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Elsewhere. The relocation of art

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The grandmother had set herself an objective: she wanted to decorate the room of her grandson, Marcel. She selected a series of photographs with artistic content: Chartres Cathedral, the Fountains of Saint-Cloud, the landscape of Vesuvius. But just as she was about to buy them it occurred to her that, because of the mechanical nature of their reproduction by photography, those pictures were rather vulgar or too easy to use. She detested the useful and the commonplace: when she had to give a present, she always tried to ensure that it had a quality and a meaning of its own. So, as if in an attempt to introduce a richer artistic density, the grandmother chose some other photographs, photographs that showed pictures of those same subjects painted by Corot, Hubert Robert and Turner. This undoubtedly introduced a further degree of art: but, as the narrator humorously emphasizes, it did not solve the problem. The pictures that the grandmother chose were still mechanical reproductions.

It is all too easy to read into this Proustian episode, which appears in the “Combray” section of *Du côté de chez Swann*,¹ an anticipation of Benjamin’s reflection on the destiny of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. The possibility of multiplying an aesthetic object mechanically makes it much more accessible but also deprives it of its aura, and thus of the ability to arouse reverence and awe which usually accompanies it. The arrival of entire areas of expression based on this practice, such as photography or films, has led to a change in the very idea of art: it has lost all solemnity and sacredness; it is no longer attached in any way to worship; rather, it is aimed at exhibition. In choosing those photographs, the grandmother wanted them to retain a sense of art; but, as the narrator’s affectionate irony underlines, it was her very selection which made it impossible.

However, why not read this passage from Proust not in a pre-Benjaminian but in a post-Benjaminian light? Why not see it not so much as the inevitability of the loss of aura but as the possibility of its return? If we shift our attention from the object to the place, and so from the photographs that were purchased to Marcel’s room for which they were intended, we perceive that the grandmother’s concern was not so much the rather pathetic wish to preserve values that the world no longer recognizes but the desire to adapt them to new living conditions, to put them to the test in new contexts, to insert them physically into new settings. The aim was to keep the sense of

art together with a habitat apparently alien to it. Seen in this light, what the episode from Proust seems to focus on is the possibility of *relocating* art elsewhere – of art migrating or being transplanted to new territories, new scenes of activity, new worlds – and thus finding a new opportunity for life.

The relocation of art is not a new phenomenon. There have always been cases of aesthetic objects passing from public places to private places, from sacred spaces to worldly spaces, from more dispersed settings to more concentrated settings. Art has always had a nomadic *je ne sais quoi*. In this to and fro movement the really decisive step was taken on the threshold of the nineteenth century, when art was transferred from contexts of life – churches, squares or palatial buildings – to a specialized context such as a museum or an exhibition (the “salon”). It was there that art, responding, in a way, to the need for autonomy that had begun to permeate it a hundred years before, found what might appear to be its proper home: a place that houses it for what it is, or rather for what it becomes precisely because of being housed there. The museum or the exhibition stripped the work of art of its various functions and revealed its stylistic substance, and precisely by doing so they made it become a work “of art”.² However, neither the museum nor the salon were closed settings: art soon began to circulate in the world again, and it did so with the status that it had acquired. The monument, no longer understood as a memorial but as an aesthetic presence, or the mural, no longer seen as the book of the people but as the product of a painter’s endeavour, or the design object, no longer considered as a sign of functionality and distinction but as the triumph of a form, provide a good example of the outflow of art from the museum. Art appeared to have been strengthened by the identity and prestige that it had acquired in the meantime, yet no less determined to continue with its wanderings.

In the course of the twentieth century this to and fro movement became increasingly frenetic, sustained by motivations that were no longer just political or social or aesthetic but also had to do with challenges and play. Art found that it could make its way almost everywhere, and at the same time it discovered that it really existed nowhere. This situation has now become even clearer, as a result, also, of a kind of minor paradox. On the one hand, the museum and the gallery – the institutional places where art is supposed to shine forth by itself – advance towards a veritable explosion: they multiply, but at the same time they become more and more like “theme parks” inserted into tourist circuits, not devoid of an entertainment element. On the other hand, completely unexpected places prove capable of a seduction that is no longer to be found elsewhere: I have in mind old, abandoned buildings used as exhibition venues, but also natural settings where the artist intervenes with new constructions, run-down districts where traces of some artistic activity are scattered, city walls painted with graffiti, electricity pylons covered with stickers, corners on which stencils are left, bus stops transformed into totem poles, or screens overlooking points of transit on which all kinds of films different from the usual advertising are projected. Art enters those

anomalous places and brings with it former objects that are inserted into a new viewing setting, as in many contemporary installations; but it also enters with works conceived directly for the setting, intended to react and act upon it, as in Land Art; and, lastly, in some cases it enters with a readiness to renounce itself, as if wishing to eliminate itself in its new context, as in much Street Art.³ However, divided between a home that has changed its function and a neighbourhood that proves all too welcoming, art runs the risk of getting lost: it seems not so much nomadic as cast out. Yet if it continues along those paths, and even accentuates them, it is because it considers that risk a virtue: by putting places to the test it is putting itself to the test, and vice versa. Moreover, what this relocation really amounts to is this: an attempt to achieve and confirm its own identity; emerging from itself and searching for new roots.

But how is the relocation of art working? What aspects and what paths does it involve? And what other contemporary processes does it echo?

In the first place, we can associate this relocation with a more general tendency, typical of a period in which globalization is the order of the day: the tendency to break down barriers and press on beyond boundaries. Since the historical avant-garde we have known that artistic activity tends to move further and further beyond the limits of morality and taste and at the same time to shake off the shackles of habit and convention. In parallel, it also seeks to expand the framework of its own expressive possibilities, and to appropriate languages, media and styles that it discovers as it goes along. Hence characteristics such as unpredictability and syncretism. Relocation uses the same attitude but applies it to physical space: art appears in new settings, it takes possession of new areas, it installs itself in new sites. Disused buildings, pieces of landscape and urban surfaces are, in the first instance, portions of territory that it needs to enter and where it has to establish roots. Pieces of world in which it can extend its own presence and activity. What emerges, therefore, is not just an urge to explore new possibilities or try out new combinations; it is also an awareness that this happens chiefly in relation to the context in which it takes root. Above all, the challenge has to do with the geography in which we are immersed.

Among the places to which it tries to migrate or transplant itself there are obviously also media, including the World Wide Web, the space represented by a film, or the world of Second Life. These areas might appear to be different from the places mentioned earlier because they are constructed by the imagination or based on sheer virtuality. However, they, too, are genuine “environments” in which art can insert itself and operate; work spaces and at the same time reception areas. Art moves to these areas, too. It does so in forms that provide good examples of the ways of surpassing boundaries that are brought into play by relocation. I am thinking, for example, of the “transfer” that takes place when works of art appear on the web site of the museum that is housing them: in this case art seeks a further function in the media setting. I am thinking, also, of the “occupation” that occurs when an artist makes a media-specific art work: whether it is

video art or computer art, what we have in this case is, literally, an annexation of territory. But I am also thinking of the “invasion” that happens when media objects take on a rather unexpected artistic quality: in this case art gives its own colour to the new setting. And I am thinking, lastly, of the “plundering” that is performed when the typical components of a media setting are in turn used to create an art work.⁴ In this case art brings back home what it has discovered by going far afield from its dwelling place. Whatever forms it takes – and whatever exemplary quality they may have – the fact remains that art has also relocated itself in the media world. Marcel’s room, which the grandmother wanted to decorate, now extends not only over streets and squares but also to computer screens or mobile phone displays. The walls on which artistic photographs can be hung have multiplied.

Yet this systematic breaking even of physical boundaries does not lead, as one might expect, to a “flat” geography. Art reaches out in all directions, but its presence is far from neutral. It *resemanticizes* the setting in which it is placed, giving it a new connotation and making it take on a different meaning. Often there is a change of function: a site characterized by certain activities opens up to new roles.⁵ This is precisely the case when a station or a factory is transformed into a museum – and, in turn, is appreciated as a building in itself. But often there is a more radical change, the conversion from *place* to *space* of which de Certeau speaks: an area that simply used to witness the coexistence of a series of elements becomes a lively, lived-in environment as the result of a presence that becomes active.⁶ Think of abandoned areas that suddenly find themselves housing an art construction, or what might be called virgin areas in which an artist intervenes by altering some part of the landscape. In these cases we have something more than the refunctionalization of a setting: we have an art work or an artistic action (an installation or a performance)⁷ which literally enlivens or revives the site in which it is set, making it a space full of life, a “practiced place”.⁸ Generalizing a little, we might also say that an aesthetic presence always has a threefold effect on the setting in which it is situated: it creates points of attention capable of characterizing the whole; it sets up a series of paths that can link the components together; and it prompts the emergence of a series of lines of action that determine the possibilities, and often also the behaviour, of whoever happens to visit the site. Thus it is an intervention that involves the semantics of a space (its contents), its syntax (composition) and its pragmatics (sphere of action), respectively. In fact, this threefold effect is the substratum of any relocation. It determines a new configuration and a new status for the receiving environment, and it is precisely in this way that it gives or restores meaning to it.

This resemanticization of space does not always match the expectations and habits of its audience. There is no lack of settings reshaped by an installation or a performance which make visitors uneasy or even overwhelm them (producing reactions from them which may lead to restoring things to how they were before).⁹ The meaning that is acquired in such a case may seem

– and be – a non-sense.¹⁰ On the other hand, the resemanticization may also prove useful for other purposes. Think of the way in which many processes of gentrification benefit from the fact that down-rated districts have begun to house studios, laboratories or galleries.¹¹ In these cases, meaning borders on (financial) value. However, what we are interested in is another aspect: an aesthetic presence also leads to the emergence of unforeseeable new boundaries; by drawing attention to the point where it is placed it leads to the discovery of less privileged portions of territory, and at the same time it reveals the existence of an elsewhere, an area where its influence is not felt. Let's consider the three types of intervention that we mentioned earlier: on the one hand, they create internal differentiations in the territory (establishing focuses of attention also means defining areas that are for viewing from rather than being viewed; establishing paths also means defining areas to be avoided rather than visited; and establishing lines of action also means defining areas of inertia rather than activity); on the other hand, they also lead to the emergence of what one might call immune environments, which are either out of their reach or dominated by other presences (areas in which the only kind of attention or path or action that comes into play is one that is utterly different, intended for other purposes). As art migrates or is transplanted it subdivides and divides: it rearticulates its new setting, contrasting it with “other” settings. Here, in a way, we come back to the classical function of the picture frame: but whereas the picture frame traditionally separated the work or artistic activity from the world, here it is applied to the world itself, separating its own aesthetically marked area from other areas that are neutral or even of an opposite nature. The result, in any case, is clear: relocation dissolves many borders, but at the same time it creates others.

Moreover, in this regard art is no different from other fields. All experiences that happen in some place other than their canonic setting (I am thinking of religious experience that does not occur in places of worship, or a film experience in one's own sitting room or in the open air, not in a film theatre) give a particular weight to that place and at the same time create new boundaries in and around it. The shift does not do away with geography; it redraws it.¹²

But relocation does not deal only with borders: it implies also directions. Once again, the art provides a useful indication: in keeping with a society dominated by Networks and Internet, it involves not so much one-way journeys as diversions and round trips – from a connection to another connection. To put it more clearly, what the relocation of art brings into play is a genuine circularity. Consider the venues that we mentioned earlier: city districts, streets and squares, abandoned buildings, areas on the outskirts, media spaces. They seem to be not so much public places – in which art has always appeared – as settings of everyday life; and we could also call them common places. And contemporary art seems to want to connect precisely with this everyday domain: it is this everyday domain that it seems to want to colonize, literally. However, if art wants its activity to be performed successfully without being absorbed or eliminated by the everyday

domain,¹³ it has to maintain its identity. To achieve this it is not sufficient for it to appear as an eccentric presence devoted to provocation; and even less as a virtuous presence, proud of its quality. There is a need, specifically, for authentication. This authentication is provided by three things: by a series of critiques which, by commenting on an artist's activity wherever it may take place, guarantee that that is what it is; by a market that gives its consent that certain objects, whatever they may be, should be sold as art; and finally by the moveable nature of art works, which ensures that, wherever they may have been placed, they can return to a canonic setting, such as the museum or gallery – either by direct retrieval, after they have been removed from their original location in order to be exhibited, or by indirect retrieval, when it is the documentation about them that is exhibited, with photographs, drawings and remnants. I must also say that it does not matter whether the return really takes place: what matters is that it should be possible – and therefore that one should think that what seems to have been relocated could return to the place where it belongs.¹⁴ Thus there is a to and fro movement in a circuit of statements, in a circuit of monetary transactions, and in a circuit of places; a to and fro movement which offers the possibility of parallel paths and returns. It is as a result of this condition, essentially capable of ensuring a connection with the art institution, that the relocation of art functions as *art* and as *re*-location. Moreover, as we know all too well, one can colonize a new world; but if one wants to be recognized as a colonizer there must be a link with the mother country.

Viewed from this perspective, it is no coincidence that the migration of art towards everyday life is compensated for by a migration of everyday life towards art. In museums and galleries we now find art works or performances directly connected with everyday objects and practices: family albums, *objets trouvés*, installations which are modelled on amusement park rides. So, while artists' videos burst onto the scene in Times Square, Disneyland is implanted in the Whitney Museum.¹⁵ This is not Late Dadaist provocation: rather, it is a recognition that art is acquainted with complex, bidirectional paths – where the link with the “mother country” ultimately guarantees an identity. So, no scandal; rather, a touch of tautology. From this perspective it becomes clear what Marcel's grandmother was lacking in our opening episode: if only she had imagined that the photographs selected for her grandson's room could also be housed in a museum – where they would, in fact, be hung nowadays – she would immediately have set aside any hesitation.

I must add that this circularity of paths also applies to the field of the media – which have really become the quintessence of our everyday life. Art is transplanted to the media, resemanticizing the spaces where it arrives, whether with more traditional works,¹⁶ or with ad hoc products; but it also stands out especially as a result of three things: (critical) discourses that emphasize and define its presence; a (spectator's) attitude that re-establish a kind of enjoyment usually activated by products with a high aesthetic content; and events that bring it back into “guaranteed” spaces of exhibition.

The third point, after boundaries and paths, is the content of the relocation. So far I have talked about art works and actions, performances and installations. But relocation really invests experiences rather than objects or deeds. Think of the Proustian episode with which we started. Marcel's grandmother selected her purchases carefully: in order not to allow the aesthetic quality to disappear beneath the common and the utilitarian, she turned to things that had a past and could thus exhibit an authenticity and a personality of their own. But the past is not enough – unless one wishes to remain a mere collector. The grandmother also needed to extract “un profit intellectuel” from the things that she came across, which means that she needed to feel involved and enriched. For her, therefore, objects only counted, really, insofar as they captivated or made an impact or instructed: they had to have life and, above all, they had to bring to life. Only then would they really convey artistic meaning.

Experience, including aesthetic experience, is a situation in which we are confronted with something that surprises and takes hold of us, and that thus kindles its and our life and at the same time makes us aware of doing so. Relocation works on this experiential dimension: it offers us a full encounter which one might legitimately expect elsewhere. In this sense, it is not concerned with a displacement of objects (which, in fact, are generally designed to be there) but with a displacement of sensations and sensibility. But what kind of experience comes from relocation? Once again, art gives us a valuable indication: in keeping with an age inspired by multiculturalism, it tells us that experiences inevitably tend to be *hybrid*.

First of all, they are hybrid insofar as they are *artistic*. As I have said, a presence allocated to an everyday space is artistic so long as it maintains a connection with the art institution. But if we analyse its effects, they would hardly be the same as the effects that would appear if, say, we were in a museum (though it is always possible that we might find ourselves there). For example, an everyday setting would hardly permit the sacred quality that seems to be preserved in an institutional place – if we exclude complex operations that manage to transform a desert region into a *temple*.¹⁷ On the other hand, an everyday setting highlights other aspects: the mesh of relations with our own living world; the provisional nature of things that we take for granted; the possibility of alternative practices; a sense of play and fortuitousness, and so on. More generally, we could say that when a relocated presence comes to terms with the context in which it is set it acts upon it and is acted upon by it: it resemanticizes it and is resemanticized by it. The experience that emerges then can only be hybrid: artistic and at the same time extra- or para-artistic, if only because of the environmental elements that punctuate and anchor it (moreover, as we have seen, the museum environment also acted on art: it made it become what it was). From this it derives what one might call a *mestizo* artistic quality, necessarily *mestizo*, in which apparently contradictory traits are combined.

What I have said about the adjective, artistic, can also be applied to the noun, *experience*. There is no doubt that an aesthetic presence in the everyday world kindles our senses and our reflectivity: but it will always pay the price of being immersed in the everyday world. And so it will also be accompanied by disregard, indifference and insignificance.¹⁸ The experience that it arouses then becomes mixed with non-experience, and thus with a slackening or even a loss of the sense of contact with things. Which brings us back to miscegenation: as if there were two states – physical and mental – which converge or are superimposed.

We must make it clear that this has nothing to do with any kind of degradation. When art is relocated it is not degraded. Rather, the reverse: when it occupies a new space, it projects an ideal behind it – the sacredness of art, the intensity of experience – which serves as a touchstone for the present situation, so that the situation may find continuity and at the same time bring out the differences.¹⁹ From this perspective we could easily say that “contemplation” (which is the classic form of aesthetic experience by which we are relocated) is an invention made possible by that very relocation. What matters, in any case, is the result that is achieved: an artisticness and an experientiality which include divergent characteristics, even their own negation, and which construct their own new identity on that paradox. We might, perhaps, call it a *quasi-artisticness* and a *quasi-experientiality* (in which “quasi” does not operate as a sign of regret, but as an underlining of the fact that an ideal form is called upon to face concrete new possibilities which provoke and transform it).²⁰

What we have, therefore, is essentially a *middle ground*. Open, on the one hand, to all the demands of an institution that functions as a model and a guarantee, and, on the other, to the pressures of the succession of contingent situations that arise. However – the final point – it is precisely this middle ground that is particularly indicative. For art, but not only for art.

For art: if we try to define “geography” nowadays, we will see that what predominates is areas behind boundaries which nevertheless act as points of passage and exchange – somewhat like the so-called Marches in the Middle Ages, which were both buffer zones and places of confrontation. Art is now distributed in this kind of territory: it occupies no man’s lands (already explored but not yet completely colonized), tax-free zones (in which the laws of the neighbouring lands do not apply), open cities (in which a suspension of fighting is declared in order to permit survival), or reclaimed lands (given in return for draining them, such as the Alpine ridges or the marshes). Whatever their status, these areas seem to have a tendency towards dynamism: open on both sides, set in the middle of a twofold pressure, they are compelled to achieve a constant balance, to invent exchanges and compensation, in order to find an arrangement that, by definition, is provisional. Relocated art is an open-air laboratory.

But not only for art. If there is one thing that is striking nowadays, it is the spread of a “quasi” quality. Especially in the area of the media, we have to deal with forms of communication

that mingle attention and inattention, quality and meagreness, intensity and indifference. And as media experiences are increasingly relocated to new devices (the newspaper to my computer, movies to my mobile phone, and so on), they increasingly become quasi-experiences and quasi-communication. Apparently impure, and really highly dynamic. In any case, beyond the realm of the media (which, incidentally, art is called up to confront most directly and which, like art, has a powerful exemplarity of its own) there is all the “geography” of our – physical and mental – world, to be reorganized around territories of interchange and regrouping. “Quasi” territories: intermediate and mixed.

Thus art pursues a destiny that it shares in common with the world into which it is inserted. Yet in its own modes, and not always in perfect harmony, it draws attention to diffuse phenomena. It draws attention to them and questions them: whether it is a work on boundaries, on the form of a path or on the confluence of contradictory impulses, it takes them on in order to explore them and perhaps explode them. It is in this that its presence maintains significance: relocated presence – nomadic and seemingly cast out, we said earlier – but, precisely because of this, in the gaze of all.

Notes

¹ Proust, Marcel: *Du côté de chez Swann*. Flammarion, Paris 1987, pp. 136–138.

² On this point see Malraux, André: “Le musée imaginaire”, in *Les voix du silence*. Gallimard, Paris 1952.

³ I am confining myself to a few purely illustrative references. For the reutilization of buildings conceived for another use and destined to become exhibition venues, one might think of the Gare d’Orsay in Paris, but also the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin or Tate Modern in London. For interventions intended to react with an environment and its specific nature, one might recall Robert Smithson’s *earthworks*, including the famous *Spiral Jetty* (1970), at Rozel Point, Great Salt Lake (<http://www.robertsmithson.com/earthworks/ew.htm>); the work of Walter De Maria, particularly *The Lightning Field* (1977), set in the desert in New Mexico; the work of Michael Heizer, and so on. Finally, for artistic interventions which seem to wish to eliminate themselves in their new context, one has only to recall, in addition to graffiti, stencils and stickers, the use of urban screens, interventions on pre-existing constructions, and so on (there is good documentation at <http://www.ekosystem.org/>); in 2008 Tate Modern organized an exhibition of Street Art (see <http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/streetart/>). One must remember that art in an urban context can take on an overtly political value, as in the case of Christy Rupp’s *Rat Patrol* (1979) (well analysed by Douglas Crimp in “The Art of Exhibition”, in *October. The First Decade. 1978–1986*. The MIT Press, Cambridge–London 1987, pp. 222–255); but it can also assume a more provocative, experimental value, as in the case of Jenny Holzer or Alfredo Jaar (both of whom have, among other things, worked with large screens solely devoted to commercial communications – Jenny Holzer with the screens in Times Square for her series *Truism* in 1982; this operation was repeated by, among others, Pipilotti Rist with *Open My Glade* in 2000, also on the NBC Astrovision screens in Times Square).

⁴ I am, of course, thinking of Nam June Paik. On Paik’s work considered from a similar perspective to the one adopted here, see Joselit, David: *Feedback*. The MIT Press, Cambridge–London 2007.

⁵ This kind of resemanticization of space is highlighted in Marrone, Gianfranco: *Corpi sociali*. Einaudi, Turin 2001, p. 301.

⁶ “A place is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. [...] A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.

[...] A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. [...] Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities. On this view, in relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken [...].” De Certeau, Michel: *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, Berkeley 1984, p. 117.

⁷ Bellavita, Andrea: “(In)contro lo spazio. L’installazione di arte contemporanea nel tessuto urbano”, in Codeluppi, E., Dusi, N., Granelli, T.: “Riscrivere lo spazio. Pratiche e performance urbane”. *E/C*, year II, no. 2, 2008, pp. 49–57.

⁸ De Certeau, Michel: op. cit., p. 117.

⁹ In 1981, Serra installed *Tilted Arc*, a gently curved, 3.5 metre high arc of rusting mild steel in the Federal Plaza in New York City. There was controversy over the installation from day one, largely from workers in the buildings surrounding the plaza who complained that the steel wall obstructed passage through the plaza. A public hearing in 1985 voted that the work should be moved; on 15 March 1989, the sculpture was dismantled by federal workers and taken for scrap.

¹⁰ On this point see Bellavita, Andrea: op. cit., and “L’immagine contemporanea: fast faster”, in *terre e cieli / lands and skies. Catalogo Invideo 2008. Mostra internazionale di video e cinema oltre. XVIII edizione*. Mimesis, Milan 2008, pp. 18–21.

¹¹ The Pompidou in Paris is still one of the archetypal examples of this process. For Manhattan, see the essay by Douglas Crimp cited in note 3.

¹² On flow in the modern world, see Appadurai, Arjun: *Modernity at Large*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis–London 1996.

¹³ The point can be made clearer. Absorption and elimination are two opposite and complementary forms of rejection of the presence of art: in the first case the environment reacts by incorporating into itself a presence considered not all that different (this is the case, for example, with graffiti, which, as they adapt to the urban landscape, cease to be or never come to be an artistic presence); in the other case the environment reacts by expelling a presence considered as too different (this is the case with installations which, in not becoming an integral part of the urban landscape, are considered simply as a nuisance). Contemporary art finds itself faced with various options: it can challenge absorption, and renounce itself (this is what many writers want: not to be considered artists); it can challenge elimination, in the name of its own provocativeness, and in the end be expelled; but it can also seek forms of negotiation in which there is some element of absorption (art is “integrated” into the environment) but in which there is still the sense of a different presence, a touch that has changed things (art is not “dissolved” in the environment, it “dissolves” the environment). Pursuing and extending a suggestion made by Andrea Bellavita, I shall call the three cases *exclusive relocation*, *negative relocation* and *inclusive relocation*, respectively.

¹⁴ On the inevitability of the return to the museum of art works which originated outside it and counter to it, there are splendid observations in Groys, Boris: “On the New”, in *Art Power*. The MIT Press, Cambridge–London 2008, pp. 23–42.

¹⁵ I am referring to three installations – *Mad House*, *Spinning Room* and *Bang Bang Room* – exhibited by Paul McCarthy at the Whitney Museum in 2008. The first, especially, links up with amusement park rides.

¹⁶ The following item appeared in *Corriere della Sera* on 13 January 2009: “*Madrid museum masterpieces in ultrahigh definition in Google Earth*. Rubens’s *The Three Graces*, Velázquez’s *Las Meninas* and a dozen more masterpieces at the Museo del Prado are now on show in Google in greater detail than they can be seen with the naked eye. Today or tomorrow, in the Google Earth section, the Google search engine is launching the amazing sight of some of the finest pieces in the Madrid collection reproduced at a resolution of 14 million pixels (a definition 1,400 times sharper than a picture taken by a 10 megapixel camera): a wealth of detail that not even the curators of the Madrid museum have been able to see until now.”

¹⁷ I am referring, for example, to the rules governing a visit to Walter De Maria’s *The Lightning Field* in the desert in New Mexico: a very limited number of places (the group of the chosen ones), a long journey to get there (the initiatory journey), the requirement to remain overnight (the initiation), the ban on bringing back personal documentation (the initiatory secret), and so on. For these rules, see <http://www.lightningfield.org>.

¹⁸ In this area we also find the combination of shock and distraction that Walter Benjamin attributes, for example, to the cinematic way of seeing and, more generally, to modern experience.

¹⁹ On this point, at least see Deleuze, Gilles: “Platon et le simulacre”, in *Logique du sens*. Minuit, Paris 1969, pp. 292–307. The subject is also taken up in Carbone, Mauro: “Deformazione e riconoscimento”, in *Una deformazione senza precedenti*. Quodlibet, Macerata, pp. 73 ff.

²⁰ On how modern experience on the one hand intensifies the contrast between form and becoming and, on the other, seeks a becoming without form, an essential reference is Simmel, Georg: *Der Konflikt der modernen Kultur*. Duncker & Humblot, Munich–Leipzig 1921 (*The Conflict in Modern Culture and other essays*. Teachers College Press, New York 1968), one of the key texts for an understanding of our modern world.