

## **REFRAMING SOME TOPIC ISSUES OF ART**

### **Kitsch between the contemporary art language and the management of values**

#### **Abstract (Berlin)**

The dynamic of the phenomenon of kitsch today is related to the complexity of multiculturalism and expansion of the geographical areas in which it takes the space to operate to the point that it borrows the same specific patterns of negotiating the ethos/ function of globalisation. Yet decision of art actors (artist, curators, gallerists) in the Art World can change under the imperative of/ can be subjected to/can subject itself to external cultural factors and phenomena (political or economical). The ambition of my research is to isolate (...) within a specific frame the phenomenon of kitsch, given that, just by itself, it has the potential to offer a generous depth of view into the larger (cultural) phenomenon of today's world of art/global culture. The exploration of the cultural and geographical borders (with little if at all historical interest) is part of the controversial yet increasingly blind move of globalisation which has been effecting individuals around the world for more than twenty years, and which like any epochal event is not univocal: on the one hand there is the proposal for a model (which sometimes requires imposing a canon, like patrimonial art-works, on the other hand there is the pressure/temptation to follow whatever canon turns up to be 'the winner'.

The basic substratum of such a phenomenon is linked to power of the art market as management of values with no chance of escape; the phenomenon is both complex and also touched by a human perverse drive, a mechanism that tends towards self-perfection so that there would be no surprise if it would suddenly seize the entire art world, turning it into formulae of increasing multiple-faceted refinement or of a less sophisticated, rebel-minimalist, functional-avant-gardiste version as well as many apparently undetectable possibilities of a pseudo-art that has no other purpose but to address the primal human drives.

Cultural industry is capable not only to adapt and produce kitsch, but to nourish the need among the art-consumers, a practice in full development. Counter-culture as well as counter-liturgic or the celebration of fraud have all become a big business for some. Visual Arts are the first on the list to be highly affected by such a strategie/mechanism of cultural mass production. And kitsch has a chance to flourish even more, resisting any external intrusion, any attempt to subject it to a negative definition for the mere fact that it does not encounter any distinctive and convincing counter-concept. The temptation of a conspiracy theory may indeed be too dangerous therefore defining a desirable framework as soon as the unequivocal might redefine the «demonisation» of the kitsch-able to create harmful pressures on culture, values, changing them in a legitimate concept with which it will be able to operate like a specific topic of the art language, as appropriate, in the Cross-Cultural Communication framework of Visual culture.

#### **Kitsch between the contemporary art language and the management of values**

Kitsch is not a bankrupt occurrence, but it is a phenomenon that will not disappear spontaneously, as it has not occurred spontaneously. It tends to refine not only in cultural contexts that have verified, detached trivial

and raised it to the rank of art, but it is especially justified by social and cultural dynamics and especially the economic one of the contemporaneity. Thus appears the invariable need of deciphering the "issues" and a theoretical approach to a speech or/and a face of a cultural paradigm, which, although apparently controlled, escapes immediate making and specific definitions, once the point of view is changed. In the context of the progressive modernity or the modernity of critic collisions with hypermodernity, in the space of the current culture-world (1), globalisation's prerogative, liberalisation and far barriers of interdependence in which the "goods" move, this concept means every time some theoretical definitions, and the capacity of adaptation based on a duplicitous and ambiguous principle.

Kitsch is the protagonist of polemics for a product, which is both paradoxical and natural at the same time, of the human mind. Art for all must affect the viewer, the kitsch object speak about his human condition. But in which way? Christophe Genin thinks that this pseudo-kitsch is therefore not meant to reflect a dream of happiness, or a so-called "void era" or "era of emptiness", or even to be a *memento mori*, but suggests otherwise: admit his part of shade, not seeing a perfect world of lightness in a blissful redemption, but to support our unsustainable sin. On one hand this approach is distinctly critic and has to do more with working across art boundaries and being effective away from the discourse than with the acculturation of a culturally antielitistic hysteria.

I shall try to propose a critical speech on the relations between art language and fashion of art policies or art strategies as an observation on socialized identity values. A small "cartography" of the emergence of these prolific issues in the art syntax.

Where are things going wrong?

Why are we often put in the situation to admire or to be offended by products of contemporary art expressed in some language which we identify as kitsch?

Each time kitsch still represents one of the most talked-about works of the contemporary art boom, even the term means the antielitistic product.

For the first instance the multiplications of the access to the meaning does justice chances our discursive organization, rhématiques abilities to transit between semantisation of different funds. For the rest, we know that domesticated exotic is the primary source of "kitschisation". Otherwise, this thesis is touching the simplicity point of the contemporary language of art to borrow the lexicon of the cross-cultural contemporary history events like *culture shock* and culture learning, values and beliefs. Handling all these, but by exposing them, by bringing them out in an anecdotal, ironic or childish way, leading to ephemeral, emptiness and finally, nothingness. How? By the market of art permanently challenged by the management of values.

From the beginning kitsch gratuity will be the engine of temptation in a world of the Exchange, by becoming freer, justified by the fact that kitsch is not a "good", but is given as such. Under the World Bank imperative dictum, "the future lies in the freedom and ability of individuals to initiate voluntary economic transactions with residents of other countries", the insidious versatility of kitsch was adapted at a stunning speed in different cultures through the local, simple mechanism until the global management, being assimilated as a marketing term, carrying by consequences artistic potential. In this direction we are studying more extensively the dynamics of the phenomenon called kitsch in the current context of the amendment continued the paradoxal art-ideologies, cultural strategies or other expressions of the Globalisation phenomenon today.

The present language of art are currently few methods of capturing the notion, volatility kitsch can however be designated through denial, (by removing from the light, apophatic), contra-art, contra-culture, aesthetic. Here knowledge "swung out" in the modal logic of the world possible, ontological and ontological level (a theoretical description of a universe), kitsch link of unconscious childhood and the recovery of the universe. Besides it, frustration, anguish, lack of sense and efforts (intellectual) disappear. Even the cultural myth based on scandal, offensive and insulting of avant-garde gets to be seen as "simply funny, turning into comfortable and harmless clichés". Ironically, the unpretentious goodwill of kitsch reap directly the "comfortable and inoffensive" and get teleported into the General elevator carrousel.

"Cross-cultural Consumption nuances of their topics, both material artefacts and the rituals associated with artefacts." In art language, the item kitsch gotten an ironic Cross-Cultural Consumption which fascinated the curators and gallerists during the last decade.

Jean-Jacques Aillagon, director of the Château de Versailles, tries to explain why he invited the Japanese contemporary artist Takashi Murakami to exhibit in the palace's sumptuous salons – a decision that has led to loud public derision and protest in France – the huge television screen that's hanging incongruously on the 17th-century gilded wall behind us lets out an ear-splitting blast of kiddies' electronic music Japanese kitsch in the Palace of Versailles? The French establishment is horrified". Or "At 10am on Friday 14 January 2011, Mayor of London Boris Johnson announced that Powerless Structures by Elmgreen & Dragset has been successfully commissioned for 2012, a boy astride his rocking horse, a visual statement celebrating expectation and change rather than glorifying the past, than an enormous blue cockerel (above) by German artist Katharina Fritsch, called Hahn / Cock, is to be the next commission and will replace Elmgreen and Dragset's installation in 2013". All theis were exhibited at St-Martin-in-the- Fields in Trafalgar Square in central London. "The visitors were invited to comment".

Under the sign of a caricature symbol, the sign serving as referrer, kitsch shows its subversivity. J. Salome link meaning "without thought of symbol symbolic classical cannot detach from reality to which it is linked, and no longer can achieve the function of representation (new presentation)". Semiotic approach supported by non semiotic references of differentiated consciences (according to the psychologist Lucien Goldman), actual and possible, change the way of handling these assumptions, but I can't stop the insinuation of kitsch into the characteristics of a symbol (like mark) of replacing the referrer or in other cases, when the transfer is incomplete, the message being discontinued because of the impossibility of the receiver to decode kitschful symbol. **Kitsch try to recover the magic, but fails and end to create illusions.**

It lightens the mode of existence potentated by kitsch in our society and its "liturgy of nothingness" or the celebration of the ordinary of upgrading as kitsch should be studied in a valuation and reframing (re-framed) practice management. But the cultural implications of the globalisation of a consumer society moove the discourse addresses topics ranging from the manga in Japan and the rise of the "hypermarket" in the Versailles palace in France, for instance, to the presentation of the consumer culture in art and to the serious anthology of pop art. Through their examination of cultural imperialism and cultural appropriation of the representation of "otherness" and identity, this art strategy contributors show how the increasingly global flow of goods and images challenges the very idea of the "cultural border" and also creates new spaces for cultural inventions.

phD. Bianca PREDOI

CESI: Le Centre d'excellence dans l'étude de l'image  
Université de Bucarest

2008-2011

## REFRAMING SOME TOPIC ISSUES OF ART

### Kitsch between the contemporary art language and the management of values

#### Bibliography

- Benjamin BARBER:** *CONSUMATI, da cittadini a clienti*, EINAUDI, Torino, 2010, dal engl. *Con\$umed. How Markets corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults and Swallow Citisens Whole*, C Barber, 2007;
- Fabio CLETO:** *Camp: Queer Aesthetics and the Performing Subject*. University of Michigan Press, 1999; *Pop Camp, voll, vol.II*, Marcos y Marcos, 20129 Milano, 2008; **FABIO CLETO:** *Pop Camp*, antologia di testi, vol I, II, Marcos y Marcos, Monza, 2008;
- Artur C. DANTO:** *Dopo la fine dell'arte, l'arte contemporanea e il confine della storia*; Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2008;  
*La trasfigurazione del banale; una filosofia dell'arte*, Editori Laterza, Roma, 2008  
*L'abuso della bellezza, da Kant a Brillo Box*, Postmedia-books, Milano, 2008;
- Umberto ECO:** *Apocalittici e integrati, comunicazioni di massa e teorie della cultura di massa*, Tascabili Bompiani, IX edizione, Milano, 2008 ;
- Ludovico PRATESI:** *L'arte di collezionare arte contemporanea, Orientarsi nel mercato, conoscere le strategie, guadagnare in valore e prestigio*, Castelvevchi Editore, Roma, 2010;
- Charles GOODWIN:** *Il senso del vedere*, trad. Alessandro Duranti, Meltemi Editore, 2003, Roma;
- Gillo DORFLES:** *Kitsch, Antologia del cattivo gustoLe oscillazioni del gusto. L'arte d'oggi tra tecnocrazia e consumismo*, Skira, *Simulacri e luoghi comuni*, TempoLungo ( translated from the 1968 Italian version, *Il Kitsch*); *Kitsch: The world of Bad Taste*, Universe Books; 1969;
- Clement GREENBERG:** *Art and Culture*; Beacon Press; Boston;1965 (text Gillo Dorfles); *Homemade Esthetics, Observations on Art and Taste*, UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1999;
- Giulio GIORELLO:** *Lussuria, la passione della conoscenza*, a cura di Carlo GALLI, il Mulino, Bologna, 2010;
- Gilles LIPOVETSKY:** *Una felicità paradossale, Sulla società dell'iperconsumo*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2007, traduzione di Daniela Damiani dal francese *Le bonheur paradoxal*, Editions Gallimard, 2006;
- con **Jean SERROY**, *La cultura-mondo, risposta a una società disorientata*, Obarao Edizioni, Milano, 2008, traduzione Luisa Cortese dal francese *La culture monde, reponse dans une culture desorientee*, Odile Jacob C, edition originales;

*Il tempo del lusso*, Selerio editore Palermo, 2007, traduzione Maria Delogu dal francese *Luxe eternal, Luxe emotionnel*, Editions Gallimard, 2003;

**Slavoj ZIZEK**, *Dalla tragedia alla farsa, Ideologia della crisi e il superamento del capitalismo*, Ponte alle Grazie, Milano, 2010, traduzione Cinzia Arruzza dal orig. Engl. *First as Tragedy, Then as Fars*, Zizec, 2009;

**Jacques Ranciere**: *Emancipated Spectator*, ARTFORUM, march 2007, (p. 271-347) (pdf) ;

**Andrei Codrescu** ; *The posthuman Dada guide : Tzara and Lenin play chess*, Princeton University Press, 2009;

**Antoon Van den Braembussche**, *Thinking Art: An Introduction to Philosophy of Art*, Free University of Brussels, Brussels, Springer, 2009;

**Ben Highmore**, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory, an introduction*; Routledge, London, NewYork, 2002;

**Clive Cazeaux**, *THE CONTINENTAL AESTHETICS READER*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000;

**Francis Halsall**, *Sistem of Art, Art, History and Systems Theory*, ed. Peter Lang, Oxford 2008;

**Gregory L. Ulmer**, *The Anti-aesthetic, The Object of Post-Criticism*, New York Press, 1982;

**Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans**, *MuseumsAfterModernism, Strategies of Engagement*, Edited by Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007;

**Jason Read**, *The Fetish is Always Actual, Revolution is Always Virtual: From Noology to Noopolitics*, University of Southern Maine, art. 2006;

**Justin Clemens, Dominic Pettman**, *Avoiding the Subject, Media, Culture and the Object*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2004;

**Lawrence Lessig**, *FREE CULTURE, HOW BIG MEDIA USES TECHNOLOGY AND THE LAW TO LOCK DOWN CULTURE AND CONTROL CREATIVITY*, THE PENGUIN PRESS, New York, © Lawrence Lessig, 2004;

**Mirko Tobias Schäfer**, *Bastard Culture! User participation and the extension of cultural industries*, Printed by All Print Utrecht, The Netherlands, 2008;

**Per Otnes**, *Subculture, or the Sickness unto Death*, Sosiologisk årbok 1999.2;

**Sarah Whatmore**, *Hybrid Geographies, natures cultures spaces*, SAGE Publications London , Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, 2003;

**Siegfried Krachauer**, *The Mass Ornament*, translated, edited and introduced by Thomas Y.Levin, first published 1963, Harvard University Press, 1995;

**Nicolas Bourriaud**, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with M.Copeland, *Les presses du réel*, Dijon, 2002. 1998 as *Esthétique relationnelle Postproduction: Culture as Screen Play: How Art Reprogrammes the World* , trans J Herman, Lukas & Sternberg, New York, 2002.

**Susan Sontag**, *Against Interpretation, notes on Camp and other essays*, Octagon Books, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1978;

**Yuriko Saito**, *Everyday Aesthetics*, Oxford University Press, 2007;

