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Sommario

Borders and Border Crossing between Art Worlds
Successful Attempts and Epic Failures to Enter New Domains in Recent British Art

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Abstract   This paper attempts to answer whether it is possible for successful artists in one specific sector to access the domain of another artistic field at their free will. In doing so, this contribution analyses the possible existence of borders and gatekeepers between different art worlds. The aim is not just finding or defining boundaries between art fields, but rather understanding whether boundaries can be pierced through, as well as the conditions that might hinder acceptance. Moving from an art theoretical and philosophical perspective, the present paper will discuss the thesis of Pierre Bourdieu and Howard Becker on boundary conditions in the arts. Subsequently, their views will be tested against three recent cases of British artist celebrities, who tried to enter new artistic domains, although with alternate success. They are the episodes of Damian Hirst painfully failing as a filmmaker, of Steve McQueen slowly working his way up to the Oscars, of Douglas Gordon intentionally and irreverently challenging contemporary theatre.

Summary   1 Aims and Scope of a Border Crossing Attitude. – 2 Borders of the Art Field or Borderless Art Worlds. – 3 Boundaries and Border Control in the Arts. – 4 Champions in their own Domain Seeking Consensus Elsewhere. – 5 Damien Hirst or the Shooting Star of Video Making. – 6 Steve McQueen or the Slow-Burner at the Oscars. – 7 Douglas Gordon or the Convict Iconoclast in Theatre. – 8 Any Golden Rules for Border Crossing?

Keywords   Border crossing. Art worlds. Art field. Gatekeepers. Pierre Bourdieu. Howard Becker. Damien Hirst. Steve McQueen. Douglas Gordon.

1 Aims and Scope of a Border Crossing Attitude

Reaching unquestionable success in the visual arts is a hard task to accomplish, as is the case of any artistic discipline. Of the many art school graduates around the world only a small percentage make a living out of their elected profession and even less rise to real stardom. However, several of the latter get to a point in their career, when they want to expand their domain outside their acquainted realm and spill their aura over different art forms. Indeed, art history is rich with cases of great authors who have expanded their creativity in various directions, successfully entering different disciplines from their original ones. Playwrights who write screenplays, movie actors who appear on stage, musicians who direct theatre plays or visual artists who become moviemakers are just a few feasible examples.

Thus the question arises, whether it is a straightforward affair for successful artists to access the domain of another artistic field at their free will. Does indeed celebrity status grant to enter and exit different sectors without any particular problem?

However, there appears to be a preliminary question that needs to be answered: are there any borders at all between different art worlds? And if so, how can they be successfully broken or pierced? Is it then possible to transfer creativity and reputation to a different art form or do gatekeepers exist that might hinder its acceptance?

Moving from an art theoretical perspective – encompassing sociology and philosophy – the present paper seeks to understand if there are boundaries between different artistic disciplines and how these would react at an attempt of breaking in from a different field. In order to do so, it will be necessary to touch upon two scholars that particularly reflected on the existence/absence of borders between the arts. The thesis of Pierre Bourdieu and Howard Becker will be extensively discussed, as they appear to be of particular interest to define the realm of an artistic discipline and the interactions of people involved in it. Furthermore, the two scholars interestingly show contrary opinions on the mentioned issue: while Bourdieu (cf. 1993) pledges for the specificity of every form of artistic expression as a sort of social sub-set, Becker's (cf. 2008) assumptions rather postulate border-free art worlds that may

interfere with one another. Insisting on the importance of *habitus*, Bourdieu will be helpful to understand the expectations that an artist must fulfil to be accepted into a specific art field, while Becker stresses the concept of 'convention', hence pointing at the importance of re-negotiation of social rules to bring any sort of change into an art world, be it individual or collective.

These theoretical stances on separate art branches and border crossing will later be put against the practical background of a case study in recent British art history. In the last two decades it might be observed that several visual artists, who reached stardom in their own field, have been tempted by a career in new disciplines. Trying to identify possible rules of engagement for artistic spill over, the case of three British artists will be analysed, who rose into prominence in the nineties and later tried to branch out into new directions, though with alternate success. The selected authors – Damien Hirst, Steve McQueen, Douglas Gordon – all belong to the generation of so called young British artists (YBA) who gained fame at a very early career stage and pushed the UK art scene back into the centre of worldwide attention. Furthermore, they were all winners of the Turner Prize assigned by Tate in the nineties, thus reaching unquestionable success in the visual arts. Besides retracing their individual attempts of border crossing, the analysis addresses the reaction of gatekeepers in the penetrated field, such as to examine how they might respond to an alteration of their discipline's boundaries. Hence, this study will rely on opinions drawn from specialised magazines, newspapers or online press expressed by critics, journalists and experts who commented on the tested attempts.

2 Borders of the Art Field or Borderless Art Worlds

In the writings of Pierre Bourdieu (1993, 12, 36) an idea of art system emerges, which sees several economic and social forces shaping a community characterised by the predominance of political and cultural elites. Hence, the ruling class as a whole would appear to act as gatekeeper of the art system, certifying artistic value. However, such a system can hardly be understood as a unified set, being rather defined as a space of positions where cultural meaning and predominance are at stake. Indeed, the art world involves numerous players – each with different means and

intentions – depending on the peculiar power relations between those agents. In Bourdieu's own words, it can be described as "a force-field as well as a field of struggles which aim at transforming or maintaining the established relation of forces" (2013, 15). The particular shape of this arena relies on capital distribution amongst participants, which consists of such properties that determine success in the considered field. The strongest agents are in a dominant position due to the accumulated cultural capital – which may be prestige, influence over other key players, opinion leadership, network assets – and usually thrive on their standing, opposing any competitor that challenges them.

The true struggle in any artistic field is not over financial power, but rather over authority inside the field itself, which means conquering the role of legitimate and acknowledged decision maker of the arena. In fact, the privileged position every agent wants to acquire holds the rare ability to sanction symbolic meaning in the observed branch. Typically the struggle is over the definition of the field limits, over what should be legitimately considered as art and over who should be counted as a recognised player (Bourdieu 1993, 30-36). Accordingly, the French scholar describes several fields of art – such as the visual arts, cinema, theatre, classical and operatic music, ballet and many more – which ought to be treated separately from one other. Each field has its own authorities and agents, capital assets and power relationships, thus they can be said to have boundaries subject to a strict border control. As a consequence, acquiring a position inside a specific art field holds meaning for that field alone and it can be related to a sort of *habitus* that every participant must get hold of. Thus, transferring one's own capital, creativity and reputation to a different discipline is no automatism, because one would probably not comply with required *habitus*. Quite the contrary, since every field has its pale and gatekeepers, any prospective entrant – even though of some relevance in another field – would need to undergo a severe screening, in order to be accepted into the new domain. The new entrant would thus be tested against the requirements of the field, particularly against the background of the right *habitus* for the role he or she intends to play in the field. It may be expected that gatekeepers of a penetrated field watch out for border crossers, such that the entrant is often confronted with harsh criticism.

To understand under what circumstances gatekeepers grant entry, it would probably be necessary to go beyond the mere description of a field.

Considering the intrinsic aims and motivations of gatekeepers or influential agents should help explaining their behaviour in terms of artistic legitimation (Heinich 1999, 26). So far it may suffice to say that in any considered arena membership is usually accorded to those agents who possess a vast amount of information on the trends and force relations of the field itself, adapting their role to the expected *habitus* (Bourdieu 1993, 31-32). Celebrity status in a specific field might thus hold no value at all in another artistic branch, or even exacerbate the debate about a possible acceptance of a star artist into the prospective field. If Bourdieu's take is correct – claiming that every art field holds peculiar power relations and capital assets – then every branch is shielded against the outside world. Consequently, allowing an extern into a field could prefigure the gradual loss of inner autonomy and legitimate authority in favour of outer determiners. In a way it would revert the perspective of Arthur Danto's disenfranchisement postulate (cf. 2008), thus leaving little choice to gatekeepers, save that of rejecting any attempt to enter from a different field. Eventually, artists who want to break the delimitation of their discipline are putting their entire reputation at stake, faced with a possible failure that could harm their image even in their field of origin.

Howard Becker's view on the intersections between different art forms appears to be at odds with Bourdieu's idea of the arts being a separate, as well as airtight container. Starting with the context in which artists are operating, the American sociologist adopts the notion of art world, thus conveying the idea of an open set of interrelated people, as well as that of an articulated process that can confer the status of art to candidates for aesthetic appreciation. Such a definition of art system is reminiscent of art theorist Gorge Dickie's early version of the institutional theory of art (2000, 107), however it differs in one relevant aspect: while Dickie superimposes the moment of artistic legitimation, as if it came as a normative activity – a sort of decree – from an above authority, in Becker's view the process is driven bottom-up and emerges from an entire set of practical activities grounded in social interaction. Accordingly, for the American sociologist aesthetic appreciation depends on a convention among individuals of a specific reference group, therefore representing the outcome of social legitimacy (Becker 2008, 39).

Artworks would thus be joint products, emerging from the cooperation of various people that by common agreement attribute art status, artists being only one link in the chain. These considerations would appear consistent with Danto's view on art world individuals and the legitimation process that sets it going (Danto 2008), however, it is important to discern these two positions. Indeed, in his writings Danto rather points at the art world's essence, not at its concrete sociological structure or institutional process. It appears clear that his take on the art world is especially theoretical – or one may dare to say philosophical. In Becker's definition instead the art world is very real, made of individuals and groups that interact at several levels, although the borders might be unclear. Furthermore, Becker insists there are several art worlds, though intended as all comprehensive subsets that include all people linked to the production process of art. This would acknowledge the existence of other motivations that foster art's evolution – such as ideological attitudes and collective stances – besides those taken into consideration by Bourdieu inside the artistic field, being individualism and personal advantage (Heinich 1999, 27-28).

If art worlds are to be understood as networks of cooperating people, Becker maintains they have no clear-cut boundaries, since there is always a larger group of supporters that may not directly interfere with the artistic process, although they are still necessary for the production to take place (Becker 2008, 35). In his words, "the line drawn to separate the world from what is not part of it is an analytic convenience, not something that exists in nature" (376). Pursuing this type of reasoning, scholars – particularly sociologists, he maintains – should not dare making distinctions between art worlds, trying to set definitive borders between them. On the contrary, they should rather help to understand how people involved in an art world distinguish between art and what is not, as they themselves appear to devote much time to this basic issue (36). Becker agrees with Bourdieu over the legitimising process that is at stake in any art world, hence admitting that some members of society control the application of the honorific term 'art' with all due advantages. However, he argues there are several participants, who reversely don't bother to have their production to be labelled as such and are able to move between art worlds (37).

The American sociologist stigmatises the idea of field, exactly because it makes actions and reactions in art appear unavoidable, as if it they were physical forces (Becker 2008, 374). On the contrary, he argues that the metaphor of world

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simply contains people caught in the middle of doing what they usually do in the arts, taking into account any interdependency with other people in the same estate. The basic difference turns out to be the relative freedom of all participants in the arts, who could well decide to move from one world to another, in case they would see their ambitions failing or blocked (378). Eventually, while Bourdieu's model of the art field heavily relies on an endemic struggle between its members, Becker would rather integrate conflict as a mere contingency in the course of actions in an interrelated network.

3 Boundaries and Border Control in the Arts

Going back to the analysis of borders and gatekeepers in the arts, the previously discussed sociological approaches of Bourdieu and Becker appear respectively antithetical, such as to ask to take a stance on the former or the latter. Should one lean towards the notion of art field, being a closed circuit set on a zero sum game between legitimised insiders, or rather favour the definition of art world, understood as an extended entity characterised by a flexible network of cooperating people?

Regardless of the answer, it should be noted that the views of the two scholars don't show the entire picture, but rather describe how people in the arts are likely to behave. Neither Bourdieu nor Becker attempt to tell the reasons of particular conducts by its participants. Both agree that art is a product of consensus or struggle among members of a specific social grouping, but they leave the question unanswered as regards to how distinctions are made and who is entitled to do them. Becker himself admits that – on a practical level – differences are made and weighed out by the people of an art world, such that they must be recognised as a social group operating with relative autonomy (Becker 2008, 38). Hence, borders must exist between art and what is not, as well

as in between various art forms, although they shouldn't be thought as physical or unbreakable barriers. The attention must be drawn to the members of an art world or field, though particularly to the way these understand the definition of art and subsequently try to demarcate its boundaries.

Taking for granted that art operates within a group of people referring to it, be it more or less open to external interference, from now on the terms field and world will be used rather interchangeably. In fact, the focus is now set on the members of a specific discipline and on the way they come to define their own world, potentially reacting to outer determiners or new entrants, who might change the delimitations or balance of the considered field. Although the arts might often seem inscrutable as regards to their inner decision making process, as well as impenetrable for anybody who comes as a foreigner, there are some constants one can rely on to understand how participants define art. For instance it must be noted that there can be virtually infinite opinions on art, at least some of them being equally valid.[1] Indeed, if a possible definition of art depends on a subset of properties,[2] its differing combination would explain divergence in opinions among members of an art field, tough all may be legitimate in their own respect (Gaut 2000, 27-28). All participants in an art world are allowed to promote their own particular preferences, but the success of such an action depends largely on their acquired position and influence, as well as on the cooperating network they manage to intercept (37).

Hence opinions, which really count, are derived from influent members in a specific time and place, those who legitimately set and control the borders of a considered field. This doesn't mean, however, that the limits of an art world are unalterable. Quite the contrary, it is necessary to go beyond the mere description of a field and try to understand the intrinsic aims and motivations that explain its behavioural model in terms of fostered trends or shifting paradigms (Heinich 1999, 26). In fact, dominant members

[1] Moving from the philosophical teaching of Ludwig Wittgenstein, British philosopher Berys Gaut has come to the idea of art as a cluster-concept, which appears very useful to recognise the legitimacy of diverging opinions inside any given art field. Indeed, the scholar maintains the definition of art inside its very world depends on a subset of properties, which refer to individual or collective stances set in a specific time and place, such as taste, aesthetics, ideology, theory and belief (cf. Gaut 2000).

[2] Gaut advances a list of possible criteria to define an artwork, which: 1) possesses aesthetic properties such as beauty; 2) expresses emotions; 3) is intellectually challenging; 4) shows formal complexity and coherence; 5) has the capability of conveying an articulate meaning; 6) expresses a personal opinion; 7) employs imagination and creativity; 8) results out of the adoption of high competences; 9) is part of an already prominent art category; 10) is the product of artistic intention (2000, 28).

tend to keep their acquired position setting up a tight border control, but their artistic choices need not to be inherently conservative. Leading figures could instead foster artistic change just to stay ahead of times or simply to respond to turmoil in social, political or economic life and creed (Hauser 1983, 100). At this point it seems feasible to recognise various individuals or even more or less organised factions inside the artistic field, each of them pulling the definition of art towards their own criteria (Margolis 2000, 126-127).[3] The objective standing of such narratives and its initiators depends on how much influence they can gather within an art world. This process simultaneously creates boundary conditions: all that endorses the narrative lies inside the art field, the rest stays beyond and needs to organise itself around another narrative, if capable of doing so (Margolis 1999, 66).

Summing up, art worlds do possess gatekeepers and barriers, but they are far from representing closed circuits. It is possible to penetrate a certain field, as long as one is aware to be tested against those properties, which shape that very field – which could be interpreted as Bourdieu's *habitus*. On the other side, new entrants and border crossers could attempt to engage with these properties and supersede them with altered ones – which is in line with Becker's 'negotiation' process. These assumptions will now be proved against a specific study case.

4 Champions in their own Domain Seeking Consensus Elsewhere

True enough, once a field has been definitively conquered, vanquishers are often tempted to enter new territories or find another quest to fight for, even if leading to total disaster. Several examples in recent art history show this exact picture of excessive yearning: there are many visual artists who reached indisputable success in their own domain and – seemingly unsatisfied with what they already had achieved – tried to set out for a career in other fields. Such cases might be interrelated with the growing relevance bestowed to the artist's persona or image, rather than to the artworks produced, as happened throughout the second half of the twentieth cen-

tury. Heightened media exposure or personal mythologies are some of the options visual artists adopt to foster their own reputation. If individual branding – as it may be called – is effective in one field to reach unquestionable celebrity status, then it might even spill over to a different artistic arena (Mantoan 2015, 368-369).

In this respect, two of the most obvious cases in the late twentieth century are Jeff Koons and Julian Schnabel, although with alternate success. While the former achieved celebrity status in the visual arts and rather moved along its sidelines, overflowing mainly in advertisement and design (Jones 2015), the latter went from macho-painter to moviemaker running into disaster (Berger 2011, 73-88). The cases to be discussed here, however, are even more recent, as they took place in the last two decades and belong to the British art world. Indeed, the nineties have seen the rise of an entire generation of young artists from the United Kingdom that helped placing their country's visual art scene back into the epicentre of worldwide attention, which persists until today (cf. Stallabras 2006, Mantoan 2015). This loosely bound group of authors – specifically those of London and Glasgow – came to be known as young British artists or with the acronym YBA, which is a good example of successful branding in the arts (cf. Muir 2011). This generation flourished throughout the nineties and saw the quick rise into celebrity status of several young artists that were still in their late twenties or early thirties (cf. Collings 1997). The selected ones for this analysis are Damien Hirst, Steve McQueen and Douglas Gordon, who individually are among the best known of that period and still score high in international rankings for contemporary art. Furthermore, all three won the Turner Prize in the late nineties, which in that decade came to be the true barometer of British art and still is one the most important awards for visual artists. Furthermore, in 1996 they were all featured in a blockbuster show at London's Hayward Gallery to celebrate the centennial of cinema, alongside great British film directors. Eventually, they all tried to spill over to different fields at a point in their career, when they had reached a stable position in the front ranks of the contemporary art world. Before endeavouring in luxury catering, Damien Hirst took his stance on video mak-

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3   Enquiring about the essence of an artwork, American philosopher Joseph Margolis departs exactly from this point arguing: "what counts as objectivity is – ineluctably – a reasoned artefact of how we choose to discipline our truth-claims" (1999, 59). Even considering art from an ontological perspective leads to the awareness that the peculiarity of every artificial object consists in the intentionality of its production (2000, 125).

ing, while Steve McQueen progressively entered proper movie business and Douglas Gordon just recently tried to comment on experimental theatre. However, their attempts represent examples of diverging fortune, since only McQueen succeeded in the new field, while on the contrary his colleagues epically failed.

5 Damien Hirst or the Shooting Star of Video Making

To start with the more obvious one, Damien Hirst rose into prominence at the beginning of the nineties with some very provocative installations featuring dead or live animals.[4] His apparently unstoppable career proceeded upwards to win the Turner Prize in 1995 at the age of 31 and later expand his geographical domain into the US art market thanks to star dealer Larry Gagosian. At the peak of his notoriety he seriously considered entering new artistic territories, as he was very attracted by video making and the movie industry (Muir 2011, 187). Between the years 1995 and 1996 he was given two good opportunities in this regards that he immediately tried to exploit: the first was a video clip for the celebrated British rock band Blur, the second was a short-film commissioned by the Hayward Gallery in London for the centennial celebration of cinema (Mantoan 2015, 332-342). While the music clip for the song *Country House* was nominated best video clip at the Brit Awards in 1996, although of quite poor quality, the piece presented at the group show Spellbound to commemorate the intersection between art and cinema was universally panned. However, the fault was not solely on Hirst's part, since the curators of the Hayward Gallery had clearly included him to have the fresh Turner Prize winner to boost the exhibition's mass media coverage.[5] In fact, many critics – such as John McEwan[6] and Kevin Jackson[7] – stigmatised that Hirst's alleged cin-

ematic experience was quite farfetched and his involvement in Spellbound rather meant to turn the exhibition into a blockbuster event. Set to be titled *Is Mr. Death in?*, Hirst's anagram, the final piece was called *Hanging Around* and featured a kind of polygamist drug dealer, caught while wandering around London parties and apparently causing death outbursts wherever he dropped by. The clip was accompanied by a fashionable Britpop soundtrack, while the plot consisted of a multitude of horrific deceases soaked in Hirstian symbols: raw meat, electrocuted insects and colourful spot-dresses. Remarkably, critics were apparently undivided in rejecting Hirst's first attempt of serious filmmaking, since *Hanging Around* faced the negative barrage even of loyal fans (Miur 2011, 341). It suffices to go over the various accounts to realise he had really missed the target, as epitomised by influent critic William Feaver: "By MTV standard, Hirst could be the next Francis Ford Coppola" (Feaver 1996). To art historian Julian Stallabrass (2006, 99) the short film was indeed negligible, though *New York Times* critic Michael Kimmelmann (1996) maintained Hirst had only done what publicity-hound artists did at the time – that is trying to spill over into new sectors and expand their personal brand. As a matter of facts, Hirst had planned to direct a real movie in order to plunge into the field of cinema, though unpredictably his shortcomings with *Hanging Around* stopped any ambition of a cinematic career (Muir 2011, 187).

The above example appears to be paramount for a border crosser who does not fit into the *habitus* of the new domain. In fact, lacking all basic qualities and competences to become a serious filmmaker, Hirst hoped to access the new field at high level simply by transferring his reputation. In a way, he attempted to do what advertising does with movie stars and pop singers, which is exploiting celebrity status to sell a specific product. In this case, however, the product in question

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4 The most obvious example is *The Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (1992), the famous pickled tiger shark in a formaldehyde glass case created for collector Charles Saatchi.

5 The press release offered on the opening day leaves no doubt that the organisers had consciously planned this effect: "First there was Britpop. Now Britart along with Britfilm are talking the world by storm. [...] Hot on the heels of his pop video for Blur, Damien Hirst presents his first ever narrative film." (Feaver 1996)

6 "Spellbound opened last week at the Hayward Gallery, 100 years to the day from the first film screening in Britain. Damien Hirst, the art world's current milch cow, is inevitably one of the artists invited to commemorate this historic event" (McEwan 1996)

7 "Much of the publicity for Spellbound has been centred on one of the short films commissioned by its curators, Ian Christie and Philip Dodd – a Tales of the Unexpected-style piece originally titled 'Is Mr. Death in?', an anagram for the name of its director, Damien Hirst, of whom you may have heard." (Jackson 1996)

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was Hirst himself and that would not suffice to access a different art field. Even his clip for Blur is remembered today as one of the oddest and maybe worst music videos in pop history (Burrows 2012). Hirst didn't even get to the point, where he could negotiate standards or properties in the entering domain: gatekeepers stopped him even before going further into the field, just because he had gone wrong with the required *habitus*.

6 Steve McQueen or the Slow-Burner at the Oscars

Curiously, it would be another young contributor to Spellbound to later succeed in becoming a renowned film director. Steve McQueen presented the clip *Stage* (1996), showing he was already working with video art years before being awarded the Turner Prize in 1999. *Stage* was a black and white feature film of a white woman and an African man – the artist himself – performing a silent choreography, though never touching each other. The shots had a decidedly sculptural effect, lingering on light and shadow details of the two whirling bodies. McQueen made a good impression, especially when compared to the rather unconvincing projects of older contributors to the Hayward show (Mantoan 2015, 339). Besides his appropriateness for the exhibition theme, critics praised his work, which demonstrated the better ability of proper video artists to engage with cinema in the visual arts in a more cogent and inventive way (Sladen 1996). After the favourable critique he had earned presenting this piece alongside star directors such as Ridley Scott, Terry Gilliam and Peter Greenaway – who were also featured in Spellbound – Steve McQueen was encouraged to properly enter the movie business. However, he did so one step at a time and first engaged with paramount moments of cinematic history, as if he wanted to acquire all fundamentals before moving into serious film projects. In fact, in 1997 he produced *Deadpan*, a partial remake of Buster Keaton's *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* (1928), enacting the well-known shot of a collapsing facade with Keaton standing exactly on the spot of an open window. With *Drumroll* (1998) he then placed a camera in a barrel being rolled

through the streets of Manhattan. The Turner Prize jury of 1999 mentioned exactly these filmic achievements to justify McQueen's victory: "Steve McQueen was shortlisted for his exhibition at the ICA which included his film piece *Deadpan* 1997 and a major new video installation *Drumroll* 1998. In awarding him the prize the jury admired the poetry and clarity of his vision, the range of his work, its emotional intensity and economy of means. They were excited by his continuing intellectual and technical evolution" (Tate Press release 1999). From this moment onwards McQueen progressively approached the film industry trying to instil a fine art sensibility to cinema or using film as another tool for his art,[8] rather than trying to breach in at once (cf. Brooker in Thorpe 2014). It wasn't until nine years later that he ventured the new sector with his first feature film *Hunger* (2008), based on the true story of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands, showing a genuine interest for research based projects and long neglected historical episodes (Grant 2011). The movie already earned him a prize at the Cannes Film Festival, while the next project would make him even more acclaimed in the movie industry, since with *Shame* (2011) he shot the life of a sex addict, starring Michael Fassbender for the second time. Later McQueen turned again to untended stories uncovering the biography of freeborn and then enslaved Solomon Northup, which became his Oscar winning *12 Years a Slave* (2013). With this enormous achievement Steve McQueen became the first black director ever to win the Best Picture award and is now rightly considered one of the world's most refined filmmakers, having completed his successful breach into the new art field. Although he still doesn't see any division between his work as a visual artist and a film director, more recently he quietly withdrew his name from consideration for the 2014 edition of the Hugo Boss Prize at the Guggenheim Museum, apparently being to busy with his last film's promotion (Thorpe 2014).

This example clearly shows how a border crosser might be accepted into new territories: first of all McQueen downgraded the importance of his reputation as a visual artist, knowing that it might hinder rather than favor his ascent in the movie business. Secondly, he paved his way into the new domain showing an apparently humble

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8   "But Steve [McQueen] and Douglas Gordon [...] were both influenced by the artists Bruce Nauman and Bill Viola and wanted to expand on their ideas. It was clear they wanted to test the way in which narrative film could exist as an art form. They had quite a different route from Schnabel, who just suddenly surprised us with his rare talent in film". (Muir in Thorpe 2014)

disposition, which definitely helped him to acquire all basic competences needed and mature a signature style in the pierced field. McQueen took his time to adapt to the required *habitus* in the movie sector and then tried to 'negotiate' over the themes he could fit into a commercial feature film, since he was drawn towards rather unconventional and disturbing stories centered on deprivation, addiction and violence. He may be seen as a slow-burner for the cinema industry, though this attitude helped him to refine a strong and consistent proposal for the new artistic field he wanted to access.

7 Douglas Gordon or the Convict Iconoclast in Theatre

Still at the Spellbound exhibition of 1996, it was another visual artist working with video that would make a big impression for his acquired ability to exploit cinematic history. Remarkably, the only piece critics were apparently undivided over was *24 Hour Psycho* (1993), a slowed down projection of the famous Hitchcock thriller by Douglas Gordon. Despite its formal simplicity the young Glaswegian artist created a striking atmosphere at the entrance of the Hayward Gallery thanks to a screen suspended over the audience showing the movie one frame after another. A unanimous hail of appraisal pushed Gordon towards the Turner Prize finale of 1996, which he would unexpectedly win as the first ever Scotsman (Mantoan 2015, 343-361). Since this event he has consistently kept working between video installations and filmmaking, although never really entering proper movie business, except for his conceptual documentary on French football star Zinedine Zidane shot with Philippe Parreno in 2006 (cf. Fried 2008). More recently, Gordon ventured into contemporary theatre, which is apparently very distant from his usual domain. Likely stimulated by his relationship to singer and actress Ruth Rosenfeld of Volksbühne Berlin, the Glaswegian artist started several theatrical projects across Europe, the most important being a new play commissioned for the Manchester International Festival in 2015 (Auld 2015). Starring actress Charlotte Rampling and eminent pianist Hélène Grimaud, *Neck of the Woods* premiered on July 10, 2015 and was supposed to

definitively launch Gordon's career in the theatre world. However, what was announced as an all-stars cross-boundary event – in which performance and visual arts, as well as classical music and TV serials soundtracks were interlaced – resolved in partial disaster, if the opinions of commentators and reviews after the show shall be taken as veritable. The project was an attempt to re-tell the fairytale of *Little Red Riding Hood*, though planned by Gordon to be as frightening to adults as the original one is for children.[9] Hence, he staged a sort of medley derived from his personal obsessions – like fear of darkness, rinsing blood, howling wolves etc. – presented in such a form that it would become quite extreme to endure both for performers as well as for the audience. In fact, in the first ten minutes of the show Gordon simply left the public in a pitch-black theatre hall with sounds of chopping wood, not even the emergency lights were allowed (Lemke-Matwey 2015). Like sitting alone in the woods at night, this unusual and uncomfortable situation caused opposing reactions in the audience: outburst of laughter versus hysteric desertion of the room. The rest of the play was a sequence of sounds and pictures, with Rampling laying on the ground speaking to a dead wolf and Grimaud playing her pieces on the piano. The show suffered several technical problems on the night of the premiere, since the standard of interaction between light and sound effects was very complicated. However, the critics would not be bothered by technicalities and most reviews pointed out that the performance was hardly a theatre play (Day 2015). One theatre critic would call it to have "the unmistakable whiff of a vanity project" (Allfree 2015) and some described it as "so old-fashioned you wonder if Gordon has any familiarity at all with contemporary theater" (Gardner 2015). The failure was apparently worsened by an act of vandalism, as it was later described on the papers, that Gordon performed with an axe on the concrete wall of the theatre (Grierson 2015). On the second night of the play he had indeed axed a partition leading to the stage, in order to draw the claws of a wolf. Far from being a deliberate damage for a bad review, however, this episode describes exactly the way Gordon intended his take on theatre. During art education at Glasgow School of Art he had indeed practiced many durational performances

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9   "For me, the most important thing is to be as close to the dark as possible, and then, when the lights come up, it should be the same as when you're a child, when you have a nightmare and then you wake up and you feel safe and then you're frightened to go back to sleep" (Gordon in Auld 2015).

that often went into the extremes, while years later he would disfigure posters of Hollywood celebrities (Mantoan 2015, 111-134). Hence, he approached contemporary theatre in his peculiar iconoclastic way challenging the very structure of the theatrical experience. He might have lacked basic knowledge on recent developments of the field, as critics pointed out, but in fact he deliberately set out to dismantle theatre by tearing down its borders to other disciplines. His iconoclastic intentions or intentional failure only partly succeeded, since in an art gallery the axing would have been seen as an exquisite performance, in theatre he had to face repair bill for the damaged wall.

This last example is much more complicated than the ones previously described, since it was hardly a problem of *habitus*. Although many critics refused to consider the Glaswegian artists a rightful member of the theatrical sector, it was probably an easy stratagem to dismantle the performance to the roots without engaging in Gordon's provocation to contemporary theatre. In fact, he had intentionally challenged the way people experience theatre, which is usually by keeping a distance to the fictional events on stage. By blinding and physically exhausting the audience Gordon somehow tried to drag the viewers into the performance, violently breaking theatrical conventions. The artist's intentional failure ended up as a proper one – at least in the opinion of various theatre gatekeepers – since he had deliberately skipped the 're-negotiation' process of theatrical conventions.

8　Any Golden Rules for Border Crossing?

Retracing the previous three attempts of border crossing in recent British art, the paper might have helped to understand whether there are borders between art worlds and what conditions may grant access to a new field or instead lead to utter rejection. As the brief theoretical digression has shown, the existence of boundaries that set artistic disciplines apart will always be debated by scholars, though for artists these frontiers appear to be quite real. Despite the difference in attitude and the divergent success rate, all three mentioned authors were absolutely aware of a Pale between visual arts and the field they intended to pierce through. Furthermore, the three artists themselves showed divergent attitudes towards the gatekeepers of the new domain, which may partly explain the

alternate success of their attempt to enter the alien branch. Hirst presumed he could enter film-making just by transferring his reputation, as a pop singer would do with a lingerie line, although he lacked all basic competences and eventually had to retreat. Despite the incompetency claims by theatre critics, Gordon did instead possess a thorough knowledge of live performance, but he irreverently preferred to challenge the new field's gatekeeper by introducing his iconoclastic methods, which stumbled on harsh resistance. Only McQueen chose a rather low profile to engage with the new domain, starting at cinema's outskirts and slowly paving his way towards the top.

So if borders exist for professionals of various art worlds, they can hardly be ignored, but rather need to be dealt with, in case an artist who has been successful in his field of origin intends to spill over. The above analysis seems to confirm that any art field is a quite closed circuit into which access is not easily granted. As Bourdieu would put it, possessing the *habitus* that is required by the specific art field is definitely a key factor for border crossers. The lack of the right *habitus* could indeed transform the access restrictions into insurmountable barriers, because gatekeepers – or of those who are entrusted with legitimation and power over a field – set out for a tight border control. Another key issue appears to be the 'negotiation of conventions', since Becker is right in recognising that the definition of art may change in time together with the shape of its world. Hence, boundaries can be bridged whenever constitutional conditions of a given field are successfully negotiated, re-negotiated or broken. So far, the evidence taken into consideration allows one to argue that celebrity status does not grant *per se* access to any other art field.

The previous cases surely don't make a general rule, but they describe some of the possible tools or difficulties for artists, when approaching foreign territories. Furthermore, they provide an interesting backdrop against which to prove the theoretical assumptions of Bourdieu and Becker, which seem consistent for anyone trying to access an artistic discipline – be it a border crosser or simply a new entrant. Hopefully, this paper may have offered new incentives to theoreticians, philosophers, sociologists and other scholars of the arts to further deepen the research on the borders and gatekeepers of art worlds or art fields.

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