

Contemporary AESTHETICS

An international, interdisciplinary, peer- and blind-reviewed open-access online journal of contemporary theory, research, and application in aesthetics.

[Home](#)

Volume: Uncategorized

[The
Journal](#)

Donate to CA

[Call For
Papers](#)

The free access to this article was made possible by support from readers like you. Please consider donating any amount to help defray the cost of our operation.

[About
CA](#)

[Submissi
ons](#)

Transculturality as the “very elixir of human existence”: Wolfgang Welsch’s Masterstroke about the Transdisciplinarity of the Arts, the Mixed Character of All Cultures, and the Ambivalence of Human Civilization

Dagmar Reichardt

[Contact
CA](#)

[Editorial
Board](#)

[Subscrib
e](#)

[Browse
Archive](#)

[Donate
to CA](#)

[Friends
of CA](#)

[Search](#)

Search ...

Search

Abstract

This critique rereads Welsch’s book, *We Have Always Been Transcultural*, chapter by chapter, by questioning his relationship to art and philosophy before resuming Welsch’s main anthropological approaches, transcultural input, and core philosophical theses. The present review ultimately concludes that this book occupies a special position in cultural studies, aesthetic criticism, and postmodern philosophy. Ultimately, this latest work of Wolfgang Welsch in English language, which has noticeably matured over decades, is a masterpiece that could have reinvented nothing less than the disciplines of epistemology and cultural philosophy.

Key Words

aesthetics; anthropology; cultural philosophy; history of art; network metaphor; Otherness; transcultural

1. "The Arts" in the plural

The German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch (b. 1946) chose a thesis for the main title of his new book, *We Have Always Been Transcultural*,^[1] and a telling subtitle: *The Arts as an Example*. The latter with good reason, for art was, and still is, Welsch's "great love," as he revealed in an interview, released in the frame of the 59th Venice Biennale 2022,^[2] focusing on transdisciplinarity and the concept of 'transculturality,' which he has introduced programmatically into philosophy and cultural studies since 1992.^[3]

At the same time, the subtitle of his new publication, *The Arts as an Example*, also represents a promise; namely, of the diverse transdisciplinary possibilities for understanding and communication that open up when one seeks to illuminate other subjects of study transculturally. 'The arts' in the plural encompasses far more than just the visual arts, although the latter has remained particularly dear to Welsch's heart since his time as a student in Munich and Würzburg, Southern Germany. Yet even a cursory glance at the volume, published originally in the same year in German by the Swiss publishing house Schwabe Verlag (2024),^[4] reveals that the author of this worthwhile nonfiction book, *We Have Always Been Transcultural*, a native of Steinenhausen (Kulmbach), Bavaria, and now living in Berlin as a professor emeritus of philosophy, by no means limits his numerous case studies to a single art discipline.

Rather, Wolfgang Welsch applies the term 'transculturality,' which he gradually introduced into German- and English-speaking academic circles in the 1990s, to many sociocultural forms of expression and aesthetic constructs, within a broad overview of historical thought patterns and internationally renowned works of art and culture. But why should we even concern ourselves with transculturality? One reason may be that we need a transcultural understanding for better, more differentiated, nonviolent, and at the same time, critical communication skills more than ever in a world that is growing together, is becoming increasingly digital, and is facing many challenges—and currently, in some cases, capitulating to them. Welsch

argues that 'the arts' in plural, as announced in his subtitle —thus obviously including the "art of living" or our "everyday culture of the present," as Welsch himself puts it (201)[5]—have been hybrid since the dawn of human history, seven thousand years, which this book roughly encompasses, and that an awareness of this nature can help us understand, appreciate, and promote art and culture in their necessary importance. In other words, our lives—and survival—can be more successful if we collectively internalize that everything is connected to everything else and that we are stronger together. Then we will achieve more beneficial effects both for ourselves and for the global community.

To support this basic thesis, Welsch elsewhere has developed his equally analog and digitally compelling "net" (*Vernetzung, Netz*) or "network" metaphor.[6] The author and inventor of the concept of transculturality has placed this vivid figurative language device at the center of his interest in his most recent book, which he wrote and published after *We Have Always Been Transcultural*, drawing on its symbolic content to create the culturally historical and philosophically interpreted vision of a "world as a netting." [7] However, in *We Have Always Been Transcultural*, he tends to waste fewer words on the theoretical background and instead delves primarily into the material, prismatic world of cultural ability and expression on a human and global level. By consistently applying the "networking" metaphor[8]—both paradigmatically and practically—Welsch demonstrates the transcultural aspects conveyed by a sequence of selective, concrete artists, paintings, sculptures, buildings, and other artifacts, some of which may be more familiar to some readers but less so to others. While the first chapter, Chapter I, is still dedicated to theoretical premises, the main part of his book focuses on the figurative arts and is structured comparatively in the following nine of a total ten chapters, Chapters II-X, with numerous images and easily readable accompanying texts. The latter are basically presented to the reader in a diachronic and keyword-related manner, starting this historical armchair tour with Chapter II, from *The Transcultural Roots of Greece* (Chapter II, Section 1), to our present-day *Transcultural Everyday Life* (Chapter X). But first, Welsch briefly addresses his personal approach to transculturality as a school of thought in his *Preface* (Preface, IX-X) as well as

the last eighty years of historical clarification of the term 'transcultural' (Chapter I).

In his *Preface*, the author states that transculturality has shaped culture per se "since time immemorial" (*Preface*, IX) and thus represents a characteristic of culture or rather of the "various branches of art, from painting, sculpture, printmaking, and architecture to literature, theater, dance, comics, film, and music" (*Preface*, X). According to Welsch, the arts in the plural have always been particularly open-minded, unprejudiced, and curious about transcultural manifestations, transformative contacts, and the potential of humans to create or produce all kinds of mixtures. Quite *en passant*, the philosopher revolutionizes the (narrowly defined) concept of 'art' in the singular and insists instead on the extended plural form, which is more common in the Romance (*Les arts* in French or *Le arti* in Italian) and English (the arts) language areas than, for instance, in his mother tongue German and in German-speaking cultural spaces, in which the concept of *Kunst* in the singular tends to predominate rather than that of *Künste* in the plural.^[9] Why he favors 'arts' over 'art' here becomes immediately clear to the reader: The reason is transcultural, transdisciplinary, and transmedial.

2. The mixed character of all cultures

Welsch makes it clear right at the beginning of his *Introduction* (1-14) that every culture is hybrid and always exhibits a "mixed character" (2ff.). After distinguishing the concepts of multiculturalism and interculturality from transculturality, and the latter (indirectly) from transnationalism, a term frequently used today in academic circles in the Anglo-Saxon world (4f.), Welsch states that "there are two fundamentally different kinds of transculturation" (6). One refers to a historically emerging composite of "different initial cultures" (which, through external influences and internal transformations, are reassembled into constantly changing kaleidoscope images), the other to so-called "universals," that is, the "universality" (183) of our history(ies) or to "a universal layer of depth common to all cultures" (183), which Welsch elaborates on in Chapter IX (*Universals as the Depth Basis of Transculturality*). According to Welsch, both manifestations are accompanied by the fact that more and more people must consensually assume responsibility and commit themselves to transforming "integration achievements" (7) into supporting cornerstones of culture.

In several *Glimpses into History* (*Introduction*, 5; 7-10), Welsch begins by citing Europe as a prime example of a historical amalgam, then directly relating it to the Asian continent by tracing, for example, the circulation of transcultural connections between Japan, ancient Greece, Roman art, and India (cf. 7-8). Welsch's intellectual journey through the history of humanity, which spans and encompasses all subsequent examples of transculturality, continues in the same breath in Africa, South America, and North America, convincingly demonstrating "movement, hybridization and interweaving" as "the matrix of cultures" (10). This introductory cultural panorama of a brief history of humankind's worldwide migrations and resulting sociocultural entanglements memorably demonstrates that—and to what extent—we are dealing with a history of hybridity.

Although the author—understandably—cannot fully resist a Eurocentric starting point, Welsch does not shy away from (historically well-founded) self-criticism, for example, when he soberly and mercilessly summarizes the European formula for success in the course of the settlement of North America with the triad of conquer – exterminate – enslave.

From human history, Welsch logically deduces to *The Mixed Constitution of the Human* (*Introduction*, 6; 10-13): For the first time, the German Anthropocene researcher not only explicitly presents the critical transcultural dark sides of "oppression and exploitation" (10) throughout world history. Rather, at this point, he also explicitly refers argumentatively for the first time to "Cuban identity, as analyzed by Fernando Ortiz" (10), which he returns to in his subsequent Chapter I. Welsch repeatedly emphasizes the benefits of a transculturally shaped global community. He contrasts humanity's oppressive instinct for power with our desire for freedom. It is also always important to consider "the possibility that better things come out of worse," he says, and to confront both realities: "the reprehensibility of oppression and the fact that it does not always have the last word" (11).

3. Every culture is a history of borrowing from outside

Welsch's constructive approach does not flinch from the problematic aspects of humanity's "history of horror" (10). They range from socially challenging aspects of migration to climate change, including a "climate migration"

predicted by the author, and even “climate wars” (11), and the colonial ambivalences inherent in looted art, all the way to the difficult relationship between the hegemonic drive for power and the human desire for peace. Welsch’s idea of transculturality as a cosmopolitan community consistently shines through, for example, in the example of Alexander the Great. How refreshing, but also obviously challenging, this philosophical and cultural studies approach becomes apparent in the final section of his *Introduction*, which he devotes to *The Accusation of “Appropriation”* (*Introduction*, 7; 13-14).

Why Welsch seems to feel called upon to preemptively exonerate his line of argument—which is in fact multifaceted, postmodern, contemporary, ethically groundbreaking, and, as the subsequent chapters of the book demonstrate, highly fascinating—is likely explained by his direct experience with critical questioning or hostility, which opponents, even in academia, regularly use to defend themselves against progressive competition. The philosopher and cultural critic Welsch here anticipates the possible objection that transculturality might seek to advocate appropriation; that is, the unlawful, even hostile takeover of cultural goods, thus “illegitimacy” or “cultural theft” (13). In light of his initial thesis, according to which the “whole history of culture is a history of cultural borrowings” (13), the writer and thinker Welsch here dramaturgically reaffirms his “not monolithic, but mixed” (14) concept of culture. Rounding off his programmatic *Introduction* and skillfully emphasizing his transversal thinking *Across the Arts and Continents* (*Introduction*, 8; 14), the reader remains optimistically oriented toward “our world of mixtures” (12) with the prospect of the equally rich and encouraging palette of artistic works that fill Welsch’s oeuvre. As a result, at the transition to the corpus of material he has accumulated for illustrative purposes over years, if not decades, in both his *Preface* and his *Introduction*, Welsch significantly revives the disciplines of epistemology and cultural philosophy—if not reinventing both entirely with this book.

4. From Fernando Ortiz to Léopold Senghor to Simone Leigh

The full strength of Welsch’s transcultural approach unfolds in Chapter I on *The Own and the Other* (15-37). Not only Europe, but also—just as well and just as fruitfully—Cuba are two possible starting points for countless outstanding

transcultural analyses and perspectives within a history of infinite breadth and depth of ever-increasing transcultural networking, expansion, intersections, and superimpositions. It is entirely dedicated to the example of Cuba as the “paradigm” of a transcultural melting pot par excellence (15). Welsch also closes a research gap here: He refers for the first time to the originator of the *transculturation (transculturación)* neologism (1940), Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969). The fact that the German humanities scholar, artist, and author Welsch was completely unaware of the Cuban politician, diplomat, lawyer, ethnomusicologist, and anthropologist Fernando Ortiz when he coined the term ‘*transculturality*’ (*Transkulturalität*) in 1992[10] is something he now rectifies right at the beginning of the first section of Chapter I (Chapter I, 1; 15-17), by giving Ortiz a prominent place at the beginning of the book and acknowledging his significance and also his *Cuban Paradigm* (15), after having already referred to this “classic” (15) in his *Introduction* (10).

In the context of Ortiz, Welsch addresses the cultural shift of transculturality as a “mutual give and take” (15) and the establishment of a “new reality” (16) since the 1920s. In Welsch’s view, Ortiz has uncovered the “path of transculturation” (17) in Cuban tradition and Afro-Cuban music, whereby the transcultural parameter was accompanied by a significant revaluation of Africa. In continuation of this discourse bridging cultural boundaries, Welsch devotes the remaining eight subchapters, into which he has divided Chapter I for reader-friendly purposes, to further cultural spaces. These imaginatively lead the reader from Cuba to the cultural melting pot of Brazil and to Oswald de Andrade’s *Anthropophagic Manifesto (Manifesto Antropófago, 1928)* as an approach to a “new Brazilian self-confidence” (18). Welsch then draws our attention to Léopold Senghor’s emancipatory *Négritude* movement in the service of “a humanistic world culture” (20), which continues to resonate today, for example, in the decentralized, anti-racist protests of the Black Lives Matter network. After highlighting “Africa’s specific contribution to world culture” (20), Welsch transports the reader to Tahiti and to Paul Gauguin’s painterly manifest South Sea dreams, in which the French artist paradigmatically imagined, as per Welsch, “the foreign [...] after one’s own ideal” (21).

While in Gauguin's art, escapism, eroticism, and exoticism merge into a triad of egocentric transculturality, imagination, and stereotypes beyond politics and society, creating images of a paradisiacal "counter-Europe," Welsch discovers in Pablo Picasso's painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907) a significant, progressive transculturality inspired by African masks and sculptures. In his works, Picasso achieves a true, almost natural-seeming integration of foreign art into his own. In the image of the cofounder of Cubism, painting becomes a "form of magic" (25), a mediator between identity and otherness, the German researcher of transculturality says. He further finds such pioneering achievements and trendsetting feats in the field of music: Based on Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 in E minor, *From the New World*, Op. 95 (1893), which is still performed and appreciated worldwide today, Welsch recognizes Dvořák's "turning to indigenous sources" (27) of North American music. The Czech composer of the late Romantic period—like Ortiz later in Cuba—locates the musical roots of the US, among other things, in the history of both Black people originating from Africa and the Native Americans, to whom Dvořák, according to Welsch, thankfully "gave [...] a voice" (29). While Dvořák's interpretation of transculturality consists in "the imperative to recognize the other" (29), the Italian opera composer Giacomo Puccini, eleven years later, "studied Japanese music intensively" (30) in his famous *Madama Butterfly* (1904). Almost simultaneously, Gustav Mahler set ancient Chinese poems to music in his *Song of the Earth (Das Lied von der Erde)*, 1908), in which he musically overwrote the spiritual content of the lyric to unite East and West, to merge Europe and the Far East, and thus make this very "song" his "most personal work" (34).

Chapter I concludes symptomatically with Welsch's introduction of the US artist of Jamaican origin, Simone Leigh, who was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion (*Leone d'Oro*) at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, exhibiting an artwork (*Sphinx*, 2022) that Welsch calls a "Black Sphinx" (36). This sculpture, in Welsch's first major arc from Ortiz to postmodernism, exemplifies not only Black women's search for identity, their "power and strength" (37), and the construction of Black female subjectivity, but also a crossover of the Pyramids of Giza and life in New York's ethnically and socially diverse neighborhood of Brooklyn. The epitome of an "outstanding example of transcultural design" (37), Leigh's work, in

Welsch's eyes, materializes the emancipatory claim of transculturality in the form of a beauty, sovereignty, and elegance that can almost be described as perfect.

5. Techniques of reframing transculturality

A similarly original, networked overview of analogous examples awaits the reader in Welsch's remaining nine chapters of the volume. Here, the author clearly draws on a richly filled toolbox to present us with subtly fluid realizations and illuminations of transcultural parameters in a wide variety of art forms. As in Chapter I (*The Own and the Other*), Welsch continues to choose a freely arranged and critically preselected thematic focus. It is through this lens that transculturality is to be conceptually examined, confirmed and performatively symbolized from diverse perspectives as an innovative potential.

At this point, a brief foray into Welsch's collected examples of the arts may provide a taste of one's own reading and encourage closer study. In Chapter II (38-59), Welsch cites several outstanding works of art and cultural contributions on the main topic of *Transformations* to examine more closely *The Transcultural Roots of Greece* (Chapter II, 1; 38-48), Europe, and the Asian duo of *China and Japan: the Foreign Becomes the Own* (Chapter II, 4; 54-59). In Chapter III (60-78), the art historian questions specifically the *Transcultural Continuation of Antiquity* by unmasking Roman sculptures as models for Albrecht Dürer's engraving of *Adam and Eve* (1504) and by transformatively rereading the literary adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* in James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* (1922). The *Inspirations* (79) that play a role in such "re-enactment" and "re-framing" or "re-reading" techniques are the core theme of Chapter IV, which concludes with the example of the transcultural theater of Robert Wilson and Ariane Mnouchkine (Chapter IV, 5; 96-99). In a *Transcultural by Constitution* mode, the reader then moves in Chapter V (100-110) to literary interrelationships in the works of Carl Zuckmayer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Henrik Ibsen, and Haruki Murakami, some of whom Welsch had already presented individual studies on in separately published essays prior to his book.

Welsch's sixth chapter is concerned with *Coming Together* (Chapter VI, 111-139): for example, architecturally and/or museum-wise (as in the case of the Hagia Sophia, the Andalusian city of Córdoba, Gothic or postmodern architecture), and in music (examples: John Cage, Michael Jackson, or the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra), in the

Transcultural Reflections of contemporary design (Chapter VI, 7; 132-136), and in the theater of the Taiwanese Cloud Gate Dance Theatre. While Welsch's Chapter VII, *Problematic Aspects and Failures*, critically examines transculturality using four counterexamples, with reference to the art market, artworks addressing migration phenomena, a racist film example, and the Benin Bronzes, Chapter VIII brings together nine examples of transcultural *Transfers* (149-180). These include the contemporary example of the African translation, performance, and film adaptation of Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen* (149-152), Welsch's more detailed examination of culinary representations in Dutch art history and the globally interconnected history of food in his subchapter about the *Transculturality of Menus* (Chapter VIII, 6; 162-171), followed by his reflections about the *Human-Animal Difference* (Chapter VIII, 7; 171-176). Chapter IX is dedicated to the philosophical significance of the *Universals as the Depth Basis of Transculturality*—the examples cited come from the fields of film, music, theater, and architecture—and leads into the final chapter, Chapter X, which under the motto *Transcultural Everyday Life* (201-207, is entirely situated in the here and now—examples: jazz, hip-hop, manga.

6. Afterword and outlook: “More open, more understanding, more courageous”

In his *Afterword* (208-209), Welsch summarizes his methodological approach and points out the advantages and strengths that transculturality can bring about. These generally consist of an increase in the “possibilities for action, [...] horizons and overall liveliness” (208). Transculturality, writes Welsch, makes us “more open, more experiential, more understanding, and also more courageous” (208); in short, it is “the very elixir of human existence” (209). Notwithstanding the nationalist “headwind” and with all due respect for the human “desire for anchoring”—which does not exclude “plurality”—the Berlin-based philosopher of Bavarian origins concludes by emphasizing the importance “to be open to others” that results from transculturality (209). Conclusion: Without solidly united, global coexistence, humanity has no future.

Overall, Welsch's fascinating journey through transculturality and its cultural manifestations is characterized by the fact that this book contains a highly substantial, yet fluently written, easy-to-read, appealingly

designed, and personally discoverable selection of topics for the reader to expand upon. The impressive wealth of illustrations should inspire both transculturally educated experts and those aspiring readers, in addition to all lovers of art and culture, to reconsider, imitate, or pass on transcultural ways of thinking and viewing. The fact that Ortiz's theoretical integration occurs at such a late stage in Welsch's conception of transculturality is an advantage for this volume. This circumstance—curious in terms of production history, although not uncommon—demonstrates all the more clearly how much the tension between identity and alterity (or between the *Own* and the *Other* as in the title of Chapter I) had already been under discussion and awaiting further elaboration after the publication of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity and *Third Space* theory back in 1994.^[11] Welsch's almost contemporaneous personal response to this type of globally conducted theoretical negotiation consists in his seminal model of transculturality, which is as consistent and autonomous as it is innovative and groundbreaking. At the boundaries of his broad spectrum of applications of transculturality, further investigations, explorations, continuations of the lively transdisciplinary material, and ideational exchange in the *Third Space* are offered in the field of comparative Cultural Studies and at many other conceivable interfaces or points of contact.

The book, *We Have Always Been Transcultural: The Arts as an Example*, which is as convincingly argued as it is creatively stimulating, philosophically gripping, and—hopefully—practically transformative, not only introduces us to the intellectual world of Wolfgang Welsch and to fundamental timeless anthropological and aesthetical queries. Rather, it also shows us how much humanity has already created throughout cultural history, how diversely intertwined culturally shaped formats, individuals, and works actually are, and how we should mentally orient, rationally proceed, and, ideally, proactively mold the global culture that lies ahead of us and in whose constitution we have all long been directly or indirectly involved.

Before Welsch's reflections in his follow-up study on “the world as a netting” or “as a fabric” (cf. endnote 7) move from the visual arts to other creative ways of expression—this time, however, tending to focus less on material works of art and more on the creators behind them or, respectively, authors of written works such as artistic personalities themselves (Leonardo da Vinci, Tobey),

philosophers (Plato, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Whitehead, Wittgenstein, Deleuze & Guattari), classical authors (D'Alembert, Goethe), and early postmodern novelists (Gadda, Calvino)—the argumentation of his thesis that we have “always been transcultural” is a necessary premise for presenting “the world as fabric” or “netting” a year later as further evidence. The former work accordingly reveals his profound, extensive examination, philosophical maturity, and intensive engagement with exemplary, representative, illustrative documentation material.

We are dealing here with another turning point in Welsch's theoretical development regarding his invention and concept of *transculturality*, with a qualitative quantum leap in his culminating chain of argumentation—in short, with a true philosophical high point or quite simply a comprehensive masterstroke. The latter aims to explore paradigmatically the rich interconnections and diverse entanglements that constitute the transdisciplinarity of the arts, while at the same time taking a far-sighted and in-depth look at the mixed character of all cultures in their totality. *We Have Always Been Transcultural* certainly aims to raise questions about the challenging ambivalence of human civilizations, but these will only be taken up, examined, and addressed in detail in the follow-up volume. The fact that Welsch masterfully succeeds in proving the thesis formulated in the title of this book and delivers a convincing *quod erat demonstrandum*, must have been a concern of the German writer and philosopher for over thirty years. The result is a big hit and idea, a magnificent achievement and intellectual concept, in short: the sum total—at least so far—of Welsch's theory of transculturality.

Dagmar Reichardt
dagmarreichardt@hotmail.com

Dr. Dagmar Reichardt is a professor of Transcultural Studies and Creative Industries at the Latvian Academy of Culture (Riga). She has authored more than 400 publications on sociocultural studies, contemporary Italian studies, and comparative literary studies with a transcultural focus, and has been awarded the International Flaiano Prize (2007), the Medal of Cicero (2009), and the Premio Antonello da Messina Award (2022). She has initiated and co-organized over thirty international conferences and translated various literary works. Since 2009, she has been a proactive contributor to

the digital cultural magazine *KulturPort.De*, and since, a member of PEN Germany (Exil PEN). She applies transcultural methodology based on Wolfgang Welsch's work in various research fields and has systematically implemented it on an international academic level, particularly in Modern Romance and Italian studies since 2006, when she published the essay *On the Theory of a Transcultural Francophonie: Definition of its Position and Didactical Relevance* (2006) and edited the prizewinning collection *L'Europa che comincia e finisce: la Sicilia. Contributions to a Transcultural Approach to Sicilian Literature* (2006).

Published on ...

Cite this article: Dagmar Reichhardt, "Transculturality as the "very elixir of human existence": Wolfgang Welsch's Masterstroke about the Transdisciplinarity of the Arts, the Mixed Character of All Cultures, and the Ambivalence of Human Civilization," *Contemporary Aesthetics*, Volume 23 (2025), accessed date.

Endnotes

[1] Wolfgang Welsch, *We Have Always Been Transcultural: The Arts as an Example* (Brill, 2024).

[2] Dagmar Reichardt & Wolfgang Welsch, "Wolfgang Welsch über Transdisziplinarität, den 'Netzwerkcharakter aller Dinge' und die Biennale di Venezia 2022," *KulturPort.De*, 17 May 2022, <https://www.kulturport.de/blog/kulturmanagement/17857-wolfgang-welsch-ueber-transdisziplinaritaet-den-netzwerkcharakter-aller-dinge-und-die-biennale-di-venezia-2022.html>; [my translation].

[3] Wolfgang Welsch, "Transkulturalität. Lebensformen nach der Auflösung der Kulturen" (*Information Philosophie*, May 1992, 2: 5-20).

[4] Wolfgang Welsch, *Wir sind schon immer transkulturell gewesen: Das Beispiel der Künste* (Schwabe, 2024). N.B.: my present article is based on my first reading of this very original edition written by Welsch first in German (and only afterwards in English). Accordingly, I basically reverted to my book review that was published in German language in early 2025 (Dagmar Reichardt, "Wolfgang Welsch: 'Wir sind schon immer transkulturell gewesen'", *KulturPort.De*,

7 January 2025, <https://www.kulturport.de/blog/kulturmanagement/19469-wolfgang-welsch-wir-sind-schon-immer-transkulturell-gewesen.html#prettyPhoto>). For my present English-language version, this text has been translated, revised, and adapted to the slightly different book structure of Welsch's English title, *We Have Always Been Transcultural*, at Brill Academic Publishing. Overall, however, the content of Welsch's German- and English-language publications correspond almost verbatim, thus enabling me to focus primarily on language and editorial-cultural transfer issues in my review here as well.

[5] Here and in the following, I give the page numbers to which I refer directly in the main text in parentheses, with the relevant page numbers corresponding to those of the title by Wolfgang Welsch indicated in [1], above.

[6] Cf. Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. by Mike Featherstone & Scott Lash (Sage, 1999: 194-213, here: 200, https://welsch.uni-jena.de/papers/W_Welsch_Transculturality.html). In 1992, Welsch used the German lexeme *Vernetzung* in his first article introducing the term of 'transculturality' (*Transkulturalität*) and from then onwards continued to work with it as a metaphor to illustrate his concept for multimeshed and inclusive societies in postmodern times.

[7] Wolfgang Welsch, *Die Welt als Gewebe. Vom antiken Himmelszelt zur zeitgenössischen Netzwerk-Euphorie* (Amazon Italia Logistica, 2025).

[8] Welsch, *Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today*, l. c.: 197.

[9] Regarding the nexus between transcultural studies and Romance studies cf., the following two publications authored by Dagmar Reichardt: "Zur Theorie einer transkulturellen Frankophonie. Standortbestimmung und didaktische Relevanz," *PhiN – Philologie im Netz*, 38/2006, ed. by Paul Gévaudan et al. (15 October 2006: 32-51, <http://web.fu-berlin.de/phin/phin38/p38t2.htm>); and: *L'Europa che comincia e finisce: la Sicilia. Approcci transculturali alla letteratura siciliana. Beiträge zur transkulturellen Annäherung an die sizilianische Literatur. Contributions to a Transcultural Approach to Sicilian Literature*, ed. and with a preface by Dagmar Reichardt (Peter Lang, 2006).

[10] Welsch, "Transkulturalität. Lebensformen nach der Auflösung der Kulturen", I. c.: 5.

[11] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994).

Volume: Uncategorized | Author: Dagmar Reichardt

Edit

[Publisher](#) | [Permission to Reprint](#) | [Links](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Donate](#)

The author retains copyright for the article.

Downloading, copying in whole or in part, and distribution for scholarly or educational purposes are encouraged, provided full acknowledgement is made to *Contemporary Aesthetics* and to the authors of articles.

© 2026 *Contemporary Aesthetics*

ISSN 1932-8478