

Subject: three essentials?
Date: Friday, December 21, 2001 1:48 AM
From: John Peffer <JPEFFER@email.smith.edu>
To: <director@proje4l.org>

Dear Vasif Kortun,

I have fine-tuned my idea and my title for the talk at your art space. I guessed your preference was for this kind of discussion and not the more historicizing type in the paper I emailed you? Good then, my blood is hot with the market/framing topic now. The new framework is spelled out below. I will likely show slides, play a recorded audio cd, and (possibly) show video during my presentation. If there will be restrictions on such media please let me know ahead of time.

As of December 23 I will not be checking my email until I reach Istanbul. I will be in Cleveland from December 24-26, at usa 216 228 1004. I am in Istanbul on the 28th December, and can be reached at Kybele Hotel, Yerebatan Caddesi, 35 Sultanhamet. tel 90 212 511 77 66, or 511 77 67.

I look forward to meeting you.

Best.

JOHN PEFFER

p.s. be glad you are spared the hypercommerical rush of the american christmas.

Three Essentials of "Contemporary African Art" (Abroad)
the exotic, the strategic, the diasporic and the market

This talk is a critical consideration of how African identities and African objects are currently being positioned in the mainstream international art arena, with a mindful eye to how the international art arena is being positioned in local art scene contexts within Africa. What can be said to be held in common by these three seemingly contradictory strategies in the popular politics of African representations: exotic essentialisms (the always-inscrutable other), strategic essentialisms ("I am other"), and the current tendency to privilege the diaspora as itself an object ("there is no 'other' and the best examples of this are international travellers and refugees")? In my discussion of this question I will examine images of "Contemporary African Art" produced in the context of international exhibitions and general textbooks on African Modernism. I will conclude with a

discussion of "African" art strategies meant to comment on the new forms of internationalism.

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