

## **OUTSIDER ART: FROM THE MARGINS TO THE CENTER?**

### **INTRODUCTION**

When I attended the Venice Biennale two years ago, I knew little more than the fact that it took place in a lovely park and that it was bound to be crowded. I had visited Venice a number of times previously, but only once during the summer of a Biennale. Already by this time, its success had inspired a proliferation of similar events in many other major cities aspiring to global prominence. São Paulo was among the first in the immediate post-World War II era. Regular major art events, usually referred to as ‘Biennales’ (even if they meet less frequently – as, for example, *Dokumenta* in Kassel) have burgeoned. In many ways, these events have joined the worlds’ most prominent art museums in providing the ‘frame’ that legitimizes contemporary art works and the artists responsible for making them. Unlike purely commercial art fairs, which are simply marketplaces for art dealers, the Biennale phenomenon has a more serious aim, intellectually attractive and adventurous, even displaying works that are virtually impossible to collect because their existence is so tenuous.

Almost from the outset, the Venice Biennale acquired a reputation as one of the most important venues for the contemporary arts, exhibiting a broad range of forms and genres. Among these, the genre that has become known as ‘outsider art’ is of particular interest because of its divergence from

conventional patterns of art works. It was a total surprise for me, therefore, to enter what has become the most important venue of the 2013 Biennale, the 'Arsenale,' only to discover that virtually everything on display was apparently outsider art of one kind or another! How could that be? Outsider Art is the last genre one would associate with an institution that has come to represent what is now a global phenomenon of aesthetic legitimacy. This is the puzzle at the center of my paper.

### A BRIEF HISTORY

The Venice Biennale was first launched by Venice's mayor and city officials, with the support of prominent residents, in the late nineteenth century. Its opening exhibition was held in 1895 in the presence of Italy's King Umberto I and Queen Margherita of Savoy. The event foregrounded contemporary Italian artists but the organizers soon decided to invite a number of other nations to participate. While the first and most imposing pavilion to be constructed was Italy's, over the years other nations built structures to display their own national art. From the quarter of a million people who visited the opening event, the Venice Biennale has continued to draw well over 300,000 visitors every two years, a sequence broken only during times of war, or periods of political and civil disorder. The themes and art styles featured at each Biennale event have varied according to artistic trends, and sometimes political pressures, with attention focusing on contemporary artists. Thus the first large exposition in the early years was a retrospective of the works of Austrian Secessionist Gustave Klimt. By the end of the Second World War, works by European and American abstractionists had also gained entry.

While the Biennale was supported largely by the city of Venice and its residents, it also came to depend on the approval and support of the Italian State, a relatively new entity at the time. In its first hundred years, the art Biennale was joined by many other aesthetic attractions, including music, cinema, architecture, dance and drama. Under pressure from artists and anti-bourgeois political movements, the painting and sculpture that predominated in the early years of the Venice Biennale gave way to other forms, while the space expanding from the Giardini to the ancient Arsenale that was no longer used for industrial arms production. Over time, an *aperto* section was launched to house works by young artists. By now, the Biennale had spilled out of its designated sites to encompass almost the entire city of Venice, whose many public buildings, and some private residences, became employed as venues for displaying art works.

Within the broad framework of public policy, government support of culture varies from one nation to another. In authoritarian or, especially, totalitarian regimes culture is usually a tightly controlled instrument of ideol-

ogy. In liberal democracies the expenditure of public funds are justified on other, supposedly 'non-ideological' grounds: for example, the role of culture in strengthening civil society. One of the watershed moments in the history of state support for art took place in France when Louis XIV, at the initiative of a dozen or so art practitioners, agreed to the inauguration of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1648. Before this time, these art forms had been deemed socially and culturally *beneath* the 'liberal arts,' i.e. those embedded in the university: grammar, dialectic and rhetoric (the trivium) and arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music (the quadrivium). It was the status of academician that elevated painters and sculptors out of the manual crafts and the guild system to the symbolic heights associated with the nation's rulers and most renowned university intellectuals. No longer was their creative practice assimilated to the mechanical arts or manual trades (Heinich, 1991: 7 ss). This was just the beginning of what was to become one of the most centralized states in Europe.

As successful as the Sun King was in establishing the higher institutions for art and imposing his taste – whether in painting, sculpture, music, theater, dance or furniture – on his courtiers and on the nation as a whole, subsequent regimes would introduce their own tastes. After the Great Revolution in particular, many of the old regime's institutions were transformed, or even discarded, at least for a time. The Academy of Fine Arts and its related salon system, which had been introduced to provide a snapshot of artistic creativity, either annually or in the form of biennial exhibitions, likewise underwent sweeping changes. The numerous changes in government regime throughout the nineteenth century meant that new institutions were created in line with the profound political transformations taking place. With the middle class rapidly expanding, a potential clientele of art collectors also began to grow. Until well into the middle of the nineteenth century, as the art market – with its art dealers and regular publications of art criticism – emerged and grew, so better opportunities opened up for artists. The new salons provided venues that continued to be among the most prestigious settings for gaining official commissions and meeting prominent private clients. It might be thought that innovativeness would have been welcomed in this expanding sphere of opportunities. However innovative artists found access to the official salons blocked, forcing them to seek other outlets to market their works. Whether or not they rejected the styles associated with the academic system, what had become a highly regarded profession attracted many more aspirants to the highest honors that the system had to offer. As the field became overcrowded, many artists turned instead to the newly emergent commercial gallery-dealer system (White & White, 1965).

The public institutions created by France's rulers became models for many other nations striving to garner a high symbolic cultural status. Ad-

mired court painters and artists cooperated with these institutions for their own benefit. The academic system established the hierarchy of genres, rules that guided how subjects should be depicted and enforced these rules by rewarding the most talented artists – those who accepted the rules of art based on hierarchies in artistic status. They constituted the artistic profession that Howard Becker (1982) conceptualized as ‘integrated professionals.’ Exclusivist and narrow in their definition of art, academic establishments were eventually shaken by challenges from successive stylistic waves. Impressionism, Pointillism, Fauvism and other variants exploring the boundaries of what constituted ‘realism’ along with styles that deliberately rejected academic teachings, some of them avant-garde art movements (Poggioli, 1971), were deliberately adopted to confirm the individualism of creative artists along lines that deliberately opposed the academic dogmas in which these painters had been schooled. In this sense, they behaved like the ‘mavericks’ categorized and described by Howard Becker. It is, indeed, as though they were striving to be ‘un-integrated’ professionals. But why, then, are they not ‘outsiders’?

### CONSTRUCTION OF THE OUTSIDER ART GENRE

Before the term ‘outsider art’ emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century, carers working with asylum patients in some countries had observed that their charges responded well to materials provided to them to encourage their engagement in craft work. Some patients used them to draw on paper, producing fascinating imagery, texts, and sometimes musical notations. Eventually, these early practices led to the development of a form of therapy. When this work came to the attention of art professionals, it gave rise to the notion of the ‘art of the insane’ (though the term ‘insane’ is now viewed as misleading). The forms of imagery varied, but the strangeness of the content, and the inability or unwillingness of some of the creators to explain what they meant, intrigued these professionals. Drawings like these were later found beyond the asylum, produced by various relatively isolated individuals engaging in creative activities. The works of those discovered by chance after their death struck their ‘discoverers’ as having parallels or similarities to the works of some modern artists (Bowler, 1997).

But as in the case of some avant-gardist art works, sometimes these images were compared to the work of children, who were believed to create without the burden of social norms that modernists considered impediments to freedom of expression. This idea was also applied to the creations of ‘primitive’ peoples from cultures outside western civilization, echoing Romantic notions of the nobility of native peoples in the Americas, and the peasantries of less developed parts of Europe. Recently the genre has been enlarged by the cultural creations of what are usually thought of as *self-taught creators* consid-

ered *marginal* to or *marginalized* by their society: naïve artists, folk craftsmen, or women, urban or rural isolates, hobbyists, the *homeless*, prison inmates, institutionalized elderly (Zolberg & Cherbo, 1997). It has even been applied to certain forms of vanguard art, such as Pop Art (Cherbo, 1997).

Superficially, the works of mental patients, social isolates or eccentrics may resemble the work of folk artists. But just as Becker is careful to distinguish between works created by integrated professionals and mavericks, he also distinguishes between the creations made by naïfs and folk artists. For Becker, folk artists are just as embedded in their social and communal worlds as integrated professional artists are in their institutionalized art worlds. Folk artists learn their *craft* (note: not their *art*) from the traditions of their community, from their parents, sometimes as apprentices. But the naïfs are separate from such social worlds; they exemplify spontaneity and freedom. Though Becker does not develop the connections further, the word *naïve* itself (commonly used in France and many other parts of the world) retains the notion of the unsocialized child. In Paris, there are museums of *l'art naïf*, just like the one I visited in Rio about twenty years ago.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century outsider art began to grow in fame – to the monetary and symbolic benefit of their collectors. Many of these works were exhibited in museums, featured in art magazines, and analyzed in books that detailed and assessed their quality, just as though they had been made by conventional artists. But in contrast to what are classified as *professional artists*, outsider artists are generally believed to be unaware of their artistry, not promoting their own career, but spontaneously following their creative impulse (Becker, 1982). They became known largely through the discovery and *marketing* practices of art dealers, gallery owners, art critics, scholars, museums and government agencies (Arderly, 1997). It is their carers, however, who select which of their creations merit public display, and which are merely discarded.

Aside from the naïve and the ‘insane,’ a third class of canonical outsider art comprises what used to be called ‘primitive’ art, a form whose meanings derive from completely different societal and cultural traditions. It was through convenient misunderstandings of their origin and significance that primitive art was lumped together with the works of the ‘insane,’ adult naïfs and *child artists* (Zolberg, 1997).

## THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF OUTSIDER ART

Interest in outsider art, I wish to argue, is an aspect of attempts by observers and scholars to grasp the meaning and impact of modernizing trends in society. Theorists who laid the groundwork for understanding the phenomenon approached it from various perspectives and disciplines, although – with the

exceptions of Max Weber (Gerth & Mills, 1946) and Georg Simmel (Wolff, 1990) – they generally did not refer explicitly to the arts. One of the most influential formulations was that of Ferdinand Toennies, whose analysis of the growing dominance of modern society over what he perceived as a declining *communitarian* rural life world summarizes a widespread unease prevalent among many nineteenth century intellectuals (Toennies, 1957). Cultural opinion leaders such as William Morris and his followers tried to overcome what they saw as the cold ugliness of industrialization and its products by reverting to medieval inspiration for design and to the organization of work around handicraft. Forms and genres that they associated with *folk* culture appealed to their Romantic sensibilities and, in some cases, their socialist ideas.

An imagined *noble savage* and *peasantry* were not the only victims of nineteenth-century modernity. There was a longing expressed in a search for ‘*authenticity*’ in contrast to the ‘*artificiality*’ of urban civilization. Seemingly embodied in the artistic creations of children and asylum inmates alike, authenticity was sought by therapeutically oriented art scholars of the 1920s. Hans Prinzhorn, for example, a leading proponent of the artistry of the mentally ill (Prinzhorn, 1972), was not alone in his appreciation of their gifts. Walter Morgenthaler, a physician in a Swiss institution, publicized the achievements of one of the first major outsider artists to be ‘discovered,’ his patient Adolph Wölfli (Morgenthaler, 1992).

The form known as the primitive involves works made principally by *non-western* peoples, and has a very different source and trajectory. It entered European consciousness through nineteenth and twentieth-century *colonialist imperialism*, when very few of these objects were recognized as art: rather, they were seen as *superstitious fetishes* or symptomatic of the innate childishness of primitive peoples. These interpretations provided additional justification for European domination, since they intersected with conventional stereotypes, rationalizing the claim that colonialism would elevate these peoples to a civilized state. The primitive as artistry was ‘discovered’ largely in the early twentieth century when, spearheaded by avant-garde artists (Cubists, Fauvists and Expressionists), these works were reinterpreted in appropriate aesthetic terms (Vogel, 1991). It was not long before other artists, art historians and critics turned their attention to this blossoming genre (Zolberg, 1997).

The English critic Roger Cardinal (1972), the French avant-garde artist Jean Dubuffet (1986), the art historian and museum curator Robert Goldwater (1986), historians and critics such as John MacGregor (1989), Michel Thévoz (1976), and many more have provided multi-faceted scholarship on these works. Anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists have added their own understandings: Howard Becker (1982), Sander Gilman (1985), James Clifford (1988), Anne Bowler (1997), Vera Zolberg (1997) and Julia Ardery (1997), for example. Several of them have noted affinities between outsider art and the genres and works

of *maverick* artists (Becker, 1982) found in the turn of the century avant-garde movements (Bowler, 1997; Tuchman & Eliel, 1992; Hall & Metcalf, 1994).

### STATE AND MARKET IN THE MAKING OF THE GENRE

This overview reveals that outsider art flourishes or languishes depending on the political regime and the *art market* in which it emerges. The complexity of both art and its context makes it necessary to clarify the nature of their intersections by tracing the genre's institutional and structural foundations. State institutions and policies play a part, but government policies, vital as they are to fostering or inhibiting culture, can seldom determine cultural outcomes beyond their own regime. Their importance lies in the fact that they set the conditions under which the public creation and dissemination of art can take place. In *liberal states* where commercial processes are permitted and indeed fostered, the power of the *art market* is at least as decisive as governmental policy in providing *gatekeepers*, agencies responsible for determining *reward, recognition and legitimation*.

The principal question is whether, how, and with what consequences the *public sector* entered the domain of outsider art. Even though government is responsible for establishing the framework in which markets behave, how participants behave within these art market structures and processes is equally important. Although this combination of domains has not been directly drawn together into a unified analysis, it appears that these *gatekeeper* agencies and groups are engaged together in discovering and constructing new forms of outsider art. In complex modern states, not only do markets play a role, they also shape the ways in which certain professions develop.

The professions that gave rise to various forms of psychotherapy converged with the rise of avant-garde art movements. The resulting imagery was interpreted as the spontaneous expressions of outsiders who were seeking a visionary experience. Added to these unschooled and apparently spontaneous creations by institutionalized mental patients and children were the tribal arts of Africa. As the 'insider' art worlds of academies and dealer systems became increasingly open to stylistic and genre innovations during the twentieth century, official and conventional art categories underwent transformation. This was also true of unconventional avant-garde artists, whose claim to be the arbiters of fine art was challenged by even more unconventional expressions that rejected pure aestheticism and linked their creative output to other domains. Barriers between high and low art, art and politics, art and religious rite, art and emotional expression, art and life itself repeatedly became breached. Art historians, aestheticians, social scientists and policy makers now face complex challenges when they try to delineate what Art is, what it includes or excludes, whether and how it should be evaluated, and the

relative importance to be assigned to different genres (DiMaggio, 1987). These uncertainties are directly implicated in controversies over how and whether governments should provide official support for recent kinds of artistic creation, and their dissemination to larger audiences.

## PUBLIC POLICY AND THE ARTS

While most liberal national governments recognize and support some art forms, rarely is the institutional support structure as centralized as it is under authoritarian or despotic regimes. Nazi Germany suppressed the principal forms of outsider art -- as well as their creators! Under the sway of their leaders' racist beliefs, based on an eugenicist pseudo-science, the state's agencies used the apparent kinship with the stylistic and philosophical orientations of avant-garde forms (Expressionism) to justify official suppression of both (Baron, 1991). Labeling the art of vanguard artists and the art of the mentally ill, the naïve, and African works as 'degenerate,' the Nazi regime persecuted and frequently murdered artists, sold their works abroad to gain funding for their policies, or to line their own pockets, or simply destroyed them.

In most other societies, outsider art's relationship to contemporary political agendas is more benign. Mussolini's Fascist regime displayed considerable appreciation of certain Italian vanguard artists' work, especially the Futurists' ultra-nationalism. But once he had allied the country with Hitler's Germany, his subordinates made every effort to promote art works that conformed to Nazi dogma. With this aim in mind, in the late 1930s the Italian pavilion featured artistic photographs of models, male or female, who were predominantly blond and blue-eyed, intended to emphasize the 'Aryanization' of Italy. In relatively liberal regimes outsider art forms have come to be associated with a more benign message: heartwarming outcomes of social work or psychotherapy. Some works have come to be regarded as possessing an aesthetic value in their own right. In this process they have become incorporated into the dealer-gallery system and the art market more generally.

While an air of elitism still clings to the arts, both artists and the public they seek out have expanded to the point where earlier conceptions of exclusivity seem to many critics in need of revision. To some extent, this trend was driven by the new challenge of the 1960s when Abstractionism was confronted by Postmodernism. In Andreas Huyssen's analysis, *Postmodernism* challenged the classic avant-garde notion of an autonomous sphere of fine art, arguing that this had preserved traditional notions of uniqueness and originality from the illegitimate importations of *technology*. By challenging this stance, various artists launched a revolution that brought *mass media* techniques into the domain of the fine arts. No longer would the quasi-sacred realm of fine art be clearly distinguishable from commerce. Instead, art came to include every-



day consumer goods, on the same level as the aura-laden fine art to which Walter Benjamin had directed his attention (Benjamin, 1969). In the process, they blurred the line – the Great Divide – between fine art and commercial art (Huyssen, 1986; Cherbo, 1997). Moreover, makers of prints, color lithographs, and photographs capable of making virtually unlimited numbers of copies were not content to be mere adjuncts by reproducing already acknowledged works of art. Instead, they claimed that the media of design and advertising themselves are Art. Those artists and critics upholding the older, exclusive avant-garde ideals became the chief detractors of postmodernism. But their efforts were largely in vain: the day of clear-cut boundaries between Fine Art and other (lesser) art forms had passed.

Postmodernism has another side closely connected to the make-up of society. Although the situation varies considerably from one nation to another, in many places the exclusion from the aesthetic core of certain art forms on the basis of their creators' membership of identity categories – gender, race, class, status, or socially defined handicaps – has gained the attention of policy makers and scholars. Since art worlds are embedded in (and encompass part of) the social fabric, it is unsurprising that they also reveal the tensions and demands of underrepresented groups and their art works. The forms taken by the Postmodern turn have implications for all the arts, but outsider art may be the most salient because it reveals the multitude of domains in which different forms of artistic excellence are now recognized.

### **THE TRIUMPH OF THE TRANSITORY**

I began this essay by speaking of my astonishment at the 2013 Venice Biennale and its display of works that had earlier been recognized as examples of outsider art, or that matched characteristics of works of that kind.

The dynamic of modernism was centered on the very dismantling of any guiding canon, the blurring of the boundary between a governing center, and recurring waves of outsiders struggling to become insiders. In the 'tradition of the new,' art could be intended or unintended, made either by professionals or by non-professionals (Rosenberg, 1965). Unexpectedly, however, vanguard innovations beginning in the last decade of the nineteenth century, for better or worse, did so much violence to the Renaissance and Enlightenment heritage underlying the cultural structure of the arts that it seemed altogether reasonable to characterize their effect as constituting "the shock of the new" (Hughes, 1981). Startling as it was at the time, this shock did not by itself immediately destroy the consensus surrounding the fine arts. A century later, though, the visual and aural revolution heralded at its outset has thrown into question the very idea of a high aesthetic realm. The range and density of artistic change have reached their apogee in the form of a permanent revolution.

The existence of outsider art implies an *insider* art, one in which a canon serves as a focus around which artistic products and their makers are to be evaluated. But it is difficult today to identify any single canon that governs art in opposition to non-art. Without an autonomous domain of Fine Art based on a consensus of aesthetic standards and criteria, in a world in which *anything* can potentially be or become art, it is to be expected that outsider art is no more likely to be excluded than a potentially infinite variety of other genres. This does not imply that artistic recognition no longer exists, but that recognition and legitimation are no longer identifiably situated in a single institution such as an academy. Rather, they inhabit a domain composed of a plurality of gatekeepers – organizations, influential individuals, publications, the media, popular and commercial or elite and scholarly – each of which may be local, national or international in reach. Insider/outsider distinctions have become multidimensional; they are matters of degree rather than of kind. Recognition may be founded on the fame and glamor of stardom, commercial success based on sales, or critical and scholarly appreciation, depending upon the trajectory involved in the art work's creation and reception.

No longer hemmed in by a single canon governing fine art, competing groups promote forms or styles that they identify as their own. Shifting power centers support claims to validity for a wide range of outsider activities and mentalities (Huysen, 1986: 218). In the process, the European autonomous sphere of fine art has become one cultural structure among various. The artistic tradition in which both integrated professional artists and mavericks furthered their own creativity and success (Becker, 1982) has also enabled the arts to become available for other purposes: for therapists using art, music or theatrical performance for prisoners, the elderly, the ill, to improve their sense of self-worth or to reinforce a sense of ethnic identity (Zolberg & Cherbo, 1997). On the other hand, this does not exclude the probability from an administrative perspective that the arts may be a means of social control in custodial institutions. What is clear is that the dynamic of insiders and outsiders extends beyond the bounded art world of objects capable of being bought and sold, and thus of gaining or losing value. The conjunction of government programs with agendas not specifically designed to construct this art genre, and with commercial forces that capitalize on the spending power of an enlarged clientele appreciative of authenticity and spontaneity, have equally played a role in creating the genre.

Outsider artists present particular problems for analysis since they are deemed to be isolated from ordinary society, with creations that illustrate an extremely personal agenda, devoid of artistic traditions. Those who emphasize their idiosyncrasy tend to characterize outsiders from a psychological point of view as vulnerable and helpless compulsive visionaries. Indeed there is little dispute about their marginality to existing art worlds. But the nature of this

marginality is varied and changeable, as is their helplessness or their ability to strategize. Rather than assume their ignorance and passivity in the face of art world actors, it may be better to treat these characteristics as questions in need of specification. With respect to Western art worlds, both asylum inmates and African carvers played crucial, but relatively passive roles in the development of the twentieth century avant-garde (Goldwater, 1986). More recently, some of these actors have become actively engaged with the art world, orienting their creativity towards institutionalized structures and aesthetics. In this process they are encouraged by art world insiders. It would be overly facile, however, to dismiss outsider art as no more than a case of marketing a new genre in the 'anything goes' art world that represents late capitalism's post-modern condition. While such a view correctly highlights the appropriation by more powerful agents of the creative expression of socially excluded others, stopping there would leave us with an impoverished analysis of what we can clearly perceive as a complex phenomenon. The market has been an extremely important factor, but it interacts on the one hand with the internal dynamic of how art itself is conceived by art world participants, and on the other with the public sector – the State – and the policies it generates.

As I have tried to show, in accord with current artistic practice, we no longer hesitate to cross boundaries between fine art and popular art; the political and personal; aesthetics and religion; art objects and performance; alternative spaces and settings. Rather than assume its status as art, we see its character to be constructed. The dynamic of insiders and outsiders is a process that we extend beyond the bounded art world of objects that can be bought and sold, that gain or lose value, and provide material for scholars – art historians, critics, social scientists – to ponder. It may be that, as Andreas Huyssen has optimistically suggested, the domination of the world's fringes by the West may be replaced by a healthy resistance of the dominated, generating a productive tension between the political and the aesthetic (Huyssen, 1986: 221). I believe that the contribution of outsiders to the nourishing of this current aesthetic realm, for better or worse, supports this position.

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**ARTE MARGINAL: DAS MARGENS AO CENTRO****Resumo**

O mundo das belas artes encenado pelo monarca absoluto Luís XIV serviu como modelo para muitas outras nações ao estabelecer a hierarquia de gêneros e regras da arte que orientaram as demandas dos mecenas e os critérios de qualidade por pelo menos dois séculos. Esta estrutura cultural foi a base para a educação de artistas aspirantes e alimentou o gosto de sucessivas gerações de clientes. Porém sua centralidade foi crescentemente desafiada pelas forças modernizadoras que acompanharam transformações econômicas, políticas e sociais. Uma única hierarquia tornou-se inadequada para a multiplicação dos grupos desejosos de status. Novas instituições acolheram formas diversas e exibiram-nas em locais pouco usuais. O sistema acadêmico baseado em um único padrão cedeu lugar à reavaliação dos mais marginais de todos os criadores, ao *naïf*, ao não ocidental, ao louco. A visão estreita do *salon* foi sucedida pela bienal global.

**Palavras-chave**

Sociologia da arte;  
Belas artes;  
Arte marginal;  
Arte;  
Status.

**OUTSIDER ART: FROM THE MARGINS TO THE CENTER?****Abstract**

The world of fine arts enacted by the absolutist monarch, Louis XIV, served as a model for many other nations by setting the hierarchy of genres, rules of art that guided the demands of patrons, the criteria of quality for at least two centuries. This cultural structure was the basis for educating aspiring artists to feed the tastes of successive generations of clients. But with political, economic, social transformations, its centrality was increasingly challenged by modernizing forces. A single hierarchy became inadequate for the multiplication of status seeking groups. New institutions welcomed diverse forms, sought them out in unusual places. The single minded academic system has given way to the revaluation of the most marginal of all creators, the *naïf*, the non-western, the mad. The narrow vision of the *salon* has been succeeded by the global biennial.

**Keywords**

Sociology of art;  
Art;  
Fine arts;  
Outsider art,  
Status.