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AESTHETIC PRECARIOUSNESS

The condition of precariousness is an expanding and deepening phenomenon in the today's world. Since 2008, and particularly in a Europe hit by the economical and political crisis, precariousness has been settling down in the heart of our societies with the intention of sticking around and becoming structural. It is widely known that precariousness is affecting many of our economic activities, but also our cultural practices and forms of life. We could then ask ourselves, in which ways art and the experience of art are connected to this new condition of precariousness and what kind of consequences it is bringing about. How do the new processes of precarization affect art, as well as its production and reception? Precariousness, however, is nothing new. It is a defining category of our culture, a modernity where all that is solid melts into air. Baudelaire had already defined aesthetic modernity in terms of a precarious search "of the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent". But in the last decades, precariousness and precarity have been intensifying their presence in our capitalist, postmodern societies. As a result, precariousness has become a central feature distinctive of most contemporary artworks and art practices from the point of view of their ontology and reception. Undoubtedly, precariousness is not a new characteristic of art in general. Time destroys even pyramids and takes away meanings and values of surviving pieces. Performative arts were always perfectly ephemeral before the invention of recording technologies of sound and image. But even now, a record is a mere document, not the work itself. Nonetheless, the precarious condition of contemporary art is a specific property of our time and culture, not generalizable to previous times and other cultures. For the latter, concepts as fragility or vulnerability would be more appropriate, connected as they are with notions like contingency, transience and brittleness, which make general distinctions of cultural artefacts and even life. "Aesthetic precariousness" will be defined as a specific condition of contemporary art and aesthetics in late capitalist culture, a condition that has been deploying for more than a century, but has been exacerbated after the end of avant-gardes and intensified our post-global culture. Let's try to be descriptive. Precariousness is not necessarily a disorder in the sense of an illness. It is a disorder that creates a new order for artworks and practices, for kinds of publics and audiences, and for aesthetic judgement and art criticism. Some

contemporary philosophers such as Jacques Rancière or Christoph Menke have been rethinking and reconceptualising that precarious condition that makes contemporary aesthetics and art distinct. In such a way, precariousness is an essential trait of what Jacques Rancière calls “aesthetic regime” of art.¹ I shall try to summarize three relevant aspects of the “aesthetic precariousness”: 1) art as a precarious expression of that condition; 2) art as a precarious medium of reflection on that precarious condition; and 3) art-discourses (i.e., contemporary art criticism and philosophy) as precarious ways of discourse.

1. Art as expression of precariousness

It was Hegel who formulated the thesis that art, in a parallel way to philosophy, is an expression of its own time as well as a medium to comprehend it in a sensible way. If something distinguishes philosophy, art and discourses concerning art in the present day is their precarious condition. The category of precariousness defines our time and culture and goes beyond economic significance. Precariousness has little to do with our ontological condition of contingency, of contingent beings; it should also be distinguished from our human condition of vulnerable social animals. Our existence is contingent subdued as it is to the randomness of fate. Our dependency on society to provide for our needs and anyone or anything’s capacity to hurt us or put an end to our lives shows our vulnerable condition. Contingency and vulnerability are dimensions of our lives, which if slightly reduced, will never perish or disappear. Precariousness as understood here is something of a different nature. It is a product born in its entirety from capitalism, an economic order which shapes social relationships and cultural practices, including of course, art. The lives of our hunter-gatherer ancestors, masters and slaves, lords and serfs, were indeed contingent and vulnerable. Only the life of workers from modernity, in the capitalistic regime of social relations, can be precarious. I highlight “can” because capitalism has the tendency of encouraging precarization of all relations and social practices, but not necessarily. Over the last century, the precarization of productive relations has been successfully combated in many countries, including the artistic production. The struggle of the labour movement, left-winged political movements and the development of the Welfare State in some areas of the planet represented a force of containment from the precarization characterizing capitalism. But now we find ourselves at a step beyond the natural tendency of capitalism to extend precariousness to segments of society that are not actually indispensable for the system to continue reproducing itself on a bigger and bigger scale. Precariousness consists in turning that which is relatively secure and reliable into something of unstable nature, from work to art, from technologies to meaning, from

¹See Rancière 2004 and 2013.

values to truths. Marx had pointed out that with capitalism everything that is solid is dissolved into thin air. Art, which among other things is an expression of culture, reflects even better than fashion the mentioned logic behind capitalism, a logic which feeds, through its negativity, the need to conserve in some way everything which we are losing through precarization.

Precariousness is manifested in the ontology of art. Ontology is not here intended as a pompous term through which we can slip through some kind of art metaphysics. It is intended as a reference of the way and means of existence of art works, in terms of their material and cultural condition and their physical and communicative dimension. Since the ready-mades of Duchamp the ontological precariousness of the art properties is something well known and I am not going to dwell on the material and physical precariousness of contemporary art. Another defining characteristic of art is its condition of merchandize resulting from a capitalistic order. Precariousness obviously affects economy of art. Those that are not very familiar with the art world only become aware when they read or hear scandals published in the media on transgressive artworks which offend good conscience and are disrespectful to certain values and beliefs; or react with dismay to the news of the stratospheric prices of some artworks, or even the extravagant jet-set world in which some artists are immersed in. But this is only the superficial glitter of a world whose reality is actually very disparate. The majority of artists in the world are poor or live in modest conditions. The art world is actually much smaller than what is believed and the funding from public and private institutions which tends to be subject to interference by political powers,² is utterly less than that which is dedicated to sports. Since the start of the crisis in 2008 until today, except in some countries, the art world has suffered severe consequences similarly to cultural and non-cultural sectors. In some countries such as Spain, catastrophic consequences have resulted from the crisis and many try to elevate them as a life lesson for political action and thinking.³ It is extremely difficult to know the extent of what is currently happening in Spain and the transcendence of its consequences. As in other social and cultural sectors, we will only be able to know this with rigor after several years.⁴

However it is, art is before all else expression of this new precariousness. Let me begin with an example from the 55th Venice Biennale celebrated in 2013. In the Catalan pavilion, a piece called 25% is exhibited. It consists in a collective work which is developed from an idea of Francesc Torres working along the film maker Mercedes Álvarez and curated by Jordi Batlló, as well as the collaboration of eight unemployed from Barcelona and MACBA. It is a collective creation which is presented as a device to reflect on the appalling unemployment situation in Spain. In a reasoned process, eight

² In reference to Catalonia, see Marzo 2013.

³ There is growing literature concerning this topic. Merely as exemplification, Lorey 2012; the dossier of Museo Reina Sofía (2012: 3-11); or the monographic issue of *ONCURATING.org* (2013).

⁴ In any case, certain documents are being published. For example, the latest report by CoNCA (2013).

citizens were selected, young and elderly, men and women, with multiple social backgrounds, origins and professions all representing the army of the unemployed. Torres and Álvarez accompanied them on various days and documented their everyday by means of cameras and videotapes. They were asked to choose a personal object and were invited to MACBA, where they selected an artwork which they felt was the most representative of themselves. The chosen artworks – pieces by Hans Haacke, Perejaume, Carles Pazos, Allan Sekula, Jorge Oteiza, Esther Ferrer, Federico Guzmán and Jaume Xifra, all present in the installation of the Biennale- were complemented with reflections of the reasons of their choice, making the installation a singular one and resulting in a collective ensemble of exceptional force, one of radical contemporaneity. Contemporary art is a useful device to think of contemporaneity, and nothing defines ours as much as the precariousness which progressively transforms the lives of millions of citizens around the world.

25% is genuine work of artistic research by means of which the participants can learn a great deal of things and which proposes some minutes of reflection on the issue of unemployment to the spectator who is strolling around the pavilion contemplating videos, photographs, personal objects and artworks of consecrated artists. 25% does not however offer any theoretical description of unemployment or of the eight unemployed. Perhaps art critics, historians, sociologists or the general public could reach a theoretical conclusion as a categorical place of reflection or thinking when it is produced. A consequence which I believe results from experiencing the production of 25% is the refusal of the claim and belief that the majority of citizens are reluctant to contemporary art, as the reactions of the seven unemployed who had never visited the MACBA show. This installation shows that any citizen, if he or she has the opportunity, can find a place to interpret and think of his or her present. In order to reach this conclusion, myself and others have had to apply concepts and formulate statements which are not inherent in the piece. This means that works of art are devices for reflection, opportunities to think and not knowledge per se, as social sciences are. A work of art shows but does not say. As a means of knowledge, art is today very precarious. There are works of art which are comical, strange, surprising, which entertain us or are pleasurable, but 25% deals with a topic which is not at all humorous – on the contrary, many spectators have perhaps been invited to sad and lugubrious reflections, and others may have been impressed by the capacity of resistance and adaptation of those whose lives have been radically altered due to job loss and the changes that this imposes on living conditions and existential expectations. But, if a work of art is so precarious from the point of view of its cognitive and emotional effects, why should we then need art at all? My response would be that precisely in this condition of precariousness of the actual piece can we comprehend the truth of a current phenomenon. Art is not about theoretical truths or theory. It is about other types of truths and ways of comprehending. The sort of comprehension which we are dealing with is created by means of disturbances in one's knowledge and sensibility.

Let's stop for a moment and ponder over the mentioned artistic project in order to evaluate its merit. Can the work of Francesc Torres be considered a device which draws us to a closer comprehension of what a jobless life means, stimulating empathy, solidarity, and a critical spirit from citizenship? Does it eventually convert the public into more responsible and sensible citizens? I believe these would be some of the relevant questions for an artistic project as this one, aimed not so much at the cognitive elements of the installations but rather focusing on the effects on the spectator's thinking and reflection. All these effects are however precarious and the discomfort they brings us makes us see precariousness as a characteristic of contemporary society.

To complement the example given, another piece of work from the Spanish pavilion in the same biennale could be mentioned, an installation by an artist from Zaragoza, Lara Almarcegui, and commissary Octavio Zaya. The artist loaded the pavilion with rubble from a construction site: a load of bricks, cement, dirt, glass etc., all perfectly triturerated. They are all material from demolitions that could be used for recycling. The piece is called *Construction material from the Spanish Pavilion* and its significance is based on introducing into the same building, built in 1922 by the architect Javier de Luque, mounts of the same quantity of material which was employed to build it. Almarcegui has linked her work to a second project based on the Venetian island Sacca San Mattia, near the island of Murano, which was formed by means of rubble from construction sites and the glass industry. It looks as if neither the artist nor the commissary, perhaps because of their distanced residences – she lives in Holland and he lives in New York – imagined the possible and logical interpretations of many, who interpreted it as a practically literal metaphor of the critical Spanish situation following the real estate bubble deflation, and as such resulting in a project of perplexing obviousness bordering banality and costing no less than 800,000 euros. Indeed, Almarcegui's installation did not fulfil any of the ends which the artist had intended, but has served as a device for reflection on Spain's endemic malaise, including certain precarious intelligence of the state apparatus – in this case the agencies of the Ministry of Foreign affairs which were in charge – regarding issues of culture agency marked by complete fatuousness.

2. Art as a precarious medium of reflection

Art, as we have seen in our examples, is not only a sort of mirror of a world of increasing economic precarity and existential precariousness, but also a way to think about these realities. Hence, by art I mean a differentiated medium, which is side by side with the social sciences or philosophy, each a means to think about aspects of the world. Art as a differentiated medium can be distinguished from the social sciences in the sense that it does not produces knowledge in a strong sense, but instead consists in the production of devices for undetermined, reflective thought, generally functioning through the disturbance of our way of thinking and sensibility. In opposition, the social

sciences produce theoretical discourses, and in such a way offer direct knowledge. These devices referred to as works of art can carry an important role in the research of phenomena as well as in the production of knowledge, and thus artistic research can be considered a legitimate form of investigation. If we take on this notion of art, then we must agree on its potentiality as a medium not only to reflect but also to think about and look into the phenomenon of precariousness, which is developing around the world. It is of such possibility, which I intend to look into now: art as a medium for a critical comprehension of precariousness.

For a while now, many artists have made a note of these realities. Art works which address these realities in a particularly interesting way, are those of Thomas Hirschhorn, a Swiss artist based in Paris and whose installations have been awarded with worldwide recognition for at least a decade. Such recognition is due to his installations produced with precarious material, and the highly philosophically aware nature of his artwork, based on classics like Spinoza, Bataille or Deleuze, and regularly collaborating with philosophers such as Markus Steinweg. For over a decade, this artist has placed the notion of precariousness at the center of his artwork, in both the sense of the actual work being precarious in its materiality and in the sense that it speaks about and shows precariousness. I will only mention two of his artworks which are on art and philosophy (and of course, politics).

The first project that I would like to mention is the *Gramsci-Monument* that was exposed last summer in Forest Houses neighborhood, in the Bronx, New York City.⁵ It is a project requested by the Dia Art Foundation, whose objective is, according to the artist, fourfold: first of all, to establish a new notion of monument, in the sense of an artwork in the public space; secondly, to demonstrate the power that art has to encourage and provoke encounters as well as its power against the neutralization of culture and consumption; thirdly, to create an event, a place of encounter/occurrence that opens up a space for new perspectives; and lastly, to rethink Gramsci today. With those purposes in mind, Hirschhorn constructed a precarious installation in May 2013 which consisted of a platform, an archive, an Internet corner, a space for workshops, a common room, a library and exhibition space, a Gramsci bar, a radio station, banners and a newspaper, and was dismantled at the end of September. For 77 days, every day a different philosophical conference was delivered by Markus Steinweg, as well as other activities which generated a precarious community around the monument and different sorts of cooperative and participative encounters.

Hirschhorn's second project to be overviewed, *Musée Précaire Albinet*, was prior in time. It consists of a project produced at the request of Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers which reflects on the precariousness of art. It was built between November 2002 and

⁵The project consulted on the projects' website up to December 31, 2013, which, due to its ephemeral character disappeared on the last day of the year: <http://gramsci-monument.com/index.html>.

spring of 2004, and exhibited between March 29 and June 18 2004, in a Parisian housing project with its very same name. Unbuilt land was used to construct a series of spaces which housed an exhibition room, a conference hall and a bar. Precarious materials were used and neighborhood inhabitants participated in the construction, some of whom were also hired. For a period of eight weeks, artworks selected from the Paris Museum of Modern Art, the Fond National d'Art Contemporain, and from the Centre Pompidou were exhibited, such as works by Marcel Duchamp, Kasimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian, Salvador Dalí, Joseph Beuys, Andy Warhol, Le Corbusier and Fernand Léger. These artworks were activated on the basis of conferences, debates, creative writing workshops, children's workshops, outings and collective meals. This project was founded on the love of art and the conviction that individual encounters with artworks concern every individual and thus can change their lives. The project was the result of the desire to share this conviction with people who, due to social, economic, and cultural reasons do not have access to art. In such a way, the displacement of works of art into a housing project demonstrates the fact that art is an issue that can interest and concern any individual, if he or she is given the opportunity, as we were able to detect in Francesc Torres' work, 25%. Following the principle of feeling the presence of the artworks, events were developed on a daily basis being thus incorporated in the neighborhood's everyday life: a new exhibition, public inaugurations, collective meals; conferences were delivered by art historians, debates on sociopolitical issues, practical workshops for children, writing workshops led by writers, and cultural outings all organized on the basis of each exhibition. This project gathered more than forty inhabitants of the neighborhood, paid to participate in the construction and operation of the museum, and a considerably detailed training scheme was carried out for about fifteen people, between the ages of 18 and 25, who were regularly part of the museum's activities and had responsibilities in the running of the Precarious Museum.⁶

Ultimately, Hirschhorn's artworks appear as defiant to our understanding, a challenge to our capacity of comprehension. Aesthetic precariousness is emanated through the sense and meaning of the work, and also in the material, disposition and composition. The aesthetics of precariousness, this art of the precarious, is a very real and appropriate manner of producing political art today, a place to think and rethink aspects of our world, our culture and life, as well as a place of comprehension, of something that is more ambiguous and even beyond knowledge. Hirschhorn's artworks tend to supply the participant with stimuli tools and clues for every individual to elaborate within their own personal experience, work through the proposal in a

⁶ Information about this project can be obtained on the Laboratoires' website: <http://leslaboratoires.org/>, accessed March 11, 2015. See a reflection on the project by Haidu (2009: 215-237).

reflective way and thus tailor their own judgment of it. Hirschhorn's artworks in this sense boost critical thinking for those who are willing to take up the challenge. His works provoke sensitivity to such an extent that it is difficult to avoid the disturbances of sensibility lead to disturbances in knowledge.

3. Precariousness in discourses of art

I'll dedicate the last part of this essay to the concern of the precariousness of discourses. Some might doubt the importance of precariousness of art discourses when what is really important is art. If artworks are devices for boosting thought, and thus for the induction of certain type of knowledge, the discourses that unfold are thus of secondary importance. However, this is an erroneous consideration, as today, when we talk about contemporary art, artworks usually are nothing if lacking in discourse, if unaccompanied by its reasons, to the extent that often we would not see them as art.

It could be said that artworks are products of particular artistic practices. Sometimes they are in the format of an artifact, such as paintings, installations, photographs or videos; other times, as in the case of performances, we are not dealing with any artifact but the artwork consists in ephemeral actions and effects. A peculiar aspect of the art in the present day contrasting with the art of the past is that it is highly dependent on its reasons, that is, a discourse that accompanies it.⁷ Art has always had some sort of accompanying discourse in a written or oral form. In this sense ancient art is indistinguishable from art today. The nature and the status of this accompanying discourse however, has changed greatly over time, as well as the concepts and functionality of art itself, particularly from the XVIII century, which Rancière has referred as the "aesthetic regime" of art. An essential aspect of the history of modernity is the gradual precarization of the relationship between society, art, and discourse, particularly in the last century, to the point that what is most distinctive of art today is its precarious condition of existence. Among other things, this is made apparent by the growing presence of contemporary philosophy in the contemporary discourses in artistic phenomena – and in the artistic practices too. I'll try to explain myself.

Art discourses form a complex field of language interplay. Distinguishable by blurry barriers and frontiers, they share certain continuity with one another. Discourses ranging from positivist theory until philosophy, they stroll along diverse forms of critical theory and theory of art. The continuity of these discourses is exposed not only through its object of study, the artwork and the complex institutional machinery that they are contained by, but also because they all share some sort of implied or explicit philosophy. It might seem rather exaggerated to say that without philosophy there would not be a history of art, theory or criticism. But the fact that almost any text on

⁷See Vilar 2005.

contemporary art is stuffed or covered with citations by Benjamin, Foucault, Deleuze or Rancière, tells us that we are witnessing a discourse that is strongly intellectualized. In this type of intellectualized discourse the concept covers most of what is important while the aesthetic dimension is actually secondary, making its appreciation dependent on a familiar context that has to be understood. Since 1900, art has gradually been transforming itself into *performed theory*, which is what any piece is today, that is, a discourse or an idea in the form of an installation, video, dance or music piece or film. But which type of performed theory is a work of art? Two centuries ago, when Hegel established one of the first great narratives of art within his philosophical system, he had already realized that among certain tendencies which lead to the dissolution of Christian-bourgeois art – which he referred to as romantic – a growing reflective character of artistic practices could be detected which he considered were meant to end with the transformation of art defined as a form of truth in a transfigured form. Hegel was and was not right. He was in terms of the strength of his own concept – metaphysical – of art and philosophy as forms of the truth in capitals; he was not right from our understandig – postmetaphysical – of the same concepts. Truth is no longer the business of art but neither philosophy's. The conceptualization of art has gradually transformed itself becoming more dependent on philosophy, while at the same time transforming itself into a cultural phenomenon characterized by its precariousness and accidentality, as Hegel argued. The differences between a painting by Jacques-Louis David and an installation by Jeremy Deller or Antoni Muntadas are not only noticeable in the means used and the meanings which are developed, but also in their place and cultural status. Art today no longer incarnates great religious truths nor is a means towards the progress of humanity, nor it is defined by its place outside popular culture, the cultural industry and entertainment society as it was in the avant-garde period. In a time where merchandize has triumphed, the autonomous art which Adorno defended and Benjamin's redeeming art are no longer possible. Today, the concepts of popular and elitist art no longer have sense. The old society of the spectacle has succumbed to the apparition of internet and social networks. The process of democratization of art has made a new leap with the turn of the century. Instead of a few artists producing artworks and texts for the majority as in high modernism, today *jederman is ein Künstler* (we are all artists) as Joseph Beuys anticipated. Because also everybody is a critic, millions of works and texts are generated today for select circles of people, acquaintances and friends who are concerned with the theme in question and dedicate the limited available time contemplating and reading them. Art today is not for elites but for fortuitous and changing minorities. So, where do we stand on this matter? If the visibility of art is virtual and dedicated only to a minority, what is the point of art today? These are the same questions that were raised in the first period of modernity: "why poets in times of destitution?", asked Hölderlin at the beginning of the XIX century. Want it or not, anybody who ponders over these inevitable questions will find their feet sunk in philosophy or will be driven to find these answers with the aid of philosophy.

Philosophy today, however, unlike other better times, cannot offer art nor its thinkers, a solid and safe umbrella. On the contrary, philosophy today is as others, an enterprise which is tormented by precariousness and is far away from the truth, in the same way that art is. Philosophy, which at a time aspired to find real truth, has also been subdued into a process of precariousness from the times of the Enlightenment, to the point that, after Wittgenstein and Heidegger – and except with analytic scholasticism – philosophy has become a creative and illuminating practice, rather than a problem-solving one. Philosophical problems and concerns have no real solutions, because if they have solution then they are scientific, not philosophical ones. Philosophical problems only formulate themselves in productive or rather sterile ways in the light of new historical constellations.⁸ The philosophical market today offers as much choice as a regular supermarket does. Choosing a philosophy is more complex and difficult than the choice a rational consumer has to make, because of all the philosophies which have claims to truth, which one is the true one? Even if one of them was, how could we know? For a while now, philosophical knowledge today has become much more precarious than in past times. In such a way, the task of thinking contemporary art is that of thinking about precariousness in a precarious way. How is that even possible? How should we think about art that is alive? Perhaps art can tell us weak but universal truths of the contemporary world, but can we think and say truths about contemporary art? Doesn't this question reflect the romantic claim of loading art with a too heavy transcendence? Aren't we still fighting against that romantic concept of art?

The only possible way to think of the precarious in a precarious way is to embrace this condition, not avoid it or try to fight it, thus accepting the inevitable tensions and even contradictions which this could imply. This is not so easy. Far from negligible, but embraced by the majority, there is a tendency of discourses on art today which turn to philosophy in search of illuminating and theoretically productive concepts, and also to shelter themselves within an authority which grants legitimacy and correction, also epistemic that is, in search of shelter in truth, as an escape from the inevitable precariousness of discourse. Resembling those who in the past looked for legitimacy for artistic practices in meta-narratives, today Benjamin, Deleuze and Rancière are resorted to as legitimizing authorities. But the substitution of Althusser with Guattari or Nancy, often places the discourse about art in a mistaken place which is more characteristic of the past. Fortunately, some contemporary thinkers are more difficult to utilize as if they were archaic authorities. Such is the case of Boris Groys, an intelligent post-marxist with a growing reputation in the world of contemporary art, which has referred to the precarious condition of contemporary art and discourse as weak universalism.⁹ There

⁸ Philosophy can not be a discourse oriented to solve philosophical problems without being primarily a creative activity, a writing that invents and reinvents its own vocabulary and its own arguments.

⁹ See Groys 2010.

still exists a connection between art and discourse with truth, but it has to go through precariousness: contemporary art has the ability to show the transitory character of today's world, as well as its lack of time of fullness, and this lacking can transcend even with a weak and minimum gesture, which is the typical contemporary gesture of transfiguring that which is known and familiar, the commonplace, or anything really into art, as an artistic symbol which we are not able to distinguish from the real object which belongs to the everyday, and such situation gives us an opportunity to think critically of some aspect of the world and ourselves. The weak universalism of art and its theory today, however, depend on the fact the distinction between art and life, the distinction between the artistic and the everyday experienced being maintained. Otherwise, this peculiar way of thinking which we denominate art would disappear in the fluxes of life, of the commonplace; it would dissolve itself as a mere cultural practice among other things. There is no guarantee of this not happening. The denominated end of art is one that is a constant threat to contemporary artists, but is surely far from being fulfilled. On the contrary, as many theorists have pointed out, there are many signs, which invite us to consider that the extension of the concept of art makes it very present in ordinary and everyday life. This can be called artification, a process in which things not considered as art, like Hirschhorn projects, end up being considered as such.¹⁰ One needs to be careful with the use of such term, as it can lead to different interpretations – as the beautification or aestheticization – as operation of converting anything into a device for aesthetic reflection in the sense that Duchamp, Cage, Kaprow and Kosuth did, as well as an infinite list of performers, dancers, cooks, and in general any citizen with their cameras, blogs and social networks. If we are on the right track, if this theory is correct in contrast with the death of art, what we have here is the triumph of artification of multiple spheres of everyday life. While in the past one had to look for art in certain places which were controlled by an elite of experts and powerful people – as museums or private collections – today we can find art anywhere, we are all artists and art theorists. Universalism of art is not then the universalism of avant-gardes, a strong universalism which created a lot of the a priori of our regime of visibility, but is rather a weak universalism of photographs that come or could come from a family album or a mini-narrative that I have posted on my blog. This universalism is precarious, but let's not cheat ourselves, weak and precarious is also the status of the artworks of the well-known, be it William Kentridge or Marina Abramovic just as they are the philosophical discourses on art of Jacques Rancière or Boris Groys.

¹⁰ About "artification" (*artification, Verkunstung*) see the publication dedicated to this topic in CA (2012). From the point of view of a sociologist, see Heinich and Shapiro 2012.

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