Cultural Maps, Networks, and Flows: The History and Impact of the Havana Biennale 1984 to the present


Abstract

Since 1984 the Havana Biennale has been known as "the Tri-continental art event," presenting artists from Latin America, Africa, and Asia. It also has intensely debated the nature of recent and contemporary art from a Third World or Global South perspective. The Biennale is a product of Cuba's fruition since the Revolution of 1959. The Wifredo Lam Center, created in 1983, has organized the Biennial since its inception. This dissertation proposes that at the heart of the Biennale has been an alternative cosmopolitan modernism (that we might call "contemporary" or "post-colonial") that was envisaged by a group of local cultural agents, critics, philosophers, art historian, and also supported by a network of peers around the world. It examines the role Armando Hart Dávalos, Minister of Culture of Cuba (1976-1997), who played a key figure in the development of a solid cultural policy, one which produced the Havana Biennale as a cultural project based on an explicit "Third World" consciousness. It explores the role of critics and curators Gerardo Mosquera and Nelson Herrera Ysla, key members of the founding group of the Biennale. Subsequently, it examines how the work of Lilian Llanes, director of the Lam Center and of the Biennale (1983-1999), shaped the event in structural and conceptual terms. Finally, it examines the most recent developments and projections for the future. Using primary material, interviews, and field work research, the study focuses on the conceptual, contextual, and historical structure that supports the Biennale. It presents from several optics the views and world-view of the agents involved from the inside (curators and collaborators), as well as, from an art-world perspective through an account of the nine editions. Using the Havana Biennale as case study this work goes to disentangle and reveal the socio-political and intellectual debates taking place in the conformation of what is call today global art. In addition, recognizes the potentiality of alternative thinking and cultural subjectivity in the Global South.
The Havana Biennial has focused its attention on the artists from the South whose works represent concerns and conflicts—many times of universal scope—that are common to their regions. Issues like the existing tensions between tradition and contemporaneity, the challenge to the historical colonization processes, relations between art and society, the individual and his/her memory, human communication in the face of technological development and the dynamics of urban culture have been topics of particular interest in the Biennial, without distinction among the multiple forms of visuality. Thus, the present study was conducted to determine whether individual cultural values can influence consumers’ impulse buying tendencies among Indian consumers. An American Psychological Association task force has argued that heavy advertising and marketing campaigns are leading to the sexualization and exploitation of young girls (Duramaz et al. 2011). Children’s consumer behaviour in developing countries in the twenty-first century.