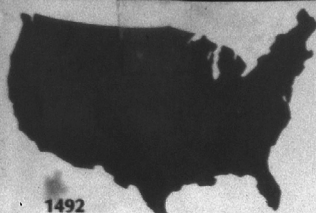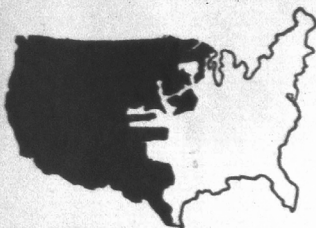# Current Trends in Indian Land Ownership

1492

1820

1840

1860

1978

Jean Fisher
Neither North Nor South

Since 1992, when I was kindly invited to speak at Arte-Expo Guadalajara, I have found myself less preoccupied with art than with trying to make sense of current economic and socio-political realities. This has lead to some reflections on the limitations of postcolonial studies in relation to one of the paradoxes of globalisation: namely, the competing claims of the "local" and the "global", in which the choices seem to be reduced to either ethno-nationalisms or "Americanised" neoliberal globalisation. Underlining this tension are some outstanding global issues of belonging and displacement. My perspective is best characterised by two maps: "Current Trends in Indian Land Ownership", a detail from Jimmie Durham's critical parody of ethnographic museums, *On Loan from the Museum of the American Indian* of 1985; and the "four-stage" map of Palestine, 1946 to 2000, where the "Middle East" has re-emerged as the North's troublesome "South". Both maps allude to the ambivalent status of "minority nations" under settler rule; both result from the long trajectory of globalisation.[1]

It has frequently been pointed out that postcolonial debates produced a radical paradigm shift in the way we understand culture, cultural and national identity and citizenship. However, these primarily culturalist debates, although still relevant, have been complicated by the new form of globalisation as its more catastrophic effects have become apparent.

Left: Jimmie Durham, *Current Trends in Indian Land Ownership*, 1985

For historical and geopolitical reasons, many of these effects were experienced in the more vulnerable South long before the North acknowledged them. And likewise, Southern intellectual and political responses have preceded those of the North. But the crises of global *inter*dependence, especially justice, security, the degraded ecosphere and now the financial sphere affect us all irrespective of cultural differences or North-South divides. Interdependence poses a challenge to the authority of state fiscal, juridical, political and social boundaries – boundaries that have already been transgressed as global communications systems have extended local networks into transnational affiliations. Interdependence raises again the concept of "cosmopolitanism" as a possible way of situating emergent forms of social and artistic practice.

My paper presents a crude sketch of postcolonialism and globalisation as conditions for re-thinking "cosmopolitanism". But since ecological sustainability needs to be factored into any sociopolitical equation, and "local" is too generalised to convey this, it seems logical to introduce an "indigenous" perspective, which traditionally includes the ecosphere as a participating subject. To call this "indigenous cosmopolitanism" may seem awkward and paradoxical; in any case, it is a contradiction in terms only if "indigenous" is interpreted as a fixed cultural space, which is the opposite of what is intended here. It is also not my intention to equate "indigeneity" with "ethnicity", but with a political constituency that tries to accommodate "global" effects to "local" situations: a "situatedness" within a cosmopolitan understanding. I am, therefore, bringing the work of indigenous American artists into the conversation precisely because this constituency has a long history of negotiating the contradictions of "tradition" and "modernity" introduced by the encounter between a pre-conquest continental cosmopolitanism and the earlier phase of European globalisation.

The Postcolonial
In the North, the privileged perspective of postcolonial studies has been the metropolitan diaspora from the former imperial colonies. But in seeming to promote recognition of *difference* over *commonality*, postcolonialism opened the door to institutional interpretations of multiculturalism in which, in the UK, culture and ethnic identity became subject to "corporate" branding, and cultural difference became a scapegoat for the

breakdown in social cohesion largely produced by neoliberal political policies. While paying lip service to the national belonging of minority ethnicities through token inclusion (now re-phrased as the more ano-dyne "cultural diversity"), institutions have relinquished neither their authority nor the old idea of culture (and identity) as a fixed property, rather than as an interactive, transforming process, thereby weakening political solidarity and reinforcing segregation. One consequence has been the rise of identifications with extreme positions of difference, nota-bly amongst disaffected Islamic youth. In multi-ethnic, multi-faith societ-ies with *trans*-national affiliations, the nation-state can no longer sustain its myth of unified spatiotemporality; but, as Tariq Madood says, it has yet to re-imagine nationality and national identity in a multicultural way. A multicultural society cannot be stable without developing a common sense of belonging among all its citizens, based not on ethnicity but on the political reciprocity between state and citizen.[2]

Given the voluntary immigrant's ontological relation to the nation-state, particularly its non-investment in and entitlement to the land as such, the diaspora perspective hasn't entirely encompassed the ongoing anti-colonial struggles for territorial and cultural sovereignty by indig-enous peoples *inside* settler regimes; or the plight of landless refugees, deprived of belonging and citizenship, whose language remains integral to *place* – real, remembered or imagined, but never forgotten. As the late Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish poignantly wrote, "Where shall we go after the last frontiers? Where should the birds fly after the last sky?" One such reminder of the political dimension of dispossession was pre-sented to visitors to the Giardini grounds of the 2003 Venice Biennale. Here they encountered *Stateless Nation*, a freestanding structure by Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti representing the passport issued by the Palestinian Authority. This functions as no more than an ID card to re-strict Palestinians' movements in, out and across Israel and the Occupied Territories, the latter bearing more than a passing resemblance to Indian reservations. Hilal and Petti are architects resident in the West Bank and members of the interdisciplinary collective Multiplicity, whose focus is the Mediterranean Sea. Among their recent projects (with Eyal Weizman) is *Future Archaeology*, a plan to decolonise space and built structures if and when Israelis evacuate illegal settlements.[3] Among the more devastating aspects of the Palestinian catastrophe is the failure of the international

political community to implement either its human rights legislation or a just political solution. And in the absence of an unbiased mainstream press capable of mobilising public opinion, the work of a few outspoken academics and artists remains the primary means by which the Palestinian national narrative gains any international visibility.

Globalisation

The effects of globalisation have penetrated everyone's lives, but this does not lead to a utopia of universal franchise and material comfort. In speaking of globalisation we have to ask, for whom? Globalisation has been a technocratic sophistication of the economic and political relations of power developed under empire: the draining of resources, information and intellectual capital from peripheries to hegemonic centres, with the difference that the "centre" is less the nation-state than the impenetrable sites of supranational corporatism. In so far as these sites have until now operated from the North, the South has remained economically hostage to them. As critics have pointed out, globalisation is a network of regulations of technology, communications, informational and security systems designed to protect and manage the free flow of capital, overriding prior state functions. The trajectories of the so-called borderless art market alongside the commodification of art are perfectly consistent with this network of power, as commentators from the South like Gerardo Mosquera have pointed out.[4] Notably, the North has reserved the right to human movement while imposing limitations on the South's ability to travel, the justifications being fear of illegal immigration or, more recently, "terrorist" infiltration. But while many of us are now connected through global communications networks, or have the luxury of escaping into Second Life, the world's poor are disconnected, excluded, and increasingly described – following Subcomandante Marcos – as "disposable people", without rights to belong to future humanity. That is, with globalisation we have witnessed an intensification of the dehumanising practices of colonialism, slavery and state violence against the unprotected.

According to political economists, much of this situation is attributable to neoliberal capitalist (interpretations of) democracy, an ideology that has dominated the political landscape for 30 years. It has overseen the dismantling and privatisation of state functions and public services – including art sponsorship; the loss of labour rights and the de-politicisation

of society, reversing decades of social progress and ethical restraints; and the shrinking of the state's role to policing. Neoliberalism claims there is no alternative: anti-market means anti-democratic, hence we have no language to imagine another future. However, the political philosopher Chantal Mouffe argues that the neoliberal belief that – barring a few glitches (and *pace* postmodernism's "deterritorialisation") – we have reached a global consensus in which partisan identities and affiliations are now "outdated and redundant", is fatally misguided, because "the need for collective identifications constitutes the mode of existence of human beings." However, without the development of an "agonistic" politics of openly acknowledging and negotiating differing political identities, conflicts inevitably erupt into violence.[5] From the economic perspective of the South, Emir Sader proposes that the real polarisation is not between the state and the social, but between the social and the market sphere.[6] We have seen this reflected in the art world, polarised between art as market commodity (exemplified by the narcissism of Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin and New Labour's "Cool Britannia" branding) and non-commodifiable practices that engage with alternative networks and local-global alliances. There remains therefore the need to re-politicise "collective identifications".

The global market economy may be fatally interconnected but it is not equal; it is a system whereby a few powerful states and corporations, supported by the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and the IMF, dominate national economies. To be eligible for loans from the World Bank, countries have had to comply with Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS), which insist on the privatisation of land, a curb in social spending and emphasis on export rather than domestic production, all of which dismantle social infrastructures. The South has been a major casualty of this policy. As I understand it, among the SAPS conditions for Mexico joining NAFTA was the removal of Article 27 Section VII of the 1917 Constitution, which had guaranteed rights of communal land (*ejidos*). If this is so, then the Zapatista objection to NAFTA, based in arguments that combined Mayan beliefs with socialism, was among the first anti-neoliberal movements. However, if, as Sader points out,[7] Latin American countries were used as *laboratories* for testing the neoliberal economic model (Chile and Bolivia), they have also been amongst the first to reject it (Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia); whilst the Bolivarian Alternative for

the Americas (ALBA), Mercosur and Unisur suggest regional collaboration with more independence from the North.

Nonetheless, the Zapatista scenario illustrates how social movements also need effective political representation at a national level. It is the gap between social realities and political representation that some artists have sought to occupy. For instance, Regina José Galindo's work targets abuses of power. *America's Family Prison*, 2008, was an installation and performance that included her family. The structure is a portable jail cell, capable of incarcerating entire families, and refers to the growth of the private prison industry since the intensification of immigration and anti-terror legislation. Galindo is best known for her performance in Guatamala City, *¿Quien puede borrar las huellas? (Who can remove the traces?)*, 2003, in which she walked from the Constitutional Court to the National Palace leaving a trail of footprints of human blood to protest the dictator Montt's bloody regime.

A similar theme is taken up by Minerva Cuevas, whose work has sought to unmask the social iniquities of the capitalist system concealed behind corporate advertising through various interventionary tactics. The "Del Montte puree criminal" campaign in 2003 consisted of canned food labels, street murals and gallery installations that parasitized the logo of the Del Monte fruit and juice agribusiness. Cuevas drew historical links between Del Monte's monopoly, especially in Guatemala, US economic interests, the CIA, and Montt's regime, all of which colluded in the systematic murder and land dispossession of the Mayan people.

The Indigenous and the Cosmopolitan

What interests me about Southern political or attitudinal shifts is the extent to which they involve indigenous-popular social movements. The South and the North share one unpalatable fact: the repression of indigenous peoples, who politically occupy neither North nor South. National settler societies constitute the indigenous as the "outside" whilst disavowing its centrality to the settler imaginary. Too often this has led to an "aboriginalisation" of settler society while continuing the destruction of indigenous lives. This includes classifying the indigenous as one "ethnic minority" amongst many (in the North), as "campesinos" (in the South), or as generic "Israeli Arabs" rather than Palestinians (in Israel),

thereby depriving them of the juridical right to land, language, and cultural sovereignty according to the United Nations' ruling on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As Jimmie Durham once pithily put it: "One night by the camp fire the Lone Ranger ate Tonto".

However, despite widespread annihilation, the survival of indigenous cultures is testimony to the co-existence between human collective needs and the ecosphere that expands the cosmopolitan debate. We know that pre-conquest America developed a sophisticated agricultural system without creating ecological imbalances. Much indigenous knowledge was forced into obscurity, not only by exploitative European technologies, but also by a wilful misreading of native pragmatics as "primitive" or "mystical" to justify dispossession. Belatedly, indigenous knowledge of agriculture and medicine is now a subject of research by international agriculturalists and pharmaceutical companies (although this does not guarantee indigenous intellectual rights).[8] Likewise, we might link these ecological concerns to the philosophical bases of political constituencies capable of adapting and incorporating the foreign without relinquishing their core beliefs.

Neoliberalism is an obstacle to tackling climate change: it treats human rights with contempt, promotes over-consumption, produces unmanageable waste, and disregards the cost to the future. *Inter*dependency now demands global cooperation in economic and socio-political relations that include the ecosphere. Whilst urbanist postcolonial studies have not attended to ecology, they have led to a re-examination of cosmopolitanism as the antithesis of neoliberal (Americanised) globalisation and ethno-nationalism. Here, cosmopolitanism does *not* mean "élite life-style choices", or "globalism without attachments". Kwame Anthony Appiah called it an "adventure and ideal", defining it as "respect for difference with a respect for actual human beings";[9] meaning, a universalising of shared human values, needs and security, but *not* an homogenisation of ways of life, the latter being among the drives of neoliberal democracy. In Ulrich Beck's terms, cosmopolitanism is a practice of social actors that strives towards enabling everyone to make a contribution to world culture in their own language and symbols.[10] However, we cannot yet envision cosmopolitanism as a substitute for the nation-state; on the contrary, as Seyla Benhabib notes, if there is a trend towards transcendence of the state it is more in

the direction of privatisation and corporatisation of sovereignty, further endangering democracy and popular sovereignty.[11] The "ideal" aspect is that, while we need the state to protect citizens' rights, we also need enforceable international restraints on state violations, which are clearly not in place. Thus the philosophical dream of a global civil society and solidarity across borders is as yet beyond our grasp. Nonetheless, there are elements within the cosmopolitan debate that note a pragmatic, "bottom-up" form of globalisation, within which one might include various inter-national artistic collectives and alliances as well as indigenous practices.

In contrast to neoliberalism, the indigenous maps the world through a *cosmological* perspective. As an illustration of how a cosmological under-standing of the world opens onto a cosmopolitan consciousness with-out necessarily physically leaving one's place, I offer this story. In 1990 the BBC broadcast a documentary that had been made at the request of the Kogi people, who, since the late 1600s, had barricaded themselves in the high sierra of coastal Colombia against further encroachment by Europeans. The message the Kogi wanted to deliver to the world was that its actions were destroying the planet, a conclusion they had reached by contemplating the effects of the receding glaciers on their tundra, and hence on the entire water ecology of the sierra. That is, the Kogi recognised global warming a decade before northern politicians would believe their own scientists. Pragmatically, the issue was how to maintain local inde-pendence whilst accommodating the reality of global *inter*dependence.

"The spindle is the axis of the world and to weave is to think" is a Kogi saying quoted by artist, poet and political activist Cecilia Vicuña, who em-ploys Mapuche weaving traditions as a metaphor for the interrelation of land, people and language, which establishes belonging without reduc-tion to the biologism of "ethnicity". *Quipu* refers to the knotted strings in Quechua: a form of script used in storytelling, poetry, accounting and the maintenance of communal rights and responsibilities. *El Quipu menstrual*, or *Blood of the Glaciers*, was a performance and installation that, echoing the Kogi, drew attention to the threat posed to the ecology and life of the Chilean cordilleras by the projected sale of the glaciers to mining corpora-tions. That is, Mapuche traditions were activated towards forestalling a common threat.

Indigenous cosmology, like ecology, understands the world as a play of interdependent forces. This includes self and other, not as independent, self-generating entities, but as mutually constituted and answerable, which *ideally* works through social practices of participation, solidarity, distribution of wealth and waste limitation, where the ecosphere is the central subject. It pursues a contrapuntal spatiotemporality based in the dynamics of continuity and change, in which the new is enfolded where possible into the cosmological schema. As such, it has followed a *transgressive* rather than *progressive* modernity. The Navajo contemporary art historian Shanna Ketchum identifies this perspective as a key element in distinguishing what she calls "resistant Native American Cosmopolitan Modernism/s" from the western art canon.[13] Ketchum's primary example is Edgar Heap of Birds, who is best known in the art world for enamelled street signs that draw attention to the often overlooked historical and political resonances of place. Selected to represent the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian at the 2007 Venice Biennale, Heap of Birds presented a series of signs in different locations in the city that drew attention to the presence of Native Americans in Europe, undermining the perception that "Indians" exist outside a cosmopolitan history. The artist, who was a participant in the New York collective Group Material during the 1980s and early 90s, traverses a plurality of positions – native, academia and the international art world – but infuses them with a Cheyenne world-understanding.

Cecilia Vicuña, *El Quipu menstrual or Blood of the Glaciers*, 2006

The same spirit of independence with interdependence underpins Mohawk artist Alan Michelson's panoramic video installation, *Two Row 11*, 2005. The work refers to the agreement in 1613 between the Iroquoians and Dutch settlers, sealed by a wampum belt. Two bands of purple beads represented the two cultures, while a middle band of white beads represented cultural integrity with peaceful coexistence. Michelson's video presents two riverbanks moving in opposite directions, with voiceovers by an American tour guide and Iroquoian elders relating two histories of the river. *Twilight: Indian Point*, 2003, is a video projected in a gold frame, mimicking the Romantic landscape genre. The fixed camera records half an hour of activities on a river during sunset: a flock of birds flies across the water; a canoe silently glides by; but after a while, the apparent idyllic scene is interrupted by a passing train and you realise that the view across the river is of a nuclear power station. As with many Native American contemporary artists, Heap of Birds and Michelson address issues of mutual global concern but articulated through place as a social, linguistic, economic and ecological reality.

It is misleading to apply postcolonial "hybridity" to the work of these contemporary artists: they are not in some unanchored, oscillating "in-between", a concept that Stuart Hall dismissed on the grounds that one needed to "take a position" in order to acquire political *agency*. Their tactics are closer to Gramsci's agonistic "war of position", where expedient alliances are made with antagonists, but without fundamentally relinquishing one's own position. Their methodologies echo what Gerardo Mosquera describes – in his various discussions of the "local" and the "global" – as the "re-signification" of internationalised artistic languages through local values and symbolic systems, which reflect historical, economic and political realities rather than the "ethnic" essentialism imposed by the West.[14]

For the indigenous subject filiated to ancestral community, the nation-state is not the transcendental entity that, in Terry Eagleton's words, "incarnates culture" for the national subject.[15] At the same time, the principle of accommodating stark realities, however paradoxical, underlines the indigenous subject's relation to the state. That is, "indigenous cosmopolitanism" is not antagonistic to the nation-state, but to state repression in its pursuit of destructive modernisation. An exemplary case of indigenous

constructive use of a cosmopolitan vision directed towards local empow-
erment is the work of Calpulli Tecalco from Atocpan (meaning, "where
the waters come together") in Milpa Alta, which is not a "community
project", but a research project. Calpulli Tecalco is a local NGO comprising
an interdisciplinary collaboration generated by professionals among the
Nahua community, attracting experts in agricultural biology, archaeology,
linguistics, law, architecture and art. The group's aim is to halt the social
and environmental degradation of the region (which includes unregu-
lated waste dumping and urban encroachment on fallowed farmland, and
illegal logging leading to soil dehydration) by reconciling appropriate
technology with indigenous land-sensitive values and knowledge. Their
educational activities include a revival of Nahuatl as an aid in deciphering
the botanical, agricultural and medicinal knowledge encrypted in codices,
ancestral stories and sculptural inscriptions, cataloguing the biodiver-
sity of the terrain, and Milpa Alta's pre-conquest terracing technology.[16]
Among the artist Fernando Palma's contributions is the re-translation of
Nahuatl iconography through aesthetic codes where linguistics alone pro-
duced only rudimentary, and sometimes erroneous meanings.

In his artistic practice, rather than produce generalised abstractions,
Palma draws on interdisciplinary research into actual situations to arrive
at an arresting poetic metaphor. For instance, *Tocihuapapalutzin* (*Our Lady
Butterfly*), 2005, is an installation comprising a field of Monarch butterflies
cut out from soft drink cans and mounted on wires digitally connected to
sensors, so that a quivering "Mexican wave" is set in motion by passing
viewers. It is a model of the indigenous combination of recycled and new
technology; of the effects of human actions on endangered habitats; and a
metaphor for the solidarity of indigenous America.[17]

These artists ask how art practice may set aside its own mythologies and
self-interest to bring a cosmopolitan aesthetic knowledge to social and
ecological realities. Two approaches to artistic activism are identified in
this paper: one exposes fault lines in the socio-political system (exempli-
fied by the work of Galindo, Cuevas, Vicuña, and Hilal and Petti's *Stateless
Nation*); the second strives to intervene with solutions "on the ground"
(exemplified by Hilal and Petti's *Future Archaeology* project and Palma's
work with Calpulli Tecalco).

The latter approach is also the enterprise of the English artist Simon Read, who rejects the attitude to land inherited from Romantic aesthetics that continues to inform British conservation policies, for which the landscape is a *picture* to be contemplated not an inhabited place.[18] Read is currently building a screen to minimize erosion of the salt marshes on the tidal River Deben – the feeding ground for young fish that spawn on the off-shore banks of the North Sea, and therefore crucial to a complex coastal ecosystem.[19] After making observational drawings of water currents, Read designed an "environmental installation" mixing synthetic and natural materials, including recycled Christmas trees, reviving a farmers' prac-tice that had fallen into disuse. Like Palma's work with Calpulli Tecalco, Read's research involves understanding the social and ecosystem as an integrated whole, and collaboration with environmental agencies, river and farming communities, biologists and engineers.

In summary, I have two points to make. Firstly, the health of the South is crucial, ecologically speaking, to global wellbeing; and it possesses the intellectual expertise and more eco-friendly technology to fulfil this role, were it to be freer from the pressures of Northern neoliberalism. Pierre Bourdieu suggested that any viable politics that challenges neoliberalism must reconfigure the role of the state in limiting the excesses of capital and providing important social provisions.[20] Part of these provisions is to strengthen those non-commodified social organisations where people feel most connected. Some, at least, of the political movements of the South suggest a move in this direction.

Secondly, we need to imagine a socially and ecologically sustainable future beyond the crippling choice between American neoliberal globali-sation and ethno-nationalism. The "indigenous" contribution to this debate, especially as expressed throughout the Americas, lies in the way it has worked through the traumas of modernisation from its own cosmo-politan traditions towards a reconfigured cosmopolitan future grounded in sustainable local values. The demand, again, is for a nation-state more open to heterogeneous ways of life and less hostage to neoliberalism. If the neoliberal "universal" constitutes itself by negating heterogeneity, "indigenous cosmopolitanism" offers a practice of *mediation* between the particular and the universal, between independence and interdepen-dence. Likewise, if art and artists have a role outside the narrow interests

of the market sphere it is as mediators or vectors of a cosmopolitan vision capable of negotiating the aesthetic, the ethical and the political in the topologies of everyday life.

Notes

[1] I was drawn into postcolonial studies through working with artists emerging from the colonial histories of Ireland, North America and, more recently, Palestine, the common denominator being British colonialism.

[2] Tariq Madood, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

[3] See Hilal, Petti and Weizman, "The Future Archaeology of Israel's Colonisation", *Afterall* No.20, 2009, pp16-26.

[4] Gerardo Mosquera, "Alien-Own, Own Alien", in Nikos Papastergiadis [ed], *Complex Entanglements: Art, Globalisation and Cultural Difference*, London: Rivers Oram, 2003, pp 18-29.

[5] Chantal Mouffe, *On The Political*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005.

[6] Emir Sader, "The Weakest Link? Neoliberalism in Latin America", *New Left Review*, no.52, July-August, 2008, pp 5-38.

[7] Ibid

[8] For example, trials are now taking place in the UK to test the viability of "bio-char" – a technique traditionally practised by Amazonian Indians for burning trees and other organic matter without releasing CO_2 into the atmosphere. A method of co-cropping edible foods with the macuna bean has been developed by the Mayans of Guatamala and now extends to Africa. The macuna, although not edible, produces a rich organic mulch that both replenishes the soil and discourages weeds, thereby dispensing with expensive and ultimately toxic fertilisers, herbicides and labour-intensive tillage. By contrast, the criminal demand from the North that maize and soya be switched from food crop to biofuel has already damaged local communities in Mexico and Brazil.

[9] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in A World of Strangers*, London: Penguin, 2007.

[10] Ulrich Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

[11] Seyla Benhabib, *Another Cosmopolitanism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp 176-177.

[12] The European Court of Human Rights, which legislates on abuses within the European Union, has had some modest success in this role. The UK government has several times been ruled against in the Court: in 2008 over the retention of information on innocent individuals in a DNA database originally intended to track indicted criminal offenders; and recently on the illegality of retaining prisoners without trial, particularly involving those held for alleged Islamic "terrorist" offenses. What is important to remember with human rights legislation is that the privileged plaintiff is the individual not the state.

[13] Shanna Ketchum, "Native American Cosmopolitan Modernism(s): A Rearticulation of Presence through Time and Space", *Third Text* 19: 4, (July) 2005, pp 357-364.]

[14] While it may be the case that Native North Americans have been historically too preoccupied with domestic struggles with Canada and the USA to attend to

international relations, this does not mean that artists have not engaged with international artistic debates, although they have seldom been invited to participate in them. The issue of how to improve international artistic agency, and on what – and whose – terms, was the subject of a conference convened by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Venice, 2005, and a subsequent publication, *Vision, Space, Desire: Global Perspectives and Cultural Hybridity*, NMAI Editions, Washington and New York, 2006.

[15] Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

[16] See, for example, Calpulli Tecalco A.C., *Amoxihutin in atocpan monextia ipan Tetepantin (Plantas de terrazas agrícolas prehispánicas en San Pedro Atocpan, Milpa Alta, Distrito Federal)*, Gobierno del Distrito Federal: Secretaria de Desarrollo Social, 2008, with the editorial collaboration of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Xolchmilco, División de Sciencias y Artes para el Diseño.

[17] Palma is a graduate of Goldsmiths College and the Slade, London, and has participated in Triangle Arts, London, an artist-led global residency and exchange programme which has a network throughout the southern hemisphere.

[18] There is a direct link between the emergence of the Romantic sublime in painting, the industrialisation of agriculture, and the colonisation and displacement of both the geographic "other" and the English rural poor during the 18th and 19th centuries, the residue of which is recognisable in the imposition of, often inappropriate, central government policies on local communities.

[19] Read lives nearby on a barge; and I am indigenous to this location and therefore have a psychological investment in its welfare.

[20] Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998.