

Brenda McCullers, ARH 6930, Fall 2014

In the article “Contemporary Art as Global Art A Critical Estimate,” Hans Belting (2009) discusses “the nature and purpose of global art that emerged...at the end of the twentieth century and opposed modernity’s cherished ideals of progress and hegemony” (p. 2). He explains that art on a global scale creates problems for the following reasons: many political systems feel a need to control it; it is difficult for Western art criticism to accept; it is difficult to categorize; and art’s value can change from one place to another. On the other hand, he feels it can open unprecedented possibilities for artists and create a new enthusiasm among them.

Jessica Winegar (2006) follows with the same concept in “Cultural Sovereignty in Global Art Economy: Egyptian Cultural Policy and the New Western Interest in Art from the Middle East.” In the article, Winegar (2006) describes areas of controversy between the Western elites and the Egyptian state elites as they try to work together, yet both fight for “the rights to represent and market Egypt” (p. 197).

Belting begins his argument by defining the meaning of global art. He describes it as synonymous with contemporary art and not identified by specific aesthetic qualities or concepts. Belting (2009) explains with its critical message and public visibility, global art bears the potential of conflicts with state control in censoring artists” (p. 1). Winegar clearly points this out with the description of what occurred as a result of Egypt’s allowance of a number of private art galleries to open. The private sector did not follow what was expected by the public sector or by the

established artist's union. As a result, tension grew causing conflict not only between the public and private sectors but also between young and older artists.

Two other areas of concern that Belting points out, the difficulty for Western art criticism to accept the idea of global art and the difficulty to categorize it, can be seen in changes taking place within museums. Belting explains that there is a difference between global art and world art, the latter being what is seen in Western museums. As a result, the introduction of global art is changing the way art history is viewed and how it must be represented within museums. Museums are redefining and recreating themselves to accommodate global art. One example Belting shares is the change from MOMA—Museum of Modern Art to MOCA—Museum of Contemporary Art.

Belting and Winegar discuss the idea that art's value can change from one place to another. Belting (2009) quotes the Global Art Forum as stating, "art is a business" (p. 1). Winegar (2006) also includes a quote from a younger generation Egyptian art critic, "They take our art and sell it abroad. We got nothing from it. They do nothing for Egyptian art here" (p. 194). Clearly both authors recognize the concerns that the unchecked spread of free-market values can cause, as well as how it can compromise the integrity of the art itself (Winegar, 2006, p. 195). Also, when one considers the different values of currencies and currency exchange rates when selling or buying art on a global basis, there are obvious problems that can arise when trying to place a fair value on art. These are but a few examples of the problems and issues facing the privatization of art around the globe.

Belting concludes that many new avenues have opened for artists as a result of globalization. He includes that “artists of many nations, ethnicities, and cultures long ignored in the West were born to critical and commercial success” as a result of the rise of multicultural art shows, art events, and venues provided (Belting, 2009, p. 22). Nonetheless, Winegar (2006) explains that “many young artists living in Egypt try to create another way that would blend some of the positive aspects of both the private and public sectors while recognizing both the problems and the potentials of nation-oriented art production and consumption in the current global order” (p.198). Winegar also points out throughout her article of the conflicts globalization has created between younger and older artists.

In conclusion, the two articles relate in that they both discuss implications of the effects of the globalization of art. Winegar, is a Sociocultural Anthropologist. Part of what she specializes in includes culture industries, material, and visual culture in the Middle East and North Africa. She gives a personal account that provides a clear picture of the influence of global art through examples and descriptions. On the other hand, Belting writes from the point of view of an art historian and theorist of contemporary art. In most areas their works support each other.

#### References:

Belting, H. (2009). *Contemporary Art as Global Art A Critical Estimate*. Retrieved October 20, 2014, from <http://globalartmuseum.de/media/file/476716148442.pdf>

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Winegar, J. (2006, May). *Cultural Sovereignty in a Global Art Economy: Egyptian Cultural Policy and the New Western Interest in Art from the Middle East*. Retrieved October 19, 2014