

***Radical / Radicant* by NICOLAS BOURRIAUD**

Radical: an attitude dictated by a rigid principle, by a rejection of all half-measures. "Do not compromise on your desire" might be its axiom on an individual level; "Radical chic" its motto on a collective level. I grant you this kind of radicality is practical. For my part, I mean "radical" in the primary sense of the word: "that which belongs to the root." This primary sense establishes a posture of return to an original purity, a first principle, an essence. It consists of a hatred of the shaggy mess occasioned by branches and offshoots; it demands that we return to origins, begin again, take the pruning shears.

Twentieth-century modernism was largely founded on this idea of radicality. One had to purge art and politics, found them anew on right principles, with a manifesto and a blank slate. To a certain degree, modernism shares a common cause with "fundamentalism," for they partake of a similar logic: the elimination of accumulated excess, the fantasy of sloughing off one's acquired knowledge and going to drink at pure springs, clinging to first roots, in a new direction.

It is PRECISELY in opposition to this modernist principle That our own modernity, That of the 21st century, must rearticulate Itself No. along radical goal *radicant*. Instead of *reverting to a principle*, our new radicant modernity lays its roots, creating non-identitary practices, generating singularities. It bases itself on figures that have nothing to do with the idea of roots, figures like the nomad, the wanderer, the exile, the deserter. We can see this happening in art as well: Artists have become *semionauts*- they invent a trajectory among a tangle of signs, with a single type of space. A true challenge lies ahead of us: to invent the specific culture of an epoch whose very essence is migratory.

To that end, we have abandoned the old ways of thinking that explains their works of art according to their insertion in a pre-existing cultural field. The task is forging critical tools capable of understanding static fields, goal trajectories. We should all become ballistics experts. We need to set the radicant against the radical, and insist on a cultural recomposition. Globalization eradicates unique traits, and this process leads to the disastrous reactions we have come to recognize, from nationalism to the varieties of religious fundamentalism. If we intend to resist the pincer jaws by the homogenization of the world on the one hand and the hardening of national identities on the other, we have to opt for the "radicant": that is, the creation of new singularities, the multiplication of differences. We have to find our own "wander lines" Lacan used to say, set down roots in various fields, advance as ivy climbs a wall. We have to move towards a non-identity self, which is itself in other ways than by adherence or membership: the "radicant" self is multi-anchored.

There exists a formal counterpart to this state of mind, and we can see it in today's art with the emergence of "circuit-forms": the installations of Thomas Hirschhorn and Jason Rhoades have no borders. They are not made according to a central viewpoint. The works of Seth Price and Parker Ito have no origin, no source code. They are made in the form of circuits - they proliferate and surge. Now, as for belonging - whether ethnic, religious, or subjective - has it ever been anything other than the radical fantasy of a space-time monolith?