

Back to Basics: Trying for the “International” as Good¹

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“What is a life if not a series of negotiations between the old and the new?”²

“Every craft and every line of inquiry, and likewise every action and decision, seems to seek some good; that is why some people were right to describe the good as what everything seeks.”³ Thus begins Aristotle’s inquiry in the *Nicomachean Ethics* on the good for humans – “for” as not useful for, but as *insofar as* we are goal-directed and rational humans. Aristotle gives no absolute standard of the good; his interest is not to set standards. Rather, he distinguishes between the kind of good that we seek for something else, that is, a means to an end, and the kind of good that is an end in itself. It is Happiness alone (in Greek, *eudaimonia*, which means flourishing and well-being) that qualifies as the highest good in human life, for being an end that is self-sufficient and perfect. As the highest good, Happiness is the continuous activity of a complete lifetime.

Pledging allegiance to the beauty of irrelevance⁴, I would like to begin by imagining an apparently irrelevant account of how believers and non-believers of the good once upon a time deliberate, so that our imagination is released to prepare for the specific good of the “international”.

1

From as many sides as the believers see, the good is obvious. But why is it not compelling for the incredulous? Why don’t the incredulous see that choosing the good is the smart thing to do? For the incredulous however, being smart contributes nothing to the understanding of what is good, for smartness is a quality that describes the manner and intelligence of those choosing the good, not the good in itself.

At the same time, believers of the good identify ignorance as the cause of incredulity. So they make tireless efforts to instruct the incredulous of the value of the good. They give reasons for how this good is better than others, how this good is what everyone chooses when it is available, and how if we fail to choose it now, it will be gone forever. The incredulous, however, think the believers are missing the point. They refuse the good not because it is bad. They refuse, so as to put the good into suspension, to make time for finding an account of the good that articulates its intrinsic qualities like its durability and self-sufficiency, not an account of the good that comes about by comparison, as popular opinion, or as demanded by deadlines.

When believers of the good claim moral duty to instruct the incredulous, the incredulous wonders

whether there is any difference between the kind of moral duty claimed and justified by authority, and another kind of moral duty chosen by all and shared by all to rule all. At work seems to be an old language and the absence of a new one yet to arrive. The incredulous thus wonders if instructions on old structures of knowledge are more or less promising than instructions aiming at liberating imagination.

Finally, believers of the good may take the incredulous' refusal as hostility, which may harm the good. They hold on to the good tighter and tighter, as if being tenants⁵ of the good makes them owners of the good. At the same time, they further exalt the good as if this gesture would safeguard it. This makes the incredulous more perplexed, for they, too, feel as gravely responsible as believers of the good in safeguarding it for what it is. They counter-argue that ownership of the good is shared equally in a society of citizens just as moral duties are. When both sides look away from each other for not recognizing this mutual right and duty, they are on their way to trading mutual equality and freedom for self-referentiality.

2

As an art citizen based in Hong Kong, I have been wondering whether going (or being, if there is such a thing) “international” would make us happy, or, offer the conditions in which we could flourish. This is for sure a belated, or some may argue obsolete question, for the international has long arrived in the form of commodities, communities, institutions, ideas, imaginaries, beliefs; it is normalized as the way to be and the goal to which any member of the art community direct their actions. In this light, the question “Why be happy when you could be normal?”⁶ is a fair one indeed.

Two perhaps idiosyncratic perplexities have motivated this essay. First, if the process of normalizing the “international” as a good has simultaneously rendered questions about it silent, would this not be precisely the reason for calling the questions alive? For as circumstances change, obsolescence might return to relevance. Second, given that the “international” as a good has been understood with the grammar of use (that is, the benefits the good brings as a consequence of choosing it), with a pervasiveness and an eloquence that spread way beyond art, is it not equally important to ask what limits there are to this grammar, just in case that there is something it cannot exhaust? Would understanding the “international” with the language of the good yield not just the obvious, but the compelling (for this is what the good does to us – it compels us to act in its favor)?

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I need to quickly qualify that I have no intention of defining the “international” in this essay, although my thinking on the idea did arise in the specific, relatively well-defined context of the policy change in 2012 of the institutional model of Hong Kong's participation in the Venice Biennale.⁷ Given that Hong Kong's participation in the Venice Biennale is an international project from Hong Kong, I am interested in asking two questions. What is the biennale as an international institution for the production and distribution of art and what is regarded as good practice now?⁸ That is, what are we participating in or

getting ourselves into?) Since many circumstances in art and the larger society have changed (drastically even)⁹ in the past three years, what is good about the “international” for artists and curators now? (That is, what other kinds of imagination and experiences of the international are valued on top of the particular international circulated in official rhetoric that Hong Kong’s participation in the Venice Biennale promises?)

Admittedly, to speak in the language of the good risks suggesting a kind of moralism that is reproachful.¹⁰ My goal however, is to aim for a different way of thinking the good that is confusing (for we start with an opinion on the right thing to do, seek out the principle on which it is based, then we find ourselves confronted with a situation that confounds the principle), compelling (for feeling the pressure to sort the dilemma out), public (for moral reflection “requires an interlocutor – a friend, a neighbor, a comrade, a fellow citizen” who may be imagined or real, but such meanings “cannot be lived through introspection alone,” for they have to do with the question of “what laws should govern our collective life”), and political (for it needs some “engagement with the tumult of the city, with the arguments and incidents that roil the public mind.”)¹¹ In this kind of moral reflection, we negotiate together what the good is, so that the well-established order of consistencies is not taken to be inevitable, natural, or normal.

Speaking in the language of the good also entails some form of abstract articulation that is not always encouraged in the public discourse of art in Hong Kong.¹² But thinking in the abstract is in fact a practical thing to do when it comes to questions on principles and law. If “not only the actions which turn towards the facts are practical, but even more practical are the contemplations and reflections which have their origin and end in themselves and which, by educating the mind, prepare for good deeds,”¹³ thinking the abstract may contribute to deliberating the good together.

In this essay, the international does not refer to persons (I do not think anyone could be meaningfully described as “international” without having to offer further qualification, e.g. international practice, internationally renowned, internationally shown etc.); there is no “person behind the belief.” I take the international rather as a tendency and a way of imagining the world. Where there are incoherent ways of understanding the international, opportunities for negotiation become available – negotiation that would not be rigidified by the local-international, institution-people, and professional-populist dichotomies (and opposition at times), shackled by the imperative for speed in communication, and above all, by “the undertone of undirected cynicism and unchallenged opportunism that is often so readily – and unnecessarily! – employed.”¹⁴

3

In a very general sense, the international is commonly understood in the following ways: frontier thinking that sees the international as a border breaking imperative (often associated with triumphal thinking which is preoccupied with how to win), city branding thinking that sees the international as a trademark circulating across borders at ease (often associated with a global economy of attention and multiple forms

of tourism), supremacist thinking that sees the international as universal and therefore superior to the particular, multi-nationalist thinking that sees the international as a combination of many nations in one space-time (leaving whether there is collaboration out of co-presence an issue unaddressed), and multiculturalist thinking which could both be liberalism's ally or its opposition's legitimating claim... and the list may go on. The case of Hong Kong's presentation in the Venice Biennale demonstrates how the international is in addition caught up in multiple layers of reality and in local and global conditions. I wonder if the exaltation by art institutions of the "international" in this particular case¹⁵ contributes to the polarization of views on how it is claimed to be the universally desired on the one hand, and the necessary enemy on the other. In any case, it isn't hard to notice an emerging "siege mentality"¹⁶ on both the part of the believers and the incredulous, as if "almost all forms of power [is] a threat to their existence."¹⁷ The perspective that sees the international as the obviously good rigidifies itself as a monolith and presents itself as such, in opposition to parochialism¹⁸ for their failure to see the bigger picture. The perspective that doubts the good of the international sees the international as monstrous for over-determining what "Hong Kong art" is in international sites of production. This perspective understands the contention as a matter of making a competitive claim about "Hong Kong art," framed overly narrowly as an identity project from a different particular – narrow, for the democratic process is one where with political equality and freedom, we safeguard each other's equal right of cultural expression. There may be reasons for prioritizing the "Hong Kong art" project, for in the rare case that the international wants to articulate itself as a cultural project, there is little effort in joining existing communities already devoted to cultural work, so that art as cultural work and identity project is still inadequately articulated.¹⁹ But as much as there is the urge to do so, it is equally important to keep asking questions about art simultaneously with questions on the qualifier "Hong Kong," for in the specific circumstance that such an idea as "Hong Kong art" is coined, it always already reproduces the category that is loaded with tendencies of exclusion and itself an invention in specific contexts. When the siege mentality is caught up between having to grab global attention in the transnational public stage and needing historicity coming from various cultural trajectories, the mentality actualizes into a race in seizing the future rather than being mindful of the present.

Globally, recent contextualization of the biennial reveals the intellectual gap between art institutions in Hong Kong and the global ecology of international art institutions and their public discourse. While the idea of the biennial has been rigorously taken up in discussions between global institutions,²⁰ there is limited effort – in a continuous, coherent, and research-oriented way – by institutions in Hong Kong to analyze and share expertise about the larger context of Hong Kong's participation, which is intricately related to the status of the biennale today in the world, not only to the glory of its past, or any one coherent, established story of art history – there is always more to tell, more for debates, to expand our

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understanding. This raises questions of precisely how we could interpret and receive the international as good by engaging with it and its limits.

As an example, in the Conference and 1st General Assembly of the International Biennial Association (2014), conversations were forged over the structure of the biennial (as the changing nation-building project), the kind of diplomacy it engages with, its relation to other art and cultural institutions, what kind of art is in the biennials – its quality and mode of presentation, the relation between these international presentations with the local communities, the kind of politics of negotiation possible, etc. More specifically, speakers point to several areas of the work of the biennial that require attention in the global circumstances today. Some of them have been explicitly discussed, others, implied. These areas include:

1. The biennial is, in some circumstances, in contention with the museum as an institution and it could productively become its critique.
2. Biennials like the São Paulo Biennial, the Havana Biennial, and the Gwangju Biennial are frequently mentioned as different and equally important participants of the global biennial culture.
3. In the context of the biennial, when it is not a national presentation but sponsored by multiple organizations with curators arriving at a particular city, the important questions for the biennial include how to represent what is already there.²¹
4. Institutional decision-making in what it does as cultural work is closely tied to where it is, so it has to do with its self-governance; that is, there is an inseparable relation between the structures (financial, political etc.) the organizers are bound by and what they are doing; these are both the organizers’ responsibility.²²
5. The biennial phenomenon is also a form of cultural tourism.

While these topics arise from the specific context of the biennial from within (as experienced and analyzed by curators, directors, and artists participating in the biennials), which is not directly comparable to the issues around Hong Kong’s participation in any biennials in the world, I propose that the discussion is helpful in framing overlapping issues in a productive way. For instance, from Hong Kong, with respect to the relation between the biennials and art institutions, we may ask, when the museum is in the biennial, how has it been self-reflective of what kind of power it is mandated to possess and from where this power comes, as well as to where and how does it want to invest this power. Even when the museum-in-biennial structure is taken as given, the questioning and thinking on how the museum positions itself in relation to which particular biennial and how would be continuously made and encouraged. Considering the global map of biennials, is our investment in the Venice Biennale alone gearing our attention away from a more balanced view of what kinds of biennales there are in the world and how to participate in them (which

does not have to be limited to exhibiting in them)? Would there be a long-term, coherent plan from the art institutions to strategically begin new connections and sustain existing ones, not for the short-term goal of gaining immediate attention or rewards, but for a gradual engagement that prepares for future possibilities? The current institutional discourse on the Venice Biennale in Hong Kong keeps reproducing claims that speak of it as the best and the norm, which makes it impossible to examine its limits as the good; this does not encourage understanding. In relation to culture, the organizers need to consider their own relation to what they claim to represent, to caution against “putting post-colonial object in display in the context which only exposes the old ‘Former West’ power structures.”²³ This is precisely what happens when the kind of power that brings what is in the periphery to the center regards itself as acting on moral burden and as the only solution, for aligning itself to the existing power structure, to the global inequality of attention.²⁴ Lastly, “sponsorship is not ownership.”²⁵ This is a timely reminder of the need for an expanded discourse on the financial structures of art projects. To bring money in to make a project better isn’t good enough a reason for silencing questions about how financial structures of a project are related to what a project supports.

In Hong Kong, while there has been the consistent habit of organizing artists and curators’ talks to share experiences since the first presentation at the Venice Biennale edition in 2001, critical contextualization began only recently, initiated by M+’s curation. For instance, the public talk by art historian Federica Martini²⁶ and the public talk by artist and curator Paul O’Neil²⁷ offered rare occasions to engage with histories and theories of the biennale and curatorship. The strength of such presentations is the sharing of expertise and knowledge, but when these two talks are contextualized in the entire Talk Series, which also included sharing by curators and artists of the previous editions of Hong Kong’s participation in the Venice Biennale,²⁸ the critique of globalism and internationalism (among other ideas) seem to live a life of its own, with the curators making comments – some of which quite personal – that give the impression that nothing on critical institutional self-reflection has taken place. For instance, M+ curator Tobias Berger talked about “private jets” and “the whole art world” flying in and to be in Venice during the first four days was to have a “decadent experience” of the city of Venice. Moderator Tina Pang²⁹ tried to bring in the perspective of the architectural fragility of the city as critique, and how people also worked to save the city and its heritage. The conversation only returned to how gallerists made money as well as lost it in Venice as Berger picked up the thread, and to an explicit personal confession of a “lack of interest” in such matters by Tsang Tak-ping.³⁰ When there is the lack of engagement and intellectual generosity by even the professionals with exploring multiple ways of contextualizing their practice in complex structures, two things happen: we are missing a core part of how to be international by engaging with the international intellectual community of criticality and self-reflection, and by extension, the decisions on whether to participate in any biennial³¹ and how to do so

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could become arbitrary for being out of context, and sometimes naturalized. An alternative way of seeing it, as Maria Hlavajova proposes, is that “the biennial is not a metaphysical hydra-headed creature, but just a blunt instrument in the hands of professionals from various fiends that intersect in the world of art. ‘How to biennial’ is not a given; instead, it needs to be carefully reconsidered anew each time.”³² Equally important is it to acknowledge that the biennial itself is not the only model for presenting art globally, let alone Hong Kong’s museum-curated and driven, art council-sponsored participation in the biennial. It is a specific kind of global politics, a specific way of investing power from Hong Kong at the global art scene. As Maria Hlavajova says,

[Who] says that biennials need to be exhibitions at all? Rather than ‘perfect exhibitions’ [...] I recall curator Rene Block saying that the biennial should become a ‘workshop’ for contemporary art, something that would provide an opportunity for ‘encounters between local and international artists’ that would encourage work and exchange. [...] Yet in cases when the crude machine to the biennial imposes itself from the outside and threatens the cultural work of the existing (progressive) institutions in a particular locality – art centers, museums, or academies – only because it is better equipped to operate in close proximity to the economic dogma of the day, this might create a new urgency for us to debate the place of the biennial in relation to other art institutions.³³

For Hong Kong, one of the questions to be asked then becomes, what is it about the international that art practitioners value? How much do they align with or diverge from what the art institutions claim to be good about the international?

4

In my interviews with four artists and four curators based in Hong Kong, several discursive moments have arisen regarding the international. First, artists tend to talk about the international as encountering cultural differences on the level of personal collaboration. To be among those who come from different backgrounds is a source of inspiration, curiosity, and learning. This is already happening as artists are exhibiting outside of Hong Kong, or when they are in the same project with fellow artists from elsewhere.³⁴

# of times artists exhibiting overseas in the past 5 years	Places of project/exhibition	Overseas residency	Biennales/triennales
<p><10 = 21 (zeros not counted)</p> <p>10 to 20 = 3</p> <p>> 20 times = 5</p>	<p>South Korea (Busan, Seoul, Gwangju, Incheon), Taiwan (Taipei, Taichung), Japan (Tokyo, Amino), Philippines (Manila), U.S. (California - LA, SF, New York, Cincinnati, Boston), PRC (Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Suzhou, Chengdu, Guangzhou) Macau, UK (Manchester, Liverpool, London, Cardiff, Birmingham, Nottingham, Oxford Devon), Spain (Barcelona, Canary Islands) India (Mumbai), Finland (Helsinki), Sweden (Göteborg), Russia (Moscow), Switzerland (Zurich), Tasmania, Germany (Berlin, Kassel, Duisburg, Koln, Dresden), France (Paris, Sete), Italy, Poland (Sopot), Malaysia, Burma (Yangon), Australia (Melbourne), Vietnam, Poland (Wroclaw), Greece (Athens, Naoussa), Singapore, Dubai, Austria (Vienna), Italy (Rome, Venice), Mongolia (Ulaanbaatar), Ukraine, Slovakia (Kosice), Norway, Brazil (Rio), Ireland, Bulgaria, Egypt, Israel, Romania, Netherlands</p>	<p>Yes = 17</p> <p><5 = 16</p> <p>5 or more = 1</p> <p>Japan, Manila, Switzerland (Zurich), USA (NYC, Vermont), Malaysia (Penang), Spain (Barcelona), France (Paris), Indonesia, Austria (Lina), Poland (Sopot), Denmark, Taiwan, Ireland, India, Philippines (Manila), South Korea (Seoul), Brazil (Rio)</p>	<p>14 artists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanghai Biennale • Guangzhou Triennial • Chongqing Biennial (China) • Biennale of Young Art (Moscow) • Media Arts Biennial (Wroclaw, Poland) • Setouchi Triennale (Japan) • 2nd Land Art Biennial Mongolia • Liverpool Biennale • Asia Triennial Manchester • Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India • Kuandu Biennale, Taiwan • Sydney • Beijing • Nagoya, Japan • Ukraine (Hong Kong Contemporary Awards not counted)

* The style is inconsistent for I am keeping the original way the artists reply.

Second, artists tend to find the international curator a source of knowledge and expertise, with a potential of lending fresh eyes to interpret their practice. An artist identified an institutionalized inequality, however, in the way the art institutions invites “international artists” to Hong Kong with the assumption that “local artists” have to learn from them.³⁵ This relates not only to official rhetoric, but to the project structures, including the differences in remuneration for artists overseas and those in Hong Kong, the capacity of artists’ participation etc. Cultural exchange has to be mutual and artists comment on the need for more confidence from here that there is a lot to offer from Hong Kong.

For the curators, a commonly shared view is that internationally renowned art (as production, exhibitions,

names etc.) need to be engaged with for a sense of their own self-positioning, for it is through the exposure to professional practices of others that we have a sense of being among peers, understand what we are practicing and where we are in our practice. There is no expression of whether the international or the professional is more primary to their needs, which gives rise to an interesting question of where the professionals are, where they overlap with the “international,” and what kinds of professional practices are competing and whether any of these result in domination.

Curators also identify an area they find lacking in Hong Kong – the international tends to be referred to by funding bodies as overseas artists being brought into Hong Kong. There is however no coherent and comprehensive policy of bringing Hong Kong artists and curators abroad.³⁶ An example would be to have curators’ tour that visit biennials overseas, so there would be opportunities to make connections through presence and initiating conversations in sites of production in other parts of the world. Instead, the tendency is to exchange with China, and to export traditional cultural products like Cantonese opera. What is rare but mentioned is the international as a global movement of social activism involving artists and cultural workers, where this international community across virtual space inspires and shares a common sense of humor.

I also find interesting the moments where there is a struggle for words that would not betray condescension over the aspiration of the so-called “acting locally,” and while doing so, revealing in a tacit way and with a tinge of guilty feeling, that not acting globally is a problem, and that it is a problem to not have this ambition. I am not convinced that the choice to stay in Hong Kong and contribute to filling gaps in the art ecology here is necessarily a lesser choice (as long as it is an informed choice, and that it does not constitute myopia, which can happen anywhere). And this choice may not necessarily be any identity project aiming to resist the Other. It is often, and paradoxically so, the narrative of the powerful and in their interest to exaggerate and (mis)interpret the intentions of such projects to further rigidify the differences between various communities or practices of art. It is also important to point out that many who act locally often have various kinds of access of international communities, by means other than essentializing differences in order to overcome them.³⁷ The public discourse however seldom allows for the opening up of such claims as more nuanced and complex than stratification between the international and local would present.

For a different purpose, in 2013, I also spoke with ten artists based in places outside of Hong Kong via email³⁸ about the international with a slightly different angle. The three questions I put to them are:

1. Have you ever used the term “international” to describe yourself or the way you work? Can you briefly give an example, or explain the circumstances?
2. Is the term “international” empowering to you in any way? In a more detailed way, has it been empowering to you in any particular stage of your life as an artist?

3. If “international” was a term that others use to describe you as an artist, or/ and your practice, would you say it is an accurate, fair, or helpful description? Why or why not?

Nine of the ten artists have never self-named “international artist”. The only artist who had was answering a question in the visa application process, of whether he was an international artist. One artist says, “International to me relates to seeing ‘my community’ as one that crosses borders, linked by interests and concerns rather than nationality.” In grant applications, several artists have described themselves as “having worked or exhibited internationally” to describe some projects and elements of them that are trans-cultural. A sense of exigency has been prominent, with artists saying “I have no choice.” The message there is, “How I choose how to involve is important. International isn’t how, but it’s practical and a convention. I have no strong objection [against it].”

The term is not empowering for some artists because it means too many things, from having travelled to many places to having exhibitions outside of their home country. But they acknowledge that having exhibited in international festivals like documenta leads to trust, and helps get the next opportunity to show. One artist says, “People pay attention to me when I am associated with the ‘international’ – it’s empowering when I was younger, in the beginning of the career; but now, there is no need to it for the kind of power it promises. International could also be empowering for cross-regional support and collective action. It means I am curious about others’ practices.” Another says, “While growing up in a small town in East Germany where ‘international’ till 1989 always meant something out of reach, something phantastic, some seducing but forbidden experience, some type of personal freedom. Now, after having experienced the inflationary and mis-representational use of the term, ‘international’ too often, this taste has disappeared. If there is anything empowering left about this term, then it might be its potential for collective action and cross-regional support.”

Lastly, there is a sense of humor, embarrassment and humility, when one artist says, “[The international] leaves out the cross-cultural contexts I work in; it doesn’t describe me as an artist – international artist is someone having a wide influence and widely known in the world, so to describe myself as such is embarrassing.” This anecdote suggests that it would be absurd to describe an artist as “international” or his/her work as “international”; they can be international in other ways of their being, but not the being-of-art and what art is. This coincides with the idea of an artist based in Hong Kong who says she plays with the term “local” and “international” with a sense of fun, as a way of testing fellow artists of what they care for. It is fun precisely for having been, for her, a false but desired site of contention, a rigid formation of the relation between differences that does not make sense to her, just as the label “Hong Kong artist” does not communicate her practice, but is a site of play.

These responses are biased towards my own practice and network, and I cite these not to claim authority for any position of the particular. But I find these discursive moments telling of how universalities can be found between differences, if we care to give them time. In “Competing Universalities”, Judith Butler argues, citing sexual egalitarianism and racial equality as examples, that “a certain competing version of

universality is intrinsic to the particular movement itself.” She says:

the particular, which constitutes only one part of sector of the sociopolitical field, nevertheless comes to represent the universal, which means that the possibility for the principles of equality and justice that define the political field within a nominally democratic context seems now to depend upon the actualization of the goals of the ‘particular’ sector. It is not the case that the particular now postures as the universal, usurping the universal in its name, but that the universal comes to be regarded as insubstantial unless the claims of the particular are included within its purview.³⁹

Butler makes it clear that this is not a matter of translating the particular into the universal, for in cases where the universal is capable of representing only a “restrictive conception of community and citizenship, or becomes equated with certain organizations of kinship or racial identification, it is not just in the name of the excluded particulars that politicization occurs, but in the name of a different kind of universality.”⁴⁰ That is, any project of the particular may carry universal potential beyond itself. The deliberation would therefore be precisely what universalities we are to bring out, what claims are made, i.e. to confront competing universalities. But Butler quickly cautions against meta-commentaries. She says we have to be able to see also “whether the dilemmas we assume to pertain universally are, in fact, at work in the subject we purport to study.”⁴¹ In Hong Kong, the Umbrella Movement and all those protests in which artists and cultural workers participated in recent years⁴² are solid testimonies to concerns about and also beyond cultural self-representation. Still, at times, when threat is perceived, the identity project is hastily taken up to be a bulwark against the so-called “international”, requiring priority attention. By doing so, art practitioners who see beyond the identity project respond to the pressure by putting politics (in this case, identity politics) first. Institutions have contributed little to untangling these contentious points with rigor that regards knowledge and experience from all sides with respect, and seek to set up and, more importantly, articulate projects as always already embodied in but not exhausted by the idea of “Hong Kong”. Instead, they contribute to perpetuating inequalities and false dichotomies.⁴³ As the identity project continues, what is equally important is to locate and articulate with language and other means a competing universality.

To bring Butler’s idea further, Simon Sheikh argues that we have to “understand [universality] in the plural and conflictual.”⁴⁴ In the case of the biennial, an art-world system of exhibitions in an “international economy of desire,”⁴⁵ the question becomes a politics of translation:

how [the biennial] is made visible to a local community, and how is it relevant to the experiences of the audience, both inside and outside the exhibition, as well as before and after the exhibition? The question is what our relationship is to different spaces, and, moreover, how *continuity* is established and made *productive* in a biennial setting. It is therefore a matter not only of what a biennial can give, or give back, to its community and constituency, but also of what kinds of community and constituency

it can produce, put into play or suspend. [...] The biennial is not only a container of artworks, but also a mass medium in itself, and must as such establish a social space, that is, a place where meanings, narratives, histories, conversations, and encounters are actively produced and set in motion. A place where connections are made and unmade, subjectified and suspended. In other words: politics of translation.⁴⁶ [my emphases]

My elaboration would be that “continuity” is achieved not by project name, but by the haggling of people encountering each other in concrete human relations. To make continuity “productive” is not to produce quantifiable results evaluated with a checklist, but to produce situations that involve us fully. The politics of translation therefore is not the simultaneous translation as professional service made available out of globalization,⁴⁷ but translation that aims for a third space so that negotiation is possible.

When Butler and Sheikh’s theorization is juxtaposed to the discursive moments of the artists’ narratives in Hong Kong, one wonders whether there has been any particular claim from “Hong Kong” being articulated as a universal that competes with others. There are surely cases to be made (and perhaps not yet fully made) of what such projects as showing artists from Hong Kong and art from Hong Kong support in terms of universalities. In the context of the arts, we may think of such universality as equal aesthetic rights, equal right of access to all forms of art, freedom and right to art education, equal right of cultural expression, etc. How much these universalities are seen and heard in the current public discourse on art in Hong Kong, and how much they are taken up as ways to engage with the international community of art practitioners on multiple levels of their practice would require another research commitment. What I would like to stress for the purpose here is that as soon as the imperative to construct any coherent narrative of what “Hong Kong” is loosened up (for from the cultural point of view, there is no such thing), the question becomes what art can do and how we do it from here. As Sheikh says, “[The biennials] offer a stage, surely, but one does not have to follow the script.”⁴⁸

This is why I understand but disagree with the view that what “Hong Kong art” is would soon be fixed once and for all, as if some ground will be lost, some meanings forever standardized and fixed for having come from the established institutions of power. I also understand, though, that artists have reasons to worry because there are always enough artists to be solicited, curated, shown, and collected in the world (a typical workers’ plight), and also, artists have been evidently targeted in disputes over institutional structures.⁴⁹ In Hong Kong, the lack of universal suffrage adds to the double oppression of political and economic inequality. However, to posit this as an emergency that is based on a fight that represents the existing power structure as final and a rigid monolith encloses what needs to be kept open and negotiated. In the opposition against power, the power is reproduced, opposition is victimized. In *Times of Crisis*, Michel Serres points to a different way of conducting negotiation: the need of “not only possible access, but also active intervention” in “every public affair, whether it is their business or not,”⁵⁰ so that there is a different way to be found for letting the new in. Struggles for political equality are but a beginning for many other forms of equality in other aspects of shared life.

5

In the winter of 2014, I was in the audience of a public talk by Charles Esche. He was introducing the mission statement of the recently set up L’Internationale, a confederation of six institutions.⁵¹ I asked him how we could talk about accountability when an institution becomes international (for there is no longer the sovereign that binds its will), and how it could avoid being self-referential. He responded by addressing the danger of institutions becoming self-referential when, indeed the question of accountability is put aside. I am abridging his response here:

The museum is often being accused, and rightly I think, of being self-referential in the sense that we look at what we have and we kind of build out of that [...]. And this can sometimes make it enclosed and I think we always struggle against that. [...] So it shouldn’t be that L’Internationale only becomes the relationship between the six of us. It should be about our relationship to this bigger project, the project of art, which is a project we don’t, to some extent, we don’t have any more. [...] What is the project we contribute to now? I think that’s the question that we need to ask. That would be to avoid self-referentiality because the tendency [is that when there is] no fulfillment on the outside of the individual institution or the individual person, [...] when you don’t have a project, then you tend to look inwards for motivation.⁵²

On the surface, this seems a contradictory take from our ancient friend Aristotle, but I find them in fact sharing a common direction – the pursuit of what is good, what we value, is a continuous process that requires the realm of the social (Aristotle’s idea of humans being social, sometimes translated as “political”) against and with whom one deliberates the good for oneself, insofar as we are who we are. Today, we set up institutions to institute the conditions that facilitate our deliberation of the good. It is one thing for an already powerful institution to further invest that power to make itself more powerful; it is another to commit itself to understanding that power in the changing political circumstances in Hong Kong and globally, and respond to them creatively and responsibly. The former aims at victory now. The latter aims at what we want to survive us in spite of us.

If there were such a thing as “the condition of suspended ontology”⁵³ (or, if we would resist the temptation of being full of ourselves in response to the sudden attention we are getting), perhaps the Umbrella “Moments” for art is not to stop making art and participate in politics, but to resist the demand for immediate political solutions,⁵⁴ and to recognize what each claim from each side supports, to defend art not with an old ground, but with an intellectual generosity and curiosity that recognize that every work that an artist makes, every gesture directed to art, is a claim on what art is; hence a politics of making solid, albeit provisional universals derived from and embodied in the particular. This prepares us for committing to a common moral ground⁵⁵, for we are now open for uncertainty and indirection in politics, just as we have always been in art. To quote Former West’s Maria Hlavajova again, “What if democracy isn’t a show?”⁵⁶

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- ¹ I would like to thank Joanna Lee, Editor of this book, for her patience and professional advice throughout the long process of my writing. My gratitude also goes to all the artists and curators who responded to my questions online and in person. All errors are mine.
- ² Sontag, Susan. “The Peace Prize of the German Book Trade” (Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels) acceptance speech (2003). See www.friedenspreis-des-deutschen-buchhandels.de
- ³ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1999): 1094a1.
- ⁴ Gaburo, Kenneth. *Paper Play: The Beauty of Irrelevant Music* (Lingua Press, 1976).
- ⁵ I borrow this metaphor from the Ming dynasty text, Huang Zongxi’s *Waiting for the Dawn, a Plan for the Prince* (trans. Theodor de Barry, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), which points to the distortion of the principles of rule. In the ancient times, princes rule as if they are the tenant and the common people are the masters; during dynastic rule, however, the rulers regard themselves as masters instead and the people become their estate.
- ⁶ This is the title of Jeanette Winterson’s autobiography, which gives an account of how being happy rather than being normal is her goal in life.
- ⁷ Elsewhere, I have written about the problematic partnership between the HKADC and M+, and about the evaluation by HKADC on the M+ presentation in 2013. I will not repeat my ideas here. See www.aicahk.org.
- ⁸ Public talks and experience sharing (e.g. the “Para/Site Collective Sharing” in 2003, “Hong Kong Participation in Venice Biennale: Now and Future” by the participating curator and artists in 2005, and the more recent Venice Biennale Talk Series by M+ in 2013), research writings (e.g. the Fall/Sep 2005 issue of *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* that devotes a substantial section to the participation of Asian countries in the 51st Venice Biennale), interviews with artists (see www.aaa.org.hk), “Response Exhibitions” that take place in Hong Kong after the presentations in Venice) etc. all contribute to the understanding of the relation between Hong Kong and the larger world of art distribution and circulation, and this is just to name a few. My intention here is to shift the focus slightly toward how the biennale has been recently reflecting upon itself as an institution from where it is produced, and by those producing it.
- ⁹ Some key moments of institutional change in the development of art in Hong Kong might include the first edition of “Art Basel Hong Kong” in 2013, the announcement of Asia Art Archive’s launch of their “Hong Kong Art History Research Pilot Project” in the same year, and the announcement of The Hong Kong Arts Development Council’s second partnership with M+ in presenting Hong Kong in the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) last year. At the same time, the architecture of the social media has also been drastically changing. One estimate is that while in 2010, YouTube statistics report an average of 35 hours of videos uploaded to mobile devices per minute, the figure stands at 72 hours now. See for instance <http://www.hypebot.com>. I

mention this to suggest possible drastic changes taking place in the reception and exposure to art globally via digital and social media that may compel us to rethink the meaning of participating in international events in the changing media landscape. This would require another paper.

¹⁰ Wendy Brown discusses “moralism” (which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as an “addiction to moralizing”) and “morality” in politics in *Politics out of history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Her critical analysis of how moralism could become a “hegemonic form of political expression” which may manifest as “the moralizing injunction to act” (p.29) reminds me of a few incidents around the contention over the change in the institutional model of Hong Kong’s participation in the Venice Biennale in 2012. Since the signature campaign and public activities around the change of policy that myself and eight other artists and curators organized, I have been reprimanded two times in person by an M+ curator for “saying bad things” about M+, which I regard as a moralizing gesture. Another moralizing gesture was made in the public forum we organized around the incident in October 2012. During the forum, Executive Director of M+ Lars Nittve mentioned morality twice. He said it was M+’s “moral obligation to take up the task” (in presenting the Hong Kong project in the Venice Biennale) and that it would be “immoral” to not use the Venice Biennale to showcase Hong Kong artists or “use this opportunity at its very, very best”. I agree that it is certainly the moral obligation of all professionals in general to serve the public with their expertise. But when morality is taken out of such contexts as power, with no ground of the good (but only use) to fall back on, it remains to be a moralizing gesture that does not admit possibilities of questioning, for what is good is already settled. Furthermore, in this case, the moral obligation is one-sidedly taken up as if the matter is a bilateral one between the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and M+, ignoring the equal moral duty of fellow art practitioners and the moral duty of citizens in Hong Kong to understand what the project is getting us into. The last incident took place in a public forum organized by M+ to present the previous editions of Hong Kong’s participation in the Venice Biennale (June 22, 2013). In the forum, M+ curator Tobias Berger said the Venice Biennale is the “grandmother” of the biennale and should be respected. In this context, the remark reproduces a kind of old power in disguise of benevolence. Considering these anecdotes together, one wonders if this is symptomatic of what Brown calls a “political paralysis” (p.29). Looking back at the public forum in 2012, I (as one of the organizers) still wonder whether and how the uneasy relation between righteous insistence on seeking the truth and need for analysis to open up ideas had been successfully balanced, even overcome. See “Round Table Discussion: We Want the Truth! On Decisions about Hong Kong’s Presentation in the Venice Biennale 2013” online at <http://www.aaa.org.hk/Collection/Details/47808>.

¹¹ I am paraphrasing what is rigorously articulated by Sandel, Michael in *Justice: What is the right thing to do?* (London: Penguin, 2009): 28-29.

¹² I notice a recent term circulated in the art community: “off-ground” (li di 離地). It often refers to the kind of talk about contemporary art that are “non-local”, “non-historical” (hence, what is about Hong Kong is more “grounded”). The coining of the term seems to suggest a gap between what’s happening on the ground and what’s happening to those in power (social, financial, cultural, political), used both for descriptive and normative purposes, depending on contexts. The coining of the term captures a certain sensibility of the times, of the need to connect with lived trajectories, while at the same time, the recognition of the circulation of certain discourses that fail to engage. I do not think this term precludes the good in thinking the abstract; it is precisely the circulation of this term that perhaps dialogues could be forged.

¹³ Wendy Brown quotes Croce, Benedetto’s *Politics and Morals*, trans. Salvatore J. Castiglione (London: Allen And Unwin, 1946): 43 in *Politics Out Of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001): 42.

- ¹⁴ Hlavajova, Maria. "How to Biennial? The Biennial In Relation to The Art Institution" in *The Biennial Reader*, eds. Filipovic, Elena, Marieke van Hal, and Ovstebo, Solveig (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall, 2010): 293.
- ¹⁵ For instance, in the Hong Kong Arts Development Council Chairman's Message (*Annual Report 2013/14*), Wong Ying-wai says, "Why devote considerable resources in participation and promotion of international exchanges? We firmly believe that by participating in international large-scale cultural exchange programs, local artists and outstanding Hong Kong artworks could be showcased in the international arts arena and artists could expand their creative horizons. In the report from the previous year, Wong Ying-wai says. "By engaging world-famous curator Dr. Lars Nittve and his professional curatorial team, we aimed to raise the standards of the Hong Kong entry further, so that our artists could shine on the international stage." The "international" isn't mentioned in the "2011/12 Chairman's message", except when it is used to describe "Fresh Wave" making "international" debut. In the "2010/11 Chairman's message", a sense of "going abroad" as learning from an inferior to superior position may be tacit: "Attaching great importance to supporting the development of local artists, we have been working hard to provide platforms to help them venture abroad. To enhance the professional standard of local arts, the ADC will continue to launch different overseas artist-in-residence programs, arts scholarships and internship programs." In his last term in office, former HKADC Chairman Ma Fung-kuok says the HKADC is devoted to helping "local artists venture abroad". (www.hkadc.org.hk)
- ¹⁶ Brown, Wendy. *Politics out of history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001):39.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Kwong, Kevin. "Artistic Impressions" in *South China Morning Post*, October 7, 2012.
- ¹⁹ Maria Hlavajova makes this point in the context of the importance of the public sphere of the biennial as part of biennial work. She says, "[It] is vitally important that the function of the biennial and its meaning for the public sphere be measured against the background of the social, political, and cultural functions of the art centre and the museum. [...] This perspective is indispensable to the attempt to articulate the space in which the biennale could bring something to the table that *isn't already there and would not exist otherwise*." While the case here is not the biennial as an institution in Hong Kong, the sensitivity to how large-scale structures invest its power and relates to existing, medium- and small-scale organizations is a helpful reference to reflecting on what it takes, for instance, to regard Hong Kong's participation in the Venice Biennale a potential cultural project, taking into account existing artists' residencies, small scale organizations, that are dynamic and resourceful with articulating cultural projects. I want to highlight how Hlavajova speaks of articulating the space in which the biennale brings, hence a gesture of opening up, not only parachuting objects and goods of desire. "How to Biennial? The Biennial in Relation to the Art Institution" in *The Biennial Reader*, eds. Filipovic, Elena, Marieke van Hal, and Ovstebo, Solveig (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall, 2010):296-7.
- ²⁰ Some examples of topics include the biennial as institution and its self-reflective critique, the relation between the biennial as institution and other art institutions, and the biennial as cultural work (hence its relation to local communities). They constitute part of a politics taking place globally aiming at negotiating different possibilities, not to simply go against or boycott it, but to expand on accepted categories, so that it does what is relevant without being complacent of always being right. See for instance "Institutional Critique – How to be self-critical in biennial work" presented in the occasion of Conference and 1st General Assembly of the International Biennial Association (July 10–13, 2014), and "Urgency and Relevance: A Curatorial Perspective at the Guggenheim" (April 3, 2014) accessible on YouTube.

- ²¹ Galit Eilat, Co-Curator, 31st “Bienal de São Paulo”, makes the comment, “How to present what's happening now in Brazil and elsewhere without re-representing since the model of democracy of representation is collapsing, and it's collapsing and reflecting back on us.” See video documentation link in note 20 above.
- ²² In the forum “Institutional Critique-How to be Self-Critical in Biennial Work”, documenta curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev makes the comment, “We must think of the relation between structures and what we do.”
- ²³ Hlavajova, Maria. “Why Biennial!” Keynote Lecture, Conference and 1st General Assembly of the International Biennial Association, July 10-13, 2014.
- ²⁴ Tsang Tak-ping Kith's remarks during the Venice Biennale Talk Series organized by M+ in 2013 belong to this discourse. He said, “When I was in Venice, I realized that it involved the drag and pull of power that Hong Kong could not get into. This is the reality. You are from Hong Kong in your entire lifetime, meaning you cannot be like Tobias (Berger) achieving his practice in the international level. My name Tsang Tak-ping – even when all the seven million people in Hong Kong know it, I am still not at that level. [...] Contemporary art is itself a phenomenon of globalization. The situation we are in now, why do we have simultaneous interpretation when we are talking about contemporary art? This is the phenomenon. You cannot say, would this be more democratic, or, if the organizers today said I had to speak English and not Cantonese, then if I wanted to speak, I had to say, I speak English.” (in Chinese) Tsang was Curator for Hong Kong's participation in the 54th Venice Biennale, member of the Para/Site Collective presentation in the 50th Venice Biennale, and member of the study group for the first Hong Kong participation in the Venice Biennale in 2001. His remarks interestingly slipped from articulating his personal position to a construction, albeit with ambiguity, of the inevitable position of Hong Kong or the Hong Kong person with respect to the so-called world-class curator or ‘level’ of practice. I would like to thank M+, West Kowloon Cultural District for sharing the video documentation of the talks with me for my purposes here.
- ²⁵ Turkish artist Ahmet Öğüt's remark during “Institutional Critique – How to be self-critical in biennial work” presented in the occasion of Conference and 1st General Assembly of the International Biennial Association. See note 23 above.
- ²⁶ May 3, 2013, unpublished video documentation from M+, West Kowloon Cultural District. I would like to thank M+ for sharing the video with me for the purpose of this essay.
- ²⁷ June 14, 2013, unpublished video documentation from M+, West Kowloon Cultural District.
- ²⁸ June 22, 2013, unpublished video documentation from M+, West Kowloon Cultural District.
- ²⁹ Then University of Hong Kong Museum curator, and currently curator at M+, West Kowloon Cultural District.
- ³⁰ See note 24 above.
- ³¹ Speakers in the Conference and 1st General Assembly of the International Biennial Foundation (July 10 – 13, 2014) shared the figure of over 200 as the count of existing biennials in the world, while the Biennial Foundation website lists 165 biennials and triennials existing in the world as of 2015. See <http://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennial-map/>

³² Hlavajova, Maria. "How to Biennial? The Biennial in Relation to the Art Institution" in *The Biennial Reader*, eds. Filipovic, Elena, Marieke van Hal, and Ovstebo, Solveig (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall, 2010): 304.

³³ Hlavajova, Maria. "Why Biennial?" Keynote Lecture, Conference and 1st General Assembly of the International Biennial Association, July 10-13, 2014.

³⁴ I asked 100 artists via email how many times they have exhibited outside of Hong Kong in the past 5 years. As I write, 36 have responded. One artist asked if presentation on the internet is counted, which I haven't included in the table, but opens up another interesting area that challenges the old language of the international based on geography and established institutions to distribute art. The narrative I have been using, that to have been "outside of Hong Kong", is not meant to make any claim about the artists being "international", which then would be to conflate cause and effect. This is why the next step of the questionnaire would need to tap an expanded notion of the international from the artists' perspective – the encounters they have had with fellow artists from different cultural backgrounds. The purpose here begins, I hope, a certain attention on the worlds artists belong to or have encounters with, worlds that don't privilege those who get more attention in the biennial, for instance.

³⁵ See note 15 above. Another example of not necessarily hierarchy but a sense of vagueness or reluctance or inability to position Hong Kong in relation to others, is the recent exhibition *Moving Images* (2015) presented by Mobile M+. The curatorial statement in English mentions that "Hong Kong and international artists" are shown, while in the Chinese, it's "Hong Kong and artists from other regions." Does the "international" in the English version mean anything? Artists from Hong Kong, for instance, Ellen Pau, has exhibited widely outside of Hong Kong. I was thinking the international might mean being based elsewhere other than Hong Kong. But "international" isn't a place to be based, and the biographies on the exhibition website also follow the convention of mentioning cities and nations of particular artists. The singling out of Hong Kong then becomes either a form of centrism, a form of task-fulfillment, or a kind of relativism. The Chinese version is a more informative description.

³⁶ This is contrary to the Hong Kong Arts Development Council's claims published in annual reports. Whether the gap between the institution and the practitioners is the result of mis-match between needs and deeds would require further studies.

³⁷ "[The] problem with a politics of 'difference' is that it lacks a vision of the future that overcomes the political significance of such differences, thus lacks an affirmative collective project. Perhaps it is for this reason that such political formations at times appear more invested in amassing and citing continued evidence of the injury justifying their existence than in figuring alternatives to these conditions." Brown, Wendy. *Politics out of history* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001): 40.

³⁸ They are based in HK/LA, Leipzig/Berlin, Japan/Dusseldorf, Japan, China, Singapore, Dortmund (Germany), Minnesota, UK/Rome.

³⁹ Butler:166.

⁴⁰ Ibid.:166.

⁴¹ Ibid.:169.

⁴² Some examples are the struggles against the re-development of Lei Tung Street in Wan Chai (from 2003), demonstrations against the demolition of the Star Ferry Pier and Clock Tower and Queen's Pier (from

2005), protests against the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong high speed rail link (from around 2010), and Chow Chun Fai running for the position of Sports, Performing Arts, Culture and Publication Functional Constituency in 2012 etc.

⁴³ It is curious how institutions like M+ and ADC keep circulating narratives that de-politicize the relation between themselves and those they rule, evading questions of what have been instituted. For instance, in the Venice Biennale Talk Series in 2013, Tobias Berger was asked how the previous editions of Hong Kong in Venice Biennale have been brought back to Hong Kong to engage with local communities, a question asked in precisely the same language in the “Urgency and Relevance” symposium at the Guggenheim in 2014 (See note 20 above), when global institutions take up the question, as how their projects elsewhere are brought back to where the objects originate. In this Venice Biennale talk, however, the question was taken up as one of personal choice, with a patronizing tone, when Berger said, “Sometimes you have to travel to see art. I was doing that, sleeping in the dirtiest places I ever had.” Granted, but this is also a narrative that pushes aside matters of institutional mandate – if it is not the professionals’ responsibility to share knowledge and expertise with their peers and the citizens, what’s the point of setting up an institution in the first place? This shows the gap between expectations of peers for the institutions and the institutions’ priorities and aspirations.

⁴⁴ Sheikh, Simon. “Marks of Distinction, Vectors of Possibility: Questions for The Biennial” in *The Biennial Reader*, eds. Filipovic, Elena, Marieke van Hal, and Ovstebo, Solveig (Bergen: Bergen Kunsthall, 2010):152.

⁴⁵ Ibid.:158.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See note 28 above.

⁴⁸ Sheikh, Simon:162.

⁴⁹ In his presentation in “Institutional Critique – How to be self-critical in biennial work” presented in the occasion of Conference and 1st General Assembly of the International Biennial Association, Turkish artist Ahmet Öğüt speaks of his experience of withdrawing from the Biennale of Sydney in 2014 after it became known that the chief sponsor Transfield also ran mandatory detention camps for migrants. He tells of how artists were given a misleading questionnaire to sign, which eventually gives the message that the withdrawals won’t affect the show because there are enough artists to make sure it goes on. Video documentation of the presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuGkystPnII&list=PLxzZtmcPOm9lvfSKozTIQkoPT-Ujq9EDZ&index=4>

A letter by the artist can be viewed here: <https://xborderoperationalmatters.wordpress.com/2014/02/26/ogut-biennale/> See also reports on the incident, e.g. <http://www.manifestajournal.org/issues/situation-never-leaves-our-waking-thoughts-long/arts-boycotts-controversy-over-nineteenth>

⁵⁰ Serres’ idea is that earlier hierarchy was based on the “the hoarding of information and monopoly of rare goods: sacraments, legal rules, family genealogy, the mastery of weapons, expertise and knacks, sources of wealth and supplies, seeds, living species, property, the secrets of theory and practice...Hierarchy is theft. On the contrary, democracy first arrives as soon as mysteries are revealed – at first by the disclosure of secrets and finally by universal disclosure.” See *Times of Crisis: What the financial crisis revealed and how to reinvent our lives and future*, trans. Anne-Marie Feenberg-Dibon. (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), p.68.

⁵¹ A confederation of six museums set up in 2010. See <http://internacionala.mg-lj.si/>

⁵² Keynote speech in “What Now? 2014: Collaboration and Collectivity Symposium”, jointly organized by “Art in General” and the “Vera List Center for Art and Politics”, April 4, 2014.

⁵³ Butler:178.

⁵⁴ Brown:44.

⁵⁵ Artist Marysia Lewandowska made the remark about the need to occupy the moral ground as the Umbrella Movement moved away from the streets, at “Common: Ground” organized by Zoe Marden for Asia Art Archive’s Open Platform (March 16, 2015).

⁵⁶ Hlavajova, Maria. “Why Biennial?” Keynote Lecture, Conference and 1st General Assembly of the International Biennial Association, July 10-13, 2014.

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