



re•bus

MOBILITY, MOVEMENT AND
MEDIUM: CROSSING
BORDERS IN ART



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Table of Contents

Nina Stainer , “ <i>Wie das Zeichnen wol zu begreifen sey?</i> ” The Role of Sculptors’ Drawings in the Seventeenth Century”.....	3
Margarita Voulgaropoulou , “Transcending Borders, Transforming Identities: Travelling Icons and Icon Painters in the Adriatic Region”.....	23
Sooran Choi , “Manifestations of a Zombie Avant-garde: South Korean Performance and Conceptual Art in the 1970s”.....	74
Pamela Bianchi , ‘Choreographed Exhibition/Exhibited Choreography: How Bodies Design Spaces’.....	109

Editorial Statement

In this year's spring issue of the *Royal Academy of Arts* journal, Sam Phillips posed the question, "Is art beyond borders?"¹ Art has always travelled, in the knapsack of an Alpine merchant, from the podium at Christies, or between museums of the global community. In this unprecedented time of global pandemic and lockdown, our own movement has been so drastically curtailed, aeroplanes are grounded, galleries have been closed and art can no longer be physically shared, the question of whether art is beyond borders is more important than ever.

For this ninth issue of **re•bus**, 'Mobility, Movement and Medium: Crossing Borders in Art', the editorial team has put together four articles which explore themes of mobility, movement and borders from varying perspectives of media, place and time. Drawings, paintings, installations and the human body itself are examined in terms of how they cross borders physically, sociologically and even politically. The chronological sweep of this issue takes us from the Early Modern era through the seventeenth century, the 1970s and right up to the present day, whilst the geographical range is no less wide, encompassing the Adriatic, Bavaria, South Korea and Paris. In her exploration of one Early Modern sculptor's output, Nina Stainer discusses how his drawings crossed borders in terms of their use, both as workshop models and also as memorabilia for later, seventeenth-century collectors. Margarita Voulgaropoulou looks at the newly emerging study of icon painting in the Adriatic and particularly at how the work of Greek icon painters, and often the painters themselves, travelled to Italy and beyond due to the increasing demand for icons. Sooran Choi then examines the challenges of creating art in the highly charged Cold War period in South Korea, analysing the way that the term 'avant-garde' was used as a protective amulet against possible political imprisonment and torture. Finally, Pamela Bianchi explores the position, participation, movement and even observation of the beholder within exhibition spaces. In short, the authors of these articles prompt how art indeed goes beyond spatio-temporal, geographical and corporeal borders.

Alison Barker & Ana Varas Ibarra
re•bus Issue 9 Co-editors

¹ Sam Phillips (ed), *Royal Academy of Arts Magazine*, No.146, Spring 2020, p.15.

‘Wie das Zeichnen wol zu begreifen sey?’¹

The Role of Sculptors’ Drawings in the Seventeenth Century

Nina Stainer

Abstract

The early modern sculptor’s education north of the Alps has yet to be thoroughly explored. Three collections of sculptor’s drawings, originating from the Bavarian workshop of Thomas Schwanthaler (1634-1707), found in different locations across central Europe, allow insights into their importance to the early modern sculptor. Use and collection of drawings had mainly practical purposes for instruction and communication inside the workshop. However, inscriptions suggest that sketches were also crafted for personal reasons. The drawings crossed borders not only physically—being taken along on the itinerant craftsmen’s journeys—but also in their functions as media of both professional purpose and personal memorabilia. The article explores the use of drawings in a non-academic environment, presenting examples from the collections.

Keywords: *Early modern sculpture, Mobility of Early Modern artists, Sculptor’s drawings.*

In the first part of his extensive historical work, the *Teutsche Academie*, published first in 1675, the German painter and art writer Joachim von Sandrart included a chapter discussing the

meaning of drawing for the arts of painting and sculpture. Describing the best ways to acquire drawing skills he states that many sculptors lack practice in sketching on paper and therefore prefer to produce small-scale models from clay or wax.² Scholarship on the importance and role of drawing for the early modern sculptor is heterogenous: whereas research on early modern Italian sculptors and their practices has produced a considerable body of literature reaching from general questions on the development of sculptural concepts,³ the drawings and models by Gianlorenzo Bernini and his co-workers⁴ to the inner workings of large sculptors' workshops such as that of Orazio Marinali;⁵ the early modern sculptor's practices and the structure of his education north of the Alps are topics that have yet to be thoroughly explored by scholarship.

During the long seventeenth century, the sculptor was perceived as a craftsman more than as an artist, particularly in rural areas where, through the absence of a royal court, the local clergy were the main employers for architects, sculptors, stucco plasterers and painters. The region of Southern Germany and Tirol was divided into small parishes, making influential monasteries into centres of artistic exchange and progress.⁶ While in Italy private academies such as the workshop of sculptor Baccio Bandinelli⁷ developed out of small groups who practiced drawing after the live model from the sixteenth century, north of the Alps sources only tell of such informal gatherings at the end of the seventeenth century.⁸ Here, academies were not founded before the second half of the sixteenth century, when informal drawing circles—so called 'Zeichenkreise'—dedicated to sketching after the living model, were turned into institutions, like in Nürnberg 1662.⁹ Whereas the early academic curriculum included practical knowledge as well as drawing, little information has been passed on about the education of sculptors in a non-academic environment.

By taking a closer look at a number of sculptor's drawings originating from a seventeenth century workshop north of the Alps, this article will investigate their diverse

functions: their role for sculptors' training as well as for the transfer of artistic ideas and their significance as personal memorabilia.

The Sculptor's Instruction North of the Alps

During the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth century, the sculptor's education took place in a master's workshop. An apprentice would start to work with a local craftsman for five years to learn the basic techniques before receiving his first certificate. During the following mandatory 'Wanderjahre', a period of eight years, young craftsmen were required to travel from workshop to workshop, joining masters for various periods of time and improving their skills by assisting on current commissions.¹⁰ Only after completing their journeyman's years, could they complete their education to receive the craftsman's diploma. In order to develop an idea of early modern sculptors' everyday working practice it greatly helps to approach this topic from the angle of social history of the arts,¹¹ including sources like guild's books, master craftsmen's certificates and invoices to help reconstruct certain facts on the sculptor's instruction: the duration of time an apprentice would spend in the masters' workshop; the tips he would receive if involved in a commission; or the responsibilities a master would face when taking in a young employee, were meticulously stipulated. On the contrary, information on the precise methods sculptors used to teach their apprentices is hard to come by. A handicrafts code from the city of Ulm, dating from the year 1496 states that sculptors in Ulm were obliged to teach their pupils "*entwerffen, schneyden und molen,*"¹² which roughly translates into 'designing, cutting and painting' but gives no further indication on how this task was to be accomplished.

One successful approach in terms of reconstructing sculptors' techniques and habits while working on commissions is research on small scale sculptural models conducted by art historians like Tomas Hladik¹³ or Sylvia Carmellini.¹⁴ Three dimensional models from the workshops of Gianlorenzo Bernini, Giovanni Giuliani or Ignaz Günther offer an exceptional opportunity to reconstruct the artists' techniques. However, these bozzetti, mostly executed in wax or clay, have often suffered severe damage or have been destroyed altogether over time, so this approach is only suitable for a handful of artists. Another way of taking a closer look at the inner workings of a sculptor's workshop is to explore their graphic works. Scattered drawings clearly indicate that sketching was part of the daily routine, not only of sculptors, but also goldsmiths or carpenters. Often we only know one or two sketches that can safely be attributed to an artist, which is hardly enough to gain an insight into either a personal style or a whole system of training.

Until the middle of the 15th century, before the emergence of early academies dedicated to drawing, workshops often referred to model-books presenting collections of iconographic motifs for their compositions, followed by engraved model-sheets that were sold as single pages.¹⁵ Subsequently, preparatory sketches made by the artists themselves became predominant. Facing the scarce amount of drawings preserved from sculptors' workshops, the existence of three collections of sculptor's drawings, originating from the workshop of Bavarian sculptor Thomas Schwanthaler (Ried im Innkreis, 1634-1707), dating from 1667-1700 presents an unexpected opportunity to achieve deeper comprehension of their role for the early modern sculptor. The collections, comprising over five hundred and thirty sheets all together, have been preserved in different locations: Ried im Innkreis (former Bavaria), Imst (Austria) and Pécs (Hungary).¹⁶ The majority of the drawings are red chalk on paper of similar size, measuring roughly 160 by 210 millimetres, completed by fewer drawings in pen and wash.¹⁷

Assembled by several generations of sculptors, the collections have one thing in common; the earliest sheets of each album can be traced back to the sculptor Thomas Schwanthaler himself by signature, date and style and hence form a common ground for subsequently added drawings. Apart from Schwanthaler, five hands can be distinguished. Whereas the drawings that remained in Ried im Innkreis were originally created for the local Schwanthaler workshop and handed on to the family members who continued to work as sculptors until the middle of the nineteenth century, the collections found in Tirol and Hungary had a more adventurous history.

The Imst sketchbook contains sketches by Andreas Thamasch (1639-1697), one of Schwanthaler's most outstanding pupils, studying in his workshop from 1671-1674 before continuing his work in the monasteries of Stams in Tirol (1674-1697) and Kaisheim, Bavaria. A number of drawings can also be attributed to Paulin Tschiderer (1662-1720), apprentice of Andreas Thamasch until 1695 and Andreas Kölle (1680-1755) who worked with Thamasch in Stams until 1697 and later on with Paulin Tschiderer in Kaisheim from 1697-1702.¹⁸

The Pécs sketchbook, found in a minor Hungarian parish, comprises drawings by Schwanthaler and Thamasch, as well as a number of sketches by Matthias Winterhalder who had been working in Kaisheim around 1685 with Andreas Thamasch. The largest group of signed drawings mostly dated between 1690-1698 in this collection were contributed by the sculptor Georg Hoffer, who had been studying with Winterhalder from 1690-1694. Hoffer was also the last owner of the Pécs sketchbook.¹⁹

The collections of Imst and Pécs offer great possibilities for new research on sculptors' drawings: the large number of sketches display a range of motifs and techniques and reflect what can be called a "drawn dialogue" between the masters and their pupils.²⁰ Furthermore, their mutual origin in the Schwanthaler workshop makes them more comparable and even

allows one to observe parallels in their ways of dissemination. The reason for the dissemination of drawings that obviously had a common origin in the workshop of Thomas Schwanthaler lies in the nature of the sculptors' training. Apprentices, living in the master's household where lodging and food were provided, were themselves taught to draw and received drawings for instructional purposes, before they started their mandatory journeyman's years. The preservation of the collections in Tirol and Hungary—the sketchbooks of Imst and Pécs—proves that young sculptors not only collected drawings and added their own studies to the bundle, but also passed them on to their apprentices after their death, developing a culture of safekeeping: The collections were not formed by external collectors, but by inheritance and choice.

The itinerant craftsmen's movement between commissions is thus of central importance to the existence of the two collections of Imst and Pécs: Both have been travelling with their respective owners—one from Ried to Southern Germany and further on to Tirol, the other probably even to Salzburg, Croatia and eventually to Hungary.²¹

The concept of mobility

According to a seventeenth-century apprenticeship certificate from the town of Überlingen, west of Munich, a sculptor's apprentice would leave the master's workshop after an average of five years for the journeyman's years, continuing his education by travelling between commissions, a period that mostly took another eight years.²² This was not an exceptional phenomenon in early modern society—many individuals like pilgrims, soldiers, merchants or diplomats led a very mobile life.²³ Seen from the angle of social history though, the mobility of craftsmen was not only a means of education aiming to broaden the individuals' horizon, but

also a consequence of social and economic circumstances that forced artists to take on commissions abroad: Sources show extensive migration of artists—sculptors, but also painters and plasterers—who could not find suitable workshops for their education or rely on a sufficient number of commissions even after their training.²⁴ Especially after the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 with its catastrophic effects on economy, many artists from the area of North Tirol moved to Southern Germany, the Rhineland or Bohemia.²⁵ The mandatory journeys thus helped to balance the market and to increase the craftsmen's knowledge at the same time. The average duration of these journeys and the routes craftsmen would frequently use can be traced by their appearance in diaries, guilds books, invoices—or also, dedicated drawings. Often apprentices would carry an *Album Amicorum* with them, inviting fellow craftsmen and other acquaintances they met on their journeys to leave memorabilia such as quotes, personal notes or drawings.

An important example is the *Album Amicorum* of a young Swiss apprentice called Johannes Carl Zay (ca. 1654-1734) who travelled Bavaria, Austria and Northern Germany during his journeyman's years.²⁶ His *Album*, found in a private collection in Switzerland and now part of the Pierpont Morgan Library's Department of Drawings and Prints, has remained intact and in very good condition.²⁷ The entries show that Zay started his journey in 1678, travelling from Ulm via Augsburg and Salzburg to the North of Germany until 1682, assembling twenty-two drawings by young sculptors, painters and goldsmiths – one of them the now well-known Giovanni Giuliani—also moving between workshops. Zay even visited the Schwanthaler workshop in Ried im Innkreis in 1679 and asked the master for an entry, documented by a sketch by Thomas Schwanthaler in the *Album*, completed by a dated and signed inscription on the opposite page [fig. 1].²⁸



Fig. 1

Album Amicorum of Johann Carl Zay, drawing by Thomas Schwanthaler, inscribed „*Thomas Schwanthaler, Burger und Bildhauer zuo Riedt in Nider Bayern den 24. August Anno 1679*“, pen and ink, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, No. 2003.43, p. 246 & 247, © The Morgan Library & Museum. Purchased on the Edwin H. Herzog Fund, 2003

The Workshop of Thomas Schwanthaler

The Schwanthaler workshop in Ried im Innkreis offers a view of the inner workings of a small-town business, including the working conditions and regulations that were largely determined by local craft guilds.²⁹ In many aspects, its history resembles that of other family-based workshops of the time: Thomas Schwanthaler took over his father's workshop in 1656, aged twenty-two. Whereas his latter commissions are documented by drawings, church records and bills, his early years remain obscure. He probably received his initial training in his father's workshop before continuing his education during his journeyman years. During his career he employed several of his brothers, sons and nephews and educated numerous pupils, some of whom are known to us by name.³⁰ After his death in 1707, the workshop in Ried was continued by his sons and descendants until the 1750s, which is one reason for the preservation and good

condition of the surviving drawings from his workshop.³¹ Schwanthaler was mostly commissioned by the local catholic clergy, working for parishes and monasteries in Bavaria and Salzburg. Works in wood, stone, ivory and metal show that he was familiar with a broad range of techniques, although the majority of his sculptures were executed in lime- and maple wood.³² One of his best known works is without doubt the large scale double altar in St. Wolfgang, Salzburg which he completed in 1675 [fig. 2].³³



Fig. 2

Thomas Schwanthaler, double altar of St. Wolfgang, 1675/76, Austria, © Oskar Anrather.

Although we have no proof of where Schwanthaler received his training, it is very likely that his journeyman years took him to the area around Munich and Augsburg, a very popular route for travelling craftsmen of the time. Through the synopsis of the collections in Ried, Imst and Pécs his style as a draughtsman can be comprehended for the first time, allowing conclusions on his inspirations. Mostly in very good condition, the signed and dated drawings

can be related to projects in the early days of his career—some might have served as preparatory studies, but another important role was to build a pool of examples and templates to be used by the trainees in his workshop.

A particularly striking and well-preserved double page in the Pécs sketchbook features the evangelists Luke and John with their respective symbol animals, the calf and the eagle [fig. 3]. The signature of Thomas Schwanthaler, a ligature of the letters T and S, has been placed just below the right big toe of St. John, on the corner of the narrow pedestal he is standing on and again in the left bottom corner of the page, intertwined with the delicate shrubs on the ground [fig. 4]. The drawing shows a clear focus on contours using distinctive lines, completed by skilfully crafted hatching. The powerful, yet elegant, almost dancing poses are characteristic for both Schwanthaler's drawings and his sculptures during the period between 1660-1675.



Fig. 3

Thomas Schwanthaler, Evangelists St. Luke and St. John, ca. 1670s, red chalk on paper, each 21.5 x 33.7 cm, Pécs sketchbook, p. 204 and 205, Diocesan Archive, Pécs. © Diocesan Archive, Pécs. Photo: Nina Stainer



Fig. 4

Detail: Thomas Schwanthaler, Evangelists St. Luke and St. John, ca. 1670s, red chalk on paper, each 21.5 x 33.7 cm, Pécs sketchbook, p. 204 and 205, Diocesan Archive, Pécs. © Diocesan Archive, Pécs. Photo: Nina Stainer

Schwanthaler was familiar with the works of his contemporaries and with collections at monasteries and also drew inspiration from engravings after French and Italian artists that were diffused by art dealers.³⁴ The use of red chalk was possibly inspired by the well-known German sculptor Georg Petel (1602-1634), who had spent some time in the atelier of Peter Paul Rubens and travelled Italy before settling down in Augsburg.³⁵ Petel also used red chalk for his drawings, although so far only two single sketches can safely be attributed to him by signature [fig. 5].³⁶



Fig. 5

Georg Petel, sketch of Pietro Taccas "Monument of the Four Moors" in Livorno, red chalk, 21,3 x 19,1 cm, © Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inventar-Nr.: KdZ 9950

Another influence on Schwanthaler might have been the German engraver, painter and art writer Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688). His large scale altarpieces at the Benedictine monastery of Lambach and the Cathedral of Salzburg—including his preparatory studies in red chalk – both about a day's journey from Ried im Innkreis, were prominent works of the time [fig. 6].³⁷



Fig. 6

Joachim von Sandrart, Baptism of Christ, Study in red chalk for the lost altar painting at the cathedral of Salzburg, 1658, © Kupferstichkabinett. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv. Nr. 8314.

Combined with the previously mentioned coloured drawing that Schwanthaler dedicated to the young apprentice Johann Carl Zay in his *Album Amicorum*, the range of his skills becomes apparent. Whereas the majority of his drawings were executed in red chalk, a medium allowing a certain spontaneity and minor corrections, the illustration in the *Album Amicorum* represents one of his rare works in pen and wash, showing that he was handling colours skilfully and bringing painterly qualities to his drawings. The great care with which he executed this dedicated drawing suggests an awareness for the audience it might reach, being taken away on the journey of Johann Carl Zay, and an interest to demonstrate his refined professional abilities.

Drawing in the Sculptor's Workshop

The transmission of artistic knowledge between master and apprentice was accomplished through the medium of the drawing. This effect however was multiplied by the mobility of travelling sculptors, who journeyed along well-established routes using a community of master craftsmen. The network of sculptors and workshops they visited would ultimately be reflected in the drawings or notes in their albums, which helped to transfer visual knowledge over great distances. The communication network included precise information on technology, for example, detailed measurements described on the drawings, enabling sculptors to (re)create works based on the sketches. Neither the Imst nor the Pécs Sketchbook give clear indications on the importance of drawing after the live model, since the majority of sketches show a high level of completion, unlike the open, sometimes impulsive or imperfect style one would seek when looking for preparatory studies. Considering the sketches have not been preserved for contemplation in artists' private sketchbooks but selected for their quality and passed on to apprentices to help improve their skills, this is not an entirely surprising observation.

The circulation of knowledge through this communication network led to an intellectual discourse and eventually, a visual dialogue between artists.³⁸ The imitation and emulation of existing topics, not necessarily the originality of ideas was a very common strategy in baroque artistic practice and can be described more precisely as a “competitive repetition of eternal tropes.”³⁹ Due to this practice-based form of education pupils would imitate the style and figural types of a master, but at the same time alter them to their own needs, or those of a patron. This fact is strikingly illustrated by a drawing of the previously mentioned Matthias Winterhalder, a sculptor who probably never personally worked at the Schwanthaler workshop, but who got to know his drawings while being employed at the monastery of Kaisheim.



Fig. 7

Matthias Winterhalder, *St. John the Evangelist*, ca. 1680s, red chalk on paper, 21.5 x 33.7 cm, Pécs sketchbook, p. 24, Diocesan Archive, Pécs. © Diocesan Archive, Pécs. Photo: Nina Stainer



Fig. 8

Thomas Schwanthaler, *St. John the Evangelist*, 1672, red chalk on paper, 28.5 x 34.1 cm, signed 'TS' and dated 1672, Pécs sketchbook, p. 32, Diocesan Archive, Pécs, © Diocesan Archive, Pécs, Foto: Nina Stainer.

Winterhalder, whose style can be identified by signed drawings in the Pécs sketchbook, made a sketch of the evangelist St. John [fig. 7], obviously using one of Schwanthaler's drawings as a model [fig. 8]. The similarities between the two compositions are striking. It is not only the elegant pose and the interaction between the evangelist and the eagle that Winterhalder tries to capture, he even copies details like the hatching around the knee or the single curl of hair that falls onto St. John's shoulder. Winterhalder's version is mirror-inverted, suggesting that he might have referred not to the original sketch by Schwanthaler, but to a third version, maybe a copy of the original made by impression. Both the Imst and the Pécs Sketchbooks contain a number of impressions that can be identified by a slightly blurry appearance and sometimes by mirror-inverted signatures and inscriptions. These reproduced motifs could easily be handed on to pupils, as could be the case here, enabling the artists to keep the original for further use.

Even though the data concerning Winterhalder's life is scarce—seven of his drawings date from the time between 1682-1685, which is most likely the time he spent at Kaisheim—this sketch testifies to his great appreciation for the style of Thomas Schwanthaler, whom he probably never met in person, but whose influence was enhanced by the mobility of his drawings.

Professional Purpose – Personal Memorabilia

The link between the two sculptors is an apprentice of Schwanthaler, whose presence in the workshop and town of Ried can be traced by court records starting in 1671.⁴⁰ Andreas Thamasch (1639-1697), spent four years in Schwanthaler's workshop between 1671-1674, before continuing his work travelling back and forth between the monasteries of Stams in Tirol (1674-1697) and Kaisheim, Bavaria.⁴¹ During his time in Ried, he received a very personal gift;

a drawing showing his namesake St. Andrew, carefully complemented by an inscription in ink [fig. 9].



Inscription:

‘Ich Johannes Schwanthaller verehere dem Andre Tomäs an seinen geburts-tag zur gedechtnus ano 1673’

Fig. 9

Johannes Schwanthaler, *St. Andrew*, 1673, red chalk, 15 x 10.5 cm, Imst Sketchbook, no Inv. Nr., Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, © Museum Innviertler Volkskundehaus, Ried im Innkreis.

The inscription identifies the artist as Johannes Schwanthaler, the younger brother of Thomas, who dedicated the drawing to Andreas Thamasch on his birthday in 1673.⁴² Due to the fragility of the red chalk, Saint Andrew can only be identified by the big cross he is carrying, but the underlying message is clear. Andreas Thamasch, by then possibly an esteemed member of the Schwanthaler household, received a gift for his birthday, which he took with him upon his departure from Ried. During his time in Stams as well as in Kaisheim he trained several pupils himself and passed on his collection of drawings. The sketch of St. Andrew was eventually found in the Imst sketchbook, resulting from his time in the monastery of Stams in Tirol.⁴³ Whereas Schwanthaler himself remained in Ried, pupils like Andreas Thamasch played a

crucial role in the dissemination of the drawings and the foundation for the collections in Tirol and Hungary.

In the beginning it seemed that due to their roots in craftsmanship, the purpose of the three collections previously mentioned was mainly professional and educational. However, some sketches show a different approach, bearing dedications and inscriptions indicating that they were crafted for personal reasons, or simply for pleasure. A single drawing can combine several facets, showing a design for a sculpture, but at the same time bearing an inscription concerning its measurements, or a note stating the sculptor's location and a date at the time of drawing. Sketches like Thomas Schwanthaler's drawing in the Album Amicorum of the itinerate Johann Carl Zay and the dedicated drawing Andreas Thamasch received for his birthday in 1673, used as memorabilia, form a special group within this topic.

Conclusion

Sculptors as craftsmen were obliged to lead a mobile life, partly due to the customs of their trade, but also due to economic circumstances. The 'Wanderjahre' as part of their education were spent on the road, travelling between workshops. Additionally, after they successfully completed their training, master craftsmen were often forced to move between commissions for economic reasons. As displayed in the collections of drawings in Imst and Pécs, their use and collection had mainly practical purposes; to create a pool of ideas and possible formal solutions that all members of the workshop could rely upon. Thus, drawings were an important medium for both the communication inside a workshop and the education of apprentices. Initially a means of education and technique, the drawings served versatile purposes during the time of their existence. Apart from being used as a tool within the workshop, the sketches were

transformed into personal memorabilia. By adding personal notes or creating sketches especially as presents, sculptors also used them as mementos, documenting important events in their lives, such as the beginning or the end of an apprenticeship, much like the Albums carried by travelling craftsmen.

Together with the itinerant sculptors, the drawings crossed borders: geographically, travelling between Austria, Germany, Croatia and Hungary, transferring information on technique, sculptural style and possibly also strategies of planning sculptural projects, which then could be adapted and altered by their fellow craftsmen. By being turned into memorabilia, the drawings received a second layer of information, sometimes meant for the artist's own use, but also intended as a means of communication, turning them into 'open letters'⁴⁴ – still to be read.

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Notes

¹ Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie*, (Nürnberg 1675), I, Volume 3: 59.

² Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie*, (Nürnberg 1675), I, Volume 3: 60: *Weil aber manche Bildhauere in Umrißen und liniren nicht allerdings erfahren sind/ und daher auf das Papier nicht wol zeichnen können/ als machen sie/ an statt dessen/ mit guter proportion und Maß/ von Erde oder Wachs/ Männlein/ Thiere/ und andere erhobne Modellen/ was sie zu bilden haben/ und stellen solche auf das Papier oder andere flache Ebne/ welche dann auch Zeichnungen von ihnen genennet worden.*

- 3 Johannes Myssok, *Bildhauerische Konzeption und plastisches Modell in der Renaissance*, (Münster: Rhema, 1999).
- 4 Joris van Gastel, *Senza sostanza di corpo? Bernini and the Problem of the Sculptor's Drawing*, in: *Sculpture Journal* 24/1 (2015), pp. 23–36.
- Andrea Bacchi and C.D. Dickerson, *Bernini: sculpting in clay*, (published in conjunction with "Bernini: Sculpting in Clay" on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, from October 3, 2012 to January 6, 2013 and at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, from February 3 to April 14, 2013), (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012).
- 5 Silvia Carmellini, *Zwischen Steinbruch und Studio: die Bildhauerwerkstatt von Orazio Marinali und Giacomo Cassetti (1683 -1754)*, (Marburg: Tectum, 2011).
- 6 Heinrich Ferihumer, 'Die kirchliche Organisation im Landschaftsraum der barocken Schwanthaler' in: Otto Wutzel, *Die Bildhauerfamilie Schwanthaler, 1633-1848. Vom Barock zum Klassizismus*, (Linz: Oberösterreichischer Landesverlag, 1974): 28.
- 7 Barbara Eschenburg, *Pygmalions Werkstatt: die Erschaffung des Menschen im Atelier von der Renaissance bis zum Surrealismus*, zur Ausstellung in Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus (8. September bis 25. November 2001, München) (Köln: Wienand, 2001): 15.
- 8 Andreas Tacke, 'Zeichnend zur Auszeichnung? Zur paradigmatischen Rolle der Handzeichnung im Streit zwischen zunftgebundenem Malerhandwerk und Akademie', in: Iris Lauterbach (Hg.), *Aspekte deutscher Zeichenkunst*, (München: Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, 2006): 105.
- 9 Nikolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art: Past and Present*, (Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1940): 115.
- 10 Rainer S. Elkar, 'Lernen durch Wandern? Einige kritische Anmerkungen zum Thema Wissenstransfer durch Migration', in: Knut Schulz, *Handwerk, Zünfte und Gewerbe: Mittelalter und Renaissance*, (München: Oldenbourg, 2010): 213.
- 11 Andreas Tacke, 'Das tote Jahrhundert. Anmerkungen zur Forschung über die deutsche Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts', in: *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* 51, (Berlin: Verein, 1997): 43–70 and Andreas Tacke, 'Dresdner Malerordnungen der Frühen Neuzeit. Ein Quellenbeitrag zur Kunstgeschichte als Handwerksgeschichte', in: *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums*, (Nürnberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2001): 29-47.
- 12 Hans Huth, *Künstler und Werkstatt der Spätgotik*, (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 1967): 13+14.
- 13 Tomáš Hladík, *Die Bildhauerwerkstatt der Barockzeit in Mitteleuropa. Vom Entwurf zur Ausführung*, (Prag: Národní galerie, 2016).
- 14 Silvia Carmellini, *Zwischen Steinbruch und Studio: die Bildhauerwerkstatt von Orazio Marinali und Giacomo Cassetti*, (Marburg: Tectum, 2011).
- 15 By 1520, prints were the dominant medium for the transmission of motifs. See Zoltán Kárpáti, 'Survival of a Tradition: The Budapest Animal Model-Book', in: *From Pattern to Nature in Italian Renaissance Drawing: The Transition from Pattern Book Drawings to Life Drawing from Pisanello to Leonardo*, (Florence 2012), p. 63.
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Transcending Borders, Transforming Identities

Travelling Icons and Icon Painters in the Adriatic Region

Margarita Voulgaropoulou

Abstract

The presence of Greek artists has been consistently attested in the broad Adriatic area from the Late Middle Ages through the entire Early Modern period. Renowned for their ability to work in both the Byzantine and Western iconographic traditions, Greek icon painters appealed to an extensive patronage network that transcended ethnic, socio-economic, and confessional boundaries. The high demand for icons from such a vast demographic resulted into a notable rise in the import of works of Orthodox art in the Adriatic markets, and culminated in the establishment of flourishing icon-painting workshops along the Italian and Dalmatian coasts.

Keywords: *Icon painting, Orthodoxy, Venice, Dalmatia, Istria, Boka Kotorska, Apulia*

In his life of Cimabue Giorgio Vasari writes: “It happened that in those days certain Greek painters came to Florence, having been summoned by those who governed the city, for no other purpose than that of introducing there the art of painting, which in Tuscany long had been lost.”¹ According to Vasari, young Cimabue closely studied the paintings created by these Greek artists, and even worked alongside them, only to later turn away from their Byzantine manner, and develop his own artistic style. Vasari also comments that these “Greek painters” cared little for advancing the art

of painting, and produced works “not in the fine ancient Greek manner” but in the “awkward, modern style of their times.”² Vasari’s account of ‘Greek painters’ has not so far been confirmed by archival sources, and is often believed to be nothing but a narrative device to trace the roots of Florentine painting;³ nevertheless, it remains a valuable historical commentary, as it provides evidence for a long-lasting tradition of Greek-speaking artists crossing borders to work in the West, and at the same time, it reflects the perceptions of early art historiography on artworks following the Byzantine tradition. This paper will demonstrate how the “rough, awkward, and commonplace” Byzantine style reproached by Vasari, managed to live on in the Catholic milieu of the Adriatic, allowing for the vibrant circulation of Greek icons, and the establishment of flourishing icon-painting workshops.⁴

Over the last fifty years an extensive body of literature has been produced on the topic of icons and icon painters in the Latin-ruled territories of the Eastern Mediterranean, specifically in the territories of the Venetian state. Of key importance was the discovery of a rich archival material in the State Archives of Venice, which helped elucidate our insights on icon production in the Stato da Màr from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Byzantinists and art historians brought to light valuable documents from the Archives of the Duke of Crete, and the records of the notaries of Candia, revealing the names of a large number of icon painters working predominantly in Venetian Crete.⁵ In the same archives, scholars also discovered substantial evidence documenting the presence of Greek, mainly Cretan, artists in Venice, and the Orthodox community, thereby linking Cretan painting with European art.⁶ In light of these findings, and as the field of Cretan studies was expanding, a substantial number of publications, far too numerous to list here, was produced, focusing overwhelmingly on the artistic developments in

Venetian Crete, and the cultural interactions between its capital, Candia, and Venice. As a result, geographic areas such as Central and South Italy or the East Adriatic coast remained largely underresearched.

Besides Greek historiography, international scholarship has also shown reduced interest in the reception of icon painting in the Adriatic again with the sole exception of Venice. Based on widely published data regarding the Greek community of Venice and its most prominent artists,⁷ scholars of the Italian Renaissance have reviewed the circulation of icons *alla greca*, and the production of Greek icon painters as a side chapter of Venetian social and cultural history, relevant to the extent that it highlights the openness of the Venetian state, or the influence of Byzantine art on Renaissance painting.⁸ Despite the growing tendency to contest the categories of artistic ‘centers’ and ‘peripheries’, and expand the focus of Renaissance studies to more ‘marginal’ geographic areas, icon painting has yet to become part of the discourse.⁹

In recent years, attempts have been made by Byzantinists and Medievalists to expand the scope of research in Byzantine and ‘post-Byzantine’ art, discussing the cross-cultural interactions in the wider Eastern Mediterranean, and investigating various channels of contacts between Byzantium and the West.¹⁰ Yet the Adriatic was glaringly absent from these studies too. On the other hand, the emergence of fragmentary contributions of a regional focus and audience underlined the need for more global approaches to the cultural history of the Adriatic,¹¹ which have been so far limited to the Middle Ages.¹² The comprehensive study of icon painting in the broad Adriatic region has attracted scholarly attention only very recently, and has since sparked a growing interest in the area.¹³



Fig. 1

Map of the Eastern Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas, © Margarita Voulgaropoulou

Building on previous scholarship, this study will explore the circulation of icons and icon painters of Greek origin¹⁴ and Byzantine artistic formation in the broad region of the Adriatic Sea, aspiring to expand our fragmentary knowledge of a research area so far considered marginal in terms of both geography and content. By applying a cross-cultural and long durée approach, this article aims to demonstrate how the artistic language of icon painters and the reception of their works were transformed with regard to the political situation and the ethno-confessional development of the receiving societies, especially in the context of the Tridentine reforms, and the migration waves triggered by the Ottoman-Venetian wars. As this article was tailored for the special issue of the journal *re•bus* on ‘Mobility, Movement and Medium: Crossing Borders in Art’, particular emphasis will be given on the aspects of transregional mobility of artists and the circulation of artworks across the fluid borders of the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas [fig. 1].

Tradition and Appropriation: The Influence of Byzantine Culture in the Adriatic

The dissemination of Orthodox art and the circulation of Greek-speaking artists in the Adriatic territory were the fruit of a long and complex process that went back to the era of the Byzantine dominion. From the sixth to the late twelfth century the city-states of the Adriatic were developing under the direct or indirect control of the Byzantine Empire, which exerted a unifying influence on the diverse cultures and societies of the region. The Byzantine influence did not cease with the decline of the Empire's political and ecclesiastical supremacy, but instead, it survived as a basic structural element of the succeeding power in the region, the Republic of Venice.

The Venetian appropriation of Byzantine culture defined the future reception of Greek-Orthodox art in the Adriatic region,¹⁵ and allowed for the diffusion of hybrid artistic styles, based on the creative dialogue between Eastern and Western traditions.¹⁶ Drawing from Ejnar Dyggve, who first introduced the conventional term 'Adrio-Byzantinism' (*adriobizantinismo*, *adriobizantinizam*) to describe the presence of Early-Christian features in Dalmatian Medieval architecture,¹⁷ scholars adopted the all-encompassing term 'Adrio-Byzantine' to define the artistic production of the Late Medieval Adriatic manifesting the coexistence of Byzantine, Romanesque and Gothic elements.¹⁸ Although the 'Adrio-Byzantine' style covered the whole spectrum of artistic production, from architecture and sculpture to monumental painting and manuscript illumination, it was mostly diffused through mural- and especially icon painting. From the thirteenth to the fourteenth century the whole Adriatic region was flooded with

Byzantine and Byzantinizing icons, which were often considered miraculous and held a prominent place in local cults, especially in the regions of Apulia and Dalmatia.

While it is estimated that most of the icons venerated in the Medieval Adriatic were imported from Constantinople, Cyprus and the broader Greek world,¹⁹ the sheer volume of extant Byzantinizing icons and frescoes in the region probably indicates the presence of local or travelling icon-painting workshops, such as the ‘Greek painters’ mentioned in Vasari’s *Lives* (1550). As early as the late Middle Ages artists of Greek origin or Byzantine formation were frequently attested in archival documents throughout the Adriatic, especially in Venice and the former Byzantine administrative centres of South Italy, Dalmatia and Venetian Albania.²⁰



Fig.2a
Saints Ambrose and Augustine, ca. 1331,
Saint Tryphon's Cathedral, Kotor
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou



Fig. 2b
*Details from the Crucifixion and the
Deposition from the Cross*, ca. 1331, Saint
Tryphon's Cathedral, Kotor
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

One of the earliest accounts of Greek painters is that of a certain Ioannes Klerikopoulos, who in all probability lived and worked in Zadar around the year 1314, when he signed an icon of Saint Demetrios for the city's eponymous church.²¹ According to archival sources, the Greek painters Emmanouel (*Hemanuel Grecus pictor*), Ioannes from Durrës (*magistro Johanni pictori de Durachio greco*), and Georgios from Kotor (*Georgius Grecus pictor olim de Catharo*) worked in fourteenth-century Dubrovnik,²² while Greek painters were also invited to decorate the rector's palace in the event of Tsar Stefan Dušan's visit to Dubrovnik in 1350.²³ Wall paintings that could be associated with those artists can be found today in the churches of Saint John in Šipan, Saint Nicholas in Koločep, and in the Franciscan monastery in Dubrovnik.²⁴ Moreover, in the State Archives in Kotor, there are several documents attesting to the presence of Greek artists in the first half of the fourteenth century, as were the painters Nikolaos (*Nycole pictoris Greci*), Emmanouel (*Hemanuel Grecus pictor*), Ioannes (*Jani Greci*), and possibly Michael (*Micho Grechi*).²⁵ In addition, in 1331 'Greek painters' (*pictoribus graecis*) worked at Saint Tryphon's cathedral in Kotor [fig. 2a-b],²⁶ while during the same period artists of Greek origin or at least of Byzantine formation painted the churches of Saint Luke,²⁷ Collegiata,²⁸ Saint James, and Saint Nicholas in Kotor,²⁹ as well as the church of the Deposition of the Precious Robe of the Virgin (Riza Bogorodice) in Bijela [fig. 3a-b].³⁰



Fig. 3a.

Officiating bishops, Church of the Deposition of the Precious Robe of the Virgin (Riza Bogorodice), Bijela
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou



Fig.3b

Christ 'Anapeson' and portrait of bishop Daniel, Church of the Deposition of the Precious Robe of the Virgin (Riza Bogorodice), Bijela
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

A similar pattern can be identified along the Italian coast of the Adriatic, especially in the region of Apulia, which was an important hub of Greek monasticism during the Middle Ages. Several Greek artists were active in the area in relation to the Basilean monastery of Saint Nicholas of Casole,³¹ while numerous monuments throughout the whole Terra d'Otranto were decorated with Byzantine wall paintings. These varied from larger, urban churches, such as the Otranto Cathedral or the church of San Pietro in the same city [fig. 4],³² to rural rock-cave chapels that functioned for the needs of the local Italo-Greek communities in the Apulian countryside.³³



Fig. 4

Christ washing the feet of the Apostles, Church of Saint Peter (San Pietro), Otranto
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

In Venice, Greek-speaking painters and mosaicists were documented since the mid-twelfth century, such as masters Ioannes and Philippos.³⁴ This tradition was preserved up until the fifteenth century, as testified by the case of Nikolaos Philanthropenos from Constantinople, who in 1430–1436 participated in the mosaic decoration of Saint Mark’s together with renowned Early-Renaissance painters such as Jacobello del Fiore, Michele Giambono and Paolo Uccello. It appears that Philanthropenos held an honorary position among his fellow painters, as the title of *magister artis musaice* and *prothomagister musaici in ecclesia Sancti Marci* was bestowed upon him.³⁵

In the fifteenth century, the fall of the Byzantine Empire and later of the Serbian state resulted in the gradual decline of the Eastern-Orthodox influence in the Adriatic. Meanwhile, the emergence of humanism brought about the abandonment of the Byzantine style—the medieval *maniera greca*—and expedited its replacement by the more naturalistic innovations of the Renaissance. As previously mentioned, already in 1550 Giorgio Vasari was writing about the “awkward Greek manner,” and was discussing how after Cimabue and Giotto the “*maniera*

greca ... died out in every aspect.”³⁶ As we shall see, however, this was not entirely the case. Unlike the rest of Catholic Europe, where the Byzantine culture was less influential, in the region of the Adriatic traces of the medieval *maniera greca* persisted to a greater or lesser extent even while the Renaissance was in full bloom.



Fig. 5a

Andreas Ritzos, *Virgin Hodegetria (Madre della Passione)*, Church of Saint Blaise (crkva Svetog Vlaha), Ston © Vinicije Lupis
©Margarita Voulgaropoulou



Fig. 5b

Giovanni Bellini, *Greek Madonna (Madonna Greca)*, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan
© image in the public domain

In Venice, Renaissance masters continued to draw on Byzantine pictorial forms, such as golden backgrounds and imitations of mosaic interiors; they often used Greek inscriptions, and even created Byzantine-inspired iconographic types, such as the popular half-length Madonna and Child, the Venetian variant of the Byzantine *Hodegetria* [fig. 5a–b].³⁷ The product *par excellence* of this fruitful contact between Venetian and Byzantine traditions was Saint Mark’s Basilica, where all works for the renovation of the mosaic decoration were executed according

to the Byzantine ways, a practice respected even by renowned Renaissance painters, such as Paolo Uccello, Andrea del Castagno, Paolo Veronese, Titian, and Tintoretto.³⁸

But while the Byzantine heritage was appropriated in Venice as a symbol of prestige and an “obvious anachronism,”³⁹ in the rest of the Adriatic it was preserved as an intrinsic element of regional artistic traditions. Compared to more advanced artistic centres, the Adriatic periphery often lacked the educated patrons that would cultivate the need for artistic innovations and exhibited a great delay in the replacement of older art forms. In Southern Italy, for example, Byzantine elements were discernible in the local artistic production, reflecting the preferences of the local patronage at least until the official abolition of the Orthodox rite in the late sixteenth century. Byzantine iconographic types, such as the *Hodegetria* or ‘Our Lady of Constantinople’ (*Madonna di Costantinopoli*) were well rooted into the local traditions, and featured on wall paintings and icon-like images, namely half-length portraits of saints on a golden background, such as the ones produced by the painter known by the initials ‘ZT’ [fig. 6].⁴⁰



Fig. 6

'ZT', *Madonna and Child (Santa Maria di Costantinopoli)*, 1539, Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin, Ruvo di Puglia © Margarita Voulgaropoulou

Likewise, on the East coast of the Adriatic Byzantine influences survived well into the period of the so-called Dalmatian Renaissance, and were most evident in the use of gold backgrounds, two-dimensional compositions, but sometimes also Greek inscriptions. It appears also that certain painters were familiar with the 'Greek style', as was Lovro Dobričević, who in 1455 painted the small church of the Assumption at Savina Monastery in Montenegro according to the rules of the Byzantine tradition [fig. 7],⁴¹ or his son, Vicko Lovrin, who in 1510 executed the wall paintings at Tvrdoš monastery in Herzegovina 'more greco'.⁴²



Fig. 7

*View of the altar with the frescoes of Lovro Dobričević, Small Church (Mala Crkva), Savina Monastery (Lazar Seferović, *Umjetničko blago Herceg-Novog* [Herceg-Novi: SIZ za turizam, 1984]) © Margarita Voulgaropoulou*

Even more pronounced was the presence of Byzantine tendencies in the Bay of Kotor. The confessional coexistence of Orthodox and Catholic populations left a marked and lasting imprint on the art of the region, with the most illustrative example being the dual Church of the Dormition of the Virgin (or of Saint Basil) in Mržep, near Donji Stoliv.⁴³ The church was founded in 1451 by the Serbian chancellor and interpreter Stefan Kalođerđević, and was decorated by painter Michael from Kotor. Uniquely reflecting the ethno-confessional diversity of the bishoprics of Kotor and Zeta, and the political imagery of the period that followed the Union of Ferrara–Florence (1439), the frescoes bear inscriptions in Latin, Greek and Cyrillic, and feature a combined Byzantine and Late Gothic style and iconography. In particular, although the main scenes of the iconographic program remain faithful to the Eastern Orthodox pictorial

tradition, a distinct Western influence is evident in the inclusion of saints typically associated with the Catholic Church, such as Tryphon, Sebastian and Francis of Assisi, and in their contrasting depiction according to Late Gothic precepts.

The Pious Art of the Schismatics: Orthodox art for a Catholic Patronage

By the late sixteenth century, the various remnants of medieval forms were gradually abandoned in the official artistic schools of the Adriatic urban centres. Nevertheless, while Byzantine monumental painting slowly went out of fashion, the demand for Byzantinizing devotional images remained undiminished, and icon painting continued to survive on the margins, now almost entirely limited in the production of ‘post-Byzantine’ Greek-Orthodox icons. It should be noted, however, that the steadfast popularity of icons in the region was not as much an aesthetic preference for archaic forms, as it was a manifestation of deeply rooted religious practices within the Adriatic societies. As we shall see, religious icons were almost exclusively intended to satisfy a specific set of market needs as their main function was not to embellish the décor of domestic or ecclesiastical settings, but rather to inspire devotion and piety in the faithful.

Since the the Council of Ferrara–Florence for the union of the Greek and Latin Churches, and especially after the fall of Constantinople, Byzantine icons had been entering Italian collections either as diplomatic gifts or relics of a fallen Empire, thus kindling a renewed interest in icon painting.⁴⁴ But although this “icon enthusiasm of the later fifteenth century” was mainly reserved for audiences of higher intellectual and social status, by the mid-sixteenth century icons became popularized and accessible to a much wider public.⁴⁵ The cult of icons grew immensely

in popularity after the Council of Trent, which considered art as a useful instrument in the toolset of Catholic propaganda, and promulgated the educational and spiritual role of images rather than their aesthetic value.⁴⁶ According to the engineer of the Tridentine reforms, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, religious images were primarily intended to “educate, to delight and to move” (*docere, delectare, movere*), and artists were advised to portray the Virgin half-length with the infant Jesus in her arms, as she was depicted in Greek icons.⁴⁷ Paleotti himself was a documented collector of icons made *alla greca*, as were in fact numerous cardinals and ecclesiastical prelates, such as Carlo and Federico Borromeo.⁴⁸

For conservative theological circles of the post-Tridentine era Eastern icons had remained more faithful to the Early Christian tradition, by reputedly reproducing the authentic portraits of saints. As copies of divine prototypes icons were often considered to bear miraculous properties, therefore providing the Catholic Church with a compelling argument against Protestant iconoclasm.⁴⁹ It was in this ideological context that post-Tridentine ecclesiastical authors, such as Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano and Federico Borromeo promoted the piety of Byzantine icons to the profanity of Renaissance paintings, despite remaining advocates of the more naturalistic style of their time.⁵⁰ Particularly illuminating are the instructions of the bishop of Bisceglie, Pompeo Sarnelli, to the painter Angelo Solimena to paint religious images “half-length, according to the old Christian custom, which has been preserved by the Greeks.” Sarnelli justified his recommendations by stressing that Greek icons “inspired devotion and superhuman majesty, even though they did not conform to the rules of art,” compared to “the painters of our age, who have profaned the sacred images to the point where not only is it impossible to worship

them, it's also impossible to look at them with pure eyes, for they have introduced nudity even on the altars.”⁵¹

Apart from serving the goals of post-Tridentine propaganda, Orthodox icons were also in high demand among the Catholic populace of the Adriatic, and formed an integral part of private and public devotional practices. From Venice and the Veneto to Dalmatia and the Venetian Albania there was hardly a Catholic household that did not treasure devotional icons among other works of art.⁵² Usually, devotional icons were kept in the most private and secluded places of the home, especially in the bedchamber, where their owners would retire to pray, although in Venice they often made their way to the shared reception areas that were commonly decorated with Italian or Flemish paintings. In a rather lively account of his travels in Northern Italy, the sixteenth-century painter and historian, Giambattista Armenini, complains about the presence of poorly made devotional images next to “admirable works of art,” which could be found even in the most lavishly decorated houses and palaces. These “lesser images” he described as “small pictures of some figures made in the Greek manner (*alla greca*), very awkward, displeasing, and covered with soot.”⁵³

A review of relevant archival sources from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries confirms Armenini's narration. Inventories, household registers, and testaments document the presence of Greek icons in Catholic households throughout the Adriatic, and even in the Republic of Ragusa, where the Orthodox rite remained banned until the eighteenth century.⁵⁴ Archival records equally manifest the mass production of icons for Catholic patrons and their exportation to the Western markets. We know for instance that on 4th July 1499 three Cretan icon painters were commissioned to deliver seven hundred icons of the Virgin within a period

of roughly a month. Out of these icons, only two hundred were to be painted “in forma greca,” while the rest five hundred were expected to be “tuto in forma a la latina [sic],” therefore mainly destined for Catholic patrons.⁵⁵

Art and Migration: The establishment of Orthodox communities in the Adriatic

Although the positive reception of icon painting among Catholic audiences substantially boosted the imports of icons in the West, on its own it fails to explain the extraordinary production and circulation of icons and icon painters in the Early Modern Adriatic, which rather implies the existence of a much broader customer base that could sustain an increased and continuous demand for Orthodox art. This customer base should be sought among the Greek- and Serbian-Orthodox populations of the Adriatic, for whom icons constituted the primary means of artistic expression. Indeed, from the late fifteenth century onwards, the radical change of the geopolitical status quo in the Eastern Mediterranean profoundly altered the ethno-confessional composition of the Adriatic societies and cultivated a fertile ground for the reception of Orthodox art in the region. The loss of the major Venetian possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean and its gradual transformation into a ‘Turkish lake’ triggered the mass migration of Orthodox populations to the West, especially to the Venetian territories of the Adriatic.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the advancement of the Ottomans through the Western Balkans pushed populations of Slavic origin towards the East Coast of the Adriatic, completely reshuffling the demographic equilibrium of the region. Under the pressure of these geopolitical developments the Early Modern Adriatic was essentially

shaped into a dynamic contact zone, “where disparate cultures met, clashed, and grappled with each other.”⁵⁷

As a result of the waves of migrations from the Eastern Mediterranean, numerous Greek communities and churches emerged in the whole Adriatic region from the sixteenth up to the eighteenth century, often mixed with Orthodox populations of Slavic or Albanian origin. In 1511 a Greek confraternity was established in Venice, followed by the construction of an Orthodox church dedicated to Saint George, which was started in 1539 and was completed in 1577.⁵⁸ The foundation of a Greek-Orthodox community in Venice encouraged the further migration of Greek refugees to the Adriatic and kindled the establishment of Orthodox churches along both shores.

Besides Venice, in the Italian Peninsula Orthodox churches and crypts existed as early as the Middle Ages, especially in the Italo-Greek village communities of the Terra d’Otranto. However, from the sixteenth century onwards, new churches were established, this time in the urban centres of the littoral. In Ancona, for instance, the church of Saint Anne was conceded in 1524 to Greek merchants and sailors that frequented the city’s port.⁵⁹ Further to the south, in Barletta the church of Our Lady of Angels (Santa Maria degli Angeli) was handed over to Peloponnesian refugees that had been invited by Charles V to settle in the Kingdom of Naples.⁶⁰ In Lecce the church of Saint Nicholas was assigned to the local Greek and Albanian Orthodox community.⁶¹ Two Greek churches dedicated to Saint John and Saint Peter, also functioned in the city of Brindisi.⁶²

On the East coast of the Adriatic on the other hand, in Venetian Istria and Dalmatia, numerous Orthodox communities were formed as part of the Republic’s strategic project to

channel the refugee inflow from their former Mediterranean territories, while at the same time repopulating abandoned settlements and protecting their borders from Ottoman incursions. Thanks to the petitions of Greek mercenaries (*stradioti*) in 1547 the church of Saint Elijah was founded in Zadar,⁶³ followed in 1569 by the concession of the church of Saint Julian to the Greeks of Šibenik.⁶⁴ In addition, in 1561 the monastery of Saint Paraskeve (Santa Veneranda) was established on the island of Hvar to service the spiritual needs of passing sailors and mercenaries.⁶⁵ Furthermore, in 1583 refugees from Cyprus, Nafplio and Monemvasia were granted the church of Saint Nicholas in the city of Pula, which serviced the whole Istrian peninsula.⁶⁶ A significantly larger number of Orthodox religious institutions functioned in the Venetian Albania, as was the church of Saint Luke in Kotor, which was converted to the Orthodox rite in 1657.⁶⁷ In addition to the Venetian-ruled coastline, numerous Orthodox churches and monasteries were documented in the Montenegrin and Dalmatian hinterland (*Zagora*), which were constantly changing hands between Venetian and Turkish rule.⁶⁸ Contrary to the urban communities of the littoral, these Orthodox villages were mainly populated by Slavic-speaking rural populations (Serbs, Bosnjaks, and Morlachs) that had migrated from the Balkan mainland.

These Orthodox communities that were established in the broad Adriatic region created a vast new market for Byzantinizing icons that were intended to supply the spiritual needs of the newcomers, and decorate the newly founded Orthodox churches and monasteries. Given the dire financial straits of these refugee communities, the decoration of Orthodox churches was usually carried out over several decades, and was heavily dependent on private donations, bequests or even on the collective charity of other Orthodox communities. Having as a model the churches

of their homelands, and the church of Saint George in Venice, the Orthodox communities of the Adriatic employed workshops that could deliver the desired outcomes, by producing works strictly executed according to the rules of Byzantine tradition and after popular iconographic prototypes.

The significance of adhering to Byzantine pictorial forms is highlighted by the fact that even renowned Italian artists were expected to ‘Byzantinize’ their painting style when involved in the decoration of Orthodox churches. From Lorenzo Lotto’s memoirs, for example, we learn that in 1551 the Venetian painter was commissioned to paint three panels for the Orthodox church of Saint Anne in Ancona, but was “forced” by his Greek patron, Ioannes Argentes (Zuane de Argenta), to adhere to the ‘Greek style’ (*forzarme che tira alla grecha*).⁶⁹ Likewise, when in 1598 Jacopo Palma il Giovane competed for the apse mosaic of the church of Saint George in Venice, he had to redo his original study in the Byzantine style in order not to be disqualified.⁷⁰ In the end, however, Palma still lost to the Greek Thomas Bathas, who was faithful to the “devout Greek manner,” according to the jury’s assessment.⁷¹ It is evident, therefore, that despite their ability to employ highly skilled Italian artists, the Greek communities of the Adriatic preferred to entrust church decorations to icon painters of Byzantine formation, knowing that they would best fulfill the specific requirements of their commissions.

Imported Art and Art of the Diaspora: Travelling Icons and Icon Painters in the Adriatic

The increasing demand for icons from a multicultural demographic resulted in an unprecedented rise in the import of works of Orthodox art in the Adriatic during the Early Modern Period. Until the sixteenth century the icons that reached the Adriatic markets were almost exclusively the product of imports from the iconographic centres of the Eastern Mediterranean, primarily from Crete, but also from Cyprus or the islands of the Aegean and the Ionian Seas. Treated as a commodity, religious icons reached the Adriatic ports through Venetian maritime trade routes and were further distributed to the markets of the Italian Peninsula and the Western Balkans.

In this trading network merchants performed the role of intermediaries, by purchasing icons directly from painting workshops, and then reselling them in foreign markets.⁷² Archival sources estimate that about fifteen per cent of the total orders received by Cretan painters were destined for Venetian and Greek merchants.⁷³ For example, in 1497 the dealer Zuan Giustinian commissioned a substantial number of icons from the painter Ioannes Salivaras in order to distribute them to the Western markets; the painter, however, failed to meet the demanding terms of the contract and the commission was never completed.⁷⁴ Highly illustrative is also the previously mentioned case of a massive commission recorded in a series of contracts from 1499. The contracts were stipulated in Candia between the merchants Giorgio Basejo from Venice and Petro Varsamà from the Morea on the one hand, and the painters Michael Fokas (Migiel Fuca), Nikolaos Gripiotes (Nicolò Gripioti) and Georgios Miçoconstantin on the other, who agreed to execute seven hundred icons of the Virgin within the period of forty-five days.⁷⁵ It is noteworthy that in order to fulfill the demands of the order, one of the painters, Michael Fokas, employed

the carpenter Georgios Sklavos to construct a thousand wooden panels in three different sizes, and also hired the painter Antonio Tajapiera to assist him, by creating seven busts of the Virgin on a daily basis.⁷⁶

This mass production of icons, evidenced in the afore-mentioned cases, implies the existence of a thriving trading network of icons between Greek—especially Cretan—and European markets. Moreover, the amount of surviving icons in Italian and Dalmatian churches and collections suggests that a large percentage of these exported works was destined precisely for the markets of the broad Adriatic region. The vast majority of the icons that reached the Adriatic originated from Candia, which remained the largest and liveliest artistic centre of the Greek world until its ultimate conquest by the Ottomans in 1669. Works signed by the most prominent painters of the time were dispersed all over the Adriatic: Icons signed by or attributed to Andreas Ritzos and his workshop are located in Bari, Ston, Dubrovnik, Trogir, Šibenik and Krpanj, but even in regions more remote from the shore, such as Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna and Bosnia, whereas icons signed by his son, Nikolaos, can be found as far as Florence, Sarajevo and the Dalmatian village of Islam Grčki. Likewise, works that bear the signature of Nikolaos Tzafoures were documented in Trieste and Brezovica, with a much larger number of attributed icons located in Fermo, Pesaro, Drniš, Prčanj, Korčula, Savina monastery, and Podgorica.

From the sixteenth to the seventeenth century the conditions of the trade of icons underwent a gradual change, as a considerable percentage of orders were now addressed to painters established in Venice or the rest of the Adriatic. Still, however, the imports of Cretan and other Greek icons in the Adriatic continued unabated, responding to the needs of newly established Greek-Orthodox communities. Among the most productive workshops of the time

was that of Georgios Klontzas, whose works have been located in Venice, Drniš, Šibenik, Berat but also in Sarajevo and the village Osimo of the Italian Marche. Icons signed by the prolific painter Emmanouel Lambardos can be found as far as Dubrovnik, the Croatian village Mali Grđevac or the monastery of Ozren in Bosnia. Moreover, icons by master Viktor ended up in collections in Bari, Zadar, Koprivnica and the village of Maini in Montenegro.



Fig.8a

View of the iconostasis with icons by Demetrios Foskales, 1699, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin (originally: Church of Saint Julian), Šibenik
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou



Fig. 8b

Demetrios Foskales (attr.), Pentecost, 1699, Collection of the Serbian Orthodox Church (provenance: Church of Saint Julian), Šibenik
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

The fall of Candia in 1669 witnessed a sudden drop in the imports of artworks from Crete and a respective growth of the art trade between the Adriatic and the Ionian Islands. For example, when in 1699 the Orthodox confraternity of Šibenik had a new iconostasis constructed for their church, they commissioned twenty-four icons from the workshop of the Corfiot painter, Demetrios Foskales [fig. 8a–b].⁷⁷ In the meantime, the monks of Krka decorated the renovated

katholikon of Archangel Michael with icons of Heptanesian provenance, in all probability ordered from the workshop of Gerasimos Kouloumbes in Zakynthos.⁷⁸ Signed icons of Heptanesian masters, such as those of Elias Moskos in Kotor or Konstantinos Kontarines in Hvar and Savina, also testify to the thriving commerce between the Islands and the lower Adriatic.⁷⁹

Along with the mass import of icons, in the Early Modern period new professional opportunities were created for Greek artists and artisans in the broad Adriatic area. Greek icon painters travelled to the Adriatic after receiving important commissions or in search of new markets due to the high competition in their homelands. This was particularly evident in highly saturated markets, as was the one of Candia, where approximately one hundred and eighty icon painters worked in the period 1450–1600, a considerable number if we take into account that the overall population of the city reached fifteen thousand people.⁸⁰

After the sixteenth century numerous artists also migrated to the Adriatic as part of the refugee waves that followed the capture of major icon painting centres in the Eastern Mediterranean by the Ottomans. To name but a few, Ioannes Permeniates fled Rhodes after the capitulation of the Island to the Ottomans in 1522;⁸¹ Georgios Margazines and Theodoros Poulakes left the city of Chania around the time of its conquest in 1645;⁸² while Elias Moskos or Emmanouel and Konstantinos Tzanes settled in Venice after the fall of their hometown, Rethymno, in 1646.⁸³



Fig. 9

Ioannes Permeniates, *Madonna and Child with Saint Anne*, ca. 1530, Museo Diocesano (provenance: Church of Saint Anne), Ancona © Margarita Voulgaropoulou

The vast majority of the Greek painters that travelled to the West settled in Venice, recognizing the importance of the city as leading artistic centre, but also as a flourishing hub of the Greek Diaspora.⁸⁴ The icon painters of the Greek community of Venice were primarily involved in the decoration of the newly built church of Saint George or were employed by Orthodox churches and monasteries throughout the Adriatic and the Balkans. In particular, Ioannes Permeniates created the icons for the church of Saint Anne in Ancona [fig. 9]; Michael Damaskenos and Emmanouel Tzanes worked at the church of Saint George in Venice; Ioannes Apakas painted the icons for the *katholikon* of the monastery at Krupa [fig. 10]; and Thomas Bathas worked for the church of Saint Nicholas in Pula and the church of Our Lady of Angels in Barletta.⁸⁵



Fig. 10

Ioannes Apakas, *Icons*, ca. 1600, Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Krupa Monastery
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

The artistic production of the icon painters of Venice was not limited to the execution of works for Orthodox commissioners, but extended to the creation of images in the Italian fashion. In his 1599 will for instance, the aforementioned Thomas Bathas writes that he wished for his student, Emmanouel Tzanfournares, to receive ‘all of his designs, both those in the Greek and those in the Italian style (*‘tutti i miei deseigni, cosi grechi, come all’italiana’*)⁸⁶ thus confirming his involvement with Western art, besides his proficiency in the ‘devout Greek manner’. Raised and trained in the multicultural environments of the Eastern Mediterranean, Greek and especially Cretan icon painters were renowned for their dual ability to work in both the Byzantine and Western iconographic traditions. Departing from the austere formality and schematization of Byzantine art, icon painters from Latin-ruled territories blended in their works Late-Gothic or Renaissance elements in order to achieve a more ‘Westernized’ look, which consisted in a softer modelling of the facial features in *chiaroscuro*, a smoother and less geometric rendering of the

draperies, and sometimes the replacement of the traditional golden background with a naturalistic landscape [fig. 11].



Fig. 11

Comparison of icons *alla greca* and *alla latina*: (left) *The Virgin Hodegetria (detail)*, 16th century, Venice, Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini (image in the public domain); (right) *Madre della Consolazione (detail)*, ca. 1500, Museum, Savina Monastery © Margarita Voulgaropoulou

In Venice these ‘bilingual’ icon painters had the opportunity to further study the trends and techniques of contemporary Venetian painting, either by copying popular works of art, or directly as apprentices at the workshops of renowned Renaissance artists. This fruitful contact resulted in the enrichment of the iconographic repertoire of Greek icon painters, their further familiarization with Italian art, and sometimes even their complete conversion to the Western style, as was the case of Antonios Vassilakes or Domenikos Theotokopoulos.⁸⁷ Perhaps the most striking example is that of Ioannes Permeniates, a member of the Greek community of Venice, who, depending on the demands of his clientele, would either produce icons in the Byzantine tradition or paintings in the spirit of the Venetian Quattrocento, easily recognizable by his signature-‘Bellinesque’-landscape [fig. 9 and 12].



Fig. 12

Ioannes Permeniates (attr.), *Madonna and Child with the Infant Saint John and Saints Sebastian and Roch*, private collection © image in the public domain

It was exactly this dual ability of Greek-speaking icon painters to work in both the Byzantine and Western iconographic traditions, which permitted them to respond to the demands of a multicultural patronage network that transcended ethno-confessional and socio-economic borders. Indeed, apart from their work for Orthodox patrons, Greek icon painters often received commissions from a Catholic clientele: for example, Michael Damaskenos executed the altarpiece of the Virgin of the Rosary at the Benedictine monastery in Conversano, while Konstantinos Tzanes painted a *pala d'altare* for the Carmelite church in Trogir.⁸⁸ Besides these larger commissions, the icon-painting workshops of Venice were also associated with the mass production of devotional images in the style of the Venetian mannerists, which they sold in mass in the Adriatic markets. Such works are commonly attributed to lesser artisans, collectively referred to in literature by the derogatory term *madonneri*,⁸⁹ even though a closer observation allows us to identify in them the hand of notable icon painters, such as Michael Damaskenos, Thomas Bathas or Emmanouel Tzanfournares.⁹⁰

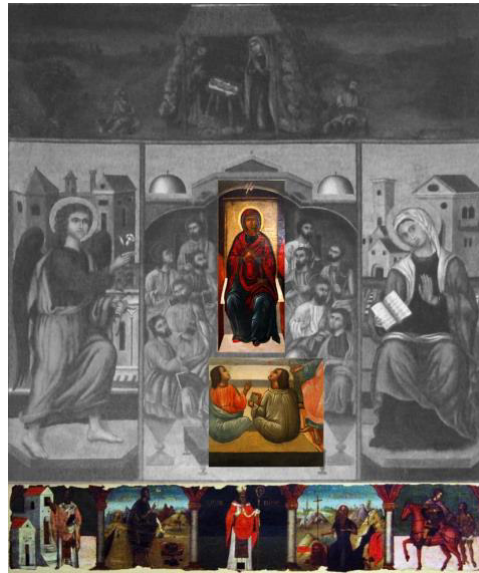


Fig. 13

F. Ludwig (copy after Angelos Bitzamanos), *The Descent of the Holy Spirit*, 1888, Church of the Holy Spirit, Komolac, and Angelos Bitzamanos, *The Descent of the Holy Spirit (fragments)*, ca. 1518–1519, Franciscan Monastery, Dubrovnik Digital reconstruction of the altarpiece © Margarita Voulgaropoulou

Alongside Venice, a small but not insignificant number of Greek icon painters also settled in cities and villages of the Adriatic periphery. Mostly they were less qualified artists, who struggled to cope with the high competition in larger artistic centres and sought work in provincial regions of the Adriatic, exploiting the artistic conservatism and the unsophisticated taste of the local patronage. Such was the case of Angelos Bitzamanos,⁹¹ an icon painter from Candia, who in 1518 travelled to Komolac, a village near Dubrovnik, after receiving a commission for an altarpiece in the Italian style [fig. 13].⁹² The arrival of Angelos in Dubrovnik was in all likelihood related to the death within the span of a year (1517–1518) of the three major painters of the city, Mihajlo Hamzić, Nikola Božidarević and Vicko Lovrin, which marked the abrupt end of the so-called Ragusan Painting School, and created an immediate need for artistic hands. In order to cope with the high demands of the commission, Angelos probably employed the assistance of his younger relative –probably son– Donatos, who also left works in

Dubrovnik.⁹³ The two painters later crossed the Adriatic and settled first in Barletta, and then permanently in the town of Otranto, where they formed a thriving icon-painting workshop. Despite producing mainly small portable icons that often lacked refinement, the Bitzamanos family workshop managed to flourish in the provincial milieu of the Terra d' Otranto, and even attract apprentices and followers, as were the locals Giovanni Maria and Fabrizio Scupula.⁹⁴

From the late seventeenth century onwards, the geopolitical changes in the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas completely reshuffled the dynamics of art trade and the mobility of Greek artists. The redefinition of the Ottoman-Venetian borders after the treaties of Karlowitz and Passarowitz brought under Venetian rule regions with a majority of Orthodox population, such as the Dalmatian hinterland and the rural area around Kotor and Budva. Contrary to previous times, the new settlers were mainly of Slavic origin, since most Greeks would rather settle permanently in Venice or the Ionian Islands. Furthermore, the relative political stability that followed led to the demographic and economic growth of the Orthodox communities of the Adriatic periphery, allowing them to afford larger commissions, and attract increasingly more icon painters. Meanwhile, the fall of the cities of Rethymno, Chania and ultimately Candia to the Ottomans suspended the supply of Cretan icons and artists to the Adriatic markets, thus permitting the appearance of a new generation of Heptanesian icon painters working between the Ionian and Adriatic Seas. These painters found a steady market for their works in the Orthodox communities of the Adriatic, exploiting the lack of competition in the area, and thus monopolizing the artistic production.⁹⁵

In 1756 the painter Eustathios Karousos travelled from Cephalonia to Naples, commissioned to decorate the church of Saints Peter and Paul,⁹⁶ while in 1767 he painted the

icons for the Orthodox church of Villa Badessa in Abruzzo.⁹⁷ At about the same time, the Corfiot Spyridon Romas created the icons for the Orthodox church in Livorno,⁹⁸ and also left works in Lecce and in Dalmatia.⁹⁹ In the last decades of the eighteenth century Spyridon Sperantzas from Corfu painted the iconostasis of the church of Saint Spyridon in Trieste together with his son, Michael,¹⁰⁰ who would later travel to Zadar, commissioned to construct a new iconostasis for the church of Saint Elijah [fig. 14].¹⁰¹ Around the turn of the century, another Corfiot painter, Demetrios Bogdanos was active in the Orthodox communities of Barletta, Brindisi, and Lecce, where he also served as a priest for almost sixty-six years (ca. 1775–1841).¹⁰²



Fig. 14
Michael Sperantzas, *Iconostasis*, 1806–1811, Church of Saint Elijah, Zadar
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

A similar picture is observed on the East coast of the Adriatic. In the parish archives of the church of Saint Elijah in Zadar, for example, there can be found several records of artists hailing from the Ionian Islands or other Greek-speaking territories. An illustrative example from the eighteenth century is that of the Corfiot painter Georgios Michalakes, mentioned in the

sources in 1727 and 1735, who left behind works in Zakynthos, Skradin, Dalmatinsko Kosovo and the monastery of Krka [fig. 15].¹⁰³ Even more striking was the case of Spyridon Rapsomanikes, also from Corfu, who served as chaplain at the church of Saint Elijah from 1750 to 1769.¹⁰⁴ Rapsomanikes was active along the entire East coast of the Adriatic, and was responsible for creating among others the iconostasis of the church of Saint Spyridon in Skradin [fig. 16], and possibly that of the chapel of Saint Spyridon at the church of Saint Luke in Kotor.¹⁰⁵ Another Greek painter active in Zadar was Antonios Makres, who signed an icon of Saint Elijah for the homonymous church, commissioned by Milos Ghikas, a registered member of the local community. Makres' style is evident in several unsigned icons in Zadar and Krka, but can also be identified in the iconostasis of the church of Saint Nicholas at the Dalmatian village Bratiškovci [fig. 17].¹⁰⁶



Fig.15

Georgios Michalakes, *The Madonna and Child with Angels and scenes of the Akathist*, Collection of the Serbian Orthodox Church (provenance: Skradin, Church of Saint Spyridon), Šibenik © Margarita Voulgaropoulou



Fig.16

Spyridon Rapsomanikes, *Iconostasis*, 1755, Church of Saint Spyridon, Skradin © Margarita Voulgaropoulou



Fig. 17

Antonios Makres, *Iconostasis*, Church of Saint Nicholas, Bratiškovci
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

Another case from the second half of the eighteenth century is that of Matthaïos Vegias from Corfu, priest and archimandrite of the Orthodox Church of Šibenik.¹⁰⁷ Vegias enjoyed widespread popularity throughout the Adriatic, especially in Northern Dalmatia, and was responsible for decorating the iconostases of the churches of the Saviour and the Dormition of the Virgin in Šibenik, as well as that of the church of Saint Nicholas in Rijeka [fig. 18].¹⁰⁸ Vegias' long-term success is easily explained by the complete absence of competition in the market, which was explicitly noted by his contemporary Gerasim Zelić in his autobiography: “we have no icon painters in Dalmatia, with the sole exception of priest Matthaïos Vegias in Šibenik.”¹⁰⁹



Fig. 18

Matthaios Vegias, *Saint Demetrios*, 1794, Collection of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Šibenik
© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

Apart from the Ionian Islands, painters from other Greek-speaking regions also travelled to the Adriatic seeking work. Hailing from the city of Methoni in the Peloponnese, the painter Ioannes Trigones produced several icons for the church of Villa Badessa,¹¹⁰ but was also active in the Orthodox community of Trieste from 1786 until his death in 1833.¹¹¹ Somewhat different was the case of Naoum Tzeteres from the village Grabovo in modern-day Albania, who travelled to Budva in 1833 to create the iconostasis for the church of the Holy Trinity along with his nephew Georgios and the woodcarver Athanasios [fig. 19].¹¹²



Fig.19

Naoum and Georgios Tzeteres / Nikolaos Aspiotes, *Iconostasis*, 1833/1884, Church of the Holy Trinity, Budva © Margarita Voulgaropoulou

The presence of these travelling icon painters in the Adriatic fostered a vibrant dynamic of cross-cultural exchanges especially between the Greek- and Serbian-Orthodox elements of the Eastern Adriatic. Greek artists strongly influenced the work of local workshops, either indirectly by introducing new artistic tendencies and iconographic themes, or directly by forming collaborations with local artists and artisans. Highly illustrative, for example, is the case of the parish church of the village Višnjeva in Grbalj, modern-day Montenegro, which was decorated jointly by master Titos from Corfu, his assistant Tripo Dabović from Škaljari, and the woodcarver Ižepo from Kotor.¹¹³

Despite the initial predominance of the Greek cultural element in the Adriatic communities, the longterm coexistence of Greeks and Serbs resulted in their gradual but inevitable assimilation. As the numbers of Slavic-speaking congregants were rising within mixed communities, Serbian chaplains were recruited along with Greeks to perform the liturgy, and Serbian language gradually replaced Greek and Italian both in everyday and religious life.

Moreover, Greek community members were now able to communicate in Serbian, and were often registered in the sources by their slavicized names.¹¹⁴ This cultural amalgamation is perfectly reflected in the artistic production of the time. From the mid-eighteenth century on, works of art would feature bilingual inscriptions in Greek and Cyrillic in order to be understood by both ethnic contingents [fig. 20], and Greek painters would sign their works interchangeably in Greek or in Slavic, such as Spyridon Rapsomanikes, who signed several of his works in Cyrillic, and also appeared in the archival sources by the slavicized name Spiro Rapsomanić. On the other hand, Serbian patrons would be commemorated in dedicatory inscriptions by their hellenized names, as we can observe in an icon of the Dormition of the Virgin (1747) from Bratiškovci, which commemorates the donor Filip Knežević, or an icon of Saint Nicholas (1766) now at the Archeological Museum of Split, which bears the name of the donor Stanko Porović.



Fig 20

Spyridon Rapsomanikes, *Christ Pantokrator (detail)*, 1755, Church of Saint Spyridon, Skradin

© Margarita Voulgaropoulou

From a stylistic point of view, in order to respond to the aesthetic preferences of a now almost exclusively Orthodox and conservative patronage, Greek icon painters had to revert to

more traditional pictorial ways, at a time when strong Westernizing and naturalistic tendencies had been dominating Orthodox religious art in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. This becomes evident in a letter recommending the Corfiot painter Spyridon Romas to the Greek community of Livorno as the only artist in the Levant that was capable of painting in the ‘Romeic’ style, in other words, according to the ‘Byzantinizing’ tradition of the Orthodox Church.¹¹⁵ Considering that Romas was perfectly skilled in painting according to the Western fashion, his promotion as a representative of the Greek tradition illustrates the conservative horizon of expectations of his prospective clientele, rather than the spectrum of his artistic repertoire.¹¹⁶

Within this system of aesthetics it is possible to interpret the extraordinary popularity that Greek icon painters enjoyed in the Adriatic region up until the late nineteenth century, by which time religious art in the newly established Greek state had long departed from the strict Byzantine tradition, and was being ‘improved’ under the influence of academic tendencies.¹¹⁷ One of the most prolific artists of that time was Nikolaos Aspiotes from Corfu, a traditional icon painter who failed to succeed in the artistic scene of the modern Greek state, but who nevertheless managed to establish his fame in the Adriatic world, and was responsible for decorating a striking number of churches and monasteries throughout the Italian Peninsula, Dalmatia, and Montenegro [fig. 19 and 21].¹¹⁸



Fig. 21

Nikolaos Aspiotes, *Iconostasis*, 1863/1884, Church of Saint Nicholas, Praskvica Monastery
© (Manastir Praskvica, *U čast proslave 600 godina osnivanja crkve Svetog Nikole* [Budva: Edicija Budva 2013]).

Despite his extraordinary artistic production Nikolaos Aspiotes is still perceived as a marginal figure in Greek art historiography, while his overseas work is essentially unknown to scholars. Indeed, for all its remarkable geographical and chronological expansion, the work of the travelling icon painters of the Adriatic remains largely uncharted territory in scholarship. Eclectic in style, uneven in quality, and often oblivious of major artistic tendencies their production is often subject to scholarly misconceptions and has not yet earned a concrete place within the various European and Balkan art histories. Within its limited space this article aimed to provide a first comprehensive overview of the activity of itinerant Greek-speaking icon painters, with the purpose of revealing heretofore unexplored aspects of their work, and thus highlighting its obscure historical significance. As we have seen, the mass influx of Greek icons and icon painters in the Early Modern Adriatic was the combined outcome of the region's deeply

rooted aesthetic traditions that set the stage for their favourable reception, and on the other hand of intense geopolitical upheavals, which reshaped the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Seas, resulting in the culmination of the vibrant cross-cultural exchanges between the Greek-speaking world, the Italian Peninsula and the Western Balkans. Versed in both Eastern and Western artistic traditions, and aware of the challenges of their time, Greek icon painters were willing to travel beyond the borders of their homelands, transform their pictorial language, and, much like traders, adapt their product to the demands of the multicultural patronage networks of the receiving societies. More than a creative choice, the iconographic and stylistic development of their work was dependent on their entanglements with either Catholic or Greek- and later Serbian-Orthodox populations, therefore perfectly reflecting the socio-political, confessional and artistic dynamics of coexistence between the diverse cultural groups that crossed paths in the Early Modern Adriatic.

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Notes

- ¹ ‘Avenne che in que’ giorni erano venuti di Grecia certi pittori in Fiorenza, chiamati da chi governava quella città non per altro che per introdurvi l’arte della pittura, la quale in Toscana era stata smarrita molto tempo’. Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de’ più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a’ tempi nostri* (Firenze, 1550): 126; cited in Italo Furlan, ‘Artisti greci a Venezia’, in *Il Veltro* no. 3–4 (1983): 299–313: 305. The passage was slightly modified in the following edition of the *Lives*. See Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de’ più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a’ tempi nostri* (Firenze: 1568): 83. The translated passage is cited in Hayden Maginnis, ‘Duccio's Rucellai Madonna and the Origins of Florentine Painting’, in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 123 (1994): 147–164: 147; Ennio Concina, ‘Giorgio Vasari, Francesco Sansovino e la Maniera Greca’, in Ennio Concina, Giordana Trovabene, Michela Agazzi (eds), *Hadriatica. Attorno a Venezia e al Medioevo. Tra arti, storia e storiografia*, Scritti in onore di Wladimiro Dorigo (Padova, 2002): 89–96.
- ² Vasari, *Le Vite*: 83. Translated in Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, Julia Conaway Bondanella, and Peter Bondanella (eds) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 8.
- ³ Joseph Archer Crowe, and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, *A history of painting in Italy, Umbria, Florence and Siena, from the second to the sixteenth century*, vol. 1 (London, 1903): 179; Paola Barocchi, *Studi Vasariani* (Torino, 1984); Bruce Cole, *Studies in the history of Italian art, 1250-1550* (London, 1996): 124.
- ⁴ Vasari, *Le Vite*: 83; Vasari, *The Lives*: 9.
- ⁵ Mario Cattapan, ‘Nuovi documenti riguardanti pittori cretesi dal 1300 al 1500’, in: *Πεπραγμένα του Β’ Διεθνούς Κρητολογικού Συνεδρίου*, vol. 3 (Athens, 1968): 29–46; Mario Cattapan, ‘Nuovi elenchi e documenti dei pittori in Creta dal 1300 al 1500’, in *Thesaurismata* 9 (1972): 202–235; Maria Constantoudaki, ‘Οι ζωγράφοι του Χάνδακος κατά το πρώτον ήμισυ του 16ου αιώνας οι μαρτυρούμενοι εκ των νοταριακών αρχείων [The painters of Candia in the first half of the sixteenth century witnessed in the notarial archives]’, in *Thesaurismata* 10 (1973): 291–380; Athanasios Paliouras, ‘Η ζωγραφική εις τον Χάνδακα από 1550–1600 [Painting in Candia from 1550–1600]’, in *Thesaurismata* 10 (1973): 101–123; Maria Constantoudaki, ‘Μαρτυρίες ζωγραφικών έργων στο Χάνδακα σε έγγραφα του 16ου και 17ου αιώνα [Evidence of paintings in Candia in documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries]’, in *Thesaurismata*, 12 (1975): 35–136; eadem, ‘Νέα έγγραφα για ζωγράφους του Χάνδακα (ΙΣΤ΄ αι.) από τα αρχεία του Δούκα και των νοταρίων της Κρήτης’, in *Thesaurismata* 14 (1977): 157–198; Maria Kazanaki, ‘Οι ζωγράφοι του Χάνδακα κατά το 17ο αιώνα. Ειδήσεις από νοταριακά έγγραφα’ [The painters of Candia in the seventeenth century. News from the archival documents], in *Thesaurismata* 18 (1981): 178–267; Maria Vassilaki, ‘Ο ζωγράφος Άγγελος Ακοτάντος: το έργο και η διαθήκη του (1436)’, in *Thesaurismata* 18 (1981): 290–98; Maria Constantoudaki Kitromilides, ‘Οι Κρητικοί ζωγράφοι και το κοινό τους: η αντιμετώπιση της τέχνης τους στη βενετοκρατία [The Cretan painters and their public: Attitudes towards their Art in Venetian Crete]’, in *Kretika Chronika* 26 (1986): 246–61; Angeliki Lymberopoulou, ‘The painter Angelos and post-Byzantine art’, in Carol M. Richardson (ed.), *Locating Renaissance Art, vol. 2* (Yale University Press, 2007): 174–210; Maria Vassilaki (ed.), *Χείρ Άγγέλου. Ένας ζωγράφος εικόνων στη βενετοκρατούμενη Κρήτη [The Hand of Angelos: An Icon Painter in Venetian Crete]* (Athens, 2010). For the historiography on Cretan icons see also Dionysis Mourelatos, ‘The debate over Cretan icons in twentieth-century Greek historiography and their incorporation into the national narrative’, in Dimitris Damaskos and Dimitris Plantzos (eds), *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and the Hellenic Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008): 197–207.
- ⁶ Literature on the Greek painters of Venice abounds but see in particular Ioannis Veloudos, *Ελλήνων Ορθοδόξων αποικία εν Βενετία [Greek Orthodox community in Venice]* (Venice, 1893): 47, 144–145; Konstantinos D. Mertzios, *Θωμάς Φλαγγίνης και ο Μικρός Ελληνομνημιών [Thomas Flanginis and the Small Recorder of Greek Affairs]* (Athens, 1939): 238–247; Constantoudaki Kitromilides, ‘Οι ζωγράφοι του Χάνδακος’: 326, 330–331; Manoussos Manoussakas, ‘Έλληνες ζωγράφοι έν Βενετία μέλη της Ελληνικής Αδελφότητος κατά τον ΙΣΤ΄ αιώνα [Greek painters in Venice, members of the Greek confraternity in the sixteenth century]’ in *Μνημόσυνον Σοφίας Αντωνιάδη* (Venice: Ελληνικό Ινστιτούτο Βενετίας Βυζαντινών και

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- ⁷ See for example Ronda Kasl, ‘Holy households: art and devotion in Renaissance Venice’, in Ronda Kasl (ed.), *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004): 58–89; Caroline Campbell, ‘The Bellini, Bessarion and Byzantium’, in Caroline Campbell, Alan Chong, Deborah Howard, J. M. Rogers, and Sylvia Auld, *Bellini and the East* (London: National Gallery Company, 2006): 36–65: 54–59; Donal Cooper, ‘Devotion’, in Marta Ajmar Wollheim, and Flora Dennis, *At home in Renaissance Italy* (London: V & A, 2006): 190–203; Margaret Ann Morse, ‘Creating sacred space: The religious visual culture of the Renaissance Venetian casa’, *Renaissance Studies* 21 (2007): 151–184: 159–160, 166, 182; Megan Holmes, *The miraculous image in Renaissance Florence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013): 162–163; Margaret Ann Morse, ‘The Venetian Portego: Family Piety and Public Prestige’, in Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller, and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari (eds), *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400–1700* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing): 89–106: 95–96; Andrew Casper, ‘Greeks abroad: (as)signing artistic identity in early modern Europe’, *Renaissance Studies* 28 (2014): 356–376; Lucia Corazza, *Il mercato di quadri nella Venezia del Cinquecento*, MA thesis (Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia, 2017): 55, 203; Maya Corry, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven (eds), *Madonnas & Miracles: the holy home in Renaissance Italy* (London – New York: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017): 69; Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).
- ⁸ Alexander Nagel, and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010): 95–107; Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011): 21–23; Christopher J. Nygren, *Titian’s Icons: Tradition, Charisma, and Devotion in Renaissance Italy* (Penn State University Press, forthcoming – 2019).
- ⁹ Enrico Castelnuovo, and Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Symbolic Domination and Artistic Geography in Italian Art History, translated by Maylis Currie’, *Art in Translation* 1:1 (2009): 5–48; Stephen J. Campbell, ‘Artistic geographies’, in Michael Wyatt, *The Cambridge companion to the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 17–39; idem, *The endless periphery: toward a geopolitics of art in Lorenzo Lotto’s Italy* (Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press, 2019).
- ¹⁰ Marina S. Brownlee, and Dimitri Gondicas (eds), *Renaissance encounters: Greek East and Latin West* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Heather E. Grossman and Alicia Walker (eds), *Mechanisms of exchange: transmission in medieval art and architecture of the Mediterranean, ca. 1000–1500* (Leiden: Brill 2013); Angeliki Lymberopoulou (ed.), *Cross-cultural interaction between Byzantium and the West, 1204–1669: whose Mediterranean is it anyway?* (London – New York: Routledge 2018); Falko Daim, Dominik Heher, and Claudia Rapp, *Menschen, Bilder, Sprache, Dinge: Wege der Kommunikation zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen* (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2018).
- ¹¹ See for instance Patrizia Angiolini Martinelli, ‘Icône Postbizantine in Italia Settentrionale’, *Milione* 1 (1988): 367–380; Pina Belli D’Elia (ed.), *Icône di Puglia e Basilicata dal Medioevo al Settecento* (Bari 1988); eadem,

‘Icône meridionali e “maniera greca”. Prospettive per una ricerca’, in *Studi di Storia dell'Arte sul Medioevo e il Rinascimento nel centenario della nascita di Mario Salmi*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Arezzo–Firenze 16–19 novembre 1989) (Firenze, 1993): 295–309; Milorad Savić, *Slikarstvo u Srpskim Crkvama Sjeverne Dalmacije: od kraja XIV do početka XX vijeka* (Beograd: Zavod za Udžbenike, 2000); Clara Gelao, ‘La pittura post-bizantina a Creta e sulle coste adriatiche, XV–XVI secolo’, in *Percorsi del sacro: icone dai musei albanesi*, Vicenza, Gallerie di Palazzo Leoni Montanari (Milano, 2002): 169–180; Zoraida Demori Staničić, *Javni kultovni ikona u Dalmaciji* (Split: Književni Krug, 2017).

12 Toniolo, Federica, and Giovanna Valenzano (eds), *Medioevo adriatico: circolazione di modelli, opere, maestri* (Roma: Viella, 2010).

13 Margarita Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική εικόνων στην Αδριατική από το 15ο έως το 17ο αιώνα [Post-Byzantine icon painting in the Adriatic from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century]*, PhD Diss. (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2014). See also Eugenia Drakopoulou, “‘Pittura Romeica’ in Italy: artistic transfers across the Adriatic Sea (18th – 19th centuries)”, in *The Historical Review / La Revue Historique*, Section of Neohellenic Research / Institute of Historical Research 13 (2016): 7–28; Margarita Voulgaropoulou, ‘From Domestic Devotion to the Church Altar: Venerating Icons in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Adriatic’, *Religions* 10/390 (2019): 1–41.

14 The term ‘Greek’ is used in this article to collectively designate Greek-speaking painters working in the Adriatic and the Balkans, and thus distinguish them from other artists of Italian or Slavic origin that were active in the same area. As Manolis Chatzidakis stresses ‘at this time the term Greek cannot refer to ethnic categories, but only to issues of language and artistic if not of more general education’: see Manolis Chatzidakis, *Έλληνες Ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση, 1450–1830 [Greek Painters after the Fall of Constantinople, 1450–1830], vol. 1* (Athens, 1987): 12. Indeed, despite the vast chronological and geographical span of this review, the artists presented in this article shared common cultural traits; they all used the Greek language, received similar artistic training, and often even identified themselves as Greeks when signing their works. In addition, for all its limitations the term ‘Greek’ is preferred over the equally problematic term ‘post-Byzantine’ which is commonly adopted in literature, since the time frame of this review goes beyond the conventional limit of ‘post-Byzantine’ art, and into the so-called ‘modern Greek’ or ‘Neo-Hellenic’ period. See also Olga Gkratziou, ‘Μεταβυζαντινή τέχνη: χρονολογικός προσδιορισμός ή εννοιολογική κατηγορία;’, in Tonia Kiousopoulou (ed.), *1453. Η άλωση της Κωνσταντινούπολης και η μετάβαση από τους μεσαιωνικούς στους νεότερους χρόνους* (Heraklion, 2005): 183–96; Panagiotis Ioannou, ‘«Ιταλοελληνική», «βενετική», «νεοελληνική», «μεταβυζαντινή»... Ορισμοί – ερμηνείες για την εικαστική παραγωγή στα Επτάνησα (17ος-19ος αι.)’, in Aliko Nikiforou (ed.), *Θ’ Πανιώνιο Συνέδριο*, Πρακτικά, vol. 2 (Paxoi, 2014): 175–192.

15 For the appropriation of Byzantine cultural heritage by Venice see: Anthony Cutler, ‘From Loot to Scholarship: Changing Modes in the Italian Response to Byzantine Artifacts, ca. 1200–1750’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 237–267; Maria Georgopoulou, ‘Late Medieval Crete and Venice: An Appropriation of Byzantine Heritage’, *Art Bulletin* 77/3 (Sep., 1995): 479–496; Chrysa Maltezou, ‘Byzantine “consuetudines” in Venetian Crete’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 269–280; Eugenia Drakopoulou, ‘Comments on the artistic interchange between conquered Byzantium and Venice as well as on its political background’, *Zograf* 36 (2012): 179–188; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 17–20.

16 Michele Bacci, ‘Veneto-Byzantine ‘Hybrids’: Towards a Reassessment’, *Studies in Iconography* 35 (2014): 73–106.

17 Ejnar Dyggve, ‘Eigentümlichkeiten und Ursprung der frühmittelalterlichen Architektur in Dalmatien’, in *Actes du XIIIe Congres International d’Histoire de l’Art* (Stockholm, 1933): 109–111; idem, *History of Salonitan Christianity* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1951): 3, 31, 81–82, 137.

18 Grgo Gamulin, *Bogorodica s Djetetom u staroj umjetnosti Hrvatske [Madonna and child in old art of Croatia]* (Zagreb: Kršćanska Sadašnjost, 1971): 9, 19; idem, ‘La pittura su tavole nel tardo medioevo sulla costa orientale dell’adriatico’, in Agostino Pertusi (ed.), *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, Atti del I Convegno Internazionale di Storia della Civiltà Veneziana, vol. 2, Arte, Letteratura, linguistic (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1974): 181–209; Željko Rapanić, ‘Istočna obala Jadrana u ranom srednjem vijeku’, in *Starohrvatska Prosvijeta* 3/15 (1985): 7–30; 16; Zoraida Demori Staničić, ‘Two icons of medieval Hvar’, in *Hortus Artium*

- Medievalium* 2 (2006): 43–56: 49; Igor Fisković, ‘Un contributo al riconoscimento degli affreschi "Adriobizantini" sulla sponda croata meridionale’, in *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 4 (1998): 71–83; Rosa Lorusso Romito, ‘Cultura figurativa “adriatica” in Puglia tra XIV e XV secolo’, in Raffaella Cassano, Rosa Lorusso Romito, and Marisa Milella (eds), *Andar Per Mare: Puglia e Mediterraneo tra Mito e Storia* (Bari: Adda, 1998): 351–368; Francesca Flores d’Arcais, ‘Paolo Veneziano e la pittura del Trecento in Adriatico’, in Francesca Flores d’Arcais and Giovanni Gentili (eds), *Il Trecento Adriatico: Paolo Veneziano e la Pittura tra Oriente e Occidente* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2002): 19–31: 20; Igor Fisković, ‘O freskama 11. i 12. stoljeća u Dubrovniku i okolici’ in *Radovi Instituta za Povijest Umjetnosti* 33 (2009): 17–36: 28–29; idem, ‘Slikano raspelo Sv. Franje iz 13. stoljeća u Splitu’, in *Radovi Instituta za Povijest Umjetnosti* 36 (2012): 97–112.
- ¹⁹ Belli D’Elia, ‘Icône meridionali’: 300–303; Valentino Pace, ‘Modi, motivi e significato della pittura bizantina nell’Italia meridionale continentale postbizantina’, *Zograf* 26 (1997): 41–52: 51.
- ²⁰ Cvito Fisković, ‘Slikar Angelo Bizamano u Dubrovniku’, in *Prilozi Povijesti Umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 11 (1959): 79–90: 84; Voulgaropoulou, *H μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 21–28; Margarita Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters in the twilight of the Republic of Venice: The Church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Višnjeva, Montenegro’ in *Journal for Modern Greek Studies* 36 (2018): 25–70.
- ²¹ The icon, which was destroyed during a fire in 1779, bore the following inscription: ‘IOANNES CLERICOPULO FECIT A. MCCCXIV’. Carlo Federico Bianchi, *Zara Cristiana* (Zara, 1877): 438; Raimond Van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, vol. 4 (The Hague, 1924): 98; Ljubo Karaman, ‘Notes sur l’Art Byzantin et les Slaves Catholiques de Dalmatie’, in Gabriel Millet (ed.), *L’Art Byzantin chez les Slaves: L’Ancienne Russie, les Slaves Catholiques*, Deuxième recueil dédié à la mémoire de Théodore Uspenskij, vol. 2 (Paris, 1932): 332–380: 354; Lazar Mirković, ‘Die Ikonen der Griechischen Maler in Jugoslawien’, in *Πεπραγμένα του Θ’ Διεθνούς Βυζαντινολογικού Συνεδρίου*, (Θεσσαλονίκη, 12- 19 Απριλίου 1953), vol. 1 (Athens, 1955): 301–328: 323; Cvito Fisković, *Zadarski Sredovječni Majstori* (Split, 1959): 92; Vojslav Đurić, ‘Vizantijske i Italo-Vizantijske Starine u Dalmaciji’, in *Prilozi Povijesti Umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 12 (1960): 123–144: 141; Voulgaropoulou, *H μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 23n159.
- ²² Jorjo Tadić, *Grada o slikarskoj skoli u Dubrovniku XIII-XIV veka*, vol. 1 (1284–1499) (Beograd, 1952): 22, doc. 62, 25, doc. 70–72, 30–32, doc. 76–77; Mirković, ‘Die Ikonen der Griechischen Maler’: 317–319; Vojslav Đurić, ‘Influence de l’art vénitien sur la peinture murale en Dalmatie jusqu’à la fin du XV^e siècle’, in Agostino Pertusi (ed.), *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, Atti del I Convegno Internazionale di Storia della Civiltà Veneziana, vol. 2, Arte, Letteratura, linguistic (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 1974): 139–161: 157; Voulgaropoulou, *H μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 25.
- ²³ Tadić, *Grada*: vol. 1, 16, doc. 46, 22, doc. 62, 25, doc. 70–72, 30–32, doc. 76–77; Mirković, ‘Die Ikonen der Griechischen Maler’: 317–319; Đurić, ‘Vizantijske i Italo-Vizantijske Starine’: 141–142; Đurić, ‘Influence de l’art vénitien’: 157; Voulgaropoulou, *H μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 24–25.
- ²⁴ See Igor Fisković, ‘Un contributo al riconoscimento degli affreschi “Adriobizantini” sulla sponda croata meridionale’, in *Hortus Artium Medievalium* 4 (1998): 71–83; Fisković, ‘O freskama 11. i 12. stoljeća’: 17–36.
- ²⁵ Vladimir Čorović, ‘Grčki slikari u Kotoru XIV veka’ in *Starinar* 3–5 (1928–1930): 39–42: 39; Antun Mayer, *Liber Notariorum Catarensium* (Zagreb, 1951): doc. 474–475, 563, 1182; Mirković, ‘Die Ikonen der Griechischen Maler’: 316–317; Risto Kovijanić and Ivo Stjepčević, *Kulturni Život Staroga Kotora, XIV-XVIII vijek* (Cetinje, 1957 [Reprinted, Perast, 2003]): 88–92; Đurić, ‘Vizantijske i Italo-Vizantijske Starine’: 141–143; Đurić, ‘Influence de l’art vénitien’: 156.
- ²⁶ Cvito Fisković, ‘O umjetničkim spomenicima grada Kotora’, in *Spomenik SANU* 103 (1953): 71–96: 76; Mayer, *Liber Notariorum*: doc. 662; Ljubo Karaman and Kruno Prijatelj, ‘O Mjesnim Grupama Dalmatinske Slikarske Škole u XV. St.’, in *Prilozi Povijesti Umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 9 (1955): 170–180: 179; Mirković, ‘Die Ikonen der Griechischen Maler’: 317; Kovijanić and Stjepčević, *Kulturni Život Staroga Kotora*: 94; Đurić, ‘Vizantijske i Italo-Vizantijske Starine’: 142; Đurić, ‘Influence de l’art vénitien’: 155–156.
- ²⁷ Vojslav Đurić, ‘Freska u Crkvi Sv. Luke u Kotoru’, in *Prilozi Povijesti Umjetnosti u Dalmaciji: Fiskovićev zbornik I: Zbornik Radova Posvećenih Sedamdesetogodišnjici Života Cvita Fiskovića* 21 (1980): 225–240.

- 28 The church of Santa Maria Collegiata was painted by the Greek artist Manouel or Manoylo. Fisković, 'O umjetničkim spomenicima grada Kotora': 80–82; Rajko Vujičić, 'The Frescoes in the Church of Maria Collegiata in Kotor', in *Prilozi Povijesti Umjetnosti u Dalmaciji* 35/1 (1995): 365–378; Valentina Živković, *Religioznost i Umetnost u Kotoru: XIV-XVI vek* (Beograd: Balkanološki Institut SANU, 210): 278–282.
- 29 In the report of his 1605-apostolic visitation, the bishop of Kotor, Angelo Baroni mentions that the churches were 'painted with Greek pictures' (*picta picturis graecis*), and were 'entirely covered with Greek pictures' (*tota depicta picturis grecis*) respectively. Svetozar Radojčić, 'O Slikarstvu u Boki Kotorskoj', in *Spomenik SANU* 103 (1953): 53–69: 61; Kovijanić and Stjepčević, *Kulturni Život Staroga Kotora*: 94; Đurić, 'Vizantijske i Italo-Vizantijske Starine': 142; Đurić, 'Influence de l'art vénitien': 156–157; Vojslav Đurić, 'U Senci Firentinske Unije: Crkva Sv. Gospe u Mržepu (Boka Kotorska)', in *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 35 (1996): 9–56: 44n134; Živković, *Religioznost i Umetnost u Kotoru*: 278; Valentina Živković, 'Tota depicta picturis grecis. The style and iconography of religious painting in medieval Kotor (Montenegro)', in Giuseppe Capriotti and Francesca Coltrinari (eds), *Periferie Dinamiche economiche territoriali e produzione artistica. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage* 10 (2014): 65–89.
- 30 Petar Šerović, 'Crkva "Riza Bogorodice" u Bijeloj, u Boki Kotorskoj', in *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Bosni i Hercegovini* 32, 3/4 (1920): 273–294; Kovijanić and Stjepčević, *Kulturni Život Staroga Kotora*: 93; Gordana Babić and Christopher Walter, 'The inscriptions upon liturgical rolls in Byzantine apse decoration', in *Revue des Études Byzantines* 34, 1 (1976): 269–280.
- 31 The mosaic of the Otranto Cathedral (1163–1165) for example was signed by the Greek painter Pantaleon (*Pantaleonis presbiteri*), who was a monk at the monastery of San Nicola di Casole. Another Greek painter, 'scientist of the art of coloring', was recommended to the prior of the same monastery by the Metropolitan of Corfu in 1220–1235. Linda Safran, *S. Pietro at Otranto: Byzantine art in South Italy* (Roma: Edizioni Rari Nantes, 1992): 159, 383n450; Pace, 'Modi, motivi e significato': 41–52: 50; Francesco Abbate, *Storia dell'arte nell'Italia meridionale. Il Cinquecento* (Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2001): 89.
- 32 Safran, *S. Pietro at Otranto*.
- 33 Linda Safran, "'Byzantine" art in Post-Byzantine South Italy?: Notes on A Fuzzy Concept', in *Symposium – Fuzzy Studies: A Symposium on the Consequence of Blur*, Part 3, *Common Knowledge* 18/3 (2012): 487–504; Cosimo De Giorgi, 'Cronologia dell' arte in Terra d' Otranto', in *Rassegna Pugliese di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* IV/5 (1887): 70–71; Alessandro Spagnolo, 'Salento bizantino e suo splendore', in *Nuovo annuario di Terra d' Otranto* 1–2 (1957): 64–72; Pace, 'Modi, motivi e significato': 323–324, 331–348, 371–397; Safran, *S. Pietro at Otranto*: 40–204; Marina Falla Castelfranchi, 'Sul Bosforo d'Occidente: la cultura artistica ad Otranto in epoca tardoantica e medievale', in Hubert Houben (ed.), *Otranto nel Medioevo: tra Bisanzio e l'Occidente* (Galatina: Congedo Editore, 2007): 299–306, 319–321.
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⁴² Mirković, ‘Die Ikonen der Griechischen Maler’: 323; Zdravko Kajmaković, *Zidno Slikarstvo U Bosni I Hercegovini* (Sarajevo: ‘Veselin Masleša’, 1971): 61–64, fig. 12, 14; Tadić, *Građa*: vol. 2, 39, doc. 838.

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⁴⁴ A more in depth discussion on this topic is available in Voulgaropoulou, ‘From Domestic Devotion’: 6–10. See also Nagel, *Controversy*: 21–23; Rembrandt Duits, ‘Byzantine icons in the Medici collection’, in Angeliki Lymberopoulou and Rembrandt Duits (eds), *Byzantine art and Renaissance Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013): 157–188.

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⁴⁸ Ilaria Bianchi. *La politica*: 171; Jones, *Federico Borromeo*: 122–126, 171, 189–192, 209, 240–241, 354; Steven F. Ostrow, *Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome: The Sistine and Pauline Chapels in S. Maria Maggiore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 128; Francesca Cappelletti, ‘An Eye on the Main Chance: Cardinals, Cardinal-Nephews, and Aristocratic Collectors’, in Gail Feigenbaum and Francesco Freddolini (eds), *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550–1750* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2014): 78–88; Voulgaropoulou, ‘From Domestic Devotion’: 9.

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- 75 Mario Cattapan, ‘Nuovi elenchi’: 211–15, doc. 6–8. Michael Fokas and Georgios Miçoconstantin agreed to paint two hundred icons each, while Nikolaos Gripiotis undertook the task of painting the remaining three hundred.
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- 77 Petar Šerović, ‘Nekoliko podataka o stanovništvu Šibenika’, in *Vjesnik za Arheologiju i Historiju Dalmatinsku* (1954): 198–201: 198n2; Mirković, ‘Die Ikonen der Griechischen Maler’: 326–327; Savić, *Slikarstvo u Srpskim Crkvama*: 77; Voulgaropoulou, *H μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*., 327–331. The attribution of these icons to Foskales is proposed by the author of this article, and is based on the close stylistic and iconographic similarities with icons signed by the Corfiot painter, as is for example the signed icon of the Nativity from Fogg Art Museum in Harvard or an icon of the Descent into Hades in the Ikonen-Museum in Frankfurt.
- 78 Savić, *Slikarstvo u Srpskim Crkvama*: 54; Čolović, *Sakralna Baština*: 175. Previous attribution of the icons to Michael Damaskenos can be refuted by a more careful stylistic analysis of the icons, as well as by the historical evidence. In 1647 the monastery and the *katholikon* were sacked and burnt down during an Ottoman incursion, only to be rebuilt and restored in 1673, a year which thus serves as a *terminus post quem* for the dating of the icons. The association of the icons with the work of Gerasimos Kouloumbes was suggested in Voulgaropoulou, *H μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*., 364n1667 and Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 46.
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- 81 Manoussos Manoussakas, ‘Έλληνες ζωγράφοι’: 215, No. 7; Pardos, ‘Αλφαβητικός κατάλογος’: 294–386: 366; Margarita Voulgaropoulou, ‘Η ζωγραφική βυζαντινότροπων εικόνων στις δύο ακτές της Αδριατικής: η

- περίπτωση του Ιωάννη Περμενιάτη’, in *Egnatia* 14 (2010): 195–211; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*., 48–54.
- 82 Ioannis Rigopoulos, *Ο αγιογράφος Θεόδωρος Πουλιάκης και η φλαμανδική χαλκογραφία* (Athens, 1979); Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι*: 171, 304–317; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 72–73.
- 83 Mertzios, *Θωμάς Φλαγγίνης*: 238–242; Nikolaos Tomadakis, ‘Εμμανουήλ, Κωνσταντίνος και Μαρίνος Τζάνε Μπουνιαλής’, in *Κρητικά Χρονικά* (1947): 123–154; Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι*: 198–203, 408–426; Maria Constantoudaki Kitromilides, ‘Από το Ρέθυμνο στη Βενετία: ο ζωγράφος Κωνσταντίνος Τζάνε Μπουνιαλής και η εξέλιξη της τέχνης του [From Rethymno to Venice: painter Konstantinos Tzanes Bouniales and the development of his art]’, in *Της Βενετίας το Ρέθυμνο*, Πρακτικά Συμποσίου (Venice, 2003): 415–434; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 40, 73–77.
- 84 See note 7. Voulgaropoulou, ‘Η ζωγραφική βυζαντινότροπων εικόνων’: 43–77.
- 85 Voulgaropoulou, ‘Η ζωγραφική βυζαντινότροπων εικόνων’: 195–211; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 219–222, 235–238, 353–356, 416–419 (with literature).
- 86 Mertzios, *Θωμάς Φλαγγίνης*: 235; Konstantinos D. Mertzios, ‘Μικρός Έλληνομνήμων-Τεύχος Γ’. Θωμάς ή Τόμιος Μπαθάς ή Μπαττάς-Κερκυραίος [The Corfiot Thomas Bathas]’, in *Ήπειρωτική Έστία* 221–222 (1970): 532–539: 538; Maria Kazanaki, ‘Ειδήσεις για τον ζωγράφο Θωμά Μπαθά (1554–1599) από το Νοταριακό Αρχείο της Κέρκυρας [Information about the painter Thomas Bathas from the Notarial Archive of Corfu]’, in *Δελτίον Ιονίου Ακαδημίας* 1 (1977): 124–138: 133; Maria Kazanaki Lappa, ‘Testamenti di pittori cretesi, XV–XVIIo secolo’, in Chryssa Maltezu and Georgia Varzelioti (eds), *Oltre la morte. Testamenti di Greci e Veneziani redatti a Venezia o in territorio greco-veneziano nei sec. XIV–XVIII* (Venice: Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia, 2008): 119–129: 124–125; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 62.
- 87 Margarita Voulgaropoulou, *Επιδράσεις της βενετσιάνικης ζωγραφικής στην ελληνική τέχνη από τα μέσα του 15ου έως και τα μέσα του 16ου αιώνα [Influences of Venetian painting on Greek art from the fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth century]*, MA thesis (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2007).
- 88 Constantoudaki Kitromilides, ‘L’arte dei pittori greci’: 1231–1233; Constantoudaki Kitromilides, ‘Από το Ρέθυμνο στη Βενετία’: 426–427; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 58–60, 116–118, 449, 473–477, 502–504, 590, inv. no. 25, 803, inv. no. 386 (with previous literature).
- 89 A first attempt to group these works and identify different artistic hands was undertaken by Martin S. Soria and Lionello Puppi, who associated them with the early ‘Venetian’ period of Dominikos Theotokopoulos, and came up with the conventional names by which the painters are still designated in literature. Martin Soria, ‘Algunos pintores “madoneros” venecianos’, in *Goya* 39 (1960): 180–188; Lionello Puppi, ‘Il Greco giovane e altri pittori “madonneri” di maniera italiana a venezia nella seconda metà del cinquecento’, in *Prospettive* 27 (1963): 25–46; See also Chatzidakis, ‘La peinture des “Madonneri”’: 673–690; Panagiotis Ioannou, ‘The Modena Triptych and the question of the Madonneri’, in *International Conference El Greco: The Cretan Years* (Heraklion, June 21–23 2014), Summaries: 47–50.
- 90 Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 67–70.
- 91 Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι*: 295–297; Margarita Voulgaropoulou, ‘Το εργαστήριο του Άγγελου και του Δονάτου Πιτζαμάνου και η διαμόρφωση τοπικής σχολής ζωγραφικής στο Otranto της Απουλίας [The workshop of Angelos and Donatos Bitzamanos and the formation of a local school of painting in Otranto, Apulia]’, in *30ο Συμπόσιο Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, περιλήψεις (Athens, 2010): 25–26; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 86–95.
- 92 ibidem: 89, 828–829, inv. n. 428 (with literature).
- 93 Voulgaropoulou, ‘Το εργαστήριο του Άγγελου και του Δονάτου Πιτζαμάνου’: 25–26; eadem, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 87, 89, 831–832, inv. n. 432 (with literature).
- 94 Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 89.
- 95 See note 115.
- 96 Nikolaos Katramis, *Η έν Νεαπόλει ελληνική εκκλησία [The Greek church of Napoli]* (Zakynthos, 1866); Alberto Rizzi, ‘La Chiesa dei SS. Pietro e Paolo dei Greci a Napoli e le sue Icone’, in *Napoli Nobilissima*

- (1974): 201–209; Rentetzi, *Le iconostasi delle Chiese Greche*: 181–202; Eugenia Drakopoulou, ‘Pittura Romeica’: 7–28: 15–16; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 40–46.
- 97 Gaetano Passarelli, *Le Icone e le Radici: le Icone di Villa Badessa* (Rosciano, 2006): 8–13, 36–57; Lucia Arbace Maria Concetta Nicolai and Maria Ruggeri, *Dall’Est a Villa Badessa: Immagini, Icone, Costumi. Percorsi di Uomini, Percorsi di Fede* (Pescara: Fondazione Pescarabruzzo, 2012): 90–91, 104–109, 112–115; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 46.
- 98 Doriana Dell’Agata Popova, *Icône Greche e Russe del Museo Civico di Livorno* (Pisa, 1978): 32–65; Gaetano Passarelli, *Le Iconostasi di Livorno: Patrimonio Iconografico Post-Bizantino* (Pisa; Ospedaletto, 2001): 87, 89–101; Drakopoulou, ‘Pittura Romeica’: 19–20; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 46.
- 99 Drakopoulou, ‘Pittura Romeica’: 16–17; Savić, *Slikarstvo u Srpskim Crkvama*: 153–154; Čolović, *Manastir Krka*: 104; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 46.
- 100 Marisa Bianco Fiorin, ‘Nomi Greci di Pittori, Orafi, Committenti e Donatori Rinvenuti a Trieste’, in *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 14 (1988): 297–304: 298–302; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 106; Drakopoulou, ‘Pittura Romeica’: 21–22; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 46.
- 101 Berić, ‘Crkva Sv. Ilije u Zadru’: 146–147; Savić, *Slikarstvo u Srpskim Crkvama*: 203; Čolović, *Sakralna baština*: 139; Milorad Savić, ‘Bogata Religijska Cjelina. Ikonostas Crkve Sv. Ilije u Zadru, Slikar Mihailo Speranca i Kasnobarokno Pravoslavno Slikarstvo’, in *Prosvjeta* 105 (2011): 18–23; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 106, 319–320; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 46.
- 102 For the work of Demetrios Bogdanos see Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι*: 221; Maria Melenti, ‘Ο Δημήτριος Μπογδάνος και η Ζωγραφική των Εικόνων στο Λέτσε, τον 18ο αιώνα’, in *Ελληνισμός και Κάτω Ιταλία. Από τα Ιόνια νησιά στην Grecia Salentina, A’* (Kerkyra, 2002): 185–212; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 106, 178, 191, 196, 225–229, 555, 595–596; Drakopoulou, ‘Pittura Romeica’: 16–17; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 47.
- 103 Arhiv Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve u Zadru (ASPCZ), Quaderno dell’Ecclesia, f. 21v. See also Mirković, ‘Ikone i drugi predmeti’: 371–373; Berić, ‘Crkva Sv. Ilije u Zadru’: 161; Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι*: 196; Savić, *Slikarstvo u Srpskim Crkvama*: 105; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 105, 318, 555, 728, 741–742, 868, 902, 918; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 47.
- 104 ASPCZ, ff. 35v, 36v; Državni Arhiv u Zadru (DAZD), Knjiga I Rođenih (1637–1776), inv. br. 1531: ff. 129v, 138r, 148r, 169v. See also Mirković, ‘Ikone i drugi predmeti’: 371–373; Berić, ‘Crkva Sv. Ilije u Zadru’: 161–162; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 47.
- 105 Icons attributed to Rapsomanikes have been located in Zadar, Šibenik, Skradin, Split, Peroj, Kotor, Topla, Berat, and at the monastery of Krka. Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 105–106, 265–266, 316, 329, 336, 388, 555, 572, 689, 730; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 47.
- 106 Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 104.
- 107 Arhiv Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve u Šibeniku (ASPCŠ), Matična Knjiga Krštenih, and Matična Knjiga Rođenih (1768–1803). See also Georgios Moschopoulos, *Οι Έλληνες της Βενετίας και Ιλλυρίας, 1768–1797: η Μητρόπολη Φιλαδελφείας και η σημασία της για τον Ελληνισμό της Β. Αδριατικής [The Greeks of Venice and Illyria, 1768–1797: the Metropolis of Philadelphia and its significance for the Greeks of the North Adriatic]* (Athens, 1980): 162–175; Savić, *Slikarstvo u Srpskim Crkvama*: 99, 132, 202; Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 106; Voulgaropoulou, ‘Cross-cultural encounters’: 47.
- 108 The attribution of all these works to Matthaios Vegias is first suggested in this article.
- 109 ‘[...] Zašto i tako nemamo u Dalmaciji živopisca, krom što nam je još pop Matej Veja u Šibeniku’. This statement is further confirmed in a letter by Spiridon Simić, prior of the monastery of Krupa, granting Gerasim Zelić permission to travel as far as Russia to study the art of icon painting. Zelić’s trip was funded on the grounds that in Dalmatia there were no icon painters capable of creating icons for churches: ‘Понеже въ нашихъ земляхъ, наипаче въ Далмацији, неимѣмъ иконописателей, которы бы иконы црквамъ нужныя изображали’. Dejan Medaković, ‘Jedno neostvareno slikarsko školovanje Gerasima Zelića’, in *Prilozi za Književnost, Jezik, Istoriju i Folklor* 20/3–4 (1954): 291–293: 292; Rajko Veselinović, *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve sa Narodnom Istorijom* (Beograd: Sv. Arh. Sinod Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve, 1966): 203;

Dejan Medaković, *Putevi Srpskog Baroka* (Beograd: Nolit, 1971), 292; Dušan Kašić, *Svetli grobovi pravoslavnih Šibenčana* (Šibenik, 1975): 16.

¹¹⁰ Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι*: 441; Passarelli, *Le Icone e le Radici*: 86-91; Arbace, Nicolai and Ruggeri, *Dall'Est a Villa Badessa*: 130–131.

¹¹¹ Bianco Fiorin, 'Nomi Greci di Pittori': 300, 302; Olga Katsiardi Hering, *Η Ελληνική παροικία της Τεργέστης (1751–1830) [The Greek community of Trieste (1751–1830)]* (Athens, 1986): 222, 232–233, 237; Chatzidakis and Drakopoulou, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι*: 441; Drakopoulou, 'Pittura Romeica': 23–24.

¹¹² The inscription mentioning the names of the painters and woodcarver is located on the base of the Crucifix, and reads as follows: + δεκέβριος 1833 // ΈΖΟΓΡΑΦΗC/ΘΗ, Ο ΞΥΤΟC, Ο ΤΕΜΠΛΟC, ΔΙΑ ΧΙΡΟC // ΕΜΟΥ ΝΑΟΥΜ, ΤΖΕΤΙΡΗ, Κ'Ε ΓΕ/ΩΡΓΗ, άνεψου αὐτοῦ, ἐκ γγρά/μποβ // χ σκαλιζιν ἀθανάσιου ντίμσρα [sic]. Tzeteres' workshop is responsible for creating the Crucifix, the Twelve Feasts, the icons of the Apostles and Evangelists, as well as the royal doors. The icons of Saint John the Baptist and of the Holy Trinity were painted by Nikolaos Aspiotes in 1884. See Margarita Voulgaropoulou, 'Από το αγιογραφικό εργαστήριο στη βιομηχανική παραγωγή: Το έργο του Κερκυραίου Νικόλαου Ασπιώτη', in Areti Adamopoulou, Lia Yioka and Konstantinos Stefanis (eds), *Ιστορία της Τέχνης, Ζητήματα Ιστορίας, Μεθοδολογίας, Ιστοριογραφίας, Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of Art History* (Athens, Benaki Museum, January 15–17, 2016) (Thessaloniki: Gutenberg, 2019): 251–72. The work of Naoum Tzeteres in Budva is briefly noted by Zdravko Gagović, who erroneously mentions the island of Milos as Naoum's place of origin, probably misreading the word *τέμπλος* (=iconostasis). Zdravko Gagović, *Crnogorski ikonostasi i njihovi tvorci* (Cetinje: Republički Zavod za Zaštitu Spomenika Kulture, 2007): 92.

¹¹³ Voulgaropoulou, 'Cross-cultural encounters': 25–70.

¹¹⁴ Arhiv Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve u Zadru (ASPCZ), Quaderno dell'Ecclesia; Matica Rođenih (1637–1776), Državni Arhiv u Zadru (DAZD). See also Voulgaropoulou, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική*: 265–267.

¹¹⁵ 'L'unica persona della nostra stirpe in Levante per la pittura romeica' [The only person of our origin in the Levant for the romeic painting]. Cited in Dell'Agata Popova, *Icône Greche*: 22n26; Mathieu Grenet, 'Grecs de Nation, Sujets Ottomans: Expérience Diasporique et Entre-Deux Identitaires, v.1770–v.1830', in Jocelyne Dakhlia and Wolfgang Kaiser (eds), *Les Musulmans dans l'Histoire de l'Europe, t. II, Passages et Contacts en Méditerranée* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2013): 311–344: 323; Voulgaropoulou, 'Cross-cultural encounters': 40.

¹¹⁶ See for example Romas' works at The Vyne, Hampshire, or his painting titled *The East Offering Her Riches to Britania*, which was commissioned by the Honourable East India Company, and is now at the Foreign Office in London. Edward Croft Murray, *Decorative Painting in England, 1537–1837* (London: Country Life, 1962): vol. 2, 44–45; Cathal Moore and Christine Sitwell, 'Spiridione Roma at the Vyne. Reconstructing the Work of a 'Very Idle' Painter', in *Apollo* 434 (1998): 22–24.

¹¹⁷ Nikolaos Graikos, *Ακαδημαϊκές τάσεις της εκκλησιαστικής ζωγραφικής στην Ελλάδα κατά τον 19ο αιώνα. Πολιτισμικά και εικονογραφικά ζητήματα [Academic trends of ecclesiastic painting in Greece during the nineteenth century. Cultural and iconographic issues]*, PhD Diss. (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2011); Fani Spachidou, *Η Βυζαντινή Τέχνη στον ελληνικό τόπο του 19ου αιώνα [Byzantine art in nineteenth-century Greek press]*, PhD Diss. (Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2010).

¹¹⁸ Nikolaos Aspiotes painted the iconostases for the monasteries of Praskvica, Gradište, Cetinje, and he created icons for Orthodox churches in Budva, Dubrovnik, Kistanje, Pelinovo, Sutvara, Šišići, Markovići, Stanišići, Boreti, Pobori, Pobrđe, Brajići, Kameno, Mojdež, Kumbor, Sušćepan, Topla, Rose, Sasović, Baošići, Njeguši, and Villa Badessa. Voulgaropoulou, 'Από το αγιογραφικό εργαστήριο'.

Manifestations of a Zombie Avant-garde:

South Korean Performance and Conceptual Art in the 1970s¹

Sooran Choi

Abstract

By the early 1990s, multiple Euro-American authors proclaimed the death of the avant-garde, but this was paradoxically followed by its various revivals. This essay examines the performance and conceptual art practices of several South Korean art collectives in the 1970s during the Cold War military regime, to argue that they appropriated and re-purposed Western theories of the avant-garde and its various post-war manifestations—including happenings, land art, conceptual art, and Fluxus—to mask their socio-political resistance. Their association with Western avant-garde art forms functioned as a subterfuge that protected them from censorship and persecution from the anti-Communist, and pro-American, but authoritarian government. This alternative view of ‘avant-garde art as covert political agency’ challenges dominant centre/periphery paradigms in global art history, and complicates and expands discourses on the avant-garde after its alleged death in the West.

Keywords: *Post-war global artistic network, (Post-war) South Korean Avant-garde Art, South Korean Happenings, South Korean Performance Art, South Korean Conceptual Art, South Korean Fluxus, South Korean Nature Art, Global expansion of the theory of the avant-garde, zombie-avant-garde, the death of the avant-garde, East Asian philosophy, and global art history.*

The teleology of the avant-garde can no longer be reduced to a thematic(s) of success or failure, of revolt or complicity, of truth or illusion, of sincerity or hoax, of existence or non-existence. The death of the avant-garde is not its termination but its most productive, voluble, self-conscious, and lucrative stage.

-Paul Mann²

By the early 1990s, multiple Euro-American authors proclaimed the death of the avant-garde, albeit paradoxically followed by the avant-garde's various revivals.³ For instance, literary critic Paul Mann acknowledged the so-called death of the avant-garde, but also questioned whether it left "anything vital behind."⁴ It was suggested that true avant-garde art had 'died,' because it was no longer radical or politically potent.⁵ They argued that throughout its history, the avant-garde had been regularly absorbed by the very status quo it attacked, which in turn, had reduced its critical agency to institutionalised categories, such as Dada-*ism*. These vanguard movements and the critical challenges they posed were incorporated into a canonical art history, and further co-opted as if they were a genre of fine art. Eventually, the avant-garde became integrated into the system it originally challenged. Marxist critiques also demonstrated that the discourse on the avant-garde and its valuing of originality, were indelibly rooted within the capitalist system's cycle of renewal (it continuously transforms and expands itself by incorporating not only the new ideas that feed into the market consumption of materials and ideas, but also its opposition and competitors).⁶ Within the context of the expansion of global capitalism in the post-World War II period, this constant failure of the avant-garde to subvert the status quo was one of the main reasons

for various authors to claim its passing. However, the premise of this article is that one example of the effective resurrections of the avant-garde is evident in South Korean art practices of the 1970s. This article examines the performative and conceptual art practices of three South Korean art collectives of the 1970s—The Fourth Group (1970), the Avant-Garde Association (1969—1974), and Space and Time (1971—1979), all active during the harshest decade of the authoritarian regime of South Korea’s Cold War period. The various military dictatorships that operated in South Korea from 1961 to 1993 were anti-Communist, pro-Western, and authoritarian.⁷

While the administration of President Chung-hee Park (1963–1979) promoted rapid economic development, it was also responsible for the most repressive socio-political policies of the 1970s. In April 1971, Park won his third presidential bid in an allegedly rigged election after having forcefully amended the South Korean constitution, which originally permitted a maximum of two terms, to allow him multiple terms. This proved highly unpopular, which led to multiple protests and demonstrations. As a result, in December 1971, Park proclaimed a state of emergency, censoring the press and freedom of speech.⁸ These actions culminated in October 1972 when Park proclaimed martial law, disbanded the National Assembly, closed the universities, prevented political factional activities, political gatherings and protests, and imposed censorship on the press, publications, broadcasting, and media.⁹ The period from 1972 to 1979, was the most repressive period under Park’s regime. Early during Park’s reign, he formed the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA, 1961) and The Korean Public Performance Ethics Committee (KPPEC, 1962) which suppressed political dissent, often by framing dissenters as Communists and placing heavy censorship on the press, media, art and culture, which continued until 1979.¹⁰

However, Park’s legacy is complex, controversial, and conflicted. On the one hand, he is

still recognised and respected as a hero, and as a brave and efficient leader who brought rapid economic development (referred to as “the Han River Miracle”) and who lifted the country out of extreme post-war poverty.¹¹ On the other hand, the Park government was extremely repressive, restricted human rights, carried out Communist witch hunts, and jailed and executed political dissidents.¹² As will be discussed throughout the article, not only the political dissidents, but artists who were under suspicion of creating art with any anti-governmental associations were under surveillance and often even subjected to torture and physical violence. It was against this backdrop that the South Korean art collectives, considered in this article, were operating.

These South Korean art collectives are little known or studied outside of the country. The subject has been completely omitted from extant Korean Modern art history surveys published in English.¹³ The rare reference in English relating to the South Korean avant-garde is the catalogue *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s*, which accompanied the eponymous exhibition at the Queens Museum of Art in New York in 1999.¹⁴ However, it discusses South Korean Conceptualism, mainly focusing on Minjung Art in the 1980s, and dismisses the art activities of the early 1970s as superficial derivatives of Western art, therefore, claiming they were not a Korean Conceptual art, nor an avant-garde.¹⁵ Within South Korea, while the art collectives have been previously written about in monographic catalogues and periodicals, their performative and conceptual works have been historically ignored and dismissed as ‘derivative’ Western avant-garde art by both the South Korean government and the art establishment.¹⁶ As an example, South Korean art historian Gwang-soo Oh (who originally furnished positive assessments of Happenings), and art critic Yil Lee, both writing about South Korean art from the 1970s to the 1990s, regarded the late 1960s and the early 1970s in South Korean art as a “transitional” phase,

an “age of confusion and depression,” and a period “without major art movements, caught in between the established Art Informel movement of the mid- 1950s and the Tansaekhwa (Monochrome painting) movement of the mid-1970s.”¹⁷ The artists who were involved in these performance-based activities in the late 1960s and the early ‘70s were not part of the mainstream art establishment, whose works centred around painting; they were also restricted by state-sponsored censorship, which the military government justified with Cold War rhetoric on the one hand, and ethics and morality laws on the other.

Doubly marginalised by the art establishment and the military government as derivative and decadent, these artists were considered a “lost generation” within the political and social milieu of that time.¹⁸ However, in this article, I contend that their implied association with Western avant-garde art itself functioned as a form of subterfuge that protected them from censorship and persecution. The proposition to be explored here is that these artists appropriated and re-purposed Western theories of the avant-garde and its various post-World War II manifestations—including happenings, land art, post-minimalism, conceptualism, and Fluxus—to mask their socio-political criticism in order to survive and evade the authoritarian military regimes’ repressive measures, which included imprisonment, torture, and even execution. Due to its perceived exoticism and global artistic aura, Western forms of avant-garde art functioned as a shield. The motives of the anti-Communist, pro-American South Korean government were to rapidly industrialise and catch up with global culture and artistic trends. Initially avant-garde art did not raise any suspicions in government circles, press, or media.

Since Western avant-garde art appeared exotic, benignly ‘artsy’ or ambiguous to local audiences, South Korean artists used these styles to protect themselves from censorship and

persecution during this period. They shifted away from painting and sculpture—the dominant media of the South Korean art establishment—using instead text, photography, and performance—the alternative media of the avant-garde. However, these South Korean artists differed from their Western counterparts in that they included covert and coded socio-political messaging in their work, obscuring their critical commentaries from state authorities by promoting and referring to their work as ‘global avant-garde art,’ catering to the government’s desire for modernisation and global recognition.

My argument here is that South Korean artists of the 1970s repurposed Western avant-garde art as artistic genres and styles, in order to protect themselves in their non-violent political resistance to the military regimes. This alternative view of ‘the Western avant-garde art/discourse as covert political agency’ nuances and expands the discourse on the avant-garde after its alleged demise in the West, by articulating how this dead form of the avant-garde as an institutionalised/recuperated ‘style’ was resurrected and repurposed by South Korean artists and intellectuals. My approach debunks the theory of the avant-garde as a specific set of Euro-American constructs. It elaborates the complex dialectic between the autonomy and the dependence of the avant-garde arts vis-à-vis the status quo in South Korea, and the role it played as a coded tactic of socio-political resistance of South Korean art collectives.

This paper resurrects South Korean art collectives as examples of what I describe as a ‘zombie-avant-garde.’ A zombie is an apt metaphor for the South Korean version of the avant-garde, because as a member of the living dead, a zombie has technically expired, but still operates as a living being, aggressive in its attack. Though the Western avant-garde had been rendered inert, and had become an institutionalised style or art form, South Korean artists resurrected and

repurposed it and brought it back to life, like a zombie. The vibrant avant-garde should constantly elude institutionalisation, keeping its criticality alive. However, it was this dead form of the avant-garde—as a ‘zombie’ that had come back to life—which was useful as a shield for South Korean artists, and which protected them from governmental censorship for their critical and radical activism.

Newspapers and weekly magazines (from 1968) were utilised by these South Korean art collectives and were the main vehicles for dissemination and circulation of their avant-garde activities, since there were few contemporary art magazines or conventional art criticism in the 1970s in South Korea.¹⁹ Furthermore, establishment South Korean art historical sources did not address them as ‘serious art.’ The South Korean Museum of Contemporary Art (the only modern art museum in South Korea at the time) established in 1969 was mainly compliant with governmental oversight in order to avoid scandals, and therefore it was conservative in its approach to art in the 1970s. The fact that the newspaper dailies, and later the tabloids, often reported on these events as ‘scandalous’ only further propagated interest in them among the general public.²⁰ As will be suggested here, artists used this strategically to circulate their message to broader publics. They also relied on the popular media to distract from the criticality of their messaging, which was obscured by their label of ‘avant-garde art,’ which often appeared in the media at the time.

An Avant-garde Funeral: The Fourth Group and the South Korean Happening

In the summer of 1970, an innovative, radical, and somewhat whimsical group of artists from various disciplines joined together to form The Fourth Group (The Fourth).²¹ The group is considered one of the most radical art collectives in South Korean theatre history,²² with their performances not only featuring female nudity, but also cultural and political satire.²³ The Fourth wanted to dismantle what was considered ‘art’ by eliminating the conventional artistic categories of painting, sculpture, music, and theatre, and substituting them with more universal and inclusive terms such as ‘the visual arts,’ or ‘programs.’ Due to their radicalism, The Fourth only officially lasted for two months before being forced to disband due to pressure from the authorities. In their brief existence (from June to August 1970), they produced a series of controversial performative events often described by the artists themselves and by the local press as ‘Happenings.’²⁴ I contend that these artists promoted their events as ‘Happenings’ not only to exploit public interest in international art trends, but also to covertly satirise South Korean politics, which they viewed as corrupt and anti-democratic.²⁵ I also argue that framing their activities as ‘Happenings’ helped to save them from more serious repercussions from the government censorship, because they were able to covertly insert politicised messaging within the obscure artistic language of fashionable Western art trends, which was, for this reason, perceived to be illegible and overlooked by the Korean regime’s disciplinary apparatus.

On the morning of 15 August 1970, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Korea’s liberation from Japan in 1945, five members of The Fourth staged a public ‘funeral’ procession titled *The Funeral of Culture and the Art Establishment* (1970) (purportedly for the ‘death’ of art and culture, but also

implicitly for the ‘death’ of democracy during the regime) [fig. 1]. At around 10:30 a.m., artists Kang-ja Jung, Ku-lim Kim, Chan-seung Chung, Il-gwang Sohn, and Tae-soo Bang gathered in front of a public sculpture depicting a respected historical Confucian scholar and national hero, Yul-gok (Lee) Yi, in Seoul’s city centre. Around 11 a.m., after reading their manifesto aloud, they buried a printed copy of their manifesto in sand, filling the interior of a coffin and covered it with flowers and a white flag. As they began the ‘funeral procession,’ they saluted the flag, performed patriotic gestures, and paid tribute to past national heroes and political martyrs, so they would not be viewed by onlookers as subversive.



Fig.1

Ku-lim Kim, Chan-seung Chung, Kang-ja Jung, Il-gwang Sohn, and Tae-soo Bang, *The Funeral of Culture, and Art Establishment*, Seoul, South Korea, August 15, 1970, personal archive of Tae-soo Bang. © Tae-soo Bang

Assemblies of many people in public space were interpreted by the regime as a ‘protest,’ which was illegal, so to avoid being seen as a protest group, they created a lot of physical space between their bodies. Kim, leading the procession and holding one white flag, was followed by Jung, fifty meters behind him, who held one white and one South Korean flag.²⁶ Fifty meters behind her followed Sohn and Chung, carrying the flower-covered coffin. Lastly, Bang followed

them carrying a shovel. According to the artists, the coffin symbolised ‘all contradictions,’ the flowers, ‘hypocrisy,’ the white flag ‘purity,’ and the ideal of non-violent unification.²⁷ The manifesto reiterated The Fourth’s proclamation of the death of the art establishment and the independence of Korean culture.

The symbolic funeral procession continued to Gwanghwa Gate (the historical centre of downtown Seoul) before police stopped it in front of the National Assembly Building. The original plan for the funeral was to continue to the first Han River Bridge, where the flags were to be burned and the coffin buried. However, because of police interference, this was not achieved. The incident was covered in a local weekly magazine titled *The Weekly Woman (Juganyeoseong)* published on 26 August 1970, which reported the conversation between the artists and the police as such:

Police: What kind of art is this?
Artists: What we are doing is called a ‘Happening.’
Police: What is a ‘Happening,’ then?
Artists: It is a sort of spontaneous art, and now we are creating one with these materials.
Police: How is this art? This is a coffin!
Artists: It is also sand and flowers. They are all materials for our artwork. It is also called ‘land art.’²⁸

A court hearing was held the next day, and the artists were lightly charged with violating traffic laws. In their own defence, the artists claim that their activity was a ‘Happening,’ and ‘land art,’ annoyed and puzzled the authorities, but they set them free with no further charges.²⁹

Process and Land Art: Ku-lim Kim’s ‘Art that Makes One Think’

Four months earlier in 1970, the two members of The Fourth, Ku-lim Kim and Chan-seung Chung, ventured out into public space. Experimenting with the concepts of impermanence and

ephemerality, Kim characterised the art of the 1970s, as “art that makes one think.”³⁰ Kim put these conceptual ideas into practice in his work *From Phenomenon to Traces* (1970), in which he went to a riverbank near Hanyang University in Seoul in April 1970 and burned sections of grass [fig. 2]. Over five hundred feet of grass, Kim inserted several large nails into the ground and connected them via a rope in the shape of seven large zigzagged triangles with sides of about twenty-three meters. After laying pieces of gasoline-soaked toilet paper on the ground alongside the triangular roped lines, he set the paper on fire, hoping to burn alternate sections of the triangles.



Fig. 2

Ku-lim Kim, *From Phenomenon To Traces*, A riverbank near *Salgogi* Bridge and Hanyang University, Seoul, South Korea, April 11, 1970, personal archive of Ku-lim Kim. ©Ku-lim Kim

Kim referred to this work as an example of *Daeji Misul* (variously translated as ‘Earthworks’ or ‘land art’), explaining to onlookers that “art can be found or created outside of the walls of the museum, amid nature.”³¹ As Kim’s three-and-half-hour burning event continued and people gathered around him, he explained to the confused spectators that it was “an impossible art[work], as the burnt grass [would] eventually disappear, and nothing [would remain] permanently.”³² The 19 April 1970 issue of the weekly newspaper, *Sunday Seoul* initially reported on the onlookers’ puzzled responses to Kim’s actions, quoting them as saying: “What person wastes gasoline?”, “I need that toilet tissue to wipe my nose!” or “This is boring and strange.”³³ These comments reveal South Korean audience’s complete lack of acquaintance with process art and land art in the early 1970s. Eventually, however, there was an interesting turn of events when Kim’s trousers caught fire and he burned his hands attempting to put the fire out. As the *Sunday Seoul* reported:

Surprisingly, with burnt pants and hands, Kim chose to continue the event unperturbed. Viewing the sincerity of Kim’s actions, and the fact that he almost burnt himself in the process, for what to the audience seemed as purposeless ‘land art,’ the people were nevertheless moved, and began to pay closer attention to Kim’s words and activities.³⁴

Similarly, the 22 April issue of *Weekly Trends* also reported on the fire as a catalyst for audience engagement, this time as something humorous:

. . . as the smoke emerges . . . a policeman from a nearby police station hurried over only to go back laughing when he found out it was an art event. . . . Many were relieved and there was laughter as some people jokingly commented that it may have been [a dead] body art rather than land art.³⁵

Lighting a fire in a public space, such as a riverbank in the centre of the city, could have provoked a serious penalty, yet Kim's explanation that it was a form of art variously called 'land art' or 'process art,' caused the policemen to not take him seriously. Meanwhile, the audience was moved by Kim's earnest engagement with his seemingly useless and pointless actions, enabling them to observe and think about their deeper meanings, without easily pinpointing what exactly the artist was criticising. Burning the grass on the developed riverbank, which stood as a symbol of the government's economic progress, could have been viewed as undermining governmental authority. Yet, by burning it in a zigzag design, Kim rendered his action as an artwork rather than as destruction or resistance, rendering the performance metaphorically beyond the law.

Sitting on the burnt grass and smoking a cigarette afterward, Kim responded to a *Weekly Trend* reporter who asked why he was embarking on such a difficult undertaking. He explained, "There are easier ways to make art. It is a lonely job, and it does not make money. But if we stop doing it, pure art will be buried under authoritarian art."³⁶ When he was asked "What is authoritarian art?", he responded, "all of the establishment art that is involved with politics and power games."³⁷ In short, he associated the art establishment as complicit with the authoritarian regime, and through his artwork intended to metaphorically critique both.

Collectivism as a Mode of Survival under the Military Dictatorship

Two other art collectives: the Avant-Garde Association (AG) and Space and Time (ST), were well-known art collectives in the 1970s. They were formed by loose associations of artists who engaged in various post-minimalist and conceptually oriented art practices that were gaining international

traction at the time. Like The Fourth, both AG and ST exploited the anonymity of their collective identities to avoid the dangers of punishment by the regime. However, unlike The Fourth, which used the avant-garde form of ‘Happenings’ to render its critiques, AG and ST turned to post-minimalist and conceptual approaches, as a form of heightened protective measures in the face of the increasingly harsh censorship of the Park regime. These art styles were perceived as subtler avant-garde art forms.

Formed in 1969, AG consisted of over a dozen artists and art critics of the post-war generation, who sought to represent the ideas of the avant-garde, as indicated by their name. Formed a year later, ST was mainly led by artists who were five to ten years younger than most members of AG (although several members belonged to both groups).³⁸ The name Space and Time referred to the warped and non-objective sense of space and time described by Alfred Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, as well as the relativism described in the *Zhuangzi* (476–221 BC), an ancient Chinese collection of fables that is one of the foundational texts of Daoism.³⁹

AG’s specific approach to the avant-garde is exemplified by one of its main theoreticians, art critic and historian Yil Lee. Having studied and majored in art history at the University of Paris between 1957 and 1966, and before returning to South Korea, Lee was one of a small number of art historians active in the South Korean art scene since the end of the 1960s. In his essay, ‘A Discourse on the Avant-garde: an Essay about its Transformational State and Limitations,’ published in AG’s first journal in June 1969, he offers a comprehensive and detailed historiography of the avant-garde in its Euro-American artistic context.⁴⁰ He suggests his own visionary views on the avant-garde by citing Pierre Restany who stated that: “Today’s avant-garde is not an art of resistance, but an art of participation.”⁴¹ He also argued that in contrast to the earlier historic avant-

garde, the post-war avant-garde was not motivated by destruction, but rather by optimism within the system and strived for a critical renewal.⁴² Published in 1969, Lee wrote his essay five years earlier than another major text on the avant-garde, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, by German literary critic Peter Burger, originally published in 1974.⁴³

Lee's upending of the typical rhetoric of the avant-garde as an art of participation and constructive optimism, rather than one of destruction, sheds light on AG's artistic direction. One must keep in mind that in South Korea, 'participation' in any type of activity that was not endorsed by the government was in itself a radical political act and was viewed with suspicion. In his text, Lee downplays the apparent confrontational sentiment of his statement, by displacing the words 'resistance' and 'destruction,' usually associated with avant-garde art, with 'participation.' Participation for Lee, as well as for AG, was positive, yet also vague and ambiguous enough to retain its criticality without being targeted by governmental surveillance.

Kun-yong Lee's Post-minimalism under the Avant-Garde Association



Fig. 3

Kun-yong Lee, *Relation 72-1*, AG Third Exhibition, National Museum of Contemporary Art, December 11-24, 1972, personal archive of Kun-yong Lee. © Kun-yong Lee

In 1972, AG held a group exhibition at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul, in which Kun-yong Lee (who was also one of the founders of ST) exhibited two post-minimalist-type works, titled *Relation 72-1* (1972) [fig. 3], a stone tied with ropes to a column, and *Corporal Term* (1972) [fig. 4]. *Relation 72-1* was, and *Corporal Term*, an uprooted tree trunk with its roots embedded in a block of earth. Lee stressed that his artistic approach was based in phenomenology, specifically Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1944) and Ufan Lee's *Phenomenology of Encounter* (1970).⁴⁴



Fig. 4

Kun-yong Lee, *Corporal Term*, Installation scene, Ku-lim Kim and Kun-yong Lee standing next to *Corporal Term*, AG Third Exhibition, National Museum of Contemporary Art, December 11-24, 1972, personal archive of Kun-yong Lee. © Kun-yong Lee

Merleau-Ponty's discourse on phenomenology was also an important text for the Minimalist artist Robert Morris, during the period when he transitioned away from what James Meyer has described as "Cagean process aesthetics," to "phenomenological aesthetics of perception."⁴⁵ Key to Morris' Minimalism was his desire for the subject to perceive his work via their body. While Morris and Minimalist artists were grappling with phenomenology, Kun-yong Lee was also reading foreign texts on phenomenology translated into Korean and Japanese in the mid-1960s. Ufan Lee shared with Merleau-Ponty an interest in the embodied character of

experience and the belief that the physical body is the primary source of all perception. In response to Ufan Lee's ideas, Kun-yong Lee created *Relation* and *Corporal Term* to identify the body as the point of contact between the individual and the object, as well as to indicate space as the site of consciousness, where this contact is mediated. Embodying Ufan Lee's theoretical ideas, *Corporal Term* sought to separate language from objects and things.

In preparing *Corporal Term*, Lee uprooted a tree trunk along with the earth underneath measuring one by one-and-a-half meters from the yard behind the museum, promising to put it back once the exhibition was over. However, during the installation, two military guards approached Lee and began to interrogate him, stating, "This is near the Blue House (the residence of the South Korean President). Are you trying to mark the site by digging a hole in the ground so that the Blue House may be identified from the sky? There may be explosives hidden inside the exhibit, so we must investigate."⁴⁶ Taken aback, Lee explained, "I am an artist . . . This is only an uprooted tree and soil."⁴⁷ Later, the *Joseon Daily* reported that when confronted with the finished work in the museum, a spectator gestured an imaginary gun with their hand and 'shot' at it, remarking "It looks like a hood placed over one's head before execution."⁴⁸ Ironically, this unknowing audience member may have correctly interpreted Kun-yong Lee's hidden message. He intended the pulled-up tree trunk cut in half to symbolise an 'uprooted' and divided Korea. While the authorities and audiences alike sensed a subversive meaning, Lee was able to get away with the explanation that the work was merely an avant-garde art piece that brought natural materials into the museum.⁴⁹

Neunkyung Seung's Conceptualism under Space and Time

Another work that utilised the tactic of tautology and incorporation of the quotidian of Conceptualism was Neung-kyung Sung's *Newspapers: From June 1, 1974, On*, an installation in the third ST exhibition at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul (1974). Utilising daily newspaper pages and performances, Sung installed the pages of each day's newspaper onto four white panels on the gallery wall [fig. 5]. He then proceeded to cut out all of the text and left only the white margins, pictures, and advertisements. The removed text was placed in a blue acrylic box positioned in front of the work while the remnants of the previous day's newspaper were collected in a transparent white acrylic box positioned next to the blue one. These actions were repeated every day of the exhibition from 21 to 27 June, although Sung already began cutting the newspapers two months before the exhibition.



Fig. 5

Neung-kyung Sung, *Newspapers: From June 1, 1974, On*, ST Third Exhibition, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul. June 21-27, 1974, personal archive of Neung-kyung Sung. ©Neung-kyung Sung

In some ways, the work resonates with other conceptual performances such as On Kawara's *Today/Date Paintings* series (1966-2013), in which he painted the date of each day onto a small painting. Similarly, the use of newspapers was not uncommon in global in conceptual art practices, as evidenced by Italian *Arte Povera* artist Luciano Pabro's *Floor-Tautology* (1967) and Japanese artist Kanezaki Hisori's *Newspaper* (1972). However, while Pabro's and Hisori's

conceptual use of newspapers focused on the intrusion of the everyday into the art realm, and the intervention of information into the visual sphere, Sung's intentional repurposing of these kinds of conceptual gestures was a deliberate critique of press censorship, masked as conceptual art. The press and media at the time were heavily censored, and any activity involving media and public exhibitions were under surveillance. By using newspapers as mundane items and repositories of information and claiming the rhetoric of 'art as a process,' Sung safely interjected a critical and political dimension of critiquing the government's media censorship to his work.

Sung's critique of censorship in *Newspapers* foreshadowed an event that occurred four months later in October 1974, historically referred to as 'the *Donga* Newspaper Incident.' It traces its roots to 1972, when President Park declared martial law and dissolved the National Assembly. These actions propelled intellectuals, religious leaders, and journalists to protest. As a result of these protests the government enacted very severe media censorship.⁵⁰ In response, student activists burned the censored newspapers in front of the *Donga Daily* newspaper building. In a show of support for the students, sympathetic reporters from the *Donga Daily* held a 'Free Press Conference' on 24 October 1974, during which they declared their right to free speech, especially the freedom of the press.⁵¹ Fearful of the government's retaliation, the *Donga Daily* executives attempted to interfere with the publication of the declaration in the 24 October newspaper issue. However, the journalists resisted the management's obstruction by refusing to produce any articles. Finally, on 25 October, the declaration was published despite the executives' prohibition.⁵² The Park government reacted by forcing commercial advertisers to withdraw their advertisements from the *Donga Daily*. By 25 December, the *Donga* TV Broadcasting wing of the company also lost its advertisers. By 8 March 1975, the *Donga Daily* was forced into a mass layoff

of reporters and other employees using the excuse of cutting costs, while most fired employees were advocates of free speech. The situation grew worse when the *Donga* company hired thugs to forcefully oust employees.⁵³

The *Donga* newspaper incident shows how punitive governmental censorship was at the time, and how dangerous it was to resist it. Afterwards, other newspaper companies reluctantly complied with censorship in order to survive. Referring to *Newspapers*, Sung stated, “at the time, I wanted to comment on the gap between what happened [in real life] and what was eventually published by way of government censorship.”⁵⁴ He also confessed that he feared reprisal when he cut off the newspaper pages. These statements underscore the ways that *Newspapers* was intended as a direct critique of government censorship of the media and the press, expressed in the ambiguous language of conceptual art. In this way, Sung’s reliance on the rhetoric of the avant-garde gave *Newspapers* an artistic aura that protected him from censorship or punishment.

Kun-yong Lee’s Conceptual Performances under Space and Time

After his involvement in the third AG exhibition, in 1975 Kun-yong Lee began presenting performances that involved tautologies, and simple acts of measuring, counting, and body movements, which he described as ‘Events’ or ‘Event-Logicals.’⁵⁵ Lee purposely used these terms to differentiate his performances, from ‘Happenings,’ which were popular in South Korea during the late 1960s, but had fallen out of favour in the 1970s, due to repressive measures by the government. Performing over fifty Event-Logicals throughout the 1970s, Lee emphasised the difference between them and happenings by explaining that happenings were “accidental,

impulsive, and somewhat shocking,” while his ‘Events’ were “pre-planned, logical, and conceptual.”⁵⁶

According to Lee, the term ‘Event’ was borrowed from John Cage’s comment that “an event is what reveals something as it is.”⁵⁷ While this is similar to the rhetoric used by Fluxus artists like George Brecht and Yoko Ono, for Lee, the concept of ‘logic’ was an important notion that he used to critique the random, subjective, and illogical state of ‘business as usual’ in South Korean politics and society. Though the term ‘Event’ was already well established in artistic and Fluxus lexicons, Lee repurposed it differently: his concept of the ‘Event’ relied on logic to avoid artistic subjectivity. This translated into Lee’s use of logic as an antidote to the subjective ill-treatment of South Korean citizens by the authorities. In an interview he asserted,

No one [in South Korea] followed any rules, objective policies, or logical thinking . . . it was all subjective . . . it was a mess . . . I wanted things to be objective, and follow logical rules, without the subjective manipulations of the powerful.⁵⁸

Ultimately, Lee used Fluxus-type events for their foreign aura, which enabled him to critique society and politics under the guise of conceptual art.

Lee’s interest in logic and philosophy began early in his life. He was introduced to the theories of logic during his middle and high school years and from the books in his father’s library.⁵⁹ Like artists Neung-kyung Sung and Joseph Kosuth, he was interested in the artistic possibilities and ideas contained in the analytic philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) in which the self-referential nature of linguistic tautology was examined. Wittgenstein’s aim in *Tractatus* was to analyse the relationship between language and

reality, and thus, defined the limits of science. Kosuth, who was well versed in Wittgenstein's analytic philosophy, and translated Wittgenstein's ideas to art, wrote in his essay:

Works of art are analytic propositions. That is, if viewed within their context—as art—they provide no information whatsoever about any matter of fact. A work of art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the artist's intention, that is, he is saying that a particular work of art is art, which means, is a definition of art. Thus, that it is art is true a priori (which is what Judd means when he states that 'if someone calls it art, it's art').⁶⁰

The importance of Kosuth's realisation of the tautological aspect of art was that it greatly expanded what could be considered art. Art could now be stripped of its aesthetic qualities and other attributes that were traditionally assigned to art's definitions. Kosuth reduced the definition of art to a simple linguistic statement that art is art. Building upon both Kosuth and Wittgenstein, Lee went one step further, I contend, by adopting a Conceptualist artistic tautology to ambiguously comment on the nature of reality as it was distorted and to critique the social and political situations in South Korea at the time. Lee later developed what I term a 'theory of misinterpretation' from these early forays into analytic logic, arguing that there was value in new and different interpretations of Western philosophies.⁶¹ In contrast to several South Korean art critics, Lee advocated the importance of his idea of "deliberate misinterpretation." Lee stated,

Misinterpretation is important . . . During the early 1970s, while I was studying Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, I tried to reinterpret it. I blame the South Korean art historians and critics of the time for not understanding the importance of misinterpretation; by using their authority as art critics and having studied in the West that they understood the Western context [of the avant-garde], so they viewed different South Korean interpretations of the avant-garde as valueless and mistaken.⁶²

Also noted for championing deliberate misinterpretation—or détournement—as early as 1956, was Guy Debord and the Situationist International. The idea of détournement was to divert images, texts, and events toward subversive viewings, readings, and situations. Derived from Dadaist and Surrealist collage, détournement was not aimed at a univocal appreciation, but rather at a dialectical devaluing/revaluing of the diverted artistic elements.⁶³ It was meant to simultaneously expose the ideological nature of the mass-cultural image or the dysfunctional status of high-art forms and repurpose them for a critical and political use. Debord's détournement resonates with Lee's deliberate misinterpretation.

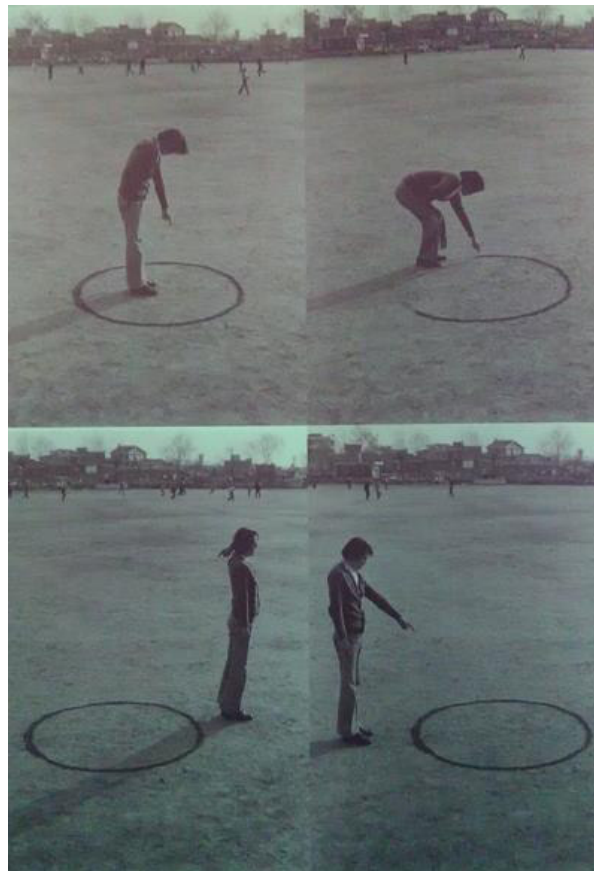


Fig. 6

Kun-yong Lee, *Place of Logic*, AG Fourth Exhibition, December 16, 1975. The picture was taken several months earlier when Lee staged *Place of Logic* in the playground at the Hong-ik University, from which, a majority of the artists in this chapter graduated from, personal archive of Kun-yong Lee. © Kun-yong Lee

During the AG exhibition on 16 December 1975, Lee presented seven events. One of them, titled *Place of Logic* (1975), merits further analysis, as Lee incorporated less subtle socio-political critiques in this work, which led to unwelcome consequences [fig. 6]. In *Place of Logic* (also variously titled *Location A*, or *There+Here+That Place+Where*) Lee drew a circle on the floor, and shouted ‘there,’ while standing outside of the circle, then ‘here,’ while standing inside of the circle, and then ‘there,’ pointing to the circle behind his back while standing outside of it again, and then, ‘where, where, where,’ as he walked on the circle following the line on the ground. This work epitomises his interest in the form of the ‘Event-Logical’ as a means of exploration into the possibility of an “objective” reality, as well as, promoting thinking “outside of the box,” when everything in South Korea, including politics, was intentionally manipulated, and rules and policies did not have any objective logic or meaning.⁶⁴ Lee noted, “I was obsessed with logic and this type of indifferent approach to the world around us, because in South Korea at the time, nothing seemed to be objective at all, and all was subjectively manipulated.”⁶⁵ Although Lee’s framing of his critique within the framework of conceptual art saved him from the major punishment usually imposed on Communist suspects or political activists, in the suppressive milieu of the mid-1970s, his mild satire still got him into trouble. Shortly after these performances, Lee was escorted by government security agents to a building’s basement, where he was violently beaten and tortured over a period of several hours. Even after being released, he was kept under government surveillance. He then received an official notice declaring that his Events would therefore be considered illegal examples of avant-garde art, and that they could not be performed at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art.⁶⁶ In comparison to the numerous other

incidents in which innocent people who were suspected by the government of being Communist conspirers, were quickly tried and executed, Lee's punishment was rather mild.

Wrapping Up the 1970s

On 1 May 1978, in a now infamous meeting between a 'Happening,' and an 'Event,' the leading member of The Fourth, Chan-seung Chung, and of ST, Kun-yong Lee, together showcased a performance titled *Tonsure Happening* (1978), a playful and satiric swipe at the Korean government and media's suppression and criticism of 'longhairs,' 'happening artists,' and 'avant-garde artists' [fig. 7]. *Tonsure Happening* entailed Chung, reading from his writing *The Aesthetics of Long Hair*, while seated in a chair, wearing a shoulder cover made on the spot from a simple blanket cut by Lee to create holes for Chung's head, and two arms. As he read, Lee began cutting off Chung's long locks of hair. Shortly thereafter, Chung, with his head freshly shaven, asked the audience if they too wished to cut their hair. Some members of the attending audience decided to participate in support. After the shaving was done, Lee cut the blanket that Chung was wearing into smaller bits and used the cut fabric to wrap Chung's cut hair and arranged the wrapped hair bundles in a circle. Chung then signed each bundle and distributed them among the audience as a souvenir.⁶⁷ Shaving one's head was a symbolic act of rebellion and protest in South Korea, but also a sign of commitment, like that of a Buddhist monk shaving his head, or a type of discipline, such as when one joins the compulsory military service in South Korea. While this happening/event resonated with Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece* (1964) and American Fluxus artist Alison Knowles shaving Dick Higgins' head (1962), Chung and Lee's quasi-ritualistic hair cutting

performance symbolically marked the united resistance of the South Korean avant-garde art, and the wrapping up of the tumultuous avant-garde activities of the 1970s.



Fig. 7

Chan-seung Chung and Kun-yong Lee, *Tonsure Happening*, Gogan Sarang Theater, Seoul, May 1, 1978. personal archive of Kun-yong Lee. © Kun-yong Lee

After this performance, Chung left South Korea for New York, and Lee continued to pursue his career in Gunsan, a city in North Jeolla Province, southwest, and a good distance from Seoul.

One year later, in 1979, President Park was assassinated by his own security chief and director of the South Korean CIA, ending a dictatorship that lasted over two decades. Chung's hair wrapped in the scrap of blankets, as a remnant of the performance ritual *Tonsure Happening*, may have been kept as a souvenir and *memento mori* of this moment in the frame of a Fluxus event, and a cathartic reference to the numerous young Korean soldiers who were in the military whose own fate was decided by the government, and politics.

In conclusion, I have maintained that Western avant-garde strategies were not blindly imported and transposed into South Korea by these artists, with the goal of duplicating Western art activities. The danger and sheer life-threatening conditions in South Korea turned their avant-garde art activity into a risky venture. In the West, the avant-garde was the avant-garde either for aesthetic or political reasons. In South Korea, the avant-garde was a mask to hide behind while being politically subversive. South Korean artists had a conflicted relationship with the Western avant-garde, pushing it away while pulling it in—on the one hand, they rejected being framed as part of the Western avant-garde, but on the other, they embraced it for different specific critical ends.

As I mentioned previously, most art critics have summarily dismissed the Fourth, AG and ST as a “failed avant-garde.”⁶⁸ In counterpoint, I pose the question: is there such a thing as a failed avant-garde? In terms of political success or failure, these artists did not overthrow the government, but this, I believe, is beside the point. The point being made was raising the consciousness of South Korean society through these artistic performances during a time of repression. In the Daoist tradition, people must be aware of reality, before any change happens. The change does not have to be immediate but can be gradual. Although short-lived, these art

collectives, through their inventive theatrics and imaginative manipulation of the weeklies, were able to get their message out to a large portion of the population. Perhaps the legacy of these art collectives ought not to be remembered in terms of their success or failure, but rather, to be viewed as a catalyst for the eventual transformation of South Korean democratic society.

It is important to remember that at the height of governmental intolerance, members of The Fourth, AG and ST had the courage to protest against the government's anti-democratic policies under the veil of various forms of Western avant-garde art. In the notable words of critic Gilbert Keith Chesterton, "My country right or wrong," is like saying, "My mother drunk or sober."⁶⁹ These courageous South Korean artists, tried to get mom back to sobriety through the message and medium of the institutionalised 'dead' avant-garde discourse and the exotic notion of Western avant-garde art 'styles.'

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Notes

¹ All English translations of Korean terms, names, and quotes in this article are mine unless otherwise indicated.

² Paul Mann, *The Theory-Death of the Avant-Garde* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 3.

³ Since the 1990s, the discourse has taken a self-reflexive turn, coinciding with the claim of the death of the avant-garde. Art historian T J Clark questioned the efficacy of modernism and avant-garde art beyond its relative temporality and locality. T J Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Critics such as Paul Mann, and more recently, literary and cultural critic Mike Sell, suggested that the theorisation of the avant-garde itself resulted in its death. They also warned against the limited radical position of authors writing on the avant-garde in academia because of their roles as part of the art institution. See Mann, *The Theory*, and Mike Sell, *Avant-garde Performance and the Limits of Criticism* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2008). Similarly, emerging from the post-colonial and global expansion of the discourse on the avant-garde, Larry Shiner has argued that the avant-garde was a European historical construct and ideology. James Harding's concept of the avant-garde's pluralism after its alleged death, has also been addressed by multiple authors such as Leslie Fiedler and Mike Sell in their analyses of the "migration of the avant-garde." See Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); James Harding, *The Ghosts of the Avant-garde(s): Exorcising Experimental Theater and Performance* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013); Leslie Fiedler, "Death of Avant-Garde Literature," in *The Collected Essays of Leslie Fiedler*, ed. Leslie Fiedler, vol. 2 (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 454–461.

⁴ Mann, *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵ Fiedler, *ibid.*; Mann, *Ibid.*; Sell, *ibid.*; and Harding, *ibid.*

⁶ See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), and David Harvey, *The Art of Rent: Globalization, Monopoly, and the Commodification of Culture*, *Generation Online*, unpaginated, accessed 12 May 2017, http://www.generation-online.org/c/fc_rent1.htm.

⁷ See Yong-jick Kim, 'The Security, Political, and Human Rights Conundrum, 1974–1979,' in Byung-kook Kim and Ezra F. Vogel (eds), *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011): 457–483; and Clyde Haberman, 'Seoul Student's Torture Death Changes Political Landscape,' *The New York Times*, 31 January 1987, accessed May 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/01/31/world/seoul-student-s-torture-death-changes-political-landscape.html>.

⁸ "Guk-ga bisangsatae seoneon" [Declaration of State of National Emergency], *Joseon Daily*, December 1, 1971: 1; "Geungeoemneun somune gwagyeokan hyeongbeol" [Severe Punishment for Groundless Rumor], *Joseon Daily*, December 11, 1971: 2.

⁹ Hyung Baeg Im, "The Origins of the Yushin Regime: Machiavelli Unveiled," Kim and Vogel, eds. *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, 243–247.

¹⁰ Byung-kook Kim, "Introduction: The Case for Political History," in Kim and Vogel, eds. *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, 7.

¹¹ Kyung Moon Hwang, *A History of Korea* (London: Macmillan, 2010), 232–233.

¹² Byung-kook Kim, "The Leviathan: Economic Bureaucracy under Park," Kim and Vogel, eds. *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*, 200–205.

¹³ Jae-young Roe, *Contemporary Korean Art* (Australia: Fratsman House, Ltd., 2001); Young-na Kim, *Modern and Contemporary Art in Korea* (Seoul: Hollym, 2005); Christine Starkman, et al., *Your Bright Future: 12 Contemporary Artists from Korea* (LA: Los Angeles County Museum, 2009); Hong-hee Kim, et al., *Double Fantasy: Korean Contemporary Art*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: FOIL, Co. Ltd., 2009); Jung-rak Kim, *Diaspora: Korean Nomadism* (Seoul: Hollym, 2011); Serenella Ciclitira and Dae-young Lee, *Korean Eye 2012*, exh.cat. (Milano: Rizzoli, 2012); Miki Wick Kim, *Korean Contemporary Art* (New York: Prestel, 2012); Shine Choi,

Re-imagining North Korea in International Politics (London and New York: Routledge, 2011); and David Shim, *Visual Politics and North Korea: Seeing is Believing* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

14 Luis Camnitzer, et al., eds. *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999).

15 Wan-kyung Sung, “From the Local Context: Conceptual Art in South Korea,” in *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s – 1980s*, 119–125.

16 Ibid.

17 Yil Lee, “Hanguk Hyeondaemisul, Geu 10 Nyeonui Baljachwi—1966 Nyeoneseo 76 Nyeonkkaji” [Korean Contemporary Art, its Trajectory of 10 Years—from 1966 to 1976] in Lee, *Hyeondaemisurui Sigak* [Contemporary Art and Vision] (Seoul: Mijinsa, 1985), 341–343; and Gwang-soo Oh, *Hanguk Hyeondaemisurui Mihak* [The Aesthetics of South Korean Contemporary Art] (Seoul: Jaewon, 1995), 39–77.

18 In the West, the “Lost Generation” refers to the artists who came of age during and after World War I, including expatriates or those who died during the War. William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future: 1584 to 2069* (New York: Quill, 1991), 247–260; Similarly, the South Korean young artists who came of age after the Korean War and experimented with avant-garde art in the late 1960s had witnessed the devastation of the Korean War (1950–1953) and were disillusioned. They were chafing under the social, political, and cultural restrictions imposed on them by the Cold War. Many of these artists eventually left South Korea by the end of the 1970s for socio-political reasons.

19 Because of this lack of art magazines and journals, the dailies and entertainment-oriented weekly magazines that began to emerge in the late 1960s played an important role in propagating the avant-garde arts in South Korea in the 1970s.

20 ‘Bizarre Happening Show,’ *Joseon Daily*, December 15, 1967, 5; ‘Extreme Avant-garde Art, Seoul’s Happening Show,’ *Joongang Daily*, June 1, 1968, 5; ‘A Report on the Three Dimensional and Performance Art in South Korea: The Meaning of Object, Three Dimensional, and Performance Art,’ *Space* (June 1980): 18.

21 Members in the group included artists, actors, journalists, a theater director, a pantomime artist, a screenplay writer, a film director, a musician, a Buddhist monk, a seal engraver, a music effect designer, and a composer.

22 Young-suk Suh, *Geukdan ejeotto yeongu* [A Study on the History of the Theatrical Company “Ej[e]otto], MA thesis, Dongguk University, Seoul, 2008.

23 The group based its name on the ‘fourth dimension’ referencing time as a universal, non-objective element. They also intended to reference a taboo surrounding the number four in Korea. The sound of the Korean pronunciation of number 4 is the same as the sound of the word of death, so the number 4 has been associated with death, and has an ominous association (like the number 13 in Western culture). In South Korea, there is rarely a 4th floor in a building, or room numbers bearing the number 4 in a hotel. People are reluctant to be the 4th in line at work due to its association with bad luck, etc.

24 Soo-jin Cho, ‘The Whole Story of the “Fourth Group”: The Challenge and Frustration of Korean Happening,’ *Misulsahakpo*, vol. 33, no. 6 (June 2013): 147.

25 Not only did the artist promote their performance as a Happening, but also, the print media picked up the term in their reports.

26 Jung, phone interview with author, 7 September 2015.

27 Ibid; Kim, interview with the author, 23 July 2016.

28 Sung-mi Lee, ‘Yeonhaengdanghan jeonwimisul’ [Avant-garde Art Hauled to the Police Station], *Juganyeoseong* [Weekly Woman], 26 August 1970: 26.

29 Ibid.

30 Ku-lim Kim, quoted in Young-sook Park, ‘Je 4 hoe S.T. geurup jwadamhoewa igeonyong ibenteuui uimi’ [The Fourth S.T. Group Roundtable, and the Meaning of Kun-yong Lee’s Event], *Space* (October 1975): 77.

31 Ku-lim Kim, quoted in ‘Jeonwiyesulga bul butida jukdaga salhanada’ [Avant-garde Artist Narrowly Escaped Death Setting Fire to Earth], *Sunday Seoul*, 19 April 1970: 14–15.

32 Ibid., 14.

33 Ibid., 14–15.

34 Ibid.

35 ‘Gangduge bulbutigo yesul’ [Called It Art After Setting Fire at Riverside], *Weekly Trends*, 22 April 1970: 20–21.

36 Ibid, 20.

37 Ibid., 21.

38 Artists Hoon Gwak, Ku-lim Kim, Cha-seop Kim, Han Kim, Dong-gyu Kim, Seok-won Park, Jong-bae Park, Seung-won Suh, Hak-cheol Shin, Moon-seop Shim, Seung-taek Lee, Gang-so Lee, Kun-yong Lee, Seung-jo Lee, Myeong-yong Chi, and Jong-hyun Ha, and art historians Gwang-soo Oh, In-hwang Kim, and Yil Lee were AG members; The members of ST included artist Kun-yong Lee, Jeong-moon Han, Won Yeoh, Sung-hee Shin, Won-joon Park, and Moon-ja Kim, and art historian Bok-yong Kim. Ku-lim Kim and Kun-yong Kim were members of both AG and The Fourth Group.

39 This also resonated with The Fourth’s interest in the ‘fourth dimension.’ Kun-yong Lee, interview with the author, 24 July 2016.

40 Yil Lee, ‘Jeonwimisullon: geu byeonhwauwi yangsanggwa hangyee daehan esei’ [A Discourse on the Avant-garde: An Essay about its Transformational State and Limitations], *The First AG Journal* (June 1969) in *Rereading Korean Contemporary Art II*, 97–168.

41 Ibid., 100.

42 Ibid., 103.

43 Lee’s argument that the term ‘Neo-Dada’ is not appropriate to describe the work of post-war American artists like Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, resonates with Burger’s contention that the American Neo-Dada artists were not the real heirs of the historical avant-garde. Even so, Lee was not altogether dismissive of American Neo-Dada as an avant-garde form. See Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

44 Kun-yong Lee, interview with the author, 24 July 2016. See also Ufan Lee, ‘Mannamui hyeonsanghak seoseol’ [A phenomenological Introduction to Encounter] in *Rereading of Korean Contemporary Art II*, 289–291.

45 James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001): 161.

46 Kun-yong Lee, interview with the author, 24 July 2016.

47 Ibid.

48 ‘What Helps? After Seeing AG Exhibition *World Beyond Idealism*,’ *Joseon Daily*, 17 December 1972: 6.

49 Kun-yong Lee, interview with the author, 24 July 2016.

50 Jin-suk Chung, *Hanguk sinmunui yeoksa [History of Korean Newspapers]* (Seoul: Communication Books, Inc., 2013): 99.

51 ‘Gyeongjickdoeneun saeroun jeongchisanghwang’ [A New Phase of Hardening Political Situations], *Donga Daily*, 30 December 1974: 2.

52 ‘Jarangseureon dongaillboneun ireohge churakhaessda’ [This is How Our Proud Dong-A Daily Went Down], *Hangyeorae Daily*, last edited on 25 November 2012, accessed 3 June 2017, http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/politics_general/562075.html.

53 ‘Jarangseureon dongaillboneun ireohge churakhaessda’ [This is How Our Proud Dong-A Daily Went Down], *Hangyeorae Daily*, last edited on November 25, 2012, accessed June 3, 2017, http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/politics_general/562075.html.

54 Neung-kyong Sung, interview with the author, 1 August 2014.

55 See also Kun-yong Lee, ‘A Report on South Korean Three-Dimensional Art and Happenings: from the 1960s Happening to the 70s Event,’ *Space* (June 1980): 13–14; Lee, ‘The Development of South Korean Performance Art,’ *Art of Young Adult* vol. 12 (December 1987): 8–12; and Lee, ‘The Development of Korean Performance Art and its Surroundings: Trajectory from 1967–1989,’ *Art World* (September 1989): 48–53.

56 Yong-suk Bak, ‘Igeonyongui ibenteu’ [Kun-yong Lee’s Event], *Space* (October/November 1975): 80.

57 Kun-yong Lee, interview with the author, 24 July 2016.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Joseph Kosuth, "Art after Philosophy," *Studio International*, vol., 178 (October 1969): 134.

61 Kun-yong Lee quoted in 'Roundtable on Kun-yong Lee's Event': 158.

62 Ibid.

63 Tom McDonough, ed., *Guy Debord: Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (New York: October Books, 2004), 98.

64 Kun-yong Lee, interview with the author, 24 July 2016.

65 Ibid.

66 Kun-yong Lee quoted in "Roundtable on Kun-yong Lee's Event," 158 Earlier in 1970, as the Fourth Group launched more Happenings that included female nudity, the media began to turn against the avant-garde artists, and the government eventually passed several laws against and suppressing so called 'avant-garde artists' and 'Happening tribes.' For more detailed accounts on this issue, see Sooran Choi, *The South Korean 'Meta-Avant-Garde,' 1961–1993: Subterfuge as Radical Agency*, PhD Dissertation (New York: The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, 2018), 153-159.

67 Kun-yong Lee, and Soek-won Jang, 'A Report on South Korean Three-Dimensional Art,' 20; Han-seung Ryu, '1970 nyeondae junghubanui ibenteu' [Event in the mid- and late 1970s], *Journal of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art*, Korea, vol. 7 (December 2015): 121–122.

68 Art historian Mi-kyung Kim, who first positioned the 4th within Korean avant-garde art history when she compared the 4th Group with later Minjung art, still viewed the group as a failed political avant-garde. In 2013, Soo-jin Cho analysed the 4th as a subcultural group and advocated it as an example of the cultural avant-garde, but a failure as a political avant-garde.

69 Gilbert Keith Chesterton, *The Defendant* (New York: Random House, 1901), 117.

Choreographed Exhibition/Exhibited Choreography

How Bodies Design Spaces

Pamela Bianchi

Abstract

Current museum strategies are by now going towards interdisciplinary forms profiting from the cross-matching between visual arts and performing ones. The negotiation between different art languages engenders a heuristic dialogue which, in turn, enables aesthetic experiences to arise, at the same time that it defines new exhibiting forms: 'choreographed exhibition and exhibited choreography'. Within a migration from the 'black box' to the 'white cube', the theatrical body becomes a work of art through a process of objectification. Simultaneously, the exhibition space turns into a hybrid place of creation. Eventually, the beholder is called into question: his participation is choreographed, as well as the very act of observation. This article probes the dynamism of this situation and analyses a series of study cases from both, the institutions' and the artists' perspectives.

Keywords: *Performing arts, new museology, aesthetic experience, exhibition, choreography, contemporary art*

Introduction

the fences [are coming] down and the labels are
being removed. An up-to-date aquarium has all the
fish swimming together in one huge tank.

-John Cage

Over the last five years, one can recognise an increasing interest in moving bodies in exhibition spaces. Besides, as the concept of temporary exhibitions has become the focal point of performance studies and new museology research, a new aesthetical vocabulary has been set up.² Expressions like ‘theatrical display’, ‘performed spectatorship’, ‘choreographed space’ or ‘living museography’ have reshaped the contemporary study approach, turning spectators and their aesthetic experience into a subject of theoretical debate. This situation can first be described through the image of cross-cultural interaction between performing and visual arts. A fundamental interplay has given birth to a series of temporary hybrid events where, while the moving body is staged in non-theatrical places, viewers have to rethink their position in respect of the exhibition space and artwork. Indeed, these contexts, by generating new forms of aesthetic experimentation, have insisted, most of all, on the relationship between different aesthetical sources, on the encounter of extraneous creative frameworks, and on the use of alternative spaces and exhibiting approaches. Halfway between ‘choreographed exhibitions’ and ‘exhibited choreography’, these proposals finally upset temporal and spatial spectatorship conditions, as well as the very logic of exhibition display.³

This paper starts with these brief reflections and then deepens by utilising historical and contemporary case studies, in order to investigate how interdisciplinary processes, staged in museums and galleries, impact upon the aesthetical experience of the individual. Also, it considers how these processes have rewritten exhibition design methods, thus reinterpreting the

meaning of the act of exhibiting. In particular, the study tries to analyse this interdisciplinary approach through, first of all, a historical perspective. By studying some 20th-century cases of intersection and dialogue between alternative art forms, the article seeks to highlight the transition from a relational dimension of the interdisciplinary encounter (typical of the 1960s) to an economic and conceptual one that characterises contemporaneity. Alongside the analysis of some specific examples and the articulation of museological and museographical issues, the article finally insists on the idea of a ‘choreographed body’ intended as a critical device of transcultural mediation.

Performing arts are indeed invading museum and exhibition contexts.⁴ Among others, in Paris, Anna Teresa De Keersmaeker staged an “exhibited choreography” at the Centre Pompidou (2016); Cally Spooner [Fig. 1] showed dancing bodies during the Parisian art fair FIAC (2016); and Mathieu Copeland organised choreographed and spoken exhibitions at the Jeu de Paume (2013). In Turin, Tino Sehgal emptied the entire space of the OGR—Officine Grandi Riparazioni— (2018) to stage what he considered an ‘aesthetical encounter’, and in London, Boris Charmatz invaded the Turbine Hall of the Tate Gallery with his *Musée de la Danse* (2014). These examples describe a sort of migration from the ‘black box’ to the ‘white cube’, where individuals are undergoing a process of objectification that is leading them to become works of art themselves. In particular, the place welcoming these events, despite being in most cases an exhibition space, temporarily loses its structural and statutory hierarchy: neither exhibition space nor theatrical stage, it turns into a hybrid place, a meta-museum.⁵ According to art historian Claire Bishop, this hybrid space could even be considered as “the new ‘grey zone’ for performance that has evolved out of the historical convergence of experimental theatre’s black box and the gallery’s white cube.”⁶



Fig. 1

Cally Spooner, Installation view during FIAC, 2016, Paris. Photo: Pamela Bianchi
©Pamela Bianchi

Points of view change. The renaissance monocular vision, typical of the relationship between the individual and the artwork, disappears, depriving spectators of their traditional theatrical positions. The historical linear perspective—based on the reading of fictional space—no longer defines the conventional museum and theatre behaviour. Indeed, in these cases, the ordinary comprehension of space is subordinated to a form of decentralised perspective recalling the phenomenon of parallax. Points of view multiply; thus, new paths, trajectories and temporalities arise. By taking place in specific moments overlapping the daily routine of exhibition space, these choreographed events question the spectator's position. Within hybrid contexts where the watcher interacts with the watched, and vice-versa, spectators not only have to rethink their habits of aesthetic enjoyment but end up choreographing the very act of observation. In doing so, the beholder turns into a “spect-actor,”⁷ he/she becomes the viewer, who, by getting on stage to intervene in the action, “acquires freedom of movement and conscience that in turn influences freedom of judgment, [...] mobilises attention, arms a presence, chooses a posture,” as Pier Paolo Pasolini describes.⁸

Within a space without scenery, specific temporality, lighting, apparatus or music, “spectators [are thus] confronted not only with what [is] there to see, but also with how they negotiate their movements.”⁹ This displacement from the black-box theatre to the white cube institution, therefore, defines a compromise between different forms of representation, in which the very notion of theatricality undergoes an ontological transformation, becoming an aesthetic device capable of proposing: “[...] a new configuration of artistic experience.”¹⁰

The Relational Dimension of the Interdisciplinary Encounter

An age that has lost its gestures is, for this reason, obsessed by them. For human beings who have lost every sense of naturalness, each single gesture becomes a destiny. And the more gestures lose their ease under the action of invisible powers, the more life becomes indecipherable.

-Giorgio Agamben¹¹

Far from the ancient ambition to enhance boundaries between different artistic languages, the mixing between performing arts and visual arts, between temporal succession and spatial juxtaposition, is currently defended as a source of experimentation. As in a ‘creolization’ system, these two opposing contexts set conditions for reciprocal and productive contamination, involving unknown systems and vocabularies, different aesthetic paradigms and artistic frameworks. That is what one can find in the notion of ‘interartiality’: interaction between different arts that, while maintaining their specificity, still dialogue through an aesthetic and ontological compromise.¹²

This interplay, however, is not newly created. Over time, one can recognise many examples of interdisciplinary encounter in which visual arts and performing arts have across their mutual boundaries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, for instance, the futurist and

surrealist actions, in France and Italy, highlighted the importance of the theatrical and scenography feature in the exhibition design by absorbing spectators inside a meta-exhibition where exhibits were considered more as devices than as artwork. Yet, the ontological peak of this condition can be found in the 1960s, when the artwork was ‘absorbed’ into the process of its exhibiting, by turning a tautology into an experience.

The *Poème Electronique* (1958) is a clear example of this heuristic dialogue. Designed by Le Corbusier, Iannis Xenakis and Edgard Varèse, for the Brussels World’s Fair in 1958, this Pavillon anticipated current immersive environments where the encounter between music, images and architecture defines a potential space of action. Conceived as a total work that combines the aesthetics of the external form with the spatial, sonic and visual enjoyment of the internal architecture, the Philips Pavilion is an interdisciplinary object. Here, the communion between cinema, sound and architecture plunged the public into a meta-space where the phenomenological experience was the very artwork itself. Similarly, Piero Manzoni’s studies of the *Placentarium* (1960)—a balloon aerostatic about 18 meters in diameter—while evoking the panoptic surveillance structure, also offer today the occasion to re-question the spectator’s place inside immersive contexts.¹³ Indeed, although it was never built, the *Placentarium* was designed to welcome Otto Piene’s ballets of light (*Lichtballette*): luminous events created by the interaction between sound installations and visual effects, where spectators could experience a kind of kinaesthetic immersion.

In the 1960s, however, the interdisciplinary encounter between arts insisted more on the relational dimension of events, where spectators were directly and theatrically involved in the action or exhibition. In this respect, among others, the exhibition programming of Fabio Sargentini’s gallery, L’Attico, seems to claim this relational approach.¹⁴ Sargentini suggested the exit from the pictorial two-dimensionality, the invasion of the social place, and the advent

of alternative spaces, ways of aesthetical reflection and art curating. An example is *24 ore su 24* (24 hours a day) (1975), an event he organised as a succession of artistic projects, held consecutively 24 hours a day for six days, with which Sargentini sought to insist on the temporality of the gesture and on the theatricality of the exhibition.¹⁵ By staging hybrid events, halfway between theatrical exhibitions and exhibited performances, he moved away from the traditional use of the exhibition and space, to question, on the contrary, the spectator and his/her relationship to art. *Ginnastica mentale* (1968) [Fig. 2], and *Danze—Costruzioni* (1968) are, in this sense, two exhibitions which precisely insist on the mixing between the moving body, dance, performance and experimental music.



Fig. 2

Fabio Sargentini, *Ginnastica Mentale*, 1968, Installation view, Galleria L'Attico piazza di Spagna, Rome © Archivio L'Attico

For the first exhibition Sargentini organised a series of gym sessions and during the second one he invited the American choreographer Simone Forti to stage some of her performances. On these two occasions, a “multifaceted, [...] articulated, aggressive spatiality

emerges, based on the use of new materials [...] unrelated to the good practices of plastic art.”¹⁶ The new material, evoked by Renato Barilli, is nothing more than the body in movement, intended both as the spectatorship body and as an authorial body. In this sense, Sargentini could be considered as the spokesperson, in Italy, of a form of theatricality whose roots lie in the “philosophy of spontaneity and of liberation through the irrational” typical of the first Surrealist exhibitions, of Futurist incursions or Dadaist excursions.¹⁷

In the 1960s and 1970s, other interventions continued to insist on the choreographed gesture of the public or of the artist, such as the visual experiences proposed by Peter Campus or the filmed performances by Joan Jonas.¹⁸ Anyhow, this period seems to have highlighted the media status of the gesture, as defined by Giorgio Agamben:

If dance is gesture, it is so, rather, because it is nothing more than the endurance and the exhibition of the media character of corporal movements. *The gesture is the exhibition of a mediality: it is the process of making a means visible as such.* It allows the emergence of the being-in-a-medium of human beings, and thus it opens the ethical dimension for them.¹⁹

Thus, a new spectator consciousness seems to arise within a hybridisation process of the traditional exhibition system and spectatorship approaches. Indeed, in the analysed examples, the body of the spectator becomes, very often, the object of an implicit transformation that, depending on contexts and exhibition goals, transforms the visitor into a device, an obstacle, or the real subject of the artistic proposal.

However, unlike the 1960s and 1970s, in which the aim was to widen the limits of art, today, the relational paradigm seems to be a search of purpose, both concrete and abstract. Concepts such as those of de-territorialisation, transcultural invasion, spatial overlap, fragment aesthetics, or institutional nomadism, bring the notion of relation to a meta-artistic dimension in which the spatial issue acquires more and more interest. In this sense, as the artwork is today no longer a “place of [relational] negotiation,” but a potential space of action, the contemporary

exhibition space is, in turn, no longer merely a place to be experienced in duration, but a space to live and to traverse.²⁰

When the “Alternative” Becomes Ordinary

In the current artistic context, while artwork can no longer be considered outside of its modes of presentation, the exhibition is by now: “[part] spectacle, part socio-historical event, part structuring device.”²¹ At the same time, the exhibition space ends up becoming a hybrid place where the beholder experiences a new body awareness. The idea of aesthetic experience stemmed from these latter considerations. It metaphorically draws first a space in which the creation is achieved in its development, and secondly an embodied encounter, in a specific space and time, between the seer and the seen.²² The aesthetic experience thus appears, as Noel Carroll points out, as an experience “self-rewarding.”²³ Inserting this reflection into the specific context of the interdisciplinary artistic proposals, the mixing between arts seems even to consider the aesthetic experience as a real work of art. This consideration, while it shifts the analysis towards the issue of contemporary artistic marketing, also combines performing arts issues with the museum’s necessity to both seduce a broad audience and define alternative ways of exhibiting.²⁴

Indeed, as places of art are intended as places of “sociability” and, therefore, have to provide visitors with “the enjoyment of specific experiences,” one of the main objectives of cultural institutions is to captivate the spectator by fulfilling their needs.²⁵ From a museological and sociological point of view, the encounter between visual and performing arts might, therefore, be considered as a medium of cultural marketing, for which alternative modes and places of exhibiting are seen as heuristic devices.²⁶ In particular, the idea of ‘alternative’ should be understood as an advertising apparatus to attract spectators’ curiosity towards new artistic

contexts and to awaken their interest through ‘spectacular’ aesthetic experiences. This condition recalls the well-known Jean Davallon’s ‘viewpoint museology’, that is an engaging presentation method centred, not on the exhibited artwork, but on the spectator. In his own words,

Objects and knowledge are present as before, but they are used as materials for the construction of a hypermedia environment which encourages visitors to evolve, offering them one or more points of view on the subject of the exhibition.²⁷

Nevertheless, in the current art system, the ‘subject of the exhibition’ mentioned by Davallon finds an equivalent in the spectator who turns into an artwork. In brief, the aesthetic experience of an artistic event, while it seems implicitly to transform the individual into a device, also turns out to be a form of exploitation of performing arts, aspiring to spectatorship seduction. In any case, the beholder ends up becoming the focal point of the exhibition system.²⁸

This condition could thus be considered as a new exhibition approach which uses the communicative, economic and social power of specific art programs—in this case, performing arts in galleries or museum spaces—to create a new exhibition paradigm.²⁹ Among others, the interdisciplinary program *Nocturnes du Vendredi*, at the Louvre is a typical example. By staging ballets and theatrical pieces in traditional exhibition rooms, it exemplifies the ambiguous role of these events, halfway between a publicity stunt and an artistic experiment. At these occasions, dancers stage choreography using the collection works as scenographic elements. Drawing a sort of silent dialogue with motionless sculptures, dancers move freely within ephemeral sets devoid of theatrical demarcation. Within a choreographic performance, art objects temporarily lose their nature of an artwork, becoming, instead, accessories and mere decorations for a transient stage. Simultaneously, dancing bodies are objectified, acquiring the status of an artwork. The exhibition space, for its part, becomes a scenic design: through a conceptual overlapping, exhibition rooms misplace their primary role of containers to become

Bishop's 'grey zone'. This interaction between performing arts, the collection, and the architectural ornament of exhibition rooms, questions the limits of the spectatorial gaze, by putting in dialogue the acts of the re-presentation. Therefore, a new temporary exhibition arises. That is a stage without a real distinction between scene and parterre, where the beholder can wander at will, being free to meander into space, changing his/her point of view towards dancing bodies and the exhibition layout of the museum.

The Parisian example also draws the metaphorical image of the 'encounter with artwork', and emphasises several questions concerning spectators and their role in the exhibition process. Beyond the concepts of 'objectified body' and 'aesthetic experience', this example crosses boundaries of the space of art, the theatre, and the beholder's privileged place. The displacement from the theatre to the exhibition space involves a series of ontological adjustments that resize, not only the idea of the moving body and spectator gaze, but also the idea of space, thus evoking a "spatial dramaturgy"³⁰ where the aesthetic enjoyment becomes an act to be choreographed.³¹ Within this hybrid place, then, the perception is both activated by a multipurpose environment and involved in the choreographed exhibition. While they observe, spectators also participate in the exhibition, and their behaviour consequently becomes an aesthetic exercise of creation. This kind of hybridisation process seems to exploit the communicative power of theatrical languages, not only to propose new ways to live the museum experience and to enjoy its collections, but also to reconsider the role of the museum through the lens of marketing strategies.

Indeed, according to Bishop, it seems that: "the steering question for the museum is not whether people will visit the museum but how they will view the works."³² Whether it is for aesthetic or more pragmatically commercial purposes, the contemporary attention to the crossing of interdisciplinary boundaries becomes an ordinary condition of museum

programming or artists' creative approaches. Anyway, it seems that the rereading of the relationship between visual arts and performing arts implies a new vocabulary, a new questioning of the way the museum opens up to the logic of the scene, and on what it means to exhibit today.

Performing the Spectatorship Gaze

Currently, art institutions using an interdisciplinary approach to exhibit are countless. *A Year at the Stedelijk: Tino Sehgal* at the Stedelijk Museum of Amsterdam (2015), *Move! Choreographing You* at the Hayward Gallery in London (2011), *Do Disturb* at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, or the European *Dancing Museum* (2016) are some of the many cases that stage the encounter between theatrical and museum languages. Here, individuals are spatialized as exhibition devices inside a performing stage where the body (of the dancer or the actor) becomes a kind of moving interface.³³

In this respect, the cycle of events organised by Mathieu Copeland over the last ten years shows how theatrical language can be used as a creative device within a contemporary exhibition process. In 2013, for instance, a French curator proposed a series of spoken and choreographed exhibitions at the Jeu de Paume in Paris. Here, he considered the possibility of exhibiting artwork through its verbal and oral translation. By staging actors into an empty space, he encouraged beholders to rethink their habits of aesthetic apprehension during the visit. Another Copeland exhibition, *Une exposition choréographiée*, organised in 2008 at the Ferme de Buisson, turned the moving body into a narrative device. For over a month, three dancers interpreted movements and choreographed gestures, following instructions provided by eight invited artists (including Roman Ondak, Michael Parsons and Jennifer Lacey). Every day, for

six hours, in a space free from any museological decoration or devices, dancers defined ephemeral temporalities and drew trajectories inside and outside the art centre, forcing the spectator to move according to their gestures. This dynamic led to the constant repositioning of the viewer in a space devoid of standard architectural references, and in which the proximity between the public and the dancers' movements reshaped new hierarchical relationships. With *Une exposition choréographiée*, the inscription of the gestures in an exhibition context reveals the narrative potential of the body and, once again, denies the object as artwork.

Beyond institutions' proposals, also several artists have embraced this interdisciplinary attitude, by showing how the critical reinterpretation of these languages and their narrative potential can lead to new creative processes.³⁴ Among others, the choreographed invasions by Sasha Waltz in the MAXXI in Rome and the Neues Museum in Berlin (2009), or the choreography *Atlante del gesto* (2015) staged by Virgilio Sieni at the Prada Foundation in Milan suggest this transcultural encounter [Fig. 3].



Fig. 3

Virgilio Sieni, *Atlante del gesto, Rituale* (choreographic cycles), 2015, Fondazione Prada, Milan,
Photo: Ela Bialkowska, OKNOstudio ©Fondazione Prada. Courtesy Fondazione Prada

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's exhibition at the Centre Pompidou (2016) allows us to go further in this reflection.³⁵ Her work, *Work/Travail/Arbeid*, was indeed an itinerant exhibition with which the artist imagined the choreography as an exhibition. She first staged it at WIELS in Brussels over nine weeks in 2015; then she moved it to the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Tate Modern in London [Fig. 4]; and finally, she arrived at the MoMA (2017). For the Centre Pompidou exhibition, the choreographer conceived a ten-hour-a-day show for nine days: a "choreographed exhibition", executed by the dancers of her company, Rosas, and exhibited in the South Gallery of Beaubourg.³⁶ During this period, dancers walked and danced to music by Gerard Grisey, following geometric and circular paths they traced with chalk on the floor. Musicians, likewise, were on the scene, playing and sailing on the same trajectories, thus reinterpreting dance in the exhibition space. In this moving landscape, spectators were thus free to wander in the exhibition space, even to invade the scene in a peremptory way, finally becoming a kind of obstacle for dancers. Musicians, dancers, and spectators then intersected each other, by sharing the same space, which was also connected with the outside, through the large glass window of the gallery which overlooks the Tinguely Stravinsky Fontaine.



Fig. 4

Anna Teresa De Keersmakear, *Work/Travail/Arbeid*, 2017, Installation view, Tate Modern, London © Anne Van Aerschot. Courtesy of the artist

This exhibition, compared to the *Nocturnes du Vendredi* at the Louvre, did not take advantage of the narrative potential of works of art of the collection to create interdisciplinary dynamics of encounters. This choreographed exhibition, on the contrary, interrogated the profound significance of the act of putting on a display. Rosas' dancers were the only 'objects' to contemplate in the gallery. Unlike the Louvre example, where dancers, as semantic devices, questioned viewers on their relationship with the museum objects, in the Centre Pompidou exhibition, the public has been invited to intervene in the development of the choreography. In this case, spectators played the same role which is played by works of art in the Louvre collection, that is, narrative and heuristic devices with which the dancers were interacting. Moreover, while the Louvre event has had a specific duration—with a defined start and end—, this exhibition followed museum opening times and exploited exhibition temporalities to stage choreography. Within an empty space filled by moving bodies, the distinction between dancers and spectators, mingled in an ephemeral stage, was almost impossible to see. Indeed, the non-enunciation of the choreography, performed for nine hours a day without any break, allowed the public to attend the exhibition at any moment. This spectatorial freedom highlights the

ambiguity of the role played by the beholder in this event, who ended up also playing the ‘role’ of a dancer for other spectators.

The solo show of the Norwegian artist Ragnar Kjartansson, at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2016, concludes our reflection. Indeed, this exhibition shows a case in which the theatrical language met that of contemporary art. Among the various artworks displayed by the artist, *Bonjour* (2015) was a performance which repeated, during the entire duration of the exhibition (a month), the fleeting encounter between a man and a woman in a life-size setting [Fig. 5].



Fig. 5

Ragnar Kjartansson, *Bonjour*, 2015. Performed as part of *Seul celui qui connait le désir* at Palais de Tokyo, Paris. 21 November 2015 to 10 January 2016, daily for 12 hours, Co-produced by Palais de Tokyo and Festival d’Automne à Paris. Photo: Justin Emard © Ragnar Kjartansson. Courtesy of the artist, Luhring Augustine, New York and i8 Gallery, Reykjavik

The repetition of the scene, continuously interpreted by the two actors, during the opening hours of the art centre, allowed spectators to experience different theatrical moments. In particular, it enabled them to live the narrative potential of the random encounter within an exhibition context, thus combining the ideas of exhibition visit and theatrical vision. At the same time, the performance was played within a scenic design that, by appropriating the

theatrical language, completely overturned the traditional relationship between stage and parterre. While the performing repetition inside a museum context enabled spectators to become aware of a new meta-theatrical temporality, the theatrical installation in an exhibition space interrogated viewers on their place and their favoured points of view.

Indeed, the two-level installation, located on the second floor of the Parisian art centre, was visible both from one of the balconies of the second staircase of the building and from the ground floor. This scenic installation was thus exhibited as an almost sculptural art object, and this condition allowed spectators to walk around the whole stage, experiencing the ‘behind the scenes’. At the same time, this placement also showed the artwork from an entirely overturned point of view, emphasising the communicational and aesthetic power of an interdisciplinary encounter.

Finally, whether for Copeland’s curatorial proposal, Keersmakear’s exhibited choreography or Kjartansson’s exhibition that appropriates theatrical language, the action of displaying merges with the creation process, thanks to the theatrical gesture. In these cases, moreover, the question of temporality and duration of action seems to go hand in hand with the ontological definition of the performing gesture. According to Copeland: “Time is fundamental in an exhibition made of, and in, movement. In this orchestrated time, these gestures only last as long as it takes for them to be realised and experienced. To choreograph an exhibition is to confront the ephemeral nature of movements.”³⁷ Here, Copeland highlights the interdependent relationship between the idea of realisation and the idea of the exhibition process, revealing the ephemeral nature of both contemporary exhibition and aesthetic experience. “A choreographed exhibition will only exist for the time needed for its overall realisation.”³⁸ In this way, spectators lived a nomadic visual experience, chasing bodies in motion, and repositioning themselves at every displacement of the artwork/body. Finally, a new idea of space arises, and a fluid space

opens to the phenomenological experimentation of spectators who are thus free to follow random paths and to write a personal exhibition tale.

Conclusion

Beyond marketing strategies embraced by art institutions, the encounter between different artistic languages seems currently to be deconstructing normal exhibition modes, invading the place, crossing boundaries of traditional exhibition space, and exploring the narrative potential of the 'alternative'. In the meantime, a spatial dimension of the interdisciplinary process echoes to a relational dimension of the exhibition space—intended as a meta-theatrical space of encounter. By exploiting the potentiality of the 'here and then' of an exhibition, the interdisciplinary approach leads to the exhibition becoming a living event, and spectators becoming itinerant. Through erratic nomadism, they invade the scene, they transgress the boundaries and migrate towards aesthetic itineraries, thus suppressing the academic *Noli me tangere*. Spectators' movements finally meet dancers' movements: by superimposing each other, they highlight the polysemic nature of the objectified body. Likewise, actors and spectators turn not only into objects to be contemplated but also into critical devices allowing the interrogation of strategies of art history writing.

A new spectatorship awareness thus appears, as well as a new form of spatial and aesthetic knowledge, which claims the narrative potential of the theatricality of the exhibition space. In conclusion, choreographed exhibitions—or exhibited choreography—organised within live programming of art institutions, while they have to shape a negotiation between arts, also impact the spectator's role within an exhibition context. Contemporary dynamics of

fruition into exhibition venues transform the concepts of temporality and spatiality, by finally defining the choreographed body as a critical device of transcultural mediation.

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Notes

¹ John Cage, *Empty Words: Writings '73—'78* (Middletown, CT.: Wesleyan University Press, 1979): 179.

² See: Georgina Guy, *Theatre, Exhibition, and Curation: Displayed & Performed* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Jackson Shannon, “Performing Show and Tell: Disciplines of Visual Culture and Performance Studies”, *Journal of Visual Culture*, 4.2 (2005): 163-77; Susan Bennett, *Theatre & Museums* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Erin Brannigan, “Dance and the Gallery: Curation as Revision”, in *Dance Research Journal*, 47.1 (2015): 5–25; Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012); François Mairesse (eds), *Nouvelles tendances de la muséologie* (Paris : La documentation française, 2016); François Mairesse, “New trends in museology”, in *ICOFOM Study Series*, 43b (2015): 15–17.

³ Copeland, *Chorégrapheur l'exposition, op.cit.*; see the notion of “theatrical museography” in Merleau-Ponty Claire and Ezrati Jean-Jacques, *L'exposition. Théorie et Pratique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).

⁴ See the distinction between performing arts—dance, music and theatre—, and performance art, intended as an experimental corporal practice which is “exhibited in a direct, face-to-face relationship between the performer and the audience”. While the performance art criticizes methods of reproducibility typical of

performing arts: “[...] methods of narrativity, spectacularisation, and representation,” on the contrary, performing arts underline the unrepeatable nature of performance, and its attachment to the spatiality and the temporality of the present. See Barbara Formis, “Performance Here and Then”, in Mathieu Copeland, *Chorégrapheur l'exposition* (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2013): 56.

5 It should be noted that most of the current museums are equipped by auditoriums or stage spaces to accommodate “spectacular” propositions. However, the tendency to present performing arts in their specific places seems to be overshadowed by a current approach which exhibits performing arts into museum spaces, from the entrance to connecting spaces, rest areas, or passageways. “it is surely time to think about theater and museums together since so many others do: cultural policy makers, urban and regional planners, arts and other marketing agencies, and of course, visitors.” Bennet, *Theatre & Museums*, *op.cit.*, 77.

6 Claire Bishop, “Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone: Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention”, in *The Drama Review*, Vol. 62, 2 (Summer 2018): 22–42.

7 See Jean-Louis Weissberg, *Présences à distance* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 1999).

8 Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Che cosa sono le nuvole* (1967); Françoise Parfaite, ‘La projection vidéo : un dispositif mental’, in Alexandre Castant (eds), *ImagoDrome : des images mentales dans l’art contemporain* (Blou: Monographik éditions, 2010): 188–203, here 190. “[...] un spectateur ayant acquis une liberté de mouvement et de conscience à laquelle il conditionne une liberté de jugement par rapport à la prolifération du visuel qui l’environne. Un spectateur averti donc, qui peut mobiliser une attention, affirmer une présence, choisir une posture [...]”

9 “the result of a perceptive dynamic, that of the gaze which connects someone or something watched (subject or object) and a watcher”. See Joretta Feral, *Théories et pratiques du théâtre : au-delà des limites* (Montpellier: L’Entretemps, 2011): 102; Julie Pellegrin, ‘This is not a Catalogue’, in Mathieu Copeland (eds), *Chorégrapheur l'exposition* (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2013): 17.

10 “Une nouvelle configuration de l’expérience artistique” Jacques Sato, ‘Littéralité et théâtralité’, in Louis Dieuzayde et al. (eds), *Le Langage s’entend mais la pensée se voit*, Aix-en-Provence: PUP): 172.

11 Giorgio Agamben, *Mezzi senza fine. Note sulla politica* (Turin: Bompiani, 1996): 53.

12 Édouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996); Walter Moser, “L’interartialité: pour une archéologie de l’intermédialité”, in Marion Froger and Jürgen E. Müller (eds), *Intermedialité et socialité* (Münster: Nodus, 2007): 69–92.

13 See Pamela Bianchi, *Espaces de l’œuvre, espaces de l’exposition. De nouvelles formes d’expérience dans l’art contemporain* (Paris: Connaissances & Savoirs, 2016).

14 See Maurizio Calvesi (eds), *Roma anni ’60* (Rome: Carte segrete, 1990); Luca Massimo Barbero and Francesca Pola (eds), *L’Attico di Fabio Sargentini* (Milan: Electa, 2010).

15 From that moment Sargentini adopts a new time slot, opening the gallery at night and no more during the day. See also the “Teatro delle Mostre” program, organized by Plinio de Martiis in his gallery La Tartaruga (Rome), where, throughout May 1968, he organized one exhibition a day. See Barnardi, Ilaria, *Teatro delle mostre. Roma, maggio 1968* (Milan: Scalpendi, 2014).

16 Renato Barilli, “Invadere lo spazio”, in *Quindici*, n°11, 15 (June 1968).

17 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Esthétique relationnelle* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1998): 12.

18 See Pamela Bianchi, “Retransmettre la performance filmée : de la documentation à la présentation”, *Culture & Musées*, 29:1 (Summer 2017): 97–116.

19 Giorgio Agamben, “Notes on gesture,” in *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience* (London and New York: Verso, 1993): 58–59.

20 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Esthétique relationnelle* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 1998), 26.

21 Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, Sandy Nairne, *Thinking about Exhibitions* (London, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005): 2.

22 “the aesthetic experience is the sensitive relation that one maintains with the environmental context.” Marianne Massin, *Expérience esthétique et art contemporain* (Rennes: PUR, 2013):28.

23 Carroll argues on four methodological approaches to study the notion of aesthetic experience: the traditional account, the pragmatic account, the allegorical account, and the deflationary account. See Noël Carroll, “Four Concepts of Aesthetic Experience”, in *Beyond Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2001): 41–62, here 44.

24 See Claire Bishop, “Black Box, White Cube, Gray Zone: Dance Exhibitions and Audience Attention”, *op.cit*

25 Dominique Poulot, *Musée et muséologie* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009): 112.

26 Daniel Jacobi, 'Exposition temporaire et accélération : la fin d'un paradigme ?', in *La lettre de l'OCIM*, 150 (Winter 2013): 15–24, here: 16–18; See Harmut Rosa, *L'accélération. Une critique sociale du temps* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010).

27 In his text, Davallon proposes three models of museology which correspond to as many types of exhibits and exhibition spaces: object museology, idea museology and viewpoint museology. See Jean Davallon, 'Le musée est-il vraiment un média ?', in *Publics et Musées, Regards sur l'évolution des musées*, 2 (1992): 99-123. "Objets et savoirs y sont présents comme dans les autres formes, mais ils sont utilisés comme matériaux pour la construction d'un environnement hypermédiatique dans lequel il est proposé au visiteur d'évoluer, lui offrant un ou plusieurs points de vue sur le sujet traité par l'exposition."

28 See the "theatrical" advertising campaign organized by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam to inaugurate the reopening of the museum after years of closure.

29 Jean-Jacques Boutaud, 'Du sens, des sens. Sémiotique, marketing et communication en terrain sensible', in *Semen*, 23 (2007).

30 Isabella Vesco, 'Teatro non a teatro: luoghi e spazi', in Giovanna Donini (eds), *L'architettura degli allestimenti* (Rome: Kappa, 2010): 148.

31 Copeland, *Chorégrapheur l'exposition, op.cit.*

32 Claire Bishop, *Radical Museology: or, What's "Contemporary" in Museums of Contemporary Art?* (London: Koenig Books, 2013): 37.

33 See Pamela Bianchi, 'Exposer la performance : une forme nouvelle d'interface spatiale', in *Les chantiers de la création*, n°8 (2015), online, <http://journals.openedition.org/lcc/1055>. Accessed 12 January 2019.

34 Lili Reynaud Dewar, Ragnar Kjartansson, Dector & Dupuy, Cesare Pietroiusti, Nadia Vadori-Gauthier, Julien Prévieux, Boris Charmatz, Sasha Waltz, Jérôme Bel ...

35 *Work / Travail / Arbeid*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 26 February-6 March 2016.

36 Each hour, seven dancers and seven musicians realized different choreographic combinations.

37 Copeland, *Chorégrapheur l'exposition, op.cit.*, 21.

38 *Ibid.*.