

Transcription of "Form is Content", Apex Art , June 1 , 2001.

Graciela Hasper

To begin with, I want to remind you of the evening's title; Form is content; About Abstract Art and Transcultural Reading. Each word in the title could give rise to an evening's, or a lifetime's, discussion, so let me explain what motivated this panel and what particular questions I want to pose.

This panel grew out of a sudden disoriented sensation that struck me on my arrival in the United States a confrontation with an understanding of the word Abstraction very different from my what I was used to in my native Argentina. The tradition of Abstraction and Formalism in Argentina is contemporaneous with, , but not derived from the North American tradition; the same wave of artistic emigration from Europe between World War I and World War II fed both cultures while such independent theoreticians as Joaquin Torres- Garcia created home-grown versions of Abstract art in South America since 1930-. In contrast to the relative freedom that prevailed in the United States, the development of Abstract art in Argentina was affected by forces both cultural and political; in painting the social- realist mural tradition historically dominant through Latin America Modernism provided a polarizing , defining opposite , while , ending the 1940s, political repression of Abstract art both condemned it as foreign, non representative of the desired national culture, and deprived Abstract artist of funding.

Further, the Argentinian view, on which Abstract art, Conceptualism and Minimalism overlap and intersect, is much more fluid than the American view, which reflects the heritage of Clement Greenberg and its particular categories and notions of Modernism. For Greenberg's followers, painting is separate from, and superior to, all other media , and Abstraction, Conceptual art and Minimalism are separate endeavors . Argentinian Abstraction was also associated with a great outpouring of texts and manifestoes that sought to define or explain it since 1944- This can be contrasted with the European formalist tradition , which , to quote Yve-Alain Bois "not only did not deny content, did not make content a conditional and detachable element of the work, but on the contrary strove to attribute deep ideological meanings to form itself. It contrasted this conception of form to the simplistic realistic view of it as some sort of embellishment of the content, a decorative accessory lacking any ideological meaning of its own. The formalist therefore reduced form and content to one common denominator, although one with two aspects: 1) form and content were both constructive elements in the closed unity of the work, and (2) form and content were ideological elements. The principle of contrast between form and content was thus eliminated".

This clash between two particular concepts of Abstraction, the American and the Argentinian , made me wonder whether the question was not broader than a simple matter of definitions of words.

Are there parallels to be found in the different paths of Abstraction in Eastern Europe under the Soviet regime and in Western Europe after World War II? What about the relation among the Modernism of Brazil , Venezuela, and Argentina? What about Japan, Korea, France, Morocco?

Are such concepts of Abstraction universal, or do they vary among communities, whether these are national, ethnic, class-context-language translation based ? And

to echo the subtitle of tonight panel, to what extent is our experience of art a transcultural one?

My increasing discomfort with the “true” definitions of Abstraction and the implied limits between it and other artistic operations thus led me to consider a Pandora’s boxful of questions involving such notions of nationality, otherness , and universality. Before I list some of these questions as a way of getting our discussion underway , I would like to warn you that most, if not all, of these questions may seem unanswerable. But as Gombrich said, it is a mistake to think that what couldn’t be defined, shouldn’t be discussed.

1 What does Abstract mean? Has the word changed its meaning over the last decades?

2 Does Abstract art have a subject? If so, give an example.

3 How does Abstract art articulate its content?

4 Is the Abstract a universal language?

5 How should we define “art that comes from an other culture” If a work made in Europe has been in New York’s Metropolitan Museum for more than a century, is it still from another continent or has it been naturalized/Americanized?

6 How do local art and universal art differ? Is this a meaningful/objective difference?

7 What can we say about heritage and appropriation in this age of globalization? What different types of heritages are there? Who validates what heritages given individual may claim?

8 What does transcultural mean? (Is the Metropolitan an example of transcultural with its extensive holdings of Egyptian and Roman treasures? When the underground becomes mainstream is this transculture? Is Third World art invariably transcultural?

9 When is art universal? It is ever universal?

10 To return to our first question, What is Abstract?

As you think about these questions I would like to offer one thought -provoking quotation about the way we may encounter a culture not our own. from Jesus Martin-Barbero, of the Cultural Studies group at the National University of Colombia:

“ Either by a process of assimilation that reduces other cultures to what they have in common with our own, thus silencing or attenuating those features that are more aggressively different and challenging, by stylizing and banalizing what shocks us, making them more comprehensible but leaving us unchanged; or , alternatively, by a process of distancing that makes the other exotic, folkloric, in a movement of affirmation of the other otherness that simultaneously makes him interesting and excludes him from our universe, denying his capacity to question us or engage us in dialogue.”

Tonight’s panelist will discuss how certain artists, in the United States Poland, Argentina and Germany, have worked within _or helped to define _notions of Abstraction prevalent in their own communities. As they do so, I hope they will cast some light on the “unanswerable” questions I offered you earlier.

I’d like to announce the schedule for this evening discussion. I will present our four distinguished speakers, each of whom will discuss our questions from a particular cultural viewpoint. After all four have spoken, we will have a question and answer period beginning with the panelist who will be invited to respond to one another’s

presentations- or to revise or expand their own. Then, I hope you will all be full of questions or comments of your own.

Our first speaker is **Barry Schwabsky**, is the author of *The Widening Circle: Consequences of Modernism in Contemporary Art* (Cambridge University Press) and co-author of the Phaidon monograph on Jessica Stockholder. He writes regularly for *Artforum*, where he is also co-editor of international reviews, as well as for *Art in America*, *Art On Paper*, and many other publications.

Next is Monika Szczukowska, is a curator and compulsive cultural rhythm maker currently based in NYC. She is associated with Galeria Foksal, a non profit art place in Warsaw, Poland, and has two years of modelling experience. She is currently working on a project oscillating around electronically generated sounds, images, and thoughts. All this while collaborating with an international independent agency of researchers TLA (Three Letter Acronym) on the presentation of new Polish independent film in NYC and a website for Polish net.art.

Next is Carina Plath, holds a Ph.D in Art History from Ruhr-Universität Bochum, and is currently studying at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. She has curated exhibitions since 1985 in Germany and the US. And since 1994 has regularly written reviews, articles and interviews for *Das Kunst-Bulletin* (Zurich) and *neue bildende kunst* (Berlin). She has also made research at The Getty Research Institute, the Special Collections Department of UCLA.

The last speaker is Gabriel Perez-Barreiro, is director of visual arts at The Americas Society in New York. Prior to this appointment he was curator of the University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art (UK), and exhibition coordinator at the Casa de América in Madrid. He has written extensively on Geometrical Abstraction in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, and holds a Ph.D on the subject from the University of Essex.

Barry Schwabsky :

I am going to be very brief in my introductory remarks not only because I am eager to get to the questions and discussions but because when I looked at the structure of the panel that was presented to me before hand, I had the feeling that everyone on it was somehow there to represent their particular nationality or culture whether Polish, Argentine or in my case the United States. And in the first instance I became extremely self-conscious because of this in that I felt that well, maybe the United States has already had its say and more and maybe the other participants had more need of the time and space to present where they are coming from. In a certain sense I think that I see, looking out at the audience, there are a lot of people I know and I see a lot of people from many different parts of the world. But I suspect that many of you are pretty familiar with the basics of what Abstraction has been in the United States and maybe those of us who are from the United States are relatively ignorant of what Abstraction or art in general has been in many of your countries. I think this is perhaps one of the problems that we want to address tonight. So I didn't want to reiterate something that was already known in the place of something less known. But secondly, given that the topic was Abstraction I was troubled with the whole question of how it was that I was supposed to represent something anyway whether it was a nationality or a cultural group and I'm not exactly sure what the definitions of those things are

anyway, in terms of our working hypothesis here. There, for me at least and here I am going to reiterate something that I've already said many times over the years.

There are two ways of understanding abstraction in art and one is to think of it as an effort that a number of people made in different places to really find basic or ultimate structures of art whether you think of them as formal or compositional structures or whether you think that there are somehow structures of desire, if I can use that term, or let's say they're kind of more neutrally ideational structures. But one side of Abstraction certainly did win in this effort to get to the bottom of just what it is that we mean by the idea of art in general and so that kind of Abstraction or that strain in Abstraction always seems to be claiming to show you what all art has always been essentially. But then there is another side to Abstraction which is very different and maybe is the inherent failure of this first aspect of Abstraction which is to say that Abstraction is a general a particular general of art not one that gives the essence of all other art but simply a set of motifs and conventions within painting, sculpture and so on like any other and so just in the same way if you look at a painting and you see that there is a bottle and dead hair you know that you are looking at a still life painting. In the same way, if you look at a painting and see a square or you see a brush stroke you know you are looking at an abstract painting. And so one side of the Abstraction is simply this given set of motifs in order to find out what you can do with them what they can signify, what emotions they can carry and in that way Abstraction is basically similar to any given general in art that takes particular conventions and plays with them, varies them and tries to see just how much those conventions will bear.

The question about the meaning of Abstraction therefore and the possible diversity of meanings of Abstraction is one that I guess I don't exactly know how to address to these two different senses of Abstraction. Each one of them seems to understand what meaning might be in a different way. Maybe one deals with symbolic meaning and another deals with allegorical meaning, maybe one of them deals with referential meaning and another one deals with expressive meaning but it's very difficult to know exactly where to make the cuts between those different kinds of meaning. For me I guess these things have become much more problematic too since I started doing the job that Graciela mentioned in kind of giving my little bio for the last couple of years I have been co-editing the International review section at Art Forum and there I think I have to deal very concretely with the question of what the meaning is of a work of art, Abstract or otherwise it doesn't matter, within different cultural contexts and the extreme difficulty of rendering from one context to another what it is that something looks like in one place to certain people rendering that fact, if it is a fact, to other people who are not in that place and who are not in contact with those people. When I explain what it is that I have to do in editing these reviews I normally tell people that I'm dealing with a long chain of misunderstandings. It starts with the artist and the artist's misunderstanding of art. From there you have the critic and the critic's misunderstanding of the artist. From there you have the translator and the translator's misunderstanding of the critic and then finally you have me misunderstanding the translator and trying to reach back by looking at other documents, by looking at photographs and by calling people on the phone and asking them what in the world they meant, or asking them by email and trying to put into an American magazine something that will rightly or wrongly at least give

an American reader the feeling that they understand something about a work of art that was shown in another place and that they haven't seen and that is being talked about in that place in a way that in fact is very different from the way that thing would be talked about if it were exhibited here. So in a sense I guess where I want to leave this problem is simply with the idea that we are dealing with problems in translation even though we are not dealing with something that starts out as necessarily a linguistic text. And that the way this relates particularly to Abstraction as opposed to other types of art is that Abstract art seems to already start by making a problem out of what its own meaning is, at least in this and certainly in that first meaning of Abstraction that I talked about if there is an Abstract meaning as opposed to a concrete meaning we're constantly in search of what it is and we can never really be sure that we have grasped it the more we say about it the further we may be diverging from that original impulse. And in a way that's the problem I would like to see something about how artists and critics in cultural situations outside my own account for it.

Monika Szczukowska

I would like to start with a movie from a Polish comedy which was done I believe in 1970. It's a very low budget comedy, of course no one would pay attention to it in 1970 because it basically sucked but with the whole return to the fashion of the 70s it became kind of interesting material with young people especially we liked to see what was the whole glorification of Warsaw in 1970s because Warsaw under very strong modernist architectural undertakings at that time and it's basically a comedy, a simple comedy of errors, and I want to show the fragment taking place in the Central Artist Exhibitions Office of new art exhibitions which today is called the Contemporary Art Gallery and probably known maybe to you because of the most recent political problem with Maurizio Catelan piece for which under Anda Rottenberg the director was dismissed (or resigned herself) from her position and so I will show the fragment and I will do the direct translation. Basically it's about, this fragment is about a guy who works for a station which repairs combines in the south of Warsaw. He comes with a mission to Warsaw to find spare parts for combines because they are stuck with the yearly plan and if you won't be able to do it then the farmers will be late with their harvest. So by accident he finds himself in this gallery.

(movie) _It's an open competition for artists, for a prize. You're lucky you're right on time. You're crossing the entry. What's your name, where are you from? From the center of repair being done on combines rule (?) number four. Please do not let animal people in. The exhibition is to (?) be in 1970. Goat (?) strong with no description, not politically engaged. And this is not a thing for black wrenches. Right, this together with the vertical elements symbolizes the eternal drive of man to modernity. Bolt. Oh my god a combined bolt. One and a half inch. Is this piece yours? You like it? Do I like it? It's a miracle this is what our workers are anxiously waiting for. They sent me here on a business trip to the capital city and said, do not return Banche (?) without the bolt other wise our company will collapse and the farmers will be late with their harvest. Harvest too? Of course. What a day. I'm so happy. For how much should I write the check. The check? You gave me back my belief in people. Since the last three years I have been doing modern sculpture and

nothing has happened and suddenly workers and farmers can not even live without it, take it for free. Do you have a card? Yes I do. So please come and visit us and we'll do a complete overhaul of your car for free. Thank you, thank you very much. And the charges find something not too much abstract yet simple though, statement of sincerity, truth.

So can you see that this movie illustrates in a very humorous way the dialectical construction its formal and ideological aspects and it also addresses the impossibility of the artistic language about abstraction in communist Poland where the ideas of utopian constructivism became incorporated by the regiment and thus were made ridiculed. I wanted to talk today about two artists who are actively involved in Foksal gallery in Warsaw, Henryk Stazewski and Edward Krasinski and I kind of wanted to give it a tentative title, Margins of the Universal Avant-garde to the Essence of Locality and Apartment. But I would like to start from a quote by the pioneer and the most important Constructivist artist in Poland, Wladyslaw Strzeminski who already, before second war, gave a description of, he was already interested in the issues of certain periphery (?) since he was based in Lodz, south of Warsaw and Warsaw was the bohemian city, Lodz was a very industrial place and Strzeminski, somewhere between 1929 and '33 writes about Warsaw and about Henryk Stazewski saying that Stazewski is a bold man but Warsaw (quote-translation), "They all allowed their in Warsaw how to interact (?) to pose a fashion label and pretend an cuts matchman (??) manipulators all the pretense of the West and placeness of the of the East no one knows how to make things but everyone pretends to know, lack of precision". And I think this quote might be adequate to today since Warsaw is a very confused place in regards to our real geographical location and especially the cultural one.

Henryk Stazewski was born in 1894 and passed away in 1988 and Edward Krasinski is still alive he was born in 1925 they were two defendants of the disappearing form of Polish Avant-garde. The first was an abstract painter and after 1956 the most important remaining painter between the old Western Avant-garde and the cold war local bohemia. The second, Edward Krasinski was an interventionalist and installation artist who began with an idea of transforming abstract sculpture into a single line in space. The most important thing about the two of them is that they showed at the same apartment in Warsaw and this apartment was a place where many people met and it was a spot for anyone who would visit Warsaw from abroad and also a hangout and a teaching place for Polish artists of younger generations. Maybe I will show the slides now.

(slide) This is Henryk Stazewski's installation project for Foksal gallery which was never realized in his life and it was prepared by the critics and artists of the gallery in 1999, in the corridor of the gallery so the arrangement of the colors and works the reliefs are by Henryk Stazewski.

(slide) It's the interior view of the gallery.

(slide) Also from different years from between 1960 and 1988 but the way all of his works from the time before second war were destroyed during the bombing of Warsaw in 1945, so he kind of started from the beginning.

(slide) This is Henryk Stazewski in his apartment which was is a very beautiful place full of their works and interventions.

(slide) The apartment functioned at the same time as a studio and these are works by Henryk Stazewski.

(slide) This is Edward Krasinski in the common living room space with his work in the background geometric paintings on which he put the blue scotch line on the height of his heart which he called intervention. And anyone visiting from abroad with the local people would have to sit at the table and drink vodka with Edward and the conversation would go after Henryk Stazewski passed away would go about absurd things because I think and I would refer to what you just said about the possible modes for Abstract art that Krasinski was trying to find a way out of Abstract art with his interventions because he was very aware of the fact of not putting it into any gestural or expressionistic mode.

(slide) This is an installation of Edward Krasinski and the work you see in the foreground are his very early works from the beginning of the 1960's where he was working on the idea of abstracting sculpture to a single line which then ended in the interventionist object of this blue scotch tape which he put on everything. And that's the last slide.

So when I was thinking about the cosmos of their place, of this apartment and when we think about all these huge universalism and ideas and struggle to be present and to put in to ourselves and we don't pay that much attention to very local little things everyday meetings, everyday talks and its an interesting issue how to document it and how to write about it and it brought me to this issue of channels of exchange because there is so little reading now in Poland about what was the exchange between Polish artists especially before the second war and the constructivists there is much more known about the exchange with France for example because Stazewski was very active in this circle in Amsterdam in the circle of Mondrian but we really don't have any documents neither do we know the facts for example if Stazewski went to Paris what happened, whom he has met, what was the matter of their talk and what they were planning together for example. Also it's very little known about the moment when Krasinski wanted to create the first model of Modern Art in Warsaw in 1927 being inspired by the fact that Malevich came to visit a Polish artist in Warsaw for two weeks. And we also don't know very much, there is very little text, a couple of photographs so we don't know what was really the essence of the exchange with Malevich. And what is interesting is that these issues became very mythologized because since there are no details you just flow on these dreams that maybe belonged to Russian constructivism maybe there was a real exchange but then you ask the question why Krasinski, for example immigrated from Luck on Wolyn what happened that he decided to leave this perfect situation where all the social and political ideas had been engaged in abstract art why then he decided to leave together with his wife Anka Ptaszkowska. So I found that there is a huge need for going into the details and I hope that young art-historians will be able to take the material out especially after the moment when Russia is being much more open and many archives are being more easily accessible. After the second war in Poland for a very long time it was being told that it was a perfect time for neo-constructivists but the recent writings especially of art historians like Piotr Piotrowski they try to understand why artists like Henryk Stazewski or Edward Krasinski decided to shift from this one of the modes of understanding Abstract art as one that is engaged politically that the form is the force of creating new political and ideological exchanges within society. And Piotrowski brought very interesting observation that in the impossibility in the

ridiculed situation of communist using the language of the utopian 1930s this connection of artists with his social engagements disappears but Piotrowski also suggests that paradoxically it might mean that Stazewski became even more aware of the idea of political context but in a totally different circumstance of surrounding reality. So he sees this as actually as an artist being responsible for placing himself within the context and being aware of it and not only paying attention to the aesthetic points of abstract art of that time. That is all that I would like to point to.

Carina Plath

I am going to talk less about practice and more about the reception actually and the ideology and the question of Abstraction in Germany. When I was first asked to present something on abstraction in Germany I felt quite uncomfortable with this national identification of being German of course and I had not thought about German contemporary art in national boundaries and especially not about Abstract painting. But then the question turned out to be quite interesting in that I had to come to the conclusion that there is no German abstract painting today, which is not to say that you don't have contemporary abstract painters in Germany but it is to say that there is no case to make for an identification of this abstraction as German. Why is that so? And is always Germany the reason in history and I will just try to flash some moments of this history out to give some understanding why abstraction in Germany always has been this very contested practice. I'll begin after World War II and one of the most influential people after World War II was the Austrian Art Historian Hans Sedlmayr who had taught in Vienna and then later taught in Munich and who published in 1948 his book, "Art in crisis, The lost Center". And in this book he really tries to evaluate his time by taking art as a symptom of his time and he characterizes his time as a malady as a sick time that in sickness consists in the loss of a center. So he analyses modern architecture, modern painting, for example Paul Klee, Henri Matisse and he comes to observe that art has become centrifugal, that it doesn't, that it has lost its touch with the ground. As he said, the idea of the human spirit or god is lost in the art world. So for him abstraction through its search for autonomy has isolated itself in its evolution of representation, composition and through the equivalence of human figure and pattern. In 1950 then in the famous "Darmstädter Gespräch" of 1950, called after the city of Darmstadt in Germany, where prominent Art Historians and artists were invited to discuss, "The image of man in our time", that was the title it came to an open controversy between Sedlmayr and the abstract artist Willy Baumeister, who attacked him as pursuing the same line of argumentation that the fascists used to coin art is degenerate art and one also has to say that Sedlmayr continued teaching during this period and was a public figure and was then suspended in 1945 but continued to be a very influential figure after the second World War. Baumeister on his part, saw, as many artists of his time, Abstraction not as a loss but as a gain, not as dehumanized but as the very expression of a newly gained freedom. In his book, "The unknown in Art" that appeared in 1947, he focused on the experience of seeing on the very perception that could offer the open-minded viewer experiences previously unknown, in contrast with Bauhaus education principles. Baumeister as well as Joseph Albers who later would publish after his immigration to the United States, his interaction with color, they both understood seeing as a way of emancipating your artist therefore have driven

Germany in the post-war was a conflicted between a continual hostile environment towards abstraction and on the other hand enthusiasm for Abstract art as a new beginning. This was also expressed in the first three documenta's that were installed under the leadership of its founder, Arnold Bode in Kassel later a historian Werner Haftmann, both were defenders of Abstraction. Its occasion was a major concern after the experience of fascism also center for occasion. Bode once described documenta as his own survivor strategy and that only in terms of the ruins of in which the first documenta took place in 1955 but also in terms of dealing with the own participation in World War II. The dominant art at that time was on the one hand colorful abstraction in search of a new harmony, a harmony that would have actual consequences in the moral codes of the society.

(slide) I'm just showing, Nay a painter from Cologne, it's called "Black Yellow" it's actually from 1968 but Nay was a prominent figure and supported by Haftmann as well as Bode and on the other hand in front of the painting born out of existentialist position that united France and Germany, protagonists would be Wolfgang Otto Schulze (Claude Wols), Schumacher just to name two of them. In the forward for documenta 2, Werner Haftmann proclaimed Abstract art as a universal language and as a global signature but when in 1964 documenta still followed this path and denied any type of art, such as Pop art for example, it was heavily criticized as the attempt to create an art official, official state of art which is not politically engaged but which really tried to push Abstractness as this universal code. Already in the end of the 1950s the generation born in the 1930s protested these ideas. An example is a group called "0" like the number zero, which was a group of artists which found out there was no way to continue with this kind of abstraction because it was too much filled with guilt and resentment of these artists who had gone themselves through the war and they tried to get rid of and make it a international art that was really their claim. And Yves Klein and Lucio Fontana were also part of contacted by these artists which really tried to get rid of this sticky air of post-war Germany and that is I think why American art was so fully embraced when it first came to Germany in '58 or '59. There was a show of Abstract artists organized by MoMa and then full storm in documenta for in 1968 which was also due to the overweight of American art called, "The Document Americana" and so somehow because of this provincial feeling of Germany, Germans really embraced this Abstraction as a real liberation by the outside the United States and I think that documenta or really marked the end of German search for German abstraction somehow and Internationalism took over. However I think that there are two points to make that continue to be characteristic for Germany. One point is that Abstraction in Germany has and is always accompanied by figuration, which continued in the former of GDR with painters like Bernhard Heisig, Willie Sitte, and Werner Tübke who were not visible in the West for a long time but artists knew of their work and they were officially also presented in documenta 6, in 1977 and Germany had in contrast to the United States no teleology of modernism so it was not a problem to paint like Max Beckmann again if the content was credible so not in terms of you could go back it was possible to go back to figuration. And this also had to do with the second aspect which was central and perhaps for the German but also for the European discussion that painting is not so much considered as a medium but from really as an entity and a wholeness that is expressing the content, the German term "Bild " is not only the evil painting but is also the whole

concept of an image where the form is not divided from content. There was a show in Münster in 1992 called "Open Picture" which really showed that persuasively and that is how European and German painters somehow extended the limits of painting in order to investigate the constant questioning of itself often in material terms but also in conceptual terms and this dialectic of limitation of extension is a constant feature of Abstract painting in Europe. So there is no idea of linear Art History of painting than one on the pressure on the body and belief system of painting and somehow but still for German painters in the 60s was not so clear that just embracing American art would be a solution that they were still looking for their specific situation and for an art which could be authentic in terms of their own experience and when pretending Abstraction as a universal language didn't help much in dealing with the Holocaust, for example. Another aspect was of course the rising pressure of mass culture and it was not to be confronted with elitism. So Pop art somehow showed a way out embracing mass culture this irony, and the German artists Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, Konrad Lueg the later gallerist Konrad Fischer enacted the so-called "Capitalist Realism", some performances that today are considered German Pop art. These artists as well as Imi Knoebel and Blinky Palermo were clearly not children of the war but of the post-war, German rise of consumer culture the so called "economic wonder". Of course Richter is central because of his transformation of abstract painting of his doubt of the capacity of abstraction to articulate meaning, and I just want to show

(slide) This woman with umbrella from '64. This is Jackie Onassis.

(slide) Ten large color charts from 1966. (slide) Abstract painting from 1980s, I didn't know the correct title.

(slide) And a landscape from the end of the 1990's. Richter is a key figure which is nothing new because he succeeds "the task of morning", Ive-Alain Bois has prescribed as essential to abstract painting that is working to the end of painting in a constant contradiction to himself speaking to every genera at the same time and constant oscillation between the banal, mass-produced on the one hand and transcendental and expressive on the other hand. Benjamin Buchloh has defined the Richter painting as and I quote, "both the object and the process of historical memory in a continuously developing and differentiating amnesic, means recollecting, procedure designed to reconstitute painting's past and lost capacities" But also I want to point out to the other artist who Blinky Palermo Sigmar Polke, Imi Knoebel were somehow underrated and they also found decisive ways of rethinking Abstraction and I just wanted to show some of their work.

(slide) They share in part with American minimalism also that in that they work with prefabricated material preventing doing it again like Donald Judd formulated here to get rid of expression and the gesture. So I show from Imi Knoebel the plywood paintings which are like plywood and different sheets of plywood pressed together you see there are several paintings,

(slide) There is a drawing you can see different layers of color pressed together under a plywood sheet.

(slide) Blinky Palermo these are two different paintings that are made from fabric so he just bought bright fabric and had it sewed together to this Abstract painted often considered landscapes these are from the end of the 60's, 1967- 69 .The left one was in Julian Schnabel collection for a while.

(slide) Another Palermo "Untitled" from 1973.

(slide) Polke in the 60ís already working on fabric but then later in the 80ís working with chemical processes. (slide) His contribution to the Venice Biennial in 1986 where he worked with chemicals which would respond according to change according to the climate like in the city would look different at certain levels of humidity. At the same time however and already from the 60's figuration resurges, painters like Anselm Kiefer, Georg Immendorf , Penck and I am just showing, lets see the next one

(slide) One painting from Gerhard Baselitz which is called "Four stripes Idyll" from 1966 so these painters were around at the same time but the perception really came to the core only in the 1980ís so somehow history came back in terms of emotionalism and also the re-conservation of fascist motifs and Lüpertz are dealing with history and Wagner and paintings of Anselm Kiefer . The controversy about these paintings exploded around the exhibition "Bilderstreit" which is translated, paintings struggle but also iconoclasm, in 1989 in Cologne, that strongly favored this sort of painting in extreme way. The show was constituted around the comparison of Europe and United States and proclaimed a strong art in Italy and Germany, again that could hold up at the most prominent in American artists. So Schnabel was confronted with Lüpertz , Martin was confronted with Baselitz and the whole show was about this fight of paintings somehow and it was were heavy criticized for this false set -up and the proclamation of a new art along the axis of Italy- Germany. The total neglect of a group like "0" or artists like Gotthard Graubner or Emil Schumacher who were abstract painters working at that time. There is a continuation of this figuration in Germany with painters born in the 50ís, which forcefully re-ironized German petty bourgeoisie even further.

(slide) This is Martin Kippenberger for example, "Portrait of Paul Scheber" designed by himself in '94 also want to mention Rosmarie Trockel knitted paintings for example. Today we find more figurative painting mixed with a touch of socialist realism in painters some of who were educated in the former GDR just want to mention Thomas Scheibetz and Neo Rauch who recently had a show at David Zwirner. Artist from Düsseldorf ,so somehow the means of figuration, again the painting that can be identified as German in reference to German motifs if one wants. Abstract painters today, on the other hand, refer to an International or especially to an American tradition of Abstract painting I think. I would mention, for example, Katharina Grosse which I think can not be discussed on national terms however and this just last point I want to make, Abstraction made in Germany today seems to be photography. And I'm thinking of Bechers and Andreas Gursky, as well as Candida Höfer, Thomas Struth , Thomas Ruff,

(slide) This is a photograph from the Bechers.

(slide) Andreas Gursky who has a retrospective at MoMa.

(slide) Photograph by Platino a photographer from Stuttgart.

(slide) Jörg Sasse ,also Bechers, but not quite fitting in what the market wants be those colors it's from 1995 so it is really coined by the market as a German art but if its really a German Abstraction is really doubtful to me. But I think America embraces it as a new German art somehow as one can see in the Gursky retrospective also in painting at the edge of the world up at the Walker Art Center were there was only one photographer included and it was Andreas Gursky.

Gabriel Perez Barreiro

I have to make a clarification first. I have been mistakenly cast as Argentine in the packet you have it is a great privilege to be the only person here speaking here tonight who is clearly free of any kind of ethnic or racial burden I have nothing to do with racially or ethnically with any of the art I'm going to be discussing so somehow my situations a bit weird I would like to thank Graciela for organizing this. This is a subject that is close to my heart and really and since I've been researching abstract art, historical abstract art, mostly in Argentina and Uruguay, this issue kept coming up again and again, the question of meaning or context in abstract art and the extent to which there is a problem with the lack of a historical model which can really deal with this apparent contradiction or articulation between the local and the global. It becomes particularly different when you get to Abstract art because of course you're dealing with a language which poses itself as being universal at the same time it's charged with local content and that's something that comes up again and again and more so when you are looking at art which is unfamiliar I think that the further away you move from the artistic centrism the more this becomes comes to the forefront of the discussion. I really had feelings that the problem was the way that we automatically equate visual style with meaning. When we look at a painting or a sculpture we instantly think we know what it means, well, it's an expressionist work so that must mean xyz. The same with Abstract art, you know it must be about rationalism and reductive sense of form and all of these things. What's interesting in a lot of the art that I became interested in is that it's not about that at all, it's about a completely different agenda even if it expresses in these terms and I very much liked Barry's idea of misunderstanding and translation and I think if we begin to see art as a series of misunderstandings and mistranslations it will suddenly become, at least for me, a lot clearer.

So, as soon as we move to Latin America as a geographic or cultural area the history of abstract art becomes even more complicated and this really has to do with the desire to see Latin American art as essentially a social identity art and that has always meant figurative art. In other words, Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, anything which is exhaustively magical, different mantra has very much been the canon until very recently. I think it has only been in the past few years that there has been a broadening of this understanding and the awareness that the artistic traditions are diverse and much broader than we thought they were, and there was if you look back even as far as five or ten years ago any history of Latin American art would always have a footnote somewhere saying there are some abstract artists but this is something that is really not interesting, this is the kind of thing you would find in dentist's offices, it's stripy painting and it's really not of any interest. When you look back historically what you really begin to notice is that early in Argentina and Brazil the most radical political, social, philosophical agendas were articulated within the tradition of Constructivism or abstract art much more so than within the tradition of figurative art and it's something extremely interesting that really makes you question how these historical

models have worked. The other problem of course is a sort of complaint is that Latin America has always been seen as being derivative. This again is clearly not the case. The shaped canvas was invented in Argentina in the 1940s not in the United States in the 1950s. Neon sculpture was first made in Argentina, depending which version you believe but certainly by the 1940s and 1950s it wasn't invented by Fontana although he was half Argentine. The idea of the city in space was something that happened in Buenos Aires more or less simultaneously with Constant in the Netherlands. So this is just yet another historical problem of trying to come to terms with this material but rather than go on and complain for hours about this, we'll start looking at some of the works and this is a completely random sort of accidental walk through some of these artists. I'm absolutely not trying to do justice to these countries, these regions, these artists, I've simply selected a few works in which this issue of how a local context can not really articulate a meaning, I hope will become clear.

(slide) I'm just going to give a little anecdote to give some historical context to this. In 1957 the Uruguayan artist Maria Freire won a travel scholarship to travel to Belgium. She traveled there with her husband José Pedro Costigliolo another major Abstract artist and they went to museums and did a very exhausted iconographic study of medieval metal work of locks, keys, produced a series of works of which this is one.

(slide) And this slide is another, when they showed this in Brussels in '56 or '57 the audience who came in knowing that these artists were from Latin America said, of course this Inca, Aztec stone work this is deep America this is pre-Columbian culture that just shows that this problem is a very old one particularly Uruguay which is a country with almost no pre-Columbian tradition at all. This really is all the work responding to European Iconography by two emigrated Europeans there is very little in this which one could call Latin American.

(slide) OK, this is in Argentina around 1944, '45 there was really a sudden bust of young artists who were engaging with the constructivist tradition and really trying to re-interpret it pretty much to a local agenda. This is a work by Gyula Kosice of 1944. It is called "Roi" means nothing its an invented word and it was a moment which is really interesting, created fictions around art work and dealing with the whole artistic movement as a fiction. They would print manifestos from movements which never existed they cataloged from the exhibition a list of a whole range of people who never existed it was a very inventive and sort of subversive movement at that level. So this work is seminal in a sense, it raises a concern which was at the heart of many different abstract movements in Latin America in Argentina, in Uruguay, in Brazil certainly which was the to try to engage directly with the spectator in other words not produce objects which was in any way perfect, finished, harmonious and an object of contemplation which would be manipulated

(slide) For example, this work as you saw there is effectively a mobile. It's a piece which requires the spectator to physically walk up to it and engage with it, move it around and there is never a perfect situation, it's one in which the artist has given you the basic tools for you to finish the

work. And this is an attitude which is extremely common. There are other attitudes you know there is also the far more classical kind of formalism which I'm not really going to go into today.

(slide) Here is another work from this movement, the Madi movement it's called. This is a work done by Diyi Laañ of the late 1940s.

And again the next slide we will again show you how it's a mobile and this whole kind of aesthetic of the game of the toy of something to play with to complete which was not absolute in the sense that Constructivism is usually a very rich idea and one which on a local level is extremely significant. The art world in Buenos Aires in this period was extremely conservative in the sense that even modern art was considered in terms of the master-piece. The artists who were admired, the modern artists Berni, Pettorutti were still producing objects that were recognizably art however difficult the image would be, it was still something you stood in front of, contemplated and found beautiful, challenging, whatever your viewpoint was. This was very much an engagement with trying to break down that distinction and relate to a viewer in a different way.

(slide) This is even more extreme. This is a work from 1944 again by Gyula Kosice it consists of no more than metal bands riveted together which again had been manipulated and there is something significant in the material of this piece. Gyula Kosice made his living making hand bags and this was considered, this was a working class profession and the advanced artistic fair was very much reserved to the patrician aristocratic class so to take the tools of his trade these are the metal bands which reinforce the hand bag, simply staple them together and leave it around for someone to play with is socially as well as aesthetically transgressive and this is part of the sense I'm trying to get to.

(slide) Here is an even more extreme example of some works which are now lost but these were basically assemblages of junk by Kosice things that were lying around in the workshop, simply thrown together, the photograph was taken and that was the end. We're very much closer to a aesthetic of dadaism or futurism but pretty much working within a constructivist tradition.

(slide) Utopian desire to transgress the art object is something that is very common and this is a project by the same artist, by Kosice which was to create cities in space, I made referral to this earlier, and the labels are reversed, these are places where you can feel like where all of the, it's a negation of rationalism in the sense that these are not the ideal environment is not one in which there is good plumbing and the walls are transparent because its more hygienic these are places in which you no longer have any physical needs in which everything is simply pure experience and suspended in space. You have really gone beyond the need for art work because the whole situation of living has become radically transformed.

(slide) Picture of artist with the city in space.

(slide) This is the neon work which one could conservatively date to 1952 but its probably earlier, the subject is of much dispute.

(slide) Just to show that it wasn't all about moving into space and having

transcendental experience there was also this when I mentioned the shaped canvas and structured frame, this kind of work was being produced in the mid 1940s in Buenos Aires. This is by Rhod Rothfuss he's a Uruguayan artist.

(slide) And there is another example and obviously this is challenging the status of the rectangle as being a left over of the window of perspective of the whole Western art tradition.

(slide) This is a work by Raul Lozza who is a very bizarre figure who invented a mathematical equation to completely get rid of any sense of optical illusion even in Abstract art he was concerned with abstraction as we understand it still had effects of recession through color, through form so he invented an equation, "qualimetría" which would be a way of measuring the quality of the form and it was not only the but the sides, the angles to create an art work mathematically in which there will be absolutely no illusion of any kind at all. The equation is obviously fictitious although he denies it, he has been denying it for the past fifty years but it really doesn't work. These works, weather you like it or not are made in a completely different way, some of it is the sort of fictioning that I was referring to before.

(slide) Move up the continent to Brazil, this is a work by Lygia Clark the so called Bichos of the 1950s where obviously this is a development of that idea we were looking at before, this is a work which requires hinged pieces of metal and it absolutely requires the viewer to reconfigure in any number of ways and the title, Bicho which means animal, is how we're incorporating this organic element into this most severe pure geometry.

(slide) This next slide that's going to come up is a work by Lygia Pape it's 1959, it's called "Book of Creation" and all of you who missed the exhibition at the America's society last month and didn't see this work, I'm going to show it to you again but it's an example of this desire to integrate geometry and the viewer and the wider world, to call it something. Just to explain what it is, it's a book which consists of 14 pages of colored cardboard which have a narrative which is the creation of the universe and this narrative in fact requires the viewer to read each page by touching and by doing various things to the page but each of these is absolutely pure geometry there's not a single element of representation.

(slide) This page for example is the recession of all the water, so this is when the water receded at the beginning of creation, and it consists of three pieces of cardboard and you remove one, one, one and that's, you have this visual metaphor in the purest geometrical form. This is the measurement of time when man discovers time. It is a piece of cardboard again with this red circle and you can basically, one form disappears within the other.

(slide) The invention of the wheel, this again falls back onto two dimensions. I should say something about the photographs, this is a work which can be presented in a gallery setting but one of the ways she presented it was to take the art work effectively for a walk, take it out into the city, in this case into Rio, and place it into everyday situations where there would be a dialogue between this reductive pure form, the

spectator and the broader sort of social context without there being any contradiction.

(slide) This is the discovery of Fire.

(slide) This is when man sows the soil which is a perforated piece of card displayed on a news stand.

(slide) This is the Solar System.

(slide) It's within a telephone booth, and it's when man discovers that the earth is round.

(slide) This is they key of navigation, boats.

(slide) So this is something that has been very characteristic of a great deal of abstract art produced in Latin America, this failure to see a contradiction between pure geometry and a broader engagement with the social, the personal, the psychoanalytic, in each case it takes very different forms and here I have not referred to the work of Helio Oiticica, which most of you probably know, or to the later works of Lygia Clark but it's very much within this vein. So one of the more interesting ideas that was discussed and presented at this time was by Mario Pedrosa who was a main theorist of the group and he proposed Art History as rather than being a series or sequence of influences or the development of a style he made the suggestion that Art History should be seen as a series of questions to be resolved in different ways, in other words in a non-hierarchical, non-linear fashion and this is, really seems to be a very promising idea for dealing with this kind of art. What you get rid of is these dichotomies of first world, third world, here, there, first, last, whatever, us, them. I'm just going to steal an idea from Nicolas Guagnini who is in the audience who's an artist and curator, and this is a show we're going to present again at the America's Society, I apologize again for the institutional propaganda. These were works that were produced by Cesar Paternosto, an Argentine artist who has lived in New York for the past thirty years. These were made in 1969, '70 and '71 where as you can see the front of the canvas is completely blank and all of the painting happens on the side so here he is obviously working within, very much within a North American context of minimalism of the shaped canvas and how its understood in American terms.

(slide) Here is another one which is made up of multiple pieces.

(slide) This is an exhibition view from 1971.

(slide) And this is another Brazilian artist of the late 1950s, Willys de Castro, who never knew, Paternosto never knew de Castro work and de Castro never knew Paternosto work. They belonged to very different contexts. This is very much within the Brazilian concrete tradition and I don't know if you can read it but this is an art work which comes at you perpendicular and again it's painted on the side so what would happen, this was the proposal I found to be a very rich one, what would happen if one could place artists together with out raising the issue of who influenced who, who was the first, who was the last, who did it best, who did it worse but rather say there are obviously works which can be in dialogue by themselves and still belong to two local and different traditions and I think somehow this is being the subject what we have been talking about tonight which is

how this trans-culturalness as trying to deal with the local and specific and the universal without there being a conflict

Graciela Hasper

Before taking questions from the audience, I would like to invite the panelists to ask questions among themselves or to expand or revise their presentations.

Barry Scwabsky

Something that really struck me is how Gabriel's presentation seemed to circle us back to something that I saw in Monika's, particularly with the sculpture of Kosice made out of these, the metal framework from the handbags which sort of took me back to the sculpture made from the combine parts in the movie and I think something I was a little bit surprised, well not surprised but I was wondering how you would talk about that in terms of the subject of abstraction because I saw it instead of or as much in terms of the question of the ready-made in this case the way a certain kind of abstraction always seems to raise the possibility of becoming, so to speak, a ready-unmade. That is to go back to being ordinary things of use that are not necessarily visible to everyone as art objects in a sense I think a work like Kosice is also deliberately courting this same kind of risk and somehow I think that what abstraction sometimes shares with the ready-made is in fact this risk of unrecognizability as art and I'm just curious about how that's seen in different contexts. In a sense the movie perhaps from a somewhat Philistine view point presents that as possibly a weakness of art maybe Kosice would see it more of a strength of art that it can disappear.

Gabriel Perez Barreiro

I think that's true and that's one of the things that's fascinating about abstraction, to see it in these ways and certainly I think Kosice's work was kind of asking that question. He produced many kinds of work which perhaps lesser(?) but the work which I think really does speak to this is the later work of Lygia Clark where some of the works consist of nothing more than a plastic bag and a stone so there is obviously absolutely no value attached to the material, to the putting together of these materials but these were objects which were to be used in a therapeutic or psychoanalytic setting. In other words, you were to get these, touch them against your face and they were just tools to provoke experience and to get you to talk about or to experience from sort of deep within. So I think this whole idea of art as a tool for something else is something that's very common and it's there in the work of Kosice. It's absolutely central in the work of an artist like Lygia Clark where it's trying to emphasize the value of art as a form of communication or as a possibility for channeling communication rather than being anything that in itself has any inherent value. It's different from a ready-made.

Barry Schwabsky

This kind of therapeutic...

Monika Szczukowska

I only wanted to say that I think Krasinski's work, I would connect it on the line from abstraction to absent and that's why the movie was referring some way to it because once you don't see as an artist, reason to do abstract art because the notions associated with it were being ridiculed so what do you do next and if Krasinski's he was talking a lot about how the simulation of painting a blue line on a flat surface and the act of putting the scotch blue tape all around marking the space in that way it's still kind of removing the space of painting onto the architecture of space.

Barry Schwabsky

I guess just from my point of view that the kind of gesture seems to maintain the enigma of art and the question of its existence or nonexistence where as Lygia Clark's effort to render art therapeutic actually seems to give up on the enigma and actually to want to direct the meaning or the usage of the object in a way that actually does remove it from the realm of art.

Gabriel Perez Barreiro

I agree in a sense and I think that actually we are going to trace back that kind of idea when we have to go to Mondrian which is really where a lot of this original idea comes from which is that absolute desire to create an art which is totalizing. I think that reinterpreted through Lygia Clark for example is still necessary there is, I agree, this absolute utopianism to it, it does take away some of the range of possibility.

Carina Plath

I had a question to Gabriel about the show which you talked about in the last minute and I was wondering if you would put the last artist show next to a painting by Judd for example, in the show and you would say that just look at these objects and not in terms of difference so that's how I understood and you can correct me if I'm wrong but the question is if you are not thinking of this question of abstraction as a universal language which abolishes the differences where you can understand the difference between an abstract Europe and an abstract in America.

Gabriel Perez Barreiro

Yeah, it's kind of funny that you should mention that and I don't know how much I'm allowed to say but originally this exhibition was part of a two exhibition sort of series and the other one was taking the work of The Paternosto together with the work of Judd where there is a very interesting contemporaneity to their work. They were produced at the same time in the same place, one artist became famous, one fell into oblivion, this is one of the things that happens. I would love to do that show, I can't because of my constitutional mission which reduces, I can't deal with the United States, it's just one of those things, but yes, the logical extension of this model is absolutely to not limit yourself to any particular

geography without a doubt.

Carina Plath

The question I have is then do you really think you can grasp the difference if you just show these objects or do you need to somehow meditate the context in which the work has originated?

Gabriel Perez Barreiro

I think essentially you do both. The risk of this model is obviously to say that all of this is the same and local context does not matter, of course local context does matter and a local context will give you the meaning of each of those particular works. Now that doesn't stop the works being in dialogue with each other and that's where I think it's interesting to maintain these two things simultaneously. These come out of a specific production and it also functions on another level which has nothing to do with that.

Graciela Hasper

I would like to invite any comments from you, from the audience.

Audience David Reed: ...

Barry Schwabsky

Yeah, actually when you said ...

is a particular thing but she threw herself into that oblivion with a certain sense by rejecting her own previous work. Obviously there are many artists who are part of a context that I consider my context and some of them are not known outside of that context and others are hardly known within the context itself some artists travel, you know the way that some (?) travel and some don't it goes both ways one of the questions that came into my mind tonight was well, why do we understand, or think we understand Gerhard Richter (?) so well in New York? I mean to me we can almost receive him as a New York artist and probably in a very different way than he's perceived in Germany I think 'im far from unusual in saying that I haven't the foggiest idea what anybody gets out of looking at an Imi Knoebel painting you know and I think that you know maybe it's my problem but in fact his work has had very little impact in New York even though he's constantly cited if you go to Germany or if you go to Art fairs any where else where there are German galleries represented, you see that he is represented as a major artist in Germany. I don't know why certain things communicate easily and others don't as a kind of theoretical proposition I can discuss it in certain cases and give my hunches in this particular case I don't have a hunch but... (audience) Well, it's also a case in which there is not much work and it's hard to get and show and so on... (audience)

Well there is this tremendous myth about New York and that Greenberg defines modernism in New York and has the pleasure of having been just the one powerful voice which he was but none the less among many voices and passing on certain things that he got from artists and as well his own thought

developments but you know he was in a dialogue with other people many of them did not agree with him.

Audience Amy Roseblum...

Audience Nicolas Guanini...

Gabriel Perez Barreiro

All I can say is I think you're right and it sucks. It's kind of really irritating that this kind of art should lead you back into essentializing identity issue, it's really stupid but I can see your point that it does happen in terms of, I guess the other question is the simplest form of saying is to ask back, what else (?) to each of these works and not necessarily try to follow that route of an essentializing identity, see what else happens I actually don't know.

Barry Schwabsky

I always remind people of the Ad Reinhardt cartoon where the guy goes up to this abstract painting that's just made up of a bunch of lines and he says, ha ha, what does that represent in and the painting, the lines somehow sort of turn into this face that's looking back at him and says, What do you represents Which I believe is another way of saying that wanting to throw the question back out. Whatever question you ask of abstraction there is an answer somewhere but there is also the possibility that's there to question your question and I think it's more interesting to take it to that level.

Carina Plath

I think I have in my presentation taken very little to take abstraction in Germany and I see how they go or don't go together which probably would not have been the question that I would have chosen myself but somehow there comes a doubt of if really abstraction is the right question or is the model to think about for Germany at this point but for me it seems also for Germany it seems kind of absurd at this point to ask it that way and but the question I have was really more, is really a doubt if one can claim that abstraction is a certain genera or is a very specific set of questions still and if not rather on the contrary you have certain issues which can be addressed every form somehow and which can be addressed more interestingly for other forms, for example, so I'm not really sure I think for Germany it's really difficult to say, perhaps it's different for Latin America or different for Poland, but I might...

Monika Szczukowska

The result in this discussion working in Eastern Europe or Central Europe around acquiring a idea of certain language and if you were thinking a simple way of abstraction as universal and about contemporary art then is it the issue of acquiring the language or is it the issue of supporting mechanisms of the arts and you can start from different points of view like many are for

education of the artists, translations of the critical art texts from different parts of the world in which we lack so if you are lacking translations of texts if you are lacking translations of texts so then how you can establish a dialogue I think it's very different then.

Gabriel Perez Barreiro

Just to speak to that. That's one of the interesting things about the way that abstraction has traveled or influences have traveled and one of the points about translations and texts is that knowledge is an extremely pertinent one at least for example in Argentina where what you have, what magazines traveling with reproductions in them so people were looking at the history of abstraction in the wrong order in a fairly sort of arbitrary and random way and with texts that were either not available or in a language that nobody could read so everybody was convinced that Mondrian and Malevitch were basically mathematicians concerned with rationality, no one had any idea that they were talking about philosophy and spirituality in any of this and they also called the works were different the painter Alfredo Hlito who was sort of hard edged, straight of straight Swiss school formalist, when he first traveled to Europe in 1952 I believe it was, and first saw a real life Mondrian had the shock of his life because he realized it had actually been painted there was a painterly quality to this which of course was lost in the reproduction and at that point totally gave up how any abstraction and went into sort of very loose (?) of impressionist kind of word painting from which he never really recovered so there's this wide misunderstanding in translation is so important because one has to look at what information arrived and then start there and how is that made into something dynamic, useful, interesting, stimulating and it has nothing to do with correctness it has to do, it's all relative and that's where the local really becomes important.

Audience...

Barry Schwabsky

I don't really understand the question. What is the transgression that you're...

Audience; Where do the forces that bear on the conversation between not only the object and a translation of the object but the forces that bring the translation on and to the object and if for example we take two different pieces that look alike from completely different places and say look, abstraction occurs in vastly different places and they look alike right then this seems like potentially transgressive knowledge... So I'm asking how can you can digest transgression that are bearing on this evolution ?

Barry Schwabsky

But sometimes there is no translation I think that's part of maybe what I think you're getting at but you know very often the supposed dialogue is an imaginary dialogue or failed dialogue and that people are getting answers back to questions

that they're posing that are not the same questions that somebody else started out with but on the other hand it's also clear that in very separate situations people independently pose the same questions to themselves or pose the same tasks or agendas on themselves because of possibly some shared history that they may not even be aware of.

Gabriel Perez Barreiro

Again I think I understood this in the way you did in that certainly in the case I was discussing when the material arrived it was then in a sense translated by the person who was looking at it I mean if they wanted to see that history of art in Europe was mathematical they would and that was it. So in a sense that's where the translation took place was at the simple moment of opening and in a sense projecting your desire onto that and so much of the, sort of genealogy and interpretation of all these things and put them in order and of course that particular order or sequence has nothing to do with its nothing we would recognize but in a sense it doesn't matter I think that its all based on a desire to see something in a particular way. I don't know if that's what you're getting at.

Graciela Hasper

I 'm happy that there are lots of questions floating in your minds but in the meantime I would like to thank everybody here who helped me make this evening a success, our panelists, our sponsors including Apex art, Fulbright grant and Fondo Nacional de las Artes all the friends and colleagues who helped me with suggestions and finally everybody here. Thank you.