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# Global Conceptualism? Cartographies of Conceptual art in pursuit of Decentering

Sophie Cras

*Conceptual Art had a dual character: on the one hand, the social nature of the work was progressive; on the other, its structural adherence to the avant-garde geography was conservative.*<sup>1</sup>

For the past few years, a recent trend of research has developed aiming to denounce a “Western hegemony” over the history of conceptual art, in favor of a more global conception of this movement. The exhibition *Global Conceptualism*, held at the Queens Museum of Art in 1999, was one of its major milestones. Against a tradition that viewed conceptual art as an essentially Anglo American movement, the exhibition suggested “a multicentered map with various points of origin” in which “poorly known histories [would be] presented as equal corollaries rather than as appendages to a central axis of activity.”<sup>2</sup> The very notion of centrality was altogether repudiated, as Stephen Bann made it clear in his introduction: “The present exhibition ... explicitly rejects the customary practice of plotting out the topology of artistic connections in terms of ‘center’ and ‘periphery’.” According to the authors of the catalogue this dismissal was not only a curatorial methodological standpoint, but was already present historically in conceptual artistic practices themselves, which “broke open the political economy of center and periphery.”<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Peter Wollen argued in the catalogue that conceptual art, contrary to surrealism for instance, was truly international because it did not disseminate out from an original center, but spontaneously emerged from diverse locations around the world. “Conceptual art,” he concluded, “had a significant impact in challenging the geographical as well as ethnic and gender hierarchy of core and periphery in the art world” and was therefore responsible for a “decentralization” of the art world.<sup>4</sup>

The exhibition *Global Conceptualism*, by opening up the geographical scope of historical analysis to conceptual practices largely overlooked, considerably marked the discipline.<sup>5</sup> However, its choice to negate the notion of an opposition between center and periphery in favor of a supposedly de-hierarchized panorama is problematic at three levels at least. First, a number of artists of the time, I argue, effectively perceived the artistic scene in terms of centers and periphery, if only to contest its structural inequality. Second, leveling practices very diversely recognized today does not allow an understanding of the process by which some established themselves historically while others had to wait for a belated rehabilitation. By assuming the “spontaneous emergence” of “equal corollaries,” studied side by side but not confronted, this approach overlooks the dynamics of global circulations (and non-circulations) between spaces, which impacted their development and their historical recognition. Thirdly, this proscription of the notions of center and periphery, accused of carrying on a tradition of domination of one geographical area over another, does little justice to the discipline of geography, which since the 1970s has been deeply reconfigured under the influence of structuralism. As Alain Reynaud explains in his seminal book *Société, espace et justice*: “Center and periphery do not correspond to any absolute opposition, in the framework of a dualism or of a simplifying Manichaeism ... On the contrary, center and periphery must be understood as relative notions,

defining one another.”<sup>6</sup> For Reynaud, Fernand Braudel, and such writers, speaking of centers and peripheries does not mean expressing a value judgment that would anchor the domination of a space over another. It is rather a tool to develop a critical analysis of the geopolitical, geohistorical, and geo-economic dynamics which make, at one specific moment, one socio-space a periphery or a center in relation to another socio-space. Only an understanding of such dynamics can make a “socio-spatial justice” possible. On the contrary, I suggest, claims of “internationalism” and “decentering” in the late 1960s only hid—or even justified—persisting geographical inequalities. The aim of this discussion, therefore, is to oppose the discursive construction of a “global conceptual art” in the 1960s, with the analysis of identifiable international circulations—of artists, artworks, exhibitions, and exhibition catalogues. It shows that those who, at the time, defended most heartedly the hackneyed, almost incantatory argument that conceptual art existed in every country, actually perceived not what existed but only what circulated, and more specifically what circulated from, or toward, a well-defined center. To better understand the “internationalism” of conceptual art, one therefore needs to consider not only practices that were geographically disseminated, each having its own history, but circulations between these spaces, considered dynamically and dialectically, to understand processes of emulation, domination and exclusion. The ideal of “decentering,” of putting an end to the notions of center and periphery, was indeed already present as early as the 1960s, lying at the heart of the project of conceptual art such as it was defined by a group of artists, critics, and gallerists of the New York art scene. In terms not very different from those of the contributors of *Global Conceptualism*, Seth Siegelau, the famous dealer of conceptual art, explained in 1973:

*The debut of conceptual art is unique because it appeared simultaneously around the world. Prior to this, artistic movements were very localized with all the leaders living in the same city (and usually the same neighborhood). It could also be said, in other words, that it was impossible to be an important artist unless you lived in the “right” city. Conceptual art, which is an inappropriate name, was probably the first artistic movement which did not have a geographic center.*<sup>7</sup>

This idea was elaborated and brought out in numerous interviews at the end of the Sixties: “the artist can live where he wants to—not necessarily in New York or London or Paris as he has had to in the past—but anywhere and still make important art,”<sup>8</sup> and “it’s now getting to the point where a man can live in Africa and make great art.”<sup>9</sup> At the heart of this ideal of decentering was the argument that conceptual art, by dematerializing the art object and thus allowing for cheap production and distribution, was subverting the traditional structuration of the art world, and putting an end to the weight of “artistic capitals” so as to allow for a truly international practice. According to Siegelau, geographic decentralization was the result of a new independence of conceptual practices toward artistic structures: “My gallery is the world now,” he explained, and consequently “New York is beginning to break down as a center,” which, he said, “turns [him] on.”<sup>10</sup> In 1970, for his preface to the catalogue of *Information*, one of the major exhibitions of conceptual art in New York, the Museum of Modern Art curator Kynaston McShine restated the argument, tainted with a form of McLuhanian technological optimism:<sup>11</sup>

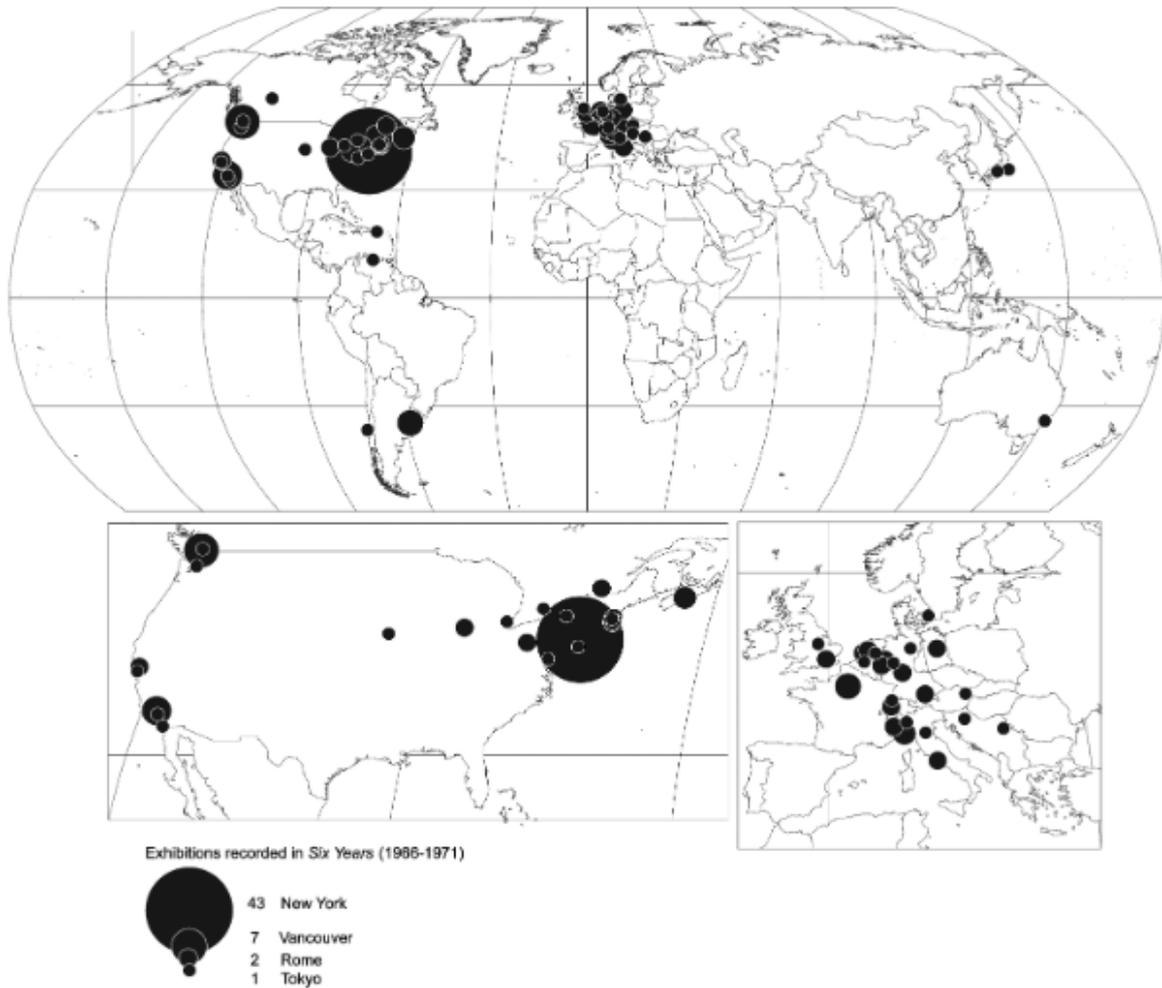
*With an art world that knows more readily about current work, through reproductions and the wide dissemination of information via periodicals, and that has been altered by television, films, and satellites, as well as the “jet,” it is now possible for artists to be truly international; exchange with their peers is now comparatively simple ... It is no longer imperative for an artist to be in Paris or New York. Those far from the*

*“art centers” contribute more easily, without the often artificial protocol that at one time seemed essential for recognition.*<sup>12</sup>

At the time, not only dealers and curators but also numerous critics, like John Perrault, and artists, like Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt or Ian Wilson, were expressing similar views about the subversion of geographic centers and the international artistic decentering enabled by conceptual art.<sup>13</sup> However, this discourse of internationalism was actually very localized: in its vast majority it was held by those who belonged to none other than the New York art scene, and who could afford to travel places. For LeWitt, for instance, “if you travel a lot, you see that a lot of artists around the world have similar ideas and are doing interesting things.”<sup>14</sup>

Among them was one of the most prominent critics and curators of conceptual art: Lucy Lippard. Throughout the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, she insisted on the “dissemination possibilities” of conceptual art, and the “decentralization and internationalism” that the practice should partake in.<sup>15</sup> In a 1969 interview with Ursula Meyer that constitutes the preface of the first edition of her seminal book *Six Years*, Lippard claimed that: “One of the important things about the new dematerialized art is that it provides a way of getting the power structure out of New York and spreading it around to wherever an artist feels like being at the time.”<sup>16</sup> Published in 1972, *Six Years* is a chronological account of exhibitions, publications, and events concerning the so-called “dematerialization of art” between 1966 and the end of 1971. It has remained, to this day, one of the most important sources for the history of conceptual art.<sup>17</sup> Written after Lippard traveled to Canada, Argentina, Peru, and Europe, and reflecting her interest in the global art scene, *Six Years* manifests what a very well-informed New York-based art critic knew and retained from the international scene of conceptual practices. Its global ambition is evident in its impressive full-length title, occupying the whole surface of the book cover: *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972: a cross-reference book of information on some esthetic boundaries: consisting of a bibliography in which are inserted a fragmented text, art works, documents, interviews, and symposia, arranged chronologically and focused on so-called conceptual or information or idea art with mentions of such vaguely designated areas as minimal, anti-form, systems, earth, or process art, occurring now in the Americas, Europe, England, Australia, and Asia (with occasional political overtones)*. Mapping the content of this book will therefore help us understand her point of view on early global conceptual art, and confront it to her and her peers’ discourse of decentering and internationalism.

Map 9.1 localizes the 147 exhibitions (among which are 32 solo shows) of conceptual art listed by Lucy Lippard in her book. Although many countries are represented, with the notable presence of South America (7 exhibitions, 5 percent of the total), the density of exhibitions is much larger in Europe. Above all, New York largely dominates, with more than 43 exhibitions, one third of the total. The title of Lippard’s book, announcing a concern with art “occurring now in the Americas, Europe, England, Australia, and Asia” is therefore both true and misleading: Australia is represented by only one exhibition; Asia is reduced to Japan, with two exhibitions recorded. Europe means Western Europe exclusively, except for two exhibitions in Zagreb and Belgrade. Therefore, although Lippard is deeply concerned with the global scene, and eager to demonstrate the “internationalism” of conceptual art, local artistic activities are nevertheless preeminent in her panorama.

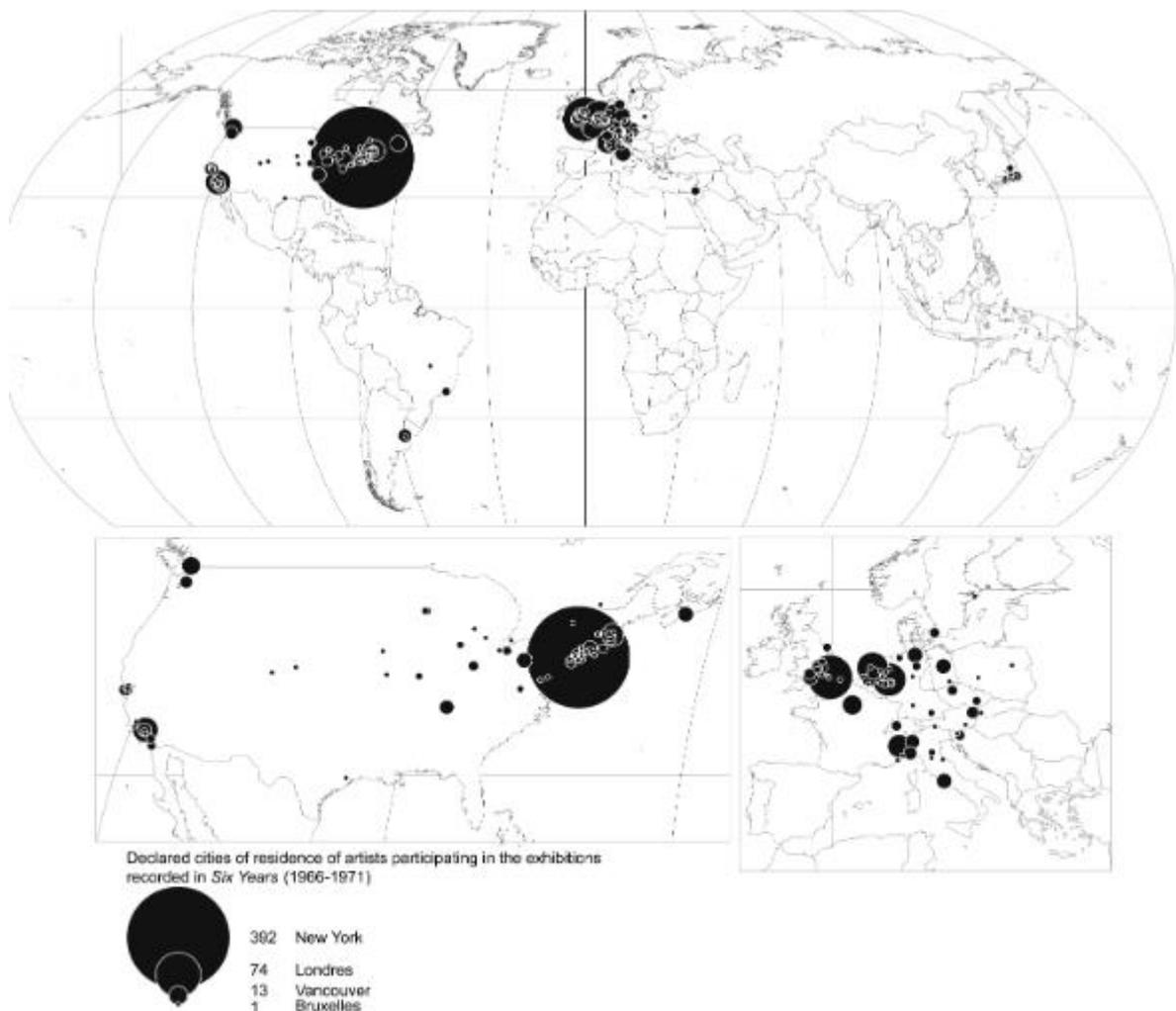


Map 9.1 Maps localizing the 147 exhibitions listed in *Six Years*.  
Made by the author using Philcarto

*The first set of maps (Map 9.1) localizes the 147 exhibitions listed in Six Years. In contrast, the second set of maps (Map 9.2) localizes the city of residence of participants in these exhibitions: one artist can appear several times if she or he has been included in more than one of these shows. The information about the place of residence of these participants was extracted from a single, homogeneous source—the exhibition catalogues of these shows. Therefore, this map is necessarily non-exhaustive: many exhibitions did not have a catalogue, or their catalogue did not mention the places of residence of the artists. Among the 147 exhibitions of Six Years, I was able to find only 28 with a catalogue including such information. They allow us to localize 983 participants in total, equaling 380 artists. Maps made using Philcarto.*

This concentration is even more evident when we consider not the localization of the exhibitions, but the localization of the artists themselves. Map 9.2 localizes, whenever the information was available, the city of residence of each participant in the collective exhibitions listed by Lippard, as declared in their respective catalogues (50 of them could be consulted, 28 of which—mainly the major ones— included mentions of artists’ residences). Here, the contrasts are even more striking: 40 percent of the participants in these exhibitions of conceptual art indicate that their residence is New York City.

Then, London appears as a secondary center with 10 percent of the participants, as well as Düsseldorf and Amsterdam. Paris and Northern Italy follow, with only about 2 percent of the participants.



Map 9.2 Maps localizing the city of residence of participants in the 147 exhibitions listed in *Six Years*. Made by the author using Philcarto

Contrasts are not only on the global scale, they also appear on the national and regional scales: while Western Europe is relatively dense and multi-centered, with the exclusion of entire areas like Southern Europe, in the US New York and Los Angeles concentrate all activities. The local dynamic of center and periphery was so important that an artist like Douglas Huebler, who lived not in New York but in Bradford, Massachussetts, was presented as a “marginal” by the critics, and was always cited by Siegelauub or Lippard as an example of the formidable geographic dispersion of conceptual art.<sup>18</sup>

I want to make clear that these maps do not attempt to localize where conceptual artists lived and exhibited between 1966 and 1971. Rather, they reflect the point of view of Lippard, a well-aware observer based in New York; they are constructed according to the information at her disposal at the time, information that circulated and was able to reach her. Indeed, it is not enough that artistic productions and events *occurred*, they had to *circulate*—under the form of documentation, magazine articles, exhibition catalogues—to become visible internationally, or rather visible for those who had

the institutional power to make art history, like the influential critic Lucy Lippard. What is fundamental here is the translation of these maps—contrasted, unequal, with defined centers and peripheries—into a discourse of non-hierarchized, decentered internationalism, and the ideology at play into this translation. To quote Siegelaub again, “a man can live in Africa and make great art,” but his art will probably not make it into *Six Years*, and is therefore quite unlikely to enter traditional art historical literature.

This discrepancy between Lippard’s inclusive discourse and the reality of how much of the international activity she actually registered—and advertised—was actually pointed out by observers at the time. In its review of *Six Years*, the Italian-based magazine *Flash Art* condemned a New York perspective that overlooked European practices:

*on careful analysis, there is a typically American and therefore biased approach that is, everything comes from the States, anything of any importance done over the last ten years is American or almost (rather, from New York, as even California has an absolutely minor role in this book). The information on Europe and therefore general information is scarce, partial and biased. And the sporadic information on Europe reflects the official American stand or its echo. We do not wish to believe that Lippard is in bad faith: we only point out the limited artistic information (and naturally, political) on Europe in the 1960s.*<sup>19</sup>

As the authors rightfully make clear, Lippard sincerely wished to present a truly international panorama. What she failed to acknowledge was that the diffusion and promotion of artistic activities were still much dependant on traditional artistic structures (institutional galleries and museums, widely distributed art magazines and exhibition catalogues) that were unequally implemented. The possibility for the artists to travel, the necessary funds to publish exhibition catalogues and advertisements, as well as the support of the media were as many filters which contributed to select which artistic practices would reach Lippard. This selection would obviously be in the detriment not only to Western Europe, but also to a much larger extent to Eastern Europe, South America or Asia. While the Australian artist Michael Archer estimated that “Geography was no barrier to involvement, not least because *Studio International* from Britain, *Artforum* from the US and *Art International* from Switzerland were able to play a substantial role in furthering the awareness of what was happening in other places,” one could argue to the contrary that the real geographic frontier was whether one could or could not enter any of these magazines.<sup>20</sup>

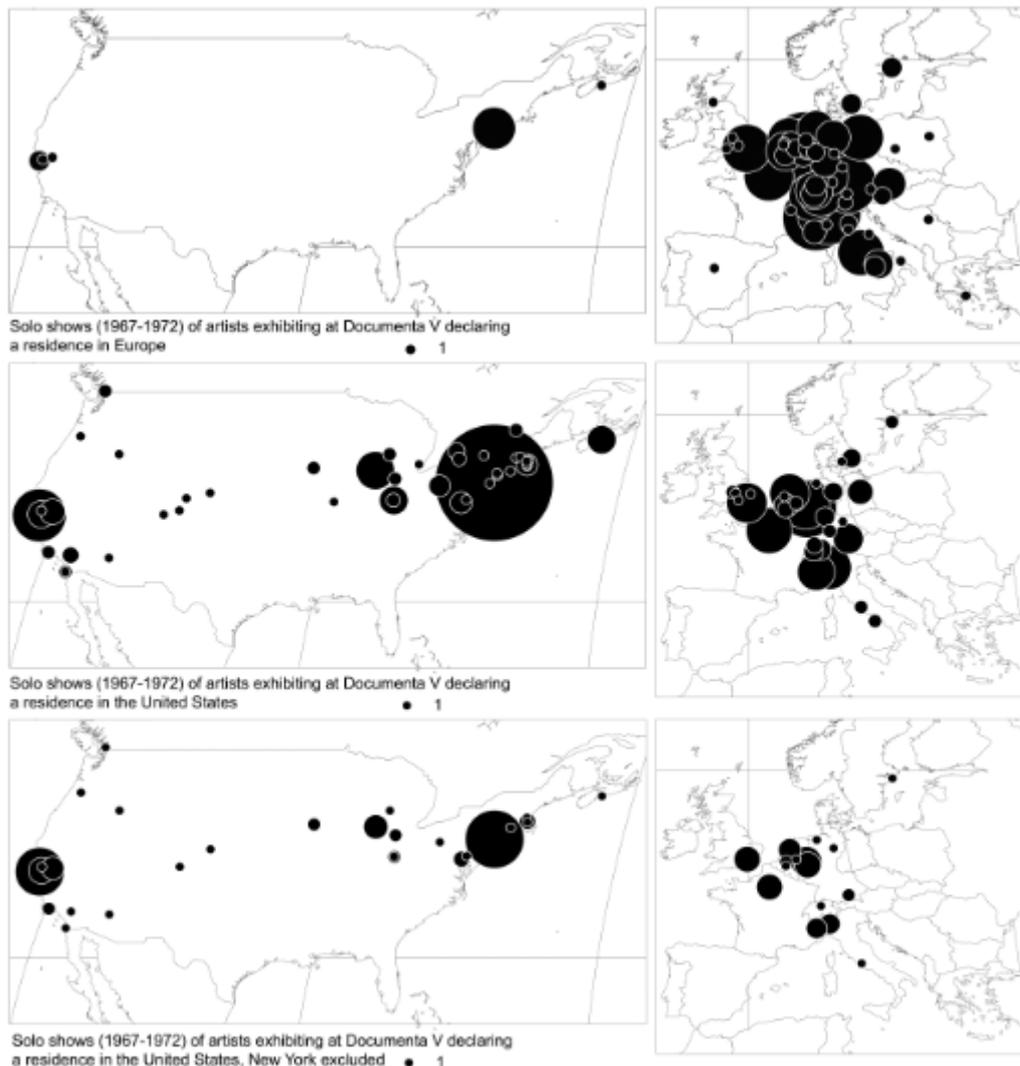
To analyze these regional inequalities a little further, I would like to study one exhibition, *Documenta V*, in greater depth. This exhibition, which took place in Kassel in 1972 (when Lippard’s *Six Years* was in the process of publication and when Seth Siegelaub retired from the art world) is considered by many historians as both the climax and conclusion of the first phase of conceptual art. The catalogue of *Documenta* is rich in geographical information. First, participants were asked to name their places of birth and of residence, which reveals predictable trends of exclusion and concentration. While more than a dozen participants indicate a place of birth in South America, Asia or Eastern Europe, only 1 (out of the 164 participants who named their place of residence) admits to currently reside outside of the US or Western Europe (Michael Buthe, Morocco).

Besides, each participant was invited to list his or her personal exhibitions up until 1972, which enables us to map out individual exhibition trajectories and careers. When artists are sorted according to their places of residence, striking differences appear. The first map in Map 9.3 localizes the personal exhibitions of artists declaring a residence in Europe: their career preceding *Documenta*

V is mainly European, with very few shows in New York and Los Angeles. In contrast, the second map shows that artists declaring a residence in the US have had a great number of solo shows in Europe before 1972. It is clear that while Europe is very permeable to American artists, and offers them numerous possibilities for individual exhibitions, the reverse is not true and the US seems largely inaccessible for Europeans, be they conceptual artists. How can we account for such a difference? Should it be understood as a sign of the so-called “triumph of American art,” an intrinsic superiority in the quality of American contemporary art at the end of the 1960s? Geography suggests other kinds of explanations. In her work on the “International Network of Conceptual Artists,” Sophie Richard showed how a successful partnership between 15 art galleries throughout Western Europe (including Yvon Lambert in Paris, Konrad Fischer in Düsseldorf, Sperone in Milan, etc.) allowed the same exhibitions and artists to circulate from one country to the next.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, if an American artist had an exhibition in one of these galleries, which was made easier by the proactive attitude of European dealers, he or she was almost assured to have other shows in Europe. No such networks and agreements existed in the US. It was then much more difficult for an artist living in Europe to penetrate the American art scene. Therefore, although Richard, in her introduction, takes it for granted that “there was equality between European and American artists,” I believe that the result of her study actually contradicts such a claim: rather than a non-hierarchical network, maps emphasize the reality of geographical inequalities grounded less in artistic validity than in institutional structures. By allowing the non-reciprocal circulation of shows, artworks, and artists, these structures conditioned their later reception and inscription in art history. Paradoxically, it was precisely the collaborative, organized, and dynamic activity of European galleries that insured the success of artists based in the US.

However, it was not enough to live and work in the US to have the gate of Europe opened: geographical inequalities also functioned on the national scene. The third map in Map 9.3 shows the personal exhibitions of artists living in the US, with the exclusion of New York City: it is clear that, for them, there were far fewer exhibitions in Europe. The art scene outside New York, the West Coast in particular, did not offer the same transatlantic passages. Insofar as circulation conditioned artistic recognition, being excluded from such a network may have undermined their chances of international success.

Again, what these maps demonstrate above all is the contrast in the New York conceptual art community between, on the one hand, a discourse on internationalism and decentering, and on the other, a perception of international exhibitions and artists which was actually very unequally distributed, structured in terms of powerful dynamics of centers and peripheries. This supports the claims made by some artists at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s that “internationalism” was actually a local form of ideology, linked to American imperialism, which acted as a disguise for the exportation of “colonial contemporary art” (in Luis Camnitzer’s words).<sup>22</sup> As American artist Dan Graham acknowledged in 1973, “this identification of American art to an art without frontier [that is, to “international art”] is not admissible today with the same naïve idealism.”<sup>23</sup> Only at that time did artists realize that, in the terms of the Australian artist Ian Burn, conceptual art actually adhered to a traditional avant-garde geography which was “conservative.”<sup>24</sup>



Map 9.3 Maps localizing the 182 participants in *Documenta V* (1972).  
Made by the author using Philcarto

*These maps were constructed solely on the basis of information available in the catalogue of Documenta V (1972). Among the 182 participants in the exhibition, 153 mentioned at least one solo show between 1967 and 1972 in their biographical information (only the living artists were considered). Artists were then sorted in Maps 1, 2, and 3 according to their declared place of residence (not nationality): Europe, US, US excluding New York City. Maps made using Philcarto*

Importantly, however, these geographical dynamics functioned at every level: they did not simply oppose, on the global scale, a Western Center to a non-Western periphery; as we have seen, centers and peripheries are strictly relational notions and vary according to the scale of study. Western Europe was also involved in a non-reciprocal relationship with the US, and within the US itself, space was equally divided and compartmentalized.

To finish, I would like to suggest that maps were also used at the time as visual statements, to either build or deconstruct this idea of international decentering through the circulation and

practice of conceptual art. Maps, indeed, became a privileged artistic theme in the 1960s.<sup>25</sup> In some cases, maps clearly partake in the general discourse of internationalism in vogue at the time. Maps may, for instance, illustrate magazines and exhibition catalogues as a mere signal of their geographic ambitions, like Siegelau's exhibition catalogues of 1968 and 1969, or the Sonsbeek 71 catalogue cover.<sup>26</sup> But maps were also very commonly used as a material for artworks themselves. While they clearly suited conceptual artists' search for non-expressive, scientific-looking images, closer to documentation than to art and supposedly able to efficiently transmit information, they also carried a political overtone. This was clearly the case when maps were used by artists to denounce ideologies of nationalism, imperialism or political oppression—as in certain works by the Argentinean artist Jorge Luis Carballa, or the large series of maps by the Italian Alighiero Boetti, where each country is represented in the colors of its national flag. One can also point out Marcel Broodthaers's miniature book *The Conquest of Space. Atlas for the Use of Artists and the Military* (1975), which confronts, regardless of their respective scale, some European countries and a few of their formerly colonized territories. In Öyvind Fahlström's 1972 World Map, statistics invade the cartographic space to denounce the generalized exploitation of Third World countries.

However, this issue was, to some extent, also present in a number of works by conceptual artists, which are often mistakenly read as non-political. Indeed, at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, the growing public contestation of the artistic structures in the US, which involved many artists of the "conceptual" generation, went together with a more general stance against American economic imperialism and the war in Vietnam.<sup>27</sup> Maps, which were commonly used to illustrate the progression of the conflict in the mainstream press, could become synonymous with a critical reflection on space. These cartographic works often manifest a predilection for empty spaces, for anti-centers. They point to places that are usually deemed marginal, out of sight of an average viewer of contemporary art. In 1967, the British group Art & Language created their *Map to Not Indicate*, a map of the US where all the states are left blank except for Iowa and Kentucky. Central states in terms of artistic geography—such as New York or California—are voluntarily "not indicated," leaving for examination two states more rarely considered by (European) viewers. Their *Map of a 36-Square-Mile Area of the Pacific Ocean*, also from 1967, is even more radical: it is the paradoxical map of an empty area, a blank square. Ger Van Elk's *La Pièce* (1971) includes a map centered on the North Atlantic Ocean. Here, the ocean is both a place free of human invasive presence, "where there is no dust to created dirt" as the Amsterdam-based artist stated, and a connecting space between Europe and North America, an inter-space between two centers.<sup>28</sup> In 1966, the Japanese-born artist On Kawara painted *Lat. 31°25' N; Long. 8°41' E*, a form of conceptual landscape painting where the location is not depicted but instead designated by its geographic coordinates, inscribed in white capitals over a black background. These coordinates, one discovers, lead to a point located in the middle of the Sahara desert. The artist thus frustrates the curious viewer by leading him to a non-place, an anti-climatic quest. These few examples of artistic geographies seem to support a spatial pursuit: that of a decentering, where empty spaces become the primary focus of attention. These works, however, could be said to replicate the "internationalist" discourse of Lippard or Siegelau. While they demand that the spectator's attention be driven away from the main artistic centers,

they do not question their own position as artworks actually exhibited in, and seen from, these centers.

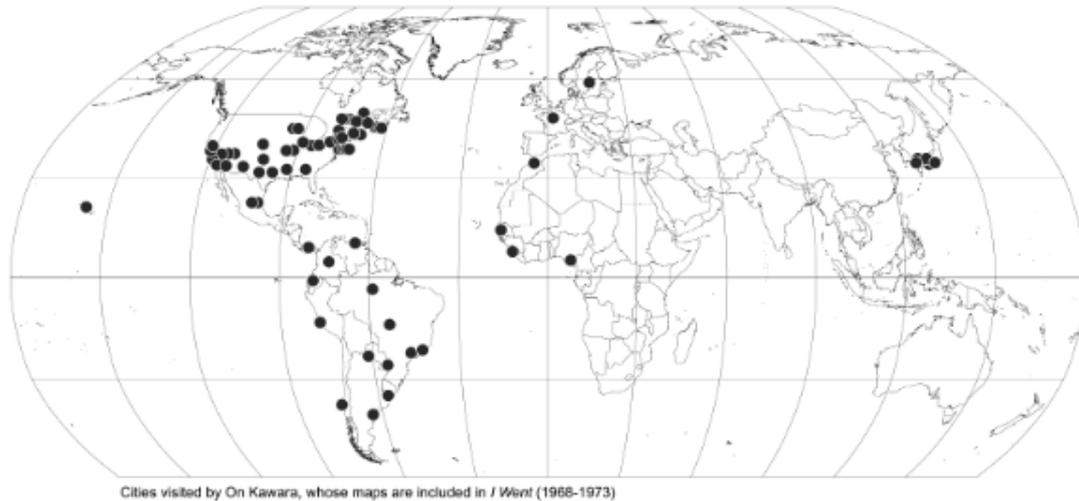
More critical works, conversely, engage in a dialectical opposition between centers and periphery, at different scales. At the scale of a city, *Gallery Goers' Birthplace and Residence Profile*, by the New York-based German artist Hans Haacke, points to the geo-economic determinants of contemporary art amateurs. The work was realized in two parts. For the first one, at the Howard Wise Gallery in November 1969, visitors in the exhibition were asked to pinpoint their place of birth and residence on maps spread out on the walls. The second part of the work, exhibited at the Paul Maenz Gallery a few months later, involved photographic documentation of the places located during Part 1, therefore constructing a visual, sociological approach to contemporary art gallery visitors, investing the geography of the city with considerations of economic status and cultural capital.<sup>29</sup>

At a regional scale, Douglas Huebler—this “marginal” artist living in Massachusetts—made a number of works based on the theme of an exchange between two spaces: that of New York, the art center, and Boston, the city scorned by the art world for its supposed provincialism, and remoteness from artistic activities. For instance, in *New York–Boston Exchange Shape* (1968), Huebler drew two regular, identical pentagons on two maps—one of New York City, the other of Boston—at the same scale. He thus defined six points in each city, separated by the same distance, where he then traveled in order to mark the spots and photograph them.<sup>30</sup> In the actual space of the cities, as in the representational space of the maps, Huebler implied a formal equivalence between the two cities through a de-hierarchized geographical process, while at the same time emphasizing the differences in size and urban planning evident in the confrontation of the maps. Huebler therefore proposed a dialogue between the center and its immediate periphery, both near and far away, included and excluded.

At a larger scale, Dennis Oppenheim's *Gallery Transplants* suggest a similar project. In this series of works started in 1969, the ground plan of the gallery or museum where his exhibition took place was “transplanted” at a distant location, materialized by a shape on the ground, and designated in the gallery by a photograph and a map.<sup>31</sup> The topography of the gallery, once transposed in a different, non-artistic space, often deserted, rocky or snowy, revealed its absurdity. Finally, the works that perhaps most emblemize this dialectic are Robert Smithson's *Sites-Nonsites*, started in 1968.<sup>32</sup> The artist chose a “site” (preferably in the periphery of the exhibition) and presented, in the gallery, its conceptual reverse, the “nonsite,” materialized by samples collected on the site (earth, sand, rocks), a map, and a photograph of the site. While the gallery hosted the “nonsite” of art, the real site was elsewhere, far away from the so-called art-centers but close enough for the spectator to go visit it. The “site” was often at the outskirts of the economic and artistic centers, where artistic underdevelopment met with economic desertion.

These various works, briefly mentioned, all function on the assumption that, rather than focusing on the alleged “empty spaces” of contemporary art, one should concentrate on the dialectical tension between centers and peripheries, whether they be, in the terms of Alain Reynaud, “dominated,” “abandoned” or “self-sufficient.”<sup>33</sup> While assuming that they need the

artistic centers to be recognized as art, these cartographic works suggest that artistic geographies often duplicate socio-economic geographies, and that a reflection on spatial justice should involve the way “centers” create, or feed on, their peripheries.



Map 9.4 Map localizing the cities visited by On Kawara between 1968 and 1973.  
Made by the author

*This map is based on the maps available in I Went. Each dot represents one stay in the city (several dots on the same spots indicate that the artist came back to the same city for another stay).*

I would like to give one last example of an artwork that demonstrates that artists were not simply the naïve victims nor the passive agents of geographic domination, but instead proposed a critical rethinking of the logics of spatial power at play in the art world. Between 1968 and 1979, On Kawara, an American artist with Japanese origins, based in New York, worked on *I Went*. It consisted in recording every day on a city map the journey he had walked during the day. *I Went* was recently reedited in 12 volumes totaling 4,740 pages, each of them a xeroxed map onto which the artist has stamped the date, and inscribed his path.<sup>34</sup> In contrast to the apparent conceptual neutrality and aridity of the project, the effect is visually striking, due to the diversity of maps, scales, typographies, and alphabets. The shapes traced day after day suggest the passage of a man in time. The maps also suggest the endless possibility of other places, rather than the fixity of this or that art center or art capital. Page after page, map after map, the artist’s book elaborates another, dynamic cartography based on continuous circulation (Map 9.4). This map appears like an imperfect negative of Map 9.2. The artist, always on the move, seems to be seeking to fill in the vacant spaces left by the geography of artists when they fix their place of residence on an exhibition catalogue.

Maybe this is why, as if to preemptively undermine future art historians seeking to freeze artistic geography in maps, some artists decided to play tricks on them. So did David Tremlett in the catalogue of *Documenta V*, stating, at the place reserved for his city of residence, “Er reist”: he travels.

- <sup>1</sup> Ian Burn, "The Sixties: Crisis and Aftermath (or the Memoirs of an Ex-Conceptual Artist)" [1981], in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), 405.
- <sup>2</sup> Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rachel Weiss, Foreword to *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s–1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), vii, xi.
- <sup>3</sup> Stephen Bann, Introduction to *Global Conceptualism*, ed. Camnitzer et al., 3, 6.
- <sup>4</sup> Peter Wollen, "Global Conceptualism and North American Conceptual Art," in *Global Conceptualism*, ed. Camnitzer et al., 73, 85.
- <sup>5</sup> See for instance: Michael Corris, ed., *Conceptual Art, Theory, Myth, and Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Rosetta Brooks, "An Art of Refusal," in *Live in Your Head, Concept and Experiment in Britain 1965–75* (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 2000); *How Latitudes Become Forms: Art in a Global Age* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2003).
- <sup>6</sup> Alain Reynaud, *Société, espace et justice: Inégalités régionales et justice socio-spatiale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981), 38.
- <sup>7</sup> Michel Claura and Seth Siegelau, "L'art conceptuel" [1973], in *Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Stimson, 287.
- <sup>8</sup> Quoted by Joseph Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy" [1969], in *Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Stimson, 175.
- <sup>9</sup> Interview with Seth Siegelau [1969], in *Recording Conceptual Art, Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelau, Smithson, Weiner*, by Patricia Norvell, ed. Alexander Alberro and Patricia Norvell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 52.
- <sup>10</sup> Interview with Seth Siegelau [1969], in *Recording Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Norvell, 38, 52.
- <sup>11</sup> The Canadian communication theorist Marshall McLuhan was extremely influential in the 1960s. He argued that the transmission of information was dependent on the technological features of the media used. As audio-visual devices would develop, he anticipated the emergence of a "global village" where messages—however simplified—would simultaneously reach an ever-expanding human community. Cf. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962); Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).
- <sup>12</sup> Kynaston McShine, *Introduction to Information* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 140. See also Ken Allan, "Understanding Information," in *Conceptual Art*, ed. Corris, 152.
- <sup>13</sup> "Conceptual Art is a symptom of globalism and it is the first—Surrealism almost was—really international art style": John Perreault, "It's Only Words" [1971], in *Idea Art, A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1973), 137. "Pollock and Judd are, I feel, the beginning and end of American dominance in art": Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy" [1969], in *Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Stimson, 175. For Sol LeWitt, Siegelau's exhibition catalogues are "terrific, because, first of all, he's taking away from New York the kind of hub of the universe": Interview with Sol LeWitt [1969], in *Recording Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Norvell, 122. "I've freed art from a specific place. It's now possible for everyone": Ian Wilson, quoted in *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects* (New York: New York Cultural Center, 1970), 33.
- <sup>14</sup> Interview with Sol LeWitt [1969], in *Recording Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Norvell, 122.
- <sup>15</sup> "What is radically new [with conceptual art] is its context, the exhibition and dissemination possibilities": Lucy Lippard, "Introduction to 557,087" [1969], in *Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Stimson, 180; "Decentralization and internationalism were major aspects of the prevailing distribution theories": Lippard in her Preface to the second edition of *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xviii.
- <sup>16</sup> Interview of Lippard by Ursula Meyer [1969], Preface to the first edition of *Six Years*, 8.
- <sup>17</sup> As demonstrated recently by the exhibition and publication *Materializing Six Years: Lucy R. Lippard and the Emergence of Conceptual Art*, ed. Catherine Morris and Vincent Bonin (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press; and New York: Brooklyn Museum, 2012).
- <sup>18</sup> Huebler's example is mentioned by Siegelau among others in a 1969 interview with Patricia Norvell, in *Recording Conceptual Art*, 53, and by Lippard in *Six Years*, xviii. See also Frédéric Paul's interview with Douglas Huebler, "Truro, Massachusetts, 11–14 octobre 1992," in *Douglas Huebler, "Variable," etc.* (Limoges: FRAC du Limousin, 1992), 116.
- <sup>19</sup> "Six Years," *Flash Art* 42 (1973): 1.
- <sup>20</sup> Michael Archer, "Out of the Studio," in *Live in Your Head*, 28.
- <sup>21</sup> Sophie Richard, *Unconcealed, The International Network of Conceptual Artists 1967–77, Dealers, Exhibitions and Public Collections* (London: Ridinghouse, 2009).
- <sup>22</sup> Luis Camnitzer, "Contemporary Colonial Art" [1969], in *Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Stimson, 225.
- <sup>23</sup> Dan Graham, *Ma position: Ecrits sur mes oeuvres* (Villeurbanne and Dijon: Nouveau Musée/Institut, Presses du Réel, 1992), 44.
- <sup>24</sup> Burn, "The Sixties," in *Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Stimson, 405.
- <sup>25</sup> On the use of maps in conceptual art of the 1960–70s, see Larisa Dryansky, "Déplacements. Les usages de la cartographie et de la photographie dans l'art américain des années 1960 et du début des années 1970: les cas de Mel Bochner, Douglas Huebler, Dennis Oppenheim, Ed Ruscha et Robert Smithson" (PhD diss., Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2011) and more recently, by the same author, "Du ciel à la terre. Les earthworks et la vue aérienne," in *Vue d'en haut*, ed. Angela Lampe (Metz: Centre Beaubourg Metz, 2013); Robert Storr, *Mapping* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994); Marie-Ange Brayer, "Mesures d'une fiction picturale: La carte de géographie," *Exposé 2* (1995): 6–23; Marc Bormand, "Quelques signes au détour des années 1960," in *Face à l'histoire 1933–1996: L'artiste moderne devant l'évènement historique* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1996); Deborah Schultz, "'The Conquest of Space': On the Prevalence of Maps in Contemporary Art" (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2001); Peter Wollen, "Mappings: Situationists and/or Conceptualists," in *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. Michael Newman and Jon Bird (London: Reaktion, 1999).

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<sup>26</sup> *Douglas Huebler* (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1968); *July–August–September* (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969); *Sonsbeek 71* (Arnhem: Sonsbeek, 1971).

<sup>27</sup> In the US, these claims were carried over notably by the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC), born in 1969 as an association of artists, critics, and museum staff, who demanded an extension of artists' rights and advocated against the Vietnam war, sexual and racial discrimination, etc. See Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> *Sonsbeek 71*, 107.

<sup>29</sup> Hans Haacke describes and comments this work in Jeanne Siegel, "An Interview with Hans Haacke" [1971], in *Conceptual Art*, ed. Alberro and Stimson, 245. See also, among others, Anne Rorimer, "From Minimal Origins to Conceptual Originality," in *A Minimal Future? Art as Object, 1958–1968* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004), 94.

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of this work, see Anne Rorimer, *New Art in the 60s and 70s Redefining Reality* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 137.

<sup>31</sup> See in particular: Jean-Louis Bourgeois, "Dennis Oppenheim, A Presence in the Countryside," *Artforum* 8, no. 2 (1969): 36–37; and Dennis Oppenheim quoted in *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects*, 38.

<sup>32</sup> Among the abundant literature on these works, see: Patricia Norvell's 1969 interview with Robert Smithson, in *Recording Conceptual Art*, 126; and Robert Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (1968): 50.

<sup>33</sup> Reynaud, *Société, espace et justice*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> On Kawara, *I Went* (Brussels: MCF-Michèle Didier, 2007). This publication was limited to 90 numbered and signed copies (plus 10 artist's proofs).