

# The Borders of Europe: Art and Cultural Memory in the EU since the Maastricht Treaty

Editorial

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This issue of *Stedelijk Studies* aims to contribute to the historical and critical discourse on the European Union and the European integration project since 1992 in the specific field of contemporary art. In that year the Treaty on European Union (TEU) was signed in Maastricht—hence the “Maastricht Treaty”—which established the foundation of the EU. Comprising ten essays by international scholars, writers, and artists with a European nationality, background, or strong affiliation with European topics (from countries as varied as Belgium, Greece, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, Turkey, and the United States), this issue explores whether this defining political moment is also indicative of an inevitable shift in the critical discourse in the field of contemporary art; from addressing the split and reunification of Eastern and Western European art since 1989, to broader contemporary European issues, challenges, and concerns, in search of a shared European identity within a global context. The issue opens with a roundtable discussion between four Dutch art professionals engaged with the EU’s cultural politics, networks, and projects, in which the key themes of this issue—the borders of Europe and the role of art and culture within the European project since 1992—are discussed alongside a much-needed debate on the lack of transparency in the (financial) policies conducted by the EU for the stimulus of contemporary art. Can we imagine that the contours of a new European concept and identity take shape in the informal, transnational cultures of the arts, as the Vice President of the European Commission, Frans

Timmermans, suggested at the W-Europe Festival (2016)?<sup>1</sup> Or should this propitious view be questioned with regard to European policymaking that mediates and funds rather particular artistic developments and trends, often intersected with the promotion of creative industries?

## 1. Maastricht Treaty and Cultural Identity

In *Passage to Europe: How a Continent became a Union*, Europe expert Luuk van Middelaar describes the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, as an “*Epochmachende Ereignis*.”<sup>2</sup> According to Van Middelaar, the leaders of the European Union gave their first serious answer to this major turning point in history—soon followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union and German unification—at the political summit in December 1991, a few months before the actual signing of the Maastricht Treaty. The new union re-actualized a constantly recurring issue in Europe’s postwar history: the geopolitical question of its borders. In the first Schengen Agreement (1985) the dissolution of borders between the member states had already been agreed upon, which resulted in the actual abolition of internal border controls in the Schengen Convention (1990). Van Middelaar convincingly shows that the newly formed EU aimed at nothing less than a new role and place on the global stage. With the official creation of the EU and its intensified global ambitions, the debate on the identity of the new union started in a rather optimistic mood, in the form of discussions on how to deepen and strengthen European integration. But while this integration process has made steady progress within economics and finance, where it led to the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the foundation of a single currency (euro) within the so-called “Eurozone” in the space of merely a decade (1992–2002), the question of cultural integration and identity has been relatively underexposed during that same period. This led to the main question of this issue of *Stedelijk Studies*: what role does contemporary art, including cultural identity and cultural memory, assume in the contemporary European integration project, from the Maastricht Treaty to its current coalition of twenty-eight member states?

After the first decade of its founding the EU began to take initiatives to strengthen and make visible its cultural identity, as Bert de Muynck reports in his contribution to this issue, “What ever happened to ground Euro? The Borders of Brussels.” The initial focus was on grand-scale architectural and urban renewal plans for the European Quarter. De Muynck interrogates these (partially failed) initiatives in his essay, scrutinizing “what has happened with the debate on the Capital of Europe and its architectural identity in relation to the development of ‘Ground Euro,’ that plot of land in the heart of Brussels, actually more commonly known as the European Quarter, which was suddenly bombarded with good intentions, ideas, and a nascent desire to architecturally embody an elusive European identity in a

campus-like European Capital.” In 2001 the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, and the Belgian Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt, set up a think tank to brainstorm this architectural and urban project, the so-called “Erasmus Group.” Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas was the only member of this think tank to also join its follow-up, *The New Narrative for Europe*, initiated by José Manuel Durão Barroso (11th President of the European Commission, 2004–2014). This second project created a platform for debate on the cultural identity of the EU in which professionals from the art world participated alongside citizens. De Muynck carefully examines Koolhaas’s involvement in both European projects, including his well-known design of a multicolored barcode flag symbolizing the “new” EU.<sup>3</sup> Although the author is critical of the second project, which he describes as a pragmatic and ideologically driven derivative of the original ideas and innovative projects of the Erasmus Group, to bolster the cultural identity of the EU, he does acknowledge that it aimed “to involve artists, scientists, writers, intellectuals and all kinds of cultural practitioners in an effort to reconnect the European Union with its citizens.”

In May 2017 a more visible yet disputable initiative was undertaken by the European Parliament to engage its EU citizens: the House of European History. This museum is located in a historical building in Leopold Park, walking distance from the European Parliament in Brussels, and houses a permanent exhibition of objects and documents that together tell the story of Europe. The museum triggered considerable debate among politicians and citizens for and against Europe, particularly because of its €55 million price tag, paid directly from the EU budget. While the museum provides a place where EU citizens and other visitors can learn about the history and continuing integration process of the European Union, critics consider it essentially as a form of propaganda. As Marietje Schaake, Dutch member of the European Parliament, sums up the core critique of this new institution, “A parliament should not finance a museum.”<sup>4</sup> Supporters regard the museum as a unifying accomplishment for an all too scattered EU, but critics point to the narratives left out in this grand European identity-shaping project, such as the neglect of the influence of immigrants and refugees on European history and culture. And even if a shared European history and the unification of European values are supposed to be important topics in times of crisis, should the future of Europe not include a multiplicity of identities of European citizens, aspiring citizens, and temporary residents with all kinds of visas?

The House of European History intends to highlight such aspects of the “new Europe” in temporary exhibitions, but the Humanity House in The Hague—substantially financed by the European Commission—has developed an “inclusive museum” on a permanent basis. In her contribution to this issue, Inge Zlatkou analyzes the immersive curatorial strategies of the Humanity House, which she considers an effective methodology to include and attract a wide variety of (visitor) groups from different cultural backgrounds. It can be

questioned, however, how much immigrants recognize of themselves in the role of the victim that is so explicitly envisioned in the museum's exhibitions, and to what extent this unambiguous picture is representative of the complex of narratives already assimilated into the European community today. Zlatkou's analysis does not discuss museums of modern and contemporary art, but her case study of the Humanity House is still useful for envisioning more inclusive museum models adapted and responsive to the current age.

Philosopher and media art theorist Boris Groys advocates a space for reflection for people's own perspectives on (European) art, culture, and society, independent of the general slogans of the EU's rhetoric or cultural plans designed "from above." In "Europe and its Others" (2008) Groys takes on the topic of cultural identity and the arts within the broader context of Europe's shared cultural values. "In recent years, we have been hearing European politicians say over and over that Europe is not just a community of economically defined interests but something more—namely, a champion of certain cultural values that should be asserted and defended."<sup>5</sup> Groys is rather skeptical about the EU's seemingly noble aspirations toward an integrated concept of cultural identity and its shared values, because of its hidden agenda to differentiate Europe with such cultural claims from other countries across the globe for primarily economic reasons. This critical attitude leads Groys to explore "what effect this demand for cultural identity has on the arts in Europe." He puts great hope in art, because its tradition and development into an autonomous discipline does not allow for being molded into an ideological construct of cultural values and identity. Art freely taps into the rich, diverse, and often contradictory traditions of European cultural histories, including the "foreign" that has constantly taken root within its borders. In Groys's words, "the truly unique feature of European culture consists in permanently making oneself alien, in negating, abandoning, and denying oneself. Indeed, the history of Europe is nothing other than the history of cultural ruptures, a repeated rejection of one's own traditions."<sup>6</sup> Clarifying this point with examples from philosophy, literature, and the avant-garde, Groys concludes that "contemporary art practice demonstrates the position of the alien in today's culture in a much more adequate way than the standard political discourse."<sup>7</sup>

In Thomas Bellinck's "documentary stage musical on the digitization of migration management," *Simple as ABC #2: Keep Calm & Validate*, "the position of the alien" is taken to the extreme. Based on interviews with border and data managers of the control chambers along the frayed edges of Europe, Bellinck's play uncovers the uncomfortable and at the same time ruthless bureaucratic and technological functioning of the European "migration apparatus"—one of the most complex phenomena in the EU today. In *The House of the European History in Exile* (2013), a futuristic-fictional parody set in the future and formulated as an exhibition on the House of European History, which did not yet exist at the time, Bellinck turned the EU's often failing

political and bureaucratic system inside out. But in this sequel to his earlier play about surveillance technology, *Simple as ABC #1: Man vs Machine*, Bellinck more specifically addresses the bureaucratic jargon of the European Commission's Institutions and Agencies, and the officers and officials working for it. This jargon describes migrants as "data subjects," as readable carriers of measurable identities. Or, as Bellinck sums up the two distinct parts of the play, "At the beginning of the first, non-musical part, an actor enters an empty, slowly revolving stage and invites an imaginary, early-morning stroll along the EU's external borders. Gradually, the revolving stage picks up the pace, while the actor struggles to keep his balance and get a grip on a border-scape that is increasingly non-local, virtual and vertical. In the second part, which consists of interviews with border managers set to music, two actors and four musicians sing to a collective 'you' of border crossing migrants."<sup>8</sup> Sound excerpts from the poignant first part of the play are included as artistic contribution to this issue of *Stedelijk Studies*, and correspond to the de-personification of the refugee's despair: "Disembodied identities were archived by machines... " "queuing human hyperlinks... " "Unrecognizable like aliens... " "undesirable data subjects on the move... " "Their body is the border..."

## 2. European Crises, Borders, and Migration

If we may believe the predominant media coverage of the social, economic, and political challenges of the European Union today, it seems that it has experienced one crisis after another since the financial crisis (2007–2008) and the Great Recession (2007–2013) that began in the United States and spread to the world at large, greatly affecting the European continent from 2008 onwards. While the European debt crisis has barely reached its end after the dramatic Greek climax in 2015, with the third rescue plan agreed upon at the last minute with the European troika, Brexit continues to cause further disruption and instability since the referendum in 2016, in which the British voted with a slight majority in favor of leaving the European Union. Meanwhile, terrorist attacks instill deep fears on many levels and the immigration crisis is tearing Europe apart. The latter has led to the largest European-wide humanitarian crisis in recent memory, which prompts a fundamental public debate on the EU's internal and external borders. While the Schengen Agreement created an area for the "free movement of persons" within the EU, which has been extended ever since, it concurrently affirms Europe's internal borders, for example, by refusing entry to countries such as Bulgaria and Romania, or through the reintroduction of border controls by certain member states due to tightening immigration policies. Thus, it can be questioned to what extent the EU will further open up towards an inclusive globalized world, or conversely adapt to "a larger trend toward 'walled states,' protected from terrorism, 'illegal' immigration, and hostile neighbors...."<sup>9</sup>

According to Paul Scheffer, professor of European Studies at the University of Tilburg (NL), the European integration project has focused for a long time on its internal borders, in order to prevent conflict situations and war.<sup>10</sup> In the decades to come, however, Scheffer predicts the focus will increasingly shift to its external borders. While Europe is now turning to countries like India, Brazil, or China to overcome its monetary crisis, he states, the ratio is changing and the relative influence of Europe in the world is rapidly diminishing. Scheffer compares the current situation in Europe with that of around 1800, when the economic powers of countries like China and India were considerable. Principally, the dominant Western narrative is no older than two centuries, and within fifty years from now we may be facing relationships on more equal terms, just as they previously existed in a much longer historical retrospective. In this respect, Henry Kissinger's definition of China as a *returning power* instead of an *emerging power* seems appropriate. Yet, Scheffer claims, the true power of the EU lies as much in its unity as in its plurality; what unites Europe is its democracy and welfare, as well as its well-functioning juridical system and accompanying lawmaking institutions, something that is often lacking in the economically fast-growing superpowers of the non-Western world.

The democratic promise of a plural yet unified Europe is precisely the reason why one of the continent's leading intellectuals, German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, has consistently advocated the transnational state as the best possible option for the EU. This solution suffered a major setback in 2005 due to the negative outcome of the referendum on the European constitution, in which the majority of the electorate in France and the Netherlands said "no" to what they perceived as a European superstate. In the voters' eyes this would weaken rather than strengthen democracy in Europe, because it would take away sovereignty from the nation states. Habermas, however, warns that the EU could be a "faltering project" if a politically unified Europe beyond the borders of its individual member states is not established in the near future. In *Zur Verfassung Europas* (2011), translated into English as *The Crisis of the European Union* (2013), he makes yet another strong case for a continuing policy that supports the gradual integration of Europe towards a truly democratic constitution, one in which the people play a major role in the political system, while the EU as a whole is capable of realizing a stable and competitive place within the neo-capitalist global order, together with the United States. While Scheffer opposes a ratified EU constitution—as evident in the title of his essay, "A United States of Europe? No Thank you!"—Habermas, by contrast, argues that any proposal to transform the system of European governance into executive federalism is a mistake.

As a possible solution for today's identity crises that keep Europe busy, EU political advisor and philosopher-historian Ulrike Guérot envisions a model for a *res publica europaea*, a European Republic, providing legal equality for

citizens and resolving disputes about subsidiarity, the principle that governs the union's competence to take decisions and actions beyond the national level of separate EU member states.<sup>11</sup> In this respect, she refers to a sixteenth-century map of Europe in which the continent is represented by a woman in a royal gown, upon which all the regions of Europe have their natural or organic place. According to Guérot, "The symbolism of this map tells us that everybody has *place* and *space*—and even a *specific function*—in the organic body of Europe: Spain (by then the Habsburg Monarchy) is the head, France the breast, Germany the heart, the Danube the aorta etc. They can only live together: no head without breast, no heart without head etc."<sup>12</sup> Using the metaphor of the historical map of Europe as a common *body*, she claims that no one state has to *lose* its identity within Europe; everyone *contributes* to this identity, to the *res publica europaea*, the common European good.

The metaphor suggested by Guérot to make visible the ideology of a Republic of Europe may be exceptional within the field of politics, but the formative potential of imagery is something more common within the field of art and culture. In their contribution "Let's Take Back Control! Of Our Imagination," Mihnea Mircan and Jonas Staal address the imaginary potential of art (discourse) in favor of imagining a new political future for the "*res publica europaea*." The authors appropriate the Brexit banner "Let's Take Back Control!" as their general slogan to point to the transformative power of the imagination. Mircan and Staal consider the black-and-white choice inherent in the Brexit dichotomy ("Leave" or "Remain") as indicative of the current European crisis, which is a "crisis of the imagination" in their view. Starting with the monochromatic blue representation (by Dutch artist Remco Torenbosch) and the iconoclastic reconfiguration (by Dutch politician Geert Wilders) of the European flag, they sketch a trajectory of suggestive imagery in art and culture that anticipates "symbolic policymaking." The EU flag, for example, consists of twelve stars representing the member states that initially signed the Maastricht Treaty. Whereas the EU presently includes twenty-eight member states, the flag has remained unchanged; individual stars *de facto* symbolize a 2.3 state average. According to Mircan and Staal, "Such uncomfortable iconographic imagery fits the Eurocratic project well.... The European project struggles with a dramatic visual deficit. There is very little to see here, just the more or less blue ennui of flags in front of EC headquarters and the generic monuments adorning euro banknotes." An artistic project that creatively and ironically comments on the deficient European imagery described by Mircan and Staal is the post-Brexit UK passport designed by Ian Macfarlane. The result of an unofficial competition by the architecture and design website *Dezeen* in the spring of 2017, Macfarlane's winning proposition is a cover that combines the burgundy EU passport with the dark blue of the old, pre-EU British passport. While this symbolic passport will never actually be issued, the passports that were designed by the former Yugoslavian artists' collective Neue Slovenische Kunst/IRWIN, representing an imaginary

state, were widely distributed and even misinterpreted by refugees from non-European countries, who tried to use them as official documents to cross the external borders of Europe and thereby gain access to the heart of the continent.

In searching for a “new ethics of hospitality toward the immigrant,” Esra Akcan investigates the former West Berlin neighborhood of Kreuzberg. In her contribution, “The Immigrant Continent”—which gives us a glimpse of her upcoming book, *Open Architecture: Migration, Citizenship and the Urban Renewal of Berlin-Kreuzberg by IBA-1984/8*—Akcan shows how the large population of Turkish migrants and refugees that have settled in Kreuzberg in the postwar period up till now helped culturally shape and develop the district through all kinds of creative output and viable projects. Turkish immigrants, residents, and squatters of the primarily leftist community turned this decaying part of Berlin into a dynamic, multicultural place, “despite the restrictive immigration policy and culture” in Germany at the time. The Turkish immigrants’ constructive participation in Kreuzberg is mobilized to demonstrate the challenging thesis of Europe as an “Immigrant Continent.”

Acknowledging Europe as a continent of immigrants, like the United States, means placing it in the context of global migration flows. In Akcan’s words, “My overarching theme is international immigration and the ongoing human rights regime that impaired guest workers’ and refugees’ right to have rights.... As many authors have exposed, the stateless puts into question the limits of the current human rights that presume the condition of being a citizen of a state.” In addition, Akcan points to the urgency of the proposed “ethics of hospitality” in the face of current global developments, such as the Syrian refugee crisis and the persecution of Turkish journalists and academics under Erdogan’s regime.

Akcan’s thesis is in dialogue with Habermas’s plea for a politically unified EU that is legally obliged to respect universal human rights and human dignity (*Menschenwurde*).<sup>13</sup> In resolute opposition to Akcan, however, Scheffer argues that today’s migration issues in Europe cannot simply be resolved by making the societies which receive immigrants more open and hospitable, since the different value systems and beliefs that migrants and refugees bring with them often pose a real threat to existing communities of autochthonous residents. In *Immigrant Nations*, Scheffer states that “there is a need to think seriously about *both* the life stories of immigrants *and* the experiences of indigenous residents.”<sup>14</sup> The author sees an intensification of conflicting values in regard to Muslims and Islam, unless the former reinvent and modernize their religion within a European context. Whether Islam is compatible with Western democracy is open to debate, but important here is that Luiza Bialasiewicz picks up another bone of contention in this fierce polemic on Muslim immigrants in her (republished) essay for this issue, “The Political Geographies of Muslim Visibility: The Boundaries of Tolerance in the European City.” Taking the well-known art installation of Christoph Büchel at the Venice Biennale

(2015) as her starting point, in which the Swiss artist turned a Venetian church into a mosque, she questions the (in)visibility of Muslims in European public space, and especially the strategies of inclusion and exclusion behind it, as well as the questions that arise as to whether Western tolerance will be flexible enough to allow for Muslim involvement in giving form to Western society. Mobilizing Hannah Arendt's political thoughts on visibility as a condition for full participation in political society and Nilüfer Göle's notion of "over-visibility" to comprehend the contemporary situation of Islam in the West, Bialasiewicz provides a multifaceted analysis of the ambiguous interrelations between visibility, presence, and political inclusion through a primary symbol of the presence of Islam in the West: the mosque.

### 3. Shifting the European Discourse: Biennale and Documenta

There is a growing number of artistic practices today that relate and refer to different aspects of migration and its humanitarian and sociological concerns, especially in regard to exile, statelessness, and nomadism, as art historian and theorist T. J. Demos points out in his award-winning book, *The Migrant Image* (2013).<sup>15</sup> Demos analyzes the work of artists as diverse as Mona Hatoum, Christian Philipp Müller, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Emily Jacir, Yto Barrada, Steve McQueen, and the Otolith Group, among others, from the perspective of global crisis. Processing migratory theories of contemporary thinkers such as Edward Said, Giorgio Agamben, Slavoj Žižek, and Étienne Balibar, among others, Demos emphasizes the "creative ways contemporary artists have imagined forms of life capable of inspiring hope and belief in a better world to come."<sup>16</sup> Following Agamben, Demos considers the figure of the refugee, the displaced person or noncitizen, in the present circumstances of massive demographic changes around the world as a representation of "the paradigm of new historical consciousness."<sup>17</sup> With this figure we glimpse a future beyond the nation state and its destructive exclusion of noncitizens. He or she, in the words of Said, exposes a "double perspective" or "bicultural knowledge produced by living in a foreign environment, generating in its positive expression a sensitivity toward difference (that of cultures, places, and communities), and a newfound appreciation of the cultural character of one's origins when looking back from the migrant's awry vantage."<sup>18</sup>

Said's "double perspective" can also be experienced in "the diasporic public sphere of international exhibitions," as Okwui Enwezor characterizes the ever-growing scale of recurring mega art exhibitions around the world.<sup>19</sup> The participating artists in such shows, as Demos points out, "reflexively problematize their economic and social position, as well as the exclusions of the location," while at the same time creating "the terms of cross-cultural interactions."<sup>20</sup>

Reflecting on the evolving global context of European biennials, Antje von Graevenitz anticipates a critique of current art discourses or theories in her contribution, "Art: Don't Fence Me In! The Correspondence Principle in European Art," which include keywords such as "cross-border," "transgressive," "trans-national," "global imaginative," "expansive," "integrative," "multicultural," "cross-cultural," and "inclusion." According to Von Graevenitz, "All of these terms fit in the frame of 'thinking wild,' a reference to Claude Lévi-Strauss's important book, *The Savage Mind* (1962)." She recalls Harald Szeemann's *dAPERTutto* at the Venice Biennale in 1999—which literally means "open to everyone," inviting artists from all over the world—as a start for the large range of exhibitions in the Western art sphere presenting so-called global art that would follow. "Important curators and authors have been dealing with this subject, as globalization is a political and social phenomena with an unmerciful effect on people who may decide to migrate to Western countries with a rich and settled civilization," Von Graevenitz states. Crediting Mieke Bal's notion of "migratory aesthetics," that leaves "room for doubt or friction, dilemma, and 'double exposure,'" she analyzes the work of a global generation of artists within the theory of the "correspondence principle."<sup>21</sup> This principle, according to Von Graevenitz, takes into account the subjective perspective in the production and reception of art: "subjectivity, or human creativity, means ambivalence and possible different viewpoints."

If there was one exhibition that made a vital political statement about the status of Europe and the EU today, then it was documenta 14 (April 8 – September 17, 2017). This, first and foremost, because of the main curatorial decision of its Polish artistic director, Adam Szymczyk, to organize the show not only in Kassel, Germany, but also in Athens, Greece. In an interview with *Artforum*, Szymczyk implies that the strict austerity measures then in place in Greece inspired the organizers to hold documenta there. "One of the reasons to work in Athens in parallel to Kassel is precisely to make the exhibition in a place where you can see how problematic things are at the moment."<sup>22</sup> The idea was to offer a different perspective on the EU, which also implied a shift in discourse from the "East-West" antagonism of 1989 to an equally important divide between "North and South." Athens would also act as a mirror, a place perhaps at the periphery of Europe but at once in the very center of the multiple European crises in the second decade of the twenty-first century, in which Germany and Greece are playing the two opposing roles, as debt-ridden Greece suffers from the austerity policies of the German-led EU. Greece feels it has lost too much of its sovereignty as a nation state due to the austerity measures from the EU's financial institutions, while at the same time it is the cradle of democracy, (i.e., the foundation for Europe's political model). The perspective from the "South," to address the asymmetries in the EU, is the reason why the *New York Times* sharply concluded that documenta 14 "would use culture to... re-examine, maybe even shift, the power dynamics of Europe."<sup>23</sup>

Coming from an Eastern European country, Szymczyk is well aware of the “post-communist condition” that countries from East-Central Europe faced after the continent’s unification in 1989, which precludes the current pressures put on Southern and Eastern European countries by the EU since the euro crisis. The Croatian philosopher Boris Buden has problematized the unequal situation between West and East in the context of the former Yugoslavian countries, in which the latter are forced to adapt to a process of “normalization” to become part of the dominating Western European capitalist tradition.<sup>24</sup> That enforced normalization processes do not assimilate well is also evident in the Eurozone crisis in Southern European member states (especially Greece, Portugal, and Italy), and in the continuing political conflicts (migration issues and violations of democratic principles) with the newest EU members in the Eastern region, such as Bulgaria and Hungary, which entered the union in 2007. In her contribution, “Reenacting the Past: Romanian Art Since 1989,” Mirela Tanta proposes that the communist and dictatorial past of Ceaușescu’s regime in Romania has been processed more constructively through artistic practices. Tracing the different phases of Romanian (neo-)socialist realist art in the postwar period, she illuminates the ways in which contemporary artists (Ion Grigerescu, Ciprian Muresan, Irena Botea, and others) are trying to come to terms with the country’s political, social, and artistic legacy by appropriating, deconstructing, and critically reflecting on the iconography of the communist past in their work. They thereby address critical questions relevant for the EU today, such as “How much democratic transformation did the 1989 revolution bring about?”

But the imaginative motto “Learning from Athens” was not restricted to the cultural, political, or socioeconomic asymmetries within the EU. Building on documenta’s current standing as a critically esteemed exhibition of global contemporary art—which was first envisioned by Catherine David in 1997 with documenta 10, and extended by Okwui Enwezor in documenta 11 in 2002—Szymczyk brought together a wide range of artistic (and non-artistic) practices that problematize the existing art historical hegemony of Western European (and American) culture in a global context. His documenta thus focused on parallel histories and narratives in the global arena with which we are not (yet) familiar, as well as the influences of migration and migrating artists on the existing history of art. Documenta 14 was initially highly acclaimed for this standpoint, but after the joint exhibitions in Athens and Kassel were actually executed, the project was severely criticized by the mainstream press for its political approach and lack of a coherent program and “high-quality” artworks. In this issue of *Stedelijk Studies*, we invited two established critical theorists from Greece to voice their “Southern perspective” on documenta, in order to counterbalance the somewhat one-dimensional critiques from Northern and Western Europe. In their contribution, “When Crisis Becomes Form: Athens as a Paradigm,” Theophilos Tramboulis and Yorgos Tzirtzilakis propose, in a set of interrelated critical and theoretical arguments, that the exhibition in Greece was not so much criticized in regard to the art and discourse

presented, but rather in regard to the institution of this European mega-exhibition and its operations, as well as its discursive political context. Citing the scathing criticism of Yanis Varoufakis, former Greek Minister of Finance during the euro crisis (“it is like rich Americans taking a tour in a poor African country”), the authors demonstrate in their analysis of the political discourse that surrounded the exhibition in Athens that documenta 14 “served as a kind of double mirror on which we could see the cultural relation of Greece with Europe and the world but also the reverse: of Europe with Greece.”

#### 4. Europe, the World, and Cultural Memory

“The Borders of Europe” is the title of this editorial, in which we have attempted to contextualize the various essays submitted for this issue. Most intersect in various ways with this major theme, from Bert de Muynck’s essay on the borders of that “little plot of land” in the European Quarter of Brussels, or the EU’s porous borders and cultural identity due to immigration flows in the essays and art of Bellinck, Staal and Mircan, and Akcan, to the reflections on documenta in Athens by Tramboulis and Tzirtzilakis, in which the question of who is or is not part of the EU (or Eurozone) forms the backdrop of their analysis due to the threatening “Grexit.” Andreas Huyssen closes this “European issue” of *Stedelijk Studies* with the edited lecture “Memories of Europe in the Art of Elsewhere,” in which the acclaimed American cultural theorist and critic suggests that there is one more type of “border” that we might wish to consider, namely, the immaterial borders of Europe in the realm of cultural memory. “European memory,” Huyssen claims, “cannot be fortified. It must include memories of Europe as they circulate across the world.” As an expert on the culture and politics of memory, originally in the context of German art and history in particular, Huyssen is dissatisfied with the way in which the close relations between Europe and non-European parts of the world is dealt with in the practice of remembrance, despite the undeniable colonial and postcolonial links between the two. Like Groys in his essay, “Europe and its Others,” Huyssen finds solace in the arts, where the memories of Europe inside and outside the continent are imagined and questioned by globally operating artists such as William Kentridge and Doris Salcedo. Through an in-depth discussion of relevant works by these artists in the (post-)colonial domain, Huyssen lays bare the intertwined histories, modernities, and memories of Europe and the world beyond its borders. In Huyssen’s words, “Both [Kentridge and Salcedo] are exemplary in that they weave together two separate strands of memory: memories of local histories of violence (South Africa and Colombia) and emphatic memories of European modernism which they appropriate and transform in creative ways. Both tell us a great deal about how memories of Europe are an integral part of the very texture of artistic work from elsewhere.”

Sjoukje van der Meulen received her MA and PhD degrees from respectively the Department of Art History and the School of Architecture at Columbia University (1998/2009). She lived in the United States for 15 years, where she taught at Columbia University, the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Oregon. She was a participant of De Appel curatorial program, an editor of *Metropolis M*, and a lecturer in the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. She served as Chair of the European workgroup of the Dutch Social Democratic Party (PvdA), for which she organized conferences and workshops on topics such as *The Future of the Eurozone* and *The Migration Crisis* with support of among others the S&D in the European parliament. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at Utrecht University, and co-editor of this “European” issue of *Stedelijk Studies* with Nahatlie Zonnenberg.

Nathalie Zonnenberg is an art historian and curator based in Amsterdam. She received a PhD in art history from the VU University in Amsterdam in 2016, on her dissertation “Between Dematerialization and Documentation: Conceptual Art in a Curatorial Perspective.” Currently she is part-time lecturer at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (KASK) in Ghent, and at the Open University (NL). Prior to this she was a lecturer at Utrecht University, and the VU University. From 1999 to 2009 she was a curator at several art institutions, including Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, and the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, where she curated the exhibition *Living Art: On the Edge of Europe* in 2006, about the Eastern European avant-garde of the 1960s-70s. Zonnenberg was senior editor of *Manifesta Journal* (2009–2011), is editorial board member of *Stedelijk Studies*, and, together with Sjoukje van der Meulen, co-editor of this “European” issue.

1. The first W-Europe Festival took place on June 11, 2016, in Amsterdam. It was organized by the Party of European Socialists (PES) in collaboration with various international branches of the Dutch social democratic party (PvdA). Timmermans was one of the high-profile guests at this event, where he informally discussed present-day European music based on a remarkable selection of his own favorite clips.
2. Luuk van Middelaar, *De Passage naar Europa* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 2009). Translated into English as *Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 255. Middelaar derived this characterization from German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer’s definition in a 1969 essay, which further reads: “Such events are incisions in time, points that mark off the old from the new.”
3. This design was based on the idea of a barcode but then composed of colored lines drawn from the existing flags of all EU member states.
4. Schaake is a member of the Dutch political party D66, which is part of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) in the European Parliament. See

- <https://museumactueel.nl/controverse-rond-europa-museum-brussel>.
5. Boris Groys, "Europe and its Others," in *Art Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 173.
  6. Ibid., 182.
  7. Ibid.
  8. See <https://www.stedelijkstudies.com/journal/simple-abc-2-keep-calm-validate>.
  9. T. J. Demos, *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013), 13–14
  10. Paul Scheffer, "Geen Verenigde Staten van Europa alstublieft," *NRC Handelsblad* (November 30, 2013), accessed January 24, 2018, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2013/11/30/geen-verenigde-staten-van-europa-alstublieft-1319943-a1262215>. This is a condensed version of the essay "The hidden vitality of Europe," published by Felix Meritis Foundation on the occasion of a debate between Scheffer and the Austrian writer Robert Menasse on November 29, 2013.
  11. Ulrike Guérot, "Europe as a Republic: The Story of Europe in the Twenty-first Century," accessed January 24, 2018, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/ulrike-guerot/europe-as-republic-story-of-europe-in-twenty-first-century>. This text is an adopted version of a speech at the German fashion lifestyle and online community conference RE:PUBLICA, on May 6, 2015, in Berlin. The principle of subsidiarity is defined in Article 5 of the Treaty of European Union. See [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU\\_1.2.2.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ftu/pdf/en/FTU_1.2.2.pdf).
  12. Ibid.
  13. Habermas intentionally publishes a learned philosophical essay on human rights and dignity in *Zur Verfassung Europas* (Frankfurt, Edition Suhrkamp, 2011), 13–39. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union were put into legal force in the Lisbon Treaty (2007).
  14. Paul Scheffer, *Immigrant Nations* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011), 41.
  15. Demos, *The Migrant Image*. The College Art Association announced on the CAA's annual conference in 2014 that T. J. Demos won its annual prize for art criticism, the Frank Jewett Mather Award, for this book.
  16. Ibid., xxii.
  17. Ibid., 4.
  18. Ibid., 3.
  19. Ibid., 18.
  20. Ibid., 3.
  21. Von Graevenitz appropriates "the correspondence principle," a definition coined by the Danish physicist Niels Bohr in 1920, for the field of art.
  22. See <https://www.artforum.com/print/201704/documenta-14-67184>, accessed March 1, 2018.
  23. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/arts/design/documenta-german-exhibition-greek-crisis>, accessed March 1, 2018.
  24. Boris Buden, "The Post-Yugoslavian Condition of Institutional Critique: An Introduction
  25. On Critique as Countercultural Translation," European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies website (November 2007), accessed January 31, 2018, [http://eipcp.net/transversal/0208/buden/en/base\\_edit](http://eipcp.net/transversal/0208/buden/en/base_edit).