



GLOBAL CONTEMPORARY ART AND THE AMERICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Literature Review

Since 1895, when the first ever Biennale di Venezia opened its gates, up to today, where hundreds of recurring international art exhibitions scatter the world, a lot of writing and rhetoric has come out about the biennial. From shifting centricities to neoliberal views and star curators to competing countries, it's no wonder the structure, ideals and perceptions of these recurring international art exhibitions have changed over time.

This literature review will take an in depth look at a collection of texts gathered to compare the conceptualization of the "global" of three distinct time periods: postwar era, the 1980s, and the last decade or so, to understand the perception of the global contemporary from a historical perspective. Important actors, themes and developments found in the various texts will be pulled out and discussed. This discussion and comparison will explain the biennial's development over time and the important players and opinions that helped to shape the history. The overall goal of this literature review will be to create a framework of the global to better view the AP curriculum as a product of a global biennial history.

My literature review will take a chronological approach and look at a number of important texts on biennials to see how ideas about the global expanded over time. To start, a small selection of texts describing biennials from the post-war era will be considered to see how the global was viewed post WWII. This is when the São Paulo Biennial came on to the scene, in 1951, and the structure of the biennial began to expand outside of Europe. Next the review will take a look at a number of critical essays from 1975-1995 when the biennial's period of proliferation took place. Finally, a larger look at the present-day perception of the global will be considered. An influx of texts and critical essays about biennials and global contemporary art have flooded the academic world in the last decade or two, so this will be the largest and most extensive portion of the literature review.

Post-War

Critical writing on biennials from the post-war era is limited and significant texts do not begin to emerge until about the 1960s, which is problematic when performing a chronological literature review such as this. One of the more important collections of essays on biennials, due to its comprehensive range of essays, *The Biennial Reader: An Anthology on Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art*, from 2010, demonstrates this lack of literature, as it has only included one important text from the post-war era, which is “The Biennial in 1968” by Lawrence Alloway which discusses the post-war biennial’s structure, function and perception in 1968. This is one of the main sources that will be drawn on in the review.

The available texts demonstrate that the majority of authors either writing about or critiquing the biennial structure at the time, with a focus on the Venice Biennial, were students and artists who felt that the institution was too competition-based and focused on bourgeoisie capitalist national identity rather than an international perspective.¹ Even the São Paulo Biennial, the first in Latin America following the Venice structure, reinforced these bourgeoisie ideals and was critiqued in writing for not being open to the public or international enough.² For these writers, access for all also meant international access for all. Umbro Appollonio, the Curator of the Historical Archives of Contemporary Art, agreed with these critiques and saw opportunity for change and stated the biennial had potential for a truly international format, with a reconsideration of the system of prizes, since the foundation is built from international art.³ This was important step in the development of the global because it critiqued the competition format of the institution.

¹ Lawrence Alloway, “The Biennial in 1968” in *The Biennial Reader*, ed. by Elena Filipovic, Marieke Van Hal, Solveig Øvstebø, (Bergen, Norway: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010) 146-147.

² Alloway, “The Biennial,” 138.

³ Alloway, “The Biennial,” 144.

A shift from nation-based competition to international identity is documented in these texts, especially with their suggestions for change and acknowledgment of protests. The languages in the essays, like “The Biennial in 1968,” is interesting as the term “global” was never implemented, instead they used the term “international,” which is less all encompassing. The vocabulary word “global” had not yet come into play at this point and will not for a while, as will be seen in the next section. Writers, students and artists were just beginning to push for a less Eurocentric biennial that focused on more international, and less of what they considered to be bourgeoisie, issues.

Period of Proliferation

The mid 1970s to early 1990s saw a boom of biennials as they began to pop up all over the world, both in and outside of Europe. Along with this explosion of biennials came more writing and text about them, including writing by non-European authors. There were more essays on how to organize a biennial, like one with just that title, “Organizing a Biennial,” by Antonio Rodriguez from 1978. Rodriguez reflects on organizing the first Ibero-American Painting Biennial in Mexico and the shift of focus from displaying an individual country’s magnificence in biennials to a concentration on world problems.⁴ Vocabulary like “world” or “universal” is utilized in that text, along with the 1993 “Arrivederci Venice: Third World Biennials” by Thomas McEvilley and the 1978 “A Humanistic Biennial” by Berta Taracena. Such vocabulary began to be used more frequently by authors as a stronger focus on world problems comes out. The demand for diversity of artists and countries also increases in these writings as more recurring international exhibitions formed all over the world. Jorge Glusberg, an Argentinian video artist, in his 1977 “Report on the Exhibition of the Group of Thirteen of CAYC, Argentina,

⁴ Antonio Rodriguez, “Organizing a Biennial,” *Artes de México*, no. 193 (1978): 99, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24324575>.

at the XIVTH São Paulo International Biennial, 1977” where he praises the São Paulo Biennial because, “for the first time in the Biennial’s 27 year history, the ‘Itamaraty’ Prize was awarded to a Latin American country,”⁵ which demonstrates how these writings and critiques slowly began to create change in the biennials and then went on to acknowledge that change. Diversity is a key issue that is added into the perception of the global at this time, as are regional connections. Glusberg also discusses how new regional connections will be made through a regionally focused Latin American biennial that came out of the national Brazilian biennial.⁶ This shows the shift, yet again, from post-war to the period of proliferation and how the global is slowly changing over time.

This aspect of diversity in biennials and in the global is emphasized even further 15 years later in McEvelley’s “Arrivederci Venice: The Third World Biennials.” It is one of the more illuminating texts from this period since it marks the transition from the end of the period of proliferation to the more recent scholarship on the matter. In it the author discusses people’s perception of these new “third world” biennials that have popped up and the success they have had throwing off their colonial pasts and focusing more on art of the periphery rather than art of Europe.⁷ However, the west is still a central actor and is critiqued as such in the essay along with “Organizing a Biennial.”

Global is a term that is still missing from the surveyed texts, but a sense of what that meant during the period of proliferation still comes out. There is an emphasis on diversity both geographically and artistically. A shift away from Eurocentric art, artists and writers appears in

⁵ Jorge Glusberg, “Report on the Exhibition of the Group of Thirteen of CAYC, Argentina, at the XIVTH São Paulo International Biennial, 1977,” *Leonardo* 11, no. 2 (1978): 124, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1574011>.

⁶ Glusberg, “Report,” 124.

⁷ Thomas McEvelley, “Arrivederci Venice: The Third World Biennials,” *Artforum International* 32, no. 3 (1993): 114, Academic OneFile, <http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.lib.utah.edu/apps/doc/A14875189/AONE?u=marriottlibrary&sid=AONE&xid=803c1e9e>.

these texts. Also, a humanitarian focus on world problems all over the world becomes a recurring issue in these texts and critiques.

The Last Decade

The last decade or so has seen a huge increase in writing about biennials and global contemporary art. Many have been historical, reflecting back on eras like the period of proliferation. Others critique biennials for what they are now. The authors of these texts range from curators to artists, critics to art historians. The conversation has expanded to include more actors than ever before and as such, this portion of the review will be the largest with eight texts to survey to better understand the term global today.

The vocabulary word “global” is, finally, now used prominently here by all eight texts. Many have a different take on what that term does or should mean, but each use it in reference to the contemporary art world and the biennials of today.

“New World Order” from 2004 by Julian Stallabrass is a seminal text that includes a variety of case studies of different biennials, artists, artworks and audience reception to show that the core incentive of the art world is to create and promote western neo-liberal propaganda.⁸ Stallabrass determines that there is an over visibility of “third world” which normalizes and commodifies diversity,⁹ which is interesting seeing as many texts from the period of proliferation demanded and encouraged this diversity. Nine years later, Anthony Gardner and Charles Green in their 2013 essay, “Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global” productively counteract Stallabrass’ claim. From a southern perspective, they conclude that biennials can be beneficial for these “third worlds” or what they prefer to call “the global south” because they transform

⁸ Julian Stallabrass, “New World Order,” in *Art Incorporated : The Story of Contemporary Art*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 72.

⁹ Stallabrass, “New World,” 59.

colonial-era format to a format of regionalism and also boost economies.¹⁰ Their argument, unlike Stallabrass', looks at a wider range of perspectives and considers the value biennials can have outside of the west.

Okwui Enwezor, a prominent Nigerian curator and actor in the global art world, as can be seen in his many mentions in biennial texts such as Stallabrass', argues in his 2009 "Questionnaire on 'The Contemporary'" that global contemporary art should be viewed as localized, and not global which will, in his eyes, break up the center and periphery dynamics in the art world.¹¹ This interesting perception of the global is not echoed in other prominent essays or texts in this review, in fact a quite opposite opinion is stated by Thierry de Duve's earlier 2007 text, "The Glocal and the Singuniversal: Reflections on Art and Culture in the Global World." Unlike Enwezor, Duve thinks contemporary art should stem from the universal, not local or culturally specific areas.¹²

Despite this though, a similar point can be drawn out between Enwezor and Stallabrass. Both of their essays develop the perception that this notion of a global art world is detrimental to the perceived peripheries and should be rethought. This is echoed in the data collected in 2009 by Chin-Tao Wu in "Biennials without Borders?" that shows how these hierarchies are very much apparent and are not going away any time soon in this global art world.¹³ Wu's data also does a good job of supporting the claims made in Jeannine Tang's 2007 essay, "Of Biennials and Biennialists: Venice, Documenta, Münster" as Tang also argues biennials reinforce the global

¹⁰ Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, "Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global," *Third Text* 27, no. 4 (July 2013): 454. *Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCOhost <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2013.810892>.

¹¹ Okwui Enwezor, "Questionnaire on 'The Contemporary'," *October*, 130 (2009): 40. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40368571>.

¹² Thierry de Duve, "The Glocal and the Singuniversal: Reflections on Art and Culture in the Global World," *Third Text* 21, no. 6 (November 2007): 688. *Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCOhost. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528820701761095>.

¹³ Wu, Chin-Tao. "Biennials Without Borders?." *Tate Papers* no. 12 (September 2009): *Art Full Text (H.W. Wilson)*, EBSCOhost.

hierarchies of the North and South, center and periphery, but this time through historically documenting their values and ideologies and legitimizes their exhibitions before they begin.¹⁴ Caroline A. Jones' 2010 "Biennial Culture: A Longer History" is another one of the texts today that looks back on the history of and development of the biennial overtime. She takes out connections their shared structures of tourism and urban development, which are positives results of these global biennials, which, "Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global" also champions.

Jacoba Urist's 2016 article "Rewriting Art History" is the final text in this review. It discusses how the College Board's restructuring of the AP Art History exam will hopefully help mitigate the cultural, racial and gendered biases of the art world and its canon, especially in the new Global Contemporary Art section.¹⁵ It is apparent from the survey of the previous texts that there are still intense cultural biases as hierarchies of the periphery are reinforced through a variety of techniques. Here the global is an attempt to be more encompassing, but overall it continues to create divisions and impose hierarchical structures.

Overall, the last decade is where the term global comes out in writing most explicitly. As universal themes are championed in art and biennials of the south have been well established all over the world, it provides opportunities for growth and regional connections. The global is not an equalizer though. Hierarchies remain and are enforced through the institutional system of the biennial.

To conclude, these three distinct time periods in biennial history have produced valuable literature that documents the progression of the "global." The post-war era used different

¹⁴ Jeannine Tang, "Of Biennials and Biennialists: Venice, Documenta, Münster," *Theory Culture and Society* 24, no. 7-8 (December 2007): 258-259, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276407084709>.

¹⁵ Jacoba Urist, "Rewriting Art History," *The Atlantic*, February 1, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/02/rewriting-art-history/435426/>.

wording which displays the less encompassing nature of their own “global.” The period of proliferation saw the global as a chance for more diversity and less hierarchical structure. The last decade saw a variety of opinions on what global means today, but overall global comes with inherent bias and a hierarchy that lives on, despite institutional critique. Each era has helped transform the term global into what it is today and it will not stop shifting. It will continue to evolve as more writing comes out, different actors emerge, and new biennials occur.

Global Contemporary Art and the American Education System

Intro

Global Contemporary Art (GCA) is an emerging art exhibition category that has risen to prominence in the art world over the past few decades. With this increase in GCA production there has been a surge of writing and rhetoric about the topic growing right along with it. This academic work is filled with critique and analysis along with strong anecdotal claims about the category without a lot of hard evidence to back it up. Over the past year, as a part of a larger research project under Dr. Sarah Hollenberg, I have taken a data-driven approach to the GCA category to determine what is truly considered “global contemporary” beyond the academic anecdotal rhetoric.

The research has been broken down into three distinct sections: an analysis of the newly instated Global Contemporary section in the Advanced Placement (AP) Art History Curriculum in American high schools, the collection of data on prominent international exhibitions and biennials, and finally, a review of existing literature on the GCA category in relation to the information found in the first two sections of research.

This thesis, however, will focus on the new AP Art History Global Contemporary category. By discussing GCA’s history and comparing the data collected to the AP course

material, it will show how the American education system is not accurately portraying the global contemporary art world today and is perpetuating harmful biases and hierarchies. My research shows that the course has indeed made steps in the right direction but maintains a western-centric and tokenized view of the current global contemporary art world. If the United States wants to produce truly global citizens, as is claimed Jacob Urist's 2016 article "Rewriting Art History", then they need to reevaluate their course materials and approach to this topic.

History

The Global Contemporary section is a new edition to the AP Art History curriculum and is therefore presumably a product of GCA's history. So, let us begin by tracking the history of the "global" in relation to the art world to better understand and define the term so that we may better critique the AP curriculum. To start, we begin with the history of biennials, which are main actors in the emergence of GCA. These international art exhibitions emerged in 1895 with the opening of the first Biennale di Venezia or the Venice Biennial. Today there are now hundreds of recurring international art exhibitions scattering the world. A lot of writing and rhetoric has come out about the biennial as its values have changed over time. From shifting centricities to neoliberal views and star curators to competing countries, it is no wonder the structure, ideals and perceptions of the global have transformed.

The conceptualization of the "global" can be broken down into three distinct time periods: postwar era, the 1980s, and the last two decades. In the post-war era people began to critique the biennial structure, with a focus on the Venice Biennial. This is because of its competition-based format that pitted countries against one another. Think of it as the Olympics of art. Students and artists alike felt that this format focused on bourgeois capitalist national

identity rather than an international perspective, so they began to protest and write critiques.¹⁶

Even the São Paulo Biennial, the first in Latin America following the Venice structure, reinforced these bourgeois ideals and was critiqued in writing for not being open to the public or international enough.¹⁷ For these writers, access for all also meant international access for all.

Umbro Apollonio, the Curator of the Historical Archives of Contemporary Art for the Venice Biennial from 1949 to 1972, agreed with these critiques and saw opportunity for change. He stated the biennial had potential for a truly international format, with a reconsideration of the system of prizes, since the foundation is built from international art.¹⁸ This was an important step in the development of the global because it critiqued the nationalistic competition format of both the Venice and São Paulo Biennials and pushed for a more inclusive structure.

A shift from nation-based competition to a focus on international identity is prominent in the post-war period. The language in well-known essays at the time, like “The Biennial in 1968,” is interesting as the term “global” was never implemented, instead they used the term “international,” which is less all encompassing. The term international is tied to the emergence of international modernism. The vocabulary word “global” had not yet come into play at this point and would not for a while.

The Period of Proliferation is next and spanned the mid 1970s to early 1990s. The era saw a boom of biennials as they began to pop up all over the world, both in and outside of Europe. Along with this explosion of biennials came more writing and text about them, including writing by non-European authors. There was a shift in focus from displaying an individual country’s magnificence in biennials to a concentration on world problems.¹⁹ Vocabulary like

¹⁶ Lawrence Alloway, “The Biennial in 1968” in *The Biennial Reader*, ed. by Elena Filipovic, Marieke Van Hal, Solveig Øvstebø, (Bergen, Norway: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010) 146-147.

¹⁷ Alloway, “The Biennial,” 138.

¹⁸ Alloway, “The Biennial,” 144.

¹⁹ Antonio Rodriguez, “Organizing a Biennial,” *Artes de México*, no. 193 (1978): 99, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24324575>.

“world” or “universal” is utilized more in texts, like those accompanying the 1993 “Arrivederci Venice: Third World Biennials” by Thomas McEvilley and the 1978 “A Humanistic Biennial” by Berta Taracena. Such vocabulary began to be used more frequently by authors as a stronger focus on world problems and new “global” identities developed.

The demand for diversity of artists and countries also increased in this era as more recurring international exhibitions formed all over the world. Jorge Glusberg, an Argentinian video artist, in his 1977 “Report on the Exhibition of the Group of Thirteen of CAYC, Argentina, at the XIVTH São Paulo International Biennial, 1977” praises the São Paulo Biennial because, “for the first time in the Biennial’s 27-year history, the ‘Itamaraty’ Prize was awarded to a Latin American country,”²⁰ showing that slow change was indeed happening. Diversity is a key issue for the global at this time, as are regional connections. The term “global,” however, is still missing in the period of proliferation, but a sense of what it meant was emerging, even if the vocabulary is not used explicitly. There is an emphasis on diversity both geographically and artistically. A shift away from Eurocentric art, artists and writers and towards a humanitarian focus on world problems.

The last few decades are where the term global comes into play most explicitly. Universal themes begin to be championed at biennials as are regional connections rather than solely looking towards the west for guidance. The term “global” is still not an equalizer though despite these steps forward. Hierarchies remain and are enforced through the institutional biennial system and writing.

The post-war era used different wording which displays the less encompassing nature of their own “global.” The period of proliferation saw the global as a chance for more diversity and

²⁰Jorge Glusberg, “Report on the Exhibition of the Group of Thirteen of CAYC, Argentina, at the XIVTH São Paulo International Biennial, 1977,” *Leonardo* 11, no. 2 (1978): 124, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1574011>.

less hierarchical structure. The last decade saw a variety of opinions on what global means today, but overall global comes with inherent bias and a hierarchy that lives on, despite institutional critique. Each era has helped transform the term global into what it is today and it will not stop shifting. It will continue to evolve as more writing comes out, different actors emerge, and new biennials occur. This history is important when understanding the Global Contemporary section in the AP Art History curriculum because it is a product of this history and cannot be separated from it. Understanding what the global means today and the issues surrounding the institution of the biennial are vital to properly evaluate the AP curriculum.

The AP course description claims that “through investigation of diverse artistic traditions of cultures from prehistory to the present, the course fosters in-depth and holistic understanding of the history of art from a global perspective”²¹ which shows that a focus of the curriculum is to educate students on the history of art from a more all-encompassing global perspective rather than the western perspective that has prevailed for decades. Yet, this exam fails to properly do this. Jacob Urist’s 2016 article “Rewriting Art History” discusses how the College Board’s restructuring of the AP Art History exam will hopefully mitigate the cultural, racial and gendered biases of the art world and its canon, especially in the new Global Contemporary Art section.²² This is an optimistic viewpoint, despite the fact that the AP curriculum could still do so much more. The global section in the AP curriculum is an attempt to be more inclusive, but overall it continues to sustain divisions and impose hierarchical structures.

²¹ College Board, “AP Art History Course and Exam Description,” [www.collegeboard.org](https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-art-history-course-and-exam-description.pdf), last modified August 2015, <https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-art-history-course-and-exam-description.pdf>.

²² Urist, “Rewriting Art History,” *The Atlantic*.

Data Collected

The next section of this thesis will focus on the data from biennials. Data was collected from Documenta 14, held in 2017, to compare to data collected on the 27 AP artists from the Global Contemporary section to see how the AP curriculum compares to what is actually happening in the art world today, not what is being claimed by academics. Documenta 14 was chosen to be examined because it is one of the more prominent and revered recurring art exhibitions in the world. Documenta began in 1955 in Kassel, Germany, trailing along right after the Bienal de São Paulo which was first instigated in 1951. Founded by Arnold Bolde, a German painter and professor, the exhibition's original purpose was to get Germany reconnected with the rest of the world after WWII while simultaneously putting it in dialogue with the international art community by presenting a survey of 20th century art.²³ Happening every five years and lasting for 100 days, this recurring exhibition is a great sample of what is currently happening in the art world today. In the summer of 2017 in its 14th rendition, Documenta added a second location in Athens Greece in addition to Kassel, Germany. By looking at Documenta 14's data we will create a larger picture of the global contemporary art scene and be able to critique the AP data in comparison.

Data: Birthplace

To begin, this section of the thesis will first look at the birthplaces and nationalities of the 27 selected AP artists, which comprise 11% of the AP curriculum,²⁴ and will then compare that data to Documenta 14's artists' birthplaces and nationalities. The birthplaces of the AP artists are fairly varied, but despite this a large majority do hail from the United States with a total of 8 American artists. This is not to say that American artists cannot be global, but, when a large

²³ Documenta 14, ed., "About," www.documenta.de, last modified 2017, https://www.documenta.de/en/about#16_documenta_ggmbh.

²⁴ College Board, "AP Art History," www.collegeboard.org.

majority of the artists selected were born in the United States it does not allow for a diverse array of artists. The United States is a dominant Western country, so by selecting so many people from this particular place it promotes a western-centric point of view, which is what GCA claims it is fighting against today. As this is an exam written by and for people in the U.S., it makes sense that a majority of artists would be from there. But it then brings up a few questions. Is the category truly global if nearly one third of the artists are American? What kind of hierarchies are being enforced despite the course update? How does the AP course address these hierarchies? Or does it even? According Urist the new curriculum does just that.²⁵ However, the irony in his claim is quite apparent. There are zero artists from Mexico, Central America, South Asia and South East Asia. Plus, in addition to one third of artists being from the U.S., another one fourth of AP artists are also from Western countries. While it is difficult to condense all Global Contemporary Art and Artists into a single section on the AP exam, one would assume that the United States and Western countries would not be the focus. Yet, this exam is indeed a product of its history and as stated earlier these hierarchies and biases continue on today. According to College Board, the AP exams are written by a committee of college faculty and well qualified AP teachers.²⁶ While looking at the map and stats below, it does appear the AP course writers did a decent job of selecting artists from different regions of the world as most of the pins are widely spread out. When compared to Documenta 14 the results are indeed similar, except in the case of the United States.

²⁵ Urist, "Rewriting Art History," *The Atlantic*.

²⁶ College Board, "AP Art History," www.collegeboard.org.

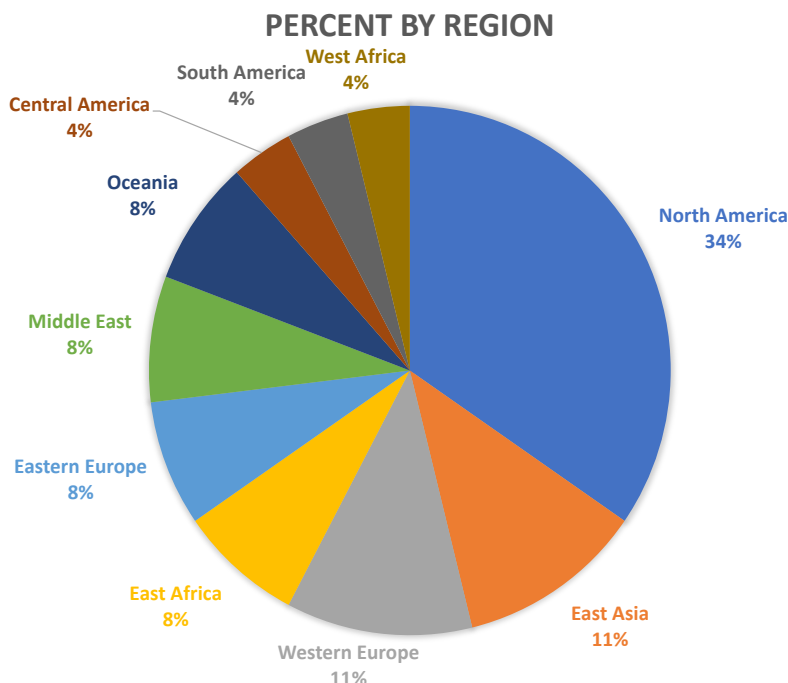


AP Artist Birthplaces

Number of Artists By Country

- **USA: 8**
- **South Korea: 2**
- **China: 2**
- France: 1
- Bulgaria: 1
- Poland: 1
- Australia: 1
- Iran: 1
- Puerto Rico: 1
- New Zealand: 1
- Canada: 1
- Japan: 1
- Germany: 1
- UK: 1
- Ghana: 1
- Ethiopia: 1
- Kenya: 1
- Colombia: 1
- Iraq: 1

AP Artists Broken Down By Region

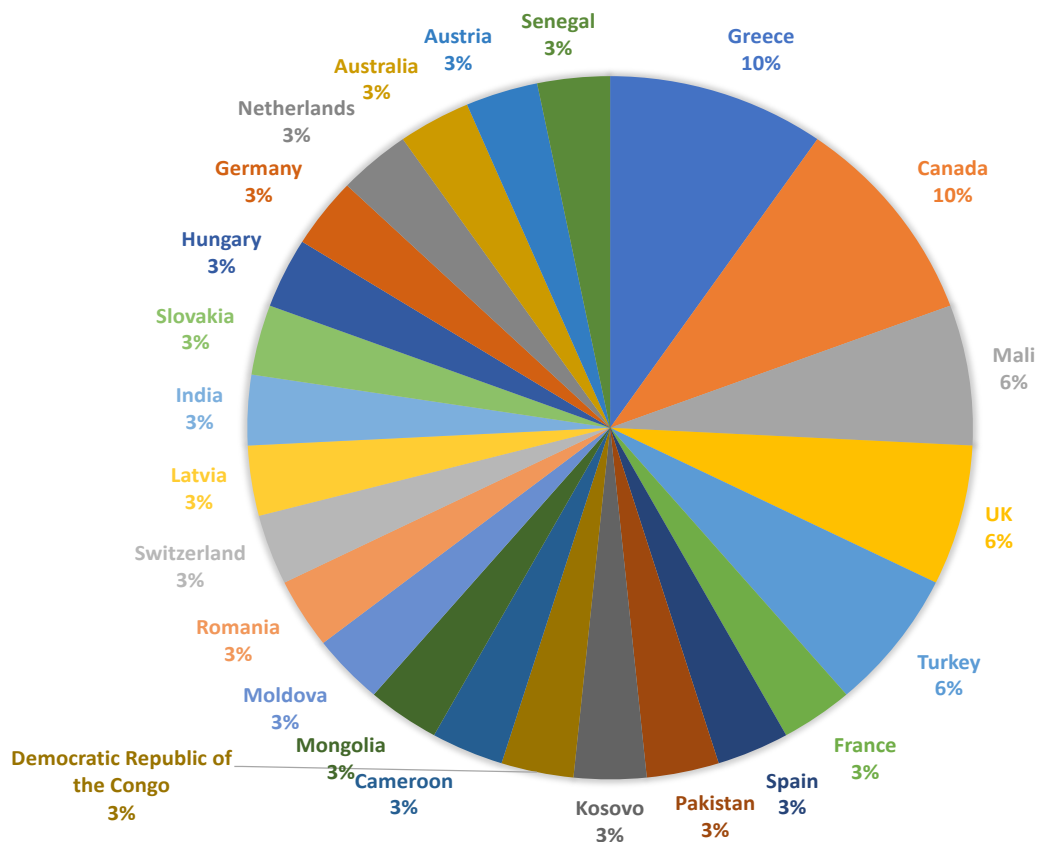


There are zero participants in Documenta 14 that were actually born in the United States, even though Documenta 14 has a much larger pool of participants compared to the AP curriculum.²⁷ While comparing nationalities and birthplaces of AP artists to Documenta 14, one will see a difference in variety with a much smaller emphasis on Americans, as previously stated, but still a large European focus. There is an overabundance of artists from Greece, which is due to the fact that Documenta 14 was held in both Athens and Kassel. A larger number were also from Canada. But there is a much larger array of nationalities included in Documenta 14 compared to the AP curriculum.

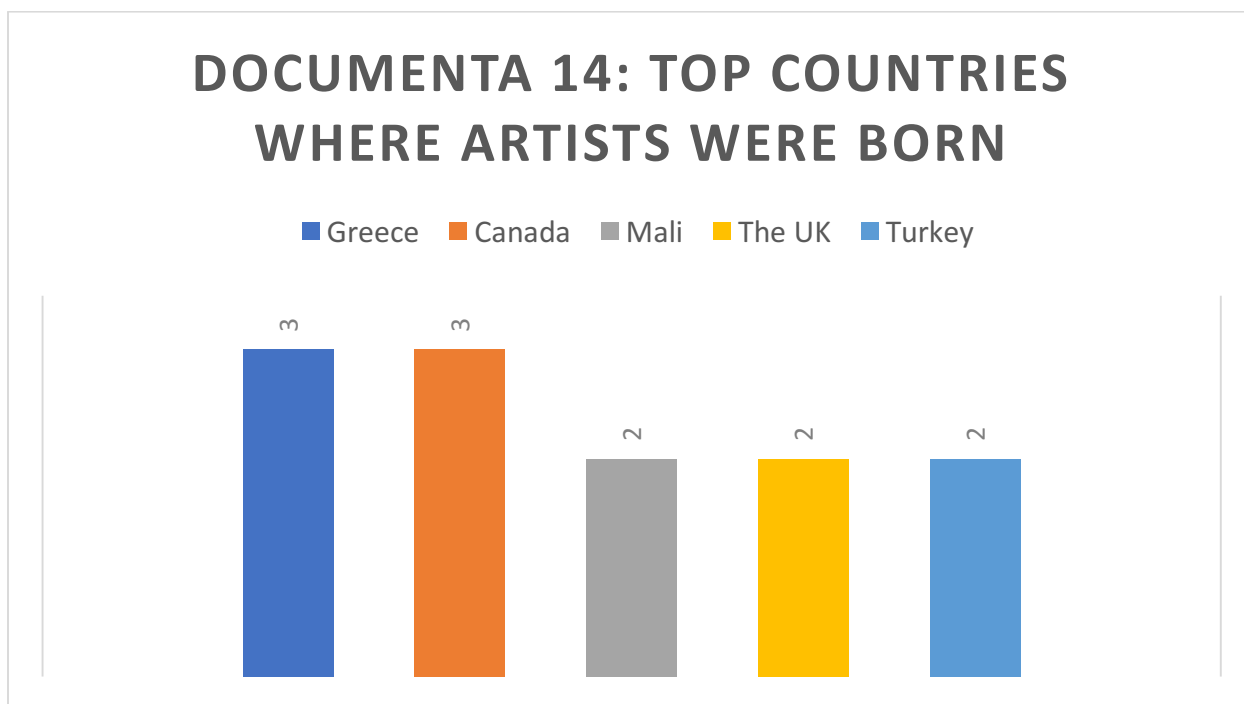
²⁷ It should be noted here that the artists analyzed from Documenta had to have been in at least one other major biennial to be included in the data. This is because it provides a better understanding of what participants are actively involved in the global art scene and therefore better reflects the reality of the category.



DOCUMENTA 14: ARTISTS' BIRTHPLACE BY COUNTRY



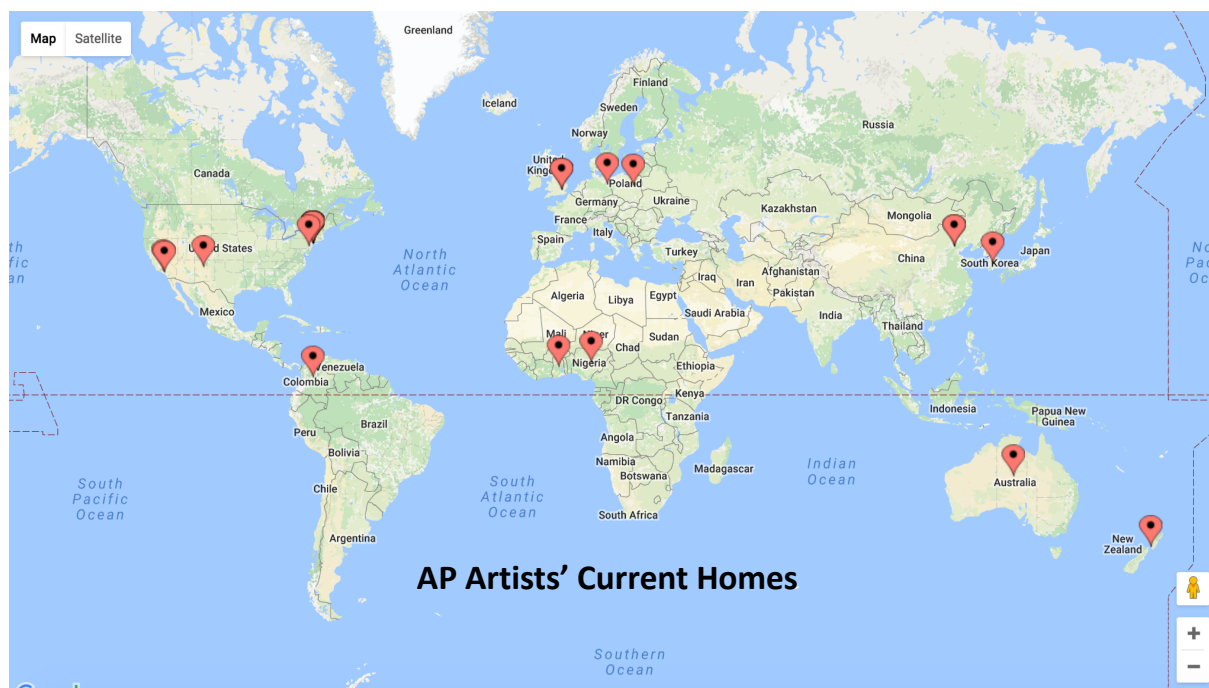
There is only one artist selected from Latin America, just like the AP exam, which shows that that is a region not heavily focused on always in these exhibitions. Overall, the majority of artists from the AP global contemporary art curriculum were born in the United States, unlike Documenta 14 where none of them were. Obviously, the AP course material here poorly reflects the realities of the current global contemporary art world and aids in the continuation of a western-centric point of view, which is not beneficial to AP art history students, especially if one of the AP exam's goals is to educate these high schoolers from a global perspective.



Data: Current Homes

After looking at the artists' birthplaces, the next step was to look at their current homes to see if they had moved or stayed in the same location. This is important because when looking at artists they may be of a certain nationality but if they all live and practice art in the same place it definitely has an effect on their work. If everyone is surrounded by the same culture how are they able to create a diverse array of work? If everyone lives in the same place, is the art they are all creating actually global? It is also telling because if they all live in a particular country then there is a chance that curators or the AP exam writers have better access to particular work which is why those artists are being more heavily represented in shows the AP curriculum.

The data collected on AP artists' current homes is interesting because it varies a lot from their birthplaces. Looking at it visually in the form of maps it is obvious that the birthplaces of artists is much more spread out compared to their current homes.



The top cities that AP artists live in currently are as follows: 46.4% in New York City, 7.1% in Beijing and 7.1% in London. When broken down by country, the US is in the lead with 64.2% of AP artists. It is obvious that the AP course writers have a bias here and it also shows that these are probably the artists they have the best access to when seeing shows or exhibitions.

This is echoed in the data too since the top four cities to find AP works are New York City, London, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles. Along with this, 14 of the 26 works are housed in the United States. That's more than half of the AP works in the GCA section.

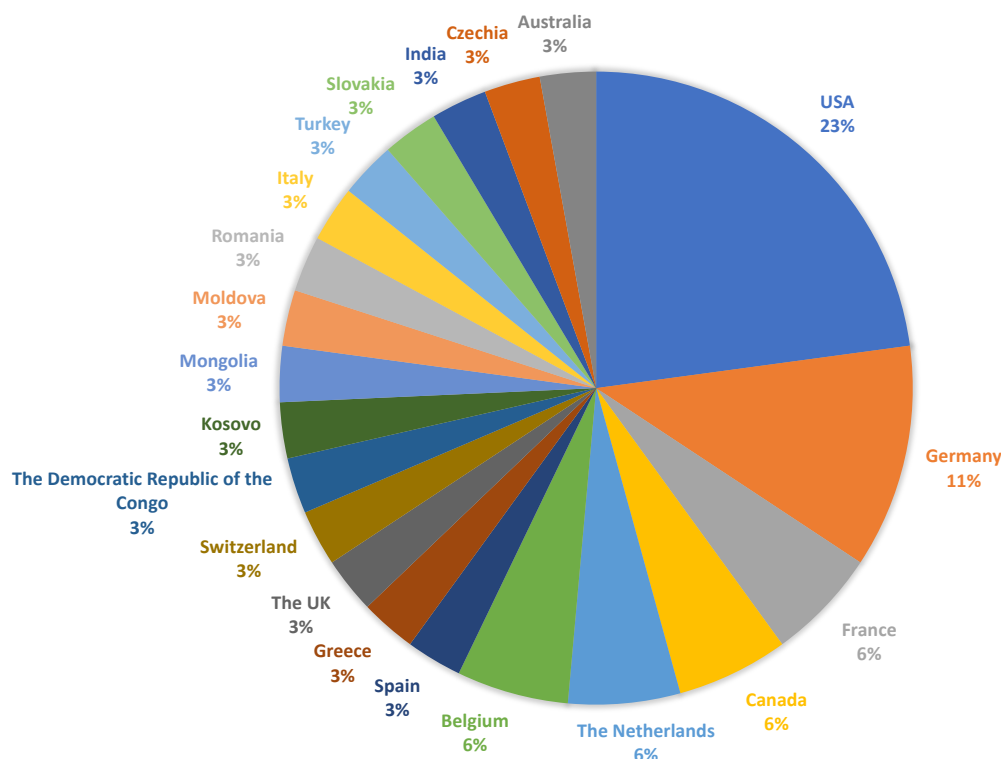
Compared to the GC artists, Documenta 14's artists' current homes much more diverse. Documenta 14 has over 25 different countries represented while the AP exam only has 11. It is true though that Documenta 14's largest number of artists included in the recurring exhibition currently live in the United States, but it is only 23% compared to AP's 64.2%.





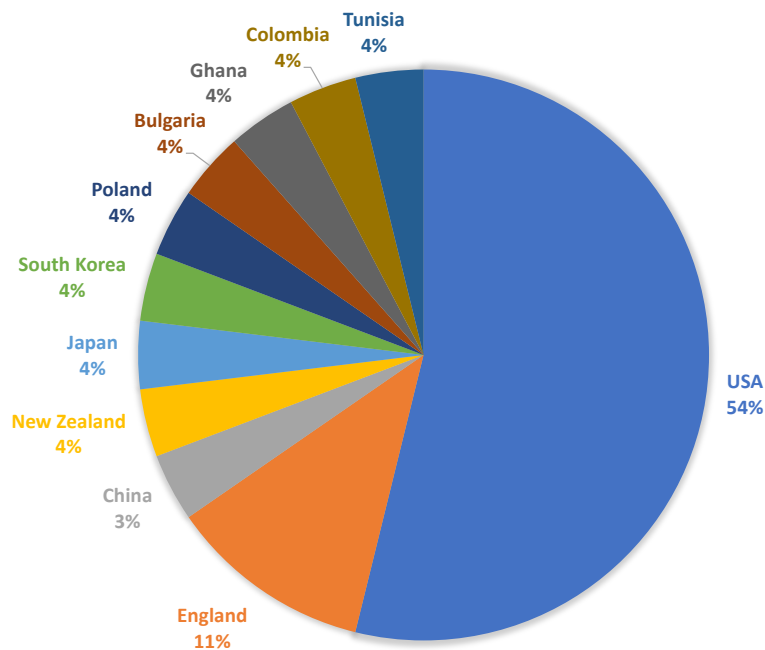
Hierarchies where western art is prioritized are still apparent in Documenta 14, but not as heavily as seen in the AP curriculum. The top two cities to find artists from Documenta 14 are Berlin and New York City, so the AP exam does partially reflect the current global art world by including a number of artists living in New York City. It should be noted, however, that there is a huge rise in artists that live in Berlin and Beijing. This type of claim that big artists only live in New York City, which is also a claim found in academic text and rhetoric, perpetuates a long-held idea that all important artists right now must live in an art mecca like New York City. This is harmful to Global Contemporary Art as a category because so many artists actually do not live in New York City, as shown by Documenta 14.

DOCUMENTA 14: ARTISTS' CURRENT HOMES BY COUNTRY

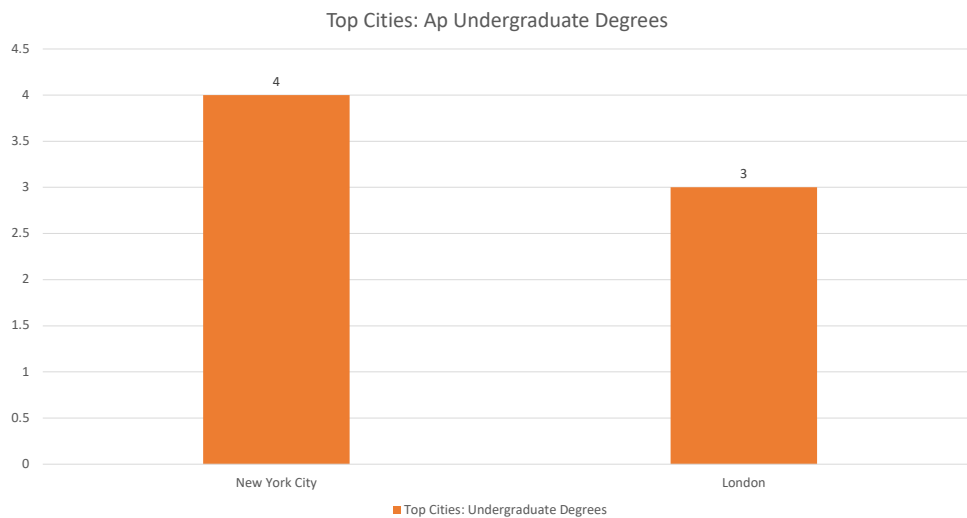
**Data: Level of Education and Location of Education**

An artist's level of education along with the location of where they received their education is also important when thinking about artists as global actors. Like what was previously discussed about global contemporary artists' current homes, if everyone's art education is in the same country or same city then they are not necessarily creating diverse global work. It becomes an incestuous academic pool where everyone is being educated in the same place and therefore creating work that reflects that. The United States, unsurprisingly, is where more than half of AP global contemporary artists received their undergraduate education. Following that is England with 11% of AP global contemporary artists.

WHERE AP'S GC ARTISTS WENT FOR THEIR UNDERGRAD BROKEN DOWN BY COUNTRY



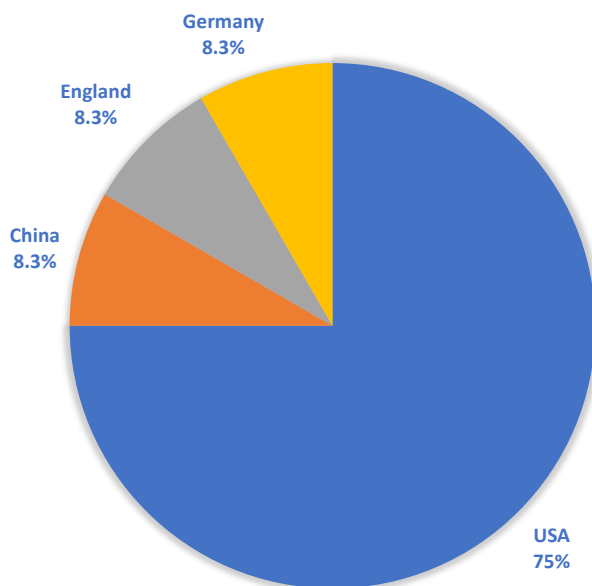
The top cities where AP global contemporary artists received their education are New York City and London. Again, this is unsurprising that many of the AP artists selected were educated in such cosmopolitan western cities. It reinforces the western point of view, so even if these AP artists were not born in a western country, most of them still learned to make art in one,



which is problematic when it comes to representation and truly reflecting the global art world for these AP students.

Those AP global contemporary artists who pursued a master's degree after their undergraduate career were more likely to be educated in the US. The data shows that about 75% of AP global contemporary artists attended a U.S. institution. This is an extremely high proportion. China, Germany and England follow with 8.3% each. In reality, 75% of the master's degrees these artists earned were in western countries. Again, this echoes the same point made before, if everyone is educated in the same place then it calls into question if they really represent a diverse array of global art and it continues to promote the western perspective. It brings up the question: To be a successful global contemporary artist does one have to go to school in a western country? This is an idea the AP's list of global contemporary artists emphasizes.

Top Countries AP's GC Artists Received their Master's Degrees



For Documenta 14, the numbers are similar in that many of the artists, even though they were from a wider range of countries than the AP artists, were also educated in the United States



along with Western European countries. This shows that hierarchies where the west is championed are still in place in the GCA world. These institutions continue to impose hierarchies and sustain cultural divides, as shown in the history of the biennial mentioned earlier along with the data collected here. This is true of Documenta 14, but the AP Global Contemporary section takes it a step further. The numbers are nowhere near as high as the AP's college stats. About 14% of Documenta 14's artists were educated in the United States for their undergraduate degree compared to the 54% seen in the AP Global Contemporary section's artists. While hierarchies are still apparent in the current GCA scene, it does give permission to the AP curriculum to emphasize those disparities even further by promoting a select group of artists that fit the stereotype in their teachings. Both need to do better in decentering the western point of view, but Documenta 14 and other biennials are certainly much further ahead than the AP Art History curriculum.

Conclusion

To conclude, by discussing GCA's history and comparing the data collected to the AP course material, it shows that American education system is not accurately portraying Global Contemporary Art today and is perpetuating harmful biases and hierarchies that are detrimental to the art historical field. Not only that, but if this type of representation continues to promote the same ideas and the same values that have been there for decades then there will be no progression in the field or in the thinking of the high school students in this course. If these students are to become global citizens, as Urist claims²⁸, and these students should be able to view the world from a global point of view, as the College Board claims²⁹, then something needs to be done about the Global Contemporary Art section in the AP Art History curriculum. While the argument is not black and white, as shown in my research, the AP curriculum does take these hierarchies and cultural disparities to a much larger extreme compared to the Global Contemporary Art world and is therefore continuing harmful ideas about this particular art exhibition category. There is a lot of growing to do, not only for the next generation of students, but for the culture at large including academics, curators and artists in the fight to decenter the western art world.

²⁸ Urist, "Rewriting Art History," *The Atlantic*.

²⁹ College Board, "AP Art History," www.collegeboard.org.

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