Raqs Media Collective: Nomadism in Art Practice

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Raqs[1] Media Collective are a group of media practitioners based in Delhi who have been consistently present on the international art scene since 2002. For years in India, they have been a voice in the debate concerning the city, urban culture and media practices. They are co-initiators of *Sarai*—a multidisciplinary space for independent research and creative endeavour located in Delhi. At *Sarai*[2] as well as in their participation in the platforms of visibility and discussion of art practice, *Raqs* have carried on a reflection on the urban, the media and everyday practices. Among other things, this has led them to explore the notion of 'place' and how it bears upon conceptions of identity. *Raqs'* work helps us to reconsider the meanings and implications of location and of being located somewhere in cultural practice today. It also helps us to review concepts of locality, as well as the spaces and dynamics of globalization in relation to cultural formations.

This essay will pose the discussion of *Raqs'* work within the context of current debates on 'place' which have been articulated in various disciplines, not least in art and art history. Processes of economic globalization, of forced and free migration, as well as the development of communication technologies have caused us to reconsider traditional anthropological conceptions of place as a marker of discrete identities and cultures. This has led to the deconstruction of the space of the nation as a natural, given category, as a homogeneous place where within its boundaries absolute belonging was possible for (a) given people(s).

> In the traditional vision of things, cultures were understood as being rooted both in time and space, embodying genealogies of "blood, property and frontiers" and thus cultures "rooted societies and their members: organizations which developed, lived and died in particular places." By contrast, the contemporary world is a world of movement and that mobility

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[1] A word in Urdu, Arabic and Persian which indicates the state dervishes enter when they whirl. It also means dance.

[2] In Urdu and Hindi it indicates a temporary home for travellers, a place where travellers meet, a caravansary, an inn.

(both physical and imaginative) is central to our conceptualisation of modernity and its various "posts."[3]

'Hypermobility,' 'nomadology,' 'space-time compression,' 'hybridity' are some of the key terms which have marked re-conceptualizations of contemporary space. With respect to this essay, the discussion of location and subject positions will often go in the direction indicated by Gilles Deleuze's 'nomadology,' and by poststructuralist feminist philosophy, particularly of Deleuzian inspiration as in the writings of Rosi Braidotti,[4] to give one example. Nomadic thought and poststructural feminism are particularly relevant in this instance for their rejection of fixed positionalities or meanings. As we will see in the discussion of *The Co-Ordinates* project (2002) and particularly *The Impostor in the Waiting Room* (2004), *Raqs'* reflection on location and subjectivities moves away from established categories of reference such as the nation state and that of a national identity. *Raqs* underline identity as a process, a performance which entails the possibility of new becomings and multiple positionings with respect to different contexts of power. From this perspective, location is not seen as rooting subjects in one fixed image of the self. It is rather, to use Donna Haraway's terminology, "about vulnerability,"

> Location resists the politics of closure, finality or to borrow form Althusser, feminist objectivity resists 'simplification in the last instance.' That is because feminist embodiment resists fixation and is insatiably curious about the webs of differential positioning.[5]

Sarai and the extroverted spaces of the city

In their engagement with *Sarai* as well as with the art world, *Raqs* have been carrying on a discourse which looks at the complexities and

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[3] David Morley, *Home Territories. Media, Mobility and Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 9. Quoted text within, Sandra Wallman, "New Identities and the Local Factor," in *Migrants of Identity*, ed. Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson (London: Berg, 1999), 201 and 195.

[4] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); *Transpositions. On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge, UK and Malden USA: Polity Press, 2006).

[5] Donna Haraway as quoted in Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma. Geography's Visual Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 25.

contradictions of the present, of living in a more and more technologically mediated and interconnected world. *Sarai*, The New Media Initiative, was founded by *Raqs*, Ravi Vasudevan and Ravi Sundaram from the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS).[6] It was designed as an attempt to respond creatively and intellectually to the rapid changes affecting the media, social and physical landscape of Delhi in the late 1990s.

> The 1990's transformed the city of Delhi through a series of shock-like flows: large scale migrations […], the spatial expansion of housing colonies, and the new visibility of houseless on the street. This was also the period of the new globalization, which introduced an unending flow of commodities, new techniques of reproduction, and our peculiar mediascape.[7]

Sarai defines an intellectually agile environment, not restricted by the boundaries of disciplines, an independent space for research, practice, and debate on the media, urban space and culture. Besides its association with the CSDS of which it is a programme, *Sarai* is in partnership with The Society for Old and New Media (SONM), De Waag,[8] in Amsterdam. Indeed, *Sarai*, as its name as well as its affiliation and network of connections across national borders suggests, was envisioned within a context of mobility and connectivity, of cultures and practices. *Sarais* were once halt-stations in trade routes, places where travellers could stop and rest in their journey, performative zones, areas of hospitality where stories were told and shared. The city hosts *Sarai*, and is thought of as a *sarai* itself. It defines a porous space for interaction, but also for 'contamination,' and transformation.

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[6] The CSDS was founded in 1964. Its interests lie mostly in the area of the social sciences. They range from democratic politics and its future, politics of culture—new technologies of culture and communication, and politics of alternative and human futures to violence, ethnicity and diversity. See "How Sarai Happened," *Sarai Reader 01: The Public Domain* (2001): 242, http://www.sarai.net/ (last accessed October 20, 2006).

[7] Jeebesh Bagchi and Ravi Sundaram, "'Our' Media City," *Sarai Reader 01: The Public Domain* (2001): 53, http://www.sarai.net/ (last accessed October 20, 2006).

[8] The SONM is a Dutch cultural research and development centre for communications technology. Its areas of interventions are: design and software, workshops for policy makers, teachers, advisors, developers, and programme and events such as conferences, manifestations, exhibitions. The Waag/*Sarai* collaboration works at the level of sharing funding as well as intellectual and creative energies. See http://www.waag.org/project/exchange (last accessed January 2 2007) and "How Sarai Happened," 242.

Raqs' involvement, since 2002, with the realm of art also indicates a preoccupation of this kind. One of the first occasions of engagement with the art scene was the exhibition Documenta XI (2002). This edition of Documenta was conceived as an attempt to grasp what its curator Okwui Enwezor termed as the 'will to globality' or the desire for connectivity and access to 'the global' embedded in contemporary (art) practices. It aimed to create a 'conversation' where more voices could redefine and remap from their point of view what may constitute 'the global'; where 'the world' could be claimed, thought, defined from anywhere. As *Raqs* pointed out:

> Our engagement with the art practice [...] began with Documenta when Okwui Enwezor and a number of other people came to Delhi. [...] That was an interesting context because our intellectual engagement with people like Okwui was very much about ideas, about thinking in terms of porosity, [...] of flows between, to and from a location.[9]

Raqs' activity moves fluidly within and outside art spaces. They are involved with different locations, institutions and types of creative engagement whether it is the editing of the *Sarai Reader*, at *Sarai* or a multimedia installation for *Documenta*. This type of practice, intellectual and physical mobility has brought them to talk about their activity as 'nomadic.' A 'nomadic sensibility' can be perceived, also, in their approach to 'place' with *Raqs'* interest in and engagement with the city of Delhi.

The experience of being located in Delhi is very important for *Raqs* and informs their exploration of concepts of location and of being located somewhere. A lot of their work can be seen, in fact, as responding to the experience of living in the city.

> A lot of our work is very rooted in terms of its context in Delhi [...]. In a sense we have always seen our work as responding to the city. So, even if it articulates across large cultural distances we have always seen it as an ongoing process of responding to the locality that we live in. It's a way of looking at the world from here. Even when we have worked in other spaces, for example we did a fairly major project in Brussels;[10] it was from the point of view of being someone who is located in a city like Delhi. [11]

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[9] Monica Narula, interview with the author 16 Dec 2004, New Delhi.

[10] *The Wherehouse* (2004) installation with videos, found objects, books, text panels, sound, spoken performance, web page and photographs. It was presented between May and June 2004 at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, in Brussel, as part of the

It is precisely this located experience that has led them to articulate a discourse which looks beyond enclosed conceptions of locality, the nation, discrete cultures and essentialist definitions of identity, as we will see more specifically in the discussion of *The Co-Ordinates* project and *The Impostor in the Waiting Room*. The city is felt as a multilayered and open space which has been shaped and is constantly changing under the effect of different flows of peoples, capital, and information. The mediascape of the city plays an important role in the perception of place as 'extroverted' and interconnected, as do people's stories of travel and dwelling, interaction, confrontation and exchange past and present.

> One concern in our work has always been to look at different kinds of connections and connectivity in time and space. We are constantly looking at the history of the moment in which we are in now. So, how did we come to be this way, in this city? How did the world come to be this way? […]So, this orienting oneself constantly in this direction makes us look at flows and networks and the evolution of practices, or maybe evolution is not the right word, but at least at the ways in which practices get layered in history. So, we look at things as a kind of palimpsest. If you look at the walls in Delhi, they have layers and layers of posters and that is one way of looking at the way the present has arisen, to look at it in terms of a torn set of posters that stick on to each other. […] If you think of each city being a particular entity with large footprints, then, these footprints are often sort of merging into each other in global space. And traces travel or infect each other. […] It is not a matter of situating oneself in some kind of abstract ether where everything is floating; it is actually to consider the place you are in with great concreteness and specificity.[12]

In a sense, we could say that *Raqs* understands the city as a node in a network extending far in space and time. This does not underline a position with "no sense of place,"[13] disembodied, and ungrounded. Quite to the

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series Revolution/Restoration curated by Barbara Vanderlinden and Dirk Snauwert. The work was also presented at the Taipei Biennial 2004/2005.

[11] Shuddhabratha Sengupta, interview with the author, 17 Dec 2005, New Delhi; "In Dialogue with Raqs Media Collective," an interview with Raqs Media Collective by Elena Bernardini in *Cinema of Prayoga. Experimental Film and Video 1913-2006*, ed. Brad Butler and Karen Mizra (London: A no.w.here Publication, 2006), 113. Available online at http://www.raqsmediacollective.net/conversations4.html (last accessed January 2, 2007).

[12] Shuddhabrata Sengupta quoted in Ibid., 114.

[13] Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in *Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura

contrary, it reflects a very strong sensibility towards the context they are living in. *Raqs'* nomadic attitude is, then, one of a particular kind, one that never dismisses locatedness while at same time investing in the idea of movement, whether it is between locations or practices.

Not surprisingly, Raqs' awareness of spaces and bodies also as technologically mediated and interconnected has led them deep into discourses of power rather than away from them. Far from providing an easy sense of community or equality, technologies are felt also as immersing bodies in specific hierarchies of power and relations of inclusion and exclusion.[14] They have maintained rather than superseded patterns of oppression based on ethnicity and gender. Indeed, globalization processes and information technologies have not led us into an equal and borderless world. Although national borders appear clearly to be vacillating, to say it with Etienne Balibar—the national state is an "institution […] irreversibly coming undone"—they have not disappeared. Borders have, rather, shifted their meaning, they have "thinned" and "doubled," "multiplied" and "reduced" creating border zones, regions where one may reside and live.[15] The dividing line between 'us' and 'others,' insiders and outsiders is not something which is drawn necessarily at national borders, but also within the very space of the city itself. As we will see also in *The Impostor in the Waiting Room* these border zones are places of transition and negotiation but can also become areas of abandonment with "populations awaiting entry or exit [...] individually or collectively engaged in a process of negotiation of their presence."[16] The existence of these frontier-lands within the cityscape and more in general the geographies of the present are of outright concern for *Raqs* Media Collective. Their nomadic averting the category of the nation, fixed conceptions of location and identity has not led them to assert a free floating position, whether this is expressed in a sense of being at home anywhere, or of permanent unbelonging. Instead, it expresses the articulation of an ethical sensibility which allows them to account for the complex positionings marking the present moment.

Chrisman (Harlow, England: Longman, 1994), 325 with reference to media spaces and communities.

[14] Braidotti (2006), 30; Braidotti is referring to the work of Mette Bryld and Nina Lykke, *Cosmodolphins. Feminist Cultural Studies of Technologies, Animals and the Sacred* (London: Zed Books, 1999).

[15] Etienne Balibar, "The Borders of Europe," in *Cosmopolitics. Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, ed. Peng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 220.

[16] Ibid., 218.

Cityscapes and border-zones of the present

28.28 N / 77.15 E:: 2001/02 An Installation on the Co-Ordinates of Everyday Life (2002) considers discourses of power embedded in urban planning and development policies in Delhi. The city emerges as a contested site where different understandings and uses of its spaces come into conflict, and people's right of belonging is put into question.

The installation comprises of three screened videos, a board with stickers and a fourth projection on the floor **Fig. 1**. The numbers in the title indicate the latitude and longitude of Delhi and are followed by a time notation 2001/02 defining where we are geographically and temporally.

The work focuses on Delhi and looks at how space has been differently used, imagined, represented and claimed. It considers how the state through the masterplan of the city and legislation has been thinking, redesigning, and thus, exercising control over the urban space. This may come into conflict with other forms of understanding of the city which find no expression on plans or maps. For example, a regeneration project of the riverbanks with commercial and green areas, walkways, and a water sports park, such as the one proposed for the Commonwealth Games of 2010, envisions the river primarily for its scenic value. The river, however, is already embedded in a network of social, religious and economic relations which are completely overlooked. People from neighbouring slums, for example, have been using its banks for farming, for others the river is the centre of little commercial activities, and pilgrims come here for worship.[17] These indicate spatial patterns of use which elude those envisioned by urbanists and architects. In fact, a redevelopment project as such will prevent access to the river for the very people who most use its banks and whose sustenance actually depends on it.

The projection on the floor shows a satellite image of Delhi, bringing us from the vastness of space into this specific geographical and temporal position. On the walls, the board with stickers take us into considering what the city through its interface of signs, billboards, advertisement is telling us. They have texts taken from around Delhi and translated into four languages (English, Hindi, German, and Turkish).[18] A lot of the messages exhibit notions of prohibition and control. Taken as they are, outside their usual

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[17] Aman Sethi, "A Site of Contestation," *Frontline*, Vol. 22, Issue 15, July 16-29 (2005), http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl2215/stories/20050729002604200.htm (last accessed October 5, 2006).

[18] At the Documenta XI exhibition, the stickers were also distributed and stuck around town, all over Kassel.

spatial context, the language used emerges forcefully, sometimes with a surreal charge, or an extraordinary sense of aggression: 'You are now entering a zero-tolerance zone,' 'Make no trouble here,' 'Keep your identity with you at all times, you must be able to produce it on request.' In this latter example, 'identity' actually means identity papers. Nevertheless, the text suggests the idea that unless identified by documents you are not welcome, you are not a rightful occupier, inhabitant of that space, or using some terminology which *Raqs* have frequently engaged with, you are 'a trespasser,' 'an encroacher,' 'an impostor.'

One of the video projections focuses, instead, on the legal construction of space through extracts from legal cases, a municipal logbook, and comments from people responsible for masterplans and their view on how city spaces should be organized. It looks into legal definitions of 'land,' or 'slum' giving a sense on how space is being defined officially. This legal 'coding' of urban space is of particular importance. Through legislation it disciplines behaviour within the city. It can, therefore, be turned into a machine of coercion and abuse in the name of the interests of the municipality and the state.

Development and progress are often invoked to justify provisions such as the demolishing of illegal settlements. These are followed by severe consequences: inhabitants are made into trespassers in need of a new place to live, the capacities of hospitality and sustainability of new neighbourhoods are stretched to their limits, and people dispossessed from recently demolished neighbourhoods are left to provide for themselves. Having no legal status to stay on the land they are occupying, these people find themselves in a paradoxical position. On the one hand, they have been abandoned by the municipality who doesn't provide them with basic services. On the other, they are considered as trespassers, therefore, subject to the law's 'strong arm.' The city is marked by these zones of vulnerability and the indistinction between law and violence. The urban space is turned into a frontier-land probing its 'boundaries' in its (in)capacity of hosting.

Another projection shows the arrivals in the city by train. This touches upon the idea of mobility associated with the urban in terms of flows of migrants. The kind of images shown, the city at night with its lights, also explores the lure and fascination of the urban as a centre for the transmission of signals, information, and data. It is a place of invested desires which moves people towards it—people who will, then, have to negotiate the city's capacity for hosting them.

The last projection is concerned more with everyday life in Delhi in terms of its spatial usage and organization, and brings us straight to the

question of the city's problematic hospitality. It has images from a squatter settlement, LNJP Colony (Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Colony) where its inhabitants are under constant threat of being evicted. It also shows us Narela, a 'resettlement colony' at the edge of Delhi. Resettlement colonies constitute the legal state solution to allocate space to people in the government programme of demolishing and clearing away illegal structures. Both sites, however, represent problematic realities plagued by unemployment, poverty and criminality. They mark a landscape of loss, legal violence, and abandonment.

The tensions presented in the installation are not resolved or easily resolvable. They lay out bare exposed in the street, in the everyday experience of the urban landscape of Delhi. Reflecting the conflicting nature of the city space, the combination of images on the three screens is not synchronized and the viewer is faced with a pattern of different juxtapositions every time. The work speaks of a specific experience, the urban space of the city of Delhi, but also, at a more general level, in terms of power: how and who is defining urban spaces? It suggests the presence of voices, stories, practices which have been silenced, or made illegal (a preliminary step for their erasure) under the name of progress, and development.

One interesting aspect of this installation is the way in which it keeps at bay the viewer's thirst for 'a location.' There is no attempt at furnishing the viewer with an image of the city. As the name 'Delhi' is omitted from the title for the more abstract and less easily identifiable signifier of the coordinates, so we are kept away from 'place' and we are brought, instead, into the transient politics of the everyday which define and mark the space we inhabit. The work looks at how place is constructed in the first instance, it does not look at location as representative of 'a people,' or a nation. It questions the very idea of who belongs to the city, who is a 'rightful' inhabitant, who is 'the citizen.' People living in illegal settlements are very much part of the social and economic structure of the city. However, their presence (as well as their needs) is denied by declaring their spaces of residence as illegal in order to meet the interests and visions of a more privileged elite of the population.

It is interesting that this work was presented at an international venue, Documenta XI. It clearly underlines the intent to engage in a transnational dialogue away from a discourse among 'representatives' of specific locations, from a discourse centred on provenance, or origins. In fact, there is a crucial difference between the idea of speaking as representative of a location and that of speaking from a located experience. The former

underlines a discourse where the boundaries of the nation state, of a locality mark out, often at great cost, a certain image of 'the people,' of the self. In this case, identity is not a matter of becoming but, rather, of definition and control of a certain representation. The latter subtends instead a sense of accountability to one's own positioning beyond fixed definitions, and in this sense it can be considered as 'nomadic.' This allows for the idea of multiple subject positions constructed in complex and also contradictory ways and an awareness of the violence which often inscribes them.

Raqs' interest in the local, while participating in the transnational platform of art practice is not done in order to reinforce a sense of identity with respect to a specific location or the nation. They are not trying to stress an essential difference based on provenance, instead, they try to explore the contradictions and specificities of present subject positions. So they are clearly still engaged in a discourse around 'difference' but of another kind. In the words of Stuart Hall,

> There is the 'difference' which makes a radical and unbridgeable separation: and there is a 'difference' which is positional, conditional and conjunctural.[19]

Of impostors and waiting rooms

In *The Impostor in the Waiting Room* (2004) *Raqs* have further explored the predicament of those who find themselves suddenly displaced and in need to prove their rights of being in a certain spatial context, i.e. the city, the nation. *The Impostor in The Waiting Room* is a complex installation articulated through three video projections, two notice boards and two light boxes. The work is centred on two main ideas: the impostor, a performer who uses or who is compelled to use disguises, and the waiting room, a spatial periphery and temporal suspension of sorts, where the subject is left unrecognized and invisible before being allowed to move on elsewhere and into the plane of history.

The image of the waiting room, then, implies a fixed, common destination, a threshold to be crossed and a source of power to be encountered which bestows the rights of access beyond it. The tricks of the impostor might be what are needed to pass through its scrutiny and move

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[19] Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morely and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 446-447.

further. Impostors can be seen, in fact, as survivors whose disguising skills allow them to cope with hostile environments or the demands from different forms of control. However, they are ultimately considered tricksters, 'fakes,' 'copies,' in a discourse where authenticity irremediably belongs elsewhere, to an*other*.

> The image of the "waiting room" gestures towards the sense of incompleteness and elsewhereness that fills those spaces of the world about which the overriding judgement is that they are insufficiently modern—that they are merely patchy, inadequate copies of 'somewhere else.'[20]

Raqs have taken upon these two images and used them as a way to critically rethink the spaces of the contemporary. Their reflection focuses on a specific cartography of the world which envisions it as divided into areas where modernity has been fully achieved and others where it has yet to become, between a "centre stage" and its "antechamber." Antechambers may be identified with entire nation states, or can be found, for example, within the same city. As we will see, the imperative of identity and identification is highlighted by *Raqs* as a way of controlling the border between the shadowy zones of the inadequately modern and the bright glare of full fledged modernity, waiting rooms and history, between 'fakes' and 'originals,' impostors and citizens.

The image of the waiting room has been used by Dipesh Chakrabarty as a way to highlight historicist ways of thinking that has sustained European thought, and justified colonialism and its 'civilizational' project. Commenting on John Stuart Mill's famous essays *On Liberty* and *On Representative Government*,[21] Chakrabarty noted,

> According to Mill, Indians or Africans were *not yet* civilized enough to rule themselves. Some historical time of development and civilization (colonial rule and education, to be precise) had to elapse before they could be considered prepared for such task. Mill's historicist argument thus consigned Indians, Africans, and other "rude" nations to an imaginary waiting room of history. In doing so, it converted history itself into a version of this waiting

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[20] Raqs Media Collective, "Profile," http://www.raqsmediacollective.net/CV.html (last accessed January 3, 2007).

[21] John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," in John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty and Other Essays*, introduction and notes by John Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 5-130; "Considerations on Representative Government," in Mill, 205-470.

room. We are all headed for the same destination, Mill averred, but some people arrive earlier than others.[22]

Historicist attitudes informed also European perceptions of modernity as it had developed outside its centres. This was seen as derivative, a lesser version of the original, therefore, inferior. This argument original versus derivative and notions of the authentic have plagued the emancipatory projects of the colonial as well as the postcolonial subject. The old colonial centres have repeatedly used it to maintain a privileged position with respect to 'the periphery.'

In the installation we find a framed copy of a letter written by Rammohan Roy (1784-1833). Rammohan Roy was one of those middle class Bengalis who had internalized 'the lesson of modernity' as it was brought in by the British through practices, institutions, and a discourse centred on bourgeois individualism. He was a reformist as well as one of those early nationalists who shared the idea that a period of British governance was necessary to prepare Indians for citizenship and self-rule.[23] Citizenship and the nation-state, though deferred in the historicist argument, were, nonetheless, crucial in the discourse of modernity as it was shaped by European imperialism, but, also, as Chakrabarty has pointed out, by third world nationalisms.[24] In the letter Roy was particularly upset by being denied (once again) a visa to go to Paris.[25] Apparently being a modern man, 'a man in a hat' to borrow an image used in the installation, but not born in Europe was not enough to gain him access to the modern city of Paris. Indeed, as other nationalists would come to realize, individual rights and equality were far from being universals.

In a text written in connection with the installation, *Dreams as Disguises, As Usual*, *Raqs* have linked the figure of the impostor to that of the man in a bowler hat which appears in René Magritte's painting *Le Barbare* (1928).[26] This is identified as Fantômas, a character in an early

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[22] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000*)*, 9.

[23] Ibid., 32.

[24] Ibid., 43, see also 37-42.

[25] Raqs have written rather evocatively about identity with reference to "white Mughals," "brown sahibs," nationalist elites and xenophobic Englishmen. See Raqs Media Collective, "Dreams as Disguises, as Usual," *Sarai Reader 05: Bare Acts* (2005): 162-75, in particular 170-1, http://www.sarai.net/ (last accessed January 2, 2007); http://www.raqsmediacollective.net/texts7.html (last accessed January 2, 2007)

[26] Ibid.

twentieth century novel.[27] Despite his typically bourgeois attire Fantômas is a delinquent whose murderous deeds have been terrorizing the city of Paris. He is a master of disguises, a "barbarian in a hat."[28] Fantômas is, in fact, thought to be a foreigner and is accompanied by a gang called the Apaches. His disguise, overcoat and bowler hat, allows him to move undetected in Paris by rendering him indistinguishable from its citizens.

In Magritte's paintings, Fantômas dresses and looks like everybody else's, there is nothing in his appearance that makes him stand out. If Fantômas looks like the citizen, how is it possible to account for his presumed radical difference? The lack of any striking exterior difference is just another way in which Fantômas turns the tables on the citizens of Paris, or the authority which represents them. As Juve, the detective who constantly pursues Fantômas, will come to recognize, there is only one way to capture this stranger, to unmask him: becoming a character in his dreams. However, this ultimately leads to the collapse of any distinction with Fantômas.

In the installation, a figure sporting the same attire, bowler hat and overcoat, appears in two of the three video projections present. In one he surfaces barely visible through the grey and white flickers of a snow effect on the screen. The image of the man in the bowler hat is disturbed, strives to come across and to achieve stability, definition and clarity as if there were a loss of signal in the transmission of the picture. His presence is seen clearly this time in a second projection **Fig.2.** He appears as one of the many guises assumed by a man in a neutral white environment. The man is seen undertaking a series of different personae by dressing in different ways. In the performance the man dons body to different personifications, *avatars*: 'Peasant,' 'Labourer,' 'Factory worker,' 'Convict,' 'Performing divinity,' 'Being in uniform,' 'Man with Injury,' 'Shrouded Man,' 'Accountant,' 'Man in a Bowler Hat.'

The man in the bowler hat can be seen as the epitome of the modern man, or better, of a certain understanding of the modern man. In the historicist argument mentioned above, this figure would represent the culmination of a process fulfilled by the European man. Following this way of thinking, the man in the bowler hat would be held to represent, also, 'the destiny' meant for all 'the rest.' In the short story *The Imam and the Indian*, Amitav Gosh describes a heated conversation between an Indian

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[27] Fantômas a series by Pierre Souvestre and Marcel Allain. See Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 164

ethnographer (the narrator) and the traditional *Imam*[29] of an Egyptian village*,* who is also a healer.[30] Each attempts to prove the superiority of his own country. Somewhat paradoxically, what keeps propping up in the discussion regarding each country's excellence is "the West." The issue at stake is which country is more "advanced" (with "advanced" here we mean "science, and tanks, and guns and bombs")[31] and "the West" is the recurring measure of judgment. What the narrator comes to realize is the weight which, even in postcolonial times, the signifier 'West' bears in a discourse regarding progress, and how this is linked with violence.[32] In the video projection, the man in a bowler hat does not appear as the crowning moment of a series of transformations. At a certain point his occurrence on the screen is joined by all the other personae who are simultaneously visible, thus, defying any teleological implication. The co-presence of all the different personae prompts us to problematize how we may access modernity. Each *avatar* can be seen, in fact, as a possible way of entering or exiting contemporaneity, besides the bourgeois model of the citizen.

In the projection, our unknown performer becomes recognizable through dress. Through performance he enters or, at least, takes a step into the sphere of 'the known,' 'legibility,' 'representability.' Like with Fantômas in *Le Barbare*, we cannot view his face properly. His face is always concealed by some means, i.e. by wearing a mask, by turning his back to us, etc. The face is certainly a particularly contested site of knowledge, power and control. As Deleuze and Gauttari reminds us it is a prime place for both *territorialization* and *deterritorialization*, for the codification and control of what will come to be considered as the norm, normal, normative but also of transformation. We may view it, then, as a site where power may be articulated in a repressive way or in a productive one, as *potestas* or *potentia*.[33]

> The face holds within its rectangular or circle a whole set of traits, *faciality traits*, which it subsumes and places at the service of significance and

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[29] Leader, guide; patriarch, priest, minister or reader of a mosque.

[30] Amitav Ghosh, "The Imam and the Indian," in *The Imam and the Indian. Prose Pieces by Amitav Ghosh* (Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publisher, 2002), 1-12; see also James Clifford's discussion of this story in James Clifford, *Routes. Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Massachussets and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1997), 1-2, 4-6.

[31] Ghosh, 11.

[32] Ibid., 11.

[33] Rosi Braidotti talks about *potestas* as "hindering" and *potentia* as "enabling" see, Braidotti (2006), 30.

subjectification. […] If the face is a politics, dismantling the face is also a politics involving real becomings, an entire becoming clandestine. Dismantling the face is the same as breaking through the wall of the signifier and getting out of the black hole of subjectivity. […] Find your black holes and white walls, know them, know your faces; it is the only way you will be able to dismantle them and draw your lines of flight.[34]

As *Raqs* reminds us in *Dreams and Disguises*, the face is crucial in the construction of the citizen in relation to the state, in the moulding of the person into "a political entity capable of being represented."[35] Rules on passport photographs are one attempt to regulate the representation of the citizen so that his/her identity can be confirmed and the traffic across borders can be controlled. The passport picture *facializes* the entire body of the citizen.[36] In biometric passports, for example, the body of the citizen becomes a verifiable body of data to be handed in, elaborated and verified, thus completing the identification process.[37] However, as *Raqs* notices,

> What the technologies of identification do not take into account, […], is the ability of a person to enact different iterations of the self. Crucially, this means that the story of personhood, and the narratives of identity that gather around a person, are material for constant re-fashioning. [38]

The performance that may be required from people who find themselves in one of these waiting rooms of contemporaneity, and wish (or are forced)

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[34] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Gauttari, *A Thousands Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizofrenia* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 208.

[35] Raqs Media Collective (2005), 172.

[36] In Roger Bromley's discussion of Neil Bissondath's *Eve of Uncertain Tomorrows* (1991) we find a very good example of the *facialization* of the trespasser's body, this time a political refugee, by means of his tortured hands. See, Roger Bromley, "The Unbelonging. Refugee or Trespasser," in *Approching SeaChanges. Metamorphoses and Migrations Across the Atlantic*, ed. Annalisa Oboe (Padova: Unipress, 2005), 49-57; in particular 54-55.

[37] The production of the face in this instance comes in crucial conjunction with the technologies which allow for identification, i.e. biometric scanning. The "making of the face" has to conform to certain parameters, i.e. mouth closed, full frontal view, neutral expression, in order for the machine to be able to read it and verify its identity. The identity of the citizen as constructed in biometric passports is produced, mediated by and inseparable from the machine.

[38] Raqs Media Collective, "Machine Made to Measure. On the Technologies of Identity and the Manufacture of Difference," *Sarai Reader 04: Crisis/Media* (2004): 5, http://www.sarai.net; http://www.raqsmediacollective.net/texts2.html.

to cross the threshold, can be a complex one. It reconfigures them both in terms of what they are leaving behind and what lies ahead. It is evident that often we are not in the presence of an entirely dialogical process.[39] If we use the example of refugees, their only chance of being internalised is in the host country's terms. Their performance needs to meet the expectations of the host and the role it is ready to assume in their respect. The refugee has to be made 'readable,' therefore, assimilative. This is a process of "remembering and dismembering"[40] which may come, however, at price of a new form of captivity.

> The disguise is a means to travel from a world apparently in shadow, to a world where the sharp glare that brings visibility in its iridescent wake is not without the threat of capture and confinement. [41]

Roger Bromely, in his discussion of Neil Bissondath's short story *Eve of Uncertain Tomorrows* (1991), notices how the performance demanded of the refugee is articulated in already highly determined ways.[42] In this sense, then, this act of reconfiguration, while newly codifying the body of the refugee or the trespasser, also erases it. In the story the central character Joaquin is a political refugee in the process of negotiating his entry to Canada. Bromley remarks how "both in his home country and in Canada Joaquin's 'humanity' is trespassing; the one broke his body, the other needs it as evidence; both evacuate the person."[43]

Besides the impostor, the idea of the waiting room subtends, in fact, the presence of another figuration, which also appears in the installation—that of 'the missing person' **Fig.3**. We are talking about who has been erased, lost, disposed of, temporarily forgotten, or left waiting in a state of abandonment at the threshold: people in refugee camps, people from recently evicted neighbourhoods abandoned to their own devices.

In one notice board, screened by chicken-wire we have a series of images combined with text which take us into the transit spaces and regulated traffic of international travelling. We have a few shots taken from a plain, looking outwards, then, mostly images taken inside an airport. The accompanying text is a personal account. The narrator tells us of being held at the airport for a long delay. Out of the many images with details of

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[39] Bromley, 54.
[40] Ibid., 55.
[41] Raqs Media Collective (2005), 164.
[42] Bromley, 57.
[43] Ibid., 55.

passages, doors, direction signs, one picture confronts us with the quizzical stare of a person behind some kind of net divider. Despite being designed for quick transit, the airport has also been turned into a space of captivity, of interrupted journeys, of prolonged halts tinged with uncertainty, fear, and suspicion. The narrator met people who have been held there for months, in between places. They have the wrong papers they need to proceed in their journey, and they cannot go back either. Somewhat paradoxically, the airport becomes also, a space of hospitality, if under extreme duress, of occasional contacts and solidarity between strangers. "So, we live off passengers meals. The planes are always late, the chicken is always cold and there are always people, like you, willing to share."[44] Through sparse, emotionally contained, plain observations, the narrating voice gives us a very concrete sense of the waiting, the displacement, uneasiness, and anonymity of the whole situation. Similarly, the images are mostly details, with a strong sense of the surfaces, devoid of climax.

The light boxes elaborate more closely on the idea of the missing person. One light box presents newspaper excerpts of missing and wanted people, a sort of catalogue of those who have disappeared, or escaped "account." It is accompanied by another with a succession of numbers compiling a waiting list of people who have gone missing in the ante-chambers and a strip with the words "real" and "fake" cutting across the surface. Again, this underlines the necessity of proving or changing one's identity in order to pass the scrutiny of power. It reminds us also of how the transformation required may still work against those who undertake it. Like Rammohan Roy, they may still be considered "defective" for lacking authenticity. The authority demands the change, obtains it but still manages to draw a difference between 'us, the people' and 'them, the others' by clinging on the issue of originality.

Up to now, the discussion has focused on people and on the dichotomy citizen/non-citizen with the example of the refugee, however, trespassing may be referred to non-human subjects, i.e. practices, digital and biological viruses, animals, etc. In the installation *Raqs* have also maintained a more open conception of trespassing than perhaps underlined so far. In one of the notice boards we find what *Raqs* calls 'a speculative architectural drawing.' It presents the blueprints of roads interspersed with images of details of

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[44] The images and text in this notice board have been published in *SoDa* magazine, December 2002, Zurich: Raqs Media Collective, *Carte_blanche*, photographs with text, 16 pages. See http://www.raqsmediacollective.net/images/sodacover.pdf and http://www.raqsmediacollective.net/images/sodapages.pdf.

buildings, containers, highways, "the urban alphabet" created by the masterplan in its redrawing of the city space. It is an alphabet which leaves out everything that doesn't necessarily fit the newly imagined purpose ascribed to that piece of land by the masterplan, "everything that is in the way—people, settled practices, older inner cities, nomadic routes, and the commons of land and water." [45] On the drawing we find marked various ante-chambers, reminders of these disappearances and threatened existences.

To go back to the figure of the impostor, who is he and what does he do? Perhaps we answer in the words of Fantômas: he is nothing and everything, and he spreads terror.[46] He is a foreigner, a stranger. As Zygmunt Bauman reminds us, each society produces its strangers. They are those who upset the cognitive, moral, aesthetic parameters of 'us, the people.' They confuse one's capacity of action, and ultimately spoil one's sense of being at home with oneself fuelling anxiety and contradiction. They "befog and eclipse the boundary lines which ought to be clearly seen."[47]

Indeed, boundary lines are crucial in the definition of identity, at least a certain conception of identity based on citizenship and nationality. As Franca Bernabei pointed out "the borders of the modern nation-state have created the figure of the foreigner."[48] Balibar has aptly remarked how state borders have been thought not only as defining a geographical region, but also a culture (no matter how fictional), and as "the support of the universal," of a vision of the world.[49] The policing of the borders of the nation states helps maintaining hierarchies of identities and meanings. The nation state through its bureaucracy, legislation, and international agreements has been defining a certain image of the citizen which, then,

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[45] Raqs Media Collective (2005), 169.

[46] Ibid., 162.

[47] Zygmunt Bauman "The Making and Unmaking of Strangers," in *Debating Cultural Hybridity. Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (London and New York: Zed Books, 1997), 46.

[48] Franca Bernabei "Guests, Strangers, and Non-Persons. *Ius Migrandi* and the Risk of Hospitality in a Circumatlantic Perspective," in *Approching SeaChanges. Metamorphoses and Migrations Across the Atlantic*, ed. Annalisa Oboe (Padova: Unipress, 2005), 44; Bernabei is referring to Ermanno Vitale, *Ius Migranti. Figure Erranti al di qua della Cosmopoli* (Torino: Bollati Boringheri, 2004).

[49] Balibar, 220; Balibar's discussion refers specifically to Europe. However, he sees the model also as applicable to nation states outside Europe. As Chakrabarty reminds us European imperialism as well as third world nationalisms turned the nation state into the most desirable form of social organization. See Chakrabarty (2000).

becomes crucial in the discussion of rights. The nation state needs to control "how its people are written and how their meaning is fixed […] if the state is to retain its claim to legitimacy and representative government."[50] In this instance, identity is constructed through the distinction between an inside/outside, here/there, between 'we, the people'/others. It requires the construction and exclusion of "boundary makers" namely "constitutive others" who are defined in terms of negative difference.[51] Fantômas, in this sense, then, is everything and nothing. The fundamental paradigm is 'sameness,' 'like us.' In this view it is identity, 'sameness,' which grounds difference rather than the other way around: "points of identity being abstracted from difference" as Colebrook reminds us with reference to Deleuze.[52] The stranger who presents him/herself at the threshold questions the borders of this constructed self asking to be let in, testing its capacities of hospitality. Fantômas' way of constructing the self necessarily averts this binary opposition self/other. Fantômas had to become like the citizen to move freely around Paris. His construction of identity is necessarily non-essentialist, contingent, conjunctural, a matter of multiple alliances.

The vacillation in the meaning and function of national borders in times of globalization has clearly not meant their disappearance. As we have seen also in *The Co-Ordinates,* borders, what will mark one as an insider or outsider, and their violence are still very much part of daily experience. That is why a discourse of increased mobility in present times cannot take the question of power lightly. That is why for *Raqs* any discourse on 'nomadism,' on agile identities, movement and multiple homes is accompanied by the crucial question of hospitality—what happens when we move, and when others move in 'our' space.

Local/Global reconfigured

Raqs' work speaks of an experience which cannot be circumscribed to a strictly local level. Neither can it be inscribed within a homogenous type of global cultural formation, though the reach of their activity is undoubtedly global. The dimensions 'local' and 'global' with reference to the works of

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[50] Bromley, 52; for this discourse Bromley is referring to Cynthia Weber *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State, Symbolic Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[51] Braidotti (2006), 32.

[52] Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 76.

practitioners like *Raqs*, become inevitably 'enmeshed' with one another. *Raqs'* practice speaks of both mobility across, between locations and locatedness without setting one against the other, or privileging one above the other. That is why the idea of 'nomadism,' at least a certain definition of it, provides us with more enabling ways to discuss *Raqs* and their understanding of the geographies of the present than a strict dichotomy between the local and the global. It helps us navigating the slippage constantly at work between a local and global dimension, the complexities which the two carry with themselves.

Often the idea of the nomadic artist has been discussed as this free floating figure moving from residency to residency, a sort of professional on hire, offering his/her expertise to different institutions and ready to operate *in situ*.[53] The great mobility of the artists certainly constructs an artistic transnational discourse generating an art debate which is articulated across borders in different institutions around the globe. The figure of the nomadic artist has been used to express this condition of mobility and exchange in art practice today. This is often understood with an outright accent on mobility and rootlessness.

Raqs' sense of nomadism instead, is better looked at through the concept of translocality. The theoretical frame of 'translocality' offers a way to think about the global and the local relationally, rather than in antagonistic or teleological terms. *Raqs* have explored this theoretical framework in a conversation with Steve Dietz, Guna Nadarajan, and Yukiko Shikata.[54] The term was brought forth in art practice by Andreas Broeckmann and aims to stress aspects of situatedness while at the same time acknowledging that we are living in a potentially, as Dietz rightly pointed out,[55] networked context. The term was also independently developed by Tetsuo Kogawa who expressed it as 'think locally, act globally,' thus reversing the globalization motto 'think globally, act locally.'[56] It was thought as a way to rethink the

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[53] see Miwon Kwon's discussion on site specificity, "One Place After Another. Notes on Site Specificity," in *Space, Site, Intervention. Situating Installation Art*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 38-63, in particular 51-58 where she discusses the figure of the "itinerant artist." It should be said that Kwon's analysis of this figure is always critical, not gratuitously celebratory; see also Gerardo Mosquera, "Alien-Own/Own-Alien. Globalization and Cultural Difference," *Boundary 2*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2002), 164.

[54] Steve Dietz et al., "Translocations" (2003), http://www.raqsmediacollective.net/conversations1.html, (last accessed 20/01/2005).

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

terms local and global, through a concept that would retain the tension between the two, while showing how they are imbricated.

Raqs' idea of nomadism, an "embodied" and "embedded" nomadism as Braidotti would put it, works in the direction indicated by the idea of translocality. If we just go back a moment to our early discussion on the city, the cityscape is felt by *Raqs* as marked by its links to other locations, by its history of travel and exchange whether commerce, war, etc. The idea of location is revisited through its stories of movement present and past. As *Raqs* points out,

> The discovery of one's roots is also a discovery of each of our nomadic inheritances. Each of these nomadic inheritances is an instance of a will to globality.[57]

Raqs' stress on the importance of locatedness over location can be well framed by the term translocality and their intending of nomadism. Locatedness is seen as an experience which bears specificities but which is not self-enclosed. This is something which emerges quite clearly behind the design of *Sarai* which I discussed at the beginning and the way in which they understand their practice as being 'rooted' in a certain 'local' situation. As we have seen in the *Co-Ordinates* project, *Raqs'* interest in Delhi, which is where they are based, does not feed into attempts to stress provenance, 'Indianness.'

> Location has ceased to be of paramount importance but locatedness hasn't. […] The work that we do reflects the very specific conditions of a large, chaotic, industrial, cosmopolitan city which is connected through flows of information, finance and industrial processes to the whole world. While we may hesitate to use the term "Indian" to describe our work, we are certain that our work speaks to the specific, simultaneously global and local realities of working and living in a city like Delhi, and of engaging with the diverse and complex histories of modernity in South Asia, as reflected in media cultures and practices.[58]

Not surprisingly, *Raqs* have been openly critical of the use of the label 'Indian' with respect to their work. As they remarked,

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[57] Ibid.

[58] "Sarai--Part 2," an interview with *Raqs* Media Collective by Mike Caloud, http://rhizome.org/thread.rhiz?thread=1938&page=1#3465. For the first part of the interview see "Sarai—Part1," an interview with *Raqs* Media Collective by Mike Caloud, http://rhizome.org/thread.rhiz?thread=1937&page=1#3460.

> We prefer to work in contexts where the curatorial engagement is an intellectual engagement in some ways, where we are not an 'Indian form.' I don't want to dismiss location. I think location is very important because we live in Delhi and for us, our work is very much part of where we are, and who we are etc., but these are ideas that have not only to do with national frames it's much bigger than that.[59]

The national, or location as underlining provenance, can be, in fact, a problematic category and particularly, when it tends to be thrown at you. It should be at least met with suspicion. Critics like Ajaz Ahmad have noted with regards to literature how there has been a tendency to overemphasize the national with respect to writers from the so called 'Third World.' In his critique of Jameson's notorious essay *Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital*,[60] Ahmad is concerned that by saying that "Third World writers" cannot but speak in terms of an allegory of the nation, Jameson is looking at the "Third World" only in relation to its experience of colonialism and imperialism. Thus, he is failing to account for conflicts based on class, gender, religion, caste which are also crucially taking place. The national can certainly be a reductive signifier that does not take into account important stories of difference. Not only the national, but more in general the idea of provenance can be easily inscribed in superficial discourses of multiculturalism which allows for 'undercover' exoticism and old stereotypes to live on. Stuart Hall has remarked how certain ways of talking about cultural diversity don't actually do much for the recognition of marginalized experiences and further reinforce the power hierarchies they should be displacing. Therefore, he urges that,

> We might ask about that continuing silence within postmodernism's shifting terrain, about whether the forms of licensing of the gaze that this proliferation of difference invites and allows, at the same time as it disavows, is not really, along with Benetton and the mixed male models of The Face, a kind of difference that doesn't make a difference of any kind.[61]

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[59] Monica Narula, interview with author, 16 Dec 2004, New Delhi.

[60] Frederick Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital," *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65-88; Ajaz Ahmad, *In Theory, Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992).

[61] Stuart Hall, "What is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture," in *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 467.

Indeed in the light of the proliferation of regional exhibitions ("India," "China," "Mexico" etc.) it should be an imperative to question what kind of discourses of difference are we carrying on.[62] In this respect, *Raqs* have steered away from provenance, which often finds expression in the national signifier, for a different type of accountability, which we may term as nomadic. *Raqs*' averting fixed categories of identity enables them to account for the unevenness and complex subject positions of today's globalization. *The Impostor in the Waiting Room* shows a strong sensitivity towards borders in the new manner they appear nowadays and the violence they entail.

The concept of 'translocality' and nomadism, as described above, may also help us to rethink globalization processes in another sense. Retaining the accent on the local, they suggest the coexistence of a plurality of movements towards the global, rather than a process in one direction alone. Considering the power of the economic, military, and media machine of the United States, and so called 'western nations' it is not surprising that processes of globalization have been often interpreted in terms of an Americanization or Westernization. However, despite its unevenness, globalization is a process which is happening along many trajectories and not just from 'the West' towards 'the rest.' As Stuart Hall pointed out

> Globalization must never be read as a simple process of cultural homogenization; it is always an articulation of the local, of the specific and the global. Therefore, there will always be specificities—of voices, of positioning, of identity, of cultural traditions, of histories, and these are the conditions of enunciation which enable us to speak. We speak with distinctive voices but we speak within the logic of a cultural global, which opens a conversation between us, which would not have been possible otherwise.[63]

With reference to critical debates on the recognition of subjectivities and experiences which have been marginalized in dominant (white, male) Euro-

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[62] Raqs have written a very interesting essay regarding the problematic issue of regional exhibitions. See Raqs Media Collective, "Once Again, to the Distant Observer" in *Subcontingent. The Indian Subcontinent in Contemporary Art*, cur. Ilaria Bonacossa and Francesco Manacorda (Milano: Electa / Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, 2006), 18-25.

[63] Stuart Hall quoted in "Cultural Studies and the Politics of Internationalization. An interview with Stuart Hall by Kuan-Hsing Chen," in *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 407.

American centric cultural and aesthetic discourses, *Raqs* have moved away from articulations of difference in essentialist national terms. Their conversation with the global is, rather, marked by the complexities of a discourse of 'positionalities.'[64]

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[64] I'm referring to Stuart Hall's 'war of positions' and his critical take on ethnicity. Hall posits the necessity of shifting the cultural struggle on difference away from essentialist practices. See Stuart Hall, "What is This 'Black' in Black Popular Culture," 465-475 and "New Ethnicities," 444-449.

List of images

Figure 1. Raqs Media Collective, *28.28"N 77.15"E:: 2001/02 The Co-Ordinates of Everyday Life*, 2002, installation with 4 video projections, soundscape, stickers, and print. View of the installation in Kassel

Figure 2. Raqs Media Collective, The Impostor in the Waiting Room, 2004, installation with video, photography, performance, text, sound, and print. View of the projections in the installation
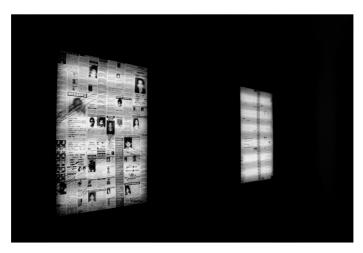
Figure 3. Raqs Media Collective, The Impostor in the Waiting Room, 2004, installation with video, photography, performance, text, sound, and print. View of the lightboxes with newsprint.