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In Praise of Translation – Recent Intermedial Transpositions in Video, Print and Installation

Abstract

In this essay different approaches to recycling images, generated by diverse technologies from historical print to most recent digital video, are discussed with reference to the notion of translation. In a broad interpretation of the notion of 'recycling,' the concept and practice of 'translation' serves as a methodological tool. Specifically, it aids the elucidation not only of the reusing of imagery, but of media and processes in the context of 'expanded printmaking' as a vital aspect of intermediality (or interdisciplinarity) in contemporary art. Despite the fact that prints and printmaking are an undertheorised area of contemporary art, various modes of historical, as well as more recent print practices lend themselves to appropriation, adaptation and recycling, and the utilization of the critical potential that these approaches afford.

Addressing questions of the nature of camera image, time and labour, German Christiane Baumgartner transposes video footage into the historical technique of xylography. Columbian Oscar Muñoz reprocesses photo booth type 'portraits' through a performative modus of printing, which involves screen printing with charcoal dust on water. Thus, he stages a complex interrogation of various media and their role in identity construction as well as their specific political connotations. Regina Silveira's *Mundus Admirabilis* (2008) appropriates 18th and 19th century entomological print forms, combines them with ceramics and textiles, and transforms the gallery space with plotter-cut vinyl into an immersive environment with a unique aesthetic, political and affective charge. My essay starts from the assumption that in the selected art works conventions and systems of value that are associated with materials and images undergo a change that is comparable to linguistic translation. In this way, the three chosen artists' transpositional strategies not only extend notions affiliated with media and processes, they also question established values of originality, authorship and cultural conceptualizations of the copy.

Keywords: translation, copy, intermediality, contemporary art, expanded printmaking.

In this essay different approaches to the recycling of images are discussed with reference to the notion of translation. The images are generated by diverse technologies, from historical print to most recent digital video. In a broad interpretation of the notion of 'recycling,' the con-

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cept and practice of 'translation' will serve as a methodological tool. Specifically, it aids in the elucidation not only of the recycling of imagery, but of media and processes in the context of 'expanded printmaking' as a vital aspect of intermediality (or interdisciplinarity) in contemporary art.[1] Despite the fact that prints and printmaking are an undertheorized area of contemporary art, various modes of historical, as well as more recent print practices lend themselves to appropriation, adaptation and recycling. Such artistic methods draw on and foreground the critical potential that these approaches can afford.

Hence my aim is to study closely what such 'translations' mean in the context of an expanded or intermedial print practice. I am going to do this by investigating the work of three artists whose practices involve the deployment of various established, as well as unusual media and procedures. I will principally focus on the temporal, spatial, aesthetic and material operations that are involved, including associated notions and systems of value and other cultural significations.

Of course, printmaking has a long established history of adaption or translation of works that were initially executed in another medium, such as painting and drawing, and now photography and video. This practice continues, especially (but not only) in the most prominent and pervasive examples of printmaking that enter the circuit of international contemporary art.[2] In contrast, the artists under consideration here employ modes of printmaking in conjunction with other media or processes to create their work. Of relevance are the specific combinations in one work of different media and their distinctive nature.

While not necessarily representative of the most common expressions of such media composites, the chosen artists are typical of the pervasive multi- or intermedial approach of contemporary art as it pertains to printmaking.[3] Printmaking has always had a close affinity to being a 'multi-medium,' due to its diverse manifestations as 'printed matter,' such as illustrated books, posters and so on, and also due to its proximity to translation. Furthermore, in addition to translation, the notion of the 'copy' is built into printmaking. One might even speak of printmaking's 'privileged' connection or affinity with the copy due to the various transfer processes that are involved in making a print, especially the presence of a matrix from which the image issues.[4] Recent heterogeneous print practices thus revisit printmaking's always already multiple identities while rejigging and expanding them.

Translation

I am following one prominent strand in translation studies that has been taken up in visual cultural discourse by authors such as Bal and Morra, who define translation 'as a poetic, hermeneutic, political and experiential mode' (9).[5] The word 'translation' denotes the activity of a translator (Bal's 'experiential' element), but also the end result of the process of translating, the translated text (which in its turn elicits another experiential mode, namely its reading/reception by an audience). In the present context

this differentiation is important, as it places a certain emphasis on the production, that is, the performative element that is the making of an artistic work as well as the final 'product,' the work of art and its relationship with the viewer/audience. Translation also encompasses the 'crossing of boundaries between media' with which I am concerned here (Bal and Morra 6).

As evident, I am using the concept of translation in its broadest sense of transformation. Philosopher John Sallis, in his discussion of *Midsummer Night's Dream* with its multiple translations, states: 'Most obtrusively presented is the sense of translation as change in form, condition, appearance, or substance, translation as transformation, as transmutation' (31-32). It is to be noted that translation does not only affect the 'target' language, i.e. the language into which a given text is translated. As Fabbri observes, 'to some extent' translation 'compensates for defects of the [original] text' (189), in other words, the source language is affected too. He links this compensatory quality of translation with 'Peirce's "infective" notion by which meaning accretes in translation' (ibid). As the ambiguous connotations of the adjective 'infective' suggest, such alterations to both languages or semiotic systems can be regarded as positive, as an increase in meaning, effect, affect or, alternatively, as the 'perversion' of the initial text/language/semiotic system.[6] In the context of intermedial practices this 'perversive' capacity of translation is hugely attractive and even instrumental for artists who are interested in making visible and/or subverting established material, media and/or broader cultural and political values and hierarchies.

It is to these aspects of translation that I will refer in my discussion of the chosen artists.

Intermediality

Despite different approaches and methodologies in various fields that have been debating the concept in recent years, there is, according to literary theorist Irina Rajewsky, agreement as to 'the definition of intermediality *in its broadest sense.* It refers to relations between media, to medial interactions and interferences.' Hence, it can be applied 'to *any* phenomenon involving more than one medium' and 'thus to any phenomenon that – as indicated by the prefix *inter* – … takes place *between* media. Accordingly, the crossing of media borders has been defined as a founding category of intermediality' (51-52).

Rajewsky is fully aware of the conceptual problematics that is entailed in the underlying assumption of fixed media 'with tangible borders.' This is especially so, if one takes on board W J T Mitchell's questioning of the 'premise of discernable media boundaries' and his much-quoted assertion that 'all media are mixed media' (215). In other words, Rajewesky notes, 'medial purity precepts should themselves be understood as discursive effects and thus, not least, as the result of procedures of power, of inclusion and exclusion' (52).[7]

Given this theoretical critique and the tendency in art works of the last decades 'towards … a dissolution of the boundaries between different art forms' (52), it seems, as Rajewsky herself acknowledges, somewhat 'démodé' to debate intermediality. Yet, she asserts the necessity to speak about (media) borders, since 'any kind of theoretical dismantling of the term "intermediality" is confronted with concrete intermedial practices in the arts for which … media borders and media specificities are indeed of crucial importance' (53).[8]

Therefore, Rajewski exhorts, 'we need to ask (not to cease to speak of) what we mean when we talk about "individual media," medial specificities or of crossing media borders.' In other words, the often cavalier critical attitude and theoretical vagueness regarding much current art practice demands a consideration of actual media transformations and the notion of media boundaries that are entailed therein.

Hence, Rajewsky proposes intermediality as a 'critical category for the concrete analysis of individual medial configurations' (54). As there is not 'the **one** criterion of a medial border crossing' [my emphasis] this requires a way 'to distinguish groups of phenomena, each of which exhibit a distinct intermedial quality and a particular way of crossing media borders' (55).

Rajewsky proposes three intermedial categories:

1. '**medial transposition** (Medienwechsel), also referred to as medial transformation, as, for example, film adaptations of literary texts.' (In other words the phenomenon which has been defined elsewhere as 'transmedial,' as discussed earlier.)

2. '**media combination** (Medienkombination), which includes phenomena such as opera, film, theatre …. Sound Art installations … or to use another terminology, so-called multimedia, mixed-media and intermedia forms.'

3. '**intermedial references** (intermediale Bezüge), for example, references in a literary text to a specific film, film genre or film qua medium (that is, so-called filmic writing), likewise references in a film to painting, or in a painting to photography and so on' (55).[9]

Implied in such operations is the presumption of '*a priori*, conventional delimitations of those media or art forms' (60). This means that '"the idea" of one or another individual medium *can be*, and … frequently *is*, called upon in the recipient' and is equally available to the producer/artist (ibid). Obviously, any answer as to what an 'idea' or conventional attributions of a medium/art form are, is dependent on and varies with 'the historical and discursive contexts and the observing subject or system' (61). Furthermore, as with translation, 'the overall actualisation or realisation of the other medial system is impossible.' Put quite simply, 'dance theatre cannot truly become painting.' Here medial specificities and borders emerge, which make clear that certain basic medial constraints must be considered' (62). One could add that it is often precisely such differences, or even constraints, that are of interest to artists.

Rajewsky's conclusion attests to the productiveness of a reflection on the notion of 'borders' or 'border zones' between media. The latter can be understood 'as enabling structures, as spaces in which we can test and experiment with a plethora of different strategies' (65).[10] Similarly, Marie-Laure Ryan's comments, made in reference to genre, medium and narrative, capture a related, vital point in my view. Ryan points out that media 'should not be regarded as collections of properties that rigidly constrain [the form of narrative], but rather as sets of virtualities which may or may not be actualised, and are actualised differently by every instance of the medium' (290). In addition to exploring the specific medial strategies, it is with this sense of media as virtualities that I approach the activities of the chosen artists.

Copy

Canadian philologist Marcus Boon maintains that, culturally, a comprehensive rethinking of our attitudes to notions of the copy is necessary. As he points out, despite the fact that copying and the copy are a 'pervasive' feature of (not just contemporary) culture and life itself, 'there seems to be an almost total lack of context for understanding what it means to copy, what a copy is, what the uses of copying are' (6). His book attempts to redress these lacunae by taking the notion of the copy beyond 'the legal-political constructions which dominate thinking about copying today' (8).

I am particularly interested in the relationship of the notion of the 'copy' with repetition. Boon declares that 'one simple way to put it is that a copy is a repetition' (81). He places the copy in analogy to repetition when he cites Deleuze's much-quoted statement from *Difference and Repetition*. Deleuze argued that we can understand repetition only '"once we realise that variation is not added to repetition in order to hide it, but is rather its condition or constitutive element, the interiority of repetition par excellence"' (qtd in Boon, 81). Just as difference is constitutive of repetition, so, Boon argues, 'copia necessarily involves variation in the constitution of what we call "copies"' (81). Referring to Gabriel Tarde, the French sociologist whose ideas on repetition were instrumental for Deleuze amongst others, Boon suggests that in repetition/copying 'something else happens.' 'Difference manifests itself in repetition and marks a transformation that happens within repetition' (91).

Taken in such generalised terms the notion of copy/repetition as difference/variation may appear rather too pat. Yet the point I want to make is this: While the concepts of intermediality/translation allow us to take a closer look at the differences/variations involved in intermedial art practices, due to cultural and disciplinary conditioning we generally tend to emphasise variation/difference over the copy/repetition factor. Therefore it strikes me as worthwhile to repeat [sic] the emphasis on copy/repetition. Rather than displacing the focus from the copy on to translation, I would therefore like to place it right into the centre of the reflection on translation and intermediality.

Artists

I encountered the work of the three artists in the context of *Philagrafika*, the inspiring biennial print exhibition, curated by José Roca in Philadelphia, USA, in 2009/10.[11]

Addressing questions of the nature of the camera image, time and labour, German Christiane Baumgartner transposes video footage into the historical technique of xylography. Columbian Oscar Muñoz reprocesses photo booth type 'self-portraits' through a performative modus of printing that involves screen printing with charcoal dust on water. Thus, he stages a complex interrogation of various media and their role in identity construction as well as their specific political connotations. Regina Silveira's *Mundus Admirabilis* (2008) appropriates 18th and 19th century entomological print forms, combines them with ceramics and textiles, and transforms the gallery space with plotter-cut vinyl into an immersive environment with a unique aesthetic, political and affective charge. Printmaking is an important constituent in each artist's approach, even if only one (Baumgartner) can be called a 'printmaker.'

In the chosen art works conventions and systems of value that are associated with materials and images undergo a change that is comparable to linguistic translation. The artists' transpositional strategies not only extend notions affiliated with media and processes, they also question established values of originality, authorship and cultural conceptualisations of the copy.

The first work I wish to consider is that of Christiane Baumgartner. Her wood cuts of the urbanised landscape are based on and filtered through the medium of video. The ancient relief technique of the wood cut has experienced a much-commented upon revival in recent years.[12] Yet, the combination of wood cut and video is relatively new,
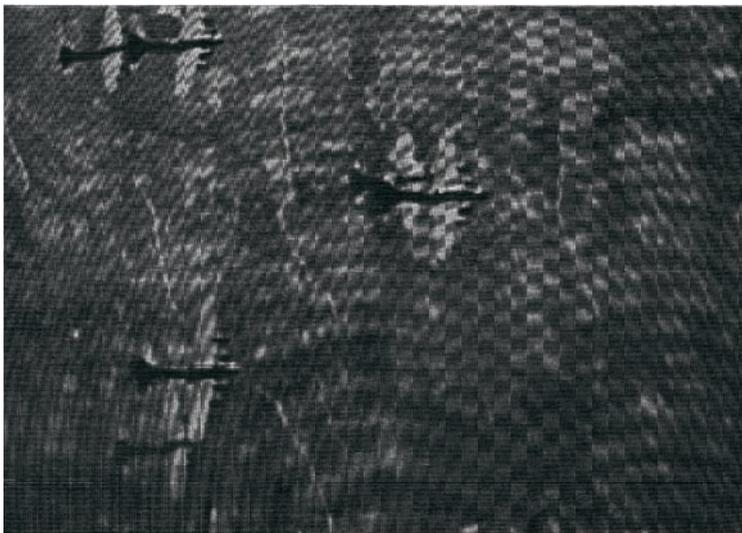

Fig. 1. Christiane Baumgartner 'Luftbild' 2008/9, Woodcut on Kozo paper, 260 x 350 cm / 102.4 x 135.8" (Image courtesy of Christiane Baumgartner and Alan Christea Gallery © DACS).

although not unique.[13] Baumgartner translates these two historically and technically diverse image technologies into an intermedial fusion or an 'intermedial referencing,' in Rajewsky's terms, where only one of the employed media manifests itself. This conflation sets both individual media in relief (pun intended), in other words, it allows a deconstruction of the 'idea' of their 'conventional' qualities (Rajewski). Their combination also results in 'the accretion of meaning' as noted by Fabbri in respect of the transformation between two signifying systems.

Baumgartner invades the stilled, singular video image with dark and light horizontal lines. Although suggestive of the graphism of analogue video 'noise,' these lines may be inspired but are not truly caused by this familiar pattern.[14] The image or scene emerges, ostensibly, in spite of this 'noise.' But this is not so. It is perfectly possible to translate the densely graded tonal structure of a camera image into a relief process such as the woodcut by following the tonal gradations through a varied texture of incisions as, for example, in Vija Celmins's *Ocean Surface Woodcut* (1992). Baumgartner employs a different method. The positive-negative relationship which conventionally defines the relief technique of the woodcut consists in the literal exposure of the drawn (and to-be printed) line that describes its object or image area by cutting away anything that is extraneous to it.[15] This is in contrast to the incising of the descriptive line in etching or engraving. In Baumgartner's case, it is really the 'noise' or interference in form of horizontal (or patterned) lines which reveals the image/scene and not, as often in the conventional woodcut, the contouring lines or areas. Only by alternating the width and texture of the repeated line is the object/image represented.

If the line of the woodcut traditionally helps to represent the actual object/scene, it often does so transparently, without ostensibly drawing attention to itself, although there are ample historical and more recent examples where the opposite is the case.[16] But in Baumgartner's print the insistent, repetitive wefting foregrounds the mechanistic, mediated operation of the technique. Moreover, the image is re-constructed as a mere surface or screen, as well as a represented scene. Despite the fact that the straight line in modernity has come to be identified with machine-like precision, this is not the case here.[17] By the same token, the evidence of the artist's touch in the lines' wavering, slightly undulating quality is not symptomatic of an expressive, unitary self. It acts more as a reminder, an index of bodily discharge and manual labour rather than as the expression of an inner self. Hence it points to rather than divulges the personal. Besides, such performative markers of the artist's toil place her into a broader socio-economic framework, as represented by the increasing intermeshing of the body with technology and the changes that ensue for both self and work (artistic and non-artistic). Still, the densely worked surface yields an affective charge that counteracts the seemingly neutral geometry of image and lines.

In the language of the woodcut, its basic functioning as a mere alteration between or repetition of light and dark, of the black ink and the whitish colour of the paper are exposed. Simultaneously, in addition to the analogue video with its linear graphic or-

ganisation, as we have seen, the underlying structure of the digital image with its binary on/off mode are referenced. Thus, the means of this particular intermedial fusion, of the analogue/digital video still and the wood cut, are foregrounded.

Besides, Baumgartner's linear manoeuvres complicate the visibility of the image, quite literally: Up close, her images seem to dissolve and are not only unrecognisable but almost vertigo-inducing. It is only by searching for an appropriate distance, depending on the size of the image at which the viewer is looking, that a decipherable 'scene' becomes apparent.[18] Metaphorically such manoeuvres remind the viewer of the lack of translatability that is part and parcel of all images and vision itself (Derrida; Garner, 60ff). More specifically, such intrusive meddling is pertinent to the automatic realism that is still implied by the camera image, notwithstanding the possibilities of digital manipulation.

In other respects too, Baumgartner's uni-dimensional adaptations turn out to be revelatory devices. The derivation of the single image from potentially thousands of moving frames is intimated by an apparent arbitrariness in terms of the chosen subject, view and composition. It is through these iconographic terms that the images exhibit their banal medial source. The subject matter consists of ostensibly mundane 'non-places' (Augé), such as the motorway in *Lisbon I-IV* (2001) or a generic looking, mechanically planted or 'fabricated' forest in *Deutscher Wald* (2007).[19] Even if one disregards the multifarious translation or copying processes during the production of the image [20] and concentrates on the iconography, one could argue that the source image already possesses the character of a copy: One motorway is like any other, the perfect simulacrum; an industrialised forest is similarly a copy of a copy of a copy and so on. Moreover, Baumgartner's apparently random, 'artless' framing with its 'point-and-shoot' quality further emphasises the copy character of the image as a multiple. This is made particularly evident in a series like *Lisbon I-IV* which does comprise of four nearly identical images that are selected from the video stream. Hence, in terms of iconography, it is appropriate to speak of the resulting individual images as repetitions with variations.

Baumgartner's intermedial wefting (or patterning) recasts the age-old print technique of the wood cut as a repetitive, mechanistic, 'mediated' operation. Concurrently her procedure injects time and movement into the still image, thereby transposing characteristic elements of the moving image into the stationary wood cut. This comprises not only the seemingly indiscriminate halting of the moving image but also the far more arresting stillness that comes from the condensation of time through intensive and prolonged labour. The result of this intermedial fusion is the haptic, affective and conceptual transformation of both media and the attendant 'accretion of meaning,' as noted by Fabbri.

The second work that I am considering is Columbian artist Oscar Muñoz's *Narcissi in process*. This piece, started in 1994, consists of a set of on-going photographic self-portraits, or, to be more precise, of photo booth images based on the artist's face. Unusually, these are printed with charcoal dust on water in shallow vitrines by a spe-

cially developed screen printing method. The containers are lined with paper, often maps or other printed matter, which is sometimes torn. Onto this 'ground' the pigment eventually settles during the gradual evaporation of the water. In terms of its intermedial quality, the work can be defined as a media combination (Rajewsky's second category), oscillating between photography, print, sculpture and installation. The combination of silk screen printing with photography is all but new and reproduction/repetition is built into both photography and the screen print (the latter is after all a commercial technique for printing multiple labels and such like). It is the specific materiality of the translation which is novel and striking. However, as I will show, the processes of translation go beyond this.

In terms of iconography and genre, Muñoz's photographic images can be read as a rejection of the humanistic, expressive qualities of (self-)portraiture connoting a stable, self-sufficient subjectivity:

- The image, with the artist's dead-pan expression and frontal stare, resembles a mug shot, the closest a representation of a person can get to being a mere generic mechanical double or copy. Despite its function of proving individual authenticity, the mug shot maps the inauthentic: One image is the same as the next, a multiple or a copy. (One only has to think of the instructions defining a passport photo with its exactly repeatable detailed positions of head, direction of the gaze and so on.)
- The copy-factor of the multiple, so crucial to print, is further emphasised by the serial nature of the work in which the portrait appears with no ostensible variation other than those related to age. (This is unlike the performative enactment of multiple subjectivities as with many other artists in the last forty years.)
- A further intimation of the notion of the copy persists in the support on to which the image eventually settles. Everyday printed matter such as newspapers or maps reference the literal and metaphorical inscription of the subject within the citational social discourses through everyday graphic communication.

Seen from the angle of intermedial combination, Muñoz's translation of the photograph into print invests both with an unusual degree of materiality. This is a factor which is customarily ignored in favour of the photograph's content, as Elizabeth Edwards (2004) and others have shown. The increase in physical substance is simultaneously accompanied by the dematerialisation of the photographic image/print through the gradual evaporation of the image's carrier, the water.

The actual material into which the image has been transposed, namely decompressed charcoal, in other words, miniscule specks of concentrated, opaque 'dust,' is both suggestive of the chemical grain of analogue photography, as well as the pixelation that underlies the digital photograph. Likewise, it recalls the densely compounded surface matter of print. In addition to undermining the photograph's 'reality factor,' the treatment of the image as a field of unstable 'stuff' evades the notion of creative agency that could so easily be allied with a self-portrait. This is especially the case

Fig. 2. Óscar Muñoz, Three works form the suite, *Narcisos en proceso* (Narcissi in Progress), 2010 (first conceived 1994, series ongoing). Screenprinted charcoal powder on paper floating in water in six Perspex vitrines. Each vitrine measuring 49.9 x 50 x 10.3 cm. Image courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art. © Photo: Constance Mensh.

as the image is not only filtered through the 'automatic' medium of photography, but also the mechanical print, resulting in an 'in-between' character with an 'oscillation between both' (Rajewsky).

While the charcoal dust with its suggestion of extreme tactility accounts for the haptic appeal of this work, dust's simultaneous connotation with evanescence is reinforced by the volatile liquid surface. Thus, temporality is quite literally infused into (and metaphorically inferred by) a still image that most evocatively speaks of time, namely the human portrait. The attendant deterioration of a portrait into a formless 'blot' holds disturbing implications for the image as print or photograph. It is an obvious and alarming reminder of the dehumanising practice of obliterating the facial features of the victims of criminal and political violations in oppressive regimes, Muñoz's home country Columbia amongst them. The instability of the image therefore generates a specific metonymy of disappearance (Matheson). The work functions, indeed, as a memorial testimony.[21] In addition, the appearance of the blot can be regarded as an example of the 'informe' that challenges social (and artistic) categorisations, as theorised in art theory, following Georges Bataille.[22] This may be further linked to questions around the possibility of intermedial combinations and the limits of representation in both photography and print.

Finally, the unstable nature of the physicality of the image reinforces not only both media's unfixed nature but also the subject's unstable self. This interpretation is compellingly suggested by the title *Narcissi in process*.[23]

Instead of the customary responses to Muñoz's pieces in terms of memorial testimony, as mentioned earlier, in the context of the present discussion it seems to me that its conception as a series also bears the character or function of a traumatic repetition.[24] This is even intimated in Ovid's version of the Narcissos myth: 'Even when he was received into the abode of the dead, he kept looking at himself in the waters of the Styx' (qtd in Lomas, 11). While it is not possible to follow up this quite different mode of repetition here, I hope to have shown how the artist's translation between the different media of photography and print and the specific material and conceptual quality of this translation creates an intermedial combination which disturbs and exceeds conventional associations with both media. Furthermore, the 'extra,' that translation here adds, signals larger aesthetic, philosophical and political issues. At the same time it alludes to and questions 'medial constraints' on the one hand, and the 'in-between' character of some media combinations, to which Rajewsky refers, on the other.

How do the concepts of translation, intermediality and the copy that have guided this investigation operate in relation to Brazilian artist Regina Silveira's installation at *Philagrafika*?

In *Rerum Naturae* (2007-8) and *Mundus admirabilis* (2008-10) Silveira's translation is occasioned by a literal transfer of small engraved printed images from 18th and 19th century entomological books into both a two-dimensional and three-dimensional format, namely as surface 'décor' on the walls and floor of the gallery and on a set table's crockery and table cloth.[25] These multi-medial strategies result in the creation of an installation that relies on a telescoping of different orders of scale.[26] Silveira's piece fits the now firmly established category of installation art, as theorised by Claire Bishop. It also complies with Rajewsky's second category of 'intermedial combinations.

The artist exploits print's reproducibility at different levels. Compared to Baumgartner and Muñoz she engages in the most direct and fertile replication or copying: The individual motifs are copied from sources that are already multiple copies, namely illustrations in books. Besides, they are duplicated in different material modes or media, as indicated above. Furthermore, the imagery in the gallery comprises of multiple copies of individual insects, sometimes at different scales.

Against this factual description we have to posit an account of the work's effects (and affect): As is often the objective of installation, its spectacular character, intended to match as well as to counter pervasive consumerist stagings in shopping malls, on screens and so on, tends to overwhelm the viewer. Here it can be felt viscerally as an invasion. This is due to the multiple, contradictory yet potent connotations of Silveira's anthropod imagery and its magnification multiple times beyond its natural size.[27] But then, there is nothing 'natural' about Silveira's phantasmagoric vision.

If the work, at first glance, appears to be based on a mere reproductive method, there are actually a number of operations and changes in register at play and hence, in effect and cultural signification.[28] Despite the potentially distancing element of a historical, graphic as opposed to a contemporary, 'realistic' photographic imaging style,

Fig. 3. Regina Silveira 'Mundus Admirabilis', 2008-10, Plotter-cut and digitally printed vinyl and Rerum Naturae, 2007-08, Screenprinted transfer and overglaze on porcelain, hand-embroidered linen. Collection of the artist. On view at Moore College of Art, Philadelphia on occasion of Philagrafika 2010. © Photo credit: Jo Ganter, Glasgow.

enduring socio-cultural associations which have been affiliated with insects remain present in the work.[29] With an underlying assumption of insects as being wholly different from human beings, attitudes and behaviour towards these invertebrates can summarily be characterised by two contradictory, yet often correlated responses: A sense of wonder on the one hand and utter denigration on the other.[30] In relation to the former, Silveira draws on and seems to enjoy the reference to, even the cliché of (not only Latin-American) magic realism with its baroque 'lack of emptiness,' 'departure from structure or rules' and its 'extraordinary plenitude of disorienting detail' (Alejo Carpentier).

By the same token, the agglomeration of imagery, its sensory assault, repeats one of the represented species' most pronounced attributes, namely its 'swarming' which typically provokes fear in humans.[31] Swarming is a signifier of insects' multiplication and fecundity and portends an absolute disregard of inner or outer boundaries, as conceived by humans. Instances of 'the abject' (M. Douglas), they are met with aversion and disgust. The reference to biblical and other calamities and its allegorical translation into the contemporary context of global and national warfare, corruption, environmental catastrophe, disease and so on easily presents itself to the viewer.[32]

Then there are the various changes in scale that mark the transposition from small to big print. If insects in most environments might be compared to the cultural form of the 'miniature' and hence turn the human body gigantic, within Silveira's installa-

tion the human body, if not exactly being turned into a miniature, certainly becomes reduced and swamped. The gigantism of the imagery has further implications. As Susan Stewart has argued, 'while the miniature represents a mental world of proportion, control and balance, the gigantic presents a physical world of disorder and disproportion' (74).

But the shift from two-dimensional illustrations to three-dimensions through the application of the, albeit flat, images onto the architectural features of the gallery generates incommensurabilities that further serve the subject. The perspectival depth that an individual motif holds by itself becomes flattened. The effect is a certain 'deflation' of the architectural space. Both facets lead to a distortion of perspective and hence, a further disorientation of the viewer, as well as an interrogation of one of the foundational principles of the Western representational system.[33]

In Silveira's intermedial transactions between the two-dimensional image and different modes of three-dimensionality not only are the media boundaries of print challenged and magnified (literally and metaphorically) but also the conventional binary division between nature and culture is strikingly exploded. If translation embodies the infective quality that Fabbri (189) has noted and with it the 'accretion of meaning' through translation, then Silveira's translation of historical print forms fulfils this function particularly with regard to the virulent propensity of the print as copy. Coupled with an equally copious iconography, instead of the popular reference to modern plagues, as suggested by some authors and Silveira herself, I would like to propose a different interpretation. Boon considers copying as 'a sign or symptom of or scapegoat for [this] primordial plasticity of name and form to which Philippe Lacou-Labarthe gives the name "mimesis" fully aware that in naming he is representing and thus freeze-framing the instability' (89). Silveira's piece allows the viewer fully to experience this 'plasticity of name and form' that exceeds its linguistic fixation.

I hope to have shown how the various translation processes of the artists in creating works that can be defined as intermedial, demonstrate, as Rajewsky argues, the persistence of conventional 'ideas' (including material processes) and associated values regarding the different media that are combined. Nevertheless, a close inquiry also reveals that not only certain conventional 'ideas' regarding individual media are called upon. The realisation of the works also means that the artists have ignored the conventional boundaries or gaps between media. This entails a combination of hitherto unusual media, as with Baumgartner, or an untypical viscerality for both media as with Muñoz and an exposure of the art print's other, namely its status as multiplicatory reproduction and its potential for spatialisation in Silveira's case. Yet, as truly intermedial art works, the final pieces also exhibit what Rajewsky has called an 'in-betweenness' or 'oscillation between media.' It is in these interstices that the 'constructedness' of media and hence their mutability becomes visible. The differences that are thus exposed in the process of translation become the site of individual media's 'virtuality' and potential for change. This oscillation may also account for the specific ef-

fect and/or affective charge of such intermedial works. As John Sallis has pointed out, such transformational potential becomes 'entrancing, enrapturing, enchanting' (32).

   Finally, the multiple references to copying and repetition that characterise the manifold translation processes involved in printmaking in general are repeated or foregrounded in the work of the different artists under discussion here, as I have shown. They make visible what Marcus Boon holds to be a topic of central concern, namely a re-evaluation of the notion of the copy as a basic condition of life – and, I would add, art.

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1 Intermediality is one facette of influential curator Nicholas Bourriaud's concept of the 'altermodern' - his attempt to identify and conceptualise current cultural and artistic trends in a global context. Interestingly, the altermodern is also characterised by 'translation' (Bourriaud). Since the 1990s, this mode of translation in art manifests itself in a 'proliferation of re-use and recycling of earlier styles and innovations' (Pooke, 11). Further criteria of the altermodern, such as 'mobility, heterogeneity, transmission and hybridities' can also be linked to translation (Pooke, 11). These features apply to the broader field of contemporary art practices but can also be observed at the level of individual media. Yet, as Grant Pooke in his recent overview of British art says, it remains unclear 'what the "translation" alluded to as part of the altermodern will actually mean in relation to present and future art practice either in UK or internationally' (Pooke 12). Hence the necessity of a closer investigation of such practices.

2 In the British context this applies to some print editions by Damien Hirst or Howard Hodgkin, to name but two examples. It can also be observed in the publishing activities of print publishers, such as Charles Booth-Clibborn's Paragon Press, which consists of a virtual roll call of British and international contemporary 'blue chip' artists. I am not denying that such transmedial operations raise fascinating issues of translation in themselves, but they do not interest me here.

3 I have chosen work where I consider print to be a major component of the final image/object. At its most simple, this entails the preparation of a matrix which is then applied to another surface. Jose Roca, the curator of *Philagrafika*, a ground-breaking international print exhibition in Philadelphia, USA, expressed this broad approach to an 'expanded' notion of printmaking thus: 'We considered a print anything that had three components: a matrix, a transfer medium, and a receiving surface.' (Roca, Prints)

4 Hence, printmaking's marginalisation in modernist art practice which can still be felt. The modernist expressive authorial signature style (and with it, the signed limited edition) was adopted in printmaking from the late 19th century to bring printmaking in line with the most dominant strain of modern art. It acted as defiance against print's character as a copy.

5 For the idea of translation as hermeneutic, see also Paolo Fabbri (186-187). Influential translation theorist Lawrence Venuti distinguishes two large categories which underpin conceptualisations of translation, 'based on different assumptions about language': The instrumental or pragmatic category regards 'language as communication, expressive of thought and meaning.' Meanings are based 'on reference to empirical reality.' The hermeneutic classification sees language as 'interpretation, constitutive of thought and meaning; meanings shape reality and are inscribed according to changing cultural and social situations' (5-6). Obviously,

the second category is most crucial to art practice, however, category one should not be dismissed out of hand, as there is always a pragmatic element to art practice, too.

6   John Sallis refers to the Greek etymological roots of the word 'to transfer' which also includes 'a sense that disturbs the otherwise smooth transition across an interval: to transfer something is also to change it … to alter it … to pervert it' (32).

7   See also Schröter who argues that the 'intermedial field produces definitions of media' and not the other way around (Discourses, 4-6).

8   See also Elleström: 'If all media were fundamentally different' it would be 'hard to find any interrelations at all; if they were fundamentally similar, it would be equally hard to find to find something that is not already interrelated. Media, however, are both different and similar and intermediality must be understood as a bridge between medial differences that is founded on similarities' (12**).** See Jens Schröter for a discussion of the ideological stakes that have been, and often still are, affiliated with the term 'intermedia' and the phenomenon of 'intermediality (Schröter, The Politics).

9   In category one, the meaning or outward appearance of the particular works, executed in distinctly different media, remains unchanged. Categories two and three 'aim at an intra-compositional intermediality', in other words, they involve '"a direct or indirect participation of more than one medium" not only in the formation process, but "in the signification and/or structure of a given semiotic entity"' (Rajewski, 56), hence their meaning and outward appearance are mutually affected. However, with regard to category three (intermedial references) 'only one conventionally distinct medium manifests itself in its specific materiality and mediality' (58). In respect of media combinations (category two) Rajewsky notes that 'the various modes of such configurations may range from a mere 'coexistence' to a '"genuine" integration or interplay' (56).

10 As evidence for a new recognition of and interest in such border zones, see a recent publication by art critics Eva Grubinger and Jörg Heiser (eds) titled *Sculpture Unlimited* which explores the relevance of traditional sculpture within today's seemingly 'unbounded' practices.

11 Leipzig-based Christiane Baumgartner has been steadily gaining international recognition in the last ten years. Her prints have been on show in the Albertina, Vienna (24.10.2012 – 01.01.2013), notably one of the foremost and largest collection of prints in the world. Columbian Oscar Muñoz maintains a strong presence in his home town of Cali, Columbia. His international profile has been growing since his participation in a group show at the 2007 Venice Biennale, with exhibitions at San Francisco MOMA and in Belfast in 2012 and exhibitions in Lima, Peru (2013) and the Jeu de Paume, Paris (2014). Brasilian Regina Silveira's work has been on view extensively in South America and internationally, including the US. Her most recent European exhibitions were in Denmark (at the Køge Art Museum, Køge, 2008), Poland (Lodz, 2010) and Spain (La Coruña, 2012). In 2013 she is exhibiting at various venues in the US with a solo show at SCAD Museum, Atlanta, Georgia.

12 See, for example, Coldwell (Printmaking, 50).

13 At Philagrafika, the Indonesian artists group Tromarama exhibited wood cut as an animated video piece http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGAysE1vz7U [Accessed 13/10/2013].

14 Baumgartner: 'Actually I did not use the existing monitor lines for my woodcuts, although many people do think this is the case. I created my own raster' (Roca, Baumgartner).

15 This is not to say that artists have not long interrogated and subverted this aspect of the technique. See, for example, Edvard Munch's *Woman on the Beach*, 1898 or *Angst*, 1896 in which there is a constant reversal of the contouring line as either positive (black), or negative (white).

16 See endnote 15.

17 See Ingold 'How the line became straight' (152-170).

18 Baumgartner herself links this complication of the surface and visibility to the scale and size of the image and the desire to involve the viewer directly: 'If you want to see how it's made you need to go very close but in order to create an image you have to get some distance, so you have to move your body to read the work and that's why I make certain images monumental.' (Coldwell, Christiane Baumgartner).

19 There are other, more loaded scenes referring to military events, past and present, such as *Transall*, 2002, which I am disregarding for the purpose of my argument here.

20 These occur between the video image (in some cases the videoed television image), digital manipulation software, such as Photoshop, its printed output which is transferred to the wood block, the cutting of the wood block and finally the transfer of the wood block matrix to paper.

21 See José Roca (On Óscar Muñoz).

22 The 'informe' or formlessness is something that breaks down classifications and thereby represents an 'undoing the whole system of meaning' (Foster et al, 245).

23 Unfortunately it is not possible to delve into a potentially promising study of copia in relation to the Narcissos myth. See Lomas's exhibition catalogue and his study of the myth in contemporary art, including Muñoz's work, in relation to psychoanalytic theories.

24 See Van der Kolk.

25 As seen in the gallery of Moore College of Art and Design during *Philagrafika* (2009-10)

26 The formation of a site-specific immersive environment with its viewer orientation occurs through, firstly, wall paper-like print and floor covering (employing industrial, computer-printed vinyl); secondly, three-dimensional design objects in the tradition of the altered ready-made (achieved via decal, the transfer of printed imagery from one surface to another - here china) and thirdly, craft-oriented embroidery on a table cloth.

27 Amongst Silveira's insect species that do not naturally occur in the same environment, there are clearly recognisable types of caterpillars, moths, ants, scorpion, dragon fly, ordinary fly, beetles, cicadas, spiders, bees, wasps, mosquito and others.

28 Silveira's transfer through montage of diverse species from different natural habitats, geographical locations and historical periods, executed in a variety of realistic styles, is unified through the graphic quality of the selected image fragments. On the latter, see Silveira's comments in Roca (Regina Silveira).

29 See the illuminating entries in Hugh Raffles's fascinating *Insectopedia* (129; 173; 184).

30 See Raffles (129).

31 See, the entry: 'My nightmares' (Raffles).

32 The title of some versions of the installation has carried the addition 'and other plagues'. See extended formats of the installation in 2008, Brito Cimino Gallery, Sao Paulo; 2007, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Brasília; also 2007 at MAP - Museu de Arte da Pampulha - Belo Horizonte. (Information on Silveira's web site http://www.reginasilveira.com/). See also Navas and Buhl Andersen. It could be argued that there is another, more specific metaphorical reference entailed, namely the hybridisation that has been regarded as one of the characteristics of globalisation and postcolonial identities. In many respects, Latin American and especially Brasilian artists regarded both their art as well as their culture as 'hybrid' avant la lettre. (See Buhl Anderson, 2).

33 Within the broader context of Silveira's work as part of the second Latin American avant garde her frequent deployment of shadows, traces and tracks intentionally probes this foundational principle of the Western representational tradition. Silveira has frequently made this point herself. See also Buhl Andersen and Navas.

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