

Huma Mulji
Plymouth College of Art

Site/s of Production, Site/s of reception and the location of meaning: installing art in global context

The interpretation of a work of art today as it travels great distances, digitally as well as physically, poses real challenges for the Artist, the exhibition maker, the viewer and the critic. We live in times where sound bites, move from one cyber platform to another, calcifying meanings and intentions faster than ever before, often without a real encounter with the work of art. Its critical reception around the world can be analyzed through notions of 'globalization'. Despite this 'internationalism', in a very peculiar way Art has perhaps never been more "national", but continues to be validated in the economic capitals of the world.

Gerardo Mosquera, In Alien-Own/Own-Alien: Globalization and Cultural Difference states: "In a catch-22, this circle tends to regard with suspicions of illegitimacy, art from the peripheries that endeavors to speak the "international language." When it speaks properly, it is usually accused of being derivative; when it speaks with an accent, it is disqualified for its lack of propriety toward the canon."

Paradoxically, artists from the postcolonial world tend to see themselves as they are seen by others, buying into the center and periphery definitions, waiting to be endorsed. This is a deeply disempowered position, one that is being somewhat challenged by academic voices from these regions. My paper will primarily be based on my experience as an artist from Pakistan, occasionally showing internationally. I will attempt to question certain issues as the work as it travels from the source of production (of idea) to the point of reception; its translation or interpretation, notions of censorship and the use of Cultural production as diplomatic currency to serve current agendas of power.