THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON CURATING CONTEMPORARY ART IN INDIA 1990-2012

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Abstract

This thesis is an inquiry into how contemporary Indian art has been represented and positioned through its exhibitions since the 1990s, and the impact that globalisation has had on these curatorial practices. Coinciding with India's adoption of a neoliberal economic system and a broader Western interest in emerging art scenes, the last two decades have seen a global interest in contemporary Indian art, and increased exhibitions in the region. However, despite its rise in profile, there has been scarce scholarly research and writing with regard to the curatorial and exhibiting history of contemporary Indian art in global times. This thesis addresses this gap by looking at globalisation's impact on curating contemporary Indian art in the sphere of national and international exhibitions, extending existing debates and proposing new models for the study of the field of curating Indian contemporary art and its exhibition flows.

This research draws on globalisation paradigms and their various forms of hegemony, mobility, agency and exchange, especially related to postcolonial and global cultural theory. The use of the 'field' applied to curatorial practices resonates with and extends Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical model, based on the notion of the field as a set of disciplinary and cognitive practices and on his criticism of globalisation as a form of neoliberal dominant discourse. In turn, the concept of 'flow', linked with exhibitions on the move, echoes and extends Arjun Appadurai's theory, based on the notion of global cultural flows as a framework to explore the social imaginary of new global cultural processes. Combined, the field of curatorial practice and exhibition flows provide a wide-ranging framework for understanding the production, mediation and display of contemporary Indian art across a range of agents and sites: artists and curators and biennales, travelling exhibitions and the market.

An empirical qualitative approach has been deployed in this study to analyse two prominent forms of exhibiting contemporary Indian art: biennales and travelling exhibitions. These case studies outline the circulation of Indian artists and curators in biennales and the multiple flows of exhibitions of Indian contemporary art worldwide and consider some of the reasons that have facilitated such global mobility and exposure. Moreover, drawing on these mappings and their cultural and political implications, in the case of biennales the thesis analyses the *Delhi Biennale* (proposed in 2007 but unrealised) and with regard to the case of

Indian contemporary art on the move, it studies the *Indian Highway* exhibition (2008-2012) and the *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* exhibition (2008). As primary sources this thesis uses targeted and semi-structured in-depth interviews with a wide range of artists, curators, academics, writers and other cultural practitioners, conducted during extensive fieldwork in India and Europe, as well as the catalogues of the exhibitions under discussion and other related material. Further resources consulted include specialised archives and libraries in India and elsewhere and digital methods such as database searches and digital curation sites.

This study contributes to contemporary debates on curatorial practices underlying the globalisation of art and to the development of the field of research on curating. By studying the emergence of curating contemporary Indian art through the perspective of cultural globalisation and postcolonial theory, the thesis identifies the dual role of the global in becoming simultaneously a dominant institutional and commercial discourse and a central form of agency from the global South.

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List of Accompanying Materials

CD – Publications:

A-   *La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound*. Santander: Fundación Botín, 2013.
     Co-curator, editor and contributor. [Exhibition Catalogue, ISBN 978-84-15469-33-9]
     Materials included: Curatorial text and exhibition blurb.

B- "Mapping the field of curatorial practices in India", in Natasha Ginwala (ed.), *Dialogues on Curating II - The Reader*, New Delhi: Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art, 2011, pp. 98-107.

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Material from this study has been published in "Mapping the field of curatorial practices in India", in Natasha Ginwala (ed.), *Dialogues on Curating II - The Reader*, New Delhi: Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art, 2011, pp. 98-107.

Author's Declaration

During the period of registered study in which this thesis was prepared the author has not been registered for any other academic award or qualification. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

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PART I

GLOBALISATION AND CURATING CONTEMPORARY ART

1-Introduction

This thesis considers how contemporary Indian art is positioned and mobilised through its exhibitions since the 1990s as a means to understand globalisation's impact on art and curatorial practices. This time frame coincides with India's adoption of a neoliberal economic system and a broader Western interest in emerging art scenes, and has translated into an increase in exhibitions of Indian contemporary art locally and globally. The thesis analyses how curatorial practices related to Indian art are used to orientate present art discourses, to challenge dominant power relations and, in some cases, to maintain hegemonic positions. Furthermore, this thesis examines how Indian art has seemingly galvanised public attention to travel widely through local and global exhibitions situated in between institutional, commercial and independent art spheres.

In addition, the thesis explores how globalisation has impacted on the ways in which contemporary Indian art is being produced, mediated and displayed, both nationally and internationally. Given that critical studies on curatorial policies and practices underlying the globalisation of art are still in their relative infancy, this study has topical relevance and contributes to the further development of the field of curatorial discourse. Amongst the questions I ask in the thesis are: which Indian artists and curators have been active in the international art scene between 1990 and 2012, when, where and why? What role has the art market played in regulating Indian art practices, positions and discourses? And have the growing number of exhibitions of Indian contemporary art elsewhere reinforced the suspicion of a new colonisation hidden under the name of globalisation, or instead challenged this? Within a new globalised framework of transcultural relations, I further analyse the extent to which Indian curators and artists preserve and bring forward local traditions at the same time that they might build on global ones and how their art practice and curating recall global South imaginaries as a resistance to global Western hegemony.

The thesis presents two empirical case studies: an analysis of biennales and a study of group exhibitions of Indian contemporary art on the move. These are two of the most prominent forms for exhibiting contemporary Indian art and are given priority in the research. First I attend to the case of the proposed, yet ultimately unrealised, *Delhi Biennale* as a means to consider the conditions through which biennales can emerge in India, and what political trajectory they may follow. In parallel with the increase of Indian artists' and curators'

circulation in biennales worldwide, I discuss how this has translated into the local art scene in relation to the emergence of global South discourses.

Second, with regard to exhibiting Indian contemporary art on the move, I examine the *Indian Highway* exhibition (2008-2012) and the *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* exhibition (2008) and discuss the practice of curators from elsewhere. *Indian Highway,* themed on the importance of the road and its links with migration and contemporary movements, is on the global move itself, as the exhibition expanded and changed as it toured internationally. The *Santhal Family* exhibition at MuKHA in Antwerp considered the homonymous sculpture made by Ramkinkar Baij in 1938 as a site of reinterpretation, inviting artists from India and elsewhere to enter into dialogue with this seminal work. Throughout this comparative case study, I analyse exhibitions of Indian contemporary art elsewhere and the role of curatorial collaborations and global dialogues.

1.1- Rationale of study

In recent years there has been a transformation towards cultural exchanges and global dialogues in the curatorial field. This change has had a major impact on Indian visual culture and art exhibitions. Two shifts are noteworthy. First, contemporary visual culture in India now has an important presence in the international art scene. Many international museums and biennales have dedicated important exhibitions to current art in India. Also Indian contemporary artists have acquired worldwide recognition on an unprecedented level. As curator and critic Gayatri Sinha has commented, "Indian art has become increasingly global in its address, allowing curatorial objectives, the effects of new media, international residencies, art fairs, biennales, galleries, and a fluid globalized vocabulary to enter into the discourse".[1] Precisely how this is achieved, and to what effects, will be the concern of this thesis. Second, as a result of global interest, experimental art and curatorial practices in India are increasing, and so too is the number of contemporary art exhibitions and debates on curating in the region. This attention has been captured especially since 2010, when more discussions have focused on curatorial practices in India, as evidenced by numerous conferences, workshops and special journal issues on curating, such as *Art & Deal: The Magazine for Contemporary Indian Art* (2010), *Take on Art* (2011), and *Art India* (2012). Significantly, though, despite the increased international profile of contemporary Indian art

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[1] Gayatri Sinha, "Introduction", in Gayatri Sinha (ed.), *Arts and Visual Culture in India, 1857-2007,* Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2009, p.19.

and the recent debates on curatorial practices in India, there remains a lack of scholarly research on how it is positioned in terms of curatorial policy in the sphere of national and international exhibitions.

As such, as my original contribution to knowledge, this research project aims to study the exhibition system and the curatorial practice of contemporary art in India between 1990 and 2012 and how globalisation has impacted on it. The 1990s are selected as the starting point because it is since then that the West has been interested in contemporary cultural production from emerging art scenes, often as a way to satisfy its desire for consumption of "the other". Exemplifying this shift, the well-known exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* in Paris in 1989 marked the beginning of this institutional multiculturalism. As scholars have summarised, this show represented the assimilation of the exotic other into the new world art.[2] Despite the failure of the exhibition, *Magiciens de la Terre* was important, since it defeated its own objective to provide a viable framework that would break distinctions and allow a dialogue among the diversity of contemporary art from all over the world.[3] During the 1990s, even with the proliferation and rapid expansion of truly international contemporary art exhibitions, multicultural dialogue was still marked by the superiority of the Western voice among other voices. In the 21st century this situation has changed. Since then a growing number of non-Western curators and cultural practitioners have become active, positioning themselves and not being positioned by others. These changes, in turn, have broadened the politics and possibilities of transcultural curating. The idea of transculturalism sees cultures today as constituted by new and complex forms of entanglement and extensive interconnections beyond national and cultural borders.[4] Hence, the thesis analyses how transcultural strategies establish platforms that open up cross-cultural dialogues in a global framework, and in relation and dialogism with multiples politics and realities of the local.

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[2] See Sean Cubitt, "In the Beginning: *Third Text* and the Politics of Art" in Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubitt and Ziauddin Sardar (eds.), *The Third Text Reader. On Art, Culture and Theory*, London and New York: Continuum, 2002, pp. 1-8.

[3] Rasheed Araeen, "Our Bauhaus, others´ mudhouse", *Third Text*, 6, 1989, pp. 3-14.

[4] Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz devised the term transculturalism in 1940. For Ortiz transculturalism was a possibility, more than an end result, to prove the Africaness of Cuba. In his view, transculturalism is "the product of a meeting between an existing culture or subculture and a migrant culture, recently arrived, which transforms the two and creates in the process a neoculture, which is also subject to transculturation". See Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar,* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995.

Providing a twin imperative to consider this particular time frame, the 1990s onwards has been a crucial period for shifts in India following the neoliberal reform instituted in 1991, which strengthened India's encounter with global capital.[5] This shift saw India move from economic protectionism with strong socialist ties after its independence in 1947, to adopting neoliberal economic policies as part of the conditions of development loans from global governance institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This has had an impact on present economic and socio-political transformations in the country. A direct consequence of the implementation of neoliberalism in India has been the emergence of a consumer economy and the consolidation of the middle classes.[6] At the same time, from the 1990s onwards, India has seen the rise in political power of the Hindu nationalists.[7] At present, India is couched in discourses of an emerging world economy, while at the same time inequalities and poverty remain a constant within the country. Furthermore, from 2001 India was identified as an important BRIC economy, along with Brazil, Russia and China.[8] These countries are among the biggest and fastest growing emerging markets, with India designated by the World Bank as the world's fourth largest economy.[9] This rise in economic status coincides with the emergence of contemporary Indian art on the global stage.

While maintaining a critical stance towards these economic-based global discourses, such a context nevertheless provides a compelling and timely lens through which to look more closely at Indian contemporary art and its exhibitions. In particular, this thesis privileges curatorial practices as its object of enquiry, since exhibitions are the very mechanisms through which contemporary art circulates globally. As curator Natasha Ginwala has stated: "As a live medium, an exhibition is a site of production, a social persona, a constellatory narrative and a shared conversation. The *voices* within exhibitions constitute an observable politics, but what often go unnoticed are the *silences*".[10] By mapping and looking at the material histories and politics of exhibitions of contemporary Indian art in the last two decades, this study produces a complex constellation of both events that happened and

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[5] See Rupal Oza, *The making of neoliberal India. Nationalism, Gender, and the Paradoxes of Globalization.* New York and London: Routledge, 2006, p.2.
[6] *Idem*, p.11.
[7] The victory of the Hindu nationalists Narenda Modi of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the general elections in 2014 best exemplifies this rise.
[8] Jim O´Neill, "Building Better Global Economic BRICs", *Global Economics Paper*, 66, 30 November. 2001.
[9] See http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/india/overview [Last accessed: 21 October 2013].
[10] Natasha Ginwala, "In Hindsight: An ode to forgetting and inexactness", in Natasha Ginwala and Vidya Shivadas (eds.), *Take on Art* – Special Issue on Curation, 2 (1), 2011, p.15.

could not happen, to better understand curating contemporary art and globalisation and its field of possibilities.

To achieve this, I draw on globalisation paradigms and unpick their various forms of hegemony, mobility, agency and exchange, especially related to postcolonial and global cultural theory, to understand the field of curatorial practices and exhibition flows. As I elaborate further in the thesis, the concept of 'field' applied to curatorial practice in India resonates with and extends Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical model based on the notion of field and its associated attributes and his criticism of globalisation as a form of neoliberal dominant discourse.[11] In turn, the concept of 'flow', linked with exhibitions on the move, echoes and extends Arjun Appadurai's theory based on the notion of global cultural flows as a framework to explore the social imaginary of new global cultural processes.[12] Combined, this theoretical framework of the field of curatorial practice and exhibition flows provides a wide-ranging constellation for understanding the production, mediation and display of contemporary Indian art across a range of agents and sites: artists and curators and biennales, travelling exhibitions and the market.

1.2- Methodology

To position myself within this field and to create a working chronology of relevant exhibitions and art historical debates, I first carried out an extensive review and mapping of exhibitions, practitioners and discourses.[13] To create the empirical base for this study, I deployed a range of approaches and methodologies, including fieldwork, document and digital-based research and analysis, and interviewing. This was an iterative process, which was constantly developed and refined throughout the study. The main crux of this research was the in-depth fieldwork that I conducted, based around four research periods in India, totalling over two years in the field. During this time I was an Associated Researcher at the School of Arts and Aesthetics in the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi and also

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[11] Pierre Bourdieu, [1979], *Distinction – A social critique of the judgement of taste* (tr. Richard Nice), New York and London, Routledge, 2008; Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1993; Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (tr. Richard Nice), New York, The New Press, 1998 and Pierre Bourdieu, [2001], *Firing Back. Against the Tyranny of the Market 2* (tr. Loïc Wacquant), New York: The New Press, 2003.

[12] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

[13] See Appendix A.I- Chronology of the participation of Indian artists in biennales worldwide, 1990-2012, pp. 161-168, and Appendix B.I- Chronology of major exhibitions elsewhere, 1990-2010, pp. 178-186.

conducted research in Mumbai, Bangalore, Kochi and Kolkata. I visited exhibitions and took part in numerous events and conferences in India, including presenting at key symposiums such as *Curating Indian Visual Culture: Theory and Practice* (2011, RLV College of Music and Fine Arts, Kochi), which was part of the seminal India Foundation for the Arts' four-year Curatorship Programme (2010-2013). This research in India was complemented with research trips to Belgium, France, Italy, Germany and Spain to visit exhibitions and archives.

Collating a vast collection of empirical materials whilst working on this research project, my case study sources include observations, photographic and sound recordings, in-depth audio interviews, exhibition catalogues, conference proceedings, online archive materials and specialist publications. To be self-reflexive about this research process, I would now like to draw attention to four main methodological issues: how I conducted my interviews, the ethics involved in this research, questions of insider/outsider relations and privileges, and how I analysed and presented the research in this thesis.

Interviewing artists, curators, critics, scholars, gallerists, collectors and other cultural practitioners was a major strand of my research: I conducted seventy-one face-to-face interviews, largely when I was in India, with some in Europe. These interviews lasted between half an hour and two hours. These interviews were semi-structured, based around an agenda that I prepared beforehand, allowing for the space and dialogism for interviewees to bring forward their own concerns and interests related to the topics.

To contact the interviewees, I mainly emailed them first, with a short explanation of my research and research questions. To decide who to interview, I prepared a draft list of prospective names of artists, curators, cultural practitioners, gallerists, collectors and so forth, based on my initial preparatory research. This initial list was completed with the insider's view, expertise and advice of Parul Dave Mukherji and Shukla Sawant, faculty members at the School of Arts and Aesthetics in the Jawaharlal Nehru University. In order to get contact details for all my potential interviewees, I drew on my increasing network of acquaintances. The majority of invited participants replied to my emails, but, if not, I also phoned some people or approached them at openings and art events. As I was based in India for an extended period, I became more familiar with people in the art scene, and this facilitated my access to interviewees. It should be noted that there was a certain timeliness to my fieldwork: when I started there was little international research on contemporary art

and curating in India, yet my research coincided with a boom in interest in these topics, with participants willing to share their experiences and views.

There were ethical issues in conducting interview-based research, notably within professional fields that are also structured by interpersonal relationships, rivalries and long-standing collaborations and conflicts. With each interviewee I gave the option for the interview to be recorded or not, and for the interviewee to be named or made anonymous. The majority of interviewees agreed for their interviews to be recorded; nine participants declined to be audio recorded, and these interviews were captured by manual note-taking. Among those who did not want to be recorded were key players in the art world and those who did not feel comfortable with their level of competence in the English language.

I also noticed that some questions were difficult topics to answer, and that as all my interviewees were active practitioners in their field, some diplomacy was needed in their responses so as to not potentially compromise their careers. At other times, there were suspicions as to who I was and what my intentions and premises for the interviews were. In particular, in one instance, a gallerist from Mumbai believed at first that I was a spy from a rival gallery, sent to find out her business secrets. Only after reiterating my PhD research and showing her my Royal College of Art business card did she feel comfortable about my purpose and continue with the interview. Notably, the length of time that I spent living and researching in India, becoming immersed in the art scene and extending my circle of friends, acquaintances and research contacts, enabled me to map the largely unspoken and intangible web of personal and professional social relations which structured the field. While this brought advantages in terms of being able to locate different references and topics that arose in my interviews, it also brought disadvantages, such as being seen as being associated with certain people over others, which may have influenced how the interviews unfolded and who agreed to participate.

It is important to reflect on questions of privilege and inequalities within my interview process. All the interviews I conducted were in English, which already delimited a space of privilege and cultural capital. During the interview encounters I was aware of my privilege as a white, Western outsider and also my interviewees' privileges as being, for the most part, upper-class, with family connections to high Indian society. Just two of my interviewees came from lower class and rural backgrounds, as they pointed out in their interviews. In

these interviews I also mentioned my own working-class background, coming from a farming family, and this disclosure seemed to open up a more personal terrain, although of course it did not constitute a parity of experience.

The most relevant interviews and excerpts were transcribed and coded as the basis of my case study analyses. I organised my codes according to the themes that came out in the interviews as well as my particular research questions, case studies and interests. Some examples of these codes are: "Curating Indian Art Elsewhere, Travelling Shows and Artists' Selection", "Public Institutions in India", "Art Market and Global Crisis", "India in Biennales", "Curatorial Practices in India", "Collectors" and "Digital Communications, Travel, Visas and Internet", among others.[14] Rather than present a historical and exhaustive definition based on a chronological development, I focus on some of its most important and representative shows that are analysed and connected with the critical and theoretical discourses mentioned above. In this regard, since this thesis primarily concerns the analysis of curatorial practice, I have mainly focused on exhibitions and have analysed art works only insofar to emphasise a point about curatorial choices, according to specific exhibition contexts. When writing up my research, I remained aware of the problematic nature of the nation-based approach, including the reluctance of some of my interviewees to be defined as Indian artists, but nevertheless this approach remained important, since the nation-based approach remains embedded in the way that exhibitions are mediated and identities are represented. In this respect, I unpick through the thesis "the idea of India", as Sunil Khilnani put it in relation to imagined communities,[15] to consider how identities and territories are constructed through curatorial discourse and practices.

Finally, considering the merit of the interview data collated in this research, the main crux of this method was the evidential qualities of the interviews conducted. This allowed me to put on record the testimonies of witnesses to and participants in particular exhibitions or art events, together with their analysis or opinions of these events. However, it is also important to acknowledge the drawbacks of using interview data as method and research strategy: human memory is not always accurate; and, of course, perceptions and perspectives vary from person to person depending on their own interests and affiliations. In order to overcome such disadvantages, I recorded a wide range of perspectives and cross-referenced or supplemented what was said in the interviews with other forms of document

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[14] See Appendix C- List of cited interviews, pp. 191-192.

[15] Sunil Khilnani [1997], *The idea of India,* London: Penguin Books, 2012.

and digital-based research and analysis, traversing in this way a wide number of texts and interviews.

1.3- Thesis overview

This thesis is structured in four parts. Alongside this "Introduction" (Chapter One), the first part, "Globalisation and Curating Contemporary Art", comprises the theoretical framework and literature review (Chapter Two). The second part, "Biennales in India and India in Biennales", outlines Indian artists' and curators' circulation in biennale circuits (Chapter Three) and proposes a critical analysis of the establishment of biennales in India (Chapter Four). The third part, "Indian Contemporary Art on the Move", maps the mobility of exhibitions of Indian art elsewhere, in Europe in particular, and identifies the logics through which these exhibitions have taken shape (Chapter Five). I then comparatively analyse two specific cases of group exhibitions elsewhere (Chapter Six). The fourth part, "The Field of Curatorial Practices and Exhibition Flows", concludes this thesis by summing up the arguments and findings of this study (Chapter Seven). I shall now outline the next chapters in more depth.

Chapter Two, "Globalisation, Contemporary Art and Curatorial Practices", provides the theoretical context for this thesis. Examining globalisation and its parallelism and differences with colonialism, this chapter asks 'what is globalisation, when, and for whom?' I address these questions by means of relevant discussions on economic and cultural globalisation theories as well as through the case of contemporary art and its debates. From this, I focus on Pierre Bourdieu's field theory and criticism of globalisation, exploring its relevance in relation to curatorial practices in India.[16] Noting the applicability as well as the limitations of Bourdieu´s theory, furthermore I discuss Arjun Appadurai's theory of global cultural flows, which complements and extends Bourdieu's theory, overcoming its structural determinism.[17] In this chapter I develop the theoretical framework used in this thesis, based on the field of curatorial practices and exhibition flows, which establishes a tool to explore curating contemporary art's globalisation, mobility, hybridisation and agency in India and elsewhere.

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[16] Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.*, [1979]; Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.*, 1993; Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.*, 1998 and Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.*, [2001].
[17] Arjun Appadurai, *Op. Cit.*, 1996.

In Chapter Three, "Biennale Circuits and Models of Large-Scale Exhibition Practices", I outline the participation of Indian artists and curators in biennale circuits. This includes an interrogation of what has been termed within the Indian art scene as "the usual suspects", which refers to the artists repeatedly picked up in international exhibitions. Moreover, I analyse the reasons that have facilitated such global exposure and consider the art market's role and the use and expectations of global art languages in these selections. Finally, I present relevant debates on the biennale realm in India, such as the relation with the nation and transcultural curating. This is looked at through the prism of global South theories and exemplified through divergent curatorial discourses and positions held by Indian curators.

In Chapter Four, "The Delhi Biennale", I examine the case of biennales in India in order to discuss the historical, political and contextual issues that have shaped the contemporary biennale sphere in the country. I highlight the case of the Delhi Biennale Society, which proposed a biennale in the 2000s that ultimately did not come to realisation. To analyse the processes of the proposal, rather than as an end event which did not materialise, I look at three interconnected spheres of articulation: the relation of the proposed Biennale to the Triennale India (a state-run exhibition launched in the post-independence period of 1968 and discontinued in 2005), the idea of 'Asia' underpinning the proposal, and the aim of the proposed exhibition to develop South-South dialogues and revitalise existent domestic art infrastructure according to contemporary times. Through a close consideration of interviews and conference documentation surrounding the Delhi Biennale Society, I analyse and respond to the core questions: which conditions have facilitated the establishment of biennales in India and India in biennales? And how do these perennial exhibitions relate to the politics of biennales from the global South?

Focusing specifically on Indian contemporary art, in Chapter Five I analyse curatorial practice as a space of cultural mobility related to wider social changes taking place under present globalisation. First, I map out how, when and where contemporary art in India has been exhibited on the global scene, in Europe in particular, and the reasons that have facilitated such circulation. Moreover, in this chapter I examine the main curatorial frameworks of these exhibitions worldwide related to the practice of curators from elsewhere and the multiple phases that have shaped such frameworks. In doing so, my primary aim is to analyse, discuss and respond to the core questions: what are the models and dynamics of

transcultural curating of Indian contemporary art, and how do they relate to collaborative practices and the idea of belonging?

These questions are addressed further in Chapter Six through an empirical case study of two exhibitions, the *Indian Highway* exhibition (2008-2012) and the *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* exhibition (2008). Through the analysis of these exhibitions, taking into account the relevance of exhibitions on the move in defining the dynamics of contemporary art display within India and elsewhere, I discuss current developments in transcultural curating as shaped by art mobility, migratory flows of culture and global dialogues and exchanges. In this journey, perhaps surprisingly, the different models and strategies of curating on the move will flow beyond their multiple points of departure and arrival and the apparently more static ones might turn out to be the ones that move further.

In Chapter Seven, the "Conclusion", I draw together the arguments and findings presented in this study, before evaluating the field of curatorial practices and the exhibition flows framework proposed in this thesis and highlighting some areas for future research. Within this exposition, I explore the relation of this theoretical PhD study in dialogism with my curatorial practices, in particular the exhibition *La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound* that I co-curated in 2013 at Fundación Botín in Santander. This exhibition considered the arrival of sound reproduction technologies in India and its impact on contemporary art and culture in India and elsewhere. Overall, the aim of this thesis is to draw attention to some broader questions of how curatorial practices in India and elsewhere can be produced, transmitted and taken up in global times.

2- Globalisation, Contemporary Art and Curatorial Practices

The phenomenon of globalisation is fiercely debated in the contemporary world. Under present circumstances of increasing social inequalities, migratory movements, uneven flows of communication and mass-media technologies, ecological and agricultural disasters and global economic crisis, diverging voices are raised on behalf of and against globalisation's effectiveness and consequences. On the one hand, its supporters maintain that globalisation increases economic and cultural capital in a democratic process of transnational exchange. Its critics, on the other hand, argue that globalisation reinforces homogenisation and creates differences between the privileged members of society, who control economic and cultural capital, and the underprivileged, who are subordinated to it.

In order to understand the contemporary global world in relation to curatorial practices, it is necessary to define globalisation and trace its origins and how it differentiates itself from previous forms of worldwide exchange and regimes of domination. In order to do so, in this chapter I present an overview of theories of globalisation: examining what globalisation is, when it began, its parallels with and differences from colonialism and its impact on contemporary art. From this, I focus on Pierre Bourdieu's field theory and criticism of globalisation, exploring its relevance in relation to curating contemporary Indian art. Noting its applicability as well as its limitations, furthermore I discuss Arjun Appadurai's theory of global cultural flows, which complements and extends Bourdieu's theory, overcoming its structural determinism. Moreover, Appadurai's conceptualisation of the imagination as a social practice opens up global fields of possibilities in negotiation with local sites of agency. Finally, to conclude this chapter, I raise some considerations on the theoretical framework used in this thesis, based on the field of curatorial practices and exhibition flows which, in dialogism with Bourdieu's and Appadurai's theories, establishes a tool to explore curating contemporary art's globalisation, mobility, hybridisation and agency in India and elsewhere.

2.1- Globalisation: what, when and for whom?

The term 'globalisation' has increasing currency in the present, from everyday discussions to scholarly conferences and debates. In a moment when everything is, seems or seeks to be global, its meaning and implications are often blurred by the vagueness of this buzzword in continuous transformation. Globalisation has multiple dimensions and dynamics and to

define them one has to comprehend the different layers and positions that the term encompasses. In an attempt to do so, Roland Robertson, one of the first sociologists to theorise about the concept of globalisation, defines it as "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole".[18] In turn, for political scientists David Held and Anthony McGrew, globalisation "denotes the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of transcontinental flows and patterns of social interaction".[19] Furthermore, Held and McGrew also provide a useful framework to analyse globalisation, differentiating between three main schools of thought: the hyperglobalists, the sceptics and the transformationalists.[20]

The hyperglobalists' main focus is economic globalisation. They argue about the increased relevance of the global world, which dismisses the power and sovereignty of the nation-state. This school of thought can be divided between those theorists who take an upbeat view of globalisation, like the neoliberals, and those who see it in negative terms, like the neo-Marxists. Among the neoliberals, the economists Milton Friedman and Rudi Dornbusch stand out, and amongst the neo-Marxists, significant critics are the linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky and anti-globalisation movements like the World Social Forum. The second school of thought, the sceptics, such as sociologists and political theorists Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, argue that globalisation is a myth. For them, globalisation is not unprecedented but instead is a highlight of economic interdependences where international processes are more fragmented and regionalised than globalised. Finally, the transformationalists argue that globalisation has structural consequences and is a driving force in society that has influences in political, social and economic changes. This school synthesises the two opposed approaches described above and includes theorists such as Held and McGrew, who are noted transformationalists. For them, the outcomes of globalisation are undetermined and they argue that politics can no longer be just based on nation-states and the logic of the market: neither can be the single cause behind globalisation. Thus, globalisation represents a dialectical process with integration and fragmentation, winners and losers.

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[18] Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London: Sage, 1992, p.8.

[19] David Held and Anthony McGrew, *Globalization and Anti-Globalization*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002, p. 1.

[20] David Held and Anthony McGrew, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

If we take into account when globalisation began, again there is no consensus: each position depends upon the criteria by which the term is defined. For economist Amartya Sen, over thousands of years globalisation has contributed to the progress of the world through travel, trade, migration, spread of cultural influences and dissemination of knowledge and understanding. [21] For historian Jean Chesneaux and sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, globalisation is an extension of European colonial and capital expansion which evolved throughout the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries.[22] By contrast, sociologists Martin Albrow and Anthony Giddens insist that the economic and technological changes that started five centuries ago needed to become global, to establish worldwide markets of communication and capital, and this only started to happen in the middle of the 20th century.[23] In this regard, as anthropologist Néstor García-Canclini points out, one must outline the characteristics and differences between internationalisation, transnationalisation and globalisation in order to understand the autonomy of the latter from its precedents.[24]

The term 'internationalisation' refers to the geographical increase in economic activities beyond nascent national borders beginning in the 15th century with European maritime mercantilism and subsequent colonisation of the Americas, Asia and Africa. With independence from colonialism, economy and culture were then ostensibly controlled by the newly instituted nation-states.[25] Transnationalisation, in turn, started during the first half of the 20th century when multinational corporations with profitable commercial activities in several countries started to control a considerable amount of the world economy. Sociologist Ulrich Beck argues that transnationalisation cannot apply solely to multinational corporations, but must also apply to other types of transnational connections that were carried out by social movements and migratory flows that circulated around the world.[26] Globalisation might be seen as the culmination of these previous processes but with its own characteristics. Regarding the new features of globalisation, which according to Beck

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[21] Amartya Sen, "How to Judge Globalism", *The American Prospect,* 13 (1), 2002, pp. 1-14.

[22] Jean Chesneaux, *Modernité-Monde. Brave Modern World*, Paris: La Découverte, 1989 and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System, vol. III: The Second Great Expansion of the Capitalist World Economy, 1730-1840s*, San Diego: Academic Press, 1989.

[23] Martin Albrow, *The Global Age,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997 and Anthony Giddens, "Globalisation: Keynote address at the UNRISD Conference on Globalisation and Citizenship", *The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development Bulletin*, 15, Autumn 1996 - Winter 1997, pp. 4-5.

[24] Néstor García-Canclini, "La globalización: ¿productora de culturas híbridas?", in Javier Encina and Manuel Montañés Serrano (eds.), *Construyendo colectivamente la convivencia en la diversidad: Los retos de la inmigración,* Sevilla: UNILCO, 2002, pp. 81-94.

[25] *Ibidem.*

[26] Ulrich Beck, *What Is Globalisation?*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

is characterised by the world market eliminating or supplanting political action,[27] one should mention the intensification of reciprocal dependencies generated through economic and cultural processes, which begin during internationalisation, colonisation and transnationalisation processes.

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall, in turn, differentiates between four phases of globalisation and defines its origins at the moment when Western Europe breaks out of its confinement, at the end of the 15th century, and the era of exploration, conquest and colonisation of the non-European world begins. In his opinion, somewhere around 1492 it is possible to see this project as having a global rather than a national or continental character.[28] After the initial phase around 1500 and following this historical break, processes of globalisation enter a second phase characterised by formal and informal colonisation. The third phase, after the Second World War, is marked by the decline of European empires that were dominant during the second phase. The fourth period, which is particularly relevant for this research referring to the field of curatorial practices and exhibition flows, begins for Hall in its radically reconstructed, transnational form in the mid-1970s. According to Hall, culture and the economy permeate each other and therefore the movement of power is inseparable from the movement of images, the movement of capital, and the movement of information.[29]

In relation to the origins and phases of globalisation and its implications for the cultural field, sociologist Diana Crane distinguishes three main theoretical models to explain and interpret cultural globalisation.[30] The first model is the cultural imperialism theory that appeared in the 1960s under the influence of the Frankfurt School as a Marxist critique of the dominance of capitalist culture. This theory had a significant relevance after decolonisation when new states gained independence in Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Cultural imperialism theory argues that there was a prevailing Western hegemony in the global economic field in opposition to Third World countries that remained in the periphery with little control over their economic and political development. This neo-colonial process of cultural transmission

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[27] *Ibid,* p.9.

[28] Stuart Hall, "Creolization, Diaspora, and Hybridity in the Context of Globalisation", in Okwui Enwezor et al. (eds.), *Creolité and Creolization. Documenta11_Platform3*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Kantz, 2003, p. 193.

[29] *Ibid*, p. 194.

[30] Diana Crane, "Culture and Globalization. Theoretical Models and Emerging Trends", in Diana Crane, Nobuko Kawashima and Ken'ichi Kawasaki (eds.), *Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization,* New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 1-25.

provoked homogenisation of cultures and identities and presupposed the subordination of peripheral countries to the rules and impositions of the powerful ones. Cultural imperialism, despite its limitations in acknowledging the global dissemination of centres and how local communities achieve agency, remains a useful tool to analyse the prevalence of some positions and actors over others on the global cultural scene, as I argue later on, drawing on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu.

The second model is the audience reception theory, developed by cultural theorists such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall. This model appeared during the 1970s and 1980s and recognised the importance of an active audience, which has an important role in interpreting, critiquing, negating or subverting the impact of globalisation, noting the influence of factors such as gender, race and age along with economics and class in audience interpretation. As summarised by Crane: "reception theory concentrates on the responses of audiences and publics. On the one hand, reception theory looks at people's responses to specific cultural products. On the other hand, it theorizes the long term effects of cultural products on national and cultural identity".[31] Audience reception theory proposes a multidirectional relation in front of the centre-periphery dialectical model, with multiculturalism identified as the dominant trend.

The third model is the cultural flows and global networks theory, which likewise argues that influences do not have a fixed origin or flow in a unilateral direction. This model emerged in the 1990s through anthropologist and cultural theorist Arjun Appadurai's global cultural flows theory and it is relevant for this research as a key referent in the field of curatorial practices and exhibition flows that I shall outline and analyse in the next sections of this chapter. For now, it is important to note that cultural flows and global networks theory blurs the centre and periphery model, since cultural influences move in two or more directions and provoke hybridisations instead of homogenisation. Both cultural flows and global networks theory and audience reception theory are interrelated and offer an alternative and a critique to cultural imperialism. These two models, originally framed within media, culture and communications studies, transcend these disciplines and are also a useful framework to analyse the contemporary world marked by cultural globalisation and mobility. In particular, cultural flows and global networks theory and audience reception theory are relevant for this research on how the global impacts on contemporary art and curatorial practices.

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[31] *Ibid*, pp. 9-10.

With regard to explaining present globalisation in relation to previous forms of global exchange and colonial dominance, especially related to postcolonial studies, arguably the relationship works in two ways. As postcolonial theorists Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin have pointed out, it is not possible to understand globalisation without understanding the structure of contemporary global power relations as a legacy of Western imperialism. At the same time, postcolonial theory provides very clear models for understanding how local communities create modes of resistance and agency under the pressure of global hegemony.[32] This does not mean that the two phenomena are the same or that globalisation is neo-colonialism *per se* but, as cultural and literary theorist Simon Gikandi has noted, they have at least two important things in common. On the one hand, globalisation and postcolonial studies transcend the boundaries of the nation-state. On the other, both provide new frames to understand cultural flows that go beyond the homogenous Eurocentric narrative of development and social change.[33]

Noting the interrelatedness and difference of cultural globalisation and postcolonial studies theory, I believe that in combination, they constitute a useful tool to analyse the power dimensions of overlapping spheres of action and resistance related to global politics, economics, technologies and culture on the move. In this frame, as visual culture theorist Annie Coombes has pointed out, it is essential to acknowledge inequalities of access to economic and political power, in terms of class and gender relations within subaltern and dominant groups which will also articulate how difference is constituted not just in terms of western metropolitan centres. As she argues, "maybe this would allow us to explore hybridity as a condition occurring within and across different groups interacting in the same society".[34] In this respect, it is important to emphasise the multidirectionality of hegemonic powers in an intersectional way, from North to South but also horizontally.

Finally, the social, political and economical globalisation discussed through this section has had an impact on the field of art. According to art historian Jonathan Harris, globalisation in

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[32] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader,* London: Routledge, 1995, p.461-462.
[33] Simon Gikandi, "Globalisation and the Claims of Postcoloniality", *South Atlantic Quarterly,* 100 (3), 2002, pp. 627-658.
[34] Annie Coombes, "Inventing the 'Postcolonial': Hybridity and Constituency in Contemporary Curating", in Donald Preziosi (ed.), *The Art of Art History. A Critical Anthology,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 497.

relation to contemporary art carries with it three qualifications.[35] Firstly, the term, although having currency and specialisation in the field of art history and practice, goes beyond the art world and encompasses the organisation of society in general. Secondly, despite globalisation's universal claims, there remains a hegemonic Western centrism as a result of centuries of western colonial and imperial conquest. And finally, there is neither agreement on the effects of globalisation in the art field, nor in the fields of sociology and political science, as I discussed earlier. Regarding the lack of consensus on the effects of globalisation on the arts, two main positions arise. The more negatives ones, among which stands out the critique of British art historian and curator Julian Stallabrass, contend that the globalised codes of artistic languages lead to homogenisation of the arts.[36] By contrast, Cuban curator Gerardo Mosquera argues that difference is constantly produced through the local or personal interpretations and translations of global art languages.[37] Indeed, as indicated by these distinct positions, the debates and discussions on globalisation have wide currency in the present. As a continuum of these debates, throughout the thesis I shall analyse further the globalisation of the arts and curatorial practices through the lens of contemporary Indian art, taking into account both the positive and negatives positions and their outcomes.

In sum, as seen in this section, the debates around globalisation are vast and multidisciplinary and there is no definitive agreement on this phenomenon. As an extension of these debates, in the following section, I shall review Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field and his criticism of globalisation, which remains a useful theory to analyse the prevalence of some positions and actors within the global cultural scene. Furthermore, I discuss how this theory could apply to the case of curating contemporary Indian art and in what way it might be an appropriate framework for this thesis.

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[35] Jonathan Harris, "Introduction. Globalization and Contemporary Art: A Convergence of Peoples and Ideas", in Jonathan Harris (ed.), *Globalization and Contemporary Art,* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p. 1.

[36] Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated. The History of Contemporary Art,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

[37] Gerardo Mosquera, "Alien-Own/Own-Alien: Globalization and Cultural Difference", in Nikos Papastergiadis (ed.), *Complex Entanglements. Art, Globalisation and Cultural Difference,* London, Rivers Oram Press, 2003, pp.19-29.

2.2- From field to flows

According to Bourdieu's theoretical model, any social formation and/or interaction is structured by way of a hierarchically organised series of fields. A field - the economic field, the educational field, the medical field, the political field, the cultural field etc. - is defined as a structured space with its own laws and its own relations of force, relatively autonomous of those of politics and the economy, although most fields tend to respond to them.[38] As Bourdieu suggests, one can analyse "all practices, including those purporting to be disinterested or gratuitous, and hence non-economic, as economic practice directed toward the maximising of material or symbolic profit".[39]

To understand Bourdieu's theory of the field, it is also necessary to outline some of its associated attributes, particularly the concepts of agent, consecration, symbolic capital, habitus and doxa, which are relevant for this research to investigate the curatorial field. A field is a setting in which agents - institutions, groups or individuals - and their social positions are located. As actors - Bourdieu uses the terms 'agent' and 'actor' equally - they operate as producers (artists), mediators (curators, critics, art historians) or consecrators of value (critics, curators, historians, dealers, collectors, gallerists, art digital platforms, auction houses, TV and internet programmers, the informed art public etc.). The position taken by agents/actors who mediate between symbolic, cultural and economic capital in art responds to the struggle to occupy certain competitive and luminary positions with the aim to achieve consecration or recognition according to the logic of the field. At the same time, the position taken responds to the agents/actors' own benefit and self-interest. In this set, since the dominant class of agents determine the value of art, consecration becomes a function of the self-definition, legitimacy and autonomisation of the field of art itself.

The concept of habitus comprises a set of sociological, psychological and experiential unconscious dispositions that governs the attitudes, institutions and positions in the field. Habitus generates practices, inclinations, beliefs, tendencies, appreciations and perceptions recognised by agents who know the codes and rules. Within the art field, given that artistic principles are codes and rules that a person must learn in order to decode an art object, according to Bourdieu "any art perception involves a conscious or unconscious deciphering

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[38] Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.*, 1993.
[39] Pierre Bourdieu, [1972], *Outline of a theory of practice* (tr. Richard Nice), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p.183.

operation".[40] Taking into account that habitus positions agents through factors like social class and wealth, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality and so forth, the ability to decode artistic competences belongs to a restricted and privileged social group who know the rules of art and have the capacity to consecrate value. These predispositions, at the same time, create exclusion, since art speaks firstly to its own field, which Bourdieu refers to as "production for producers".[41] For now, it is important to notice the complicity between the art market, national cultural policies and neoliberal agendas regarding which artists are selected, exhibited, profiled and collected and the reasons and interests behind such decisions.

In this framework, the field of cultural production is structured, in the broadest sense, by an opposition between two sub-fields: the field of restricted production – high art consumed as an exclusive product of class distinction – and the field of large-scale production – mass-culture produced for mass consumption.[42] If we take into account the field of restricted production, Bourdieu sees it as based on two oppositions: between the licensed avant-garde and newcomers, which is the field of conflict between cultural orthodoxy and heresy, between past and present forms, between art for art's sake and art as political and social critique. The logic of the field has assembled into it the conditions of experimentation and novelty and this enables shifting power relations based on changing values and the struggle for interests or resources among different positions in the field. Value is thus produced by a series of differential oppositions, all of which rely on self-denial by "makers and marketers" - artists and curators-dealers/mediators – who necessarily collude in the "repressions of the direct manifestations of personal interest".[43] In this respect, one should consider how and when these rules and exchange rates are positioned, who fixes them and on behalf of whose interests and profits. Later, I will analyse and respond to these questions in relation to contemporary art and curatorial practices in India, but for now I must underline that these rules and exchange rates are based on hierarchical relations among fields with a prevailing dominance of the economic and political fields and structures.

In the last decade of his career, in the 1990s, Bourdieu used his theory of the field to articulate a fierce public critique on globalisation and neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, in

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[40] Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.*, 1993, p.215.
[41] *Ibid*, p. 46.
[42] *Ibid,* p.30.
[43] *Ibid*, pp.79-80.

parallel to the concept of globalisation analysed previously, refers to a new take on economic liberalism that has established worldwide markets of communication and capital since the second half of the 20th century, particularly in the last twenty years or so. As Marxist sociologists and political philosophers Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt point out, "along with the global market and global circuits of production has emerged a global order and a new logic and structure of rule – in short, a new form of sovereignty". [44] Neoliberalism's dominion has reinforced the spread of private enterprises, liberalised trades and relatively open markets to promote global capitalism, consumerism and productivity in terms of economic profit in detriment to non-commodified and non-valuable individuals, groups and forms of knowledge, such as the arts and curatorial practices for this matter. Neoliberalism, though, like globalisation, is not new. What are new are the transnational forms it takes through movements of finance, goods and services increasingly separated from the state and its social regulations.[45]

Bourdieu critiques globalisation as an established neoliberal dominant discourse[46] or, in his own terminology, as a doxa: that is, the self-definition and presentation of neoliberalism as a self-evident truth about the human and social, which is beyond question and has no alternatives. The status of neoliberalism as doxa, Bourdieu tells us, is "what gives the dominant discourse its strength". [47] The neoliberal doctrine significantly erodes the autonomy of the arts, bringing the pressures of the market to bear upon the production and consumption of art, literature and film.[48] As he points out, "commercial concerns are being even more intensely and widely imposed on cultural production".[49]

In response and opposition to globalisation neoliberal sovereignty, Bourdieu advocates for a scholarship with commitment "where the collective intellectual can play its unique role, by

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[44] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, London and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000, *Preface,* p.1.

[45] Dag Einar Thorsen, "The Neoliberal Challenge: What Is Neoliberalism?", *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*, 2(2), 2011, pp. 188-214.

[46] Pierre Bourdieu, "The 'Myth' of globalisation and the welfare state", pp. 29-45, and "Neo-liberalism, the utopia (becoming a reality) of unlimited exploitation", pp. 94-105. Both in Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (tr. Richard Nice), New York: The New Press, 1998.

[47] Pierre Bourdieu, "The 'Myth' of globalisation and the welfare state", *Op. Cit.*, 1998, p.29.

[48] Pierre Bourdieu, "Neo-liberalism, the utopia (becoming a reality) of unlimited exploitation", *Op. Cit.*, 1998, p.38.

[49] Pierre Bourdieu, [2001], "Culture is in Danger", *Firing Back. Against the Tyranny of the Market 2* (tr. Loïc Wacquant), New York: The New Press, 2003, pp.68-69.

helping to create the social conditions for collective production of *realistic utopias".*[50] This autonomous collective intellectual – artists, curators, writers, academics, scientists etc. who engage in political action – has a decisive role to play in the struggle against the new neoliberal doxa and purely formal cosmopolitanism. Fake universalism, Bourdieu states, serves in reality the interests of the dominant.[51] To such an unequal situation, committed scholars can oppose "a *new internationalism*, capable of tackling with truly international force not only issues such as environmental problems but also more strictly economic issues or cultural issues […]. All this can unite intellectuals who are resolutely universal, that is, intent upon universalizing the conditions of access to the universal, beyond the boundaries that separate nations, especially those of the North and South".[52]

Bourdieu's argument in favour of the collective intellectual parallels the intellectual's role suggested by postcolonial theorist Edward Said. According to Said, the intellectual's role is "to represent a message or view not only to but for a public and to do so as an outsider, someone who cannot be co-opted by a government or corporation, and whose *raison d'être* is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug".[53] Given that institutions might potentially compromise intellectuals, in Said's view the mission of intellectuals often entails standing outside the institutions in order to advance the cause of freedom and justice.

Regarding the internationalisation of the field of visual arts and curating, curator Gerardo Mosquera states that "what is called the international art scene and the international artistic language reveals a hegemonic construct of globalism more than true globalisation, understood as a generalised participation".[54] In response to the new international orthodoxy, committed art theorists and curators such as Jean Fisher, Rasheed Araeen, Geeta Kapur, Olu Oguibe, Shaheen Merali and Mosquera himself, among others, advocate towards a new internationalism in the visual arts;[55] which also resonates with the neo-Marxists' New

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[50] Pierre Bourdieu, "For a scholarship with Commitment", *Op. Cit.*, [2001], p. 21.

[51] *Ibid,* p.23.

[52] *Ibid*, p.24.

[53] Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual, The 1993 Reith Lectures*, London: Vintage Books, 1994, p.11

[54] Gerardo Mosquera, "From", in Okwui Enwezor et al. (eds.), *Creolité and Creolization. Documenta11_Platform3*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Kantz, 2003 p. 145.

[55] Jean Fisher (ed.), *Global Visions, Towards a New Internationalism in the Visual Arts,* London: Iniva and Kala Press, 1994.

Internationalism to which Bourdieu subscribes.[56] Faced with inequalities, as art historian and cultural theorist Sarat Maharaj summarised, new internationalism would, if successful, "lead to a more complex reading of the socio-political economic context, critical aesthetic practice, and the 'material expression of both individual vision and a collective experience'".[57] From this perspective and acknowledging new internationalism's resonance and relevance to present global circumstances, it is necessary to emphasise the relevance of South-South dialogues, collaborations and curating applied to relatively autonomous ways of exhibiting contemporary art in India. In contrast to these independent practices, it is also important to note the impact of neoliberal globalisation in the construction of more orthodox curatorial discourses related to the commercialisation of Indian contemporary art. I shall analyse these two distinct curatorial practices in Parts II and III, in relation to contemporary Indian art in biennales and exhibitions on the move, respectively.

Having outlined Bourdieu's theory of the field, I shall consider its differences, relevance and applicability to present circumstances of globalisation's dominion worldwide. Starting with the differences, since the time of Bourdieu's interventions, the world in general, and the field of art in particular, have undergone big changes that translate into three main variances. First, in the field of art, as I have pointed out in the Introduction, there has been an increased transformation towards cultural openness and global exchange in the curatorial sphere, which has moved beyond the previous Western hegemony regarding the exhibition of "other cultures". If that was relatively certain at the time when Bourdieu was writing, arguably recent global art expansion has established non-hegemonic movements, challenging the predominance of North-North art circuits. However, the West still retains a considerable amount of economic power and often its interest in contemporary cultural productions from emerging art scenes conceals a way to satisfy its desire for consumption of "the other". As sociologist Alain Quemin has pointed out in his analysis of museum acquisitions and reviews in high profile art magazines, particularly those targeting collectors, the number of artists outside western countries exhibiting internationally is relatively small and hierarchies remain the same.[58] In this regard, according to curator and art theorist Geeta Kapur, one should remain attentive to new hegemonic forces hidden under the name

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[56] Promoted originally by the New Left in the 1960s and 1970s and inspired by neo-Marxist Dependencia theory, New Internationalism is concerned with human rights and needs, egalitarianism and antimilitarism in search of global justice.

[57] Sarat Maharaj, "'Perfidious Fidelity': The Untranslatability of the Other", in Sarat Maharaj and Stuart Hall, *Annotations: Modernity and Difference No. 6*, London: Iniva, 2001, pp. 26-34.

[58] Alain Quemin, "Globalization and Mixing in the Visual Arts", *International Society*, 21 (4), 2006, pp. 522-550.

of the global.[59] In Kapur's view, "the contemporary holds such premium that the diachronic paradigm - now characterized as an overdetermined discourse creating a teleology that promotes Western hegemony - is superseded by a euphoric synchrony. A de-temporalised globality that suppresses an earlier, more dialectical, internationalism and its (utopian) avant-garde should continue to be the subject of examination".[60] Kapur questions the temporal framing of the ´modern´ and ´contemporary´ in relation to art discourses surrounding Indian art and hegemonic globalisation, which I shall analyse further in the case studies of this thesis. For now I shall underline that those actors outside the hegemonic global art machine have more limited possibilities to achieve symbolic, cultural and economic capital in the international art circuits.

Second, along with the ostensible opening up of cultural boundaries, one of the most significant shifts in the art field and its agents is the blurriness between the field of restricted production – fine art – and the field of large-scale production – mass culture and media – which undermines art's autonomy such that it becomes more emphatically a commodity hostage to market forces. The commodification of culture, in turn, has expanded art practices to mass media and, in the present, art is part of the entertainment industry and artists can acquire the role of celebrities. As art engages with the mass media, the position taken by agents/actors who mediate between symbolic, cultural and economic capital in the arts has changed as well. On the one hand the informed general public has expanded, weakening the mediator role of art historians and critics. On the other hand the power of the curators has also increased, multiplying their roles and taking over the celebritisation of artists, which used to be the role of the art critics or writers.

Finally, the biggest change in the art field is the involvement of corporations and art enterprises as agents. Corporations associate themselves with an exclusive and sophisticated idea of "high art" to appeal to the economically privileged consumer, reporting large benefits and publicity to the company. As art historian and curator Julian Stallabrass states, "the supplementary character of art to neoliberalism is becoming more visible as both corporations and states, aware of the lack in free trade, attempt to augment it by making instrumental demands on art. Corporations want to use art to assure an attachment

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[59] See Geeta Kapur, *When was modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2000.

[60] Geeta Kapur, "Art in the Global Contemporary", lecture presented at the workshop "Global Art and the Museum: The Global Turn and Art in Contemporary India". New Delhi, 11 October 2008. Unpublished lecture. I am grateful to Geeta Kapur for passing me a copy of this lecture.

to the brand that cannot be purchased by advertising; the state wants to counter the destructive effects of free trade on social cohesion".[61] In the case of India, given the limited governmental support and subsidy to the arts in the country, corporate sponsorship and investment and art galleries have acquired a significant role in the production and exhibition of Indian contemporary art, as I shall analyse throughout the thesis, especially in Part II in relation to the case of biennales.

Regarding the reception and impact of Bourdieu's theory, according to sociologists Larissa Buchholz and Ulf Wuggenig, his concept of the field of art is useful for analysing international exchange processes, as it does not rely on an interactionist perspective but conceptualises the dynamics of high-culture as objectively and relationally structured by the unequal distribution of artistic and symbolic capital.[62] If this statement is true in a global frame, one might argue, as García-Canclini states, that there are risks in reproducing this theory indistinctively, especially since Bourdieu's approach does not take into consideration the different aims between the activities of the scientific field and the artistic field, between the production of knowledge and aesthetic experiences. Furthermore, a conception based on research into the "noble" cultural spheres that have achieved major autonomy, such as fine arts, philosophy or science, does not explain the differential logic of popular cultures that Bourdieu describes in *La Distinction* as a degraded reproduction of the dominant culture.[63] This should be considered a weakness in Bourdieu's theory since, as I stated previously, the blurriness of the division between high art and popular culture denies a degraded reproduction of the latter from the former. In this respect, as I will address later, global artists in India draw on visual popular and folkloric culture with independence of the nobility and autonomy of the high-culture arts, as defined in the Western tradition.

Artist and writer Everlyn Nicodemus also argues about the difficulty in applying Bourdieu's method outside Europe. Nicodemus' main concern, in her case using Bourdieu's theory to analyse the artistic field in sub-Saharan Africa, is the lack of a consolidated art infrastructure in the Third World as well as the fact that the examination of Bourdieu's material basis, by statistical research and sociological and historical case studies, remains insufficient outside

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[61] Julian Stalabrass, *Op. Cit.,* 2004.
[62] Larissa Buchholz and Ulf Wuggenig, "Cultural Globalisation between Myth and Reality: The Case of the Contemporary Visual Arts", *Art-e-fact*, 4, 2005. Website http://artefact.mi2.hr/_a04/lang_en/theory_buchholz_en.htm [Last accessed: April 24, 2009]
[63] Néstor García-Canclini, "Pierre Bourdieu. El arte como laboratorio de la sociología (y a la inversa)", *Exitbook Journal,* 10, 2009, p.45.

Europe.[64] If we consider the case of India, taking into account the lack of an institutional art infrastructure devoted to contemporary art, curatorial practice and its space of action and resistance has been developed along with the globalisation of the country. In this frame, Bourdieu's application to curatorial practice of contemporary Indian art, despite its limitations, is not just viable but useful, especially taking into consideration the perils of a standardising global discourse and, at the same time, acknowledging that this same discourse potentially produces practices both as reaffirmation and contestation. On the difficulties of examination by material basis outside of Europe, in the case of India the empirically based data that I collected and analysed constitutes the basis to partially apply Bourdieu's statistical research methods in this thesis.

Finally, one of the most recurrent critiques on Bourdieu's work is that it is determinist, or at least that it focuses excessively on the structural aspects of the field and how they reproduce, ignoring their changeability.[65] For Bourdieu, aesthetics rank equally with ideology, obviously an ideology or doxa of the dominant fields/agents/social classes.[66] Against this position, philosopher Jacques Rancière articulates a strong critique of Bourdieu's work. In Rancière's opinion, it reinforces what it seeks to expose. Bourdieu's discourse, Rancière argues, juxtaposes the poor at one end of society with the sociologist who is placed at the other end. This results in the poor being the object of study rather than intellectual subjects. Rancière concludes that Bourdieu strengthens inequality by presenting it as the core of his analysis and denies, in doing so, an account of political agency of his object of study.[67] Similarly, philosopher Michel de Certeau gives us another explicit critical argument against Bourdieu's theory for its dogmatism.[68] Where Bourdieu views subjectivity more as a reflection of broader structural processes -discourse, habitus- that determines the position of the subject that has little possibility of subverting the systems of power, for De

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[64] Everlyn Nicodemus, "Bourdieu out of Europe", *Third Text,* 9 (30), 1995, pp. 3-12.

[65] See Anthony King, "Thinking with Bourdieu against Bourdieu: A 'Practical' Critique of the Habitus", *Sociological Theory,* 18 (3), 2000, pp. 417-433, and Nick Crossley, "From Reproduction to Transformation. Social Movement Fields and the Radical Habitus", *Theory, Culture and Society,* 20 (6), 2003, pp. 39-64.

[66] Pierre Bourdieu with Terry Eagleton, "Conversation: Doxa and Common Life", *New Left Review,* 191, 1992, pp. 111-122.

[67] Jacques Rancière, [1983], "The Sociologist King" in *The Philosopher and His Poor* (ed. and tr. Andrew Parker), Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007, pp. 165-203.

[68] Michel de Certeau [1984], *The Practice of Everyday Life* (tr. Steven Rendall), Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988, p.60.

Certeau, agency and resistance are intrinsic characteristics of the irreducible essence of the person, the human soul, which is autonomous and has creative styles of life.[69]

Acknowledging these critiques, I believe the use of Bourdieu's theory remains applicable and valuable to analyse power structures and relations in global social transformation processes.[70] In this case, accepting curatorial practices as an overlapping phenomenon of mobile cultures and artistic encounters and disruptions between the global and the local, Bourdieu's theory becomes a useful tool to explore them. However, curatorial practices in the age of globalisation are better understood through his concept of the field than through his concept of habitus, criticised for being too static and deterministic, as I discussed previously. In this research, although Bourdieu's concept of habitus remains partially relevant, it is important to emphasise the changeability, mobility and agency of the field in a contemporary world characterised by highly differentiated societies that are themselves categorised by globalisation, deterritorialisation and hybridisation of cultures, as cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis has pointed out.[71] Under these circumstances, the mobility and agency of the curatorial field is better understood through the concept of global flows developed by Arjun Appadurai, which complements Bourdieu's theory and expands this theoretical framing of the impact of globalisation on Indian curatorial practices.

2.3- Exhibition flows through curatorial practices in-between

In regard to the limitations of the habitus for the purpose of this research and better applicability of global flows in relation to field theory, it might first be worthwhile to see what Appadurai himself says about the habitus. In his opinion, as groups past (and present, I would argue) become increasingly exhibited, curated and collected in national and transnational spheres, "cultures become less what Pierre Bourdieu would have called a habitus […] and more an arena for conscious choice, justification and representation, the

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[69] Jon P Mitchell, "A fourth critic of the Enlightenment: Michel de Certeau and the ethnography of subjectivity", *Social Anthropology Journal,* 15 (1), 2007, pp. 89-106.

[70] Despite its limitations, field theory has proved a useful analytical tool applied to various disciplines and case studies, from Bourdieu's own work that focused first on Algerian colonialism and war and later on class differences and power dimensions in 19th century France to successive studies where his theoretical legacy has been applied. Among them, the field of education has been one of the most recurrent and fruitful examples taking up Bourdieu's theory. Other studies include the fields of arts, colonial literature, fashion, public relations, political sciences, gender and equality.

[71] Nikos Papastergiadis, "Hybridity and Ambivalence. Places and Flows in Contemporary Art and Culture"*, Theory, Culture and Society,* 22 (4), 2005, pp. 39-64.

latter often to multiple and spatially dislocated audiences".[72] Since habitus is limited by determinism and by focusing on dominance over resistance, Appadurai overcomes these limitations by focusing on the new global cultural economy as a "complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models".[73] However, Appadurai's emphasis on the imagination as "a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibilities"[74] resonates with Bourdieu's field theory, extending it by incorporating global communities of practices to those limited to a specific location which reinforce changeability and resistance.

For Appadurai, one of the main characteristics of global modernity is the new role of the imagination in social life. His focus on the cultural dimensions of globalisation emphasises "a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practice of the modern".[75] In order to do so, he proposes to bring together the old idea of images, especially mechanically reproduced ones in line with the Frankfurt School, the idea of imagined communities, in line with Benedict Anderson's work,[76] and the idea of the imaginary as a constructed landscape of collective aspirations – the *imaginaire* in the French sense. In this frame, he states, "the imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component in the new global order".[77]

Under global circumstances, Appadurai argues, cultural and national borders are blurred. He articulates this through the deterritorialisation of culture that is closely related to globally mediated events and migration flows. As the nation-state is in crisis, media and migration have become active across large and irregular transnational terrains, underpinning his sense of the cultural politics of the global modern. This transnational mobility and consumerism does not equate with the expansion of American culture; nor is it an equivalent to a homogenised or unified global culture. For Appadurai, the incorporation of the global into the local produces hybridisation that serves as a methodological point to map cultural exchanges in the frame of the deterritorialisation of contemporary culture. If we apply this premise to curating Indian art, if we take into account some examples of group exhibitions

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[72] Arjun Appadurai, *Op. Cit.*, 1996, p.44.

[73] *Ibid*, p.32.

[74] *Ibid,* p.31.

[75] *Ibid,* p.4.

[76] Benedict Anderson,[1983], *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* London and New York: Verso, 2006.

[77] Arjun Appadurai, *Op. Cit.*, 1996*,* p.31.

elsewhere, it is ironic that some of these shows have framed themselves under the speed of global flows but the model of how the artworks are selected and exhibited fixes them within geographic boundaries. Arguably, this denotes an incorporation of the hegemonic global and a reterritorialisation attitude by some curators instead of a genuine hybridisation of cultural exchange in line with Appadurai's theory, a point to which I will return in Part III of this thesis.

According to Appadurai, the polarising effects of globalisation (producers/consumers; centre/periphery) can no longer be used to explain global cultural economies. In order to explore the global disjunctures between economy, culture and politics, he proposes five dimensions of global cultural flows: ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes. These dimensions circulate across cultural boundaries and emphasise the fluidity and irregular shapes of global flows, cultural exchanges and production of locality. The suffix –scape, Appadurai explains, indicates that the dimensions of flows "are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors".[78]

Ethnoscapes refer to the landscape of moving individuals and groups caused by global circumstances such as national and international conflicts, capital and workers flows and mass media and technological developments. As these realities are constantly shifting, "these moving groups can never afford to let their imaginations rest too long, even if they wish to".[79] By 'technoscapes' Appadurai means the global configuration and distribution of technology linked with rapidly moving political and economic dynamics and the availability of labour. Financescapes refer to the high-speed and complex distribution of global capital flows. Mediascapes are linked with the distribution of electronic capabilities of production and dissemination of information and to the world images created by these media. They mix the world of commodities, news and politics through images, narratives and ethnoscapes that blur the viewer's perspective between reality and fiction and produce material "out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places. These scripts […] constitute narratives of the Other and protonarratives of possible lives".[80] Finally, ideoscapes are collages of images, often political, that relate to the state ideologies and the counter-ideologies of movement oriented to capture state power.

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[78] *Ibid,* p.33.
[79] *Ibid,* p.34.
[80] *Ibid,* p.35-36.

Each of these flows proceeds according to its own restrictions and incentives and it is the disjunction between them that makes a singular historic moment of the present global world.

According to cultural sociologist John Tomlinson, Appadurai's theory on global cultural flows and the notion of imagination suggest that globalisation is potentially productive rather than always destructive.[81] If this is certainly true in a general framework, it is also necessary to see how it applies to specific cases, considering both globalisation's productive and destructive capacities. In this respect, Appadurai's theory has been criticised for being too vague and diffuse and having an idealised view of globalisation.[82] Regarding the art and curatorial field, if we take into account the flow of images, Appadurai initially did not distinguish between high art's flows and popular culture's flows; nor did he specify the directions where 'flows' flow or the configurations of power relations that deterritorialised movements imply.[83] Acknowledging the need to signpost the directions where 'flows' flow, I shall map in Part II and III artists' circulation in biennales and the mobility of exhibitions of contemporary Indian art elsewhere.

Addressing the gaps in his theory, Appadurai later coined the term 'artscape', which complements the other five dimensions of global cultural flows. Artscape refers to the flow of images on which works of art are based and from which they derive their motivation. This allows an intermediated approach between global flows and local images and the way they are changed and exchanged, characterising the movement between images and the cultural context of their production and providing an indication of the changeability of meanings.[84] The dimension of artscape has a significant relevance for this research, being a key component of the exhibition flows along with the other dimensions discussed previously.

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[81] John Tomlinson, "Globalization and Cultural Identity" in David Held and Anthony McGrew (eds.), *The Global Transformations Reader*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003, pp. 269–272.

[82] Josiah McC. Heyman and Howard Campbell, "The anthropology of global flows: A critical reading of Appadurai's 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy'", *Anthropological Theory,* 9, 2009, pp. 131-148.

[83] Larissa Buchholz and Ulf Wuggenig, "Cultural Globalisation between Myth and Reality: The Case of the Contemporary Visual Arts", *Art-e-fact*, 4, 2005. Website http://artefact.mi2.hr/_a04/lang_en/theory_buchholz_en.htm [Last accessed: April 24, 2009] and Chin-Tao Wu, "Biennials without Borders?", *New Left Review,* 57, 2009, pp. 107-115.

[84] Arjun Appadurai, "Anxieties of Tradition in the Artscapes of Globalization", *Art Magazine Quarterly*, 3 (23), 1999, pp. 54-57.

Despite the vagueness and diffusion of global cultural flows, it is a useful theory for the purpose of this research and a referent to analyse the mobility, changeability and agency of the field of curatorial practice and, most specifically, the study of exhibition flows. Appadurai considers the complex phenomena of globalisation and conceptualises his theory away from the polarities of opposed binaries such as the global and the local. Instead, global cultural flows involve the development of overlapping global-local linkages: what he calls 'deterritorialized global scapes'. These flows overcome the determinism of Bourdieu's theory of the field and, in turn, overcome the limitation of not fully acknowledging the power dimensions associated with the mobility flows.

Finally, field and flows are linked through the curatorial in-between, which echoes Homi Bhabha's liminal space of hybridisation. For Bhabha, "'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself".[85] These spaces do not perpetrate single positions but instead create identities in an on-going process, which has great relevance for this study on globalisation and contemporary art. Hence, through the in-between, the field of curatorial practices and its exhibition flows allow for more nuanced approaches to analyse global and local dialogues and exchanges and, at the same time, for considering how local and global interactions can lead to new hybrid forms of art practice and curating, in India and elsewhere.

2.4- Conclusion

As I have argued in this chapter, a study of globalisation's effects has to examine its global forms of action and resistance in a particular field and, at the same time, the history, development and mobility of this same field. In the case of curating contemporary art in India, one must take into account the development of this practice in relation to the artistic field where it takes place, the agents involved and the mobility, history and dimensions within this practice. From this perspective, the sociological, political and ideological global transformations of contemporary India will be the framework within which to analyse the impact of globalisation on Indian contemporary art, especially in the field of curatorial practice and its exhibition flows. As I have discussed previously, the concept of field applied

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[85] Homi K Bhabha, [1994], *The Location of Culture,* London: Routledge, 2004, p.2.

to curatorial practices in India resonates with and extends Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical model based on the notion of the field and on his criticism of globalisation as a form of neoliberal dominant discourse. In turn, the concept of flow linked with exhibition moves echoes and extends Arjun Appadurai's theory based on the notion of global cultural flows as a framework to explore the social imaginary of new global cultural processes.

Regarding the field of curatorial practice and its exhibition flows, the preceding concept of field frames the configurations of power relations that exhibition flows imply. That is to say, this research on curatorial practices of contemporary Indian art analyses the global shifts in the art and the exhibitions system as well as what the art and the exhibitions system are and how they support and resist hegemonic global shifts. Furthermore, the subsequent concept of flows of exhibitions implies the mobility of the curatorial field and assembles its multi-dimensional -scapes. This should not be mistaken for an assumption that curatorial and exhibition flows somehow equate with global flows. They are very different and obviously global flows comprise a much wider and more complex phenomenon. Nevertheless, since the focus of this thesis is on how globalisation has impacted on curating contemporary Indian art, I analyse the curatorial, considering both the multiple angles of the global and the local. As such, global and local dynamics and their multi-dimensional –scapes of flows are a useful tool for this approach. Finally, the implications and processes of fields and flows complement each other and are mutually imbricated. The field of curatorial practice and its exhibition flows aim to captures the way in which they are intertwined.

Drawing on the field of curatorial practice and exhibition flows, throughout the thesis I shall analyse curatorial practice of contemporary Indian art in relation to cultural globalisation. To begin with, in Part II I analyse the case study of biennales in India and India in biennales. In order to understand some of the mechanisms of global circulation of contemporary Indian art, in the next two chapters I examine the participation of Indian artists and curators in biennales worldwide, how this mobility has translated into the local art scene in relation to the emergence of global South discourses and curatorial practices and the conditions through which biennales can emerge in India, and what political trajectory they may follow.

PART II

BIENNALES IN INDIA and INDIA IN BIENNALES

3- Biennale Circuits and Models of Large-Scale Exhibition Practices

The questions that exercise us today have to do with the manner in which the biennial, as a form, a platform, a device for investigation and a production system, allows us to interrogate the nature, direction and relevance of contemporary art; its relationship to wider narratives of cultural and political change; and the changing sociality of viewing, the relationship between artist and viewer.[86]

Ranjit Hoskote

The proliferation of international biennales worldwide is one of the main characteristics of contemporary art under globalisation.[87] Biennales have become one of the key factors in decentralising traditional art centres and have the capacity to produce cultural capital, regenerate urban spaces, and bring increased attention to underdeveloped or marginalised regions. However, on closer inspection, it is clear that any such benefits are liable to be subordinated to the pressures brought to bear by globalisation forces and neoliberal interests. Within India, curators, critics, artists and theorists have engaged during the last decade in sustained debates regarding the feasibility of establishing an international biennale in the country, the effectiveness of such platforms in terms of engaging with local communities and their place within wider discourses on art and globalisation. Given the increased participation of Indian artists and curators in biennales all over the world, the recent establishment of the first international biennale in India in 2012 through the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, and the growing number of national representations in recurring exhibitions, an in-depth analysis of this phenomena is not just necessary, but vital, in order to highlight some of the questions related to curatorial practice in India and the contemporary biennale.

As suggested by curator Ranjit Hoskote in the opening quote of this chapter, biennales reflect on the ways contemporary art is being produced, mediated and displayed and also on the cultural and political contexts and transformations that surround them. Therefore,

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[86] Ranjit Hoskote, 'Opening statement - TAKE/Biennale Roundtable', in Ranjit Hoskote (ed.), *Take on Art* – Special Issue on Biennales, New Delhi, 2 (8), 2012, p.41.
[87] The term 'biennale' designates any large-scale, international exhibition, organised by an institution or independently, that takes place or aims to take place periodically, irrespective of its structure, framework and dimensions. Therefore, in this thesis, the term 'biennale' refers to its general meaning and comprises recurring exhibitions that take place every two years as well as those that happen during further periods of time such as Triennales, Art Festivals or Documenta, which occurs every five years.

understanding biennales as an artistic system with wider cultural and political implications, in this chapter I outline the participation of Indian artists and curators in biennale circuits and consider some of the reasons that have facilitated such global exposure. Moreover, I present relevant debates on the biennale realm in India as well as some curatorial discourses and positions held by Indian curators with regard to these models. In this respect, I consider the ambivalent position of perennial art shows in relation to the art market. Furthermore, I expand this analysis to take into account forms of agency established by South-South dialogues and networks, which challenge global platforms in a theoretical sphere and question their practical consequences within the commercial and institutional global systems. Overall, my analysis aims to understand the conditions that have facilitated the emergence of India in the context of biennales worldwide and in this way, since biennales are one of the key scenarios of art in the global age, to further comprehend how globalisation has impacted on Indian contemporary art and curatorial practice. Thus, the field of possibilities of biennales and Indian contemporary art remains to be seen in this chapter on India in biennales.

3.1- The usual suspects

In 1999, *ART India* magazine*,* by then one of the few independent art magazines in the country specialising in contemporary art, [88] published an article about the Indian representations at international exhibitions by art critic Girish Shahane, then the magazine's editor.[89] With the evocative title "The Usual Suspects", the article contended that from 1995 to 1999 the same artists were constantly selected, listing some of the habitual names and seeking an explanation for this repetition. According to Shahane, two possible explanations could be drawn from this fact. One of the feasible reasons that explained this recurrence could be that just "a handful of artists in India were producing work which was exciting and original enough to merit international attention".[90] The second possible explanation concerned the curators. For him, curators "had too a narrow focus" in their selection

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[88] *Art India* magazine was launched in Mumbai in 1996 under the initiative of Sangita Jindal. The first editor was Anupa Mehta, and subsequently the magazine was edited by Girish Shahane, Nancy Adajania and Abhay Sardesai, the current editor. See http://www.artindiamag.com [Last accessed: 20 December 2012]. For a rigorous research on art criticism in India, which also includes a chronology of periodical art publications/journals, see Vidya Shivadas, *Mapping the field of Indian art criticism: Post-Independence,* 2010. Available at: http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/Details/46370 [Last accessed: 4 January 2013].

[89] Girish Shahane, "The Usual Suspects", *ART India Magazine*, 4(2), 1999, pp. 36-37.

[90] *Ibid,* p.37.

criteria.[91] However, he concluded, the main reason behind the selection of the same artists over and over was not a lack of exciting new art but instead the absence of writers/curators who could interpret and place it within an international framework.

"The Usual Suspects" has now become a general expression used to refer to the artists repeatedly exhibited in the global art scene. Indeed, a number of my interviewees used this term without my prompting, showing that it still has a currency within art circles in India.[92] The article, despite presenting an opinionated art feature, set up the basis to study further the global circulation of Indian artists and curators within biennales. Although Shahane referred generally to exhibitions held in the international arena, he emphasised further the case of biennales and triennales, carefully considering them in the listing of artists exhibited and in his conclusions. At the end of the 1990s, when the article was published, biennales had just proliferated and, for the first time, an incipient number of Indian artists took part in these exhibitions. However, fifteen years later, the situation has significantly changed. Firstly, the establishment of a growing number of biennales worldwide, most of them in places outside artistic circuits in the West, has expanded the global art map. Secondly, Indian contemporary art has come to prominence internationally and yet the participation of Indian artists and curators in biennales has increased through the years. Both factors are closely linked with the globalising disposition that Arjun Appadurai referred to as the lean "outward", where "history leads you outward, to link patterns of changes to increasingly larger universes of interaction".[93] Thus, under the present circumstances, I believe it is necessary to outline artists' and curators' circulation in the biennale sphere in order to understand the flows of cultural, socio-economic and political interactions entangled with this phenomenon, as well as to trace alternative routes that broaden geo-political cartographies of global art circuits.

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[91] *Ibidem.*

[92] For example, in my interviews with curator Roobina Karode and with art historian and artist Shukla Sawant, both of them mentioned "the usual suspects" to refer to those artists that usually exhibit internationally. In this regard, as Roobina Karode pointed out to me: "…you must have read about the usual suspects, which is that certain people are endorsed. Art is also very heavily endorsed. So when artists are endorsed by a few big players they become part of a circuit which then clearly, right from here, brings them straight to there. Sometimes these artists also don't know what is happening to them. Once they are lifted and put into an international show, then the next thing you hear is that they go to another international show and then to another one and so on". Interview with Roobina Karode. Held at India Habitat Centre. New Delhi, 17 November 2008. Recorded. Shukla Sawant referred to the usual suspects in similar terms, lamenting the selection of the same artists in international exhibitions over and over. Interview with Shukla Sawant. Held at her house. New Delhi, 13 November 2008. Recorded.

[93] Arjun Appadurai, *Op. Cit.*, 1996, p. 74.

Figure 3.1 – A selection of works by Indian artists most exhibited at biennales all over the world[94]

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[94] From left to right and top to bottom: Ranbir Kaleka, *He was a good man,* 2007-2008, Sydney Biennial 2008, Source: http://www.rkaleka.com/; Amar Kanwar, *A Season Outside,* 1997*,* Documenta11 2002, Source: Guggenheim Collection; L.N. Tallur, *Chromatophobia* (Detail), 2010, Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art 2012, Source: http://www.tallur.com/; Sheela Gowda, *And*, 2007, Documenta12 2007, Source: Documenta Archive; Nalini Malani, *In Search of Vanished Blood* (Detail), 2012*,* Documenta13 2012, Source: Documenta Archive; Bharti Kher, *The skin speaks a language not its own,* 2006*,* Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art 2007, Source: Queensland Art Gallery Collection; Vivan Sundaram, *Great Indian Bazaar* (Detail), 2007, Johannesburg Biennale 2007, Source: Devi Art Foundation; Shilpa Gupta, *Untitled,* 2009*,* Lyon Biennale 2009, Source: http://shilpagupta.com/ and NS Harsha, *Nations*, 2009, Sharjah Biennial 2009, Source: Sakshi Gallery.

In order to do so, I will begin by empirically mapping the number of biennales that have selected Indian artists and curators from 1990 to 2012 as well as the proliferation, spread and distribution of artists in India most exhibited in the biennale sphere during that same period. In this time frame, I take the 1990s as my starting point, given that, as discussed previously, since then India has adopted a neoliberal economic system that has facilitated the globalisation of Indian contemporary art and curatorial practice. Moreover, the 1990s was also an important decade in the history of perennial exhibitions, since new biennales were initiated all over the world, establishing the foundations for a new phase of the contemporary biennale. At the other end, the conclusion at 2012 coincides with the opening of the first Kochi-Muziris Biennale in December of 2012, considered a landmark in the history of exhibitions in India. Likewise, although I have taken into account the participation of artists and curators from India in biennales worldwide, such as Havana, Venice, Sao Paolo, Johannesburg, Liverpool, Lyon and Documenta in Kassel, among others, I have considered further the circulation of artists and curators in Asian biennale circuits.[95] The main reason to do so is because the majority of new biennales established during the last two decades are concentrated in Asia and those biennales have significantly engaged with the arts and artists from the region. Furthermore, Indian artists and curators have an important presence within Asian biennales and the idea of Asia has had an impact on the debates on biennales in India. Thus, in order to discuss the circulation of artists and curators, the Asian regional parameter has been prioritised. In this respect, the number of major biennales in Asia considered for this research is comprehensive. Regarding the number of major biennales from elsewhere contemplated, and having analysed a total of a hundred, the sample is sufficiently thorough to demonstrate the general trends in the selection criteria of art practitioners from India and the parameters that have facilitated such inclusions. Finally, in this section I have considered biennales and triennales along with Indian curators' practice in recurring exhibitions, since in Part III of this thesis I will consider the practice of curators from elsewhere in relation to major travelling exhibitions of Indian contemporary art.

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[95] Although referred to in general terms as Asian biennales, this research includes biennales in the Pacific region with close ties with Asia, such as the Asia-Pacific Triennale, the Sydney Biennale and the Auckland Triennial.

Table 3.1- Number of major biennales worldwide that selected artists from India

1990-2012:

1990-1995:	6
1995-2000:	9
2001-2005:	25
2006-2010:	36
2011-2012:	24
TOTAL:	100

Table 3.2- Most exhibited artists from India in major biennales worldwide 1990-2012:

ARTIST	1990-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2012	TOTAL
SHILPA GUPTA	0	0	3	12	5	20
NALINI MALANI	1	3	8	4	2	18
SUBODH GUPTA	0	3	6	5	1	15
RAQS MEDIA COLLECTIVE	0	0	6	5	3	14
VIVAN SUNDARAM	1	4	3	2	1	12
SHEELA GOWDA	1	0	0	5	4	10
AMAR KANWAR	0	0	1	3	4	8
NS HARSHA	0	1	1	3	3	8
BANI ABIDI	0	0	1	3	3	7
SHEBA CHHACHHI	0	2	0	3	2	7
ATUL DODIYA	0	1	2	2	3	7
ANITA DUBE	0	1	2	1	2	6
L.N. TALLUR	0	0	1	2	3	6
JITISH KALLAT	0	2	0	3	1	6
RANBIR KALEKA	0	0	3	1	2	6
DAYANITA SINGH	0	0	0	2	3	5
CAMP	0	0	0	1	4	5
NN RIMZON	1	1	0	1	0	3
NAVJOT ALTAF	0	1	1	1	0	3
MANISHA PAREKH	0	2	0	0	1	3
SONIA KHURANA	0	0	1	2	0	3
NIKHIL CHOPRA	0	0	0	3	0	3
OPEN CIRCLE	0	0	2	1	0	3
TOTAL	4	21	41	65	47	178

As Table 3.1 indicates, the number of contemporary biennales that have selected Indian artists has significantly increased during the period analysed.[96] From 1991, when the Havana Biennale selected ten artists from India, to 2012, when at least twelve biennales in places as diverse as Gwangju, Benin, Sydney, Shanghai and Kochi selected eighty-two artists in total,[97] the rise of Indian artists taking part in biennales has increased eightfold. From this, it follows that artists from India were relatively underrepresented in biennale circuits in the 1990s. However, although biennales started to increase during this period, the circulation of Indian artists did not reflect this trend until the 2000s, and especially since 2005. This coincided with the burgeoning strength of Indian contemporary art globally and the large number of biennales established in the Asian region.

If we consider the artists most exhibited in biennale circuits, in Table 3.2, Shilpa Gupta is at the top of the list, followed by Nalini Malani, Subodh Gupta, Raqs Media Collective, Vivan Sundaram and Sheela Gowda, all of them having taken part in at least ten biennales in the time frame considered. Hence, with a few exceptions, one can argue that it is still the case that a selected group of Indian artists have been repeatedly featured in biennales worldwide, thus concentrating the major exposure in perennial exhibitions. However, on closer inspection, it is important to note that the artists' list has expanded through the years, incorporating new actors and diversifying the top positions. From 1990 to 2000, the most exhibited artist was Vivan Sundaram, who participated in five biennales, closely followed by Nalini Malani, who took part in four. Since the 2000s, the first appearances of artists such as Shilpa Gupta and Raqs Media Collective (Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi and Shuddhabrata Sengupta), who belong to a younger generation and would have an important presence in the following years, is notable.[98] In fact, from 2006 to 2010, Shilpa Gupta reached the highest participation in numerical terms within the sub-periods considered, taking part in twelve biennales. More recently, in 2011 and 2012, CAMP, Amar Kanwar, Sheela Gowda and Shilpa Gupta have been the artists most featured in the biennale realm. Likewise, Dayanita Singh has recently irrupted within biennale circuits, having participated in five biennales since 2008, and this number will probably increase in the years to come, as indicated by the

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[96] Table 5.1 "Number of major biennales worldwide that included artists from India 1990-2012" is based on the Chronology of the Participation of Indian artists in Biennales Worldwide, 1990-2012, included in the Appendix A.I, pp. 161-168.

[97] Of those, forty-two Indian artists participated in the 1st Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India (2012). The rest, forty-one artists, participated in biennales all over the world.

[98] Taking into account that Shilpa Gupta (b. 1976) and Raqs Media Collective (group formed in 1992) belong to a younger generation, it is significant that they have circulated as much as more senior artists such as Vivan Sundaram (b. 1943) or Nalini Malani (b. 1946), from an older generation.

fact that she represented Germany at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. Finally, although not included in Table 3.2, the case of Bhupen Khakhar, who was the first artist from India, and to my knowledge from Asia, to take part at Documenta is notable.[99] It was in 1992, at Documenta 9, and it marked an important selection, since the quinquennial exhibition did not include many artists from Asia, not to mention from India, before Documenta 11 in 2002 and thereafter.[100] The case of filmmaker Amar Kanwar, who exceptionally has taken part in each of the last three editions of Documenta – 11, 12 and 13 – is also remarkable.

Regarding the spatial location of artists' circulation, the first inclusions of Indian artists in biennales worldwide took place in recurring exhibitions located outside the Euro-American art centres. During the 1990s and until 2005, places previously considered as peripheral, such as Havana, Gwangju, Johannesburg and Brisbane, selected Indian artists for the first time. I will discuss further the politics and poetics of Southern biennales in section three of this chapter, but for now it is important to emphasise the correlation between the emergence of biennales in the global South and the first participations of Indian artists in recurring exhibitions. In this regard, the majority of the Indian artists most exhibited in today's biennales, such as Shilpa Gupta, Nalini Malani and Subodh Gupta, all first participated in biennale circuits in the global South and East. Therefore, the later inclusion of Indian artists in biennales located in Euro-American centres is correlated with the major interest that Indian contemporary art has attracted globally, which arguably could be considered an appropriation by the North. Besides, regarding the emergence of biennale circuits outside the West, this has also facilitated the circulation of artists such as Navjot Altaf, LN Tallur and Open Circle, who had mainly participated in Asian Biennales and otherwise are not much known outside those circuits. Finally, it is important to note the gender parity in the top position of Table 3.2, which, although commendable, does not correspond to the reality of those artists outside the privileged international art circuits;

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[99] Previously, Yoko Ono took part at Documenta 5, curated by Harald Szeemann, 30 June - 08 October 1972. However, by then, she had already been based in the United States for more than two decades.

[100] Regarding artists from India, at Documenta 11 in 2002 artistic director Okwui Enwezor, along with six co-curators - Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Octavio Zaya and Mark Nash - selected Ravi Agarwal, Amar Kanwar and Raqs Media Collective. Platform 2 of Documenta 11, *Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation*, took place in New Delhi, from 7 May to 21 May, 2001. It consisted of five days of public panel discussions, lectures and debates, accompanied by a video programme that included over thirty documentaries and fiction films. At Documenta 12 in 2007 the artists selected were: Atul Dodiya, Sheela Gowda, Amar Kanwar, Nasreen Mohamedi and C.K. Rajan. On the occasion of Documenta 12, artistic director Roger M. Buergel and curator Ruth Noack worked in collaboration with curator Grant Watson for the selection of the Indian artists. Finally, Documenta 13 included Nalini Malani, Tejal Shah, Bani Abidi, Amar Kanwar and CAMP.

neither is it an inherent characteristic of global art circuits where gender inequalities are still a constant.[101]

In conclusion, as I have shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, artists in India have increasingly taken part in the biennale sphere through the years, some of them from a younger generation along with new actors. In this respect, there is a clear correlation between biennales' proliferation and the growing participation of Indian practitioners, especially in the 21st century, which also corresponds with the major interest that contemporary Indian art has had globally since then. There seems to prevail the circulation and recurrence of a select group of practitioners, which represent a small fraction of art practitioners in India, the majority of whom are left out of the global circuits. Therefore, in the next section, I shall extend this empirical mapping of artists' participation in biennales and analyse the reasons that have facilitated such recurrence in order to understand some of the mechanisms of global circulation of contemporary Indian art.

3.2- Biennale circulation and global exposure

Regarding the fact that the same artists have been repeatedly selected in biennales worldwide, when I asked artists and curators about such recurrence, a first explanation referred to the dimensions of the art scene in India, ranging from "extremely large" to "very small" in the responses gathered. In the opinion of curator and gallerist Peter Nagy, owner of the leading gallery Nature Morte in Delhi, "there are a lot of new artists but in some ways it is quite a small art scene. These are the best artists".[102] In contrast, artist Probir Gupta, who himself does not belong to the selected group of artists that often take part in biennales, emphasised to me that "India is a huge country: there are other artists besides those in Bangalore, Bombay and Delhi. There are people working in different kinds of places and mediums in the country. […] There is no further curiosity to look at others' very interesting, strong and positive developments".[103] These different approaches to the scale of the art scene in India, as a means to explain artists' global circulation, are conditioned by the commentators' position and circumstances. Inevitably, as Probir Gupta remarked – arguably

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[101] There have been discussions recently regarding gender disparities within the art scene in India. See Nilanjana S. Roy, "A Parity Gap for Women in Indian Art" in *The New York Times,* 31 January 2012, for an account on the case of the India Art Fair. Available at:
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/01/world/asia/01iht-letter01.html
[Last accessed: 12 September 2013].
[102] Interview with Peter Nagy. Held at Nature Morte Gallery. New Delhi, 5 November 2008. Recorded.
[103] Interview with Probir Gupta. Held at his studio. New Delhi, 8 November 2008. Recorded.

drawing from his position as an outsider of the biennale circuits – the art scene in India is bigger than the reduced number of artists that have acquired global exposure. However, the participation in such circuits cannot be merely explained by the qualities of the artists and artworks selected as suggested by gallerist Peter Nagy, in this case drawn from his own interests as an artists' representative of one third of the names featured in Table 3.2.[104] Instead, the selection criteria also have to do with certain marketing strategies and the use of global art languages, as was a common point of reference for my interviewees, sharing a more critical perspective. Therefore, I shall look more closely at these two reasons and characteristics behind global circulation and exposure in order to understand artists' selection and recurrence and their criss-crossed links and interactions in the global scenario.

Firstly, in regard to the use of global art languages and mediums, the type of work favoured in biennales is often in the form of large, site-specific installations, new media art, conceptual video works, photography and performances that often encompass socially engaged aesthetics alongside a certain monumentalised style.[105] If we consider the artists from India most exhibited in biennales, in Table 3.2, the medium preference becomes apparent, the majority of them working in new media and site-specific installations, as well as sharing a postmodern stylistic position and artistic language. The prevalence of these forms and aesthetics can be partly explained by the criteria of biennales' curators in selecting artists whose works focus on the local while speaking globally. A commonly cited example is the work of Subodh Gupta (Figure 3.2), the best-known Indian artist on the global circuits. In the opinion of the art critic and independent curator Deeksha Nath, as she recounted to me, referring mainly to the selection made by curators from elsewhere selecting Indian artists in biennales worldwide, this happens because "there are language barriers. That is why the same artists get shown everywhere: because they are a group of artists that international curators are very comfortable with. The language is comfortable, in terms of global language and exchange".[106] From this, it follows that curatorial practice affects artistic practices, based on a series of codes and rules established by curators

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[104] The artists featured in Table 3.2 and represented by Nature Morte Gallery, are: Anita Dube, Atul Dodiya, Jitish Kallat, L.N. Tallur, Manisha Parekh, Raqs Media Collective, Sheba Chhachhi and Subodh Gupta. Updated and as it corresponded in October 2013.

[105] As art historian Caroline A. Jones has pointed out, "the dominance of installation art and the simultaneous rise of biennials needs to be examined as a conjoint phenomena–mutually reinforcing and linked to specific geopolitical and aesthetic conditions". See Caroline A. Jones, "Biennial Culture: A Longer History", in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Ostevo (eds.), *The Biennial Reader,* Bergen and Ostfildern: Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz, 2010, pp.66-87.

[106] Interview with Deeksha Nath. Held at her house. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

themselves who act as mediators within the field, according to Bourdieu.[107] However, it is equally important to note the mutuality between biennales' artist selection and curating and the production of artworks set to foster such international attention and participation.

Figure 3.2 – Installation view of the *Export* section of the exhibition *Where in the World*, held at Devi Art Foundation in Gurgaon (India) in 2008. Featured work: Subodh Gupta, *Rani,* 2001

Since the 1990s, coinciding with the adoption of global neoliberal policies and the first inclusions of Indian artists in biennales, and especially from the 2000s onwards, alongside the burgeoning strength of Indian contemporary art globally, the work of contemporary artists has shifted. During this time, artists increasingly adopted the media of sculpture, photography, video and multimedia installations and engaged more and more with the politics of the local. This type of formula for international success, which art historian Kavita Singh has described as "the use of local content housed in post-modern forms",[108] can be explained to a certain extent as common practices within contemporary art but also as a

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[107] Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit,* 1993.

[108] Kavita Singh, "Where in the World. Export", in Kavita Singh, Jaya Neupaney and Shweta Wahi (eds.), *Where in the World,* New Delhi: Devi Art Foundation, 2008, p.7.

way to satisfy global art languages and markets and to access the aforementioned global circuits. In this respect, artist and activist Sheba Chhachhi, who widely circulates within biennales and is situated in the tenth position in Table 3.2, has publicly expressed her discomfort and self-critique towards this situation, which she has described as "the self-anthropologizing subject", while lamenting the lack of vernacular art in the international art scene.[109] Likewise, curator and gallerist Devika Daulet-Singh from PhotoInk Gallery in Delhi specified to me: "everyone is looking at biennales and triennales and looking at current ideas and themes that are working and suddenly you export it into your work and your context and you jig it up and you put it out there […] one might say that some artists are producing just to be inserted into the global art world of biennales".[110] For Chhachhi and Daulet-Singh, it seems clear that nowadays some Indian artists have adopted such languages as a new trend in contemporary art in order to be inserted into global circuits, towards which they feel strongly critical.

Significantly, though, the use of the word 'export', as Daulet-Singh mentioned in the interview I conducted, not only suggests a paradigm shift in the way that artists produce, affected by the demand of global legibility, but also in the way that these artworks circulate as a commodity. The fact that the same artists participate regularly in perennial exhibitions cannot just be explained by the use of artistic languages meriting international attention but are the result of multiple factors, among them the support and demands that art enterprises give to these selected practitioners. This leads us to the second circumstance that needs to be addressed further: the role of the art market in biennales' selection criteria, which in turn partially reflects on Bourdieu's argument that all practices are somehow directed toward the maximising of material or symbolic profit.[111]

In an interview I conducted with Shilpa Gupta in 2011, the artist recounted to me how she had personally counted the list of exhibitions she had taken part in, after an art critic mentioned her as the Indian artist most exhibited internationally.[112] To her initial incredulity,

[109] Sheba Chhachhi, "The Self-Anthropologizing Subject: New Internationalism in Contemporary Indian/Asian Art", New Delhi, 11 October 2008. Recorded talk. Presented at the workshop "Global Art and the Museum: The Global Turn and Art in Contemporary India". Part of the project *Global Art and the Museum* (GAM) at ZKM/Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, initiated by Hans Belting and Peter Weibel. Organized by Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan New Delhi, ZKM/Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany, and School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
[110] Interview with Devika Daulet-Singh. Held at PhotoInk Gallery. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.
[111] Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.* [1972].
[112] Interview with Shilpa Gupta. Held at her studio. Mumbai, 13 January 2011. Recorded.

the sum of more than forty international shows confirmed such achievement. As shown in Table 3.2, almost half of these shows have been biennales and indeed she is also at the top position on this chart. Moreover, as evidenced by the broad list of exhibitions she has participated in, she is not only habitual in biennales but also exhibits regularly in group shows and commercial galleries in India and elsewhere.[113] However, in a previous interview I conducted with her in 2008, she emphasised to me that biennale circuits are completely independent from the art market. As she remarked on that occasion: "I am not showing in the big galleries, I am showing in the biennale circuit, which is independent and city based […] it is not the same as the market artists. This is completely different. I feel lucky to be a biennale artist".[114] Interestingly, in the approximate two-year period between the two interviews, from 2008 to 2011, she reached the highest participation to date in biennales and significantly increased her participation in international exhibitions both in institutional and commercial spaces. Furthermore, throughout this time and until now, she has been represented by well-established commercial galleries, both in India and Europe, which have promoted her art into the international art system. Thus, one should question Gupta's comment about the complete independence between biennales and the art market, since, on the contrary, the facts point out a direct correlation between these two phenomena. Particularly if we take into account, as pointed out in Bourdieu's theory, the dialogues, frictions and relations of symbolic and cultural capital within biennale circuits and the role of art galleries in consecrating artworks and particular artists, who know the codes and rules of the field. Thus, it seems clear that perennial exhibitions and the fields and agents involved in them, despite being relatively autonomous, are directed toward the maximising of material and symbolic profit that translates into cultural capital and economic value.[115]

In contrast with Shilpa Gupta's early effort to divorce herself from the commercial art sector, the implication of the art market in biennale artists' selection was frequently pointed out to me to explain the recurrence of the same names over and over. This was the case with Amit Mukhopadhyay, an established curator within the domestic art scene, who incisively commented: "it is very unfortunate that we have only ten or fifteen artists who are

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[113] Shilpa Gupta's CV, available on her website. See www.shilpagupta.com [Last accessed: 20 September 2013].

[114] Interview with Shilpa Gupta. Held at her studio. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.

[115] As discussed in Chapter Two – Globalisation, Contemporary Art and Curatorial Practices, pp. 23-43, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic capital* refers to the degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity and honour, or *consecration* in Bourdieu's terms, used in the production of further wealth. In turn, for Bourdieu, the idea of *cultural capital* concerns forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions that tend to respond to *symbolic capital*. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.,* [1979].

constantly globetrotting. They go to Venice, Documenta, Shanghai, everywhere – all these same fifteen artists. India is a big country. […] Why is this happening? Because their works sell".[116] Even Nalini Malini, who herself is one of the main artists from India exhibiting regularly in recurring exhibitions, remarked when I interviewed her: "biennales are too much involved in the commercialization of the arts".[117] In this respect, art historian Julian Stallabrass, deploying a Marxist analysis, has noted: "while biennales are powerful magnets for the attention of the art market, they are also frequently complicit within those markets and within the commodification of art".[118] In his opinion, the efficacy of the biennale model is frequently undermined by real circumstances and market-driven interests. Furthermore, it is important to note that the role of biennale curators, although *a priori* independent, can be complicit with the art market as a mediator figure. Thus, considering the participation of Indian artists in biennales, the complicity pointed out by Stallabrass is evident, since almost all the artists included in Table 3.2 are represented by prominent commercial galleries, denoting a higher circulation of Indian artists who are well-established in the art market.[119] Moreover, the parameter of biennale circulation not only increases the value of the artists exhibited in these circuits, but also regulates the work of those artists who are not part of the aforementioned global circles. As artist Probir Gupta explained to me, he was told by a gallerist not to increase the prices of his works because he was not well known given that he had only had two shows outside the country, which provokes a very unstable situation.[120]

If we take into account the Indian representation at Venice Biennale, another case frequently addressed by my interviewees, the art market again has played an important role behind the non-official representations since the 1990s, which have been the majority of them given that India only had an official pavilion in the 54th edition in 2011, which has since been discontinued.[121] In 2005 the exhibition *iCon: India Contemporary* took place in Venice as a collateral event of the 51st Venice Biennale. As explained to me by Peter Nagy,

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[116] Interview with Amit Mukhopadhyay. Held at Emami Chisel Art Gallery and Auction House. Kolkata, 3 December 2008. Recorded.

[117] Interview with Nalini Malani. Held at her house. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.

[118] Julian Stallabrass, *Op. Cit.*, 2004, pp. 34-35.

[119] The photographer Dayanita Singh was pointed out to me as an example of an artist who is very well entrenched within the gallery circuit in London and Milan, which has facilitated her irruption in the biennale circuits since 2008, as commented on analysing Table 3.2.

[120] Interview with Probir Gupta. Held at his studio. New Delhi, 8 November 2008. Recorded.

[121] Although previously India has had various forms of official exhibition presence at the 1954, 1956, 1958, 1962, 1966, 1978 and 1982 editions of the Venice Biennale through the Embassy of India in Rome, none of those was professionally curated or conceived as a Pavilion in line with Venice Biennale's National Pavilions structure. For the time frame considered in this thesis, see Appendix A.IV- Indian participation at Venice Biennale 1990-2011, pp. 176-177.

co-curator of this exhibition along with Julie Evans and Gordon Knox, when they started the project their aim was to be the official Indian pavilion. They therefore approached the government in order to get them involved, but never received a reply.[122] Peter Nagy, owner of Nature Morte Gallery in New Delhi, specified that they did have a commercial angle and this was obvious in the fact that the majority of the artists selected were represented by Nature Morte Gallery.[123] Commenting on this, curator Vidya Shivadas questioned the legitimacy of a commercial gallery intending to represent the country, which she felt was "extremely problematic", an opinion shared by the majority of people with whom I talked about it.[124] Later, in the 53rd edition in 2009, Bodhi Art Gallery from Mumbai also planned to have a collateral event, but due to the global financial crisis, the exhibition was cancelled, as the gallery did not have the financial resources needed and, in fact, it closed soon after, affected by the credit crunch. Since India did not have an official significant pavilion until 2011, when the exhibition *Everyone Agrees: It's About to Explode…* curated by Ranjit Hoskote took place at the first and only official India Pavilion at the Venice Biennale,[125] one might say that the Indian representations at the Venice Biennale during the 2000s depended on economic interests for the most part and, as such, were conditioned by the rules of the art market and the effects of the global crisis. Surprisingly, though, given that artists and their artworks are not just carriers of symbolic capital but also of cultural values, the contribution of the Indian state has not matched private investment, given that the official

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[122] According to Peter Nagy: "What we did in Venice [referring to himself and fellow curators Julie Evans and Gordon Knox] happened in a very roundabout kind of way because a group of people came together and realised that there was no Indian pavilion. So when we started the project we hoped that it would be the official Indian pavilion and we approached the government to get them involved. We weren't even asking them for money, we were just asking them for support because in the context of the Venice Biennale you cannot be an official pavilion unless you have some official letter from some department of culture or something like that from the government. You don't need the financial support of the government. But you do need the stamp of approval and the formal recognition. We tried to get that and we were not able to". Interview with Peter Nagy. Held at Nature Morte Gallery. New Delhi, 5 November 2008. Recorded.

[123] The artists selected in 2007 were Atul Dodiya, Anita Dube, Ranbir Kaleka, Nalini Malani, Raqs Media Collective and Nataraj Sharma. For more information see "iCon: India Contemporary" press release. Website http://www.universes-in-universe.de/car/venezia/bien51/eng/ind/text-1.htm [Last accessed: 3 February 2009].

[124] Interview with Vidya Shivadas. Held at FICA – Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art. New Delhi, 14 November 2008. Recorded.

[125] The exhibition *Everyone Agrees: It's About to Explode…* aimed to challenge the idea of the nation within a national pavilion at the same time that it represented an institutional recognition of contemporary art and curating in India. Interestingly, as Hoskote explained to me, in making the artists' selection his aim was to include aesthetically rich works that either have not yet been valourised by the art market or, if they have, have not capitulated to it. Interview with Ranjit Hoskote. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 8 March 2013. Recorded.

national representation in biennales worldwide has been scarce, and the official India Pavilion at Venice Biennale has not taken part since 2011.[126]

Finally, although the art market pervasion has been mainly criticised, one should not ignore its benefits to the art scene in India and the gains that have arisen from it. In this regard, photographer Sunil Gupta referred to the resulting travel opportunities and the benefits of people moving around, which have allowed artists to see what is happening internationally.[127] In turn, artist Anita Duve pointed out the funding opportunities and financial success that emerged from such global exposure and prosperous market, which translated into a flourishing art scene and artists being able to support themselves.[128] In a similar way, art historian Kavita Singh, in the *Export* section of the exhibition *Where in the World,* held at Devi Art Foundation in Gurgaon (India) in 2008, referred to 'export art' not in terms of capitulation to foreign audiences and the art market or artists' cannibalisation of their own culture, but instead as a field of endless possibilities, underlining artists' agency and autonomy. [129] Thus, acknowledging both the favourable aspects and the dangers of market success, it has generated a broader reflection on politics and economics in the artistic field, not only as a goal to achieve global success but also in search of alternatives away from Eurocentric notions, market interest and nationalist definitions of art. This has been the case for experimental art collectives and community-based projects, although, despite their original aim, the market has also tried to assimilate these practices.

In sum, as I have pointed out through this section, the complicity with the art market and the use of global art languages have facilitated biennales' circulation and global exposure, which in turn have endorsed the appraisal of symbolic and cultural capital in contemporary art and the consecration of a selected group of artists. However, it is also important to underline that such complicity should not be mistaken for a determinist assumption that gallery-influenced biases and conforming global art legibility and market demands can solely

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[126] In 2007, Robert Storr, curator of the Venice Biennale, offered a space for an Indian pavilion and approached the National Gallery of Modern Art and the government of India in this respect, but he never received an answer. Also, after the first and only official India pavilion at Venice in 2011, it was discontinued in 2013. This has been highly criticised, yet it is symptomatic of the lack of state support towards the arts. See artist Bharti Kher's public letter on this matter, discussing the India Pavilion's absence from the Venice Biennale 2013 because of bureaucratic stupor and nepotism. Available at: http://www.altgaze.com/?p=956 [Last accessed: 5 November 2013]

[127] Interview with Sunil Gupta. Held at his house. New Delhi, 27 October 2008. Recorded.

[128] Interview with Anita Duve. Held at her house. New Delhi, 15 November 2008. Unrecorded.

[129] Kavita Singh, "Where in the World. Export", in Kavita Singh, Jaya Neupaney and Shweta Wahi (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, pp.7-8.

explain biennale circulation. Furthermore, the list of Indian artists in biennales worldwide is also indicative of the diversification of biennale circuits since the 1990s, where India has had a significant role, particularly in those circuits beyond the Western mainstream.[130] Commenting on those circuits outside the hegemonic Euro-American centres, Cuban critic and curator Gerardo Mosquera has emphasised the need for a paradigm shift in the way we understand the circulation of artists from the global South, stressing the necessity to build up South-South dialogues that are able to pluralise both vernacular and contemporary art.[131] In this way, in the following section, I shall focus on the circulation of Indian artists and curators within those biennales located in the global South in order to comprehend how these circuits have broadened the geo-political cartographies of the global, and to bring these discussions forward in relation to India.

3.3- Global South biennales

As discussed, biennales are a common platform from which contemporary art and artists circulate worldwide, hence contributing to the decentralisation of traditional art centres. Thus, it is no coincidence that the proliferation of recurring exhibitions has been commonly associated with the multiplicity of art circuits outside the West, particularly since the majority of the new biennales have been established in non-Western areas in the past decades.[132] This is relevant since it has expanded the patterns of art circulation, including regions previously considered peripheral, although often assimilated by the art market and global North institutions. Most importantly, it has brought forward counter-hegemonic forces and ideas that have informed art and culture. In the case of artists and curators from India, this has had an impact on their practices, which I shall discuss further, addressing the perspectives that my interviewees put forward regarding the global South and East, biennales and politics. In particular, in this section I focus on the relevance of the Havana Biennale as a pioneer biennale of the South, underlining its influence on Indian artists and curators. Regarding Indian curators, furthermore I analyse their active participation in Southern biennales, emphasising throughout their heterogeneous practice and diverse postcolonial approach.

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[130] See in the Appendix A.I- Chronology of the Participation of Indian artists in Biennales Worldwide, 1990-2012, pp. 161-168.

[131] Gerardo Mosquera, "Alien Own / Own Alien: Globalization and Cultural Difference", in Nikos Papastergiadis (ed.), *Op. Cit.*, 2003, 19–29.

[132] One of the first reviews on this phenomena was Thomas McEvilley, "Arrivederci Venice: the Third World Biennials", *ArtForum*, 32(3), 1993, pp. 114 -121.

There has been extensive debate on the potential of the global South as a mediator of change and alternative endeavour to the imperatives of neoliberalism and globalisation.[133] Yet, it is important to emphasise that the idea of the South goes beyond the geographical space of the southern hemisphere or the indices of economic deprivation. As cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis has pointed out, "it refers to the specific cultural histories that have been forged by postcolonial societies and their struggles to reconcile indigenous, diasporic and settler social claims". [134] These connections and criss-crossing paths of the regions of the South have enhanced South-South dialogues, circuits and networks which in themselves "pluralise the possibilities of being global". [135] In the case of biennales, in particular global South biennales, these cultural exchanges have foregrounded the potential to effect radical transformations within the framework of a decentred cultural orthodoxy and postcolonial theory. Curator Okwui Enwezor has pointed out how global South biennales "have confronted and attacked the premise of the earlier modernist dichotomy that divided the world into civilizations: between enlightened cultural centres and inferior deculturalized peripheries; between progressive, avant-garde mainstreams and atomized, stagnated margins, between modern artists and ethnic bricoleurs".[136] Thus, biennales from the South have not just reinforced the decentralisation of the arts but have also fostered global solidarities while consciously challenging hegemonic power structures. However, southern biennales and the broad concept of the South should not be confused with the idea of a homogenous block from the margins, but instead should be seen as a way to pluralise contemporary art and culture in a international manner, "in difference and from difference".[137]

In an interview I conducted with Vivan Sundaram, he recounted to me how nowadays "more and more participation in biennales has to be from [artists] outside the Euro-American zone", to which he added: "it is great that connections are being made in a horizontal

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[133] For a comprehensive compilation of recent debates around the idea of the South, see Anthony Gardener (ed.), *Mapping South: Journeys in South–South Cultural Relations*, Melbourne: The South Project, 2013. Available at: http://mappingsouth.net/ [Last accessed: 23 August 2013]

[134] Nikos Papasterguadis, 'South-South-South: An Introduction', in Nikos Papastergiadis (ed.), *Complex Entanglements. Art, Globalisation and Cultural Difference*, London, Sydney and Chicago, Rivers Oram Press, 2003, p. 2.

[135] Nikos Papasterguadis, *Op cit*, 2003, p. 5.

[136] Okwui Enwezor, "Place-making or in the "Wrong Place": Contemporary Art and the Postcolonial Condition", in Stéphanie Moisdon and Hans Ulrich Obrist (eds.), *The History of A Decade That Has Not Been Named Yet*, Lyon: JPR/Ringier, 2007, p. 216.

[137] Gerardo Mosquera, "Spheres, Cities, Transitions: International Perspectives on Art and Culture", in Kamal Boullata (ed.), *Belonging and Globalisation,* London, Sagu 2008, p.88. (Reprinted from Sharjah Biennale catalogue, 2005).

way".[138] As an example, he stressed his participation at the Havana Biennale, one of the first biennales to focus its attention on the exhibition of "non-Western" art. For Sundaram, who had exhibited there on three occasions, in 1986, 1991 and 1997, the Cuban biennale, as a radical exhibition grounded in socialist political concerns, had a strong impact on him, being a progressive artist himself. Other artists as well circulated as Sundaram and also included in Table 3.2 include Navjot Altaf, Shilpa Gupta and Manisha Parekh, who also mentioned to me their participation at the Havana Biennale as an influential experience, praising this biennale as a pioneer exhibition in including artists from the South.[139] Hence, it is no coincidence that the Havana Biennale marked one of the first significant inclusions of Indian artists in an international biennale and therefore I shall briefly look at it.

Founded in 1984, the Havana Biennale set up the basis for the establishment of a new model of global art circulation. In fact, in 1986, the second edition of the biennale already included thirty-five Indian artists, one of the biggest numbers to date of artists from India taking part in a recurring exhibition.[140] Regarding the importance of the Havana Biennale, as art historian and curator Rafal Niemojwski has compellingly argued, it was the first time that a biennale was established in the Third World focusing on and promoting art from the peripheries as part of the global circuits, which, from the 1990s onwards, would become one of the main characteristics of the newly proliferated contemporary biennales.[141] In this respect, although the conception of the Havana Biennale as the first biennale of the Third World is debatable,[142] its international approach was groundbreaking at the time. In turn,

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[138] Interview with Vivan Sundaram. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[139] Interview with Navjot Altaf. Held at her house. Mumbai, 27 November 2008. Unrecorded.
Interview with Shilpa Gupta. Held at her studio. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.
Interview with Manisha Parekh. Held at her studio. New Delhi, 17 November 2008. Recorded.

[140] The Indian artists included in the 2nd Havana Biennale in 1986 were: Jogen Chowdhury, Jatiln Das, Dharma Das Gupta, G.Y. Giri, H.R. Kambli, Latika Katt, Brushan Kraul, Vinnet Kumar, Swapan Kumar Das, Nalini Malani, Mrinalini Mukherjee, Manu Parekh, Si Patwardhan, Shuva Prasanna, Lalu Prosa Shaw, M.K. Puri, Jayanti Rabadia, Narendra Rai, A. Ramachandran, Vinod Ra Patel, Rekha Rowittiya, Sarbari Roy Chowdhury, Deepak Shinde, Arpita Sinh, Sutaider Soni, Anupam Sud, Vivan Sudaram, Jyoti Swaroop, Vasundha Tiwari, S.G. Vasude, Ramesh Vedh Batla, Bhupen Khakhar, Manjit Bawa, Rameshawar Broota and Arpana Caur. Subsequently, the 3rd Havana Biennale in 1989 included thirteen Indian artists, and ten artists from India participated in the 4th edition in 1991.

[141] Rafal Niemojwski, "Venice or Havana: A Polemic on the Genesis of the Contemporary Biennial", in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Ostevo (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2010, pp. 88-103.

[142] For example, the India Triennale was founded in 1968. Art historians Anthony Gardner and Charles Green have traced a brief history of Southern biennales, arguing for the case of the Biennale de la Méditerranée (1955) as a pioneer biennale from the South. Furthermore, they argue for the need to reconsider biennales' genealogies that speak to the histories of Southern biennales. See Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, "Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global", *Third Text,* 27(4), 2013, pp. 442-455. Special Issue: Global Occupations of Art, edited by Professor Jonathan Harris.

this had important implications for the formation of global art, as we understand it today, which facilitated the circulation of Indian artists and curators.

Gerardo Mosquera, one of the founders and a member of the curatorial team for the first three editions of the Havana Biennale (1984, 1986, and 1989), has pointed out recently in a published conference paper how the biennale was pivotal in creating a horizontal platform that pluralised the understanding of international art outside the Euro-American art centres.[143] This inclusive approach also had a deep impact on curators from India, who could relate to it from a homologous framework and take it as a point of reference for debating non-hegemonic biennales further. Curator Geeta Kapur, who participated in the international conference organised as part of the third edition in 1989, has emphasised that her experience at the Havana Biennale broadened her idea of internationalism.[144] For Kapur, who has long contended that the First World has entirely appropriated the terms "international" and "modern" for its own perceptions and exploits, the meetings and discussions held in Havana with colleagues and artists from all over the world, especially Latin American ones, was a "revelation" of parallel postcolonial views beyond the Western mainstream.[145] Likewise, when I interviewed curator Ranjit Hoskote, who belongs to a younger generation than Kapur and has related to the Havana Biennale in terms of its genealogical strands and legacies today, he referred to it as a *biennale of resistance*.[146] For Hoskote, these types of biennale are "located in transitional societies that mark the stake of these societies in the global scenario".[147] Among them, he also pointed out the India Triennale and the Delhi Biennale, which I will analyse in the next chapter. For now, I shall discuss Indian curators and their practice in relation to the place of the South and biennale circuits, which, although small in numbers compared with the flows of artists' circulation, are nonetheless significant for the analysis of biennales in India.

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[143] Gerardo Mosquera, "The Havana Biennial: A Concrete Utopia", in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Ostevo (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2010, pp. 198-207.

[144] At the Third Havana Biennale in 1989, Geeta Kapur took part in the conference *Tradition and Contemporaneity in Third World Visual Arts,* presenting the paper "Contemporary Cultural Practice: Some Polemical Categories". In this paper Kapur argued that modernism has not yet exhausted its possibilities in India, differentiating the modern from the contemporary while advocating the possibilities of avant-garde art and Third World internationalism. See Geeta Kapur, "Contemporary Cultural Practice: Some Polemical Categories", published in Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubitt and Ziauddin Sardar (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2002, pp. 15-24.

[145] See also Rachel Weiss, "A Certain Place and a Certain Time: The Third Bienal de la Habana and the Origins of the Global Exhibitions", in Rachel Weiss et al., *Making Art Global (Part 1). The Third Havana Biennial 1989,* London: Afterall and Koening Books, 2011, p. 61.

[146] Interview with Ranjit Hoskote. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 8 March 2013. Recorded.

[147] See also Ranjit Hoskote, "Biennials of Resistance: Reflections on the Seventh Gwangju Biennial", in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Ostevo (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2010, p. 310.

Regarding the heterogeneous condition and different approaches to the idea of the South and southern biennales, this was evident to me when discussing it with curators from India who have been active in biennale circuits. Two points are worth paying attention to. First, the increase of South-South and South-East connections and networks not only facilitated the rise of Indian artists' circulation in recurring exhibitions but also marked the first inclusions of Indian curators' programming and curating exhibitions in the biennale sphere. Second, despite the global marketable condition of Indian contemporary art, the practice of independent curators from India in biennales worldwide has developed a critical discursive approach through the years, bringing forward the politics of the global South from a wide range of heterogeneous perspectives and positions.

Firstly, a growing number of Indian curators and cultural practitioners have become active in global biennale circuits through the years, especially in South-South and South-East circuits. This is important since it has facilitated them to position themselves according to their own interest and politics, instead of being positioned by others. Geeta Kapur pioneered such practice when, along with gallerist Shireen Gandhy, she curated the Indian section for *Africus: The Johannesburg Biennale* in 1995. Commenting on it, Kapur explained to me: "I must have been the first international curator from India".[148] More recently, she has discussed it as a pioneer example of a southern biennale, pointing out that the proposal came from the white establishment in the arts but the imperatives of the historical moment post-apartheid were paramount.[149] Artists Nalini Malani and Sheela Gowda, whose work was exhibited for the first time in a recurring exhibition on this occasion, commented to me about their experience at the Indian section of the first South Africa's biennale. For them it was an exciting time, underlining the connections between India and South Africa in sharing a postcolonial condition and anti-hegemonic struggles.[150] The strength of regional connections tied in with historical links was also reinforced by some of the Asian biennales

[148] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

[149] Geeta Kapur, "Curating across agonistic worlds", in Sabin Iqbal (ed.), *Against all odds – 1st Kochi-Muziris Biennale,* Kottayam: DC Books, 2012, p.160

[150] As Nalini Malani explained to me: "I showed in Johannesburg, in 1995. This was the third world country: it was interesting, because South Africa and India have a long connection. And it was the first biennale after Nelson Mandela came to power, so it was for me a very exciting moment". Interview with Nalini Malani. Held at her house. Mumbai, 26th November 2008. Recorded. In turn, Sheela Gowda said: "The contact for the Johannesburg Biennale was through Geeta. We met people there; it was so long ago. It was really nice, it was fun. It is also a crazy country. It was a very good feeling to be exhibiting in a country which has so much to do with India". Interview with Sheela Gowda. Held at her house. Bangalore, 19 December 2008. Recorded.

that proliferated during the 1990s. This was the case with biennales focusing on the arts and artists from the Asian region, such as the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale in Fukuoka and the Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Brisbane, which also facilitated the inception of curators from India in charge of selecting Indian artists for such events.[151] From this, it follows that curators from India who were active in the biennale scene curated exclusively Indian contemporary art during the 1990s, a tendency that still seems to prevail in the 2000s.[152]

However, although international biennales mainly appointed curators from India to curate Indian sections or select Indian artists, the year 2008 marked a turning point in this trend. In that year, building up on a trajectory of internationalisation of contemporary Indian art and the growing interest this has had globally, for the first time two major biennales were co-curated by curators from India. These were Manifesta 7, in Italy, curated by the Raqs Media Collective, and the 7th Gwangju Biennale, in South Korea, curated by Ranjit Hoskote.[153] Commenting on this fact, which Hoskote described as "an historical moment: from now on we do not confine ourselves to Indian art",[154] he and Raqs Media Collective both mentioned in interviews I conducted that, surprisingly, the art scene in India had mainly ignored this moment. In their opinion, this could be explained because the main interest and focus of the domestic art scene at that time was Indian art and market figures and both these large-scale exhibitions, although they included Indian artists, did not abide by national representations; neither was the curatorial selection limited to the usual suspects.[155] With respect to the selection of artists who were globally established and commercially successful, it is

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[151] For instance, Kamala Kapoor was nominated co-curator from India at the second edition of the Asia-Pacific Triennale in 1996, followed by Gulammohammed Sheikh at the third in 1999. Likewise, Roobina Karode was the curator of the Indian section at the first Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale in 1999.

[152] More recently, Suman Gopinath co-curated the first edition of the Biennale Jogja 2011 in Jakarta, with the title "Indonesia and India Meeting", and curators Diana Campbell and Susan Hapgood were in charge of the Mumbai Pavilion at the 9th Shanghai Biennale, 2012.

[153] Manifesta 7 took place in Bolzano, Italy, from 19 July to 2 November 2008. It was co-curated by Adam Budak, Anselm Franke/Hila Peleg and Raqs Media Collective, who curated the exhibition *The Rest of Now*. The 7th Gwangju Biennale took place in Gwangju, South Korea, from 5 September to 9 November 2008. With the title *Annual Report: A Year in Exhibitions*, Artistic Director Okwui Enwezor worked in collaboration with co-curators Hyunjin Kim and Ranjit Hoskote. More recently, in 2012, Nancy Adajania was one of the co-directors of the 9th Gwangju Biennale and Natasha Ginwala, who is based between Amsterdam and Mumbai and belongs to a young generation of curators, was one of the co-curators of the Taipei Biennale.

[154] Interview with Ranjit Hoskote. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 25 November 2008. Recorded.

[155] Interview with Ranjit Hoskote. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 25 November 2008. Recorded. Interview with Raqs Media Collective. Held at their studio. New Delhi, 6 January 2009. Recorded. See Appendix A.I- Chronology of the Participation of Indian artists in Biennales Worldwide, 1990-2012, for a complete list of the Indian artists selected in these two biennales, pp. 161-168.

important to note that although curators from India are not completely exempt from global trends and market influences and pressures, a direct and extended knowledge of the Indian art scene has facilitated them in the selection of a wide range of artists not confined to those usually selected in biennales. Regarding the self-referential argument marked by a predominant focus on Indian art, indeed until recently curators from India were confined to curating Indian art, on biennale circuits and elsewhere. This can be explained because it took some years of internationalisation of Indian contemporary art in parallel with the expansion of biennale circuits until curators from India had the support system to curate beyond national representations. However, this also has to do with certain ideological positions. This leads us to the second point of my argument. That is, independent curators from India active in biennales worldwide have developed a critical discursive approach, engaging with the politics of the global South from heterogeneous perspectives.

While conducting my interviews with several curators from India who have been curating in biennales worldwide, their divergent relationships and commitment to the idea of the national modern appeared to me as an ideological divide. Geeta Kapur, stating her dedication to the postcolonial discourse of understanding hegemony and the alternatives of how art works in different societies and cultures, emphasised in the interview how she has mainly focused on "creating a kind of critical discourse in India".[156] According to her, "there is a factor of leftist nationalism engagement, particularly as the State was doing less and less so we needed the scene to emerge here".[157] This can be explained by the fact that in the past decades, coinciding with India's neoliberal politics, the Government has increasingly withdrawn its support towards the arts, in contrast to the support it received from the first generation of rulers after India's independence, with socialist Jawaharlal Nehru at the forefront. Furthermore, Kapur asserted: "I think Indians have been very strongly nationalists, I mean it is a very strongly national culture",[158] towards which one should question its prevalence in present global times. In comparison, she referred to curator Okwui Enwezor, who in her opinion is the person who most accurately has foregrounded postcolonialism in curatorial practices, especially in the seminal Documenta 11 in 2002. Nevertheless, emphasising that for Enwezor postcolonialism might seem to suggest a concern only with the diaspora, Kapur stressed that he has ignored national and local battles and increasingly

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[156] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.
[157] *Ibidem.*
[158] *Ibidem.*

has interacted with the hegemonic as part of the international art circuits.[159] Kapur's critique on Enwezor's diasporic view in the light of multiculturalism can be explained since, in her opinion, multiculturalism often evades issues of responsibility and agency while dismissing the idea of the nation, which is central to Kapur's well-articulated and consistent argument.[160] However, it is important to note that nowadays the idea of the nation is continuously questioned by a young generation of Indian curators and artists, who are constantly travelling and involved with the global art circuits and are more engaged with the deterritorialisation and hybridisation of culture pointed out by Appadurai and Bhabha.[161]

Kapur's positioning of her militant postcolonial ideology from a national leftist modern commitment was prompted by my question about the appointment of Raqs Media Collective and Ranjit Hoskote as curators of international biennales in 2008. Commenting on it, specifically on the case of the Gwangju Biennale, directed by Enwezor and co-curated by Hoskote, she mentioned how for her generation "[the nation] was definitively a framing device and some of the middle-aged curators like Nancy [Adajania] or Ranjit [Hoskote] may not have believed in the framing device of the nation but they used it. You see, it was a stepping stone".[162] By contrast, when I questioned curators Ranjit Hoskote and Nancy Adajania about it, Hoskote contended:

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[159] In Geeta Kapur's own words: "He [Okwui Enwezor] only knows the diaspora, he is only interested in the diaspora. He is not interested in what the national and local battles are, or only to the extent that they filter into the diasporic discourse, so he accesses them. But certainly he brought it to the centre. Now because he is into the diaspora and he is totally inserted in the international art world he does not have the same attitude towards hegemony for the reason that he would be constantly interacting within the hegemonic. People outside, like us, or in Latin America or in Cuba or in South Africa would have a more clear-cut take on the hegemonic and the subordinated or the marginalised". Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

[160] See Geeta Kapur, "Globalisation and Culture", *Third Text*, 39, 1997, pp. 21-38.

[161] See in Chapter Two the section 2.3- Exhibition flows through curatorial practices in-between, pp. 38-42.

[162] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

the nation is one of those very many proposals […] perhaps for Geeta [Kapur] for example the national project would be the shrine. We respect its value and correct context but it is not meaningful for us anymore. We have seen the other side of what the national project meant. We tend to see how it turns out sometimes in unproductive ways, which sometimes just continued with colonial reflexes and oppressiveness. And our experience is no longer national and has not been for a long time. It is transnational, transcultural. For us it is important to create significance beyond national borders. […] [Global South biennales] have to address political resistance in real times, not just as a historical moment.[163]

Ranjit Hoskote's aim to create significance beyond national borders was tested in the exhibition *Everyone Agrees: It's About to Explode…,* which, as pointed out above, marked the first India National Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011.[164] As he explained to me recently in a second interview, in this exhibition he aimed to question the logic of national representations while critiquing the idea of the nation-state as something unitary or territorial.[165] In order to do so, the artists selected, including Zarina Hashmi, Praneet Soi, Gigi Scaria and the Desire Machine Collective (Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya), encompassed in their works diverse regional modernities and religious lineages, diasporic identities and trauma after India's partition, among others. Altogether, as stated in the curatorial text in the catalogue, the pavilion "carried forward the desire to formulate a claim to assertive participation from the global South".[166]

Likewise, the deconstruction of the idea of the nation and of national identity as a homogeneous block has also been common reference in the practice of Raqs Media Collective, both as artists and curators. Commenting on their curation at Manifesta 7 in Italy in 2008, they explained to me: "curating Manifesta for us was an experimental work in a

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[163] The 'us' that Ranjit Hoskote mentions in this quote refers to himself and curator Nancy Adajania, his colleague and partner, who was also present, since I interviewed them together. Interview with Ranjit Hoskote and Nancy Adajania. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 25 November 2008. Recorded.

[164] According to the Venice Biennale's website, India's 'first-ever National Pavilion' was at the 54th exhibition in 2011. However, there has been a controversy on this issue since India's first presence at the Venice Biennale was in 1954 –although on this first occasion it was not in an official pavilion in line with Venice Biennale's National Pavilions structure-. For more information on this controversy see Venice Biennale's website: http://www.labiennale.org/en/art/archive/54th-exhibition/first-time/india.html [Last accessed: 25 August 2013] and Ragini Bhuyan, "India first went to Biennale in 1954", *Sunday Guardian,* 10 August 2013. Available at: http://www.sunday-guardian.com/artbeat/india-first-went-to-biennale-in-1954 [Last accessed: 22 August 2013].

[165] Interview with Ranjit Hoskote. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 3 March 2013. Recorded.

[166] Ranjit Hoskote, "*Pavilion as Laboratory. A Tool Box for 'Everyone Agrees: It's About To Explode'",* New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 2011. I am grateful to Ranjit Hoskote for passing me a copy of this publication.

post-national space, where the question of nationality or where you are coming from was not important but instead what mattered was your discursive framework and your capacity for producing a body of work".[167] Significantly, Geeta Kapur referred to Raqs Media Collective curating in Manifesta in those terms: "interestingly Raqs was asked to do something that no Indian curator had ever been offered before: they were asked to curate a European Biennale. It is not just a Biennale that has everything from all over the world but is specifically European. So they were really intervening in the hegemonic discourse as curators from India. Outside the East they were asked to curate a European exhibition".[168] With this comment, Kapur reterritorialised Raqs Media Collective's position as being Indian curators in order to emphasise what she saw as an exceptional opportunity to intervene in the hegemonic West. However, this might contrast with Raqs' self-positioning and interests beyond any national framework. Thus, as I have argued through this section, Indian curators active in biennales worldwide have engaged with the idea of the South from various perspectives, which is to say, in difference and from difference.

In sum, as seen through this section, the diversification of biennale circuits in the 1990s, particularly in places outside the West, marked not only the first selections of Indian artists in biennales but also the first participation of Indian curators active in recurring exhibitions. Furthermore, the "shifting gravity" in the map of biennales worldwide, as the proliferation of biennales in Asia and by extension in the global South and East has been described,[169] not only broadened the global art map but also brought forward the idea and potentiality of biennales to present experimental and radical discourses, strengthening the relationship between art and politics in the Asian region and in a wider global South-East framework. This is particularly relevant for the diverse way in which proliferation has impacted on curators from India active in biennales, who engaged with the idea of the South from various discourses and positions, especially in relation to national and transcultural frameworks, thus pluralising the idea of the global South in relation and dialogism with multiples politics and realities of the local.

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[167] Interview with Raqs Media Collective. Held at their studio. New Delhi, 6 January 2009. Recorded.

[168] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

[169] Ute Meta Bauer and Hou Hanru (eds.), *Shifting Gravity. A Discourse on Biennials*, Gwangju and Ostfildern: Gwangju Biennale Foundation and Hatje Cantz, 2013.

3.4- Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the conditions that have facilitated the emergence of Indian artists and curators in the context of biennales worldwide. Understanding biennales as artistic systems with wider cultural and political implications, I have mapped the global circulation of artists and curators and discussed some of the reasons that have facilitated such global exposure. Regarding the circulation of artists, I have demonstrated that increasingly Indian art practitioners have taken part in biennales worldwide, some of them from a younger generation, along with new practitioners. However, there still seems to prevail the circulation and recurrence of a selected group of artists, which represents a small fraction of art practitioners in India. As I have discussed through the chapter, two main reasons explain such recurrence: the use of global art languages and their complicity with the art market, which have endorsed the appraisal of symbolic and cultural capital in contemporary art and the consecration of a selected group of artists, or "usual suspects". Nevertheless, I have argued, one should not ignore the benefits that a profitable art market can have in terms of a flourishing art scene, while also taking into account artists' autonomy and agency. It is important to underline that conforming to global art legibility and market demands does not solely explain biennale circulation. In this regard, the list of Indian artists in biennales worldwide is also indicative of the diversification of biennale circuits since the 1990s, where India has had a significant role, particularly in global South circuits and politics. The paradoxes of globalisation are entangled in the very essence of recurring exhibitions. While biennales are marked by hegemonic and market interests, they can potentially broaden the cartographies of global art circuits and challenge dominant positions.

Finally, returning to the article 'The Usual Suspects' (1999) with which this chapter began, fifteen years ago Girish Shahane suggested that the absence of Indian writers/curators who could interpret and place contemporary Indian art in an international framework could explain the recurrence of the same artists' selections. However, as I have demonstrated through the chapter, the situation has significantly changed. In the last two decades, an increasing number of Indian curators have been active in the biennale scene, positioning themselves from multiple perspectives, instead of being positioned by others. As such, the diverse practice of curators in India was prompted in parallel to their activity in biennales worldwide. To further examine the practice and impact of Indian artists and curators in biennales, I shall now analyse the sphere of biennales in India in the next chapter.

4- The Delhi Biennale

As I demonstrated in Chapter Three, the prominence of contemporary Indian art globally has translated into an increased participation of Indian artists and curators in biennales internationally. However, while the increased presence of Indian art practitioners in biennales worldwide has received critical attention, biennales in India have yet to be comprehensively examined.[170] This is especially necessary when we consider biennales that have been proposed, yet never realised, such as the Delhi Biennale in the 2000s, which will be the case study for this chapter. The Delhi Biennale, although it never materialised, succeeded in putting forward debates on the ideas and ideals of the biennale format, and the most appropriate model for the Indian context. As such, this case study provides a unique opportunity to examine contemporary discussions on perennial exhibitions, but, more importantly, to further interrogate the conditions through which biennales can emerge in India and what political trajectory they may follow.

In this chapter, I discuss the inception of The Biennale Society in Delhi, which put forward the proposal of the biennale, and examine its foundational aims and how it has evolved over the years. Among the questions I ask are: which conditions have facilitated the debates and emergence of the proposed Delhi Biennale? How did this proposal relate to the ideas of the global South, and what factors shaped the ultimate non-realisation of this exhibition? To answer these questions, I draw on in-depth interviews with members of The Biennale Society and with artists, curators and academics who were involved with the discussions or commented on them. Furthermore, I draw upon two main international symposiums organised by The Biennale Society to discuss the possibility of the Delhi Biennale: *The Making of International Exhibitions: Siting Biennales* (New Delhi, 2005) and *Elective Affinities, Constitutive Differences: Contemporary Art in Asia* (New Delhi, 2007), as well as other related printed and digital materials. The proposed Delhi Biennale is considered in relation to the then existing India Triennale, to tease out the points of convergence and

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[170] The recent establishment of the first Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2012 saw international and local art players engage in several discussions examining India's position and relevance on the global map of biennales and biennales' place in India's art history. The symposium *Site Imaginaries* took place during the inauguration of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale on 15 & 16 December 2012 in Kochi, Kerala. The symposium *On scale, site and poetics of recent transcultural exhibitions* took place at the School of Arts and Aesthetics (SAA), Jawaharlal Nehru University, in Delhi on 19 April 2013. This symposium looked at the case of Documenta (13), Sharjah and the Kochi-Muziris Biennales, with a special emphasis on the experiences of Indian artists and curators involved in these events. It is important to note that even recent debates have mainly ignored previous models and discussions of recurring exhibitions in India.

departure. It is my contention that by paying attention to a biennale that did not happen, we could learn more about what does happen, thus adding to the complexity of our understanding of biennales, curatorial practices in India and globalisation.

4.1- The Delhi Biennale and the global South

The proposal to establish a Delhi Biennale first emerged in 2004 in New Delhi among a group of independent critics, curators, academics and artists based in the city. Under the initial name of Talk about Curating, the group met informally on a weekly basis to discuss the possibilities of establishing a biennale in 2007, as explained to me in an interview with curator Roobina Karode, one of the founding members.[171] Other well established figures within the group included artist Vivan Sundaram and curator and art theorist Geeta Kapur, the two main persons behind the proposal. In 2005, the Talk about Curating group renamed itself as The Biennale Society, Delhi and officially registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi. The president of The Biennale Society was Prof. Jyotindra Jain; the secretary was artist Vivan Sudaram, and the original treasurer was curator Roobina Karode, with curator Pooja Sood later taking up this role. Completing the list, core members of the society were Prof. K.T. Ravindran, curators Geeta Kapur and Gayatri Sinha, and artists Sheba Chhachhi and Ranbir Kaleka. Cumulatively, these figures are some of the leading names in the art scene in India, all of them having a high profile within their respective fields and sharing a progressive political commitment.

The Biennale Society brought forward global South politics as the core of the proposed biennale. Here I focus on its foundational aims and objectives in relation to the Indian context and non-hegemonic global politics and discuss its possibilities. Although the Delhi Biennale has never materialised in an exhibition form and as such remains as a utopian mandate with no concrete answers to the questions posed, I believe it is worth examining it in order to consider its potential for change and how its legacy might have impacted on present biennales in India.

Regarding the time of establishment of The Biennale Society, it is no coincidence that it came about in the mid-2000s, a period of heightened internationalisation of contemporary Indian art and curatorial practice in the global scene. At that time a growing number of

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[171] Interview with Roobina Karode. Held at India Habitat Centre. New Delhi, 17 November 2008. Recorded.

biennales were also established in the global South and especially in the East, coinciding with the rise of the emergent economies in the region.[172] Commenting on it, both Geeta Kapur and Vivan Sundaram mentioned to me in separate interviews about how, when they proposed the Delhi Biennale, the proliferation of biennales in the global South and East was increasingly being criticised by Western curators, stressing western hegemonic views as dominant variants in these critiques.[173] Geeta Kapur commented in this regard: "So since the year when we started to think about it [the Delhi Biennale], in 2004, in the world the biennale format has increased to a point where people feel that it's just one more biennale and criticise it, but that is not the point in India".[174] Similarly, Sundaram contended: "I would say that there is this criticism that there are too many biennales and we are tired and fed up of them. Now that is an opinion among certain international people who map the art world […] they map the world, they like to know, and then they say: 'Oh god, we have got to go to one more biennale and there are so many and we are all tired of it'".[175]

For Sundaram and Kapur, it was clear that some Western curators operating in the biennale sphere had an ambivalent position towards recurring exhibitions. As they pointed out, some curators used these sites to raise their international curatorial profile and to perpetrate a hegemonic global position. However, simultaneously, these same curators criticised biennales for their burgeoning spread and their contribution to the spectacle of the arts while ignoring their own complicity with this extravaganza.[176] By contrast, Geeta Kapur and Vivan Sundaram, while also criticising the spectacular side of the recurring exhibition and its complicity with capitalism, emphasised the potential of biennales from the global South to effect change against the neoliberal global. This was envisioned through their aim to go against the market, build up the domestic art infrastructure that would host the exhibition and promote contemporary art in the city. Furthermore, they stressed the need to look at

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[172] See **"**Asian Biennales: Nationalism in a post-colonial world – Internationalism versus Nationalism", for a discussion on the rise of biennales in Asia. This was an online debate organised in 2009 by the collective online platform n.e.w.s. (http://northeastwestsouth.net) where young scholars were invited to contribute to the topic. See http://northeastwestsouth.net/asian-biennials-forum-0 [Last accessed: 3 March 2013]

[173] Geeta Kapur cited the example of curator David Elliot, who participated in one of the symposiums organised by The Biennale Society, where he did not talk sympathetically about biennales, but later became the director of the Sydney Biennale. Kapur referred to this as an example of critical re-thinking, specifying that she did not consider it as a hypocritical position but as a critical way to find other forms of biennales. Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at her house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[174] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at her house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[175] Interview with Vivan Sundaram. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[176] *Ibidem.*

Southern biennales in relation to the context where they emerge and to examine how contemporary art is produced in different parts of the world in a more reflexive manner.[177]

On the potential of the global South, which embodies the possibilities of political and social action and the artistic imagination expressed by Arjun Appadurai,[178] The Biennale Society first and foremost envisioned materialising it through the establishment of a biennale in Delhi. This biennale would be professionally curated and would raise public awareness and showcase recent trends in contemporary art. In terms of its political agenda, in line with the Leftist commitments of The Biennale Society's members, it stated an anti-hegemonic position whilst envisioning stimulating dialogues within the regions of the global South in a self-reflexive and self-questioning structure. As Vivan Sundaram explained to me: "the idea was to get out of the 'other' syndrome and see how things can be mapped horizontally".[179] Such politics resonate directly with South-South dialogues and encounters and the neo-Marxists' claim for a new internationalism in the visual arts, a precedent for which was established by the seminal Havana Biennale discussed in Chapter Three. In fact, the Havana model was a clear referent for The Biennale Society, as came across when I interviewed its members and discussed the preliminary debates for the proposed biennale.

Although the Delhi Biennale never took place and, as such, all the debates remained immaterialised, in line with their objective to establish a biennale that would be professionally curated, Geeta Kapur conveyed to me that one of the main questions discussed during the preparatory meetings was how to select the curatorial team. As she explained, there was difficulty in finding a set of curators, based on their dilemma between not wanting to select an international curator and the limited possibilities for finding an Indian one. Two main concerns came into play in these discussions.

Firstly, concerning the possible selection of an Indian curator, which was the main option considered, it was felt by the organisers that there was too small a number of curators in India with the experience to curate such large-scale project. "We could have asked only

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[177] As Vivan Sundaram pointed out: "I think everywhere [biennales] it is also in relationship with the context in which you are and whether there is a need for such an activity. […] There's a relationship also in the context of how people are making contemporary art in different parts of the world in a more selective and thoughtful manner, and to start a dialogue whenever it is possible". Interview with Vivan Sundaram. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[178] See in Chapter Two of this thesis the section 2.3- Exhibition flows through curatorial practices in-between for a discussion on Appadurai's theory, pp. 38-42.

[179] Interview with Vivan Sundaram. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

three or four or five at most", Kapur said. [180] Indeed, as I demonstrated in Chapter Three, the number of Indian curators active in the biennale scene is more restricted than the list of Indian artists in circulation. Nevertheless, the name of Pooja Sood, director of Khoj – International Artists' Association in Delhi and treasurer of The Biennale Society, was mentioned several times in my conversations with Geeta Kapur as a possible candidate considered for the position. In this respect, Kapur commented that they would have liked curator Pooja Sood to have a central role in the proposed Delhi Biennale, arguing that she had the kind of energy necessary for this position and the ability to negotiate between the various spheres involved in a big project of such characteristics. [181] However, Pooja Sood felt over-committed and could not take up the offer. [182] This might have reduced the options even more, since not many Indian curators had the experience to take this challenge and those who did, such as Ranjit Hoskote, Nancy Adajania or Raqs Media Collective, among others, arguably might have had some distinct positions and ideological differences from the main organisers regarding national imaginaries and curatorial strategies, as pointed out in Chapter Three. Besides, when considering these preliminary discussions, it is important to note that Geeta Kapur was talking with me about these debates retrospectively, after the proposal for the Delhi Biennale had been abandoned. As such, this could explain her emphasis on Pooja Sood's energy, since one of the challenges faced by The Biennale Society was the advanced age of the some of its members, which was one of the multiple reasons pointed out to me to explain why the proposal could not be materialised. [183] Furthermore, the emphasis on Sood's ability to negotiate between different spheres could be explained, since the lack of this ability or the reluctance to do so of other members of The Biennale Society might indicate one of the problems faced by the group, in terms of securing neither governmental nor artist community support, as I shall explore further in later sections.

Secondly, on the possible selection of an international curator, the discussions revolved around funding possibilities and ideological commitments. As Kapur put it: "we would not

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[180] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at her house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[181] *Ibidem.*

[182] Geeta Kapur explained this to me. At that time, Pooja Sood was already in charge of the performance art festival *Khoj Live 08* (2008) and the public art project *48°C Public.Art.Eco*logy (2008), both in Delhi, besides running Khoj. For more information on these two projects directed by Pooja Sood, see: *Khoj Live 08* http://www.khojworkshop.org/node/6068 and *48°C Public.Art.Ecology* http://www.48c.org/ [Last accessed: 15 October 2013]

[183] As curator Deeksha Nath pointed out, answering my question about the future of the Delhi Biennale: "I asked Vivan and Geeta, who are the driving force behind it. It's impossible for a group of people alone to do it. They are older, their own work is pressing. Let's see what happens". Interview with Deeksha Nath. Held at her house. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

have been able to afford that kind of cost: we didn't have that kind of prior commitment to funding. Also, in terms of ideology, in terms of our politics, that is what we did not want".[184] In this regard, Kapur referred to the case of the Havana Biennale as an example of a precursor model with similar concerns, in her own words: "when we talked to Lillian [Llanes] of Havana, she said, 'Why, in India, would you want to have an international star? *You* must conceive it', which is how we felt. Which is what Cuba used to feel. […] We had a strong feeling that we just did not want to import a star".[185] This is important, since it reflects The Biennale Society's commitment to global South politics, fostering global solidarities while challenging hegemonic powers, but also the vexed economic and ideological considerations involved in the discussions on the curators' selection criteria and the Delhi Biennale proposal in general, particularly if we take into account that the aim to establish a biennale in Delhi was also in reaction to what was felt as a market doxa, which, in Bourdieu's terms, refers to the established neoliberal dominant position of the art business in India.

Regarding the determination to work against the devouring aspect of the market, as Kapur stated firmly during the interview, this responded to the general impression and recurrent concern within the art scene in India about the prevalence of the market as the only institution that works in the country.[186] Therefore, the group had the inclination to develop new ideas and discursive projects and spaces that could challenge this. Nevertheless, one can argue that these propositions, despite their best intentions, did not correlate with what is actually happening in India and elsewhere. As demonstrated previously, biennales and the art market are directly imbricated, and this partly has facilitated the global exposure of Indian artists and, to a lesser degree, of curators. In this respect, Vivan Sundaram expressed his dissatisfaction with the interdependence between market hegemony and global exposure, at the same time that he underlined the distinct reality locally in terms of curatorial possibilities, art infrastructure and visibility. As he remarked: "for a long time one feels that the situation in India, in institutions, in the relationship with the international, is in a very undeveloped stage. What is happening is that individual artists are picked up and there are exhibitions that take place internationally, and worldwide there is the market. So there is a great deal of activity at that level but institutionally and for the public here, there is very little in terms of exposure".[187]

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[184] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at her house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[185] *Ibidem.*

[186] *Ibidem.*

[187] Interview with Vivan Sundaram. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

The disjunctive possibilities between exhibiting contemporary Indian art globally and locally and The Biennale Society's aim to revitalise existent domestic art infrastructure might explain why the group wanted to locate part of the proposed exhibition at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in Delhi.[188] As Vivan Sundaram told me, it was intended partly for the NGMA central location and significance, being the main governmental museum of modern art in the country, but also aimed to revitalise this art space, since, in his own words, "it is a very closed and dead place".[189] In this regard, the National Gallery of Modern Art collection is one of the biggest and most important collections of modern Indian art, but after the 1960s, the museum became a declining institution, and nowadays its contemporary art collection is negligible. The museum criteria for the new acquisitions are not useful to built up a representative collection of present art trends since, on the one hand, their remit is to have a regional purchase independent of any aesthetic criteria and, on the other hand, their budget cannot compete with the booming art market.[190] The NGMA's present decline contrasts with its origins when this institution wanted to develop a museum to represent India's national identity as an independent country in order to reach the international world.[191] By contrast, within the globalised art world, India's main institution has been left out of the internationalism that its foundation aimed to achieve. As such, given that one of the main objectives of The Biennale Society was to develop a public profile of contemporary Indian art and build up art infrastructures according to contemporary times, the decision to locate some of the biennale's sections at the NGMA would have been a

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[188] The National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi, inaugurated in 1954 under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's government, was founded with the aim to become an important institution for an emerging nation's self-image in the international world, in contrast with the museums set up during the colonial period by the British government of India. The first colonial museum in India was founded in 1796, forty years after the inception of the British Museum, followed by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1814 (whose function was to "elucidate the peculiarities of art and nature in the east"). Twelve museums were set up by 1857 and by 1936 India had a grand total of one hundred and five museums. For more information see Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India,* New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

[189] Interview with Vivan Sundaram. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[190] Along with all these factors, it does not help that the National Gallery of Modern Art is run and administered as a subordinate office to the Department of Culture: therefore, even in the first instance, by definition it is not a normal museum. Given the NGMA's obsolescence, new museums in Delhi from private collections and investors are taking the role of the state institutions, such as the Devi Art Foundation (opened in 2008) and the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (opened in 2010). See National Gallery of Modern Art http://ngmaindia.gov.in; Devi Art Foundation http://deviartfoundation.org/ and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art http://www.knma.in/ [Last accessed: 28 April 2012].

[191] See Vidya Shivadas, "The National Gallery of Modern Art: Museums and the making of national art", in Shivaji K. Panikkar, Parul Dave Mukherji and Deeptha Achar (eds.), *Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art*, New Delhi, D.K. Printworld, 2003, pp. 348-356.

logical outcome. However, the fact that this exhibition never happened reflects the existent dichotomy between the group's ideals and their actual surrounding circumstances.

Even more since their aim to go against the devouring aspect of the market, in a context lacking in institutional infrastructure and governmental support, created extremely challenging circumstances for this project. Geeta Kapur, who articulated the theoretical framework for the proposed biennale, underlined funding problems as the main reason for the project's failure. In her opinion, no biennale can be sustained without institutional support and infrastructure: this, one might add, also underlines her Marxist ideological position.[192] Given the lack of state support, the proposed Delhi Biennale could only proceed with private funding. In this respect, Kapur also expounded the difficult ideological differences faced by most of The Biennale Society members about asking private corporations for alternative funding to the state source, an option that was finally left out. I shall now look at the India Triennale and the proposed Delhi Biennale to discuss the convergences and differences between the two projects and how this impacted on the lack of governmental and artists' support towards the Biennale.

4.2- The Delhi Biennale and its relations with previous models of biennales in India

The first public discussion to set up a prospective Delhi Biennale took place in January 2005 in Delhi, in the form of an international symposium entitled *The Making of International Exhibitions: Siting Biennales*.[193] Coordinated by Vivan Sundaram along with curator Pooja Sood, it aimed to debate the ways in which to proceed with the exhibition. The conference turned out to be a well-attended and successful event in terms of public engagement and participation, gathering numerous national and international experts such as Anshuman Dasgupta, Ken Lum, Arshiya Lokhanwala, Chaitanya Sambrani, Kavita Singh and Sabine B. Vogel, among others. Among the most vocal attendees, Vivan Sundaram argued in favour of the establishment of the Delhi Biennale, stressing the need to organise it according to current trends in contemporary art in India and internationally. In his own words, "as

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[192] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at her house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[193] The symposium took place from 16 to 18 January 2005 at the Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi with the support of the Max Mueller Bhavan and the British Council India. For more information on this event and the subsequent ones organised by The Biennale Society in Delhi, see Appendix: A.III-The Biennale Society: People and Events, pp. 172-175.

democratic citizens, we have the right to propose to the government that it is time for the city to have a biennale that is sophisticated and all-encompassing".[194]

It is important to state that this proposal was formulated as an alternative to the India Triennale, which opened at the same time as the *Siting Biennales* symposium. Arguably, this symposium was organised as a counter-event to the Triennale. Indeed, the need to set up a Delhi Biennale felt even more imperative by then, since the eleventh and latest edition of the Triennale had failed to reflect the creativity of the country, showcasing banal works and facing an important decline, in contrast with its brilliant beginnings.[195] In the opinion of Geeta Kapur, referring to the lack of governmental support towards contemporary art and artistic experimentation, "it [the India Triennale] was symptomatic of the government position."[196] Thus, the group's intention was to organise a thoughtful independent recurring exhibition in India. Paradoxically, though, although The Biennale Society aimed to create an alternative to the India Triennale, both projects were intertwined in dialectic relation from the very beginning. I shall now explore this intertwined relation in more depth.

The India Triennale was founded in 1968 and ran until 2005. This state-run exhibition started with a strong leftist political commitment and humanistic intentions, but declined through the years to become a bureaucratised and defunct project. At the beginning, during the 1960s and 1970s, the Triennale aimed to develop international cultural relations, to challenge cultural imperialism and create solidarities with postcolonial nations. Arguing for the case of the India Triennale and its significant inception, curator Nancy Adajania has described it as an example of "globalism before globalisation".[197] Indeed, the India Triennale was one of the first recurring exhibitions with truly international non-hegemonic views. However, its radical beginnings contrast with its later development, which became the impetus for proposals for a new Biennale. From the 1980s, the India Triennale became increasingly institutionalised and bureaucratised, and was highly criticised for its

[194] See Gunvanthi Balaram, "A sorry state of affairs", *Deccan Herald*, 30 January 2005. Available at: http://archive.deccanherald.com/Deccanherald/jan302005/ac5.asp [Last accessed: 22 November 2012]

[195] Suneet Chopra, "A new order in the Triennale", *Frontline*, 22 (06), Mar 12 - 25, 2005. Available at: http://hindu.com/thehindu/fline/fl2206/stories/20050325000106500.htm [Last accessed: 22 November 2012]

[196] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

[197] Nancy Adajania, "Globalism before Globalization. The ambivalent fate of the Triennale India", in Shanay Jhavery (ed.), *Western Artists in India: Creative Inspirations in Art and Design*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2013, pp. 168-185.

anachronistic format and contents in the context of globalisation and contemporary art. I shall briefly look at the history of the India Triennale to analyse how the proposed Delhi Biennale dialectically related to it and discuss how the existence of the Triennale impacted on the proposed Biennale.

Figure 4.1. Left Image: Mulk Raj Anand (figure on the left), founding director of India Triennale, established in New Delhi, 1968. Right Image: Catalogue cover of the First Triennale India, 1968.

The India Triennale was initiated in 1968 by the Lalit Kala Academi in Delhi, with the support of the Indian government.[198] This was a post-independence period when India positioned itself as part of the Non-Aligned movement and the Third World internationalism and domestically was committed to Nehruvian socialism and secularism.[199] Mulk Raj Anand, the Chairman of the Lalit Kala Academi at that time, was the main institutor of the Triennale. According to the progressive times, Anand envisioned this perennial exhibition as a non-hegemonic platform to develop international cultural relations and to establish India's place in the international art scene.[200] At that time, when biennales were far fewer in number, the India Triennale sought to emulate models such as Venice, Tokyo, Paris and Sao Paolo and, in the case of the Triennale, to create solidarities with postcolonial nations and regions of outside the West. Anand himself referred to this in his welcome address, stating that "many Asian, African and socialist countries have not been able to establish a platform where the desired images of the oldest and the youngest continents (youngest in the sense of secular achievement in the arts) may be seen together with the achievement of the dynamic West".[201] Thus, the aim of the Triennale to participate in the modernist and progressive movements outside the Euro-American art world was clear from its foundation. It is important to note that forty years ago, not many triennales and biennales existed in the world and the establishment of the India Triennale was an important initiative by an independent country wanting to position itself in the non-hegemonic circuits of

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[198] As stated by the Ministry of Culture: "The Lalit Kala Akademi was set up as an apex cultural body of the Ministry of Culture in New Delhi in 1954 to develop and promote visual arts in India. The Akademi chalks out various programmes at the national and international levels, which include exhibitions, camps, seminars, workshops and lectures. The Akademi Headquarters are housed in the Rabindra Bhavan Complex, New Delhi. There are five Regional Centres at Chennai, Lucknow, Kolkata, Bhubaneshwar and Garhi in New Delhi". For more information, see India Ministry of Culture Website: http://indiaculture.nic.in/indiaculture/pdf/MoC%20Annual%20Report%202007-2008.pdf
[Last accessed: April 29, 2010]

[199] India had a central role within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was one of its founding members, along with Sukarno of Indonesia, Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. The inception of the NAM can be traced to the Bandung Conference (Indonesia) in 1955, where the term Third World was also used for the first time. A year earlier, in 1954 in Colombo (Sri Lanka), Nehru stated what would be the five pillars of the non-aligned countries: respect to Sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality, and peaceful co-existence. At that time, the NAM significantly contributed to the emergence of new international dynamics outside the world divide between the Western and Eastern blocs in the Cold War.

[200] The novelist, editor and art critic Mulk Raj Anand was a modernist figure who was close to Nehru and Indira Gandhi and later participated in the Chandigarh city project designed by Le Corbusier. For more information on this important figure, see Annapura Garimella (ed.), *Mulk Raj Anand. Shaping the Indian Modern,* Marg Publications, Mumbai, 2005.

[201] Mulk Raj Anand, "Excerpts from the Chairman's welcome address", in Sovon Som (guest ed.), "Triennale India Special Issue" in *Lalit Kala Contemporary*, 36, 1990, p.12.

contemporary art. However, despite its significant inception and aims, the Triennale was controversial from its very beginning.

During the first three editions (1968, 1971 and 1974), a group of artists and critics protested in order to express their discontent with the Triennale. These protests addressed two main objections. Firstly, as explained to me by the artist Vivan Sundaram and the art theorist Geeta Kapur, who were directly involved with these protests, a young generation of artists in India were against the internationalism and Western hegemony that in their opinion was implicit in biennales' platforms.[202] This reflected the protesters' militant politics, linked with decolonisation processes, national liberation movements and cultural nationalism. Referring to this, Vivan Sundaram commented: "it was a kind of second wave critique of internationalism in favour of, not a right wing nationalism, but we felt that we had so much in our own culture which we had not explored yet […] you can say that it was a last phase of what we call the national liberation struggles, which were struggles against imperialism and against American imperialism […] it seemed progressive at that time but it was again feeding into a kind of national sort of closure".[203] Secondly, the artists' critique focused on the selection criteria for the Indian section of the Triennale and the award system, condemning the art bureaucracy in India for its conservatism, corruption, manipulative modes and inefficiency.[204] This second critique continued until the 2000s, especially since the Triennale increasingly worsened during contemporary times in terms of curatorial proposition and infrastructure.

A recurrent concern expressed to me by a wide range of curators, art critics, artists and gallerists interviewed was the lack of curatorial professionalism within the Triennale. Concerns highlighted included: the fact that fewer countries participated in each Triennale and each edition was put together within a just few months; the participating artists selected by their respective countries as national representations; the lack of a curatorial team and the uneven quality of the works and their display.[205] These critiques pointed to the

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[202] Interviews with Geeta Kapur and Vivan Sundaram. I interviewed them separately at their house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[203] Interview with Vivan Sundaram. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[204] See "Artists' Protests" in Sovon Som (guest ed.), "Triennale India Special Issue" in *Lalit Kala Contemporary*, 36, 1990, pp. 17, 34 and 35.

[205] In 2007, India and Portugal signed a Cultural Exchange Programme. The treaty between the two governments for the years 2007-2010 envisaged implementation of initiatives designed to strengthen the cultural cooperation. In this frame, the Indian government agreed to invite Portugal to take part in the 12th Triennale-India. The agreement, signed few months before the prospective 12th Triennale, which ultimately did not happen, shows the unprofessional curatorial approach of the

need for the Triennale to restructure itself according to contemporary needs. Yet recent attempts at re-structuring have led not to a fresh beginning for the Triennale, but to a deadlock, with the exhibition being discontinued in 2005.[206]

When I interviewed Vivan Sundaram and Geeta Kapur, both expressed to me their regrets about the protests they held during the first editions of the Triennale. In their present view, Mulk Raj Anand was a visionary intellectual with strong progressive views ahead of his times and unfortunately the artists' protests put him in a very difficult position that compromised the development of this progressive project.[207] Nevertheless, despite their current self-criticism, the historically antagonistic relationship that Geeta Kapur and Vivan Sundaram had with the India Triennale raised some suspicions within the local art scene about their proposal of the Delhi Biennale. Although The Biennale Society had nine members, Sundaram and Kapur were the most visible figures in the group and led the majority of the events organised by the society. This resulted in the common association of The Biennale Society with Geeta Kapur and Vivan Sundaram solely. Regarding the doubts raised by the proposed Delhi Biennale in relation to the India Triennale, as one of my interviewees explained to me confidentially: "the question is, in the presence of the Triennale, why do you want a Biennale? You see Geeta [Kapur] and other firms always wanted to play in it [India Triennale], but because there was local politics involved and all that, they felt the need to create another unit".[208] This coincides with the reactions raised in the *Siting Biennales* symposium, where the proposed Delhi Biennale was first publicly presented.

The initial public response to the Delhi Biennale congratulated the initiative and praised its potential to position the country in the international art circuits as well as to stimulate the local art scene. However, some reservations were voiced. Among them was the fact that the

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event, which was used by the government as a tool for cultural relations. See "India-Portugal cultural treaty to become operational soon" in *The Peninsula,* 14 January 2007.

[206] When Ashok Vajpeyi was appointed as the new Chairman of the Lalit Kala Akademi in 2008, he decided to postpone the Triennale in order to overhaul the more archaic elements of the institution. Yet, the 12th edition of the India Triennale, originally organised in 2008, though later planned from December 2010 to January 2011 and then postponed to November 2011, has still not taken place. In an interview I conducted with Vajpeyi in 2009, he explained to me the necessity to adopt direct participation of the artists and to relocate the India Triennale on the map of global art from an Indian point of view. Despite his good intentions, having organised several meeting with artists, critics, academics and curators to discuss the future of the Triennale, Vajpeyi retired as Chairman of the Lalit Kala Academi at the end of 2011 and to date the Triennale has not taken place. Interview with Ashok Vajpeyi. Held at the Lalit Kala Akademi. New Delhi, 12 November 2009. Recorded.

[207] Interview with Geeta Kapur and Vivan Sundaram. I interviewed them separately at their house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[208] Confidential interview. 2011. Recorded.

city already hosted the India Triennale, which, with its democratic foundation based on regional representations, gave an opportunity to those artists outside the privileged global art scene. Those artists probably would not have had a place in the new exhibition proposal. In this respect, artist Sonia Khurana expressed in the symposium: "one holds no brief for these artists, but isn't it odd that all of them should be missing?"[209] A similar critique was voiced to me by the artist Sharmila Samant, who is part of the art collective Open Circle and consciously circulates within global South biennales and alternative networks. As she pointed out to me: "Well, if it [the proposed Delhi Biennale] becomes a well curated thing, then it would just be great. It would certainly put India into the international circuit of biennales. But on the other hand, there are thousands of artists who are not in the league that we are operating in, and who get a chance at their fifteen minutes of glory [...] if a Triennale exists and it is giving that little impetus for a different set of artists, why take it away from them? Because I mean, I have access to other things, but there are some artists in, let's say, Patna who are never going to access that international circuit but can easily access their international via the Triennale".[210] In this regard, according to art historian and artist Shukla Sawant, the complexity of the art sphere in India is reinforced by the existence of an art world that comprises several different social groups that call themselves artists or curators, which have separate circuits of operation, valorisation and markets. In Sawant's opinion, these different groups live in mutual disregard of each other but often entered into contact and conflict in the context of the Triennale.[211] Paradoxically, although the Delhi Biennale aimed to create an alternative to the India Triennale, one of the first concerns that the proposed biennale raised was the existence of the former.

This also explains why the proposed Delhi Biennale did not receive governmental support, since the state already organised and supported the India Triennale. In this regard, when I interviewed Ashok Vajpeyi, Chairman of the Lalit Kala Akademi, which organises the India

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[209] See Gunvanthi Balaram, "A sorry state of affairs", *Deccan Herald*, 30 January 2005. Available at: http://archive.deccanherald.com/Deccanherald/jan302005/ac5.asp [Last accessed: 22 November 2012]

[210] Interview with Sharmila Samant. Held at her studio. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.

[211] According to Shukla Sawant: "While artists and curators who are already Internationally well recognized as representatives of Contemporary Art in India, make a furious bid to take over this state sponsored space [the India Triennale] in the hope of providing a "Professionally" staged spectacle, elected representatives of the republic of artists in India who control the academy of art hold on furiously to their territorial space. [...] The Triennale is the only opportunity that exists for the hundreds of artists across the country to finally "go international" albeit in a local context". Shuckla Sawant. Paper presented at the workshop "Global Art and the Museum: The Global Turn and Art in Contemporary India". New Delhi, 11 October 2008. Unpublished paper. I am grateful to Shuckla Sawant for passing me a copy of this paper.

Triennale, he explained the impossibility of both events being hosted by the government, given that the Triennale already existed. In his own words: "when I came to this post, I tried to speak to them, thinking that this proposal [the Delhi Biennale] could be incorporated in some way into this Triennale, and, well, let us say we have not yet fully structured it, so the idea is an open idea. I don't know if there will be a meeting point. If not, the more the merrier as far as we are concerned, but perhaps it won't be necessary to have two separates events. Perhaps new elements could be incorporated in this Triennale, or if it is not possible, then perhaps we could have a separate biennale or Triennale. It is all right".[212] This suggests that the proliferation of events was not the problem, but the aim to both have governmental funding was not tenable.

In summary, the impossibility of organising a Delhi Biennale was mainly to do with economic reasons, but other reasons came into play as well: some artists became suspicious that it was an elite foundation and juxtaposed it with the Indian Triennale, which at least had a democratic foundation. In this respect, the Indian Triennale was a space where several groups of artists outside the privileged global art scene would have an opportunity to exhibit and achieve some international recognition, even if this international projection was relative, since the impact of this platform worldwide has been questioned. Overall, as was evident in the interviews conducted for this research, the Delhi Biennale is a difficult topic, since it throws into confusion established institutional, ideological and economic issues. I shall now explore this further in relation to the critiques raised in the subsequent conference organised by The Biennale Society on the idea of Asia and the need for a new exhibition platform.

4.3- The Delhi Biennale and the idea of Asia

Despite not realising their final exhibition, The Biennale Society was successful in putting forward debates and discussions that drew attention to the possibilities and politics of recurring exhibitions.[213] Distinguishing themselves from the late India Triennale in this

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[212] Interview with Ashok Vajpeyi. Held at the Lalit Kala Akademi. New Delhi, 12 November 2009. Recorded.

[213] During 2006, The Biennale Society organised *Lecture Series… for an inaugural Delhi Biennale, November 2007*. In these lectures, established international curators and museum directors discussed curatorial practices, contemporary art museums and the biennale phenomenon. Lectures through the year were given by: Nicholas Serota, Roger Buergel, Teresa Gleadowe, Robert Storr and Charles Merewether. For more information on this event, see Appendix: A.III- The Biennale Society: People and Events, pp. 172-175.

regard, the curatorial approach of the group reinforced a theoretical base where information and knowledge intended to precede and pervade the proposed biennale. Their aim was to first enter into dialogue and develop networks with all the parties involved, especially with contemporary art practitioners and artists in the region. As Vivan Sundaram told me: "our feeling was that an exhibition can actually be preceded by a theoretical debate, by discussion, by knowledge, analysis and familiarity. It is not something that just suddenly comes to the artists that are there. [We wanted] to make connections and then build up a base in which from there you can then make further connections. So we do the homework first and have a foundation".[214] With this goal, the discussions around the proposed Delhi Biennale were particularly plentiful in 2007, the year when the prospective biennale was planned to take place.

In March 2007, the international symposium *Elective Affinities, Constitutive Differences: Contemporary Art in Asia* took place at the Rajiv Ghandi Foundation in Delhi.[215] This conference was jointly organised by The Biennale Society and the School of Arts and Aesthetics of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi. The main organiser was Vivan Sundaram, along with a conference committee constituted by Parul Dave Mukherji, Kavita Singh and Naman P. Ahuja, from JNU, and Geeta Kapur, Sheba Chhachhi, Pooja Sood and K.T. Ravindram, from The Biennale Society. The three-day seminar was the most successful event to date organised by the group, both in terms of attendance and infrastructure. It had over forty speakers, both Indian and international, and a committed audience of three hundred registered delegates who were very much involved with the seminar and attended the majority of the sessions.[216] The University Grants Commission sponsored the symposium, along with further support donated by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Max Muller Bhavan, the Japan Foundation, the Sanskriti Foundation and the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. According to the Asian focus, the speakers' list included noted curators, artists, art historians and critics active in the region, such as Fumio Nanjo, Rustom Bharucha, Sharmini Pereira, Lu Jie, Nancy Adajania, Marian Pastor Roces, Shaheen Merali and Negar Azimi, among others.[217] Furthermore, in concordance with the organisational aim to make

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[214] Interview with Vivan Sundaram. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[215] The papers presented at the conference will be published in the forthcoming book *Influx: Contemporary Art in Asia,* edited by Parul Dave Mukherji, Kavita Singh and Naman P. Ahuja, London: Sage Publications.

[216] *Ibidem.*

[217] See the complete programme of the symposium at A.III- The Biennale Society: People and Events", pp. 172-175.

connections from the base, twenty art history and criticism students and graduates from all over the country received travel grants to attend the conference.

Elective Affinities, Constitutive Differences played on a deliberate paradox. As was made explicit in both the title and the concept note of the conference, this paradox centred around the questions: "Do elective affinities imply the bridging of structural differences; [and] when do discrete cultural and economic formations translate into active affiliations?" [218] Attempting to answer these questions, such an interrogative premise became a fruitful terrain of critical exploration during the conference, inviting the speakers to "have a place of manoeuvre and bring new, even tendentious, arguments to bear on familiar concepts".[219] This was explored through the idea of Asia, from which the organisers aimed to encourage dialogues on a potential Delhi Biennale with an Asian focus. Vivan Sundaram expressed to me in this regard: "it is such a vast region with so many differences that it seemed rich and dynamic enough to be able to get a huge diversity and yet to see whether is it worth posing the question of Asia or if it is something which is passé […] So why not attempt to look at the different perceptions within that larger Asia?"[220]

The Asian focus was prompted by what the organisers felt was the need to establish connections with the neighbours in a horizontal way, without these connections being dependent on the hegemonic interventions of the North.[221] As such, there was also an awareness of the necessity to interrogate the validity of this claim in the framework of globalisation, especially in a present marked by interconnected global networks that, according to Appadurai, potentially overcome the centre-periphery model.[222] Therefore, the idea of Asia became a vexed terrain, reflecting on the contradictions inherent in the symposium's title, and on cultural globalisation itself. On the one hand, it became a site of inquiry, through discussions on how to broaden the paradigms in which inter-Asia exchanges and differences are understood. On the other, it turned out to be a locus of critique, arising from the idea of the new Asian models linked with the rise of global economic and political powers of some regions of the East.

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[218] Unpublished text for the conference on the Delhi Biennale, 2007. Referred as it appears in the conference blurb with the detailed conference programme. I am grateful to curator Zasha Colah for passing me a copy of this blurb, which was distributed with the participants and attendees of the symposium.

[219] *Ibidem.*

[220] Interview with Vivan Sundaram. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

[221] *Ibidem.*

[222] Arjun Appadurai, *Op. Cit.*, 1996.

Figure 4.2- Opening of the symposium *Elective Affinities, Constitutive Differences: Contemporary Art in Asia,* 9th March 2007. From left to right: Geeta Kapur, Parul Dave Mukherji and Jyotindra Jain

On the opening day of the symposium, the introduction by art historian Parul Dave Mukherji and art critic and curator Geeta Kapur reflected on Edward Said. In particular, they reflected on the seminal work *Orientalism,* which concerned the relations between Europe and the East, drawing on notions of hegemony to explain how Orientalism as an oppressive force is sustained.[223] To an extent, Said's postcolonial critique depended on the existence and continuing power of a dominant centre. However, under present circumstances, it is necessary to question how the new effects of globalisation challenge such postcolonial logics, or if instead they reinforce it. In the context of the *Elective Affinities, Constitutive Differences* symposium, such questioning was particularly relevant, taking into account the growth of Asian economies and of contemporary art on the global stage and the proliferation of biennales in Asia and of Indian artists' and curators' circulation, as discussed in Chapter Three. Indeed, Parul Dave Mukherji emphasised in her introduction the need to go beyond the mythologised 'idea' of Asia and to critically consider it as a problematic proposition.[224] In relation to this critique, I shall now analyse some of the papers presented at the symposium, particularly the ones by cultural theorist Rustom Bharucha and art historian Santhosh. S, to see how they challenged the idea of Asia and raised its discontents.

In the opening paper of the symposium, entitled "The Illusions and Antagonisms of Civilizational Exchange: Critical Reflections on Dismantling Asian Empires", Rustom Bharucha argued that Asiacentricity could potentially mirror Eurocentricity. For Bharucha, the new effects of globalisation have developed an internal imperialist logic within Asia, where the

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[223] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
[224] Interview with Parul Dave Mukherji. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 15 December 2008. Unrecorded.

poorer countries like Cambodia and Laos are left out of the civilizational exchanges. As he pointed out, "the centres of global capitalism in Asia continue to frame 'other Asias', perpetuating earlier traditions of an internalized orientalism, steeped in the hierarchies of colliding empires".[225] Regarding recurring exhibitions, in his view 'Asia', and by extension 'India', has become a new manifestation of global cultural capital itself. In line with Bourdieu's terms, this cultural capital is very self-serving and is consecrated in biennales, triennales and blockbuster exhibitions.[226] In this regard, when I questioned him about the problems of Asiacentricity in relation to the proposed Delhi biennale, Bharucha expressed his discomfort about attempting to act together nationally in order to make it an Indian or even an Asian biennale.[227] While specifying that he is not a biennale person and does not work in the spectacular mode inherent in this type of exhibitions, the main problem for him was the marketing of this idea of Asia. As he explained: "I was calling attention to a certain problematic of Asia, where Asia is promoted and marketed in certain ways from certain parts of the world. And I am asking, why do we need to be part of that bandwagon given the history of that?".[228] This concern might have been shared by a considerable number of the participants at the symposium, given that the public opposition to the proposed Delhi Biennale remained a constant, as I shall discuss further in relation to India.

Indeed, one of the most impassioned debates during the symposium questioned the role and usage of the idea of the nation and of national identities in biennales' platforms. Commenting on this, curator and group member Roobina Karode explained to me: "I think the question that was very important and that was raised in the seminar was: does the biennale represent the nation or what is called nationalistic art?"[229] The curator Charles Merewether, who was a guest speaker at the symposium, argued that biennales are not

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[225] The paper ""The Illusions and Antagonisms of Civilizational Exchange: Critical Reflections on Dismantling Asian Empires" has been published in Shaheen Merali (ed.), *Re-Imagining Asia: A Thousand Years of Separation,* London: Saqi Books, 2008, pp. 88-97. See also Rustom Bharucha, "Interculturalism and its discriminations", *Third Text,* 46, 1999, pp. 3-23 and Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia: Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006 for an extensive and rigorous reasoning on this topic.

[226] As Bharucha explains: "the very diverse resources of Asian cultures, particularly in the ritualistic, folk, and traditional sectors of performance, supplemented by a spectrum of visual traditions, contribute to the lure of this capital. With appropriate adaptation, these resources can be ingeniously re-invented in the form of new narratives, contributed lucratively to the global cultural industry and the spate of biennales, triennales and blockbuster exhibitions". See Rustom Bharucha, "Beyond the Box: A view from India" in Peter Weibel and Andrea Buddensieg (eds.) *Contemporary Art and the Museum. A global perspective*, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007, pp. 214-231.

[227] Interview with Rustom Bharucha. Held at a public café. Kolkata, 2 December 2008. Recorded.

[228] *Ibidem.*

[229] Interview with Roobina Karode. Held at India Habitat Centre. New Delhi, 17 November 2008. Recorded.

representative of the nation or of nationalistic art. In his opinion, biennales are instead representative of art that can be endorsed everywhere or which is styled to meet the standards of an international audience, wherever they are.[230] The discussion on the relation between biennales and nationalism echoed current debates within the art scene in India where, as I discussed in Chapter Three, the national modern is a terrain increasingly contested in contemporary times, challenging the myth of national identity based on a homogeneous cultural identity. It is important to note the vexed relation of biennales with the idea of the nation. In this respect, although biennales present themselves as international platforms, the traditional biennale's model of national representations and the cultural investment of governing bodies can reinforce a national supremacy and the glorification of certain national narratives.

In relation to this, one of the most recurrent concerns expressed in the interviews I conducted about the proposed biennale was the decision to locate the event in Delhi. Although it could have been framed as a city-based biennale, this did not seem to be the case when I spoke with the members of The Biennale Society, who referred more to India in general terms than to Delhi as a particular city. Many of my interviewees, such as Raqs Media Collective, Nancy Adajania, John Clark, Probir Gupta and Shilpa Gupta, among others, queried the representation of India as a monolithic culture, which in their view was reinforced by the centralism exerted by the group in aiming to place the biennale in the capital.[231] As Shilpa Gupta remarked: "about the Delhi Biennale Society, you don't need just one foundation: for a country like India, you need forty or fifty foundations to propose different things, because there is not just one-way of thinking".[232] In a similar way, art historian John Clark pointed out to me: "the problem of the Indian art world is that it is too Delhi/Mumbai centred. […] The discourse of modern art in India is not a single discourse; India itself is not a single discourse".[233] These comments reflected on the controversy surrounding the location of the proposed biennale but furthermore expressed a critique of the centralism exerted by urban elite progressive groups and by the single modern narratives of the nation state.

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[230] *Ibidem.*

[231] All these interviews were conducted between September 2008 and November 2009 in New Delhi and Mumbai. See Appendix C – List of interviews conducted pp. 191-192.

[232] Interview with Shilpa Gupta. Held at her studio. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.

[233] Interview with John Clark. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 18 November 2009. Recorded.

Aware of these critiques, The Biennale Society addressed this problem in the symposium, posing questions around the site of nationalism and the intersecting spaces of marginality. In this context, art historian Santhosh. S presented the paper "Mapping the Trajectories of Minoritarian Aesthetics and Cultural Politics".[234] According to Santhosh. S, the elite left intelligentsia has constructed and appropriated the history of modernism and modernity in India for their own interests while dislocating the constitutive role that the subaltern community has in this historical process. In order to democratise the field of cultural production, the author called for an urgent critical dismantling of these frameworks, since the established canons "further normalize the normative notion that the upper caste/class (male) intelligentsias are the sole proprietors of modernity and modernism".[235] In this respect, while emphasising that it was beyond the scope of the paper to use Bourdieu's research methods to prove the reality of these claims, he did cite the example of the book *When Was Modernism* by Geeta Kapur. This influential publication barely includes one or two examples of subaltern and minority art practitioners, contributing to the normalisation of unequal power relations.[236] Against this, Santhosh. S contended that subalterns in India are not just integral to modernity – despite often being considered marginal – but also are the most paradigmatic carriers of its process. As an example of subaltern aesthetics, he argued that the works of artist Ramkinkar Baij best embody the paradoxical condition of modernisms in Indian art, which I shall discuss further in Chapter Six in relation to the *Santhal Family* exhibition.

In the context of the symposium *Elective Affinities, Constitutive Differences,* it is relevant to further highlight criticisms directed towards the progressive (left-wing) intellectuals in India. Among the points raised were: ignoring regional inequalities, eluding hegemonic positions in the domestic sphere and solely focusing their critique against Western and neoliberal global hegemony. As Santhosh. S contended, the liberal intellectuals "have evaded crucial questions related to the dominance of the neo-colonialist, upper-caste intelligentsia in the

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[234] I am grateful to Parul Dave Mukherji for passing me a copy of this paper, which is included in the forthcoming book *Influx: Contemporary Art in Asia,* edited by Parul Dave Mukherji, Kavita Singh and Naman P. Ahuja, London: Sage Publications.

[235] Santhosh. S, "Mapping the Trajectories of Minoritarian Aesthetics and Cultural Politics", in Parul Dave Mukherji, Kavita Singh and Naman P. Ahuja (eds.), *Op. Cit.,* London: Sage Publications (forthcoming).

[236] As pointed out by Santhosh. S, Geeta Kapur refers to Ramkinkar Baij, although in the lines of "the intrepid subaltern from Santiniketan". Geeta Kapur, *Op. Cit.*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2000, p.271.

sphere of culture by targeting globalization alone as their point of attack".[237] Although such judgements were expressed in general terms, they were addressed indirectly to The Biennale Society, whose members are clearly part of the cultural elite in the country. In this regard, curator Nancy Adajania discussed the society in similar terms and criticisms, although she focused more on the logic of biennales than on subaltern politics. For Adajania, "in a country like India the distributive method will work better than a model like a biennale on and for Delhi".[238] This proposal to organise smaller and more intimate events distributed all over the country was one of the most recurrent counter-proposals iterated by my interviewees when I asked them about the hypothetical feasibility of the biennale, along with the call to establish instead a public museum of contemporary art.

Overall, the paradox carried by the conference title infused the whole debate. At the end of the symposium, criticisms of biennales and the problem of how to establish an Asia biennale and to give exclusivity to 'Asia' and to certain narratives of 'India' as geographical or cultural categories began to unpick the very premises of the biennale. As Geeta Kapur's closing address noted: "We seem to have talked ourselves out of the idea [of a Delhi Biennale]".[239] This self-reflexive thought was foreboding of the future of the Delhi Biennale, in part due to the restlessness of critique surrounding the proposed exhibition – where attention was drawn not only to the hegemonic North, but also to hegemonic regional or national manifestations of the South.

4.4- Conclusion

Biennales, although not beyond a position of vexed interest, have the potential to locate a city or region on the world art map, to engage local artists with international art circuits, to establish non-hegemonic exchanges and to built up infrastructures. In order to do so, it has proved imperative to establish alliances between governmental units, private funding bodies, local institutions and the art community. The inability of The Biennale Society to achieve such alliances shaped the ultimate non-realisation of the exhibition, amplifying the existent tension between the group's ideals and their actual surrounding circumstances.

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[237] Santhosh. S, "Mapping the Trajectories of Minoritarian Aesthetics and Cultural Politics", in Parul Dave Mukherji, Kavita Singh and Naman P. Ahuja (eds.), *Op. Cit.,* London: Sage Publications (forthcoming).

[238] Interview with Nancy Adajania. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.

[239] Beth Citron, report on "Elective Affinities, Constitutive Differences: Contemporary Art in Asia", *Art India Magazine*, 2007, 12(2), pp. 35-38.

In the 2000s, when The Biennale Society proposed the establishment of a Delhi Biennale, the group wanted to create an exhibition platform to raise the public profile of contemporary Indian art in the country and internationally, in line with global South politics and as opposed to present art market hegemony. The impetus to establish a new biennale envisioned creating an alternative to the India Triennale, an increasingly institutionalised and bureaucratised exhibition that was highly criticised at that time for its anachronistic format in the context of globalisation and contemporary art. As such, The Biennale Society, framed against the 1990s economic liberal system, built up a theoretical discourse that challenged the India Triennale. Paradoxically, though, simultaneously the group was questioned by the art community in India for being an elite foundation which was unfavourably compared with the democratic foundation of the Triennale. Ultimately, The Biennale Society questioned itself for its inability to materialise an international biennale. This series of critiques not only drew attention to the global North and the art market hegemony but also to the challenges and hegemonic positions within the local. Finally, it is important to note that the experience put forward by The Biennale Society was crucial in transforming a utopian mandate into a pragmatic project of biennale in India. This was the case with the opening of the first Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2012, reiteratively publicised as the first biennale in India, underlying its significance in overcoming that stage where biennales in India were debated but not realised.

In sum, the discussions and multiple positions towards the proposed Delhi Biennale reflected on how modernity circulates through regional and local spaces to produce the heterogeneous disjunctures of globalisation, as suggested by Appadurai.[240] It is important to be aware of the asymmetrical flows and power relations existent in these positions and how the myth of the region and the nation as a unified monoculture is not tenable. As such, acknowledging the multiplicity and mobility of centres and the increase of inequalities both globally and locally, The Biennale Society strived to lead "outwards", challenging the hegemony of the North while questioning its practical consequences in and from the South. In line with this, in Part III I shall prioritise the practice of curators from elsewhere and the role of travelling exhibitions, given that in Chapters Three and Four, I have considered the practice of curators in India and biennales, contemplating in this way a wider spectrum of curatorial practices related to contemporary art in India.

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[240] Arjun Appadurai, *Op. Cit.*, 1996.

PART III

INDIAN CONTEMPORARY ART ON THE MOVE

5- Flows of Exhibitions and Models of Transcultural Curating and Belonging

Contemporary Indian art has an important presence in global art institutions, with many museums and art spaces all over the world presenting major exhibitions dedicated to art in India. At the same time, the mobility of Indian contemporary artists and curators has achieved worldwide circulation to unprecedented levels. Such global circuits of Indian art help shape the dynamics of contemporary art display within India and elsewhere. In this chapter I provide a comprehensive mapping of exhibitions of contemporary Indian art as they have been mobilised in a global frame, from the 1990s to 2010. This period coincides with the emergence of India as a key player in the global art scene and the rise of the domestic economy under neoliberal trajectories. However, the global art market boom and the rise of exhibitions worldwide have not often been considered together, or, if so, have been dealt with in a tangential way. As critic and curator Ranjit Hoskote has pointed out, "the global attention contemporary Indian art has received in recent years has been focused mainly on the boom in the Indian art market".[241]

Thus, to broaden this field of inquiry, I examine the politics and possibilities of transcultural curating. I analyse how transcultural strategies might establish platforms that open up cross-cultural dialogues. I also remain attentive to how such collaborations might paradoxically work to reinforce the very borders and assumptions they seek to overcome. In this regard, I draw attention to issues of cultural diplomacy, marketing strategies, global expectations to showcase Indian art, and the uneven exhibition flows underpinning the boom of Indian art display. I demonstrate how transcultural curating of Indian contemporary art is carried out through different exhibition strategies, simultaneously oscillating from blockbuster art shows to more experimental art exhibitions. Regarding blockbuster art shows, these exhibitions privilege "usual suspect" artists, often framed by national discourses. Experimental exhibitions, on the other hand, are produced in dialogue with the region's own position and terms, exceeding the borders of a national survey show. By analysing the curatorial policies and practices of such exhibitions, drawing on exhibition texts and original interviews with curators, artists and art practitioners, I identify two main models of transcultural curating: an early stage of transcultural curating that privileges the idea of 'new' Indian art in a global frame, and a second, more interrogative stage, which privileges

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[241] Ranjit Hoskote, "Singposting the Indian Highway" in Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran (eds.), *Indian Highway,* Cologne: Koenig Books 2008, p.190.

the practices of collaboration and critical dialogues. This latter model problematises static forms of cultural dialogue and belonging and opens up new possibilities for collaboration and exchange through fields of curatorial flows.

5.1- Mapping flows of exhibitions in the global scene

In order to get an in-depth sense of the growing presence and importance of contemporary Indian art in global exhibitions and to understand the reasons behind it, I begin this chapter by analysing the expanded flows of exhibitions worldwide and where exactly these shows have taken place. The concept of flows refers to exhibition movements and their constellation of ideas, agents, objects and sites, all of which are on the move in what Arjun Appadurai refers to as the globalised artscape.[242] In my mapping of exhibition flows, although I consider some specific exhibitions that have happened in the most immediate present, the main time frame contemplated here is from 1990 to 2010 (see Table 5.1). The decision to conclude at 2010 allows us to examine a timeline of two decades, allowing the observation of general trends, changes and movements that have taken place. Moreover, I consider mainly group exhibitions and some selected solo shows, prioritising exhibitions held at major art institutions and independent art spaces. Exhibitions held in commercial spaces and private galleries have not been considered here; nor have biennales, as I have already analysed them in Part II.

While taking into account flows of exhibitions all over the world, I select European exhibitions and examples to analyse in more depth. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the majority of exhibitions outside India in the time frame considered are concentrated in Europe and the European reception of Indian contemporary art has been recently considered in forums in India.[243] Secondly, I had the opportunity to visit *in situ* several of the exhibitions that have taken place in the last five years in the UK, France, Spain, Belgium and Germany. The European regional parameter is thus privileged in my analysis.

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[242] Arjun Appadurai, "Anxieties of Tradition in the Artscapes of Globalization", *Op. Cit.*, 1999, pp.54-57
[243] For example, in the *India Art Fair Speakers' Forum* 2012, 'Session 4: European Reception of Contemporary Indian Art', 27 January 2012, 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm. This panel was moderated by art historian and curator Deepak Ananth and included speakers such as Ranjit Hoskote - cultural theorist, poet, and independent curator, Sophie Duplaix, chief curator, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Holly Brackenbury, director, Indian Art, Sotheby's, London, and Peter Nagy, director, Nature Morte Gallery, New Delhi. The 2011 edition also had a session on 'Indian art on the international art circuit'. This session was moderated by Dinesh Vazirani, Co-Founder of Saffron Art, with the participation of Hans Ulrich Obrist, Co-Director, Serpentine Gallery, Holly Brackenbury, Deputy Director, Sotheby's, London, Jitish Kallat, Artist, and Nina Miall, Director, Haunch of Venison, London.

Table 5.1- Number of major exhibitions of Indian contemporary art elsewhere 1990-2010

COUNTRY	1990-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	TOTAL
UK	3	4	2	15	24
USA	0	4	5	7	16
ITALY	0	0	1	6	7
SPAIN	0	0	1	6	7
FRANCE	0	0	1	5	6
GERMANY	0	0	1	5	6
AUSTRALIA	1	1	3	1	6
JAPAN	2	1	1	2	6
AUSTRIA	0	0	1	3	4
NORWAY	0	0	1	3	4
NETHERLANDS	0	1	1	1	3
SWITZERLAND	0	0	1	2	3
CHINA	0	0	0	3	3
SWEDEN	0	0	0	3	3
SOUTH KOREA	0	0	0	2	2
SINGAPORE	0	1	0	1	2
CANADA	0	0	2	0	2
BELGIUM	0	0	0	2	2
IRELAND	0	0	1	1	2
HUNGARY	0	1	1	0	2
PERU	0	1	0	0	1
MEXICO	0	0	1	0	1
PORTUGAL	0	0	1	0	1
FINLAND	0	0	0	1	1
RUSSIA	0	0	0	1	1
DENMARK	0	0	0	1	1
JORDAN	0	0	0	1	1
SOUTH AFRICA	0	0	0	1	1
VIETNAM	0	0	0	1	1
NEW ZEALAND	0	0	0	1	1
BRAZIL	0	0	0	1	1
UKRAINE	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	6	14	25	77	122

As Table 5.1 indicates, exhibitions of Indian contemporary art have significantly increased in numbers during the twenty years analysed.[244] Regarding the number of exhibitions in these two decades, the proportion of shows progressively doubled in each of the first three sub-periods considered (1990-1995: six exhibitions; 1996-2000: fourteen exhibitions; and 2001-2005: twenty-five exhibitions), peaking in the last five years under discussion, 2006-2010, when the number of exhibitions trebled from the preceding sub-period (2001-2005: twenty-five exhibitions; 2006-2010: seventy-seven exhibitions). It is also important to note how in the first six years considered, 1990-1995, just three countries held major exhibitions of contemporary Indian art (the UK, Australia and Japan). By contrast, in the last five years, 2006-2010, twenty-seven countries displayed major shows of contemporary art in India in places as diverse as Turin, Seoul, Philadelphia, Johannesburg and London. The enormous rise of more than seventy-five per cent both in number of exhibitions and multiplicity of locations can be explained in parallel with India's domestic transformations and the impact these have had globally. Again, as demonstrated in relation to Indian artists' participation in biennale circuits, one cannot ignore the impact of a marketable art explosion on a certain percentage of curatorial interest, and the phenomenon of commercially driven exhibitions under neoliberalism.

However, from 1990 to 2010, the number of shows did not simply rise: they also expanded into new regions. But how globalising are these exhibition flows? Upon closer examination of Figure 5.1, we see a concentration of exhibitions in the global North. This demonstrates the uneven showcasing of Indian contemporary art worldwide, with marked asymmetry between the numbers of exhibitions held in the global North and the far smaller numbers in the global South. This asymmetry suggests an interdependent relation between curatorial practices and their positions relative to the centres of power and symbolic capital; a considerable number of exhibitions are located in the hegemonic global North, which often has assimilated the regions of the South in international exhibition circuits.[245]

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[244] Table 5.1 "Number of major exhibitions elsewhere 1990-2010" is based on the homonymous Chronology included in Appendix B.I, pp. 178-186.

[245] Curator and critic Geeta Kapur has long contended about the hegemony of the North and the art market under globalisation. See Geeta Kapur, "Globalisation and Culture", *Third Text*, 39, 1997, pp. 21-38.

Figure 5.1- Map of exhibitions of Indian contemporary art in the global scene, 1990-2010

To unpack these findings further, I will now consider the case of the UK, which has an overwhelming dominance in Table 5.1. Curiously, the UK, and London in particular, has been pointed out as a place where contemporary art in India has *not* received sufficient attention. For instance, the curator Hans Ulrich Obrist from the Serpentine Gallery in London stated in an interview I conducted in 2008 that "all the other European big cities have had many shows - Milan has had three, Paris has had two, in France there have been many Indian shows and in Germany there have been shows all over, Stuttgart, Berlin - but not in London".[246] Three years later, art historian and critic Emilia Terracciano also noted "more recently, Paris has been much more receptive than London, which still shows little enthusiasm for showcasing the former colony's contemporary art".[247] Yet, these perceptions do not equate with exhibition history in London and the UK, which accounts for 20 per cent

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[246] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.
[247] Emilia Terracciano, "Centre Pompidou's Indian Excursus", *Modern Painters,* July 2011, p. 15.

of total exhibitions of Indian contemporary art worldwide. The UK has had fifteen exhibitions from 2006 to 2010, with twenty-four in total from 1990 to 2010. Of these, London held eight exhibitions from 2006 to 2010, with thirteen in total during the two decades analysed. Paradoxically, even if it might seem the opposite, in both the UK and London the majority of exhibitions were concentrated from 1990 to 2010.

The mistaken impression that London has not been receptive enough to Indian contemporary art can be explained in part by the aim of some art institutions to promote themselves as "the first to showcase it", as the Serpentine Gallery did in London in 2008. The reinforcement of this constructed novelty can be read in line with an easily consumable approach of institutional hype and marketing rhetoric. As I will discuss further in the next section, such a strategy of 'newness' forms part of the curating model "New Indian Art in a Global Framework". Another of the possible reasons is an ambivalent approach towards showcasing contemporary art in India, either in dialogue or in avoidance of the fact that it is a former colony, a point which Terracciano pointed out indirectly and to which I will return and analyse further through the *Indian Highway* and *Santhal Family* exhibition case studies in Chapter Six.

However, it should be noted that recent shows in London have not been promoted within a governmental cultural policy endorsed through a wider diplomatic strategy to strengthen the links with India: arguably, a framework which heightens a sense of public attention. By contrast, this has been increasingly the case with some cities in Europe. In the last five years, countries like Spain, France and Germany have presented major exhibitions of Indian contemporary art in the frame of state cultural programmes focusing on India. The apparent greater receptiveness of cities like Madrid, Paris or Berlin can be explained within the temporal concentration of exhibitions during these exchange programmes.

Regarding the way in which Indian contemporary art has been exhibited in response to governmental cultural diplomatic exchanges, it is necessary to correlate these exhibitions with political and economic agendas under the umbrella of global mercantilism. In these cases, art has become a tool to strengthen diplomatic and cultural traffic in order to benefit economic trade and bilateral relations. In the case of global exhibitions of Indian contemporary art, there has been a tendency to concentrate them around 'Years of India'. This explains why Spain is among the top positions in Table 5.1 although the ties and cultural

relations between both countries were almost non-existent in the past. In fact, of the seven exhibitions in Spain, six correspond to the period around 2008-2009 coinciding with the celebration of the Year of Spain-India in 2008 when India was the invited country in ARCO in Madrid in 2009.[248] Since 2010, there have been almost no further exhibitions of Indian contemporary art in the country. In 2010-2011 this 'celebratory year' took place in France, which held the Year of India in France with a large number of exhibitions and cultural events, the most prestigious being the *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…* exhibition at the Centre Pompidou in 2011.[249] The years 2011-2013 saw a similar initiative by the German government, marking the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries since India's independence.[250] On this account, let us remain attentive to the fact that Table 5.1 considers a time frame from 1990 to 2010. If 2011 and 2012 were included, France and Germany would occupy position three and four respectively, given the increase in exhibitions in both countries during these celebratory years.

Along with the concentration of exhibitions in particular years and locations, especially in Western Europe, the increased number of countries that have had just one or two exhibitions in the twenty years analysed is also significant, corresponding to fifty-six per cent of the total. To a large extent, this can be explained by the fact that some countries, such as Russia, Portugal and Mexico, held a single major independent exhibition, somehow meeting the global expectation to showcase Indian contemporary art. In these cases, once the exhibition is over, there have been no further initiatives, either governmental or independent, to build up longer and more solid collaborations and dialogues. Regarding Table 5.1, lastly, it is important to note that the Indian government has not reciprocated the exchange of Indian contemporary art in the global scene. As cultural theorist Rustom Bharucha has noted, "the Indian state has not matched this cultural investment [in

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[248] *PANORAMA: INDIA* took place from 11 to 16 February in 2009 in ARCO – the International Contemporary Art Fair in Madrid. Curated by Bose Krishnamachari, the programme included roughly a dozen galleries and the works of close to fifty Indian artists. Along with *PANORAMA: INDIA*, Shaheen Merali, Jyotindra Jain and Spanish curators Juan Guardiola, Menene Gras and Luisa Ortínez rounded off the spotlight on India with a series of elaborate exhibitions, film seasons and events at major museums and art centres in Madrid.

[249] Along with the massive exhibition *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…* at the Centre Pompidou, other major museums, art centres and private galleries in Paris held exhibitions related to contemporary art in India and diasporic communities in 2011. Bharti Kher, Sudarshan Shetty and Zarina Hashmi, among others, exhibited in art galleries in Paris, Rina Banerjee had a solo show at Musée Guimet and Anish Kapoor created a temporary, site-specific installation at Monumenta 2011.

[250] In 2011-2012, Germany celebrated the "Year of Germany in India", followed by the "Days of India in Germany" celebration in 2012-2013. See website *Germany and India: Infinite Opportunities* for a detailed programme of events: http://www.germany-and-india.com/ [Last accessed: 15 August 2012].

reference to the investment carried out by governments and independent institutions elsewhere] apart from short-term opportunistic forays in the now moribund area of the 'festivalisation' of Indian culture abroad". [251] This is obvious considering that just four exhibitions elsewhere have been organised and supported by the Indian government (in Peru in 1997 and in South Africa, Vietnam and Jordan in 2008) from a total of one hundred and twenty-two exhibitions considered.

In summary, the number of exhibitions of Indian contemporary art outside India significantly increased from 1990 to 2010. Even so, and despite claims that globalisation increases, widens and equalises interconnections worldwide, a quantitative analysis on the mobility of shows of Indian contemporary art in the global scene demonstrates a strong concentration of exhibitions in the global North. This can be explained according to the fake universalism pointed out by Bourdieu, referring to the uneven global art circulation that in reality serves only the interests of the dominant. [252] Furthermore, there is a remarkable correlation between the rise in exhibitions and the art market boom. There has been a growing interest in emergent geopolitical entities, like India, by the centres of power of the global North, mainly in Western Europe and the US, although, as shown by the exhibitions held in these countries, the interest is shared by Japan and Australia. In turn, this framing has reinforced political and economic hierarchies between India and the West, given the centrality of funding and availability of resources in the global North, which still retain the major power institutional structures despite the increase of circuits and art centres in the global South and East. [253]

However, in recent years, it should be noted that new parameters have arisen, establishing new forms and potentialities of exchange and agency. In the case of private institutions in India, which have built up and sustained contemporary art infrastructures in the country, there have been some collaborations with institutions elsewhere, challenging forms of power relations and contributing to strengthen the multidirectionality of exhibitions flows

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[251] Rustom Bharucha, "Cultural Exchange and Civil Society in Asia: A Perspective From India", *South Asia Journal for Culture*, 2, 2008, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Available at *Diaaalogue,* Asia Art Archive, June 2010: http://www.aaa.org.hk/Diaaalogue/Details/847# [Last accessed: 17 August 2012].

[252] Pierre Bourdieu, "For a scholarship with Commitment", *Op. Cit.*, [2001], p. 21.

[253] Rustom Bharucha, "Cultural Exchange and Civil Society in Asia: A Perspective From India", *Op. Cit.*, 2008. Available at *Diaaalogue,* Asia Art Archive, June 2010:
http://www.aaa.org.hk/Diaaalogue/Details/847# [Last accessed: 17 August 2012]

characteristic of the artscape.[254] For example, FICA (Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art) in New Delhi has collaborated with Iniva and the Serpentine Gallery in London, and the Creative India Foundation in Hyderabad has been supporting Indian sculptors to create new commissioned works, attend international residency programmes and participate in international exhibitions in Australia, the UK, the US, Canada and Sweden.[255] Likewise, since 2010, several exhibitions of Indian contemporary art have taken place not just in locations in the West or traditional centres of power like Japan but increasingly all over Asia, organised by local curators from China, South Korea and Indonesia, among others. These exhibitions, such as *Place·Time·Play: Contemporary Art from the West Heavens to the Middle Kingdom,* an India-China cross-cultural exchange exhibition curated by Chaitanya Sambrani in Shanghai in 2010 as part of the *West Heavens Project* commissioned and directed by Johnson Chang Tsong-zung, resulted from the supporting systems and art patronage of inter-Asian exchanges.[256] These exchanges diminish the centrality of Western curating – and progressively, even funding – and have further diversified the multiple directions and interactions of cultural exchanges in the global art scene.

Finally, to conclude this initial mapping, it is important to emphasise the multiplicity of directions of artistic and curatorial flows as well as to place the global in an entangled dialogue with the local, independently of the location of both positions. To be specific, positions are not fixed but interchangeable and mobile. As sociologist John Urry has stated, "multiple mobilities become central to the structuring of inequality within contemporary 'disorganized' societies".[257] First, it is necessary to emphasise that the positioning of artworks, artists and curators from India is modified on the move. Positions are not fixed but

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[254] Arjun Appadurai, "Anxieties of Tradition in the Artscapes of Globalization", *Op. Cit.*, 1999, pp. 54-57.

[255] See FICA (Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art) website http://www.ficart.org/Homepage.htm and Creative India Foundation website http://www.creative-india.org/ for a detailed programme. [Last accessed: 15 August 2012]

[256] In ancient Chinese Buddhist texts, India was referred to as the "West Heavens". The *West Heavens Project*, commissioned and directed by Johnson Chang Tsong-zung, is an example of India-China art collaborations. The exhibition *Place·Time·Play: Contemporary Art from the West Heavens to the Middle Kingdom,* curated by Chaitanya Sambrani, was part of this project and took place in Shanghai from 30 October to 20 December 2010. For a detailed programme of *West Heavens Project* and "*Place · Time · Play*" exhibition see the website of http://westheavens.net/en/ [Last accessed: 17 August 2012]. For more information about supporting systems and art patronage of inter-Asian exchanges see the video "Support Systems. Contemporary Currents: Two Conversations" that records the session "Support Systems: Art Patronage in India and China". Organised by Asia Art Archive, it took place on the 27 January 2012, part of the India Art Fair Speakers' Forum. Available at: http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/CollectionOnline/SpecialCollectionItem/3142 [Last accessed: 17 August 2012].

[257] John Urry, *Mobilities,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007, p. 186.

are part of on-going open processes where differences are encountered and negotiated and new links and forms of belonging, or inequalities, arise. As art historian Kavita Singh suggests, "in these many years into the era of global visibility, the enactment of Indian-ness is not just a formula to be followed by artists, but has itself become a field for them to explore"[258] – and to contest, one should add.

Second, the greater mobility of Indian contemporary art in the global scene is in counterpoint to a move inward, with an increased number of exhibitions of global art from elsewhere taking place in India. The flux outwards is still considerably more affluent than the flux inwards. Damien Hirst's preview of 'Beautiful Inside My Head Forever' at the Oberoi Hotel in New Delhi in 2008[259], Julian Opie's solo show at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, in 2009, and more recently Yoko Ono's solo show at Vadhera Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2012 are a few examples of a reciprocated motion, which also exemplifies the role of the art market in creating infrastructures and exhibition platforms in the country. Even the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in New Delhi held a retrospective exhibition of the work of Anish Kapoor in 2011[260] and a solo show by Rebecca Horn in 2012.[261]

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[258] Kavita Singh, "Where in the World. Export", in Kavita Singh, Jaya Neupaney and Shweta Wahi (eds.), *Op. Cit*., p.7.

[259] Show hosted by Sotheby's before the work was auctioned in London in 15 and 16 September 2008, for the first time bypassing the galleries and selling directly to the public.

[260] The Anish Kapoor exhibition was organised jointly by the National Gallery of Modern Art India, the British Council and London-based Lisson Gallery, in association with Louis Vuitton and the Tata Group, and took place from December 2010 to February 2011. Alongside the exhibition at the NGMA in Delhi, part of the solo Anish Kapoor exhibition was held at Mehboob Film Studios, in Mumbai. The fact that Lisson Gallery, which represents the artist, co-organised these exhibitions exemplifies a collaborative initiative between the public and private sector, and the institutional and commercial interests of these exhibitions were evident in the whole project. As stated in the press release for the exhibition at the NGMA: "Kapoor's unique style and Indian heritage have combined to make him one of the most engaging and distinctive artists in the world and the exhibition will be the first ever showcase of his work in the country of his birth". By contrast, British High Commissioner Richard Stagg affirmed on the opening day: "it [the exhibition] is one of biggest manifestation of British culture in India since 1947". Ironically Anish Kapoor, who declined to participate in the seminal exhibition *The Other Story,* curated by Rasheed Araeen in London's Hayward Gallery in 1989, since he refused to be considered Indian and to be framed within the British Black and Asian movement, instrumentally came back to his homeland to represent somehow an international identity of India's now globalised country, not exempt from the commercial benefits, especially taking into account the potential of the country's emerging art market. See NGMA press release for the Anish Kapoor exhibition: http://ngmaindia.gov.in/ce_anish-kapoor-exh.asp [Last accessed: 28 December 2010]. The comment of British High Commissioner Richard Stagg stated as it appeared in the press *IANS, Indo-Asia News Service,* 27 November 2010. For more information on the exhibition *The Other Story,* see Jean Fisher, "The Other Story and the Past Imperfect", *Tate Papers*, 2, Autumn 2009. Available at: http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/other-story-and-past-imperfect [Last accessed: 25 March 2010]

[261] The Rebecca Horn exhibition was inscribed within the cultural exchange programme: Germany + India Year: Infinite Opportunities 2011-2012 and took place in 2012.

Last but not least, the inclusion of artworks, artists and curators in global exhibitions also means exclusion. As artist Nalini Malani pointed out in an interview, "we are only global in the sense of free trade: we are not global in the sense of culture or in terms of humans being able to move around. I mean, the trouble I have getting a visa – it's not funny, I hate it".[262] Other artists like Probir Gupta and Sheila Makhijani also pointed out to me the problem with visas.[263] These testimonies refer not only to growing inequalities on the move but also to an easier circulation of art goods, services and capital associated with neoliberalism rather than flows of artists, who are often more constrained by borders. Furthermore, as I have already pointed out in the analysis of the biennale realm in Part II, one should question which practitioners are framed and included as 'Indian artists' in exhibitions in the global scene and which ones are excluded, including the subaltern artists who are repeatedly excluded. On this point, in the local scene, as already suggested in my previous chapters, it is important to query which artists are considered 'contemporary artists' and which frames of action belong to privileged groups, most often chosen to exhibit in the aforementioned global sphere. The issue of who is included and excluded in these cartographies of artistic and curatorial flows, both in the local and the global frame, is therefore a response to curatorial judgments and art criticism interwoven with political and economic interests underpinned by national ideologies and the forces of globalisation.

5.2- Movement and models of transcultural curating

In this section I shall analyse and problematise further the dynamics and models of transcultural curating of Indian contemporary art that I have identified through my empirical research, and how these dynamics and models correlate with multiple curatorial and artistic flows. To begin with, I discuss the politics and possibilities of transcultural curating. Subsequently, I examine how transcultural curating of Indian contemporary art is carried out through different exhibition strategies, emphasising throughout the multiple phases and movements that have shaped these existing curatorial models.

As is well established in the fields of art history and curatorial theory, the 1989 exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* in Paris marked the beginning of institutional multiculturalism, which interpreted culture as 'ethnicity' and supported artists through exhibition opportunities and

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[262] Interview with Nalini Malani. Held at her house. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.
[263] Interview with Probir Gupta. Held at his studio. New Delhi, 8 November 2008. Recorded. Interview with Sheila Makhijani. Held at her house. New Delhi, 12 November 2008. Recorded.

funding as far as they met existing expectations of their cultures.[264] During the 1990s, with the proliferation of global art exhibitions, institutional multiculturalism was framed by the rules of the centres of power and curators in the global North, mainly Europe and North America, which established mostly unidirectional flows. The 1990s multiculturalism evaded questions of hierarchical power relations and inequalities, elided the role of difference in processes of exchange and cultural transformation and reinforced segregation, since multiculturalism promoted cultural diversity as co-existence, on the terms of the dominant culture, but not genuine exchange or dialogue.

Regarding the idea of transculturality, it considers cultures today as constituted by new and complex forms of entanglement and extensive interconnections, beyond national and cultural borders and moving "away from the concentration in polarity of the own and the foreign to an attentiveness for what might be common and connective".[265] Deploying a commitment to global South politics, media and cultural theorists Scott McQuire and Nikos Papastergiadis have argued in favour of transculturality to map horizontal forms of agency, dialogues and networks in the South-South axis. According to them, horizontal transculturality provides "a matrix for new modes of inclusion and forms of collaboration that might counterpoint the extension of commodity production into the interstices of everyday life".[266] As such, one can argue that transculturality potentially challenges the difficulties and limitations raised by institutional multiculturalism. However, given the continuing asymmetries of exhibition flows pointed out in the previous section, it is necessary to question whether institutional multiculturalism has survived the turn of the millennium and prevails in present times hidden under the name of the transcultural.

It is my contention that in the new millennium the situation has changed, although there remains an asymmetry of power relationships in terms of direction of flows, as well as class,

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[264] *Magiciens de la Terre* took place at the Musée National d'Art Moderne Centre Georges Pompidou and Grande Halle, Parc de la Villette, Paris, 1989, and was curated by Jean-Hubert Martin. Jyotindra Jain was part of the advisory committee and participated in the exhibition colloquiuim. Before the exhibition opened, Jain wrote an essay on *Magiciens* for *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne,* issue no. 28. This edition of *Cahiers* was republished in English in *Third Text*, 6, 1989. See Jyotindra Jain, "Ganga Devi: Tradition and Expression in Madhubani Painting", *Op. Cit.*, 1989, pp. 43-50; Sean Cubitt, "In the Beginning: *Third Text* and the Politics of Art" in Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubitt and Ziauddin Sardar (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2002, pp. 1-8 and Rasheed Araeen, "Our Bauhaus, others´ mudhouse", *Op. Cit.*, 1989, pp. 3-14.

[265] Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today", in Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (eds.), *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, London: Sage, 1999, p. 201.

[266] Scott McQuire and Nikos Papastergiadis (eds.), "Introduction" in *Empires, Ruins + Networks: The Transcultural Agenda in Art*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005, p. 10.

race, gender and sexuality, both in global and local contexts where dominant groups retain a prevalent position. In the curatorial field, on the one hand, a growing number of artists, curators and cultural practitioners from the global South are active worldwide, positioning themselves and working in collaboration with artists, curators and institutions all over the world, gesturing towards dialogical and multidirectional flows and blurring the hierarchical dualism that prevailed in the previous decade. On the other hand, as pointed out above, the centres of power in the North still retain a hegemonic position that correlates with the centrality of capital and the major concentration of exhibition flows.

In relation to transcultural curating of Indian contemporary art, art critic and curator Geeta Kapur alerts us to the risk of being over-triumphant. As she states: "in a globalised world, terms such as transnational and transcultural have greater purchase, but let me add: there is little that is contestatory about 'trans' – it covers gaps and differences, thereby creating an illusion of a continuity-in-difference... The point to reiterate is that discourse is now so mobile as to be slippery and that one must learn to enunciate both firmly and flexibly in order to be heard".[267] By contrast, curator and cultural theorist Ranjit Hoskote advocates for a "transcultural experience as the only certain basis of contemporary artistic experience".[268] The dichotomy of these viewpoints correlates with their distinct theoretical and curatorial propositions discussed in Chapter Three. Once again, this exemplifies their various positions in difference and from difference as well as the paradoxes of the present, and thus, of transculturality and globalisation.

I argue here that, whilst acknowledging the perils of transcultural curating, which risk legitimising centres of power under the fallacy of an even globalisation, it is equally important to note the fields of possibilities that can arise from it.[269] Transcultural curating has the potential to build up collaborative, dialogic, hybrid and critical practices that gesture towards democratic exchanges. This differs from a general simplistic assumption that any transcultural collaboration leads to a true dialogue, in the same way that the perils

[267] Natasha Ginwala, "Interview with Geeta Kapur. On the Curatorial in India", *Afterall Online,* 12 July 2011. Available at: http://www.afterall.org/online/geeta-kapur-part1 [Last accessed: 17 August 2012].
[268] Ranjit Hoskote, "Singposting the Indian Highway" in Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2008, p.192.
[269] Curator Gerardo Mosquera has pointed out both the problematic nature and the potentiality of transcultural curating. See Gerardo Mosquera, "Some Problems in Transcultural Curating" in Jean Fisher (ed.), *Op. Cit.*, 1994, pp. 105-112 for an account of the critiques. For an argumentation on its possibilities see Gerardo Mosquera, "Alien Own/Own Alien: Globalization and Cultural Difference", in Nikos Papastergiadis (ed.), *Op. Cit.*, 2003, pp.19-29.

imbricated with transculturality do not blur its potential agency. Thus, taking into account both the possibilities and challenges of transcultural curating, I shall discuss this further through the curatorial models and frameworks that I have identified: "New Indian Art in a Global Framework" and "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues". These two models are shaped by exhibitions of Indian contemporary art on the move. In particular, I shall examine how these models relate to collaborative art and curatorial practices, mobile belongings and critical dialogues, or if they instead foreground hegemonic power relations from the North.

5.2.1- New Indian Art in a Global Framework

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, the number of exhibitions of contemporary art in India globally has multiplied since the new millennium. *Chalo!; Horn Please; Paris-Delhi-Bombay...; India Art Now* and *New Indian Art* are just a few of the titles of exhibitions that have taken place in the last ten years or so in Europe and North America. As some of these names already imply, through their use of exclamation marks and their designations of the 'new' and the 'now', there is a marketing rhetoric at play in these exhibitions' titles, lauding Indian art as both timely and commanding. Furthermore, beyond these bombastic appellations, the contents of these exhibitions also express a desire to showcase at a glance how contemporary art practices re-examine and question India's rapid transformations in the global age. Common themes such as the transformations of the cities, demographic shifts from rural lands to urban metropolises and the emergence of the country as a global power, along with retrospective readings of the modern from the contemporary, encapsulate and problematise how contemporary Indian art perceives, represents and positions itself through an expanding number of exhibitions worldwide.

This first model of transcultural curating, which I call "New Indian Art in a Global Framework", is characterised by survey exhibitions that showcase the transformations of the country through defined sections. These sections comprise several fields like religion, society, politics, sexuality, environment or history and draw on binary wordplays in catalogue texts such as global/local, urban/rural or tradition/modernity; altogether assembled from a simplified approach to arts and cultures. This is the case in exhibitions such as *Hungry God: Indian Contemporary Art* (2006, Beijing), curated by June Y. Gwak; *India of the Senses* (2006, Paris), curated by Hervé Mikaeloff and Deepak Ananth, and *India*

Revealed (2007, Naples), curated by Antonio Manfredi,[270] which, as their titles imply, comprise a certain mythification of religion and exoticising view. This curatorial model mostly encompasses the practices from a growing number of curators from outside India curating Indian contemporary art after a brief period of research and some visits to the country without any particular engagement with its history and politics, as my interviewees have pointed out. However, initially some Indian curators active worldwide also engaged with this approach, meeting Western expectations of Indian cultures as demanded by the hosting institutions. This is the case in exhibitions such as *Rediscovering the Roots: Contemporary Indian Art* (1997, Lima) curated by Laxma Goud and *India Awakens. Under the Banyan Tree* (2010, Vienna) curated by Alka Pande. In these cases, institutions have instrumentalised exhibitions, artists and curators as a way to assimilate and control the circulation of non-Western art in the Western market without addressing or changing the basic premises and attitudes of their central cultural authority.[271]

The exhibitions belonging to the model "New Indian Art in a Global Framework", despite intending to build up transcultural platforms and sustainable dialogues, correspond to the concept of institutional multiculturalism previously discussed. On that account, their lack of critical thinking on globalisation and neoliberalism not only ignores hierarchies and inequalities but also elides a critical engagement with the complexities of cultural identities and differences within the global. This curatorial model is often presented within a series of exhibitions of New Art from China, Brazil, Poland, Russia, Mexico, etc. These exhibitions, from their titles to their global claim, reinforce ethnic essentialism and possibly its entertainment value without challenging the hegemony of Western curatorial attitudes or practices. In the case of India, the use of "new art from" denotes a novel construct that conforms to an easily consumable approach often related to the phenomenon of globalisation and the growing importance of contemporary Indian art in the market. Furthermore, the inclusion of the signifier 'India,' or its derivative 'Indian,' in almost every exhibition's title considered in this model indicates a prevailing tendency to specify nationality. Hence, one should question whether art's mobility, framed by the phenomena

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[270] "Hungry God: Indian Contemporary Art", Arario Gallery, Beijing, China; Busan Museum, Busan, Korea. Curated by June Y. Gwak. 3 September – 15 October, 2006, Beijing and 12 January - 19 February 2007, Busan. "India of the Senses", Espace Louis Vuitton, Paris, France. Curated by Hervé Mikaeloff and Deepak Ananth. 5 May - 25 August 25, 2006. "India Revealed", CAM_Casoria Contemporary Art Museum, Naples, Italy. Curated by Antonio Manfredi. 26 May – 10 July 2007.

[271] Jean Fisher, "From Primitivism to Multiculturalism. Magiciens de la Terre and The Other Story: Two Case Histories". London: Royal College of Art, 2008, p. 8. Unpublished Paper. I am grateful to Jean Fisher for passing me a copy of this paper.

of cultural globalisation, truly blurs national borders or instead reinforces and exploits them following institutional interests: this is to say, whether or not exhibitions belonging to the model "New Indian Art in a Global Framework" adhere to Arjun Appadurai's theory of transnational mobility and global cultural flows as producers of hybridisation and deterritorialisation of contemporary culture.[272]

In the case of exhibitions of Indian contemporary art elsewhere, a considerable number of Western curators and institutions have presented their practices and policies under an organising rhetoric of speed and global flows. However, the model of how the artworks are selected and exhibited fixes them within geographic boundaries. Arguably this denotes an incorporation by the hegemonic global and a reterritorialisation attitude instead of a more transformative cultural exchange. Furthermore, such curatorial constructions, based on equally constructed geopolitical borders, have linked producers and audiences across national boundaries but paradoxically have done so through a recurrent reinforcement of cultural cohesion and a certain degree of standardisation. In this regard, a recurrent concern among the artists and curators that I interviewed referred to how such curatorial approaches standardise art practices and belongings from an exotic point of view. As artist Atul Bhalla remarked, "sometimes I don't like being framed within Indian Contemporary Art. But I can't deny it – see, I am Indian, but when a curator is going to frame it within a pre-conceived notion of what India is, then I have a problem. A pre-conceived notion of India with camels, India with elephants – that becomes a problem when you only look for the exotic and do not reflect reality in terms of what is happening here".[273]

This logic can be seen at work in a selection of catalogue covers and banners from some major exhibitions in the global scene (see Figure 5.2). From this sample, two major trends in terms of how institutions in Europe and North America have promoted these shows can be identified. First, there is the use of iconic artworks by well-established artists, like Bharti Kher, Ravinder Reddy or Jitish Kallat. Second, maps, traffic and vehicles that resonate with jammed Indian roads, horns and movement are visually portrayed. Both examples mostly draw on a sense of "Indianness" that easily captures and persuades the viewer's perception on the subject and correlates with this preconceived notion of India that Atul Bhalla mentioned. Thus, it seems that a considerable number of global exhibitions of Indian

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[272] Arjun Appadurai, *Op Cit,* 1996, pp. 48-65.
[273] Interview with Atul Bhalla. Held at his house. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.

contemporary art have not diversified from this approach, considering the use of iconic artworks as cover images, and often ignoring the political nature of these works.

Figure 5.2 – A selection of catalogue covers and banners from group exhibitions of contemporary art from India in Europe and North America during the last ten years[274]

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[274] From left to right and top to bottom: *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2011; *Chalo! India: A New Era of Indian Art,* Essl Museum, Vienna, 2009; *India Moderna,* IVAM, Valencia, 2008; *Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2010; *Horn Please. Narratives on Contemporary Indian Art,* Kunstmuseum, Bern, 2007; *Edge of Desire. Recent Art in India,* Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 2004; *Subcontinent: The Indian Subcontinent in Contemporary Art,* Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, 2006; *Indian Summer: La jeune scène artistique indienne,* Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 2005; *New Narratives: Contemporary Art from India,* Chicago Cultural Centre, Chicago, 2006; *Indian Highway,* Serpentine Gallery, London, 2008; *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture,* Mukha, Antwerp, 2008 and *The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today,* Saatchi Gallery, London, 2010.

The exhibition *Chalo! India: A New Era of Indian Art* curated by Miki Akiko at the Mori Museum in 2008 in Tokyo and later exhibited at the Essl Museum in 2009 in Vienna exemplifies this tendency. Significantly, the catalogue cover of *Chalo! India* in Vienna, Figure 5.3, showcases a work by Pushpamala N. in which the feminist artist reinterprets the past – in this case Raja Ravi Verma's oleograph of the Hindu goddess Lakshmi – from a contemporary perspective. [275] From this image cover, as art historian Parul Dave Mukherji has suggested, one should question whether the cultural specificity of Pushpamala's strategies of representation is foregrounded or instead caught in a Eurocentric engagement with the postcolonial. [276] The answer reveals itself if we take a look at the online flash banner of the exhibition in the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, where the show

Figure 5.3- Catalogue cover of the exhibition *Chalo! India: A New Era of Indian Art*, held at the Essl Museum in 2009 in Vienna. Artwork depicted in the catalogue cover: Pushpamala N., *The Native Types - Lakshmi (After Oleograph from Raja Ravi Verma, Early 20th Century)*, 2001. Work made in collaboration with photographer Clare Arni.

initially took place (see Figure 5.4). In this case *Chalo! India* was shaped through an animated circulation of buses advertising the artists in the exhibition along a string of auto- and cycle-rickshaws, elephants, strollers, camels and cows. All these images moving around the exhibition's title illustrated with green, white and orange, the colours of the Indian flag, and altogether enlivened through a musical line of horns, traffic and shouting. Indeed, the exoticism that Atul Bhalla referred to.

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[275] Pushpamala N., *The Native Types - Lakshmi (After Oleograph from Raja Ravi Verma, Early 20th Century)*, 2001. Work made in collaboration with photographer Clare Arni.

[276] Parul Dave Mukherji, "Performative Mimesis: A Contemporary Retake on Indian Aesthetics by N. Pushpamala". Paper presented at the Lecture Series on Global Philosophies - Reflections and Challenges between Asia and Europe, 12 January 2012, Karl Jaspers Centre for Advanced Transcultural Studies, Heidelberg University. Available at: http://www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php?id=2174 [Last access: 15 May 2013]

Figure 5.4 – Screenshot of the animated flash banner of the exhibition *Chalo! India: A New Era of Indian Art*. Website of the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan.
http://www.mori.art.museum/english/contents/india/index.html

This curatorial model, "New Indian Art in a Global Framework", has shaped a first phase of exhibitions of Indian contemporary art in the global scene. This first phase comprises panoramic shows of Indian art encapsulated within the geopolitical devices of a standardised national construct. Arguably, this generalist approach has been dominant since the 1990s. However, a wide range of artists and curators whom I interviewed predicted that the exhibition *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…*, curated by Sophie Duplaix and Fabrice Bousteau at the Centre Pompidou in 2011 in Paris, would be the last one of the survey's shows. As one of my interviewees who took part in this exhibition pointed out confidentially:

> there is the show at the Pompidou: people say it probably will be the last of these group shows. Artists are very excited about it [being the end of survey show], because these kinds of shows… you have to understand that there are difficulties… you have to see both the pros and the cons of these shows. The Indian artists selected for these shows have been given greater visibility for their work in the place they were [exhibited] but visibility always comes with a certain gaze. So there is a lot of trauma and tragedy taking place at the same time. What happens is that it [contemporary Indian art] gets foregrounded so much and elevated a bit too much so that it starts to appear fashionable for people – it may still be critical but it appears fashionable, appears to have power. And one has to realise that it became a fashion and any fashion is going to pass.[277]

This comment clearly exemplifies the problems and unease that artists felt towards this exhibition model. One the one hand, it acknowledges the benefits this model provides, particularly the enjoyment of wider visibility while participating in international exhibitions. But on the other hand, it highlights the underlying detriments of having to meet certain expectations and the risk of becoming a temporary fashion.

When I questioned Sophie Duplaix, chief curator of contemporary collections at Centre Pompidou, about the perceived winding down of survey shows marked by *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…,* she argued that survey shows are necessary as a first stage of exhibiting non-Western art. As she commented: "I think these phases when you show a scene are also necessary, have to happen, anyway. […] In a sense this focus will not be necessary anymore because people will know through all these exhibitions what the scenes are. There is no longer 'here and there', 'very far and unknown'".[278] Significantly, in the same interview, Duplaix noted: "I am always a bit embarrassed by the idea that a subject is done. […] And giving knowledge of a new country – I mean new, not… a country to discover for a certain

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[277] Confidential interview. 2011. Recorded.
[278] Interview with Sophie Duplaix. Held at Centre Georges Pompidou. Paris, 27 May 2011. Recorded.

public – is very nice to do through the prism of art. [...] For example, in *Africa Remix* [in reference to the exhibition held at the Centre Pompidou and the Hayward Gallery in 2005], maybe our knowledge of Africa is very big because of our colonial past, so maybe we don't have to understand, we know already many things [...], but not really for India".[279] Duplaix´s comments problematically reinforce a unidirectional flow of exchange with a marked Eurocentric construct of dominance and patronisation, implying France's discovery of contemporary Indian art and a suggested, secured knowledge of (an imagined) Africa as a former colony. In contrast to this implicit sense of Eurocentric 'discovery' of new Indian art, *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…* exhibition publicly claimed in the catalogue and press release to be starting a new process of *dialogue* and *cultural exchange* between France and India. As specified in the press release: "The fruit of an unprecedented Franco-Indian collaboration, *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…* is intended to promote communication between the two cultures, establishing new and lasting links".[280] Indeed, curator Sophie Duplaix used the word 'dialogue' continuously during the interview. However, when I questioned her about the commanding cultural relativism of the exhibition and the fact that the catalogue was published only in French, defaulting the much-sought dialogue with Indian artists, Duplaix commented: "Buf, terrible question [...] There is this problem of translation, which is a basic one. Also metaphorically, but first of all in a very practical way".[281] From this, it follows that although the main objective of *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…* was to create a cross-cultural exchange, it was a clear example of institutional multiculturalism.

5.2.2- Collaborations and Critical Dialogues

Although the re-enactment of Indianness prevails in global exhibitions that I describe as the "New Indian Art in a Global Framework", another curatorial model challenges this approach. This model, which I name "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues", critically engages with social change and politics in India under globalisation, considering modern legacies while avoiding a simplified approach. This model seeks to move beyond the imperative of the national survey and its contextual frames. Both in terms of transcultural curating and critical dialogues, the "Collaborations" model has shaped a second phase of exhibitions on the move. This phase embraces curatorial propositions that are self-reflexive of historical and

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[279] *Ibidem.*

[280] *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…* Press Release. Centre George Pompidou, Paris, 25 May – 19 September 2011. Available at: http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/Details/51061 [Last accessed: 10 March 2013]

[281] Interview with Sophie Duplaix. Held at Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 27 May 2011. Recorded.

cultural specificities while expressing global concerns, instead of providing generalist contextualisation and universal claims of the local. Thus, collaborative curating provides transcultural dialogues and potentially reinforces multidirectional flows and shifts. In this respect, as art adviser, entrepreneur and collector Amrita Jhaveri envisioned when commenting on this curatorial model: "[in the future] there would not be so many big survey shows but there would be more considered shows".[282] The need to further develop the critical entanglements and collaborative aspects of this curatorial model was also pointed out to me by many of my interviewees.

Over the past decade, there has been considerable debate about artistic and curatorial collaborations and collective practices, from 'relational aesthetics' to its antagonism and critiques.[283] Recent debates on artistic and curatorial practices in India have also focused on cultural collaborations and art collectives.[284] These debates have argued about the possibilities and challenges that can arise from collaborative practices while discussing the new models for global cultural exchanges. A wide spectrum of ensembles have been considered in these discussions, from the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group that dates back to India's partition times to contemporary groups such as the Desire Machine Collective and the Samuha Artists' Collective. Overall, there seems to be a consensus about the resurgence of multidisciplinary collectives, art collaborations and alternative networks. The global need for collaborations, as cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis remarked, has led to a spontaneous shift in practices and the first truly global movement in art.[285]

Papastergiadis notes four main characteristics of collaborative practices. The first is what he calls "the space of arts", which refers to the shift in the model of institutional engagement,

[282] Interview with Amrita Jhaveri. Held at her house. Mumbai, 18 January 2011. Recorded.

[283] See Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (tr. S. Pleasance and F. Woods), Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002. For its critique see Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics", *October*, 110, 2004, pp. 51-79 and Rustom Bharucha, "The limits of the beyond: Contemporary art practice, intervention and collaboration in public spaces", *Third Text*, 21 (4), 2007, pp. 397-416.

[284] A recent issue of *Art India Magazine* under the title 'Art Collectives' focused on how artists, critics and curators come together to explore the world and respond to its uneven aspects with a shared enthusiasm. See Abhay Sardesai (ed.), *Art India Magazine,* 16(3), 2012. Also the *India Art Fair Speakers' Forum* 2012 had a session on 'New Models for International Cultural Collaboration: Insights, Best Practices, and Future Recommendations', moderated by Melissa Chiu, Director of the Asia Society Museum, New York, with the participation of Rajeev Lochan, Director of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, Yuko Hasegawa, Chief Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (MOT) and Kimberly Masteller, Jeanne McCray Beals Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.

[285] Nikos Papastergiadis, "Collaborations in Art and Society. A Global Pursuit of Democratic Dialogue", in Jonathan Harris (ed.), *Globalization and Contemporary Art,* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp.275-288.

incorporating the dynamics and elements of the museum and gallery structures and critiquing the institutional establishment from within. The second is "politics of resistance" that gesture towards building up dialogues and creative exchanges, not only responding to artistic initiatives but also shaping the communicative process. The third is "collective authorship" in the form of flexible memberships that privilege collaborations in specific projects rather than continuous associations. Finally, the fourth is the "vernacular cosmopolitan and global mobility", which poses the need to consider local civic needs alongside cross-cultural, regional and global conceptions of human rights. Although these four characteristics are wide enough to be inclusive, their point of reference primarily alludes to artistic practices and their collaborative turn. In India, this is exemplified by artists collectives like the Raqs Media Collective (founded in 1992) and artists-run spaces such as Khoj – International Artists' Association (1997 onward), both based in New Delhi, among others. Regarding curatorial practices, in line with Papastergiadis's argument, the curatorial model I call "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" also encompass this collaborative aspect and share its intrinsic characteristics. Moreover, collaborative curating related to exhibitions of contemporary art in India on the move is vital to position alternative global moves and neoliberal resistance and to sustain intellectual and critical exchanges worldwide.

Considering critical global perspectives related to the mobility of exhibitions of Indian contemporary art, some collaborations between curators and artists in India and curators and cultural practitioners from elsewhere have resulted in some of the most interesting and challenging transcultural shows in recent years. An example of this is the exhibition *Zoom! Art in Contemporary India* curated by Nancy Adajania and Luís Serpa at Culturgest in Lisbon in 2004.[286] This exhibition is included in Table 5.1, being the only show held in Portugal from 1990 to 2010 and somehow meeting the global expectation to showcase contemporary Indian art. Nevertheless, *Zoom!* challenged this conception and its expectations, consciously avoiding being a survey show. Taking as its starting point the very problem of how to contextualise an artwork from another culture, it turned this problem into a discursive approach. Thus the title *Zoom!* questions how close one needs to look at an artwork to understand its specificities, and how far one needs to go to see it within a larger context. This is to say, it goes beyond both an uncritical globalism and a narrow provincial approach, as curator Nancy Adajania explained to me.[287] The exhibition included works that could

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[286] "*ZOOM! Art in Contemporary India*", Culturgest, Lisbon, Portugal. Curators: Nancy Adajania and Luís Serpa. Apr 7 - Jun 6 2004.
[287] Interview with Nancy Adajania. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 25 November 2008. Recorded.

speak in a larger context but also in an intercultural one: from new media practices and net art to community-based practices and collaborations between metropolitan art practitioners and artists from rural areas, developing throughout a mutual dialogue. In this way, *Zoom!* encompassed the four main characteristics of collaborative curatorial and art practices pointed out by Papastergiadis, but surprisingly it did so by having to face an antagonism from within.

This can be illustrated by drawing on some personal reflections on the exhibition texts and conversations with the actors involved. While reading the *Zoom!* catalogue, I noticed the differences in tone and approach in the two curators' texts, which are independent curatorial statements. To my surprise, curator Luís Serpa's text plays with all the possible binaries that often surround the idea of India. Some of the questions posed by the text are: "How can a westerner, especially one from a former colonizing country, interpret the culture of a country that has an experience of colonialism – in this case more than that of a colonized country - without a sense of guilt? […] Ultimately, how can these facts be transmitted using local trends but within a context of global fragments?"[288] These questions are problematic, since they are addressed rhetorically but not answered with the necessary criticality and self-reflexivity. In this regard, several of the artists included in the show had already told me that curator Nancy Adajania was the one who articulated the most considered curatorial framework of the exhibition and drove its more critical approach. When I questioned Nancy Adajania about this, she contended: "That was a sad and difficult experience. The good thing about globalisation is that it opens a whole network and possibilities to meet people from all over the world, but you don't really know these people. And these people can make a lot of politically correct comments but then when you work with them you realise that they have a very exotic understanding of your cultural context. In my case I had to fight to represent the art from our country in the manner that I thought fit. I managed to do it, but it was extremely difficult".[289] As revealed in the interview, the conflicts were also based on generational and gender differences, reflecting a certain colonial nostalgia towards India of an older generation of (male) Portuguese curators.[290] Nevertheless, the exhibition *Zoom! Art in Contemporary India* belongs to the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" curatorial model, because of its content and critical approach, which

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[288] Luís Serpa, "Global Fragments / Local Trends. Art in Contemporary India", in Luís Serpa and Nancy Adajania (eds.), *ZOOM! [ART IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA]*, Lisbon: Culturgest, 2004, p. 11.
[289] Interview with Nancy Adajania. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 25 November 2008. Recorded.
[290] *Ibidem.*

established a horizontal transcultural dialogue, not capitulating to the demands to meet some Western expectations of Indian cultures.

In sum, the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" curatorial model implies the idea of working together, but essentially it is necessary to do so towards a transcultural dialogue that potentially fosters critical plural exchanges. Likewise, although I prioritise instances of working together between curators from elsewhere in collaboration with artists and curators in India in line with the main focus of this chapter, the gesture of global resistance and critique is not unique to such exchange, given that critical agency goes beyond the agents involved and their location.

5.3- Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed current developments in curating contemporary art in India on the move as shaped by cultural exchanges, migratory flows of culture and global dialogues. Taking into account contemporary art exhibitions as mobile platforms related to wider social changes taking place under globalisation, I have drawn the cartography of interrelated movements, locations and dynamics in the shows considered, demonstrating throughout a considerable increase in the number of exhibitions of Indian contemporary art in the global art scene. However, alongside the proliferation of exhibitions, I have also outlined an asymmetrical distribution of shows worldwide, which correlates with a strong phenomenon of concentration and hierarchisation of exhibitions related to the rise of the art market's interest in contemporary Indian art, and the major concentration of exhibition flows and funding possibilities by centres of power in the global North, correlated with the growing interest in India as an emergent geopolitical entity.

Furthermore, I have identified two main models of transcultural curating. The first model, which I named "New Indian Art in a Global Frame", corresponds to an early stage of transcultural curating that privileges blockbuster survey shows narrowly framed through fixed geographic boundaries and national strategies. As I demonstrated through this chapter, the majority of exhibitions belonging to this first model, despite presenting themselves as platforms that aim to establish cross-cultural dialogues, correspond to the model of institutional multiculturalism. The second model privileges the practices of collaboration and critical dialogues, establishing a more interrogative stage of transcultural

exhibitions. I referred to this type of exhibition as the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" curatorial model.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that curatorial models, frames and phases are not exclusive, absolute or static. Instead, they are contested and evolving, and can potentially be co-existent: that is, an exhibition might demonstrate aspects of both models simultaneously. In the case of exhibitions of contemporary art in India in the global scene, they seem to move between market-driven art shows framed within national survey constructions and collaborative artistic practices and curatorial strategies that contest static belongings and neoliberal global frameworks. In the next chapter, using the *Indian Highway* and *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* exhibitions as case studies, I shall discuss how these exhibitions have interwoven global moves and local shifts as well as the extent to which they have encompassed collaborative curatorial practices, plural belongings and alternative global resistance. In particular, I examine some of the multiple collaborations that these two shows encompassed and the ways in which they potentially oscillate between the two different curatorial models discussed in this chapter.

6- Indian Highway and Santhal Family

In this chapter, I examine the *Indian Highway* exhibition (2008-2012) and the *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* exhibition (2008). I do so in relation to group exhibitions elsewhere and the curatorial models of Indian contemporary art on the move discussed in Chapter Five. *Indian Highway,* themed on the importance of the road and its links with migration and contemporary movements, has been on the global move itself as the exhibition expanded and changed as it toured internationally to institutions across six different countries in Europe and Asia. The *Santhal Family* exhibition at MuKHA in Antwerp considered the homonymous sculpture made by Ramkinkar Baij in 1938 as a site of reinterpretation, inviting artists from India and elsewhere to enter into dialogue with this seminal work. In turn, *Santhal Family* symbolically moved from cosmopolitan modernism in India to the global contemporary, building social interactions between past and present, the local, the national and the global. The comparative study of these two exhibitions provides a rare opportunity to analyse group exhibitions and interrogate current developments in transcultural curating as shaped by collaborations, art mobility and global dialogues and exchanges.

In this chapter, I examine how these two exhibition projects relate to transcultural curating of Indian contemporary art, and how they encompass collaborative practices and the idea of belonging. Among the questions I ask are: what could a different, more critically aware transcultural curating be? What would be the content of this critique? And how would it be expressed in exhibitions of contemporary Indian art on the move? To answer these questions, I draw on in-depth interviews with the curators and with artists involved with these exhibitions or commenting on them. Furthermore, I draw on the exhibition texts and their surrounding publicity materials, as well as on exhibition reviews and photographic documentation of my visits to these shows. Through the analysis of these exhibitions, I discuss some of the multiple collaborations that these shows encompassed and the ways in which they potentially oscillate between different curatorial models.

6.1- Indian Highway

Indian Highway, a major travelling group exhibition curated by Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B. Kvaran, started its global journey at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2008. The exhibition theme focused on the historical importance of the road and

its links with movement and migration, including its relation to partition. This theme was the result of ongoing conversations between the core curators of the exhibition and the multidisciplinary artist group Raqs Media Collective.[291] The exhibition not only referred to the road and its linking of rural and urban movements, but also to moving technology and the 'information superhighway', which has had a central role in India's economic growth. Furthermore, as pointed out by Peyton-Jones, Obrist and Kvaran in the exhibition catalogue, *Indian Highway* was also energy: "an energy that was positive, optimistic yet also critical in the same way as the artists' political and social engagement".[292] It is interesting to note how, in relation to the artists' critical position, the curators underlined a common thread "in examining complex issues in an Indian society undergoing transition, which include environmentalism, religious sectarianism, globalisation, gender, sexuality and class".[293] This is relevant in terms of critical engagement but it remains to be examined in this chapter whether the exhibition itself addressed such complexities.

The exhibition, in line with Obrist's distinctive curatorial strategies, was devised as an experimental platform of mobile transformative curating. As he explained to me while preparing the exhibition, the show "was conceived as an evolutionary learning system which shall function like algorithms and evolve over time. [It will be] a travelling laboratory, a negotiation between the local and the global".[294] Thus, the exhibition evolved as the show travelled. As Obrist commented, in this journey the general theme of movement was "generic enough to avoid being prescriptive".[295] Since the initial stop in London, *Indian Highway* has so far been to Oslo in 2009, Herning in 2010, Lyon in 2011, Rome in 2011 and Beijing in 2012.[296]

The exhibition changed at every stage, reconfiguring itself according to the associated local curators, new scenarios and localities as well as incorporating new sections, artworks and "exhibitions within the exhibition". The exhibitions inside the main show were curated by Indian artists: Raqs Media Collective in London, Bose Krishnamachari in Oslo, Shilpa Gupta in

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[291] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at the Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.
[292] Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran, "Directors' Foreword", in Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran (eds.), *Op. Cit.,* 2008, p.7.
[293] *Ibidem.*
[294] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at the Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.
[295] *Ibidem.*
[296] See Appendix B.II for an up-to-date travel itinerary and the list/s of artists selected in the *Indian Highway* exhibition/s, pp. 187-189.

Herning, Studio Mumbai Architects in Lyon and Amar Kanwar in Rome. The stop in Beijing incorporated the previous "exhibitions within the exhibition" without presenting a new section curated by Indian artists. Altogether the project constituted a growing curatorial cluster with the aim of creating a "polyphonic situation" in dialogue and critique with the main curators and previous models.[297]

Considering the vastness of this project and having researched the different incarnations of the exhibition, I shall focus on the two editions I visited in London and Lyon. From London to Lyon, I examine the extent to which *Indian Highway* corresponds with the "Collaboration and Critical Dialogues" curatorial model and the different frameworks of exhibiting Indian contemporary art in the global scene proposed in Chapter Five. Given that *Indian Highway I* took place in London in 2008 and *Indian Highway IV* in Lyon in 2011, the three years' difference between them allows us to examine with a certain distance the curatorial collaborations and movements and question the production of difference of the show.

6.1.1- London-Lyon

In November 2008, a month before *Indian Highway* opened in London, Hans Ulrich Obrist, accompanied by associate curator Savita Apte, visited New Delhi.[298] On that occasion, I had the opportunity to interview him and some of the artists and curators with whom Obrist conducted studio visits. The undisclosed artists' list prompted a shared curiosity and concern in the Delhi art scene one month before the opening; there was a suspicion that the list would mostly include the "usual suspects", referring to those artists usually selected in exhibitions of Indian contemporary art in the global scene, as I discussed in Part II of this thesis.[299] Art critic and independent curator Deeksha Nath expressed this concern when I interviewed her. As she contended: "the Serpentine is showing Subodh Gupta, which is opening now. The Mori museum in Tokyo, which is opening in November, is showing Subodh, the show in Paris also […] it's great but it's a little bit frustrating. Like I said, curators come for five days to India […] It's easily palatable, this work".[300] Indeed, *Indian Highway* included artist Subodh Gupta with the installation *Date by Date* (2008), Figure 6.1, as almost

[297] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at the Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.

[298] Obrist had been to India before on several research curatorial trips, also visiting other cities such as Mumbai and Bangalore. On the previous visit, he travelled accompanied by curator Julia Peyton-Jones and artist Marc Quinn.

[299] Girish Shahane, "The Usual Suspects", *Op. Cit.*, 1999, pp. 36-37.

[300] Interview with Deeksha Nath. Held at her house. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

every exhibition of contemporary art in India does. In Geeta Kapur's opinion at that time, "the London one will be a smart exhibition, the way Obrist has worked, like a torpedo, evolving, just passing through, casual thing".[301] This might be explained by Obrist's proposition.

As Hans Ulrich Obrist recounted to me, "nobody has ever attacked the curatorial master plan and that has always been my aim – to attack it and put it into question. That's why there is always a high degree of unpredictability: who is going to show, how it's going to evolve?"[302] One should question to what extent this statement reinforces what it sought to critique. The failure to question all curatorial premises, as Gerardo Mosquera has contended, "implies an acceptance of the curator's capacity to make transcultural judgements and from here the belief in the universality of art. To deny it would imply an anagnorisis: acknowledging that a selection is made from local criteria (from a particular institution, culture and aesthetic) leaving behind any globalising discourse".[303] Therefore, in this section I shall look at *Indian Highway* in London and Lyon and examine their curatorial premises and how these related to the models of transcultural curating and belonging discussed in Chapter Five.

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[301] Interview with Geeta Kapur. Held at her house. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.
[302] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.
[303] Gerardo Mosquera, "Some problems in transcultural curating", in Jean Fisher (ed.), *Op. Cit.*, 1994, p.136.
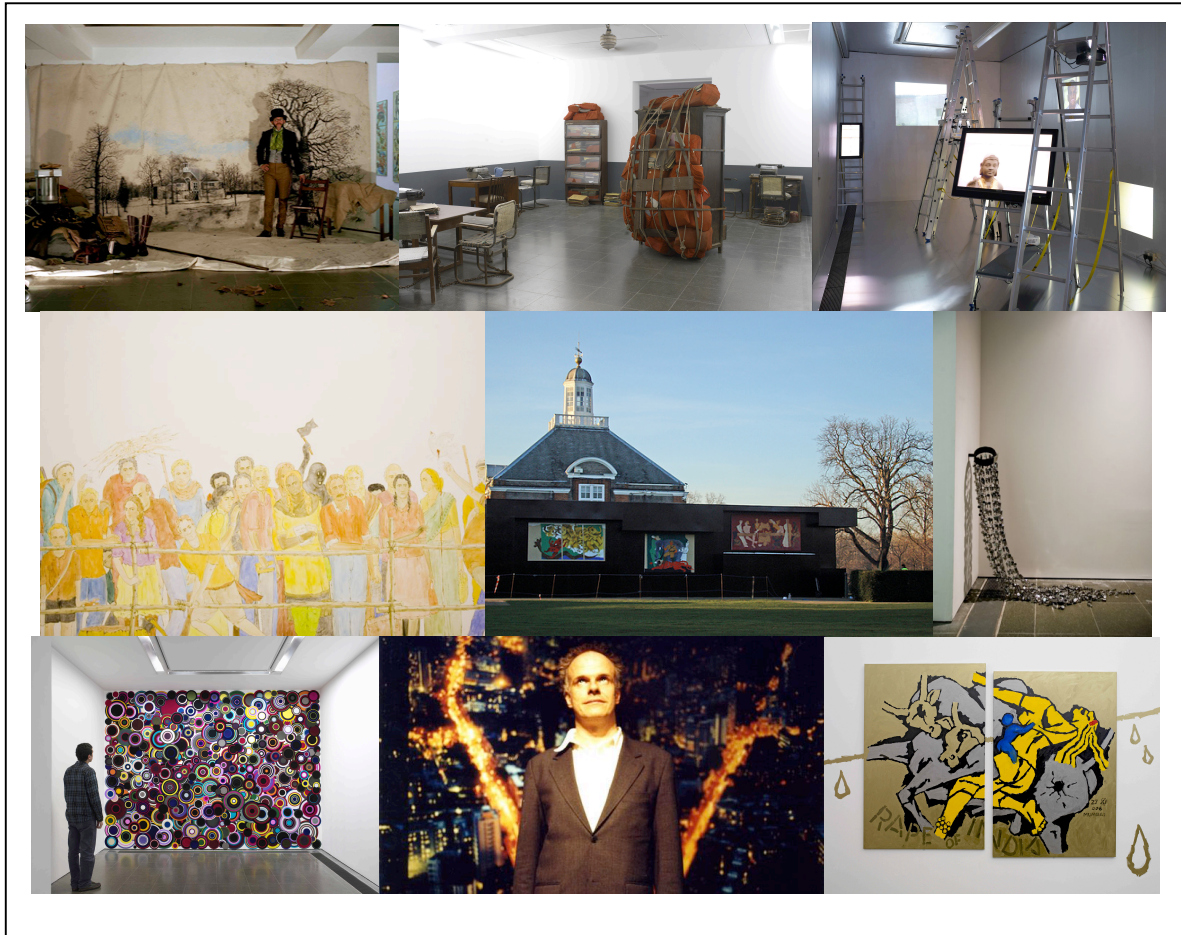
Figure 6.1- Exhibition views of *Indian Highway I* at the Serpentine Gallery, London, 2008[304]

Despite the project aims, the unpredictability of *Indian Highway* as well as its ability to attack a 'curatorial master plan' remains unclear. Indeed, *Indian Highway* in London turned out to be a predictable exhibition of Indian contemporary art in the global scene. The artists selected included those already established within global art circuits. The exhibition curatorial statement was framed in a way that reinforced existing expectations of Indian culture and the country's emergence globally. As stated on the Serpentine Gallery's website: "the galleries give visitors a snapshot of a vibrant generation of artists from a country that is taking an increasingly central position in the international art scene. […] *Indian Highway* is a

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[304] From left to right and top to bottom: Nikhil Chopra, *Untitled from the series Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory Drawing II,* 2008; Subodh Gupta, *Date by Date,* 2008; Raqs Media Collective, *Sleepwalkers' Caravan (Prologue),* 2008; N S Harsha, Reversed Gaze (Detail), 2008; Serpentine Gallery Building view with M F Husain paintings installation; Shilpa Gupta, *Untitled*, 2008; Bharti Kher, *The Nemesis of Nations,* 2008; Curator Hans Ulrich Obrist in front of Dayanita Singh, *Dream Villa 11,* 2007-2008 and M F Husain, *Rape of India,* 2008.

timely presentation of the pioneering work being made in the country today".[305] The fact that the exhibition was conceived as a national survey show was highly criticised. As one of the exhibiting artists and curator of an "exhibition within the exhibition" explained to me confidentially: "any trope using nationality is problematic for me, and I think it is not just me: everybody who is thinking these days will realise what a difficult structure it is to view anybody through nationality, especially in the work of curators and thinkers and writers who are well informed and critiquing".[306] Significantly, all the artists selected took part in the show. Despite their reservations, this can be explained because it gave them greater visibility and the opportunity to work with powerful curators such as Hans Ulrich Obrist and Julia Peyton-Jones.

Overall, 'India' was a common signifier in the exhibition: from the title and artworks exhibited to the artists' profiles, where 'India' was referred to in almost every paragraph in the catalogue, prioritising an interpretation of the works in terms of ethnic specificity. For example, Bharti Kher's use of the bindi as a central motif in her works was referred to as a symbolic device with multiple meanings by the Serpentine's curator at the time, Rebecca Morrill. Nevertheless, Morrill only elaborated on one of these multiple meanings: the tension in shifting definitions of femininity in India. Such an act of interpretation directly reterritorialised the artwork.[307] Similarly, Kiran Subbaiah's loudspeakers for bicycle horns were interpreted as a counter-sound to vehicular horns in Indian cities and the noises of urban life, commenting only secondarily on the artist's tendency to highlight the inherent contradictions in everyday life, which are a recurrent concern in his conceptually oriented works.[308] These interpretations contrast with the critical nature of the artworks on display, which were ultimately caught in narrow explanations that fixed them to ethnic and national frameworks in an essentialist manner.

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[305] Exhibition blurb available at the Serpentine Gallery website. Available at:
http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2008/06/indian_highwaydecember_2008_fe_1.html
[Last accessed: 10 January 2009]
[306] This comment came out while speaking generally and avoiding a direct answer about *Indian Highway,* although my question directly referred to it. Confidential interview. 2011. Recorded.
[307] Rebecca Morrill, "Bharti Kher", in Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran (eds.), *Op. Cit.,* 2008, p.106.
[308] Rebecca Morrill, "Kiran Subbaiah", in Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran (eds.), *Op. Cit.,* 2008, p. 114.

In the exhibition, Bharti Kher's *The Nemesis of Nations* (2008), Figure 6.2, best illustrated this confinement to ethnic framing. This site-specific multi-layered and multi-coloured bindi wall piece does not allow a fixed vantage point, either literally, as per multiple focus points of the piece, or symbolically, in terms of fixed national identities. To begin with, the non-confinement to fixed national identities is exemplified by the artist's dual
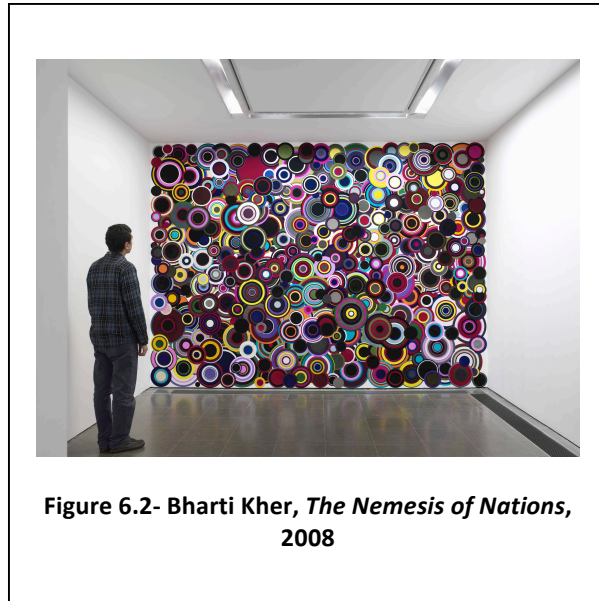

Figure 6.2- Bharti Kher, *The Nemesis of Nations*, 2008

nationality: Indian and British. However, the piece was still nationally framed within this one-way highway to India, reading the bindis in terms of shifting definitions of femininity in India. Arguably, as philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Zizek has noted, paradoxically globalisation has reinforced a search for "ethnic roots".[309] Accordingly, in relation to *Indian Highway*, art historian and critic Zehra Jumabhoy questioned in *Frieze Art Magazine, "*where does the line between 'Indian enough' and 'international' lie?"[310] As she commented, "if the Serpentine's 'Indian Highway' had been more nuanced in its selection, it would have granted Indian and western audiences alike more insight into their respective aesthetic journeys".[311] In this respect, the exhibition in London worked in accord with expectations about showcasing Indian art. As such, it prioritised a hospitable proposition by the main curators, who concentrated on essentialist views and acclaims of the global over the more critical viewpoints expressed by some of the artists selected. This was the case with the Raqs Media Collective's section, *Steps Away From Oblivion,* Figure 6.1, which attempted to steer away from the promise of wealth, influence and power implied by India's emergence as a global power.[312]

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[309] Slavoj Zizek, "Multiculturalism, or, the Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism", *New Left Review,* 225, September/October 1997, pp. 28–51.

[310] Zehra Jumabhoy, "A Highway to India?", *Frieze Art Magazine Online,* 21 April 2009. Available at: http://blog.frieze.com/a_highway_to_india/ [Last accessed: 17 August 2012].

[311] *Ibidem.*

[312] Taking as a starting point some key independent documentary films made during the past fifteen years, Raqs asked the filmmakers to revisit these materials in order to see what new resonances might have emerged in the present. Raqs Media Collective, "Step One", in Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran (eds.), *Op. cit.,* 2008, p.171.

Among the more analytic exhibition reviews, a concern voiced was that the display of some artworks set out to appeal to Western audiences.[313] Among the supportive reviews, the show was praised for being a "fascinating journey marked by tears, tigers and tiffin boxes".[314] The facile tears reference was condescending, trivialising struggles and sufferings through an approach that, paradoxically, the main curators tried to avoid.[315] The majority of reviews, however, stressed the space limitations of the Serpentine Gallery for hosting such a vast curatorial proposition. The exhibition was deemed cramped, somehow constrained by a boundless theme. Regarding artists' political and social engagement, there is no doubt that the artworks selected dealt with issues related to environmentalism, religious sectarianism, globalisation, gender, sexuality and class. This was the case with Nikhil Chopra's performance/installation *Untitled from the series Yog Raj Chitrakar* (2008), a fictional character inspired by his grandfather who was a landscape painter in the 1930s, and with MF Husain's selection of paintings installed in the exterior of the gallery (2008), Figure 6.3, which narrate the secular cultural history of India. However, the evasion of the political implications of the curatorial

Figure 6.3- Above Image: Nikhil Chopra, *Untitled from the series Yog Raj Chitrakar*, 2008. Below Image: Serpentine Gallery Building view with M F Husain paintings installation

project, especially the colonial relations between the UK and India, was very evident.

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[313] Charles Darwen, "Indian Highway, Serpentine Gallery, London", *The Independent,* 21 December 2008. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/reviews/indian-highway-serpentine-gallery-london-1205879.html [Last accessed: 17 August 2012].

[314] Laura Cummin, "Passage from India: A vast and vital pageant for the people", *The Observer*, Sunday 14 December 2008. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2008/dec/14/art-india-highway-review [Last accessed: 17 August 2012].

[315] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at the Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.

The curatorial statement in the catalogue avoided any reference to postcolonial politics, which was a recurrent concern in the exhibited works and relates directly to Britain's colonial past. As Stuart Hall pointed out, "knowledge of the 'Empire' is increasingly subject to a widespread selective amnesia and disavowal". [316] *Indian Highway* in London ambivalently reinforced this amnesia. In this regard, it is surprising that the curatorial statement ignored postcolonial politics and thinking, since the *Indian Highway* Exhibition Conference's blurb underlined postcolonialism as one of the exhibition's main theoretical concerns,[317] particularly since the UK has been familiar with postcolonial critiques from Afro-Caribbean and Asian diasporas for nearly thirty years. However, neither Obrist nor Peyton-Jones have ever publically identified with these discourses, which seem lacking from their critical repertoires. And yet, in global times it remains essential to highlight asymmetrical power relations, since avoiding them ignores agency and creates the risk of reinforcing the dominance of those who retain the power to dictate discourses, or to curate exhibitions, for that matter.

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[316] Stuart Hall, "Whose Heritage?, Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-Nation", in Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubitt and Ziauddin Sardar (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2002, p.76.

[317] As stated in the *Indian Highway* exhibition programme: "This conference will explore the theme of the exhibition, react to individual works and address some of the central theoretical concerns: 'namely a concern with the problem of the difference of Indian modernity, with mapping its distinctly colonial and/or postcolonial career and with uncovering the alternatives presented by marginal or subaltern groups to the totalising narratives of a dominant Euro-Western order and its bourgeois beneficiaries in the non-Western world'". (Saloni Mathur), p. 18. Quoted from Saloni Mathur, "The Power of Postcolonial Thinking", *Metropolis M,* 6, 2007, December/January. Available at: http://metropolism.com/magazine/2007-no6/postkoloniale-denkkracht/english [Last accessed: 17 August 2012].

Figure 6.4 – Exhibition views of *Indian Highway IV* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, 2011[318]

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[318] From left to right and top to bottom: Sudarshan Shetty, *Untitled (Double Cow from the show Love)*, 2006 (right) and Subodh Gupta, *Take Off Your Shoes and Wash Your Hands*, 2007 (left); Bharti Kher, *Choleric, phlegmatic, melancholy, sanguine,* 2009-2010 (right) and *An Absence of Assignable Cause*, 2007 (left); Studio Mumbai Architects & Michael Anastassiades, *Corner Shop*, 2010; Sumakshi Singh, *Micro-interventions,* 2011; *Indian Highway IV Poster*; Hemali Bhuta, *Growing* (Detail), 2009; Tejal Shah, *Swelling of the Neck in a Hysteric*, 2007-09 (left) and Sheela Gowda, *Darkroom*, 2006 (right); Raqs Media Collective, *Escapement,* 2009 and Jitish Kallat, *Aquasaurus*, 2008 (left) and *Baggage Claim* (right), 2010.

Now moving to France, three years later, *Indian Highway IV* in Lyon significantly expanded and the number of artists selected increased.[319] Occupying 2,000 square metres of the MAC Lyon, the vast exhibition space allowed the installation of bigger works (see Figure 6.4), along with the selection of emerging practitioners, such as Valay Shende, Sumakshi Singh and Shanay Jhaveri. Likewise, established artists such as Hema Upadhyay, Sundarshan Shetty and Riyas Komu were included in Lyon following their participation in previous stages in Oslo (2009) and Herning (2010). Regarding the re-enactment of Indianness highly criticised in the previous editions, *Indian Highway IV* was more consistent with the main curatorial proposition to produce variety and difference rather than standardisation, as explained to me by Hans Ulrich Obrist when referring to the curatorial aim.[320] Although India was still the central focus presented in an essentialist manner, the geographical border was less imposed on the artworks' narratives. For example, Studio Mumbai Architects and Michael Anastassiades created an "exhibition within the exhibition" called *Corner Shop* (2011), consisting of large scale mock-ups, models, material studies, sketches and drawings of a neighbourhood general store (see Figure 6.5). This work strengthened the discourse on

Figure 6.5- Studio Mumbai Architects & Michael Anastassiades, *Corner Shop*, 2010

urbanism and architecture from which to look at the complexity of relationships between public and private, artificiality and nature.[321] Likewise, the profiles of the artists specially selected for Lyon were written on this occasion by the artists themselves or by Indian art critics, who avoided an interpretation of the works as a national continuum.

While these curatorial practices seemed to imply a greater sense of collaboration and critical dialogue than in previous editions of the exhibition, there still remained problematic framings by the main curators. In contrast to the avoidance of postcolonial politics in

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[319] See Appendix B.II- Indian Highway: Up-to-date Travel Itinerary and Artists List, pp. 187-189.

[320] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at the Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.

[321] Studio Mumbai Architects + Michael Anastassiades, "Curatorial Statement: Studies, 2011" in Kathleen Madden and Thierry Raspail (ed.), *Indian Highway IV,* Cologne: Koenig Books, 2011, p. 273.

London's edition, Thierry Raspail's catalogue preface in *Indian Highway IV* referred to Eurocentrism, emergence, tourism and globalisation in the first paragraphs of his text.[322] Raspail, director of MAC Lyon and associate curator of the exhibition, alluded to a dualistic approach in some exhibitions of art in China, India, the Middle East and Africa which reinforced the myth of the West. Furthermore, he mentioned the work of Rabindranath Tagore, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and Albert Memmi as authors who historically denounced the myth of the West. Subsequently to his rhetorical question: "what kind of history would it be that avoided Eurocentrism and orientalism of every kind, and what kind of exhibition?", Raspail pleaded for a *Partage d'Exotismes* (a sharing of exoticisms) in relation to *Indian Highway IV,* which he described as an exercise in reciprocity.[323] *Partage d'Exotismes* refers to the 5th Biennale of Contemporary Art in Lyon (2002), co-curated by Jean-Hubert Martin, Thierry Prat and Raspail himself. Given that this sharing of exoticism was criticised for retaining "a strong whiff of essentialism"[324] arguably *Indian Highway* replicated the trace of essentialism.

From decolonisation and postcolonial theorists' name-dropping to its attempt to establish a critical dialogue with the artworks exhibited and Indian modernism, *Indian Highway IV* did not succeed in establishing a cross-cultural exchange, either in the catalogue essay or in the exhibition space. Thierry Raspail's remarks on Eurocentrism and orientalism ignored the unidirectional origin of both concepts: the exoticism referred to is a Western construct and this hypothetical sharing dismisses existing asymmetric power relations. Raspail's strength to put aside "yesterday's thinking, which presupposes something from 'there' as opposed to 'here'"[325] in practice failed to achieve an exercise in reciprocity, particularly if we take into account that the reciprocity that he claimed instead concealed institutional hype and marketing rhetoric, exemplified by the self-promotion of the show as "the groundbreaking exhibition of contemporary Indian culture".[326] Moreover, it is important to underline that the only explicit exercise in reciprocity that Raspail pointed out in the text was the exhibition *The Monk and the Demon*, curated by Fei Dawei at MAC Lyon in 2004 and part of the 'Year

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[322] Thierry Raspail, "Preface", in Kathleen Madden and Thierry Raspail (ed.), *Op. cit.*, 2011, pp. 5-6.
[323] *Ibidem.*
[324] Andrew Budge, "Partage d'Exotismes: Do 'Magicians' Grow Wise or Just Old?", *Third Text,* 16 (1), 2002, pp. 87-102.
[325] Thierry Raspail, "Preface", in Kathleen Madden and Thierry Raspail (ed.), *Op. cit.*, 2011, p. 6.
[326] See Serpentine Gallery website:
http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/indian-highway [Last accessed: 20 November 2013]

of China' in France.[327] This resonates with the cultural diplomacy strategies and the series of exhibitions of New Art from China, Brazil and Russia discussed in Chapter Five, which reinforce ethnic essentialism and possibly the entertainment value without challenging the hegemony of Western curatorial attitudes or practices. In fact, *Indian Highway* in Lyon coincided with the celebration of the 'Year of India' in France and indeed also exemplifies a curatorial cultural relativism.

In sum, *Indian Highway* entailed multiple collaborations, but this differs from an assumption that its various modes of working together produced a reciprocal exchange, a critical dialogue and global resistance. Despite its various collaborative ways, *Indian Highway* still corresponds to the "New Indian Art in a Global Framework" curatorial model discussed in Chapter Five. For instance, although critical of cultural homogeneity, the exhibition legitimated institutional multiculturalism and ignored hierarchies and inequalities in its claim to be a global curatorial project. Artist Sunil Gupta explained this to me in relation to both his own and the curators' positions. For Gupta it was strange to receive a studio visit from Julia Peyton-Jones while he was based in Delhi, since she had never visited him while in London. Gupta explained this turn of events in terms of his belonging to an exclusive dominant class while in India, with his 'Indianness' being more visible, in contrast to his diasporic position in London.[328] Arguably, being selected when in Delhi equated to a form of discriminatory reterritorialisation of identity in the curatorial criteria. Furthermore, given that Obrist's curatorial proposition aimed to attack the 'curatorial master plan'[329], the question remains to what extent *Indian Highway* replicated it. His emphasis on the invention of 'new rules of the game' has not only ignored asymmetrical power relations but also increased his hegemony. As a result, the set of rules demarcated by the curators reinforced their privileged and dominant position as the show was on the move globally.

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[327] This exhibition presented a survey show of Chinese contemporary art in collaboration with the Guy & Myriam Ullens Foundation, whose founders, the world's leading art collectors Baron and Baroness Guy and Myriam Ullens de Schooten, later founded the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, where *Indian Highway* headed to in 2012. See Núria Querol, *Exhibitions as discourse? Contemporary art in China, 1989-2005*, Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2007.

[328] Interview with Sunil Gupta. Held at his house. New Delhi, 27 October 2008. Recorded

[329] Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. Held at the Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.

6.2- Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture

The exhibition *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture,* curated by Grant Watson in collaboration with Suman Gopinath and Anshuman Dasgupta, took place at MuKHA (Museu van Hedendaage Kunst) in 2008 in Antwerp. [330] This exhibition considered the seminal sculpture *Santhal Family* (see Figure 6.6) as a site of reinterpretation. The *Santhal Family* sculpture, made by artist Ramkinkar Baij in 1938, stands in rural Santiniketan near Calcutta, in the grounds of the influential Visva Bharati University founded by Rabindranath Tagore in the 1920s. [331] The university campus, partly reconstructed at the *Santhal Family* exhibition by artist Goshka

Figure 6.6– Ramkinkar Baij, *Santhal Family*, 1938

Macuga, was the quintessential cosmopolitan modernist environment where Ramkinkar Baij encountered the intellectual engagement and artistic freedom to create his public sculptures. Among the sculptures at Santiniketan campus, *Santhal Family* – not included in the exhibition's campus reconstruction – is one of the most prominent, and is widely considered to be the first modernist sculptural work in India.

The *Santhal Family* sculpture depicts a mother, a father, a child and a dog. From this concept of traditional family from the Santhal tribe[332], the exhibition tried to consider the familial concept in a number of different ways. As stated in the exhibition's catalogue, first there is

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[330] See *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* – Website:
http://www.muhka.be/en/toont/event/2126/SANTHAL-FAMILY [Last accessed: 16 September 2013].
[331] Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was one of the most important poets and thinkers of his time who exemplified the emerging transnational discourse on global modernity. From an Indian rural area in West Bengal, the educational and pedagogical ideology of Santiniketan encouraged an idealized artistic-folk paradigm for propagating a universal culture. In a sense, as art historian and scholar Partha Mitter contended, "romantic primitivism as a new perception of peasants, craftsmen, the tribals, and rural regions untouched by urban colonialism, as the true uncorrupt India, permeated the art movement in Santiniketan". See Partha Mitter, *The Triumph of Modernism: Indian Artists and the Avant-Garde 1922-47,* London: Reaktion Books, 2007, p.65. See also Geeta Kapur, *When was Modernism: Essays on contemporary cultural practice in India*, New Delhi: Tulika, 2000; K.G. Subramanyan, *Moving Focus: Essays on Indian Art,* New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1978 and K.G. Subramanyan, *The Living Tradition: Perspectives on Modern Indian Art,* Kolkata: Seagull, 1987.
[332] This tribe lived in close relation to Santiniketan campus since Tagore invited two families to settle there.

the idea of the individual 'human family' that seems a utopian undercurrent in Ramkinkar's work and in the exhibition. Second, there is the idea of individuals brought together collectively to address particular issues and work in collaboration, which constitute a sort of expanded family group and community. Considering this collective idea of family, the exhibition comprised multiple collaborative practices, from the curatorial proposition to the artists and art collectives selected and artworks on display. And third, there is the curatorial debate about whether objects can be placed together in family groups based on significant shared characteristics. This modus operandi does not necessarily apply to contemporary art exhibitions, curator Grant Watson argued.[333] Related to this last concept of family, the *Santhal Family* exhibition displayed archive materials alongside other works directly or indirectly related to the sculpture, creating throughout an open discourse based on aesthetic and conceptual affinities instead of familial groups.

Fourteen new works were commissioned for the exhibition, with several artists, both from India and elsewhere, travelling to Santiniketan to see the *Santhal Family* sculpture on location. The artists and artists' groups that created new works were The Otolith Group, Juan Pérez Agirregoikoa, Raqs Media Collective, Kerala Radicals, N.S. Harsha and Goshka Macuga, among others.[334] Installations and sculptural works prevailed in the selection criteria, given the core and context of the exhibition. Commenting on her participation at this exhibition, artist Sheela Gowda told me: "*Santhal Family* – I think that is one of the good shows. Only somebody who has been in touch with India could do a show like that. This is not fly-by curating. That's what one looks for. I was very happy to be part of that show".[335] Sheela Gowda's comment foretells the importance of the curators having a more imbricated relation with the artists and their cultural contexts, which takes time to develop and characterises the collaborative curatorial model.

In line with the curatorial proposition to consider the current phase of globalisation in dialogue with India´s own history and politics from various perspectives, the exhibition encompassed transnational movements from its point of departure instead of having a constrained regional focus. As Watson explained to me in an interview, "rather than doing a national show, it takes a sculpture as its starting point. I was really anxious that it was clear

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[333] Grant Watson, "Introduction" in Anshuman Dasgupta, Monika Szewczyk and Grant Watson (eds.), *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture,* Antwerp: MuKHA, 2008, p. 3.
[334] See Appendix B.III for a complete list of the artists selected in the *Santhal Family* exhibition, p. 190.
[335] Interview with Sheela Gowda. Held at her house. Bangalore, 19 December 2008. Recorded.

that I was making a break from the trajectory of national exhibitions".[336] I argue that from these multi-layered viewpoints, the *Santhal Family* exhibition and its accompanying catalogue, which provided a theoretical tool that complemented and expanded the works on display,[337] positioned Indian modern and contemporary art in a global framework. As a result of the way it was put together, *Santhal Family* considered the connections and dialogues of India with other places and with the past, present and future.

6.2.1- From Santiniketan to the present, or a retake on multidirectional modernity from the global contemporary

Western hegemony's earlier appropriation of modernity as a linear path forward from its Eurocentric original and unique epicentre has been repeatedly rejected in present times. The condition of modernity is now generally accepted as a multidirectional phenomenon.[338] As Geeta Kapur stated in relation to modernity in India, "it should not see the modern as a form of determinism to be followed […] [moving] towards a logical end. It should see its trajectories crisscrossing the western mainstream and, in its very disalignment from it, making up the ground that restructures the international. It should reperiodize the modern in terms of its own historical experience of modernization so that it may enter the postmodern at least potentially on its own terms".[339] In line with this statement, *Santhal Family*, both the sculpture and the exhibition, worked as a symbol of colonial and postcolonial struggle in search of its own position within a wider and non-linear transcultural global framework. On the one hand, the sculpture combined the formal possibilities of modernism and the artist's engagement with the local.[340] On the other hand, the exhibition brought together contemporary global modernity from the expansive and cosmopolitan Santiniketan campus and a curatorial interest in the political engagement of the *Santhal Family* sculpture with the artworks related to it.[341] At the same time, the nexus between the sculpture and the exhibition was traced in a rhizomatic way, including the fact that the sculpture that named the exhibition was not exhibited in the museum space

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[336] Interview with Grant Watson. Held at MuKHA. Antwerp, 21 February 2008. Recorded.

[337] The catalogue records and complements the exhibition: it contains a selection of articles and artworks, some of them showed in the publication but not displayed at the exhibition space.

[338] See Kobena Mercer (ed.), *Cosmopolitan modernism*, London: Iniva and MIT Press, 2005, for a more detailed contextualization of the global modernism cross-cultural movement.

[339] Geeta Kapur, "When was modernism in Indian art?", *Op. Cit.*, 2000, pp. 297-298.

[340] See R. Siva Kumar, "Ramkinkar Baij and Modernism's Dual Commitments" in Anshuman Dasgupta, Monika Szewczyk and Grant Watson (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2008, p. 17.

[341] Interview with Grant Watson. Held at MuKHA, Antwerp, 21 February 2008. Recorded.

Figure 6.7 – Photograph of *Santhal Family* sculpture, 1938

Notably, the sculpture was presented on the exhibition's catalogue cover through an archival photograph that records it being transported on the way to its permanent location (see Figure 6.7). Pictured 'on the move', it functions as a symbolic image by which to trace multidirectional global modernity. As art historian and scholar Partha Mitter points out, at the time when Baij sculpted the Santhal family carrying their possessions, modernism in India was viewed through a wide framework of artistic lenses in resistance to the colonial regime.[342] When modernism arrived in the subcontinent in the 1920s, "its flexible radical language provided artists with a new tool to construct their image of anti-colonial resistance. Modernism's most fervent advocates, the Indian primitivists, proposed a far-reaching critique of colonial modernity, drawing upon peasant culture in an affirmation of the local and the present".[343] Yet, as Mitter explains, "their anti-urban, anti-capitalist

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[342] The Santhal Tribe depicted in the work functioned as a myth of the innocent spotless primitive. The importance of the encounter between the sculptor and the Santhals lies in Baij's use of modernist language to draw the idealized primitive. In doing so he broke the rules imposed by colonial dominators and also the imposition of naturalist academic artistic language as the only valid discourse. See Partha Mitter, *Op. Cit.*, 2007 and Grant Watson, "Introduction", in Anshuman Dasgupta, Monika Szewczyk and Grant Watson (eds.), *Op. Cit.,* 2008, pp. 3-7.

[343] Partha Mitter, *Op. Cit.*, 2007, p. 226.

counter-modernity had global implications".[344] This strong sense of locality, attached to global signifiers characteristic of modernity in India, found its most notable example at Santiniketan campus as a space and laboratory of multiple ideas and forms. Likewise, within the multidirectional framework of global modernity, past and contemporary, the exhibition *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* positioned itself as a convergent space of flows that cut across generational and geographic borders.[345]
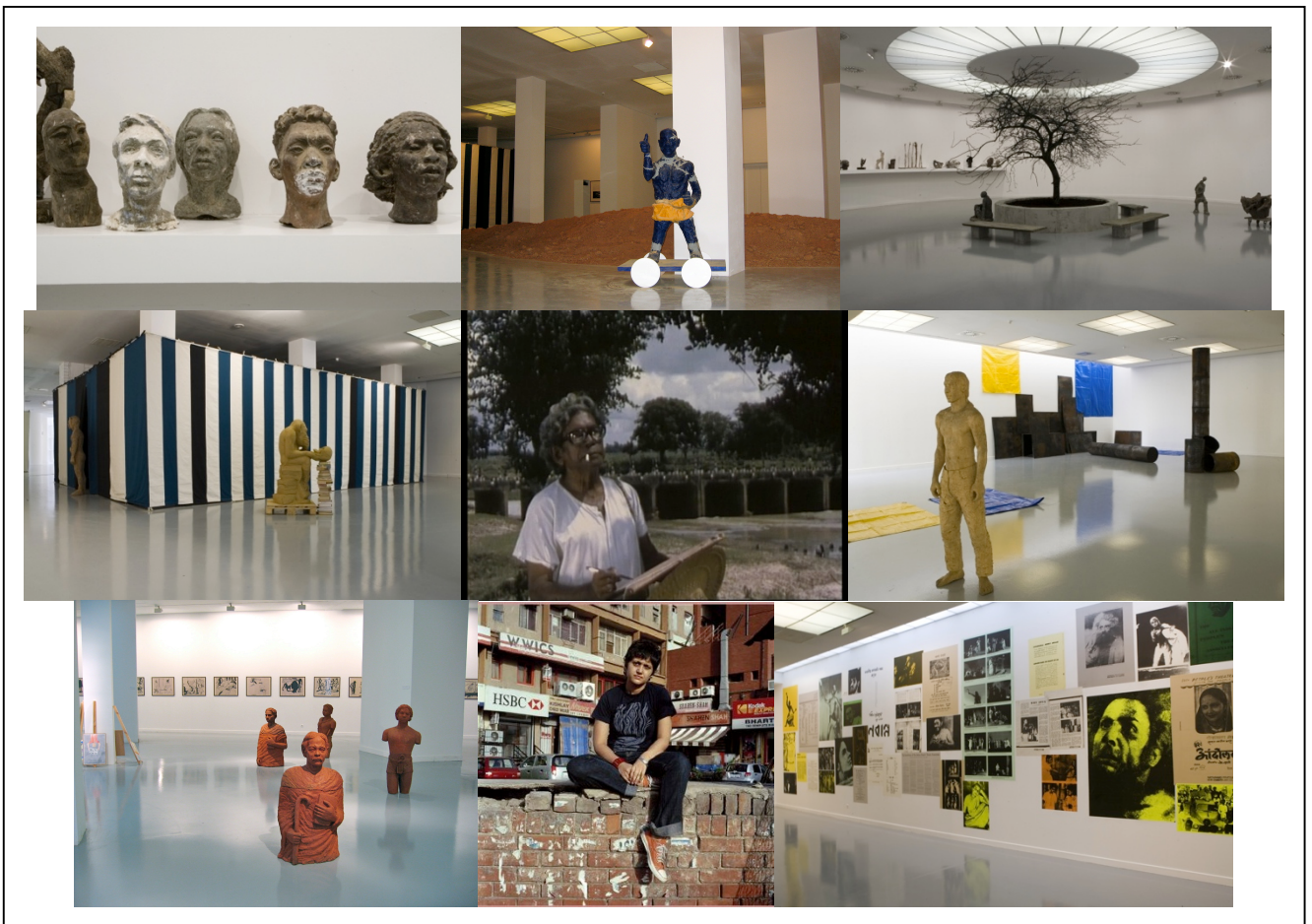
Figure 6.8- Exhibition views of *Santhal Family* at the MuHKA, Antwerp, 2008[346]

[344] *Ibidem.*

[345] Interview with Grant Watson. Held at MuKHA. Antwerp, 21 February 2008. Recorded.

[346] From left to right and top to bottom: Goshka Macuga, *When was Modernism*, 2008 (detail installation); Exhibition view with works from Kerala Radicals and Matti Braun; Goshka Macuga, *When was Modernism*, 2008; Exhibition view with works from Klaus Weber and Ravi Shah; Ritwik Ghatak, *Ramkinkar Baij: A personality Study*, 1975-2008; Exhibition view with work from Ravi Shah and Sheela Gowda; Exhibition view with works from Boran Handsa and Juan Pérez Agirregoikoa; Sunil Gupta, *Mr. Malhotra's Party*, 2007 and IPTA Indian People's Theatre Association, documents. Archival installation designed by Julie Peeters.

As emphasised in the curatorial statement, the intention of the *Santhal Family* exhibition (see Figure 6.8), in focusing on the legacy of the sculptural work and how it was repositioned in relation to the present, was to radiate outwards. As Watson explained: "first, from the state of Bengal, where the sculpture stands, drawing historic links between left wing politics and the arts; then through the work of contemporary Indian artists familiar with this iconic work; and finally, through the intervention of diasporic and non-Indian artists who considered the sculpture's importance from afar".[347] These kinetic circles, together with the main discursive and structural premises of the exhibition, linked with the idea of mobility. As Watson stated in an interview with me: "the sculpture is a metaphor for movement".[348] Thus, even though it could not be moved from its location in Santiniketan and was therefore absent from the show, the *Santhal Family* sculpture served, in Watson´s words, "as a metaphor of mobile materials and moves between places and, in a sense, this became a metaphor for the whole exhibition".[349]

In this regard, despite the fact that some reviewers criticised the unavailability of the sculpture in the exhibition,[350] the void caused by the absence of *Santhal Family* sculpture embodied mobile imaginaries. These mobile imaginaries, as stated previously in relation to the field of curatorial flows, address something critical and new in the processes of cultural globalisation, which is the imagination as a social practice, as contended by Appadurai.[351] Mobile imaginaries relate to the collective agency characteristic of the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" curatorial model discussed in Chapter Five. In the *Santhal Family* case these mobile imaginaries were encompassed both within the exhibition and through the connections that the show made. As Ashuman Dasgupta summarised in his field notes from the Ramkinkar Baij Centenary Seminar in 2007: "though, we may visualize that period of deeper engagements and possible immanence, in its past-ness (with all its glories and aura of the bygone) we could also locate the strategic dynamics of an underclass intercultural in or via the twin thematic, which can be located in both, Ramkinkar and the period he represents, and also in our time".[352] On that account, the various kinetic loops and positions

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[347] Extract from the exhibition press release and also specified in a recorded interview I conducted with Grant Watson that took place at MuKHA on 21 February 2008.

[348] Interview with Grant Watson. Held at MuKHA. Antwerp, 21 February 2008. Recorded.

[349] *Ibidem.*

[350] For example, Maria Fusco, "Santhal Family", *Frieze Art Magazine,* 5 May 2008. Available online at: http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/santhal_family/ [Last accessed: 17 August 2012].

[351] Arjun Appadurai, *Op. Cit.*, 1996, p. 31.

[352] Anshuman Dasgupta, "Field notes from the Ramkinker Baij Centenary Seminar. Thematics: Aspects of Modernity/Public Nature of Art Practices", 2007. See *Mattersofart.com* http://www.mattersofart.com/lead64.html [Last accessed: 30 April 2008].

comprehended by the selected artworks will allow us to unfold the *Santhal Family* movements, considering them through the collaborative aspect of the show.

The first movement of the *Santhal Family* exhibition was to reveal the links between Baij's sculpture and subaltern identities and left-wing politics; although the artist never expressed any politically artistic commitment, his works are considered to closely represent communist and socialist concerns.[353] Baij spoke thusly about his relations with the Santhals and their positions: "I came from a humble family, used to seeing labouring people. Their simple easy life, mode of working, their movement – these were my subjects. Santhals in Santiniketan specially influenced me".[354] To some extent Baij identified himself with the tribal people and raised their visibility through his work. In Watson's opinion, the fact that the sculptor came from a humble family and had a non-hierarchical, anarchic and hospitable personality reinforced his connection with the subaltern.[355] The fact that Baij created the Santhal tribe sculpture using non-conventional materials like concrete and post-impressionist forms broke with the naturalist aesthetic rules imposed by the colonial regime, and monumentalised the Santhal struggle and cultural simplicity whilst simultaneously avoiding exoticisation. Similarly, Grant Watson's curatorial proposition, working in collaboration with curators Suman Gopinath and Anshuman Dasgupta, avoided any exoticism view in *Santhal Family Positions around an Indian sculpture.* The exhibition reinforced left-wing solidarities, past and contemporary, through the artworks, collectives and artists' groups selected in relation to and in dialogue with the sculpture.

The second concentric movement of the exhibition concerns the work of Indian artists contemporary with the iconic work, such as the Indian Peoples' Theatre Association (IPTA), which was founded as a cultural front for the Indian Communist Party in 1943, and represented collective agency at the critical junction of India's independence and post-independence. IPTA was displayed in the *Santhal Family* exhibition through the reinterpretation work done by graphic designer Julie Peeters. For the occasion, Peeters produced a series of posters that incorporated elements of IPTA's archive (see Figure 6.8), whose legacy could be considered as a left-wing intervention in the process of defining

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[353] See R. Siva Kumar, "Ramkinkar Baij and Modernism's Dual Commitments", in Anshuman Dasgupta, Monika Szewczyk and Grant Watson (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2008, p. 18.
[354] Partha Mitter, *Op. Cit.*, 2007, pp. 97-98.
[355] Grant Watson, "Introduction" in Anshuman Dasgupta, Monika Szewczyk and Grant Watson (eds.), *Op. Cit.,* 2008, p. 3.

India's modernity.[356] Its members, defined as urban street theatre activists, shared an opposition to the juggernaut of the dominant interests in their various spheres of activity and agency.[357] Rustom Bharucha pointed out the importance of this collective, since it adapted folk forms in order to contribute to the secularisation of cultural politics in the early 1940s.[358] About IPTA's later division and final disintegration, Bharucha explained that, instead of engaging with its subaltern aesthetics, "the Party members of IPTA attempted to capitalize on its political efficacy, without being fully prepared to grasp the politics of its dramaturgy, at once rooted in the real, and yet uncompromisingly innovative in its forms".[359] Former IPTA activist and revolutionary filmmaker Ritwick Ghatak (1925-1976), to whom MuKHA dedicated a retrospective film programme on the occasion of the exhibition, expressed the left ideology that witnessed progress and regress in post-independence India.[360] His last film, *Jukti Takko ar Gappo* (1975), became an occasion for him to reflect autobiographically on the meanings of revolutionary practices in art and politics.[361]

On entering the *Santhal Family* exhibition space, *Thief*'s sculpture stood in front of the viewer's position (see Figure 6.8). The sculpture, made by K.P. Krishnakumar in 1985, was reconstructed for the occasion by other members of Kerala Radicals. Anita Dube, one of the members of this group, said about this work that it was a kind of self-portrait, a new surge of life and will, challenging and aggressive.[362] Krishnakumar, leader of these ultra-left Kerala artists, committed suicide in 1989, thus putting an end to the group, which was also known as the Indian Radical Painters and Sculptors (1987-1989). It has been said that this group "introduced history into a land that knew only memory".[363] Its major gesture was the exhibition *Questions and Dialogues* (1987). This exhibition took place at Baroda University in Vadodara and its manifesto, reprinted and redistributed in the *Santhal Family* exhibition, stated an anarchic position against the conservatism of the art world and the failure to resist western hegemony and elite nationalism. For the Kerala Radicals, as Parul Dave Mukherji

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[356] Geeta Kapur, "When was Modernism", *Op. Cit.*, 2000, p. 344.

[357] Nancy Adajania, "Towards a New Folkloric Imagination", in Gerald Matt et al, *Capital & Karma: Recent Positions in Indian Art*, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2000, p. 48.

[358] Rustom Bharucha, *In the Name of the Secular: Contemporary Cultural Activism in India*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 42-45.

[359] *Ibid,* pp. 45-52

[360] Related to the *Santhal Family* exhibition, MuKHA presented a retrospective film programme of his works along with the unfinished documentary about his friend Ramkinkar Baij, completed for the exhibition by Ghatak's son, Ritaban Ghatak.

[361] See Geeta Kapur, "When was Modernism", *Op. Cit.*, 2000, p. 342.

[362] Interview with Anita Duve. Held at her house. New Delhi, 15 November 2008. Unrecorded.

[363] Ashish Rajadhyaksha, "The last decade", in Gulam Mohammed Sheikh (ed.), *Contemporary art in Baroda,* New Delhi: Tulika Books, 1997, p. 258.

pointed out, nationalism and internationalism were mutually exclusive domains of cultural practice and any attempt at setting up a dialogue across the two led to the homogenisation of the former.[364] Significantly, the *Santhal Family* exhibition acknowledged the relevance of the group in the present, whose anarchic positions resonate directly with contemporary counter-hegemonic claims locally and globally.

The exhibition's third movement takes into account those exhibited works that positioned themselves in the present and from the here and now look forward to the past. Sunil Gupta shares the direct, irreverent and interventional attitude characteristic of the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" curatorial mode. Identities and spaces of representation are one of the main concerns of his work. About his series of photographic portraits entitled *Mr. Malhotra's Party* (2007) (see Figure 6.8), included in the catalogue of the exhibition as a visual essay, he wrote: "in the 1980's I made constructed documentary images of gay men in urban spaces in Delhi [*Exiles* series]. Now, people are meeting less in parks, etc., and more on the net, and in places like "private" parties".[365] Gupta tried to visualise this latest virtual queer space through a series of portraits of real people who identify their sexuality as "queer". This group was invited to an imaginary party, which Gupta called 'Mr. Malhotra's Party'. In this regard, he also noted: "Gay nights at local clubs are always sign-posted as private parties in a fictitious person's name to get around the law: Section 377, a British colonial law, which still criminalises homosexuality in India. Mr. Malhota is the ubiquitous Punjabi refugee who arrived post partition and contributed to the development of the city".[366] Since Gupta wrote these reflections about the margins of urban cultures, much has changed in the queer scene in India. Section 377 was abolished on 2 July 2009 after queer activists mobilised all over the country and campaigned to repeal this colonial law, re-establishing queer collective agency in postcolonial India.[367]

Finally, on the exhibition's movements outwards, one may argue that the position of the subaltern voices of folk, popular and tribal artists and their vernacular art in a time of global mobility still remains marginalised. They are often disregarded at exhibitions of Indian contemporary art in the global art scene as well as in the domestic one, despite the

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[364] Parul Dave Mukherji, "Horn Please", in Bernhard Fibicher and Suman Gopinath (eds.), *Horn Please - Narratives in Contemporary Indian Art,* Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2007, p. 30.

[365] See "Notes", in Anshuman Dasgupta, Monika Szewczyk and Grant Watson (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2008. p. 139.

[366] *Ibid* p.139.

[367] See Voices Against 377 campaign http://www.voicesagainst377.org/ [Last accessed: 5 October 2012]. Unfortunately, at the close of 2013 this act was reinstated by the Indian government.

precursory political alignment and subaltern solidarity that Baij moved forward, and continued by contemporary artists such as Navjot Altaf and Sheela Gowda who have collaborated with rural artists. In the entangled spaces of the local and the global, folk, popular and tribal artists do not have the same consideration and visibility as contemporary visual artists, somehow being "divided by questions of value and materiality", as art historians and curators Annapurna Garimella and Olympia Bhatt have pointed out.[368] In India, one of the earliest occasions in which folk and tribal art has been part of the Indian contemporary was in the important exhibition *The Other Masters*, curated by Jyotindra Jain and held at the National Crafts Museum in New Delhi in 1998.[369] More recently, Annapurna Garimella curated the exhibition *Vernacular in the Contemporary* at the Devi Art Foundation in 2010-2011 in New Delhi.[370] Among exhibitions of Indian contemporary art elsewhere, some rare examples include *Edge of Desire – Recent art in India* (Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, 2004, travelling exhibition curated by Chaitanya Sambrani), and *Bombay/Mumbai* (Tate Modern, 2001, co-curated by Geeta Kapur and Ashish Rajadhyaksha). In general, though, curatorial practices mainly have failed to include folk, popular and tribal practices in favour of global visual languages. Even so, some global artists from India and elsewhere have appropriated the aesthetics and discourses of the tribal, as some of my interviewees have pointed out. For example, Francesco Clemente's painting *From Story of my life, 3* (1990), exhibited at the Biennale of Sydney in 1996, included a drawing made by tribal artists in Orissa, but it was not attributed as such except indirectly in the material description, which stated: "Indian ink and gouache on Orissa paper".[371] Thus, it seems that tribal artists remain left out of these global cartographies of art and power. In the case of *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture,* tribal art was presented tangentially, although, as in the sculptural void, its absence embodied mobile imaginaries.

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[368] Annapurna Garimella and Olympia Bhatt, "Posting from the Ethnic". Paper presented in the session *Questioning the Post Ethnic* moderated by Jyotindra Jain and part of the workshop "Global Art and the Museum: The Global Turn and Art in Contemporary India" that took place the 11 October of 2008 in New Delhi. Organized by Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan New Delhi, ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany, and School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Presentation Recorded.

[369] Jyotindra Jain, *The Other Masters: Five Contemporary Folk and Tribal Artists,* New Delhi: National Crafts Museum, 1998.

[370] Vernacular in the Contemporary, Part I, 27th November 2010 – 28th February 2011, and Vernacular in the Contemporary, Part II, 27th March 2011 – 27th June 2011. This two-part exhibition re-engaged with vernacular art practices and how they intersect with the contemporary art world.

[371] Francesco Clemente, *From Story of my life (3)*, 1990. Explained to me confidentially in an interview. 2008. Recorded.

To conclude, *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* encompassed multiple collaborations, from curators and artists working together to an entangled critical dialogue between past, present and future. Thus, the exhibition, in line with the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" curatorial model I identified, expanded the discourse on multidirectional modernity from the global contemporary, emphasising throughout resistance to the collusion between the borderless free market of neoliberal corporate capitalism and the art market by left wing solidarities.

To sum up the concentric movements discussed through this section, from the sculpture to the exhibition and its extension outwards, I would like to take the image of the exhibition banner that hung outside on the museum wall as a symbol of *Santhal family* moving ideas, narrations and struggles (see Figure 6.9). The photographic image showed how Baij's sculpture was carried

Figure 6.9- *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture.*

Exhibition banner. MuKHA, 2008

through a journey whose starting and end points the viewer did not know but, at the same time, this same viewer traced it through her or his own position. Therefore, symbolically, the static sculpture began to move from the outside to the inside to finally reach multiple meanings and movements in the exhibition *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture.* If one curatorial concern was to test whether it was possible to unfold transversals and committed discourses and positions and put them into transcultural dialogues[372], the answer, I believe, is yes, from a collaborative curatorial practice and intellectual critical exchanges to positioning counter-hegemonic global movements.

6.3- Conclusion

From the 1990s, when India became a global art player alongside its economic rise, two main models of curating contemporary Indian art elsewhere have taken place. The first is

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[372] Interview with Grant Watson. Held at MuKHA, Antwerp, 21 February 2008. Recorded.

blockbuster survey shows narrowly framed through fixed geographic boundaries and national strategies, a curatorial model that I named "New Indian Art in a Global Framework". The second is more experimental and collaborative, engaging in dialogue with the region's own position and terms, which I referred to as the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" curatorial model. Focusing on this second model through two case studies, the exhibitions *Indian Highway* and *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture,* I have sought to characterise the 'collaborations' curatorial model and its critical engagements with social changes and politics under globalisation. However, although *Indian Highway* conformed in part to collaborative curatorial practices, the curators ultimately fell back to standardising identities through a national framework more characteristic of the first 'survey' model of "New Indian Art in a Global Framework" that I explored in Chapter Five.

By contrast, *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* presented a more nuanced approach characteristic of the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" curatorial model. This exhibition established critical dialogues with the region's own position and terms. It gestured towards dialogical and multidirectional flows and blurred the hierarchical dualism prevalent in blockbuster survey shows. As such, in this journey, perhaps surprisingly, the different models and strategies of curating on the move explored here have flown beyond their multiple points of departure and arrival. Even though *Indian Highway* was more on the move as it travelled globally, ultimately the *Santhal Family* exhibition was the one that moved further. It did so by proposing an innovative transcultural curatorial statement and approach to exhibiting contemporary Indian art elsewhere, moving beyond national survey shows fixed on geopolitical borders and essentialist models of interpretation to establish cross-cultural dialogues and transformative curatorial practices.

PART IV

THE FIELD OF CURATORIAL PRACTICES AND EXHIBITION FLOWS

7- Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore how globalisation has impacted on curating contemporary Indian art in recent decades, both locally and globally. Located within an artistic, cultural and scholarly context that questions the role of globalisation in how contemporary art is produced, mediated and displayed, this study has provided an in-depth empirical analysis of both the hegemonies and the political possibilities of exhibiting contemporary Indian art. As such, the field of curatorial practices and exhibition flows has been used as a tool to analyse two prominent forms of exhibiting contemporary Indian art: biennales and travelling exhibitions. Given that exhibitions and curatorial studies are still a relatively recent site of academic research, this study has a topical relevance and contributes to the further development of knowledge by presenting research on curatorial theory, practice and the politics of contemporary art in India.

7.1- Summary of findings

Globalisation's impact on art and curatorial practice has been the main question addressed in this study of the field of curating contemporary Indian art and its exhibition flows. The notion of the field applied to curatorial practices has drawn on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the field and on his criticism of globalisation as a dominant neoliberal ideology and force.[373] The use of Bourdieu's field theory has proven a useful tool to analyse power structures and the effects of globalisation on international art exchanges and exhibition processes. In particular, this theory has proven relevant to demonstrate the unequal distribution of symbolic and cultural capital that has translated into an uneven worldwide circulation of Indian artists and curators as well as of funding possibilities and the distribution of exhibitions' sites. Moreover, this framework was particularly suited to the study of those cases where the dominance of hegemonic powers applies. However, the reproduction in all the spheres of Bourdieu's structural explanation and criticisms of globalisation has also proved restrictive. This has been the case when examining the mobile relations characteristic of global social transformation processes, especially since global South artists and curators' circulation and the development of alternative networks have broadened the geo-political cartographies of the global. In this regard, I have emphasised the changeability, mobility and agency of the field of curating in a contemporary world characterised by highly

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[373] Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.*, 1993 and Pierre Bourdieu, *Op. Cit.*, 1998.

differentiated societies, themselves categorised by globalisation, deterritorialisation and hybridisation of cultures.[374] Under these circumstances, the mobility and agency of the curatorial field has been better understood through the concept of exhibition flows.

The concept of flows linked with exhibitions on the move has echoed and extended Arjun Appadurai's theory based on the notion of global cultural flows as a framework to explore the social imaginary of new global cultural processes.[375] Flows theory has proved relevant for the study of contemporary art exhibitions and their forms of global disjunctures between economy, culture and politics. In particular, the concept of exhibition flows has been useful in analysing the mobility and changeability of the field of curatorial practice and the assemblage of its multi-dimensional -scapes. The interrelated idea of the imagination as a social practice has also proved pertinent to open up global fields of possibilities in negotiation with local sites of agency. Regarding the restrictions of flows theory for this study, which concerned the vagueness of the term and the lack of reflexivity on asymmetrical flows and power relations, I have overcome these limitations through the application of the aforementioned field theory.

Thus, the use of flows has overcome the determinism of Bourdieu's theory of the field that, in turn, has overcome global cultural flows' limitation in acknowledging the power dimensions associated with their mobility. Combining the field of curatorial practice and its exhibition flows has provided a wide-ranging framework for understanding contemporary art and exhibition production, mediation and circulation. This framework has drawn attention to exhibitions' complex assemblages of ideas, agents, objects, sites and movements under globalisation. Moreover, although the field of curatorial practices and exhibition flows complement each other and are mutually imbricated, field theory has been particularly useful for analysing the more structural case of biennales, while flow theory has been especially relevant for the study of mobile platforms such as exhibitions on the move.

Regarding the impact of globalisation on contemporary Indian art, two main factors have been identified and explored in this study. The first is the use of global art languages, which translates into artists increasingly adopting postmodern art forms and mediums and engaging more and more with the politics of the local while speaking globally. The second is

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[374] Nikos Papastergiadis, "Hybridity and Ambivalence. Places and Flows in Contemporary Art and Culture", *Op. Cit.,* 2005, pp. 39-64.
[375] Arjun Appadurai, *Op. Cit.,* 1996.

the role of the art market in the increased participation of Indian artists and curators in biennales and travelling exhibitions and in the rise of exhibition flows globally. The complicity with the art market and the use of global art languages, along with an increased interest among Western art institutions in showcasing art from emerging regions, have facilitated the circulation of Indian artists and their global exposure. In turn, an examination of these factors has confirmed my appraisal of symbolic and cultural capital in contemporary art and the consecration of a selected group of artists. This global hegemonic shift has taken place in the last two decades, coinciding with the burgeoning strength of contemporary Indian art globally. However, it is important to underline that such complicity should not be mistaken for a determinist assumption that gallery-influenced biases, institutional interests and conforming to global art legibility and market demands solely explain circulation or conform to the homogenisation of the arts.

Since the 1990s, the circulation of Indian artists and curators within South-South and East-South axis has diversified the global art world, developing alternative circuits of production and distribution in places outside the Western mainstream. It is equally important to note that the globalisation of the arts is potentially productive, especially considering artists' and curators' agency and their capacity to subvert the imperatives of the global neoliberal system. Indian artists and curators – or at least those that have had the means to do so – have re-positioned themselves in relation to power. In this regard, globalisation does not necessarily equate with the homogenisation of art and curating but instead produces difference on the move. It does so in relation to the global North but also in a horizontal way within South-South and East-South circuits and centres. Therefore, in this thesis I have established that the global has a dual role, becoming simultaneously a dominant institutional and commercial discourse and a central form of agency from the global South and East. This polarisation of the global art world has been demonstrated through an in-depth empirical analysis of hitherto unexamined examples of exhibitions of contemporary Indian art.

Significantly, I have proposed two unique models for the study of transcultural curating of contemporary Indian art. The first model, which I have called "New Indian Art in a Global Framework", is characterised by blockbuster survey shows narrowly framed through fixed geographic boundaries and national strategies. The exhibitions belonging to this model, such as *Paris/Delhi/Bombay…* (2011), although intending to build up transcultural platforms and

sustainable dialogues, correspond to the concept of institutional multiculturalism. In this regard, these shows not only ignored hierarchies and inequalities but also elided a critical engagement with the complexities of cultural identities and differences within the local and the global. This first model corresponds mostly to exhibitions of contemporary Indian art in the West, curated by curators from elsewhere. However, one can also note some of its logics internally in India, Asia and the global South, which indicates that a multicentred global art world enacts scenes and processes of exclusion globally and locally.

I have termed the second model "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues". This model is characterised by curatorial propositions that are self-reflexive on historical and cultural specificities while expressing global concerns, instead of providing generalist contextualisation and universal claims of the local. Thus, collaborative curating provides transcultural dialogues and potentially reinforces multidirectional flows and shifts. However, it is important to note that these different model types are not distinct and sequential, but can co-exist and intersect. As I have demonstrated in my case study analysis, parts of the case study *Indian Highway* (2008-2012) reinforced the logics of the "New Indian Art in a Global Framework" curatorial model, although it presented itself as part of the "Collaboration" model. The exhibition *Santhal Family. Positions around an Indian sculpture* (2008) corresponds more affirmatively to the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" model by establishing critical dialogues with the region's own position and terms while blurring the hierarchical dualism prevalent in blockbuster survey shows.

As such, in this conclusion it might be useful to return to my earlier case study, on biennales, to re-think my analysis through the lens of these two models. As a moment of reflection, do these models have critical purchase with regard to further understanding the proposed Delhi Biennale and broader global South biennale practices? The proposed Delhi Biennale corresponds to the model "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues", aiming to establish horizontal forms of agency, dialogues and networks within the East-South axis, and as opposed to contemporary art market hegemony. However, this proposed biennale also raised some critiques and suspicions in broader art networks in India on potentially replicating some of the logics that we can understand through the model "New Indian Art in a Global Framework". In particular, the critiques concerned the proposal's prospect to replicate national hegemonic views and enact processes of exclusion within the idea of Asia. In turn, global South biennales also belong to the "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues"

curatorial model. They do so by challenging global platforms in a theoretical sphere and questioning their practical consequences within the hegemonic commercial and institutional global system corresponding to the model "New Indian Art in a Global Framework". In this regard, there seems to be a paradoxical need for alliance with the market, rather than antagonism, as a pre-condition for both the establishment and survival of biennales in the global South with anti-hegemonic ideals.

In summary, the curatorial models "New Indian Art in a Global Frame" and "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" have relevance in the study of both biennales and travelling exhibitions. These two models of transcultural curating capture the dualism of globalisation, both as a hegemonic force and as a form of agency from the South. Crucially, global polarities can co-exist and intersect in vexed political, economic, social and ideological configurations. Thus, the dual role of the global collides and intermingles in curatorial formations on the move. As such, in evaluation, the proposed two models have critical purchase with regard to further understanding the impact of globalisation in curating contemporary art in India, and beyond.

Finally, returning to the field of curatorial practices and its exhibition flows, with which this thesis began, this framework moves beyond a realm of single-site analysis to consider the social complexity, agency and hegemony of global exhibitions as they move. This can be used further to map how ideas, people, objects and movements collide and intertwine in curatorial practices underlying the globalisation of the arts. It is also important to acknowledge the drawbacks of the method and research strategy, however: it was extremely time-consuming. The multitude of texts traversed and interviews conducted in this study, as a means to map both the field and the flows, were an often-overwhelming number. On many occasions I felt that I had to sacrifice an interest in an individual instance or project for the broader coherence of the case study as a whole. For instance, that was the case for the exhibitions of contemporary Indian art held in China, such as *Indian Highway* in Beijing (2012) and *Place·Time·Play: Contemporary Art from the West Heavens to the Middle Kingdom* in Shanghai (2012), but I did not have the space to attend to these shows further. In evaluation, while I would adopt this methodology again, I would pursue a more bounded fieldwork with more targeted interviews: to read the field of curatorial practices and its exhibition flows, but this time with a much more manageable dataset.

7.2- From theory to practice

Acknowledging that curating is a practice involved with theory and certain pragmatics, the empirical research elaborated in this dissertation has informed my praxis as a curator. In relation to this study and the curatorial models that I proposed in the thesis, I had the opportunity to test this further and translate it into an exercise of curation in the exhibition project *La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound.*[376] This exhibition, which I co-curated with Bombay-based curator Nida Ghouse, took place at Villa Iris Artspace of Fundación Botín in Santander, Spain, in August-September 2013.

La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound was directly intertwined with my doctoral research from the very beginning. In 2010 the Art Advisory Committee of Fundación Botín invited me to submit an exhibition proposal related to my investigations conducted in India, a study that initially was partially funded by Fundación Botín. For the first two years of my PhD I enjoyed a scholarship in Museum Management and Curatorial Studies granted by this foundation to pursue my doctoral studies. Although the invitation to curate an exhibition was an initiative independent of the grant, the first contact was developed through their early patronage of my research from which the subsequent professional relationship began.

The initial proposal that I submitted in 2010 addressed a selection of artistic and curatorial practices in India that had taken a self-analytical positioning during the last decade. Conceived as a meta-exhibition, the proposed show was structured around various curatorial practices identified through my research with the aim to analyse the exhibition medium through the archive and retrace some of the most significant examples of contemporary art and curating in India. Two years later, in 2012, when I returned to this proposal to initiate its materialisation for the exhibition planned in the summer of 2013, I realised some of the limitations and challenges of my initial aim to transpose my doctoral research into an exhibition. In this regard, "practice must embody theory and theory must inform practice",[377] but the distinction between a scholarly curatorial research and the praxis of curating was evident in the proposal. This also coincided with the further development of my research, having elaborated and developed during this time the models

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[376] Núria Querol and Nida Ghouse (eds.), *La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound,* Santander: Fundación Botín, 2013. Exhibition catalogue. Bilingual publication Spanish/English.

[377] Raqs Media Collective, "On Curatorial Responsibility", in Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Ostevo (eds.), *Op. Cit.*, 2010, p. 278.

of transcultural curating proposed in this thesis. Thus, I was attentive to the politics and challenges of transcultural curating, and inclined to work in collaboration, gesturing towards the establishment of critical dialogues and multidirectional flows beyond the imperative of blockbusters survey shows that seem to prevail when exhibiting contemporary Indian art elsewhere.

With this intention, having interviewed curator Nida Ghouse for my doctoral research during her residency at Delfina Foundation in London in 2011 and having discussed with her the possibilities and challenges of transcultural curating,[378] I proposed that we work together as co-curators of this exhibition. Through our conversations and discussions, which centred on the possibilities of exhibiting contemporary art beyond fixed geographic boundaries and national strategies, we redefined the proposal as the exhibition *La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound.* Taking into account the initial exhibition proposal, this new concept moved forward the idea of retracing exhibitions to present an original curatorial proposition of exhibiting contemporary art in India and beyond. Instead of focusing on curatorial perspectives, definitions or locations, *La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound* privileged artworks, soundscapes, shared experiences and politics based on listening and seeing.

La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound invited its audience to consider an early history of sound reproduction technology and its arrival in India. The exhibition presented a range of artistic practices that engage with the nature of sound and the implications of sound reproduction technologies on contemporary culture. It explored the implications of these technologies, alongside certain colonial legacies, through works of contemporary art. In opening up the archives of early commercial and ethnographic recording expeditions, the show emphasised the relationship of sound to image, body, history, borders and voice. The focus on the objecthood of music and sound, while timely, reinforced a non-fixed vantage point of reference.

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[378] Interview with Nida Ghouse. Held at Delfina Foundation. London, 8 December 2011. Recorded.

Figure 7.1- *La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound.*
Exhibition Banner. Villa Iris Artspace, Fundación Botín, 2013.

The artist list featured those already established on the international art scene along with emerging practitioners. The nine artists featured were Lawrence Abu Hamdan (1983, lives and works in London), Shilpa Gupta (1976, lives and works in Mumbai), Susan Hiller (1940, lives and works in London), Dipna Horra (1974, lives and works in Ottawa), Rashmi Kaleka (1957, lives and works in Delhi), Robert Millis (1966, lives and works in Seattle), Yashas Shetty (1978, lives and works in Bangalore), Kiran Subbaiah (1971, lives and works in Bangalore) and The Travelling Archive - Moushumi Bhowmik and Sukanta Majumdar - (started 2003; 1964 and 1977, live and work in Calcutta). In this artist selection, we consciously moved beyond the sole inclusion of the "usual suspects", inviting to participate a wide range of practitioners, including diaspora and non-Indian artists. A favourable response by the Indian artists selected was the fact that the exhibition also included artists from

elsewhere and it broke with the trajectory of national survey shows, which again exemplify the problems and unease that artists feel towards the survey exhibition model.

On reflection, although we did not face many economic limitations due to the generous budget of Fundación Botín, other challenges and dynamics of power did arise. The exhibition was conceptualised and materialised in line with the collaborative and dialogical curatorial model proposed in this thesis. However, despite these aims, at an initial stage one could sense a certain institutional interest in re-territorialising the proposal more accordingly to the model of national surveys shows – including the wish to have 'India' in the title of the show. In this regard, explanations and a certain degree of negotiation with the institution were required in order to present the exhibition in a less geographically bound way. In the end, the institution was happy to negotiate on this, and what proved more difficult was the inclusion of artworks with multiple technologies in the show, as this was not part of the very first exhibition proposal. Furthermore, from an institutional point of view, as transpired in the way in which the exhibition was promoted and in their presentation in the catalogue, the main objective in producing this exhibition was not the show *per se*. Instead, the institutional philanthropic aim was to produce the exhibition as a material result of this research, thus collaborating with and professionally supporting a previous grant holder, and, in turn, publicising the fruitful results of the foundation's well-established educational programme, which supported this study.

Collaborations always entail points of encounter as well as of divergence and these dichotomies were present in this curatorial project. It would be naïve to assume that sharing a theoretical approach would equate to harmonious collaborations. As such, differences are inherent in the process of working together. In this regard, there were difficulties in working with a fellow curator, due to the logistics of being based in different countries and time zones and having different positions and ideas on the exhibition. This should be recognised as an on-going aspect of the second model where successful collaborations often need a lot of time to be invested in their development, especially in order for non-hegemonic projects to arise. The gaps between intention and manifestation were also demonstrated in the press coverage of the show. In general, the exhibition was well received by the press, featuring the embodiment and narratives of sound in the majority of the reviews while specifying the inclusion of Indian artists and artists from elsewhere. However, there were some instances where the media coverage presented the exhibition in a bounded way, foregrounding

Eurocentric views. For example, I did an interview with a journalist who is an acquaintance of mine for a local area newspaper in Spain. The interview was very sympathetic and I strove to emphasise our transcultural approach. However, the headline for the piece was "Asian art is active and vibrant". Arguably, the 'vibrant' reference partially returned to an orientalist framing,[379] demonstrating that despite transmitting a clear idea of the exhibition and its break with the trajectory of national survey exhibitions, it might be difficult to have an effect on how the system promotes the exhibition afterwards.

In sum, a transcultural exhibition is a site of encounters between the global and the local; artists and curators; institutional interests and curatorial aims, and of multiple positions, differences and affects. As I have pointed out in this self-reflexive account, the collaborative process entailed some challenges, but most importantly it led to fruitful dialogues and outcomes. *La presencia del sonido/The presence of sound* was a successful exhibition, an attempt to translate multiple aural histories, views and positions into the production of artistic and curatorial difference.

7.3- Areas for future research

One of the most significant conditions of the field of curatorial practices and its exhibition flows is their changeability, mobility and agency, transforming art practices and exhibitions as they move. With this approach in mind, I will now indicate some future areas of research that would strenghten the arguments made in this thesis. Feasibly, the two curatorial models proposed in this thesis could be split off and considered in closer detail. As demonstrated through the thesis, there is a compelling need to further develop South-South and South-East connections and networks and to study these anti-hegemonic platforms and their fields of possibilities. As such, I would be inclined to analyse in more depth the model "Collaborations and Critical Dialogues" through the lens of curatorial practices, exchanges and networks within the global South. Further consideration could be given to independent art spaces and artists' initiatives and collectives in India that have developed alternative circuits of production and distribution outside mainstream institutions and arts centres.

Since this study has developed an empirically based data collection and analysis, the collected data can be used further to analyse other examples of exhibitions as they move.

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[379] See Edward Said's seminal work *Orientalism* for an account of the Eurocentric view of the East. Edward Said, *Op. Cit.*, 1979.

Considering the mobility and changeability of "Biennales in India and India in Biennales" and "Indian Contemporary Art on the move", these case studies would benefit from a more sustained analysis. In the case of biennales, it would be beneficial to study the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, the first international biennale in India, established in 2012. With regard to "Indian Contemporary Art on the move", the analysis of subsequent examples of *Indian Highway* in Rome in 2011 and Beijing in 2012, and the study of *Santhal Family* in relation to the recent exhibitions *Social Fabric* in 2012 and *Tagore's Universal Allegories* in 2013,[380] would be valuable contributions for the further understanding of travelling exhibitions, transcultural curating and contemporary art on the move.

It is also important to note recent shifts in the field of curatorial practices and discourses in India. During the 2010s, an increased number of debates in the country have focused on the meaning of curating, the role of the curator and the responsibilities of curatorial praxis.[381] The curatorial imperative, as these discursive platforms have been named, has shaped the debates on contemporary Indian art and its exhibitions in the most immediate present.[382] By contrast, over the time frame of my study, the majority of my interviewees were sceptics about the practices of curating in India, which were often associated with the art market in the information I gathered during my fieldwork. Acknowledging the field of possibilities that might arise from a more responsible curating as well as underpinning the boom of Indian art globally and locally, further consideration could be given to the curatorial turn in India in the last two years, which has translated into a growing interest and debates around exhibition-making and its theories and practices.

Finally, a more in-depth consideration could be given to inequity in all dimensions, including questions of region, class, caste, race, ability, gender and sexual orientation. In regard to gender, although I did not start with a specific agenda to focus on women´s experiences while conducting my interviews, women constituted slightly more of my respondents: I interviewed thirty-one men and forty women. Following recent discussions on gender

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[380] These two exhibitions were curated by Grant Watson at Iniva in London and respectively looked at the social and economic role of textiles, particularly in India, and the legacy of the work of Rabindranath Tagore today.

[381] Amongst the recent discussions on exhibitions, education courses and curatorial thoughts are the workshop *Dialogue on Curating* (India International Centre, New Delhi, 18 and 19 January 2011); the discussion platform *The Experimenter Curators' Hub 2012* (Experimenter Gallery, Kolkata, 26 and 27 July 2012) and the postgraduate diploma course *Modern and Contemporary Indian Art and Curatorial Studies* (Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai, January-December 2014).

[382] See Mohd Ahmad Sabih, "The Curatorial Imperative", *Research Log,* Asia Art Archive website. Available at: http://www.aaa.org.hk/Diaaalogue/Details/928 [Last accessed: 11 December 2013]

disparities within the art scene in India,[383] the involvement of equitable numbers of men and women has been an advantage to understand the field more closely. However, this would benefit from a more sustained examination through an intersectional lens, studying the interactions and interrelations of multiple systems of discrimination or oppression. Moreover, as demonstrated in the thesis, there is a compelling need to further examine the impact of globalisation on subaltern art practitioners, a group often not considered through the lens of the global or the curatorial.

In summary, this thesis contributes to contemporary debates on curatorial practices underlying the globalisation of art and to the development of the field of research on curating. By studying the emergence of curating contemporary Indian art through the perspective of cultural globalisation and postcolonial theory, the study has identified the dual role of the global in becoming simultaneously a dominant institutional and commercial discourse and a central form of agency from the global South. As the conditions of the present change, so, too, will the field of curatorial practices and exhibition flows, as new forms of production, mediation and display will be called upon to act as resources to orientate discourses on conflict and direct new possibilities of a more ethical globalisation. The challenge for the researcher, then, is in understanding these dynamics and formations, their connections to discourses on social change, and how curatorial practices are made to matter in present times.

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[383] Whilst there are numerous texts looking at feminist representations of women artists, there is a lack of scholarly research looking at the gender inequalities within the art scene in India. An example of gender disparities was the artists selected for the first Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2012. In this large-scale exhibition, where more than eighty artists were selected, fewer than a quarter of the artists were women. In the conference *Fields of Legibility: Disciplines and practices of art writing in India,* organised by the Asia Art Archive and held on the occasion of the biennale on 6 February 2013 in Kochi, the participants queried the biennale's curators about the disparity between the numbers of women and men artists selected for the exhibition. To the public's surprise, the curators Bose Krishnamachari and Rias Komu had not even considered this issue.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Biennales in India and India in Biennales

A.I- Chronology of the participation of Indian artists in biennales worldwide, 1990- 2012[384]

1991

"4th Havana Biennale", La Havana, Cuba. 16 November – 31 December 1991. Artists from India: Charles Correa, Dakoji Devraj, Satish Gujral, M.F. Hussain, Sunil Janah, Krishen Khanna, N.N. Rimzon, K.G. Subramanyan, Vivan Sundaram, J. Swaminathan

1992

"dOCUMENTA IX", Kassel, Germany. 13 June – 20 September 1992. Artists from India: Bhupen Khakhar

1995

"1st Johannesburg Biennale", Johannesburg, South Africa. 28 February – 30 April 1995. "Dispossession: Four Women Artists from India" curated by: Geeta Kapur and Shireen Gandhy. Part of 'Bua! Emergent Voices'. Artists: Sheela Gowda, Nalini Malani, Pushpamala N, Nilima Sheikh

"1st Gwangju Biennale", Gwangju, South Korea. 20 September – 20 November 1995. Artists from India: Kali Charan Gupta, Ravinder Jamwal

"7th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh", Dacca, Bangladesh. 2 – 30 November 1995. Indian section curated by Satya Prakash. Official participation organised by Lalit Kala Akademi. 20 artists from India

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[384] The Chronology A.I- Participation of Indian Artists in Biennales Worldwide, 1990-2012 comprises the inclusion of contemporary artists from India in major biennales all over the world, especially the case of biennales in the Asia-Pacific region. It includes perennial exhibitions such as Havana Biennale, Sao Paolo Biennale, Sharjah Biennale, Liverpool Biennale, Lyon Biennale and dOCUMENTA, among others. The biennales in the Asia-Pacific region considered are: Gwangju Biennale, Busan Biennale, Shanghai Biennale, Beijing Biennale, Guangzhou Triennale, Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, Yokohama Triennale, Jogja Biennale, Taipei Biennale, Asian Art Biennale, Singapore Biennale, Asia Pacific Triennale, Sydney Biennale and Auckland Triennial. The Indian participation at Venice Biennale is not included given that will be considered in the Appendix A.IV. This Chronology is assembled from eclectic sources, such as biennale and artist' websites, and the research and interviews I conducted through the years. Some existing chronologies have also been referred to and updated which include Brigitte Ulmer "Major international exhibitions/biennials/triennials showing Indian artists" in the exhibition catalogue *Horn Please, Narratives in Contemporary Indian Art*, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007, pp. 74-77 and Évelyne Pomey, "Chronologie des expositions" in the exhibition catalogue *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…,* Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2011, pp.328-357.

1996

"2nd Asia-Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art", Brisbane, Australia. 27 September 1996 – 19 January 1997. Co-curator from India: Kamala Kapoor. Artists from India: Nalini Malani, Mrinalini Mukherjee, N.N. Rimzon, Nilima Sheikh, Vivan Sundaram

1997

"2nd Gwangju Biennale", Gwangju, Korea. 1 September - 27 November 1997. Artists from India: Vivan Sundaram

"2nd Johannesburg Biennale", Johannesburg, South Africa. 12 October – 12 December 1997. Artists from India: Vivan Sundaram

"6th Havana Bienal", Havana, Cuba. 3 May - 8 June 1997. Artists from India: Vivan Sundaram, Sutapa Biswas

1999

"1st Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale", Fukuoka, Japan. 6 March – 6 June 1999. Co-curator from India. Roobina Karode. Artists from India: Navjot Altaf, Subodh Gupta, Sheba Chhachhi, Jitish Kallat, Surendran Nair

"3th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art", Brisbane, Australia. 9 September 1999 - 26 January 2000. Co-curator from India: Gulammohammed Sheikh. Artists from India: Sonabai Rajawar, NS Harsha, Rummana Hussain, Surendran Nair, Ravinder Reddy

"6th Istanbul Biennale", Istanbul, Turkey. 17 September – 30 October 1999. Artists from India: Manisha Parekh

2000

"7th Havana Biennale", Havana, Cuba. November 2000 – January 2001. Artists from India: Sheba Chhachhi, Anita Dube, Jitish Kallat, Nalini Malani, Manisha Parekh

"3rd Gwangju Biennale", Gwangju, Korea. 29 March – 7 June 2000. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta, Nalini Malani, Sudarshan Shetty

2001

"1st Yokohama Triennial of Contemporary Art", Yokohama, Japan. 2 September – 11 November 2001. Artists from India: Atul Dodiya, Anita Dube

2002

"2nd Fukuoka Triennale", Fukuoka, Japan. 21 March - 23 June 2002. Artists from India: NS Harsha, Satish Sharma

"4th Shanghai Biennale", Shanghai, China. 22 November 2002 - 20 January 2003. Artists from India: Rahul Mahrotra

"4th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art", Brisbane, Australia. 12 September 2002 – 27 January 2003. Artists from India: Nalini Malani

"dOCUMENTA 11", Kassel, Germany. 8 June – 15 September 2002. Artists from India: Ravi Agarwal, Amar Kanwar, Raqs Media Collective

"Busan Biennale 2002", Busan, Korea. 15 September - 17 November 2002. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta

"MAAP 3 – Multimedia Art Asia Pacific", Beijing, China. 2002. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta

2003

"8th Havana Biennale", Havana, Cuba. 1 November – 15 December 2003. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta, Navjot Altaf, Open Circle

"InteractivA'03. Bienal Internacional de las Artes Mediáticas y Electrónicas", Merida, Mexico. 11 July – 28 September 2003. Artists from India: Subba Ghosh, Subodh Gupta, Pooja Kaul, Ranbir Kaleka, Nalini Malani, Tejal Shah, Kiran Subbaiah, Vivan Sundaram

"10th Biennale of moving image", Geneva, Switzeland. 7 – 15 November 2003. Artists from India: Sunil Bhatia and Zakir Chinde, Madhusree Dutta, Shilpa Gupta, Ranbir Kaleka, Faiza Khan, Nalini Malani, Mamta Murthy, R.V. Ramani, Kiran Subbaiah

"8th Istanbul Biennale", Istanbul, Turkey. 20 September – 16 November 2003 Artists from India: Runa Islam, Nalini Malani

"MAAP 4 – Multimedia Art Asia Pacific", Beijing, China. 2003. Artists from India: Nalini Malani

2004

"5th Shanghai Biennale", Shanghai, China. 29 September – 28 November 2004. Artists from India: Vivan Sundaram

"Busan Biennale 2004", Busan, South Korea. 22 May – 31 October 2004. Artists from India: Sonia Khurana, L.N. Tallur, Ajesh S. Kumar

"Taipei Biennale 2004", Taipei, Taiwan. 23 October, 2004 – 23 January 2005. Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective

"11th Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh", Dacca, Bangladesh. 15 – 31 January 2004. Artists from India: Aftab Ahmed, Dattatraya Apte, Vijay Bagodi, Amitabha Banerjee, Sandeep Bhatia, Usha Biswas, Hanuman Kambli, Abdul Karim, Ravi Kumar Kashi, Anil Kumar, Santosh More, Veer Munshi, K. Murleedharan, Savitri Pal, Rajesh Kumar Sharma, Jayes B. Shukla, Prem Singh, Rameshwar Singh, Sukhvinder Singh, Binoy Varghese

"3rd Seoul International Media Art Biennale", Seoul, South Korea. 15 December 2004 – 6 February 2005. Artists from India: Shilpa Gupta, Nalini Malani

"3th Liverpool Biennial", Liverpool, UK. 18 September – 28 November 2004. Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective

2005

"3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale", Fukuoka, Japan. 17 September – 27 November 2005. Artists from India: Shilpa Gupta, Bani Abidi, Hema Upadhyay, Shibu Natesan

"1st Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art", Moscow, Russia. 28 January – 28 February 2005. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta

"2nd Guangzhou Triennale", Guangzhou, China. 18 November 2005 – 15 January 2006. Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective

"2nd Yokohama Triennial of Contemporary Art", Yokohama, Japan. 28 September – 18 December 2005. Artists from India: Open Circle, Pushpamala N

"7th Sharjah Biennale", Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. 6 April - 6 June 2005. Artists from India: Nalini Malani, Vivan Sundaram

2006

"15th Sydney Biennale", Sydney, Australia. 8 June – 27 August 2006. Artists from India: Navjot Altaf, Shilpa Gupta, Amar Kanwar, Raqs Media Collective, Ranjani Shettar

"4th Liverpool Biennial", Liverpool, UK. 16 September – 26 November 2006. Artists from India: Shilpa Gupta

"9th Havana Biennale", Havana, Cuba. 27 March – 27 April 2006. Artists from India: Shilpa Gupta and Tallur L.N.

"5th Asia-Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art", Brisbane, Australia. 2 December 2006 – 27 May 2007. Artists from India: Jitish Kallath, Bharti Kher, Nasreen Mohamendi, Kumar Shahani

"6th Gwangju Biennale", Gwangju, Korea. 8 September – 11 November 2006. Artists from India: Jitish Kallath

"6th Shanghai Biennale", Shanghai, China. 29 September – 28 November 2006. Artists from India: Tallur L.N., Shilpa Gupta

"9th Biennale de Lyon", Lyon, France. 19 September 2007 - 6 January 2008. Artists from India: Shilpa Gupta, Sheela Gowda, Ranjani Shettar

"1st Singapore Biennale", Singapore. 4 September - 12 November 2006. Artists from India: Bani Abidi, Alwar Balasubramaniam, Sheba Chhachhi, NS Harsha, Ashok Sukumaran

"Busan Biennale 2006", Busan, South Korea. . 15 September – 25 November 2006. Artists from India: Open Circle, N.N. Rimzon

"Taipei Biennale 2006", Taipei, Taiwan. 4 Nov 2006 - 25 Feb 2007. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta, Nalini Malani, Vivan Sundaram

"dOCUMENTA 12", Kassel, Germany. 16 June – 23 September 2007. Artists from India: Atul Dodiya, Sheela Gowda, Amar Kanwar, Nasreen Mohamedi, C.K. Rajan

2007

"10th Istanbul Biennale", Istanbul, Turkey. 8 September – 4 November 2007. Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective

2008

"7th Gwangju Biennale", Gwangju, South Korea. 5 September – 9 November 2008. Artistic Directors: Okwui Enwezor, Curators: Hyunjin Kim and Ranjit Hoskote. Artists from India: Bani Abidi, Atul Dodiya, Sonia Khurana, Shilpa Gupta, Dayanita Singh, Apinan Poshyananda

"Asia Triennial Manchester I", Manchester, UK. 5 April – 1 June 2008. Artists from India: Shaina Anand, Shilpa Gupta, Jasmeen Patheja, Tejal Shah, Surekha

"3th Yokohama Triennial of Contemporary Art", Yokohama, Japan. 13 September – 30 November 2008. Artists from India: Nikhil Chopra, Shilpa Gupta

"Manifesta7. The European Biennial of Contemporary Art", Bolzano, Italy. 19 July – 2 November 2008. Co-curated by Adam Budak, Anselm Franke/Hila Peleg, Raqs Media Collective. Artists from India: Shahid Amin, Ranu Ghosh, Rupali Gupte & Prasad Shetty, Sanjay Kak, Arundathy Roy, Dayanita Singh

"2nd Singapore Biennale", Singapore. 11 September - 16 November 2008. Artists from India: Srinivasa Prasad, Shubigi Rao, Kiran Subbaiah

"Kuandu Biennale 2008", Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei. 26 September – 30 November 2008. Artist from India: Shilpa Gupta

"Busan Biennale 2008", Busan, South Korea. 6 September – 15 November 2008. Artists from India: Bharti Kher

"3th Guangzhou Triennale", Guangzhou, China. 18 November 2005 – 15 January 2006. Artists from India: Archana Hande, Jitish Kallat, Sarnath Banerjee

"3rd Seville International Biennial of Contemporary Art", Seville, Spain. 2 October 2008 - 11 January 2009. Artist from India: Shilpa Gupta

"16th Sydney Biennale", Sydney, Australia. 18 June - 7 Sept. 2008. Artists from India: Nalini Malani, Sharmila Samant, Bari Kumar, Vivan Sundaram, Ranbir Kaleka

2009

"10th Biennale de Lyon", Lyon, France. 16 September 2009 – 3 January 2010. Artists from India: Shilpa Gupta, Bani Abidi

"9th Sharjah Biennial", Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. 16 March – 16 May 2009. Artists from India: CAMP, N.S. Harsha, Sheela Gowda

"4th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale 2009", Fukuoka, Japan. 5 September, 2009 – 23 November 2009. Artists from India: Atul Bhalla, Subodh Gupta, Ashok Sukumaran, Pors & Rao

"6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art", Brisbane, Australia. 5 December 2009 – 5 April 2010. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta, Thukral & Tagra

"3th Moscow Biennale", Moscow, Russia. 25 September – 25 October 2009. Artists from India: Sheba Chhachhi, Atul Dodiya, Anita Dube, Ravinder Reddy

"2009 Asian Art Biennale", Taichung, Taiwan. 24 October 2009 – 28 February 2010. Artists from India: Sheba Chhachhi, Subodh Gupta, Reena Saini Kallat, Thukral & Tagra

'4th Tate Triennial: Altermodern', London, England. 3 February – 26 April 2009. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta

"3th Thesaloniki Biennale", Thesaloniki, Greece. 18 September - 18 December 2009. Artists from India: Sheela Gowda

2010

"6th Liverpool Biennial", Liverpool, UK. 18 September – 28 November 2010. Artists from India: Sonia Khurana

"8th Shanghai Biennale", Shanghai, China. 24 October, 2010 – 23 January, 2011 Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective, Nikhil Chopra

"29th Sao Paulo Biennial", Sao Paolo, Brasil. 25 September – 12 December 2010 . Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective, NS Harsha, Amar Kanwar

"4th Auckland Triennale", Auckland, New Zeland. 12 March – 20 June 2010. Artists from India: Shilpa Gupta

2011

"4th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art", Moscow, Russia. 23 September – 30 Otober 2011. Artists from India: Shilpa Gupta, T. V. Santhosh

"10th Sharjah Biennial", Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. 16 March – 16 May 2011. Artists from India: CAMP, Amar Kanwar

"Asia Triennial Manchester II", Manchester, UK. 1 October – 27 November 2011. Artists from India: NS Harsha, Manisha Parekh, Pushpa Kumari

"3rd Singapore Biennale", Singapore. 13 March - 15 May 2011. Artists from India: Gigi Scaria, Sheela Gowda

"4th Yokohama Triennale of Contemporary Art", Yokohama, Japan. 6 August – 6 November 2011. Artist from India: NS Harsha

"Evento, The Urbain Art Biennale" Bordeaux, France. 9 October 2009 - 7 February 2010. Artist from India: Shilpa Gupta

"1st Biennale Jogja XI 2011 Edition #1: Indonesia and India Meeting", Jakarta, Indonesia. 25 November 2011 - 8 January 2012. Curated by Alia Swastika and Suman Gopinath. Artists from India: Atul Dodiya, Archana Hande, Anita Dube, Amar Kanwar, N S Harsha, Prabhavati Meppayil, Sreshta Premnath, Pushpamala N, Riyaz Komu, K.P Reji, Sheela Gowda, Shilpa Gupta, Sheba Chhachhi, Sakshi Gupta, Valsan Koorma Kolleri

"2011 Asian Art Biennale", Taichung, Taiwan. 1 October 2011 - 1 January 2012. Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective, Bani Abidi, L.N. Tallur

"4th Guangzhou Triennale. Inaugural Exhibition", Guangzhou, China. 22 September - 27 November 2011. Artist from India: Ranbir Kaleka

"XI Bienal de Cuenca", Today's Art Museo de Arte Modernos, Ecuador. 11 November 2011 - 31 January 2012. Artist from India: Shilpa Gupta

2012

"Energy Plus, Mumbai Pavilion, 9th Shanghai Biennale, 2012", Shanghai, China. 2 October 2012 - 31 March 2013. Curators: Diana Campbell and Susan Hapgood. Artists from India: Pablo Bartholomew, Mansi Bhatt, Hemali Bhuta, Neha Choksi, Shilpa Gupta, Kaushik Mukhopadhyay, Manish Nai, Gyan Panchal, Sharmila Samant

"9th Gwangju Biennale", Gwangju, Korea. 7 September – 11 November 2012. Co-directed and curated by: Nancy Adajania, Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Mami Kataoka, Sunjung Kim, Carol Yinghua Lu and Alia Swastika. Artists from India: CAMP, Jangarh Singh Shyam, Sheba Chhachhi

"Busan Biennale 2012", Busan, South Korea. 22 September – 24 November 2012. Artists from India: Sheela Gowda

"4th Guangzhou Triennale", Guangzhou, China. 28 September – 16 December 2012. Artists from India: Dayanita Singh

"Taipei Biennale 2012", Taipei, Taiwan. 29 September 2012 – 13 January 2013. Curated by Anselm Franke. Co-Curator: Natasha Ginwala. Artists from India: Yashas Shetty, Ashish Avikunthak

"18th Sydney Biennale", Sydney, Australia. 27 June – 16 September 2012. Artists from India: Alwar Balasubramaniam

"7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art", Brisbane, Australia. 8 December 2012 — 14 April 2013. Artists from India: Atul Dodiya, Sheila Makhijani, Dayanita Singh, L.N. Tallur, Raqs Media Collective

"dOCUMENTA 13", Kassel, Germany. 9 June – 16 September 2012. Artists from India: Nalini Malani, Tejal Shah, Bani Abidi, Amar Kanwar, CAMP

"5th Beijing Biennale", Beijing, China. 28 September – 22 October 2012. Indian Special Exhibition organised by the Lalit Kala Akademi. Artists from India: Anju Dodiya, Chittrovanu Mazumdar, Deepak Shinde, K K Muhamed, N. N. Rimzon, Poosapati Parameshwar Raju, K S Radhakrishnan, Riyas Kommu, Seema Kohli, Suman Gupta, Vijay Bagodi

"Biennale Bénin 2012", Benin. 8 November 2012 - 13 January 2013. Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective

"11th Bienal de la Havana", La Havana, Cuba. 11 May – 11 June 2012. Artists from India: T.V. Shantosh

"1st Kiev Biennale, Arsenale 2012", Kiev, Ukraine. 24 May – 31 July 2012. Artists from India: Jitish Kallat

A.II- India Triennale: Chronology[385]

1st TRIENNALE-INDIA
10 Feb 1968 - 31 Mar 1968

No. of Countries: 31

No. of Works: 649

Venue(s):   Lalit Kala Akademi; National Gallery of Modern Art

2nd TRIENNALE-INDIA
01 Feb 1971 - 31 Mar 1971

No. of Countries: 47

No. of Works: 803

Venue(s):   Lalit Kala Akademi; Sridharani Galleries; National Gallery of Modern Art

3rd TRIENNALE-INDIA
08 Feb 1975 - 21 Mar 1975

No. of Countries: 22

No. of Works: 606

Venue(s):   Lalit Kala Akademi, Bahawalpur House Hall

4TH TRIENNALE-INDIA
10 Feb 1978 - 23 Mar 1978

No. of Countries: 36

No. of Works: 994

Venue(s):   Rabindra Bhawan Galleries, LKA, Defence Pavilion Pragati Maidan

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[385] Sources consulted: Catalogues of the first three editions of the India Triennale (1968, 1971 and 1974); Sovon Som (guest ed.), "Triennale India Special Issue", in *Lalit Kala Contemporary*, 36, 1990; Asia Art Archive Website: "Triennale-India Event Overview" in *All you want to know about international art biennials.* Available at:
http://www.aaa.org.hk/onlineprojects/bitri/en/overview.aspx?id=A008
[Last accessed: 14 December 2013] and the Biennales Database ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen). Available at:
http://www.ifa.de/index.php?id=2753&L=0&biennale=&stadt=&land=Indien
[Last accessed: 25 July 2011].

5TH TRIENNALE-INDIA
16 Mar 1982 - 07 Apr 1982

No. of Countries: 45

No. of Works: 940

Venue(s):   Defence Pavilion Pragati Maidan

6TH TRIENNALE-INDIA
22 Feb – 21 Mar 1986

No. of Countries: 42

Venue(s):   Rabindra Bhawan Galleries, LKA

7TH TRIENNALE-INDIA
13 Feb – 14 Mar 1991

No. of Countries: 38

Venue(s):   Rabindra Bhawan Galleries, LKA

8TH TRIENNALE-INDIA
17 Feb – 15 Mar 1994

No. of Countries: 41

Venue(s):   Rabindra Bhawan Galleries, LKA

9TH TRIENNALE-INDIA
03 Dec 1997 - 31 Dec 1997

No. of Countries: 38

Venue(s):   Rabindra Bhawan Galleries, LKA; National Gallery of Modern Art;
Max Mueller Bhavan

10TH TRIENNALE-INDIA
22 Jan 2001 - 21 Feb 2001

No. of Countries: 30

Venue(s):   Rabindra Bhawan Galleries, LKA; National Gallery of Modern Art; All
India Fine Arts and Crafts Society

11TH TRIENNALE-INDIA
14 Jan 2005 - 10 Feb 2005

No. of Artists: 164

No. of Countries: 33

Venue(s):   Rabindra Bhavan Galleries, LKA; National Gallery of Modern Art;
India

                        Gandhi National Centre for Arts; Crafts Museum

A.III- The Biennale Society: People and Events[386]

The Biennale Society
(Registered under the Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860, Government of NCT of Delhi)

President: Professor Jyotindra Jain
Secretary: Vivan Sundaram
Treasurer: Pooja Sood
Members: Professor K.T. Ravindran, Geeta Kapur, Gayatri Sinha, Sheba Chhachhi, Ranbir Kaleka and Roobina Karode (former treasurer)

Founded in 2004

Symposium on "The making of international exhibitions: Siting biennales"

- International Symposium "The making of international exhibitions: Siting biennales", coinciding with the opening of the 11th India Triennale
Date: 16th – 18th January 2005
Venue: Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi
Organised by Talk About Curating (TAG). Coordinated by Vivan Sundarama and Pooja Sood. Supported by Max Mueller Bhavan and British Council

Lecture Series… for an inaugural Delhi Biennale, November 2007

- The Biennale Society, A Lecture Series
Date: 3rd - 4th January 2006

Programme:

·Nicholas Serota, Director Tate, UK
Lecture: "Are Museums of Modern Art necessary in the 21st century"
Date: 3rd January 2006
Venue: Triveni Kala Sangam Auditorium, Tansen Marg, New Delhi
Organised by The National Gallery of Modern Art and The Biennale Society. Supported by The British Council

·Roger Buergel, Director Documenta 12, Kassel
Lecture on his Concept of the 2007 Documenta
Date: 4th January 2006
Venue: IIC auditorium, New Delhi
Organised by The Biennale Society and the India International Centre. Supported by the Max Mueller Bhavan

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[386] Information gathered from my interviewees and various online sources, among them sarai.net and School of Arts and Aesthetics (JNU) mailing list. The detailed programme of the international conference "Elective affinities, constitutive differences, contemporary art in Asia" is presented as it appears in the conference blurb. I am grateful to Zasha Colah for passing me a copy of this publication.

·Teresa Gleadowe, Head of Curating Contemporary Art Department, Royal College of Art, London
Lecture: "What is Curating Now?"
Date: 4th January 2006
Venue: IIC Annexe Lecture Theatre, New Delhi

- Robert Storr, Artistic Director 2007 Venice Biennale
Lecture: "First Venice, then...Biennials in a polycentric art world"
Date: 7th August 2006
Venue: School of Art and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
Organized by The Biennale Society in collaboration with The School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU

- Dr. Charles Merewether, Artistic Director, 2006 Biennale of Sydney
Lecture: "Taking Place: Acts of Survival for a Time to Come"
Date: 24th November 2006
Venue: Little Theatre NCPA, Mumbai
Organised by Mohile Parikh Center for the Visual Arts, Mumbai, in association with The Biennale Society, Delhi

International Conference "Elective affinities, constitutive differences, contemporary art in Asia"

Date: 9th, 10th and 11th March 2007
Venue: Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Jawahar Bhawan, New Delhi
Organized by The Biennale Society in collaboration with The School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU. Sponsored by University Grants Commission. Supported by The Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Max Mueller Bhavan, Japan Foundation, Sanskriti Foundation and the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation.

Programme:

·DAY 1, 9th March 2007

Introduction: Parul Dave Mukherji and Geeta Kapur

- Session 1: Civilizational Exchange: stories, riddles, conversations. Chair: Jyotindra Jain

Rustom Bharucha 'The Illusions and Antagonism of Civilizational Exchange: Critical Reflections on Dismantling Asian Empires'

Oscar Ho 'Curatorial Work as Collective Fabrication'

Sharmini Pereira 'The Consequences of a Serial Thriller – The One-Year Drawing Project'

Nancy Adajania 'Storylines for the self'

- Session 2: The worlding of art. Chair: Gulammohammed Sheikh

Manray Hsu 'When cosmopolitan attitudes becomes form'

Fumio Nanjo 'Belief: Asian Artists at the Singapore Biennale'

Won-il Rhee 'Thermocline of Art – New Asian Waves'

Arshiya Lokhandwala 'Worlding Asia: A conceptual framework for the 1st Delhi Biennale'

·DAY II, 10th March 2007

- Session 3: Public Domain: the shape of the argument

Panel with Shivaji Panikkar, Y.S. Alone and Santhosh S. 'Art and subaltern politics: focus on Dalit discourse'

Jeebesh Bagchi 'What Gets Left Behind'

Keynote Address: Marian Pastor Roces 'Curating Barbarians: Descriptions of a Visual Practice'

- Session 4: Pleasures of the Cosmopolitan. Chair: Girish Shahane

Ranjit Hoskote 'Retrieving the Far West: Towards a Curatorial Representation of the House of Islam

Quddus Mirza 'Miniature, Monster, Modernism'

Ashish Rajadhyaksha 'Reading Off the Wall'

Shaheen Merali 'A Rose by another name…'

·DAY 3, 11th March 2007

- Session 5: Economies of Production: ruptures. Chair: Annapurna Garimella

Parul Dave Mukherji 'Women Artists in India: Riots, Violence and Multiple Politics of Praxis'

Negar Azimi 'An Honest Engagement with the Pitfalls (and Perks) of the Ethnic (Rubric)

Valeria Ibraeva 'The Art of Kazakhstan as a Political Project'

Charles Merewether '…to draw an oblique line in the sand: towards a natural history of contemporary art in the wake of Tampa'

Ahmad Bin Mashadi 'Southeast Asia, perspectives of region in exhibitionary practice'

- Session 6: Counter-geography: ecology, locality, and the ground of history. Chair: Sheba Chhachhi

Lu Jie 'Long March into Public Domain'

Gayatri Sinha 'Cartographic Necessities: contemporary practices and the making of a brave new world'

Kuroda Raiji 'Fukuoka Triennale in the B(l)oom of the Biennale/Triennale in Asia

KT Ravindram 'Public Space, Private Dreams'

Valediction: Vivan Sundaram, Naman P. Ahuja

The Biennale Society Dialogues

- Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Artistic Director dOCUMENTA 13
Lecture: "The dance was very frenetic - Notes towards dOCUMENTA (13) - 2012"
Date: 18th February 2010
Venue: School of Art and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
Organized by The Biennale Society/The Biennale Society Dialogues in collaboration with The School of Arts and Aesthetics, JNU

A.IV- Indian participation at Venice Biennale 1990-2011

1995

La Biennale di Venezia, 'Nessuno Tocchi Caino (Hands off Cain)', Venice, Italy Subodh Gupta

2003

"50th Biennale di Venezia", Venice, Italy. 15 June - 2 November 2003. Artists from India: Raqs Media Collective

2005

"51th Biennale di Venezia", Venice, Italy. 12 June – 1 November 2005. Artists from India: Subodh Gupta

"Icon: India Contemporary"

12 June – 31 July 2005

Collateral exhibition at the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.

Curated by: Peter Nagy, Julie Evans and Gordon Knox

Artists: Atul Dodiya, Anita Dube, Ranbir Kaleka, Nalini Malani, Raqs Media Collective and Nataraj Sharma

2007

"52th Biennale di Venezia", Venice, Italy. 10 June – 21 November 2007. Artists from India: Nalini Malani, Riyas Komu

2009

"53th Biennale di Venezia", Venice, Italy. 7 June – 22 November 2009. Artists from India: Nikhil Chopra, Anju Dodiya, Sunil Gawde, Sheela Gowda

2011

"54th Biennale di Venezia", Venice, Italy. 4 June - 27 Nov. 2011. Artists from India: Dayanita Singh

"Everyone Agrees: It's About to Explode…" 1st India Pavilion

Curated by: Ranjit Hoskote

Artists: Gigi Scaria, Zarina Hashmim, Praneet Soi, The Desire Machine Collective (Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya)

Appendix B – Indian contemporary art on the move

B.I- Chronology of major exhibitions elsewhere 1990-2010[387]

1993

"A Critical Difference. Contemporary Art from India", Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, Camden Art Center, London, Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, Huddersfield City Art Gallery, Huddersfield, UK. Touring exhibition in collaboration with The Showroom, London, UK. Curated by David Thorp. Chapter Arts Centre, January – May 1993; Camden Art Centre, 28 May 1993 - 04 July 1993; Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, August 1993; Huddersfield Art Gallery, Huddersfield, September 1993

"India Songs. Multiple Streams in Contemporary Indian Art", Art Gallery in New South Walles, Sydney, Australia. Travelling exhibition, then toured to Wollongong, Orange, Canberra and Campbelltown. Curator: Victoria Lynn in collaboration with Manjit Bawa and Haku Shah. 1 April - 9 May 1993

"Contemporary Indian Art from Glenbarra Art Museum", Yokohama Sogoh Musuem, Japan. 20 October – 14 November 1993

1994

"Vivan Sundaram: Map, Monument, Fallen Mortal", South London Gallery, London, UK. 14 January – 20 February 1994

1995

"Inside-Out: Contemporary Women Artists of India", Middlesborough Art Gallery, Cleveland, 7 October – 2 December 1995; Huddersfield Art Gallery, Huddersfield, 13 July – 17 August 1996; Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham, 7 September – 19 October 1996, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, 25 November – 21 December, 1996. Curated by Alison Lloyd

"Indian Contemporary Art Tokyo", Art Museum Ginza, Tokyo, Japan. 3 – 8 October 1995

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[387] The Chronology "Majors exhibitions elsewhere 1990-2010" comprises major shows of contemporary artists from India that have taken place elsewhere. It lists mainly group exhibitions and some selected solo shows. The selection criteria have given priority to exhibitions held at major art institutions and some independent art spaces, not including commercial spaces or private galleries. The Chronology is assembled from eclectic sources and the research I conducted through the years. Some existing chronologies have also been referred to and updated which include Brigitte Ulmer "Late Arrival: An Exhibition Chronology of Contemporary Indian Art" in the exhibition catalogue *Horn Please, Narratives in Contemporary Indian Art*, Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007, pp. 59-77 and Évelyne Pomey, "Chronologie des expositions" in the exhibition catalogue *Paris-Delhi-Bombay…*, Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2011, pp.328-357.

1996

"Fire and Life", Exhibition toured in Bangalore, Baroda, Brisbane, Canberra, Calcutta, Delhi, Melbourne, Mumbai, Perth, Sydney (1996 - 1997). Organised by Asialink Melbourne. Curators: Alison Carroll, Julie Ewington, Victoria Lynn, Chaitanya Sambrani (Australia-India)

"The New South – Contemporary Painting and Sculpture from South India", Delfina Gallery, Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol and Middlesborough Art Gallery, Middlesborough, UK

"The Other Self", The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Curated by Els Reijnders, Foundation for Indian Artists, in collaboration with Sanskriti Pratishtan, 18 May – 23 June 1996

1997

"Tryst with Destiny – Art from Modern India, 1947-1997", Singapore Art Museum, Singapore. Curated by Karen Lim, Rakhi Sarkar and R. Siva Kumar. 24 October 1997 – 18 January 1998

"India – A Celebration of Independence, 1947-1997", Philadelphia Museum of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, USA. This major exhibition commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of India's independence with photographs by Indian and foreign artists. The exhibition then toured to Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Knoxville Museum of Art, USA; Royal Festival Hall, London, UK; National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi and National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, India. 6 July – 31 August, 1997

"Epic Reality: Contemporary Narrative Painting from India", Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, USA. Curated by Dana Friis-Hansen. 3 October – 16 November, 1997

"Out of India: Contemporary Art of the South Asian Diaspora", Queens Museum of Art, New York, USA. Curated by Jane Farver. 8 December, 1997 – 22 March, 1998

"Rediscovering the Roots: Contemporary Indian Art", Museo de la Nación, Lima, Peru. Curated by Laxma Goud. Organised by the Lalit Kala Akademi, 15 – 31 August

"Contemporary Indian Art. Seven Artists from the collection of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi", Ludwig Múzeum - Kortárs Művészeti Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary. Curated by Krisztina Szipocs and Amitava Das, 21 August – 5 October

"Telling Tales of Self, Nation, Art", Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, UK. Curated by Rasna Bhushan. September 1997

1998

"Private Mythologies: Contemporary Art From India", The Japan Foundation, Tokyo, Japan. Curated by Akira Tatehata. 17 October – 29 November, 1998

1999

"Timeless Visions: Contemporary Art of India", Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, USA. Works from the Chester and Davida Herwitz Collection

2000

"Drawing Space. Contemporary Indian Drawing", Beaconsfield, London; Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham, UK. Curated by Suman Gopinath and Grant Watson. 7 October – 29 November 2000, London and 17 March – 28 April 2001 Nottingham

2001

"Bombay/Mumbai 1992-2001", Tate Modern, London. Curated by Geeta Kapur and Ashish Rajadhyasksha; part of the exhibition "Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis". Inaugural exhibition of the Tate Modern, London, UK. 1 February - 29 April, 2001

"Bollywood Has Arrived: Indian and Dutch Contemporary Art", Passenger Terminal Amsterdam, Netherlands. Curated by Els Reijnders, Foundation for Indian Artists and Jim Beard Gallery Foundation. 23 June - 1 August 2001

"Moving Ideas: A Contemporary Dialogue with India", Montreal, OBORO, Vancouver, Canada. Curated by Hoopoe Curatorial. 16 February – 31 March, 2001. One section of this exhibition was the exhibition: "Moving Ideas, Secular Practice: Recent Art from India", Gallery La Centrale, Montreal, Contemporary Art Gallery, the Charles H. Scott Gallery and the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada. Curated by Peter White from the Hoopoe Curatorial Collective. November 10 to December 15, 2001

"Indian Painting", Art Gallery of New South Wale, Sydney, Australia. Curated by Haema Sivanesan. 6 April - 2 July 2001

"Woman/Goddess", Indian Center of Art and Culture, New York, USA. Curated by Gayatri Sinha. 21 June – 11 August

"Amrita Sher-Gil and Vivan Sundaram", Ernst Museum, Budapest, Hungary. Curator: Katalin Keseru

2002

"Kapital and Karma: Recent Positions in Indian Art", Kunsthalle wien, Vienna, Austria. Curated by Gerald Matt, Angelika Fitz and Michael Wörgötter. 29 March - 9 June, 2002

"Bhupen Khakhar", Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain. 6 June - 16 September 2002. Then toured to The Lowry, Manchester, UK

"India – Contemporary Art from Northeastern Private Collections", Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Musuem, New Brunswick, USA. Works on loan from collectors Sunanda and Umesh Gaur, New Jersey, USA. 7 April – 31 July 2002

"Self: Contemporary Indian Video Art", Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia. Curated by Johan Pijnappel. 4 – 20 July 2002

"New Indian Art: Home – Street – Shrine – Bazaar – Museum", Manchester City Art Gallery, Manchester, UK. Curated by Gulammohammed Sheikh and Jyotindra Jain. 13 July - 01 September 2002

2003

Festival "Body City. New perspectives from India" held at The House of World Cultures, Berlin, Germany. This included the two exhibitions: "subTerrain: artworks in the cityfold" curated by Geeta Kapur and "Popular Indian Culture. 'The Conquest of the World as Picture'" curated by Jyotindra Jain. 19 September – 16 November, 2003

"The Tree from the Seed: Contemporary Art from India", Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo, Norway. Curated by Gavin Jantjes. 30 January – 27 April 2003

"City Park", Project Art Center, Dublin, Ireland. Curated by Suman Gopinath and Grant Watson. 27 June – 1 August 2003

2004

"Edge of Desire: Recent Art in India", Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia. Curated by Chaitanya Sambrani and jointly organized by the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth and the Asia Society, New York. This major exhibition then toured to the United States (Asia Society, 1 March – 5 June, 2005, and the Queens Museum of Art, 27 February – 5 June, 2005); to Mexico (Tamayo Museum, Mexico City, 18 Aug. – 20 Nov., 2005); back to the United States (University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA), 14 June – 18 September, 2006). The final venue was in India, at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi (14 November – 8 December 2006) and Mumbai (8 January – 9 February, 2007). In Perth, Australia, was first exhibited on 25 Sept 2004 - 9 January 2005

"ZOOM! Art in Contemporary India", Culturgest, Lisbon, Portugal. Curators: Nancy Adajania and Luís Serpa. Apr 7 - Jun 6 2004

"Rites / Rights / Rewrites. Womens' Video Art from India", Hartell Gallery at Cornell University, Ithaca and Duke University, John Hope Franklin Center, Durham, USA. Curated by Arshiya Lokhandwala. 1 – 6 March 2004 at Hartell Gallery at Cornell University, Ithaca and 2 March – 1 April, 2005 at Duke University, John Hope Franklin Center, Durham, USA

"Another Passage to India", Musée d'Ethnographie, Geneva, Switzerland. Curated by Pooja Sood. 21 October – 30 November 2004

"Crossing Visions II. Indian Video Art: History in Motion", Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan. Curated by Johan Pijnappel. 7 February – 21 March

2005

"ICON. Indian Contemporary", Refectory of the former Convent SS.Cosma & Damiano Campo San Cosmo, Venice, Italy. 51st Venice Biennale Collateral Event. Curators: Julie Evans, Gordon Knox and Peter Nagy. 12 June – 31 July 2005

"Indian Paintings of the New Millennium: Sunanda and Umesh Gaur Collection", Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery at Fairfield University, USA. 17 September - 4 December, 2005

"Indian Summer: La Jeune Scène artistique Indienne", Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France. Curated by Deepak Ananth, Henry-Claude Cousseau and Jany Lauga. 7 October - 31 December 2005

"Vivan Sundaram. Re-take of Amrita", Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography, Toronto, Canada. 22 September – 29 October 29, 2005

2006

"Sub-contingent. The Indian Subcontinent in Contemporary Art", Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy. Curated by Francesco Manacorda and Ilaria Bonacossa. 30 June – 8 October 2006

"Bombay Maximum City", Lille 3000 Festival, Lille, France. Curated by Caroline Naphegyi. 14 October 2006 – 14 January 2007

"Hungry God: Indian Contemporary Art", Arario Gallery, Beijing, China; Busan Museum, Busan, Korea. Curated by June Y. Gwak. 3 September – 15 October, 2006, Beijing and 12 January - 19 February 2007, Busan

"Indian Express – Sacred and Popular", Helsinki City Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland. Curated by Jyotindra Jain. 2 March – 30 July 2006

"India of the Senses", Espace Louis Vuitton, Paris, France. Curated by Hervé Mikaeloff and Deepak Ananth. 5 May - 25 August 25, 2006

"Cinema Pragoya: Indian Experimental Film and Video", Tate Modern, London, UK. Curated by Shai Heredia, Experimenta, and no.w.here. 15-19 September, 2006

"Speaking of Others. Impossible India", Kunstverein Frankfurt, Germany. Curated by Nina Möntmann. 27 September – 19 November 2006

"Watching me, Watching India. New Photography from India", Photography Forum International and Kommunale Gallery, Frankfurt, Germany. Curated by Gayatri Sinha and Celina Lunsford. 30 September – 26 November, 2006

"Passages: Contemporary India", Palais de Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium. Curated by Jany Lauga and Deepak Ananth. 7 October 2006 – 21 January 2007

"Hybrid Trend. Contemporary Art Exhibition India & Korea", Hangaram Art Museum, Seoul Art Centre, Seoul, Korea. Curated by Insang Song and Jai Krishna Agarwal. 8 November – 13 December 2006

2007

"Amrita Sher-Gil", Tate Modern, London, UK. Curated by Chris Dercon. 28 February - 22 April 2007

"Nalini Malani", Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland. Curated by Enrique Juncosa. 10 July 10 – 14 October 2007

"Horn Please: Narratives in Contemporary Art", Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland. Curated by Bernard Fibicher and Suman Gopinath. 21 September 2007 - 06 January 2008

"New Narratives. Contemporary art from India", Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, USA. Curated by Betty Seid in collaboration with Johan Pijnappel. 26 July – 23 September, 2007. Then toured to Kansas where was exhibited at Salina Art Center, 5 January – 16 March 2008; Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Musuem, New Brunswick, 12 April – 31 July 2008

"Private/Corporate IV. Works from the Lekha and Anupam Poddar and DaimlerChrysler Collections: a dialogue", DaimlerChrysler Contemporary, Berlin, Germany. 19 January - 20 May 2007

"India. Public Space – Private Space. Contemporary Photography and Video Art", Newark Museum, New Jersey, USA. Curated by Zette Emmons, Gayatri Sinha and Paul Sternberger. 19 September, 2007 – 6 January 2008

"Emerging India. A Group Show of 45 Young Contemporary Artists", The Henry Moore Gallery, Royal College of Art, London, UK. 29 August – 4 September 2007

"Gateway Bombay: Art from the Herwitz Collection", Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. Curated by Susan Bean in collaboration with Beth Citron 14 July, 2007 - 7 December, 2008

"Urban Manners. Artisti contemporani dall'India", Hangar Bicocca, Milan, Italy. Curated by Adelina von Fürstenberg. 19 October, 2007 – 06 January 2008

"Fluss, Foto und Medienkunst aus Indien. Eine Entdeckungsreise", Schloss Wolkersdorf, Wolkersdorf, Austria. Curated by Renate Bertlmann. 12 May – 3 June 2007

"Tiger by the Tail – Women Artists of India Transforming Culture", Brandeis University, Massachusetts, USA. Co-curated by Elinor W. Gadon, Wendy Tarlow Kaplan and Roobina Karode. 2 October – 14 December 2007. Touring exhibition

"India: New Installations", The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, USA. Curated by Michael Olijnyk and Barbara Luderowski. Part I: 15 April – 25 November 2007, Part II: 7 September 2007 – 20 January 2008

"Prospects of Contemporary Art from India. Focus 2007", Parco della Musica, Rome, Italy. Curated by Deepak Ananth. 18 – 28 October 2007

"Les Rencontres d'Arles 2007, 38º edition", Palais de l'Archevêché and Ateliers des Forges, Arles, France. Curated by Alain Wuillaume and Devika Daulet-Singh. 3 July – 16 September 2007

"Indian Contemporary Art. India 25", Zurab Tsereteli Art Gallery, Moscow, Russia. Curated by Ravi Kumar and Nicolas Bourdiaux. 22 May – 17 June 2007

"India Revealed", CAM_Casoria Contemporary Art Museum, Naples, Italy. Curated by Antonio Manfredi. 26 May – 10 July 2007

"India Arte Oggi. L'arte contemporanea Indiana fra continuità e transfromazione", Spazio Oberdan, Milan, Italy. 18 October 2007 – 3 February 2008

"From the Everyday to the Imagined. An Exhibition of Indian Art", Singapore Art Museum, Singapore. Curated by Jean Wee. 17 November 2007 – 16 January 2008

2008

"Chalo! India: A New Era of Indian Art", Mori Art Musem, Tokyo, Japan. Curated by Miki Akiko. 22 November, 2008 – 15 March, 2009. Then toured to Austria where was exhibited at Essl Museum, 02 September – 01 November, 2009

"India Moderna", IVAM Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia, Spain. Curated by Juan Guardiola. 11 December, 2008 – 15 February, 2009

"Indian Highway", Serpentine Gallery, London, UK. Travelling exhibition curated by Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B. Kvaran in collaboration with Raqs Media Collective, Shilpa Gupta, Bose Krishnamachari etc. –London 2008; Oslo 2009, Herning 2010, Lyon 2011, Roma 2011, Beijing 2012

"Santhal Family", MuKHA, Antwerp, Belgium. Curated by Grant Watson in collaboration with Suman Gopinath and Anshuman Dasgupta. 01 February - 04 May 2008

"Passage to India. New Indian Art from the Frank Cohen Collection", Initial Access, Wolverhampton, UK. Curated by David Thorp. 15 March 2008 – 2 August 2008

"Click" Contemporary Photography in India", Vadhera Art Gallery, New Delhi, India and Grosvenor Vadhera, London, UK. Curated by Sunil Gupta and Radhika Singh. 1 – 29 March 2008, New Delhi and 27 February – 27 March 2008, London –a selection of the exhibition held in Delhi

"Multiple Modernities. India 1905 – 2005", Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA. Curated by Michael W. Meister and Darielle Mason with Beth Citron, Nachiket Chanchani, Neil Ghosh, Jenna Levy and Nyssa Liebermann. 14 June – 7 December, 2008

"Moderns. An Exhibition of Indian contemporary art from the permanent collection of the Lalit Kala Akademi", Royal Cultural Center, Amman, Jordan. Curated by Uma Nair. 4 – 11 March 2008

"Reflejos de la India Contemporánea", Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain. Curated by Luisa Ortíñez. 21 October 2008 – 4 January 2009

"Satyagraha – Unspoken strength. Contemporary Indian Visual Art. A Soul Force", Sandton Civic Art Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa. Curated by Alka Pande. 5 Septembre – 5 October 2008

"Chaos in Order. An Exhibition of Indian Contemporary Art", 29 Hang Bai, Hanoi, Vietnam. Organized by the Lalit Kala Akademi. Curated by Anubhav R Nath. 15 – 22 October 2008

"Leftovers. Solo exhibition by NS Harsha", Maison Hermes, Tokyo and Osaka, Japan

2009

"The Self and the Other. Portraitures in Contemporary Indian Photography", Palau de la Virreina, Barcelona, Spain. Curated by Devika Daulet-Singh and Luisa Ortínez. 10 July - 27 September 2009. Then toured to Artium, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, 24 October 2009 - 7 February 2010

"Narrativas de India en el siglo XXI. Entre la memoria y la historia", Centro Casa Asia, Madrid, Spain. Curated by Menene Gras. 5 February – 17 May 2009

"Cultura popular India… y más allá: Cismas (emergentes) jamás contados", Sala de exposiciones Alcalá 31, Madrid, Spain. Curated by Jyotindra Jain and Shaheen Merali. 6 February – 24 May 2009

"India. Auteur Films, Independent Documentaries and Video Art (1890-2008)", La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain. Curated by Juan Guardiola. 12 – 22 February 2009

"Indian Contemporary Art", Palais Bénédictine, Fécamp, France. Curated by Ranjit Hoskote and Supriya Banerjee. 14 March – 14 June 2009

"Passage to India. New Indian Art from the Frank Cohen Collection. Part II", Initial Access, Wolverhampton, UK. Curated by David Thorp. 17 March – 1 August 2009

"India Contemporary Art", Museum voor actuele kunst, La Haye, Netherlands. Curated by Willem Baars, Doede Hardeman and Laura Stamps. 28 March – 21 June 2009

"ReVisions, Indian Artists Engaging Traditions", Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, USA. Curated by Susan Bean, Kimberly Masteller and Jeanne McCray Beals. 4 April 2009 – 28 March 2010

"India Xianzai", Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai, China. Curated by Alexander Keefe, Diana Freundl. 16 July – 31 August 2009

"Nasreen Mohamedi: Notes – Reflections on Indian Modernism (Part 1)', Office of Contemporary Art, Oslo, Norway. Curated by Suman Gopinath and Grant Watson. 6 March to 20 June 2009, Olso. The exhibition then traveled to Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes, UK, 5 September-15 November 2010, and Lunds konsthall, Lund, Sweden, 27 November-24 January 2010

"Nalini Malani" Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand. Curated by Rhana Devenport, 10 October - 29 November 2009

"Nations. NS Harsha", Iniva, London, UK. 18 September - 21 November, 2009

2010

"Urban Manners 2", SESC Pompeia, Sao Paolo, Brasil. Curated by Adelina von Fürstenberg and Peter Nagy. 21 January – 4 April 2010

"Where Three Dreams Cross. 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh", Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, UK, and Fotomuseum Winthertur,

Winthertur, Germany. Curated by Sunil Gupta with Kirsty Ogg anf Urs Stahel. 21 January – 11 April, 2010, London, and 11 June – 22 August, 2010, Winthertur

"The Empire Strikes Back. Indian Art Today", The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK. 29 January – 7 May 2010

"Facing East. Recent Works from China, India and Japan from the Frank Cohen Collection", Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK. Curated by David Thorp. 4 February – 11 April 2010

"Autres maîtres de l'Inde. Créations contemporaines des Adivasi", Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, France. Curated by Jyotindra Jain. 30 March – 18 July 2010

"Being Singular Plural. Moving Images from India", Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, Germany. Curated by Sanshini Poddar. 26 June – 10 October 2010

"Between Kismet and Karma. South Asian Women Artists Respond to Conflict", Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds, UK. Curated by Fareda Khan and Ananya Kabir. 6 March – 8 May 2010

"Go See India", Galleri Scandinavia AB, Götteborg, Sweden. Curated by Amit Mukhopadhay and Oscar Ashan. 10 August – 15 September 2010

"Things that Happen When Falling in Love, RAQs Media Collective", Baltic Arts Centre, Newcastle, UK. 2 April - 20 June 2010

"Sheela Gowda: Behold", NAS Gallery, Sydney, Australia. 12 May - 19 Jun 2010

"Samtidigt/Concurrent", Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden. Curated by Sointu Fritze, Erja Pusa and Pia Kristoffersson. 2 October 2010 – 9 January 2011

"Subodh Gupta: Faith Matters", PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, Ukraine. 23 January – 21 March 2010

"Subodh Gupta: Take off your shoes and wash your hands", Tramway, Glasgow, UK. November – December 2010

"Inside India. A Journey through Contemporary Indian Art", Palazzo Saluzzo Paesana, Turin, Italy. Curated by Marco Marrone and Margherita Artoni. 5 – 21 November 2010

"India Awakens. Under the Banyan Tree", Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg, Austria. Curated by Alka Pande. 26 November 2010 – 13 February 2011

"Sheela Gowda: Postulates of Contiguity", Office of Contemporary Art, Oslo, Norway. 30 April – 26 June 2010

"Place.Time.Play: Contemporary Art from the West Heavens to the Middle Kingdom" Shanghai, China. Commissioned and directed by Johnson Chang Tsong-zung. Curated by Chaitanya Sambrani. October-December 2010

"Nalini Malani. Splitting the Other", Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland. Curated by Bernard Fibicher. 20 March – 6 June 2010

B.II- INDIAN HIGHWAY: Up-to-date Travel Itinerary and Artists List[388]

INDIAN HIGHWAY I - LONDON

2008 (10 December 2008 – 22 February 2009)

Serpentine Gallery, London (UK)

Curators: Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran

Artists: Ayisha Abraham, Ravi Agarwal, Nikhil Chopra, Raqs Media Collective, Sheela Gowda, Shilpa Gupta, Subodh Gupta, N. S. Harsha, M. F. Husain, Amar Kanwar, Bose Krishnamachari, Nalini Malani, Tejal Shah, Dayanita Singh, Ashok Sukumaran & Shaina Anand

"Steps away from Oblivion", exhibition within the exhibition curated by: Raqs Media Collective (Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula and Shuddhabrata Sengupta)

Artists: Debkamal Ganguly, Ruchir Joshi, Kavita Pai & Hansa Thapliyal, M. R. Rajan, Raqs Media Collective, Priya Sen, Surabhi Sharma, Vipin Vijay

INDIAN HIGHWAY II - OSLO

2009 (2 April – 6 September)

Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo (Norway)

General Curators: Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran
Local Curators: Hanne Beate Ueland and Grete Årbu, Curators, Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art

Artists: Ayisha Abraham, Ravi Agarwal, Nikhil Chopra, Dawood/Deora, Debkamal Ganguly, Sheela Gowda, Sakshi Gupta, Shilpa Gupta, Subodh Gupta, N.S. Harsha, Abhishek Hazra, M.F. Husain, Ruchir Joshi, Jitish Kallat, Amar Kanwar, Bharti Kher, Bose Krishnamachari, Nalini Malani, Kavita Pai/Hansa Thapliyal, Pors & Rao, M.R. Rajan, Raqs Media Collective, Priya Sen, Tejal Shah, Surabhi Sharma (with Siddharth Gautam Singh), Dayanita Singh, Kiran Subbaiah, Ashok Sukumaran & Shaina Anand, Hema Upadhyay and Vipin Vijay

"On the Road to the next Milestone", exhibition within the exhibition curated by: Bose Krishnamachari

Artists: Anant Joshi, Riyas Komu, Prajakta Potnis, Sumedh Rajendran, Sudarshan Shetty, Avinash Veeraraghavan, Vivek Vilasini

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[388] Information collected from *Indian Highway*'s catalogues, museums websites and interviews with a selection of the artists and curators involved in the exhibition.

INDIAN HIGHWAY III – HERNING

2010 (13 March – 12 September)

HEART Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Herning (Denmark)

General Curators: Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran
Local Curator: Stinna Toft from HEART

Artists: Ravi Agarwal, Nikhil Chopra, Jayaschree Chakarvarty, Raqs Media Collective, Anita Dube, Sheela Gowda, Sakshi Gupta, Shilpa Gupta, Subodh Gupta, N S Harsha, Jitish Kallat, Amar Kanwar, Bharti Kher, Bose Krishnamachari, Nalini Malani, Jagannath Panda, Tejal Shah, Dayanita Singh and Hema Upadhyay

"Film Programme", exhibition within the exhibition curated by: Shilpa Gupta

Artists: Nikhil Chopra**,** Baptist Coelho**,** Sunil Gupta**,** Tushar Joag, Sonia Khurana**,** Nalini Malani, Kiran Subbaiah and Vivan Sundaram

INDIAN HIGHWAY IV – LYON

2011 (24 February – 31 July)

MAC Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon (France)

General Curators: Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran
Local Curator: Thierry Raspail, Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art

Artists: Ayisha Abraham, Ravi Agarwal, Sarnath Banerjee, Hemali Bhuta, Nikhil Chopra, Desire Machine Collective, Sheela Gowda, Sakshi Gupta, Shilpa Gupta, Subodh Gupta, N S Harsha, Abhishek Hazra, Shanay Jhaveri, Jitish Kallat, Amar Kanwar, Bharti Kher, Bose Krishnamachari, Nalini Malani, Jagannath Panda, Prajakta Potnis, Raqs Media Collective, Tejal Shah, Valay Shende, Sudarshan Shetty, Dayanita Singh, Sumakshi Singh, Kiran Subbaiah, Ashok Sukumaran & Shaina Anand, Thukral & Tagra, Hema Upadhyay

"Exhibition within the exhibition" curated by Studio Mumbai Architects & Michael Anastassiades and reconfiguration of the curatorial project of Bose Krishnamachari

Special Focus on Guest Artists: Subodh Gupta

INDIAN HIGHWAY V – ROME

2011 (22 September – 29 January 2012)

MAXXI National Museum of the 21st Century Arts, Rome (Italy)

General Curators: Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran
Local Curator: Giulia Ferracci, MAXXI

Artists: Ayisha Abraham, Ravi Agarwal, Sarnath Banerjee, Hemali Bhuta, Nikhil Chopra, Desire Machine Collective, Sheela Gowda, Sakshi Gupta, Shilpa Gupta, Subodh Gupta, N S Harsha, Abhishek Hazra, M.F. Husain, Jitish Kallat, Bharti Kher, Bose Krishnamachari, Nalini Malani, Jagannath Panda, Prajakta Potnis, Raqs Media Collective, Tejal Shah, Valay Shende, Dayanita Singh, Sumakshi Singh, Kiran Subbaiah, Ashok Sukumaran & Shaina Anand, Thukral & Tagra, Hema Upadhyay

"The News", exhibition within the exhibition curated by: Amar Kanwar
Special project *The News*, a selection of three news extracts of news footage. The first is filmed in the early 1930's and shows us glimpses of protests against British rule in India. The second is from 2004, of Manipuri activists under attack from the police, while demanding the removal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act [AFSPA], a law that gives the army the right to search, arrest and even kill with impunity (across the North East of India) since 1958. And the third clip, shot in 2011 shows the people of Jagatsinghapur District, Orissa, protesting against the police attempt to forcibly enter their villages to acquire land for the South Korean Steel Company POSCO. The News opens on the 2nd of October 2011, as it commemorates the birth anniversary of M. K. Gandhi.

Site-Specific Installations: N S Harsha, Desire Machine Collective, Hemali Bhuta, Sumaksi Singh

INDIAN HIGHWAY VI – BEIJING

2012 (24 June – 16 August)

UCCA Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (China)

General Curators: Julia Peyton-Jones, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Gunnar B Kvaran
Local Curator: Philip Tinari, UCCA Ullens Center for Contemporary Art

Artists: Ayisha Abraham, Ravi Agarwal, Sarnath Banerjee, Nikhil Chopra, Baptist Coelho, Sheela Gowda, Sakshi Gupta, Shilpa Gupta, Subodh Gupta, N.S. Harsha, Abhishek Hazra, M.F. Husain, Jitish Kallat, Amar Kanwar, Bharti Kher, Nalini Malani, Jagannath Panda, Hetain Patel, Prajakta Potnis, Raqs Media Collective, Tejal Shah, Sudarshan Shetty, Dayanita Singh, Kiran Subbaiah, Vivan Sundaram, Thukral & Tagra, Hema Upadhyay, Avinash Veeraraghavan and Studio Mumbai Architects

Special Focus on Guest Artists: Sudarshan Shetty, Bharti Kher, Ayisha Abraham, Hetain Patel and Dayanita Singh

B.III-SANTHAL FAMILY: General Information and Artists List[389]

SANTHAL FAMILY. Positions around an Indian sculpture

2008 (1 February – 4 May)

MuKHA – Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp (Belgium)

Curators: Grant Watson in collaboration with Suman Gopinath and Anshuman Dasgupta

Artists: Ramkinkar Baij, Santanu Bose, Matti Braun, Calcutta Art Research, Ritwik Ghatak, Sheela Gowda, Boran Handsa, N.S. Harsha, Reba Hore, Indian People's Theatre Association, Valsan Koorma Kolleri, Goshka Macuga, Melvin Motti, Meera Mukherjee, Otolith Group (Kodwo Eshun & Angelika Sagar), Sudhir Patwardhan, Juan Pérez Agirregoikoa, Ashim Purkayastha, Kerala Radicals (incl. Jyothi Basu, Anita Dube, K.R. Karunakaran, K.P. Krishnakumar, Alex Mathew, C.K. Rajan, Reghunadhan K), Raqs Media Collective (Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, Shuddhabrata Sengupta), N. Rimzon, Ravi Shah, Vivan Sundaram and Klaus Weber.

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[389] Information collected from *Santhal Family*'s catalogue, museum website and press release.

Appendix C – List of cited interviews

Altaf, Navjot. Artist. Held at her house. Mumbai, 27 November 2008. Unrecorded.

Bhalla, Atul. Artist. Artist. Held at his house. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.

Bharucha, Rustom. Cultural Theorist. Held at a public café. Kolkata, 2 December 2008. Recorded.

Clark, John. Academic. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 18 November 2009. Recorded.

Daulet-Singh, Devika. Gallerist and curator. Held at PhotoInk Gallery. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.

Duplaix, Sophie. Curator. Held at the Centre Georges Pompidou. Paris, 27 May 2011. Recorded.

Dave Mukherji, Parul. Academic. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 15 December 2008. Unrecorded.

Duve, Anita. Artist. Held at her house. New Delhi, 15 November 2008. Unrecorded.

Ghouse, Nida. Curator. Held at Delfina Foundation. London, 8 December 2011. Recorded.

Gowda, Sheela. Artist. Held at her house. Bangalore, 19 December 2008. Recorded.

Gupta, Probir. Artist. Held at his studio. New Delhi, 8 November 2008. Recorded.

Gupta, Shilpa. Artist. Held at her studio. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.

Gupta, Shilpa. Artist. Held at her studio. Mumbai, 13 January 2011. Recorded.

Gupta, Sunil. Artist. Held at his house. New Delhi, 27 October 2008. Recorded.

Hoskote, Ranjit and Adajania, Nancy. Curators. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 25 November 2008. Recorded.

Hoskote, Ranjit and Adajania, Nancy. Curators. Held at Olive Bar. Mumbai, 8 March 2013. Recorded.

Jhaveri, Amrita. Art collector and advisor. Held at her house. Mumbai, 18 January 2011. Recorded.

Kapur, Geeta. Art critic and curator. Held at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

Kapur, Geeta. Art critic and curator. Held at her house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

Karode, Roobina. Curator. Held at the India Habitat Centre. New Delhi, 17 November 2008. Recorded.

Malani, Nalini. Artist. Held at her house. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.

Makhijani, Sheila. Artist. Held at her house. New Delhi, 12 November 2008. Recorded.

Mukhopadhyay, Amit. Curator. Held at Emami Chisel Art Gallery and Auction House. Kolkata, 3 December 2008. Recorded.

Nagy, Peter. Gallerist and curator. Held at Nature Morte Gallery. New Delhi, 5 November 2008. Recorded.

Nath, Deeksha. Curator. Held at her house. New Delhi, 14 October 2008. Recorded.

Obrist, Hans Ulrich. Curator. Held at the Imperial Hotel. New Delhi, 4 November 2008. Recorded.

Parekh, Manisha. Artist. Held at her studio. New Delhi, 17 November 2008. Recorded.

Raqs Media Collective (Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula and Shuddhabrata Sengupta). Artists and curators. Held at their studio. New Delhi, 6 January 2009. Recorded.

Samant, Sharmila. Artist. Held at her studio. Mumbai, 26 November 2008. Recorded.

Sawant, Shukla. Artist and academic. Held at her house. New Delhi, 13 November 2008. Recorded.

Shivadas, Vidya. Curator. Held at FICA – Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art. New Delhi, 14 November 2008. Recorded.

Sundaram, Vivan. Artist. Held at his house. New Delhi, 3 January 2009. Recorded.

Vajpeyi, Ashok. Former Chairman of the Lalit Kala Akademi. Held at the Lalit Kala Akademi. New Delhi, 12 November 2009. Recorded.

Watson, Grant. Curator. Held at MuKHA. Antwerp, 21 February 2008. Recorded.

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