

As opposed to printed materials of previous centuries, the representations of global culture are devising a visual field where, above all, the moving images are decidedly determining a range of modes of perception. Today's media, the digital interactive ones included, are representing a changed and changing reality marked by an expansion of culture, which is driven by the strong artistic production. Museums and galleries, among other "traditional" institutions, are turning into laboratories of a continuous production of variations of meanings and interpretations, sometimes broadening the public's view on culture and sometimes confining it to some mystified canonical signification of whatever they are presenting. However, these institutions are no more (if they ever were) "neutral" places of exhibitions of works of art, but they are, as Mieke Bal would say, agents of exposures, not so much of artists and their work as such; much more however, of how they expose someone's conceptualised view of art or cultural goods. Artists "outside" these institutions became an extinct species. In the view of this institutionalised world, culture is actually the reality. Of course, there are many sophisticated and critical reflections upon this culture, such as Jameson's theory of reification or explanatory attempts by many authors, who make use of the notion of the *simulacrum*. All these reflections help us to come to terms with the complexities of social reality, which is highly saturated with multiple images, representations, and all kinds of other messages. Moreover, this is happening on a level that is comprehended as "global". Never before has the international exchange of goods been so "culturalised". This includes not only material goods, but also the nomadism of so-called "spiritual" ones in a very broad spectrum of cultures, spaces and times. In a phantasmal universe icons are produced to feed any individual imagination almost anywhere in the world. These icons support a stream of individual identifications with celebrities, with their patterns of behaviour and their performances of life-styles on a global level. The Freudian unconscious has never before been turned "inside out" to such an extent. The Babylon of the 21st century is a global stage, where an immense plurality comes forth. What is perceived in many texts in the field of cultural analysis as the colonial look is being increasingly dislocated, although far from being erased. However, inevitably the plurality comes forth only to be reduced in its scope. Abstractions and common denominators are absorbing it, as different particular representations in unity with interpretations are being selected and deselected, according to a self-generating rule of "recognisability". Still, one may observe that the global market