



Nomadic Art: Decolonising the Human and the Posthuman

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Abstract

Under the reign of global capitalism, migration is becoming a shared condition for increasingly larger numbers of people across the world. At the same time, nomadic forms of living are often targeted by both left- and right-wing populisms, exacerbating issues around what has been called the “Fortress Europe Syndrome”. Inspired by the work of Rosi Braidotti, this paper examines the creation of new posthuman nomadic subjectivities as a possible solution to the deadlock of populism and neo-fascism. I engage with two Portuguese artists, Grada Kilomba and Welket Bungué, whose transdisciplinary work questions issues of racism and colonial violence by turning memory and the performing body into sites of political action. At the same time, in dialogue with Achille Mbembe’s work on decolonisation and Zahi Zalloua’s intervention on posthuman ontologies’ relation to race, I ask whether it is appropriate to theorise on the move beyond the human and into the posthuman, at a time when European colonial history and attitudes to race still need to be further deconstructed. I see Kilomba and Bungué’s work as prime examples of nomadic art, and advocate for more dialogue among academics, artists and local communities, as a way out of the current deadlock, and toward developing a new view of Europe which is free of intellectual, affective, and physical borders. At the same time, I emphasise the need for a critical, self-reflexive form of posthumanism, tackling not only issues of race and colonialism but also the Eurocentric foundations of Western philosophy.

Keywords: Posthumanism, Postcolonialism, Europe, Migration, Transdisciplinary Visual Art.