Boundaries and Magic Tricks

Jean-Marc Poinsot
Translator: Simon Pleasance

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“Is there a history of boundaries in the arsenal of modern imagery?”

Posed in this way, the issue raised by Anselm Franke in “Across the Rationalist Veil”, an article written in 2009 which we are translating in relation to his current curatorship of the Shanghai Biennial, may seem dogmatic, were we not to bear in mind his interest in magic tricks as practiced by artists, and “the role aesthetics holds in both transgressing and constituting the modern border-space”.

What is theorized by Anselm Franke is to be found at the heart of the discussions referred to by Larys Frogier (“Practicing Exhibitions to Re-map Asia”, p. 14) and Peggy Wang (“New Narratives of Contemporary Chinese Art”, p. 28) about biennials in Asia and the history of Chinese art, respectively. The former emphasizes recompositions which go beyond and transgress States (we won’t use the word ‘nation’, because the geopolitical issue of territorial divisions is still at crisis point). Larys Frogier underlines the fact that there are paradigms for constructing curatorial narratives other than those favoured by western curators around arguments which are, in a very general sense, anthropological. He gives an idea of this in his evocation of Park Chan-Kyong’s “Ghosts, Spies and Grandmothers” for the Seoul biennial. His submissions, and those of Peggy Wang and Anselm Franke strike the same chord, but it may also be the case that their reluctance with regard to a modern “self-realizing” rationality finds an echo in Marc Décimo’s areas of investigation as examined by Christian Besson, and in Larisa Dryansky’s introduction to Ann Reynolds’s works.

This 44th issue of Critique d’art challenges more than a few other just as stimulating issues which—I both fear and hope—will not spare readers from carrying their thoughts over into the books themselves, and not only into their recapitulations. A summary of this issue would not be apt, insomuch as the articles by our contributors have already had to offer very short summaries of the books which our readers will have to refer to. So we advise just a plurality of readings, which will plunge you into the exciting, albeit
illuminating, realms of doubt proposed not only in the printed review, but also in the 384 reading notes associated with this issue, and published online.  

NOTES

1. Franke, Anselm. “A travers le voile rationaliste”, *Critique d’art*, n°44, spring/summer 2014, p.112
4. [http://critiquedart.revues.org](http://critiquedart.revues.org)