AWAY / A WAY:
ARTISTIC MOBILITY AND THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION IN THE ART RESIDENCY CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically reflects on mobility as a contemporary paradigm by looking at the artistic mobility and the politics of inclusion/exclusion within art residency culture. In recent years, art residencies have gained momentum as a core stage in the development of many young practitioners, and they take place in a plethora of places, practices and models. The official institutional discourse portrays art residency culture as an open field accessible to a globalised supercommunity and as a way to internationalise contemporary art by connecting the local with the global art world. After presenting an overview of art residency culture, its role and relevance within the contemporary art world and for artistic careers, the paper employs two case studies. The first, a review of an ethnography of an alternative residency in São Paulo, Brazil, complexifies notions of *centre* and *periphery* within the art residency network. The second presents an emblematic example of the creation of an online skills market to access residencies. The two cases are linked by an overview of EU policy documents and frameworks, and open calls and regulations of institutions hosting international residencies through which issues affecting artistic mobility are explored. Even though the paper makes the point that there is no such thing as a completely peripheral residency, it also highlights that the whole art residency culture seems to sustain an institutional model that may exacerbate the already precarious working conditions of artists.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Valeria Bevilacqua trained as an anthropologist, earning a BA degree in Anthropology and Philosophy at the University of Siena and an MA in Medical Anthropology at SOAS, University of London. Following her call to the East, Bevilacqua moved to India where she worked as a researcher for the Public Health Evidence South Asia (PHESA) centre of Manipal University. She's co-founder of Resina, a nonprofit cultural organisation which runs and curates a yearly international residency programme in Ferrara, Italy. In the attempt to insert her work in a broader research framework, she returned to SOAS in 2018-2019 for an MPhil with a research project investigating the relevance of art residencies and mobility in the global contemporary art world. She recently joined the Master in Arts Management and Administration (MAMA) at Bocconi University in Milan and wishes to continue nourishing her passion for the arts by merging research, project management, curating, and consulting.

INTRODUCTION

I would like to open up this paper by challenging the idea that "mobility has become the paradigm of our times."[1] In fact, has it for artists?

Figure 1. Gilbert Spencer, An Artist's Progress, 1959
© Royal Academy of Arts. Photo: John Hammond

I introduce this first section by quoting the curator and art educator Miwon Kwon, whom in her evocative book *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity,* provocatively brings us to reflect on the multiple frictions of mobility, the intrinsic value that "the logic of nomadism," as she calls it, acquires for artists and art practitioners and how it collides powerfully with an affective dimension:

> [t]he success and viability of one's work are now measured by the accumulation of frequent flyer miles. The more we travel for work, the more we are called upon to provide institutions in other parts of the country and the world with our presence and services, the more we give in to the logic of nomadism, one could say, the more we are made to feel wanted, needed, validated, and relevant (Kwon 2002:156-57).

Artistic practice has historically been linked with mobility, travel, and tourism, and is well documented in history and art history[2] (Vasari 1988[1568]; Avcioğlu and Flood 2010; Elfving et al. 2019; Horowitz 2014; Kim 2014). Since the late Middle Ages, "it has been a prerequisite for artists and craftspeople to travel for a number of years before earning their master status" (Zyman 2018:33). Throughout history, art centres, travel, and pilgrimage routes may have changed, but "themes such as mobility, travels, and the quest for inspiration, learning and unlearning through exchange," and "the utilitarianism that accompanies being on the move" remain fundamental underpinnings of the artistic practice (ibid.). Long before we found a terminology for what we now call an art residency, artists were already taking part in immersive cultural experiences in different contexts away from home. For example, as Rio de Janeiro-based residency curator and producer Helmut Batista narrates,

> The Villa Medici is more than 400 years old and is probably the oldest art residency on the globe. When Da Vinci created his beautiful machines in some French castle, by invitation, he was probably in an art residency, as artists are today. He was earning his living and building his CV (Batista 2019:78).

Nowadays, the Villa Medici is home to the French Academy in Rome and continues to offer residency programmes open to all fields of literary and artistic creation, history of art as well as works of art and monuments restoration to "fellows known as 'pensionnaires'" (Transartist, Villa Medici). Since "the XVIIthcentury, it has hosted artists and scholars among whom Fragonard, Ingres, Berlioz, Carpeaux, Bizet, Debussy, Garnier" [ibid.].

The mobility entailed by art residencies is both physical/geographical, as well as emotionally and value charged. Residencies abroad are temporary time-outs away from one's everyday life; they also mark a metaphoric journey to find a way within one's self and one's practice.

ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF ART RESIDENCIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY ART WORLD

Institutional patterns of art residencies as we know them today began to develop "in the post-war period and then spread rapidly from the 1990s on and in this process, they have become a legitimate pillar of cultural promotion in many countries" (Glauser 2018:43). Western centres of contemporary art - such as London, Paris, New York - set the model for the art residencies to come, which have then begun to spring from the so-called peripheries (Vogel 2018:135) - megacities of the Global South, rural settings, secluded areas immersed in nature. Art residency can, perhaps, be seen as an umbrella term for a constellation of places, a plethora of models and heterogeneous practices as well as a multitude of actors, both human (artists, curators, programme organisers, patrons, hosting community) and nonhuman (institutions, money flows, buildings, artworks, visas, value), revolving around a common mission: cultural promotion, exchange, international networking, as well as "understanding of and insight into local culture, engage[ment] with the local art scene" (OTM 2019). Moreover, art residencies appear to be increasingly in the target of cultural policy initiatives, as a key instrument in urban development and community planning (Elfving et al. 2019; Lithgow and Wall 2018).

Although the European Commission's Policy Handbook on Artists' Residencies (EU OMC, 2014) identifies "clear barriers causing imbalance" (ibid.:59) and calls for "more easily accessible information on practical, mobility related issues […] across Europe and beyond" (ibid.:63), the official institutional discourse still portrays art residency culture as an open field accessible to a globalised supercommunity and as a way to internationalise contemporary art by connecting art worlds, the local with the global, in a sort of "pluralism through connections" whereby "the specificity of an art world is based on its locally normative debates in combination with how it is stretching out to internationaldiscourses" (Fillitz 2018:101).

What needs to be singled out as a peculiar feature of the art residency is its capacity to act as a microcosm with a geographic and ethnographic specificity - with a life of its own, one that encapsulates, condenses, appropriates, and redefines art and the global at local level. And, simultaneously, each artresidency exists as a hyperdependent, minuscule tile of that very nuanced, stratified, complex global art mosaic. A mode that not only survives but thrives in the global art world, the art residency model has succeeded in carving out for itself a strategic space and function. A juncture where the global is injected in the local, and the local acquires global reach, for instance "[f]rom within the post-industrial warehouses of the London East End" (Acme Studios 2012:18). A node where "'periphery' and 'centre' converge in a global perspective" (Vogel 2018:135) and are woven together in the liminal time-space of hospitality and host-guest exchange and reciprocity, as well as through mobility and network creation.

I propose that what lies beneath and contributes to the fortune of art residency culture is precisely the fact that it encompasses a heterogeneity of models, forms, and practices. This fluidity allows the residency to occupy a multiplicity of spaces within the global contemporary art worlds: from reinforcing neoliberal dynamics and structural imbalances between centres and peripheries, to infiltrating and disrupting gaps and cracks between the institutional and noninstitutional, and opening up the possibility for radical experimental affordances of existence, of living together - for those who organise and host, those who participate, and - in certain cases - the surrounding/hosting community. However, as scholars have warned, art residencies could in fact "isolat[e] practitioners while aiming to bring them together" (Elfving and Kokko 2019:23). They are surely, in part, also feeding competition - from one open call to the next - even when "encouraging sharing and critical reflection" (ibid.).

Another reason that perhaps contributes to the "thriving phenomenon" of art residency culture (EU OMC 2014:23) is its role as a control mechanism, a disciplining bottleneck, which establishes who and how, especially artists but curators too, can progress from MFAs to the higher echelons of the art world. It has been pointed out that "as most artists will only very rarely be able to actively participate in biennials," the logic underlying global circuits is "arguably much more fully represented by the culture of residencies" than by that of biennials (Hodge and Yousefi 2015:4).

ART RESIDENCIES' INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE: CENTRES AND PERIPHERIES

The complexity of the institutional landscape of the art residency culture is decisively related on the one hand to where and which studios are offered for artists, and on the other hand from which places and for whom they are accessible at all. As clearly visible in the figure below - an attempt of ResArtis [3] to map residencies worldwide (468 organisations and related networks and collaborations wherever available) - there are considerable differences with regard to the distribution and density of programmes.
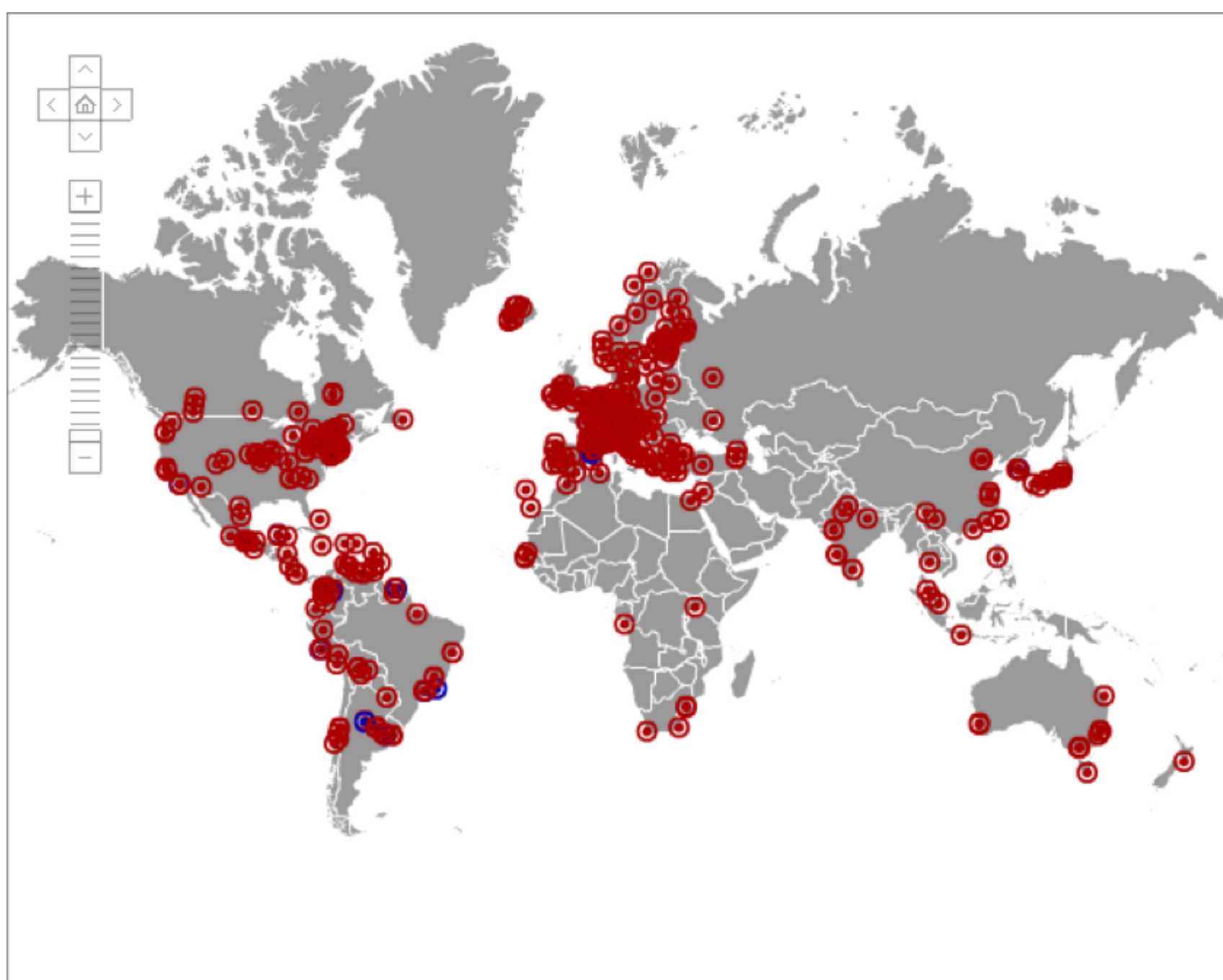

Figure 2. ResArtis Mapping
© ResArtis http://www.resartis.org/resartis_mapping/map/

This distribution, although ever-changing, shows existing imbalances and a predominance of residency opportunities in the West/Global North, followed by postcolonial countries included in the art market, i.e., the Global South, Eastern Europe, and Asia.

The European Union's Operational Study Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe countries (EU OTM 2019) also points to existing imbalances across Europe, which reinforce existing social, economic, and cultural asymmetries and mobility-related practices. Even though the document looks at the European context, the structural imbalances identified: "access to information and knowledge, including language barriers; access to funding and different costs of living; policy priorities regarding mobility (including the relevance given to the notion of 'reciprocity') […] and the different impact of budget cuts" (ibid.:23) speak to the global context more at large. These asymmetries - embedded in more comprehensive patterns of Western hegemony - have been addressed again and again not only in cultural policy and artistic practice, but also in cultural and social science studies on art and globalisation. However, it is important to maintain that "the borders between […] centres and peripheries have become less certain" also due to "digitalization" (Elfving and Kokko 2019:24).

Through the example of Alex Flynn's ethnography of an alternative, noninstitutional art residency in an occupation in São Paulo, Brazil (Flynn 2018), I further the argument that there is no such thing as a completely peripheral residency because art residencies are located at the crossing of various axes. There may be cases, such as the following, to which I refer to as peripheral centres or central peripheries. Flynn's is an example of a (questionably) anti-institutional residency, located in the Global South, but nonetheless very much central in terms of re-signification of places and practices, knowledge production, host-guest participation, and visibility - and let's not forget that its ethnography is now circulating among an academic readership, most likely in the Global North.

Whereas the point has been made that "it is especially crucial that art residencies situate themselves" (Elfving and Kokko 2019:21), I maintain that it is equally important that researchers are able to do so, as these are located at interesting "intersections of axes" (Flynn 2018:180, 187, 195) - local and global, Global North and Global South; aesthetics and politics; artistic and activist intervention; the ephemeral, the utopian and the mercantile; the horizontal and the vertical; between reinforcing neoliberal dynamics and resisting/subverting them.

CASE STUDY 1: RESIDÊNCIA ARTÍSTICA CAMBRIDGE, SÃO PAULO

In 2016-2017, the anthropologist Alex Flynn co-curated, alongside other local collaborators, the Residência Artística Cambridge where a group of artists were invited for a period of three months, with a focus on noncommercial, ephemeral art. The residency was hosted in the Occupation Hotel Cambridge, a formerly luxury hotel, which since 2012 had been occupied by the Movimento dos Sem Teto do Centro (Movement of Homeless in the Centre), itself part of a wider collective, the Frente de Luta por Moradia (FLM, Front for Just Housing). This collective articulates the struggle for a right to a home within "a very specific and hostile context: São Paulo is one of the most unequal cities in the world, characterized as a series of fortified enclaves" (Flynn 2018:187). A community and a politically entangled space which the artists- and curators-in-residence cohabited and coexisted with, the residency "responded to, and articulated, a very different understanding of contemporary art practice" (ibid.).

Figure 3. Front, Occupation Hotel Cambridge ©Alex Flynn
PLURAL, Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Sociologia da USP, São Paulo, v.25.2, 2018, p.20-45

Figure 4.   Rooftop, Occupation Hotel Cambridge
©Alex Flynn https://www.alexflynn.net/Residencia-Artistica-Cambridge

Figure 5. Occupants, Occupation Hotel Cambridge
©Alex Flynn https://www.alexflynn.net/Residencia-Artistica-Cambridge

Independent, experimental, and entirely unfunded, the Residência followed the urge of its organisers and participants to "explicitly position itself against more commercial contemporary art enterprises" (Flynn 2018:187) and was conceived as an artistic (not activist) act of "epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo 2011:122-23 in ibid.:180). Flynn points to the rising importance of "contemporary art practitioners' and participants' particular role as theorizing agents" (ibid.:181) in the Global South. This calls into debate a notion of participation and collaboration at border zones of art world and non-art world spaces which operate in activating relations and hierarchies from concrete everyday life. What the Residência managed to do, even if unintendedly, was to create a transit of ideas within and without the perimeters of the hotel which contributed to the reappropriation and re-signification of what occupation could be. In the period when the Residência was active, the mayor of São Paulo gave a campaign speech in the library; the occupation applied for formal recognition as a cultural space; a Brazilian cinema actress gave a talk at the cine club; and a whole series of relationships between residents and project participants were forged, "a process that would never have occurred if the project had taken place over a shorter period of time" (ibid.:194). Responding to the problems "inherent in reconciling the specificity of the local with the problems of representation of the global […] the curators resisted the idea that the project could continue beyond its designated time-frame" (ibid.194-195).

The case of the Residência presents a problematic and questionable relationship vis-à-vis institutional and power dynamics. Existing without financial sponsorship was allowed by the fact that "all the artist within the Residência were contracted to powerful commercial galleries" (Flynn 2018:188); in other words, the sustainability of the Residência was possible by virtue of the dependency on the very institutional dynamics that it aimed to criticise.

ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF RESIDENCIES FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

As shown so far, and more specifically through the map and the first case study, art residency can be seen as an umbrella term for a constellation of places, a plethora of models, configurations, and practices as well as a multitude of actors, both human and nonhuman, some of which move more easily or more rapidly than others.

For practitioners in the arts, collecting residency experiences is considered evidence of a successful career, presented as a key section in biographies and CVs, and seems to act as a currency for young, emerging artists to acquire status and value by virtue of being mobile, of circulating, of being nomadic.

The art residency positions itself as both a physical and a conceptual place: whereby the locally situated studio is indeed immersed in a vivid, thick, Other everyday life, it also appears as a flashing node in a much-aspired global network. The art residency culture produces concrete networks and "networks on imaginary maps" (Vogel 2018:137), also defined as "cosmopolitan imagination" (Roesler 2015:471) and "cosmopolitics" (Elfving 2018:6). The aim of these "temporary re-locations into new contexts" is "not necessarily the production of new works, but primarily the broadening of experiences and horizons" (Vogel 2018:137). One may wonder whether this makes a residency essentially a retreat, and artists-in-residence tourists. According to art historian and curator Daniela Zyman, an artist-in-residence "simultaneously assumes an 'outside' position while being required to work from within" (Zyman 2018:35). Her position "complicates different forms of localities: her own with the one present at the residency site and possibly that of other migrant localities of the artistic diaspora" (ibid.).

A resident, in the truest sense of the word, is an occupant, an inhabitant indeed. Hence, "an artist in residence cannot be viewed as a traveller nor as a tourist en route for pleasure" (ibid). It becomes crucial to qualify the mobility entailed by art residencies in times when the art world is accelerating its global circulation at a dizzying pace, and mass tourism, carbon footprint, massive migrant and refugee flows, and environmental and geopolitical urgencies are deeply affecting the world we live in. As clearly pointed out by Taru Elfving and Irmeli Kokko, co-authors and editors of *Contemporary Artist Residencies: Reclaiming Time and Space*, one of the most recent publications on the topic, the role of residencies

> is to counter this very acceleration as support structures for artistic development, offering time-space for creative processes and momentary retreats for critical reflection. Their role is thus to recognize and nurture diverse temporalities rather than succumb to the productivist ethos of homogeneous linear time (Elfing and Kokko 2019:21).

Whereas participating in a residency can be seen as a privilege, in the following paragraphs, I will explore how demanding the path to get a place in a residency reveals to be, as well as the hardships of being in residence.

THE ARTIST'S JOURNEY TO BECOME ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

The residency's journey begins at home [4], much before the actual residency abroad. The artist first needs to find a call for which she is eligible. Being eligible means, essentially, to comply with all the requirements. These span from age limit, to nationality and proficiency in the working language (usually English), to level of education and years of work experience, to specific types of artistic practice, and - most importantly - the availability (and not only temporal) to participate in the programme. Striking, in this respect, is the very last point in the call for applications' guidelines of the Arts and Culture Division of the Federal Chancellery of Austria: "Neither the community studios nor the apartments are equipped for the needs of disabled" (Federal Chancellery of Austria 2019).

In practical terms, as also recognised by the EU policy documents, the aspiration to participate in a residency is usually grounded in an already "precarious employment and related financial situation" (EU OTM 2019:31). Artists and culture professionals

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[4] Or, remotely, anywhere with an internet connection.

often don't have the means to take part in long mobility experiences. Even when funding is available, they have other professional and private considerations, such as part-time jobs, employer-employee relationships, temporary contracts, other co-productions as well as private life that cannot be relocated on a temporary basis (ibid.).

Another issue is that not all residencies come with a grant that covers all the expenses and provide a stipend; on the contrary, many ask hefty fees. This means that the applicant will have to either cover those costs (ranging from travel and living expenses to accommodation and production costs) from her pockets or find a public or private sponsor at home - more applications, more unpaid labour.

Once the financial aspects are settled, next comes the residency application. CV, portfolio, reference/invitation letters, and a coherent project that will be developed on-site are usually required. The unpaid intellectual, immaterial, affective labour involved in application processes is an inescapable part of an early career artist, researcher, and cultural worker. Even the international policy framework now acknowledges that these "long 'research and development' phases […] remain unremunerated" (EU OTM 2019:23). This speaks to a larger trend in cultural studies on precarity and artistic-cultural work, whereby the artist is identified with the post-Fordist worker par excellence (Boltanski and Chiappello 2005; Gill and Pratt 2008; Power 2015), always flexible and ready to put her soul constantly at work (Berardi 2009).

The institution or organisation offering a residency programme publishes or advertises calls for applications mostly on their website, often on online platforms/databases with residency listings, such as ResArtis and TransArtist [5], but also via social media (e.g., Instagram is becoming more and more popular in these terms). Sending and receiving institutions internationally often partner to mobilise artists' flows as well as financial flows, and to even out or facilitate the legal and bureaucratic aspects of travel and border crossing. Each receiving institution's regulations, requirements, and restrictions are made clear and contribute to set the institution's positionality and discourse.

The selection procedure involves the "subjective evaluation" of a panel of experts (Stecher 2018:111) who use "the quality of artistic work (or the 'potential' of the artist) as a key award criterion while it does not take into account the criterion of economic indigence" and hence "identifies the beneficiaries as producers worthy of support" (ibid.). This raises two fundamental questions of what is considered legitimate art worthy of support and who is a legitimate beneficiary. In other words, it is a matter of identifying who better fits the discourse of the hosting institution.

Whereas being selected may be conducive to "self-esteem and other psychological benefits, through the recognition of one's work that is embodied in the reception of a grant" (EU OTM 2019:20) and more, "is tantamount to a consecration" (Glauser 2018:111), many are deemed unfit and left behind. A relevant question here is: How many applications one has to fail before getting officially recognised?

Last but not least, obtaining the documents to travel abroad is another issue that may often create complications, especially when there are not already established agreements between the sending country (or patron or institution) and the hosting or receiving institution.

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[5] TransArtists.org is a platform for artist-in-residence information, resources and knowledge, part of DutchCulture, Centre for International Cooperation https://www.transartists.org [accessed 24 July 2019].

"CASE STUDY 2: THE INTERNATIONAL ARTIST TM"

The good news is there are people out there to help emerging artists get a place in a residency. For example, the Australian ceramic artist and multi-residency participant Amy Kennedy offers through her website The International Artist ™, a six weeks customised programme "to land the international artist residency of your dreams" (Kennedy 2019). Her online course and tailored Skype counselling is available only to five selected participants for the "modest" sum of 997 Australian dollars (approximately 556.50 £)[6]. Mind, though, that this programme is for artists who: "are fully committed to their Art; have some experience (though it doesn't need to be a lot); have a unique artistic voice" (ibid.). Again, we see the usual tropes of commitment, engagement, experience, and "uniqueness" popping up. Once more, I ask: can these be measured? If so, how? And by whom?

Amy doesn't take risks and states that her programme "cannot guarantee success in being selected for an International Artist Residency." However, she "will do all [she] can to put you in the best position possible for potential success" (ibid.). And, should you not land the residency of your dreams, "payment is non-refundable" (ibid.).

NETWORK AND NETWORKING

In the art residency discourse of recent years, a central element is the topos of "removing boundaries" (Glauser 2018:45). The so-called "institutional 'trans' ideology'" poses "the borders of nation states [as] the entities to be transcended" (ibid.). This is possible through a relatively rapid flow and assemblage of infrastructures that create the conditions for a residency to happen and unfold, where localities, identities, routes, roots, relationships, economic flows, aesthetics, value, aspirations, power structure, and affect converge and are played out in manifold ways.

Understood in a general sense, "a network is simply a collection of interconnected systems. When these systems are associated organisations that pursue the same goal, a network is capable of creating synergies that strengthen its components and boost innovation capacity" (Cámara and Velasco 2015:5). Expanding the notion of socialising as a compulsory means of securing future work (McRobbie 2002; Gill and Pratt 2008) propose a more articulate notion where "'networking' is less about 'schmoozing' the powerful than 'chilling' with friends, co-workers and people who share similar interests and enthusiasms" (Gill and Pratt 2008:26). In other words, sometimes networking may be seen ascompulsory sociality (Gregg 2011 in ibid.:) required to survive in a field; at other times it may be pleasurable hanging out (Pratt, 2006 in ibid.). Often, it is both. For other researchers, the word network is "most productively read in relation to the career-building strategy of 'networking'" (Hodge and Yousefi 2015:4).

The ambivalent character of networking is reflected by the accounts of a broad range of international artists and curators contributing to "Network," the second issue of Mapping Residencies magazine (Cámara and Velasco 2015). Here, networking is defined as key for every artist's career and identified with the skills of building personal contacts; finding the right people, platforms, contexts, and trends; and constructing networks that can lead to collaboration, production of new work, and funding opportunities. Networking is said to be important to put one's work in perspective and not to work in isolation. Attending conferences and events related to one's area of practice and research are important networking platforms. However, networking is a matter of investing time, money, and resources. For artists who live in cultural centres such as London or Berlin, there are many networking opportunities, but the cost of living and producing work in those places is high; for those outside of these hubs, the expense and difficulty of travel can be high too.

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[6] Currency conversion retrieved from https://transferwise.com/gb/currency-converter/aud-to-gbp-rate?amount=1 [accessed 27 July 2019].

Time emerges powerfully as problematic and difficult in many respects. Time dedicated to creative work may exert heavy costs on, or even prohibit, relationships outside of work with friends, partners, and children (Gill and Pratt, 2008). Moreover, "the absurd circle [of] not having enough time (and personal or institutional resources) to research, travel, do studio visits" may undermine the artist's professional practice and their possibilities to find a better job in the field (Alampi, 2018). In respect to residencies, "maintaining the balance between networking and art-making during residencies" is perceived as crucial, but "easier said than done" (Cámara and Velasco 2015:33).

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

As this paper has shown, art residency culture remains a privileged arena permeated by structural inequalities and typical features of post-Fordist work: competition, self-exploitation, and precarity. Moreover, it is not anymore a question of whether an application is successful, but of who gets to be mobile.

Networking is very much based on informal, face-to-face contacts: in this context "the physical proximity to other players of this field is an absolute must for an international career or the inclusion in relevant network" (Glauser, 2018:47). For artists from countries which hardly have such instruments, this means a restriction of artistic practice to local contexts (ibid.). Hereby, the support from local governmental and nongovernmental cultural promotion institutions to the ability of artists to globalise is of vital importance.

> For young artists from the Global South, participation in relevant art residency programme frequently is the only opportunity for (lawfully) staying in arts centres in the Global North for a longer period […]. And even if you have an art scholarship, you are not immune to border-crossing problems – and without such an institutional framework, participation remains very difficult indeed (Glauser 2018:47).

While few are deemed fit, worthy, or deserving to enter and circulate through the art residency network, many others - deemed, more or less explicitly, unfit, unworthy, undeserving - remain behind/outside of it.

Hospitality and reciprocity can be seen in other main tropes around art residencies. Hosting institutions and organisations usually provide and cater for accommodation and studio space and encourage opportunities to network with the local artistic and cultural scene. As the focus is shifting more and more to the process, and less and less on a final product, work on site-specific projects which engage with the host context becomes crucial. Residencies, even when defined as nonprescriptive[7] in terms of producing a final exhibition, tend to expect participants to contribute with something (e.g., an open studio, a presentation, a workshop) and encourage interaction and dialogue with local audiences.

As explored by this paper, the affective dimension encompasses the residency journey: making it through the application and selection processes, then the physical journey itself, the extenuating process of finding one's bearings within - and adapting to - the ever-new residency environments which may differ greatly from those at home. As it has been pointed out, "an artist in residence is required to be sensitive, schooled in critical theory, have her perception sharpened by experience, and be able to navigate the nomadic settings that have become her stage" (Zyman: 2018:35), which include maintaining an enhanced performativity.

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[7] Gasworks, About Residencies https://www.gasworks.org.uk/residencies/about.

Primarily structured as "an agonistic competition between individualised agents" (Hodge and Yousefi 2019:3), the solitude and isolation felt by artists-in-residence could be other nuances of the affective dimensions at play, to be researched in the field. Maintaining both the transnational bonds and the professional relationships emerged in residence with the temporary cluster of fellow participants - whose life trajectories after the shared residency experience may take clear-cut, opposite geographic directions - residency-goers are made to bear a heavier emotional toll than anyone else involved in the residency network. This raises questions about the impact of a high-intensity residency on personal and professional life, well-being, and mental health. Furthermore, residencies' inevitably temporariness is said to "militate against the formation of lasting collective bonds" (ibid.:4) which "undermin[e] the formation of collective solidarities" (ibid.:3).

The scholarly tendency to focus on "artists who are internationally acclaimed figures, artists with a capital A whose work has been exhibited in major sites, had significant market-place value, were part of major private and public collections, and had attracted extensive critical commentary" (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2015:424) is widespread (Belting et al. 2013; García Canclini 2014; Osborne 2013; Schneider 1993; Thornton 2014, 2009). This, however, does not seem an acceptable research framework, both on ethical grounds and of academic rigour. By focusing on artists who have become known and control the market - and the literature, as it seems - we in turn remove, neglect, and make invisible all of those artists who do not wish to be or never will be known, who may be marginalised or liminal, and exist in other peripheral centres or central peripheries. Researching the young generation of artists across the globe in their everyday, unfancy residency stories of rejection and pain, and perhaps even boredom, a zoom on precarious artistic work through an affect framework is a zoom on the contemporary, its contradictions, failures, and fissures. In this respect, unpleasant affective experiences need to be theorised to furnish a full understanding of the experience of artistic-cultural work.

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