

## ABSTRACTS

**Guillaume Alevêque**

### **What is an idol? From Christian iconoclasm to contemporary art in French Polynesia**

In the early 19th century, the conversion of Polynesia to Christianity led to the effigies of divinities being destroyed or collected by the London Missionary Society, whose evangelisers established a strict ban on religious images. Until recently any pre-Christian images inadvertently uncovered were still shunned or destroyed because they represented a supernatural threat. Currently, the reproduction of these images is part of the reappropriation of cultural heritage. But depending on the desire of the artist and those who handle or display a reproduction, it may still be seen as an *ātene* (heathen) object. This article combines ethnographic study with the history of Christian missionary work to analyse the influence of conversion iconoclasm on the formation of contemporary Polynesian art and the manner in which it is presented in public space.

**Key words:** French Polynesia, iconoclasm, missionary work, contemporary art, heritagisation

**Enrico Camporesi**

### **“Have to saturate myself with Brancusi!” Notes on Paul Sharits’s journey to Târgu Jiu**

In 1977, when the American visual artist Paul Sharits (1943-1993) was visiting the sculpture ensemble in Târgu Jiu, Romania, he made a documentary on Constantin Brâncuși. It is a one-off in his filmography, showing a deep interest in the work of the Romanian sculptor that goes beyond mere artistic influence. This article reconstructs from unpublished archive material the origins and ramifications of this singular reinterpretation of the work by another artist. As Sharits looks at Brâncuși he is operating on at least three levels: using the sculpture as a theoretical tool to plan the disposition of his film productions; outlining the working hypotheses of an art historian; and beginning, via Brâncuși, a dialogue with the artists of his own time, such as Lynda Benglis.

**Key words:** artist’s film, film on art, artist as art historian, minimal art, Paul Sharits, Constantin Brâncuși

**Sandrine Colard-de Bock**

### **Archival Turn Table. Listening to remix in the work of Sammy Baloji**

Remix is a concept widely used in critical discourse on contemporary African arts and in particular the archival turn. This essay explores this analogy by examining the collage work of the DRC artist Sammy Baloji—the *Mémoire* (2006-2007) and *Congo Far West* (2011) series— and analysing it through the art historian Tina Campt’s theoretical lens concerning the “frequencies” of the photographic image. By replacing the remix phenomenon in its Afro-descendant historical, cultural and political context, the article suggests a reinterpretation of Sammy Baloji’s photographic collage technique as the manipulations of the frequencies of the image and as post-colonial resistance.

**Key words:** contemporary art, Democratic Republic of Congo, archival turn, Sammy Baloji, contemporary African photography, remix, theory of photography

**Hugo Daniel**

### **“Where is the vandal?” History and values of graffiti in France from 1945 to 1968**

In the years immediately following the Second World War in France, the political nature of graffiti became fully visible, and later exploded publicly in May 1968. It is against that background that the association of graffiti with vandalism and iconoclasm was both strengthened and interrogated, in a debate that reveals the profound ambiguity of this form of action at once constructive and destructive. In this revival of theoretical and practical interest in graffiti, the protagonists differed for reasons that were more political than aesthetic. Guy Debord and Michèle Bernstein as part of the Situationist International saw it as a direct political means of action with an artistic purpose concerned with “surpassing art”, while Asger Jorn considered that the “vandalising” aspect of graffiti, with all its paradoxes and ambiguities, was a way of interrogating artistic values and the sense of iconoclastic acts, in a context of a problematic cultural and regionalist opposition. From the interrogation of the effectiveness of artistic creation there emerged a purpose that was anything but aesthetic, but rather social, cultural and symbolic. The history of graffiti provides an opportunity to re-examine the shifts that occurred among the protagonists and themes of Lettrism, the Situationist International, Jean Dubuffet and the political movements and events of their time. Interrogating the values of graffiti leads to an inter-connecting history of art and politics.

**Key words:** iconoclasm, vandalism, May 1968, graffiti, politics, popular art, Situationist International, Lettrism, Guy Debord, Asger Jorn, Isidore Isou, Jean Dubuffet

**Diego Madi Dias**

### **The theatre of the Guna Revolution (1925). Amerindian mythopractice and ritual representation of suffering**

The issues addressed in this study of the theatre of the Guna Revolution come from Edmund Leach’s major insight (1954) that “to understand the ethical rules of a society, it is aesthetics that

we must study”. The working hypothesis here is that the aesthetics of drama among the Guna people are a key subject of research for understanding their social ethics. The aim of this article is to provide new evidence for the debate on art, politics and social memory via a discussion of “moral heritage”, namely the set of values that are to be staged, asserted, preserved and transmitted. Using the example of Guna community theatre it is possible to consider an updated definition of “heritage” that includes both mnemonic and emotional activities. The approach used in this article owes much to the perspective initiated by Carlo Severi’s research into Guna shamanism as a ritual representation of suffering. On the basis of an ethnography of the performances the author witnessed in the village of Uggubseni in February 2017, it proposes an analysis of community theatre as a way of producing relational positions or identifications that combine myth, history, ritual and clan relations through the experience of pain and suffering. This is an examination of community theatre using the pragmatic theory of ritual put forward by Carlo Severi and Michael Houseman.

**Key words:** ritual action, collective suffering, myth and history, cosmopolitics, Amerindian ethics, Guna (Kuna)

**Amandine Rabier**

### Can pastiche replace the original? James Woodmason and the vicissitudes of the New Shakespeare Gallery

Following the example of John Boydell’s Shakespeare Gallery, James Woodmason opened his Irish Shakespeare Gallery in Dublin in 1793 but it was a failure. The following year he opened a New Shakespeare Gallery in London and it too failed. Boydell’s gallery, for all its chaotic running, left a lasting mark on English illustration in the 18th and 19th centuries, whereas Woodmason’s two ventures were soon forgotten. Why did one man succeed and the other so completely fail? We shall see that the gallery, as it developed in late 18th-century Britain, was both an exhibition space and a print museum in which engravings took on a major role in displaying and marketing historical paintings. Woodmason thought that his connections with inventors in the field of mechanical copying would enable him to earn a profit from his gallery by selling engravings. This aim led him unwittingly to overturn aesthetic codes, challenge the status of a picture, its originality, reproduction and market value. It is these artistic upheavals that this article describes.

**Key words:** gallery, show, mechanical copying, New Shakespeare Gallery, Polygraphic Society, copy, imitation, invention, original, creation, historical painting, engraving

**Irina Tcherneva**

### The image of crime shaped by changing views. The story of Yosef Kuzkovski’s *The Last Way* (1944-1970)

This article examines the role of painting and artists in the shaping of the memory of the Holocaust in Soviet Latvia after the Second World War. The story of the painting *The Last Way* (1944-1948), dealing with the extermination of Jews at Babi Yar in Nazi-occupied Ukraine, and of its painter, Yosef Kuzkovski, throws light on the changing representation of the genocide halfway

between public and private lives. The successive views of the painting illustrate the circulation of visual codes, many and various. These codes fashioned a certain view that was challenged in the early 1960s, when the political authorities and media required a large amount of visual material (films, photographs, drawings and sculptures) to mobilise the public memory of Nazi crimes. As the succession of trials for crimes against humanity advanced, *The Last Way*, like a magnet, gave a structure to the communities of memory formed at citizens' initiative. Analysis of the reception and re-use of the painting reveals the widening gap between those groups acting as alternative protagonists in the narrative of Nazi crimes and the political and legal authorities.

**Key words:** Soviet painting, Holocaust, reception, community of memory, Nazi crimes, Soviet Latvia, Yosef Kuzkovski