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The *Getty Research Journal* presents peer-reviewed articles on the visual arts of all cultures, regions, and time periods. Topics often relate to Getty collections, initiatives, and broad research interests. The journal welcomes a diversity of perspectives and methodological approaches, and seeks to include work that expands narratives on global culture.

Information for Scholars

The research articles in this issue were peer reviewed through a double-masked process in which the identities of the authors and reviewers remained anonymous. The essay "Bennett Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy:* A Case of Mistaken Identity" by James Oles received single-anonymous review. "Belonging Elsewhere: Felipe Baeza and Laura G. Gutiérrez in Conversation" received editorial review.

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Cover

Felipe Baeza (Mexican, b. 1987, active in the US). *to shape, shape self*, 2023, ink, acrylic, graphite, varnish, and cut paper on panel, 40.6 × 30.5 cm. © Felipe Baeza. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; kurimanzutto, Mexico City / New York. Photograph by Brad Farwell.

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Editor's Note

Doris Chon

The appearance of this twentieth issue of the *Getty Research Journal* marks its first year as an open-access publication. Freely accessible to anyone with an internet connection in web, PDF, and e-book formats, the journal has dramatically expanded its readership worldwide. Our editorial and production teams have learned countless lessons along the way, and there is no doubt that the learning process will continue as new challenges arise in an ever-evolving digital landscape. We are grateful to our authors and readers, longstanding and newfound alike, for joining us in the cybersphere and supporting this historic transition.

Several momentous changes have taken place for the journal since the publication of our first open-access issue (no. 19). Last summer, following the achievement of their vision of an open-access *Getty Research Journal,* ten members of the journal's former Editorial Board concluded their tenures, paving the way for a new cohort to lead in this vital advisory function. I extend my profound thanks to the outgoing board members, all of whom served in their capacity as Getty staff, many having done so continuously since the journal's nascence: Scott Allan, LeRonn Brooks, Anne-Lise Desmas, Tom Learner, Mary E. Miller, Rebecca Peabody, Andrew Perchuk, Richard Rand, Alexa Sekyra, and Naoko Takahatake. Among them, I would like to highlight Mary E. Miller, who, during her distinguished tenure as director of the Getty Research Institute (GRI), welcomed a sea change at the *Getty Research Journal* that will continue to unfold beyond her retirement from the GRI.

As the journal embarks on its next chapter, I am thrilled to introduce the *Getty Research Journal*'s new Editorial Advisory Committee. Its nine members come from various Getty programs as well as external academic institutions, and they bring a wealth of scholarly, curatorial, pedagogical, and publishing experience that will guide us into the future. Committee members will serve limited terms of three to five years, which may be renewed. Leonard Folgarait is a renowned scholar of modern Latin American, US American, and European art and architecture with a specialization in twentieth-century Mexico, a topic on which he has published four books singularly attuned to the intersection of art and politics. He previously served on the board of *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture.* A celebrated educator and mentor, Folgarait

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recently retired from Vanderbilt University, where he served as distinguished professor of history of art and architecture. Susan Elizabeth Gagliardi is a professor of art history at Emory University and has published two books on arts of West Africa: *Senufo Unbound: Dynamics of Art and Identity* (2014) and *Seeing the Unseen: Arts of Power Associations on the Senufo-Mande Cultural "Frontier"* (2022). Her pedagogy and research seek to promote justice and well-being within the discipline and institutions of art history. Gagliardi cochairs, with Brett Pyper, #JustAndEquitableNow: Reimagining Arts and Humanities in Our Universities, a collaborative research project that brings together a multidisciplinary team of scholars from South Africa and the United States to respond to demands for better futures within their institutions and communities. A scientist trained in metals conservation, Stavroula Golfomitsou recently joined the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) as head of collections, in which capacity she oversees movable heritage collections, strengthens existing GCI initiatives, and develops new projects in partnership with outside institutions; extensive teaching and academic programming at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden and the University College London Qatar preceded her arrival to Los Angeles. Golfomitsou previously served on the Council of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) and currently holds positions on the editorial boards of numerous journals in the conservation sciences. Mazie M. Harris is an expert in US American photography past and present, and she is associate curator in the Department of Photographs of the J. Paul Getty Museum. Her current research addresses photography's role in environmental movements; *María Magdalena Campos-Pons: Behold* (2025) is her most recent exhibition. Kristin Juarez is a senior research specialist for the African American Art History Initiative at the GRI; her research engages histories of collaboration and multidisciplinary experimentation at the intersection of visual art, performance, and the moving image. Juarez previously served as a founding editorial board member for the journal *liquid blackness*. She cocurated the exhibition *Blondell Cummings: Dance as Moving Pictures* (2021) and coedited its award-winning catalog with Rebecca Peabody and Glenn Phillips. Alpesh Kantilal Patel is associate professor of global contemporary art and LGBT*Q theory at the Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University; their art historical scholarship, curating, and criticism reflect a queer, antiracist, and transcultural approach to contemporary art. Patel previously chaired the editorial board of *Art Journal* and *Art Journal Open;* their recent publications include *Productive failure: Writing queer South Asian art histories* (2017) and *Storytellers of Art Histories: Living and Sustaining a Creative Life*, coedited with Yasmeen Siddiqui (2022). An expert in the history of postwar architecture, Emily Pugh is a principal research specialist at the GRI, where she oversees the program in digital art history. Author of *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin* (2014) and coeditor, with Andrew Perchuk, Zanna Gilbert, Tracy Stuber, and Isabel Frampton Wade, of the open-access volume *Ed Ruscha's Streets of Los Angeles: Artist, Image, Archive, City* (2025), Pugh has worked in digital publishing since 2001, having served as the web developer of the born-digital journal *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*. Last but not least, two members of the *Getty Research Journal*'s newly

appointed Editorial Advisory Committee were part of the journal's previous board; each has kindly agreed to lend continuity by serving an additional advisory term into this next phase. Maristella Casciato is the senior curator of architecture at the GRI, where she is responsible for the acquisition and stewardship of key collections such as the archive of Frank Gehry, which includes hundreds of architectural models, and the Paul R. Williams drawings and papers; among the most recent of her numerous exhibitions and publications are *Bauhaus Beginnings* (2019) and *Le Corbusier: Album Punjab, 1951* (2024). David Saunders is associate curator of antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum; a specialist in Greek and South Italian vase painting, ancient bronzes, and the history of collecting and restoring antiquities, he recently cocurated the exhibition *Picture Worlds: Greek, Maya, and Moche Pottery* (2024) at the Getty Villa and the Carlos Museum at Emory University, and coedited the accompanying catalog with Megan E. O'Neil.

The Editorial Advisory Committee and editorial team convened in person last fall on the Getty campus in Los Angeles for a two-day retreat, the first gathering of this kind for the journal. Throughout full days of panels and workshops, balanced with wellness breaks for mindfulness and play, we addressed the changing landscape of so-called art history and grappled with the challenges and opportunities facing an open-access, peer-reviewed scholarly journal such as this one. We brainstormed the possible roles that the *Getty Research Journal* could serve in this space and began articulating a new vision for a path forward, which will unfold in the seasons to come, beginning with this issue.

Six full-length articles, one shorter notice, and an inaugural installment of a new Conversation series constitute the current issue. They cover an apparently heterogeneous yet interrelated set of subjects and themes, all situated in the modern and contemporary periods. In "Remembering and Remaking Christofle et Cie's Second Empire," Amy F. Ogata takes on fine metalworking in late nineteenth-century France, interpreting Christofle et Cie's reconstruction and photographic preservation of pieces originally commissioned during an earlier period and subsequently destroyed in a fire as at once an act of mourning and a deliberate reclamation of French design history. Samuel Johnson similarly brings fresh insight, in this case to a less-familiar facet of Soviet photographic practice, in "Victorious Laughter: Satirical Photomontage in Brigade KGK's Photo Series *From the 16th to the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*." In a close reading of the artist collective's mass-produced photo series of 1934, which illustrates one of Joseph Stalin's major political speeches, Johnson discerns a surprisingly broad range of experimental techniques used to create distortions and evoke laughter; such technical manipulations rendered satirical photomontages legible to audiences. James Oles narrates an art historical detective story of his own experience in "Bennett Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy:* A Case of Mistaken Identity." Written in the first person, Oles recounts the misattribution of a little-known work by a New Deal–era painter born in Syracuse, New York, to the legendary Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco and the considerable hurdles to be overcome when setting the historical and provenance record straight. Alex Kitnick's "Talking Criticism

with David Antin, or Criticism at the Boundaries" situates Antin's multifaceted practice at the intersection of experimental poetry, postconceptual art, and an intimate form of criticism. Kitnick concludes that the poet-artist-critic's work is fundamentally concerned with the social formation where poetry and criticism take place: if not the public, what Kitnick calls "interested parties." In "*Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs:* The Limited-Edition Portfolio and the Market for Photographic Prints in the United States," Audrey Sands outlines the fundamental role that the invention of the limited-edition portfolio played in dramatically increasing the marketability of Model's photography as well as activating the broader market for prints in the United States; in the 1970s, photographs entered major public museums and private collections at unprecedented rates. Rita Elizabeth Risser offers a timely and perceptive analysis of a decommissioned state prison in Philadelphia that sat vacant for twenty-three years before reopening in 1994 as a historic site and museum. Addressing the ethical question of what should be preserved as cultural heritage and the pitfalls of curating potential monuments to incarceration in "Unlocking Heritage at the Eastern State Penitentiary," Risser interprets it today as an open museum where people may gather as a public defined by a shared interest in present-day issues such as mass incarceration. In the shorter notice "Like Father, Like Daughter: A Sketchbook Shared by Raymond and Rosa Bonheur, Rediscovered," Alexandra Morrison directs new attention to a sketchbook in the GRI's holdings that was mistakenly attributed solely to the nineteenth-century French painter Rosa Bonheur. In fact, the evidence suggests that the *carnet* was purchased by the artist's father, Raymond Bonheur, as early as 1835. Into the 1850s, both father and daughter filled the sketchbook with drawings, studies, and notes. With the presentation of these articles as well as future contributions to the *Getty Research Journal*, we endeavor to galvanize far-reaching publics about the value and potential of art and architectural history as means to connect with what is human.

The final feature is the first in the journal's new Conversation series, wherein we invite our readers to actively "listen in" to a dialogue between interlocutors who may be colleagues, collaborators, friends, or merely professional acquaintances. They are all engaged in the practice of supporting, producing, and interpreting culture; their conversations might explore a topic that inflects their respective practices or offer behind-the-scenes perspectives on the making, transmission, and reception of a work of art, exhibition, or cultural project. Through this new venue, we hope to illuminate aspects of cultural labor (artistic, art historical, museological, pedagogical, emotional, or other) that often go unacknowledged or remain overshadowed.

At the time of writing this note, two weeks after wildfires of unprecedented magnitude razed two historic Los Angeles neighborhoods beyond recognition, and mere days following the tumultuous start of Donald Trump's second term in the White House, the poignancy of "Belonging Elsewhere: Felipe Baeza and Laura G. Gutiérrez in Conversation" cannot be overstated. As visual artist Baeza and scholar of performance and Chicanx studies Gutiérrez invite readers in to their exchange about the making of Baeza's public art commission *Unruly Forms* (2023) and their parallel trajectories as

cultural producers, they share intimate details about their respective experiences of immigrating from Mexico as children, growing up in the Catholic Church, and coming of age as queer adolescents in the largest city of the Midwest. Through a nuanced analysis of the intricate iconographies that compose Baeza's mixed-media collages, the interlocutors reveal the existential and political realities of living and even thriving in the United States with undocumented or resident-alien status. It is in Baeza and Gutiérrez's moving discussion of what it means not to belong that the liberating potential to belong anywhere, everywhere, and elsewhere emerges as a voluntary and tactical condition of persevering and creating under the strictures of legal exclusion and ongoing threats of deportation or imprisonment. As the powers that be continue to arbitrate—to grave consequence—the status of who "belongs" and who does not in this settler country where the vast majority of us are the descendants of immigrants, if not immigrants ourselves, collective despair at the tragedy of these historically fatal repetitions threatens to paralyze us once again. I have been reminded by others much wiser that the most meaningful work lies before us. To abide by our commitments with renewed focus and dignity is the ultimate and most enduring form of resistance to powers and values to which we do not subscribe. Pursuing this important work of embracing alterity and forging connections, making the arts and humanities legible and accessible to a broader public, cultivating shared spaces in which to flourish through community: this is how we sustain ourselves and each other into the future.

Los Angeles, January 2025

Remembering and Remaking Christofle et Cie's Second Empire

Amy F. Ogata

> When we concentrate on a material object, whatever its situation, the very act of attention may lead to our involuntarily sinking into the history of that object.
>
> —Vladimir Nabokov, *Transparent Things*, 1972

Late in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Parisian fine metalworking firm Christofle et Cie embarked on a project to remake some of its lost Second Empire objects. This effort to reconstitute artifacts of the recent past joined the firm's ongoing interest in making goods for a market of new consumers to ensure the commercial and historical legacy of the firm. Although founded in the 1830s by jeweler Charles Christofle, the company flourished in the middle years of the nineteenth century, especially because of its considerable favor under Emperor Napoléon III and his government. The authoritarian and imperialist politics of the Second Empire (1852–70), however, was anathema in the Third Republic, which was established after the end of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune. By the end of the nineteenth century, the art of the Second Empire was also aesthetically retardataire. When an installation of Second Empire furniture was exhibited in 1900, one critic challenged mocking spectators: "It is easy to laugh; nothing appears more ridiculous than the styles of our fathers, nothing as old as that which dates back thirty years."[1] Why, then, did Christofle lavish attention on the symbols of power of an autocrat who was unseated in a humiliating defeat? I argue that the reconstruction of two of the firm's most significant Second Empire commissions was both a process of mourning and a mode of historical thinking embedded in the larger project of writing a history of design in France. Examining the ways in which the firm remade and remembered its own products reveals the extent to which it understood the agency of the objects to tell their own material histories. I suggest that these works actively negotiated the social memory of the violent end of the Second Empire, forming—in the context of the Third Republic—a collective memory that turned objects into witnesses and secured a place for the firm in the history of design.[2]

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The narrative of loss and recuperation that I trace animated the two objects that were to different degrees lost in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War and informed exhibition and textual statements that recounted the history of French *orfèvrerie* (fine gold- and silversmithing). Loss is a sustaining theme of the historiography of metalwork, given metal's vulnerability to melting.[3] Royal edicts mandating the confiscation of fine metalwork in the name of patriotism ravaged collections for centuries. Even without war, metalwork's fortunes were always in doubt. The long-standing French law of free coinage meant that anyone with precious metals of silver and gold could take them to a mint and demand their bullion weight in money. Yet, it was the calamitous environment of mid-nineteenth century politics, rather than direct monetary exchange, that unmade the two works.

After the abdication of the emperor in the Franco-Prussian War, a four-month siege of Paris ensued, which isolated the city and starved its citizens. The initial government of the Third Republic was the military Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale headquartered in Versailles and led by Adolphe Thiers, who negotiated humiliating concessions to Prussia, including a large payment and a parade down the avenue des Champs-Élysées. In the absence of an elected body to ratify the Treaty of Paris, a call for elections inspired a popular uprising that created the Paris Commune, a revolutionary government modeled on socialist and anarchist principles, that took over in March 1871. When the Versailles army marched on the Commune in May 1871, a series of deliberately set fires ravaged parts of the city. The already grim, and for many, lethal, circumstances of the year 1870–71 gave rise to catastrophic civic devastation, hasty trials, and punitive executions of known and suspected Communards. In the wake of these reprisals and political assessments, the makers of elite metalwork embarked on a campaign to remember, if not exactly to commemorate, the Second Empire. Art, architectural, and design historians engaging with questions of materiality have stressed that objects can help to trace deep, entangled histories.[4] In the case of Christofle et Cie, a preoccupation with the material history of lost objects meant not only shaping meaning from materials but remaking them once again in potentially different material forms under different historical circumstances. While this could be understood as a politics of conservation, the process of restoration that it involved subverts the norm of direct technical intervention; instead, Christofle called on the circumstances of survival to perpetuate cultural memory.[5]

Commemorating the Hôtel de Ville Centerpiece

A large and impressive album bound in crimson leather, the cover stamped in gold, presents in images the various parts of a large metallic table centerpiece, or *surtout de table,* that was created for the Galerie des Fêtes, a grand official reception and dining room at the Hôtel de Ville (the main city hall) in Paris (fig. 1). The city of Paris, through its prefect of the Seine, Georges-Eugène Haussmann, commissioned this work from the goldsmithing firm Christofle to coincide with the completion of the building's

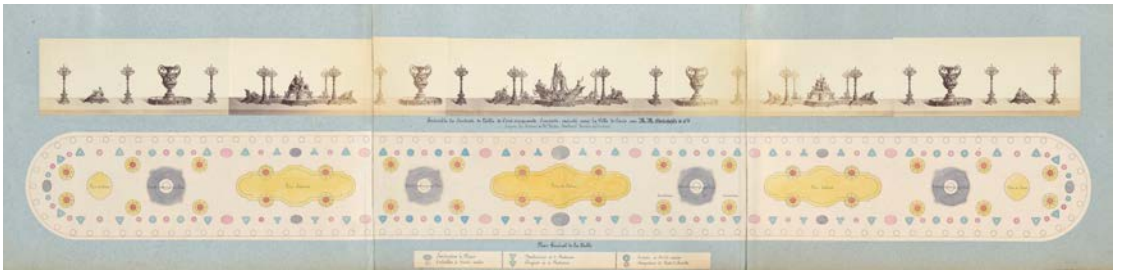

FIG. 1. — Foldout, six-part photographic panorama and hand-colored plan from *Surtout de table de la Ville de Paris, éxecuté par Mrs. Christofle et Cie d'après les dessins de Mr. Vor. Baltard, member de l'Institut, et détruit dans l'incendie de l'Hôtel de Ville en mai 1871,* ca. 1872, albumen prints and watercolor. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2023.R.7.

renovation and the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1867.[6] The set was officially designed by the city architect Victor Baltard, who completed additions to the Hôtel de Ville and was also in charge of municipal ceremonies, including planning state visits and banquets.[7] The firm produced the central sculptural parts in cast bronze electroplated with silver and gold along with twenty candelabra and smaller compositions that embellished the ends of the table. Four large ceramic vases executed by the Sèvres manufactory were set in jardinieres and occupied either side of the central group. Place settings for 150 guests along with footed dishes for desserts and metallic baskets for flowers completed the commission.

The service and other ornaments were added to the long-standing expansion and restoration of the Hôtel de Ville, which had begun in the 1830s. Under Baltard's tenure as city architect, he added new buildings to the complex, enclosed the courtyard, and created the curving courtyard stair that embraced a large fountain, which Baltard completed with Max Vauthier and the sculptor Auguste Jean-Baptiste Lechesne in 1855 (fig. 2).[8] The central figural group of the centerpiece, intended for the table of the Galerie des Fêtes, reproduced in sculptural terms the motto and coat of arms of the city of Paris: *Fluctuat nec mergitur*, or "She is tossed by the waves but does not sink." The heraldic device appeared on coins and seals from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries, but Haussmann legally adopted it in 1853 to commemorate the first year of Napoléon III's rule. Rendered in three dimensions to preside over the grand dining room, the seal imagery of vessel and tower-crown were incorporated into the composition of the figural sculptures. A crowned, female allegorical figure of the city of Paris is seated holding a scepter (fig. 3). In the full composition, she is elevated above a large boat by two pairs of classical caryatids personifying on one side Commerce and Industry, and on the other, Science and Art. The figure of the city of Paris is accompanied on the boat by the allegories of Progress, a male youth looking forward at the prow, and Prudence, a woman seated behind, near the rudder. This central group of figures gave physical form to the ideal of good government using the imagery of classicism and the language of allegory, which proliferated in official commissions.

Lateral groups personifying the Seine and Marne Rivers extended the civic imagery (fig. 4), along with groups of the four seasons. Candelabra were placed at

FIG. 2. — Charles Marville (French, 1816–79). *Interior of the Hôtel de Ville, l'escalier à double révolution de la cour Louis XIV* (axial stair of the Louis XIV courtyard), ca. 1865, albumen print from wet collodion negative, 27 × 36.5 cm. Williamstown, Massachusetts, Clark Art Institute, lent by the Troob Family Foundation, TR TR2012.36.1.

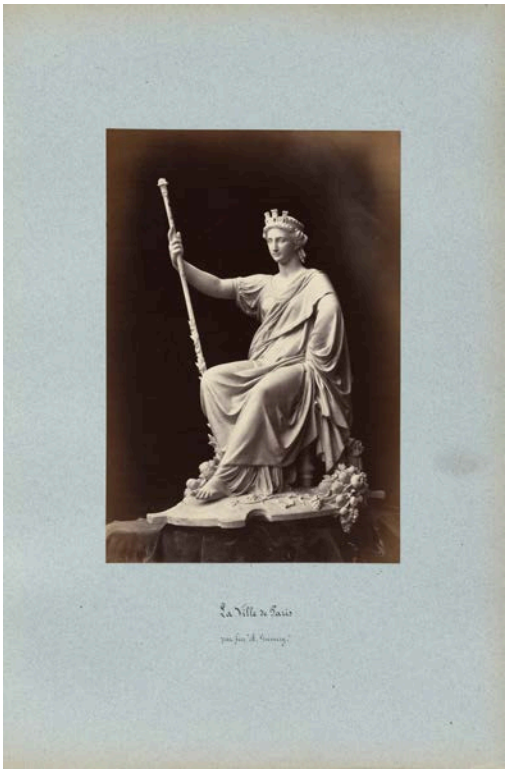

FIG. 3. — Charles Gumery (French, 1827–71), sculptor. *La Ville de Paris* (The city of Paris), from *Surtout de table de la Ville de Paris, éxecuté par Mrs. Christofle et Cie d'après les dessins de Mr. Vor. Baltard, member de l'Institut, et détruit dans l'incendie de l'Hôtel de Ville en mai 1871,* ca. 1872. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2023.R.7.

intervals between the major figural groups, and clusters of four accompanied each of the major ensembles. The theme of water, embodied by the figures of the Seine and Marne,

FIG. 4. — Jacques Maillet (French, 1823–94), sculptor. *La Seine (face antérieure)* (Seine River [front side]), from *Surtout de table de la Ville de Paris, éxecuté par Mrs. Christofle et Cie d'après les dessins de Mr. Vor. Baltard, member de l'Institut, et détruit dans l'incendie de l'Hôtel de Ville en mai 1871*, ca. 1872. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2023.R.7.

FIG. 5. — Mathurin Moreau (French, 1822–1912), sculptor. *Triton à la conque* (Triton with a conch), from *Surtout de table de la Ville de Paris, éxecuté par Mrs. Christofle et Cie d'après les dessins de Mr. Vor. Baltard, member de l'Institut, et détruit dans l'incendie de l'Hôtel de Ville en mai 1871*, ca. 1872. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2023.R.7.

and the frolicking tritons alongside the boat, continued in the *plateaux*, or bases on which the sculptural forms were placed. Tritons and putti made indirect references to a long history of French fountain sculpture, which was thoroughly revived in the Second Empire (fig. 5). Indeed, the fluvial theme of Baltard's centerpiece directly echoed the elaborate fountain, which the Hôtel de Ville courtyard's ceremonial double stair framed (see fig. 2).

The *surtout* served a long-standing purpose of using sculpture to ornament the surface of the table, animating the space of the room, especially for official ceremonial purposes.[9] The fine metalwork, or *orfèvrerie*, assembled the multiple talents of sculptors, modelers, chasers, and other essential contributors whose artistic and artisanal intelligence together produced the *surtout*. The Christofle company employed Prix-de-Rome sculptors, such as Georges Diebolt, Charles Gumery (who modeled the figure of Paris), Jacques Maillet, Jules Thomas, Mathurin Moreau, and the finest modelers and chasers, who worked on this commission. Although Baltard designed the central group of Paris, it is likely that these artists interpreted his design (as Lechesne had for the

courtyard fountain), adding subtle dynamism and probably the additional figures and the lively undulating tritons, in contrast with the resolutely stable image of Paris.

Napoléon III and others in his government and court prided themselves on their patronage and sought lively adornments for their well-appointed dining rooms where they held lavish formal dinners. These objects served a larger ideological purpose of conveying official support for the luxury arts while flattering the regime. The central part of the table centerpiece, featuring the figure of Paris, was on view at the London Great Exhibition of 1862, and it presided over a table in the Hôtel de Ville during the 1867 Exposition Universelle. At a dinner in June 1867 honoring Alexander II, emperor of Russia, and Wilhelm I, king of Prussia, the *surtout* commanded the table, drawing attention to its robust physicality and gleaming surfaces (fig. 6). Its main forms were depicted in careful, if exaggerated, detail in wood engravings and disseminated in the popular periodical *L'Illustration*.[10] Like other Christofle creations for official purposes, the Hôtel de Ville centerpiece was a manifestation of the official dogma of the Second Empire and designed to impress both French and foreign viewers.

The album, which exists in at least four versions, goes beyond merely documenting the various parts of the centerpiece. It also acts to preserve a historical memory of the table service, for the metalwork disappeared along with the entire contents of the building, which was burned on 24 May 1871. The leaders of the Commune had assumed control over the local seats of government—the *mairies* of Paris—and occupied the central Hôtel de Ville in a symbolic act of claiming political authority. When the

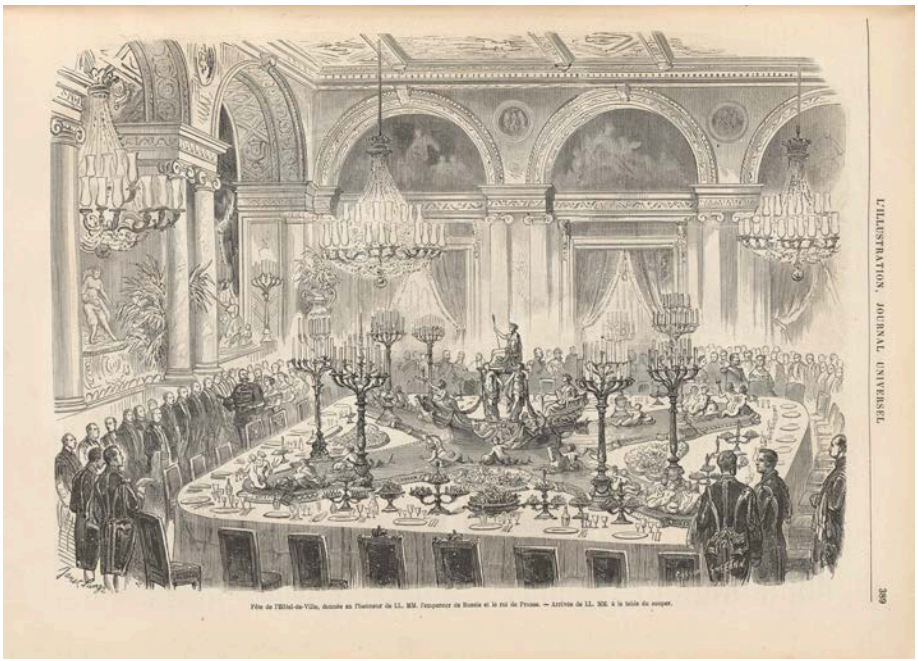

FIG. 6. — "Fête de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, donnée en l'honneur de LL. MM. L'Empereur de Russie et le Roi de Prusse. Arrivée de LL. MM. à la table de souper," wood engraving from *L'Illustration*, 22 June 1867, 399. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 84-S259.

Commune was violently put down by the advancing army from Versailles, fires were deliberately set, destroying many official buildings, including the Hôtel de Ville and its contents (fig. 7). The album documents the main sculptural and decorative forms of the service, but it has a curiously opaque history. Four known copies share the same images and yet they are not identical.[11] All are albums of photographs depicting some original objects and the plaster models that were probably used to cast the figural groups, but some are bound in a different order, and captions are written in different hands. Some have a long watercolor foldout showing the intended arrangement for the placement of each piece on the table. All indicate that the *surtout* had been destroyed in the fire of 1871. Yet the precise date and circumstances of the albums' production is unknown.[12] The edition was small and luxuriously produced, and therefore certainly intended for a limited audience that would appreciate the cultural import of the commission.

As a portrait of a metallic object, the album's images and materials are surprisingly heterogeneous. Mounted on heavy blue pages with each leaf captioned in a calligraphic secretarial hand, the collection comprises different types of images that together constitute, or reconstitute, the service. There is no text aside from the inscription on the cover and the short captions indicating the artist and subject of each image. In the album held at the Getty Research Institute, like the example in the collection of the library of the Hôtel de Ville, the first page is a threefold watercolor drawing showing a color-coded plan of the arrangement, including the central grouping, and a hierarchical array of other parts, including the candelabra, jardinieres and baskets, and étagères and desserts. This plan is mounted beneath a panoramic albumen photograph of an

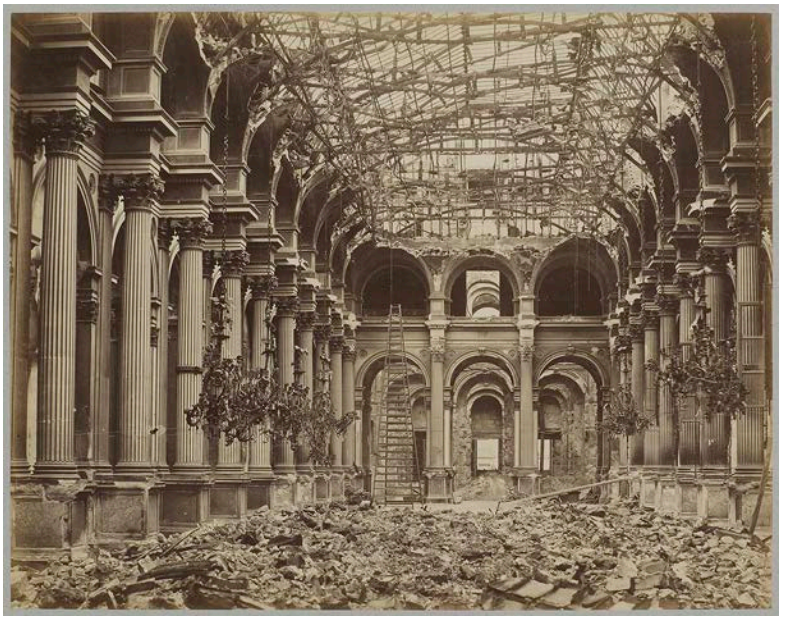

FIG. 7. — Jules Andrieu (French, 1816–after 1876). *Disasters of the War, City Hall, Galerie des Fêtes,* ca. 1870–71, albumen silver print, 29.2 × 37.4 cm. Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada, purchased 1975, inv. 20755.

illustration showing the setting in profile, indicating the various parts and their precise placement on a long table, a visual relationship akin to that of plan and elevation in architectural terms (see fig. 1). Individual photographs that depict each part of the service in warm, velvety tones follow. Christofle had long used photography to document its production and kept an archive of glass negatives of their designs. These photos were often of finished goods set against a blank backdrop or mounted on boards with captions and numbers, some in the same hand. Although photography was not an uncommon tool in decorative arts industries, and the photographic album was itself an invention of the Second Empire, the Christofle album of the Hôtel de Ville commission goes beyond merely documenting the parts of the destroyed centerpiece.[13] Given the circumstances, I argue that Christofle purposefully created the albums to portray the centerpiece as an affective cultural artifact representing a shared sense of loss.

The album, like a collection of family photographs, depicts the entire group and the individual parts that compose it. Aside from the jardinieres and vases, the photographs show the models for the service rather than the finished cast pieces. The glowing white surfaces of the matte clay or plaster figures are set against dark backgrounds, enhanced in the photographic contrast, in line with the conventions for photographing sculpture.[14] The photographs show both sides of the allegorical groups.[15] Further, the name of each sculptor is indicated as the author of the composition. Thus, even though the entire commission was an object of applied art with many designs of nonfigural forms, including the ornamental friezes used around the foot, the images in the album stress the commission's sculptural value. Recording the models with explicit attention to authorship implies the significance of the artistic labor of the sculptors who collaborated on the project and is in keeping with Christofle's efforts to promote the high artistic merit of their work. Yet traces of manufacture remain. The original forms were probably made in clay and then cast in plaster, before being cast in bronze and then silvered. In some cases, the models were sectioned for casting before they were rejoined in the process of chasing. Other images in the album indicate chips and cracks, suggesting that the plasters had already been used at the time they were photographed. Even though it depicts objects rather than people, this largely photographic album adheres in its commemorative quality to the conventions of a visual biography, in which a life is constructed to engage viewers empathetically.[16]

Photography was widely deployed for commemorative and persuasive purposes in the aftermath of the conflagrations of 1871. The images of ruins, especially Jules Andrieu's portfolio *Désastres de la guerre* (Disasters of the war) (see fig. 7), are far different from the elegant forms of the Christofle portfolio, but as art historian Alisa Luxenberg has argued, the haunting photographic documentation of the ruins of Paris was created for multiple reasons and found a wide audience in France and abroad.[17] She observes, "photographs served as both historian and souvenir, fact and memory."[18] Unlike other images post-1871, especially those of the burned shell of the Hôtel de Ville itself, the photographs in the Christofle albums show wear, not overt physical destruction. Yet as ghostly models of a lost object, these images nonetheless play on

the emotions of viewers. Jill Bennett has suggested that images possess a powerful experience of collective "sense memory," suggesting that cultural pain can have a shared affect.[19] Since the events of 1870–71 ruptured the social bond, the trauma was collective and lasting. Although there are strong overtones of mourning in the album, the preparatory forms of these images also convey the potential of futurity and the possibility of a version recast from original molds, which focuses the viewer's attention on artistic value rather than politics. As a representation of a carefully constructed work of art, the Christofle album is a collection of pictures that enacts a collective sense of ownership.

The commemoration of this artifact was a potentially complicated endeavor in the years following the Commune. Christofle prided itself on its bourgeois patriotism. During the siege, the firm shifted its atelier production to making swords and bayonets, armaments to enhance street fighting.[20] The Prussian military tactic was to isolate Paris, making the city suffer and starving inhabitants of supplies from the countryside while strategically bombing parts of the city. Unemployment and raging hunger made the working classes the most vulnerable. During this time, Christofle paid its workers a minimal sum.[21] Leaders of the firm later claimed that none of its employees participated in the insurrection, which was otherwise strongly supported by workers in the applied arts, especially those in furniture industries as well as bronze and jewelry-making foundries.[22] Undertaking a memorial of this complex object during the Third Republic was thus not an obvious response to the molten anger of the early 1870s. While the centerpiece celebrated the wounded city of Paris, it also implicated the deposed emperor and the disgraced prefect. The centerpiece, like the urban renovations of the city, stood for the reviled Second Empire, which was notorious for its overspending and its affinity for spectacle—and thus, moral associations of superficiality. Since this album was created to honor the grandiose official allegory that Baltard and Christofle had produced together, the post-1871, anti-Communard politics of this position are clear.

The album employed the tropes of martyrdom in its evocation of the lost centerpiece, suggesting that the firm remembered its objects as victims. Bound in the rich crimson that dominated interior decoration of the 1850s and 1860s, the covers of the various copies read like a tombstone (fig. 8). The prominent designation of the object's title, the firm name, and the designer's name, along with critical information that the centerpiece was "destroyed in the fire of the Hôtel de Ville in May 1871" all suggest the conventions of memorialization.[23] Beyond the cover, the painstaking reconstruction of the whole and its parts in two-dimensional images bolsters the sense of the grandeur and impressiveness of the lost work. The tenor of recuperation and loss that underwrote the assembly of images was no doubt a result of authentic feelings of shock and dismay at the losses that mounted and the labor that was sacrificed. The albums, however, joined other memorial projects as part of an effort by Christofle to remember its objects as witnesses.

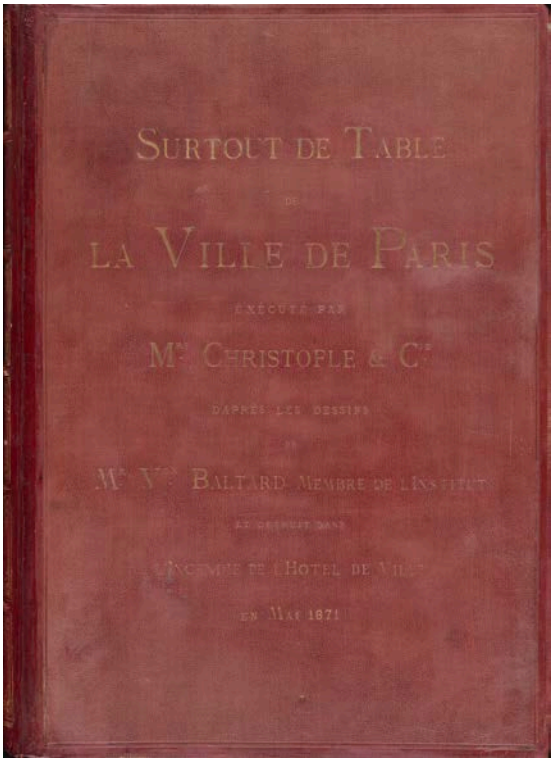

FIG. 8. — Cover of *Surtout de table de la Ville de Paris, éxecuté par Mrs. Christofle et Cie d'après les dessins de Mr. Vor. Baltard, member de l'Institut, et détruit dans l'incendie de l'Hôtel de Ville en mai 1871*, ca. 1872. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2023.R.7.

Preserving the Tuileries Centerpiece

In the aftermath of the terrible year of 1870–71, Christofle was also mourning the loss of another commission, one that had even greater significance for the firm. Napoléon III, following a long line of French kings and leaders, including his own uncle Napoléon, took special interest in the applied arts. He and the Empress Eugénie were keen patrons of fine goldsmithing firms, which enjoyed the favor of vast imperial commissions for the lavishly redecorated palaces. The Christofle firm, moreover, was committed to the imperial outlook of pursuing modern chemistry and technology alongside venerable artistic tradition to create their works. A commission of one hundred place settings and a central grouping was destined for the Tuileries Palace, the official Paris residence of the emperor and empress. The design centered the allegory of France raising two wreaths of victory between figures of War in a chariot and Peace driving a group of cattle (fig. 9). It also included groups representing Justice, Concord, Religion, and Force, as well as the major regions of France. Allegories of Agriculture, Industry, Science, Art, History, and Victory ornamented the candelabras and baskets that would have been placed down the length of the thirty-meter table. The imagery of a prosperous and victorious France was designed by sculptors Diebolt, Pierre-Louis Rouillard, and François Gilbert (who directed the project) to flatter the regime and

to claim for the firm a key place in the history of official patronage. The Tuileries centerpiece, like the one created for the Hôtel de Ville, was prominently exhibited at Second Empire world's fairs, which were opportunities for publicizing both the regime's priorities and the economic importance of French luxury industries. This work, whose manufacture was covered in the press, was displayed at the first French Exposition Universelle in 1855 in Paris among a selection of fine objects produced for the emperor's household in the special rotunda dedicated to the crown jewels, where it won a grand medal of honor.

FIG. 9. — Central group with France Distributing the Wreaths of Glory, from the one-hundred place *surtout de table* of Napoléon III, 1852–58, galvanic bronze and silvered galvanic bronze. Produced by Christofle et Cie. Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 7023.A. © Les Arts Décoratifs/ Jean Tholance, madparis.fr.

Along with the incineration of the Hôtel de Ville, the imperial palaces were looted, ravaged, and burned in May 1871.[24] Like the Hôtel de Ville, the Tuileries Palace was an existing structure that became an object of Second Empire attention, newly completed and, as a residential seat, furnished at great expense under the budget of the Maison de l'Empereur. Finishing the splendidly appointed Tuileries, the long-standing residence of the French aristocracy, enhanced the Second Empire claims to legitimacy. But this spectacular effort, and its visibility as a symbol of the Second Empire power, made it a primary target during the Commune.[25] Communards claimed, "There is no filthier monument, one that recalls more horrors and infamies" and called for its destruction as a symbolic end to the Second Empire.[26] This vicious enmity made the Tuileries and its showy decor an obvious target. It was sacked and set ablaze in May 1871. After a long debate that revisited the politics of the Commune and the association of the Tuileries with monarchical and imperial France, the ruined structure was deemed anti-Republican and demolished in the early 1880s.[27]

Unlike the building itself, the central parts of Christofle's one-hundred place *surtout de table* executed for the Tuileries Palace was ultimately saved from the wreckage and restored. The architect Hector Lefuel, who had finished the structure along with the

FIG. 10. — Candélabre, Les arts (Candelabra with allegory of the Arts), from the one-hundred place *surtout de table* of Napoléon III, 1852–58, bronze and silvered galvanic bronze. Produced by Christofle et Cie. Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 7023.E. © Les Arts Décoratifs/ Jean Tholance, madparis.fr.

new wings of the Louvre for Napoléon III, combed through the smoking ruins to assess the damage. He amassed thirty-two hundred kilos of metallic debris, which he offered to Christofle; the firm bought most of it for ten francs per kilo. The repossession of the remains of a work that had bestowed exceptional prestige on the Christofle firm in the 1850s was more than an effort to reclaim the valuable raw materials. Using the gathered debris and the models in the company archives, Christofle embarked on a process of restoring parts of the Tuileries service. The company remade some of the lost parts to join with the repaired and resilvered central group, but they left visual evidence of the damage (fig. 10). Some figures have severed limbs, and most of the remaining candelabra have puckered and darkened surfaces. The ornamental friezes of their bases remain in a fragmented state with obvious losses that were not concealed or replaced. These deliberate artifactual traces bore witness to the high heat of the destructive Tuileries fire. In addition, Christofle recast some of the utilitarian serving dishes of the Tuileries service. The expense of recuperation and the labor of remaking was not slight. Like the album of the Hôtel de Ville centerpiece, the firm's efforts to remember and remake its most glorious objects was also an attempt to collect and secure its legacy in the shifting context of the Third Republic.

Remembering, Exhibiting, and Writing

The effort to preserve the Christofle artifacts was entangled with the promotion of the history of French *orfèvrerie* in the second half of the nineteenth century. The key figure in this endeavor was Henri Bouilhet (1830–1910). The Bouilhet family was closely aligned through business and marriage with the Christofle enterprise. As an orphaned nephew of Charles Christofle, Henri Bouilhet was taken into the immediate family and ensured education and training as an engineer-chemist under Jean-Baptiste Dumas at the École Centrale des Arts et Manufactures and the Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie Nationale. Bouilhet entered the firm equipped with new scientific knowledge of electrochemistry, which became a Christofle specialty. He ascended through the company, by all accounts an intelligent and hardworking figure dedicated to the firm and its founder. After the death of Charles Christofle in 1863, his son Paul Christofle and Bouilhet took over, as cousins, the shared management of Christofle et Cie. The Second Empire, then, marked not only the fortunes of the firm but also the career of Bouilhet himself.

Bouilhet used his scientific knowledge to promote the use of the new techniques of electroplating and electroforming (*galvanoplastie*) and developed a process for casting in the round that was used for monumental doors, large-scale sculpture, and copies of artifacts. He was also a witness to the company's rising prospects under the patronage of Napoléon III. Just two years after Bouilhet entered the firm in 1851, Christofle was awarded its most important early commission, the Tuileries *surtout* for Napoléon III, for which some parts would be cast galvanically. The use of this process tested the possibilities for the meeting of art and industrial manufacture in a work of considerable public significance. According to Victor Champier, art critic and Bouilhet's longtime friend and collaborator, Bouilhet's attachment to this commission was not just technical, for Bouilhet also contributed sketches for some ornamental parts of the dish covers. Champier recounts Bouilhet's treatment of the debris: "With a sort of piety, he applied himself to reassembling the shapeless fragments, to restoring the missing parts of the decoration fashioned in the past, and to bringing back to life the most important pieces of this famous Napoléon III centerpiece."[28] Witnessing Bouilhet in the process of reconstruction, Champier recalled the care with which he assembled the parts and his emotional attachment to the task:

> I had the occasion to see the eminent engineer in his ateliers in the rue de Bondy, while he presided over the patient and careful reconstitution. . . . The task made him radiant and reminded him of his ardor in his twentieth year. His dark eyes so vivid shone with pleasure and he, who was normally hardly loquacious, found ardent and colorful words to explain to me in his deep and resonant voice the first genesis of the work of his youth, which pleased him to bring back to life.[29]

Champier's repetition of Bouilhet's devotion to bringing this work "back to life" suggests how critically it figured in his personal story. It also indicates that Bouilhet

understood the centerpiece to be animated, or reanimated, after its "death." Far from merely a technical intervention, then, the restoration of the centerpiece was a labor of personal conviction, and returning it "to life" was also an effort to recognize the work of many esteemed contributors, and to revisit the passage of time.

The restored Tuileries centerpiece, apart from commemorating the fine workmanship, also embodied the firm's own history. The restoration of the remaining parts was likely completed by the early 1890s, for it was donated in 1891 to the nascent Musée des Arts Décoratifs to perpetuate the memory of Charles Christofle. According to Champier (writing with or for Bouilhet), the company "hoped to reconstitute some of the most important pieces and to save from oblivion a work that had been the glory of their father."[30] The twinning of the reconstituted historical artifact with a commemorative effort to honor the deceased Charles Christofle gave the Tuileries centerpiece a testimonial quality that surpassed its association with the ignoble demise of the Second Empire. Remade, the injured forms suggested the glory of France and its tradition of fine metalworking, which, true to their original purpose, continued to perform a splendid public role.

Bouilhet's part in the project of promoting the Christofle firm dovetailed with efforts by others on behalf of the applied arts in France, and specifically the increasingly public outlook of the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs. Formed in the 1860s, the Union Centrale had emerged from a private organization of designers and manufacturers who advocated for the interests of their members. Following the British example of the Museum at South Kensington (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), the organizers aimed to collect and exhibit both contemporary and historical artifacts and to create a library of design that would suit the interests of skilled artisans. According to art historian Rossella Froissart Pezone, those early ideas were transformed in the late 1870s into a strategy for display that ultimately divided Union Centrale leaders over whether to privilege the history of a material (something the makers favored) or the uses to which that material might be put, which the collectors advocated.[31] Debora Silverman has suggested that the organization, which had changed its name from the Union Centrale des Beaux Arts Appliqués à l'Industrie to the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs in the 1880s, shifted its emphasis away from the industrial manufacturing of the 1860s toward the investments of government ministers, collectors, and elite producers to venerate the ancien régime. A catalyst of this transformation, she argues, was the artistic losses of 1870–71 and the election, in 1874, of a new administrative council within the Union Centrale, which included Bouilhet.[32] Silverman stresses the resurgence of interest in works held in private collections amid the campaign to create a museum for the Union Centrale, yet, as she also documents, the group had a long-standing interest in mounting retrospective exhibitions dating to the mid-1860s.

As vice president of the Union Centrale, Bouilhet and his colleagues pursued a series of retrospective exhibitions that highlighted specifically French luxury industries, such as costume (1874) and textiles and tapestry (1876). In the 1880s, they held exhibitions on the elemental arts of metal; the arts of wood and fabric (furniture

and textiles); the arts of fire (stone, ceramics, and glass); and a recapitulative exhibition in 1887. The displays of techniques and juxtapositions of contemporary and retrospective works in the 1880s included a broad selection of French applied arts. While these exhibitions garnered attention for manufacturers and created cohesion among the collectors and supporters for the idea of a museum of French design, the museum had yet to find a permanent home. Before the Musée des Arts Décoratifs finally opened in the Pavillon de Marsan in 1905, the grandest and most thorough history of French design and manufacture to date was presented in the temporary but widely viewed Musées Centennaux et Rétrospectives (Centennial and Retrospective Museums), a series of medium-specific exhibits, mounted in conjunction with the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900.

The impulse to display a national history of craft and manufacture alongside the newest production owed to the Janus-like sentiment of the turn-of-the-century fair, which was poised to look both forward and backward from 1900. The centennial exhibits were a cumulative material summary of the previous one hundred years of French production, which was presented in individual exhibitions of painting and sculpture, photography, pharmacy, transportation, and especially the applied-arts industries. In short, the classes of new objects on view at the international exhibition had historical counterparts in the Musées Centennaux. The displays were intended to show the public "the product, its fabrication, and its history."[33] François Carnot, a politically well-connected special delegate, organized the displays, working with the French juries of each class.[34] Thus, the specialists of each material or type curated their own selection and wrote the narrative of the historical works in catalogs that each French jury published independently.

In addition to painting and sculpture, on view were embroidery, costume and fashion, toys and dolls, lighting, ceramics, photography, a survey of public life in Paris, and public works.[35] Several classes combined to produce a museum of furniture and decoration that included full interiors, which art and design historian Anca Lasc has argued acted as a series of immersive period rooms.[36] While some of the Musées Centennaux displays were included in the French section in the Grand Palais, other classes, such as furniture and silversmithing, were shown on the Esplanade des Invalides. Together, these retrospective assessments claimed for France the expertise and artistic lineage of manufacture that served to polish its reputation internationally. Lasc has argued that the furniture displays of the Musées Centennaux constituted a visual argument for a nationalist rhetoric of continuity in design, linking the past spatially with the present. Shown under the banner of progress, a rhetorical trope of nineteenth-century expositions, these displays also made an argument for a history of French design that transcended politics and time. The project of juxtaposing exhibitions of both recent and historical objects surely attracted consumer interest for the new goods on view, but this endeavor to recount the history of French design was undertaken above all with devotion to the memory of the past.

The centennial display of silver- and goldsmithing, Class ninety-four, included more than eleven hundred objects from the eighteenth century onward, with special emphasis on the nineteenth century.[37] Positioned behind the presentation of new work (by some of the same firms), the historical forms were shown as the ancestors of the present. The historical objects, however, were also active and vigorous intercessors in a history of the material and the politics of the age. Because some committees rejected the premise that a survey of their medium could logically begin in 1800, some classes instead anchored their exhibits in earlier times. For the Class ninety-four displays, there was a case of eighteenth-century girandoles and candelabras, including works by the eminent father and son, both royal silversmiths, Thomas and François-Thomas Germain. Neoclassical vessels from the Empire period, a selection of Froment-Meurice objects from the Louis-Philippe era, and a healthy selection of Second Empire artifacts represented the mid-nineteenth century. In the Second Empire display, the large silver presentation cup in the form of a boat dominated. Commissioned from Fannière Frères by Empress Eugénie, the cup was offered to her cousin, the diplomat-turned-land-speculator Fernand de Lesseps upon the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 (fig. 11). The Second Empire display also included a group of objects that Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc designed for the cathedral Notre-Dame de Paris, which were executed by the religious metalworking firm Poussielgue-Rusand. At the center of the entire retrospective exhibit, on a large table, sat the restored parts of the Tuileries centerpiece, lent by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. The effort to remake the centerpiece, which bore the traces of its destruction, had preserved not only the memory of the Second Empire and its material opulence but also the preeminence of the firm and its place in a history of French artistic production in metal. It joined the Suez cup and the Notre-Dame reliquary as material witnesses of important French monuments that gave the image of the Second Empire a retrospective honor. Reconstituted and exhibited in these circumstances, the centerpiece played a theatrical role in the staging of French design as a collective national endeavor that exceeded the artifacts of a deposed elite.

The historical sensibility that informed the Musée Centennal exhibition project also prevailed in the images, reports, and catalogs. Objects and displays from the Musées Centennaux were featured in the Exposition's illustrated portfolios called *Le Panorama*, which was issued as a popular serial of the official photographs.[38] The final reports produced by each jury were far more scholarly. Some of these were straightforward lists of objects and their lenders, along with general descriptions of the history of the subject. Others were lavish productions that included extended essays, narrative histories, and photographic images of the individual objects and their display in 1900.[39]

The most ambitious texts went far beyond documenting works produced between 1800 and 1900; they also expanded the historical context to become standard historical works on the subject.[40] Bouilhet's final report on the Centennial exhibition of Class ninety-four was integrated into an exceptionally complete, three-volume illustrated *L'orfèvrerie française aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles*.[41] This effort dwarfed the exhibition itself and became a definitive account of French metalwork and, beyond that, Bouilhet's own

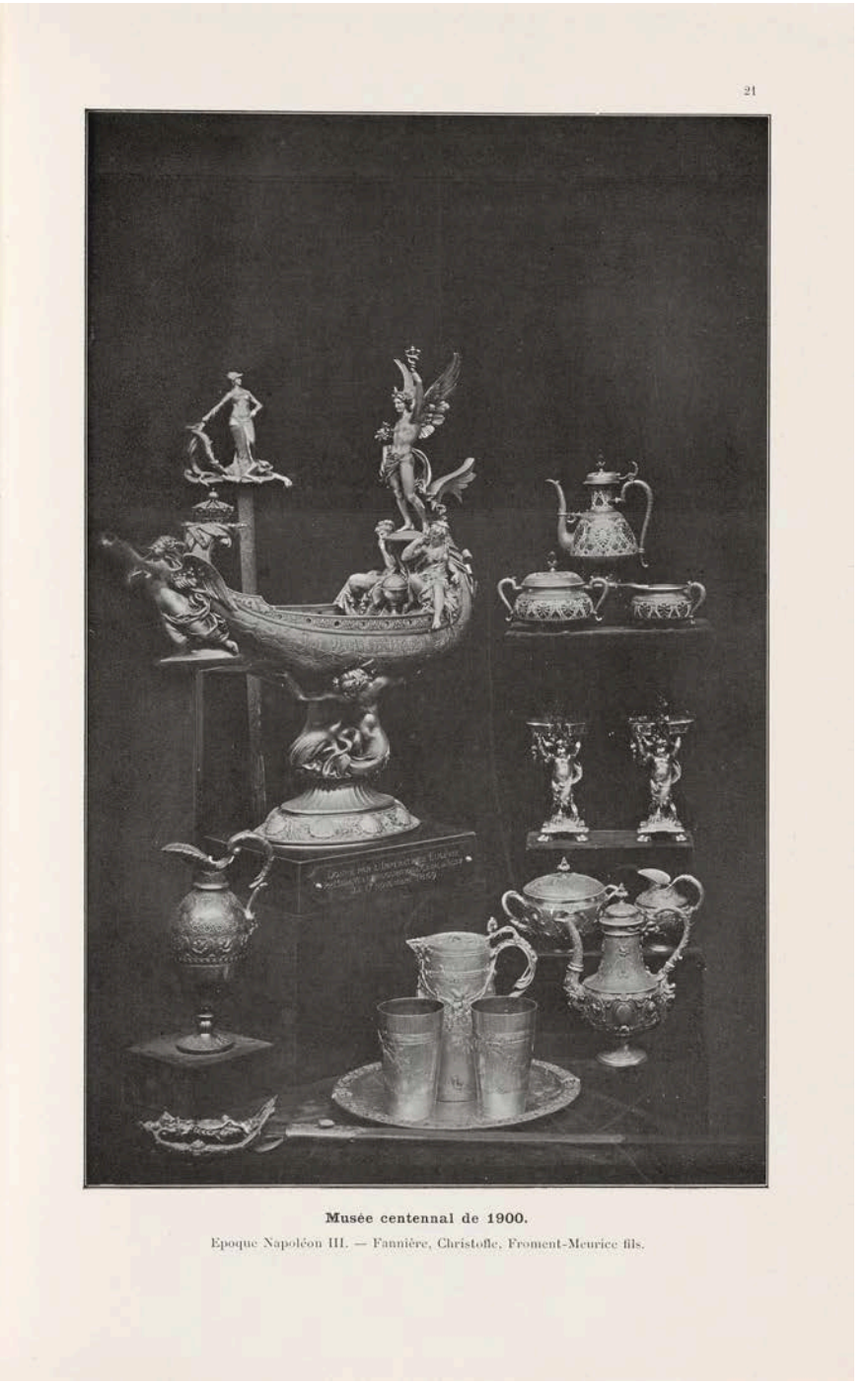

FIG. 11. — "Musée centennale de 1900. Époque Napoléon III—Fannière, Christofle, Froment-Meurice fils," from Henri Bouilhet, *L'orfèvrerie française aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles (1700–1900),* vol. 1, *L'orfèvrerie française aux XVIIIe siècle (1700–1789)* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1908), 21. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, NK7149.B76.

final contribution to the field of applied arts.[42] While the cover and title page of all three volumes indicate that the text was written by Henri Bouilhet "after documents gathered for the Musée centennal," the scholarship was nonetheless highly collaborative and intertextual. Bouilhet's narration of a history of French production drew from firsthand knowledge as well as sources by critic Paul Mantz, authors Henry Havard and René Ménard, and other histories of metalwork that appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century.[43] Champier, secretary for the Union Centrale, a member of the Musées Centennaux commission and of the jury for Class ninety-four as well as editor of the *Revue des arts décoratifs*, wrote long parts of the text and managed its publication.[44] This, then, was a collective effort to recover a history of French metalwork from its origins to the present.

Beginning in the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages, the text describes the historical uses of fine metalwork, its techniques, and its patrons. It moves quickly to the eighteenth century—by page forty of the first volume. Volumes two and three comprise the period of 1800–1900, with the Second Empire straddling these accounts. The story of the Christofle firm is integrated into this history, and images of its output dominate the illustrations of the final two volumes. Some of the text is identical to sections published elsewhere under Champier's name and drafts in his archive. These include the critical selections on Christofle that Champier, rather than Bouilhet, penned.[45] Bouilhet's history of French *orfèvrerie* exploited images and the possibilities of photomechanical reproduction. The three volumes present a lavishly illustrated history, incorporating line drawings, wood engravings, and photographs. Along with an extensive description of the commission for the Tuileries and Hôtel de Ville centerpieces, the catalog includes images of these works in numerous successive, full-page photographs (fig. 12). The images of the Hôtel de Ville centerpiece are identical to those that appear in the albums. The project of writing a history of design in images and objects therefore preoccupied the leaders of the Christofle firm who repossessed, remade, and ordered the historical accounts of their objects.

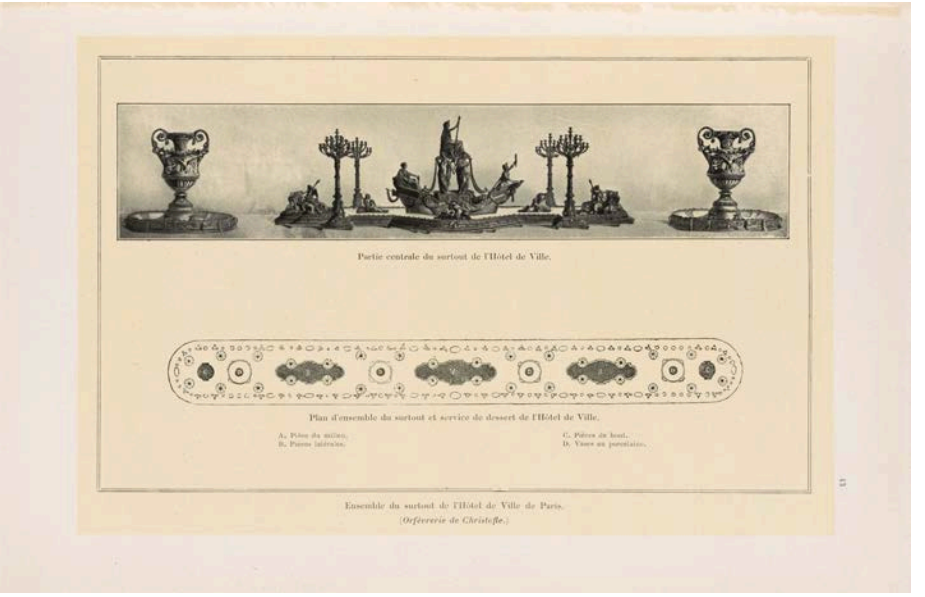

FIG. 12. — "Ensemble du surtout de l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris (Orfèvrerie de Christofle)," from Henri Bouilhet, *L'orfèvrerie française aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles (1700–1900)*, vol. 3, *L'orfèvrerie française aux XIXe siècle: Deuxième période (1860–1900)* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1912), 43. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, NK7149.B76.

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Bouilhet's efforts to write the history of his own métier dovetailed with efforts to preserve French prestige in the final years of the nineteenth century. From the vantage point of 1900, with its resplendent art nouveau exhibits, the historical trajectory of French metalwork seemed destined for an optimistic future. Yet, even while reassuring readers and exhibition viewers of continuity, the visceral upset of the devastation of the 1870–71 era is unmistakable in the account of fine metalwork production from the third volume of *L'orfèvrerie française*:

> It will be one of the astonishments of history, the prodigious rapidity with which it arose from the disasters of the terrible year. Disasters had piled up. To the ruins and mourning of the most appalling of wars were added the worst scourges: the tearing of internecine struggles, the underlying anguish of the occupation by the German army of the mutilated *patrie*, the obligation to pay the victor an enormous indemnity of five billion, finally the agitations of the political parties which could not bring themselves to accept the Republic, as a system of government succeeding the Empire. In the midst of such a troubled situation, we saw, as if by magic, the luxury industries flourish again. In the workshops, where the craftsmen, returning from the battlefields, hastily resumed their tools, there was a veritable fever of activity.[46]

Like the nationalist rebirth of the French *patrie*, the dramatic return of the metalworking industry was juxtaposed against disaster and ruins. By exhibiting and writing their works into a history of French design, the Christofle firm cast their lost objects in a discourse of survival that ensured continuity of the firm's reputation and put it above the censured politics of the Second Empire. Well aware of the historical potential of the object, Bouilhet and/or Champier conclude their history with a suggestion of the potential of metalwork to reveal something deeper about the past:

> The industry, whose history we have attempted to trace, and the fluctuations of two centuries reflect perhaps more than any other the physiognomy and the state of the soul of successive generations whose needs it served. Art is the powerful beacon that illuminates its route, regulates its evolution, and transforms itself according to the changing idea of society. . . . Aside from the general causes that influence taste and fashion, and which determine the principal character of decorative art of the time, one must consider the quantity of smaller phenomena and secondary causes, so to speak, whose succession and union create little by little a larger movement and sometimes provoke unexpected and decisive results.[47]

As artifactual witnesses, the two centerpieces and their material journey can be read alongside this statement. The damaged relics testified to the ostentatious fashion and historicizing taste of their era as well as to the smaller phenomena of specific artistic collaborations, and finally to the brutal historical vicissitudes that ultimately required remaking them once again. By remembering and remaking Second Empire objects, whether in metal, in photographic albums, or in text, Bouilhet and his colleagues reclaimed not only the objects themselves but also their testimonial value. They then deployed them to tell a history of their production that made larger claims for a splendid French tradition of design and craftsmanship, which they expected to persist. For the Christofle company and for later scholars, a deliberative regard—in line with the one evoked in this article's epigraph by Vladimir Nabokov—reveals how the circuitous histories of material objects continue, like a mise en abîme, to inform our own attempts to analyze and write histories of objects and eras.

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Notes

I began thinking about the material afterlife of the Second Empire as a scholar at the Getty Research Institute (GRI) in fall 2015 and thank the GRI Scholars Program for that opportunity. All translations from the French are mine.

1. *Musée Centennal des Classes 66, 69, 70, 71, 97: Mobilier et Décoration à l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900 à Paris; Rapport de la Commission de l'Installation* (Saint-Cloud: Belin, ca. 1900), 51, https://archive.org/details/gri_33125009323458/mode/2up.

2. Maurice Halbwachs, "The Reconstruction of the Past," in *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 46–51; and Éric Brian, "A Theorist of Collective Memory," in *The Anthem Companion to*

Maurice Halbwachs, ed. Robert Leroux and Jean-Christophe Marcel (London: Anthem, 2021), 5–16.

3. Allison Stielau, "Liquid Metaphors and the Politics of Melted Metal," *West 86th* 28, no. 2 (2021): 319–26.

4. See, for example, Anna Arabindan-Kesson, *Black Bodies, White Gold: Art, Cotton, and Commerce in the Atlantic World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021); Peter H. Christensen, *Precious Metal: German Steel, Modernity, and Ecology* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2022); and Helen Hills, ed., *Silver: Transformational Matter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024).

5. New attitudes toward conservation and its histories underscore the ways in which cultural artifacts are also products of technical interventions. See Peter N. Miller and Soon Kai Poh, eds., *Conserving Active Matter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022).

6. For the history and iconography of the commission, see Claudia Kanowski, "Le surtout de table de la ville de Paris," *Paris et Île-de-France: Mémoires publiés par la Fédération des Sociétés historiques et archéologiques de Paris et de l'Île-de-France* 44 (1993): 175–205.

7. Christopher Curtis Mead, *Making Modern Paris: Victor Baltard's Central Markets and the Urban Practice of Architecture* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2012), 77.

8. David Van Zanten, *Building Paris: Architectural Institutions and the Transformation of the French Capital, 1830–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 91.

9. Marcia Reed, ed., *The Edible Monument: The Art of Food for Festivals* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015).

10. Some twenty candelabras, four large Sèvres vases, and one hundred twenty pieces for flowers, fruits, and dessert completed the ensemble. See Henri Bouilhet, *L'orfèvrerie française aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles (1700–1900)*, vol. 3, *L'orfèvrerie française aux XIXe siècle: Deuxième période (1860–1900)* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1912), 42.

11. Similar but not identical albums exist at the Bibliothèque du Conseil de Paris, the Bibliothèque de l'Hôtel de Ville, the Bibliothèque Forney in Paris, the Christofle et Cie archives in Paris, and the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.

12. The depiction of plaster models in the photographs is the greatest rationale for a post-1871 dating of the extant albums, assuming the metallic object was completely lost. Baltard, who died in 1874, is not noted as deceased in the Getty album, but Diebolt (d. 1861) and Gumery (d. 1871) are. Claudia Kanowski argues that the slightly different text, and date of 1867, on the cover of the version in the library of the Hôtel de Ville indicate that it may have been a presentation copy. Kanowski also suggests that the company sought a second commission for the centerpiece in the 1880s to replace the centerpiece lost in the fire. Kanowski, "Le surtout de table de la ville de Paris."

13. Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 23.

14. Sarah Hamill and Megan R. Luke, introduction to *Photography and Sculpture: The Art Object in Reproduction* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2017), 1–32.

15. One side of the Summer and Winter composition is depicted with a surface sheen, and could possibly be a metallic object, or one of plaster with a coating of graphite. *Surtout de table de la Ville de Paris, éxecuté par Mrs. Christofle et Cie d'après les dessins de Mr. Vor. Baltard, member de l'Institut, et détruit dans l'incendie de l'Hôtel de Ville en mai 1871,* ca. 1872, GRI, 2023.R.7, unpaginated.

16. Catherine Whalen, "Interpreting Vernacular Photography: Finding 'Me'—A Case Study," in *Using Visual Evidence*, ed. Richard Howells and Robert W. Matson (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009), 78–94; and Sarah Brophy and Janice Hladki, eds., *Embodied Politics in Visual Autobiography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

17. Alisa Luxenberg. "Creating *Désastres*: Andrieu's Photographs of Urban Ruins in the Paris of 1871," *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 1 (1998): 113–37. See also Éric Fournier, "Les photographies des ruines de Paris en 1871 ou les faux-semblants de l'image," *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* 32 (2006): 137–51.

18. Luxenberg, "Creating *Désastres*," 115.

19. Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

20. *Henri Bouilhet 1830–1910* (Paris: G. de Malherbe, ca. 1910), n.p, https://archive.org/details/henribouilhet18300boui/.

21. Marc de Ferrière le Vayer, *Christofle: Deux siècles d'aventure industrielle, 1793–1993* (Paris: Éditions Le Monde, 1995), 215.

22. Kristin Ross, *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2015), 52–65. See also Gonzalo J. Sánchez, *Organizing Independence: The Artists Federation of*

the Paris Commune and Its Legacy, 1871–1889 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 78. Sánchez indicates that 748 artisans were supporters of the Commune and the artists' federation.

23. In the Hôtel de Ville copy, Baltard's affiliation with the Institut de France as a member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts is noted, but unlike other copies where this is indicated on the cover, it is in the text underneath the plan of the table.

24. Alexandre Gady, "La disparition des palais, 1870–1892," in *Palais Disparus de Napoléon: Tuileries, Saint-Cloud, Meudon* (Paris: Mobilier National, 2021), 465–76.

25. Quentin Deluermoz, *Commune(s) 1870–1871: Une traversée des mondes au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 2020), 233–38.

26. *Le Père Duchêne*, no. 3 (10 Floréal An 79) (30 April 1871), 65.

27. Louis J. Ianoli, "The Palace of the Tuileries and Its Demolition," *The French Review* 79, no. 5 (2006): 986–1008.

28. Victor Champier, "La vie et l'oeuvre de Henri Bouilhet 1830–1910," preface to *L'orfèvrerie française*, by Bouilhet, vol. 3 (Paris: H. Laurens, 1912), xvi.

29. Champier, "La vie et l'oeuvre de Henri Bouilhet 1830–1910," xvi–xvii.

30. Bouilhet, *L'orfèvrerie française,* 3:303.

31. Rossella Froissart Pezone, "Controverses sur l'aménagement d'un Musée des arts décoratifs à Paris au XIXe siècle," *Histoire de l'art* 16 (1991): 55–65.

32. Debora L. Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology and Style* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 109–33.

33. Stéphane Dervillé, quoted in Henri Bouilhet, *Musée Centennal de la classe 94. L'orfèvrerie française à l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900, à Paris* [. . .] *Rapport du Comité d'Installation, M. Henri Bouilhet, rapporteur* (Saint-Cloud: Belin, 1908), 2.

34. François Carnot, engineer and cultural administrator, was the son of Sadi Carnot, who was president of the Republic between 1887 and 1894, when he was assassinated.

35. Since each class had its own retrospective exhibit, there were also displays on the history of public works, such as bridges and canals as well as railroads and stations. See *Musée Rétrospectif de la Classe 29: Modèles, plans et dessins de travaux publics à l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900, à Paris* (Saint-Cloud: Belin, ca. 1900), https://archive.org/details/museeretrospectio0expo_0/mode/2up.

36. Anca I. Lasc, "Paris 1900: The Musée Centennale du Mobilier et de la Décoration and the Formation of a National Design Identity," in *Expanding Nationalisms at World's Fairs: Identity, Diversity and Exchange*, ed. David Raizman and Ethan Robey (New York: Routledge, 2020), 109–29.

37. Bouilhet, *Musée Centennal de la classe 94*, 8.

38. *Le Panorama* nos. 26–30 (1901) were devoted to the Musées Centennaux. The masthead indicates that issues grouped multiple classes together and lists them as: No. 26 Les moyens de transport, les instruments de musique l'alimentation; no. 27 Les tissus, soieries, broderies, le mobilier de 1780 à 1880; no. 28 Le mobilier (suite), les arts du métal, le chauffage, l'agriculture; no. 29 Le costume de Louis XV à Napoléon III, les parures de la femme et ses objets de toilette; and no. 30 Les armes de guerre et de chasse, le luminaire, la coutellerie, les jouets, la céramique et la verrerie.

39. *Musée Centennal de la Classe 72: Céramique, à l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900 à Paris, Rapport du Comité d'Installation* (Paris?, n.p., 1900), https://archive.org/details/museecentennaldooexpo/page/n7/mode/2up; *Musée Centennal de la Classe 12 (photographie) à l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900 à Paris: Métrophotographie & chronophotographie* (Saint-Cloud: Belin, ca. 1900), https://archive.org/details/museecentennaldeooexpo/mode/2up; and *Musée Centennal de la Classe 87: Arts, chimiques et pharmacie (matériel, procédés et produits) à l'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900, à Paris* (Saint-Cloud: Belin, ca. 1900), https://archive.org/details/musecentennaldooexpo. One compilation examines the history of Paris rather than applied arts: Charles Simond, *Paris de 1800 à 1900: Les Centennales Parisiennes; Panorama de la vie de Paris à travers le XIXe siècle* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1903), https://archive.org/details/lavieparisienneto2simo.

40. See, for example the three-volume history of French toys and games: Henry d'Allemagne, *Musée rétrospectif de la classe 100: Jeux* (Saint-Cloud: Belin, 1903).

41. Bouilhet, *L'orfèvrerie française aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles (1700–1900),* 3 vols. (Paris: H. Laurens, 1908, 1910, 1912).

42. The final volume, which covered the years 1860 to 1900, was produced and corrected by Bouilhet but was published in 1912, after his death in 1910.

43. Henry Havard, *L'orfèvrerie* (Paris: Delagrave, 1891); Henry Havard, *Histoire de l'orfèvrerie française* (Paris: Quantin, 1896); Paul Mantz's series "Recherches sur l'histoire de l'orfèvrerie française," published between 1861 and 1863 in the *Gazette des beaux-arts*; René Ménard, *Histoire artistique du métal* (Paris: Rouam, 1881); and Ferdinand de Lasteyrie, *Histoire de l'orfèvrerie* [. . .] (Paris: Hachette, 1875).

44. Victor Champier papers, Los Angeles, GRI, 940020, boxes 3 (manuscripts and notes on "Orfèvrerie") and 6 (correspondence with Henri and André Bouilhet); see finding aid: http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa940020.

45. Victor Champier papers, GRI, box 3, folder 7. Champier collaborated with Bouilhet on Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs projects in the 1880s and onward.

46. Bouilhet, *L'orfèvrerie française*, 3:101–2.

47. Bouilhet, *L'orfèvrerie française*, 3:122.

Victorious Laughter: Satirical Photomontage in Brigade KGK's Photo Series *From the 16th to the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*

Samuel Johnson

In 1934, Soviet artists Viktor Koretsky, Vera Gitsevich, and Boris Knoblok created a series of photomontages under their working name, Brigade KGK, to illustrate a major political speech by Joseph Stalin. Of the three artists, the best known today is Koretsky, a Kyiv-born graphic artist twice awarded the Stalin Prize for posters he designed during World War II. After completing his education in 1929 at the Moscow State College of Visual Arts in Memory of the 1905 Uprising, Koretsky worked intermittently with Gitsevich (his wife) and Knoblok, creating stage designs for the realist theater of Nikolai Okhlopkov and producing graphic design for the State Fine Arts Publishing House, Izogiz.[1] Brigade KGK achieved its greatest success in the field of poster art, but *From the 16th to the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, finds them working in a new format. A sheaf of silver bromide prints showcasing seventy-five photomontages captioned and numbered sequentially was published by the agency Soiuzfoto in an edition of five thousand, with an embossed red portfolio available for separate purchase. The series represents a novel type of Soviet print culture; part album, part filmstrip, the mass-produced photo series could also function as a portable exhibition in libraries, workers' clubs, and other public places, as book artist and curator Mikhail Karasik explains.[2] The editioned photo series therefore exemplifies an emerging type of publication oriented toward informal public exhibition, which photography historian Olivier Lugon first identified in the postwar period.[3]

Among the most notable qualities of Brigade KGK's *From the 16th to the 17th Congress* is its comic mood. Fifteen of the photomontages in the series—one fifth of its contents—are satirical. The sheer frequency of Koretsky, Gitsevich, and Knoblok's attempts at humor allows us to position their work within a cluster of debates in the 1930s: on the nature and direction of photomontage, the aims and possibilities of satire in an era devoted to socialist realism, and the enjoyment of consumer goods in the Soviet Union. Serguei Oushakine, one of the leading voices in recent critical discussions of Soviet

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laughter, has stressed the importance of visual representation to the comic milieu.[4] Scholars of film, literature, and drama have recently expanded our understanding of Soviet humor, but art historical studies of official humor are still too rare.[5] In this respect, *From the 16th to the 17th Congress* serves as a valuable case study.

The surprising range of photographic techniques exploited by Brigade KGK also testifies to the persistence of a rich photographic culture in the Stalin era. Surrounded by experiments, Soviet critics of the mid-1930s complained that "there is still no theory of photomontage," even as they saw the basis of a future theory with new clarity.[6] Their dissatisfaction arose from the capacious and free use of the term itself. *Photomontage* referred not only to the serial, multipage layouts of illustrated magazines, which preserved an individual photograph's autonomy and documentary value, but also to the satirical compositions that German photomonteur John Heartfield created for the *Arbeiter Illustreirte Zeitung* (*AIZ;* Workers' illustrated news), which subordinated photographs to a simple slogan-like message. As a result, Soviet critics maintained that "one of the first tasks on the way to creating a theory of photomontage is to clarify the genres, establish their fundamental differences, sphere of application, etc."[7]

The novel format and multifarious techniques of *From the 16th to the 17th Congress* underscore the currency of these concerns about genre. Brigade KGK freely used photographs in statistical data visualizations, monumentalizing socialist realist tableaux, and satirical photomontages. In each of these genres, their work reveals a new plasticity in the photograph. Nowhere is this quality more striking than in their satirical montages, which rely on an experimental technique to create distorted images. This essay examines how this technique made photomontage intelligible in relation to the other arts that contemporary critics regarded as its models in the mid-1930s: drawing, painting, and stage—or, more precisely, film—direction. It demonstrates that concerns often understood in terms of medium alone were, for artists and critics of the 1930s, ineluctably bound up with questions of genre.

Imminent Victory

From the 16th to the 17th Congress is a little-known intertext of a well-known speech: Stalin's "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.)."[8] This long address, delivered at the so-called Congress of the Victors on 26 January 1934 and published two days later in the organ of the party's Central Committee, *Pravda*, celebrated the Bolsheviks' triumph over internal dissent from its left and right flanks as well as the continuing stability of the USSR's planned socialist economy against the backdrop of the ongoing depression in the capitalist West. In the photo series by Brigade KGK, the text of Stalin's address maintains a position of primary importance. The lengthy captions beneath the photographs are taken directly from the published *Pravda* transcript, and any deletions are duly marked by ellipses. The illustrations also closely shadow Stalin's text, giving special emphasis to no single passage of the speech. Even the visual humor in the montages receives textual

legitimation in a form recently analyzed by literary historian Natalia Skradol: several captions contain the *Pravda* transcript's editorial interpolations of laughter and applause from Stalin's audience.[9]

Stalin would not utter his famous verdict that "life has become better, life has become happier" until the final months of 1935, but the jubilation it expressed originated in the events of 1934. In his "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress," he sought to clarify a widespread misconception about the goals of economic planning. During the first five-year plan (1928–32), massive industrial investment and poor resource allocation had created runaway inflation, which required food rations to be introduced for the first time since the civil war. For some observers, the reappearance of the centralized command economy and the disappearance of money presaged an immediate transition to the producer-oriented society of full communism. In his report of 1934, however, Stalin announced that the second five-year plan would eliminate rations, reminding those who had praised the ration system for obviating money that "in the last analysis goods are produced not for the sake of producing them, but for consumption."[10]

When he delivered his report, Stalin still hoped to end rations in 1938, at the conclusion of the second plan period, but by the end of 1934 he would abruptly change course. Determined to tame the inflation that rations held at bay, the Soviet State Bank advised a slackening of price controls on some commodities, which would allow the state to absorb as revenue the excess demand that bubbled up in underground markets.[11] The strategy was immediately successful, and by October Stalin decided to eliminate rations before the year's end. In November he told the Central Committee that these reforms were meant "to expand Soviet commerce, to strengthen the cash economy." He promised that "the value of the ruble will become more stable, undoubtedly, and strengthening the ruble means strengthening all of our planning and financial accountability."[12] Rather than reflecting a turn to liberal laissez-faire, the reintroduction of money as the central instrument of the economy was part of a seismic shift toward a planned mass-consumption sector.

The triumphant mood of the report was therefore anticipatory, and Stalin continued to emphasize the need for vigilance against the enemies of socialism. In both Stalin's report and the satirical photomontages of Brigade KGK, those who stood in the way of the planned commercial-trade sector were subject to merciless mockery. Stalin criticized two closely related attitudes. On the one hand, he highlighted a widespread "indifference to the demand for a greater range of goods and to the requirements of consumers" among functionaries who dreamed of direct, moneyless exchange.[13] On the other, he reminded his audience that "there is still among a certain section of Communists a supercilious, disdainful attitude towards trade," which is not the perspective of true Bolsheviks but "impoverished aristocrats who are full of ambition."[14]

In the photo series, these internal political obstacles to state trade are represented in a pair of montages. In montage number fifty-seven, Brigade KGK portrays a helpless Soviet consumer overwhelmed by toothbrushes that cascade from a comically oversize document containing the orders of a myopic, self-satisfied bureaucrat (fig. 1). The party's

FIG. 1. — Brigade KGK (Viktor Koretsky [1909–98], Vera Gitsevich [1897–1976], and Boris Knoblok [1903–84]). "We had to overcome among the people in charge of trade the unhealthy habit of distributing goods mechanically; we had to put a stop to their indifference to the demand for a greater range of goods and to the requirements of the consumers." *From the 16th to the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, 1934, no. 57, gelatin silver print, 22.7 × 17 cm. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2014.R.25.

own arrogance toward trade is lampooned in montage fifty-six, which shows a young man turning his nose up at—and turning his back on—the stream of goods awaiting future Soviet consumers: tea kettles, alarm clocks, reams of fabric, leather shoes, sausage links, bread, and canned goods (fig. 2). Amid this bounty, a can of tomatoes clipped from the foreign press—a sign of the relative abundance enjoyed abroad—gives indirect testimony of the continuing straits of the Soviet consumer.

The chaotic proliferation of consumer goods in these compositions shows how Brigade KGK borrowed its models from the previous generation of avant-garde artists and subtly transformed them to meet new ideological demands. Of particular relevance are the photomontages that the constructivist Aleksandr Rodchenko created in 1923 to illustrate Vladimir Mayakovsky's new poem "Pro eto" (About this).[15] Art historian Chistina Kiaer has situated "Pro eto" in the context of left-opposition leader Lev (Leon) Trotsky's campaign for a new way of life in the period of the New Economic Policy (NEP), when the private enterprises of so-called nepmen were permitted to compete with nationalized concerns.[16] For the lovelorn poet who is the protagonist of Mayakovsky's poem, the persistence of the old *byt*, or way of life, under NEP stands

FIG. 2. — Brigade KGK (Viktor Koretsky [1909–98], Vera Gitsevich [1897–1976], and Boris Knoblok [1903–84]). "There is still among a section of Communists a supercilious, disdainful attitude toward trade in general, and toward Soviet trade in particular. These Communists, so-called, look upon Soviet trade as a matter of secondary importance, not worth bothering about." *From the 16th to the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, 1934, no. 56, gelatin silver print, 22.7 × 17 cm. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2014.R.25.

in the way of a new, higher form of communist existence (*bytie*). One of Rodchenko's illustrations for the poem derides the paraphernalia of tea drinking as a primitive fetish of the old, feminine-coded *byt* (fig. 3). It shows two photographs of the poet hemmed in on all sides by precious silver, backed by a corpulent nepman. For the NEP-era photomonteur, the overwhelming accumulation of domestic goods represented an obstacle to communist mobilization. A decade later, Brigade KGK used the same compositional and stylistic principles to a different end. Where the nepman represented an external threat, foreign to the Soviet way of life, the traders targeted by Brigade KGK's montage were within the party—Communists, but in name only, as Stalin stated.

The distance between these two eras can be gauged with a passage from the popular satirical novel by Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov, *Dvenadtsat' stul'ev* (1928; *The Twelve Chairs*). The novel follows the irrepressible Ostap Bender, a conman, master of the new Bolshevik argot, and all around "smooth operator," as he seeks his fortune: a set of jewels that the mother of a provincial noble sewed into the cushion of a dining chair as the revolution unfolded around her. When Bender visits a poet friend who sleeps on the floor of a communal apartment in Moscow, the authors draw a stark contrast between the new

FIG. 3. — Aleksandr Rodchenko (Russian, 1890–1956). Draft illustration for Vladimir Mayakovsky's poem "Pro eto," accompanied by the lines "And the century stands / Unwhipped / the mare of *byt* won't budge," 1923, cut-and-pasted printed papers and gelatin silver photographs, 42.5 × 32.5 cm. Moscow, State Mayakovsky Museum. Art © 2024 Estate of Alexander Rodchenko / UPRAVIS, Moscow / ARS, NY. Photo: Art Resource.

ethical existence pursued by young Communists and the familiar comforts of the old way of life. In witheringly ironic indirect discourse, Ilf and Petrov skewer the attitude of vigilance against domestic comfort that motivates the protagonist of Mayakovsky's "Pro eto":

> A mattress is insatiable. . . . It needs a bookcase. It needs a table with thick stupid legs. Creaking its springs, it demands drapes, a door curtain, and pots and pans for the kitchen. It shoves people and says to them:
>
> "Go on! Buy a washboard and a rolling pin!"
>
> "I'm ashamed of you, man. You haven't yet got a carpet."
>
> A mattress remembers and does everything in its own way.
>
> Not even a poet can escape the common lot. Here he comes, carrying one from the market, hugging it to his soft belly with horror.
>
> "I'll break down your resistance, poet," says the mattress.[17]

As Kiaer has argued, this kind of spontaneous "thing theory" led Mayakovsky to repurpose the commodity fetish in his advertisements for Bolshevik-made "comradely objects" during Trotsky's campaign for a new *byt*. The poet in *The Twelve Chairs* is portrayed somewhat less sympathetically than Mayakovsky's poet; the former is an idealist, a lover of Leo Tolstoy, and a vegetarian. Both types, however, were targeted in the Stalinist campaign against the left-wing ideology and Trotskyism. And, as Mikhail Odesskii and David Feldman show in their critical introduction to the text, this campaign underpinned Ilf and Petrov's 1927 commission for a serialized novel from the monthly literary journal *30 dnei* (30 days).[18] For this reason, literary scholar Maya Vinokur argues that Ilf and Petrov's novels mark the transition from a traditional form of Russian satire exemplified by Gogol's "laughter through tears" to a new kind of Stalinist "laughter without tears."[19] This new type of laughter, which rippled through the auditorium as Stalin delivered his report, is what Brigade KGK wanted their photomontages to provoke from the viewer.

Satire, a Realist Genre

Recently, a number of scholars have demonstrated that the famously slippery definition of socialist realism did not exclude satire. As art historian Annie Gérin argues, the former commissar of education, Anatoly Lunacharsky, was instrumental in reconciling these apparently distinct modes. Speaking to the Union of Soviet Writers shortly before his death in 1933, Lunacharsky explained that "in his struggle with negative phenomena, the Socialist Realist may of course resort to all sorts of hyperbole, caricature, and utterly improbable comparisons—not to conceal reality but, through stylization, to reveal it."[20] In 1934, when the founding editor of the satirical journal *Krokodil*, Mikhail Koltsov, addressed the First Congress of Soviet Writers, he stressed that satire was an indispensable weapon in the struggle against the remnants of capitalism. In contemporary examples of Soviet humor, Koltsov perceived "strength and power, along with notes of severe anger and superiority over the enemy."[21] But he also echoed Stalin's criticisms of antitrade attitudes within the party, asking, "Isn't it possible that in ourselves, in those who sincerely consider themselves new people, devout Bolsheviks . . . that some old, petit bourgeois poison remains?"[22] This volatile mixture of triumphant ire and introspective critique distinguishes the satirical sensibility of 1934 from later developments in Soviet humor. As Oushakine points out, in subsequent years the negative aspects of Soviet life would be portrayed from the standpoint of positive comic heroes who exuded an attitude of joy, calm, and confidence against the backdrop of a stable socialist environment.[23]

These statements are exactly contemporaneous with publication of *From the 16th to the 17th Congress*, but the discussions of satire that most strongly shaped it began several years earlier, when the first five-year plan was drawing to a close. After a debate in 1929 about the purpose of satire under socialism unfolded in the organ of the Federation of Soviet Writers, *Literaturnaia gazeta* (Literary gazette), Lunacharsky

created a Commission for the Study of Satirical Genres at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which would examine traditions in Russia, Europe, and Latin America. In a notice published in March 1931 in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, he highlighted the need for a study collection and solicited contributions from collectors of journals such as *Punch*, *Simplicissimus*, *Le charivari*, *L'assiette au beurre* (The butter plate), *Kladderdatsch*, and *L'asino* (The donkey).[24] For working artists, the living embodiment of this tradition was Heartfield, the former dadaist who had contributed stinging satirical photomontages to the Comintern-financed workers' newspaper *AIZ* since 1929. Heartfield even visited the USSR in preparation for an exhibition of his work in 1931 in Moscow, giving lectures and lessons in his photomontage technique to an admiring public.

Heartfield's impact in Moscow was as immediate as Moscow's impact on Heartfield. As art historians Hubertus Gassner and Maria Gough have shown, the potent negativity characterizing Heartfield's anti-capitalist photomontages abated when he was enlisted in the project of positively representing the Soviet planned economy; at the same time, Soviet critics used his work for *AIZ* to attack Soviet photomonteurs, especially Gustav Klutsis, who responded by transforming the field of poster art with a greatly simplified style.[25] More recently, art historian Sabine Kriebel has reinterpreted Heartfield's humor in relation to the satire debates in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, and literary historian Devin Fore has linked Heartfield's practice to socialist realism via caricature. Yet both scholars treat Heartfield's work in a strictly German frame of reference: for Kriebel, the German tradition of satirical magazines, or *Witzblätter*, serves as a "buffer zone" shielding Heartfield from the heroic optimism of official socialist realism, while in Fore's view, the highly developed media ecosystem of German capitalism makes Heartfield a prototypical postmodern realist who mainly used photographs as "reproductions stolen from other sources."[26] This literature reveals a complex and influential artist, but it pays surprisingly little attention to the warm reception that Soviet artists gave to Heartfield's signature trait: his satirical negativity.

In this respect, it is instructive to consider the example of one of Heartfield's most gifted Soviet followers, Boris Petrushansky, who worked under the pen name Boris Klinch. An experienced caricaturist frequently published in *Krokodil*, Klinch embraced photomontage in the rush of excitement surrounding Heartfield's visit to Moscow and employed a method very similar to Heartfield's, if not directly modeled on it.[27] In 1932, Klinch complained that satire is "one of the strongest weapons in the struggle for socialist construction," yet "photo-satire is almost totally absent" from the arsenal of the Soviet artist.[28] To Klinch, Heartfield was primarily a master of comic genres. Indeed, Klinch used the term *fotomontazh* interchangeably with *fotosatira*, *fotokarikatura*, and *fotosharzh*, a term adapted from the French *portrait charge* (itself a translation from the Italian *ritratti carichi*, or "loaded portrait").

The *fotosharzhi* that Klinch published in the Soiuzfoto organ *Proletarskoe foto* (Proletarian photo) in late 1932 testify to his belief that Heartfield had "essentially laid the foundations of a great school of this genre."[29] For the fifteenth anniversary celebration of the October Revolution, Klinch created *fotosharzhi* of the British and

German conservatives Stanley Baldwin, Winston Churchill, Gustav Noske, and Adolf Hitler. Klinch's portrayal of Noske, the conservative Social Democrat who forcefully suppressed the Spartacist uprising in 1919, is particularly reminiscent of the combination of animal physiognomy and verbo-visual puns that Heartfield perfected in his photomontages of the late 1920s and early 1930s (fig. 4). Motivated by the nickname "Bluthund" that Noske earned through his taste for martial order, Klinch paired Noske's heavy-lidded eyes with the jowls of a dog. In Russian, the verbal epithet maintains its organic connection to the image through a rather literal transcription; Noske is revealed to be a *krovavaia sobaka* (a bloody dog) rather than an *ishcheika* (a bloodhound, or more literally, a tracker). The vagaries of the translation are evident in the visage of Klinch's *fotosharzh*, which more closely resembles a bulldog than a bloodhound. As Klinch's penetrating interpretation of Noske's cold, indifferent gaze suggests, this verbal image provides the montage with its visual logic.

By emphasizing its natural affinity with the family of comic genres, Klinch convincingly argued that photomontage could be reconciled with the other major arts in the realist tradition. He maintained that photomontage ought to be seen as "a theoretical and practical solution to the problem of the image" encountered by artists in all fields, even if its material properties "make montage more akin to cinema than to the other types of spatial art."[30] In Klinch's view, photomontage and film shared the ability to create an artistic image from mechanical impressions of the external world. But he thought that these new arts were also united with literature and painting by a problem of general relevance: "'Assembling' ['montiruia'] reality in his own way, solving the problems of creative comparison, combining individual uncoordinated photo-touches

FIG. 4. — Boris Klinch (Russian, 1892–1946). *"Krovovaia sobaka," Noske* ("The bloody dog," Noske), photomontage, 1932. From *Proletarskoe foto,* no. 11 (1932): 29. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 85-S956.

[foto-mazki] step by step according to a plan previously drawn by consciousness, in other words, 'directing' the unorganized 'elements' of the montage, the artist-monteur solves the problem of the image analogously to the easel painter or the satirist."[31]

The linchpin of Klinch's exposition is the artist's conscious plan, which organizes the disparate materials gathered by the monteur into a meaningful order. The presence of this mental image or idea gives the work artistic significance and transforms the monteur into an "artist-monteur." It is regrettable, Klinch concludes, that this process is called montage at all, for the term's unavoidable connotation of mechanical assembly tends to conceal the deep connection between the artistic image assembled by the monteur and the reality it discloses to the viewer.

A renewed assertion of artistic will was necessary, according to Klinch, because artists and critics had come to treat photography as "naked 'factography,'" and in the process forgot that "representation as a directly transcribed [protokol'noe] reproduction of reality is only raw material for the artist."[32] The model of "factography," against which Klinch argues, was popularized in the mid-1920s by the circle of artists and writers associated with the journals *Lef* and *Novyi lef* (New lef), who combined an interest in photomontage with the range of genres they called the literature of fact—diaries, letters, sketches, and minor news reports. As painters picked up the camera, avant-garde writers reinvented themselves as professional journalists issuing communiqués from the field of class struggle. In this milieu, according to art historian Kristin Romberg, the term *moving picture* could be used to criticize a documentary film because it implied (however subtly) that the film subordinated photography to posed or staged actions, like those encountered in painting and theater.[33] Klinch simply reversed this charge by stressing that photomontage is, in fact, a kind of picture making.

The automatic snapshot had been especially appealing to photomonteurs seeking to replace traditional artistic skills with new, rationalized procedures. Latvian artist Klutsis, who claimed to have invented political photomontage independently of Heartfield, articulated a strong defense of this position. Klutsis maintained that "by replacing a drawing with a photograph, the artist represents a particular moment more truthfully, more vitally, more comprehensibly to the masses. The meaning of this substitution," he explained, "lies in the fact that the photograph is not a sketch of a visual fact, but its precise fixation."[34] As Gassner has shown, Klutsis's valorization of these mechanical processes was relentlessly criticized as a form of petty-bourgeois formalism by members of the Russian Association of Proletarian Photographers and the Russian Association of Proletarian Artists (ROPF and RAPKh), who considered his fragmented, repetitive compositions inferior to the powerful simplicity of Heartfield's work.[35] But members of both camps saw promise in the mechanical aspect of photomontage, ambivalent though they were. As one of Klinch's supporters pointed out, the assembly of readymade clippings had a distinct advantage over traditional methods of artistic representation because "it frees artists from the need to make drawings," something many artists already did with the aid of photographs, he admitted.[36]

Klinch regretted the way critics portrayed photomontage as an approach marooned "somewhere on the border between the drawing and the photograph," but this view has great explanatory power.[37] Heartfield's method exploited both the credibility of the photograph as an index of reality and the traditional artistic skills that it was often said to replace. Photographer János Reismann recalled taking custom photographs for Heartfield "based on exact pencil sketches," which then became the subject of long critical discussions with the monteur, who "insisted on nuances that I was no longer capable of seeing."[38] The primacy of Heartfield's artistic vision over the mechanically produced photograph served as a powerful model for Soviet artists. "Having determined the idea and theme," Klinch too prepared "a graphic sketch according to which he selects photographic material," which he then "enlarged or reduced in the appointed sizes" and assembled.[39] Even without the special photo shoots that Heartfield relied on, this method required that the artist "know in advance—definitely in advance, even if in general outline—what kind of basic photographic material he will have at his disposal."[40] As in Klinch's remarks about the primacy of the image in artistic creation, this outline is both a plan of action and a drawing in the traditional sense of *disegno*.

This refashioning of the mechanical aspects of photomontage into a more traditional guise soon became common in Soviet criticism. In an entry for the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* written in 1934, a chastened Klutsis admits that "photomontage as artistic creation should be distinguished from photomontage in which several photographs, or cut-outs of them, are mechanically combined . . . which is not really art."[41] The first monograph devoted to Heartfield's work, published in 1936 by Soviet writer Sergei Tretiakov, de-emphasizes the mechanical side of photomontage in order to highlight the genres that make its effects intelligible. In addition to the "photomontage-*sharzh*," Heartfield is presented in the monograph as a creator of "photomontage-feuilletons" and "photo-epigrams."[42] Tretiakov states that these exercises "do not demand from the photomonteur the specialized knowledges of the artist or draftsman—these are replaced by scissors—but in exchange grant full freedom to the combinatory ability, taste and wit."[43] Scissors too are expendible, a mere implement. Tretiakov also sees Heartfield's combinatory wit in his staged photographs, where "the moment of montage precedes the snapshot."[44] In the end, Tretiakov admits that the very skills the photomonteur sets aside justify the new practice. He concludes his text by stressing that "the feuilletonist is brought up on photomontage," and that "additions to the photograph are educating the future draftsman or painter."[45] Evidently, photography and montage would not put an end to traditional skills and genres, as some corners of the avant-garde had loudly proclaimed, but would transform and renew them.

A Truthful Distortion of the Facts

Closer attention to genre categories can help to elucidate the technical and material aspects of Brigade KGK's series *From the 16th to the 17th Congress*. Consider the distinction

between *sharzh* and caricature. The boundary between these genres is fluid, but it occasionally emerges in sharp relief. Where *sharzh* concentrates on individual physiognomy, caricature adds mise-en-scène, often developing into complex multifigure compositions that rely on situational humor. The former captures the quirks of public personalities, while the latter extends its reach to impersonal, abstract ideas. When Stalin's report distinguishes between the defeated nationalist foe and its lingering ideological effects, for example, Brigade KGK uses caricature to show how the party, represented by a membership card, must still be purged of alien ideas that cling to it like homunculi (fig. 5). Indeed, owing to the dry, policy-forward framing of Stalin's report, pure *sharzhi* (like that of Klinch's portrait of Noske; [see fig. 4]) are rare in the series. In caricatures where *sharzh* does appear, Brigade KGK takes an approach not seen in the work of Heartfield or Klinch. They use an old darkroom trick to distort the faces of its subjects into ridiculous, grimacing masks.

Many of the most striking montages in the series exploit a fun-house effect that can be achieved by using a curved mirror, bending the photosensitive paper beneath the enlarger or otherwise manipulating the photograph's emulsion.[46] In montage number

FIG. 5. — Brigade KGK (Viktor Koretsky [1909–98], Vera Gitsevich [1897–1976], and Boris Knoblok [1903–84]). "We have smashed the enemies of the Party, the opportunists of all shades, the nationalist deviators of all kinds. But remnants of their ideology still live in the minds of individual members of the Party, and not infrequently they find expression." *From the 16th to the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, 1934, no. 62, gelatin silver print, 22.7 × 17 cm. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2014.R.25.

FIG. 6. — Brigade KGK (Viktor Koretsky [1909–98], Vera Gitsevich [1897–1976], and Boris Knoblok [1903–84]). "There are two other types of executive who retard our work, hinder our work, and hold up our advance. . . . People who have become bigwigs, who consider that Party decisions and Soviet laws are not written for them, but for fools. . . . And . . . honest windbags (*laughter*), people who are honest and loyal to Soviet power, but who are incapable of leadership, incapable of organizing anything." *From the 16th to the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, 1934, no. 70, gelatin silver print, 22.7 × 17 cm. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2014.R.25.

fifty-six (see fig. 2), the young man's face has been subtly stretched to emphasize his self-important expression. In montage number seventy (fig. 6), this distortion is used to even greater effect in the depiction of two contemporary Soviet types highlighted in Stalin's address: the "bigwigs" who think they are above the law because of the services they have performed for the party; and the "people who are honest and loyal to Soviet power, but who are incapable of leadership," whom Stalin calls "honest windbags."[47] In the caption of this image, the matter-of-fact parenthetical inserted by editors at *Pravda* testifies to the spontaneous laughter (*smekh*) that this remark provoked at the congress. This spontaneous delight is neither a sign of Stalin's talent as a humorist nor of his audience's sycophancy. Instead, the laughter alerts us to the generic quality of the mediocre joke, a mainstay of political speeches.

The "honest windbag" is a type expertly drawn in Ilf and Petrov's novel of 1931, *Zolotoi telenok* (*The Golden Calf*), which finds Ostap Bender pursuing another secret fortune—this time, concealed by a minor bureaucrat. The countless ineffectual officials Bender encounters in his quest are typified by one Yegor Skumbrievich, who, like his

coworkers, turned his zeal for social work into a "universal mutual fraud" that kept him out of the office at all times.[48] After finally locating Skumbrievich at the beach, Bender subjects him to an interrogation at sea, which transforms the "exemplary activist" into "a shapeless sack full of mustard and horseradish."[49] The comedic effect of this image lies in its unexpected verbo-visual illumination: the slippery fish Skumbrievich—his name derives from the Russian word *skumbriia* (Scomber, or mackerel)—is caught at sea and turned into a tasty snack. As literary scholar Mark Lipovetsky has shown, the methods that Bender uses to net his elusive prey are borrowed from the Soviet secret police.[50]

Unlike the *fotosharzhi* by Klinch, which reveal the true character concealed beneath appearances, these examples from Brigade KGK and Ilf and Petrov rely on a different trope: an endlessly changeable form that will readily adapt itself to any content. The target of the humor here is appearance itself, and our pleasure arises from the manipulation of this empty, pliable, and ultimately insignificant material by a superior force. For a visual equivalent to these jokes about windbags, Brigade KGK turned to an unsigned *fotosharzh* published in 1932 that portrays Berlin's chief of police, German Social Democrat Albert Grzesinski (fig. 7). While serving as minister of the interior from 1926 to 1930, Grzesinski oversaw the suppression of Communist rallies and the banning of the Rotfrontkämpferbund (Alliance of Red-Front-Fighters), a paramilitary organization affiliated with the German Communist Party. In the *fotosharzh* of Grzesinski, the stretched face is less a means of amplifying a suspicious sidelong glance than a visual equivalent of the police violence exercised on German Communists, turned against their political foe. When Brigade KGK adopts this device, stretching and distorting the faces of windbags and bigwigs, the same kind of visual violence is inflicted upon the shiftless Soviet bureaucrat, a figure so insignificant that the force required to reshape him amounts to nothing.

This unsigned *sharzh* of Grzesinski can be linked in turn to an earlier use of the same device in the Sovkino film *Kain i Artem* (*Cain and Artem*) of 1929, directed by Pavel Petrov-Bytov. Petrov-Bytov's free adaptation of story by Maxim Gorky follows Cain, a Jewish tradesman and underground leftist living on the margins of a provincial market town, as he experiences, first, persecution by, and then comradely solidarity from the brawny Artem. After finding Artem unconscious following an attempted murder by some petty toughs (hired by an envious kulak), Cain nurses him back to health and teaches him of the workers' plight. Later, when those same villains drunkenly force Cain to dance until he loses consciousness, the enlightened Artem reemerges to exact a satisfying vengeance. As the exhausted Cain falls to the floor, he sees the faces of his tormenters contorted—by his own failing senses and by their disbelief—into dreadful masks (figs. 8a–c.). To the villains, Artem has risen from the dead.

Although Petrov-Bytov's film was almost overshadowed by the ultraleft polemic he incited in the Leningrad journal *Zhizn' iskusstva* (The life of art) against the pioneers of montage in Soviet film, Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin, for making pictures that appealed to the intelligentsia more than the masses, it was quickly pointed out

FIG. 7. — Artist unknown. "The Social Democrat Grzesinski," from *Proletarskoe foto,* no. 3 (1932): 7. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 85-S956.

that his own films made brilliant use of the very formalism he decried.[51] In a review of *Cain and Artem* published in the daily newspaper *Izvestiia*, Lunacharsky remarks that "deformations of objects and human faces have nowhere been used so masterfully, it seems to me. The drunk, brutal people trying to torture Cain lose their human appearance. . . . Here the unbelievably elongated, fantastically distorted faces are full of a mortal fear, which cannot but infect the viewer."[52] While he admits that the film takes too many liberties with Gorky, Lunacharsky concludes that it "holds to the framework of that realism, brought to an absolutely captivating illusion, which made our best films so famous abroad."[53] In 1932, Petrov-Bytov's film was kept in the public eye throughout Soviet celebrations of Gorky's fortieth year as a writer and through the synchronized-sound version of the film prepared in France by film director Abel Gance.[54] Although Soviet critics were unanimously opposed to the French version of *Cain and Artem*, its existence nonetheless testified to an admiration first expressed by Lunacharsky: "The collective that made this picture—first of all, probably, the cameraman—genuinely knows how to make the photograph speak."[55]

Their claim to realism notwithstanding, the distorted projections that we encounter in *Cain and Artem* and *From the 16th to the 17th Congress* have a decidedly mechanical quality. Indeed, it is possible that these images were created with a new device that mechanized the photographer's know-how. In 1927, English photographer

FIGS. 8A–C. — Pavel Petrov-Bytov (Russian, 1895–1960), director. Screen captures from the film *Cain and Artem*, 1929. Images courtesy University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive Library.

Herbert George Ponting patented a device "for photographing in caricature" that he called the "variable controllable distortograph."[56] Using an irregular surface directly affixed to the lens of a still or motion-picture camera, Ponting's device made it possible to create distortions of every conceivable variety, from the amusing to the grotesque (fig. 9).

FIG. 9. — Herbert George Ponting (English, 1870–1935). *Camera Caricature*, ca. 1927, gelatin silver prints mounted on card, 49.5 × 35.6 cm (grid). London, Victoria and Albert Museum, RPS.3336–2018. Image © Royal Photographic Society Collection / Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Ponting's invention was available to Petrov-Bytov's camera operator in 1929, just as it was available to Soiuzfoto in spring 1931, when the agency energetically pursued a policy of full mechanization for its printing facilities. In keeping with the goals of increased production under the first five-year plan, the agency replaced its "old-fashioned equipment" with new photographic enlargers and a range of machines that automated the processes of printing, washing, drying, trimming, and sorting.[57] This new, rationalized production process was what allowed Soiuzfoto to efficiently produce editioned series such as *From the 16th to the 17th Congress*. The agency's first attempt at this format, brought out in October 1930 in an edition of 1500, became so popular in workers' clubs, schools, and factory committees across the USSR that the problem of assembling the prints into series "was sorted out literally on the fly."[58] The *fotosharzhi* published in *Proletarskoe foto* and *From the 16th to the 17th Congress* were produced and distributed by Soiuzfoto—first anonymously, and then, after a protest from Klinch, with artist credits—only after its new facilities had begun operating.[59] Looking closely at the multiple vectors of distortion in the bodies of the bigwigs and windbags in Brigade KGK's photomontage number seventy (see fig. 6), it is easy to conclude that something more than a convex mirror is in play.

Distorted images like those we encounter in the series *From the 16th to the 17th Congress* continued to appear in the years after the publication of the portfolio, even as they hewed more closely to Heartfield's example. By way of conclusion, I will highlight the next phase in the history of the device in photomonteur Aleksandr Zhitomirsky's work for *Front-Illustrierte* (Front illustrated). This newspaper was a Soviet propaganda leaflet published by the chief political directorate of the Red Army during World War

II; it was distributed behind enemy lines and aimed to undermine German morale. In many of Zhitomirsky's montages, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels is depicted as a subhuman creature spewing racial ressentiment. But in pivotal works, the distorted image is transformed from an instrument of visual violence to a supplementary means of characterization (fig. 10). In a front-page montage for an April 1943 issue of *Front-Illustrierte*, captioned "There are lucky devils and unlucky ones," Goebbels's distended face appears as a documentary fact atop the hand-drawn body of a chimpanzee. This distorted mechanical likeness still possesses its iconoclastic power, but it also plays a supporting role as the weight of characterization shifts to the larger composition—from *sharzh* to caricature. In this instance, Goebbels is characterized less by his face than by his bodily attributes, which connect him to the surrounding elements of the montage. Dressed in a suit, he balances on a forelimb, rather than his feet, and holds forth on the mysterious nature of luck before a photograph of a tuxedoed Hermann Goering—the titular "lucky devil"—seated beside his wife. Against the human attributes of culture and speech, Zhitomirsky juxtaposes the racist's bestial truth: behind his back, Goebbels's prehensile tail holds a pen that records the fate of the "unlucky ones"—the German soldiers who must die in the mud like animals.

This image of Goebbels as a chattering ape soon became widespread in Soviet anti-Nazi propaganda, but the combination of mechanical and manual techniques in "There are lucky devils and unlucky ones" occurs in just a few of Zhitomirsky's montages. In subsequent examples, the anamorphic photograph of Goebbels is replaced by a hand-drawn image of a chimpanzee's face, returning the caricature to the realm of traditional manual skill. Indeed, as photography historian Erika Wolf has shown, the art of drawing was central to Zhitomirsky's self-presentation throughout his career.[60] Even so, his artistic development from the fragmented cut-and-paste montage to neotraditional Heartfieldian caricature was mediated by technical manipulations like the distortions discussed in this essay.

From the 16th to the 17th Congress offers a striking exhibit of novel technical experiments, repurposed avant-garde tropes, and even some polished examples of heroic socialist realism. The variety of approaches used in the series evinces a robust period of photographic experimentation within the prolonged gestation of socialist realism. Still, over the course of the 1930s the photograph faced increasingly urgent demands to serve the interests of the worker. While painting, drawing, and cinema were celebrated for their narrative capabilities, photomontage was portrayed as an imperfect and increasingly inadequate means to express the proletariat's mastery over modern technology. The montage constructions in Brigade KGK's series show that they accepted many of the arguments against the mechanical qualities of photomontage even as they continued to explore technical effects unique to photography.

When *From the 16th to the 17th Congress* appeared, however, their position was in retreat. A large body of recent scholarship has presented convincing arguments that Soviet attitudes toward montage were transformed by Heartfield's subordination of the photographic medium to the singular political purpose of his compositions. By

FIG. 10. — Aleksandr Zhitomirsky (Russian, 1907–93). "There are lucky devils and unlucky ones," cover of *Front-Illustrierte*, no. 10, April 1943. Prague, Ne Boltai! Collection. Art © Vladimir Zhitomirsky.

1936, when Tretiakov argued that it was "Heartfield alone, as the pioneer of Bolshevik photomontage," who "pounded into the heads of academics and art lovers that photomontage is a member of equal rights in the order of the visual arts,"[61] this opinion was widely accepted. Younger artists coming of age in the 1930s, such as Koretsky and Zhitomirsky, saw Heartfield as the official embodiment of committed Communist art and quickly assimilated the principles of his method. In his subsequent work as a poster designer, Koretsky professed that "it is impossible to be satisfied with readymade photographs."[62] *From the 16th to the 17th Congress*, however, demonstrates that the Soviet reception of Heartfield as the master of satirical photomontage was far from

straightforward, and that his example was played against other anonymous and half-forgotten figures who forced the photograph to speak in ways that Heartfield never explored.

To a certain degree, art history has been the willing inheritor of the conservative Soviet impulse to canonize Heartfield as the paterfamilias of political photomontage. But in many respects, a focus on comic genres rather than on individual style grants a more accurate view of the photomontage tradition. In his late writings, Lunacharsky affirmed that "laughter is a tool—and a very serious tool—for the social self-discipline of a class, or for [the exertion of] pressure from one class onto other classes."[63] For him, satire was especially complex because it testified as much to the insignificance of its target (always something laughable, after all) as to the serious threat that the target represents. Reflecting on the example of the European bourgeoisie, Lunacharsky concluded that laughter is supremely important in the infancy of a class, when both self-discipline and merciless mockery of the class enemy are paramount. When Brigade KGK created *From the 16th to the 17th Congress*, the final victory of the working class appeared imminent, but only in the territories of the USSR, where the Bolsheviks' enemies were increasingly spectral and ideological. The effect of the pure photographic distortion—at once captivatingly elusive and utterly dehumanizing, as Lunacharsky pointed out[64]—suited the political needs of the moment. In subsequent years, when internal threats had been eliminated, the techniques devised to represent them were refashioned for use in the international sphere, where the battle lines were still very clearly drawn.

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Notes

This paper benefited enormously from an exchange with Jindřich Toman at a panel for the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) Annual Convention in 2017, where I delivered a very early draft. Since then, many conversations with Maggie Innes have deepened my understanding of the issues addressed here. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of quoted material from the Russian are mine and use the Library of Congress system to romanize Cyrillic letters. In the case of proper names, I have followed the simplified transliterations introduced by previous authors, eliminating soft signs and substituting "y" for "i" when it occurs in the terminal position.

1. "Sezon teatra Krasnoi presni," *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 22 August 1934, 3. For a brief overview of Koretsky's career, see Erika Wolf, *Koretsky: The Soviet Photo Poster: 1930–1984* (New York: The New Press, 2012). Knoblok began a long and successful career in the theater after the breakup of Brigade KGK, while Gitsevich continued to design posters under her own name into the late 1940s.

2. Mikhail Karasik, *The Soviet Photobook, 1920–1941*, ed. Manfred Heiting (Göttingen: Steidl, 2015), 30–31, 552–53.

3. Olivier Lugon, "The Ubiquitous Exhibition: Magazines, Museums, and Reproducible Exhibitions after World War II," in *The "Public" Life of Photographs*, ed. Thierry Gervais (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 123–24.

4. Serguei Oushakine, "Laughter under Socialism: Exposing the Ocular in Soviet Jocularity," *Slavic Review* 70, no. 2 (2011): 247–55.

5. For a comprehensive survey focused on the Stalin period, see Evgenii Dobrenko and Natal'ia Dzhonsson-Skradol', *Gossmekh: Stalinizm i komicheskoe* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe

Obozrenie, 2022). For an excellent art historical treatment of visual satire in the 1920s, see Annie Gérin, *Devastation and Laughter: Satire, Power, and Culture in the Early Soviet State, 1920s–1930s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

6. Viktor Afanas'ef, "Foto i fotomontazh," *Sovetskoe foto,* no. 11 (1935): 19.

7. Afanas'ef, "Foto i fotomontazh," 18.

8. I. V. Stalin, "Otchetnyi doklad XVII s'ezdu partii o rabote TsK VKP(b)," in *Sochinenie,* vol. 13 (Moscow: Gos. Izd. politicheskoi literatury, 1952), 282–379. English translation published as J. V. Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.)," in *Works,* vol. 13 (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1955), 288–388.

9. Natalia Skradol, "Laughing with Comrade Stalin: An Analysis of Laughter in a Soviet Newspaper Report," *The Russian Review* 68, no. 1 (2009): 26–48.

10. Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress," 347.

11. Oleg Khlevniuk and R. W. Davies, "The End of Rationing in the Soviet Union, 1934–35," *Europe and Asia Studies* 51, no. 4 (June 1999): 563–64.

12. Joseph Stalin speaking at the November 1934 Central Committee Plenum, quoted in Oleg Khlevniuk, *Master of the House: Stalin and His Inner Circle*, trans. Nora Seligman Fvorov (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 115–16.

13. Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress," 348.

14. Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress," 348.

15. See the illustrated translation: Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Pro Eto – That's What*, trans. Larisa Gureyeva and George Hyde (Tormorden, UK: Arc, 2009).

16. Christina Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 146–58.

17. Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov, *The Twelve Chairs*, trans. John H. C. Richarson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 155.

18. Mikhail Odesskii and David Feldman, "Legenda o velikom kombinatore, ili Pochemu v Shankhae nichego n sluchilos'," in Il'ia Il'f and Evgenii Petrov, *Zolotoi telenok: Pervyi polnyi variant romana* (Moscow: Vagrius, 1997), 6–16.

19. Maya Vinokour, "Books of Laughter and Forgetting: Satire and Trauma in the Novels of Il'f and Petrov," *Slavic Review* 74, no. 2 (2017): 347.

20. Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Synopsis of a Report on the Tasks of Dramaturgy (Extract)" (1933) in *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents, 1896–1939*, ed. and trans. Richard Taylor (London: Routledge, 1994), 327. For a discussion, see Gérin, *Devastation and Laughter*, 184.

21. Mikhail Koltsov, "Address to the First Congress of Soviet Writers," quoted in Gérin, *Devastation and Laughter*, 186.

22. Koltsov, "Address to the First Congress of Soviet Writers," in Gérin, *Devastation and Laughter*, 186.

23. Serguei Oushakine, "Red Laughter: On Refined Weapons of Soviet Jesters," *Social Research* 79, no. 1 (2012): 207–9.

24. Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Pismo v redaktsiiu," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 6 March 1931, 4.

25. Hubertus Gassner, "Heartfield's Moscow Apprenticeship, 1931–1932," in *John Heartfield*, ed. Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honnef (New York: Abrams, 1992), 256–90; and Maria Gough, "Back in the USSR: John Heartfield, Gustav Klutsis, and the Medium of Soviet Propaganda," *New German Critique,* no. 107 (2009): 133–83.

26. Sabine Kriebel, *Revolutionary Beauty: The Radical Photomontages of John Heartfield* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 202; and Devin Fore, *Realism after Modernism: The Rehumanization of Art and Literature* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 295, 246.

27. For a brief discussion of Klinch's work, see Jindřich Toman, "The Real Reality: Notes on Boris Klinč and Photomontage in the USSR," in *Realisms of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Moritz Bassler et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 299–310; and Toman, "From Carnival to Satire: Photomontage as a Commentary on Photography," *History of Photography* 43, no. 2 (2019): 144–55.

28. Boris Klinch, "Fotosatiru v arsenal agit-massovoi raboty," *Proletarskoe foto,* no. 6 (1932): 24–25.

29. Boris Klinch, "Fotomontazh—peredovoi uchastok iskusstva," *Proletarskoe foto,* no. 2 (1933): 26.

30. Klinch, "Fotomontazh—peredovoi uchastok iskusstva," 27.

31. Klinch, "Fotomontazh—peredovoi uchastok iskusstva," 26.

32. Klinch, "Fotomontazh—peredovoi uchastok iskusstva," 26.

33. Kristin Romberg, "Labor Demonstrations: Aleksei Gan's *Island of the Young Pioneers,* Dziga Vertov's *Kino-Eye,* and the Rationalization of Artistic Labor," *October,* no. 145 (Summer 2013): 51.

34. Gustav Klutsis, "Fotomontazh kak novyi vid agitatsionnogo iskusstvo," in *Izofront: Klassovaia bor'ba na fronte prostranstvennykh iskusstv*, ed. P. I. Novitskii (Moscow: Izogiz, 1931), 120.

35. Gassner, "Heartfield's Moscow Apprenticeship," 266–70.

36. S. Evgenov, "Za bol'shevistskii fotopokaz," *Proletarskoe foto,* no. 6 (1932): 5

37. Klinch, "Fotosatiru v arsenal agit-massovoi raboty," 25.

38. János Reismann (Wolf Reiss), "Als ich mit John Heartfield zusammenarbeite," *Internationale Literatur,* no. 5 (1934): 189–90, quoted in Gassner, "Heartfield's Moscow Apprenticeship," 261.

39. Evgenov, "Za bol'shevistskii fotopokaz," 4.

40. Klinch, "Fotomontazh—peredovoi uchastok iskusstva," 27.

41. Gustav Klutsis, "Fotomontazh," in *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 58 (Moscow: Ogiz RSFSR, 1936), 322–3. English translation in Iveta Derkusova, ed., *Gustavs Klucis: Complete Catalogue of Works in the Latvian National Museum of Art* (Riga: Latvian National Museum of Art, 2014), 1:176.

42. Sergei Tret'iakov, *Dzhon Khartfil'd. Monografiia* (Moscow: Ogiz, 1936), 68, 71.

43. Tret'iakov, *Dzhon Khartfil'd*, 79.

44. Tret'iakov, *Dzhon Khartfil'd*, 69.

45. Tret'iakov, *Dzhon Khartfil'd*, 79.

46. See the brief discussion of photographic caricature techniques in Nikolai Tarabukin, "The Art of the Day" (1925), trans. Rosamund Bartlett, *October*, no. 93 (2000): 72. Tarabukin prefers that photographers and filmmakers use an anamorphic lens, a possibility I discuss below.

47. Stalin, "Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress," 378.

48. Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov, *The Golden Calf*, trans. Konstantin Gurevich and Helen Anderson (Rochester, NY: Open Letter, 2009), 171.

49. Ilf and Petrov, *The Golden Calf*, 178. Gurevich and Anderson translate the name Skumbrievich as "Sardinevich." I have maintained the authors' original name here.

50. Mark Lipovetsky, *The Charms of Cynical Reason: The Trickster's Transformation in Soviet and Post-Soviet Culture* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011), 102.

51. Pavel Petrov-Bytov, "We Have No Soviet Cinema" [April 1929]; and Adrian Piotrovsky, "Petrov-Bytov's Platform and Soviet Cinema" [May 1929], in Taylor, *The Film Factory*, 259–63.

52. Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Kain i Artem," *Izvestiia*, 20 November 1929, 5.

53. Lunacharsky, "Kain i Artem," 5.

54. "K 40-letiiu literaturnoi deistvitel'nosti M. Gorkogo," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 11 September 1932, 1. Critic K. Iukov complains that Petrov-Bytov rewrites Gorky's story according to the logic of cinema in K. Iukov, "Tvorchestvo Gorkovo na ekran," *Proletarskoe kino*, nos. 17–18 (1932): 7–16.

55. Lunacharsky, "Kain i Artem," 5. For critical comments on the sound version of *Cain and Artem*, see G. Levkoev, "Opyt ozvuchaniia nemoi fil'my," *Sovetskoe kino,* no. 7 (1933): 57.

56. Mia Fineman, *Faking It: Manipulated Photography Before Photoshop* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012), 105.

57. "Khronika Soiuzfoto," *Proletarskoe foto,* no. 4 (1931): 50–51. The mechanization began with the purchase of a German Bromograph machine said to expose, fix, and wash prints, and a machine from the firm Marcelina that could handle both drying and rolling. With the Bromograph alone, it was reported that the work of twelve men could be completed by just three.

58. "Khronika Soiuzfoto," 50–51.

59. Evgenov, "Za bol'shevistskii fotopokaz," 5.

60. Erika Wolf, "Drawing as the Foundation of Zhitomirsky's Photomontage," in her *Aleksandr Zhitomirsky: Photomontage as a Weapon of World War II and the Cold War* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2016), 92–95.

61. Tret'iakov, *Dzhon Khartfil'd*, 78.

62. Viktor Koretsky, *Tovarishch plakat: Opyt, razmyshleniia* (1978), 16, quoted in Wolf, *Koretsky*, 4.

63. Anatoly Lunacharsky, "O smekhe" (1931), in Anatoly Lunacharsky, *Sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 8 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1967), 533. Bracketed interpolation by the author.

64. Lunacharsky, "Kain i Artem," 5.

Bennett Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy*: A Case of Mistaken Identity

James Oles

For many scholars, times of quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged the resolution of unfinished projects; in my case, I turned my attention to a faded pink folder of photocopies that I had kept close at hand through various long-distance moves for more than a quarter century. Reviewing and reconsidering those documents has generated a close reading of a forgotten painting and its checkered history, in which a failure of connoisseurship is offset by historical recovery. At the heart of the matter is a case of willful misattribution—rather than fakery—substantiated by documents both falsified and misleading. This is a problem that still plagues the field of Latin American art, where the need for scholarly authentication can overwhelm the small number of trained experts. But behind this "crime," for which there was neither trial nor confession, is an uplifting detective story of rediscovering the truth, of bringing to wider attention a neglected artist's career, and of analyzing his most important painting in its own context for the first time. My recuperation of motive, means, and opportunity may be speculative in parts, but the story can be told thanks to a wonderfully rich dossier that was assembled decades ago to give Mexican gravitas and compelling provenance to a forgotten painting by an artist from the United States.

✦ ✦ ✦

In the early 1990s, then a doctoral student at Yale University, I was fortunate to curate my first exhibition, *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914–1947,* which opened in September 1993 at the Yale University Art Gallery. This project explored, for the first time in depth, how Mexico generally, and Mexican art more specifically, shaped the work of US American artists between the end of the Mexican Revolution and the beginning of the Cold War. (Today I wouldn't be so quick to use the term *American* to mean only residents of the United States.) The show featured paintings, prints, and photographs by artists such as Henrietta Shore, whose oil painting *Women of Oaxaca* (1928) graced the catalog cover, and Robert Motherwell, whose *Mexican Notebook* of pen-and-ink drawings and watercolors (1941) closed the show. Along with folk and decorative arts, and books and postcards, the exhibition checklist included

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works by Mexican muralists in order to demonstrate the profound impact that their iconography, styles, and politics had on their contemporaries.[1] More specifically, I included Mexican paintings and prints that revealed particular points of contact with the United States: works made in the US or connected to it through subject matter, prior ownership, or even exhibition history.

The exhibition included four major paintings by Diego Rivera and, as I recall, none were particularly difficult to borrow. Finding relevant works by his colleagues David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco was more complicated. Late in the curatorial process, the Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros in Mexico City denied (probably for conservation reasons) our request to include Siqueiros's *Birth of Fascism* (1936), and the Museo de Arte Moderno informed us they would only lend Orozco's *Prometheus* (ca. 1944) to our first two venues: Yale and the Phoenix Art Museum.[2] As a novice curator, I struggled to find replacements, especially a signature painting by Orozco, for our final venues, the New Orleans Museum of Art and the now-defunct Museo de Monterrey in Mexico.

I was under time pressure, rushing to fill gaps with last-minute loans, when Pilar García, now a curator at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México's Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, introduced me to two museum patrons in Mexico City with a spectacular collection of works by Dr. Atl, Joaquín Clausell, and Carlos Mérida.[3] In their house in a quiet neighborhood near San Ángel, in the south of Mexico City, I was shown a large and brilliantly colored canvas measuring 150 by 90 centimeters (fig. 1). Although the work was unsigned, a shiny brass label affixed to the frame listed both artist and title: José Clemente Orozco, *Norte Sur (North South)*. Apparently, I had found what I was looking for.

The oil painting in question consists of a montage of different geographic and social spaces rendered at different scales: meaning is generated through their abrupt juxtapositions. Montage was a compositional strategy employed by several muralists in the 1930s, including Thomas Hart Benton and Rivera, but in this painting, the use of rigid lines and overlapping elements brought to mind similar features in Orozco's mural cycle from 1930–31 at the New School for Social Research in New York. In terms of iconography, the painting juxtaposes an ancient and traditional Mexican "south" with an industrialized US "north," much as Orozco does in his *Epic of American Civilization*, painted in the Baker Library at Dartmouth College in 1932–34 (figs. 2, 3). In the painting, the contrast is arranged vertically, and thus geographically, with north above south, rather than horizontally. The stoic expressions and massing of the four men wearing the white cotton clothing typical of Mexico's agricultural peasantry, who march in profile at the lower-right side, resemble figures in Orozco's early frescos from 1923–26 in the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria in Mexico City, and in the mural cycle at the New School. Most directly, however, they evoke the muscular bodies of the Indigenous figures in *Migration*, the opening panel of the Dartmouth cycle, albeit clothed and transported from an ancient context to a contemporary one (fig. 4).

FIG. 1. — Bennett Buck (US American, 1900–1982). *Good Neighbor Policy,* 1938, oil on canvas, 150 × 90 cm. Private collection.

The pre-Hispanic pyramid shown in an oblique view in the lower-right corner of the painting surely symbolizes the modern nation's ancient roots; its architectural details, however, seem imagined rather than based on known structures such as the Castillo at Chichén Itzá (which was abstracted by Orozco in his panel *Struggle in the Occident* at the New School) or the pyramids of the Sun and Moon at Teotihuacan (which appear in Orozco's Dartmouth cycle). The tightly cropped field of wheat in the painting recalls a similar depiction of wheat in the *Anglo-America* panel at Dartmouth,

FIG. 2. — José Clemente Orozco (Mexican, 1883–1947). Panel 13, *Anglo-America,* from *The Epic of American Civilization*, 1932–34, fresco, 304.8 × 261.6 cm. Hanover, New Hampshire, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, P.934.13.15. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College.

FIG. 3. — José Clemente Orozco (Mexican, 1883–1947). Panel 14, *Hispano-America*, from *The Epic of American Civilization*, 1932–34, fresco, 304.8 × 302.3 cm. Hanover, New Hampshire, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, P.934.13.16. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College.

though there the grain is directly tied to the United States rather than Mexico (see fig. 2). A small inset image of two rebozo-clad women flanking a ceramic vessel before a windowless house and small maguey resembles the melancholic paintings and

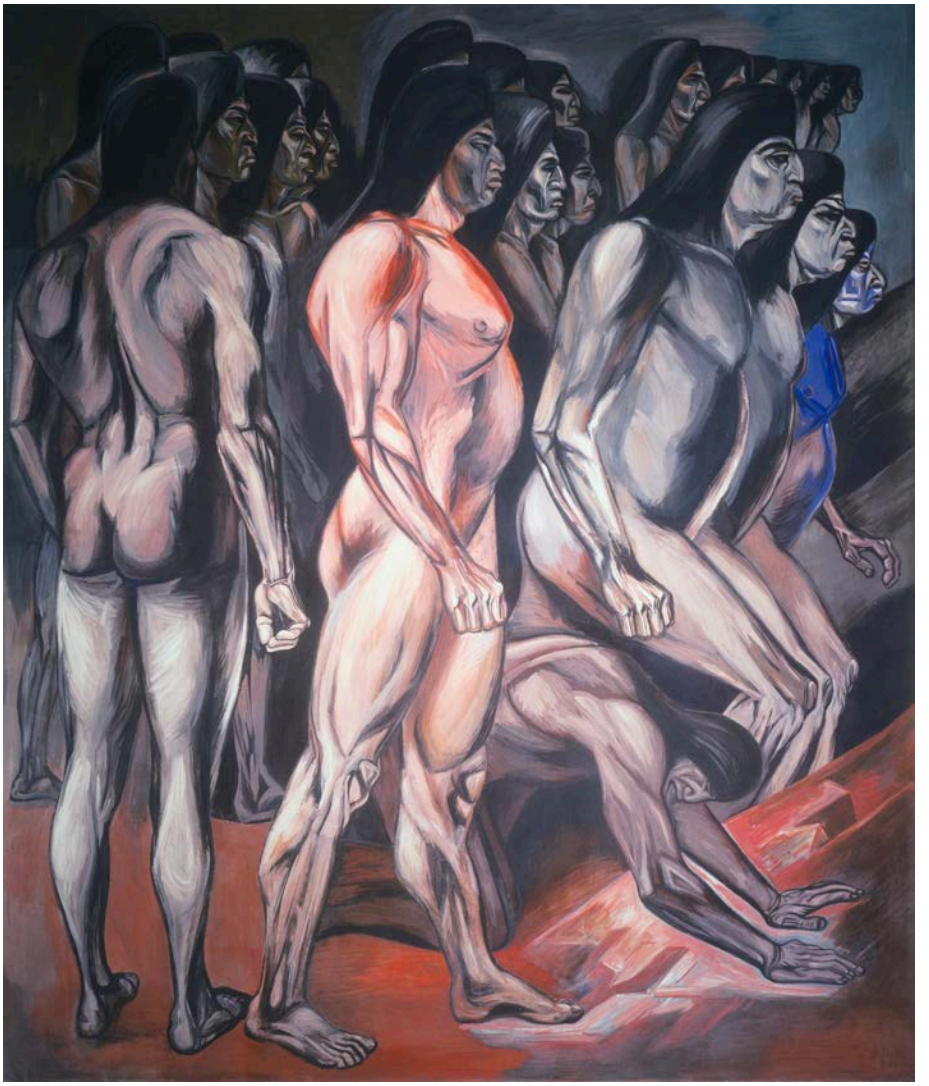

FIG. 4. — José Clemente Orozco (Mexican, 1883–1947). Panel 1, *Migration*, from *The Epic of American Civilization*, 1932–34, fresco, 321.3 × 266.7 cm. Hanover, New Hampshire, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, P.934.13.1. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College.

lithographs showing scenes from rural Mexico that Orozco created during his residence in the US between 1927 and 1934 (fig. 5).[4]

The upper third of the composition refers to the modern United States. The striding Mexican figures are echoed by a larger crowd of workers in blue overalls who march in the opposite direction above, past a skyscraper or apartment block toward a steel tower that radiates beams of light or electrical energy, and a red-brick tenement at the left edge. To the right, a red truck turns along a paved road. Strangely, as if hanging against the dull gray sky, a curvilinear picture frame surrounds an industrial landscape, featuring a pair of crude-oil storage tanks and a rail tank car. This second painting within a painting may reference the precisionism of artists in the United States such as

FIG. 5. — José Clemente Orozco (Mexican, 1883–1947). *The Maguey*, 1928, lithograph, 25.1 × 40.5 cm. Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, INBAL, Mexico City. Courtesy Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil / INBAL / SC. © Heirs of José Clemente Orozco, 2025. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, 2024.

Charles Sheeler or Elsie Driggs, or the machine-age imagery of Rivera's US murals. An image of a grazing cow and suckling sow is rendered in black and white and delineated with a white border, as if to mimic a gelatin silver photograph.[5] Despite the implied depth of the overall composition, fashioned with loose brushwork and a rather thick application of oil paint, the rectangular vignettes, overlapping forms, and sharp divisions emphasize the flatness of the pictorial surface.

Even for a budding scholar, it was clear that the painting's formal qualities and iconography, as well as its somewhat awkward title, were closely related to work Orozco had completed during his extended residency in the United States.[6] To me, *Norte Sur* seemed to be a suitable and perfectly portable example of Orozco's interest in "American" civilization. Even more importantly, the painting proved, in bold visual terms, a main thesis of *South of the Border*: that an idealized rural Mexico served as a constant counterpoint to the anxieties of the industrial nation to its north.

On that first visit, the owners showed me a sheaf of documentation related to the painting, which I skimmed through all too quickly, and flipped open a German book on Orozco to show me a full-page color illustration of the same work.[7] They mentioned that the late art historian Raquel Tibol—who had written more than one book on Orozco—had seen the work and given it her approval. I declared an end to my search and wasn't bothered when, at the very last minute, the loan of *Prometheus* completely fell through, for now the spectacular painting from the collectors in Mexico City would be featured in all four venues—a curatorial victory at the start of my career. *South of the Border* opened,

FIG. 6. — Installation view of *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914–1947,* with works by Bennett Buck, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Isamu Noguchi (reproduction), September 1993, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut.

and the entire gremio of Latin Americanists came up from New York to see it. No one said much about the "Orozco" hanging in one gallery alongside works by Siqueiros (fig. 6). The exhibition catalog circulated widely at a time when there were relatively few books on modern Mexican art, but I had found *Norte Sur* too late to illustrate or discuss in the book; if I had, this story might have been told long ago.[8]

After the opening of the exhibition at Yale, I turned to my dissertation. That November, I was working at the Archives of American Art (AAA) in Washington, DC, searching through their copious files for information on the US muralists who worked in Mexico in the early 1930s.[9] I remember rich conversations with art historian Andrew Hemingway, who was then researching his book *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926–1956* (2002), and have a sharp memory of some low file cabinets that—today using the AAA digital catalog to jog my memory—held its "Miscellaneous art exhibition catalog collection, 1813–1953." My immediate focus was on the radical public art of artists such as Philip Guston and Isamu Noguchi, but as I surveyed the wealth of ephemera without really knowing what I was looking for—often the best way to find things—I came across a small stapled pamphlet for a show called *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal,* held at Herman Baron's American Contemporary Artists (A.C.A.) Gallery in New York City, then the leading space for what has been called social or proletarian art (fig. 7).[10] Flipping through the pages, I was shocked to find an illustration of the same painting hanging back at Yale (fig. 8).

It wasn't by Orozco. Instead, the painter was an unknown figure named Bennett Buck, and the title of the work was *Good Neighbor Policy*. It wasn't a fake; it was an

FIG. 7. — Cover of *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal* (New York: A.C.A. Gallery, 1938). Miami, Florida, The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Francis Xavier Luca and Clara Helena Palacio Luca, XC2014.03.1.9

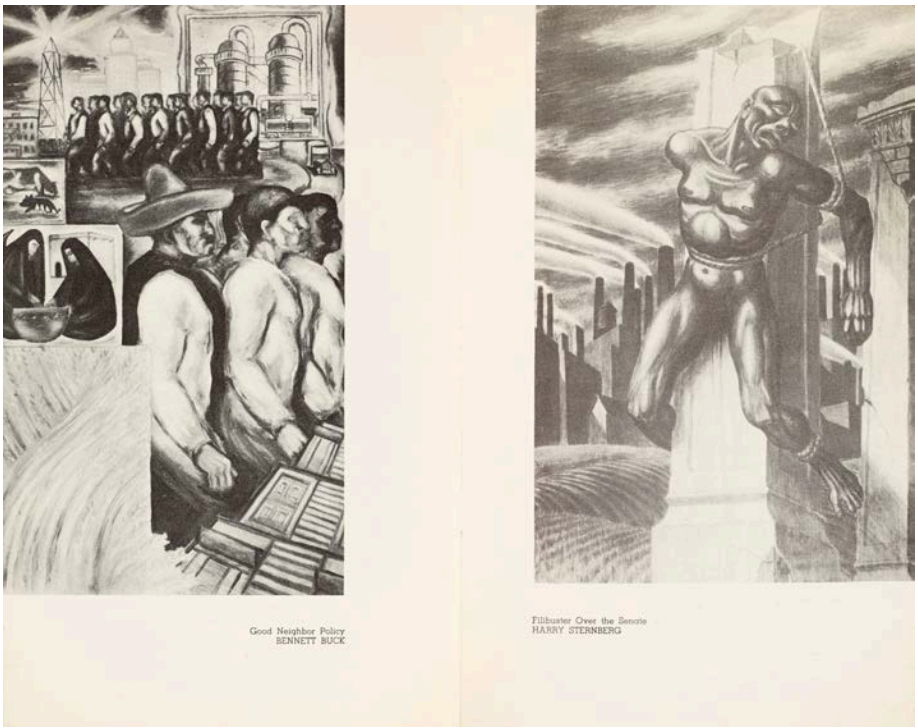

FIG. 8. — *Good Neighbor Policy* (1938) by Bennett Buck (US American, 1900–1982) and *Filibuster Over the Senate* (ca. 1938, now lost) by Harry Sternberg (US American, 1904–2001). From *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal* (New York: A.C.A. Gallery, 1938). Miami, Florida, The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Francis Xavier Luca and Clara Helena Palacio Luca, XC2014.03.1.9.

homage to Orozco, and a rather good one at that. As Hemingway has astutely noted, for leftist artists in the United States, "it was Orozco, the most politically equivocal and pessimistic of the [Mexican] muralists who offered the least problematic exemplar."[11] This was aided by several factors: Orozco's murals in New York and Hanover, New Hampshire, were easily accessible, and his prints and paintings were widely exhibited and published; his uncompromising, expressionist style was considered deeply modern; and his themes—especially his skepticism about war, ideology, and the machine age—resonated with the concerns of many of his younger contemporaries.[12] In fact, Buck's painting would have served the thesis of *South of the Border* even better as an homage to Orozco painted by a US American artist, had I only known.

The serendipitous discovery at the Archives of American Art led to a feeling of curatorial remorse, a sense that, through the gallery presentation and exhibition checklist—but fortunately, not through an illustration—I had deceived not only myself but also my audience. Rather than pull the work from the show, which was about to close at Yale, I simply corrected the wall label for subsequent venues. I was not able to convince the collectors to remove the brass plaque from the frame, but if the conflict between the labels bothered any viewers, I received no word of it. After *South of the Border* closed in Monterrey in late November 1994, Buck's painting returned to the collectors' home in Mexico City, and I've not seen it since.[13]

I had done a bit of research on Buck in the fall of 1993, but a focus on my dissertation, and then my career, left the project truncated, if not forgotten. Then, at my desk in Mexico City during the pandemic in 2020, I decided to reexamine the contents of that pink folder and write an essay about Buck's painting. This was possible, of course, because research methodologies had changed so radically since the early 1990s. Thirty years ago, travel—or at least moving through a building—was the only way to gain access to books, archives, or museum collections, and discoveries generally required painstaking hours spent looking through the stacks, archival boxes, or storage, to sometimes find nothing. Today, while there is still no substitute for hands-on research, digitization has facilitated everything; even the rare A.C.A. catalog in which Buck's painting first appeared is now available online through the Wolfsonian Library at Florida International University. We may rely too much on Google in all its manifestations, including Gmail, Search, and Scholar, but they allowed me to write the first draft of this essay from my home in Mexico.

The 1938 exhibition at the A.C.A. Gallery included twenty-one paintings and prints, several by major leftist artists, including Philip Evergood, Harry Gottlieb, Eitarō Ishigaki, Joe Jones, Walter Quirt, and Harry Sternberg. Each artist was asked to submit a five-by-three-foot vertical panel; together, the mural-sized works would have echoed the slightly larger scale (seven by four feet) of those in the Museum of Modern Art's influential, albeit less radical, exhibition *Murals by American Painters and Photographers,* held in 1932.[14] Although not all artists complied with the format requested by the gallery, Buck's painting hewed to the required dimensions perfectly. Some artists, such as Jones, Julien Levi, and Sternberg, portrayed individual workers as heroes or martyrs (fig. 9),

FIG. 9. — Joe Jones (US American, 1909–63). *A Worker Again—On WPA* (Self-portrait), ca. 1938, oil on canvas, 68.6 × 83.8 cm. From the collections of the St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

while others crowded their compositions with as many figures as possible, employing dramatic shifts of scale and breaking the laws of perspective.

Hemingway provides the most complete analysis of *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal,* arguing that while it demonstrated support for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's social agenda, it also "inadvertently revealed the ambiguities of the Democratic Front," given that several artists created images deeply critical of conditions in the United States.[15] Indeed, some referred directly to pressing themes of the day, including Arthur

Emptage's *Half-a-Million Protests*, Quirt's *One-Third of a Nation*, and Max Weber's *The Forgotten Man*. Some works employed irony, such as Gottlieb's *Strength through Joy*, which depicted a bacchanal of capitalist excess, while others enlisted horror, as in Sternberg's *Filibuster over the Senate*, which shows an African American man tied to a column as a victim of lynching, which was a crime of urgent and intense concern to those on the left (see fig. 8).[16]

Baron, who organized the show, noted in the introductory essay for the catalog that the works shared a concern for "social implications" but then suggested that not all might meet the requirements of quality demanded by New York City critics:

> The creative impulses of American art have been greatly stimulated by the W.P.A. art projects and by all the progressive forces which made the project possible. Those who claim that the W.P.A. is responsible for too much bad art, are needlessly worried. "Bad" art is an elastic term and history supports the contention that future masterpieces almost invariably are included in that class. As for the real bad art, good quality eventually will reduce it to its proper place. To advocate placing artists in the professional category of doctors or architects is to fail to understand the social service rendered by art.[17]

Judging from the black-and-white illustrations, communicating a political message (what Baron refers to as a "social service") was sometimes more in evidence than formal elegance or expertise. At the same time, Baron's comment about the label of "bad art" foreshadows the shifting political realities of the Cold War, when the disdain for didactic social realism, in favor of seemingly apolitical abstraction, would cast a long shadow over the work of radical artists of the 1930s and 1940s.[18] Today, when the concerns of these same artists regarding racial and economic inequity resonate deeply with current debates, they may merit renewed attention, if not archaeological recovery, however they are judged on aesthetic grounds. Yet despite increased critical attention to this period of US American art, only Evergood's *The Artist in the New Deal* has been the subject of close study: apart from those by Buck and Jones, the paintings from the 1938 exhibition are lost from public view, some surely destroyed or painted over (as was the case with Evergood's submission), whether victims of Cold War politics or just cumbersome and unsalable items.[19]

Buck (1900–1982) is one of several artists included in *1938* who have left scant traces in the historical record, along with Hy Cohen, Emptage, Margaret Lowengrund, and Abram Tromka. Born Henry Bennett Buck in Syracuse, New York, he studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, then under Charles Guérin at the Académie Colarossi in Paris, before acquiring blue-collar credentials back home by spending "two years in the steel mills, doing his art work evenings and at odd times."[20] Buck returned to Paris in the late 1920s, taking courses in etching with Jean Antonin Delzers and briefly studying with Fernand Léger and master printmaker Stanley William Hayter. He returned to the United States "wholly preoccupied with what he

FIG. 10. — Bennett Buck (US American, 1900–1982). *Untitled (Hitch Hikers),* 1935, drypoint, 16.3 × 18.2 cm (image). Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 2008.115.1096. Reba and Dave Williams Collection, Gift of Reba and Dave Williams.

FIG. 11. — Bennett Buck (US American, 1900–1982). *Bar Room*, 1935, drypoint, 16.3 × 18.2 cm (image). Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 2008.115.1097. Reba and Dave Williams Collection, Gift of Reba and Dave Williams.

called the international scene in its labor aspects."[21] He taught etching in 1934–35 at the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts, where he produced several small prints featuring episodes in the life of the working class (figs. 10, 11). A solo show at the A.C.A. Gallery in 1936 presenting drawings done on a trip to Puerto Rico further revealed a concern with social justice through works that sometimes veered into caricature (fig. 12).[22] He was elected treasurer of the American Artists' Congress and around 1940 participated in the Federal Art Project in New York, under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), when a few of his antifascist paintings and drawings also appeared in the press.[23] After serving in World War II as a designer of camouflage patterns, he settled in Connecticut (fig. 13). Like other artists of his generation, Buck eventually abandoned socially concerned figuration for abstraction. A show in 1966 featuring his recent "Hard-Edged Cubist style" garnered minor and lackluster reviews, and then the record trails off into oblivion, even after Buck's death in 1982.[24]

The best indication of Bennett Buck's aesthetic interests emerges from his donation of almost one hundred works on paper, mainly prints, to the Everson Museum of Art at Syracuse University around 1977, by which time he had retired to St. Petersburg, Florida. This eclectic gift included forty-nine of Buck's own works, including several of the Puerto Rico drawings and some explicitly leftist or antifascist images, along with prints and drawings by a wide range of European artists, such as William Blake and André Masson. Buck also gave the museum works by William Gropper, Levi, and Louis Lozowick, all of whom had participated in the A.C.A. exhibition in 1938, and a copy of Orozco's 1929 lithograph *The Maguey* (see fig. 5).[25] The donation also contained prints by Mexican artists Leopoldo Méndez, Roberto Montenegro, Gonzalo de la Paz Pérez, Everardo Ramírez, and Siqueiros.[26] Buck also gave the Everson an ink-wash drawing

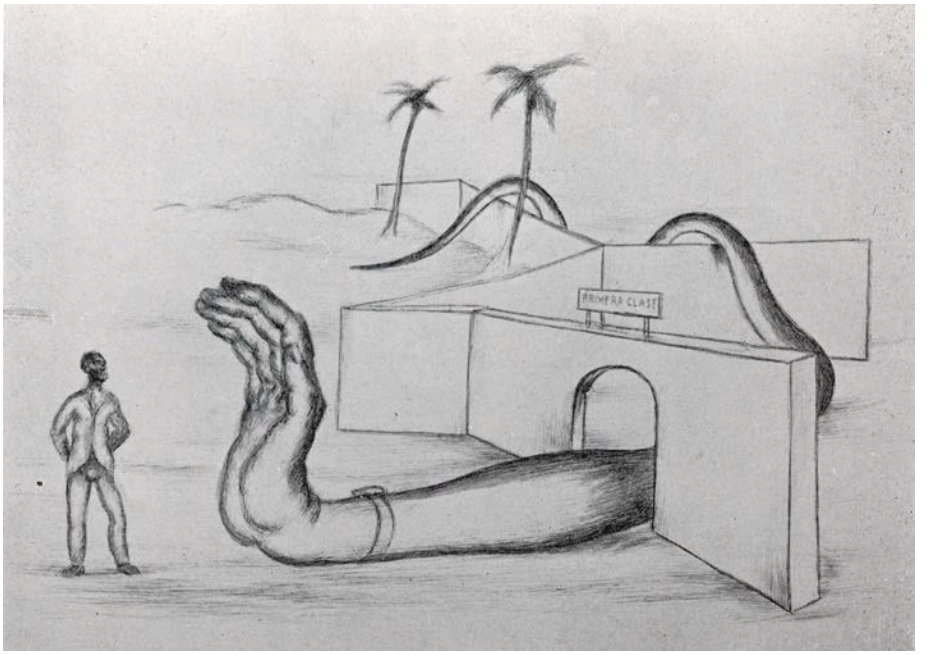

FIG. 12. — Bennett Buck (US American, 1900–1982). *The Color Line*, ca. 1936. From *Puerto Rico: Twelve Reproductions of Original Drawings by Bennett Buck* (New York: A.C.A. Gallery, 1936), 5. New Orleans, Louisiana, Tulane University, Rare Books Collections, Latin American Library. Image courtesy of the Latin American Library, Tulane University.

by Rufino Tamayo titled *Fascism*, one of very few explicitly political works by the artist, perhaps done in New York at the time of the American Artists' Congress (fig. 14).[27]

Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy* was the only painting showcased in *1938* that directly referenced life outside of the United States. The title refers to an official policy announced by Roosevelt during his inaugural address of March 1933, in which he called for nonintervention in Latin America's domestic affairs. Although there seems to be no strict border between the lower "Mexican" section and the upper "American" one, Buck's painting lacks visual evidence of cooperation or assistance, such as the embrace of a Mexican and US worker that was a common topos in the period. The oil-storage tanks in the background could reference Mexico's nationalization of foreign oil companies in March 1938, since the resulting crisis put the policy in jeopardy, but here they are placed in the upper "American" sector.[28] Perhaps Buck's idea of the Good Neighbor Policy was more general or symbolic: as a tribute by a US American painter to a Mexican colleague, the painting revealed a good neighborliness that was artistic rather than political.

Buck's painting is far more conciliatory than any of Orozco's works of this period. The Mexican workers, resting on—or emerging from—archaeological and agricultural foundations, turn their backs on the domestic, feminine sphere; in the upper (or northern) section, industrial workers, equally unified but now separated from nature and the past, surge toward the light emitted from the electrified tower. The representation of Mexico is granted greater space in the pictorial field, but it gives

FIG. 13. — Photograph showing (*left to right*) E. Gould Chalker, Bennett Buck, David (last name illegible), and Aldis B. Browne at the Essex Art Association, Essex, Connecticut, 1960s. Photographer unknown. Courtesy Essex Art Association.

FIG. 14. — Rufino Tamayo (Mexican, 1899–1991). *Fascism,* 1936, ink wash on paper, 22.9 × 35 cm. Syracuse, New York, Everson Museum of Art. Gift of H. Bennett Buck, PC 77.86.40. © Tamayo Heirs / Mexico / Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY.

way to a more modern—though perhaps more tragically alienated—United States. In comparison to other paintings in the A.C.A. show, and to most of Orozco's work, Buck's ideological stance seems muted, even opaque—there is no violence or oppression, no apparent suffering, only an inexorable march toward the future.

Buck was not the only artist in the 1938 exhibition who disclosed iconographic and compositional debts to Orozco, although surprisingly, in his introductory essay, Baron mentions only artists of the past (Francisco Goya and Honoré Daumier) as providing models for expressing "social ideals."[29] The building frames, broken windows, and I beams as well as the dramatic diagonals in Mervin Jules's *Planning & Construction* (fig. 15) resonate particularly with Orozco's fresco panels depicting *Hispano-America* (see fig. 3) and *Modern Industrial Man* at Dartmouth, while Jules's angular figures and dense composition, also evident in Axel Horn's *Unemployed* (fig. 16), recall Orozco's work in general. Indeed, the exhibition confirms the broad impact of Orozco on art produced during the New Deal, as signaled by scholars such as Bram Dijkstra and Hemingway, among others. But while Buck appropriated Orozco's iconography and brilliant coloration, he softened the outlines, avoided dramatic diagonals, and beefed up the muscles of the workers. Overall, his painting is less agitated and less overtly expressionist than his model (or than the paintings by Jules and Horn), which serves to heighten the diplomatic benevolence of his theme.

In fact, when I look at Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy* today, I don't see the evidence of Orozco's hand that I imagined in 1992. This clarity is largely the result of three decades of increasing familiarity with the artist's varied stylistic innovations and extensive production. Buck's message is too optimistic, his paint is too thickly applied, the forms are too rounded, and the collaging of rectangular elements into the composition are too obvious.[30] There are unresolved incongruities, such as the framed precisionist painting that hangs strangely against the darkened sky, or the field of European wheat that overlaps a Mesoamerican pyramid. Today it appears to me—and probably to everyone else in my field—as exactly what it is: evidence of Mexico in the (US) American imagination. But it was not simply the iconography and direct references to specific murals that made me think, back then, that I was looking at a painting by Orozco.

Before *South of the Border* opened, I had only summarily reviewed the documents the collectors had shared with me, given that I had not questioned the painting's authenticity. After locating the A.C.A. Gallery catalog for *1938*, however, I needed to discuss my findings with the owners, and so I returned to their home to examine the materials more closely (and fortunately, to obtain photocopies). I learned that the owners had acquired this particular work not from an established gallery or auction house but from an informal dealer known in Mexico as a *cajuelero*, someone who sells art without a permanent space (literally, out of the trunk of a car). *Cajueleros* are not prima facie dishonest, but they may be sly and secretive. The works they offer are rarely displayed publicly; their prices undercut those of brick-and-mortar dealers but can also be inflated by unseen intermediaries and agents awaiting a commission. Some offer works of the highest caliber, while others are unscrupulous peddlers of fakes and

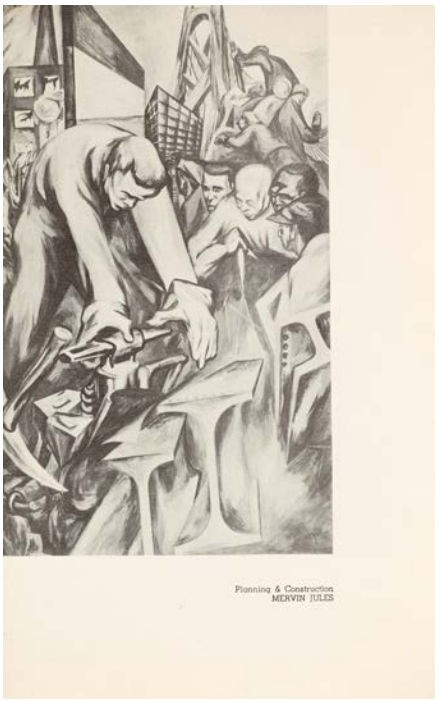

FIG. 15. — *Planning & Construction* (1938, now lost) by Mervin Jules (US American, 1912–94). From *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal* (New York: A.C.A. Gallery, 1938). Miami, Florida, The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Francis Xavier Luca and Clara Helena Palacio Luca, XC2014.03.1.9.

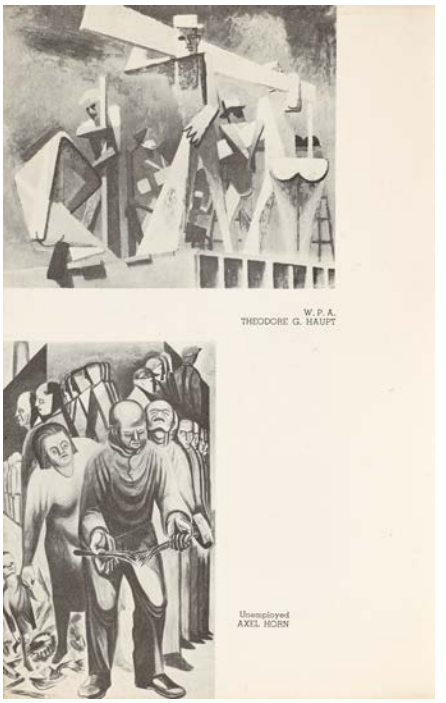

FIG. 16. — *W.P.A.* (1938, now lost) by Theodore G. Haupt (US American, 1902–90) and *Unemployed* (1938, now lost) by Axel Horn (US American, 1913–2001). From *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal* (New York: A.C.A. Gallery, 1938). Miami, Florida, The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Francis Xavier Luca and Clara Helena Palacio Luca, XC2014.03.1.9.

misattributions. The latter are known to pressure even sophisticated collectors to make a fast decision without due diligence, convincing buyers that they are getting a bargain, but only if they act quickly.

In this case, the collectors' decision to purchase a painting purportedly by Orozco—and my decision to include it in *South of the Border*—was justified by an array of documents and publications that seemed to prove that the work was by the Mexican muralist (fig. 17). These materials—fourteen pieces of evidence in all—fall into two clusters of time—1964-66 and 1979-81—that reveal successive attempts to create a false identity for the painting, each building upon the last.[31] Authentic letters in Orozco's hand, published reproductions, typed letters signed by key figures in his biography—Alma Reed and Churchill P. Lathrop—and a certificate of authenticity from an established society appraiser: viewed quickly, the documents seemed to confirm Orozco as the author of the painting. But close forensic and textual analysis—the kind of work purchasers rarely have the time or inclination to conduct, and that art historians and curators aren't always trained to conduct—reveals numerous imprecisions and

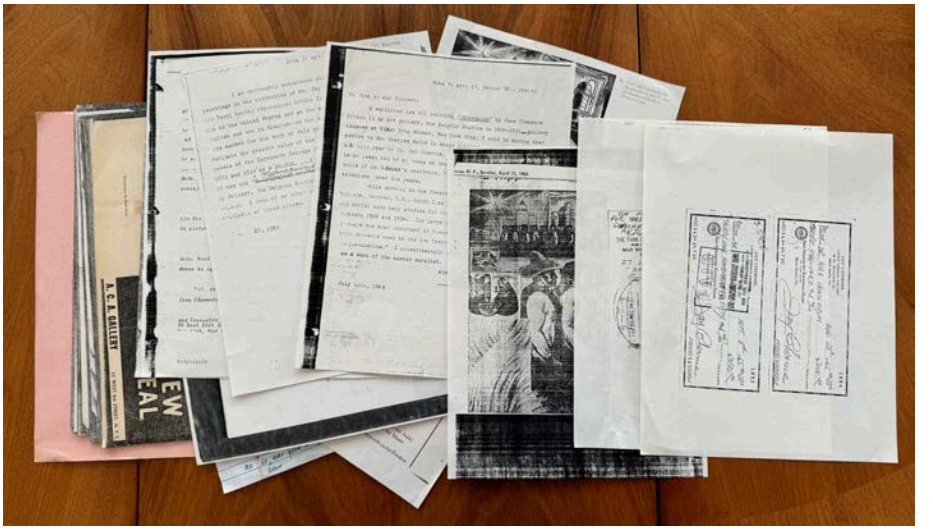

FIG. 17. — Photocopies in the author's possession from collectors' provenance dossier (current location of original dossier unknown) supporting the misattribution of Bennett Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy* to José Clemente Orozco.

inconsistencies that should have cast doubt on the attribution even without access to the A.C.A. Gallery catalog. As in any good con, however, it is not always easy to separate fact from fiction.[32]

From what I have been able to glean using the information at hand, the story goes something like this. In the fall of 1938, the A.C.A. Gallery exhibition traveled to the City Art Museum in Saint Louis (today the Saint Louis Art Museum) and then to the newly opened Washington Bookshop in Washington, DC.[33] When the exhibition closed, the painting may have been returned to the A.C.A. Gallery, or to the artist. The trail then goes cold until 11 April 1965, when the painting and a brief description appeared in *The News*, an English-language newspaper published by the Mexico City daily *Novedades*. This clipping—included in the dossier—provides the earliest published evidence that Buck's painting had already been reattributed: "Another painting by José Clemente Orozco has recently been discovered in New York," the short anonymous article read, concluding, "The owner of this work painted in the early 30's is Jay Chernis, one of Hollywood's best known composers of movie music scores."[34] At that time, Buck was still alive, but his painting had either been mistakenly assigned to Orozco, or—more likely in my estimation—dishonestly misattributed by someone confident that Buck would never see the false information planted in a Mexican newspaper. The article may have launched an effort to doctor the historical record, not unlike the ways in which Dutch forger Han van Meegeren and English con artist John Drewe manipulated archives in order to give forged paintings a more lucrative provenance.[35] The move may seem bold, but in 1965, Orozco had been dead for almost twenty years, and no scholars, curators, or collectors—especially in the United States—were familiar with his entire oeuvre.[36]

"Best known" or not, Jay Chernis (1906–96) was indeed a songwriter and composer, though only scant information appears in his biographies online. He was born in Norwalk, Connecticut, but lived most of his life in and around New York City. He told people that the honorific *Sir* had been granted to him by the Knights of Malta for his writing of their anthem, but "Sir Jay" was just a corruption of his given name, Sergei.[37] He was also an art collector and private dealer, with a focus on US American art and postimpressionism; online searches reveal, however, that when paintings formerly in his collection appear at auction, they are often merely "after" or "attributed to" famous artists.[38]

In the summer of 1965, Chernis acquired, through his Little Terrace Gallery in New Hope, Pennsylvania, a group of authentic Mexican works from Max Honigbaum (1894–1966), who had inherited them from his brother, fruit-packing magnate Alfred Honigbaum (1882–1939), a leading collector in San Francisco. A letter from Chernis to Max Honigbaum dated 22 January 1966—to be trusted, since it is still in the Honigbaum archive—confirms the purchase amount (6,150 USD) and lists sixteen works by Orozco, Rivera, and Siqueiros (plus twenty prints by Robert Delaunay), but there is no mention of a large mural study of any sort.[39] Chernis then used this honest transaction to create a false provenance for Buck's work, which had already been published in *The News*. In a deliberate act of fraud, Chernis annotated the backs of the two checks (totaling $6,150) that he had made out to Max Honigbaum the previous summer (and that had been cashed and returned to him by the bank) to imply that the large painting (the one by Buck) had been acquired with the lot. Employing the same capital letters he had used on the front of the checks, he wrote on one, dated 28 August 1965, "On account for three Orozco gouache studies *and panel*," and, on the other, dated 8 September 1965, "Payment in full for following: (Balance) 12 Diego Rivera watercolors, Delaunay lithographs Siqueiros 'Mother and Child' *Orozco panel (mural study)*."[40] Chernis also obtained a copy of a checklist for an exhibition at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, to which Alfred Honigbaum had previously lent most of the purchased works, scrawling "Bought by Sir Jay Chernis" or "Sir Jay Chernis Purchase" by several entries.[41] In his dealings with the Honigbaum heirs, Chernis also apparently obtained (or stole) two brief but authentic letters Orozco had sent to Alfred; neither mentions anything like a large "mural study."[42] An unsuspecting buyer—or a green curator—might skim through all this and erroneously conclude that Alfred Honigbaum had once owned a large Orozco inspired by his frescos. A skilled con artist takes advantage of the mark's all-too-willing suspension of disbelief.

Not surprisingly, the dossier also includes letters of authenticity and related documents, typed on suspiciously plain sheets of paper, not letterhead. The first is a letter of authenticity dated 15 July 1964 that purports to be from Reed, Orozco's biographer and principal dealer in the 1930s. The document references two works: a known oil painting titled *Mannequins* (1930; now in a private collection) and a "large panel owned by Mr. Jay Chernis" that is "perhaps the most important of these studies [for Dartmouth] and depicts all of the main elements used in the two fresco panels,

'Latin America' and 'Anglo-America.'" It concludes: "I unhesitatingly identity [*sic*] this oil on canvas panel as a work of the master muralist." This is accompanied by a second letter (25 July 1964), also apparently signed by Reed, that values the first work at 5,000 USD and the "large panel—studies for two fresco panels of the Dartmouth College (Hanover N. H.) murals" at 20,000 USD. This letter concludes: "I know of no other oil paintings by Orozco currently available at these prices."

The signatures on both letters are similar to Reed's but are not incontrovertibly authentic.[43] Errors in syntax and spelling, as well as one handwritten correction, raise additional suspicions about both documents.[44] If they were forged, then their dates are unreliable: they seem to authenticate the work before its publication in *The News*, but the letters might have been created anytime, even after Reed's death on 20 November 1966.[45] Besides my inconclusive forensic evidence, I believe it to be highly unlikely that Alma Reed—who knew Orozco's work intimately, surely better than any other critic or art historian in the US—would have been deceived by the painting's superficial resemblance to the Dartmouth murals.[46] A close reading of Reed's letters, the publication of the painting in *The News* in 1965, and Chernis's dealings with the Honigbaum estate in 1965–66 provide rather convincing evidence that something crooked was afoot.

Mary-Anne Martin, a leading dealer who was then working in the Modern Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture Department at Sotheby Parke Bernet (SPB) in New York, recalls that Chernis tried to consign the large painting in the mid-1970s. She visited his New York apartment to inspect it, but after she found nothing similar in the few available books and sales records on Orozco, she brought it to the attention of the Orozco family in Guadalajara, who rejected it: "I had no context for including it [in the sale]," Martin explained to me recently, "and so I didn't."[47] Deeper scholarship sometimes trumps the negative evaluations of family members, who often have their own blind spots or reasons for denying authenticity. But here, as Martin said, there was insufficient information (or "context") for the auction house to risk selling what could easily be an inauthentic work. Of course, I knew none of this when I selected the painting for *South of the Border.*

Authentication often depends on the accumulation of evidence, and it seems that the rejection by SPB led to a second burst of activity by Chernis or someone else eager for a sale. First, an image of the misattributed painting was somehow placed in a German translation of Reed's biography *Orozco*, published posthumously in Dresden in 1979. This version includes many more images than the first edition, published in New York by Oxford University Press in 1956, including a full page dedicated to Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy*, titled as *Nord- und Lateinamerika* and described as an "idea study for the frescos at Dartmouth College."[48] In 1993, when I first visited the collectors, this book provided quite compelling proof that the painting was by Orozco; in retrospect, I should have questioned the reliability of a book on Mexican art published in East Germany, where an inexpert editor might have easily collaborated, consciously or not, in planting Buck's image.

The dossier contains an additional letter of authenticity, dated 7 July 1981, purportedly from Carroll Edward Hogan, an independent appraiser who had been director of the Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture Department at Parke-Bernet from 1960 to 1965. It is odd that such an important attestation was typed on a sheet of paper with no letterhead, although it does include the signature of a notary public and a detailed narrative: "I was present when she [Reed] inspected the painting at the home of Mr. Jay Chernis in 1964, who purchased it from Mr. Honnigbaum [*sic*]. She agreed to give a certificate of authenticity at that time but no photo was available. The certificate was written after she returned to Mexico City." The letter of 1981 thus takes greater pains to authenticate Reed's certificate of 15 July 1964 than to vouch for the work itself, which Hogan never identifies, describes, or titles (it could refer to one of the authentic works Chernis acquired from Honigbaum). The dossier also includes a Spanish translation of this letter and a copy of Hogan's CV (the only document in the dossier on letterhead).

It seems unlikely that Hogan's letter is an outright forgery, since he could easily have been contacted at the time it was written. Hogan, however, was not the most reliable expert. According to Martin, he might have carelessly authenticated the painting without knowing much about Orozco's work. But there is also the possibility that the letter reveals Hogan's collusion in the owner's scheme.[49] Indeed, shortly after Hogan left Sotheby's, his name was linked to a famous case involving forged artworks that Algur H. Meadows, founder of the Meadows Museum, had purchased in 1967.[50]

Another typed declaration, this one dated 9 July 1981, was purportedly obtained from Lathrop (1900–1995), an emeritus professor of art at Dartmouth College, who had been responsible for Orozco's mural commission there in the early 1930s. Despite its cautious tone, this letter implies that Lathrop had actually seen the painting, or at least a photograph: "I do see in this oil painting a number of similarities in subject matter and way of painting to his [Orozco's] Dartmouth murals: especially the golden wheat; the muscular men marching; and the treatment of hands and faces." He indicates that he knew Reed, recalls her asking Orozco "for portable paintings to sell," and that "perhaps this oil painting was such a picture." He ends by stating that "Alma Reed's endorsement of the picture is of great importance," implying that, if Lathrop actually wrote the letter, he relied almost solely on what he believed was the honest opinion of a recognized expert. The letter lacks a signature and instead seems to be a transcription (in both English and Spanish) of some original, typed up on a blank sheet of paper, using the cursive script of an IBM Selectric typewriter, perhaps the same one used to type the Spanish translation of Hogan's declaration. It warrants review by a typewriter expert.[51]

The last dated item in the dossier is a fragment of an article that appeared in the Mexican newspaper *Excélsior* on 19 August 1981 illustrating a panel from the Dartmouth cycle. The text refers to a loan of works to the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) and to the "stratospheric" prices that museums were paying for works of art but makes no mention of the Buck painting. Like the authentic Orozco letters, it is a real document that seemingly supports the attribution without actually proving anything.[52] The collectors acquired the work sometime between that date and 1992.

Knowing that the painting at the center of this tale is by Buck has allowed me to see the dossier today as a treasure trove of evidence documenting how a trap was carefully laid over a period of at least fifteen years to mislead a future buyer. Based on the documents—real or faked—it seems that sometime before April 1965, when the painting appeared in *The News*, Chernis had acquired a large and unsigned painting that looked like an Orozco. He may have himself been deceived by someone else, or he may have schemed from the start, knowing that it was one of the many New Deal–era paintings that had been inspired by Orozco, a type of art then disdained if not forgotten. Whatever the case, by annotating his canceled checks to Max Honigbaum with references to a painting he had definitely not purchased in San Francisco, Chernis launched a fraudulent attempt to authenticate it. Over the years, he created a dossier that ultimately included documents that were either entirely falsified or ambiguous to a fault. The extent to which others were complicit, including any links between Chernis and the *cajuelero* who ultimately sold the work to the collectors in Mexico City, may never be known. What I can say is that when the collectors generously agreed to lend their painting to *South of the Border,* they had no idea that it was anything other than genuine: after all, they had the documents to prove it.

✦ ✦ ✦

Bennett Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy* is a compelling survivor from a time when the influence of Mexican modernism on art in the United States was so great that an homage painted by an obscure artist from Syracuse could be mistaken for a major work by a leading muralist from Guadalajara. In the period when Chernis was creating the dossier, a lack of scholarship—both on Orozco and on proletarian art of the 1930s in general—meant that the switch entailed relatively little risk with a rather high chance of economic payout. And for every expert—like Martin—who couldn't be convinced, there was a probably a collector or curator who could be. In the mid-1960s, the Buck canvas was almost valueless; as an Orozco, even if Mexican modernism hadn't regained the prestige that it held back in the 1930s, it was worth much more. Indeed, for whoever has the picture today (the original owners having sold it years ago), the correct attribution is no small matter: the market value of Buck's painting would be a fraction of that of an equally large and compelling work by José Clemente Orozco.[53] At the same time, given renewed interest in leftist New Deal art, the visual complexity of *Good Neighbor Policy*, and, admittedly, the content of this essay, who knows how many museums might fight for the chance to own it. After all, the value of a work must also be measured in the tales that it tells.

The positive side of this story is the recovery of an important lost work that reveals the impact of contemporary politics and Mexican muralism on artists of the 1930s; it is also one of the few known survivors of a historically significant exhibition in which it kept good company. Had I not found that twenty-four-page A.C.A. Gallery catalog, I might still have wondered what ever happened to that "Orozco" that I had included in *South of the Border*, but there would have been no reason to bring Buck

out of the shadows.[54] The negative side is that Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy* serves as a warning that many other fakes and misattributions, sometimes passed from one mark to another, remain at large, contaminating the historical record. Theory and philosophy help little in this regard, for the only effective gatekeeper is the connoisseur—who not only looks hard and long at works of art but at the documents that accompany and purport to authenticate them. These are skills many consider old-fashioned, outmoded, even politically suspect, but they are essential skills nonetheless.

The most egregious fakes are often laughable, but even obvious ones cast doubt, damaging an artist's reputation, as in the case of a pseudoacademic publication that slandered Frida Kahlo a few years ago.[55] And yet, it is very difficult to talk or write openly about fake or even questionable paintings in an interconnected art world, mainly because in so doing, we risk angering stakeholders whose generosity we may need for future projects.[56] A broader discussion of this topic or a catalog of problematic works is well beyond the contours of this essay. But I close by noting that although very few false Kahlos or Riveras have actually deceived leading curators or art historians,[57] the case for Orozco is more complicated, partly because scholarship on his paintings remains comparatively limited, and partly because his expressionist style is rather easy to imitate. The same is also true for late (and sometimes sloppy) works by Siqueiros; by contrast, Rivera's precise brushwork is almost impossible to duplicate convincingly. Besides the younger artists who sincerely copied Orozco's expressionist style—aside from those discussed above, Will Barnet and Arnold Belkin come to mind—and whose work might be mistaken for their mentor's, there is evidence of at least one skilled forger out there whose hand can be seen in paintings that have passed through the most reputable auction houses, and that in some cases remain ascribed to Orozco in both public and private collections. Less ignoble are other cases of mistaken identity, such as a brightly colored drawing of two men in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, dated 1933 and donated to the museum in 2019, that is old but definitely not by Orozco.[58] I leave it to my readers who jump to the endnote and follow the link to judge if this account of Bennett Buck's *Good Neighbor Policy* might serve, ultimately, as a cautionary tale.

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Notes

I wrote the first draft of this essay in Mexico City in July 2020 in the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic. I thank Jeffrey Collins and Bonnie Gossels for their generous and careful comments on earlier drafts, the two anonymous readers for the *Getty Research Journal* for pushing me to refine my arguments, and Lauren Gendler at the Getty Research Institute for her sharp copyediting and fact-checking.

1. James Oles, with an essay by Karen Cordero Reiman, *South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914–1947*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993). Some of these ideas were revisited and expanded in Barbara Haskell, ed., *Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art, 1925–1945*, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of

American Art, 2020). See also James Oles, review of the exhibition *Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art, 1925–1945*, *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2020), https://doi.org/10.24926/24716839.10732.

2. There are actually two versions of this painting in Mexico's national collections: a smaller one in the Museo de Arte Moderno (dated 1930 by the museum but is certainly later) and a larger one dated 1944 by the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil. Both revisit the central figure in Orozco's mural at Pomona College (*Prometheus,* 1930, Frary Hall), but reduce multitudes to just two flanking figures. For images, see *La colección permanente: Museo de Arte Moderno de México* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2006), 54; and Justino Fernández, *Obras de José Clemente Orozco en la colección Carrillo Gil, México* (Mexico City: n.p., 1949), 39, pl. 59.

3. Although my memory of the following events is sharp, my documentation is sparse, and I kept no diary at that time. Doubts throughout the essay are signaled by the use of passive voice.

4. Largely for economic reasons, Orozco moved to New York in 1927, leaving his family behind in Guadalajara. He was the first of the three leading muralists to seek his fortune north of the border. He returned to Mexico in early 1934. The bibliography on the artist has expanded dramatically since the early 1990s: see Renato González Mello and Diane Miliotes, eds., *José Clemente Orozco in the United States, 1927–1934,* exh. cat. (Hanover, NH: Hood Museum of Art, 2002); Anna Indych-López, *Muralism without Walls: Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros in the United States, 1927–1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); and Mary K. Coffey, *Orozco's American Epic: Myth, History, and the Melancholy of Race* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).

5. The representation of two paintings and a photograph within the space of the canvas may indicate that the artist wanted his own work to reference (or subsume) multiple media, including prints, frescoes, architecture, and industrial design.

6. Orozco's work was frequently seen in exhibitions in New York and was well reproduced, albeit in black-and-white, in Reed's widely distributed *José Clemente Orozco* (New York: Delphic Studios, 1932).

7. This book is discussed below; see this essay, note 48.

8. The work is included in the checklist but not illustrated. Before the digital revolution, there was an even longer lead time for sending a final catalog to press ahead of the opening of an exhibition, especially—as in this case—when the book was printed abroad (Hong Kong). Changes to the galleys were marked by hand, sent by FedEx or fax, and often entailed additional costs. When the catalog for *South of the Border* went to press, I already knew that the loan of *Birth of Fascism* had been denied and had signaled this in the checklist, but I still believed *Prometheus* would be exhibited at the first two venues.

9. *South of the Border* emerged from my dissertation prospectus, but the dissertation itself had a tighter focus. See James Oles, "Walls to Paint On: American Muralists in Mexico, 1933–1936" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1996).

10. The show ran from 15 August to 11 September 1938. Baron (1892–1961) founded the A.C.A. Gallery in 1932 at 1269 Madison Avenue; by 1938 it had moved to 52 West Eighth Street. His nephew Sidney Bergen (1922–2001) joined the gallery in the 1950s (it remains in operation as the ACA Gallery). After discovering the catalog, I wrote to Sidney's son Jeffrey Bergen in April 1994, hoping for more information on Buck from the A.C.A. Gallery files. I received no reply, and I did not follow up after learning that their archive had been donated to the Archives of American Art and mainly covers post-1938 activities.

11. Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926–1956* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 28.

12. Hemingway, *Artists on the Left,* 28.

13. A short conversation with one of the former owners in 2022 revealed that the painting has been sold to another collector, and I have been unable to trace its current whereabouts.

14. *Murals by American Painters and Photographers,* exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1932). Artists George Biddle, Philip Evergood, and William Gropper participated in both projects.

15. Hemingway, *Artists on the Left,* 136. See also Helen A. Harrison, "John Reed Club Artists and the New Deal: Radical Responses to Roosevelt's 'Peaceful Revolution,'" *Prospects* 5 (1980): 241–68. For contemporary reviews, see Elizabeth McCausland, "New Deal Hailed in Show of Social Art," *Sunday Union and Republican*, 14 August 1938, 6E; M. U., "Artists Toying with New Deal," *New York Sun*, 20 August 1938, 21; Jacob Kainen, "ACA Show on New Deal," *Daily Worker*, 5 September 1938, 7; and Elizabeth Noble, "Art,"

New Masses, 6 September 1938, 30–31. None discusses Buck's painting.

16. Sternberg made a lithograph with a similar composition titled *Southern Holiday* (1935); Elizabeth Olds also created a lithograph version of her painting *The Middle Class*. For images of the two prints, see Hemingway, *Artists on the Left*, 50, 137. An oil sketch for Levi's *Dock Worker* has appeared on the market: "American & European Paintings and Prints," Bonhams, Boston, 11 September 2009, lot 753, https://www.skinnerinc.com/auctions/2470/lots/753.

17. Herman Baron, untitled introductory essay in *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal* (New York: A.C.A. Gallery, 1938), n.p. The entire catalog is available online at the Wolfsonian-FIU Library, XC2014.03.1.9, https://digital.wolfsonian.org/WOLF040195.

18. See Bram Dijkstra, "Erasing a Movement," chap. 1 in *American Expressionism: Art and Social Change, 1920–1950* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003), 9–23. This book discusses several of the artists featured in *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal,* but it makes no mention of Buck.

19. Patricia Hills analyzes Evergood's submission in "Art and Politics in the Popular Front: The Union Work and Social Realism of Philip Evergood," in *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere,* ed. Alejandro Anreus, Diana Linden, and Jonathan Weinberg (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2006), 196–98. I searched as well as I could for the other exhibited paintings but hit a digital dead end.

20. Biographical material for this essay was taken from a short, unsigned statement, possibly by the artist himself: "The Artist," in *Puerto Rico: Twelve Reproductions of Original Drawings by Bennett Buck*, with a text by M. W. Royse (New York: A.C.A. Gallery, 1936), 26; and Peg Weiss, introduction to *H. Bennett Buck: An Artist's Collection*, exh. cat. (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 1978), n.p.

21. "The Artist," 26. In the period, many artists in the US padded their CVs with references to their studies undertaken abroad, when what that actually entailed is rather vague. In Buck's case, the impact of Léger's modernism is unclear.

22. See Anne Ziegler, "With an Itch to Etch: The Five Ediths and the Syracuse Printmakers," in *North American Prints, 1913–1947: An Examination at Century's End*, ed. David Tatham (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 134–35. The Puerto Rico drawings had been shown previously at the Ateneo Puertorriqueño in San Juan.

23. When researching Buck in the mid-1990s, I found some images in clippings in his artist's file at the New York Public Library, and though I failed to keep accurate notes at the time, online research has allowed me to fill in some details. A single photograph of a painting (*Steam Roller*, 1940) indicates that Buck was at least briefly employed by the WPA in New York City. Archives of American Art, Federal Art Project, Photographic Division collection, circa 1920–1965, bulk 1935–1942, box 3, folder 47: https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/federal-art-project-photographic-division-collection-5467/series-1/box-3-folder-47. Buck's *Undeclared* (an antiwar painting) is illustrated in Howard Devree, "A Reviewer's Notebook: In Galleries," *New York Times*, 19 December 1937. Buck is also mentioned in Isabel Cooper, review of "American Cartoons between Wars," *New Masses,* 25 February 1941, 27.

24. In 1946, Buck was a founding member of the Essex Art Association (EAA) in Connecticut; materials in the EAA archive include exhibition brochures from the early 1960s, but nothing related to his earlier New Deal practice. I am grateful to Sarah Grote, EAA Gallery director, for sending me the relevant digital files. The quoted review appears in a short note in *Art News*, May 1966, 15.

25. See Clemente Orozco, *José Clemente Orozco: Graphic Work* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 42–43. The image included in this essay is a different impression from the same edition, identical to the one Buck owned.

26. This gift was commemorated by the catalog published by the Everson Museum, *H. Bennett Buck: An Artist's Collection*, cited in this essay, note 20. In 1994 I obtained a checklist from the Everson with fragmentary information and several misspellings, but during the pandemic, Gina Stankivitz, former assistant registrar, kindly provided me with updated checklists of the works by Buck and the artists from Mexico as well as a PDF copy of the 1978 catalog. It is unclear when or how Buck acquired these works; they predate his two-year residence in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in the 1950s, where he founded a little-known school called Artes Contemporáneas. Buck owned a copy of Siqueiros's lithograph *Self-Portrait* (1936); see John Ittman, "David Alfaro Siqueiros," in *Mexico and Modern Printmaking: A Revolution in the Graphic Arts, 1920 to 1950*, ed. John Ittman, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006), 166, 169. In a clear sign of admiration, Buck once depicted a studio interior (perhaps his own) showing Siqueiros's lithograph hanging on the

wall. My research folder includes a poor photocopy of the image, but I have been unable to retrace its source.

27. Tamayo's drawing has not been previously published. On this period, see E. Carmen Ramos, *Tamayo: The New York Years* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2017).

28. The nationalization of oil in Mexico was widely discussed in the press. See, for example, J. H. Carmical, "Mexico's Oil Move Hits U.S. Policies," *New York Times*, 27 March 1938, 41. Historians have questioned whether the Good Neighbor Policy was truly operative in the ensuing dispute over reparations. Clayton R. Koppes, "The Good Neighbor Policy and the Nationalization of Mexican Oil: A Reinterpretation," *The Journal of American History* 69, no. 1 (June 1982): 62–81.

29. Baron, introductory essay in *1938: Dedicated to the New Deal*, n.p. Gottlieb's *Strength Through Joy*, on the other hand, makes reference to Orozco's ink drawings from his *Horrors of Revolution* series of the late 1920s. For a discussion of this series, see Indych-López, "*Horrores*," chap. 2 in *Muralism without Walls*.

30. At the New School, geometric lines and rectangular blocks separate different scenes or figures, but the resulting montage is more subtle than in Buck's painting, especially because Orozco used color to unify the composition and never resorted to such obvious divisions as picture frames or graphic borders. See Diane Miliotes, "The Murals at the New School for Social Research (1930–31)," in González Mello and Miliotes, *José Clemente Orozco in the United States*, 118–41.

31. As prices for art increased in the postwar period, the market demanded ever more documentation. Jonathon Keets, *Forged: Why Fakes Are the Great Art of Our Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 2013), 120.

32. Here I should reveal that before I began the PhD program at Yale, I received a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law (1988), which might explain why at times this essay reads more like a legal brief than art history.

33. "New Modern Art Works on Display at City Museum," *St. Louis Star and Times*, 28 September 1938, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/10889490/the-st-louis-star-and-times/; and Robert Justin Goldstein, "Watching the Books: The Federal Government's Suppression of the Washington Cooperative Bookshop, 1939–1950," *American Communist History* 12, no. 3 (December 2013): 240.

34. Untitled clipping from *The News*, 11 April 1965. I won't gloss the interpretation of the painting except to say that the text includes the phrase "Anglo-America and Latin America," which repeats the titles of Orozco's panels at Dartmouth. For the research in this essay, I used only photocopies of the original documents; I am unaware of the current location of the original dossier.

35. See Laney Salisbury and Aly Sujo, *Provenance: How a Con Man and a Forger Rewrote the History of Modern Art* (New York: Penguin, 2009). The bibliography on Van Meegeren is too extensive to list here.

36. There was, for example, no catalogue raisonné to consult (there still isn't one), and there were only a handful of publications, mostly in Spanish.

37. Email communication between Mary-Anne Martin and the author, 23 July 2020.

38. See, for example, "Fine Art," Stair Galleries, Hudson, New York, 25 September 2010, lots 273–80, 282, and 286A: https://www.stairgalleries.com/auction/09-25-10/catalogue/201-300/cat-271-280.htm. A work by Norman Rockwell dedicated to Chernis was recently sold: "American Art and Philadelphia Impressionists," Freeman's, Philadelphia, 6 June 2022, lot 56, https://hindmanauctions.com/auctions/1736-american-art-and-pennsylvania-impressionists/lot/56. Future research may or may not uncover more information about this character.

39. On 19 May 1966, Chernis wrote to Beatrice Kirshenbaum (1908–92), who had inherited the Honigbaum estate (she had a long and childless romantic relationship with Max Honigbaum), about having purchased works from Honigbaum and expressing interest in works in her collection to resell at his gallery. This letter too remains with her family. I thank Beatrice's son, Noel Kirshenbaum, and granddaughter, L. D. Kirshenbaum, for their assistance in my research.

40. Emphasis mine. In this essay, absent evidence to the contrary, I assume Chernis is the sole protagonist in the fraud.

41. This printed checklist is not dated, but must be between 1936, when the Fine Arts Center was founded, and 1939, the year of Alfred Honigbaum's death. Chernis's annotations on this document indicate he acquired Rivera's ten watercolors of *Russian Army Scenes*; Orozco's *Head* and *Heads*, both watercolors; and Siqueiros's *Mother and Child* (now lost). It is difficult to identify the works by Rivera and Orozco. For the work by Siqueiros, see Olivier Debroise, ed.,

Portrait of a Decade: David Alfaro Siqueiros, 1930–1940, exh. cat. (Mexico City: Museo Nacional de Arte, 1997), supp. cat. no. 16. Chernis's letter of 22 January 1966 to Max Honigbaum and the annotations on the check reference an additional watercolor by Orozco and two watercolors by Rivera that are not present in the Colorado Springs checklist.

42. The first, dated 1 January 1934, includes polite but unspecific news about working at Dartmouth. The other (25 January 1936) was sent from Guadalajara: "As soon as I can I will paint some small pictures and I will send one to you." This second letter came in a stamped envelope addressed to Honigbaum. Photocopies from now-lost collectors' provenance dossier.

43. I consulted a photograph of her dedication in a copy of Alma M. Reed, *The Mexican Muralists* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1960), listed for sale on AbeBooks in July 2020.

44. It seems strange that these letters "authenticate" two very different paintings, but Chernis seems to have used real works to lend credibility to other, more dubious works. *Mannequins* (1930; also known as *Manikins* or *Mannikins*) had been sold by Reed to New York lawyer Charles Recht and was supposedly purchased from Recht by Chernis in 1964. An auction sale of the painting makes no mention of Chernis's ownership. See "Latin American Art," Sotheby's, New York, 30–31 May 2007, lot 10, https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2007/latin-american-art-n08324/lot.10.html. In the second letter, someone first typed the title of another painting—*Two Scholars in Discussion*—which was then crossed out by hand and changed to "Mannequins," with the initials A. M. R., above. For images of these two works, see González Mello and Miliotes, *José Clemente Orozco in the United States*, 257, fig. 273 (*Mannequins*) and 300, fig. 38 (*Two Scholars*).

45. The dates create a glitch in the chronology. Although Reed's letters do not actually state that she saw the painting in person, any reader would assume she had; a letter from appraiser Carroll Edward Hogan, discussed below, implies that Reed had seen the panel in Chernis's New York apartment in 1964. Why, then, were the annotated checks for its supposed purchase from the Honigbaum estate not issued until more than a year later? Fictions are filled with such mistakes.

46. The leading experts at the time in Mexico would have been scholar Justino Fernández (1902–72) and collector Álvar Carrillo Gil (1898–1974), but in the 1960s, I doubt any US collector would have even contemplated getting their approval. Chernis misattributed the painting while Reed was still alive, but I am sure she was oblivious rather than complicit.

47. Email communication between Mary-Anne Martin and the author, 23 July 2020. Martin told me, however, that the family's opinion was not always reliable, and so when she saw the work again in *South of the Border* in 1993, she assumed that I had proven that the work was indeed by Orozco!

48. Alma Reed, *Orozco*, trans. Eva Schumann (Dresden: VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1979), pl. 84 and 384 (checklist). Author's translation from German. Most image captions in this edition simply copy collection information from Reed's publication on Orozco from 1932 (see this essay, note 6) and were not updated. The German edition also includes a contribution by Orozco's widow, Margarita Vallardes de Orozco (1898–1990), translated from *José Clemente Orozco: Autobiografía* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1970), though it is unclear to what extent the family—or any scholar—supervised the publication. I thank Barbara Bobak, art librarian at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and Ruth Halvey at the MoMA Library, for confirming information from the German edition via email. There was much interest in postrevolutionary Mexican art from behind the Iron Curtain, but how Chernis—or someone else—managed to get a color plate inserted into the edition of 1979 remains a mystery.

49. Email communication between Martin and the author, 23 July 2020.

50. See Paul Cummings, "Oral History Interview with Ralph F. Colin," 15 August 1969, transcript, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-ralph-f-colin-12526; and Donald S. Vogel, *Memories and Images: The World of Donald Vogel and Valley House Gallery* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2000), 186. I recently discovered that Hogan was named a codefendant in a lawsuit of 1971 filed in New York City by two collectors who had purchased fake works ascribed to Raoul Dufy at Parke-Bernet. The judge found Hogan free of any personal liability: *Weisz v. Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc.* (325 N.Y.S.2d 576,67 Misc.2d 1077), https://case-law.vlex.com/vid/weisz-v-parke-bernet-885707231.

51. Confirmatory evidence might be found in Lathrop's papers at the Rauner Special Collections Library at Dartmouth. The ambiguous language of both the Hogan and Lathrop "certificates" lends

credence to the idea that they are authentic; a forger would arguably have come up with some more convincing and assertive prose.

52. In fact, such dossiers are often marked by "an abundance of detail coupled with a certain overall vagueness." Salisbury and Sujo, *Provenance*, 119.

53. The public auction record for works by Orozco remains 1,142,000 USD, achieved at Christie's in May 2010 for his oil-on-canvas painting *The City* (1929). See "Latin American Sale," Christie's, New York, 26–27 May 2010, lot 54, https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5316895.

54. As the years went by, it was increasingly unlikely that any scholar who came across the image by Buck in the catalog for *1938* would have tied it to *South of the Border*.

55. Barbara Levine and Stephen Jaycox, *Finding Frida Kahlo* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009). See also Jason Edward Kaufman, "Finding Frida Kahlo: Controversy Calls into Question the Authenticity of the Renowned Artists's Work," *IFAR Journal* 11, no. 3 (2010): 18–25.

56. For legal reasons, curators and other professionals need to tread carefully in maligning works of art, and for that reason, I hesitate to identify some of my suspects here. See Patricia Cohen, "In Art, Freedom of Expression Doesn't Extend to 'Is It Real?,'" *New York Times*, 19 June 2012.

57. One exception—that I am not sure has ever been noted in print—is the *Peasant with Sombrero* that slipped into an otherwise authoritative catalog on Rivera: Linda Downs and Ellen Sharp, eds., *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, exh. cat. (Detroit: Founders Society, Detroit Institute of Arts; New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), 63, fig. 112. Like Buck's painting, it passed muster as a Rivera because it was related to a well-known mural. When the show traveled to Mexico, artist Jesús Ortiz Tajonar (1919–90) identified it as his own work. I thank Mary-Anne Martin for clarifying this detail.

58. As of February 2025, this work (accession number 2019-123-1) remains listed as "possibly by" Orozco on the Philadelphia Museum of Art's online collection database: https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/346296. I notified the museum that, despite an apocryphal signature, the work was clearly not by Orozco, but the attribution sticks.

Talking Criticism with David Antin, or Criticism at the Boundaries

Alex Kitnick

> What have we been doing? What are we addressing ourselves to, in what way, who do we hope to *talk* to, and in view of what urgencies?
>
> —David Antin, letter to Leo Steinberg regarding "The Goals of Criticism"

In the 1960s, David Antin's work moved along two parallel tracks. Deeply involved with the New American Poetry, he wrote poems "with prefabricated and readymade materials, recycling texts and fragments of texts, enclosing valuable and used up talk and thought and feeling, hoping to save what was worth saving, liberate it and throw the rest away."[1] Between 1965 and 1968, he also edited, alongside poet and translator Jerome Rothenberg, four issues of the poetry journal *some/thing*, which featured work by writers such as Jackson Mac Low and Margaret Randall, its covers graced with work by artists Amy Mendelson, Robert Morris, Andy Warhol, and George Maciunas. These covers point to Antin's other activity at the time—the writing of art criticism. Antin was one of the first critics to seriously consider Morris and Warhol, and he wrote about other important contemporary artists, including Alex Katz and Jean Tinguely, for publications such as *Art News* and *Art and Literature*. In the November 1966 issue of *Artforum* he reviewed the exhibition *Eccentric Abstraction*, organized by Lucy Lippard. On occasion he authored wide-ranging essays on other topics, for example, the influence of corporate money on contemporary art. An early biographical sketch describes his activities this way: "Poet, linguist, critic David Antin is an enthusiastic spectator of new painting and sculpture which he relates to modern ideas in science, philosophy and literature."[2]

In summer 1965, Antin wrote the column Art Chronicle in *Kulchur* magazine, reviewing the critical reception of Marcel Duchamp; in the winter issue of 1965–66 he examined recent art criticism by Thomas Hess, Max Kozloff, Harold Rosenberg, and Irving Sandler, chiding them for what he considered their noxious mix of humanism and sentimentalism. "I began by attacking the bases of art criticism for *Kulchur* magazine," Antin put it in a capsule biography of 1970, "then wrote several art articles

Getty Research Journal, no. 20 (2025): 79–98 © 2025 Alex Kitnick

to show it should/could be done in a reasonably intelligent manner."[3] The criticism Antin went on to write was extremely good—more than "reasonably intelligent," and certainly much more philosophical than what was typically found in art magazines. While it was not of a radically different character than other criticism written at the time, Antin's work did break with certain conventions.[4] There was a tradition of New York poets writing criticism about New York artists—John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, and James Schuyler are the three best-known examples—but Antin's texts, lengthy and arch in tone, are far less belletristic than those of his predecessors.[5] And yet Antin's move was still to come. In the early 1970s his work underwent a fundamental shift, changing the way he made both his poetry and his criticism. The boundary between the two began to blur; Antin called this new form *talking*.

Dispensing with desk and typewriter, Antin's talking took shape live, without anything written down. Presenting at art schools, museums, and poetry projects, Antin would arrive with some ideas in his head, possibly even with some notes in his hand, and he usually had a title to serve as a guidepost. He delivered his work extemporaneously; it was not read or delivered but thought and improvised. Often the performances would go on for an hour, sometimes longer. The talking was recorded and subsequently transcribed and edited. The result was not quite poetry or criticism—or, as literary scholar Sherman Paul put it, "The talk poems become his art and his criticism."[6] Over the years, Antin published four books of work made according to this method—beginning with *Talking* in 1972—which all consider the differences between listening and reading, and writing and speaking, and in which Antin imagines different scales of community. The list of subjects Antin discusses in these high-wire acts includes personal relationships, gossip, real estate, architecture, philosophy, and photography, but he ruminates again and again on art and criticism. As publisher Lita Hornick imparts, these "works are always classified as poetry, because the Library of Congress has no classification for talking."[7] That said, many poets didn't consider Antin's work poetry. It is a truly free verse: There is no meter or rhyme, and its improvisatory nature chafes against tradition. Antin's project purposefully poses a problem of categorization and genre, but here I want to think about what it might mean to consider Antin's talking as a lost episode in the history of criticism. Call it talking criticism, improvisational criticism, wandering criticism, or criticism at the boundaries.

orality / audience / community

> Radio and gramophone and tape recorder gave us back the poet's voice as an important dimension of the poetic experience. . . . But TV, with its deep-participation mode, caused young poets suddenly to present their poems in cafés, in public parks, anywhere. After TV, they suddenly felt the need for personal contact with their public.
>
> —Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*

I would like to begin with two questions: Why did Antin's work take the form of talking in the early 1970s? And how did his talking alter the conventions of criticism regarding position and voice? Certainly, Antin belonged to a larger groundswell in poetic thinking. "For poets of the 1950s and 1960s, a new oral impulse served as a corrective to the rhetorically controlled, print-based poetry of high modernism," scholar Michael Davidson writes.[8] Influences outside poetics exerted their energies too. Media theorist Marshall McLuhan claimed that a new orality was taking shape in culture at large. If Gutenberg's press, invented in the fifteenth century, had pushed Western culture into a linear, literate, and visual order, McLuhan believed that new technologies were launching it into acoustic space: "In the electronic age which succeeds the typographic and mechanical era of the past five hundred years, we encounter new shapes and structures of human interdependence and of expression which are 'oral' in form even when the components of the situation may be nonverbal," McLuhan notes in his 1962 treatise *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*.[9] McLuhan's ideas animated Antin's circle, with some members dedicating themselves to a field they called *ethnopoetics*, connecting prehistorical, archaic, and "primitive" oral traditions with the newest iterations of poetry. "The rediscovery of formulaic oral traditions by Milman Parry, Albert Lord, and Eric Havelock," Davidson writes, "provided a link between avant-garde literary practices and earlier tribal cultures."[10] The new work looked backward and forward at the same time. The publication in 1968 of Rothenberg's anthology *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia and Oceania*, edited with Antin's help, describes a "'post-literate' situation, in McLuhan's good phrase, or where-we-are-today."[11]

If Antin's talking exists in a constellation with spoken poetry, stand-up comedy, and avant-garde performance, it intersects with tendencies in criticism too. Although a number of contemporary critics adopted a talky, vernacular style in their writing—consider Jill Johnston's coverage of 1960s dance-happenings in the *Village Voice*, defined by antic first-person narration—Antin made talkiness literal.[12] He made his criticism live and in person; he delivered it without a net, bringing it face to face with a social world that provided criticism with its very conditions of possibility. Antin's move toward talking speaks to a changing conception of the audience at this moment, with criticism being the form of writing most closely associated with the public sphere. By the mid-1960s, the public sphere was in crisis: individuals were overwhelmed by new technologies that threatened to turn the public into a mass and by an increasing pluralism of concerns, particularly the equality demanded by the civil rights and women's movements, which made it clear that the public's coherence had been made possible only by many exclusions.[13] Performing live was one way to guarantee an audience for criticism, making it palpable and concrete while at the same time diminishing its universalizing pretensions. The public, in other words, was no longer an abstract entity, nor was the critic. Antin stood there as himself.[14] The audio recordings of his talks, though rarely distributed, contain crucial information in this regard.[15] We hear Antin's voice, avuncular and laced with a singsongy New York accent as well as

laughter. "There is a good deal of borscht-belt humor in Antin's work," Davidson writes. "He relies extensively on timing—the incremental building of a metaphor, the deferral of the punch line—and combines it with the subtle creation of himself as a schlemiel in the world of slick impresarios."[16] Antin did this in part by opening up criticism to intimacy and renouncing critical distance. Conventionally, critics are supposed to stand outside and peer in, but Antin generated his work within crowds. "All I needed to know was who I was going to be talking to," Antin told editor Barry Alpert in 1973. "Because, for my purposes, what I wanted in talking was this sense of address."[17]

transcription

The fact that Antin transcribed, edited, and published his talking suggests that he didn't see live performance as the end point of his work. While the live audience served as an engine, Antin's talking found another meaning when it was codified and typeset, and entered into a separate context.[18] It was almost as if he were trying to extend the intimacy of the oral community into the matrix of print. (Had he published his work as recordings, as opposed to texts, he might have made some kind of claim to authenticity.) The site of publication mattered, too, especially in the case of Antin's first talk piece, "talking at pomona," which, staged at Pomona College, near Los Angeles, "in early 1971—around April, I think," was not published in a poetry journal or little magazine—though this would be the most common home for his work—but in *Artforum*, the art world's magazine of record and a proper space of criticism.[19]

The story is that after delivering his talk to art students at the small liberal arts college, Antin and his wife, the artist Eleanor Antin, drove back to their house in Solana Beach near San Diego and listened to the recording on the way. They put it on the car stereo—it begins, "testing testing testing testing"—and Eleanor said, "that's a poem."[20] She recognized the recording not as a talk delivered by a critic and curator but as a form of poetry, and Antin, a poet who was always making "an effort to get away from the sealed-in package that poetry is often treated as," decided to use this understanding as a way to expand poetry beyond its established conventions.[21]

Eleanor's insight, of course, didn't come out of the blue. A table had already been set in which such an idea could surface. Ethnopoetics privileged oral traditions, and certain strands of contemporary art turned toward voice too. In 1964, Morris lip-synched a lecture by art historian Erwin Panofsky in his performance *21.3*; later, in 1968, Warhol published *a: a novel*, cobbled together from twenty-four hours of methamphetamine-addled discussions that actor and Warhol-studio regular Ondine [Robert Olivo] recorded at Warhol's Factory with a motley crew of interlocutors.[22] Talking was also gathering around the borders of the work of art. The artist talk and artist interview assumed a new relevance at this moment, with the conceptual-art tabloid *Avalanche*, published between 1970 and 1976, featuring an artist-cum-celebrity on each of its covers and a long interview inside.[23] It is clear that Antin saw himself as part of this tendency, and it is significant that, despite Eleanor classifying his talk as poetry and Antin

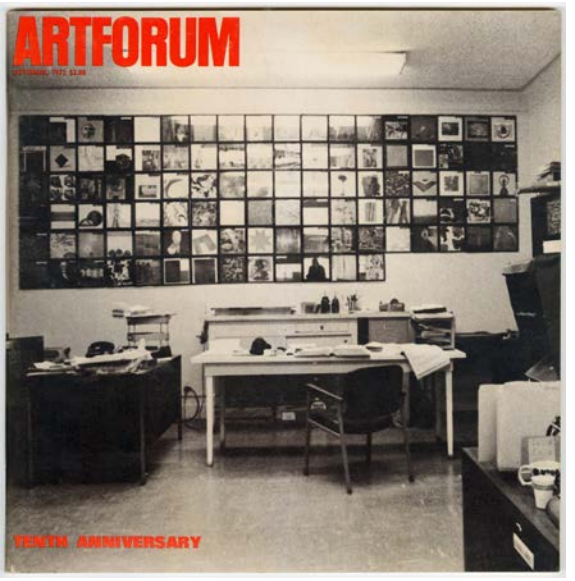
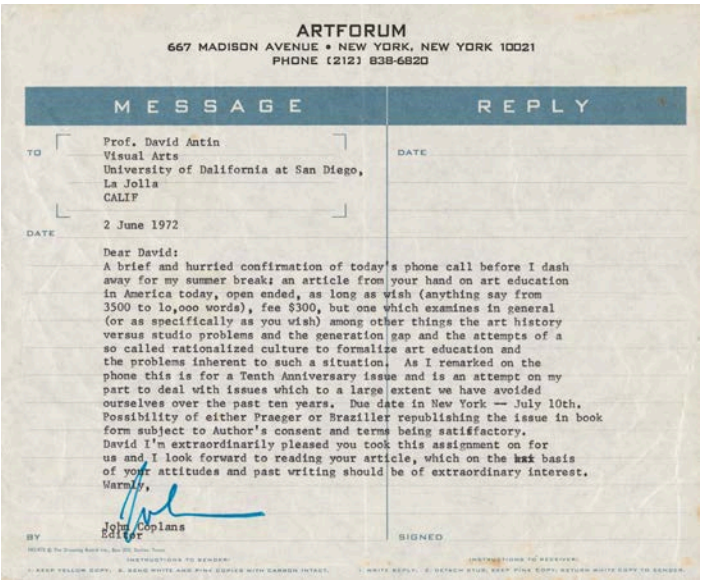


FIG. 1. — Cover of *Artforum* 11, no. 1 (September 1972).

designating his work as "talk poems," "talking at pomona" first appeared in *Artforum*'s tenth anniversary issue in 1972 alongside essays by curator Lawrence Alloway ("Network: The Art World Described as a System"), critic Kozloff ("The Trouble with Art-as-Idea"), and scholar Rosalind Krauss ("A View of Modernism"), all of which offer "a synoptic overview of the art ambiance during the past decade."[24] Antin was expanding the parameters of not only poetry but also criticism (fig. 1).

Significantly Antin's title doesn't mention what he was talking about—there is a trace of John Cage's "Lecture on Nothing" from 1959 in the refusal to establish a topic. That Antin was talking—and where—were the important elements. Within the art world, Pomona College was known at the time for its commitment to advanced conceptual practices.[25] According to a telegram dated 2 June 1972, Antin, who at the time was a professor of visual arts at the University of California, San Diego, had been commissioned by *Artforum* editor John Coplans to write an article "on art education in America today, open ended, as long as [you] wish (anything say from 3500 to 10,000 words), fee $300, but one which examines in general (or as specifically as you wish) among other things the art history versus studio problems and the generation gap and the attempts of a so called rationalized culture to formalize art education and the problems inherent to such a situation"[26] (fig. 2). Coplans invited a more or less traditional essay about art education and its role in a changing society. While Antin's contribution must have surprised Coplans—not only in that it took art education as its context rather than subject but also in its unusual form and singular voice—the work was not merely iconoclastic.[27] Antin's piece may have differed in substantive ways from those of his colleagues in terms of tone and style, but it shared a preoccupation with questions of voice and critical distance. All of these figures belonged to a larger tendency



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MESSAGE | REPLY

TO
Prof. David Antin
Visual Arts
University of California at San Diego,
La Jolla
CALIF

DATE
2 June 1972

DATE

Dear David:
A brief and hurried confirmation of today's phone call before I dash away for my summer break: an article from your hand on art education in America today, open ended, as long as wish (anything say from 3500 to 10,000 words), fee $300, but one which examines in general (or as specifically as you wish) among other things the art history versus studio problems and the generation gap and the attempts of a so called rationalized culture to formalize art education and the problems inherent to such a situation. As I remarked on the phone this is for a Tenth Anniversary issue and is an attempt on my part to deal with issues which to a large extent we have avoided ourselves over the past ten years. Due date in New York — July 10th. Possibility of either Praeger or Braziller republishing the issue in book form subject to Author's consent and terms being satisfactory. David I'm extraordinarily pleased you took this assignment on for us and I look forward to reading your article, which on the basis of your attitudes and past writing should be of extraordinary interest.
Warmly,

John Coplans
Editor

BY

SIGNED

FIG. 2. — Telegram sent by John Coplans to David Antin, 2 June 1972. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2008.M.56. © The John Coplans Trust.

in criticism that challenged the autonomy of art by privileging sociological terms. The emergence of a unique voice, in distinction to the opticality of the eye and its claims to objective truth, spoke to the break with modernism then under way in art and criticism. Indeed, this was the crux of Krauss's argument in "A View of Modernism," which ends with the lines: "It matters who one sounds like when what one is writing about is art. One's own perspective, like one's own age, is the only orientation one will ever have."[28] Foregrounding voice opened up the possibility of contingency, if not relativism, in criticism. While his talking was ultimately monologic in form, Antin did broach the possibility of interruption, dialogue, and conversation.[29] He also nodded at openness by occasionally getting things wrong. At the end of the text "talking at pomona" in *Artforum,* Antin provides footnotes (he calls them *afterthoughts*) in order to correct the slips he made in the live talk, but he refused to intervene in the body of the text, insisting on the primacy of live thought.

Antin's talking changed "the appearance of the Gutenberg printed page."[30] His text has no punctuation marks or "traffic signals."[31] In order to reestablish criticism's connection to voice, Antin had to delete the graphemes of typical written language. That is to say, he bucked five hundred years of printed history and parted ways with both standard poetry and prose. "If written language is singled out as the culprit, what will be sought is not so much the reduction as the metamorphosis of language into something looser, more intuitive, less organized and inflected, nonlinear (in McLuhan's terminology) and—noticeably—more verbose," Susan Sontag wrote around this time.[32] So instead of sentences and paragraphs, clusters of words slide across the page, breaking in accordance with Antin's breath. Margins are unjustified, an innovation allowed in part by the move from cold-type methods of printing toward electric

typewriters.[33] All the text is lowercase, Cagean and antihierarchical, and this lowering is very much to the point: Antin's work maps out a nonstandard, horizontal space, and he claims that it is there—in the scrum of sociability—that art's meaning gets made.[34]

The artworks reproduced in the *Artforum* article are mentioned only in passing. Antin didn't incorporate pictures in other talk pieces, and I would assume they appeared in the article at the editor's behest. The new art was built on elaborate conceptual structures rather than visual appearances, so it was better to describe them, to talk them out; pictures would not necessarily divulge their meanings. The import of artist Douglas Huebler's *Duration Piece #15* (1969), for example, which Antin lauds because it "operates a system" in "real space,"[35] rested on an elaborate pricing structure based on the capture of a wanted criminal; the artwork's collector would pay the captor's reward. One best grasps the stakes of Huebler's project through mapping out its components rather than viewing the piecemeal documents that constitute its nominal form (fig. 3; see the image in the online edition). Huebler is the hero of Antin's text, not least due to the way questions of capture—and morality—operate in his work. (What Antin calls the "violence" of Huebler's work is what distinguishes Huebler from the other conceptual artists Antin discusses, such as Dennis Oppenheim, who harvested and sold wheat.) Five years earlier, Warhol had painted a mural for the New York World's Fair of 1964 depicting mug shots of thirteen most-wanted men, and while the murals offered Huebler a precedent, Huebler's work is distinct in the way that it engages a social system as not simply a picture or representation but a demand made on the world. The result, Antin claims, doesn't simply modify art history but "raises the question about the meaning of art."[36] The artwork, no longer self-contained and autonomous but despotic and diffuse, required a new type of similarly open-ended criticism. Antin understood that art's shift toward information altered established roles and ways of working, and his work responded by reconsidering criticism's form. As the artwork moved into real space, it ensnared the critic. The two entered a new kind of relationship, and a novel mode of engagement took shape.

painting relators

One of the key terms that Antin coins in "talking at pomona" is *painting relators*. These are the folks who lend painting meaning:

> there are a set of people who are painting relators
>
> and these painting relators relate your painting to
>
> other paintings which is how you know these
>
> are paintings now in order to make a painting
>
> of the sort that is related to other paintings
>
> by painting relators you have to find painting

relators thats very important painting relators

are essential to artists sometimes these

painting relators are other artists and sometimes

theyre people who do nothing else but

relate paintings they have sometimes been

thought of as critics sometimes theyre hustlers

called dealers and sometimes theyre people

who are just sort of wandering around

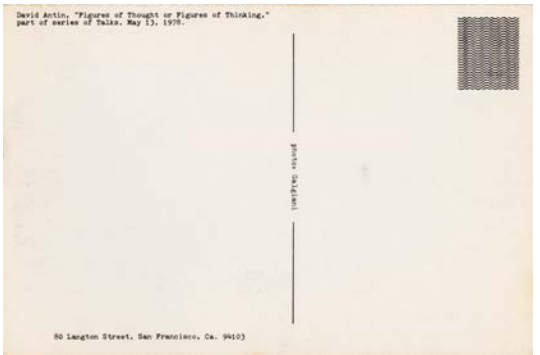
with nothing else to do but relate paintings[37]

Different kinds of people fit under the mantle "painting relators." Artists, critics, and gallerists all relate paintings; they all work toward a similar end (relating paintings), and thus have a similar effect (the relation of paintings). Antin does not mention curators, who were perhaps only beginning to accrue the clout and profile they now enjoy. Antin, of course, is a painting relator as well.[38] By coining the term, Antin gathered species under a genus and located a lingua franca that they all share: talking. And it is the talking—this relationality, sociability, network vernacular, or "live discourse"—that, however conditional it may be, gives art its meaning.[39] But to make art truly meaningful, Antin contends, one must not simply link painting to painting but open art up to life, which is what Huebler sought to accomplish in his work. Such a claim offered a direct challenge to Clement Greenberg's modernist doxa, which prized medium specificity and opticality above all else. Art's meaning, for Antin, was made less of materials than it was the surrounding social world.[40]

A photograph from 1973 by Fred Lonidier offers an example of Antin's relating in action (fig. 4). Outfitted in a black turtleneck and sports coat, Antin stands talking on the phone in his office in front of Roy Lichtenstein's screenprint *Sweet Dreams, Baby!* from 1966. The male comic-book character's head collapses in the work's bottom right-hand corner while a clenched fist swings upward toward the top. Meanwhile, Antin's left arm, outstretched, gives the impression that the print is in motion while the tail of the speech balloon containing the titular caption is pointed at Antin's mouth, hinging together representation and the real. Antin is not only connected to the print but extends it, wiring and relating it to the world through the technology of the phone.

Antin's relating also took more immediate forms. A photograph from Antin's talk "Figures of Thought or Figures of Thinking" at San Francisco's 80 Langton Street in 1978 conveys the intimacy of Antin's talking, as he stands close to his audience, a term whose etymology, with its roots in auditory processes, seems particularly important here (figs. 5a, 5b). Much in the manner of the happenings of the 1960s, the hard line between

FIG. 4. — Fred Lonidier (American, b. 1942). Photograph of David Antin, 1973. Courtesy the artist.



FIGS. 5A, 5B. — Postcard, front and back, of David Antin delivering the talk "Figures of Thought or Figures of Thinking," 80 Langton Street, San Francisco, California, 13 May 1978.

spectators and performer breaks down, with the two sides of the equation joining together in a group. People sit on the floor and smoke amid scattered beer cans; posters and fliers are pinned to the wall. One might say the audience is on view, or that Antin, who is seen from behind in the photograph, belongs to the audience, and the bodies around him catalyze his performance. Here is a private-public sphere—what used to be called an alternative space—and everything and everyone in attendance helps give it shape.[41] It is interesting to compare the emphasis on liveness with the stillness of the cover of the tenth anniversary issue of *Artforum*, which features a photograph of the magazine's barren office, chairs empty and desks piled with books and phones (see fig. 1). Each image offers its own model of textual production, and while both are technologized—tape recording is crucial to Antin's work—the latter lacks the embodiment of Antin's pedagogical performances. Critic Lytle Shaw has used the term *narrowcast* (as opposed to *broadcast*) to describe a tendency in New American Poetry that emphasized "intimate, corporeal space," or "microspace," so as to position itself against the universalizing "anywhere" tendencies of mainstream media.[42] Antin may have created a kind of narrowcast criticism.

critic

Others were arriving at similar conclusions about the possibilities for criticism during this time. In 1966, artist Les Levine made a video called *Critic*, which recorded thirteen members of New York's critical establishment speaking about their work for two minutes apiece (fig. 6). "My point was that criticism and art are different things," Levine said in an interview. "Reading criticism is a completely different experience from dealing with art."[43] One can, however, also draw the opposite conclusion from Levine's work: by making the talking of critics the content of his art, Levine suggested that art comprises language. The critics share a range of ideas in the video, but Kozloff makes a particularly important point about what one might call, after Rosenberg, the de-definition of roles in the art world, which also speaks to Antin's notion of painting relators. "I'm very much impressed by a curious situation that one sees more and more in the art world these days, the art world in New York," Kozloff says.

> You might summarize it by saying that it's a shifting of roles in which traditional categories of activity or professional behavior of people whose identity seemed secure enough in the past no longer really obtains. . . . In a sense I suppose this does belong to what's coming to be called the McLuhan age, in which the fantastic media mix of what were previously separate arts goes on at an ever-increasing and uncanny rate of speed, an acceleration puzzling to view.[44]

Impressed is a funny word for Kozloff to use, for he seems concerned by the so-called McLuhan age, which is characterized by not only a return to acoustics and orality but also a post-medium situation that parallels the breakdown of strictly defined roles. Needless to say, this new art-world formation challenged the possibility of critical distance, and Antin consciously acknowledged this by working within the maelstrom. In a vignette included in his second book, *talking at the boundaries* (fig. 7), Antin tells a story about a conversation he had with Kozloff and the fact that Kozloff saw Antin's position as part of the problem:

> on my way down madison avenue i ran into max
>
> kozloff who i hadn't seen for over a year and since it was
>
> about one oclock we went into one of those steak-n-brew
>
> places to sit and talk over lunch max who is one
>
> of the most serious art critics i know was concerned
>
> about the way my new work was going he was afraid
>
> that by putting my critical concerns in an art context and
>
> "becoming an artist" i was going to lose any chance i had

FIG. 6. — Les Levine (Irish, b. 1935). Photographs shot from the video version of *Critic*, 1966. Courtesy the artist.

to have a serious effect on peoples minds he was

more familiar with my art critical writing than with my poetry

and hed recently published one of the talk-pieces in *art*

forum so he may have had a better chance to collect feed-

back but what bothered him most was that the usual

effect of estheticizing a discourse was to neutralize it

and i agreed that this was a danger[45]

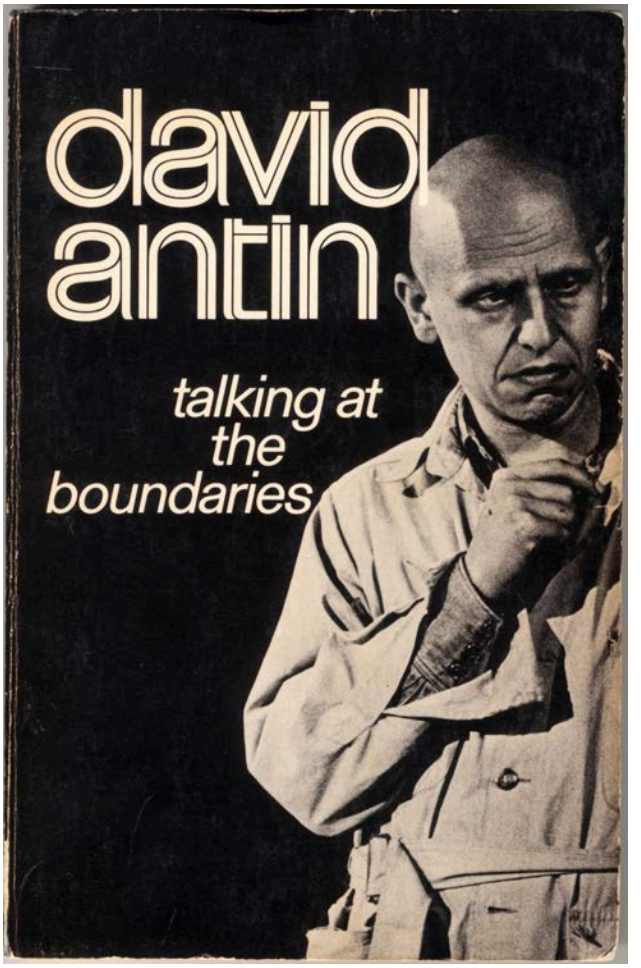


FIG. 7. — Cover of David Antin, *talking at the boundaries* (New York: New Directions, 1976).

Antin is a real-life example of shifting roles in the art world, and by "becoming an artist," Antin—for Kozloff at least—necessarily forfeited critical distance.[46] For Kozloff, when critics stepped outside their roles, or blurred them, criticism lost its bite. Critical points, made in the wrong way, risked losing "serious effect."

Despite his differences with Kozloff, Antin found common cause with other critics. In fact, Antin's text "talking at pomona" shares much with Alloway's essay in the anniversary issue of *Artforum*. In "Network: The Art World Described as a System," Alloway makes claims virtually identical to what Kozloff described some six years before about the shifting of roles and what Antin chronicles about painting relators, but Alloway values them differently:

> Art historians prepare catalogues raisonnés of living artists, so that organization of data is more or less level with their occurrence. Critics serve as guest curators and curators write art criticism. The retrospectives of de Kooning and Newman at the Museum of Modern Art were both arranged by the editor of *Art News*, Thomas

B. Hess. (A crossover in the opposite direction was made by John Coplans, former curator of Pasadena Art Museum and now editor of the magazine.) William Rubin, a curator at the same museum wrote a monograph on Frank Stella; he is also a collector and lent a Newman to the retrospective. In ten years I have been a curator, a teacher and an art critic, usually two at a time. The roles within the system, therefore, do not restrict mobility; the participants can move functionally within a cooperative system. Collectors back galleries and influence museums by acting as trustees or by making donations; or a collector may act as a shop window for a gallery by accepting a package collection from one dealer or one adviser. All of us are looped together in a new and unsettling connectivity.[47]

In other words, everyone is now a painting relator, and while Alloway finds this unsettling, true to his pop art roots, he believes that one must work within the situation, which he rather generously describes as a "cooperative system." Although Alloway and Antin agree on this point—Antin also sees the art world as a network, though he favored terms such as *arena, art world,* and *live discourse*—the difference between their views is important, and it falls largely along formal lines. To put it bluntly, Antin invents a critical form, talking, which both delineates and extends the shape of the art world, whereas Alloway leaves historical models of criticism in place. Talking, for Antin, is the default medium of art's network. Chatting, dealing, gossiping, and rumoring are some the most common ways of disseminating information, and, given the fact that information was now art's primary material, talking had a new claim on criticism too.

talking place

The thing about talking is that it can happen anywhere; it only requires one or more individuals to do it. On the one hand, talking's mobility and openness enable discourses to expand beyond institutional structures; on the other, the mercurial nature of talking can lead disciplines to lose their shape (which is Kozloff's fear). Either way, Antin realized that as the audience for criticism changed from the public to something like community, criticism had to change in step with it. As his anecdote on painting relators suggests, critics, artists, and hustlers/dealers not only get closer in this new formation but also become more alike. The epigraph in *Talking* captures a real curiosity about what might come next: "If someone came up started talking / a poem at you how would you know it / was a poem?"[48] This is a genuine question—how and when does something become legible to a discipline? Talking out of bounds might lead to a loss of recognition, and yet, language binds people and fields together. Language ties art to a world, Antin implies—and this was a particularly significant claim to make at a moment when art's visual coherency was giving way to a pluralism of media, styles, and ideas. Talking would be the new glue holding the field of art together, not only because it opened up the possibility of dialogue and conversation but because it privileged presence over the page.[49] While Antin extended the avant-garde project of tying art ever more closely to life—"it is possible to construct make our art out of something more meaningful than

the arbitrary rules of knot making out of the character of human experience in our world," he says at the end of "talking at pomona"—he spoke and published in almost exclusively institutional spaces, while adamantly addressing his work to colleagues and friends. For Antin, the institution was intimate. "Nobody knows who the public is or what it wants or needs. Or whether it should be considered singular or plural," Antin notes in a late essay.[50] When Antin attended to the institutional identities of the contexts in which he worked, he carved out a kind of embodied space that refused both the inward turn of privacy and the abstraction of the public. If Antin worked at the boundaries of art, he delimited them at the same time, and it is significant that almost all his talks resulted from invitations.[51] He rarely talked on his own accord. In Antin's vision, art, artist, and institution are inextricable from one another, bound together by language.

While talking offered a fitting form for criticism as the art world took on a new shape in the 1970s, as interdisciplinarity swelled, medium specificity fell away, and art lost its relation to the public, one cannot help but note that few followed Antin's example. For all the claims I have made for his horizontality—the way that his talking both comes from the self and centers a social world, and shows the self to be social in turn—and for all the claims I have made for what must be called Antin's postmodernism—the way that his criticism is both sited and site-specific—there is something deeply modernist about his endeavor.[52] For, ultimately, what else did he do but make criticism new? And as is the case with all modernist newness, Antin got there by tapping into something ancient and outside. Antin revealed a possibility for criticism by rescaling it, living it, and thinking it out loud, but he also made it impossible for others to use his invention as a model. Talking belongs to Antin, and others who follow his lead would only be derivative. And so, while Antin's talking glimmered with possibility, while it shook free all the ossifications that had barnacled themselves on criticism, it throws back the question of what criticism might look like today. To say that others didn't follow in his footsteps is not to lament the fact but simply to wonder how else one might make criticism anew. "Fools lament the decay of criticism," Walter Benjamin wrote in his meditation "One-Way Street," and Antin was no fool—there's no wistfulness in his project, only a genuine desire to find a form that fit his moment.[53] Antin wanted to do something consequential; he was not averse to judgment. "In mathematics it is well known that anybody can devise and prove a proposition, but the problem is to devise propositions that have profound consequences that reverberate throughout the entire system," Antin wrote in his second installment for *Kulchur*'s Art Chronicle, which pointed out the foibles of contemporary critics, and in a way this foretold his entire critical project: to propose a new model for a new system.[54]

postscript?

I hope I've made it clear that I'm not advocating for a return to talking some fifty years later. Antin's criticism grew out of a recognition of the structural conditions

of his moment: Criticism's audience was changing; it demanded something different, and Antin's intervention, however short-lived, provided a generative response to this moment of crisis and transition. By the late 1980s, Antin had become somewhat bitter—he refused to publish in the big art magazines so as not to pad artist CVs—but in the early 1970s, his talking had fulfilled some need, and it made certain behaviors, structures, and tendencies transparent, thus lending criticism, for a brief moment, some newfound relevance.[55] But, of course, not all forms are relevant for all times. We may look back at the intimacy and community of Antin's moment with some nostalgia, aware that that such qualities are no longer available in our ever more global, digitalized world, and demand some other form or language to bind our networks together.

Artist and writer Gregg Bordowitz has studied Antin closely, and his series of lecture-performances *Testing Some Beliefs*, staged in 2011 and 2012, apply something of Antin's method to new ends (fig. 8).[56] Where Antin is often virtuosic—he always lands the plane, so to speak—Bordowitz toys with the possibility of the crash. Indeed, in the worst know-it-all moments of Antin's performances, he veers into the domineering territory of patronizing his audience, whereas Bordowitz gets overheated and forgets things. In the *Testing* performances, Bordowitz offers impromptu monologues about various beliefs that he holds, and the audience is key to his testing of ideas. In spaces filled with friends and colleagues, Bordowitz bounces his beliefs off those in front of him, exposing them to skepticism and doubt. The act furnishes the value of the live audience: talking in public is different from writing in private. *Testing* is immediate, visceral, personal, and sensible. Facial expressions and nods from members of the audience might encourage the speaker to proceed or else to pursue different lines of thought. Testing is also a type of criticism, or at least it suggests something about the critical impulse. The work of criticism is not simply to judge artworks but also to use artworks to test one's own suppositions, values, and beliefs.

The relevance of Antin's work today might have something to do with its relationship to testing. So much contemporary criticism, even mundane, transpires outside traditional domains such as the journal and the newspaper, surfacing instead as critical energies applied to personal blogs, Substack content, social media, and even Yelp reviews. Posted and reposted conversations slink around and occasionally gel, or gather and lose steam—but it is often every critic for themself, and the reader's task is to follow the scent. In a sense, there has never been so much criticism, and yet one might also say that there is hardly any criticism at all, with very little audience today, in terms of a stable, coherent entity, and perhaps even less of a sense of address. That said, criticism is found in unlikely places. Tagging might be our talking. Hashtags scatter code words for searchers. The asperand is all. The historian in me accepts this while my inner, old-fashioned critic, tied to midcentury mores, bridles. Antin's lesson, I think, is not purely to find a form appropriate to one's moment—although that is key—but also to see that criticism can't go it alone; it can't happen just anywhere. Criticism needs structures to sustain it. It needs places and worlds, whether that be the museum, the poetry project, the magazine, or the conference. Put differently, it matters both where

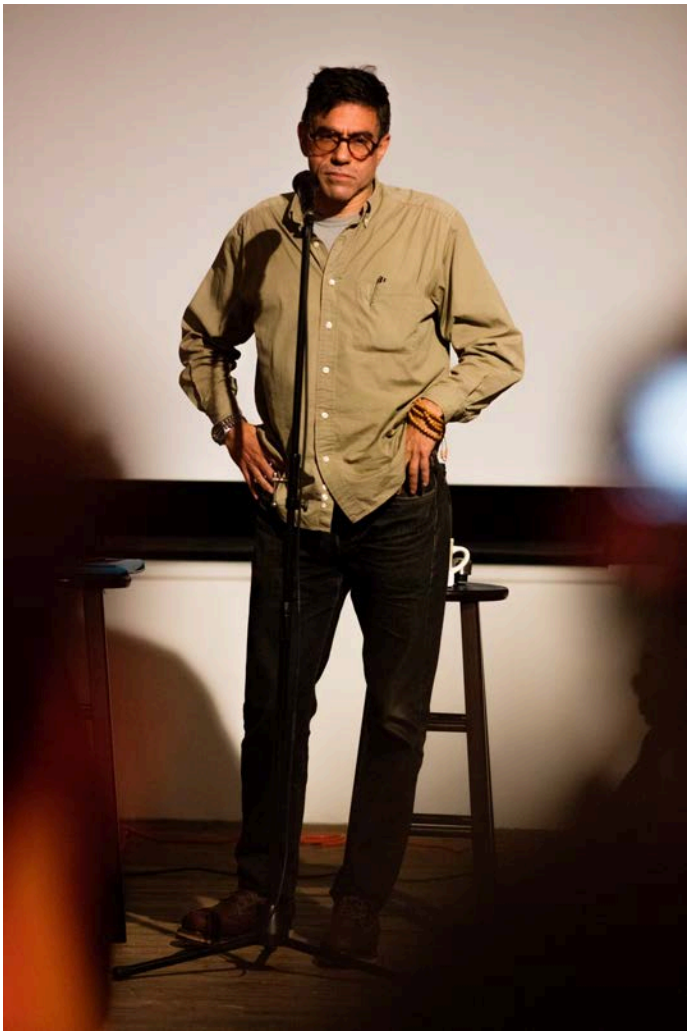


FIG. 8. — Gregg Bordowitz delivering improvised talk piece at Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York, 2019. Photo by Oto Gillen. Courtesy the artist.

and to whom one is talking. Many understand this: a tagline for Documenta 15 in 2022 was "hanging out, telling stories," an Antinian turn of phrase to be sure. Of course, this presents a conundrum for a digital world, but the attempts to organize and situate ourselves in relation to it, and to braid together the digital and the physical spheres, must be part of any critical project today. The MFA program, the masthead, and the museum—with all the problems of gatekeeping they might possess—should play an active part in sustaining critical dialogue.

The public might have had its day—born in coffeehouses and riddled with exclusions, it was always a fiction. It's hard for me to say this, because its broad sweep and dream of coherence still has a powerful appeal. The clique, coterie, and community, with their varying degrees of boundedness, have their problems. There's the cohort, but that sounds too statistical. I'm not sure how I feel about the mass or swarm—too

irrational, electric. I am trying to find another word that might break and rearrange the ranks of identity and class, a word or phrase that might help construct an audience. I keep drifting toward *interested parties*. It has a glimmer of festivity and a touch of political organization. Perhaps it is a way of building up to something like a public, little by little, rather than taking its existence for granted as something already there and in place.

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Notes

I talked to many wonderful people while working on this essay, including Charles Bernstein, Ann Lauterbach, and Robert Slifkin.

Epigraph: letter dated 27 May 1976, sent from David Antin to Leo Steinberg for a panel held on "The Goals of Criticism" at the College Art Association annual conference in Los Angeles in February 1977. David Antin papers, 1956–2006, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (GRI), 2008.M.56, box 27, folder 10. Emphasis mine.

1. David Antin, "A Few Words," *Selected Poems: 1963–1973* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon, 1991), 13–14. Antin's early books include *Definitions* ([New York]: Caterpillar, 1967); *Code of Flag Behavior* (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow, 1968); and *Meditations* (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow, 1971).

2. David Antin, "Grey Paint: Robert Morris," *Art News*, April 1966, 22.

3. *New American Poetry Circuit* (San Francisco: New American Poetry Circuit, 1970), n.p. Antin described his entrance into art criticism on a few occasions. Another time he wrote, "[Nicolas Calas] suggested I do a piece of criticism in which I criticize the critics. And I did. Two of them for *Kulchur*, the magazine edited by Lita Hornick. And Lita said go out and do it, so I simply examined the assumptions of a number of well known critics from a more or less logical or commonsense point of view and watched them crumble. Later I went on to try to propose a 'sensible' or 'straightforward' way of talking about art in a couple of articles for *Art News*, which I merely offered as examples. That was the beginning." Barry Alpert, "David Antin—An Interview," *VORT* 3, no. 1 (1975): 25. Note that Antin refers to his work in these early articles as talking.

4. For a full tally of Antin's art criticism, see Stephen Cope, "A David Antin Checklist," *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 182–85.

5. Antin took over *Kulchur*'s column Art Chronicle from poet Frank O'Hara shortly before O'Hara's death in July 1966.

6. Sherman Paul, ed., *In Search of the Primitive: Rereading David Antin, Jerome Rothenberg and Gary Snyder* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 4.

7. Lita Hornick, *David Antin / Debunker of the "Real"* (New York: Swollen Magpie, 1979), 14. Hornick is paraphrasing Antin in David Antin, "what am i doing here?," in *talking at the boundaries* (New York: New Directions, 1976), 4.

8. Michael Davidson, "Technologies of Presence: Orality and the Tapevoice of Contemporary Poetics," chap. 7 in *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 196.

9. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 3. The epigraph to this section is from Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 53.

10. Davidson, "Technologies of Presence," 199. In a letter dated 25 September 1973 to *boundary 2* editor Robert Kroetsch, fellow editor William Spanos makes a similar point. Antin's work, he writes, "*reverberates* with echoes of the past (the oral poetry of Homer, Plato's *Dialogues*, and the peripatetic poet-philosophers, the whole Parry and Lord *Singer of Tales* context) and is at the same time utterly *situated* in the present: McLuhan, the French *parole* vs. *ecriture* debate, Heideggerian phenomenology, and, of course, the whole thrust of American poetry towards oral 'composition.'" David Antin, William V. Spanos,

and Robert Kroetsch, "A Correspondence with the Editors," *boundary 2: a journal of postmodern literature* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1975): 602. Emphases in original.

11. Jerome Rothenberg, ed., *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia, and Oceania* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), xxiii. Rothenberg notes that "the present collection grew directly out of a pair of 1964 readings of 'primitive and archaic poetry' at The Poet's Hardware Theater & The Café Metro in New York. Working with me on those were the poets David Antin, Jackson Mac Low, & Rochelle Owens." Rothenberg, preface to *Technicians of the Sacred*, xxv.

12. See Jill Johnston, *Marmalade Me* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971), which collects much of the work Johnston published in the *Village Voice*. One might also consider the talking-head criticism John Berger offered in his BBC broadcast *Ways of Seeing* in 1972.

13. See Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text,* nos. 25/26 (1990): 56–80.

14. Describing Antin's talk piece "talking at pomona" in his essay of 1974, artist Allan Kaprow notes, "David Antin was asked to give a lecture on art. He talked impromptu and recorded what he said on tape. The tape was transcribed, and all breath stops and phrases were indicated by spaces left in the lines of print. The transcript was published first as an article in an art magazine and subsequently as a poem in a book of his recent works. But when read silently or aloud, it was just like David Antin was speaking normally." Allan Kaprow, "Education of the Un-Artist, Part III," in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 146–47. Antin and Kaprow were colleagues for many years at the University of California at San Diego.

15. There are a couple of early examples of Antin's work appearing on vinyl, such as his reading of "The Black Plague" on the anthology *Poems for Peace*. David Antin, "From 'The Black Plague,'" track A6 on *Poems for Peace: A Benefit Reading for the New York Workshop in Nonviolence at St. Mark's Church in the Bouwerie,* LP, 1967, Broadside Records BR465. He also released two cassettes in his career: *The Principle of Fit* (1980) and *the archaeology of home* (1987).

16. Davidson, "Technologies of Presence," 208. Antin himself notes, "im an old new Yorker as youll probably recognize from my accent." Antin, "is this the right place?," *talking at the boundaries*, 27.

17. Alpert, "David Antin—An Interview," 27. Antin continues, "And usually these 'talks' were addressed—not only *to* people, but also *toward*—a domain. That people called art." Alpert, 28. Emphases in original.

18. Antin's printed talks, Davidson notes, are "in no sense a replica of the talk itself. Antin freely edits and modifies the talk so that it becomes a representation, not a mimesis, of speech." Davidson, "Technologies of Presence," 208.

19. Antin, letter to Sherman Paul, 14 October 1981, quoted in Paul, *In Search of the Primitive,* 69. Antin notes that "the first really clear talk poem came in late 1970, when I was invited by Dore Ashton to be part of a series of speculative lectures to be given at Cooper Union," though, for a variety of reasons, Antin's piece was never published. An excerpt of "talking at pomona" appeared in *Alcheringa: A Journal of Ethnopoetics,* no. 4 (Autumn 1972): 42–44, and it was included as the final piece in Antin's book *Talking*, published by Hornick's Kulchur Foundation in 1972.

20. This story appears in a number of places, including Marjorie Perloff's introduction to the new edition of Antin's *Talking* (Dallas: Dalkey Archive, 2001). See also Antin quoted in Paul, *In Search of the Primitive,* 69. Eleanor Antin was working on her photoconceptual work *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* at the time, which was also engaged with gerunds and process. The original audio of Antin's talk at Pomona, a little over an hour long, is available online: GRI, Selected audio and video recordings from the David Antin papers, C6, http://hdl.handle.net/10020/2008m56av.

21. Antin, Spanos, and Kroetsch, "Correspondence with the Editors," 620.

22. See Andy Warhol, *a: a novel* (New York: Grove, 1968). Antin mentions Warhol's "taped novel" in his 1966 article on the artist, although *a* wouldn't be released until two years later. David Antin, "Warhol: The Silver Tenement," in *Radical Coherency: Selected Essays on Art and Literature, 1966 to 2005*, by David Antin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 21.

23. See Peggy Gale, ed., *Artists Talk, 1969–1977* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 2004).

24. Dedication in *Artforum* 11, no. 1 (September 1972).

25. See Rebecca McGrew and Glenn Phillips with Marie Shurkus, eds., *It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles, 1969–1973*, exh. cat.

(Claremont, CA: Pomona College Museum of Art, 2011).

26. John Coplans to David Antin, 2 June 1972, David Antin papers, GRI, 2008.M.56, box 15, folder 34.

27. "I really didn't know what it was those students needed to hear," Antin later said. "So I decided I wouldn't prepare anything to talk about before I got there. I was scheduled to meet some of the students and look at their work." Alpert, "David Antin—An Interview," 27.

28. Rosalind Krauss, "A View of Modernism," *Artforum* 11, no. 1 (September 1972): 51. Reprinted in Rosalind Krauss, *Perpetual Inventory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 115–28.

29. See David Antin, "what am i doing here?," in *talking at the boundaries*, 23–24.

30. Antin, Spanos, and Kroetsch, "Correspondence with the Editors," 616.

31. Theodor W. Adorno, "Punctuation Marks," in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 1, trans. Sherry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 91.

32. Susan Sontag, "The Aesthetics of Silence,"in *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969), 28.

33. Ideally, this was the case—and "talking at pomona" appears this way in Antin's book *Talking* (New York: Kulchur Foundation, 1972). In *Artforum,* the text conforms to the periodical's columnar structure and is justified on the left.

34. Cage's work was important for Antin, especially his "Lecture on Nothing." For Antin on Cage, see Antin, "john cage uncaged is still cagey," [1989–2005] in Antin, *Radical Coherency*, 331–43. See also Marjorie Perloff, "'No More Margins': John Cage, David Antin, and the Poetry of Performance," in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 288–339.

35. Antin, "talking at pomona," in *Talking,* 174, 175.

36. Antin, "talking at pomona," in *Talking,* 177.

37. Antin, "talking at pomona," in *Talking*, 147.

38. Antin was one of six critics asked by dealer and curator Seth Siegelaub to select six artists for a conceptual exhibition organized by Siegelaub within the pages of *Studio International* in 1970 (vol. 180, no. 924). Antin chose Dan Graham, Harold Cohen, John Baldessari, Richard Serra, Eleanor Antin, Fred Lonidier, George Nicolaidis, and Keith Sonnier.

39. Antin, "talking at pomona," in *Talking*, 171.

40. A line from Johnston comes to mind: "I like to think of the critic as a corporate sensibility," she writes. "Ideally the critic would be a transparent medium giving off vapors of ideas and opinions constantly passing through the body from street to concert to cocktail party." Jill Johnston, "To Whom It May Concern," in *Marmalade Me*, 154.

41. Antin titled a later book of talk poems *Tuning*, a term that speaks to the situational tactics he used to make his work—the process of syncing his voice, body, and thoughts to a given space and audience. This is not to say that Antin's work created peaceful unions or that he preached to the choir—it can be surprising to hear the damning things he has to say about close acquaintances and colleagues—or even that he was trying to garner shared understanding, but rather that he intervened in particular situations.

42. Lytle Shaw, *Narrowcast: Poetry and Audio Research* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), 3.

43. Les Levine, quoted in Elayne Varian, "Schemata 7," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968), 369.

44. For Kozloff's words, see the transcription of Levine's video, *Les Levine: Critic, 1966* (New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 2020), n.p.

45. Antin, *talking at the boundaries* (New York: New Directions, 1974), 51.

46. Antin was included as an artist in *Software: Information Technology: Its New Meaning for Art*, an exhibition curated by Jack Burnham in 1970 at the Jewish Museum in New York. Antin also appeared in the tenth issue of *Art-Rite* (Fall 1975) on performance. See also David Antin et al., *Dialogue-Discourse-Research*, exh. cat. (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1979); and Annina Nosei Weber, ed., *Discussion* (New York: Out of London, 1980).

47. Lawrence Alloway, "Network: The Art World Described as a System," *Artforum* 11, no. 1 (September 1972): 29. Reprinted in Lawrence Alloway, *Network: Art and the Complex Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984), 3–15.

48. Antin, epigraph in *Talking*.

49. See Cindy Nemser, *Art Talk: Conversations with 12 Women Artists* (New York: Scribner, 1975) for one example of the new prominence of talk at this moment, and perhaps as a counterpoint to other forms of discourse. Significantly, Eleanor Antin is one of the artists interviewed in Nemser's book.

50. David Antin, "Fine Furs," in Antin, *Radical Coherency*, 302.

51. "since these works could not have been realized without the kind invitations of many people at many institutions this book is dedicated to them." Antin, dedication in *talking at the boundaries*, n.p.

52. Antin's name appears in a section titled "Post Modernism as Participatory Environment" in Maurice R. Stein and Larry Miller, *Blueprint for Counter Education* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), n.p.

53. Walter Benjamin, "One-Way Street," in *Reflections,* ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1986), 85.

54. David Antin, "Arabian Chess," Art Chronicle, *Kulchur* 20 (Winter 1965–66): 80. Antin ends this text—as he would later do in "talking at pomona"—with reflections on chess-like games.

55. For Antin's withdrawal from publishing criticism, see his unpublished talk "Criticism as Madness or Liberation from Madness," 1987, GRI, Selected audio and video recordings from the David Antin papers, C176, http://hdl.handle.net/10020/2008m56av.

56. See Gregg Bordowitz, "Testing Some Beliefs," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, MOCAtv, 21 December 2012, YouTube video, 12:44, https://youtu.be/RrlxtFuVWEs?si=FaHYGRMJyq731YP2.

Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs: The Limited-Edition Portfolio and the Market for Photographic Prints in the United States

Audrey Sands

"I have no prints. There is nothing," declared photographer Lisette Model in the summer of 1975. She was sitting at the café in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, across the table from Gerd Sander, established professional printer and grandson of German photographer August Sander. Having recently moved to the United States to open an art gallery in Washington, DC, Gerd Sander had just told Model of his hopes to open his gallery with a monographic exhibition of her work, which would be her first solo gallery exhibition of works for sale. Model was keen but insisted, "there is no work."[1]

The problem was not that she truly lacked prints. Rather, what she did have was more akin to artifacts—the remnants of a process whose end goal was photomechanical reproduction on magazine pages or custom sizes for temporary display at places such as public libraries, camera clubs, photography-equipment stores, or didactic and advertising spaces like Eastman Kodak Company's Colorama display on the eastern balcony inside New York City's Grand Central Terminal. In Model's possession, by contrast, were eight-by-ten-inch proof prints made in the 1930s–1950s, which she considered unfit for exhibition, and even less fit for sale; these were things she kept bundled in boxes under her bed or stuffed in the closets of her modest West Village basement apartment. The prints were not aligned with 1970s standards for objects of fine art.

Like many photographers, Model's assignment work dwindled in the 1950s with the decline of illustrated magazines in the US such as *Life* and *Look*, so she ceased making commercial work and paid her rent through teaching. Between 1951 and her death in 1983, Model was on staff at the New School for Social Research and taught privately. Although she maintained an active artistic practice during this time, producing her extensive jazz series and photographs of Italy and Venezuela, very little of the work from this period was published or sold.[2] Model was a household name in the photography scene, an iconic figure; she was a former member of the Photo League,

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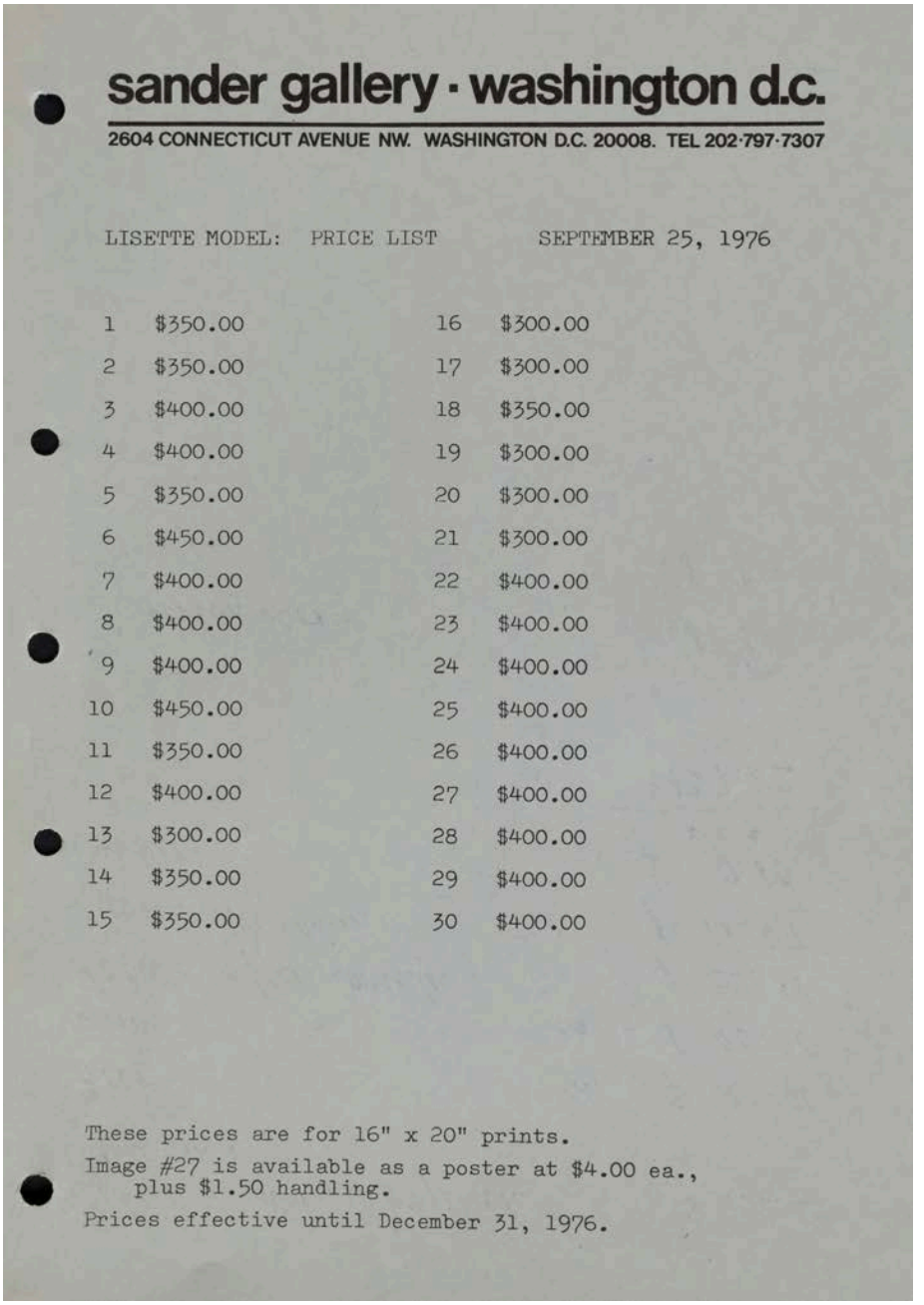
a frequent exhibitor at MoMA, and the erstwhile private teacher and confidante of the recently deceased photographer Diane Arbus. Model's work was included in photography trade journals and museum surveys, and her perspective was invited at convenings and symposia.[3] She was, by any measure, one of the great photographic artists of her time. And yet, as a magazine photographer turned teacher who had grown her career at a time when there was no defined market for photographs, the notion that she might have some reserve of collectible prints was not in keeping with contemporary practices in which prints were made for magazine reproduction or exhibition.

Model's predicament was typical of that of many magazine photographers, or any photographer who had worked for hire but was now being promoted to the inchoate art market for photography in the 1970s. For Model in particular, the print had never been precious; through the 1960s, prints rarely sold, and when they did, prices were usually not more than $15 to $50—a minimal gain from the labor and expense of printing.[4]

Following their meeting, Model delivered negatives to Sander, who, from his home darkroom, printed them to her precise specifications. In September 1976, Sander Gallery opened with a show of thirty of Model's photographs, priced between $300 and $400 apiece for sixteen-by-twenty-inch prints (figs. 1, 2). According to an unsigned review in *Aperture,* with the exhibition, "Lisette Model reemerged from legend to the visibility of the gallery wall and the scrutiny of the public eye."[5] The review commends the fact that, finally, "Model's work is being printed, exhibited, and published. The old negatives . . . came out of storage and Sander carried them to Washington. There he began to print as Model directed, 'strong and closed.'" Model's satisfied response to Sander's work is quoted: "The prints are so much myself. They were a miraculous kind of thing."[6]

FIG. 1. — Gerd Sander at the opening of *Lisette Model Photographs* (25 September–30 October 1976), Sander Gallery, Washington, DC, September 1976. Photographer unknown. Cologne, Germany, August Sander Stiftung. Art © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.



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LISETTE MODEL: PRICE LIST SEPTEMBER 25, 1976

1	$350.00	16	$300.00
2	$350.00	17	$300.00
3	$400.00	18	$350.00
4	$400.00	19	$300.00
5	$350.00	20	$300.00
6	$450.00	21	$300.00
7	$400.00	22	$400.00
8	$400.00	23	$400.00
9	$400.00	24	$400.00
10	$450.00	25	$400.00
11	$350.00	26	$400.00
12	$400.00	27	$400.00
13	$300.00	28	$400.00
14	$350.00	29	$400.00
15	$350.00	30	$400.00

These prices are for 16" x 20" prints.
Image #27 is available as a poster at $4.00 ea., plus $1.50 handling.
Prices effective until December 31, 1976.

FIG. 2. — Price list for works in the exhibition *Lisette Model Photographs*, Sander Gallery, Washington, DC, 25 September 1976. Cologne, Germany, August Sander Stiftung.

Despite broad publicity and positive reviews from art critics, only one work sold.[7] It was an image of *Running Legs* (a series she had begun in the 1940s), which artist Allan Kaprow and his wife, photographer Rachel Vaughan, ordered in a larger, twenty-by-twenty-four-inch size for the price of $500. The print-to-order and price-to-size sales model had been standard for several decades, and while prices had risen considerably

since the 1950s, the days of $25 prints, the general marketing structure remained the same, with exhibitions and catalogs like menus from which buyers might order any number of items for custom printing.

After the show closed at Sander Gallery, fellow Washington, DC–based photography dealer Harry Lunn approached Sander for help with another project to print Model's work.[8] Lunn was a former CIA agent turned dealer of fine-art prints and photography. In 1968, Lunn had opened a graphic arts gallery in the Capitol Hill area of DC that dealt in nineteenth- and twentieth-century prints and drawings. But in January 1971, after seeing the work of Ansel Adams, he began selling photographs marked by an inaugural exhibition of Adams's *Portfolio V*.[9] Quickly establishing himself as a groundbreaking photography dealer whose impact on the market is still felt today, Lunn made $10,000 in sales from this first show alone. In the early 1970s, he purchased inventories of thousands of prints from the archives of Lewis Hine, Walker Evans, Adams, and Robert Frank; he co-acquired, with Marlborough Gallery, the entire set of prints Berenice Abbott had made from Eugène Atget's negatives, as well as Abbott's own work; and he came to exclusively represent Brassaï and the estate of Arbus.[10] Lunn's proposed project was a limited-edition, collectible boxed-set portfolio of works by Arbus's friend and teacher, Lisette Model.

Custom-printed for this purpose, the portfolio, titled simply *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*, contained a selection of signed images that Model had made in the 1930s and 1940s, printed uniformly at sixteen by twenty inches.[11] Master printer Richard Benson, who had printed for Paul Strand, Evans, and others, started production, but Model was unhappy with the prints, so Lunn asked Sander to take over.[12] The portfolio was presented loose in a custom-designed, silk-covered case and issued in a limited edition of seventy-five identical sets, plus fifteen artist proofs, each numbered (fig. 3). Fixing or "limiting" the edition meant that, after the portfolio, no further prints would be created from those negatives. This was a significant break from the order-fulfillment model. The portfolio, Lunn projected, would produce a new kind of collectability for Model.

The challenge for Lunn was how to position a magazine photographer without salable prints as a collectible artist. In 1956, pioneering photography dealer Helen Gee had sold a nineteen-by-fifteen-inch print of Model's photograph *Woman with Veil, San Francisco,* of 1949, printed sometime between 1949 and 1956, for $25.75 at Limelight Gallery to US American arts patron and women's rights advocate Dorothy Meigs Eidlitz (fig. 4).[13] In 2007, by contrast, a print of that same photograph, described as vintage, sold at auction at Christie's London for £31,200 ($61,818)—more than three times the estimate, surpassing any previous price for a print by Model.[14] The vintage print, whose lower contrast and slighter dimensions Model advocated moving away from in the 1970s, would become prized by collectors. Model's work gained exponential value as the twentieth-century art market evolved.

In the following pages, I argue that the invention of the limited-edition portfolio played a fundamental role in the marketability of Model's photography and, more

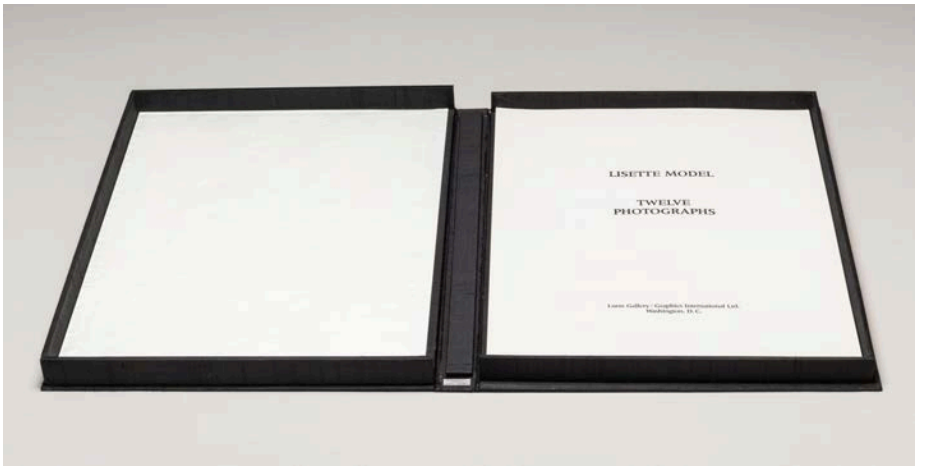


FIG. 3. — ***Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*** **(Washington, DC: Graphics International, 1976).** Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 2002.152.9–20. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Ruttenberg, courtesy of the Ruttenberg Arts Foundation. © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

broadly, the rise of the photographic art market in the United States. Using Model as a case study to address the question of how a market was created for photographs, I will review some early attempts to market photography in the United States prior to the 1970s, when the print-to-order model dominated; discuss the production and circulation of photographs in magazine and museum contexts in this period; and consider theoretical models on the nature of the commodity that link notions of collectability and desire to the perception of scarcity. Two fundamental and concurrent interventions, modeled by Sander and Lunn respectively, transformed the US photography market, helping it to effloresce ahead of markets in Europe and other locations: first, modern printing—that is, later printing from original negatives for the express purpose of sale; and second, the creation of rarity, or the limitation of what flowed into the market. In what follows, I present the distinct roles Sander and Lunn played in reshaping Model as a salable artist as well as their broader impacts on the photography market, particularly the rise of the limited-edition portfolio. Ultimately, and ironically, although the production and sale of portfolios was intended to build a market for photographic prints—which it did—what came to be known as "vintage prints," those that had been produced for noncollecting purposes and showed signs of age and wear, became the most sought-after, costly items; these were the very same objects that Model had considered unfit for exhibition.

The astronomical ascent of photography as a collectible art form in museums and private collections in the last fifty years, reflected in the climbing prices achieved at auction, is a subject of increasing scholarly interest. Today, the so-called photo boom of the 1970s is a dense and growing area of literature in the field, yet the history of limited-edition photography portfolios has yet to be situated in its broader impact on the market. As the market for photographs dramatically expanded, pioneering

FIG. 4. — Lisette Model (US American, b. Austria, 1901–83). *Woman with Veil, San Francisco*, 1949, gelatin silver print, 34.9 × 27 cm. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 84.XM.153.13. © Estate of Lisette Model, courtesy Baudoin Lebon / Keitelman.

photography critic A. D. Coleman, whose column Latent Image in the *Village Voice* was published beginning in 1968, offered leading analysis on developments in photography. His writings from this period trace themes and trends such as public funding for the arts, the fugitivity of Polaroids as a problem for their collectability, the reception of color photography by art critics, the hybridization of photography and performance art, and the role of pornography in our understanding and valuation of photography.[15] Coleman only delves occasionally into themes such as editioning; his texts focus on broad cultural

trends without isolating limited-edition portfolios as a subject of inquiry. Art critic Andy Grundberg employs a similarly holistic approach to historicizing the photograph in his book *How Photography Became Contemporary Art: Inside an Artistic Revolution from Pop to the Digital Age* (2021).[16] His broader overview of postwar artistic developments situates the broader acceptance of photography and its shifting artistic status with respect to its increasing presence in and integration as a core component in conceptual and performance practices from the 1970s onward; this focus prioritizes the incorporation of photography into other art forms over practices within historic photographic modes. Alternate perspectives on the photography market have come from other sources. A notable recent overview of its efflorescence and an economic analysis of the photo boom has come from auction-house expert Juliet Hacking, who was a longtime head of the Department of Photographs at Sotheby's in London. Her book *Photography and the Art Market* of 2018 takes up the economics of the art market for photographs from an art-business perspective. While the book addresses editioning and the difference between vintage and modern prints, it doesn't historicize these distinctions.[17] Similarly, Denise Bethel, former chairperson of photographs at Sotheby's, continues to speak and write broadly in this developing area of scholarship.[18]

Most recently, Molly Kalkstein completed her unpublished doctoral dissertation "The Discerning Eye: Creating Value in the 1970s American Market for Photographs," which charts several developments in the US and England between 1969 and 1980 that solidified the status of the photograph within the art and museum worlds. Kalkstein's is the first major study to assess, from an art historical perspective, mechanisms such as editioning and the notion of the "vintage print" in the historic valuation of photographs.[19] Still, with the exception of unpublished writings, there remains a lacuna in the understanding of the crucial role played by portfolios across this period.[20] In this essay, to bridge that gap, I situate and historicize the short-lived heyday of the limited-edition portfolio, the figures behind its careful positioning as a market tool, and the crafting of rarity that underpins the rise, fall, and impact of this briefly dominant trend that pervaded the photography market in the 1970s.

Photography without an Object

Since the invention of photography in the 1830s, practitioners and enthusiasts alike had to fight for the medium to be recognized as art. Yet it was not until the market boom of the 1970s that a solid collector base was finally secured for photography as fine art in the United States. Dealers have been lauded as visionary promoters of the aesthetic value of photographs, yet studies are lacking that describe the precise alchemy by which aesthetic value was translated into market value with economic returns; this was an alchemy that in turn shifted and, in many ways, flattened the at once multiple and overlapping "discursive spaces" of photography that Rosalind Krauss famously theorized.[21]

In the first half of the twentieth century, some prescient art dealers recognized and advocated for the value of photographs. Notable examples were Alfred Stieglitz, Julien Levy, and Gee, each of whom exhibited photographs in their New York City galleries.[22] Although each project brought greater critical attention to the medium, none succeeded in garnering a discrete collector base. In 1905, Stieglitz, famed pioneer and promoter of Pictorialist photography and leader of the Photo-Secession, opened the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession at 291 Fifth Avenue in New York. More commonly known as "291," it introduced the work of photographers alongside modernist paintings and sculptures by international artists Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Auguste Rodin. The fact that photographs failed to sell did not deter Stieglitz, who remained committed to his cause, and from 1925 to 1929 he ran the Intimate Gallery, dedicated exclusively to the promotion of US American art. Finally, in late 1929 he opened a third gallery devoted to US modernism, called An American Place, at 509 Madison Avenue, where he presented monographic shows of work by Paul Strand, Adams, Eliot Porter, and others, again without sales, until his death in 1946.

In the 1930s, Levy, having spent time in Paris among the avant-garde, returned to New York determined to promote surrealism to an American audience.[23] He believed in photography as a central medium of modernism, and when he opened the Julien Levy Gallery in 1931 at 602 Madison Avenue, he showed photographic work by Man Ray, Henri Cartier Bresson, Abbott, and Marcel Duchamp. It was only when this work did not sell that he began to focus broadly on other media, including painting, sculpture, and collage, showing surrealist works by Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, and Joseph Cornell with great success. When his gallery closed in 1949, Levy had amassed a spectacular private collection of photographs that was eventually acquired for the Art Institute of Chicago by photography curator David Travis in 1976.[24]

In 1954, Gee, a former student of Model's, opened Limelight, the first gallery dedicated exclusively to the exhibition and sale of photography in New York.[25] Located in the happening Greenwich Village neighborhood, Limelight was a coffee house and diner with a devoted gallery section in the back. In its six and a half years, Limelight mounted sixty-one exhibitions of photographic work, featuring Abbott's prints from Atget's negatives, the work of Brassaï, Julia Margaret Cameron, László Moholy-Nagy, Stieglitz, Edward Weston, and much more. The financial survival of Limelight, however, was carried by food sales from the café. The photographs, priced between $25 and $75, rarely sold. Although it provided an important exhibition and gathering space for photographers, the project was not viable financially, and Gee ultimately closed the gallery in 1961.

Even at MoMA, the first major institution to collect photographs, museum leaders tried to cultivate enthusiasm for private collecting. In 1951, a decade after the founding of its Photography Department, *A Christmas Sale of Photographs* was staged at MoMA "as an experiment to stimulate interest in the collecting of original photographic prints."[26] Works by Weston, Aaron Siskind, Lotte Jacobi, Frank, and Model were priced at $10 to

$25 each. The organizers of the museum sale promised that works would be custom-printed according to demand. Unfortunately, the sale produced few buyers.

In spite of the increasing recognition by museums, the notion of the photographic print as a privately collectible art form had yet to catch on. Collectors did not perceive photography as an aesthetic or financial investment, for it was entrenched in utilitarian purposes such as advertising and journalism, and its seemingly limitless reproducibility made it appear too easily accessible.[27] Never was that reproducibility more embedded in the photograph's identity than in the mid-twentieth century, a moment when photography's discursive field was driven by the domain of the magazine page; it was rare to find sustainable income as a photographer anywhere else.

The great image engines of New York—*Life*, *Look*, *Fortune*, *Vogue*, and *Harper's Bazaar*—churned out new issues weekly, biweekly, or monthly. The specific process by which a single photograph or set would end up in the hands of millions of readers around the country might vary slightly from periodical to periodical, but in general, a photographer would shoot a subject, develop the film, produce a contact sheet and sample prints, and deliver these to the magazine. An editor would select what they considered to be the best images for a story or spread. These were sent to retouchers, then to a design team for layout, montaging, and integration with text before being shot for transfer to offset lithography plates. Original prints were usually not returned, and if they were, they often had cropping marks, touch-ups, editorial commentary, and stamps all over them.[28] It is easy to understand how prints from this period were stashed away in boxes or lost to the cutting-room floor.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, MoMA employed an in-house photographer to document exhibition installations and to make custom prints for those exhibitions using on-site darkroom facilities.[29] Particularly under the stewardship of former magazine photographer Edward Steichen, who served as director of the Department of Photography at MoMA from 1947–61, photographs were exhibited more for their design and image qualities than for their value as objects, exemplified perhaps most dramatically by the exhibition *Family of Man*.[30] Original negatives or photographers' prints were sent out with orders for poster-size enlargements from Manhattan-based printing companies including Compo-Photocolor and Modern Age, and it was those enlargements that would be installed on gallery walls. In such a print-to-order system, standard for museums at this time, it was difficult to identify a single collectible object.

Theories of Collecting in the Postwar Period

By the late 1960s, at the same moment that the first major photography galleries to anticipate lasting success began to open in New York and Washington, DC, scholars Jean Baudrillard and Timothy Brock were publishing works in the fields of sociology and psychology on the ways in which people value objects. Baudrillard's and Brock's ideas about the nature and status of commodities offer a useful lens for interpreting the actions of gallerists. In his book of 1968, *Le système des objets* (*The System of Objects*), French

sociologist and cultural theorist Baudrillard, who was incidentally also a photographer, argued that collected objects are distinct from ordinary objects based on the nature of their relationship to an owner.[31] When individuals relate to an object through its function, he explains, its status is simply that of a used thing. By contrast, an object can only be regarded as "possessed" once it has been "abstracted from its function and thus brought into relationship with the subject."[32] In a section titled "The Non-Functional System, or Subjective Discourse," in which he devotes a subsection to what he terms "a marginal system: collecting," Baudrillard gives the following example:

> If I use a refrigerator to refrigerate, it is a practical mediation: it is not an object by a refrigerator. And in that sense I do not possess it. A *utensil* is never possessed, because a utensil refers one to the world; what is possessed is always an object *abstracted from its function and thus brought into relationship with the subject*.[33]

When considered in relation to photography, Baudrillard's thesis would imply that for the medium to be perceived as collectible, it would first need to be disentangled from its scientific, editorial, and advertising functions. Photographs had to be redefined, essentially, as useless—as things whose sole purpose is to be owned. In other words, the photograph needed to be converted from a functional image into a functionless object.

Working at the same moment as Baudrillard, Brock, a psychologist, published his formulation of commodity theory in 1968.[34] Brock was interested in psychological responses to scarcity, and in particular how scarcity impacts perceptions of commodity value. His fundamental argument was that scarcity enhances the perceived value, or desirability, of anything that can be possessed. In other words, the more restricted or limited the availability of a good, the more people want it and will be willing to pay for it. A century earlier, economist Adam Smith had articulated a similar observation, writing simply: "The merit of an object, which is in any degree either useful or beautiful, is greatly enhanced by its scarcity."[35] Following Baudrillard, such merit would only be enhanced if an object was both beautiful and useless. Brock's commodity theory adds the implication that by modulating scarcity you could influence behavior. Photography's status as infinitely reproducible was precisely what lay in the way of its desirability as a commodity. In order to redefine the photograph as collectible, it needed to be divested from its function, made scarce, and perceived as rare.

Gerd Sander, Master Printer

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the onus was on the dealers to prove that photography could be a stand-alone object—a print. For many living photographers, particularly those who had primarily worked for magazines, they had no prints to sell. A sudden need for quality prints led in turn to the rise of the master printer.

Gerd Sander was born in 1940 in Cologne, Germany, to a family of photographers. At the age of six, he received his first photography lessons from his grandfather, August Sander, the great German photographer known for his lifelong portraiture project

Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts (*People of the 20th Century*), which documented, indexed, and classified the German population.[36] The family business was darkroom printing. Initially an engine to support August's work, printing operations were run by August's middle child and Gerd's father, Gunther Sander. Gunther eventually established his own commercial darkroom, printing for publicity and advertising companies and making oversize enlargements for trade fairs and film sets. In 1957, at the age of seventeen, Gerd left school to work full time in the darkroom, where he learned how to print to the specifications of varied and demanding clients. After August's death in 1964, Gunther and Gerd continued printing from August's negatives for a variety of purposes, and these posthumous prints can now be found in many museums around the world.[37]

When he moved to Washington, DC, in 1975, Gerd Sander's reputation as a serious printer led him to several printing jobs.[38] He got his first job that year, working with Hungarian émigré photographer André Kertész, then living in New York, who needed help restoring damaged negatives from his series *Distortions* of 1933. Sander meticulously cleaned them and, using Kodak SO-15 direct reversal film, made duplicate negatives from which to print Kertész's book *Distortions* (1976). For a second job, the National Archives in Washington, DC, hired him for a large-scale project to produce quality exhibition prints from their large collection of negatives. And in 1975–76, Sander was hired by Cohn Gallery to make portfolio prints of snapshots by German painter George Grosz taken when he arrived on US shores as an immigrant in 1932.[39] The artist had been deceased for nearly two decades, and all that were left were 35 mm contact sheets. Sander rephotographed these with an eight-by-ten view camera to make new copy negatives and print the editioned set of gelatin silver prints.

The production of modern prints by patient and precise darkroom printers was on the rise, to the great benefit of artists who established continuing relationships with many of them as their dedicated printers. The practice of artists contracting with master printers became so ubiquitous that an entire series of books could be devoted to documenting it. For example, Sid Kaplan became Frank's printer; Lucien Treillard printed for Man Ray; George Tice for Steichen; Benson for Evans; Gus Kayafas for Harold Edgerton; and Alex Jamison for Fredrick Sommer. The Arbus estate gave exclusive printing rights to Neil Selkirk. When Sander approached Model in 1975 about showing her work, he was not expecting to take over her printing too, but it was not an altogether surprising proposition.

Marketable prints for Model would be distinct from prints of her earlier work; for one thing, they would be larger. As early as 1964, Model had already started to reinterpret her own works, updating her approach to printing. That year, she delivered to MoMA a box of six newly made sixteen-by-twenty-inch prints—all larger and more attentively printed duplicates of works the museum had acquired for exhibition during the time when photographs were prized more for their design elements than for their material features. She explained that these were "replacement prints," and asked that they be kept and used instead of the older standard eleven-by-fourteen-inch press prints, which the museum had purchased in the early 1940s for $10–15 apiece (figs. 5,

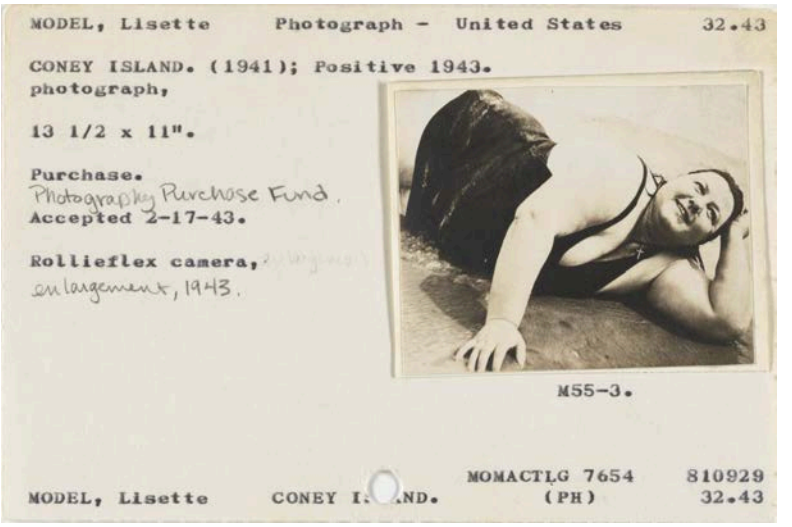


FIG. 5. — Cataloging card for the eleven-by-fourteen-inch print of Lisette Model's *Coney Island* (1941) acquired in 1943 by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 32.1943. Department of Photography files, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Digital Image © 2024 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Art © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

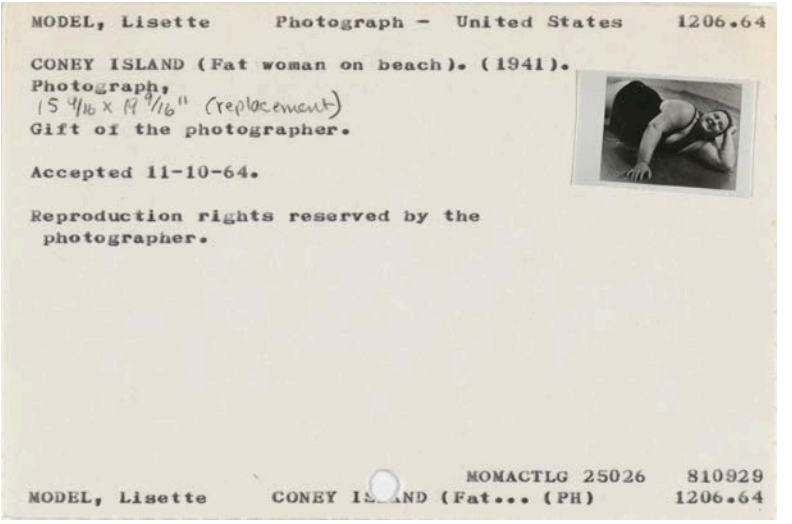


FIG. 6. — Cataloging card for the sixteen-by-twenty-inch replacement print of Lisette Model's *Coney Island* (1941) produced by the artist in 1964 for the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1206.1964. Department of Photography files, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Digital Image © 2024 The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Art © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

6).[40] The replacements from 1964 had clean edges and sharp, precise, ninety-degree corners that suggest the use of a cropping easel.

The core belief that a fine-art print should be distinct from those made originally for other contexts informed the specifications of the prints Model wanted from Sander. In addition to setting the sixteen-by-twenty-inch sheet as her new minimum size,

Model wanted her new prints to have grit and weight. Unlike the flattened, dull tones required for magazine reproduction (a process that enhanced contrast through the multiple states of reprinting), "she wanted her [new] prints to have solidity, like a sculpture," Sander said.[41] Model was a photographer of people, and the weight and solidity of their bodies had to be translated into the printing, which meant that contrast was important. Rather than an emphasis on middle-gray tones, Model wanted bright white highlights to emphasize the forms, and deep, dark blacks to help model and distinguish figures from the space around them. Accordingly, Sander used 250-watt photoflood bulbs, which produce intense white light, to render extremely sharp detail and heightened contrast. "You saw every dot on it. Every grain of the negative."[42] This produced the punch and character that Model sought.[43] In addition, she wanted an extra-shiny effect, so Sander printed on Agfa Brovira glossy paper, advertised for its sparkling highlights, which he then air-dried, dry mounted on archival board, and sandwiched under Plexiglas to be hung on the wall (fig. 7).[44]

Photography collector Pierre Apraxine, who in the 1970s to 1990s amassed over eight thousand photographs for the Gilman Paper Company Collection, once explained that a pristine print, framed and hung on the wall, "raises them [photographs] to the dignity of desirable and collectible objects."[45] But there were limits to the sustainability or success of a system in which photographers and printers were fulfilling orders from private collectors, dealers, or museums for only a couple of hundred dollars apiece. Even the most beautiful prints, made with care and precision, were not enough to sell on their

FIG. 7. — Lisette Model's work printed by Gerd Sander in 1976, installed in the exhibition *Lisette Model Photographs* (25 September–30 October 1976), Sander Gallery, Washington, DC, 1976.
Photographer unknown. Cologne, Germany, August Sander Stiftung. Art © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

own. Despite the hundreds of catalogs sent out by Sander Gallery, and the positive press garnered for them, only one print sold.[46]

"The Creation of Rarity": Harry Lunn and Strategies in the Photography Market

As Sander perfected the art of modern printing, Harry H. Lunn Jr., who held a degree in economics, came to the business of selling prints with an eye toward financial systems. In the 1960s, while living in Paris, Lunn had become interested in graphic prints and drawings, and had started collecting and selling them. In 1971, a few years after opening Lunn Gallery in Washington, DC, he championed the work of Adams and devoted his business primarily to photography, quickly distinguishing himself as one of the most influential photography dealers in the United States.

In October 1978, photography dealers and curators gathered at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, for a symposium that would plant the seed for the founding of the Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD) and its annual art fair. AIPAD was the first-ever professional organization for photography dealers and is still active today. The title of the weekend symposium in 1978 was Photographic Collecting, Past and Present.[47] On the last day, Lunn gave a talk candidly titled "The Creation of Rarity," in which he laid out a strategy of how photography dealers could control market pricing. He began with a story of a stamp dealer, who, "having acquired two identical stamps worth one million dollars each, burned one in order to charge three million [dollars] for the other."[48] Lunn then urged that similar actions be taken in the photography market, given what he called the "relative thinness of the market and the failure of photography to attract a significantly wider group of collectors in recent years."[49] For Lunn, if dealers wanted to elevate demand and prices, they ought to cease the limitless availability of the print-to-order system in favor of extreme limitation.

Lunn, of course, never set fire to any art, but achieved his creation of rarity in a number of ways. He acquired exclusive rights to facilitate the sale or printing of work by photographers including Arbus, Frank, Evans, and Abbott, and had the foresight to acquire their work inexpensively and then construct greater market value for it. He acquired whole estates and trickled prints onto the market sparingly, only a few a year. He set limited-term pricing and warned of price jumps after a certain deadline, guaranteeing immediate sales at the lower prices and setting precedent for annual inflation rates.

According to photography scholar Michelle Bogre, in 1974, Lunn "practically cornered the market on Adams, purchasing 1,000 prints for around $300 each. Shortly thereafter, Adams stopped making prints for private sale. Anyone wanting an original had to deal with Lunn, and the prices skyrocketed."[50] In 1979, a print of Adams's iconic *Moonrise, Hernandez* (1941) that Lunn had purchased for $300 sold at auction for $15,000; Lunn later remarked that "the Ansel Adams phenomenon would not have occurred

had he continued to print individual orders without restriction. Despite Adams [*sic*] perfectionism which makes his prints individual hand made works, the collectors would have continued to regard his prints as readily available and without particular rarity."[51] "Harry gave photography a totally new reputation," said the dealer Howard Read. "In the early seventies, a picture was something you kept in a drawer or in the attic. Harry changed that into something you could trade, buy and sell. He created a market."[52]

The other way Lunn manufactured rarity was through the publication of limited-edition photographic portfolios, each a precious, collectible art object with a fixed limit imposed on its quantity. Portfolios, particularly collections of prints, hold a long history in the traditional graphic arts. But prior to the 1970s, it was a relatively uncommon format in photography, with notable self-published exceptions by Adams, Weston, and Strand, many of which were targeted to book buyers.[53] In 1968 Tice self-published *The Amish Portfolio*, a selection of twelve mounted prints in an edition of fifty, which sold for $75 each. Shortly thereafter, Arbus first conceived of her own self-published portfolio, *A box of ten photographs*, of which four editions were completed by the time of her death in 1971.[54] In 1970, Richard Avedon's *Minneapolis Portfolio*, designed by Marvin Israel, was issued in tandem with Avedon's retrospective at the Minneapolis Institute of Art that year. Also, in 1971 Evans published *Fourteen Photographs* in an edition of one hundred with Ives-Sillman, in New Haven, Connecticut. Seeing this trend and its salability to museums inspired photography dealers to begin producing portfolios for the artists that they represented.[55] For Lunn, it was likely that his background as a print specialist enabled him to recognize the portfolio as a familiar and rich marketing opportunity—he referred to portfolio production as a means of creating "the maximum investment return."[56]

Photography dealer Lee Witkin, whose eponymous New York photography gallery also embraced portfolio production at this time, describes its benefit in this way:

> Usually presented in a box and accompanied by a foreword, introduction, or similar text, a portfolio generally offers collectors a mini-retrospective of a photographer's career or a selection of images on a theme for which the individual is well known. . . . Most portfolios are initially sold at a price lower than the sum total of the individual prints if they were to be purchased separately. This saving, plus the attractiveness of a "package," makes portfolios appealing to many collectors. Once purchased, portfolios can be split up for display, for single-print sales, or for the sake of joint owners.[57]

In 1974, published under his subsidiary company Graphics International, Lunn released his first portfolio: *James Van Der Zee: Eighteen Photographs*, printed by Benson under the photographer's supervision from a combination of original negatives and copied vintage prints.[58] Issued in an edition of seventy-five plus fifteen "presentation copies," the portfolio was priced at $2,000; the negatives were permanently retired after its completion. After the Van Der Zee portfolio, whose copies nearly all sold, Lunn had

proof of concept, and in the following five years alone he began work on no fewer than eight photographic portfolios.

Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs, *1976*

Lunn met Model in 1974, introduced by their mutual friend Gee (fig. 8). It is possible that when Lunn proposed the portfolio to Model, Lunn hoped to represent her exclusively—an ambition that would have been complicated by Sander's connection to the artist around that same time. Nevertheless, the resulting collaboration between Lunn, Sander, and Model would benefit all three parties and transform Model's absence in the market into a place of prominence.

FIG. 8. — Harry Lunn (*left*) with Lisette Model (*center*), ca. 1975, gelatin silver print. Photographer unknown. Cologne, Germany, August Sander Stiftung.

The stunning result of nearly four years of collaboration between these key figures, *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs* is a deluxe, modern object (fig. 9). Encased in a hard, translucent, black Plexiglas slipcover, it can be slid vertically into a large bookshelf for storage and display or, more ostentatiously, laid flat as a singular object and housed horizontally on a deep shelf or table. Out of the slipcover, it is luxurious and minimal. Bound entirely in rich, knotted, black raw-silk cloth, it is clean and monolithic, with only a silvery-white silkscreened line slicing down the center of the front cover at a subtle slant.

The diagonal line confronts the viewer as a direct aesthetic proposition—entirely divested from the magazine origins of the photographs contained within the case. Reminiscent of artist Barnett Newman's signature vertical band of color, the "zip," the

FIG. 9. — *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs* (Washington, DC: Graphics International, 1976). Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 2002.152.9–20. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Ruttenberg, courtesy of the Ruttenberg Arts Foundation. © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

single bisecting line aligns Model with the legacies of abstract expressionism and minimalism in the United States (fig. 10). In it, one might also recognize the diagonal line from her photograph of 1933–38, *Blind Man Walking, Paris*, a version of which was not selected for *Twelve Photographs*—perhaps suggesting that, like the blind man's cane, her photographs, too, aid the unseeing to perceive the world (fig. 11). A third possibility is that Model's inspiration came from a design painted by her husband, Evsa, for the cover of a book containing painter and critic Michel Seuphor's lectures on abstraction, published in 1928, the year Lisette and Evsa met in Paris (fig. 12). The single slanted line might be an adaptation or version of Evsa's work.[59] He died in October of 1976, just as the portfolio design was being finalized.

Inside the box, a colophon insert specifies that the edition includes "75 examples . . . with an additional 15 proof examples," and, without listing either Benson or Sander, emphasizes the authenticity of the prints through the statement that they "have been printed under the supervision of the artist . . . and are signed on the verso in pencil." The signature further reifies the aura of collectability and reinforces the nonutilitarian nature of the objects. To further establish its rarity, in the colophon it is also noted that "no further photographs will be made for sale from the negatives."[60]

Finally, on its own sheet before the prints, following the colophon, a short essay by Abbott is included. Her words sound a triumphant declaration of a battle hard won:

> It is not often that a new form of expression comes along. Niepce's invention ushered in a baffling and deceptive medium. To project the eye through a boxed-in lens was considered a "mechanical" process. But if a camera, mindless and

FIG. 10. — Hans Namuth (US American, 1915–90). Untitled (Barnett Newman), 1951. © 1991 Hans Namuth Estate, Courtesy Center for Creative Photography.

FIG. 11. — Lisette Model (US American, b. Austria, 1901–83). *Blind Man Walking, Paris*, 1933–38, gelatin silver print on newspaper mount, 30.4 × 25.2 cm (mount). Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 2016.109.1. Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund. © The Lisette Model Foundation, Inc. (1983). Used by permission.

> heartless of itself, is a "machine," certainly a piano and violin are likewise, as well as the simpler brush and pen. There can be as much magic in a photograph as there is in a sonata.[61]

These words exemplify Abbott's lifelong advocacy of the medium. Underneath Abbott's contribution lay the prints. In an ultimate move to reclaim authorial control

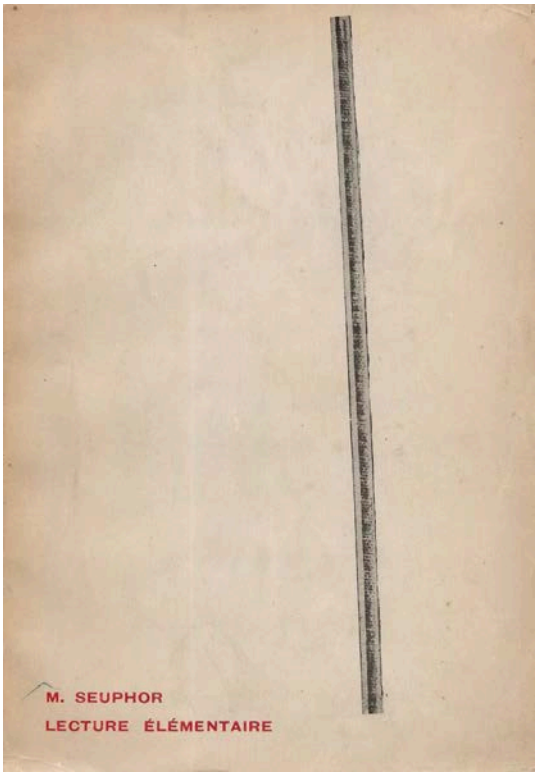
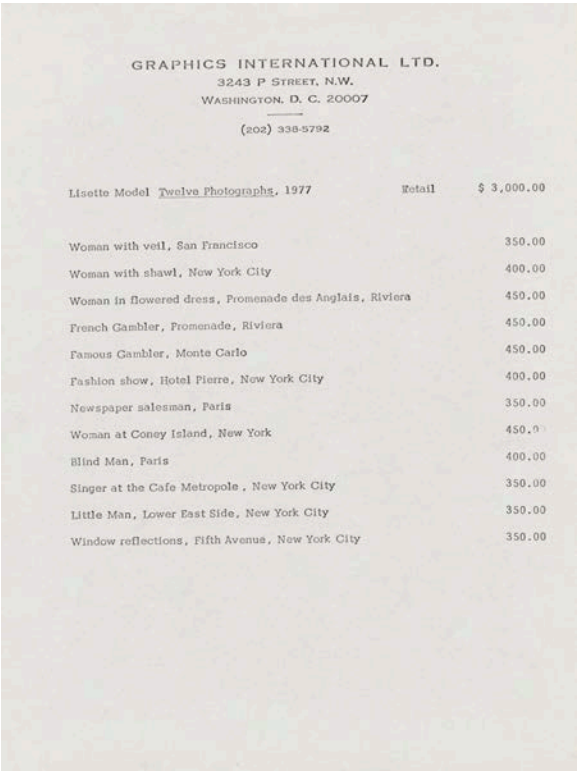


FIG. 12. — Cover of Michel Seuphor, *Lecture élémentaire: Algèbre des facilités et tout le roman des lettres* (Paris: Les Écrivains Réunis, 1928). Based on a painting by Evsa Model (US American, b. Russia, 1899–1976).

over her identity as an artist, Model selected the photographs that most aligned with her personal vision rather than those produced on assignment. These twelve images have gone on to become Model's most canonical, most reproduced, and most familiar works.[62]

The portfolio, bearing a publication date of 1976, was originally priced at $2,400 at issuance in early 1977, and by the spring of that year, Lunn had spiked its cost. The price sheet from late 1977, which lists the works in the order they appear in the portfolio, showed how the edition offered collectors a deal (fig. 13). For $3,000, they could have twelve prints whose value, based on individual pricing, exceeded that price by 50 percent, at $4,750.[63] With prices bumped up each year, and with each portfolio bringing with it the potential to be split and earn profit through resale, it is easy to imagine the photography market chugging like a giant steam engine, growing stronger and moving faster with each turn of the axle. Today, only a few unsold copies remain in the inventories of the Sander and Lunn families, and it seems likely that they may keep them, for they have now become extremely rare.[64]

Which brings me to one final achievement of the portfolios more broadly: getting photography into museum collections. Most of Model's intact portfolios remain in museums today. The prepackaged portfolio was attractive to smaller museums with



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WASHINGTON, D. C. 20007
(202) 338-5792

Lisette Model Twelve Photographs, 1977	Retail	$ 3,000.00
Woman with veil, San Francisco		350.00
Woman with shawl, New York City		400.00
Woman in flowered dress, Promenade des Anglais, Riviera		450.00
French Gambler, Promenade, Riviera		450.00
Famous Gambler, Monte Carlo		450.00
Fashion show, Hotel Pierre, New York City		400.00
Newspaper salesman, Paris		350.00
Woman at Coney Island, New York		450.00
Blind Man, Paris		400.00
Singer at the Cafe Metropole, New York City		350.00
Little Man, Lower East Side, New York City		350.00
Window reflections, Fifth Avenue, New York City		350.00

FIG. 13. — Price sheet for *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs* (1976), issued by Graphics International, Washington, DC, late 1977. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, Harry Lunn papers, 2004.M.17.

modest budgets for photography; for a reasonable price, they could have all the greatest images by a single photographer—enough to make up an entire one-room exhibition or to seed a larger collection. Today, the portfolio remains one of the primary means by which Model's pictures are represented in collections across the United States, including the New York Public Library, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), the Library of Congress, the Spencer Art Museum at the University of Kansas, the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts, the Center for Creative Photography in Arizona, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. In the 1970s, portfolios were also promoted as a tax incentive to investors, who would buy a boxed set at a deeply discounted price and in turn donate it to a museum, where they could claim a large tax write-off for the full market value.[65] This questionable system is no longer practiced, but it had two outcomes: One, it served to place artists like Model into museums that might not have otherwise had the resources to invest in their work. Two, as Lunn himself once said, "Whenever a photograph or anything else passes into a museum that's it. It's off the market."[66] The transmission of portfolios into museums gave the market yet another spike, augmenting rarity by limiting what was available to private buyers, thus making the remaining portfolios even more valuable.

The portfolio trend was by no means thanks to Lunn's initiative alone.[67] Indeed, it swept through the entire photography market. In and around the 1970s, several hundred photography portfolios were published by galleries, museums, photographers, and printers around the country. Most prolifically, Witkin, with his partner, collector Dan Berley, published more than thirty portfolios under the imprint Witkin-Berley of work by Abbott, Brassaï, Francis Bruguière, Judy Dater, Frederick Evans, Jacques-Henri Lartigue, W. Eugene Smith, and others. Other portfolios were made and sold by Galerie Wilde, Time-Life Books, Life Gallery, Lustrum Press, Double Elephant Press, Vision Gallery, and Sonnabend Editions, among others. Sander, too—having made portfolio prints for Horacio Coppola, Grosz, Model, and Umbo (Otto Umbehr)—eventually got involved in the practice of editioning and published Sander Gallery portfolios of Marcel Broodthaers, William Christenbery, Walter Peterhans, and ringl + pit.

As museums came into possession of artists' negatives, they too began to publish and sell portfolios. Celebrated examples include the Metropolitan Museum of Art's release of *Stephen Shore: Twelve Photographs* to coincide with its solo exhibition of the artist's color work in 1974; and *A Portfolio of Sixteen Photographs by Alvin Langdon Coburn* by George Eastman House, posthumously produced in 1963 following Coburn's bequest of twenty thousand negatives, along with cameras and correspondence.

The 1970s simultaneously saw the solidification of the art market for photography—what came to be known as the photo boom, during which dedicated photography galleries met with success, auction sales hit record numbers, major private and public collections emerged, and photography was adopted into the programs of modern art gallery powerhouses. The legendary Castelli Gallery, which included in its program blue-chip artists such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella, and Cy Twombly, was an early proponent of minimalist artists, and it championed not only work by artists who incorporated photography into their work (for example, Ed Ruscha and Bruce Nauman) but also work by photographers Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Ralph Gibson, and John Gossage.[68] Dealer Larry Gagosian also expanded his program to include photography in 1976, opening his Los Angeles space with a show by Gibson. In the mid 1970s, Marlborough Gallery also expanded its reach to exhibit photography. Between 1975 and 1977, Marlborough installed more than ten photography shows featuring work by Abbott, Avedon, Bill Brandt, Brassaï, Louis Faurer, Frank, and Irving Penn.[69] According to Grundberg, "In terms of impact on photography's artistic status, however, the gallery that most made its mark is Sonnabend," the extraordinarily influential contemporary art gallery founded by Ileana Sonnabend.[70] Among the photographers on its roster were Bernd and Hilla Becher, Jan Groover, and Hiroshi Sugimoto. The validation that these major international art dealers bestowed on photography expanded its audience and reception to coveted art critics and collectors, giving an unprecedented platform in the art world to living photographers. Not only did photography enter the art market during this time, but it fundamentally changed it.[71] As the photography market reached full stride by the late 1980s, the production of portfolios would begin to decelerate.

Rarity as a Source of Decline: The Lisette Model Portfolio Today

In December 1975, New York's free weekly newspaper, *The Village Voice*, devoted a special section to the photography scene titled "The Photography Generation Takes Over." In it, Norman Schreiber, a columnist for the paper, surveyed a number of artists, photographers, curators, historians and critics on the question, "Whom or What is the Major Influence on Photography?"[72] Andy Warhol answered in two simple words: "Art dealers."[73]

The 1970s brought change not just for Model but for photography writ large. Across the United States, photographs began consistently selling for hundreds and often thousands of dollars, at auction and privately, to individual collectors and public institutions. The ascent of photography as an art form, in the end, was not achieved in isolation. It was ultimately a merging of museum endorsement; experimental aesthetic approaches to the medium, including the adoption of its use in conceptual artistic practices; and, crucially, portfolio production, which, combined with the critical market strategies of art dealers, transformed reproducible, prevalent photography into something exceptionally limited.

As it turns out, the very feature that photographic portfolios were designed to create—rarity—was the source of their decline in value. The singular original print, made by an artist shortly after the creation of the negative, was irrefutably rarer than an edition of, say, seventy-five. On a recent visit to the National Gallery of Art, I requested to see all the works by Model in the collection. Senior curator of photographs Sarah Greenough obliged my request with the caveat that they "don't have a lot of Model prints and many [of them] are 70s [prints]."[74] Upon my visit, the collections manager brought out twelve sixteen-by-twenty-inch prints followed by the black silk–covered box in which they had once been stored. It was a complete portfolio set, numbered fifteen of seventy-five and donated to the museum in 2002.[75] Quick to bypass these, she then directed my attention to something "really special," and pulled out a small, hastily trimmed vintage print by Model of a blind man walking in Paris—one of very few prints that exist of this subject—likely printed when she was still living in France in the late 1930s and mounted soon after on a piece of a US newspaper (see fig. 11). Once the dismissed refuse that Model had kept stored away, the print was sold in 2016 at auction in New York for $15,000 before being acquired later that same year by the museum.[76] And, just a decade prior, when the sale of a print of Model's *Woman with Veil, San Francisco*, had set a record price for the artist at £31,200 ($61,764), it was featured in the catalog for the sale with a description of the rarity of the type: "Large-format vintage prints of Model's work, such as the present lot, are exceedingly rare."[77] While there still remains a market for modern prints, vintage prints—the most rare objects—are now privileged above all else.

"Over the years," writes Richard Blodgett in his book *Photographs: A Collector's Guide* of 1979, "photographers have typically made prints only in direct response to demand, and for that reason vintage prints of most photographers' work are scarce. . . . This is one of the great ironies of the photography market: that a process which is theoretically

limitless actually has resulted in works of considerable rarity."[78] Both Sander and Lunn eventually agreed. "After Lisette died," Gerd recounts, "I had access to the vintage prints and that was what the market asked for."[79] In the late 1980s, Lunn expressed a similar sentiment: "Vintage is sacred. . . . the finest vintage examples of an artist's work have increased in price by a significant degree [more] than later prints of the same image."[80] Perhaps it was finally fair to say that photography had been accepted by the market as art, with rarity as its North Star.

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Notes

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1. Gerd Sander, interview with the author, Normandy, France, 25–29 July 2017; and Gerd Sander, email to the author, 6 February 2018.

2. For more on Model's jazz series produced in the 1950s, see Audrey Sands, *Lisette Model: The Jazz Pictures* (New York, Eakins Press, 2024).

3. Model was included as a leading voice for the medium at the MoMA symposium of 1951, "What is Modern Photography," moderated by Edward Steichen. Transcriptions and discussions from the event were published in Walter Rosenblum, "What is Modern Photography?," *American Photography* 45, no. 3 (March 1951): 153; and Lisette Model, "Picture as Art: Instructor Defines Creative Photography as Scientific Eye that Captures Life," *New York Times,* 9 December 1951, n.p. Earlier that year, Model's pivot to teaching photography was publicized broadly; see "Lisette Model to Teach," *New York Times,* 28 January 1951, n.p. In 1952, Model's photograph *Sammy's Bar, New York* (1940) was reproduced in an essay by Minor White in the first issue of

Aperture that was broadly inspired by Model's course on photographing with the miniature camera at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. Minor White, "Exploratory Camera: A Rationale for the Miniature Camera," *Aperture*, no. 1 (April 1952): 4.

4. On the paucity of photography sales in the 1950s and early 1960s, see price sheets and sales records from Limelight Gallery, held at the Center for Creative Photography (CCP), AG 74. For Limelight and the broader market for photography prior to the 1970s, see Helen Gee, *Limelight: A Greenwich Village Photography Gallery and Coffeehouse in the Fifties: A Memoir* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997). According to Gee, the Lee Witkin Gallery, which opened in 1969 in New York, was "the first photography gallery able to sustain itself financially, independent of all other means." Gee, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective* (Tucson, AZ: Center for Creative Photography, 1980), 16.

5. "Lisette Model: Re-emergence from Legend," *Aperture*, no. 78 (Winter 1977): 4.

6. "Lisette Model: Re-emergence from Legend," 4.

7. Sander, interview with the author, 25–29 July 2017. See Mary Ann Tighe, "Lisette Model at Sander," *Art in America* 65, no. 1 (January–February 1977): 132; and "Lisette Model: Re-emergence from Legend," 4.

8. For more on Lunn, see the Harry Lunn papers, 1855–1999, Getty Research Institute (GRI), Los Angeles, 2004.M.17.

9. In 1969, the Lunn Gallery moved to Georgetown. Following the Adams exhibition, a subsequent photography exhibition in 1971 showed work by Man Ray. According to an unnamed reviewer for *The Photographic Collector*, "There has hardly been an article written about the art photography market in America that hasn't included Lunn's name. Lunn's leadership began almost the very day he opened his first exhibition of photographs in his Washington gallery in 1971. This was a show of 'Portfolio V' by Ansel Adams, the photographer whose work first turned Lunn's imagination to the possibilities of the market for photographs." "Harry Lunn," *The Photographic Collector* 4, no. 2 (Autumn 1981): 151.

10. Finding aid for the Lunn papers, GRI, 2004.M.17, https://www.getty.edu/research/collections/collection/113Y6C.

11. *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs,* with an introductory essay by Berenice Abbott (Washington, DC: Graphics International, 1976), printed from the original negatives under the artist's supervision by Richard Benson and Gerd Sander, unmounted, each photograph numbered and signed on the verso. The price at issuance was $2,400; its value in late 1977 was $3,000.

12. The publication date of the portfolio is 1976, but printing of the full edition continued well into 1977. According to photography curator and historian Ann Thomas, Model initially became dissatisfied with Benson's contribution due to the inconvenient distance of travel required to reach his studio from New York City, where Model's husband, Evsa, was ailing. Thomas also cites a second reason: "In December of 1975, Model wrote to Lunn that she would not accept the prints by Richard Benson that she had initially received quite positively. In January 1977 Sander took over the printing, and by the summer the project was completed. She had instructed Sander to print 'closed and dark' resulting in prints that are 16 × 20 inches (40.4 × 50.6 cm) in format, grainy, and with much more contrast than the vintage prints she herself had been responsible for printing." Ann Thomas, *Lisette Model*, exh. cat. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1990), 161.

13. Limelight Gallery 1956 sales record, Helen Gee / Limelight Gallery Archive, CCP, AG 74. The print was donated by Eidlitz to the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, in 1968 with a large gift of US American paintings and photographs.

14. Christies London, live auction 7393, Photographs, 31 May 2007, lot 00015, https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4912698.

15. Most of these writings are compiled in A. D. Coleman, *Light Readings: A Photography Critic's Writings, 1968–1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); and A. D. Coleman, *Tarnished Silver: After the Photo Boom* (New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1996).

16. Andy Grundberg, *How Photography Became Contemporary Art: Inside an Artistic Revolution from Pop to the Digital Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021).

17. Juliet Hacking, *Photography and the Art Market* (London: Lund Humphries, 2018).

18. See, in particular, Bethel's talk "From Book Object to Art Object: Some Observations on the Origins of the Photographs Market," 9 May 2015, delivered as part of the symposium Seen through the Collector's Lens: 150 Years of Photography, presented by the Center for the History of Collecting at the Frick Collection, New York, YouTube video, 39:35, https://youtu.be/1VoLAvqYoHM?si=M63Xuike621xpbyq.

19. Molly Kalkstein, "The Discerning Eye: Creating Value in the 1970s American Market for

Photographs" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2022).

20. Two notable studies to date have considered the portfolio trend: Molly Kalkstein, "Inside the Box: Photography and the Portfolio Format" (MA thesis, Ryerson University, 2013), addresses the role of limited-edition portfolios in the mid-twentieth century, with an emphasis on those produced by artists themselves rather than by photography dealers. In 2005, curator Britt Salveson organized a small exhibition without a publication at the Center for Creative Photography, spotlighting the theme with objects from their collection: *Boxed Sets: Portfolios of the Seventies*, 11 March–29 May 2005, CCP, University of Arizona.

21. See Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *Art Journal* 42, no. 4, *The Crisis in the Discipline*, ed. Hernri Zerner (Winter 1982): 311–19.

22. Throughout the twentieth century, several commercial galleries for photography emerged outside of New York City and outside of the United States. Many of these were short-lived and experimental in spirit, but several founded in the 1970s and 1980s remained in operation for decades and significantly shaped the international market.

23. See Julien Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (New York: Putnam, 1977); and Peter Barberie and Katherine Ware, *Dreaming in Black and White: Photography at the Julien Levy Gallery* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2006).

24. David Travis, *Photographs from the Julien Levy Collection Starting with Atget*, exh. cat. (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1976).

25. Gee affixed to the gallery wall a small black label that read: "Limelight is dedicated to photography. Limelight exists primarily to show the work of those photographers, both known and unknown, who have made an outstanding contribution through their serious creative endeavor. We intend to present continuing shows, each running six weeks, including the work of American and European photographers. The public will have an opportunity of purchasing the photographs on display." Limelight Gallery statement, 1954, Helen Gee / Limelight Gallery Archive, CCP, AG 74. Briefly coexisting with Limelight was photographer Roy DeCarava's short-lived A Photographer's Gallery, which he operated from 1955 to 1957 out of his West 84th Street loft in Manhattan. There, he echoed the spirit of Limelight by offering "a place for serious photographers who produce and value creative photography." DeCarava, through the exhibition, exposure, and sale in his space, sought to "encourage and stimulate the serious photographer towards a more productive and creative life, a life by which an eager and perceptive public cannot help but benefit." Roy DeCarava, "Photography, Photographers, and a Gallery," typewritten document, 1956, Helen Gee / Limelight Gallery Archive, CCP, AG 74.

26. "Photographic Prints to Be Sold at Museum for Christmas," 30 November 1951, press release, Museum of Modern Art, New York; "Christmas Photography Sale, Nov. 29, 1951–January 6, 1952: Checklist," The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and installation images of *Christmas Photographs,* MoMA website, https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3281.

27. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," [1935], in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, 1968), 224, emphasizes the challenge the photograph poses to the "cult value" of the work of art.

28. See the press markings on the verso of Lisette Model's gelatin silver print, *They Honor Their Sons* (1935–42), Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019.31, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/818065.

29. Throughout the 1950s, Rolf Petersen was identified as the printer in a number of object records in the MoMA collection.

30. *The Family of Man* ran from 24 January to 8 May 1955. See "Musuem of Modern Art Plans International Photography Exhibition," 31 January 1954, press release, https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_325966.pdf. See also Gerd Hurm, Anke Reitz, and Shamoon Zamir, eds., *The Family of Man Revisited: Photography in a Global Age* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018); and Eric J. Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

31. Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* [1968], 2nd ed., trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 2005).

32. Baudrillard, *The System of Objects,* 91.

33. Baudrillard, section B, *The Non-Functional System, or Subjective Discourse*, subsection II, "A Marginal System: Collecting," in *The System of Objects,* 91–113, 91 (quote). Emphasis in original.

34. Timothy C. Brock, "Implications of Commodity Theory for Value Change," in Thomas M. Ostrom, *Psychological Foundations of Attitudes*, ed. Anthony G. Greenwald and Timothy C. Brock (New York: Academic Press, 1968), 243–75.

35. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (London: W. Strahan & T. Cadell, 1776), 172.

36. Sander (1876–1964) first conceived of his magnum opus around 1922, a project intended to document the diversity of the German people. It was first presented as an exhibition in 1927, and a selection of images were later published as *Antlitz der Zeit* (1929, Face of our time), which was later confiscated and destroyed by Nazis. Over the course of five decades, Sander produced an archive of tens of thousands of negatives for the project, although the project remained incomplete at the time of his death in 1964. In 1963, Sander first became involved in printing his grandfather's work for a major August Sander exhibition, co-organized by Gunther and L. Fritz Gruber, curator and founder of the Photokina photography fair in Cologne. In 2002, Gerd Sander collaborated with the August Sander Archive (Cologne) and scholar Susanne Lange to edit and publish a seven-volume collection comprising all 619 of Sander's photographs. Susanne Lange, Gabriele Conrad-Scholl, and Gerd Sander, eds., *August Sander: People of the 20th Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002).

37. In 2015 MoMA acquired the complete set of *People of the 20th Century*, printed from the artist's original glass-plate negatives by Gerd Sander and Jean-Luc Differdange between 1990 and 1999. "The Museum of Modern Art Acquires Complete Set of August Sander's Landmark Achievement *People of the Twentieth Century,* 1892–1954," 5 June 2015, press release, MoMA website, http://press.moma.org/wp-content/files_mf/sanderacquisitionpressreleasefinal.pdf.

38. Sander, interview with the author, 25–29 July 2017.

39. George Grosz, *Erste Landung, New York, 1932* (New York: Kimmel/Cohn Gallery, 1977). Printed by Gerd Sander and Igor Bakht from the original negatives.

40. The following works by Model were purchased by MoMA from the artist in the 1940s: *Nice* (1938), 80.1941, $10; *Reflections* (1941), 81.1941, $10; *Coney Island* (1941), 32.1943, $15; *Lower East Side* (1943), 33.1943, $15; *World War II Rally, Lower East Side* (1942), 34.1943, $15; *Gambler Type, French Riviera,* (1938), 35.1943, $15; *Old Woman, Orchard Street* (1942), 36.1943, $15; and *Sleeping on Montparnasse*, (1938), 37.1943, $15. Cataloging sheets, Department of Photography Files, MoMA, New York.

41. Gerd Sander, interview with the author, Paris, France, 23 February 2018. Bracketed interpolation by the author.

42. Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

43. "She knew what she wanted, but she could not do it herself." Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

44. Later, when he made the portfolio prints, Sander purchased a ferrotyping drum to reduce his labor and replicate the look of hand-treating the hundreds of prints. Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

45. Pierre Apraxine, quoted in Mark Haworth-Booth, "Wheeling and Dealing at Rochester," *Aperture*, no. 82 (Spring 1979): 4. Bracketed interpolation by the author. The Gilman Paper Company Collection, containing more than 8,500 prints dating largely from the first century of the medium, was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2005. "Metropolitan Museum Acquires World-Renowned Collection of Photographs from The Howard Gilman Foundation," 16 March 2005, press release, https://www.metmuseum.org/press/exhibitions/2005/metropolitan-museum-acquires-worldrenowned-collection-of-photographs-from-the-howard-gilman-foundation.

46. Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

47. Photographic Collecting, Past and Present in the United States, Canada and Europe, organized by Yong-Hee Last, International Museum of Photography/George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, 12–14 October 1978. Proceedings from the symposium are chronicled in Mark Haworth-Booth, "Wheeling and Dealing at Rochester," *Aperture,* no. 82 (Winter 1979): 2–7.

48. This story is the plot of "Night of the Piraeus," episode 19 from season 2 of the hit television show *Kojak*, 26 January 1975, directed by Jerry London.

49. Harry Lunn, "The Creation of Rarity," lecture given at the symposium of 12–14 October, 1978, George Eastman House, quoted in Dennis Longwell, "Creating Rarity: Dealers and the Photography Market," *American Art & Antiques*, May/June 1979, 85.

50. Michelle Bogre, "Harry Lunn," *American Photographer*, March 1987, 68.

51. Harry Lunn, untitled and undated note, Lunn papers, GRI. Very soon after this sale, in 1981, at G. Ray Hawkins Gallery in Los Angeles, a thirty-nine-by-fifty-five-inch print of *Moonrise, Hernandez* sold for $71,500, the highest price ever paid for a black-and-white photograph at the time. Philip Gefter, "Why Photography Has Supersized Itself," *New York Times*, 18 April 2004.

52. Howard Read, quoted in "Harry Lunn: The Man Who Made Mapplethorpe," *Knack Weekend,* 1 April 1997, Lunn papers, GRI.

53. Ansel Adams produced several limited-edition portfolios between 1927 and his death in 1984. The first was *Parmelian Prints of the High Sierras* (San Francisco: Jean Chambers Moore, 1927), comprising eighteen gelatin silver prints in an edition of one hundred fifty. Between 1948 and 1976 Adams produced seven numbered portfolios, I-VII, reproduced in Ansel Adams, *The Portfolios of Ansel Adams* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977). The inclusion of Adams's *Portfolio V* (New York: Parasol, 1970), issued in an edition of 110, in Lunn's first photography exhibition likely sparked his inspiration to adopt a similar model for other photographers. See also this essay, note 9. Another notable early example was Paul Strand's *The Mexican Portfolio* (1940), offered in a limited subscription of two hundred fifty, which included photogravures produced under the photographer's supervision. See lot essay for lot 99 in the live auction 9324, Photographs from the 20th Century, Christie's, Los Angeles, 17 January 2001, https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-1978781.

54. See John P. Jacob, *Diane Arbus: A Box of Ten Photographs* (New York: Aperture, 2018).

55. Dealer Lee Witkin specifically mentioned Tice's portfolio as an inspiration. "I owe George a lot," Witkin said. "He was important in giving me an image of a portfolio, of what it could be." Quoted in Roberta Faul, "For the Collector of Photographs," *Museum News,* 1 February 1976, 25.

56. Harry Lunn, untitled and undated note, Lunn papers, GRI.

57. Lee D. Witkin and Barbara London, *The Photograph Collector's Guide* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1979), 277.

58. *James Van Der Zee: Eighteen Photographs* (Washington, DC, and New York: Graphics International with James Van Der Zee Institute, 1974). Introduction and chronology by Eugenia A. Perry.

59. According to Sander, Model told him that her husband designed the portfolio cover. Sander, interview with the author, 23 February 2018.

60. *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*, colophon. In spite of claims that editions were fixed and finite, it remained a concern for would-be collectors and remains a complex issue today. See the case of William Eggleston's controversial consignment agreement with Christie's in 2012 to create and sell digital reprints of a formerly closed edition: "Photographer William Eggleston Beats Claim by Collector for Creating New Prints outside of Edition," *CDAS Insights* (blog), 12 April 2013, https://cdas.com/photographer-william-eggleston-beats-claim-by-collector-for-creating-new-prints-outside-of-edition-2/.

61. Berenice Abbott, "Lisette Model," October 1975, in *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*.

62. In sequence, they are: *Woman with veil, San Francisco*; *Woman with shawl, New York City*; *Woman in flowered dress, Promenade des Anglais, Riviera*; *French gambler, Promenade des Anglais, Riviera*; *Famous gambler, Monte Carlo*; *Fashion show, Hotel Pierre, New York City*; *Newspaper salesman, Paris*; *Woman at Coney Island, New York*; *Blind man, Paris*; *Singer at the Café Metropole, New York City*; *Little man, Lower East Side, New York City*; and *Window reflections, Fifth Avenue, New York City.*

63. Price sheet for *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs*, issued by Graphics International, Washington, DC, late 1977, Lunn papers, GRI.

64. In 2021, the Lunn family disassembled one of their two remaining Lisette Model portfolios for the purpose of its sale. Artsy, sale posting for *Singer, Café Metropole, New York, 1946*, from *Lisette Model: Twelve Photographs,* https://www.artsy.net/artwork/lisette-model-singer-cafe-metropole-new-york-1946.

65. "Dealers like Lunn and Light Gallery . . . beckoned clients in search of tax shelters, organizing portfolios suitable for museum gifts at an attractive discount to the buyer." Belinda Rathbone, "The Photography Market: Image or Object?," *Print Collector's Newsletter* 20, no. 1 (March–April 1989): 7.

66. Harry Lunn, unpublished transcript of an interview for *The Wall Street Transcript*, 2 December 1982, 22, Lunn papers, GRI.

67. Some highlights of Lunn's many portfolios are Berenice Abbott, *Portraits in Palladium* (1989); William Eggleston, *Southern Suite* (1981); Josef Breitenbach, *Seven Portraits* (1976); Beaumont Newhall, *Beaumont Newhall Photographs* (1981); and perhaps most famously, Robert Mapplethorpe's *X, Y,* and *Z* portfolios (1978, 1978, and 1981, respectively), published jointly with New York dealer Robert Miller and London dealer Robert Self.

68. Grundberg, *How Photography Became Contemporary Art,* 93.

69. For Marlborough's photography years, see Audrey Sands, "Photography at Marlborough Gallery," in *Bill Brandt | Henry Moore,* ed. Martina Droth and Paul Messier (New Haven, CT: Yale Center for British Art, 2020), 114–17.

70. Grundberg, *How Photography Became Contemporary Art,* 93.

71. Grundberg expands significantly on this point in *How Photography Became Contemporary Art*, in which he historicizes the breakdown of distinctions between photography and art and their respective markets during the 1970s and 1980s.

72. Norman Schreiber, "Whom or What Is the Major Influence on Photography?—The Whats Have It; A Poll of People Who Know a Thing or Two about Photography, with Surprising Results," *The Village Voice*, 8 December 1975, special section, "The Photography Generation Takes Over," 89.

73. Other interviewees included Smith, Cornell Capa, Elliott Erwitt, Witkin, Beaumont Newhall, and Coleman.

74. Sarah Greenough, email to the author, 31 August 2017.

75. National Gallery of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David C. Ruttenberg courtesy of the Ruttenberg Arts Foundation, 2002.152.9–20.

76. The print was sold as *Beggar, Paris*, 1937, in the sale Photographs from a Private East Coast Collection, Phillips, New York, 4 April 2016, lot 198, https://www.phillips.com/detail/lisette-model/NY040116/198.

77. Live auction 7393, Photographs, Christie's London, 30 May 2007, lot 15, https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-4912698.

78. Richard Blodgett, *Photographs: A Collector's Guide* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 26.

79. Sander, email to author, 3 February 2018.

80. Harry Lunn, quoted in Candelora Versace, "Harry Lunn Gives Lowdown on Photography Market Finances," *The Santa Fe New Mexican,* 20 November 1992, 53. Bracketed interpolation by the author.

Unlocking Heritage at the Eastern State Penitentiary

Rita Elizabeth Risser

The Heritage Site

Eastern State Penitentiary is a decommissioned state prison in Philadelphia that opened in 1829, was registered as a US National Historic Landmark in 1965, and closed its carceral operations in 1971. The building and grounds subsequently sat vacant before reopening as Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site in 1994 (fig. 1). The site is maintained as a stabilized ruin, with the building and grounds preserved in some state of ruin rather than having been restored to their original condition, which gives the site a feeling of abandonment. However, the mission of Eastern State is anything but abandonment, seeking instead "public understanding of the criminal justice system and its impact on the lives of those affected by it."[1] To this end, the "haunting world of crumbling cellblocks and empty guard towers" has become a site for dialogue on the legacy and reform of criminal-justice systems.[2] The curators allow the stabilized ruin to speak for itself while also framing it with descriptive, critical, and conversational narratives, told through, respectively, an audio guide and signage throughout the site; an innovative program of temporary, site-specific art installations; and an interpretation center. Each narrative, in its own way, amplifies what the site has to say. The stabilized ruin and its discursive framing weave together to create what philosopher Charles Taliaferro refers to as an *open museum*, modeled on philosopher Karl Popper's concept of the "open society," one that commends "critical reflection and dialogue on matters of value" such as the state of justice within the criminal legal system.[3] Eastern State's curators use the past as a tool for excavating the present, starting with the concrete past: the heritage building and grounds themselves.

Material Evidence

A visit to Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site begins with a visual impression of the buildings and grounds. The viewer will likely have some idea of what they are looking at—for example, that it is a decommissioned prison. They may also know that it was built for the solitary confinement of its inmates. The penitentiary system was devised by religious-minded prison reformers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth

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FIG. 1. — Aerial view (looking east) of Eastern State Penitentiary, 2125 Fairmount Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, after 1933. Photograph by Jack E. Boucher for the Historic American Buildings Survey. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, HABS PA–1729.

centuries who modeled imprisonment on the monastic practice of silent retreat. Each inmate was to be confined to a single cell and not see or speak to other inmates or staff. In the case of Eastern State, its architect, John Haviland (1792–1852), designed the penitentiary to also prevent clandestine communication between or outside the cells, and the prison adminstrators required staff to make their rounds in silence, even wearing socks over their shoes to dampen the sounds of their footsteps. On the rare occasions that inmates were taken outside of their cells, they were hooded to sustain their isolation, which was intended to foster contemplation and penitence—hence the name *penitentiary*. The reformers believed that humans are inherently good even if they have acted badly, and are therefore redeemable through penitence. However, despite the well-meaning intentions and optimism of reformers, it soon became apparent that prolonged isolation—"this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain," as English writer Charles Dickens put it after a visit to Eastern State in 1842—led not to redemption but to mental breakdown.[4] Well before the Philadelphia penitentiary was decommissioned in 1971, the practice of solitary confinement had come to be seen as pointless and cruel, and Eastern State had discontinued the practice by 1913. Ironically, the prison was subsequently used to incarcerate individuals serving life sentences, a practice based upon the less-optimistic belief that some humans are not inherently

good or redeemable and should be imprisoned—albeit not in solitary confinement—for life. Over time, these early penitentiaries were either refitted to accommodate new carceral practices or they were decommissioned. Some of them, including Eastern State, became historic sites, often referred to as *dark heritage* for their association with human suffering.

The designation of Eastern State as a heritage site and its preservation as a stabilized ruin invite "attentive looking" at the building and grounds, akin to how a viewer would look at an artwork or a monument.[5] The building's peeling paint and rusted metal, its crumbling structures, and the encroachment of vegetation on the grounds all reflect the abandonment of incarcerated life. At the same time, the bulk of the building, though decaying, evokes the oppressiveness of this life.[6] The foreboding Gothic Revival entrance facade adds to the heaviness with its crenellated towers and barred lancet windows, in contrast to the churchlike interior of the prison with barrel vaults and skylights, presumably where redemption takes place (figs. 2, 3). As criminology and criminal-justice scholar Jeffrey Ian Ross aptly summarizes, "the building speaks for itself."[7]

Heritage preservation prioritizes the material-historical identity of artifacts and sites. This is not to say that conservators are reductive materialists, valuing heritage for nothing more than its materials. If Eastern State's building and grounds had degraded into a heap of rubble, most would agree that it is not the rubble as such but the penitentiary that is worth preserving—the idea or plan. Thus, conservators would likely be open to a reassembly of the rubble into the penitentiary as it might have once

FIG. 2. — Eastern State Penitentiary, 1920s entrance facade before the addition of a vestibule. Photograph courtesy of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, PA.

FIG. 3. — Cellblock seven at the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith, 2019. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Carol M. Highsmith Archive, LC-DIG-highsm-56325.

looked, or even a modest reconstruction using some new materials. However, they would likely be far less open, if at all open, to replacing the rubble with a replica of the penitentiary built from entirely new materials. While the idea and plan of the penitentiary is important, the material object, which would be lost with a replica, also matters.[8] Eastern State as a stabilized ruin may not look precisely as it was originally planned and built, but it is at least the authentic remains of the building and grounds, broken and worn, with enough resemblance to the original plan to be legible.

A harder question than how to preserve the ruin is whether and why any version of Eastern State Penitentiary should survive at all. Architect Rem Koolhaas notes that the kind and number of artifacts and sites deemed worthy of preservation has widened over time.[9] Preservation "started logically enough with ancient monuments" but has expanded beyond "sacred" structures to more "sociological" ones, "to the point that we now preserve concentration camps, department stores, factories and amusement rides."[10] While Koolhaas finds it "slightly absurd" that "everything we inhabit is potentially susceptible to preservation,"[11] he also finds it promising, as a spur to overcome mediocrity in the built environment. Be that as it may, there is an argument to be made for allowing some cultural works to expire. For example, architectural historian and Holocaust scholar Robert Jan van Pelt wonders if it might be best, once the last survivor of the World War II concentration camp at Auschwitz has passed away, to let the buildings decay, return to nature, and be forgotten, so that we "finally

efface that most unnatural creation of Man."[12] However, Van Pelt also thinks there is value in excavating the evidence and conserving the history of Auschwitz, and he has curated a number of important exhibitions on the subject, including *Seeing Auschwitz* (2020–ongoing), curated in partnership with Musealia and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, initially exhibited at the United Nations headquarters in New York and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquarters in Paris and ongoing at various UN Information Offices worldwide.[13]

Ross raises an additional concern about the preservation of historic prisons. It normalizes prisons, according to him, and as they become a familiar part of the cultural landscape, we find ourselves not especially bothered by their existence.[14] The curators of Eastern State Penitentiary address this concern by framing the site in a way to disrupt, not entrench, prison culture. The art installations, in particular, question, rather than legitimize, criminal-justice institutions and practices. Nevertheless, there is debate about the wisdom of preserving dark and dissonant heritage. Historian Steven Conn takes a moderate position, along the lines of philosopher Paul Ricoeur, who, Conn notes, "wonders whether and how we might achieve some sort of balance between remembering and forgetting."[15] Conn elaborates: "The risk in our attempt to 'never forget' is that our landscape, metaphorically and literally, becomes so cluttered with our attempts to remember the past that they crowd out our capacity to imagine the future."[16]

While curators and conservators need not save absolutely everything, then, they might at least preserve the heritage artifacts and sites that contribute productively to the cultural life in which they are rooted, in much the same way that Eastern State Penitentiary is used to raise pertinent questions on the justice of mass incarceration. Conserving heritage artifacts and sites for their place in a cultural ecology equally allows certain heritage objects to expire, such as offensive monuments.[17] It also allows for taking modest liberties with heritage materials. For example, the art installations at Eastern State require minor preparatory alterations to the material site. All this is to say that the question before the curatorial team at Eastern State is not how to preserve the heritage site for its own sake but to ask in what way might the site be relevant within its cultural milieu. Finding contemporary relevance does not require the curators to hide the site's dark past, but rather, in the words of art historian Annette Loeseke, to find a way to bring the "political inheritance" of the site to bear on "contemporary contexts."[18] To use the heritage site in this way—to illuminate contemporary conditions—requires moving beyond bare preservation by framing the site with descriptive, critical, and conversational narratives.

From Forensics to Narrative

There is a large literature on how best to stage or frame a heritage site.[19] Conn, for one, cautions against ambitious narratives that eclipse the artifacts or site, subordinating them to the narrative. This defeats what Conn calls the power of heritage

objects to, on their own, "convey knowledge, meaning, and understanding."[20] Better, he suggests, to prioritize the heritage objects, allowing a narrative to emerge from looking at and reflecting on their strategic presentation. As art historian Alan Wallach put it, "A successful exhibition is not a book on the wall, a narrative with objects as illustrations, but a carefully orchestrated deployment of objects, images, and texts that gives viewers opportunities to look, to reflect, and to work out meanings."[21] In line with this, the curators at Eastern State present a light narrative touch, with minimal signage and an unobtrusive audio guide. As I will show, so do the art installations and the interpretation center rely on the material site to make their critical points.

The curatorial program begins with a descriptive, self-guided audio tour providing historical and contextual information—straightforward facts about the site, such as its construction details, and its history—to help the viewer better understand what they are looking at. Impartial and factual, a descriptive narrative may nevertheless shape someone's impression of a site. The more a viewer knows, the more they may come to see and experience the site differently. A challenge for curators of dark heritage is to frame that heritage in such a way that elicits empathy. This is especially challenging for the curator of a prison museum, who must find a way to summon viewers' empathy for not only what prisons stand for—presumably the preservation of law and social order—but also for those individuals formerly imprisoned inside.

Any carceral institution—which includes prisons and jails, prisoner-of-war and internment camps, gulags and so forth—is susceptible to abuses of power. However, within liberal democracies, state prisons are understood to incarcerate only those who have violated commonly agreed-upon laws. In fact, a justification for the practice of state punishment in liberal democracies is that it preserves rule of law. As political philosopher Thomas Scanlon argues, the threat of punishment for breaking the law not only fosters compliance with the law but also conveys the weightiness of the rule of law itself.[22] Prisons are also associated with the protection of citizens from the harm of crime. Therefore, the visitor to a prison museum may enter with a predisposed idea of the site and what it represents, lacking, at first look, empathy for the incarcerated.

Sometimes simply informing visitors of the historic realities of life at a prison will provide a sobering perspective on the prison in question. Learning, for instance, that a person was incarcerated for breaking an outdated or unjust law will likely evoke some sympathy for the inmate. In 1881, Eric Hall was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment at Eastern State for what was at the time considered a crime: a consensual, same-sex relationship between adults. Conveying knowledge about the criminalization and imprisonment of people for actions not considered transgressions today typically elicits outrage on behalf of the incarcerated, not a sense of justice served. Accordingly, Eastern State's audio guide includes this sort of humanizing historical information.[23]

Complicating matters, certain visitors to a site of dark heritage may search for sensational stories of infamy or titillation at the site, which can stifle viewer empathy. Unlike experiences of empathy, which involve seeing others through their own eyes, sensationalism is voyeuristic, with the viewer looking at others from the outside, as

FIG. 4. — Cindy Stockton Moore (US American, b. 1975). Installation view of *Other Absences*, 2014, ink wash portraits on mylar and ledger on pedestal. Photograph by Jaime Alvarez, 2014. Art © Cindy Stockton Moore. Image courtesy of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, PA.

props in a story for their own thrill and gratification. Curators of dark heritage may cater to these inclinations as a way of attracting visitors while at the same time looking for ways to temper sensationalism. The exhibitions at Eastern State, for example, showcase celebrity inmates Al Capone and Slick Willie Sutton but give more overall attention to the prison's majority, lesser-known inmates. It must also be said that Eastern State does not put incarcerated people currently serving prison sentences on display, as it once did in its early days when national and foreign delegations visited, eager to study the new prison system. The practice of putting living inmates on display for the edification of the viewing public, which is a dehumanizing and morally troubling practice, continues at certain prisons to this day.[24]

Respectfully crafted, a biographical vignette such as the one describing Hall's time at Eastern State humanizes the imprisoned, inviting the visitor to imagine a person—however flawed—and to reflect on his or her path to imprisonment. Of course, vignettes are not always a defense of those who were historically imprisoned. Philadelphia-based artist Cindy Stockton Moore's installation *Other Absences* at Eastern State in 2014 featured portraits and biographical vignettes of fifty individuals killed by former inmates of the penitentiary (fig. 4). These vignettes are a reminder of the harm and suffering borne by the victims of crime. They, too, humanize the site. In either case, humanizing vignettes are an attempt to recognize the interests of all the stakeholders in the conversation on justice in the criminal legal system—including the injured, wrongdoers, and the public.

Although Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site does not advance any one theory of criminal justice over another, the site is historically associated with Quaker thought and its advocacy for prison reform. Contemporary Quaker thinkers, along with those of other pacifist Protestant orders, who are now aware of the harms of solitary confinement but still committed to prison reform, have more recently taken an interest in restorative justice.[25] Restorative justice is a public-minded, social model of criminal justice, carried out in forums where wrongdoers and the injured, or their proxies, deliberate the appropriate punishment for a crime. Like the penitentiary movement of the past, restorative justice prioritizes rehabilitation. However, the objective is no longer only to rehabilitate the individual lawbreaker for reentry into society but also to rehabilitate the community that has been damaged by the crime—or a society that has been damaged by practices such as mass incarceration—through dialogue on the appropriate response to the crime or societal problem. By contrast, the more familiar models of criminal justice, such as the deterrence and retributive models, are not primarily concerned with the rehabilitation of those who have committed crimes or the impacted community. The more familiar models aim to protect society, but not necessarily to restore it. Deterrence justifies punishment as a way to deter future crime, and retribution justifies punishment simply as just deserts for committing a crime.[26] Restoration, in addition to protection and justice, also aims to restore the well-being of individuals and communities in the aftermath of crime.

A central tenet of the restorative-justice movement is that even wrongdoers are stakeholders in society, and while they may be punished, they do not, as philosopher Jonathan Jacobs put it, forfeit "the regard and treatment distinctive of the civility of a liberal democracy."[27] That being said, the wrongfully injured are also stakeholders in society. A criminal-justice system that does not recognize the resentment of the wrongfully injured would likewise erode that person's dignity and standing in their community.[28] This is the point of Stockton Moore's installation, *Other Absences*. Her work shows a small sampling of the total number of murder victims associated with the penitentiary but serves as a sufficient reminder that the wrongfully injured—the victims who may not even live to see the aftermath of a crime, and the families and communities who do—are indelibly present in the conversation on crime and punishment.

From Description to Interpretation

In the late Middle Ages (circa 1300–1500) in Europe, prisons were meant for short-term detention, and were maintained as rudimentary lockups where wrongdoers could be held until their trial or punishment, which was likely to be the pillory or a flogging or hanging.[29] At times lockups also held debtors or dissidents for longer periods, but these were not purpose-built prisons. They were large rooms without amenities housed within castles, gatehouses, or military complexes, in which unsupervised prisoners lived communally and in squalid conditions. Early in the modern era (circa 1500–1800),

purpose-built prisons began to appear, although they were still foul, chaotic places. English reformers such as John Howard (1726–90) and Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845) advocated for more habitable living conditions in prisons as well as for more humane forms of punishment. Eventually, the idea came about that imprisonment itself could be used as a form of legal punishment. In Britain, the 1779 Penitentiary Act sanctioned imprisonment as an alternative to traditional forms of punishment such as the pillory and floggings. Imprisonment seemed on the surface to be a more humane form of punishment, but nonetheless imposed a sufficiently heavy penalty, considering the ever-increasing value attached to individual liberty in the modern period. By the late modern period (circa 1800–1945) a new type of prison appeared, primarily in Europe and its colonies in the Americas: the penitentiary, which was purpose-built for the supervised detention of inmates in solitary cells—barren but habitable—as a form of punishment.

There were variations in the penitentiary systems. The system at Eastern State, known as the separate system, was rigorous in keeping inmates isolated and separate from each other, and it became a model for a number of other prisons that not only emulated the penitentiary's system but also its distinctive radial plan, with long cellblocks arranged like spokes around a central supervisory hub (see fig. 1). All penitentiary systems were thought by reformers to convey two benefits. First, it was believed that the isolation of inmates from one another would prevent the spread of moral corruption among inmate populations. The earlier lockups, which housed all manner of offenders and lawbreakers in an unsupervised common room, were described in 1884 by American reformer Richard Vaux as "moral pest house[s]."[30] Similarly, French civil servants Gustave de Beaumont and Alexis de Tocqueville, after visiting Eastern State in 1831, commended the new penitentiary systems for preventing the "association of the wicked" and thus averting the blight of criminality among prison populations.[31] Second, cellular confinement would not merely punish and deter crime—it would also be an instrument to reform the individual criminal. Through solitude and contemplation, the wrongdoer could repent and be rehabilitated as a useful member of society. Solitary confinement, it was believed, would not merely contain the spread of criminality but cure it.

This was the ideal; the historical record of how the separate system performed in reality reveals disparities between theory and practice. A state government report on the alleged misconduct of Eastern State's first warden, Samuel Wood, describes many irregularities at the prison, including inmates fraternizing with one another and with prison guests.[32] Correspondingly, while Beaumont and Tocqueville find much to admire in the new penitentiary systems, their report also expresses misgivings. For one thing, the authors note that all that is required of an inmate to survive a penitentiary system is to display outward conformity to its penitential ideals, without necessarily taking them to heart, which would seem to foster hypocrisy as opposed to genuine penitence and reform.[33] After returning to France, Tocqueville went on to write *Democracy in America* (1835–40), in which he identifies the conditions necessary for democratic society to

flourish—conditions not found within the penitentiaries.[34] For example, a penitent's fixation on the self and isolation from others dulled their faculty for the associational life that Tocqueville thought central to democracy.[35] The question that the writings of Beaumont and Tocqueville raise is whether there is a better path to rehabilitation, one that kindles rather than extinguishes the character required for reentry into democratic society.

Eastern State now as a heritage site and museum poses a similar question. Is there a way to present the heritage not just as a historic site but as a living one that engages the public on present-day issues, particularly mass incarceration in the democratic state—which is a modern-day blight on democratic society itself?[36] It is increasingly apparent that, just as solitary confinement was found to be unsuited to the objective of rehabilitation, mass incarceration is proving to be unsuited to the objective of deterrence, instead weakening social structures that might be more effective in deterring crime. Accordingly, the descriptive path through the prison and grounds leads to an interpretation center in cellblock four, with a permanent interactive exhibition opened in 2016 titled *Prisons Today: Questions in the Age of Mass Incarceration* (fig. 5).[37] The minimalist approach to signage throughout the heritage site is here set aside in favor of a comprehensive interactive display consisting of educational graphics and didactics for the viewer to navigate (figs. 6, 7). In the adjacent yard stands a massive bar graph constructed of plate steel titled *The Big Graph,* installed in 2014 and displaying statistics updatable to 2030 based on national and world rates of incarceration and policies on capital punishment (fig. 8). The east side of *The Big Graph* charts every nation's rate of incarceration, showing the United States with the highest. The south side presents the growth in US incarceration rates since 1900 and the marked increase since the 1970s, precipitated by new laws and longer prison sentences. The north side shows the racial breakdown of the US prison population in 1970 and today, pointing to the disparities in incarceration rates among different racial groups over time. Essentially, *The Big Graph* is a representation of the penal history and its outcomes, which the visitor has just absorbed.

Both the state prison and the public museum have a mission, broadly speaking, to inform individual and public thought in the service of citizenship and nation building.[38] As a penitentiary, the focus of Eastern State was on the penitentiary inmate. As a public museum, its focus has shifted to the viewing public, in which dialogue is no longer suppressed but now encouraged. As a penitentiary, Eastern State once relied on isolated contemplation to reform an inmate's thought and behavior before their release back into society. As a heritage site, Eastern State now promotes open dialogue on the realities of prison life and history so that societal thinking may be deepened and possibly reformed on justice in the criminal legal system.

FIG. 5. — Exhibition didactic titled "Mass Incarceration Isn't Working," part of the permanent exhibition *Prisons Today: Questions in the Age of Mass Incarceration,* Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, 2016–present. Photograph by Darryl Moran, 2016. Courtesy of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, PA.

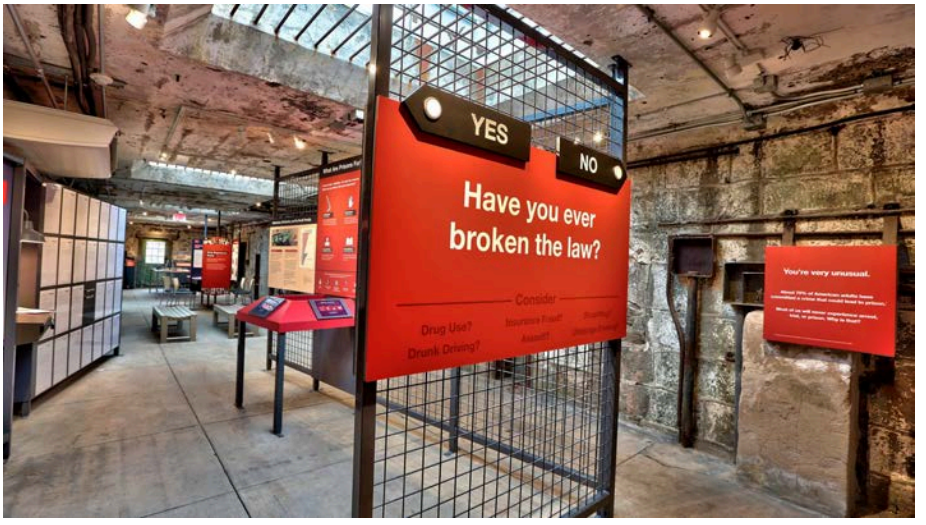

FIG. 6. — Exhibition didactic titled "Have you ever broken the law?," part of the permanent exhibition *Prisons Today: Questions in the Age of Mass Incarceration,* Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, 2016–present. Photograph by Darryl Moran, 2016. Courtesy of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, PA.

FIG. 7. — Exhibition didactic titled "What Are Prisons For?," part of the permanent exhibition *Prisons Today: Questions in the Age of Mass Incarceration*, Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, 2016–present. Photograph by Interactive Mechanics, n.d. Courtesy of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, PA.

FIG. 8. — *The Big Graph* installed in the prison yard adjacent to cellblock 4, seen from the northeast, Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, 2014–present. Powder-coated plate steel, 16 × 24 × 3 ft. Courtesy of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, PA.

The Conversational Frame

The viewing experience curated at Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site prepares visitors for the public work they are asked to undertake when they arrive in the interpretation center. For example, in the exhibitions, fostering empathy is a first step toward informed and fair judgments on the issues arising from the site and its presentation. Empathy allows individuals to feel and understand what life is like for others, and this helps them to grasp the full picture of all those who are impacted by crime and punishment. Still, something more than empathy is required for participation in public affairs. It requires the informed and sympathetic viewer to be more than a bystander—to be instead a witness, someone who will report on what is observed, and who will say something about, in this case, the principles, rules, and practices of criminal justice.[39]

Although the exhibition didactics do not communicate how the public ought to decide these affairs, they present mass incarceration as a troubling issue and carry on the conversation initiated by the reformers of the penitentiary movement on the need for prison reform. As Sara Jane Elk, past president of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, put it, rather than confirm settled viewpoints, *Prisons Today* urges dialogue, in the form of "civil and open interaction" across competing viewpoints.[40] Nor are the exhibition didactics rigged for certain outcomes; they merely lay the foundation for viewers to "think actively" and to arrive at their own informed and fair conclusions.[41] For all that, the exhibition is not, strictly speaking, neutral. Eastern State balances impartiality and partiality by taking a stand on the issue of mass incarceration, identifying it as troubling, yet leaving it open to the public to decide what to make of it.

The Critical Frame

The temporary art installations at Eastern State are site-specific; they use the site itself to create art that invites reflection on what the site is about. This is distinct from other genres of art related to prisons and imprisonment. There is, by contrast, art raising awareness about issues related to incarceration created by artists working within the art world but not tied to a prison site, such as the mural *Free Zehra Doğan* (2018) on the Houston Bowery Wall in New York by street artist Banksy.[42] There is also the genre of outsider prison art, created by prisoners but not always about prisons, and displayed within or beyond a prison site. *Capitalizing on Justice,* organized by the Urban Justice Center and exhibited in 2019 at the Gallatin Galleries at New York University, showcased work by artists incarcerated across the United States who used the limited materials available to them inside the prison sites to make their art.[43]

The artists behind the installations at Eastern State, departing from these models, create site-specific pieces that reveal deeper truths about the historic prison. Although based in history and fact, the installations cannot be misconstrued as archival descriptions of the site. A video art installation by Luba Drozd titled *Institute of Corrections* (2016–17) makes use of actual instructional videos created by the

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for its employees at correctional institutions.[44] The instructional videos cover a range of topics on the management of inmates, including the administrative tasks of admitting and releasing inmates and the handling of emergencies. Drozd reedits the footage to expose the subtext of the videos, namely "the system behind incarceration and the dialogue that goes on internally within the field of corrections itself."[45] The reedited video is satirical and at times dark. At no point would a viewer confuse it for a real instructional video in use then or now. Compared to Eastern State's informative but also creative and engaging audio guide, *The Voices of Eastern State*, which too incorporates historical material including testimonies from staff and past inmates as well as commentary from scholars who have studied the site, the art installation brings into the room uncomfortable truths through its artful transformation of the source material.

A model of how the art installations at Eastern State function to reveal underlying truths about the site is *Point—Counterpoint*, created in 2005 by architects Tricia Stuth and Ted Shelton, which formally intervenes with the penitentiary architecture.[46] The radial plan of Eastern State allowed staff in the central hub to see along the cellblock corridors. However, staff could not see inside each cell from the hub, and thus, inmates were not under constant surveillance as they might be in a panopticon. Conceived by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century, the panopticon is an architectural plan for institutions with inmates, such as prisons, hospitals, or schools.[47] It is composed of a circular building with a watchtower at the center, from which a single person can observe all the inmates of the building without the individuals knowing whether or not they are being observed. Bentham hypothesized that the mere prospect of constant surveillance would lead inmates to self-regulate their behavior. While Eastern State is not a panopticon, strictly speaking, it was nonetheless a place of surveillance, both by guardians—recalling that the penitentiary system came about precisely to provide surveillance as a corrective to the unsupervised lockups that were thought to be moral pest houses—and by the inmates themselves, as they self-surveilled their actions and moral development as penitents. In *Point—Counterpoint,* the architects amplify and upend the surveillance features of Eastern State. The installation consists of four large mirrors placed at a forty-five-degree angle along the axis of cellblock ten (fig. 9). From the central hub, looking down the corridor of cellblock ten, the mirrors block the normally unobstructed view of the corridor. At the same time, the mirrors reflect the corridor into cells five, seven, twelve, and fourteen. The mirrors, then, allow the occupant of a cell, whose view was historically obstructed, to see along the corridor (fig. 10). As Stuth and Shelton sum it up: "Thus, the view of the guard is captured while the prisoners' view is extended."[48] The installation is an inversion of the lived realities in the prison. *Point—Counterpoint* does not describe how things really were at the site; rather, it reverses how they were, to reveal and question the surveillance dynamics built into the prison structure.

Generally speaking, the installations at Eastern State animate the site's dark heritage without sensationalism. Consider, by contrast, the animating strategy at some

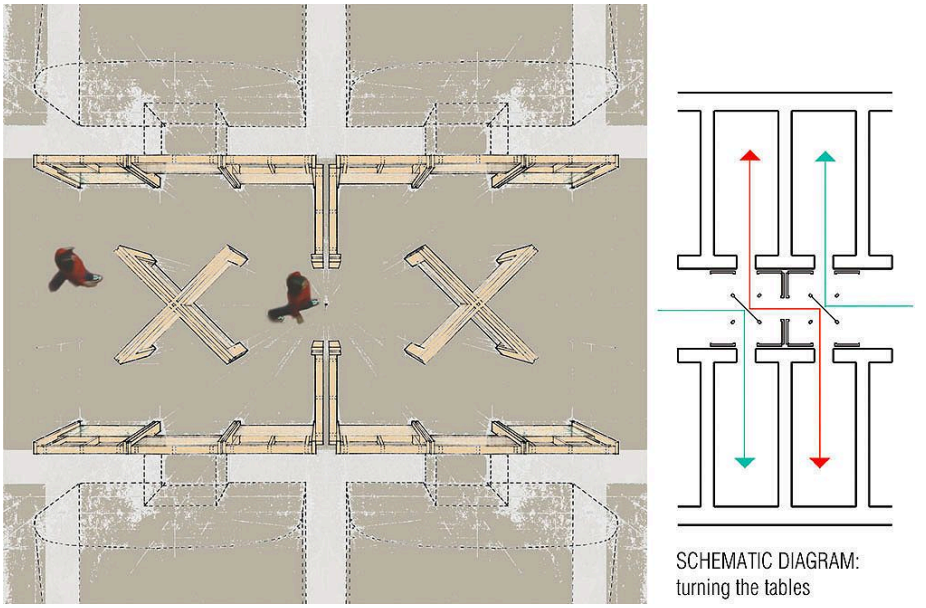

FIG. 9. — Ted Shelton (US American, b. 1969) and Tricia Stuth (US American, b. 1973). Installation plan, 2005, for *Point—Counterpoint* (2005). Courtesy of Ted Shelton and Tricia Stuth.

prison museums of staging mock trials and punishments. Criminology and criminal-justice scholars Kevin Walby and Justin Piché find that, instead of deepening the visitor's grasp of crime and punishment, these mock events simply encourage visitors to photograph themselves at play during the event, trivializing and obfuscating the realities of prison life.[49] Art installations such as *Point—Counterpoint*, by contrast, do not distract from the site. In their site-specificity, they encourage visitors to look closely at the site in a forensic, rather than fictitious or imitative, way. In doing so, such installations reveal rather than obfuscate the realities of prison life.

Eastern State also hosts a mock event on Halloween, originally called Terror Behind the Walls, in which visitors could imagine themselves communing with uneasy prison ghosts. The event was discontinued in 2020 due to the pandemic and then reinstated in 2021 as Halloween Nights, running from the end of September to the beginning of November, featuring haunted houses, a flashlight tour, and beer gardens. The event is not part of any curatorial program or meant to be educational like the mock trials studied by Walby and Piché; it is an unapologetic use of the heritage site for entertainment. As German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche argued in a short treatise *The Use and Abuse of History for Life,* history should "serve life" and the present, rather than be pursued for its own sake.[50] We should feel free, therefore, to use heritage sites and artifacts in a way that aligns with contemporary interests. That said, Neitzsche thought of this service as ennobling life, a model example of which is the way that the art installations at Eastern State use the site to enlarge our understanding of the penitentiary and prison life. Halloween Nights, by contrast, is a glaringly voyeuristic event, at odds with the core curatorial programing. Be that as it may, the event fosters a

FIG. 10. — Ted Shelton (US American, b. 1969) and Tricia Stuth (US American, b. 1973). View of *Point—Counterpoint* (2005) from cell five, looking out to cellblock ten. Courtesy of Ted Shelton and Tricia Stuth. Photograph © Frank Laquinta / Halkin Photography.

visceral familiarity with the site. Granted, this familiarity is different from the attentive looking fostered by the curatorial programing as well as from the critical engagement that Taliaferro imagines is at the heart of an open museum, but in any case, the event is not presented as a curatorial program, and it is arguably valuable in its own way.

There is a difference between an open museum concerned with res publica—public life and affairs—and a publicly accessible space where people may gather for

various reasons, such as a museum, library, or shopping center. An open museum is not only a place where people may gather but particularly a place where people may gather as a public defined by a shared interest in and varying stances on a public issue. Not all museums are suited to be open museums in this sense. Even those referred to as museums for the public good can be places of entirely private contemplation and appreciation. As an example, public gardens, which may be accessible to the public and may attend to the interests and demands of their visitors, are not necessarily places where public affairs and duties are explored. Eastern State Penitentiary, given its inheritance, calls for this exploration. Indeed, the public is often conceived of as a body or sphere that checks the power of the state, not the least of which is state-sanctioned punishment. As political philosopher Jürgen Habermas envisioned it, the public sphere consists of people freely gathering to identify and deliberate public affairs precisely in order to influence political action.[51] The particular genius of Eastern State Penitentiary is the way in which it brings material culture to bear on res publica. A direct encounter with the historic site suffuses and distinctively shapes the public conversation.

Thing Knowledge

The lack of consensus in heritage preservation on whether to prioritize the plan of a site or its materials rests on a conceptual distinction between the abstract *work* of art—an idea or plan with purpose and meaning—and the concrete art *object*—a specific set of materials given form at a particular place and time.[52] The architectural plan of Eastern State Penitentiary can be distinguished from the materials used in its construction. While the penitentiary stone may be icy cold to touch, the radial plan as such cannot possess those physical qualities. Conversely, while the Gothic Revival entrance may be foreboding, the stone alone is not. The penitentiary as a work, then, possesses representational and expressive properties that its bare materials do not. An idealist would insist that it is the work that matters more than its materials. The materialist would disagree, stating that it is not simply the non-spatiotemporal work that we value but the concrete historical object(s). An abstract idea, it seems, is found in thought and only then instantiated in materials, whereas a concrete art object is produced with materials by one or more artists working in a given time and place.[53] By and large, conservators and curators lean toward materialism, as do their audiences, all drawn to the historical-material object. Even so, all are typically sympathetic to aspects of the idealist position. Admittedly, in the appreciation of heritage *objects*, viewers will also attend to the abstract features of the *work*. It is the penitentiary that they wish to see, not merely, in the worst-case scenario, an unstructured pile of rubble from which it was once constructed.

One reason for our captivation with the historical-material object is offered by English writer Jeanette Winterson, who explains her own love of a signed first edition of Virginia Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929) as the psychometry of original editions.[54] Reading Woolf's purple-ink inscription, Winterson notes, "here she is and

here she was."[55] It is the indexical presence of Woolf "in your hands, a book that was in their hands," that gives the book "an extra power."[56] Historical-material objects have indexical properties that abstract objects, such as penitentiary plans and literary works, do not. Audiences pick up on these indexical properties as they wander through the abandoned corridors and cells of Eastern State Penitentiary, sensing, for example, the oppressiveness of the prison, all of which deepen their sensitivity to the issues arising from prisons, such as the toll solitary confinement takes on a human.

For Winterson the attraction to art objects is visceral and emotional rather than strictly intellectual. To love a book as an object is to love it not for its biographical, archival, or even historical value but as, in Winterson's words, a talisman or doorway, as a genie bottle, or as a living thing.[57] Heritage artifacts, then, have unique properties—indexical and visceral—that are not available to those who only read about these objects in books. This is not to diminish the value and pleasure of knowledge acquired from books, which will shape how a person sees and experiences a heritage artifact or site. The point is only that direct acquaintance with a heritage object is uniquely informative, and, in the case of Eastern State's stabilized ruin, indispensable in that it renders the public conversation less abstract, balancing principles with lived realities.[58]

While most scholars would agree that artifacts hold a wealth of empirical information to be uncovered by those who study these objects, or that they have unique properties (as Winterson argues), philosopher Davis Baird goes further to argue that artifacts may even hold knowledge.[59] However, knowledge is typically understood to be a mental object in the form of a belief held in the mind—specifically a *justified true belief*, defined as a belief that is justified with reason and evidence, and is also true—which artifacts patently do not have. Baird does not reject the traditional definition of knowledge but appends to it an additional kind of knowledge that can be embodied in physical objects. Whereas humans hold knowledge as a matter of justified true belief, artifacts hold "thing knowledge" as a matter of *true performance*.[60] Baird proposes that an artifact can be shown to be true or not in its functioning; for example, a "true wheel" is such when it "spins properly, dependably, regularly," and, in this way, the well-balanced bicycle wheel successfully spinning on its axis is true in performing its rotations. Further, in "successfully accomplish[ing] a function" or in being true, the "artifact bears knowledge."[61]

Baird is particularly interested in the knowledge that scientific instruments hold—although his argument is applicable to other kinds of artifacts with comparable functions. Not only are these artifacts instrumental to the creation of new knowledge in their users, they hold their own kind of thing knowledge "built into the reliable behavior of [the] artifact."[62] Baird's novel materialist epistemology can be applied to the art installations at Eastern State. A prison is an instrument, if you will, with a function, whether the rehabilitation of criminals or the deterrence of crime or the exacting of retribution. The installations ask, What thing knowledge does Eastern State Penitentiary hold? The answer is found through testing the instrument. Just as the knowledge a wheel holds is found by spinning the wheel, the knowledge Eastern State

may hold is found by tinkering with and testing the workings of the site. As Baird summarizes, "If I want to understand or, more important, if I want to use or modify the knowledge an artifact bears, I am better off attending to the material thing itself."[63]

All this is perhaps not so novel to curators who have long focused on object-centered inquiry and knowledge acquisition. That said, philosopher Amie Thomasson cautions against viewing artifacts too narrowly as definitively functional objects, suggesting that we view them instead more broadly, as intentionally created objects with "some intended features," including structural and sensory features, as well as how the object "is to be regarded" by audiences (receptive features), but "which may or may not include an intended function."[64] Further, intended features are sometimes not enough to classify an artifact, and we also rely on public norms, or how an artifact will typically be treated irrespective of a creator's intentions. All this allows for "finer-grained distinctions" in the classification of artifacts, enabling, for example, the grouping of all prisons into a kind even when they have different functions, or the grouping of decommissioned prisons like Eastern State, now "intended 'for show,'" with their "working cousins."[65] Thomasson adds that the receptive and normative features of artifacts highlight their public nature. A roadside sign, for example, that is recognized as a stop sign (receptive feature) and associated with established rules and expectations (normative features) illustrates how artifacts can embody social agreements and behavioral expectations beyond their physical properties and why they are of such interest to curators, historians, and social scientists. Artifacts are not "mere things with certain physical-functional capacities"; they are cultural, historical objects "infused with significance" for ways of human life.[66]

The Open Museum

The depth of preparedness that a visit to Eastern State Penitentiary provides to the participant in the conversation on criminal justice is notable. The building and grounds memorialize the lived experiences of solitary confinement and provide material evidence for visitors to take into account in their judgments on issues of imprisonment and criminal justice. The audio guide frames and contextualizes the evidence. The art installations turn the evidence over, looking for truths about prison life and the separate system held by the building and grounds. This discovery process is then brought to bear on the rulings made in the interpretation center. Therefore, the conversation at Eastern State on criminal justice does not begin in the interpretation center. It starts by stepping onto the grounds and looking at the material remains of the penitentiary along a path through the site, finding its denouement in the interpretation center. Heritage sites, it seems, are integral to an open society. If the point of an open society is to commend critical reflection and dialogue on matters of value, then preparedness for such reflection and dialogue through direct encounters with heritage is indispensable.

Rita Elizabeth Risser, PhD, writes on the history and philosophy of the arts and its institutions, and was most recently assistant professor in the College of Humanities at United Arab Emirates University in Abu Dhabi.

Notes

1. Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, mission statement, https://www.easternstate.org/about-eastern-state.

2. Eastern State, mission statement.

3. Charles Taliaferro, "The Open Museum and Its Enemies: An Essay in the Philosophy of Museums," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 79 (2016): 39. See also Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* [1945], with a new introduction by Alan Ryan and an essay by E. H. Gombrich (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

4. Charles Dickens, "Philadelphia, and Its Solitary Prison," in *American Notes for General Circulation* [1842] (London: Chapman & Hall, 1855), 68.

5. Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 27.

6. On the spectacle of prison architecture, see Michelle Brown, *The Culture of Punishment: Prison, Society and Spectacle* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

7. Jeffrey Ian Ross, "Why and How Prison Museums/Tourism Contribute to the Normalization of the Carceral/Shadow Carceral State: The Primacy of Economic Realities," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Prison Tourism*, ed. Jacqueline Z. Wilson, Sarah Hodgkinson, Justin Piché, and Kevin Walby (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 960.

8. Philosopher Nelson Goodman made the argument that original materials hold valuable empirical information that is invariably lost in a replica. Nelson Goodman, "Art and Authenticity," chap. 3 in *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968). Viewers may not immediately perceive this information—for example, details about the artistic process or clues about the object's provenance—but it comes to light in the fullness of time, told through the original materials. Other scholars, however, are skeptical that what we actually value in a heritage object is the minutiae of the original materials as opposed to the original idea or meaning represented by the object, which can be evoked through a replica, in which case the replica is preferable to a deteriorated original. And so the disagreement goes.

9. Rem Koolhaas, "Preservation Is Overtaking Us," *Future Anterior* 1, no. 2 (2004): xiv, 1–3.

10. Koolhaas, "Preservation Is Overtaking Us," 1.

11. Koolhaas, "Preservation Is Overtaking Us," 1–2.

12. Robert Jan van Pelt in "Cash Crisis Threat to Auschwitz," debate, BBC News, 26 January 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7827534.stm.

13. *Seeing Auschwitz*, New York and Paris, January–February 2020, https://seeing-auschwitz.com/credits/.

14. Ross, "Why and How Prison Museums/Tourism Contribute to the Normalization of the Carceral/Shadow Carceral State," 948.

15. Steven Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 18.

16. Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?*, 19.

17. On the fate of offensive monuments, see Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998).

18. Annette Loeseke, "Transhistoricism: Using the Past to Critique the Present," in *The Contemporary Museum: Shaping Museums for the Global Now*, ed. Simon Knell (London: Routledge, 2018), 142.

19. See for example, Bruce W. Ferguson, "Exhibition Rhetorics: Material Speech and Utter Sense," in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, ed. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), 175–90.

20. Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?*, 7. See also Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Ivan Gaskell, Sara Schechner, Sarah Anne Carter, and Samantha van Gerbig, *Tangible Things: Making History through Objects* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

21. Alan Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradictions: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998),

121, quoted in Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?*, 7.

22. Thomas M. Scanlon, "Punishment and the Rule of Law [1999]," in *The Difficulty of Tolerance: Essays in Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 223.

23. The original script for *Voices of Eastern State* was written by Sean Kelley in 2004. Kelley was program director and subsequently vice president and director of interpretation at Eastern State from 1995 to 2023. The script was narrated by actor Steve Buscemi and included oral histories from past wardens, guards, and prisoners as well as commentary from experts on the history of prison construction and administration. In 2019 the script was updated by Annie Anderson with new information regarding LGBTQ prisoners (see Peter Crimmins, "Eastern State Penitentiary Casts a Light on its LGBTQ History," *WHYY,* 11 May 2019, https://whyy.org/articles/eastern-state-penitentiary-casts-a-light-on-its-lgbtq-history/). Anderson was a researcher and subsequently a manager for research and public programming at Eastern State from 2011 to 2020. In 2021 the script was updated and revised by Kelley and rerecorded by Buscemi, with language more sensitive to the experience of the incarcerated, and with additional perspectives on the prison.

24. The practice ranges from prison awareness programs intended to deter those in at-risk populations from prison sentences to programs for entertainment such as the Angola Prison Rodeo in Louisiana and prison reality-television programs. For a survey of these practices, see Jeffrey Ian Ross, "Varieties of Prison Voyeurism: An Analytic/Interpretive Framework," *The Prison Journal* 95 (2015): 405–9. For the perspective of the objectified prisoner, see Craig W. J. Minogue, "Human Rights and Life as an Attraction in a Correctional Theme Park," *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons* 12 (2003): 44–57.

25. See, for example, Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice,* rev. ed. (New York: Good Books, 2015).

26. Philosopher Erin Kelly argues that it is the prevalence of retributive thinking in contemporary criminal justice, and a diminished interest in rehabilitation, that have led to the current state of mass incarceration in parts of the world. Erin Kelly, "The Retributive Sentiments," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy and Science of Punishment*, ed. Farah Focquaert, Elizabeth Shaw, and Bruce N. Waller (New York: Routledge, 2020), 102. See also Erin Kelly, *The Limits of Blame: Rethinking Punishment and Responsibility* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

27. Jonathan Jacobs, "Resentment, Punitiveness, and Forgiveness: An Exploration of the Moral Psychology of Punishment," in *The Routledge Handbook of Criminal Justice Ethics*, ed. Jonathan Jacobs and Jonathan Jackson (London: Routledge, 2017), 73.

28. Jacobs, "Resentment, Punitiveness, and Forgiveness," 65. See also Scanlon, "Punishment and the Rule of Law," 234.

29. Norman B. Johnston, *Forms of Constraint: A History of Prison Architecture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 7–16.

30. Richard Vaux, "The Pennsylvania Prison System," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 21 (1884): 651.

31. Gustave de Beaumont and Alexis de Tocqueville, *On the Penitentiary System in the United States and Its Application in France*, trans. Francis Lieber (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1833), 21.

32. Thomas B. McElwee, *A Concise History of the Eastern State Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, Together with a Detailed Statement of the Proceedings of the Committee, Appointed by the Legislature Dec 6, 1834* (Philadelphia: Neall and Massey, 1835), cited in *Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Structures Report*, vol. 1, commissioned by the Eastern State Penitentiary Task Force and the City of Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Marianna Thomas Architects, 1994), 74–75, https://www.easternstate.org/sites/easternstate/files/inline-files/history-vol1.pdf

33. Beaumont and Tocqueville, *On the Penitentiary System in the United States and Its Application in France*, 57–58.

34. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Peter Bradley, trans. Henry Reeves (New York: Knopf & Doubleday Publishing Group, 1994).

35. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, esp. vol. 2, section 2, chaps. 2–8.

36. For a survey of the issues of mass incarceration, particularly as they arise in the democratic state, see Albert Dzur, Ian Loader and Richard Sparks, eds., *Democratic Theory and Mass Incarceration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

37. Nathan Griffiths (reporting and interactive), *Prisons Today: Questions in the Age of Mass Incarceration*, virtual tour, The Associated Press, 6 May 2016, https://interactives.ap.org/2016/prisons-today/.

38. Sociologist Michael Welch notes that these institutions are often located within the same vicinity of a city plan. Michael Welch, *Escape to Prison: Penal Tourism and the Pull of Punishment* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 7–9. For example, Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site is located about five blocks from the Philadelphia Museum of Art. On the citizen-building mission of the public museum, see also Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995); and David Carrier, *Museum Skepticism: A History of the Display of Art in Public Galleries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

39. Brown, *The Culture of Punishment,* 21.

40. Sara Jane Elk, "Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," *Revue Histoire Pénitentiaire* 11 (2016), republished in *Criminocorpus,* 24 March 2017, https://criminocorpus.hypotheses.org/26013.

41. Jeremy Waldron, "It's All for Your Own Good," *New York Review of Books,* 9 October 2014, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/10/09/cass-sunstein-its-all-your-own-good/. For a summary of visitor outcomes see Sean Kelley, "Beyond Neutrality," *History News* 72, no. 2 (2017): 23–27.

42. Andrew R. Chow, "New Banksy Mural in New York Protests Turkish Artist's Imprisonment," *New York Times*, 15 March 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/15/arts/design/banksy-mural-new-york-zehra-dogan.html.

43. "*Capitalizing on Justice:* An Art Exhibit Featuring Incarcerated Artists," NYU Gallatin Galleries, 2019, https://gallatin.nyu.edu/utilities/events/2019/03/capitalizing-on-justice–an-art-exhibit-featuring-incarcerated-a.html.

44. "Luba Drozd, *Institute of Corrections*," Eastern State Penitentiary website, https://www.easternstate.org/explore/artist-installations/luba-drozd-institute-corrections.

45. Artist Statement, *Institute of Corrections*, website of Luba Drozd, http://www.lubadrozd.com/instituteofcorrections.

46. For images of the installation, see Tricia Stuth and Ted Shelton, "Point—Counterpoint: A Conversation with Haviland," *Journal of Architectural Education* 59 (2006), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1531-314X.2006.00051.x.

47. Jeremy Bentham, "Letter 1: The Idea of the Inspection Principle [1787]," in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham,* vol. 4, *Panopticon, Constitution, Colonies, Codification,* ed. John Bowring (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1843), 40. A handful of panopticons were built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but not always in their pure form. The panopticon is better known as a model of institutional power and social control, particularly following Michel Foucault's analysis in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1975).

48. Stuth and Shelton, "Point—Counterpoint," 38.

49. Kevin Walby and Justin Piché, "Staged Authenticity in Penal History Sites Across Canada," *Tourist Studies* 15 (2015): 242.

50. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History* [1873], 2nd ed., trans. Adrian Collins (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 3. Nietzsche identified three approaches to history: the monumental, which looks to great persons and deeds in the past as either shining examples or cautionary tales for the present; the antiquarian, which preserves and reveres the stories and materials of the past and their continuity with the present; and the critical, which critiques past traditions in service of present interests (Nietzsche, *Use and Abuse,* 12, and sections 2 and 3). At Eastern State, the monumental approach can be found in the presentation of celebrity biographies; the antiquarian approach is found in preserving the material-historical identity of the site as well as in the descriptive narrative framing the site; and the critical approach is found in the art installations and the interactive exhibition in the interpretation center.

51. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 176.

52. Peter Lamarque, *Work and Object: Explorations in the Metaphysics of Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

53. For a fuller treatment of the distinction between abstract ideas and concrete materials in the ontology of artworks, see Amie Thomasson, "The Ontology of Art," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 78–92.

54. Jeanette Winterson, "The Psychometry of Books," in *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), 119–32.

55. Winterson, "The Psychometry of Books," 131.

56. Winterson, "The Psychometry of Books," 132, 131. Psychologists George E. Newman and Paul Bloom would describe Winterson's attraction to first editions as symptomatic of the psychology

of contagion, the belief that subtle qualities can be transferred to an object by physical contact. The authors contend that this belief explains people's preference for original artworks delivered from the hand of the artist over replicas or forgeries. See George E. Newman and Paul Bloom, "Art and Authenticity: The Importance of Originals in Judgments of Value," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 141 (2011): 558–69.

57. Winterson, "The Psychometry of Books," 119–20.

58. Parenthetically, the argument is for direct acquaintance with the heritage object as a heritage work, and not, say, as a haunted house or beer garden.

59. Davis Baird, *Thing Knowledge: A Philosophy of Scientific Instruments* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). For Goodman's argument on empirical information and objects, see this essay, note 8.

60. Baird, "Thing Knowledge," chap. 6 in *Thing Knowledge*.

61. Baird, *Thing Knowledge,* 122.

62. Baird, *Thing Knowledge,* 12.

63. Baird, *Thing Knowledge,* 148.

64. Amie L. Thomasson, "Public Artifacts, Intentions, and Norms," in *Artefact Kinds: Ontology and the Human-Made World*, ed. Maarten Franssen et al. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International, 2014), 58, 60.

65. Thomasson, "Public Artifacts, Intentions, and Norms," 61.

66. Thomasson, "Public Artifacts, Intentions, and Norms," 73, 59.

Shorter Notice

Like Father, Like Daughter: A Sketchbook Shared by Raymond and Rosa Bonheur, Rediscovered

Alexandra Morrison

In early June 1900, a two-week-long auction was coming to a close at the Galerie Georges Petit but still drawing crowds—everyone in Paris wanted to see the art hitherto cached in the studio of Rosa Bonheur (1822–99).[1] The painter had risen to great prominence in France, England, and the United States with *The Horse Fair* (1853–55) and filled her home and studio, the Château de By, with a menagerie of animals that rivaled the zoo at the Jardin des Plantes. The most successful woman artist of the century by any measure, she had also expressly forbidden such a public and large-scale sale.[2] But shortly after Bonheur's death in May 1899, the inheritor of her estate, German-American painter Anna Klumpke (1856–1942), caved to mounting legal pressure and enlisted dealers Tedesco Frères to offer some two thousand paintings, works on paper, and sculpture for sale to the public.[3] Deprived of opportunities to see Bonheur's work in France for nearly fifty years, Parisians flocked to the gallery for the chance to view, at last, the unseen oeuvre of the *chevalier* turned *officier* of the Legion of Honor.[4] On Thursday, 7 June, or Friday, 8 June, an assortment of sketchbooks went under the hammer.

There were sixteen in all, of varying sizes and origins. According to the detailed auction catalog, whose essays and lot notes were published in French and English, some were curated volumes preserving selections of Bonheur's sketches from multiple decades. Others were *carnets* with dedicated subjects, such as lot 1842, featuring lions. Most bore the decorated artist's monogram, but some carried that of her lifelong partner Jeanne-Nathalie Micas (1824–89).[5] One of the last sold was lot 1847, a "small notebook covered with green corrugated paper, gilt-edged," measuring 9.5 by 12.5 centimeters.[6] The catalog provided the additional information:

> Sixty-eight pages of sketches. This notebook which belonged to Raymond Bonheur, the father of Rosa, and which contains with [*sic*] autographic notes, pen drawings by him, was also used by Rosa; the sketches by her therein are numerous. The father owned the book when he lived rue Rumfort [*sic*]; several drawings by Rosa are probably of 1844.[7]

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The dual authorship of this object has been lost in recent history. Since its acquisition by the Getty Research Institute (GRI), it has been mistakenly attributed to Rosa Bonheur alone and dated as its lot number from the 1900 sale (fig. 1). One of four known sketchbooks shared by the artist and her father, Raymond Bonheur (1796–1849), and the only of this kind in a public collection, the volume is a unique material document of their working relationship.[8] A painter of modest renown, Raymond nurtured his eldest child's precocious talent and raised with a similar artistic ethos her siblings Auguste (1824–84), Isidore (1827–1901), and Juliette (1830–91), each of whom became artists in their own right. Restoring the sketchbook's dual authorship not only sheds new light on the artistic rapport of father and daughter but also provides context for the beginnings of Rosa's great Salon successes *The Horse Fair* and *Haymaking in the Auvergne* (1855).

FIG. 1. — Cover of a shared sketchbook belonging to Raymond Bonheur (French, 1796–1849) and Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–99), ca. 1835–55. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

A faint annotation in the final pages of the sketchbook—"J'appartiens à R. Bonheur" (I belong to R. Bonheur)—speaks to the volume's dual authorship as well as the challenge of retracing its origins and use by both Rosa and Raymond Bonheur.[9] Nevertheless, the Getty's sketchbook may be definitively identified as lot 1847 from Rosa Bonheur's estate sale. Its worn green cover with decorative edges and eighty-four interior pages containing dozens of notes and sketches in various media, mostly

graphite and ink, correspond to the auction catalog's description. While none of the drawings or notes is signed, some evince multiple hands on the same page, such as the two markedly different scripts juxtaposed on leaf 5r (fig. 2). The sticker affixed to the front cover carries the lot number "1 • 847," whose inscription, "Rosa Bonheur, acheté à sa vente après décès" (Rosa Bonheur, bought at her posthumous sale), suggests that it may have remained initially in France after the sale in 1900.

Little is known about the sketchbook's provenance in the early twentieth century or the circumstances that led to the loss of its joint attribution. Retracing a timeline of its early history, however, illuminates the nature of this object, its use by the Bonheurs, and its significance to Rosa's oeuvre. It seems likely that the *carnet* was purchased by Raymond before 1841—possibly as early as 1835—and that it was used into the 1850s. A seal on the verso of the front free endpaper indicates that it was produced by the book and stationery shop Chartier, which operated at 117, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, the address partially legible at the stamp's lower edge, from 1835 through the early 1840s.[10] Corroborating this dating, the address "rue rumford 13," annotated below "I belong to R. Bonheur," became the family's residence in 1841.[11] A different inscription, in Rosa's distinctive hand, points to the sketchbook's use into the 1850s: the name and address of critic and writer Arsène Houssaye (1815–96), who in 1856 became inspector general for the fine arts.[12] It is possible that the address's notation coincided with his new appointment to oversee the École de Dessin pour les Jeunes Filles, which Raymond, and later Rosa, directed.

Establishing that this object was in use for a period of more than ten years creates a framework within which to consider its contents, both materially and iconographically. Drawings, studies, and day-to-day notes are distributed throughout. The bulk of blank pages fall in the middle, and the orientation of entries on the leaves from the second half are often inverted. The drawings are in varying stages of completion and detail in ink, pencil, or watercolor. On the basis of style, subject, or medium, some drawings may be identified as the work of father or daughter. Taken together, the pages reflect two artists at work simultaneously, unlike the other notebooks that Rosa and Raymond Bonheur were known to have shared, which also appeared at auction in 1900.

Rosa's father emerges as the best candidate for the ink-and-wash compositions in the sketchbook, as suggested by the lot description in the auction catalog. Given the date of the object's manufacture, Raymond was most likely its first owner. The inscription of its belonging to R. Bonheur and the accompanying address suggest that leaf 83r was Raymond's starting point, further supported by the detailed landscapes in sepia ink and wash that appear only in the second half of the sketchbook, of which his composition depicting the chiseled face of a mountain below a band of tall clouds on leaf 81v is representative (fig. 3). The foreground, a short incline bordered at the left by trees and moss, creates the perch for this view. Although he was the father and teacher of a *peintre animalière* (animal painter), Raymond made his career with such vistas. The construction of this landscape sketch is similar to that of his painting *Romantic Landscape* (1834), now in the collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux, reinforcing

FIG. 2. — Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–99) and Raymond Bonheur (French, 1796–1849). Shared sketchbook, ca. 1835–55, 4v and 5r. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

FIG. 3. — Raymond Bonheur (French, 1796–1849). Ink-and-wash drawing of trees, a mountainscape, and clouds from sketchbook shared by Rosa Bonheur (1822–99) and Raymond Bonheur, ca. 1835–55, 81v. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

the identification of Raymond as its author. In one of the other shared sketchbooks sold at Rosa's estate sale, lot 1841, the sepia drawings were exclusively attributed to Raymond. The catalog proposed that this album bearing the equivocal monogram "RB" had originated as a gift for Raymond, as it contained many sketches that the catalog dated to the late 1820s and attributed to the Bonheur patriarch.[13]

Raymond's predilection for heightening pencil drawings with ink recurs in a sketch on leaf 80v—a portrait of a child greatly resembling Rosa (fig. 4). Crowned by short curls and framed by a delicate lace collar, the child's rounded, youthful face turns downward. The fullness of her face recalls Raymond's portrait of Rosa as a young girl with her brother Auguste (fig. 5), more so than that of a grown Rosa painted by Auguste years later and exhibited at the Salon in 1848 (fig. 6).[14] The figure in the sketchbook portrait crouches, her left arm balanced on her knee, and outstretches her right palm, as though to feed a small, unpictured animal. The mountainscape and Rosa's cameo support the assertion that this was originally Raymond's sketchbook, possibly one that he intended to use for drawings in this medium, and also suggest that the volume predates the family's relocation to rue Rumford in 1841, when Rosa was nineteen years old.

If these pages may be attributed to Raymond on the basis of their style, content, and media, then what is considered today the first half of the sketchbook—filled with drawings in pencil and watercolor and rendered in the opposite orientation—seems to belong to Rosa. The first notable composition, a double portrait, supports this premise

FIG. 4. — Raymond Bonheur (French, 1796–1849). Ink-and-pencil drawing of a crouching figure from sketchbook shared by Rosa Bonheur (1822–99) and Raymond Bonheur, ca. 1835–55, 80v. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

FIG. 5. — Raymond Bonheur (French, 1796–1849). *Portrait of Rosa and Auguste Bonheur as Children*, 1826, oil on canvas, 94.8 × 80.6 cm. Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bx E 1168. Image © Mairie de Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Photo by F. Deval.

FIG. 6. — Auguste Bonheur (French, 1824–84). *Portrait of Rosa Bonheur*, 1848, oil on canvas, 130.5 × 98.3 cm. Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bx E 1169. Image © Mairie de Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts. Photo by F. Deval.

(fig. 7). Dressed in a bodice and skirt and seated on the ground, the woman at the left steadies a paint or watercolor box with an open lid between her knees. Her right hand holds a brush pointed toward the canvas or notebook page that would be fitted into such a lid's interior frame. The figure to her side seems to look on or out to the draftsperson. Two women central to Rosa's life, Jeanne-Nathalie Micas and her mother, Henriette Micas (née Divalon), are likely the subjects in the depiction. Jeanne-Nathalie, Rosa's childhood friend who would become her partner of fifty years, was also an artist and is said to have assisted Rosa in the studio on occasion.[15] She also served as a frequent subject for Bonheur: the profile of the seated figure at left bears a strong resemblance to the portrait of Jeanne-Nathalie made by Rosa around 1850, now in the Musée National de Fontainebleau, and to more detailed profiles filling a nearby page of the sketchbook.[16] The Micas matriarch, as the probable contender for the other seated figure, was a forceful presence in their lives; as Rosa's adopted mother, she resided at Jeanne-Nathalie and Bonheur's home, the Château de By, from 1860 until her death in 1875.[17]

FIG. 7. — Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–99). Pencil drawing of two seated figures from sketchbook shared by Rosa Bonheur and Raymond Bonheur (1796–1849), ca. 1835–55, 2r. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

This impromptu portrait could have been made by Rosa as she completed other studies in watercolor in plein air, such as the detailed rendering of a bird on a subsequent page of the sketchbook (fig. 8). The subject required a dozen different colors, each of which is carefully annotated in pencil. The scrupulous notes in Rosa's handwriting disclose a young artist learning to capture the natural world on a two-dimensional surface or familiarizing herself with the many shades of the medium. Numerous drawings after other works of art, which a young Rosa would have made in the Musée du Louvre or elsewhere, similarly capture the hand of an artist in training. On other pages, she produced pencil sketches of a decorative vase with figures in relief, and a standing Egyptian statuary.[18]

The GRI sketchbook represents a working, functional object, one that father and daughter could have exchanged, examined, and discussed in their familial studio, distinct from the other three shared notebooks sold at auction in 1900. The auction catalog's notes provide ample information that point to the other three volumes having been assembled, rather than used, by either Raymond or Rosa.[19] The first to appear

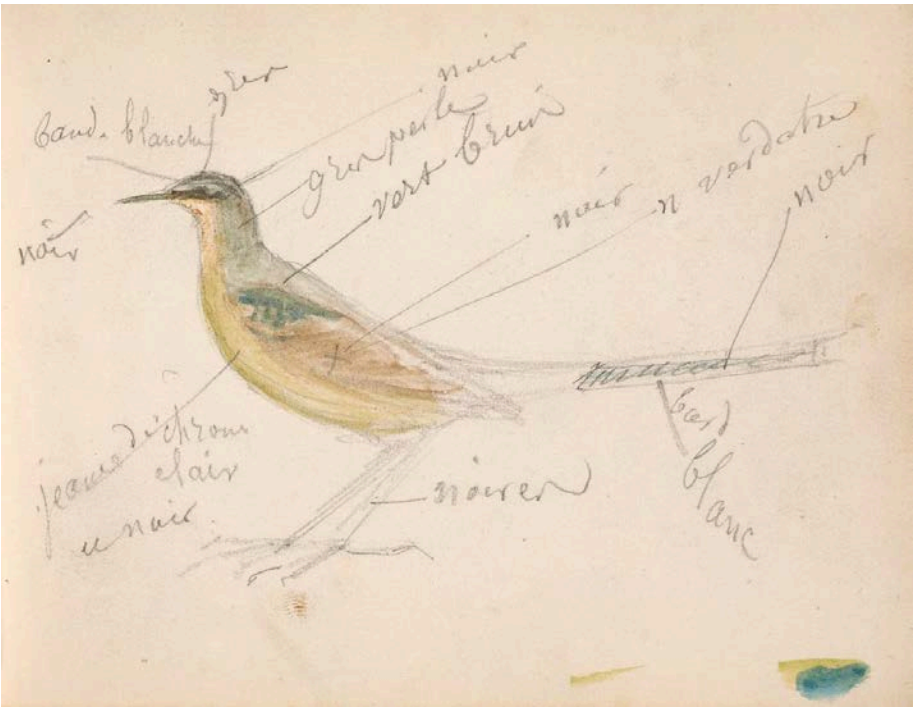

FIG. 8. — Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–99). Watercolor and pencil drawing of a bird, with annotations for color, from sketchbook shared by Rosa Bonheur and Raymond Bonheur (1796–1849), ca. 1835–55, 15r. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

in the sale, lot 1839, contains nearly sixty sketches by Raymond, some predating his daughter's birth, as well as drawings by Rosa made in the Louvre, likely from the last years of the 1830s, based on her surviving copyist registration.[20] The second, lot 1840, bore Rosa's baptismal name, "Rosalie," on the cover and comprised an assortment of thirty of her drawings, apparently randomly chosen, in addition to a few sepias and sketches by Raymond from the 1830s to 1840s.[21] Lot 1841, a "very curious album," was thought to have been "offered as a gift to Raymond Bonheur" yet appeared to include "several very old sketches by him."[22] The only other Rosa Bonheur sketchbook currently in a public collection in the United States, lot 1836 from the auction of 1900, contains no drawings from Rosa's father; rather, it functioned as a curated repository for drawings by Rosa alone.[23] The sketchbook in the GRI's collection is therefore the only extant material document of Rosa's artistic relationship with her father.

As the only one of its kind in a public collection, and one with connections to both artists' Salon works, the GRI sketchbook is also important for its drawings that relate to Rosa Bonheur's *The Horse Fair* and *Haymaking in the Auvergne*. The drawings for her two great successes on the preeminent Parisian stage, made apparently from life, take on new meaning juxtaposed with her father's work. Raymond actively encouraged Rosa, from her first days of artistic training, to surpass the achievements of other women artists, particularly Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842).[24] In the wake of Raymond's death, Rosa began two new monumental compositions that would fulfill her father's

charge. *The Horse Fair* and *Haymaking in the Auvergne* represented a culmination of years of study and active self-promotion. In December 1851 or January 1852, Rosa met with Charles de Morny (1811–65), head of the Ministry of the Interior and by extension all fine arts commissions.[25] The French state wished to confer upon Rosa the honor of a new commission, and de Morny was to determine a suitable subject. Rosa, who had been contemplating a composition featuring horses since 1844, proposed an equine project.[26] Unconvinced of her ability, the minister dismissed the idea. Together they agreed instead that the official commission would be for a painting depicting haymaking, but, at Rosa's own request, the painter would defer the order and complete the horse picture first.[27] *The Horse Fair* catapulted Bonheur to new heights in 1853; *Haymaking in the Auvergne* cemented her mark on the French school at the Exposition Universelle in 1855.

A number of drawings provide compelling evidence that these two paintings began, at least in part, in the sketchbook shared with her father. Some drawings in the first fifty leaves suggest that Rosa's planning for this composition may have started during Raymond's lifetime, which would support her biography's mythologizing narrative that *The Horse Fair* had been an idea since the early 1840s. Two notable studies of horses illustrate the subject's early evolution as a composition inspired by the Louvre's Old Masters and the Parthenon's frieze.[28] The first graces the pages amid the pencil sketches that Rosa would have made in the Louvre in the late 1830s; it is drawn directly from a work by one of the artists she recalled admiring most: *Landscape with a White Horse* (ca. 1650–1700) by Dirck van Bergen.[29] In Rosa's rendering, the animal's hindquarters are rendered with short, emphatic strokes that stress its pronounced musculature. Her horse assumes the exact stance of Van Bergen's primary subject, down to the exaggerated hip at the left. Leaf 43v offers a concrete connection to one of the earliest preparatory designs for *The Horse Fair*, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (figs. 9, 10). In the sketchbook, two geometric outlines of horses and a partial third gallop across the page; a similar rudimentary profile of a horse appears along the lower edge of the drawing at the Metropolitan Museum. Whereas the studies are freely arranged on the sketchbook page, two distinct compositions are framed on the Metropolitan Museum's sheet. That at the left side is framed by a horizontal line below and vertical line at right and includes many elements that would feature in the final Salon submission. On the same page, at right, is a sketch of four grouped animals, likely after Théodore Géricault's *Five Horses Viewed from behind* (1822), which Rosa would have seen at the Louvre. The sketchbook page and the preparatory drawing link Rosa's studies in the museum to the composition's origins, responding to her father's hope that she would ascend to the French painterly pantheon that was the Louvre.

FIG. 9. — Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–99). Pencil drawing of horses from sketchbook shared by Rosa Bonheur and Raymond Bonheur (1796–1849), ca. 1835–55, 43v. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

FIG. 10. — Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–99). Sheet of studies for *The Horse Fair*, ca. 1850, black chalk and graphite on paper, 18.4 × 41.1 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991.463. Gift of Alexander Johnson and Roberta Olson, in honor of Jacob Bean, 1991.

To complete *The Horse Fair,* Rosa ultimately favored studies from life. A carefully rendered head of a horse on leaf 42r corresponds to the final stage of its compositional development. In the final months of the painting's preparation and execution, Bonheur ventured to the horse market on the boulevard de l'Hôpital in men's attire to study her primary subjects.[30] Rosa's pencil carefully shaded the horse's muzzle, forehead, and eyes, stopping short of its neck, crest, and mane. The circumstances under which Bonheur made such studies have since become historiographic fodder, but her commitment to working after nature as the foundation of her practice placed the artist in the company of numerous nineteenth-century contemporaries from the Barbizon school and the Impressionist circle.

Given the shared origin story for her major Salon submissions in the early 1850s, it is hardly surprising that studies for *Haymaking in the Auvergne* also appear in the sketchbook. Outnumbering those related to *The Horse Fair,* the drawings present the work's evolution from single figures to fully choreographed scene. Women balancing bundles atop their heads, men carrying scythes, and figures using pitchforks to load hay onto the cart populate a half dozen leaves.[31] Many of these figures were ultimately relegated to the wings of the painting that Bonheur exhibited in 1855, allowing the oxen and cart to take center stage. Drawings of heaps of hay and their transport attest to a methodical exhaustion of various compositional possibilities. For example, a drawing on leaf 48v frames the profiles of two horses pulling a cart and its contents against a haystack and hill beyond, grounding the scene in a specific landscape. A sketch on leaf 49v, meanwhile, focuses on the cart and the individuals tending to its load of hay, whose massive scale is emphasized in relation to the laboring animals and farmers. A leaf preceding these pages shows a horse in three-quarter view, whose figure is dwarfed by the haystack that exceeds the page's margins (fig. 11). Meticulous attention to perspective and position is given to a series of studies of cradle scythes on leaves 37r through 39r (fig. 12). With the precision of technical drawing, the artist suspends the haymaker's implement in space to capture its construction in three dimensions, rotating the tool to produce a schematic of every bolt and pin that joins the blades to the wooden handle.[32] In contrast to the drawings related to *The Horse Fair,* the range of preparatory work for *Haymaking* represents an exclusive allegiance to working after life.

The placement of these studies in an old, used sketchbook purchased over a decade before, rather than in a new volume of fresh pages, suggests that Rosa treated the development of *Haymaking* as an extension of her father's own practice, literally and figuratively. Leaves 48v and 49v are drawn in the same page orientation as Raymond's landscape studies in the second half of the album. Rosa's sketches for *Haymaking*, along with the drawings for *The Horse Fair*, also fall between the successions of blank pages in the middle of the object. Just as the final works reflected Rosa's bids to continue the familial artistic lineage, the early drawings for them were executed in the sketchbook in such a way that they seem to continue Raymond's contributions.

Ultimately, both paintings cemented Rosa's position in the art world. *The Horse Fair* heralded a lasting success in England and the United States, thanks in part to

FIG. 11. — Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–99). Pencil drawing of a horse and cart with additional studies from sketchbook shared by Rosa Bonheur and Raymond Bonheur (1796–1849), ca. 1835–55, leaves 47v and 48r. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

its purchaser, Belgian-born, London-based dealer Ernest Gambart (1814–1902), who exhibited it widely in both countries. The sale of the massive canvas brought Bonheur financial and artistic independence, a feat rare among her male peers and unprecedented among her fellow women artists. *Haymaking* similarly confirmed her place as the foremost animal painter on the international stage of the Exposition Universelle. Thanks to these two paintings, which continued the momentum set by her

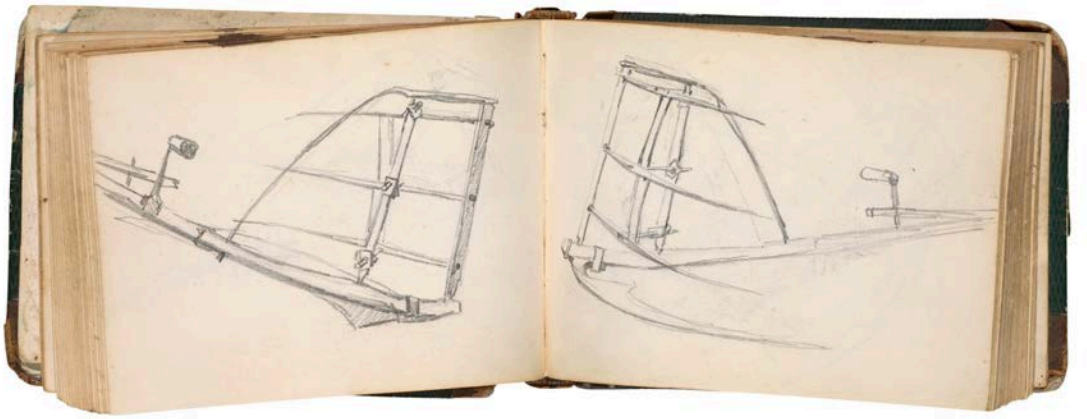

FIG. 12. — Rosa Bonheur (French, 1822–99). Pencil drawings of a cradle scythe from sketchbook shared by Rosa Bonheur and Raymond Bonheur (1796–1849), ca. 1835–55, 37v and 38r. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 850837.

first state commission, *Ploughing in the Nivernais* (1849), Bonheur enjoyed numerous accolades in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[33] The appearances of *The Horse Fair* and *Haymaking in the Auvergne* in the sketchbook that she shared with her father offer a belated realization of Raymond's wish that she establish independent renown and secure an artistic legacy for them both.

The sketchbook linking Rosa's two works attests to the artistic proximity between father and daughter at the end of Raymond's life during what were arguably the most important years of Rosa's career. Its jointly authored pages complicate enduring narratives of artistic inheritance and Rosa's own lore, which she sought to perpetuate in her final years and posthumously through Klumpke. Father and daughter emerge as creative confidantes, whose relationship foregrounded Rosa's success and renown. As the only shared album known to have survived, the restored dual attribution of the sketchbook opens new lines of inquiry for the study of Raymond's and Rosa's respective oeuvres, particularly her works *The Horse Fair* and *Haymaking in the Auvergne*. The identification and recontextualization of their shared undertaking show how the first thoughts for some of Rosa's best-known works were drafted on the pages of a sketchbook, side by side.

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Notes

I thank Naina Saligram for her insightful reading and intellectual generosity. Unless otherwise noted, translations are mine.

1. The sale at Galerie Georges Petit began Wednesday, 30 May 1900, and ended Friday, 8 June 1900. See Léon Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur*, 2 vols. (Paris: Georges Petit, 1900). For contemporary press coverage of the sale, see La Rivaudière, "Notes d'un curieux: Les aquarelles et les dessins de Rosa Bonheur," *Le Gaulois,* 3 June 1900, 3; and "Vente de l'atelier Rosa Bonheur," *Le Radical,* 3 June 1900, 2.

2. Bonheur's estate planning was the primary subject of one of her biography's final chapters. Bonheur told the sole inheritor of her estate, Anna Klumpke, not to organize a public sale; she advised selling a study if money was scarce. Anna Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur: Sa vie, son oeuvre* (Paris: Flammarion, 1908), 394.

3. Dealer Giacomo Tedesco (1799–1870) had represented Bonheur since the late 1840s. The patriarch left his business to his sons, who rechristened the enterprise Tedesco Frères in the 1870s. See Paul de Katow, "Rosa Bonheur," *Gil blas*, 27 March 1883, 3; and Paolo Serafini, "Archives for the History of the French Art Market (1860–1920): The Dealers' Network," *Getty Research Journal*, no. 8 (2016): 114, 130nn13–14. Tedesco Frères had initially offered to buy the contents of Bonheur's studio for one million francs, but public auction proved the most amenable solution. For the history of the sale's organization, see Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 405–12.

4. Bonheur was the first woman artist to receive the French Legion of Honor, a distinction that was awarded by Empress Eugénie herself in 1865. In 1893, following success at the Universal Exposition in Chicago, Bonheur was promoted to the rank of officer. A complete list of Bonheur's distinctions appears in Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 300n3.

5. The descriptions for lots 1837 and 1838, for example, identify Micas as the sole author of those sketchbooks' contents. Léon Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur*, vol. 2, *Aquarelles et dessins* (Paris: Galerie Georges Petit, 1900), 176.

6. Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur,* 2:79.

7. Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur,* 2:79. Rosa Bonheur sketchbook, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (GRI), 850837, hereafter cited as Bonheur sketchbook. The sketchbook is fully digitized and available at http://hdl.handle.net/10020/850837f5. The sketchbook was acquired from the McAlpine Collection through the dealer Kenneth W. Rendell in Newton, Massachusetts, in 1985.

8. The other three sketchbooks shared by Raymond and Rosa appeared as lots 1839, 1840, and 1841. Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur* 2:177–78. Their current locations are unknown.

9. Bonheur sketchbook, back free endpaper, recto.

10. Sébastien Bottin's *Almanach du commerce* from 1833 records at this address as a joint enterprise, "Meslin & Chartier." By 1835, however, Meslin disappears; A. Cambon's *Almanach des commerçans de Paris* from that same year names only Chartier. One business directory continues to place Chartier at 117, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré through at least 1847, but Didot's *Annuaire* states that another paper shop named Brunet was operating at this location starting in 1844. Regardless, by 1854, Chartier had moved to 105, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Sébastien Bottin, *Almanach du commerce de Paris, de la France et des pays étrangers* (Paris: Bureau de l'Almanach du Commerce, 1833), 220; A. Cambon, *Almanach des commerçans de Paris* (Paris: Bureau de l'Almanach des Commerçans, 1835), 668, 713; Sébastien Bottin, *Almanach-Bottin du commerce de Paris* (Paris: Bureau de l'Almanach du Commerce, 1842), 267; E.-M. Prétot, *Annuaire de la typographie parisienne et départementale* (Paris: Pretot, 1847), 106; Firmin-Didot Frères, *Annuaire général du commerce, de l'industrie, de la magistrature et de l'administration, ou Almanach des 500,000 adresses de Paris, des départements et des pays étrangers* (Paris: Firmin-Didot Frères, 1844), 580; and Sébastien Bottin, *Almanach-Bottin du commerce de Paris* (Paris: Bureau de l'Almanach du Commerce, 1854), 942.

11. Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur,* 170.

12. Bonheur sketchbook, 68v. Houssaye's appointment was widely reported. See, for example, "Faits divers," *La presse*, 31 January 1856, 2.

13. Other drawings, however, postdate Raymond's by at least two decades, according to the lot notes. Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur,* 2:178.

14. *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, architecture, gravure et lithographie des artistes vivants, exposés au Musée national du Louvre le 15 mars 1848* (Paris: Vinchon, 1848), 36, cat. no. 156.

15. Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 178.

16. Bonheur sketchbook, 4r.

17. The sale of *The Horse Fair* in 1855 allowed Bonheur to purchase the Château de By in 1860. Located in the Parisian suburb of Thomery, the château comprised apartments for living as well as a studio and menagerie for her work. Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 243–45.

18. Bonheur sketchbook, 2v, 3r, 7r.

19. Despite the shared sketchbook's unorthodox organization and perplexing use, there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the auction catalog. Although French art critic Léon Roger-Milès is credited as the author of its introductory essay, realistically only Klumpke could have given such specific details about the sketchbooks and their provenance. By the last year of the artist's life, Klumpke agreed, at the painter's behest, to steward her estate and publish a definitive biography, which would appear in 1908. Whether in preparing this manuscript, which oscillates between Klumpke's first-person narration and Bonheur's own voice, or in determining which works to include in the artist's bequest to the state, the pair had ample opportunity to discuss the sketchbooks and their contents in the late 1890s. For Klumpke's own recollection of this period, see Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 101–26. See also Gretchen van Slyke, "Reinventing Matrimony: Rosa Bonheur, Her Mother, and Her Friends," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 19, nos. 3/4 (1991): 69–72.

20. Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur* 2:177. Rosa's extant copyist registration dates to 9 August 1838. Paris, Archives nationales, Registre des copistes, Élèves (chrono) 1834–1840 (20150337/445, formerly LL06), folio 108.

21. Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur* 2:177.

22. Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur* 2:178.

23. Roger-Milès, *Atelier Rosa Bonheur* 2:176. This sketchbook is in the collection of Transylvania University, J. Douglas Gay Jr./Frances Carrick Thomas Library Special Collections, Kentucky.

24. Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur,* 164.

25. Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 223.

26. Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur,* 218.

27. For a condensed history of the commission, see Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 223–28.

28. Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 221.

29. Bonheur sketchbook, 9r. Among the Old Masters who were "irresistibly fascinating" ("exerçaient . . . une fascination irrésistible") to the young artist was Van Bergen. Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 165. For more information on Van Bergen's *White Horse in a Landscape*, see the object page (inv. 1035) on the Louvre website, https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010059279.

30. Bonheur sketchbook, 42r. Bonheur's masquerade was reported even before *The Horse Fair* appeared at the Salon in 1853. See Edmond Texier, "Les Peintres, les ateliers et les modèles," *Tableau de Paris,* vol. 2 (Paris: Paulin et le Chevalier, 1853), 46–47.

31. Bonheur sketchbook, 7v, 26v, 40r, 44r, 47r.

32. Bonheur sketchbook, 38v, 39r.

33. For one of the first announcements of her induction to the French Legion of Honor in the French press, see "Chronique," *La comédie*, 18 May 1865, 8. The act of her induction was dated 8 June 1865. See J. Cohen, "La décoration de Rosa Bonheur," *La France (Paris)*, 12 June 1865, 1. The episode is recounted by Klumpke, *Rosa Bonheur*, 264. See also this essay, note 4.

Conversation

Belonging Elsewhere: Felipe Baeza and Laura G. Gutiérrez in Conversation

Felipe Baeza and Laura G. Gutiérrez

On 10 September 2023, I greeted Felipe Baeza in Chicago at the National Museum of Mexican Art, a place that we had both visited on countless occasions but, to the best of our knowledge, never at the same time. The museum is in the Pilsen neighborhood, which has been home to different waves of migrants to the city, particularly people from Central and Eastern Europe and Mexico. The museum's building was a shared point of reference, familiar to both of us as immigrants to Chicago. We set out on a walking tour of Pilsen, where Felipe and his family had lived for several years after their arrival to the city. In our roaming, we walked to the different homes in which he had lived on Eighteenth Place, had coffee at Café Jumping Bean, and paused outside of the grade school he attended—Orozco Community Academy, named after Mexican muralist José Clemente Orozco. We lingered for a long while before the images on the bus shelters at either corner of Eighteenth Street and Damen Avenue. From August to November of that year, *Felipe Baeza: Unruly Forms*, a project presented by Public Art Fund, was featured at those two bus shelters in addition to others throughout Chicago, New York, Boston, and three cities in Mexico: León, Mexico City, and Querétaro (figs. 1–3).

Although I had known of Felipe's work and had seen it on several occasions in group shows, the two of us did not meet in person until September 2022, when we were both at the Getty Research Institute as part of the Getty Scholars Program. Felipe was the artist in residence, and I was a residential scholar. The "and" in that year's theme, Art and Migration, describes at least one of the intersections that we both inhabit, albeit differently: We both make our livings through art, and we are both immigrants to this country. During our stay in Los Angeles, we came to the awareness that we had both immigrated to Chicago as children, but in different decades: Felipe in the 1990s, and I in the 1970s. While art and migration may define us, in our extended conversations, including the one that we had in Pilsen, we bonded over the complicated relationship to its two rubrics. In short, we share side-eyed (some would say queer or antinormative) approaches to the way that we represent and discuss migration in art and scholarship, respectively; we prefer the oblique and opaque. Meandering the streets of Pilsen, we were so wrapped up in the conversation that we forgot to hit record. Later, we met on

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FIG. 1. — Installation view of Felipe Baeza's *Unruly Forms* in Querétaro, Mexico, 2023. *Unruly Forms,* presented by Public Art Fund, is an exhibition on more than four hundred JCDecaux bus shelters and street furniture in New York, Boston, and Chicago in the United States; and in Mexico City, León, and Querétaro in Mexico, 9 August–19 November 2023. Photograph by Ramiro Chaves, courtesy Public Art Fund, NY.

FIG. 2. — Installation view of Felipe Baeza's *Unruly Forms* in Boston, 2023. *Unruly Forms,* presented by Public Art Fund, is an exhibition on more than four hundred JCDecaux bus shelters and street furniture in New York, Boston, and Chicago in the United States; and in Mexico City, León, and Querétaro in Mexico, 9 August–19 November 2023. Photograph by Mel Taing, courtesy Public Art Fund, NY.

FIG. 3. — Installation view of Felipe Baeza's *Unruly Forms* in New York, 2023. *Unruly Forms,* presented by Public Art Fund, is an exhibition on more than four hundred JCDecaux bus shelters and street furniture in New York, Boston, and Chicago in the United States; and in Mexico City, León, and Querétaro in Mexico, 9 August–19 November 2023. Photograph by Nicholas Knight, courtesy Public Art Fund, NY.

Zoom to process our experience together on that Saturday afternoon of September, and this time we did record.

—Laura G. Gutiérrez

The conversation below took place in October 2023 on Zoom. It has been edited for length, repetition, and clarity. Italics have been added to capture words or phrases emphasized in the original dialogue.

Laura G. Gutiérrez: I've been thinking a lot about our visit to Chicago last September, which I would like to bring into our conversation about your Public Art Fund commission and the process of its making. I would love to start by talking about what we saw on our walk through the neighborhood of Pilsen, what we experienced that day, and the complex feelings that came from that shared time together.

Felipe Baeza: Meeting you in Chicago felt amazing—a familiar landscape that each of us has a different set of connections and attachments to. It was beautiful to share that space with you, so much so that we forgot to record our conversation on the ground that day! We were just in the moment, so many things happening simultaneously. . . .

My parents drove me to the Mexican Fine Arts Center [now known as the National Museum of Mexican Art] before we met, and somehow, we ended up inside the

museum. I didn't share this with you at the time, but that was the first time I had ever been to a museum with my parents. And just seeing how uncomfortable they were in that space, despite the fact that it's a Mexican museum in an immigrant neighborhood and they live nearby and know that building well—it threw me off.

But even so, that building has so many memories for me. It was probably the first museum I ever went to as a kid growing up in Pilsen. So they dropped me off, and then they left. And then we met, and we decided not to walk the museum, if I remember.

Laura: Yeah, I think the people working at the museum were a little thrown off. Because I walked in to join you, and then we walked out together! [*laughter*]

Felipe: But yeah, I completely forgot to share that. Because I was just very thrown off by that. And I think everything happened organically then. Because then we walked to the first bus shelter showcasing my Public Art Fund Project (figs. 4, 5). And I think it was walking in a landscape that I have, obviously, a lot of memories from. I think it was just a full circle of going back there. And then eventually we went to the same block where I grew up. And I remember we walked through every house that I grew up in.

Laura: Do you remember, I think we did it inversely—we walked down the block first, and then we walked to the bus stop.

Felipe: Oh, really? Yes! I mean, that whole day was just—wow!

Laura: There were a lot a lot of feelings.

Felipe: Yeah, it was a lot of—yeah. Because I mean, I had not been back to that block. I mean, obviously I'd been back to Pilsen since then but probably hadn't returned to that specific block since we moved out of there. So it felt so strange and so foreign. It didn't obviously feel the same.

Laura: And yet so familiar at the same time!

Felipe: Oh right, because your family used to live there too?

Laura: It's so wild! I forgot to tell you, I verified that my aunt and uncle's house was across the street from your childhood home! So I probably was there when you were a little kid, I was already—

Felipe: —causing trouble? [*laughter*]

Laura: But that was the moment in which we were so immersed in the conversation that we forgot to record. Because we were walking through the different houses where you had lived, and your memories of them.

Felipe: Exactly, with the purpose of recording, right? But I think it was good that we didn't record. We were just basically in the space and taking it in, and it was special to share it with you. And to see your connection to that landscape too; even though you didn't grow up in that neighborhood, you had also a strong attachment to it. The landscape looks strange, but familiar, and also very surreal. My time there feels like a dream somehow, as if it never happened. But obviously it had such an impact on me as a child that I have so many vivid memories of that block and playing with all of my friends. The neighborhood has changed so drastically. It seemed like such a vibrant neighborhood back then, right?

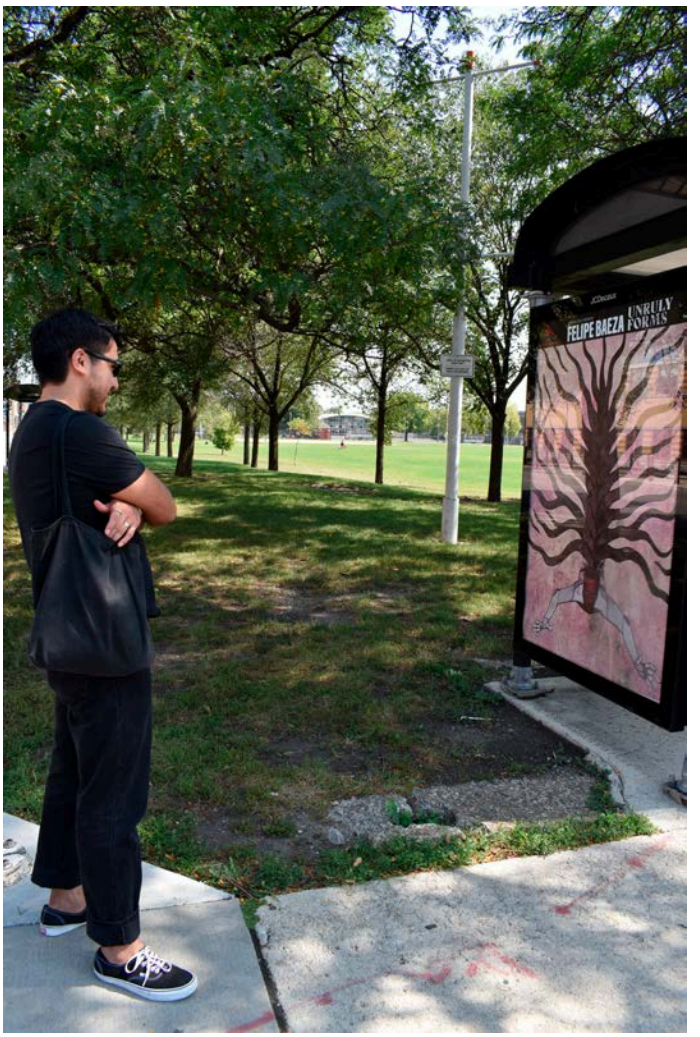

FIG. 4. — Felipe Baeza viewing a bus shelter located at the intersection of S. Damen and S. Blue Island Avenues in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago featuring Baeza's *Let yourself fall* (2023), part of the installation *Unruly Forms*. Photograph by Laura G. Gutiérrez, September 2023.

FIG. 5. — Felipe Baeza at a bus shelter located at the intersection of S. Damen Avenue and W. 18th Street in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago featuring Baeza's *to shape, shape self* (2023), part of the installation *Unruly Forms*. Photograph by Laura G. Gutiérrez, September 2023.

Laura: Yeah, that's why we would go to Pilsen when I was a kid, because it's where things were happening—the culture, the food; I wanted to be immersed in it. And as a young adult I wanted to be close to where Mexican art and Mexican migrant experiences were not only highly visible but were thriving.

Felipe: That's how I remember it. I arrived there when I was seven, about to turn eight. It seems so surreal, but the transition from Mexico to Pilsen wasn't so harsh. It seemed like I was coming from one brown place to another brown place. And it just so happened that a lot of the brown people in Pilsen spoke English.

Laura: You have these enclaves.

Felipe: And I always say that I feel like I never experienced Mexico until I left Mexico. And by that, I mean that when I grew up there, Pilsen embodied this kitschy idea of what Mexico is: murals everywhere, colors everywhere, this hybrid, nostalgic outcome of a lot of people trying to re-create home. I went through the public school system, attended José Clemente Orozco Academy, and literally 99 percent of my peers and faculty growing up were Mexican—either first- or second-generation immigrants. And there's even a Benito Juárez High School close by. So it was also surreal growing up there, especially coming from Mexico. I just felt like I was transported to a different Mexican city.

Laura: And an extension of Mexico, which actually Pilsen is. But this Mexico is re-created through these memories and nostalgia, this sense of "How do we sort of make it feel and look like Mexico?" But that also ends up serving as a mechanism to ground one in that space, doesn't it?

Felipe: Yes, exactly. It is another mode of survival to re-create not necessarily home but that sort of structure, right, that allows you to flourish. And I think, as I said, sadly, this is only made possible by how segregated Chicago is, which has allowed for certain communities to stick together. I've been in New York since 2005, and it's obviously a whole different landscape; you just live where you can afford to, which doesn't happen so much in Chicago. But yeah, it was surreal going back to Pilsen and doing the same walks that I did as a child—

Laura: With the added layer of surrealism—

Felipe: So many layers! That's why it feels so surreal, because I don't have the language to describe it. When you left that afternoon, I was like, "Wait, what just happened? Was I just with Laura, hanging out in Pilsen?"

Laura: But also you were walking through streets you once knew well; you were in front of Orozco Academy, which is kitty-corner to two bus stops where your work is currently installed. Let's talk about that?

Felipe: I'm sure those bus stops have always been there, but to see my work in there was [*pauses*]. . . . It still hasn't hit me; I'm not sure how to feel about it! Even though the project was also installed in New York, I had only seen pictures sent by friends or sent through social media before that trip to Chicago. It was beautiful that the first time I saw it was with my parents when they drove me to the museum to meet you that day. It was surreal to see it through their eyes, and it's hard to describe that feeling or what that meant at the time. But I couldn't help imagining seven- or eight-year-old Felipe walking in those streets and being able to see something like those bus shelters. Even now that I've seen it a couple of times in New York, I haven't found the words yet, beyond it feeling a bit cringey. [*laughter*]

From that bus shelter I recall we went to a well-known neighborhood coffee shop, Café Jumping Bean, that was the site of my first job.

Laura: And I was like wait, this is just more than perfect!

Felipe: Like you, I was also someone who was very much interested in making, even though I didn't have that concept of *Art* with a capital *A*. I remember encountering that coffee shop as a kid for the first time and thinking it was the coolest place ever.

Laura: I used to drive to Pilsen from the North Side, just to go to that coffee shop, because it was the coolest one in Chicago.

Felipe: There were so many writers and artists hanging out there. And as a ten-year-old, that was my only aspiration: I want to work here one day. I owe a lot to that neighborhood. I'm sure you remember the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum used to have a program called Yollocalli [Arts Reach], which I think still exists?

Laura: Oh, and the community radio for youth?

Felipe: Yes, Radio Arte. And it used to be on the corner of Blue Island and 18th, literally a block away. And I was part of both. I think I was part of Radio Arte for a minute, thinking that I wanted to be a radio DJ, but that never happened. [*laughter*] But Yollocalli was such a transformative space for me and so many kids in the neighborhood. I took my first art class there, in photography, an interest that later evolved into many other creative languages. It was thriving; there was a huge population of young kids who were all taking art classes there, making together, and participating in Radio Arte. There was another community center up the block called Casa Aztlán.

Laura: Oh yeah, I remember Casa Aztlán.

Felipe: Yeah, which sadly doesn't exist anymore. But they had an amazing ceramic studio, which I was also part of. I was always connected to making and fortunate to have access to these classes and spend time with other people, making. It was extremely transformative and provided a community. I owe a lot to the many mentors and amazing people along the way who guided me to be where I am now, in this conversation with you.

Laura: I'm thinking of the generational shifts that happened, maybe in the eighties or nineties, that turned Pilsen into such a thriving arts community beyond the commercial businesses that were always successful. I remember my family would go there to get Mexican bread at the panaderías, to attend mass, and to visit relatives living there.

But in terms of the community art making, it was my generation and maybe earlier ones that began to build the infrastructure to get kids like you into those spaces, to allow them to create. I saw that happening from a distance, before my eyes, and now I see that

you come out of that. It wasn't just Orozco Academy—all of Pilsen was your school, with its murals and public art.

Felipe: Yeah, I mean, having access to all that enriched my childhood. But things have changed with gentrification—so many families have left, including mine. I owe so much to those spaces that are no longer there. Casa Aztlán and Radio Arte don't exist anymore. As children growing up in Pilsen in the late nineties, we had access to so many things and a sense of community. I arrived there in 1995 and attended St. Ann School for third grade, which I think you mentioned your cousin went to. The following year I moved to a public school that was named after Peter Cooper, the same founder of Cooper Union in New York, where I earned my BFA.

Laura: So many layers–

Felipe: So many layers to this, which I didn't realize until later!

It's surreal to go back to a place that has impacted my life and see it again through a very different lens. And to return with you this time, travel down memory lane with the added layer of seeing my own work in that space—and try to comprehend, what is going on? I mean, that whole day was a lot of layers. Going with my parents to a museum for the first time and seeing them walking and interacting with that space.

It was quite emotional because I think they just felt uncomfortable. And then I wonder where that's coming from, but I do know where that's coming from, right? A lot of us feel unwelcomed by those spaces, not really knowing how to navigate them. I remember the first time I went to the MCA [Museum of Contemporary Art] in Chicago—I must have been eleven. I went by myself and had to figure out, "Wait, how do I get in? Do I pay?" It was intimidating.

Laura: For me, it was the Art Institute [of Chicago]. As a child, I wanted to go, but I was scared to. I had the same feelings as you, I think in large part because both of our families migrated to Chicago from rural Mexico for economic reasons. Going to museums was not part of what we did. The arts were not supposed to be part of our trajectories. But to start seeking those spaces as kids, I'm going to venture out and say something: Speaking for myself at that age, I knew I was weird. But I didn't know I was queer in terms of sexuality. I was seeking out the kinds of images that more or less fit with this little developing queer in me; I was trying to find spaces.

Felipe: That was true for my weird queer self too as a kid. For me it was a sort of doubleness. And by that, I mean dealing with my status—that I had to come out as undocumented, and also as queer. As kids we feel weird and wonder, "Why am I feeling this way?" We don't know how to name it. But also there's some shame in it as a recovering Catholic.

Laura: Oh, yeah, for sure.

Felipe: But even before I arrived in Chicago, my earliest experiences with that "weirdness" at that age was going to church and noticing how beautiful these bodies of crucified Jesus were, and feeling complete euphoria. As you know, these images in Mexican churches are so dramatic in their depiction and I was so attracted to them. And I was just like, "Wait, what is going on?" Naming it happened in Pilsen, years later. My first and closest friend, Nicólas González-Medina, was an artist and also queer. We never came out to each other, but we both knew without speaking about it.

Laura: You had a different language that wasn't verbal.

Felipe: It was super nonverbal whatsoever, and maybe that's why we gravitated to each other. Even to this day, as I get older, I start accepting parts of myself that I never accepted about my queerness. I think as queer folks, we're just fragmented individuals. And as queer folks of color, we shielded ourselves and performed other personas as kids, didn't we? To the point that we forgot what the truth is? I think part of the process now is to shed those layers and try to rediscover which parts are true and which parts are not. There were other queer individuals in the community in Pilsen, and even though we never named it, we supported one another. I never feared rejection.

There were two visual markers for me during that period that expanded on these ideas of fragmentation and performance. One was Nahum Zenil. I'm not sure how I encountered his work the first time, but it was extremely transformative.

Laura: I was going to ask you about that! I could imagine Nahum's work in one of the group shows at the National Museum of Mexican Art. My own interest in performance studies came from attending the different performances that were curated and programmed through that museum. I saw many artists there for the first time—like Luis Alfaro. I think that there were people on the museum's curatorial or programming team that were queer and brought queer visual or performance artists into that space. And I will forever be grateful to whoever was doing that! But I imagine Nahum might have been shown there, or maybe you saw his work in an art or art history book. . . .

Felipe: I wouldn't disregard it. But whatever the source, those markers were quite important for nine- or ten-year-old Felipe. Another influential image was that amazing photograph by Graciela Iturbide of Magnolia, which she took in Juchitán (fig. 6). I saw myself reflected in that image but didn't know how to name it. It wasn't obviously gay or queer in the beginning—it was just *the other.* I didn't know anything about Graciela or this individual in the picture—only that this person, who was living their true existence, reflected me in ways that I didn't have words for.

So those were two visual markers that I encountered in Pilsen that have had a lasting impact. It's surreal to consider the impact of my images that are publicly exhibited

FIG. 6. — Graciela Iturbide (Mexican, b. 1942). *Magnolia, Juchitán, Oaxaca,* 1986 (negative); 2005 (print). Gelatin silver print, 44.5 × 31.5 cm. Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007.65.25. Gift of Susan Steinhauser and Daniel Greenberg. © Graciela Iturbide.

right now through the Public Art Fund on other children today. Certainly this is what attracted me to the power and limits of art. Obviously as a kid I had no idea who Nahum was, but encountering an image of his work has affected me to this day—it made me stop and realize, "Wait, I want to do whatever this person is doing. I want to spend the rest of my life making worlds and images."

Laura: Do you remember what Nahum image you saw as a nine- or ten-year-old? Because I can picture Iturbide's *Magnolia* perfectly.

Felipe: Well, there's two that I remember. One is a triptych of him being penetrated by the Mexican flag (fig. 7).

Laura: That's the image that came to my mind when you mentioned his name.

Felipe: Oh really!? That particular image I'm sure I encountered way later. But the first image wasn't sexual at all; it was a self-portrait of him with thorns around his head.[1]

Laura: Were you aware then that it was a self-portrait?

Felipe: No, definitely not! I learned that later on. As a child, I didn't know that he was queer; there was just something in the image that attracted me.

Laura: I'm totally geeking out here! [*laughter*]

Felipe: Those images still have a very powerful impact on me—especially in their representation of a body and the possibilities of a body; that is important to my work. Also the idea of queerness as fragmentation, as incompleteness. We will never be complete individuals, but the process of this life is to find those pieces and maybe shed other pieces away. I could say that I acquired many pieces of myself growing up in Pilsen.

Laura: I wanted to ask about the title of your Public Art Fund project, *Unruly Forms,* because what you've been saying makes me think of those two words together. When we think of the word *form,* we think of something that is perhaps fully formed with strict contours and definition, and yet, when you put *unruly* in front, it becomes unwieldy, right? What are your thoughts around unruly bodies and queerness?

Felipe: Well, the title came in some way from Gayatri Gopinath's book *Unruly Visions: The Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora* [Duke University Press, 2018]. My language to describe what I'm interested in has changed over the years, even though the terms are very much connected. In the beginning, I embraced the idea of illegality. Then, I began to work through the idea of fugitivity and later modes of suspension, though fugitivity is also a mode of suspension. And then I explored waywardness. And now, I'm investigating the unruly, though they are all very much the same.

Laura: They're all connected.

Felipe: Right, they're all connected. But I think we always run at the risk of romanticizing fugitivity, don't we? It's an extremely violent way of living—Black radical thinkers like Fred Moten and Sylvia Wynter have spoken to that. When you speak about fugitivity, you have to be aware that it's a very exhausting way of living because you're always on the run. But what I was very much attracted to in the concept of fugitivity is this idea of *choosing not to belong*, choosing to live outside, while still within—how is that made possible?

FIG. 7. — Nahum B. Zenil (Mexican, b. 1947). *¡Oh, santa bandera! (A Enrique Guzmán)* (Oh, Holy Flag! [For Enrique Guzmán]), 1996, ink, acrylic, and oil on paper, triptych: 238 × 71.5 cm. Mexico City, Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (DiGAV, UNAM). Acquisition through funds from the Programa de Egresos de la Federación, 2013. Photo by Francisco Kochen, courtesy MUAC. By permission of the artist.

And thinking through my own life experience, that I came to this country at seven, and now I'm thirty-six. And I have lived in some mode of fugitivity that entire time—I was put outside by force, not by choice. At the same time, I've learned to thrive within this country, but from the outside—if that makes sense? And I think that's very much in connection to the unruly. How does one live outside citizenship? Is that possible? And how does one live outside of the norm? That's what I've been trying to explore—not just in my art practice, but in my day-to-day life. In terms of citizenship, what does it mean to desire a country that doesn't desire you? As we know, Laura, citizenship does not protect you.

Maybe I'm just jaded, but as we know, the American dream has been the biggest scam. Before, I used to think, "I can't live like this anymore. I don't want to live in this liminal space for the rest of my life." But since then, I've learned to embrace it, asking instead, "How does one flourish in a space that doesn't allow you to flourish?" As we saw in Pilsen, the possibility of flourishing is there. But it means finding community and building the structures that allow you to flourish.

So that's what I mean when I speak about the unruly. Embracing that unruliness in its many forms that allow for survival in a landscape where one wasn't meant to flourish. And in that sense, it was beautiful to see the work that I'd made for the Public Art Fund in Pilsen. Because everyone that I grew up with in that neighborhood had very similar experiences—of migrating to this country and trying to envision a world where they were flourishing. I think that is the power of the queer migrant imaginary, that you're able to thrive in conditions where you weren't supposed to thrive. And that's what has shaped the work and its making.

Laura: Oh, yeah, you've just said so much! I want to respond to everything.

Felipe: As people who flee home either by choice or by force, it's human nature to want to belong, to be part of something. And I think for me, as I grow older, I'm just starting to accept parts of myself but also reach toward things other than citizenship and ideas of belonging. Now I'm in this space where I choose not to belong. And I think, ultimately, that's how you attain freedom: you realize you don't belong anywhere. We've spoken before about what it means to feel Mexican or not—and at some point I decided that I honestly didn't care.

Laura: Exactly. I have something to say about that. We are so alike in that sense.

Felipe: But the outside world does care. As I've been showing my work in different spaces, they consistently label me as "Felipe Baeza, the Mexican artist." But never as "Felipe Baeza, the American artist." That's another landscape to navigate, to observe

from the outside. But getting back to ideas of belonging, that's also where the unruly allows this choice of not being fixed as something. Rather, you can choose to be legible on your own terms, to select people. For example, with my childhood friend Nicólas, we spoke in a coded language; we didn't have to name it, but we understood one another.

Laura: Or perhaps just remain illegible. Not to romanticize that, but I don't really care to be legible. You can retain the power to just keep them guessing.

Felipe: It's true. Definitely—beyond opacity, I think we're refusing to be legible in the way the state, the law, and even society demands. To be legible only to those that you care about. That's been a learning process for me as I've grown up in this country, where I'm forever foreign. I went back to Mexico for the first time in 2016, when I was thirty, after having left when I was seven. So that was surreal to experience, to go back to a place to which I never thought I was going to return and see family I thought I was never going to see again.

I bring this up because I also felt extremely foreign there. But I've gone back many times recently, and every time, it's felt more like home—whatever home is! [*laughter*] But it felt comfortable; I didn't have to justify my existence to anybody there. Maybe the process is to reject the idea of belonging and legibility, and refuse to be coherent for others.

Laura: Yeah, I am all for that! When my family migrated across the border, I was two weeks short of nine and remained undocumented for a few years after that. But my circumstances were different than yours because at that moment, we still had the Family Reunification Act. Because my youngest sister was an anchor baby born in Chicago, my family got our green cards. So for me, it's about choosing to stay in that limbo, not because I love Mexico or want to be binational, but I embrace that in-between space. It is a privileged limbo space since my green card allows me mobility, but I also give the government the power to track me as I cross borders and move around. Nevertheless, I embrace my resident-alien status.

Felipe: I want to become a resident alien! [*laughter*]

Laura: When my friends get residency, I always say "Welcome to resident alienation!" I didn't choose that status; my parents embarked on the process for me, and choosing to stay has been important for many reasons. But I've consciously chosen not to become a US citizen because the American dream is bankrupt for me—

Felipe: It's a trap!

What you said about resident alienation reminded me of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which came out under President Obama, our Deporter in Chief. It was started in 2012, but I didn't apply until 2013. The application process was extremely

infantilizing and dehumanizing: we had to provide every single address that we'd ever lived at, basically tracking our location since we stepped foot in this country. And of course there's also the concern: What happens if someone like Trump gets into office and wants to cancel this program, when all of our information is there?

I have to reapply for DACA every two years, providing updated addresses and a new set of fingerprints. So as much as I like to say that I live outside of the system, I'm very much tracked within it. Under DACA, I have to apply for a travel permit called Advance Parole every time I want to leave the country.

Laura: Who comes up with these names, by the way?

Felipe: Exactly! It's such a broken system, dehumanizing in so many ways. And while I don't want to give it credit, this "immigration protection" has allowed me mobility—including returning to Mexico under very specific conditions, though you're not guaranteed re-entry to the US. They could decide, you know what, we're not going to let you in. So there's always that concern, but I obviously have to learn to let that concern go. What's the worst that can happen? I can't come back.

Laura: I think that's really important to lose the fear of not returning, to not give it so much power over you—even while that fear is completely understandable. This is what I stress to those I know who have DACA status, including many of my students at UT Austin.

Felipe: The first time I traveled to Mexico was just before Trump came into power, and I was worried. So I made a point to return before he took office just to be sure I'd make it back. But it's vital to lose that fear and take that power back from the oppressor. The ultimate freedom is realizing you don't belong anywhere. I have nothing to lose, right? If anything, the only people I care about who have a lot to lose are my parents—they are already living a very different reality than I am.

I often think about their journey to this country. My mom was in her late twenties, and my dad in his early thirties, and they already had a life for themselves in Mexico. The decision to embark on a journey to this unknown land, whether by choice or by force, was quite powerful. As immigrants, they had to have imagined that there was something better out there, coming with this idea of the American dream. But once you arrive here, you find a space that mirrors where you left behind, or is even worse.

Now I'm seeing them getting older, and my mom has since retired. In many ways she seems like a teenager to me because she's trying to discover herself, figuring out what she likes and enjoys doing in her free time now that she's not constantly working.

Laura: That is beautiful though, and equally sad.

Felipe: True, it's beautiful but also sad that she spent a significant part of her life working and worrying about other things. Now she's at the stage where she has some time to attend to herself. And I'm seeing that with my dad, too. Obviously, their bodies are changing. I left Chicago when I was eighteen, and I feel that I've missed out on so many things in their lives. Every time I see them, they've gotten older. Ultimately, my only responsibility is to give them the best life possible. Right? Because I don't think the answer for them is returning to Mexico, to a landscape that is very unknown to them now. And selfishly, I don't want them to return; I just want them in close proximity to me. But that's where I'm coming from, my only responsibility is to my parents and otherwise I really have nothing to lose.

Laura: [*Pauses*] Wow—

Felipe: That was a lot! [*laughter*]

Laura: I've been thinking a lot about my own parents in relation to these questions and have much more to say. As you might remember, my father passed away only a few months ago, after being sick for a few months, in large part due to the lack of mobility caused by the pandemic. To think that my dad's biggest dream was to return to our town in Durango, where I was born, is devastating. He was never able to do that. I now want to do an action in our town, an art intervention, as a way of honoring him and bringing him back home.

But maybe this is a good moment to pivot back more directly to your work?

I was remembering our time at the Getty in Los Angeles, and the privilege of being able to pop my head into your studio and see your work in process (figs. 8, 9). After seeing you make work on such a small, intimate scale, it's surprising to see those same works blown up and installed in bus shelters across six cities in the United States and Mexico for this Public Art Fund commission!

Perhaps we could start by talking about the Mesoamerican artifacts these works were based on. Beyond specific identifications of the objects, their references, and symbolism, I'm interested in your own mythmaking with and through them.

Felipe: More than answers, questions guide my practice—and I think that is what makes the studio and the process of making so important for me. I'm trying to explore those answers through materiality. My interest in Mesoamerican artifacts has changed over time.

For this commission, I looked primarily at objects from what is now known as Mexico currently in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the Art Institute of Chicago. These were the three cities I was initially given by the Public Art Fund, and I tried to unify them. Once I did

FIG. 8. — Felipe Baeza working in his studio at the Getty Research Institute, 2022. Photograph courtesy the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

FIG. 9. — Felipe Baeza in his studio at the Getty Research Institute, 2022. Photograph courtesy the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

some research, it turned out that several Mesoamerican objects I'd been attracted to for a long time happened to be in these three museum collections.

Rather than tracing these objects back to their original contexts, I'm interested in them as vehicles for broader conversations about migration and displacement. How is meaning added to objects? What does it mean for an artifact to be taken far from of its original context and then fixed in a very clinical state within a museum, where it's never meant to change?

Laura: There's so much science around defining the exact provenance, the location, date, the maker if known, and all of that.

Felipe: It's such a violent extraction. This project attempts to imagine a liberatory force that would allow this object to thrive in these displaced conditions far from its place of origin, even while carrying the name of a wealthy white donor for the rest of its life.

What if the object was never meant to be displayed? What if it was meant to be buried for the rest of its life? I believe these objects still carry so much energy; they're vessels of energy. As viewers, we sometimes struggle to acknowledge that the object was made by a being, by a person—we see it as an object, rather than a vehicle. For a lot of cultures, not just Mesoamerican ones, mythmaking was a way to create portals into the afterlife, a means of survival and regeneration. We tend to think of living as spanning from the moment we're born until we die—but so much of life happens beyond death, in giving life to other forms.

For me, that public commission expanded in so many directions. Having time and space to research while in residence at the Getty allowed me to take a deep dive into this project. The process, as you know well, was very layered and happened organically.

Laura: Your work is quite literally layered, and also very minute in the details.

Felipe: A lot of the work that I've been doing has addressed an erasure that removes voices from a history of making. I'm deeply interested in archaeology, which is an extremely problematic discipline. One example of this is the Mexican National Anthropology Museum [Museo Nacional de Antropología]: a violent, nationalist project that has extracted so many objects from communities that are still thriving across Mexico into a single location.

Laura: For those communities, the "artifact" is not an artifact but a living object with a spiritual function in the community. It's not meant to be in a museum, part of a national project.

Felipe: It's an extremely violent extraction. The answer for these objects that are in collections in the States and all over the world is not to repatriate them, because they will never be able to go back to their original places. But this raises questions about institutional responsibility to care for and contextualize these objects. This is another way that my Public Art Fund project opens up many more questions than answers.

FIG. 10. — Codex-style plate, Maya, late classic period, 640–740 CE, earthenware; red and black on cream slip paint, diam.: 5.8 × 32 cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1993.565, gift of Landon T. Clay. Photograph © 2025 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

There is one object that I had been particularly obsessed with: a Maya plate that turned out to be at the MFA in Boston of all places, the only city of the initial three that I had no personal connection to (fig. 10). Like many of the objects that I picked for this project, this plate depicts transformation and regeneration. Here it's a maize god rebirthing from the shell of a turtle while aided by an individual on each side. Together they make a collective that allows you to come into existence, to be present.

Laura: That's one of my favorite images that you work with. And it was mind-blowing to see *to shape, shape self* (2023; fig. 11) at a bus stop—you're doing a new kind of mythmaking, for a public audience (see fig. 5).

Felipe: Thank you for sharing that! It's been hard to take in this project when I see it firsthand on the streets, but it's beautiful to see it through the eyes of friends and family, and to witness their excitement at seeing an image in public made by someone they know.

As an artist, public art is an important responsibility, and I haven't fully absorbed or comprehended what it means. But especially in the context of Chicago, I imagine my younger self walking in that landscape, and imagine my work in that public setting having an impact on someone. I like that there's no context to these images whatsoever—there's really nothing beyond the title of the project and my name.

FIG. 11. — Felipe Baeza (Mexican, b. 1987, active in the US). *to shape, shape self*, 2023, ink, acrylic, graphite, varnish, and cut paper on panel, 40.6 × 30.5 cm (16 × 12 in.). © Felipe Baeza. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; kurimanzutto, Mexico City / New York. Photograph by Brad Farwell.

Laura: Yes, but people are left to deal with the image in their own way. Which is what happened that evening after we met in Pilsen. I went to have dinner with my sister and eleven-year-old niece on the North Side, and we drove past some of the bus shelters where your project was displayed. We stopped at one of them and got out of the car. My niece was stunned and speechless for a bit as she confronted the image. Then she commented, "Oh, it's scary . . . but I like it." She examined it really closely, fixating on certain details, and then pulled back and asked me to take a picture of her and my sister

in front of the work. She had no idea about the artifacts the image was based on, or who you were exactly, but nonetheless had to reckon with the image.

Felipe: Well, I want to return to what you said about the work's format and scale, because I agree that the enlargement makes them feel very different. I worked on these images at the Getty on a very different scale, as panels—and the largest one was probably sixteen by twelve inches, so very intimate (figs. 12, 13). I worked on them one by one. And obviously I knew they were going to be enlarged and printed. But I didn't comprehend that scale until I got the proofs. And I was like, "Whoa!" The prints take up space in a very different way than the smaller ones; the images feel so different.

And that was also my feeling when I first opened the proofs—like your niece, I was like, "These are so scary!," but also beautiful in how they take up space and have agency, as if to reclaim space: I'm here, and you're forced to deal with me. And I think that's also why it was hard to encounter them at first, hard to know how to respond to them. I wondered if they were taking up too much space. . . .

Laura: Because you're a quiet person who likes to hide in the corner! [*laughter*]

Felipe: I mean, that's true! Because I thought, "Oh my God, they're out there. And they're living and they're taking up space in a very different way than they have in the studio!" In the studio they're just so intimate; only one person is able to view them at a time. But on the subject of scale, this project situated in the spaces of public transit felt important for me to do because that's also how I experienced Chicago and how I continue to move around. I don't drive; I never had a desire to learn how to drive. So public transportation has always been my mode of getting around, of learning my landscape and discovering new ones. There's a cycle of mobility and waiting built into that experience, of riding one bus and then waiting for the next one, pausing and then resuming movement again. It's a mode of bodily suspension. Hopefully I'm not scaring a lot of individuals while they are waiting for the bus! [*laughter*]

Laura: I loved observing passengers inhabiting the bus shelter and moving through space—not just because I'm interested in the body's movement as performance studies but also because I have a deep love and appreciation for you and your work. As I stood there, I observed people sitting on benches, standing, and leaning against the shelters, and engaging with your images in various ways until the bus arrived and they started piling onto it. It felt deeply ritualistic, almost like I was attending church. Through this project, you're not just enacting new myths but also new rituals.

Felipe: Religion has informed the work. Growing up Catholic on one side of my family and evangelical Christian on the other, I experienced two very different types of interactions with images. Long before I first saw the work of Nahum Zenil or Graciela Iturbide (see figs. 6, 7), church was the context in which I first experienced the body in space or in a landscape and reckoned with the power of the image beyond desire. These

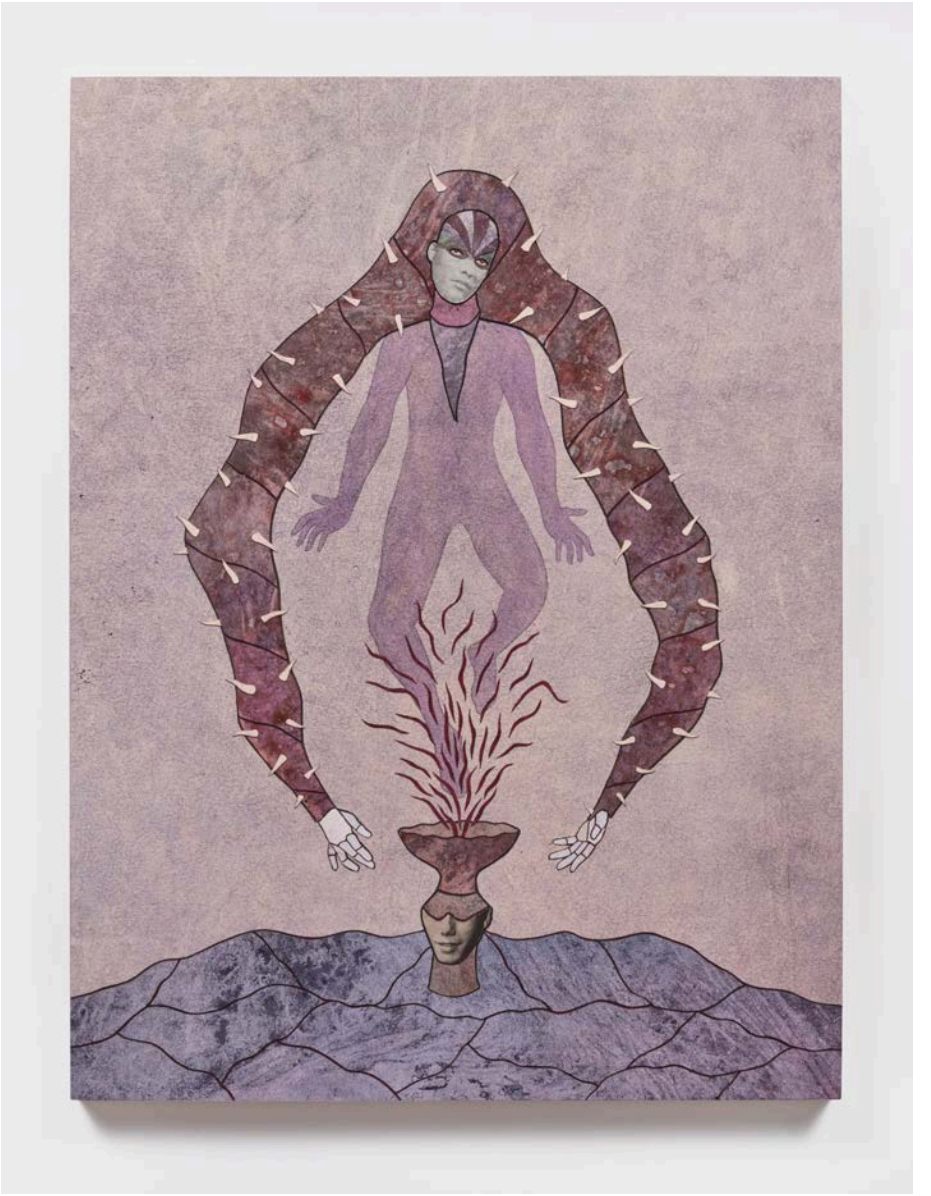

FIG. 12. — Felipe Baeza (Mexican, b. 1987, active in the US). *Our shadows merging*, 2023, ink, graphite, varnish, and cut paper on panel, 40.6 × 30.5 cm (16 × 12 in.). © Felipe Baeza. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; kurimanzutto, Mexico City / New York. Photograph by Brad Farwell.

issues are still very much at the forefront of my work, which questions the possibility of the body, the kind of energy the body carries, and the space it can occupy. In a lot of my work, the body doesn't have or even inhabit a landscape—rather, the body itself is the actual space, is the landscape itself. The body is a vessel that carries energy. There have always been ritualistic aspects of the work, as well as poetic ones. The bodies have become more abstract and fragmented in embodying the refusal we discussed earlier, but they also exist in their full totality, despite this fragmentation. The work tries to

FIG. 13. — Felipe Baeza (Mexican, b. 1987, active in the US). *Confined but still intoxicated with freedom*, 2022, ink, graphite, varnish, and cut paper on panel, 35.6 × 27.9 cm (14 × 11 in.). © Felipe Baeza. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; kurimanzutto, Mexico City / New York. Photograph courtesy the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

build back a history or myth, to reconstruct a unity that will never be totally right, but the challenge is to learn to sit with that and be OK with it.

Laura: The regeneration that you spoke about earlier is key to this. But the other dimension of the bodies depicted in your work that is equally important to me is their appendages—roots, wings, or arms that reach out. Almost like tentacles. And the teeth or thorns that grasp or ground the bodies. As a viewer, I desire to be grabbed by this

body that is a vessel, to be pulled in through the portal. I want to use these bodies as a vehicle for my own journey into and through the work.

Felipe: Wow, thank you for that! I would say that what I'm trying to do not just in my work but in my day-to-day life is respond to a need and a desire to create portals. To go back to our earlier discussion about not belonging, maybe the essence of not just my practice but also my very being is to belong—anywhere, everywhere, and elsewhere, right? And I'm so thankful that I'm an artist, because it has allowed me to figure all these things out for myself. The journey of art making has been my exploration to find my language. Making has allowed me to work out and fully express these ideas in ways that words have not. Materiality has been extremely important to this process, and I'm interested in how materiality can also sit eye to eye with the content.

I don't work in a traditional manner; it's a layered process that I don't fully comprehend and can't control. When I walk into the studio, I'm not in a comfortable state because it's always a space of failure. But I enjoy that failure because it allows for so many surprises to happen. The studio practice is fairly new to me. Every day, I confront that fear of not having or knowing what freedom is. For a long time, I couldn't name it. And I was like wait, this is what I'm able to do now. This is my space. I don't have to respond to anybody. I can just come to the studio and lose track of anything and fully absorb myself in the making. And yeah, and I'm still trying to figure that out for myself. And I think sometimes there's also that guilt, feeling like it's such a selfish practice.

Laura: Recovering Catholics! [*laughter*]

Felipe: Guilt is still very much embedded in there! Guilt that I get to do this, and trying to sit comfortably with that. So yeah, there's a lot of figuring out happening.

Laura: OK, maybe this is a good moment to pause.

Felipe: Thank you so much for that.

Felipe Baeza and Laura G. Gutiérrez at a bus shelter located at the intersection of S. Damen Avenue and W. 18th Street in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago featuring Baeza's *to shape, shape self* (2023), part of the installation *Unruly Forms*. Photo by Laura G. Gutiérrez.

Felipe Baeza is a visual artist living and working in the United States.

Laura G. Gutiérrez is an art critic and performance curator based in Austin, Texas, and a professor and administrator at The University of Texas at Austin.

Notes

1. Nahum B. Zenil (Mexican, b. 1947), *Self-Portrait with Thorns*, 1992, oil on wood, 70 × 50 cm, private collection. An image of the work is viewable on the website of the Grey Art Museum, New York University, in the context of the exhibition *Nahum Zenil: Witness to the Self*, 2 September to 1 November 1997, https://greyartmuseum.nyu.edu/exhibition/nahum-zenil-090297-110197/sec/images/.