

## **TRANSLOCATIONS**

**MARCH 11–22, 2002**, Steve Dietz (Minneapolis, Minnesota), Gunalan Nadarajan (Singapore), Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta of Raqs Media Collective (New Delhi, India), and Yukiko Shikata (Tokyo, Japan) engaged in an online conversation that started from the idea of translocations and ranged widely across the terrain of global net art practice and philosophy. Following is an edited version of that conversation.<sup>1</sup>

From: Steve Dietz <steve.dietz@walkerart.org>  
Date: Mon Mar 11, 2002 0:48am  
Subject: Why “translocations”?

Dear Guna, Jeebesh, Monica, Shuddha (Raqs), and Yukiko,

I first came across the term “translocal” in the writings of Andreas Broeckmann.<sup>2</sup> For me, one of the ways the term resonated most strongly was the flip from terms such as transnational, transglobal, and global. If McDonald’s and Starbucks are the poster children for such corporations—the near hegemonic presence of a single brand globally—then translocal foregrounds the aspect of “situatedness” (sometimes geographically local and sometimes psychogeographically?) while acknowledging that we live and practice in a (potentially) networked context.

Tetsuo Kogawa, who also uses the term translocal—and said in a conversation that he had coined/used the term independently—suggests a similar flip in “The Global Transformation of Books and Reading” when he states that **the goal is not, in fact, to “think globally, act locally,” as the popular refrain goes, but to “think locally, act globally.”**<sup>3</sup> In other words, focus on the local, but allow the networks to propagate the action globally.

Anyway, my interest is not in the term per se, and I recognize that there is a complicated dynamic involved. Raqs, if I’m not off base, it is precisely the complexity of this dynamic—of not being “Indian,” even though what

-----  
Note: Except for the Web site provided in footnote 1, which was posted on February 7, 2003, all sites referenced below were visited by the author on June 12, 2002.

1 Steve Dietz is curator of new media at the Walker Art Center; Gunalan Nadarajan is dean in the faculty of visual arts, Lasalle-SIA College of Arts, Singapore; Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, and Shuddhabrata Sengupta are founding members of Raqs Media Collective and participants in *How Latitudes Become Forms: Art in a Global Age*; Yukiko Shikata is a curator at the new Mori Art Center in Tokyo. The full version of this conversation is available online at <<http://translocations.walkerart.org/conversation>>.

2 See Andreas Broeckmann, “Networked Agencies,” at <<http://www.v2.nl/~andreas/texts/1998/networkedagency-en.html>>; “Sociable Machinists of Culture,” at <<http://www.v2.nl/~andreas/texts/2000/networkers.html>>; “Minor Media—Heterogenic Art,” at <<http://www.nettime.org/nettime.w3archive/199811/msg00029.html>>; and <<http://www.translocation.at/d/broeckmann.htm>>.

3 See <<http://www.honco.net/archive/980801.html>>.

Sarai does is very rooted—that you refer to in your Rhizome interview.<sup>4</sup>

I am also interested in exploring the network, and specifically new-media practices, as a fruitful way to approach issues of globalization, especially the roles of the local and the trans in the global.

So my first question is: What do each of you think about the term translocal and some of the issues embedded in what I have said and in Broeckmann's and Kogawa's texts, as well as in other references to the term and these issues?

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Shuddhabrata Sengupta <shuddha@sarai.net>

**Date:** Mon Mar 11, 2002 2:48am

**Subject:** Re: Why “translocations”?

Dear Steve and all the others on the list,

First of all, a big hello from Jeebesh, Monica, and me (Shuddha) in the Raqs Media Collective at Sarai in Delhi. We look forward to a stimulating few days of conversation.

I think Broeckmann is quite close to what many of us feel when he talks (implicitly) about the tensions between the pulls of nomadism and the search for the feeling of home.<sup>5</sup> This tension, we feel, describes the predicament of translocality quite accurately. The feeling of being transient where you are, no matter how long you have been there. The sense of “internal” exile, even from the context of mainstream art and media practice, that some of us have come to recognize as part of our everyday experience. And also the unexpected alliances that we find with our traveling companions—free-software activists, hackers, coders on the fringes of code, and other free-floating intellectual and cultural artisans.

In this sense, for us, the creation of Sarai was about providing a “home for nomads” and a resting place for practices of new-media nomadism. Traditionally, sarais were also nodes in the communications system (horse-mail!) and spaces where theatrical entertainments, music, dervish dancing, and philosophical disputes could all be staged. They were hospitable to a wide variety of journeys—physical, cultural, and intellectual. In medieval Central and South Asia, sarais were the typical spaces for a concrete translocality, with their own culture of custodial care, conviviality, and refuge. They also contributed to syncretic languages and ways of being. We would do well to emulate even in part aspects of this tradition in the new-media culture of today.

I was particularly struck once by what the Russian cyberfeminist Irina Aristarkhova said in a panel discussion on cyberfeminist practices at the last Next 5 Minutes conference in Amsterdam. I am paraphrasing her, but she spoke of the importance to all who work in new media of the idea of “hospitality,” of always being hosts and guests in one another's practices.<sup>6</sup>

This might create oases of locatedness along the global trade routes of new-media culture.

---

<sup>4</sup> Raqs Media Collective interviewed by Mike Caloud about the Sarai New Media Initiative, posted on Rhizome, April 18, 2002, part 1 <<http://rhizome.org/object.rhiz?3460>>, part 2 <<http://rhizome.org/object.rhiz?3465>>.

<sup>5</sup> See Andreas Broeckmann, “Construction of Dialogic Spaces,” at <<http://www.translocal.net/ground/gsauna/andreas.html>>.

<sup>6</sup> “First, a bit about my work on welcoming differences and hospitality as a cyberfeminist strategy. Thus far communities seem to welcome differences at the moment of self-formation, while after being formed, they often operate to level out differences and strive toward homogeneity. A desire for heterogeneous online communities, specifically among diverse women interested in the impact of technologies and their proliferation, is the motivation behind me joining. In this case by differences I mean especially geographical and cultural differences of our members, as notions like race and color are pretty much defined by where you are from.” Irina Aristarkhova <uspia@nus.edu.sg>, “[undercurrents] moods and such,” April 2, 2002, e-mail to <undercurrents@bbs.thing.net>.

We would like to share here with you a fragment from an e-mail interview that Rhizome did with Monica.<sup>7</sup>

On “Locatedness”

Rhizome: Are there unique Indian qualities to the media projects at Sarai? Or do you consider yourself part of a more global aesthetic?

Raqs: For us, the idea of a “uniquely Indian quality” is not really meaningful, or expressive of anything at all. India is the name of a nation-state, and “Indian” the term denoting nationality that happens to be entered in our passports, but it does not really suggest anything real or concrete in terms of culture to us; nor do the words French, or Italian, or Australian, or American, for that matter. Those who use the term “Indian Culture” usually mean a complex of values, attitudes, and tendencies that have been processed to mark out a space that is “uniquely” theirs, and which mirrors an obsession with territoriality. We are puzzled as to what (in cultural terms) can “uniquely” be the possession of any sets of people, in exclusivity. Culture is something that never respects borders and territories. It is infectious, nomadic, and volatile. We see culture, and cultural intervention, as an agile constellation of people, practices, connections, and objects that come into being when different disciplines, histories, and attitudes encounter each other in a global cultural space. This does not mean that we subscribe to the view that there are no cultural differences, but that cultural affinities and differences are not reducible to the mere notations of current political cartography.

The work that we do reflects the very specific conditions of a large, chaotic, industrial, cosmopolitan city that is connected globally 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.

It is because we are strongly located in a city like Delhi that we also know that we are part of, and contribute to, a global domain of aesthetic and cultural practice.

Looking forward to all our “translocal” conversations.

Cheers,  
Shuddha  
for Raqs Media Collective

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Steve Dietz <steve.dietz@walkerart.org>  
**Date:** Mon Mar 11, 2002 11:39pm  
**Subject:** Re: Why “translocations”?

Shuddha,

Thanks for this response about Sarai and Raqs’ thinking about the interplay of nomadism and locatedness. I like very much the idea of a “home for nomads” and understand your issues with “Indian Culture,” but I want to press a bit more on this interplay.

Is there a difference between “a city like Delhi” and Delhi? In other words, there are of course experiences, attitudes, and possibilities common to Delhi and Tokyo and Rio and perhaps to a lesser extent Minneapolis. Are there also meaningful differences?

Yukiko, I know you were involved in Knowbotic Research’s IO\_dencies project, which mapped urban flows in Tokyo and Rio, among other places.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps you can comment on your experience with this important project in terms of the interplay between the transglobal flows and the local locatedness of the participants.

---

<sup>7</sup> Raqs interview, Rhizome, April 18, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> See <<http://www.krcf.org>>.

I guess what I am asking—and we don't have to remain fixated on this, I promise—is how does the “where” fit in? Is geography (physical) a difference that makes a difference, to reference Claude Shannon's theory of information? Or is that a kind of essentialist argument, considering, as Shuddha points out, that all geographies are already hybrid?

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Raqs <raqs@sarai.net>  
**Date:** Tue Mar 12, 2002 6:48am  
**Subject:** Re: Why “translocations”?

The problem with a word such as difference, like the term roots, is its extreme ideologization. To be able to talk about a space one needs to dig in different directions, but where this digging will lead is somewhat unpredictable. Difference forecloses this unpredictability. A “city like Delhi” is a product of a very complex weave of movement and violence. This city has been destroyed, decimated many times by various forms of power. New spaces and new rhythms have emerged within an imagination of power's imprint and around its shadow. To be conscious of this history, with all its complexity and contradiction, is to be aware of the processes by which spaces and identities are destroyed, created, and sustained.

The problem is how to talk sensibly about these processes, being conscious of one's locatedness but not valorizing location.

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** yukiko shikata <sica@dasein-design.com>  
**Date:** Tue Mar 12, 2002 9:00am  
**Subject:** translocations

Hi all,

It is so funny and nice that we share different time zones (caused by the different latitudes) and social, cultural defenses ... but we are connected via the Internet. This situation is already translocal!

I read over the previous postings, and I will reply to some parts of them, but first, as a starter from me, I'll write down some random thoughts:

I live in Tokyo, a city currently economically weaker than ever before, but as Saskia Sassen has observed, Tokyo is (still) connected globally to other big cities such as New York and London—so-called global cities that share the same kind of reality realized by the global economy.<sup>9</sup>

Manuel Castells wrote that the global economic flow is predominant compared with other kinds of flows. It is clear that this global economic flow tends to foment a mono-political, -social, and -cultural situation. It makes cultural diversity weaker.<sup>10</sup>

Guy Debord wrote that “spectacle” has “world time” and “world space.” Time and space are strongly connected, and the Situationist attitude embodied the disturbance of or resistance to those kinds of time and space.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> See Saskia Sassen, “The Topis of E-Space + Private and Public Cyberspace,” posted on Nettime, October 17, 1998; also published in [Read Me: ASCII Culture and the Revenge of Knowledge](#) (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Autonomedia, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> See Manuel Castells, [Global Economy, Information Society, Cities and Regions](#), special Japanese ed. in the Sociology Thoughts series (Tokyo: Aoki-Shoten Publishers, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> See Guy Debord, [La Société du spectacle](#) (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1992).

How can we get beyond this initialization of time and space? I think translocal is a strategy, and ideas such as Hakim Bey's Temporary Autonomous Zone, being nomadic, can be omnipresent, depending on the situation.<sup>12</sup> Regarding the IO\_dencies project, it was very important that no one could have an overview of what was happening, as the totality of the information flow was happening only invisibly at info-level—on the server. Each participant had a different experience. No one could share the same reality.

With the Tokyo version of IO\_dencies, what the user sees at the interface depends on the information “tendencies.” Each participant can visualize the flows as he or she wants and modify them in many ways. Also, there is a kind of “ghost” of other users remotely influencing the flows of the person’s interface. You operate your own interface locally, as do others, but some interaction or influences occur, which can happen randomly, unexpectedly.

Tendencies and density of flows operated by each user form a kind of info-agency, which creates an applet that starts to seek similar tendencies and connects to them to make stronger tendencies. Info-flows are always in dynamic flux in these info-spaces. Over time, links between local data grow to influence the whole; in other words, global information.

I use the term local not in a sense limited to Tokyo people, or exhibition visitors, but rather as including any local participants accessing from any place in the world, which I think could be called translocal.

KR+cF (Knowbotic Research) raised the question of urbanism and urban planning to make the local participants face (invisible) realities and possibilities—to have them start thinking of themselves as one of the flows of Tokyo.

Greetings,  
yukiko

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Gunalan Nadarajan <gunalan@lasallesia.edu.sg>  
**Date:** Tue Mar 12, 2002 0:11pm  
**Subject:** Re: Why “translocations”?

Shuddha and the Raqs Collective,

I am particularly impressed with the position (or refusal to position) that conceptually grounds the concept of your Sarai initiative. The etymological and historical references of sarai upon which you have developed a form of strategic nomadism have interesting resonances, as you rightly noted, with notions of the translocal and translocation. I wonder, however, if you had thought of the limits of nomadic strategies such as yours, since there is a tendency for such strategies not to have a life after their initial interventions and effects. **The strategic advantages of nomadism seem to issue exactly from its mobility and lack of institutional baggage. However, this also seems to limit the capacity for such nomadic strategies to have long-term effects and sustainable structures to maintain the dynamic of change they initially bring about or point to.** Does Sarai see itself becoming more rooted, or are roots always dangerous? Location may have become less important, but the locatedness you suggest as being crucial for your work may need to develop some kind of roots, not for grounding but for a sustained relationship to a location.

I am also a little puzzled by the notion of translocal being presented in these discussions as somewhat anti-theoretical to operations of globalization. It seems to me that the “trans” in translocal is driven by what Okwui Enwezor has called the “will to globality,” which is a desire for connectivity and access to what is perceived to be global.<sup>13</sup> If translocation is a movement, and therefore a moment of globalization, despite being attentive to

---

<sup>12</sup> See Hakim Bey, T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Autonomedia, anti-copyright 1985, 1991). This text is also available at <[http://www.hermetic.com/bey/taz\\_cont.html](http://www.hermetic.com/bey/taz_cont.html)>.

<sup>13</sup> Conversation with the author.

the local, then how does one really conceptualize and articulate its radicality vis-à-vis globalization? If the translocal is strategically driven by the desire to connect up to what turn out to be largely global operations (and I am willing to accord that not all nonlocal activities are necessarily global, for example, diasporic, religious, and regional activities), then what possibilities does it represent for strategically articulating the local? While speculating on the notion of nomadism and on the translocal connections that Raqs celebrate through the net communities they plug into, I wondered about another translocal concept, that of the diaspora. **The diasporic individual seems to have been the first translocal insofar as he/she has had to connect up to an imagined community in a manner that transcends geographical positioning.**

I am wondering if Raqs need be so anxious to reject the label “Indian” to articulate a nomadic position, since they could draw some ideas of how such translocality can be managed by looking at the experiences of many diasporic Indians like myself. I am not suggesting by this that the diaspora is a successful translocal articulation that makes a seemingly impossible reference to some distant (both culturally and temporally) reference point, but rather that the diasporic experience is itself one that flip-flops between connection and disjuncture, between mimicry and invention, between roots and routes. Being a third-generation Indian migrant living in Singapore who has never visited India but has been consistently referred to and related to as Indian, though never quite identifying with that label, I draw these connections between the diasporic experience and that of translocation as a means to highlight the perpetual indecision that characterizes such positions or lack thereof.

\* \* \* \* \*

From: yukiko shikata <sica@dasein-design.com>  
Date: Wed Mar 13, 2002 3:19am  
Subject: Re: Why “translocations”?

Dear Guna and the rest,

In my last mail I used the term globalization generally, from the aspect of financial flows, which is done, in a way, top-down, driven by corporations or nation-states, or by the mixture of them.

**But can I say that there is another, alternative layer of globalization, which could be realized bottom-up by the people connected globally,** or as Guna wrote, by “the will to globality” according to Okwui?

I think translocal is a condition that leads away from the existing opposition of global versus local, but always faces the contradiction between those two.

I locate translocal as a condition realized by an unlimited number of people, each of whom is attentive locally and connected globally. The translocal emerges through a kind of ever-changing interaction process among these people and can be different depending on the reality of each participant. It is multilayered, and those layers are not always synthetic but rather contain some contradictions. The reality of each location can be shared in part with other locations. But at the same time not all is shared, and in this lack or difference “imagination” starts to work.

In 1996 I became involved in the exhibition [atopic site](#) held in Tokyo (atopic contains the meanings “a-topos” and “a-topic”).<sup>14</sup> Five curators, myself included, brought in artists to create site-specific projects, each based on a specific local situation, such as Sarajevo, Geneva, Okinawa, Indonesia, and the United States, among others. The projects questioned whether such local realities could be shared in Tokyo or not. I think the answer was both. Visitors discovered problems similar to those in Tokyo but at the same time realized the different realities stemming from social, political, and cultural backgrounds. Here, by experiencing several projects at the same location, the visitors were expected to make many links between each project and to start imagining other

---

<sup>14</sup> The exhibition [atopic site](#) was held in August 1996 at Tokyo Big Sight, within the framework of Tokyo Seaside Festa organized by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The exhibition was co-curated by Hiroshi Kashiwagi, Kenjiro Okazaki, Yukiko Shikata, Naoyuki Takashima, and Akira Tatehata.

possible localities that were not presented or visible in the exhibition. I think **imagining other possible localities is a key factor in being translocal.**

Greetings,  
yukiko

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** mediachef\_translocations <steve.dietz@walkerart.org>  
**Date:** Wed Mar 13, 2002 3:57am  
**Subject:** Re: from Guna

Guna and Yukiko,

A lot to chew on here! And thanks, Yukiko, for introducing the notion of imagination. Shuddha has written a quite wonderful piece about his imagination as sparked by community telephones called “Long Distance Conversations.”<sup>15</sup>

In my recent “global travels” I had a similar sense of wonder and imagination provoked by the destination board in the Kuala Lumpur airport. I think I could have sat there indefinitely. It also brings to mind one of my standard anecdotes, which is that one of the ways that Claude Shannon, and others, understood his very precise and profoundly transforming mathematical theory of information was as surprise. Information has more value the more surprising it is.<sup>16</sup>

Guna, I think you are right to question whether latitude—geography—introduces another instance of a certain essentialism. Nevertheless, I remain interested in whether there is a kind of nonessentialist localism that can be recuperated by the notion of translocal in opposition to transglobal. Perhaps it is the notion of hospitality, which Raqs mentioned in relation to Irina Aristarkhova and which is embedded in her new work Virtual Chora.<sup>17</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Gunalan Nadarajan <gunalan@lasallesia.edu.sg>  
**Date:** Tue Mar 12, 2002 9:09pm  
**Subject:** Re: translocations

Dear Yukiko and the rest,

I am thankful for your reference to the notion of latitude-differentiated time zones as it again points to the ways in which cartographies are organizing the spatial-temporal realities of our lived experiences as different. I would like, though, to suggest that sometimes geographies, with reference to the imagined topographies of the net and the global networks of commerce, have been promoted as the new signifiers of real spaces or, in cyberculture circles, place. The fact that geographies are as much constructions of spatio-temporal experiences as they are representations of real spaces is carefully circumvented, sometimes by the critique of net space as being not real vis-à-vis that of geographical space. In some sense, then, **I am wondering if the reference to latitude being a geographical construct standing in this exhibition as a trope of locatedness is not rather problematic.**

I would like to raise another issue that has been bothering me for a while now, **the phenomenon of the global curator;** and Steve, as I indicated to you during your visit here, you seem to be one example of a global curator both by intent, and since I know you will beg to differ, by default. By intent insofar as you (as does your institution, the Walker Art Center) desire to “curate the world” in a sense. **The desire to go beyond one’s shores,**

---

<sup>15</sup> See Shuddhabrata Sengupta, “Long Distance Conversations,” at <<http://www.sarai.net/compositions/texts/works/longdistance.htm>>.

<sup>16</sup> See Steve Dietz, “Signal or Noise? The Network Museum,” February 16, 2000, <[http://www.walkerart.org/gallery9/webwalker/ww\\_032300.html](http://www.walkerart.org/gallery9/webwalker/ww_032300.html)>.

<sup>17</sup> See Irina Aristarkhova, “Virtual Chora,” at <<http://www.virtualchora.com/>>.

the aspiration to incorporate other perspectives and products into one's ambit (and thus reflecting global ambitions) is peculiar to the global curator, most concretely embodied in the biennial curators/artistic directors.

One may quibble about whether it is really the globe that the global curator desires, or whether it is far more humble insofar as they aspire merely to represent a variety of perspectives, not comprehensively but conscientiously. Whatever one decides about these issues, the global curator, reflecting a "will to globality" in curating and organizing art exhibitions, is an important mediator of the global in the art world. What is the role of the global curator in an age of translocations? Does the global curator sometimes embark on the translocations by his/her own travels, stringing together geographically and culturally diverse artists in ways that circumvent the need for others, such as the artists and the audiences, to "translocate"? Or is the global curator a key agent in initiating and sustaining critically nuanced translocational strategies in the art world?

\* \* \* \* \*

From: yukiko shikata <sica@dasein-design.com>

Date: Wed Mar 13, 2002 7:12am

Subject: Re: translocations

Dear Guna and the rest,

"Latitude" includes attitude, and the attitude comes from each person, so latitudes could be defined as the connected attitudes (perspectives and actions) of an unlimited number of people, each facing local realities and connected globally. "Forms" are generated by space and time, but nobody knows how they become, as each of us sees them from our own perspective.

I think the forms coming out of latitudes constitute an info-geography, consisting of dynamic, changing numerical codes, to which we cannot apply the existing notion of physical space. Via the Internet, we face totally different kinds of geography, which are beyond global and local, private and public.

Of course, there is a tendency toward territorialization (or globalization) of the information sphere, applying the existing material-based regulations to an info-, digital-, network-based entity and putting this info-geography under the control of governments and corporations. Artists could be "agents for change" (Konrad Becker) to resist such tendencies.

At the moment I am co-curating, with Shu Lea Cheang and Armin Medosch, an online exhibition titled Kingdom of Piracy (KOP).<sup>18</sup> Raqs Media Collective is participating with their Global Village Health Manual.<sup>19</sup> Shuddha or Jeebesh or Monica, could one of you talk about the project in relation to translocation or other related topics?

With KOP, we are dealing with the piracy issue, trying to promote artistic interventions, as the whole digital-based information "space" is in possible danger of future control by the global economy. Piracy also references issues of deterritorialization and omnipresence.

Regarding info-geography, I am also interested in the aspects of memory that can be collected and stored as resources for future use. Raqs is also dealing with this issue in its OPUS project.<sup>20</sup> This is a totally new way of production and locates works as nodes in an infinitely open-ended progression of possible future productions.

Henri Lefebvre wrote in Production of Spaces as follows (sorry for my bad translation from the Japanese):

---

<sup>18</sup> Kingdom of Piracy, curated by Shu Lea Cheang, Armin Medosch, and Yukiko Shikata, launched online December 9, 2001, at <<http://www.adac.com/tw>>. The on-site exhibition was held at ArtFuture 2002, March 2002, at Acer Digital Art Center, Taiwan.

<sup>19</sup> Raqs Media Collective, with Mrityunjoy Chatterjee, Global Village Health Manual, CD-ROM. See <<http://www.sarai.net/compositions/multimedia/multimedia.htm>>.

<sup>20</sup> See <<http://www.sarai.net/opus/>>.



In the near future, it will become important to seek the new possibility as much as possible and to produce the human space following the model of the collective. ... Here, works are not “created” by a single author, but “produced” by collaborations regarded as the production of the space ... and the space could be said to be a “public space”... This space can be realized by taking the way of the “public domain” or the “commons.” Where do those “commons” exist?<sup>21</sup>

We might think of this as a new kind of translocal entity, which is an agent or agency to connect with us and others, and also to connect us with each other (this is also done, for example, by Knowbotic Research’s IO\_den-cies project).

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Steve Dietz <steve.dietz@walkerart.org>  
**Date:** Wed Mar 13, 2002 9:31am  
**Subject:** Re: translocations

Yukiko,

Thanks. I think the movement you make from translocal to information commons is important. There is a certain parallelism between global/local, nomadic/fixed, public/private, which is very interesting.

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Raqs Media Collective <raqs@sarai.net>  
**Date:** Wed Mar 13, 2002 8:28am  
**Subject:** nomadism and routes

Dear Steve, Yukiko, and Guna,

It is great to see the list really warming up and all of our postings substantiating one another.

Guna has raised a very important point about the “limits of nomadic strategies” because, as he says, “there is a tendency for such strategies not to have a life after their initial interventions and effects.”

While this is a very necessary caveat to keep in mind, it also presumes that nomadism is seen as being inherently contingent on impermanence.

We think, however, that nomadism is not a one-off singular movement from one location to another. It requires regularities, and returns. **This is the difference between the nomad and the migrant. The nomad walks the same paths between places; the migrant leaves one place for another.**

The betweenness of the first movement and the finality of the second departure enclose between them a world of a difference. In fact, this difference may be what we are struggling to define as the distinction between translocality and the hegemonic form of globalization. This is not to say that translocality is antithetical to all forms of the global imaginary, but of that, more later.

The paths on which nomads walk need to be maintained over time and across generations. While settlements have witnessed ebbs and flows, cities have been depopulated and repopulated, and so have trade routes. The entire history of Central Asia, and the languages that many of us speak, from Turkey to Bangladesh, bear witness to the obstinate persistence of nomadism across generations. This permanence requires that there be stable institutions of hospitality for practices of nomadism. Hence, sarais. Hence, the settlements that grew with sarais as their nuclei. Nomadism and location have in this instance at least a symbiotic relationship. And the decline of many cities and seemingly permanent settlements in our geographies has to do with the inability

---

<sup>21</sup> See Henri Lefebvre, La Production de l'espace (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1974); author's translation from the Japanese ed. (Tokyo: Aoki-Shoten Publishers, 2000).

of nomads to traverse well-worn paths, because of borders that inhibit movement. The tragic destiny of a city like Kabul, from the early twentieth century right through to the Taliban years and the war in Afghanistan, is, for instance, signatory of what happens to a location when borders close in and nomads, carrying ideas and images and songs and objects from other spaces, are no longer welcome. This is why we stress the importance of hospitality, of permanent refuges for transients, as an essential factor in a new/old cultural ethic.

To delve into roots in such spaces is necessarily to discover an intricate matrix of intersecting, chaotic “wills to globality.” This is true, we think, of all our genealogies. Our selfhood, the apex of the myriad identities that constitute our coming into history today, is composed of many silences and acts of forgetting as much as of remembering and assertion. **These omissions are the ones that are located exactly at the point where the tendrils of our roots touch the tendrils of the roots of others from whom we may wish to deny inheritances.** The deeper we go into our genealogies, our cultures, our practices, and our languages, the more horizontally spread out they become. In this sense, the discovery of our roots is also a discovery of each of our nomadic inheritances. Each of these nomadic inheritances is an instance of a will to globality.

The will to globality need not be seen only in terms of the desire of the local to reach a predetermined global space—to be “in” on what is provisionally constructed as the global space. We argue that it also resides in all our specific, located abilities to imagine ourselves as global subjects, creating global spaces. This means that it is not only the curator who is a global entity. He or she is no more (or less) of a global entity than are practitioners and artists.

Let us elaborate on what we mean. On Sarai’s listserv Reader List, there was a lot of discussion about what happened in New York, in Afghanistan, and in the world in general post-9/11. There was no hesitation on the part of those who live in, say, New Delhi to claim for themselves the global space of New York.

There is, at the moment, a serious and violent sectarian crisis engulfing parts of India. And the listserv is just as active. But curiously, although the constituency of the list is global, no one from outside the subcontinent is writing about what is happening in India at the moment. We could surmise that this is because of a phenomenon that we have always maintained is an **“asymmetry of ignorance.” We, on the fringes of the global space, know more about the global space than those who are at its core know about us.** This is the consequence of the relationship over at least the last two hundred years between centers and peripheries in the cultural universe. But this also paradoxically means that we, at the “local” periphery, can claim the “global” center with far less hesitation. We can be global in a discursive sense, more than someone at the center can be. This is our will to globality. This is what ensures that our locatedness in New Delhi is also the crucial determinant of the nomadism of our concerns and practices.

As Florian Schneider of the No Borders Campaign says, succinctly, “What use are borders if we do not cross them?”

This has been a long posting, but we would like to leave you with a few fragments from a hypertext work in progress that we are developing called “The Concise Lexicon of/for the Digital Commons.”<sup>22</sup>

These fragments are entries that define certain terms, as in a dictionary; we offer you the following three words.

#### Nodes

Any structure that is composed of concentrated masses of materials which act as junction points for the branching out of extensible parts of the overall system may be described as nodal. The concentrations or junctions being the nodes. A nodal structure is a rhizomatic structure, it sets down roots (that branch out laterally) as it travels. Here, nodes may also be likened to the intersection points of fractal systems, the precise locations where new fractal iterations arise out of an existing pattern. A work that is internally composed of memes is inherently nodal. Each meme is a junction point or a node for the lateral branching out of the vector of an idea. In a work that is made up of interconnected nodes, the final structure that emerges is that of a web, in which

---

<sup>22</sup> The work can be viewed in its current, simply text form at <<http://www.sarai.net/compositions/texts/works/lexicon.htm>>.

every vector eventually passes through each node at least once on its orbit through the structure of the work. In such a structure it becomes impossible to suppress or kill an idea, once it is set in motion, because its vectors will make it travel quickly through the nodes to other locations within the system, setting off chains of echoes and resonances at each node that trace a path back to the kernel of the idea.

These echoes and resonances are rescensions, and each node is ultimately a direct rescension of at least one other node in the system and an indirect rescension of each junction within a whole cluster of other nodes. Nodes, when written, perhaps erroneously, as “no-des” give rise to an intriguing hybrid English/Eastern-Hindi neologism, a companion to the old words des, and par-des. Des (in some eastern dialects of Hindi, spoken by many migrants to Delhi) is simply homeland or native place; par-des suggests exile, and an alien land. “No-des” is that site or way of being, in des or in par-des, where territory and anxieties about belonging don’t go hand in hand. Nodes in a digital domain are No-des.

### Ubiquity

Everywhere-ness. The capacity to be in more than one site. The simple fact of heterogeneous situation, a feature of the way in which clusters of memes, packets of data, orbit and remain extant in several nodal points within a system. The propensity of a meme toward ubiquity increases with every iteration, for once spoken, it always already exists again and elsewhere. It begins to exist and be active (even if dormant) in the person spoken to as well as in the speaker. Stories, and the kernels of ideas, travel in this way. A rescension, when in orbit, crosses the paths of its variants. The zone where two orbits intersect is usually the site of an active transaction and transfer of meanings. Each rescension carries into its own trajectory memes from its companion. In this way, through the encounters between rescensions, ideas spread, travel, and tend toward ubiquity. That which is everywhere is difficult to censor, that which is everywhere has no lack of allies. To be ubiquitous is to be present and dispersed in “no-des.” Sometimes, ubiquity is the only effective answer to censorship and isolation.

### Vector

The direction in which an object moves, factored by the velocity of its movement. An idea spins and speeds at the same time. The intensity of its movement is an attribute of the propensity it has to connect and touch other ideas. This gives rise to its vector functions. The vector of a meme is always toward other memes, in other words, the tendency of vectors of data is to be as ubiquitous as possible. This means that an image, code, or idea must attract others to enter into relationships that ensure its portability and rapid transfer through different sites and zones. The vectors of different memes, when taken together, form a spinning web of code.

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Gunalan Nadarajan <gunalan@lasallesia.edu.sg>  
**Date:** Wed Mar 13, 2002 9:31pm  
**Subject:** Re: nomadism and routes

Dear Raqs and the rest,

Thank you very much for such a thought-provoking response to my point about the transience of nomadic strategies.

I do agree with you that my point about nomadic strategies does not adequately take into account the continuities and rhythmic nature of nomadic movements in contradistinction, as you suggest, to those of the migrant. I agree that such “routinizations” do constitute some sort of temporal continuities that can serve well in keeping the effects of nomadic strategies in currency over long periods of time. I am doubtful, however, if such nomadic strategies can continue operating for very long when they are so dependent on “the stable institutions of hospitality” you speak of, especially since such institutions are fast becoming difficult to sustain. Even Web space, often touted as the most hospitable of spaces, is riddled with proprietary claims and regulations that make it almost hostile. How to develop more sarais to provide more “permanent refuges for transients” seems to be of tantamount importance now more than ever.

I am not so convinced, however, by your argument that the “discovery of our roots is also a discovery of our nomadic inheritances.” While it may well be the case that the tendrils of our roots may spread to touch the roots of others, these discoveries are seldom invited with recognition of commonalities but rather with anxieties about differences. This anxiety to articulate one’s difference from some other, as soon as you discover the common roots, seems often to result not from an unwillingness to affirm our nomadic inheritances but from an anxiety to maintain legitimate claims over the inheritances that constitute our present state. Thus a recognition of one’s nomadic inheritances does not necessarily lead toward or reflect one’s will to globality, though I am willing to accept that it sometimes does just that.

I agree with and have very often noted the “asymmetry of ignorance” you mention with reference to the knowledges of the global reflected by the peripheries vis-à-vis centers. I am unsure, however, how one is to go about thinking of the core and the periphery with reference to global space. If the global is a sense of one’s being “in” on what has been “provisionally constructed as global space,” then how does one articulate within this imagined space cores and peripheries? What does it mean to be at the core, to be more into and inflected by the global? What is periphery when one participates in the global, as you suggest, by “our abilities to imagine ourselves as global subjects”?

I especially enjoyed the way you recolonized the semantics of nodes by etymologically renovating the possibilities for articulating nomadic (dis)positions as nodes. I do think that the notion of nodes, especially in its resonances with ubiquity, is extremely useful in thinking about the translocal as well as in understanding the operations of the global.

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Raqs Media Collective <raqs@sarai.net>  
**Date:** Thu Mar 14, 2002 1:08am  
**Subject:** Re: nomadism and routes

Dear translocators,

Expanding on Yukiko’s point about info-geography, we must consider, as she has urged us to, whether it is at all necessary to collapse “territoriality” of physical cartography onto the making of the map of new cultural practices. This also ties in with Guna’s very salient criticism of our deployment of the metaphors of center and periphery when conceptualizing a global space.

We have been struck, ever since Guna’s last posting, by **the inadequacy of the terms center and periphery as tools with which to think through translocality.**

In fact, the notion of a center assumes that there is one globality, though we ourselves have been arguing for alternate global imaginaries. **The moment one desires, or admits to, disparate, intersecting, chaotic wills to globality, the notion of a center, and with it of peripheries, loses any meaning.** So, we stand humbly corrected on that score.

We would take this further to say that it is also time to resurrect, critically examine, and where necessary, celebrate every form of global or translocal cultural practice from all our histories.

A model of globality need not be in any one direction. Japan or Korea is as far as England or France from Northern India, and there are high mountains, deserts, and seas in between—yet ideas and codes did persist in traveling. The world of global culture seems at the moment to be skewed in one direction only, and this bias needs to be corrected for us to understand what it might mean to embrace local wills to globality.

And further, we need to consider an archaeology of translocality, to construct and complicate stories of rootedness that make it difficult to narrativize the other in terms of hostility alone, that make it possible to integrate in any image of the self and its practices all its inheritances, sedentary as well as nomadic. We agree that

this is by no means easy, but we think that it is necessary if we are to map an info-geography that does not recapitulate the borders of the physical world today. Such an info-geography might interact with the bound- edness of the physical world in unforeseen ways.

Here we would like to come back to what Guna said about the institutions of hospitality that can permit forms of nomadism to flourish. Of course **the Web is a highly contested space, and the fragile commons of the digi- tal domain is now in a constant state of siege because of the way in which regimes of intellectual property (patents, copyright, trademark, etc.) construct enclosures on the field of code, signs, and knowledge.** This goes so far as to impose on the maps of our fluid info-geographies the barbed wires of physical borders—of reter- ritorializing (as Yukiko might say) that which has been at its foundation deterritorialized. This is what hap- pens when, for instance, the regional encryption systems construct territorial limitations on the usage of DVDs.

This is a situation that we can either accept or work around and against. The attempt to ensure that a digital commons remains a digital commons is precisely the effort of ensuring that spaces remain hospitable to the flows of cultural nomadism, among many other things. The commons remains such because people continue to travel through it. This is what ensures that it does not become proprietary.

This means that there can be no naive belief in the inherent freedom or openness of digital culture, or an inno- cence as regards what must be done (repeatedly and constantly) in order to keep the commons, common.

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Steve Dietz <steve.dietz@walkerart.org>  
**Date:** Thu Mar 14, 2002 5:52am  
**Subject:** Re: nomadism and routes

Translocations,

I am interested in the “asymmetry of ignorance” and how it maps “a model of globality [that] need not be in any one direction.” When Raqs first raised this asymmetry, it was, of course, very recognizable.

The model I would like to make more explicit, however, is that of the network. As has been pointed out, the nodes of a network are nondirectional, providing, potentially, a different way of mapping relationships that does not rely on notions of center and periphery. **The network is also an amplifier that can invert the asymmetry of power (and ignorance?) and allow for the conventionally unempowered to act with great effect, for the local- ized (wherever they are geographically) to have global impact.**

This network can be used to try to close down borders or to hack them, to encrypt or to decrypt, to be an “old boys network” or to become something else. It, like technology, is not good or bad, but I do think it models a way to affect practice.

Finally, Yukiko made a very important point about the IO\_dencies project when she said that no one person had or could have the overall view of the various flows. There could be no master narrative. This is a com- monplace observation by now, but nevertheless there remains this “drive to understand,” and it is always dif- ficult to retain a sense of this understanding as contingent and incomplete yet adequate and compelling.

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** yukiko shikata <sica@dasein-design.com>  
**Date:** Tue Mar 19, 2002 3:40am  
**Subject:** Re: nomadism and routes

Dear translocators,

Actually, the difference between center and periphery, the “asymmetry of ignorance,” is everywhere.

From a distance, it seems possible that we see the world based on geography (including latitude and longitude), and see centers and peripheries depending on that; but actually, when we get closer to them, we realize that it is not so simple. In each city (so-called global cities especially), small centers and peripheries are intermingled, and “asymmetry of ignorance” abounds.

The locations that seem peripheral are not necessarily vulnerable. Rather, those locations could be connected translocally and might reveal alternative directions, not dependent on the existing scale of center and periphery; and for this strategy, the network (in a rather broader meaning, not only the Internet) becomes the key point. It means that each area or node can strengthen the others, can show new possibilities.

One short comment on info-geography. Information has intentionality, so when we call it “information,” that automatically implies a receiver, which reveals how this information is intended for the survival of the one (or the group) in the world. I refer here to the notion of Umwelt by biologist Jakob Johann von Uexküll.

I am also impressed by what Raqs wrote in their last posting, raising the important issue of the “archaeology of translocality.” It is necessary to insert the time-aspect to see how information, people, and cultures influence one another—as dynamic exchanges of information and changing tendencies. Through the exchange of codes, or through the process of translation (and sometimes misunderstanding, misuse), those kinds of differences of understanding can bring about a new phase of emergence for a new expression of culture.

Translation of translocation, or translocation of translation. Maybe I am playing with words. It makes nonsense but sometimes might make some sense, and nonsense has at least some sense.

And translatitude.

“Sense” means meaning; also feeling (in a way connected to phenomenology). How to feel the world; how to feel the other, and oneself.

I agree with Raqs’ notion of nomadism requiring regularities and returns, repeating but always with slight differences.

Translocality is always in motion, and inserting some “otherness” every time and being renewed/reterritorialized, it is like an autopoietic process, defining the border by moving itself. There is no substantial or fixed border, only an ever-changing process that generates borders at every second of movement. Whereby the location.

Translocality derives from chaos and order, or in other words, info-nodes and dispersion, appearance and disappearance, globality and locality.

To Guna:

On the issue of the global curator, I also work as a so-called curator, but I believe that people working with/in new media think and act rather borderlessly. Artists, engineers, curators, etc. collaborate to make a discursive public space for the participants, not for one-way expressions. That’s why I always call myself a mediator (rather than a curator), which is a kind of interface for the new connective nodes.

In my understanding, latitude is based on the earth’s surface, but it is also used in the air, for airplanes (and there are national borders and time zones applied to the sky). How about applying latitudes deep into the earth? Is there a point at which the latitudes disappear, become one?

Do we have any scale for the region deep inside the earth?

Reflexive + flexible = reflexible. I coin the term reflexible for all translocators, also for the digital commons.

All the best,  
yukiko

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Steve Dietz <steve.dietz@walkerart.org>  
**Date:** Tue Mar 19, 2002 8:29pm  
**Subject:** Re: race and the translocal

Dear reflexors,

I like this term reflexible. It also reminds me of the term rescension. Raqs, perhaps you could share that definition from your cyber glossary?

The urge for new terminologies—translocal, reflexible, rescension—and the reinvestment of old terminologies—sarai, commons—must reflect a certain inadequacy of current terminology (current understanding?) in regard to what we know to be the contemporary context. I would argue that to some extent the terminologies are not important. Of what import is “new media” versus “cyber art” or “information works”? On the one hand, they are just labels. On the other hand, they can open up new territories for our thinking, to help create new old spaces such as the digital commons.

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Raqs Media Collective <raqs@sarai.net>  
**Date:** Tue Mar 19, 2002 6:36am  
**Subject:** Re: race and the translocal

Dear Translocators,

We think that Yukiko’s evocation of the network (and a network can always be a network of networks) as a conscious remapping strategy is an interesting way of destabilizing the notion of both center and margin.

A form of cultural practice that is located at the intersection of many networks finds itself placed simultaneously in different maps of the world. We think that this should be considered the general condition of the information arts and new-media practices. Being made of data, and being immaterial, and being transportable, and not being the kind of works that need to stand alone, information artworks and new-media works can take to networks and to networked exhibition contexts in the same way that archaeological artifacts gravitate toward museums of antiquity. This (the network)—the decentered profusion of maps—is the natural habitus of the new-media work. Perhaps we are witnessing for the first time a culture that is global not only in its dispersal but also in its production, as practitioners form networks to make work happen.

For instance, the possibility of our work (the Global Village Health Manual) being included in the Kingdom of Piracy show, and being accessed through its decidedly Sino-Japanese interface, places our work within a “(syn)aesthetic” map quite different from it being seen in a curatorial context that frames new-media work in terms that are, lets say, “deep” Central European, or “far” North American, or even “thick” South Asian.

This leads to shows of shows, networked iterations of works in which flexible and fluid curatorial contexts are themselves up for consideration along with the works they present. Thus, the figure of the global curator, which Guna evoked earlier, becomes the norm rather than the exception.

What this means is that no matter where you place your work, it will be read differently depending on the context and on the works that are its neighbors. That's obvious, and not very profound, but let's complicate this picture a bit. Let's speak of neighbors both in spatial and temporal terms. What is the neighborhood of a work?

This questions a canonical understanding of what one's territory is, where one's neighborhood lies, and which cultural materials one can be intimately self-reflective and playful with. We think that it is high time that those of us in the so-called non-West (which latitude is that?) lay claim to all that is called Western, just as naturally as we lay claim to more proximate forms of cultural material. Because what may be close in spatial terms may be far away temporally, and there may be many permutations of this tension between space and time in between. This means that aspects of what is called Indian Art by art historians may be quite far away from us in time, even if it is close to us in space. And of course the larger corpus of what is called Western art is far away both in time and in space. This means that one can begin to think of one's location and neighborhood in quite unexpected ways.

Of course, another consequence of the "asymmetry of ignorance" is that even if a non-Western practitioner were to be reflective of his/her own antecedents, a Western viewer, who takes his/her own vantage point as universal, without recognizing that Euro-American culture or Euro-American modernity is no more and no less provincial than any other spatial configuration of culture and of modernity, may not even recognize that which the practitioner is being reflective about.

What then is the strategy that (for the purpose of argument) a non-Western practitioner can adopt?

To enter and create networks that do not ask (as do immigration officers or bouncers in certain discotheques) about one's cultural antecedents.

To refuse to answer any question in terms of yes or no when it comes to whether one does or does not belong to the West or the East. One can say that one belongs to above or below (?) rather than to East or West.

**To make work that belongs to networks and that is uncomfortable with standing alone.**

#### Rescension

A re-telling, a word taken to signify the simultaneous existence of different versions of a narrative within oral, and from now onwards, digital cultures. Thus one can speak of a "southern" or a "northern" rescension of a myth, or of a "female" or "male" rescension of a story, or the possibility (to begin with) of Delhi/Berlin/Tehran rescensions of a digital work. The concept of rescension is contraindicative of the notion of hierarchy. A rescension cannot be an improvement, nor can it connote a diminishing of value. A rescension is that version which does not act as a replacement for any other configuration of its constitutive materials. The existence of multiple rescensions is a guarantor of an idea or a work's ubiquity. This ensures that the constellation of narrative, signs, and images that a work embodies is present, and waiting for iteration, at more than one site at any given time. Rescensions are portable and are carried within orbiting kernels within a space. Rescensions, taken together, constitute ensembles that may form an interconnected web of ideas, images, and signs.

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Steve Dietz <steve.dietz@walkerart.org>

**Date:** Tue Mar 19, 2002 8:05pm

**Subject:** Re: race and the translocal

"To make work that belongs to networks and that is uncomfortable with standing alone."

This is a fine phrase, and it seems to lead, as Raqs suggest in regard to the global curator, to the notion of "shows of shows, networked iterations of works in which flexible and fluid curatorial contexts are themselves up for consideration along with the works they present."



How, practically, does one create curatorial contexts that are themselves up for consideration? For instance, I'm a little confused by the statement "information artworks and new-media works can take to networks and to networked exhibition contexts in the same way that archaeological artifacts gravitate toward museums of antiquity."

One of the critiques of the museum is precisely the case of the Elgin Marbles, which "gravitated" from their incorporation in a temple of worship to a museum of antiquity for a different kind of veneration, a moment, as Paul Valéry described it, when art and sculpture lost their mother, architecture.

The idea that information artworks can "take to networks" seems to me absolutely correct, but my question is whether there is a fruitful relation between the network and the museum that is not, merely, the expression of an asymmetry of power or of the museum as mausoleum, sav(or)ing things by killing them. How to exhibit translocally, where the context is both the global network and the physical setting?

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Raqs Media Collective <raqs@sarai.net>  
**Date:** Wed Mar 20, 2002 4:09am  
**Subject:** on networks and museums

There was a certain deliberation with which we put the network and the museum close to each other in the same sentence, and we are glad that Steve immediately zeroed in on it.

It was wicked :) on our part to slide these two spaces that seem so far apart from each other into a space in thought where they seem close, but the intention was to provoke a reflection on conceptuality, and on what belongs where.

Of course, we are not arguing that new-media networks, as exhibition contexts, are analogous to archaeological galleries in museums. The museum, as Steve pointed out, could be a dead space, and the network is, by definition, alive.

But there is a point about the loss of context that we want to stress: whereas the artifact in a museum loses context when it "gravitates" toward or is pulled into a museum, the data object has little or no context to lose. The immateriality of the data object does suggest the possibility of a certain aloofness from immediate cultural geographies and contexts—"above or below" rather than east or west of given latitudes.

If anything, a data object has much to gain by being positioned in an interlocked way and by being embedded in or at least coincident with other data objects. Contextlessness is the context of the data object.

There can be two ways of thinking about belonging: one is to say "I belong to this culture," and the other is to say "these cultures belong to me." In the second sense, one is privileging a notion of taking things, using them, abandoning them, fashioning other things with them, while one is on the move; our belongings then can be said to travel with us as we course through culture. This need not be understood in a foraging or acquisitive sense alone; it can be seen in terms of circulation and the sharing of belongings that never stick to their momentary custodians but rather travel among their custodians in the same way that their custodians travel through the network. We are speaking of agile practices, mobile curators, and floating works, which construct complex matrices of belonging and claims on one another, none of which are based on the principles of mutual exclusivity. This presupposes an art circuit that has something in common with the pattern of conversation and give-and-take that might otherwise be the defining feature of an affinity group. This is a form of practice that presupposes the existence of a network, and thus means that the building of the network is as much a part of the practice as the fashioning of the objects that inhabit it. Because the way the objects are positioned and oriented has everything to do with the architecture of the network—of the living as opposed to the dead collection.

\* \* \* \* \*

**TRANSLOCATIONS**

From: Gunalan Nadarajan <gunalan@lasallesia.edu.sg>  
Date: Thu Mar 21, 2002 9:22pm  
Subject: Re: on networks and museums

Dear Raqs and others,

I find the idea of the data object's immateriality and contextlessness a little problematic. The fact that something circulates within a network does not mean that it is free from context. It may simply mean that the contexts are shifting, as are the meanings associated with them. I see interesting parallels between the shifting contexts of the data object and Derrida's notion of difference.

As for Raqs' desire for "agile practices, mobile curators, and floating works, which construct complex matrices of belonging and claims on one another, none of which are based on the principles of mutual exclusivity"... I remain hopeful.