

research on Sicily, Spain, and Portugal focuses on the material history and techniques of artistic materials and architecture.

INTRODUCTION. LOCALIZATION/GLOBALIZATION: A TOXIC BINARY FOR ART HISTORY AND THE THEORY OF CULTURAL PATRIMONY

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Abstract

Art historical scholarship and research has reached a historical divide. Forced to choose between history & interpretation, or theory & invention, today's art historian is obliged to take side in the academic discourse and refrain from political speech, while his/her work remains irrelevant for most civil society. How did we get here?

A retrospective look at art history methodologies over the past 40 years - from the creation of the Global Web (1983) to the implementation of Big and Open Access data processing, clarifies that we abdicated analytical, logical and in depth social and contextual studies to abstract and theoretical rethinking of global circulations and trans-activities. This global turn may explain the vacuum on which we precariously float.

Incredulous spectators of this ultimate swan song, after the death of premodern art and the burial of Art History - understood as a discipline, primary education, humanitas, and an instrument of cultural protection – art historians and educators today feel unsure about their right to exist and puzzled about the vocation of Art History in the socio-cultural reset postulated by EU Agenda Europe 2030, increasingly dominated by the rhetoric of Visual Studies, the lure of Artificial Intelligence, and the ultimate consequences of implementing metadata/metaverse and transhumanism in current and future human generations, already alienated from reality, materiality, and the body.

Inspired by research on regenerative cultures, I will reintroduce the model of sustainable, inclusive, politically, and civically engaged contextual art history as a tool for the reconfiguration and preservation of human legacy on earth, and the optimal preservation model which can reverse the effect of Homogenocene global modernity into a new Anthropocene model meant to last without prejudice of animal and vegetal life.

Stepping from the democratic manifesto of Localization theories (Local Futures etc.) we shall see how local identities where the balance between men and nature is respected, beloved and coveted, are the only viable solution for globally re-implementing human values, human and animal rights and earth democracy (as declared by - among many - ecologist, activist, and food rights advocate Vandana Shiva).

Keywords

Global studies; Localization; Cultural heritage; AI; Cultural patrimony; Art history, Transhumanism; Homogenocene; Anthropocene.