

From: "Burger Collection" <Burger_Collection@mail.vresp.com>
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NEWSLETTER
25/11/2011

Seminar "Showing Without Telling"
Alternative Approaches to the Trans-
Cultural System of Art?
Curated by Daniel Kurjaković
Brissago, Switzerland / September 2011



November, 2011, Zurich—The Burger Collection embarks on a new phase in its multi-regional exhibition project Quadrilogy. It launches its own research with the first self-organized seminar "Showing Without Telling" about the trans-cultural dynamic in contemporary art. Participants included well-known artists BANI ABIDI (Karachi/Berlin), DAMIEN ROACH (London), and BARTHELEMY TOGUO (Paris/Bandjoun), the critic and writer MANUEL CIRAUQUI (Valencia/New York) as well as the researchers ALEXANDRA CHANG (New York) and STEPHEN CHING-KIU CHAN (Hong Kong).

The research was established as an extension of the Theory/Conversations, published on the [Quadrilogy website](#) and already partly in BC's first catalog [Conflicting Tales: Subjectivity \(Quadrilogy, Part 1\)](#), and consists of an on-going series of seminars, lectures and workshops at various sites in different regions of the world. The research serves to deepen both the knowledge about the artistic practices represented in the Burger Collection as well as giving a new twist to the discussion of the much talked of but ambiguous terms 'trans-cultural', originally coined by Cuban writer Fernando Ortiz and revived mostly in the late 1980s in the discourse about art.

Reaching beyond some of the neo-ethnic takes on art from different regions in the 1990s, but also questioning the more recent inclusion of art in the agenda of

Numerous ideas were put forward during the seminar that would essentially remodel the customary facets of collecting. By expanding the notion of collecting, the private collection maintains its posture as the public-spirited "art patron", but also takes on a more operative and proactive standing in the cultural sphere. Some examples of special pursuits brought up were:

- tying various cultural forms such as visual arts, literature, film and popular media to each other subjecting them to cross-analysis (opting for an integrationist view),
- furthering research about more localized cultural concerns within their social environments and,
- acting as a cultural prime mover across the social and aesthetic spectrum in

geo-political discourse, "Showing Without Telling", which took place from September 15–19, 2011, explored how art is conceived of as a specific form of communication between different art regions. It especially tried to convey a complex sense of art that avoids bare applications of information, journalism, or academic knowledge production onto the shifting nature of aesthetic experience. What is it that makes art a specific form of showing without telling?

The seminar also addressed the role of the private collection within the system of contemporary art. The term 'collection' nowadays seems to be mainly understood as an organization that acquires, stores and lends works of art. But how can a private collection expand such known tasks and become more broadly enmeshed in the social fabric? What transformations are necessary for the collection to eventually become a social medium engaging with the concerns of civil society?

specific sites.

The collection as social medium aims at different levels of understanding by examining its *reliable* public use. For example, public programs centered on a collection's holdings, a by now often-applied feature of contemporary collection's operations, as a measure to establish public use is not entirely convincing. Therefore, what are the alternative measures to be taken? Also, what operations have to be necessarily taken into consideration in terms of a constitution of an authentically *public* use of a collection? Answering such questions ultimately helps understand the potential—but also the limits—of private collections to engage with diverse audiences as well as with the concerns of civil society.



The seminar also served as a platform for the trans-cultural conversation in artistic practice, one of the key concerns of the Quadrilogy. To start, this entails re-examining the existing description of the Quadrilogy: "The Quadrilogy manifests itself in different regions around the world, and in so doing places the works in specific geo-cultural zones—sometimes the works get re-introduced in their original cultural context of production." For even though trans-cultural dialogue has a decisive place in contemporary descriptions of global art, its potential to enlighten the multi-regional condition of contemporary art seems underappreciated.

The seminar challenged contemporary notions of trans-culturality, and came to a more secure grasp of its properties and subtleties. One apparent problematic is how trans-culturality is dealt with within the art field. Three co-ordinates were charted as essential when mapping a discussion around trans-culturality in artistic practice:

- applying sound historical frames,
- maintaining an integrationist approach to the general cultural field and,
- conceptually focusing on art as communication beyond *extra-aesthetic* explanation.

The seminar took into consideration the recent global network of communication and exchange that keeps influencing and altering the production and reception of contemporary art and gave leeway for the interpretation of the concept of trans-culturality, disputing its meaning, application, relevance and use in the present-day art system. The participants were able to calibrate definitions of the trans-cultural object and to look at the eventual mis-readings and misapplications of the complex term, one that is often overshadowed by, or even equated with, terms such as globalization, internationalism, or multi-culturalism.

As to the recently much-used term 'research': It is understood as a medium to enhance exchange and knowledge in real-time encounters and localized scenarios, to encourage a critical stance and an attitude of intellectual curiosity backed up by historical contextualization.

The Burger Collection and its team welcome comments and contributions about this newsletter. If you are interested in further details about the seminar "Showing Without Telling" or wish to receive an in-depth documentation about it, please address your inquiry to Linda Jensen, curatorial assistant: curatorial@burgercollection.org



[THEORY/CONVERSATIONS](#)

The Burger Collection continues its Theory/Conversations series that is part of the research conducted within the multi-regional exhibition project entitled *Quadrilogy*. The conversations with artists, art historians and theorists seek to illuminate some of the artistic practices in the collection and to articulate some of the urgent questions in the present context of a multi-regional art system. The latest conversation with American artist [Titus Kaphar](#) is now available online. The artist talks about his recent body of work and reflects upon how history and subjectivity apply to the construction and conservation of memory. He also recounts some of his earlier performances and their relation to painting and sculpture.

Click below to read the conversation with Titus Kaphar in English:

http://www.quadrilogy.org/en/theory_individual?page=5

Click below to read the conversation with Titus Kaphar in German:

http://www.quadrilogy.org/de/theory_individual?page=5

All conversations can be downloaded in English and in German on our website:

<http://www.quadrilogy.org/en/theory>



PRESENTLY ON VIEW WORLDWIDE

Aside from its own exhibition and research project of the *Quadrilogy*, the Burger Collection regularly responds to loan requests from artists and institutions in its open policy of making works available to the general public. The following works of the Burger Collection can be presently seen on tour:

[Gilbert & George, *Jesus Suits*, 2008](#) at Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdansk, 10/11/11 – 06/02/12

[Ana Roldan, *Sam*, 2008](#) at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts Lausanne 08/10/11 – 15/01/12

[Nedko Solakov, *The Little White Winged Fly*, 2005](#) at the IKON Gallery, Birmingham 21/09/11 – 20/11/11

[Marcel van Eeden, *Celia*, 2004–2006](#) at the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt 13/11/11 – 19/02/12

[Fernando Bryce, *Spanish War/Spanish Revolution*, 2003 *East Asia Review*](#) at the Museo de Arte de Lima 25/10/11 – 02/12, at the MUAC, Mexico 03/12 – 05/12, at the MALBA, Buenos Aires, 28/06/12 – 27/08/12

Conception of seminar:
Daniel Kurjaković, curator / head of program of the Burger Collection; in collaboration with Linda Jensen, curatorial assistant, and Sandra Jeker, research assistant. The seminar was held from September 15–19, 2011, in Brissago / Switzerland.

About the Burger Collection and its *Quadrilogy*:
Since 2005 the works of the Burger Collection have been available for view online on the [Burger Collection's website](#). As of 2009, the Burger Collection has been realizing the multi-regional exhibition and research project called [Quadrilogy](#) under the curatorial leadership of Daniel Kurjaković. Temporary exhibitions based on the aesthetic key ideas such as subjectivity, narration, history, and language are held in different locations around the world.

The first exhibition, "Conflicting Tales: Subjectivity (*Quadrilogy*, Part 1)" was held in Berlin in 2009. On-site research, co-operations with institutions, exhibition sites, and additional local and international partners deepen the knowledge about the art works in the collection and illuminate some of the trans-cultural dimensions and intricacies of contemporary art.

General concept by Monique Burger, director of Burger Collection and Daniel Kurjaković; curated by Daniel Kurjaković

Photo 1: Alexandra Chang © Burger Collection
Photo 2: Seminar Participants © Burger Collection
Photo 3: Jim Dessicino, friend of the artist, Studio of Titus Kaphar, New Haven, Connecticut, 2011 © Burger Collection

Supporters of the Burger Collection:
Ulrike Groos, Cordelia and Christoph Noe, René Block, André Schmitz, Michael Heitz, Michael Lüthy and Ariane Beyn.

Already published:
[Theory/Conversations](#) with Eva Kernbauer, Jörg Heiser, Jitish Kallat, Johan Poussette and Manuel Cirauqui. Essays and entries in [Conflicting Tales catalog](#) by Manuela Ammer, Manuel Cirauqui, Berni Doessegger, Catrin Misselhorn, Stefan Neuner, Robert Pfaller, Beate Söntgen, Jörg Volbers, Frédéric Wecker and Giovanni Zapperi.

www.burgercollection.org
www.quadrilogy.org

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