

WHAT MAKES ART
EUROPEAN – CRITICISM
FROM THE OUTSIDE

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The exhibition "Rhizome", curated at the Haags Gemeentemuseum (The Hague, Holland) by Franz W. Kaiser and Paul Donker Duyvis (Nov.25,1991 through Jan.19,1992) assembles artists, whose origins lie in cultural contexts that traditionally don't know a separated sphere of art (as art), but who work as internationally reputed artists in Europe. It has been initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Culture on the occasion of the Final Conference of the European Council's 'Community Relations Project (about the integration of minority cultures), held at the same time in The Hague.

The exhibition is meant as a double polemic against:

1st: the so-called "Ethnic Exhibitions", like, for instance, "Les Magiciens de la Terre (Paris 1988): There is no doubt about the merit of those exhibitions, to having widened the attention of the Western art world to what their apologists call a "true global art", but they do it in a very superficial way, mixing incompatible cultural phenomenons to an apparently homogenous sauce - the way like the world media culture does - and hiding behind a moral argument (participation for Third World artists in the West) the old colonial attitude (it's still the Western curator, who selects).

2nd: an apparent misunderstanding about the role of art in Western cultures, interpreting it as a sort of social criticism, a misunderstanding, that is linked to the aforementioned superficiality. Talking about social criticism, the methods of sociologists are certainly more suited and efficient; artists

contributions are not required here and cannot truly pretend on any effect. On the contrary, artistic thinking is a very particular one, which is, even if fundamental, excluded from our rationalized social practice to a wide extent. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have used the "Rhizome" (the Greek word for a rootstock like, for instance, ginger) as a model for this. Besides in the creative process, they also localise it geographically - in the East.

The artists art: Bülent Evren (Turkey/Holland), Shirazeh Houshiary (Iran/England), Anish Kapoor (India/England), Kazuo Katase (Japan/Germany), Edu Kisman (Indonesia/Holland), Ming (China/France), Hidetoshi Nagasawa (Japan/Italy), Iba Ndiaye (Senegal/France), Sarkis (Turkey/France), Joseph Semah (Iraqe/Israel/Holland).

The catalogue includes an interview with everyone of them, inquiring about his or her being-artist in Europe. Furthermore it contains fragments, referring to the theme of art, out of the original "Rhizome" text by Deleuze/Guattari, a talk between J.L. Locher and F.W. Kaiser on the anthropological aspects of increasing mixture of cultures as well as a critical centre text that tries to suggest a different way to deal with the word "art" on global level.