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SPHERICAL CONFLUENCE Global Curatorship after 'Magiciens de la Terre'

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The year 2014 marked the 25th anniversary of Magiciens de la Terre, one of the twentieth century's most controversial and ambitious exhibitions. Interestingly, this anniversary coincided with the collapse of the postcolonial ethnographic authority of the most emblematic encyclopedic and internationalist Western museums, symptomatically immersed in reconfiguring their discourses and collections in order to offer a new understanding of transcultural aesthetics. As is it well known, *Magiciens de la Terre* proposed a curatorial model based on the arithmetical confluence of Western and Non-Western art, of modern and primitive artists/ magicians. Displaying fifty artists from the bright side of modernity (Euro-American modernism) and fifty from the dark side of modernity (the anthropologically defined as primitive art), the curators declared this show as the first global exhibition ever and Paris (Centre Pompidou) as the core of a new spherical confluence of artists across the globe.

The arrogance of that statement was of course immediately called into question. *Magiciens de la Terre* is in fact famous because of the radical criticism that emerged even before the opening of the show. Now, my intention here is not to recall again the arguments and the validity of this discredit. On the contrary, what I would like to emphasize is that, in recent years, this exhibition has been evoked paradoxically as the foundational myth of a new form of global curatorship, reopening the question about global art as a spherical equalitarian regime. In opposition to Kant's anthropological practical philosophy, somewhere else I have described this phenomenon as the emergence of a new aesthetic cosmopolitanism (Barriendos, 2014). What is surprising about all this is that even those who criticized in the

early 90s the show accept nowadays the idea that the so-called global art world finds its point of origination in *Magiciens de la terre*. Emblematically, Hans Belting and Andrea Buddensieg have claimed that "[T]oday, more than twenty years later, the *Magiciens de la terre* exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in Paris can be identified as a key event for everything that followed. Most of the terms with which globalization is articulated today also date from around 1989" (Belting et al., 2011, p. 10).

It is impossible to summarize here the numerous commemorative exhibitions, seminars, and institutional statements contributing to the anniversary of *Magiciens de la terre*. To mention just a few, the Centre Pompidou took advantage of the occasion to review the geo-aesthetic map that shaped its collections and institutional discourses, organising seminars (*Magiciens de la Terre: vingt-cinq ans après. Le 25ème anniversaire d'une exposition pionnière, à l'orée de la mondialisation de l'art*), exhibitions of `global art', and a series of publications (*Décentrements, Arts et mondialisation, anthologie de textes de 1950 à nos jours*). Meanwhile, in late 2013, the publishing organisation Afterall released the second volume in the series `Exhibition Histories' under the title *Making Art Global (Part 2).* '*Magicines de la Terre' 1989*. In April 2014, in collaboration with Afterall, the Tate Modern organised '*Magiciens de la Terre' Reconsidered,* a series of debates and film projections.

Beyond the commemoration, there is for sure no common ground connecting the variety of events revisiting *Magiciens de la Terre*. However, in one way or another all of them remind us about the urgency to give proper answers to the following questions: what is the future of modernity after the collapse of the West as an aesthetic marker? What comes next after the discontent with contemporary art as a worldwide *lingua franca*? What sort of new hierarchies have emerged within the new spherical confluence of artists promoted by global museums, curators, and biennials? Rather than offering a concise answer to these questions, in the following I will analyse a series of concepts derived from the *magiciens effect*, such as alter-modernity, globalism, global contemporary, etcetera. My approach to them is actually fully in debt with a series of discussions organized in February 2015 by the Parisian independent organization *Le peuple qui manque* (Aliocha Imhoff & Kantuta Quiros). Under the title *Beyond the 'Magiciens' Effect: diplomatic (f)rictions #1*, this organization proposed an anti-monumental performatic reading

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of this anniversary. During three-days, a number of artists, scholars, art critics, and curators were invited to revisit the figure of the 'cultural diplomat' in order to call into question the politics of representation (national and supranational) after the fall of the Berlin Wall.¹

I Altermodernity

Peter Sloterdijk described the spatial imagination of enlightened modernity as the 'geographical-philosophical bastard' of Western thought because although it aspired to conquer the world it lacked sufficient power to consolidate the 'Western Subject' throughout the whole planet. Fully aware of this frustrated project, what so-called artistic 'altermodernity' demands is precisely the spherical consummation of modernity. What is at stake in the current debates around 1989 is thus the consolidation of a potentially catastrophic globalist ideology: the conviction that (Eurocentric) modernity failed not because it desired universality from the provincial mindset of social democratic Europe, but rather because it did not desire it strongly enough to truly implement it across the entire globe.

As we will see, what the *magiciens effect* brings to light is nothing but the promise of attaining this totality through alterity. In other words, the *effect* consists in spacialising a non-repressed desire to conquer the planet-as-image through the radical absorption of the non-Western. While Euro-centred modernity was a provincial (universally 'bastard') project, the new (alter)modernity is being put forward as a globally *legitimate* project in as far as there should be nothing suspicious about the desire of the Other's desire to be symmetrically reinstated. Taken into the art field, this new altermodernity is envisaged as a kind of global geo-aesthetic 'new deal': Kant's perpetual peace reinvented as an infinite artistic hospitality in which a 'continentalised' alterity finally takes the position that had been denied it by the West as a hegemonic subject of history. The *magiciens effect* thus entails the desire to reassemble Africa, Latin America and the 'Other Asias' (Spivak 2008), including Oceania, into a new grand narrative without the West: a *grand récit* that proclaims that the West is no longer on the face of the earth. French curator Nicolas Bour-

¹ *Le peuple qui manque* is currently preparing a publication with the results of the meeting; for more information visit [www.lepeuplequimanque.org/en/magiciens]

riaud explicitly defends this notion of altermodernity when he writes:

If twentieth-century modernism was a purely Western cultural phenomenon, later picked up and inflected by artists the world over, today there remains the task of envisaging its global equivalent, that is, the task of inventing innovative modes of thought and artistic practices that would this time be directly informed by Africa, Latin America or Asia and would integrate ways of thinking and acting current in, say, Nunavut, Lagos or Bulgaria. This time around, to have an impact, African tradition won't have to influence new Dadaists in a future Zurich, nor will Japanese print art have to rely on inspiring tomorrow's Manets. Today's artists, whatever latitudes they live in, have the task of envisaging what would be the first truly worldwide culture (Bourriaud, 2009b, p. 17).

Transformed into a 'radicant aesthetic', Bourriaud's relationality has institutionalised a kind of cosmopolitan moral obligation: to reconstruct modernity without nostalgia through Africa, Latin America and Asia. His book Radicant: *pour une esthétique de la globalisation* –which was published in 2009 as a theoretical extension of the exhibition *Altermodern* (Bourriaud, 2009a)– begins with the following explanation: 'here [in *The Radicant*] I simply develop and expand on the intuition of my youth, which was based on few examples' (Bourriaud, 2009b, p. 6). Bourriaud is referring to an article entitled 'Notes on Radicantity', which was published in *New Art International* magazine in May 1989, that is, just a week before the opening of *Magiciens de la terre* (Bourriaud, 1989, p. 25-27). This is important for our idea of the *magiciens effect:* although Radicant only appeared in print in 2009, the author dates the origins of the book and the issues that gave rise to it a decade earlier, thus creating a kind of umbilical cord that connects to 1989 as the origin of his aesthetics of globalisation.² Indeed, Bourriaud's book-manifesto *The Radicant* begins as follows:

> On November 9 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. Six months earlier –on May 18 to be precise–the exhibition *Magicians of the Earth* opened, bearing the subtitle *First World Exhibition of Contemporary Art* because it brought together visual artists from every continent: an American conceptual artist rubbed shoulders with a Haitian voodoo

² In parallel to the publication of "Notes on radicantity", that is, soon after the opening of *Magiciens de la terre*, Bourriaud published a review of the show in the magazine art press, entitled "Les Magiciens de Babe" in: art press, May 1989, No. 136, p. 40-42.

priest, and a sign painter from Kinshasa exhibited alongside great names of European art. To the great mixer that was *Magicians of the Earth* we can date the official entry of art into a globalized world shorn of master narratives, a world that is henceforth our own. This sudden emergence into the contemporary arena of individuals from countries then considered 'peripheral' corresponds to the advent of that stage of globally integrated capitalism that, twenty years later, was to acquire the name *globalization* [...] The time seems ripe to reconstruct the 'modern' for the present moment, to reconfigure it for the specific context in which we are living (Bourriaud, 2009b, p. 11-15).

Bourriaud's words place us in the global-centre of the *magiciens effect*: in Paris in 1989, *Magiciens de la terre* reappropriated the idea of modernism –which had been wondering aimlessly and spreading for the past fifty years, since New York had stolen it from the Parisians– and in the hands of postmodern and postcolonial criticism –that is, in the hands of the West thinking itself from the point of view of alterity–, it had announced its own death and re-emerged as a truly global art.

II Globalism

The German theorist Hans Belting endorses this idea when he describes global art as an art that has 'emerged like a phoenix from the ashes':

Twenty years after its first manifestations, the time has come to discuss the nature and purpose of global art that emerged, like a phoenix from the ashes, from modern art at the end of the twentieth century and opposed modernity's cherished ideals of progress and hegemony. Contemporary art, a term long used to designate the most recent art, assumed an entirely new meaning when art production, following the turn of word politics and world trade in 1989, expanded across the globe. The results of this unprecedented expansion challenged the continuity of any Eurocentric view of art. Global art is no longer synonymous with modern art (Belting & Buddensieg, 2009, p. 39).

However, just as Bourriaud makes a distinction between capitalist globalisation and a positive alter-globality led by semionaut artists, Hans Belting describes globalism as a state in which different modernities coexist, as opposed to the provincialism that characterised Western historiographic thought. In other words, as opposed to the false philosophical universalism of Euro-centred modernity: "Globalism, in

fact, is almost an antithesis to universalism because it decentralizes a unified and uni-directional word view and allows for "multiple modernities [...] This also means that in the arts, the notion 'modern' becomes a historical definition and accordingly loses the authority of a universal model. It might even appear as a past that is linked to the West, like other cultures view their own local pasts" (Weibel & Buddensieg, 2007, p. 22).

Nonetheless, Bourriaud's affirmative globality and Belting's 'globalism' remain problematic, particularly if we start by clearly differentiating between globalisation, globality and globalism. As we see it, globalism is not a kind of 'third way' for globalisation, but rather its ideology. In fact, these three terms are deeply indebted to their corresponding pairs modernisation, modernity and modernism. In both triads, the first term (modernisation/globalisation) presupposes a *process*, the aim of which is the attainment of the second term (modernity/globality), which would also be the *geohistorical condition* for the first; this condition is in turn driven by the third (modernism/globalism), which functions as the *ideological and discursive medium* of both the geohistorical development of the first and the continuity and validity of the second. Seen from the long-term perspective of the modern/colonial world-system –rather than the narrow framework of so-called New Global History (Mazlish, 2006) – we can deduce that just as modernity would not exist without a theory of modernisation, there can be no globality without a theory of globalisation. Accordingly, 'globalism' would be the ideological and discursive basis that defends the idea of reconstructing modernity from its foundations, and could quite properly be described as globality/coloniality-modernity in which modernity and globality are characterised precisely by concealing their dark side -coloniality-, which, as Walter Mignolo has pointed out, is constitutive of both:

> The basic thesis [...] is the following: 'modernity' is a complex narrative whose point of origination was Europe; a narrative that builds Western civilization by celebrating its achievements while hiding at the same time its darker side, 'coloniality'. Coloniality, in other words, is constitutive of modernity –there is no modernity without coloniality. Hence, today's common expression 'global modernities' implies 'global colonialities' in the precise sense that the colonial matrix of power is shared and disputed by many contenders; if there cannot be modernities without coloniality, there cannot either be global modernities without global colonialities (Mignolo, 2011, p. 2-3).

As the decolonial turn that Mignolo suggests clearly implies, the discourse of multiple modernities or of altermodernity simply reinforces the ideology of *globalism* in art as the fuel that drives the *magiciens effect*.

III Global Banishment

In 2011, Jean-Hubert Martin presented a lecture entitled *Contemporary Art in the Global Era*, which was symptomatic of the magiciens effect. In this lecture –which was part of a series of seminars entitled *El arte en su destierro global*– the curator of Magiciens de la terre argued that the exhibition had put an end to Occidentalism and that –in spite of the reservations of its critics– it had reset the world's geohistorical and geopolitical clock back to zero:

How far has the globalisation of contemporary art come? Although it is still controversial, *Magiciens de la terre* is now almost unanimously recognised as the first exhibition to open up the closed circle of contemporary art on such a large scale [...] *Magiciens de la terre* has come to symbolise that geographical opening-up by expanding the boundaries of art, [...] How can we fail to see that the coming years will reset the relationships between cultures and demand a revision of art history? [...] As we emerge from an ethno-centric vision of exoticism and take into account the feeling of estrangement that takes over the foreigner who visits us, we have to rethink the whole thing from scratch (Hubert, 2011, p. 170-207).

As we can see, although Jean-Hubert Martin's curatorial and discursive ideas are largely contrary to those of Nicolas Bourriaud, both theorists agree that the hegemony of the West and the 'centre-periphery' opposition have been dismantled, and that *Magiciens de la terre* dealt a death blow to the geo-aesthetic asymmetry of the globe. Half of the works in *Magiciens de la terre*, says Martin, 'were from Africa, Asia, Australia and South America.' And like Bourriaud and Belting, Jean-Hubert Martin also sets 1989 as the geohistorical marker that reset the history art to zero: 1989 as a turning point that makes it possible to wipe the burden of coloniality off the face of the earth.

So what makes the *magiciens effect* complex and controversial is the fact that not only those who defend the exhibition argue that it enabled the emergence of a truly global and post-asymmetrical world. Rather, this belief is shared by critics

who consider it to be a neocolonialist expression in art, as Bourriaud himself does, and also -to mention a radically different position- Rasheed Araeen, who organised another show in London, significantly entitled *The Other Story*, at the same time as *Magiciens de la terre* (Araeen, 1989).³ Twenty-five years on, detractors of Magiciens de la terre, even those whose geo-aesthetic model is based on questioning the validity of Jean-Hubert Martin's ideas, have ended up accepting the idea that 'modern art' and 'contemporary art' declined in 1989, giving way to the emergence of the global. In his famous article Periodising Contemporary Art, for example, Alexander Alberro sets 1989 as the year of the start of a new global era (Alberro, 2009, pp. 935-939). And other ambitious projects such as *Former West* are also based on the idea that 1989 inaugurated a new global order as a result of the postcolonial critiques of Eurocentrism and the end of the centre-periphery model that had split the planet into three different worlds.

Although the list of examples could go on, we simply want to draw attention to the problems involved in talking about this exhibition as the matrix of a new aesthetic global confluence without centres or peripheries. As Bourriaud puts it, '[p]ostmodernism, thanks to the post-colonial criticism of Western pretensions to determine the world's direction and the speed of its development, has allowed the historical counters to be reset to zero; today, temporalities intersect and weave a complex network stripped of a centre' (Bourriaud, 2009a). So the announcement of the arrival of 'globalism', is really an affirmative reading of an expanded internationalism in which talking about 'global art' is simply a euphemism for no longer talking only about Western art. As such, it is not surprising that the unstoppable worl-dwide proliferation of contemporary art biennials, the increase in artistic mobility, and the sense that the 'global art world' is a world without borders (geographical, epistemic, cultural, institutional, etc) tend to be interpreted as sufficient evidence of the global nature of contemporary art and of the emergence of a decentralised post-Western aesthetic.

The year 1989 no longer just stands for the end of the Cold War and the start of a new global geopolitical reality. 1989/*Magiciens*/Paris has become the founding myth of a new global geo-aesthetic model: the 'global art world'. So what we are

³ Exhibited at Hayward Gallery, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, and Manchester City Art Gallery.

calling the *magiciens effect* is simply the belief that once the clocks of modernity/ coloniality had been reset to zero, the West acquired sufficient authority and legitimacy to disappear, declaring that the failure of the 'grand narratives' of modernity -especially the universal history of art- had not been due to the fact that they had been conceived as universal narratives -as postmodern critiques had argued- but rather to the fact that their desire had been insufficient to allow them to spread far enough and become truly global, covering the entire planet. The magiciens effect has shaped a new grand narrative of 'global art', one that no longer declares the end of modernity but rather the end of postmodernity. Moreover, it does so by appropriating postcolonial critique with the aim of downplaying the ethnographic authority of the West to the point that it disappears as a hegemonic site of enunciation. Its objective is explicit: to bring to an end the age of the spatial conquest of alterity in order to secure the authority that is necessary in order to forget the drama of the geographical colonisation of the planet. Without the West, global art calls for a regime of contemporaneity of the non-Western, in which the West has ceased to be content and becomes the container of modernity/coloniality. The Quai Branly museum in Paris is the monument to the magiciens effect - or better still, its ruins.

IV Global Contemporary

The exhibition *The Global Contemporary. Art Worlds after 1989*, held at the ZKM (*Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie*) in Karlsruhe, Germany, from September 2011 to May 2012 explicitly highlighted the contradictions of the 'globalism' we are discussing here. The exhibition was the culmination of an interesting and ambitious project that had started in 2006 under the name *Global Art and the Museum* (GAM).⁴ Coordinated by Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg and Peter Weibel,

⁴ GAM / Global Art and the Museum is a project produced by the ZKM (Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie de Karlsruhe, Germany), which began in 2006 with a series of lectures, seminars, publications and exhibitions around the subject of the globalisation of art, with a particular emphasis on the role of contemporary art museums in this process. Before the opening of the exhibition *The Global Contemporary* (September 2011-Februrary 2012 [extended until May 2012]), the GAM had published three readers: Weibel, P., Buddensieg, *Contemporary Art and the Museum. A Global Perspective.* Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007; Belting, H., Buddensieg (Ed.) *The Global Art World:*

the exhibition at ZKM argued that the end of (universal) modern art was nothing but the result of the dismantling of the centre-periphery model. As the catalogue says, `[t]he geopolitical turn 1989 ushered the age of worldwide biennials, whose geography left behind the concept of "Westkunst" [West Art] with its old opposition between center and periphery' (Belting et al., 2013).

It is paradoxical that the longed-for and heralded end of the centre-periphery model was once again expressed through the idea that alterity has emerged from afar, 'continentalised' as a counter-globalisation rather than altermodernity. As Peter Weibel writes:

> As a result of this contention about the monopoly over mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, a new epoch began after 1989, because the year 1989 signified the end of the Western monopolies. The rise of art from Asia, Africa, South America, etc. in Western institutions is nothing other than the legitimate attempt by other cultures, nations, and civilizations to strip the West of its monopoly on exclusion [...] Global art after the collapses of 1989 does not ask for inclusion nor can it naively demand the elimination of all mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion; it would, however, like to break up the Western monopoly. In that respect, these new art worlds create new mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, which I would like to describe with the term rewrite rather than clash or *confluence* (Belting et al., 2013).

There is clearly a major difference between Bourriaud's altermodernity and The Global Contemporary: the latter is not talking about forgetting the colonial past, but about rewriting it. But given that this rewriting of the colonial past cannot be expressed through the 'qualities' that define the modern (distinction, difference, identity), it takes the form of a counter-modernity, or, in other words, a modernity that rejects itself. Consequently, 'global contemporaneity' defends a kind of geo

Audiences, Markets, and Museums. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009; Belting (Ed.) *Global Studies: Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture.* Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011; and had organised over fifteen seminars, including: Curating in Asia; Review of "Curating in Asia"; ZKM Global Studies II; Where is the Contemporary Art?; ZKM Global Studies; Global Studies: Tagungsberich; Contemporary Art and the Global Age; The Interplay of Art and Globalization - Consequences for Museums; A New Geography of Art in the Making; Review of the GAM Platform Hong Kong; Global Art and the Museum – The Global Turn and Art in Contemporary India; The Global Turn of Contemporary Art in Brazilian Collections; Contemporary Art and the Museum: A Global Perspective; Where is Art Contemporary? The Global Challenge of Art Museums II; The Global Challenge of Art Museums I.

-aesthetic revisionism: a Eurocentred anti-Eurocentrism, which paradoxically extends the universalist Western tradition that it attempts to overcome. Radicalising the idea of alternative modernities, 'global contemporaneity' aspires to abolish modernity with the theoretical tools of modernity itself, in the hope of attaining a cosmopolitan aesthetic:

> *Contemporary art* today means *art after modernism*, just as it once meant modern art. Modern art always had a quality of distinction and difference. Modern history separated the world, since it wasn't everyone's history. Hence the term *contemporary* serves as a beacon to make it possible to cross old borders. Artists from developing countries may take up positions against the modernist legacy simply because they feel compromised by its colonial history. The West always wanted to remain modern, even when it hurriedly proclaimed postmodernism so that it could become modern in a different way. And when Nicolas Bourriaud proclaims an *altermodernity* today, he makes an attempt to reclaim once again the leadership of the new art world. But does this mean to incorporate all those who never were modern and were only supposed to become modern retroactively after the heirs to modernity proclaimed a different one? (Belting et al., 2013).

As we can see, although both theories spring from the crisis of Western modernity and are thus the result of the West's diminished ethnographic authority when it comes to defining its own distance with regard to others, Bourriaud's altermodernity and the notion of global contemporaneity developed by Belting/Buddensieg/Wiebel offer us two different models of 'globality'. On one hand, they both 'continentalise' that which is non-Western in order to institute the global, but they do not agree on what globality entails after the end of Western unilateralism: the first (altermodernity) re-establishes Western modernity through the 'Others', while the second (global contemporaneity) envisages globality as the phase that follows modernity without disavowing it from within; the first would be a modernity/globality, while the second is a globality/contemporaneity. While the first calls for forgetting the colonial past and cultural heterogeneity in order to re-establish THE modernity on a global scale, the second reinstates the colonial past but only to rewrite it as evidence of a global geo-aesthetic 'new deal' in the present, without the burden and the drama of history (of the history of modern art). But neither of the two manages to satisfactorily resolve the extent to which globality is, in both cases, simply occupying the discursive zone of modernity while leaving the meta-geographic

foundations of coloniality intact. As such, neither of them takes into account the normative globality of the sensible that we call 'aesthetic globe-centrism' (Barriendos, 2013, 2014).

To finish up, I would like to briefly comment on one of the eight spaces that made up The Global Contemporary exhibition. This area, called Room of Histories: A *documentation*, attempted to visualise the thesis of the project: the idea that we are seeing a global turn in the contemporary art field that makes it possible to rewrite history. The room consisted of six projects that aimed to give 'documentary' legitimacy' to the emergence of the global art world. In spite of its name, Room of Histories: A documentation was less about stories than about a confluence of geographies. A small multi-channel installation, narrated (and spectacularised) the spatial conquest of the planet through contemporary art (trans_actions: The Accelerated Art World 1989–2011), another mapped the biennialisation of art (Mapping. The Biennials in the Geography of Art), another showed the museisation of the globe (Art Spaces. A Museumscape in Transition), and a further one showed the planetary 'financialisation' of the art world (Branding. New Art Markets and Their Strategies / The Great Contemporary Art Bubble). The room also presented the documentary Édouard Glissant: Un monde en relation by Manthia Diawara, in which the Martinican philosopher and poet talks about his philosophy of relation.⁵ Nonetheless, The Global Contemporary seems to be based on the polar opposite of the ideas that Glissant developed from the perspective of Caribbean decolonial thought, in as far as he argued that the global and the contemporary do not come after modernity, that the global is actually also insular, and that every world -including the world of modernity– is at the same time a 'whole-world' (*tout-monde*).

In a section entitled, *Documents: 1989 and the Global Turn*, the room also recovered Neil Dawson's work *The Globe*, which had been displayed on the façade of the Centre Pompidou as part of the exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* in 1989. The

⁵ We should note that Bourriaud also goes back to Glissant to develop his notion of altermodernity, even though his theory of radicant aesthetics has more in common with Renato Ortiz's theory of a 'world-modernity' than with Glissant's 'whole-world'. Glissant, É. *Poétique de la relation*. Paris: Gallimard, 1990; Glissant, É. *Introducción a Una Poítica De Lo Diverso*. Barcelona: Ediciones del Bronce, 2002; Ortiz, R. "Diversidad Cultural y Cosmopolitismo" in: *Nueva Sociedad*. No. 155 (1998); Ortiz, R. *Cultura y Globalización*. Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1999.

exhibition information sheet described the work as follows: 'A timeline with key information for the year 1989 demonstrates that this year played a crucial role in the history of globalization. In the art field the global turn is manifested in much discussed –and also much criticized– exhibitions whose significance only became apparent in subsequent years. In the wake of these events, curators became the agents who paved the way for an era in which art is no longer defined by the Western mainstream model.' (Belting et al., 2009). As we can see, the exhibition *The Global Contemporary* aimed to turn the arithmetical geography of *Magiciens de la terre* into a new global imaginary: the aesthetic confluence between the West and its Others.

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