saw itself confronted by the joint forces of the French, Dutch, and Spanish armies and fleets. In this context, Quilley demonstrates, representations of ships and the sea shifted and were marked by a retreat from the uncertainties of Empire to an inward-looking, celebratory nationalism. In an effort to give visual expression to a new historicist sensibility that was now framed in particularly nationalist terms, paintings of British naval victories were assembled to establish a taxonomic teleology of British maritime history and naval glory. The celebration of British naval victories was expressed in multiple media and in a burgeoning popular culture. For instance, marine painter Philippe de Loutherbourg’s *The Battle of the First of June* (1794) was exhibited to the public in Bowyer’s Historic Gallery at Pall Mall for an entrance fee and reproduced for print subscriptions, while marine painter Robert Dodd presented his rendition of the *HMS Boyne* as an immersive panorama at Charing Cross in 1796.¹⁸⁷ By 1815, Quilley notes, a bellicose nationalism defined by a white, male-dominated British marine supremacy had established itself, which the Victorian sculptural program on Trafalgar Square and its hagiography of Nelson and other imperial officers perpetuate.

¹⁸⁶ Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 98.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 196ff.

The royal commission of J.M.W. Turner's, *The Battle of Trafalgar* (1824) in the aftermath of Britain's most decisive naval victory of 1805 is of particular importance to this discussion, given the contemporary perception of Turner as the "pinnacle of achievement in English painting" and his role as an art historical progenitor for Shonibare's twenty-first century artistic rendition of the same naval vessel for, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*.¹⁸⁸ Turner's, *The Battle of Trafalgar* was commissioned by king George IV as a pendant piece for Philippe de Loutherbourg's aforementioned 1795 canvas, *The Battle of the Glorious First of June*, which represented an earlier British naval victory. The canvasses were to be hung in St. James Palace's state reception rooms, framing a portrait of King George III from both sides, to create a historicizing pictorial scheme that would link these naval success with the glory of the Hanoverian dynasty of George III and George IV. Turner's large-scale canvas presents a broadside view of the *HMS Victory* in battle, situated in the middle ground and enshrouded by clouds of smoke. The right frame of the composition is marked by a hazy representation of the French naval ship *Redoutable*, from which Admiral Nelson had been lethally shot. The French flagship is shown here in the process of sinking, although she had, in fact, gone down in the course of a storm after the battle. The death of Admiral Nelson, staged to great dramatic effect in an earlier Turner painting titled, *The Battle of Trafalgar, Seen from the Mizen Starboard* (1822), was only alluded to symbolically here, through the *HMS Victory*'s falling foremast, and a vaguely discernible crowd gathered on deck by the main mast. The focus was instead

¹⁸⁸ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 13.

placed on a lifeboat in the foreground, in which cheering British seamen, victory apparently secured, rescue their own and enemy seamen from the ocean. This reiterated a 'conquer and save' theme that found common application in naval battle painting as a testament to British humanity in spite of warfare.¹⁸⁹

Upon reception, Turner's canvas was largely dismissed by court and admiralty for its synchronous depiction of crucial battle events that had, in fact, unfolded at different times.¹⁹⁰ Naval officers, in particular, found Turner's symbolic canvas lacking for its historical inaccuracies and its sensual, gestural aesthetics, preferring the mundane renderings of more conventional marine painters that took more care to properly *illustrate* these historical engagements. Quilley notes that Turner's canvas marks a critical juncture in the self-definition of the maritime nation. He suggests that its perceived "failure" can be explained by the incompatibility of Turner's aspiration to create a history painting, a modern and spectacular allegory of the maritime nation, and his audience's evaluation of it from the perspective of marine paintings as illustrative eyewitness accounts of, what were presumed to be, historical facts.¹⁹¹ It points to the dichotomy between marine painting, which was perceived as a specialized subgenre of painting that served primarily documentary purposes, and the type of "fine art" practiced by Turner, that could take poetic licence and that appealed to the viewer on an emotional basis to instill patriotism. Eventually, Turner's *Battle of Trafalgar* and its pendant piece, De Loutherbourgs, *The Battle of the Glorious First of June*, were donated and moved to Edward Hawke Locker's recently established Naval

¹⁸⁹ Geoff Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 196.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 231.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 232.

Gallery in Greenwich Hospital. Opened in 1824, the establishment of the Naval Gallery institutionalized continuing efforts to translate the “mythologies” of the British maritime nationalism into a graspable, taxonomic visual history.

The collections of the Naval Galleries at Greenwich Hospital came to form the basis of what is today the National Maritime Museum (NMM). Towards the end of Shonibare’s public display on Trafalgar Square in 2012, the Art Fund launched a fundraising campaign on behalf of the NMM in Greenwich to acquire *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle* for its collections. Contributions by the Art Fund itself and by the Stephen Friedman Gallery were enhanced by substantial public donations, so that Shonibare’s installation moved to its permanent home at the National Maritime Museum on the occasion of the museum’s seventy-fifth anniversary.¹⁹² *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle* was installed outside the newly erected Sammy Ofer Wing, so that Turner’s painted rendition and Shonibare’s conceptual installation of the *HMS Victory* are today more than just notional neighbors. Geoff Quilley, who served as the museum’s Curator of Fine Arts, notes that the museum’s significant collections of marine seascapes have gained importance in recent years as a result of British art history’s adoption of critical theory and postcolonial approaches.¹⁹³ As a genre with an undeniable connection to the imperial sphere, marine seascapes are beginning to receive more attention as (art) historians have begun reappraising womens’, slaves’, and commoners’ “marine histories” and the imperial dimensions of Britain’s national history and

¹⁹² Mark Brown, “Yinka Shonibare’s Ship in a Bottle Goes on Permanent Display in Greenwich,” *The Guardian*, April 23, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/apr/23/yinka-shonibare-ship-bottle-greenwich>.

¹⁹³ Quilley, ed. *Art for the Nation*, 1-18.

collections.¹⁹⁴ In recent years, the National Maritime Museum has attempted to do justice to and overlap the artificially manufactured “dual” histories of Britain’s maritime heritage. The museum acquired the Michael Graham Stewart Collection of cultural artifacts related to the history of slavery and the slave trade, and, on the occasion of the bicentennial of Britain’s abolition of the slave trade in 2007, it established a permanent gallery addressing the themes of slavery, empire and trade. At the same time, the museum has begun promoting contemporary art practices that thematically relate to the museum’s holdings or its site. It is in this context that *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle* was acquired for the museum. Shonibare’s installation was inserted into an institution whose holdings were initiated with the desire to establish a taxonomic visual history of the British maritime nation, with Shonibare’s installation extending this history to the multicultural, postcolonial present.

The Slave Ship in British (Visual) Culture

Yet the citationality of Shonibare’s *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle* is not limited to a celebratory, nationalist marine imagery but, due to the slippage between signifiers of “Britain” and “Africa”, his installation also broaches what Quilley has called the “second” system of marine imagery. I will focus the discussion on the iconic plate, *Description of the Slave Ship* (1788), which is arguably the most widely known British maritime image and continues to proliferate in contemporary

¹⁹⁴ Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra. Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2000); Bernard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun (eds.), *Sea Changes. Historicizing the Ocean* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

art and culture (Fig. 9). In his *History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the Slave Trade by the British Parliament* (1808), abolitionist Thomas Clarkson discussed the instrumental centrality of the *Description* for the successful legal abolition of the slave trade in Britain in 1807.¹⁹⁵ The *Description* was produced by chapters of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade [SEAST] and it capitalized on the dehumanization characterizing the Middle Passage. It showed generically rendered slaves as economic units stacked to full capacity within the schematically rendered outlines of the historic slave ship *Brookes*. The ship was presented in seven diagrammatic and sectional views, and text columns beneath these representations detailed the amount of space available to each slave in empirical detail.¹⁹⁶ *The Description* deployed an analytic, scientific (visual) language to render visible the violence and dehumanization of the slave trade. It appealed to the compassion of as-of-yet disinterested white Britons, who were visually enlisted with the ethical imperative of ending the atrocious slave trade.¹⁹⁷ As such, the *Description of the Slave Ship* unified white Britons within a sentimental, liberal cosmopolitanism that served to prop up white mythologies of British humanity, rather than empowering slaves by representing them with agency.¹⁹⁸ In his study *Specters of the Atlantic. Finance Capital, Slavery and the History of Philosophy* (2005), Ian Baucom describes the attitude of liberal cosmopolitanism as, “the posture of one who ‘looks on’ at scenes of suffering and death, sympathizes less with the dying and

¹⁹⁵ Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic. Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 267.

¹⁹⁶ Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship. A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007), 318f.

¹⁹⁷ Wood, *Blind Memory*, 19;29.

¹⁹⁸ Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 102.

the dead than with the idea of his own display of sympathy, and then moves on to inhabit a liberal modernity cleansed of the 'ghosts issuing forth' from the past."¹⁹⁹

Baucom proposes that the, *Description of a Slave Ship* was instrumental in affectively inciting a liberal cosmopolitanism in which the history of slavery and suffering was witnessed and dwelled upon with melancholy, but ultimately situated within an Enlightenment philosophy of historical progress and, thereby, relegated to a completed past. As such, the image becomes an icon of the liberal commemoration of slavery, which focuses on British humanism and its central role in the *abolition* of the slave trade rather than on its leading role in its perpetuation. The *Description* has been well integrated into hegemonic national narratives of British humanism, as its visual proliferation at the festivities for the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 2007 serves to demonstrate.²⁰⁰

British Diasporic Evocations of Ships and Marine Imagery

Since the late 1980s, theorists of black cultural politics ranging from Paul Gilroy, Barnor Hesse, Stuart Hall, Kobena Mercer, and others, have made efforts to historicize the black presence in Britain and to theorize racism in its national and historical specificity.²⁰¹ As the constitutive links between nationalism and racism

¹⁹⁹ Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 282.

²⁰⁰ Marcus Wood, *The Horrible Gift of Freedom. Atlantic Slavery and the Representation of Emancipation* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010).

²⁰¹ Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford, 222-233 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990); Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack. The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Barnor Hesse, "Black to Front and Black Again. Racialization through Contested Times and Spaces," in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. by Steve Pile and Keith Michaels, 160-179 (Florence, KY:

became increasingly evident in Thatcherite Britain, these scholars began to articulate Black Britishness in relation to a wider diaspora and in terms of a strategic political solidarity with black populations in the Caribbean, the Americas, Africa, and elsewhere, who shared histories of enslavement, racism, cultural survival, and political struggle.²⁰² Brent Hayes Edwards notes that the use of diaspora in black cultural politics emerged out of the growing scholarly interest in the Pan-African movement and in black internationalism that began to develop in the context of decolonization and civil rights movements in the 1950s.²⁰³ Pan-Africanism refers to a series of conferences organized between 1900 and 1974 by Henry Sylvester Williams, W.E. B. Du Bois and others that aimed for the political and cultural coordination of the interests of people of African descent around the world.²⁰⁴ Historian George Shepperson proposed the term “diaspora” as an alternative to “Pan-Africanism” in 1965, because, despite its name, Pan-Africanism tended to relegate Africa to the position of a mere historical concept to which “Africans abroad” related. Shepperson suggested that, other than Pan-Africanism, African diaspora studies would include a consideration of African unity as idea and practice, would contemplate the effects of slave trade and imperialism and insist on both as central to understandings of “Western” modernity, would study the survival of African cultures in the New World contexts, but would also focus on internal dispersals within the African continent itself and

Routledge, 1993); Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle. New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

²⁰² Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation. Diaspora Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2007).

²⁰³ Brent Edwards Hayes, “The Uses of Diaspora”, *Social Text* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 45-73; 46.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

the emergence of African-Americans as important figures in the articulation of African nationalisms.²⁰⁵ Brent Hayes Edwards writes that the situation of the African abroad appeared to share many of the elements common to other diasporas, such as the Jewish, the Greek and the Armenia, including: “an origin in the scattering and uprooting of communities, a history of ‘traumatic or forced departure’ and also the sense of a real or imagined homeland mediated through the collective memory and the politics of ‘return’.”²⁰⁶

In theorizing diaspora for Black British cultural politics in the 1980s, Stuart Hall was particularly attentive to disassociate his notion of diaspora from the investment in the notion of real or symbolic return to an imaginary homeland in Africa.²⁰⁷ In departure from these precedents, he defined diaspora as a strategic and shifting cultural identification that is firmly situated in Britain, but also encompasses the desire and need to culturally articulate oneself in relation to Africa and the black Americas in a complex fashion. As such, his conception of diaspora is less concerned with *roots* and more interested in tracing *routes* in a fashion that accepts dissemination as a permanent condition.²⁰⁸ Because diasporic affiliations take shape through the dialectic of a material situatedness in a given place and a sense of belonging to a diasporic ‘imagined community’, Hall insisted on the need to consider the historical and place-based specificities of diasporic articulations as they move through a transnational circuit. As James

²⁰⁵ Hayes, “The Uses of Diaspora”, 52.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, 235.

²⁰⁸ Stuart Hall, “Creolization, Diaspora, and Hybridity,” *Creolité and Creolization, Documenta 11-Platform 3*, ed. by Okwui Enwezor, Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Suzanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Mark Nash, and Octavio Zaya (Kassel: Hantje Cantz and documenta, 2002), 191.

Clifford succinctly summarizes, “the term diaspora is a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement but of political struggles *to define the local, as distinctive community in historical contexts of displacement*” [my emphasis].²⁰⁹ For Hall, diasporic identifications thus assume multiple allegiances, “a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite difference; by hybridity.”²¹⁰ The British diaspora presents the processes of transculturation in particularly sharp relief and might serve as a prototype for living with multiple identifications in our contemporary world. But it is also important to acknowledge, as Catherine Hall and other British historians have shown that, as a consequence of centuries of globalization and migration, these same developments have taken place and continue to shape British national culture itself.²¹¹ One danger of the diasporic model lies in the assumption that individuals with diasporic affiliations inhabit an unsettled, permanent exile, which is contrasted with the unchanged, settled national cultures of which they are also a part.²¹² On the other hand, diaspora identifications retain their specificity because they refer back to a *longue durée* of racial formations and are embedded in unequal power and hegemonic relations within their specific localities of the present.

The “turn to diaspora” in British Cultural Studies incited the adoption of particular image economies, particularly the iconography of the slave ship, which was significantly reinterpreted by Black British cultural historians, writers, and artists. In his book, *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*

²⁰⁹ James Clifford, “Diasporas”, *Current Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (August 1994): 302-333.

²¹⁰ Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, 235.

²¹¹ Catherine Hall, *Civilizing Subjects. Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

²¹² Rasheed Araeen, “A New Beginning,” *Third Text* 14, no. 50 (2000): 3-20.

(1993), Paul Gilroy proposed the “Black Atlantic” as a framework for analyzing a counter-modernity of black expressive cultures which had been obscured by existing ethnocentric, nationalist paradigms of both Eurocentric and Afrocentric variations. He proposed, “the image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe, America, Africa and the Caribbean as a central organizing symbol for this enterprise” and claimed that, “the time has come for the primal history of modernity to be constructed from the slaves’ point of view.”²¹³ Gilroy’s book poses a counterclaim to Eurocentric conceptions of modernity in which the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars figure as *the* formative events. According to this latter narrative of modernity, European nations first came into a distinctly modern, historicist awareness of themselves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when vast citizen armies were mobilized against the onslaught of Napoleon’s armies, and defensive nationalisms were articulated in response to the dissemination of “universalist” Enlightenment principles. In response to this Eurocentric conception of modern subject-formation, Gilroy and other diasporic thinkers have formulated counterclaims that point to the vast mobilization of human beings during trans-Atlantic slavery as the foundational event for a global modernity, in the aftermath of which syncretic, hybridized, diasporic cultures of a distinctly modern character were formulated.

Paul Gilroy projects the concept of diaspora historically, by tracing the articulation of black expressive cultures through his analytic framework of the Black Atlantic, which maps the overlapping spaces of Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the United States. By omitting Africa as a site of analysis, Gilroy

²¹³ Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 4 and 55.

returns to a transnational, black cultural tradition previously articulated in Pan-Africanism at the turn of the twentieth-century, but decenters the latter's prioritization of the connection between black America and Africa by including the migrations of black British populations in the postcolonial era as a third, paradigmatic experience.²¹⁴ While articulating black British experiences in relation to a wider diaspora, on the one hand, Gilroy simultaneously sought to challenge the conflation of whiteness and British national identity.²¹⁵

Gilroy is not singular in his invocation of the slave ship and the sea as organizing symbols for his conception of modern culture. His work is part of a larger diasporic tradition of writers and artists that have attempted to rewrite the slave trade as the foundational event of modernity and the sea as a metaphor for travel routes and memory, including Eduard Glissant, C.L.R. James, Fred D'Aguiar, Derek Walcott, in addition to various contemporary artists who have redeployed ship imagery such as the *Description*.²¹⁶ But the evocation of the slave ship by Paul Gilroy and other diasporic writers and artists must be distinguished from its deployment in British liberal discourses of the past and the present. The intention is not to relegate the history of slavery to a completed past on which we can mournfully reflect as distanced historical spectators to celebrate our humanist achievements. Instead, these diasporic writers and artists discard liberalism's progressive philosophy of history in favor of temporal schemes of

²¹⁴ Clifford, "Diasporas", 315f.

²¹⁵ Paul Gilroy, "Art of Darkness. Black Art and the Problem of Belonging to England," *Third Text* 4, no. 10 (1990): 45-52; 51-52.

²¹⁶ Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, "On and Beyond the Colour Line. Afterimages of Old and New Slavery in Contemporary Art Since the 1990s," in *Slavery in Art and Literature. Approaches to Trauma, Memory and Visuality*, ed. by Birgit Haehnel and Melanie Ulz (Berlin: Frank und Timme, 2010), 59-92.

return and accumulation, in which, in Baucom's words, "what-has-been *is* and it is *lived*, and it is lived as the total environment linking together the 'histories of the people'."²¹⁷ The slave ship is no longer primarily seen as a melancholic reminder of slave suffering that is relegated to a completed past, but as a foundational event that facilitates the creolized, hybridized expressive cultures of a global modernity and around which visions of unity, solidarity and a global sense of responsibility for this history can be articulated.²¹⁸

Geoff Quilley suggests that we might better understand why the maritime world has assumed such renewed urgency for contemporary artists, if we consider the line of argument developed in Ian Baucom's, *Specters of the Atlantic. Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (2005).²¹⁹ Baucom argued that the hyperfinancialized (or neoliberal) late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are not contemporary with themselves alone, but repeat and amplify the economic and political philosophies of eighteenth-century commercial Britain.²²⁰ Baucom follows Gilroy and other diasporic thinkers in positing the slave trade as a foundational event for modernity, but explicitly emphasizes the slave trade as relevant, not just to the cultural and political archive of the Black Atlantic and its expressive cultures, "but to the history of modern capital, ethics, and time consciousness" as a whole.²²¹ By rejecting the Enlightenment's liberal philosophy of a progressive history and embracing recursive, diasporic conceptions of time, Baucom proposes a *longue durée*

²¹⁷ Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic*, 329.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 313.

²¹⁹ Quilley, "Art History and Double Consciousness," 32.

²²⁰ Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic*, 30.

²²¹ Ibid., 31.

understanding of modernity in which time does not pass, but accumulates. In such a framework, a “long twentieth-century” would be seen to extend back, intensify, and fulfill the emergent potential of the eighteenth century, when modern subjectivity was first reshaped by the twin births of a speculative finance capital, on the one hand, and the formation of a melancholy, liberal cosmopolitanism that attests to, yet serves as a screen from the violences of modernity, on the other. While the former assumed that anything, including human lives, could be converted to a monetary equivalent or interest-bearing bond, the latter provided a testamentary counter-discourse to its excesses. Baucom suggests that, in altered and amplified form, this dialectic continues to define British nationhood today, first, in the entrenchment of a hyperfinancialization of global capital as part of Britain’s economic “common sense”, and, second, through the articulation of diasporic philosophies of history and Black Atlantic meditations that take up, yet significantly critique and redefine, the liberal, progress-oriented discourses of British nationhood. If the “fractured” visual history of British marine imagery and ship iconography described by Quilley dialectically encoded and enabled eighteenth-century economic and political philosophies, and if we assume, following Ian Baucom’s diasporic philosophy of history, that the latter are repeated and amplified today, then how is Shonibare’s parody of the *HMS Victory* to be evaluated within this twenty-first century dialectic?

Conclusion: Multicultural Normalization and the Limitations of Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* as Parody

A perusal of press releases published on the occasion of the unveiling of *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* makes evident that, other than Turner's painted rendering of the *HMS Victory*, Shonibare's version was received with unanimous praise. Given its incessant slippage of meaning and the diversity of subject positions among potential spectators on Trafalgar Square, Shonibare's installations accommodated a broad range of possible interpretations that were both complicit with and resistant to hegemonic narratives of Britishness. Shonibare's engagement with hegemonic narratives of Britishness manifests his concern with a familiar theme in postcolonial theories, namely, the ambivalence of (post)colonial subject formation.²²² *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* positively affirmed British maritime nationalism for some, while also attesting to England's long history of multiculturalism. It thereby defied common assumptions that a black presence in Britain only began with the post-war arrival of the SS Empire Windrush from the Caribbean in 1948.²²³ His installation introduced ironic markers of "Africa" into a public urban space that was previously dominated by a monumental sculptural program honoring white, male officers with violent colonial legacies. His installation served as a public reflection on the position of slaves and (post)colonial subjects in historical and current conceptions of Britishness. As Peter Goodwin, the curator and keeper of the *HMS Victory* noted: "There

²²² Divyah Tolia-Kelly and Andy Norris, "Disruptive Aesthetics? Revisiting the Burden of Representation in the Art of Chris Ofili and Yinka Shonibare," *Third Text* 18, no. 2 (2004): 153-167.

²²³ Barnor Hesse (ed.), *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions* (London and New York: zed books, 2000), 97.

were 22 nationalities on the ship, including Jamaican, Indian and even four French. The work encapsulates this as well as being one of our greatest national icons.”²²⁴ As such, *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle* accommodated interpretations that engaged in historical revisionism and wanted to read the British nation in multicultural terms.

Shonibare addressed the assembled audience on Trafalgar Square on the occasion of the unveiling of *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle*, by stating:

I think Nelson would be proud to see that his battle has had the significant effect on the lives of so many people. This piece celebrates the legacy of Nelson [...] The sails are a metaphor for the global connections of contemporary people. This piece celebrates the legacy of Nelson—and the legacy that the Battle of Trafalgar left us is Britain’s contact with there rest of the world, which has in turn created the dynamic, cool, funky city that London is.²²⁵

If we want to enter the much-contested ground of discussing artist intention and determine the *evaluative attitude* behind his parodic work, then this statement is of little help. Shonibare’s speech extends the unfixable ironies and the postcolonial ambivalence of his installation to his performance-of-artist/self, so that we can only decide to assume, but cannot fix a critical intention. Shonibare recounted in an interview that, upon his reception of the Fourth Plinth commission, London mayor Boris Johnson had found it necessary to remind him that Admiral Horatio Nelson had been a fierce *opponent* of the slave trade. Shonibare recalls responding with a question that sought to expose Johnson’s

²²⁴ Geoff Pugh, “Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle Unveiled on Fourth Plinth,” *Telegraph*, May 24, 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-news/7758830/Nelsons-ship-in-a-bottle-unveiled-on-Fourth-Plinth.html>.

²²⁵ Charlotte Higgins, “Yinka Shonibare Celebrates Victory on Trafalgar Square’s Fourth Plinth”, *Guardian*, May 24, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/may/24/shonibare-fourth-plinth-ship-bottle>.

essentializing logic, by countering: “Who said anything about slavery?”²²⁶ Although, once again, his blackness had served to reduce him to a representative of the historically oppressed in the British context, this incident demonstrates that we must carefully distinguish an individual’s “social” and their “epistemic” position.²²⁷ Shonibare’s class privilege means that his relation to the British Empire is highly ambivalent, and he simultaneously rejects and manipulates the racisms that continually seek to exoticize or demote him to an inferior class status. He has made the ambivalence of his postcolonial positionality in relation to the British Empire explicit in numerous interviews, for instance, when he stated:

Many of the issues that I work with relate to colonialism and parodying the British establishment. [...] I have a love/hate relationship with aristocracy. On the one hand, I’ve never considered poverty a joke. Economic and social deprivation are terrible. On the other hand, I enjoy the trappings of aristocracy. But I am highly critical of the strong class system in England.²²⁸

Irony has often been criticized for its elitism, because it enthrones the ironist and his complicit discursive community at the expense of those who are “duped” by or uncertain about the literal meaning. Counter to this, Linda Hutcheon argues that those who do not “get it” should not necessarily be conceived as duped

²²⁶ Ossian Ward, “The Fourth Plinth: Yinka Shonibare”, TIME OUT, May 23, 2010, <http://www.timeout.com/london/art/the-fourth-plinth-yinka-shonibare>

²²⁷ Ramon Grosfoguel, “Decolonizing Postcolonial Studies and Paradigms of Political Economy. Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking , and Global Coloniality,” *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 1 (2011), available at <http://dialogoglobal.com/texts/grosfoguel/Grosfoguel-Decolonizing-Pol-Econ-and-Postcolonial.pdf>.

²²⁸ Janet A. Kaplan, Lisa G. Corrin, Julia Peyton Jones, Ken Aptekar, Marysia Lewandowska, Neil Cummings, Roxy Payne, J. Morgan Puett, Suzanne Bocanegra, and Yinka Shonibare, “Give and Take Conversations,” *art journal* 61, no. 2 (May 2014): 68–91, 82–83.

“victims”, as they might simply not care to understand in the first place or might (un)consciously misunderstand the ironist’s intention.²²⁹ We might read London mayor Boris Johnson’s interpretive framing of *Nelson’s Ship* on the occasion of the unveiling along the latter lines. Although he prompted his audience to consider whether this “quirky take on our seafaring heritage” is pro-Empire or anti-Empire, he was quick to reassert his own preferred reading of the installation in his public speech. He humored his assembled audience with a pun that ultimately reveals his disinterest in engaging the installation’s polyvalence:

This sculpture vividly and poetically hints at the central reason why Nelson was able on that magnificent day in 1805 to defeat the Franco-Spanish fleet despite having fewer ships, fewer guns, and half as many men [...] What was the essential reason why Nelson was able to defeat the Franco-Spanish fleet? What quality did he possess that enabled him to rout the enemy fleet, establish mastery of the seas and create the conditions for the 1807 act abolishing the slave trade?... It was bottle, ladies and gentlemen. And it has taken an artist of Yinka’s imagination to show how much bottle Nelson had.²³⁰

This excerpt from Johnson’s speech rehearses all the mainstays of British maritime nationalism: Nelson functions as the courageous white, male hero that not only single-handedly defended British mastery of the seas (and, by extension, British commerce), but also led the way for Britain’s abolition of the slave trade as a pioneer of British humanism. His statement indulges the redemptive narrative of British humanism and its central role in the abolition of the slave trade, while not focusing on Britain’s prior dominance of the trade itself

²²⁹ Hutcheon, *Irony’s Edge*, 89f.

²³⁰ Charlotte Higgins, “Yinka Shonibare Celebrates Victory on Trafalgar Square’s Fourth Plinth”, *Guardian*, May 24, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/may/24/shonibare-fourth-plinth-ship-bottle>.

and the immense wealth acquired as a result of it. Having discursively reenacted the British maritime nationalism visualized in the Square's existent sculptural program, Johnson enthusiastically turned to the current context and, having left the past behind, praised Shonibare's installation for its portrayal of London as "creative and forward looking." As he elaborated in an interview after the unveiling, "I think the message encapsulated in this bottle is that London is the greatest artistic and cultural capital on earth, that it brings together all sorts of nations, cultures, races, and that you will find in London the most elegant fusion...combination, of the old and the new."²³¹

Although a member of the Conservative Party, Johnson's statements concede to New Labour's decade-long effort to redefine a positive, all-inclusive and multicultural Britishness, while holding on to the neoliberal economic principles first embraced under the Conservative regime of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. Our current economic configuration, which is often dubbed 'neoliberalism' in academic circles but commonly subsumed under the term 'globalization' otherwise, first emerged in the course of the late 1970s and achieved significant impetus after the end of the Cold War in 1989.²³² Although neoliberalism is thus a fairly recent phenomenon, its ideas are rooted in the principles of eighteenth-century 'classic' liberal economic and political theory.²³³ Neoliberalism assumes that human well-being and socio-economic

²³¹ Reuters, "London Mayor Unveils Nelson's Bottle", uploaded May 25, 2010, accessed November 16, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqQELRchn0U>.

²³² David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005); Stuart Hall, "The Neoliberal Revolution", *Cultural Studies* 25, no. 6 (2011): 705-728.

²³³ Hall, "The Neoliberal Revolution", 708.

development can best be furthered by restraining state interventions, while maximizing the entrepreneurial freedom of possessive individuals and corporations by guaranteeing unrestrained access to expanding and deregulated global markets. The redistribution of wealth by the welfare state is seen to erode personal impetus and responsibility and, therefore, the power of the state should be confined to the protection of property rights, free markets, and the establishment of markets where none exist yet. This establishment of markets is to be understood both globally, in the coercive opening up of new territories to global trade as exemplified by the Structural Adjustment programs administered by the World Bank and the IMF, and domestically through the privatization and hyperfinancialization of realms such as education, land, water, education, etc. Stuart Hall emphasizes that the current stage of globalization erodes the power of nation-states, which are subsumed into a global system of financial management. He writes,

If earlier phases of globalization worked through conquest, trade, mercantile supremacy, settlement, direct colonization, and informal rule, the new system of power operates at a distance, through the market, geopolitical and global-economic management and strategic military intervention rather than through direct colonization. The informal networks of “Empire” as Hardt and Negri name it, are no longer directly related to nation-states (which remain strong players but powerfully circumscribed by the global system), but are essentially transnational in character.²³⁴

While the Labor Party had traditionally defended the importance of the redistribution of wealth in the interest of social equality, in the course of the late twentieth-century, neoliberalism has become entrenched as a bipartisan

²³⁴ Hall, “Creolization, Diaspora, and Hybridity,” 194f.

“common sense” approach to economics.²³⁵ But in contrast to Thatcher’s regressive “Little England” rhetoric that faulted Britain’s postcolonial immigrants and their descendants for England’s social disintegration, New Labour governments under Tony Blair (1997-2007) and Gordon Brown (2007-2010) attempted to develop a counter-hegemonic vision of a ‘positive’ Britishness for the new millennium that was not to be defined in limiting racial terms.²³⁶ In acknowledgement of the ethnocentric and chauvinist undertones that cling to the term ‘Englishness’, New Labour decided to continue a previous history of subsuming English under British national identity. This new vision of Britishness, which was first summarized by then Secretary of State for Culture, Media, and Sport, Chris Smith, in a 1998 publication titled *Creative Britain*, stipulated that the support of contemporary cultural creativity would be vital to the regeneration of Britain.²³⁷ With its reconceptualization of culture, media, and the arts as realms of primary economic investment and interest, New Labour’s Britain took on a future-oriented air of youthful “coolness” that was summarized under the title “Cool Britannia”. Art historian Julian Stallabrass recapped New Labour’s cultural policies as follows, in a commentary that is itself marked by a hint of irony: “[T]he arts are an integral part of national renewal. They will help society to cohere, the

²³⁵ Hall, “The Neoliberal Revolution,” 714f.

²³⁶ Pauline Schnapper, “British No More? The Political Debate on Englishness (1997-2007),” in *Englishness Revisited*, ed. by Floriane Reviron-Piégay, 205-217 (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2009).

In the face of the parliamentary devolution in Scotland and Wales in 1999; the revival of debates about multiculturalism, immigration and race following the brutal murder of Stephen Lawrence and a renewed spike in race riots that followed it; and the report of the Parekh Commission of 1999-2000 on ‘The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain’, New Labour attempted to emphasize a more positive Britishness.

²³⁷ Julian Stallabrass, *High Art Lite. The Rise and Fall of Young British Art* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 118-119.

cities to regenerate themselves, people of different races to live in harmony, the long-term unemployed to find work, the ill to get better.”²³⁸ Stallabrass’ scholarship has further shown how closely the spectacular conceptual works produced by the Young British Artists [yBa’s], with whom Shonibare is loosely affiliated, were associated with this moment of “Cool Britannia”, as New Labour worked hard to shake off Thatcherism’s regressive, cultural provincialism. Stallabrass draws attention to the strategic similarities between corporate and yBA art production, by pointing out how the yBAs have attempted to “brand” their art with a repetitive, signature style or medium that can achieve quick market recognizability.²³⁹ Shonibare’s repetitive use of Dutch Wax fabrics as his signature trademark certainly adheres to this strategy, while also providing a convenient and predictable marker of “exotic” racial difference in the context of multicultural conceptions of Britishness.

While the rhetoric of “Cool Britannia” was widely ridiculed upon its initial proclamation in the late 1990s, the terrorist attacks on New York City and London in 2001 and 2005 made the necessity of a multicultural closing of ranks under the banner of a new, positive definition of Britishness all the more evident.²⁴⁰ The new, inclusive ‘Britishness’ embraced by New Labour sought to stymie Scottish and Irish independence movements and contain fundamentalist extremism by emphasizing the worth of the Union for all British citizens.²⁴¹ While acknowledging the continued importance of the nation-state as a guarantor of

²³⁸ Stallabrass, *High Art Lite*, 298.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 190.

²⁴⁰ Schnapper, “British No More?,” 209.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 206.

security for its citizens, New Labour's economic politics were based on neoliberalism as a positive phenomenon that would, through trade and exchanges of all kinds, lead to the creation and sharing of new wealth at the international level. In this context, New Labour embraced a multicultural approach that prizes official signifiers of difference as signs of "timeliness, vitality, inclusivity, and global reach."²⁴² Stuart Hall has emphasized the difference between the adjective 'multicultural', which describes the fact of culturally heterogeneous states, and the substantive 'multiculturalism' which refers to a variety of political strategies and policies adopted by governments to manage the problems of multiplicity on a state level. He argued that, in a neoliberal context where corporate interests are privileged over the interests constituting society at large, a "corporate multiculturalism" tends to manage minority cultural differences in the interests of the center.²⁴³ In this context, delicate political and social inequalities are "solved", through cultural gestures that provide the subaltern with visibility. How this process takes place institutionally can be made explicit in the selection process of the Fourth Plinth Programme itself.

Shanti Sumartojo has shown that the formation of national symbols and narratives on Trafalgar Square continues to be an inherently "elite" process.²⁴⁴ The primary aim of the Fourth Plinth Programme is to make contemporary art available to a broad public, while a site-specific engagement with the square is

²⁴² Stuart Hall, "Conclusion: The Multicultural Question," in *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms. Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, ed. by Barnor Hesse, 209-241 (London and New York: zed Books, 2000); Paul Gilroy, *Against Race. Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 21.

²⁴³ Hall, "The Multicultural Question", 210.

²⁴⁴ Sumartojo, "The Fourth Plinth," 71.

not a stated intention. Nonetheless, the four public art works that had been commissioned under the program up to then had triggered discussions about national identity all the same.²⁴⁵ The Fourth Plinth Commissioning Group was first put together under the Mayor's Office of Ken Livingstone and has been composed of a variety of distinguished art world personalities and professionals in engineering and urban design since then.²⁴⁶ For each exhibition cycle, the Commissioning Group invites up to thirty established, international artists to present proposals and selects six finalists to enter maquettes from the pool of submissions.²⁴⁷ While, currently, the Commissioning Group invites public opinion on the submitted maquettes before it makes its decision, it ultimately has free reign in selecting the winning design, requiring only the final approval of London's mayor.²⁴⁸ Shonibare was chosen as one of the finalists during the 2007—2008 selection process, along with Tracey Emin, Antony Gormley, Jeremy Deller, and Anish Kapoor.²⁴⁹ Because 2010, the year on which Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* was to be installed on the Fourth Plinth, coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of Nigerian independence from the British Empire, London mayor Boris Johnson was probably not alone in deeming the selection of Shonibare's

²⁴⁵ Sumartajo, "The Fourth Plinth," 71.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Elsbeth Joyce Court, "Nelson's Ship in a Bottle, Fourth Plinth Commission, Trafalgar Square," *African Arts* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 86-90.

²⁴⁸ Fourth Plinth: Contemporary Monument, Institute of Contemporary Arts, December 5, 2012-January 31, 2013, <https://www.ica.art/sites/default/files/downloads/FourthPlinth-ICAPublication.pdf>

²⁴⁹ Court, "Nelson's Ship in a Bottle," 87.

installation for the 2010/2012 interval “particularly timely.”²⁵⁰ This serves to demonstrate, once again, the tautological logic by which black artist are continuously forced to artistically reiterate their cultural difference in relation to a white, hegemonic norm.

The globalization of capital and corporate multiculturalism were not only understood to be aesthetically reflected in the sails and ship iconography of *Nelson’s Ship in a Bottle*, but were manifested in the economics of the installation’s materialization itself. Because its costly production had required additional funding beyond the awarded Fourth Plinth commission, Nigeria’s Guaranty Trust Bank had proudly co-sponsored this public artwork. As a result, Shonibare’s installation served to pronounce not only the embrace of a commercial and corporate multiculturalism on the platform of London’s “front room”, but also served as a “flagship” for a Nigerian bank hoping to reinforce its position as an African banking institution of international standing and reputation through the patronage of art. This demonstrates, as Julian Stallabrass has noted, that free trade and free art are not “as antithetical as they may seem.”²⁵¹ In Britain, the sponsorship of a public artwork on Trafalgar Square by a Nigerian bank served to buttress the myth that, fifty years after Nigeria had gained independence, neoliberalism had indeed resulted in the internationalization of wealth.

²⁵⁰ James Cohan Gallery, “Yinka Shonibare, MBE. Fourth Plinth Commission,” issued February 10, 2010, http://www.jamescohan.com/news/2010-05-24_yinka-shonibare-mbe-fourth-plinth-commiss.

²⁵¹ Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated*, 4.

Ultimately, Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* recuperated the British maritime nationalism visually conveyed on the square with a multicultural message that, as Boris Johnson noted, could be interpreted in purely "forward looking" terms. Judith Butler noted that parody only has the potential of taking on a subversive quality if the parodic repetition serves to *decenter* the original (visual) statements' naturalized, normative status. As Boris Johnson's speech made evident, the incessant slippage of *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* did not enforce a denaturalization of British maritime nationalism, but allowed for its multicultural modernization. The sumptuousness of the exotic fabrics were instrumentalized as signifiers of multicultural diversity that served to ensnare audiences with a touch of racial difference in London's "front room" rather than fundamentally questioning the dualistic separation of blackness and whiteness or sufficiently resisting liberal narratives of British nationhood. The square's patriarchal normativity was ultimately left unchallenged, while the contributions of Britain's (post)colonial subjects were "added" to the hegemonic national narrative in an inclusive fashion. By providing a veil of difference, which was ultimately recuperated into an aegis of the same, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* followed the model of corporate internationalism.²⁵² Stallabrass' critical commentary on the deployment of irony in the works of the YBAs can be aptly extended to Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*:

[A] pervasive and disabling irony becalms the work in a manner that is supposed, in conventional wisdom, to challenge the viewer but which in fact conveniently opens up demotic material to safe aesthetic delectation. Irony is the essential lubricant of this medium [...] While it

²⁵² Julian Stallabrass, *Contemporary Art. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 47.

dethrones critical thought, it enthrones the artist, for to see irony in the work is to believe that the individual creator has taken an attitude toward their work, and towards the viewer.²⁵³

Nelson's Ship in a Bottle became a celebratory master trope of the long history of an African diasporic presence in London and the British Empire, in which white supremacy, oppression, and economic exploitation are relegated to the age of slavery and imperialism and veiled in a historical forgetfulness, to be dispensed with, in true liberal fashion, in favor of a forward-looking, multicultural and neoliberal present. While the incessant slippage of *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* meant that it was able to accommodate more critical interpretations that read it through the lens of diasporic philosophies of history that undermine the nation, his parodic installation did not enforce the creation of new interpretive communities and, as such, did not have an overall subversive effect. When serious issues such as colonial exploitation, slavery, racism and sexism are at stake, irony's lacking didacticism is too readily transformed into complicit evasion.

²⁵³ Stallabrass, *High Art Lite*, 96.

CHAPTER TWO: GERMANY

Introduction: *Who Knows Tomorrow* at the Berlin Nationalgalerie

As Shonibare's, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* began its tenure on Trafalgar Square in London, curators at Berlin's Nationalgalerie were preparing to open an exhibition addressing Germany's forgotten colonial legacy. *Who Knows Tomorrow*, which was on display from June 3 to October 26, 2010, was organized by Nationalgalerie curators Britta Schmitz and Udo Kittelmann in collaboration with Princeton-based Africanist art historian, Chika Okeke-Agulu. The incentive for the organization of *Who Knows Tomorrow* was first prompted by Germany's then-president, Horst Köhler, who suggested that an Africa-related exhibition be organized to coincide with an Africa Forum conference planned in Berlin as part of his program *Partnerschaftsinitiative mit Afrika* [partnership initiative with Africa]. Rather than creating yet another mega-show surveying contemporary African art, the curators decided to offer a platform for select African artists "to contemplate the place of Berlin in the history of European colonization of the African continent, a process that officially began with the Berlin-Congo Conference (1884-85)."²⁵⁴ The resulting exhibition featured independent projects by five established, international artists with ties to Africa, including Antonio Olé, El Anatsui, Zarina Bhimji, Pascale Marthine Tayou, and Yinka Shonibare MBE. Each of the five selected artists was invited to display one or two works paradigmatic of their overall oeuvre, mostly installation-based arts, at one of four institutions associated with the Berlin Nationalgalerie. Although the select artworks were

²⁵⁴ Chika Okeke-Agulu, "Who Knows Tomorrow," *Art Journal* 69, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 49 – 65.

spatially dispersed throughout the city at the *Alte Nationalgalerie* (El Anatsui), the *Neue Nationalgalerie* (Pascale Marthine Tayou), the *Friedrichswerdersche Kirche* (Shonibare), and the *Hamburger Bahnhof. Museum für Gegenwart* (Zarina Bhimji and António Ole), they were conceptually unified by their respective postcolonial engagements with the museums' varied architectures and collections, which demonstrate various re-articulations of German national identity throughout history (Fig. 10). With the exception of Shonibare's and Bhimji's contributions, all of the artworks were exhibited on the exterior of the museum buildings. While this curatorial decision intended to make the artworks accessible to a broad public for free, curator Udo Kittelmann's questionable assumption that "life in Africa takes place outside" served as another motive for situating the installations in the public sphere.²⁵⁵

In the place of a conventional exhibition catalog, *Who Knows Tomorrow* was accompanied by an interdisciplinary, bilingual 600+page reader that featured essays on Germany's colonial history, early twentieth-century race discourses, remnants of colonial history in Berlin, and discussions of various contemporary cultural and political developments in Africa.²⁵⁶ As such, it situated the exhibited artworks as part of larger, multidisciplinary discourses. The catalog also provided the five participating artists with space to fill a few pages of the reader with content of their choice. In addition, an extensive exhibition program was put

²⁵⁵ Dierk Schmidt, "Who Knows Tomorrow," *Die Springerin. Hefte für Gegenwartskunst* 3, no. 10, available online at <https://www.google.de/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=dierk+schmidt+who+knows+tomorrow>.

²⁵⁶ Udo Kittelmann, Chika Okeke-Agulu, and Britta Schmitz (eds.), *Who Knows Tomorrow* (Cologne, Germany: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König and Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2010), exhibition catalog.

together and expert conversations on various topics were held in the exhibition spaces under the heading “Encounters”. Among other topics, these “encounters” engaged the museums’ collection histories, the representation of African art in German museums, the view of Africa in German philosophy, and—as will be central to considerations in this chapter—the deployment of the concept of hybridity in contemporary culture.²⁵⁷ As a whole, the curators hoped that *Who Knows Tomorrow* would initiate discussions about a largely forgotten German colonial past by reexamining “the long-established and often ignored or underacknowledged relationships between art and state power, between aesthetics and nationalism, and between the artistic avant-garde and political ideology.”²⁵⁸ As the exhibition title *Who Knows Tomorrow* indicates, the exhibition also aimed to look at the present and to the future by examining how art might contribute to the overcoming of (art) historical constructions and stereotypes, so that “the postcolonial experience, which is as much a problem for Europe as it is for Africa” could be reimagined, “through the critical perspective of contemporary art.”²⁵⁹

While this chapter specifically focuses on Shonibare’s contribution to the exhibition and his engagement of hegemonic conceptions of German nationhood, modernity, difference and differentiation as manifested at the Friedrichswerdersche Kirche, a brief outline of the other projects serves to provide a better impression of the exhibition as a whole. El Anatsui’s *Ozone-Layer* (2010) and *Yam Mound* (2010) were specifically commissioned for *Who*

²⁵⁷ “Who Knows Tomorrow”, exhibition gallery guide.

²⁵⁸ Okeke-Agulu, “Who Knows Tomorrow,” *art journal*, 49.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

Knows Tomorrow and were mounted on the *Alte Nationalgalerie*'s neoclassical temple exterior and in its portico entrance (Fig. 11). *Ozone Layer* consisted of countless flattened bottle caps, which El Anatsui joined into an asymmetrical metal tapestry. Consisting of two pieces, it was hung to partially obscure the museum's temple façade entrance. The glistening surface of the bottle caps competed with the golden inscription *Der Deutschen Kunst 1871* [To German Art 1871] that decorates the frieze above the museum portico and which does not document the year of the museum's foundation (which preceded it), but refers to Germany's belated national unification. Although the title and materiality of Anatsui's *Ozone Layer* evoked environmental concerns, Okeke-Agulu also likened its appearance to a "dilapidated construction fence" that gestured to the museum's role in the construction of Germany's national identity as an ongoing process.²⁶⁰ Pascale Marthine Tayou installed, *Colonial Erection* (2007) in the elevated entrance plaza of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's *Neue Nationalgalerie* (Fig. 12). Built in 1968 to serve as West Germany's pendant to the *Alte Nationalgalerie* located in East Germany, the museum's minimalist glass-and-steel building served as an iconic materialization of West Germany's self-conception as a transparent democracy.²⁶¹ Within this context Tayou installed *Colonial Erection*, an assemblage of 53 flags that resembled, but did not accurately reproduce, flags of the African nations, and thereby recalled headquarters of Pan-African collaboration such as the recently founded African Union. The installation's flags gestured not only to the diversity of a continent

²⁶⁰ Okeke-Agulu, "Who Knows Tomorrow," *art journal*, 54.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

which is frequently homogenized as “Africa”, but also evoked questions of Africa’s political participation in the contemporary world community, transnational identity, and the question of democracy. Tayou inserted various human-sized replicas of colorfully painted *colon* sculptures amidst the flags. While wooden *colon* sculptures once served to portray European colonial officials, Tayou deployed them here to represent Africans. As such, his installation reiterated Marxist critiques pointing out that little has changed since African elites assumed the positions of the former colonizers within largely unchanged neocolonial economic structures.²⁶² Zarina Bhimji and António Ole displayed their works at the *Hamburger Bahnhof. Museum für Gegenwart*. Bhimji took over parts of the interior space with her dreamlike video installation, *Waiting* (2007) (Fig. 13). The video featured haunting scenes filmed in Kenya at an abandoned factory that once produced sisal, a fiber that was introduced into Germany’s East African colonies in the 1890s. António Ole’s installation *The Entire World - Transitory Geometry* (2010) consisted of shipping containers of various colors with inserted *objets trouvés*, which were stacked along the exterior of the Hamburger Bahnhof’s white, neoclassical façade (Fig. 14). The locally sourced shipping containers referenced global trade relations and alternative housing for refugees and the urban poor. They were meant to interrupt the “clean” look of innocence surrounding the visual language of the *Hamburger Bahnhof’s* white, neoclassical building. While this branch of the Nationalgalerie circulates contemporary art today, its name still bears the traces of its original function as a train station and its implication in the trade of goods.

²⁶² Okeke-Agulu, “Who Knows Tomorrow,” *art journal*, 64.

Shonibare was featured with two pre-existing installations, *Scramble for Africa* (2003) and *Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald Shooting* (2007), which were mounted at the Neogothic Friedrichswerder Church to great dramatic effect (Figs. 15–21). *Scramble for Africa*, which was placed in the church gallery, reenacted the Berlin-Congo conference that was convened by German Reichschancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1884/85 and formalized the colonial division of the African continent among the European powers (Figs. 17-18). The installation consisted of fourteen gesticulating mannequins, which were assembled around a large rectangular table with a map of Africa printed upon it. The second installation was situated by the choir in the church nave and joined two eighteenth-century British aristocrats who had been involved in the slave trade, Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald, in an imagined pheasant hunt (Figs. 19–21; 23). Both installations deployed Shonibare's signature, transcultural style by featuring phenotypically ambiguous, headless mannequins, whose Victorian and Georgian European dress was tailored from Dutch Wax fabrics.

While German Protestant and French Huguenot congregations originally used the church, it was signed over as a branch of the Berlin National Gallery in the 1980s to house the museum's sculpture collection.²⁶³ The red brick facade and Neogothic stylistic elements of the Friedrichswerder Kirche, which was built by Karl Friedrich Schinkel between 1824 and 1831, were conceived as expressions of Prussian patriotism at the time of construction (Fig.15).²⁶⁴ Shonibare's installations were inserted amidst the church's permanent display of

²⁶³ Britta Schmitz, "Who Knows Tomorrow, Who Knows Today," in *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 373.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

early nineteenth-century neoclassical sculptures, busts, and a small selection of antique statue casts, which, as the museum's website stated at the time, were "grouped in the exhibition space in a way which is informal and rich in connections so that the observer is given an impression of something like a 'landscaped serenity'" (Fig. 16).²⁶⁵ Artists associated with the Berlin School, including Johann Gottfried Schadow and his students Christian Daniel Rauch, Christian Friedrich Tieck, and Ludwig Wichman produced the majority of the sculptural work shown here. In addition to mythologically themed sculptures and a cast of Schadow's famous double portrait of the princesses Luise and Friederike of Prussia (1797), the permanent display featured intellectuals that contributed to German Enlightenment and classical thought. Among others, the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) (Fig. 27), philhellenic art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) (Fig. 28), the writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), the geographer-explorer Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), and the church's architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841) were rendered here in sculptural form. To situate Shonibare's installations in relation to the Friedrichswerder Kirche's permanent display and the narratives of nationhood it materializes as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the specificity of German engagements with colonialism, racism and its current conceptions of postcolonial nationhood must first be considered.

²⁶⁵ <http://www.smb.museum/en/exhibitions/detail/nationalgalerie-in-der-friedrichswerderschen-kirche.html> (accessed April 2011, removed in meantime).

Recovering German Colonial History and the Issue of “Race” in Postcolonial Germany

Since Germany was a latecomer to formal colonialism in the 1880s and was dispossessed of its colonies in Togo, Southwest and Southeast Africa, and the South Pacific in the aftermath of World War I, scholars have often trivialized Germany’s comparatively brief, thirty-year involvement in European colonialism.²⁶⁶ While France and Britain had to contend with the disintegration and decolonization of their empires and faced substantial mass migrations from their former colonies in the aftermath of World War II, German commemorative culture was preoccupied with Nazi history, the Holocaust, and an ideologically and geographically bifurcated nation that would remain divided until 1990.²⁶⁷ Although US-derived debates on multiculturalism were received in West Germany in the late 1980s, when the diverse constituency of German society was finally acknowledged, these debates were primarily concerned with post-war labor migration from Southern and Eastern Europe, particularly Turkey, and not, as in France or Britain, with populations from the former colonies.²⁶⁸ The comparative lack of vocal colonial subjects in Germany facilitated the conclusion among German scholars in various fields that postcolonial theories were

²⁶⁶ Russell Berman, “Der ewig Zweite. Deutschlands Sekundärkolonialismus,” in *Phantasiereiche des deutschen Kolonialismus*, ed. by Birthe Kundrus, 19-23 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013); Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer (eds.), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 1; Jürgen Zimmerer, *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2013), 14f.

²⁶⁷ Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, “Kunst und kulturelle Differenz oder: Warum hat die kritische Kunstgeschichte in Deutschland den postcolonial turn ausgelassen?” *Kunst und Politik. Jahrbuch der Guernica Gesellschaft*, vol 4 (2002), 10.

²⁶⁸ Susanne Stemmler, “Jenseits des Multikulturalismus. Visionen eines postethnischen Deutschlands,” *Multikultur 2.0. Willkommen im Einwanderungsland Deutschland* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2011), 10.

irrelevant to their pursuits. After all, in contrast to the French and British empires with their consistent histories of slaveholding and colonialism, it seemed that Germany did not appear to have a comprehensive colonial history to contend with.²⁶⁹

When Germany was reunified in 1990, debates about a joint, post-Nazi and post-unification German national identity were initially anxiously avoided.²⁷⁰ Rather than taking on the challenge of defining a positive conception of German nationhood that could accommodate heterogeneity, public postwar intellectuals such as Jürgen Habermas opted for a postnational European identity and sought renewed affiliation with “Western” political culture.²⁷¹ Historian Fatima El-Tayeb has shown that the construction of a larger European identity situates Europe’s civilizational origins in ancient Greece and Rome, traces it through the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and deploys the Second World War and fascism as reminders of the contemporary need to transcend national divisions.²⁷² Meanwhile, colonial histories, racisms, and the presence and contributions of Europe’s various minorities remain largely absented from these Eurocentric, continental narratives.²⁷³ Therefore, as Andreas Huyssen has noted, “rather than representing an alternative to the nation, Europe was always its very

²⁶⁹ “Die Probleme des Postkolonialismus betreffen uns gar nicht, weil Deutschland keine Kolonialgeschichte im grossen Stil zu erinnern hat und wir mit der Aufarbeitung “unseres” NS mehr als genug zu tun haben.” in: Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, “Kunst und kulturelle Differenz oder: Warum hat die kritische Kunstgeschichte in Deutschland den postcolonial turn ausgelassen?” *Kunst und Politik. Jahrbuch der Guernica Gesellschaft*, vol 4 (2002), 10.

²⁷⁰ Andreas Huyssen, “The Inevitability of Nation. German Intellectuals after Reunification”, *October* 61, The Identity in Question (Summer 1992): 65-73; 71.

²⁷¹ Volker Kronenberg, *Patriotismus in Deutschland. Perspektiven für eine weltoffene Nation* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 222; Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others*, 6.

²⁷² El-Tayeb, *European Others*, 9.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, 6.

condition of possibility, just as it enabled empire and colonialism.”²⁷⁴ Huyssen suggests that the failure to articulate a communal German identity within Europe resulted in the increase of racist incidents in post-unification Germany, as anxieties about national identity were displaced on those deemed “foreigners.” In spite of these incidents, there has been a particular problematic of addressing the persistence of racism in German society, as the Third Reich implicitly forms the backdrop of any such discussion. Astrid Messerschmidt explains that

[I]n the federal German public and in education, antisemitism is primarily perceived as something that took place in the Nazi past and that is now over. Racism is rejected, because nothing is feared as much as the diagnosis of being racist. The monstrosity of the NS-crimes results in the bypassing of everything associated with it as part of the past.²⁷⁵

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the UNESCO had advised in 1952 that the term “race” be avoided in public discourse, in acknowledgement of the fact that it does not exist as a scientifically valid category.²⁷⁶ In contrast to Britain, the term “race”, or “Rasse”, is rarely heard in German public discourses and the ideology of “colorblindness” is pervasive throughout continental Europe. Historian Fatima El-Tayeb points out that “to reference race as native to contemporary European thought [...] violates the powerful narrative of Europe as a colorblind continent,

²⁷⁴ Huyssen, “The Inevitability of the Nation,” 71.

²⁷⁵ Astrid Messerschmidt, “Postkoloniale Erinnerungsprozesse in einer postnationalisozialistischen Gesellschaft – vom Umgang mit Rassismus und Antisemitismus,” *Peripherie* nr. 109/110 (Münster: Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot: 2008): 42-60; 1-2. [Antisemitismus wird in der bundesdeutschen Öffentlichkeit und im Bildungswesen vorwiegend als etwas wahrgenommen, das mit der NS-Vergangenheit zusammenhängt und eben mit dieser auch vergangen ist, und Rassismus wird abgewehrt, weil man kaum etwas so sehr fürchtet wie die Diagnose, rassistisch zu sein. Die Monstrosität der NS-Verbrechen lässt alles, was mit ihnen zusammenhängt so erscheinen, als sei es in eine reine Vergangenheit übergegangen. Transl. by author].

²⁷⁶ Anna Greve, *Farbe-Macht-Körper. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in der europäischen Kunstgeschichte* (Karlsruhe, Germany: KIT Scientific Publishing, 2013), 15.

largely untouched by the ideology it exported all over the world.”²⁷⁷ Although theoretical debates about German multiculturalism since the 1980s served to complicate Romantic notions of a cohesive German *Kulturation*, Germany never adopted a multicultural conception of nationhood nor was multiculturalism institutionalized.²⁷⁸ For decades Germany refused to naturalize its labor migrants and their offspring by repeating the mantra that Germany, other than Britain and France, was not an immigration country.²⁷⁹ Policies related to minorities were negotiated under the heading “Ausländerpolitik” [foreigner politics], which served to render even those individuals who had lived and worked in Germany for decades as a “constitutive outside” within the border of the nation. Difference and differentiation in Germany were (and continue to be) articulated in ethnocultural and, more recently, religious, rather than in racial terms.²⁸⁰ Anxieties about Germany’s cultural fragmentation in face of the increasing diversity of its society is evident in official calls for minorities’ adherence to a Judeo-Christian, German *Leitkultur* [dominant culture], which is presumed to be stable, centered and hermetically sealed from Germany’s various minority cultures. This position tends to assume that “Western” political achievements such as liberal, constitutional,

²⁷⁷ El-Tayeb, *European Others*, xv.

²⁷⁸ Sociologist Norbert Elias has argued that, due to Germany’s belated national unification in 1871, German national identity has been intricately linked with its self-conception as a *Kulturation*. Lacking political power, the German intelligentsia came to focus on the arts, scholarship, and intellectual-philosophical matters as a basis for national cohesion. Elias suggested that thinkers ranging from Immanuel Kant to Johann Wolfgang Goethe came to deploy the term “Kultur” as an oppositional polemic signifying spiritual depth, sincerity, and moral superiority. “Kultur” was to be distinguished from the superficialities and the “civilization” of the French court and the Francophilia of German court life from which the middle-class intelligentsia often remained excluded due to class-prejudice.

²⁷⁹ Klaus J. Bade, “Von der Arbeitswanderung zur Einwanderungsgesellschaft,” in *Multikultur 2.0*, ed. by Susanne Stemmler et al., 162.

²⁸⁰ “Introduction,” *Hybrid Cultures, Nervous States*, xxxiv.

parliamentary democracies have deep roots in Occidental culture and, by extension, in Christianity, to which minorities must learn to adhere.²⁸¹ The notion of an essentialist German *Leitkultur* was first deployed in 1998, as the political concession that Germany was indeed an immigration country and that the official repression of difference in Germany had been a dead end, resulted in the updating of German citizenship law from *jus sanguinis* to *jus solis* in 2000.²⁸² Yet, by October of 2010, just as *Who Knows Tomorrow* was closing, Germany's chancellor Angela Merkel made headlines when she claimed that multiculturalism had "utterly failed" in Germany and insisted that Germany's minorities and immigrants must display stronger efforts to adapt to the German, Judeo-Christian 'Leitkultur'. As many critics have noted, this conception of a German "Leitkultur" perpetually produces a totalized ethnic "Other" on whom the burden of integration is unilaterally placed. It assumes the existence of internally homogenous cultures and conflates culture with ethnic or religious identities, while failing to consider how German society and its minorities have changed through decades of cohabitation.²⁸³ By taking recourse to terms such as "ethnic" or "cultural" difference, racialized "Others" continue to be produced in German society. After all, as Robert C. Young has noted,

Culture has always marked cultural difference by producing the other, it has always been comparative, and racism has always been an integral part of it: the two are inextricably clustered together, feeding off and

²⁸¹ Serhat Karkayali, "Der Kampf der Kulturbegriffe", *Multikultur 2.0*, 145.

²⁸² Markus Schmitz, "The Current Spectacle of Integration in Germany. Spatiality, Gender and the Boundaries of the National Gaze," *Hybrid Cultures, Nervous States*, 269.

²⁸³ Susanne Stemmler, "Jenseits des Multikulturalismus. Visionen eines postethnischen Deutschlands", in *Multikultur 2.0*, 11.

generating each other. Race has always been culturally constructed. Culture has always been racially constructed.²⁸⁴

If postcolonialism is understood not only in terms of chronological progression, as that which follows colonial rule, but also as the reconfiguration of a hermeneutic field in which Eurocentrically conceived colonial discourses and binary conceptions of difference are critiqued in response to mass migration and the global circulation of goods, signs, and information, then the relevance of postcolonialism for the German context becomes most explicit.²⁸⁵ In the course of the 1990s, the marginalization of German colonial history and the indifference to postcolonial studies were incrementally challenged, as a range of historical events, exhibitions, scholarly paradigm shifts, and economic incentives encouraged a renewed engagement with Germany's colonial history and postcolonial present.²⁸⁶ The assumed insignificance of postcolonial theories was first undermined by scholars in U.S. based German Studies, through publications such as Suzanne Zantop's *Colonial Fantasies. Conquest, Family and Nation in Pre-colonial Germany, 1770-1870* (1997) and Russell A. Berman's *Enlightenment or Empire. Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (1998). With its focus on precolonial Germany, Zantop's study demonstrated particularly clearly that colonial discourses and fantasies in Germany did not have to go hand in hand

²⁸⁴ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 54.

²⁸⁵ Elisabeth Bronfen, Benjamin Marius and Therese Steffen (eds.), *Hybride Kulturen. Beiträge zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1997), 8.

²⁸⁶ Alexandra Karentzos, "Postkoloniale Kunstgeschichte. Revisionen von Musealisierung, Kanonisierung, Repräsentation," in *Schlüsselwerke der Postcolonial Studies*, (pp.249-266) ed. by Julia Reuter and Alexandra Karentzos (Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer VS, 2012).

with de facto colonial possessions and that a “colonialism without colonies” is indeed a possibility.²⁸⁷

Historical events that incited a renewed engagement with German colonialism included the opening of Germany’s colonial archives in 1989; the centenary and historical reconsideration of the 1904 genocide of the Nama and Herero by German colonial officers in—what is today—Namibia;²⁸⁸ the debates leading up to the partial return of human remains still held in the Berlin Charité to Namibia in 2011; Namibia’s achievement of independence from South Africa in 1990 and the subsequent end of apartheid; and the persistent demands by these countries for restitutions.²⁸⁹ German historians adopted transnational and postcolonial approaches to narrate German colonial history as part of Germany’s national history, while Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff and the Trier School introduced critical race and gender and postcolonial theories to art historical studies in German academia.²⁹⁰ The growth of Holocaust Studies and the heated debates surrounding the “continuity thesis” that considers links and differences between Germany’s imperial race politics and the Holocaust, have further

²⁸⁷ Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies. Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997), Russell A. Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire. Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

²⁸⁸ Joachim Zeller and Jürgen Zimmerer (eds.), *Völkermord in Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen* (Berlin: Christoph Links, 2003).

²⁸⁹ Ulrike Lindner, Maren Möhring, Mark Stein and Silke Stroh (eds.) “Introduction”, in *Hybrid Cultures—Nervous States. Britain and Germany in a Post-colonial World* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010), xxvi.

²⁹⁰ Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff, “Warum hat die kritische Kunstgeschichte in Deutschland den Postcolonial Turn ausgelassen?” in *Kunst und Politik. Jahrbuch der Guernica Gesellschaft* 4, Schwerpunkt Postkolonialismus (2002): 7-16.

contributed to a renewed engagement with Germany's colonial past and a consideration of its legacy in the present.²⁹¹

Meanwhile, a number of large-scale survey exhibitions introduced contemporary African art and postcolonial positions to German audiences prior to *Who Knows Tomorrow*, including Okwui Enwezor's exhibition, *The Short Century. Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994*, which was held in Munich and Berlin in 2001; Enwezor's directorship and "deterritorialization" of the Kassel-based *Documenta 11* in 2002 (which is examined in the last chapter); the exhibition *Der Black Atlantic* (2004) organized by Paul Gilroy, Tina Campt and Fatima El-Tayeb at the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt* in Berlin and, finally, Simon Njami's *Africa Remix*, which was held at the Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf in 2004. But despite the importance of these large-scale survey exhibitions for introducing previously unknown artists and postcolonial and diasporic positions to German audiences, their lacking emphasis on the specificity of the *German* colonial project and the persistent legacy of colonial conceptions of difference and differentiation in Germany in particular, ultimately allowed for the public's oblivion regarding its own colonial history and the racialized structures governing German

²⁹¹ Volker Max Langbehn and Mohammad Salama, *German Colonialism: Race, The Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011); Jürgen Osterhammel and Sebastian Conrad, *Das Kaiserreich Transnational. Deutschland in der Welt, 1871—1914* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht, 2006); Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisation and the Nation in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jürgen Zimmerer, *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 2013); Joachim Zeller, "Decolonization of the Public Space? (Post)colonial Cultures of Remembrance in Germany." in *Hybrid Cultures, Nervous States*, 65-87.

society to continue unabated.²⁹² It was this German (post)-colonial “amnesia” that *Who Knows Tomorrow* sought to counter at the institutional level of the National Gallery, by initiating a consideration of Germany’s and Africa’s mutually constitutive images of self and other.

In the last decade, a group of scholars situated in various disciplines in German academia has sought to correct the assumption of Germany’s presumed “colorblindness”. In their co-edited anthology, *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland* (2005), Maureen Maisha Eggers, Grada Kilomba, Peggy Piesche and Susan Arndt redefined US-derived Critical Whiteness Studies for the German context, by reinvigorating discussions on racism in Germany that had already been addressed by Afro-German activists in the 1980s.²⁹³ *Kritische Weißseinsforschung* acknowledges that race does not exist as a scientific, biological category as defined by nineteenth-century race theorists and deployed by the Nazis. But contrary to prevalent discourses in Germany that anxiously prohibit the contemporary use of the term race [Rasse] in light of this history, they insist that it remains instrumental for studying the legacy of “Rasse” [distinguished by quotation marks] as a *social concept* that is performatively re-instantiated in day-to-day life with tangible, material consequences.²⁹⁴ Scholars of *Kritische Weißseinsstudien* do not conflate “whiteness” and “blackness” with skin colors per se, but conceive of them as

²⁹² Carol Becker, “Conversation with Okwui Enwezor,” *Art Journal* 61, no 2 (Summer 2002): 8—27.

²⁹³ Maureen Maisha Eggers, Grada Kilomba, Peggy Piesche, Susan Arndt (eds.), *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland* (Münster: Unrast Verlag, 2005)

²⁹⁴ Eggers et al, “Konzeptionelle Überlegungen,” in Eggers et. al., *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte*, 12.

constructed political identities that might be assumed unconsciously (as is often the case with “whiteness”) or strategically, for political purposes. “Whiteness” is defined as a hegemonic power field that is manifested in historical, political, social, and economic privileges that provide a certain group with access to the dominant institutions and structures of society.²⁹⁵ *Kritische Weißseinsforschung* is concerned with critically exposing and dismantling the centrality of an ideological whiteness that often remains unmarked, because it is unconsciously and self-evidently assumed by those who are privileged to inhabit it in German society and, by extension, in Europe. As a critical undertaking, *Kritische Weißseinsforschung* aims to render the dominant normativity of this ‘whiteness’ visible, to demonstrate how it discursively and structurally works to discriminate and oppress other identities and histories in Germany by marking them as inherently different. Maureen Maisha Eggers elaborates that, “contemporary discourses and medial representations produce and reassert whiteness as humanist, progressive, democratic, invested in egalitarian relations, committed to gender democracy.”²⁹⁶ As part of a larger European ‘Self’, Germany is Eurocentrically defined with recourse to Roman law, Christianity, and the Enlightenment; whereas racial theories, colonialism, and the Shoa are bracketed

²⁹⁵ Grada Kilomba, “White is not a Color. An Interview with Author and Psychoanalyst Grada Kilomba,” *africavenir*, accessed December 1, 2016, <http://www.africavenir.org/nc/news-details/article/white-is-not-a-color-an-interview-with-author-and-psychoanalyst-grada-kilomba.html>.

²⁹⁶ Eggers et al, *Mythen, Masken, Subjekte*, 18. “Gegenwärtige Diskurse und mediale Repräsentanzen erzeugen und tradieren Weißsein als humanistisch, fortschrittlich, demokratisch, an egalitären Verhältnissen interessiert, der Genderdemokratie verpflichtet.” [my translation]

as “singular” aberrations and denied as defining constituents of German modernity.²⁹⁷

It is with these considerations in mind that I return to Yinka Shonibare’s installations at the Friedrichswerder Church. The exhibition space and its permanent display unified all the elements that characterize Eurocentrism as defined above: German notables associated with the Enlightenment and classical period are presented in white marble, they are situated in continuity with ancient Greece through a neoclassical aesthetic, and are contained within the serenity of a Christian church building. I deploy Critical Whiteness Studies to frame the Friedrichswerder Church and its permanent display as an “effective white power field”.²⁹⁸ In the *Who Knows Tomorrow* exhibition reader, curator Britta Schmitz’ discursively framed the permanent display in the Friedrichswerder Kirche as follows:

As a complete ensemble, this museum represents the perfect showcase to feature the liberal spirit of the Enlightenment prevailing in Prussia after the 1848 Revolutions. Guided by such virtues as acceptance, tolerance, and the cross-pollination of ideas, this brief period was one of the most productive in German history, predating German unification. [...] Within the context of *Who Knows Tomorrow*, Yinka Shonibare MBE will be the first contemporary artist to be featured in the Friedrichswerder Kirche. He will show two sculptures that introduce—amidst the sculptural renderings of the sublime spiritual leaders from the age of Goethe—perspectives of a different history. He will thereby add another exploratory dimension to the legacy of the Enlightenment.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Susan Arndt, “Weißsein. Die verkannte Strukturkategorie Europas und Deutschlands,” *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte*, 25.

²⁹⁸ Peggy Piesche, “Der >Fortschritt< der Aufklärung—Kant’s Race und die Zentrierung des weißen Subjekts,” in *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte*, op cit, [transl from German by author of this article]

²⁹⁹ Britta Schmitz, “Who Knows Tomorrow, Who Knows Today,” in *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 373.

In public intellectual discourses in Europe, the Second World War and the Holocaust are usually framed as the temporary collapse of Western civilization, which only serves to highlight the necessity of recovering and modifying the Enlightenment project in order to reestablish an international regime of universal human rights.³⁰⁰ Europe's continental union in the aftermath of two devastating world wars has served to accentuate Europe as a role model of transnational collaboration and shared values that qualifies it for (moral) world leadership. Yet, as historian Fatima El-Tayeb has demonstrated, the search for a common transnational European identity takes recourse to whiteness and Christianity as the smallest common denominator, so that non-white and non-Christian populations living in Europe become a permanent constitutive "outside" whose histories and contributions are not reflected in continental European or national narratives.³⁰¹ Because colonialism is conceived as having taken place outside of Europe, the post-war migrations to Europe are comprehended as first initiating the challenges to previously homogenous national cultures. Meanwhile, the hegemonic ideology of racelessness serves to render racial thinking and the exclusions that it effects invisible.³⁰² This chapter considers how Shonibare's insistently "unbound" and "impure" bodies engaged the "effective white power field" of the Friedrichswerder Kirche with its display of white marble bodies of important German *Denker und Dichter* such as Immanuel Kant, Alexander von Humboldt, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

³⁰⁰ Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others*, 8.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, xvii.

Shonibare's Installations as Hybridizations of the Friedrichswerder Kirche's "Effective White Power Field"?

For his reenactment of Otto von Bismarck's Berlin-Congo conference, *Scramble for Africa* (2003), Shonibare assembled fourteen headless, male mannequins around a rectangular wooden table in the gallery of the church, overlooking the nave (Figs. 17 and 18). Despite the absence of the mannequins' heads and, hence, their facial expressions, the figures' postures made evident that they were involved in a passionate debate concerning a map printed on the table top, in which vast brown areas discerned the *terra nullius* still "available" for conquest from the clearly outlined, colored patches of land that had already been explored and claimed. While some of the men leaned into their neighbors, placing hands on their arms in gestures of persuasion, others reclined in their chairs, taking in the event more passively. The phrase, "Scramble for Africa" is used by modern historians to refer to Europe's feverish colonial partition of the African continent between 1876 and 1912.³⁰³ Having proclaimed himself an "honest broker", German chancellor Otto von Bismarck had convened the competing imperialist nations in Berlin in 1884/85 to avert warfare in Europe through consensual agreements on Africa's colonial division and trade.³⁰⁴ It is here that the national boundaries of many existent African states were arbitrarily drawn.

Contrary to many of Shonibare's other works, *Scramble for Africa* does not mimetically recreate an iconic visual prototype from art history that might have

³⁰³ Thomas Pakenheim, *The Scramble for Africa. White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876 to 1912* (New York: Avon Books, 1991), xxv.

³⁰⁴ Andreas Eckart, "Die Berliner Afrika-Konferenz," *Kein Platz in der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*, ed. by Jürgen Zimmerer, 137-149 (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 2013).

been familiar to German audiences, although, especially when exhibited within the space of the Friedrichswerder Church, the assembly of men along around a long table reminded of representations of the The Last Supper. Shonibare's installation relies on the citationality of habitual gestures and repeated poses to recreate a conference scenario readily recognizable to viewers. A visual account of a Berlin conference that might have informed the poses and gestures represented in, *Scramble for Africa* was reproduced in Shonibare's contribution to the exhibition reader.³⁰⁵ Shonibare selected Prussian court painter Anton von Werner's oil painting, *Der Berliner Kongress* (1881), which has been displayed in Berlin's town hall since 2005 and depicts the closing session of an earlier conference convened by Bismarck in the Reich Chancellory's seat in the Wilhelmsstraße (Fig. 22). Von Werner's painting was commissioned by the city of Berlin to document another conference, which was held in 1878 to settle an escalating crisis in the Balkan area and which involved the major powers that would gather again in 1884/85 for the Berlin-Congo conference.³⁰⁶ To my knowledge, no comparable history painting exists of the Berlin-Congo conference, in which Bismarck was once again concerned with the maintenance of peace in Europe in the course of Africa's imperial division. While Shonibare specifies his installation as representing the Berlin-Congo conference by reproducing a map of Africa on the table, the individual participants of the conference are not specified. Instead, in typical Shonibare style, the

³⁰⁵ Udo Kittelmann, Chika Okeke-Agulu and Britta Schmitz (eds.), *Who Knows Tomorrow* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2010).

³⁰⁶ "Gemälde 'Der Berliner Kongreß von 1878'", *berlin.de*, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.berlin.de/rbmskzl/service/berliner-rathaus/gemaelde-der-berliner-kongress-von-1878-387382.php>

heedlessness and mixed-race skin colors of the fourteen representatives and Shonibare's characteristic deployment of Dutch Wax fabrics for their "African" Victorian clothing, denied not only the identification of specific individuals, but served to resist unambiguous identification with nineteenth-century Europe by pointing beyond it.

At the opposite end of the church, *Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald Shooting* (2007) featured a male and a female mannequin with the same ambiguous phenotypes and "Africanized" European dress, standing on pedestals and aiming their rifles at an eviscerated pheasant suspended above them in the choir of the church. In spite of the mannequins' conspicuous lack of heads, they have miraculously succeeded in striking the pheasant, as blood and feathers, distributed across the choir on fine yarn, appeared to explode outwards from the bird's body (Fig. 23). The title of this installation suggested that the mannequins, whom Shonibare has imaginatively brought together in a joint pleasure hunt, represented two privileged, eighteenth-century British merchants, whose wealth was based on the slave trade and imperial commerce and whose likenesses had been rendered in eighteenth-century portraits. *Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald Shooting* was originally commissioned by London's National Gallery in 2007, when British institutions were incited to consider their own implications in the slave trade on the occasion of Britain's bicentennial of its abolition.³⁰⁷ For this commission, Shonibare had selected two portraits of wealthy eighteenth-century individuals culled from the London National Gallery collections: Sir Joshua

³⁰⁷ The exhibition 'Scratch the Surface' was held at the London National Gallery from 20 July – 30 November 2007.

Reynolds's oil painting *Colonel Tarleton* (1782) and Johann Zoffany's, *Mrs. Oswald* (1763 – 64) (Figs. 24 and 25). General Sir Banastre Tarleton (1754-1833) was the son of a slave trader from Liverpool and later became the commander of the British Legion in the American War of Independence.³⁰⁸ In his portrait of the officer, Sir Reynolds emphasized Tarleton's military prowess as commander of the British Legion by casting him in the pose of the classical sculpture of Cincinnatus, in an effort to counter narratives of military decline and colonial loss circulating in Britain at the time.³⁰⁹ The second portrait by Johann Zoffany shows an elderly and sombre Mary Oswald peacefully seated at the trunk of a tree in the British countryside, maybe in proximity to her stately home in Ayreshire. The exhibition reader conveyed that the Scottish Mary Ramsey grew up on Jamaica, where her father owned a successful colonial business that she would inherit upon his death.³¹⁰ She later married Richard Oswald, a Scottish merchant who traded in sugar and tobacco and who invested part of her inheritance into a slave fort on Bance Island, Sierra Leone. The Oswalds also produced wax-print fabrics in Manchester from cotton grown on their South American plantations. Rather than mimetically replicating the postures captured in the portraits in installation form, Shonibare imaginatively joined these two slaveholders in a leisure pheasant hunt, a pastime that performatively asserted their upper class affiliation. By imbuing their headless bodies with mixed-race phenotypes and by tailoring their Georgian outfits from a fabric whose materiality

³⁰⁸ Britta Schmitz, "Who Knows Tomorrow, Who Knows Today," 375.

³⁰⁹ Mark Hallet, "Reading the Walls: Pictorial Dialogues at the British Royal Academy," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, no 4, Artistic Interactions (Summer 2004): 581 – 604.

³¹⁰ Britta Schmitz, "Who Knows Tomorrow-Who Knows Today," in *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 375.

is indicative of the complex entanglements between Africa, Europe, and Asia, Shonibare's reenactments of Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald served to destabilize the "whiteness" of their eighteenth-century portraits by marking their bodies with "impurity" to visualize their colonial entanglements.³¹¹

Homi Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity

In both installations, Shonibare repeated events and individuals culled from Europe's colonial history, and grafted traces of the "Other" upon them. In this capacity, Shonibare's installations have frequently been interpreted as opening up a hybrid, "Third Space" of enunciation in Homi Bhabha's sense of the term. While Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity is based on the presupposition that internally homogenous and "pure" cultures never existed so that, in fact, all cultures are always already hybrid, he also proposed that strategic instances of intentional hybridization can help to expose this fact. Hybridization takes place when the subaltern insert themselves into the hegemonic cultural field for their own purposes, so that the latter is confronted with a counter voice that can no longer be effortlessly pigeonholed as the authentic "Other", but which assumes an interstitial, unsettled, "Third Space" of enunciation.³¹² Bhabha argues that this "Third Space of enunciation" challenges

our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People [...] It is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and

³¹¹ Britta Schmitz, "Who Knows Tomorrow-Who Knows Today," in *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 375.

³¹² Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 21.

ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or “purity” of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity.³¹³

Hybridity intends to demonstrate that cultural differences cannot be externalized along ethnic, national, and religious boundaries that divide people into clearly demarcated camps. Instead, cultural differences are always situated in the self, because subjectivities are fractured along various lines of social stratification and come into being through the performative identification with and demarcation from others.³¹⁴

If, following Jennifer González, Shonibare’s installations are conceived as “environmental microcosms that have a metonymic relationship to the social spaces they mimic and critique”, then how did Shonibare’s installations serve to deconstruct the naturalized racial categories and national identities visually conveyed in the Friedrichswerder Kirche and its permanent display?³¹⁵ On the most obvious level, his installations introduced references to colonial history to demonstrate Europe’s entanglement with the rest of the world preceding the post-war migrations. As such, the installations served the purpose of historical revisionism, to remind German audiences of the long history of European involvement with Africa through the slave trade and colonialism, while *Scramble*

³¹³ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 54-55.

³¹⁴ Kien Nghi Ha, *Hype um Hybridität. Kultureller Differenzkonsum und postmoderne Verwertungstechniken im Spätkapitalismus* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2005), 93. [Eine solche Wahrnehmungsweise kann binäre Kultur- und Identitätschema verfestigen, da die Kategorie des “Eigenen” und des “Anderen” nicht hinterfragt werden. In einem solchen Modell wird kulturelle Differenz nicht im Selbst lokalisiert, sondern als äusserliche Differenz angesehen, die sich an ethnischen, nationalen, und religiösen Grenzziehungen orientiert.] Translated by author.

³¹⁵ Jennifer A. González, *Subject to Display*, 8f.

for Africa particularly forced an acknowledgement of Germany's implication in this history. By deploying flamboyantly dressed plastic mannequins whose headless bodies demonstrated a formal kinship with body fragments of classical sculpture, but whose materiality also pointed to commercial department store displays and consumerism, Shonibare's installations parodied the "landscaped serenity" of the classicist marble bodies in the permanent display. Sociologist Norbert Elias has argued that, due to its belated national unification in 1871 (which also explains Germany's initial colonial abstention), German national identity has been intricately linked with its self-conception as a *Kulturnation*.³¹⁶ Whereas the French as well as the English concept of "culture" can also include politics, economics, technology, sports, moral and social facts, "the German concept of *Kultur* refers essentially to intellectual, artistic, and religious facts and has a tendency to draw a sharp dividing line between facts of this sort, on the one side, and political, economic, and social facts, on the other."³¹⁷ Shonibare's installations breached this separation by introducing references to the material realities within which the intellectual contributions of these individuals were elaborated. Shonibare's installations visually played with different histories and techniques of displaying bodies in art and ethnological museums, thereby also blurring museological strategies that had previously served to maintain cultural differences and hierarchies of European whiteness and its "Others". For instance, Colonel Tarleton's and Mrs. Oswald's mannequins were accompanied by two

³¹⁶ Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und Psychogenetische Untersuchungen*. vol. 2. *Wandlungen der Gesellschaft: Entwurf zu einer Theorie der Zivilisation*. 15th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990).

³¹⁷ Wolfgang Iser, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

glass vitrines, one exhibiting Colonel Tarleton's plumed helmet and the other one spotlighting a *Bergère* hat that rested on Mary Oswald's lap in Zoffany's portrait. Shonibare's isolated display of Tarleton's plumed helmet and Mary Oswald's hat in glass vitrines, recreated in three dimensions and sheathed with "African" Dutch Wax fabrics, was reminiscent of ethnological exhibitions showcasing African masks and headgear (Fig. 26). In the nineteenth-century, the featured display of ordinary, everyday objects in glass cases and the exhibition of anonymous individuals as "specimen" dressed in their characteristic "garb" and pursuing everyday tasks, was the prerogative of anthropology and natural history. Shonibare blurs display strategies deployed in nineteenth-century art and ethnographic museums, which served to institutionally segregate European "high" art, such as neoclassical sculptures, from the artifacts of "primitive" cultures. His installation subjects British merchants to a leveling anthropological investigation by displaying their headgear in vitrines and representing them pursuing everyday activities, while simultaneously elevating their headless bodies on pedestals, a display method more akin to the art historical exhibition of nineteenth-century monuments and the presentation of important historical personnel.

Given the sacral context of the exhibition, audience members familiar with Christian iconography might have discovered further interpretative frameworks for making sense of Shonibare's polyvalent installations. Situated in the upper gallery, from where the higher echelons of society once observed church services, Shonibare's conference of agitated men passionately engaged in

deliberations also evoked representations of the Last Supper.³¹⁸ Meanwhile, the eviscerated pheasant of the second installation, suspended in the holy space above the choir, is reminiscent of Christian representations of the Holy Spirit as white dove.³¹⁹ As such, when installed in the Friedrichswerder Kirche amidst Germany's liberal thinkers of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century, Shonibare's installations came to manifest the convergence of the three C's that formed the imperatives for European imperialism—Christianity, Commerce, and the mission to Civilize.³²⁰ The violent extermination of the pheasant, read here as Holy Spirit, by Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald most poignantly visualized the triumph of material interests over Christian and enlightened values, once again visually connecting the intellectual legacies of Germany's *Kulturation* with the colonial economics and politics of the day.

Hybridity and Its Discontents

While, of all exhibited pieces at *Who Knows Tomorrow*, Shonibare's installations certainly addressed the century-long economic, political, and cultural interdependencies between Africa and Europe most explicitly, reviews of the installations do not suggest that he created a non-categorizable hybrid or “in-between” space that jolted viewers into a realization of the categories of “whiteness” and “blackness” or “Germany” and “Africa” as mutually

³¹⁸ Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *Sacred Power, Sacred Space. An Introduction to Christian Architecture and Worship*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)

³¹⁹ George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); 10 – 12.

³²⁰ Pakenheim, *The Scramble for Africa*, 241.

interdependent constructions.³²¹ Robert C. Young has noted that the trouble with contemporary deployments of hybridity is that the term cannot shake off its etymological roots in botany and nineteenth-century race theories, where it described the off-spring between two different breeds or the miscegenation of two presumable fixed human races.³²² Young argues that the invocation of “cultural hybridity” is underwritten by an implicit heterosexual politics of reproduction that perpetually relapses into assumptions of a prior state of racial/cultural purity. As a result, contemporary articulations of cultural hybridity repeat their origins and remain locked in an incessant slippage between the two, rather than creating a stable new form (a *Third Space* of enunciation) that serves to contest the dominant culture’s claim to authority.³²³ Because the Dutch Wax fabrics of Shonibare’s installations are read as signifiers of Africa rather than expressions of cultural hybridity in themselves, Shonibare’s installations perpetually repeat the dialectical structure of their own presumed cultural “origins” by being reduced back into “pure” signifiers of black Africa and white Europe that are mixed in our contemporary context. Perceptions of this sort reify binary cultural schemes, because binary categories of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ are not questioned. “In such a model,” Kien Nghi Ha notes, “cultural difference is

³²¹ See, for instance, Alexandra Mangel, “Die Wahrheit hinter den Containern. “Who Knows Tomorrow”. Die Berliner Nationalgalerie präsentiert an vier Orten afrikanische Kunst,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 4. Juni 2010; Daniela Roth, “Deutscher Müll ist nicht erwünscht,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5. Juni 2010.

³²² Young, *Colonial Desire*, 5.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 21f.

not situated in the self, but is comprehended as an external difference, which is oriented along ethnic, national and religious boundaries.”³²⁴

As Kien Nghi Ha has shown for the German language and Robert C. Young has demonstrated for the Anglophone context, the term “hybridity” was for centuries mostly used pejoratively and associated with fear and threat. For the ancient Greeks, “hybris” originally referred to man’s presumptuous behavior and transgression towards the gods, by extension, it also denoted “mixed beings” such as half gods.³²⁵ Ha argues that the product of procreation between a man and a woman of different ranks was referred to as a “bastard” and conceived as culturally, morally and socially inferior in Greek antiquity already. Throughout the occidental Middle Ages, the term “bastard” was used to describe social border-crossings of this sort. The term “hybrid,” deriving from botanical and biological origins, became tantamount in the nineteenth century, as race was applied to the conception of absolute biological differences among humankind, which were organized hierarchically on a civilizational scale. Ha concludes that the concepts of the “bastard” and, later, “hybrid” have been metaphors for threatening difference and destabilizing power since antiquity.³²⁶ Given the importance of ancient Greece as a civilizational birthplace for modern Europe, it becomes

³²⁴ Kien Nghi Ha, *Hype um Hybridität*, 93. [Eine solche Wahrnehmungsweise kann binäre Kultur- und Identitätschema verfestigen, da die Kategorie des “Eigenen” und des “Anderen” nicht hinterfragt werden. In einem solchen Modell wird kulturelle Differenz nicht im Selbst lokalisiert, sondern als äusserliche Differenz angesehen, die sich an ethnischen, nationalen, und religiösen Grenzziehungen orientiert.] Translated by author.

³²⁵ Ha, 17-18.

³²⁶ Ha cites passages from Plato’s *The State* in Ha, *Unrein und Vermischt. Postkolonial Grenzgänge durch die Kulturgeschichte der Hybridität und der kolonialen “Rassenbastarde”* (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript, 2010), 114-15.

evident that images of purity and impurity are deeply inscribed into the European conception of self.

Yet, outside of the hegemonic “whiteness” of the Friedrichswerder Church exhibition space, postmodernity has long self-reflexively broken with the “obsessive pursuit of total homogeneity and integrity” and the “anxiety of contamination” characteristic of the modern age.³²⁷ Postmodernity has been characterized by an incessant demand for cultural plurality and contamination and, as such, some critics have argued, “hybridity” has accommodated the needs of late, transnational capitalism quite snugly. In his book *Hype um Hybridität*, Kien Nghi Ha makes the important point that, in the last decades, “hybridity” has experienced a positive revaluation and now signifies innovation, flexibility, and material resilience. Hybridity is a “sexy” consumption and lifestyle model: we drive hybrid cars, benefit from hybrid materials utilized in outdoor gear, hybridization in genetic engineering has incited fantasies of humanity’s omnipotence, and hybrid breeds are produced in botany and agriculture. Ha encourages us to consider whether cultural hybridity still has a subversive potential in a time when “hybridity” as such has become a pervasive marketing slogan. The neoliberal erosion of cultural and national barriers in the name of “free trade” and the global incorporation of economically Westernized middle classes, bears an alarming resemblance to postmodern celebrations of border crossings and “culture mixing,” prompting us to question whether these “hybridizing” cultural strategies reflect Empire in a new disguise.

³²⁷ Kien Nghi Ha, *Hype um Hybridität*, 67.

Kien Nghi Ha has noted that, in its German reception, Bhabha's "hybridity" has frequently been comprehended in this abbreviated form, not as necessitating a revision of colonial culture, but as describing a postmodern mixing of cultures.³²⁸ In her brief entry on Shonibare's work for the exhibition reader, curator Britta Schmitz cites Manthia Diawara to interpret the hybridity of Shonibare's installations as follows: Shonibare [...] "shows us that we are what we consume. This means: the fabrics, referred to as wax-print, are automatically Africanized because they are intended for African consumers although these textiles are not even produced in Africa." Schmitz concludes, "[t]his means that if it is possible to Africanize these textiles, then Europeans can equally be Africanized—identity is hybrid."³²⁹ While Bhabha's theory is based on the presumption that "pure" cultures never existed and that all identities are hybrid, the future-oriented underpinnings and the reference to consumption in Britta Schmitz' statement on hybridity is suggestive of the postmodern mixing of cultures in a global context that Bhabha's theory explicitly sought to evade. The assumption that we are all participants in a hybridizing, global culture through consumption turns cultural difference into a free-floating signifier that is stripped of its entrenchment in social hierarchies, which are constituted along racial, sexual, national and economic stratifications. Celebrations of cultural hybridity in this sense amount to a discursive suppression of the other to bring it into an aegis of the same, rather than a decentering of the self. Instead of serving as critical interventions initiating a reconsideration of hegemonic notions of

³²⁸ Ha, *Hype um Hybridität*, 90.

³²⁹ Britta Schmitz, "Who Knows Tomorrow, Who Knows Today?", *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 375.

nationhood, modernity and whiteness, the incorporation of difference in articulations of hybridity in this sense buttress the logic of late capitalism by proffering absolute cultural difference for a renewed colonizing consumption.³³⁰

Most exhibition reviews in the press treated Shonibare's installations in terms of historical revisionism, as visually ravishing, if somewhat gimmicky *illustrations* of Germany's colonial history, that were juxtaposed against the representatives of Germany's "liberal spirit" to raise awareness of the *simultaneity* of the two histories.³³¹ This assumption of simultaneity does not decenter the hegemonic whiteness defining German nationhood as such, because it fails to consider how Christianity and the intellectual legacies of the individuals represented in the Friedrichswerder Kirche were themselves implicated in the articulation of colonial discourses. This consideration is important given the continued deployment of Christianity and the Enlightenment as defining constituents of a Eurocentric, "white" identity. In her study, *Colonial Fantasies. Conquest, Family and National in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*, Susanne Zantop demonstrated that in precolonial Germany, "colonial fantasies provided an arena for creating an imaginary community and constructing a national identity in opposition to the perceived racial, sexual, ethnic, or national characteristic of others, Europeans and non-Europeans alike."³³² Scholars such as Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, Robert Bernasconi and Peggy Piesche have

³³⁰ Kien Nghi Ha, *Unrein und unvermischt. Postkoloniale Grenzgänge durch die Kulturgeschichte der Hybridität und der kolonialen "Rassenbastarde"* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2010), 16.

³³¹ Claudia Wahjudi, "Sommerpause gibt es nicht," *Magazin Zitty Berlin* 1/2 (29. Juli 2010); Prita Meier, "Beyond Colonial Time. Africa and Colonial Time in Who Knows Tomorrow," *NKA. Journal of Contemporary African Art* 28 (Spring 2011); 68-77.

³³² Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 2.

further shown that the articulation of Enlightenment concepts of human equality, acceptance and tolerance were defined in the context of a racialized modern world order in which full humanness came to be equated with “whiteness”.³³³

While analyses of the various colonial discourses produced by the individuals represented in the Friedrichswerer Kirche would exceed the confines of this chapter, it is important to note that the intellectuals and notables represented in the Friedrichswerder Kirche, ranging from Immanuel Kant, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, or Alexander von Humboldt, did not only write their art histories, their aesthetics, their cosmopolitan philosophies, their poetry, fictional narratives and travelogues in the historical context of a colonial mentality perpetuated by *others*. Instead, their intellectual endeavours and creative writings were themselves implicated in the articulation of colonial discourses in a myriad of ways, which ranged from Orientalist and scientific fascination with foreign landscapes and peoples, sexualised fantasies of conquest, material speculations of resources and riches, to derogative views of racial inferiority in relation to various non-European others.³³⁴ For instance, Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant, who is featured in the permanent display with the replica of a bust by Friedrich Hagemann and is primarily known for his cosmopolitanism and for his *Critiques*, also first defined the modern

³³³ Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, “The Color of Reason. The Idea of ‘Race’ in Kant’s Anthropological Writings” in *Postcolonial African Philosophy. A Critical Reader*, ed. by Eze (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997); Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore (eds.), *The German Invention of Race* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2006).

³³⁴ David Pan, “Goethe’s ‘west-östlicher Divan’ und der Islam: Annäherung durch Einverleibung,” 323-333; and Michael Zeuge, “Der ‘Kosmos’ von Humboldt’s oder Was soll ‘Welt’ vor der Weltwirtschaftsglobalisierung sein?” both in *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte*, ed. by Jürgen Zimmerer (Frankfurt/NEW York: Campus Verlag).

conception of race (Fig. 27).³³⁵ While Kant was a defender of monogenesis, which assumed the common origin of all peoples inhabiting the planet, he deployed climatic theories to suggest the fundamentally different and irreversible development of different races that could be distinguished by phenotype. In his early anthropological and aesthetic writings, he ascribed an ultimate aesthetic and intellectual inferiority to the non-white races.³³⁶ In his study, *Ape to Apollo. Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth-Century*, David Bindman demonstrated that aesthetic theories were elaborated in anthropological frameworks and were entangled with the establishment of racial theories and hierarchies.³³⁷ In Europe, the (neo)classical visual language and the ideal Greek body came to function as the very manifestation of transcendent whiteness, universal reason, and cultural superiority that preoccupied European intellectual thought.³³⁸ The reason we encounter intellectuals such as Immanuel Kant rendered in a classicist formal language that situates him in continuity with ancient Greek philosophers, can be traced, at least in part, to the writings of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who is himself portrayed in the permanent display with a sculpture produced by Ludwig Wichman (1844 – 48) (Fig. 28).

³³⁵ Eze, “The Color of Reason. The Idea of ‘Race’ in Kant’s Anthropological Writings,” 103.

³³⁶ Immanuel Kant, “Of the Different Human Races,” in Bernasconi and Lott (Eds.), *The Idea of Race*, 17; and Immanuel Kant, “Observations on the Feelings of the Beautiful and the Sublime” in *Observations on the Feelings of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, ed. by Patrick Frierson and Paul Guyer, 11–64 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³³⁷ David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo. Race and Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the Eighteenth Century* (Cornell University Press, 2002). Ironically, classical sculpture had originally not been white at all, but had been painted in gaudy colors, as Clyde R. Taylor notes in *The Mask of Art. Breaking the Aesthetic Contract – Film and Literature* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998).

³³⁸ Clyde R. Taylor, *The Mask of Art. Breaking the Aesthetic Contract. Art and Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

Winckelmann has been described as the ‘father’ of the classical ideal, as his 1763 publication, *History of the Art Of Antiquity*, which celebrated ancient Greek art as the highest cultural achievement and regarded the art of his day as situated at the end-point of a long process of artistic decline.³³⁹ Influenced by the Platonic distinction between the ideal and the empirical, Winckelmann argued that the climatic and democratic social conditions of Greek antiquity had enabled the momentary, and likely unrepeatable, collapse of the ideal and the empirical in ancient Greek sculpture.³⁴⁰ He favourably contrasted ancient Greek art with “inferior” Phoenician, Etruscan and Egyptian arts, which were the product of less virtuous societies and less agreeable climates and physical forms.³⁴¹

This short digression seeks to show that the German notables represented in the Friedrichswerder Kirche contributed to the construction of Eurocentrism, which traces a progressive historical trajectory from ancient Greece through feudalism and Christianity, to the inevitable culmination in the Enlightenment and capitalist, modern European nation-states.³⁴² A postcolonial approach conceives of cultural difference as produced “through histories and broader patterns of cultural conflict, appropriation and resistance to domination,” and would require a nuanced reconsideration of how contemporary recourse to

³³⁹ Alex Potts, *Flesh and Ideal. Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 25.

³⁴⁰ David Bindman, *From Ape To Apollo*, op cit, 81.

³⁴¹ Winckelmann writes: “Among the Egyptians, art did not advance much beyond its earliest style, and it could not easily have attained the heights that it did among the Greeks. The reasons for this lay partly in their way of thinking, and just as much in their customs and laws, especially those relating to religion.” Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, ed. by Alex Potts (Los Angeles, CA: The Getty Research Institute, 2006), 128.

³⁴² Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism. Modernity, Religion, and Democracy. A Critique of Culturalism and Eurocentrism* (Monthly Review Press, 1989).

this Eurocentric historical trajectory serves to overwrite complex transcultural histories and exclude non-white and non-Christian Europeans. Meanwhile, postmodern celebrations of cultural pluralism are based on notions of pre-existent cultural differences that are mixed only in the present. As such, the latter pose no significant challenge to hegemonic conceptions of national identity nor to dominant political philosophies in Germany.

As part of the “Encounters” lecture series organized on the occasion of *Who Knows Tomorrow*, Berlin-based curator Bonaventure Soh Bjeng Ndikung and photographer/curator Akinbode Akinbiyi were invited to jointly moderate a talk titled “The Polemics of Hybridity in Contemporary Culture.” While no documentation of the talk exists, Ndikung has lamented elsewhere that, in the realm of contemporary art, the term “hybridity” has mostly been applied to non-white artists working transculturally and not the other way around. In this fashion, hybridity is reessentialized as a property of the formerly colonized in a “globalized” art world, so that “hybrid” artists such as Shonibare who cannot be unambiguously situated on the map, are contrasted against the centered stability of German national culture and the universalism of an intact “whiteness” once again.³⁴³ Because efforts to deconstruct colonial culture in Germany are still incipient it is likely that, for the majority of the exhibition attendees, Shonibare’s hybrid installations recalled the historical fact of colonialism and manifested the cultural mixing of the present without substantially questioning the latent

³⁴³ Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, “The Polemics on Hybridity in Contemporary African Art,” *Savvy. Art. Contemporary. African* (2010), 12-21.

colonialism informing the “whiteness” of the visual history of Germany’s past conveyed at Friedrichswerder Kirche.

Exhibition Programming for *Who Knows Tomorrow*

While it is thus questionable whether Shonibare’s installations enforced the erosion of categories of a white, German “self” and a non-white “Other” through the creation of a ‘Third Space’, the exhibition programming surrounding *Who Knows Tomorrow* served to encourage a more explicit reconsideration of these categories of differentiation and the “whiteness” of German nationhood. A multi-faceted and insightful program tackled ardent contemporary issues and included various organizations, scholars, and communities in Berlin. The program was documented through a retrospective publication that allowed its organizers and speakers to reflect on the events in the aftermath.³⁴⁴ The educational institution *Migration und Gesellschaft e.V.* offered workshops on racism and critical whiteness, with titles such as “The White Gaze. Reflections on our Own Entanglement with Racism” (Saturday, June 26, 2010) and “My Position. An Empowerment Workshop” (Sunday, June 27, 2010). In the former workshop, participants were introduced to the theoretical concepts of postcolonial and critical whiteness studies, while an ensuing workshop titled “Critical Whiteness in Practice” [Kritisches Weisssein und Handeln] aimed to encourage reflection on the practical applications of these lessons in everyday life. The latter workshop “My Position. An Empowerment Workshop” was aimed at Afro-Germans and was

³⁴⁴ Besucher-Dienste der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, *Who Knows Tomorrow. Dokumentation Begleitprogramm* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2011).

cancelled due to lacking registration.³⁴⁵ It is tempting to speculate whether this lack of interest could be taken as a reflection of the exhibition's failure to target and include Berlin's Afro-German community in the exhibition itself?

Chika Okeke-Agulu wrote that the exhibition was intended not so much as another manifestation of "institutional critique", which he diminishes as "merely an opportunity to examine the role museums have played in forming and framing the history of Europe and its Other".³⁴⁶ Instead, he suggests that the exhibition was conceived as an occasion "to contemplate the road Africa and Europe have travelled together since the Berlin Congo conference" and that it would "no more tell us about the imagined other as it should force us to examine the constitution of the self today."³⁴⁷ If the primary aim of *Who Knows Tomorrow* was indeed to thematically reflect on German-African (post)colonial relationships to make conscious the legacy of colonial culture in the constitution of a German "self" in past and present, then the exclusive selection of artists of African descent deriving from outside of Germany for this purpose remains unclear. Doesn't this selection presume that the burden and prerogative of recovering colonial history and exposing colonial discourses lies exclusively with Africans? One wonders why white German and Afro-German artists were not also commissioned to jointly engage this history and its legacy. In a book titled *Die (Re)präsentation zeitgenössischer afrikanischer Kunst in Deutschland*, Yvette Mutumba lists thirty-three artists of African descent currently practicing in Germany, many of them in

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 49.

³⁴⁶ Chika Okeke-Agulu, "No Condition is Permanent: The Art and Politics of Euro-African Encounter," *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 386.

³⁴⁷ Okeke-Agulu, "No Condition is Permanent", 386.

Berlin itself. In a joint publication addressing the situation of Afro-German artists Sandrine-Micossé-Aikins and Sharon Dodua Otoo write:

The collective amnesia Germany is experiencing with respect to its violent colonial history continues to shape German identities, German concepts of race and (white German) contemporary cultural production. Unlike in Britain and the USA, the German cultural arena has never been strongly impacted by an art movement that could have challenged conservative notions of *race*, *whiteness*, or forced a remembering of Germany's colonial history.³⁴⁸

While *Who Knows Tomorrow* proclaimed to address these very same issues, the inclusion of Afro-German artists would have more radically challenged the conflation of German cultural production with whiteness and would have demonstrated Germany's hybridity in Bhabha's sense. The inclusion of white German artists would have made explicit that it is our common responsibility to recover this history and to perform the difficult and often painful labor of acknowledging the racialized thought structures governing our thinking. Instead, all of the five artists featured for *Who Knows Tomorrow* had previously been exhibited in Germany, either in Enwezor's *The Short Century* (2001), in his documenta 11 (2002), or in Simon Njami's *Africa Remix* (2004), in fact, Shonibare participated in all three of them. Therefore, *Who Knows Tomorrow* deployed established and predictable artistic positions. This is a common predicament in the realm of contemporary African art, as art historian Sylvester

³⁴⁸ Sandrine Micossé-Aikins and Sharon Dodua Otoo (eds.) *The Little Book of Big Visions. How to be an Artist and Revolutionize the World* (edition assemblage and Limited to you, 2012), 9.

Ogbechie pointed out.³⁴⁹ Ogbechie generously estimates that 2500 artists constitute the realm of contemporary African art on a “global” market today, but only a small selection of artists that have already “made it” are continuously circulated in the major institutions.

The curators of *Who Knows Tomorrow* explicitly claimed their curatorial departure from the practice of obliging African artists to become representatives of the African continent as a whole.³⁵⁰ Since the artists’ work was spatially distributed in Berlin National Gallery facilities dispersed across the capital, an incoherence of the exhibition resulted that was positively framed as allowing for the artists to maintain their independence. In her exhibition review for *Nka. Journal of Contemporary African Art*, Prita Meier likewise writes:

By refusing to emphasize geography or identity as categories of analysis, *Who Knows Tomorrow* promises an alternative logic for the study of Africa’s relation to the world. It ultimately moves beyond static models of local versus global and universal versus particular that tend to naturalize economic theories of center-periphery dependencies.³⁵¹

Counter to this, I would argue that it is questionable whether the curatorial selection of very few artists and their spatially disjointed exhibition evaded reductive notions of a universal African group identity. Art historian Yvette Mutumba poignantly noted that, since there have been few exhibitions of contemporary African art in major German institutions and no non-African artists

³⁴⁹ Sylvester Ogbechie, “The Curator as Culture Broker (A Critique of the Curatorial Regime of Okwui Enwezor in the Discourse of Contemporary African Art,” *aachronym*, accessed January 10, 2015, <http://aachronym.blogspot.com/2010/06/curator-as-culture-broker-critique-of.html>.

³⁵⁰ Udo Kittelmann, Britta Schmitz and Chika Okeke-Agulu, “Foreword,” *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 365; Horst Köhler, “Greeting from the Federal President,” *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 362.

³⁵¹ Prita Meier, “Beyond Geography: Africa and Colonial Time in Who Knows Tomorrow,” *NKA. Journal of Contemporary African Art* 28 (Spring 2011): 68-77; 69.

were invited to contribute to *Who Knows Tomorrow*, it may have been difficult for audiences *not* to see those five artists as representatives of the continent.³⁵²

Despite its stated claims, *Who Knows Tomorrow's* comfortable recourse to already familiar positions thus served to reiterate the representative function of these artists as spokespeople "for Africa".

Therefore, although *Who Knows Tomorrow* made important strides towards a recovery of Germany's 'manifest' colonialism, its exhibitions and curatorial decisions did not sufficiently counteract the colonial underpinnings organizing institutional and epistemic structures. It appears that Chika Okeke-Agulu was aware of these shortcomings when he surmises in his contribution to the exhibition reader:

Might not the presence of large-scale, visually overpowering and conceptually dense installations by Anatsui, Ole, and Tayou[...], Bhimji's films [...] and Shonibare's installations at the Friedrichswerder Kirche invite new debates about Germany's colonial past, as well as the often-ignored presence of Afro-Germans in Germany? Or, do these projects not suggest that contemporary debates about German identity and history ought to acknowledge the place within it of Africa and Africans, not as the intimate other but as part of the German self?³⁵³

I would argue that very little in the exhibition itself encouraged questions of this sort. As the discussion above served to show, even Shonibare's installations, which visualized African and European interdependences most explicitly of all the exhibits, did not force these questions onto his audiences because his "hybrid" installations too easily relapsed into dualistic interpretative schemes.

³⁵² Yvette Mutumba, "(Re)Presentations, Reception, Expectations: Contemporary Art by Artists from Africa and the Diaspora in the German Context, 1960s – 2011" (PhD diss., Birbeck College, London, 2012).

³⁵³ Chika Okeke-Agulu, "No Condition is Permanent: The Art and Politics of Euro-African Encounter," *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 386.

Yet, the categorical distinction between a German self and an African other was complicated by the exhibition programming. Guided bike tours were offered not just for exploring the spatially dispersed exhibition locations, but also to visit Berlin-Wedding, the neighborhood where colonial history is still traceable in street names and where, coincidentally, the majority of Berlin's Afro-German population lives today. These pre-existing tours were conceived by Humboldt University's African Studies graduate Josephine Apraku and are usually offered as part of the neighborhood initiative "Nächste Ausfahrt Wedding" [Next Exit Wedding]. They were incorporated into the *Who Knows Tomorrow* program under the title "Afrika im Wedding – der schwarze Kiez" [Africa in Wedding – the black Kiez].³⁵⁴ The tour made explicit how colonial culture has shaped Berlin's cityscape itself while visits to restaurants and shops run by Afro-Germans in Wedding were meant to undermine fears and contact barriers among the city's inhabitants in the present. Although the exhibition programming thus served to render the presence of Africans in and as part of the German "self" visible, this "ethnic" tourism also made evident that the exhibition was primarily aimed at Germany's white majority population.

Conclusion: Who Knows Tomorrow? Horst Köhler and Germany's "New" Scramble For Africa

Celebrations of cultural hybridity are especially problematic when they are not embedded in a critical analysis of the structural asymmetries that serve as

³⁵⁴ Josephine Apraku, in *Who Knows Tomorrow. Dokumentation Begleitprogramm*, ed. by Besucher-Dienste der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2011), 39-41.

conditions and prerequisites for global cultural exchange. In this regard, one of the biggest absences in the *Who Knows Tomorrow* exhibition was a critical consideration of the neocolonial present, which was commented upon in a few perceptive reviews and was signaled by the absence of Afro-German artists.³⁵⁵

As mentioned at the outset, the immediate incentive for the organization of the exhibition was prompted by Germany's then-federal president Horst Köhler, who had resigned as the director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to become Germany's president in 2004. During his tenure as president, he made a name for himself as the *Afrikamann* by supporting African-German dialogue through his initiation of a program called 'Initiative Partnerschaft mit Afrika' in 2005. Its central objective was the establishment of a trust- and respectful relationship between African states and Germany that would avoid the hypocritical attitudes toward Africa that Köhler proclaimed to have witnessed during his time with the IMF. Köhler had announced his commitment to Africa in his inaugural address in 2004 by stating, 'For me, the humanity of our world is decided upon based on Africa's fate.'³⁵⁶ Köhler prompted the organization of annual Africa forums to provide a framework within which African and German politicians, journalists, distinguished personalities from business and civil society, as well as artists and intellectuals

³⁵⁵ In her review, for *Nka*, Prita Meier notes: "Who Knows Tomorrow is ultimately a reworking of Germany's contested past, not its present," Meier, "Beyond Geography: Africa and Colonial Time in *Who Knows Tomorrow*," *Nka. Journal of Contemporary African Art* 28 (Spring 2011): 68-77; 76.

³⁵⁶ Horst Köhler, "Wir können in Deutschland vieles möglich machen," 1 July 2004, transl from German by author of this article, accessed July 5, 2015, available at <https://www.land-der-ideen.de/sites/default/files/Antrittsrede%20des%20Bundespr%C3%A4sidenten%20Horst%20K%C3%B6hler.pdf>

could collaborate and discuss a broad range of issues.³⁵⁷ Köhler acknowledged that familiarity with African cultures and the interrogation of one's own sovereignty of interpretation constitute important foundations for successful corporate partnership with Africa today.³⁵⁸ His efforts at cultural mediation took place in the larger context of a "New Scramble for Africa", in which Europe faces Chinese competition for resources on the African continent.³⁵⁹ At a podium discussion addressing Europe's economic relationships with Africa in 2011, in the aftermath of the exhibition and after Köhler's resignation as president in 2010, he stated:

The Europeans simply missed developments in Africa. Africa is a continent full of resources. We need resources, but the Chinese are growing incredibly fast, they need even more resources, India needs them, so everyone is focused on Africa now [...] But the self-righteous attitude of labeling the Chinese as authoritarian and reducing them to their interest in exhausting resources will not suffice. Instead we have to say: We need resources. We will pay a fair price for them and we have a

³⁵⁷ These forums took place under the headings "Two Generations – One Future" (Accra, Ghana, 2007), "The Challenges of Change – African and German Responses" (Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 2007), and "Barriers to Partnership and How to Overcome Them" (Abuja, Nigeria, 2008). Horst Köhler, *Schicksal Afrika. Denkanstöße und Erfahrungsberichte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 2010).

³⁵⁸ In a speech to the *Afrika Verein der Wirtschaft* on the the occasion of its 75th anniversary on May 6, 2009, Köhler stated: "Dabei ist das Wissen um afrikanische Kultur nicht nur etwas für Schöngeister. Mir ist beim Reisen immer wieder aufgefallen, dass diejenigen Unternehmen, die sich am intensivsten mit dem sozialen Kontext auseinandersetzen, auch an schwierigen Standorten langfristig die besten Ergebnisse erzielen. Wer sich um die Kultur seiner Kunden und die Belange seiner Mitarbeiter kümmert, legt die Grundlage für nachhaltigen Erfolg." [Knowledge of African culture is not of interest only for aesthetes. During my travels I have repeatedly noticed that those companies that engage with the social context in most depth, are able to persevere and obtain the best results in the long run, even in the most complicated business locations. Those who are concerned with the culture of their clients and are attentive to the issues of their workers, lays the foundation for longterm success." Horst Köhler, *Mit Afrika Gewinnen. Rede von Bundespräsident Köhler beim Festakt zum 75. Jubiläum des Afrika-Vereins der deutschen Wirtschaft am 6. Mai 2009 in Berlin*, accessible online at http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Horst-Koehler/Reden/2009/05/20090506_Rede.html

³⁵⁹ Padraig Carmody, *The New Scramble for Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011).

concept for collaboration with African countries that support the value creation process and the establishment of jobs.³⁶⁰

Who Knows Tomorrow thus originated in the context of larger state-induced efforts to improve relationships between Germany and African countries and, implicitly, to convince Africans that economic collaboration with Germany was desirable over Chinese competition, on the one hand, while making Africa attractive for German investors and corporations, on the other. Köhler asserted that double standards have no place in economics and politics and suggested that if “German values” are consistently applied in Germany’s business relations with the continent, this could provide Germany with an advantage in relation to its Chinese competitors.³⁶¹ Decolonial scholars such as Walter D. Mignolo or Sylvia Wynter have long noted that contemporary discourses on economic globalization, development and global collegiality, are a mere resemantization of Europe’s previous “global designs” for the rest of the world, beginning with the salvation narratives of the Christianity’s missionary zeal, which were reformulated in various “civilizing missions” of the nineteenth century. By maintaining that the imitation of the European model, by way of Christianity and through civilization then, and by economic globalization, development, and democratization now, is

³⁶⁰ Horst Köhler, Asfa-Wossen Assefate, and Manfred Osten, (eds.), *Diesseits von Afrika* (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2011), 12, transl from German by this author.

³⁶¹ “Unser Land hat einen guten Ruf auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent. Wenn wir die eigene Werte glaubwürdig in Afrika vertreten, dann lässt sich daraus ein Vorsprung erarbeiten. Es ist nicht glaubwürdig einerseits Gute Regierungsführung einzufordern und Korruption anzuprangern und andererseits noch mitzuschmieren. [...] Doppelstandards haben in der Wirtschaft ebenso wenig was verloren wie in der Politik.” [Our country has a good reputation on the African continent. If we can represented our own values in Africa responsibly, then we can acquire an advance. It is not credible to preach good governance and to denounce corruption and to be complicit in bribing at the same time. [...] There is no place for double standards in the economy and in politics.] Köhler, *Mit Afrika Gewinnen*, 3-4.

the only solution for the challenges of our time, Europe maintains its pretensions to universalism.³⁶² Köhler's discourse evidences colonial underpinnings, for instance, when he talks about how Africa "lags behind" modernity and references the African youth that regard European culture and European history as a model.³⁶³ In his book, *Provincializing Europe* (2002), Dipesh Chakrabarty demonstrated that cultures of scholarship and models for organizing civil societies cannot be "exported" and "adopted" to a new situation without taking into account the colonial difference and the subalternization of knowledge.³⁶⁴ For Köhler, recourse to the colonial past and efforts to efface the cultural hierarchies that structured colonial relations were primarily of a practical and future-oriented nature, as becomes evident in his opening statement for the exhibition reader:

As with Yinka Shonibare's group of figures, the other works in the exhibition, *Who Knows Tomorrow*, also reflect the difficult relationship between Europe and Africa. Each piece takes its own approach to connecting the past with the present and the future. Herein lies an ability possessed by African cultures from which we can learn. It is striking to see how Africans are able to look ahead positively despite their painful experiences with slavery and colonialism. In the conversations I had during my Africa Forum, it was particularly young Africans who pointed out repeatedly that the importance of looking back should not obstruct our vision of the future.³⁶⁵

Colonial history and racism are thus addressed to be relegated to a completed past, and "young Africans" are invoked as proof of a shared desire to leave the past behind to jointly look toward a better future. Sylvia Wynter sardonically

³⁶² Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011)

³⁶³ Horst Köhler, Asfa-Wossen Asserate, and Manfred Osten, eds, *Diesseits von Afrika*, 8.

³⁶⁴ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 305.

³⁶⁵ Horst Köhler, "Greeting From the President", *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 361.

described this position, which responds to the needs of a free market-driven and consumer-oriented global economic plan, as follows: “No longer be a native, but come and be a man like us! Be Homo Oeconomicus!”³⁶⁶

In light of Köhler’s *Partnerschaft für Afrika* that united African and European representatives at the conference table in the context of a “New Scramble for Africa”, Shonibare’s “hybrid” installation, *Scramble for Africa* experiences a curious updating to the present. Yet, within the exhibition itself, Germany’s implication in the neocolonial constellation of the present was only vaguely addressed. The only essay in the exhibition reader addressing economic concerns was a piece titled “The Myth of Aid” by Dambisi Moyo, which provided an overview of international economic policies adopted in relation to African since decolonization. Without substantially challenging the “global designs” of economic globalization or analyzing the origins of economic asymmetries, she suggests that the culprit locking Africa in a cycle of dysfunction is “the myth of aid.”³⁶⁷ While Pascale Marthine Tayou’s installation evoked the persistence of colonial structures under the aegis of African comprador elites, and although the polyvalent interpretations that António Ole’s stacked shipping containers vaguely elicited the asymmetries of our global condition, the specificities of Germany’s role in a neocolonial present ultimately remained obscure.

The assumption of a centered, static German *Leitkultur* that persists unchanged in a multicultural context, along with Horst Köhler’s confident assertion that the consistent application of “German values” in economic

³⁶⁶ Katherine McKittrick, *Sylvia Wynter. On Being Human As Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 20.

³⁶⁷ Dambisa Moyo, “The Myth of Aid,” *Who Knows Tomorrow*, 449-468.

relations with Africa might prove Germany to be the more desirable business partner, demonstrate that, at the state level, notions of migration, hybridity, and transcultural subjectivities continue to be conceived as trans-border issue between nation-states, which are themselves conceived as “*containers* within and among which fixed cultural groups and categories circulate.”³⁶⁸ The persistence of this hegemonic assumption makes the importance of the hybridizing intervention that *Who Knows Tomorrow* sought to make all the more evident. While the exhibition and Shonibare’s installations in particular contributed to a larger process of historical revisionism that has brought German colonialism into the public’s historical awareness and while the exhibition program introduced some incentives to think German identity transculturally, the exhibition did not sufficiently dismantle hegemonic assumptions that continue to conflate Germany with “whiteness”.

³⁶⁸ Joaquín Barriendos Rodríguez, “Global Art and the Politics of Mobility, (Trans)cultural Shift in the International Contemporary Art System,” *Thamyris, /Intersecting* no.32 (2011): 313-334; 324.

CHAPTER THREE: FRANCE

Introduction: *Jardin D'Amour* at the Musée du Quai Branly

The *Musée du Quai Branly* opened its doors to the public in June of 2006, after over a decade of controversies and debates. Initiated by then-president Jacques Chirac, the museum aimed to elevate the material cultures of other parts of the world—previously tucked away in Parisian ethnological museums—to the status of “Art.” Art and culture have a prominent place in French national identity and, as a result, French politicians have always played an important role in museum affairs. Chirac’s proposal in 1998 to leave a museum showcasing, what was then called the “arts premiers”³⁶⁹ as a legacy of his presidency was not out of the norm, but followed the precedents of Frederic Mitterand’s construction of a new opera house, Georges Pompidou’s foundation of a contemporary cultural hub in Beaubourg, and Valery Giscard D’Estaing’s presidential project of the Musée d’Orsay.³⁷⁰ As Elizabeth Harney has argued, France has always used its cultural institutions to promote “the great values of the republic and national culture.”³⁷¹ Meanwhile, every newly founded cultural institution goes beyond the individualized legacy of its specific originator, and can be seen to express a broader politics of change. The ambition driving the establishment of the Musée

³⁶⁹ “In early debates about how to give recognition to the forgotten arts in Paris museums, *art premier* was the term of choice. But before long, arguments began to be voiced that it carried the same inaccuracies and derogatory connotations as its politically incorrect predecessors, and planning committees charged with naming the new museum turned to its nomenclatural competitors” in Sally Price, *Paris Primitive. Jacques Chirac’s Museum on the Quai Branly* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 37.

³⁷⁰ Elizabeth Harney, “Les Arts Premiers in Paris: Le Monument de L’Autre,” *African Arts* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2006):1;4;6;8-9;91-92;96, 6.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

du Quai Branly, according to Jacques Chirac's inaugural speech on June 20, 2006, was to celebrate France as the "protector" of the diversity of world cultures, in the face of an increasing homogenization resulting from globalization/Americanization. As will be elaborated below, this tentative embrace of cultural diversity signaled a shift in French approaches to cultural difference and nationhood, which sought to respond to larger changes in global geopolitics after the 1990s.

The establishment of the Quai Branly prompted a reorganization of the French museum system, as the majority of its future collection was assembled from two previously existing institutions—the ethnological center at the *Musée de L'Homme* (which had grown out of the Trocadero Museum, where many of the Parisian modernists first encountered African art) and the *Musée d'Arts d'Afrique et Océanie*. By culling its collection from an ethnological center in a natural history museum and from a museum that had originated as a colonial exhibition, an effort was made to liberate these material cultures from their ethnocentric contextualization as scientific specimen, fetishes or "primitive" arts and to frame them in a transfigured rhetoric of aesthetic universalism. As Chirac stated on the occasion of the Quai Branly's inauguration, "There is no hierarchy of the arts any more than there is a hierarchy of peoples. First and foremost, the Musée du Quai Branly is founded on the belief in the equal dignity of the world's cultures."³⁷² Given these proclamations and the early involvement of anthropologists in the

³⁷² "Opening of the Musée du Quai Branly Speech by Jacques Chirac," November 12, 2007, *Australia Council for the Arts*, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/news/media-centre/speeches/opening-of-the-musee-du-quai-branly-speech-by-president-jacques-chirac/> .

project, scholars versed in contemporary debates regarding the mission and politics of museums received the end product with a mix of baffled astonishment and disbelief.³⁷³

In our contemporary, transnational societies, the ethnographic museum is an institution in crisis.³⁷⁴ The globalization of the art world has thrown into question the institutional boundaries separating ethnographic museums and contemporary art. Ethnographic museums regarded the objects they collected as representative material expressions of specific cultural landscapes that functioned as pedagogical tools whose static meanings could contribute to reconstituting societies in far-away places. Based on the assumption that a limited amount of internally closed cultures inhabit the world, ethnographic museums were invested in establishing an encyclopedic inventory of the world and its peoples through the collection of objects.³⁷⁵ This collection paradigm has been significantly challenged from within the discipline and anthropologists now regard themselves as translators between different knowledges of the world and

³⁷³ James Clifford, "Quai Branly in Process," *October* 120 (Spring 2007): 3-23; Herman Levobics, "Will the Musée du Quai Branly Show France the Way to Postcoloniality?" in *Museums in Postcolonial Europe*, ed. by Dominic Thomas (London and New York: Routledge, 2010):101-114; Sally Price, *Paris Primitive. Jacques Chirac's Museum on the Quai Branly* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Benoît De L'Estoile, *Le Goût des Autres. De L'Exposition Coloniale aux Arts premiers* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007).

³⁷⁴ "The Future of Ethnographic Museums Conference" Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, July 19-23, 2013, <https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/PRMconference.html>; Felicity Bodenstein and Camilla Pagani, "Decolonizing National Museums of Ethnography in Europe: Exposing and Reshaping Colonial History, 2000-2012", and Fabienne Boursiquot, "Ethnographic Museums: From Colonial Exposition to Intercultural Dialogue," both in *The Postcolonial Museum. The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, ed. by Iain Chambers et al (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 39-50; 63-71.

³⁷⁵ Boursiquot, "Ethnographic Museums: From Colonial Exposition to Intercultural Dialogue," 67.

mediators of a relationship, rather than as scientists of “otherness”.³⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the ethnographic approach of attaching place or ethnicity to artists deriving from outside of the white European orbit, so that they become representatives of a cultural collective that is conceived as homogenous, has proven incredibly persistent within the contemporary arts whenever an artist derives from outside the European orbit. In contrast to ethnographic objects, contemporary art works tend to aspire to universalism. This means that, while a specific artwork may or may not refer to local aesthetics and meanings, it is generally accepted that artworks receive new inscriptions as they circulate in different spaces.³⁷⁷

In her outline of the Quai Branly’s development, Price notes that an early planning group headed by anthropologist Claude-Lévi Strauss had decided in 1996 that the distinction between art and ethnological museums had become obsolete.³⁷⁸ However, this acknowledgement did not result in unanimity as to how its holdings should be shown in the future. From the outset, debates at the Quai Branly surrounding the museum’s purpose and the nature of its displays were torn between defenders of an aesthetic approach—who argued that objects should be appreciated first and foremost for their formal qualities—and anthropologists, who demanded that interpretative information on original context and object use should be provided, but collection histories and “object

³⁷⁶ Boursiquot, “Ethnographic Museums: From Colonial Exposition to Intercultural Dialogue,” 67.

³⁷⁷ Mirjam Shatanawi, “Contemporary Art in Ethnographic Museums,” *The Global Art World: Audiences, Markets, and Museums*, ed. by Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007), 368–385.

³⁷⁸ Sally Price, *Paris Primitive*, 44.

biographies” should also accompany the exhibits.³⁷⁹ A look at the permanent display quickly makes evident that the proponents of an aesthetic approach asserted themselves in the exhibition space, while anthropologists’ concerns are mostly relegated to temporary galleries and exhibitions. The exhibits are arranged in static glass vitrines in an aestheticized fashion, with very little immediate contextual information to distract from their formal arrangement

Much has been written about the failure of Jean Nouvel’s exoticizing architectural concept for the Quai Branly and the museum’s depoliticized, aestheticizing permanent display.³⁸⁰ Both perpetuate a colonizing logic that relegates “non-Western” cultures to a realm of primordial timelessness and nature, while casting the visitor into the role of a contemporary explorer. Situated along the Seine in visual proximity to the Eiffel Tower, which once served as a testament to the prowess of French engineering and technology at the 1889 World’s Fair, the Musée du Quai Branly restages the old nature/primitive vs. culture/civilized dyad in the center of Paris (Fig. 29). Jungle-references abound in the lushly planted museum garden designed by landscape architect Gilles Clement, in the street-front facade covered with Patrick Blanc’s “Vertical Gardens”, and in the museum building’s glass facades, which are internally printed with foliage to protect the exhibits from direct sunlight (Fig. 30). But as anthropologist James Clifford pointed out in his 2007 critique of the museum:

[The] Quai Branly is more than one thing, a coalition of different agendas that will, no doubt, be renegotiated. The founding vision and dramatic architecture create possibilities and impose limits. It will be interesting to track how those that animate this project – curators, anthropologists,

³⁷⁹ Price, “The Enduring Power,” 451.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

historians, bureaucrats, technicians, artists, and diverse audiences—work within and against its spatial and ideological structures [...] A tendency to dwell on the museum's centerpiece, Nouvel's impressive and sometimes kitschy exhibition space can obscure the diversity, tension and potential of a large-scale project exposed to ongoing historical cross-currents.³⁸¹

Early critics of the Quai Branly thus placed their hopes on the potential of contemporary art practitioners, whose work is featured in the auxiliary Garden gallery, to supplement the permanent display and speculated that events such as movie screenings, lectures and conferences might rupture the neoprimitivism of the museum itself.

From April 2 until July 8, 2007, Yinka Shonibare MBE was the second contemporary artist exhibited at the Quai Branly. His labyrinth installation, *Jardin d'Amour* (2007), which encompassed three *tableau vivant* installations titled "The Pursuit", the "Love Letters", and "The Crowning", was specifically commissioned for the site while the museum was still under construction (Figs. 31—34). Shonibare recalls that, after studying the plans of the museum building and its surrounding gardens,

I understood the complexity of the building and that there was a lot of glass. I also saw that it had gardens that were an important feature [...] When I was looking at this ethnographic museum, I was also thinking 'Ok, this project is going to be in France. What do I know about French gardens historically?'³⁸²

Shonibare decided to engage the institution's garden references by reconfiguring three paintings from a Rococo cycle by French artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard, titled *The Progress of Love* (1771-73). Fragonard's paintings "The Pursuit", "The

³⁸¹ James Clifford, "Quai Branly in Process," *October* 120 (Spring 2007): 3, 9.

³⁸² Bernard Müller, "Interview with Yinka Shonibare MBE," *Yinka Shonibare, MBE. Jardin D'Amour* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), 18.

Confession”, and “The Lover Crowned”, which depict heterosexual, aristocratic lovers flirtatiously engaged in fictive garden scenes, combined an investigation of the theme of love with a growing interest for picturesque landscape aesthetics that were developing in England and France in the early 1770s (Figs. 35–37).³⁸³ Shonibare recreated Fragonard’s lovers as *tableaux vivants* in his characteristic style and situated them within separate clearings of maze-like passageways that were covered with plastic ivy-foliage and transformed the gallery space into a labyrinth garden (Fig. 34). In addition, Shonibare’s labyrinth framework provided spectators with multiple framed views of his arranged mannequins through carefully placed windows that punctured the ivy-covered passageways. The mannequins’ headlessness rendered them not only anonymous and unable to return the spectator’s gaze, but also served to recall the aristocracy’s fate at the guillotine.

Reviews of the exhibition described his garden installations as a postcolonial “reversal of the gaze” that subjected European art works to the same neoprimitivist, aestheticizing spectatorship with which the Quai Branly presents its “non-Western” exhibits. Two statements about the exhibition by an art historian and the co-curator of *Jardin D’Amour*, Bernard Müller, serve to demonstrate the “return of the gaze” hermeneutic invoked here. First, art historian Anne Ring Petersen writes:

He took the European colonisers as objects of curiosity in the manner of European ethnographers, thereby reversing the gaze [...] Artistic interventions such as those of [...] Shonibare can provide the necessary conditions for an act of dis-identification that enables museum

³⁸³ Anne L. Schroder, “Fragonard’s Later Career: The Contes et Nouvelles and the Progress of Love Revisited,” *Art Bulletin* 93, no. 2 (2011): 165.

professionals and audiences to imagine what a 'postcolonial museum' that also produces views from what the "other side" could be like.³⁸⁴

Bernard Müller, the co-curator of the exhibition, likewise claimed that,

Le Yoruba nous parle en montrant qu'il connaît aussi bien, sinon mieux, notre culture que nous la sienne. Voilà que Yinka Shonibare inverse le règles du jeu en se muant en spécialiste de l'Occident."³⁸⁵ [The Yoruba shows us that he knows our culture just as well, if not better, than we know his. Voilà, Yinka Shonibare inverts the rules of the game and positions himself as a specialist of the Occident.]

In this chapter I engage the trope of the postcolonial gaze reversal more closely. Counter to the quoted interpretations I suggest that, rather than suggesting views "from the other side" or "inverting" the rules of the game, Shonibare's ambivalent installations attempted to deconstruct the privileged positionality of the spectator as controller of a racialized and sexualized field of vision by presenting scenes that interrupted either-or-binaries of self and other. The interpretations above perpetuate a dualism that serves to flatten colonial history into a story of colonizers pitted against colonized, "our culture" against "theirs", "powerful" against "powerless", Europe vs. Africa, while neither category is internally stratified by class and gender. This runs the risk of reifying the absolutization of cultural differences dominating French national discourses and reified in the Quai Branly's neoprimitivizing, aestheticizing architecture and display, while leaving the category of "Frenchness" centered and hermetically sealed from colonial culture. Instead, I suggest that the Quai Branly's permanent displays

³⁸⁴ Anne Ring Petersen, "Mining the Museum in an Age of Migration", *The Postcolonial Museum. The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, ed. by Iain Chambers, Alessandra De Angelis, Celeste Ianniciello, Mariangela Orabona, and Michaela Quadraro (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 125-136.

³⁸⁵ Bernard Müller, "Le « Jardin d'Amour » de Yinka Shonibare au Musée du Quai Branly ou : quand l'« autre » s'y met," *ceroart*, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://ceroart.revues.org/386?lang=en>.

demonstrate Homi Bhabha's argument that colonial discourses are inherently contradictory in their simultaneous projection (neoprimativism) and disavowal (the equality of all cultures) of difference. Rather than "inverting the gaze" Shonibare's installations engaged and manipulated the "repertoire of conflictual positions that constitute the subject in colonial discourse."³⁸⁶

Modern Spectatorship and the Male, Imperial Gaze

Spectatorship, visibility, and "the gaze" have played a central role in European self-making and empire-building.³⁸⁷ The dominant Post-Enlightenment scientific and philosophical paradigms assumed that vision was an apparatus for investigation, surveillance and cognition that provided the spectator with the tools for determining objective perceptual "truths" about an external world.³⁸⁸ While the European intellectual tradition has arguably always been ocularcentric, the distinctiveness of the modern hegemony of vision is seen to rest in its alliance with advanced technologies and new sites for securing the conditions of visibility, such as photography, film, postcards, world's fairs, zoos, museums, and colonial expositions.³⁸⁹ Feminist film theory of the 1970s is usually recognized for having produced the first critical analyses of the "male gaze" structuring (cinematic)

³⁸⁶ Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question. Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2010), 110.

³⁸⁷ Hal Foster (ed.), *Vision and Visuality*. DIA Art Foundation. Discussions in Contemporary Culture, no. 2 (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988); David Michael Levin, *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

³⁸⁸ David Michael Levin, "Introduction," *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, 5-6.

³⁸⁹ Paula Amand, "Visual Reposte. Looking Back at the Return of the Gaze as Postcolonial Theory's Gift to Film Studies," *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 3 (Spring 2013); 49-74.

spectatorship.³⁹⁰ Feminist scholars attempted to dismantle the universalist underpinnings of the disembodied, male gaze by socially locating the spectator, analyzing the patriarchal power relations structuring the viewing relationship, and examining the cultural codes through which the “male gaze” produces objectified representations of womanhood.³⁹¹ Influenced by Michel Foucault’s discussion of the panopticon, the “gaze” structuring patriarchal image-making technologies came to be associated with power and the disciplinary control of populations.³⁹² Power was here not conceived in its conventional sense as imposed from above through a ruling instance, but understood as a self-regulating normativity that is socially articulated and internalized. These early analyses of spectatorship have since been criticized for their tendency to totalize power differentials in a unidirectional fashion, by splitting spectatorship into a dominant, male, desiring observer and an observable, female, submissive object, while—when applied to film—the historical viewer was conceived as a mere effect of the film’s ideological structure.³⁹³ Black feminist and postcolonial theorists further showed that the lacking consideration of other axes of social differentiation structuring gazes of power, such as racial and national differences, resulted in the implicit assumption of a monolithic, white, male gaze that fails to account for other forms of

³⁹⁰ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask* (New York: Grove Press, 2008); Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 833–44.

³⁹¹ Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma. Geography’s Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 11.

³⁹² Amand, “Visual Riposte,” 61.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

domination.³⁹⁴ Influenced by Frantz Fanon's forceful description of the destabilizing power of the white gaze projected onto black bodies in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), film scholars such as Robert Stam, Elle Shohat and E. Ann Kaplan examined the implications of the "Gaze of Empire" or the "imperial gaze", which cannot be separated out from the "male gaze" in subject formation.³⁹⁵ Representations rendered through the "gaze" should not be taken as mimetic reflections of an exterior reality, instead, what the eye "sees" is formed by fears, desires, and culturally determined structures of seeing. Rather than providing universal knowledge about the world, "the gaze" produces stereotypes rendering the colonized world as trivial and picturesque and the colonized population as variably sexualized, exotically different, primitive, submissive, barbaric, and/or inherently inferior. However, E. Ann Kaplan asserts that the body and looking are the most primitive aspects of being human and that they play an important part in the constitution of self. To open up the possibility of different kinds of relating, she distinguishes "looking" from "the gaze". She proposes that *looking* might "connote curiosity about the other, a wanting to know (which can still be oppressive, but does not have to be), while the gaze I take to

³⁹⁴ Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy (eds.), *Empires of Vision. A Reader* (Duke University Press, 2015); bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze," *Black Looks. Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press 1992):115-132; Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship. Problems of Identification and Representation," *Screen* 29, no. 4 (1988): 66-79; E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other. Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012); Robert Stam and Elle Shohat, *Unthinking Eurocentrism. Multiculturalism and the Media*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2014); Elle Shohat, "Imaging Terra Incognita: The Disciplinary Gaze of the Empire," *Public Culture* 3, no. 2 (1991): 2-10; Jane Gaines, "White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Film Theory," *Issues in Feminist Criticism*, ed. by Patricia Erens (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990): 197-214.

³⁹⁵ E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other. Feminism, Film and the Imperial Gaze* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), xi.

involve extreme anxiety—an attempt in a sense *not* to know, to deny in fact.”³⁹⁶ Hence, “the gaze” participates in a form of erasure.³⁹⁷ While the authority of the “imperial, male gaze” was never absolute, large-scale immigration to the European metropolises in the aftermath of decolonization and an increasing technological interconnectivity have meant that, to an unprecedented degree, images rendered through the imperial, male gaze are now in competition with images and returned looks by those who were formerly objectified.³⁹⁸ In light of the critiques outlined above, spectatorship is currently conceived as a contested, mutually constitutive field in which the boundaries between subjecthood and objecthood, man and woman, colonizer and colonized, are understood to be frayed, internally fragmented, intersectionally criss-crossing, and unstable, rather than clearly demarcated in oppositional terms.³⁹⁹

Cinema scholar Paula Amand suggests that the trope of the postcolonial “return-of-the-gaze” was invented in the context of decolonization as a refusal of the early theories of film spectatorship that simplistically equated vision with absolute power and counterposed the monolithic, unidirectional Western gaze with an equally homogenous, observed colonized Other.⁴⁰⁰ The returned gaze was implemented as part of a proliferating post-independence third cinema and in response to the shift in postcolonial studies described above, which

³⁹⁶ Kaplan, *Looking for the Other*, xi.

³⁹⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

³⁹⁸ Dominique Wolton, “From Colonial Stereotypes to the Postcolonial Gaze. The Need for an Evolution of the Imaginary,” in *Colonial Culture in France Since the Revolution* (pp. 536—545), ed. by Pascale Blanchard, Sandrine Lemaire, Nicolas Bancel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

³⁹⁹ Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma. Geography’s Visual Culture*, 34.

⁴⁰⁰ Paula Amand, “Visual Riposte, 61.

acknowledged that power structures in the colonial context were ambivalent and stratified rather than binary and absolute, so that the subject was always internally fragmented rather than coherent and fully centered. Amand defines the postcolonial “gaze reversal” in two ways.⁴⁰¹ On the one hand, it aims to recover resistance and agency for “the nameless masses trapped like insects within modernity’s visual archive” by tracing instances of refused or defiantly returned gazes in documentary footage.⁴⁰² In a more general, politicized sense, and this is how it appears to have been invoked in interpretations of Shonibare’s work, the postcolonial return of the gaze describes counter-hegemonic acts of resistance to Eurocentric structures and apparatuses of looking that are part of a larger effort to decenter and provincialize Europe. While, in its most radical manifestations, gaze reversals can achieve the decentering of the Western self by replacing the passive spectator with an active witness to history, a more cynical reading could also evaluate the returned gaze as a “fetishized trace of our contemporary desire for—based on historical lack of—the irrecoverable reverse shot of the Other’s view of the world”, which serves to historically unburden Europeans from stereotypical renderings of its racial and colonial others through the “gaze.”⁴⁰³ To consider and evaluate Shonibare’s installation within a postcolonial gaze reversal hermeneutic, the institutional gaze manifested at the Musée du Quai Branly and its entanglement with a hegemonic French “national gaze” must be determined,

⁴⁰¹ Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man,” *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85-92.

⁴⁰² Amand, “Visual Riposte,” 53.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 53-56.

to come to an understanding of how (national) belonging is instilled across the matrices of race, class, and gender.

The “Neoprimitivist” Gaze at the Musée du Quai Branly

Sally Price and many other scholars have demonstrated that despite official claims to the “equality of cultures”, the *Musée du Quai Branly*’s buildings and exhibition displays facilitate a “neoprimitivist” gaze that epitomizes the alterity of the exhibited cultures and, as such, reformulates the basic tenets of colonial primitivism for the present.⁴⁰⁴ The term “primitive” is not an essentialist category, but describes a political relationship that exists in tension with its binary opposition, “the civilized”, both of which were elaborated in the colonial context.⁴⁰⁵ Though notions of primitiveness have likely existed in most historical cultures, in the context of Europe’s imperial domination of the rest of the world, this designation took on a particular relation to power within the colonial cultures which has spatial, temporal, raced and gendered implications. On the one hand, it served to exclude colonized populations from the flow of time by positioning them in an unchanging, perpetual “ethnographic present” as part of feminized “nature” or in an earlier stage of development situated in the European past. The

⁴⁰⁴ Sally Price, “The Enduring Power of Primitivism. Showcasing “The Other” in 21st Century France,” in *A Companion to Modern Art in Africa*, ed. by Gitti Salami and Monica Blackmun Visona (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 447-466; Bohumil Jewsiewicki, “Le primitivisme, le postcolonialisme, les antiquités “nègres” et la question nationale,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* 31, no. 121/122, La Malédiction (1991):191-213; Dominic Thomas, “Museology and Globalization. The Musée du Quai Branly,” in *Africa and France. Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 14-41.

⁴⁰⁵ Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighton, “Primitive”, *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by R. Nelson and R. Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 217-233; James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Harvard University Press, 1988).

colonized were seen to stand in contrast to the masculinized conceptions of European historical progress, science, and development and were denied what anthropologist Johannes Fabian has called “coevalness” with Europeans.⁴⁰⁶ On the other hand, primitivism robbed colonial subjects of specificity and individuality by spatially conflating them and their cultural products as representatives of a larger monolithic “tribal” culture. Notions of “the primitive” came to be associated with essentialized racial categories, which were ambivalently split between an Enlightenment fascination and desire for the “noble savage” uncorrupted by civilization, and nineteenth-century racial theories that categorized the colonized as inherently inferior, barbaric and, hence, subhuman. Primitivism, like all stereotypical representations, is thus inherently ambivalent, as Homi Bhabha describes:

The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference—racial and sexual. Such an articulation becomes crucial if it is held that the body is always simultaneously (if conflictually) inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination, and power.⁴⁰⁷

Sally Price argues that, then as now, the (neo)primitivist gaze is informed by nationalistic agendas and by a cultural arrogance that reveals a lot about the state of France, while it “leaves little room for according any priority to non-Western individuals and the specific details of their ways of life.”⁴⁰⁸ Since much has been written about the Quai Branly’s primitivizing logic, I will only briefly

⁴⁰⁶ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

⁴⁰⁷ Homi Bhabha, “The Other Question. Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism”, in *The Location of Culture*, 96.

⁴⁰⁸ Price, “The Enduring Power of Primitivism,” 458.

outline the museum's neoprimitivist architecture and display strategies to embed them in a consideration of French concepts of national identity, universality, and cultural difference.

Jean Nouvel's building conglomerate for the Musée du Quai Branly consists of four stylistically and functionally distinct buildings, which are arranged on a plot by the Seine and shielded from the riverside street front by a glass palisade supported by slender metal "spears" (Fig. 38). The buildings are connected through underground passageways and bridge-like, covered walkways. The main museum building has been likened to a boat or a footbridge; its slightly bent, but roughly rectangular body towers on stilts of sorts and juts across the length of the plot paralleling the curvature of the adjacent Seine. Its glass facade is marked by protruding colorful boxes which host special exhibition "caves" on the interior (Fig. 29). The only building lining up with the riverside street is one of the two block-shaped administrative buildings, whose street-front façade is prominently covered with Patrick Blanc's meticulously tended "Vertical Garden" (Figs. 30, 38). The museum itself is set within a garden designed by landscape architect Gilles Clement, which serves as a screen that largely obscures the main building from street view. To enter the museum displays, the visitor follows a labyrinth of winding pathways through a luxurious vegetation consisting of trees, grasses, and shrubs. Themes of travel and exploration characterize the garden setting and the museum itself, as cowry shells and insects encased in resin are embedded in the sidewalks and await discovery.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁹ Amanda Gilvin, "Yinka Shonibare MBE. Jardin D'Amour", *NKA. Journal of Contemporary African Art* 24 (Summer 2009): 168-170; 168.

One enters the main exhibition areas by traversing the gardens, passing underneath the “footbridge”-like museum building and looping around to enter the museum building’s airy entrance foyer from the back. While the Garden gallery, which featured Shonibare’s installation, could be entered from here, access to the permanent displays is granted by means of a white, undulating ramp, which is increasingly cloaked in darkness. In this fashion, the visitor’s eyes can adjust to the dim exhibition space into which s/he is eventually emitted to embark on a cultural tour around the planet. The murky atmosphere of the exhibition space is achieved through photographs of lush foliage impressed on the glass façades, as well as fenestrated shutters that can be adjusted. The “open landscape” of the permanent display is loosely separated into four geographical areas marked by different floor colors—the Americas (blue), Africa (yellow), Asia (orange), and Oceania (red)—and features a total of 3500 art works (Fig. 39). The collection on display is diverse, featuring textiles, everyday objects like purses, sculptures, masks, ritual and decorative objects. The fluid passage between the individual continents emphasizes the pervasive nature of cultures and their reciprocal “points of contact” and is therefore an improvement on anthropological approaches of the past that attempted to hermetically seal various “tribal” cultural productions off from each other by defining their aesthetic essences.⁴¹⁰ Nouvel compared the openness of the pathway leading through the exhibition to a river irrigating the four geographical regions.⁴¹¹ The visitor thus becomes an explorer

⁴¹⁰ Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, “One Tribe, One Style? Paradigms in the Historiography of African Art,” *History in Africa*, vol. 11 (1984): 163-193.

⁴¹¹ Price, *Paris Primitive*, 144—46 ; and Hugues Demeude, *The Musée du Quai Branly* (Paris: Éditions Scala, 2006).

of sorts, pushing through this constructed jungle by means of a river, an experience that one critic likened to Conrad's trip to the *Heart of Darkness*.⁴¹²

French Museums, Nationhood and Universalité

At a curator's roundtable on African art organized by *NKA. Journal of Contemporary African Art*, Sidney Littlefield Kasfir observed that different countries have distinct exhibition strategies.⁴¹³ Sally Price and Nelia Dias have shown that the institutional and exhibition choices made at the Quai Branly can only be understood fully, if French notions on citizenship, *laïcité*, universalism, and the equality of diverse cultures, are taken into consideration.⁴¹⁴ Since the days of the Revolution and the constitution of 1791, French national identity and citizenship have been conceived around abstract, secular, and universalistic principles of citizenship that seek to evade potentially divisive, ethnically or culturally based notions of nationhood.⁴¹⁵ Citizens are encouraged to identify with the universality of Republican values, while cultural and religious particularities are relegated to the private realm. Despite their joint investment in "colorblindness", the situation of minorities in France has thus differed from the treatment of migrants in Germany, because the former have long been officially

⁴¹² Michael Kimmelmann, "A Heart of Darkness in the City of Light, *New York Times*, July 2, 2006, accessed September 26, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/02/arts/design/02kimm.html?_r=0 .

⁴¹³ Chika Okeke-Agulu, "NKA Roundtable II. Contemporary African Art History and the Scholarship," *NKA. Journal for Contemporary African Art*, no. 26 (Spring 2010): 88.

⁴¹⁴ Nelia Dias, "Cultural Difference and Cultural Diversity: The Case of the Musée du Quai Branly," in *Museums and Difference*, ed. by Daniel J. Sherman, 124-154.

⁴¹⁵ Nadine Pippel, *Museen kultureller Vielfalt, Diskussion und Repräsentation französischer Identität seit 1980* (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript Verlag, 2013), 11.

recognized as French citizens.⁴¹⁶ But while the ideology of multiculturalism has been mainstreamed in the United States and in Britain, in France a strong reluctance exists to embrace a path that might result in what is derogatively conceived as the “identity politics” of Anglophone countries. Jacques Chirac explained the difference between U.S. and French approaches to cultural difference and nationhood as follows:

The American model of integration is based on juxtaposing communities that are both different from each other and unequal. In contrast, France makes an effort to take men and women from elsewhere and melt them into a single community centered on shared values. This approach is at once more generous and more ambitious. [...] I have profound respect for cultural and religious identities, but I am convinced that they should never come before national identity and citizenship. A shared cultural heritage is an essential ingredient of citizenship. When the things that separate us are overvalued to the detriment to those that bring us together—for example language, turns of phrase that develop in this or that banlieue—integration is not well served, and the risk of ghettoization increases. We need the opposite. We need to bring alive the notion of a cultural fatherland.⁴¹⁷

Chirac’s statement expresses the French concepts of *universalité* and *laïcité*, with the latter roughly translating to secularism or the separation of church and state. Because French museums are national institutions, emphasis on cultural and religious differences cannot be encouraged here. While everyone has the right to pursue their religious beliefs or cultural eccentricities privately, national spaces continue to be reserved for expression of the communal values of shared citizenship, which are—purportedly—objective. It is for this reason that detailed information on the rituals and performances in which some of the exhibited

⁴¹⁶ Mark Terkessidis, David Holländer, Kien Nghi Ha, and Wilfried N’Sondé, “Jenseits des Multikulturalismus: Herausforderungen für die Einwanderungsgesellschaft,” in *Multikultur 2.0*, ed. by Susanne Stemmler et. al., 251.

⁴¹⁷ Quoted from Price, *Paris Primitive*, 38.

objects at the Quai Branly were originally used are not presented to the public. Because the cultural specificity of the objects under consideration cannot be addressed, voices from the cultures that are exhibited have largely been excluded from shaping the exhibitions.⁴¹⁸ Instead, the objects are elevated to the status of “art” while the equality and commonality of all cultures is recognized in the universal drive to produce aesthetic objects.

However, the claim of “cultural equality” at the Quai Branly and, on a larger scale, in the “cultural fatherland” invoked by Chirac, masks a hegemonic whiteness that continues to symbolically dispossess France’s minorities of history and agency.⁴¹⁹ As Eduard Glissant noted, “a generalizing universal is always ethnocentric.”⁴²⁰ For instance, the concept of “art” as autonomous and primarily defined by aesthetic concerns is a European invention of the modern era and, as such, is by no means universal.⁴²¹ Moreover, with regard to French society at large, philosopher Achille Mbembe has poignantly noted that, in France, “[t]he perverse effect of this indifference to difference is thus a relative indifference to discrimination.”⁴²² In the course of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century, a

⁴¹⁸ Sally Price cites the head of international relations at the Quai Branly, Severine De Guevel, who explained: “We at the Quai Branly, as elsewhere in France, have decided to respect the principle of *laïcité* [separation of church and state, very roughly equivalent to secularism] Therefore we do not take in account any claim based on religion or ethnicity. That’s important...We’re a public institution, a secular institution operating in the public domain. If you allow the legitimacy of one religion, you allow them all, and then they all cancel each other out. That would put every place on the world on the same level!...Giving credit to all the claims would be to cancel out all of them...If you really believe that these things have a profound meaning, well, the museum isn’t made for that. The museum is not a religious space.” Price, *Paris Primitive*, 123f.

⁴¹⁹ Achille Mbembe, “Provincializing France?”, *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 93.

⁴²⁰ Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation*, 117.

⁴²¹ Carolyn Dean, “The Trouble with (The Term) Art,” *Art Journal* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 24-32.

⁴²² Achille Mbembe, “Provincializing France?” *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011); 93.

process which Mbembe has described as ‘decolonization without auto-decolonization’, French authorities and intellectuals chose to withdraw into the hexagon rather than facing the challenges posed by the French colonial legacy, globalization and postcolonial immigration.⁴²³ For the most part, national and colonial history remain artificially separated so that the impact that slavery, the colonies, and immigration have had on contemporary French society itself remain untheorized in public discourse.⁴²⁴ In the mid-1990s, a group of young French historians began examining the histories of the colonies and the metropole within a transnational framework, to expose the impact colonial culture has had on French Republican ideology.⁴²⁵ These historians have also been involved in the organization of temporary exhibitions at the Quai Branly that address the French colonial legacy in France, for instance, the 2011 show on human zoos titled “Human Zoos. The Invention of the Savage”. However, in the Quai Branly’s permanent display, historical analyses of the power constellations within which the acquisition of the objects and the development of knowledge claims about them took place is absented. A beige, amorphous wall that traverses the entire length of the exhibition space, accommodates touch screens and audio stations that offer some cultural contextualization. But no account of the various “object biographies” and how their meanings have changed through institutional absorption is given, while the historical contexts of slavery, colonialism, and tourism in which collecting and interpretive practices took shape remain

⁴²³ Mbembe, “Provincializing France,” 90.

⁴²⁴ Nicolas Bancel, Sandrine Lemaire, Pascal Blanchard, and Dominic Richard David Thomas (eds.), *Colonial Culture in France Since the Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 28f.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

unacknowledged.⁴²⁶ The end result is a display that assumes the self-referentiality of dehistoricized, depoliticized, and aestheticized objects, which is masked as a universal and relativizing approach, while the neoprimitivizing architecture and displays implicitly deny coevalness with European culture once again. Sally Price remarked that, “[t]he belief that African and others outside the European orbit live outside of history continues to represent a viable (though of course no universally accepted) viewpoint in France, even at the highest level of national leadership.”⁴²⁷ Mirjam Shatanawi, who works as a curator at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, notes that,

[T]oday, ethnographic museums should acknowledge that their ‘other’ does not exist outside the Western realm, and that as a consequence, ethnographic museums have never really represented ‘other cultures’ in the first place; they represent Western culture and its particular view of the world.⁴²⁸

While she argues that ethnographic museums can only move forward today if they succeed in dissolving the boundaries constructed between “the West” and “the rest”, the Quai Branly’s permanent displays continue to present the world’s “cultural diversity” as separate from French culture, marking them off as two separate fields, in spite of the fact that the descendants of some of these “others” are themselves French citizens.

But how does this emphasis on a shared cultural fatherland and the repression of cultural differences on the national level coincide with Jacques Chirac’s assertion that France regards itself as a protector of the diversity of

⁴²⁶ Clifford, “Quai Branly in Process,” 15.

⁴²⁷ Price, “The Enduring Power of Primitivism”, 457. Price was referring here to a speech held by French president Nicolas Sarkozy in Dakar, Senegal in the summer of 2007, in which he stated that the African has not entered into history.

⁴²⁸ Shatanawi, “Contemporary Art in Ethnographic Museums”, 369.

cultures? In the new millennium, French authorities have attempted to adjust their geopolitical strategies to the realities of contemporary globalization with a tentative embrace of an affirmative plurality, or “diversité” in relation to the Francophone realm of its former empire. The term ‘Francophonie’ was first coined in the late nineteenth century and originally referred to those territories over which the French empire ruled and which had been subjected to its universalizing *mission civilisatrice*.⁴²⁹ It came to be redefined in the context of decolonization as including those populations who have the French language in common, while French itself, as the language that had declared the Rights of Man, was regarded as the bearer of universal, humanist values that could vouch for the dignity of the individual and would counter the threat of cultural disintegration.⁴³⁰ In the face of global political and economic realignments of the post-Cold War era, Francophonie was reconceived once again as a “collective identity and a political project meant to unite peoples and countries on the basis of shared values”.⁴³¹ The latter redefinition allowed for an expanded conception of Francophone “universalité” as inclusive of cultural differences and even acceptant of multilingualism—at least outside of France proper. The French self-appointment as a global protector of “cultural diversity” needs to be understood as a protective maneuver that serves to redefine and delimit a unified Francophonie as a political organization on which France, on the one hand, relies to accumulate votes in international organizations and which, on the other,

⁴²⁹ Gabrielle Parker, “Francophonie and Universality. The Evolution of Two Intertwined Notions (1961-2006),” in *Colonial Cultures*, 562—573.

⁴³⁰ Eduard Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation*, transl. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997).

⁴³¹ Ibid, 562.

serves as a buffer against an Anglophone, U.S.-led cultural imperialism.⁴³² Within France itself, the tension between the factual multicultural constitution of the nation, which remains unacknowledged in public proclamations of universality and sameness, results in a failure to address structural inequalities and class differences that result in what a group of French historians has called “ethnic apartheid”.⁴³³ This same ambivalence between universality and diversity is institutionalized at the Musée du Quai Branly. By attesting to the overall *aesthetic* equality of diverse cultures, the museum cloaks the hierarchies, epistemic injustices and material inequalities that structure the material realities of a multicultural French society outside of its sanitized walls.⁴³⁴ As anthropologist James Clifford noted with regard to the museum’s subtheme *Là ou dialoguent les cultures*: “How, in practice, the Musée du Quai Branly might position itself to foster a “dialogue of cultures” in contemporary Paris and its embattled immigrant suburbs was a question that haunted the opening events.”⁴³⁵

Yinka Shonibare MBE’s *Jardin D’Amour* and the Trope of the Postcolonial Gaze Reversal

The collection and exhibition of contemporary art is regarded as one means through which ethnographic museums can critically engage their colonial

⁴³² Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation*, 562.

⁴³³ Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, and Dominic Thomas, “Postcolonial France: From the Colonial Fracture to Ethnic Apartheid,” *Occasion*, accessed June 14, 2016, http://arcade.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/article_pdfs/Occasion_v09_bancel-Blanchard-Thomas_01Pass_final.pdf

⁴³⁴ Nelia Dias, “Cultural Difference and Cultural Diversity: The Case of the Musée du Quai Branly,” in *Museums and Difference*; 124-154.

⁴³⁵ Clifford, “Quai Branly in Process”, 18.

legacies today.⁴³⁶ It is within this institutional context that Yinka Shonibare's *Jardin D'Amour* was commissioned and then exhibited at the Musée du Quai Branly in 2007, shortly after the museum's opening. In a conversation with Okwui Enwezor, Shonibare had earlier stated that "[t]he idea that there is some kind of dichotomy between Africa and Europe, between the exotic other and the civilized European, if you like, is completely simplistic. So I'm interested in exploring the mythology of these so-called separate spheres and in creating an overlap of complexities."⁴³⁷ On an institutional level, Yinka Shonibare's *Jardin D'Amour* did indeed rupture the separation of European and all "other" cultures, by introducing reenactments of a French Rococo painting cycle into this Parisian temple of cultural alterity. By recreating three scenes of flirtatious encounter among aristocratic, heterosexual couples culled from Jean-Honoré Fragonard's Rococo painting series *The Progress of Love* (1771-73), but grafting references to "Africa" onto his reenactments, Shonibare introduced scenes of transcultural interdependence into an institution that reinscribes hierarchies of cultural difference despite its official rhetoric of "equality". Because his *tableau vivant* installations were situated within a dimly lit labyrinth garden structure, the *Jardin D'Amour* provided an immersive experience that served to separate viewers from the external world by plunging them into a "dreamlike environment."⁴³⁸ The maze garden framing his installations picked up on the picturesque garden references

⁴³⁶ Mirjam Shatanawi, "Contemporary Art in Ethnographic Museums," *The Global Art World: Audiences, Markets, and Museums*, ed. by Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007), 368–385.

⁴³⁷ Okwui Enwezor, "Yinka Shonibare MBE. Of Hedonism, Masquerade, Carnavalesque and Power. A Conversation with Okwui Enwezor," in *Looking Both Ways. Art of the Contemporary African Diaspora*, ed. by Laurie Ann Farrell, 163.

⁴³⁸ Claire Bishop, *Installation Art*, 10.

in Fragonard's canvasses themselves, while also extending and responding to the carefully orchestrated, primitivizing themes of nature, travel and exploration established in the Quai Branly's exterior gardens and its institutional framework.

Fragonard's paintings reflected a new interest in picturesque garden aesthetics of the late eighteenth-century, which succeeded the "formal", baroque gardens at places such as Versailles, whose predictable symmetry, clipped hedges and containing walls were deemed artificially constructed "remnants of feudal pride."⁴³⁹ In contrast to the previously existing formal gardens, picturesque gardens were supposed to appear "natural," so that human manipulation was less obvious. Picturesque landscapes required irregularity, a dramatization of existing natural materials, "'roughness,' intricacy, sudden variation, abruptness, mystery and surprise."⁴⁴⁰ The underlying idea was that landscape ought to be seen as if it were a picture, so that landscape paintings by artists Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa and others were influential models for landscaping gardens. Picturesque art was thus inherently paradoxical, because it succeeded by providing the surface of a spontaneous naturalness that, in fact, followed predetermined, conventionalized aesthetic laws. This aesthetic was translated in the fictive garden scenes of Fragonard's canvasses, which depicted seemingly organically overgrown, yet highly calculated garden cartouches as frameworks for his lovers, who were themselves arranged in apparently spontaneous, but highly conventionalized poses. As such, Fragonard's series provided an aesthetic

⁴³⁹ Dora Wiebenson, *The Picturesque Garden in France*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

⁴⁴⁰ John Dixon Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001).

reflection on the tension between artifice, fantasy, and reality. Shonibare's *Jardin D'Amour* replicated the artfully conceived, yet naturally framed viewpoints so central to the aesthetics of both "formal" and "picturesque" French gardens by providing his viewers with privileged viewpoints of his installations through peep holes in the plastic ivy foliage of his maze walls. In a review of the exhibition, Amanda Gilvin suggests that Shonibare's kitschy faux garden with its plastic ivy leaves and multiple viewpoints of the lover's bodies exposed the "artful naturalness" of the museum's exterior gardens as manifestations of a twenty-first-century neocolonial picturesque fantasy. As such, Gilvin argues, Shonibare's *Jardin D'Amour*, "playfully denounces the ideologies around which it [the museum] was built."⁴⁴¹ Yet, Shonibare's work did not serve as a straightforward critique or denunciation of the Quai Branly's institutional framework, but carefully deployed the ambivalences of colonial discourses and fantasies at play here.

Shonibare's installations replicate the conventionalized poses of Fragonard's paintings, but the lovers are of ambiguous phenotypes and don Rococo dress designs tailored from colorful Dutch Wax fabrics. The fabrics used in these installations reveal Shonibare's conscious deployment of various icons evocative of modernity. For instance, the installation, *The Crowning* presented a female mannequin sitting atop a small grass and flower-covered hill, crowning her headless lover who was leaning towards her from below (Fig. 33). Her dress and the circular case sitting on the hill next to her, which might have held the flower wreath, are decorated with a Chanel logo that update the Rococo *haute-*

⁴⁴¹ Gilvin, "Yinka Shonibare Jardin D'Amour," *NKA. Journal of Contemporary African Art*, 168.

couture to designer clothing of the present. His suit is covered with a design pattern that repeats the bourgeois idyll of a two-story house and a car. In this fashion, the cultural/racial slippage characterizing the installations is enhanced by a temporal dimension that fluctuates between the aristocracy of the eighteenth-century to the bourgeois order that continues to define the present. Shonibare's introduction of temporality and history thus stands in contrast to the primitivist timelessness defining the Quai Branly at large. His installation "The Confession" featured a woman seated upon a foliage-framed fountain reading a letter, while her lover leaned against her, embracing her waist (Fig. 32). The man's dress combines various symbols, which include what appear to be Stars of David interspersed with red para wings and representations of monetary bills that featured picturesque landscapes and colonial peoples. His cape is internally printed with a blue pattern that repeats the words "Elections" in bright, red letters, referencing political organization and democracy and, hence, the incipient dawning of the French and Haitian Revolutions that brought an end to the aristocratic order and resulted in the foundation of the first black republic founded by former slaves. The third installation, titled "The Pursuit" arranged another couple on two separate patches of grass (Fig. 31). A woman arrested in mid-movement playfully rushes past her lover, who reaches out to her with a pink rose that appeared to have been plucked off the rose bush beside him. While her dress was marked by an arabesque pattern of ivy leaves that replicated the surrounding foliage, his suit was anachronistically covered with an abstracted pattern of bicycles. Through the conscious deployment of phenotypical ambiguity

and evocative iconographies repeated on the Dutch Wax fabrics, Shonibare's reenactments of Fragonard's scenes of flirtatious encounter and love were marked by various sociopolitical and technological references that firmly situated his lovers within an expanded modernity that extends beyond the French nation-state.

The "Garden of Love" is a well-worn motif closely associated with eroticism, desire and human loss of innocence in a previously ideal world, which can be traced from the myths of ancient Egypt and Greece, to Old Testament accounts of the Garden of Eden, all the way to modernity.⁴⁴² Through all times, the unabridged fulfillment of one's sexuality has been projected onto the freedom of propitious, fertile garden scenes.⁴⁴³ Moreover, as Elle Shohat has shown, the erotic and libertine undertones of fertile garden and nature metaphors and their association with loss of innocence also informed colonial culture. She describes how colonial conquest and the "civilizing mission" were conceived in terms of an eroticized tension between the temptations offered by "virgin" landscapes inviting conquest, and the white, bourgeois capacity to tame and cultivate the resistant, libidinous nature of colonial landscapes and the peoples that were part of it.⁴⁴⁴ Following her argument, Shonibare's "Garden of Love" can be understood as metaphorically representing the (post)colonial interdependence between France and Africa in sexualized terms that suggest copulation.

⁴⁴² Michael Niedermeier, *Erotik in der Gartenkunst. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Liebesgärten* (Edition Leipzig, 1995), 14.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Elle Shohat, "The Disciplinary Gaze of Empire", 51.

Fragonard's work was created at a time of sociopolitical transition from an aristocratic to a bourgeois social order that culminated in the French Revolution. These political upheavals were marked by an aesthetic transition from a Rococo to a Neoclassical visual language, in the aftermath of which Fragonard's body of work became symbolic of the oppressive, exuberant system of the ancien regime.⁴⁴⁵ As the aristocratic social order based on hereditary lines of descent and sovereign power became insufficient for explaining social inequalities, the intersecting discourses of sexuality, race, and class were drawn upon to elaborate the moral parameters of the healthy, bourgeois nation.⁴⁴⁶ In his *History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault argued that the establishment of the bourgeois order involved a new politics of sexuality. The aristocratic conceptions of extra-marital gallantry and playful love, which are reflected in the dainty, light-hearted Rococo scenes of Fragonard's *The Progress of Love*, were replaced by the heteronormative, bourgeois paradigm of Romantic, monogamous love based in the nuclear family. Heterosexual and patriarchal monogamy came to be associated with the health and morality of the nation, while all other sexualities—of women, children, homosexuals, criminals, etc.—were pathologized and discursively articulated as deviant.⁴⁴⁷ Laura Ann Stoler has expanded on Foucault's analysis of biopolitics by demonstrating that, "Europe's eighteenth- and nineteenth century discourses on sexuality cannot be charted in Europe

⁴⁴⁵ Mary Sheriff, *Fragonard. Art and Eroticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 1.

⁴⁴⁶ Laura Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire. Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁴⁴⁷ Andrei Molotiu, *Fragonard's Allegories of Love* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008), 16.

alone, but need to be traced long imperial lines as well.”⁴⁴⁸ While “race” had previously been deployed to refer to aristocratic lineages based on blood (sanguinity), the bourgeois order required new explanations to naturalize social inequalities.⁴⁴⁹ The French aristocracy, which suffered the guillotine for its financially and sexually excessive lifestyles, the urban poor, and colonized Africans, who came to be stereotyped as promiscuous and irrational by colonial culture, came to serve as important counter-foils for defining the bourgeois self. Stoler has demonstrated that, despite assumptions to the contrary, colonialism was never just about the *importation* of fully shaped white, bourgeois, middle-class sensibilities, but about their *production* through dissociation from various “immoral” and “deviant” raced, classed, and sexed others that seemed to threaten national health, morality, and purity.⁴⁵⁰ With her analysis of colonial discourses on moral reform and sexual regulation, Stoler seeks to demonstrate that the dualistic model of integration by assimilation, which continues to define French nationhood in the present, was always much more porous and unstable than is usually conceded, fragmented as it was along lines of race, class, and gender.

Stoler follows Foucault in assuming that the exertion of “power” in the bourgeois social order can no longer be understood in its conventional sense as imposed from above through a ruling instance, but must be conceived as a self-regulating normativity that is performatively reinstantiated and internalized.⁴⁵¹ In

⁴⁴⁸ Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 7.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

this interpretation, sexual desire is not an originary impulse that is repressed in accordance with social norms, as psychoanalysis had proposed, but desire is only *produced as an effect* of normative discourses on sexuality.⁴⁵² Following this argument, the persistent fascination with cross-racial looking and sexuality, which becomes evident in the popularity of Shonibare's spectacular installations, is thus, at least in part, a result of the historical prohibition of these engagements.⁴⁵³ Yet, Stoler notes that Foucault's straightforward conflation of power and desire fails to account for the various ambivalences of abjection and desire that define colonial discourses.⁴⁵⁴

This colonial ambivalence of abjection and desire can be demonstrated by turning to another historical incident that Shonibare's installations vaguely evoke, although he does not mention it as an influence. Given the garden references and the location of Shonibare's installations in an ethnographic museum in France, Shonibare's *Jardin D'Amour* also called to mind another Parisian garden, the Jardin D'Acclimation, where cross-racial looking was *not* prohibited but explicitly invited in prior reenactments of difference. Between 1877 and 1931, the Jardin D'Acclimation became the setting for expositions displaying native populations from around the world, who were presented wearing their "native costumes" and inhabiting villages transplanted to the metropolitan center.⁴⁵⁵ More than forty ethnological exhibitions were held to great public success,

⁴⁵² Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 23, Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 177.

⁴⁵³ E. Ann Kaplan, *Looking for the Other*, xix.

⁴⁵⁴ Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, 191.

⁴⁵⁵ Sandrine Lemaire and Pascale Blanchard, "Exhibitions, Expositions, Media Coverage and the Colonies, 1871-1914," in *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution*, 90-97; 93.

providing the Parisian public with spectacles of racial and sexual “difference” within the proximity of their homes and ethnologists with human specimen to study and develop theories of racial hierarchy. As historians Sandrine Lemaire and Pascale Blanchard have noted:

The organizers invited the public into a mythical world, somewhere between dream and reality. They saw to the minutiae of the décor, assuring the “authenticity” of the representations. Indeed, those fond of the picturesque immersed themselves in all the visit had to offer. They saw “natives” at work and were awed by the theatrical productions.⁴⁵⁶

The relationship of difference between the exhibited and their audiences was reinforced through physical barriers that created zoo-like displays, so that these exhibitions served to entrench colonial notions of self and other in the popular consciousness. While Shonibare’s careful orchestration of access to his theatrical installations through a labyrinthine play of concealment and revelation might be regarded as disorienting the viewer, Shonibare’s, *Jardin D’Amour* ultimately manipulates the viewer’s scopic desire. One viewer likened her experience of gazing through windows onto mixed-race lovers pursuing each other in a flirtatious chase, jointly reading letters in an intimate togetherness, or engaged in a “crowning”, with all its sexual and nuptial connotations, to that of a “peeping tom”.⁴⁵⁷ The viewer is privileged with “keyhole” view access to the installations, which incite scopic pleasure and stimulate fantasies of cross-racial sexuality, but the scenes that present themselves ultimately resist phenotypical, cultural, and

⁴⁵⁶Lemaire and Blanchard, “Exhibitions, Expositions, Media Coverage and the Colonies, 1871-1914,” 91.

⁴⁵⁷ Sara Wajid, Yinka Shonibare at the Musée du Quai Branly, *darkmatter*, May 6, 2007. <http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/2007/05/06/yinka-shonibare-at-the-musee-de-quai-branly/>

temporal categorization and thereby defy the classifying desire of the “male, imperial gaze.”

Jardin D’Amour was accompanied by an exhibition catalog that included a brief introduction by curator Germaine Viatte, an interview between Shonibare and co-curator Bernard Müller, an essay by Erik A. Jong discussing the reception of Marie Antoinette’s garden at the Petit Trianon as an expression of indulgent luxury during the French Revolution, and an essay by Francoise Vergés that discussed slavery, the Haitian revolution, and the persistence of a “superfluous humanity” that is manifested in Europe’s treatment of refugees in the Mediterranean today.⁴⁵⁸ In the interview, Shonibare suggested that his grafting of “African” references onto bodies that represent the French aristocracy, served to provide a commentary on the mindless enjoyment of luxury, which is enabled through the exploitation of others. He claimed that the headlessness of his elite lovers added a critical dimension to the reenacted scenes by recalling the aristocracy’s incipient fate at the guillotine, so that the eighteenth-century is deployed as a warning metaphor for the costs of exploitation today.⁴⁵⁹ Yet, rather than providing a significant critique about exploitation and the careless enjoyment of luxury at the expense of others in the present, the headlessness of the mannequins also meant that spectators were able to take in the flirtatious, extravagant scenes without having to engage a confrontational gaze. Given the temporal fluctuation introduced into his scenes of mixed-race *jouissance*, his

⁴⁵⁸ Germaine Viatte and Bernard Müller, *Yinka Shonibare MBE, Jardin D’Amour* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007).

⁴⁵⁹ Bernard Müller, “Interview with Yinka Shonibare MBE,” in *Yinka Shonibare MBE. Jardin D’Amour*, 12.

installations are as likely to be read as critiques of exploitation, as they might be interpreted as celebrations of the hedonistic privilege marking complicit African and European elites today. In fact, he notes that his installation also provided the viewer with “the fantasy of luxury, even the fantasy of imagining yourself in the eighteenth century.”⁴⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the significant struggles that accompanied the negotiation of normative sexualities and gender roles in colonial encounters are largely obscured by Shonibare’s grafting of African signifiers on European scenes of Romantic involvement, which naturalize European conceptions of love to which “Africa” has been assimilated. The ambivalence of Shonibare’s position, which is marked by his own upper class affiliation and his fascination with beauty and luxury, became further evident in his interview with curator Bernard Müller. Shonibare conceded that, for many people in Africa and from the former colonized world more generally, Europe is idealized as a rich fruit basket, as the type of Garden of Eden reflected in his *Jardin D’Amour*.⁴⁶¹ But Shonibare acknowledged that,

These members of the aristocracy, as a modern African, I find in a way that they are objects of curiosity, in a reverse kind of way. So the fetish for me, as an African, is the eighteenth-century European culture, whilst theirs is the African mask. [...] I encountered the aristocracy through painting and cinema [...] So the way that Picasso was going to the museum, I would go to the cinema.⁴⁶²

The “gaze reversal” suggested here by Shonibare too easily slips into the aestheticizing relativism perpetuated at the Quai Branly, in which the existence of

⁴⁶⁰ Bernard Müller, “Interview with Yinka Shonibare MBE,” in *Yinka Shonibare MBE. Jardin D’Amour*, 14.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, 12.

⁴⁶² Ibid., 21.

mutual looking relations superficially feigns equality while factual power differentials structuring French society are obscured. After all, despite official declarations of cultural equality, an “imperial, male gaze” persists in France, which is torn between a ravenous desire for the cultural alterity and authenticity of the “Other”, as demonstrated at the Quai Branly, while it simultaneously marks working class, black and brown bodies in the banlieues as a constitutive “outside” of the nation.

Conclusion: The Reassertion of Colonial Dualisms as Exclusionary Mechanism

In his *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon described colonialism as a clash of gazes. If Shonibare’s installations can be conceived as a postcolonial gaze reversal, then only in the way outlined above, which conceives of the colonial encounter and the clash of gazes between colonizer and colonized as internally fragmented, intersectionally criss-crossing, and unstable, rather than clearly demarcated in oppositional terms.⁴⁶³ If scopophilia is an effect of the pleasure and fascination of looking at, eroticizing, and objectifying the human form, then Shonibare’s displays, which draw the viewer in through their ravishing theatricality, lush abundance, and invocations of cross-racial, heteronormative sexuality, do not serve to de-center the European self through the experience of a self-alienating, postcolonial gaze reversal.

Paula Amand has noted that, as long as power hierarchies continue to privilege whiteness, the “return of the gaze” trope (even if it more explicitly

⁴⁶³ Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma. Geography’s Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

decenters viewers and successfully marks an unmarked whiteness than Shonibare's installations do), can never quite equal the pain of someone like Fanon. In her evaluation of the postcolonial gaze reversal as a tactic, she tempered the radical assumptions often tied to invocations of this trope. She notes that scholars such as Stuart Hall were well aware that the "reversal of the gaze" could never overturn but could merely *substitute* the hegemonic gaze to momentarily question the authority of oppressive power structures.⁴⁶⁴ Likewise, Bhabha initially asserted that the ambivalent categories of colonial discourses do not seriously threaten the dominant power relations, which function by playing with contradiction both "pleasurably" and "productively."⁴⁶⁵ As such, the apparent victories of the visual riposte are always hollow. Although the return-of-the gaze interpretive move emerges in decolonial poetics and intellectual practices and has been deployed for counterhegemonic purposes in a variety of decolonial films, Amand cautions us to consider in how far the eager and retroactive embrace of "irrecoverable reverse shot[s] of the Other's view of the world" in Europe might primarily serve to unburden us historically through a belated strike of justice.⁴⁶⁶ She ultimately concludes that the hermeneutic should not be abandoned, but that its deployments need to be more deeply contextualized so that deterministic interpretations that assign it with an a priori liberating capacity can be avoided.

In light of the inherent ambivalence of Shonibare's installations, it is questionable, to return to the quotes cited in the introduction, in how far

⁴⁶⁴ Amand, "Visual Riposte," 63.

⁴⁶⁵ Robert C. Young, "The Ambivalence of Bhabha," in *White Mythologies*, 181-198.

⁴⁶⁶ Amand, "Visual Riposte," 56.

“Shonibare can provide the necessary conditions for an act of dis-identification that enables museum professionals and audiences to imagine what a ‘postcolonial museum’ that also produces views from what the “other side” could be like.”⁴⁶⁷ Rather than providing an idea of what a view from “the other side” might look like, Shonibare’s installations set out to demonstrate the impossibility of a dualistic division of this sort and evidence his complex entanglement and complicity with Empire. Yet, the interpretations of his work cited in the introduction serve to discursively undo Shonibare’s attempts to blur the separations between “self” and “other”, as becomes most explicit in the co-curator’s contextually superfluous designation of Shonibare as “the Yoruba”. In this fashion, Shonibare’s ambivalent and partial “return of the gaze” was discursively regulated, neutralized, and reintegrated into French notions of absolute cultural difference.

⁴⁶⁷ Anne Ring Petersen, “Mining the Museum in an Age of Migration”, *The Postcolonial Museum. The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 125-136.

CHAPTER FOUR: NIGERIA

Shonibare and Nigerian Artists in a Contemporary (Art) World

In the course of the late 1980s and 1990s, a generation of Nigerian artists began securing a presence in the “global art-institutional network”, having negotiated their ways into biennials, group shows, and other forums.⁴⁶⁸ Attendance at “Western” art schools, particularly in London and New York, made artists such as Yinka Shonibare conversant with the prevailing conventions and discourses of the Euroamerican art world and provided them with access to critics, curators and, exhibition spaces. At the same time, the emergence of independent curators as powerful brokers of contemporary African art for Euroamerican audiences has been of particular importance for increasing the visibility of artists such as Shonibare. While Nigerian-born, US- and Europe-based curator Okwui Enwezor has taken on a hegemonic role in the canonization of contemporary African art for a “global” platform, the scholarship and curatorial efforts of other diasporic artists and curators from Nigeria in particular, including Chika Okeke-Agulu, Sylvester Okwunodo Ogbechie, Olu Oguibe, and Nkiru Nzegwu, all of whom are located in U.S.-based academia, have also contributed to the projection of African art production into narratives of modernity and contemporaneity or have incited their rewriting.⁴⁶⁹ Although these artists and scholars spent their

⁴⁶⁸ Olu Oguibe, “Nigerian Artists in the Contemporary Art World”, *Art Journal* 58, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 30-41.

⁴⁶⁹ Nkiru Nzegwu (ed.), *Issues in Contemporary African Art* (Binghampton, New York: International Society for the Study of Africa, 1998); Nkiru Nzegwu, “The Concept of Modernity in Contemporary African Art,” *The African Diaspora. African Origins and New World Identities*, ed. by Isidore Okpewoh, Carole Boyce Davies, and Ali A. Mazrui (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 391-427; Sylvester Okwunodo Ogbechie, *Ben Enwonwu. The Making of An African Modernist* (Rochester: The University of

childhoods and youths in Nigeria, they left Nigeria as a result of political and civil instabilities and/or to take advantage of institutional and educational opportunities abroad.

In 1994, Okwui Enwezor and art historians Chika Okeke-Agulu and Salah Hassan launched *NKA. Journal of Contemporary African Art* to provide an Anglophone scholarly venue for a field then still primarily registered by its absence.⁴⁷⁰ Soon thereafter, Enwezor established himself in the art world as a curator through his contributions to the 1996 exhibition *In/Sight: African Photographers, 1940 to Present*, at the SoHo Guggenheim Museum. After gaining further experience as an adjunct curator at the Art Institute of Chicago, Enwezor curated his first major show titled, *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1990* in 2002, which was shown in two locations in Germany before touring to the U.S. Through his appointment as artistic director of both long-established and more recently founded biennials, beginning with the Second Johannesburg Biennale in 1997, continuing with the Kassel-based *documenta 11* (2002), the *Bienal Internacional de Arte Contemporáneo de Sevilla* in Spain (2005-2007), the 7th Gwangju Biennale in South Korea (2008), the *Triennial d'Art Contemporain* in Paris (2012); and leading up to his most recent appointment as artistic director of the 2015 Venice Biennale, Enwezor has come to be regarded as a spokesperson for a “global”

Rochester Press, 2008); Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Postcolonial Modernism. Decolonization in Twentieth-Century Nigerian Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

⁴⁷⁰ Okwui Enwezor, “Redrawing the Boundaries: Towards a New African Art Discourse,” *NKA. Journal of Contemporary African Art* 1 (Fall/Winter 1994): 3-7.

conception of art and as *the* mediator of contemporary African art for consumption by the “Euro-American art institutional network”.

But significant debate exists concerning Enwezor’s hegemonic role in the canonization and definition of contemporary African art. Art historian Sylvester Ogbechie positioned himself in explicit opposition to Enwezor at a 2009 conference, when he delivered a paper titled “The Curator as Culture Broker: A Critique of the Curatorial Regime of Okwui Enwezor in the Discourse of Contemporary African Art.”⁴⁷¹ Ogbechie and other critics have emphasized that Enwezor’s curatorial discourse, which is defined by a rejection of all identity markers and the assumption of a global contemporaneity that is in constant flux, runs the risk of working in capitalism’s favor. Marked by concepts such as “deterritorialization” and “nomadism” his curatorial discourse fails to sufficiently emphasize the neocolonial power differentials that continue to inform artists’ access to and mobility within the hegemonic art institutional networks,. Ogbechie points out that the hypervisibility and circulation of select diasporic artists, who are invoked as representatives of “contemporary African art” in the established art centers in Europe and the United States, but are often not received on the African continent itself, have had the effect of writing continental artistic practices that do not adhere to the (post)modern discourses informing cultural practices in Europe, out of art history once again.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷¹ Ogbechie, “The Curator as Culture Broker. A Critique of the Curatorial Regime of Okwui Enwezor in the Discourse of Contemporary African Art,” <http://aachronym.blogspot.com/2010/06/curator-as-culture-broker-critique-of.html>.

⁴⁷² Ogbechie, “The Curator as Culture Broker”

At the same time, the concept of “deterritorialization” risks obliterating the race discourses that continue to confine black artists attempting to work transculturally in Europe.⁴⁷³

How these authenticating race discourses work can be exemplified by considering two conflicting interpretations of Shonibare’s work. The attempt to construct an “African” significance for Shonibare’s art becomes evident, for instance, in an essay for his 2008 retrospective exhibition catalog, *Yinka Shonibare MBE*, penned by art historian Robert Hobbs.⁴⁷⁴ This exhibition was organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and subsequently travelled to the Auckland Art Gallery in New Zealand, and the Brooklyn Museum and the National Museum of African Art in the United States. Hobbs writes that: “Even though Shonibare’s family and early development have had an impact on the overall direction of his work, there has been little appreciation of the important role that his traditional Yoruba background plays in his art.”⁴⁷⁵ Along with the Igbo and the Hausa, the Yoruba are one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria.⁴⁷⁶ The Yoruba have a rich sculptural tradition and a long history of centralized government presided over by sacred rulers, both kings and queens, that resided in the Southwestern part of what is today Nigeria.⁴⁷⁷ As a result of

⁴⁷³ Joaquín Barriéndos Rodríguez, “Global Art and the Politics of Mobility Transcultural Shifts in the International Contemporary (Art) System,” *Thamyris/Intersecting* No. 23 (2011): 313–334.

⁴⁷⁴ Robert Hobbs, “Yinka Shonibare MBE: The Politics of Representation,” *Yinka Shonibare MBE*, 2nd ed. (London: Prestel, 2014), 27–42.

⁴⁷⁵ Hobbs, “Yinka Shonibare MBE”, 28.

⁴⁷⁶ Toyin Falola, *A History of Nigeria* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 5.

⁴⁷⁷ Henry Drewal, John Pemberton, and Rowland Abiodun (eds.) *Yoruba. Nine Centuries of African History and Thought* (New York: Center for African Art in Association with Harry N. Abrams, 1989).

the slave trade, sizable Yoruba communities are also to be found in Brazil, the United States, and Cuba, while post-war migration to Europe has meant that a significant Yoruba population inhabits cities such as London, as well.⁴⁷⁸ Shonibare has mentioned in interviews that his family descends from the Yoruba king Kosoko, who was centrally involved in the nineteenth-century slave trade in Lagos.⁴⁷⁹ Shonibare was raised bilingually and speaks Yoruba, but he attended “Western” private schools in Lagos where instruction took place in English. While Hobbs acknowledges that Shonibare has repeatedly emphasized his experience of living in London as a privileged, black man as the formative influence on the direction that his art has taken, Hobbs ultimately overwrites Shonibare’s claim by stating that it is “both surprising and unfortunate that the traditional Yoruba outlook has been passed over, particularly since this tribe considers the head to be seat of the soul and subsequently the most important part of the body.”⁴⁸⁰ Hobbs speculates that the proportional emphasis on the head as seat of the soul in Yoruba sculpture lends specific weight to the headlessness in Shonibare’s installations for Yoruba viewers. He further suggests that Shonibare’s theatrically arranged installations marked by colorful fabrics might serve to remind Yoruba viewers of Egungun masquerade dancers, who are also hidden beneath layers of colorful and varied cloth strips that are activated in dance. How is Hobbs’

⁴⁷⁸ Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs (eds.), *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Mikel S. Omari-Tunkara, *Yoruba Art, Ritual, and Resistance in Brazilian Candomblé: Manipulating the Sacred* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005); Cros Sandoval, *Worldview, the Orichas, and Santería. Africa to Cuba and Beyond* (University Press of Florida, 2009).

⁴⁷⁹ Bernard Müller, “Interview with Yinka Shonibare MBE,” in *Yinka Shonibare MBE. Jardin D’Amour*, 24.

⁴⁸⁰ Hobbs, “Yinka Shonibare MBE: The Politics of Representation,” 39.

interpretation, which assigns particular interpretational insights to Yoruba viewers in Nigeria and elsewhere, to be reconciled with the following assertion by Africanist art historians Gitti Salami and Monica Blackmun Visona regarding the reception of Shonibare's work? They write

[a] highly acclaimed British Nigerian artist such as Yinka Shonibare MBE, who lives and works in London, can entice Western audiences with his stunning tableaux and reflections on European history and canonized European artworks. Shonibare MBE's headless figures and their (im)plausible hybrid couture – Victorian-era clothing made from fabrics mistakenly felt to be “authentically” African – destabilize entrenched essentialism only after both their strangeness and familiarity have already ensnared the viewer. [...] Such works raise complex identity issues and create shifts in awareness regarding the relationship between Europe and Africa from within the international art world, yet *they address European rather than African viewers*. We would argue that they thus ultimately reify Europe's foundational definitions of modernity. African expatriates such as Shonibare are overburdened by the expectation that they represent Africa, something they decidedly cannot do.⁴⁸¹ [My emphasis]

In light of these issues, the aim of this chapter is twofold. First, I briefly outline the development of anticolonial artistic practices in Nigeria before the international emergence of Shonibare and others on international platforms in the 1980s and 1990s, to demonstrate that a critical engagement with European artistic traditions has a history in Nigeria that precedes expatriate artists such as Shonibare. I then turn to Enwezor's conception of global contemporaneity by examining his curatorial discourse of “deterritorialization” and “nomadism” for *documenta 11*, which has entered exhibition history as the biennial that “globalized” the art world. This is followed up with an analysis of Okwui Enwezor's and Chika Okeke-Agulu's survey text, *Contemporary Art in Africa*

⁴⁸¹ Gitti Salami and Monica Blackmun Visona (eds.), *A Companion to Modern African Art*, (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley&Son, 2013), 9.

Since the 1980s (2008), which served to narrate contemporary African art into this conception of global contemporaneity. Shonibare's "unbound" work was prominently featured in both the survey text and the biennial.

Secondly, as this dissertation is being completed, a sculpture from Shonibare's *Wind Sculpture* series has temporarily been installed at public park in Lagos, Nigeria, marking the first exhibition of Shonibare's work in the country of his childhood. Shonibare's *Wind Sculpture* series, which was initiated in 2013, marks a significant departure in his work. The series abandons the references to iconic modern European artworks, historical events, and episodes in favor of exhibiting what appear to be large, twirling pieces of Dutch Wax fabrics as freestanding sculptures. These *Wind Sculptures* have been installed in metropolises across the United States, Europe, and now, Nigeria. I close the chapter by demonstrating how critiques of the contemporary concepts of nomadism and deterritorialization, as elaborated by Sylvester Ogbechie, can also be extended to Shonibare's work. I further considering what meanings or relevances Shonibare's *Wind Sculpture* might have assumed for diverse Nigerian audiences, who are less likely to be ensnared by his Dutch Wax fabrics as "exotic" signifiers of cultural authenticity, but for whom the Dutch Wax fabrics are inscribed with multi-layered political and social meanings.

Anticolonial Nationalism in Modern Nigerian Art

Toyin Falola concludes his *History of Nigeria* by stating, that "the modern history of Nigeria is a troubled one, characterised not by success in building a viable

nation-state, but by the gross failure to overcome the twin problems of political instability and economic underdevelopment.”⁴⁸² Political upheavals resulting in long periods of military dictatorship, civil strife, corruption, and a neocolonial economic framework have meant that the loyalty of Nigerian citizens to the national idea remains tenuous at best. Nigeria’s current borders were established by colonial fiat in 1914, through the amalgamation of Britain’s Northern and Southern Protectorates, which served to centralize power and to ameliorate the economic gap between a more prosperous South and a weaker North. The British introduced a centralized system of governance presided over by British colonial officers, while the colony was regionally and locally administered through the contested system of “indirect rule”.⁴⁸³ First developed by the British High Commissioner of the Northern protectorate, Frederick Lugard, “indirect rule” stipulated that not only were Britons and Nigerians culturally different, but that the societies inhabiting the North were also different from those of Southern Nigeria. Nigeria is inhabited by over two hundred ethnic groups that speak over two hundred and fifty languages and who are further stratified by various religious affiliations.⁴⁸⁴ While Islam dominates in the North, various forms of Christianity are predominantly practiced in the South and in the Middle belt, while a range of indigenous religions based on ancestor worship also continue to be practiced.⁴⁸⁵ The three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria today are the Hausa in the North,

⁴⁸² Falola, *A History of Nigeria*, 223.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 70f.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

the Yoruba in the Southwest, and the Igbo in the Southeast.⁴⁸⁶ Lugard assumed that it would be advantageous to rule Nigeria's diverse populations through existent indigenous institutions and traditional leaders, to reduce not only the costs of administration, but also to ameliorate local resistance by turning native chiefs into "collaborators" of the colonial system. This approach incorrectly assumed that all African societies had previously been ruled through centralized kingdoms with strong leaders. In eastern Nigeria in particular, where no centralized system of governance of this sort had existed among the Igbo, it resulted in the haphazard appointment of chiefs to political power whose authority had no base in history or backing among the indigenous societies.⁴⁸⁷ The decision to rule Nigeria through a centralized, British colonial government that was distanced from the population and whose authority was implemented through native leaders, inaugurated a contested regionalism in which ethnic and religious factions were forced to vie for economic resources and political power in the center. It also alienated an emergent educated Nigerian middle class who criticized the conservatism of the traditional leaders invested with power by the colonial system and who claimed a political stake of their own.

This regionalism has continued to plague Nigerian politics in the postcolonial period, because the British "divide and rule" approach invented and produced ethnic affiliations as markers of identification and difference in a form that did not previously exist.⁴⁸⁸ What has derogatively been called "tribalism" was reinscribed through the foundation of ethnically based political parties in the 1940s. It has

⁴⁸⁶ Falola, *A History of Nigeria*, 5.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁸⁸ John Picton, "Undressing Ethnicity," *African Arts* (Autumn 2011): 72.

been further exacerbated by the uneven wealth distribution within Nigeria itself and its implication in the world economy as a producer of raw materials that continues to rely on the importation of finished consumer goods.⁴⁸⁹ While Nigeria's main agricultural exports were cocoa and palm oil in colonial times, since the discovery of oil in the 1950s, petroleum has been Nigeria's economic mainstay. The continued reliance on foreign technologies and expertise and the central involvement of multinational corporations such as Shell in the extraction of Nigeria's oil reserves in the Niger Delta, has perpetuated Nigeria's economic underdevelopment and characterizes the persistent imperialism of the present.⁴⁹⁰ Because the "rents" paid by foreign oil companies have been a central source of income for the Nigerian government and the latter has been repeatedly marked by corruption, there has been a tendency among the leading native bourgeoisie to accommodate the interests of multi-national corporations rather than serve the best interests of Nigeria's citizens at large.⁴⁹¹

Anticolonial and nationalist sentiments and protests emerged early on in the colonial period, through figures such as Pan-Africanist Edward Wilmot Blyden, Nnamdi Azikiwe (who would come to be the first president of an independent Nigeria), Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and the establishment of a branch of the Garvey movement in Lagos.⁴⁹² But in this chapter I will focus on a survey of one site of anticolonial and nationalist struggle in particular—the

⁴⁸⁹ Falola, *History of Nigeria*, 76.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 74.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 81ff.

visual arts and art education.⁴⁹³ While Christian missionaries had established schools in Nigeria since the mid-nineteenth century, these primarily focused on educating converted Nigerians in the service of Empire, which did not include classes in the visual arts. By destroying and disparaging existing artistic traditions, while simultaneously voiding colonial education of subjects that might stimulate creative and, hence, critical thinking, the colonial education system only granted partial access to “Western” education. This served to inscribe the colonial difference of the African’s supposed “backwardness” and lack of civilization.⁴⁹⁴ This colonial injustice was soon challenged, with Aina Onabolu, Nigeria’s pioneer modernist artist, initiating a campaign for the introduction of art education in colonial Nigeria. While already working as a self-taught art instructor at various secondary schools in Lagos, Onabolu petitioned the colonial government to include art classes in the colonial education system and to dispatch British art teachers to the colony that could support him in his endeavors in 1922.⁴⁹⁵ His petition eventually succeeded in 1926 and Ben Enwonwu was among the first artists to study with Kenneth Murray, who was sent to Nigeria for the purpose.

Aina Onabolu was associated with nationalist, anti-colonial groups in early twentieth-century Lagos and deployed a naturalistic visual language to paint dignified portraits of the Lagosian elites. The portraits served to counter the racist stereotypes of primitivism and cannibalism with which the British colonial

⁴⁹³ Olu Oguibe, “Reverse Appropriation as Nationalism in Modern African Art,” *The Third Text Reader on Art, Culture, Theory* (London and New York: continuum, 2012), 35-46.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁹⁵ T.A. Fasuyi, *Cultural Policy in Nigeria* (Paris, France: Unesco, 1973), 50.

government disparaged its African subjects (Fig. 40).⁴⁹⁶ Onabolu would attend St. John's Wood College in London to acquire a teaching certificate that qualified him to be employed as an art instructor within the colonial system.⁴⁹⁷ Onabolu's practice demonstrates an early form of colonial resistance in which he confronted Europe on its own terms by mastering its educational system and excelling in a naturalistic visual language that had hitherto been definitive of European art.⁴⁹⁸ While Onabolu's art education adhered to the naturalistic idiom (which also has precedents in Yoruba art from Ife), Kenneth Murray encouraged his students to preserve their own indigenous artistic traditions rather than emulate European styles, marking a shift in colonial education from the denial of indigenous cultures to the preservation of the "authentic native".⁴⁹⁹

In his monograph on Ken Murray's student Ben Enwonwu, Sylvester Ogbechie argues that, despite this colonial education, Enwonwu would come to formulate a personal aesthetic in painting and sculpture that was informed by Igbo arts and rituals, the bronze-casting traditions of Benin, as well as European conventions, and would come to embrace a subtle Pan-African critique of European hegemony.⁵⁰⁰ Like Onabolu, he would move on to study art in England at the University of London and also attended classes at Oxford. Enwonwu's career was ambivalently suspended between his desire to advance

⁴⁹⁶ Ola Ololade, "Defender of African Creativity: Aina Onabolu, Pioneer of Western Art in West Africa," *African Research Bulletin* 17, no. 2 (1991): 21-49; Nzegwu, "The Concept of Modernity in Contemporary African Art", 414.

⁴⁹⁷ Oguibe, *Reverse Appropriation as Nationalism*, 40.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 41; Ogbechie, *Ben Enwonwu, The Making of an African Modernist* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 58.

⁵⁰⁰ Sylvester Okwunodo Ogbechie, *Ben Enwonwu: The Making of an African Modernist* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

professionally within the colonial bureaucracy and his anticolonial, nationalist aspirations that were informed by his reception of the political rhetoric of black empowerment formulated by the Harlem Renaissance, by Negritude in Francophone Africa, and by anticolonial newspapers such as the *West African Pilot*, which was edited by Nnamdi Azikiwe.⁵⁰¹ As a result of this ambivalence, his career has often been dismissed as expressive of the “identity crisis” of African subjects in the (post)colonial era.⁵⁰² Yet, as Ogbechie’s scholarship seeks to demonstrate, Enwonwu was not a mere product of the colonial system. Bronze sculptures such as his *Anyanwu* (1954-55) were intended to symbolize “our rising nation” by negotiating Pan-African influences ranging from the Ethiopianism of African-American artists such as Meta Warrick Fuller, references to the Igbo earth goddess Ani, and the black mother symbolism of Negritude (Fig. 41).⁵⁰³

Just like their European modernist counterparts drew from African sculptures and masks to define their modernist visual languages, Aina Onabolu and Ben Enwonwu amalgamated European and African conventions to formulate their own personal aesthetics. Yet, the colonial difference has meant that art history has praised modernists such as Pablo Picasso for their innovativeness, while the work of their African counterparts was dismissed as merely derivative.⁵⁰⁴ Nationalist protests in Nigeria reached a height in the course of the Second World War, as Allied propaganda of democracy and self-determination circulating at the time, resulted in resistance to British racism, demands for the

⁵⁰¹ Ogbechie, *Ben Enwonwu*, 61.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 23.

⁵⁰³ Ogbechie, *Ben Enwonwu*,

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 7.

indigenization of Nigeria's political and civil system and, eventually, requests for decolonization.⁵⁰⁵ During the process of "Nigerianization" preceding political independence, the colonial Nigerian government responded to local pressures by establishing the first university-level art training programs at the Nigeria College of Arts, Science and Technology in Zaria and the Yaba Technical Institute in the 1950s, which would eventually be followed up by the establishment of a Fine Arts Program at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1961.⁵⁰⁶ During this period of incipient decolonization and independence, two disparate art movements developed that demonstrated distinct engagements with indigenous arts. On the one hand, expatriates Susanne Wenger and Ulli and Georgina Beier began offering art workshops at the Mbari Writer's Club in the Yoruba town of Oshogbo. They provided untrained Nigerian artists with art materials and encouraged them to engage with Yoruba tradition.⁵⁰⁷ Twins Seven Seven, who deployed an essentialized Yoruba identity in his presentation as artist-self, emerged as the most prominent, nationally and internationally received artists of this workshop.⁵⁰⁸ On the other hand, a group of university-trained artists led by Uche Okeke, who had challenged the European-based curriculum at Zaria since the 1950s, came together at the University of Nsukka in the 1970s and 1980s.⁵⁰⁹ The Nsukka group deployed the concept of a "Natural Synthesis" between indigenous

⁵⁰⁵ Falola, *History of Nigeria*, 81ff.

⁵⁰⁶ Chinedu C. Chukkuegu, "The Origin and Formation of Formal Art Schools in Nigeria", *African Research Review* 4 (April 2010): 502-513.

⁵⁰⁷ John Pemberton III, "Ulli Beier and the Oshogbo Artists of Nigeria," *African Studies Review* 45, no. 1 (April 2002):115-124.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Chika Okeke-Agulu, "The Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism in Nigeria," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109, no. 3, (Summer 2010): 505-527; 508.

Nigerian cultural traditions and modern Africans' exposure to European conventions with an explicitly nationalist agenda. In 1960, Uche Okeke had penned his manifesto of "natural synthesis" against the background of Nigerian nation-making, which had to be forged out of a great number of different ethnic and religious groups.⁵¹⁰ Chika Okeke-Agulu aligned natural synthesis in the arts with Léopold Sédar Senghor's concept of Négritude and describes their parallels as follows:

although their advocates claimed and asserted the uniqueness of African or black history and cultural heritage, they acknowledge the importance of Western forms and ideas but only as elements of the basic compound out of which the universal modern might be fashioned. This is what Léopold Sédar Senghor, one of the principal theorists of Négritude, must have meant asserting the right to contribute to what he called "the civilization of the universal."⁵¹¹

Artists such as Demas Nwoko, Obiora Udechukwu, Bruce Onobrakpeya, among other Nsukka artists, studied a variety of indigenous traditions, such as Igbo uli painting and nsibidi writing systems, to create a modern aesthetic nationalism.⁵¹² This art movement was defined by what Okwui Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu have called "postcolonial utopia" in their survey text *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*, which, they argue, was eventually followed by the "postcolonial realism" of the 1980s.

The U.S.'s assumption of Britain's hegemonic role as world leader after World War II, further catalyzed decolonization, since, given its lack of colonies in Africa,

⁵¹⁰ Simon Ottenberg, *The Nsukka Group and Contemporary Nigerian Art*, 224.

⁵¹¹ Okeke-Agulu, "The Art Society and the Making of Postcolonial Modernism," 509.

⁵¹² Chika Okeke-Agulu, "Nationalism and the Rhetoric of Modernism in Nigeria. The Art of Uche Okeke and Demas Nwoko, 1960-68," *African Arts* (Spring 2006):26-37.

the United States had no interest in maintaining them.⁵¹³ After a process of peaceful transition and indigenization, Nigeria gained political independence from Britain in 1960. Yet, an independent Nigeria came to be dominated by a Westernized, educated African bourgeoisie that maintained the political structure of a federated republic, as well as the economic framework put into place by colonialism.⁵¹⁴ The regional disparities created by colonial rule were reinforced in the course of independence, as religious and ethnic minorities feared domination by the larger groups and politicians instrumentalized ethnic and religious differences to gain quick political support rather than building national or pan-African solidarity.⁵¹⁵ The parliamentary system was interrupted by two military coups in 1966 and the Igbo proclamation of secession from Nigeria through the establishment of the state of Biafra in the East, which unleashed a violent civil war that lasted from 1967-70. Although Nigeria had joined the nonaligned movement, a coalition of countries that was formed in Bandung in 1955 and that sought a “third way” of neutrality during the Cold War, historian Toyin Falola argues that Nigeria’s orientation was factually pro-West in economic terms.⁵¹⁶ This demonstrates, as Robert C. Young has argued, that the problem with a “third way” for non-aligned countries was the lack of a separate system at the

⁵¹³ Falola, *History of Nigeria*, 88.

⁵¹⁴ Kwame Nkrumah wrote, “The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from the outside.” In *Neo-Colonialism. The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1967), ix.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵¹⁶ Falola, *History of Nigeria*, 146.

economic level to which these countries could have adhered.⁵¹⁷ The end of the Cold War brought about significant shifts in global politics and the widespread enforcement of neoliberal economics that fully incorporated countries like Nigeria into a neocolonial world economy. The launching of the IMF's and World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programs in Nigeria in 1988 significantly reformed economic policies, which resulted in the devaluation of the Naira, large-scale privatizations, and an increasing gap between rich and poor and, as such, had devastating consequences for the majority of the Nigerian population.⁵¹⁸

It is in this period that large sections of the Nigerian middle classes moved to the United States and Europe in search of better opportunities. While artists such as Uche Okeke continued to insist on the necessity of developing the arts within Nigeria itself, others, such as Yinka Shonibare MBE and art historian, artist, and poet Olu Oguibe, rejected the necessity of engaging indigenous traditions, refused to produce an ethnically or nationally inflected art, and embraced postmodern cultural strategies to penetrate a global art scene.⁵¹⁹ In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, these artists achieved a presence in the Euro-American institutional network that was, at least in part, owed to the curatorial efforts of Okwui Enwezor and other independent curators.

What this brief outline of anticolonial nationalism in Nigerian modern art has sought to demonstrate is that the movement of artists from Africa to Europe in this time period was not between radically different cultures, but took place within

⁵¹⁷ Young, *Postcolonialism. An Historical Introduction*, 51.

⁵¹⁸ Falola, *History of Nigeria*, 183ff.

⁵¹⁹ Simon Ottenberg, "Introduction," in *The Nsukka Artists and Contemporary Nigerian Art* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002).

a shared culture defined and constructed by modernity.⁵²⁰ Lacking awareness of the longevity of these cultural exchanges has meant that artists such as Shonibare continue to be confronted by demands for African cultural “authenticity,” even as they, like the modernists that preceded them, circulate on and engage with international discourses and platforms. One format that amplified the “globalization” of the arts is the biennial network and we shall now turn to one biennial in particular, the documenta 11, to analyze the curatorial discourses on contemporaneity that served to introduce Shonibare to international audiences.

Biennials and Globalization

First inaugurated in Venice in the late nineteenth century, the biennial might be broadly defined as a large-scale, international group exhibition that recurs every two to five years and presents a platform for contemporary art trends and experimentation.⁵²¹ While the specific genealogies and formats of existent biennials vary greatly, in all cases, biennials are not just platforms to showcase art, but also cultural tools for building and demonstrating political and economic alliances that serve to position the hosting country within an international network.⁵²² The foundation of Africa-based biennials, such as the Cairo Biennial in Egypt (1984), the *Dak’Art* Biennial in Dakar, Senegal (1992), the *Rencontres*

⁵²⁰ Rasheed Araeen, “A New Beginning,” *Third Text* 14:50 (2008): 10.

⁵²¹ Paul O’Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Cultures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 52.

⁵²² Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, Solveig Ovstebo, (eds.) *The Biennial Reader* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 14; Sabine B. Vogel, *Biennials—Art on a Global Scale* (New York: Springer, 2012).

Africaines de la Photographie in Bamako, Mali (1994), the *Johannesburg Biennial* in South Africa (1995), the East African Art Biennial in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania (2003) and the Luanda Triennial in Angola (2006) served to place these countries on the map of global curators and audiences. At the same time, as mentioned above, independent curators such as Okwui Enwezor have played a central role in the revision of Eurocentric constraints defining already established biennials, such as documenta, by serving as mediators for contemporary artists deriving from outside of the Eurocentric orbit. A number of scholars have wrestled with the question of whether, in light of these developments, we can indeed speak of contemporary art as a global phenomenon.⁵²³ For some, the opening of Eurocentric institutions to “non-Western” artists and the blossoming of biennials across the globe appeared to suggest a major paradigm shift decentralizing European and U.S. hegemony in the art world, while for others, these exhibitions are nothing more than “an overblown symptom of spectacular event culture, the result of some specious transformations of the world in the age of late capitalism—in short a Western typology whose proliferation has infiltrated even the most distant parts of the world.”⁵²⁴ Although Ranjit Hokote and others have also discussed the existence of “biennials of resistance” that complicate any generalizing statements about “biennials” as a whole, it is now widely acknowledged that the conception of the biennial circuit as a level playing field is

⁵²³ Charlotte Bydler, *The Global Art World Inc. The Globalization of Contemporary Art*, diss. phil. Uppsala University, 2004; Chika Okeke-Agulu et. al, “The Twenty-first Century and the Mega-Exhibitions,” *NKA. Journal of Contemporary African Art* (Spring/Summer 2008): 153-188.

⁵²⁴ Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal, Solveig Ovstebo (eds.), “Biennalogy” in *The Biennial Reader* (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 13.

a liberal utopia.⁵²⁵ In her dissertation, *The Global Art World, Inc.* (2004) Charlotte Bydler summarizes the opposing views on biennials as follows:

From the networked horizon, the art world seemed like a smooth and integrated global machine, McLuhan style, where local events resounded globally, where all art was equally relevant and judged by similar standards. [...] Seen from another perspective, the globalization of art followed an old economical and technological pattern where the circulation of art practices was tied to the global division of labor [...].⁵²⁶

Currently, biennials tend to deploy two divergent methodologies to engage contemporaneity and the cultural impacts of global capitalism.⁵²⁷ One approach strategically engages site-specificity by interfacing with the particularities of a given place and its peoples to consider how the forces of globalization are negotiated in specific localities.⁵²⁸ The other approach renounces this concern with site-specificity and locality as outmoded and favors notions of nomadism, flux, and deterritorialization in an effort to shed all confining identity markers. By assuming that the condition of diasporicity has remapped contemporary culture by questioning hegemonic concepts of ethnicity, nationality, and authenticity, of center and periphery, Enwezor's curatorial discourse has adhered to the latter.

Global Contemporaneity at *Documenta 11*: "Empire", Deterritorialization, and Itinerant Artists

Arnold Bode inaugurated the *documenta* biennial in 1955 to educate the German public on the development of international modernism and to resituate Germany

⁵²⁵ Ranjit Hoskote, "Biennials of Resistance. Reflections on the Seventh Gwangju Biennial," *The Biennial Reader*.

⁵²⁶ Bydler, *The Global Art World Inc.*, 14.

⁵²⁷ Claudette Lauzon, "Reluctant Nomads. Biennial Culture and its Discontents," *RACAR: revue d'art canadienne/ Canadian Art Review* 36, no 2 (2011): 15-30; 17.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

as a sovereign nation sharing in the values of the “Western” world, after Hitler had eliminated modern art from public view as part of his political agenda.⁵²⁹ Since then, documenta has taken place in Kassel, Germany, every four to five years and is now considered one of the most important venues showcasing contemporary art.⁵³⁰ Every documenta has traditionally been organized by a different artistic director who determines scope and theme of the exhibition, thereby allowing for new outlooks and approaches. While initial documentas were largely centered on European and American modern art, the occasional African artist has been included since documenta’s ninth edition in 1992.⁵³¹ The curator of the 1997 *documenta X*, Catherine David, initiated tentative efforts to interrupt Eurocentric narratives of modernity and contemporaneity.⁵³² She invited Okwui Enwezor to attend the lecture series “100 days, 100 guests” that accompanied her exhibition, to discuss his curatorship of the Second Johannesburg Biennale at the time (1997).⁵³³ In his capacity as a curator that seeks to highlight the decentering impact that global capitalism, media technologies, and mass migration have had on the production of new cultural

⁵²⁹ Nuit Banai, “From Nation State to Border State”, *Third Text* 27, no 4 (2013): 456-469.

⁵³⁰ Bernard Balkenhohl, “Art Unrealized. Künstlerische Praxis aus dem Blickwinkel der Documenta 11,” *Kunstpädagogische Positionen* 12 (Hamburg University Press, 2006).

⁵³¹ Okwui Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu, *Contemporary African Art Since 1980* (Bologna: damiani, 2008), 0.

⁵³² Catherine David, “Introduction,” in *Documenta X. A Short Guide*, ed. by Francoise Joly and Paul Sztulman, (Ostfildern: Cantz, 1997), 6-3; 11-12.

⁵³³ “Biennalen—Eine kritische Betrachtung: Die 2. Johannesburg Biennale: 100 Tage-100 Gäste,” *Documenta Archiv für das 20. Und 21. Jahrhundert*, http://documentaarchiv-mediencoluster.stadt-kassel.de/R/2IMLG896B4RTE8PKKFFKT87T7L8321HB95N29EHUABGSTEGR7Y-02458?func=collections-result&collection_id=1653.

economies, networks and formations, Enwezor was subsequently appointed in 1998 as the first non-European director to curate *documenta 11* in 2002.⁵³⁴

Enwezor's curatorial practice renounces concerns with locality and site-specificity as outmoded and is invested in politicized and multidisciplinary practices that defy assumptions of art's autonomy.⁵³⁵ In the *documenta 11* exhibition catalog essay he explains:

As an exhibition project, *documenta 11* begins from the sheer side of extraterritoriality: firstly, by displacing its historical context in Kassel; secondly by moving outside the domain of the gallery space into the discursive; and thirdly by expanding the locus of the disciplinary models that constitute and define the project's intellectual and cultural interest.⁵³⁶

The concept of "extraterritoriality" or "deterritorialization" derives from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari but has been adopted, repurposed and redefined by scholars in various disciplines. As his introductory essay for the *documenta 11* exhibition catalogue reiterates, Enwezor's conception of "deterritorialization" is, at least in part, informed by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's hugely influential and widely criticized study, *Empire* (2000).⁵³⁷ Hardt and Negri argue that "Empire" is a new stage in global capitalism that is defined by an inherently decentered and deterritorialized apparatus of rule. "Empire" succeeds the imperialism conducted by nation-states and is no longer controlled by any one metropolitan center, as not even the United States can claim an absolute authoritative position any longer. While nation-states continue

⁵³⁴ "Platform 5_ *documenta11*", <http://www.documenta12.de/archiv/d11/data/german/index.html>

⁵³⁵ Lauzon, "Reluctant Nomads," 17.

⁵³⁶ Okwui Enwezor, "The Black Box", *Documenta 11_Platform 5:exhibition catalog*, ed. by Heike Ander and Nadja Rottner (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), 42.

⁵³⁷ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

to exist and play important roles in defining economic, political, and cultural norms, they have lost the sovereign authority of the modern era to a complex cluster of national and supranational organisms, including, among other entities, the U.S. military complex, transnational corporations, the United Nations Organization [U.N.O], World Trade Organization [WTO], the International Monetary Fund [IMF], etc., all of which converge to form what they describe as “Empire.”⁵³⁸ “Empire” cannot be reduced to the economic, as it attempts to manage not just territories and populations, but permeates the totality of social life, human relations and cultural exchanges. Hardt and Negri propose that because “Empire” is itself a deterritorialized apparatus, it no longer relies on the hierarchical distinctions of nations and peoples and increasingly erases the manufactured differences between the “East” and the “West” or “First” and “Third World”, by managing “hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges.”⁵³⁹ “Empire” projects itself as a planetary system, which is free of spatial and temporal limitations and, although it often rules by violence, it upholds peace, fairness, and equality as its ulterior motives. Resistance to the pervasive force of “Empire” can only take place, Hardt and Negri claim, through the anarchic demands of “the multitude” who must abandon local attachments to assume a strategic globality and demand global citizenship in order to counter “Empire’s” totalizing aspirations.⁵⁴⁰ They reject localist positions as “false and damaging”, because they essentialize differences and tend to feed into the

⁵³⁸ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “Globalisierung und Demokratie,” *Documenta 11, Plattform 1, Demokratie als unvollendeter Prozess* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2002), 371.

⁵³⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, xii-xiii.

⁵⁴⁰ Enwezor, “The Black Box,” 45.

support of the capitalist regimes of Empire, thus impeding the formation of a politicized, transnational “multitude.”⁵⁴¹

Enwezor also asserts an understanding of a deterritorialized culture, which is derived from efforts in anthropology by scholars such as James Clifford and Arjun Appadurai to disassociate the disciplines’ conventional conflation of space/territory with culture.⁵⁴² In his book, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), Arjun Appadurai argued that the turn towards global rewritings of history and culture and the mass migrations characterizing our planetary system, have required new conceptual frameworks. Appadurai outlined five intersecting and shifting factors or “scapes” (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes) that provide a toolkit for tracing the cultural complexities of our current world, which can no longer be accurately comprehended through national units of analysis or local vs. global dichotomies.⁵⁴³ His five “scapes” provide a means of (1) acknowledging the asymmetries in the disposition of global capital and technological infrastructures (finance- and technospaces), (2) analyzing the international division of labor and the patterns of voluntary or involuntary migration that result from it (ethnoscapes), while also (3) providing a means of considering the ways that the imagination has become a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity

⁵⁴¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), xvii.

⁵⁴² Enwezor writes that, “each phase of staging the discursive potentialities of the engagement between artistic practice and social reality, theoretical reflection and political systems, forms-of-life and image economies, advanced technology and local industries, confronts us with a world of vast displacements and deterritorialized understanding of culture.” Enwezor, “The Black Box,” 55.

⁵⁴³ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

which situates people everywhere in “imagined worlds” that are fed by transnationally circulating images and ideas (mediascapes and ideoscapes). Due to the fluctuating relationships of these shifting and overlapping “scapes” which, as a whole, serve to track the global flows shaping the status quo, Appadurai argues that deterritorialization and the formation of diasporic public spheres have become the defining forces of our postnational present. As a result of these processes, cultures are no longer (if they were ever) containable within a specific territory or space, but need to be regarded as fractal, transnational, hybridized, etc. But rather than concluding that the world is increasingly culturally homogenized and standardized, Appadurai suggests that “locality” continues to be produced through a process of negotiation between the specificities of a particular place and the “imagined worlds” that inform it.

For documenta 11, Enwezor followed these deterritorialized understandings of economy and culture by creating four discursive platforms on four different continents that preceded the exhibition project in Kassel, which was conceived as the fifth, final platform. As a result, the actual exhibition project was marginalized as one event within what Enwezor called “a constellation of public spheres”.⁵⁴⁴ These public spheres were successively held in Vienna, New Delhi, Santa Lucia, and Lagos and opened the exhibition up to a multidisciplinary discourse in which various intellectuals and thinkers were invited to interrogate political and social issues, including: 1) the unfinished or unrealized project of democracy and whether European democracies can serve as a model for

⁵⁴⁴ Okwui Enwezor, “The Black Box”, *documenta 11_Platform 5: Exhibition catalogue*, 54.

formerly colonized nations; 2) questions of justice, truth, reconciliation, and state impunity; 3) concepts of identity formation such as creolization and creolité that go beyond “self” and “other” binaries; and 4) case studies of African urbanity.⁵⁴⁵

Documenta 11 confronted viewing publics in Kassel with the experience of lacking privileged access to the entire program, while over 10,000 visitors participated in platforms 1 to 4 outside of Kassel.⁵⁴⁶ Enwezor further invited six curators to assist him in organizing documenta 11 with the intention of gathering a multitude of different perspectives: Argentina's Carlos Basualdo, Susanne Ghez from the U.S., Sarat Maharaj from South Africa, German-born Ute Meta Bauer, Octavio Zaya from the Canary Islands, and Mark Nash from England. Finally, Enwezor explicitly distanced his documenta 11 from the previous strategies of forging a singular, all-encompassing narrative of cultural and artistic modernity. Instead, the exhibition offered a fragmentary display of 124 artists and artist groups from all over the world, whose works were conceived as “refractory shards thrown up by the multiple artistic spaces and knowledge circuits that are the critical hallmarks of today’s artistic subjectivity and cultural climate.”⁵⁴⁷ Given its emphasis on extraterritoriality, documenta 11 did not engage the specificities of Kassel or Germany as the hosting venue.

⁵⁴⁵ Enwezor, “The Black Box”, 49-55. The platforms addressed the following topics: platform 1 in Vienna: “Democracy Unrealized”, platform 2 in New Delhi “Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation”, platform 3 on St. Lucia: “Creolite and Creolization”, platform 4 in Lagos: “Under Siege: Four African Cities-Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos”.

⁵⁴⁶ Leoné Anette van Niekerk, *Documenta 11 as Exemplar for Transcultural Curating: A Critical Analysis*, diss. phil. University of Pretoria, 2007, 45.

⁵⁴⁷ Enwezor, “The Black Box”, 43.

While desiring a “global” outlook, the curators sought to resist the spectatorial logic of postmodern aesthetic consumption that dishes up an array of non-European artists for yet another colonizing ingestion, by deploying a number of curatorial counter-strategies. In addition to the dispersal of the event across five platforms, the resistance to totalization was further implemented through a “rhizomatic” curatorial strategy.⁵⁴⁸ Following Deleuze and Guattari’s definition of the concept, the curators sought to achieve an a-centered, open-ended, nonhierarchical network of displays with various possible connections, rather than providing a linear, hierarchical, and more easily readable display.⁵⁴⁹ For instance, Yinka Shonibare’s installation *Gallantry and Criminal Conversation* (2002) was exhibited at the *Binding Brauerei*, an exhibition location marked by its fragmentation into various small rooms that do not allow for straightforward, linear exploration of its spaces (Figs. 42, 43). Shonibare’s installation was featured in the center of a room also showcasing photographs by Italian artist Giuseppe Gabellone and mixed media paintings by Manhattan-based Ouattara Watts. The exhibited art was neither organized by nationality, media, nor around any other apparent theme or category. Thereby, Enwezor distanced his documenta 11 from other large-scale exhibitions and biennials that deployed artists as representatives of their respective nation-states or ethnicities by deterritorializing the exhibited artists from all confining identity markers. Instead,

⁵⁴⁸ Ute Meta Bauer, “The Space of Documenta 11. Documenta 11 as a Zone of Activity,” in *Documenta 11_Platform 5*, 103-107; 106; Leoné Anette van Niekerk, *Documenta 11 as Exemplar for Transcultural Curating: A Critical Analysis*, diss. phil. University of Pretoria, 2007, 45f

⁵⁴⁹ Brent Adkins, “Rhizome”, in *Deleuze and Guattari’s A Thousand Plateaus. A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

the displays appeared to suggest that, once one enters the temporal dimension of contemporaneity, spatial and geographical affiliations are no longer a concern.

Accordingly, as Johanne Lamoreux points out:

Documenta 11 instead valorized the wandering of hybrid producers. There could be no one point on a map for most the participants, only complex histories and trajectories, largely impossible to draw.⁵⁵⁰

Yinka Shonibare's multivocal installation piece itself exemplifies this resistance to conventional schemes of classification. *Gallantry and Criminal Conversation*, which was specifically commissioned by Enwezor for documenta 11, consisted of eleven headless mannequins and stacked wooden trunks distributed around a white platform above which a green horse carriage was suspended in the air. The viewer was immediately drawn in by the beauty of this jovial arrangement of male and female mannequins flamboyantly dressed in Shonibare's signature style. The headless mannequins, which were assembled in groups of two or three, were engaged in licentious, lustful homo- and heterosexual activities. Shonibare's installation recalled the "Grand Tours" that aristocratic Europe embarked upon for the purpose of self-improvement since the seventeenth century. During these studious journeys the aristocracy would trudge the major European cultural destinations to study art, culture and history. Shonibare, however, exposes these "Grand Tours" as covert sexual tourism during which the social elite could liberate itself from the sexual mores of their respective societies and commit adultery, which was referred to as "criminal conversation" in Britain at the time.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ Johanne Lamoreux, "From Form to Platform: The Politics of Representation, the Representation of Politics", *Art Journal* 64, no.1 (Spring 2005), 72.

⁵⁵¹ Rachel Kent, "Time and Transformation in the Art of Yinka Shonibare MBE", in: *Yinka Shonibare MBE*, 15.

Shonibare's installation was interpreted as a reflection on the elite nature of cultural tourism, both in the past and now, when an itinerant nomadism has become the predicament of elites across the globe.⁵⁵² His installation evoked the entanglements of leisure, privilege and desire implicit in the hedonistic exploration of other cultures, places, and peoples, but he did not assume an explicit moral position in relation to it. The incessant slippage between signifiers of "blackness" and "whiteness" and his representation of homosexual and heterosexual lovers had a relativizing effect in which race and gender were unmoored, with class persisting as the only stable determining stratification in his scenes. As such, Shonibare's installations could be conceived as acknowledging the class-based privilege required to access the boundlessness of contemporary cultural nomadism, but his work did not assume a politicized or moral position in relation to this condition. In characteristic ambiguity, his installation is as likely to be read as a critique as it might be regarded as a playful celebration. While other artworks shown at documenta 11 sought to map the costs of global flows more explicitly, it is questionable in how far the open-endedness of Shonibare's work and the exhibition's central premise that "there are no overarching conclusions to be reached, no forms of closure", was to be reconciled with Enwezor's claim that documenta 11 aimed to elicit ethical agency and commitment.⁵⁵³

However, Eleanor Heartney noted that the spectacular appeal, sex and wit of Shonibare's work presented an exception among the displays at documenta 11, which were dominated by conceptual installations, photography, and video

⁵⁵² Eleanor Heartney, "A 600 Hours Documenta", *Art in America* (2002): 87-95.

⁵⁵³ Enwezor, "Black Box," 43.

works highlighting the increasing ethnic and ideological conflicts resulting from “Empire”.⁵⁵⁴ The politicized tenor of documenta 11’s selected artworks sought to reflect the effects that attend “Empire”’s global reach, while Enwezor’s curatorial discourse also sought to contribute to the constitution of the “multitude” with his emphasis on the dissolution of national sovereignty and ethnically or nationally-bound cultures. He organized “constellations of public spheres” and exhibited politicized artistic productions as a means of eliciting a counter-hegemonic force defying the totalizing aspirations of “Empire”. However, whether the creation of a multitude was successfully implemented in documenta 11 has been subject to debate. For instance, in its privileging of video as the preferred medium, the biennial was quite demanding on its viewing public, offering up about 600 hours of video work to watch.⁵⁵⁵ While this proliferation of video work was intended to slow down the viewing process while rendering the desire to subject the biennial to visual totalization impossible, various critics of documenta 11 evaluated this strategy as counterproductive.⁵⁵⁶ George Baker cautioned that, “[m]ega-exhibitions cannot be taken in, digested, understood, or read in any complete manner, and this sublime scale serves the function of obfuscation. They are constructed by curatorial authors as labyrinthine narratives whose plot evades any attempt at being followed, never mind critiqued.”⁵⁵⁷ According to Baker, the format and structure of documenta 11 mirrored the “gargantuan scope” and the incomprehensibility of an all-powerful and pervasive “Empire”, overwhelming

⁵⁵⁴ Van Niekerk, *Documenta 11 as Exemplar for Transcultural Curating*, 65f.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵⁵⁶ George Baker, “The Globalization of the False: A Response to Okwui Enwezor,” *The Biennial Reader*, ed. by Elena Filipovic et. al, 448.

⁵⁵⁷ Baker, “The Globalization of the False,” in *The Biennial Reader*, 448.

viewing audiences rather than empowering audiences and instilling a sense of agency and ethical commitment to shape a “multitude”.

Defining the Field of Contemporary African Art: Okwui Enwezor’s and Chika Okeke-Agulu’s *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*

While Enwezor sought to strip artists of confining identity markers in his documenta 11, in 2008, he collaborated with Chika Okeke-Agulu to produce a survey text on, *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*. Here, the authors strategically embraced a geographical demarcation to insert contemporary African art into broader narratives of global contemporaneity. A photograph of Shonibare’s series, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* (2008) decorates the title page of the survey text, visually announcing Shonibare as a prominent representative of the field outlined within the covers of the book (Fig. 44). Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu stake out the field in three theory-heavy chapters, summarize strategies and themes used by contemporary African artists in another four, and follow up these elucidations with plates featuring the work of more than 150 artists. In their attempt to create a survey text, they circumvent art historical analysis of individual works in favor of situating the field in larger sociopolitical discourses. The authors emphasize that contemporary African art should not “be understood in ethnocentric, national, regional, or even continental terms alone, but as a network of positions, affiliations, strategies and philosophies [...] available to and exploited consistently by the artists.”⁵⁵⁸ Their survey includes work produced by Arab artists from Northern Africa, white African

⁵⁵⁸ Okwui Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu, *Contemporary African Art Since the 1980s* (Bologna: damiani, 2009), 11.

artists, and African diaspora practitioners and thereby counters previous tendencies in African art historiography to isolate black, sub-Saharan art as the only “authentically” African practice.⁵⁵⁹ Rather than monolithic, Africa is conceived as a “tapestry of overlapping, contingent, and incommensurable spaces of production whose features change and blend into new aesthetic systems.”⁵⁶⁰ While the field cannot be defined spatially, the authors specify that contemporary African art emerges in the *postcolonial* period, in response to the “end” of both colonialism and “traditional art.”⁵⁶¹ “Traditional art” is defined as a “a storehouse of powerful artistic achievements” of the (seemingly precolonial) period, which “continue to exert influence beyond Africa.”⁵⁶² Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu reject modernist binaries opposing the traditional and the modern, which assumed traditional African art to consist of timeless, anonymously produced, hermetically closed “tribal” styles.⁵⁶³ Although they acknowledge that “traditional” African art has always been subject to change, Enwezor and Okeke exclude all art forms that fall within the “traditional” realm from the field of contemporary African art. While, in acknowledgement of the fact that these art forms are still produced on the continent today, curators such as Susan Vogel had included “traditional art” into their mega-shows on contemporary African art, the authors’ radical exclusion of these art forms in their survey has to be recognized as a strategic maneuver that seeks to dislodge the prevalent conflation of African art with carved ritual

⁵⁵⁹ Olu Oguibe, “In the Heart of Darkness,” *The Culture Game*, 6; N’Goné Fall, “The Repositioning of Contemporary Art from Africa on the Map,” (2011).

⁵⁶⁰ Enwezor, *Contemporary African Art*, 26.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid. 16.

⁵⁶² Ibid., 12 and 13.

⁵⁶³ Sidney Littlefield Kasfir, “One Tribe, One Style? Paradigms in the Historiography of African Art,” *History in Africa*, vol. 11 (1984): 163-193.

objects.⁵⁶⁴ The authors explicitly justify this exclusion by positing “de-skilling” as another defining feature of contemporary African art. Just like modern artists in Europe moved away from technically skilled academic naturalism, contemporary African artists today no longer work in the media and formal languages of “traditional” African arts, although they might strategically allude to them. The authors do not nostalgically mourn the devaluation of traditional art on the continent, but acknowledge that political, cultural, and economic encounters on the continent and beyond have always resulted in the continuous reinvention of artistic forms of expression. Yet, as Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu outline in their third chapter, the acceleration of globalization in the post-1989 era resulted in an unprecedented increase of transnational cultural exchanges and borrowings, and the adoption of border-crossings-as-strategy, so that the fundamental characteristic of all contemporary art forms, including contemporary African art, is an awareness of their simultaneous existence in a global sphere and the dissolution of distinguishable regional styles and forms.⁵⁶⁵ What holds contemporary African art together as a field, in their opinion, is not a coherent aesthetic or a specific geographic situatedness. Instead, contemporary African art can be conceived as a platform of sorts, constituted by an array of vantage points from which specific postcolonial concerns, issues, and concepts can be explored.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁴ Olu Oguibe, “Africa Explores. Twentieth-Century African Art,” review in *African Arts* 26, no. 1 (January 1993):16, 18, 20-22.

⁵⁶⁵ Enwezor and Okeke, *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*, 23.

⁵⁶⁶ Okeke-Agulu et. al, “Roundtable II: Contemporary African Art History and Scholarship,” *Nka.Journal of Contemporary African Art* 26 (Spring 2010), 93.

In spite of situating contemporary African Art as a postcolonial development that is informed by the “epistemological architecture of the decolonization movements between 1945 and 1980,” the authors focus their survey on the decades since 1980.⁵⁶⁷ They substantiate this temporal demarcation by tracing a shift between the “postcolonial utopia” of the 1960s, when artists’ efforts converged with the pressing political tasks of decolonization, popular nationalism and the creation of a ‘usable past’ (as exemplified by the Nsukka School in Nigeria), and the subsequent “postcolonial realism” in the face of economic decline, corrupt postcolonial state apparatus, and political instabilities. In this time period, global economic asymmetries were consolidated through the introduction of the International Monetary Fund’s neoliberal Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). The end of the Cold War and the politically and economically dire situation in Nigeria and in other African states in the aftermath of the SAPs and in the face of wide spread corruption, resulted in a massive exodus of privileged and educated Africans to Europe or the United States. Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu acknowledge that this development, which is often referred to as the “brain drain”, introduced a dialectic into the field of contemporary African art between so-called “diaspora” and “continental” artists and scholars. Cultural practitioners of the diaspora, such as Yinka Shonibare MBE and Okwui Enwezor or Chika Okeke-Agulu themselves, studied and practice in Europe or the United States, have access to multifarious resources and institutions, and therefore enjoy an increased visibility on a global market. Meanwhile, continental artists and scholars who do not have the same resources

⁵⁶⁷ Enwezor and Okeke, *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*, 16.

at their disposal more easily suffer invisibility in the Euro-North American art-institutional network.⁵⁶⁸ The authors contrast attempts by some contemporary African artists to further a “worlding” of African aesthetic production by assuming a transnational, cosmopolitan identity in their work and self-presentation and shaking off markers of identity such as ethnicity, religion, or nation; with the concurrent development of a “continentalism” among some artists and curators, who embrace a “prideful authenticity” in response to the global reception of these diaspora artists. While the diaspora artists continue to be faced by institutional frameworks in Europe and the United States that seek to “Africanize” (or reterritorialize) their work, as the discussion of Shonibare’s reception has sought to demonstrate, they are also perceived as “privileged exports, to be enjoyed only in the West” by proponents of “continentalism”.⁵⁶⁹ Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu reject the continent-diaspora binary as creating a “simplistic line between residents and expatriates, between natives and transnationals, continentalists and diasporists” and claim that the debate ultimately comes down to geopolitics and the persistent neocolonial asymmetries characterizing globalization. They propose that critical attention should instead address issues of resource control and how artists working on the continent are valorized on the continent versus those who are received abroad.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁸ Enwezor and Okeke, *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*, 24.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The Romanticization of Deterritorialization and Nomadism

Sylvester Ogbechie acknowledges the importance of Okwui Enwezor's efforts for the validation of contemporary African art, but fundamentally disagrees with his hegemonic definition of the field on various accounts.⁵⁷¹ His main challenge is directed at Enwezor's curatorial discourse of a "global contemporary" art context and its assumption of a "free flow" of cultural producers in a "deterritorialized" realm. Ogbechie emphatically rejects the term globalization, because it too easily glosses over a violent history of colonization, exploitation and "Westernization" of less powerful parts of the world, which resulted in a disequilibrium still held in place today through the global network of naval bases that secure U.S. imperial hegemony.⁵⁷² He thus implicitly counters Enwezor's assumption of a deterritorialized, decentered "Empire" as described by Hardt and Negri as an apt model for describing our contemporary constellation.⁵⁷³ To him, Enwezor's curatorial discourse on deterritorialization and itineracy appears misplaced at a time when "Fortress Europe" is increasingly closing its borders to Africans. With a passport from an African country in hand, Ogbechie observes, the world is frequently *not* experienced as a deterritorialized realm, as visas are denied and physical border-crossings require considerable amounts of time, money, and

⁵⁷¹ Sylvester Ogbechie, "The Curator as Culture Broker," *AACHRONYM*, June 16, 2010, <http://aachronym.blogspot.de/2010/06/curator-as-culture-broker-critique-of.html>; Ogbechie, "The Perils of Unilateral Power: Neo-Modernist Metaphors and the New Global Order", in: Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor and Nancy Condee (eds.), *Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 165-186; Ogbechie, "Where is Africa in Contemporary African Art?" *Savvy. Art.Contemporary.African*, ed. 1 (2011): 24-31; available online at <http://www.savvy-journal.com/>;

⁵⁷² Ogbechie, "The Perils of Unilateral Power," 171f.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 165f.

patience.⁵⁷⁴ While goods, images, assets, or investments do move globally with a new fluidity, national legislations ensure that the majority of the world population is not or only selectively mobile so that transnational corporations and trade can take competitive advantage of spatialized inequalities.⁵⁷⁵

Moreover, what is not sufficiently emphasized in Enwezor's curatorial discourse is Deleuze and Guattari's contention that deterritorialization is inevitably accompanied by the complementary force of "reterritorialization" in which a new stability is sought.⁵⁷⁶ Deterritorialization without a consideration of reterritorialization cannot account for the ways in which artists like Shonibare continue to be confined by race discourses that reinscribe their "Africanness", despite their attempts to work transculturally. Shonibare's efforts to create an "in-betweenness" that defies the binary logic of European nationhood and difference, by grafting signifiers of Africa onto scenes identified as European, have too easily been recuperated by postmodern celebrations of culture mixing that are based on the assumption of preexisting cultural purities. These work in tandem with the cultural logic of global capitalism rather than defying it, because deterritorialization and nomadic travel are not necessarily radically anti-capitalist strategies, but as Robert Young has argued, "one brutal mode of capitalism itself."⁵⁷⁷

The language of de/reterritorialization cannot provide a sustainable critique because it does not account for the power imbalances in which the

⁵⁷⁴ Ogbechie, "Where is Africa in Contemporary African Art?" 26.

⁵⁷⁵ Stuart Hall, "Creolization, Diaspora, Hybridity," 195.

⁵⁷⁶ Sutton, Damian and Martin-Jones David (eds.), *Deleuze Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 7.

⁵⁷⁷ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 164.

processes of voiding and reinscribing meaning tend to take place.⁵⁷⁸ Young further suggests that processes such as decoding, recoding, and overcoding, and we might extend this to the processes of de/reterritorialization, “imply a form of cultural appropriation that does not do justice to the complexities in the ways in which cultures interact, degenerate, and develop over time in relation to each other. Decoding and recoding implies too simplistic a grafting of one culture onto another.”⁵⁷⁹ Shonibare’s recuperation into hegemonic discourses thus becomes possible, in part, because his transcultural installations do not sufficiently speak to the historical complexities, asymmetries, and violences within which these cultural interactions and interdependencies took place. After all, the cultural exchanges of colonial encounters were always much more complex than a mere voiding of the indigenous and a reinscription of the colonial meaning. British colonial power, for instance, involved the grafting of a colonial infrastructure onto existent indigenous cultures, which resulted in a two-way process of cultural dissemination and mixing that de/reterritorialization cannot adequately account for.⁵⁸⁰

Sylvester Ogbechie further notes that Enwezor’s scholarship and curatorial practice do not only include, but especially valorize diasporic producers who inhabit complex histories and trajectories.⁵⁸¹ The hypervisibility of a relatively small selection of African diaspora artists trained at U.S. and European art academies, who are implicated in discourses of postmodernity, has had the

⁵⁷⁸ Sutton and David. *Deleuze Reframed*, 7.

⁵⁷⁹ Young, *Colonial Desire*, 164.

⁵⁸⁰ Robert C. Young, *Colonial Desire*, 164.

⁵⁸¹ Ogbechie, “Where is Africa in Contemporary African Art?” Savvy. *Art.Contemporary.African*, ed. 1; available online at <http://www.savvy-journal.com/>, 24.

calamitous effect of once again writing continent-based African artists and African American artists out of art history.⁵⁸² Krista Thompson has addressed a related issue in the context of U.S. academia, pointing out that academic job postings now frequently search for scholars of “African diaspora and/or African art history,” resulting in a disciplinary collapse that does not suggest connection but substitution.⁵⁸³ Thompson argues that, since the publication of Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic* (1994), African Diaspora art history has increasingly focused on a critical revision and extension of Western notions of modernity, visuality, and representation. In the process, African diaspora art history’s original scholarly focus—Africa—has increasingly retreated from view. This substitution of African art history with African diaspora art history runs the risk of reifying the preoccupation with Eurocentric models of modernity while increasingly relegating Africa to the margins once again. Considerations of the Black Atlantic have been critiqued for treating Africa as a historical site of origin and purity that remains uncontaminated and plays no major role in subsequent black Atlantic cultural production.⁵⁸⁴ Ogbechie emphasizes that in order for a valid definition of contemporary art to emerge, artists, curators, and art historians must also consider how localities such as Lagos are produced through engagements with global influences.⁵⁸⁵ He is careful to emphasize that he is

not making a nationalistic or ethnically framed argument here. I believe that it is possible to recognize the disparate locations of African artists

⁵⁸² Ogbechie, “Where is Africa in Contemporary African Art?”, 24.

⁵⁸³ Krista Thompson, “A Sidelong Glance: The Practice of African Diaspora Art History in the United States,” *Art Journal* (Fall 2011): 7-31.

⁵⁸⁴ Charles Piot, “Atlantic Aporias. Africa and Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic*,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 155-170; 156.

⁵⁸⁵ Ogbechie, “Where is Africa in Global Contemporary Art?” *Savvy*, 26.

and Africans on a global continuum and their increasing visibility in an interaction with the West while centering Africa itself as a site of globalization and important context of contemporaneity.⁵⁸⁶

If Appadurai's model of culture in our global society is taken seriously and if we consider George Shepperson's original articulation of diaspora as including considerations of dispersal on and the continent itself, then the African continent itself must be reconceived as marked by transcultural histories and diasporic movements. Consider, for instance, art historian Nkiru Nzegwu's description of mid-nineteenth century Lagos:

A burgeoning cultural centre had begun to develop with the influx into Lagos of numerous Christian missionary groups, Sierra Leonean immigrants (or Saro), self-emancipated Africans from Brazil (Agudos or Assimiliados, as they were known), Egbas from Abeokuta, Oyos, Ilesha, and Ijebas from Yoruba heartland, Akans from the Gold Coast, and European (English, German, Austrian, and Italian) merchants of different trading missions. Yorubas travelled back and forth between home in the hinterland [...] and the coast. [...] The presence of this diverse multiethnic, and multicultural population gave cosmopolitan Lagos a vibrancy and independence at odds with the picture of passive subjugation we regularly encounter in colonial literature.⁵⁸⁷

Ogbechie does not dismiss artists such as Shonibare as less or more authentically African than his continent-based counterparts. Instead, against conceptions of a "free-floating" global art context, he privileges a translocal art historical practice, which recognizes the transcultural influences on art-making everywhere, while also taking into account the "the vagaries of place and time specificity, [...] of how artists are located within the physical and psychological

⁵⁸⁶ Ogbechie, "Where is Africa in Global Contemporary Art?" Savvy, 25.

⁵⁸⁷ Nkiru Nzegwu, "The Concept of Modernity in Contemporary African Art," 408-409.

reality of their local spaces of practice and also within the politics of access to transnational space.”⁵⁸⁸

It is this “politics of access” which the artistic ideal of nomadism, which is frequently elicited in discussions of contemporary art today, fails to account for. Nomadism is another term culled from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. They defined it as a form of opposition to the state’s hegemonic codes of categorization that works with strategies of multiplicity, cultural and social border crossings, and deterritorialization that serve to evade fixed interpretations.⁵⁸⁹ According to this definition, Shonibare’s work, in its attempt to produce an incessant slippage of cultural signifiers, aptly encapsulates the concepts of nomadism and deterritorialization. But, as Carol Becker has noted, the concept of “nomadism” does not distinguish clearly enough between the privilege of voluntary migrants that travel at will to expand their worlds, including artists such as Yinka Shonibare MBE; and those laborers and refugees who have no other choice but to migrate for economic survival, to escape wars, violence, political and/or religious oppression.⁵⁹⁰ In each case, exile, migration, and nomadic travel mean very different things.

In sum, the shortcomings that define contemporary art discourses of nomadism and deterritorialization are to be located in their failure to account for the various social stratifications that govern movement in our planetary system,

⁵⁸⁸ Ogbechie, “Where is Africa in Contemporary African Art?” Savvy, ed. 1

⁵⁸⁹ Robert C. Young, *Colonial Desire*, 163.

⁵⁹⁰ Carol Becker, “The Romance of Nomadism. A Series of Reflections,” *Art Journal* 58, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 22-29; Claudette Lauzon, “Reluctant Nomads: Biennial Culture and its Discontents,” *RACAR:: revue d’art canadienne/Canadian Art Review* 36, no. 2 (2011): 15-30; Mignolo, *Local Histories, Global Designs*, 72.

their lacking acknowledgement of the ways in which black artists are reterritorialized in the course of reception, and for obscuring the unevenness of nation-based infrastructures that facilitate access to a global art scene. Despite the popular rhetoric of deterritorialized globalization, national representation is not a thing of the past and the biennial circuit might even be regarded as preserving and serving the model of the nation-state. Like the world expositions that preceded them, biennials contribute to the construction of local, national and continental identities, even when they simultaneously function to position a given country as a member of a cosmopolitan globality.⁵⁹¹ Moreover, despite the decentralizing power of supranational organizations and transnational corporations, people continue to fundamentally depend on nation-states to guarantee their human rights and marginalized communities must fight against their invisibility against a certain delimited community. National considerations play a role also when poorer countries that lack substantial institutional infrastructures such as galleries, museums, magazines, policies, and money cannot compete with countries that can provide these infrastructures, such as Britain, Germany, France, Japan and South Korea.⁵⁹² Given the lack of state funding for the arts that still mark countries like Nigeria (despite significant transformations currently taking place, which will be described below), the utopian nature of discourses of “deterritorialization” and “nomadism” are more than evident to artists who operate outside of the Euroamerican institutional network. Art historian Sunanda Sanyal aptly summarizes that

⁵⁹¹ Nuit Banai, “From Nation-State to Border State,” *Third Text* 27, no. 4 (2013): 456-469.

⁵⁹² Bydler, *The Global Art World*, Inc., 154.

The fact is, the authority of Western cultural institutions over the production of knowledge and meaning—their now-weakened national economies notwithstanding—has yet to show any significant signs of decline. Take, for example, an Indian and a Nigerian artist, each widely exhibited and favorably received in Asia and Africa, respectively. It is highly unlikely that their success would be seen, at home or abroad, as equal to that of others from the same two countries who have made their way into the galleries, residencies, and collections of western Europe and North America, but are little known in the other continents. One's "global" art career, in other words, is still very much defined by one's recognition in the West.⁵⁹³

If the first three case studies have been concerned with how Shonibare's deterritorialized installations were reterritorialized in historically and geographically specific settings, then this last chapter on Nigeria also aims to consider how Shonibare was received, both in the course of an artist talk he delivered in Nigeria in 2011 and through a consideration of his recent installation *Wind Sculpture VI* in Ndubuisi Park, Lagos.

Shonibare in Lagos

In April of 2011, Shonibare returned to the city of his childhood and youth, Lagos, Nigeria, after a thirty-year absence to speak about his artistic practice to an assembled audience of art aficionados, collectors, family and other relations at *Terra Kulture*. "E ku role, Eku joko," he greeted his audience in Yoruba and provided a slide-show survey of his work ranging from his early painting installation such as, *Deep Blue* (1997), to his most recent public art success,

⁵⁹³ Sunanda K. Sanyal, "Global: A View from the Margin," *African Arts* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 1;4.

Nelson's Ship in a Bottle (2010).⁵⁹⁴ He was received with a warm welcome, with many in attendance expressing pride and deriving inspiration from the global success and visibility their compatriot has received. In a Q&A session following his presentation, an audience member questioned Shonibare what Nigerians can hold on to as “their own” in his work.⁵⁹⁵ Shonibare rejected the assumption that there should be something specifically Nigerian about his work, replying, “I am free as Picasso and I can do what I want. We are global.”⁵⁹⁶ Although Shonibare’s claim is tempered by the argument I have developed in the first three chapters, which have shown how Shonibare’s artistic expressions continue to be constrained by the race discourses that structure the European art institutional network, his statement needs to be understood as a performative gesture asserting his entitlement to reject, yet again, the “burden of representation”.

His talk was given as part of the Lagos-based Centre for Contemporary Art’s “Art-iculate” lecture series and occasioned by his participation in the transnational exhibition, *The Progress of Love*, which was co-organized by the Centre for Contemporary Art, in Lagos; the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas; and the Pulitzer Foundation in St. Louis, Missouri, from late 2012 to early 2013. The Centre for Contemporary Art [from now on CCA] was founded by curator Bisi Silva, who holds a degree from the Royal College of Arts in London, in 2007. CCA was conceived as an intervention into the Lagosian art scene through its

⁵⁹⁴ Ozolua Uhakheme, “I am free as Picasso,” *The Nation*, April 27, 2011, accessed May 10, 2011, <http://thenationonlineeng.net/2011/index.php/art/life-midweek-magazine/4194-'i-am-free-as-picasso'.html>.

⁵⁹⁵ Titilayo Olarin, “A Revolution in the Studio” May 1, 2011, *next*, accessed May 10, 2011, <http://234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/ArtsandCulture/5694707-147/story.csp>.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

prioritization of performance, photography, installation and new media practices, which had, until then, not been widely received or practiced in a painting- and sculpture-dominated Lagos.⁵⁹⁷ The CCA has perpetuated an integrationist approach that networks transnationally with various other cultural institutions and taps financial resources provided by international foundations such as the Prince Claus Foundation.⁵⁹⁸ The three institutions involved in *The Progress of Love* did not co-curate a single touring exhibition, but conceived independent shows in each location which were conceptually unified by their joint investigation of contemporary notions of love and its various stages, and materially connected by a shared exhibition catalog and website.⁵⁹⁹ The exhibition provided a model for working transnationally while evading expensive loan and transportation fees that stifle the circulation of art on the African continent.⁶⁰⁰ Although Shonibare traveled to Lagos for his artist talk in advance of the show, his work was in fact not presented at the CCA exhibition in Lagos, but was featured at the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas. Shonibare stated that, although he was initially invited to exhibit his work in Lagos, he could not find an exhibition space that met the international standards that he requires for displays of his work.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁷ Jess Castellote (ed.), *Contemporary Nigerian Art in Lagos Private Collections. New Trees in Old Forests* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Bookcraft, 2012).

⁵⁹⁸ Kerstin Pinther, Berit Fischer and Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi (eds.), *New Spaces of Negotiating Art (and) Histories in Nigeria* (Series: African Art and Visual Cultures, vol 2. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2015).

⁵⁹⁹ Phillips de Pury & Company, "The Progress of Love," exhibition website, last modified February 19, 2013, <http://www.theprogressoflove.com/>.

⁶⁰⁰ Kazeem Adeleke, *In a New Light. Conversations with Nine Nigerian Artists and Curators* (Baltimore: PublishAmerica, 2011), 164.

⁶⁰¹ Sarah Cartledge, "Yinka Shonibare MBE", August 21, 2013 <http://www.fascinatingnigeriamagazine.com/2013/08/yinka-shonibare-mbe-2/>.

During his visit, Bisi Silva and Azu Nwagbogu, founder of the African Artist Foundation, filled Shonibare in on the challenges experienced by cultural practitioners in Lagos.⁶⁰² Lagos boasts an expanding contemporary art scene and the foundation of new cultural institutions have significantly invigorated the city's artscape in recent years. But artists continue to face inadequate exhibition spaces, lacking in-depth art criticism and financial support, and an education at art academies that is largely focused on painting and sculpture — media that will readily sell in Nigeria, but that are less desired on the international art markets and biennial circuits.⁶⁰³ Given the limited nature of state-sponsorship of the arts, artists based in Lagos primarily depend on the dedication and financial support of corporations, individual collectors such as Yemisi Adedoyin Shyllon, Rasheed Gbadamosi and Samuel Olagbaju, and foreign cultural institutes such as the Goethe Institute and the British Council.⁶⁰⁴ While some Lagos-based artists participate on international art scenes and travel transnationally, others primarily cater to the aesthetic tastes and preferences of local elites and expatriates, who

⁶⁰² Tajudeen Sowole, "From Shonibare. British Touch on Art from Motherland," *Nigerian Guardian*, April 26, 2011, accessed May 10, 2011, http://ngrguardiannews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article...onibare-british-touch-on-art-of-motherland&catid=74:arts&Itemid=683

⁶⁰³ For summaries of the transformations Lagos' art scene is undergoing in recent years see Bisi Silva, "Lagos", *Artforum* 47, no. 4 (2008): 237–239; Antawan I. Byrd and Reid Shier (eds.), *Art Cities of the Future: 21st Century Avantgardes* (London: Phaidon Press, 2013); Kerstin Pinther, Berit Fischer and Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi (eds.) *New Spaces of Negotiating Art (and) Histories in Nigeria*, Series: African Art and Visual Cultures, vol 2 (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2015).

⁶⁰⁴ The artistic career of Ghanaian artist El Anatsui, who lives, practices, and teaches in Nigeria and is received on a "global" art market (as the Germany chapter demonstrated) is a marked exception to this rule.

prefer the media of painting and sculpture and privilege local aesthetics and themes.⁶⁰⁵

This situation is starting to change, however, as a result of initiatives instigated by Bisi Silva and others, a trend that curator N'gone Fall describes as characteristic across the African continent:

And then came a disillusioned generation which wasn't expecting much from an apathetic political cast and aware that change will not be simply awarded but rather has to be conquered. Their motto: if you want to make it happen here and now, help yourself and God will help you. Returning to their homeland with a PHD in art history or a Master in curatorial practices, the current generation of art professionals is the architect of the important transformations one can notice in Africa. The private initiatives they have implemented have impacted the landscape by strongly questioning both public African cultural policies and foreign cultural cooperation programs as well as by breaking the monopoly hold on exhibition spaces by European cultural centers in Africa.⁶⁰⁶

In addition to the opening of the CCA, the year 2007 also witnessed the foundation of Arthouse Contemporary, an auction house in Lagos dedicated to the sale of modern and contemporary West African art, and the Omooba Yemisi Shyllon Art Foundation (OYASAF), which collects modern and contemporary Nigerian art and supports both international scholars and artists by providing residencies and fellowships within its premises. *Terra Kulture*, where Shonibare's artist talk was held, is a cultural center founded by businesswoman and art enthusiast Bolanle Austen-Peters in 2004 and features an art gallery and a library, but focuses on theatrical productions in particular. As such, Lagos is increasingly being placed on the map of contemporary artistic and cultural

⁶⁰⁵ Bisi Silva, "Lagos", *Artforum* 47, no. 4 (2008): 237–239.

⁶⁰⁶ N'goné Fall, "The Repositioning of Contemporary Art from Africa on the Map", Newsletter/Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, Nigeria. no. 14 (January/April 2012):4-5.

practice thanks to the dedication and initiative of individual entrepreneurs determined to counter the dearth of state—funded institutional support for contemporary artists on the continent.⁶⁰⁷ In an exclusive interview with, *Fascinating Nigeria* upon his return from Nigeria, Shonibare stated that he, too, feels a “sense of duty” to give back and, having secured the support of world-class architect David Adjaye, he has initiated plans for creating a museum of Contemporary Art and Design in Lagos. He noted

I would be looking for funding initially for a good strong business plan because I want it to be a commercially viable project. There should be a shop that would support the work of the designers and possibly a restaurant. I don't think it should be a museum in the long term that is dependent on public money. The research I am gathering will show the size of the art economy, the number of artists and museums, the tourist industry, how this type of project might boost the career of designers and artists and also the tourist industry so it is comprehensive.⁶⁰⁸

Diasporic artists such as Yinka Shonibare are thus beginning to invest money and time to contribute to the improvement of infrastructures for the arts in Lagos and elsewhere. Maybe it is also an outcome of his visit that, in association with the British Council in Nigeria, a version of Shonibare's series *Wind Sculptures* was featured at Ndubuisi Kanu Park in Lagos from November 1, 2016 to January 31, 2016, marking the first exhibition of Shonibare's work in the country of his childhood.

⁶⁰⁷ Chika Okeke-Agulu et. al, “Contemporary African Art History and Scholarship,” *Nka. Journal of Contemporary African Art* 26 (Spring 2010): 81-151; 82; Yemesi Shyllon, “The Role of Government and Other Stakeholders,” *Issues in Contemporary Nigerian Art*, ed. by Juliet Ezenwa Maja-Pearce (Lagos: The New Gong, 2015), 35-38.

⁶⁰⁸ Sarah Cartledge, “Yinka Shonibare MBE”, *Fascinating Nigeria*, August 21, 2013, accessed December 1 2016, <file:///Users/johannawild/Desktop/Shonibare%20/articles%20/Shonibare%20Articles/Fascinating%20Nigeria%20-%20YINKA%20SHONIBARE%20MBE.webarchive>.

The Migratory Movement of Shonibare's *Wind Sculpture* series and the Performance of Authenticity in Global Art Contexts

The British Council's website announced that Shonibare's *Wind Sculpture VI* will be displayed at the Ndubuisi Kanu Park in Lagos from Tuesday, November 18, 2016 until Tuesday, January 31, 2016 (Fig. 45).⁶⁰⁹ The installation is part of a larger series of works dubbed *Wind Sculptures* and its mounting in Lagos was accompanied by a movie screening and a talk delivered by Shonibare. Shonibare recounts that his *Wind Sculptures* were inspired by his work on *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, when the billowing sails of the naval battle ship made him consider the effects of wind on fabric.⁶¹⁰ The *Wind Sculptures* abandon the deployment of mannequins or objects culled from European modernity and work with bolts of Dutch Wax fabrics alone. Roughly twenty-feet tall, the shapes of these conceptual *Wind Sculptures* are computer-generated and subsequently constructed from fiberglass, which is mounted on steel armatures and hand-painted with a variety of Dutch Wax fabric patterns. Yet, the paint application for the *Wind Sculptures* evidences a glossy finish that does not suggest the artist's hand but passes as mechanically produced. Despite the rigidity of the fiberglass and the considerable weight of the underlying steel skeleton, the sculptures convey a dynamic weightlessness that captures the effects of wind and share the instantaneity of arrested movement that also mark his installations.

⁶⁰⁹ "Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA): Wind Sculpture VI in Lagos," accessed December 1, 2016, <https://www.britishcouncil.org.ng/events/yinka-shonibare-wind-sculpture-lagos>.

⁶¹⁰ "The Making of Yinka Shonibare's Wind Sculptures," *Mediorite*, accessed November 4, 2016, <https://vimeo.com/92138642>.

Shonibare's *Wind Sculptures* have been installed in a range of locations in the United States and Europe (Figs. 46-48). A previous edition of the *Wind Sculpture VI* exhibited in Lagos was mounted at both the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and at the National Maritime Museum in England. Another *Wind Sculpture* decorates Howick Place in central London, while a further one was temporarily shown in the exterior sculpture garden of the Gerisch-Stiftung in Neumünster, Germany; three versions of his *Wind Sculptures* were commissioned by the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art to decorate its entrance plaza in 2014, and the permanent installation of *Wind Sculpture VII* is currently underway outside of the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C. This list is not exhaustive, with further *Wind Sculptures* installed at the Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln, Nebraska, in Miami Beach, Florida, and at the New Orleans Museums of Art, among other locations.⁶¹¹ In an interview marking the installation of his *Wind Sculpture VII* at the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C., Shonibare asserted that

the work really is about migration, it's about travel, it's also about the mixture of different cultures because the fabrics that the work actually depicts have their origins in Indonesia and also in Holland. And now Africa. So I like that mixing of cultures that actually exists in the identity of the fabrics [...] we know about the trade winds, and we know that a lot of people, particularly in the United States, got here by the sea. So the sea is also very much the history of the United States. And it's the history of most of us. Most of us actually are migrants. And so the piece also does represent the movement of people, migration, which is the story

⁶¹¹ Email exchange with India Alexander from Stephen Friedman Gallery, November 28, 2016.

that makes up our individual identities as people. I think in America, this is a very, very important subject.⁶¹²

It becomes evident here how critiques of the discourses of deterritorialization and nomadism outlined above apply to Shonibare's framing of his *Wind Sculptures*. In his statement, Shonibare elevates migration and culture mixing as values in and of themselves without distinguishing the various *forms* of migration that have resulted in the current, multicultural composition of U.S. society. Nor does his work attend to the power asymmetries through which this cultural mixing and movement took place. Slaves who were brought to the United States through the transatlantic slave trade, Irish farmers fleeing starvation during the Great Famine, European Jews finding refuge from Nazism, undocumented immigrants from Mexico working on fruit farms in California, various Europeans searching religious freedom and economic possibilities, and the children of elites from Africa and elsewhere who are sent to the U.S. universities to study, are all pooled and homogenized in a celebratory discourse of migration and culture mixing that does not attend to the violences and asymmetries that have elicited and accompanied these movements. As such, Shonibare's artworks, while both exploiting and claiming to subvert signifiers of "Africaness", ultimately stay aloof from the realities of the social conditions of migration and of blackness in specific times and places.

In her consideration of the expanded concept of site-specificity in contemporary art, Miwon Kwon noted that while site-specificity was originally

⁶¹² Andrew Beaujon, "The National Museum of African Art is About to Have an Amazing Sculpture Outside," *Washingtonian*, accessed November 20, 2016, <https://www.washingtonian.com/2016/11/11/yinka-shonibare-national-museum-african-art-washington-dc/>

related to the phenomenological experience of a particular place, the “site-specificity” of art works has been broadened to include political and social issues as a discursive “sites” of artistic investigation that might subordinate place-based site-specificity or render it irrelevant altogether.⁶¹³ Shonibare’s *tableaux vivants* might be regarded as site-specific in this latter sense. As has been noted throughout this study, the “discursive site” of Shonibare’s work, which was developed as a result of his experience of living in London as a black man, can be located in his attempt to deconstruct stereotypes of black people in Europe and to trouble essentialized identities that persist as inheritances of slavery, racism and colonialism.⁶¹⁴ Early on in his career he specifically emphasized that his deployment of Dutch Wax,

refers to the experience of the urban African arts...and these fabrics are industrially manufactured. They contain motifs from alphabets to footballs and are reproduced over and over again. I want to incorporate this symptom of commodification into my work...there is a deliberate denial of the authentic in this installation. The fabrics are bought from shops and they do not correspond to the primitivist expressionism epitomised by the Nigerian Oshogbo school of the 1960s.⁶¹⁵

Yet, once his characteristic, racially ambiguous mannequins and the European scenarios they reenact are removed, can we really still claim that the materiality of Dutch Wax fabrics blowing in the wind convey the message of “cultural fluidity” to audiences by deconstructing claims to cultural “authenticity”, or that they present references to maritime trade and migration? This really only holds true in circles where Dutch Wax fabrics have been readily “reified” and where his

⁶¹³ Miwon Kwon, “One Place After Another. Notes on Site Specificity,” *October* 80 (Spring 1997): 85-110.

⁶¹⁴ Picton, “Undressing Ethnicity”, 9.

⁶¹⁵ Cited from Picton, “Undressing Ethnicity,” 69.

installations have themselves become fetishized commodities that are associated with his mantra of cultural hybridity. Just like Bertold Brecht once noted that a photograph of a factory tells you nothing about the labor relations within it, the incessant reproduction of Dutch Wax fabrics blowing in the wind reveals nothing about the various voiding processes they underwent to reemerge as fetishized, epidermalized commodities of cultural “authenticity” in Europe and elsewhere. As noted in the introduction, the search for “authenticity” is a peculiarly modern phenomenon, which emerged from a sense of loss and fragmentation and is counteracted through the consumption of certain objects and materials that are essentialized as expressions of specific cultural origins.⁶¹⁶ Stripped of their original context and social norms of usage, these reified, “authentic” objects are reintegrated into a cultural chain of added value for consumers that serve as a source of self-renewal in cosmopolitan self-construction.⁶¹⁷ As such, and certainly in places like London and Chicago, his *Wind Sculptures* offer colorful, dynamic and decontextualized speckles of aestheticized cultural difference floating through corporate city centers.

In an interview on the making of the *Wind Sculpture* for Howick Place in central London, Shonibare emphasized formal concerns as crucial for the production of his *Wind Sculptures*, which, he argued, stand in contrast to the straight lines and organized geometries of the metropolitan and corporate architectures surrounding them, by conveying a sense of organic movement. As

⁶¹⁶ Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity. The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997); Sylvanus, “The Fabrics of Africanity,” 205.

⁶¹⁷ Sylvanus, “The Fabrics of Africanity”, 202.

such, his *Wind Sculptures* might be understood as revisiting concerns of his early conceptual paintings, such as *Double Dutch* (1994), which aimed to deconstruct Greenbergian formalism, the grid, and the ostensible “purity” of modern art in Europe.⁶¹⁸ His installation *Double Dutch* (1994) consisted of fifty, small rectangular frames stretched with a variety of Dutch Wax fabrics (Fig. 49). Shonibare traced the fabrics’ colored patterns with acrylic paint to imbue them with painterly texture, and installed them in a geometric grid against a pink background.⁶¹⁹ By introducing these “ethnically” coded, epidermalized textiles into the seriality of the grid, and ironicizing modernism’s bravura brushwork with his neat tracing of preordained, machine-produced fabric patterns, *Double Dutch* constituted an early attempt at blurring genres and categorizations of mass culture, craft, and “high” art. His *Wind Sculptures* might be seen to play with conceptual concerns of this sort, as celebrating the “artness” of commercially produced Dutch Wax fabrics themselves. But, ultimately, his *Wind Sculpture* series provides fetishized markers of cultural difference while the discourse of “migration” that is invoked to frame them contributes to a capitalist amnesia that would like to forget the asymmetries within which these cultural exchanges happened in the first place. As such, I would argue that Shonibare’s *Wind Sculptures* are less invested in deauthentication, but demonstrate his fluency in global contemporary art discourses.

⁶¹⁸ Olu Oguibe, *The Culture Game*, 39f.

⁶¹⁹ He stated: “...it is important I don’t go to Africa to buy them, so that all African exotic implications remain fake. And I actually like that fakes.” Jaap Gudemond and Gabriele Mackert, “To Entertain and Provoke: Western Influences in the Work of Yinka Shonibare MBE,” in *Yinka Shonibare: Double Dutch*, ed. Jaap Gudemond, Gabriele Mackert, and Barbara van Kooij (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen; Vienna: Kunsthalle Wien; Rotterdam: NAI publishers, 2004), 41.

But to move on to the latest iteration of Shonibare's *Wind Sculpture VII* in Lagos, Nigeria, how would his monumental, twirling piece of fabric have worked here? In his article, "Yinka Shonibare. Undressing Ethnicity," John Picton opened up a consideration of what specific relevances West African audiences might attribute to Shonibare's deployment of Dutch Wax fabrics.⁶²⁰ While for most white European viewers, the fabrics Shonibare deploys are perceived as generic markers of African cultural difference, how might knowledge of the textiles' iconographies and patterns; of their deployment in social and ceremonial practices such as weddings, where families often wear dresses tailored from the same fabric; and their close association with women-dominated market economies and naming-practices, alter the reception of Shonibare's work in Nigeria? Since the textiles are not tied to a specific ethnic identity in Nigeria, but experienced popular reception precisely because of their foreign origins and their associations with modernity, they were easily taken up as symbols of Pan-African nationalism in the context of decolonization. Would Shonibare's deployment of Dutch Wax fabrics for his *Wind Sculpture VI* be primarily received as an expression and reminder of a former Pan-African pride and optimistic nationalism that has suffered from the "postcolonial realism" that has ensued after decades of ethnic conflict and class-based and neocolonial exploitation in Nigeria?

At least for art aficionados in Lagos, Shonibare's *Wind Sculpture VII* would likely serve to validate Lagos' increasing importance within a neoliberal art institutional network, by adding "a Shonibare" into the cityscape, right along with London, Chicago, and Washington D.C. In Lagos, Shonibare's work might not

⁶²⁰ Picton, "Undressing Ethnicity," 93-95.

appeal to audiences on the basis of its “exotic” authenticity, given that Dutch Wax fabrics are “the most worn and the most valued fabric in West Africa”, but would serve as evidence of Lagos as an emergent point of cultural interest within the “global” art world.⁶²¹ The installation of *Wind Sculpture* closely coincided with the inaugural opening of the *Art X Lagos Art Fair* directed by curator Bisi Silva which, according to its website, is “a new art fair designed to widen Lagos’ connection to the contemporary art scene across Africa and internationally.”⁶²² Since Nigeria does not have its own biennial, the *Art X Lagos Art Fair* is the first large-scale effort to provide a central location that continental and international curators might frequent to discover Nigerian artists on the continent. Upon the unveiling of his *Wind Sculpture VI* in Lagos, Shonibare stated that he has purchased land in Lekki for the construction of an art museum so that adequate space will be established to preserve Nigerian art collections in the future. As such, Shonibare’s market-savvy installation of *Wind Sculpture VI* in Lagos might be seen to symbolize the incremental incorporation of Lagos into the “global” art institutional network.

⁶²¹ Nina Sylvanus, “The Fabric of Africanity. Tracing the Global Threads of Authenticity,” *Anthropological Theory*, 205.

⁶²² “Art X Lagos”, accessed December 1, 2016, <http://artxlagos.com/about-art-x-lagos/>.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation started out by asking how the art establishment's shift towards global inclusivity and multicultural normalization might be evaluated in light of Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA)'s hypervisibility in the established centers of cultural production. While Olu Oguibe optimistically praised Shonibare's installations as subversions of the authenticating effects of a postmodern "culture game" in 2001, Rasheed Araeen soberly testified to the immutable sameness of the art establishment's institutions in Europe in 2008. By considering the institutional framing and reception of Shonibare's art works in four case studies situated in England, Germany, France, and Nigeria, respectively, this study has attempted to show that the geographically and historically specific racisms and colonialisms that defined Great Britain, Germany, France, and Nigeria in the past, continue to impact the respective conceptions of nationhood and difference today.

Although organizations and institutions such as the Fourth Plinth Programme in England, the Berliner Nationalgalerie in Germany, and the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris have revisited the colonial past in light of a multicultural present, their engagements with colonial history still tend to flatten it into a dualistic narrative that pits colonizers against colonized. Institutional narratives remain attached to the self/other binary that has defined modern European subject formation since its inception. Although the present order no longer relies on the institutional exclusion of the "Other", its inclusion is based on the disavowal of the "Other's" possible sameness. As the discussion of Shonibare's work and his self-positioning in Europe aimed to show, this dualistic framework

fails to account for the ways in which the colonial difference and race are overdetermined by other stratifications, such as class and gender. Binaries between colonizer and colonized cannot accommodate the complex ambivalences that mark artistic positions such as Shonibare's, which are simultaneously complicit with and critical of Empire. Ultimately, Shonibare's installations, which graft African signifiers onto European scenes in an effort to produce "unbound" artworks marked by an incessant slippage of meaning, were recuperated into these dualistic institutional narratives and, as such, posed no subversive challenge to the status quo. This is the case because the instantaneous production of meaning always depends on an arbitrary interruption of the incessant slippage that characterizes *différance*. Therefore, in the course of reception, Shonibare's "hybrid" and "ironic" installations relapse into their cultural "origins" in Africa and Europe. As such, they come to serve the hegemonic narratives of a "weightless" postmodern culture mixing that underwrite rather than defy neoliberal capitalism's corporate multiculturalism. Moreover, as my final chapter on Nigeria argued, this recuperation into ahistorical narratives of a multicultural contemporaneity is enabled because Shonibare's "hybridizations" do not sufficiently attend to the power struggles and asymmetries that accompanied and continue to mark the cultural exchanges and interdependencies that his installations evoke.

Okwui Enwezor has aptly noted that, "if the mode of the postcolonial is resistance and subordination through transformation, then that of the nation is

consolidation and repetition through transfiguration.”⁶²³ While, in the 1990s, Arjun Appadurai optimistically predicted the disappearance of the nation-state as a relevant unit of analysis in the face of an increasing globalization, the resurgence of right—wing populism, Brexit, and racist anxieties and assaults in light of the refugee crisis, have brought the persistent purchase of national imaginaries and the limitations of a Eurocentrically conceived, supposedly “colorblind” European Union to the fore. Attempts to disarticulate ethnicity and nation by Stuart Hall and other diasporic thinkers was countered by the unilateral consensus of David Cameron, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy in 2010 that multiculturalism had utterly failed in Europe.⁶²⁴ This proclamation targeted second- and third-generation migrants as not properly belonging to these respective nations culturally, while failing to account for class differences that continue to marginalize them economically.⁶²⁵ Contemporary racisms in Europe thus primarily function through the insistence on totalizing conceptions of cultural difference. Yet, the self/other dichotomies that these official national discourses reiterate can no longer account for the globalized, networked, and diasporic world of the present and hold little explanatory value for complex subject positions such as Shonibare’s. My case studies have attempted to show that globalization must be approached as a deeply contradictory process that cannot be reduced to a postnational world order defined by deterritorialization and inhabited by nomadic, “post-identity” artists, but must simultaneously resist a

⁶²³ Okwui Enwezor, “The Postcolonial Constellation”, 70.

⁶²⁴ Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities,” *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 442-451.

⁶²⁵ El-Tayeb, *European Others*, xxxi.

relapse into ethnic and national provincialism and segregation. As Amelia Jones has aptly noted, we still need to make the transition

from a desire to see and know, mapped into European models of knowledge formation [...] in the early modern to high modern periods [...] to a nascent but growing sense that identity must be multiple, fluid, intersectional, performative, and contingent. This latter sense acknowledges without any defenses the potentially frightening and disorienting potential of accepting the impossibility of fixing identity; this acknowledgement is a key in countering the trend towards continued polarization of cultures.

While cultures are certainly transnational, the global economy is marked by persistent neocolonial asymmetries. As Everlyn Nicodemus noted in her critique of postmodernism, the performance of Western remorse does not suffice if it is based on an ahistorical weightlessness that does not attend to the continuance of epistemic violences and material inequities that mark our current world.⁶²⁶ Decolonial scholars such as Sylvia Wynter and Walter Mignolo have demonstrated how, over the last five-hundred years, ‘the West’ has brought the human species as whole into the homogenizing fold of successive and overlapping global designs that continue to define what it means to be fully human.⁶²⁷ If Europe’s grand narrative of Christianity was, in part, replaced by the secular rhetoric of Enlightenment, progress and the Civilizing Mission in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, the latter have been troubled and redefined by postmodernism and postcolonialism alike. Contrary to some postmodern predictions this has not meant, however, that the era of generalizing grand

⁶²⁶ Everlyn Nicodemus, “Inside. Outside,” in *Seven Stories About Modern Art in Africa: An Exhibition*, ed. by Clementine Deliss (Paris and New York: Flammarion), 31.

⁶²⁷ McKittrick, Sylvia Wynter. *On the Praxis of Being Human*, 1-89; Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories, Global Designs. Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000)

narratives has come to an end.⁶²⁸ Today, the global market and its insistence that the former colonial world must be incorporated into its designs through development, modernization, and democratization represent the new salvation narrative. This narrative refuses to acknowledge that capitalism relies on the imperial exploitation and underdevelopment of these parts of the world in the first place. Humanity is now granted to virtuous middle-class breadwinners across the globe, to stable jobholders, taxpayers, successful entrepreneurs and investors, while denizens that do not or cannot equitably participate in this system die a symbolic death.⁶²⁹ As the previous chapters served to show, the hypervisibility and institutionalization of Yinka Shonibare MBE (RA), who navigates a contemporary art world engrossed by capitalism as a successful artist-entrepreneur, does not significantly threaten, but even serves to ameliorate this status quo.

⁶²⁸ Mignolo, *Local Histories, Global Designs*, 278ff.

⁶²⁹ McKittrick, Sylvia Wynter. *On the Praxis of Being Human*, 19.

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Figures



Figure 1: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, 2010, installation on Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth with London National Gallery in background. © Yinka Shonibare MBE © Photo: urban75.



Figure 2: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, 2010; © Yinka Shonibare MBE; Image courtesy of Royal Museums Greenwich.



Figure 3: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* (detail), 2010; © Yinka Shonibare MBE



Figure 4: Trafalgar Square, London, aerial view.



Figure 5: Trafalgar Square with *Nelson's Column* on the left and *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* mounted on Fourth Plinth, 2010.



Figure 6: H.J. Bailey, *Nelson's Column*, granite, 1843.



Figure 7: William Behnes, *Sir Henry Havelock*, in Southeast corner of Trafalgar Square.



Figure 8: J.M.W. Turner, *The Battle of Trafalgar*, oil on canvas, 1822.

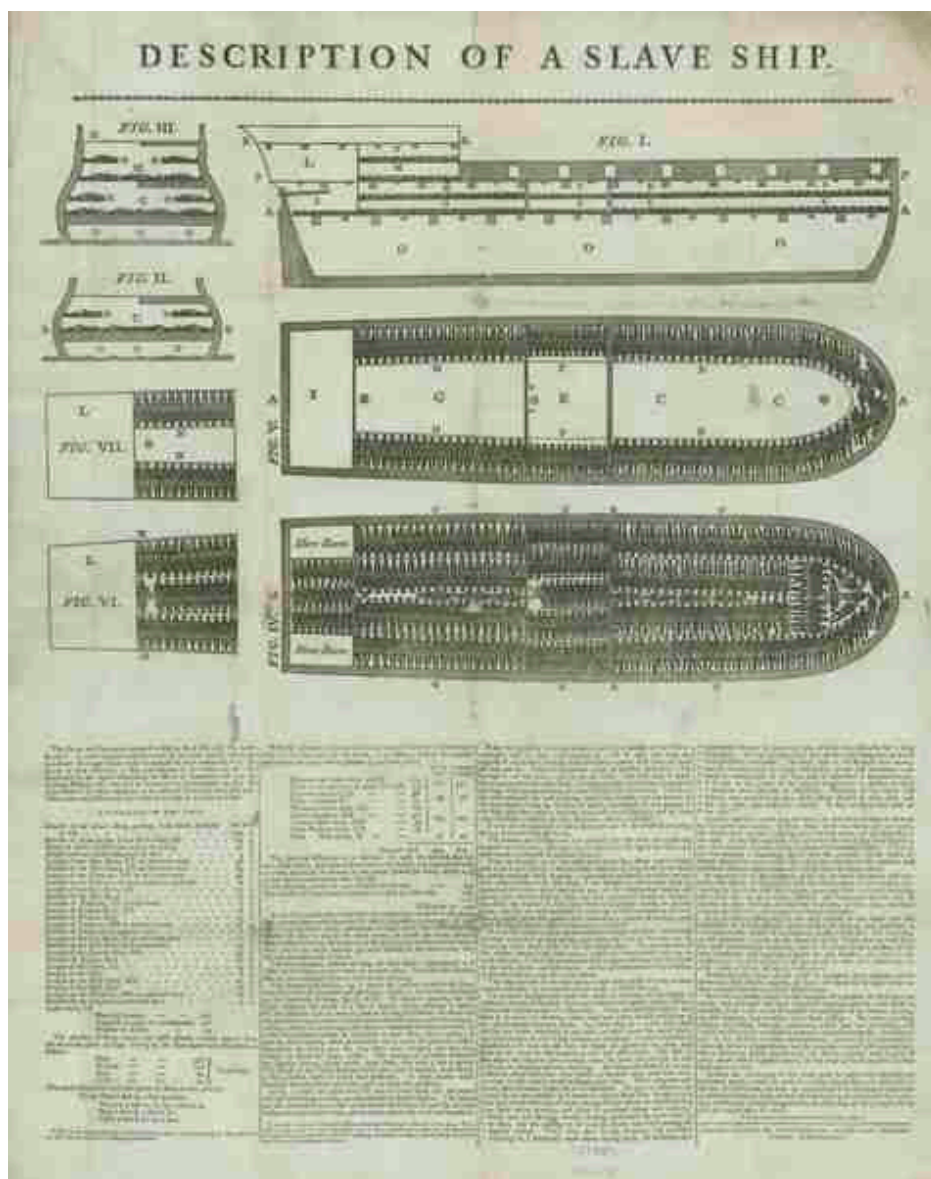


Figure 9: Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, (SEAST), *Description of a Slave Ship*, 1789.

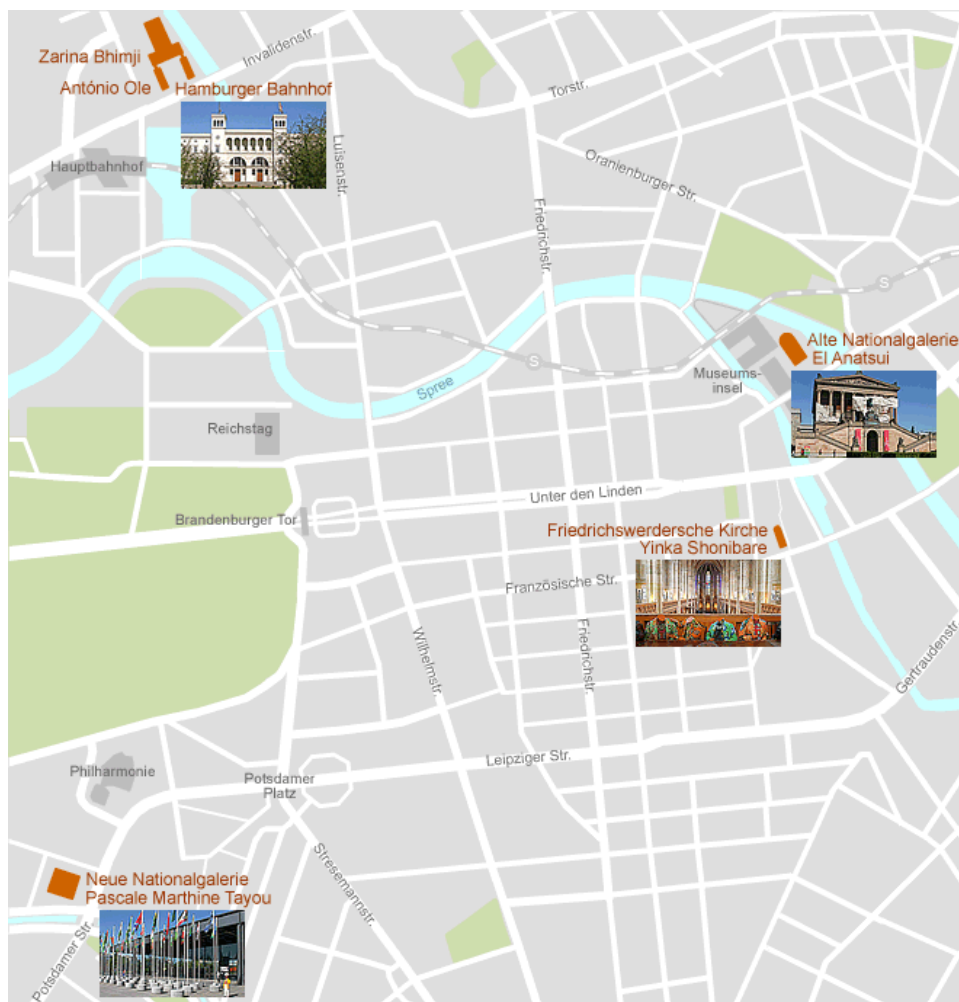


Figure 10: Map with Locations of Who Knows Tomorrow exhibition, © Map: Haupt & Binder.



Figure 11: El Anatsui, *Ozone Layer*, 2010, installation at Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin.
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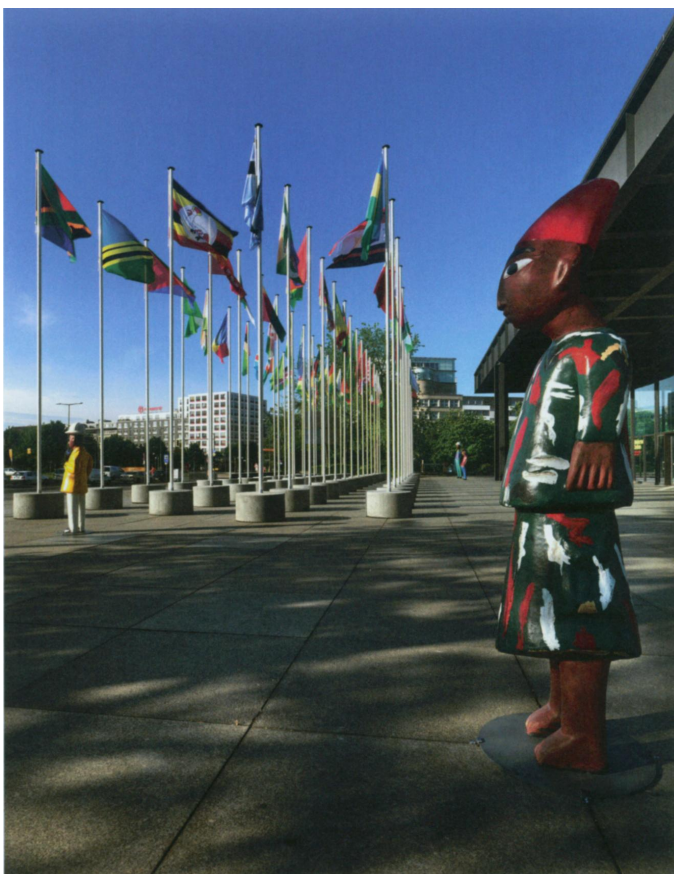


Figure 12: Pascale Marthine Tayou, *Colonial Erection*, 2010, installation at Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin.



Figure 13: Zarina Bhimji, *Waiting*, 2007, 35mm, HD projection, installation at Hamburger Bahnhof. Museum für Gegenwart, © Photo: Haupt & Binder.



Figure 14: António Ole, *The Entire World/Transitory Geometry*, 2010, installation at Hamburger Bahnhof. Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin. © Photo: Haupt & Binder.



Figure 15: Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Friedrichswerdersche Kirche*, Berlin, 1824-31.



Figure 16: Interior of Friedrichswerdersche Kirche with permanent display of early nineteenth-century neoclassical sculptures.



Figure 17: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Scramble for Africa* (detail), installation at Friedrichswerder Kirche, 2003, © Photo: Haupt & Binder.



Figure 18: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Scramble for Africa*, 2003, 14 figures, 14 chairs, table, 132 x 488 x 280 cm, installation at Friedrichswerder Kirche in 2010, Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Friedman and James Cohan Gallery, © Photo: Haupt & Binder.



Figure 19: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald Shooting* (detail), 2007, installation at Friedrichswerder Kirche in 2010, © Photo: Haupt & Binder.



Figure 20: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald Shooting* (detail), 2007, installation at Friedrichswerder Kirche in 2010, Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Friedman and James Cohan Gallery, © Photo: Haupt & Binder.

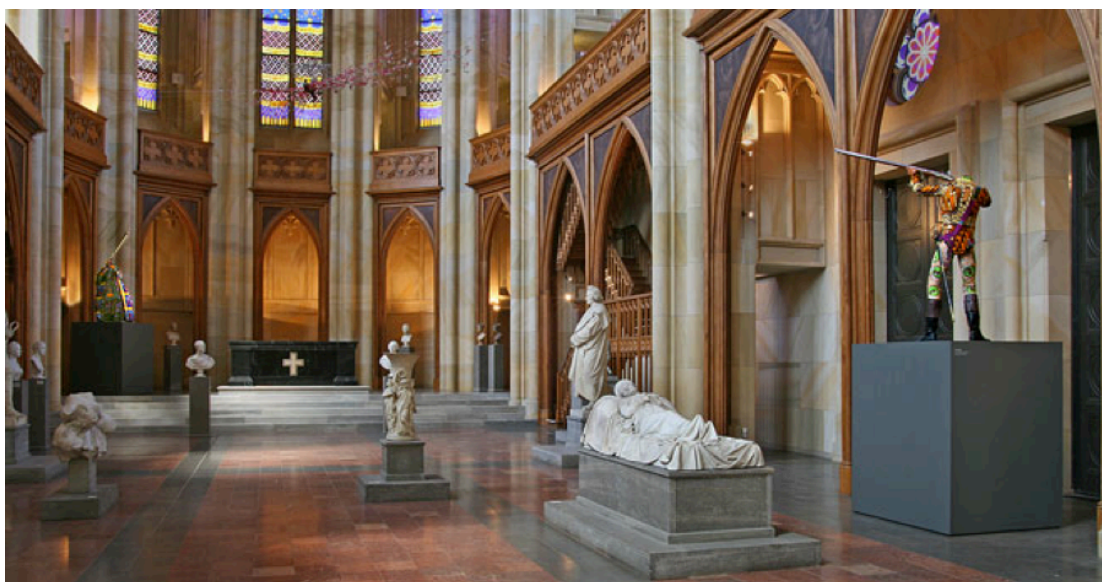


Figure 21: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald Shooting*, 2007, 2 fibre glass figures, 2 rifles, 2 plinths, Dutch wax-prints (cotton). Each figure on plinth: 389 x 192 x 152 cm, installation at Friedrichswerder Kirche in 2010. Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Friedman and James Cohan Gallery, © Photo: Haupt & Binder.



Figure 22: Anton von Werner, *Der Kongreß zu Berlin*, 1881, oil on canvas, 360 x 615 cm, Berlin Rathaus, Berlin.



Figure 23: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Colonel Tarleton and Mrs. Oswald Shooting* (detail), 2007, installation at Friedrichswerder Kirche, 2010. Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Friedman and James Cohan Gallery, © Photo: Haupt & Binder.



Figure 24: Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Colonel Tarleton*, 1782, oil on canvas, 236x145.5 cm, London National Gallery.



Figure 25: Johann Zoffany, *Mary Oswald*, 1763-64, oil on canvas, 226.5x158.8cm, London National Gallery.



Figure 26: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Mrs. Oswald's hat*, 2007; with sculpture of Karl Friedrich Schinkel by Daniel Rauch in background, © Photo: Haupt & Binder.

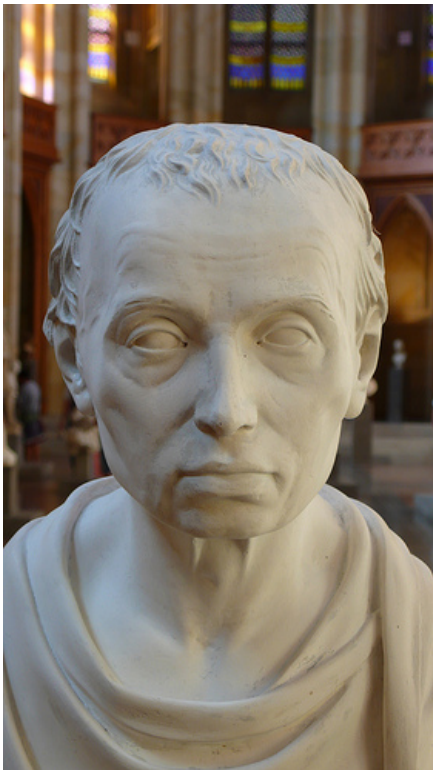


Figure 27: Carl Friedrich Hagemann, *Immanuel Kant*, marble, 1801, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin Nationalgalerie.



Figure 28: Ludwig Wichman, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann*, marble, 1844-48, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin Nationalgalerie, Image courtesy petrus.agricola.



Figure 29: Musée du Quai Branly with Eiffel Tower in background.



Figure 30: Patrick Blanc's "Vertical Garden" Facade



Figure 31: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *The Pursuit, Jardin D'Amour*, 2007.
© Yinka Shonibare MBE



Figure 32: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *The Confession*, *Jardin D'Amour*, 2007.
© Yinka Shonibare MBE



Figure 33: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *The Crowning*, *Jardin D'Amour*, Installation view Jardin D'Amour, Musée du Quai Branly, 2007. © Yinka Shonibare MBE



Figure 34: Shonibare's maze-like passage-ways for Jardin D'Amour at Quai Branly.



Figure 35: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Pursuit, The Progress of Love*, oil on canvas, 1773, Frick Collection, New York.



Figure 36: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Love Letters, The Progress of Love*, 317.2 × 216.9 cm, 1771-72, Frick Collection, New York.



Figure 37: Jean Honoré Fragonard, *The Lover Crowned, The Progress of Love*, oil on canvas, 318x243 cm, 1771-73, Frick Collection, New York.

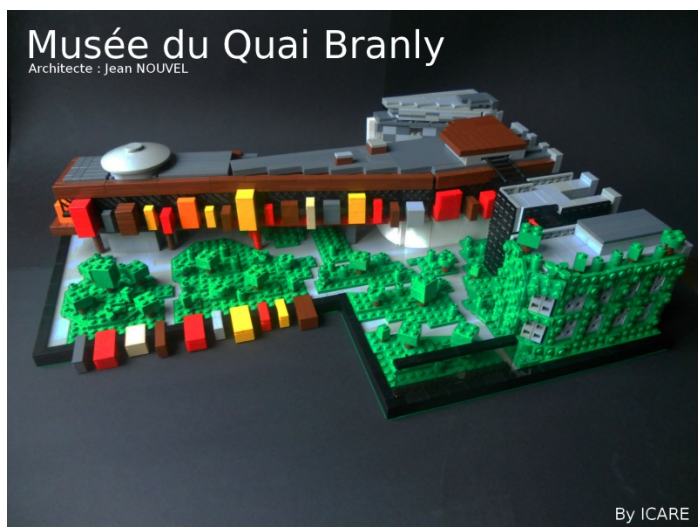


Figure 38: Model Musée du Quai Branly



Figure 39: Floorplan, Musée Du Quai Branly with its themes of travel and exploration



Figure 40: Aina Onabolu, *Barrister*, oil on canvas, 1920s.



Figure 41: Ben Enwonwu, *Anywanwu*, bronze, (1954-55). Image courtesy: Independent.com



Figure 42: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Gallantry and Criminal Conversation*, 2002, Installation in Binding Brauerei at documenta 11.

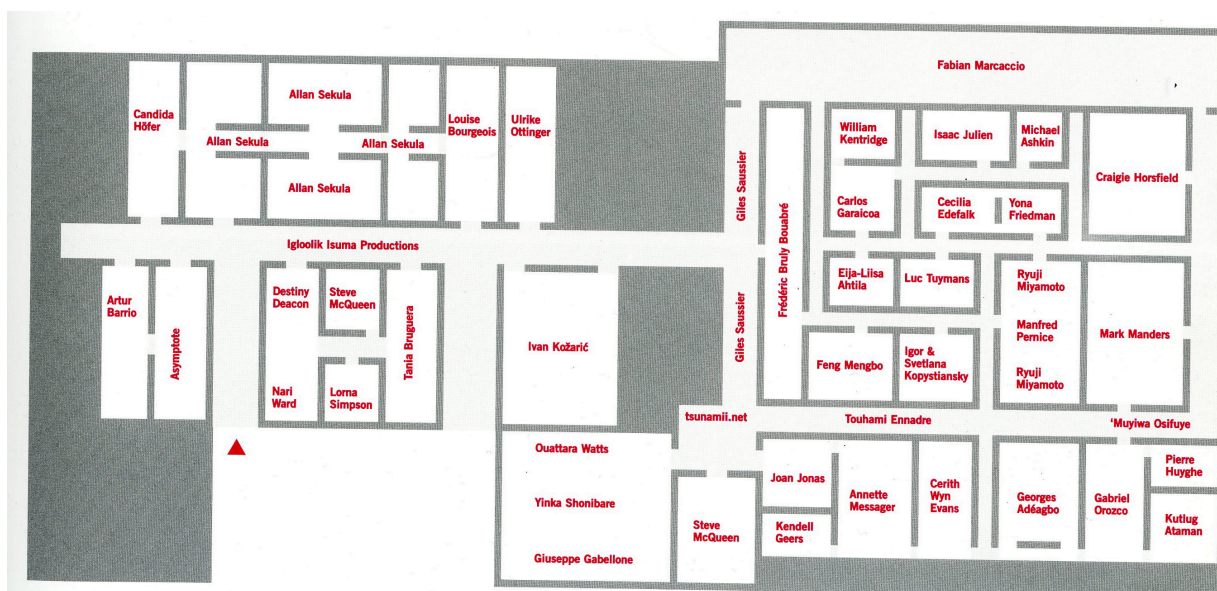


Figure 43: Binding Brauerei map, excerpted from Anders, Heike and Nadja Rotter, eds. *Documenta 11: Platform 5. Exhibition Catalogue*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002.

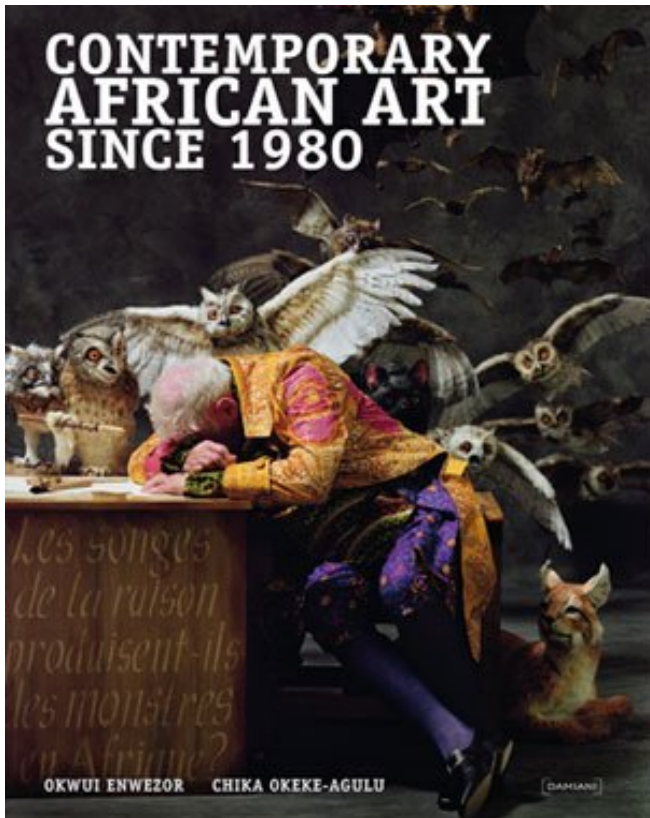


Figure 44: Okwui Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu's *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*, with Yinka Shonibare MBE's, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters (Africa)* (2008) on its cover.



Figure 45: Yinka Shonibare MBE posing with *Wind Sculpture VI*, 2014, steel armature with hand-painted fiber resin cast, temporarily installed in Lagos, Nigeria, in 2016. © Red Media, Courtesy of the British Council.



Figure 46: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Wind Sculptures V, IV, and III*, 2014, 610 x 340 x 80 cm, steel armature with hand-painted fiber resin cast, permanent installation at Museum of Contemporary Art Plaza, Chicago.

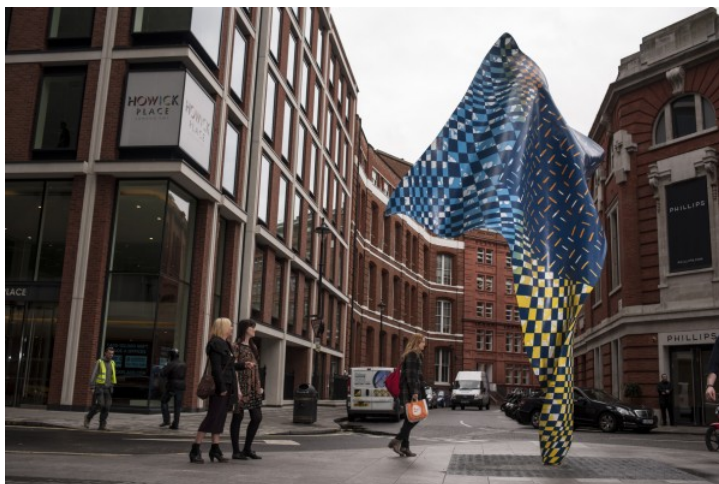


Figure 47: Shonibare, *Wind Sculpture*, Howick Place, London, steel armature with hand-painted fiber resin cast, ©Yinka Shonibare MBE.



Figure 48: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Wind Sculpture III*, steel armature with hand-painted fiber resin cast University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in Sheldon, Nebraska. Image courtesy of Nebraska Today, <http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/unltoday/article/sheldon-adds-shonibare-sculpture-to-collection/>.



Figure 49: Yinka Shonibare, *Double Dutch*, 1994, emulsions and acrylic on Dutch Wax fabric. Overall 332 x 588cm; each panel 32 x 32 x 4.5cm, © Yinka Shonibare MBE.