

■ Research

■ Indonesian Contemporary Arts

The book discusses the close interrelationships between politics and aesthetics in the Indonesian art of the contemporaneity. The art production in thematic and formal plurality establishes a specificity of its own that emancipates from the dynamic processes of colonial and postcolonial structures of power. Spielmann discusses in particular Indonesian arts of the present that emerge from syncretistic mixing of ethnic elements and connect these to cultural and religious references in narrative and visual appropriations. The book also explores how this art is influenced by the West and influences the West and thereby contributes to issues of nation building and identity.

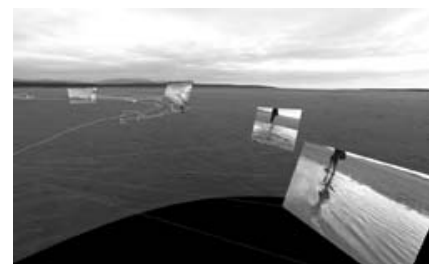
By discussing critically societal, religious and political matters, the contemporary arts newly interpret traditional techniques and materials. In sculpture, installation, mixed media, street art, photography, and video and performances, we find that batik, woodcut, dance and especially the Javanese shadow puppet theatre are combined with comic and manga, graffiti and advertisement, and with elements of pop culture.

Spielmann in her study discusses the status and significance of Indonesian contemporary art that since the 1990s increasingly participates in art events in the Asia-Pacific region and worldwide contributes to biennales, auctions, art fairs and international exhibitions. These initiatives are fueled by curators, galleries, alternative art projects and collectors and have fundamentally changed the worldwide perspective towards an Asian context and have enhanced the market value. From this position, as the book concludes, Indonesian art gains its global relevance in the present.



■ Hybrid Culture

Yvonne Spielmann in her monograph “Hybrid Culture” (“Hybridkultur”, Suhrkamp Press 2010) discusses hybrid cultures as phenomena of the present. They emerge from connections between influences and elements of different media, and from various cultural contexts and discursive fields. The plurality of media and cultures under the sign of the digital and the global are prominently discussed as »hybrid« with regard to cyberspace and multiple identities. The detailed study suggests a critical concept of hybridity that in an interdisciplinary view interrelates debates of the fields of media studies with Cultural Studies. The study argues that hybridity constitutes a strategy of our contemporaneity to aesthetically intervene into internationally operating media industries. In the book, this hybridity is amongst others highlighted in the non-western and highly technological media and cultural context of Japan.



Masaki Fujihata, *Simultaneous Echos*, 2009

■ Video

Video is an electronic medium, dependent on the transfer of electronic signals. In the book “Video. The Reflexive Medium” (MIT Press 2008, originally published in German, “Video. Das reflexive Medium”, Suhrkamp 2005), Yvonne Spielmann argues that video is not merely an intermediate step between analog and digital but a medium in its own right. Video has metamorphosed from technology to medium, with a set of aesthetic languages that are specific to it, and current critical debates on new media still need to recognize this. Spielmann considers three strands of video praxis: documentary, experimental art and experimental image-making. Finally, the study discusses the potential of interactivity, complexity, and hybridization in the future of video as a medium.



Steina Vasulka, *Somersault*, 1982

The book “Video. The Reflexive Medium” won the 2009 Lewis Mumford Award for Outstanding Scholarship in the Ecology of Technics.

The book is published in Japanese by Sangen-sha Press, Tokyo, 2011.

■ Intermedia

Intermedia, multimedia, hypertext and related terms such as hybridisation and mixed media preclude contemporary debates on recent developments in new media. Evidently, a variety of terms is needed to identify the array of processes that describe the interrelationships between diverse elements of two or more media. The variety of terms stems from the different theoretical approaches rooted in fields such as literary studies, speech theory/linguistics, cultural studies and cinema studies.



Peter Greenaway, *Prospero's Books*, 1991

New research further suggests that intermediality has the potential to serve as a model that not only increases our understanding of the mechanisms of media convergence but also applies to parallel phenomena in cultural contexts.

Yvonne Spielmann's major publications on intermedia are:

“Intermediality. The Systems of Peter Greenaway” (“Intermedialität. Das System Peter Greenaway”), Fink 1998.

“What is Intermedia” (co-edited with Jürgen Heinrichs), special issue of “Convergence”, (2002).