A Companion to Modern Art

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Edited by

Pam Meecham

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Claire Robins is a Reader in Art and Education at UCL Institute of Education, University College London, where she leads the MA Art and Design in Education and supervises PhD students. Her research interests span contemporary art, curatorial practices, gallery/museum education, and art education. She has written widely across the intersection of these fields of study. Her book, *Curious Lessons in the Museum: The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions,* was published by Ashgate in 2013. She is currently researching the ways in which key twentieth-century exhibitions influenced developments in art education.

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Introduction

Pam Meecham

Revisiting *The Past is a Foreign Country* David Lowenthal deliberated that "sheer recency" leaves the knowledge of yesterday incoherent and "Hindsight cannot assimilate what has just happened into a properly mulled chronicle" (Lowenthal 2015, 13). Modern art's history, once confidently allocated a time-period of *c*. 1870 to 1970 and confined to developments in Western culture, is no longer told as a single-voiced narrative. Moreover modern art's conventional movement based framework (variously Realism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and so on) rarely dominates textbook accounts of the period. Chronicled through stylistic experimentation with form (line, shape, color and texture) and through the exploration of the properties of materials (largely paint and canvas) modern art's traditional narrative broadly ran from French nineteenth-century Realism through to American Abstract Expressionism of the 1940s and 1950s. Such a story, never without its critics, has since the 1960s been subject to transformations that challenged the identification of unbroken, stylistic experimentation as modern art's primary priority. The unalloyed history of heroic artists' quests for innovative, formal breakthroughs in their work, and so a rejection of academic values, was questioned by historians, sociologists, theorists and artists working from diverse perspectives emanating from the emancipatory forces set in motion by the civil unrest of 1968. The exclusion of modern art's political and social agendas and the procedures by which artworks were selected for canonical status became the focus for those interrogating the ways that modern art's history had been written and its artworks displayed. Realigning modern art's histories in the twenty-first century is a continuing process with definitions,[1] timelines, and modernism's geographic locations unsettled and expanded. No longer (if it ever was) a Western largely urban phenomenon modern art now overtly inhabits an expanded globalized field: the period no longer firmly anchored as a European and North American phenomena. Moreover the standard account of modernism[2] as an antagonist culture with an adversarial aesthetic that stood in opposition to the *status quo*, which even within Europe did not translate seamlessly across cultures, now takes up various guises. Variously, it is, and has been, a tool with which to critique a dominant conservative culture, a challenge to the quotidian, or seen as an emancipatory visual culture distancing itself from forms of imperialism. For others modern art, design and architecture stood as markers for social progress or, conversely, for all that was wrong with Western enlightenment: more dystopian than utopian.

Writing about modern art and modernism is a less confident enterprise than during its formation: more prone now to caveats and often with a cast of once minor characters brought into sharper focus. Accounting for and interpreting modern art in the twenty-first century is a far cry then from sweeping surveys of the mid-twentieth century such as

E. H. Gombrich's 1950 *The Story of Art* with its tale of permanent revolution brought about by nineteenth-century industrialization and its fabled "break with tradition"; or, George Heard Hamilton's 1967 *Painting and Sculpture in Europe, 1880–1940* justifiably admired for its coherent narrative. Many things have militated against modernism and modern art's moral and aesthetic certainty. Writers in this volume relate the tensions of a still globalizing world where re-assessments of the past are conducted through local sources beyond any expectation of a unitary cultural authority. Questioning the imposition of modernism's timelines, values and disciplinary categories, theorists, artists and activists, since at least 1920s Surrealism, have re-mapped Western modernism away from the center's hegemonic framework to include more peripheral visions. More specifically theorists have, as early as the 1950s, articulated the consequences of "belatedness" for those outside the center and confronted the tyranny of time marked out as a progressive ordered whole (Homi Bhabha 1991; Frantz Fanon 1952; Olu Oguibe 1993). Referring to "the politics of pastness" Appadurai argues against the received history of a break with tradition, broadly conceptualized as a distinction between the traditional and the modern which had profoundly negative consequences for those identified as outside modernity (Appadurai 1996, 3; Kapur 2000). Further, being "modern" did not always guarantee inclusion. Australia, although identified as a modern culture, was circumscribed by a "tyranny of distance" from the perceived center that shaped national histories (Blainey 1966).

Although historically written of as a defining feature of Western culture, modernism's uneven and combined development,[3] and still contested terrain, prohibit any singular universal pattern of progress or a tidy précis. Whether modern art's origins are sited in the Renaissance or changing sensibilities brought about by the seventeenth-century English Civil War or eighteenth-century Romanticism, or situated in the pictorial innovations of Gustave Courbet or Paul Cézanne, or pump-primed by the agenda-setting artists at Paris' unofficial *Salon des Refusés* (exhibition of rejects) of 1863, the established modernist narrative (never as coherent as it appeared on the page) has been upended by the consequences of the end of the Cold War, postcolonial independence, the end of apartheid and, less momentously, disciplinary changes to art history. In 1979 Jean-François Lyotard described an incredulity towards modernism's metanarratives and posited a move towards multiple terrains and more fluid assessments of the past. The often irreconcilable differences across multiple domains however have rendered attempts at a globally cohesive history of modern art a largely fugitive enterprise, David Summers' *Real Spaces, World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism* (2003) and Whitney Davis' *A General Theory of Visual Culture* (2011) notwithstanding.

So this *Companion* does not attempt a definitive account or a historical survey. Rather than an all-encompassing framework the book draws together some (by no means all) of modern art's histories, its temporalities, artworks, historical transitions and cultural transfers. Perspectives offered here often fall outside of unitary concepts of national cultures in a period of mass-migration (both historic and present) but also look to ways in which the development of modern art was also mediated and transformed by the experience of self-defining nation-states in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries. Encompassing locations and artists once accorded minor status, some authors in this book relate narratives from the "elsewhere" of modernity. They evidence ways that the local was not merely a foil to central orthodoxies but contributed to modern art's development with innovation taking place beyond the once mandatory sanction of cosmopolitan centers. While rejection of the *status quo* and distain for the aesthetic orthodoxies of academic art were widespread, local adaptions particularly in cultures defined by forms of imperialism often embraced the emancipatory possibilities of the modern: both through its aesthetic innovations and its

characterization of the modern artist. The asymmetrical relationship of modern art's perceived center to the periphery notwithstanding, some authors in this volume offer readings that rather than be a local variant on the main narrative offer more complex versions of the ways that cultures impacted on, and reacted to, received canons.

This *Companion* makes no claim to being an encyclopedic, comprehensive history of modern art. Rather it offers a random glimpse of modernism and modern art and its display from multiple perspectives. This syncretic view encompasses a range of beliefs, methodologies, and cross-disciplinary and subject-specific approaches including anthropology, art history, architecture, education, and photography that I trust will act as a check to generalizing conclusions and contribute to a more expansive understanding of modern art and modernism's reach. Alongside towering canonical figures such as Paul Cézanne and Pablo Picasso this volume also considers the less celebrated and understudied. Forcing artists into a narrative into which they don't fit or indeed would not have wished to inhabit is a position addressed by several contributors. There is no single method of study in this volume resulting in the coexistence of different and sometimes contradictory narratives. Some authors taking a cue from Sven Lindqvist's 1978 manual and manifesto *Gräv där du står: hur man utforskar ett job*, the title of which gave its name to the "Dig where you Stand" movement, have returned to local contexts to uncover formally repressed histories. Other authors have looked from more global vantage points interweaving narratives across different time-periods and geographies. Several authors also incorporate in their chapters the far-reaching legacies of modern art's developments for both historic and present-day cultures with reference to contemporary artists.

Authors

The *Companion* presents a variety of positions written by emerging and established scholars. Although far from geographically comprehensive, several authors do come from (or offer research undertaken in) locations outside an Anglo-American nexus. Modernism has been written of as a closed system that omits the possibility of further narratives however authors in this *Companion* take the view that reading of the diverse ways that modernism and modern art have intersected with both the local, national, and international both inside and outside national boundaries and colonized cultures still has much to say. Stories told here are not just narrated as foils for the center but retold as acts of cultural exchange challenging the notion of a single point of origin and offer different entry points. Authors from Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Ireland, and Sweden capture some of Europe's internal complexities rather than present Europe as a homogenized unity. Reconsidered in terms of their own centers authors from the former periphery such as Australia, reject cultural deference through processes of cultural reversal, shedding new light on artworks under-represented in gallery and art historical literature alike. Several authors offer examples of the ways that outside the official centers, militant anti-bourgeois modernism was both appropriated and developed. Some authors redefine relationships with modernism's cultural traditions and narrate its contemporary legacies that invert assumptions, sometimes reading against the grain of canonical modernism. A cross-section of commentaries productively re-examine modern art's historiography offering stratified narratives that problematize evolutionary developments: writing of alternative modernities and multiple modernisms. Working with so many authors it became evident that the preoccupations of generations rarely coincide but I hope the unexpected encounters will prove compelling and revealing. Writers in this volume look again at modernism's and modern art's continuing complexity.

Audience for the *Companion*

A Companion to Modern Art is written for an expanded audience for what has hitherto been a relatively restricted interest. If there ever was a golden age of modern art (perhaps during the early decades of the twentieth century when it was touted as a new Renaissance), it was never universally acclaimed pitted as it often was against the perceived threat of popular culture. Not entirely tempered by nostalgia and heritage culture, and currently the subject of interest for younger generations there is a resurgence of interest in modernism's militant activism, its aesthetics, artworks, architecture, pedagogies, and exhibitionary discourses. The *Companion* is also written for the general reader and student interested in the artworks and locations for modernism or searching for fresh readings of canonical artists.

Time-frame

Although from the vantage point of 1964 American abstract painter Ad Reinhardt was willing to cite, probably mischievously, 1950 as the point at which artistic revolution moved from avant-garde to official art (Reinhardt, 1964); the *Companion* takes a less exacting view of dating. Although dates of world wars and 1968, 1989, and 1994 are frequently used as period markers, in a more interconnected world they can also appear overly determined. This volume takes the development of modern art from the eighteenth century and broadly ends with the emergence of Conceptual Art (mid-1960s) that is often cited as the radical break with high modernism and its almost exclusive attachment to painting with the caveat that in some instances timelines have been retuned to take account of globalization.

Organization of the Book

The *Companion* foregoes the periods and movements of received histories as an overarching framework as there is currently little consensus on which movements, artists, and critics were pivotal to the development and geographic spread of modern art: the contentious and disputed roles of Futurism, Cubism, and Expressionism standing as examples. Neither is the *Companion* an overt history of avant-gardism although as an international, hugely diverse confederation of philosophies, practices, beliefs, and artworks, avant-gardism can be found in a range of guises in most chapters. This *Companion* consist of five overarching themes: Part I *Ancient & Modern*, Part II *Displaying the Modern*, Part III *Re-assessments: Modernism and Globalization*, Part IV *Locating Modernism: Multiple Modernisms and Nation Building* and Part V *The Modern Artist, the Modern Child and a Modern Art Education*. However, it is the case that chapters while segmented into sections, often overlap with others through commonalities played out in different contexts. It was my intention to present poly-vocal accounts of the development and legacies of modern art.

Part I Ancient & Modern

The first theme of the *Companion* addresses the interconnectedness of "remote" historic periods on modern art's formation and the continuing relevance in contemporary culture of three of modernism's central preoccupations: Romanticism, the primitive

and the archaic. Taking Friedrich Nietzsche as a key figure in the modern reception of Romanticism, Colin Trodd's chapter "Revitalizing Romanticism; or, Reflections on the Nietzschean Aesthetic and the Modern Imagination" examines the importance of vitalism, imagination, myth and aesthetics, prefigured through spontaneous power and creativity. Returning to the modern artist's preoccupation with Romantic discourse at the beginning of the twentieth century, Trodd looks at the artistic and cultural traditions to which Nietzsche functioned as a cultural catalyst. In case-studies, he pays particular attention to the ways that a number of modern artists including Charles Ricketts, Gustav Klimt, Edvard Munch, Hannah Hoch and Giorgio de Chirico pictured Nietzschean art.

It is a striking characteristic of both modernism broadly and the avant-garde in particular that rejection of the existing social order and its "conservative" cultural manifestations was expressed by recourse to perceived simpler art objects and forms, be they designated primitive, exotic, folk, or popular culture. The category of the primitive resonates throughout this *Companion* although often in a different register from the twentieth century's apprehensions about European artists' encounters with dehistoricized "Others" and their artefacts. In the early 1990s Kirk Varnedoe suggested sidestepping the grand theories of the primitive then almost exclusively related to "timelessness" and "imperialist thievery" that were mandatory touchstones for any discussion and suggested we "look harder at what we see" (Varnedoe 1990, 186). Forms of primitivism haunt several chapters in this book, whether in the fabled untamed pre-rational primitivism of the child, or through the Surrealist unconscious, Paul Cézanne, Asmat art, or primitivism as a counter-discourse to modernism.

In this section the two-way relationship of indigenous people to the avant-garde is explored. Andrew McNamara and Ann Stephen's chapter "A Cartography of Desires and Taboos: The Modern Primitive and the Antipodes" note that while discussion of the modern and the primitive is deemed to have exhausted its potential to the contrary, they move the still evolving debate into projections of cultural marginality and cultural reversals that can be seen in the reception and development of modern art in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific. Here the appeal to the primitive meant the shift of the marginal and peripheral to the center of critical and aesthetic attention bypassing the need for endorsement from the major centers of art.

Paul Wood in "Primitive/Modern/Contemporary" also re-examines critiques of primitivism suggesting a need to reconsider further the avant-garde's relationship to primitivism. His re-examination, for instance, of Primitivism and Futurism is followed by a consideration of still evolving strategies for displaying the art of the non-western world within Western museums. Taking "Benin bronzes" as a case-study Wood discusses a number of curatorial approaches including Joseph Eboreime's restaging of the Benin collection at the Horniman Museum, London and the mediation of contemporary artists in exhibitions such as *Foreign Exchange*, shown at the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt.

In his chapter "Did Modernism Redefine Classicism? The Ancient Modernity of Classical Greek Art" Whitney Davis considers the ways in which the development of modern art up to the 1930s influenced the perception of ancient Greece's Classical art, reconceptualized as a form of "ancient modernity." Davis considers not just modernist artistic responses to ancient classicism, seen for instance in Picasso's *Pipes of Pan*, 1923 but also in the same period the responses of classicists to modernism: scholarly reflections that reanimated "Classical Greek art."

Returning to the much contested display and deployment of primitivism in the service of modern art, Nick Stanley's "Robert Goldwater and the Search for the Primitive: The Asmat Project at the Museum of Primitive Art" looks with a fresh perspective on Goldwater's

formalism evident in his influential 1938 *Primitivism in Modern Art*. Stanley details the cultural complexities surrounding the display of Asmat art in the setting up of The Museum of Primitive Art, New York City in 1949 and in subsequent exhibitions at MoMA and the Metropolitan Museum.

One of the most persistent contemporary presences from the modernist project is Surrealism: its political radicalism and its formal innovations. In "Surrealist Ireland: the Archaic, the Modern and the Marvelous" Fionna Barber discusses the significance of Surrealism in Ireland both in terms of its representation of Ireland and its legacies for Irish artists from mid-twentieth century to the contemporary. Paying particular attention to the work of Leonora Carrington, Colin Middleton, Alice Maher and Gerard Byrne, Barber problematizes Surrealism's *marvelous*, (that is the rejection of the rational) the archaic and the modern and the consequences of the disjunctions of such formations for gender politics in Ireland in the present.

Part II Displaying the Modern

Almost thirty years after the publication of "The Exhibitionary Complex" (Bennett 1988) there has been increased academic and popular interest in curating and displaying art in exhibitions shared by the writers in this section. Moving beyond interpreting the art gallery as part of the Foucauldian carceral regime and complicit in a knowledge/power nexus, authors in this section expand upon our understanding of the role of historic and contemporary exhibitions and institutions in the formation, dissemination and reassessment of modern art.

Julie Sheldon's "Picturing the Installation Shot" examines three legendary modern art exhibitions – the Paris Salon of 1852, the Die Brücke exhibition held in Dresden in 1906, and the 1951 Ninth Street Show in New York to explore the role of the photographic "installation shot" in the history of modern exhibition culture. Sheldon discusses the role installation views can play in the writing of modern art's histories.

"Contemporary Displays of Modern Art," considers recent re-assessments of modern art and its canonical works evident in a range of international exhibitions that act as a barometer measuring modern art's fortunes and pressures. It considers curatorial strategies such as "value-free" and "non-hierarchical" narratives that are used to re-calibrate modern art in a period of massive institutional change as the museum is repurposed towards greater social inclusivity. A retraction of modern art's historic hierarchies, no longer deemed fit for purpose, may permit "multiple genealogies" of the modern period that chime with calls for greater institutional transparency as changing audience demographics demand new forms of mediation.

Liz Wells' chapter "Camera-Eye: Photography and Modernism" critically situates debates and practices pertaining to modern photography as visual art. She argues that the key development for photography at the turn of the twentieth century was mass reproducibility. She looks at the importance of artists' migrancy, socio-political change, and photographic experimentation and reflects on the link between American formalism and the foundation of photographic collections. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the work of Mexican photographer, Manuel Álvarez Bravo and his way of "seeing" that articulated modernist values with themes and explorations that were specifically Mexican.

If the all-consuming concern regarding the instrumentalization of culture during the Cold War that dominated art historical writings of the 1990s is currently less pressing, it re-surfaces in post-1989 legacies (Van den Berg 2006; Piotrowski 2012). Hans Belting surmised, the unity of Western art was in part defined by what it was not: eastern

European art (Belting 2003). Once held in mutual tension the binary between east and west may well have dissolved but the repercussions of such distinctions are long-lasting. In Wiebke Leister's "Photographic Installation Strategies En-bloc and In-the-round," Gerhard Richter's *48 Portraits* (1972, 1998) is discussed in detail from its different levels of photographic transformations through media and through a range of installation strategies. Locating Richter's work as a crossing-point between modernism and postmodernism, Leister discusses questions of portraiture, reproduction, and documentation, the relationship of photography to painting as well as Richter's treatment of archival sources through three staging methods of display.

The consequences for the west of a greater understanding of the complexity of art and art-making in eastern Europe, once simplified to the point of parody, is discussed by Judith Brocklehurst though an examination of institutional amnesia embodied in exhibition display. "*Documenta 6*: Memories of Another Modernism" starts in 2012 at *Documenta 13* in Kassel, Germany before revisiting 1955's *Documenta 1* and *Documenta 6* in 1977 in which East German artists participated. The chapter extracts different narratives from these exhibitions including the defector-dialectic which led to a re-evaluation of Realism, and the dissident-paradigm which saw the valorization by the west of selected artists from the east. Brocklehurst examines what light these recollections shed on modernism as an unfinished project.

Part III Re-assessments: Modernism and Globalization

Jonathan Harris' chapter "*Bijiasuo* and Truth: Modernism Reassessed in an Era of Globalization" offers a reassessment of modernism based on some of the themes raised by the influential art historian, T. J. Clark, in his 2013 book *Picasso and Truth: From Cubism to Guernica*. Harris' title begins with *Bijiasuo* the translation of the name Picasso in "Pin Yin" – the official phonetic system for transcribing the sound of Chinese characters into Latin script. This is used as a tentative rhetorical driver with which to discuss a current global condition that Harris feels is a permanent dislocation from the social order of mid-twentieth century Western intellectual and artistic life. The chapter locates Western modernism, and its forms of socio-historical understanding within a still globalizing present.

Writing from the incendiary perspective of the anti-austerity protests in Greece in the summer of 2015 Angela Dimitrakaki's "Extensive Modernity: On the Refunctioning of Artists as Producers" revisits Walter Benjamin's seminal 1934 text *Author as Producer* to discuss the possibilities of re-defining the artist's position in contemporary culture: from how the artist makes to what makes an artist and how such changes can be mobilized against the devaluation of labor. In a period Dimitrakaki characterizes as extensive modernity she examines the critical role artists might play within neoliberal culture.

"Architecture's Modernisms" by Richard Williams reminds us of the interdependent relationship between architecture and modern art and maps out architectural modernism as a polyvalent, polymorphous and global phenomenon. Relating the ways that ideas traveled internationally Williams considers the new, modern life styles, of hygiene, cleanliness, and moral rectitude. Williams' account of modern architecture moves beyond an examination of signature architects that dominate accounts of modernism to look to more quotidian architects who worked on Glasgow's municipal housing projects of the early 1960s. Williams finds the continuing impact of modernism in IKEA's global iterations.

Rosemary Shirley's "The Wide Margins of the Century: Rural Modernism, Pastoral Peasants and Economic Migrations" narrates a story of modernism that centers on artists' engagements with rural locations. While the received history of modernism was first and

foremost determined by artworks and theories emanating from metropolitan cities, Shirley constructs another narrative. From the early "peasant painting" of the nineteenth century and the importance in modern art's development of the pastoral she expands to economic migration relevant in contemporary cultures globally with a discussion of photo essays by John Berger and Jean Mohr published in the 1960s and 1970s: the 1975 *A Seventh Man: A Book of Images and Words about the Experience of Migrant Workers in Europe* was republished in 2010. She continues with the work of contemporary artists' Jordan Baseman and Neville Gabie that can be read as a continuum of Berger and Mohr's project focusing on the continuing role of the rural economic migrant.

Naoko Uchiyama's study "Destabilizing Essentialism through Localizing Modernism" explores international aspects of Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi's artistic practices during the 1930s problematizing both the modernist image of him as a "rootless cosmopolitan" and more recent multiculturalist re-evaluations. The chapter focuses on the reception of *Chinese Girl*, made in Beijing and re-cast and displayed in Japan in 1931. Uchiyama argues that the sculpture and its display challenged forms of essentialism, and makes visible the interlacing gazes that underpinned the unstable formation of localities.

Part IV Locating Modernism: Multiple Modernisms[4] and Nation Building

Modernism as experienced and written about from the former peripheries has much of relevance and interest to add to a decentralized international cultural debate: entwined with the complexities of cultural translation and transnationalism. While it could be argued that at a remove from the center more radical practices were permissible visibility was likely to be in direct proportion to distance and proximity. In this volume we catch a glimpse of the ways that modernism played out differently in periphery, colony, and British Commonwealth. Balancing the genealogical search for an authentic cultural heritage with the desire to be "modern" occupied some artists encountered in these chapters. Their narratives are outlined against a backdrop of national self-definition and self-determination that conditioned, but were not necessarily overly determined by, the specific challenges of their colonial or perceived cultural subservice or parochial contexts. Particularly problematic was mainstream modernism's historic hostility to the radical potential of forms of figuration and naturalism, strategies that were adopted and enhanced away from the center not as artistically regressive but as signifiers of freedom and modernity. Moreover, antagonism to the *status quo* and hostility to bourgeois high culture, central principles of many accounts of modernism, did not translate seamlessly across all cultures.

Annika Öhrner, Elena Stylianou, and Nicos Philippou and Renja Suominen-Kokkonen undermine a one size fits all monolithic modernism that has tended to represent Europe with a broad sweep in over-generalized terms. They remind us that while many artists went to Paris and were "influenced" by Parisian teaching, even education at Henri Matisse's school was not an unalloyed, even-paced triumph. However, being a recipient of a center did not automatically result in easily dismissible, derivative artwork or over zealously mimicked theoretical perspectives (Bhabha 1991). Restoring the complex networks of negotiation and exchange has meant returning to modern art's histories to trace the ways that artists (often marginalized by gender) have been molded to fit particular exhibitionary agendas sometimes eliding their significance in determining the direction and form of modern art. While some authors in this section write within a national perspective it is not necessarily from a belief in fundamental essentialist or nationalistic views that dictate that there is such a thing as a homogenous national culture.

Laura Back's chapter on "The Many Modernisms of Australian Art" details the complexity of modernism's relationship to unitary notions of nationalism. As a quintessentially modern nation Australia's adoption and rejection of modernism, what it took, reworked or innovated from through artists' migration and itinerancy is situated against a backdrop of a nation's search for its own identity. The chapter also confronts the place of monuments within modern art using the Australian War Memorial Museum, Canberra as a focus for a discussion about why public monuments instrumentalized as sites for remembrance often failed to be "modern" (see Chapter 22, this volume).

Capturing some of Europe's internal complexities the following three chapters in this section militate against any geographic or culturally homogenizing unity. Elena Stylianou and Nicos Philippou's "Greek-Cypriot Locality: (Re) Defining our Understanding of European Modernity" reminds us that the effects of euro-centrism could be experienced from the furthermost edge of Europe's border: Cyprus was also subject to the west's orientalizing gaze. Stylianou and Philippou bring together three significant forces that inflected the visual arts of Cyprus: British colonialism; Greek nationalism; and an organized Left and labor movement. They argue the case for an alternative site-specific modernity through close reading of the work of Cypriot artists: Ioannis Kissonergis, Adamantios Diamantis, Costas Stathis, and Loukia Nicolaidou.

Arguing against a one-way street between center and periphery Annika Öhrner's "A Northern Avant-garde: Spaces and Cultural Transfer" revisits the development of modernism in Sweden. While much has been written on the significance of the collectors and art dealers that advocated for modern art in France (particularly Paul Durand-Ruel and Daniel Henri Kahnweiler) Öhrner's departure point is the Nordic dealerships for modern art. She uncovers the strategies used by migrating artists that act as a repost to a historiography that has simplified the process of avant-garde transfer. Taking a case-history approach she challenges traditional modernist art history paying particular attention to the curatorial contradictions in the display of two artists' work: the parallel aesthetic strategies of Hilma af Klint and the "retrospective Cubism" of Siri Derkert. In common with several authors in this volume Öhrner focuses on an exhibition where avant-garde ambitions were performed: here the Baltic Exhibition in Malmö, Sweden in 1914.

The pre-existing conditions of Finnish society underpin this examination of Finnish modernism. In Finland during the nineteenth-century, modernism was visible initially through technological modernization seen in the development of a mostly agrarian country. The processes of modernization are considered here in Renja Suominen-Kokkonen's "Modernisms, Genealogy, and Utopias in Finland" where she seeks a new, critical perspective on the heroicizing narratives of canonized modernism. Weaving together developments in architecture and the visual and applied arts Suominen-Kokkonen's interdisciplinary counter-narrative includes an account of the electrification of Finland; the centrality to modernism of new types of homes; a comparison of artists' colonies; and images of the modern that did not necessarily conform to a Baudelairian call to paint modern life.

So-called New Deal murals constructed during the American Great Depression of the 1930s under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's relief programs were represented (when written about at all) as little better than state-sponsored propaganda: public artworks dutifully executed by unemployed artists desperate to secure government patronage. Using the recently restored Manhattan's Harlem Hospital murals (created by amongst others Charles Alston, Alfred Crimi, Vertis Hayes, and Georgette Seabrooke) as a case-study Greta Berman avoids totalizing interpretations. She draws on both her first-hand experience in the 1970s of interviewing artists who had worked on New Deal projects and on her involvement with subsequent mural restoration. She offers assessments that move

beyond accounts of artists working without personal agency or on public art devoid of aesthetic innovation. In "The Engaged Artist: Considerations of Relevance" Berman argues that the term "modernism" should be replaced by "modernisms," thereby embracing a wider-range of artists and art practices than is usual in triumphalist accounts of American modern art that until the twenty-first century focused on Abstract Expressionism.

One theme in Laura Back's chapter (How to Memorialize with the Modern Visual Language at the Artist's Disposal) finds a parallel in Leon Wainwright's "Visualising Figures of Caribbean Slavery through Modernism." In his discussion of Aubrey Williams and Philip Moore's use of painting and public monument respectively in the context of the visualization of the Caribbean slave rebellion of the eighteenth century, Wainwright considers the production, reception, and subsequent deployment of Williams' *Revolt* 1960 and Moore's *The 1763 Monument (or the Cuffy Monument)* 1976. Both Back's and Wainwright's chapters, engaged in very different situations, discuss the limitations of modernism's painting and sculpture when mobilized for the purpose of historical remembrance.

Part V The Modern Artist, the Modern Child, and a Modern Art Education

The role allocated to the child in the history of modernism was often a fictional one of the expressive foil: a primitive whose naïve artlessness produced authentic artworks. Children's art was lauded as exemplary in formal terms for the modern artist in search of a back-to-basics simplicity. While by the 1920s the cult of childhood and the child was proving increasingly irritating to Vorticist and Cubo-Futurist painter Wyndham Lewis (1927), chapters in this section restore the importance of the child, child art, and child's play reallocated central roles in both the development and dissemination of modern art. In the main, images of children, child development, and art education have been relegated to the side-lines of academic discourses. The child, once as marginal a subject in art history as sexuality and often only visible in the increasingly specialized discipline of Education, is foregrounded in this section. In part this reflects contemporary interest in constructions of childhood, modern art's pedagogy, twentieth century psychology, and increasing awareness of the modern artist's deployment of the image of the child as a signifier of modernity.

Claire Robins' "A Modern Art Education" re-examines modern art's educational legacies and traces its winding continuum through a series of parables that connect the fractured ideals of its half-realized endeavors. Atypically her chapter criss-crosses boundaries between children's art education and the education of artists exploring moments of conjunction between modernism, progressive education, avant-gardism, and alternative forms of pedagogy. Although modern art's fabled charismatic teachers and notions of emancipation through personal freedom and the rhetoric of radical democracy in art-making, have been subject to scrutiny and skepticism they nonetheless remain remarkably persistent pedagogic tropes. Robins reiterates the significance of the social values once attached to art education as possible antidotes to twenty-first century neoliberalism.

Calling into question modernism's defining mantras of "creativity," "autonomy," and "originality," Nicholas Addison's "Misrecognition: Child's Play, Modern Art, and Vygotskian Psychology" examines children's play as improvisatory practices as theorized by Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Defining play as a serious social engagement with the material and symbolic world rather than an unthinking, pre-cultural process, Addison develops an argument that play as improvisation was central to the invention of Cubism by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso in a period marked by their increasing artistic

competition. Addison examines the partnership between the two artists while expanding on ways that child's play can provide a procedural basis for adult invention and exchange.

Briley Rasmussen takes as her focus the Museum of Modern Art, New York and its part in proselytizing for the modern movement but atypically in "MoMA and the Modern Child: The Critical Role of Education Programming in MoMA's Modernism" Rasmussen examines the expansive educational programming of the 1930s that was developed by progressive educationalists' championing of creativity in the modern child. Such an enterprise framed children's art-making as a response to, but not pastiche of, MoMA's growing modern art collection. She maintains that the modern child was critical to how MoMA presented modern art to the public, and was not considered merely as a nascent audience for modern art. The chapter culminates in a discussion of MoMA's Children's Art Carnival that traveled internationally. However questionable such endeavors may seem, with historical hindsight Rasmussen focuses specifically on the ways that the program chimed with the aspirations of the newly independent India in 1963 bringing together notions of modernity and social progress.

Anna Green's chapter offers a multifaceted appraisal of a seminal modernist artist in "Paul Cézanne's *Young Girl at the Piano – Overture to* 'Tannhäuser'": a work from *c.* 1869 that falls outside Cézanne's so-called mature period. Green contributes to re-assessments of Cézanne's modernism and indeed modernism itself and eschews any singular, univalent reading but rather offers what she describes as multiply inflected, intertwined discourses that arise from the artwork itself. Further in discussing Charles Baudelaire's notion of a return towards childhood, Green moves away from orthodox historical narratives of nineteenth-century France dominated by accounts of Paris' *demi-monde* and the role of the *flâneur*, to show how youth and young female piano players in particular might also be read as emblematic of modernity. The chapter comes with a coda *"Le Haschisch des femmes"* ending by asking: In what sense might making music at the piano resemble taking hashish for a woman?

Conclusion

All histories are subject to revision not least the history of modern art. Following momentous social change in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries our perceptions of the past have altered and with them a sense of certainty has disappeared. During the 1980s it was still possible to be critical of modernism's "selective traditions" and yet eulogise "… there is still much to be learned from the complexities of its vigorous and dazzling development" (Williams 1989, 63). The intervening years have taken their toll on such a stance and the values enshrined in modern art seem remote from contemporary culture. Yet I hope the *Companion* has balanced the charges against modernism's hegemony with an understanding of the complexity of historic developments and its continuing reverberations in the present. Looking back at the development of modern art with greater critical detachment is often confounded by its heirs, continuities, and unintended consequences and a properly mulled chronicle is still to be written however the *Companion* offers a range of tentative propositions to contribute to an on-going debate.

Notes

1   In a more interdisciplinary period, the utility of terms such as modernism itself has been called into questioned.

2   The attempts to rigorously define (and restrict) the term Modernism using an upper case M against other forms of modernism have not created clarity. Where once the distinction between modern art and modernism was relatively clear it was always illusive and frustrating the latter term now often used interchangeably or as a catchall term with a variety of inflections.

3   The term is used within Marxist theory to critique capitalism implicated in the unequal distribution of resources that contribute to social injustice.

4   While the term multiple modernism is used here to indicate a paradigm shift it is also with an understanding that such terms are emergent and subject to debate.

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Part I

Ancient & Modern

Revitalizing Romanticism; or, Reflections on the Nietzschean Aesthetic and the Modern Imagination

Colin Trodd

The tragic artist is *not* a pessimist – it is precisely he who *affirms* all that is questionable and terrible in existence, he is *Dionysian* …

(Nietzsche 2003 [1889], 49)

We must constantly give birth to our thoughts out of our pain, and nurture them with everything we have in us of blood, heart, fire, pleasure, passion, agony, conscience, fate and catastrophe. Life to us – that means constantly transforming everything we are into light and flame, as well us everything that happens to us.

(Nietzsche 2001 [1887a], 6)

The world as work of art that gives birth to itself.

(Nietzsche 1967, 419)

In 1941, the Harvard academic Crane Brinton claimed that Friedrich Nietzsche's followers could be divided into two groups: the "gentle" Nietzscheans, for whom human life was dedicated to understanding the nature and function of illusions; and the "tough" Nietzscheans, for whom human life was the attempt to engage with, struggle against, or concatenate, a myriad of energies. All the same, both groups, interested in the complexity of human beliefs and thoughts, not with standards of verification and validity, concluded that art was the key creative response to an intrinsically alien universe (Brinton 1941, 184–185).[1] If Brinton's "tough" model gets most of the attention in what follows, then this is because the Nietzsche it articulates, who equates the term "life" with the idea of the diversity of the world, was an important reference point for a number of modern artists, writers, and commentators. Many of these figures were sympathetic to the principal critical assertions of Romanticism: that human life was a perpetual struggle to understand the division within being; that art arises from the experience of living in a body; and that the imagination, as condition of perpetual reflection, confirmed the creative authority of the cultural activity known as myth. As I will argue below, these conceptualizations allowed Nietzsche to become the "strong enchanter" for those individuals whose analytical interests and critical procedures obliged them to converse with Romanticism.[2] This relationship is

punctuated by three broad concepts, each of which was attractive to different artists and artistic communities: first, the idea that the mind, as active process, embellished, enriched, or completed the world in the process of picturing it; second, the idea that philosophical thought should concentrate on the aesthetic life of humanity; third, the idea that the systems of science and technology threatened the sensuous subject by questioning the value of cultural life. The logical outcome of these conceptualizations, as formulated by the first-wave of Nietzschean creators, was that the creative artist is involved in a perpetual struggle to create mental compositions, intuited truths, and dynamic world-pictures; and that Nietzscheanism was destined to become the prism by which modern art should be understood.[3]

The history presented in this chapter is necessarily partial and investigative, not definitive. It endeavors to outline a picture of a heterogeneous whole, a set of diverse ideas, phenomena, and groupings brought into contact, and forming a meaningful system, by the critical category "Nietzschean." The chapter is at once descriptive (it notes main themes and issues) and critical (it explains the nature, scope and impact of these themes and issues); it is not a guide to Nietzsche's reputation in modern culture.[4] In short, it looks at the artistic and cultural tradition to which Nietzsche gave rise. As outlined here, Nietzsche's views on culture and life are identified as symbiotic, as they were for the majority of his original auditors and exegetes. Although they found his writings both dazzling and challenging, many commentators reassured themselves that his critique of industrial modernity – what Nietzsche called the "struggle against the … mechanistic nitwitization of the world" – was foreshadowed by Romantic culture, which resisted the reduction of value to reason (Nietzsche 2014 [1886], 158). Reading Nietzsche, then, allowed artists and thinkers to return to a major preoccupation of Romantic discourse: the belief that social modernity, through its valorization of commerce and manufacture, had shrunken and enfeebled the physiological and cognitive bases of life; robbed it of a culture rooted in mythos, the creative energy that raises art to the status of reality. As will be seen, Nietzsche functioned as a cultural catalyst: he enabled star-struck admirers to insist that the most pressing concern of art was the realization of the subject's sublime potential through the development of critical energy and kinetic power, pre-requisites for the appearance of living culture. Nietzsche, as these commentators conceived him, allowed the modern subject to identify and intensify the heroic vitalism needed to sustain life.[5]

Being Vital

The terms of this critical engagement of Nietzsche explain his significance and effectiveness in European cultural circles around 1900. Three responses can be noted at this point. First, his intellectual cosmopolitanism was exciting for artists, thinkers, and critics who equated creative activity with the ideal of universal culture. Second, his understanding of society as collective ontology, the idea that beliefs and consciousness can be explained by reflecting on what is meant by human beingness in different social settings, satisfied those individuals, groupings, and movements dedicated to spotlighting the psychological bases of art production. In turn, these propositions functioned as the critical armature whereby Nietzsche's interests were summarized as continuations of Romantic discourse, where the aesthetic is categorized in terms of spontaneous power and creativity: the desire to see life as the subject sees itself seeing.[6]

Universalism, aesthetic life, and imaginative act: these overlapping concepts indicate the complicated ways in which Nietzscheanism and Romanticism commingled in the workings

of different modern cultural communities. Nietzsche, as audited by representatives of these various groupings, was at once champion of the individual human psyche and angelus figure pointing to a new understanding of human energy as the key to collective identity and psycho-social coherence. Nietzscheanism, as it developed over time, became the obsidian mirror by which Romanticism revealed itself to modern thought. As will be demonstrated, some figures believed that Nietzsche was a Romantic because he was committed to overcoming old ways of seeing, being and acting. Others saw him as a liberating visionary heralding a world vitalized by an aesthetic dedicated to remodeling inherited concepts of mental activity. Still others found a psycho-explorer and messianic leader whose genius was the association of culture with the need to face incarnate inexhaustible struggle, to define the self as something seeking a condition of immanent togetherness through inwardness. At the same time, Nietzsche was celebrated for other reasons: his writing was dazzlingly alive; he argued for an art of radiant joy in living; he was intoxicated by the burning spirit of the universe.[7]

These attitudes were elaborated most fully in Europe, where numerous individuals discovered in Nietzsche a way of meshing philosophy, psychology, culture, and history to question traditional models of consciousness, perception, social development, and the history of ideas.[8] He intrigued or dazzled important literary figures, thinkers, and composers: Gabriele D'Annunzio, Guillaume Apollinaire, Antonin Artaud, Hugo Ball, Georges Bataille, Gottfried Benn, Ernst Bloch, Georg Brandes, Martin Buber, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Frederick Delius, George Egerton, Havelock Ellis, Stefan Georg, André Gide, Julius Meier-Graefe, T. E. Hulme, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, D. H. Lawrence, Percy Wyndham Lewis, Gustav Mahler, Thomas Mann, F. T. Marinetti, A. R. Orage, Georg Simmel, George Bernard Shaw, Richard Strauss, August Strindberg, Ferdinand Tönnes, H. G. Wells, Heinrich Wölfflin and W. B. Yeats. "Nietzscheanism," or the idea of "Nietzschean" art, fascinated leading artists: Aubrey Beardsley, Henri-Gaudier-Brzeska, Giorgio de Chirico, Le Corbusier, Henri Edmond Cross, Max Ernst, Hannah Hoch, Augustus John, Wassily Kandinsky, Gustav Klimt, Max Klinger, František Kupka, Francis Picabia, Pablo Picasso, André Masson, Edvard Munch, Charles Ricketts, Luigi Russolo, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Giovanni Segantini, Henry van der Velde – and many others.[9] A number of these individuals believed that Romanticism provided the critical resources for grasping the nature of Nietzsche's thought; and most European avant-garde art movements and groupings, from *fin de siècle* Symbolism to Expressionism, Futurism, Vorticism and Dadaism, grappled with his theories, adapted his ideas to fresh critical settings, or insisted on thematic affinities between themselves and his writings. This is not the place for a full-blown assessment of the cogency of these interpretations, many of which identified Nietzscheanism as the successoral movement of Romanticism, but it is important to stress that by linking Nietzsche to Romanticism commentators could see his brilliant readings of Hamlet and Beethoven in terms of the Romantic project: the never-ending search for those new spaces which self-creating art brings into being.[10]

As these remarks indicate, Nietzsche provided the stimulus for different models of representing existence: he compelled his readers to occupy the imagination; he commanded his admirers to see the world as luminous and crystalline; and he heralded a new age of individual liberation through unfettered aesthetic creativity. "Nietzsche" was another way of describing a number of processes whereby art, criticism, and cultural discourse tried to identify new values for living in the world. And what united these strands of thought was the conviction that Nietzsche's goal was the generation of systems of representation dedicated to aestheticizing the universe.[11]

This last point, which affirms the ontologically generative power of art, strikingly illustrates the nature of turn-of-the-century engagements with Nietzsche, many of which argued along the lines that he was a neo-Romantic, whose antirationalist vitalism defined the will as the source of dynamic impulse.[12] Equally important, Nietzsche's celebration of agonal existence could be used as a check on Darwin's anti-providential view of history. Physical liberty, spontaneity, and cultural growth were to be the key terms:

> For art to exist, for any sort of aesthetic activity or perception to exist, a certain physiological precondition is indispensable: *intoxication* … The essence of intoxication is the feeling of plenitude and increased energy … In this condition one enriches everything out of one's own abundance: what one sees, what one desires, one sees swollen, pressing, strong, overladen with energy.
>
> (Nietzsche 2003 [1889], 82–83)

This concept of energy, as promulgated by Nietzsche, gave shape and structure to modernist readings of Romantic aesthetics (Rosenblum 1975, 128–219). At the center of this encounter was the idea that human creative power, as incarnated in the Dionysian dynamic, is the principal means by which the artist-seer emancipates himself from the alienating objectivity of technology, science, and industry. With Nietzsche, it was agreed, critical thought remained alive; it pointed to a world where human life would renew itself in ecstatic union with earth, nature, world, or universe. In this context the "vitalist" Nietzsche, who set out to align will, feeling, and outer world, was taken to affirm the critical reality of the Romantic sublime, which was at once archetypal (arising from shared physiological norms) and individual (arising from subjective psychological conditions).[13] The Dionysian, Nietzsche states, is

> …the terrible *awe* which seizes upon man, when he is suddenly unable to account for the cognitive forms of a phenomenon … [It is] the blissful ecstasy which rises from the innermost depths of man … [In this] glowing life … not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but Nature which has become estranged, hostile or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her prodigal son, man … [He] now walks about enchanted, in ecstasy, like to the gods, whom he saw walking about in his dreams. He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art; in these paroxysms of intoxication the artistic power of all nature reveals itself to the highest gratification of the Primordial Unity.
>
> (Nietzsche 1927 [1872], 3–4)

Here, and throughout *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Dionysian art is rooted in a prerationalist world of earth and body: it is a way of delineating a universe made radiant through surplus energy. The Dionysian represents, Nietzsche argues, the materialization of the unity of being, but this process, which he calls a "festival of the earth," reveals that the world is not designed for human life. Hence "terrible awe": the Dionysian means more than facticity; it is Nietzsche's term for confirming existence as an abyss with neither center nor end (Nietzsche 1927 [1872], 1–29; Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 54).

This is the viewpoint of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1885).[14] In this widely translated epic prose-poem, Nietzsche remodels the image of the prophetic-outsider, a familiar figure in the art, literature, and music of Romanticism, as a forest-loving perpetual "wanderer," who longs to live the "sense of the earth!" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 10, 12). Zarathustra's philosophy is something that happens to the body in the process of its life. It is the

recognition that there is no beyond on the other side of sensory perception. This is the truth given to Zarathustra: to know being in a state of perpetual becoming; to accept change, to live it ecstatically, is his gift to humanity; to see a world where the human is a "bridge and not a goal" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 13). In Zarathustra's view, the sensuous world is described via haptic forcefulness, an enhanced feeling of life, a perpetual openness to the transfiguring potentiality of world energy: "I say to you: one must still have chaos within, in order to give birth to a dancing star … You must want to consume yourself in your own flame: how could you want to become new unless you have first become ashes!" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 15, 56).

Many early twentieth-century intellectuals used such pronouncements to convert Zarathustra and Nietzsche into nature-mystics, mountain-men, or cosmic types, whose true subject was the rhythmic vitality of the animate universe. This was not, of course, unsurprising, as a similar vision of creation occurs in Romanticism, where Blake, Coleridge, Friedrich, Keats, Schelling and Shelley identify aesthetic life as the true criterion of human value.[15]

The Dionysian Creator

To arrive at such a description, where Nietzsche signifies the purity or value of the inner world, is only half the story. The neo-vitalism prevalent in symbolist and modernist circles – the view that art, properly conceived, is the means of concentrating on dynamic life-forces – could be reconciled with the image of Dionysus as subject of perpetual self-creation. We can develop this insight by noting the interconnectedness of the varied reflections on Nietzschean matters around 1900. For instance, by equating the homogeneous with the Apollonian principle and the heterogeneous with the Dionysian principle, Nietzsche established a critical framework in which "Classic" and "Romantic" values came into contact. "Nietzscheanism," as it was configured or imagined in cultural circles, was a way of speaking out against the massified world of technocratic modernity, where raw life was imprisoned beneath socialized experience and its codifying forms. A number of related terms – "rhythm," "rhythmic vitality," and "vital energy" – were used to describe the various projects for connecting structures of existence to systems of representation.[16] Many of these terms would be used to reassess the "modernity" of earlier artists.[17]

As noted above, vitalism was the dominant paradigm within which Nietzschean ideas were calibrated around 1900. We see a version of the vitalist model at work in Charles Ricketts' complex design (1892) (Figure 1.1). Ricketts, the first British artist to have responded to Nietzsche's writings, adheres to *The Birth of Tragedy* paradigm by granting primacy to aesthetic experience, and by making flux, rapturous vision, and rhythmic vitality the subject matter of his work.[18] What is striking about this unusual composition is the combination of shaping and vitalizing forms. On one level, Ricketts depicts different examples of movement, different stages of growth and development. Ricketts pictures the spiritual form of Shelley, or his emanation-doppelganger, the wanderer-poet in *Alastor* (1816).[19] This androgynous form occupies a dark-column, and stares into transfiguring light. The bottom third of the image is like a diagrammatic representation of crustal elevation: the release of energy from the core of the dynamic earth forcing new patterns and forms to struggle to the surface of things. The Shelley figure inhabits a space that is at once a terrace with steps, and a protean world of geothermal wonder made from a flurry of arabesques and flames. Armoured forms emerge from the inky floor of this fluidic and atomistic world; crustal dynamism breaks beyond the horizon line and orients vision to the

SHELLEY.

(Drawn by C. Ricketts.—See Sonnet opposite, by Theodore Watts.)

FIGURE 1.1   Charles Ricketts, Illustration to accompany Theodore Watts' poem, for the Shelley Centenary (1892). Published in *The Magazine of Art* (1892) Volume 16. *Source*: Private Collection.

Shelley figure, who seems to embody the magical quest of Romanticism: the idea that the outside world will be romanticized once all appearances become one with personal feeling; and that the sensitizing power of art arises from the struggle to make visible the primordial forces that act upon and transform the world of appearances (Abrams 1953, 31–102).

The relationship between vision and creativity is the starting point of an image where the Shelley figure implies both transcendence *and* absorption, the movement upwards into pure spirit and downwards into the dynamism of emergent life. What we see, then, is a creating spirit for whom nature is a creative form, an image that "ends" with celestial glorification, the angelic choir, but "starts" with constant physical transformation, the blobs of a close-grained world. The image is not confined to the depiction of a single process; instead, it shows two zones: the Dionysian vitalism of teeming nature, and the Apollonian calm of achieved cultural forms. In other words, Ricketts provides a compositional framework in which sensory perception becomes a vehicle for the relationship between mind and nature, a theme connecting the Nature Philosophy of Romanticism to the life philosophy of the Nietzschean modernists.

More pointedly, this design, caught between incarnation (the dark physicality of matter) and numinous energy (the radiant shaft of light), speaks to the neo-Romantic version of the Nietzsche cult in two important ways. First, the association of the aesthetic with phantasmagoria and primal experience: the conflation of pleasure and pain, is a continuous theme in *The Birth of Tragedy*, where Nietzsche argues that artistic creativity results from a struggle to control raw matter and convert naked terror into aesthetic form (Nietzsche 1927 [1872], 1–34). Second, the association of cosmos and mind makes this world a world-picture, an inward space with its own images, a space where the Shelley figure becomes the complete subject for whom inner perception, thought and being are one.

This leads to another issue that deserves attention: the specific representation of light and darkness. In fact, the image of light is overrun with dark, brutal, and crushing forces. What Ricketts describes is a world of sensory impressions, a world obliged to include diverse forms, proto-things, most of which remain inchoate shapes cloaked in the dark foreground. As with Nietzsche's account of the Dionysian aesthetic, Ricketts outlines a world of boundless energy, a supersensualized realm, in which the barriers between self and not-self are being dissolved. A whole strand of thinking, what would come to be known as Nietzscheanism, is embodied by the Shelley figure who intuitively knows the cosmos through the body, and in those swirls, blobs, and arabesques whose insistent presence confirms the rapturous nature of the organic world as a place of continuous vitality and syncopated rhythm.[20]

A similar vision of Nietzschean culture was advanced in a set of brilliant articles by Havelock Ellis published in *Savoy* (1896).[21] Ellis, who moved in the same circles as Ricketts, was a founder member of *The Progressive Association*, established in 1882 with a plan to preach the gospel of humanity and cultural cosmopolitanism. Ellis' Nietzsche, "one of the greatest spiritual forces which have appeared since Goethe," views culture as "unity of artistic style in every expression of a people's life." Ellis refers to Nietzsche's Dionysian sense of the "vital relation of things," which confirms his "philosophy was the inevitable outcome of his own psychic constitution." In all, Nietzsche's thoughts are "born of his pain; he has imparted to them of his own blood, his own pleasure and torment" (Ellis 1915, 83).[22]

These matters, where the aesthetic is a constellation of forces associated with the task of higher self-creation, or defined in psychophysiological terms, were central to other

developments of the Nietzsche vogue as expressed in "Nietzschean" art. Accordingly, the second part of this chapter looks at other manifestations of this aesthetic of the body, starting with Gustav Klimt, the most distinguished member of the Secession group in turn-of-the-century Vienna.

The Rebirth of Vitality

Assessing the exact impact of Nietzsche on the critical development of Klimt's art is far from easy. Over hastily, we can say that Klimt's equation of life philosophy with immersive aestheticism parallels the argument advanced in *The Birth of Tragedy*, where Nietzsche announces his conviction "that art is the highest task and the proper metaphysical activity of this life" (Nietzsche 1927 [1872], "Preface"). Moreover, it has been argued, persuasively, I think, that Nietzscheanism provides an important framework for the development of Klimt's pictorial logic (Hoffman 1999, 67–89). In particular, the tension between instinctual forces and expressive bodies – eruptions of energy and normalizing systems – the polarities explored in *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, can be compared to the pictorial structure of Klimt's early works. *Love*, 1895, represents the experience of socialized pleasure in the context of instinctual forces, a relationship expressed through the disposition of bodies as vertical and horizontal forms. Ernst Moritz Geyer uses the same compositional system in his illustration to Nietzsche's parable "The Giant" reproduced in *Pan* (1895).[23] Here a Zarathustra-like giant, with wings, nimbus, and holding a vast image of solarized energy, presides over a landscape where ant-like academics shuttle across the foreground.[24]

This conflict between vibrant life and codified experience, a conflict expressed in spatial and compositional terms, features in Klimt's *Altar of Apollo*, 1886–1888 and *Altar of Dionysus*, 1886–1888, part of a decorative program for the Burgtheater, Vienna. As Werner Hofmann has implied, Klimt contrasts the humanized space of Apollonian culture, where the vertical and horizontal disposition of maenad-worshippers is unified by the life-sized bust of Apollo, with the chaotic space of Dionysian culture, where ideational distortion and loss of individuality is expressed as confusion of scale and space (Hoffman 1999, 71–73). These matters are taken further in *Tragedy*, 1897, where a begowned skeletal embodiment of Apollonian beauty holds a grotesque mask. This menacing object, which seems to struggle from the undulating gown, suggests the raw energy of life breaking into consciousness.

Ricketts, we remember, had implied that Shelley incarnates the Romantic aesthetic in the struggle to recognize the divinity of the cosmos; Klimt, by contrast, stresses immanence: there is no supersensible realm "beyond" the material world. Instead the mask, the effigy, or the grotesque form confirm the world is a world of mental representations, and that it is from such representations that we create knowledge of the universe. Or, to put it another way, what we call the universe is energy as represented in form. It is the life or force of this form that the artist struggles to picture as he stitches together different bits of "vision": anthropological, meta-psychological, pan-cosmic, the key elements of mythos as revealed to, and reconstituted by, the creative power of the imagination.

As noted in the introduction, the ideas that constituted Nietzscheanism were heterogeneous, but the common dominator among the various Nietzschean groupings was the exaltation and affirmation of the instinctual, the idea of the life-force as shaping form in history and biology. Accordingly, the Dionysian Nietzsche, the one who argued that "everything good" is "dominated by the instinct of life," was immensely important to the

development of modernist art and aesthetics (Nietzsche 2003 [1889], 59, 55). Roughly speaking, this accounts for the vision of Nietzsche as incendiary iconoclast advanced by Expressionism, Dadaism, and Futurism. Gottfried Benn, the Expressionist writer, sums this up in his battle cry: "Our blood cries out for heaven and earth. We want to dream. We want ecstasy. We call on Dionysus" (cited in Sokel 1959, 94).[25] This belief, where creativity is a type of demonic energy and ecstatic revelation, the manifestation of inner experience in cultural forms, encouraged the view that at heart Nietzsche was a messianic vitalist, and that his version of vitalism constituted a nodal point in the history of the understanding of the nature of aesthetic creativity and aesthetic experience.

Edvard Munch strikingly illustrates the workings of this model. Munch – who moved in the same circles as Georg Brandes, Count Harry Kessler, and other leading Nietzscheans, including Ernest Thiel, a rich Swedish Banker, whose donations established the Nietzsche archives in Weimar – owned an edition of Nietzsche's *Collected Works*. Munch's portrait of Nietzsche of 1906, commissioned by Thiel, uses the same pictorial logic as *The Scream*, 1893, one of the earliest attempts to picture a subject sensing naked terror as world loss. Munch describes this as a process of psycho-apocalypse,

> One evening I was walking along a path, the city was on one side and the fjord below. I felt tired and ill. I stopped and looked out over the fjord – the sun was setting, and the clouds turning blood-red. I sensed a scream passing through nature; it seemed to me that I heard the scream. I painted this picture, painted the clouds as actual blood. The colour shrieked. This became *The Scream* of the *Frieze of Life*.
>
> (cited in Hodin 1972, 48)

The source of art, then, is intuition or experience of the horror which is the ground of all existence. This cosmic dread was modified, if never completely nullified, when Munch connected the concept of hylozoism, the idea that the universe is alive, with Nietzsche's ecstatic vision of Dionysian culture, where all life is understood in relation to an unbroken whole.[26] Over the course of the following decades, this neo-vitalism, where the artist sets out to capture primordial being, became Munch's starting point in the representation of human life.

Munch was dazzled by *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, which he equated with Metabolism, his own version of vitalism. Metabolism, a fusion of pantheism and non-mechanical theories of energy development and preservation, was central to Munch's vision of creation: "to become this earth ever fermenting, ever illuminated by the sun and which lived – lived – and from my rotting body plants and trees and flowers would grow, and the sun would warm and I would be in it, and nothing would decay – this is eternity" (cited in Huber 2014, unpaginated).

Munch's vision, where there is no rest, inertia, or solidity in nature, draws on Romantic aesthetics, where nature, as pure energy, provides humanity with images of perpetual life. Johann Gottfried Herder, the German philosopher, poet, and critic, laid the foundations for this tradition in *God, Some Conversations* (1787). Herder claimed that there is "no death in creation … In a world in which everything changes, every force is in eternal activity, and hence metamorphosis of its organs … Life, thus, is movement, activity, the activity of an inner force. Every living force is active and continues active" (Herder 1940 [1787], 22). Likewise, Munch's vitalism equates artistic identity with sensuous intuition of universal forces; the capacity to align self and not-self. This vision of the eternal cycle of nature, in which the universe is alive because energy runs through it, would be conflated with his vision of a Nietzschean aesthetic in the Oslo University Murals of 1909–1914. Munch

FIGURE 1.2   Edvard Munch, *The Sun*, (1909–1911). Oslo, University Hall. *Source*: © 2016. Photo Scala, Florence.

divided the entire decoration into two concepts: "Natural Forces" and "Humanity." *The Human Mountain*, *c*. 1910, was his synthesis of these concepts.

   The Human Mountain represents the zenith of Munch's Dionysian worldview, his desire to "leap … into his *own* sunlight" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 101). It depicts a fragment of an endless mountain composed of knotted human forms. Some figures cling to the mountainside, others become incorporated into the rock-face, but all seek the splintered rays of light emitted by the sun. What Munch creates is a crystallization of the life-force, a mountain world where the struggle of energetic life is expressed through the pulsing interplay of geometric and serpentine lines. A pictorial hymn, then, to Zarathustra's self-vision: "Out of silent mountains and thunderstorms of pain my soul rushes into the valleys" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 72).

   Munch's fusion of the fluxional and adamantine, which recalls Nietzsche's cosmic Dionysianism, was continued in the central panel, *The Sun*, 1909–1911 (Figure 1.2). This composition, the apogee of Nietzschean vitalism, encapsulates Munch's dictum, "A work of art is like a crystal – like the crystal it must also possess a soul and the power to shine forth" (cited in Chipp 1968, 115). More than this, it presents the sun as the living center that gives form to the world. In other words, the human body is not the measure of all things. In place of man, a sign of full knowing, we are given an image of "solar love," a sign of full being (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 107). Like Zarathustra, Munch's striving for wholeness takes him away from society to the primal oneness of the universe, a universe defined in vitalistic terms: striations of light, bands of energy, irradiated lines of force.

   Another figure who was powerfully affected by this line of thought was the German Expressionist architect Bruno Taut. Like Munch, Taut associated mountain ranges with the idea of eternal energy, the vision of total life expressed in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. And, as with Munch, he saw the crystal as concentrated form and dynamic equilibrium, confirmation of the universe as perpetual festival of light and life. And again, like Munch, he

made Nietzsche the prophet of this visionary vitalism, the crystalline subject of a great cult of energy. To this end, Taut went on to produce a vast project entitled *Alpine Architecture*, where he imagined human existence in terms of a chain of crystal houses dedicated to the celebration of cosmic life. The crystal cathedrals, at the summit of the Alps, were an appeal to the pantheistic vitalism found in Romanticism and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Indeed, Taut imagined nature transformed into a vast Book of Nietzsche,

> [L]andscapes of Grail-shrines and crystal-lined caves … Mountains crowned and reworked, valleys improved … Airplanes and dirigibles carry happy people, who are glad to be free of sickness and sorrow through viewing of their work in blissful moments. To travel! And during the journey to see the work grow and fulfilled, in which all have somehow cooperated as workers in distant lands! Our earth, until now a bad habitat, shall become a good habitat.
>
> (cited in Pehnt 1973, 81, 80)[27]

Taut went on to envision caves spanning entire continents with glass and precious stones in the guise of "ray domes" and "sparkling palaces" (Pehnt 1973, 82). Here, as in other forms of Expressionism, we get a sense of the artist imagining projects informed by the ecstatic dynamism outlined by Nietzsche, who proclaimed, "Life wants to build itself up into the heights with pillars and steps; it wants to look into vast distances and out toward stirring beauties: therefore it requires height" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 213).

There is good evidence that this idea was widely diffused across different cultural groupings. For instance, many of the numerous unfulfilled plans to build commemorative monuments and temples presented Nietzsche as the culminating figure in Romantic vitalism, the incarnation of creative energy. As early as 1898, Fritz Schumacher's plan for a Nietzsche temple continued the Romantic fascination with solitude, inner-reality, and revelation.[28] Schumacher's design included an ecstatic Zarathustra at the summit of a temple, a heliotropic hero emerging from a sea of darkness.[29] Another remarkable example of this process, where the vitalized Nietzsche stands for the authority of creative reality, the world-picture of Romantic art, was put forward by Count Harry Kessler, one of the most striking figures in art and letters in early twentieth-century Germany.[30] Kessler imagined a colossal memorial to Nietzsche, a network of spaces and buildings dedicated to the cult of intellectual and physical energy. Aristide Maillol was to create a statue of Apollo using Vaslav Nijinsky as the subject; Henry van der Velde was to design the temple, monument, and other buildings; Gordon Craig and Eric Gill were to provide internal decoration and design; Max Klinger was to produce reliefs; and Gabriele D'Annunzio, Georg Brandes, André Gide, Gustav Mahler, H. G. Wells and other leading public intellectuals were to serve on a fund-raising committee. Kessler's Nietzsche, a visionary vitalist, saw the universe in terms of wholeness, the wholeness of *élan*. Nietzsche meant "propulsive energy"; the exterior of the Nietzsche Memorial "must not express any goal, but rather an *idea*, or more precisely *feelings*, heroism and joy, the feelings that form the basic spirit of Nietzsche's works … We must … have a great form that breathes heroism and joy" (cited in Easton 2013, 201, 572).[31]

Locus and Labyrinth: Dancing and Dreaming

An important modification of this thought, where the artist is architect of animism and perpetual vitality, creator of works through which life flows, is pressed forward powerfully by
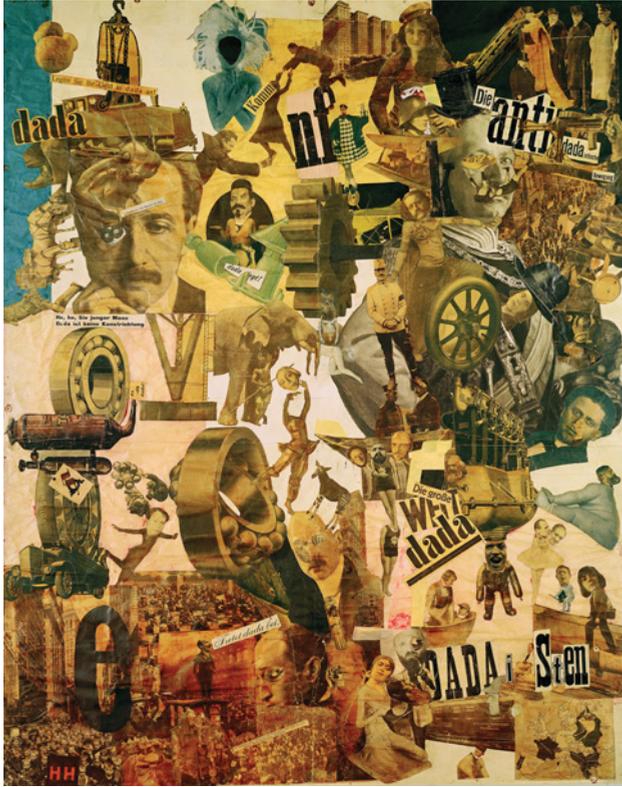
FIGURE 1.3 Hannah Hoch, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany*, photomontage and collage with watercolour, 44–7/8 × 35–7/16″, 1919–20. Berlin, Nationalgalerie. *Source*: akg-images/Erich Lessing/© DACS 2016.

Hannah Hoch. *Cut the Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany*, 1919–1920 (Figure 1.3) indicates the penetration of Nietzscheanism through-out the early twentieth-century avant-garde. For Hoch, as for Hugo Ball, Johannes Baader, Raoul Hausmann, and other members of the various Dada communities, Nietzsche was the critical lodestar of all avant-garde experimentation and revolt.[32]

At the locus of *Cut the Kitchen Knife* we see the headless dancer, the source of dynamic plasticity. Hoch, following Nietzsche, presents the dancer as a recursive figure, the subject made in the performance of action, the incarnation of the life-force.[33] Her dancer exists in a mechanomorphic world, as personified by Einstein, top left, who has gearwheels in his left eye. This, too, is a Nietzschean trope, as Zarathrusta asks, "Are you a new strength and a new right? … A self-propelling wheel? Can you compel the very stars to revolve around you?" A few pages later he says this of future humanity: "A higher body shall you create, a first movement, a self-propelling wheel – a creator shall you create" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 55, 61).

Chance and chaos are the key elements in Hoch's non-space where the real is a set of colliding fragments, the disjunctions opened up by her retreat from the syntax of scale and perspective. At the center of this kaleidoscopic universe – a universe of interchangeable

things – we find an image of individuated movement, a sign of the wonder of physical presence. Hoch's dancer, then, represents a Nietzschean epiphany, a vision of a world where the body does the thinking. Hoch exalts Dionysian vitality, not Apollonian rationality; the aliveness of the body, not the perfectly proportioned form. Regarded in these terms, the dancer, who generates her own energy, is the perfect image of life as rhythmic vitality, the perfected form of vitalist culture.

Other entrées to Nietzscheanism spotlighted the relativism of vision and the uncanniness of the perceived world. Nietzsche's magical potency cast a spell on Giorgio de Chirico, pre-empting the invention of metaphysical painting, his definition of the world as a place of existential abandonment.[34] De Chirico's art, at once spectral and unhomely, revisits one of the themes of Romantic literary criticism, the idea that the magical life generated by art arises from the experience of estrangement from the world and its objects.[35] And unlike the Dadaist Nietzscheans, for whom aesthetic life is equated with the development of autonomous or spontaneous creations – the world of individuated energy battling against massified forces – de Chirico's images embody detachment, solitude, and inwardness. Instead of boundless vitalism, de Chirico pictures emptiness, stillness, and their quasipsychic emanations. Unsurprisingly, de Chirico said that he wanted to "live in the world as if in an immense museum of strangeness" (cited in Soby 1966, 246). This vision, where vision begins and ends in hermeneutics, draws in equal measures from Romanticism and Nietzsche.[36]

Another manifestation of de Chirico's Nietzscheanism is his fascination with the unfathomable mystery of the labyrinth, Nietzsche's preferred image of a world devoid of locus, shelter – or absolute knowledge.[37] The world de Chirico pictures is at once architectonic, pathless, and disorientating: to look at it is to be confronted by something not built to human scale, somewhere indifferent to human presence. This radical nominalism, derived from Nietzsche, for whom the world is a world of different images or pictures, explains de Chirico's model of pictorial composition, where conventions of depth, plane, and perspective are dismantled. What we should call de Chirico's "perspectivism" is revealed in a world of insistent angles and orthogonals, but without legible vectors. There is, in short, nothing to determine the location of a point in space relative to another, a system of picturing that results in the replacement of the idea of environment, the humanization of space, with the articulation of spacings, the unfolding of multiple and incommensurate "situations" beyond human need. Hence the *piazza*, a traditional sign of civic pride, sociability, and hospitality, becomes a source of eternal solitude and mystery, a set of labyrinthine colonnades framed by sepulchral light.[38]

These responses are important in our context because they call into question the claim, made by H. G. Wells, that there was a single "Gospel of Nietzsche" (Wells 1897, 244). As we have seen, the Nietzsche of the modern art world was a protean figure. For some, such as Ricketts, he was the subject of heroic vitalism, individual vision; for others, such as Klimt and Munch, he pictured the production of plenitude. All three agreed with Hoch and de Chirico that Nietzsche created a new space for the human imagination, and that Nietzscheanism was an art of dynamic self-creation.[39] Or, as another admirer put it, Nietzsche's "range of subjects is as wide as modern thought … he was his age, he comprehended the mind of Europe" (Orage 1911a, 12).

Were these figures inspired by Nietzsche's ideas, or were they overwhelmed by the belief that they alone were the custodians of "Nietzschean vision"? However we answer this question it is clear that their Nietzsche, a promethean subject, was an "irresistible attraction," whose "dazzling books" contributed to the general understanding of Romanticism's complex historical reception (Bataille 1991 [1949], 365). In all, this Nietzsche represented one

version of the mystical state: the desire to give, the boundless gifting of creation and cre-ativity, the fusion of inner experience and universal community.[40] Here, in this image of activist creation, we get a sense of Nietzsche's impact on creative life in the modern period. For this reason alone he deserves an important place in the mythos of modern art, in the stories it tells about its origins, principles, and values.

Notes

1 Brinton's book, one of the best of its kind, parallels the thinking examined in this essay: "This romantic opponent of the great tradition of European rationalism could not bear his fellow Romantics" (95).

2 The term used by W. B. Yeats to describe Nietzsche's impact on his thinking and poetry: see Wade (1954, 379). In this letter, Sept 26 1902, to Lady Gregory, he asserts Nietzsche's Romanticism by arguing that he "completes Blake and has the same roots" (379).

3 See Langbehn (1890), for another version of individualism, where Rembrandt incarnates the folkic values which contest industrial modernity.

4 For Nietzsche's reception history see Ascheim (1992), Smith (1996), and Thatcher (1970).

5 It is worth noting that Nietzsche was dubbed the "Professor of energy" by French writers in the 1890s: see Forth (2001, 61–73).

6 These ideas were particularly noticeable in the British reception of Nietzsche. See, for instance, Orage, editor of the Nietzsche-friendly *The New Age* (1907–1923), and author of two landmark books on Nietzsche in 1911, Jackson (1907) and Ellis (1915).

7 See Orage (1911a, 12), where Nietzsche is compared with William Blake. See also Trodd (2012, 6–7, 185–186, 392–5, 409), for an overview of those early twentieth-century read-ings where Blake and Nietzsche are imagined as cultural brothers dedicated to completing the project of Romanticism via the gospel of iconoclasm and energy.

8 See Ratner-Rosenhagen (2012), for an overview of Nietzsche's reception in American academic and literary circles. For three examples of Nietzsche's impact on American artists, see the illustrations in Kent (1920), Rothko (2004, 36); and the discussion of Barnett Newman in Rushing (1988, 187–195).

9 Key engagements with Nietzschean culture and its impact on modern thought include Bataille (1992 [1945]) and Bloch (2009 [1935]). For a wider cultural overview, see Kostka and Wohlfarth (1999).

10 "Transform Beethoven's *Hymn to Joy* into a painting: let your imagination conceive the multitudes bowing to the dust, awestruck – then you will be able to appreciate the Dionysian … [T]he Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both have … penetrated into the true nature of things – they have *perceived*, but it is irksome for them to act; for to act cannot change the eternal nature of things … Knowledge kills action, action requires the veil of illusion … But at this juncture, when the will is most imperilled, *art* approaches, as a redeeming and healing enchantress: she alone may transform these reflections on the … absurdity of existence into representations with which man can live" (Nietzsche [1872], 4, 23). Additionally, Nietzsche had a youthful identification with Byron's Manfred: see Nietzsche (1984 [1878], 78, 135).

11 "All surplus poetic strength available among contemporary humans … should be dedi-cated … to showing the way to the future: – and not as though the poet, like some sort of imaginative political economist, should anticipate in his images more favorable cultural and social conditions and how to make them possible. Instead, just as artists in the earlier

times continually composed and recomposed images of divine beings, he will compose and recompose images of beautiful human beings and sniff out the cases where, *in the midst* of our modern world … the beautiful, great soul is still possible" (Nietzsche 2013 [1879], 46).

12 Vitalism, the theory that what made matter alive was an energizing principle arising from the great chain of creation, was supported by various scientists, thinkers, and artists throughout the Romantic period. Moreover, neo-vitalist ideas were developed in many late nineteenth-century cultural networks and organizations. In Britain, the Fellowship of New Life advanced the view that nature, a dynamic whole, offered a vision of human community and energy. It is not difficult to see why some of its leading figures, such as Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter, assimilated Nietzsche to their worldview. They could point at specific examples of "vitalism" in Nietzsche's writings: "There is no 'being' behind the doing." Nietzsche (2014 [1887b], 236. Elsewhere Nietzsche stated, "History, thought through completely, would be cosmic self-consciousness." Nietzsche (2013 [1879], 81). Both statements could be equated with vitalist doxa promulgated by Henri Bergson and others. See Schiller (1913, 145–158), for a contemporary reading of Nietzsche as vitalist thinker.

13 "The secret of Nietzsche is the secret of Dionysus … Apollo and Dionysus … penetrate the very stuff of consciousness and life … life *is* conflict … The drama of life is thus a perpetual movement towards a climax that never comes" (Orage 1911a, 25, 34, 35, 36).

14 As Orage put it, "In the Superman he found the answer to the Dionysian question: How can life be surpassed." See Orage (1911a, 78).

15 Key sources include Joel (1905) and Orage (1911a). Orage asserts, "nobody who *understands* Nietzsche will doubt that behind all his apparent materialism there was a thoroughly mystical view of the world … Blake is Nietzsche in English" (75). See also Trodd (2012, 392–393, 409, 423), for more on Nietzsche and British Romanticism.

16 See, for instance, Coomaraswamy (1918, 22, 32, 155), where Nietzsche, Blake, and Whitman are taken to associate artistic vision with the rhythm of the cosmos; Middleton Murry (1911, 9–12); Holmes (1911, 1–3); Sadler (1912, 23–29); Middleton Murry and Mansfield (1912, 18–20). Huntley Carter, summarized this line of thought when he referred to the "rhythmic vitality" of modern culture, a condition in which artists put together "new pictorial material … in light to the new deity, rhythm." Rhythm is another way of describing "the apprehension of the Reality underlying forms of life, of things living and evolving." See Carter (1911, 82). Rhythm is one of Julius Meier-Graefe's master terms in his highly influential *Modern Art* 1908. Nietzsche, much-admired by Meier Graefe, features in volume 2 at 146, 164, 319.

17 See, for instance, the representation of Blake and El Greco in the writings of Sir Charles Holmes, Director of the National Gallery (1920, 5, 25, 43, 66, 149); (1927, 190) and (1929, 242–243). John Cowper Powys predicted this viewpoint (Powys 1915, 76–84), where El Greco's "ecstatic hieroglyphs" pre-empt Blake, Beardsley and Futurism. Powys' vision of Blake as a "wandering Dionysus," was developed in a later publication (Powys 1916), where Blake is compared with Nietzsche and El Greco at 260, 267, 271, 272.

18 *The Magazine of Art*, August, 1892, 336, where it accompanies Theodore Watts' sonnet "For the Shelley Centenary." Ricketts designed *Lyrical Poems of Shelley* (1898) and *The Poems of Shelley*, 3 vols (1901). Yeats expresses his admiration for Shelley and Blake in a letter to Ricketts dated 5 November, 1922. See Wade (1954, 691). Ricketts' uncomfortable relationship with Nietzsche is captured in his diary entry for 27 August 1900: "Death of Nietzsche. Years ago when I first read him I was half-frightened to find in print so many things which I felt personally … His end is even more tragic than Heine's … Where I

resemble him is in my estimate of the religious instinct, women, and the crowd, admiration of the Renaissance, belief in the sacredness of laughter: laughter that saves, laughter that kills" (Ricketts 1939, 43–44).

19 Shelley (1816). It is worth noting that H. G. Wells yoked together Shelley and Nietzsche as prophets of the world-state in *When the Sleeper Wakes*, published in installments in *The Graphic*, 1898–1903.

20 Ricketts might have had in mind Nietzsche's thoughts on the relationship between energy and genius: "Ah, the cheap fame of the 'genius'! How quickly his throne is erected, his worship turned into a ritual! We still remain on our knees before *energy* – in keeping with the age-old slave habit – and yet if we wish to determine the degree to which something is *worthy of being honoured*, only *the degree of reason in the energy* is decisive: we have to measure to what extent precisely this energy has been overcome by something higher and is at its service as a tool and means! But for such a measuring there are too few eyes … And so perhaps what is most beautiful walks along in darkness and sinks, barely born, into eternal night – namely the spectacle of that energy that a genius expends *not on works*, but *on himself as a work*, that is, on his own mastery, on the purification of his fantasy, on the ordering and selection of the onrushing stream of tasks and sudden insights." Nietzsche (2011 [1881], 270–271).

21 *Savoy*, a leading organ of late nineteenth-century Bohemian culture, published illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley and essays by Yeats, both great admirers of Nietzsche and Blake. The journal was edited by Arthur Symons, the author of the pioneering *William Blake* (1907), where Blake is a prophet of Nietzschean thought. See Walker (1937, letter no. 67, October 4 1896), where Beardsley writes: "Would you be so very kind as to get me everything Henry & Co. have published by Nietzsche." See also W. B. Yeats, "William Blake and His Illustrations to *The Divine Comedy*," *Savoy* (1896), nos 3–5, no. 3, 41–57; "His Opinions of Dante," no. 4, 25–41; "The Illustrations of Dante," no. 5, 31–36. Reprinted in Yeats (1903).

22 See Ellis (April 1896; July 1896 and August 1896). These were reprinted in Ellis 1915, 2nd edition, where this passage appears at p. 83. Nietzsche is transformed into a Romanticist, at p. 78, when Ellis refers to his "restless self-torment" and "sense of the abyss."

23 *Pan, Mercure de France*, *The Eagle and the Serpent*, named after Zarathustra's closet companions, and *The New Age*, were key agents in Nietzsche's German, French, and British reception.

24 Ricketts used the same format in his Nietzsche-inspired poster advertising Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts* (1914).

25 Elsewhere Benn noted, "everything that my generation discussed, dissected in its deepest thoughts – one can say suffered through; one can say: enlarged upon – all of that had already been expressed and explored, had already found its definitive formulation in Nietzsche; everything thereafter was exegesis… As is becoming increasingly clear, he is the great giant of the post-Goethean era." See Allen (1983, 26).

26 John Davidson, the Scottish poet, dramatist, and Nietzsche admirer, came to the same conclusion: "For me there is nothing immaterial; for me everything matters; for me there is nothing behind phenomena: the very 'thing in itself' is phenomenon; phenomena *are* the universe." Davidson (1905, 26–27).

27 Taut's Nietzsche, a romantic, is equated with Rousseau and Whitman at p. 81.

28 Zarathustra advises his admirers and followers to "Flee into your solitude … to where raw and bracing air blows!" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 46).

29 Zarathustra utters: "unsettled am I in all settlements and a departure at all gates" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 105).

30 Kessler, a central figure in German cultural life from the 1890s to the Weimar Republic, was one of the first Europeans to celebrate Blake. His diary entry for 18 June 1895 notes: "Went early to the South Kensington Museum and had the Blake's shown to me … Easily the greatest that England has produced as of yet, and one of the greatest of all time … The pages of the prophecies 'America' and 'Europe' … belong to the most powerful and moving that an artist has ever created. They rise above the level of a purely ornamental art to the highest heights of poetic and artistic perfection. Here for the first time artistic visions that are truly equal in grandiose fantasy to those of the Revelation of St. John. Next to these staggering images what do the collection of nudes, supposedly representing the Last Judgement, by Cornelius or even Michelangelo matter? Even Dürer must yield to Blake on this ground." See Easton (2013, 136).

31 Kessler provides in-depth details of the Nietzsche memorial: see Easton (2013, 560–561, 571–573).

32 For a helpful overview of this engagement, see Berguis (1999, 115–139).

33 Nietzsche calls the Dionysian figure of the satyr "the image of Nature, and her strongest impulses, the very symbol of Nature, and at the same time the *proclaimer* of her art and vision: musician, poet, dancer and visionary united in one person." Nietzsche (1927 [1872], 28). Zarathustra commends "the supple and persuasive body, the dancer, whose allegory and epitome is the self-enjoying soul." He announces "all that is heavy become light, all body become dancer, all spirit become bird … verily that is my Alpha and Omega!" (Nietzsche 2005 [1885], 165, 202).

34 "It is only with Nietzsche that I can say I have begun a real life." Cited in Merijan (2014, 15). De Chirico's multiple identifications with Nietzsche – philosophic, existential, psychological, critical and photographic – are charted by Merijan and Taylor (2002).

35 The vision of the experience of life as a condition of transcendental homelessness describes the vantage point in two classic texts of Romanticism and Modernism: Blake's *Jerusalem* (1804–1820), and Kafka's *The Castle* (1926).

36 Alberto Savinio, de Chirico's brother, claimed that de Chirico's painting "could be called *second romanticism*, or, if you will, *complete[d] romanticism*." See Merijan (2014, 52).

37 'If we desired and dared an architecture corresponding to *our own* make of soul (we are too cowardly for it!) – then the labyrinth would have to be our model!' (Nietzsche 2011 [1881], 124).

38 In a letter dated 26 January 1910 de Chirico states: "[T]he most profound poet is Friedrich Nietzsche … I … study a great deal, especially literature and philosophy, and in the future I am planning to write books (now I want to whisper something in your ear: I am the only one who has understood Nietzsche. All my works demonstrate this)." See Baldacci (1999, 92).

39 "[You must want] to *be* something new, to *signify* something new, *represent* new values" (Nietzsche 2014 [1886], 185).

40 See Bataille (1992 [1945], 166), where he explains Nietzschean inner experience as affirmation of life value as sovereign formlessness.

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A Cartography of Desires and Taboos: The Modern Primitive and the Antipodes

Andrew McNamara and Ann Stephen

When the French *Surrealist Map of the World* was published in 1929 (Figure 2.1) in the Belgian magazine *Variétés*, most Western democracies either disappeared or had shrunk to minuscule significance (Aragon 1929). Australia was dwarfed by New Guinea. The world's only island continent was deemed a place of virtually no interest for modernism, at least in its surreal manifestation. With this contorted map, the Surrealists asserted the priorities of their alternate imaginary: a world where Western modernity was overpowered by its alter ego, an enchanted other possessing raw, primitive creative power – massive in scale, magical, superstitious, tradition-minded, communist or at least collectivist in basic orientation.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Surrealist cultural imaginary had been extended to include Australia. This chapter explains how this transformation occurred and the paradoxical legacy it leaves in its wake as far as Australia and its neighboring region are concerned. At the edge of the Eurocentric world, even the local modernists were considered fringe dwellers on the cultural map in the early twentieth century, always far from the sophisticated assurance of the center. Yet, at the same time, the Surrealist Map, no matter how provocative and deliberately confounding, was already out of date. Since the late nineteenth century, the influence of indigenous cultural practices of Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific had been provoking revisions of common assumptions identified with social and aesthetic Western norms. Indeed, the study of such indigenous cultures impacted upon the discourses of ethnography, anthropology, art history, psychiatry, or psychoanalysis, as well as influencing art.

The Surrealist strategy conforms to a "classic" modernist premise. Its challenge was to provoke a transformation in our understanding about what counts as culturally significant in the world. Because the "exotic," the less than "cultural," resides elsewhere, far from London, Paris, or Berlin, such a projection cannot help but uphold Europe's preeminent place in the world as distinctive as well as culturally normative. Its chief critical provocation relates to its own world or culture. It projects ideals of authenticity, non-alienation and natural immediacy in order to express discontent with Western modernity that rested on alienation and exploitation. This is why an artist such as Emil Nolde could write letters back from the then German New Guinea in 1913 bitterly decrying "colonial exploitation of tribal societies," while maintaining a "conservative, *volkish* ideology" (Lloyd 1991, 97, 106). Colonialism was turning tribal societies into "a grotesque caricature of western
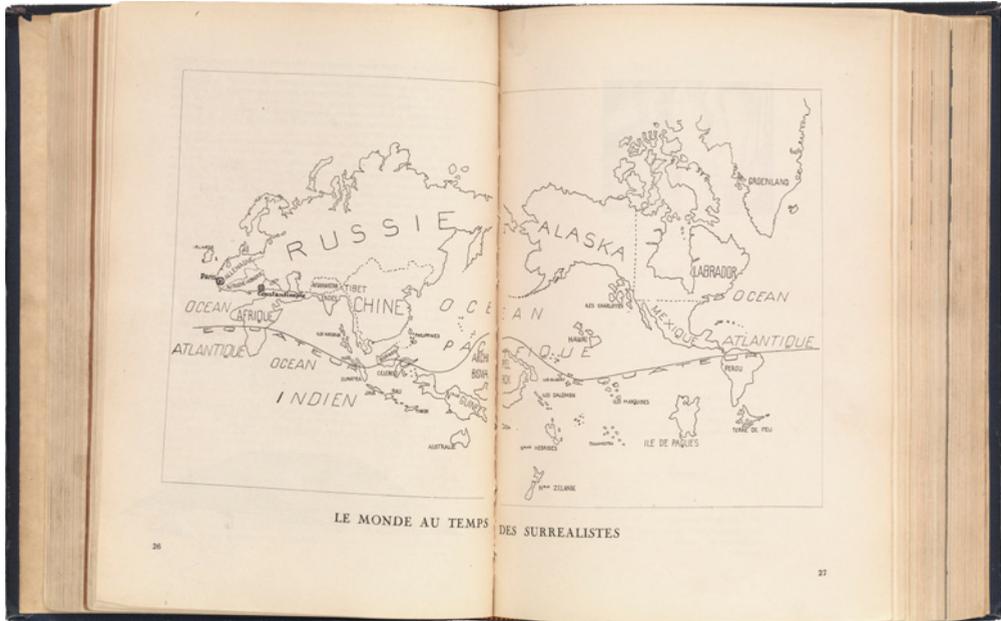
FIGURE 2.1 "Le monde au temps des surrealistes," in *Variétés*, Hors Serie, Giugno, 1929, pp. 26–27. New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). *Source*: © 2016. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.

modernization," whereas Nolde cherished an uncontaminated "original state" (*Urzustand*) in which tribal societies stood low on evolutionary development, yet as a "'natural' counter-image to the modern industrial world" (Lloyd 1991, 106). It was precisely this volatile mix of attitudes, both conservative and radical, that led Nolde to become an early advocate of environmental protection in his home region of Germany (North Schleswig; today Schleswig-Holstein, or North Frisia) (Lloyd 1991, 97) as well as to count "pre-Renaissance German styles in his pantheon of the 'primitive'" (Lloyd 1991, 108).

Primitivism could thus function as a tool of counter-cultural ambition because it aimed to conjure new forms of cultural imagination. Such a projection could be critical because it showed how its own culture is capable of being envisaged differently, and thus of being reshaped, capable of yielding new, alternative conceptualizations of its capacities, routines and customs. In a sense, the Surrealists were inadvertently also reinforcing the view of disciplines already being reshaped by what they were discovering in Australia and the South Pacific – even though the Surrealist Map overwhelmingly privileges the northern hemisphere. In fact, two years later the Surrealists would stage their own *Exposition Anti-impérialiste* to counter the spectacle of the official 1931 *Exposition Coloniale*.[1]

Take the case of the Aranda (or Arrernte, now the preferred spelling), described by the anthropologist John Morton as "one of the best-known Aboriginal groups in world anthropology, having been the subject of many famous descriptive discourses, as well as heated and obscure debates concerning the nature of so-called 'primitive' life" (Morton 1992, 24). Like many Aboriginal cultures, having evolved no written language or literature, science, architecture, or sculpture – or anything recognizable as such in Western terms – they were deemed low on the evolutionary scale of human progress, according to the prevailing model of Social Darwinism. Yet, over a decade before the Surrealist Map,

Australian Aboriginal culture featured in some of the most audacious modernist avant-garde performances.

Far from central Australia, Tristan Tzara was busy in Zurich incorporating Arrernte song cycles into several of his *Poèmes Nègres*. Accompanied by wild drumming and Cubist masks, the Arrernte songs featured in the Dada performances of 1917 (Tzara 2006 [1917], 31–36). Their route from remote Central Australia to the Cabaret Voltaire reveals a nuanced, culturally alert process of translation, quite different from the wild "babble" of other Dadaists. Tzara had conducted ethnological studies across African, Aboriginal, Maori, and other South Pacific sources in Zurich's Technical University Library (Browning, 1972, 51). His source for songs like *Chanson du Serpent* and *Chanson du Cacadou* was the Central Australian Arrernte and Loritja cultures (Tzara 2006 [1917], 32–36). Their documentation by Lutheran missionary Carl Strehlow – subsequently published as *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien* – gave the songs a status equivalent to written cultures (Strehlow 1907–1920). Tzara selected for his French translation, according to the linguist Walter Veit, Strehlow's most literal, interlinear version, "a poetic solution between the meaningless sound … and the logical, syntactical discourse" (Veit 2009, 45–89). This approach allowed Strehlow "to get closest to the original sound and rhythm which he could not fathom in any other way" (Veit 2009, 57; see also Stephen 2009, 157). Such literalness borders on abstraction as the sounds and rhythms of the Aboriginal words rubbed against foreign tongues. In Tzara's performances, the duality of the primitivist tactic is evident: they are a form of appropriation aimed at releasing new forms of cultural imaginary and possibility, while exemplifying a form of cross-cultural exchange that sought to challenge the Eurocentric distinctions of "civilized" and "primitive."

For artists residing on the Western cultural periphery, the appeal of resorting to a primitive stance would eventually mean something different. Of course, it began as an attempt to de-center ossified Western academic traditions by championing cultural expression peripheral to the Western tradition. Yet, these were not distant projections as a mode of displacement, but a case of the modern constantly coming into confrontation with vibrant traditions that emphasized the opposite, maintenance, and continuity. Prior to Tzara, in 1909, the Australian-American composer Percy Grainger, who experimented with mechanical and electronic sound art, first transcribed three Arrernte songs from wax cylinders recorded by the anthropologist Baldwin Spencer. Directly contradicting prevailing views of race-based primitivism, Grainger understood the songs' formal complexity, "What lies stand in the Musical histories re Australian native music, that it moves over a few notes only and is mere repetitions of primitive phrases; not at all!" (Grainger 1934, 46). Later, Grainger introduced excerpts into his radio broadcasts, describing them as "lithe and graceful as snakes and highly complex in their rhythmic irregularities," concluding that most so-called "primitive music is too complex for untrained modern ears" (Grainger 1934, 48).

Len Lye's *Tusalava* and Primitivist Energy

Like Tzara and Grainger, avant-gardist Len Lye's practice was shaped by indigenous cultures. After leaving New Zealand, he lived between Sydney and Samoa in the 1920s, studying South Pacific and Aboriginal collections. Sigmund Freud's writing, particularly *Totem and Taboo* (1913), further informed Lye's remarkable first animation, eventually completed in London in 1929. Its title, *Tusalava* (Figure 2.2), was "a circumspect Polynesian word inferring that eventually everything is just the same" (Lye 1930, 12–15; see also
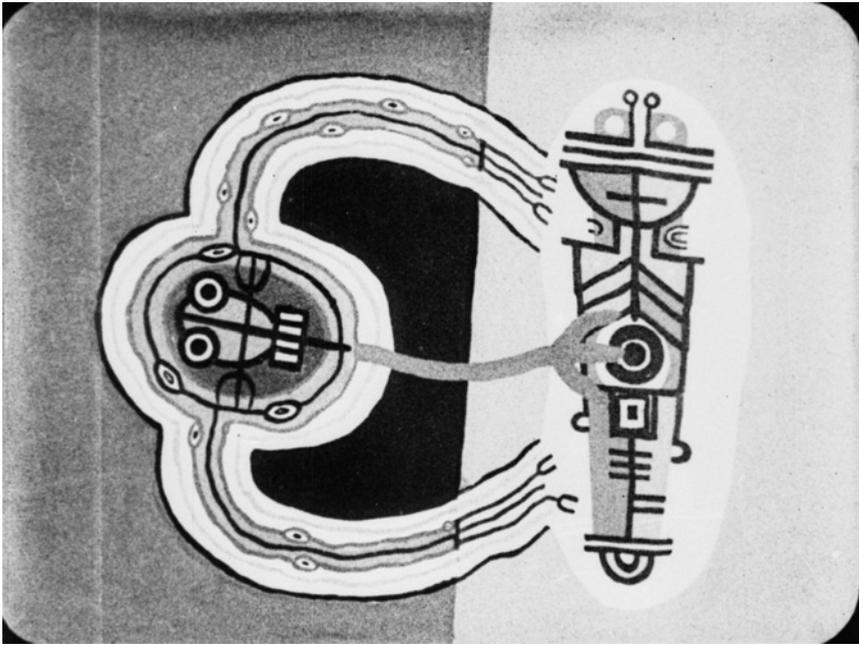
FIGURE 2.2   Len Lye, film still *Tusalava*, 1929. *Source*: Stills Collection, Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision. TUSALAVA (1929). Courtesy of the Len Lye Foundation.

Horrocks 2001, 92). Lye described his early "film drawings" as "flat with a two dimensional movement. They are hard and definite, not abstract or scientific … dots are used to convey organic life in a primary stage" (Lye 1930, 41–42). In representing the genesis of life across each hand-drawn film cell, which he regarded as analogous to biological cell division, Lye created a flickering kinetic energy in the form of abstract dance. The "dance" suggests the dynamism resulting from Lye's urging for interdisciplinary explorations of sound or movement, and his encounters with South Pacific indigenous cultures.

Like the Surrealists with whom he would later exhibit in the 1930s, Lye looked for a world where Western modernity was overpowered by its alter ego. Lye's engagement coincided with a growing interest in Oceanic cultures in the 1920s and 1930s evident by the coverage devoted to ethnography in leading publications such as the avant-garde journal *Documents* edited by Georges Bataille and Christian Zervos' influential *Cahiers d'art*. The explosive end of *Tusalava* is like the poet Paul Éluard's text that accompanies *The Surrealist Map of the World* in *Variétés* (1929), which blasts the old world, "You annihilate the savages through love of logic, and also by shame, and by charity … to explain totemism in a way that conforms to your taste" (Éluard 1929). Like Nolde, Lye had witnessed firsthand the savagery underpinning colonial relations, this time in Samoa. Lye noted in his *Totem and Taboo* sketchbook, "*(father Diehl) (an ideal)," a reference to the missionary who sided with the Samoans in their battles against the New Zealand administrators. Lye's primitivism of the 1920s expressed primal desires and fears, and like other avant-gardists he looked to the primitive to provoke Western culture in the aftermath of the world war.

Lye's animation is a war dance of sexual energy and craving, in which the predatory male turns on and devours the female totem, unleashing the forces of their mutual extinction in order to return to the original oneness of things. In this narrative the self is annihilated in

a primal scene in which "the mother becomes sole parent," and as film historian Barbara Creed notes of the horror film genre, "she is reconstructed and represented as a negative … the origin of all life threatening to re-absorb what it once birthed" (Creed 2010, 60). When asked to explain the meaning of *Tusalava* to the British Board of Film Censors who in 1930 were considering whether it should be banned or certified for general release, Lye probably created more confusion than clarity by explaining that the film was "a self-shape annihilating an agonistic element" (Horrocks 2001, 95). Later Lye was more forthcoming about its autobiographic dimensions, explaining that as a young bohemian he had feared,

> … the effect of the female on my inner self … the menace of absorbing me into family and domestic goals when all I had pinned and hoped for was the goal of the self-expression of my essence in works of art.[2]

In the climax of *Tusalava*, the male throbs in a visceral dance of desire and hostility, attempting to penetrate and consume the female before both are consumed in an apocalyptic orgasm of mutual annihilation. The circular motifs of Aranda sand painting appear as concentric black and white rings that pulsate like sound waves, and the film ends on the primeval black hole. Alternating between ground painting and the flat monochrome space of early animation, *Tusalava's* primitivist energy is animated by such oscillations that touch both the ancient living cultures of Oceania and the new science of the unconscious. *Tusalava* plays on primal fears as it mobilizes the senses. It is indeed a hybrid work, part-abstract avant-garde experiment, part-horror film, made as these genres were just evolving. Little wonder that Lye himself only half understood the forces that he was dealing with and that *Tusalava* unleashed.

Primitivist Appropriations and Counter-projections

Australian modernist Margaret Preston conducted similar research to Lye at much the same time, and in the same museums. Throughout the interwar years, she was the primary advocate of a sympathetic approach to "primitivism" in art. Preston wished to promote an "Indigenous art of Australia" – a national modernism – based on adopting Aboriginal art's formal properties of earth colors and flat dynamic designs (Preston 2003 [1925]): she achieved this through articles and essays, and her own practice – which at this stage of her career meant showing the value of modernism by working on the cusp of art and design – in ceramics, fabric, and even tapa cloth printing. Preston argued her case for a particular region- or nation-specific development of modernism with a missionary zeal, advocating for "Aboriginal art artfully applied" (Preston 1924; see also 1930, 1935, 57). Her approach rapidly gained popularity in mass culture, graphic design, architecture, and town planning. Yet what was provocative and innovative in 1924, signaling a new local modernism, became aligned with a fervent nationalism a decade later.

During the Second World War, Aboriginal art anchored a 1941 MoMA-circulated North American touring exhibition, *The Art of Australia (1788–1941)*.[3] The exhibition "starts with the work of the aborigines and ends with the influence of their work as a basis of a new outlook for a national art for Australia" (Ure Smith 1941, 38). The tour was extraordinarily successful and was the first of many to follow in the coming decades. Also in 1941, another major exhibition opened in Sydney inspired by Preston, as its title suggests: *Australian Aboriginal Art and its Application*. Now many white artists, architects, and

designers were following Preston's precedent and identifying their work as "Aboriginal." This exhibition also included indigenous contributions, introducing Albert Namatjira, a Western Arrernte man born in the Lutheran mission of Hermannsburg, to a contemporary audience. His watercolors did not use ochres or flatten the view, though his paintings do disturb European conventions of seeing by drawing the viewer into a deep space that wraps around, "forcing the peripheral vision of Western perception to be no longer peripheral, no longer out of focus" (Burn and Stephen 1993, 263). Such a position of imaginary occupation inside the land differs from the elevated vision of the colonial frontier. Namatjira's example popularized the significance of Aboriginal relations to their land, inspiring a Hermannsburg School and generations of future indigenous artists.

The willingness to broach vastly different cultural worldviews can be detected in the effort of Aboriginal artists from the early to mid-1970s to go beyond indigenous socio-cultural parameters in order to assert why their beliefs, traditions, and practices should be acknowledged as important beyond their customary boundaries. In the process, they began to overturn many of the hierarchical suppositions surrounding traditional and modernist cultures. For many of its champions, this is the enduring provocation of the Papunya Tula painting movement of the Western Desert.

If Preston had been interpreted as defying prejudice against Aboriginal people and culture, her approach was now understood as cultural appropriation: appropriating Aboriginal art without the Aborigines to advance a distinctive local modernism for non-Aboriginals. The next phase upends this dynamic as Aboriginal artists appropriate modern settler principles to advance the cause of traditional knowledge. By embracing innovation within traditional settings, the outcomes are still often ambiguous, but the artistic achievements assert a contemporary indigenous perspective. As Ian McLean put it, the inversion clarifies how *Aborigines invented the idea of contemporary art* (McLean 2011); witness the Papunya Tula painting movement in the early 1970s, whose success set a precedent for hundreds of communities. The painters aimed not simply to extol a traditional culture, but to articulate the tradition's place within contemporary conditions. Whereas many modernists eagerly identified with primitivism to disrupt the narrative linking the modern with scientific and technological triumph, indigenous artists looked simultaneously to traditional and to modern cultural perspectives.

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri showed how such distinct ways of perceiving could be accommodated in his treatment of large-scale landscape works. His spatial-landscape organization was based on grasping how one series of events was "laid down on top of another in the Dreaming" (Johnson 2003, 70). Tjapaltjarri's innovations related to recognizing the "perceived parallel between the abstract diagrams of ancestral passage in these traditional expressive forms of his culture and the maps of the Europeans" (Johnson 2003, 79). These insights combined to produce the complex superimposition effects of his large canvases from the mid-1970s onwards.

This conjunction of contradictory cultural impulses is essential to grasping how Tjapaltjarri's art functions "two ways" or "bi-culturally": the paintings must be understood as contemporary art and "more than just art" in accordance with the customary expectations of his community (Johnson 2003, 18). As Johnson asserts, while Tjapaltjarri could be highly experimental, he was equally a traditionalist who "held fast to the original vision of the Papunya Tula painters of communicating to the world the custodianship of the Western Desert people over their Dreaming narratives and places" (Johnson 2003, 18). He was fastidious about traditional knowledge. If other indigenous painters' artwork lacked "the food supplies of the ancestral beings," for instance, he dismissed their works as "dead ones" (Johnson 2003, 198). Yet, Tjapaltjarri's penchant for innovation and his independence

manifest equally throughout his career. *Man's Love Story* (1973) introduces "a non-traditional motif" – a spindle hovering between a "brown haze of 'atmosphere' and an 'earth' made up of angular striped planes" – which testifies to how he arrived at his "own set of secular symbols … to symbolize elements of the Ngarlu Love story" (Johnson 2003, 76). The spindle suggests a magnetic attraction between forbidden lovers, one that defies the guardians of a fiercely patrolled taboo, and irresistibly draws them ever closer, even though they know it cannot end well because their love is illicit.

This broaching of disparate worldviews derives from the effort to assert why indigenous beliefs, traditions, and practices are important beyond their customary boundaries. In the process, Aboriginal art in the 1970s began to overturn hierarchical suppositions surrounding traditional and modernist cultures. For many of its champions, this was the enduring provocation of the Papunya Tula painting movement. The impressive works drove many contemporary artists to interact with Papunya Tula and other indigenous artists, generating cross-cultural collaborations, such as Tim Johnson and Tjapaltjarri's, and Michael Nelson Jagamara's with the Campfire group.

As Aboriginal art slowly came to prominence in contemporary art, Central Australia began hosting visiting Australian and high-profile avant-gardists, such as Richard Long, Nikolaus Lang, Joseph Beuys, Ulay and Marina Abramović and Anslem Kiefer, who all journeyed to contact the world's oldest continuous living culture. It is notable that these European artists were mostly German, a legacy of the long history of German anthropology in the region. Lang, off the back of exhibiting in the 1979 Biennale of Sydney, began to visit the Centre over the following decade, adopting Aboriginal ochres as his medium. At the Sydney Biennale in 1988, the curator Daniel Thomas concluded, "Lang is not the only visiting European artist to have admired Australian Aboriginal culture, but his own nature-based art and his determination to connect prehistory with the present are unusually close to the Aboriginal spirit" (Thomas 1988, 174). Unlike the South Pacific, the remote "heart" of Australia had no history as an avant-garde destination until the 1970s. Following her participation in the 1979 Sydney Biennale, Abramović – together with Ulay (German artist Frank Uwe Laysiepen, her partner of twelve years) – spoke of a defining creative experience when spending a year living in the Australian outback,

> I was in the desert with Ulay, but we lived with two different tribes. … I lived one year without money because we just lived on kangaroos and rats and lizards and honey ants and you don't even want to know what I was eating! … I had these amazing out-of-body experiences. There were things I can't even explain rationally. The Aborigines are the only tribes that don't use any drugs at all but they have incredible power of perception, telepathy and so on. It starts with sitting around the fire with the women and we are not talking and they are talking to my head and oh my God, I am going crazy.
>
> (Abramović 2012)

By the 1970s the rhetoric of Abramović's account is already well worn, even in its hippie inflection – with its implicit condescension. For Abramović, Ulay, and Lang, Aborigines exist in a state of pre-lapsarian timelessness. Does primitivism constitute such an enduring theme only because it idealizes the journey to the beyond or into the heart of darkness to represent the absolute inverse of the Western or Eurocentric "norm"? Like Bruce Chatwin in his writing of *The Songlines*, these artists imagined themselves stepping outside of culture in visiting "places that Australians don't go." In 1989 both Papunya artists and neo-primitives like Abramović were brought together for the "first truly international

exhibition of worldwide contemporary art," the 1989 exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre*. Its curator Jean-Hubert Martin anticipated the risks, but argued that,

> … we will display them in a manner that has never been used for objects from the Third World. That is, for the most part, the makers of these objects will be present, and I will avoid showing finished, movable objects as much as possible. I will favor 'installations' … made by the artists specifically for this particular occasion … I know that is dangerous to extricate cultural objects from other civilizations. But we can also learn from these civilizations, which – just like ours – are engaged in a search for spirituality.
>
> (cited in Buchloh and Martin 1989, 154–155)

Yet the focus for some artists making cross-cultural exchanges at this time was on non-spiritual matters. For instance Narelle Jubelin engaged in a postcolonial salvage job on modernism. For the 1989 Venice Biennale she paired her miniature, sewn renditions on the wall with trading objects and masks, in *Trade Delivers People*. A stitched version of Margaret Preston's "Aboriginal primitivism," namely her 1946 "boomerang and flower" potato print, was coupled with a similarly shaped necklace of Venetian trade beads of African origin. Such a pairing mimics the visual affinities that defined curator William Rubin's much-criticized "Primitivist" morphology, but Jubelin substitutes high modernism and the primitive with peripheral categories, in this case women's needlework and local modernism. Currency – trading beads, a New Guinea bride-price armlet of German porcelain buttons and a plethora of coins – underpins the exchange. Rather than separating the primitive and the modern, we require a more provocative conception that can grasp how the two are intricately intertwined – that is, conjoined at the heart of modernist thinking as forces of attraction and taboo – just like the lovers represented by the weaving analogy of Tjapaltjarri's spindle.

Towards a New Cartographic Vision

The Surrealist Map's real challenge was to transform our understanding of global cultural significance. It is a classically modernist strategy, aiming to provoke action within one's own world. It creates room for critical agency within European culture by showing how it can be envisaged differently and reshaped to yield alternative conceptualizations of its own perspectives, routines, and cultural conventions. On this model, primitivism is a tool of counter-cultural ambition because it permits new forms of cultural imagination.

The ambition of stepping outside one's own culture to grasp another culture is often viewed as a conceit because it is a product of unequal exchange, or the result of Western utopianism that "carried nothing less than colonialism in its underbelly," as Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado puts it (2013, 94). Conversely, Leszek Kolakowski argues that this ambition to grasp what is culturally foreign involves a genuine risk that is important to one's own culture's prospects. It amounts to assuming that it is "possible from within a culture, which, through learning to question itself, has shown itself to be capable of the effort of understanding another" (Kolakowski 1996 [1980], 19). Because one may not possess any obviously equivalent practices, language, or forms for comparison, the risk necessitates the effort to "break out of the closed confines of ethnocentricity" (Kolakowski 1980, 19). To embark on this challenge is pivotal, but it "presupposes an epistemological impossibility – to enter into the mind of the object of inquiry while maintaining the distance and objectivity of a scientist" (Kolakowski 1980, 19).

This train of inquiry reprises Sigmund Freud's classic work on the primitive, *Totem and Taboo*, which observed ambivalence at the heart of taboo relations, being "composed of conflicting affectionate and hostile impulses" (Freud 2001 [1913], 17). Freud noted that "taboo is a Polynesian word," returning us to Freud's influence on Len Lye and the centrality of Pacific sources for reimagining geo-political and cultural projections or inverted resonances (Freud 1913, 21). Such reconfigurations are key to the *Surrealist Map of the World* – while the South Pacific islands are not magnified to the degree of Alaska (which dwarfs South America), the South Pacific is at the map's center (albeit at the expense of Australia; New Zealand stays relatively intact).

For Freud, "taboo is a primeval prohibition forcibly imposed (by some authority) from outside, and directed against the most powerful longings to which human beings are subject ... The magical power that is attributed to taboo is based on the capacity for arousing temptation" (Freud 1913, 40–41). Freud asserts that in conjoining the sacred and the impure, taboo reduces them to one, "if we suppose that in a primitive mind the awakening of the memory of a forbidden action is naturally linked with the awakening of an impulse to put that action into effect" (Freud 1913, 40).

Such concerns open up one's own cultural presumptions to scrutiny. This highly ambiguous, reflexive scrutiny is evident in the treatment of images of Papua New Guinea that Sigmar Polke produced in the 1970s. For instance, in *Baumhaus* (*Tree House*) (1976) Polke displays an elevated dwelling high up in the treetops with only a precarious ladder to reach it. This image of exoticism is overlaid with three horizontal washes, of red, blue, and a muddied white. At once, it is an image of a completely foreign, exotic life and one of escape and self-discovery, in a country that at the time "still had some blank patches on its map" (Hackenschmidt 2011, 156). Cultural maps are constantly being redrafted in the collective imaginary. While Polke may be drawn to this alternative world free of encumbrances, reaching for the sky in the untamed wilderness, the work is overlaid with the history of the reception of primitivism. It recalls the European avant-garde, particularly the German Expressionists such as Max Pechstein and Nolde, who traveled to New Guinea prior to the First World War when the desire for new or alternative origins for art opposed to European academic traditions was a powerful critical impulse. By the time Polke creates his image, New Guinea is just gaining independence from Australia, which perhaps the splashes of color allude to (if not the colors of the Australian flag, perhaps those of the British, French, and United States flags). This link is not as audacious as it seems because the image of the tree house derives from a mid-1880s photograph by German-born Australian photographer J. W. Lindt (Hackenschmidt 2011, 155).[4] In creating these screens and layers through the colonial, ethnographic, and primitivist artistic legacy, Polke displays some awareness of this double risk, of the impossibility of achieving some pure, uncontaminated position outside cultural modernity, which no longer permits the resort to projections of timelessness, immediacy, and an uncontaminated, holistic social-aesthetic vision. The art historian Peter Brunt reminds us that there is "no tribal artist in New Guinea or its surrounding archipelagos who has not pondered his or her relation to the 'State' (Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, Britain), Christianity, anthropologists, the tribal art market, the museum world, expatriate kin, urban relatives or the past or the future" (Brunt 2012, 74). This is something Polke appears to have anticipated in his highly layered image of a house in the sky.

Anneleen Masschelein notes that Freud's exploration of oscillating or conflicting projections of attraction and repulsion, concerning the internal and external, should be considered "one dual response" (Masschelein 2011, 28). This perspective offers insight into the critical ambition of art in the context of primitivist projections. This ambivalence

illustrates how the uncanny oscillation of attraction and repulsion is at the heart of the modern ambition, and how the modern and the primitive are intricately related. Primitivism revives the idea of art as magically able to escape its social and cultural boundaries. It reinvigorates the classic modernist strategy, that seeks to show how art can reconceive the world with an aesthetic transformation that amplifies and seeks to transcend its culture's limitations, while permitting the "return of the repressed in a safe way" (Masschelein 2011, 31). The uncanny aspect of this redrafting is its introduction of "a sense of imperfection and human frailty" that can trouble the European conceit of attributing objective cultural power and superiority to itself (Masschelein 2011, 158). The enduring fascination with the primitive therefore involves a double risk: first of all, it risks what Kolakowski dubs the "epistemological impossibility" of renouncing one's cultural specificity in order to question its own projections and blind spots. At the same time, such a risk depends upon projections of various cultural reversals, which do not afford it the solace of a politically correct distance from accusations of elitism, cultural chauvinism, dogmatism, and even bigotry.

Such fraught aspirations help explain the peculiar, fluctuating position of Australia and Oceania as it has shifted between oblivion and center stage according to the vagaries of modernism's projections of the primitive. In 1965, the Surrealist "leader" André Breton reinstated Australia on the world cultural map in his Preface for the English edition of Karel Kupka's *Dawn of Art: Painting and Sculpture of Australian Aborigines* (*Un Art à l'etat brut*). According to Breton, Australia "has a poetic magnetism all of its own," due to the instructive example of Australian Aboriginal art (Breton 1965, 723) because its artistic vision is not influenced by Western ways of seeing. Breton refers to "primitives" – "beings governed by affective forces more elementary than our own" – that affect the "moderns," who feel a sense of "lost powers" in a "lost world" (Breton 1965, 723), thus it starkly contrasts the plight of the Occident. Breton's revision of Australia's place on the world cultural map inevitably reverts to the key motives behind the appeal to primitivism: a projected lost pre-modern totality that can sharpen the critique of present circumstances. Breton does this, however, in wholly new circumstances. Ever "since the sixth day of August 1945," he continues, the moderns confront a future in the shadow of nuclear weapons – and thus face the horror of witnessing a "world in dissolution" (Breton 1965, 723). The pretense of separating the savage and the civilized was no longer feasible when technological sophistication now encompassed the utmost savagery. For Breton, Aboriginal art counteracts this dissolving world; though we are surrounded by alienation, it can help us resist (Breton 1965, 724). Aboriginal expression, for Breton, is "disdainfully independent of perceptual representation," and is thus infallible "on the plastic level" (Breton 1965, 724). The analysis was prescient: the artists who followed, such as Tony Tuckson and George Johnson, transformed the mission of abstraction by focusing as much on local or regional indigenous art as on "avant-garde" developments in modernist painting. Thereafter, it would be difficult to tell if this late modernist path mined the "primitive" for modernism, as Preston advocated, or if modernist abstract art only belatedly attained the formal eloquence of South Pacific and Australian Aboriginal art.

Contemporary Primitivism

Today the idea of representing the primitivist desire of modernism through paired affinities, as William Rubin notoriously did in *"Primitivism" in Twentieth Century Art* for the Museum of Modern Art in New York almost three decades ago, is now a veritable taboo.[5] However what happens if the act of affinity is reversed at the other end, at the site of original

violation? The artist Daniel Boyd has restaged such primal encounters in a 2013 exhibition entitled, *New Hebrides*, the colonial name of the South Pacific islands now known as Vanuatu. Boyd's dozen monochrome canvases of vastly different sizes share a common all-over surface dotting that blurs the photographic under-painting. Two small canvases based upon iconic images of Picasso are positioned opposite a life-size portrait of the artist's great-great grandfather, Samuel Pentecost, a South Sea Islander from Pentecost Island. In one, Picasso is trying on a "Red Indian" headdress. His spectral partner Pentecost stands in his own head feathers. One is playing "native," the other is "the other" of nineteenth-century ethnographic photography. These paintings are accompanied by vast dotted canvases scanning moments from a historic scrapbook of colonial "black-birding"; the repetitive dot surface – developed by Papunya Tula artists in the 1970s to conceal their dreaming stories – has a different function here. Boyd has described his dots as a kind of lens (Bird 2013). Each small glutinous liquid drop catches light. The effect draws a glistening veil across otherwise dark surfaces, pulling them together into an unlikely constellation. The distinctions of primitive and developed, of "raw and cooked," to use Lévi-Strauss's famous distinction, is dissolved; instead the relationship is re-conceptualized in terms of "oscillation, of systole and diastole, of shrinkage and dilation, of multi-belongingness" (Amselle 1998, xi). Boyd's reparative approach does not avoid loss and guilt in confronting modernism with one of the sites of its pillaging/collecting.

While such comparisons are risky, Mikala Dwyer's installations are not unlike the residue of rituals in the Sepik River displays at the seventh Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT7), with videos of masked figures performing all kinds of irrational or magic acts, leaving in their wake props and empty dance costumes as a display along the wall. Unlike institutional spectacles of the primitive, Dwyer deals with the primitivism within her own culture, like Schwitters's *Merzbau* or Tzara's *Poèmes Nègres*. Her art is a reparative act, mixing primitive with scientific systems of knowledge.[6] Dwyer speaks of the attraction of certain geometric systems in terms of ameliorating loss,

> … a circle, which is a tight form of geometry, a completely closed system – a psychic fortress that can hold together disparate thoughts and objects. I often use circles for exactly this reason, as holding patterns – ways of shaping thoughts, creating taxonomies of things that temporarily hold against loss.

> (Dwyer 2012)

Various round, circular, or ring-like forms link the three parts of her installation *Goldene Bend'er* at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in Melbourne in 2013. Walls of reflective metallic diagonals are the backdrop for *Spell for Corner*, a ceiling-height colored target wedged between two walls, its throbbing chromatic disharmonies and acute angles at odds with the cool geometry of late modernism in the manner of Kenneth Noland or Sol LeWitt. The abject hole of the anus is at the unseen center of Dwyer's installation. According to the Freudian psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, who studied children's fantasy life, acts of reparation and the capacity to identify with the other are a compensation for the anxiety caused by primitive aggressive impulses against the mother. The primitive is here associated with the unconscious formation of the self (ego). Klein describes certain elemental processes of projection and identification, so that "excrements then have the significance of gifts; and parts of the ego which together with excrements, are expelled and projected into the other person represent the good" (Klein 1946, 102). In her performance Dwyer ritualizes this parent–child relationship. A video projection records a ceremony of communal shitting with masked performers circumambulating others who excrete into transparent

cylinders. In the adjacent space, the artist presents the primal gift in sculptural form, scaling up three geometric rings designed by her late mother, one of which holds a group of small, imperfect objects of faux gilding and other ersatz matter (Michael 2013, 6).[7] Completing the circle, the artist as alchemist strives to transform design into primitive objects, or precious shit (Dwyer 2012).

The uncannily primitive remains at the heart of modern contemporary culture, partly because it inspires its critical vocabulary, for instance, being an avenue for addressing our repulsion and unease with our own society's less-than-savoury social outcomes. Indeed, certain artists are now exploring the paradoxes of inhabiting a globalized art world. They find themselves committed to a practice that is unwilling to dispense with modernist critical examination (in the manner of Kolakowski's risk of "epistemological impossibility" in seeking to break out of the confines of ethnocentricity). Yet they are confronted with particular circumstances in which the postcolonial critique of primitivism is now virtually official doctrine and in which traditional cultural imperatives run up against contemporary expectations.[8]

This is the ambiguous world that Rohan Wealleans's practice inhabits with relish. His performative paintings evoke the air of a shaman uncovering profound mysteries by slicing through the sculptural layering of his work to reveal some oozing essence. It is no longer possible for an artist to escape the stereotypes of the shaman-artist role – which, as we have shown, pervades the modern era and pervades the modernist visual arts stretching back beyond Abramović and Beuys to Len Lye and the Expressionists. At the opening of APT6 in December 2009, Wealleans (or his stand-in) evoked all these resonances in the postcolonial context of an Asia-Pacific exhibition in which the artist performed his role as a representative artist of New Zealand by creating an ambiguously confounding disturbance (Figure 2.3). A ritual was invoked with loud guttural utterances accompanied by frenzied gestures loosely in the manner of a Maori haka. Wealleans convinced many in the uncertain audience to participate happily in chants that transformed the familiar Maori prefix *whaka-*, into something sounding suspiciously like "fucker-t." The performance culminated in the ritual cutting of a painting hung on the gallery wall behind him. The sliced open painting's "contents" – a slow moving fluid – were to be scooped into a ceremonial bowl, but the residue oozed gradually to the floor. It was a polarizing event. Half the assembled crowd seemed bemused, even smirking or giggling, taking in the joke, while the other half remained in awe, hushed in reverential admiration as if witnessing a truly cultic, ceremonial event. Others in the audience seemed to waver between both responses, as contradictory as they were; a few were just plain offended. Ultimately it remained unclear whether everyone assembled that morning was engaged in parody or something more earnest like a genuine ritual act.

Yet, even as Wealleans amplifies what is absurd about playing up to this primitivist shaman role today, his practice equally testifies to how enticing such a role remains. Wealleans wants to poke fun at the pretense of being an artist – shaman, while preserving his critical autonomy by adopting the attitude of an outside observer to his own culture. This is the paradox of all artists in the wake of primitivism. It explains the enduring fascination with the figure of the primitive; as Kolakowski notes, the creative reconfiguration of the world allows space for the perennially tentative ambition of stepping outside one's own culture in order to gain sight of its limits and to grasp how its own absurdities function as accepted "convention." Yet, it is impossible to recruit customary ritual in the service of contemporary art, virtually at will. No artist can reconfigure customary culture from scratch within a contemporary art practice and make it a binding tradition for all of culture today, valid for everyone. In fact, it is the gap between customary and contemporary cultures that we inhabit today. This leaves any practice in a precarious space between

FIGURE 2.3   Rohan Wealleans, *Paint Ritual* (2009), Performance for "The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art" (APT 6), Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. *Source*: Photograph: Ray Fulton, QAGOMA. Image courtesy: The artist and Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art.

mystification and demystification. In Wealleans's case, it is this gap he inhabits in a society like New Zealand, which today is modernist and also recognizes customary culture as a component of its official culture. And so the saga continues, complicating itself, as it continues while never eluding the duality of the primitivist–modernist dynamic in the renewed circumstances of the contemporary situation.

Conclusion

As we begin to approach its centenary, the Surrealist Map approaches an ironic realization as contemporary art goes global: no longer exclusively European, American, or

even Western. The Surrealist Map was already redundant at the time. As we have shown, Breton and Kupka sought to redraw it drastically in the 1960s due to the influence of Australian indigenous art. If there is such a thing today as a "global art history" then ironically primitivism played a part – despite it being the most taboo word in the vocabulary of such an account. It is not simply greater communication possibilities that permit a global perspective, but also the legacy of the primitivist impulse to disturb familiar aesthetic–cultural orderings. While our contemporary critical discourse will not avow this word, or its "impulse," artists do because of the continuing vitality of its challenges. Such disturbances tend to be minimized by the current institutional discourse, which treats everything in terms of an asinine celebration of diversity. Eschewing careful avoidance of any negative racial or cultural connotation, many artists are once again drawn to primitivism precisely because it retains the potential to disturb and dismantle pretentiousness. This is the way of keeping the critical impulse alert and alive.

Yet it is difficult to talk of primitivism today in its original form because its strivings are no longer fueled by projections of timelessness, immediacy, and an uncontaminated, holistic social-aesthetic vision. For artists residing on the Western cultural periphery, the appeal of resorting to a primitive stance did eventually mean something different. As we have noted, artists on the Western periphery did embrace it in order to de-center ossified Western academic traditions by instead championing the vivid forms of cultural expression peripheral to the Western tradition. By such a strategy of cultural displacements, however, a more enduring challenge was initiated. The appeal to the primitive no longer referred to the remote and distant, the simple and unsophisticated; instead, it meant the shift of the marginal and peripheral to the center of critical and aesthetic attention without endorsing the projections of the major centers of art. The eventual result was the redrafting of the entire cultural map so it was composed of a proliferation of localities, marginal, and peripheral, that have become the pivotal focus of a global art history with only provincial centers.

Notes

1 Rather than securing an anti-imperialist alliance with the Communist Party, the Surrealist tactic provoked internal ructions. Palermo argues that Louis Aragon conceived the display of African, Oceanic, and Ameri-Indian cultures, not as an "ethnographic exhibition," but more as "an art exhibition." Indeed, the Surrealist exhibition juxtaposed the primitive exotic with industrial and religious kitsch in order to destabilize conventional categories. See Palermo (2009).

2 Len Lye Archive, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth New Zealand. Undated note [*c.* 1970] on graph paper sheet written in pencil reads in full: "It started with witchetty grub then it got into one thing eating another & at the time I didn't think antibody & microphage but rather I thought male & female my polarity of value organic self ... the effect of the female on my inner self was the menace of absorbing me into family & domestic goals when all I had pined and hoped for was the goal of the self-expression of my essence in works of art. This male/female polarity idea came to me objectively as a value problem in the 1950s but in the twenties & before it was a big factor in my life in Samoa Sydney London resolved and solved but not hooked was the motto as with most young men 17–30 period/ Film about that but organically done."

3 The exhibition was sponsored by the Commonwealth Government of Australia and Carnegie Corporation New York. Theodore Sizer, Director of Yale University, Art Gallery selected works, some of which Yale purchased, as did the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

4   The Lindt photograph was taken in a Koiari village in the Central District of New Guinea. Refer also in the same volume: Kea Wienand, "New Guinea: a projection critical of civilization": 162–169.

5   William Rubin's exhibition *"Primitivism" in Twentieth Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, provoked a firestorm in art criticism. See Hal Foster, "The 'primitive' unconscious of modern art", *October*, Vol. 34, Autumn 1985: 47. Foster's complaint is that "the primitive is sent up into the service of the Western tradition (which is then seen to have partly produced it)."

6   The idea of the reparative function of art was brought to our attention by Susan Best, who is currently working on a book (forthcoming with Bloomsbury) on reparative strategies in contemporary art photography.

7   Linda Michael has noted the parent–child thematic of the rings, acting to "bring her mother's work closer to hers, as well as the reverse … Dwyer sees the three sculptures in this room as pelvic bones, as a chain of bones linking generations … the three gold nuggets and clay lumps – a child's primordial gifts – spill out of a parent form, a giant wooden ring."

8   This is particularly apt for the situation in New Zealand, which has a treaty between the European settler and Maori populations. Yet, in terms of art, the attempt to maintain the precarious balance between traditional cultural imperatives and contemporary expectations could result in some ambiguous, even confounding, formulations. Even prior to Wealleans, for instance, Robert Leonard explains that an artist like Colin McCahon could be held up as the "unavoidable" model of the god-like and immanent – at once "a nationalist and an internationalist … a primitive, a modernist and, ultimately, a postmodernist" (Leonard 2012, 14–15). The confounding play of the local and the outside, the playing out of the primitive against the cosmopolitan, finally results, Leonard argues, in the loss of intimacy within the local: "The internationalists got what they wanted. We are now part of the wider art world" (Leonard 2012, 44–45).

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Primitive/Modern/Contemporary[1]

Paul Wood

Part One: Cave-Men in Sports Cars

Dreams of a golden age cast long shadows in the human mind. Maybe they are a permanent reflex of troubled civilizations? Although if so, the dreams, like the civilizations themselves, change through time. Since the age of exploration, the figure of the noble savage has been a powerful motif of the romantic imagination. More particularly, from the emergence of modernism in the European visual arts in the mid-nineteenth century, the most resonant discourse which the avant-garde invented to deal with its own dreams of wholeness, refracted through the cultures of the rest of the world (for the age of modernism was also the age of empire), was that of the "primitive." It is widely accepted that the concept of the "primitive" played an important role in early modernism (see Figure 3.1). The *locus classicus* is Robert Goldwater's statement in his *Primitivism in Modern Art* of 1938, that, "the further one goes back – historically, psychologically, or aesthetically – the simpler things become; and that because they are simpler they are more profound, more important, and more valuable" (1986 [1938], 251).

With gathering pace over the last thirty years it has become equally widely accepted that the role played by the concept of the "primitive" was problematic at best; and if construed at its worst, served to undermine the typical claims for a "free art" associated with modernism – revealing modern art to be less the cultural flagship of an open society than a subaltern component of Western imperialism. The *locus classicus* of this post- (or more pertinently counter-) modernist phase may well be Hal Foster's 1985 question, posed to Pablo Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907, "is this aesthetic breakthrough not also a breakdown, psychologically regressive, politically reactionary?" (1985, 181). Foster, addressing the now notorious Museum of Modern Art *Primitivism* exhibition of 1984, claimed that in that show in particular, and by extension in the whole modernist tradition, "the imperialist precondition of primitivism was suppressed, and 'primitivism', a metonym of imperialism, served as its disavowal" (1985, 183). In that now-standard picture, "primitivism" is made to stand as yet another instance of an avant-garde discourse being outed as a symptom of the disease of which it had proclaimed itself the cure.

Yet just as recent work in the field of Orientalism has led to reconsideration of the critical stances of pioneers such as Edward Said and Linda Nochlin,[2] so in my view, the sheer oddity of modernist primitivism invites further reflection. It contains an excess of hazard that cannot wholly be disposed of by assimilating it as symptomatic of colonialism. In modernist primitivism there remains a trace of that mentality-on-the-precipice which Erich Auerbach found in Giambattista Vico's imagining of prehistory, as an Other to the

FIGURE 3.1   Ernst-Ludwig Kirchner, *Male Figure (Adam)* (1920–21). Carved wood, h. 169.6; w. 40; D. 31cm, Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie. *Source*: akg-images.

modern, "in all its greatness and horror" (2014 [1936], 35). Something of the same thought seems still to be present at the other end of modernism in the mid-twentieth century, in Eliot's passage (1970 [1944]) in *The Dry Salvages* on: "The backward look behind the assurance/ Of recorded history, the backward half-look/ Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror" (2014 [1936], 39). The result, to cite Auerbach again, is a recognition of something "far more profound – and far more perilous" than the currently fashionable rubbishing of modernism in the name of a global, multicultural difference, seems able to recognize.

When modern art first came into being, around 1860 (indeed before it first came into being, when it was initially being demanded by literary figures like Stendhal and Charles Baudelaire), it had nothing whatsoever to do with ideas of the "primitive." It was required as a response to modernity, as experienced in the expanding cities of Western Europe, especially Paris (see Stendhal and Baudelaire in Harrison *et al.*, 1998). It was an essentially urban phenomenon. Édouard Manet was a creature of the boulevards; he wore a top hat and gloves, and presumably a black frock coat and patent leather shoes. The characteristic figure of early modern art was the painter of *modern* life, in all his Baudelairean "heroism" (1998, 493–506).

The discourse of the "primitive" as a factor in the production of a modern art, represents nothing if not a dramatic reversal of this. It was an extreme, strange, move. Even

then, some saw it in negative terms. The anarchist Camille Pissarro, completely wedded to what he regarded as a modern philosophy of social emancipation, saw Paul Gauguin as an opportunist who was, as he put it, "pillaging the savages of Oceania" (Pissarro cited in Harrison *et al.* 1998, 1033) in the service of a new mysticism to which the bourgeoisie had turned in the wake of the Commune and military defeat by the Germans.

There is undoubtedly a lot of truth in this. But the discourse of primitivism was also a symptom of a much wider tension between radical politics and radical art which came to mark the entire avant-garde project in the twentieth century. The fact is that there *was* no widely accepted practical political solution to the problems of capitalist modernity; no more so in the late nineteenth century than in the early twenty-first. Even if we take revolutionary socialism to represent such a political solution (and there are many who do not), and historical materialism to represent its appropriate philosophy (and there are many who do not), it would be a thin art history that restricted its gaze to those who passed that particular test. And even if we extend the criteria from Marx to Freud and Saussure, as the *October* group so successfully did for several decades in the late twentieth century, even that can now look restrictive (Foster *et al.* 2004). I am afraid that in our current period of indecision and possible reconstruction, we have to face up to the idealists and the metaphysicals, the symbolists and the Christians, and even the avant-garde racists and amateur fascists, if anything they did as art remains of interest.[3]

Wittingly or unwittingly, the eclipse of positivism in the late nineteenth century (and the absence of any articulated materialist theory of culture) did open the door to a resurgent and not unfruitful philosophical idealism, much of it of German origin. New artistic initiatives cannot be conjured out of the air, nor plucked as if ready made from the shelves of one of the new department stores. They have to be improvised out of what is to hand. The generation of the 1860s and 1870s had got out from under the suffocating Franco-Italianate academic tradition through recourse to an unstable mix of Dutch genre subjects and Spanish artistic techniques, positivist philosophy, the marginalized aesthetic of popular sheets, and Japanese prints. When the heroism started to drain out of the experience of urban modernity, as it seems to have done by the 1880s, a comparable problem faced those committed to a renewal of art.

Already, in the late eighteenth century, the Romantic critique of an increasingly decadent and materialistic proto-modernity had produced the counter-ideology of the "noble savage." (It should be borne in mind that the "noble savage" always represented a kind of minority-report against the "stages" theory of human development, which emerged in the Enlightenment and has long been entrenched in the Western psyche (Meek 1976 and Millar 2012 [*c.* 1770]). In the context of a resurgent romanticism and idealism in the bourgeois wasteland of the late nineteenth century, this figure came to resonate again. What was new in the situation was that, instead of *depicting* noble savages, the desperate modernist sought to *become* one.

It is no longer a case of Sir Joshua Reynolds depicting the Polynesian Omai as a "noble savage." In the 1890s, in *Noa Noa* Gauguin writes, "I was reborn; or rather another man, purer and stronger, came to life within me … I was indeed a new man; from now on I was a true savage" (2012 [*c.* 1893–5], 255).

It was the bad faith implicit in this would-be utopic gesture that proved so objectionable to later, postmodernist critics, the latent quality of impersonation that was rumbled – the spectacle of the hoary male modernist losing his inhibitions and letting it all hang out, usually at someone else's expense; that "someone" frequently being either female or black. The point was driven home in a multitude of books and articles with increasing frequency from the mid-1980s onwards (for example, Foster 1985, James Clifford 1985, Sally Price

1989, Susan Hiller 1991 and Shelley Errington 1998). We know all this now, and I have no stake in trying to gainsay it. All I really want to do is to suggest two qualifications that ought to be borne in mind.

The first concerns primitivism's relations *within* the avant-garde. The ideology of primitivism – and it *is* an ideology, with all the connotations of an "imaginary resolution of a real contradiction" – is itself highly modern, a deflected symptom of the constraining power of modernity. (Modernity always, it seems, ends up constraining those it promises to free.) We have now become used to postmodernist and postcolonialist rejections of the ideology of primitivism. But one of the easily overlooked conjunctions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century avant-garde concerns its attitude to time. The first modern art had been preoccupied with the present. When the wine of modernity turned to vinegar, that present became less congenial. The way out lay in rhetorics of the past *and* the future. *Both* represent equal and opposite denials of the crushing power of actual modernity (Wood 2012a).[4]

The past seems to have come first. We know why. In its burgeoning ethnographic museums, imperialism laid the ruins of the exotic at the feet of the avant-garde no less suggestively than Rome had laid out its ruins for the eyes of the Renaissance. The future was slower in coming into focus, possibly because early technology was so clunky. But once the internal combustion engine arrived, the Futurist imagination took off.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, even more so than Gauguin, is of course a deeply uncongenial figure for our contemporary cultural matrix. Militaristic, anti-feminist, nationalistic, to all intents and purposes fascist, Marinetti is the bogeyman of the avant-garde. Yet a rhetoric of the future, albeit in a different register, was no less closely connected to Suprematism and Constructivism. It is too easy to say that "Futurism" is a mere creature of the fascist impulse. But my point here is not to whitewash Marinetti, just to underline the connection between a rhetoric of the past and a rhetoric of the future, in the early twentieth century avant-garde.

Marinetti too, just like Gauguin, finds himself born again: not as a "Maori" but as a Futurist, when he is baptized in the waters of a factory ditch after crashing his racing car. The single most powerful fusion of past and future in Marinetti's imagination occurs in *Mafarka the Futurist* (1909), subtitled "an African novel": wherein the archaic-primitive Arab warrior-hero presides over the slaughter and rape of numberless Africans, before finally remaindering women altogether by giving birth to his own son, who then rapidly mutates into an aeroplane. But the conjunction of the "primitive" and the technologically advanced, of the past and the future, is pervasive in Marinetti's thought. In the Futurist Manifesto itself, the reviving waters of the factory ditch remind him of "the blessed black breast of my Sudanese nurse" (1997 [1909], 147).

I do not expect anyone to admire this now (or at least to admit it in public). But this is the first point: that modernist primitivism does not somehow just stand on its own, as a sort of culpable picking-on the weakest members of the human community in order to forge careers in a Western market place. It might have become that later. By the 1930s, adherents to the ideology of the primitive weren't even really engaging with the genuinely exotic anymore, so much as copying what had already become just another routine of a semi-domesticated avant-garde. But that isn't the issue; the epigones don't matter. What does matter, is this unstable conjunction of past and future when it was new: not least for what it tells us about the evacuation of the present, as a fruitful site for the making and remaking of modernism.

To steal a phrase from Theodor Adorno, primitivism and Futurism are the two halves which fail to add up to a whole. Which in a negative sense is the point: the "whole" had

become inaccessible. Picturing modernity dies as a progressive, or even a convincing, way of making art. Paradoxically, if it goes anywhere, the confrontation with the present passes through the eye of a needle and ends up as abstraction. But the mutation of the present into the encounter with the autonomous work of art opens up a different avenue altogether, and is a story for another occasion.

My point here is that modernist primitivism, at least at the moment of its inception, was, in its valorization of the simple, itself a complex and difficult move. Inseparable from a vision of the future, its vision of the past is a deflected or coded address to the intractable question of modernity. It is, so to speak, part of the generalized failure of realism to compel conviction, and as such a symptom of the doomed avant-garde dream of alternatives to bourgeois-capitalist modernity. It is not uniquely to be despised for complicity with colonialism, but critically re-assessed in terms of its unstable juggling of space and time in the face of an overpowering, and overpoweringly hostile, present.

I now want to turn to my second qualification. On the one hand, I have been thinking about the relation of modernist primitivism to Futurism *within* the general avant-garde crisis in respect of modernity. On the other, I now want to think about the avant-garde's relation to *non*-avant-garde art.

Thirty years ago in the essay I have already mentioned, Hal Foster eloquently argued that the modernist construction of the "primitive" amounted to "a repression of the fact that a breakthrough in our art, indeed a regeneration of our culture" was based in part "on the break up and decay of other societies," and was "implicated" in that wider process (1985, 198–189). It is not, of course, that Foster is wrong when he accuses normative expressionist primitivism of some level of complicity in the exploitation of Africa. His contrast between its "recuperation" of the "otherness of the primitive" *for* Western bourgeois culture, and Surrealism's later employment of that same "otherness" to "disrupt" it, carries weight. The later one goes in the European avant-garde, the more likely this contrast is to hold. And the contrast between the Surrealist anti-colonial exhibitions of the early 1930s and the haute-bourgeois fashion for jazz and all things black, is a powerful one. But an important aspect is missing from the binary of the good and the not-so-good avant-gardes. That aspect is the submerged part of the cultural iceberg, the *status quo*.

One such has, of course, just been alluded to: the "colonial exhibitions" that the Surrealists demonstrated against, and their long history (not confined to France) stretching back into the nineteenth century (see Jody Blake 2002).[5] However, it is not just ethnographic museums and official exhibitions that need to be accounted for, but academic *art* itself. The critique of an earlier academic orientalism – in the art of Jean-Léon Gérôme and others – is well known. But in the early twentieth century, academic, as opposed to avant-garde, primitivism, was also in play. One only has to look at what the academy made of the past, or of large tracts of the non-Western world, to recover some of the critical force of what the avant-garde was doing, including the "expressionist" avant-garde.

At this point I want to turn from ideas and generalities, to review some particular art works. The absence of a comprehensive roster of illustrations here, is both confining and liberating. On the one hand, we are, after all, dealing with visual art. But on the other, an exercise in *ekphrasis* is immensely useful: attaching words, meanings, to images is difficult, and the potential lack of fit between the two can provide a salutary lesson.

Jean-Frederic Waldeck was a nineteenth century artist, little-known today, who was active in France, and best known then for his imaginative renditions of pre-Columbian artefacts encountered on a journey to Mexico in the 1830s. In a remarkable self-portrait, he subsequently pictured himself as *The artist carried in a sillero over the Chiapas from Palenque to Ocosingo, Mexico*, *c.* 1833. The first thing the viewer sees is a barefoot, indeed

almost naked copper-skinned native figure straining up a mountain path, dominating the foreground of the picture, with a panorama of a lush valley spread out behind and below. It is only slowly that the true nature of the enormous burden on his back discloses itself. It is another foot that does it. Poking out of the gigantic basket, that resolves into a kind of lightweight sedan chair (a "sillero"), is a well-shod foot and a white-trousered leg. Then one sees a pale hand resting on the knee, and the circle on the outside of the sillero becomes a straw hat, complete with chin strap, to protect the European against the sun. Hidden inside the sillero, one never sees the artist's face, resting in the shade, and gazing across the self-same view that you, the spectator, have of the tropical valley below. The white man *as* burden has seldom been so blithely represented; so too his art, if your eye follows the mountain path upwards to the right, and you then discern a second, smaller brown figure toiling ahead under the lighter burden of Waldeck's easel and canvases. It *is* comic, or at least partly so. But there is nothing funny about the power relation involved; nor the role of art in it.

The – presumably unconscious – humor persists in a work by the society portraitist James Tissot of 1895. A kind of ethnographic naturalism was widely practiced in late nineteenth-century France. Though subsequently scorned by modernist critics it forms a particular strand of figurative art, quite distinct from the sub-classical nudes usually associated with academic art. Indeed, it aspired to function in support of new ethnographic science – as in some (albeit only some) of Gérôme's views of middle-Eastern life, or Frederic Cormon's vast representation of cave-men masquerading as the expulsion of Cain into the desert (currently in the Musée d'Orsay) (see Dominique de Font-Réaulx 2010 and Benson Miller 2010). None of this relative seriousness of purpose can sensibly be attributed to Tissot's comical *La femme prehistorique*. The peach-skinned, lissom-limbed, young lady, fetchingly attired in a sort of disheveled leopardskin bathing costume (much skimpier than an actual nineteenth-century bathing costume, it may be added), does nothing so much as anticipate Hollywood in her promise of the alluringly exotic for a middle-class art lover. Heaven knows what went on when he got home. Tissot's meanings are however not always so comically erotic. Though it is worth underlining that this is not necessarily a matter of authorial intention. Presumably, in *Hush! (The Concert)* of 1875 Tissot had set out to depict a charmingly cosmopolitan musical soirée in Kensington, as an attractive soloist is about to entertain a group of sophisticated haute-bourgeois music lovers. The modern viewer perhaps will barely notice the two turbaned and bejeweled Indian maharajas in the exclusive audience. But the art critic of one contemporary London newspaper did, and in his review did not hesitate to draw his readers' attention to the "ogling Orientals ready to devour a young lady violinist."[6] Such are the circuits of meaning for official art in an imperial metropole. One is in murkier waters here than those about to be dipped into by the nubile cave-girl.

The register darkens further with certain other examples of academic primitivism, such as Herbert Ward's bronze images of *The Idol Maker* and *A Congo Artist* of 1906 and 1910. The sculptures purport to depict "primitive art" in two and three dimensions, painting and sculpture as it were. Both employ a relentless realism, but tilted in a particular way. There is no romanticism here, no vestige of the noble savage; and no modernist "expressive" intensity either. The idol-maker hacks at a crude wooden figure resting across his knees, the painter sits splay-legged on the ground, "drawing" with his finger in the mud. Both are naked except for a ragged loincloth. The representations play into contemporary discourses of "race," which located African material culture, and indeed African people, on a lower rung of the evolutionary ladder than Europe (see Marles 1996). No less than the depicted subject matter, the very contrast of medium is meant to underline this: on one side of the

civilizational divide, the finger scrawling in mud and the crudely hacked idol, on the other the finely finished bronze of the European art tradition. My point is that, compared to Ernst Ludwig Kirchner or Henri Matisse's formal distortions – articulated by romantic-primitivist myth-making and a vision of the power of nature over decadent and artificial bourgeois culture, all underwritten by the concept of "expression" – here it is the supposed truth-telling of naturalism that is so transparently subservient to an overarching racism.

Ward had lived in Central Africa, and it is unsurprising to find comparable academic works of art in Belgium. In these examples, the balance shifts from a would-be "truthful" (because naturalistic) representation of African backwardness to an overt endorsement of empire. In a suite of sculptures commissioned in the early twentieth century by the Ministry of the Colonies and now on display in the Africa museum at Tervuren, Arsène Matton employs a mixture of conventional academic figuration and allegory to reinforce the ideology of imperialism. The key device is a tall European figure, allegorized as a soldier, the church, welfare, and so on, in classically-inspired robes, around whose lower legs are clustered supplicating native figures, women and children, mostly naked. As ever, the titles provide the crucial function of elucidating the proposition: *Belgium brings security to the Congo*; *Belgium brings welfare to the Congo*; *Belgium brings civilisation to the Congo* (Figure 3.2). It is a matter of historical record now, but was then only brought to light

FIGURE 3.2   Arsène Matton, *Belgium Brings Security to the Congo*, 1910–22. Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren. *Source*: HO.0.1.332, collection RMCA Tervuren; photo Jo Van de Vyver, © RMCA Tervuren.

in the teeth of official dissembling by the Irish politician Roger Casement among others (including the novelist Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*), that many millions died in this process of bringing security and civilization to Central Africa. My point here is that academic art had little difficulty underwriting the civilizing mission of empire. That is what official art *does*; it shares in official values. One can see again how a mixture of easily accessible naturalism and idealizing classicism can not only pander to, but overtly serve, the cause of imperialism in a way that avant-garde complexity and relative illegibility just couldn't.

Another of Matton's sculptures points to something else sustaining the imperial mission. This one is called *Slavery*. Unlike the others, the cowering, naked native figures are precisely not clustered around a reassuring figure of Christian civilization; to the contrary, they shrink from the blows of a haughty Arab: the figure of a slave trader. The same motif forms a key element in the rationale behind Thomas-Jules Vinçotte's complex and extensive *Monument to the Pioneers of the Belgian Congo*, still to be found, uncomfortably graffitti'd, in the Cinquantenaire Park in Brussels. The sculptural ensemble takes the form of a fountain. In the foreground, in an oval basin now emptied of water, a young, nude black man and a crocodile allegorize the Congo River. Behind, in a curving shallow relief indebted to the Parthenon frieze, the people of the Congo are led towards civilization, in the shape of a seated Belgian governor, herded onwards by a bishop wielding a crucifix: Church and State united in bringing African people from the bottomless pit into the light of Christian civilization. The whole is surmounted by another allegorical female figure of Europe gathering unto herself supplicating native women and children. However, one of the really important bits of ideological work is achieved at the extreme outside edges of the sculptural ensemble, in a naturalistic rather than allegorical mode. To the right, a Belgian soldier lays down his life to save his wounded officer; a conventional enough image of self-sacrifice and nobility. But the left-hand side is more pointed, and takes us back to the terrain of Matton's *Slavery*. At first, all one sees is a Belgian soldier in aggressive posture, twisted round and lashing down towards the ground with a whip, or a cane, beating down on something lying beneath his feet. It only slowly dawns on the viewer that this is a human figure, and the Belgian soldier is treading on his neck. A modern viewer is at first liable to be slightly lost. When I have asked students to read the image, the immediate response is one of puzzlement. What is it? Then, recognition: it is a human figure, a human head. But what kind of human figure? Semitic, apparently. Then, drawing on how negatively empire now tends to be regarded, off on the wrong track. Christ? – the military trampling down the Savior himself. But clearly this cannot be. The sculptural ensemble is intended to promote the virtues, not the vices of empire. No. Then it finally dawns. It's an Arab's head, grimacing beneath the soldier's heel … And there you have it. Matton and Vinçotte visually articulate an identical claim: the Belgian presence in the Congo is not an exploitative holocaust, but is actually *saving* its innocent inhabitants from the depredations of Arab slavers. Christian civilization triumphs. *We* are vindicated, our "sacrifice" is justified.

These then, are half a dozen examples, contingently selected from my own acquaintance with academic art. They span a period of just under a century, from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth. In the early twenty-first century, and particularly in the late twentieth when criticisms of the avant-garde tradition were first being widely mooted, this kind of art had more or less slipped from view, relegated to the margins of art history. It was the newly central figures, the over-heroicized "pioneers" of modernism, that needed to be removed from their aesthetically autonomous pedestals and resituated in history. This is

fine in its moment: a moment when, under pressure from postcolonialism and nascent globalization, art history began to expand its remit from metropolitan modernity to its other side, its *under*side in the colonies.

But history is not static. Difference has become a form of orthodoxy, yet paradoxically, while difference is celebrated in representations of culture throughout the majority world, its consequences are seldom pursued back into the metropole. Yet there are also fissures and contradictions there. Western art, even in the period of imperialism, never was a seamless monolith. Set against the kind of context just reviewed, the pervasive *status quo* of academic painting and sculpture trumpeting the values of civilized racism and Islamophobia, the primitivism of the avant-garde may recover at least a part of its critical force. Not, to be sure, as an index of freedom on Goldwater's model, sloughing off cultural accretions in pursuit of a bedrock, essentialist, "human nature"; but as a strategy of critique *within* the Western hegemon. Foster spoke of a "breakthrough in our culture" being bought at the cost of the break-up of theirs. My argument is that the process is not quite so homogenous. The avant-garde is to an extent complicit in imperialism, just as it was in capitalism. How could it be otherwise? But in one of those queer recursions which happen in history, the space they cleared within their parent culture is what produced the forces capable of reaching out and connecting with forces of liberation coming in the opposite direction, to create the shared ground on which a greater worldwide cultural openness could begin to flourish. Their "solutions" to be sure may have been imaginary solutions to real contradictions. They may indeed have partaken of negative elements of their wider culture: after all, in "Notes of a Painter," the very essay in which he articulates the goal of an art of purity and serenity, Matisse himself acknowledged that "all artists bear the imprint of their time," that "whether we want to or not, we belong to our time, and we share in its opinions, its feelings, even its delusions" (1998 [1908], 74–75). No-one today with an ounce of critical intelligence could subscribe to the ideology of primitivism, but *then* it represented a powerful critical lever against the certainties of a dominant culture, a culture which embraced official art in its own ideology of civilization and progress. Avant-garde primitivism was a partial kind of counter-ideology, no less, no more; but "real" solutions to the problems of modernity were, and are, thin on the ground.

The key difference, one that must not be forgotten, lies in the differing *academic* and *avant-gardist* connotations of the concept "primitive." For the latter it inhabits, indeed constructs, a positive register of values, representing a rejection of the cultural mores of European bourgeois society at large, if not – admittedly – its economic base. For the former, the concept of the "primitive" is wholly negative, intended to reinforce bourgeois morality and advertise its civilizing mission. I am not denying that the avant-garde's "positive" meaning often does little more than invert the negative academic one, while maintaining a comparable myth of Africa, or Polynesia, relative to Europe, as being outside history. But the culpable fact – the historically culpable fact – is that almost *no-one* in the West at that point seems to have regarded Africa, or Polynesia, as culturally and historically complex on a par with Europe (see Roger Fry 1981 [1920]).[7] Nor did they do so for decades. Even when the change did come, it owed less to intellectual challenges to the idea of "primitivism" as such, or indeed to the sphere of art at all, but to the changes wrought by world history and the agency of the colonized themselves: the national liberation struggles of the mid-century. For this reason, at least, the distinction between the academic and the modernist sense of "primitive" should still be observed, however easy it is to tar them both with the brush of racism, today. There were few enough then who took even that small step.[8]

Part Two: Under New Management

I want now to turn to a different aspect of the problem of the "primitive"; or rather, to the wider problem of which the discourse of "primitivism" was itself an aspect. Primitivism is now consigned to history, but the general question of how the Western concept of "art" is made to relate to the visual cultures of the majority world, and in particular, how Western museums display it, remains resolutely contemporary. There is, of course, relatively little problem for contemporary art itself. Contemporary art is now so diverse, and the contemporary art museum so all-engulfing, that anything can be displayed as art irrespective of its point of origin, or for that matter irrespective of anything else. And yet in the historical purview, a problem does persist. This is a problem which is not restricted to what the late nineteenth and early twentieth century modernist avant-garde made of non-Western art. In fact the thought behind that very phrase *is* part of what remains at issue. For what the modernist avant-garde made of non-Western art was, precisely, art: "primitive art." The key conceptual shift was that they made "art" out of what had hitherto been considered mere "artefact." But what has happened since is not a simple ascent, or "opening": as if modernism had patronized the rest of the world by insisting on the adjective "primitive," but now we are sufficiently liberal, multicultural, and so forth, simply to recognize that it is all equally "art." The point being that the concept of "art" itself changes. The demise of the ideology of primitivism leaves various loose ends hanging if both the terms "artefact" and "primitive art" become unusable. It is not enough just to accept that it is all "art" now; even though, of course, it *is*: as I have just said, in its contemporary sense the concept of art has become so expanded that it can not only cover anything or nothing made anywhere in geographical space (or not even made, just "nominated"); but also from anywhere in historical time (or indeed, "pre-historical" time), including times before the concept of "art" itself existed. Neither is the term "art" simply co-terminous with notions of "material culture" or "visual culture": recent debates about expanding curricula to embrace "art and visual culture" do nothing if not serve to demonstrate that such assimilation is no panacea. Clearly what conception of "art" is in play, matters.

I will try and proceed by again attending to concrete, particular examples, which will once more necessitate excursions into *ekphrasis*. To state the point very schematically, set against the context of the evolving discourse of artistic modernism over the last one hundred and fifty to two hundred years, there have been three distinct paradigms under which non-Western visual/material culture has been received and displayed in the West. I will take the "Benin bronzes" for a case study (see Wood 2012b). These sculptures were unknown in the West before 1897; or at least, knowledge of them which may have existed at the moment of the European encounter with West Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had been lost. Without delving too deeply into nineteenth-century racism, it had become the common sense of the imperium that the people of Africa were degraded savages who lacked culture. The sudden appearance, in the wake of the destruction of Benin City by the British "punitive expedition" of 1897, of finely wrought cast metal sculptures made by the lost wax process, some of which exhibited a marked "lifelikeness" rather than varieties of distortion, threw these conventional categories into disarray.

With gathering pace from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century, collections had been formed in the European metropolis of materials from the wider world. As the unstable concept of "curiosity," which had subtended the collection of these materials in the late eighteenth century and earlier (see Thomas 1991 and Wood 2012c),[9] began to consolidate with the development in the nineteenth century of the human sciences of anthropology and ethnography, the first display paradigm for this material was of the object

regarded as ethnographic artefact. The purpose here was to provide knowledge of exotic or alien ways of life through displays constructed under the sign of "science." So long as "art" remained identified with Renaissance models, these kinds of things were not regarded as art. The Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford has retained this mode of display, itself a kind of conglomerate historical artefact. Objects are grouped according to medium – pottery, metalwork, and so on – or according to function – musical instruments, weapons, utensils, and so on – and are displayed in glass cases with labels. Once, of course, it was all like this, minus the implicit quotation marks.

The second display paradigm reflects a revolution, namely the revolution of modernism that we have already encountered in the first part of this chapter; and the construction of a new category – the category of "primitive art." Resulting displays were organized under the sign of the "aesthetic"; that is, the specifically modernist aesthetic organized around "form." Such exhibitions were many and varied, ranging from early examples like the Chelsea Book Club display of African carvings written about by Fry in 1920 (or indeed the art of the South African San people he wrote about – as "art" – ten years before that), to *African Negro Art* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) in 1935, to *The Art of the South Seas* also at MoMA in 1946, *Masterpieces of African Art* at the Brooklyn Museum in 1954 and a hundred others through the decades. Indeed, it might be said that the root of the issue with the *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* exhibition at MoMA in 1984–1985 was not the concept itself but the fact that it had been allowed to sleep too long in the insulated halls of official modernism, and woke to find itself engulfed in waves of postmodernist, and postcolonialist, outrage.

In 2008, a large exhibition of Benin artworks was shown in Vienna, Paris, Berlin, and Chicago (see Plankensteiner, 2007). There were telling differences in the way the works were displayed. Traces of the "artefact" paradigm persisted – these were, after all, museums of anthropology – especially in Vienna and Berlin. However, by then the second, modernist paradigm, displaying the non-Western works as autonomous works of art for aesthetic contemplation, had become impossible to ignore, even in anthropologically-based collections. In the 2008 Benin shows, this was most dramatically staged at Quai Branly in Paris. Many objects were still displayed in glass cases, but the famous and unique two-dimensional bronze "plaques" were displayed in individually lit recesses along a long curving wall, at eye level. The staging was dramatic, and aesthetically powerful, almost to the point of being coercive. The curatorial intention, explicitly, was to present them as Art with a capital "A."

A similar tension exists in the British Museum's permanent display of its Benin Bronze holdings. Some are in cases, along with maps and information panels. But the plaques are shown in a singular display, a large grid, with the plaques grouped into a large rectangle made up of the individual elements attached to slender vertical aluminium poles. Although there is a distant echo here of the plaques' original function on the pillars of the Oba's palace in Benin, here the ordering principle is aesthetic. Despite the ethnographic trace, so to speak, the British Museum plaques installation much more resonantly connotes a minimalist or postmodernist art installation.

However, by 2008, when the Benin exhibition made its triumphal tour of major metropolitan museums, a third display paradigm had already emerged, under the pressure of broader world-historical forces of decolonization and globalization, as well as another revolution in art – this time, the turn away from modernism into the "expanded field" of contemporary art.

In some respects this emergent third paradigm marks the return of the repressed anthropological moment, but at a higher level. Here, the re-emergence of social/ethnographic considerations marks not a refusal to confer the elevated status of art, but a critique of the

modernist autonomy claim. From this perspective, the work of art is less an end in itself than a means to engagement with the cultures of Others – other *people*. These displays are constructed under the sign of "difference," under the sign of identity politics, wherein it is not aesthetic autonomy that is held to be the governing virtue, but cultural diversity and the relation of art to ways of life.

In the 2008 Benin exhibitions, this third display paradigm took several different forms. In Vienna, the relatively conventional anthropological display was prefaced by a simu-lacrum of the *original* historical context: in the form of facsimiles of the ridged walls of the Oba's palace in Benin through which one entered the display proper, as well as the plac-ing of some objects, such as carved elephant tusks, on replica mudbrick altars. In Berlin, a similarly rather conventional display was anchored in the *contemporary* Nigerian diaspora. Here the entrance to the exhibition was through life-size photo panels of contemporary Nigerian people resident in Berlin, with statements on their views of the meaning of the works to them personally, and the question of their presence in Western museums. But the most interesting development of this third paradigm can be found at the Horniman Museum in London. Here the Nigerian curator Joseph Eboreime, in a recent re-staging of the collection, on the one hand (and this goes almost without saying) emphatically treats the Benin plaques as "art," through a display device comparable to that at Quai Branly of showing them in spot-lit individual metal boxes; yet simultaneously the display contextu-alizes them into *both* contemporary Nigeria *and* historical Benin, through the device of an accompanying video of contemporary brass-casting in the UNESCO World Heritage site around Igun Street in Benin City. A further innovation however was to foreground, indeed to transform, one of the key (albeit frequently overlooked) components in the staging of all visual displays: the labels. Drawing on his own Nigerian identity, in order to research into Bini traditions of oral history, Eboreime's labels symbolically reverse the linguistic priorities of English and Edo (Eboreime 2000).

So the Benin bronzes offer a rich case study of changing attempts to display non-Western cultural materials in Western museums. It is worth underlining that this has been a three-stage process, not, as is so often thought, a simple transition from demeaning such things as artefacts to elevating them to fully-fledged art status. The display process of majority world visual culture has involved three paradigms: as ethnographic artefact; as formally resolved masterpiece of primitive art; and as testimony to a relativistic condition of global cultural difference. Broadly speaking, this third constellation represents the position where things stand now. However, I want to conclude by discussing some issues arising from the still more thoroughgoing revision of traditional categories that recently took place at the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt. This deserves our further attention precisely because of the prominence it accords to Art in its redescription of the ethnographic object, the erstwhile "primitive."

The exhibition I want to concentrate on, titled *Foreign Exchange*, was shown at the Weltkulturen Museum throughout 2014 (Deliss and Mutumba 2014). Its focus was con-sciously self-reflective, being directed upon the museum's own collection. The Frankfurt ethnographic museum opened in 1904, but the primary subject of "Foreign Exchange" was a much later expedition made under the museum's auspices to collect material from the Sepik River area of Papua New Guinea in the early 1960s. One of the principal points of interest was the sheer quantity of material brought away from New Guinea to Germany – collecting as a serial endeavor, on an almost industrial scale – and the huge efforts of clas-sification and scientific explanation which ensued. In complete contrast, *Foreign Exchange* sought to offer multiple, open-ended accounts of what had gone on through the work of

a group of contemporary artists derived from their experience of the collected materials, plus a series of international workshops hosted by the museum in 2013.

The museum's Director Clémentine Deliss describes the aim of the enterprise as a requirement to "remediate" the collection: a double-sided neologism intended to capture the need both to "remedy" an existing situation and to "remake" new representations. To "remedy" in the sense of *both* to critically engage with existing Western discourses of anthropology and the museum *and* to take increasing note of "testimonials that originate from the producers and users" (which would include the kinds of thing we have seen in the Benin case). To "remake" in the sense of pressing on "to experiment with alternative ways of describing, interpreting and displaying the objects in the collection" (Stored Code 2014). The overarching purpose is to "articulate new identifications" in a context of debates about the nature of citizenship in the global contemporary; and to offer answers to the question, posed in the form of a wall text by Ciraj Rassool in the exhibition itself: "How can the museum reposition itself as a relevant, vibrant institution in a world after colonialism?"

The heart of this strategy involves a redirection of the curatorial gaze *inwards*; away from the classification or display of the putatively remote or exotic, onto the structures of the museum itself, both physical and ideological; the aim being to foster instead a *self*-consciousness about how the institution itself has made, and continues to make, meaning.

Hitherto marginalized questions concerning how the objects came to be in the museum, and how they have been catalogued, now become foregrounded; along with an interrogation of easily overlooked elements such as the conventions governing catalogue photographs, the writing of captions and information panels and labels (again something we have seen in the re-staging of Benin material). In the crucial respect of how meaning is institutionally attached to objects, these are all revealed as densely coded rather than as transparent carriers of information.

Drawing on historical models associated with figures such as Aby Warburg and Carl Einstein, Deliss's aim is to turn the museum into something mobile and dynamic rather than a repository. Instead of the standard contemporary museum situation where more or less passive spectators are through-put to the shop, the aim is to create a discursive space rather than a space of consumption. Moreover, it is worth underlining that this vision is also to be distinguished from conventional universities – that is to say, from a situation in which higher education has become increasingly commodified: dominated more and more by business models, wherein students are increasingly described as "customers," and everything has to be signed for and paid for on an "internal market" within the institution.

All of this is without question progressive, even liberating, especially when contrasted with the all-pervasive late capitalist landscape of the commodification of everything. But it is at this point that I want to turn to a more critical register. The reservations, of which I cannot rid myself despite the positive intentions just sketched in, are twofold. On the one hand they go to the constitution of the "new knowledges" that are being invoked; on the other, to the conception of "art" involved – which is *not* a peripheral issue, because a particular notion of "art" seems to be central to the enterprise, made to carry much of the weight of the forward-looking part of the critique of conventional science. Thus the museum's website speaks of the development of "a new research lab on the borderline between advanced art practice and anthropology."

The visual aspect of the situation was crucial to its production of meaning. Each of the rooms was very "cool," plain wooden floors, plain white walls (see Figure 3.3); each contained various specially-designed but equally plain vitrines, themselves containing objects

FIGURE 3.3 *Foreign Exchange (or The Stories You Wouldn't Tell a Stranger)*, exhibition installation view. Weltkulturen Museum, Frankfurt. *Source*: Weltkulturen Museum Frankfurt/Main, photo: Wolfgang Günzel 2013.

arranged by morphological resemblance: rows of long thin objects, circular objects, rectangular objects, all artefacts from the collection. One space had a large, plain conference room-type table, with equally sober office chairs arranged around it, for study and discussion. There were also wall cases containing large ledgers, and others containing modern and contemporary books – in effect a library of critical anthropological literature. Also on the walls were two kinds of writing. One kind consisted of a frieze of names running all round the walls of one of the rooms, at first sight looking like a pale grey band, as it were a type of wall-drawing, but on closer inspection resolving into names – the names of the places from which objects had been collected. The other kind consisted of larger-sized type, often in red, of bold statements or questions about the nature of the enterprise. Thus, the one cited above about the fate of the museum in the wake of colonialism, or another: "This exhibition tells the story of unsettling ways of visualizing human beings in the name of science … And it's the account of the role that is ultimately always played by money and trade." The overall effect on the visitor of this ensemble of words, images, and objects is specific, and highly characteristic.

The way the displays were organized connoted nothing so much as a classic conceptual art installation. The use of vitrines, office furniture, wall texts of various different kinds, and the consequent destabilization and therefore questioning of what exactly is the object of the enterprise, all register that kind of pedigree. This, in and of itself, is quite interesting. Almost half a century ago now, installations such as *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects*, *Information*, *The Avant-Garde in Britain*, among many others, and not least the various

"Art & Language" *Index* installations of the early 1970s, did something similar. The use of filing cabinets, vitrines, chairs and tables for reading, wall texts, and so on, all set out to destabilize and to question what and where was the work of art, and – not less – what was the work of the spectator.

Conceptual art has by now, certainly since around 1989 and the first retrospective exhibitions, become a sort of classic mode. As the hinge on which the artworld turned from an evacuated official modernism to the alleged openness of a more diverse "contemporary," it has, somewhat ironically, assumed an aesthetic identity. Of course, times move on, and I am not implying that this is an exercise in nostalgia. The intellectual underpinnings of the Weltkulturen enterprise are very different from those of forty years ago. The "Art & Language" *Indexes* proceeded from – amongst other things – an idiosyncratic mix of modal logic, linguistic theory, and historical materialism. The Weltkulturen project draws on the fashions for actor-network-theory, post-humanism, and the dissolution of a categorical subject/object distinction that are currently so pervasive in thought about the contemporary, globalized (art) world. It would take me beyond the remit of the present chapter to become involved in debating those questions, significant though they are, insofar as they impact upon what kind of "change" is thinkable under the current dispensation; under current conceptions of what can count as radical intellectual or artistic work (see Casid and D'Souza 2014; Wood 2015).[10] What I want to do instead is to focus on the conception of "art" involved.

Early conceptual art, certainly that associated with the "Art & Language" tendency, involved a questioning of the nature of the artist, as well as the work of art. One of the aims of the "Art & Language" *Indexes* was to turn consumers into collaborators, co-producers, if you like – in a way that, at first glance, seems comparable to Deliss's vision of the new museum as a place of interaction and production, rather than cultural consumption: as a "paradigm of experimentation and meta-analysis" based on the strategic collision of existing forms of enquiry.

But this is precisely where there seems to have been a crucial shift. Early conceptual art involved a critique of the mythology surrounding the modernist artist. Yet the Weltkulturen experiment seems *to draw on* a corresponding myth of the contemporary artist. Time and again the model advanced is that of an artist – an invited artist-in-residence – undertaking something like a Situationist dérive through the museum stores and coming up with new or unexpected conjunctions of objects – out of which conjunctions are supposedly generated the sought-for "new meanings."

The modernist conception of the artist was of a psychically unified, visionary individual who could imaginatively penetrate beneath surface appearance and bring back his visions in the form of stylistically resolved aesthetic totalities – formal works of art. This is the territory of the modernist primitivism we encountered earlier. This model was subject to foundational critique long ago: blown out of the water by Duchamp, the readymade, conceptual art, and related radical practices; and countered by redescriptions of the artist as producer, the artist as part of a collective enterprise, the artist as manipulator of signs, and so on. Yet something strange has happened in the much-debated field of "contemporary art." In the wake of the artistic revolution of the late twentieth century, it has been demonstrated *ad nauseam*, as we have already recalled, that anything and everything, or indeed nothing, can count as "Art"; including things produced in contexts both spatially and temporally remote from the contemporary sites where such an expanded conception of art has itself been formulated. This conception of art has now become normative.

In this situation, a kind of separation of powers has occurred. The critical dimension that was present in conceptual art has now largely devolved to the figure of the curator. As

such, that would-be critical dimension is all too often vitiated through its implication in high-level cultural management. Its putative radicalism is, more often than not, thoroughly contained. On the other hand, as such an expanded conception of art has come to take on a much more prominent role in the dominant culture, indeed, as the sphere of culture itself has come to substitute for political activity or productive work in the dream-world of global capitalism, the mythology of the artist, instead of evaporating, has correspondingly re-inflated. The whole bizarre spectacle of the contemporary globalized art machine pivots around a reburnished figure of the artist.

The contemporary situation is thus marked by paradox: the conjunction of a post-Duchampian conception of the artwork, yoked to an essentially pre-Duchampian conception of the artist: the original-thinking visionary who can see things afresh and cut through accumulated convention. The upgrade, so to speak, is that this figure is fueled now, *not* by a sensitivity to "universal form," but by an alertness to cultural difference. It is this artistic identity, managed by the figure of the über-curator, which is the lynchpin in the production of "new meanings" out of the collision and dismembering of old knowledges.

Yet as far as I can see, this figure, and – to the extent that it depends on it – even an experiment like the Weltkulturen Museum, no less so than the cave man in his sports car with whom we began, represents yet another symptom of a disease of which it claims to be the cure. Far from being a fulcrum of critique, the contemporary mythos of the artist offers no principled ground for a resolution of the crisis of knowledge in the human sciences that has been prompted by postcolonialism and globalization. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same goes for the figure of the curator-manager. The Weltkulturen Museum experiment and other comparable initiatives, certainly hold out a challenge to the behemoth of the contemporary art museum. But that challenge has yet further to go. To that end, addressing the practical and intellectual legacies of conceptual art would be more useful than quoting its style. No less than the ethnographic museum, and the concept of the "primitive," the institution of "contemporary art" itself is a fit subject for "remediation."

Notes

1 An earlier version of this chapter was given at the European Avant-Garde and Modernism Studies conference at the University of Helsinki in August 2014. I should like to thank my Chairs Ann Stephen and Andrew McNamara for the opportunity to contribute. For the present version of the chapter, I have retained much of the relatively informal delivery of the original text as read.

2 See, *inter alia*, some of the essays included in Tromans 2008. For a recent Francophone revisiting of primitivism, see *Charles Ratton* catalogue (2013).

3 For further discussion, see Wood (2014), especially Chapters 3 and 4.

4 See Wood (2012a, especially sections 4 and 5, pp. 37–50).

5 For a critical discussion, see (Wood 2014, 196–201).

6 Anonymous critic, in unidentified London newspaper, cited in gallery wall label accompanying the exhibition of Tissot's *Hush!* at Manchester City Art Gallery, May 2015.

7 Roger Fry extols the *art* of Africa while denying it "a culture in our sense of the word" – see "Negro Sculpture" [1920]. In this modernist purview, culture involves the mind, whereas art proceeds from unconscious "impulse." A rejection of this view forms one of the most enduring legacies of Conceptual art; see second part of this chapter.

8 As Hal Foster has already noted, most of those who did were involved with the radical left around Surrealism, including Walter Benjamin, Andre Breton, Georges Bataille, and Carl Einstein. For further discussion of Einstein, including a complete translation of his

Negerplastik [1915], see Zeidler (2004). A brief discussion can be found in Wood (2014, 191–193 and 198–203).

9   For a brief discussion in relation to the Cook voyages see section 8, "Oceanic art and 'curiosity'" in Wood (2012c).

10   For a recent statement of "a new notion of global art history," involving skepticism about the possibility of translation, in which, perforce, "all participants speak a language made strange by the conversations into which they are thrown … an almost impossibly hybrid argot," see Casid and D'Souza eds. (2014). For my own, skeptical, review of these claims, see Wood (2015).

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Did Modernism Redefine Classicism? The Ancient Modernity of Classical Greek Art

Whitney Davis

There might seem to be little distance between the classicism in Greco-Roman art recommended to modern artists by Johann Joachim Winckelmann in 1755 – *eine edle Einfalt und eine stille Grösse*, "a noble simplicity and a quiet grandeur" (Winckelmann 1972, 61) – and Benjamin Rowland's description in 1963 in *The Classical Tradition in Western Art* of Pablo Picasso's *Boy Leading a Horse* of 1906, now in the Museum of Modern Art, New York (Daix and Boudaille 1967, 286, no. XIV.7; Cowling 2002, 141–44, pl. 116): its "classic mood," Rowland said, lies in its "serenity, austerity, and probity" (Rowland 1963, 327–328). (And compare William Rubin: in the painting, "Picasso's classical vision is imbued with a natural *areté* [excellence] unvitiated by the nostalgia of Puvis [de Chavanne]s' 'rose-water Hellenism'" [Rubin 1972, 34].) Of course, no Classical Greek painter would have produced such a picture as Picasso's. By the time the horses of the pediments of the Parthenon in Athens were carved – a clear point of reference for Picasso's horse in the painting of 1906 – the configuration that Picasso adapted for the boy, a sombre quasi-*kouros*, had been superseded. (Perhaps Picasso had in mind a particular *kouros* from Paros in the Louvre, dated to the middle of the sixth century BCE [Richter 1970, 107, no. 116, figs. 346–58]; the sculptures of the Parthenon were produced at the end of the fifth century BCE.) Moreover, Picasso's deep space and muted matte colors would have been wholly foreign to ancient Greek beholders, who would have been more attuned to the shallow planes and the bright painted coloration of sculpture and to crisp outline drawings fired in the slip of a vase.

Picasso partly attained his variety of "classicism" in routes of painterly modernism – even a modernism pitched partly in opposition to Winckelmannian *neo*classicisms in earlier modern art. Considered strictly as art history – that is, as a visual account of the means and effects of Classical Greek art – in some ways Picasso's classicism might be better or truer than earlier neoclassicisms. For example, the young man standing on the left in Picasso's *Pipes of Pan*, 1923 (Figure 4.1 and see Giraudy 1996) seems to be partly based, yet again, on *kouroi*, and Picasso's modeling of the figure seems to be highly sensitive to the appearance of ancient sculptures in natural daylight – effects often overlooked in earlier neoclassical replications and even in twentieth-century museum photography.[1] But that might only be to say that Picasso's painting is more modern (perhaps not despite but because of its "better" archaeology of Greek art) – more modern not just in date but also in

FIGURE 4.1   Pablo Picasso, *Pipes of Pan*, oil on canvas, 205 × 174 cm, 1923. Paris, Musée Picasso. *Source*: © 2016. Photo Scala, Florence/© Succession Picasso/DACS, London 2016.

cultural age, and therefore better able to see its *ancient* equivalent in Greece, namely, the modernity of Classical Greek art. In the early twentieth century what might be called the "ancient modernity" of Classical Greek art relative to its own art history, its own artistic past in Greece, could be most fully recognized partly in response to artistic modernisms of the day: between 1890 and 1930, modernist alternatives to classicism and neoclassicism provoked rethinkings of Classical Greek art *as* ancient modernism, albeit a modernism sometimes having very different features and criteria from the artistic modernisms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

   This is not only the story of intricate and varied modernist artistic responses to ancient classicism (see Cowling and Mundy 1990; Boehm, Mosch, and Schmidt 1996; Green, 1999; Green and Daehner 2011). It is *also* the story in the same period of the responses of classicists to modernism (for incisive analysis, see Prettejohn 2013; Siapkas and Sjögren 2014). To be specific, scholars and curators of ancient art in universities, museums, and excavations redefined Classical Greek art partly in the light of three developments in modern painting and sculpture after 1890: the breakdown of neoclassical technique; the revaluation of realist mimesis and formation of Cubist and other nonstandard pictorialisms; and the conceptualization of pure abstraction. (I do not mean to exclude other possibilities, or even to claim that these three developments were the most determinative; they

are simply the developments I have chosen to consider here.) Depending on how these transformations were absorbed, new models of ancient classicism emerged. In this short chapter, I will describe three of them (again without meaning to be exclusive, or to privilege them above other possibilities): new models of the formal organization of Classical painting and sculpture, of proportions in Classical art and architecture, and of Classical pictorial mimesis.

Before proceeding, it is worth recalling familiar background. Between the 1830s, when the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen restored the early Classical marble pediments from the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina (dated to *c.* 480–70 BCE) then exhibited in Munich (Figure 4.2), and 1909, when Antoine Bourdelle produced his *Herakles the Archer* (Figure 4.3 and Bourdelle 1983, cat. no. 14, pl. 9), cited by the theoretical archaeologist Waldemar Déonna in 1927 as having the "rude savor" of Aeginantan art (Déonna 1927, 350; see Lambraki-Plaka 1985), knowledge of the diversity of Greek art from the Mycenaeans to

FIGURE 4.2　Herakles the Archer, east pediment of the Temple of Aphaia, Aegina, *c.* 480–70 BC. Marble, h. 79 cm (as restored by Bertel Thorvaldsen). Glyptothek, Munich. *Source*: Photo by CM Dixon/Print Collector/Getty Images.

FIGURE 4.3   Antoine Bourdelle, *Herakles the Archer*, bronze, h. 248 cm, 1909. Paris, Musée d'Orsay. *Source*: Photo © RMN (Musée d'Orsay)/Adrien Didierjean.

the Romans had vastly expanded, especially after 1890. Notably for my purposes, pre-Classical (Archaic) Greek *kouroi* and *korai* discovered on the Acropolis in Athens and elsewhere became widely known (Déonna's *Les "Apollons archaïques"* of 1909 was the first corpus of *kouroi*), available for modernist engagements such as Picasso's *Boy Leading a Horse* and *Pipes of Pan*. Some scholarly treatments of "classicism" in modern art tend to assimilate Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic Greek styles, not to speak of Greco-Roman Hellenisms in art to be found far beyond the Mediterranean world. Moreover, the range of modern artists over historically diverse Hellenic sources and styles – from Archaic and before to Hadrianic and later – might partly be responsible for the frequent temper of modern classicisms *as* an imaging of layers of time, of durations traversed, memorialized, and recalled. But all this variety and range also forced the question of specifically *Classical*

art in ancient Greece specifically, that is, of Greek art in the period from the Persian Wars (early fifth century BCE) to the Macedonian conquest (later fourth century BCE) as distinct from its Helladic predecessors and its Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine descendants. (For recent treatments, see Stewart 2008, Neer 2010.) For historians like Déonna still wanted the category "Classical," whether applied literally to designate a period style in Attica and elsewhere or more generally to denote an immanent aesthetics of ancient Greek art. In fact, Classical Greek art in a sense still accepted today was partly invented between about 1900 and 1930. How was this so?

The first general factor that can be identified in this regard was the breakdown of modern neoclassical technique in sculpture – or at any rate a growing awareness that neoclassical technique, despite its origins in imitations and restorations of Greco-Roman art, had little to do with *Classical Greek* technique. In 1927, Carl Blümel's *Griechische Bildhauerarbeit* (translated as *Greek Sculptors at Work*) laid out fundamental technical comparisons (identifying both parallels and contrasts) between Archaic and Classical Greek sculpture, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, modern sculptural traditions – that is, sculpture in the Italian Renaissance, in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century neoclassicisms, and in "modern" art. Modernist sculpture – especially "direct carving" in marble – can be handled in a "Classical" way technically, but it need not be, and indeed was not always so handled. The very fact of this continuum of possibility – and the visibility of non-Classical sculptural techniques in modern and modernist sculptures was indebted to ancient Greek prototypes – sometimes made it easier to identify the special qualities of Classical Greek sculpture.

In this regard, Blümel insisted that the great aesthetic achievement of Archaic and Classical Greek sculpture in marble was an even all-around removal of hundreds of thin planes of equivalent depth, like "sheets of water" as he put it – a slow reduction that kept the emerging figure open to organic modification until the very last thin sheet had been punched away. In a sense, "every Greek sculpture of the early period is, in its way, absolutely complete and whole at each stage of the work," and it is "small wonder that so much vigor emanates from a Greek sculpture, since at every layer it was re-thought by its creator, who thus charged it with added strength" (Blümel 1969, 10, 13; by "early period" in this context Blümel meant specifically Archaic and Classical as distinct from Hellenistic and Roman). Déonna and other classical archaeologists and art historians harped on the lifelessness of neoclassical sculpture, especially its supposed dependence on bored studio models. For them, it became newly salient that Classical Greek sculptors supposedly worked from living human bodies in action, above all in observing athletes at their training grounds. (This retrieved one of Winckelmann's primary interests in the historical causes of the ideal beauty of Classical Greek sculpture as he knew it, though often without the implicit tie-in with pederastic homoeroticism, whether ancient Greek or eighteenth-century European (see Davis 1996; 2010, 23–50).)

Moreover, neoclassical European sculptors often made small-scale clays that were transferred to the marble by professional stone carving technicians (not the same artisan as the "sculptor" himself) using *post*-Classical devices such as a pointing system, further distancing the work from "life." To be sure, ancient Greek sculptors also used wax and clay models and stucco or plaster casts to develop the figure. Still, the transfer of the image from these media to the marble was not done mechanically but in such a way as to ensure that "almost every successive stroke of the point [on the marble] is in itself creative and demands the artist's full attention" (Blümel 1969, 43). With the refinement of measuring and pointing techniques in Roman times, this "old, laborious, but artistically valuable process was completely abandoned" (Blümel 1969, 54). From Blümel's point of view, this post-Classical

modernization in the classical tradition in Greco-Roman art – a modernization often as "cold and academic" as neoclassical sculpture (Blümel 1969, 56) – could only be regarded as an aesthetic decline.

Archaic and Classical Greek work with the simple mallet and point striking at right angles to the surface of the stone leaves the marble deeply pitted until the last planes are removed and, when pumiced, creates a velvety matte undersurface ready to give body to paint, though sometimes the point work "went too deep and was not completely obliterated in the process of smoothing" (Blümel 1969, 14–18). Not only was the resulting surface quite unlike the soapy-smooth and shiny finish of neoclassical sculptures (notably Antonio Canova's [see Bindman 2014]), usually *un*painted, which was created in part specifically to *avoid* the "stunning" of the surface that Greek techniques inherently involved and indeed exploited artistically. It was also unlike highly-polished modernist sculptures in marble (one might think, for example, of Constantin Brâncuși's *Torso of a Young Girl* of 1923 in the Philadelphia Museum of Art [Bach, Rowell, and Temkin 1995, 200]). Modern beholders "uninitiated" in the actual techniques of Greek sculptors, as Blümel put it, often tended to take this distinctively modern "gleaming, translucent appearance … to be characteristic of the stone" itself (Blümel 1969, 19). But his account of Greek sculptors at work was intended to disabuse them of just such a neoclassical fallacy.

In turn, some modern sculptors – sculptors hoping to work as "Classically" as possible – might have responded to this lesson. Not only in stone but also in copper, bronze, and terracotta one can find sensitive replications of (or at any rate suggestive parallels for) the technical *pre*condition of Classical Greek sculpture – the hammered work with pitted surface before pumicing and painting – made and presented as *final* works with "modern" expressive surfaces, regardless of ideological valence. Examples might include Julio González's repoussé metal masks, which have "the air of battered antique fragment[s]" (Cowling and Mundy 1990, 113, no. 58; see Llorens Serra 2007, I, 485–507, nos. 534–563). (The sculptor explicitly recommended ancient armor for modern replication.) The Nazi artwriter Bruno Werner cited Blümel's work on Classical sculptural technique as a good guide for, and to, German sculptors of the Third Reich (see Werner 1940, 11, 60, 122). In both cases Classical Greek techniques and modern artists – "moderns" of disparate persuasions – joined hands to displace discredited *neo*classical finish.

Perhaps the vitality of Classical Greek sculpture, as Blümel thought, was due to the relatively few mediations – largely non-mechanical in nature – between living prototypes and completed artworks. But obviously Classical Greek art cannot be described as *realism* in a modern sense. In fact, modern realisms in pictorial representation from the later Middle Ages to the nineteenth century partly helped define the peculiarity of Classical Greek art. Above all, first linear-perspective (or "Albertian") projection and then photography established horizons of pictorial mimesis in relation to which Classical art might be measured, however inappositely and unfairly. Conversely, as modernist art moved away from certain modern realisms – especially nineteenth-century "academic" procedures and Victorian "subject pictures" – some of its critics wanted to find antidotes to modernist *ir*realisms in classicism.

It is not surprising, then, that influential early twentieth-century models of Classical Greek art reopened the question of its "naturalism" – what the art historian Emanuel Löwy in 1900 called *Die Naturwiedergabe in die älteren griechischen Kunst* (revised and translated as *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art* [Loewy 1907]). (*Naturwiedergabe* can be translated as both "*rendering of* nature" and "*return to* or *restitution of* nature." And by *älteren* or "oldest" Löwy not only meant chronologically earlier; he also meant psychologically most basic.)

By the mid-1890s, the painter Paul Cézanne and the sculptor-theorist Adolf von Hildebrand (see Hildebrand 1994) had identified painting and sculpture as operations in interlocked planes with special reference to planes at right angles to the direct line of sight. In linear-perspective constructions, ordinarily many planes of depicted objects would be orthogonal to the line of sight and controlled by the optical rules of recession and diminution. But Cézanne and Hildebrand would allow – even encourage – the painter and the sculptor to resettle such planes closer to (even *as*) planes that are *perpendicular* to the line of sight, or, if not perpendicular, having an angular deviation from the line of sight that does not always have to conform to a "correct" perspectival orthogonality. Whether or not specifically indebted to Cézanne and Hildebrand, early twentieth-century painters and sculptors pursued the ramifications, more or less exhausting all the options not only in optical terms but also in logical ones. Depending on the particular expressive and representational concerns of the artist, any and all planes that render the facets of an object (that is, visualize its aspects in a virtual pictorial space) can be turned as parallel, as orthogonal, and as perpendicular relative to one another, to the direct line of sight, to the plane of the painting, and to any line or plane laid through it, even if the configurative result on the plane seems to be far removed from natural visual perspective – optical "nature." Not surprisingly, art-historical art theory identified these operations as unalterable parameters of all possible pictorial construction in two dimensions: it must always be more or less "frontal" and/or more or less "rotated" relative to the intersection of the line of sight and the plane of the format. In turn, one could describe any historical practice of pictorial representation – from ancient Egyptian to modern European – in relation to this general framework.

In the study of ancient arts, reference to and comparison with contemporary art – from Cézanne to Cubism and beyond – was not always overt. In fact, in the study of ancient Greek art, the most explicit comparison – a world-historical contrast – was usually made with ancient Egyptian modes of rendering space and especially of depicting the human body in the two and three dimensions of graphic and sculptural form (see Davis 2017). According to Aloïs Riegl, for example, Egyptian sculpture was "haptic" (as-if-rendered by touch, or tactile) whereas Greco-Roman classicizing sculpture was "optic," and in its later Roman variant *highly* optic or "impressionist" (Riegl 1901, 1966, 2004). According to Julius Lange (1899), Egyptian sculptures and paintings were "frontal" as distinct from foreshortened; to use Heinrich Schäfer's neologism (1974), they were configured in *geradansichtig-vorstellig* aspect or according to the "rule of directional straightness," that is, rendering each side of an object on the "axis of direct observation" (as David Summers (2003, 442–445) has put it). And according to Gerhard Krahmer (1931), Egyptian depiction was "paratactic" (constructed by laying out the different "parts" and "sides" of objects side-by-side on the plane) whereas Classical Greek art strived to be "hypotactic" – to coordinate the "parts" and "sides" in a unified aspect, even if it conformed overall to the planarity of the format. It goes without saying, however, that these special art-theoretical terminologies were not exclusively derived from dedicated archaeologies of the ancient arts which they claimed to describe. They also reflected critical descriptions of – and debates about – modern and contemporary arts, though opinion often differed about the virtues of, say, frontality and paratacticism in modern painting and sculpture.

In this overall context of the description and analysis of ancient and modern arts not limited specifically to the Greco-Roman classical tradition, modernist artistic experimentations sometimes enabled one to see more sharply what Classical Greek art did *not* do. I have already mentioned Bourdelle's *Herakles* (Figure 4.3), approved by Déonna: though it is free-standing – not a relief – its "Aeginantan" (and Hildebrandian) construction in

a primary plane is obvious. But Bourdelle could sometimes differ from Classical Greek sculptural procedure in wholly folding a major figurative feature, such as the head of his *Dying Centaur* of 1911–1914 (see Bourdelle 1983, cat. no. 36, pl. 38), into *another* plane constructed at right angles to the main plane, as it were a kind of multiplication of "frontality" – a procedure extended in the next generation in a more abstract vocabulary by Jacques Lipschitz, Henri Laurens, and others. (Laurens's remarkable painted stone *Head* of 1917 (Laurens 1992, 119, cat. no. 23) is a virtual paradigm of a four-sided sculpture in which each "frontal" plane is so different from the others as to seem to belong to an entirely different head.) Of course, this procedure was utterly *non*-Hildebrandian: Hildebrandian sculpture-as-"relief" maintains as much description of the figure as possible in one series of *parallel* planes. But for this very reason such modernism could reinforce art historians' sense that Hildebrand was right about Classical Greek art, whatever his prescriptions for modern sculpture (and whether or not modern sculptors like Bourdelle, despite his ancient Greek themes, had any interest in heeding them). In *The Esthetic Basis of Greek Art*, for example, in 1921 the art historian Rhys Carpenter described Classical Greek sculpture as Hildebrandian in its "intelligible pose" (a primary silhouette completed in every principal plane), in its "planes of composition" (patterns arranged on areas that are seen together at an equal depth), and in its "modeling lines" (in which "a profile of the curved mass [of the figure is] spread out on that curved mass's own surface" (Carpenter 1959, 58, 63, 66)).

According to Schäfer (1974), all "pre-Greek" depiction depends on – unconsciously deploys – the "rule of directional straightness." Indeed, the rule is supposedly so basic as to be *ineliminable* from pictorial representation, including the most contemporary – art within which the rule not only seems to have persisted as a psychological heritage of human pictorialism (if sometimes subject to active correction by the pictorialist) but also has been revived as a self-conscious aesthetic interest on the part of modern artists (see Schäfer 1928). Here Schäfer followed Löwy (1907), though he modified some of Löwy's technical proposals. But for Löwy himself the modernity of Classical Greek art could not lie in its "pre-Greek" aspect – an aspect that a twentieth-century artist might adopt as a mode of modernism.

In 1900 Löwy proposed that all pictorial representation anywhere is founded in abstractions in the psychological sense, that is, in schemas – what he called "memory-pictures" – by which the human perceptual system organizes visual and other sensory experience.[2] His primary examples included a typical drawing by a child showing a human face in profile with the eyes depicted frontally (Löwy used studies of children's drawings by Carlo Ricci and James Sully) and the use of overlapped profiles to indicate the relative position of things in virtual space – pictorial constructions that could be found in the painted pottery of the Geometric period in ancient Greece that he took to be the earliest manifestation of "Greek" art (*die ältesten griechischen Kunst*).[3] These constructions persisted in pictorial art precisely because of their schematic basis. Adapting Hildebrand's formal analysis and providing it with a psychological frame, in *Die Naturwiedergabe* Löwy argued that in ancient Greek depiction the layering of the main planes of the pictorial construction perpendicular to the direct line of sight (planes which establish the principal outline-contours of depicted objects and their spatial relations to one another) was *always* the manifestation of an "abstraction" from appearance and the interpellation of "memory-picturing." It preserved a visible place in the picture for the original mental image – a place that an Albertian perspective projection would likely close up. Löwy's examples were intended to span the entire historical development of pictorial art in ancient Greece: from an early

Archaic relief (an object that lies "early" in the chronological sequence and in which the "severe arrangement of planes in so many distinct layers … shows, in its very exaggeration of reality, that its source is mental abstraction, not direct imitation of nature" ([Loewy 1907, 40, fig. 13]) to the so-called Farnese Bull of Hellenistic vintage – quite "late" in the same sequence in which "we find for the principal group [that] there is only one and that again an exhaustive point of view" organized on a single privileged plane (Loewy 1907, 95, fig. 4.3).[4] In other words, Greek pictorial art never wholly escaped the domain of schematization, of "conceptual imaging"; to use Hildebrand's terminology, "much that was 'relief-like' was kept in Greek art, [and] it would be no useless undertaking," as Löwy tried to show in his book, "to determine how far the principles we have enumerated at the outset remained still in force at the close of antiquity, and thereby to sum up the development of antique art from the point of view of form." Indeed, he proclaimed, "no art has yet entirely delivered itself from those principles" (Loewy 1907, 105–106). Where and how, then, did "naturalism" enter in?

According to Löwy, in Classical Greek art "nature" was partly "returned" to, or "restituted" in, schematic productions by rotating parts of the rendering away from the "frontal" aspect (or "unifaciality") typically presented in Geometric and Archaic renderings of bodies and objects – in other words, by introducing lesser or greater *contrapposto* into the sculpted figure. In identifying augmentations of rotation in early Classical, later Classical, and Hellenistic Greek sculpture, Löwy grounded the periodization of ancient Greek art – a periodization often still adopted in handbooks of Greek art – in a particular theory of images, both "mental" and pictorial. It survives in the ubiquitous notion that the modernization accomplished in Classical Greek art in relation to artistic tradition in Greece was a shift from the "conceptual" end (mnemic-schematic) to the "perceptual" (optical-attentive) end of the continuum. (A "classic" account can be found in a widely-read interpretation of Classical Greek art by J. J. Pollitt (1972); for criticism and a different narrative, see Neer 2010.) Still, the shift *to* "conceptual" can occur too.

A relatively schematic pictorial art in Löwy's sense cannot be "modern"; more likely it is historically older (imagistically earlier) – even *the* oldest (earliest). But the 1920s and 1930s saw the rise of modernist painting in which foundational schemas regulating pictorial representation might seem to have been externalized – virtualized on the plane of the format – as the very picture exhibited to beholders. In this context, the Classical art historian Gisela M. A. Richter (see Richter 1970) highlighted the *post*-schematic progress of verisimilitude in late Archaic and Classical Greek sculpture – that is, the transformation and transcendence of Geometric and early Archaic schematism, however ineliminable in Löwy's terms. (I will return to Richter below.) Splitting the difference, in an influential account of the "Greek revolution" in pictorial representation Löwy's student Ernst Gombrich (1960) defined Classical Greek painting and sculpture as the domain of *both* making schemas on the plane of projection of the picture exhibited to the beholder *and* "matching" them to the appearance of things in natural vision – a "correction" (that is, a "restitution") introduced into the pictorial process. Indeed, the main dispute about Classical Greek art in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century concerned its exact balance and reconciliation of schema and appearance. By the 1920s and 1930s, this philosophical, psychological, and art-historical question could best be defined – in a sense could only be *newly* defined – as a polarity and/or a continuum of absolute abstraction from the natural real object on the one side (whether "conceptual image" or "abstract painting") and "photographic" fidelity to it on the other (whether ancient optical naturalism or modern mechanical indexicality).

This brings us to my third and final factor in the redefinition of Classical Greek art – namely, the consolidation of pure abstraction in and as modern art during and after the First World War, for example Paul Klee's *Static-Dynamic Gradation* of 1923, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. In the 1920s, the very possibility of pure abstraction in painting and sculpture, the *new* possibility, helped shape descriptive classifications and analytic interpretations of Classical Greek art – classifications and interpretations I have already reviewed in terms of technique and mimesis – in relation to encounters with modern art and modernism.

Some scholarly admirers of Classical Greek art disliked modernist abstraction; they contrasted Greco-Roman classicism with it as its very aesthetic opposite. For example, Carpenter's *Esthetic Basis of Greek Art* vehemently objected to the "modernist suggestion that pure forms might be used abstractly without any representational content" – what he called "dynamic art," "in which we are asked to apprehend merely the emotion of surfaces, the clash of forces, the strife of line, the delights of linear motion, [and] the appeal of contrasted and mingled colors" (Carpenter 1959, 32). (From the text it is clear that Carpenter (1959, 34) had in mind the work of a particular modernist abstractionist of his acquaintance. But I have been unable to identify this artist.) Still, and with only superficial paradox, Carpenter wanted to validate abstraction in *Classical Greek art*, especially in its early phases. Herakles the archer on the east pediment of the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina is a "dynamic form" (see Figure 4.2). But it is not, Carpenter said, merely a "graph of the equilibrium of forces," such as we might find in Klee's *Static-Dynamic Gradation*. Rather, an "abstract play of lines and angles and surface-shapes appears incarnate in recognizable objects derived from the real world of experience"; primary abstract forces – the "strain of the bow-string drawn back and the impetus of the released arrow on its flight," both set "nearly at right angles to the body of the archer" – regulated everything the sculptor carved. As Carpenter put it, "every line that is not suggestive of these forces is rigorously altered or suppressed"; "even the ornamentation of the jerkin [of Herakles] is made of squares and right angles above and diagonal folds below, as though to force the eye into picking up that notion" (Carpenter 1959, 30).

Overall, Carpenter argued, Classical Greek art arose in "the appreciation of abstract formal values *in the field of vision* and the fusion of these with the normal process of recognition of the objects" (*my emphasis*) – neither "pure form" nor "representational fidelity" but rather their balance (Carpenter 1959, 33). One might be tempted to say their "median," as if the values of formal abstractions and depicted appearances, "schemata" and "representata," were perfectly equalized – that is, contributing in equal measure to the effect of the whole. But Carpenter ultimately *privileged* abstraction because he considered that Classical Greek art had developed, as Löwy had argued, out of the schematism found in Geometric and Archaic art – abstraction in the modern psychological sense. Carpenter's classicism, then, was the aesthetics (in Classical Greek art) of adjusting abstraction to nature (Löwy's *Naturwiedergabe*) given a prior and enduring aesthetic "bias toward geometric formalism" in ancient Greek visual aesthetics and its cultural history. For him, this adjustment was precisely the *modernism* of Classical Greek art in its historical context (achieved in a development *from* "archaic" *to* "classical" styles), though it was the complete inverse of modern*ist* abstraction, in which a pre-existing bias toward "representational fidelity" (or "photography") is adjusted by the abstract artist to pattern and geometry on the plane.

Carpenter began with a critique of modernist abstraction only to end, then, with Classical naturalism in mimesis – not any kind of modern realism – as the modernism of ancient abstraction. The artist and art teacher Jay Hambidge began with a critique of modern *realism* in pictorial art, taking off – as so often – from the possibilities and limitations of

Albertian perspective and of modern photography. As he wrote in *Dynamic Symmetry in Composition* in 1923,

> Perspective does introduce proportion and to a certain extent makes a picture hang together, but the more it is used the more it increases the depth in a composition and thus introduces a quality of the photograph. The power and expressiveness of an artist like Giotto lie in the fact that the perspective element is almost absent. The Greek vase painters were also free from the evil effects of too much perspective. What such pictures lack in realism they more than make up in design force. It is just this that marks the parting of the ways for the modern artist. Photography in picture making and its inseparable companion the subject picture have had their day. Design in form and color is about to come back to its heritage.
>
> (Hambidge 1923, 31)

Hambidge claimed to have uncovered this heritage, what he called "dynamic symmetry," in studying the proportions of Attic vases of the later Archaic and the Classical periods (see Hambidge 1920). (Dynamic symmetry constructs compositions and figures on the plane in terms of so-called root rectangles and their diagonals – reductions to rectangles, supposedly, of the equiangular spirals of botanical phyllotaxis (Church 1920).) But in New York in the early 1920s, Hambidge also worked with contemporary painters, notably the realist George Bellows, who constructed compositions in Hambidgean terms (see Hambidge 1923, 22–39). And designers at Tiffany and elsewhere – artists specifically identified with "modern design" – applied his procedures (see McWhinnie 1989).

There is no space here to describe Hambidge's complicated system. Among historians of Classical Greek art, in the 1920s and 1930s it attracted some scholarly adherents. The curator of Greek and Roman art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, L. D. Caskey, published a painstaking technical investigation of Hambidge's proposals about the "geometry of Greek vases" (Caskey 1922) and wrote a long Preface to Hambidge's book on dynamic symmetry in Classical Greek temple architecture (Hambidge 1924). And the art theorist Denman Ross at Harvard gave Hambidge respectful attention (Hambidge 1923, 49–59; see Frank 2011). But dynamic symmetry was controversial. This was partly because of its affiliation with the supposed reformation of "modern design," which Hambidge had taken to be "incoherent" prior to his intervention (Hambidge 1920, 7). But mostly it was because critics took *its* seemingly extreme abstraction to be alien to the origins and qualities of the abstraction of Classical Greek art. As Carpenter complained, Hambidge required that the geometries of Greek art were constructed on notional planes in "empty space," such as the virtual rectangle that encloses the curves of the real vase, not as operations on the surface organized in planes, as in the *Herakles* at Aegina as Carpenter saw it (Figure 4.2) (Carpenter 1959, 30–31; see also Dinsmoor 1923). And indeed Hambidge did treat sculptural and architectural proportions in three dimensions, ancient or modern, as two-dimensional constructions of form and figure on a rectangular plane.

For their own technical and aesthetic reasons, some modernist painters were more attracted than historians of Classical Greek art to Hambidgean and similar constructions. In *Du cubisme au classicisme* in 1921, the painter Gino Severini endorsed them, at least at a theoretical level. Indeed, it is possible that he constructed some pictures in their terms as extended to isometric rotations and orthogonal projections, using methods (ultimately descended from the investigations of Albrecht Dürer) that he studied with the mathematician Raoul Bricard (Severini 1921; see Cowling and Mundy 1990, 237). In their most explicit and technical form, Severini's published proposals attracted little support

from other artists, art theorists, and art teachers. But as Danièle Giraudy (1996, 270) has shown, Picasso used planes divided in a "golden section" to lay out *The Pipes of Pan* (see Figure 4.1). (The golden section is one of the ultimate constructions of Hambidgean dynamic symmetry, though not unique to it.) Despite its serenity, austerity, and probity, Giraudy calls it a "dynamic" composition, and so it is in Hambidge's terms.[5] Like Bellows's more "realist" constructions, Picasso's painting is deeply Classical on Hambidge's most basic definition of the formality of Classical Greek construction in the design of artifacts, buildings and pictures: its "curves are kept under control by tangent lines they touch" (Hambidge 1920, xx).

Between the modernist abstract works that Carpenter called a "meaningless jumble" (Carpenter 1959, 38) and the "realistic representation" that Hambidge took to be "little better than a photograph" (Hambidge 1923, 38) lay the formal order – even the ideality – of Classical Greek art as they both saw it, though in wholly opposite ways. For Hambidge, classicism formalized the curves and spirals of natural growth when reduced by the artist to straight lines on the plane. For Carpenter, Classical art expressed such formalization, such "geometric bias," as the artist allowed it to be mitigated *by* nature – by natural appearance.

In professional studies of Classical Greek art, the latter view (expressed in the terms of a comparative and theoretical formalism by Carpenter) won out partly because of the work of Richter. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Richter and her collaborator Irma Richter, her sister, who had extensive familiarity with geometry in art of many periods, assisted Hambidge's researches and flirted with his system in the 1920s, though Irma Richter developed what she took to be a "more universal and simpler application which makes it perhaps more adapted for the use of artists" (Richter 1932, 47, 85; see also I. Richter 1934). They recognized its interest and were intrigued by the possibility that it had actually been applied by ancient Greek designers and could be replicated by modern and modernist artists.

In the 1930s, however, and beginning with an intensive study of the *kouros* acquired by the Metropolitan Museum in 1932 (Richter 1934; see Richter 1970, no. 1), Richter came to narrate the emergence of Classical Greek art – an "epoch-making development" (Richter 1934, 50) – as a realist critique of "the marked history of abstraction" that was a "direct inheritance of the Greek geometric age" (Richter 1970, 3) and still visible in the sculpture of the Archaic period. Indeed, she went further than Carpenter in finding a standard, an animating aesthetic, of immanent fidelity to natural optical appearances in Classical Greek art. If his starting-point was the geometrically-biased formality of early Classical sculpture, hers was modern "anatomical knowledge" and in particular modern anatomical illustration – that is, human anatomy as grasped by modern artists. Published in 1942, her magisterial corpus arranged its chronology of *kouroi* from earlier to later as less or more realistic anatomically (and with correlated transformations in surface and posture) relative to the reference-point of Jean-Antoine Houdon's bronze *Écorché* of 1790, based on a plaster of 1767 in turn based on dissection of cadavers (see Richter 1970, fig. 2; see 21–25 for her "table of anatomical analyses" of *kouroi*). Ancient Greek sculptors never used dissections (for a fine account of their relation to physiological and medical theory, see Métraux 1995). But Classical Greek art for the Richters was a kind of dissection as "observation from without," as Irma Richter put it (in Richter 1970, 11). Unlike Carpenter and Hambidge, Richter had no obvious axes to grind regarding modern(ist) art. If anything, for her high Classical Greek sculpture potentially had the exactness of a nineteenth-century *académie* (a pictorial representation partly based in turn on Greco-Roman sculpture). But she saw Classical art as modernizing, not least because its real endpoint (and retrodictive standard) could be found in *modern classicizing realism* – such as the

académie – given the antecedent (and Carpenter-style) Greek "bias toward geometric formalism."

The obvious anachronism of Richter's cultural history – her developmental history of style in Archaic and Classical Greek art was arrayed using the standard of a modern realism in pictorial representation – led her into a strange dialogue with the very possibility of modernism in ancient art and in particular with its temporality. Her chronological-seriational theory required that Archaic and Classical art unfolded everywhere in the Greek world at an even pace in a uniform way, despite regional differences in materials, techniques, and style. As she put it, "We can present no case in which [an ancient Greek] artist anticipates or harks back more than a short space of time. In no instance do we find really late features in a really early scheme (in spite of the fact that a completely naturalistic model was continuously present in every human being). The great majority of sculptures show a uniform progression" (Richter 1970, 5). Such unitemporality is patently not to be found in *modern* art. As Wilhelm Pinder argued in 1928 in *Das Problem der Generation in der Kunstgeschichtes Europas*, in the year 1877 (for example) a more classicizing painter such as Hans von Marées could be contemporary with a more modernist painter such as Cézanne. (As his particular examples, Pinder compared Marées' *Golden Age I* (Neue Pinakothek, Munich) with Cézanne's *Five Bathers* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris), both of 1877.) Citing Pinder, Richter did note minor cases of old-fashioned artists in ancient Greece – artists "refusing to adopt new ways" (Richter 1970, 4). But she downplayed them; for her, modern*ization* in Greek art occurred organically without any modern*ism*. This history was neither a defense of the timelessness of classicism – as it were outside or beyond any modernism – nor a resistance to the fractured paces of modernization and modernism in the pictorial arts of recent centuries in Europe. Rather, it was a model of Greek Classical art as a modern art achieved in the whole movement of spirit of a people organically occupying their proper cultural age at all times – a form of life that we moderns, and above all modernists, patently do not occupy. Though founded in anachronism, Richter's progressivist history – her narrative myth – suited the outlook of many Classical and other art historians who had no special truck with modern art and modernism. After all, in Classical Greek art we have *ancient* modernity in art.

Did modernism redefine classicism? From 1890 to 1930 and beyond, Classical Greek art came to look different. In one usual story, modernist art definitively pushed it finally into the past of the many historical arts no longer viable for a genuinely modern engagement. But in some respects, as I have tried to suggest, the very reverse is true – true, at any rate, in certain moments and cases. In the early twentieth century, Classical Greek art sometimes came to look *fresh* again – fresh not simply in pious repetition of worn-out Victorian tropes of Greek culture as the springtime of human spirit (tropes indulged by art critics as subtle as Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds in the 1870s and 1880s) but in counterpoint with labile modernist arts that engaged it critically, though often departing from it dialectically. This was a boon for classical archaeology and art history. Without modernism, it is possible that "Classical Greek art" could indeed have been swept out of the canon of historical modernities achieved in the *longue durée* of Western culture – an art hoist on its own petard of putative universal ideality and inimitable historical originality, as it were always outside the particular historical situation of being "a modern art." As it was, it got the benefit of a "post-modernist" reconstruction (that is, a set of new interpretations undertaken in the wake of modern art and specifically of artistic modernism), even if these *apologia* were confined on the surface largely to formal considerations – Carpenter's or Hambidge's or Richter's. This was not exactly a new lease on life. But the old ghost was reanimated for hauntings anew.

Notes

1 Compare Gerard Mackworth-Young's photograph of the head of a *kouros* (Acropolis 698) photographed in natural daylight (Payne and Mackworth-Young 1950, pl. 112, no. 2) and another (Acropolis 689, the so-called Blond Boy) photographed in artificial light (Payne and Mackworth-Young 1950, pl. 115, no. 1). Picasso's rendering of the *kouros*-like heads in his painting clearly replicates the situation of natural illumination also replicated in Mackworth-Young's superb "natural" photographs, though Picasso did not know them.

2 A useful account can be found in Rose (2001, 39–74); see also Bergstein (2010, 26–29, 135–44).

3 Of course, many other historians and theorists could be cited for their treatments of "schematism" – the "conceptual image" – in ancient and non-Western arts. But Löwy is the most relevant here because he was primarily a scholar of ancient Greek art. For a full account of the "schema" as understood in English art theory and criticism in the early twentieth century, see Rose (2014).

4 Of course, the line of sight could "move around," and need not be trained axially on the sculptural plane or planes replicated from the faces of the original "block" (if "block" there actually had been: see Neer 2010, 33–38). (In the "Farnese Bull" as staged in Löwy's photograph (Loewy 1907, fig. 4.3), it would seem that the preferred aspect of the group – the one "exhaustive" plane in which it is visible – is not at all parallel with one original face of the block. Instead it cuts diagonally through the two opposite angles of the block located to the beholder's left and right and possibly "lies back" on a diagonal line between the other two opposite angles of the block, the forward one of which is the closest point to the beholder on his or her "axis of direct observation.") Indeed, in Löwy's account it was the chief aesthetic achievement of later Classical Greek and Hellenistic sculpture to break out of a direct axial relation (both in visualizing the sculpture and in carving it) to the "sidedness" of the sculptural block, which had reached its visual culmination (as it were its end game) in the "four-sidedness" of Polykleitan and similar sculptural styles in the later fifth century BCE.

5 To be specific, in the painting Giraudy identifies a fourfold construction in "golden section" – specifically in the proportional relations of fields as a + b : a :: a : b on the vertical line of the bilateral bisection of the pseudo-square virtualized on the transversal drawn immediately above the four feet of the two youths. While all such reconstructions have an air of over-elaborateness and implausibility, I find the proposal to be convincing – a tight mapping of what has visibly been laid out on the plane by Picasso, notably in the placement of the horizon line between the two fields of sea and sky in the background.

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Robert Goldwater and the Search for the Primitive: The Asmat Project at the Museum of Primitive Art

Nick Stanley

The Creation of Twentieth-Century Primitivism

"Primitivism" in Twentieth Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and Modern (Rubin 1984) one of the most celebrated exhibitions of primitivism and modern art, was held at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1984. Its impact was exceptional and although it raised much controversy it nevertheless established a new argument that Western modern art could usefully be compared with, and derive inspiration from work from other parts of the world, especially items that normally reside in ethnographic museums. So, for example, Matisse's cut-outs of the 1940s could be compared to Melanesian decorative forms.[1] Elsewhere, the exhibition suggested juxtapositions in figuration; so a painted wooden human shape from the Papuan Gulf could be placed beside a similar figure by Jean Dubuffet, his *The Reveler* of 1964. Similar comparisons were proposed involving examples from different "ethnographic sites," for example comparing Abelam and Nigerian human forms (Rubin 1984, 638–639, 42–43). The purpose of Rubin's exhibition was to confirm what "the vanguard modernists told us decades ago that the tribal peoples produced an art that often distilled great complexity into seemingly simple solutions" (Rubin 1984, 71) and it was a rich source for the development of modern art.

Perhaps the most audacious of Rubin's claims was of the universal superiority of the modernist project. He wrote,

> We experience the entire history of the past in various degrees fragmentarily and largely shorn of context. Few artists who appreciated Egyptian or Japanese art knew any more about its purpose or its cultural context than they did about that of Africa or Oceania. This ethnocentrism is a function nevertheless of one of modernism's greatest virtues: its unique approbation of the arts of other cultures. Its consequent appropriation of these arts has invested modernism with a particular vitality that is a product of cultural cross-fertilization.
>
> (1984, 71)

This repudiation of cultural context in the study of pure form was a major source of contention with a range of critics. These critics seized upon two terms that Rubin had taken from his mentor, Robert Goldwater, "primitive" and "affinity" and they subjected his usage of these terms to severe criticism. Thomas McEvilley pointed out that, "the fact that a primitive 'looks like' the modern is interpreted as validating the modern by showing that its values are universal" (McEvilley 1988, loc. 3142). He went on to note that "the very concept of 'affinity' rather than mere similarity, attributes to the tribal craftsman feelings like those of the modernist artists, for what else does the distinction between affinities and accidental similarities mean?" (McEvilley 1988, loc. 3234). Clifford is yet more dismissive, describing the affinity of the tribal and the modern as an optical illusion. He concludes that for Rubin "an ignorance of cultural context seems almost a precondition for artistic appreciation" (Clifford 1988, 192).

In his catalogue Rubin drew on the authority of Robert Goldwater as his mentor, declaring, "no one, I think, admires my late friend and colleague, Robert Goldwater, more than I. The preface to *Primitivism in Twentieth-Century Art* is devoted to expressing this admiration." But he immediately went on to repudiate one of Goldwater's basic premises, and he did this with insouciance, announcing that "our multiplication of juxtapositions illustrating proposed (and often provable) relationships between modern works and tribal objects … overturns one of Goldwater's basic principles, an insistence on the 'extreme scarcity of the direct influence of art forms on twentieth-century art'" (Rubin 1988, loc. 3454). Rubin did Goldwater a grave disservice, for whilst he repudiated the basis of Goldwater's formalism he nevertheless appropriated the two concepts that are associated clearly and unambiguously with his late friend and colleague's *Primitivism and modern art*, and in doing so he implicated Goldwater with his own project avant la lettre. The fact that Rubin employed Goldwater's vocabulary and concepts inevitably ensured that criticisms directed at Rubin would ricochet and hurt Goldwater who was innocent of any suggestion of eliding modern and primitive art. It is important to recognize the damage done by Rubin to Goldwater's intellectual reputation because the term "primitive" now by default is associated with Rubin's exuberant but defective set of visual propositions. We need to consider Robert Goldwater afresh.

Goldwater was quite explicit in his stance on the relationship between primitivism and modern art. In the preface to the revised and enlarged 1986 edition of *Primitivism in Modern Art* he emphasized that, "the art of the so-called primitive peoples is not itself 'primitive,' i.e., neither technically crude nor aesthetically unsubtle." Goldwater went on to insist, "however much or little primitive art has been a source for modern art, the two in fact have almost nothing in common." He concluded that, "both the social purposes and the aesthetic achievements of primitive art – its forms and functions – are widely different from those of modern art" (1986, xvii). Goldwater was clear that primitive works do not directly impact on modern artists. He argued that there was "an extreme scarcity of the direct influence of primitive art forms" and "there is little that is not allusion and suggestion rather than immediate borrowing" (1986, xxi). Indeed, Goldwater maintained, "'primitive art' has over time become a term of praise" (1986, 273). This does not mean that there is a distinctive intellectual unity to primitive art. On the contrary, he insisted "the search for a primitive aesthetics, which implies qualities of pure arrangement and design and the satisfaction of self-contained order, will at the very best be inconclusive in its results" (1986, 312).

Perhaps one of Goldwater's most significant contributions to the discussion of primitive art is his insistence that there is no single evolutionary imperative that drives art

from historical, psychological, or aesthetic impulses towards a single modern objective. Goldwater stated,

> primitive cultures are not what they once were thought to be – the early arrested stages of a generally uniform social evolution leading to higher cultures. They have had their own long evolution, and although their technologies may be relatively simple, they have developed their own social complications and subtleties, and their own psychological sophistications and nuances. They are different not only from more industrialised societies, but also in many basic ways from each other, and no more so than in their arts.
>
> <div align="right">(Goldwater 1969, unpaginated)</div>

Yet, for Goldwater, there were some fundamental qualities that characterized this type of art. One major aspect is what one might term the organic or holistic. Artistic products like masks and figures "do not so much represent as embody the powers and spirits they bring forth; they shape at least as much as they follow the traditional imagination of an audience that then visualizes in the very concrete formal and expressive terms of the works themselves, which to them seem natural." Goldwater went on to reflect, "All aspects of a work are thus essential to its effects, and in non-literate societies especially there is finally no way of separating the esthetic from the functional" (1969, unpaginated). For Goldwater the aesthetic sometimes seemed to disappear altogether when he spoke of the primitive artist "who inherits his style and its meaning, as he inherits a role in his society, so that he largely takes his art for granted and has little conscious aesthetic" (1976, 19).

But if aesthetics are always embedded within social norms in Goldwater's account of varieties of primitive art, this does not mean that the work produced is devoid of aesthetic interest or principles. Goldwater was quick to point out that form and color are always important considerations, and as will be shown later, are increasingly significant design features. Goldwater commended Owen Jones' early publication *The Grammar of Ornament* where Jones maintained that, "in savage ornament there is a true balance of form and color" (Goldwater 1986, 19). For Goldwater primitive sculpture is reliant upon color to enhance or even to shape the carvings. He noted that "painted surfaces play an especially large role in Melanesian sculpture (some of it flat, as in the Papuan Gulf region; some of it intricately three-dimensional and special, as in New Ireland)" (1986, 225). The pictorial surface is always important, as Goldwater reflected in his discussion of symbolism, a movement that he felt particularly close to primitive art. For both symbolists and primitive artists there is an evident conflict between "control and expression, between an awareness of form and an awareness of emotion" (Goldwater 1979, 24). Line on the surface plane also gives structure to the painted shape. Continuous line, eschewing modeling, helps "hold composition within a single unifying plane" (1989, 18). This exploration in formalism was to take practical form at the end of the 1940s resulting in two quite different manifestations.

The Museum of Primitive Art

In 1949 Goldwater was invited by René d'Harnoncourt, the newly appointed director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) to collaborate on an exhibition entitled *Modern Art in Your Life*. At first sight this is a puzzling new direction for Goldwater to take as the show was a self-consciously precocious paean to stark and uncluttered modern

design. D'Harnoncourt also came from a very different background. As one commentator noted,

> In his earlier days d'Harnoncourt had spent some time as a window trimmer in Mexico, and it is clear that he was fluent in the affective language of commodity aesthetics. His installation designs are usefully considered in the same genre as window displays – magical scenes mounted with the purpose of arresting the movement of a passerby, evoking an emotional response, exciting a desire.
>
> (Foster 2012, 145)

But there were underlying similar interests that both shared, notably primitive art. D'Harnoncourt's curiosity began in Mexico where he collected pre-Columbian and Mexican colonial and popular art. In 1929 d'Harnoncourt mounted an exhibition of Mexican art at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. In 1936 he became the general manager of the Indian Arts and Craft Board, set up by the American Department of the Interior to protect Native American cultural property and to promote their craft products. D'Harnoncourt put on a display of Native American arts at the San Francisco Golden Gate Exposition in 1939. What was particularly innovative about d'Harnoncourt's approach was his determination to "represent Native American cultural products as the art of a vital and dynamic people rather than trinkets and baubles of a vanishing race" (Foster 2012, 134). The exhibition was widely praised for its arresting visual display techniques; these were recognized in the New York Museum of Science and Industry/Rockefeller Foundation report of 1940 (New York Museum of Science and Industry, 1940). D'Harnoncourt met Nelson Rockefeller, the President of the Museum of Modern Art in 1940 and, as a result, d'Harnoncourt's *Indian Art of the United States* opened there in 1941 (Metropolitan Museum 2013). Rockefeller persuaded d'Harnoncourt to join MoMA in 1944 as Vice President in charge of foreign affairs and Director of the Department of Manual Industries (Metropolitan Museum 2013). In 1946 d'Harnoncourt mounted another successful exhibition *The Art of the South Seas*, which was "acclaimed as an experimental success, indeed unequivocal evidence that design installation is an artistic practice in its own right" (Foster 2012, 136). In 1949 d'Harnoncourt became Director of MoMA where he worked until 1967. But from this date d'Harnoncourt also became Nelson Rockefeller's closest associate in creating another collection that was to form the Museum of Indigenous Art in 1954. At this museum he served as Vice President and Chair of acquisitions from 1954 until he retired in 1967.

The 1949 exhibition *Modern Art in Your Life* provided Goldwater with an opportunity to work under the tutelage of d'Harnoncourt. The objective of the show at MoMA was to demonstrate that design sensibility derives from artistic principles. Goldwater believed that modern viewers seldom recognized this debt, "they readily admire the sensitive balance in a fine example of contemporary typography, or the magic mood of a display window, without realizing that in them they pay tribute to the vision and achievement of the artist" (Goldwater with d'Harnoncourt 1949, 5). This was a clear reference to d'Harnoncourt's background and philosophy of display. Goldwater mined examples of modern design to find underlying fundamental principles. In two areas he found particularly attractive examples. He admired the abstract geometrical form created for furniture design by Saarinen and Eames, stating, "the simplicity and clarity of this style, its clear outlines and smooth surfaces, the self-contained repose of its balanced asymmetry, above all its conscious restraint and self-imposed severity, can earn for it the name of modern classicism" (Goldwater with d'Harnoncourt 1949, 15). He was equally struck by the geometric stylization to be found

in contemporary posters where "the structure of geometric stylization makes for a unified visual impression easily grasped, and strong contrasts catch the attention" (1949, 23). Again Goldwater underlined the importance of viewer response. Both design examples combine simplicity in the union of function and aesthetic, a quality that he had previously found in primitive art.

When Robert Goldwater was appointed by Nelson Rockefeller as Director of the Museum of Indigenous Art in September 1956 he and d'Harnoncourt started to work together closely, first on an acquisitions policy and then on a program of exhibitions. Goldwater rapidly made his mark. Within three months of his appointment the museum's name changed from the Museum of Indigenous Art to the Museum of Primitive Art (MPA), underlining the intellectual pedigree that it was now adopting. Significantly, the name remained for a lengthy period, until 1991, when it was renamed by the Metropolitan Museum's trustees. Goldwater also made substantial changes in the collection policy for the museum. Whilst d'Harnoncourt had relied upon published catalogues to identify desirable categories of objects for purchase from a limited range of sources, Goldwater's approach was far more experimental, seeking new sources of supply and new and international specialist expertise to advise on purchases. Whilst the purchasing policy changed significantly the underlying common philosophy was shared by both and they each had to endorse every purchase proposed by Goldwater to Nelson Rockefeller for acquisition.

Goldwater's formalism was stamped upon the museum, or rather his formalism was fully aligned with Nelson Rockefeller's. Rockefeller had an emotional attachment to primitive art. He wrote, "Primitive art never seemed strange to me. Even though I didn't understand it intellectually, I felt its power, its directness of expression, and its beauty" (N. Rockefeller 1980, 19). For the MPA opening show, *Selected Works I* Nelson Rockefeller provided a preface to the catalogue. He wrote,

> Museums of ethnology and "natural history" have, of course, long shown these arts. They have done so primarily to document their studies of indigenous cultures. It is our purpose to supplement their achievements from the esthetic point of view. However, we do not wish to establish primitive art as a separate category but rather to integrate it, with all its amazing variety into what is already known about the arts of man. Our aim will always be to select objects of outstanding beauty whose rare quality is the equal of works shown in other museums of art throughout the world, and to exhibit them so that everyone may enjoy them in the fullest measure.
>
> (N. Rockefeller 1957, no pagination)

Perhaps both d'Harnoncourt and Goldwater had a hand in this text. Goldwater reprised the declaration,

> The Museum of Primitive Art was the first institution to display native artefacts solely as works of aesthetic interest. Its purpose, stated by Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, its founder and president, is to select and exhibit "objects of outstanding beauty whose rare quality is the equal of works of any time or place."
>
> (Goldwater 1967)

This is the language and tone of *Primitivism in Modern Art* and Goldwater was keen to see the museum living up to its principles. In the 1959 introductory brochure he stated, "since its opening in February 1957, the museum has served as a source of information and documentation for students, scholars and laymen interested in learning about the

techniques, evolution and aesthetics of primitive art" (Museum of Primitive Art 1959). The museum was to publish over sixty monographs during its life time, most of which were associated with exhibitions in the galleries. As Nelson Rockefeller proudly announced, it was "the first institution totally devoted to primitive art" (N. Rockefeller 1980, 23).

From its first show MPA sought to highlight startling and arresting work always seeking to combine authentic primitive or tribal work with an aesthetic appeal to a Western audience. In this regard it took on the mantle from the Museum of Modern Art which had started showing non-European art in 1935 with the exhibition *African Negro Art*. This was followed by *Indian Art of the United States* (1941) mounted by d'Harnoncourt, *Young Negro Art* (1943), *Arts of the South Seas* (1946), and *Understanding African Negro Sculpture* (1952). The MPA began with a synoptic display of its core acquisitions, its star pieces, to demonstrate its visual exuberance in the soberly entitled *Exhibition 1: Selected Works from the Collection*. D'Harnoncourt became responsible for the displays at MPA. Nelson Rockefeller reflected later, "Because of limitations of space, we could only show about ten per cent of the collection. Therefore, it was decided that a series of carefully selected and beautifully installed small exhibitions would be held under René's direction. The exhibitions were wide-ranging: for example, 'Sculpture from the Pacific' in 1962; 'Art of Empire: the Inca of Peru' in 1963–4; 'African Sculpture from the Museum's Collection' in 1966; and 'North American Indian Paintings' in 1967" (N. Rockefeller 1980, 23). The overlap of interests between the museums can be seen from the exhibition titles. It was further reinforced by the design and installation input from d'Harnoncourt.

An Unrivalled Collection of the Arts of New Guinea[2]

Goldwater was keen to create a specialist reputation for the museum and to this end sought collections from areas that were not widely represented in other museums. He quickly spotted a curator whose work interested him, Simon Kooijman, who had been at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, the Netherlands since 1946 and had worked in Dutch New Guinea for the South Pacific Commission in 1952–1953. Kooijman had published a synoptic review of the art of the colony in *Antiquity and Survival* in 1956 which brought him to international attention. Goldwater invited Kooijman to contribute to a major exhibition of work from Dutch New Guinea at the MPA in 1959. Objects from the MPA collection were placed alongside other objects from Basel, Leiden, Rotterdam and the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam: this was to be *The Art of Lake Sentani*. Goldwater invited Kooijman to write the catalogue and to present a public lecture in New York which was published later (Kooijman 1961). Goldwater underlined the significance of the exhibition in his foreword to the catalogue, "with this book, prepared in conjunction with an exhibition of the same theme, the Museum of Primitive Art breaks new ground in two ways: this is the first monograph issued by the museum. It is also the first time that the art of Lake Sentani has received intensive study in print or in a public showing" (1959, 5).

In the catalogue Kooijman reflected upon the marked differences in style and mood of the work produced in the different regions of West New Guinea.[3] "The art forms of the north and west coast cultures," he argued, "particularly the carved human figures, convey an air of equanimity and tranquil repose, as if the makers' way of life, though exposed to the discomforts and hazards inherent in any Papuan society was free of the continual fear and stress characterising the Asmat culture. The character of this art style seems to reflect the life of the community, which was not inclined to extremes and was seldom deeply

stirred" (Kooijman 1959, 19). Kooijman went on later to single out the squat square human *korwar* figure sculptures of Geelvink Bay made widely known in Europe through Paul Wirz and the *maro* barkcloths of Lake Sentani that Viot introduced to the surrealists in Paris as remarkable for their decorative innovation. Viot's collection from Lake Sentani was shown in Paris in 1930 and immediately established the significance of north coast art on the international stage (Kooijman 1992, 13; Peltier 1992, 162, 163).

For Kooijman the south coast looked very different. He argued that the expression of art forms relates to the spirit of the culture within which it resides. South coast cultures were psychologically constituted in a different way. He wrote, "we may remember the emotionally charged effect of, for instance, the figures carved by the hard, arrogant Mundugumor head-hunters of the Sepik area, or the nervous, intensity typifying those of the Asmat, also head-hunters living in a state of continual disturbance" (Kooijman 1959, 19). And yet south coast art was far from homogeneous. Kooijman distinguished those cultures that were vibrant from those that lacked vigor. He attributed the difference to the infiltration of external cultural pressure. So, he wrote,

> Even in the pre-European period the Mimika region was exposed to external influences much more than the isolated Asmat region was. Elements originating from eastern Indonesia and Geelvink Bay area penetrated long before the white man arrived. The influence of the latter began as early as the 1930s for the Mimika culture, whereas for the Asmat it started twenty years later and was much less intense. As a result, the traditional Asmat culture was better able to maintain itself.
>
> (Kooijman 1984, 10)

The Mimika were, in Kooijman's eyes, culturally overwhelmed, "the woodcarvers of former times are now old men who rarely pick up a chisel, and there are no young men who have picked up the skills" (1984, 164). It is to refute this view that the Kamoro festivals have been celebrated in the past few years, inspired by the success of the Asmat *Pesta Budaya*, or carving festival (Jacobs 2011; Smidt 2003). But Kooijman was not sanguine about the future prospects for Asmat art. He wrote, "the great demand for woodcarving on the part of European visitors and travelers may stimulate artistic production, but given present-day experience it is unlikely that this will constitute an incentive towards artistic achievement. Thus the prospects for the art of these Papuan groups standing on the threshold of a new era do not appear too bright" (Kooijman 1956, 347). This was not a view held at the MPA where Nelson Rockefeller, d'Harnoncourt and Goldwater were confident of the continuing value of the work being produced.

Kooijman's interest in Asmat art was fueled by the collection he assembled in 1952. There were in all 526 artefacts from the South coast with a major proportion from Asmat. These he obtained from "government officials, missionaries, businessmen, merchants and a few scholarly researchers" (Kooijman 1956, 351; Smidt 1995, 57). Two sources were particularly significant, one collection made by van Wijk, the director of IMEX, a Dutch trading company, that contained four masked costumes and sixteen shields of a high design quality from northwest Asmat, and a second of eighty-five objects gathered by J. J. Spijker, the Dutch colonial Resident, acquired during his tours of duty in the Asmat region. This second collection contained some fourteen shields, again from the northwest (Lamme and Smidt 1993, 146). These collections provided the material for Kooijman's first English language publication *The Art of Southwest New Guinea*. Immediately he concentrated on Asmat art. Kooijman wrote, "mainly as a result of the many ethnographical objects sent to the ethnological museums in Holland in the post-war years this region proved to be a

primitive art-centre showing a creativity and wealth of forms, which – in New Guinea at least – seems to be equaled only by the world-famous Sepik region" (Kooijman 1956, 347), a comparison he frequently made in his writings. He noted the human figure was the dominating motif found not only in statues, *bisj* poles, and prow decorations but also in bowls and paddles. Kooijman was particularly interested in shields. The reason that he gave for this was that "they are generally well represented in museum collections. This is probably due to the fact that these objects are easy to handle, and show spectacular ornamentation" (Kooijman 1956, 361). Certainly, shields formed a major element in his own collection. For similar reasons he concluded his discussion with a review of another two-dimensional art form, the *fu* or hunting horn. He was particularly struck by the carver's relief decoration which betokened technical skill and creative talent on both horn and shield.

Kooijman's skepticism about the future of Asmat art may have, paradoxically, fueled Goldwater's enthusiasm, for these historical pieces were likely to become scarce and valuable. When Goldwater learned that the Tropenmuseum was selling on items from its Asmat collection he reacted swiftly. He sent a memo to Nelson Rockefeller on 13 April 1961 entitled "Possible purchases." The text ran,

> Enclosed are photographs of an outstanding Asmat bispole 18 feet high, and ten other Asmat objects that René and I recommend for purchase.
>
> The bispole is one of the best of a group belonging to the Tropen Museum of Amsterdam. Considering its size, elegance and intricacy of carving of its acrobatic figures it is not expensive. There are now no such objects in American collections. This and the soul ship will some day make a unique and exciting installation.
>
> The ten other Asmat objects have been in a Dutch private collection for some time. We recommend their purchase because they are excellent in themselves, and with the soul ship and bispole we would have an Asmat representation outstanding anywhere, unparalleled in this country.
>
> Although these ten works may be bought individually (as listed), we recommend them as a group with an over-all saving of $2,350. Prices in this area are still low.
>
> The bispole (and the soul ship), plus the group of ten, added to our already important Sentani and Mimika objects, would give us an unrivalled collection of the arts of New Guinea. It would be one of the Museum's great attractions.
>
> <div align="right">(Goldwater 1961, underlining in original text)</div>

Asmat art fulfilled all of Goldwater's criteria. It was clearly an excellent exemplification of Owen Jones's "savage ornament" balancing form and color. It seemed to require little or no contextual information to conjure up a magical scene that would arrest the passerby. The size and the quality of the pieces, the acrobatic carving of figures entwined with one another, the intricacy of incised design throughout, all made Asmat art, in Rockefeller's terms, "objects of outstanding beauty whose rare quality is the equal of works of any time or place." Goldwater's memo reads almost as the working out of a rationale that he repeats to convince himself. The pieces would become, he was sure, unparalleled in their potential to create a complete installation and a major attraction. Needless to say, the purchase was approved and, in ways that he could not have foreseen, Goldwater's judgment was to prove emphatically correct. Meanwhile, to cement the MPA's specialist reputation, Goldwater entrusted his new assistant curator, Douglas Newton with a small exhibition and catalogue entitled *Art Styles of the Papuan Gulf*.

Nelson Rockefeller's fifth child, Michael Clark Rockefeller was groomed to take a prominent place in the running of the Museum of Primitive Art. In May 1959 as soon as he

reached his twenty-first birthday he became a trustee. The art of Netherlands New Guinea was to be a major focus for Michael Rockefeller and it was a major reason for his interest in and his visits to Asmat. Nelson Rockefeller described his son as "a sensitive and dedicated collector of primitive art for the museum" (N. Rockefeller 1969). He explained his son's interest in artistic matters in his valedictory article in the Metropolitan Museum's catalogue of the Museum of Primitive Art exhibition, "Michael had a great love of beautiful things. From the time he was little he painted and sculpted, and he became an excellent photographer. During his years at Harvard he collected prints – Japanese, contemporary European and American." Nelson Rockefeller then connected this artistic personality to action, "He spent a great deal of time at both The Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Primitive Art, of which he became, in 1959, a trustee" (N. Rockefeller 1980, 11).

After graduating from Harvard in 1960 and spending six months on military service Michael Rockefeller went to Papua as the sound recordist and still photographer for the Harvard Peabody expedition to the Baliem Valley. The expedition conducted fieldwork between February and August 1961 to observe a remote tribe living a life of sustained ritual warfare. Michael Rockefeller was a major contributor to the costs of the expedition (Matthiessen 1963, v; Gardner and Heider 1968, xv). Despite his youth, he proved to be a truly professional photographer (Gardner 2006, v) and the expedition leader had no hesitation in approving Rockefeller's request that he should edit the book arising from the expedition (Gardner and Heider, 1968, xv). The Harvard Peabody expedition provided a stimulus and focus to Michael Rockefeller's desire to visit and stay with people relatively untroubled by outside pressures. For three weeks in June and July Michael Rockefeller went with his friend Sam Putnam to Asmat to collect for the MPA. They spent most of their time staying with Adrian Gerbrands.

Adrian Gerbrands was a contemporary of Kooijman at Leiden. He was two years younger and joined the museum in 1947, gaining his PhD in 1956. Like Kooijman he began by writing a synoptic essay on the art styles in West New Guinea in 1951 which was later translated into English (Gerbrands 1951, 1979). This was a piece of desk research but it was a preparation for a period of eight months' intensive fieldwork that he undertook in Asmat in 1960 and 1961. This was to be a remarkable achievement for a number of reasons. First, he engaged with the community of Amanamkai extensively, but like Zegwaard before him, had few illusions about the reasons that he was accepted into the village. As he recorded,

> I knew that many of the villagers of Anamankai called me Kawirkor and that they believed me to be the reincarnation of an important chief of that name who had died some months before my arrival. It was rumoured that before his death Kawirkor had decided that he would return with an unlimited supply of treasured white man's goods – tobacco, axes, knives, etc.
>
> (Gerbrands 1967, 7)

Nevertheless, he observed, "the friendship shown to me by many of the villagers went beyond their very human desire to share in these luxuries" (1967, 8). Gerbrands recognized that his interventions in the social life of the village had a major impact and that his personal interest in the individual carvers and their work strengthened their social status. He was convinced that Asmat art was as varied as any other and not to be lumped indiscriminately together as "primitive art." He argued that "the vitality breathed by the Asmat carvings made me think that a sufficiently long stay in a not too large area, perhaps even just one village, might make it possible not only to apprehend the cultural

background of this art but also to gain an insight into the place and function of the individual artist in the community" (Gerbrands 1967, 23). He commissioned carvings and meticulously observed eight carvers at work through "continual, concentrated observation," augmented by many photographs and 16 mm ciné film. He also invited the carvers to make pencil drawings of the designs that they were carving which he used in his account. Gerbrands also sketched and produced a film of one of the carvers named Matjemos.

Gerbrands also engaged in discourse about Asmat aesthetic values. He showed carvers a copy of van Renselaar's catalogue of photographs of Asmat sculpture in the Tropenmuseum and noted the expressions of amazement and admiration that the images evinced. One of the eight carvers, Ndojokor, was especially impressed. Gerbrands recorded, "He uttered one cry of amazement and admiration after another as I turned the pages for him. Again and again he stopped me turning a page before he had time to study the pictures" (Gerbrands 1967, 166). Gerbrands reflected on the facility with which the Amanamkai carvers were able to read the images from the photographic reproductions. He concluded that it was because Asmat art was predominantly two-dimensional and it was therefore easy to see the design motifs in a variety of different types of object. This was the first recorded example of photographic recycling of design imagery in Asmat and was to start a fashion that persists to this day.

Gerbrands held long discussions about his work with Michael Rockefeller and they both went on a collecting trip to the Casuarina Coast that resulted in the acquisition of the famous *bisj* poles that are now the highlight of the Oceanic display in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Gerbrands' account of the journey has a poetic quality,

> It was already seven o'clock in the evening; the sun had set an hour ago in a blaze of red-orange, and entered Safan, the realm of the ancestors. The moon had appeared, startlingly large, and shot quickly above the tree-tops, grinning coldly. By seven, the moon stood high in the sky, where it should be. Its silver light shone down on the small group of dugouts gliding silently through the forest. Now and then the river splashed softly against the thin sides of the canoes. We were captives of the moonlight. No words were spoken, except for a single, barely audible fragment of a word from the lookout, when it was necessary to avoid a water-logged trunk or an overhanging branch.
>
> (1993, 116)

Gerbrands offered Michael Rockefeller a stable focus and source of security as is evident in Rockefeller's own account written at the time,

> At this very moment I am on a boat en route from Merauke to the Asmat on the Southern coast of Dutch New Guinea. I am taking three weeks off from the Baliem and will visit a Dutch anthropologist by the name of Gerbrands. This is very exciting because the Asmat is, as you know, one of the very few places left on this earth where primitive art of high quality is still actively produced. Dr Gerbrands has been studying this art for about eight months. This trip together with another which I hope to make at the end of the expedition I am hoping will help build a good collection for the Museum of Primitive Art.
>
> (M. Rockefeller 1961)

This three week trip was successful. Michael wrote to his father on his return from Asmat,

> I have constantly been in close touch with Dr Goldwater with respect to all my art collecting efforts. By now he will have received a report on my Asmat trip. My opportunities here are particularly rewarding both as they enable me to follow an interest which you

have engendered in me and to begin what I hope will be a very active role in the affairs of the Museum of Primitive Art. The more deeply I become involved out here the more excited I get about the place and the future of the museum.

(M. Rockefeller 1961)

Although his visit was short he met carvers in the villages and made detailed notes on the provenance of the objects that he bought. But this was still a form of salvage collecting; he mourned the passing of a way of life. This was epitomized by dress. He wrote in his journal,

> The Asmat is filled with a kind of tragedy. For many of the villages have reached that point where they are beginning to doubt the worth of their own culture and crave western things. There is everywhere a depressing respect for the white man's shirt and pants, no matter how tatty and dirty, even though these doubtful symbols of another world seem to hide a proud form and replace a far finer, if less concealing, form of dress.
>
> (M. Rockefeller 1967, 43)

He considered that "what we saw were some imposing remnants of a marvellous past" and concluded "the sculpture that that has been and (in some areas) is still being produced by Asmat artists is unquestionably some of the greatest to come from a primitive culture" (M. Rockefeller 1967, 43).

Perhaps the most important contribution made by Gerbrands to the Rockefeller collection and ultimately the MPA was his advice to Michael Rockefeller. Michael Rockefeller's diary for 28 June 1961 in Omandesep reads,

> After lunch I would have returned to bartering with a view to purchasing a different variety of objects. Yet I had already seen the four *bis* poles standing before the school, and Adri and I agreed it would be best to look them over carefully. This was one kind of object that seemed to me inviolate for the encroachment of western commercialism upon Asmat art. How marvelous they were across the river, towering above the school path. I quickly decided to buy one made by Fanipdas for the Museum of Primitive Art. However, Adri convinced me that the opportunity to have all four as a complete ceremonial set should not be tossed up [*sic*]. All I needed was the lead. With these objects being so large and unexpected I could not have expected to arrive at such an experienced decision all by myself.
>
> (M. Rockefeller 1967, 117)

Michael Rockefeller returned for a second visit in September 1961 that he planned to last for ten weeks. Gerbrands had left on 9 August (1995, 123): again his objective was to acquire objects for the Museum of Primitive Art but he was also thinking of what to do with the material. He reflected in a letter,

> I think now that with my trip, with all the anthropological work that will have been done here, and after a careful study of the large collections of Asmat things now in three Dutch museums, it would be possible to organize a mammoth expedition that would do justice to the art of these people: to show the artistic functions in Asmat society (the object of Dr Gerbrands' study) to explain the function of art in the culture, and to indicate by the arrangement of the objects the nature of style variation throughout the entire area. Nothing approaching this has ever been granted a single primitive people.
>
> (M. Rockefeller 1967, 45)

His death a few days after writing this letter served to turn his collection into a memorial. Goldwater was determined to keep the collection intact. As he wrote to an enquirer, "at present the collection Michael Rockefeller assembled is being kept together, and there are no plans to distribute it, either by gift or by sale. Two bisj poles have been given to the Peabody Museum, and two others to Leiden Museum, in accordance with his wishes; all the rest remain as a unified collection for exhibition and study" (Goldwater 1965).

Within two months of Michael Rockefeller's death the Museum of Primitive Art embarked on a commemorative exhibition. The minutes of the Board of Trustees record, "There followed an extended discussion of the possibility of holding an exhibition in the summer or fall of 1962 of those pieces collected by Michael Rockefeller on his trip to New Guinea. The suggestion was made that such an exhibition might be held in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art and Dr Goldwater and Mr d'Harnoncourt have undertaken to develop plans to be submitted to the Board for such an exhibition" (Museum of Primitive Art 1961). The size of the pieces, particularly the *bisj* poles from Omadesep, and the desire to hold the exhibition at short notice led to a novel solution, creating a new exhibition space for *The art of the Asmat, New Guinea: The Michael C Rockefeller Collection* in the gardens of the Museum of Modern Art. The show went on from September to November 1962 and it was widely reported. The Museum of Primitive Art's publicity department recorded "stories about this exhibition were in over 600 newspapers and many magazines (particularly in *Life*, *Look*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Show*) with a combined circulation of over 30 million readers. This is as close to national and local saturation as any art story ever had" (Kurts 1963). The earliest coverage of the exhibition was in *Newsweek* (Volume LX, No. 11, 10 September 1962, 100–101) which was scheduled to appear on the day that the exhibition opened. *Life*, which had sponsored the Peabody expedition to the Netherlands New Guinea Highlands the previous year, provided the most extensive coverage, an 18-page photo-essay written by the editorial team and a notice for the exhibition (Vol. 53, No. 13, 73–91) whilst Robert Gardner, the expedition leader contributed an essay to *Show, the Magazine of the Arts*, (Vol. 2 October 1962, 31–32). (Kurts was hardly exaggerating the significance of the coverage of the MoMA exhibition across the United States.)

A record of the exhibition was included in the definitive catalogue of Michael Rockefeller's collection edited by Gerbrands and published five years later. This book was commissioned by Goldwater who put Gerbrands under considerable pressure. Nevertheless it took Gerbrands over three years to edit, amidst his regular duties first as Assistant Director of the Leiden Museum and then from 1966 as Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Leiden University. It was also tricky to collate as it involved careful identification of place and time in Rockefeller's photographs, relating them to Rockefeller's field notes and identifying objects in the Rockefeller collection in New York. It was a task that Gerbrands accomplished with remarkable sensitivity and tact, remaining a largely invisible editor, and giving little sense of the profoundly different perspectives and attitudes that he and Michael Rockefeller held about Asmat culture. The book was bought widely and served to further publicize Asmat art. Goldwater offered Gerbrands a job as curator at the Museum of Primitive Art. Gerbrands entertained the suggestion for a while but eventually turned down the offer for family reasons. When the Museum of Primitive Art on West 54th Street closed in 1976 and moved to a specially constructed wing of the Metropolitan Museum, the Asmat collection became one of the most arresting exhibits in the new gallery. In the 2007 redisplay of the Oceanic galleries the Rockefeller collection of *bisj* poles and canoes retained their emblematic importance and focus.

The final episode in the Goldwater Asmat project took place in 1969. Nelson Rockefeller was, besides being President of MPA and a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art, also

a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He felt that primitive art was still not well represented in major museums. He planned to change this by proposing to the Board an exhibition of primitive art in the museum. D'Harnoncourt thought that if this could be accomplished that it would change the attitude of the Metropolitan Museum to primitive art in general. Rockefeller recorded that their proposal was accepted, for reasons no doubt wider than aesthetic, *Art of Oceania, Africa and the Americas from the Museum of Primitive Art* opened for a three-month show in May 1969. However, as Nelson Rockefeller records in what sounds like a suspiciously unlikely piece of serendipity,

> Two weeks before the show opened, Mrs Brooke Astor, one of the most creative and imaginative people in New York City and a trustee of the Met, told me she had seen the exhibition and felt the collection simply had to stay at the Met permanently. There was to be a big dinner before the opening, and she said that if I would be willing to give the collection, it could be announced that night – and it would be sensational. Her idea was that there should be a special wing built to house the collection.
>
> (N. Rockefeller 1980, 24)

This was the birth of the Michael C Rockefeller wing to house the MPA collection (Figure 5.1).

As the title of the exhibition implied, this was to carry the imprint of the MPA exhibitions over into a new environment but the Goldwater message was to remain persistent. "We organized the material in a form that emphasizes the beauty and creative qualities of the objects rather than their ethnological background exclusively" (N. Rockefeller 1980, 25). But Goldwater had also learned some things from Michael Rockefeller and from

FIGURE 5.1 Michael Rockefeller display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *Source*: © Hemis/Alamy Stock Photo.

Gerbrands. In the exhibition catalogue, when commenting on the variety of artistic approaches on display, he wrote,

> The demands of function limit the range of iconographic and stylistic innovation. But in their own societies, where the ritual significance subjects them to careful scrutiny, distinctions invisible to outsiders are easily perceived. Thus both the Asmat and the Abelam of New Guinea distinguish the styles of different villages, and the work of particular artists. The same is true among the Yoruba of Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. Awareness of this kind generally carries with it judgment of another sort: the judgment of quality.
>
> (Goldwater 1969, 10)

Quality, a term always critical and notoriously difficult to define, nevertheless remained a touchstone. Goldwater did have one last attempt to define art in his formalist terms. He wrote, "whatever its style, and whatever its cultural source, it possesses certain inherent qualities that render it accessible. These are the qualities of skill, of design, of expressive form and concentrated emotion that makes it art." (Goldwater 1969, unpaginated). This was certainly his and Nelson Rockefeller's view of Asmat art.

Michael Frederick's photograph taken in May 1969 of Nelson Rockefeller's announcement (Figure 5.2) of the transfer of the MPA collection to the Metropolitan Museum is

FIGURE 5.2   Press event relating to the donation of the Museum of Primitive Art to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, May 1969. Portrait (left to right): Robert Goldwater, Thomas Hoving, Douglas Newton, Nelson A. Rockefeller. Standing in front of Asmat carved shields. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *Source*: © Photograph by Michael Fredericks. Image courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source Art Resource, NY.

shot in front of a stunning array of Asmat shields, evidently a highlight of the show.[4] It is perhaps licit to see Goldwater as having responsibility equivalent to Michael Rockefeller's for the opening of the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing at the Metropolitan Museum. As this chapter has argued, it was the development of Goldwater's thesis from *Primitivism in Modern Art* that contributed a philosophical and art historical grounding to the Museum of Primitive Art, to its specialism in the art of Netherlands New Guinea, to the involvement of both Kooijman and Gerbands, to his mentoring of Michael Rockefeller at the MPA, and so to the creation by Michael Rockefeller of the collection that was to become so quickly known through the display in New York first at the Museum of Modern Art and then at the MPA. It was Goldwater, working in the style of d'Harnoncourt, who was responsible for the magnificent and emblematic display of *bisj* poles and *wuramon* at the Metropolitan Museum, first displayed in 1982 and still equally arresting in the 2007 redisplay.[5] The Pacific art exhibition with its soaring *bisj* poles at Musée du quai Branly (now Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac) keeps Goldwater's display philosophy very much alive in contemporary curatorial practice.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1   "In the cutouts of the mid-1940s, Melanesian decorative forms seem to have aided him in the creation of an abstract, dematerialized space, characterized by an allover decorative patterning based on the repetition of similar shapes." (The illustrations to go with the text are Matisse's 'composition green background' of 1947 and an Asmat shield from the UnirSirau district), see J. Flam "Matisse and the Fauves" in Rubin (1984, 232).
2   Nederlands Nieuw Guinea (Netherlands New Guinea) became Papua Barat in 1963, Irian Jaya in 1973, and was divided into the provinces of Papua and Papua Barat in 2001.
3   For a fuller discussion of South Coast art and specifically the history of Asmat art see Stanley (2012).
4   http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2013/nelson-rockefeller/chronology
5   http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-museum/museum-departments/curatorial-dep artments/art-of-africa-oceania-and-the-americas

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Surrealist Ireland: the Archaic, the Modern and the Marvelous

Fionna Barber

In 1929 the Belgian journal *Variétés* published a map of the world remade from a Surrealist perspective.[1] The countries of Western Europe have been replaced in significance by the islands of Polynesia, while the great bulk of Alaska dominates North America where the remainder of the United States used to be. Ireland is prominently included, floating off the coast of Europe and looming over the tiny blob that represents Britain. France, Britain's fellow imperial power, has disappeared completely, while Paris is now attached to the distorted remainder of Europe. The map indicates that Ireland had a distinct significance for the Surrealist group as a source of the marvelous. But how important was Surrealism for Ireland? The meanings of Ireland and Irishness within Surrealism are far from unitary; conversely, encounters with Surrealism by Irish artists have also been varied, taking a range of different forms in relation to other facets of their practice. This chapter looks at selected aspects of this dual relationship. On the one hand there is the construction of Ireland within Surrealism itself, while on the other, the diverse meanings of Surrealism for the Northern Irish artist Colin Middleton, or the painter Leonora Carrington, or indeed more recent practitioners Alice Maher or Gerard Byrne.

This is a line of enquiry that becomes possible in the wake of several exhibitions in Ireland in recent years, two of which were at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin (IMMA). *The Moderns* (2010–2011), an ambitious exploration of the development of modernism in Ireland between 1900 and 1975, in turn opened the way for a major retrospective (2013–2014) of the work of the Surrealist artist Leonora Carrington. Meanwhile a further exhibition on a smaller scale, *The Surreal in Irish Art* staged at the F.E. McWilliam Studio Gallery in Banbridge, Northern Ireland in 2011, provided an overview of the significance of Surrealism for Irish artists from the 1930s onwards. These exhibitions have opened up opportunities to probe more deeply into the relationship between Irishness and Surrealism. This raises questions of the role of Irishness within the formation of ideas of the marvelous, yet it additionally involves discussions of temporality, the relationship between the archaic and modern that is also more broadly speaking a feature of modernism itself. The selection of artists whose practice is discussed here also foregrounds issues of gender politics, fundamental to an understanding of the role of desire and the irrational within Surrealism.

Surrealism, Ireland, and the Marvelous

André Breton and his fellow poets and artists were systematic in their pursuit of the irrational. This included careful documentation of their activities such as the early experiments with hypnosis and automatic writing or the slightly later "Recherches sur la sexualité," an inquiry published in *La Révolution Surréaliste* in 1928. They also, however, produced comprehensive lists of writers they admired that included their cultural antecedents, some of whom were Irish. This emerged in the journal *Littérature* edited by Breton with the poets Louis Aragon and Philippe Soupault, an important precursor for the emergence of Surrealism in Paris in 1924. The March 1921 issue opened with a league table of famous men – the central figures themselves, their friends and their heroes – graded by Breton and Tristan Tzara. Jonathan Swift comes in at number sixteen, just below the Marquis de Sade (Ades 1978, 165). Swift was the Irish writer figuring most frequently in these citations, praised in the 1924 Manifesto of Surrealism as "Surrealist in malice," and featuring in a table published by Breton in 1930. "Read… Don't Read" systematically classified the achievements of both the Surrealists themselves and their precursors, whose presence helps to validate the late writers' and artists' own privileged access to the unconscious (Breton 1978a). It includes a selection of Irish figures with Swift and Bishop Berkeley near the top, then further down both the early nineteenth-century Gothic writer Charles Maturin, author of *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), and the playwright John Millington Synge. In addition to excerpts from Synge, Breton also included excerpts from Swift's "A Modest Proposal" and other writings in the *Anthology of Black Humour* (Breton 2009 [1940], 122).

Irish writers were clearly a part of the pantheon of the marvelous invoked by Breton as a means of undermining the institutions of Western capitalism and imperialism. Surrealist politics also included opposition to French attempts to crush an uprising in the Rif area of Morocco in 1925, an early instance of the group's anti-colonialism. As Luke Gibbons has observed, one of the notable achievements of Surrealism, certainly as far as Ireland was concerned, was "to recast the relationship of modernism to the colonial periphery – and, not least, to Ireland on the periphery of Europe" (Gibbons 2011, 91). Yet this move also takes place within wider conditions of the emergence of modernism, bound up with the development of the nation-state as an entity distinct from late Victorian imperialism (Armstrong 2005, 44). And the first nation to gain independence from British rule in 1922 is right there at the westernmost edge of the Surrealist map.

What would happen if we were to continue to shift the oblique view of this map even further, to look back from its western extremity? Ireland then becomes the point from which the cultural formation of Surrealism and, by implication, the rest of European modernism, is observed. The Surrealist gaze positioned Ireland in relation to their own place within the competing avant-gardes of 1920s Paris; Ireland's associations with the marvelous and the irrational became part of the development of both literary and artistic representational strategies that privileged the disruptive power of the unconscious.

From the early years of the twentieth century a fascination with the marvelous and the fantastic, areas of prime interest for Surrealism, was also a central feature of the Celtic Revival, primarily derived from an engagement with Irish folk culture. The significance of the mythological in W. B. Yeats' poetry or James Stephens' fiction was accompanied by the mystical visions of "AE's" paintings.[2] However rather than being a retreat from modernity this interest in a Celtic timelessness should be seen as a particular response to its conditions. Terry Eagleton – among others – has argued that this is to do with

the tension between the archaic and the modern experienced by Anglo-Irish Revivalists such as Yeats and Synge (Eagleton 1995, 251). In a similar fashion Geoffrey Castle has also proposed that it is the "tension between the archaic and the modern that characterizes Irish modernism generally" (Castle 2001, 207). Yet this dialectic of old and new is actually much more pervasive. As Tim Armstrong observes, modernism operates "with notions of temporality which overlap, collide, and register their own incompletion" (2005, 9). This is a recognition that helps to situate Ireland more fully within wider analyses of the development of modernism itself.

The "archaic," however, is not just a feature of the survival of Celtic mythology. It also figures within a fascination with the peasantry of the Western seaboard who also represented an outmoded way of life within a gradually modernizing Ireland, heroically depicted in the early paintings of Jack B. Yeats or Synge's photographs of the Aran islanders and plays such as *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). Synge's representations of the Western peasantry played a significant role in the construction of a notion of Irishness within Surrealism. Although initially featuring in an unpublished list of proto-Surrealist "great writers" in 1920 (Breton 1920), it was only in 1940 in the *Anthology of Black Humour* that Breton more fully elaborated his respect for Synge. The *Anthology* included the scene from *The Playboy of the Western World* where Christy Mahon graphically recounts the killing of his father to the widow Quin and three admiring girls – a description of gratuitous violence in an Oedipal murder that fitted well with attacks on bourgeois morality found elsewhere in the *Anthology*. In his introduction to Synge, Breton admired the play as a significant piece of contemporary drama, characterized by a sexual realism that had prompted riots in Dublin and New York; he also identified Synge's use of the lyricism of peasant speech as a source material, praising his ability to "strip this magnificent primitive tree down to its very sap" (Breton 2009, 251). However, as Sinéad Garrigan Mattar has observed, Synge's primitivism was due neither to any presumed empathy with "primitive" peoples nor to a "superhuman objectivity in the way he viewed them, but rather to his modernist belief in the otherness of the primitive psyche" (Mattar 2004, 131). There was possibly more in common between Breton and Synge than might at first appear.

Admiration for Synge's ability to tap the sources of the primitive, similar to the workings of a Surrealist ethnography, was not just confined to Breton. It also prompted a visit by Antonin Artaud who visited Ireland in 1937 in "search of the sources of a very ancient tradition." This quest had already taken him to Mexico the previous year, where he had sought to reinvent his identity through contact with primal forces he believed could be accessed through the peyote ritual of the Tarahumara. Now it had brought him "to the land where John Millington Synge lived" on a mission that was similarly transformative (*The Dublin Review* 2000–2001). Artaud arrived in August without either passport or visa but with a letter of introduction written by the Irish Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris, Art O'Briain. He was carrying a cane that he believed once belonged to St Patrick and hence possessed great mystical power; Artaud's aim was to return this relic to Ireland, where it would help to trigger an apocalypse once restored to its rightful home (Barber 1993, 91). Following his reading of Synge, Artaud believed the geographic remoteness of the Aran Islands to mean that they were also far from the destructive effects of civilization, and so this is where he journeyed to await the impending cataclysm. After a stay on Inishmore, the largest of the islands, he left once more for Galway and then for Dublin, still hopeful that the magical power of St. Patrick's staff would produce the desired result. Unfortunately at this point Artaud managed to lose the cane in a fight with the police. His mental condition had also deteriorated to a point from which it never fully recovered; deported back to

France, he was immediately incarcerated in the first of several psychiatric hospitals where he remained for much of the rest of his life.

Surrealism in Ireland

Rather than a generic "Irishness," then, there were different ways in which Irish writers could be appropriated to the interests of Surrealism. Swift's satirical advocacy of cannibalism as a solution to over-population in "A Modest Proposal" resonated with the Surrealist attack on the bourgeois family and the state. For Artaud and other Surrealists, meanwhile, a reading of Synge positioned Ireland as a further source of the primitive and the marvelous. This was in turn conflated with the celebration of an archaic past located in the remote West of the country. In Ireland of the 1930s, however, the West had very different connotations. The representation of the region had played a strategic role in the cultural work of decolonization; as the area most remote from Britain, the counties west of the River Shannon were celebrated as the home of a hardworking, Gaelic-speaking, Catholic peasantry. Despite the increasing poverty of rural communities and the escalation of emigration to Britain or the United States the mythologizing of the region continued throughout the decade. This ruralist agenda of ethnic nationalism was also predominant in art practice through the academic realism of painters like Seán Keating or the increasingly schematic western landscapes of Paul Henry that played upon the nostalgia of their urban audiences (Barber 2013).

Throughout the decade Surrealism began to spread within the European avant-garde, extending to Britain in 1936 with the formation of the British Surrealist Group. However despite Breton's acknowledgment of Ireland's associations with the marvelous there was no comparable grouping in Ireland itself. In the context of what Terence Brown has called "the unruffled conservatism of Irish intellectual and cultural life of the 1930s" there was little that could be described as a collective avant-garde (1995, 29). Surrealism, however, did take on a particular significance for artists in Northern Ireland, distinct from the Irish Free State after Partition in 1922. In Northern Ireland's provincial art world of the 1930s Surrealism signified contemporary internationalism. This was certainly the case for Middleton and Nevill Johnson, for both of whom the visual language of Surrealism subsequently developed into a means of articulating a response to the Second World War.

For artists in relatively remote areas such as Northern Ireland, print media was the main source of information about contemporary art practice. During the 1930s this meant that the work of Salvador Dalí was probably the most accessible version of Surrealism for artists lacking other sources. Dalí consequently proved to be a significant figure for both Middleton and Johnson. Middleton had been a member of the Ulster Unit in 1934, a short-lived attempt at establishing the first avant-garde group of artists in Northern Ireland (Kennedy 1991, 73–77). Always interested in assimilating innovations from contemporary modernism within his own practice, he may have encountered Surrealism first-hand early in the 1930s on a visit to Belgium (Coulter 2010, 12). The Surrealism that he adopted, however, was that which was readily available in reproductions in the art press back in Belfast. By 1938 in paintings such as *Spain: a Dream Revisited*, which made explicit reference to the Spanish Civil War, or *Winter,* the influence of Dalí or similarly illusionistic painters associated with British Surrealism such as Edward Wadsworth or Tristram Hillier is clearly visible in Middleton's work. However the significance of Surrealism really becomes apparent in his paintings from the early years of the Second World War. Unlike the Irish Free State, which remained neutral during the Second World War, Northern Ireland's status as a part

of the United Kingdom meant an active involvement, although it was not until the "Belfast Blitz" of 1941 that there was a loss of life comparable to that in Britain. Many of Middleton's paintings from after this date, such as *Strange Openings*, engaged with the uncannily transformed cityscape that resulted from the bombings (Woodward 2015, 151–164).

However prior to this event the visible presence of refugees from mainland Europe and a degree of rationing were continual reminders of the conflict. Middleton's *Paysage des Rêves Mauvais* ("Landscape of Bad Dreams"), 1940 is full of elements of instability and uncertainty that combine to give a sense of unease signified by the title, which, untranslated, also acts as a reminder of occupied France at this time. The painting overtly acknowledges Dalí in its staging of the irrational within fully imagined perspectival space and precise draughtsmanship that also derives from Middleton's training as a damask designer. A semi-clad female figure depicted within her barren setting appears to be teetering unawares on a cliff edge, barely supported by the bent ladder on which she is leaning, or the spindly tripod that she grasps with one hand. A regular feature of Middleton's work was the inclusion of personal symbolism; here the experience of collective trauma can be read as reinforced by grief following the unexpected death of his wife Maye in 1939. The motif of woman in a landscape setting was one that he had used earlier, in *Winter*; rather than the deconstructive methods of Freudian psychoanalysis more commonly advocated within Surrealism, Middleton consciously drew upon holistic Jungian archetypes of femininity throughout his career (Coulter 2008). However there can also be read here a wider significance beyond the personal. The use of apparently ahistorical archetypes to articulate a response to contemporary cataclysm situates Middleton's Surrealist paintings much more firmly within the relationship between archaic and modern that lies at the heart of Irish modernism itself.

Leonora Carrington and the Diasporic Twilight

In 2013 the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin (IMMA) staged a major retrospective of the work of the Surrealist painter Leonora Carrington who had died two years previously. Carrington has repeatedly figured in feminist re-readings of Surrealism focused on the role of women as producers of art rather than just its subject matter or inspiration (Allmer 2009; Chadwick 1991; Conley 1996). The IMMA exhibition, entitled *Leonora Carrington: The Celtic Surrealist* additionally emphasized the role that Irishness played within her work as both a painter and a writer. Although she was born in Lancashire in 1917, Carrington's mother was from Ireland; both Irish literature and mythology played a significant role in shaping her identity as an artist. For artists in Ireland of the 1930s and 1940s such as Middleton or Johnson, Surrealism offered an alternative to provincialism, in enabling them to situate themselves in relation to both a contemporary avant-garde and the international conflict of the Second World War. Although this is coterminous with Carrington's early career, a relationship between Irishness and Surrealism as developed within her own practice took on a very different form, mediated through other aspects of her own distinctive position: including her role as artistic muse within Surrealism, as a survivor of a traumatic mental breakdown, and as a diasporic artist. All of these factors contribute to the ways that the relationship between the archaic and the modern is played out within Carrington's paintings.

Leonora Carrington's involvement with the Surrealists began when she visited the *First International Surrealist Exhibition* at the New Burlington Galleries in 1936. At this time she had left her family home at Hazelwood Hall in Lancashire and was studying art at Ozenfant's Academy in London. At the Surrealist exhibition she was particularly impressed

by the work of Max Ernst, which she encountered there for the first time. A year later she had embarked on a serious relationship with Ernst, who was twenty-six years older, following him to Paris where her youth, beauty, and independence meant that she was rapidly accepted in Surrealist circles. For Breton she represented the *femme-enfant,* the embodiment of Surrealist womanhood whose naivety, irrationality, and intuition mean that she stands outside of bourgeois convention and hence closer to the unconscious, where she then becomes the source of inspiration for the male artist. Carrington, however, was less interested in being a Surrealist muse than in the opportunities for her life in Paris to further her continued rebellion against the repressive restrictions of her Anglo-Catholic family.

In 1938 she and Ernst moved to St. Martin d'Ardèche, a small village in the South of France. However her relationship with Ernst ended suddenly in 1940 when, for the second time, he was imprisoned in a concentration camp in the South of France as an enemy alien. Deeply traumatized, Carrington suffered a severe breakdown exacerbated by the need to flee from St. Martin d'Ardèche with two companions. Although initially finding refuge in the relative safety of Franco's Spain, her precarious mental state resulted in her being confined in a psychiatric hospital in Santander where she was treated with Cardazol, a drug that induces convulsive spasms similar to those produced by electric shock therapy. *En Bas* (*Down Below*), her account of this period, was subsequently published in 1944 in the Surrealist journal *VVV*. On her release Carrington was eventually able to escape to New York by the expedient of marrying the Mexican diplomat Renato Leduc; here she played an active part in the activities of the exiled Surrealist group reconstituted around the figure of Breton. Leduc and Carrington then traveled to Mexico and subsequently parted; Carrington meanwhile found her place within a thriving community of artists who, like her, had found themselves exiled from Europe as a result of the war. She established lasting friendships with two women, the Hungarian photographer Kati Horna and the Spanish painter Remedios Varo, who had initially come to Mexico with the Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret. Carrington remained in Mexico for much of the rest of her life, increasingly recognized as an artist of some significance within the Mexican avant-garde.

Although Irish-derived imagery played a significant role throughout Carrington's career, this had its roots in memories of her childhood. Her mother Maurie Moorhead came from Moate in County Westmeath in the center of Ireland. The family was extremely wealthy; her father Harold Carrington was the principal shareholder of Imperial Chemicals, and was reputedly also related to Oscar Wilde, thus compounding the Irish lineage. It was, however, her maternal genealogy that was more important. Carrington's childhood was filled with Irish stories and myths told by her nanny Mary Kavanaugh and her mother. Maurie additionally claimed kinship with Maria Edgeworth, the early nineteenth-century author of *Castle Rackrent* (1800), a satirical account of the Anglo-Irish landlords' mis-management of their estates. These associations of Irishness with narratives of the fantastic were in turn reinforced by the tales told on holidays with her maternal grandmother; Grandmother Moorhead claimed descent from the Tuatha dé Danann – the "People of Danu" who were ancient supernatural figures reputed to have been the country's rulers and who later survived as the Sidhe, mysterious inhabitants of Ireland's fairy mounds. The oral narratives of these mythological stories were reinforced by Carrington's own childhood reading of Celtic Revival writer James Stephens' collection *The Crock of Gold* (1912), itself an imaginative retelling of the Tuatha dé Danann sagas closer to the early romantic primitivism of W. B. Yeats than Synge's modernism. However she also read Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels.* As Seán Kissane points out, Swift was not only a significant source for Carrington's later work, but as the vicar of Larecor early in his career he lived close

to Moate; the tiny settlement of Lilliput is situated several miles away (Kissane 2013, 61). The strong association of Ireland with the marvelous and the irrational was similar to that also proposed by Breton and other Surrealists, both in terms of the primitivism of the Celtic Revival and Swift's iconoclasm. Yet rather than functioning as an exoticized source of "Otherness," a sense of Irishness figured within Carrington's practice in very different terms, and was deeply embedded in the formation of her identity from a very early age.

The relationship of Ireland, Surrealism, and the fantastic in Carrington's work was far from static, as can be seen in a comparison of two paintings that engage with these themes, albeit very differently. *The Meal of Lord Candlestick*, 1938, an early work that dates from Carrington's move to Paris to live with Ernst, depicts a nightmarish feast, a table-top spread with fantastic food and ornately baroque foliage and fruit, at the center of which a horse's head crowned with flowers confronts a skeleton on a platter, already picked clean. The diners are elegantly attired ladies with elongated, equine necks and in one case a mane of hair. The figure on the right, meanwhile, uses her fork to make an initial stab into the belly of a young child carefully laid out as part of the banquet. In 1729 Swift's satirical essay "A Modest Proposal" had advocated the uses of cannibalism as a measure to address the overpopulation and extreme poverty of the Irish Catholic poor, suggesting that "a child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish …" (Swift, 38). Carrington, whose mother had presented her at court in 1936, fiercely rejected the upper-class milieu that her parents inhabited. Kissane suggests that *The Meal of Lord Candlestick* can be situated within a contemporary political context, commenting on "class and inequality at a time when … King Edward VIII impotently said of the poor in Wales in 1936, 'something must be done'" (2013, 67). There is also a more direct family reference; "Lord Candlestick" was the name that Carrington gave her father, who, like a bloated Green Man, appears in the bottom left corner, his face surmounted with leaves. Yet Carrington also identified strongly with horses, the animals that form the substance of this meal; at a time when she had so recently rejected the restrictions of her life in England it is hard not to read this scene as embodying a fear of being devoured by her family and their social class, with all that these represented.

Breton later included Swift's "A Modest Proposal" in his *Anthology of Black Humour,* which also contained Carrington's short story "The Debutante" written in 1939 (Carrington 1978). In a fantastical retelling of her own presentation at court, the author's place is taken by a hyena wearing the face of the maid, whom the animal has conveniently eaten; in addition to the story's Swiftian amorality, while the ball is taking place the narrator sits down by an open window to read a copy of *Gulliver's Travels.* Yet Swift's viciously black humor was superseded in Carrington's later works by a different engagement with Irish culture, also derived initially from her childhood reading. *The Sidhe, the White People of Tuatha Dé Danann*, 1954 (Figure 6.1) like the earlier *The Meal of Lord Candlestick,* depicts a communal feast, but with significant distinctions. This dimly lit space surrounds a group of magical beings engaged in some kind of ritual in which the viewer becomes an initiate; these are the mythological Sidhe, now enclosed underground in the timeless space of their fairy mound.

By the time this picture was painted, Carrington had been an active participant for approximately a decade within the cosmopolitan hybridity of the European artists' community in Mexico City. Yet her identity had also undergone a fundamental transition as a result of her terrifying experience in the psychiatric hospital in Santander some years earlier. Both of these factors are significant in relation not just to a shift in her personal imagery, but in terms of the wider cultural significance of the configuration of Irishness, Surrealism,

FIGURE 6.1   Leonora Carrington, *The Sidhe, The White People of the Tuatha Dé Danann*, oil on canvas, 59.5 × 78.5 cm, 1954. Private Collection. *Source*: Photo from Leonora Carrington, exh. cat. Ediciones Era, Mexico, 1974 / © Estate of Leonora Carrington / ARS, NY and DACS, London 2016.

and the marvelous that this can be seen to represent. Initially, Carrington's survival of her mental breakdown meant that she was perceived by Breton as having metamorphosed from *femme-enfant* to another highly ambivalent category of femininity, the *femme-sorcière*. In Susan L. Aberth's words this represents "an ambassador back from the 'other side' … who had returned from the underworld armed with visionary powers" (Aberth 2010, 8). Carrington, however, resisted this categorization as merely another type of Surrealist muse and instead seems to have adopted it on her own terms. Instead of the use of Swiftian rhetoric in a savage depiction of youthful rebellion against her family, an Irishness more closely associated with the concerns of the Celtic Revival now becomes part of a more complex range of references bound up with nostalgia, hybridity, and a more affirmative and holistic view of femininity.

On the altar-like table top of *The Sidhe* are a group of items that suggest a relationship between aspects of Celtic and other mythological traditions, in addition to a reference to the culture of the artist's adopted home in Mexico. The soup bowl and ladle are reminiscent of the regenerative cauldron of the Celtic Triple-Goddess that figures in many of Carrington's other paintings, such as *The House Opposite*, 1945, in addition to playing a significant role in the plot of one of her novels, *The Hearing Trumpet* (Carrington 1976). Scattered nearby are two different kinds of fruit: a yam, indigenous to Mexico, and pomegranates, mythologically associated with Persephone, daughter of the Greek goddess Demeter and who, for half the year, is confined underground like the Sidhe themselves. Carrington's use of the signs of archetypal femininity in her work suggests comparisons also with Colin Middleton's use of Jungian constructions of female identity. In both cases these are images that convey a temporal disjuncture characteristic of the

experience of modernity, in that their archaism is in sharp contradiction to contemporary reality, whether this be wartime Belfast or cosmopolitan Mexico. By this stage, however, Carrington's hybridized phantasmagoria had become characterized by esoteric references from a multiplicity of sources, whether diasporic – unlike Middeton's – or otherwise. This was further supported by her reading in 1949 of Robert Graves' *The White Goddess* (1948). Similar to the late nineteenth-century scholar Johann Jakob Bachofen, Graves proposed a prehistoric matriarchal religion, subsequently superseded by the advent of patriarchy; for Graves this was derived from a reading of comparative mythology. Although this thesis has been widely criticized for a lack of archaeological and historical evidence, its language of poetic imagery also translated readily into visual form. Carrington was later to state that reading "*The White Goddess* represented the greatest revelation of my life" (Chadwick 1991, 186).

The theme of the table-top ritual in *The Sidhe, the White People of Tuatha dé Danann* appears frequently in Carrington's work. In her earlier painting *Three Women with Crows*, 1951 the three female figures seated round the table appear to be undergoing some kind of magical transformation. This is a painting that can be seen as a mediated representation of the bonds of female friendship that she had formed in the exiled European artistic community. Rather than the public space of the café, associated with masculine formations of the avant-garde back in Paris, Carrington, Varo, and Horna spent considerable time in each other's kitchens discussing art, photography, and politics in addition to the concerns of their families; Varo, like Carrington, was also deeply interested in occult traditions. For Carrington, the domestic functioned as a potent site for interconnected transformative processes – magic, cooking, and painting (Aberth 2010, 63). In *Grandmother Moorhead's Aromatic Kitchen* (1975) the kitchen is identified with the memory of her Irish grandmother's magical tales, yet it also contains Mexican implements: a *comal* (griddle) and *metate* (mortar) for grinding corn (Moorhead 2010, 83). The themes that Carrington derived from Irish and pan-Celtic mythology, further shaped through an embedded knowledge of Surrealism's focus on the irrational and the marvelous, therefore become reconstituted and transformed into the articulation of her place within a hybridized diasporic culture in mid-century Mexico.

Shifting Cartographies: Surrealism and Contemporary Irish Art

In 1929 Ireland was situated firmly at the western edge of the Surrealist map, positioned there by a modernist projection that privileged Paris as its main point of reference. Ireland was still positioned relative to the perceptions of a European avant-garde, for whom Irish literary antecedents were as much signifiers of Parisian cosmopolitanism as the relics of tribal African cultures in Breton's personal collection. By this point Ireland had been politically independent for the past seven years, removed from the colonial relationships characterizing the connections between Britain and Europe from much of the rest of the world. Yet Irish art was generally perceived as marginal to innovations elsewhere within a canonical designation of center and periphery. However in the more recent context where hybridity, fluidity, and cosmopolitanism have become the norm, the situation for artists in both Ireland and other "peripheral" locations has changed considerably. This also involves the potential for selective encounters with the past in relation to the needs and interests of contemporary artists. This final section focuses on work by two contemporary Irish artists, Alice Maher and Gerard Byrne, whose work engages with Surrealism. Although there are considerable differences between their respective practices, for both artists aspects

of Surrealism have figured within wider projects of the deconstruction of gender stability, temporality, and the modern.

Alice Maher

Alice Maher's work is frequently recognized as having affinities with Surrealism, and a photograph from her *Portraits series*, 2003, was featured on the cover of the exhibition catalogue for *The Surreal in Irish Art* (2011). Yet her Surrealist affinities extend beyond similarities of imagery and iconography to include aspects of both source materials and the methods used to work with these.

In *L'Université*, a site-specific work included in the artist's mid-career retrospective *Becoming* (2012–2013), small spotlights illuminate the wooden surface of desks racked in the darkness of a disused lecture theatre. The exhibition took place in an annex of IMMA, a nineteenth-century building in Earlsfort Terrace in the city center that had formerly been the site of University College Dublin (UCD). Originating as part of a political initiative to challenge the hegemony of the Protestant Trinity College by establishing a Catholic university, UCD played an important part in the cultural life of the city during the drive towards independence and subsequently; James Joyce was one of its former students (Kissane 2012, 9). The tiny pools of light on the desktops of the old Medical School lecture theatre draw attention to the "successive curtains of graffiti" carved out on the wooden surface (Alice Maher, email to author, 27 June 2015). The names of bored students, drawings, song lyrics, declarations of love, despair and obscenity provide an experiential record remaining long after the subject matter of the lectures themselves has been forgotten. Some are particularly poignant: "I Miss Her 11/10/99" is followed by the equally grief-stricken "I Still Miss Her 1/12/99." The single lights suspended from leads looped across the space of the lecture theatre made visible a selection of these different inscriptions; Maher specifically selected those that stood out as unique, historic, emotive, or uncanny. *L'Université* highlights an alternative genealogy to the official history of the institution, yet the randomness and anonymity of the desktop inscriptions also suggest the graffiti photographed on the walls of night-time Paris by Brassaï, and published in the Surrealist journal *Minotaure* in 1933. In their evocation of hidden desires Brassaï's photographs draw upon the Surrealist perception of the city as a site of the irrational, located within the areas overlooked by the progressive drive of modernization. One of the earliest instances of this is recounted in Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1926). Like the disused lecture theatre transformed into Maher's *L'Université*, in Aragon's account the nineteenth-century Passage de l'Opéra, soon to be demolished, becomes a site of the marvelous and the uncanny; both are instances of outmoded spaces that jar against later moments of modernity.

The temporal disjuncture implicit in Alice Maher's *L'Université* can be seen in terms of the contradictory relationship of archaic and modern characterizing modernism in Ireland, just as it also evokes characteristics of Surrealism. Issues of heterogeneity and fluidity of identity are also central to her work. Although additionally containing references to Celticism, the past that emerges within her practice is predominantly the hybridity of the Anglo-Norman period in Ireland, rejected by the Celtic Revival "in the search for their identity, going back to a more archaic Irishness in search of a 'purer' ancestor" (Barber 2004, 96). However the return of the past within the present in Surrealism was often figured not just as the outmoded, but in terms of the disturbing effects of the uncanny (Foster 1995). This is something that also resonates within Maher's work, as in the

FIGURE 6.2   Alice Maher, *The Double*, 2009. Video animation. Sound by Trevor Knight. 5 min 5 sec. *Source*: © Alice Maher.

film-drawing *The Double*, 2009, (Figure 6.2) where the staging of the uncanny co-exists with other aspects of her practice reminiscent of Surrealist aesthetic categories, including both the found object and the chance encounter, in addition to the questioning of constructions of femininity found in the work of women Surrealist artists.

Drawing has played a significant aspect in Alice Maher's work since the series *The Thicket*, 1991, where the image of a young girl engaged in a range of different activities emerges out of the palimpsest of markings and erasures layered onto the paper's surface. Similar processes of transformation and metamorphosis permeate the later film-drawings. *The Double*, 2009 and its companion piece *Flora* were part of an installation entitled *The Music of Things;* each had their own musical sound track written by Trevor Knight. Approximately five minutes long, the looped projection of *The Double* provides an ongoing phantasmagoria in a succession of images that continually shift and metamorphose between human and non-human, animate and non-animate. The film records drawing as a physical process (Krčma 2012, 113); working on the same sheet of paper, Maher drew until she had an image that she wanted to capture. After scanning into a computer, the image was partly erased and overdrawn until the next stage was reached and the process repeated. In the film-drawings the narrativity inherent in *The Thicket* now becomes explicit and more open-ended, while also retaining traces of the past uncannily visible within the work's surface through the buildup of erasures. In the final sequence of *The Double*, a sphinx-like female with a modern hairstyle and triple breasts suckles three severed male heads; these are reminiscent of Maher's earlier sculptural work *Gorget*, 2001, in which a small ring of heads evokes an ancient Celtic necklace. In the next stage of the film-drawing, the additional breast has become re-absorbed into the sphinx's body and the third head disappears before she discards the remaining two. Finally she sits alone, her arms folded in a gesture of self-containment. The image of the sphinx, as a symbol of female wisdom, also figures in Carrington's work, an artist with whom Maher has declared an affinity, finding "many

mutual friends amongst (Carrington's) lexicon of creatureliness" (Maher 2013). However rather than the arcane frame of reference in Carrington's work Maher's sphinx with her elegant hairstyle and dangling earrings collapses the categories of archaic and modern within a hybridized temporality.

Gerard Byrne

In the work of Middleton, Carrington or Maher encounters with Surrealism have been linked to representations of femininity, albeit in different ways. The focus of feminist readings of Surrealism from the 1980s onwards has also been largely on the prominent role played by both constructions of femininity and the activities of women artists themselves within the movement. In the work of Gerard Byrne, by comparison, Surrealism provides a focus on the formation of masculinity, specifically in his multichannel video installation *A Man and a Woman Make Love*, 2012 (Figure 6.3). Yet this project can also be situated in relation to the continued development of gendered readings in, for example, Amy Lyford's interrogation of Surrealist masculinity, or David Hopkins' analysis of the homosocial in post-Duchampian art practice (Lyford 2007; Hopkins, 2008). This focus on masculinity

FIGURE 6.3   Gerard Byrne, *A Man and a Woman Make Love* (2012). Multi-channel projection. Duration: variable loop of approx. 19 min. Commissioned by dOCUMENTA 13, Kassel, 2012. *Source*: Courtesy of Gerard Byrne Studio.

has been a consistent feature of Byrne's practice, closely allied to a deconstruction of fixed and determinate views of history, as he clarified in an interview with Kirsty Ogg,

> I think that historical discourses … re-inscribe patriarchal forms and norms. Part of the critical traction of what I've been doing for a while involves a certain deconstruction of these patriarchal representations. Not so much in an explicit activist gesture, but deconstructive in the sense that the works reproduce, or re-enact these historical referents in ways that make them palpably vulnerable …
>
> (2013, 23)

Initially commissioned for Documenta 13 in Kassel, *A Man and a Woman Make Love* is a re-enactment of the "Recherches sur la sexualité," published in the eleventh issue of the journal *La Révolution Surréaliste* in March 1928. From about 1998 onwards, a particular feature of Byrne's work has been on a number of "magazine projects" focused on a restaging of the printed word as a series of dramatized and filmed encounters that both reveal and yet undermine the aims of the original, and in turn, open up questions about the progressive and utopian rhetoric of modernity. Yet Byrne's sources are also media that have become outmoded within the digital culture that provides the means of production of the magazine projects – a temporal disjuncture not unlike that between archaic and modern emerging within readings of Maher's work, or even that of Carrington and Middleton in this context. One of the earlier magazine projects most relevant to *A Man and a Woman … is New Sexual Lifestyles*, 2003, based on a round table discussion published in *Playboy* forty years previously. Similar to the later work, a group of actors play the roles of the original participants discussing a wide range of sexual activities and preferences. Although the "Recherches" and the *Playboy* round table were separated by some forty-five years, both events can be seen as articulating prerogatives of sexual libertarianism, and in both instances their restaging reveals the contradictions that underpin these claims.

In the original transcript of the "Recherches" published in *La Révolution Surréaliste* a group of Surrealists, all male, discuss their attitudes to a wide range of sexual practices. Those taking part were artists and writers, yet their accounts have more in common with the clinical tone of the emergent scientific discourse of sexology as they assess the desirability or otherwise of brothels, fetishism, or homosexuality. Despite this, however, individual prejudices still persist that reveal the underlying heteronormativity of Surrealism; in particular, when Raymond Queneau asserts his acceptance of homosexuality, Breton, who is controlling the shape of the discussion, abruptly changes the subject.

This succession of desires, preferences, and aspirations provides a cross-section of Surrealist masculine attitudes towards sexuality; that these were predominantly heterosexual was reinforced by the inclusion in the next edition of *La Révolution Surréaliste* of the montaged individual photographs of members of the group, their eyes closed, surrounding a painting of a female nude by René Magritte. This montage was reconstructed, albeit in an altered form, for Byrne's *A Man and a Woman Make Love,* using photographs of the actors playing the parts of the Surrealists in his restaged version. Here however there is a different spatial relationship between the variably sized photographs, jostling each other across the picture space rather than the original version's systematic layout. The omission of Magritte's painting also shifts attention away from the objectification of women found throughout the narratives of the "Recherches" and helps to make it clear that this is now a project as much about relationships between men as it is about the redeployment of modernist representational strategies that are used in their investigation.

The authority of the quasi-scientific discourse of the "Recherches" is subverted in *A Man and a Woman Make Love* by use of a range of different strategies of production that defamiliarize the narrative and encourage viewers to question what they are seeing. This piece shares some of the production features that Mark Godfrey identified as common to Byrne's earlier magazine projects (Godfrey 2007). The actors stick closely to the transcript of the "Recherches" rather than adding any degree of improvisation, and the finished film has been edited in such a way as to undermine any sense of narrative continuity. When *A Man and a Woman Make Love* was shown at the Whitechapel Gallery as part of the artist's retrospective in 2013 its discontinuous and sometimes overlapping sequences were shown across different screens placed obliquely across the gallery; the spectator then had to consciously negotiate both the exhibition space and the process of looking itself in order to view the work.

This degree of the spectator's active involvement in the production of the work's meaning is reinforced by the presence of another set of viewers who also appear on the screen. Breton's flat in the Rue du Château, the location for the discussions, was reconstructed as a set in front of an audience invited to the filming of the piece in the Dublin studios of RTE, the Irish state television station. The set, and the work of both filming and editing, are all intermittently visible. As Byrne has clarified, the staging of the piece in the manner of a 1950s American teleplay reasserts the performative nature of the production in that he was "interested in the studio audience because it theatricalizes the performances of the actors, and it also reinforces the spatial duality of live broadcast" (Gerard Byrne, email to author, 29 June 2015). It is, furthermore, the conditions of the work's production that add further levels of meaning to the piece. The gap between the contemporary technology of television production and use of period set and costume leads also to the perception that the opinions presented by the actors are themselves outmoded. *A Man and a Woman Make Love* was specifically conceived with Documenta in mind, however once distinct from this context other connotations become apparent. The use of Dublin-based television studios and audience, plus Irish actors playing the parts of the Surrealists further erodes any naturalism within the production of the piece, but it also draws attention to the shift in attitudes towards sexuality in Ireland in recent years, particularly homosexuality.

Conclusion

Rather than just an exoticized curiosity, Surrealist Ireland becomes revealed as a repository of multiple meanings. Within Surrealism itself the different interpretations of Irishness had affinities with aims and desires already existing: Swift's recommendations in *A Modest Proposal* correspond to Surrealist challenges to conventional morality, while Synge's writings on the West of Ireland resonate strongly with the modernist primitivism of Breton and other figures such as Antonin Artaud. Conversely, for Irish artists an engagement with Surrealism itself has taken on a variety of forms that in turn open onto further questions around the uses of the irrational in engaging with contradictions within the experience of modernity. Although for an artist like Middleton, Surrealism engendered a means of articulating a response both to personal trauma and the collective experience of war, to what extent, for example, might this apply also to artists in a later period of Northern Ireland's history – the years of political conflict from 1969 to the 1990s? Other lines of enquiry arise from a reading of both Carrington and Maher's lexicons of phantasmagoria. Although in Carrington's case this initially drew upon both Swift and the Celtic Revival, the issues opened up concern more generalized readings of archaism and nostalgia within

a hybridized modernity. Maher's shifting and fluid construction of both femininity and temporality similarly is not just restricted to an Irish context, while one consequence of the disjuncture between outmoded and the contemporary in Gerard Byrne's engagement with Surrealism is to resituate Ireland within a wider gender politics. In some ways, these conclusions return to the Surrealist project of a revised cartography, where the significance of the peripheral and the allegedly primitive were re-evaluated; the difference here is that Ireland is now situated within a map that no longer emanates from Paris, but within a projection that is now planetary.

Notes

1   "The World in the Time of the Surrealists" (1929), *Variétés*, 26–27.
2   "A. E." was the pseudonym of George William Russell (1867–1935), an Irish writer and painter associated with the Celtic Revival.

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Part II

Displaying the Modern

Picturing the Installation Shot

Julie Sheldon

The "installation shot," or the photographic view of a display, is the chief visual record of the modern art exhibition. For instance, the layout of the Armory Show, the first Der Blaue Reiter group show, and the Surrealist Exhibitions of the 1930s are remembered in a choice handful of black-and-white photographs. However, the installation shot's status as the dominant record of exhibition culture is uneven and views of many landmark exhibitions are frustratingly absent from the history of art (it is worth noting that there is no photographic record of the eight Impressionist exhibitions or any of the Salon des Independents). Notwithstanding the fitful documentary record, what is publicly remembered about art exhibitions (including printed material relating to vernissage or to catalogues) has become a resurgent interest marked most notably by the current impulse to archive or to reprise exhibitions (Altshuler 1994, 2008, 2011; Klonk 2009; Sherman 2013; Wilson 2009).[1] This chapter has two aims. First, it sets out to examine some of the conventions of recording the physical appearance of specific exhibitions. Second, it considers the relationship between the installation view and the development of the display aesthetic in modern culture. In making my argument, I seek to balance material on the historical development of the installation shot with a discussion of the critical reality of the installation shot as a subsystem of the history of the modern art gallery.

The Installation of the Installation Shot

In order to capture some of the complexity and fluidity of the identity of the installation shot it is necessary to offer a few comments on the particular historical conditions from which it emerged. On one level the installation shot could be related to wider developments in modern culture and society. Following Michel Foucault, we can note a general trend in modern states and civil societies to introduce systems that at once massify and individualize people, objects, data, and things. Foucault referred to the "pedagogical machine" of modern power: the capacity to create governmental technologies that organize, coordinate, and standardize the norms by which institutions function (Foucault 1977, 172). In his wake, other writers have argued that museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions became places of regulation and control, and thus contributed to the disciplinary individualism at the heart of Western liberal democracies (Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Bennett 1995). For commentators working within this framework the installation shot could be identified as one of the cultural technologies developed to define the museum, gallery, or exhibition as a space governed by supervisory logic.

The matters, at the heart of this vision of the visual ordering of the art world, were of interest to a number of earlier commentators. William Hazlitt, Quatremère de Quincy, Paul Valéry, and many others had come to different conclusions from Foucault and his interpreters. Each of them treated the experience of seeing art as a process of discovering the optimum "perspectival position" from which a mass of art works could be experienced (Maleuvre 1999, 2–3, 14–23, 88–91; Barlow and Trodd, 2000, 8–10). In varying degrees, they associated the experience of display with the pursuit of a personal "installation shot" that would intensify the experience of seeing art works in public spaces. And this will to a condition of clarified experience, it must be noted, was premised on the conviction that systems of display and exhibition tended to frustrate the spectator's desire to visually isolate individual art works. Looked at from this position, the art gallery *resisted* the demands of the modern subject; *refused* to acknowledge the requirements of modern individualism:

> Something strangely senseless comes out of this grouping of dead visions. They jealously grapple for the gaze that brings existence to them. From every corner they are clamouring for my attention … The sense of sight is harassed by this abuse of space in a collection and similarly, intelligence is offended by this tight packing of important works. The more beautiful works are … the more apart they must stand [alone]. They are objects made to be unique by their creators … these gathered independent marvels become mutually antagonistic, nay enemies … [The individual painting] KILLS the others around it.
>
> (Valéry cited in Maleuvre 1999, 88–89)

Valéry's extraordinary vision, where the institutionalization of art robs the individual art work of its life, would be echoed in the foundation myths told about modernism, in which dynamic creativity seeks to overcome the "Alexandrianism" of academic culture. At the bottom of Valéry's discomfort we glimpse a perfect picture of a visual world where things stand apart, a vision of a perspectival point where the spectator is at one with individual objects, a vision of a perfected installation shot, a vision of the unity of sight, mind, and environment. As with the stories modernism tells of its birth, Valéry imagines an ideal world where authentic spectators and creators announce that the official art world is no more than an intrusion into the world of true creativity, and the singularity by which it exists.

As we will see, the *idea* of the installation shot belongs to different histories, different standpoints, different perspectives – different ways of looking at and responding to art objects and the material systems and cultural processes within which they are embedded. In the next section we will itemize some of the spatial, documentary, evidential, and institutional norms of the installation shot as a form of visual-cultural knowledge.

The Domains of the Installation Shot

The contemporary installation shot has assumed certain conventions: it typically records the design of a show in its pristine state of completion, and denuded of spectators; its perspective occludes one or two walls; its clinical matter-of-factness belies the curatorial invention and manual labor that precedes the installation; it depicts a universal territory that "belongs" to art. These properties are remarkably consistent in the presentation of modern and contemporary installation views; and they have been noted and supported by many commentators on, and participants in, the modern art world. Brian O'Doherty's

much cited exegesis on the *White Cube* discusses – albeit briefly – the installation shot in the twentieth century. In his formulation, the installation shot is "a metaphor for the gallery space," a space that guarantees us a clinical presentation of works of art, each leading its own life independently of others in the same display, and – importantly – without the distraction of other viewers (O'Doherty 1986, 15). However, the installation view, depopulated of gallery visitors, is a relatively recent phenomenon aligned almost entirely with the minimalist sensibilities of late modernism (one that O'Doherty equated with Abstract Expressionism and Colourfield Painting). The nineteenth century forerunner of the installation shot, the painted or sketched view of the gallery interior, nearly always depicted visitors to the space. Such paintings belong to an undesignated category of painting, one that Giles Waterfield has called "museum paintings" (Waterfield and Clifford 1991). Museum paintings normally utilized the gallery setting for scenes of middle-class recreation. We note this in Louis Beroud's paintings of the interior of the Louvre and Enrico Meneghelli's views of the collection at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in the late nineteenth century. In what appear to be factually reliable presentations of the installations of the galleries at Boston and the Louvre, Beroud and Meneghelli generally foreground visitors in their scenes. Beroud frequently depicts copyists in his paintings and, given that artists spent a great deal of time in the galleries of Europe and North America copying paintings (either as part of their training or as a means of generating income), it is unsurprising to find so many in museum paintings.[2] Finally, there is a further category of museum scenes in the printed press of the nineteenth century and one that particularly represents Private Views of exhibitions and the crowds that attended them (Mainardi 1989).[3]

Aside from the museum painting as a record of a gallery installation, there is a further record of displays amongst a handful of artists commissioned to document individual works of art and, occasionally also, the arrangement of paintings from a collection. In the mid-seventeenth century David Teniers was commissioned by the Flemish Archduke Leopold Wilhelm to catalogue his collection and make engraved copies after the paintings. Teniers also created a number of paintings that showed the works on display in a semi-fictionalized hang that showcased the collection. At the end of the eighteenth century Maria Cosway was commissioned to make drawings of the collection in the Louvre and she also showed the arrangement of the works on display by recording the principal walls of the gallery. With the advent of photography in the 1840s this documentary function could be commissioned from photographers (Hamber 1996).[4] However, despite the longstanding technical ability of photographers to record the physical appearance of a display in a gallery or museum, there is a woefully incomplete record of the physical appearance of the hang of many historically important displays and exhibitions.[5] There are a small number of photographic views of the interior of the halls of the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Exposition Universelle in 1855, and photographs of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 by Leonida Caldesi and Mattia Montecchi that capture some of the exhibition layout of each. For organizations with permanent collections, the employment of photographers in the gallery was relatively common from the 1850s onwards; their role was principally to document collections – or to make reproductions of works of art for sale as postcards or stereographs (Hamber 1996). So, for example, there were official photographers at the British Museum (Roger Fenton) and at the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) (Charles Thurston Thompson).[6] However, Fenton and Thompson were employed to document the items that formed the collections; not the exhibitionary arrangement of the collection (Barnes 2008; Date and Hamber 1990). When Roger Fenton captured the Graeco-Roman Saloon in the background of his photographs of

antique sculptures it was a happy accident rather than a concerted effort to depict the installation.

What might be called the humanization of the art exhibition, its transformation into a vision with its own perspectival point, belongs to a rather different narrative. As far as I can ascertain, the first photographic views of a temporary public art exhibition are to be found amongst the French photographer Gustave Le Gray's views of the Paris Salons – annual shows of works by living artists – between 1851 and 1853. These are preserved in a small album consisting of eight plates showing the Salon of 1852, and a ninth plate representing a view of the 1850–1851 Salon showing a group of sculptures.[7] Le Gray is also known to have taken photographs of the 1853 Salon (Aubenas *et al*. 2002; Janis 1987). Louvre curator and organizer of the annual Salon exhibitions, Philippe de Chennevières, commissioned Le Gray to produce a photographic album of the Paris Salon. Although the precise expectations of the commission are unknown, it appears that Le Gray was tasked with capturing views of the principal rooms of the Salon.[8] Despite the importance of the Paris Salons as the principal forum for the display and critical consumption of art during the Second Empire, there is relatively little literature that discusses the organization and design of their exhibitions or throws much light on how they were juried. However, Le Gray's images provide a visual corollary to the restricted historical record.

Grouped together, Le Gray's images of three consecutive Salons (1850–1853) reveal an interest in the experience of the hang. Compared to another photographer, Pierre-Ambroise Richebourg, who made photographs of works at the Salons of 1857, 1861, and 1865, we see that Le Gray was more concerned with the overall effect of the galleries and his vision tended towards a panoramic view of the installation. In comparing the installation views of Le Gray and Richebourg two very different responses to the official directive are evident. Richebourg's views generally capture each wall in isolation and act as a document of their individual arrangement. For example, his views of the Salon of 1861 (totaling forty-two photographic views of the installation) each is a direct frontal view. His lens records the sight as a theatrical one – the shaped plates even give the effect of seeing the paintings through a proscenium arch (an effect compounded by their arched top outline).[9] Le Gray's photographs, on the other hand, cannot resist the décor of the Salon's overall design and his viewpoint exceeds the dimensions of Richebourg's tableaux of paintings. In Le Gray's views we get a sense of how the visitor might process within the space, passing through the velvet draped entrances and exits to reach the various halls and galleries. They further suggest the warm colored walls (believed to have been chestnut red) upon which the busy arrangement of 1,755 paintings hung.

The 1852 Salon's curator, Chennevières, was an ambitious administrator at the start of a distinguished museum career. He had been an outspoken critic of the Salon in the periodical press and was firmly opposed to the democratic principles of a juried Salon, suspecting artists of being incapable of acting independently and greatly in need of being "governed" (Roos 1989, 54). Painters exhibiting at the Paris Salon frequently felt "governed" by the system of selection and display. All artists were aware that the allocation of wall space was both tactically and hierarchically significant and often complained bitterly about the positioning of their work. In Salon style displays, where works are stacked and mounted with very little intervening space, viewers' attention is at a premium; and artists frequently complained about the height at which their work was hung. In the academic Salons there was a division of the wall in two zones differentiated by what was known as "the line." Being hung "on the line" was the prime position for an art work. To be hung above the line (commonly known as being "skied") was a less prestigious allocation and functioned as a sign of aesthetic inferiority. Public and private galleries shared the tacit hierarchy of

paintings in their curatorial designs, often working to a sight line that marked out prime viewing space. Furthermore, the hanging of paintings at the Salon owed a great deal to the aristocratic tastes of the eighteenth century, where the subjects of the works determined their hierarchy in the hang. In the townhouses and country estates of the private picture owners, prime works of art (classical or biblical in subject) were often hung according to a rough symmetry, with smaller pictures arranged in tiers and rows around them. This was an installation aesthetic that was repeated throughout the nineteenth century in most European and American art galleries, where walls were stacked floor-to-ceiling with paintings. The busy design schemes were complicated further by the use of ornate and sometimes massive frames. Visitors were often overwhelmed by the density of the hang, which Oscar Wilde experienced as, "that terrible weariness of mind and eye which comes on after the 'Forced Marches' through ordinary picture galleries" (Wilde 1908 [1877], 6).

Even in the apparent disorder of the Salon style hang the arrangement of works conformed to a taxonomy and an aesthetic system that gave the works meaning. The first was a hierarchy of subjects in painting and the second was that comparisons between paintings would contribute to the education of the viewer and transmit universal values (Brettell 1987; Sunderland and Solkin 2001). As Mark Hallett has pointed out in reference to the equivalent Royal Academy exhibitions in London, the exhibition room was "loaded with the storylines of artistic competition, social distinction, and political conflict" (Hallett 2004, 596). We see this in one of Le Gray's plates which shows a wall in the main hall at the Salon. On the top row, the two large paintings are (on the left) *Tout passe* by Omer-Charlet and (on the right) *Satan Struck by Lightning* by Charles Lefebvre. At the bottom, between two small landscapes by Théodore Rousseau, is Ange Tissier's oval portrait of a woman. In the center of the middle row is *Les Demoiselles de Village* by Gustave Courbet. The installation views in Le Gray's album also reveal that the exhibition functioned as a discursive arena in which visitors could trade their opinions and critics could formulate their judgements for the press. For, in the eighth plate of the album, Courbet's painting is hung in the gallery on the first floor (Figure 7.1). The rules of the Salon provided for a five-day closure to enable works to be re-positioned. It is possible that the painting, owned by the art collector Count Morny, had at first been placed in the main hall but that, following hostile reviews in the press, it was moved to one side when the exhibition was rehung in that five-day period. This installation shot then reveals several modernist characteristics: that modernism is challenging, rarely appreciated in its own day; that active efforts were made to minimize its visual impact within the overall hang; and that curators could diminish the impact of an unorthodox painting in their scoring of the hang. In this space of sameness, a sameness orchestrated by the alliance of academicism and commercial society, the singularity of Courbet's work was problematic. More broadly, we might say that Courbet operated as a Valéry-like artist: he resisted the idea of a pictorial network where paintings compete for attention; he saw the space of display as a living space in its own right.[10]

Le Gray's photographs document the twin precepts of mid-nineteenth century display that fashioned public modes of perception: the type of arrangement practices by aristocratic collectors and the type of hang favored by the commercial showroom. These precepts sometimes overlapped as at the Salon of 1852. This Salon was held at the Palais-Royal and occupied a number of rooms on the first floor, including a new gallery that has been established just above the glazed passage known as the "galerie d'Orléans." Ideas about how best to light these new galleries oscillated between a preference for lateral and top lighting of galleries, and by natural daylight or by artificial light. As Figure 7.1 illustrates, the new gallery was illuminated by skylights, a facility that Alice Barnaby refers to as

FIGURE 7.1   Gustave Le Gray, *The Salon of 1852*, 1st Floor Gallery, salted paper print from waxed-paper negative, 24 × 37 cm, 1852. Paris, Musée d'Orsay. *Source*: Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski.

"patrician lighting," in the sense that it is evocative of "powerful Enlightenment principles of civic humanism, rational thought, and intellectual endeavour" (Barnaby 2013, 3). This top-lit processional space borrowed its design intelligence from both the showroom and from the private, aristocratic gallery. The influence of the sale room on picture hanging at the academies should not be underestimated. As Russell points out, "the pragmatic hangs of the saleroom were echoed in some collections" (Russell 1989, 146). In the art show-rooms of European cities paintings were hung *en masse* to maximize the display, but also with the upper register of pictures tilted forward to reduce glare and increase visibility for the viewer below.

Both systems of display – "patrician" and "commercialist" – were challenged by new ideas concerning the arrangement of vision, where visuality, legibility and intelligibility were defined in terms of the individual, not the collective. Our interest in the documen-tary status of the installation shot at the Salon assumes a further significance when we consider that it depicts a style of hang that was increasingly at odds with the demands for selectivity in curatorial schemes of display, and a concurrent, aesthetic desire to de-clutter the hang and to minimize fussy décor. Edgar Degas's curatorial eye recoiled at the Salon hangs; and in a letter to the newspaper *Paris-Journal* on 12 April 1870, he outlined his recommendations for a more satisfactory arrangement. He proposed that a two-tier hang should replace the floor-to-ceiling hang and that paintings should be positioned at least twenty to thirty centimeters apart and displayed "according to their own demands instead of those preordained by traditional patterns of symmetry" (cited in Ward 1991, 600–601). The model that Degas had in mind was an English example of display – with a spacious deployment of paintings and neutral color schemes – that he had seen in 1867 at the

Universal Exposition in Paris. This arrangement, Degas advocated, would guarantee the integrity of the artist and the individual work of art.

Other artists adopted this attitude, which would be developed by Valéry, where vision, legibility, and display are linked to atmospheric and environmental conditions. Hence issues relating to scale, mass, and decorative schema became important when exhibitions were treated as complex spatial domains. For artists concerned with optical effects, such as the Neo-Impressionists, the stakes were particularly high. In 1888 Paul Signac twice wrote in the press explaining why the Neo-Impressionists had rejected the traditional deep-red colored walls preferred at the Salon and the saleroom in favor of grey coverings. Signac pointed to the exhibitions held in the Galerie Durand-Ruel and the Galerie Georges Petit, arguing that the deep-red walls and frames "dripping with gold" were not conducive to the experience of viewing (cited in Ward 1991, 620). In Signac's view only a neutral color, such as gray, would maintain the vibrancy of color in Neo-Impressionist paintings. In another review of 1890 of the shows put on by the Belgian group, Les XX, Signac complained that the overly plush decoration of the rooms made the works on display "the victims of … luxury" (cited in Ward 1991, 620). Arguing that the destructive effects of the décor prevented the works from achieving the full effects of color, he proposed a space where all colored objects should be excluded so that "only the colors of the painting will sing the triumph of their undisturbed harmonies" (cited in Ward 1991, 620). Signac's critique of display techniques at the commercial galleries of Paris was timely. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century there was a rapid rise in the number of exhibitions that were open to the public.[11] Curatorial styles of display in most of these unquestioningly followed the precedents of the Salon and the sale room. Artists were often affiliated to an exhibition venue, under the artist-dealer system, but there were increasingly complex alliances of interest in the exhibition system and many artists sought independent venues for display. The third Impressionist exhibition in 1877 was mounted in a bourgeois apartment rented by Gustave Caillebotte, and Paul Durand-Ruel's gallery where he sold Impressionist paintings in 1883 was a converted domestic space.

The move away from the luxurious swagger of the showrooms of the salon, or the dealers' rooms at the Durand-Ruel or Georges Petit galleries, based on connoisseurial and commercialist forms of ocular abundance, to a system where the artist aspires to be a curator of the uniqueness of his or her vision, provides one context for the emergence of the installation shot. After all, the ideal subject, as represented by Degas, Seurat, and Signac is the fusion of spectator and creator: someone who is a composer of view-points, a manager of the dimensions in which the exhibition is viewed, a director of the spatiotemporal domain in which the "installation shot" is created in the first place.

In the years after the 1852 Salon artists pursued supplementary vehicles for display, independent of the state-sponsored Salons and the established system of dealers. Artists rejected or disenchanted by the Salon not only sought new venues for exhibiting art works, they also invented a new way of displaying their work, emboldened by the proposition that the artist might also curate his or her vision in and through the exhibition, as imagined by Degas and others. Although Degas, Seurat, and Signac proposed a refreshed exhibition aesthetic, we have very little evidence which allows us to understand how Impressionists and Post-Impressionists hung their shows. It was James Abbott MacNeill Whistler who devised a detailed program of exhibition design. Whistler agreed with Degas, Seurat, and Signac and thought that art works had to stand apart in the hang. Whistler implemented his curatorial inventions for his first solo exhibition at the Flemish Gallery, in Pall Mall, London in 1874. He took charge of the decoration of the interior and the arrangement of nearly one hundred of his prints and paintings. Whistler's interest in moderating the

lighting of his works at the Flemish Gallery was inventive and he requested that the skylight be given one coat of white paint. Having instructed the Gallery to paint the walls with one coat of red lead followed by two coats of pink distemper, he found that the effect was too bright and so darkened the overall effect by having the ceiling painted with a brown distemper and the offending walls overpainted with two coats of pink-gray distemper. The effort was evidently worth it and one reviewer commented on the congenial and homely effects of Whistler's design,

> The visitor is struck … with a curious sense of harmony and fitness pervading it, and is more interested, perhaps, in the general effect than in any one work. The gallery and its contents are altogether in harmony – a "symphony in colour", carried out in every detail, even in the colour of the matted floor, the blue pots and flowering plants, the delicate tints of the walls, and above all, in the juxtaposition of the pictures.
>
> (cited in Stoner 1997, 111)

Whistler's contrivances to woo the public gaze with sympathetic décor were further developed in a number of other Bond Street shows but, in essence, what he had achieved in the 1870s was a means of marketing the small easel painting, as well as print, as a potentially decorative complement to a domestic space.

The Shock of the Installation Shot?

Although the installation shot seems to promise a corroborative illustration to Art History's written record, sometimes – as in case of the first Die Brücke exhibition – the two pieces of evidence are uncoordinated. The exhibition of Die Brücke opened on 26 September 1906. Art history remembers that this landmark exhibition took place in the Mustersaal (show room) of what then was the Lampenfabrik (Lamp Factory) Karl-Max Seifert in the Dresden suburb of Löbtau. It remembers the artists that joined the exhibition (Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff) were at the start of their careers and united by their need to find a means of showing their work in public. The members of Die Brücke were further connected by a stylistic predilection for figurative angularity, dissonant coloring, and edgy narratives – the components that combined to form German Expressionism. These shared artistic concerns were discernible in the paintings displayed in 1906. However, the members of the group amplified their Expressionist credentials in an accompanying manifesto and invitation card with bold primitive lettering, and a controversial avant-garde poster to announce the exhibition, designed by Fritz Bleyl.[12]

Despite the fact that the group had the means to produce its own membership cards and posters, it lacked the finances to hire a premium exhibition site in Dresden. As a result, founder member Eric Heckel, brokered a deal with the factory owner, Karl-Max Seifert, having worked as a draughtsman for the architect of the showroom on the edge of the city. The arrangement was affordable and the venue had ample free wall space. The surviving installation photograph (Figure 7.2) is rarely reproduced in Art History texts, but it provides a puzzling view that hardly corresponds with what we imagine was the showcase for this resolutely avant-garde and market-savvy collective that would go on to organize a total of ninety exhibitions in Germany and elsewhere. The showroom had been decorated according to the Jugendstil tastes of the day. One newspaper reporter noted the "modern
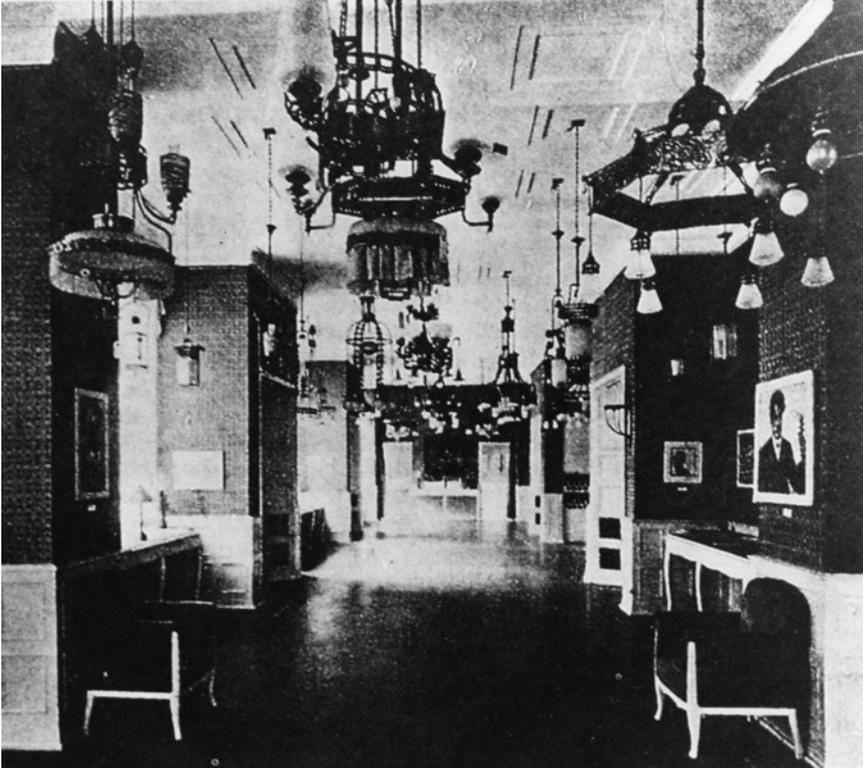
FIGURE 7.2   Installation view of the Brücke exhibition at the Karl-Max Seifert showroom, Dresden-Löbtau, 1906. *Source*: Courtesy Neue Galerie New York.

and tasteful manner of the décor with its white lacquered woodwork and pale blue-gray upholstery" (cited in Altshuler 2008, 81). The resulting hang looks, however, more like a "pop up" exhibition in a retail unit than a carefully harmonized art show. Amid stalactites of Jugendstil pendant lighting there is a sparsely sequenced series of modest-sized paintings and prints with unassuming, plain white frames hanging just above the wainscot. One critic to visit the exhibition, Otto Seabaldt, described how the visitor needed time to become accustomed to the "threatening Sword of Damocles" occasioned by the dangling lighting fixtures (cited in Altshuler 2008, 81). The only surviving installation photograph of Die Brücke shows what Bruce Altschuler characterizes as "hidden tensions in the scenography of this peculiar image." He notes,

> The showroom in this photograph is a processional space intended for leisurely viewing of the company's wares. And as a retail space designed for display, it reminds us of the relationship between the modern presentation of artworks and the development of the department store and other sites that employed a staging of visual experience in support of commerce.
>
> (Altshuler 2011)

The deployment of retail space (the works of art were for sale) – as opposed to the domestic space of Post-Impressionist exhibitions – was not new. After all, commercial galleries are

retail outlets. What is difficult to ascertain is just what the lettered panel in the foreground of the image is advertising: the prints and paintings of Die Brücke or the lamps of Karl Seifert? If we compare the exhibition design of this show with the design of permanent collections of art in Germany's museums (where the curatorial directives of the museum professional appeared to be devising and introducing a modernist display aesthetic) then the first exhibition of Die Brücke looks strangely thoughtless, uninterested in agendas outlined by Degas, Seurat, Signac, and Whistler. At the same time as the Expressionists were first mounting exhibitions of their work in Dresden, Hugo von Tschudi was at work in the Nationalgalerie, Berlin, radically transforming its displays and, in 1906, creating the first rooms to present the permanent collection against a white background (Joachimides 2001). When Tschudi took up a new post at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich in 1909 he immediately began to rearrange the collection. Predicting the terms used by Valéry, he argued that "every single work [should be] able to lead its own life" (cited in Sheehan 2000, 182). Tschudi thinned out the display by placing some works into storage and dispatching others to provincial collections. His call for a display that permitted single works to lead their own lives, led to the removal of period props and patterned and colored walls were abandoned. Tschudi's replacement at the National-Galerie, Ludwig Justi, used his tenure to collect more recently painted Impressionist and German Expressionist canvases, mounted low on the walls in a single line hang that confirmed the identity of the curator as the composer of a purified installation schema.[13]

When comparing the hanging of an independent, temporary exhibition in Germany to the broader developments in the design of permanent displays in German museums, it becomes apparent that the institutionalized space was more advanced – more avant-garde, and more methodologically ambitious – than the modernist space engendered by the Die Brücke. Other examples of the installation shot echo this development. The International Exhibition of Modern Art toured several sites in 1912 and 1913, but its sensational reception at New York's 69th Regiment Armory Building was such that it is – ever after – known as the Armory Show. We know it from a handful of photographic exhibition views of the installation in New York and from a fuller record of photographs from the Chicago exhibition.[14] The Armory Show offered a grand chronological overview of the art of the last two centuries. It showed the developments in modern painting hailing from the earliest artists represented – such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Francisco de Goya, and Eugène Delacroix – before moving on to illustrate the impact of Gustave Courbet, Édouard Manet, and the Impressionists on the Post-Impressionists: Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh. Finally, the Armory Show segued to a section that showcased the work of contemporary artists – about half of whom were American. The Armory Show had official photographers, the Hagelstein Brothers, but there are only a handful of views of the show (McCarthy 2013).[15] In one view of the installation we look down over Gallery A – the entrance to the exhibition – where we see George Gray Barnard's *Prodigal Son*, cornered by other modernist sculptures, but our raised line of sight allows us to simultaneously take in the partition walls of a massive subdivided space. Diagonally behind we see Gallery R – a room of French, English, and Swiss paintings and recognize three canvases that, despite the small black-and-white image, are distinctively portraits by Matisse. Works at the International Exhibition of Modern Art are hung mostly on the line and occasionally in a double tier, but the paintings are very close together and the visitor's perambulation of the floor space is broken by plinths for sculptural pieces.

If modernism is perceived as a new aesthetic for the spaces of display – the white cube – in which art was displayed in Spartan rooms devoid of decoration and painted in muted, or neutral, colors, then the Armory Show was an intermediary exhibition. As indicated above,

late nineteenth-century avant-garde artists had attempted to imagine the installation shot, and to see it as a vehicle for closing the gap between artistic creation and display; but this does not mean that all modernists saw themselves as artist-curators battling to create autonomous exhibitory spaces. The installation shot of the Die Brücke exhibition depicts a realm as bibelot-like as the object-worshipping culture associated with academies, commercial outlets, and other organs of the cultural establishment.

Is it the case, then, that the history of the installation shot calls into question the rule and authority of the white cube, as the dominant paradigm of exhibition design and modernist display? And to what extent do the testimonies of promoters and organizers of key modernist exhibitions shed light on this matter? To answer these questions involves looking at displays in the United States from the first half of the twentieth century.

The Modernist Exhibition Established?

The "official" view of the modernist exhibition is a story of the triumphant march of a particular mode of display. The white cube – a pristine space devoid of decorative effects and associational values – has become the medium in which the message of Modernism has been told. Here the spectator encounters a wall of paintings, spaciously hung at eye-level in a single row, or sculptures isolated on a plinth with plenty of room to walk around them. Within the white cube each work selected for display merits a position that fills the visual field of the beholder. This well-established story, looking elsewhere for validation, points at other developments in the cultural landscape: to architectural modernism, in which unadorned spaces with whitewashed walls were a standard rendition. In both contexts modernism would be another way of talking about the relationship between singularity and sameness, with the spatial dynamic of the environment standing as a sign of aesthetic creativity and design.

But how does this story, where exhibitory space guarantees neutrality and autonomy, relate to the installation shot's associated landmark modernist exhibitions? A seminal "white cube" exhibition, The Ninth Street Show (21 May–10 June 1951), financed by the art dealer Leo Castelli (1907–1999), gathered the work of a number of artists, collectively and later known as the New York School. The idea for the exhibition had emerged from discussions amongst members of the Downtown Group, that consisted of a number of artists who lived or worked within a short hop of one another in Downtown Manhattan. They had their club headquarters at 39 East Eighth Street and their preferred social meeting space, the Cedar Tavern, was located on the corner of University Place and Eighth Street. Only two of their number had been included in the previous year's Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition of work by 761 artists titled "American Painting Today-1950." In an interview with Barbara Rose, in July 1969, Leo Castelli remembered that "… we considered this almost as the first Salon des Independents; this is what I called it as a matter of fact. I was very proud of that aspect of it. I thought that never before anything of the kind had occurred in America" (Castelli 1969).

Although independently wealthy, Leo Castelli was not in the same financial league as Peggy Guggenheim and the outlay for his "independent Salon" was modest. Years later – in 1969 – Castelli recalled his expenditure: $70 to rent an empty store building that was scheduled for demolition on East 9th Street and a small sum to hastily convert the inauspicious ground floor and basement (within two weeks) by means of a coat of whitewash. Castelli also spent $25 to finance the printing costs of a linoleum-cut poster by Franz Kline. Castelli remembered, "it seemed a lot of money. I sort of footed most of the bill although I

FIGURE 7.3   Installation view of the Ninth Street Show, 1951, photo by Aaron Siskind. *Source*: Leo Castelli Gallery records, *c*. 1880–2000, bulk, 1957–1999. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. / Aaron Siskind © Aaron Siskind Foundation / Willem de Kooning © The Willem de Kooning Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2016; Franz Kline © ARS, NY and DACS, London 2016.

didn't have much money either. I think that I forked out as much as $200 and that seemed a tremendous amount of money …" (Castelli 1969). The make-do-and-mend aesthetic of the Ninth Street Show is glimpsed in Aaron Siskind's photographs of the Ninth Street Show (Figure 7.3). Siskind's photographs testify to the expediency of the venue and the sub-prime quality of the décor in which several abstract paintings and an abstract sculpture are displayed in a low-ceilinged space lit by bare light bulbs.

Castelli helped to select the seventy-five or so works for the show and Franz Kline appears to have had the curatorial overview. The putative democracy of the selection process (one painting per artist, Salon style) was not entirely effective and Castelli later recalled that the show was hung and rehung about twenty times, in order to appease artists' sensitivities (Altshuler 1994, 154–159).[16] Despite the apparent conviviality of the Club's organization, Castelli revealed, "We were all there for three days hanging and re-hanging the show. All kinds of painters who were dissatisfied with the way they hung, I remember" (Castelli 1969). What Siskind succeeded in documenting in his installation views is the coherence of the display and the combined effect of juxtaposing the artists, as yet without a clear sense of group identity, masking the same conspiratorial atmosphere as had prevailed at the Salon exhibitions 100 years earlier in Paris (Sandler 1965; Hersković 2000).

Siskind's installation shot installs order on an interior which Castelli associates with competing subjects, competing systems of display, and presentation. In this way Siskind's

photograph organizes vision: he creates a visual field at once extensive and intimate, allowing the viewer to see a space rationalized by the idea of shared individualism, one of the principal features of the discourses of abstract art. The scenography of Siskind's view represents an ideal: there is no artist, no curator and no viewer. The display is choreographed for a modern audience and the installation shot succeeds in achieving what Andrew McClellan calls, "the twentieth-century curatorial ideal … [that] rids the gallery of visitors altogether leaving only the disembodied eye to roam freely without distraction" (McClellan 2003, 27).

This emphasis on homogenization at the expense of profusion is a useful way of distinguishing between different narratives of exhibition installation and the installation shot. It is worth noting that for O'Doherty, the etiquette of the modern installation shot – purged of a viewing public – reaches its apogee in the recording of large abstract paintings, which he characterizes as, "one of the teleological end-points of the modern tradition" (O'Doherty 1986, 29). In the presentation of abstract art O'Doherty sees the audience having a distinctive experience, or as he neatly puts it, "witnessing a triumph of high seriousness and hand-tooled production, like a Rolls-Royce in a showroom that began as a Cubist jalopy in an outhouse" (O'Doherty 1986, 29). In other words, the physical and mental labor of the curatorial invention is marginalized by the purity of the experience of the exhibition of objects – and the perfected impersonality of the space of display. This reading is reinforced by Siskind. Instead of the fractiousness recalled by Castelli, Siskind's installation shot, through its artful selection of the close-up and the faraway, gives the impression of conceptual and visual serialism, as if all these art works belong on same pictorial spectrum, the same rhythmic cycle of composition and expression.

As observed above, the idea of capturing wholeness became a key element in the presentation of modernism – and its narratives of display. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) New York pioneered the intellectual and practical design of modern art exhibitions (Wilson 2009; Staniszweski 1999; Bayer 1961). Looking at surviving installation shots and the record of shows at MoMA, a bold pattern of exhibition design could provide a complimentary backdrop to the avant-garde art on display. Alfred H. Barr curated MoMA's inaugural exhibition – Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, Van Gogh – in 1929 at its three-storey townhouse. It was, as Mary Staniszweski (in her history of exhibitions at MoMA) remarks, a "type of installation that has come to dominate museum practices, whereby the language of display articulates a modernist, seemingly autonomous aestheticism" (Staniszweski 1999, 61). Yet for his decorative scheme, Barr covered the walls in a natural colored monk's cloth and hung paintings at eye-level and in a single line with plenty of space between. Barr rejected the symmetrical hang where the largest painting was centrally placed and flanked by paintings of descending size and opted for a sequence that was scrupulously determined by the logic of Art History.

Simply put, these facts cast a shadow over the view that MoMA was the progenitor of the white cube display, as from the 1930s through to the 1950s it did not promote or validate the idea of whiteness as a natural condition or setting for gallery display.[17] It should be noted that Barr remained faithful to his predilection for decorating the walls with beige monk's cloth and later curators, such as Philip Johnson, also rejected white walls on the grounds that whiteness fabricated the wrong type of optical experience of individual art works. Both curators, it seems, supported an exhibitory system where art objects are related to the "matter" of the environment, albeit without the theatrically heightened qualities associated with academic and commercialist modes of display.[18] However, a degree of theatrical display prevailed elsewhere: Peggy Guggenheim's nearby "Art of This Century"

Gallery staged the "First Papers of Surrealism" in 1942 which deployed a distinctive decorative scheme and novel props such as adjustable and revolving mounts for paintings (Kachur 2003).

As has already been mentioned, this search for the ideal visual purity of display was not isolated from other aesthetic, institutional, and discursive concerns, other techniques for recording the experience of seeing particular exhibits or displays, other systems of knowledge production. Just as seeing, collecting, and displaying overlapped at MoMA, so Barr and Johnson, like Valéry, Seurat, and others, searched for an ideal installation shot, which is to say, the ideal meeting place of art object, display system, and physical environment. With them, the art gallery was a nodal point in a cultural totality: by materializing the environment they associated with the inner-reality of modernism it would demonstrate how the perfect art work is a human activity involving numerous agents. Exhibition design, then, would be a matter of attempting to realize the inward character of a particular art form or movement – and thus to direct the gaze of the spectator to this discursive focal point. By 1982, the curator and writer Germano Celant was able to assert that, "The installation [is a] crucial component of any exhibition [it is] in and of itself *a form of modern work*, whose articulation, both spatial and visual, is worthy of consideration" (Celant 1982).

The history of the installation shot, as recorded in this chapter, has spotlighted how those involved in picturing art occupy divergent points of view. Whatever historical value we attribute to the installation shot, it cannot be denied that its development displays how the life of the art gallery has been imagined from different perspectives. As we have just seen, Barr pictures a realm where the curator is concerned with the graspable totality of artefacts and movements, the generation of a set of techniques for the integration of art and space; Castelli's testimony confirms that the curator never rises above the situatedness of cultural life, never escapes from his or her immediate involvement in the world of objects and human beings. These examples, and the others included in this chapter, indicate that the birth and development of the installation shot are part of a much bigger story about cultural transformation and change in the modern age.

Notes

1 For example, the David Findlay Jr. Fine Art Gallery revisited the 9th Street Show, by showing a selection of paintings and sculpture by nine of the original exhibiting painters in 2006.
2 Well known examples include Samuel Morse's *Gallery of the Louvre* (1831–33) and Winslow Homer *Art-Students and Copyists in the Louvre Gallery, Paris* (1868).
3 William Powell Frith's *Private View at the Royal Academy* (1881) is a well known example.
4 For instance, the photographer Robert Jefferson Bingham took photographs of the Exposition Universelle of 1855 in Paris and at the same time fulfilled a commission from Henry Cole to photograph works in the Louvre.
5 There was no technical obstruction to taking pictures of museum interiors in the early history of photography. A number of photographers specialized in more commercially valuable architectural photographs such as Neurdein Frères' photographs of the exterior and interior of French cathedrals or Leopold Ahrendts' photographs of Berlin's landmark buildings.
6 Thompson's installation view of the first ever museum exhibition of photographs, "Exhibition of the Photographic Society of London and the Société française de photographie

at the South Kensington Museum, 1858," is the earliest known photograph of a photographic exhibition; but it is the exception that proves the rule.

7   The 1850–1851 Paris Salon was held in the Palais-Royal. Le Gray's view shows a sculpture room amongst which the *Toilette d'Atalante* by Pradier is foregrounded.

8   He subsequently established Gustave Le Gray et Cie in 1855 with a studio at 35 Boulevard des Capucines. Fittingly, this would later become the premises of Nadar's studio and the location of the First Impressionist Exhibition in 1874.

9   See *Hall des sculptures et cimaises du salon de 1861 / Photographies par Richebourg*. 1861. album de 42 photogr. pos. sur papier albuminé, d'après des négatifs sur verre au collodion.

10   After 1861, works were hung alphabetically according to the artist's last name, except for the rooms reserved for the official paintings.

11   In Paris there were the annual exhibitions of many societies including the Cercle de l'Union artistique (more familiarly known as the Mirlitons), the Cercle artistique et litteraire de la rue Volney, and the Cercle des Arts liberaux, in addition to commercial exhibitions.

12   Bleyl was denied a police licence to display his lithographic poster under the National Penal Code pornography clause, on the grounds that the image, an orange ink print of a full-length nude, contained a strong suggestion of pubic hair.

13   As Charlotte Klonk points out three parallel "exhibition forms" coexisted in Germany throughout the period. See Klonk (2015).

14   There is a much more consistent record of the International Exhibition of Modern Art as it was hung across nine galleries in the Chicago Art Institute's Beaux Arts-style building on Michigan Avenue. There was only half the space available than had been the case at New York and accordingly the number of exhibits was reduced so that the final hang gave a more focused selection of the beacons of the modernist movement. For an account see McCarthy (2011).

15   Laurette McCarthy has identified two seemingly lost installation photographs by Hagelstein Brothers, which show the Cubist and Matisse rooms.

16   Accounts differ about the extent of Castelli's involvement in covering expenses and selecting artists, but all agree he was the only Club member who could have installed the show since he was not an artist and did not have work in the show. Exhibitors included Willem and Elaine de Kooning, John Ferren, Helen Frankenthaler, Philip Guston, Grace Hartigan, Lee Krasner, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Richard Pousette-Dart, Ad Reinhart, Robert Rauschenberg, and Aaron Siskind.

17   See also Klonk's refutations (2015).

18   It is worth noting that a later MoMA exhibition designer, Herbert Bayer possessed a Bauhaus-inspired view of exhibitions as a manifestation of the Gesamtkunstwerk, writing that: "exhibition design has evolved as a new discipline, as an apex of all media and powers of communication and of collective efforts and effects … The total application of all plastic and psychological means … makes exhibition design and intensified and new language" (Bayer 1961, 257).

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Contemporary Displays of Modern Art

Pam Meecham

Convoluted Chronologies

Recent, current, and forthcoming modern art exhibitions[1] are prefigured by publicity peppered with plenty of gerunds and prefixes with "re" and "un" doing most of the work: reconfiguring, revisiting, revising, rehanging, reforming, revisioning, recreating, reintroducing, reconceptualization, reinterpretation, reclamation, reimagining, reestablishing, reillumination, rewire, unsettling, and so forth. Such exhibitions are accompanied by marketing superlatives: unprecedented, groundbreaking, epoch-making, milestone, and so on. And fresh from storage we see artworks from the modern period outed as the "seldom seen" and "often unknown," in tandem with the art of the recidivist[2] finally rehabilitated to avant-garde status. While chary of inflating the few to the many, as liberal institutions glory in internal contradictions and a lack of unity, it is nonetheless possible to draw together enough international exhibitions to warrant a closer look at the staging of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century art. Witnessing the recasting of modern art there is much to reflect on including institutional change, exhibitions and audiences, the primary concerns of this chapter.

The project "*museum global?*" (2015–2017) and related conference "*museum global? 2016: Multiple Perspectives on Art 1904–1950*" at Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf is part of an overhaul of its classic modern art collection[3] "from a newly won perspective" (http://www.kunstsammlung.de/en/investigate/museum-global.html). Kunstsammlung NRW intends to extend and differentiate the grand narratives of the Western modernist canon by critically interrogating its collection, seeking revision and reillumination of its own history, to offer more diverse voices from non-European regions. Revisiting the modern art canon and its historiography, the museum is taking a diachronic approach, particularly attentive to the continuous transformation and development of language and cultural definitions in global contexts, that, it argues, can hinder transnational understanding.

In a similar vein the reopened Stedelijk Museum,[4] Amsterdam looked to its collection (Modern and Contemporary, Art and Design) for a framework: "Although museums often … frame their collections in the context of art history, this publication [*Stedelijk Collection Reflections* 2012] does the opposite: it surveys the history of modern and contemporary art *through* the … collections" (Goldstein 2012, 11). New essays "offering a kaleidoscopic overview of art history told from the perspective of the present day"

(Goldstein 2012, 11) use the collection to revisit art historical orthodoxies. For instance Christopher Green focuses on works in the collection by Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian[5] to reconsider the notion, firmly imbedded in traditional art historical consensus, of a "true Cubism" preferring to be open to conflicting truths and to exhibitions contextualized beyond the limitations of "the provincial category of art 'influenced by Cubism'" (Green 2012, 89). Through the Stedelijk collection Green extends Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque's "Cubist adventure" to locations, temporalities, avant-gardes, and artists outside a Paris conventionally bracketed by 1908 and 1911 (see Chapter 24, this volume).

Renewing its modern art collection in 2014 was the Musée National D'Art Moderne Centre (Pompidou), Paris. The Pompidou exhibition *Modernités plurielles 1905–1970* was curated by Catherine Grenier as an "off-centre vision of 20th century art" (Grenier 2014, 16). In a catalogue chapter "An upside-down world?"[6] (Grenier 2014, 15), Grenier states the "milestone" new hang, was not intended to be canonical or canon forming. In the *exhibition-manifesto* she continued the show "… breaks with long years of consensus on the uniform, linear and progressive narrative proposed by all Western museums, with slight national differences. This consensus is now undergoing a crisis, and needs to be … re-established on new foundations" (Grenier 2014, 15). She addresses interconnected concerns: a reinterpretation of Western modernity within the context of globalization. Wide-ranging geographically with over 1,000 works by almost 400 artists, the aesthetically and medium diverse exhibition included painting, sculpture, architecture, experimental film, photography, and atypically a smattering of applied arts. Rewiring the art/artefact dichotomy of Western art is not accomplished without some dithering[7] as medium specific curating has a long history although modernism always had anti-specialism exhibitions seen, for instance, in Russian Constructivism, Dada, Surrealism, and CoBrA. Although medium specific boundaries largely ceased in art production conventionally around the 1970s the curatorial framework is undergoing tentative revision.[8] Challenging mainstream discourses and hierarchies, Grenier maintains the existing historic narrative is inadequate, charged with partiality and obsolescence: that it embraces neither the gamut of global modernity or the richness of Western modernity. Rejecting the simplification and exclusion processes that have contributed to this procedure she calls for multifaceted reform and the replacement of one narrative by many to "reintroduce a complexity and diversity that will enrich our understanding of the modern period" (Grenier 2014, 17).[9]

Although globalization has all but excluded as anachronistic, the nation-state from the global display of contemporary art (witnessed in thematically driven transnational Documenta, Triennale, Biennale), historic national collections have not been immune from change seen in their own muted forms of denationalization. Markedly less prone to national triumphalism, a hallmark of earlier displays,[10] *America is Hard to See*, the 2015 inaugural exhibition of the new Whitney Museum of American Art,[11] New York also re-presented its 150-year narrative. More than 600 works were curated through themes rather than an unfolding, evolutionary route to unsettle assumptions about the American art canon. Notably the curating included works that directly addressed issues of social and political significance, devalued in the immediate postwar period as propagandistic when many artists conceptualized *social relevance* as personal revelation through painterly actions and spontaneous imagination (Rosenberg 1952). The Whitney's roughly chronological hang was divided into twenty-three thematic "chapters" (Machine, Ornament, Circus, Love Letter from the War Front and so on) and noticeably less dependent on "breakthrough" moments and keynote works.

Bearing comparison with *Modernités plurielles* at a national level, no claim was made for either "comprehensive survey or tidy summation" rather the exhibition revisits and revises "established tropes while forging new categories and even expanding the definition of who counts as an American artist" (Whitney Museum of American Art Web site). Acknowledging the difficulty of definitions, the Whitney too relinquished a single historic story. Re-narrativizing by routinely sidestepping medium specific and avant-garde curating, the formerly feted now sit alongside historic protagonists and the unsung. The result according to Walter Robinson "… is democratically revisionist, putting … iconic master-works … side by side with unfamiliar things by lesser-known artists, many of them women and people of color. Several alternative histories coexist with the mainstream" (Robinson 2015, n.p.). Multiple genealogies and a cautious retraction of hierarchical displays does allow for a more expansive, less didactic story of modern art than is familiar but recent archival research indicates the often contingent nature of such change: for instance, waves of interest and dormancy in showing artists of color according to Susan E. Cahan closely correlate with racial politics in the United States (Cahan 2016, 3). It remains to be seen if the current unsettling is irreversible or just part of "a persistent belief that token inclusion is synonymous with institutional change" (Cahan 2016, 2).

Another long-term exhibition *Reimagining Modernism: 1900–1950* (on view indefinitely) opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2014 with the expressed purpose of expanding the narratives of modern art. For the first time in the museum's history it integrated European and American modernist collections, and included art with design again utilizing the strategy of putting iconic works "in-dialogue" with art works more accustomed to storage. It too includes more art by women, Helen Torr and Mexican artist Elizabeth Catlett, and artists of "not strictly European or Euro-American Nexus" including African American, Hale Woodruff and Japanese, Bumpei Usui, and several self-taught and folk-artists rarely seen in the company of Master works (Griffey 2015, 1).

There have been earlier integrated "no narrative" shows closer to the eclecticism of seventeenth-century cabinets of curiosity than the current crop of revisions: seen in London's Royal Academy millennial exhibition *1900: Art at the Crossroads*, a collaboration with the The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (Guggenheim). The show reprised the *Décannale* exhibition shown at Paris's *Exposition Universelle* of 1900: although a slender version of the original six and a half thousand works. It "… displayed, without preferential hanging or curatorial nudge, a cross-section … regardless of school, affiliation or subsequent critical judgment. Bouguereau and Leighton were hung alongside Degas and Munch; inert academicism and tedious storytelling next to the airy freedoms of impressionism, diligent and didactic realism beside fervent expressionism; sleek porniness and naively unaware erotic musings next to the newest thick-brushed attempts to render the body truthfully" (Barnes 2015, 7–8). For Julian Barnes the disparate display was a reminder of the "noble necessity" of modernism (Barnes 2015, 7–8): for the informed perhaps but the strategy asks both too much and too little of burgeoning contemporary audiences a point to which I'll return.[12]

In 2016 the newly extended Tate Modern opened: its ambition, trumpeted a year in advance, to "challenge the traditional story of modern art and offer a fresh perspective on artists working around the world in a re-hang of the whole building" (Tate publicity 22 September 2015): the conjunction of modern art and world art articulated again. A rejection of a singular birthplace for modern art and its canon, and a redaction of institutionally sanctioned selection procedures is evident across gold standard international institutions with historic modern art and developing, mandatory, global contemporary collections. The linearity, narrative, and subject of modern art's established history is, according to its

custodians, being radically re-envisioned. Subject to skepticism since at least the mid-1960s, belatedly the *official* terms of modern art, historically ratified by the museum and gallery in streamlined exhibitions, now demand caveats and qualifications. Modern art however was never a coherent project, with a seamless CV stable definitions or tidy geopolitical boundaries but rather a loose confederation of contradictory practices and beliefs: historically plural in practice although not always presented as such on the gallery wall or through dissemination in popular publications.

It could be argued that former hangs of modern art no longer correspond to current heterogeneous tastes and mining museum holdings to refresh exhibitions amounts to no more than tinkering with eclipsed reputations, supplying culturally omnivorous audiences with diversity or belatedly redressing selected sins of omission. However the ubiquity of change indicates more fundamental assessments of modern art as the period recedes and jostles for a place globally in the "myriad forms of connectivity and flows linking the local (and national) to the global-as well as the West to the East and the North to the South" (Steger 2013, 2). Increased global, social connectivity enabled by the development of communication technologies and an understanding of the importance of earlier historic antecedents[13] have unsettled the received history of modern art usually *exhibited* post-1945 with an unruffled compelling coherence.[14] The current revisions are some distance from observations in the 1990s that those unwilling "to acknowledge [the] power and coherence [of US Modernism] condemned themselves to 'a kind of carping provincialism'" (Harrison 1991, 14). Inverting the binary of provincial and urban center, a broader project of provincializing Western modernity "through a process of destabilizing its claims to universalist idioms" has been underway for some time (Gaonkar 1999, 14). However it remains to be seen, given most art institution's historic complicity in the simplification and exclusions of canon building, if there will be a major "recuperation of that earlier moment of a multiplicity of politically inflected modernisms that Greenberg doctrine had excised" (Cottington 2013, 106). Omissions fashioned during the collecting of modern art are not easily remedied.[15]

The contemporary quests for less-hierarchical display is often couched in radical terms although devising ways to frame modern art against the *status quo* was an important part of the modern project. Institutional change at Brazil's Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) is described by Director, Adriano Pedrosa: "… we are coming to understand MASP as a museum that is múltiplo, diverso e plural. This is the expression that I'm using, multiple, diverse and plural" (Pedrosa 2016, n.p.). More inclusive displays (again echoing a modernist past) will include exhibitions of kitsch, pre-Columbian art, comics, work by patients from psychiatric hospitals and works by children. Pedrosa also returns to the 1960s for curatorial strategies to support the long-term installation "Picture Gallery in Transformation" initiated in 2015 (Figure 8.1). In 1968, modernist architect Lina Bo Bardi created a display of what were termed glass easels: the artwork was contained by a pane of glass supported by a concrete cube. The easels were an innovative system to move art off the walls and break with art historical groupings of schools and movements (although still within a chronological order) to create a non-hierarchical and non-linear narrative. Situated closer to its audiences, the zig-zag or serpentine floor-based display for Bo Bardi created opportunities for "chance encounters between the works" (Pedrosa 2016, n.p.). Although charged with nostalgia and problematic in relation to the scale of works, Pedrosa insists the glass easels and the museum are moving away from "all encompassing, totalising histories" (Pedrosa 2016, n.p.). The challenge as Pedrosa sees it is to "insert non-European works in the display up until the mid-20th century, and to insert non-Brazilian works in the display from the mid-20th century onward" (Pedrosa 2016, n.p.). Inserting works into entrenched narratives without resorting to historical amnesia is a complex business.

FIGURE 8.1 Museu de Arte de São Paulo, exhibition view, 2015. *Source*: Museu de Arte de Sao Paolo, photo by Eduardo Ortega./Emiliano Di Cavalcanti: © DACS 2016; Marie Laurencin, Fernand Leger, André Lhote: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2016; Anita Malfatti: © Estate of Anita Malfatti; Pablo Picasso: © Succession Picasso/DACS, London 2016; Candido Portinari: Portinari, Candido/© DACS 2016; Diego Rivera: © Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./DACS 2016.

"The Call of the Canon" (Halbertsma 2007, 16)

Canonical change then is nowhere more publicly evident in contemporary culture globally than in the art gallery, however the so-called democratic[16] pluralistic hangs outlined above should not inure us to the reality of business as usual outside survey exhibitions.[17] Assessing the shows that dominate US institutions, Julia Halperin and Nilkanth Patel calculate "Museums dedicated a disproportionate number of exhibitions to men, painters and artists represented by top commercial galleries. Of the 590 solo shows during this six-year period, 429 – around 73% – featured male artists" (2015, 5). The authors suggest however such a discrepancy is not a reflection of audience values, rather research indicates audiences don't make distinctions between male and female artists or show a preference for exhibitions of painting (2015, 5).

Change (considering the crisis in modern art's canon was evident from 1968) has been slow and tempered: Marlite Halbertsma maintains "The Grand Narratives may have been surpassed but the Great Masters remain" (Halbertsma 2007, 17) and while surveys and publications such as Foster *et al. Art Since 1900* (2004) questioned traditional categorization of historical styles and artistic disciplines they tended to confirm the canonical status of the art historical masterpiece: "New interpretations are spun around the traditional canon of masterpieces, and new great masters, women and 'world artists' have nestled in the folds" (Halbertsma 2007, 17). Nonetheless Halbertsma is not alone in suggesting that without the canon art history would be impossible.

The traditional modern art canon has its defenders if only for the debates that it fosters and for the weight of its contested history. At the turn of the millennium writing a new undergraduate art history course, Steve Edwards recognizing that "canonical art history is a serious adversary that cannot simply be swept away" suggests that "it is important and productive to work against the canon's[18] closures, silences, and priorities. The canon and its critique, for some time to come, exist in a necessary tension … [raising] difficult

intellectual questions to which there are no straightforward answers" (Edwards 1999, 14). In the same year Richard R. Brettell also questioned the utility of modern art movements such as Realism, Cubism, or Expressionism, and terms such as Nabis, Synthetism, and Orphism concluding that with retrospective critical detachment we could consider abandoning them, however "Avant- or anti-garde groups or larger movements are so pervasive a feature of modern scholarship that even their detractors use them, often unconsciously, as easily understood categories" (1999, 12). A decade later James Elkins concerned with art history's structure and politics too insists on a continued engagement with avant-garde culture: "It is crucial to continue engaging the main trajectory and the entire institutional, critical, and historiographic apparatus that supports it, as outmoded and ideologically limited as they may seem, because they still underwrite the conditions under which modernist practices can appear as history" (2010, 2). The avant-garde was Janus faced, at times challenging the *status quo* or contributing to its authority, but whichever way Cottington reminds us, "For over a hundred years [the avant-garde] has governed critical and historical assessment of the quality and significance of fine artist or a work of fine art- to the extent that, *if these have been judged to be avant-garde, or to belong to 'the avant-garde', then they have been worthy of consideration.* If not, then (with very few exceptions) they have not, and neither critics nor historians have paid them much attention. In short, modern art is and has been very largely whatever the 'avant-garde' has made, or has said it is" (Cottington's italics) (2013, 2).

"A Familiar Anxiety of Influence" (Stephens 2014)

While an institutionally endorsed avant-garde may have circumscribed historic displays its exclusivity as evidenced by the exhibitions cited has been called into question. Although dictionaries of art typically attach avant-gardism to authenticity, originality, and innovation, Johanne Lamoureux contends "unfortunately for the avid believer in a stable art lexicology, originality and innovation no longer survive unscathed" (Lamoureux 2006, 197). Avant-gardism was conceptualized as both evolutionary and developmental and so timing was paramount: the consequences of "belatedness" have been widely written about in postcolonial and cultural studies (see Fanon 1952). Innovation and originality were a matter of being first or court the charge of derivative: an impediment to success for many art forms or cultures considered of minor importance. Being subject to the category of *influenced by* was not confined to European colonies. Challenges to exclusion from the main trajectory of modern art came from a wide range of mutable peripheries only some of which can be included here. The 2014 Tate St Ives *International Exchanges: Modern Art and St Ives* exhibition and catalogue, rather than focus on the seaside town's remote location, reinstated the internationalism of the modern art produced there: the catalogue includes a Timeline of Key Encounters.[19] Clear about the challenges curator Chris Stephens maintained the exhibition "does not seek to dislodge an existing canon … Its aim … to demonstrate that the art made in Cornwall in the 1940s and 1950s was both specific to that place and time and can be-often was-seen as part of longer and wider artistic developments elsewhere" (2014, 15). In attempting to reinstate the strength of international connections over a localism that has dominated many accounts of St Ives, Stephens suggests that such exhibitions are rare because of a "familiar anxiety of influence. For a long time, such was the power of one historical account that it was difficult to position British-or, even, … European-art alongside American without inviting predictable assumptions and accusations of influence" (2014, 15).[20]

FIGURE 8.2   IRWIN, *Retroavantgarde*, 120 × 200 cm, mixed media, 1996. First exhibited in January 1997 in Kunsthalle Wien. *Source*: Courtesy: Galerija Gregor Podnar.

Challenging the historicism of an evolutionary framework and overcoming the anxiety of influence and the problem of originality itself seemed insurmountable to those clinging to the margins unable to breach modernism's self-referentiality and artworks ratified through radical estrangement (Kapur 2000; Williams 1989). By 2014 however qualifying criteria for inclusion once predicated on terms such as "modern, anti-modern, pioneering, late, major, minor, and so on" are no longer legitimated by all museums. New dynamics are "ending the disregard of art in 'undeveloped' or 'provincial' cultural zones. The study of influences gives way to the study of exchanges, transfers and resistances" (Grenier 2014, 18).

Displaying exchange, transfer and resistance rather than a history of influences requires remapping and pluralizing (Figure 8.2). While dispensing with the avant-garde is one possibility, Van den Berg proposes "Avant-gardes in the plural" as a solution that allows for a range of practices that embrace diverse and incompatible claims to radical art practice (Van den Berg 2006, 340). The two-dimensional map according to this logic is replaced by three-dimensional non-hierarchic rhizomatic structures that offer a degree of cohesion and yet are marked by "heterogeneity, diversity … and incoherence" (Van den Berg 2006, 341). Piotr Piotrowski too has asked for methodological revisions in ways to write about East European art: suggesting the adoption of a "horizontal art history," rather than the Western "vertical" paradigm (Piotrowski 2009). And the move from the linear to the horizontal can be seen in exhibitions that use expansive horizontal charts visualizing wider global connectivity. MoMA's 2012 exhibition *Inventing Abstraction 1910–1925* (Dickerman 2012) moves away from Alfred Barr's influential, albeit provisional 1936

diagram on the dust jacket of the catalogue to *Cubism and Abstract Art* which (the horizontal placing of dates notwithstanding) has a vertical trajectory. Most exhibitions cited above map a set of coordinates that tentatively unsettle the hierarchies enshrined in art historical orthodoxies and embedded in their own historic collections.

Continuity and Change

The rewriting, editing, or wholesale rejection of the canon takes place against the art establishment's belated attempts to frame or incorporate the variability and diversity of non-Western world art: calls to create new frameworks from the former periphery are ongoing.[21] Recent displays then are taking account of multi-linear international, national, and regional dialogues without seeking confirmation from any central, unitary voice enabling other trajectories and tributaries to flourish. Less mediated exhibitions adopt multiple temporalities, with expanded and retro avant-gardes operating in trans-disciplinary contexts.[22] The place of modern art within such transformations is uncertain. Defending the notion of continuity between contemporary art and the revolutions that produced it, Kirk Varnedoe writing on the *Modern Contemporary* in a millennial roundup of MoMA's collection in 2000 insisted new contemporary acquisitions at MoMA are "collected and presented at this Museum as part of-as belonging within and responding to, and expanding upon the framework of initiatives and challenges established by the earlier history of progressive art since the dawn of the twentieth century" (Varnedoe 2000, 12). *Modern Contemporary: Art at MoMA since 1980* was reissued and expanded to chime with the opening of Yoshio Taniguchi's new MoMA building in 2004. In the foreword, director Glenn D. Lowry is perhaps more muted on the relationship of the contemporary collection to the museum's historic "peerless" modern collection and instead emphasized the rapid acquisition and expansion of contemporary art display and "the complex dialogue that exists between the immediate past and the contemporary" (Lowry 2004, 9). Terry Smith argues "By the mid-twentieth century, modern art had become singular, even conformist, in its artistic orientations, and had concentrated its disseminative infrastructure (markets, museums, interpreters, publicists) in the great cultural centers of Europe and the United States" (2011, 8). However it could also be argued that modern art even at the height of its singularity and conformism outlined above was always more complex in practice and, away from scrutiny, innovation, and even militant forms of modernism, flourished (Craven 2002). Rather than seeing canonical modernism as a one-way process and therefore easily dismissed as hegemonic it is also the case that modernist innovations were global. If from the turning-point of the millennium the historic modern collection provided an implicit framework within which to present contemporary art, the relationship between modern and contemporary art is now less certain and combined exhibitions sometimes elide the history of the former to allow space for the latter.

While modern artworks were typically displayed pedagogically adhering to the chronological[23] charts constructed to inform a public unfamiliar with the new[24] more recently thematic curating across movements charting non-sequential narratives popularized at the turn of the millennium are now commonplace. It is worth remembering the contentious transition in the enterprise to over-ride institutionally established tradition. Franco Moretti described some of the curatorial changes as a market-led assault on the principle of modernism: the 2000 thematic hang at MoMA, New York (*People, Places and Things*) invoking the charge of capitulation. Moretti deplored curating in "modern *starts*" "that reduces a hundred years of defiguration to a stroll through an aesthetic department

store" (2000, 102). He saw the thematic hang and the downplaying of abstraction (that is "the old and difficult Modernism") (2000, 102) in favor of figuration as part of a counter-modernist reaction and with the return of figuration, a loss of technical freedom and with it the art market "slowly resumed its control of aesthetic production" (2000, 102). Jacob Birken more recently observed "the transfer of artworks into and out of the canon can be equalled to the cycles of fashion, with inclusion being the necessity for introducing new products into the market; the lower the former worth of the product, the higher the added value" (Birken 2015, 217).[25] John Roberts, writing of art history's implosion and reformation in the early 1970s argues "most art history survives largely as a servant of the intimate relationship between the market and the museum, in which the business of attribution, evaluation and judgment-towards-procurement makes the market safe for the museum and the museum safe for the market" (Roberts 2013, 33; West, 2011).[26] If the new art history sought to reshuffle and expand the canon it soon became clear that this was what the market desired. "Expanding the canon, reversing the hierarchies and opening up aesthetic judgment to objects traditionally excluded from its purview simply revivified the relations between the market and the museum" (Roberts 2013, 33).

Audiences and Value Neutral Exhibitions

To return to a point left hanging earlier, audiences' experiences of current exhibitions, it is worth noting how much visitor figures and profiles have changed. In contemporary terms Yayoi Kusama's *Infinite Obsession* was seen by over 2 million people in South and Central America in 2014 and since opening in 2000, Tate Modern has had over 40 million visitors. Both statistics stand in sharp contrast to William Rubin's observation in 1984 when director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA, that the modern tradition had been "essentially a private one, addressed to a small public of the artist's friends and collectors" with implications for display. With intimacy in mind Rubin argued, "Modern pictures were not destined for large public areas … but for artists' studios and collectors' homes and apartments; these spaces are their natural habitat" (Rubin 1991 [1984], 46).

In the present less confident age, modern art is not alone in being presented to the public within hesitant even uneasy frameworks that do not propose a single or unified vision and bring together disparate artworks and a range of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary positions. Okwui Enwezor, curator of 2015's fifty-sixth Venice Biennale *All the World's Futures* describes the orchestration of co-produced interdisciplinary exhibitions within the current upheaval of contemporary global reality as a process of "constant realignment, adjustment, recalibration, motility, and shape-shifting" (Enwezor 2015, 18). It can be argued that the current more sociological, anti-categorical display where theoretically no category is any more relevant than another encourages a relationship of co-production where the viewer's subjective experience takes precedent over institutionally ratified definitions of quality. The open-ended, coexistence of different and often conflicting narratives can be seen in what was previously titled the *BP Walk through British Art*[27] (now *Walk through British Art*) at London's Tate Britain until January 2023. Introduced in 2014, the re-hang of British art from 1500 to the present day is framed within a comprehensive chronology.[28] It takes a sequential approach (termed the chronological circuit) with periods closer to the present day organized by decades and allocated separate rooms with smart brass plates on the floor and wall maps for orientation purposes. It is a less didactic, less mediated, almost deregulated hang (and subject to regular change) and arguably

presented as "value neutral." It too presents a cross-section of artworks chosen by the date they were made with no particular narrative, chronology defined as neutral, and displayed with substantially reduced wall-texts (Curtis 2014). The stated intent is to allow more time for individual looking and bears comparison with the no-narrative strategy at the Metropolitan Museum in New York (Wagstaff 2016). Visitors to the Tate have long been encouraged to read artworks from multiple view-points (Morris 2006) albeit within an art historical framework that harked back to MoMA's genealogical tree (Belting 2009). The 2014 hang removes this framework although much of Tate's modern art collection was amassed under its mandate and so is already hobbled in terms of fulfilling a comprehensive recuperation of art from the modern period.

The curating strategy outlined above at Tate Britain and evident in earlier examples while removing the confrontation between avant-garde and the overshadowed, taxonomically subordinate seen in the complexity of clustering forms of realism together fails to engage the viewer beyond the most generalized stylistic oppositions. Forms of figuration and works involving any mimesis were scorned as conservatives by advocates of high modernism[29] and are still subject to hierarchies as indicated by Moretti cited above. Modernist innovation was often (but not always) countenanced in terms of denaturalization, that is in attacks on naturalism with stylistic experimentation and a break with tradition creating a false binary: social content in art has never been dependent on descriptive or realistic description/naturalism. Figuration[30] was often reduced to English eccentricity in the case of L. S. Lowry whose *The Pond*, 1950 is juxtaposed in Tate Britain's 1950s room with Josef Herman's *Three Miners*, 1953, a form of socially engaged expressionism and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham's abstract work *Glacier Crystal, Grindelwald*, 1950, alongside Francis Bacon's *Study for a Portrait*, 1952. The balance given to the art historical explanation of artworks and value judgments around quality and intuitive personal interpretation needs further research but current curating and revisions of frameworks present an opportunity, as Roberts suggests in other contexts, of "making the artwork visible as a site of conflict … [that] means that the artwork cannot be seen in terms of the mystification of self-expression" (Roberts 2013, 35). The new display of modern art may elide past differences and more forms of modern realism are visible but a nuanced picture of modern art and clarification of art's social role is still wanting.

Ahistoric displays that purport *dialogue as a framework* may need to move beyond benign presentation: the rise and fall of modernism is not self-explanatory, works jettisoned from the art historical narrative need a hearing. Greater transparency is needed if the much-touted democratic potential of dialogue and the reconceptualization of the relationship between learner and teacher (crucial facets of the work of Brazilian, Paulo Freire[31] and popularized in museums and galleries internationally) is to be more than rhetoric. Making sense of exhibitions, once certified by experts, is now (at least theoretically) left to audiences but can fall into the arbitrary and random although estrangement and de-familiarization can provoke new insights: and the more inclusive exhibitions do look startling. However such displays may also ratify institutionally entrenched hierarchies while maintaining a discreet distance from overt mediation. Against the de-contextualization of art and making the case for greater historical context Stephen Bann argues "… The preconditions of Postmodernism cannot be understood without reference to the preconditions of Modernism, [itself] misunderstood if we are only imperfectly aware of Modernism's structural connection to what went before" (Bann 2007, 68). Faced with the narrow modern art canon traditionally on display some of the contemporary curatorial strategies appear radical in no small part because of the dominance of an overstated formalist tradition.

Delegitimizing a Critical Paradigm

While the current culture of curating advocates an expansion of the canon it is chary of embracing critical thinking, once a corner stone of modern art and of emancipatory pedagogy that bowed under the weight of censure from amongst others Bruno Latour and Jacques Rancière (Foster 2012).[32] Writing in the journal *October* on the post-critical and appraising the retreat from critical thinking set in motion by the culture wars of the previous thirty years, Hal Foster argues that in part corporate sponsorship has produced a culture in which critical debate once crucial to "the public reception of advanced art" has resulted in a careless museum culture and although "the post-critical is supposed to release us from our straitjackets (historical, theoretical, and political) … it has abetted a relativism that has little to do with pluralism" (Foster 2012, 3).

It is not just the retreat from theoretical and historic perspectives that militate against critical thinking in the art gallery. Workplace practices, privatization and outsourcing of museum services, where progressive thought and action seem outdated in the face of market forces, have arguably created a workforce unable to voice dissatisfaction. With the rise of precariat[33] (Standing 2011) and casualization we witness the grateful, unpaid intern and increasing numbers of people on temporary or informal contracts, overseen by an expanded management bureaucracy marshaled to micro-manage in place of trust. Zero hour contracts, and the marginalization of the unions have both played their part in creating a compliant workforce. Critical theory has been relegated to the periphery of the art gallery where the modernist culture of risk-taking has been institutionalized into a cliché. In a technocratic culture where de-radicalization appears inevitable with a flexible workforce framed by employment insecurity it is difficult to see how the potential of the gallery as a discursive space can be achieved (Kleinknecht, Kwee, and Budyanto 2015). Museums and galleries have survived because of their adaptability and capacity to neutralize dissent. Andrea Fraser, moving beyond the institutional critique she largely set in motion, writing on the Whitney Biennial (2012) against a backdrop of the Occupy Wall Street movement argues,

> I have ascribed to institutional critique the role of judging the institution of art against the critical claims of its legitimizing discourses, its self-representation as a site of contestation and its narratives of radicality and revolution. The glaring, persistent, and seemingly ever-growing disjunction between those legitimizing discourses-above all in their critical and political claims-and the social conditions of art generally, as well as of my own work specifically, has appeared to me as profoundly and painfully contradictory, even as fraudulent.
>
> (Fraser 2012, 28)

"From the Infinite Unmapped" (Curtis 2015, 134)

However the rules of engagement between the art establishment and its detractors have become increasingly multifaceted, even the institutionalization of art once a taboo is offered redemption through the Situationist concept of "recuperation" and a rethinking/contesting of the institution by occupying its spaces differently (Beech 2006, 1). Railing against the institutionalization of art has rarely been effective besides avant-garde and counter-culture tropes and strategies have been assimilated into art institutions. In a period of post-institutional critique there have also been calls to move to a critical museum[34] benefiting not retreating from the damning assessment of the art gallery as an implement of

the knowledge-power nexus (Bourdieu 1984; Bennett 1995; Fraser 2005; Wallach 1998). Could the art gallery become a space of public and civic assembly and a site of resistance rather than ritual? (Murawska-Muthesius and Piotrowski 2015). Shifting to "the possibility of a critical establishment" the position from the inside is not sanguine (Curtis 2015, 129) evidenced by some of the curatorial initiatives outlined above that aim to reform and rewire the canon. Calling for greater skepticism of consensus, Penelope Curtis (former Director of Tate Britain) expresses frustration with cautious, corporate administration and a financial model geared towards popular exhibitions often at the expense of municipal and local collections. Expanding the canon and "learning from the margins" Curtis suggests is restricted by corporate culture's risk averse mandate. The blurring of exhibition design with fundraising activities and calls for transparency no doubt play their part as audiences move from fringe to core. Yet "Despite all the recent work done on mapping, inventorizing and in-putting, the establishment's artistic inventory seems instead to become ever shorter and simpler, as the same few artists and artworks are re-staged, re-photographed and re-broadcast to bring to the public. From the infinite unmapped, we increasingly are presented with 100 or 10 favorite works, and with false democracy we avoid questions of quality or meaning, by plumping instead for most-liked" (Curtis 2015, 134).

Caught between agora and the tail end of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) neoliberal "experience economy" (that is the institution's responsibility to orchestrate a memorable experience for its "customers") the transformation of exhibitions can also be seen against a backdrop of the so-called educational turn (see O'Neill and Wilson 2010). In brief, the educational turn focuses on process over product giving primacy to a range of actors/participants: viewer, curator, and artwork. With widespread promotion of co-produced, participatory experiences the art gallery itself is being re-conceptualized as an educational platform that seeks collaborations to democratize the experience of artworks through shared knowledge and discursivity calling into question the core-values and responsibilities of curators.[35] Informed by anti-hegemonic/anti-bureaucratic practices that put the needs of the public before the artwork[36] institutions seeking the promise of new social relations with audiences through well-being agendas are developing more embodied approaches to experiencing artworks.

The Return of the Museum as Laboratory

The relationship between curator and audiences is currently couched in non-didactic terms, visiting the art gallery a "very democratic and liberal ritual": the curator's role "making the best work accessible for everyone" within a participatory laboratory (Obrist 2014).[37] While the laboratory has become a prerequisite for interdisciplinary experimentation in the service of stimulating visitor participation it has a long provenance (Bishop 2004). Slipping from view for much of the late twentieth century as the art gallery concerned itself with stewardship the laboratory dates back to the museum's origins. During the seventeenth century Elias Ashmole's (1617–1692) "elaboratory" in Oxford formed part of the oldest public museum in Britain. Formed across three floors, what became the Ashmolean was part proto-scientific laboratory (chemistry), an education facility for undergraduates, with a cabinet of curiosity-type collection making up its third constituent.[38] Science and the laboratory also dominated the language of the early Russian avant-garde with artworks intended to prompt active viewers. And as first director of MoMA, Barr too declared "The Museum of Modern Art is a laboratory: in its experiments the public is invited to participate" (Barr 1939, 15).

Activating the viewer as producer (with its nod to Walter Benjamin[39]) is underpinned by an assumption that participation leads to agency and emancipation although participation remains at a superficial level in many museums.[40] Looking at artworks in the modernist museum has been characterized as primarily a detached optical experience. Such experience has been negatively equated with contemplation and passivity drawn into a false dichotomy with inter-activity that requires literal physical engagement.[41] However the role of the imagination, key to the modernist project was understood as having emancipatory potential particularly in the spirit of opposition. Optical contemplation neuro-science, too, tells us is not passive; nonetheless Nina Simon details the world of participatory projects where institutions develop platforms for audiences to have multi-directional experiences. Here differentiated visitors become connected: "content creators, distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators" (Simon 2010). Co-produced experiences are the order of the day with the art gallery not for the first time potentially a site for radical transformation although participation is no guarantee of power sharing: boundaries between the professional and public stay largely intact.

It was the ways that personal and class-based aesthetic choices functioned in relation to social mobility that occupied Pierre Bourdieu conducting his influential sociological research in France during the 1960s. The two surveys that became *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* was published in 1979, in English in 1984. In brief, Bourdieu sought to understand the relationship between social divisions and cultural taste. He famously elaborated the consequences of "cultural capital" acquired through access to *legitimate* culture that conferred, in 1960s France, advantage through cultural hegemony to a dominant class. Bourdieu's findings undermined any notion of *taste* being a natural consequence of birth and identified the determining role of social background and higher educational achievement in art gallery attendance. Bennett, Savage, Silva, Warde, Gayo-Cal, and Wright revisited Bourdieu's historic survey in 2009 and highlighted a significant omission in the earlier survey that has a bearing on this chapter. The collection of ethnic identifications was illegal in France in the 1960s moreover the whole survey was circumscribed by a particular construction of the nation-state. As a consequence transnational movements of people and cultures were elided from the survey (Bennett *et al.* 2009, 234). And it is to the increasingly mobile and less deferential populations (migrant, tourist, and the transnational) that the art gallery now reacts. The extent to which "legitimate" culture matters in the twenty-first century is debatable but future audiences lacking traditional subservience will demand more cosmopolitan experiences and a more symbiotic relationship to the art gallery: a visit variously a life-style choice, shopping opportunity, site for learning or a space for personal reflection.

Museums are on the cusp of change: alert to the power of contemporary global art and changing visitor demographics and seemingly burdened by modern art narratives now discredited as too partial to represent the complexity of the modern period and the globalizing present (Grenier 2014, 17). It can be argued that the current reclaiming, reimagining, reestablishing, reexamination, and reassessments of modern art are recognition of epistemic inequalities in historic displays and in a still globalizing world are attempts to redress the legacies of an imperial, patriarchal past that reproduced the *status quo* and invested in existing social hierarchies. Ahistorical,[42] decontextualized approaches with depoliticized paradigms of inquiry stand in stark contrast to former art historical narratives of modern art no longer deemed fit for purpose. To what extent then should modern art's contested fractious, contradictory and entangled history be confined to the catalogue and art history departments and visiting exhibitions become a dominantly visual experience with the adjudicating role of the curator repurposed as facilitator? Or does the curatorial orchestration

of workshop/laboratory/theater environments recalling some of the radicalism of early modernism create emancipation in the viewer? What are the limits of open-ended, cross-section curating? If the art gallery is to stand for anything beyond its own organizational survival, reactivating its historic civic role and playing a part in global social transformation rather than gentrification might be one way forward.

In 2015 the National Gallery Singapore (NGS) opened as part of a fiftieth year celebration of independence from Great Britain. The world's largest public collection of modern art from Southeast Asia is housed in two converted colonial buildings: City Hall and Supreme Court. Unsurprisingly the model for the museum was the National Gallery, London. In 2016 NGS, too, opened a groundbreaking, landmark exhibition: *Reframing Modernism: Paintings from Southeast Asia, Europe and Beyond*. Co-curated with Centre Pompidou it brings together canonical European modernist, including Wassily Kandinsky, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Marc Chagall to sit alongside Southeast Asian artists such as Tang Chang (Thailand), Hernando R. Ocampo (the Philippines), and Georgette Chen (Singapore). NGS director and co-curator Eugene Tan suggests the exhibition contributes to further understanding of modern art from Southeast Asia by placing it within a global context. This exhibition "reframes modernism because it challenges assumptions about it – that modernism started in Europe and then spread elsewhere, but modernization also happened all over the world. Modernity was something every country experienced" (Tan 2016, n.p.). In 2009 Tan expressed concerns about the consequences of globalization specifically in relation to the instrumentalization of art as a driver for economic development. He anticipated such an approach might result in: "… cultural homogenization, the establishment of an international language of contemporary art, or more specifically, a reinforcement of the hegemony of art discourses originating in Europe and America" (Tan 2009, 388). Further he too was concerned about the consequences of Southeast Asian artists' belated adoption of artistic styles and languages derived from the West, registering the need to find relevant approaches to "understand and perceive the art of Southeast Asia" (2009, 389). Both concerns may be read out of *Reframing Modernism* that eschews the formalist linear progression of styles and concepts (from realism to abstraction) for other temporalities. It focused on dialogue between individual artists rather than comparison between movements and so away from a framework of passive influence to more active appropriation. Centre Pompidou curator Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov expands "… there is no sense in giving a scale of value: it's not a competition. It's just different worlds, and each world has its own temporality. So I don't really see the point of saying that one artist did something before another artist, in fact they both came from different worlds" (in Wee 2016, n.p.). It is doubtful that Cottington's recuperation of a multiplicity of politically inflected modernisms can be accommodated under such a mandate. However if in the West, forms of realism have been negatively represented as conservative and, in Greenbergian rhetoric, even a failure of nerve it is possible to experience in NGS's *Reframing Modernism*'s diverse artistic responses to representation including forms of socially inflected realism. However given the exhibition's lack of context and the promotion of artistic individualism, comprehending the political, social, and historic complexity of artworks is stymied.

There has been some disquiet locally about the unprecedented displays of Southeast Asian art at NGS: Bharti Lalwani concerned about the "dubious" rewriting of Southeast Asian art history in NMS's long-term displays argues that the viewer has been "short-changed" by exhibitions that fail to show how artists variously critiqued and contested political and social change in a tumultuous historic period of anti-colonialism and the Cold War. The exhibitions failed to address: "The merging of foreign subject matter,

artistic styles, or religious iconography with indigenous forms … or the ways that artists broke away from colonial art academies" (Lalwani 2016, n.p.). Moreover "the silence over the history of communism in Singapore and Southeast Asia is deafening," with no mention made of the "symbiotic relationship between the anti-colonial movements and communism" although evident in works such as Chua Mia Tee's "Epic Poem of Malaya" (Lalwani 2016, n.p.).

Cultural homogenization through the globalizing of curatorial practices (the "white cube" the West's most ubiquitous "framing" export) can be read out of international collaborations but there are also other possibilities. While old art historical frameworks are being dismantled, extensive archive research buttresses many of the exhibitions cited above generating narratives that refute the "norms" of history. Accessible digital archives are enabling new forms of democratic, public scholarship that will be needed if a critical art gallery is to play an active role "encouraging the public to understand the complexity of the present world and to acknowledge the significance of memory and the past for the development of a civil society which is transnational … and diverse" (Murawska-Muthesius and Piotrowski 2015, 2). It remains to be seen what of modern art and modernism will be remembered, recovered and exhibited and what role such displays will play in the development of global societies.

Notes

1 Modern art has multiple time-lines but in most of the exhibitions cited these straddle the late 1900s to around 1970.
2 The English Pre-Raphaelites historically snubbed by avant-garde critics, in Tate Britain's 2013 *Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: Victorian Avant-garde* was lauded as Britain's first innovative, proto-modernist art movement. PRB's literary links, pictorial narratives, and moralizing enunciations were usually considered regressive and anti-modern.
3 A roll call of the modern canon from Picasso to Pollock, the collection also includes 100 works by Paul Klee whose tenure at the Düsseldorf Art Academy was an infamous casualty of National Socialism's purge of so-called degenerate artists.
4 The Stedelijk Museum reopened in 2012 after a nine-year closure for refurbishment.
5 Green's specific focus is Malevich's *Lamp/Musical Instruments*, 1913 and Mondrian's *Tableau No. 3: Composition Oval*, 1913.
6 Since the twelfth century Mappa Mundi that incorporated other temporalities (the ancient, mythical and contemporary worlds) with Jerusalem at its spiritual centre to Torres Garcia's *South America's Inverted Map* 1936, and George Maciunas' *Atlas of Russian Art*, 1953, maps have become a cartographic metaphor for seeing the world otherwise.
7 Textile work by Man Ray (*Tapestry*, 1911) was prominent in the show as well as work by Jean Arp, and Sophie Taeuber-Arp (*Symétrie pathétique*, 1916–1917).
8 Originally devised in 1929 as a multi-departmental museum MoMA quickly moved to disciplinary hierarchies but currently seeking interconnectivity it has also reviewed curating by media: "… over the last 40 years we've separated media – photography here, prints there, drawings there, architecture and design, film, and so on. That was an arbitrary set of decisions … What happens if we start creating a much more porous and synthetic relationship that allows photography, prints, drawings, film, and especially media and performance to connect to the other practices that are taking place? […] a much more interesting and rich experience for our viewers" (Lowry 2015, n.p.).

9   For earlier challenges to institutional frameworks at the Pompidou see Hervé Fischer's 1979 performance *The End of the Art History*.

10   See *The American Century* Part I and II at the Whitney Museum of American Art 2000.

11   The new Whitney, Renzo Piano building, opened March 2015 moving from its 1966 Marcel Breuer, Brutalist building that has become Met Breuer: an outpost of the Metropolitan Museum of Art which shows modern and contemporary work. It opened with two shows: Nasreen Mohamedi and *Unfinished Thoughts Left Visible*.

12   Many artists have refreshed collections from Joseph Kosuth, *The Play of the Unmentionable* 1991 at the Brooklyn Museum, New York to *Give and Take "Mixed Messages"* 2001 Hans Haacke at the V&A and the then Serpentine Gallery, London both taking to task institutional history and chronological curating.

13   The advocates of a range of opinion on the historic scope of globalization: from ancient trade routes, modern industrialization and post-1989 and beyond are examined by Steger (2013).

14   Although many modern art exhibitions postwar included figurative and folk-art they were often displayed as stations along the way to abstraction.

15   Well-intentioned incorporation of the formerly unrecognized into iconic collections is not unproblematic as seen in the case of Tate Modern's 2013 exhibition of pioneer Lebanese abstract artist, Saloua Raouda Choucair (b.1916). Elliot and Ellis concluding "although the curators aimed to disrupt dominant Western-centric gallery discourses … the exhibition was in many ways co-opted by, and reproduced, existing power relations" (2015, 1). See also Griselda Pollock on belatedly addressing Mary Cassatt (2002).

16   A democratic hanging system was used at the 1874 *First Impressionist Exhibition*: works hung by size in groups and spaces allocated by the drawing of lots (Altshuler 2008, 37). The claims for democratic revisions for modern art display need to be placed in the context of modernism's own innovative exhibition formats: beyond white cube orthodoxy. Historic modernist displays counter the claim of new, ground-breaking, and non-hierarchical. Zurich Dada and the Surrealists' disruptive, unsettling displays in particular are well-known but also see El Lissitzky's *Abstract Cabinet*, 1927–1928, developed for the Landesmuseum in Hanover and the Gutai group's first exhibition in a pine forest 1955: 13 days, 24 hours a day "Experimental Outdoor Exhibition to Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun."

17   *The Art Newspaper's* Visitor Figures 2014 edition: "Top Artists Male and Pale: guess who got the most solo exhibitions?."

18   See counter-canons and Andrew Hemingway and the defence of the 1930s USA New Deal and John Roberts "Art History's Furies" both in Carter, Haran, and Schwartz (2013, 32–47).

19   The Barbara Hepworth exhibition Tate Britain 2015 also foregrounded the international aspects of her work specifically through her inclusion in *Abstraction-Création* an international association of abstract artists set up in Paris during the early 1930s. See Donaldson and Stephen (2012).

20   English art during the early twentieth-century had also retrospectively adopted continental modernism resulting in similar anxieties about the modest scale of local artworks.

21   Claire Bishop proposed re-thinking the twentieth century through the lens of theater rather than painting (Bishop 2012, 3).

22   Some twenty years following post-colonial theory art, MoMA created research platforms such as C-MAP to challenge "the judgments that grow out of the assumption that artistic modernism is or was determined solely by Western European and North American narratives of early-20th-century avant-gardes" (MoMA post at MoMA.org. *Critical Digital ucr* Feb. 20th 2013).

23 The chronological approach adopted by art historians followed the practice of structuring collections by centuries implemented by Alexandre Lenoir at the Musée des Monuments Français following the French Revolution.

24 A Chronological Chart was constructed by Arthur B. Davies for the legendary Armory Show in New York (1913). It showed the *Growth of Modern Art* entirely dominated by French Classicists, Realists, and Romantics and implied a progressive movement leading to Post-Impressionists, on to Cubists Picasso (classic) and Futurists (feeble realists) (Published in *Arts and Decoration* New York, March 1913). Davies' chart not only established a francophile trajectory for the modern movement but gave it an honorable historic pedigree necessary to ensure funding and credibility for audiences unfamiliar with modern art.

25 Graw concurs: "… once a gallery declares certain art works worth looking at they are involved through intellectual activity/capital in the art market. The dichotomy of art market bad and publicly funded art gallery as good, immune to crass commercialism was always fictional but once seemed defensible. Currently the dichotomy is subject to more widespread skepticism. Moreover the increased interest in the artist's artist is totally marketable as the more secret and remote the artist seems to be the more interesting the market becomes" (Graw, 2010).

26 Shearer West has argued for a renewed investment in the linking of political and intellectual agendas that was a core element of the new art history that has been recently "undermined" by a hegemonic and depoliticized scientific discourse, and by the "instrumentalizing" tendencies of current public debate (West 2011).

27 British Petroleum's (BP's) sponsorship of Tate has been the subject of protests by environmental activists. In 2017 BP terminated its 26-year sponsorship of Tate.

28 Although atypical of his later stance on the value of realism and abstraction, John Berger's exhibition *Looking Forward* held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London in 1952, 1953, and 1956 presented British art across a wide-range of artistic practices.

29 See Alfred H. Barr on artists preferring "impoverishment to adulteration" (that is abstraction to figuration) in *What is Modern Painting* p 86.

30 In particular Greenbergian modernism under which painting was to purge itself of any imagery, left figurative forms remaindered as illusionistic and therefore lacking the seriousness of overall abstract works: See Greenberg's (1960) *Modernist Painting*.

31 Freire's 1968 *Pedagogia do Oprimido* was globally influential and published in English as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1970 and is considered the foundational text for critical pedagogy where the kind of dialogue being set up epistemologically moves beyond dialogue being merely a strategy for student participation.

32 In brief it is argued that proponents of critical theory were too often contradictory and part of a vicious circle that was not reflexive about its own claims, moreover awareness doesn't necessarily lead to transformation and claims for emancipation are too dependent on a characterization of the spectator as passive.

33 The precariat debate has centered around disenfranchised cheap labor that demographically may be coming to an end but nonetheless at present, employment in the art gallery requires higher and higher educational qualifications with fewer securities.

34 The critical museum was the brainchild of Piotr Piotrowski and grew out of the margins of East-Central Europe: the museum was conceptualized as a forum but now has wider-implications (foreword Murawska-Muthesius and Piotrowski 2015).

35 See Straughn and Gardner "Good work in Museums Today … And Tomorrow" for a summary of the changing relationships between galleries and audiences since the end of the twentieth century.

36 Such strategies are frequently related to the Free International University of Joseph Beuys.

37 See Hans Ulrich Obrist and Barbara Vanderlinden's 2001 *Laboratorium*.

38   The Ashmolean Museum at the outset included the John Tradescant collection from the Ark at Lambeth.
39   See Walter Benjamin's "Author as Producer" and Angela Dimitrakaki Chapter 13 in this volume.
40   See McSweeney and Kavanagh (2016).
41   For a longer debate see Ranciére's *The Emancipated Spectator* and Claire Bishop's 2006 *Participation*.
42   See Lowry (2015) for a defense of the ahistorical museum.

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Camera-Eye: Photography and Modernism

Liz Wells

Photography as a medium, process, and set of practices was a product of the modern era. As such it is inextricably bound up with the quest for modernity that characterized the latter part of the nineteenth century. As a technology of seeing, photography was initially viewed as a means of documentation or illustration that was more precise than drawing or painting and more able to conjure up the visible than written or oral accounts. By the mid-nineteenth century photography was well established as the new medium of the era.

As with all innovations, photo-graphy, "writing with light," was a product of experimentation and of imagining the possibility of images resulting from chemically fixed reflections. Camera technology drew on existing understanding of optics; the construction of lenses was premised on Leon Battista Alberti's (early Renaissance) system of perspective. Knowledge that light channeled through a lens could create reflections also dated back many centuries. It was chemistry, the ability to fix the image, rather than optics or physics that was innovatory in the early nineteenth century. French inventor Nicéphore Niépce's experiments from 1816 onwards opened the way for the process patented in France in 1839 by Louis Daguerre, with whom Niépce worked (from 1829 until his death in 1833). The "Daguerreotype," a unique positive image on polished silver, fast became licensed worldwide as photographers set up studios in cities within Europe-centered Empires and trade routes. The development of a salt-based process by Englishman, Henry Fox Talbot, was also announced in 1839. Paper based processes eventually superseded daguerreotypes as the negative-positive system allowed for multiple copies. Each image had to be individually printed. Nonetheless, this established the principle of reproducibility that came to be associated with photographs as visual artefacts and, as I shall argue, particularly characterized photography in the modern era.

This chapter critically situates debates and practices pertaining to modern photography as visual art. As I have suggested elsewhere, historically the relation of photography to painting and drawing was multiple (Wells 2015, 295–300). Perhaps because of the extent of political change in the nineteenth century, the quest for accurate depiction of social circumstances was marked; photographs aided realism in painting, acting as "sketches" for artists (Galassi 1981; Scharf 1974). Photography also contributed to extending the audience for art and art history. It was no longer necessary to travel, for example, to Paris or Florence, to see a well-known Renaissance painting, as a (monochrome or hand-tinted) print of an artwork could be circulated. This phenomenon was central to the musings of German critic Walter Benjamin who, in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of

Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), suggested that one consequence was the loss of an aura that emanates from the uniqueness of an art object. The philosophic value of the unique work remains contested, however, and the question was re-visited in the 1970s through photographic versions of paintings exhibited in multiples by the postmodern artist Sherry Levine, again, interrogating the status of art.

I will argue that the key development for modern photography at the turn of the twentieth century was mass reproducibility. This will be considered by reexamining debates of the 1930s on the potential and limits of photography (Benjamin 1931; Lucia Moholy 1939; László Moholy-Nagy 1936) as well as a consideration of photomontage in the aftermath of the First World War. Critical reflections interrelate socio-political change with photographic experimentation. Particular reference is made to the concepts of "camera-eye" and "new objectivity" that characterized photographic form (especially in Germany and central Europe). Questions of art, politics, and revolution will be engaged through examples from the inter-war period in Europe and, particularly, post-revolutionary Mexico. Photography has had a long-standing engagement with politics through social documentary, photojournalism, and campaign imagery (extensively documented and discussed in most histories of photography). Given the focus on social change and the limitations on chapter length, portraiture is not included. As a genre deeply rooted in painting with which many avant-garde artists were engaged and which has also been explored in relation to developments in psychoanalysis, it merits fuller discussion than is possible here. Finally the chapter reflects on criteria whereby photography collections were founded within art museums.

Overall, drawing upon philosophic positions more characteristic of postmodern and contemporary debates the chapter questions key qualities of *photographic knowledge* through focusing on selected examples and periods of change, taking into account the context of modern art within which photographic practices were later re-framed.

Of course "modern" as related to art practices has differing histories; the era regarded as most transformational varies according to medium and specific art historical concerns. The 1990s Open University, UK, course on *Modern Art: Practices and Debates* took French painting at the end of the nineteenth century as its starting point. Discussions were opened through three contrasting strands of enquiry: the first, that works of art are representations that reflect, and are products of, social practices and linked to socio-economic transformation; the second, whilst accepting a relationship between modern life and new developments in painting, emphasizes aesthetic form and experimentation as a crucial component of modern art and its challenge to established ways of seeing. The third asks what happens when feminist perspectives re-appraise the work of well-known male artists, addressing perceptions and subject-matter brought into play by women artists. Differences between the three approaches remind us that historical findings reflect: the questions that interested a researcher, where research was conducted, and particular examples investigated. In asking *What is History?* British historian, E. H. Carr, used fishing as an analogy; the type of fish caught depends where you fish, what you are looking for, and the equipment used. As he remarked, "Study the historian before you begin to study the facts" (Carr 1964, 23).

This chapter relates aesthetic questions to socio-political change, paying attention to the presence of women within the historical field. The focus is on photography as witness to social circumstances and on modes of perception specific to the "camera-eye" (in photography and film) including experiments in new angles of vision, photomontage, and photographs within mass circulation publications.[1] Geographically, the primary reference is to Europe (including Russia), America, and Mexico. It follows that the focus is on the

avant-garde within Western cultures. As such we can conceptualize art movements not only in terms of experimental vanguards, but also in terms of the generation and dispersal of ideas as artists and their work traveled, particularly between Europe and the Americas. In this respect, art movements shadow broader social and political developments. The dis-location of many of those involved in the arts in central Europe during the First World War influenced developments elsewhere. Lucia Moholy (1894–1989) offers an example. Born in Prague, she moved to Berlin in 1920, learned photography, worked with (and married) László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946). She later moved to Paris, then, in 1934 to London; in 1939 she published a history of the first 100 years of photography. In the 1920s Berlin and Paris emerged as centers for arts, literature and publishing and were viewed as key places for the avant-garde. The Surrealists, including the American, Man Ray, and the Spaniard, Luis Buñuel, infamously gathered in Paris and the *Foto and Film* festival in Berlin in 1929 includes participants from across Europe. Conversely many German actors, writers, and directors re-located to Hollywood in the 1930s. For photographers, needing to be on site to document people and places, international movement was crucial; people traveled for many years, some exiled as a consequence of economic depression or political upheaval.

The guiding timeframe for this *Companion to Modern Art* is 1840s–1970s. In consid-ering modern photography, the primary focus is the first half of the twentieth century. In terms of the camera, modernism might thus be seen as an experimental response to Pictorialism in photography in the late nineteenth century. However, the theoretical prism is one informed by postmodern debates and critiques, not to mention familiarity with sub-sequent histories, for example, the online ubiquity of photography, that could not have been foreseen a century earlier, but that arguably was foreshadowed by the revolution in print techniques that facilitated mass reproduction.

Photography and Modernity

Photography was welcomed in the nineteenth century as a modern technology. It was viewed as integral to modernity within visual documentation exemplifying ideals of tech-nical modernization that characterized industrialization and, increasingly, everyday life in the expanding cities of Western Europe and North America. It was initially the province of the (gentleman) amateur, but was soon adopted by itinerant working photographers throughout colonized areas of the world; in addition, colonialists, scientists, explorers and others took to traveling with cameras. Victorian uses of photography that might be viewed as fore-runners of twentieth century genres such as reportage, social documentary, por-traiture, landscape, family photos, soon emerged along with more commercial products such as advertisements or personal calling cards.

Initially, photography was not generally accepted as an art practice. It was its basis in "fact" that was emphasized as the foremost property of the medium; photography was acclaimed for its ability to document people, places, and events with a high degree of accuracy. In the mid-nineteenth century French critic Charles Baudelaire had argued that, given modernity included an opening up of public spaces and a sense of enhanced speed of change, painters concerned with representing "modern life" needed to find new tech-niques (Baudelaire, 1964 [1863]) in order to reflect the changing mood of the era. He might have viewed photography as contributing within this. However, in common with many other critics, he dismissed the new medium on account of its perceived mechanical character, viewing photographs as directly tracing reality rather than – as in art – operating interpretatively. Yet arguably photography's ability to transmit impressions of people,

places, and circumstances, offering a sense of familiarity with that which had not actu-
ally been experienced was crucial within modern sensibilities and imagination.

   However, an interest in photo-aesthetics did emerge and some photographers have sub-
sequently been acclaimed as artists on the basis of the formal qualities of their imagery or
the pre-conceptualization involved in the staging of scenes for the camera. To take two
British examples: Lady Constance Hawarden (1822–1865) became known for portraits
of her daughters, staged by windows or on the terrace. Her use of light transcends that
required for exposure, suggesting painterly sensitivies akin to seventeenth-century artist
Jan Vermeer's use of natural light for emphasis. Likewise, contouring effects and dramatiz-
ing affects stem from the use of light in the architectural photographs of Frederick Evans
(1853–1943). His studies at the turn of the century, which predated the emphasis on
objectivity and angle of vision that came to characterize modern photography, suggest
an interest in the specificity of camera vision. Modern photography in Europe was pri-
marily associated with "new objectivity," but there are instances of staged photographs,
for example, Madame Yevonde, who ran a portrait studio in London, also posed London
society ladies as figures from history or myth (simultaneously experimenting with color
film) (Gibson and Roberts 1990). Her approach might be seen both as a precursor to
conceptual photography as well as a link back to the Victorian imaginative constructs of
artists such as Dutchman, Oscar Rejlander (1813–1875). A painter, Rejlander was a pio-
neer of combination printing (images created from more than one negative plate to allow
for different exposure times, for instance, for land and sea). He used multiple images to
create pre-conceptualized dramatic scenarios; for instance, his allegorical rendering of *The
Two Ways of Life*, 1857, is based on a patchwork of staged and combination prints. By the
late nineteenth century pictorialist photographers in Europe and America were arguing
for photography to be acknowledged as art. Typically their images were characterized by
harmonious framing and soft focus, their subject-matter and compositions reflecting the
aesthetic values of traditional figurative painting.

   However, photography developed along radically different lines. With abstract painting
as the ultimate example, modernism in art explored the material and semiotic properties
of specific media. This spirit of questioning revolutionized attitudes to photography in the
early twentieth century, an era marked by photographers and critics debating the charac-
teristics of photographic seeing, the ontology of the photographic image, and the potential
afforded by mass circulation in print. In effect, they pursued practice-led interrogations of
aesthetics propelled by investigations into *what* photography can do.

Photography and Mass Reproduction

In many respects the photographic centrally facilitated modernization. As a conveyor of
visual information photographs documented people, places and events, and conveyed new
ideas. In the nineteenth century, camera images were shown in exhibitions and as slide
shows, the latter often based on images of other places (for example, from the various
European colonies). In addition, utilizing notions of authenticity associated with photog-
raphy, newspaper illustrators took to claiming that their work was "based on an original
photograph." Also, since the very first photographs, books had been illustrated through
the laborious process of tipping in single prints by hand. However, the early twentieth
century heralded a further revolution in visual communications in the form of actual pho-
tographs reproduced on the printed page.

If industrial processes were a feature of nineteenth-century modernization, then the introduction of direct reproductions of photographs within mass produced daily and weekly newspapers, magazines and journals, as well as books, was a key feature of the early twentieth century. Mass reproduction was facilitated by the development and commercialization of the half-tone print process in the 1880s. The process involves "translating" photographic prints into tiny dots of varied sizes; these are then used to create half-tone negative plates for press prints that reconstitute pictures (although somewhat like digital pixels, when magnified the dots are perceptible) (Benson 2008, 210–139).

The possibility of printing images alongside words transformed photographic communication. It not only extended the reach of pictorial information, but also impacted directly on visual literacy and the semiotic perceptions implicated in the interpretation of ideas and information conveyed through images. As Hungarian photographer, László Moholy-Nagy, remarked "the illiterate of the future will be ignorant of the use of camera and pen alike" (1936, 32). Although painting as a means of representing people, places, events, and circumstance, had been commonplace – in communal spaces such as churches, or fairs and festivals, or in private houses or gallery and museum collections – the very direct association of photography with "facts" lent an impact that was philosophically challenging. As Susan Sontag would later comment, "… the most grandiose result of the photographic enterprise is to give us the sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads – as an anthology of images" (Sontag 1977, 3). As she suggested, photographic information offers a semblance of knowledge that is both unearned and illusory. The limitations of photographic information had already exercised critics in the modern era. Bertholt Brecht, the German writer and theater director, famously commented that, "Things have become so complex that a 'reproduction of reality' has less than ever to say about reality itself. A photo of the Krupp factory or the AEG tells us almost nothing about these institutions" (cited in Jameson 1998, 163). This was a loaded reference; the Krupp family, known national socialist – Nazi – sympathizers, manufactured steel including armaments. Photographs deal in surface appearances. As such, the juxtaposition of photographs and written text on the printed page became a means of extending meaning through intelligible collisions.

Creatively, word and image opened up possibilities that fueled the development of mass circulation picture magazines such as *Vu* (France), *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (AIZ; Germany), *Picture Post* (Britain), *Life* and *Time* (USA), thereby extending possibilities for photo-reportage and social documentary encompassing a range of subject-matter from the exotic to the everyday. Many of the photographers later acclaimed within the art museum, benefited from commissions from these various magazines. For example, the American, Walker Evans, is particularly remembered as one of many commissioned in the 1930s by the Federal Security Administration (FSA) to document the lives of migrant agricultural workers in "dustbowl" areas in the American (US) South. But he had a career that spanned nearly fifty years, including twenty years as photographer and associate editor for *Fortune* magazine (1945–1965) as well as collaborations on books such as, with James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941) (see Campany 2014). Picture journals and photo-essays in magazines would not have been possible prior to the development of industrial-scale image printing processes. More particularly in terms of art practices, mass reproduction facilitated creative experimentation, not only through innovatory juxtapositions in books and magazines but also as press images that could be appropriated for photomontage.

For several photographers the potential of photography to comment on social circumstances was paramount, and in some cases, this response was direct. John Heartfield's photomontages critiquing the rise of National Socialism in Germany are well known.

The primary context of his work, although it predates this, was economic uncertainty following the First World War; during which he changed his surname (from Herzfelde) in protest against German imperialism. In terms of art practices, his work is interesting for the semiotic understandings embedded in the practices of montage; the juxtaposition of two or more images opens up possibilities for meaning and interpretation that transcend the implications of the individual documents. The notion of "montage" references the French term "monteur," that translates roughly as "machinist" or "engineer," clearly aligning photomontage with workers and class struggle. Take the example of Heartfield's *The Meaning of the Hitler Salute*, 1932, where we see a figure representing what we would now term Corporate Capital standing behind and influencing the actions of Hitler, with the motto "millions are behind me" suggesting finance as well as populism. This type of political intervention was only possible because mass reproduction facilitated poster campaigns. Hannah Höch, for a while associated with the Berlin Dada group, deployed photomontage techniques to critique gender stereotypes. Her later work includes several references to the 1920s German "new woman." One of her best known pieces, *Cut with the Dada Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch*, 1919 (see Figure 1.3) references notions of the domestic in the title, and includes a map showing countries where women can vote. Drawing on multiple sources to construct a critique that was simultaneously anti-war and anti-establishment, at first glance the montage appears chaotic, comprising faces, texts and machinery, but there are groupings: the establishment in the top right corner appears in conjunction with the words "anti," "dada," and "die," which in German combines as "the anti-dada" although in English reads "die anti-dada." The faces referenced would have been familiar to audiences of the time: representatives of the establishment – Empire, army and Weimar government – are situated in the top right above several of their opponents, the Dada group (Lavin 1993). The legacy of Dada photomontage can be traced via various protest movements later in the twentieth century, for instance, feminist or community campaigns. As an experiment in form, montage was not simply a question of the semiotic dissonance that could be achieved through juxtapositions. As German painter, Raoul Haussmann, suggested, although photomontage can be used in very simple ways, at its most interesting, contrasts in the structure of the picture plane, angle of vision and depth of field clashing within a single image draw attention to "dialectical form-dynamics" thereby unsettling the pictorial illusion typical of documentary (Haussmann 1931).

In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), Benjamin reflected on what he suggested was a "futile" question of whether photography is an art. Instead he argued that the reproducibility of photography had transformed art, removing the emphasis on the singularity and uniqueness (aura) of the art object. However, as he observes, "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (Benjamin 1973 [1936], 214). He adds that elements of uniqueness include its situation within the "fabric of tradition," deterioration in physical condition, and changes of ownership. He defines the experience of encounter with an art object in its place of existence as "ritualistic"; a journey has been made and an ambition realized. By contrast he suggests that reproduction – the substitution of many copies for a unique existence – reactivates the object differently as encounters occur in viewers' particular situations.

Benjamin's primary concern was to question what photography could do, and how it contributed to changes in everyday social experience. He suggested that painters maintain a distance from reality whereas the camera "penetrates deeply into its web" (Benjamin 1973 [1936], 227) arguing that the storytelling function of photography (and film) has immediacy thereby supplanting painting. He later commented on the potential for

photographs to offer detail that might not otherwise be noticed, referencing this as "optical unconscious" – a reminder of the influence of psychoanalytic debates in the early twentieth century (Benjamin 1979 [1931]). He thus emphasizes the value of photography as a medium of documentation, criticizing "arty" journalism and the potential for photographs to render the ugly beautiful in ways that mask actual social circumstances.

Benjamin was writing in an era when experimental films such as Walter Ruttman's *Berlin Symphony of a City*, 1927, and Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, 1929, were innovatory and photographically illustrated magazines had achieved mass circulation. He contrasted the evidential basis of the photographic, that he suggests demands a new form of attention from viewers, with the storytelling mode of film whereby the meaning of each frame seems "prescribed" by the preceding sequence of frames. This suggests engagement with montage in terms similar to those used by the Russian film-maker, Sergei Eisenstein in the 1930s (Eisenstein 1943). It also pre-figures post-structuralist debates relating to the fluidity of meaning-production processes (cf. Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari). It is no accident that "The Work of Art" is so often referenced; the essay explored questions about form and meaning that remain unsettled.

New Ways of Seeing

Both Europe and America had experienced significant social change, and economic depression, following the losses of the First World War. It is thus unsurprising to find many artists investigating social circumstances whilst experimenting with new media, not only in terms of mass reproducibility but also in terms of form and aesthetics. Foremost within this was a commitment to new objectivity: the Russian photographer, Alexander Rodchenko, famously declared that there should be no more "belly button" shots, referring to images made using cameras with viewfinders on the top that were necessarily shot at waist level. Instead, "new angles of vision" – literally and metaphorically – should be sought in order to better document and interrogate new social situations and experiences (Quilici 1986).

The notion of the photo-eye facilitating new angles of vision characterized experiments in central Europe between the wars, an era when there was extensive contact between Czech, German, Austrian, Hungarian, and Polish photographers as well as, in the 1920s, Russian artists. The emphasis on new objectivity was simultaneously about documenting the modern age and about finding innovative visual means of investigating the familiar, whether people, places, architecture or still life. This could be applied to film as well as still images. Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, shot in various cities over about three years, purports to show a day in Soviet life. It offers an early example of experiments in camera position, viewing distance, staging, and tricks of editing. For instance, early in the film cinema seats are pushed down with apparently no-one present to move them, or, in a later sequence, the camera and camera operator appear within a beer glass in a café. Reputedly Vertov was described by Eisenstein, as a "visual hooligan," a criticism that might now be viewed as crediting experimentation, although in the Soviet context represented dismissiveness on the grounds of formalism and lack of clear historical content, social context and purpose.

Neue Sachlichkeit (new objectivity) emerged in Germany between the wars. It was particularly associated with the Bauhaus, an academy that brought together architecture, fine art, and craft (founded in Weimar 1919, moved to Dessau 1926, then Berlin 1932–1933). The emphasis was on the interrelation of aesthetics and functionality, particularly in relation to house construction and product design. In effect, "new vision" set out to make

sense of a world newly transformed by technology. In terms of photography, new objectivity was distinguished by an insistence on precision, sharp focus, and non-emotive uses of light and shade; a shadow was a fact, not a romantic signifier of feelings: hard, not soft. Pictures of the steel struts of a railway tunnel or the key of a typewriter affirmed modern lifestyles whilst high tonal contrast images of traditional objects, for example, wheels or tools drew attention to features that might not previously have been noticed. For instance, Moholy-Nagy's photograph *Radio Tower Berlin* (Fünkturm Berlin), 1928, shot from the top of the steel erection, looking down on the street below, shows the shadows of the tower falling over a geometric composition of walkways, awnings, tables and chairs, whilst also referencing broadcast radio, another new initiative in communications. Despite economic depression, modern lifestyles included multiple innovations. Modern photography simultaneously explored new ways of seeing and modern subject-matter, from architecture or industrial construction to urban life and leisure pastimes.

A further example of the transnational development of photography can be found in Herbert Bayer (1900–1985), professor of design at the Bauhaus, who was born in Austria and emigrated to America in 1938. His photomontage, *Lonely Metropolitan*, 1932, shows a pair of hands, "with eyes set in them and a wristwatch, shirt cuff, and jacket sleeves indicating the modern white collar worker," that loom large out of a multi-storey building throwing a shadow across the windows of an upper floor – perhaps offices where he might work, clocking in and out on a regular basis. These are all-seeing eyes and smooth hands, unmarked by rural toil, yet isolated. Surreal in disparate scales of juxtaposition, the photomontage suggests a dystopian modern metropolis; the title confirms a sense of alienation. *Metamorphosis*, 1936, seemingly alludes to the transformation of the natural landscape through machine-made cubist shapes – by extension, modernist values – rolling out towards the woodlands. The contrast between the smooth molded forms and the natural treeline in the distance is marked. Given the date (two years before the artist emigrated to America and three years before war in Europe was once again declared) might this also be read as a political analogy?

Many of those now acknowledged as central to modern photography were Hungarians traveling in the aftermath of the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As commentators have suggested, the specificity of the Hungarian language, spoken and written, with no affiliations within Europe other than to Finnish and Estonian, may have contributed to a desire to communicate visually (Ford 2011). For example, André Kertész moved from Budapest to Paris in 1925, exchanging life in the army during the war and subsequent clerical work for freelance photography; he sold pictures to publications including *Vu*, *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung*, and *The Sunday Times*. Typically, his earlier Hungarian work, circa 1918, took the form of rural and small town monochrome scenes shot in soft light, often capturing the play of shadows, pre-empting "human interest" documentary modes that came to characterize street photography from the 1930s onwards. However, he is particularly remembered for several striking images reflecting a concern to respond to the influences of modernity within city life and exploring how photographs could convey the immediacy and dynamism of social experience. *The Eiffel Tower*, Paris, 1929 is shot from high in this monument to engineering enterprise; we discern tiny figures below, their shadows mingling with the more marked shadows of the struts of the tower. The pictorial form is asymmetrical, with a concentration of steel and people flowing from the top left corner of the image whilst the lower right-hand sector is relatively uneventful. The shadow length indicates that this is morning or afternoon, the beginning or the end of the working day. In a parallel image, we regard the city through the hands of the clock of the Académie Française at lunchtime, the hour hand cutting across our view and the curve of the clock
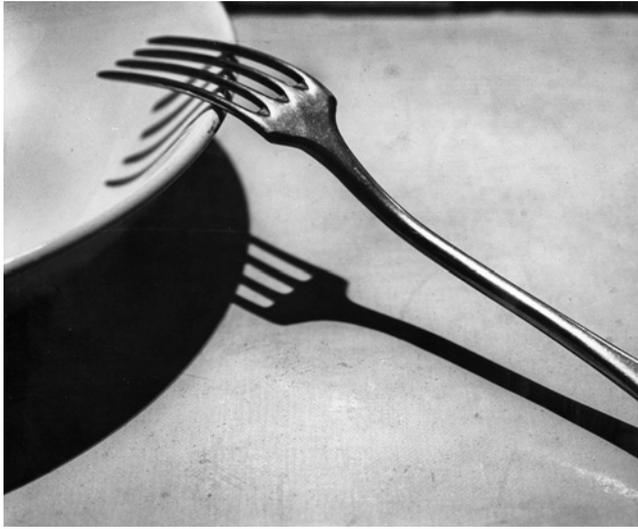
FIGURE 9.1   André Kertész, *Fork*, Paris, 1928. *Source*: © Estate of André Kertész/Higher Pictures.

face softening the strict landscape geometry of a statue set opposite the driveway bisecting the lawns in front of an imposing building beyond. Time, and the flow of workers across the central city, is of the essence in modern urban experience.

New objectivity in photography also favored still life as a genre encompassing flowers, food, and everyday objects brought into focus through new angles of vision, inviting us to reflect on detail in our daily experiences. Abandoning the soft tones of his earlier documentary, Kertész's work in Paris includes examples of a more analytic, compositionally striking approach within which point of view, focus, close-up investigation and sharp tonal contrasts come together to render the familiar enticing or strange. For instance in *Fork*, 1928, there is a complex play of shadows between the prongs of the fork, the bowl on which it is resting, and the surface on which the bowl sits (see Figure 9.1). In *Aux Halles*, 1928 the distorted shadow of a cart's wheel is brought into sharp focus through close-up and high tonal contrast. Similarly to the fork, focus, framing and light are orchestrated to create visual compositions that point to the revelatory powers of photographs. In 1936 Kertész moved to New York, his later pictures exhibiting the same interest in place and shape viewed, as it were, through the fresh eyes of a visitor. Arguably, migration and the novelty of the unfamiliar provoke detailed observation that encourages photographers to look closely at that which might otherwise pass unobserved.

Emphasis on photo-eye and on the potential afforded by camera vision also implicated films. For instance, Moholy-Nagy, who taught design at the Bauhaus from 1923–28 and established the photography department there, shot both film and still photographs, made photograms (unique contact prints) and photomontages. He explored distinctions between *Painting, Photography and Film* (Moholy Nagy 1925) arguing that the camera liberated image-making from the "limitations" of human sight, thereby transcending the capabilities of autographic media (pencils or paintbrushes) and offering new insight through replacing pigment with chiaroscuro (the effects and affects of light). He proposed that the mechanical means of representation afforded by cameras would liberate painting to explore color composition and expression (thereby prefacing many of the

debates about the integrity of modern painting). But Moholy-Nagy's interest in the photographic was not restricted to representational genres; lens-based media led to new arenas of abstract conceptual experimentation centered around the inter-play of light, color, movement, sequencing, tempo and geometric form. He cites the films of Viking Eggeling, Hans Richter, and Man Ray as influential and also draws analogies with modern music. The publication is of historical interest in part because he uses illustrations, grouped together (somewhat like a slide lecture), with comments indicating his views on the potential and limitations of photographic media. For instance, an impressionist image *Paris*, 1911, by American photographer, Alfred Stieglitz, is dismissed because, "the photographer has become a painter instead of using his camera *photographically*" (p. 49 – emphasis in original). By contrast Moholy-Nagy points to images that heighten perceptions of realities of the everyday (people, places, objects) through close-up, angle of vision, juxtaposition, balance or distortion, and includes examples of camera-less photography. His work offers an example of the inter-changeability with which many artists used the different camera modes or camera-less exposure methods. For instance, he used film and photographs to offer a perspective on the "Port of Marseilles" (1929) viewed from above. Indeed, the 1929 *Film und Foto* exhibition, hosted in Stuttgart towards the end of the 1920s era of intense visual experimentation, explicitly allied stills and movies. Whilst recent developments in digital cameras, smartphones, and on-screen editing allow for easy shifts between still and video modes, there is nothing new about the interrelation between the two, or, indeed, about exploring what movies and stills do differently in terms of abstract composition, social documentation, or criticality.

Other examples of commitment to experimentation can be gleaned from the work of the Paris-based gathering of Surrealists in the 1920s. There was a sense of foment: Surrealist artists and writers together published manifestos, organized events, and appeared in each other's films, for example, the famous scene of Man Ray and Marcel Duchamp playing chess – a game of skill, not chance – balancing on the edge of a rooftop in René Clair's film *Entr'acte*, 1924. Experimental concerns, and, in the case of the Surrealists, an interest in the uncanny and in the unconscious, expressed through "automatic" written or visual modes, refused the limitations of specific media although arguably the realist characteristics associated with photography particularly lent themselves to surreal juxtapositions and manipulations, for instance, in the disorienting affects of double exposures. Paris-based American artist, Man Ray, insisted that he painted what he couldn't photograph and photographed what he didn't want to paint. His abstract films, such as *Emak Bakia*, 1926, were created in a similar period to "Rayograms" (photograms) and in his experiments with solarization the over-riding impulse was one of artistic risk.

Of course differences in theme and focus of avant-garde activities stem from specific situations, formal concerns and motivations, and dialogic contexts. Whilst many photographers were concerned phenomenologically with time, movement, and the ontology of the still image as a reference to a moment past, others, including the Surrealists, were more interested in processes, dreams, and that which lies beyond surface appearances. In the context of Europe between the wars this interrelated complexly with questions of political change and social dislocation raising theoretical issues pertaining to the interrelation of the avant-garde, aesthetics, and politics: particularly pertinent to photography given the extent to which photographic imagery and meaning is anchored in actuality.

That "documentary" was coined (by Scottish film producer, John Grierson) in 1926, in the midst of an era of economic depression, is surely no coincidence. Aesthetically, documentary took a realist stance, stressing the authenticity of film as an analogue medium and the observational role of the camera as a mediator of social experience. Here the notion of

"realism" references likeness or naturalism in the sense of "this is how it is (or was)." This is in direct contrast to Brecht's use of the same term, to invoke critical distance and intellectual scrutiny. Documentary rhetoric situates viewers *as if* observers of a scenario playing out before them, positioning us as witnesses rather than critical protagonists. Of course, given broader social contexts there may be an implicit, or explicit, call to action or, as in the case of Sergei Eisenstein's films based on the Soviet revolution (*Strike*, 1924; *Battleship Potemkin*, 1925; *October*, 1927), accounts (justifications) of what had already occurred. Indeed, Eisenstein's films were avant-garde in terms of his understanding and theoretical propositions relating to montage, narrativity, and meaning. But in terms of form and purpose he aimed to investigate and (dramatically) recount events from recent Russian history through pictorial storytelling. Whilst scenes such as the Odessa Steps sequence in *Battleship Potemkin* were staged, they were based on historical accounts and filmed as reportage, in other words, naturalistically.

Influenced by innovations in painting artists also made films to test the effects and affects of abstract (visual) ideas. If we categorize documentary as influenced by Social Realist tendencies then by contrast we might relate works such as painter and film-maker, Fernand Léger's, *Ballet Méchanique* to Cubist explorations of visual language and to experiments in time and pace within modern music (Schönberg, Satie). Hans Richter (born Berlin) and Viking Eggeling (born Lund, Sweden) both trained as painters and increasingly explored abstraction in film. In *Rhythm 21*, 1921, Richter is concerned with illusory spatial effects emanating from shape, pattern, movement and the interaction of light and dark tones (on a monochrome spectrum); there is no figurative imagery. There is also no immediate socio-political relevance; the concerns are formalist. But questions of form and affect, aesthetic and emotional, cross-over into the experimental narratives of film-makers such as Abel Gance, concerned like Eisenstein, with moments from history. For example, in one sequence in *Napoléon*, 1927, he strapped the camera to a horse so that the head and bridle appear fixed within the frame, whilst the landscape judders past in disorienting fashion. Likewise, many Surrealist films feature *coup d'oeil* effected through strange juxtapositions and tricks of editing, in some instances, with obvious radical irreverence – for example, Buñuel's classic sequence of the couple in *L'Age d'Or*, 1930, driven by sexual desire despite repeated interruptions, references to the Catholic church, and, in the opening sequence, the scorpion as predator that, through montage, is linked to the avant-garde's enemy, the bourgeoisie.

The relation between photography and film, aesthetics and politics, takes multiple forms. Critical reflections on the modern era necessarily implicate investigations into the ideological processes that link artistic pre-occupations with the socio-economic on the one hand and questions relating to notions of art as a relatively autonomous sphere of ideas and activity on the other. For Italian Marxist philosopher, Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), art was implicated within ideological tensions that he characterized as all pervasive within the hegemonic social order. Russian Revolutionary leader, Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) viewed art as a vanguard realm within which political education should be pursued in the cause of class struggle and support for the ideals of the Soviet revolution (Lenin 1963 [1907]). This is arguably a less subtle understanding of the role of art than Gramsci's but one that nonetheless acknowledges its influence. More recent debates have focused on art as one space within which ideas and debates that relate to political processes, albeit sometimes tenuously or tangentially, are explored. Contemporary French theorist, Jacques Rancière (b.1940 –), argues that "artistic practices are 'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility" (2004, 13). He

conceptualizes "aesthetic acts as configurations of experience that create new forms of sense perception and induce novel forms of political subjectivity" (2004, 9). These are not direct or accountable processes, yet it is evident that for philosophers, alongside artists, curators and critics, there is a consensus that art offers a space for reflection on events, relationships and socio-political circumstances thereby influencing cultural perceptions, understandings and challenges. In other words, art matters.

Photography, Art, Revolution

It is no surprise, then, that historically some photographers experimented in modes of representation in order to convey something of the excitement of change or the urgency of situations specifically in times of war or revolution – whether the violence and anxieties of revolution itself or social possibilities within post-revolutionary circumstances.

The Russian Revolution (1917) had heralded a new political context, within which the role and contribution of art and artists was debated. Broadly, there was a distinction between those who stressed formalist explorations (in painting, photography, and other media), and those who conceptualized art, particularly photography, in terms of social engagement. For the Soviet Constructivists, photography offered possibilities for the democratization of art thereby servicing cultural revolution. Writer, Ossip Brik, argued that photography should supplant painting, offering speed and accessibility, and challenging traditional themes and compositional conventions. For instance, he acclaimed the work of Rodchenko, defining his aim as "to reject the principles of painterly, 'pictorial' construction for the photograph, and to discover other, specifically photographic laws for taking and composing the shot" (Brik 1989a [1926a], 217). Writing in advance of Benjamin's coining of the notion of optical unconscious, Brik proposed, "The task of the cinema and of the camera is not to imitate the human eye, but to see and record what the human eye normally does not see" (Brik 1989a [1926a], 219). Since painting draws on human sight, this further supports his emphasis on photo-eye as an enhanced means of expanding perception.

As in Europe, the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) created space for explorations through photography and film. The theme of workers' rights was central to the work of the Mexican painter and communist activist, Diego Rivera, whose public murals were commissioned for several buildings in America as well as in Mexico. For example, *The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City*, 1931, still adorns a wall at San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) where it was commissioned in 1930. The fresco combines the construction of the city – represented through engineers, architects, and workers particularly the large central figure of a hard-hatted industrial worker – and the painter working on making a fresco; he thereby interrelated building work and art processes, the artist as worker. Apparently Rivera's presence in San Francisco was controversial, but SFAI viewed the commission as "an example of the school's willingness to absorb controversy for the sake of art" (www.sfai.edu/about-sfai/diego-rivera-mural). This reminds us once again that, although the American avant-garde has been predominantly associated with formal experimentation, there was a strand of political engagement that, at minimum, represented a commitment to artistic freedom of expression.

Italian-born photographer, Tina Modotti (1896–1942), lived in San Francisco then in Mexico City (1925 to 1929). Her work is perhaps best known for breaking all auction price records for photography in 1991; a sepia-toned platinum print *Roses*, 1924, sold

for $165,000 in Sotheby's New York sale. She made many portraits including, in 1924, of Edward Weston (for whom she had modeled and worked as a studio assistant). Her experiments in photographic form and symbolism demonstrate intense scrutiny, and an understanding of the sculptural affects of light, whether flat light, or the affects of reflection. For example, in *Glasses*, *c.* 1925, circular clear surfaces of the bowls of wine glasses overlap and reflect in one another creating, as per the alternative title, an *Experiment in Related Form*. In her architectural photographs the play of natural light is often seemingly as much the subject of exploration as buildings themselves. In Mexico, such formal concerns were incorporated within a series of photographs and films supporting revolution against the old order as well as documenting some of its manifestations.

Modotti mixed in radical artistic and literary circles and, in 1927, joined the Mexican communist party. Many of her images bring together significant objects within a still life format, for instance, *Guitar, Ear of Corn, and Cartridge Belt*, 1928, or *Mexican Sombrero with Hammer and Sickle*, 1927. Other examples, documentary in idiom, are nonetheless marked by her interest in form and the symbolic. For instance, in the post-revolutionary context, that the *Workers' Hands*, 1926, are well-worn representing years of agricultural labor, lends political resonance to the image (Figure 9.2). Likewise, in *Man Carrying a Beam*, *c.* 1927–1928, shot from below, the angle of vision and the inclusion of two men looking up towards him emphasizes the weight of the beam on the man's shoulder.

FIGURE 9.2   Tina Modotti, *Worker's Hands*, 1926. Platinum/palladium print, 7 1/2 × 8 7/16′ (19 × 21.5 cm). New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). *Source*: Anonymous gift. 346.1965 © 2016. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.

Dismissing photography's uses as a pictorial art Modotti questioned what photography is *in itself*, as a medium and autonomous art form. She was interested in what photography could do. In her 1929 Manifesto *On Photography* (Sobre la Fotografía) she states,

> I consider myself a photographer and nothing more. If my photographs are different from those generally produced, it is precisely because I try to produce not art, but rather, honorable photographs – without any tricks or manipulations. […] Photography, because of the single fact that it can only be produced in the present and based on what objectively exists in front of the camera, is clearly the most satisfactory medium for registering objective life in all its manifestations.
>
> (Sotelo and Álvarez 2000, 126, 127)

She experimented with the effects and affects of form whilst producing visual documents partly intended to contribute to social change.

The quality of her images in terms of form and light, and of critical vision, begs questions of aesthetics and notions of beauty. Her work sells for high prices not because art buyers value anti-Capitalist revolution; rather, the single image extracted from a set or series loses the political force that emanates from familiarity with social context and from the interaction of images that can articulate an incisive commentary on social circumstances. In 1929 Modotti's work was exhibited in the vestibule of the National Library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City. (The exhibition was restaged in Mexico City in 2000.) The political situation was volatile; Modotti was arrested and deported from Mexico a few weeks later for being an active member of the Communist Party. Whether her photography was a factor within this is not clear; but if art influences ideas we might like to assume that her deportation was at one level an indicator of political import.

Modern Photography and the Art Museum

Noting that traditional art processes are centrally autographic, the hand "carries out the will of the mind" and that there is a tri-partite involvement of tools, hand, and brain, in 1939 Lucia Moholy emphasized conceptual dimensions of photography over and above the mechanical, suggesting that, whilst the camera as a tool acquires a large share of the action, nonetheless "the mind's share, on which the result mainly depends, upholds its position as the *primum mobile*. The result may be a work of art – or may not" (Moholy 1939, 15). Yet, if we take the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA) as a barometer, although it was set up as a multimedia museum and collected photographs from 1930, it took a further three decades for photography to establish a place as a *modern* practice in leading art museums.

The history of modern photography in America is extensively charted. In June 1917 work by Paul Strand was included in the final double issue of *Camera Work* (1903–1917) edited by pictorialist photographer and curator Alfred Steiglitz, who acknowledged the directness of Strand's photographs, the lack of manipulation, and his engagement with the contemporary. In 1932 a group of West Coast photographers, including Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, and Edward Weston, formed f64 with a view to challenging what they viewed as the sentimentalism of pictorialism and striving for "pure" photography characterized by sharp focus and detail.[2] In the same decade, several photographers including Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Russell Lee, Marion Post Wolcott, and Arthur Rothstein

FIGURE 9.3   Berenice Abbott, *Broadway and Rector from Above*, New York, 1935.
Source: Photo by Berenice Abbott/Getty Images.

were commissioned by the Farm Security Administration (FSA) to document American Life. Their work, along with that of the artist-photographers associated with f64, eventually became acclaimed within the art museum.

Meanwhile, influences from Europe encouraged aesthetic radicalism. For instance, American photographer Berenice Abbott introduced the work of Frenchman, Eugène Atget, to New York. His documentation of Paris at the turn of the century, photographs made largely for sale to painters, had been acclaimed by the Surrealists who viewed it as revealing something of what lay below the city surface. Abbott's documentation of New York (see Figure 9.3) clearly reflects the influence of new ways of seeing and engaging with modern life that typified European experiments.

In 1937 the first exhibition of photographs at MoMA was organized by Beaumont Newhall and published as *The History of Photography* (Newhall 1982 [1937]); Newhall founded the photography department at MoMA in 1940. In 1962 MoMA appointed John Szarkowski as their curator of photography. Szarkowski proposed that photography was a particular way of seeing, different but equivalent to other media. For him, *The Photographer's Eye* (Szarkowski 2007 [1966]) was based on focus, detailed observation, and

selection of viewpoints; photography transcended simple mechanical seeing. He thereby advocated photographers as artists on grounds that echo the principles of modern art with its emphasis on formal experimentation and the specificity of media. He argued that photography had a distinctive relation to "The thing itself" (actuality), was characterized by an ability to define "The detail"; implicated creative skills through decisions relating to "The Frame," and to "Vantage Point," and had a particular relation to "Time" (Szarkowski 1966). As criteria these formed a basis for collecting that could include nineteenth-century photographs (regardless of the – often commercial – context within which work had been made) as well as images from the modern era.

MoMA retains an extensive (although not uncontested) defining influence on the characteristics, significance, and parameters of modern art. Given the prominence of the photography collection there, and a developing interest in the history of photography as a specialism within art history, it is perhaps not surprising that there was a critical focus on questions of form and aesthetics rather than on cultural themes or implications. Moreover American photographers came to dominate survey histories of photography that included the era of the inter-war avant-garde. Through a large number of projects pursued, often in universities as doctoral theses, we now have a much more extended and diversified understanding of the development of photography as a medium in the United States, including the historical involvement of woman, African-American, and Hispanic photographers and some attention to the development of photography in neighboring nations.

In 1987 A. D. Coleman, introducing the work of Mexican photographer, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, for publication by *Aperture*, commented that "at long last" his work was becoming known outside of Mexico and beyond the professional world of photography. As I have suggested, many of the more interesting modern developments occurred in Europe and in Latin America, so it is appropriate to end with an example that counters the canonization of American based photographers. Álvarez Bravo's work is experimental in ways that echo the dynamism of much European work. Second, aesthetically his images synthesize photographic seeing with the cultural specificity that photographs necessarily document.

Álvarez Bravo was well known in Mexico (as was his first wife, photographer, Lola Álvarez Bravo). He was mentored in his early days by Tina Modotti and was included in MoMA's legendary if contentious postwar international *Family of Man* touring show (1955 onwards) curated by Edward Steichen, but did not have a solo exhibition in America until 1971 in the Pasadena Art Museum. His childhood coincided with the Mexican Revolution, and generated the context for the avant-garde experimentation that flourished in the 1920s. From 1930 onwards Bravo worked for the magazine *Mexican Folkways*; he also completed an extensive documentation of Mexican mural art through studying the representation of moments and characters in history as well as styles of painting. He was interested in folk culture and popular art with "less of the impersonal and intellectual characteristics that are the essence of the art of the schools" (Bravo 1966, cited in Kismaric 1997, 15). During the 1920s Bravo's style evolved from the pictorial towards emphasis on the potential of the *photographic* (partly under the influence of Modotti) and from the 1930s, he developed a way of seeing that articulated modernist values with themes and explorations that were specifically Mexican (Kismaric 1997; Hopkinson 2002).

Bravo's work was non-didactic. He utilized the effects of light to draw out the various intensities that constitute Mexican experience, ranging from the heat of the sun to the histories of Spanish colonization. For example, in *Market Closing, Tehuantepec, Oaxaca*, late 1920s, we see three women with baskets on their heads and a fourth with a chair walking towards an alleyway, dark figures silhouetted against a light but drab house wall

that is crumbling at the base, with strong short noon shadows filling the gap between their feet and the base of the wall. This is an objective shot in the social documentary idiom later characterized by French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson as a "decisive moment" when content and geometric form come together, although Bravo's approach was less concerned with composition and instantaneity and more involved with reflecting on aspects of everyday experience. For those unaccustomed to the narrow dirt alley, the rough plastered walls, intense lunchtime sun, flat baskets for carrying produce on heads, long cotton skirts and bare feet, the image can take on an aura of the "foreign," "exotic," or "otherness." His captions are prosaic, but occasionally humorous, revealing odd juxtapositions. For example, in *Mannequin with Voice*, 1930s, we see a dress model next to a gramophone with a large "His Master's Voice" style speaker, along with various other items that suggest a bric-à-brac shop. In other instances, captions are poetic in ways that are sometimes enigmatic, for example, a dark street shot centered on a tree that has been heavily pruned is titled *The Black Grief*, 1939; a dark skinned woman portrayed with bare breasts and a blanket round her shoulders leaning against a rough wall, with the caption *The Earth Itself*, 1930s, which is no doubt intended as symbolist but is disturbing in terms of the patriarchal and colonialist attitudes implied. However, cross-cultural readings are complex. Bravo was deeply ensconced in his own culture, and along with many of his contemporaries internationally, skilled at rendering everyday scenarios allegorically as gentle observations on social circumstances that transcend straight documentation. As such, although noting the formal influence of European new objectivity, it is difficult for the non-Mexican viewer to read his work without being drawn into reflecting on the poetics of the tones and textures, and, indeed, on the often extraordinary (unfamiliar) emblems of Mexican culture.

In Summary

Photography in the early twentieth century, an era of rapid social change, was characterized by three key developments: mass circulation in the printed press; an emphasis on avant-garde experiments, new objectivity and new ways of seeing; and debates as to the nature and potential of photographic seeing.

Mass reproducibility and the increasing ubiquity of photographs facilitated photojournalism and documentary storytelling. Simultaneously, in terms of modern art, the early twentieth century was particularly characterized by experimental approaches to image-making and by explorations of the potential of film-based media. Indeed for photographic practices modernist approaches included experiments in visual modes of communication and a questioning of the ontology of the photographic. As has been argued, photographers became interested in the revelatory potential of new angles of vision acknowledging the ability of the camera to show that which the human eye does not see. At its most simplistic, this, as a part of the "extract" from time that photographs effect, is what constitutes photographic knowledge. However, that photographs may reveal what we might otherwise not observe tells us little about the processes of meaning-production: of making sense of what we see.

Key to understanding what photographs could do were the parallel developments in modernist aesthetics, particularly within painting and within architecture. As this chapter has suggested through reference to Moholy-Nagy and to Man Ray, artists were concerned with identifying distinctive qualities of the photographic by contrast with those of paint. Differences between painting and photography were most evident in the interrelation of

form and content. Although many artists experimented with camera-less photography, for instance, photograms, in general photography and film were seen as more immediate than painting, welcomed for their figurative characteristics and used to explore new ways of seeing.

The relationship between photography, film, and architecture is complex, precisely because of the representational potential of film-based media. Photographs and films drew attention to architectural innovation through celebrating feats of modern engineering, both through picturing buildings within their extensive explorations of contemporary city life and through selecting innovative viewpoints that constructed a new vision, literally and metaphorically, of modern urban culture. In effect, artists navigated cities on our behalf offering new insights into the construction of social space.

Photographs were eventually accorded a place within the art museum. It follows that photography has found a place within art history as well as within broader social histories. Studies vary according to purpose, context, and starting point. However, by contrast with critical questions relating to the construction and circulation of imagery in the digital age, photographic experiments in the modern era remain interesting in part because image-content was inexorably linked to the fact that the subject was necessarily present at the moment of making. Modern photography was a realist medium and modernist principles inspired phenomenological investigations intended to provoke new forms of knowledge, that is, new ways of seeing and engaging with socio-political circumstances and everyday experience.

Notes

1 References to film relate either to analogue photography or to artists' experimental films, not to popular cinema.
2 f64 was commonly the camera's smallest lens aperture, one that through length of exposure time maximized definition.

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Photographic Installation Strategies En-bloc and In-the-round

Wiebke Leister

Focusing on exhibitions and drawing comparisons with art and performance works of the late 1960s to mid-1970s, this chapter discusses different installation strategies used to display Gerhard Richter's 1972 piece *48 Portraits* through adaptation of three theater stage models: proscenium, thrust, and in-the-round. The varying effects generated by the reiterations of *48 Portraits* is exemplary here not only because of Richter's move from East to West, but also because his work demonstrates a historical fissure between Socialist Realism and formalist abstraction by embracing a position between photorealism and abstraction, painting and photography. Although now questionable binaries, what was at stake during that time was arts' social function visibly legible in Richter's negotiations and negations, both in terms of display and in refusing an identifiably unique signature style so essential to the Western art market.

   Works of this period are of particular importance because they mark a point of transition where the certainties of modernist thinking were being increasingly challenged by postmodern questions that broke with earlier canonical metanarratives, while at the same time inverting modernist debates and thereby continuing their quests from a non-essentialist, destabilizing, and fluid perspective. After the loss of confidence in the heroic paradigms of art production in the 1950s, the nature of avant-garde art production became increasingly problematic from the late 1960s, resulting not only in a different display culture but also in a new dialogue between photography and painting, thus changing the relationship of viewer to artworks as well as resulting in wider cultural change. Artists such as Gerhard Richter who were working on the cusp between modernism and postmodernism, and who were equally concerned with what kind of art to produce at this juncture, included painters such as Anselm Kiefer, Georg Baselitz, and Jörg Immendorf, but also photographers Hilla and Bernd Becher, Anna and Bernhard Blume, Urs Lüthi and Jürgen Klauke, as well as performance artists and others in the same predicament who were unwilling to continue with earlier ideas from either East or West. They became emblematic for provoking a pivotal change in cultural production, possibly causing modernism to "retreat." More than forty years on, these postmodern ways of rethinking art and society came to produce their own problems, including increasingly neoliberalist and apologetic politics, while the utopian search of the modernist project continues.

Documentation

Exhibition Versions

Originally devised for the 1972 German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, Gerhard Richter's *48 Portraits* have been associated with an imaginary congregation of independent subjects as well as a model society of enlightened cult figures. On display were forty-eight black-and-white paintings, each depicting the head of a more or less famous man, arranged in one horizontal line around the whole gallery space, their heads successively turning towards the center, thus encircling viewers in such a way that they could never see all the images at once. The grand opening of this Biennale happened more than forty years ago, meaning that I have only ever seen its most famous display in *documentation* rather than in situ, in *installation*.[1]

Today the work *48 Portraits* exists in four different exhibition versions: as the initial forty-eight oil paintings on canvas (1971–1972), as forty-eight photographs of these paintings (1972), as a photographic edition (1998), and as part of the ongoing inventory *Atlas* (1969–). This chapter discusses how this artwork is expressed, displayed, and analyzed in its different media states. Collecting installation shots from the site-specific appearances of this work on display in its different manifestations in exhibition spaces around the globe, I wondered: What is the nature of this shifting piece of work? Still, when asking curators about their intentions and their collaboration with Richter when putting together the layout for its respective showing, their reactions seemed mostly concerned with stressing Richter's intention rather than evaluating the effect of the respective hanging of the particular version and how it contributes to and extends the visual, historical, and theoretical discourse around what constitutes the work: *48 Portraits.*

Over the course of my study, Richter and his curators insisted that there is no important difference between the three main exhibition versions, but in my view the extreme range of possibilities extended by the increasingly different display strategies, opens up very different readings of the work, making the way the work is shown part of the work itself. Adaptability could be seen as one of the great strengths of *48 Portraits.* At the same time this floating multi-existence could compromise its conceptual aspects, thus asking how it defines itself *as work.* What follows is an investigation into the expressive display models of *48 Portraits.*

Installation Shots

Even though all installations shots are complicated in nature, they are often the only way to access and discuss works that are completed by their display. Richter's *48 Portraits* lends itself readily to an investigation into how on the one hand artworks are installed in the context of a space, and on the other how these installations are documented. Both these aspects follow aesthetic decisions: showing a work as one unit or separated into parts, with other works or by itself, in straight lines or modernist grids – just as every museum photographer has his/her own style of documenting with again different results from how the artist would record it either for private use or dissemination. At the same time the problem with drawing on photographic documentation of historic installations is that these stylistic devices are often tacit and are in need of being actively analyzed as part of the image and possibly imaginatively subtracted to be able to evaluate the arrangement, because even the most deadpan depiction is never a transparent transcription. This is not

to say that installation photographs of Richter's *48 Portraits* are *performative*, nor that they are exhibited as works in their own right (unless as part of *Atlas*). But, as we shall see, they give evidence of how the work is performative *as and of itself* when well installed – not only because the work is based on performative source photographs (portraits that would not have existed unless the sitter had posed in a studio context), but also because it develops its inherent logic out of an all-over gesture of heads turning towards a center.

Encyclopedic Alterations

Anti-aesthetic Sources

Even though Richter stresses that the idea for *48 Portraits* was indeed much older, he started working on the group of paintings in Düsseldorf in 1971 after an invitation to have the first ever solo show in the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, certain that the spatial conditions would be ideal for this work (Elger 2009, 194). Sourcing his models by re-photographing 270 individual portraits of famed men from different encyclopedias, these second-hand images gave Richter the *"raw data"* from which to paint (Storr 2002, 42) – chosen as reference images assumed to be free from any particular style, just like many conceptual artists from the 1960s/1970s turned to snapshots or other use-value photographs because they were seen as banal and therefore "anti-aesthetic" (Storr 2002, 61; Osborne 1992, 104). Richter described this supposed stylelessness in 1966 as follows, "A photograph – unless the art photographers have 'fashioned' it – is simply the best picture I can imagine. It is perfect; it does not change; it is absolute, and therefore autonomous and unconditional" (Richter 1995, 56). Accordingly, he used his photographic sources to assess reality "from the bottom," thus questioning traditional portraiture. These encyclopedic candidates he then started painting on canvas, testing out different kinds of brush strokes and appearances to arrive at a distinctive degree of likeness and difference when copying the small source images onto much larger canvases with the heads more than twice natural size.

It is noteworthy that by this point each of the images had already undergone three photographic stages of alteration: from the original photograph taken of the sitter, over its half-tone reproduction in the encyclopedia, to its re-photographed and re-printed incarnation as reference photograph. Looking across the original headshots in *Atlas*, it is illuminating to see how diverse they are even though Richter's process of reproducing them from different books already standardized their scale as well as changing the visibility of their halftones and respective contrasts by possibly blurring them slightly, distorting them with reflections or perspective while adding new qualities of film grain and photographic printing paper.

Indifferent Choices, Personal History, and the Archive

The fourth stage of the alterations was the choice of *which* of those 270 pre-selected portraits to include. Much has been made of this choosing and sorting of materials, but after some experimenting Richter decided on forty-eight white nineteenth- and twentieth-century men, mostly deceased: writers, scientists, philosophers. But apart from external qualities such as wearing white shirts and dark jackets, displaying calm faces with mouths closed and hands concealed, they have nothing in common. Robert Storr observed

that this undefined element is typical of Richter as it stresses two overall aspects of his way of working – "anonymity and indifference" – undermined if the editing had reflected any personal preferences (Storr 2003, 101). Richter summarized in 1966, "I pursue no objectives, no system, no tendency; I have no programme, no style, no direction. … I am inconsistent, non-committal, passive; I like the indefinite, the boundless; I like continual uncertainty" (Richter 1995, 58). Still, even though no pattern, no communality, can be established, *who* was excluded and *why* is telling: politicians (to not suggest any ideology), artists (to not hint at an aesthetic genealogy), women (to stress patriarchal cultural legacy and keep the formal unity of dark suits) as well as all non-Westerners and anyone from pre-photographic times. Keeping these opaque criteria of de-selection and recontextualization in mind, the resulting work *48 Portraits* shows Richter more as a collector who picks and chooses and less as an archivist who strives towards completion in order to filter out signification. The work is not an iconic machine, but is presented with an archival gesture and overall look that homogenizes its appearance, thus turning its sitters into specimens of history.

In fact, one could equally talk of Gerhard Richter as a historical case in point: born in 1932, he fled East Germany – and his earlier painting studies in Socialist Realism at Dresden art academy – in 1961. He was accepted at Düsseldorf Kunstakademie in the same year the construction of the Berlin Wall began. Bearing this in mind, Benjamin Buchloh argued that this dialectic of Richter's "divided heritage" between East and West Germany is not only something that influenced his personal formation, but also played out in his work as a dichotomy between socialism and consumerism, Stalinism and Fascism, Socialist Realism and modernist abstraction (Buchloh 1996, 60–64). Paul Wood adds that Richter enters the Western art discourse at that critical moment when the dominant paradigms of the avant-garde were in the process of breaking up (Wood 1994, 182); when the metanarratives of modernism were in fact on the cusp of being dismantled by the postmodern. Looking for biographical clues to the work, Buchloh further suggested that the conception of *48 Portraits* reveals Richter's urge to retrospectively identify acceptable father figures denied to his generation, resulting in what is simultaneously a manifesto of dis-identification with the respective paternal images suggested by Nazi and Stalinist leaders and a secondary process of identity construction (Buchloh 1996, 73–75). Richter stressed in response that the absent father was characteristic for his generation in both East and West Germany, which in his view added to the disquieting effect of his work. But he also acknowledged the psychological component of the fact that he never knew his real father and that it took him years to understand what it meant to be a father himself.[2] And even though his work clearly deals with aspects of cultural paternity and the historical legacy of forefathers, he insisted that the work is "not a restauration. It is a reference to this loss" (Storr 2003, 103). Paternal identification or not, Richter admitted that he "wanted to provoke with these old men because they were so incredibly unpopular then," at a time when after the 1968 revolts all intellectual endeavors of the cultural past were widely under attack (Leister 2014, 221).

Painting Photography

The fifth stage of modification occurred in the actual painting process: here the close crops and the neutral backdrops of heads with little space around them were decided, the black jackets and white shirts straightened, the heads enlarged, centered and aligned, the size, the proportion of the canvas and the black-and-white oil paint chosen, as well as the *ductus* and *grisaille* developed in which all forty-eight paintings were then carried out. Richter's

specific method is described by Dietmar Elger as "in-painting" ("Vermalung"; Elger 2009, XIII). It establishes a seamless surface with a quasi-photographic look, based on feathering the wet paint, which has often been compared to photographic blurring (defocused lens, long exposure, camera movement). The photographic conditions Richter was aiming for were more than just a surface effect, but also a claim for the supposedly objective and anti-aesthetic qualities of the technical medium of photography thus describing the non-committal quality he was seeking for his painting: an antithesis to expressive brush strokes as well as illusionistic copying. Obviously, paint on canvas cannot be out-of-focus and Richter always rejected the idea that his painting was *about* blurring just as he always avoided any signature devices. Still, this seemingly unfocused quality of his images is often read as a fleeting impression, similar to an after-image giving a sense of withdrawal or stressing the illusionary presence of a photographic referent: a photographed moment in time rather than the painterly simulation of a photographic object.

The contemporary interaction between painting and photography was noted by Susan Sontag in 1977, "As most works of art (including photographs) are now known from photographic copies, photography – and the art activities derived from the model of photography, and the model of taste derived from photographic taste – has decisively transformed the traditional fine arts and the traditional norms of taste, including the very idea of the work of art." She continued, "Much of painting today aspires to the quality of reproducible objects. … Now all art aspires to the condition of photography" (2002, 146–149). Different from other photo-painting that explored how the significance and content of an image changes when translated into a different medium, Richter stressed that his images are not just paintings that cite photographs or photographic imagery translated onto canvas, but that he is actually making photographs by way of painting. "I paint like a camera," he noted in 1964–1965, "because I exploit the altered way of seeing created by photography" (Richter 1995, 35). And just two months before the opening of the Venice Biennale he stated, "I'm not trying to imitate a photograph; I'm trying to make one. And if I disregard the assumption that a photograph is a piece of paper exposed to light, then I am practicing photography by other means: I'm not producing paintings that remind you of a photograph but producing photographs" (Richter 1995, 73).

Reproduction

This painterly production of photographs is partly based on Richter's palette of gray paint, which he saw as equivalent to indifference: absence of opinion, nothing, neither/nor. This helped him to remain non-committal and quasi form-less while at the same time establishing a photographic dimension, which on the one hand simulated the aesthetics of present-day black-and-white amateur photographs and on the other hand stressed the distinction between painted image and colorful world. But his painted photography was also established through the interplay of four levels of representation: the painted reproduction of a photographic reproduction of a printed reproduction of a photographic portrait. Here the painting method is still to a certain extent mimetic, but it is mimetic of an image-object (Richter's photograph of the encyclopedic portrait) and *not* of a sitter. This fosters a productive conflict between representational and non-representational aspects of the work, because these photographs are not only the source but also the subject of his painting.

Following Walter Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), photographs of paintings are de-auratized, democratic representatives because they enable many to obtain a copy of an original. Painting a photographic

reproduction could therefore be read as the "auratization" of a given photograph (Ehrenfried 1997, 181–182). But because Richter's photographic sources are not photographs of paintings but photographs of photographs, *painting photographs* here means painted references to photographic pictures and not to any formerly photographed referent. On the level of visual signification this is important because his paintings are not freely imagined *pre-sentations,* but painterly *re-presentations* of photographic reproductions. At the same time his images are not simply copies or imitations, because he does transform the sourced pre-images ("Vorbilder") in the process of painting them in order to achieve a different effect – a greater level of abstraction, formal composition, and intrinsic order – so that they become post-images ("Nachbilder"): an appropriation of sources by way of capping their former significance as *notable males* to becoming images citing other iconographies. Surfaces made visible, in other words *simulacra* that no longer portray anything other than the equally concrete and imaginary matrix of hidden sources. Therefore, Richter's photography sits outside of the two kinds of indexicalities that his work indirectly thematizes: the portrait's photographic referent (because each portrait leads to another image rather than to a sitter) and the *ductus* of the paintbrush (which was in-painted to such an extent that the surface is void of any visible mark-making). His paintings become *more* real than the world – possibly creating a model for the world in order to understand something about the nature of the visible.

Portraiture as Non-likeness

Consequently, the sixth level of alteration comes into play on the level of portraiture. Based on making the portraits formally similar by means of cropping and amending details, with the effect that their sitters seem to share common traits (Gronert 2006, 85), the work postulates a polemic by investigating modes and codes of de-familiarization, estrangement, and non-likeness within the very genre of portraiture, traditionally embedded in resemblance and the representation of specific persons. Absorbing any individual residue, the *48 Portraits* are therefore on a more abstract level some kind of history painting, only they refer to a history of ideas as such, on an impartial non-ideological meta-level, rather than being a manifesto for any particular heritage other than making relevant their visual legacy (Storr 2003, 102, 117). And since these impassive faces of history themselves don't give anything away, it is a little surprising that Richter's conception of portraiture is just as indifferent as his treatment of archival sources. In his own words in 1966, "A portrait must not express anything of the sitter's 'soul', essence or character. Nor must a painter 'see' a sitter in any specific, personal way … [It] is far better to paint a portrait from a photograph, because no one can ever paint a specific person," continuing, "I never paint to create a likeness of a person or of an event. … I am really using it only as a pretext for a picture" (Richter 1995, 56–58). His paintings only ever refer to the photographic objects as particular parts of our reality, never to individual sitters. He paints photographs, *portrays* reproductions, and his paintings are therefore always presentations of representations, not of people. Accordingly, Richter's work problematizes not only portraiture, but also *mediality* – and *48 Portraits* is therefore far from portraying any shared traits of the men depicted, even though he often displays them in a line (like a conventional portrait gallery) and aided by nameplates (successively amending life dates), which could create an overall impression of an abstracted hall of fame. However, even though they are anti-portraits, their authoritarian appearance does not only derive from their source portraits. As much as we might identify some of the sitters, even Richter admitted that he did

not recognize all involved. Rather he painted them *as-if* famous by referring to the aesthetic discourse of depicted importance, which gives the images themselves the authority of frontally and centrally represented icons of culture.

Recontextualization as Work

The seventh stage of alteration comes into play through recontextualization and juxtaposition of the individual paintings as one body of work. To this end Richter not only uses the deceptive organizational paradigm of the inventory discussed above, he also establishes a formal pattern based on a dynamic choreography of head directions and lines of sight all pointing to the center of the composition: the frontal portraits in the middle, slowly turning into three-quarter profiles to both sides, thus describing a full circle, with the ideal viewer positioned in the middle of the revolving composition looking up to the frieze of oversized portraits installed above head level. All images are subordinated under this overall structure thus creating a calculated interaction of partial meanings. What remains is a constellation of heads brought together under a pre-established visual principle without any picture being more or less important; a well-organized crowd that encircles and stares at its viewers but without any shared criteria other than their calculated equal presentation as part of a flawless succession. The flow of the grouping is constructed by classic means of montage, recalling what Roland Barthes in 1970 termed an "obtuse meaning" which exceeds the referential motif and compels an interrogative reading of the signifier (Barthes 1977, 53, 61). This third meaning of montaged parts is indifferent, discontinuous, and distanced in relation to any signified. Richter's monumental composition might therefore remind us of a pantheon or a heroic panorama, but what is established here is a monument for both mnemonic and amnetic historical processes rather than for anybody or anything in particular. At the same time this decentering and denaturalizing approach to history writing in *48 Portraits* is combined and confronted with a doubly centered arrangement: that of the depicted heads looking towards the middle of the composition, and that of the work looking into the space towards its viewer – possibly laying open the questionable nature of any epic monumentalism.

Post/modern Negation

At the same time *48 Portraits* is based neither on a subversive nor an idealistic or ideological gesture, thus playing off and ultimately denying all partial meanings that enter the work from every side. It is this contrast of promising *precision* and indifferent *negation* that initially holds this modernist-looking work in postmodern suspense. In fact, it does need its quasi-modernist costume to unfold its postmodern nature: a formal structure that leads structural reading astray because it functions outside structuralist frameworks and differs from merely archival gestures through involving the viewer in an ongoing cycle of possible, purposefully undecided significations. But, even though Stefan Gronert stresses that *48 Portraits* concludes the first conceptually-driven phase of his oeuvre (Gronert 2006, 87–88), Richter is not a Conceptual artist.[3] His work lingers between poles of realism and abstraction, rationality and chance, indifference and decision, representational and non-representational strategies, modern and postmodern readings, not treated as mutually exclusive but mobilized in order to leave interferences in the work.[4] As a consequence Peter Osborne relates Richter's works to what he calls postconceptual painting after the readymade, which integrates a "consciousness of the crisis of painting into its constitutive

procedures" thus deriving its doubly negative logic from a "critical reflection on the concept of painting itself" (Osborne 1992, 111–112). This refusal of conventions therefore includes both its mediation and deployment.

Arguing that Richter's work is in fact formed out of a conflict with canonical modernism, Wood stresses that there is much dialectical engagement with the ruins of modernism at play rather than simply its deconstruction. This results in an aesthetic value that extends the human experience beyond our day-to-day experience of the world into a relation between spectator and artwork. According to Wood the condition of *after* is therefore that of the *postmodern,* while the contemporary is what is formed not only *after* but also *out of* modernism, "The logic of Richter's being not-modernist is multiple. It is historically and geographically determined; he is, in fact, a figure of several 'afters'" (Wood 1994, 182). Correspondingly Guy Debord argued in 1967 that contradiction is in fact dialectical in form and content and therefore able to destroy the society of the spectacle by undoing ideology while being grounded in history, "It is not a 'zero degree of writing', but its reversal. It is not a negation of style, but the style of negation" (Debord 2009, 132). While Richter noted down in 1964–1965, "I like everything that has no style: dictionaries, photographs, nature, myself and my paintings. (Because style is violence, and I am not violent.)" (Richter 1995, 35). So, while his encyclopedic collecting and sorting of everyday imagery might be a search for a conceptual panorama, his paintings are statements about painting by appropriating photographic means.

In view of that, an eighth level of transformation will come into play in the overall conception of the work *in installation*: how the group of portraits is spatially established in the respective space, engaging its viewers in a crossfire of gazes. To this end I will use three types of theater stage models to analyze the different configurations of *48 Portraits* as staged by Richter and his curators.

Installation and Spatial Orientation of the Work

Atlas

It is important to note that in 1967 Richter had already started to order his disparate collection of preparatory sketches and reference images into a thematically organized pictorial atlas. His *Atlas* is an *ongoing* inventory in the style of a reference portfolio that also exists in several book versions.[5] As a work in its own right it was first exhibited by the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst in Utrecht in 1972.[6] Since 1996 it belongs in its open-ended form to the Lenbachhaus in Munich and has been exhibited in many contexts.[7] At its 1997 showing at *Documenta X* in Kassel, *Atlas* had grown from the 343 plates originally included to about 650 framed plates, while the Gerhard Richter Archiv in Dresden exhibited 783 plates in 2012, and the Lenbachhaus in 2013 exhibited 802. *Atlas* contains many of the artistic experiments with photographic devices fundamental to Richter's work: blurring, double exposures, cropping, enlargement of details, collages as well as simulations of displays. Significantly embedding Richter's inventory in the context of works by other European artists who accumulated images in more or less structured grid formations and photo-montages, Buchloh points out that Richter's quasi-archival project stands out not for its homogeneity and continuity but rather for its heterogeneity and discontinuity (Buchloh 1999, 117). Collecting, indexing, and editing play a big role both in *Atlas* and in the development of *48 Portraits*, again pointing to the seemingly contradictory mechanisms that operate in his work: chance, concept, and choice. The process of Richter's thinking about *48 Portraits* is

preserved on twelve plates of *Atlas*: plates 30–37 (270 source portraits); plate 38 (biographies); plates 39/40 (installation sketches); plate 41 (photographic documentation Venice Biennale), each 66.7 × 51.7 cm.

Venice Biennale

In the run-up to the Venice Biennale, Richter not only edited source images and tested ways of painting the portraits in oil, he also made sketches and models of how *48 Portraits* could feature in the neoclassical pavilion – a space that interested him because of its good proportions and light conditions. *Atlas* plate 39 shows that he had initially also considered an aleatoric grouping, but then settled on a principle of head rotations. On plate 40 he sketches the room with a long single row of images running along the walls right above the viewer's head. Plate 41 then contains nine photographs of the installed *48 Portraits* documenting all four walls of the space: the composition gradually shifting from three-quarter portraits on the left wall (with the men looking to the right), to *en-face* portraits on the front apses, to three-quarter portraits on the right wall (with the faces looking to the left), to again *en-face* portraits on the back wall with the entrance; each oil painting 70 × 55cm presented unframed on canvas stretchers, all participants directed to the center of the composition. The installation's front wall is depicted five times – initially with Franz Kafka's portrait in the middle of the arrangement and later with Kafka exchanged for the less prominent Patrick Maynard Stuart Blackett because, as Richter explained, Kafka is too much of a loved figure and therefore stood out too much and could have been read as a personal statement – the reason why Kafka came to hang to the right of the exit with other *en-face* images (Ehrenfried 1997, 46, 60). This rehanging stresses two main aspects of the work: the formal-conceptual flow of the composition and the indifferent approach to the persons depicted.

In-the-round (Reverse)

Invited by Dieter Honisch to represent Germany, the Venice pavilion was not just the first time these paintings were exhibited, they were specifically made to operate in this space. What struck me immediately was that Richter conceived the work in terms of a surround-effect similar to the central staging strategies of classical theater in-the-round with the audience enclosing the stage from all sides. This means that a performance can be seen from any angle – 360 degrees – while the performers need to manage these sightlines in relation to their stage positions because they do not act *in-front-of* but *surrounded-by* an audience. Any sequential comprehension of a piece is based on a social, participatory act that puts viewers face-to-face with the work, engaging them in an encounter. Because the viewing platform is located in the auditorium, viewers and actors are effectively in the same space. The in-the-round presentation consequently liberates the performance from restrictions of the *picture-frame-stage* and leads to an informality that increases the rapport between viewers and actors.

Richter's presentation of *48 Portraits* plays exactly with this notion: sometimes it seems as if the portraits encircle a central audience, and sometimes as if the portraits are an audience themselves encircling a centrally positioned stage. The latter is an inversion of in-the-round, with the viewers surrounded by a piece of work that cannot be seen at once, thus turning the viewers into performers. Installing the forty-eight portraits in one communal gesture not only stresses the ideal viewing position in the center, but also an

FIGURE 10.1   Gerhard Richter walking along *48 Portraits* (1972). Installed in German Pavilion at Venice Biennale with portrait of Kafka in the center, June 1972. *Source*: © Gerhard Richter 2016.

ideal position *to-be-looked-at* from all sides. Displayed in this way, *48 Portraits* literally holds its viewers captive; we are not just observers but are faced with a work that returns our gaze in a seemingly reciprocal process. As Jerzy Grotowski asked in 1968: "Can theatre exist without an audience? At least one spectator is needed to make it into a performance" (1980, 32). Unfortunately hardly any attempts to install the work *48 Portraits* after the Venice Biennale have achieved this exchange of gazes, often because the work is part of a bigger exhibition with other works either interfering with the open space at its center or interrupting the continuous line of its circular formation, in the best case resulting in vague approximations of Richter's original conception.

White Borders

In the same year, Richter embarked on a project he would only finish in 1998: a photographic edition of *48 Portraits*. One set was indeed produced in 1972, following a method he had been exploring for other photographic editions of photo-based paintings since 1966 – usually of images that meant something to him personally, that had been damaged or sold. These multiples would be printed in the same format as the painting, but then mounted on white cardboard and framed under glass with a white border, giving them an even more distinctive look of being a picture *about* a picture with an almost poster-like quality. Similarly in the case of the *48 Portraits*, each photograph was printed in the size of the original paintings – 70 × 55cm – but mounted on white card and framed 100 × 75cm. And even though Richter stresses that he makes no distinction between the forty-eight paintings and the forty-eight photographs,[8] it is quite striking to see how different they are: re-transferred into the photographic medium, they look much more as if pulled from

FIGURE 10.2 Photo version of *48 Portraits* (1972). Installed at Museum Ludwig, *c.* 1986.
Source: © Gerhard Richter 2016.

an archival registry, more anonymous, more unified, with even less distinction between the individuals and their image. This re-transition into photographic prints is a logical contin-uation of the work and an extension of its reproductive layering – in fact moving Richter's project of painted photography on to yet another level of pre-installation alterations. As Storr points out, "Just as the camera delivers a likeness of the object of its attention by impartially screening the information before it, it also reduces the quantity and quality of that information to what can be photographed, thereby distorting the image while seeming to reproduce it" (Storr 2003, 144–145). Richter often added to these modifying factors by slightly defocusing the lens when reproducing the painting. This smoothing out of the texture, yet adding another layer of photographic tracing to the work, again is playing with ideas of photographic referencing based on the fact that any blurry or otherwise distorted portrait will still be indexical even though it is not a mimetic likeness. Accordingly, one could argue that the auratization Richter added to the photographic sources by painting them, is here productively inverted and de-auratized in the process of photographing the paintings, thus suggesting a potentially open-ended simulacral chain of copies, sources, and originals while at the same time stressing the paintings' photographic origin.

In this context Buchloh implied that the immediate production of "an exact photo-graphic simile edition" was based on a decision of Richter's "to negate the work's … precarious monumentality" (Buchloh 1996, 76) – the possibly hieratic gesture with which

they were installed as an authoritative frieze in the German Pavilion. Yet I am unsure if this necessarily foregrounds a supposedly democratic potential of the photograph in the work, as it also refers back to the totalitarian and homogenizing functions of any archival construction. When reproduced in catalogues the two versions are almost undistinguishable, but when installed as a group the white borders around the prints create a natural distance between the actual photographs.

Museum Ludwig

In 1986 we see Richter trying to adapt the linear composition of *48 Portraits* to the reality of Museum Ludwig in Cologne – often single walls in the midst of prominent staircases. After developing a centrally-oriented grid configuration from his 1966 work *Eight Student Nurses*, the first gridded hanging at the end of August with the images too close together didn't convince Richter. He then sends – fourteen years after the work was initially acquired – detailed hanging instructions, listing seven conceptual points for installation. But even though the grid formation is now the most frequent way of installing the work, Richter starts his text stressing that, "ideally, the 48 Portraits should be hung in one single row." He continues, "The 48 Portraits can also be hung in various rows on top of each other; in 2, 3, 4 or 5 rows at most, according to the conditions of the premises." Also, "The individual picture rows must not necessarily form a block" (potentially avoiding the handrail of the staircase while suggesting something incomplete). His next point concerns the number of images, "Of the 48 Portraits, a minimum of 44 must be installed (under the title *48 Portraits*)." Then, significantly, describing the focal composition, he writes, "The line of vision of the portrayed persons must always point from outside towards inside." Equally he defines the space within the installation as, "The minimum space from floor to the lower border of each picture is 170cm, the space between pictures hanging next to each other: minimal 40cm, maximum 55cm; the space from row to row one on top of the other: minimal 50cm, maximum 70cm (with the vertical distances always bigger than the horizontal ones)." When stressing that the individual nameplates are an integral part of the work, he argues that they, "must be attached to the wall, in the middle, 10–20cm below each portrait." And comparing the two versions he concludes, "Points 1–4 are equally valid for the photo series; distances from picture frame to picture frame should be a minimal of 5cm; the distance from picture frame to floor should be at least 150cm" (Richter 1986, n.p.).

Proscenium

It goes without saying that the immersive and participatory nature of the originally encircling conception is radically changed by squeezing the forty-eight images into different grid formations with open or closed blocks. Rosalind Krauss suggests that the successful paradigm of the modernist grid is based on its visual structure in which sequential features are rearranged as spatial organizations (1979, 54–55). Richter agreed that the grid display possibly looks more *modern*, but in my view the work also loses its open viewing constellation as the grid suggests a stronger connection between the depicted figures, while the viewer does not feel enclosed but rather towered over by their massive en-bloc formation. At the same time the reduction from row to block reminds one of the difficulty of staging an in-the-round work under a proscenium arch, which reduces the play area to the part

in front of the curtain opposite the audience. The side of the proscenium stage facing the audience is often addressed as a *fourth wall*. Richter's *48 Portraits* in their grid constellation still manage to break the proscenium in order to address its viewers, but in comparison to their former in-the-round installation the effect upon the viewer is much reduced.

Thrust (Reverse)

Conversely, on the occasion of installing the paintings at MoMA New York in 2002, Storr stressed his preference for less immersive ways of installing the work, "since [Venice], Richter has laid them out or ranked them in ways that avoid such visual gags, emphasizing instead the primitive system of the list or grid as a means of bringing order to the disorder of history" (Storr 2002, 63–64). Richter and Storr therefore agreed on an in-between solution, giving the overall impression of a thrust stage, often used in modern theater to undo the concept of the fourth wall. A thrust stage reaches out of the proscenium into the audience with the stage being surrounded on three sides by the audience – in effect *a three-quarter-round*. Similar to Storr's arrangement in two rows over three walls, the reverse of a thrust stage has a central audience that is three-quarter surrounded by the performance, during which viewers can adopt some kind of panoramic vision without having to leave their spot, as there is no action going on behind them. But to my astonishment, the configuration of the protagonists was changed from looking *inwards* to looking *outwards*. With their heads pointing from inside to outside, they now seem to look away from the viewer, as if avoiding eye-contact rather than their sightlines converging at the center of the gallery, suggesting different readings altogether.[9]

Photo-edition

Finally, in 1998 Richter released a second photographic version of the forty-eight paintings, now in an edition of four. In comparison, this second photographic version looks much more like the paintings, being presented in almost the same size without a border. In fact, mounted under matt Perspex the images of the photo-edition appear even more seamless than the paintings in their acquired Perspex box frames, and certainly very unlike the first framed version. Richter's aim of returning the paintings to the photographic realm while not making any distinction between them here is much more embedded in the interchange between photography, painting, and reproduction, and it is therefore much harder for the viewer to decode its referential meanings. One could even argue that the re-transferred multiples move the project to an even more accomplished level of reproductive layering, adding yet another level of pre-installation alterations. Printed from the same negatives as the 1972 photo version, the previously mentioned *en-face* portrait of Blackett was printed in reverse during this process, almost as if Richter wanted to give his viewers a hint which version they are looking at (for example, when reproduced in catalogues).[10]

Today, the seven versions of *48 Portraits* are often arranged in discussion with the artist, but increasingly it seems without any working guidelines. Rather, their arrangement now appears to depend entirely on the occasion, with no recommended placement and often without any nameplates. In interview, Richter explained that it is possible to hang them in almost any way as long as they look inside and are installed above eye-level. It is unclear if this means that he has given up on the conceptual aspects of his work, or if the greater availability of the work has led to exploring different ways of installation; but it does seem

to have resulted in many displays that treat the work foremost as a graphic, formal or even decorative pattern: too low, too high, too close together, with too little balance between individual paintings and too little attention to how they establish a communal artistic gesture.

Surprisingly, when installing the photo-edition at the National Portrait Gallery in London in 2009, Richter and Paul Moorhouse decided on a triangular grid structure to fit the work high above the escalator in the entrance hall. Indeed very different from earlier linear or square displays, this particular composition of heads could only have been devised and authorized by Richter himself. Moorhouse recalled that Richter welcomed new ways of exploring the familiar. At the same time his prime consideration focused on the formal arrangement: whether linear or triangular the heads had to converge towards the middle, irrespective of the medium.[11] This is reminiscent of Benjamin arguing in 1931 that, "the phenomenon of collecting loses its meaning as it loses its personal owner" (Benjamin 1999 [1931], 68). Yet, it remains to be seen what is going to happen with this work once it loses its artist to its curators.

Viewing Relations

Contemporary Notions

The Venice Biennale in 2005 saw Tino Sehgal's performance *This is So Contemporary* (2004) – in the center space of the German Pavilion where Gerhard Richter once staged his *48 Portraits*. There, the three guards suddenly broke out of their invigilating roles and came dancing out of the three corners of the gallery to surround us with a joyful yet unsettling chanting of "oouuh, this is so contemporary, contemporary, contemporary – ouuuh, this is so contemporary …," possibly trying to involve us in a merry go round. Akin to Richter's encircling portraits, we experienced these dancing guards not just as engaging but as intimidating as they tried to interact with us through body language, movements, and gazes, bringing dynamics of everyday interpersonal proxemic behavior patterns into the otherwise structured gallery setting. The piece therefore functions like a catalyst: it makes us conscious that we are also performers who play a role when viewing an exhibition, while at the same time questioning how we move and behave in the gallery situation. Initially based on an inverted model of theater in-the-round with the work encircling the viewer, here the performance also highlights how we understand ourselves, not only within the institutional space but also as individuals, thus turning Sehgal's performers into an audience while bringing the gallery visitors onto the center stage to perform their increasingly self-conscious interaction with the work and with others.

Only three years later Giorgio Agamben published his essay "What is the Contemporary?" in which he outlines what it means to be "a contemporary." Unlike the fact that all art was once contemporary, he sees in the untimely – in that standing out from the ordinary of a given period – what defines someone's contemporariness: a disconnection that makes this person, "more capable than others of perceiving and grasping their own time" (Agamben 2009, 40). In other words, the artist as a contemporary constitutes a fracture that both shatters and welds together aspects of his time. And it is exactly this reflexive double-nature that becomes evident in the different versions of Richter's *48 Portraits*, thus making every installation into a contemporary commentary, molded by different currents and undercurrents, as it navigates and displays those gaps between modernism and postmodernism, conceptualism and post-conceptualism, biography and collective memory, while making

this an inherent condition of the work. This *kairos* is ungraspable – just as the moment of a photograph is always immediately a thing of the past. But the work itself can cite and therefore make-relevant again, re-evoking and re-vitalizing moments of unfulfilled potentials from the past as part of the Now, reinvigorated not only in the work itself and its installation, but also in the process of trying to make sense of it. As Agamben remarks, "the key to the modern is hidden in the immemorial and the prehistoric," in making-present the "archaic *facies* of the present" (Agamben 2009, 51). Similarly Richter's work calls us back to a face of the past that is in itself part of our understanding of the present – and it is this notion that also connects its different versions and installations as part of one, arguably multifold, piece of work.

Modernist Impulses

Undisputedly, the future is often invented with fragments of the past and we can therefore not disconnect contemporary art from its past. However saying this does not assume any historical continuity. A modernist precedent for the rotating strategies used in Richter's *48 Portraits* can be found in László Moholy-Nagy's *Multiple Portrait* from 1927. It shows four exposures of a woman's head – first in three-quarter profile, then with a smile, again *en-face* with a faint smile, and finally turned away again in repose – arranged as a succession of positions in one in-the-round view, as if photographed with a stroboscopic light. Superseding realism, the face here is introduced as some kind of modernist mechanism: the composition revolving around the pivotal smile suggests a dynamic development of facial expression. Seminal for the impression of sequential progress here is the combination of four image-levels into one still image through structuring methods akin to cinematic montage. Unlike Richter's focal but rigidly arranged installation of single portraits of different men, Moholy's serial constellation of heads of the same woman has the translucent quality of X-ray images orbiting in the same visual plane. Equally resonant of partial overlappings of Cubist poly-perspectives and simultaneous staggerings of Futurist movement studies, his compound portrait brings together the New Human, its New Vision and the arrival of the New Photographer, which the Bauhaus proclaimed in the 1920s. Moholy-Nagy was part of the Bauhaus staff when writing *Painting, Photography, Film* in 1925. Exploring new perspectives for the medium, he argued that photography's manipulation of light creates new relationships which enable us to see the world, "with entirely different eyes" (1969, 29) thus modernizing human perception. In particular he was interested in interweaving shapes that, "are ordered into certain well defined, if invisible, space relationships" (Maddow 1977, 437). For Moholy the camera was *the* modernist instrument *par excellence*. One could argue that Richter was equally interested in kinetic processes, impact of movement on vision, succession in a series and formal organizing patterns when orchestrating the flow of the forty-eight component parts of his work. Henry Sayre suggests that in Richter's work the object does not move, but the gaze does (Sayre 2006, 116–117). He likens his works therefore to other work *in series,* describing painting in Richter not as spatial but as time-based by adding *duration* as a specific modernist quality to the traditional spatial dimensions of height, width, and depth.

Andy Warhol's infamous façade installation *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* (1964) combined large-scale silkscreens of recent police mug shots of outlaws photographed against light or dark backdrops. Partly combining *en-face* and *en-profile* pictures of the same men in the quasi-sequential manner of depicting a criminal from all sides, his gridded montage also included *blank* spaces. Displaying heads of perpetrators though, Warhol's work was

a direct account of recent criminal acts and provoked much public outrage (resulting in the work being painted over before the gallery opening). In comparison, Richter's *Eight Student Nurses* (1966) portrays the victims of a crime, while *48 Portraits* may depict those that remained in the face of history after the disasters of the Second World War. One could therefore argue that the cycle *48 Portraits* is in fact not simply a monument ("Denkmal"), but that it can be considered both a memorial ("Mahnmal") and a cenotaph ("Ehrenmal") – tragic and heroic, commemorative mausoleum and celebratory hall of fame – putting forward those that may be part of our collective and encyclopedic consciousness. It may well appear as a personal pantheon of cultural and paternal figures, but it may also be a panopticon of watchful gazes that acts as an epitaph to our future, yet again a transitory and indifferent double act.[12] Still, different from the rigorous grid formations developed by Bernd and Hilla Becher for their photographic typologies of disappearing industrial structures that entered the Düsseldorf art market at the same time, Richter's accumulation of forty-eight men is not an elegy. The inherent sadness of his work is directed at what *was*, not at its disappearance. Even in its quasi-archival aspect it therefore suggests the faces that can possibly carry a future, rather than archiving and comparing facades of the past.

Museum Theater

The contemporary legacy of *48 Portraits* points to other works of the late 1960s and early 1970s that have been discussed in relation to what is retrospectively referred to as *reader-response theory*, emphasizing reading processes and textual reception that reflect on the relationship between reader and work. Susan Bennett's study of theater audiences derives these aims from the political milieu after 1968 when academia, ideology and with them the supremacy of text and repertoire came under attack to devolve authorities and work towards greater structural openness, including a more egalitarian society (Bennett 1990, 37). She also points out that there is usually a fixed stage/auditorium barrier in a theater, a convention that provides a comfortable experience for the "consumer" who dissolves in the anonymity of the larger collective of the audience, while having a clearly marked space without much physical and visual proximity to others (Bennett 1990, 140–141). Oppositional theater however has long sought to break up these expectations of space in order to reinforce social responses within theatrical pre-performance configurations to foster a more active, "emancipated" spectator. And while the same can be argued regarding viewing assumptions in museums and gallery spaces, I want to be careful with all-too overenthusiastic notions of audience *participation*, because it might not be the case that all audience interaction is necessarily aimed at the political empowerment of the spectator, but possibly at audience awareness and a deeper shaking up of viewing conventions.

Offending the Viewer

During the same period Peter Handke's play "Offending the Audience" (1965) examined exactly this relationship between audience and performance by disrupting the viewer's all-too passive onlooking: "This piece is a prologue. It is not the prologue to another piece but … the prologue to your practices and customs. It is the prologue of your inactivity" (1997 [1965], 27). Handke's piece is above all a polemic about all aspects of going-to-the-theater in the masquerade of a play. It conducts an argument with the theater within

the space of the theater itself that aims to become, "the prologue to your future visits to the theatre" (Handke 1997 [1965], 27). But since Handke's critique of any theater of representation and its passive consumerism is itself a theatrically staged performance, it arrives at a productive paradox: a manifesto against the theater *within* the theater, possibly beating the theater with its own weapons, thus bringing its problematic and problematized nature right back into its very center. Tom Kuhn suggests that Handke had, "never wanted the public to accept his play, but rather to watch all plays with greater irritation, mistrust and awareness" (in Handke 1997 [1965], xiii). It is a self-reflexive work that addresses its own conditions as its subject matter by recognizing the role of its audience and the mechanism of its environment while at the same time denying them as strategies in the very same work. This self-reflexive methodology is not unlike Richter's painted critique of painting that fractures the medium itself. As Dietrich Diederichson observed, "The paintings don't only stand for themselves. They are, so to speak, stage directions for viewing other paintings" (Diederichson *et al.* 1994, 124).

Focusing on Handke's deconstruction of language, Amy Klatzkin suggested in 1979 that he, "tries to revolutionize the theatre itself by de-naturalizing the foundations of the medium. If he were a sculptor, one might presume, he would take it out on clay" (Klatzkin 1979, 54). And, if he were a painter, one might like to add, he would take it out on paint – via painting the photographic condition of contemporary art. We could therefore ask with Diarmuid Costello, "were a painter to rival the highest achievements of photography, would that make them a great photographer?" (Costello 2007, 75) thus contesting Michael Fried's understanding of medium-specificity as essential to modernism. Fried asserted in 1967 that, "Art degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre" (Fried 1998 [1967], 164), while modernist art would seek to overcome theatricality. However it seems that the theatrical is indeed a useful model to understand the conditions of *48 Portraits* and how it operates between the document, the performative, the postconceptual and the minimal. Neither through spectatorial absorption nor the illusion of an absent beholder, but through strategies that break the fourth wall and address the viewer directly, pulling them right into the dramatic action of the piece and into an active viewing position. As a result, Richter's work makes stylelessness, circulation between media and other postmodern pluralistic readings just as relevant as modernist and possibly formalist concerns, treated not as mutually exclusive but as *coexisting* qualities of the work.

In fact, when interviewed about the Venice Biennale installation, Richter described that, "*48 Portraits* work best when installed like an opera: very high, in one line, all the way around one hall" (von Flemming 1992, 21). One could also argue that in Richter's *48 Portraits* staging makes the work – that is to say: the stage model chosen for the respective organization. This strategy not only brings the curator into the completion of the work but also the viewer, by locating the question of the work's contingency, multiplicity, and polyvocality in the audience rather than simply in the material work itself, demanding individual responses from the viewer rather than autonomy from the work. Purposefully undecided incompletion is certainly what Richter is a master of: leaving contradictions in the work, not buying into ideologies, thus confronting the viewer face-to-face with these indifferences and interferences that make the work. Standing at the front of the stage, Handke's actors equally address the audience face-to-face, which results in a dramatic conflict between the spectators and the words directed at them, "But before you leave, you will be insulted. By insulting you, we … can tear down a wall. We can observe you. … The distance between us will no longer be indefinite." Then adds, "But we … will only create an acoustic pattern. … Since you are probably thoroughly offended already, we will waste no more time before thoroughly offending you, you chuckleheads" (Handke 1997, 28). Richter's heads don't

"chuckle," but equally forming a visual pattern they might be staring back at us with the very same intent, breaking down the very same fourth wall.[13]

Audience Interaction

When examining the potential for audience interaction in installations of Richter's *48 Portraits*, I am stressing the simultaneous activity of two mutually enhancing stage models: first, as an inversion of theater in-the-round with the performing work surrounding the gallery audience, and second, akin to actual theater in-the-round with an audience of portraits encircling the performing gallery spectator, with the forty-eight audience members viewing *us* on our historical stage from a position of *their* contemporariness. One conclusion is therefore that Richter's *48 Portraits* might be best staged as a "contemporary" condition asking something of the audience, confronting, contesting, or possibly even offending it. This is far from suggesting that the *48 Portraits* are *historical* now as their contemporariness is current when they are installed as a performative commentary on recent showing conventions to illuminate the way in which viewers interact with both artworks and museum spaces. This stresses what is in my view possibly the most innovative aspect of this body of work: it is conceived so that it folds the somehow problematic viewer-work relationship right back into the work itself, reverting and inverting the conventional roles and positions of both audience and work as that what makes the work *work*. Seen in this way, *48 Portraits* turns into a *prefiguration* or *pretext* for how we look at artworks in the context of the museum, a counter model to former more passive viewing conventions. At the same time it also means that its respective installation is always read against what constitutes the work – just like any *mise-en-scène* is read against its text.

But exactly for the reason that the work is only completed with its installation, each configuration – shifting the portraits' sightlines and their overall arrangement in a line or grid – changes the relationship with the viewer thus providing different entry points and different readings. It is therefore vital that curatorial inputs do not re-invent, silence, or overpower the complexity of the piece. And even though the in-the-round arrangement is preferred by the artist and is ideal because of its performative qualities and how it engages the audience, few exhibition spaces can accommodate its spatial display mode. One could therefore argue that on the one hand the photographic versions of *48 Portraits* extend and differentiate the immanent meaning of work, but on the other that they indirectly increased the number of installations using compressed and overcrowded grid formations, rather than spatially revolving compositions, therefore possibly simplifying its acquired meaning in installation.

Notes

1　The opening of the *36th Venice Biennale* was on 11 June 1972. *48 Portraits* was exhibited in the center space of the German pavilion, its central stage, while the side galleries showed Richter's Townscapes, Mountains, Clouds, and Green paintings; exhibition catalogue supplemented by an illustrated *Painting Overview* (a catalogue raisonné).

2　"Interview with Babette Richter" (2002) discusses the lost father figure, quoting *48 Portraits* as an "intimidating encyclopedia of various male role models." Richter stresses that his whole generation had lost their fathers: men fallen in war or who returned

psychologically and physically damaged, some guilty of war crimes. He adds, "Those are the three types of fathers you don't want to have. Every child wants a father to be proud of" (Elger/Obrist 2009, 442–443). Acknowledging, "it wasn't until Moritz was born [January 1995] that I started to know what a father is" (Storr 2003, 101). Richter's mother revealed later in life to him that his father (born 1907, returned from American prisoner camp in 1946, killed himself) was not his biological father.

3 Stemmrich stressed that Richter sees *48 Portraits* as part of his constructive works while asserting that he has no ideological construction rather stressing a constructive emptiness in the work (123), while Richter insists that he has never been a conceptual artist or indeed never tried making any Konzeptkunst (Leister 2014). The dematerialization of the artwork after 1968 was seen as an attempt to widen the traditional borders of the genre after the supposed end of painting. Richter felt pushed out through gallerists' preference of avant-garde American Concept Art.

4 Critiquing Clement Greenberg, T. J. Clark suggests that modernist art always pushed any medium to its limits, to the point where it breaks, thus inscribing the practice of negation into the center of its practice, "The very way that modernist art has insisted on its medium has been by negating that medium's ordinary consistency – by pulling it apart emptying it, producing gaps and silences, making it stand as the opposite of sense or continuity, having been the symptom for resistance" (Clark 1982, 152–154).

5 "Atlas" does not only give insight into the artistic pre-installation process, but it is also a work itself combining conceptual and Warburgean aspects via camouflaging art historical methods. It establishes and destroys its organization of visual materials in order to montage relations on a substantial yet open-ended scale. In contrast, Richter's catalogue raisonné starts with number 1 (the image of an erased table) in 1962, following his arrival in the West in 1961.

6 Gerhard Richter: *Atlas of the Photographs and Sketches,* Hedendaagse Kunst, Utrecht, 1.-30.12.1972; paperback publication without text. Sketchbook *Atlas* was initially created in 1970 as a companion piece to his first catalogue raisonné.

7 The Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich acquired *Atlas* in 1996 from the Dürckheim Collection when it included 583 plates (white cardboard, each 66.7 × 51.7cm). Richter pointed out in 1999, "The 'Atlas' belongs to the Lenbachhaus in Munich – it's long since ceased to belong to me. Occasionally I run across it somewhere, and I think it's interesting because it looks different each time" (Elger/Obrist 2009, 350), but he established a meticulous order how to arrange the plates in exhibition (Friedel/Wilmes 1997, 374–375, 384–387).

8 Richter stressed in 1990 that both versions are of equal value because the paintings based on photographs have not only a similar quality to the photographs, but also because the paintings have their starting point in photographs and their re-transition into photography is therefore part of his intention (Ehrenfried 1997, 49–50, 43,182).

9 Richter stressed that this installation was an experiment and that looking at the installation shot in retrospect it did not look good to him and shall remain an exception, suggesting it might have been better to stick to the well-tested model (Leister 2014).

10 Richter's assistant Hubert Becker confirmed that both versions have been printed from the same medium format negatives (email 13 March 2015), the 1998 dating photographic edition now showing are in fact in better condition than the paintings actually were in at that time, having accumulated surface cracks and other patina over time.

11 The triangular shape of the installation – with a straight line of twelve images at the top, a line of seven images on the left side, and a diagonal following the line of the handrail on

the bottom/right – was developed by Richter in his studio after his visit to the NPG. The shape of the grid recalls Richter working around the handrail in the staircase of Museum Ludwig in the 1980s.

12 Richter complicated this relationship of recent history, crime, responsibility and guilt in his cycle "18 October, 1977" (Baader-Meinhof), 1988.

13 This comparison is more closely related to the German original "ihr Glotzaugen" for "chuckleheads," which personifies the staring eyes of the onlooking mass rather than their mocking mouths. In the first staging of the play, this phrase was repeated many times by all four speakers, individually and in mocking chorus, before bursting into an extended list of 164 insults and stage devices, ending the play on the more conciliatory, *"you fellow humans you"* (31). Final scene "Publikumsbeschimpfung," directed by Claus Peymann. Theater am Turm, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1966.

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Documenta 6: Memories of Another Modernism

Judith Brocklehurst

At the conceptual core of the sprawling *Documenta 13*, 2012 (D13) exhibition in Kassel, Germany was a small assemblage of images, sculptures and objects, variously described as precarious, destroyed, hidden, traumatized or transitional (Guidebook 2012, 24). This collection in miniature that the curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev termed "the Brain" of the exhibition was situated in the central rotunda of the Fridericianum Museum and contained small art works and artefacts that related to those works. What these objects recalled, and the narrative strands they prompted, related not only to the rest of the exhibition – for this was their purpose – but could be seen as a physical manifestation of *Documenta's* own institutional memory. The objects in "the Brain" recalled previous exhibitions, works of art, and political circumstances, making a network of memories visible that hinted at a wider, more complex cultural history mislaid in the gaps.

"The Brain's" Ur[1] memory was to be found in the image of American photographer Lee Miller, taken in Munich in April 1945, by David E. Scherman. In the photograph Miller is washing herself in Hitler's bathtub after returning from documenting the horrors of Dachau (Figure 11.1). Taken on the same day that Hitler took his own life in Berlin, the photograph arguably encapsulates the trauma and cultural vacuum left at the end of the Second World War: the impossibility of cleansing, and the difficulty of directly representing experiences of destruction, oppression, and collaboration. Obliquely the dirty boots and folded clothes by the bath could represent the concentration camps. Lee Miller's body replaces Hitler's in the bath, as Allied forces occupy the country: metaphorically the photograph prefigures the oncoming political shift. The National Socialist dream, personified in the Aryan ideal body, and represented by the statuette on the right of the bath rematerialized at *Documenta 13*.

This surviving statuette was also exhibited in "the Brain": placed in a vitrine opposite the photograph. Its physical presence made the past tangible, a transitional object that linked the viewer to the image. The figurine represents the preferred aesthetic of the perfect, heroic human form and exemplifies the role of art and artists in the Third Reich (see Adam 1995). Boris Groys argues that, "Hitler saw art not simply as the depiction of the heroic but as an act that is itself heroic because it gives shape to reality" (2008, 132). This stance fueled Hitler's rejection of the expressionist and abstract expressionist[2] modern art of the Weimar Republic as it did not, "manifest a heroic determination on the level of the artist's body but instead [tried] to support itself on a theory, on a discourse, on notions of international style and fashion" (2008, 133). The well-documented National Socialist

FIGURE 11.1   *Lee Miller in Hitler's Bathtub, Munich, Germany 1945*, by Lee Miller with David E. Scherman. *Source*: © Lee Miller Archives, England 2016. All rights reserved. www.leemiller.co.uk.

regime's denunciation of "degenerate" abstract and expressionist strands of modern art was both public and devastating. The German art critic Eduard Beaucamp describes the rich diversity of art practices that had built up in the 1920s: "The coexistence of the contradictions of the irrationally of Dada, the rationality of the Bauhaus-Utopia and the unforgiving big-city realism of Dix, Klee, Grosz and Schlemmer, Schwitters and Beckmann, is what makes 'German Modernism'" (Beaucamp 2011, 128). In the same cabinet as the figurine in *Documenta 13* is Man Ray's Dada ready-made *The Indestructible Object*, 1932; a metronome with a photograph of former lover Lee Miller's[3] eye attached to the swinging arm of the pendulum, complete with instructions to watch the eye moving to and fro until intolerable and then destroy it with a hammer. Man Ray's work was included in the infamous 1937 "Entartete Kunst" exhibition in Munich that subsequently toured Germany and Austria.

The exhibition condemned modern art as degenerate, publicly shaming and discrediting hundreds of artists.[4] Over 650 art works were placed irreverently crammed together floor to ceiling. The exhibition targeted for censure a range of modern art from Wassily Kandinsky's seemingly "apolitical" spiritual abstractions, which he spoke of as stripping away expression to find freedom in abstract forms (Kandinsky 1994 [1914], 398) to George Grosz's bitterly satirical depictions of disfigured First World War veterans set

against bourgeois indulgence. Grosz aimed to affect social change though his paintings and drawings. He stated, "I at least cannot imagine the proletariat any other way than the way I draw it" (Grosz 1988 [1928], 312). By depicting the oppressed in squalor, he hoped to awaken them, so that they could recognize their own wretched enslavement and stir themselves to class war (Grosz 1988 [1928], 312). Hitler used the exhibition as a platform for long rhetorical speeches where he denounced artists such as Grosz and Otto Dix. "There are men who see the present population of our nation only as rotten cretins." Hitler pronounced he was cleaning the house of art of "worthless, integrally unskilled products" (Hitler in Wood and Harrison 2000 [1937], 425). Hitler wanted an art that would speak to generations in the future. He saw art not as a way of observing or commenting on the modern world but as a way of projecting that world into the future. Groys sees Hitler as a product of radical modernity, a man who no longer believes in the spirituality of culture but in its materiality (2008, 135). By demonizing other elided artists such as Kandinsky, Pablo Picasso, Max Beckmann, Ernest Ludwig Kirchner and Paul Klee and expressionists such as Grosz and Dix, Hitler cleared the way for the heroic art of National Socialism with a break from the past.

The photograph of a Munich bathroom in 1945 and the small statuette, juxtaposed with Man Ray's metronome in Kassel in 2012 evoked the political and cultural turmoil from which the first *Documenta* exhibition staged in 1955 emerged. It was the brain child of Arnold Bode, as a direct response to the "Entartete Kunst" exhibition. It can be argued that it sought to restore a perceived autonomous art, free of state control to the public eye and in so doing have a healing effect on the German people.

Modernism as Panacea

The exhibition in 1955 took place in the ruins of Germany's oldest purpose built museum, the Fridericianum in Kassel, in the newly formed Federal Republic of Germany[5] (West Germany). Hung on bare brick walls paintings such as Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror*, 1932 could be seen alongside work by local abstract painter Fritz Winter, creating an "image of potentiality and regeneration [that] could not be overlooked by the audience" (Wallace 2012, 68). This was exactly the ambition of curators Arnold Bode and Werner Haftmann; a vision of hope in a modern world, set against the still visible damage of war: a vision of a new Germany emerging from cultural destruction.

The curators not only sought to rehabilitate modernist art (Wallace 2012, 66) in the eyes and minds of the public but to heal the abuses of National Socialist cultural dictatorship. There was what Wallace refers to as an "uncanny paradox" in creating a situation where "Documenta organizers had to evoke a memory and suppress it at the same time" (Wallace 2012, 66). By making the exhibition a repost to the "Entartete Kunst," Bode and Haftmann wanted to restore continuity to the ruptured threads of Expressionism, reintroducing the public to art that was either unknown or distrusted. Bode and Haftmann believed the audience should remember the cultural tyranny from which they had been freed in order to forget and move on. The curators were also involved in another "uncanny paradox": that of using art for an overtly political purpose. By attempting to employ art as an antidote to one political ideology they were in danger of using it to promote another. Modern art, which had been deemed Cultural Bolshevism by the National Socialists because of the preponderance of Left leaning artists who, like Grosz, were politically active (Hobsbawm 1995, 13), was now itself to be tamed, cleansed, and depoliticized. This can be seen clearly when examining the choice of artists on show in 1955. Hannah Höch's[6] intricate

collages (see Figure 1.3) and Käthe Kollwitz's figurative, poignant, socially engaged works, were omitted along with George Grosz's portrayal of everyday Weimar excess and pain. Also absent were John Heartfield's satirical photo-montages whose art of political opposition, Gutbrod argues, "should have been guaranteed a place in the first Documenta, because they constituted a front of resistance to Nazi ideology in the clearest and most aggressive possible form" (Gutbrod in Madzoski 2013, 93).

The rehabilitation of a particular brand of politically sanitized modernist art at the first Documenta was financially and ideologically supported by the state, not only to educate the public but also to "reintegrate German modernists, specifically abstractionists, into the mainstream of European cultural and political life." It was hoped that through "the expressive and redemptive powers of abstract art, by virtue of its links with the language of the self, creative freedom and internationalism," (Wallace 2012, 65) the German nation could begin to reintegrate itself into Europe; by freeing itself from its past through a censured or partial modernism which reconnected with only a selected strand of art from the era preceding the National Socialist rise to power, namely abstraction. Ascherson describes abstraction as a way to "rinse power out of art" (Ascherson 1995, 342). Coupled with the exclusion of Heartfield, amongst others, the exhibition hinted at an increasing tendency to depoliticize prewar art, while reconnecting with its style. By 1955 abstraction[7] was seen as the cultural cure that West Germany needed. At the same time, in the Soviet Union abstraction was outlawed as decadent and elitist, polarized against a mandatory socialist realism. And in America abstraction and social realism were both deemed tainted by communist ideas.

Neither the Soviet Union nor America were represented in Kassel in the first Documenta. Bode and Haftmann drew on works of German and European classic modernism. The roll call in 1955 included Kandinsky, Picasso, and Arp and some artists persecuted during National Socialist rule, including Willi Baumeister, Beckmann, and Dix who had lived in internal exile during the war.[8] According to Claudia Mesch, in the 1955 exhibition "Haftmann effectively institutionalized a marginalization of the figurative, anti-fascist tradition of modern painting, as well as of the constructivist tradition of abstraction tied to Soviet state socialism" (Mesch 2008, 42). It was argued that the decisions made behind the scenes in the gallery began indirectly influencing what might be made in the studio. The freedom to judge these works was then handed over to the public as the "100 day Museum"[9] opened its doors.

The ideology guiding the art chosen was not only counter to the figuration of National Socialist art, but as Wallace puts it "abstraction became the design motif of capitalist commercialism" as abstract art "linked up with product design [and] identified modernism with the materialistic goals that guaranteed 'mass happiness'" (Wallace 2012, 71).

If the organizers of the first Documenta had tried but failed to expunge politics from art, hiding a new political doctrine under a thin veil of prewar aesthetic continuity, the second Documenta in 1959 (D2) became a more overt cultural and political battleground. With Kassel situated only 30km from the border of the, increasingly hostile Soviet occupied, German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany), the exhibition could never be anything other than political.

Modernism as Cold War Weapon

"The Brain" of D13 in 2012 was located in the reconstructed Fridericianum, its war damage no longer visible. Objects and images that provoke memories of the time immediately

following Lee Miller's photo in 1945 were scarce. However just past the main entrance to the museum was a restaging of Julio González's sculptures *Homme gothique*, 1937 and *Tête plate*, 1930 exhibited in D2 in 1959. In this restaging the skeletal welded steel sculptures were placed precisely where they were seen originally: on a long narrow table up against the wall in an echoingly empty gallery. The sculptures' original context is shown in an installation photograph of the work in the position it occupied in 1959 with two gallery visitors strolling past. This redisplay was seen by the D13 curators as a way to open up historical and political space between past and present: "a recapitulation of the work of sorrow … that Documenta historically carried out in the realm of art and culture, following global destruction, and the reconstruction of Germany and Europe" in 1955 and 1959 (D13 Guide Book 2012, 72). González's spiky disjointed figures would have been viewed differently in 1959 when Kassel was still in ruins. The steel girders sticking from piles of factory rubble were then fresh in visitors' minds.

In 1959 the young art student Hans Haacke would have strolled past González's work almost daily during the 100 days of the exhibition. He describes how the conversations he overheard while a gallery guard at D2 led to a loss of innocence. It was in the Fridericianum where he began to understand the art world and the role exhibitions such as *Documenta* play in promoting the "ranking of artists and art movements"; the importance of being seen and written about in the press which eventually affects "the critical and art historical discourse surrounding them, [which] can determine the reception of these works – and their market" (Haacke 2009). The socialization,[10] politicization, and commodification that occurs in the public sphere of the gallery is unavoidable.

Behind the curators and the art market other forces were seeking to influence what was shown at D2. The American Government instrumentalized art in the fight against Communism (see Serge Guilbaut 1983). So despite Haftmann's desire to push realist art to the margins paintings by American social realist artists such as Ben Shahn were included. There is irony here since such art and artists promoted abroad as emblematic of Western/ American freedom of expression were victims at home of censorship from Senator McCarthy.[11] It is unlikely that the CIA was interested in aesthetics. It arguably sent a calculated diversity to postwar exhibitions to play off against a perceived uniformity from the East. The diversity often included successful immigrant East European artists (Meecham 2004, 107): for example, Ben Shahn originally from Lithuania would have fitted the bill. This pitted deliberate political diversity against modernist singularity and contradicted the *Documenta* ethos of depoliticization through abstraction.

Haftmann later admitted casually in an interview. "Of course the CIA people were involved! … you have to understand, those who won the war are always right, that explains the effectiveness of the Americans" (Haftmann cited in Schirmer 2005, 48). The winner's narrative was however more complex and political than Haftmann wished it to appear. As the Cold War hardened, an old polarity was beginning to reemerge into a new form as Groys points out: "Whereas the market dominated, even defined Western mass culture, Stalinist culture was non-commercial, even anti commercial" it aimed not to please the public but "to educate, to inspire, to guide it" (Groys 2008, 146). D2 was a pivotal moment when *Documenta*, which had originally been conceived of as an educational exhibition, was implicated in both market forces and political influence: aiming both to woo the public and to agitate against Communism.

Another young artist influenced by D2 was Gerhard Richter, echoing Haacke he described how his visit to Kassel in 1959 caused a complete change in his mindset. For Richter, who was successfully working in Dresden as a Socialist Realist mural painter, seeing works by Jackson Pollock and Lucio Fontana made him realize "there was

something wrong with my whole way of thinking" (Richter in Elger 2009, 27). He felt the development of his own ideas and work were constricted by the institutional authorities "the paintings … which were my true concern, became worse and worse, less free and less genuine" (Elger 2009, 29). His visit to D2 provided the stimulus to leave East Germany and change his work, which started a "lifelong campaign to explore the facts, problems and possibilities of abstraction" (Elger 2009, 28). Richter might have moved West but his work went on to become a critique of both East and West.

While Haacke became critical of market control over art, Richter began to develop work that was critical of political control. Both showed work in *Documenta 5* in 1972 which was curated by Harald Szeemann. This legendary exhibition was acclaimed as the first *Documenta* to give a courageous answer to the "Entartete Kunst" exhibition. This was a "controversial exhibition which was confident enough to concede that modern art had been a difficult subject from the beginning and still was, while the first Documentas tried to win the public over with pedagogical pathos and questionable aesthetic allusions" (Grasskamp 2009). While the exhibitions cited above were carefully constructed to realign the narratives of modernism in West Germany, the same was happening in the East, but under very different circumstances.

Socialist Realism and Other Modernisms

The collective memory evident in "the Brain" at D13 in 2012 is hazy about its institutional history. Indeed institutional amnesia appears to have set in following the exposure given to the founding of *Documenta* in 1955 and the ongoing attempt to heal the cultural schisms of the Second World War in 1959, evidenced by the photograph of Lee Miller and González's sculptures. The West's myopia towards the East and the discord left by the Cold War that divided Germany created a still-unresolved complexity. There is one prompt in 2012. During the Prague Spring in 1968 Hungarian activist and conceptual artist Tamás St. Turba created *Czechoslovak Radio 1968*. The red building brick painted to look like a radio was a response to a Soviet military decree banning broadcasts made by comparatively free speaking Czechoslovak Radio[12] after the Soviet tanks rolled into Prague and broadcasts ceased.[13] Turba's brick radios became a communal act of resistance as these easily produced, non-functioning brick radios, communicated dissent and were often confiscated. Turba describes the work as the "the mutation of socialist realism into neo-socialist realism: a non-art art for and by all" (D13 Guide book 2012, 120). Turba's work tells two stories: the first concerns the conditions under which artists were operating in the East during Soviet rule; the second is one told by omission: the brick failed to reveal the intricacies of art works being made in the Soviet bloc. To echo Haftmann's words: it is part of the winner's narrative; those who won the Cold War gained the right to tell their version of the story. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and Iron Curtain in 1989 it was the dissidents who were welcomed and heralded in the West, those who were seen to have collaborated or been part of the regime and the cultural hierarchy it controlled are largely ignored or forgotten.

As early as 1946 another narrative had begun to take shape in the East. Nine years before the first *Documenta*, the first General German Art Exhibition had taken place in Dresden. It too promised to be a repost to "Entartete Kunst." Works by Klee, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Dix and Kollwitz, were exhibited together with a younger generation of German artists. The exhibition was endorsed by Soviet cultural apparatchik Alexander Dymschitz as, "a form of 'intellectual and cultural bridge-building' spanning all zonal borders to link every

segment of Germany and the whole world" (cited in Pike 1992, 239). The exhibition was not dissimilar in its aims to the first *Documenta*. Its organizers through their choice of artists were trying to reconnect with the avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s claiming a cultural lineage by embracing forbidden works: such a strategy gave an impression of freedom of expression.

The General German Art Exhibition took place closer to the end of the war, during a period when Germany existed in a complex transitional stage occupied by two different ideologies. In the West the myth of a fresh start "stunde-null" or zero hour still prevailed, masking the influence of the occupying powers, whereas Soviet influence in the East was far from covert. The exhibition also sought to position art and artists in the East as anti-fascist. This pull between freedom of expression and social duty was noted in an article in "Neues Deutschland."[14] The 1946 Dresden exhibition was described as marking a "separating line" between the "controversial works of the twenties … [and] a clear recognition of the direction taken by a new road that must be pursued in full awareness of the profound responsibility borne today by our creators of art" (cited in Pike 1992, 239). Echoing the Nazi propaganda machine Dymschitz used the exhibition of expressionist and abstract art as a weapon against its own exhibits "at this exhibition one senses the contrast between genuine realistic art … as opposed to a formal abstraction that is lacking in ideas and therefore without any future" (Pike 1992, 242).

However prewar modernism wasn't to be entirely eradicated. Dymschitz encouraged East German artists to look to the Soviet Union for guidance. This did not mean valorizing the avant-garde of the early Russian Revolution where work by Malevich, Tatlin, and Rodchenko swept away "bourgeois" realist style in favor of severe geometric abstraction. Malevich's single *Black Square*, 1915 (first shown in The Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings 0, 10 at Marsovo Pole, Petrograd) had intimated a revolutionary ground zero where the past could be destroyed. Famously this blossoming of abstraction came to an abrupt end after Leon Trotsky lost power to Stalin in 1927. Artistic experimentation was quickly repressed in favor of a return to Russian folk art. Andrei Zhdanov, Stalin's chief cultural commissar described what was expected, "It means knowing life so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art …not simply as 'objective reality' but to depict reality in its revolutionary development" (Zhdanov in Robin 1992, 59). It was this form of socialist realism which Richter rejected and against which Turba tuned his brick radio.

Groys describes the model of Soviet Socialist Realism that was to spread out across Eastern Europe after the Second World War: all artwork should be "Realistic in form and socialist in content." Art was therefore to be easily understood by the people (Groys 2008, 143) and made for mass reproduction. Unlike the art of the Third Reich, which had looked forward heroically, Communist Socialist Realism defined itself and enriched itself by looking back, drawing on the realist art of the past to inspire the present observer in their revolutionary struggle. At the close of the General German Art Exhibition another Soviet Cultural Advisor declared, "artists should be the servants and leaders of the people" (Tjulpanov cited in Pike 1992, 307). These responsibilities became clearer as the border between the two Germanies became less porous, eventually hardening into cement and barbed wire.

If capitalism became integral to art production in the West, in East Germany anti-fascism became one of the core values of the state and affected the way people understood their own cultural and political history. For instance, underscored by enormous losses of both military personnel and civilians, in the Soviet Union, the annihilation of the Jewish population remained largely unrecognized compared to the Nazi persecution of communist activists. A position was quickly established which allowed people to believe that all staunch

fascists had been and remained in the West (Hobsbawm 1995, 156). An example of the duty of artists to tell the "correct story" can be seen in sculptor Fritz Cremer's memorial in Buchenwald concentration camp, which had to be modified several times before it received governmental approval. It memorialized the communist uprising in the camp leaving aside the systematic persecution of Jewish inmates, a situation that was often reversed in West German Camp memorials. This situation, up until the mid-1950s, allowed for a certain amount of tolerance towards artists experimenting with style as long as the anti-fascist message was clear.

Despite the heavy-handed attempt of the Soviet military authorities to impose their own victor's narrative on East German cultural discourse, open discussions took place about acceptable styles even though Walter Ulbricht, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party and leader of East Germany 1950–1971, made forthright statements on the direction painters should be taking.

> We don't want to see any more of these abstract paintings in our art academies. We don't need pictures of moonscapes or rotten fish. These grey on grey paintings are an expression of capitalist decay and stand in glaring opposition to our new life in the German Democratic Republic.
>
> (Walter Ulbricht [1951] cited in Judt 1998, 297)

Painting and art education was at the forefront of debates over style and content. Abstraction was pushed into the past. Socialist Realism was modern and forward-looking in content but not in style (see Hannelore Offner and Klaus Schroeder 2000). Gerhard Richter describes his experience at Dresden Art School in the 1950s, "It became increasingly ideological. For example, we weren't able to borrow books that dealt with the period beyond the onset of Impressionism because that was when bourgeois decadence set in" (Richter 2015, n.p.). Beyond the art school, artists worked in factories and formed "brigades" or collectives with workers to produce communal artwork and paint ideologically attuned murals. Others continued to work alone, and develop their "own" work. But, in parallel with the West, it was the work that was shown in public that shaped the cultural dialogue. This dialogue, as Groys points out was a closed loop, "the primary interest of socialist realism was not an artwork but a viewer" (Groys 2008, 147). The viewer it was assumed would come to like the work as they understood the ideals embodied within.

Abstraction Set Against Realism

By the time of the third German Art Exhibition that took place in Dresden in 1953, of the 650 predominantly realist works on display nearly a third were by West German artists. Many were selected, as part of the East German government's attempt to bolster the claim that it alone promoted the unity of style of German art. The exhibition also became a propaganda tool for internal cultural policies with barbed statements in the local press purporting that "American cultural barbarism offered no clear objectives" and that "progress in the area of the visual arts in the GDR is a great area of support for West German artists" (*East German Daily Press*, in Lang 2009, 91). Polarization between realism and abstraction rather than the excitement of coexistence of styles that had marked out the 1920s and early 1930s, had become more extreme in West Germany. The main protagonists were painter Willi Baumeister and the art historian Hans Sedlmeyr. Baumeister

had worked in secret and wrote of his beliefs in abstract art as a way of finding the self during Nazi rule (Baumeister 1947). Sedlmeyr however had joined the National Socialist Party in 1930 and argued that self-centered abstraction perpetuated a distancing from the godly and an obsession with the subjective, which signified all that was wrong with the modern world (Sedlmeyr 1948). There is a certain irony that the vehemently anti-fascist regime in East Germany offered a prominent platform for West German realists who were championed by an unrepentant National Socialist.

Painter Willi Sitte, a generation older than Gerhard Richter had felt the weight of National Socialist cultural oppression. His art school life ended prematurely when he was expelled from the Herman-Göring Painting School in 1941 for criticizing its Aryan "blood and soil" ethos. Initially sent to fight on the Russian front he eventually defected to the Italian Partisans and returned to the GDR in 1946. He, like all East German artists, was under constant pressure to conform to the changing policies of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) established in April 1946. In the 1950s he produced work that was influenced stylistically by Western modernism but with anti-fascist socialist themes. Nonetheless works such as *Kampf der Thälmannbrigade in Spanien – Battle of the Thälmann Brigade in Spain*, 1954–1958 were publicly criticized for failing to conquer the "influence of decadence" (Mesch 2008, 114). In the 1959 "Bitterfeld policy"[15] Walter Ulbricht, spelled out clearly that artists were workers and workers should become artists. Art schools should teach young artists to produce art worthy of the State's ideals: "The working class in the GDR already controls the state and the economy. Now they have to storm the cultural heights and occupy them" (Ulbricht [1959] cited in Sader 2012, 192). Sitte twice lost his teaching job due to his non-conformist paintings. Under such pressure artists left the GDR, went underground, stopped experimenting or adhered to the official doctrine.

There were however other possibilities. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s censure led some artists to go underground much akin to the internal emigration of artists such as Hannah Höch during the Third Reich. Artists could carry on producing their own work without ideological pressure as long as it remained unseen. Some such as Werner Tübke and Bernhard Heisig developed methods to codify and layer their work so that it was superficially politically acceptable but could be read and understood in different ways. Others such as A. R. Penck practised more covert, risky cultural activism, setting up underground exhibitions, to challenge GDR doctrine.

Turba's radio sits in "the Brain" at D13 in 2012 as uncommunicative about the creative complexities under the pressure of the communist ideology in the GDR and other Eastern Bloc countries as only a brick can be. It perpetuates what Piotr Piotrowski calls the "dissident paradigm," a simplified view of the Eastern art scene in which Eastern art critics valorized the work which resisted the state (2012, 17). This paradigm has been largely adopted by Western art critics and curators as a way of understanding and historicizing the art from the East, making it correspond with West-centric contemporary aesthetic of socially engaged activist art. The art that spanned the gap between bland state propaganda and subversive underground art is part of another contradictory narrative that remains untold by D13. "The Brain" in 2012 inhabits a culturally ambiguous place; it seems to be almost free of the cultural Cold War witnessed in the Fredericianum between 1955 and 1987.[16] The cleansing and healing of the wounds of National Socialism, which was eventually followed by critical examination, is hard wired here through carefully selected objects. This barely visible revisionism is part of what Haacke describes as the shaping of art history which occurs through the discourse surrounding large exhibitions. What is unseen remains on the periphery. In the West, *Documenta* and other international platforms sought to tame and constrain different strands and styles into an acceptable

modernism setting up a false binary with figurative realism. This was reciprocated in the East with the evolution of the German Art Exhibition into a counter *Documenta*.

Over the decades, between 1949 and 1987 the East German Art Exhibition mirrored the changing cultural policies of Berlin and Moscow. October 1977 saw the opening of the eighth such exhibition only recently renamed The Art Exhibition of the GDR. West German art critic Uwe Schneede noticed a significant change. The queues stretched along the baroque Bruhlische Terrasse in Dresden, as people waited to see both artists known and new exhibited in the Albertinum Museum. Schneede reviewing the exhibition for *Zeit* newspaper commented on the move away from the anticipated Socialist Realist pictures of workers and "Fortschrittsoptimismus" – belief in progress, towards a more critical and personal representation. The exhibition was more diverse than expected,[17] depictions of workers at home isolated and tired, were a reflection of the complex reality of everyday life in the GDR expressed through, what Schneede calls, a "metaphoric realist" style (Schneede 1977). Artists had noticeably distanced themselves from state dictated ideological style and content. Many young artists, Schneede noted, had been taught at the Leipzig School: Bernhard Heisig, Wolfgang Mattheuer, and Werner Tübke (Schneede 1977). These artists had been part of a group of East German artists who showed work at *Documenta 6* earlier in the year.

Modernisms Transecting the Border

Documenta 6 in 1977 was the first and only time that artists from the GDR officially[18] participated in Kassel. Their inclusion was a long and politically fraught process beginning in the run up to the previous groundbreaking *Documenta 5* in 1972. The legendary director Harald Szeemann imposed an overall curatorial concept on the exhibition, encapsulated in the title *Interrogation of Reality-Picture Worlds Today*. Szeemann had made direct approaches to the GDR government, which were eventually and not unsurprisingly rejected due to the plan to place the art works from the GDR alongside images of pornography, advertising, and propaganda as part of the non-art picture world that was to contrast with the pop art and photo-realism that made up the core of the paintings to be exhibited.

In 1977 Manfred Schneckenburger, organizer of the D6, took a different approach not only in his attitude to the East German artist's work but also in how to ensure their participation. Diplomatically Schneckenburger invited Willi Sitte by now a pillar of the establishment, chair of the East German Artists Association along with Leipzig art school Professors Tübke, Heisig, and Mattheuer. Sitte's acceptance was key as he now had the ear of the central committee of the SED. Sitte having agreed to take part was asked to suggest two further participants, breaking *Documenta* convention that the organizing committee and appointed curators alone should select artists. Sculptors Fritz Cremer and Jo Astram were belatedly added to the group.[19]

Despite their work being collected and shown in the West the invitation of these six artists to D6 in 1977 was greeted with hostility. Unsurprisingly with champions such as Sedlmeyr Realism was by now mistrusted as a form of expression. *The Frankfurter Rundschau* wrote that the paintings were "formal realism bordering on Nazi Art." *Handlesblatt* newspaper stated that the painters were "historicizing paint technocrats" (Hessicher Rundfunk 2015). *Documenta*'s early role in promoting art as a place for freedom of expression and cleansing had succeeded, to the point of demands for the exclusion of work stemming from the distrusted state system in the East. The parallels are uneasy and unsettling. Sitte once expelled from art school by the National Socialists, was now

labeled a "State Artist." Sitte had bent under pressure, curtailing his style and message to suit the state while informing on colleagues to the Stasi[20] (for the complexities of Sitte's situation see Mesch 2008, 114 and Von Loeffelholz 2001). By contrast Heisig, Tübke, and Mattheuer were those praised by Uwe Schneede some months later, for positively influencing the whole cultural policy in the East: their work and teaching breaking away from socialist realism.

Art critic Eduard Beaucamp describes a complicated web of relations and influences at play across the border. During the ten years preceding *Documenta 6* Western gallerists and collectors had played a role in supporting some of the Leipzig school of painters' work, which challenged the state's Bitterfeld Policy. West German and Italian collectors' praise for the work of these East German artists put direct pressure on the SED to loosen cultural dogma. But, according to Beaucamp, "the artists only became the preferred representatives when the regime realized that they were becoming popular in the West, and that they could therefore promote a positive image and acceptability of the GDR" (Beaucamp 2011, 130). The artists denied in public that this was the case but the reach of the Western art market into the heart of the GDR government was to be seen in their success abroad and survival and preferment at home. So despite protests the artworks were transported to Kassel, accompanied by East German writer and curator Lothar Lang. Lang was responsible for negotiations surrounding the hanging of the works. The power play of gallerists and artists, governments, and ideologies was now focused on the Fredericianum.

The large organizing committee, beset by criticism for not having a clear rational, was divided by the work from the East and pressure from West. During planning the GDR artists had been promised a whole wing of the building. By the time the work arrived these spaces had been radically reduced. Lang walking the galleries shortly before the opening found the GDR paintings placed in close proximity to work by East German underground artist A. R. Penck, GDR exiles Gerhard Richter, Georg Baselitz, and West German Markus Lüpertz. By the time *Documenta 6* opened to the public Penck's painting had been removed and Richter,[21] Baselitz, and Lüpertz had withdrawn. Fragmented recollections of those intervening days hint at memories forgotten by "the Brain" at D13, and reveal multiple histories that resist concerns or coherence.

The record of Lang's communication with his Stasi contact reports him boasting that he had pulled strings with a local parliamentarian and member of the *Documenta 6* organizing committee who had agreed with a "mischievous smile" to the removal of Penck's work (in Hohmeyer 2000). Another version has it that Lang asked for the work to be moved not removed, although in 2002 he denied all knowledge of such a request (Lang 2002). West German Lüpertz and Baselitz who had left the GDR some years before, were said by some, to have withdrawn in protest at Penck's exclusion, by others, as a reaction to work from the GDR being shown at all.

Differing Vocabularies

The tangled knot begins to unravel; Penck had developed a style of painting that was abstract yet figurative. In his work symbols indicating social power systems were tightly packed onto monochrome canvases, which became a coded way of representing his situation. Penck's invitation to participate in D6 was therefore a provocation to the GDR whether deliberate or not, although the organizers would have been acutely aware of the possibility of the GDR artists withdrawing from a compromised political situation. Penck lived and worked in Dresden but was largely unknown in the East whereas in the West he

was the acceptable face of underground dissident East German art, part of the "dissident paradigm." Penck's presence it seems was intolerable particularly to Lang and Sitte. Lang had largely ignored Penck in his book on East German art that was due to be published by a West German publishing house. Lang's two-line mention of Penck, marginalized under his real name of Ralf Winkler led to the book contract falling through: eventually published in neutral Switzerland. Penck was already too famous in the West to be ignored. He had rebuffed Sitte after his attempt to persuade him back into the fold of the Official Artists Association. Penck refused to rejoin the establishment by sending Sitte a version of his own painting with the red communist flag painted black. This stalemate was emblematic of differences in beliefs, values, and styles. Recognizing the value of his exposure in the West, Sitte wanted to incorporate Penck back into the fold. Arguably Penck however wanted to hold on to his dissident credentials as it gave him greater status with Western galleries. As unacceptable as Penck was to Lang and Sitte, Penck himself threatened to withdraw in protest at being shown alongside Sitte. The already embattled D6 curators now received letters from Penck's gallerist Michael Werner who also represented Baselitz and Lüpertz threatening their withdrawal.

   In an anonymous review of D6 in *Zeit,* Baselitz and Lüpertz's withdrawal due to the "over proportioned" presence of GDR artists, is dismissed as unimportant, their paintings rejected along with the works they were protesting against: "The missing works of Baselitz and Lüpertz are no loss to the *Documenta*, particularly because their late expressionist attitudes in gigantic format are so similar to the only slightly expanded socialist realism of state artists Willi Sitte and Bernd Heisig" (cited in *Zeit* 1977). The author bemoans the absence of Jasper Johns and Willem de Kooning: indicative of the underlying turmoil, cultural breakdown, and confusion caused by the imposition of "safe" American influenced modernism on the West and state Sovietized socialist realism on the East. The columnist's use of "late Expressionism" implies that these artists were at the tail end of a moribund art movement. However these artworks were at the same time being categorized as neo-Expressionism, a reinvention of a style of painting.

The "Defector Dialectic"

Like Richter and Penck, Baselitz had been trained and begun his career as an artist in the East, although he was eventually expelled from art school in East Berlin for his "socio-politically immature" attitude (Stonnard 2014, 34). When these artists defected from the East, they were seen by some in the West as revitalizing a stagnant art market which had been overly influenced by its own capitalist system (Huyssen 2009, 237): this is part of what Mesch calls the "defector dialectic" (2008, 109). They were outsiders critical of the complacencies that had built up in the West, bringing in a new German modernism capable of critical disruption. Their own experience of the imposition of a realist, figurative vocabulary could now be used in a very different manner and led to works such as Richter's *Uncle Rudi*, 1965; a portrait of a grinning SS officer, the title indicating the still present familial link to an unexamined past. Baselitz's *Picture for the Fathers*, 1965, is also an uncomfortable, awkward depiction of destruction and decay, where worm-ridden, misshapen bodies lie in the rubble. The title references the familial closeness of these events. According to Karen Lang, Baselitz considered pure abstraction a stranglehold, "an artistic style whose dominance in West Germany appeared as the mirror reverse of the dictate for figurative art in the East" (Lang 2009, 93). She goes on to describe how this group of artists considered representation as abstraction (Lang 2009, 96) seen in

Lüpertz's painting *Soldier-Dithyrambic* II, 1972, in which he breaks down Nazi imagery into abstract symbols that allow the painting to "hover somewhere between abstraction and realism." Through this disruption of realism it becomes not a portrait of an individual but more "a portrait of German History" (Lüpertz in Lang 2009, 99). The exchange of vocabularies between East and West turned the representational vocabulary on its head. In Richter, Penck, Baselitz, Lüpertz, and others' work symbols were inverted, realigned, and abstracted. These artists were mixing Western abstraction and its perceived absolution from responsibilities (Lüpertz in Lang 2009) with figuration from the East and prewar early modernisms. Through this new hybrid methodology these border crossing artists located a new generation not geographically but stylistically in a position to examine Germany's past (Stonnard 2014, 22).

The artists representing the GDR at D6 lived in a situation from which distinctive visual language had evolved, according to Beaucamp, limited by circumstance but eluding the controlling mechanisms of the art market. He argued "the failure of progress and the perversion of utopia in the socialist dictatorship characterized their reality. The artists relied on themselves, their own introspection, fantasy and history" (Beaucamp 2011, 129). For Mesch the "defector dialectic" involved not only those leaving the East for the West but artists from both sides who "made consistent use of a style, or visual language or iconography that characterized the other German state" (2008, 109). She argues that through this dialogue "realism recovered its avant-garde aura as a kind of subtle political intervention" (Mesch 2008, 110) on both sides of the Wall. Werner Tübke, like Penck, was known in the West, but stayed in the East. To dismiss him and his work as "state art" is however, to ignore the multiple meanings possible in interpretation. Tübke's paintings drew on German Renaissance artists such as Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach, but his work also touched on Surrealism and Dada in order to create scenes of great complexity. At D6 Tübke's work *The Reminiscences of Dr. Schulze III*, 1965, Bosch-like work was exhibited. Tübke's work with its modern critique of heaven and hell straddles styles in order to criticize both the past and the present.

Lothar Lang described the reaction to the work as he showed artists such as Joseph Beuys round the GDR section, "They shook their heads at many of the works because they came from a very different realistic tradition, that was only rarely accepted in the West. Beuys valued being shown the work from the GDR by myself. I was astounded by how intensively he studied Tübke's work 'Dr. Schulze' and admired its technical virtuosity but his conclusion was that 'this is not my world'" (Lang 2002). Beaucamp writing on Tübke's death described his veiled critical stance, which was apparent even when paintings were commissioned by the SED. "The present is portrayed as a time of change, an in-between time through which Tübke, by reaching back in time wants to invent the future" (Beaucamp 2004). Tübke's historical scenes were visualizing a future that was inherently critical and skeptical of the Socialist present.

The withdrawal of Baselitz, Lüpertz, Richter, and Penck from D6 forms a major part of the continuing narrative of the rejection of art from the East. However as Beaucamp argues "art history can't only be interpreted, judged and rewritten from the dissidents point of view" (2011, 139).

Forgotten Vocabulary

The curation of the GDR artworks in a constricted space perpetuated the Western view of the narrow parameters in which the GDR artist operated (Schirmer 2005, 106) but

this was increasingly not the case (Kaiser 2009, 177). While in the *Documenta 6* catalogue published in 1977, the official record still shows that the artists were given an enormous space, countering institutional memory Heisig recalled the hanging space "looked like a conference stand" (Heisig in Schirmer 2005, 106). But in the East D6 was part of a cultural shift which Kaiser describes as Janus faced pseudo-liberalism (2009, 178). D6 allowed artists to exhibit and develop a more critical style, for example seen in the artist group Clara Mosch (1977–1982). While work was exhibited publicly at the Door Exhibition (1979) in Dresden, artists continued to be closely monitored by the secret police. At the same time part of Peter Ludwig's collection of Western art, by artists such as Beuys was granted a permanent space in East Berlin's National Gallery. Ludwig's collection of the work of Eastern artists grew and was shown in the West. Hans Haacke's work *Weite und Vielfalt der Brigade Ludwig − The Broadness and Diversity of the Ludwig Brigade*, 1984, visualizes how the Western art market intertwined with GDR political doctrine in what were to be its final years.

The *Broadness and Diversity of the Ludwig Brigade*, 1984, first shown in West Berlin (in September 1984) coincided with a large exhibition of GDR art from Ludwig's collection in the Western sector of the divided city. In the gallery space, simulating the wall stretching through Berlin, another wall had been built between two pictures to prevent the viewer from seeing both pictures simultaneously. On one side is a billboard advert for Trumpf chocolates (Ludwig's firm) on the other is a Socialist Realist pastiche of workers under the Trumpf banner: one resembling Ludwig, stirring the chocolate and his wife demonstrating for solidarity with Western workers. Haacke's work draws on the initial responsibility put on artists in the GDR to form brigades with the workers while also exposing the commercialism of the Western art world. The title is taken from General Secretary of the SED 1971–1989, Erich Honecker's rhetoric to describe the breadth and diversity of GDR culture in 1972. Used by Haacke it ridicules Ludwig and his hold on the discourse in both East and West, and exposes his cynical use of art to build up commercial connections in the East where labor was cheap. *The Ludwig Brigade*[22] however remains a polarizing work, which simplifies the cultural landscape of the time.

Modernisms Redacted or Modernism Restored

What light do these multifaceted retrieved memories shed on the dissident paradigm of late modernism from the East and the cleansing panacea of early abstraction in the West? The fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany saw a second wave of Western cultural imperialism wash over unhealed wounds. Eduard Beaucamp describes the brief glimmer of hope that 1989 would be "Spring like" bringing forth new art "a possibly controversial yet productive revival of the spirit of the 1920s" (Beaucamp 2011, 133), instead he found "art from the East roughly and polemically excluded" (Beaucamp 2011, 125): part of what Günter Grass described as the "anchluss-annexation" (Finlay 2009, 28). Art from the GDR, whether mainstream or non-conformist, when visible, was treated as a historical novelty or anachronism. Most controversially in The Rise and Fall of Modernism exhibition in Weimar in 1999 artworks from the GDR era were equated to and exhibited alongside works from Hitler's own collection (Huyssen 2009, 239). In an escalation of the narrow exhibition space in D6 many saw the floor to ceiling hanging of work from the GDR "as analogous in gesture to *Entartet Kunst*" (Huyssen 2009). Many non-dissident GDR artworks were simply stored away in the cellars of Eastern museums ignored by the

influx of Western curators while the galleries upstairs were flooded with loans from Western collections.

Only in 2009 twenty years after reunification did a more differentiated look at the work from both Germanys occur. Initiated by the LA County Museum the exhibition *Art of the Two Germanys* [*sic*] examined the many strands that ran through this time. Yet it remains an illusive narrative lost again in the D13 "Brain." The exhibition to which "the Brain" connected spoke indirectly of this complex process. Politically critical figurative works by William Kentridge sat alongside more abstract works by Doug Ashford, whose "semi-abstractions suggest a discontinuous aesthetic path through past histories and into empathies that could occupy the present" (D13 Guide book 2012, 236). Ashford's approach to his work is an indication that artists are aware of the complexities of the past on which their work sits. "The Brain" might forget but the struggles that occurred between style, ideology, and content are starting to reemerge from the gaps. Modernism is arguably an ongoing paradoxical process, a discourse which is beginning to examine the divisions of the Cold War era anew. For instance, Jim Dine has breathed life into old East German litho stones in A History of Communism, 2014, and Mark Dion has rifled through the archives at the Dresden Art School where Richter studied and museums where the GDR German Art Exhibitions took place to curate The Academy of Things, 2014, which he describes as "an exhibition about loss and holes in historiography" (Dion 2015, 1). By re-exhibiting Socialist Realist works amongst other archival artefacts in a new political context he unsettles institutional taxonomy and art histories' presumed neutrality. Both Dine and Dion are Americans, outsiders looking in, but the examination process also occurs locally. Further East in the Heroes we Love (2015) exhibition in Maribor, Slovenian contemporary artists engaged with their Socialist Realist heritage, "with a view to moving away from monuments of failed revolutions to strive instead toward new artistic utopias and contemporary concepts of memory patterning" (UGM 2015). Dine, Dion, and the Heroes we Love project all examine our current relationship with a complex art history that even Eastern art historians are trying to "willfully forget" (Piotrowski 2012, 16).

The Ur memory of Lee Miller is changed by the knowledge that in the years following the war she suffered severe depression caused by her memories of documenting the war and the liberation of Dachau (Penrose 1985). It could be argued that the startling juxtaposition of Man Ray's photograph of Lee Miller's unblinking eye taken before the war, which stares at her later self in the bath, at *Documenta 13* unnervingly prefigures the impossibility of art's ability to heal or cleanse, rather indicating its role to jar us into reflection on uncomfortable complexities.

Notes

1 Ur (German): In this context Ur is *Documenta*'s first/original or originating Memory.
2 This was German abstract expressionism, not to be confused with American abstract expressionism post Second World War.
3 Lee Miller was Man Ray's assistant and collaborator between 1929 and 1932.
4 For a full list of artists and exhibitions see the Victoria and Albert museum, http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/e/entartete-kunst/
5 Germany was officially divided into two states in 1949: the GDR (DDR in German) German Democratic Republic was formed from the Soviet occupied zone in the East. In the West the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesrepublik Deutschland) was formed from the zones occupied by the Western allies, France, Great Britain, and America.

6   Hannah Hoch's art works were not included in the "Entartete Kunst" Exhibition.

7   Abstraction in this case being a non-representational form of painting and sculpture pioneered by artists such as Delaunay and Kandinsky, who investigated shapes, colors, and composition in a formal manner.

8   The term "internal exile" was applied to artists who stayed in Germany throughout the war continuing to make work which was never seen in public.

9   The 100 day museum was the descriptive subheading for the first *Documenta* and all *Documentas* since.

10 O'Doherty describes the artworks' move from studio to gallery as socialization, which is triggered when the work becomes public and part of the gallery system (2012, 19).

11 Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy pursued a campaign against a perceived internal Communist threat in the United States in the early 1950s which led to widespread censorship.

12 Czechoslovak Radio enjoyed a period of free speech during the Prague spring. It could be heard more widely in other Eastern bloc countries where censorship was the norm.

13 The Prague Spring was a period of liberalization in Czechoslovakia which started in January 1968. It was brutally crushed in August of the same year by the invasion of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw pact countries.

14 *Neues Deutschland* newspaper was the mouthpiece of the ruling SED party in the GDR, promoting state policies and personnel.

15 The Bitterfeld Policy was a result of a conference held in 1959 which tied cultural production closely to party propaganda.

16 The last *Documenta* to be held before the fall of the Berlin Wall took place in 1987.

17 For a comprehensive list of artists and examples of the diversity of their work see Bildatlas: Kunst in der DDR http://www.bildatlas-ddr-kunst.de

18 Artists from East Germany had participated in *Documenta* exhibitions before and did again but not with state approval.

19 This convention had of course already been broken covertly allowing the United States to influence what was shown at *Documenta 2.*

20 The Stasi was the acronym for the Staatssicherheit: secret police force.

21 There is some disagreement as to why Richter withdrew. Some say it was not directly because of the inclusion of the GDR artist but the way his own work was to be displayed.

22 In the West, apart from Haacke, not many artists had dealt with the divided Germany in their work, Penck's *Der übergang – Passage*, 1963 and Immendorf's *Café Deutschland series*, 1977–1984, being notable exceptions.

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Part III
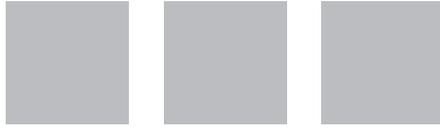
Re-assessments: Modernism and Globalization

Bijiasuo and Truth: Modernism Reassessed in an Era of Globalization

Jonathan Harris

This chapter offers ideas toward a reassessment of modernism based on a radicalization of some of the themes raised by T. J. Clark's (2013) *Picasso and Truth: From Cubism to Guernica*. Such a reassessment, inevitably, is personal and historical, autobiographical and formalist, political and apolitical. Clark's books, from his classic studies of Gustave Courbet and Édouard Manet to the recent accounts of Nicolas Poussin and Pablo Picasso, subtend a complex kind of social history in and of themselves and indicate, also inevitably, the inseparability in his work of the personal and the historical, the autobiographical and formalist, the political and the apolitical.[1] My chapter[2] proposes to locate modernism, and its forms of socio-historical understanding so distinctly elaborated by Clark, within our global, yet still globalizing, present whose senses and attachments seem now, to me, to be permanently dislocated from the social order of middle-twentieth century Western intellectual and artistic life. *Bijiasuo* is the translation of the name Picasso in "Pin Yin" – the official phonetic system for transcribing the sound of Chinese characters into Latin script. I use "Bijiasuo" – felt as an interruption, perhaps even a stumbling, in sound and meaning within that Western life – in order to allegorize this fundamental dislocation.[3]

Deserting

> Be modern, collectors, museums. If you have old paintings do not despair. Retain your memories but detourn them so that they correspond with your era … Painting is over. You might as well finish it off. Long live painting.
>
> <div align="right">(Asger Jorn quoted in Gilman 2002, 206–207)</div>

So exhorted artist and sometime Situationist Asger Jorn in 1959. This refrain has often been heard: painting is, "impossible, useless, yet possible nonetheless!" (De Duve 1991, 20). Imagine that Jorn was directly addressing Aarhus Art Museum and one of the best loved pictures in its collection, Frantz Henningsen's *Deserted*, 1888. This oil painting shows a bedraggled, impoverished mother, baby in arms and a toddler holding pensively onto her skirts – their looks are accusing, but pitiable. The work is "realist social-democratic": it seeks to show actuality in the world, and to claim that this actuality – an

indivisible social and individual truth – is unacceptable. But detect, now, a raging ambivalence similar to Jorn's in the following, probably less familiar, voice. Consider, while you read, his 1962 work *The Avant-Garde Doesn't Give Up* – a Victorian potboiler painting of a girl with skipping rope upon whose face Jorn has mockingly added a Duchampian moustache and beard, and a scrawl of graffiti on the wall, a kind of blackboard, behind,

> At least he had his work, however closely he was threatened by human vice […] the approach of old age and the behaviour of those who only bought his paintings to flog. There were the paintings; but fortunately there was also painting: the physical act which rejuvenated and purified when he and nameless others were at their most corrupt. Of course it was a miserable refuge too – oh God, yes, when he cared to admit it: he was an old man, turning his back and distorting truth to get at an effect, which he did, he knew, better than anybody else – well, almost anybody. But there were the days when he himself was operated on, half-drunk sometimes, shitting himself with agony, when out of the tortures of knife and mind, he was suddenly carried, without choice, on the wings of his exhaustion, to the point of intellectual and – dare he begin to say it? – spiritual self-justification. Anyway, he painted.
>
> (White 1970, 470)

This is the protagonist in Patrick White's 1970 novel *The Vivisector* – a story dedicated to the actual Australian modernist painter Sidney Nolan (see Figure 17.2). White's account is imagined, fictive; it is a made-up contrivance of a modern artist's life. In the story White's artist-character, Hurtle Duffield, in Dickensian fashion, is sold as a young boy by his real working-class parents to an aspiring middle class couple who try to re-invent him as their authentic son: one invention inside another then.

  Now, finally, read Clark's narration of a 1932 painting by Picasso (Figure 12.1),

> Touch – the imagination of contact and softness and curvature – is consumed in the *Nude on Black Armchair* by something else: a higher, shallower, in the end more abstract visuality, which will never be anyone's property. The nude's near hand, holding on to the clawlike white flower, is an emblem of this: fingers and petals become pure (predatory) silhouette. The body's pale mauve is as otherworldly a colour – as unlocatable on the spectrum of flesh tone – as the yellow and orange in the sky. Maybe in the picture night is falling. The blue wall to the left is icy cold. The woman's blonde hair is sucked violently into a vortex next to her breast. Blacks encase her as if for eternity. The rubber plant tries to escape through the window.
>
> (Clark 2013, 10)

Part of the greatness – also the affront – of Clark's own imaginative touch in this passage lies in that, in it, he makes no effort to hold apart ostensibly descriptive ("iconographic") and interpretative ("iconologic") utterances: "higher, shallower"/"more abstract visuality, which will never be anyone's property"/"pure (predatory) silhouette"/"Maybe in the picture night is falling"/"The woman's blonde hair is sucked violently into a vortex"/"Blacks encase her as if for eternity"/"The rubber plant tries to escape through the window." The consequence of this insouciant running together of these denotative and connotative elements is an undermining, a corruption, of settled epistemological distinctions between them *as classes of utterance* – as well as an elision of proper moral-aesthetic distinctions between effects and affect.

  It is a slap in the face of the social history of art.

FIGURE 12.1   Pablo Picasso, *Nude on Black Armchair*, oil on canvas, 162 × 130 cm, 1932. Private collection. Bought in 1999 by Les Wexner donated to the Wexner Center for the Arts. *Source*: © 2016. Christie's Images, London/Scala, Florence/© Succession Picasso/DACS, London 2016.

Modernist painting had been concerned since the 1860s both to apprehend social reality (Charles Baudelaire's modernité) and somehow visually to signal the material realities of its own representational practices. Fundamental questions regarding the possibility of "truth in painting" – key also to his earlier books, though posed in a paradigmatically different way – lie at the center of Clark's study of Picasso's art in the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1970s modernism in the visual arts had become to be understood as an *historical* entity in and through a cluster of explanatory-discursive modes institutionally defined as "factual" (principally, art history) and "speculative" or "theoretical" (criticism, philosophical aesthetics, and hermeneutics). *Picasso and Truth* radicalizes questions then, first, of the "truth content" of modernist painting and, second, of critical writing's (including Clark's) own status, means, and interests. Related exploration, I contend, has also been carried out – sometimes as significantly and eloquently – in fictional prose, such as White's novel and, for instance, in John Updike's 2002 lightly veiled story about Abstract Expressionist artists, *Seek My Face*.[4] Clark's concern, at least in the first few chapters of *Picasso and Truth* is with truth's opposition to what he calls "Untruth," an idea drawn from Friedrich Nietzsche that is not simply synonymous with falsity. I shall suggest that reassessment of Modernism as an historical entity – the capital "m" here figures that status – could instead entail a search (and new *re*search) for different qualities of truth about our recent past, recent past art, and consider how such an enterprise might speak to us, productively, about our present, and likely globalized future.[5] Towards the end of this chapter I offer a brief synopsis of some of my own recent work to this end, and introduce the category

of "Utopian Globalism" – simultaneously a faux art-historical style proper noun and a heuristic, imaginative projection back into the origins of modernism from our present.

If Clark's mode of sustained ekphratic writing had been posed as a tentative and provisional practice in his 2006 book on two paintings by Poussin, *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing*, then its reiteration in *Picasso and Truth* is perhaps troubling, or more troubling, though also more challenging, because this study offers an explicit contribution to the field that Clark did so much himself to create: the social history of modern art.[6] Clark establishes this intention – albeit with an emphatic autobiographical note – not long after his discussion of *Nude on Black Armchair*,

> the longer I live with the art of Europe and the United States in the twentieth century (I mean the short century from 1905 to 1956, from the first Russian Revolution to Hungary and Suez), the more it seems to me that retrogression is its deepest and most persistent note. Picasso is far from alone. Think of Schwitters immured in his erotic cathedral, or Matisse reassembling Morocco in his apartment, of Mondrian in his desperate dream-chamber and Brancusi among the totems; of Tatlin plunging earthward in his flying machine, Bonnard in his bathroom, Malevich in his coffin; of Duchamp playing peek-a-boo through a crack in the door and Pollock holed up in his eternal log cabin; and ask yourself, "So what *is* modern art but a long refusal, a long avoidance of catastrophe, a set of spells against an intolerable present?"
>
> (2013, 14)

Well, not so long if Clark's "short" twentieth century lasts barely fifty years! These dates might be taken to mark the beginning and end of popular support for the Russian and then Soviet-communist movement against capitalism, as well as the last gasp of British imperial pretensions as the United States took charge of the "free world." They might as easily mark, roughly, the beginnings of Cubism and the death of Jackson Pollock. Dates tend to be wheeled on and off by art historians for a variety of shifting purposes and Clark is no different in this regard – though it is worth pondering the dates he selects more carefully. Clark sounds a bit like White's Hurtle Duffield here, seeking his own "miserable refuge" in painting.

The beginning of *Picasso and Truth* is fairly apocalyptic and introducing Nietzsche adds to the gloom, despite the philosopher's observation, which Clark cites, that the "great spectacle in a hundred acts" reserved for Europe's next two centuries (which would be 1887–2087), though "the most questionable" is "perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles"[7] some of us around now no doubt will see. However, there is not much hope – the name, incidentally, of Lee Krasner Pollock's character in Updike's *Seek My Face* – in Clark's own view of the twentieth century, short or long,

> I do not see a shape or logic to the last hundred years. I see the period as catastrophe in the strict sense: unfolding chaotically from 1914 on, certainly until the 1950s (and if we widen our focus to Mao's appalling 'Proletarian Cultural Revolution' – in essence the last paroxysm of a European fantasy of politics – well on into the 1970s).
>
> (2013, 16)

Dislocating

With that last date I return, more or less, to where I began, with Jorn and White, and the Pin Yin translation of Picasso's name: Bijiasuo. I want this word to operate a simple

"alienation effect" or cognitive disturbance, for it to be stumbled over, and hard to say. It is like the sign "Picasso," yet not like it: it points to the referent, but deflects away from it as well. "Picasso," as it were, in the world outside of Europe and the United States, outside of Western modernism, and outside of Modernism understood as a concluded historical event, too. Wang Xiangming and Jin Lili's 1985 painting *Longing for Peace (Kewang heping)* shows an Asian girl standing next to a painting that "quotes" Western paintings of war/anti-war by Manet and others. Picasso's *Guernica* is prominent. But this quoting device actually creates a kind of bracketing, or distancing, of the masterpiece. It suggests that the West's ostensible "outside" – the externality, in this case, of Mao's China, and since – remains tied, but not necessarily affiliated, to the West (and to the West's art) of twentieth-century war and anti-war, through a history of imperialism and colonization.

It's clear that a testing of the implications of "outside" and "externality" is involved in this discussion. Further examples can be adduced. Consider Dia Al-Azzawi's oil painting of the mass murder of Palestinians in Lebanon by rightist Christian militia while Israeli troops turned a blind eye, *Sabra and Shatila Massacre*, 1982–1983. The picture is a homage to *Guernica*, certainly, but is it also in the end a fading, and failing, emulation of its formal and energetic densities? Or consider Spanish artist Erro's acrylic painting *After the Bullfight*, 2012, a light pop-parody of Picasso's stylistic pluralism after 1917. "Around 1970" is often the date offered for when modernism is deemed to have ended, or when it began to mutate into the variants of its post facto forms and appellations. "Postmodernism" became the favored contender during the 1980s, although now it appears to have been definitively superseded by the problem, and the conceptual problematic, of "contemporary art."[8]

If we are, indeed, "after the bullfight" that was Western modernism then, in that sense, Erro's painting is Bijiasuo too, for contemporary artists in Europe must now also experience a "relation of exteriority" to Picasso, and to modernism understood as a concluded entity. The other term, and problematic, which is as indispensable as "contemporary art" in any adequate reassessment of the status of modernism, again notwithstanding the analytic problems we will encounter in its use, is "globalization." Relations between these two ideas – conjunctive and disjunctive – are complex and unsettled. Competing alternative locutions and provisional categories remain productively jarring. Here are some contenders. (A) "Globalization" on one side and "Contemporary Art" on the other – with the latter being seen as distinct, even autonomous, from the former. (B) "Globalized Art" – a set of integral practices transformed, penetrated, corrupted even, but certainly determined by external socio-economic processes and interests. (C) "The Global Art World" understood as a form-specific condensation of the globalized body-politic, with the presupposition that some stability has been reached and that this entity (as Nicos Poulantzas (1978) claimed about the capitalist state) has both attained real discursive autonomy and yet embodies the world class struggle of late capitalist social development.[9]

At this point in the eruption of discourse on globalization – I hesitate to call this process "evolutionary" or "developmental," particularly loaded as these terms are – there remains a need for these rudimentary A, B, and Cs to be held in some kind of mutual critical relation of both possibility and disavowal. That is to say, this field will remain interesting for as long as it doesn't settle down into a set of disciplinary orthodoxies. Its relations to both art history and visual-culture studies remain agreeably opaque – both globalization discourse in its energetic epistemological untidiness and much of contemporary art itself arguably outpace art history in their "new knowledge" potentialities. Where does global/ized art come from? This term *from* has, of course, been problematized in accounts of globalization, but its core sense as meaning "of somewhere different" hasn't become redundant, though the kinds and grounds of difference have, certainly, drastically altered.

The situation, for example, in the global, and still globalizing, world economy is much more complicated now than it was, say, in the 1960s (when "the contemporary" was in the process of being born, according to most accounts). The place of contemporary art produced in Asia – a part of that global economy – is another important case and instances the fate of art produced anywhere outside of the Western societies of Europe and North America. But the same problem with "from" plagues both *in* and *outside*. The international markets for contemporary art were created and then monopolized by Western institutions – auction houses, dealing galleries, museums, and broadly what might be called, in Althusserian fashion, "the art discourse" apparatus.[10] Taken together, this global art world power nexus needs art to still come "from" China or Korea – that is, to exhibit signs of authentic difference that help brand it in the international market place. To complicate matters, the "inside/outside" dyad is, therefore, both a real intellectual puzzle and an ideological projection.

"Globalization" discourse remains, most valuably, a hypothesis, or set of hypotheses. That is, its account of the world, and the world of art, is heuristic – based on empirical, "trial and error" new research. Its reification into a final "truth" or set of facts is only an ideological possibility. Modernism suffered this fate, while Postmodernism disappeared into the vortex of Art Theory, although it occasionally mirages a presence in attempts to make sense of art and the world since the 1990s. Along with "contemporary," this cluster of terms forms the conceptual problematic from which, and out of which, we will make sense of the present, the now, the new, for art, artists, and everyone else.

Declaiming

The human figure in Xiangming and Lili's *Longing for Peace (Kewang heping)* is significant because it is that of a girl or young woman – not a boy or a man – embodying the question of the symbolic and actual social status of women in contemporary Asian societies. It is the rapid movement towards a fully commodified spectacular society in, for example, China and India that neoliberal globalization processes have hastened and helped to bring about since the 1990s. This process has involved the dramatic, sometimes mortally violent, erosion of traditional gender roles and a transformation in representations of women and girls within a newly sexualized youth culture of "modernized" gender interrelations and putative Western sexual freedoms (see Svati Shah 2014).

Recently I was able to take photographs of some anonymous murals painted onto the walls of buildings at Delhi's J. Nehru University, in a student campaign combating violence against women in India (Figure 12.2). These murals included formal quotations from (that difficult word again) modernist artworks including Picasso's 1907 "proto-cubist" painting *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon* – claimed to represent a group of women prostitutes depicted in an African "primitive sculpture" guise. Alongside the mural the following lines were declaimed, "It is we sinful women. Now, even if the night gives chase/these eyes shall not be put out for the wall which has been felled/don't insist now on raising it again"[11] (see Figure 12.2). Another available "Western freedom" for contemporary Indian women involves this taking of Picasso – taking/making "Bijiasuo" – to reiterate in the spirit of Jorn: "If you have old paintings do not despair. Retain your memories but detourn them so that they correspond with *your* era … Painting is over […] Long live painting" (my italics) (Gilman 2002, 206–207). In order to understand contemporary art within globalized conditions, then, we need to continue to reassess the products of historic modernism,

FIGURE 12.2 Anti-violence against women mural at J. Nehru University, Delhi, India.
Source: Photo Jonathan Harris (2014).

those of Picasso and "Bijiasuo" – and do this with the help of the powerful resources of social-historical study demonstrated by Clark in his early work on mid- and late nineteenth-century French art.

It should be clear from this recommendation that I place Clark's recent books on Poussin and Picasso in their own problematic "relation of externality" to the methods and objectives of the practice of the social history of art that he'd established in the studies of Courbet and Manet. This social history of art, in contrast to those models offered by, for instance, Arnold Hauser (1999 [1951]) and Nicos Hadjinicolaou (1979), was centered on the production of accounts of specific historical moments or "conjunctures" – relatively short slices of history – in which the relations between artists, art practices, artworks,

institutions, and the broader political and historical circumstances can be examined in detail. Hauser's "epochal history," in comparison, had produced on the whole sweepingly generalized accounts of art's development over centuries, identifying abstractly defined "styles" of art with equally abstractly defined notions of "modes of production" and "social ideologies." Clark began, instead, to attend to the specificities of artworks, artists, and the complex conditions of their production and interpretation.[12] (Some would also exclude from this Clarkian social history of art the great essays that make up Clark's 1999 *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* – though I see these, again rather in Althusserian terms, as "works of the break," epistemologically, and in terms of forms of experimental argument. These essays are clearly moving towards the different terrains of the Poussin and Picasso books, although the differences between these studies should not be minimized.)[13]

Whatever these differences may be, the two books have in common a "late," impressionistic, apparently "author's eye"-led inquiry, a "montage" rather than logical style of argument, and a relentless, ostensibly descriptive, focus on artworks. Clark's account of Picasso's paintings exemplifies Edward Said's idea of a "late style" manifesting what he called a "nonharmonious, nonserene tension," a kind of "deliberately unproductive productiveness going *against*…" (2007, 7) This is because, Clark's virtuoso readings of a number of key works – themselves going against cubist painting's own deep commitment to a final truth to reality lodged in what Thierry De Duve called their "retinal" legality – threaten to sabotage normal presuppositions of description's corrigibility (De Duve 1991, 14). Clark had deployed a variant of this maneuver in *The Sight of Death*, wherein, however, the foregrounded subjective voice signaled a provisional suspension of usual art-historical, and Clark's own social art-historical, procedures.

A complementary "unproductive productiveness" jam or block located in modernist paintings themselves had preoccupied Clark in his earlier studies of canonical pictures by Courbet, Manet, and Pollock. In *Picasso and Truth*, whatever Clark's other objectives, this dis/identification resurfaces, again intimately bound up with its author's own "eye" and "word." It is not that meaning, truth, reality, and social engagement are denied in this critical process – for these will always be part of any question of the "truth in painting" – but rather that they are held under a form of critical erasure. This time, the jam or block is lodged, constitutively, between Clark as the declared knowing subject and the modernist artwork. While Nietzsche's speculations on post-Christian "untruth" undoubtedly feature as a kind of parallel text or even allegorization of the jam or block in the book's early chapters, reference to this in any case ambiguously dragging philosophical anchor fades by the time Clark turns to *Guernica*, in a final chapter which restates a defense of the painting as Picasso's last great work.

Picasso and Truth manifests a second kind of "unproductive productiveness" when set against Clark's achievement over a forty-year period. If the jam or block in paintings by Courbet, Manet, and Pollock functioned, for the "Marxian Clark" as an aesthetic brake on dominant ideologies operative in capitalist social order, then the "unproductive productiveness" of *Picasso and Truth* lies squarely in its own brilliantly articulate elision of what Theodor Adorno, discussing Beethoven's late works, called the, "subjective and objective. Objective is the fractured landscape, subjective the light in which – alone – it glows into life" (2002, 567). But one, presumably unintended, effect of this "late" mode in *Picasso and Truth* is to re-present history as rather inert background, when it is presented at all. Any adequate reassessment of modernism must necessarily retain reconsideration of historical and critical, neo-Marxist, method in art history, and of what the discipline of art history – its exploding "fragments" – has become since the 1980s.[14]

Where might Clark stand on such questions now? Consider the following:

'The will to truth has ended.' 'Who cares about a work of art if it is a grab bag from which anyone can take what she wants?' 'What meaning would our entire being have if not this, that in us this will to truth has come to consciousness of itself *as a problem*?' And always in answer […] there comes a voice with seemingly no patience for such skepticism. 'Pictorial form,' it says, 'is the possibility that things are related to each other in the same way as the elements of the picture. *That* is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches right out to it. It is laid against reality like a measure.'

(2013, 58, italics in original)

But this isn't Clark "directly." It's Clark "quoting" Picasso "quoting" Nietzsche, "quoted" – how reliably we wonder? – by his ex-lover Françoise Gilot, cited in Carlton Lake and Gilot's 1964 memoir, *Life with Picasso*, where more nominally fictive and factual claims are interminably co-mingled. Clark acknowledges, in a note that both is and is not a clarification, that Nietzsche never quite says, "The will to truth has ended!" (2013, 293–294). As there are no numbered endnotes to *Picasso and Truth*, but rather a palimpsest of commentaries on commentaries in the main text, Clark's declaration of his sources – where we might reasonably expect to find some of the "truths" and "untruths" – are deliberately obscured further.

Dividing

If Modernism has ended, and if the social history of art project atomized into but one of the discipline's innocuous sub-specialisms in the later 1980s, then the fate of both was bound up with globalizing capitalist neoliberalism emergent at the moment at the end of that decade and the beginning of the 1990s (in India and China, for example) – when the husk of Soviet communism finally collapsed, followed by the more or less rapid capitulation of mainstream and oppositional socialist movements around the world. These "world-historical" developments underpin the core condition of our global socio-historical modernity now. In a recent book, I coined the term "Utopian Globalism" in order to pursue a historical reassessment of modernism in the light of globalization. One objective in the use of this speculative neologism was definitively to separate my account from the related, though different, orthodox historiographies of politicized revolutionary modern art in the twentieth century.[15]

These include studies of Constructivism, Dadaism, and Surrealism (the "historic avant-garde"), as well as of the institutionalized groupings and movements of artists, critics, and administrators associated with self-proclaimed revolutionary socialist and communist parties and states, such as in Russia after 1917, Germany, the United States, and Mexico in the interwar period, and the Soviet Union under Stalinist rule during the 1930s–1950s, in the period of doctrinal Socialist Realism. The history of these early to mid-twentieth century visual arts "political modernisms," driven by increasingly divisive ideological motives and justifications, on both sides of the Cold War (linked to a number of globalizing projects of their own) certainly intersects importantly with my reassessment. But they are distinct. I will demonstrate briefly.

Consider two artefacts, two artworks (see Miroslaw Blaka *How It Is*, 2009–2010[16] and Vladimir Tatlin *Model for a Monument to the Third International*, 1919[17]). The first shows

a large object placed in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in London in 2009–2010, viewed, and entered, by tens of thousands of people. The second shows a model from 1919, made a year or so after the Russian Revolution, for a planned enormous tower in Petrograd, which, given the then available technology, could not have been built. These two constructions, Miroslaw Balka's *How It Is* – the tenth contribution to the Unilever series of large artworks installed in the Hall since 2000 – and Vladimir Tatlin's *Model for a Monument to the Third International* stand at each end, I claim, of an intelligible and poignant history of Utopian Globalism in modern art, culture, and society.

I use Utopian Globalism to refer to an ideal of worldwide, social transformation to be brought about within a modernity recognized to be global both in its nature and effects. It is an ideal that was given visual form and material substance by artists committed to a vision of the world beyond the limits and values of tyrannical government, capitalist social order, and acquisitive materialism. Now, it may prove difficult to convince you that Tatlin's model and Balka's box on stilts represent punctual "beginnings" and "endings" in such a history – though modernism's narratives are full of such improbable claims. Tatlin's model for a soaring structure symbolizing the communist ideal certainly was the first ambitious contribution to twentieth-century revolutionary modernist internationalism – a tradition of visionary thinking and making that was avowedly utopian, gripped by an optimistic belief in the power of materialized imagination.

In contrast, Balka's rather squat metal container, entered via a shallow-angled ramp and, like Tatlin's proposed tower, part "sculpture," part inhabitable "architecture," afforded the experience, when I visited it, of a blackening, rather sinister totality as one proceeded into its interior space. Tatlin's model, foundation for a living memorial to the "Third International" world communist movement sparked into life by the Bolshevik-led uprising in Russia in October 1917, disappeared during the 1920s, and since then the only surviving visual traces of his imagined tower have been a number of spectral black and white photographs and reconstructions. Given the almost fictive ethereality of Tatlin's creation, meaningful comparisons with Balka's actual, physical box of 2009 – big, perhaps, in relation to many contemporary artworks, but tiny compared to Tatlin's giant structure which, it was proposed, would straddle the River Neva in St Petersburg – may seem far-fetched.

Nevertheless, my comparison is designed to link "modern" to "contemporary" art over a ninety-year era – as well as to open to further investigation both the "externalities" and the "finishedness" of modernism proposed earlier. *How It Is* represents a recent addition (as well as a kind of conclusion of its own) to the Utopian Globalist lineage that may be traced back to Tatlin's tower. Balka's structure does so in the sense that, along with other works in the Unilever series, it represents an attempt by those selected artists to propose that contemporary art can still compellingly give expressive visual and material form to a politically and aesthetically radical critique of the world's social order in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Other examples of this kind of "late" Utopian Globalism (in its multinational corporate-patronal phase) include Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project* – a yellow glowing disc of artificial light hung at one end of the Turbine Hall in 2003–2004 and Doris Salcedo's *Shibboleth*, 2007–2008, an incision cut into the stone ground of the length of part of the Hall, creating an earthquake-like micro-chasm that has been left to scar the gallery's floor. Both works appeared to allude to the potential human-made environmental and socio-political catastrophes now facing the earth, its peoples, and all of life on the planet. From the evidence of Tatlin's tower to the Turbine Hall's spectacular array of distracting visions and enigmatic objects, modern and contemporary art's socio-critical purpose interlocked with its utopic-visionary function in a variety of ways. The development of these modes and

practices has, in addition, become more and more closely bound up with technologically dynamic mass media forms of representation and dissemination. For, in the Utopian Globalist lineage, photography, film, television, video, mixed media installation and internet communication technologies have become constitutive of globalized contemporary art.

Such extending and adaptive processes were active within the early twentieth-century "modern," as well as within the "postmodern" and "contemporary," conjunctures. These are the times, spaces, means and forms that link Tatlin's tower to Balka's box. The Utopian Globalist lineage, however, is *not* dependent upon, nor does it embody, a continuous linear history of modernism in media such as painting or sculpture. About twenty years after the Russian Revolution, Picasso, realizing the worldwide significance that his planned painting of the bombing of the town of Guernica in Spain, with Franco's approval, by the German Condor Legion might have in the propaganda battle against the fascists, organized the photographing of *Guernica* in several stages of its development towards completion. These photographs were disseminated widely in the press in 1937 and later years. Decades, then, before John Lennon and Yoko Ono's May 1969 "Bed-In for Peace" – the Utopian Globalist live TV event of music, banter, comedy, and radical polemic to which I devote an extensive chapter in my book – Picasso had understood something of the role that the arts, combined with international mass media, could play in promulgating a cause.[18]

If the serial photographing of *Guernica* and many later paintings made after Picasso had joined the French Communist Party at the end of the Second World War turned their production and public dissemination into kinds of early mediatized "performance" on a world stage, prefiguring Lennon and Ono's televisual performance in 1969, then there was still, nevertheless, a clear divide, then, between perception of the "original artwork" and "secondary" means for its reproduction. (This distinction was something that some artists attempted to break down entirely during the 1960s and 1970s.) Being autonomous and therefore "self-ruling," the modernist artwork offered a visionary model and parallel for the early twentieth-century ideal of the truly revolutionary utopia. It is possible to see how belief in a political utopia – be it the projection of the USSR as effectively an achieved autonomous communist reality, say, or of capitalist freedom after 1991 as the triumphant "post-historical" global societal form, as Francis Fukuyama (1992) claimed – could find a mirror of sorts in critical idealizations of modernist artworks of the last century.

This is Clark's ultimate truth claim for, and homage to, Picasso's 1924 painting *Guitar and Mandolin on a Table* and perhaps the reason why this artwork appears illustrated on the cover of his book (*Guernica* remains tied too closely to the world to fulfill this role). The American Marxist critic Harold Rosenberg had articulated such an idealization in his argument in 1940 that what he called the "cultural International" of Paris had produced artworks that had "freed" mankind from its past: modernisms autonomous "vision" had been eclectically "blended," he claimed, from millennia of human civilizations "arranged, scattered, regrouped, rubbed smooth, re-faced …" (Rosenberg in Harrison and Wood 1993, 543).[19] The modernist artwork presented as a utopic image of an achieved "autonomous totality," of an ideal freedom – freed also from the "truth to reality" role that Clark notes Cubism still aspired to, its "retinal" legalities – offered a challenge to the pertaining socio-historical reality of capitalist society within which, Rosenberg acknowledged, modernism had emerged, but from which it had separated itself out.

By necessity, the rupture in history from anterior contaminated society that would bring a political utopia into being must be total in its overthrow of all previously existing circumstances. The transformation of reality must be absolute. Simply tinkering with individual features in a social order only confirms its systemic interconnectedness and indissolubility except through a process of total, revolutionary, societal renewal. The Marxist

art historian and critic Max Raphael, writing on Picasso in the 1930s and 1940s, explicitly brought together this dream of an overarching "free unity" comprising the autonomous modernist artwork and the ideal totality of true communist polity. In the sphere of the former, he believed that new artworks would be produced whose internal structure would be "organic," "dialectical," and "materialist."[20]

In a manner recalling Tatlin's model for the tower, Raphael believed that a unity of all the separate plastic arts would be brought about under the leadership of an ideal form called "architecture." Works made in the future socialist society that achieved this new state would somehow fuse dialectics and materialism, satisfying the historical principles of totality and necessity. In such a world social order all would contribute equally and no group or field of human activity would oppress any other. This dream of systemic rupture was given vivid form in some of Utopian Globalist arts evermore spectacular visual and multi-media forms – the "Bed-In for Peace," large earthworks hewn by Robert Smithson and Michael Heizer, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's 1995 *Wrapped Reichstag*, Balka's *How It is* and the other Turbine Hall installations.[21]

Departing

Modernism may be history, but as a field of historical study (its artworks, critical writings, and museum collections) it will never be exhausted – as it may constantly be redefined and rethought anew in conceptual terms, and thus brought into critical relation to the urgencies of the present. I've suggested that modernism's relations both to contemporary art and to globalization are the two central problematics within which any reassessment should be refigured. But this explanatory work isn't simply or sufficiently completed through "critique." Modernism's reassessment must also involve the introduction of *new* empirical materials and evidences that may profitably challenge – threaten, undermine, even obliterate – the received intellectual frameworks, habits, canons and elisions of its dominant historiographies in the last seventy years or so. These new materials may be transferred into visual arts studies from other terrains – as I've tried to do, for example, in my examination of Lennon and Ono's "Bed-In for Peace," an event that wasn't presented at the time, or subsequently understood to be, an art event.

It wasn't my intention, either, to turn "Bed-In for Peace" into an art event, or to reassess modernism in order to renovate the category for future use. The task, rather, is to see how critics, historians, and curators can come to understand and compellingly represent historical modernism's conjunctive and disjunctive relations to contemporary art – whether that is a temporary agit-mural daubed on a student union building wall or an installation at Tate Modern co-commissioned by a multinational corporation attempting to improve its public image. In the process, the understanding could help us to make sense of the relations between these artworks – Picasso or Bijiasuo – and the social orders, locally, nationally, regionally, and now globally, that have produced them.

Notes

1 See Clark (1973a, 1973b, 1984, 2006) and also my brief outline of Clark's achievements to date in my entry in Chris Murray's (2003) *Key Writers on Art: The Twentieth Century*. London: Routledge: 68–74.

2 The chapter is derived from a lecture I gave at the conference "Reassessing Modernism in the Twenty-first Century," held at Aarhus Art Museum, Denmark, in April 2014. I would like to thank Dr. Inge Lise Mogensen Bech, Aarhus University, for inviting me to take part in this conference, along with speakers including W. J. T. Mitchell and Thierry De Duve: conversations with them helped to shape this chapter.

3 Hovering in the background to this chapter is the influential but now dated polemic by Krauss (1985), dealing with some related themes though from an entirely different viewpoint. I discussed this, along with an essay by Clark on Cubism "Cubism and Collectivity" (1999), in *The New Art History: A Critical Introduction* (2001) – see pp 47–56. On Cubism as an influence in Asian modern art, see Tatehata Akira (2011).

4 I discuss Updike's novel in "'Contemporary,' 'Common,' 'Context,' 'Criticism': Painting after the End of Postmodernism" (2013a). See also Harris (2005).

5 See the review of Clark's book by Malcolm Bull (2014). Its subtheme of Picasso's latent dallying with interwar crypto-fascist tendencies – contra to *Guernica*'s evident political sympathies – crops up again in a subsequent letter by Bull, "Picasso amongst the Non-Entities," Vol. 36, no. 8; 17 April 2014, an excited response to Clark's riposte to Bull's review, Vol. 36, no. 5, 6 March 2014. Despite Clark's despising of Picasso's decision to join the Stalinist French Communist Party in 1944, he wants and needs Picasso, like Courbet, Manet, and Pollock, to be, in the end, another man of the Left (or another left-Nietzschean)!

6 See Clark's succinct outline and defense of this in his 1974 "The Conditions of Artistic Creation." See my 2007 review of *The Sight of Death*.

7 From Nietzsche's 1887 *The Genealogy of Morals*, quoted in *Picasso and Truth*: 129–130.

8 See, e.g., Osborne (2013); Jonathan Harris ed. (2011); and Terry Smith (2009).

9 See Poulantzas (1978).

10 See Althusser (1971) and Harris (2017).

11 Photograph taken by author in January 2014 at the J. Nehru University Students Union building, Delhi, India.

12 Clark mounted a succinct meta-theoretical defense of the conjuncturalist social history of art in his combative 1983 essay "Arguments about Modernism: A Reply to Michael Fried."

13 See reference in 6 above to my review, and Howard Eiland's unpublished essay "Mimesis and Monstrosity": T. J. Clark's *Picasso and Truth* (thanks to Tim Clark for sending me a copy of this).

14 See Clark's 1974 essay in the *Times Literary Supplement* for his discussion of the fate of art history. Clark's studies of Courbet and Manet are paradigmatic conjunctural accounts of their paintings' active role, and co-creation within, as part of, the broad societal conditions of France in their respective historical moments. Such conjunctural analyses in the social history of art sought to dissolve the foreground/background distinction characteristic of art in context formulations. See Harris *The New Art History*, Chapter 2.

15 See Harris (2013).

16 http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/unilever-series-miroslaw-balka-how-it

17 www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/lost-art-vladimir-tatlin

18 See "'Bed-in' as *Gesamtkunstwerk*: A Typical Morning in the Quest for World Peace," in Harris *The Utopian Globalists*, 211–245.

19 Harold Rosenberg, The Fall of Paris, was first published in *Partisan Review* in 1940, revised text from Rosenberg's, 1962, *Tradition of the New*, in Harrison and Wood (1993).

20 See Max Raphael (1981) [1933 in French]. This summary is partly based on John Tagg's valuable Introduction, in Raphael, *Proudhon, Marx, Picasso*: vii–xv. See *The Utopian Globalists*, Chapter 3 for further references and commentary on Raphael's writings on Picasso.
21 See Chapters 6 and 7 in Harris, *The Utopian Globalists*.

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Extensive Modernity: On the Refunctioning of Artists as Producers

Angela Dimitrakaki

The Impossibility of a Break

Can art cease being modern before capitalism ends? I begin with the question initially imagined as a possible conclusion to this chapter to pursue – elliptically and concisely – the connection of capitalist globalization, crystallized triumphantly after 1989, to artistic production. In the institional knowledge regimes of globalization, the distinction between the modern and the contemporary is ubiquitous: the distinction is so widely accepted in the art historical imaginary as to habitually come across university course titles on "modern and contemporary art." That university course titles on "medieval and contemporary art" are not that popular implies (if someone devotes much thought to the historically and conceptually unclear role of "and," which is unlikely) a nebulous affinity between "modern" and "contemporary," but the nature of this affinity remains mostly undisclosed and only marginally debated. By way of contributing to the de-marginalization of a debate that I find politically essential, I must clarify that the decision to open the chapter with what I had assumed to be its ending betrays the realization that the question was, ultimately, rhetorical: artistic production in times defined by capitalism as the dominant mode of production is necessarily modern. It is modern historically, aesthetically, and critically.

It is modern *historically* in that globalization, as the culmination of centuries-old processes, affirms the impossibility of leaving behind the colonial model and industrialization which defined modernity. That China extends Europe's colonial project in Africa, as Paolo Woods' photographic series *Chinafrica*, 2007, documents (see Figure 13.1), simply proves that colonialism, in globalization, is not a white prerogative. As Julian Stallabrass (2004), among others, has asserted, the global art world relies on the colonization of cultural diversity in order to diversify and expand its markets. In more general terms, the announcement of the advent of postcolonial times, at some point in the twentieth century, was to be followed by an era of neo-colonialism, often relying on debt bondage but remaining tied to the project of primitive accumulation and the plundering of resources, including "human resources" in the twenty-first century. The de-industrialization of part of the First World (with Britain and France as key examples) has meant the relocation of manufacture to regions providing cheap, devastatingly devalued labor as a means of survival, while technology continues being an asset to capital rather than the workers.

FIGURE 13.1   Paolo Woods, *Chinafrica*, photo series, 2007. *Source*: Paolo Woods/INSTITUTE.

More recently, capitalist development, encompassing the service economy, demands cheap labor as a precondition for the flow of capital in whichever national space. In 2013 Vivek Chibber's critique of postcolonial theory demolished the myth according to which democracy was the bourgeoisie's gift to the world – a gift that, allegedly, part of the world (the non-West) had failed to appreciate and implement. Chibber's argument that capital has traditionally stood *against* democracy is immensely useful in placing the current, unprecedented in terms of scale, attack of capital on democracy (the one effected as part of neoliberal rule, institionalised also in the EU)[1] within a longer history that has shaped and continues to shape a global modernity in terms of struggles and contradictions. To take one example, women, as the social "group" carrying the burden of a division of labor (unpaid housework seen as "unproductive" versus waged, productive labor) that remains necessary for capital's profits, continue to be central in the social practices of capital: imagine if capital acknowledged housework as productive labor and had to pay wages to all those committed to the reproduction of the workers. If Silvia Federici (2004) demonstrated how witch-hunting was instrumental to the enclosures pursued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries so that landless people eventually accepted seeking survival as industrial workers, Hester Eisenstein (2009) and Nancy Fraser (2009) showed how women entering the workforce in the twentieth century contributed to capital re-organizing beyond Fordism. The above extend, and add to, the idea of a contemporary capitalist, global "empire," to

use Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's catch-phrase from 2000, that has been the logical outcome of a complex historical process. In this historical process, the energies that give us the field of art (rather than merely artworks) may well be placed critically towards old and new enclosures, but this critical stance does not avert the capture of artistic productivity by capital.

Artistic production is modern *aesthetically* in that an intricate network of art institutions, from art schools to museums to collections and the market structures overall, continue to safeguard an art field that distinguishes between production and consumption, that is between producers and consumers of art. Already in 2002, and in the context of Documenta 11, which dedicated its narrative to the horrors of globalization, Boris Groys (2002) referred to art documentation as the institutional substitute of artworks executed within actual social relations, an art that seeks to move beyond its allocated framework of "other than life" but is being persistently disciplined and made to return to sites of display. That this fate, of display, has befallen Édouard Manet's *Olympia*, 1863, Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, 1917, Adrian Piper's *Catalysis IV*, 1971, Tanja Ostojic's *Looking for a Husband with EU Passport*, 2000–2005 and Chto Delat's activist, post-performative negations summed up as the collective's, "first solo exhibition at Secession Vienna this winter" (Koch 2015), suggests that the exhibition form reigns supreme, joining together a long string of disparate, radical art idioms and aesthetic propositions actualized within and as artworks. In other words, the exhibition form has emerged as the true aesthetic, framing all other aesthetic experiments, to which art produced in capitalism sooner or later capitulates. And as regards art's attempts at exodus (its passage from the institution to life), this underlying aesthetic establishes a continuity between the nineteenth century of industrialization and the twenty-first century of globalization that is hard to refute – despite art's negated commitment to the visual in favor of practices of radical incompletion and the requirements of the many strands of participatory art.[2] The hegemony of the exhibition form – recently renewed through the global appeal of biennials that rely on fairly well-known channels of funding and deeply entrenched expectations concerning what an encounter with art can be like – diminishes the importance of all attempts at periodization that give us the very distinction between modern and contemporary art. In the long run, unless we are prepared to establish display as the ontological condition of art and give up efforts to construct a *history of art*, we are compelled to admit that all artistic experiments on the basis of which we would differentiate between modern and contemporary are undermined (or, put more mildly, underwritten) by an exhibition logic that never fails to reproduce an art system premised on showing, selling, and buying. Today, when artworks – dematerialized or not – have joined the long list of goods available as part of a service economy, a critique of art as commodity is no longer the issue. The exhibition form *is* TINA transferred from economy to art. And the dictum There Is No Alternative, which must be why radical artists today participate in the system they critique in their artworks, did not appear overnight. Rather, TINA is the climactic point of the history of modernity in which labor has been losing too many battles against capital. Without succumbing to T. J. Clark's (2012) melancholy affirmation over a Left "with no future," it remains nonetheless important to become aware of the two histories: the history of losses on the part of the avant-garde (mostly committed to a critique of capitalism, including its cultural structures) and the history of losses on the part of the world of labor. These two histories of losses are the backbone of the history of modern art all the way to today.

Artistic labor has been part of this broader history of labor, which is why art's *critique* continues to belong to modernity – why indeed the current organization of artistic labor invites an interpretation of global capitalism in terms of an extensive modernity. In 1999

Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* differentiated between a "social critique" associated with labor and an "artistic critique" associated, well, with art. The broader argument, which exceeds the French context from which the data was drawn, posits the decline of the critique associated with labor and the trade unions after May 1968 against the affirmation of artistic critique which began doing really well in the last quarter of the twentieth century, though the two critiques have, "accompanied the history of capitalism from the start, linked both to the system and to each other in a range of ways, along a spectrum from intertwinement to antagonism" (Budgen 2000, 151). Sebastian Budgen summarizes Boltanski and Chiapello's take on artistic critique, first enacted "in bohemian milieux of the late nineteenth century," as a cluster of values including "expressive creativity, fluid identity, autonomy and self-development touted against the constraints of bureaucratic discipline, bourgeois hypocrisy and consumer conformity" (2000, 150–151). In short, the criticality of modern art as originally encountered within the struggle against alienation, represented by the opposition of the historical avant-gardes in the West (the Russian avant-garde was defeated in different terms) to an industrial order, was subjected to a refunctioning that contributed to the rise of post-Fordism and the genesis of the self-managed individual that today we find at the heart of artistic labor.

The above leaves little doubt about the continuity between an artistic paradigm formed at the emergence and constitution of modernity and the one available in today's extensive modernity, suggesting instead that the totalizing tendencies of capitalism bear a spatial but also a temporal dimension – a completion process in time as much as in space. In the first quarter of the twenty-first century, after *so much history of modernity*, an oppositional consciousness can only ignore this doubly articulated tendency to completion at its own peril. Refraining from hopeful or depressing teleologies about capitalism, we can retrospectively say that the return to the modern occurred exactly when globalization brought to the fore the impact of these totalizing tendencies, and so rethinking (rather than, as previously, rejecting) the modern was a symptom of the zeitgeist. Troubled by the "modern revival" (Maxwell 2005) evident around 2000, following a whole decade of globalization-as-everyday-life, Fredric Jameson formulated "four theses on modernity" which are pertinent at this point. When it comes to negotiating (rather than interpreting once and for all) the complexity of the term "modernity," Jameson noted: first, the impossibility of not periodizing; second, that modernity "is not a concept but rather a narrative category," a logical extension of the first maxim; third, that modernity does not posit a subject but "situations," without meaning that these are random and exempted from causality; fourth, that "no 'theory' of modernity makes sense today [2002] unless it comes to terms with the hypothesis of a postmodern break *with* the modern" (Jameson 2002, 94, emphasis added). The four maxims are in ascending order from the obvious (of course, modernity implies periodization) to the most disputable: why can't postmodernism be simply dismissed as two decades of false consciousness and the narratives that painstakingly fleshed it out (including Jameson's own) be dropped as cases of critical mis-recognition, as too much theoretical ado about practically nothing? In *A Singular Modernity*, Jameson does not raise this question and, consequently, despite his emphatic nodding to periodization, how postmodernism relates to modernity remains unclear in his study. The risk of forgetting the dialectical articulation of a contemporary as an updated modern was however all too real. For a number of reasons, postmodernism became a hegemonic discourse precisely after May 1968, during the first phase of contemporary art. In fact, postmodernism *was* that first phase. In hindsight then, to speak about postmodernism is to speak about the hegemonic cultural narrative covering the period from the Left's moment of hope and defeat (1968) to capital winning the war (1989), even if a *historical* account of

postmodernism comprehending the connected significance of these two dates is still lacking in art history. Proceeding with knowledge of this lack in mind, a slight revising of Jameson's fourth maxim is in order: theorizing modernity today necessitates a grasp of postmodernism as a break *within* – not as Jameson says, *with* – the modern. We shall call this break within modernity the postmodern parenthesis.

The Postmodern Parenthesis

The political interpetation of the quiet, if widely noted, decline of postmodernism as the hegemonic framework of contemporary art after May 1968 remains a difficult task for the historians of extensive modernity. This decline has been announced across theoretical and curatorial contexts. In 2009 Dan Karlholm's essay title in *Art History*, "Surveying Contemporary Art: Post-war, Postmodern, and then What?" and Nicolas Bourriaud's (2009) exclamation "Postmodernism is Dead!" in his "Altermodern Manifesto," accompanying the eponymous exhibition at Tate Britain, typified the variety and visibility of assertions of the decline, noted however already in the early 1990s. There would be little use in disputing the validity of the claim, keeping in mind that hegemonies (cultural or other) tend to leave indelible ideological traces on whatever is born out of the process of their demise. Whereas it would be tempting to interpret postmodernism as a misnomer for a particular phase in the development of a modern consciousness, the ideological effects of such an appelation – postmodernism – are too obvious to ignore.

Postmodernism was hardly the void it was presented as, given that its supporters and detractors rarely disagreed on its content as much as they disagreed on the latter's meaning. Sustained by poststructuralism, postmodernism became identified with the instability (even a radical unfixity) of meaning, a decentered subject and the renouncing of totality on historical rather than merely conceptual grounds: totality, the argument went, was not the historical framework of postmodern discourse. In the best-case scenario, a totalizing social narrative was deemed impossible because of the multiple, un-unifiable terrains of struggle, the diversity and incommensurability of claims that could never ally under a common cause; in the worst-case scenario, struggle as such was deemed futile, given the impossibility of designating a stable matrix of social discontent. Above all, of course, postmodernism amounted to a proclamation of the end of modernism and the end of modernity, as suggested by the title of David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1991). Both Harvey's book and Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* appeared in 1991, a year before Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992). All three studies were able to deliver a verdict precisely because the postmodernist parenthesis was drawing to a close – a closure in fact, which at the point, indicated a stasis. The long shadow of 2008 and the struggles against the austerity dogma (preached and practiced globally by neoliberalism) have made the happy stasis imagined by Fukuyama a laughable fiction, but the analyses of stasis offered by Jameson and Harvey can be used to understand the significant role that postmodernism played in the relatively peaceful transition to capitalist globalization – a totality in spirit and substance, if there ever was one. If European imperialisms provided the material resources for a future globalization, postmodernism launched a techno-ideological apparatus sustaining the spectacularization of everything (distance is our relationship to the "other" despite the other's increasing proximity), the textualization of resistance (mass opposition is often confined to social-media debates), culturalism (material divisions are buried under cultural traits – tragically, including the biopolitical hold of religion and its continuous capacity to regulate gender

roles, much like capital). In extensive modernity, spectacularization makes us experience the thrill of aesthetic documentaries that reveal hidden zones of labor abuse. Textualization makes us converse as resistive subjects on Facebook while our free labor puts Facebook on the stock market, and culturalism has generated the "clash of civilizations" doxa.

The fracturing of social struggles effected in postmodernism, eloquently summarized in 1987 by Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as "there is no such thing as society," has mutated into the contradictions of globalization. Whereas it is true that, as Chibber put it, "for the first time since the 1980s, everyone is talking about capitalism" (2013, 294), it is also true that transnationalism is practiced by the institutional apparatus of global capital rather than its oppressed or opponents. Increasingly, resorting to nationalism and closed borders is seen as the only credible response to the scarcity imposed by capital, a tendency threatening to defeat even Left internationalism.[3] And even if, already in 2004, postcolonial feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty highlighted capitalism's centrality in her updated analysis concerning women in the Global South and the possibility of a transnational feminism poised against global capital as a common enemy, the legacy of "difference" alongside vast and growing material divisions among women have prevented the actual practice of transnational feminist solidarity.[4]

A cursory revisiting then of the postmodern parenthesis suggests that despite the historically necessary retraction of postmodernism's central contention (that totality has evacuated the historical scene), there is a legacy of postmodernist ideological work which cannot be dismissed as a mere remainder. Although it is true that postmodernism's cultural and ethnographic subject (Foster 1996) has collapsed as the economic reductionism of social relations is normalized by global capital, it is still hard to continue in extensive modernity from where an earlier modernity left off – that is, the economic subject which Walter Benjamin identified in his "Author as Producer." Writing in 1934, as the future of fascism was already taking shape in Europe alongside the processual defeat of the Russian avant-garde under Stalinism, Benjamin posed "a question which is relatively original in Marxist aesthetics: he asks first, not what a cultural work's position is *vis-à-vis* the productive relations of its time, but what its position is *within* them" (Eagleton 1973, 25). This is also, without a doubt, the decisive question to ask in suggesting that, at present, artistic production is actualized in an extensive modernity.

Artists as Producers in Extensive Modernity

Back in the 1930s, Benjamin asked a question that was to become defining in the analysis of art since:

> Before I ask: how does a literary work stand in relation *to* the relationships of production of a period, I would like to ask: how does it stand *in* them? This question aims directly at the function that the work has within the literary relationships of production of a period. In other words, it aims directly at a work's literary *technique*. With the concept of technique, I have named the concept which gives access to a direct social analysis, and thus a materialist analysis of literary products.
>
> (Benjamin 1970 [1934], unpaginated)

What I want to suggest is that when it comes to art in the 2010s, materialist criticism can no longer pose the question in these terms. Changes in the organization of production compel a shift of attention from the artwork to the artist. The question, in other words,

changes from "how does an artwork stand in relations of production?" to "how does the artist stand in relations of production?" True, this change – its scale and implications- is primarily evident in so-called visual art (and in that regard visual art's departure from the visual is a major symptom of the change) rather than literature where texts ('literary products') continue to circulate, prompting renewed assessments of 'technique' as aesthet- ics (Kunst 2015, 144). But the *materiality* historically underpinning the practice of what used to be visual art has permitted a different historical trajectory for the latter: in 1993, an author (collective or singular) writing and publishing a short story did something different from artist collective WochenKlausur setting up a mobile healthcare unit in Vienna as an artwork titled *Medical Care of Homeless People.* Boltanski and Chiapello's emphasis on the *values* prioritized in, and by, artistic critique already indicates that what is important is not so much what the artist makes but what makes the artist. To elaborate on this reversal, Boltanski and Chiapello open the way for a research project that would examine *how* what makes the artist becomes relevant to making the subjectivity of the post-Fordist laboring subject. Adapting Benjamin's question this way means that one takes account of histori- cal differentiations in the evolution of modernity as the outcome of the struggle between capital and labor – a variation of which may well be the struggle to overcome *both* capital and labor, as captured in communization theory as a theory of revolution (Noys 2011). So far, the extensive modernity we inhabit appears to be the historical era where, in the words of Marc Augé, "the class struggle has taken place, and has been lost by the working class: the triumphant International is the capitalist one" (Augé 2014 [2012], 47). Art is but one space where this defeat is asserted, at least for the time being.

Defying Left optimism, Melanie Gilligan's feature length film *Popular Unrest*, 2010, offers an insightful interpretation of this historic defeat. In a sci-fi narrative barely covering its reference to the contemporary, biopolitical terrain of global capitalism, Gilligan posits a ruthless abstraction, the Spirit, as the supreme ruler of life and death in human society. This human society is one that prioritizes the well-being of production. It takes a while for the viewer to realize that all the decisions made by the Spirit, decisions which lead to a knife falling from above to kill randomly, are the outcome of a constantly updated algorithm responding to the shifting needs of production. "The Spirit's 'labour-saving calculations' are turning homicidal but this emanates from the system's logical processes," explains Gilligan: "the Spirit (i.e., capital) *expels labour* from the process of production in order to continue to be productive. This aspect of the story is a concrete manifestation of the antagonism between the social reproduction of the workers (or anyone else) by capital and capital's own reproduction" (Gilligan cited in Dimitrakaki and Lloyd 2015, 9). A telling moment in the film is when the (female) architect of a video game called the Spirit hands a gun to a young rebel who wants to destroy the system and free humanity, advising him to start his revolution by killing himself since the system is but a *participatory* vicious circle, a totality of performances ultimately conducive to the system's stability and reproduction.

Popular Unrest summarizes the anxieties generated in an extensive modernity that has become the theatre of operations for the brutality of capitalism in its consolidation as global empire. In 2015 the UN reported that "barely one in four of the global workforce has a stable job," that is "30 million more without work than at the height of the global recession in 2008" (Stewart 2015). Analyses of precarity and dispossession (Lorey 2015; Athanasiou and Butler 2013) abound in response to pauperization-by-debt and the waves of twenty- first century migrants who attempt perilous to suicidal crossings to reach "a better life," a life that is free from precariousness that can extend from physical to economic survival (a distinction that does not always apply). The same year that saw the release of *Popular*

Unrest, Michael Denning published his essay "Wageless Life." A historical overview of wagelessness led him to argue that we must prioritize "wageless life, not wage labour" as "the starting point in understanding the free market," contending:

> For capitalism begins not with the offer of work, but with the imperative to earn a living. … Rather than seeing the bread-winning factory worker as the productive base on which a reproductive superstructure is erected, imagine the dispossessed proletarian household as a wageless base of subsistence labour – the "women's work" of cooking, cleaning and caring – which supports a superstructure of migrant wage seekers who are ambassadors, or perhaps hostages, to the wage economy. […] Unemployment precedes employment, and the informal economy precedes the formal, both historically and conceptually.
>
> (Denning 2010, 81)

Denning's argument about precarity being at the heart of modernity's capitalist economy, beginning with the disposed masses of the industrial revolution, can contribute to a rethinking of how the artist, as a precarious subject, enters the relations of production structuring the hierarchies of extensive modernity. In the past fifteen years there has been no shortage of critical appraisals of artistic labor in post-Fordism as precarious, flexibilized, over-committed and casualized. "Ask anyone who has children or sick relatives in a country without good health care – which could by now be almost any country," say the editors of *Are You Working Too Much? Post-Fordism, Precarity and the Labor of Art* in 2011. They continue, "It is no longer an issue of some kind of moral or ethical principle, but of life itself. So why should so many talented and hyper-qualified artists submit themselves willingly to a field of work (that is, in art) that offers so little in return for such a huge amount of unremunerated labour?" (Aranda, Wood, and Vidokle 2011, 6).

  To put this question in perspective, let us return to artistic critique, the critique charged with providing the very values of post-Fordism. Combining Boltanski and Chiapello's argument (based on the analysis of management manuals from the 1990s) with Denning's historical overview, it seems logical to suggest that the conditions that guaranteed the radical potential of artistic critique in the nineteenth century were not in place in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. But what has changed? One obvious change was the greater diversity in the class, race, and gender profile of artists from the 1960s onwards, the (relative) opening of the art world to those who did not share in the privileges of a male, middle-class subjectivity. It is now highly possible that an arts graduate no longer comes from the "comfortable" class and, thanks to the feminist movement, it may not even be a "he." In America, for example, most art school students are women.[5] Teaching art students anywhere in Europe, and certainly in Britain, may make one suspect that one teaches more women than men, despite the embarrassing absence (at the time of writing) of data to corroborate the claim. Overall, there is good reason to believe that those art school graduates are no longer a majority of middle-class men, or as typically put: "their [artists'] backgrounds have become more diverse" (McCarthy *et al.* 2005, xvi). Men appear, however, to constitute the few and far between shining stars emerging out of what Greg Sholette, writing in America, called "dark matter" in 2011, "the obscure mass of 'failed' artists" whose multiple forms of *participation in the art world* are absolutely essential for rendering visible "the small cadre of artists" sustaining "the global art world as it appears today" (2011, 3, emphasis added). Following on this, it is plausible that the transfer of artistic critique to a different subject from that representing the artist in

historical modernism is the problem – as well as an important marker of distinction between historical and extensive modernity.

To see how far expectations have changed as regards the nature of artistic production, suffice to read the Executive Summary of (National Endowment for the Arts) NEA's 2005 report entitled *Artists in the Workforce: 1990–2005*, "the first nationwide look at artists' demographic and employment patterns in the 21st century" in America. The opening paragraph reads,

> America tends to see its artists as visionaries, *rebels*, outsiders and eccentrics. These long-standing stereotypes have become mainstays of popular culture – perhaps because they are so entertaining. A troubled dreamer, a footloose *bohemian*, or a charming deadbeat can steal the scene from any workaday character. Presented from whatever perspective – adoring, puzzled, bemused, or even hostile – these stereotypes almost always portray artists as *outsiders, fascinating creatures who somehow manage to survive on the margins of society*. The purpose of the new NEA report, Artists in the Workforce, is to demonstrate – in *cold, hard, unpoetic facts* – that such caricatures misrepresent American artists and even contribute to their marginalization in society. The time has come to insist on an obvious but overlooked fact – *artists are workers*.[6]
>
> (Gioia 2005, emphasis added)

NEA's statement betrays the shocking distance covered since the rise of the "art worker" in America in the 1960s (right before the postmodern parenthesis). Julia Bryan-Wilson's *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* examined the American movement from the 1960s and 1970s, comprising artists and critics, that "sought to expand the definition of creative labor by identifying themselves as 'art workers', among them artists such as Carl Andre, Robert Morris, Hans Haacke, critics such as Lucy Lippard, and participants in 'Art Workers' Coalition – a short-lived organization founded in 1969 to protest against the war and agitate for artists' rights – and the New York Art Strike." Bryan-Wilson's central thesis concerned "how a polemical redefinition of artistic labor played a central role in minimalism, process art, feminist criticism, and conceptualism" (2011). What is left of all this is NEA's contention that artists "make things and perform services, just like other workers, and these goods and services have value – not merely in lofty spiritual terms but also in dollars and cents" (2005). In one stroke, NEA appropriated a radical, anti-capitalist self-definition (art workers) and turned it into a workforce category within the expanding web of capitalist economic relations. This is the regime of real subsumption, to use a Marxist term,[7] where anything and anyone is the economy.

Given that the NEA Report concerns the First World's most advanced art economy and that it covers the first fifteen years after the fall of the Berlin Wall (as a marker of capitalism's global triumph) and before the global crisis of 2007–2008, it acquires symbolic significance. The Report is not under pressure to justify widespread precarity in terms of a crisis and exceptional circumstances. Rather, it seeks to introduce a new production norm in eliminating the distance between the subjectivity of the entrepreneur and that of the worker, which is essential for normalizing precarity in extensive modernity. The profession of the artist – strongly associated with entrepreneurialism in globalization – seems the ideal place to start.[8] In deriding the "bohemians" (the very originators of artistic critique) as an "entertaining stereotype" and in dismissing any claims to artists' rebelliousness and outsiderness, the Report denies the division between productive and non-productive labor that has sustained fantasies of art's exceptionalism (as non-productive labor) both Left and Right. Artists are workers. Yes, and this comes with all the usual attributes: alienation,

unemployment, and, of course, submission to metrics and production norms and fluctuations. All the attributes are present, except that they are a little bit worse. For example, the Report data demonstrate that artists are more educated than other workers but face far greater underemployment. Ideologically, the Report over-fulfills the plan: it expands the definition of the "worker" to include highly skilled or service labor, parodying the claim that the capitalist empire's mass of intellectual and service workers should expect a better deal than a traditionally exploited working class. For all intents and purposes, the NEA Report's main implication is that the democratization of art, the creation of an expanded art field based on the desire of many to participate in it, is translated as increased competition (which results in artists' poverty). The driving illusion for art in extensive modernity is that it is a participatory democracy (a promise of the postmodern parenthesis) when, in reality, it is a participatory economy. But participation, in this case, does not spell out equality or the lack of profit and hierarchy.

The NEA Report explains an important parameter of this economy in stating that artists "make things and perform services." What this means is that artists, in capitalist globalization, are engaged in both material and immaterial production. Both immaterial and material art goods have value, we are told, "in dollars and cents." True. Whether you serve noodles to gallery-goers or make paintings, economic value is the great equalizer. Asserting *the overcoming of the division between material and immaterial labor* in art in the early twenty-first century did not merely speak the truth about artistic production. The NEA Report presented art as a regime of *total production* where, in fact, the distinction between material and immaterial production, on which so much has been written since 1996[9], is irrelevant. Production is all that matters – which is precisely the key production principle of a global economy combining services, manufacturing, and various economies of extraction ranging from debt to human organs.

The *first* form which total production takes in art is identified by Sholette in his *Dark Matter*, which builds on Carol Duncan's observation from 1984 that, "the majority of professionally trained artists make up a vast surplus whose utter *redundancy* is the *normal condition of the art market*" (Duncan 1983, 172). Expanding on this, Sholette has argued that this redundancy is essential not just for enabling the formation of the rare "stars," but for delivering an "aggregate" whose economic role is "in *reproducing* the actually existing art world" (Sholette 2015a, unpaginated). We can read this "aggregate" as an effect of *participation*: the willingness of artists to participate as volunteers, interns, exhibitors, audiences, buyers of materials, writers, readers and so on. The blurring of all categories (maker, consumer, user) is important in that it is over-determined by a single category: the *reproducer* of the art world. Reproduction is the essence. And reproduction is stability, even if it incorporates "change." We see this elsewhere too. For instance, the introduction of technology in the home in the 1960s did not lead to the emancipation of women (end of division of labor sustaining capitalism): women got the "double burden" instead. More than that, women were made to enter waged production in a way that led to the infamous "feminization of labor," also, or even especially, evident in the art world (Dimitrakaki 2014; Krasny 2014). Seen in this light, the stasis identified with globalization requires an immense effort centered on practices of reproduction. If in nineteenth-century modernity it was possible to argue that capital's need for change in production would lead to the implosion of capitalism, in the twenty-first century, or in extensive modernity, the principle of production as reproduction evacuates any such prospect. Although throughout modernity production is associated with change, it is imperative to work towards a history of modernity where capital's *uses* of change are also historicized.

Art *as a form of social reproduction* becomes possible when the production of the artwork (immaterial or material) is but *one* element in the production process of the artistic

subject as such. As I have argued elsewhere (Dimitrakaki and Lloyd 2015), the production of artworks as outputs pales in significance before the spectrum of material and ideological impacts stemming from the relations that define what an "artist" is and what she does. These are the relations of production, according to Marx, who differentiated them from the forces of production. The amplification of relations of production – the *totality of social relations* into which a worker must enter in order to reproduce himself and which exceed those relations encountered in the typical work-place such as a factory, an office, and certainly a studio – is a salient feature of art in extensive modernity. It underlies extensive modernity's key contradiction. Namely, that the democratization of the art world, evident in the diversity of subjects carrying the weight of artistic critique and realizing the broadening of participation, exists in conflict with the scarcity of relations of production to which an artist must have access in order to fulfill his professional identity as an artist. Not all individuals who self-identify as artists today have access to critics, historians, collectors, galleries, residencies, art funding bodies and even other artists' labor – all of which are essential for becoming a success story in the art world of extensive modernity. An artist who can produce outputs within a set of social relations that includes critics, collectors, writers, studio assistants and so on has far greater access to autonomy than an artist excluded from these social relations. It is therefore unsurprising that we see the same names in all the world's biennials. Art is a classed terrain, and this is what makes the NEA report slightly misleading: it is not true that all artists are workers, but it is true that some artists are other artists' workers. Yet securing the provision of the requisite amount of artistic labor for the reproduction of the art world, when success is so glaringly rare, has required the mainstreamization of an ideology whereby we observe *a transference of value from making to participating*.

The association of democracy and participation must come freely: but it must also be based on passion and love – with the phrase "art lover" capturing the general trend. Participation carries the quality frequently invoked in multinationals' advertisements decorating airports: the quality of the unmeasurable and the "priceless." "There are some things you can't buy, for everything else there is Mastercard" (Adslogans 1997). In the art world, this is slightly altered: *there are some things that you shouldn't be able to buy, for everything else there is capital*. But as in total production all artworks *can* be bought, irrespective of their material or immaterial production process, the essential qualities of the "unmeasurable" and the "priceless" cannot be located in the encounter with the artwork as such but in the aggregate of encounters that remain free from economic value and that reproduce the art world through large-scale consensus. To maintain this reproduction as a matter of consensus rather than coercion, it is imperative to maintain the "labor of love" (Federici 1975) associated with wagelessness or, more broadly, the lack of remuneration. Being paid to participate is an insulting absurdity for all environments whose *legitimacy* requires, and imposes, the primacy of a freely made moral choice over the political address of power in the name of interests: we do not get paid to vote; we do not get paid to raise our own children, and we do not get paid to love art. The value of public response to art, so prized in technocratic exercises seeking to measure the "success" of an artwork or an exhibition, would evaporate if an artist or curator revealed that they paid fifty thousand people to stare at an artwork or visit a museum. What many have found unacceptable in the work of Santiago Sierra (see, for example, his *A Person Paid for 360 Continuous Working Hours* at the PS1 Contemporary Art Center in New York in 2000) has been precisely his flagging up of participation-for-income in his art works. What shocks in Andrea Fraser's *Untitled*, 2003, is the lack of clarity around the documented exchange: did the collector pay in advance to buy an artwork (a video tape) or did he pay in advance to participate in a scene of sexual intimacy with the artist (the content of the video tape)? Whereas the first option (buying

an artwork) appears to be utterly unproblematic, the second option (buying participation in the making of an artwork that entailed social drinking, chatting, and consensual sex) appears to be morally unacceptable. The audience, which Sholette rightly claims is made by much artistic "dark matter," must participate out of a pure love for, and a commitment to, art, rather than material profit. In fact, not just the audience but *everyone* must participate not for material profit. For example, the High Net Worth Individuals (whose numbers and fortunes increased since 2008) collect art for "personal satisfaction," as an "investment of passion" (Davis 2013, 79). To make matters more complicated, Terry Eagleton writes, "In Marx's view, men and women only genuinely produce when they do so *freely*, and for its own sake … Only under communism will this be possible. Meanwhile we can gain a foretaste of that creativity in the specialised form of production we know as art" (in Davis 2013, 183). And so, this vision of participation – free, willing, unconnected to material gains and emanating out of existential need – enjoys rock-solid ideological hegemony, appealing both to the capitalist *and* the communist imaginary. In extensive modernity, the "production we know as art" seems to be facing an impasse. And the artist as producer seems to be facing a depressing dilemma: either accept a redefinition of her identity as a worker in a global proletariat that is re-discovering wagelessness at the core of an evolving modernity or accept that the communist future of free participation in the making of culture has been realized as a capitalist present that turns the dark matter's labor of love into the fundamental condition of the art system's legitimacy.

Reproduction *must* remain unwaged so that the system reproduced (be it the family or the art world) can achieve *legitimacy* – legitimacy that comes from that which exceeds measure and cannot have a price tag: *the aura of participation as consensus*. What kind of critique takes place within the delimited space of this participation is irrelevant as long as participation (the consensus) is not disturbed. This is why participation is not just form, but also content; not just the medium, but also the message.

The Avant-garde in Extensive Modernity: Towards the Organization on Defeat

The argument presented so far in this chapter has rested on an examination of production, and its connection to wagelessness, as the demonstrative link between historical and extensive modernity. Yet nothing perhaps shows the desire for establishing continuity between then and now as claims to a revival of an avant-garde, a concept that had been under fire during the postmodern parenthesis. Assessing the critical approaches to the thesis, put forward by the Left, that we need and therefore *have* an avant-garde in the early twenty-first century lies beyond the scope of this analysis, yet it is important to keep in sight Andrea Fraser's unambiguous words from 2005, "we are living through a historical tragedy: the extinguishing of the field of art as a site of resistance to the logic, values and power of the market," cited in the introduction to Marc James Léger's *Brave New Avant Garde* (2012, 8).[10] Léger writes in favor of upholding "the avant garde hypothesis," explaining in 2012,

> The avant garde hypothesis I speak of here in no way conforms to the post-structuralist doxa of a "beyond left and right" micro-politics. A contemporary avant garde is one that seeks a path beyond what Hal Foster has termed the "double aftermath" of modernism and postmodernism and responds to Mao's injunction: "Reject your illusions and prepare

for struggle". In this, today's avant garde represents not so much the transnational class of civilized petty bourgeois culturati, but a counter-power that rejects the inevitability of capitalist integration.

(2012, 2–3)

Re-reading these lines in Athens in the hot summer of 2015, as I witness the first political European vanguard of the Left in power being forced to choose between capitalist integration and the deadly impoverishment of the people it governs, it becomes somehow hard to imagine a cultural avant-garde able to avoid capitalist integration. The preceding analysis of the refunctioning of artists as producers in extensive modernity, effected through a transference of responsibility from making art to participating in the art world, suggests that if an avant-garde can exist today, its right to leadership can in no way be legitimized through the artworks it delivers as outputs, no matter its good or indeed radical intentions. Outputs, even if executed in the Amazon jungle or in a spaceship on its way to Mars, will be a potential commodity as long as capitalism's empire exists. So, in the end, this refunctioning of artists as reproducers (the plural matters) of the very art world that steeps them in precarity is all we are left with. With regard to this, Sholette recently made an important observation:

> For several decades now, but especially since the crisis of 2008–09 we have witnessed the emergence of social labour in the art world as an inescapable presence. Combined with the tendency for self-organisation, the gatekeepers of high art are coming under siege. The emergence of an artistic subjectivity *aware of its own conditions of production* is alarming and I suspect far more threatening than most overtly political art ever was.
>
> (Sholette 2015b, 181)

Referring to "a potential artistic subject," Sholette's comment can help shift attention from the criticality of the product to a *consciousness of production*. An awareness of one's own conditions of production has indeed excellent potential for generating a revolutionary consciousness – or, if you prefer, an avant-garde consciousness – in the many thousands of "failed" artists whose love of art remains undiminished. Such an avant-garde consciousness could join in making manifest a social force that accepts *without guilt* that it has been victimized – and that it has been victimized, specifically, on the grounds of participation and the achievement of a morally airtight consensus. This is what an "awareness of the conditions of production" can mean – which, in capitalism's stage of total production, should be renamed as *awareness of the conditions of reproduction*. Conceding to the need for a contemporary avant-garde that would allow us to reconnect with the failures of historical modernity, prefigurative of but not a blueprint for our current defeats, entails a departure from an internal history of art as a history of artworks – a history forever trapped into an economy of accumulation. (In the 1970s and 1980s, feminist art history was the latest political discourse to drop this history of radical (or not) artworks but its faith in the art institution as reformable soon forced a capitulation of feminist art historical methodologies: from doing away with a focus on artworks and advancing the analysis of gender-based *processes* of exclusion, efforts eventually shifted to having more artworks made by women in art institutions.) But to shift attention to the biopolitical process of being an artist; to show the torment when reality, rather than just its representation, is reduced to economy; to make explicit the dialectic between the hidden and the apparent in the political economy of art – all this might effect a rupture in the schizophrenic imperative of entrepreneurial

success when, at the same time, you are told you are a worker. *Reveal the contradiction and organize on defeat!* can be the first act in the drama of destroying artistic critique, the principal legacy of historical modernity in extensive modernity, and starting anew by making apparent the hidden value of our labor.

Notes

1   The recent discovery, in the conflict around debt and sovereignty dividing the EU, that the ECB (European Central Bank) and the Eurogroup are in a position to make decisions that affect the lives of millions but that discussions leading to such decisions are not minuted, thus making these bodies unaccountable to voters as much as to historians, has put a conspicuous question mark to the European bourgeoisie's alleged commitment to democracy.

2   For a detailed analysis of the conflict between artistic labour and the exhibition-form, see Dimitrakaki (2012).

3   The admonition to drop the European project of unity and withdraw from the EU as the response of the European left to the apocalyptic developments revealing the deficit of democracy in the EU typifies this tendency. Indicatively, see Owen Jones (2015) and Franco "Bifo" Berardi (2015).

4   Mohanty's 2004 book includes a revised version of her 1984 foundational essay revisited in light of capitalist globalization.

5   "According to *The New York Times*, in 2006 women represented more than 60 percent of the students in art programs in the United States," states Maura Reilly, 26 May 2015.

6   The definition of the artists offered in NEA Report is quite inclusive encompassing, for example, visual artists, designers, dancers, writers.

7   In the chapter in *Capital* on "Primitive Accumulation" Marx showed that genuinely capitalist accumulation could only take place on the basis of productive forces which themselves could only arise on the basis of capital. At first, capital draws into itself an *existing* labour process – techniques, markets, means of production, and workers. This Marx calls "formal" subsumption, under which the whole labor process continues much as before, but by monopolizing the means of production, and therefore the workers' means of subsistence, the capitalist *compels* the worker to submit to wage-labor, and by using the existing markets, is able to accumulate capital. Capitalism as such, however, cannot develop on the limited basis it finds in the already existing forces of production. The pre-requisites for a *real* capitalist labour process can only be created by capital itself. Thus, capital gradually transforms the social relations and modes of labor until they become thoroughly imbued with the nature and requirements of capital, and the labor process is *really* subsumed under capital. This (real subsumption) is Marx's solution to the paradox that only capital can create the conditions for capitalist production.

8   One of the most interesting approaches to the artist-as-entrepreneur and how this new-found identity necessitates a distinction between modern and contemporary art is offered by Marina Vishmidt (2013).

9   Maurizio Lazzarato first used the term in his essay "Immaterial Labor" (1996). Lazzarato's dropping of the term soon after its initial launch because of "ambiguities" did not curb the art world's enthusiastic embrace of "immaterial labour" which continues to date.

10 Fraser's original quotation comes from the survey "How Has Art Changed?" in *Frieze* 94 (October 2005).

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Architecture's Modernisms

Richard J. Williams

Introduction

What is, or was modernism in architecture? As a starting point, it is worth saying that architecture's modernism, unlike the other modernisms described in this volume, is significantly conditioned by its existence as a professional practice. It has, or had, clients to satisfy, budgets to meet, and (oftentimes) profits to make. As with all forms of architecture, in architectural modernism, the reality principle had a firm hold. As a profession, it was as often as not a strikingly conservative one too: even more overwhelmingly male than other modernist arenas, it was a battleground more than a site of reasoned discourse. Ayn Rand's architectural novel, *The Fountainhead*, contains a large element of truth, depicting an outrageously phallic competition between the representatives of different architectural styles. The modernist's victory is crushing.

Most histories of modernism start from the assumption that there is, or was, one true variant, and that all others remain bastardizations. Kenneth Frampton's highly influential work, for example, sees modernism as fundamentally a matter of *tectonics*, which is to say structure rather than surface. His history of modernism (2001), in common with perhaps the majority of such histories, stresses the role of the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier, his written work as much as his extraordinary buildings. In the United States, it is often the transplanted German architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe who attracts the maximum attention, reasonably so, because of the extent to which his highly refined architecture defined the look of American downtowns (Figure 14.1).[1]

But there are other, no less important modernisms too. Brazil, not much smaller than America by population, and a cultural giant in the southern hemisphere, was, and in many ways still is, the most modernist country on earth: nowhere else was architectural modernism so enthusiastically adopted by government as a national style. Brasília, the modernist capital city inaugurated (although far from complete) in 1960 is the world's biggest single modernist project by some margin (see Evenson 1973 and Williams 2009). Brazil is also the country to produce one serious correction to modernism's masculinism everywhere else, namely Lina Bo Bardi, the Rome-born, São Paulo-domiciled Brutalist (see Andreoli and Forty 2004).[2] There are significant local variants of modernism everywhere: in former Yugoslavia, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, not to mention the vast legacies of the former USSR, China, and North Korea.[3]

A global tendency with infinite variations, it is hard to conceive of as a singularity. Nor should we – this chapter argues that it was always polyvalent and polycentric, and that its manifestations in Belo Horizonte are no more correct than those in Birmingham. It

FIGURE 14.1   Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 860 Lakeshore Drive, Chicago, 1951.
Source: Photo Richard J. Williams/© DACS 2016.

spread widely and fast, and its centers were global and dispersed. And as much as it made architectural heroes out of Le Corbusier and others, it also widely refuted such attribution of authorship. Some of the most significant projects have no names attached to them, at least not publicly. The transformation of urban Britain after the Second World War was done largely under the aegis of local authority departments of architecture, not individuals (see Glendinning and Muthesius 1994).[4] Authorship for the London County Council architects' department was corporate: except in rare cases, such as the Royal Festival Hall (1951, Robert Matthew, Leslie Martin and others), individualism was out.

So this chapter is about architecture's modernism*s*. It assumes polyvalency and polycentricity from the start but it also accepts that despite all of this multiplicity, it is as identifiable a form as neoclassicism. It is the architecture of simple, Platonic forms, the architecture of no ornament, the architecture of truth to materials, the architecture of slabs and towers and cubes. It is instantly recognizable to the untrained eye, and often as instantly reviled. And regardless of its appearance and location, it always, one way or another, carries with it the

promise of social transformation. That demand (regardless of how it is heeded by building users) is as clearly recognizable as the outward forms of the buildings themselves, and it is as much a cause of modernism's uneasy reception, as its uncompromising aesthetics.

In the polyvalent spirit of the phenomenon, this chapter is organized as a series of vignettes, arranged loosely in chronological order. They could be added to – there is no hope here of being comprehensive – and they could be rearranged. What I have tried to do is communicate a sense of modernism's multiplicity, so the chosen instances represent its range of possible definitions. That range stretches the normal definition of architecture into what might normally be considered the design of industrial products, and domestic interiors. However, the legacy of architectural modernism is sometimes clearest at its edges.

Vienna 1910: Ornament and Crime

Modernism might be polyvalent, but we have to start somewhere. And as good a place to start as any is Vienna in about 1908, with a handful of eccentric houses for rich clients, and a provocative, even inflammatory manifesto that seemed to argue for the abolition of the simple pleasure of decoration. Vienna in 1908 was a contradiction: as the poet Stefan Zweig memorably described it, it was the "world of yesterday," an imperial capital living on borrowed time, riddled with vice, sclerotic and sleazy, yet the intellectual capital of central Europe (Zweig 1943). Here all things were possible, albeit in the context of the social elite. Here Ludwig Wittgenstein started to put in doubt the question of rational communication;[5] here at the same time, Sigmund Freud's work (see "Civilisation and its Discontents") indicated that bourgeois civilization was a neurotic, and ultimately unattainable attempt to contain erotic desire, a thesis that seemed to be confirmed in the highly erotic contemporaneous paintings by Egon Schiele.[6] In this context, the Austrian-Czech architect Adolf Loos (1870–1933) built a series of uncompromising buildings unlike anything that had been seen before in the city. These include the 1910 Goldman and Salatsch Building, which defined one edge of the Michaelerplatz. Commonly known as the Looshaus, this eight-story mixed-use complex faced in Portland Stone occupies a prominent site opposite the Romanesque church of St Michael, one of Vienna's oldest, as well as an entrance to the Habsburgs' Hofburg Palace.

Apart from the green marble of the bank entrance, the Looshaus refrains from decoration of any kind. By comparison with the surroundings, it is almost frighteningly restrained. The elements of the façade that call one's attention are all functional or structural (the cornice, the window frames, the green copper roof); it has a Platonic straightforwardness, which if anything emphasizes the awkwardness of the site. The Looshaus terminates in a narrow, undifferentiated façade, in effect an architectural shrug. It refuses to be demonstrative, to grasp the site in the usual way. It simply is what it is. That refusal is a key part of Loos's most famous text, a lecture given the same year with the German title *Ornament und Verbrechen*, literally "Ornament and Crime." It was subsequently published in French in 1913 in *Cahiers d'Architecture*, and in German only in 1929, but by this stage its notoriety was assured. It argued, succinctly, for the abolition of ornament, and in so doing, gave the tendency that would become known as modernism a moral dimension that it has never lost. Ornamentation was "criminal" he argued because, simply put, it was waste. It always went out of style. Anything defined as modern in one moment would lose that sensibility in the next. Equating decoration with savagery, he argued that it had no place in the modern world. "The Papuan," he writes in a passage that combines frank racism

and class prejudice, "tattoos his skin, his boat, his paddles, in short anything he can lay his hands on. He is not a criminal. The modern man who tattoos himself is either a criminal or a degenerate" (1998[1929], 167). Better abolish decoration altogether and accustom oneself to the austere, but morally superior world of non-decoration.

Hollywood 1922: The Kings Road House

One of the peculiarities of architectural modernism is the extent to which its ideas traveled internationally, a characteristic present from the outset. As the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated, the Viennese became great exporters of ideas, especially to the United States.[7] In the early 1920s the Viennese architects Richard Neutra (1892–1970) and Rudolf Schindler (1887–1953) both emigrated to California where they refined and developed the West Coast's understanding of modernism. Neutra, the more successful of the two, had widespread impact (see Hines 1982). In retrospect, it is his erstwhile friend and colleague Schindler who tends to be more highly thought of. Schindler built little, wrote even less, and at the time had a reputation as a raffish bohemian. That said, his 1920s houses are remarkable structures formally, and they embody as well as anything a moral sensibility. These are not just houses, but houses for living in in a modern way, models for living as it were. His moral sensibility came from his friendship with Dr. Philip Lovell, a quack doctor specializing in "natural" cures who wrote a popular health column for the *Los Angeles Times* (see Hines 1982, Frampton 1996, and Williams 2013). Schindler and Lovell disagreed on sexual morality, but shared otherwise a liking for the outdoors, fresh air and exercise, and a belief that these things should structure one's life rather than be thought of as luxuries. (On the sexual question, it might be noted that Schindler and Lovell's wife Leah had a disastrous affair which sealed the architect's career chances for the remainder of his life.)[8]

Schindler's most important creation is the 1922 Kings Road House in Hollywood. It consists of two interlocking single-story pavilions, built in an "L" shape in private grounds. The construction was novel: the largest components, the walls, were cast horizontally in concrete, and then winched to position when complete. Other components – large parts of the bathrooms and kitchen for example – were built in the same way. The rest of the building was finished in dark timber. Almost everything was designed to connote flexibility, so walls and screens were movable throughout. Equally almost everything was designed to maximize contact with the outdoors. Both pavilions therefore have what are in effect outdoor living rooms: patios with integral hearths around which informal entertainments could be arranged. The sleeping quarters were open-air roof-terraces, built on the top of the public rooms (see Steele 2005, Williams 2013, and Frampton 1996).[9]

If all this sounds like camping, it was supposed to. The spirit of the house with its free-flowing spaces, openness, and flexibility was meant to evoke the memory of successful camping trips he and his wife had taken with another couple, the Chaces, on several occasions. The house in fact was built for these two couples, and therefore suggests (although this was nowhere made explicit) a fluid relationship between them. If this was not a fact, it was certainly implied by the building: everything was shared, one way or another, and normal bourgeois standards of privacy are more or less abolished. One can see most things, and hear all of them. The look is Japanese, drawing on a widespread European enthusiasm for Japan in the early twentieth century.[10] The fluidity between inside and outside, and between rooms, is especially Japanese. But where the fragility of Japan's domestic architecture was bolstered by innumerable social codes, Schindler's work was not. Its

context was the free-for-all of 1920s California in which everything, one way or another, was up for grabs.

As a social experiment however, the Kings Road House was a failure. The Chaces moved out after little more than a year, to be replaced, but only briefly by the Neutras. The Schindlers split shortly thereafter, and spent much of the ensuing thirty years occupying separate parts of the house, communicating only via their respective lawyers. The house remains, a beautifully curated tourist attraction, funded in part by the Austrian government.[11]

Paris 1923: Vers une Architecture

More than any other figure in the history of architectural modernism, Charles Édouard Jeanneret (1887–1965) stands out. Born in La Chaux-de-Fonds, the center of the Swiss watch-making industry, Jeanneret built a small number of vaguely Art Nouveau houses in the town, the best-known example being the Villa Schwob (1916).[12] He moved to Paris in 1920, and after the bohemian fashion of the time, gave himself a new name, Le Corbusier.[13] It was wordplay, a punning version of an old family name, twisted to mean "the crow-like one." The architect's artfully constructed public appearance made sense of the name: tall, thin, and always immaculately dressed, he wore round spectacles with thick black rims that ever since have come to represent both him, and architectural modernity in general.[14] His public pronouncements were gnomic demands; he had a certainty about him that accorded with a public mood that was eager for such things. He seemed to have the answers, and the answers were beguilingly simple. His authoritative presence was represented in some telling photographs. In one, for example, he had his hand photographed pointing at a scale model of the Plan Voisin, a radical remodeling of Paris: it is the hand of God.

Le Corbusier was not especially prolific in terms of built output, but what he did produce had a huge impact, the result of some carefully judged writings. The first major pronouncements emerged in 1920 as part of a series of lectures organized under the aegis of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, an order-and-authority obsessed journal of aesthetics edited by Amedée Ozenfant (see Jeanneret and Ozenfant in Harrison and Wood 1992). These were collected together as the book *Vers Une Architecture* and published in English in 1926 as *Towards a New Architecture*. Frederick Etchells's translation preserved Le Corbusier's clipped literary style and his distinctive use of visual imagery. Copiously, and strikingly illustrated, it brought together material from an astonishing range of sources, cultural and scientific as well as architectural. In fact, architecture, conventionally understood, featured relatively little.

What it argued remains beguilingly simple: the world has modernized, rapidly and almost without our knowing; architecture must respond to it (our failure to recognize the change is reflected in the chapter title "Eyes which do not see"). Le Corbusier's world was one of extraordinary new machines, some of which rivaled architecture in scale. He particularly liked ocean liners for their spare form, and it is easy to spot the portholes, handrails, and other nautical images in the subsequent buildings (1997, 85–104).[15] In these writings it is the traveler who is the embodiment of the modern person. He or she already inhabits modernist space, a zone of technology, free from ornament and distraction.[16] It is also, pointedly, a space of hygiene.

In one of the most striking parts of the book, THE MANUAL OF THE DWELLING (the capitals are his), Le Corbusier foresaw the new lifestyle in detail. The modern

person – implicitly bourgeois – would inhabit a space noticeably smaller than the one to which he or she was accustomed. It would be free from ornamentation ("do not buy decorative pieces," he warns) and heavy, wooden, architecture-rivaling furniture (1997, 123). Bathing would be celebrated, along with sunbathing, via a proportionate increase in the size and importance of bathrooms and sun terraces relative to other parts of the house (the bathroom should be big and light-filled, a central feature of the house, not squirreled away).[17] The kitchen would be located far away from the living quarters, at the top of the house, "to avoid smells" (1997, 123). And there should be minute attention to cleanliness and order. There should be a separate dressing room: dressing in one's bedroom is "horribly untidy and not a clean thing to do" (1997, 122). And one should, he concludes with a flourish, "demand a vacuum cleaner" (1997, 123).

Almost everything you need to know about the first phase of Le Corbusier's work is here. In terms of architectural precedents, not much makes the grade apart from the acropolis of classical Athens, which he admired not only for its simplicity of form, and sense of authority, but the way it had been bleached over the millennia. Its purity and whiteness became leitmotifs for modern architecture. Little else was valorized, apart from American grain elevators, which had the same, thus far largely unappreciated qualities.[18]

What Corbusier built initially was limited to private houses for bold clients. The early work in Switzerland gives some indication of his later direction, especially in the case of his generous, light-filled bathrooms and sun terraces. These ideas were further developed in the first truly modernist houses, such as the Villa Savoye in Poissy (1928–1931), on the northwestern outskirts of Paris. The Villa is an assertively horizontal three-story structure in its own grounds. Its ground floor is largely a stairway at the center with the building cantilevered all around, supported by *pilotis* (thin columns, a device now indelibly associated with Corbusier). The entrance is stark, but splendidly confirms *Vers une Architecture*'s hygienic thesis. The only other element apart from the stair itself is a basin for washing the hands. Its presence, in effect demands a ritual purification on entry. You continue through the house up the celebrated *promenade architecturale* as it winds its way around the building, terminating on an extensive roof terrace. All light, space, horizontality, and nautical detailing, it is a ship folded into a cube.

The same details, fenestration and color scheme find their way into a series of other private houses in and around Paris. It is uncompromising stuff for the most part, but it can be refined too, and even jaunty. There remains a surreal humor in the lighting design at the Villa La Roche (1923–1924), the architect's third Parisian commission and now the headquarters of the Fondation Le Corbusier: light bulbs on sticks project rudely out from the living room walls. At the same time Le Corbusier developed a comprehensive theory of planning, published as *Urbanisme* in France and *The City of To-Morrow and its Planning* (1987) in English. In all of this early work, modernism is formally and ideologically remarkably simple. There was to be light, space, and economy in individual buildings, in planning, the same things built out to a city scale, and in all, an overriding sense of order.

Dessau: 1925–1926

A brief note is necessary on the Bauhaus. Brief because for much of its history, the Bauhaus was in a state of flight, from Nazi Germany to America, or inaccessible to all but those in Warsaw Pact countries until 1989. A "cathedral of socialism," in the words of the artist Oskar Schlemmer, it was an experimental art and craft school, very reminiscent in outlook of England's Arts and Crafts movements, and aimed at producing a society based

on unalienated labor (Schlemmer cited in Frampton 1995, 124). The Dessau building, constructed in 1925–1926 was designed by Walter Gropius, but tends to be of interest more for what it represents than what it *is*. Even in Frampton's encyclopedic history of modernism, it is dismissed in a few words: it represents the materialization of the Bauhaus as an idea, the consolidation of Gropius's power, and an exercise in interdisciplinary organization (Frampton 1997, 127).

Earlier commentators had more to say. In 1942 the Swiss architectural historian Sigfried Giedion, one of modernism's earliest advocates, raved about its form comparing it to Pablo Picasso's Cubism. In one of the building's key moments, the corner of the workshop wing, a three-story curtain wall, simultaneously displays its inside and outside. Moments like this, Giedion argued, were the architectural equivalent of Picasso's painterly "overlapping planes." The walls themselves were, in effect, dematerialized. Rendered apparently weightless, they were no longer walls in the familiar old-fashioned sense, but "hovering relations of planes," in other words, abstractions, beyond everyday human experience (Giedion 1942, 402–403). That idea appears more concretely in the main part of Giedion's analysis, "the glass walls blend into each other just at the point where the human eye expects to encounter guaranteed support for the load of the building" (Giedion 1942, 401).

Giedion's ecstatic view of the Bauhaus rarely emerges in later accounts, which focus on the plan. From above, it's a rather more humdrum structure than Gideon suggests. A "pinwheel" with spokes radiating from a central point, in later accounts it better represents the modernist dictum "form follows function," with each structural element clearly defined and separated: an administration block here, a bridge there, over there a studio building, there some workshops.[19] It is all very rational. The school is not well visited, and to date it is known much better in (usually poor quality) monochrome images. Of these, a photograph of the end of the workshop block stands out: displaying the word BAUHAUS vertically on the end wall, it tells of typography made monumental. This is perhaps the building's key message: architecture can be anything, including, if it's big enough, typography.

Rio de Janeiro: 1939

Eurocentric histories of architecture naturally emphasize Paris and Dessau. What they forget, intentionally or otherwise, is that the places that most enthusiastically took up modernism at first were those that were able to. That meant not France or Germany, hamstrung with debt and political turmoil, but Brazil and in a different way America. Through different agencies and in different ways, these two continent-sized nations found in modernism an appropriate program for expressing a state vision. For years, the largest single example of a modernist building was not to be found in Paris, but the then Brazilian capital, Rio de Janeiro. This was the Ministry of Education and Science (MEC), designed by a team led by Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa, with the advice of Le Corbusier on the second of his two trips to Brazil.[20] It is an immense slab located in the commercial heart of the city with definitively modern elements: *pilotis* allowing pedestrian access through the ground floor of the structure, *brises-soleils* (integral sun-blinds) across the façade, a plan that inverted the perimeter block form of the city to build public space, and the location of the building's services on a sculptural roof. In the adjoining two-story pavilion, there is one of the world's greatest spiral staircases sunk into a marble floor. The MEC was sensational. Its technical innovations grabbed the attention of Philip Goodwin at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, who staged a bold exhibition in 1943 of Brazil's architecture, *Brazil Builds* (see Goodwin 1943). The show made the point that Brazil was – at that historical

moment – the most modern country in the world. Not only did it have the MEC, Brazil had airline networks and hydroelectric facilities as developed as any in the world.

Visiting the MEC now can be disillusioning after reading the 1940s hype. Like New York's Seagram, the MEC is no longer the exceptional structure it once was, and Rio's development boom in the 1950s and 1960s saw it surrounded by buildings of similar height and presence. But its interiors are still remarkable, and the early modernists' pre-occupation with air circulation can be clearly felt. This is a building that carves an airy space from a dense, sometimes suffocating, city. It makes shade and flow, and on a hot day among the pilotis, surrounded by Cândido Portinari's tiled murals, there is something like a perfect climate. There was arguably no modernist building with this scale or public ambition, anywhere, until the completion of the United Nations headquarters in New York in 1952 (Wallace K. Harrison, Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer, and others).

Richmond, California: 1942

One reason that architectural modernism was so slow to catch on after its initial appearance was the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. In terms of public architecture, the war was a disaster; similarly for house building. For European nations involved in the war, civilian architecture practically ceased. The one architect everyone can cite from this period is Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler's chief architect and close confidant. His building style, although it made ample use of modern technology and had a formal restraint that was arguably modern, was essentially an inflated neoclassicism (see Sereny 1996).[21]

However the war did not see the end of modernism at all – the ferocious ramping up of the production of aircraft in Germany, Britain, and America saw the production of objects that had many of the aesthetic characteristics favored by modernists. Le Corbusier liked aircraft with good reason: they were spare, economical, and of their time. And arguably, the individual productions of each nation exemplified the aesthetics that might be found in building. In Germany, for example, the designs of the Heinkel bureau in their treatment of glazing, and their general obduracy, recall the work of Gropius or Loos. There's no attempt at beauty or symmetry.

And in terms of buildings, the war meant – on a global scale – any number of munitions factories, dock facilities, submarine docks, and airfields, and prisoner of war camps all of which had to be built as quickly and efficiently as possible. The urgency of building, and the need for efficiency produced the look of modernism, albeit inadvertently, in the humblest buildings.

It also produced modernism on a spectacular scale. Albert Kahn's Ford Motor Company plant in Richmond, California was originally built during the Depression, opening in 1931. Kahn (1869–1942), a Prussian-born architect, emigrated to America in 1880 and was responsible for the design of Detroit's earliest motor assembly buildings. The Richmond Ford plant followed the pattern of the Detroit work. By 1942 the 500,000 square foot plant had been requisitioned by the American government as a facility to manufacture jeeps and tanks for use in the Asian theater of war. It was at the heart of an astonishing industrialization of the Bay Area, which saw the de facto creation of a new metropolis in the service of the war effort. The Bay Area manufactured practically every kind of military hardware. Most spectacularly, it turned out one ship per day – Liberty ships were its specialty, a species of lightly armed cargo vessel, designed to keep essential trade going across the oceans.

Kahn's Ford Factory has a few quirks offensive to modernists. The gable ends of the east and west elevations have pediments and pilasters to suggest the Parthenon. There is

even an oriel at the apex of each pediment. But these are really just details: the plant is middle-European modernism in every other sense from the treatment of the brickwork, to the astonishing area of the glazing. Peter Behrens' Berlin AEG Factory (1907–1910) is the obvious comparison. The key point is this: before the war, modernism was the taste of a tiny elite; after the war, modernism was experienced by millions.

Chicago: 1951

Aside from Le Corbusier, the other key figure for architectural modernists has always been Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969). Mies (the van der Rohe was an affectation borrowed from the maternal side of the family) was born in Aachen, Germany and built a number of small, but well regarded projects there as well as a sensational, but unbuilt, glass office tower for Berlin's Friedrichstrasse (1922). His Tugenhat House at Brno, and the now reconstructed German Pavilion for the Barcelona World Exposition (1936) are outstanding examples: small, refined, and exceptionally well crafted. The stature of Mies's work grew exponentially in every way on moving to America in 1937. He set up a practice in Chicago where he planned and built the campus for the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT).

His best-known works are arguably towers, however, starting with the Chicago apartment complex of 860–880 Lake Shore Drive. Built on Chicago's upscale northern lakefront, the complex consists of two point blocks of twenty-six stories, steel-framed, curtain-walled, and faced in glass and aluminium. Servicing was located in a central core, and is minimally visible on the roof of each block. Each window was based around a single form, a 21 foot-square bay, repeated without variation all over each building. The color is essentially the dark grey of the anodized steel. The towers were absolutely symmetrical, and outwardly identical, but arranged in an L-shape, with landscaped grounds between: like the later Seagram building in New York (1958) the Lake Shore Towers make space in the city; they sculpt a landscape and punctuate it with buildings.

There is a formal curiosity it shares with the Seagram. Mies's most famous dictum was "less is more" (there were not many – he was an unconfident public speaker).[22] And he, like the other modernists celebrated materials in the natural form. Form was broadly to follow function. But the Lake Shore Towers, in common with the later Seagram building has non-structural steel I-beams running the full height of the building, defining the bays. They are structural at first sight, but they perform no function other than to give a visual accent to the bays, and color to the buildings as a whole.

Mies was unapologetic. "Without them" he said, the building simply "did not look right" (in Schulze 1995, 243). The application of the I-beams is certainly inconsistent with the earliest, and fiercest forms of modernism (think of Loos) as well as some of the thinking of the Bauhaus, of which Mies was briefly in charge. But the belief that modernism was simply and only a matter of function is a fundamentalist interpretation that had few adherents. Most, perhaps all, modernisms were also formalisms; they all arguably fetishized certain kinds of surfaces, enhancing them with decorative accents whenever it seemed appropriate.

With Mies's work, the architecture is hugely concerned with the quality of surfaces; they were, and are meant to look carefully chosen, while the detailing of for example the way a wall joins a floor, or a window meets a wall is very finely considered.[23] At the Seagram, the blinds were specified so that they could rest in only three positions: fully open, fully closed, and half-open (see Cohen 1996). Any other position would have been

unacceptably disordered. Mies's modernism did not seek a societal transformation, but rather the formal transformation of the surfaces of commerce and luxury. His Lake Shore Drive apartments and the Seagram provided the formal vocabulary for corporate America: modern, luxurious but restrained, the architectural equivalent of the IBM blue suit.[24]

Mies himself adopted a public persona very like his buildings. Because of his uneasiness about his English, he said little communicating instead through his physical presence. A latter-day architectural Buddha he offered gnomic pronouncements that mean as much, or as little, as the listener wanted to hear. Meanwhile he sat, big and immovable, in immaculately tailored suits, smoking his immaculate cigars. Everything, as interviewers often remarked, was just right (Whitman 1969).

Brasília: 1960

When Le Corbusier took an interest in urbanism, he translated his established design principles of light, space, and order to a vast scale. So if the house was to be a simple geometrical form, free of decorative flourishes, and horizontal in general aspect, so too the city. Urbanisme, 1929, proposed a contemporary city for 3 million, illustrated in some famous perspective drawings (Le Corbusier 1987).[25] The drawings depict what is in effect a park punctuated by towers: the city is defined by its space, rather than its buildings.[26] Its principal avenues are vast enough to act as runways. The city's skies are punctuated with aircraft, suggesting that this may in fact be the most practical form of urban transit. People barely feature. They're tiny specs where they appear at all. The city's scale is spectacular; the city's spectacle is scale.

Versions of the *Contemporary City* have appeared in fragmentary form in many locations, the outskirts of Paris, or Moscow being good examples. But the most complete built example of such a city has to be Brasília, the new capital of Brazil, inaugurated (although far from finished) in 1960. Brasília's importance was recognized in its gaining UNESCO World Heritage Status in 1989, giving it the same position as the Taj Mahal or Grand Canyon.[27] What it protected precisely was this complete, integrated plan. While Brasília is very much the work of its local authors Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa, in terms of plan, it puts a great deal of the Contemporary City into practice.[28] In Costa's words, it is the city of the "park" and the "autostrada," a city largely devoid of conventional streets, a city defined by its space (Figure 14.2).

Brasília was the result of a design competition held in 1956, some twenty-seven years after *Urbanisme*. It reactivated an ambition for a new capital buried in Brazil's first post-independence constitution, and rather in the manner of events in Brazil, it occurred as if by accident. Juscelino Kubitschek, the then governor of the state of Minas Gerais, when campaigning for the presidency in 1955 was asked what he planned to do about the new capital. Without giving it too much thought, he said he would "implement the constitution."[29]

The idea developed wings, and on winning the presidency, Kubitschek found himself with a commitment to build a new city from scratch, and do it within just four years, Brazil's politics being what it was, and presidential second terms being then unconstitutional. An international competition was held, the official competitors largely ignored, and the job given to Kubitschek's friend Oscar Niemeyer, and Niemeyer's longtime associate, Lucio Costa.[30] A furious period of building ensued, "fifty years' progress in five" Kubitschek had promised in his 1955 campaign slogan (Holston 1989, 84). Both the President and Niemeyer decamped to the new city to oversee progress, and myths, both positive and negative grew wildly. "JK" was to be found at all hours on construction sites,

FIGURE 14.2   Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa, Praça dos Três Poderes, Brasília, 1960.
Source: Photo Richard J. Williams/© NIEMEYER, Oscar/DACS 2016.

they said, boosting morale – but at the same time Brasília was dangerous, at worst a wild west of incompetence and banditry (see Epstein 1973 and Williams 2007).

The bones of the city were ready by the day of inauguration in April 1960. They included the plan, often described as an aircraft form, comprising a 14 km highway and residential axis running north-south, bisected at the halfway mark by a much shorter *eixo monumental* (residential axis). The former was a highway bisecting low-density housing in parkland, built mostly in the form of four-story slabs on *pilotis*. The latter – the better-known part internationally – consists of government buildings designed by Niemeyer. At the eastern end lies the *Praça dos Três Poderes* (Square of the Three Powers) in which is located the parliament, a wide podium on which can be found vast concave and convex bowls, the upper and lower houses respectively. Behind this, like two giant cigarette lighters, are the thirty-story twin towers housing the deputies' offices. The formal differentiation of the debating chambers notwithstanding, this is a building of striking symmetry, further emphasized by its placement in the center of the monumental axis, and by the identical ministry buildings marching for an unbroken mile each side eastwards.

There are few more formal places on earth, and few places built by humans that make humans feel so small. It is no place for the pedestrian, especially in the high temperatures that are characteristic of the city. It takes around ninety minutes to walk from one end of the axis to the other, during which time – because of the relative absence of interest at the small scale – the landscape barely appears to change at all.

This highly formal quality was intended. Costa saw the city as comprising several clearly demarcated scales, of which the monumental was one. He found intimacy in the tiny

lanes around the central shopping and entertainment area; tiny and twisting, partly open to the elements, they were meant to introduce something of the spirit of Venice into the city. And then there was the residential scale, which is perhaps the city's most successful part: parkland, on the south side generously planted, punctuated with low-rise slabs, all with open views to greenery. The planting, plus the transparency of many of the blocks' façades suggests a life in which the boundary between inside and outside had dissolved. Brasília was largely absent from the non-Brazilian media from 1960 to the mid-1990s, during which time it was widely thought to have become a dystopian ruin (see Buchanan, 1967).

The reality is somewhat different: a quiet, wealthy city, praised for its open spaces and generally high quality of life.[31] It has a few quirks its authors could not have foreseen: the system of pedestrian underpasses between the north and south parts of the highway axis quickly became dirty and dangerous, forcing residents to cross the highway itself, a risky and often fatal exercise (UNESCO status has so far prevented any serious address of this problem). And the city is vastly bigger than it was ever supposed to be. A capital for 500,000 civil servants, it has grown to a metropolis of some 2.85 million, the majority of whom live in peripheral towns.[32] These can be poor and badly serviced, but they can also, like Taguatinga to the northwest, be respectable high-rise dormitories, or even centers of work. Taguatinga, once a squatter camp, is now the economic motor of the whole region.[33] Brasília is unquestionably a success, but its success does not always take the form its authors imagined.

Glasgow: 1962

The vast majority of modernist buildings in the world were not erected by individuals, but were the result of political decisions. Most of the buildings we call icons are isolated examples, which have to be sought out. The Seagram building doesn't define New York City in any meaningful way, no more than the Villa Savoye does Paris. Modernism did radically change the urban landscape in many places, however, particularly the second order cites where local government had freer reign. There is no better example than Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, which from 1961 to the early 1970s embarked on one of the most ambitious municipal-led rebuilding programs in Europe, at first under David Gibson, the convener of the city's Housing Committee from 1961 to 1964. Gibson, "the most remarkable of Western Europe's postwar municipal housing leaders" was unapologetic in his desire for a physical transformation of Glasgow through modernism. The vision was "multi-storey homes rising by the thousand" (Glendinning and Muthesius 1994, 221). Unlike the other modernist adventures described in this chapter, however, Glasgow's activities were intended to benefit the majority population rather than a small elite. Gibson's housing crusade affected the entire city: not only its skyline, which changed for good, but the quality of residence for the majority of its citizens now.

Glasgow in the 1930s had a population of some 1.1 million; the vast majority inhabiting stone-built tenements built in the late nineteenth century. It was densely populated, at least as dense as London. The result of the crusade produced an entirely different landscape: a modernist city on a huge scale, with a sinuous urban highway lined with towers. The highest of the new buildings, at Red Road, were thirty-one floors tall. One of few projects to have a named firm attached to them, Sam Bunton Associates, they were put up between 1962 and 1970, and were then by some margin Europe's highest residential blocks, and by far Scotland's tallest buildings. Architectural histories of Glasgow by and large ignore the

city's modernist reconstruction, or belittle it ("miles of nondescript suburban housing … and high rise from the 1960s. Nothing that is architecturally remarkable") (Walker 1992, 9). The Red Road flats have always demanded attention, however by their very scale. Otherwise unimpressed by Glasgow's modernization, the *Buildings of Scotland* lost its reticence when it came to Red Road, "sublimely arrogant," it wrote, the blocks were "awesomely tall," containing the "population of a small town" (Williamson *et al.* 1990, 433).[34]

The scale of Glasgow's transformation should not be underestimated however. The sublime that later historians found at Red Road is, in truth, in many places north of the Clyde. David Gibson as author of Glasgow's transformation, compared to other figures mentioned here, was a maverick: working class, no intellectual, and concerned with action rather than words. Originally from Ayrshire, in Scotland's rural south-west he moved to Glasgow aged sixteen. As a local councilor, he thrived on direct engagement with constituents. His base of operations was, appropriately enough (according to the architectural historian Miles Glendinning) "a three room East End council house, situated in an appropriately noxious setting cheek-by-jowl with a bone-boiling works and a piggery" (Glendinning and Muthesius 1994, 221). Gibson's work was not architecture, nor was it simple polemic. It was a political crusade underpinned by more than thirty years as an Independent Labour Party member, only joining the mainstream Labour party in 1954. He terrified the planning committee. He was "a white faced, driving idealist, absolutely fanatical and sincere, of a kind you couldn't help admiring in a way" (Glendinning and Muthesius 1994, 222).

On the one hand, Gibson's enthusiasm for multi-story towers resembled Le Corbusier's for Paris. But in a crucial respect it differed: it was driven less by aesthetics, than a desire to maintain the city's population in one place. He thought the logic of overspill, madness; there was space in the city to be found with persistence and imagination.[35] The result, once Gibson had won the battle, was a greater concentration of high-rise dwellings in Glasgow than any other city in the UK. It was, as Glendinning put it, "the shock city of the modern housing revolution. Nowhere else … were so many large, high blocks completed or under construction at once" (Glendinning and Muthesius 1994, 220). For Gibson himself, the effect was "thrilling" (Gibson in Glendinning and Muthesius 1994, 220). Throughout the 1960s high-rises made up three quarters of housing completions in the city. The effect on the skyline was dramatic. A city that was in many ways the epitome of the Victorian industrial city had become, in reality, mostly modernist.

St Louis, Missouri: 1972

In 1956 the Japanese-American architect Minoru Yamasaki (1912–1986) completed work on his first independent project, a vast public housing project on the outskirts of St Louis, comprising thirty-three slabs of eleven floors each. The project itself was named Pruitt-Igoe after an African American fighter pilot and a white congressman respectively, both natives of St Louis. Although over budget by some 60%, the project was well liked and popular from the start – it was said that occupation rates exceeded 90% in the early years. It was also well regarded by the profession, especially the journal *Architectural Forum*, which in 1951 singled it out for high praise (Anon 1951, 128–136). Formally it drew on well-established practice in both Europe and America by that stage: it has the modernist figure-ground relationship pioneered by Le Corbusier in the 1920s, ribbon windows on the slabs, services concentrated in central cores.

Yamasaki himself did not rate the complex especially highly for it was an architectural compromise involving many different parties. But photographs and film footage of it at the time of completion show an austere but handsome complex, well-proportioned, in line with international trends.[36] What happened next is a matter of debate, at least in terms of causes. What is clear however is that by the late 1960s, the complex was mostly abandoned, vandalized beyond repair. Pruitt-Igoe's historical status is as an architectural failure. It was demolished in a series of controlled explosions from 1972–1976: in a now famous piece of critical rhetoric, this was the literal "end" of modernism, "Modern Architecture died in St. Louis, Missouri on July 15, 1972 at 3.32 pm (or thereabouts)" (Jencks 1987, 9).

Charles Jencks, the critic in question, used the Pruitt-Igoe case to bolster a critical argument about the origins of the postmodern style, in which, it might be added, he had interests both as a commentator and a practitioner.[37] Jencks popularized the destruction of Pruitt-Igoe by describing it as a failure of design. Citing the work of a sociologically-minded architect Oscar Newman, Jencks argued that Pruitt-Igoe's high crime rate was the lack of "defensible space," that is, space under de facto individual or community ownership. But perhaps worse, given Jencks's aesthetic preoccupations, was style: Pruitt-Igoe was "designed in a purist language at variance with the architectural codes of its inhabitants" (Jencks 1987, 9).

Jencks's analysis chimed with the anti-collectivist mood in Europe and America. Architect-bashing went down well at this time, and it helped hasten the end of large-scale public housing in the Anglophone West, a situation that still obtains.[38] However the project's failure had less to do with architecture *per se* than a set of banal, but serial failures around the distribution of properties and their maintenance:[39] the authorities responsible for Pruitt-Igoe created the slum conditions they were building to alleviate.

Pruitt-Igoe nevertheless stands for the failure of modernism. Its demolition was widely covered by the news media; the images of what is known as a "blowdown" have become iconic. Such is the drama of their failures that we imagine them as exploding or collapsing as much as clean and proud. Pruitt-Igoe is part of a set of images of failures that circulated around the world: Ronan Point in London; Cidade de Deus in Rio de Janiero; the blowdown of Hutchesontown C in Glasgow (2013). To these we could add the images of the shelling of the Bosnian Parliament building in Sarajevo, or the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York, the latter by an appalling coincidence also a building by Yamasaki. In each of these cases, for quite separate reasons, modernism is depicted as ruin. Since at least 1972, certainly in the English-speaking world, modernist architecture collapses. That is not to say that it does in reality, but that it is widely understood to collapse – and that broad perception had devastating consequences for the building of modernist towers in those countries. There was at least a twenty-year hiatus before they became even partially respectable again.

IKEA Wuhan, China 2014

The opening of IKEA Wuhan in September 2014 represents not only the relentless push of the Swedish furniture retailer into China but also the ongoing success of the modernist aesthetic. It is, after all, at IKEA that most of the world has its everyday contact with architectural modernism.

If IKEA is mentioned at all in histories of modernism, it is as the briefest of footnotes. It should not be the case: IKEA has probably had as much of a global impact in propagating modernism as any other single phenomenon. IKEA has instituted a global network of

production. It has made possible the consumption of architectural modernism on a global scale, and it has democratized design more thoroughly than any other modernist organization. It remains an essentially middle-class phenomenon, but its middle class is no longer that of Uppsala or Utrecht, but the entire planet. IKEA's attributes are not so clear if we understand architectural modernism as the work of exteriors and structures alone. But if we include interiors, IKEA plays a critical role.

Founded in 1943, by 2008 IKEA was the world's largest furniture retailer with 351 stores in 56 countries and around 12,000 individual lines. It was so large, that according to the company's own figures it used 1% of the earth's supply of wood.[40] By the early 1980s it had developed its signature style. The furniture was simple, unadorned, wooden, or wood-effect. It was sold cheaply by developing to the highest degree a business model based on self-assembly and the so-called flat-pack, both saving on labor and transportation costs. By 2015 IKEA operated 361 stores worldwide.[41]

From the perspective of architectural modernism, IKEA does a number of important things. First, standardization: in a world where local variation increasingly connotes symbolic and actual value, IKEA makes a fetish of consistency. Some of its stores, including Jakarta, are franchise operations but the great majority are not. IKEA is an organization that pays immense attention to detail, and exhibits minimal local variation. Each store is in effect, the same: built for convenience with local architects and to local building regulations, but everywhere the same. The form is a now global archetype, a 25–50,000 square meter retail shed, built on a steel frame with corrugated steel paneling. There is extensive car parking, unintentionally affirming modernist planning's figure-ground classic trope. The exterior is painted IKEA's blue and yellow house colors, which are also the colors of the Swedish flag, one of a few instances in modernist culture in which a color becomes an icon itself. The size of the stores may vary, but the plan does not. At ground level, there is a zone for smaller items, balanced equally between kitchen, bedroom furnishings, and lighting. The store breaks out into the warehouse proper, which allows access for customers, who then pass through extra-wide tills. The exit area serves various functions, but typically includes a shop selling Swedish produced, or branded food. All parts of the ground levels maintain an aesthetic of flexibility throughout: the structure of the building is its skin, and inside everything, can, and routinely is, moved to best show off the merchandise. Structure, skin, and services are rigorously exposed throughout.

The showroom occupies typically half of the upper floor. Notorious for its intentionally distracting *promenade architecturale*, it leads the visitor through a series of tableaux, showcasing different interior zones. One section is in effect a zoo of bedroom furniture; in another, kitchens fight to the death (the manipulative quality of the showroom is an example of what the architect Alan Penn has called a "coercive spatial culture," arguably another modernist legacy (2005, 36–37)).[42] The remainder of the upper floor contains a subsidized self-service restaurant serving industrialized versions of Swedish delicacies: meatballs with lingonberry jam and gravadlax, and for dessert, a rich cake made from the *Daim* chocolate bar. Typically one eats looking out through the Dessau Bauhaus-style fenestration of the café onto the car park. All this is interchangeable, regardless of where one finds oneself. The cult of IKEA is the modernist cult of standardization, so often declaimed in theory, but so little lived in reality.[43]

In IKEA's reiteration of modernism, the second key factor is economy, which it has consistently emphasized.[44] The upper floor showroom routinely displays entire apartments crammed into forty square meters or less, a microscopic form of living, some might say more appropriate to ocean travel. It is a clever trick: IKEA encourages us to consume

more, but with the promise that our consumption will reduce our impact on the world; our living space becomes ever smaller, but better.

The third factor is the form of IKEA's merchandise in general. It uses materials and techniques (MDF, recycled plastics, glues) that could not have been imagined in the early 1920s, but the spirit of efficiency would have been recognizable. Any residual unease about the solidity of the material – veneer-coated MDF, for example – would I think have been offset by the very high tolerances of the manufacturing processes, and the quality of the surfaces which exceed anything that could have been produced in the 1920s, except perhaps in aerospace. The cubes, cones and cylinders and slabs, the bright colors and the grids, and the sense of both rationality and infinite extension – these elements come from the lexicon of early modernism, from constructivism, de Stijl, early Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus, as well as the mythical Sweden of IKEA's ancestry.

Finally, there is the moral dimension, a modernist constant. From Loos onwards, modernism is as much a belief system as a set of buildings; it is morally superior because it is rational (or economical, or humane, or egalitarian, or any other progressive values you care to name). So it is with IKEA whose products come overlaid with a range of moral strictures. Its devolution of labor to the consumer enables low cost, but it also covertly introduces an agenda to do with the dealienation of labor: to put it another way, building things is good for you. Over the top of that are a range of broader images promoting IKEA as an environmentally concerned company, as a company that enables a direct, unmediated relationship with nature, a company fundamentally concerned with the community, however defined, a company that in European countries, and perhaps especially Britain, activates residual memories of communitarian politics when these have been largely displaced from the mainstream. In Britain, IKEA provides a communitarian fix largely unavailable elsewhere. It is modernism reduced to style, but the effectiveness with which it has been done should not be underestimated. It provides most of Europe and America with most of its actual contact with modernism. In China, Indonesia, and Malaysia, IKEA looks set to repeat the exercise in the Asia Pacific.

Notes

1   For example Mies is the defining architectural presence in Stern (1997).
2   Bo Bardi is best known for the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (1968). See Andreoli and Forty (2004).
3   The historical coverage of modernism likewise continues to proliferate. At the time of writing, the Yugoslav variant was described in Le Normand (2014).
4   The chief authors in this story are rarely architects, but the chairmen of local authority housing committees.
5   Wittgenstein, born in Vienna, was an important, albeit intermittent, presence in the city until 1929 when he moved to Cambridge. His *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was published in 1921.
6   The connections between art and psychoanalysis in Vienna were explored in Tate Modern's *Century City* (1 February–29 April 2001). The "Vienna" section was curated by Richard Calvocoressi and Keith Hartley. See: http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/century-city/century-city-vienna-1908–18
7   The process accelerated with Hitler's rise to power. For more see Jackman 1979.
8   Schindler was an "incorrigible Bohemian" according to Frank Lloyd Wright. Widely quoted, e.g., Heathcote (2012).

9   See Steele (2005: 20–25), Williams (2013: 31–37), and Frampton (1996: 249).

10 See Heathcote (2012) for more on this.

11 For more see http://makcenter.org/

12 Also known as the Villa Turque for its vaguely Ottoman appearance.

13 See Frampton (2001, 8–19) for an account of the architect's early years.

14 Philip Johnson and Nicholas Grimshaw are some of the many who followed Le Corbusier's taste in eyewear.

15 The Villa Savoye (1921) has these elements.

16 There is a much later, but similar image of travel in Augé (1995). Here Augé celebrates "supermodernity," a condition that has emerged via the new technologies of travel.

17 The Villa Schwob (1916) is an early material example of this. It has huge south- and west-facing roof terraces, adjacent to bathrooms.

18 For more on whiteness in architecture, see Wigley (1995, 1–34) on Le Corbusier.

19 Sometimes ascribed to Gropius, the phrase is in fact Louis Sullivan's – see Sullivan (1896).

20 Le Corbusier made visits to Brazil in 1929 and 1936. The effect was probably greater on the architect personally than on Brazil. His Brazilian notes and sketches are comprehensively anthologized in Rodriges dos Santos *et al*. 1987.

21 Speer is a footnote here, but even a cursory glance at his work and writings shows an engagement with technology of the highest order. The surfaces of his buildings aped Rome; their guts were as modern as anything. For more see Sereny (1996).

22 Again this is a case of appropriation: Mies popularized it, but its origins lie with Peter Behrens, in whose office he worked in the 1920s. See Mertens (2014).

23 For a discussion of the erotics of Mies's surfaces, see Williams (2013, 85–106).

24 IBM's own commentary on its employees' attire over the years: https://www-03.ibm.com/ibm/history/exhibits/waywewore/waywewore_1.html

25 In particular see Le Corbusier (1987, 178–179, 190–191).

26 Detailed discussion of urban figure-ground relationships in Holston (1989, 101–135).

27 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, World heritage List, Brasília http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/445

28 The differences need underlining, however. Le Corbusier's city is a city of towers reaching perhaps sixty floors. Brasília's residential slabs reach no more than six.

29 Widely reported, for example in Fraser (2000, 216). See also Evenson (1973, 113). It is one of many beliefs about the origins of the city.

30 Thorough account of the design competition and its aftermath in Evenson (1973, 117–153).

31 Discussion of the post-inauguration city and its critical reception in Williams (2007).

32 http://www.ibge.gov.br/estadosat/perfil.php?sigla=df

33 On Brasília's changing periphery, see Williams (2007, 352–363).

34 Supported by the National Trust for Scotland, this is the most comprehensive architectural survey of the city.

35 "Overspill" – a British term referring to the panned de-densification of cities by rehousing residents outside municipal boundaries.

36 Pruitt-Igoe is unusually well documented visually. See the film *The Pruit-Igoe Myth* (dir. Chad Freidrichs, 2011) and also the photographic archive at the University of Missouri-St. Louis: http://tjrhino1.umsl.edu/whmc/view.php?description_get=Pruitt+Igoe

37 Examples of Jencks's architectural work are illustrated in Jencks (1987, 162 and 174).

38 *Language* was first published in 1977, but its anti-modernism was certainly still current ten years later when the fifth edition was published.

39   See the film *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* (2011). Detailed account of maintenance issues in Cairns and Jacobs (2014).
40   IKEA Summary Sustainability Report (2013) http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_GB/pdf/yearly_summary/sustainability_report_2013_final.pdf
41   http://ouryear.ikea.com/story/ikea-stores-2014/
42   See Penn (2005) for his analysis of IKEA, underpinned by the methodology of Space Syntax.
43   Standardization, like so many other modernist concepts, was for *other* people.
44   The IKEA Summary Sustainability Report is also arguably an example of this.

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The Wide Margins of the Century: Rural Modernism, Pastoral Peasants, and Economic Migrations

Rosemary Shirley

The title of this chapter refers to the "Wide margins of the century" and it is a quote from a lecture called *When was Modernism?* given by the critic and writer Raymond Williams. In this lecture Williams questions how modernism has come to be constructed as a cultural movement. He notes that ideas of what being modern actually means have evolved throughout history, making it a slippery term that is always open to contestation. He argues that modernism in art and literature needs to be thought of as "a selective tradition," meaning that certain artists and writers have been seen as central to the movement, while others have been displaced to the periphery or left out altogether. Importantly he asserts that these selections have created an ideology of modernism that privileges the city as the place where artistic activity takes place and that it is the conditions of these urban locations that have influenced the work of artists and therefore dictated the character of cultural production and representation of human experience,

> Paris, Vienna, Berlin, London, New York, took on a new silhouette as the eponymous City of Strangers, the most appropriate local for art made by the restlessly mobile émigré or exile, the internationally anti-bourgeois artist.
>
> (Williams 1996 [1987], 34)

A central condition of the modern city reflected in this quotation is alienation. This includes the alienation from home or community that might be experienced in the large industrial city, which is populated by people who have left their roots elsewhere and have come to the metropolis to find work – Williams talks of the artist being an émigré or exile in the city. This condition is found in the anonymity of the city streets, the separation from the natural world created by urban living conditions, and the alienation from the products of labor characteristic of modern working processes such as the production line. The ideology of modernism as an urban phenomenon serves to normalize the condition of alienation. Speaking in the 1980s, as certain cultural critics were positing a transition

from modernism to postmodernism, Williams argues that in order to offer some challenge to this tradition, different histories of modernism need to be written,

> If we are to break out of the non-historical fixity of postmodernism, then we must search out and counterpose an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margin of the century, a tradition which may address itself not to this by now exploitable because quite inhuman rewriting of the past but, for all our sakes, to a modern future in which community may be imagined again.
>
> <div align="right">(Williams 1996 [1987], 35)</div>

This directive creates a powerful image of a wealth of art works lying in these wide margins. In postcolonial scholarship such margins might include the cultural production of countries that were once seen as peripheral to the largely European centers of power, and much work has been done to disrupt these hierarchies (see King 1999 and Araeen, Sardar, and Cubitt 2002). However, Williams's margins can also be found in aspects of the rural and art practices connected with people and places found outside the modern city. His interest in the mapping and analysis of representations of rural and urban places is evident in *The Country and the City* (1973), "Culture is Ordinary" (1989 [1958]) and the account of his rural childhood in the novel *Border Country* (1960). This, together with his emphasis on the need to imagine community again, speaks to a need to re-assess the role of the rural in navigating an alternative tradition.

This chapter attempts to follow a path that leads out into the countryside and seeks to narrate different modernist stories, which feature artists' engagements with rural places, the people who inhabit them, and the intertwined relationship between the country and the city. It begins by looking at the popularity of "peasant painting" during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and how these representations of traditional rural scenes might be conceptualized as modern. This is followed by an exploration of the theme of the pastoral and how artists and art historians have productively expanded this idea beyond the depiction of idealized shepherds in romantic settings, to help us think about art works and subjects which are relevant to modern contexts. This expanded notion of the pastoral is then used to frame an analysis of a photo essay by John Berger and Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man* (1975), which explores the lives and representation of "peasants" in the later decades of the twentieth century. The chapter ends with a short account of two contemporary artists' work that can be read as a continuum of Berger and Mohr's project focusing on the role of the rural economic migrant as they contribute their labor to the UK economy.

The Peasant and Modern Art

The word "peasant" is a loaded term. Traditionally it refers to a person who lives in the countryside and works on the land, however there is an equally strong tradition of the word being used as a term of abuse, denoting a person of low social status who is ignorant or unsophisticated. In contrast, peasant culture is also idealized as an enviable simplicity of life or an authentic existence based around a relationship with land and nature. Depictions of peasants in painting derive much of their power from the tensions between these different conceptualizations.

The peasant has been a popular subject in art since the sixteenth century, most often characterized by works by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, depicting jovial scenes of village

FIGURE 15.1 Jean-François Millet, *Gleaners* (1857). Oil on canvas, h. 83.5 cm; w. 110 cm, Paris, Musée d'Orsay. *Source*: © The Art Archive/Alamy Stock Photo.

life (see Alpers 1972–1973, Silver 2012, and Stewart 2008). In the nineteenth century peasants became a central theme for realist painters such as Jean-François Millet, who created iconic images of rural workers, depicted as heroic figures in their everyday labors. *Gleaners*, 1857 (Figure 15.1), shows a harvest scene with three peasant women in the center of the foreground, uncomfortably bent over and engaged in the practice of gleaning – picking through stubble for ears of wheat missed during the main harvest. The positions of the figures show that this is physically hard work, and they are perhaps contrasted with the sunlit laborers in the background making haystacks, or a figure on a horse who is presumably the supervisor, however the women seem strong, dignified, and graceful in their work.

Vincent van Gogh was influenced by Millet in his many studies of peasants in the Netherlands. Speaking of his work *The Potato Eaters*, 1885, he said, "I have tried to emphasize that those people, eating their potatoes in the lamplight, have dug the earth with those very hands they put in the dish, and so it speaks of manual labor [*sic*], and how they have honestly earned their food" (Chipp 1968, 29), a sentiment which clearly valorizes the simplicity and the harshness of the peasants' lives. Famously van Gogh's painting *A Pair of Shoes*, 1886, of what appears to be a pair of battered boots apparently belonging to a peasant, became the subject of much debate amongst philosophers and art historians. Martin Heidegger claimed their worn texture and mud-encrusted surface as evidence of the authenticity of a life lived in the landscape (2001 [1935–7]), while Meyer Schapiro disagreed with this reading of the painting and questioned Heidegger's nationalist motivations for attaching authentic existence to a deep affinity with the land (Schapiro 1968, also see Jacques Derrida 1987). The depiction of peasants, or even shoes that may or may not belong to peasants, is never a straightforward affair.

Ysanne Holt has argued that although many of the images, which can be loosely gathered under the bracket of "peasant painting" in the decades directly before and after 1900, do not refer to the modern period at all, they are in fact products of modern attitudes and anxieties. One of these concerns was that due to the increase in urban living and industrial employment the rural way of life was dying out and needed to be preserved. In response to this, the rural was represented as a timeless arena of continuity, acting as a foil to the feelings, change, and disruption that characterized modern city living. In her analysis of British painters such as George Clausen and Edward Stott, she notes that the details of modern peasant life are largely absent and the subjects of these works become idealized iconic symbols, rather than anything that could be thought of as an accurate record of rural life at the turn of the twentieth century. During this period mechanization of many agricultural tasks such as ploughing and harvesting was taking place and traction engines and threshing machines were fairly widespread, but these pieces of technology never feature in the paintings (Holt 2003, 12).

The details of agricultural workers' clothing were also altered to make them feel less like products of the early twentieth century. Holt quotes from a critic who is outraged by the fact that British peasants do not look like peasants anymore. By this he meant that rather than wearing what might be considered traditional peasant dress, "They dress in the cast-off clothes of their superiors, in things inappropriate to their employment and out of keeping with their surroundings" (A. L. Baldry cited in Holt 2003, 14). A factor in this change of attire would have been the availability of industrially produced materials, which if the agricultural workers had not been able to afford themselves would have eventually made its way to them via hand-me-downs. This predominance of cast-off garments also speaks of the rural poverty and the extremely harsh living conditions which were endured by those working the land.

In *Akenfield* (1969), a book based on the oral history accounts of people living in rural Suffolk around this time, a farm laborer puts these terrible conditions into perspective when he talks about joining up for the First World War,

> In my four months' training with the regiment I put on nearly a stone and got a bit taller. They said it was the food but really it was the first time in my life there had been no strenuous work. I want to say this simply as a fact, that village people in Suffolk in my day were worked to death. It literally happened. It is not a figure of speech. I was worked mercilessly. I'm not complaining about it. It is what happened to me.
>
> (Blythe 2005 [1969], 38)

Few of the realities of rural labor at this time are accurately portrayed. The work being done in these paintings is often generic and picturesque, jobs like scything, harvesting wheat, picking fruit or ploughing, all graceful and rhythmic activities which seem to be carried out in good weather. The workers appear to be healthy and well fed. The portrayal of strong and healthy peasants reflects another of the anxieties experienced by the urban middle-class consumers of these paintings. This was the feeling that the rural, and by extension the nation itself, was in decline. Evidence for this anxiety was found in the struggling rural economy and the de-population of the countryside, as many of those who were able migrated to the industrial cities leaving a perception that only the weakest were left behind (see Howkins 2003). These fears about the degeneration of the land and the rural population also found apparent corroboration in Britain, where large numbers of potential recruits for the Boer War (1899–1902) were found unfit to serve (Holt 2003, 5).

During this period artists' colonies in rural places were thriving. By 1900 there were over eighty rural artists' colonies in eleven European countries including Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Scandinavian states (Lübbren 2001, 1). The presence of large numbers of artists in these rural places had a significant impact on the way the countryside and the people who lived there were imagined and represented. In her study of this practice Nina Lübbren notes that many artists living in these colonies placed great importance on the observation from life of the details of rural labor, behavior, and dress. This concern shows itself in the extremely detailed nature of paintings which tend to pay a lot of attention to the recording of details in costume, footwear, tools, interiors, architecture, practices and customs. However her research reveals that artists were "happy to sacrifice ethnographic exactitude for picturesque effect" (2001, 45). For example peasants were depicted wearing costumes from a bygone age and Clausen, in his work *High Mass at a Fishing Village on the Zuyderzee*, 1876, shows Catholic villagers kneeling outside a Protestant church. Because of their supposed veracity, these images appeared to merely reflect an un-manipulated reality of the countryside, one which was entirely populated by peasants who were pious, hard-working, kind, and unthreatening (2001, 48). Lübbren argues that this image of the noble peasant appealed directly to urban bourgeois audiences because it made them identify with the peasants and their unostentatious dignity, while also serving as a marker of how far they had progressed from their agrarian beginnings.

While elements of modernity were actively left out of portrayals of peasants, it is the careful construction of these images that speak of the conditions of modernity in which they were produced. Holt summarizes this apparent contradiction,

> So when Augustus John painted a group of bare-footed earth mothers walking down to the sea in northern France, he was actively engaged with the age of the motor-bus, the typewriter, the telephone, the mass-circulation magazine and, perhaps most notably, declining middle-class birth-rates and vociferous suffrage campaigns in the London Streets. In fact the particular significance of these representations, much of the time, lies precisely in that which is unrepresented.
>
> (2003, 9)

However, it is productive to close this section with T. J. Clark who reminds us that while the peasant paintings were undoubtedly idealized constructions, born out of the anxieties of an urban middle class, they were also based on a way of living that operated as an alternative to the alienation of the industrial proletariat, and the tumultuous machinations of the progress of modernity. In an echo of Williams's call for us to imagine community again, Clark hints that portrayals of peasant life allow viewers to dream of a particular form of humanity,

> So peasant life was a screen, then, on which modernism projected its technical and expressive wishes? Well, yes. But that does not mean the screen was empty, or the projections made out of nothing. There was a form of life still actually existing in the nineteenth century (I know the word "peasant" sums it up too neatly) that stood in the way of modernity, and resisted the disenchantment of the world. Modernist values partly depended on an image of that life and its characteristic qualities. No doubt in the imaging process the qualities were idealized, or prettified, or sentimentalized. But those words are not final pejoratives. They may only describe the agony – the inevitable ruthlessness – involved in keeping a dream of humanity alive.
>
> (Clark 1999, 71)

The Idea of the Pastoral

Paintings of peasants may be thought of as belonging to the genre of the pastoral. This is a term usually associated with forms of poetry, literature, and art, its central characteristic being the idealized portrayal of the rural as a place of plenty, rest, innocence and beauty. While its roots lie in poems of classical antiquity, it is identified as coming to prominence as a visual theme in its own right in High Renaissance Venice. It was thought to be a method of expressing the idea of a harmonious relationship between the human and natural realms (Cafritz, Gowing, and Rosand 1988). Characters included in these landscapes were usually popular rustic types such as peasants, or more specifically shepherds. Shepherds were a favorite subject, perhaps because their lifestyle could be easily romanticized, working outdoors in beautiful landscapes, primarily sitting and thinking, occasionally chasing pretty girls. It is interesting to note that *Pastor* in Latin means feeder or shepherd (Edwards 2012, 115). The prevalence of shepherds as the key figure in the genre is noted by John Dixon Hunt in *The Pastoral Landscape* (1992) who writes that,

> Herding sheep in all weathers on steep mountainsides is no fun, has no aesthetic dimension, and is of no conceivable interest to an outsider except perhaps for the skill displayed and for the extraordinary collaboration of man and dog. Yet take that same activity and give it a different context – framed as an entertainment whether on television or on a pleasant summer's day in a lowland field with a background of fells and it is transformed into a pastoral event.
>
> (1992, 11–12)

Aspects of everyday rural life need to be framed and aestheticized in order to be transformed into the pastoral. Similarly Dixon Hunt notes that when a modern day shepherd is encountered by an urbanite, perhaps during a holiday to Greece, a process of editing out all aspects of modernity needs to take place before the experience can be registered as pastoral, "we ignore his transistor radio and the electrical or telephone pylons that localize his shepherding chores in the contemporary world" (1992, 12). This example is tied up with the idea of the tourist's gaze and the drive towards finding an "authentic" experience that motivates much tourist activity (see Urry 1990). However, it is also possible to see the same process which many artists who were engaged with depicting peasants at the turn of the twentieth century were going through. The urge to construct the rural as a place outside of modernity is deeply entwined with the tradition of the pastoral.

It is easy to see how the peasant paintings discussed above could be considered as pastoral, however art historians have argued that the pastoral also makes an appearance in some unexpected aspects of more recent art practice. An example of this can be found in Steve Edwards' account of Martha Rosler's work *The Bowery in two inadequate descriptive* systems, 1974–1975, a set of twenty-one black and white photographs and twenty-four text pieces. The images show shop doorways and windows, some boarded up and some down at heel yet still open for business, in the district of Manhattan called the Bowery: at a time known for its population of homeless people and street drinkers. The text panels which are shown alongside the images contain words or phrases that relate to drunkenness or alcoholism – glassy-eyed, snozzled, lushy. The subjects of this work, the disenfranchised inhabitants of this area, are absent: a decision which speaks of Rosler's critique of both photographic and written language as inadequate mechanisms for representation.

On first encountering this work it seems to be firmly rooted in the urban. It is about New York, one of the emblematic cities of strangers described by Williams. However, Edwards

finds aspects of Rosler's piece which seem to relate to the pastoral. The Bowery, itself relates to the countryside being named after a farm that used to occupy the area, and a bower is a pleasant place under the bows of a tree. In Rosler's photographs, Edwards also identified references to water fountains and cherubs – aspects of an Arcadian scene, and perhaps more strangely a smashed figurine of a rustic figure in amongst detritus of empty liquor bottles on the street.

Drawing on the literary critic William Empson's (1935) account of the genre, in which he positions the pastoral as a form of proletarian literature, Edwards introduces the idea of a Marxist pastoral. The pastoral is often thought of as being counter to Marxist Humanists' ideas. In *The Country and the City* (1973), Raymond Williams criticizes the genre for its focus on the peace and beauty of the countryside while refusing to see the brutal exploitation of rural labor. However, following Empson, Edwards argues that, "the key characteristic of this poetic mode is not the presence of shepherds or descriptions of country life, but the voicing of rich themes through simple or down-to-earth representatives" (Edwards 2012, 117).

Thomas Crow, writing on the relationship between modern art and everyday life, also draws on Empson's formulations to argue that the pastoral genre creates the possibility of a kind of "everyman" character who becomes representative of society as a whole. Crow writes that, "In this form of courtly conceit, the poet or the painter transfers the lordly pretence of representing the whole of society … to characters who derive their representative status from their ubiquity and from their presumed closeness to nature and the basics of life" (1996, 176).

In these re-figurings the pastoral shifts from an idealized art form designed to entertain the aristocracy or comfort the middle-class art market, towards a more radical formation in which lowly, peasant characters become central to the exploration of the grand narratives of modernity. The significance of these re-evaluations for Rosler's piece is to help us think about those who are at the bottom of society, so ubiquitous and neglected as to become invisible (literally in the case of *The Bowery* photographs), and how their experience can be central to understanding fundamental truths about this particular society in the grips of late-stage capitalism.

In the preceding section of this chapter we saw that the portrayal of peasants in painting became a screen reflecting the anxieties and concerns of an industrial urban middle-class society. In this section we have seen how the idea of the pastoral can become radicalized, utilizing the possibilities it contains for destabilizing power structures and centralizing the experience of the poorest in society. The next section develops this idea, exploring how John Berger and Jean Mohr's photographic projects recording peasant experience in the 1970s, can contribute to this rehabilitation of the pastoral.

John Berger and Jean Mohr and the Figure of the Peasant

In the mid-1960s the artist, writer, and critic John Berger and the documentary photographer Jean Mohr started to work together on a series of projects involved with European peasant culture and rural communities. The projects became extended photo and text montages which were published as the books: *A Fortunate Man* (1967), *A Seventh Man* (1975), and *Another Way of Telling* (1982). It is the middle book in this series that I am going to focus on here, *A Seventh Man*, which tells the story of a Turkish peasant's journey to Germany to become a guest worker, his experiences in different forms of industrial employment, and his return home.

Cultural productions like the peasant paintings of the nineteenth century have habituated us to the idea that the rural is outside of modernity, occupying a non-specific arena of generic past. Similarly the term peasant is always something that seems to belong to another time or another place. The dictionary tells us that the word is, "especially used with reference to foreign countries or to Britain and Ireland in earlier times, and often to denote members of the lowest and poorest rank of society" (OED online 2015). This is a definition that draws on a colonial version of history that conceptualizes the act of traveling away from the center (Britain and Ireland, in this case) as an act of traveling back in time. Berger and Mohr's work brings back to visibility the existence of peasants, who as John Roberts notes were "still central to much of rural life in Europe, but written out of contemporary historical experience of Europe as a class in decline" (Roberts 1998, 139). Furthermore it productively serves to update peasant experience to take into account the often dual identity of rural peasant and urban migrant worker, sadly still so often viewed as "the lowest and poorest rank of society."

The title of the book comes from a poem *The Seventh* by the Hungarian socialist writer Attila Jozsef, which appears on the first pages. Berger connects this text to the subject of the book in his assertion that one in seven manual workers in Britain and in Germany is an immigrant. The story is told using a montage of different forms of text and imagery including polemic, lists, quotes from theoretical texts, statistics, documentary photography and archive images. Berger and Mohr work in a way which disrupts any notion of hierarchy between image and text. The photographs do not function as illustrations to the written word; rather they are another way of telling. Berger states that: "The photographs … say things that are beyond the reach of words. The pictures in sequence make a statement: a statement which is equal and comparable to, but different from, that of the text" (Berger and Mohr 1975, 7).

This practice of gathering related but different fragments in order to document or communicate the complexity of otherwise hidden everyday experience could be seen to have its roots in avant-garde leftist anthropological projects of the 1930s. The first publication made by Mass Observation: *May the Twelfth* (Jennings and Madge 1937) is composed of diary entries, newspaper clippings, questionnaires and observers' reports in an attempt to capture something of the simultaneous but different realities that converge to create an account of a day in the life of a nation.[1] Humphrey Jennings went on to make a series of films including *Spare Time* (1939) and *Listen to Britain* (1942), using a similar montage technique of overlapping times and locations to create a feeling of a single story being told by a multitude of voices. It is significant that like Mass Observation, Berger and Mohr produced their projects as "book works," not limited edition artists' books but, mass-produced paperbacks: *A Seventh Man* was produced by the mainstream publisher Penguin, and in 1975 cost £1 to buy. Roberts notes that art, "To produce images and text as a collaborative book work is immediately to step outside the aestheticized categories of fine art and literature, to align the production of art with the reproductive and collective processes of mass culture" (Roberts 1998, 131). These works were about the everyday and circulated in the everyday world.

We saw Rosler in *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems*, 1974–1975, series questioning the effectiveness of any system of communication, be it written or image based. Rosler together with many other photographers and writers at this time were engaged with the deconstruction of language, highlighting the hierarchies perpetuated within such systems and the tendency for much documentary photography to turn its subjects into voiceless images for consumption. Berger and Mohr however, take a different approach. Their photo works remain critical but do not continually de-naturalize the photograph's

relationship to reality. Rather Berger (1980) talks about building a radial system of meaning for the photograph, meaning that through the contextualization of the image with words, narratives, poetry, statistics and other images, a constellation of different associations is generated. The voices of those pictured are recorded in fragments of conversation, statements, and stories. These multiple possibilities for reading de-stabilize the idea of the photograph as an empirical image, while at the same time allows the viewer to connect with its subject matter more deeply. In his writing on Berger's "book works" Ben Highmore comments that,

> To turn the page in these books is to be surprised and challenged: these books don't unfold as a linear argument but build up a series of registrations, of 'ways of seeing' and 'ways of telling' that in their heteroglot forms substantiate a portrait of a complex cultural experience. The image is not mobilized as illustration, or proof, but as a disconcerting singularity. This isn't a realism that would ask you to forget the presence of a photographer: but nor is it a photography that insists on your recognizing, endlessly and finally, the photographer's constructed vision.
>
> (2012, 124)

Throughout the work the reader/viewer feels as if they are following one man, a structure which helps build this connection between reader and subject. However, this person is never named and no one person appears repeatedly in the images. The worker's background and past experiences also seem multiple which has the effect of shifting the identification – he is a shepherd, a wood cutter, a butcher. This is not one person's journey but many. In this way Berger and Mohr create an "everyman" figure in the peasant. He is singular but also multiple, and his story becomes the story of the many. This, of course, echoes one of the characteristics of the pastoral mode as described above by both Edwards and Crow, where the ordinary man becomes heroic and his actions become emblematic of society as a whole.

This pastoral mode makes it possible to trace in this man's journey the whole of global capitalism. In the villages, cities, borders, factories, transport systems, sewers, institutions, streets, shops, and barracks that texture this story the workings of this system and its implications for humanity are revealed. In his accounts of everyday life in industrial society, Henri Lefebvre makes a similar connection between the importance of attending to the micro experience in order to elucidate the macro,

> the simplest event – a woman buying a pound of sugar –, for example must be analysed … it is not enough simply to describe it; research will disclose a tangle of reasons and causes, of essences and 'spheres': the woman's life, her biography, her job, her family, her class, her budget, her eating habits, how she uses money, her opinions and her ideas, the state of the market, etc. Finally I will have grasped the sum total of capitalist society, the nation and its history.
>
> (2008 [1958]), 57)

A Seventh Man is an attempt to map this tangle of reasons and causes, to show how both the iconic figure of the peasant, as well as the real living, feeling man is born into a world where he is always already entangled in the rhythms, the ebbs and flows, and the inequalities of this system.

The book begins in the Turkish countryside. The images of these rural places seem empty, and there are few buildings and few people. There are also few markers of modernity which could have been taken at any point in time. One exception is in a photograph of

a group of women where perhaps their shoes bear testament to the fact this was taken in the 1970s rather than the 1890s. In this aspect we see resonances of the peasant paintings in which the rural was portrayed as a zone outside of modernity and the suspended temporality of the pastoral. However, rather than idealized, this disconnection from modernity feels impoverished. The ground is stony and bare. The living conditions are difficult. There are few amenities and the women look prematurely aged. As the central figure's journey nears the city the images become crowded with people. The migrants who have all embarked upon similar but individual passages up until this point seem to lose their identities and become part of a crowd. Conditions are cramped. There are few freedoms living in barracks, in highly controlled circumstances. We see images of men cooking basic provisions on hot plates, sitting together on narrow beds, or waiting in line for the bathrooms.

These men have sold their labor during working hours but their bodies are also no longer their own. Images of the medical examination centers that those hoping to work in Germany are obliged to attend, show men being stripped, examined, and numbered (Figure 15.2). These evaluations prove a man is physically able to work and will not need significant medical care in his temporary new country of residence. These images find strange resonance with the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anxieties around the peasant body and its depiction as strong and healthy. Then, as a way of ameliorating concerns around the physical and economic decline of the nation, here, as a way of guaranteeing they will not become an economic burden on their host nation.

For the ones who pass the tests we see that the factory work that awaits them is repetitive and dangerous. Berger tells us that there is not necessarily any danger inherent in the tasks

FIGURE 15.2   Jean Mohr, *Turkish Workers Being Medically Examined by German Doctors, Istanbul*. From John Berger and Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man* (1975). *Source*: © Jean Mohr, Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne.

themselves; rather it is in the language barrier, lack of training, and the fact that migrant workers are often moved to new and unfamiliar roles which need to be learned all over again. The repetitive nature of the work is made evident through images of uniform size showing fragments of factory production. Fordist industrial practices are emblematic of modernity, enabling mass production to feed mass consumption. They create the alienation from nature, from the products of labor and from fellow human beings that Marx positioned as being central to capitalism. The rhythms and routines of existence as an economic migrant worker where both work time, and leisure time are highly controlled, yet deliberately precarious, speak of the effects of this alienation.

The use of archive images of migrant workers within the book situates this story in a historical context, and in a passage, which could be argued as situating the project within the pastoral mode by building on the idea of the peasant as an everyman figure who has always been around, Berger writes,

> The naturalness of his inferior status – the naturalness with which he is accorded his inferiority by people, by institutions, by the everyday etiquette of the metropolis, by ready-made phrases and arguments – would never be so complete and unhesitating if his function, and the inferior status which it entailed were new. He has been here from the beginning.
>
> (Berger and Mohr 1975, 113)

These archival photographs of Irish navvies, who came to England to build railways, leaning on their shovels, some of them very young, a central figure, larger than the rest hand on hip, smoking a pipe looking directly at the camera, are redolent of the Ford Maddox Brown painting *Work*, 1852–1863. This represents the lowly Irish navvy as a heroic worker figure, contrasted favorably with the idle rich who push past him as he works on one of the key modern urban projects: a sewer system. As we have seen, the men in this book could be thought of as heroes too. They engage in the mythical heroic narrative arc: leaving home, enduring hardship, finding reward and returning changed, although there are very few photographs in which they appear in any traditionally heroic forms. Interestingly, one of the few occasions where a worker appears in what could be considered an heroic pose, singled out, alone, epically wielding a huge drill, could relate to a series of photographs titled "Report from under Geneva," which focuses on how the city is using migrant labor to dig a new underground sewer system.

The relationship between the country and the city is implicitly present throughout this work. Like Williams, Berger takes the position that the two are inextricably intertwined and dependent on each other. He argues that cities are dependent on the rural areas for food and raw materials, but also for labor. The industries documented here only function because of the enforced inequality between country and city, producing millions of rural people who are willing to take on the hardships of life as an economic migrant in order to earn money, improve living conditions, and of course take part in the consumer society of the modern world. This short passage shows how the promises of the city bleed into the country through a trickle of consumer goods, "These promises are not transmitted by any single means … They are transmitted by machinery, by cars, tractors, tin-openers, electric drills, saws. By ready-made clothes. By the planes that fly across the sky" (Berger and Mohr 1975, 23).

This text is accompanied by two aerial views, one of an ancient village formed like a honeycomb of stone walls and windows. The other shows the intricate road patterns

at a motorway junction. This is one of a number of examples where images register as contrast pieces for the country and the city. It is never a romanticized view of the country-side in comparison to the city; both places are cold and hard for those of limited means. A crowded bus top in rural former Yugoslavia shows people of all ages talking, sitting, wait-ing, relaxing on the grass at the side of the road. The bus has all its doors open and does not seem in a hurry to leave. Many people stare at the camera, intrigued by this photogra-pher in their midst. This image is paired with a photograph of an underground station in Stockholm which is comparatively empty. The few commuters, mainly men in suits stand on their own with no interaction between them. The tiled surfaces are sterile and brightly lit; some men stare at a series of adverts for women's underwear opposite the platform. No acknowledgment of the photographer is made.

While this work was made in the mid-1970s it is remarkably prescient, and these sto-ries can be translated for more contemporary contexts. Economic migration continues to support the systems of global capitalism, with workers from rural places moving to cities to find employment, perhaps most dramatically in China (see Wu, Zhang, and Webster 2013). The differences in economic development between European countries lead to workers from less buoyant economies traveling away from home to carry out low-paid agricultural work such as fruit picking and chicken processing, amongst other occupations.

Contemporary Resonances

Jordan Baseman and Neville Gabie are two contemporary artists who, in their individual practices, make work which negotiates the processes of recording the experiences of these often low-paid and sometimes invisible workers in the United Kingdom.

Jordan Baseman's *I hate Boston and Boston hates me*, 2006, is a controversial piece of work which has never actually been shown. It was withdrawn from public exhibition by the artist after national and local press condemned it as a "race-hate video" (Norfolk 2006), and the resulting media attention threatened to compromise the anonymity of the film's subject. The film centers on an interview with a female agricultural worker from Portugal who is one of the estimated 5,000 Portuguese residents of Boston, a small town in Lin-colnshire, who are employed on the area's fruit and vegetable farms. The woman recounts instances of racial abuse suffered by her daughter and talks about the difficulties of making friends and fitting in. In a nod to the pastoral genre, her voice is combined with a visual of the flat Lincolnshire landscape. No attempt is made to aestheticize this image or to engage in the signature pastoral mode of temporal suspension. Here the severe verticals of electricity pylons are clearly visible in the background. Significantly, in the foreground is a flagpole flying the cross of St. George, the English national flag, which has become increasingly identified with racism rather than patriotism. The wind, coming from the East – from continental Europe, has blown the flag out the wrong way, meaning that the word ENGLAND emblazoned across its center is now read backwards: a highly charged image which accrues layers of meaning from the accompanying testimony.

The fact that this piece of work generated such a strong reaction amongst the local community and was seen as sufficiently newsworthy as to feature in national newspapers and broadcast media, speaks of the continuing need for this type of work to take place. As in Berger and Mohr's project, the voice of the migrant is heard. Their experiences are brought to the surface and in this process the society is reflected back to itself, in this case creating a powerful and predominantly negative reaction. The film addresses the insularity

FIGURE 15.3 Neville Gabie, *Canteen – Cabot Circus*, 2008. *Source*: courtesy the artist and Danielle Arnaud.

of some rural communities, yet it also demonstrates the embroilment of rural places in global currents that facilitate and rely upon the large-scale movement of goods, money, and people, showing how these meta-rhythms are played out in everyday experience.

These global currents were again in evidence in the re-development of a large area of the city center of Bristol. Working on the now familiar model of neoliberal regeneration of inner city areas through development that forefronts retail as a major component, Cabot Circus is essentially a huge new shopping mall. The workers who were employed on this construction project came from over seventy different countries. Neville Gabie worked with these migrants to acknowledge and to celebrate their cultural diversity and contribution to the city. In one project *Canteen*, 2008, (Figure 15.3) he asked workers to tell him about their favorite dishes. Recipes were compiled into a book and chefs from the city and further afield cooked feasts that were served to the workers as communal meals, where shared food and conversation broke up the working day. The consumption of abundant food and drink is another pastoral motif, and it is interesting to see that one image documenting the project shows construction site workers in their luminous high visibility jackets, sitting together under a leafy bower engaging in what is titled a medieval banquet.

This pastoral theme is continued in a second project undertaken by Gabie in collaboration with the workers on this site and composer David Ogden: *Cabot Circus Cantata*, 2007. For this piece the artist collected songs from across the world by persuading builders, secretaries, foremen, concreters, security guards, and canteen staff to sing and record traditional songs from their native countries. Along with eating and drinking, song is one

of the pleasures of the pastoral scene, and it is remarkable to see the transformative effect of introducing these melodies into the building site. After the songs had been collected they were arranged as a choral work by Ogden and performed by Bristol City Choir, with special appearances by some of the contributing workers. The venue for this concert was the concrete shell of a newly constructed department store and the music was broadcast throughout the site via a system of speakers. Video footage shows workers joining in, accompanying the choir, by tapping scaffolding supports with spanners and singing along. The day-to-day place of labor is temporarily transformed into a party.

Both of Gabie's projects operate in the spirit of Berger and Mohr. They work to human-ize the migrant worker in a society which deliberately puts in place structures which dehu-manize. They create a place in which customs and difference are valued, rather than seen as a threat. Importantly they acknowledge the communities from which these workers have come and work to facilitate the building of new communities in the city in which they find themselves.

At the beginning of this chapter we saw Williams calling for a re-evaluation of modernism that will compensate for some of the alienation created by capitalism and allow for a return to community. I argued that Williams might have encouraged us to search the wide margins of the rural for art works and practices that allow different stories about modernism to emerge. The peasant paintings of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries operated within the classical pastoral mode in which all aspects of modernity are removed in order to portray the rural as an idyllic space outside of time. However it was what was left out of these paintings that revealed and reflected the concerns of an increasingly industrial society, and the peasant became emblematic of a lost imaginary past. The air of nostalgia that hangs over these images however, prevents them from offering any real image of alternative possibilities offered by rural cultures. Rather they become a visual ameliorative to the pressures of modern life. In contrast, Berger and Mohr use photography and the extended montage, as a redemptive force, that is socially constructed (Roberts 1998). Building a context for documentary images through the use of different voices, presents an alternative to the spectacularization of images, where subjects become objectified and consumed. This photographic practice is about naming and showing aspects of society that are ignored or invisible and how, through that process, social connections are made, towards a form of empathy. Engaging with rehabilitations of the pastoral mode in which the "lowly" and often rural characters' stories are made visible and projected as reflections of society as a whole is a productive step in this process. Furthermore Berger (1992) sees peasant culture as providing that alternative demanded by Williams. Based on a model of survival rather than progress, and on cyclical time rather than continuous forward motion, he argues that a re-evaluation of peasant culture might provide an alternative to modern urban living, one that allows for and relies upon collectivity and community.

Note

1   Mass Observation was a social research organization formed in 1937. The central figures were poet and journalist Charles Madge, filmmaker Humphrey Jennings and anthropologist Tom Harrisson. Their aim was to find effective ways to record the everyday lives of ordi-nary people in Britain. This endeavor resulted in a significant archive of fascinating material including diaries and observations, together with several publications. This material is held by the University of Sussex.

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Destabilizing Essentialism through Localizing Modernism[1]

Naoko Uchiyama

Introduction

This chapter explores the ways in which art historical accounts narrate practices of artists working across national and regional boundaries in the mid-twentieth century. Any Western frameworks for interpreting art face challenges as theoretical positions shift in what has been termed the global turn (Mukherji 2014): while some scholars continue to attempt to interpret art globally (Summers 2003; Davis 2011), others work with the specificity of art to the culture to which they "belong" (Elkins 2002; Grenier 2014). Itinerant artists and their work are well positioned as a locus from which transnational practices and notions of multiculturalism and essentialism can be problematized.

This chapter focuses on the issues raised by the historiography applied to Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), sculptor, artist, furniture and stage set designer, and landscape architect who represented America at the 1986 Venice Biennale. Noguchi, born in Los Angeles to a Scottish-American mother, Léonie Gilmour and a Japanese father, Noguchi Yonejirō (also known as Yone Noguchi), lived in both the United States and Japan. While spending much of his early years in Japan, Noguchi returned to the United States in 1918: Noguchi then spent some of the next ten years at the sculpture studios of Gutzon Borglum (1867–1941) and Onorio Ruotolo (1888–1966). During the Second World War supporting Japanese Americans, Noguchi was a voluntary internee in a relocation camp for "aliens" in Poston, Arizona. In the early 1950s, he participated in the project to build a memorial park at ground zero, the location of the atomic bomb explosion in Hiroshima, where his bridge designs were constructed (1951–1952). However, his proposal for the memorial monument was declined by the city of Hiroshima perhaps reflecting the uneasy position he occupied at this time.

Unlike some of his American Abstract Expressionist colleagues, such as Franz Kline (1910–1962), Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), and David Smith (1906–1965) who rarely left the country, Noguchi's long career was characterized by border crossing in both physical and disciplinary terms. In his mid-twenties, he studied in Paris at the studio of modernist sculptor Constantin Brâncuși (1876–1957) (see Figure 16.1), whom Noguchi admired after visiting Brâncuși's solo exhibition in New York (The Brummer Gallery, 1926). Traveling widely Noguchi returned to New York, re-visited Paris in 1930, and traveled to Beijing and Tokyo. In the mid-1930s he went to California, then on to participate in the Mexican Mural Movement where he made a relief for the Abelardo L. Rodríguez

FIGURE 16.1 Constantin Brâncuși, *Léda*, polished bronze and nickel, 53 × 79 × 24cm, 1926. Paris, Centre Pompidou – Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre de Création Industrielle. *Source*: Photo © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais/ Bertrand Prévost./© Succession Brâncuși – All rights reserved. ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2016.

Market in Mexico City (1935–1936). Postwar until the mid-1950s he traveled from Western Europe, across what was then termed Eurasia to East Asia, and from the early 1960s worked at studios in three countries: Italy, Japan, and the United States.

Unsurprisingly perhaps the historiography of Noguchi's life is dominated by two narratives as seen even in his own recognition, one that he was the bridge between both parents' cultures, East and West; the other that as a traveler he was freed from this heritage (Wolf 2010, 141). During the twentieth century, the latter "cosmopolitan"[2] identification followed him everywhere as it chimed with the universalist aesthetics of modernism where individual alienation was understood as contributing to artistic "creation." More recently Noguchi's "Japanese-American-ness" has been re-focused back to the first image of him as bridging East and West. While the less explored aspects of his work have started to be investigated, there is still debate surrounding this revision as valuing Noguchi's Otherness in the West obscures his crossing of national borders. In addition, his association with the "Orient" needs to be re-examined contextually rather than being taken as fixed and

unchanging (Lyford 2013). Locating these issues in the current art historical debate on pluralizing modernism, this chapter examines Noguchi's 1930 sculpture *Chinese Girl* in Japan in terms of how this work participated in producing, rather than passively reflecting, cultural images of nations. Refusing to interpret this piece as an embodiment of universal humanity, a Western imitation of "Oriental" artefact, or an "authentic" Eastern product, I problematize both the universalized and essentialist, pluralized approaches to art in the modern period.

In Search of Pluralized Narratives of Modernism

Established in the late nineteenth century modernism was the dominant discourse of modern art for the first two thirds of the twentieth century. Although subject to critical scrutiny from the 1930s by social art historians such as Meyer Schapiro (Schapiro 1978), the conception of a universally shared aesthetic value, regardless of temporal/spatial differences, dominated art criticism in the twentieth century. However, Western-centricity and modernist rhetoric fit uncomfortably with contemporary globalization and postcolonial theories (Elkins 2002; Wood 2014). Re-narrating worldwide modern art practices have complicated and decentralized the modernist narrative: to embrace diversity in terms of artistic style, medium, and artists' gender, race, or sexuality at the same time broadening arts' geographic/geopolitical location.

Arguably revision of modernism's certainties was accelerated by the exhibition *"Primitivism" in 20th-Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* (The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1984) (see Chapter 5, this volume). Parading under an assumed universalism, this widely cited exhibition infamously juxtaposed non-Western artefacts with Western modern art as a source of inspiration: in the name of "affinity." Co-curator of this show, William Rubin claimed that there was a "profound identity of spirit" (Rubin 1984, 265) shared by both modernist and non-Western people. The anthropologist James Clifford maintained that such showcasing valued the "primitive" artefacts only in terms of their contribution to the modernist mindsets; the curatorial conceit unilaterally obscured cultural appropriation in the name of humanity and dismissed "Third World modernisms" (Clifford 1988, 195). The "temporal coevalness" (Antliff and Leighten 2003, 219) of what were referred to as "tribal" and "modern" had to be concealed to hold the dualist structure of primitivism: assuming someone is "primitive," confirms "us" as "cultivated." In this structure the idea of "progress" is essential to evaluate the latter; but when "tribal" is supposed to be unchangeable and ahistorical, to assume that it shares the same moment with the "modern" would undermine the dualist model (Antliff and Leighten 2003). Uncovering in this way the inherited Orientalist model of defining the "non-Western" as the Other, what Jean Fisher calls a "universalised particularism" (Fisher 2009, n.p.), the "universality" claimed by MoMA's exhibition seemingly left the non-West in an ahistorical realm.

Organized in response to the criticism of MoMA's exhibition, *Magiciens de la Terre* (Centre Georges Pompidou and La Grande Halle de La Villette, Paris, 1989) invited further, ongoing debate regarding Western art historical frameworks applied to global contexts. Underpinning this project was egalitarianism, enabled through "exchange and dialogue" (Buchloh 2013, 229). Fifty participants from the "West" and fifty "non-West" participants made work on site, which highlighted the temporal synchronicity of artists from both groups. However, the "temporal coevalness" presented by the *Magiciens* did not encompass arts prior to post-modernism. Reviewing the first edition of *A World History*

of Art (Honour and Fleming 1982), which claimed to encompass art around the world, the British artist and participant of *Magiciens*, Rasheed Araeen, suggests that while African and Asian art history until the nineteenth century is discussed regionally, in the twentieth century, art from those regions is examined only within the context of primitivism in the West (Araeen 1989, 10). While Honour and Fleming's seventh edition (2009) introduces post-Second World War transnational practices of non-Western artists and reflects on the popularity of international art biennials, non-Western art particularly during the first two thirds of the twentieth century is rarely discussed. The synchronicity of art around the world is usually attributed to the contemporary period (Smith 2011); however, attention has more recently been paid to transnational artistic practices before the 1960s (Marter 2007; Stephens 2014; Wood 2014).

During a re-evaluation and partial restaging in 2014 of the 1989 exhibition, *Magiciens de la terre Retour sur une exposition légendaire* (Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris) the curatorial team highlighted the anthropological approach of *Magiciens* where participants were both selected and identified in the exhibition catalogue by location on a map. To liberate the context of modern art-making from Western-centricity, the exhibition aimed to reinforce "the message of equality, and at the same time assigns difference to the individual rather than the group" (Lafuente 2013, 13FN). The geographical specification made it difficult to embrace itinerant artists while underlining the "indigenousness" of artistic practices. Underpinning the original exhibition was multiculturalism, a position that maintains the coexistence of diversified and distinguished cultures. While applying "magicien" instead of "artist" can suggest a curatorial intention of relativizing canonic "Western" terminology, it runs the risk of restricting potential diversity. Within the multiculturalist trope of culturally specific contexts of art making and appreciation, artists from the "peripheries" – previously dismissed or narrated unilaterally as the ahistorical Other – have apparently obtained a voice to represent themselves.

However multiculturalism is an epistemology that hinders us from observing what is occurring on borders and boundaries and often reinforces the myth of "authenticity" and "essentialism" by attributing to individuals a fixed national, ethnic, racial group, or culture. Araeen was cautious about enshrining a Western multiculturalism that could be "used as a cultural tool to ethicise its non-White population in order to administer and control its aspirations for equality" (Araeen 1994, 9). Further, this apparent egalitarianism prevents us from focusing on the centripetal impact of the West's modernism (Elkins 2002; Giès 2014).[3] The *Magiciens'* underlying dichotomy to oppose "non-West" to the "West" has been challenged for its Western-centricity. Re-evaluating *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain* (The Hayward Gallery, London, 1989), the re-assessment of postcolonial response and commitment by artists of Afro-Caribbean and Asian ancestry to modernist art in United Kingdom, Jean Fisher reminds us that some exhibition pieces were then reviewed in modernist terms as "derivative" rather than "authentic." She insists on the need to reflect on art's geographical/ethnic attachment beyond polarization, and to revisit "cosmopolitanism" to bring intricacy of identity in cross-border politics into our discussion of modernism (Fisher 2009, n.p.).

Isamu Noguchi: From the "Universal" to a "Japanese-American"

A salient example of changing historiographies can be read out of the mid-twentieth century career of Noguchi. A review of *Fourteen Americans*, curated by Dorothy Miller (1904–2003) at MoMA in 1946 is telling. According to the managing editor of *Art News*,

Thomas Hess (1920–1978) who celebrated Noguchi's state of exile as a symbol of "universal humanity,"

> Isamu Noguchi, half-Japanese and half-Scotch-American, has carried his exile inside him like his skeleton … In his exiles … this artificer has fashioned a conscience for a greater race than either of his own, humanity, and has fused in his art the East and the West as they were fused in his body … Noguchi has justified his exiles … In the smithy of his soul he has forged the uncreated conscience of his race – humanity. He has realized his dream of universal intelligibility.
>
> (Hess 1946, 34)

Moreover, referring to the semi-abstract figuration of an early work of Noguchi, *Miss Expanding Universe*, 1932, Hess argues that the "cultures of East and the West met in abstraction" (Hess 1946, 50). Noguchi's art is related to his family background while the exhibition curator emphasized the internationalism of "American" art, as "the world of art is one world and … it contains the Orient no less than Europe and the Americas" (Miller 1946, 8). Noguchi's inclusion as a successor to both traditions of East and West perfectly met the aim to portray the "American" as inclusive in terms of artists' cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Lyford 2003, 137). Another interpretation can be gleaned from the review: in synthesizing East and West Noguchi achieved a "humanity" that transcends individuality. Hess also uproots Noguchi from both countries in order to attain "universality." Subsequently, Noguchi and his art have been characterized by exiled neutrality. Close friend Buckminster Fuller's (1895–1983) foreword to Noguchi's autobiography, *Isamu Noguchi: A Sculptor's World* (Noguchi 1968) further develops this view, interpreting Noguchi's non-belongingness as a proof of his cosmopolitanism,

> Unaware that the absolute political sovereignties of yesterday's world were to melt and merge into a unitary cosmos, Isamu travelled on and on, not as a tourist … but as the intuitive artist precursor of the evoluting [*sic*], kinetic one-town world man. As the unself-conscious prototype artist of the new cosmos, Isamu has always been inherently at home – everywhere … it proved biologically and intellectually impossible for him to escape his fate of being a founding member of an omni-crossbred world society.
>
> (Fuller 1968, 7)

Addressing rootlessness as a synonym for universality, Fuller who advocated the idea of the wholeness of the earth in *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* (1968), presents Noguchi's family background and his wandering tendency as his unique characteristic. It is noteworthy that in this foreword being uprooted is described as an artistic identity; he is portrayed as a cosmopolitan artist who has the freedom to travel. Fuller describes Noguchi's uprootedness as integral to his identity as a cosmopolitan artist, rather than as a Japanese-American fated by birth. The mythology gained ground when the modernist art historian Sam Hunter emphasized Noguchi's "world citizen" status.

> [W]hile Noguchi did not feel entirely at home either in Japan or America, his artistic achievement shows him to be a citizen of the world, on a plane beyond nationality. He has turned the sense of non-belonging, in fact, into a series of remarkably courageous and esthetically viable acts of repossession, and managed to combine in triumphant synthesis important features of both Eastern and Western tradition.
>
> (Hunter 1978, 22–24)

From Hess to Hunter the idea of synthesizing East and West as unique to Noguchi's family background was gradually developed into the image of the itinerant modernist artist. Sustaining the modernist's aesthetic of "art's universality," the idea of "non-belonging" applied to Noguchi corresponded to "the identity of artist as alien, outside conventional society," a notion shared by his New York colleagues in the mid-twentieth century (Ashton 1992, 16). This state of "alienation" challenged the academic conventions of the bourgeoisie, "[t]heir self-referentiality, their propinquity and mutual isolation all served to represent the artist as necessarily estranged, and to ratify as canonical the works of radical estrangement" (Williams 2007, 35).

Noguchi, close friend of Armenian born Abstract Expressionist Arshile Gorky (1904–1948), was familiar with constant displacement encountered in New York's avant-garde art world – a place Raymond Williams describes as "the City of Emigrés and Exiles" (Williams 2007, 34). However, as modernist universalism was problematized by multiculturalism, the cosmopolitanism associated with Noguchi's as a "traveler" became less absolute. Accordingly, Noguchi's connection with "Asia," once obscured by the modernist notion of the "world citizen," has recently been restored.[4] While recent studies are rather cautious of stereotypically labeling artists of Asian ancestry by their heritage, the artists' works are nevertheless tenaciously examined winding around the hybridization of their life and identity as "Asian American." As acknowledged, despite his American citizenship, Noguchi was often misidentified as "Japanese" or even "Oriental" in the American context with regard to his art as well as his nationality (Altshuler 2003). Does the multiculturalist re-identification of Noguchi as a hyphenated "Japanese-American" overwrite this "misreading" of him addressing his Otherness? Amy Lyford problematizes Noguchi's re-evaluation in recent American art historical discourse as "Orientalist":[5]

> Noguchi's inclusion in the canon of modern American art responds to the efforts of art history as a discipline to become a more inclusive field of study. It has opened a place in art history survey texts for underrepresented groups of artists (women, blacks, Asians, Latinos). But even as the field has grown more inclusive, it continues to aestheticize Noguchi's race as an unchanging concept and fails to ask political, social, and historical questions about the aims and significance of specific works he created.
>
> (Lyford 2013, 7)

In relativizing modernist rhetoric, Noguchi studies may revert to an essentialist interpretation highlighting Noguchi's Otherness. Further, by interpreting his "Japanese-Americanness" one-dimensionally we not only confirm the existence of pre-fixed regional, racial, or cultural frameworks but risk ignoring Noguchi's mid-century period as a modernist artist who was regarded, even by himself (Noguchi 1968, 39), as a universal "world citizen." Moreover within an adapted and enlarged modernism, Noguchi has been re-identified as a modernist without critically reflecting on the position he occupied in the previous narrative.

Revisiting the Artist Image as a "Traveler"

In the 1990s there was a paradigm shift in the field of anthropology from epistemology to social constructivism. Here Arjun Appadurai redefined "locality" as an "aspect of social life" which is "relational and contextual rather than … spatial," and "neighborhood" as "actually existing social forms in which locality, as a dimension or value, is variably realized"

(Appadurai 1995, 204). Conventional anthropological studies assume cultural practices such as rites to be defined by existing communities, however such local practices actually create "local subjects" who, committed to "neighborhood," produce the idea of locality (Appadurai 1995, 205). Appadurai's re-evaluation of neighborhood is relevant to interpretations of Noguchi's work.

> In one dimension, at one moment and from one perspective, neighbourhoods as actually existing contexts are prerequisites for the production of local subjects ... But as these local subjects engage in the social activities of production, representation and reproduction (the 'work of culture'), they might exceed the existing material and conceptual boundaries of the neighbourhood.
>
> (1995, 209–210)

In this way culture cannot be an *a-priori* set of practices: culture's agent-participatory nature prevents universalism by focusing on the specificity of each cultural practice. "Locality" is further complicated through migration and tourism. Appadurai names this state "translocality" where "various circulating populations with kinds of 'locals'" (Appadurai 1995, 216) are woven together. Accordingly, what we regard as a field is evolved not merely in "intertextual" but "intercontextual" complexity (Appadurai 1995, 212). Clifford, referring to Appadurai, questions the way "cultural analysis constitutes its objects – societies, traditions, communities, identities – in spatial terms and through specific spatial practices of research" (1997, 19). Clifford argues that conventional research methods function to reduce diversity into a singular easily managed fixed narrative that corresponds with the researchers' system of thought. To amend this "translocality" where multiple processes of producing locality cross, Clifford proposes to think of people as "travelers" instead of ethnicitizing "them" who are "native" as unique to a certain "field" (1997, 23). Clifford does not suggest replacing the "native" with the intercultural "traveler" and advises against making the margin a new center, as "we" are all travelers suggesting,

> [...] that specific dynamics of dwelling/traveling be understood comparatively ... Why not focus on any culture's farthest range of travel while also looking at its centers, its villages, its intensive fieldsites? How do groups negotiate themselves in external relationships, and how is a culture also a site of travel for others? How are spaces traversed from outside? To what extent is one group's core another's periphery?
>
> (Clifford 1997, 24–25)

Traveling and displacement are discussed in sociological terms not as just spatial movement from one place to another, but as a process of actively producing images of familiarity and the Other through differentiation (MacCannell 1999; Urry 1990). Contrasting "cultural difference" to "cultural diversity," Homi K. Bhabha draws attention to differentiations as an essential process through which meanings are produced,

> Cultural diversity is an epistemological object ... whereas cultural difference is the process of enunciation of culture as "knowledgeable", authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification. If cultural diversity is a category of comparative ethics, aesthetics or ethnology, cultural difference is a process of signification through which statements of culture or on culture differentiate, discriminate and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity.
>
> (Bhabha 2004, 49–50)

Bert Winther-Tamaki reinterprets Noguchi as a "maker of places" (Winther-Tamaki 2001, 117), examining his work produced in Japan, France, and the United States in the early 1950s to mid-1960s; his account reveals Noguchi's context-specific interpretations of "Japan." To undermine the bicultural teleological readings of Noguchi's art, Winther-Tamaki retrieves Fuller's cosmopolitan admiration of Noguchi as an "inveterate traveler" and identifies his career as an "itinerary through a scattered range of places" (2001, 117). In a period when the idea of universal humanity is no longer defensible, art historians are developing an awareness of the ways locality is produced. By revisiting Noguchi's passage to East Asia, we catch a glimpse of the ways his artistic/national identity as well as cultural images of "the West," "China," and "Japan" were constructed and reconstructed within the "intercontextual" settings of the early 1930s.

Noguchi in Beijing[6]

In 1927, Noguchi successfully applied for the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship to study in Paris. He spent two years there studying at Académie de la Grande Chaumière and working for Brâncuşi the Romanian pioneer modernist. In the application in 1927, Noguchi outlined his aim to extend his trip to Asia as well, in order to introduce the East, the "Orient," to the West,[7] although he had to give up this original plan since his request to extend the fellowship was not accepted. After returning to New York in 1929, Noguchi re-visited Paris the following year intending to travel to Tokyo. However, estranged from his father and unclear about his reception Noguchi stayed temporarily in China. He had read Laurence Binyon's (1869–1943) *The Flight of the Dragon* (1911), and during a visit to London in 1928, met Binyon who worked as curator of prints for the British Museum (Winther-Tamaki 2003 and 2013). Thus, when Noguchi started his journey to Asia in the early 1930s, the "Orient" already had a double meaning: a subject of cultivated interest in the Western context as well as a place in which he found attachment as "home." By exploring the ways Noguchi imagined "China" and how the country was imagined in Japan, an unstable and complex image of the "Orient" is revealed.

In July 1930, Noguchi arrived in Beijing from Paris via Moscow. The 2013–2014 exhibition, *Isamu Noguchi/Qi Baishi/Beijing 1930*[8] details the calligrapher Qi Baishi (1864–1957) and Noguchi's study of Chinese ink and brush painting with Qi. Qi, born into a peasant family in Xiangtan district, Hunan province, was a self-taught painter, calligrapher, and stamp carver. He gained an international reputation as representative of Chinese contemporary artists, exhibiting at the Second Sino-Japanese Joint Painting Exhibition in Tokyo in 1922. Noguchi was introduced to Qi by a Japanese art collector, Katsuizumi Sotokichi (1889–1985) who worked for the Yokohama Specie Bank in Beijing known for supporting Japan's investment activities in Manchuria, the northeastern part of China.

Following the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), Japan began colonizing Taiwan[9] and Korea in 1895 and 1910 respectively, and acquired the rights and interests of the South Manchuria Railway Company in 1906.[10] In September 1931, the Japanese imperial army destroyed the railway line near Mukden (the Liutiaohu Incident) and the subsequent invasion of northeastern China is known as the Manchurian Incident. The Japanese government established its puppet state "Manchukuo" in 1932, accelerating Japan's imperialist policy on the continent. The Manchurian Incident is a turning point in the modern history of Japan as the Japanese government abandoned its pro-American/British policy and expanded its imperialism: the Japanese Monroe Doctrine for Asia (Eguchi 1994). Having complacently identified

itself as a "leading nation of Asia comparable to the West" to justify its aggressive acts and colonization of East and Southeastern Asia, Japan engaged in the Fifteen Year War (1931–1945), which included the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945) and Pacific War (1941–1945). Noguchi's encounter with Qi and Katsuizumi in Beijing was shortly before the Manchurian Incident, which began in the middle of the Nika Art Exhibition in Tokyo where Noguchi submitted work.

In Beijing Noguchi painted at Qi's studio using ink on paper but did not follow the conventional practice of the literati painting tradition (Oyobe 2013, 20): Noguchi painted human figures from life including male and female nudes, infants, and monks wearing draped robes. Natsu Oyobe argues that Noguchi selectively studied Qi's art, exploring ways of portraying the human body so as to liberate himself from his admiration for Brâncuşi's abstractions, probably by developing his own abstract forms (Oyobe 2013).

In addition to ink paintings, Noguchi made one sculpture, a small, painted plaster-work titled *Chinese Girl*, which depicts a crouching female nude with her right elbow resting on the floor.[11] Without sufficient materials for further work *Chinese Girl* is Noguchi's only sculpture from Beijing. Winther-Tamaki suggests that its acrobatic pose was possibly inspired by Binyon's interpretation of the tomb figurines from the Tang Dynasty, and that there is also a resemblance between *Chinese Girl*'s pose and Noguchi's drawings from Beijing (Winther-Tamaki 2003, 10). An image of a woman similarly posed can be found in the archives of the Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum in New York[12] – both *Chinese Girl* and this drawing show a figure depicted with the right elbow on the ground while the left hand is placed on the left knee.[13] Winther-Tamaki suggests that *Chinese Girl* does not have the literary subject, flawless surface, or dignified pose of academic convention, and identifies the piece as Rodinesque, a form already widely practiced among American conservative sculptors. He accordingly doubts (apart from its subject matter) this work's contribution to Noguchi's ambition to "interpret the East to the West" (Winther-Tamaki 2003, 9). Considering Noguchi's use of a variety of sculptural materials, styles, and techniques, from academism in bronze to abstraction in polished brass and wood, Noguchi's imagined "China," rather than his direct understanding of Chinese culture, can be read out of *Chinese Girl*. With her eyes closed, *Chinese Girl*'s dark painted unpolished surface exposes her vulnerable undressed body to viewers; this image contrasts with Noguchi's Brâncuşian abstract work from his Paris period and the polished metal portrait sculptures such as the *Portrait of R. Buckminster Fuller* (1929), both of which characterize Noguchi's admiration for modern art forms. Moreover the subject matter of Noguchi's Beijing ink drawings particularly the Buddhist monks and women are easily identified as "Chinese" by their robes and typical chignon hairstyle. Noguchi's depiction of "China" can be identified as part of the Orientalist tradition of imagining the Other through spirituality and femininity. As Winther-Tamaki acknowledges, Noguchi often matched material and style to subject matter (Winther-Tamaki 2003 and 2013). The "Chinese" subjects, signification as the Other, are further highlighted as Noguchi chose ink on paper for his drawings of *Chinese Girl*, and an unconventional pose, material, and rough colored surface for the sculpture. Thus, it can be argued in these Beijing works Noguchi's interpretation of "China" stands in contrast to "Western modernism" with which Noguchi was familiar.

To Japan

In January 1931, Noguchi left China for Japan where his arrival at Moji Port captured journalists' attention. An article entitled "Return of Yone Noguchi's Beloved Son to Japan

for Studying" contains a commentary by Noguchi which might be a nonliteral translation from a nationalist perspective,

> There is no uniqueness in American art world as people enshrine French art etc., although there is one Japanese young man who was brought into sudden prominence at the new art world in New York and lionized. It is Mr. Kuniyoshi Yasuo, thirty years old, who is the leading figure in the American art circle. Being funded by the Carnegie Foundation, he is working enthusiastically for other Japanese. Since my father advised me to come back to Japan to concentrate on my paintings and sculptures rather than studying in America whose artistic uniqueness is limited, I agree with him and returned back to my home country of admiration.
>
> <div align="right">(Anon. 1931a, 7)</div>

Noguchi's arrival was reported as the "return" of a "Japanese" man acquainted with the American art scene, his name written following the Japanese convention, his family name followed by his given name, both in Chinese characters.[14] In Japanese art history his name has usually been written according to Western convention and in the katakana syllabary, which generally suggests the persons' non-Japanese nationality.[15] Noguchi had American citizenship, but his association with Japan was emphasized throughout his 1931 stay. This identification of Noguchi cannot be understood solely by his paternal consanguinity but also by nationalist sentiment in Japan in the interwar period, outlined earlier. The Japanese painter Yasuo Kuniyoshi (1893–1952) who worked mostly in the United States was welcomed as a member of the Nika Association, and identified as an "American Fujita" (Anon. 1932, 7).[16] The labeling of Noguchi as a "Japanese" boy returning from America is comparable to that of Kuniyoshi; this is in stark contrast to his reception in post-Second World War Japan as an "American modernist."

During his eight months in Japan, Noguchi worked in the potter Uno Ninmatsu's (1864–1937) Kyoto studio where he recast *Chinese Girl* in terracotta (Altshuler 2003, 194) (see Figure 16.2) and produced *Tamanishiki, Erai Yatcha Hoi, The Queen, Sunflower, Uncle Takagi, Peking Duck*, and *Tsuneko-san*: works showcased in a series of solo exhibitions in America. Before leaving Japan, Noguchi took part in an art exhibition organized by the Nika Association (Nika-kai) at the Ueno Park Tokyo Art Museum (now Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum).[17] Founded in 1914 the independent Nika Association challenged academic conservatism. The association was established by a group of artists who were dissatisfied with government-sponsored exhibitions which did not fully embrace those working in non-academic styles. The annual Nika Art Exhibition originally just for paintings, by 1931, it had also become a platform for Japanese sculptors who valued Western modernism. Noguchi participated with the support of founding association member Arishima Ikuma (1882–1974). Arishima was a painter and novelist of the Shirakaba group who, advocating liberalism and individualism, promoted modern art after Impressionism through their periodical, *Shirakaba*. Having contact with August Rodin (1840–1917), the exhibition organized by the Shirakaba group in 1912 was the first showcasing of his sculpture in Japan (Tanaka 2012). The British potter, Bernard Leach (1887–1979) was another influential figure engaged in the philosophy and activities of the Shirakaba group, who bridged the British Arts and Crafts movement and Mingei, the Japanese folk art movement. The founder of the Mingei movement, Yanagi Muneyoshi (1889–1961) was one of the prominent contributors to *Shirakaba*. The Nika Association consisted of artists who were similarly enthusiastic about European modernist artists such as Van Gogh and Paul

FIGURE 16.2   Isamu Noguchi, *Chinese Girl (Girl Reclining on Elbow)*, terracotta, 1930 (cast 1931). The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York. *Source*: Photo The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York/© The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum/ARS, New York and DACS, London 2016.

Gauguin. Along with members' work, Nika exhibitions included the work of European modernists, such as Pablo Picasso's *Head of a Jester* (1905) in 1930 and Henri Matisse's *Nu (Carmelita)* (1903) in 1932. However, Noguchi's work was exhibited among works submitted by Japanese artists in the 1931 exhibition, while the French sculptor Ossip Zadkine (1890–1967) showed his work as an invited modernist artist from abroad.

The exhibition reflected the ideological tension among artists in Japan during the interwar period. Male dominance and the imperialistic nature of the Japanese art world was broken in 1931 when a work by a female sculptor Takeda Mieko and a Chinese artist Zhèng Liào were shown. However, the exhibition was censored by the Metropolitan Police Department, and received front-page newspaper coverage: "An Unprecedented Censorship on Art Circle" (Anon. 1931c, 1). Tsuda Seifū's (1880–1978) painting *Bourgeois Diet and the Lives of the Masses*, 1931[18] with a line from Karl Marx's *Wage Labour and Capital* (1849) attached, could only be shown with the quote removed and title changed to *The New Diet*.[19] Arishima Ikuma's *The Memorial of Kanto Great Earthquake*[20] was also changed and Kinoshita Yoshinori's (1898–1996) sculpture *Female Nude*[21] was removed. Ueno Kenzō suggests that unlike an earlier period of "adopting" European frameworks where government and artists were working together,[22] censorship after the 1910s reveals the conflict between "power" and "art" (Ueno 1997, 29). Noguchi submitted two sculptures: *Chinese Girl*, and *Tamanishiki*, a figure of a *sumo* wrestler (Anon. 1931b, 9) but only *Chinese Girl* was selected.[23] *Chinese Girl* survived the censorship, was lauded in reviews for its sense of intimacy (Shimizu 1931, 108) and eroticism (Anon. 1931d, 3), and described

as a sculpture "modeled from a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old girl in Beijing" (Kojima 1931, 9). Perhaps less contentious than other censored work it was received positively as a depiction of a "young Chinese woman" by a "Japanese" sculptor.

In the socio-political context of Japan "China" was the Other alongside "Taiwan," "Korea," and "Southeast Asia." These "peripheries" were imagined, often with images of sexualized women, exotically subordinated to the modern, Westernized and industrialized metropolis where Japanese artists worked. Such images of the Other which were the product of the Japanese artists' search for identity placed them in a double bind. Many artists, particularly those specializing in oil painting or Western style sculpture, had studied in Europe, and acknowledged the "Westerner's" Orientalist gaze towards Japan as the Other to the West. They portrayed "Japanese Orientalism" (Kim 2005, 246) or "Oriental Orientalism" (Kikuchi 2005, 123) by viewing East Asian countries as the Other, ruled by imperial Japan, while comparing themselves with "Westerners" (Kim 2005; Kojima 2013).

An interest in "China" and its culture flourished first in the Japanese literary scene and then in fine art; the trend to "Sinophilia" (Kaizuka 2014, 109) was developed throughout the interwar years. As people traveled from Japan to Europe via China, the exoticism of Chinese people and customs, literally and in the imagination, became popular with Japanese artists (Kaizuka 2014). The earliest Chinese female figure, *Perfume*, 1917[24] by Fujishima Takeji (1867–1943), was showcased at a government-sponsored exhibition where it captured fellow artists' attention (Kojima 2002 and 2013; Kaizuka 2014), as did Arishima Ikuma's *Spring in Jiannan*, 1938[25] depicting two women in Chinese-style dress with a male Japanese soldier on horseback. Kojima Kaoru compares the relationship between Japan and China to that between France and Italy. "Italy" was, among art students in France, regarded as a realm of classicism although its golden age had passed. The Japanese painters similarly saw "China" as a country of admiration in the historical past; they identified "Japan" as modern, similar to France (Kojima 2002 and 2013). Yet, those figures were not necessarily Chinese; artists favored Japanese models dressed in Chinese-style, to add a sense of modernity to the historical past (Ikeda 2002). At the time Noguchi's *Chinese Girl* was exhibited, such eroticized images of "Chinese women" were widely appreciated in Japanese art as part of an imperialist mindset whereby male Japanese artists who admired the "West" were able to establish their identity as "modern," "civilized" men.

Noguchi's *Chinese Girl* was one example of Japanese modern art producing and consuming images of Chinese women but unlike similar images Noguchi's work was nude. Japan's scant historical knowledge of "Western art" created difficulties in differentiating "nude" from "naked." Although sustained by the heterosexual male gaze (Nead 1992), according to Kenneth Clark the difference between "nude" and "naked" constitutes the core aesthetics of academism in Europe (Clark 1956). Yet in Japan, with no convention of representing divine, heroic images or allegorical subjects in idealized nudity, the unclothed human body was regarded as "naked." Further nude works were sometimes labeled as *Shunga*, pornographic images familiar through the popular print in Japan since the seventeenth century (Wakakuwa 1997, 46). Images containing nudity could be subject to censorship or exhibited with restrictions (Kuraya 2007). Nudity however was also enshrined in Japan's "Westernization" where it symbolized nothing but "art." Norman Bryson argues that when Japanese artists studied in Paris and drew female nudes, they took part in "the masculine camaraderie of the studio" (Bryson 1994, 104).[26] To appreciate female nudity without confusing it with sexual desire was understood as proof of "cultivation," that is to say to be "Westernized" (Kojima 2013, 174–175): "Japanese male painters, by drawing the body of Western women, became capable of believing that they were standing on the same standard" (Kojima 2013, 174). Drawing the nude became widespread among

Japanese artists; particularly popular at the male-only Tokyo Art School (Kojima 2013, 175). Depictions of female nudity in Japanese modern art was thus another way that male artists could be seen as "cultivated." Further, artists worked on making the nude more accessible to the general public (Ueno 1997), so that by the 1910s those with what became known as Western "cultural capital" had an appreciation of nudity;[27] this was shared widely among those visiting art galleries, even women and children (Kuraya 2007).

The development of modern sculpture was equally complex. According to Tanaka Shūji, "in Japan which had scant contact with the Western sculpture before Rodin, narrative work of a social nature were received negatively" (Tanaka 2007, 199). Sculpture remained a divisive practice with non-Western sculptors producing works based on Buddhist tales or Shinto mythologies, while Western style sculptors preferred non-narrative works. The preponderance of the latter were female nudes (Furuta 2007, 94). Among the artworks at the Nika Art Exhibition in 1931, Noguchi's *Chinese Girl* occupies a controversial position. While there were other nudes, *Chinese Girl* depicting specifically a "Chinese woman," was represented without the typical Chinese-style dress. Despite the nudity, Noguchi's work signifies as "Chinese," although the figure is anonymous.

There were several female nudes purported to represent "Korea," "Taiwan," "Southeast Asia," and Japanese "rural areas" where they signify the geographic/ethnic Other. However while there are images of people wearing Chinese-style dress, Noguchi's work is a rare Chinese nude. Further, compared to other female nude sculptures at the 1931 exhibition, the horizontal direction of the head and crouching posture of *Chinese Girl* are distinctive. The specificity is further emphasized by its placement in the same exhibition room as the prominent sculptor Fujikawa Yūzō's *Old Man Working*.[28] Noguchi and Fujikawa's works oppose each other in terms of age, clothing, facial expression, and gender as well as posture: a nude young woman crouching eyes closed is contrasted with an elderly man, standing looking forward, dressed as a blue-collar worker or soldier,[29] the former signifying subordination, the latter representing superiority over the former. *Chinese Girl* represented a "Chinese woman," and *Old Man Working* presented an image of Japanese "superiority" over China. Consequently Noguchi's status as a producer of this work confirmed his identification by journalists as conforming to the hallmarks of a male "Japanese" artist with "Western sophistication." However, Ameda Sadayuki, a sculptor remarked,

> Mr. Noguchi Isamu's *Chinese Girl* is full of humor and is deliberately successful in its facial expression, its strange posture, and the ways of expression. He encountered what people call an excellent idea of subject.
>
> (Ameda 1931, 50)

What was defined as "strange" in Noguchi's sculpture? In another review the French art critic Élie Faure (1873–1937) visiting Japan berated the Japanese art world for adhering to the artistic trends in France (Faure 1931b, 9). Faure however praised Noguchi's sculpture, "in the work by the sculptor, Mr. Noguchi Isamu, there is a sense of ingenuous but somehow sardonic old Japan expressed in a simple and interesting manner" (Faure 1931a, 5). Faure's review demonstrates his view of "Japanese culture" as part of an Orientalist fantasy wedded to an "authenticity" which was lacking in French culture. Egawa Yoshihide acknowledges that work by Japanese modernist artists from the Nika Association exhibited in the "Japanese section" at the legendary Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1923 were similarly under-appreciated by French critics because of their subordination to the West (Egawa 2005, 200). If Faure reviewed the 1931 Nika Art Exhibition expecting to discover a "unique" Japanese art and found it in Noguchi's *Chinese Girl*, it would certainly

underline the distinctive quality of Noguchi's work. Could such a view be derived from the uneasy position *Chinese Girl* occupied in the context of Japanese modern art?

Images of "China," "Korea," and "Taiwan" were produced by artists working in Japan, but also by both Japanese and indigenous artists working outside Japan on the "peripheries" of Japanese art. The Japanese government sent leading Japanese artists to implement their art exhibition system in the colonies and "Manchukuo" (Choi 2007). The assimilation policy was applied to the colonies, but paradoxically the "locality" of each region was expected to be showcased through local work (Choi 2007; Kim 2005; Kim 2006; Rawanchaikul 2008 and 2013; Rawanchaikul *et al.* 2014; Ushiroshōji 2009). Within the Japanese imperialist context, the people and customs of the colonies were depicted as either "innocent" or "barbarous" according to the artists' Orientalist gaze. "Native" artists however re-interpreted those images as "an alternative to expressing their nationalist spirit apolitically" (Kim 2006, 346), although it was unavoidably a controversial process of artistic "self-orientalizing" (Kim 2006, 347). But such a process of participation by indigenous artists destabilized any monolithic framework of "Japanese art" which was apparently sustained by Japanese artists' gaze towards their own "Orient."

Noguchi's *Chinese Girl* similarly situated at the "peripheries" of Japanese art was also unlike work by the indigenous artist. Noguchi's depiction of "China" which he produced in Beijing could never be a simple mirror: it was another image of the Other to Noguchi himself. These representations of the Other demonstrate the impossibility of maintaining fixed cultural frameworks. Noguchi's nomadic tendencies do not imply that he adapted himself everywhere he visited or that he was alienated from any specific socio-cultural context: he certainly participated in situations requiring differing gazes. Nevertheless, the dual image of the "Orient" Noguchi maintained before departing for East Asia, as both his "home" and subject of interest, was further complicated through his journey. His dichotomous mindset of the East and the West was undermined as he produced and exhibited an image of "China" in the midst of the entangled gazes of not only the West looking at the "East," but also Japan looking both ways at the "West" and "Asia." The "Orient" evolves here as multi-layered and unstable rather than being the unchanging Other to the Occident.

Conclusion

Since the mid-twentieth century Noguchi has repeatedly been referred to as a universal world citizen that militates against the context-specificity of his work. More recently multiculturalism has provided an equally unsatisfactory framework which has tended to leave the construction of cultural frameworks unquestioned and ethicized Noguchi's art within his non-Western identity. The US exhibition *Isamu Noguchi/Qi Baishi/Beijing 1930* (2013–2014) was an attempt to complicate Noguchi's cultural "affiliation." It outlines Noguchi's sojourn in Beijing within the international contexts of the interwar period, challenges the simplistic interpretation of Noguchi as "Japanese" in the United States and "American" in Japan, and demonstrates the complexity of Noguchi's commitment to "Asia" by considering "the importance of China in his artistic formation, which is usually eclipsed by his relationship with Japan" (Oyobe 2013, 13).

Exhibiting *Chinese Girl* at the Nika Art Exhibition immediately before the Manchurian Incident, Noguchi was identified within Japan as "Japanese"[30] but by looking more closely at a "nude Chinese woman" Noguchi's identification as "Japanese" becomes less absolute when acknowledging *Chinese Girl*'s uneasy position in that context. This ambiguity

reminds us Noguchi and his migratory practices were never neutral, but "intercontextual," informed by both Western Orientalism and Japanese constructions of "China" and the "West." Unconsciously perhaps Noguchi's ever-transforming identity developed in multi-faceted ways. In Noguchi's context of developing modern art, his itinerancy disrupts multiculturalism by exposing the extent of its essentialism.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 In this chapter, unless otherwise noted, all translations from Japanese to English are by the author. Japanese words are rendered in the Hepburn Romanization system, with elongated vowels marked with macrons. As transliteration of names represents the persons' cultural affiliation in a specific context, Asian personal names are given in their customary order, family name first followed by the given name. However, those of Léonard Foujita, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Isamu Noguchi, and Yone Noguchi, are usually written with their given name first to indicate their "association" with the "Western culture," and are given as such, except for those cited in quotations. Names of scholars are written as they appear on the texts to which the author makes reference. Whilst Japanese titles of artworks cited in the main text are translated from Japanese to English, their Romanized original Japanese titles are found in the endnotes. Whenever Japanese references have a subtitle in English, the author cites the English.

2 This cosmopolitan image was a product of the modernist mindset of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. More recently however "discrepant cosmopolitanisms'"(Clifford 1997, 36) have been discussed to examine today's more diverse and fractured states of itinerany (Mitter 2008).

3 Elkins alerts us to the dominant story of art even in a period when we were aware of the necessity of pluralizing that narrative (Elkins 2002, 151). Giès similarly argues that "[a]s a model, modernity is always attached to a centralized and hegemonic cultural world. … Any other world that does not relate to this moment sees itself as though anchored in its traditions and its past, a prisoner of its origins" (Giès 2014, 134).

4 For recent art historical studies focusing on Asian-Americans artists, in which Noguchi is referred to, see Chang, Johnson, and Karlstrom (2008) and Cornell and Johnson (2008).

5 Using "Orientalism" in Saidian sense (Said 1978), Lyford points out that by emphasizing Noguchi's "Japanese" background, Noguchi is exoticized (Lyford 2013).

6 Beijing is also transcribed as Peking. When Noguchi visited, the city was called Beiping, and was also written as Peiping.

7 In the proposal of 1927, Noguchi stated: "I have selected the Orient as the location for my productive activities for the reason that I feel a great attachment for it, having spent half my life there. My father, Yone Noguchi, is Japanese and has long been known as an interpreter of the East to the West, through poetry. I wish to fulfill my heritage" (Noguchi 1993, 17).

8 University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor; The Noguchi Museum, New York; Frye Art Museum, Seattle, 2013–2014.

9 Taiwan was then known in English as Formosa.

10 While there are various definitions of "colonialism" and "imperialism," I base the term on Edward Said's description: "'imperialism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism', which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (Said 1993, 8).

11 "*Chinese Girl: Girl Reclining on Elbow* (76A)," In *Isamu Noguchi Catalogue Raisonné* (online), The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York, http://catalogue.noguchi.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/9626

12 The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum originated in the museum designed and opened by Noguchi at the artist's studio in Long Island City, New York in 1985. The Foundation and Museum now houses the richest collection of Noguchi's work and his archives.

13 *Peking Scroll.* Image ID: 6131; ID: 02625; Scan location: Box 3, File 33; Object location: CR Prints File 4B. The archives of The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, Long Island City, New York.

14 野口勇 ("Noguchi Isamu" in Chinese characters).

15 イサム・ノグチ ("Isamu Noguchi" in Katakana syllabary).

16 Fujita Tsuguharu (1886–1968), also known as Léonard Foujita, had gained reputation as an artist of the École de Paris.

17 From 3 September to 4 October 1931.

18 *Burujowa Gikai to Minshū no Seikatsu.*

19 *Shin Gikai.*

20 *Taishin Kinen.*

21 *Rafu.*

22 Revealing the male dominance of this early period of Japanese modern art, Wakakuwa Midori argues that redefining the gaze towards the female body, they had worked together to establish ethical standards of sexuality (Wakakuwa 1997).

23 *Dai Jyūhachi Kai Nika Bijutsu Tenrankai Mokuroku (The 18th Nika Art Exhibition Catalogue)*, 1931, Library of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

24 *Nioi.*

25 *Kōnan no Haru.*

26 The English translation of Bryson's quotation is re-cited from Kojima (2013, 174).

27 Kuraya's argument around "cultural capital" is based on a reading of French Sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu's 1979 *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* published in English in 1984 by Lynda Nead (1992).

28 *Hataraku Rōfu.* For the image of Fujikawa's work, see the frontispiece of *Bijutsu Shin Ron*, 6 (10), 1931.

29 This type of costume is attributed to workers and soldiers in Japan, and not the "modern boys" which were a symbol of modernization/Westernization at the time. Male images wearing costumes similar to Fujikawa's work can be seen in periodicals such as *The Asahigraph*, 17 (15), 1931 and *Senki*, 2 (10), 1929.

30 I have no intention of arguing whether during the 1931 Nika Exhibition Noguchi identified himself as Japanese or whether he shared in the Japanese imperialist gaze towards China. As Robert J. Maeda reveals, Noguchi contributed one of his Beijing paintings to a charity event to support the people in China who had suffered during imperial Japan's invasion. It is highly likely that Noguchi had developed his kinship to China and was critical of the militarism of Japan (Maeda 1999).

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Part IV

Locating Modernism: Multiple
Modernisms and Nation Building

The Many Modernisms
of Australian Art

Laura Back

Defining Australian Modernism[1]

Defining Australian modernism has become a subject of recent interest for art historians and curators within Australia. A myriad of histories can be told of the sub-cultures across different regions, starting with the version by Australian art historian Bernard Smith widely adhered to since the publication of his *Place, Taste and Tradition* (1945), and the journal *Art in Australia*, published between 1916 and 1942. Its founding editor, Sydney Ure Smith, set the agenda for what became the nation's received art history. This presented a provincial history in which Australian art was adapted to conform to the story of art elsewhere, and which appropriated a particular language and form. Yet the history of modernism in Australia can equally be described as a history of interrelated innovation and coincidence, one that could be seen as an "UnAustralian history" (Butler and Donaldson 2009, 434–437). In the twenty-first century, the question of forming a defining narrative continues to suggest new readings of an unresolved story of Australian modernism. For example, a key recent publication, *Modern Times: The Untold Story of Modernism in Australia* (Stephen, Goad, and McNamara 2008), assumes the premise that this story is as yet "untold." Even in 2009, the Heide Museum of Modern Art, Bulleen, Victoria revisited the notion of an Australian modernism, in the context of its international counterparts, through what was lauded as a "ground-breaking" exhibition, *Cubism and Australian Art*, Victoria, 24 November 2009–8 April 2010. The curators found that they had "a story worth telling, one that showed a much more encompassing embrace of Cubism by Australian artists than has been acknowledged to date, if a disparate and varied one" (Harding and Kramer 2009, 3).

In generating exhibitions of art for international audiences, it is the artificial groupings of modern artists by region or by nationality that becomes problematic rather than, for example, schools of thought. Attempts to define a broader, collective, Australian modernism often fail. Work emanating from Australia, or work shaped by artists' experience in Australia, comes under the rubric "Australian modernism," but that is not to say there is any such agreed category. The artist's place of birth is not necessarily helpful because major proponents of modernism in Australia came from elsewhere; their ideas were drawn from the intellectual capitals of Europe. For example, Danila Vassilieff, a Russian émigré, strongly influenced the modern era of art in Australia. Inge King, who was born in Germany in 1915, only came to Australia in 1951, but as part of the "Centre 5" group

of sculptors she fostered non-figurative sculpture that helped to establish modern practice in Australia. These examples, however, point to the more fundamental question of what modern art in Australia was *not*. International trends, and also the status, influence, recognition, and presence of many European artists living in Australia form part of modernism's history here. The situation is complex. Australian modern art cannot simply be viewed as another version of modernism. Within it, there are fragments that are not contiguous, some that align and belong with modernist ideas established elsewhere, and others that emerge independently. A more localized history resists Bernard Smith's (1945) nationalist reading, replacing the distance, isolation, and provincialism with a more diffuse "endless story of Australia in the world and the world in Australia" (Butler and Donaldson 2009, 437).

The survey exhibition *Australia*, held at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 21 September – 8 December 2013, assumed geographical origins to be a sufficient basis for grouping artists together, whether or not they consciously worked under the mantle of "Australian." In this respect, it is as if being Australian has a relevance and a meaning in itself. Yet a unity of purpose is difficult to trace in the history of Australian modernism: indeed why should there be such a unity of purpose? Individual artists or groups, at different times, each considered their approach to be "outside" the traditional conventions they rejected, but at what point did this bring them together? The issue of identity is unresolved on a national level and, as a result, is a feature that sets Australian art apart but continues to obscure new readings of the art itself.

For traditional Indigenous artists there is an entirely different story to tell, one which has now been drawn into a relationship with modern art. Their nationality and their culture are their own, and their traditional art and its meaning are nuanced practices, varying greatly between regions and "nations" across the continent. From an international perspective, it could easily appear that the only authentically Australian art is that produced by Indigenous artists. By virtue of their sophisticated level of abstraction, traditional Indigenous paintings often appear essentially modern, a quality exploited by the National Gallery of Australia in a current rehang of works in a gallery showing the development of Australian formalist painting.

Since there are few points of cohesion in the reception and practice of modernism in Australia, it may be misleading even to cultivate the idea of an Australian modernism, which risks becoming little more than a tokenistic label. Nevertheless, those points of cohesion that have figured prominently in the discourse will be discussed here.

Modern art in Australia has always been tied up with the problem of Australian identity, succeeding in international terms either despite its provincialism (which can lead to its being considered peripheral and imitative) or by virtue of it, in the sense that its marginalism allows it to remain free from association with the core of the avant-garde by which it is measured. Either way, it is always considered Australian first and modern second. Could it therefore be truly avant-garde? Apart from any intellectual concerns about the pursuit of modern ideas in art, Australian art has been viewed, rightly or wrongly, as conditioned by the imagery of the continent's vast and often harsh landscape, and also by its position far removed from the intellectual centers of Western civilization.

Exhibitions and collections of Australian art formed from the 1920s until the present demonstrate the peculiar way in which Australian identity remains a central theme. While early war artists were not modernists, a growing awareness of the need to understand what it was to be Australian coincided with the modernist era.

Modernism in Australia had a small number of key practitioners, but these were widely dispersed, making a definitive overview problematic. So, what can Australian culture have been during the modernist period, when interspersed in an international dialogue? Butler

and Donaldson (2009, 437) sketched some of the complex interplay of artistic connections in this period: Thea Proctor was taught by George Lambert in St John's Wood School in London; John-Peter Russell taught Henri Matisse how to use color in Belle Île; the French-trained Ambrose Patterson was the leader of the Northwest School in Seattle; Robert Klippel and James Gleeson encountered the writer and poet André Breton through the Belgian surrealist E. L. T. Mesens; and the Sydney artist Mary Webb took steps to get the Sydney modernists (Grace Crowley, Frank Hinder, and Ralph Balson) included in Michel Seuphor's 1957 *Dictionary of Abstract Painting*. The play of such a complex set of influences and artistic cross-fertilization merely underscores the difficulty of defining Australian modernism.

Geoffrey Blainey's famous description of "the tyranny of distance" (1968) has long been quoted as a feature of Australian life: the nation was clearly removed from Britain and Europe. In a world where the journey between the Antipodes and the northern hemisphere may have taken months by ship, being far away from one's European origins also meant being at a disadvantage when it came to keeping up with the latest trends and ideas from the "old world." As Margo Lewers (1934) observed after meeting British moderns Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth: "I cannot but feel that Australia is being deprived of a wealth of interest and a host of constructive ideas … by being shut off from this vast field of new expressions … We are quite out of touch … in art, literature, interior decoration and architecture" (Lewers 1934, 7).

A "new world" country typically offers opportunities to innovate, free from the conventions and constraints of the past, and this was true of Australia where modernity manifested itself in the building of such icons as the Sydney Harbor Bridge, completed in 1932 in the midst of a wave of modern design in furniture, industry, textiles, fashion, interior decoration, graphic design and architecture. This was, in fact, the perfect place for modernism to take hold – in a country where it was demonstrably possible to build a better future, as exemplified in the nation-building that has been the hallmark of Australian life since colonization. But as there was clearly a sense in which Australia was still very much part of the old world (Anglo-Celtic Australians considered themselves British until well into the 1950s), the nation shared many of the ideals and cultural concerns dominant in the "mother country." This meant clinging to an image of respectability, and even emulating British society, in an attempt to overcome the stigma of a colonial past. Thus it is all too easy to read this as a history of influence, of returning to the "source" for inspiration, rather than of generating distinctive theories evolved from Australian conditions. Australian art therefore reflects both a version of British and European (and postwar American) theories as the ideas introduced by artists who either traveled to or came from abroad were adopted or reworked. The issue of being at the center or on the margins is therefore central to an understanding of Australian modern art.

One obvious distinguishing feature of Australian art remained the treatment of landscape, its look, light, and feel: the central concerns of modernism – line, color, and form rather than subject matter – took on a local imagery. Subject matter was no longer seen as wholly irrelevant as artists created images of the distinctive Australian landscape and culture. However, landscape was not the central concern for all artists, particularly since it was the urban centers of Sydney and Melbourne that were the primary loci for the arrival and early development of modernism in Australia. Experiments in abstraction were confined to the qualities of color or form alone, while still life subjects, interiors, urban development, and design were equally prevalent.

The Heidelberg School, which did take the Australian landscape as a subject, was derived from – or at least in part owed its inspiration to – the use of light, color, and composition of landscapes in European painting.[2] This genre bore a resemblance to the familiar scenes

found in classical art, marking it part of the tradition which modernists eschewed. By contrast, early modernists such as Margaret Preston built on her experience of studying modernist principles in Europe to pursue a new use of color and graphic line. She explored the purely decorative qualities of Australian native flora in her designs, and Aboriginal motifs as a basis for imagery in her work. She saw art as serving a nationalist purpose, and was consciously creating what might be seen as a truly "authentic Australian art" (Edwards 2013, 148).

In 1913, Sydney artists Roland Wakelin, Grace Cossington Smith, and Roi de Mestre first became aware of the French avant-garde through Cézanne's work (in reproduction) and began what was to become an Australian version of formalist modernism.[3] They formed a small group outside the mainstream in which Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, and the "Australian Impressionists" were still dominant. And so, both during and after the war, artists left the country, with many of them looking to the avant-garde of Paris for inspiration.

A large number of Australian modern artists trained, lived, and worked in Britain and in Europe although some, including Stella Bowen, did not return, but are still considered Australian modernists. At home, foreign influences were still largely viewed with suspicion.

A pioneer of modern art in Australia, Grace Cossington Smith was one of the most influential "Sydney moderns." Having lived in England and Berlin in 1912–1914, she returned to Sydney and produced what is widely seen (after it was championed by Daniel Thomas curator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales) as Australia's first modernist painting, *The Sock Knitter*, 1915 (Figure 17.1). In its simple aesthetic of broad brush-strokes, flattened picture plane, and use of color and pattern, this work shows the influence of Matisse and van Gogh in its depiction of a girl knitting, a scene evocative of domestic wartime life on the Australian home front. But Cossington Smith's daring breakaway from the Australian Impressionists marginalized her. Instead of romanticizing the heroic Australian in the landscape, or on the battlefield, she looked at the quieter heroism of the domestic world and found inspiration for her modernist experimentation in everyday life. It took many years for her work to gain wide public support *The Sock Knitter* was acquired by the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1960. Cossington Smith developed a technique of flattened compositions where the motif was subordinated to color and form – a textbook demonstration of modernist principles. Her work is now acclaimed, not only for being the first example of its kind in Australia, but also for representing a truly modernist oeuvre.

National Identity in Australian Culture

As documented by Bernard Smith (1945), support for modern art in Australia between the world wars was cautious, with the first national art competition, the Archibald Prize for portraiture, established in 1921, and won by "respectable" artists who aimed to please their conservative audiences. Modernist Australian art was first exhibited at artist Adrian Feint's Grosvenor Gallery in Sydney in 1926, where over the next couple of years he showed work by the progressive Contemporary Group established by painters George Lambert and Thea Proctor. These local artists were part of a Post-Impressionist phase and had emerged largely through the Sydney studios of Julian Ashton and Antonio Datillo Rubbo. The exhibition included still life, landscapes and portraits, of a general simplicity if not strictly modernist approach, by Kenneth Macqueen, Vida Lahey, Thea Proctor, and Elioth Gruner. They presented an early yet enduring vision of Australian life. While artists
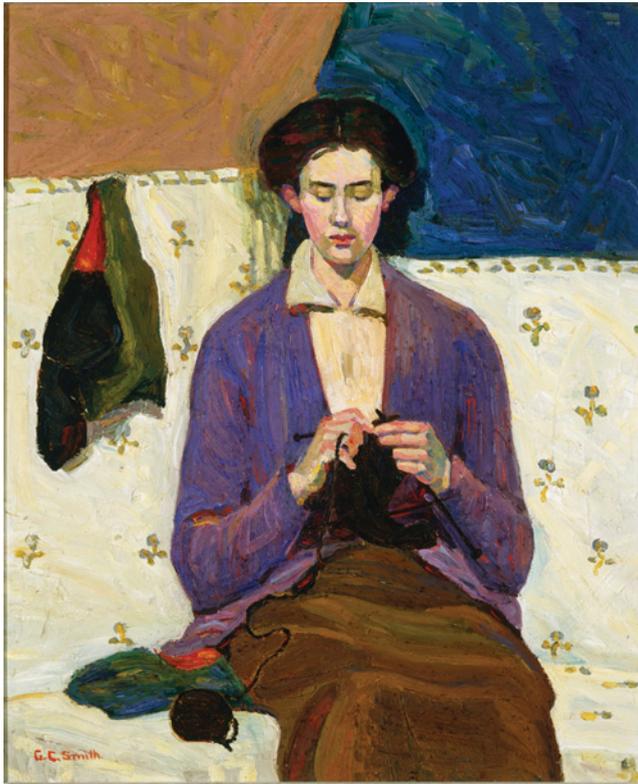
FIGURE 17.1 Grace Cossington Smith, *The Sock Knitter* (1915). Oil on canvas, 61.6 × 50.7 cm. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. *Source*: Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia/Bridgeman Images/© Estate of Grace Cossington-Smith.

quietly followed their modestly modernist interests, the "authorities" were slow to show support, favoring the conservative.

Australian modernism was indeed a part of an international movement, but it was not always distinctly so. The schools of thought that emerged in Europe were to some extent copied in Australia, as artists who studied abroad gradually returned and introduced modernist theories to Australia. It was not until 1933 that a major exhibition of British art was brought to Australia: the *Exhibition of British Contemporary Art* held at Newspaper House in Melbourne, and then at Blaxland Gallery in Sydney, in 1933. This show included the work of Augustus John, Walter Sickert, Eric Gill, and the Nash brothers. This was twenty years after the landmark *International Exhibition of Modern Art* had been held at the Armory of the Sixty-Ninth Infantry, Association of American Painters and Sculptors, New York, in 1913. Surrealism, ciphered through Herbert Read in the 1930s, was less overtly advocated in Australia, although it had a significant impact on key practitioners such as James Gleeson, James Cant, Peter Purves Smith, Robert Klippel and Donald Friend.

However, the influence of Cubism was keenly felt by a few isolated practitioners in Sydney in the 1930s, as is best seen in Grace Crowley's work *Les Baigneueses*, 1928, and as practiced abroad by expatriate artists, especially J. W. Power. Abstraction and Constructivism were adopted to a lesser extent, notably in the work of Frank Hinder, who was

influential in the 1930s for bringing the Futurist-related theory of Dynamic Symmetry from America, where he had studied in the 1920s. These adopted ideas were not widely taught, and were only slowly assimilated into Australian art: reinforcing the view that it was secondary and peripheral to contemporaneous modernist practice internationally. The Sydney schools, for example, Dorrit Black's Modern Art Centre and the Grace Crowley–Rah Fizelle School, offered formal instruction in the ideas of André Lhote and Albert Gleizes in the 1930s, after Black and Crowley had returned from studying their theories abroad.[4] Students benefited not only from the influence of Frank and his American wife, Margel Hinder, who brought an American influence, but also from that of Eleanore Lange, a German artist whose subject matter was often the city of Sydney itself.

It was not until 1939 that the work of Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Fernand Léger, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Salvador Dalí was widely experienced at first hand by Australian audiences in the *Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art* in the National Art Gallery, Adelaide which opened on the 21 August 1939. This touring exhibition was brought to Australia by newspaper proprietor Sir Keith Murdoch. It was reported to have initially provoked broad public interest but was later relegated to display at Melbourne Town Hall and David Jones (an upmarket Sydney department store) before being placed in storage during the Second World War.[5] The exhibition came at a critical time in the public debate in Australia over what was – and was not – deemed acceptable in art.

The conservative Prime Minister Robert Menzies established an Academy of Art in Australia but was actively resistant to the modern movement and a champion of the Heidelberg School. Menzies was supported by the influential tonal realist painter Max Meldrum, and the artist and critic Lionel Lindsay, who promulgated a negative view of modernism, culminating in writings such as the notorious *Addled Art*, 1942. In chapters with titles such as "Novelty," "The cult of ugliness," and "Drawing – bad and good," Lindsay deplored "the dead hand of European decadence" (1942, 16), describing modern art as "a criminal gesture" (1942, 41) and fulminating against works created "in a hurry at the behest of market-rigging dealers" (1942, 1). "The whole modern movement," he declared, "with its pretentious theories and contentment with surface decoration, must give place to high seriousness and the recovery of the traditional means of expression" (1942, 60). One target of Lindsay's ire was the Contemporary Art Society (CAS), which had formed in Melbourne in 1938; the CAS reflected the emerging interest in Surrealism, Cubism, and modernism that represented a direct backlash against the Academy.

During this period, it is significant that modern art was not unanimously considered suitable for acquisition by the nation.[6] There were no collections of international modernism in Australian galleries until decades later. State and regional galleries largely acquired works from local salon exhibitions, and the National Gallery of Victoria, the oldest public art museum in Australia, founded in 1861, was very conservative. In the early part of the twentieth century it was the only gallery to have a significant source of funds[7] with which to purchase art. However, its Director between the wars, J. S. MacDonald, was, like Menzies, renowned for being an opponent of modernism and a champion of the Heidelberg School. Under his leadership, twenty-two modern French works were rejected in 1937 alone (Snowden 2004). In the following two years, seven of Cézanne's works were recommended to the Gallery by an advisor in London, and only one was purchased. He also rejected five Gauguins, three out of the four Edgar Degas works proposed, along with two Claude Monets, two Auguste Renoirs, and works by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Édouard Manet, Eugène Delacroix, Alfred Sisley, Henri Fantin-Latour, Gustave Courbet, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Jean-François Millet, and Eugène Boudin

(Snowden 2004).[8] At the time these works were relatively inexpensive, and well within the purchasing power of the Gallery.

Despite a lack of official support, in 1939 – decades after the avant-garde was felt in Europe and America – a group in Sydney presented their manifesto in *Exhibition 1* at the art gallery of David Jones. The central figures of this group were painters Rah Fizelle, Frank Hinder, and Ralph Balson. At the same time, Post-Impressionism continued to gain popularity, with a neoclassical group of artists that included Norman Lindsay, Sidney Long, Jean Bellette and Paul Haefliger pursuing classical mythology and the poetic and spiritual qualities of Australian landscape (subjects ignored by other Sydney moderns).

Melbourne, a more conservative city than Sydney, remained the seat of government in Australia until 1927, when that function was transferred to the new planned city of Canberra. As part of the governmental establishment, modernism developed later in Melbourne, which has a colder and more somber natural environment than the harborside city of Sydney.[9] By contrast, in Sydney new design, and an acceptance of a new style for modern life, flourished. In the optimistic atmosphere of Sydney, with its beaches and sunshine, images of the idealized modern body emerged. Works such Max Dupain's iconic photograph *Sunbaker*, from 1937, and *Australian Beach Pattern*, painted by Charles Meere in 1940, portray a modern Antipodean utopia. They reveal a glimpse of a uniquely modern Australian identity. These images highlighted a tendency of Sydney towards hedonism, and of the Sydney moderns to favor the decorative. By way of broad contrast, Max Meldrum's tonal realist school held sway in Melbourne. In turn, however, this was challenged by the schools of George Bell and Arnold Shore, where Post-Impressionist painting and sculpture were quietly disseminated and where Roger Fry's ideas of modernism were being introduced.

During the upheaval in Australia after the Second World War, a backlash to the pervasive conservatism in the arts emerged more rapidly, particularly in Melbourne. The psychological distress caused by war, poverty, and social displacement saw a change in artistic practice that reflected the darker side of urban life. This mood shift intensified as the influx of displaced artists arriving from Europe increased.

One of the earliest and most influential of émigré artists to arrive in Australia was Danila Vassilieff, who came from Soviet Russia. After working in Queensland and Sydney, Vassilieff moved to Melbourne and worked with the Contemporary Art Society influencing younger artists, including Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, and Sidney Nolan. Vassilieff saw a "relationship between the modernist movement and Russian decorative art" (in Moore 2002, 443), and his use of allegory and folk traditions influenced key modern works by Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd and John Perceval, who were struck by his emotional and direct responses in an expressionist style. He became part of the bohemian artistic circle in Melbourne, where radical politics and the aggressive rejection of the established ideas about art had taken root. The seat of this idiosyncratic hotbed of ideas that fundamentally shaped modern Australian art was an old farm called Heide, just outside Melbourne, owned by wealthy Melbourne benefactors, John and Sunday Reed. They championed Vasillieff's ideas for an art that was simple, powerful and self-consciously modern, but which conveyed the raw emotion of the human condition. It was the Heide circle more than any other that appeared to express modernism in Australia.

In the early 1940s a modern literary and artistic group called the "Angry Penguins" was formed, under the influence of Max Harris, an Adelaide-based poet, and inspired by the avant-garde literary journal published from 1941 to 1946, for which he was a Principal Editor. The Angry Penguins opposed the vestiges of a culture of complacent conservatism they saw in the arts, and it was their fervor for change which finally brought about a

modernist transformation in Australia. The Heide circle artists championed the Angry Penguins' artistic and poetic revolution. The Angry Penguins gave rise to artists whose work was to radically shape what is now widely recognized as distinctively Australian modern art. As with the poets, the key Angry Penguin artists – Arthur Boyd, Albert Tucker, John Perceval, Sidney Nolan, and Joy Hester – aimed to produce art liberated from classical or academic European techniques, and which used a new vivid visual language that would similarly create a more immediate, emotional and poetic expression of their experiences. They intentionally sought to follow the early European modernist aims of Expressionism and Surrealism, with the Reeds' library of current books and magazines feeding their hunger for the new.

The Heide circle of artists fed upon a dynamic of psychological intensity and on the passionate relationships in which Nolan became embroiled when he joined the Heide circle in 1938 at the age of 21. Nolan was drawn to their reputation for challenging the *status quo*, interest in experimental poetry, and the poetic power of highly simplified imagery, which can be read out of his early work *Boy and the Moon, c.* 1939–1940, that shows a tension between abstraction and representation. Like many artists, including Arthur Boyd, Nolan was conscripted during the Second World War. He was stationed in rural Victoria but in 1944 went absent without leave and later traveled into the outback. His encounter with the severity of the flat and desolate scenery was a catalyst for his later modernist landscapes.

In *c.* 1945–1947 Nolan painted the pivotal *Ned Kelly series*, which took the Australian landscape as a backdrop for the simple imagery of his figures and his focus on an Australian folklore (Figure 17.2). In a pictorial series of twenty-seven panels, he presented a disjointed, episodic narrative. It was loosely based on a true story of the legendary

FIGURE 17.2   Sidney Nolan, *Ned Kelly* (1946). Enamel paint on composition board, 90.8 × 121.5 cm. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. *Source*: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra/Gift of Sunday Reed 1977/Bridgeman Images.

nineteenth-century Irish-Australian bushranger (outlaw), Ned Kelly, who challenged the authorities, culminating in a highly mythologized last stand in which he fought beside his brothers wearing a homemade iron helmet. The helmet became an iconic image in Nolan's paintings and became a powerful symbol in Australian art that was also employed by Arthur Boyd and revisited in recent work by Shaun Gladwell. Kelly's audacity was both ridiculed and admired. He became a rural anti-hero who symbolized the struggles of the settlers in a hostile land, a perfect metaphor for the Australian outsider, and for the image of an anti-authoritarian figure lost to society, and lost in the landscape. With its Australian setting and content, this was to become a defining image of Australian identity in modern art. The drama of the story is fused with theatricality, both in its puppet-like figures in stage-like settings, and in the intensity and vivid colors of a deeply strange country, where white people were clearly foreigners. This unequivocally Australian story told Australian audiences who they were, without presenting their history as merely a part of British history.

A tendency for the dramatic in Nolan's work has no doubt aligned with popular taste, and his inspiration came from both literary and visual worlds. Interest in Nolan as a national figure is evident in the undiminished promotion of this series as a modernist icon. Equally, the compulsion to present a recognizably Australian modern art has not diminished – indeed, it has recently gained momentum, and is found brandished at a national level as a grand statement of Australian identity. Nolan was perhaps the first to go beyond creating an image just of the landscape, and to visualize it as no longer a version of somewhere else (with which it might be compared).

Nolan's monumental and dramatic work *Snake*, 1970–1972, was first displayed at the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Hobart, Tasmania, when it opened in 2011. The ostensible reason no museum had ever displayed the approximately 45-metre-wide work was the lack of a suitably large space, although earlier reception would have been hostile. The 1,620 drawings of *Snake* make one striking image: that of a rainbow serpent.[10] This can be linked with the Kelly works of decades earlier, when Nolan had his critical and transformative confrontation with the Australian outback and its inhabitants; it was a moment when the ancient cultures of Australia, the folkloric origins of its European settlers, and the new world eye of a modern artist first came together to produce a significantly assertive image of modern Australian art. It was only in MONA, a privately funded museum, that the work was given prominence. Around the same time, the National Gallery of Australia opened a new wing dedicated to Indigenous art, and re-hung the *Ned Kelly series* in an equally prominent and unconventional curved wall gallery. Both *Snake* and the *Kelly series* have now been presented in purpose-built rooms, and given pride of place as the definitive examples of Australian modern art, much as Nolan might have originally hoped.

While individual artists can be held up as examples of the advent of modern art in Australia, their story is not always readily legible. It was not until the 1960s that Australia saw the emergence of a real discipline of art history and criticism. A key exhibition, *The Field*, was held at the National Gallery of Victoria's new building in 1968, to showcase local artists whose work signaled a change in focus, from British and European modernism to an alignment with American artists. These artists were influenced by the theories of abstraction espoused by American critic Clement Greenberg and championed locally by the local critic Patrick McCaughey.

Greenberg's formalist theories were not universally understood, or were perhaps misrepresented as the complete subordination of content to form. Nonetheless the trend for painterly abstraction gathered momentum after Australian audiences had been exposed to *Two Decades of American Painting*, a 1967 traveling exhibition from the Museum of

Modern Art in New York. It also generated fierce debate, particularly from the critic Terry Smith, who promoted the local characteristics of Australian modern art and objected to wholesale adoption of Greenberg's views. Smith expressed concern that "Australian abstract painting of the 1950s and early 1960s embodied all that was most embarrassing about local art" (Smith 2002, 16), embarrassing because it merely imitated American painting. For example, many painters were enthused by the Color Field approach of minimalism, and began to see the Australian landscape in a new way. So, while many artists were criticized for painting inferior versions of their American counterparts, others successfully explored the Australian content of the Australian landscape. The greatest proponent was Fred Williams, who painted the Australian landscape in modernist form, but unmistakably as the Australian bush. Williams was the first Australian artist to have a solo exhibition in America, *Fred Williams: Landscapes of a Continent*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1977.

Between 1974 and 1978, works by Willem De Kooning, Alexander Calder, Mark Rothko, and Robert Smithson were acquired for the Australian National Gallery, in addition to the controversial purchase of Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*, 1952, (originally titled *Number 11*) which caused a national outcry as much for its cost as for its artistic merit. Meanwhile, a group of painters who resisted American abstraction – Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, John Brack, David Boyd, Robert Dickerson, John Perceval, and Clifton Pugh – were championed by Bernard Smith, who was then Director of the influential Power Institute. Ultimately, the "Antipodeans" group gained equal currency with Williams, Nolan, and Tucker, and were recognized internationally, largely building on the success in 1961 of *Recent Australian Painting*, held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. Eventually in 1976 Smith published his *Antipodean Manifesto* in which a more figurative modernist Australian art was asserted.

To be a success was thus in part measured by the extent to which one gained recognition in other countries. The challenge was how to be seen as a modern, or even as an Australian modernist, without having recourse to Australianness as the central theme. Local art arises beyond or despite nationalistic borders. The work of Ian Fairweather, in particular, exemplified the solitary protagonist, whose peripatetic life and exploration not only of his adopted home of Australia but also of other influences, such as the arts of China, India, and South-East Asia, set him apart. His deliberate isolation placed him outside established notions of an Australian modernism, and yet he was one of the most influential artists of his generation. Fairweather's work is now hung alongside Nolan and Williams, in what is a common grouping of "Australian modernism," but while there is a degree of commonality in that they are Australian landscape artists they share neither a clear theoretical origin nor similar intent.

Both for individual artists and for the nation, the construction of a definition of Australian art has been part of a self-conscious approach which in turn has come to feature in the public diplomacy of international exhibitions. The question of Australian identity is repeatedly posed, as the idea of Australia is itself branded as a cultural product in international diplomacy. In the space of one year, 2013, the exhibition *Australia* was taken to London, while in Australia several major and also regional museums were also examining modernism, including the Sydney exhibition *Sydney Moderns: Art for a New World* and *Reality in Flames: Modern Australian Art and the Second World War*, a traveling exhibition developed by the Australian War Memorial. In 2009 the Powerhouse Museum mounted *Modern Times: The Untold Story of Modernism in Australia*: the title indicative of a belated recognition of a century of change.

Modernism, Monuments, and National Identity in Australian Art

Various themes have shaped interpretations of modernism in Australian art: the role of women artists; the role of travel; and the influence of the Australian landscape. War also shaped the development of both the Australian identity and, unsurprisingly, the art of the period. Australian culture retains a strong focus on military commemoration, and the country continues to support a national war art commissioning program. While there is no cohesive theory that can be said to have shaped Australian modernity, war itself has been upheld as a unifying feature in the Australian cultural identity.

Commemorative art, and the extensive works held in the National Collection at the Australian War Memorial in particular, demonstrates the contradictory relationship between nationalistic ideals and the advent of modernism in Australia.[11] The Official War Art Scheme set up during the First World War included painters and sculptors, and also was driven by a program of recording battlefields in dioramas for a future national war museum. Although Australia had a small population at that time – around 4.5 million – it had one of the highest per capita losses of life. The unique dioramas, which both depicted the landscape and encapsulated a narrative, had a dual function: they were intended to show families where their loved ones had fought and died on the other side of the world, but they also served as a substitute locus of remembrance.

The sculptors took the lead on this project with work designed to create a chronological spine for a series of displays, augmented by detailed sculptures, paintings and relics. The Australian War Memorial building is itself a monument, containing a Hall of Memory, with an extensive mosaic-lined dome and stained-glass windows designed by ex-soldier and artist Napier Waller in the 1950s. The Hall represented the most substantial public art commission in the nation's history. Filling the Memorial's museum galleries also resulted in numerous commissions for the sculptors who led the diorama teams. They produced statuary for the galleries that would largely explore the figure of the Australian Anzac.[12] While painters were also employed to work on the backgrounds for the dioramas, and to create paintings that would provide another level of detail to the overall narrative, the prominence of the dioramas (and of the Memorial itself as a monument) appears to have elevated the role of the sculptor to one of national importance. As a new concept combining both memorial and museum, the Australian War Memorial was monument-making taken to an extreme, a process reinforced by the inherent power of national monuments to embody ideals.

Modernist art was used in the service of nation-building, for example, in such public commissions as Tom Bass's lintel sculpture and Leonard French's stained-glass windows at the grand entrance to the National Library of Australia (1967). French believed in art for the masses while upholding modernist design principles: an approach seen earlier in the Australian War Memorial's Hall of Memory (1959).

The modernist aesthetic has often been represented as a shift from the purely figurative to the solely abstract. However, in the field of Australian sculpture, this has not always been the case. The figurative tradition in sculpture retains a certain inertial presence despite the presence of modernism. Modernist sculptors have been preoccupied with distinctly sculptural strategies which go well beyond the apparent concern for verisimilitude in relation to nature. They have dealt rather with issues such as the relationships between surface and volume, the presence of sculpture in both time and space, the realm of temporality and kineticism. They have even culminated in contesting or transcending objecthood itself – with works being defined by what they are not – as described by Rosalind Krauss (1979).

One notable exception to the lingering tradition of figurative sculpture in Australia was Robert Klippel who maintained a geometric aesthetic, informed by cubist and surrealist ideas, and Abstract Expressionism. He refused official commissions, insisting that art did not need to convey a social message. Perhaps the most significant assumption challenged by modernist sculpture was the idea that figures could embody eternal values such as sacrifice, heroism, patriotism, or loyalty. The enduring physical presence of the sculpture reinforces the notion that these values are equally real and enduring. As such, the works are used to promote civic ideals. As Marianne Doezema has noted, "The public monument has a responsibility apart from its qualities as a work of art. It is not only the private expression of an individual artist; it is also a work of art created for the public and therefore can and should be evaluated in terms of its capacity to generate human reactions" (Doezema 1977, 9). James E. Young suggests that, "we cannot separate the monument from its public life, that the social function of such art *is* its aesthetic performance" (Young 1993, 13). This in part explains why the figurative stream had persisted for so long in the sculptural tradition (especially in connection with memorials and dioramas constrained by the narrative, figurative tradition) at a time when it was becoming less prevalent elsewhere.

There is an inherent tension between the sculptor's self-expression and their public duty. Sculpture held lingering associations with patriotism and nationhood, but when acquired under commission, it offered a rare opportunity for the artist: security and status. The ideals expressed in public monuments reveal much about the national character. National monuments not only suggest a heroic past but are in turn used to promote an ideology. It was perhaps inevitable that modernism's emphasis on the formal qualities of art would be mirrored in the design of modern monuments. If the form itself is challenged, the commemorative ideology may be disarmed.

Heroic, commemorative sculpture, as seen in the Australian War Memorial, arises out of the neoclassical traditions of the nineteenth century. It is clearly made for the purposes of the national interest: to rally support for national ideals. From a modernist perspective, such art is inherently compromised by its subservience to tradition. Modernists, after all, were conventionally represented as innovators who valued the right of the individual artist to create a new way of seeing the world. For a modernist, to create a monument poses a real dilemma, for how can a monument not be tied to the past? As Lewis Mumford famously declared, "The notion of a modern monument is veritably a contradiction in terms," and furthermore, "If it is a monument, it is not modern, and if it is modern, it cannot be a monument" (1938, 438).

Despite the theoretical tension between the modernist's determination to innovate and the conservatism inherent in monuments, works by Kathe Kollwitz and Ernst Barlach attest to the search for a sculptural resolution. And yet, in Australia in the early twentieth century, sculpture was largely given over to the typical heroic figures associated with official commissions. There was no peculiarly Australian tradition; this work was fashioned after the style familiar throughout the British Commonwealth, and reflects the innate conservatism of public commissioning bodies. For a young nation, the First World War generated an impulse to remember and grieve in traditional ways, using the familiar forms offering reassurance and emotional comfort that predominated at the Australian War Memorial. The earliest First World War sculptures commissioned or acquired for its exhibition galleries reflect the desire to show Australian figures as, simultaneously, both literal but idealized examples of Australian servicemen and women.

Qualities such as bravery, strength, and courage are seen in the figures by Wallace Anderson, of which the best example is *Evacuation*, 1928. Such works purposefully invite reflection on the glorified figure; they are heavily nostalgic and intended to elevate the

carnal suffering of battle into something dignified. This imperative turned the grieving for so many remote deaths into something that might justify it: the national good. The figure in *Evacuation* – an Australian soldier of the failed Gallipoli (1915) campaign – stands casually erect, but symbolically significant: surrounded by the shattered instruments of war, he represents the triumph of the "digger" spirit. In defeat, with the reality of death acknowledged by an undersized skull almost hidden on the periphery, this figure proclaims Australia's idealized image of itself. It can be read, however, as a direct "lift" from British works such as Hamo Thorneycroft's *The Mower*, 1884: once again, Australian moderns learned from, emulated even, British and European examples.

Anderson had a vision for all the Australian War Memorial's galleries, and as the first museum officer involved in collecting artefacts, he carried out a very specific plan to make this a place to stir the nation's patriotic emotions. The story of John Simpson Kirkpatrick and his donkey, for example, provided a ready motif on which to build an official legend, a sort of counterpoint to the outlaw Ned Kelly. The narrative of the doomed stretcher-bearer under fire who helped carry the wounded to safety formed the basis for the creation of the image of the heroic Anzac. Early works such as the bronze by Leslie Bowles, *Man with the Donkey*, were displayed when the Memorial's galleries opened in 1941. As late as the Australian nation's bicentenary in 1988, the motif was again employed for its suggestion of the Australian spirit of mateship, courage and compassion. At that time a new but traditional figurative sculpture was commissioned from the artist Peter Corlett, and placed at the entrance to the Memorial, to stir the emotions of visitors and give renewed substance to the legend.

While figurative sculpture presented the noble attitudes and ideals sought for the Memorial's galleries, the so-called "reality of war" was to be seen in the dioramas of the battlefield scenes. All the most proficient sculptors of the day were swept up into this venture, dedicated to sketching out a narrative in figurative form. They placed the figure in the landscape, where it was seen as enduring all manner of hardship and triumphing over both nature and the enemy – or at least making a valiant effort to do so.

By the time the Australian War Memorial was opened on Remembrance Day 1941, a new world war was well under way. By this time, too, the influence of modernity was central to the debate about what form commemorative art should take, no longer merely a marginal concern. Yet again, we can see how the concept of the commemorative monument feeds on the supposedly universally held ideals that had once more brought the nation to war. Here, the example of the largest sculpture commissioned at the Memorial, or anywhere in Australia, at that time, bears analysis. The sculpture in question was intended for the Hall of Memory, the commemorative heart of the Australian War Memorial, within the "heart of the nation." Leslie Bowles was commissioned in 1937, but it took nearly two decades to settle on a design. Entitled *The Four Freedoms*, it was inspired in part by American President Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous Address to Congress of that name. It featured four angel-like figures back-to-back, slightly abstracted in a Gothic treatment, each one holding a different symbol representing the four freedoms: freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from want and fear.

In 1953, after a viewing of the full-sized plaster version in situ, the Australian Minister for the Interior wrote to Memorial founder C. E. W. Bean,

> My own feelings were those of horror and confusion. The plaster model seems to me to be a ghastly result achieved by grafting something modern on to the simple dignity of the ancient Cross … the composite whole looks like the pillar of a wedding cake … the allegorical or modern heraldic figures … look as if they have been jet-propelled from

a modern atomic weapon, or else are the four victims of a road accident caused by a twenty-ton lorry … Not even Epstein could have perpetrated such a monstrosity and got away with it as an art production.

(Kent-Hughes 1953)

The reference to Jacob Epstein is intriguing: his work might have caused a stir in 1912, but by the 1950s it had come to be seen as archetypically modernist. The idea of overthrowing the tradition of the life-like monument was seen as tantamount to challenging the order that held the nation together. In any case, the work was seen to be too modern, and was summarily rejected, with Ray Ewers' work *Australian Serviceman*, 1957 later commissioned to replace it. One wonders what the minister would have made of Ossip Zadkine's *The Destroyed City*, 1947: the final work became the first public monument to be erected in Rotterdam after the war.

There is an irony here: Bowles was in fact keen to show his ties to an established tradition rather than create a new one. The theme was based on the accepted rhetoric of war, and the work was imbued with traditional allegory, but with an Antipodean flavor, substituting wattle (the national flower) for laurel wreaths, for example. However, the mere perception of a radically modern work was enough to send the authorities running for cover, rather than risk even a hint of controversy. In fact, both Bowles and Anderson had been chosen to do work for the Memorial over early modernist sculptor, Ola Cohn.

In the interwar period, sculptors in Australia had been entrenched in what Margel Hinder described as "academic-cum-modernish types of art" (Sturgeon 1978, 117). Lyndon Dadswell's sculptures from the Second World War continued this trend. In a clear, albeit cautious, reference to British modernism, Dadswell focused on the elimination of non-essential elements and on the notion of "truth to materials": his forms are simplified, and he makes no attempt to disguise his stippled modeling technique. This was as modern as the national agenda allowed. The most significant example, *Munition Workers*, 1942, has a visual kinship with the socialist realism found in a Stalinist monument, which was clearly art in the service of power, much like Vera Mukhina's *Industrial Worker and Collective Farm Girl*, 1937. Her sculpture shows the Soviet ideal of young workers eagerly building an ideal socialist state and depicted wielding the practical tools (hammer and sickle) that would supposedly help them achieve this patriotic task. Both works are depictions of distinctly egalitarian ideals, and of people in the service of enduring national goals (building socialism, winning a war). They are all about vigor, unity, strength – forward-looking qualities, modernist principles – and striving to build a better future.

Dadswell's ideal, on display in *Munition Workers*, simply represents the modern commitment to a formalist solution to represent an agreed higher goal – in this case, victory. The sculpture's date is crucial: it was made right at the darkest part of Australia's wartime struggle, which is why it needed to be so vibrantly affirmative. But once the fighting had stopped, commemorative art could afford to resort more obviously to the familiar eternal ideals, postponing again any resolution of commemorative art and truly modernist art in Australian commemorative sculpture. For example, in contrast to Dadswell's wartime work, Ray Ewers' *Australian Serviceman*, 1957, a monumental 7-metre-high bronze figure, shows once again a regression to static monolithic ideals.

Apart from work by the émigré artists such as Bauhaus-trained Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, interned in Australia during the war, modernism does not feature elsewhere in the Australian War Memorial's collection until much later, in works that were not part of any official commissioning program, and thus freed from the need to express national culture and identity. Daphne Mayo produced abstracted figurative work such as *Two Jolly Sailormen*,

1942, but it is notable that this was not purchased for the collection until 1981. During the 1920s Mayo studied at the Royal Academy in London, and the monumental public works she completed for her home state of Queensland adhered to the expected narrative style and the heroic convention still required for architectural reliefs in Australia between the wars.

The post-1945 part of the Memorial's collection contains works that do contest the heroic tradition – works such as John Perceval's *Listening Angel, c.* 1957, Olive Bishop's *Wash-and-War "General,"* 1978 and Gay Hawkes' *Off to the Gulf*, 1990. Hawkes' work, for example, defies the very notion of the solid edifice of the monument. Her work, true to the new sculpture's abandonment of the pedestal, stands in contradiction of the notion of the monument, and in its twig-like form, refers to ephemerality, not permanence. It has no base, is colorful, and is made of sticks. Thus, her rendition of the mounted military hero becomes a satirical comment on the folly of nationalism. It also satisfies the modernist tenet of "truth to materials" and allows the random nature of organic material to dictate its final form. This process of making a sculpture is modernist in ways that a large-scale public commission cannot possibly be.

Most recently the post-modernist anti-monument highlights the inherent contradiction in the modern monument. Anti-memorials employ various means, such as inversion, reflection, ephemerality, voids, negatives, and invisibility, to subvert the genre, yet while still addressing the essential, elusive nature of commemoration. Such a work is the *Women's Services Memorial* by Anne Ferguson, commissioned for the Australian War Memorial's new sculpture garden in 1999. Adopting the form of a horizontal memorial, the work takes its cues from place-making and landscape, rather than from the monumental impulse; as a result, it was met with strong popular criticism, especially from the generation it commemorates, who expect to see the traditional monument as the only appropriate form for national commemoration.

From this it can be seen that the constraints and tensions surrounding the notion of the modern monument are still current. As noted by historian Sergiusz Michalski (1998), the focus on national and social rites is linked to a social and political brand of modernism, and this is evident in Australian commemorative art. There is more at stake than the art. Just as Nolan's *Ned Kelly series* transformed a doomed outsider from outlaw to hero and his *Gallipoli series* explored the mythology surrounding the soldier, the war art of the nation elevates the tragedy of war to a glorious rite of passage. The legend of the Anzac soldier is transformed from the story of men facing defeat in battle to a national triumph. In this sense, the National Collection of war art contains a snapshot of the struggle in Australian art to find both artistic expression and official sanction.

Postcolonial Australia could have had the hallmarks of a society akin to that which emerged in America: a blended culture, far from its antecedents, still finding itself, and as such modern. As it emerged from its convict past, Australia had the potential to develop as a young nation, in every sense part of the modern world. While such a history allowed a certain freedom, it also perpetuated the desire to emulate traditions of the old world. Australia's modernity was perceived as a threat to the respectability the nation so desperately craved. In the twentieth century – the century of modernism – Australia did assert its independence and establish a free society, one in which old traditions were incorporated rather than slavishly observed, but the separation from other cultures was unclear. Inevitably, the tenets of modernism – a loosening of ties to tradition and the gradual transition to abstraction – were central to the modern art of Australia, as they were elsewhere in the world. A tendency to view Australian modernism as a product of this transition continues in the twenty-first century.

Notes

1 The terms modernism and modern art will be used interchangeably in this chapter.
2 Heidelberg refers to the riverside semi-rural bush area on what was the outskirts of the Victorian capital of Melbourne, made famous in the late nineteenth century as the subject of landscape painters working in an impressionist style, later known as Australian Impressionism. The Heidelberg School, as it became known, was a loose association of artists, most notably Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton, and Tom Roberts, who painted the Australian bush *en plein air*.
3 Art students relied heavily on photographs, prints, and literature to supplement their study of art, as well as traveling abroad to see works first-hand. Notably, in 1920, Sydney publisher Sydney Ure Smith launched the wildly popular design magazine *The Home*, and later, *Artforum* and *Art International* were in wide circulation.
4 The noteworthy presence of so many women in the discussion of modernism is not something that can be quantified here; however, the strength of women artists is recognized as at least equivalent to their male counterparts. Interest in women's art is potentially due to the late critical awareness of Australian modernism, coinciding with the feminist theory and art criticism which aimed to uncover previously overlooked work. After the First World War, as was the case elsewhere, the role of women in Australian society was elevated and expanded (including the appointment of women, such as Stella Bowen, as Official War Artists and to undertake public art commissions, for example, Daphne Mayo). The serious practice of art by women was likely to have been marginalized; however, there was support for female proponents and teachers of modernism as evident by the independent schools of art established by women.
5 Some of these works were later shown in Brisbane. Recent scholarship has questioned the significance of this exhibition as a watershed in the development of modernism in Australia (see Chanin and Miller 2005).
6 Melbourne, the capital of the state of Victoria, retains the anomaly of having a *National* Gallery of Victoria. The Australian National Gallery (later known as the National Gallery of Australia) opened in its current location in Canberra in 1982; however, the collection had its genesis in the 1960s.
7 Thanks to the huge Felton Bequest of 1904.
8 The expatriate surgeon and modern artist John Wardell Power also left a significant bequest to the University of Sydney, which established the Power Institute of Fine Arts, and supported the collection of modern art. Between 1967 and 1989 over 3,000 works were collected for the Museum of Contemporary Art, which opened in 1989 in Sydney. The bequest was "to make available to the people of Australia the latest ideas and theories in the plastic arts by means of lectures and teaching and by the purchase of the most recent contemporary art of the world … so as to bring the people of Australia in more direct touch with the latest art developments in other countries" (Bradley and Smith 1988). The annual Power lectures were hugely influential, notably for the 1968 lecture by Clement Greenberg.
9 A rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne stems from the origins of Sydney as the penal colony of New South Wales, in contrast to the free-settler society of Melbourne.
10 In Indigenous Australian lore, the story of the rainbow serpent is a mythical creation story linked to the provision of water sources throughout the land and embodying a life force. The rainbow serpent totem exists as a motif in Australian Aboriginal rock painting, depicted as a large snake in the form of an arc or series of arcs, like a rainbow.

11   The Australian War Memorial was conceived as a national shrine for Australians who died in the First World War. It is prominently situated at the opposite end of the capital's central ceremonial axis, on a mall (Anzac Parade) facing the Australian Parliament House. By the time it opened in 1941, it also commemorated the Second World War, and continues to commemorate all Australians who have died in subsequent military conflicts.

12   The term *Anzac* was coined from the acronym of Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (1914–1918), but extended to refer to later Australian and New Zealand soldiers who displayed the characteristics of bravery, selflessness, larrikinism, and heroism with which they had faced battle.

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Greek-Cypriot Locality: (Re) Defining our Understanding of European Modernity

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Introduction

In 2013 a group of five Greek-Cypriot women who share a common interest in art history, curatorial and artistic practice, and social engagement attempted to create an evolutionary timeline of exhibition-making in Cyprus. This was part of the exhibition "Other Indications" that took place in the Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre (NiMAC) that same year.[1] The collaborative timeline was opened up for expansion, revision, and discourse through a series of public workshops: apart from theoretical concerns about display, historiography, archival access, visibility, authority, and dominant narratives, as well as issues regarding the afterlife of such a timeline, the material gathered, and the discussions that occurred within the timeline's framework unearthed a set of key questions: (a) When and how was modernity in the visual arts established in Cyprus?; (b) How did modernity evolve in Cyprus in relation to other European art centers and perhaps in parallel or with reference to Cyprus's relation to the East? and (c) What is the importance of Cypriot modernity – established and developed on an island that is perceived as Europe's furthest border with the East and the East's nearest border with Europe – in redefining conventional understandings of European modernity?

This chapter begins from the conviction that historical linearity is problematic and can no longer function constructively in critical historical reflection. However, the chapter also acknowledges certain moments in Cypriot history that might prove helpful in contextualizing efforts towards defining modernity as a trend both in a local context and beyond mainstream readings. For Cyprus, modernity might have its roots around the time the island moved from Ottoman to British rule in 1878, when the overall socio-cultural and political landscape changed. Changes in visual arts practice might be traced even before this political shift as they emerge within a wider tendency of change at the end of the nineteenth century. This was accentuated by new political governance as well as other emerging socio-political and cultural changes.

We begin by making reference to the image of Cypriot identity, constructed by colonial discourse and various travelers, photographers, geographers, and pseudo-anthropologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This identity was often constructed as half-oriental since it was presented as being "infected" by long exposure to the Orient

during Ottoman occupation (Philippou 2013, 2014). The way external observers have presented and defined Cyprus has impacted on the various manifestations of Cypriot identity and artistic practices by local artists, to such an extent that even today artists often struggle to overcome tired notions of trauma, victimhood and nationalism. Finally, while artistic practices from mid-twentieth century onwards were apparently in close dialogue with both local artists' studies in Europe and with the mainstream European avant-gardes, the earlier artistic practices on the island also tell of the beginnings of an alternative modernity in an area still defining its identity on the margins of Europe.

More specifically, we identify three main forces that have influenced the emergence of this contentious alternative modernity: (a) British colonialism; (b) Greek nationalism; and (c) an organized Left and labor movement. The chapter will consider these influences through an examination of the work of four local painters: Ioannis Kissonergis (1889–1963), who stands as an example of the ways in which Western perspectives and orientalizing narratives were internalized; Adamantios Diamantis (1900–1994), who adopted tradition and purity in work that embodied the Greek nationalist discourse; Costas Stathis (1913–1987), who faded into oblivion for many years, but whose work best illustrates the emergence of a local, idiosyncratic modernity; and Loukia Nicolaidou (1909–1993), whose work on the female body has often been overlooked in favor of less "offensive" subjects. Some references to vernacular photography and wider vernacular culture will also be made to further trace Cypriot modernity and its relation to the established orthodox narratives of European modernity. It is important to acknowledge from the outset the limitations of this chapter in excluding references to art production from Turkish Cypriots or other ethnic and religious groups on the island at the turn of the century.[2] When we speak of Cypriot modernity, we are mainly referring to Greek-Cypriot modernity.

Modernity Denied: Gazing at Cyprus from *Afar* and from *Within*

Beginning in the eighteenth century, as part of European expansionism – economic, political and cultural – in the region, and continuing well into the twentieth century, Cyprus became the subject of various representational projects. Despite changes in political priorities and aims – as well as means of representation – through time, such projects aimed to "present" the island to the rest of the world. Most of them sketched Cyprus through a romantic, nostalgic, purifying, and often patronizing prism. Whether it was an interest in Byzantine culture and classical or medieval ruins, or an interest in the island's landscape and topography, Cyprus was typically depicted through an orientalizing gaze with scant attention paid to the island's cultural complexity or rapidly changing late nineteenth, early twentieth century environment (Severis 2000). In particular during the period of Ottoman rule (1571–1878), most visiting artists – such as the Austrian Archduke Louis Salvador, the Italians Hermann David Solomon Corrodi and Eugène Bottazzi, and American Albert Leighton Rawson – established a vision of Cyprus as an exotic and romanticized destination with oriental undertones, their illustrations sold as nostalgic souvenirs (Severis 2000, 143).

Traveling artists, writers, pseudo-anthropologists and other representational practitioners would mostly come from the "center" and cast Cyprus as a primitive, premodern society. The tendency was, and in many instances still is, for Cypriot modernity to be pushed backwards; a trend already identified as anthropology's own failure that "denies the Other cultural equality" (Argyrou 1996, 177). Identified by Johannes Fabian, as well as by Edward Said before him, this temporal and spatial distancing between an ethnographer

and his/her subject and the denial of the subject's contemporaneity is achieved by placing the subject in a chronological frame remote from both the ethnographer and subsequent reader. Argyrou also identified this as one of the main forms of denial of a Cypriot modernity (see also Marcus 1984; Fabian 2014 [1983]). Argyrou (1996) especially argues that this denial derives from what Michel Foucault has described as a technology of power: to be able to define others but also to define how they perceive themselves. And for a long time, the West and its superiority were not perceived as a construct but as an identity, a full entity to which "others" aspired. Similarly, it was assumed that European modernity and its cultural project, emerging in modern Europe, would take over all modernizing societies in a homogenizing and hegemonic manner (Eisenstadt 2000).

Vassos Argyrou has identified "the rhetoric of a culturally superior West" (1996, 174) as a form of denial seen in "the way in which Cypriot aspirations to modernity are practically repudiated" (1996, 177). In his *Tradition and Modernity in the Mediterranean*, Argyrou argues that Cypriot claims to modernity have been denied or even ridiculed by outsiders as nothing more than mere imitation that leads to loss of character and "authenticity" (Argyrou 1996). Among others, Argyrou uses extracts from the *National Geographic Magazine* for the July 1928 edition travelogue on Cyprus, produced by writer–photographer Maynard Owen Williams, to demonstrate such denial. In the travelogue, Williams casts Cyprus as half-oriental and premodern (Philippou 2014). William's Cyprus story was published with the amusingly long title *Unspoiled Cyprus: The Traditional Island Birthplace of Venus is One of the Least Sophisticated of Mediterranean Lands,* which summarizes the article's narrative. The magazine's appetite for the picturesque and romanticized primitiveness led to an image of Cyprus, defined by an aesthetic and thematic emphasis on tradition and rurality.

Williams constructed a romantic Cyprus with women and men in traditional costumes pictured against mostly medieval and classical architecture in a picturesque landscape, seemingly unaffected by modern ways of life. Evidence of an emerging, dynamic Cypriot modernity was purposefully avoided (Philippou 2014). However, Williams gives the game away. In a photo depicting the daughters of the *mukhtar* (village mayor) of Lefkoniko, Williams' caption makes the remarkable admission that it was with difficulty that he persuaded these ultramodern women to wear the outmoded costumes of Cyprus (Argyrou 1996; Philippou 2014). Elsewhere, he notes, "The young folks of Nicosia are not 'unspoiled'. They don't doff their hats to the foreigner; they don't wear rags [and] they are independent ... Nicosia is progressing" (Williams 1928; as cited in Argyrou 1996, 178). Acknowledging that Nicosia's inhabitants were not "unspoiled" was equal to admitting that they were not exotic enough. For an outsider who had first-hand experience of modernity in the West, it was problematic that Nicosia was going through a process of modernization that resulted in a loss of those characteristics seen as unique (Argyrou 1996).

Lawrence Durrell's 1957 book *Bitter Lemons* (later *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*) is another lucid example of a problematic view of the country's claims to modernity adopted by many outsiders. Durrell presented the visible influences of modernity on Cyprus as "disturbing anomalies" (1957, 34). Among these "anomalies" he included the "Cypriot version of the small-car owner... smoking a pipe and reverently polishing a Morris Minor; costumed peasants buying tinned food and frozen meat at the local version of the Co-op; ice-cream parlors with none of the elaborate confectionery, the true Levant delicacies, which make the towns of the Middle East as memorable as a tale from the Arabian Nights" (Durrell 1957, 34). Durrell's complaint that the average Cypriot "townsman's standard of living roughly corresponded to that of a Manchester suburb" (Durrell 1957, 34) not only suggests the superficiality in an outsider's reading of Cypriot modernity, but also reveals the extent to which Cyprus has been exoticized by imperialism to the point that even

FIGURE 18.1   Ioannis Kissonergis, *Turk with Nargile*, watercolour, 34 × 16cm, 1945–48. State Gallery of Contemporary Cypriot Art, Nicosia. *Source*: State Gallery of Contemporary Cypriot Art, Nicosia. © Michalis Kissonergis.

locals would often (re)read and (re)write their own sense of identity within this same framework.

Ioannis Kissonergis is an artist whose work is an example par-excellence of the local adoption and internalization of an outsider definition of one's own culture. The samples of his work in the State Gallery of Contemporary Art in Nicosia could well have been done by a European traveling artist. Whether watercolors on paper or oils on wood or canvas, his works of the Cypriot landscape show a romanticizing quality, its people and their practices. Mosques and churches, village-scapes, and people as archetypes are his preferred themes. In his *Turk with Nargile*, 1945–48 (Figure 18.1), an imagined, exotic Orient is the main subject. The painting shows a shoeless, mustachioed man with baggy trousers and a turban sitting smoking the hookah. The background is unspecified: it could have been the interior of a house, the courtyard, the street or the coffeehouse. The man is presented as a Turkish male archetype smoking the narghile. Smoking the narghile however was not an exclusively Turkish-Cypriot habit, but an everyday, social activity practiced across ethnic groups. Visually the lack of the image's referentiality leads to the production of a general image of the Cypriot male, although the artist seems compelled to create an ethnic distinction by titling the painting *Turk with Nargile* rather than

a *Cypriot with Nargile*. At the same time, the outlook of the man – the turban and the missing shoes – allude to a culture far distanced from the West. In other words, although Kissonergis was perpetuating imperial discourses of Orientalism painting themes favored by outsiders, he was also establishing the possibility of a distinction between the two communities. Although this was an image of a Cypriot, it was an image of an Oriental within.

Kissonergis was also an icon painter who had studied in Athens,[3] and could lead to the assumption that this would be a case of a Cypriot painter looking to define Cyprus within a Greek nationalist narrative. However, his paintings, both in content and style, divert from a practice that focuses on representing a purely Greek geographical and cultural territory. More so, while his thematology and approach to visual representation are reminiscent of traveling artists, his oeuvre provides us with a possible reading of Cyprus and its people characterized by a complex sense of identity rather than a straightforward fantasizing of locality as "purely" Greek.

While local art production like Kissonergis's could point to an inability to fully escape external orientalizing readings of the island and its people, ordinary Cypriots did not adopt or enact such fantasies. Photographs from ordinary Greek-Cypriot albums that chronologically overlap with Williams's visit to Cyprus and Kissonergis's productive years, tell the story of a society that perceives itself, and wants to be perceived, as modern and urban rather than as traditional and pastoral (Philippou 2010a). These photographs appear to be a manifestation of those social and material changes reshaping Cypriot society at the time, which gave birth to urbanity, individualism, and an alternative modernity that idiosyncratically varied from the dominant Western European narrative.

Modernity Expressed: Vernacular Photography and a Changing Island

Many postcards produced by Cypriot photography studios between the mid-1920s and the mid-1930s are examples of an emerging local modernity; a number of them, for instance, feature cars parked outside buildings of interest (Lazarides 1987; Hadjipanayis 2001). Seen as cultural products, the postcard, as well as the photograph, may be viewed as symbolic of cultural modernity – one that came to permeate everyday life on the island, and that was arguably carried forward by entertainment, the press, and advertising. The subject matter, the automobile, is also a symbol and an expression of modern society, as it is an invention that is central to the social transformations of urban life and social modernity. As such, it can best illustrate the dilemmas of Western modernity (Gaonkar 2001). On the one hand, the automobile marks the emergence of urbanization and increased mobility. On the other hand, the automobile as a symbol of societal modernization alerts us to the rise of standardization and automation with regard to its production, to transformation of capital, and even to alienation (Giucci 2012).

In Cyprus, the automobile often appears to be the preferred means of transportation for certain sections of society, making its appearance across various visual expressions, marking the emergence of both cultural and social modernity. It was a means of individualization and a status symbol associated with modernity. A postcard in the personal collection of Constantinos Ioannou, credited to Glaszner Studio and Mantovani Tourist Agency and printed in Germany,[4] depicts Larnaca's seafront boulevard packed with dozens of cars. The cars are not in motion, but are instead arranged in rows, surrounded by onlookers. The pavement on the side of the seafront is crowded by smartly dressed, hat-wearing

pedestrians, whereas on the other side the pavement is occupied by the clients of coffee houses, hotels, and confectioneries.

Postcards such as this were produced around the time that Maynard Owen Williams visited the island in the late 1920s. Although this postcard does not give any information, we can assume that the cars and their drivers flocking to the seafront was a scene Williams also faced upon his arrival. It is, also, all but impossible to assume that he never encountered a single car, motorcycle, or truck during his journeys from one town to the next, or within the busy town centers. Reports of traffic congestion in urban centers – especially in Nicosia – had been published in that period. The need to take measures towards decongestion were the subject of an internal note by a colonial government commissioner, dated 5 February 1930 (Fokaidis 2011). Williams, nevertheless, opted to totally ignore the automobile and urban transformation. Instead, his photographs and texts emphasized the donkey, the ox, and the camel.

Thus, ironically, while the cultural project of modernity demanded Western cultural hegemony and a cross-national cultural uniformity, it simultaneously remained exclusive for it clearly denied the possibility of an Other assimilating or following this same modernizing paradigm. Instead, the Other was expected to remain on the margins of European modernity; an exotic and inferior Other. Any attempt at assimilation would only lead to an assumed loss of authenticity; an "anomaly" as mentioned above.

Modernity and the West: The Beginnings of an Alter-modernity

The past couple of decades have witnessed a dramatic shift away from conventional readings of modernity towards a new understanding of the term and what it might mean to be modern. The German social theorist Ulrich Beck has suggested that we currently need a redefinition of terms, for existing basic social categories are only "zombie categories"; "living dead" categories that, although governing our ways of thinking, fail to capture the contemporary milieu (Slater and Ritzer 2001, 262). Identifying postmodernism's failure to investigate a "meta-change" of social structures and to acknowledge "a multiplication and pluralization of modernities in the making," Beck suggests that Europe, as the inventor of modernity, has the responsibility to acknowledge modernity's shortcomings and to therefore "recall" modern society (2001, 262). Although Beck's theories have mostly focused on developing the idea of a "second modernity" as a solution to the question of postmodernity, the questions he posed are relevant here too. Beck specifically asks: "What can modernization mean if it is not equated with Westernization and Europeanization?" and "What can 'modern society' mean if *not* the nation state?" (2001, 263). Our position is that even early modernity cannot be understood as a fixed term, solely defined by the European paradigm of social and political emancipation developed in relation to scientific rationalism, secularism, nationalism and the advancement of industrial societies. Instead, we believe that the idea of modernity, as mainly the product of mainstream European sensibilities needs to be recalled – more so by cultures mistakenly considered as its mere consumers.

There are parallels: Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar for instance argues that we cannot speak of the end of modernity at a time when non-Western people everywhere are only just beginning to engage with their own hybrid modernities. This multiplicity moves beyond "a governing center or [the] master-narratives that accompany it" (2001, 14) and everywhere, *"modernity is not one but many … modernity is incomplete and necessarily so"* (2001, 23, emphasis in the original). Gaonkar also affirms that it is impossible to ignore or abandon the legacy of the Western discourse on modernity as a wider discourse that interrogates the present. What one should consider is the difference in its hybrid configuration, which

could ultimately destabilize its "universalist idioms, historicize the contexts, and pluralize the experiences of modernity" (2001, 15). In Cyprus, the country and its cultural production are characteristic of the ways in which European modernity was indeed consumed, adopted, often assimilated, but also often ignored or even transformed at the turn of the twentieth century in ways that allow us to speak of a hybrid, alternative modernity in art practice.

Before further analysis of artistic practice, it is important to examine those historical – primarily economic, political and ideological – conditions that were specific to Cyprus during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These conditions make the case for a break from a single authoritative viewpoint and an understanding of modernity as a natural extension and a belated manifestation of a particular homogeneous cultural and aesthetic project. Instead, modernity in Cyprus can be seen as the expression of various sociopolitical and cultural changes that are site-specific and the result of three distinct, although often co-terminous, forces on the island mentioned above: (a) British colonialism; (b) Greek nationalism; and (c) an organized Left and labor movement. These culminated in an intriguing and fascinating period: the time between the 1920s and the 1940s, a time when Cypriot society, also, maintained a fertile contact with a cosmopolitan Middle East.[5]

We thus identify the period between the 1920s and 1940s as a first Cypriot renaissance and a high point that witnessed the emergence of Cypriot modernity in both society and the arts. We therefore place the process of modernization in Cyprus in an earlier time period compared to other scholars. The prevailing view in Cyprus is that the peak of modernization, especially in art, is linked to the period right after Cyprus's independence from Britain in 1960, and to an urgent desire to "consolidate Cyprus' new-found status as an independent state in the modern world" (Danos 2014, 220). Danos states that Cyprus "entered the twentieth century still in an essentially premodern, agrarian state" (2014, 243). Here we argue that significant modernizing trends were already in motion by independence. Although known artistic practice from these early years is limited, we can find elements in paintings, photography, and vernacular culture that support this argument. Nonetheless, we agree with Danos (2014) that the existence of these elements, isolated from the chronological and historical framework of the Western avant-gardes, maps an alternative to orthodox European narratives of modernity.

Colonialism and the Emergence of National Consciousness

In 1878 Cyprus moved from Ottoman to British rule[6] and from "the Ottoman system of local organization to a type of parliamentary democracy espoused by the British colonial administration" (Loizidou 2014, 85). British colonialism was a force, which, by default, legitimized Westerness and directed Cypriots, their ways of life and cultural production, towards the West. In a sense, British colonialism and its modernizing projects (that is, the political system, elite lifestyle practices, etc.) can be viewed as mostly symbolic and as a kind of colonial domination over local culture. Colonialism was not the only force during this period. Before British rule, Greek nationalism came to the fore as a political, cultural, and linguistic project. It aimed at promoting the idea of Greekness, a national orientation selected, popularized, and institutionalized at the time the Greek nation-state emerged in the nineteenth century (Yagou 2009), and which was part of the newly established modern Greek state's expansionist aspirations.

The Greek Brotherhood of Alexandria, which sponsored the introduction of the first printing press in Cyprus in 1878, urban elites, and the Orthodox Church were some of the key actors in the nationalist movement. While the press promoted acute political debates

among the middle and upper classes on the idea(l) of *enosis* (union) with Greece, sections of the Church of Cyprus were already promoting these same aspirations. After a decade-long ecclesiastical crisis relating to the election of a new archbishop that eventually resulted in the victory of forcefully nationalist candidates, the Church was turning into "an institution that would pursue what was at the time, a socially progressive Greek nationalist agenda" (Loizidou 2014, 84) and that would ultimately drive apart the two main communities of the country. At the same time, the development of the public sphere, literacy, and education as modern institutions, created new forms of power that would contribute to future internal conflicts (Bryant 2004; Loizidou 2014).

The *Megali Idea* (Great Idea) would, in time, become a powerful instrument in identifying the Church of Cyprus with Cypriot Greek nationalism[7] (Loizidou 2014). It encapsulated the ideal of creating a Greek state that would encompass all areas inhabited by ethnic Greek and Greek-speaking populations that were previously under Ottoman rule. Influenced by a long succession of Romantic Hellenists and a Western leaning towards the classical past (Webb 1982), Greek intellectuals were eager to integrate with the "civilized world," often driven by a misunderstood discourse of uniqueness and cultural primacy (Loizidou 2014). Within this framework, along with the impact of the Orthodox Church, the idea of Greekness was employed as part of a wider project of an invented tradition. By implication, this idea would ultimately cultivate a national sentiment among the Greek-speaking population and create the conditions necessary for a claim of cultural homogenization and political union with Greece.

This movement was not exclusive to Greece. Instead, it reflects more general aspirations of the late nineteenth century, such as the "philological-lexicographic revolution and the rise of intra-European nationalist movements, themselves the products, not only of capitalism, but of the elephantiasis of the dynastic states" (Anderson 2003, 83). As Benedict Anderson discusses in *Imagined Communities*, at this time the nationalist ideal was increasingly gaining prestige throughout Europe, and "there was a discernible tendency among the Euro-Mediterranean monarchies to sidle towards a beckoning national identification" (2003, 85). In Cyprus, the dominance of nationalism eventually came to operate conservatively, especially in relation to politics, but also in terms of cultural production. Often, representational practices would shy away from modernity and emphasize tradition and cultural purity. Modernity, defined as the complete rupture with the past, was often seen as "polluting" and in conflict with a continuation of Greekness, thus leading many artists who aspired to such ideals to turn to tradition, folklore, and religion. Adamantios Diamantis is one such example.

Diamantis preferred to depict Cypriots as premodern, often using the word "simple" to describe the characters in his paintings. In a text discussing his monumental painting *The World of Cyprus*, Diamantis expressed his difficulty and frustration with making decisions about method and style, and stated, "I am forever putting off starting. In the simplicity of the surroundings, thoughts come back insistent. In a simple way, without too many thoughts and calculations – in a simple way, as *my villagers are simple*" (Diamantis 2002, 39; our emphasis). Diamantis positioned himself vis-à-vis his subjects in a very precise way: he cast himself as a sophisticated urbanite who set out to record what he repeatedly called "simple villagers." In his texts too he often expressed his growing disappointment with the disappearance of what he felt was the "true" image of Cyprus, as a result of a set of "ill-digested ideas and customs" (Diamantis 2002, 82). In the manner of Western imperial discourses constructed by outsiders, which insisted on safeguarding Cyprus's "purity," thus placing the island alongside canonical exegeses of "otherness," Diamantis also viewed modernization as corrupting the purity of the Cypriot culture and

people. Diamantis appears to look down on lay Cypriots from a class vantage point, much like culturally "advantaged" European traveling artists. Thus, his initial attempts at challenging urbanity "as a symbol of denouncing colonial influences" (Coquereau 2014, 85) and at establishing a strong connection with a Hellenic past, backfired. His work, instead of being a clear and irrefutable testimony to the continuity of the island's Greek identity, becomes a paradox of colonialism and nationalism's synergetic co-existence. This, we argue, is paradigmatic of Cypriot modernity's specificity.

This specificity is in many ways analogous to India's modernity, which was also the result of tensions between various forces occurring simultaneously: locality and globalism, tradition and modernity, colonialism and indigenous culture (Coquereau 2014). Various authors writing about India's avant-gardes (Mitter 2008; Chaudhuri 2010; Coquereau 2014) identify a movement of "primitivism," not as the European equivalent of adopting an aesthetic positive evaluation of the concept of nature and a reaction against industrialization, but rather as a way of disapproving of a lifestyle brought by colonialism, which seemed to threaten India's traditions. Similarly, Diamantis would idolize "Cypriot peasantry and their land as living testimonies to the island's Hellenic cultural heritage" (Danos 2014, 220). Discussing Diamantis' work, Danos specifically argues that the painter was influenced by the "Generation of the Thirties" in Greece, who found great value in folk tradition. Greek and Cypriot modernists' affection for the primitive had little to do with the traditions of European modernity, but instead "related to their overall (national) search for, and negotiation of, some notion of Greekness" (Danos 2014, 222). Thus, while artists such as Diamantis would attempt to emphasize Hellenic cultural heritage through an idolization of Cypriot peasantry (Danos 2014), this would often give way to a blurring of categories by an unavoidable co-existence of European influences, Hellenism, and traditionalism.

The founding of the archaeological museum in Nicosia (known as the Cyprus Museum) is a further example of the often synergic relationship between Westernization – through British colonialism – and Greek nationalism during the period when Cypriot modernity emerged. In accordance with a wider European trend that grew out of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Princely Collections that aimed to display the splendor and legitimacy of the prince's rule (Duncan 1991) and to "symbolically [magnify] it in the public domain" (Bennett 1995, 33), the Cyprus Museum could be seen as a British attempt to enhance their legitimacy. The Cyprus Museum project can be seen as an empire's desire to appear powerful and progressive in the eyes of its subjects (Stylianou 2013). Furthermore, the dominant Western view – at least at that time – of Classical Greece as the cornerstone of Western civilization meant that making connections with a Hellenic past, in this case through the establishment of the museum, would serve as an indirect validation of European Imperialism (Bounia and Stylianou-Lambert 2011 and 2012; Stylianou 2013).

However, for those sections of the Greek-Cypriot community that aspired to political union with Greece, the establishment of the Cyprus Museum was welcomed with great enthusiasm – albeit for reasons different from the British authorities. As Persianis (2007) notes, various urban infrastructure projects of the colonial period, of which the Cyprus Museum was part, were strongly linked to perceptions of identity and a perceived East-West dichotomy.[8]

> For Cypriot citizens, the material, social, political and cultural progress of the towns was necessary not only for the purpose of improving their quality of life, but also for proving, to themselves as well as to foreigners, (a) that the country had definitely shifted away from the "uncivilized state" of Turkish rule, and (b) their national [Hellenic] identity.
>
> (Persianis 2007, 103)

The establishment of the museum was thus seen as part of the greater political project of union with Greece, as it served as an affirmation of the country's unbroken links with a glorious Hellenic past (Stylianou 2013). In addition to colonialism and nationalism though, a third modernizing force was also in motion. This came after the economic crisis of 1929 in the form of an organized Left and labor movement and reached wider audiences in the country.

An Organized Left and Societal Modernization

In "Cyprus, 1878–1955: Structural Change, and its Contribution to Changing Relations of Authority," Peter Loizos (2001) presents aspects of Cypriot modernity as both empowering and emancipating. He documents a significant shift away from agriculture, while discussing changes in production techniques, the emergence of the Left and of an organized trade union movement, a boom in mass education, the flourishing of the press and the women's emancipation movement. He attributes these social and structural changes that peaked in the late 1920s to a late arrival of the spirit of the French Revolution. Loizos discusses the burning down of the Governor's residence in Nicosia in 1931 as having "the same conceptual importance as a statement about social relations, authority and hierarchy as the storming of the Bastille" (Loizos 2001, 136). He continues by describing a series of confrontations that took place during the period between 1878 (the year the British arrived) and 1955,[9] among which is the Left's challenge to the ethical and political leadership of the Church (Loizos 2001).

Panayiotou, in his aptly entitled paper "Lenin in the Coffee Shop," similarly focuses on the Left and its impact on the lives of rural and urban working classes in Cyprus. He describes the emergence of the Left as an alternative modernizing movement – based on the proclamation of equality and secularism – and as an answer to the needs generated by the dynamics of systematic and structural modernization (Panayiotou 2006, 277). The movement was set in motion in the 1920s by groups involving workers and young intellectuals, but was eventually led by workers. The ideas of the Left reached wider audiences when specific internal conjunctures were in place; notably the economic crises of the 1920s and the challenges these produced at a local level, which were met by the dynamic local labor movement.

The severe economic crisis of the 1920s followed by the international economic crisis caused by the 1929 international crash had very real consequences on small farm/land owners in rural Cyprus, whose agricultural products had diminished in value in the international market. Combined with long periods of drought, the crises rendered agricultural production inefficient. Consequently, many farmers took out loans from moneylenders and eventually saw properties that had belonged to their families for generations disappear. The crisis caused mass migration of the now landless villagers to urban centers, and to people who were prepared to work just for the day's meal, generating what Katsiaounis called a "rural proletariat" (Katsiaounis 2000, 38–51). This affected primarily male teenagers from rural areas, whose families could not afford to send them to school. Such teenagers would regularly end up in the urban centers of Limassol and Nicosia to work on large construction projects, to learn a craft as unpaid apprentices, or to work in the mines of Amiantos (on Troodos mountain) and Xeros (on the island's northern coast), run by non-Cypriot companies such as the American-owned Cyprus Mining Corporation (Katsiaounis 2000; Panayiotou 2006; Philippou 2007).

The rapid expansion of urban centers, the prolonged drought, the economic crisis, and the continued confiscation of property transformed more and more small landowners into

members of the new urban proletariat; it was only a matter of time before class conscious-ness was formed and ideological entrenchment deepened. The Communist Party, despite the fact that it had been proclaimed illegal by the colonial government since 1931 (the year of the popular uprising against the British), had secretly overseen the organization of a wave of trade unions that were set up from the mid-1930s onwards. It was the trade union movement that afforded the Left its popularity, as it was successful in securing decent work conditions and an improvement in the standard of living for the masses of Cypriot laborers. These dramatic grassroots societal and political changes found expression in some cultural products within genres such as poetry, and in vernacular culture.

Alternative Modernity(ies) and Home-grown Avant-gardes

Poet, teacher, journalist and publisher Tefkros Anthias was in this same period the most progressive literary figure in Cyprus, and leader of the local intellectual avant-garde. He was a Marxist who publicized his Communist Party membership as an act of defiance at a time when the Party was going underground (Trimikliniotis, pers. comm). His poetry was anti-establishment, class conscious, anti-clerical, and atheistic. Two poetical works, *Holy Satan, Bless Me* (1930) and *The Second Coming* (1931) are a direct and caustic attack on religion and the powerful Church of Cyprus. Inevitably his work resulted in excommu-nication from the Church of Cyprus and subsequent removal from his teaching position. After the October 1931 uprising, in which Anthias had an active role, the colonial govern-ment turned against him. He was accused of being a political subversive, arrested twice, imprisoned and then internally exiled (Sophocleous 2011). The case of Anthias illustrates the dynamism of Cypriot modernity in the 1920s and 1930s. It is also, indirectly, another telling example of the often symbiotic relationship between local political and clerical elites and the colonial government.

Shifting to vernacular culture, many of the political changes that marked the peak of Cypriot modernity came to be acted out in the space of the coffeehouse, which became the primary arena for political debates. The coffeehouse provided a space for socialization and contact with the world outside the narrow confines of small community life. Within its space people would consume mass media content, be entertained by traveling theater or music groups, and participate in forms of vernacular and working-class subcultures. It was a cosmopolitan and, eventually, a modernized and modernizing institution (Philippou 2007, 2010b). The socio-political role of the coffeehouse is to this day echoed on its walls, in the form of political paraphernalia; posters of Che Guevara and Karl Marx, or portraits of seminal ecclesiastical figures and guerrilla fighters of the late 1950s. This material culture and other objects associated with modernity, such as TV and radio sets, can be seen as expressions of a head-on confrontation of vernacular culture and aesthetics with romantic fantasies about Cyprus. These vernacular tableaux also reveal contradictions within the multiplicity and complexity of existing cultures and ideologies on a local level. While on some occasions objects act as signs of hegemonic values (for example, religious iconography, images of ethnic and nationalist identities), on other occasions they are in sharp opposition to dominant definitions of the nation's identity and the leadership of the Church, and are imbued with politics and ideals that are generated from the bottom up, as well as being class-related (for instance, posters of Che Guevara or of local known Leftists).

Costas Stathis, a painter who remained on the margins of Cypriot art historiography for many years, appears to have an honest relationship with the complexities of this dynamic, domesticated modernity in general, but also as manifested in the subcultures that emerged

FIGURE 18.2   Costas Stathis, *In the Coffee Shop VII*, oil on board, 44 × 30cm. Collection Stathis Orphanides. Costas Stathis was a painter of scenery and people in the village of Askas, where he spent the last thirty-five years of his life. The artist was a regular visitor of the local coffee shop, which would double as a grocery store, either to drink a cup of herbal tea and play cards with his co-villagers or to paint a coffee-house scene. *Source*: Photo courtesy of Stathis Orphanides.

in the social space of the coffeehouse; a theme of several of his paintings. In his work, he is not preoccupied with preserving a "pure" Cyprus like Diamantis, but he instead records visible manifestations of Cypriot modernity, such as a sizeable world map on the wall or a radio receiver (Figure 18.2). Both of these objects point towards the transformation of this social space into a modernized, cosmopolitan one, where individuals would engage with the world beyond the island, with international ideas, as well as with local politics. More specifically, the radio was a significant utilitarian and cultural object, the interest in which peaked during the Second World War and particularly after Greece and the Cypriot Regiment (under British command) entered the war (Philippou 2010b). As the island did not have its own broadcasting station (early 1940s), coffeehouse owners would tune into Athens and Cairo radio stations and the BBC (Philippou 2010b), thus allowing customers

access to events taking place beyond the island, and transforming the radio into a significant sign of the island's modernizing process.

Stathis was an avant-garde painter of the early generation of Cypriot modern artists; the generation generally referred to as the "Fathers of Modern Cypriot Art." In addition to content that reflects a process of modernization, important observations can be made about his visual style as well. A level of abstraction is dominant in his paintings: outlines are abandoned; facial features are often absent; perspective is distorted and vivid colors dominate the overall compositions. Also, there is often a substantial degree of subversion and surrealism in Stathis's work. Loizidi notes this dimension in his work by describing it as one bordering "on parody, sarcasm or the grotesque theatrical masquerade" (2013, 39). More so, Loizidi acknowledges a level of similarity with European modernists. She writes,

> If Costas Stathis … had lived in Paris or some other metropolis of art of the early 20th century, his work would have undoubtedly and effortlessly paralleled the most advanced tokens of the so-called post-impressionist movements. He would have no trouble following the bold composite conquests of the renowned Fauves or gain a profound understanding of the potent social symbolism of the German expressionist group "The Bridge."
> (Loizidi 2013, 15)

It would however be a mistake to categorize Stathis's work based only on formal elements, technique, or approach and their proximity to European paradigms of painterly practice during this same period. Although the recent unearthing of his work and attempts to establish it as part of the "Fathers" of modernity in Cyprus are mostly based on this type of analysis, Stathis's oeuvre needs to be considered beyond and in isolation from European-isms (Post-Impressionism, German Expressionism, Fauvism, Surrealism, etc.). Even though Stathis was trained at the Athens School of Fine Arts and was probably influenced by the European trends taught at the School,[10] his paintings are illustrative of a deeply idiosyncratic approach to locality.

What is of interest in Stathis's case is not just the work itself – exemplary of an emerging modernity in both content and style – but also the way in which he has been treated by local art historiography. While his work is conspicuously absent from the State Gallery in Nicosia – where the "Fathers" of modernity are displayed – and from mainstream art historiography, it has recently been unearthed and hailed as a significant discovery that could enhance our understanding of Cypriot modernity. Nikita (2010) suggests that Stathis' erstwhile absence and his physical withdrawal from Nicosia, was the product of mental illness. Leaving the local center of intellectual and artistic activity in the mid-twentieth century, he returned to his parental village. Stathis continued to paint systematically after his relocation in 1950, and a substantial body of his work found its way into private collections. The reasons for his absence from the Cypriot art canon must, then, be sought not in his departure from Nicosia, but in the ideological priorities of the new Republic of Cyprus that emerged in 1960, which – through institutions such as museums and art galleries – tried to revive tradition and reaffirm Cyprus's Greekness. Stathis' work served neither of these goals.

In any attempt at representing artistic practice in early and mid-twentieth century Cyprus, works that offer a narrative supportive of national aspirations were preferred. Loukia Nicolaidou, the first known Cypriot woman to have studied art and one of the first Cypriot artists to have had solo exhibitions in Nicosia and Limassol (1934, 1935, and 1936), is another such example. A "mother" among the patriarchs of art, Nicolaidou appears in that section of the State Gallery of Contemporary Art that is informally referred to as the "Fathers" section. While her early work is an amalgam of individual dynamism

and the wider feminist emancipations of the twentieth century – and thus unique among other existing visual expressions of local modernity – the State Gallery chose to represent her work through an early mother-and-child-themed painting, a 1950s work alluding to the *enosis* movement, and an inoffensive landscape.

Her dynamic earlier female nudes from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s that represent women who refuse to be subjected to a male gaze and instead appear to project defiant and confident sexualities, are excluded from official narratives. Danos says of her nudes,

> Many of her works depict female nudes, in line with many of her European, mostly male, colleagues, in the work of whom the female nude occupies central place. And while Nico- laidou could be "accused" of participating in the tradition … of offering the depiction (by mostly male artists) of the female nude to the pleasure of the (mostly male) gaze, the rendering of the subject puts her works aside from the above tendency. Whether they are earlier school studies … or paintings done after her studies in Paris … the figures … rendered with a degree of monumentality … they contain a sense of self-reference (as if refusing to acknowledge the presence of the viewer), that greatly negate the possibility of their being viewed as passive objects of desire.
>
> (2006, 17)

Such visual representations are unique for Cyprus. While they significantly point towards an art practice inspired by the artist's own studies in Paris from 1929 to 1933 and her engagement with European modernity, they also reflect an aspiration to a wider philosoph- ical and social positioning relevant to the female body and sexuality in the early decades of the twentieth century.

It is noteworthy that Nicolaidou's studies of the female body change formally, when she moved from Paris to Cyprus in the 1930s. Her depicted women change from European- looking females to more "exotic," Cypriot-looking, auto-referential individuals. In a 1929 Paris nude, a woman is standing against the dark interior of a house, holding firmly onto the back of a chair, her body beautifully painted in hues of yellow and blue conveying an almost cold, melancholic, and distant quality. The short necklace of blue stones around her neck and the carefully groomed dark hair allude to a fashionable woman. At the same time, the frontal posture of the figure, the closed yet relaxed eyes and overall facial expression, as well as the raised arm in the manner of Picasso's 1907 *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* arguably generate a strong sense of confidence and a radiant sexuality.

When Nicolaidou returns to Cyprus (1933–1936) her painting of the nude changes stylistically. A female nude (Figure 18.3), for instance, is painted in the warm hues of orange, red, and brown against what seems to be an outdoors scene. The landscape in the background, as well as the Gauguin-like female, allude to a local avant-gardist tendency to adopt primitivism as a way of asserting tradition, as already discussed, and Nikolaidou seems eager to present an exoticized female figure. The black straight hair, the olive skin, the raised arm, the curves of the body lightly covered by a white cloth casually placed upon the pubic area, and the fact that the female is no longer facing the viewer but stands at a dis- tant point, are reminiscent of romantic depictions of reclining nudes of a previous era. Still, as noted above, the figure here renders a degree of monumentality, containing a sense of self-reference by refusing to acknowledge the presence of the viewer. This monumentality is accentuated by the woman's face, which approximates an archaic bust, with big eyes, long dark eyebrows, straight nose, and full lips. Certainly, the face is also reminiscent of other depictions of the Cypriot female as an exotic, dark-haired, and olive-skinned Aphrodite.[11]
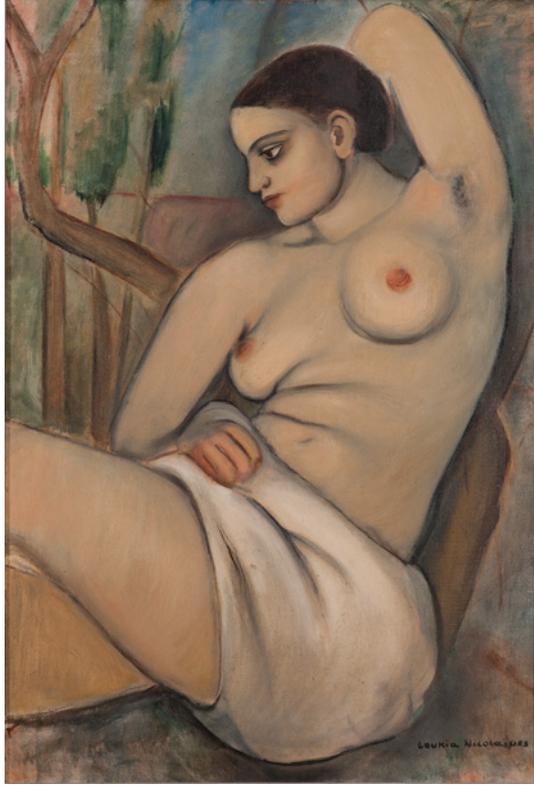
FIGURE 18.3   Loukia Nicolaidou: *Nude*, oil on canvas, 103 × 70.5cm, 1933–36. Limassol Municipal Gallery. *Source*: Photo Limassol Municipal Gallery. Courtesy estate of the artist.

Nicolaidou's negotiations of female sexuality, either in an aggressively direct confrontation with the viewer or in an indirect defiance that reclaims a monumental integrity and presence, speak of a society that is increasingly progressive, changing, open, and searching for a new self-image, as well as for its place in an international and cosmopolitan milieu. Nicolaidou's nudes also stand for an increasingly educated and liberated modern woman in Cyprus. At the same time, the observed formal changes in her paintings at the time of her relocation home cannot be ignored. What is of significance is the manner in which her work could potentially encapsulate both modernizing trends in the manner of Stathis's paintings and other parallel socio-political aspirations in the manner of Diamantis, becoming the epitome of visual representation of what we have argued to be an alternative modernity in Cyprus; one that adopts conflicting forces such as Europeanism and locality in idiosyncratically synergetic ways.

Conclusions

An assumed "altered understanding" of Cypriot modernity in the case of many visual artists is often based on misdirected attempts to align the first avant-garde artists of Cyprus with wider European trends and practices, limiting the potential of looking at the site-specificity of these visual products of modernity. On the one hand, existing readings of Stathis's and

Nicolaidou's work, for instance, can be seen within a wider limited attempt to expand the European canon of art history by including non-Western artists, primarily on account of their compatibility with the West (Mitter 2008). In the case of Stathis, one could argue that the recent emergence of his work as one of great significance is mostly based on measurement against his European colleagues. On the other hand, the attempt to place a female artist within the dominant narratives of the master "Fathers" is performed through the particular politics of the gallery displays that remain in alignment with mainstream discourses of museology and art historiography within local dominant narratives. These attest to a tendency of favoring a hegemonic modernizing image of Cyprus from the turn of the twentieth century onwards and a failure to escape conventional readings of local art practice – even by local art historians.

One important question then to be addressed is why such readings and processes are being revisited now. This chapter began with a reference to an exhibition-making timeline project, which, among other things, attempted to retrace the emergence of modernity in Cypriot arts. That project, just like this chapter, should be seen as a product of its time. We identify this current period as an intensely revisionist one; a period marked by a plethora of projects attempting to re-define Cyprus' postcolonial condition, reconsidering local modernity and even rethinking Cypriotness itself. If the period between the 1920s and the 1940s marked the first Cypriot renaissance, this current period could be considered as its second. It is a period when fixed and persistent ideas about Cypriotness that have dominated the country since the consolidation of the hegemony of the Church and the *enosis* movement in the 1950s are reconsidered and challenged. This rediscovered fluidity means that Cypriot identity is once again given a different content and contexts by different sections of society (Philippou, forthcoming).[12]

The co-existence of trends/movements and the identity flux during the emergence of Cypriot modernity eventually gave way in the 1950s to a, by then, dominant Greek nationalism, the Ethnarchy (that is, the dual religious and political role of the Church) and the *enosis* movement. The ideology espoused by these combined forces pushed all other trends aside, either turning them into subcultures or at any rate distancing them from dominant discourses. What prevailed in the first few decades of the Republic, at least at the level of official discourse and its aesthetics, was a yearning for tradition and purity. This related to two dominant ideas or attitudes. First, the notion that the birth of the Republic was an unwelcome accident of history and that Cyprus's destiny was with the Greek state. Consequently, it was through tradition, not modernity, that the links with the wider "Hellenic world" could be established. Second, after the 1974 Turkish invasion there was a prevailing sense of victimization. The emphasis on tradition was again instrumental in putting the argument forward; a premodern, apolitical and unassuming society could easily be cast as the victim of greater forces.

This, in turn, has given way to a new era. Accession to the EU (in 2004), the maturity of a now 57-year-old Republic, and many young people's tiredness of the Cyprus Problem have created the conditions for a renewed fluidity of Cypriotness. The island's accession to the EU created a sense of "having arrived," providing an "official" affirmation of the country's European identity that fulfilled the aspirations of the political, social, and clerical elites. This means that anxiety about identity, which in the Republic's first couple of decades of existence suppressed any voices or trends that were perceived as pointing away from Greekness and/or European-ness, has been eased. This sequentially leaves room for alternative discourses and perspectives on the question of Cypriotness.

At the same time, the maturity of the Cypriot state, the consolidation of its institutions, and the creation of new cultural bodies such as universities provide local sources for

deriving civic pride and cues as to what constitutes Cypriotness, while also increasing the distance from corresponding Greek causes. In the eyes of many Cypriots, Cyprus feels less and less like a Greek province. Finally, the Cyprus Problem has created such weariness on the part of society and especially the young that a whole new generation of artists, writers, and poets are turning their backs on the Problem and the Buffer Zone that divides the island into two, and are looking for inspiration elsewhere. Actions that have resulted in a form of purism and nostalgia for tradition, give way to a rather delayed but quite dynamic Cypriot postmodernity, with Cypriotness once again being re-negotiated and in flux.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 This two-day research marathon, during which the team gathered material on exhibition-making in Cyprus was an initiative of *Re Aphrodite* (made up by Evanthia Tselika and Chrystalleni Loizidou) and Christina Lambrou, Elena Parpa, and Maria Petrides. The material collected was presented in the form of a "Timeline" – a visual and textual intervention.

2 For an extensive discussion on the limitations in researching Turkish-Cypriot art of the early twentieth century and the problematic distinction between Greek and Turkish-Cypriot twentieth-century art along "ethnic lines," see Danos (2014, 218). We would like to recognize the significance of including Turkish-Cypriot art in a more comprehensive overview of Cypriot modernity (beyond the scope of this chapter), and the need to carry out further research into what remains an unexplored part of Cypriot modernity.

3 Kissonergis left Cyprus for Athens to study medicine (unspecified date), but his studies were interrupted by the Balkan Wars (1912–1913). He resumed his studies after the end of the war – this time at the Higher School of Fine Arts in Athens – only to have them interrupted again one-and-a-half years later to return to Cyprus, after contracting tuberculosis.

4 Between 1925 and 1935 Leopold Glaszner's studio, based in Larnaca, produced postcards printed in Germany. In 1927 Glaszner collaborated with the Mantovani Travel Agency (also based in Larnaca) for the production of a series of postcards depicting both the towns and the natural beauties of the island (Hadjipanayis 2001).

5 This grassroots Cypriot renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s was not insular. While it had aesthetic and ideological references to Western modernity, it was still at ease with its position in the Middle East. For example, the period's press frequently reported on cultural and athletic exchanges between Cyprus and Egypt, or Cyprus and Lebanon. Furthermore, at least until the 1940s it was common for ordinary Cypriot men, both Turks and Greeks, to smoke the narghile in coffeehouses – a habit that virtually disappeared in subsequent decades as it acquired a lower, "eastern" status.

6 Cyprus became British territory on 4 July 1878, when the Ottomans signed a treaty with the British in exchange for support in case of a Russian attack in the East. At the same time, Cyprus was part of the Grand Tour that began during the eighteenth century as a

pilgrimage that both broadened the horizons of young British aristocrats and prepared them for future political careers (Papaioannou 2014).

7　Interestingly, in 1815 Archbishop Kyprianos excommunicated Greek freemasons, accused of spreading radical nationalist ideas in Cyprus, religious heresy, and also opposition to the Sultan's authority (Katsiaounis 1996). Katsianounis offers an important analysis of the birth and expansion of Greek nationalism in Cyprus. Although Greeks overall desired the end of Ottoman rule, "they did not all desire it in the same way" (1996, 19). The difference was class-related; the elite mostly placed their hopes for liberation on outside intervention rather than on a revolutionary reaction, the desire of the lower classes.

8　Persianis also discusses urban transformations in the first quarter of the twentieth century and the symbolic value of those architectural projects developed in the preferred neo-classical style, intended to be an attestation of the Hellenic national identity of Greek Cypriots in the eyes of both the locals and the British who questioned this.

9　This was the year the EOKA uprising began.

10　Stathis' studies began in 1936. They were interrupted due to financial difficulties and the onset of the Second World War in 1939.

11　The lure of Aphrodite is here viewed in relation to an ambiguous Cypriot identity. Papadakis (2006) observes a "categorical ambiguity … employed for descriptions of Cyprus, including local representations of Cyprus" (p. 241). His example is a Greek-Cypriot brand of Turkish delights named "Aphrodite Delights." Papadakis uses his example to illustrate the complexities of identity relating to the Greek-Cypriot mainstream desire to be part of a Hellenic past and the impossibility of doing so, due to the long and integral interweaving of the island's various ethnic communities. In addition to issues of ethnic classification, there lies another significant element in the example of "Aphrodite Delights" as well as in the locals' fixation with the Greek goddess of beauty and love. This is the underlying testimony that the image of the island has always been the result of an "exoticization" of the past. One might claim that the affection towards the symbol of Aphrodite is due to its potential to prove the island's connection to Greek mythology and thus to a greater Hellenic past.

12　This section draws from an extended analysis of Cypriot identity and the twists and turns in notions about Cypriotness in the twentieth century and this current period in a PhD thesis titled *Photography, Ideology and the Construction of Cypriotness*.

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A Northern Avant-garde: Spaces and Cultural Transfer

Annika Öhrner

The avant-garde of the early twentieth century in Europe was to a large extent a field of migrating artists and the circulation of artists' works. In Stockholm a small, distinguished art school was run by *Konstnärsförbundet*, the influential independent "artists' association," founded in 1886 in opposition to the Royal Art Academy. *Konstnärsförbundets tredje skola* – "the Third School of Konstnärsförbundet" – had opened in 1905 but closed due to the lack of students in 1908 as many had moved to Paris.[1] The school's professors had been working with *plein air* painting following their residency in France in the 1870s and 1880s. The Royal Art Academy in Stockholm, the major art institution, was not progressive and sometimes subject to student protests, including one by female students who wanted access to nude male models in drawing classes (Öhrner 2012); protests that were rejected by the professors. This lack of a contemporary art education provided the motivation to travel to Paris, where Scandinavian students could be found in many of the independent académies libres, indeed forming the majority of Henri Matisse's students during the years of his academy: 1908–1911. Thus, Swedish and other Scandinavian artists were a large part of avant-garde formations in Paris. Few of them actually exhibited in the Salons but artists such as Nils Dardel and Isaac Grünewald were involved in the inner circles of Montparnasse artistic life.

The presumption embedded in conventional art history is that Paris was the source of modern art and innovative culture, which was then transferred throughout Europe and beyond during the first decades of the twentieth century. Such a view typifies what Piotr Piotrowski has named the "center-periphery paradigm," and which assumes linear development of aesthetic innovation (Piotrowski 2009, 13). An example confirming such a view is provided through Matisse's Nordic students and the dissemination of "Expressionism" into Scandinavia. What I would like to call "the notion of a monospheric nature" of the avant-garde in Paris has been crucial in promoting such simplistic understandings; however I will demonstrate through an art field with multiple spaces of play that the situation was more complex. Without denying the unquestionable importance of Paris, it is fruitful to re-visit the above explanation through a synchronic perspective, using notions of transnational strategies as a tool and a diachronic eye (Sapiro 2009; Joyeux-Prunel 2009).

In Swedish historiography at least since the mid-twentieth century, the year 1909 has been regarded as the moment of modernist breakthrough (Lilja 1955). That year, some young artists returned after having studied at the Académie Matisse in Paris and launched their work at an exhibition at Hallins Konsthandel, Drottninggatan 25, Stockholm.[2] This narrative remains embedded in institutional structures, reinforced through museum displays. A group of students referred to as *Matisse eleverna* ("the students of Matisse") has become ahistorical, gendered in the masculine unit that with time and much historical writing, has taken on a narrower meaning different from the *actual* group of Matisse's Swedish students (Öhrner 2014). This chapter will investigate this construction through two recent figures of pioneering avant-gardism within the modernist narrative: the ones created around the work of Siri Derkert (1888–1973) and Hilma af Klint (1862–1944). From these artists it will be clear that modernist constructions often obscure what they intend to explain. I will conclude by revisiting the Baltic Exhibition in Malmö 1914, a historic moment where several initiatives of avant-garde ambition were performed on one site. Avant-garde formations, to use the concept of David Cottington (2013), need to be understood as being positioned in a field of several parallel spaces.

Stockholm and the International Art Market

In the early twentieth-century Stockholm was one of several, horizontally organized centers and peripheries in Europe. During a period of intense cultural transfer throughout Europe Stockholm was not just a city to leave but one to arrive at. During the 1910s Stockholm had a small, but from a European perspective, important art market. Three galleries were foremost in dealing with international modernist art (Lärkner 1984), all situated at Östermalm, the bourgeois part of the city. *Gummessons Konsthandel*, Strandvägen 17 was founded in 1914 by Carl Gummeson, and showed Swedish and international modernist art, including works by Franz Marc (1915), Wassily Kandinsky (1916), and Gabriele Münter (1916). *Nya Konstgalleriet*, founded by the Italian artist Arturo Ciacelli one block away from Gummeson's in 1915, showed in a range of constellations and occasions, Sonia and Robert Delaunay (1916), as well as Fernand Léger, Amadée Ozenfant, André Lhote, and Diego Rivera. Ciacelli was himself a migrant artist, who came to Sweden in 1912 after marrying Swedish artist Elsa Ström in 1909. He began to create an avant-garde position for himself through a one-man exhibition in Lund that year and in the following year one in Stockholm. In connection with this, he claimed to be one of the authors of the *Futurist Manifesto* which he published in Swedish (Boccioni *et al.* 1913). The third space was *Svensk-Franska Konstgalleriet* founded in 1918 by Gösta Olson, who made wide connections with intellectuals, dealers, and artists in Paris while running his own physiotherapist institute there before the war (Olson 1965). The gallery was to become a major player into the 1920s, and showed Pablo Picasso, Maurice de Vlaminck, André Derain, Matisse and Léger and other, primarily French, artists.

The international activities within these three galleries can be seen as beneficiaries of Sweden's neutrality: foreign art dealers saw them as alternatives to declining markets in Europe during the war. Interestingly, Gösta Olson had been chosen by the leading Parisian art dealers Paul Rosenberg, Bernheim-Jeune, and Durand-Ruel to direct the Swedish part of a large traveling exhibition of French art to Scandinavia. It contained art by a broad range of artists from Eugène Delacroix to Picasso, and traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1917, and then to Christiania (now Oslo), Norway in 1918, after which it

arrived in Stockholm. Olson also arranged its travel on to Gothenburg. The connections he made during this successful project became the foundation for his own business as he then opened his gallery at Strandvägen.

Another sign of the significance of the Stockholm art scene for the international market was the interest and activities of Herwarth and Nell Walden, their gallery and Expressionist journal *Der Sturm* (*The Storm*). The French artist Robert Delaunay exhibited at *Der Sturm* in Berlin in January 1913. This led to a visit to Paris by Walden, where he saw Sonia Delaunay-Terk's decorative work and invited her to take part in the *Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon* in Autumn 1913 (Goetzmann 2014). The *Herbstsalon* was Sonia Delaunay's first step into the international art world but also a breakthrough for Walden himself, who went from being the editor of a rather small art journal to an international player, one whose gallery was the most prominent in Berlin and internationally. Walden was closely connected to Kandinsky and through him developed relations with Russian and French artists. In Stockholm his partner was Carl Gummesson. Sonia Delaunay was invited to exhibit at Ciacelli's *Nya Konstgalleriet* in Stockholm through the friendship that Robert Delaunay had established earlier in Paris with Arturo Ciacelli. This important exhibition of "simultaneous" work was dominated by more than twenty paintings by Sonia Delaunay and her and Blaise Cendrar's *La Prose du Transibérien et la petite Jehanne de France* sent from Portugal where the Delaunays lived.

Herwarth and Nell Walden, the latter a Swedish artist, developed strategies to establish *Der Sturm* in the Stockholm art market (Sjöholm-Skrubbe 2015). Herwarth Walden's Berlin *Der Sturm* Gallery exhibited the *Schwedishe Expressionisten* in 1915, a show that included the artists Gösta Adrian-Nilsson, Sigrid Hjertén, Isaac Grünewald, Einar Jolin, and Edward Hald: the latter three belonged to the "men of 1909" (Reinhardt 2000). Another artist exhibiting at the *Erster German Herbstsalon* in Berlin was Gabriele Münter, one of the artists in *Der Blaue Reiter*-group and Kandinsky's partner. She came to Stockholm in July 1915 to be resident in a neutral country but as close as possible to Russia where Kandinsky had fled in November the previous year. Münter had an exhibition in *Der Sturm* in Berlin that opened on 24 October 1915 while in Stockholm she managed to quickly connect to the local scene and art market, and participated in a group show at *Gummesons Konsthandel* as early as October that year. Walden commented upon Münter's independence with these arrangements in a letter to her that can be interpreted as controlling "his" artists in the Swedish market (Öhrner 1992, 70). Following Robert Delaunay's solo 1920 exhibition at *Nya Konstgalleriet*, Walden maintained a level of control over the sale of these paintings to counter his rival Ciacelli in the Swedish market for the French painter.

When both Kandinsky and Münter had successful solo exhibitions at *Gummesons Konsthandel* in early 1916, they were carefully identified as *Der Sturm* exhibitions in the catalogue. Although under pressing personal circumstances during her years in Scandinavia, Münter's interaction with the Swedish art scene and particularly the painter Sigrid Hjertén, meant a qualified liberation from her gendered position within the *Der Blaue Reiter* circle as a "primitive artist," and her art moved into more mundane subject-matter. In 1917 she exhibited successfully with Ciacelli at the *Nya Konstgalleriet* and remained in Scandinavia until 1920. The correspondence between Walden and Münter, and between Walden and the Delaunays, shows a certain tension regarding the artists' independent actions in Stockholm, giving an indication of the competition in the avant-garde field and art market in Stockholm. These exhibition projects were the results of eagerness on the part of artists and art dealers to create new patterns of cultural transfer, in which the established figures of center and periphery became obsolete.

FIGURE 19.1   Arvid Fougstedt, *Matisse's School* (1910). From left: Carl Palme, Rudolf Levy, Henri Matisse, Arthur Percy, Sigrid Hjertén, Leander Engström, Isaac Grünewald, Einar Jolin, Per Krogh och Birger Simonsson. Indian ink on paper. Borås Konstmuseum. *Source*: Borås Konstmuseum/© DACS 2016.

Académie Matisse and the Formation of "The Men of 1909"

> As these forerunners and teachers [the artists in Konstnärsförbundet] the young once wanted to travel to find inspiration at the "sources of art" in Paris. When the students of Matisse in their turn returned home, it was to introduce modernism in Nordic art.
>
> (Svensson and Hoff 2007, 5)

Matisse played an important role as an art educator, despite the short tenure of his *Académie* from 1908 to 1911 (Figure 19.1). While this period is closely intertwined with Swedish modernist art history, little international research has been focused on the fact that so many of his students were from the North of Europe, while some were German, none was from France. Matisse opened his studio in January 1908 for students at the former monastery Couvent des Oiseux, 86 Rue de Sèvres, then in the summer of 1908 moved the school to another similar building, Couvent du Sacré Cœur. He lived with his family in the former convent and kept his own private studio separate from the spaces where his students worked. The Swedish artist Carl Palme belonged to the small circle of young artists that became Matisse's students that included the American Leo Stein, brother of Gertrude Stein, Max Weber, and Hans Purrman (Palme 1950; Spurling 2009; Öhrner 2014). Palme's presence is probably one reason that a contingent of Scandinavian artists soon appeared at the school. Artists new to Paris often connected to networks of compatriots, who helped with advice on where to live and study and with overcoming language barriers, thus creating micro spheres with nationality as a common base. Isaac Grünewald, for example, was non-French speaking and was dependent on Carl Palme's

simultaneous translation of Matisse's critique during the master's Saturday studio classes (Hodin 1949, 41). A number of Scandinavian artists, including Norwegians such as Henrik Sørenssen, Axel Revold, and Birger Simonsson (Werenskiold 1972) followed Palme and joined Matisse's academy during Autumn 1908. The exact numbers of Scandinavian artists at the Académie are not known but around fifty Scandinavian artists have been recorded among Matisse's 100 students (Meister, Prytz, and Sidén 2014).

While at times Académie Matisse had been valorized as a site of a more liberal art education, this playground for new and modernist forms had a demanding curriculum. Intense studies of the nude were at the core of the work, as seen by the large number of nude studies left by his former students (Meister, Prytz, and Sidén 2014). Matisse seems to have had good pedagogical skills, formulating in a few words problems he saw in students' work. According to the Norwegian Edward Hald, Matisse emphasized the need to carefully distinguish between lines and colors. "Il faut se distinguer" was the phrase Hald recalled (Hald 1944). In sculpture classes, Matisse recommended students conceptualize form, before actually starting working with materials. As well as working with nude models, Matisse recommended students study archaic sculptures, both actual sculptures in the studio, and from photographs. Thus, his methods of educating were not very different from the more academic tradition that the same students "escaped" in the Royal Academy in Stockholm. This mode of educating artists survived a long time within Scandinavian, as well as in other European art schools.

The free academies in Paris that emerged around the 1870s, such as the *Académie Julien* opening in 1868, were fundamentally important for women from all around the world denied education in national academies (Garb 1994; Gonnard and Lebovici 2007). Many of the Swedish female artists who went to Paris found a place at the *Académie Matisse*. Sigrid Hjertén was a painter who developed an extremely subjective style of painting there. Although her work was well received by Matisse who seldom complemented students, her work is rarely cited in art historical literature (Borgh Bertorp 1999). Hjertén had a background in textile art but turned to painting during her studies at Matisse's *Académie*, and even published articles on the new art. She was also a rare example of a female artist who on her return and within modernist art history could "claim Matisse." The group exhibiting at Hallins Konsthandel, later labeled "the men of 1909" had founded their team, *De Unga* ("The Young") with proper statutes by 1907 even though many of them were still students in the third school of *Konstnärsförbundet*. The first two paragraphs of the statute read "'The Young' is an association of artists to promote their common interests. §1. The purpose of the association is to arrange exhibitions. §2. As members of the association, male artists can be elected" (Lilja 1955, 100). Sigrid Hjertén, married to the leading artist in the group Isaac Grünewald, was to become the rare exception as she was included in many of the group's activities during the years after 1909. Other women artists from Matisse's *Académie* – for example Maj Bring, Jane Gumpert, and Charlotte Mannheimer – remained outside the avant-garde formations of Stockholm and thereafter outside received art history. Although students of Matisse, they were never included in the modernist art history of a modern breakthrough, that is, they were never counted among *Matisse eleverna*.

Cubism in Retrospect – Siri Derkert (1888–1973)

Cubism and artists such as Picasso and Georges Braque belong to the core histories of aesthetic innovation in the early twentieth century; so they often occur in narrations of

cultural transfer (Cottington 2004). As a reaction to the fascist period and the suppression of the avant-garde during the Second World War the previously repressed became the focus of many museums and Kunsthalles after the war with Cubism itself used to legitimate the emerging so called neo-avant-garde. An example can be found in the Swedish delegation to the Venice Biennale in 1962. It opened with a retrospective exhibition by Derkert in the new Nordic Pavilion, built in a modern, austere style by Scandinavian architect Sverre Fehn.[3] Pontus Hultén, curator at *Moderna Museet* since its opening in 1958 and soon its Director (from 1963) had curated the show. He stated,

> Siri Derkert is a central figure within Swedish Modern Art. She was one of those who introduced cubism in Sweden, after her return from Paris and Italy in 1910. Actually, she has always been a cubist. She does not submit herself to anything, and neither did Picasso and Braque, creating their first collages.
>
> (Hultén 1962)[4]

In 1960 Ulf Linde made similar associations between Derkert, classical Cubism, and Picasso in the exhibition catalogue of Derkert's retrospective in the *Moderna Museet* (Linde 1960). However, Derkert's encounters with Picasso's art in Paris, and even more so her "distribution /promotion of Cubism" in Sweden, are art historical inventions. Derkert neither saw Picasso's art nor became a "Cubist" in the cafés of Montparnasse; she was even less able to display her own Cubist work in Sweden or elsewhere.

Derkert's Cubist work has been reconstructed through written statements, original paintings, and photographs representing artworks now lost. These works position her as an artist of the early avant-garde (Öhrner 2011 and 2012). These artefacts and documents serve to specify the kind of space that was given for Derkert's work and position it in the social space. Derkert's work and life can be traced through almost the whole twentieth century. Born in 1888 in Stockholm, she studied for less than two years at the Royal Academy before leaving for Paris in November 1913. She lived in France, Italy, and other parts of Europe before, during, and after the First World War. From the 1920s onwards she painted intensely and in isolation, finally obtaining an exhibition of her Expressionist work in Stockholm in 1944.

By the 1960s her position in art history as an early modernist and a "Swedish Cubist" was assured but was based on just a few paintings, *Self-Portrait*, 1915 (Figure 19.2), the *Nature Morte*, 1915, and *Self-portrait with Parasol*, 1916. The first two were acquired by the National Museum in the 1950s and included in the 1958 opening collection of *Moderna Museet*, and the latter was a key work at the Venice Biennale in 1962. These paintings were conceived while Derkert was traveling in Italy with the Finnish painter Valle Rosenberg and have become more or less emblematic of early Swedish Cubism. In the first history of *Swedish 20th Century Art* Söderberg suggested that they were caused by Derkert's "confrontation" with Cubism after her arrival in Paris. In Söderberg's interpretation her modestly Cubistic work is seen as "aesthetisized and formalized," and he relates it to classical Cubism's dynamics and use of restricted colors (Söderberg 1955, 50). The "radicalization" of Derkert's early work had begun. When she died in 1973 she was a renowned and well-respected artist, in part due to her late, radical work: notably with the politically and aesthetically controversial *Carvings in Natural Concrete*, 1962–65, at the underground station Östermalmstorg in central Stockholm.

In the summer of 1916, Derkert left Italy returning to Sweden, leaving Valle Rosenberg and their son behind while she looked for exhibition opportunities for them both. Rosenberg, a talented young modernist painter, spent time in Italy and Paris where he
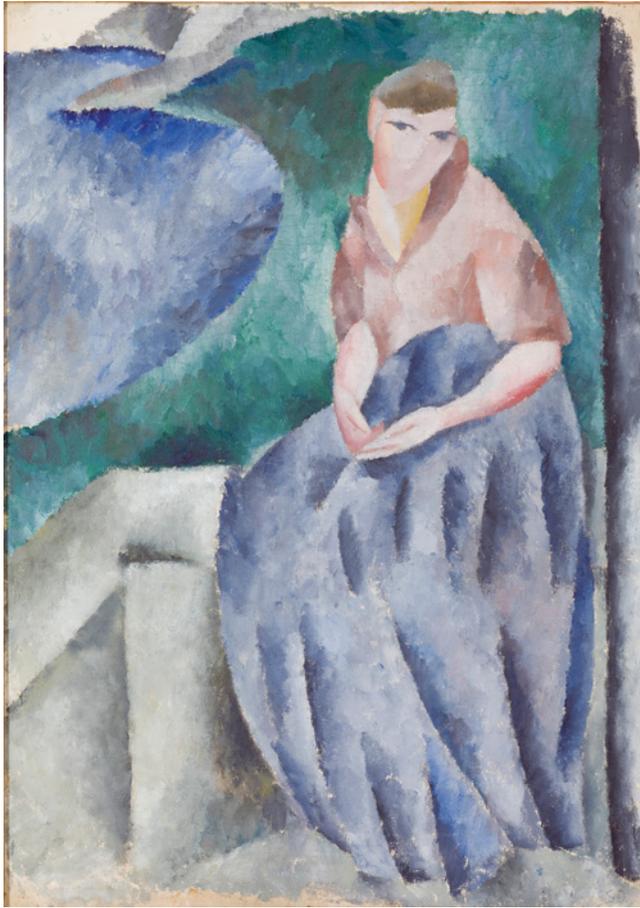
FIGURE 19.2   Siri Derkert, *Self Portrait*, oil on canvas, 1915. Moderna Museet, Stockholm.
Source: Photo: Moderna Museet, Stockholm/© DACS 2016.

was an habitué of the cafés of Montparnasse where he later met Guillaume Apollinaire, and the likes of Amedeo Modigliani, Danila Vassilieff, and Picasso. These encounters are recalled in his letters to Derkert from Paris to Stockholm written in 1916–1917. Rosenberg's descriptions of Paris bohemia have become transformed into direct links between Picasso's work and Derkert's. Rosenberg did not return to the North until the autumn of 1919 when gravely ill; he traveled through war-torn Europe only to die of tuberculosis in his native town of Porvoo, Finland, in December. Their son finally returned to his mother in Sweden in 1923.

So what space did Derkert inhabit in Paris, and did she encounter Cubism there? To arrive physically in Paris before the First World War did not automatically imply access to Cubist or other avant-garde spheres. The potential networks, although occasionally overlapping, were gendered as well as created through common artistic, national, and social interest, or at times, sexual identity. Female networks were essential to many artists. Derkert belonged to a group of young women with enough cultural, social, and economic capital to get to Paris. At home, they were bound by family expectations and an almost non-existent access to the art market. These shared conditions resulted in strong loyalty and

close, long-lasting friendships between women. It was a loan from a better off colleague, the sculptor Anna Petrus, that enabled Derkert to travel to Paris. One could describe the role of the *académies libres* in Paris as a "hidden economy" within the art educational system in Europe: in this case the paucity of female art students at the Royal Art Academy in Stockholm became a surplus at the free academies of Paris.

While in Paris, Derkert studied briefly at the *Académie Collarosi* and at *Académie Russe* but from her arrival in November 1913 until her return to Stockholm when war broke out there was no trace of Cubism in her work. Derkert and her sculptor friend Ninnan Santesson did visit the *Salon d'Automne* in 1915, and Santesson was deeply shocked by the Cubist work painted by Albert Gleizes (Öhrner 2012, 36). When Derkert returned to Stockholm in 1916 she aspired to a position in the avant-garde art scene and intended to exhibit her paintings which she felt were an important body of work. Her self-promotion together with her promotion of Rosenberg's work included: contacting the Futurist painter and gallery owner Ciacelli; a production of modern dance at Intiman Theatre where she performed and designed the costumes, and received broad reactions in the press; and a contribution to a volume of modern Swedish woodcuts in *Svenska original träsnitt*, edited by the leading art critic August Brunius in 1917. There is also evidence that she contacted up-and-coming avant-garde artists such as Grünewald and Sigrid Hjertén. None of these moves were successful. Some years later, in 1921, Derkert's Cubism was presented in the April exhibition at Liljevalchs Konsthall in Stockholm.[5] It had a fine but brief reception among art critics then was quickly forgotten. Derkert continued to work with painting, fashion design, and in the textile business until the mid-1920s. During the next decades she produced expressive portraits of her family with which she had her first real success with an exhibition at Gösta Stenman Gallery in 1944.

Thus, despite her ambitions and intense efforts after 1910 Derkert does not appear in avant-garde circles before the *Moderna Museet* retrospective launches her in 1960, and with her representation at the 1962 Venice Biennale. In complicated ways she negotiated her life and work, turning to those spaces where possibilities arose. Ironically, it was precisely the *Moderna Museet's* launch of Derkert's early work in the 1960s that served to obscure those dynamic and gendered spaces that framed her life and her painterly work. At a moment when the young *Moderna Museet* was eager to present and legitimize new American and Swedish neo-avant-garde, it chose to accomplish this by including a program on the art of the earlier "heroic" avant-garde.

Modernism and Abstraction – Hilma af Klint (1862–1944)

In 2013 *Moderna Museet* opened a large retrospective titled *Hilma af Klint – Abstract pioneer* (Figure 19.3) (Müller-Westermann and Widoff 2013). The impressive works of an artist intensely engaged in an imagery of great consequence and innovation was presented in the largest room of the museum. In a long series of work, some on an intimate scale as, for example, *Serie WU/Rosen, Grupp 1* ("Series WU/The Rose," oil on canvas, 1906–1907, 25 of approximately 50 × 40 cm) or the impressive *Grupp IV, De tio största* ("Group IV, *Paintings for the Temple: The Ten Largest*," tempera on paper, 1907, 10 of approximately 320 × 240 cm) seem to systematically investigate matters of evolution not only through patterns collected from natural objects but also through non-figurative form and using colors formally and symbolically. Another part of af Klint's painterly work, a small number of landscapes and portraits, was presented in a corner of the exhibition: works of

FIGURE 19.3 Hilma af Klint, installation shot, *Paintings for the Temple: The Ten Largest*, 1907. Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 16 February to 26 May 2013. *Source*: Photo: Åsa Lundén/Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

naturalistic representations. Af Klint's immense body of work is I suggest a unique contribution to modernism's cultural history and art.

Af Klint's early engagement in abstract form were arguably dated before the pivotal abstractions of Piet Mondrian, Kandinsky, and Kazimir Malevich, giants of innovation in Western modernist art history. The museum directors describe the process of curating af Klint's work, as a kind of excavation, a revealing of until then concealed images, "Mystical wooden boxes, old and full of secrets, arrived from a deposit where they had bided their time … we unpacked hundreds of works that have not been shown, and gives insights to higher spheres." The implication was that the show would give af Klint "the international breakthrough that she deserves," as before only "single paintings" have been presented in exhibitions (Birnbaum, Noring, Kittelman, and Stals 2013, 16). This description of an "excavation" of a "hidden" oeuvre, of a work that in fact has been exhibited and researched since the 1970s is part of the creation myth of a heroine of modernist abstraction.[6] That creation is also achieved by the separation of af Klint and her colleagues from the actual historical spaces in which they acted.

The academically trained af Klint had a career as a portrait and landscape artist, successfully selling work from her own studio before 1906 when she started to paint a series of systematic, spiritualistically inspired imagery. This work was made in secret within a circle of five female friends; "De fem" *The five*. They had started to meet earlier in 1896, communicating with spiritual leaders: the names and leaders were invented and did not refer to any known persons. The group performed automatic painting and writing; af Klint and her friends kept notes of these sessions. From 1905 the spiritual leaders allegedly gave the group a commission; to start to paint *Målningarna till templet* (*The Paintings for the Temple*).

It is intriguing to think about the circumstances under which af Klint and her colleagues, among them Anna Cassel, who was to remain her companion throughout their lives, created this specific working space. The spiritual and ritual aspects of the painterly work performed by this circle has been thoroughly discussed (Ringbom 1970; Fant 1989; Rousseau 2013). The work can be seen as part of the general interest in spiritualism within upper-class circles at the time, but taken much further and more consequently as a life project for af Klint and her friends. Her library contained literature by N. B. Blavatsky, Annie Besant, and Rudolph Steiner and although her work was clearly understood by her as spiritual, she was inspired by theosophy and searched, personally in vain, for acceptance of her work by Rudolph Steiner. The existence of this large secret body of work, presented decades after the artist's death, has opened up the work to a larger audience. The idea of a group of middle aged, unmarried women, meeting in secrecy performing communication with spirits, holds a certain fascination. However, the actual isolation of the creative space of af Klint has been exaggerated as her work has become incorporated into the early avant-garde. In establishing af Klint as an early abstract pioneer her work has been detached from the social context in which she consciously acted. Her visionary work, her "true" oeuvre, has been separated even distanced from her later naturalistic work.

It is clear, however, that this separation of styles was not the way the artist saw her work. Af Klint and her friends built an atelier outside Stockholm, at Furuheim, Munsö in 1912, financed and owned by Anna Cassel specifically for the 1912 large-scale series *The Paintings for the Temple*. A round, two-story atelier was created where the lower floor consisted of a high roofed atelier with a stove in the center where a number of the large-scale works from *The Paintings for the Temple* series hung. The first floor had two rooms, a hallway, and a kitchen, and one of the rooms had built-in beds. Here, examples of af Klint's visionary work as well as the more naturalist paintings, were hung together in the same space (Fant 1989, 25). Created as a site for specific work to be displayed within a closed circle, this atelier had many features of a classic artist's atelier, but included sacred designs in its vaulted windows and double doors. Af Klint did not devote herself exclusively to private work on *The Paintings for the Temple*, but was also an active member of the public art life in Stockholm during the early decades of the century. Though her Will stated that she did not want to present her secret work during her lifetime and for it not to be shown until twenty years after her death, she did exhibit other work publicly during the early years of the twentieth century.

Af Klint's studio was situated in a building at Hamngatan 5, Kungsträdgården, in the heart of Stockholm and less than a kilometre from the modernist galleries at Strandvägen, a house where exhibitions of Konstföreningen ("The Art Association") and Konstnärsförbundet were presented at *Blanch Konstsalong*. The Konstsalong was founded in 1883, and showed for example an Edward Munch exhibition in 1894 during the time when af Klint studied at the Art Academy. According to Fant, af Klint exhibited portraits at *Blanch's* during the early years of the century (Fant 1989, 16). She attracted many customers, and was able to comfortably support herself. She also worked at the Veterinary Institute where she and Anna Cassel made drawings in 1900–1901. She is reported to have been a very clear-minded woman, and her visionary work shows a strong sense of systematization. However, there are indications of yet another direction of her mind.

From the outset of its foundation in 1910, af Klint identifies herself as a member of Föreningen Svenska Konstnärinnor (FSK, "The Association of Swedish Women Artists," Fant 1989, 14). FSK soon became an important actor in artist life, with several national and international exhibitions during the next few years. The association has within Swedish feminist art history been described as a direct answer to the founding of "De Unga" in

1907, for male artists (Bergslätt 2014). In the context where Swedish women were only given the right to vote in 1921, and even then had limited rights in running businesses or supporting themselves independently, I would like to suggest that a more accurate history of the founding of FSK lies within a society in which many actions were necessary to facilitate women's station in society and enable their political rights. The artists in FSK were very committed to women's rights and some were engaged in the suffragette movement. For example, Eivor Hedvall created the banner of the International Alliance of Woman Suffrage that was inaugurated in conjunction with the influential congress of the Alliance in May 1911 in Stockholm.[7]

Early in the spring of 1911 FSK arranged their first exhibition; a large show at Konstakademien, the Royal Art Academy. Af Klint exhibited no less than three naturalistic works: *Chimney Sweepers*; *At work*; and *Riddarholmsfjärden at Winter Time*.[8] Interestingly, the show was divided into two temporalities: "the retrospective department" and "the modern department."[9] While today's reception of af Klint's naturalistic work has been defined as traditional work (as opposed to the "pioneering abstraction" in her visionary work), it was understood differently during early modernism. Although the distinctions between the two departments seem partly to address whether the artist was living or not, it is clear that af Klint was identified as a "living artist" but also as "the modern."

Af Klint and her work raise questions regarding gender, the linearity of art history writing, and the problematics around modernism and its sources. As Dan Karlholm has put it, instead of trying to insert af Klint through "historiographical violence" into a fixed and patriarchal modernist canon where abstraction is one of the strongest currents, the delayed arrival of her visionary work into the public sphere gives us the option of viewing her work as a kind of present, contemporary art (Karlholm 2014, 294). An initiative in that direction was the inclusion of five of her paintings in the main exhibition in the Central Pavilion of the Venice Biennale 2013, by the curator Massimiliano Gioni in cooperation with Moderna Museet (Birnbaum and Noring 2013). But in addition to such inclusions, we also need to extend our historical understanding of her work and take into account the different spaces within which the artist positioned herself. The fact that her work was produced in both a consciously created, demarcated space of spiritual production, and in a public, emancipatory one that by then was considered as "modern" raises issues of parallel strategies. By following her work in its entirety, not just concentrating on the compelling secret body, an understanding of the conditions of its presentations, strategies and spaces of early modernism will be made much clearer.

The Baltic Exhibition 1914

A huge exhibition of modern industry and modern art was presented in Malmö, Sweden from 15 May to 4 October 1914. In the course of the exhibition, the First World War broke out, which created a chaotic situation for the organizers and the artists. The industrial Baltic Exhibition included the largest ever art exhibition in the Nordic countries, containing some 3,500 artworks by artists from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Russia, and Sweden (Christenson 1989; Sundberg 2014). A condition for submitting art works was that they should be by a living artist, and be new works, not older than seventeen years. Although realism was dominant, new avant-garde art was also present and attracted great interest among younger artists. The Baltic Exhibition included pivotal paintings by Kandinsky, Alexej von Jawlensky, Max Pechstein and other Die Brücke artists, side by side with young Scandinavian art.

The leadership of the art exhibition was given to Oscar Björk, a diplomatically minded, mature artist. Because Björk had been commissioned by the Swedish King the project was accused of being run by the capital rather than by Malmö itself (Sundberg 2014). The art world in Sweden was still torn by tensions between the academy, where Björk was a professor, and the more radical Konstnärsförbundet. Björk traveled throughout Europe to negotiate loans for the exhibition, which he part curated. The Art Hall was divided into four parts, where Finland was included in the Russian section. The Swedish section of the show was created through direct invitations by Björck, as well as by a jury that made selections from artists' submissions, and lastly, by arrangements from invited associations. The Konstnärsförbundet dominated this section, but interestingly many small artists' groups took the chance to participate. Among them were "Expressionisterna," the label under which some of the "men of 1909" Leander Engström, Einar Jolin, Nils von Dardel, and Isaac Grünewald, as well as Sigrid Hjertén-Grünewald exhibited. Derkert did not participate except as a facilitator for her partner, Valle Rosenberg, whose paintings were included in the Finnish section of the show. Three artists from the Association of Swedish Women Artists (FSK), Ida von Schulzenheim, Stina Tirén, and Alice Nordin, arranged the FSK show in two rooms where they exhibited more than 200 works, including af Klint's *Restless work* (*Träget arbete*).

Although curated, the impression of a somewhat random arrangement did not escape the critics. The same unordered character however, is also what helps us find the kind of synchronic spaces for artists that art history narratives normally do not allow us to see.

The Baltic Exhibition reflects the simultaneous character of the spaces in which new art happened and artists acted. This was not within one singular cultural space, in Paris, nor through singular events, such as the Swedish example of modernist narration, witnessed in *De Unga*, in 1909. Moreover, several micro-spaces of avant-garde and other art practices existed side by side, as described here. They represent different expressions and different positions gathered together with the same ambition; to be part of a presentation of future invention and creation.

Notes

1   Konstnärsförbundet's first school ran from 1890 to 1896, the second one from 1899 to 1901 (Strömbom, 1965). Another school as Althins målarskola (Althin's painting school) and a few other private initiatives were to be found in Stockholm.

2   The artist in the 1909 show were: Gregori Aminoff, Ture Ander, Tor Bjurström, Gabriel Burmeister, Arthur Percy, Leander Engström, Isaac Grünewald, Knut Jansson, Ivar Johnsson, Gunnar Lundh, Arvid Nilsson, Carl Ryd, Gösta Sadels, Birger Simonsson and Sigfrid Ullman.

3   The section on Siri Derkert is a derivation of the author's more elaborate argument in Öhrner 2011 and Öhrner 2012.

4   Derkert first went to Paris in 1913 – see Note 5 below.

5   Derkert's Cubist work was first exhibited abroad in 1919, in a show with works by Anna Petrus and Ninie Bergsten, in *Den Fri Udstilling* in Copenhagen. After that, the show traveled to Lund in southern Sweden, to an exhibition space at Lund University.

6   The oeuvre of Hilma af Klint was bequeathed to her niece, on condition it should not been presented publicly until 20 years after her death. In 1967, Professor Sixten Ringbom took an interest in the work. The foundation with her name was founded in 1972 in Stockholm. Subsequent research was undertaken by Fant and his important book (1989) is still the

standard literature on the artist. The international breakthrough of her work came with the exhibition *The Spiritual in Art, Abstract Painting*, curated by Maurice Tuchman for Los Angeles County Museum in 1987, touring to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and Haags Gemeente Museum in The Hague, in 1987, presenting twelve works by af Klint. No less than three traveling exhibitions in the Nordic and Scandinavian countries followed, *Hilma af Klints hemliga bilder* (Nordiskt konstcentrum, Helsinki, 1989, 117 works); *Hilma af Klint; Ockult målarinna och abstrakt pionjär* (Moderna Museet, 1990–1991, 125 works). *Hilma af Klint. Målningarna till templet*, exhibited in Liljevalchs konsthall, City of Stockholm and Wäino Aaltosen Museo, Helsinki in 1999–2000, contained no less than 189 works. The retrospective referred to above held at Moderna Museet in 2013, traveled to Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, 2013; Museo Picasso Málaga, Málaga, 2013–2014, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, 2014 and Kumu Art Museum of Estonia, Talinn, 2014. Some of her paintings, as mentioned above, were shown at the Venice Biennale in 2013. The show "Hilma af Klint: Painting the Unseen," was presented at Serpentine Gallery, London, in early 2016, co-curated with Daniel Birnbaum, Director of Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

7 Eivor Hedvall had won an international competition for designing the banner for the International Alliance of Woman Suffrage, at the 1909 congress in London, and it was produced at the Licium Atelier: today within Handarbetetes Vänner, HV. The banner is still in active use by the Alliance, today the International Alliance of Woman.

8 Nr 361, *Sotare*, Nr 362, *Vid arbetet, genre*, and Nr 363, *Riddarholmsfjärden* vintertid. In *Svenska Konstnärinnors Utställning 1*. Katalog. 1911. Stockholm: Kungliga Akademien för de fria konsterna.

9 "Den retrospektiva afdelningen" and "Den modärna afdelningen," see Svenska Konstnärinnors utställning, K. Akademien för de fria konsterna, 1–30 mars 1911.

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Modernisms, Genealogy, and Utopias in Finland

Renja Suominen-Kokkonen

Introduction

Historical analyses of modernization in Finland today have highlighted the significance of its separation from Swedish rule and its incorporation into the Russian Empire as an autonomous Grand Duchy from 1809 until independence in 1917. This connection with Russia influenced the ways in which Finland approached the process of modernization.

Finland enjoyed a privileged position under Russian rule, with broader political autonomy than the other border regions of Imperial Russia. In comparison with Western Europe, the economy of the Grand Duchy of Finland was markedly agrarian. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were only thirty-seven towns in the whole country, all of them fairly modest in size (Lilius 2014, 308).

Modernization under Russian rule meant expanding and developing industrialization during the nineteenth century, along with effective improvements to urban infrastructure. The concentration of industries in towns and cities, in particular, also led to the significant growth of urban populations. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, 75% of the total population were still engaged in the primary sectors of agriculture, forestry, and fishing, while only 5% were employed in industry and crafts (Myllyntaus 1991, 8–10).

An image of Finland has been created as a country close to pristine nature inhabited by a hard-working and persevering people – an image that continues to be perpetuated even today. A special and underscored feature of this identity discourse, possibly due to late industrialization and slow urbanization, is what Finnish sociologist Risto Alapuro calls a conceptual agrarian identity. This notion of identity gave prominence to clearing land, building, and preserving society, while excluding from its perspective aspects of civic society that were incompatible with these elements (Alapuro 1993, 8). This was particularly evident in the spirit of reconstruction after the Finnish Civil War of 1918, soon after national independence, and again after the Second World War.

It is often forgotten, however, that Finland as a nation, culture, way of life, or linguistic region does not have strict geographic boundaries. As a construct, it is most commonly anchored to the people, its shared roots, experiences, and culture. However, in respect of its roots, the country could not be a *Reich*, nor a *Land*, for its history included 600 years of foreign domination (as the eastern part of the Swedish realm) and over a century as an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. Nonetheless, in the nineteenth century the educated classes of Finland took upon themselves the project of making a *nation* or

more precisely a *Kulturnation* out of Finland, with folk poetry bearing witness to its roots and authentic origins (Joenniemi 1993, 66–67). National independence in 1917, however, placed more emphasis on an alliance of the people and the state, which gradually became self-evident and an integral part of Finnish identity. An emphasis on the state as important in and of itself, however, led to the exclusion of all things that were different and regarded as potential threats or problems. Finnish identity thus came to be interpreted narrowly and at the time disputes over the respective roles of Finnish and Swedish as the country's official languages undermined the notion of a constitutional state, an association of free citizens (Joenniemi 1993, 72). Finland defined itself in dichotomous terms as an outpost of Western civilization facing the East after the Civil War of 1918.

Notions of Finnishness in art and culture are aspects of discourse and rhetoric, occasionally mythical but also revealing. Therefore, I consider three themes with which I seek to challenge earlier notions of Finnish modernity and to illustrate the modernization of the country in terms of culture and the arts. My text weaves together the modernisms of architecture, visual art, and the applied arts, seeking a critical and newer perspective on a canonized narrative. I aim to present a kind of counter-narrative to the heroicizing narratives of modernism looking at three themes: (1) the electrification of Finland; (2) the utopian fantasies of art; and (3) images of the modern.

Electricity Ushering in a New Way of Life

The importance of electrification for Finland needs to be considered here within a broader perspective. More than just a series of developments impacting industries, construction, and architecture, electrification changed habitation and the culture of the home. Material culture was renewed and the overall way of life acquired different features.

Nineteenth-century urbanization went hand-in-hand with industrialization, and accordingly with modernization. As historian Marjatta Hietala has noted, many sociologists since Max Weber have explored the psychological background of rapid economic growth, highlighting modern achievements and innovations. An innovation is a new idea, process, product or service, and implies a capacity to change and adapt (1987, 30, 37).

In late nineteenth-century Finland, the mass-media sector was fairly advanced compared with the rest of the economy, a significant factor from the viewpoint of technology transfer and innovation. The rate of literacy was also relatively high. How an innovation is developed and the opportunities this process provides have an important effect on an economy. In Finland, the introduction of electrical technology and its first commercial venture, lighting, proved to be a success (Myllyntaus 1991, 6, 17).

Despite its agrarian economy, Finland managed to raise the production of electricity to a relatively high per-capita level by the 1910s. In his studies of the electrification of Finland, Timo Myllyntaus notes how the first experiments in electric lighting were carried out in 1877. Before long, the use of electricity spread through the country, and by 1940 all the urban areas and nearly half of all rural households were electrified (Myllyntaus 1991, 1–2). In Finnish towns, the Thomson-Houston Electric Light Company of America's municipal system for electric street lighting was commissioned for the first time in 1888 in Tampere, followed by Oulu in 1889 (Myllyntaus 1991, 31).

This process of technological modernization, however, had no effect on the motifs and themes of visual artists. Anyone seeking modernity in the themes of painting as called for by Charles Baudelaire (1989 [1863]), when he underlined the need for artists to depict their own time and the present moment will inevitably be disappointed, even though late
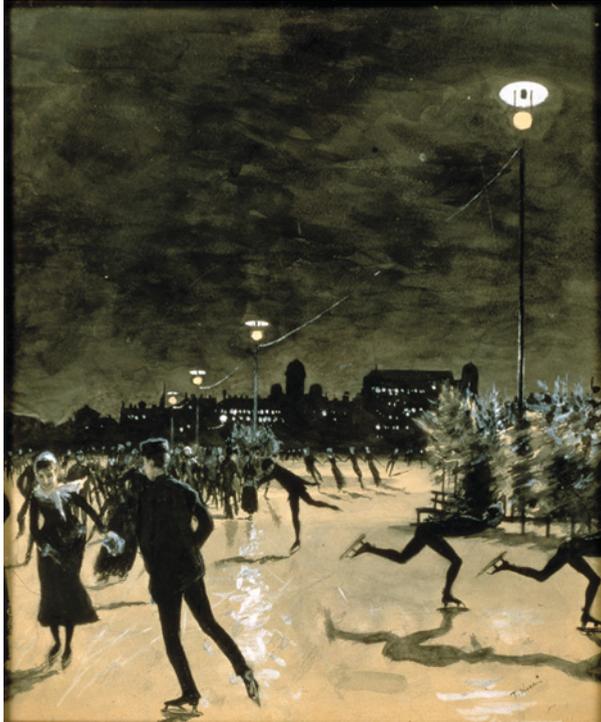
FIGURE 20.1   Torsten Wasastjerna, *The Skating Rink in the North Harbour of Helsinki*, gouache, 1890s. Helsinki City Museum. *Source*: © Helsinki City Museum.

nineteenth-century Finnish artists had studied in Paris, and read Baudelaire (Konttinen 2004, 266, 273). There were, however, exceptions, for example artists became interested in electrically lit public events. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, public entertainment in Helsinki had not reached the proportions of larger European cities, although in the winter people could go skating on the frozen sea. The winter skating rink on the frozen waters of Helsinki's North Harbor was maintained by the Helsingfors skridskoklubben skating club and had been fitted with electric cables and arc lamps soon after the first experiments with electric lighting. The rink was still popular in the early 1920s, when it was visited by the young Maire Gullichsen and her friends: "The rink was cleaned of snow and surrounded by a hedge of spruces that shielded it from sight. It had a particularly festive look in the evening when its arc lamps were reflected from the ice and a brass band played while we skated" (Gullichsen 2008, 129) (see Figure 20.1).

Technological innovation received a positive reception in Finland, despite considerable friction in moving psychologically from traditional means of lighting to modern technologies. Ironically, according to Myllyntaus Finnish towns also benefited from their backwardness. As the towns generally lacked a gas lighting system or even proper paraffin street lighting, they did not have to think about the possible costs of scrapping previous investments in illumination equipment when planning electrification (Myllyntaus 1991, 37–39).

Technically developed electrical equipment was previously manufactured by large multinational companies. Originally a subsidiary of the Edison Corporation, the Deutsche Edison Gesellschaft (founded 1883) was reorganized as an independent major corporation,

the Allgemeine Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG). The areas of Europe east of Germany and the whole of Russia, including Finland, were AEG's domain (Myllyntaus 1991, 52–53).

The demand for electrical equipment in Finland could only be met by imports. At the beginning of the twentieth century Germany dominated international exports in this sector. AEG staged a widely noted sales campaign in 1908, when it published as many as twenty different advertising catalogues in Finland. Of these products, electric irons were especially promoted. Indeed once electric lighting had been provided the electrification of homes more generally developed out of the mechanization of kitchens (Lepistö 1994, 100, 165).

There is nonetheless cause to consider how electrification changed the culture of the home and cultural notions of art. The enthusiasm of people for the new forms of culture introduced by electricity can easily be understood, with cinema as a particularly good example. Early cinemas began to be established in Finland in the early 1900s.[1] The Swedish ethnologist Jan Garnert, however, has emphasized that electric lighting changed the relationship of people with time and space (Garnert 1993, 237). Daily rhythms, in particular, began to change as electric lighting was adopted. For instance, shop windows lit at night were closely associated with the modernizing townscape (Schivelbusch 1983, 176). The social and cultural behavior of people also changed when homes were electrified and elements of lifestyle, from cooking to interior decoration, were transformed (Garnert 1993, 239).

The extensive use of electricity also provided new challenges for designers and manufacturers. AEG is no doubt the most widely known company to have launched a comprehensive modernization of its corporate image and products. In 1907 it employed as its artistic adviser the architect, designer, and artist Peter Behrens. In addition to AEG's plants and advertising, Behrens designed products ranging from water kettles and electric clocks to light fittings and heaters (Buddensieg *et al.* 1981).

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries discussion about the domestic sphere had grown in importance in the Nordic countries. Since the Paris World Fair of 1900 Finland had expressed its desire to be part of Western Europe. Finnish architects and artists worked and stayed in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and London. Towards the end of the nineteenth century they had adopted the ideology of the total work of art. The young architects Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren, and Eliel Saarinen designed sumptuous homes where the smallest details were taken into account. Technological innovations were also developed for this new situation of interior design. The design and production of electric light fittings in particular introduced changes to Finnish homes. Electricity provided rooms with much stronger light and even lighting for different areas. Early Finnish lamp and light-fitting design, however, was on a small scale so it was an important development when in 1907 the architect Emil Schroderus founded the Taidetakomo Koru Company. Schroderus's company produced light fittings, candelabra, and candlesticks designed in a national-romantic spirit by Finnish artists and architects. Despite efforts at standardization, production was mostly hand-crafted (Aav 2005, 9).

As Pekka Korvenmaa has noted in his history of Finnish design, industries primarily operated in the area of so-called low technology, meaning that no actual goods were provided through industrialization. Mass production in the applied arts sector was mainly represented by the Arabia porcelain factory and the textile industry. The products of the expanding technological infrastructures represented the kind of design that would today be called industrial design (Korvenmaa 2009, 65).

A new aesthetic of combining art and technology was instilled in the generation of architects and designers who followed Behrens. The emerging "new pioneers," including Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe, were now the heroes of architecture

and design. This at least has been the dominant narrative since Henry-Russell Hitchcock's writings of the 1920s (Schwarzer 1997, 87, 89) whose work considers the arts in evolutionary terms. Here, practices in art regarded as more outmoded or even academic were opposed to the new avant-garde, the assumption being that the older stage did not contain any features of modernity (Hayden 2006).

Finland closely followed its neighbor Sweden in matters concerning electricity, such as standards, norms, and public education. The Electrical Inspection Authority (*Sähköntarkastuslaitos*) was founded in Finland, headed by engineer Aku (Aksel) Marsio (1881–1938) (Aarrevaara and Stenvall 2002). Marsio was also the director of the Helsinki City Power Utility and the chairman of the Finnish Association of Electricity Utilities. The Finnish Association of Architects was invited to be a passive member of this electricity association, which meant that architects and designers followed the development of this sector through direct personal contacts (Norvasuo 2009, 34–35).

Of Finland's architects, Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) carried out perhaps the most intensive studies relating to the problems of lighting. This may have been partly due to his contacts with Aku Marsio, the brother of his wife who was the architect Aino Marsio-Aalto. In his projects in the city of Turku, the South-West Finland Rural Cooperatives' Building (1928) and the Turun Sanomat newspaper offices (1930), Aalto developed his own lamp and light-fitting types. Already in these designs, he sought standardized solutions for use in settings from homes to offices and hospitals (Norvasuo 2009, 38–41). Aalto collaborated with light-fitting designer Paavo Tynell (1890–1973) of the Taito Company. Founded in 1918, this company acquired an important role in the design and production of light fittings for the Finnish market. Taito made Aalto-designed light fittings for several Aalto buildings. Tynell's collaboration with the Aaltos continued until the early 1950s (Poutasuo 2005, 26–30).

Later at the Artek Company, which marketed Aalto furniture (Suhonen 1985), Aino Marsio-Aalto also designed a variety of light fittings. The Aaltos' work in this area was most influenced by the Danish designer Poul Henningsen, whose PH lamps they had already bought for their home in 1928 (Suominen-Kokkonen 2007, 59). Following Henningsen's ideas, the Aaltos also designed light fittings with a variety of lampshades to prevent the strong reflection of light (see Figure 20.2).

Modernization brought about by electricity involved broader issues than just electrification and the spread of electrical appliances. The most important was the impact of the new technologies for people and their way of life. Electrification changed the use of time in working life, functions of the home, and ways of spending leisure time. Alongside change of a material nature, the mechanization of kitchens had an impact on gender roles and as a result on everyday life in the social and cultural sense.

Utopian Fantasies

Along with growing urbanization came a changing perception of the countryside including utopian plans for artists to live and work in outlying regions, in the wilderness and in artist colonies, or to seek inspiration from the roots of original Finnish identity in the eastern regions of Karelia. Although this narrative may be related to the situation of the rural population more widely, it is interesting to consider why it gained such prominence in the history of Finnish art.

In 1979, the Museum of Finnish Architecture launched a new series called *abacus*, the museum's first yearbook (*abacus* 1979). It discussed both national and international trends in Finnish architecture and provided detailed views of their history, from the heritage of

FIGURE 20.2   Greta Hällfors-Sipilä, *Same Day's Evening at Tiva's and Halle's. Björn and Fagi Singing Together*, 1930, watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper, 24 × 20 cm, Ateneum Art Museum. *Source*: Photo: Finnish National Gallery/Hannu Karjalainen/© DACS 2016.

wooden churches to Aalto and other modernists. The series is exemplary and shows how the history of Finnish architecture was viewed at the time, as a canonized narrative of progress.

In its highly uniform and generally accepted version, this narrative begins with a discussion of the emergence of art regarded as Finnish in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This stage has even been referred to as the "golden age of Finnish art" and is anchored in music, literature, architecture, and painting, the Kalevala epic of folk poems, and the quest for an authentic "Finnishness" in Russian Karelia in the east.[2] Karelia became the site of an imagined lost past viewed in a utopian light, because most of the folk poems of the *Kalevala* epic had been collected among the so-called rune singers of the Dvina (White Sea) region of Karelia. The uniform conception of the area that is now known as Karelia was defined only with reference to its past and through various scholarly and artistic interpretations and notions (Katajala 2013, 31). There was a strong belief that Finns could find something authentic and original in Karelia that had disappeared from Finland itself. This utopian dream of rediscovering something lost included a dream that Finland's future would be improved through a re-engagement with things of the past.

In his discussions of the heritage of nationalism in Europe and elsewhere, Benedict Anderson asks whether the "past" was the inevitable consequence of the "novelty" of a given historical turning point, maintaining that nations are built with imaginary

communities as their basis (Anderson 2007 [1983]). In practice, nationality is an integral element of political awareness, and where nationalities began to be imagined they also started to be shaped and transformed. According to Anderson, this involved deep attachment and readiness for sacrifice. Such sentiments were expressed in poetry, prose, music, and the visual arts, and at least in Finland, also in architecture. This *amor patriae*, love for an imagined fatherland, its language, poetry, and art were associated with an imagined past and community, which led to utopian dreams of the future (Anderson 2007, 193–218). In Finland the utopian dream of Karelia formed this kind of imaginary community of Finnish-speaking people.

In the early years of the twentieth century, this quest for innovation and the desire for nationally defined art implied not only a quest for material goods but also a "new Finnishness" (Aspelin 1901). Research into these developments, however, has often ignored the fact that the discourse on Finnishness excluded a considerable portion of the country's Swedish-speaking minority population. Although some of the Swedish-speaking intelligentsia had pro-Finnish attitudes, other elements among them clearly distanced themselves from the Kalevala cult of the period. This can also be seen in sources of inspiration in art: Swedish-speakers found their own fantasies among the Western elements of Ancient Scandinavia and even the Viking Age (Ehrström 1989, 5–39; Ripatti 2011).

In his book *Modernism as Institution*, the Swedish art historian Hans Hayden considers the authentic in modernism. Veracity in art began to be understood as something other than imitation and was believed instead to require originality and authenticity (Hayden 2006, 19 75). In architecture, this was also related to the requirement for authentic materials. These discourses generated imagined – and interesting – Finnish art in which a new, and more national appearance was sought for buildings with reference to medieval fieldstone churches originally built by the Catholic Church, and the supposedly "Kalevala-type" vernacular buildings of Russian Karelia. The medieval churches of Finland were already interpreted in the 1910s as living proof of a "Finnishness" that had stood the test of time over centuries, being regarded as "nationally characteristic" expressions of the "soul of the nation" (Valkeapää 2000, 143–149; Sihvo 1973). This discourse mostly ignored the Catholic origin of the churches.

Nationally defined visual art of a Finnish orientation that partly received its inspiration from Paris also sought a "Kalevalaesque" form. National prominence was now given to the young Axel Gallén, who later Fennicized his name as Akseli Gallén-Kallela.[3] In addition to illustrating the *Kalevala* epic, he produced a large body of work in which the characters of the Kalevala were for the first time received enthusiastically by the general public (Ervamaa 1981). Depictions of the imaginary world of the Kalevala united the pro-Finnish elements of the period and it could be said that they inspired emerging nationalism just as much as the music of Jean Sibelius.

Nationalist ideology and leading politicians underlined Finland's legally separate status from the Russian Empire, that is, the connection with Russia was regarded as a kind of union. This conception of the Finnish state was no doubt reinforced by the establishment of the unicameral Finnish Parliament, elected for the first time in 1907 by universal suffrage. All laws in Finland, however, were still ultimately passed by the Tsar (Haapala 1995, 22–25). These issues preoccupied national historiography in Finland for many years, perhaps because legal and administrative Russification measures, which were part of an overall European rise of nationalism, were interpreted originally and long after national independence in 1917 solely as depriving Finland of its former autonomy.

Like architects and folklorists, Finnish visual artists also journeyed to Russian Karelia and were among the first to realize inspiration from these trips by building villas regarded

as "Finnish" in wilderness locations. Sculptor Emil Wikström built a residence of this kind in 1894 at Visavuori in Sääksmäki, which was followed by Axel Gallén's Kalela studio and residence at Ruovesi (Tuomi 1979, 63–69). These wilderness studios, however, were not artists' colonies as such.

Nina Lübbren's studies of the rural artists' communities movement, estimates that there were at least eighty such colonies in Europe, although she does not include Finland in this figure. While the reasons for their popularity are not completely clear, they belonged to a broader range of cultural developments in the 1880s and 1890s. According to Lübbren, they included a growing nostalgic longing for the countryside as compensation for urban-ization (Lübbren 2001, 1–3). In the Finnish context, however, it would not be correct to argue that the colonies were merely nostalgic. They were at least equally utopian in trying to create ideal environments where artists could paint. Geographically, they were chosen not only for their nostalgic scenic aspects, but also for their connections with modern com-munications, such as trains or steamers. In Finland there were two artists' colonies of this kind, an earlier one founded in the village of Önningeby in the Åland Islands, and another one by Lake Tuusula near the village of Järvenpää. Their history is quite different. The Lake Tuusula colony or community which included Jean Sibelius, the writer Juhani Aho and his artist wife Venny Soldan-Brofeldt, and the artists Pekka Halonen and Eero Järne-felt has been the focus of Finnish art history since the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The artists' colony in Önningeby has not been afforded a central position within a similar national narrative.

Also the explanations of the origin of these artists' colonies are slightly different. The Lake Tuusula colony was a permanent community for artists who wanted less costly and more peaceful living conditions for their growing families (Konttinen 2001, 303–304). On the other hand, the Önningeby artists' colony, established by the painter Victor West-erholm (1860–1919) in the late 1880s, is clearly different in many respects. Although the Westerholm family lived in the area for longer periods, the other artists did not reside permanently at Önningeby. Research by Anna-Maria Wiljanen demonstrates the impor-tance of this place for Finnish women artists. Compared with more widely known artists' colonies such as Barbizon, Grèz, and Skagen, Önningeby had far more women resident in the colony, outnumbering men. There were also differences in membership between the colonies. All the members at Lake Tuusula were Finnish citizens, while Önningeby was more like many other European artist colonies with several artists coming from abroad, especially from Sweden (Wiljanen 2014, 48, 275).[4]

While the Lake Tuusula colony has been a vital part of Finnish cultural heritage, Önningeby with a number of foreign painters has not been included in the canonical story of Finnish art. However, the story of Lake Tuusula has traditionally been related as a male one. Only recently has the painter Venny Soldan-Brofeldt's role been acknowledged; she was the first to find this location for her family (Konttinen 1996, 90–92). As noted above, given the geography of both these colonies access was only made possible through the use of modern transport communications. However, there were similarities of topography and both locations had the element of water, important in Finnish landscape paintings.

It is, however, clear that the local population near these colonies was at odds with the mostly middle-class artists coming from various urban centers. Contrary to the picture painted by nationalist thinking, Finland was by no means a homogeneous or uniform society. The country was disparate and divided, with one part of the population not even understanding the language spoken by the other. The Finnish historian Pertti Haapala observes that there were different Finlands at the level of everyday life. The coastal areas, the agricultural regions of South Finland, the cities and the industrial centers constituted

developed Finland where the population was concentrated. The other Finland of the inland regions was a sparsely settled predominantly agricultural area of forest industries whose products passed through developed Finland on their way abroad (Haapala 1995, 90–92).

Images of the Modern and the Heroicized Narrative of Modernism

The narrative of the "generation that changed everything" focuses on the features introduced into cultural life by national independence and the Finnish Civil War. It is here in the problematic of the heroicized narrative of modernism that possibilities for counternarratives may be found. Following Baudelaire, I have sought to underline the relationship of the changing and the static, as in Finland modernity was not constituted simply in opposition to tradition. The essential question is, in what ways were artists and architects capable of understanding the present and its urban and industrial change: modern life unfolding before their own eyes?

In the late 1910s and 1920s, art discourse in newly independent Finland was contradictory, a conflict between the established arts and new forms of expression. Nationalist rhetoric talked of anti-internationality. The pressing need, however, was to demonstrate a separation from Finland's former Russian dimension and the new Communist-ruled Soviet Union. Contacts and identification with European culture became a necessity. In the early 1900s, a predominantly male group began to dominate the arts in Finland, consisting of members of the upper classes joined by young men from lower-ranking social groups. The field had quite a conservative attitude to women artists, even though 15% of all artists in Finland were women (Kivirinta 2014). It should be noted, however, that the art market of the late 1910s gave new visibility to Fanny Churberg (1845–1892), who had died before the turn of the century, and to Helene Schjerfbeck (1862–1946), who made her professional debut in the 1880s (Hjelm 2009).

Art dealer Gösta Stenman had a central role in Finnish culture and promoted Finnish modernist art making it known to the public. Although he included the above women within it, his list of prominent artists was headed by completely different names. In the years following the Finnish Civil War of 1918, there was a demand for a more socially oriented art, to exemplify an agenda of national unification. Tyko Sallinen (1879–1955) who belonged to the expressionist "November Group" of painters in the late 1910s was a protégé of Stenman's gallery. He was given the status of a national genius representing the vitality and emotional depth of Finnish art (Huusko 2007, 122, 123, 171; Kivirinta 2014, 72–74). The subject matter of modern life that Baudelaire called for was not, however, addressed by many Finnish painters, and even those artists and architects who embraced a moderate form of modernism were severely opposed by critics and their art was defined as mere decoration (Karjalainen 1990, 38–39).

An interesting development at this time was a renewed interest in Helene Schjerfbeck and the reception of her modernist work. Art historian Marja-Terttu Kivirinta's research on the reception of Schjerfbeck's work analyses the discourse around new works by this middle-aged artist, which clearly illustrates the gendered nature of the art field. Schjerfbeck was accepted as a leading artist figure in Finland, but only as an exception to her gender. Despite many exhibitions of her work and related texts, she was regarded as a discovery from somewhere in the mists of history. This depiction of her included epithets such as "a reclusive, physically weak old woman suffering from pain," although she was only fifty-five years old in 1917 when Finland became independent and went on to live for another thirty years (Kivirinta 2014, 85–150).

A symptom of the above can be seen in how Schjerfbeck's modernism was read through her female body defining her as a victim of her physical disabilities. She had sustained a hip injury in her childhood, but was victimized rather than valorized like men in the history of art who had disabilities, such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. When Schjerfbeck moved in the early 1900s from the art scene in Helsinki to live in the town of Hyvinkää, some sixty kilometers north of the city, her reclusiveness was identified negatively as turning her back on life elsewhere. The artist, however, continued to work; her new paintings were included in important Finnish and international exhibitions; and the first artist monograph on her was published during this time (Ahtela 1917). There are reasons to consider her choices from a different perspective. Hyvinkää was one of the most important junctions on the Helsinki–St Petersburg railway line. It was also the site of significant industrial plants and a sanatorium, popular with patients from St Petersburg. Nonetheless Schjerfbeck's relocation to Hyvinkää has not been interpreted from the same art-inspired perspective as the members of the Lake Tuusula artist colony (Kivirinta 2014, 111, 115; Konttinen 2004, 217–220).

The narrative of modernization in Finnish art history, however, has rarely focused on the political and intellectual situation that followed in the wake of national independence. The percentage of deaths per total population during the Finnish Civil War and its aftermath was very high even in comparison with other European countries. The winning, so-called White side, either stripped the losing Red side of civil rights and citizenship in quite concrete terms, or defined them as the enemies of the nation (Alapuro 1994). This is noteworthy in order to understand the division, confusion, and yearning for European perspectives that prevailed among culturally active elements. When young professionally trained artists and architects turned their gaze towards Europe, they were also seeking a different atmosphere from conditions at home.

Finnish literature contains several examples of idealizing modern life in European metropolises after the First World War. A literary group called Tulenkantajat (The Torchbearers), which published a magazine of the same name, expressed this position in clear terms. Their agenda was to compensate for the horrors of deprivation and destruction with an active, life-asserting cultural movement and the radical reform of literature and the arts (Palmgren 1989, 107). In these circles, admiration of technology and the idolizing of metropolises were also reflected in the work of artists, with inspiration drawn in particular from travel abroad and via foreign literature (Paavolainen 1929; Waltari 1928, 1929).

In architecture, specifically, the so-called grand narrative of modernism is unambiguous, and this dominated the received view of modernism for many decades after the 1920s. The predominance of this narrative left various individuals in its shadow and accorded heroic status to only part of modern architecture by making rationalist design exemplary (Gold 1997, 2–3). In this way the traditions of modern architecture underlining the organic were almost completely forgotten, and were to be taken up later as a new counterweight to rationalism.

Interestingly, Finnish architects of the 1920s also began to seek the new lifestyle that Baudelaire had called for. In the 1920s the old center of Turku, Finland's former capital, which had been built of wooden houses according to a regular plan after a fire that razed the town in 1827, began to be torn down and replaced with modern multi-story buildings. There were several innovations in housing construction, including the use of reinforced concrete slab elements (Schildt 1985, 23).

One of Turku's leading architects was Erik Bryggman (1891–1955), whose restrained classicism evolved into Bauhaus-inspired modernism as a result of his trips abroad (Nikula 1991). Around this time, Alvar Aalto, who had moved with his family to Turku, underwent

a similar change of style in his own work (Suominen-Kokkonen 2007, 41–78). An important element of the utopian atmosphere of the period was the ideal of a new kind of habitation; the emphasis was not only on new architecture but also on a new way of life for everyone. Debate and discussion concerning minimum-standard dwellings, plain, unembellished architecture, the standardization of housing and more hygienic housing conditions that emerged in Europe after the First World War, and in Finland after its Civil War and amidst conditions of social distress, can be regarded as necessity redefined as virtue.

The public was coached and prepared for this new lifestyle through manifestos and active contributions to publications in different sectors. Finnish architects quickly became aware of Le Corbusier's new writings. Aalto read Le Corbusier's book *Vers une architecture* in German (1926), but it was also read in the original in Finland. Before long, Finnish architects also began to promote and defend in writing the new urban fabric and new types of housing and apartments. This rhetoric, however, must be distinguished from what architects actually designed and built.

As early as the late 1920s, both Bryggman and Aalto began to promote new architecture and ideal housing and dwellings. Aalto's text *The Latest Trends in Architecture*, published at the beginning of 1928 still refers to this new architecture as realistic, as it takes into account contemporary reality and social conditions, and he describes his own period as the "age of industrialization" (Aalto 1928; Schildt 1997, 59–63). Though observing that new form cannot be created without new context, he clearly takes a conciliatory view of tradition, also noting that in the cross-currents of different needs the artist (designer) must be able to create harmony. In late 1928, Bryggman, Aalto's colleague in Turku, also wrote about the new architecture, but now using the term "functionalism" (Bryggman, 1928; Nikula 1991, 280–281). A similar tone is also present in his text, where he underlines that functionalism is nothing new to architecture, only that there was now a more radical emphasis on functionality.

These early texts need to be considered more closely with regard to contemporary architecture and the projects of Aalto and Bryggman at the time. When their articles appeared, neither had yet designed any significant avant-garde architecture. Bryggman, however, had been on a long study trip to Germany in the summer of 1928, visiting the Weissenhof housing estate in Stuttgart and the Bauhaus in Dessau (Standertskjöld 1991, 130–133). At the same time Aalto flew with his wife to Paris via Denmark and Holland, meeting colleagues from Poul Henningsen to André Lurçat. In addition to their travels abroad, these Finnish architects had been introduced to the ideas of the Swedish architect Sven Markelius concerning rational aims in new architecture. In April 1928, Markelius had been an honored guest and invited speaker at the annual meeting of the Finnish Association of Architects (Schildt 1985, 48). As a result of these influences, Bryggman and Aalto in particular began to renew the language of form in their work as evidenced in Aalto's designs from 1928 for the Turun Sanomat newspaper building. Both together and separately, these two architects were at the forefront of renewing Finnish architecture. This, however, did not mean that change applied to all building and development, or to all of Finland's architects.

Of particular interest in this early modernist discourse on architecture was its focus on the imagined effects of changes in lifestyle and people's habits at home. In late 1929, Aalto wrote a text on the rationalized design of small apartments (Aalto 1930). In this text he wrote of his new contacts at the second congress of CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) in 1929. While emphasizing the now changed role of the artist and designer in society and changes in working methods, Aalto stressed that this was not just a change of style. The text specifically addresses the ways in which homes for families

can be arranged in increasingly smaller space. Aalto's observation that "the home is a space where people sleep, eat, work and play" (1930, 24) points to a clear connection with the above-mentioned text by Le Corbusier. But when explaining how a family with as many as six children can live in an apartment of sixty square meters, he takes his arguments from Walter Gropius.

Between 1929 and 1931 Walter Gropius published several articles on the issues of housing for factory workers, presenting the idea that centrally managed services would better suit the needs of modern society. Within this process of change, privacy and private needs would largely be served through public or shared services. These would include communal kitchens, shared leisure and childcare facilities, schools and libraries, all of which would be designed for a new kind of individual. In this connection, Gropius drew upon the ideas of the German psychiatrist and sociologist Franz Carl Müller-Leyer (1857–1916) (Poppel-reuter 2011; Gropius 1929).

Müller-Leyer has been described as a positivist who maintained that scientific research is only possible through explanations that make reference to the laws of nature. Between 1908 and 1924, he published a seven-volume series of books entitled *Die Entwick-lungsstufen der Menschheit* (*The Stages of Development of Mankind*). As pointed out by Tanja Poppelreuter, he believed in the shared basis of the natural sciences and the humanities whereby he outlined the stages of cultural evolution. These stages were distinguished according to whether they were ruled by: (1) the social being; (2) the individualistic being; or (3) the social-individualistic being (Poppelreuter 2011, 38–39). Müller-Leyer also gave the family an important role, stressing that the old-fashioned model of the family should be changed particularly in view of the more independent and more equal position of women. These attitudes were clearly present in Gropius's writings, and through him they were reflected in Aalto's texts (Suominen-Kokkonen 2007, 93–99).

It is important in this connection to remember Swedish influences, and especially the role of Sven Markelius. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Markelius, who was a member of the Social Democratic Party of Sweden (Rudberg 2005), had a strong influence on the Aaltos' liberal political attitudes (Suominen-Kokkonen 2007, 207). Markelius was the trusted architect of the Swedish social policy experts Gunnar and Alva Myrdal. Alva Myrdal and Markelius had actively campaigned for collective residential houses and centrally organized childcare and household management (Barn 1932). In 1934 one of the first collective buildings of this type was built near the center of Stockholm following designs by Markelius. Although collective housing was later built in Sweden for the country's many families with large numbers of children, this early example was not inhabited by particularly low-income members of society. The apartments in the building were of a high standard with balconies facing Lake Mälaren.[5]

In Finland, on the other hand, collectively organized apartment buildings never became popular in the same way as in Sweden, and in fact the family maintained a solid role as the basic unit of society. The reason for this lies in the difference between Finnish and Swedish society. Furthermore, the utopian rhetoric of a classless society appearing in Aalto's writings was anything but suited to the actual situation in Finland. Although Aalto emphasized that the right norms for homes that would meet minimum standards of housing could be found through research (Aalto 1997 [1930]), the Finnish context of the early 1930s was poorly prepared for this. By 1930, only twelve years had passed since the Finnish Civil War, and the goal of the victors and their predominantly right-wing policies was by no means a classless society.

After the Civil War of 1918, the phenomenon of early modernism in Finnish art towards the end of Russian rule came to an end as Finland focused inward on national values. While

this was no doubt due to the country's unstable political situation and its poor economic condition, international attitudes were also regarded as dangerous, especially those with left-wing overtones. Modernism in the visual arts found it most difficult to develop in those years, while architecture and applied art were able to gain a foothold internationally, partly because of Aalto's personal contacts. Early attempts at modernization in the visual arts were not included in the canon of Finnish art, and it was not until the 1990s that they began to be considered more closely.

As there is a clear interrelationship between industrialization, urbanization, and modernization, it could be said that Finland was a late-comer in all these aspects. However, at the end of nineteenth century, the country's cultural elite believed that the nation had its own special identity. Finnish independence in 1917 made it possible for artists and architects to experience more freely the metropolises of Europe. They had a utopian dream of a new modern way of life to be created in Finland. As the story of Finnish art and architecture has usually concentrated on evolutionary narratives, this chapter, with its emphasis on electrification, comparisons of artists' colonies, and the ideas behind new types of homes, provides a counter-narrative.

Notes

1 Helsinki's first cinemas had evocative names such as Around the World (1904–1915) and the World of Wonders (1905–1907).
2 Kalevala, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalevala (accessed 20 October 2014).
3 On the Fennicising of names, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finnicization (accessed October 20 2014).
4 From 1886 to 1892 the artists of the colony were: J. A. G. Acke, Fredrik and Nina Ahlstedt, Elin Danielson, Ellen Favorin, Alexander Federley, Rafael Gambogi, Ida Gisiko, Amélie Lundahl, Karl Moberg, Elias Muukka, Georg Nordensvan, Elin Nordlund, Hanna Rönnberg, Helmi Sjöstrand, Ada Thilén, Eva Topelius, Carl-Erik Törner, Dora Wahlroos, Anna Wengberg, Hilma and Victor Westerholm, Edvard Westman, Emil Wikström.
5 "Byggnadslov och PM angående kollektivhusets undersökning" (Folder 18, *Kollektivhuset*, AM 1972-10, 1935, Archives, Museum of Architecture, Stockholm).

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The Engaged Artist: Considerations of Relevance

Greta Berman

Introduction

The front page of the Sunday Arts and Leisure section of the *New York Times* on 10 August 2014 featured the work of an artist called Swoon, also known as Caledonia Curry, born in 1978. The author Melena Ryzik stressed Swoon's "far-flung activism," speaking of progressive performance art and "socially minded work" in New Orleans, Haiti, and other poor and underfunded areas. Swoon is by no means alone in her activist art. Increasing numbers of ecology-minded artists work today to foster environmental awareness. The Green Museum (http://greenmuseum.org/) is just one of a number of Web sites that discuss contemporary environmental art and lists numerous artists, Ellen K. Levy,[1] Victoria Vesna,[2] Patricia Olynyk,[3] and Aviva Rahmani[4] are representative of some of the many present-day artists concerned with environmental issues.

Nicolas Bourriaud, has taken this conjoining of art and society in an alternative direction; he espouses what he calls relational aesthetics, in which art no longer takes "shelter behind Sixties art history" (2002, 113). Instead, he argues, relational art of the 1990s and 2000s has more to do with human relations and their social context than with the artist as individual supreme creator often seen as a product of mid-twentieth century art.

Since this is a chapter in a book on Modern Art, I cite these examples in order to underline the connection and continuities between activist art of the 1930s through to the 1950s, and contemporary art of today. There is arguably a difference between "contemporary" and "modern," but perhaps such a gulf is lessened by historical research. Maybe it is a question of semantics, but I suggest there exists a kind of modernism different from that usually understood by the term. Perhaps it is time for an overarching definition of modernism that is less exclusive than that used in received art history.

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on an alternative form of modernism, one often not acknowledged in conventional histories of art. Instead of once again repeating the "standard" history of modernism, I hope to achieve this goal by investigating some of the less-explored routes that artists in the United States took from the 1930s through the 1950s.

Most art history texts that include American art begin the litany of "Modernism" with Alfred Stieglitz and Gallery 291, followed by the 1913 Armory Show (International Exhibition of Modern Art). They then dismiss art of the 1920s and 1930s as retardataire: primarily American Scene, Regionalism, or Social Realism, skipping ahead or moving swiftly

on to Abstract Expressionism. The complex reasons for the decline of socially engaged art, coupled with the dominance and spread of Abstract Expressionism during the late 1940s and 1950s, have only relatively recently been reassessed in mainstream art galleries. Similar conditions apply to classical music during the period. Only atonal or serial music counted as "modernist"; generally the avant-garde dismissed anything tonal out of hand.

Although I think it a mistake to offer only a simplistic political explanation, it is now well known that the CIA[5] and the Ford Foundation covertly funded an organization called the Congress for Cultural Freedom, formed in 1950. This and other groups hoped that by challenging Stalinist artistic constrictions with concepts such as "freedom" and "individualism," the United States of America could demonstrate to the world the optimal way to make art. Indeed, some think that the primary purpose of American sponsorship of Abstract Expressionism, atonal music, and jazz was to advance American interests through cultural means by diminishing concepts the Soviet Union held dear (Stoner Saunders 1995).

"Modernism" has often been narrowly defined in unsustainable binary terms of representation versus abstraction. Such a divide often resulted in the demeaning of "social" art. Art practices during this era cannot be explained through politics alone; instead of narrowing issues down into Left versus Right, we need to recognize that there were many in-between positions. Furthermore, although some of the artists who continued to be socially engaged after the 1930s held politically Left positions, not all of them did. Conversely, an artist with conservative political views did not necessarily produce conventional art. To make matters even more complicated, the Left broke into many factions during the 1930s, especially following widespread dismay at the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939 and during and after the Second World War.

My own expertise began with my research into the 1930s, carried out during the 1970s, when I interviewed artists who had worked on New Deal projects. I will therefore start with an in-depth investigation into the careers of a few of these artists, and selected works of art they produced during the 1930s. I will also discuss some of the social conditions that prevailed in America at that time.

It is unfortunate that for a long time, historians took seriously Arshile Gorky's sarcastic comment that the 1930s defined an era when "poor art was made for poor people"[6] (and by inference, by inferior artists). This was specifically applied to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Projects.[7] Indeed, compared to the international success of Abstract Expressionism, which followed during the 1950s, New Deal art has often been regarded as an embarrassment or a product of the welfare state.

Today, however, a twenty-first century perspective encourages a reconceptualization of the 1930s as a golden decade for art in America. Out of the stock market crash of 1929, and the ensuing Great Depression, arose the phoenix of the New Deal, and along with it, a huge-scale employment of artists that has never been done before or since. Perhaps for the first time in American history, artists felt like respected members of society. And the government's recognition of artists as workers, in turn inspired their loyalty and idealism. It is difficult to comprehend the enormity of the Federal government employing artists on the same basis, and at comparable salaries, as those of other workers.

The birth of Federally supported art occurred in 1933, when George Biddle, an artist friend of Franklin D. Roosevelt, wrote to the President, urging him to create a Federal program to support the American artist. In his communications, Biddle noted the precedent of the Mexican artists who created murals during the 1920s. The Federal Emergency Relief Act was approved in 1933, creating the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. Harry L. Hopkins, its administrator, referring to artists, succinctly stated: "Hell, they've got to

eat just like other people."[8] From 1933–1943, the American government supported artists in what was arguably the most meaningful and enlightened cultural endeavor in American history; it paid regular salaries to artists, writers, musicians, and playwrights, recognizing that they, like other workers, had the right to make a living. During this exceptionally democratic era, artists had a great deal of freedom. Contrary to popular misconceptions, New Deal works of art by no means all featured rural scenes or socially relevant ones, but rather, ran the gamut from Mexican-influenced murals to abstract and even surrealist paintings. The encouragement and support the New Deal provided to artists resulted in a reciprocal loyalty and gratefulness to their country for supporting them during a time of crisis. This was especially true of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (often just called the Project – or less correctly, the WPA).

The Depression Era was characterized by discourse about the artist as citizen, and loyalty to one's country. In response to governmental support, many artists employed their paint-brushes, chisels, pens, or musical instruments to understand and convey a sense of American and local history. There can be no question that artists, writers, and other creative and intellectual individuals during the 1930s in America felt an overwhelming, urgent, inner responsibility to actively engage in their urban and rural society. This took many and various forms; some artists continued their work and ideology into the 1940s and 1950s. Although histories written in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s have tended to diminish such artists, a number of them continued to forge impressive careers after the New Deal projects ended. Some have been forgotten, but others are just beginning to get recognition. The (2015) Jacob Lawrence exhibition at MoMA is but one example. Ironically we seem to have come full-circle today with a kind of interdisciplinary approach to the arts similar to that promoted by the various New Deal divisions. Indeed, Joseph Polisi, President of the Juilliard School, titled his (2005) book, *The Artist as Citizen.*

But to return to the 1930s: although after the fact, many "modernist" artists and critics viewed Social Realism as backwards and visually bland, the New Deal stimulated several artists to develop their vanguard styles and ideas. Philip Guston (1913–1980) and David Smith (1906–1965), both New Deal artists, can be cited as examples. Smith's *Medals for Dishonor* series (15 plaster models, 1939; e.g., *No. 9 – Bombing Civilian Populations,*[9]) and Guston's early murals and easel paintings revealed strong anti-fascist principles: never abandoned, even when developing later, mature modernist styles. Guston, part of the core of abstract expressionist painters, eventually departed from Abstract Expressionism to return to his earlier ideals; these include his *Ku Klux Klan* and other series during the 1960s and 1970s. His later, unique figurative works influenced many younger painters. And many major abstract expressionists, such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman retained the large format and humanistic standards they learned from the WPA and the Mexicans during the 1930s, even when their content became depoliticized.

There is further complexity in describing the view of artists who worked on New Deal projects as without aesthetic goals: Ben Shahn for instance insisted his work was art first and social commentary second. Invariably many artists had goals that went far beyond expressing themselves or achieving fame and recognition. In an idealistic cultural period many had higher ideals, aspiring to use their art to educate, to heal, and to inspire. But this did not mean that these dedicated artists – who in effect functioned as social workers, political activists, and teachers – necessarily had to express these objectives overtly in their art.

During the early years of the New Deal, the Treasury Section of Fine Arts dictated certain subjects and prohibited others; abstract art for instance was rarely acceptable. In fact, the stereotype many people still hold onto of post office murals, characterized by American Scene painting, comes primarily from Treasury-prescribed subject matter. But

the WPA/FAP was different. A more democratic process in choosing artists – no competitions, and no assigned subject matter – led to better, and more varied art. Housing projects, schools, hospitals, prisons, and other public spaces provided walls for paintings that would speak to the "people." Although subject matter relating to local history still predominated, there are numerous examples of other subjects and styles. When looking closely at murals painted in libraries, airports, housing projects, schools, hospitals, and prisons, their diversity is evident. Nonetheless, the main point is that artists felt responsible; they wanted to better their society and world by means of their art.

At the time that I began research on the WPA many of the artists were still alive, and I had the opportunity to speak with a number of them. Without exception, they expressed gratitude and respect for their unique opportunities. My dissertation concentrated on mural paintings in New York City's five boroughs, where artists completed over 200 murals in public spaces. Of those, perhaps 25% still exist. Many were destroyed either through neglect or vandalism.

Perhaps a detailed examination of several different mural projects will serve to illuminate my present position. Some of the artists who will be discussed are: Stuart Davis (1894–1964), the renowned cubist-inflected painter who, while active in the left-wing Artists Union, nonetheless painted several abstract murals. James Brooks (1906–1992), and Philip Guston (1913–1980) both went on to become abstract expressionist painters in the late 1940s and 1950s. Their WPA murals encompassed both representational and semi-abstract forms. Driven by 1930s activism, they intended their murals – Brooks's *Flight*, 1940, for LaGuardia Airport's Marine Air Terminal, and Guston's *Work and Play*, 1940–1941, for Queensbridge Housing Project – to be educational and accessible, while at the same time allowing for exploration of formal language that interested the artists. Lucienne Bloch (1909–1999), daughter of composer Ernest Bloch; and Seymour Fogel (1911–1984) painted murals for high schools on the subject of music, inevitably employing both representation and abstraction.

The first part of this chapter will explore and concentrate on some individual WPA/FAP murals. The second half will focus on the 1940s and 1950s, following some of these artists, as well as others who took varying paths. Questions will be raised about what led to the demise of activism among many artists, and their transition to what some have called "Cold War warriors."

Case Study: Harlem Hospital's New Mural Pavilion and *The Pursuit of Happiness*

Among the murals I researched, the series carried out for Harlem Hospital, Manhattan seemed especially intriguing. I first found documents of their existence in the Municipal Archives in City Hall. The yellowed and brittle artists' proposals and photos literally crumbling under my fingers, I telephoned the hospital to find out whether the murals were still on the walls. A trip to the hospital in 1972 confirmed that some of them remained in place, though badly deteriorating. Others, however, appeared to have disappeared.

This is what documents showed. Early in 1936, the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project hired a group of African American artists who proposed to depict the history of Black people in the United States on the walls of Harlem Hospital. Although Federal and city officials approved their proposal, the local White supervisor of the hospital took it upon himself to reject the works on the grounds of, "too much Negro subject matter," adding that twenty-five years hence, the neighborhood might not even be

FIGURE 21.1   Charles Alston, *Modern Medicine*, 1940. Harlem Hospital Center.
Source: Photo and mural conservation Evergreene Architectural Arts. Courtesy of Harlem Hospital Center, New York City.

predominantly "Negro"! In order to justify his racist thinking, he enlisted local Black leaders in an attempt to challenge the "subject matter." However, instead of objecting to subject matter (which included aspects of African history, slavery, and integration), the leaders applauded it, and the hospital installed the murals as planned.

When I walked into the once proud and stately entrance to the Women's Pavilion, I came immediately upon two panels facing each other titled *Magic* and *Medicine* (Figure 21.1), 1907–1977, painted by Charles Alston. Alston was the first African American supervisor for the WPA FAP and founder of the Harlem Artist's Guild. The two paintings, each measuring six feet by seventeen feet, depicted the history of medicine, contrasting tradi-tional medicine on the one hand, with modern medicine on the other, although the binary is unlikely to hold in today's more holistic medical climate. Installed over radiators, the murals were covered with years of accumulated grime and dirt that had almost completely obscured them. But Alston, a major educator and artist during the Harlem Renaissance (he taught the 10-year old Jacob Lawrence while an instructor at MoMA), informed me that since he painted them in oil on canvas, they could be restored.

The artist described his murals at the time of completion, 12 March 1940 saying: "In the science panel I have attempted to show the different races working together on the same

basis with an absolute lack of discrimination, illustrating the sheer objectivity of science. I have always been interested in primitive African culture and this gives me an opportunity to concentrate on it" (see note 57 in Berman 1978, 100).

A very large "primitive" god dominates the center of the "Magic" mural, countered by a gigantic microscope in the "Medicine" panel. Surrounding the god, Alston depicted witch doctors, voodoo drums, and other means of combating disease in Africa, the West Indies, the Deep South, and certain contemporary American urban and rural communities. The microscope represented the most up-to-date one Alston could find. The artist spent hours peering through this microscope, and painting a symbolic stream of cells to counter the opposing mural's "Magic." Portraits of famous men of medicine lead compositionally down to the lower part where modern doctors and nurses are at work. An especially startling fact is that the "nurse" he painted holding a baby was actually Alston's wife, at the time doing her internship in surgery at the hospital. "Who would believe that a Black woman could be a surgeon?" Alston asked me. The historical, journalistic, but non-rational juxtaposition of images in the composition was surely influenced by Mexican Diego Rivera's murals. Indeed, Alston told me that he used to visit Rivera and talk to him on his scaffold while he was painting the ill-fated Rockefeller Center murals.[10] This mural – Alston's first – posed numerous challenges, of course. And, like many other WPA/FAP muralists, in his youthful enthusiasm, he sought inspiration from artists such as Michelangelo and Piero della Francesca.

The second set of murals I found lined the main corridor of the Nurses' Residence on the other side of the building. Here, Vertis Hayes (1911–2000), had headed a group of artists who depicted "The Pursuit of Happiness." Panel after panel presented the history of Black people, starting with life in an African village, and moving on to slaves picking cotton in the American South. Then turning the corner (both architecturally and metaphorically), a family faced the future, leaving the agrarian life behind, and taking their new place in urban life. In this section, Hayes portrayed painters, sculptors, musicians, entertainers, as well as preachers, students, doctors, and nurses. The rhythms of city life, alternating with formal shapes and lines, propelled the murals along with a vibrant tempo that enlivened the drab corridor.

When I came upon them, these murals were in somewhat better shape than Alston's, but many were disintegrating. It was clear that without action, they faced imminent oblivion. Some were painted directly on the wall, and others on canvas glued to the walls. One other mural, a true fresco, painted by Alfred Crimi, remained in the payroll office. Several, however, were missing entirely.

In 1978 a group of artists and historians, including the painter and collagist Romare Bearden and myself, together with administrators from the hospital, and from the NYC Art Commission, examined the murals, and presented a proposal for their restoration to then-mayor Ed Koch. The request was approved, and conservator Alan Farancz set to work in 1979, rescuing the murals from further decay. Many years passed, and the murals began to deteriorate again – especially the Alston works, which continued to suffer effects from the radiators.

Harlem Hospital has recently (2005–2010 see below) re-restored and celebrated these intriguing and historical mural paintings from the New Deal Era in a new, state-of-the-art "Mural Pavilion" at their hospital. Health and Hospitals Corporation says that the pavilion is scheduled soon to be open to the public. Much work went into this conservation, as some murals had to be peeled off walls, and others cut from sections of walls. Crimi's fresco is also displayed. Georgette Seabrooke's (1916–2011) *Recreation in Harlem*, conceived

for the walls of the nurses' recreation room, once thought to be lost, was also found, and is currently undergoing restoration.

Seabrooke was seventeen in 1933 when she was chosen to create her mural, which she eventually titled, *Recreation in Harlem*. The youngest of the master artists, as well as one of the few females, she completed the mural in 1937, having barely survived the controversy of 1936. The ambitious, nearly twenty-foot long oil painting is a conglomerate of scenes. In it, people dance, sing, picnic, swim, attend the theater, and engage in a variety of other community activities. The mural, at once symbolic and representational, depicts real people who lived in Harlem, represented by fragments engaged in actual activities. Although the individuals and activities seem believable, the painting does not attempt to reproduce a naturalistic reality, but rather, it reports in a journalistic fashion – close to Rivera and Alston – on the separate parts that make up the whole. After hospital officials took issue with Seabrooke's depiction of an all-Black Harlem community, saying they did not want their institution to be known as a "Negro hospital," they ordered Seabrooke to change her original vision, and add White characters to the mural. The controversy around the artwork stalled its completion by a year, causing Cooper Union Art School to delay Seabrooke's graduation. To appease the hospital officials, Seabrooke incorporated eight White characters into the mural. However, the artist did not alter her original intention to depict the joys and struggles in the Harlem community. Seabrooke painted five of the White characters to face away from the viewers, at the same time ensuring that the race of the other three people remained vague. Her title for the mural, *Recreation in Harlem*, reinforced the location of activities in the mural.

In April 2010, Harlem Hospital Center began preparation to install glass panels on the façade of the Hospital's New Patient Pavilion. Today you can see these immense glass panels from the street; they reproduce images from three selected panels of Vertis Hayes' eight paneled *The Pursuit of Happiness* that depicts scenes from the African diaspora. It is fitting that *The Pursuit of Happiness*, *Recreation in Harlem*, and Alston's and Crimi's histories of medicine should be once again celebrated. In place of their initial rejection and ensuing neglect, the murals are belatedly being recognized for the important works of art they are, and have been triumphantly installed inside the new pavilion.

It must be noted, however, that a number of murals for Harlem Hospital have disappeared. Among these are Selma Day's (dates unknown) *Mother Goose Rhymes*, appropriately painted for the children's ward. Photos show them as pretty straightforward, except perhaps, that the characters of Old King Cole and the Old Lady who lived in a Shoe were Black: raising no objections. In describing her murals in 1940, Day stated that she had tried to create flat, peaceful paintings that would not be disturbing to children with high fevers (Berman 1978, 103, footnote 62). She wanted her art to promote healing. Two other women artists Elba Lightfoot and Sara Murrell (Berman 1978, 103, 104) whose works have disappeared have up to now been casualties of institutional and art historical indifference.

This analysis of Harlem Hospital murals provides insight into a larger issue, the relatively new idea of including minorities in America as important to a democracy.[11] The Hayes and Alston murals corresponded to themes of other ethnic groups in various murals – and other venues. Indeed, the history of Black people and the demand for equality, as seen in *The Pursuit of Happiness*, is comparable to subject matter in many 1930s murals.[12]

One paradigm seen at Harlem Hospital is the contrast of "Old" versus "New." This is especially true of Charles Alston's murals. Philip Evergood uses a similar binary in the *Story of Richmond Hill*, 1938, painted for the Richmond Hill Branch of the Queensborough

Public Library. Here, one portion of the mural shows oppressed downhearted workers leaving their old city slums to dance joyfully in an adjoining section that portrays their new landscaped neighborhood. Seymour Fogel's contrasting pieces, *Primitive Music*, and *Religious and Modern Music*, 1938 directly parallel Alston's *Magic* and *Medicine* panels. Sacha Moldovan's *Scenes of Old and New New York*, 1937, for Public School (P.S.) 164 in Brooklyn, achieve the same result, but in a more "American Scene" or "Regionalist" mode. All of these derived from – and their authors gave credit to – the Mexican muralists, especially Rivera, who had originated these scenarios. Indeed, the WPA/FAP achieved an unprecedented inclusivity – especially of Blacks and women, but also of many other ethnic groups and neighborhoods. Some artists faced prejudice and opposition to their work; Harlem Hospital was only one example. Lucienne Bloch's completed mural, *Evolution of Music*, created for George Washington High School, was painted over by order of the school's principal in May 1937. It is unclear whether it was her chorus showing diversity of different races or her use of "modernism" with cubist elements and abstract qualities that so offended the principal (Berman 1978, 69, footnote 24). Bloch repainted the entire 950 square foot mural the following year. Fogel's Abraham Lincoln High School mural mentioned above received threats because of its depiction of African and "primitive" musicians. These are only a few of the many examples of WPA/FAP works that attempted to depict a unified nation at a time of national crisis and so forge a new sensibility.

Abstract Murals

It was not only socially "progressive" and racially inclusive murals that faced opposition from authorities. The American public was not inclined to accept abstract art either, and those in charge of public commissions hesitated to approve any murals that might antagonize their audience (the everyday American citizen and taxpayer).

For this reason, it is surprising that the blue collar Williamsburg Housing Project, built in 1936–1937, became the site of a number of avant-garde, abstract murals. William Lescaze, chief architect, agreed to make some of the social rooms in the twenty buildings available to the WPA/FAP for mural decoration. He indicated to Audrey McMahon, Director of the New York region from 1935 to 1943, that the rooms were simple and would not compete with "so-called architectural decoration" (cited in Berman 1978, 142, note 8).

Burgoyne Diller (1906–1965), head of the New York City Mural Division, and himself an abstract painter, took advantage of Lescaze's largesse to employ a number of likeminded abstract artists. Claiming that most of the project's residents, factory workers, would not appreciate seeing more workers and machines after eight hours in a factory, Diller worked out an elaborate justification for installing abstract murals. He described his reasoning as follows:

> The decision to place abstract murals in these rooms was made because these areas were intended to provide a place of relaxation and entertainment for the tenants. The more arbitrary color, possible when not determined by the description of objects, enables the artist to place an emphasis on its psychological potential to stimulate relaxation. The arbitrary use of shapes provides an opportunity to create colorful patterns clearly related to the interior architecture and complementing the architect's intention.
>
> (Berman 1978, 142, note 9)

For this project Diller selected twelve artists; four of these he called the country's leading abstract painters: Stuart Davis, Jan Matulka, Francis Criss, and Paul Kelpe. Eight others, whom he referred to as younger, and in the late 1930s comparatively unknown, were: Byron Browne, George McNeil, Willem de Kooning, Balcomb Greene, Ilya Bolotowsky, Harry Bowden, Eugene Morley and Albert Swinden.

Some of the murals reached completion, but others never did, and all eventually disappeared from their original sites over the years. Fortunately, Stuart Davis's celebrated *Swing Landscape*, though originally commissioned for Williamsburg, but never installed there, was instead sold through the Federal Art Gallery in New York, ultimately finding a home at the Indiana University Art Museum in Bloomington, Indiana. *Swing Landscape* may have been considered too abstract even within the Williamsburg context. This major painting in Davis's oeuvre has been on long-term loan to Indiana ever since. This and the mural Davis painted for WNYC Radio Station's studio are now counted among Davis's major works, as he painted little else from 1933–1939.

When Davis exhibited *Swing Landscape* at the Federal Art Gallery in 1938, *New York Times* critic Edward Alden Jewell complained that it "screams" and needs a whole room or even an entire housing project to itself (Berman 1978, 143, footnote 12). The large seven-foot by fourteen-foot painting exploits plastic qualities of paint, while relating to the architecture and the specific location. It may allude, through abstract means, to newly built playgrounds, with their swings and seesaws, but was actually based on observations of the Gloucester, Massachusetts Seaport. The painting "swings" with its pun on jazz. Indeed, Davis drew much of his inspiration from this most American of musical forms. Pieces of city machinery, hoists, ladders, and pulleys, alternate with straight and squirmy lines, and both geometric and biomorphic shapes. He uses color as space, jumping back and forth within a two-dimensional surface. Though Cubism has strongly affected his composition, it is in no way merely derivative. The neon sign-like quality that typifies much of Davis's work adds to the mural's modernity.

Davis happily acknowledged his debt to Picasso and Leger, while at the same time, affirming his American-ness. In a letter to Henry McBride in 1930, he wrote, "Over here we are racially English-American, Irish-American, German-American, French, Italian, Russian, or Jewish-American and artistically we are Rembrandt-American, Renoir-American, and Picasso-American. But since we live here and paint here we are first of all, American" (cited in Berman 1978, 145, note 13).

A number of other Williamsburg murals have been recovered from underneath layers of paint, and now reside in the Brooklyn Museum of Art. One of these, Ilya Bolotowsky's (1907–1981) *Untitled*, 1936, oil on canvas, measures 85 × 211 inches. Bolotowsky had come to the United States in 1923, and studied at the National Academy of Design in New York City. He painted some semi-cubist works in the early 1930s, but turned to absolute abstraction after 1934. He spent a full year researching and making sketches for the mural. In it he borrowed heavily from Bauhaus painters, and from Miró and Arp, using primary colors plus black, white, and gray. The straight lines, triangles, circles, and parallel lines crossed by a diagonal derive from Klee and Kandinsky, while the biomorphic shapes echo Miró and Arp. A highly experimental and eclectic work, this mural nonetheless paved the way for Bolotowsky's own mode of expression: his Mondrian-inspired maturity, which he reached much later. The artist himself considered this mural so important in his oeuvre that he repainted a version of it even before conservators were able to remove the original from the wall, and restore it. Additional abstract murals by Balcomb Greene, Albert Swinden, and Paul Kelpe, adhered largely to American Abstract Artists' aesthetics[13] – also influenced
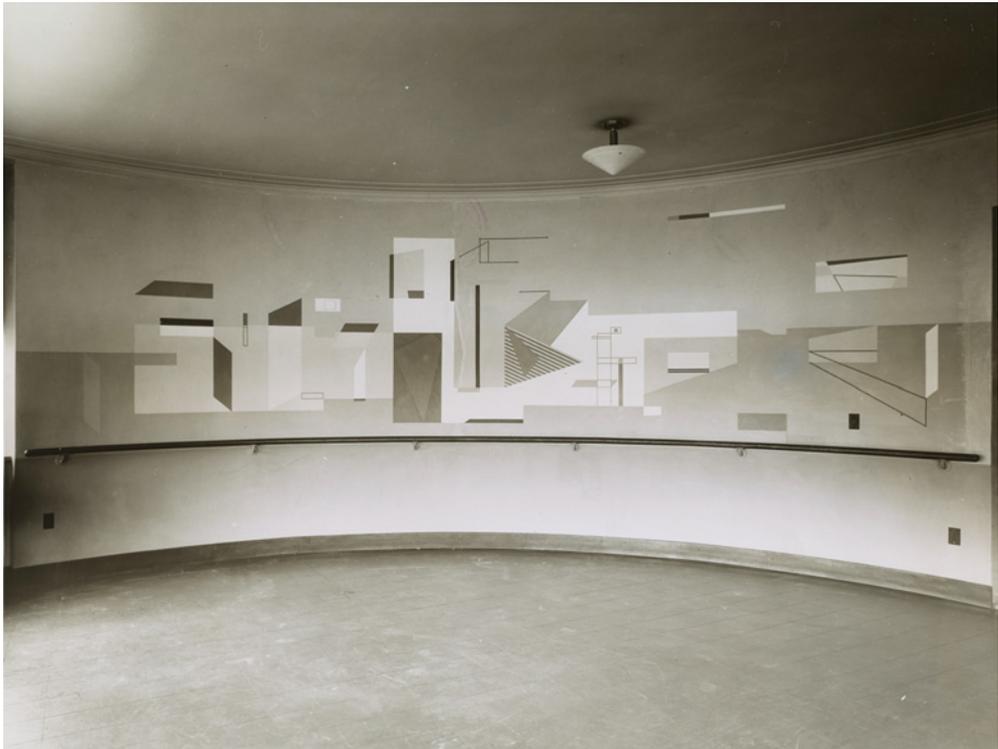
FIGURE 21.2   Ilya Bolotowsky, mural in former Roosevelt Island Hospital, 1941.
Source: Collection of the Public Design Commission of the City New York/© Estate of Ilya Bolotowsky/DACS, London/VAGA, NY 2016.

by European Cubism and Constructivism – and, like social realist painting, they were marginalized by advocates of the avant-garde during the rise of Abstract Expressionism during the late 1940s and 1950s.

Diller used an argument similar to the one he employed at Williamsburg in order to gain approval to install another group of abstract murals at Radio Station WNYC. He said that abstract art would not interfere with the speaking and talking at a radio station, but implied it would be more background and non-confrontational. One important example from this series, also by Stuart Davis, is currently on long-term loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bolotowsky completed another sequence of abstract murals, in oil on canvas, measuring 85 × 600 inches in 1941 for the then Chronic Disease Hospital (Figure 21.2): now Cornell Tech Campus the restored mural will be in the first academic building, which is to open in 2017. This, like so many others, had disappeared under several coats of paint, but also has undergone recent restoration. When designing the mural, the artist carefully considered the architecture, saying:

> The Day Room of the hospital is circular in shape. It is a very unusually beautiful room. However, its roundness might give some patients a feeling of being walled-in and fenced off from the rest of the world. Therefore, in the mural I have sought to create a feeling of a free, open space … the shapes of the doors and windows all around the day room have

been woven into the design … since straight lines are the most restful things to contemplate, this mural is of straight lines and geometric shapes. The day room, its architecture, and its mural form one plastic unit …

Detailing changes to his art practice that are telling, he added:

Before long I was combining the biomorphic forms with the rectilinear … My Williamsburg Housing Project Mural of 1937 … and the mural for the Hall of Medical Science, New York World's Fair, 1938–39, are examples. By the time I was designing the fifty-foot mural for the Hospital for Chronic Diseases [Coler-Goldwater Hospital] … the biomorphic elements were completely excluded from my work. This last mural was close to the Suprematist style.[14]

Case Study: LaGuardia Airport's Marine Air Terminal and Newark Airport

James Brooks (1906–1992) dedicated over two years to the painting of *Flight*, completing it in 1942, for LaGuardia's Marine Terminal. One of the largest and last murals painted during the WPA/FAP, it covers 2,820 feet, wrapping around the rotunda where tickets are sold. Brooks, who later became a nonfigurative abstract artist, used this opportunity to experiment with geometric forms, influenced by School of Paris artists, such as Miró and Arp. However, he alternated abstract flat shapes with representational figures, in an effort to engage the attention of waiting passengers, who could observe the history of aviation. The large format and freedom to investigate shape and color unquestionably influenced Brooks's mature work during the following decades. The mural had been painted over some time during the 1950s, but because of publicity and campaigns, money was raised, and it was restored – and can now be enjoyed once again – definitely a pioneering piece of modernism.[15]

Arshile Gorky (1904–1948) painted a huge mural for Newark Airport's Administration Building in 1936, consisting of ten panels, only two of which have been found and restored; they are now in the collection of the Newark Museum. Gorky, even earlier than Brooks, painted images of airplane parts, symbols, and maps in order to explore abstraction. He based many of the panels on photographs taken by Wyatt Davis, Stuart Davis's brother. Gorky's work received mixed reviews, and he himself was not entirely happy with them, but the government provided him with the opportunity and freedom to explore abstraction on a very large scale. Gorky's murals, influenced by Leger, Davis, and others, were lost for many years, but in 1972 two panels were located and restored: *Aerial Map*, which is really an abstract design rather than any accurate map; and *Mechanics of Flying*.

Two Lesser-known Transitional Artists: Max Spivak (1906–1981) and Seymour Fogel (1911–1984)

Max Spivak and Seymour Fogel are illuminating even now. Their well-documented cases and views on the 1930s and subsequent years help to understand subsequent art world developments. Both men began their careers on the WPA as figurative artists, but their work later became non-representational, and non-social realist. Nonetheless, both continued to make murals after the projects ended. And murals, by virtue of being public art,

must engage with society. Spivak and Fogel have both left significant personal accounts of what it meant to be on the WPA, and its aftermath. Perhaps it is worthwhile quoting Max Spivak at length, speaking about the Great Depression in 1963,

> Now then the only thing is the poverty basis wasn't demeaning. Everybody was poverty-stricken … It was no longer a feeling of shame, you see.
>
> Now once the artists began to get … enough to keep on a minimum basis, … then the idea being in this … mass unemployed, the people who worked on parks, the people who worked on roads, and the fact that they all shared the same experience of starvation, they weren't alone, made them go into the social basis. This gave them also an excitement, for the first time they were participating, not as individuals but as a group.
>
> Because these artists went into May's department stores on strikes that did not affect them, on sit-downs that did not affect them, some went down to Kentucky, the heroic basis of the whole experience. And we, by standing still, became the leaders of the inarticulate mass because we shared the same experiences of starvation, therefore we had to lead them, you see.[16]

In an interview Spivak recounts that being a "swashbuckling muralist" or the boss of a particular project only translated into a few dollars more pay, so rank wasn't that important but democratic purpose was. He mentions that they all respected administrators because they were also artists. Speaking about the "community" of artists, he said that they did not so much discuss or argue about styles, as about strikes, trade unions, and politics. Spivak added that Lee Krasner was his research assistant, and Harold Rosenberg his "reader."[17] Spivak considered it one of the best times for artists. The artist later went on to make numerous murals – mostly mosaic and non-representational – and mostly for private firms. As I was completing this chapter, the *New York Times* on 26 March 2015 reported on a new unveiling of a glass mosaic mural Spivak made in the 1950s (see Dunlap 2015). Reassessments of the 1930s give us a change to view works that have had little attention. Is it worth asking why these assessments are happening now?

Spivak's major WPA mural, *Puppets*, painted on six oil-on-canvas panels, covering 250 square feet for the Queensborough Public Library, was completed in 1938, and has remained *in situ*. This mural was progressive both in terms of inventing new subject matter, and combining it with cubist and Klee, and Miró influences. Indeed, in many ways, it looks ahead to artists such as Red Grooms. Not only did the artist evince a sense of humor, making some topical jokes (see Berman 1978, 124), but he also encouraged children to participate by leaving some of the faces blank, and asking them to paint and repaint facial features and expressions. Spivak also made a number of portable murals; one titled *Mardi Gras*, and allocated to the Newark Museum, is now in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The cartoon-like mural quotes Miró directly in the man smoking a pipe, and several spider-like "critters."[18]

Seymour Fogel (1911–1984) created more than twenty murals throughout the United States during his lifetime. His early murals for the WPA/FAP and for the Treasury Section were, like Guston's and Brooks's, semi-abstract – a combination of Social Realism, Realism, and abstract substructure. Later he experimented with many different styles and media. A recent website http://www.artofseymourfogel.com/ covers much of his work, including abundant information and some videos.

Fogel's two-part mural, *Primitive Music*; and *Religious and Modern Music*, 1938, mentioned earlier deserves further elaboration. Painted in oil on canvas in 1938 for the music room of Abraham Lincoln High School in Brooklyn, and still *in situ*, it followed a format

similar to that already discussed in Alston's Harlem Hospital murals. Instead of "traditional" and "modern" medicine, however, Music was the subject. A large "primitive" figure wearing an ornate headdress, and playing a drum, dominates one panel. The other has at its center a gigantic "modern" woman, who holds sheet music on her lap. Surrounding the "primitive" drummer sit African people, who sing, clap their hands, and play various drums, a horn, and lutes, while a masked figure dances. Western religious musicians – a carillon player, singing monks, and an organist – flank the goddess-like woman on her left; to her right sit contemporary musicians: a pianist with sheet music, a conductor, and representations of various instruments such as a violin, a harp, and a trumpet. Fogel told me in an interview that his African musicians and instruments were extremely accurate. The mural created an uproar when someone complained that it was "obscene," because it depicted African music, jazz, and other such "depraved" musical forms. Nonetheless the murals remained in place to inspire generations of students who used the room.[19] In both panels, the artist used circular rhythms in order to create an effect analogous to musical reactions.

The following year, Fogel, together with Anton Refregier (1905–1979), Philip Guston, and Eric Mose (b.1905, date of death unknown) painted murals for the WPA building at the 1939–1940 World's Fair held in New York. These artists shared a mission, expressed by Refregier. They hoped, they said, to "show up" commercial mural painters at the fair by creating murals that would "speak to the people," instead of selling to them. They aimed to integrate examples previously set by Mexican muralists into contemporary American ideas and design. The artists worked together in an unused theater in Brooklyn, in the spirit of Renaissance workshops (see Berman 1978, 91–93). Both Fogel's *Rehabilitation of the People* and Guston's *Maintaining America's Skills* (the latter placed over the entrance to the building) combined painting monumental figures with a social message, advocating a better American society. In these works, the artists experimented with "modernist" flat, two-dimensional design, in a search for the geometric structures underlying natural forms.

The Treasury Section commissioned another Fogel mural in 1941, titled *The Wealth of a Nation*; unfortunately, like so many others, this one no longer exists. Its history is especially interesting though; obtaining the commission was a huge plum for the artist, as he had to defeat 375 painters who competed for it. The three eventual winners were Fogel, Ben Shahn, and Philip Guston. It was painted for the interior lobby of the Social Security Building in Washington, DC, and a preparatory sketch for it is owned by the Mitchell Wolfson Jr. collection at Florida International University, Miami Beach, Florida. The artist described it as being devoted to forces that make for general national security: construction, science, industry, and growth. He stressed new ideas in research, featuring in the center, large wheels of industry, with a man at the switch in complete control. This trope, reminiscent of Rivera's *Man at the Crossroads*, was widely used during the 1930s (see Shahn 1940; Mecklenburg 1979).

Fogel continued to make murals after the end of the WPA;[20] he also created private sculpture and paintings during the rest of his prolific life. He could certainly have achieved far greater renown if he had settled in New York City and "played the game," but instead he retreated to Connecticut, and remained aloof from the New York City art world.

Postwar Transitions

In extending my discussion of WPA murals, I shall start by making a transition into the 1940s and 1950s, by means of the examples of Philip Evergood (1901–1973) and Ben Shahn (1898–1969), two of the more successful Social Realists who resisted Abstract

Expressionism. Fogel, Bolotowsky, Guston, and many others also continued in defiance of the prevailing mood – though Guston did become an abstract expressionist for some years. Interestingly, Guston's more political attitudes opposed Fogel and Bolotowsky's apolitical ones as the years went on. And, perhaps ironically, New Deal inspiration and ideals of the 1930s and early 1940s infused the viewpoints of many of the abstract expressionist artists in their attempts at universality. In the now famous letter to the *New York Times* (June 1943), Gottlieb and Rothko, with the assistance of Newman, wrote: "To us, art is an adventure into an unknown world of the imagination which is fancy-free and violently opposed to common sense. There is no such thing as a good painting about nothing. We assert that the subject is critical."

Philip Evergood, Ben Shahn, and Peter Blume

In 1938, Evergood painted a WPA/FAP mural, *The Story of Richmond Hill*, for the reference room of the Richmond Hill Branch of the Queensborough Public Library. Although not intended as a critique of society, it raised hackles on the library trustees who deemed it "inappropriate," requesting its removal (see Berman 1978, 71–73).[21] Fortunately WPA officials and storms of protests by artists prevented the trustees from achieving their goals. Unlike other "Modernist" artists, Evergood continued to work as a "Social Realist" throughout the 1940s and 1950s. He painted in a unique, semi-surrealist/magic realist style. He was so successful that the Whitney Museum gave him a retrospective in 1960. In an interview of 1968 now in the Archives of American Art[22] Evergood was asked what he thought of the shift to Abstract Expressionism during the Second World War, and his own attitudes toward war. Unfortunately, his self-contradictory responses do not really give us much insight into how, and what Evergood painted, nor who constituted his patrons and critics. But patrons there were, and Evergood – along with several others – continued to earn a living through his social content paintings.[23]

After the Second World War, Evergood's paintings no longer fit the standard definition of Social Realism. Rather, he further developed his own style, which merged a kind of expressionism with some magic realism. As a consequence, he was both praised and denounced. Two instances can be cited: on the one hand, Marxist critic Marion Summers, approved of the artist's messages, but found them difficult to understand. Summers objected to symbols and distortions in his work, suggesting that he might supply a written program. On the other hand, George Dennison, a journalist identified with abstract art, wrote in 1962 that Evergood's paintings were more expressive and exciting than anything he had seen that season (Berman and Wechsler 1981, 41, footnote 79). He did note, however, that the artist was "extremely unfashionable."

Further examples might help to better understand the extremely varying critical reactions to Evergood's work. *Renunciation*, 1946 (Berman and Wechsler 1981, 57 and color plate 3) is a graphic depiction of the atom bomb detonating: boats and planes explode, turning upside down or sideways, and apes have taken over, populating the remnants of a brick wall. Evergood acknowledged influences from Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Bruegel, and others in this horrific vision. From today's point of view, it looks modern in its very clumsiness and storytelling quality. The artist's leitmotif was brick walls – having used them in his well-known *Lily and the Sparrows*, 1939, as well as his WPA mural, the *Story of Richmond Hill*, previously discussed.

Ben Shahn (1898–1969) was the most renowned, and the most influential, social artist who remained outside Abstract Expressionism. Shahn's iconic *Sacco and Vanzetti series* of

FIGURE 21.3   Peter Blume, *The Rock*, 1944–1948, oil on canvas, 146.4 × 188.9cm. Art Institute of Chicago. *Source*: Art Institute of Chicago, IL, USA/De Agostini Picture Library/ Bridgeman Images/© The Educational Alliance, Inc./Estate of Peter Blume/VAGA, NY/DACS, London 2016.

1932 – are probably the most familiar of his works to American audiences. Finding support at MoMA through James Thrall Soby by the mid-1950s, Shahn was selected, along with Willem de Kooning, to represent the United States at the 1954 Venice Biennale.[24]

Despite works that even postwar never abandoned social and political concerns *Look Magazine* recognized him as one of the world's ten best artists after the war.[25] And the Art Director's Club Hall of Fame recognized him as "one of the greatest masters of the twentieth century" in 1988.[26] But it is ironic, since the ADC is best known for advertising and design. Shahn's graphic work and illustrations pitted him against the "purity of the medium" rhetoric so pervasive in the postwar art world.

Peter Blume (1906–1992), in recent years very little known (although a 2015 exhibition *Peter Blume: Nature and Metamorphosis* took place at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and was favorably reviewed)[27] painted several of the all-time most popular paintings in the United States. Most famous are: *The Rock*, 1945–1948 (Figure 21.3), still a major draw at the Art Institute of Chicago; *The Eternal City*, 1934–1937, at the Museum of Modern Art; and the earlier *South of Scranton*, 1931, owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Blume, like a number of other representational painters (see Berman and Wechsler 1981) kept up a lifelong dedication to old master techniques and methods. Therefore

he only produced a few monumental paintings, but hundreds of sketches and studies. Ironically, as in the cases of Shahn, Evergood, and others, both his popularity and a dedication to old master techniques branded Blume as non-modernist. The artist regarded *The Rock* as an allegory of reconstruction (Berman and Wechsler 1981, 56). The subject of this painting is the struggle for reconstruction following the atom bomb and the Second World War. Like Evergood's *Renunciation*, 1946, the effects of the bomb loom large. But instead of the despair seen in the Evergood, Blume uses his theme to stimulate hope: out of destruction comes rebirth. The painting, which Blume regarded as a transition from the more overt social criticism he made against fascism and Mussolini to general and philosophical concerns, directly parallels some abstract expressionists' work. Indeed, this huge allegorical painting directly challenges the abstract expressionist paintings in adjoining galleries. However, Blume's concern with tradition, unspontaneous technique, narrative, and imagery, combined with his popularity, made his work the object of modernist avant-garde contempt.

The trajectory of the career of Jack Levine (1915–2010) in many ways resembles that of Blume. Both produced easel paintings for the WPA during the 1930s, and both continued to incorporate old master technique and representation into their socially conscious works into the 1940s, 1950s, and beyond. The artist's *Feast of Pure Reason*, 1937, is in the Museum of Modern Art's collection; *Gangster Funeral*, 1952–1953 is in the Whitney's. Levine was more satirical and caustic than Blume, however. His big moment came in 1959 when his 1946 painting *Welcome Home* (now in the Brooklyn Museum of Art) was attacked by the House Un-American Activities Committee after being exhibited in Moscow. Ridicule by President Eisenhower guaranteed, as Blume said, his "star" status.[28]

Courting critical censure, a large number of painters did not become abstract expressionists. Although there were examples to the contrary, many women artists, such as Alice Neel, Colleen Browning, Priscilla Roberts,[29] and Black artists, such as Archibald Motley, Jr. and William H. Johnson continued to paint within a figurative and/or socially conscious tradition. But these artists were by no means uniform in their approaches. More research about the forward-looking roles that African American artists took during the 1930s–1960s continues to add complexity to pre- and postwar American art. From Aaron Douglas to Charles Alston, Hale Woodruff and Romare Bearden – to name a few – we see combinations of social relevance and abstract means that change American art history.[30]

A recent reassessment of Jacob Lawrence in an exhibition at MoMA in 2015 is part of a generally more inclusive history of American art. Lawrence (1917–2000), one of the best-known African American painters of the twentieth century, studied with Charles Alston at the WPA-supported Harlem Art Workshop *c.* 1933, starting at the age of 16. By 1939, he was making easel paintings for the WPA, having already developed his own unique style, combining social realist content with modernist narrative and style. Lawrence, in fact, has been recognized for his work fusing modern art with Social Realism.[31]

What made Lawrence so successful in the art world of the 1940s and 1950s? According to Bridget R. Cooks (2011) part of his popularity arose from his making visible the African American struggle for democracy. Paintings with narratives done in semi-abstract style such as *The Migration of the Negro* are now considered seminal works. He was championed by Edith Halpert of Downtown Gallery, illustrated in *Fortune Magazine*, and bought by MoMA and the Phillips Gallery, Washington, DC in 1940–1941. He had also served in the Coast Guard, and done other patriotic duty. The blend of patriotism, political activism, and radical subject matter, combined with a formalist style, proved to be a compelling combination in the art world; although, often overlooked are Lawrence's *Toussaint l'Ouverture* series of slave revolt, and other racially charged works.

In this chapter, my intention has been to concentrate on first-hand experience with artists and their work, rather than on criticism, philosophy, and politics. However, I want to acknowledge the pioneering writings of Eva Cockcroft (1974), Max Kozloff (1973), Serge Guilbaut (1983), Jonathan Harris in Wood *et al.* (1993), and Andrew Hemingway (2002).[32] These radical critics have attempted in numerous ways to demonstrate that Abstract Expressionism was used politically during the Cold War. The very terms of "individualism," "artistic freedom," and "art for art's sake," epitomized Cold War rhetoric. Although a product of 1980s/1990s art history and criticism and, still subject to debate, modernism itself (as espoused and promoted by Clement Greenberg) was used as a capitalist tool to fight against the Soviet Union and China's "socialist realism" and its theories of accessibility to the masses. However, others such as David Craven and Claude Cernuschi,[33] voice an opposite opinion: both sides cite Meyer Schapiro. Craven insists it is the interpretation of works of art that is associated with politics – not the art itself, the artists, or their techniques.

Greenberg accused artists who did not adopt modes of Abstract Expressionism of a failure of nerve. Many artists mentioned above felt the weight of his criticism, but continued with projects that we might now call participatory art and certainly "socially minded work" that I began with. The dissolution of the WPA, entering into the Second World War, the atom bomb and the division of the country into ever more extreme positions of Left and Right all contributed to the sea change that occurred during the late 1940s and 1950s. The full artistic and political range of the period is still like the murals being recovered and interpreted.

In conclusion, I have tried to recover some of the artists who went against the critical tide and the historical intricacy of the period, and cite specific examples of a range of artistic responses to pre- and postwar American art. The recovery of WPA/FAP murals, overlooked careers and a range of critical interpretations have undermined a monolithic modernism opening up the field to plural modernisms. The reinterpretation of American art of the mid-twentieth century is unlikely to dismantle all the historic hostility to work produced during the 1930s and 1940s, but new perspectives are emerging.

Notes

1   See http://www.complexityart.com/
2   See http://victoriavesna.com/
3   See http://patriciaolynyk.com/
4   See http://www.avivarahmani.com/
5   Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).
6   Arshile Gorky, as cited on MoMA website, http://www.moma.org/collection/details. php?theme_id=10051&section_id=T0002
7   The New Deal domestic programs (*c.* 1933–1938) that sought to provide "relief, recovery and reform" nationwide included the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (1935–1943) set up to employ artists and artisans.
8   Frequently cited. One source is the FDR Library website: http://www.fdrlibrary.marist. edu/museum/artdetail.html
9   Ex-artist's private collection, see McCoy (1973).
10 Charles Aston, Interview, New York, 23 October 1973. Seymour Fogel told me similar stories during numerous interviews in the summer and fall of 1980. Many other artists reported visiting the great Mexican at work in the Rockefeller Center.

11 See the discussion in Cooks (2011).

12 See Berman, *Lost Years*, for discussions of James Michael Newell's (1900–1985) 1938 fresco panels, *The History of Western Civilization*, at Evander Childs High School, in the Bronx; James Penney's (1910–1982) 1938 Early History of Flushing," in Flushing High School, and so many other histories.

13 According to their website http://www.americanabstractartists.org/. "American Abstract Artists is a democratic artist-run organization founded in 1936 in New York City to promote and foster understanding of abstract and non-objective art."

14 See http://www.americanabstractartists.org/history/wpamurals/hospital.html

15 Brooks remained proud of this mural when I interviewed him in 1976. And he was present at its unveiling on 18 September 1980.

16 Oral history interview with Max Spivak, *c.* 1963, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

17 Both Krasner and Rosenberg came to epitomize "modernism," as generally understood. Rosenberg read to the artist as he painted. He got off the art project and onto the writer's project as soon as he could.

18 See http://americanart.si.edu/collections/search/artwork/?id=22805

19 See Berman (1981). The last time I visited the room, it was being used for dance classes.

20 Among others is a mural in the U.S. Federal Customs Building in Foley Square, New York City that he completed in 1968.

21 Because of nude anatomy underneath clothing, an emphasis on "mammary glands," and a satirical view of one of the staid old lady board members.

22 Relevant excerpts of the interview follow (*Oral history interview with Philip Evergood, 1968 Dec. 3, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution*) http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-philip-evergood-12410

23 QUESTION: Now since the Second World War with its development of abstract expressionism and so on, I wondered how you feel about that movement? That is, why did it start? Do you have any beliefs on this at all? – the development of abstract expressionism in American art. It was such a change from what had been done before the war. PHILIP EVERGOOD: Well, I think that it's a result of the horrible confusion and the horrible mixed-up turmoil that World War II led into and that psychologically it does reflect the times. QUESTION: And yet established artists such as you and Ben Shahn and others have never developed into abstract expressionism. Very few at least have. PHILIP EVERGOOD: Well, just temporarily we weren't that kind of artist I suppose. I have always been interested in expressing ideas not from an illustrative standpoint but to me a painting with a great idea at the back of it is greater than a fine painting with nothing back of it.

24 See Frances Pohl, *An American in Venice: Ben Shahn and United States Foreign Policy at the 1954 Venice Biennale.*

25 This popular approbation probably amounted to the kiss of death, as far as the avant-garde was concerned.

26 http://adcglobal.org/hall-of-fame/ben-shahn/

27 In his *New York Times* article Johnson (2015) ends by saying, "But Mr. Blume's retirement from the worldly fray is otherwise regrettable. You can only imagine how he might have allegorized the endless spiritual and political crises of late-20th-century humanity."

28 Interview with the artist, 17 August 1980.

29 Ibid.

30 A recent, February 2015, College Art Association two-session panel was called "New Genealogies of American Modernism at Midcentury." Papers were given on numerous

artists who have been neglected – including Jack Levine, Black artists already cited, an Oklahoma artist, JJ McVicker, and others. Co-Chair Angela Miller summed up saying that art after the Second World War deserves a newer complex understanding. In short, the Cold War caused a kind of "cultural amnesia."

31 See Harkins Wheat (1986) "Jacob Lawrence and the Legacy of Harlem."
32 See Hills' 1984 review of Guilbaut and Goldhammer. Hills also cites Kozloff, William Hauptman, Jane DeHart Mathews, John Tagg, David and Cecile Shapiro. See also Frances Pohl (1989) on Ben Shahn.
33 See Cernuschi (1999).

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Visualizing Figures of Caribbean Slavery through Modernism

Leon Wainwright

In 1763, two enslaved men, Cuffy and Accara, led a revolt against the Dutch owners of the Magdalenberg plantation on the Conje River in Berbice, now a county of Guyana, then a separate Dutch colony. After killing the plantation manager and torching his house, almost a year of successful resistance followed the fifth reported uprising to take place in the colony over the course of thirty years. A military unit headed by Cuffy took over a long list of further plantations as well as Fort Nassau, while he attempted by several written dispatches to strike a peace accord with General Van Hoogenheim. But intransigent planters, the arrival of European troops, and divisions in the ranks of the rebels led the enterprise to failure, with Cuffy's death and the brutal punishment of those who stood behind him.[1]

In the years just before and after Guyana's independence from British rule in 1966, several of the country's artists turned to the memory of that uprising and made it the basis for some distinctive and controversial artworks. In 1960, the Guyana-born painter Aubrey Williams (1926–1998) found in the story of the rebels an allegory for present-day decolonization in the Caribbean and produced the painting *Revolt*, 1960 (Figure 22.1). His interest in the rebellion of 1763 helped to put in place concerns that continued and developed in Guyana into the decade of the 1970s. In 1976, the Guyanese painter and sculptor, Philip Moore (1921–2012) made his great public work, the *1763 Monument*, popularly known as "the Cuffy monument" (Figure 22.2).[2] Here Moore handled that same historical topic of the Berbice rebellion, presenting a colossal figure with tubular limbs, frenetic surface detailing, and somewhat obscure motifs – a signature work among the artist's wider body of painting and sculpture.

In some ways, these artists' various attempts to represent and remember the events of 1763 were as failed as the rebellion itself. They were not well received nor have they held lasting appeal. Certainly, these artworks are revealing of some complex social locations for modernism: they are embedded in some key relations among several artists who operated in decolonizing and post-independence Guyana, and clustered around them are significant party-political, religious, and nationalist interests focused on the topic of the 1763 rebellion. But the matter of Williams' and Moore's respective "success" with their two works is really one about how to see modernism in the Caribbean. Indeed, I have brought together these Caribbean examples in order to debate what emerges when modern artists turned to the topic of the region's history, in particular its histories of plantation slavery and resistance. The story of Williams's and Moore's attention to slavery indeed shows how Guyana has looked back from a range of viewpoints on its past. These moments of

FIGURE 22.1 Aubrey Williams, *Revolt*, oil on canvas, 134 × 165cm, 1960. National Gallery of Guyana. *Source*: © Estate of Aubrey Williams. All rights reserved, DACS 2016.

retrospection, enacted in the making and reception of art, should go to show how visualizing and materializing such a past can, at the same time, raise questions about creativity and the imagination at large: the power and the purpose invested in them, and the reasons why they often seem to disappoint if not alarm their audiences.

When art is assumed to be a way of disturbing the present through attention to the historical past, commemorating Caribbean slavery becomes entangled in an especially complex interplay of forces. Much more is going on than commemoration when artworks are charged with such responsibility, and yet there are limitations that surround modern art when it is made into a client for such public memorialization. In the following discussion, I outline some of these palpable uses of art for memorializing purposes, and explore why the tensions that arise through such attempts to employ artworks have to do with the material aspects of modern, visual creativity itself. What these examples suggest is the need to identify how individual works of art are positioned within surrounding expectations about their political usefulness. In this Caribbean context, artists may have set out to visualize the past, but their efforts also betray the purpose of trying to "win back" their works, away from such an aim, pointing therefore to an aspiration for art to transcend its commemorative capacity. Above all, events in Guyana in the twentieth century raise the question: why are modern artworks tasked with the representation and remembrance of history at all, when visualizing and materializing the past can seem so inadequate, if not wholly inappropriate?

Evaluating Art's Commemorative Efficacy

My chosen artworks by Williams and Moore, although ostensibly on the same theme – focusing on the year 1763 – were made to perform quite dissimilar memorializing functions. That difference points to the changing significance of slave rebellion before

FIGURE 22.2   Philip Moore, *1763 Monument*, h. 4.9 m, 1976. Plinth by architect Albert Rodrigues, h. 5.9 m. Sited on Vlissengen Road, Georgetown, Guyana. *Source*: Leon Wainwright. By kind permission of the National Trust of Guyana.

and after Guyanese independence, which can be detected in the circumstances of production and reception for these artworks. For Williams' painting, it is striking that in 1960 its visibility was temporarily withheld, frustrating the artist's ambition to have it shown during the final years of colonization, and by contrast, that in 1976 Moore's monument on the same topic was proudly unveiled. As I am about to show, the particular political, social and religious expectations underscoring these differences are best examined by looking in a subtle way at the visual medium of each artwork, and asking what actual work they were expected to do.

Executed in Britain where Williams was then domiciled, and given by him as a gift to the Guyanese people, the painting *Revolt* is now in the Guyana National Gallery in Georgetown. Standing as victor over a maimed white body, a stripped white woman, and a helpless white man, *Revolt* is composed around a negative space of silhouette, the outline of an enslaved rebel brandishing a weapon. The provocative content of the work inaugurated a series of events which include it being kept from public view; an ensuing protest in the

local press that drew support from the literary personality, Jan Carew (1960); and the long delay before the painting was displayed for the first time, not until after independence, at a National Museum retrospective exhibition of 1970 when it was selected by a sub-committee headed by Williams.

Limiting my reflections for the time being simply to the handling of its subject matter and reception during the decade of the 1960s, what may be called the "efficacy" of Williams's painting can be identified through two, interlinked aspects. First I turn to the artist's self-identification with the enslaved man it pictures. Cuffy's physical profile is portrayed to resemble that of Williams's own, and this surrogate for him extends to the substitution of a weapon for a paintbrush. The composition exploits a choreographic arrangement that places the viewer behind the enslaved man's back, so that the "revolt" in question is both 1763 and 1960. In that way, the work asserts both the righteousness of the eighteenth-century rebel and the present-day anti-colonial artist-activist, above all assuming, even demanding, that its audience supports the political principle of trans-historical struggle against European domination.

Revolt framed the promise of political freedom in British Guiana as the resolution of a long program of national struggle, dating back at least to the Berbice rebellion. Yet, as it became loosened significantly from the didactic purpose of remembering the year 1763, it also countered the various expectations for modern art that dominated in the Caribbean and Britain around 1960. This aspect of the work's efficacy rests on its chosen medium of painting and relies on the artist's main interest being figuration. For his 1960 intervention in Guyana, Williams chose painting because it harked back to the older colonial order and offered a form of address that depended on a context of display that was understood and accessed by an elite colonial audience. He would have known that by the 1960s, painting and, in particular, representing the human figure, could no longer be seen as the *sine qua non* of modern art. That superior status for painting in the Caribbean had been superseded by the turn toward sculpture and time-based, contingent forms of spectacle – dance, theater, carnival, steel drumming and calypso (while such performances also intersected with literary work).[3] Artists in Britain, meanwhile, who persisted with figuration, did so in the face of a New York-led assault on depiction itself, and in view of the dominance of abstract form and the arrival of new three-dimensional work.[4] Since Williams operated on both continents, he has to be considered an artist who contrived both to resist the concerted move away from painting in the decolonizing Caribbean, and to subvert mid-century high modernism centered on abstraction as it was developing in metropolitan centers in the north Atlantic.[5]

The topic of the politicization of Aubrey Williams's *Revolt* during the 1960s deserves the attention of a wider project of scholarship on artistic modernism that is able to map the movements of Caribbean art and artists and the choices they made in relation to artistic modernism, taking into view their different locations around the Atlantic (Wainwright 2011). What may be observed here, in a more focused account, is that Williams's painting practice was for the most part an interworking of naturalism and abstraction, in a way that would have seemed conservative for north Atlantic modernists and their proponents, but which makes much more sense now with hindsight of the way that art would develop in the later twentieth century. Indeed Williams was part of a pattern of opening up the art community in order to value works that were more contingent on local conditions of production, marking a sea-change in attitudes whereby art that was outside the historical centers of modernism came to the fore and began to shape a more transnational cultural geography. In at least two senses then, with *Revolt,* he turned on its head the anachronism that had come to be associated with painting and figuration.

The context of production for Philip Moore's *1763 Monument* was shaped as much by Williams's influence as an artist, as by Moore's wider art practice, his deliberate search for new approaches, definitions and materials for what he felt to be an authentic expression in art, culturally and even spiritually appropriate to the wider Caribbean. As Moore told the writer Andrew Salkey in 1970 on the matter of his own development as an artist, "I broke away from the rigid anatomy way of representing my figures, and began to express myself freely, with the encouragement of a Guyanese artist who had gone up to London, and come back. I mean Aubrey Williams" (Salkey 1972, 87).[6] In fact, Aubrey Williams initiated and coordinated the *1763 Monument,* following a competition for the commission that was won by Karl Broodhagen (b. 1909, Georgetown, Guyana, d. 2002).[7] When Broodhagen refused to make certain requested changes to his entry and then withdrew it, Philip Moore, who was not in the competition, was approached by Aubrey Williams to replace him. This solution came at the behest of the artist, institution-builder and archaeologist Denis Williams (no relation) who oversaw the process of executing Guyana's first, and what has come to be its last, large-scale public monument. Eve Williams (daughter of Denis) records that,

> The artist Philip Moore was repatriated to Guyana from the United States to undertake this work. His fifteen-foot bronze statue, weighing two and a half tonnes, was cast for Guyana at Britain's famous Morris Singer foundry in Basingstoke where the work was overseen by Williams in his role as Director of Art for the History and Arts Council of Guyana. The original maquette Moore had sculpted in wood was also cast in bronze and later formed a central exhibit in Guyana's exhibition at the Jamaica Institute during Carifesta 1976.
>
> (Williams 2012, 118)

Although the transnational geography associated with the movement of the monument, and the artists who collaborated on it, connected America, Guyana, Jamaica, and Britain, the monument would be pressed above all into national service after that appearance in Jamaica, ten years after independence, identified it with a "national school" of Guyanese art. During a decade of initial optimism about the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, sited at the Square of the Revolution ("to the heroes of the 1763 revolution against forced labour and the plantation system," its plaque reads), the monument commemorated a story of continuous struggle, resistance, and ensuing emancipation from slavery, and spoke to Guyana's anti-colonial beginnings. It was unveiled three days before the tenth year of independence from Britain, and the anniversary of the 1763 uprising on 23 February was chosen as Republic Day.

The story of my own encounter with the monument began when I viewed it at ground level. There, I saw that a temporary altar had been put up, hidden behind it, which was laden with blue eggs, candles and so on, and tended ritually by a white-clad follower of "Spiritists" (of the Caribbean's Afro-syncretic Spiritual Baptism). It was August 2005, the most intense month for libation ceremonies and thought to mark the historical period of a visit to that area by Cuffy and his followers when they hoped to negotiate successfully with the colonizers.[8] Such offerings and libations at the foot of the *1763 Monument* are not uncommon and they signal its dual importance for national and religious community. Indeed, that Afro-syncretic beliefs focus on the monument is consonant with Philip Moore's personal philosophy of "godmanliness." This drew from his membership of the Jordanites, and the pan-African framework that he promoted through attempts to

"represent the African man in all his spheres; by that I mean Africans living in Africa, and those who are the descendants of slaves in the Caribbean, America, Latin America, Canada and Britain, anywhere they've travelled and settled down" (Salkey 1972, 88–89).

If Williams's *Revolt* was a work of self-identification, my sense is that such a practice emerged again with Philip Moore's monument. However, here that happened in a way that spoke to the collective, national "self" rather than the individual. Moore married his work to a further, spiritual goal: to offer an elemental human form with which all Guyanese may identify. As he told the visiting writer Salkey in 1970, "We're having a little debate about Cuffy's image not being too right, you know."[9] This was in reference to the search for what may serve as a suitable national "symbol" for Guyana, leading Moore to protest that, "No real nationalist would revere Cuffy, really less, if he is depicted, as I think he should be, as a rough, tough, unkempt man, with matted hair … If we have to pretty him up, we are ashamed of him, ashamed of our own, ashamed of our past" (Salkey 1972, 98–99). Salkey reported that Moore in 1970 took out of his shirt-jacket pocket "a cameo likeness" of Cuffy that he had carved. That may well have been a prototype for the same repeating image in painted mud that Moore bequeathed to Guyana's Burrowes School of Art, there still on permanent view today, based on the molding techniques that he taught himself while working as a tutor at Princeton.

Moore's mention of "having a little debate" was an allusion to the divergence between elite and popular taste in Guyana in their attitudes to figuration. This became even clearer when the *1763 Monument* was realized six years later: opinion vocalized in the press showed disapproval of it, while Spiritists, who put themselves outside such debate, nonetheless began to embrace it. The lawyer and polymath Rupert Roopnaraine wrote about the monument twenty years after it was unveiled, and focused on the former sort of reception,

> It is true that the popular rejection of 'Cuffy', as he has come to be known and hated, has also to do with the fate of non-representational public art in the region as a whole. No Henry Moores and Barbara Hepworths for us. We like our monuments realistic, as recognizable as our next door neighbors.
>
> (2012, n.p.)

From such a description it becomes quite hard to tell which is the "popular" audience for figurative sculpture in the Caribbean (drawn along what social or religious lines?), and thereby quite a challenge to know what "public" is the preferred one for the region's "public art." Having set out his commentary in these terms, but in general trying to defend Moore's monument, Roopnaraine is then left with only one option, which is to argue that the final product was never as Moore intended. He notes that there was another maquette which included a "wheel of eternal revolution" (and reconciliation) made up of the cup, the coconut tree and sun – symbols of the main political parties at the time of Guyana's independence. Also that Moore's "many disappointments" ran to its elevation on a plinth.[10] "Philip Moore did not intend Cuffy to be in the sky … Bring him to earth so we can share in his power" (Roopnaraine 2012, n.p.).

In the context of remembering histories of slavery, the matter of Cuffy's "likeness" and the language of his bodily comportment, became the focus for frictions and disagreements that arose through a visualizing practice. Ultimately the *1763 Monument* offered a stance that was directed simultaneously against colonial oppression (plantation slavery), privileged aesthetic taste, and postcolonial bureaucratic and party-political power. That Moore chose to turn away from two dimensional depiction (i.e., painting) altogether, in

favor of a three-dimensional rendering of Cuffy, was the fundamental basis for his ability to hold these multiple viewpoints in an environment of dissent about *how* to see the past in the present.

Conflict and Visualization

The discourse around commemoration of slavery and resistance has condensed on the uprising of 1763 time and again in Guyana, thrusting visualization practices to the fore. When the painting *Revolt* was finally shown in public in 1970, a political opportunity opened up for Cheddi Jagan, leader in opposition of the People's Progressive Party. A report in *The Sunday Chronicle* (Sunday 15 February 1970) told how,

> Dr [Cheddi] Jagan said that it was the PPP Government in office (but not in power) which insisted on the Aubrey Williams painting, 'Revolt', being exhibited, and being found a resting place in the Public Free Library eventually; as it was the PPP which, during the early years of the annual History and Culture Week, drew Cuffy from his unknown resting place into the proud pages of Guyanese history …
>
> (cited in Salkey 1972, 95)[11]

By the time the painting was exhibited, it could be argued that its meaning had already notably changed, and its value diminished, by the new attention given to public sculpture shown outdoors. This was reflected by the degree to which sculptural meaning in the urban space of Georgetown became a live issue. For instance, Jagan pronounced on the removal of the statue of Queen Victoria from the lawns of the Law Courts that it "had therapeutic value for the nation and the individual" (Salkey 1972, 95). The search was well underway for appropriate modes of three-dimensional figuration that could displace the statuary of the colonizers.

If Williams' painting indeed succeeded in drawing the rebellion of 1763 into the "proud pages of Guyanese history," the same could not be said for the place that the painting has occupied in a Caribbean history of art. While Moore's sculpture offended an elite view of Cuffy's likeness, *Revolt* offended in the same quarters their expected standards for art in Guyana. The Guyanese artist and educator Stanley Greaves recalled recently when he and a small group of contemporaries (Emerson Samuels and Michael Leila) were granted permission to see the painting,

> It seemed … more of a study than a finished painting for the following reasons. The left of the painting was occupied by a large silhouetted figure of a slave with broken chains on his wrists and holding a bloodied blade in a most obviously *improbable* manner. The silhouette itself *contradicted* the modelling in the pants dispelling visual unity. *Inaccuracies* in figure drawing were evident in the rendering of the small group, including the wounded and dead, to the right underneath the upraised knife arm of the slave. *Problems* of scale were evident in the relationship between the group and the dominant figure. These were compounded by a flattening of the pictorial space and *distorted* perspective not consonant with figure painting in a naturalistic genre. [12]
>
> (Greaves 2014, unpaginated, my emphasis)

Such disparagement of the formal qualities of *Revolt* would have aided the bureaucratic refusal to exhibit it publicly, emboldening the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society

that became custodian of the work in 1960. Greaves offers a clue as to how the justification for the refusal was made on explicitly aesthetic grounds, a distraction from the Society's ideological opposition to the painting's stirring anti-colonial message. Greaves' description is a valuable window onto that historical episode, fluently voicing the artists' continuing reservations about the painting. It is a throwback to those dominant aesthetic values that prized illusionism and naturalism and an indication of how these have held their ground even to the present day: with its reproach to the deceased Williams for his lack of appreciation for why compositions of painted figures ought to convey "visual unity," should avoid contradiction, demonstrate accuracy with regard to scale, perspective, and so on. Evidently the spirit of rebellion that galvanized Cuffy and his followers – in their desperate violence and mobilized armed struggle – had entirely dissolved under the normative aesthetic appraisal meted out by the educated Guyanese who had viewed the painting.

This sort of debate about the virtues of images as works of art, somewhat lamentably distracts from a perhaps more pressing one about visualization and materialization themselves: those contexts of showing and signifying, the manipulation of physical form, etc., which have tended to lie outside the proper domain of aesthetic evaluation centered on artistic creativity and named artistic personalities. Argument over the appropriate way to render the late eighteenth century through artistic media has overshadowed any attempt to know how Cuffy and his followers employed visual means at large in order to articulate their aims and experience.

A slightly alternative mode of inquiry, set apart rather from the present-day interest in the visual commemoration of slavery, could try to elicit and bring into our contemporary debate the matter of the historically contextual modes of visualizing that enslaved people themselves had used. It is really difficult based on the surviving colonial record to recover the visualization practices issued by the enslaved rebels themselves, but the task seems vital for countering the authority of that record, and moreover uncovering how colonial power has been served by conservative aesthetic discourse.

The destruction of plantation property should be considered just such a primary visualizing practice at the hands of the enslaved. As well as a means to cease or set back sugar production, for rebels to make sure that "the hill of fire glows red"[13] – as it does in *Revolt* – signaled their serious intent and degree of organization. 1763 became a scene of such incendiary signification (much as had happened the previous year on Laurens Kunckler's plantation Goed Fortuyn, in the upper part of the colony of Berbice), when on 28 February every building at five plantations along the Berbice River burned except those in which the rebels established their headquarters. Second there is the self-styling of "Coffy, Governor of the Negroes of Berbice, and Captain Accara," to quote the opening words of a letter of negotiation to the Dutch that the illiterate Cuffy dictated to a young mulatto boy, a title that might suggest that he and the other rebel leaders wore military dress. That this Governor and Captain could assume the dress fitting of their rank is an expectation that was probably not met because the enslaved community was deprived of all but the simplest clothing, just as they were destitute of all arms except for rusting swords, fragments of iron and agricultural implements, and a few guns and pistols.

If they did seek to don military uniform, what has gone entirely unrecorded is how Cuffy identified his rank just as clearly as he did his ethnicity. Of the two main ethnic groupings among the rebels, his background stood out from that of his officers, Accara, Atta, Fortuyn, and Prins. It is in connection with such ethnic diversity that there is a particular reluctance to consider the visualization practices of the rebels, especially when doing so means relying on the colonial record, certain details of which are deemed beyond countenance in Guyanese popular memory of the revolt. The ethnic differences among the

rebels was so marked that it is generally understood that they widened into a tragic division when Cuffy's officers turned against him in the final challenge to his authority, leading to his alleged suicide.

That bitter end to Cuffy's struggle is among several details of the uprising that are still today met by disbelief in Guyana. As such, it is fair to wonder about those visual indexes of rebel power during the uprising that are contextually inappropriate memories, indeed beyond the accepted bounds of patriotic, triumphalist commemoration. A supreme example would be the very idea that 1763 became a scene of injured and mutilated white bodies; according to the colonial record, the stockades of Cuffy's first stronghold carried the heads of white victims from a massacre at Peereboom. Such a display carried tactical advantages, aiding the rebels' cause. It added to the fatalistic mood felt by Van Hoogenheim who in turn called a special meeting of the colonial *Raad* on 6 March. At the same time, two petitions were received from Cuffy begging the Dutch to leave Fort Nassau. The colonizers' reluctant preparations to retreat were quickened on 8 March by another letter sent by Cuffy that warned "Leave the colony." This message was underscored with portent by yet another startling image: its bearer and her state of presentation – Cuffy's white mistress, raped, disheveled and in rags.

Conclusions: Heroism, Modernism, and Blind Faith in Art

These examples by Williams and Moore are testament to two related controversies over attempts by artists to draw parallels between an eighteenth-century episode of resistance to the system of slavery and conditions of the more recent past. Additionally, they show how circumstances for visualization in the 1960s were distinct from those of the decade that followed. *Revolt* issued from a painter based in London who turned to the history of slavery in order to galvanize anti-colonial feeling in British Guiana, with an efficacy that provoked a proprietorial response among the colonial authorities in their attempt to decide what sort of art was appropriate for public display. By contrast, Moore's *1763 Monument* belonged to the politics of postcolonial Guyana and its energetic investment in nation-building.

In that later work, the armed rebel is no longer confronting the slavers and planters, nor does the rendering of its subject repeat Williams' interpellation to elite culture and the genre of European "history painting." Rather, Moore puts himself entirely outside the dilemma over whether to show shackles or manacles that are broken or unfastened, and he neatly sheathes the weapon of armed struggle. The formal codes of this uprising are obscure. They emerge from an elaborate system of body markings that resemble futuristic armor; the animals are held confidently in the hands; the mouth is silent yet shaped to suggest speech. This is Moore's attempt to normalize a mode of figuration grounded in a private language of motifs and figural proportions that had nothing to do with naturalism or academicism. Gone is the antagonism toward colonial rule and the didactic appeal for independence that issued from the painting *Revolt*, and so too is any supporting information such as sticks of sugarcane or colonials.

The visual impact of the *1763 Monument* depended on the artist's embrace of the medium-specificity of sculpture itself, which does not presuppose the single viewpoint of painting, as in the work by Williams. Moore has brought out what the art historian Alex Potts calls the "instabilities" of our perceptual encounter with works of modern sculpture (2000, 8). Returning to the matter of fire, while the illusionism of painting may readily convey the immateriality of the fire, as suggested in *Revolt*, such illusionism being far from

an obvious quality for sculpture, it is missing from Moore's monument. Indeed, the standard iconography of uprisings and destruction, the burning house and cane fields, are all physically out of the question in a sculptural composition. In all practicality, it is much easier to add a pool and channel of actual water than to model flames or even to keep a fire alight. Ultimately, it is on this material point that the two works of art pull crucially apart, and there lies the analytical basis for locating them respectively in any debate about the aesthetics of historicizing slavery and heroism.

The history I have examined seems to recommend a more properly evaluative approach to understanding the demands that are placed on modern artworks and how those demands are maintained or modified over time. If an overall conclusion may be drawn, it is from examples of how one or other medium of modern art compares in delivering upon the expectations of artists and their audiences through the process of visual commemoration. While I have suggested that each medium does its own work according to its means, the question remains of why so much faith rests in the efficacy of artworks at all. They so frequently disappoint, if not subvert, the instrumental aim to revisit history. Such attitudes to art are probably not unique to the context of visualizing slavery, yet they do assume a certain character in this commemorative arena. The pictorial imagination and the sculptural imagination seem to separate from one another, just as much as they diverge from the historical imagination and come to elude the expectations that are made patent through memorialization. This misalignment is fundamental to visual representation, and it should be salutary for scholars of the histories of slavery whose interest in works of art is growing. I suspect that in the histories being studied, there are some untested intellectual assumptions about what art can do, and these are not confined to Guyana and its memorializing practices of the twentieth century.

If histories of slavery and heroism have suffered from "blind memory" (in reference to Marcus Wood's 2000 analysis of the visual phenomena that frame the process of the abolition of slavery) then it is worth asking if there is not a sort of correspondingly "blind faith" in art to do the work of memory. That question can be asked of Caribbean-focused studies of modern art and also it could be raised quite productively in relation to the newly-emerging studies of modernism in its global, comparative contexts. In any case, looking more closely at the Caribbean would assist in understanding those kinds of historical instances when the aim to fulfill art's ostensibly commemorative potential becomes an operative one in the production and reception of public visual practices.

The recalcitrance of artworks, identified here by their incapacity to play a more reliable role in historical remembrance, is quite hard to handle: intellectually, socially, politically. With the visualization of slavery through modernism there is the potential for unexpected consequences, and errant significations. But these, once seen through the lens of modernism, are rather more positive attributes than they may at first appear. What I suggest is that there is good scope within modernism for artworks to assert some degree of sovereignty through, rather than despite, their materiality. We have seen this at work in Williams' and Moore's contributions where, in a simple sense, the various media available to these artists have lent themselves to different outcomes. Once this is taken into view, then it becomes possible to approach in a more accepting fashion that the operations of artworks vis-à-vis histories of slavery are both a site of controversy, as well as aesthetic projects that are dynamic and open-ended.

Such art actively positions those whose lives it implicates. Aubrey Williams was occupied with painting in the face of the rise of more public and temporary sorts of creativity, such as sculptural production and theatrical performance. His attempt to recuperate the value of painting – when that was becoming an outmoded artistic medium in Guyana – took place

in parallel with the diminishing status of painting in the northern Atlantic metropole: in the words of Michael Fried (1967), painting had become "at war" with theater and theatricality in the search for a more authentic modernism. While Williams' painted in London, the sending of *Revolt* to Guyana was evidence of that war having a long front that extended to the Caribbean – with mixed results for Williams. Since Moore sought to find his own measure of artistic authenticity, aside even from those that were normative in Guyana (the European representationalism that he shunned), such desire would subject him and his monument to public imputations of failure.

In this field of visualizing slavery, it is striking that artists' negotiations with the sensitive subject matter of a traumatic past can become simultaneous with the wider experimentation and exploration of art's materiality. Certain artworks from Guyana are key contributions to the politics of anti-colonialism (especially its uses of the past through commemoration of an uprising during slavery), but they are also a focus for understanding why visual art in the twentieth century comes under pressure and is changed through processes of commemoration. The events of 1763 in Berbice, once called to remembrance in the twentieth century, became in part a pretext for trying to understand the creative possibilities and limits of figuration. The result was an uneasy relationship between memory, painting, and sculpture in a climate of unquestioning faith in art to somehow intervene in history.

The imperative to revisit histories of enslavement and resistance is at its most fascinating, then, when artists become engaged with the intersecting breadth of challenges, from the ideological to the material, that visualization brings. The same matter of what is an "acceptable" or "unacceptable" way of remembering the history of slavery – a matter that has attended the production and presentation of art throughout the Atlantic world – is a sensitive one and a preoccupation that has persisted in the modern Caribbean. Respecting the need to address that issue, I see the process of confronting such an unacceptable past as a task of seeing more clearly the differences between one sort of art and another.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 I have drawn the details of events in 1763 from the account given by Cornelis Christiaan Goslinga, in van Yperen 1985.
2 The monument was cast in sections at the Morris Singer Foundry in Basingstoke, England, with the assistance of Guyanese structural engineer Dr. David Klautky and model makers David Gillespie, Dorset, and Farnham. It was assembled through welding. On site it stands 4.9metres (15 feet) high and weighs 2267 kg (2.5 tons) and rests on a plinth 5.9 meters (18 feet) high which was designed by architect Albert Rodrigues.
3 For some examples in Guyana, see Creighton (1995) and Maes-Jelinek (1989).
4 For a clearer sense of the critical forces that ranged against painting in the 1960s in the metropolitan north, it is useful to note that by 1958 Allan Kaprow referred to Jackson Pollock's "legacy" as an imperative to use all our senses, suggesting the extension of the artist's method beyond the borders of painting into a "new concrete art." As he wrote:

"Here the direct application of an automatic approach to the act [of painting] makes it clear that only is it this not the old craft of painting, but it is perhaps bordering on ritual itself, which *happens* to use paint as one of its materials. […] Not satisfied with the *suggestion* through paint of our other senses, we shall utilize the specific substances of sight, sound, movements, people, odors, touch." In Japan, another requiem for painting would be Jiro Yoshihara's *The Gutai Manifesto* (1956). By 1963 a feminist such as Carolee Schneemann was using her painted body as a sculptural material, while Gunter Brus had long given up painting in favor of performance. Comparisons may be drawn with Yves Klein's *The Chelsea Hotel Manifesto* of 1961 ("Would not the future artist be he who expressed through an eternal silence an immense painting possessing no dimension?"), Guy Debord and the Situationist International (1957), and Kaprow's (*c.* 1965) "Untitled Guidelines for Happening." A different but consequential set of theoretical coordinates issued from Morris' "Notes on Sculpture," (1966a, b) Parts I and II. In the Caribbean after the Second World War, the pressure on painting, although just as sustained, was of quite a different order. Here a flattening out of the field of creativity made room for creolized sorts of public spectacle – carnival masquerade (mas'), steelpan bands, and so on. Guyana produced variations on this in the 1970s, with its crowd-assembled paintings, cut into square panels and paraded. In the present-day Caribbean, with the inexorable growth of interest in "participatory" art practices, which give prominence to "performativity," such divisions are being systematically troubled yet further. Many artists who began their careers as carnival costume designers have successfully integrated into the mainstream of international spaces for contemporary art practice. See for instance: *Up Hill Down Hall: An Indoor Carnival* (Tate Modern 2014); and *En Mas': Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean* (Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans 2015, and touring). But it is also worth recalling that in the early years of independence there was a persistent conservatism, especially in the area of arts education policy, that resisted the coming together of painting and carnival in any institutional context. Alladin (1967), for instance, prescribed a firm division between these art forms, as its author in his capacity as Trinidad and Tobago's first Minister of Culture oversaw the directing of official funds to the standardization of visual art through studio-based teaching.

5   An important response to these issues during the 1930s shows a comparable complexity in the example of Jacob Lawrence's series, *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture,* consisting of forty-one individual tempera-on-paper compositions executed between 1936 and 1938. While the series is now widely celebrated, it tends to be overlooked that it was originally part of the attempt to make abstracted figurative forms against the backdrop of hostility to both social realism and modernism, a move that subjected Lawrence to strident criticism, see Ellen Harkins Wheat (1986).

6   The interview is transcribed in Salkey (1972).

7   Broodhagen would go on to attract the commission from the Government of Barbados for *The Emancipation Monument,* popularly known as "the Bussa statue," unveiled 28 March 1985. The sculptor called the statue "Slave in Revolt," in reference to the largest revolt against slavery on the island of Barbados in 1816.

8   This combination of elements is typical of the iconography of paintings by Stanley Greaves, with his references to the veiling of public figures and monuments and signs of obeah.

9   Salkey noted a newspaper editorial by Carl Blackman entitled "Is that you, Cuffy?," which asked "What manner of man was Cuffy, leader of the bloody Berbice Rebellion and now, Guyana's first hero?" (Salkey 1972, 98).

10 The eighteen-foot high plinth was designed by Albert Rodrigues, and includes five brass plaques.

11 The article is quoted at length in Salkey (1972). With such continuing political importance placed on the figure of Cuffy and the place of art in stimulating public debate, it becomes easier to see what led to the commission of Moore's sculpture.

12 Communication by Stanley Greaves, read aloud in his absence at "Aubrey Williams: Now and Coming Time," a conference held at the University of Cambridge to celebrate the artist's life and work (26 April 2014).

13 Reference to Martin Carter's poem *The Hill of Fire Glows Red* (1951), see Carter (1997). See also Robinson (2004).

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Part V

The Modern Artist, the Modern Child, and a Modern Art Education

A Modern Art Education

Claire Robins

"Couldn't modernism be taught to children as a series of Aesop's fables?" begins the second chapter of Brian O'Doherty's, 1976 *Inside the White Cube*. He proceeds with a tongue-in-cheek list of possible titles for this imagined pedagogic project, "such fables as 'Who Killed Illusion?' or 'How the Edge Revolted Against the Center.' 'The Man who Violated Canvas' could follow 'Where Did the Frame Go?'" (1999 [1976], 35), and to his list we might offer additions, such as "What Did Education do when Art took its Objects Away?," "Who Ate Art and Culture?" and "Coyote, Hare and the Free International University."

O'Doherty's question, pertinent here, is not whether modernism can be taught to young people in the form of parables. It clearly can, albeit in an often reductive and soulless form (see British secondary school (11–18 years) art examination outcomes which often emulate selective artists from the early modern canon). Rather, as the residue of modern art's educational project shakes and judders into a new era the question is more about what might be learned from some of the parables that this period of fractured educational ideals has provided; but where to begin and end in a search for a modern art education. If once a Western orientation appeared to provide neat temporal perimeters for locating modern art we must now acknowledge the cultural myopia of such proclamations. Our temporal understanding of the modern, postmodern, and the contemporary have all been open to substantive global revision and as Preziosi and Farago reminds us, in a global purview the very designation "art" *qua* fine art is, in itself, a Western concept of cultural production (2012, 53). Therefore, to say that this chapter considers a period from 1693 to 1968 is both purposeful and arbitrary true and something of a fiction. The period is vast and this chapter is short and has also been written in London, which undoubtedly shapes its trajectory. Time as a framing device therefore takes secondary significance to the re-occurrence of selective temporalities that appear to intersect as reminders of persistent debates and projects not yet completed. Fables of modern art present both conditions for reflection and possibilities for mapping alternative futures.

The Tail End of the Tale

By 1968 it was becoming clear to many artists and educators in Europe and America that the giddy days of modernism's influence on art education were already on the ebb tide, for others this was less of a certainty. Stuart Macdonald had begun researching his

comprehensive and scholarly volume *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (1970), in which he wrote,

> Art education today is becoming increasingly analytical, logical and thematic. This development originates from the Preliminary or Basic Course initiated by Johannes Itten in the autumn of 1919 at the Bauhaus, which was planned to liberate students from second-hand traditional information …
>
> (Macdonald 1970, 365)

Macdonald identified a Britain in the late 1960s that was just coming to terms with developments almost half a century before in Germany. However, liberation in the form of "Basic Design" or a "Foundation Year," as the Bauhaus Vorkurs became known, was both a little too early and rather late. If British art schools seemed impervious to Bauhaus' principles of design this was largely because it was little known and viewed with circumspection. Artists teaching at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London empathized with abstract work but as a teaching philosophy Bauhaus principles emerged in the North of England in Leeds and Newcastle. Preliminary or Foundation courses were established in Leeds by Hubert Dalwood and Harry Thubron, assisted by Tom Hudson, Wendy Pasmore, and Terry Frost, and in Newcastle by Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton.

However, in a mere eight years from the publication of William Coldstream's 1960 report, an unprecedented and much documented restructuring process had begun. Coldstream, a realist painter and educator[1] decreed that the outmoded and resolutely conservative National Design Diploma (NDD) was to be replaced with a Diploma in Art and Design (Dip AD), intended to match university awards. In this moment of overhaul the floodgates were opened and it became possible to institute a more forward-thinking art education. In fact art education in the United Kingdom was playing a serious game of catch-up. The lessons it was learning had traveled via a number of routes but if they were indebted to Johannes Itten (1888–1967) and the Bauhaus' Vorkurs then it wasn't the analytical and logical version that Macdonald had in mind. It was the Bauhaus processed through alternative educational experiments taking place in America and elsewhere in Europe.

Some Art Lessons

1968 was an auspicious year for bringing forth new parables for art education: a large percentage of the student body and some staff at Hornsey College of Art, London, took control of the college in order to implement a new educational structure. This well documented[2] higher educational revolt was one of many happening in Britain and elsewhere.

It was in 1968 too that nine professors of the Kunstakadamie Düsseldorf signed a mistrust manifesto against their colleague Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) in which they reproached him for, "Presumptuous political dilettantism, passion for ideological tutelage, demagogical practice [amongst other things] an uncollegial spirit aimed at the dissolution of the present order" (Schmuckli 2004, 165).

Dissolution was the order of the day and like many others (lecturers and students) Beuys was contesting institutional authority. He had already begun to stage performances that vanquished established art-world conventions. In *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, 1965, Beuys performed a "lesson" in interpretation at the Alfred Schmela Gallery. It was a

chilly November evening in Düsseldorf but the attendees of the "private view" remained locked outside while Beuys sat in a corner of the gallery, his head coated in honey and gold leaf, tenderly cradling and mumbling to the hare.

Initially Beuys' controversial[3] "performances" were not explicitly related to his teaching. At the Kunstakadamie he favored more conservative approaches, advocating drawing and modeling.[4] He was a stickler for attendance and time keeping but even at the outset, as former student Petra Richter testifies, "Beuys expected students to work but he refused to provide his students with the kind of framework they had been accustomed to … consequently most of them were at a complete loss" (Richter 2006, 3). If Beuys's aim was a direct critique of what he perceived as the "complete trust in the teacher that was at the root of his students paralysis" (Richter 2006, 3), then did his methods liberate them? As with many aspects of Beuys' art that rely on an autobiographical account, contradictions surface, particularly with regard to power. Jan Verwoert detects a "problematic of auratic authority in Beuys' oeuvre" (Verwoert 2008), and suggests that as Beuys continued to hone a persona as a "mythic messianic healer with a seamless worldview appropriated from anthropsophy" (Verwoert 2008) in effect he replaced one form of authority with another, namely his own.

In the late 1960s developments such as performance, conceptualism, and minimalism (to some extent) had abjured the traditional crafting of objects. In education it followed that making art objects as autonomous entities began to be questioned. This didn't mean they disappeared altogether but that discussions, studio critiques (or "crits" as they became known), and recourse to theory, gained increasing status and teaching time. By 1966 Beuys's teaching was almost totally in a forum or seminar format. His Ring Discussions "not only changed the content of the teaching curriculum but also affected the working atmosphere and entire organization of the class. Compared with Beuys's first years at the art academy, any concentrated artistic work in class was now virtually impossible" (Richter 2006, 9). Ultimately, at the academy and in his "Free International University,"[5] Beuys proposed language and teaching as forms of sculpture. It was this presumptuous bypass of the artefact, as much as his overt criticisms of the academy, that provoked such vitriolic complaints about his conduct.

During the 1950s to the 1960s the tail end of modernism's uneven attempts at a universalizing project prompted contestation through a range of disruptive strategies in art schools. Significantly the instigators were often artist/lecturers. At New York's Brooklyn College the American abstract painter and political activist Ad Reinhardt was instructing his drawing students to make self-portraits in pencil and charcoal on a sheet of paper. When complete he asked them to erase them and begin again. So ensued an iterative process, re-enacted on the same sheet of paper that was intended to occupy students for an entire term, drawing and erasing, erasing and drawing, a sort of frustrating intonation of possibilities as yet unseen and un-thought. Reinhardt's lesson forms just one in an array of exercises for creating situations and propositions to refute students' previous expectations of more traditional art educational models. It is noteworthy that the conceptual foundations of these seemingly bizarre lessons became subject to a process of crystallization, which saw them fixed as art works in museum collections. *Erased de Kooning*, 1953,[6] in which Robert Rauschenberg erased not his own drawing but that of the older artist Willem de Kooning, preserves Reinhardt's lesson and simultaneously captures a "dialogue" between two generations of artists.

In Britain, artist John Latham (1921–2006), visiting tutor at St. Martins School of Art, London was performing another sort of erasure. Along with some of his students he chewed and spat-out pages from the college library copy of American critic, Clement

FIGURE 23.1　John Latham, *Art & Culture*, 1966–1969. Assemblage: leather case containing book, letters, photostats, etc., and labeled vials filled with powders and liquids, 3 1/8 × 11 1/8 × 10′ (7.9 × 28.2 × 25.3 cm). New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). *Source*: Blanchette Rockefeller Fund. 511.1970.at. © 2016. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence / John Latham Foundation.

Greenberg's seminal formalist tome *Art and Culture* (1965). The masticated paper pulp was then returned to the library in a small vial, in lieu of the book (Figure 23.1). For this transgression of borrowing conduct, so the parable continues, Latham had his teaching contract terminated[7] and *Still and Chew* or *Art and Culture*, 1966–1969, as it is also known, returned instead to America, to enter the collection of MoMA, New York in 1969.

Artist Richard Long, a student at St. Martins from 1966–1968, establishes the context for Latham's irreverent gesture.

> When I first went to St Martins the house teaching style consisted of a famous artist leading a discussion around a newly minted welded metal or (fiberglass) student sculpture, in Clement Greenberg formalist language. […] we had no interest in this by now old school of mannerism.
>
> (Long cited in Westley 2010, 47)

For Long and his contemporaries, as for Latham, modernism in the manner of Greenberg was already passé; sculpture was taking a different turn. At St. Martins, according to Long, "the one person [students] could turn to for academic discourse and rigor" (Westley 2010, 47) was Peter Kardia, who reshaped the curriculum to gain the Dip AD accreditation initially denied. Famously in 1968 Kardia devised a teaching experiment where students

disappeared into a "locked room" (1969). Artist Richard Deacon, a contemporary student, recounts,

> The padlocked door was opened and we were invited to enter. As we did each of us was given a cube of polystyrene […] wrapped in brown paper, secured with brown sticky tape. Inside the room there were a set of rules posted prominently on the wall,
>
> > No verbal communication between students.
> > No drawing or writing materials to be used.
> > No documentation within the project area.
>
> (Deacon cited in Westley 2010, 54)

Kardia's intentions were serious. The locked room was not an ironic gesture or performance it was a project that lasted for a term. Once inside students were left to their own devices and what they made was largely thrown away as new materials were provided on a regular basis. Although there was always a tutor in the room no feedback or instructions were given. Ian Kirkwood a former student remembers the shock of,

> … not being provided with models of what to do; that the expectations of staff as determinants of what or how to make work had been taken away. This was both liberating and alarming. Until that point I had not appreciated the role that the expectations of others had played. It undoubtedly forged many of us as artists and teachers without handing out a prescription.
>
> (Kirkwood cited in Westley 2007)

Yet not all students had such positive memories. For some Kardia's strategy, which literally dematerialized the art object's centrality, remained a disappointment. The project drove sculptor Greg Powlesland to the welding basement in search of the tangible reassurance of constructed metal and while David Millidge, was left with a sense of gratitude for the way Kardia's teaching "shaped his personality" he expresses a residual sadness for all "those fantastic, sensual, provocative, real sculptures that [he] never made" (Westley 2007).

Institutionalizing Ambiguity

Perhaps it is inevitable that parables of charismatic tutors, unorthodox methods, deliberate confusion and "rites of passage" education are cherished most keenly by those students who return to education as teachers, for these are often the individuals who thrived under such conditions.[8] In fact, according to Austerlitz *et al.* (2008), what twenty-first-century art educators still hold most dear from this legacy, is a, "pedagogy of ambiguity." By this they refer to the ways in which art education (particularly for undergraduates) continues to foster a culture in which the learner's route to success is far from explicit. As one of the lecturers cited in their study states, "students will often ask if what they are doing is 'right' and our response will be to explain that rather than 'right' or 'wrong,' we are expecting students to engage with the themes of the brief and develop a position in response to that engagement" (Austerlitz *et al.* 2008, 132).

A "pedagogy of ambiguity" stems from deeply rooted values that have been nurtured in the hothouse of modernist art education. It is here that risk-taking[9] became prized

above certainty and the ability to risk aspects of one's own "identity" in a transformative and often performative self-making process, constituted half of the learning. Enlightenment theories of freedom, self-determination, and personal and cultural transformation or Bildung (von Humboldt 1791–2; Hegel 1807) and the modern concept of self-actualization (Goldstein 1939; Maslow 1943), become particularly compelling when harnessed to the arts. As Klafki writes, "a qualification for autonomy, for freedom for individual thought, and for individual moral decisions, creative self-activity is the central form in which the process of Bildung is carried out" (2000, 87).

A learning trajectory embracing an essence of self-formation through creativity is in keeping with modernism's avant-garde. And a desired outcome of creating and perpetuating newness and difference is, according to Boris Groys, what learning at its most radical, in the modernist art school encompasses. Groys characterizes this transformative pedagogy as a strengthening of the student's immune system by being "infected by otherness" (2009, 27). He provides a useful metaphor but interestingly it is one that he borrows from Kazimir Malevich's essay, "An Introduction to the Theory of an Additional Element in Painting" *Essays on Art Vol. 1* (1915–1933). Malevich refers to new, modern phenomena and responses in modernist art as part of a virus to which the art student will need to succumb. The art school in this characterization aims to literally re-constitute the individual through a sometimes dangerous and painful process of re-making the self as much as through the making of art-work. Accordingly, as Groys writes, "the closed world of the art school keeps the bacilli [art] permanently circulating and the students permanently infected and sick" (2009, 28).

A sea change in educational conditions has left modern art education's values washed up on a postmodern, neoliberal, shoreline. With escalating fees and universities run as businesses, such ambiguity, denying as it does a direct correlation between monetary expenditure and concrete outcomes, appears fragile. Simultaneously that oxymoron: a formula for teaching creativity is being sought, particularly by Asian countries such as South Korea and China who have strong manufacturing bases. Turning their sights to those who have excelled in innovation in art and more particularly design, they look to invest in a pedagogy that will foster quintessential modernist tropes: unbridled creativity, individuality, and originality. But these narratives of art education are now problematized from within and like Aesop's *Goose that laid the Golden Eggs* they are experiencing if not total dismemberment then serious wing clipping.

Fables and Early Educational Reform

So perhaps Aesop's fables are not such a bad place to start in an attempt to bridge the gaps between the lessons of discontent with modernism's promise (recounted from the late 1960s) and the lessons that shaped education in the last half of the nineteenth century, when a modern art education began to properly take shape.

The circulation of Aesop's fables caught the attention of early educational reformers and it was in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) that the early Enlightenment philosopher, John Locke (1632–1704) advocated targeting children as a special audience, for whom the fables would be "apt to delight and entertain" (Locke 1824 [1692/3], 87). Until then Aesop's fables were used by a predictable coterie of teachers, preachers, speechmakers, and moralists and were largely directed at adults.

Pre-dating the arguably more influential educational writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Locke drew connections between children's play, pleasure, and learning.

Significantly, he seized on play's educative capacity and aligned it to the formation of a spirited, autonomous subject, capable of exercising individual agency.[10] As much as Locke became convinced of the potential for learning through play and the significance of enjoyable learning he simultaneously saw possibilities to put this to more instrumental ends.

In essence, pre-dating Foucault or Bourdieu by over 250 years, Locke recognized in education its power as a marker of distinction. He writes,

> The great skill of a teacher is to get and keep the attention of his scholar […] To attain this, he should make the child comprehend (as much as may be) the usefulness of what he teaches him, and let him see, by what he has learnt, that he can do something, which he could not do before; something, which gives him some *power and real advantage above others* who are ignorant of it.
>
> (Locke 1824 [1692/3], 158, my italics)

The ideals perceptible in Locke's vision situate education as both a process of moral, intellectual, self-formation and as a strategy to "get ahead," forming part of a regime that would prepare certain young men for leadership and greatness.[11] These dualistic values became an inheritance that remained pertinent when more precise questions concerning art education's purpose came to the fore in an early or proto-modern art education of the nineteenth century.

Modern Art Education at a Cross-roads

With influential Victorians Henry Cole (1808–1882) and Richard Redgrave (1804–1888) in the industrialists corner and John Ruskin (1819–1900) in the social and moral certitude corner, art education was wrestled in different directions. Significantly, these oppositional protagonists were as one in attempting, with varying degrees of success, to move away from the beaux-arts[12] or fine art academic model that had hitherto dominated art education.

At the outset it was certainly the influence of the pragmatic, national reformers Cole and Redgrave, with an eye to production and mass schooling's potential to feed its needs, who gained most ground. Art, and in particular the application of art to design and mass manufacturing was part of their plan. As an ambitious civil servant and erstwhile ceramic designer,[13] Cole took over the reins of the failing design schools and as Minister for Education in the mid-nineteenth century he championed the then radical introduction of drawing into elementary schools. In *Drawing for Children* his rationale for extending these approaches to a younger audience was published in the *Journal of Design and Manufacturers* 1849:

> The time is not far distant when drawing will become part of elementary education in schools of all grades for the working classes, where writing is taught. We think every carpenter, mason, joiner, blacksmith, and every skilled artisan, would be a better workman if he had been taught to see and observe forms correctly by means of drawing.
>
> (Cole cited in Bermingham 2000, 233)

The specific objective to produce skilled manual workers was determined by an emphasis on observation and exactitude. It was an anti-intellectual curriculum of geometric shapes, straight lines, and simple perspective. The exercises advocated by the manual *Teaching*

Elementary Drawing (1863) were dull and mechanical, with inaccuracy in representing objects, mistakes in perspective, and untidiness generally almost the only, and certainly the main grounds for assessment.

In Cole's newly formed art schools, that rose from the ashes of the schools of design, things were hardly more stimulating and the twenty-three closely administered educational stages and their assessed competencies were to become an industry in their own right. All the time this elaborate system was moving further away from its stated aim of having relevance to the design industry's employment needs.

The nineteenth century continued to witness a rise in the wealth and political influence of the middle classes, aided by the repeal of laws excluding dissenters from public life.[14] If a "Protestant work ethic" underpinned the utilitarian institutional projects of Cole and Redgrave's design schools so too was it present in the new elementary school curriculum for the middle and lower-middle classes, which had strong links to the Prussian "Realschule" instituted by Protestant and Lutheran industrialists.

This is not to say that there was a free flow of ideas into Britain from Europe and beyond. The xenophobic Redgrave in particular found much to complain about in the art education of other nations. Somewhat misguidedly he criticizes the Japanese for their lack of symmetry and the French for an absence of foundational principles (Macdonald 1970, 240). All the while problems with his own plans seemed to elude him. He recognized that English art and design students lacked abilities in manipulation, free spirit, and creativity, yet he failed to connect this to the laborious and mind numbing repetitiveness of the exercises his system had put in place for them to follow.

Art Education and the Beautification of the World

Ruskin has been proposed as the antidote to Cole. He stood for education's more lofty ideals in which art was a force for social and spiritual good. His conviction of an inherent synonymy between art and moral values did much to promote art's efficacious promise. Ruskin believed that there were prerequisites for "civil culture" and one of these was obtaining first the right moral state, without which "you cannot have art" (1904 [1870], 80). His adherence to assiduous loving craftsmanship linked him with the values of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement and to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Ruskin championed vernacular craft traditions such as the linen, lace making, and embroidery of the Lake District, through which he sought to improve the local economy by providing work for women. His influence was also widely received in America, particularly in the elite women's colleges where his ideas were interpreted as the beautification of the world.

Today Ruskin's emphasis on close observation of nature and loving attention to detail seem so deeply emblematic of the past that it is hard to view him as anything close to radical. However, artist William Bell-Scott's (1811–1890) visit to a drawing class led by Ruskin at the Working Men's College, London gives some perspective. Bell-Scott witnessed, "Ruskin's students bent over desks trying to put on small pieces of paper imitations by pen and ink of pieces of rough stick encrusted with dry lichens and he was, profoundly shocked by what he saw" (Bell-Scott cited in Owens 2014, 109). "Why were they wasting their time laboring over such trifles when they could have been drawing conventional art school props like cones and spheres and casts of classical sculpture" (Owens 2014, 109), which despite reforms was still the main diet of the day.

Ruskin's views set him apart from the fast paced developments that were taking place around him. As a man who believed that, "all travelling becomes dull in exact proportion

to its rapidity" (Ruskin 1889 [1874], 143) he clearly didn't anticipate the intoxicating spell that speed would cast on the twentieth century, nor the place it might play in the modern artist's mindset, but his views on the environment and his fundamental attitudes to education were prescient. For example, Ruskin felt that it was better "to teach people not to 'better themselves' but how to 'satisfy themselves' …" (Ruskin 1889 [1874], 140), a sentiment that would rise again and again in the next century. In this he had more in common with his European counterparts who viewed education less as a sprint to an economic finishing line and more as a life's work.

The Child

Largely through Ruskin's lack of interest in the government art schools, he failed to exert much immediate influence on the course of art education in Britain (Macdonald 1970, 265) but his legacy was more successfully implemented in schools by his Working Men's College student, Ebenezer Cooke (1853–1911). Cooke's main criticism of the elementary school curriculum for children, devised under Cole, was that it did not take into account the age and developmental stage of the pupil or student. Ideas of "stages of development" detected here owe much to Cooke's friendship with the psychologist James Sully. An escalating interest in child psychology had begun to position the child at the foreground of learning and there was an enthusiasm for the art works and "visualizations" of younger children. In particular drawing was regarded as a direct conduit to the child's developing cognitive faculties, which set it at odds with interventionist approaches aiming to shape able draughtsmen. Cooke made the case that "child art" and children's education should be distinct from the education or training of the professional artist.

Cooke's views on art, in no small part influenced by his former tutor Ruskin, were also shaped by the work of Swiss educationalist, Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827) whose ideas Cooke circulated in 1894 by publishing the first English edition of Pestalozzi's *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*.[15] Pestalozzi's significance for art educators stems from his adherence to methods that foster individual development and privilege concrete, tangible experience. Like Locke and Rousseau, Pestalozzi believed that thought began with sensation and that teaching should engage the senses. What became known as Pestalozzi's "object lessons" involved exercises in observing and drawing from plant, mineral, and animal specimens. Fundamental to his approach was a teaching method that related closely to his doctrine of "Anschauung," or sense-perception, literally "looking at" from *anschauen* to look. In Pestalozzi's lessons words were forbidden until sufficient time had been given over to this sensory perception or "Anschauung."[16]

It is possible to link this early teaching method with continuing contemporary concerns in art education in which the suspension of spoken and written language are commonly employed. This has long been recognized in Western philosophical thought as Rachel Jones comments adding that, "to work without knowing where one is going or might end up is a necessary condition of creation, of generation of difference rather than the reproduction of the same" (Jones 2013, 16). The insistence on silence in Kardia's "Locked Room" experiment, as we saw earlier, is another example of conceptualizing through the "sensual, embodied" practice of making. It is perhaps unsurprising that Kardia, who was drawn to phenomenology, also cites Kantian aesthetics as a lasting influence on his teaching. In particularly the eighteenth-century philosopher's view that an aesthetic idea is a "representation of the imagination which induces much thought but without the possibility of any definite thought whatsoever, that is, concept, being adequate to it, and which

language, consequently, can never get on level terms with and render completely intelligible" (Kant cited in Kardia 2010, 92). The Enlightenment intellectual hierarchy, which placed abstract thought at its apex and regarded the senses as in need of both regulating and relegating, has proved particularly tenacious in educational thought.

Teacher Training

An educational hierarchy that relegates the senses subordinate to the cognitive is antithetical to Pestalozzi's belief that education could change society for the better and that sense and intuition are essential components in preparing individuals to create a better world. His influence on teacher education, which emphasized a broad liberal education, followed by a period of educational research and professional training, relates directly to the postgraduate training model adopted in Britain, Europe, and the United States by the start of the twentieth century.

Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852) who first studied architecture at Frankfurt University benefited greatly from his time at Pestalozzi's educational institute in Yverdon, Switzerland, between 1808 and 1810. Although Froebel is best known for starting the original kindergarten school in the spa town of Bad Blankenburg in 1837, his influence on the world of art education has been profound. The dual significance of two mentors, crystallographer Christian Samuel Weiss[17] and social reformer and educationalist Pestalozzi set Froebel on his way to create an approach to learning that examined structures, privileged making, and encouraged individual development and respect for a divine order. Teaching children about a "God-given" geometry underlying all life was Froebel's main educational goal and a seemingly endless possibility for structural configuration and invention had a substantive impact of the first and second generation of artists and designers who experienced his "gifts" as they passed through kindergarten education.

Norman Bronsterman's writings on Kindergartens (1997) traces Froebel's development of pre-school education and his "gifts" (a series of twenty, simple two- and three-dimensional educational "toys" with component parts allowing for invention, construction, and discovery) to modernism's central principles for learning about art, design, and architecture. Bronsterman argues that many of the modernist artists and designers including Buckminster Fuller, Georges Braque, Piet Mondrian, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier were greatly influenced by their early kindergarten experiences of playing and learning with Froebel's "gifts." Cutting through the more usual art historical trajectories Bronsterman's analysis of modernism proposes a direct link to educational innovation, arguing that some of the most influential and radical developments came not from "artistic argument over absinthe and Gauloises in Montmartre cafés, nor was it taught at the tradition-bound academies. It has been largely ignored because its participants, three-to seven-year-olds, were in the primary band of the scholastic spectrum" (Bronsterman 2002/3).

When Invention Overtook Imitation

Despite the tender age of the learners, it is beyond dispute that Froebel's educational methods utilizing elements of design with simple construction components for young children had a direct influence on the formation of education for young adults at the Bauhaus, in Weimar Germany. The Bauhaus, literally meaning house of construction, was

at the core of modernist design philosophy in the first decades of the twentieth century and its legacy became essential to much that happened in the name of modern art education for the rest of the century. It was formed in high octane revolutionary times, shortly after the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II in November 1918[18] and the beginnings, in 1919, of the Weimar Republic. Froebel's belief that education should be free from derivation in order to bring forth each learner's inner "spiritual essence" and the "spark of divine energy" was at the core of Bauhaus pedagogy with its radical ethos of invention over imitation; a mantra that still has a place in art education today, albeit tempered by contestations of originality and authenticity that have informed art practice and theory since the 1960s.

By bridging the distinctions and hierarchies between craft, fine art, and design, the Bauhaus had strong methodological and philosophical connections to William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement but this is not the whole story. Teaching at the Bauhaus, as Singerman attests, was in every way addressed to the imperatives of the contemporary moment but it also "had its roots in the Gestalt which ties it to a broad discourse on psychological aesthetics that had, by the end of the late nineteenth century, become one of the dominant strands in German intellectual thought" (Singerman 1999, 98).

On Seeing and Seers

The first Bauhaus director, architect Walter Gropius (1883–1969) was of the opinion that art cannot be taught. In 1923 in his "Theory and Organisation of the Bauhaus" he wrote, "the artist has been misled by the fatal and arrogant fallacy that art is a profession that can be mastered by study. Schooling alone can never produce art" (Singerman 1999, 22). The trickiness of a modern art education starts to surface here with a question that would see much iteration in decades to come. Strictly speaking "art" was not Gropius's major concern. The Bauhaus to his mind was producing socially useful designers not artists *per se*.[19]

It is noteworthy that the influential Bauhaus preliminary course progenitor Johannes Itten was introduced to both Walter Gropius and to Eastern and Indian religions by the pianist Alma Mahler, later Gropius's wife. Noteworthy because Itten's devotion to neo-Zoroastrian philosophy, which heavily influenced his teaching, was also part of the wedge that drove the two men apart. Gropius's adherence to what he saw as the democratizing potential of designing for mass production also contrasted sharply with Itten's belief that, "the end and aim of all artistic endeavor [was] liberation of the spiritual essence of form and colour from imprisonment in the world of objects" (Itten 1970 [1961], 95). At the Bauhaus Itten developed work on the association of color with "emotional energy," elaborating Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1810) analysis, in his "Theory of Colours," which had employed the diagrammatic use of a polychrome star. It is Itten's version of this visual aid that demonstrates properties of color, such as warmth and coolness, complementary colors and color mixing that became a standard point of reference in schools and colleges throughout the twentieth century. Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee, who Itten persuaded to join him at the Bauhaus also collaborated to deepen work on perception and color theory, honing it to their teaching programs.

But Itten's lessons were not simply about color, painting, drawing, and designing in isolation. They involved meditation, breathing, and physical exercises that were intended to align the "mind and body balance" (Figure 23.2). As a member of the Mazdaznan sect,[20] Itten lived on a vegetarian diet, followed a strict health regime, and wore monk-like attire, all of which contributed to his mystical quality and established him as something

FIGURE 23.2   Johannes Itten teaching morning exercises on the roof of the Itten School, Berlin, 1931. *Source*: Photo Estate of Johannes Itten/© DACS 2016.

of a charismatic guru. An extract from Bauhaus student Gunta Stölzl's diary (1919), only a few days into her studies, captures something of Itten's mystical, holistic teaching.

> Great things are starting to become clear to me: mysteries, wider contexts appear visible … His first words were about rhythm … Drawing is not replicating what we see, but letting flow through the entire body that which we feel through external stimulus (as well as through pure internal stimulus of course) it then comes out again as something that is definitely one's own … when we draw a circle, the emotion of the circle has to vibrate throughout the whole body.
>
> (Stölzl 2012 [1919], 51)

Itten was certainly not the only artist drawn towards spiritual values, mysticism, and philosophical ideas that sat outside Western thought. The early twentieth century was marked by a fascination with invisible phenomena. Scientific discoveries, such as x-rays that could reveal internal human organs, and electromagnetic waves that led to the development of radio and the telephone, were to most people just as mysterious as the notion of a "fourth dimension" or séances in which mediums could converse with the departed. Here too was a possibility for artists to become the cyphers through which divine knowledge, uncoupled from organized religion, might be made manifest in symbolic form.

While Helena Blavatsky's theosophy and its offspring, Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, had a considerable impact on many artists and educators Clement Greenberg was famously

hostile to any affiliation with spiritualism, dismissing it in "Towards a New Laocoön" (1940) as "metaphysical pretensions."

If the excesses and irrationalities of the spiritual and occult unsettle the sleek scientific and formalist efficiency that generally characterizes the onward trajectory of modernity then one serious claim should be made for theosophy's modernizing outlook: it was the first spiritual organization in Europe that did not discriminate against women. Visionary watercolours and drawings by leading Victorian medium, Georgiana Houghton (1814–1884), preserved by the Victorian Spiritualist Union in Melbourne, Australia, are only recently attracting due curatorial attention. In the art world gender inequalities were pervasive, as can also be seen in the later case of Swedish painter Hilma af Klint[21] (1862–1944) who was deeply affected by spiritualism, theosophy, and later anthroposophy (see Chapter 9, this volume). Af Klint's art, which reflected her academic training in naturalistic portraiture and landscape, was pulled in another direction in the 1890s when together with four other women artists she began to visualize in paint what the eye could not see. In common with Kandinsky, af Klint, saw the artist's role as akin to a prophet, not reflecting the contemporary milieu but shaping the future.

Despite inconsistencies in reception, a strong sense of belief in the "power" of art is evident in the writings of many artists working in the early twentieth century. Kandinsky, who stayed at the Bauhaus until its closure in 1933, wrote in "Concerning the Spiritual in Art" that, "art which is capable of educating springs from contemporary feeling … but also has a deep and powerful prophetic strength" (1977 [1933], 4).

Conceptual Leaps

If in the nineteenth century Cole and Ruskin had been arguing over the worth of educating students to draw a straight line (Cole thought it was "a disgrace to everyone who affects to be well educated if he cannot draw a straight line" (in Macdonald 1970, 233), Ruskin averred that "a great draftsman … can draw every line but a straight one" (in Carline 1968, 96). By the twentieth century Klee's "Pedagogic Sketch Book" was taking "an active line on a walk moving freely, without a goal. A walk for a walk's sake. The mobility agent is a point, shifting its position forward" (Klee 1972 [1953], 16). The conceptual leap in which drawing as a process becomes subject to analysis is substantive, and no less important is the emergent sense of art as an autonomous activity detached from context. This decisive break with the concerns and methods of classical art education was propelled by a profound desire for a better future in which the limitations, inequities, and stuffiness of the past would be transcended.

Kandinsky and Klee, along with Itten, Gropius, and Albers all produced influential publications that were distinct from didactic art teaching manuals. Often idiosyncratic and indicative of individual philosophies, these publications reveal the galvanizing force of modern ideas struggling against a dominant conservatism; they also reveal the discursive nature of these artists' relationships with each other.

Why Art is Taught

If many changes in art education were afoot in Europe relatively few had reached the shores of conservative Britain. Since the development of French Impressionism in the nineteenth-century anti-academic momentum had gathered apace giving rise to an unprecedented

diversity of stylistic and conceptual approaches to creating art. Moreover, modern art's "permanent revolution" boasted an antithetical relationship to the old regimes of bourgeois cultural certainty. The Slade School of Fine Art in London, under Edward Poynter (1836–1919) led the way in promoting a more progressive outlook, with life drawing encouraged at the outset rather than viewed as a distant promise after years spent copying carefully selected classical exemplars. But elsewhere in Britain modern art's shape shifting phenomena caused a sense of panic concerning the direction and quality of the Nation's art education. When considering the education of younger students of school age, this cause for concern persisted well into the first decade of the twentieth century.

Reporting on the 1908 congress for the Development of Drawing and Art Teaching, London Lucy Varley, Chair of the "Art Teachers' Guild" captures this anxiety well. She reflects on a very competitive international forum in which the "English contingent" was put upon its mettle and goes on to register her dismay at the "inadequacy" of the English Art Education system in contradistinction to the "energy and enthusiasm and personal initiative which American and Continental teachers were putting into their work" (Varley 1908, 1–2).

Rapid changes in early twentieth century art practices could have presented art education with significant challenges, but an inherent conservatism resisted modernism and stasis prevailed. It was from small pockets of progressive thought and practice that key questions concerning why, how, and if, art should be taught began once again to surface.

Art, A Language?

In Britain, the sweeping changes can be read out of the work of early art educators such as Marion Richardson (1892–1946) who encouraged children to understand art as a vehicle for the expression of their own ideas. Richardson advocated art as, "a language which exists to speak of things that cannot be expressed in words" (Richardson cited in Holdsworth 2007, 166). So, in Richardson's classroom, even for older children, skills and techniques were of marginal concern. Fostering children's confidence, the development of art from mental imagery, remembered, invented, and constructed from her narrations took precedent.

"Autonomy to select and responsibility for the way in which the materials might afford the desired impression of the events portrayed was for Richardson a prerequisite for a successful and original outcome" (Holdsworth 2007, 163). Yet the freedom offered was also one with parameters. Richardson's teaching methods were intended to allow the child to produce an untainted vision and it might be imagined that this would lead to an array of vastly differing outcomes, yet there is a surprising consistency in the stylistic appearances of her students' artworks. The children's imagery reflects both its cultural context and its time. Richardson nurtured a predominantly free painterly style that was not a million miles away from the avant-garde work promoted in Britain from the second decade of the twentieth century: namely Post-Impressionism. Her work with school children corresponded to the manner in which a number of adult artists, trained in more conservative art making process, were attempting to free themselves by casting off academicism to obtain a "purer" vision. This was exactly what the artist, critic, and curator Roger Fry and his Bloomsbury Group contemporaries prized most highly, therefore it is unsurprising that Richardson's encounter with Fry, at the Omega Workshop exhibition of children's art, marks a significant boost to her self-belief as a teacher. Richardson writes, "he [Fry] made me feel that we [herself and her students] were … part of the modern movement in art of which he was so great a leader" (Richardson 1948, 32). It

is rare for school pupils' art to have more in common with the avant-garde than with the educational establishment's ideas of what children should be learning.

Richardson's art teaching and teacher training synthesized the zeitgeist and to leading-edge modernist curators and painters her pupils' work appeared as vivid and vital as the avant-garde itself. Through her pioneering work as a teacher educator at the London Day Training College, later to become the Institute of Education, Richardson established the art teacher's influence as a key factor in pupils' achievements in art. In this she stands in contradistinction to the Austrian art educator Franz Cizek (1865–1946) who regarded children's art making as a distinctive developmental phase unrelated to adult art making and hence one that should be free from interference.

Exhibitions of child art[22] also played an important part in disseminating these new approaches to children's art education. Such an exhibition at County Hall, London in 1938 was visited by 26,000 people, and did much to secure Richardson's influence, which reached its pinnacle in the late 1930s and 1940s. One of the earliest child art exhibitions was mounted in 1912 by Alfred Stieglitz at the 291 gallery in New York, significantly programming the art of the child between an exhibition of Picasso's paintings and one of African art. In modernism the naïvety esteemed in children's art was related to a misplaced quality attributed to the so-called "primitive." Partha Mitter astutely observes that this was a myth so powerful and potent that it "helped emancipate Western artists from the constraints of classical taste bringing about a remarkable paradigm shift" (Mitter 2014, 542).

By the latter half of the 1920s the pendulum had swung away from the ideas of training tradesman and craft workers in the school sector, according to the Hadow Report (1926) "the art room would have a character and atmosphere of its own" (cited in Ashwin 1975, 67) and in the Primary School Report of 1931 art education would be put to a new task, "To cultivate in children sufficient skill to enable them to express their own ideas in some form of art, and also stimulate the growth of such sympathy and sensitiveness as may lead eventually to aesthetic appreciation" (Ashwin 1975, 67). These reports reflect the weight of educational psychology and also chime with the views of art critic Herbert Read. Read was concerned to address what he perceived as an imbalance in education where fact dominated feeling and reason became uncoupled from "emotional intelligence." His pleas for sensitivity and his belief that insensitivity was "a disease of the endocrine system … like sclerosis" (1945, 303) point once more to a perception of art's palliative role.

Retreats from the Center

At a time when Europe was still reverberating from a catastrophic and futile loss of life in the First World War and America was heading for the "Great Depression," a number of progressive educational initiatives began to burgeon. Although such endeavors were not solely focused on art education, most formed around an arts and humanities curriculum. The consciousness of inhumanity and a desire to overcome its devastating legacy were forces in resisting tradition. New forms of education often aligned to radical (and not so radical) politics and technologies for understanding art emerged. Displacement, migration, and the search for a better way of life drove the principles that would undermine traditional educational structures. Flux and movement of artists and educators also led to transnational exchanges. Individuals forced into exile by the rise of the Third Reich took with them vestiges of practices and hopes that could be reshaped in a new freer environment.

The countryside and wilderness also offered something restorative and an apparently more neutral ground for ventures to take root. A series of experimental, educational retreats took place in the early to mid-twentieth century, away from centers of commerce

and culture. In the West the 1920s and 1930s were a dynamic period of intense uncertainty in which students' expectations of education would inevitably change. So too would the art educator's role and identity, caught, as it so often was, in the relationship between their art practice and their teaching practice.

In Britain, Dartington Hall School in rural Devon was founded with the aim of creating a utopian community. Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst, who founded the alternative school in 1926, took inspiration from a number of precedents including the Bauhaus, Ascona in Switzerland, Summerhill in Britain, and significantly from poet and painter Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan[23] the rural university he founded in West Bengal. Dartington, like Santiniketan placed a high premium on the arts and on learning in the natural environment. The nurturing calm of the "un-spoilt world" was thought to help maintain the intensity of student experiences. In 1961 the school spawned Dartington School of Arts, which until its contested closure in 2010 specialized in performance art. Dartington Hall's founding principles directly challenged educational practices of the day by rejecting punishment, prefects, uniforms, gender segregation, and held no truck with mandatory curriculum elements such as sports, religion, or Classics.

Significantly it is the words of John Locke that cut through 300 years of educational thought to illuminate the home page of Dartington's alumni Web site,

> If the mind be curbed and humbled too much in children, if their spirits be abased and broken by too strict an hand over them, they lose all their vigour and industry … dejected minds, timorous and tame, and low spirits are hardly ever to be raised, and very seldom attain anything …
>
> (http://www.dartingtonhallschool.co.uk)

Dartington, like other rural educational "retreats," sought an alternative community, unshackled from over-determined knowledge and incremental measurements of progress. In keeping with the metaphor of "infection" referred to at the outset of this chapter, such sealed communities (for there was little local integration) could foster new values and approaches away from the barbs of wider cosmopolitan criticism and hostility.

Similar progressive educational experiments appeared at Bennington College in Vermont, which opened in 1932 to 85 women and was the first to include the visual and performing arts as fully-fledged elements of the liberal arts curriculum. Wisconsin Experimental (1927), an autonomous faculty of the University of Wisconsin, was established by philosopher and educational reformer Alexander Meiklejohn and had students and teachers living and working together in the same residence hall with no fixed schedule, no compulsory lessons, and no semester grades.

Not dissimilar to later pedagogic attitudes, which informed the art schools of 1960s and 1970s in Britain, Wisconsin Experimental while not actively encouraging, certainly tolerated, non-conformity and behavior that would have been too rebellious, destructive, and radical in other educational contexts. Inevitably this was also to play a role in the demise of the short-lived project which closed in 1933, the same year in which the legendary Black Mountain College in North Carolina welcomed a remarkable ratio of twenty-three students to ten lecturers.

If the usual hierarchical divisions between staff and students were instantly unsettled, then similarly, an absence of assessment and no powers of accreditation made open-ended experimentation at Black Mountain College easy to legitimize. Owing much to the educationalist John Dewey's democratizing ideas, the structural interrelationships between

learning and teaching, staff and students, work and play, art and life was central to the college ethos. Dewey championed many alternative educational ventures and wrote in 1940 specifically in support of Black Mountain College's experimental standpoint, "The work and life of the college (and it is impossible to separate the two) is a living example of democracy in action. … The College exists at the very 'grass roots' of a democratic way of life" (Dewey cited in Füssl 2006, 82).

It was MoMA's director, Alfred H. Barr Jr. and the founder of its Department of Architecture and Design, Philip Johnson, who recommended exiled Bauhaus tutors Joseph and Anni Albers to fill the key teaching positions at Black Mountain. John Andrew Rice, founder and first rector of the College welcomed them with open arms in recognition of the kudos their rigorous modernism could bring to his pioneering mission. "The Ashville Citizen," a local paper, was more circumspect, heralding their arrival with the headline "Germans to Teach Art Near Here" (Harris *et al.* 2005, 24).

Black Mountain College thrived on a multidisciplinary approach to the arts that echoed the Albers' experiences at the Bauhaus where art education had also been a catholic affair encompassing music, theater, literature and drama alongside the more usual expectations of drawing, painting, construction and design. Here, while both Joseph and Anni Albers were able to refine and develop their ideas for a community of learning, a wholehearted embrace of this more unstructured, Dewey inspired, version of democratic learning was not necessarily something they accepted. Freedom was something Joseph Albers, in particular, recognized as hard won. It was certainly not to be acquired through the mere emulation of early modernists: a mistake that merited his scornful chiding that students had contracted, "Picassophobia," "Matissetisis," and "Klee(p)tomania" (Albers cited in Füssl 2006, 85).

Albers countered ideas fostered in progressive educational circles, which designated art as synonymous with self-expression, uncoupled from the rigors of drawing skills and techniques of perceptual attunement. Such "laissez-faire" approaches were not part of Albers' classes at Black Mountain College where his continual assertion that he was teaching students "to see not to draw" also paid homage to Ruskin's nineteenth-century maxim "to see clearly is poetry, prophesy and religion all in one" (1899 [1856], 333), which Albers would regularly recite. Moreover, Pestalozzi's aforementioned *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* was a set text which Joseph Albers would have read as part of his teacher education in Büren, Westphalia, and Füssl argues that its ethical messages of interior growth, step-by-step learning and ethical objectives were the sustaining influence on his approach to education at Black Mountain College.

Arguably, it is Albers' desire for educational rupture that designates him as more clearly modern often declaring, "I am here to destroy your prejudices" and "if you have a style don't bring it with you, it will only be in the way." These are the enduring precepts on which Art Foundation Courses have been based. An ethos of purported liberation from prior knowledge has stood as a cleansing-rite between school and art school (Robins 2003), a time when students are asked to forget everything they have learned in school for a promise of an alternative that is truer, freer, or just not yet known.

Black Mountain College closed its doors in 1957[24] with only 1,200 students having passed through them. It is therefore surprising to find the college positioned as one of the most halcyon and innovative moments of modern art education. If this fabled legacy appears disproportionate in relation to the college's realistic potential for direct influence it may reflect O'Doherty's point that, "fables give you more latitude …" (1999, 35). They do so by providing a generalized territory that seems "equally true and fictitious" (1999, 35). Fables are "out of time," or to put it another way, not dependent on the anchoring limitations of a historicity or teleology. For all its many flaws arguably we need this fable of

a utopian modern art education to pose questions germane to our current concerns and possible futures.

Conclusion

O'Doherty's fables for ingénues of modernism encapsulate the central tenets of twentieth-century avant-garde art. There is rebellion, "How the Edge Revolted Against the Centre," then desecration, "The Man Who Violated Canvas," annihilation, "Who Killed Illusion," loss "Where Did the Frame Go?" (O'Doherty 1999, 35). I suggested that a modern art education might add some tales of de-materialization: "What did Education do when Art took its Objects Away?," irreverence: "Who Ate Art and Culture?" and modernism's enthusiasm for charismatic leaders: "Coyote, Hare and the Free International University." Of all these fables it is perhaps the de-materialization of the art object in the wake of conceptualism that did most to de-stabilize modern art education. When art took its objects away, education (itself a modern project) was unsure what to do with this troublesome subject, art.

In 1970s Britain, Macdonald's bleak warning of art's imminent educational demise was precipitated, no doubt, by his awareness of the radical departure from traditional educational methods in art schools such as St. Martins School of Art, along with short lived but influential educational experiments such as Roy Ascott's "Ground Course" at Ealing School of Art and the "Art Theory" course at Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry, initiated by members of the collective Art and Language.[25] All of which, in Macdonald's opinion, exhibited "articidal tendencies"[26] what he perceived as the demise of beauty, craft and the artefact in education, brought about not simply by government officials but from within, by art educators, who he argued, had "been busy demolishing the subject, which supports them" (1973, 99).

With hindsight the demise of the artefact in the twenty-first century was a partial and temporary affair, overstated just as much as the death of painting. Beauty and craft didn't disappear either but it is fair to say that nothing was ever quite the same. The Greenbergian promise of certainty and authority *qua* "art for art's sake" was, as Richard Long testified, "old school" by 1968 and instead an over-riding desire for cross-contamination with the worldliness of the everyday and the political and social conditions of art's production and dissemination, took root. Subject matter and content, which Greenberg warned should "be avoided like the plague" (1965, 6), had once more infected art and art education.

Developments in British secondary schools were no less troubled. Richardson's ideas about the expressive language of art did not translate well in the hands of less informed teachers often resulting in formulaic work. Expression diminished in significance as learning in art became something akin to the acquisition of a grammar, or vocabulary of form. Art educators argued "that a truer balance must be sought between concern for the integrity of children and concern for the integrity of art" (Field 1970, 55). Modernism's apotheosis formalism, soon became an instant curative for child-centric approaches and replaced the emphasis on freer forms of "expression." By the end of the 1960s, according to Meeson, formalism had become "an almost universally accepted ideology" (1991, 107). This method perfectly fitted the desire for standardization across school subjects. Students "mastered" line, tone, and color in much the same way as they identified verbs, adjectives, and nouns. Art lessons became an exercise in visual design. Color wheels proliferated, along with exercises in hue, tone, and perspective still seen today. For despite many changes and efforts by spirited teachers and reformers a more contemporary art curriculum

for schools remains elusive, and the continuity between the school and higher education is at best beset by different values and at worse entirely antithetical.

In the art school, teaching and learning throughout the decades from the 1970s onwards became progressively threaded through more theoretical understandings of both art and art world. The reflexivity needed to examine art education however has moved at a slower pace. By the 1990s the effects of socially engaged art practices and cross-disciplinary initiatives had proposed art as part of a wide ranging social agenda. Under the auspices of "post-modernism" the past too ceased to be another country and instead became a territory to be mined and recycled. This included mining art education's parables for the alternatives they might offer to resist an increasingly corporatized pedagogy.

A Tale of Two Centuries…

In February 2015 I visited the exhibition "Really Useful Knowledge" at the Reina Sofía National Art Centre in Madrid. Curatorially, this was another in a growing list of contemporary art exhibitions that focus attention on education. The "educational turn"[27] has thoroughly permeated the art-world and renewed relationships and exchanges between art and pedagogy. This particular exhibition curated by "What, How and for Whom" (WHW), in collaboration with educational and curatorial staff at the Reina Sofía, promised to consider, "the museum as a pedagogical site devoted to the analysis of artistic forms interconnected with actual or desired social relations" (Garces 2014).

During the exhibition thousands of demonstrators descended on Madrid's city center to take part in a massive rally against their current government. In common with a number of European countries an economic downturn and swinging austerity measures have left the Spanish populus reeling. Its young people are most cruelly affected, with 55% of 16- to 24-year-olds out of work (Buck 2014).

"Really Useful Knowledge" took its title from a moment of radical grassroots activism that included mass protests and demonstrations in nineteenth-century Britain. Industrialists had begun investing in their companies' development by funding their employees training in "applicable" skills and disciplines. Workers' organizations allied to "Chartism"[28] used the term "really useful knowledge" in contradistinction to the supposedly "useful knowledge" their employers had in mind for them, which often turned out to be "merely useful" or in many cases "really useless." Significantly, the education sought by these protagonists encompassed various "unpractical" disciplines such as politics, economics, and philosophy.

As a term "Really Useful Knowledge" gained more widespread currency in the 1970s, largely through Richard Johnson's writings. Johnson's (1988) historical excavation of working-class education sought to distinguish ethical and democratic education from dominant educational policy-makers' less egalitarian priorities. In the twenty-first century these same issues command an urgency to seek alternative models and once more necessitate the retelling of a history of educational inequity. This is particularly the case for arts education. In the West, seeking to understand the art education of the 1960s and 1970s and its contestation of canonized cultural values is important for the present. It is timely to return to the unsettling of stable points of reference by a largely working-class contingent, who in this moment of inclusivity gained free access to art education.

Ultimately, the big questions, which were there at the outset of the modern period, remain pertinent today. Who has access to art education? In what ways will art education benefit individuals and society? Noteworthy too are the public spaces in which these

questions are now most visibly debated. Tony Bennett's (1995) term the "exhibitionary complex" might best describe the arenas in which purposeful discussions are taking place and alternative pedagogies are emerging.

Nevertheless Dean Kenning's warning, that there is a "tipping point between art-related educational practices which confront social mechanisms of conformity and exclusion in order to offer real alternatives, and those which slide back into education-themed art events" (Kenning 2013, 333) should be heeded when appraising these initiatives. It is in the extended realm of this "exhibitionary complex," in galleries, art museums, studios, biennales and project spaces, that narratives (both past and future) have been mobilized and allowed to freely flow in the search for alternative possibilities for art education. Despite the benefits of accountability that university status bestowed on former art schools, there is little doubt that in many of today's academies, art education is experiencing a crisis of contemporary currency just as it did once before in the moribund academies of the nineteenth century. And today in Britain, the academy's reach goes further as the conversion of comprehensive schools to new "academies"[29] brings attendant powers to marginalize the arts.

Twenty-first century art education has reached another precarious moment and this chapter has been written with a heightened sense of current dangers. In a moment of rampant bureaucracy the education system from primary schools to universities has been subject to an unprecedented process of standardization and performance-based assessment in which the arts fair badly. Simultaneously the free market economy has left little space for the social values once attached to the arts or for art's unrealized democratic aspirations.

If it appears increasingly utopian that the art school, or indeed the school, might forge a more critical and ethical and imaginative relationship between art and society, then it's not for the first time. Nor is it the first time that an imperative to circumvent the over-controlling hand (so clearly understood by Locke to "abase the spirit" and "tame the mind" [1824 (Locke 1692/3), 46]) will find art education seeking out heterotopias, those alternative mental and physical spaces of discursivity proposed by Foucault (1998 [1967]) which offer intense, unpredictable, and transformational possibilities.

Notes

1 Victor Pasmore, Graham Bell, Claude Rogers, and Coldstream founded the "Euston Road School" in 1938. Coldstream became director of University College London's Slade School of Fine Art.
2 For a comprehensive account see Lisa Tickner (2008).
3 Joseph Beuys' work, 1960s onwards, received mixed critical reviews some enchanted by his messianic role as healer of modern society, e.g., Kuspit (1980). Others, notably Benjamin Buchloh (1980) repudiated Beuys' account of his experiences as a pilot in the Second World War which he had mythologised into a fable of healing.
4 Beuys insisted that all students should model a clay head as part of their studies.
5 Set up in 1973, the aim of the Free International University, as its manifesto states, "is not to develop political and cultural directions, or to form styles, or to provide industrial and commercial prototypes. Its chief goal is the encouragement, discovery, and furtherance of democratic potential, and the expression of this" https://sites.google.com/site/socialsculptureusa/freeinternationaluniversitymanifesto
6 Robert Rauschenberg asked de-Kooning, an artist whom he respected, for a drawing telling him of his plan to erase it. Somewhat surprisingly de-Kooning obliged selecting

one with crayon and other media that it would be hard to erase. *The Erased de Kooning*, 1953, is now in the collection of San Francisco MoMA.

7 The notion that the termination of Latham's contract was directly linked to this incident has been contested see Stewart Holmes (2006). In confluence with Latham and Steveni's Artist Placement Group's maxim: "Context is half of the work," in this instance, the fable is at least half of the work.

8 Ian Kirkwood, for example, became a university head of fine and applied art.

9 For a thoughtful commentary on risk taking see Jeff Adams' iJADE editorial (2014).

10 This sense of self-actualization chimed with the thinking of influential European contemporary Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827).

11 The letters "Some thoughts about Education" (1693) were written for a minority aristocratic readership.

12 Art education in the academies followed a program of copying prints of classical sculptures to master principles of contour, light, and shade as a precondition of being an artist. Successful completion of drawings meant progress to plaster casts of classical sculptures and eventually entry into the life class. Drawing was a prerequisite of painting before joining an academician's studio.

13 Cole successfully designed and produced tableware under the pseudonym of Felix Summerly.

14 This was a drastic diminution of rights for articulating and disseminating working-class opinions resulting in punitive political acts silencing dissent which had increased following the "Battle of Peterloo" (1819).

15 The book explained Pestalozzi's educational concepts (1894) and had a substantive impact on progressive education.

16 Kant's use of the term also refers to pre-cognitive intuition.

17 Froebel was Weiss's assistant for nearly two years and according to Jane Insley (2015), his pedagogic "gifts" correspond directly to diagrams of crystal models that Froebel would have observed whilst working with Weiss (cited in Haüy's *Treatise on Crystallography* of 1822).

18 His abdication was in response to uprisings in Berlin and a mutiny in the German Imperial navy.

19 As Frayling (1987) asserts the Royal College of Art tentatively sought Gropius's guidance when he came to Britain in 1934, Gropius ultimately left Britain in 1937 for a professorship at Harvard University.

20 This was a hybrid religion founded in America that amalgamated Asian philosophical ideas and behavior.

21 For a detailed account of af Klint's work see Chapter 19, this volume.

22 Exhibitions of children's art were mounted in Russia, across Europe and in the USA, see Chapter 24, this volume.

23 The school was expanded into a university in 1921 and by 1951 became one of India's central universities housing the highly respected art college of Santiniketan, Kala Bhavana.

24 Just like Wisconsin Experimental, Black Mountain College's financial sustainability proved hard to achieve.

25 Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin, and Harold Hurrell, all teachers at Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry formed the initial *Art and Language* collective in 1966 and their eponymous journal was first published in 1969. They aligned conceptual art with art theory signaling the limits of both and opening new intellectual debate.

26 "Articidal Tendencies" is the title of Macdonald's 1973 chapter published in Piper.

27 The "educational turn" describes tendencies within art practice and curation, which since the late 1990s have concentrated attention on the structures and institutions of learning and teaching and the knowledge generation capacities of art and research. It can be traced back to critical pedagogy, institutional critique, and self-reflexive arts and curatorial projects often dating from the 1960s and 1970s (see Lee Podesva 2007; Rogoff 2008; O'Neill and Wilson 2010).

28 A working-class movement (1836 to late 1840s), it sought to extend franchise beyond property owning classes.

29 Academy schools were introduced in England at the start of the twenty-first century. They are funded directly by the state, thereby circumventing local authority control (see Ball 2013).

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Misrecognition: Child's Play, Modern Art, and Vygotskian Psychology

Nicholas Addison

Preamble

It all starts with a child. A six year old encounters a sculpture, a long rectangle of wooden beams reflected *ad infinitum* in mirrors placed at its corners. She skips along its length, her uninhibited play watched by an art critic and her parents (one an artist): "And there we were … informed in contemporary art, taken to school by a six year old, our theory no match for her practice. For her playing of the piece conveyed not only specific concerns of minimalist work – the tensions between the images we feel, the images we see, and the forms we know – but also … new interventions in space." So begins Hal Foster (1996, ix) in his account of the "delayed return" of the avant-garde, designating child's play as a form of embodied truth, for in Foster's allegory the child acts freely in and on the world, experiencing an immediacy which, he infers, goes to the crux of the matter. What happened to the critic here had happened once before to the artist, and therein lies this tale.

Introduction

Within the histories of modernism "child art" becomes visible at a moment when artists begin to understand children's graphic expression as authentic, an utterance prior to the acquisition of orthodox forms of representation, a kind of truth. In the 1890s the Austrian artist and educator Franz Cizek, for example, claimed: "I value highly those things done by small children. They are the first and purest source of artistic creation" (cited in Tutchell 2014). For artists determined to rid themselves of the sedimented accretions of academic and naturalist convention, such as members of the international group *Der Blaue Reiter* 1910/11, children's painting signaled the possibility of an "ur" moment or "tabula rasa." As a consequence many artists chose the difficult process of "regress" or "unlearning" in an attempt to write themselves out of the history of painting, to exit and begin again. That they chose to do so through imitation, emulation, and appropriation is ironic given that children's graphic expression is an attempt to "write" themselves into history. Subsequently, art historians, complicit with this improbable aim and its developing mythology, have tended to treat children's practices as both unmediated and ahistorical,

in effect as universal acts. This interpretation not only misconstrues the situated and motivational impulses of children's graphic expression, but is also sloppy scholarship.[1]

Prior to its adoption by modernists, Western philosophers and educationalists had for some time acknowledged the significance of children's drawing as a form of learning and meaning making; it was already "in the air." The investigation of children's graphic expression by Jean Jacques Rousseau (1762), Johan Heinrich Pestalozzi (1781–1827), John Ruskin (1857), Herbert Spencer (1861), Friedrich Froebel (1887), Corrado Ricci (1887) (all in Kelly 2004) encouraged the protagonists of the developing science of psychology to recognize children's graphic production as a form of representation and semiosis (James 1890; Sully 1896). Towards the end of the nineteenth-century numerous publications with extensive reproductions appeared in Austria, Italy, and Germany. Indeed by 1905 (the year Paul Klee first referenced children's practice in his work) "child art" had become an obsession (Franciscono 1998, 101). These volumes seem to have functioned either as panegyrics to spontaneity and innocence or as "scholarly proofs," the latter arguing tendentiously for correlations between the minds of children, prehistoric "man" and modern "primitives" despite providing abundant evidence of the historically-specific content and cultural sensibilities of mid-European children of various ages. It was not until Georges-Henri Luquet (1913) systematically archived the drawings of his daughter that a body of sustained evidence, a longitudinal study, provided data with which to test emerging theories. Further psychological experimentation and investigation in the early twentieth century was used to support developmental models of the mind and human behavior: Sigmund Freud (1914) interpreting drawing as one source for unconscious imagery; Jean Piaget (1929) acknowledging the correspondences between drawing and his developmental stages (although he never refers to it as evidence) and Lev Vygotsky (1978a, 1978b, 2004) who discusses drawing as one among many forms of semiosis within childhood.[2] Although this literature permeates discussion of children's practice in art education it has entered art criticism/history only at its interdisciplinary margins.[3]

Noting the neglect of child art within recent histories of modernism, Jonathan Fineberg's two books (1997, 1998) are intended to rekindle interest in the relationship between children's and modernist artists' practices. He suggests that the respect afforded child art by artists such as Mikhail Larinov, Natalia Goncharova, Gabriele Münter, Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Jean Dubuffet, and Asger Jorn intimate that its impact on the formal and processual strategies adopted and deployed at key moments within the evolution of modernism is worthy of critical attention. By investigating artists' collections of children's drawing and painting and the ways in which artists referenced and/or appropriated children's graphic expression Fineberg readdresses a phenomenon that had been acknowledged somewhat cursorily in the art historical literature to date, and usually in relation to so-called "primitivism" (Goldwater 1986 [1936]; Rhodes 1994).[4]

Within the discourses of primitivism child art serves to exemplify one or two of three intersecting, if contradictory, paradigms: first, Romanticism, where the child is posited as a metonym for pure potential embodying innocent and immanent form (Rousseau; Froebel; Cizek; see Kelly 2004, and even to an extent, Piaget 1929). Within the second paradigm, Social Darwinism, children are deemed analogous to ancient and colonized peoples, beginners or losers within a model of cultural evolution; the yet-to-be formed and the degenerate (Ricci 1887).[5] The third, Psychoanalysis, tends to present infants/children and cognitive "others" as homologous, diagnosing both groups as polymorphously perverse, unactualized, or regressive, labels that in effect pathologize children's minds (Freud 2001 [1914]; Klein 1991 [1935]), the proto- and de-formed. The first and second paradigms were often conflated thereby infantilizing the "primitive mind" (whether "noble" or "savage") a

conflation between phylogenetic and ontogenetic processes (species with individual development) that had become a mainstay of scientific discourse by the beginning of the twentieth century (Green 1998; Shiff 1998).[6] In this way a potentially illuminating metaphor between two entirely distinct processes was embedded as a mainstay of anthropology and colonial rule (Gillen and Gosh 2007; Táíwò 2010). While the art of colonized and cognitive "others" has undergone both popular revision and critique (Foucault 1963; Said 1978; Foster 1992; Bhabha 1994) in the context of art history, child art remains a homogenized, decontextualized other.

Fineberg (1997) is both suspicious of the "primitive" tag while simultaneously reinvesting its tropes with some credibility. As the association refuses to go away I wish to reexamine its longevity by questioning the basis of modernist identifications with and appropriations of children's visual practice particularly as they coalesce around the concept of play. Although the discussions of play by Johan Huizinga (1949 [1938]) and to an extent Roger Caillois (2001 [1958]) have provided an alternative point of departure for many in the field[7] along with numerous commentators to date (Rudolf Arnheim; Richard Shiff; Christopher Green; all in Fineberg 1998) I too shall draw on child psychology. But rather than draw on the developmental theories of Piaget and the gestalt theorists, or the psychoanalytical literature post-Freud, the two bodies of work other than Huizinga's that have dominated discussion within art history, I wish to draw on the parallel investigation made by Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and his followers in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and early 1930s. His understanding of children's imaginative practice (1978a, 1978b, 2004), including drawing, questions the assumptions and contradictions within primitivist paradigms. Similarly, Vygotsky's understanding of creativity as an ordinary and necessary aspect of motivated activity (2004) does much to question its special status within the arts and corresponding ideas of originality and autonomy.

It is nonetheless the case that modernist artists undoubtedly understood children's drawing as "free," which turned out to be a productive part-recognition. The appropriations, the assemblage and recontextualization of signifiers of freedom and difference were only possible because of the "wilful forgetting and setting aside" (Varnedoe 2003, 380) typical of the primitivist more generally. This amnesia enabled modernists to amass a repertoire of "hybrid dialects" and "neologistic inventiveness" (Varnedoe 2003, 380) available for endless variation. That these same signifiers do not register as free for the child was beside the point; the fiction nourished re-generation. By examining Vygotsky's thought, some of what artists and art historians have overlooked and/or misrecognized will become evident.

Premise

Modernist artists went to children's graphic expression to relearn practices of play. True, some also went there to "unlearn" stagnant conventions by imitating its energy, radical condensation, and perceived mimetic naiveté, and many did little else, producing pastiches of what to traditionalists registered as stylistic idiosyncrasy and wilful distortion. Nevertheless, play was key for those artists who understood (often tacitly) how the processes involved in children's practice could loosen the hold of perceptualism and academicism to recuperate strategies for improvisation. This claim is not an unusual one to make but, with reference to Vygotsky (1978a), play can be understood as a cognitive and developmental process rather than as only one of three other possibilities: one, a form of "pleasure," two, a place of "freedom" (whether of a disinterested "ludic" kind, Huizinga (1949 [1938]); or of dissolution in "vertigo," Caillois (2001 [1958]) three, a biologically determined,

pre-cultural rehearsal, "animals play just like men" (Huizinga 1949 [1938]); although it may possess some or all of these elements.

Play

Vygotsky (1978a) claims the defining characteristic of play is the construction of "an imaginary situation." Within this space the child is able to think beyond immediate sense experience towards adaptive behaviors and the delay of gratification; "play seems to be invented at the point when the child begins to experience unrealizable tendencies" (1978a, 93). The child cannot think in this way until the age of three, a capacity that differentiates humans from all other animals, "liberating the child from constraints" (1978a, 96).[8] The construction of this fictive space allows the child to work through and realize unresolved desires. An infant (from approximately six months to the end of the second year), unlike its older sibling, reacts immediately to external things and events, as Vygotsky notes s/he is compelled to act in determined ways: a bucket has to be emptied or filled, a ball has to be stilled or rolled, a "union of motives and perception" (1978a) in which the infant is entirely constrained by the situation. In contradistinction, in play "the child learns to act in a cognitive, rather than an externally visual realm by relying on internal tendencies and motives and not on incentives supplied by external things" (1978a). For the infant meaning and object are the same and determine action. For the child the two are gradually separated, the child electing the meaning of objects. For example, a child in play wishes to transport a playmate by boat. S/he examines available resources with the intention of finding a surrogate object and selects a cardboard box because it can contain children's bodies; locomotion is a different concern. In this way "the child begins to act independently of what he sees" (1978a 97); ideas rather than things begin to determine action. It is only in play that this process is initially developed; play is the realm where cognition is given license to grow. This is not a sudden alteration as the child finds it difficult to untie the object/thought knot. Vygotsky therefore characterizes play as a transitional process enabling the move from concrete to symbolic to abstract thought.

Before this period, infants discover they can make marks, smearing food, or scrawling on a bounded surface with a handy tool.[9] Depending on culture, this activity may be scaffolded early on, paper and crayons providing both protection against the despoliation of domestic surfaces and a "frame" or limit to the process. This originary, "destructive" act is thereby appropriated in the name of culture and designated "drawing," separated off, at least by adults, from the mundane life world of the child. When children begin to play, at around three years, their drawing shifts from gestural mark-making to figuration:[10] just as one object can be substituted for another, a gestural configuration such as a near-circle begins to suggest a face, or, with a few appendages, a person. The shift from gesture to figuration presupposes an imagined situation and is therefore a form of play. Vygotsky thus understands drawing as an aspect of play rather than as proto-art and he observes it alongside play's other manifestations.

Vygotsky (1978b) observes that infants communicate primarily through gesture, or bodily action. While they are marking (scribbling) infants "frequently switch to dramatization, depicting by gestures what they should show on the drawing" (1987b, 107). This fully multimodal process continues into childhood but tends to be inhibited post-kindergarten (from about age five) especially within formal schooling. Vygotsky sees infants' mark-making as an extension of gesture rather than as drawing *per se* (characterized for him by figuration). In this sense such mark-making is a type of proto-writing

more than drawing, Vygotsky claiming "representation [by which he infers gesture] in play is essentially a particular form of speech at an earlier stage, one which leads directly to written language" (1978b, 111). When an object is chosen to substitute for another, the object isn't named, and the young child attaches the new meaning by applying "representational gestures" to signify the desired object: the child sits in the box/boat and moves it by shunting forward while mimicking a rowing action in which arm and oar are one; these gestures/actions communicate and reinforce the switch both for her/himself and for others involved in the game. The criterion for selecting a substitute object is the capacity to apply such gestures; without this possibility an alternative substitute would be found. The "affinity" mentioned above is therefore based on use not appearance; a "two-fold analogy" (Kress and Leeuwen 2006); first, the box contains; second, it can be moved forward, salient features and functions of the boat which enable the substitution to hold. The substitution is thus not arbitrary but actionally linked. An "older" child, however, begins to move away from substitution to denotation, from a sort of indexicality to iconicity, seeking out visual similarities to reinforce the substitution (2006, 109): the boat has to be dragged to the river the watery pattern of the carpet substituting very well.

As is evident from this scenario the imagined situation is far from being totally free; play always has rules.[11] If the child plays at being a parent, her/his parents' behaviors are a model and in imitation the child differentiates adult, gendered action from its own, striving to act as an other. In this way s/he recognizes and attempts to understand different familial and social practices, imagining beyond its current capabilities in an attempt to accommodate those aspects of bodily hexis and social practice affording access to local customs and values, a process of enculturation. In play the child therefore has to show restraint, to overcome the desire for immediate gratification because the rules of the game disallow it; withholding produces the greatest pleasure. Vygotsky (1978a) provides the example of candy brought into a game as a poison and consequently untouchable. As he claims: "The rule wins because it is the strongest impulse. Such a rule is an internal rule … In short, *play gives a child a new form of desires*. It teaches her to desire by relating her desires to a fictitious "I," to her role in the game and its rules. In this way a child's greatest achievements are possible in play, achievements that tomorrow will become her basic level of action and morality" (p. 100). In play, therefore, the child self-imposes rules (or taboos) without which the "game" doesn't exist. Through invention, reconfiguration, and negotiation the child makes a world that coexists with, and yet supersedes concrete reality.

Working Definition

With these thoughts in mind and for the purposes of my subsequent argument, play can be defined as an imaginary situation within which improvisatory strategies are brought to bear on cultural tools (gestures, images, sounds, things, words) co-assembled and distributed to form a temporal sequence of unfolding events free from all immediate constraints other than contextual rules (often un-spoken and made in-process). Children's drawing and other multimodal expressions can be accommodated by this definition positioning drawing as an instance of the wider representational phenomenon of play. I might add at this point that Vygotsky (1978a, 104) muses on the difficulty of tracing how play leads to the complex cultural practices of adults, but a leader he makes it. In the following art historical instance I want to suggest that the working definition of play given above may provide some insight into the practices and procedures of artists at a privileged moment within modernism: the cubist moment. When the process of children's play is the object

of scrutiny rather than its products or traces, I hope to demonstrate that child's play can be understood as the basis for adult invention.

Strategies of Play within Modernism

The dominant stories of modernism privilege a trajectory in which the prevailing regimes of representation are undone in favor of an aesthetic one; from figuration to abstraction, dependence to autonomy (Barr 1936; Dickerman 2013).[12] Whenever "play" is acknowledged within these stories it tends to be in its Kantian guise as "the free play of the imagination" ([1790] Laxton 2011, note 7). In those instances where play's many alternative meanings are invoked they are often exercised to qualify practices that question and/or undermine these same formalist teleologies (Getsy 2011). Playful strategies thereby constitute an "other" to formalism within modernism's counter-stories, exemplified by the figure of the popular entertainer or carnivalesque fool satirizing their "masters." This transgressive impulse is manifest in a succession of interrelated avant-garde "tactics," often "regressive" in orientation: the appropriation of child art in "primitivism" (Goldwater 1986 [1936]; Fineberg 1998), the "blaguing" central to Cubism (Weiss 1994; Lomas 2010), the "trickster" tactics of Dada and Surrealism (Hyde 1998; Laxton 2003), the scatological "informe" of Georges Bataille (Bois and Krauss 1997), and the rule-bound practices of Fluxus (Pearce 2006; Smith 2011). Despite its inclusion here, Cubism is, nonetheless, positioned as the pivotal moment in formalist justifications of "future-orientated" modernism where "play" is used to suggest the way its instigators, Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, sustained its continual transformations through a series of quasi-logical steps. In Clement Greenberg's canonic formalist account (1961) the term "play" is never used; Cubism as experiment is a serious exploration of the dialectical relationship between depth and flatness. Nevertheless, as a Kantian, Greenberg reminds his readers elsewhere that "the pleasure of art consists in the free play of reason together with intuition or the imagination" (1971, 113). For Yve-Alain Bois (1992) and Rosalind Krauss (1999), formalism's "inheritors" (Clark 1999), "play" is used to refer to the verbal and visual punning and the multivalent deployment of semiotic resources to question the function of the sign within particular regimes of representation. "Play" is adopted within these arguments to suggest critique and transformation. But, as an action, a process, it is rarely defined except through linguistic analogies. Given this lack it may be that Vygotsky's understanding of play as an imaginary situation sustained through rule-making and improvisatory strategies, might better illuminate the working practices involved in the collaboration between Braque and Picasso, specifically the time between 1911 to 1914 encompassing the move from analytic/hermetic to synthetic Cubism.

Unsurprisingly, given its pivotal status, much discussion of analytical Cubism gravitates in one way or another towards formalist or semiotic readings.[13] During both summers of 1909 and 1910, Braque and Picasso, painting in separate locations but joining in Paris to discuss their explorations, experimented with the possibility of a new pictorial spatiality, a destabilization and re-classification of conventional rules of representation. What they potentially had to offer was an emancipation from illusionism (see Clark 1999). Braque recalls that the two artists were intent on developing an "anonymous personality" (Cowling 2002, 202) producing, in effect, an impersonal method of painting which could be offered up as an "analytical" procedure available to anyone, much in the same way that pointillism had offered an accessible, "objective" approach twenty years before. This was not a founding teleological aim. It was more emergent, a possible application of a set of

procedures, "its totalizing moment" (Clark 1999, 206), an aim that had it been realized would have put an end to the playing to come. If the pair's paintings of 1910 are characterized by a reduction in means, the play of light within and across an "autonomous" grid-like structure, then, together in the summer of 1911 at Céret, they drew on more diverse resources assembling popular and traditional idioms to produce an uncomfortable heteronomy. In this, I suggest, they were like children, plundering both legitimate and illegitimate play objects just so long as they conformed to actional rules, the necessary gestures associated with painting. Such practice assured that any attempts at resolution or fixity were undermined.

Re-thinking Cubism

T. J. Clark (1999) in his re-reading of Cubism begins with the impasse resulting from this moment, one of radical uncertainty out of which synthetic Cubism was to emerge (characterized by collage, construction, and assemblage). It should be noted that substantial sections of Clark's discussion are speculative despite the "empiricist" procedure of close looking (both of paintings and photographs of paintings before "completion") for he tries to imagine what impulses or provocations lay behind Picasso's decision-making when marking and revising a number of "test-case" paintings. In this way Clark writes a fictive re-enactment, imagining an improvisatory practice by working back from the product to imagine the process. Clark also recognizes that the discontinuous innovations of Cubism were produced through a kind of partnership (although favoring Picasso's contribution[14]); he has this to say:

> Two people, as I say, may look like a small collectivity … nonetheless this one seemed powerful, and made converts, precisely because its first viewers sensed that Picasso and Braque's picture-making had reached a stage where the idiom they were using might not be there, first and foremost, to qualify or express some irreducible individuality. It might be designed to reduce that irreducible.
>
> (Clark 1999, 222)

What I wish to focus on here is the relation of this collaboration to both improvisation and friendship, including the sibling and best-friend rivalry that occurs in the context of children's play, the competitive *agôn* of Huizinga (1949 [1938]).

Collaboration and Improvisation

The most concentrated moment in the partnership occurred at Sorgues in the south of France during the summer of 1912, by which time the artists were edging "hermetic" Cubism (for many its high point) towards synthetic Cubism. Clark (1999) selects Picasso's *Ma Jolie*, 1911–1912, MoMA, as indicative of the period (http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=79051). Its title (more a soubriquet) quotes a phrase from a popular song stenciled towards its lower edge, an intervention that Clark relates to Picasso's intention to root Cubism "in a base kind of materialism," signifying that which is "low" (1999, 179). Picasso made this claim in correspondence with his and Braque's then dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, a notoriously serious Kantian, who would likely

be offended.[15] The "resources" and "devices" or "tokens," as Clark calls them (199, 180), such as the schematic "f" sound hole of the violin and the combed wood-graining in Braque's *Homage to J. S. Bach*, 1911–1912, MoMA[16] (http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=116275) are largely absent save for the typographic text. So Clark, unlike other commentators, extends this baseness away from the appropriated, heteronomous "devices" towards the material means itself, the work done with paint, the earthy matter of spread pigment.[17] What others tend to foreground are the "novelties": the linear scaffolding, shallow space and interlocking planes, the medley of signs. But for Clark the painterly surface and its implied spaces is the focus and for him they remain rooted in tradition, "illusionism's bag of tricks" (1999, 180), including tonal modeling and facture: in relation to *Ma Jolie*, "the outlandish bravura of the "pulled" veil of light just to the right …" (1999, 180). Although the fractured and dissipating structure of *Ma Jolie* alludes to a human presence it lacks the *raison d'être* of traditional painting, in semiotic terms a clear referent: if not this particular woman or scene, then a woman, a scene.[18]

In the Sorgues paintings Picasso and Braque therefore toy with the figural basis of painting by negating the primacy of representation, formulating what Clark calls a "pretense" (1999, 184–185) and a "counterfeit" (1999, 186), not so much writing themselves out of history as writing out history, an undoing which Clark likens to "a deep shattering of the world of things … [while harboring a] sheer tenacity of attention to the world and its merest flicker of appearance" (1999, 186). John Richardson (1996, 238–239) provides a less apocalyptic scenario suggesting that the contradictions and ambiguities of the series of still lifes that presage synthetic Cubism in the spring and summer of 1912 have a "palimpsest-like" quality resulting from the peripatetic nature of Picasso's life at that time. Moving from one studio to another before the completion of paintings, the series is produced in fits and starts the interruption in effect determining the discontinuity and contrariness of the iconographic and formal ingredients, from the paintings' facture to their "right-way-up."[19] If at this moment their practice was contingent, by the close of 1912 both Braque and Picasso's deployment of heteronomous resources had become a given improvisatory strategy.

The base interventions, the devices and tokens, are deployed at a moment when the pair's paintings had become almost interchangeable *c.* 1910–11, the two becoming one (they often didn't sign canvases, or only on the back). If Clark (1999) identifies baseness with the material surface and an illusionist's "bag of tricks," then the novel elements of analytical Cubism: the linear scaffold, the muted, essentially tonal color, the shallow space whose tilted planes are articulated by deeply undercut shadow, might also point backwards to Baroque painting. These devices, rather than pointing forward to abstraction (Green 1980) are reminiscent of seventeenth-century Northern and Spanish painting: Rembrandt van Rijn, Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Zurbarán, Dutch and Spanish still life and their eighteenth-century French heir Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin all of whose portraiture and still life (the low "genres" that dominate Cubism) are continuously referenced by Braque and Picasso.[20] Clark (2013) also argues that Cubism, far from being future-orientated, is primarily retrospective; but he locates a more recent past, the last stand of nineteenth-century bohemian culture. In this reading the low elements are merely remnants of a way of life already on the way out, a nostalgic now.[21] For Clark the base elements ground Cubism thereby undermining idealist interpretations, and yet what is perhaps most prescient in 1912 is Cubism's uncertainty, its dislocations. Such ambivalence might be interpreted, oddly, as a legacy of Immanuel Kant (1790) and the indeterminacy of his aesthetic theory, the play between reason and intuition. As Susan Laxton (2011) asserts, "while the *Critique of Judgment* manifests a conservative model for play … modern critical

practice will find an alternative, temporally based and resolutely *interested* play – a play that is already present, if repressed, in Kant … the entire Kantian model of the mind is haunted by the *irrational*" (2011, 5–6). Despite this possibility, a more immediate cause is Braque and Picasso's adaptation of Cézanne's perceptual investigations[22] and his identification with the child's open attitude (Smith 2007) applied here not to things seen but to affective exchanges, to the give and take of social and cultural relations between the "collective of two."

Such exchange is central to Vygotsky's theories (1978c) for whom learning is necessarily social, a construction built on the exchange of cultural tools rather than a process of individual acquisition or assimilation. Development is the result of internalization, which is a process subsequent to the learning event and in no way a given consequence of biological maturation (as it is for Piaget). Vygotsky called this exchange the "zone of proximal development," (ZPD) that is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978c, 86). In this respect it should be noted that Braque and Picasso mutually sought out one another, their different dispositions and aptitudes offering up numerous "learning" possibilities, and they were constantly exchanging roles. In improvising with their disparate "bag of tricks" they were in effect, playing with cultural tools drawn from contrasting, possibly antithetical, sources (demi, high, and low) as if, like young children, they were unable to differentiate the social status of available resources, or, like older children, intent on upsetting their pedagogic mentors. What was most urgent for them was the *demi-monde* of their immediate forebears, elder siblings, and rivals, the artists and intellectuals of bohemian culture (*pace* Clark); second, their renowned ancestors, a specific European tradition, which despite the leftish and anarchist tendencies of both artists and their *milieu* (Leighten 1989) can be readily associated with national origins and/or identifications at a time of impending Imperial conflict. Then there are the various "low" sources: first, the artisanal culture of Braque's family with its emphasis on craftsmanship and decoration; second, visual pedagogy in schools, Molly Nesbit (1986) convincingly associating the diagrammatic elements of Cubism with the technical drawing exercises that Braque and his peers had been subject to in their schooling; third, the typography and content of advertising and commercial entertainment; and fourth a range of "primitivisms."[23]

Given this motley assemblage, what the duo had done in the Vygotskian sense was to bring improvisatory strategies to bear on cultural "tools" (genres and traditions, legitimate and illegitimate) "co-assembled and distributed to form a temporal sequence of unfolding events" (the transformations and negations within and between successive paintings) "free from all immediate constraints other than contextual rules" (the assorted rule-bound idioms unaligned and/or dissonant with the various traditions to which they belong). Despite the avowed attempt at accessibility, even universality through synthesis, the playmates had imitated the actions of their siblings, parents, and teachers while dislocating their gestures from the impulse to understand the social implications of their play, a dissolution of its representational imperative (in this sense it is unlike child's play). But the play was also motivated by "unrealizable tendencies"; the players were not after solidification despite the retrospective aims, but recognition. After all "tradition is destroyed by becoming a tradition. The raw performativity of free-improvisation is exemplary in the manner in which it dramatizes the aesthetic self-destruction in full view of a judicial audience" (Peters 2009, 48). Braque and Picasso's performance is an attempt to kill the past whilst failing to mourn it, a Janus-like, directional contradiction on the threshold of an "abyss"

(Clark 1999, 179). But the abyss might be understood more productively as the "opening" onto improvisation, which, "to be successful … must be a form of delay, an incessant interruption of the work's desire to be a work and to speak" (Peters 2009, 58).

Play as Improvisation

If Miró was to take up the "assassination of painting" during the early 1920s in the meantime, for Braque and Picasso, the play went on. It was initiated in the form of an extended game, synthetic Cubism (1912–1914), moving Braque and Picasso away from the edge of abstraction/negation, "painting at the end of its tether" (Clark 1999, 187). The play in analytical Cubism was an attempt by its instigators to position themselves agonistically in relation to their peers and ancestors, for Clark, an end game that "stages" in historic terms, "the failure of representation" (1999, 191). The imitation of their ancestors combined with the newer modalities, the tools deployed within their imagined, "democratizing" situation, ultimately made no sense.

What Braque and Picasso therefore achieved in the shift to synthetic Cubism was to ally themselves to the quotidian, a riposte to the idealists around and to come. Despite the incorporation of ready-made artefacts such as newsprint and wallpaper, synthetic Cubism continues to loosen the hold, not the use, of illusion. The ghostly, x-ray mirages of hermetic Cubism[24] give way to statements of fact, a reassertion of the objectness of life, its close-to-handedness. It is not that the doubt disappears: the contradictions, the play with solid and void, occlusion and assertion intensifies albeit in less compacted guise. Acts of drawing and Braque's paper constructions (1911/12) and *papier collé* (1912) become the preferred mediums; painterliness is thereby much reduced instigating an anti-aesthetic regime of process, presentation, and appropriation, a consolidation of techniques and tokens that others, never this duo, took to their limits. There is a reduction too in iconography: the human presence largely disappears, implied only by the display of domestic objects: tables, chairs, haberdashery, food and drink, utensils, newspapers and musical instruments, the outside only impinging in the form of light from a window, a refrain from a song or a political text from a newspaper. Picasso is more confrontational (see Cowling 2002), relishing the color of wallpaper, abrupt juxtapositions, and textual allusions. Occasionally he limits the hand/eye of the artist to the function of selecting, cutting, and sticking alone, appropriating the habits of the amateur scrap-booker (often female) as well as those of the house painter (usually male: Picasso had to seek Braque's help with gluing). But Picasso is sometimes more subtle too, playing with signs to produce paradoxical meanings, see for instance the analysis of his collage *Violin,* 1912 by Krauss (1999, 27–33). This improvisation with low objects and techniques, applied, collaged, and imitated, comes to manifest itself in an uneasy dialogue with the remnants of the old painting.

But what had led to these innovations? The great absence in the history of Cubism is Braque's experiments with paper construction some time in 1911/12[25] (the habit of the adolescent model maker). Other than a photograph of a corner piece from 1914 (Figure 24.1), the earlier manifestations can only be imagined in the follow-ons from Picasso who was quick to explore the technique's potential, constructing *Guitar* from card in 1912. It is commonly agreed that Braque undertook these experiments to work through "problems" within Cubism. No doubt they were formal and material explorations, entirely process-led, with no view to permanence (now lost or destroyed), prefiguring *papier collé*;

FIGURE 24.1   Georges Braque, *Corner Relief Construction* (1914). The corner sculpture in Braque's Hôtel Roma studio, 1914. *Source*: © archives Laurens, Paris/© ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2016/Photograph from Georges Braque: A Life by Alex Danchev (2005) Penguin Books, Fig. 12.

but Braque claimed: "there was no deliberate intention behind it" (cited in Danchev 2005, 70). This is typical of the improviser "the absence prior to the work … concerns the absence of planning, the risk taking associated with an unguided journey into the unknown where 'anything can happen'" (Peters 2009, 36). Braque's other recent improvisatory interventions: the *trompe l'oeil*, combed wood-graining and marbling, stenciled letters, (both 1911) the addition of sand and other base matter to paint, and *papier collé* (both 1912), were accepted by Picasso as a type of gift to play with in ways that no doubt stretched their affective possibilities. Nevertheless, Picasso later claimed that collage was his "gift" to Braque, whom, with typically machismo spite, he called his "ex-wife" (Danchev 2005, 107–109). Picasso's reciprocal gestures, the use of wax-cloth, imitation chair-caning (1911–1912) and commercial house paints (ripolin) (1912) are evidently extensions from Braque's low interventions.[26]

Vygotsky, referring to observations made by James Sully, noted that "children could make the play situation and reality coincide" (1978a, 94). He discusses this in Sully's exemplification where two sisters are absorbed in playing at being sisters. This "display" of sisterhood constitutes a type of reflexive action in which the actors attempt to position themselves in relation to themselves within the context of their familial habitat, perhaps testing out, contrasting, and devising rules about aspects of their affective relations: duty

with reciprocity (prefiguring friendships to come). In less familial but almost as inti-mate circumstances, Picasso and Braque, given the crisis within painting at the turn of the century, are working hard playing at being friends but also (dis)playing at being artists.[27]

During their close partnership, from 1908 until 1914, the affectionate banter that passed between Braque and Picasso indicates a closeness somewhat akin to youthful best-friends and/or brothers. But the partnership was to become increasingly competitive (particularly in their own recollections) a typical dynamic within friendship play. In relation to this phenomenon the Vygotskian educationalists Thomas Rizzo and William Corsaro observe "that after the initial phases of friendship formation, the major change in the children's actions [is] the emergence of disputes about responsibilities of being a friend … what is intriguing here are the apparent causes and function of these disputes … an effort to induce necessary changes in their friend's behaviour" (1999, 211).[28] The much-vaunted reciprocity of dialogic relations is necessarily put under strain, no more so than in the Braque/Picasso partnership. As Gary Peters notes, the recent sanitization of improvisatory practices within philosophical and particularly educational discourses has had the effect of submerging improvisation "in a collective language of care and enabling, of dialogue and participation, a pure, aesthetically cleansed language of communal love" (2009, 24). In contradistinction he notes that in the context of jazz improvisation one musician often "succeeds" at the expense of others in the ensemble.

As well as imbibing the intellectual legacy of Symbolism (poets were their most vocif-erous champions) Braque and Picasso were together aficionados of popular culture fre-quenting cabaret outside the tourist trail and consuming the "penny dreadful" literature then flooding the market. Picasso would sign himself "ton pard" to Braque's "Buffalo Bill," although no doubt ironically given that he would sometimes invert this accolade referring to Braque as his "Calamity Jane" (Danchev 2005, 108). They closely identified with the Wright brothers, the pioneering aviators who were idolized in France. The point of identification was in this instance much stronger for Braque (Picasso nicknamed him Wilbur, one of the brothers) the two artists applauding the way flight had been achieved in 1903 with a few sticks, paper, and glue, a metaphor for the heights that might be achieved from Braque and then Picasso's experiments with similar materials, the paper construc-tions of 1911/12. Mark Tansey in his painting on their relationship at this moment, often referred to as, *Picasso and Braque inventing Cubism in the spirit of the Wright brothers*, 1992 (Figure 24.2), intimates a particular power dynamic. In the center of the painting Picasso pilots the cubist flying machine with Braque attentive and wary in pursuit, even though the authorship of the machine, indexed by the brushes and pots of paint or glue from which Braque is running, might ascribe authorship to him not Picasso. Braque constructs the flying machine (albeit from remnants of Picasso's collage, *Violin,* 1912), but Picasso knows how to pilot it receiving all the credit. Nonetheless, given Tansey's viewpoint on the two-dimensional surface Braque is "out front."

Who was first, who was dominant is perhaps beside the point; the continual improvisa-tion within Cubism took place in actions exchanged (however charged). That the process of exchange was to diversify exponentially is well attested.[29] Although the experiment to provide a secure model for a new painting may have failed, the multiple "lines of flight" it generated produced an international network, a type of give and take across bound-aries, prefiguring the distributed and collaborative "knotworking" yet to come (Engeström 2005). As Peters asserts, the improviser's "primary aim is to produce *beginnings*" (2009, 37).

FIGURE 24.2   Mark Tansey, *Picasso and Braque* (1992). Oil on canvas, 80 × 108″. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Modern and Contemporary Art Council Fund (AC1992.154.1) *Source*: © Mark Tansey.

Conclusion

I realize that my art historical argument is possibly a little strained in places; nonetheless, what it points to is twofold. First, child's play is not an unthinking, pre-cultural process joyously divorced from social reality; the intuitive route to truth as promoted within Hal Foster's and many others' allegories. Rather, as Vygotsky argues, play is a deliberate and serious engagement with the material and symbolic world, a site for imagining, inventing, and experimenting, a place where cognitive and affective experience combines through improvisation to shape action (the conative), establishing points of departure. What artists, indeed what most creative actors do in fashioning culture opens out from this practice (this has major implications for pedagogy, from kindergarten through to university and beyond). Second, it points to a reorientation of attention, a concern with the spaces generated between social actors, the "zone of proximal development," in which learning, exchange, and action take place. It is a space, despite the dialectic of intentionalities, characterized by affect and dialogue, all the more so within modernism as artists shifted from a dependence on professional institutions to networks of friends, partners, rivals, dealers, critics, champions, and affiliates. The invention and exchange inherent within the improvisatory practices of play are thereby always subject to the fluctuations and intensities of

affective energies and therefore difficult to pin down. This posits a concern with affective dynamics, the economy of exchange that informs, if not determines, the embodied and circulating activity of creative practice. If the misrecognition of child's play in early modernism spawned a necessary destabilization within bourgeois regimes of representation, it nonetheless reinforced myths of innocence that promoted sentimentalized views of childhood expression and education. Although it was misrecognized at the time, what child's play had, and still has, to offer is a way to examine and model reality through the deployment of the imagination; in this way child's play provides a procedural basis for adult invention and exchange, establishing a disposition that embraces exploration and reflection. Modernism, as pre-eminently exploratory and reflexive, and Cubism in particular, is exemplary in this respect.

Notes

1 Until very recently this is an approach typical of art history (Goldwater 1986 [1936]; Rhodes 1994) that is until Jonathan Fineberg's two books (1997, 1998).
2 John Matthews (2004) provides a summary of the implications of this psychological work on (mis)understandings of children's graphic practice, which he also relates to developments in current neuroscience.
3 For example in the work of Roger Fry, in early discussions of the work of Paul Klee and Joan Miró by Michel Leiris, Georges Bataille and others (see Green 1998; Shiff 1998), and notably by Herbert Read (1943), Rudolph Arnheim (1966), and Donald Winnicott (1971). The latter finds in the infant's "construction" of a "transitional object" the prototypical imaginative act underpinning all creative activity (however, this is an unconscious process and the argument here will focus on deliberate, primarily conscious activity).
4 Nonetheless, of books and articles published between Robert Goldwater (1936) and Colin Rhodes (1994) that refer to "primitivism" in the title, few mention child art. William Rubin's vast compendium (1984) attempts to valorize perceived affinities between "tribal" and modernist visual practice, while more recent scholarship critiques this approach. For an extensive list of critique see Chapter 5, this volume. However, the representation of children within visual culture has been subject to revision (Higonnet 1998).
5 Stuart Macdonald (2004 [1970], 329–333) usefully outlines the sources for this tendency; Rhodes (1994) acknowledges and rejects it but does little to question it.
6 Christopher Green (1998) examines this phenomenon in some depth demonstrating that Marcel Mauss's concern with similarity as well as difference began to erode any easy conflation. Green notes how Mauss's thinking supported Georges Bataille's contention in *Documents* (1929–1930) that the prehistoric artist was quite capable of choosing between modes (naturalistic or schematic, etc.) rather than the mode being indicative of a particular fixed "mentality" (see Ades and Baker 2006).
7 For a sustained critique of this premise see Susan Laxton (2011). Johan Huizinga (1938) rejects both biological and developmental models in his discussion of play which he perceives as voluntary, disinterested, and amoral; play for play's sake. This is a legacy from Kantian aesthetics in which the "free play" of cognition within aesthetic judgments is both disinterested and unproductive. Huizinga (1938) also takes from Kant the sense that play is a rule-formed space of non-instrumental pleasure distinguishable from "real" life. For Huizinga (a historian) this draws in magical and religious rites. Roger Caillois in his well-known sociological critique of Huizinga refuses the latter while agreeing that play is a sort of opposite to work. Further, Caillois differentiates between rule-based games and

make-believe. They agree, nonetheless, that play is not productive; for Caillois it "is an occasion of pure waste" (1958, 5). Although Huizinga recognizes playfulness in children (which he understands as pre-rational) he foregrounds its symbolic, adult uses as a "civilizing" force in the making of culture (playfulness, the child, the primitive, are antithetical to play).

8 Because Vygotsky (1978a) understands imagination as the engine of thought and language he thus condemns the Behaviourist school for extrapolating a human psychology from animal experiment.

9 Bataille (1929–1930; see Ades and Baker 2006) understands this action as destructive, a defacement. For a discussion of this point see Green (1998) who carefully unpicks understandings of child art by French anthropologists in the light of both Freud and Piaget's theories and the ways in which their thinking informed the reception of artists, Miró in particular, in the 1920s/30s.

10 Although play is universal, graphic figuration is not. Figurative drawing by children requires an environment in which two-dimensional figuration is present and possibly ubiquitous, as in most print cultures; Ellen Winner (2007) discusses variations within such cultures. Australian Aboriginal children did not, for example, until recently, draw figuratively and may still eschew figuration for symbolization in some areas (Cox 1998).

11 As noted above, Huizinga (1938) also characterizes play as essentially rule-based and focused on meaning (this makes it non-material for him). He argues that these factors are deployed to sustain an illusion (an escape) rather than as a means to engage with reality through an imaginative situation.

12 Griselda Pollock examines the gendered implications of this formulation questioning the absence of women from the story: "what modernist art history celebrates is a selective tradition that normalizes, as the only modernism, a particular set of gendered practices" (1988, 50). My analysis might be accused of ignoring gender relations; Vygotsky's theories tend to be gender-blind and the partnership I discuss is between two males. But similar studies might be applied to other modernist partnerships, e.g., Sonia and Robert Delaunay, Sophie Tauber and Hans Arp, Lee Krasner, and Jackson Pollock. In relation to the latter partnership see Pollock (2003).

13 T. J. Clark (1999) provides a critique of these approaches, noticing their limitations and aporia. Popular (bohemian) culture, the locus of cubist iconography, is usually noted in formalist and semiotic accounts but deemed secondary. More recent scholarship, however, tells a story of cubism saturated in social, political and affective significance, e.g., Patricia Leighten (1989, 1990) who argues for Picasso's involvement in political critique around both colonialism in Africa and Imperialism in the Balkans.

14 For Clark, the development of cubism is almost rendered as a one-man-band, despite the chapter's title "Cubism and Collectivity"; Braque and other painters are rarely mentioned until the closing pages.

15 Clark (1999) argues that Picasso's motivation here was akin to "playing with his interlocutor," designating "play" here as a form of teasing.

16 Perhaps the experiments that surround the development of cubism with their serialization, self-quotations and re-workings, and the testing of the affordances of different idioms (high and popular), reflects Baroque musical procedures (for more on the Baroque, see note 20).

17 Although Picasso and Braque primarily used artists' colours, (it is reported that Braque always ground his pigments) the duo's tonal palette, consisting of white and black, and various earth colors: ochre, burnt umber, verdigris (the green of oxidized copper), even if some were produced synthetically, are low, both in terms of cost and origin.

For a partial analysis of a painting from 1909 see http://www.enea.it/it/produzione-scientifica/EAI/anno-2012/knowledge-diagnostics-and-preservation-of-cultural-heritage/investigation-and-characterization-of-artistic-techniques-in-works-of-modern-and-contemporary-art.

18 Nonetheless, the association of the song with a new love in Picasso's life, Eva Gouel, is noted almost universally (e.g., Richardson 1996; Weiss 1994, 256, note 8).

19 However, Braque was more consistent in his whereabouts while demonstrating similar ambiguity and complexity in his work.

20 Baroque painters are also referenced by the artists Braque and Picasso most revered at the time: Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, Édouard Manet, Paul Cézanne. What might the pair have learned from these sources? Consider, for example two paintings now in the Louvre, *Game and Hunting Accessories on a Window Ledge*, 1691 by Jan Weenix and Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin's *The Attributes of Military Music*, 1767. Look at the Weenix in relation to Braque's seminal *Violin and Pitcher* 1909-10, (Kunstsmuseum, Basel). Note the pyramidal, cascading composition in both (already apparent in Braque's *L'Éstaque* hill townscapes 1908 and a compositional format often used by Chardin), about to tumble respectively from the ledge/canvas's lower edge but held up by a tag/trompe l'oeil nail. Consider the Chardin in relation to Braque's, *The Clarinet,* summer 1912 (Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice): note the oval formats, the former's shallow space, the implied structure of interlocking planes (easily abstracted to a linear scaffold), the sheet music, the never fully-seen instruments, the choreographed tassels emerging token-like from the muted gloom.

21 Others find cubism indicative of possible futures, whether an energized and subversive popular idiom (music hall/cabaret/caricature; Weiss 1994), the engineered precision of a utopian future (Constructivism; Bann 1974) or indeed the technocratic massification of totalitarian and capitalist production (popular entertainment and affordable design; Rosenblum 1990).

22 Braque and Picasso not only emulated Cézanne's multiple, shifting outlines, which modify the planar construction evident in his late work (although they simultaneously developed a similar faceting from the lessons of West African and Oceanic sculpture, see Cowling 2002, 180–199), they may also have appropriated Cézanne's variant of divisionism, blocked rather than dotted.

23 The adoption and adaptation of "primitive" resources, the Egyptian and Iberian antiquities of Picasso's Gósol period 1905 and the formal and fetishistic aspects extracted from West African masks and sculpture by both Picasso and to an extent Braque from 1906–1908, seem less apparent at this moment perhaps because they had already been synthesized (see note 22 above). Nonetheless, African precedents resurface powerfully for Picasso *c*. 1912–1914 especially in his card constructions, and later in his career (see Leighten 1990).

24 X-rays were first produced by Wilhelm Röntgen in 1895 who championed their scientific and medical possibilities. The ghostly images were popularized in newspapers almost immediately, and taken up by Edison 1896 as a money-generating concern, finally entering carnivals, side-shows, and the apparatus of clairvoyants (see Dalrymple Henderson 1988). X-rays thus became a populist apparatus and can enter the pantheon of low resources available to Braque and Picasso. There was little mention of this possibility in 1911/1912, however, partly because the Futurists had already referenced x-rays in their *Technical Manifesto of Painting* 1910 (Dalrymple Henderson 1988).

25 The art critic Christian Zervos, an early commentator on cubism, claims he first saw Braque's paper constructions in 1911 (see Danchev 2005, 70).

26 It is notable, however, that Picasso's interventions are industrially produced and thus emblematic of modernity whereas Braque's are craft-based, even if associated with modern petit-bourgeois taste.

27 Braque does not claim to be an artist until the sale of work exhibited at the Salon des Independents 1907 to the dealer Wilhelm Uhde (Danchev 2005, 42). The nature of the play and the hierarchical dynamic between Braque and Picasso was significantly conditioned by their respective relationships with parents, but fathers in particular, who were both "artists." Picasso is said to have experienced a moment of Oedipal triumph (probably mythical) when his artist father, an expert in painting pigeons, conceded his profession to his "gifted" son aged fifteen. In contradistinction, Braque experienced repeated disappointment, securing an apprenticeship to a house painter in Le Havre 1899 after failing to gain a full place at the academy in the same town (having studied there from 1887–1889).

28 In 1914 Braque was called up to the Front, marking an end to the partnership. Picasso transferred his give-and-take relations to Juan Gris, whose competition he greatly "feared."

29 Different forms of exchange and some appropriation took place with the Futurists in Italy, the Constructivists and cinematic montage in Russia, Vorticism in England, Synchromism in the United States, Orphism to Purism in France, Dadaist montage in Germany, Rivera and many other artists in South America, Mondrian and De Stijl in Holland and on to the Bauhaus, Tagore and the Bengal School in India, and more generally as a pan-cultural signifier of modernity suitable to newly independent countries.

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MoMA and the Modern Child: The Critical Role of Education Programming in MoMA's Modernism

Briley Rasmussen

On 14 March 1962, the First Lady of the United States, Jacqueline Kennedy, gave "an American Gift to the Indian Child."[1] Kennedy was on a nine-day goodwill tour through India and Pakistan. In a ceremony of diplomatic gift exchange and surrounded by the international press corps, Kennedy presented Indira Gandhi, president of the Indian National Congress and daughter of the Prime Minister, with a portfolio and letter "as a token of the actual [Children's Art] Carnival" (Figure 25.1). The Carnival, a children's art-making program and the brainchild of Victor D'Amico, Director of Education at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), would have the broadest reach and impact of any of MoMA's educational programs.

At the inauguration of the Carnival in New Delhi nineteen months later in October 1963, Indira Gandhi welcomed the gift and situated it amongst India's efforts to modernize their newly independent and democratic nation,

> I think that this gift is going to help children of India to develop their imagination and foster their creative attitudes. This gift is very important for us because of all the people in the world we are the most tradition bound and more inhibited than is good for our development … not only because it can change the face of our art education but because I hope it will help our children to develop their faculties of creative thinking.
> (*The Children's Art Carnival in India 1963–64 – A Report* n.d., 13)

Thus, MoMA's Children's Art Carnival and the creativity of children it cultivated were linked in the aspirations of a nation and framed as a critical instrument for peace, democracy, and innovation in the modern world. The gift of the Carnival was the culmination of three decades of education programs at MoMA devoted to fostering and advocating for children's creativity. In India the Carnival can be seen as an instrument for MoMA's ideas on the importance of creative expression in the future of democratic nations in the Cold War period.

While other art institutions saw children as a potential future audience, MoMA considered children, their creative processes, and their artwork to be vital to how it would frame modern art to a broad public.

FIGURE 25.1   Jacqueline Kennedy and Indira Gandhi at the presentation of the gift of the
Children's Art Carnival, New Delhi, 1962. New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).
Source: Exhibition Records, ICE-28-61:VII.174.9. The Museum of Modern Art Archives,
NY. MA274. © 2016. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala,
Florence.

Beginning with the early formation of education programs at MoMA, in particular
Victor D'Amico's philosophy of creative teaching and the Young People's Gallery, this
chapter considers MoMA's leveraging of children that was linked to new constructs of
children and childhood. As modernism emerged, so did ideas about the modern child as
an imaginative, healthy and engaged child who was connected with her innate creativity
and curiosity.

The centrality of the modern child in MoMA's ambitious strategy to expand the reach
of its presentation of modern art extends through its international activities in the postwar
period. While Abstract Expressionism has been discussed as dominating MoMA's Cold
War arsenal, this chapter expands the reading of the museum's activities in this period to
consider the role of the Children's Art Carnival in MoMA's postwar modernist agenda.
D'Amico argued,

> No other single activity of the Museum's Department of Education has received so much
> public notice consistently, year after year. Both through visiting teachers and the press,
> the ideas, methods, and equipment of the Carnival have been adopted entirely or in part
> all over the world.
>
> (*The Children's Art Carnival in India 1963–64 – A Report* n.d., 40)

India was the most extensive international engagement for the Children's Art Carnival
and the only instance in which the host country solicited MoMA to bring the Carnival
to them. The American gift of the Carnival "to the Indian child" raises questions about
the international exchange of art pedagogy and the influence of modernism on the devel-
opment of democracy in an independent postcolonial India. It also enables us to explore
what this engagement with India reveals about MoMA's modernist agenda to promote its
fusion of art with a modernist democratic agenda and its pedagogical strategies.

Constructing the Modern Child

Ideas about the modern child were not an invention of the twentieth century. Since John Locke in the late seventeenth century new notions of the child were emerging (see Chapters 23, 24, 26, in this volume). Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile, or On Education* (1762) proclaimed an inherent goodness in humanity, especially children. As a treatise on education, *Émile* mobilized education in the preservation of this notion of inherent goodness, the cultivation of natural gifts, and the preparation of children to be good citizens in a civil society. Other humanist writers embraced the perceived innocence of the child as a form of genius and admired their insights. German painter Caspar David Friedrich wrote in 1830, "The only true source of art is our heart, the language of a pure childlike spirit. A creation, not flowing from these springs, can only be mannerisms" (Fineberg 1997, 3). Friedrich, like other artists, believed that children possessed purity of emotion, admiring and finding inspiration in their connection to a supposed innate human spirit.

As in Rousseau's *Émile*, discussions of children, education, and the future of society are often inextricably linked. The modern child's education remained central to debates around societal reforms throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Reformers in America and Europe were building a body of literature and experiments that focused on the child as the source of social progress. Ellen Key, in her book *Century of the Child* (1901), proclaimed the core mission of the twentieth century to be ensuring the rights and wellbeing of all children in a competitive and industrialized society. This manifesto, with equal parts dread and aspiration, advocated the protection of children through a broad base of reforms: social, political, aesthetic, and psychological. The modern child became imbued with society's hopes and aspirations for an idealized future (Kinchin and O'Connor 2012, 11).

Social reform in the early twentieth century was intertwined with the physical spaces and objects children would interact with throughout their childhood (Larsson 1899). Careful attention to all aspects of children's development, physical and aesthetic, were of paramount concern. Modern childhood became something to be celebrated (Fineberg 1997), rather than suppressed. Reformers argued that children required both protection and a carefully constructed education, both in school and in the home, so that they might become productive adult members of a democratic society. This emphasis on design for children would echo throughout MoMA's program during its first four decades, in particular in the construction of the museum's educational spaces.

Children's artwork became revered as an expression of their imagination and uninhibited vision. Many modern artists, including Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Jean Dubuffet, and Wassily Kandinsky, collected children's artwork as objects of admiration and sources of inspiration (Fineberg 1997 and 2006). Exhibitions such as *Art in the Life of the Child* in St. Petersburg in 1908, and the *Salon des Enfants*, presented in 1909 in Paris and organized by Henri Matisse, showed children's artwork. In 1908, Viennese Secessionists exhibited children's work, presented as "an aesthetic contribution to be considered seriously" alongside the Secessionists (Fineberg 2006, 215). The first such exhibition of children's art in America was probably at Alfred Stieglitz's 291 gallery in 1912. Within the next four years, Stieglitz would go on to present three more such exhibitions, claiming that the work of two- to eleven-year-olds had "much of the spirit of so-called modern work" (Fineberg 2006, 12). While this notion of the innocent and innately creative child has been called into question (Higonnet 1998) and is no longer espoused, this context and framework is important when situating the extensive presentation of children's art at MoMA.

A Progressive Foundation for MoMA

MoMA's founders possessed not only the wealth and art collections needed to establish the new museum, but also the social and political acumen to realize their vision in the artistically and financially hostile climate of New York City in 1929. When MoMA opened on 8 November 1929, the founders were realizing calls from art critics and other collectors to establish a permanent museum that would collect the work of modern artists and be a repository for the growing collections in America. Yet, the museum also had larger philanthropic and social aims.

Abby Rockefeller, in particular, believed that art, especially modern art, possessed a strong social purpose. Her biographer Bernice Kert wrote, "It was … her conviction that art deserved to be brought into the lives of ordinary citizens, and more significant, that even the most extreme and unpopular art had the right to be seen" (1993, 285). Later, her son Nelson recalled, "Mother deeply believed that art not only enriches the spirit but also, as she put it herself, 'it makes one more sane and sympathetic, more observant and understanding…'" (Miller 1981, 5). This belief would form the bedrock of MoMA's education program.

The philanthropic founders had been active in New York prior to establishing the museum, with a particular interest in arts and culture, education, and children's charities. Bliss was a patron of the Julliard Foundation, which benefited the Juilliard School for performing arts, as well as privately subsidizing artists and musicians (McCarthy 1991, 196). Rockefeller had a number of philanthropic interests, including support of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and local neighborhood associations for immigrants and minorities (Kert 1993, 253). She also showed an interest in progressive education reform and sent three of her five sons to the newly established Lincoln School, a progressive laboratory school of Columbia Teachers College. Sullivan had studied art at the Art Students League and Pratt Institute and went on to teach art in public schools and at Pratt. Sullivan's extensive art training and teaching background would lead her to become a voice for art education at MoMA in its early efforts to engage with area schools (Lynes 1973, 168).

MoMA, with its philanthropic and social concerns, should be considered in the context of the Progressive Era. While the progressive movement encompassed many facets focused on the promise of a better life for an increasingly industrialized society, at its core, the focus was children, education reform, and the critical role of education and public institutions to improve the lives of individuals and of society as a whole (Cremin 1961, viii). The Great Depression brought children's issues into the wider public consciousness, galvanizing a broad spectrum of activists. Joseph Hawes explains,

> [a]n army of adults concerned about the nation's future and therefore very much aware of the circumstances and needs of the nation's children, coalesced into a movement in the 1930s. These child advocates included social workers, juvenile court staff, teachers, parents, staffers at the U.S Children's Bureau, public health nurses, volunteer workers with children and other civic-minded folk.
>
> (1991, 66)

These progressive ideas about childhood fed into the founders' philanthropic focus on children and education. Rockefeller, Bliss, and Sullivan were the driving force behind the crafting of larger social aims for MoMA. In its early years, MoMA can be seen as a feminized and peripheral space in comparison to more established and traditional art institutions in

New York at the time. While MoMA has been interpreted as a masculine space (Duncan 1989), it is worth noting the strong female influence on its early years.[2]

Encouraged by their successful first five years, MoMA's trustees opened the new building in 1939. Wanting to chart their progress into the future, they commissioned Artemus Packard, Professor of Fine Arts at Dartmouth College, "to outline a program whereby the Museum may become a national medium of art education" (Packard 1938). Packard devoted two years to the study, delivering his final report in February 1938: it proved a critical turning point for the museum. The report identified MoMA's deficits, redirected its interpretation plan, and led to the establishment of an education program. Overall, the Packard Report offered the museum a more concrete application of its charter, especially in terms of its educational mission.

Despite MoMA's initial success Packard addressed the disparity between theory and practice at the museum, stating,

> Theoretically, in as much as the Museum of Modern Art is an educational institution, its various departments may be thought of as each devoted to some specific educational enterprise. In fact, however, very little attention is given within the present organization, to a consideration of the educational value of any of the Museum's activities.
>
> (1938, 17)

The report highlighted a deficit in the expertise of the early staff and board – no-one had expertise in art education or education more broadly. Packard's report emphasizes that staff and board members needed more expertise on how to present art to a general audience. While the report leveled harsh criticism, overall it offered MoMA a better understanding of its future challenges and recommendations. Packard articulated a new direction for the museum's interpretation of modern art, one that had it play a more significant role in people's lives and society as a whole, stating,

> Art can occupy a central place in the life of the modern world only insofar as it can be applied to the things the majority of people are intimately aware of and by according to it in these associations the same dignity and respect to which it is supposed to be entitled in its less plebeian manifestations.
>
> (Goodyear 1943, 94)

He proposed that the museum emphasize aesthetic appreciation over historical information. This approach diverged in part from how the museum had previously been interpreting and presenting art.[3] He argued that in order for the general public to fully appreciate modern art and in turn make it a greater part of their lives, they had to be able to understand it in terms of what they saw in front of them and around them. They also needed to consider how another person, an artist, was engaging with and responding to contemporary society, without using the terms of historical lineage. In other words, the museum had to offer an answer to the question, "What does this have to do with me? Now?" Packard emphasized the museum's potential, stating,

> The Museum of Modern Art is in a more strategic position than any other institution to lead the attack on the fundamental cultural question in our time. "How can Art be restored to a more healthy relationship to the life of the community?"
>
> (Goodyear 1943, 95)

Among Packard's salient recommendations was an appointment to lead the museum's education programs for children. The program would center on engaging new audiences

in modern art and the modern world through art making and children therefore would become change agents.

In the spring of 1937 MoMA hired Victor D'Amico, an art teacher at the progressive Fieldston School in the Bronx, to develop a pilot education project. Beyond a commitment to the Packard Report recommendations and to popular instruction, the choice of D'Amico and the focus on children reveals the institution's social values. It shows MoMA's understanding of the role of the modern child in progressive political thought, as well as evolving concepts of children and childhood in the twentieth century and in modern art. D'Amico had a strong grounding in progressive education and had distinguished himself by applying progressive pedagogy to art education and being a strong advocate for children's creativity.

From his earliest teaching experience for the Child Study Association in Summer Play Schools, a program for children in settlement houses in New York City, D'Amico acknowledged children as his teachers.[4] D'Amico later described the transformation of his teaching after listening to and observing children. He noted they became dramatically more spirited and engaged in art and their broader surroundings when he abandoned teaching technical skills and began talking with children about their interests, engaged their imaginations, and walked through their neighborhoods to paint and draw what they saw around them. He stated that through these methods "We found more creative and personal adventure." Throughout his career, D'Amico would advocate listening to and respecting children, arguing that they had a great deal of wisdom to impart.

D'Amico's pedagogic experiences and the Play School Movement, evolved from the teachings of Caroline Pratt.[5] Pratt, a contemporary of MoMA's founders, advocated no set curriculum; rather, instruction was based on the belief that children learn through self-directed play and seek knowledge when they desire or require it. Teaching was unstructured, followed no prescribed pattern, and was directed by the child's exploration (Cremin 1961, 205). Importantly, Pratt viewed the child as an artist: inherently creative. She believed students should be offered a variety of materials and objects to explore and integrate into their play.

Pratt's Play School and D'Amico's formative training were located in Greenwich Village, New York, a fertile and vibrant community in which to explore creative expression in the early twentieth century. Lawrence Cremin notes, "These were the years when Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham were attempting to develop an expressionist dance, Max Weber and John Marin, an expressionist painting, Charles Ives, an expressionist music, Alfred Stieglitz, an expressionist photography, and William Zorach, an expressionist sculpture." He continues, "When Caroline Pratt spoke of the child as artist, she was really propounding a pedagogical version of the expressionist credo. And when this credo was applied to education on a broad scale … it seemed to release an extraordinary flow of genuinely first-rate student art" (1961, 206). Like Pratt, D'Amico believed that "genuinely first-rate student art" was the result of consciously constructed art education. He was committed to developing what he saw as the creative expression of children. It is in this spirit that we can understand his pedagogy and the creation of early programs at MoMA. It is also where we can see the intersection of his pedagogy and MoMA's. While MoMA was presenting the expressive work of modern artists, D'Amico was experimenting with how to foster creative expression from the earliest age.

By the time MoMA employed D'Amico in the spring of 1937, he had been teaching art at the Fieldston School for nearly a decade. D'Amico had also developed a solid progressive pedagogy and a strong and assured professional voice. He was emerging as a dedicated advocate for children and art education and was one of the first educators in

the United States to apply theories of cognitive development to art education (Morgan 1995, 156). The philosophy of creative teaching that D'Amico espoused in his book (*Creative Teaching in Art* 1942) and through the programs at MoMA proposed a new approach to art education. He found fault with contemporary art education practices that he characterized in turn as indoctrinatory and *laissez-faire*. He argued that indoctrinatory teaching methods had children work on the mastery of techniques and fundamentals through projects which promoted imitation with intended identical outcomes such as color charts, coloring books, and perspective exercises. He also criticized *laissez-faire* methods which gave children materials and the freedom to create whatever they pleased without any instruction or motivation from the teacher.

Rather than situate his ideas within this spectrum, D'Amico developed a method "based on knowledge of the child's creative and psychological growth and on mastery of teaching techniques for their development" (*The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 1951, 7). He stressed the need to understand child development, encouraging parents and teachers to select media and motivation appropriate for children's development in order to foster their imagination and creativity. He emphasized young children's interest in exploring ideas and media spontaneously, as well as helping them to use the particular qualities of the media to communicate ideas. Between ages three and five, he introduced children to artwork through color reproductions, placing them casually around the classroom for students to observe or discuss with the teacher. As children grow (ages six to twelve), he believed they become interested in more challenging projects and give greater attention to craftsmanship and design. He believed that older students are also more aesthetically aware and better able to organize and express their feelings. He suggested that classes take on the same project, such as "the expression of a common emotional experience or the introduction of a new concept or technique" (1951, 8). Even when suggesting overarching class projects, D'Amico emphasized that these were open-ended with differentiated outcomes. Teenagers, he suggested, should be introduced to more works of art and that "as the individual grows towards maturity, the art experience not only broaden[s], but deepen[s]" (1951, 8). He brought all of this to bear on his work at MoMA.

The Young People's Gallery

On arrival D'Amico developed the Education Project, which would launch the following autumn. The Education Project was a partnership with New York City-area high schools, both public and private, and consisted of four components: rotating exhibitions sent to participating schools, lectures for partner-schools, demonstrations of techniques offered at the museum, and the Young People's Gallery.

As a permanent and public gallery space at MoMA, the Young People's Gallery was the most visible component of the Education Project. Its original intent was "to provide a place for children in an adult museum, to communicate the ideas and activities of the Department, and to bring new experiments in art education to parents, teachers, and the general public" (1951, 12). The Young People's Gallery was conceived of as a space where all visitors at the museum could learn about the "new experiments" of the department, engage with its ideas and activities and view children's artwork.

Exhibitions in the Young People's Gallery included children's artwork and exhibitions about children's creative development and art education. The space also included works from the museum's permanent collection curated by high school students. These exhibitions were presented in the service of D'Amico's belief in the universal need for creative

expression. In 1939, D'Amico mounted *Creative Growth: Childhood to Maturity*, which presented the work of Dahlov Zorach, daughter of artist William Zorach. The exhibition grouped her work into stages of artistic development[6] to illustrate how a child's interests and skills change as she matures. He would also mount annual exhibitions highlighting the artwork of children in museum programs, including exhibitions dedicated to work from the Children's Art Carnival. D'Amico also used the gallery to show the art of children from around the world. The first of these exhibitions was *Children of England Paint*, mounted in 1941, following MoMA's exhibition *Britain at War*. He extended this theme to children's art about the war (1942), and the work of children from Axis power nations, Japan (1949) and Italy (1955), as well as art by children from the Soviet Union (1944), China (1944), France (1948), and Sweden (1951). In 1948, *Art Work by Children of Other Countries* presented the art of children grouped by nation and included a section devoted to "Art Work By Young People Released From Concentration Camps." D'Amico aimed to develop empathy for the children in other nations, and in turn foster understanding. Both D'Amico and MoMA would leverage children to further their message of unity through modern art and creativity in the decades to come. By 1951, the Young People's Gallery had mounted eighty-three exhibitions.

The Young People's Gallery served a dual function as both an exhibition space and a workspace. D'Amico emphasized the importance of the classroom environment to stimulate a child's creativity, and he took care in designing furniture with an eye both to the children's ages and also the differing functions of the space. The Gallery included lightweight desks that could be easily moved by students to create different formations depending on the activity. The multi-purpose furniture easily folded and could be pushed against the wall to take the appearance of wainscoting, allowing for open performance space. The tabletops were off-white linoleum for easy color–legibility and cleanup. The Gallery also included folding screens to display artwork pinned to corkboard or placed in drop-down trays. The easily stacked stools were designed by the Finnish architect/designer, Alvar Aalto. The gallery exemplified how D'Amico marshaled modern design and consumerism to support learning and creativity for both the individual and the larger group.

The Young People's Gallery was in a strategic and noteworthy location in the museum, in the Phillip L. Goodwin and Edward Durrell Stone-designed building, inaugurated in 1939, on the third floor alongside the permanent collection. Educational and child-focused spaces were then as now often out of view. Counterintuitively, the Young People's Gallery was designed to be viewed by the general public during teaching sessions and, crucially, experienced in conversation with other artwork on view at MoMA. Similarly, children as artists would offer visitors a relatable experience: an opportunity to recall their own childhood creativity. The Young People's Gallery championed respect for children's creative expression, positing this as a shared value across the museum.

The placement of the gallery highlights important distinctions about how MoMA was viewing and leveraging children in this period. The location of the Young People's Gallery adjacent to collection galleries can be contrasted with Junior Museums, children's spaces that were growing in popularity in the early 1940s, most notably at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago. These spaces were separate from the main galleries of the museum. The Junior Museum at the Metropolitan Museum had its own entrance, exhibition galleries, and a café and library for children, keeping the activity of children away from the general public. By contrast, MoMA prominently displayed the learning and activities of children within the galleries of the museum.

In this period MoMA also asked the public to consider the art of children outside the Young People's Gallery. Like the exhibition of the Viennese Secessionists nearly three

decades earlier (Fineberg 2006, 215), Alfred Barr Jr. included children's work alongside that of mature artists in two exhibitions of the 1930s. In the 1937 exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism*, considered to be a defining modernist exhibition in America, Barr presented modern art alongside the artwork of children. Similarly, in 1939 in *Art in Our Time*, Barr included twelve paintings by children ages eight to twelve years old. In the exhibition catalog captions accompanying two of the paintings invite comparison with Matisse's *Dance (1)*, 1909 and *The Blue Window*, 1913. The text is a series of quotations ranging from an unnamed art critic in 1877 disparaging the work of modern artists by comparing their work to that of children, to a contemporary quote by Aldous Huxley that praises the "astonishing artistic talents" of children and arguing that "Where artistic sensibility is concerned, the majority of adults have grown, not up, but down" (n.p). This quotation and the inclusion of the artwork of children in these seminal exhibitions highlights MoMA's belief at the time that engaging with children's work could help frame the work of modern artists.

During its first decades MoMA focused on introducing the American public to modern art, advocating the legitimacy of the work of modern artists, and making modern art part of American life. Children, and specifically children as artists, would be leveraged in this campaign. At a moment when definitions of modern art were still unstable, and the forms and trajectory of modern art were diverse, MoMA, under Barr, worked to delineate and categorize these widely varied forms. The education programs at MoMA focused on exploring the processes of modern art making. This strategy asked viewers to consider the process by which artists created, by first considering themselves, and their children, as artists. The artwork of other artists, thus, became familiar and personal. The interpretation and presentation of modern art at MoMA centered around creativity with children as exemplars.

The Children's Art Carnival

By 1942, D'Amico had created the Children's Art Carnival for children aged four to twelve years. The Carnival provided a laboratory for D'Amico to test his ideas about children's creativity. It was developed as an ideal creative environment for children that centered on stimulating their awareness of elements of design and art making. D'Amico controlled every aspect of his experiment, from the design of the furnishing to the selection of materials and projects. He did so by constructing what he believed to be an ideal environment for creative development, emphasizing the importance of environment and play:

> The Carnival is run on specific principles of child psychology and according to particular theories about creative growth. The importance of an environment designed for visual appeal as a setting for exposing children to modern art is one principle. Another is that play can be used as a source of orientation for the child's creative learning because it stimulates his imagination and gives him opportunity to assume adult roles usually denied him in real life.
>
> (*The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 1951, 12)

The Carnival was a space created especially for children. No adults were allowed into the Carnival other than instructors and occasionally members of the press. D'Amico created

a magical realm that transported children into a separate world devoted to their creativity and imagination.

The basic format of the Carnival remained the same throughout its long run consisting of two areas, the Inspiration Area and the Studio-Workshop. Children entered the Carnival at intervals, either as independent visitors or as classes, first encountering the Inspiration Area, described as an "exhibition area where toys, paintings and sculpture by modern artists are set up" (*The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 1951, 12). By 1960, D'Amico had articulated a more sensual and analytical description of the area,

> This is a semi-darkened room painted in deep blues and greens with toys either in pools of light or lighted from within, giving a jewel-like effect. The mood intended is one of magic and fantasy, of a friendly forest, cool and quiet, with delightful surprises beckoning the child from every direction.
>
> (1960, 35)

The Inspiration Area was intended to stimulate children's creativity and imagination. It introduced children to fundamentals of design that they would later apply in the Studio-Workshop. The area included toys, often referred to as Motivations, which were created for the Carnival by artists and designers. Each toy, whether it was a puzzle, a light box, or a pegboard, was designed to engage with an element of design: line, color, texture, or spatial relationships. The toys in the Inspiration Area also encouraged combinations of visual, tactile, and kinesthetic experiences.

Once the children had explored the Inspiration Area, they moved into the Studio-Workshop (Figure 25.2). They emerged from the darkened Inspiration Area into a brightly lit room with vividly painted walls. D'Amico, again, designed the space and furnishings. Around the perimeter of the room were adjustable painting easels (D'Amico 1960, 36) where children were given aluminum trays with glass coasters that held tempera paint in the primary colors and black and white, a large bristle brush and sponges, and sheets of 18 ins × 24 ins paper (Sahasrabudhe 1995, 22–23). In the center of the Studio-Workshop were round white tables that could accommodate six to eight children each. In the center of the tables were turntables with pie-shaped compartments that contained stimulating materials for collage making, including feathers, pipe cleaners, sequins, beads, buttons, and colored and textured papers. There was no prescribed list of materials; the contents of the turntables were selected to excite the eyes and hands with a range of colors, shapes, and textures. Children also had the option to create mobiles (also called "constructions"). Each table was supplied with scissors, staplers, hole punches, and adhesive and suspended above each were large white hoops from which mobiles could be hung while being constructed. The children were free to choose what media they would work with and how they would spend their time. Instruction was minimal:

> A child is assisted by a teacher only when he does not know how to operate a toy, how to get started on a collage or construction, or when he does not seem to be deriving all the satisfaction possible from a given experience.
>
> (D'Amico 1960, 36)

The hands-off presence of the instructor was implicit in the careful and intentional construction and furnishing of the environment and the selection and presentation of materials. This approach to instruction was intended to allow the child's natural expression to emerge. D'Amico made no attempts to teach the work of modern artists or have children work in the style of artists whose work was in MoMA's collections. However, works from

FIGURE 25.2 Participants at the exhibition "Children's Holiday Carnival." MoMA, NY, December 10, 1956 through January 13, 1957. New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). *Source*: Photo: Soichi Sunami. Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY. Acc.: IN0610.8. © 2016. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.

the collection were placed throughout the Carnival as inspiration or motivations, similar to the toys. D'Amico argued,

> If education is to develop the child's personality, it must nourish every kind of expression. If a child tends to work abstractly, the teacher will try to develop that particular expression; if another child tends to work realistically, the teacher will guide him. But each child must work in a way natural to him. The real problem is to free the child of his clichés or imitated mannerisms and to help him discover his own way of seeing.

> (1960, 15)

The Children's Art Carnival also tested D'Amico's ideas about the classroom as a microcosm of democratic living. The combination of individuality and community cooperation was an example of the ideal progressive classroom championed by John Dewey and other progressive educators, including D'Amico. Dewey, a leading voice in progressive education, espoused a pedagogy that integrated a child's personal experiences and built upon it to create new knowledge. Core to this philosophy of education was active learning to develop new knowledge which had children creating and engaging in various activities,

such as cooking, sewing, and woodworking. Dewey and D'Amico both argued, that the dynamic of an active classroom prepared children to live and participate in a democratic society. D'Amico further believed in the creative classroom as a microcosm of democracy: "Children share tools and materials in common, there is constant rubbing of shoulders, there is need for planning and activities and for establishing efficient and congenial working relationships" (*The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 1951, 11). These ideas around cooperation and choice would become especially significant when the Carnival toured Europe and India.

This emphasis on the seemingly democratic aspects of modern art would be particularly important as America emerged from the Second World War. Adapting to postwar change, MoMA began to take on a new identity and rhetoric, crafting its message to address fears of communist encroachment and nuclear threat. Modern art's foreign – particularly Russian – origins and breaks with tradition often caused suspicion in America (de Hart Mathew 2000). Increasing conservatism, red-baiting, and anti-communist propaganda, had created a hostile environment for modern art and artists, who faced accusations of being tools of the Soviet regime (Dondero 1949). During this period, MoMA worked to recast conversations around modernism in America to construct an affirmative argument about the purpose of modern art in American culture. MoMA positioned itself as a defender of freedom of expression and a bedrock of a democratic society. This affirmative argument would center around creativity and innovation as hallmarks of American freedom and essential tools for building a free and democratic future. Again, children would become critical, if unwitting, actors in shaping this future.

In 1952, amid an atmosphere of tension due to McCarthyism and what was known as the Second Red Scare in America, both Barr and D'Amico penned essays addressing the essential role of creative expression in a democracy. Barr's essay "Is Modern Art Communistic?" directly addressed accusation that modern art was subversive and anti-American. He stated, "[w]hatever a Western leader's point of view on artistic matters may be, he would not want to impose his taste upon his countrymen or interfere with their creative freedom" (1986 [1952], 214). Barr's essay not only reframes conservative critics as uninformed; it also valorizes European modern artists as heroes of creativity and artistic freedom. In this same period one of D'Amico's fundamental arguments became "creative education is an investment towards peace" (*The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 1951, 18). In 1952, the same year Barr penned "Is Modern Art Communistic?," D'Amico wrote "Creative Expression: A Discipline for Democracy." Here, D'Amico asks the central question, "Does art education help children live more effectively in a democracy?" (1952, 10), echoing Barr's views on creative freedom,

> The arts can and do develop socially minded children who contribute to a democracy. It is essential to establish personal freedom of thought and action, but these must be born out of self-discipline … Paramount, of course, is the understanding that all members of a group have the same privileges of choice and action and that no member should willfully act in violation of it.
>
> (*The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 1951, 11)

Thus, D'Amico argued that only art education which focused on creativity and social interaction, like creative teaching, would be a true "investment in peace" (1952, 10). D'Amico believed that art making develops appreciation of the art of others, and by extension develops a person's empathetic capacities, "… the sharing of materials and the realization that other children also have these sensations is a conscious part of their learning experience"

(D'Amico 1952, 35). By this logic, children in a creative classroom are developing the skills and capacities to sustain a democratic society. This cooperative community of individuals would be on display and a topic of discussion as the Children's Art Carnival became a cultural export. For visitors to the World's Fair, the Carnival, as a model of cooperative individuals working harmoniously together, became a microcosm of global foreign policy and a symbol of the hopes and aspirations of the fair itself. In India, it was hoped that the harmony promoted by the Carnival would speak to the cooperation and integration of different classes of people in an emerging democracy.

MoMA began exporting exhibitions and educational material during the Second World War, increasing these activities after 1952 when it established the International Programme and Council (Franc 1994). Through the International Program and Council, MoMA sent traveling exhibitions abroad in the 1950s and 1960s to promote modern art. These exhibitions highlighted American art and artistic practice. At the 1953 opening of *Twelve Modern American Painters and Sculptors* at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris, board president John Hay Whitney stated, "We at the Museum believe that modern American art has a special contribution to make in the exchange of creative life throughout the world" (Franc 1994, 118). Discussions of MoMA's international exhibitions in this period have focused on the presentation of Abstract Expressionism as a weapon of the Cold War (Cockcroft 2000). It is worth noting that MoMA sent a much wider range of art abroad than indicated in similar publications of the 1980s and 1990s. Notable amongst these exhibitions are *Modern Art in the U.S.* in 1956 which as a survey show included a wide range of artists. Nonetheless it is the case that *The New American Painting* in 1958–1959 curated by Dorothy Miller was billed as an Abstract Expressionist exhibition and featured the work of William Baziotes, Grace Hartigan, Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Clyfford Still, and traveled to eight European countries.

In addition to exhibitions of American Modernists and Abstract Expressionists, MoMA deployed abroad the Children's Art Carnival. In 1957, it was included in the International Trade Fairs in Barcelona and Milan under the sponsorship of the United States Department of Commerce. The following year, it was part of the American Pavilion at the World's Fair in Brussels. Like Abstract Expressionism, D'Amico's themes of childhood creativity, imagination, and freedom of expression became symbolic of American democracy abroad. As adults looked on, children's creativity and play were freighted with the notion that they foreshadowed the future of democracy and global diplomatic relations. In the eyes of D'Amico, the Carnival not only represented a thriving democracy, but was key to global peace. In India, it was hoped that harmony promoted by the Carnival would speak to the cooperation and integration of different classes of people in an emerging democracy.

"An American Gift to the Indian Child"

The Children's Art Carnival in India began when Indira Gandhi visited the World's Fair in 1958. She felt "the Indian children should benefit a great deal from it" (*The Children's Art Carnival in India 1963–64 – A Report*, 1). The Carnival in India is of particular interest because it is the only example of it being replicated and given to a nation as a permanent installation. Furthermore, it is the only instance of the Carnival being solicited by another nation and being presented independently of other American government programs. The gift of the Carnival was developed to have a long-term impact in India, making it distinctive from similar presentations in Europe. It was seen by India as having potential benefit for the country. The Carnival in India offers unique perspectives on the political implications

of the international transmission of modernism and the importation of art pedagogy, and in the role MoMA aspired to in the development of an independent postcolonial India.

The language of gift-giving used by MoMA established a paternal construct and a problematic dynamic. It revealed that despite MoMA's support of India's postcolonial development, vestiges of colonialism persisted in this period and specifically in these interactions. While MoMA's engagement with India was constructed as a reciprocal exchange, it was an inherently uneven one.

The rhetoric that MoMA and D'Amico had honed throughout the 1950s linking children's activities with democracy, creativity, innovation, and peace found a partner in Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The early postcolonial era in India was a period of optimism and growing nationalism within which Nehru set an aggressive modernization agenda. Modernization, for Nehru, was not simply a fashionable emulation of the West, but a state of mind that would combat stasis and advance the nation (Prakāsh 2002, 10). Creativity factored critically into Nehru's ideas about modernization and his belief that creative thinking was critical to helping India prosper and was at the core of a modern democracy. Nehru argued that

> [t]he main thing today is that a tremendous amount of building is taking place in India and an attempt should be made to give it a right direction and to encourage creative minds to function with a measure of freedom so that new types may come out, new designs, new types, new ideas, and out of that amalgam something new and good will emerge.
>
> (Prakāsh 2002, 10)

Nehru called upon seasoned modern designers and curators from the West (including Le Corbusier, Charles and Ray Eames, Louis Kahn, Richard Neutra, and Grace McCann Morley) to assist the new nation-state in its urgent modernization project.[7] Under the Nehru government, modernism became associated with the new. Architectural historian Vikramāditya Prakāsh advances:

> The inherent value of the new, in Nehru's view, simply was that it was 'a measure of freedom,' liberated from the stasis of history. To be modern was to be new, and the New and the Good, in the Nehruvian semantics, were synonymous.
>
> (2002, 10)

Nehru's interest in Western mid-century modernism was not simply conceived as an adoption of Western design, but rather as a dialogue with modern design to explore and address the contemporary struggles of India. Architectural historian Farhan Sirajul Karim notes a sense of Indian agency characterized by a proactive notion of determining the future of the nation-state (2011, 190). This sense of agency on the part of India led to a mining of modernism for the processes and possibilities for advancing their nation (Karim 2011). The Carnival's focus on fostering creativity and attending to the processes of making and creating, rather than on a preconceived outcome, aligned with this notion. When Indira Gandhi inaugurated the Children's Art Carnival in New Delhi on 30 October 1963, she not only linked the Carnival to her father's aspirations for the new democracy, but placed these aspirations within the hands of Indian children. It was through their creativity, developed and fostered through the Carnival that they would help to develop the newly democratic India.

The six-week Carnival closed on 7 December. In India, it had maintained its basic format of Inspiration Area and Studio-Workshop, and continued to place creativity at its

core. During this initial installation in New Delhi it served an average of 210 students per day, serving 5,403 students and 141 schools (*The Children's Art Carnival 1963–64 – A Report*, 15). It served an additional 1,875 visitors during Sunday open-houses. Following this initial installation in New Delhi, the Carnival toured five cities in India, Hyderabad, Madras, Bangalore, Bombay, and Ahmedabad, before returning to New Delhi where it was permanently installed at the National Children's Museum.

Planning for the Carnival took place both in New York and in India. Dr. Prabha Sahasrabudhe, Director of Bal Bhaven and National Children's Museum, was appointed to be director of the Carnival in India.[8] While D'Amico duplicated the Carnival and brought it to India, much work was done once it arrived to adapt its methods to make them applicable to the needs and realities of teaching in India. In addition to Sahasrabudhe, an Indian committee made up of representatives from both the arts and education was formed.

In India the Carnival was constructed to model the pedagogy of creative teaching and have a discernible impact on art education, the lives of children, and ultimately the nation as a whole. Unlike previous presentations abroad, which mainly demonstrated creative teaching practices, the Indian Carnival sought to elucidate the philosophy behind it and the methods employed. This strategy was achieved by offering hands-on training for Indian teachers, including preparing a team to facilitate the Carnival itself, and conducting conferences on the philosophies and methods of creative teaching.

Not all of MoMA's activities in India were well received. Examples of these less successful imports offer ways of understanding the contributions of the Carnival and the complex and often problematic activities of MoMA abroad. MoMA's presentation of postwar abstraction as a universal or democratic art did not resonate in the Third World, and proved highly problematic. The disconnect between MoMA's presentation of modern art and Indian audiences can be seen in the reception of the 1967 exhibition *Two Decades of American Painting*, mounted four years after the arrival of the Children's Art Carnival.[9] The exhibition contained 100 works of art, including examples of Abstract Expressionism, Color Field painting, and Pop Art. The formalist critic Clement Greenberg accompanied the exhibition to India and lectured in New Delhi. The local reception of the exhibition ranged from confusion to outright dismissal. Indian audiences described it as "decadent," "boring," "inexplicable," and "tragic" (Gupta 2013, 44). The exhibition conveyed the "exasperations, depression, and impotent anger of a generation of Americans" (Gupta 2013, 44). Indian artist Gieve Patel noted that "The American statement seemed too complete in its own context, and offered an impassive facade" (Gupta 2013, 44). Furthering the disconnect between MoMA and Indian audiences, Greenberg assessed the work of contemporary Indian modern artists as derivative of Western abstraction and argued that Indian artists should focus on producing traditional Indian crafts that would be more marketable abroad.

The historic, social, and political contexts of modernism in Europe and America and their visual culture were not the same in India. Discussing the disparate manifestations of modernism, Andreas Huyssen notes,

> The antagonistic ethos of European modernism thus took on very different political shadings in the colony, which in turn required literary and representational strategies in tune with the experiences and subjectivities created by colonization. The crisis of subjectivity and of representation at the core of European modernism played out very differently in a colonial and postcolonial modernity.

(2007, 190)

This difference is precisely what MoMA failed to acknowledge in *Two Decades of American Painting*. Recent scholarship has explored the complexities of modernism in the developing Third World, aiming to deconstruct the binaries of the hegemonic West with the passive Third World.[10] Karim argues, "The old linear model of cultural imperialism could not explain this form of flow. Modernity was no longer merely an imposition, that is, a one-way flow from West to East, but the result of a two-way process" (2011, 190). The plan for the Carnival in India placed an emphasis on training Indian teachers to facilitate the Carnival and to implement creative teaching strategies in their classrooms. Adaptation was expected, and even required. We should consider this discussion of the Children's Art Carnival amongst these more complex and problematized discussions of modernism in the Third World and the spread of American political and artistic ideology during the Cold War. The Children's Art Carnival can be seen as a point of "connection, dispersion, [and] entanglement" (Lu 2011) for global modernism.

The Children's Art Carnival seems to have had a more enthusiastic reception than *Two Decades of American Painting* because, as Karim argues, it was, "the result of a two-way process."[11] The Children's Art Carnival focused on the processes of modern art and design, allowing room for and encouraging Indian audiences to adapt the forms to their contexts. D'Amico was committed to a strategy of pedagogic transmission, training teachers, and implementing creative teaching strategies. Thus, in India, the Carnival was less of a showcase than it had been in Europe, and was seen instead as an educational development program.

The Carnival in India was the high point of D'Amico's career at MoMA, and the height of influence for MoMA's education programs. D'Amico's education program held at its core Abby Rockefeller's belief that, to reiterate, art makes "one more sane and sympathetic, more observant and understanding" (Miller 1981, 5). Throughout his career D'Amico asserted that through these capacities we could create change. The Carnival was given to the children of India with the conviction that it would foster their creativity so that they could become change agents themselves. But, by the end of the decade, D'Amico's art center and education programs were closed and he was forced into retirement.

Amid the seismic cultural shifts of the 1960s and the waning influence of modernism, D'Amico's philosophy and practice did not adapt and fell out of favor. As MoMA approached its forty-first year, John Hightower, MoMA's newly installed director, stated, "to a large extent the Museum has essentially accomplished what it set out to prove forty-one years ago" (1970, 2), when MoMA was established for the purpose of, "encouraging and developing the study of modern art and the application of such arts to manufacture and practical life and furnishing popular instruction" (Elderfield 1994, 9). With this statement Hightower effectively shut the door on the first forty years of the museum's activities and charted a new course for MoMA as "the preeminent institution of its kind in the world" (Hightower 1970, 2).

When D'Amico came to MoMA in 1937, the Packard Report had identified critical deficits in the staff's knowledge of education. Over the following three decades MoMA built an education program that came to be recognized nationally and internationally for its influence and impact. D'Amico's career, and the history of education programs at MoMA during its first forty years, help to elaborate an understanding of how the institution was framing emerging modern art. This history underlines the importance that creativity, artistic practice and children played in the understanding of MoMA's modernism. Importantly, it highlights MoMA's commitment to reaching and educating a broad public about modern art, and the centrality of children in this mission.

Notes

1   This phrase appears on publicity posters for the Children's Art Carnival used during its presentation in India, Victor D'Amico Papers (VDA), IV.A.vi.11, MoMA Archives. It also appears in the museum's report on the Carnival in India "The Children's Art Carnival in India: An American Gift to the Indian Child" (1962).

2   The founding board of trustees included Mary Quinn Sullivan, Lillie Bliss, and Abby Rockefeller, as well as Josephine Crane, Paul J. Sachs, Frank Crowninshield, and A. Conger Goodyear, who served at the museum's first President.

3   The interpretation had followed Alfred Barr's methodology that emphasized tracing a historical and formal lineage for modern art. Many of the museum's seminal exhibitions of the 1930s took this approach, notably *Cubism and Abstract Art*, mounted in 1936, during Packard's residency at the museum.

4   Settlement houses were part of social reforms in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England and the United States. They provided daycare, education, and other social services for immigrants. The most well known of these in America is Hull House, founded by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in Chicago in 1889.

5   In 1914 Pratt founded the Play School in Greenwich Village, later known as the City and Country School.

6   Stages of artistic development are culturally distinct and so this is a problematic area and by no means easily identifiable as universals.

7   The American Grace McCann Morley was a former classmate of Alfred Barr's while at Harvard. She had been the director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art before moving to New Delhi to lead the nation's first national museum. For more on Morley see Phillips (2006).

8   Sahasrabudhe's EdD thesis explored the needs for and feasibility of establishing an art education center in New Delhi based upon the creative teaching methods espoused by D'Amico. See Sahasrabudhe (1961).

9   *Two Decades of American Painting* also toured Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, and Kyoto, Japan.

10 See Gupta (2013), Mathur (2007, 2011), Huyssen (2007), Lu (2011), and Karim (2011).

11 Duanfang Lu (2011) argues that points of "connection, dispersion, entanglement" are as important to the study of Third World modernism, rather than focusing on a discussion of centers and peripheries.

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Paul Cézanne's *Young Girl at the Piano – Overture to* "Tannhäuser" or "*Le Haschisch des femmes*"

Anna Green

Introduction

Paul Cézanne's *Young Girl at the Piano – Overture to* "Tannhäuser," *c*. 1869, is a liminal painting in both style and subject, emerging as it does from the vigorous *couillarde* essays of the 1860s and very early 1870s, but preceding the mutation of these into the so-called "constructive stroke" and then what has traditionally come to be seen as "mature" Cézanne.[1] It is a painting of seeming contrasts. On the one hand, contained within the narrow pictorial space of an oppressively furnished bourgeois interior, are two female protagonists, absorbed in quintessentially "feminine" accomplishments: one, white-clad, angular, stiffly inclined towards her piano; the other, perhaps older, in darker dress, seated on an unyielding banquette, sewing, knitting, or darning. On the other hand, the whimsical wallpaper, the disequilibrium of the striped carpet, the crazy jigsaw where skirts meet piano, and the capricious floral covers of the armchair threaten to overspill their boundaries, like the piece the girl is playing – a piano transcription of the overture to Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, which contemporaries would have immediately read as a byword for sensuality and free play of the imagination (Figure 26.1). The palette, which initially appears limited, on close inspection yields sonorous variations of tone. What might Cézanne have intended by these apparent antinomies? Responses – rather than answers – are to be found, I believe, by considering what constitutes the "modern" in this relatively little discussed painting.

My enquiry will cover the following. I will examine how young female piano players might be read as markers of modernity in nineteenth-century France. I will explain why for Charles Baudelaire and his contemporaries Wagner's *Tannhäuser* epitomized the "music of the future" (1972a [1861], 335) and why Baudelaire's notion of "correspondence" is key to understanding the modernism of this painting. I will draw parallels with Cézanne's own life. I will argue that all these contribute to a revision of assessments of what Cézanne's modernism consists of – and perhaps of modernism more generally. I will attempt to reduce neither the concepts of modernism nor modernity to univalent voices but treat them, rather, as multiply inflected, intertwined discourses.

As a means of access to these themes I will integrate some key methods and theories traditionally associated with explorations of modernism, particularly in studies of nineteenth-century French culture: social and Marxian histories, feminisms, Foucauldian analyses,

FIGURE 26.1   Paul Cézanne, *Young Girl at the Piano (The Overture to Tannhäuser)*
(*c*. 1868). Oil on canvas, 57 × 92cm. State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia.
Source: © Photo Josse/Scala, Florence.

psychoanalysis, semiotics, and deconstruction, amongst others. I will employ them with a
light touch, as vehicles, not foci – what Linda Nochlin approves as "bricolage" (1999, 10).
This is not only because I believe the particular art work in question should determine the
approach, rather than vice-versa; but that areas as plural as those under scrutiny here "call
for interpretative strategies that are open to multivalence, heterogeneity, and contestation"
(Brown 2002, 2).

Conditions of Production

I will begin by piecing together what is known regarding the picture's making. From letters
between Cézanne's friends, Fortuné Marion and Heinrich Morstatt, it is clear that this is
a third attempt at the *Young Girl at the Piano/Tannhäuser* theme, intended for the Salon.
The first was begun on 28 August 1866, with Marion reporting excitedly:

> he has half-built a superb picture, you'll see. It will be called the *Overture to Tanauhser*
> [sic] – it belongs to the future just as much as Wagner's music. Here it is: a young girl
> at the piano; some white against some blue; everything in the foreground. The piano
> superlatively and broadly treated, an old father in an armchair in profile: a young child
> with an idiotic air, listening in the background. The mass very wild and overwhelmingly
> powerful; one has to look quite a long time.
>
> (Barr 1937, 54)

But by the following year Cézanne was dissatisfied, complaining, "having attempted a
family *soirée*, it didn't come out at all, but I'll persevere and perhaps with another stab it
will come" (cited in Baligand 1978, 180). Possibly having painted over the first, he tried a
second. Marion again described this in two letters to Morstatt in 1867. The first, in June

or July, reports: "he is going to treat again in altogether different tonalities, with lighter notes the *Overture to Tannhäuser* that you saw in a first canvas" (Barr 1937, 54).

The second letter, September 6, describes its,

> … very different tonalities and very clear colours, with all the figures very finished. There's a young blond girl's head that's astonishingly powerful and pretty, and my profile is a very good likeness, yet at the same time very resolved, without the harsh colours that were so annoying and the ferocity that was so off-putting. The piano is still very beautiful, as in the other canvas, and the draperies, as usual, of an astonishing truth. Very likely it will be refused for the exhibition, but it will be exhibited somewhere, a canvas like this is sufficient to establish a reputation.
>
> (Barr 1937, 54–55)

We do not know why this one still did not satisfy, but sometime between 1867 and 1869 the version under discussion in this chapter, now in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, was produced. Only the pianist from the original cast of characters remains. The father and child from the first version, and Marion from the second have been expunged, and an additional female inserted.

The setting seems to evoke the Cézanne family home, the Jas de Bouffan: the neo-Rococo wallpaper and the piano figure in other pictures of the house. The literature is divided as to the sitters. One or both of Cézanne's sisters are usually favored – Marie or Rose – for either protagonist, with the female sewing as Cézanne's mother a close contender. John Rewald suggested that they "could equally well have been his cousins" (Gowing 1988, 158). André Dombrowski argues for "the painting less as a 'portrait' of … Cézanne's family … than as a genre scene of provincial middle-class life" (2013, 154).

Girls and Pianos in Nineteenth-Century France

What might the picture of a girl at her piano have connoted in France of the period? In vogue by 1815, by the 1820s in the French bourgeois household "a piano was an absolute requirement whether or not anyone played" (Auslander 1996, 290); by the 1840s so common it might be an object of derision; and by 1860 one might count several in one household (Perrot 1990, 531). Although boys and men did play, the piano was predominantly "feminine": one of a string of accomplishments learned either at home or at school that the middle-class daughter was to apply herself to. Paintings of female piano players are common in the period. In fashion plates girls were frequently modeled at their pianos. Popular magazines for "young ladies" had advice on what piano piece to play this week and how best to do so.

Piano playing, indeed, became a veritable metonym for femininity. Littré's dictionary of 1863 has under "piano" the example, "she is at the piano," no more, no less. A typical poem in *The Family Magazine* of December 1850 has piano playing representative of all – faceless and nameless – young girls: "let's call her Helena: she practises the same thing, over and over – loudly – day in, day out, on her fickle keyboard" (Bachi 1851, n.p.).

The connotations, then, were not necessarily positive. Danièle Pistone in her splendid *Le Piano dans la littérature française* sums up: "this laborious apprenticeship arises from a civilisation in which women contribute absolutely nothing of any importance" (1975, 215). "Girls sit down at the piano because birds like music" wrote one contemporary, implying not only the natural, but also the bird-brain (Fourcade-Prunet 1861, 71).

Frederick Graindorge, Hippolyte Taine's largely autobiographical hero, patiently explains why music is natural to women as mathematics is to man: "many things trace it back to source, from the tendency to the dramatic or to the mechanical" (1863, 321). Thus either it demonstrated female showiness – "briller" ("to shine") was the verb often used – or soulless plinking – what the French called "tapoter" or "pianoter" (Pistone 1975, 368). "Find me a young woman on the marriage market who can't tinkle the ivories with her nimble fingers to a satisfactory degree" commented a familiar contributor to the purportedly representative *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (Couailhac 1840, Volume I, 281). Cartoon and caricature exploited the tropes mercilessly.

Playing the piano was not simply a way of occupying the young girl in contradistinction to the more demanding and career-oriented education of her brother. As with other carefully monitored talents it was part of her "life's work" – an ensnarement with which to catch a prospective husband. *La Question des jeunes filles à marier*, 1863, describes a family *soirée* to which a potential husband is invited: "the young girl sits down at the piano … which provides a context of intimacy most favourable to the cohesion of the 'glue'" (Fourcade-Prunet 1863, 71).

The pleasure was not only aural. What could be a more charming embellishment to a bourgeois salon than a pretty young girl at the keyboard, as Pierre-Auguste Renoir's frequent and saccharine renditions suggest, and Edgar Degas's *Madame Camus at the Piano*, 1869, perhaps more critically? If absorbed in her music (as in her book, or drawing, or sewing) she offered an uninterrupted object for male contemplation (Figure 26.2). The Goncourts made no pretence: "a young woman sits down at the piano and I don't listen to her play: I watch her" (1956 [1888], Volume I, 1177).

The modern young girl at her piano, then, was "spectacular." Her image melds the meanings of the term as it passes from Guy Debord to T. J. Clark to gender scholarship. As marriage capital, surface show, and sexual property alike, she was subject to "a *consuming* gaze; a pleasuring look produced through the desire for consumption" (Green 1990, 66).

The male imagination could go quite wild watching the female *amateur de piano*. Taine/Graindorge, lingers over the delicious spectacle of a friend's daughter: "Jeanne … languidly trailed her fingers over the ivory keys, with a half smile on her sensual lips" (1863, 87). He imagines thrilling depths beneath a pure exterior:

> One senses an interior fire in such beings, a quivering sensibility, always concerned to contain itself … The beautiful creature is so fragile, that one is perpetually afraid of crushing her … All this throbbing and palpitating underneath the scarcely undulating skirt.
>
> (1863, 88)

At fever pitch he reminds himself that he will be fifty-three next birthday, but this does not stop him, next time he witnesses a female pianist, noticing how "her cheeks glowed, her eyes sparkled, a real goer of a race horse" (1863, 98). He envies her future husband, since, to judge by her fervor at the piano, he will be fortunate in other respects: "lucky man! … here's a training that will tickle her up in just the right places …" (1863, 99). Such scopophilic reactions are equally intentional in a number of paintings of female pianists in the period, especially those from around the date of Cézanne's painting, such as Gustave Léonard de Jonghe's headily allusive images, popular at the Salon.

I have begun to demonstrate how the image of the female pianist could be read as indexical of modern life in nineteenth-century France, but it is too early to suggest how Cézanne intersects with this discourse. For now I will highlight a more fundamental sense

FIGURE 26.2   Edgar Degas, *Madame Camus at the Piano*, oil on canvas, 139 × 94 cm, 1869. Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich. *Source*: Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich.

in which Cézanne's choice to represent one – or two – young girls, with or without a piano, may itself be interpreted as modern.

Modern Youth, Modern Girls

My argument in *French Paintings of Childhood and Adolescence, 1848–1886*, was that images of youth are vital for construing the modern, despite having been largely ignored in the art-historical literature in favor of the *flâneur,* the city, and the prostitute (Green 2007). The canonical texts on high French modernism to this day, from the good to the bad, adhere to the trio. Édouard Manet's *Olympia*, and Gustave Caillebotte's *Paris Street: A Rainy Day* are amongst the staple images in such accounts. They often begin with Gustave Courbet – *The Burial* or the *Painter's Studio* – and finish somewhere around "Post Impressionism" – frequently with Georges Seurat's *Grande Jatte* or late Cézanne – usually via Manet and the better known male "Impressionists" – Degas and Claude Monet in particular. The Open University's excellent *Modernity and Modernism: French Painting*

in the Nineteenth Century is a case in point, despite being structured, in part, as an indispensable critique of the literature on the subject to that date (Frascina *et al.* 1993). Key to these interpretations is Baudelaire's essay published in 1863, "The Painter of Modern Life," and the poet's characterization of his newly-coined term "modernity" as "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent" (1964a [1863], 13). Crucially overlooked, however, is a seminal passage in the essay subtitled, "The Artist, Man of the World, Man of the Crowd, and Child." Here Baudelaire expands on what constitutes "the Painter of Modern Life," using a conceit already current in other contemporaneous attempts to describe the modern, of "a return towards childhood":

> the child, is possessed to the highest degree of the faculty of keenly interesting himself in things … The child sees everything in a state of newness; he is always *drunk*. Nothing more resembles what we call inspiration … genius is nothing more nor less than *childhood recovered* at will – a childhood now equipped for self-expression … It is by this deep and joyful curiosity that we may explain the … gaze of a child confronted with something new …

> … think of Monsieur G. as … a man-child … never for a moment without the genius of childhood – a genius for which no aspect of life has become stale.
>
> (1964a [1863], 7–8)

The young, therefore, partake of modernity not merely via "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent" – they change, grow up, are impressionable – but because of an absorbed, fresh, heady inquisitiveness about the world, which fits them to transform themselves and it in new ways – qualities writ large, of course, in modernism as well.[2]

Baudelaire does not give an age to this "child" – and periodization of the stages of youth is anyhow notoriously slippery and culturally specific as we shall shortly see. (As shorthand in this chapter I am using "child" to denote the young subject clearly without any pubertal traits, and "adolescent" to describe the evidently pubertal subject.) When contemporaries pick up on youth as a cluster of signifiers for modernity, they range from earliest childhood to what we would now call young adults ("L'Enfant dans la peinture…" 1913, Volume I, 13). Often, however, they note how these qualities were magnified – and subtly modified – in that new, modern designation "adolescence" (Alaimo 1992, 421–422; Erickson 1968). Adolescence is probably closest to the age bracket the pianist actually looks to belong to, and certainly to the appellation "jeune fille"/young girl which Marion gave her from the first. From the 1920s *Jeune Fille au Piano* became either an alternative, or a preface, to the initial title, *Overture to* "Tannhäuser" which was adopted by Cézanne's inner circle from the first, suggesting his sanction. These considerations fit my own calculation that the pianist is most likely to be Cézanne's sister Rose, fifteen in 1869: for the painting was probably given to her by Cézanne and certainly sold from the estate of her husband (Maxime Conil) to Ambroise Vollard in 1904, the first time it had left the immediate family.

In French the same word – *fille* – is used for daughter and girl, but different words are used for boy and son – *garçon* and *fils*. Whilst *fille* and *fils* have their etymological root in *filiation* – consanguinity/dependence – *garçon* comes from the generalized *gars* – "person": no relational dependence. Like *fille, femme* – "woman" – is determined, not biologically, but in relation to men. To become *une femme* she must marry. Thus even if Cézanne's *Young Girl* is Marie – around twenty-eight – or one of the daughters of his uncle Dominique Aubert – a year younger and a year older respectively than Paul, who was thirty in 1869, the likely date for the painting – the fact that none of the potential

models was married, sanctioned the title of *Jeune Fille*. It does not take a Lacanian eye to notice that French paintings of young males of an apparently similar age are more likely to have been titled *Jeune Homme/Young Man*, not *Garçon/Boy*.

My contention, then, is that youth, as well as the city, the prostitute, and the *flâneur*, can "represent" or "stand for" the modern. To include a young girl inserts Cézanne's painting into this chain of signifiers. The gender of that youth further informs the equation with modernity. One way of maintaining male domination of the modern was to keep girls in a state of what Baudelaire called "immortal … puerility" (1964b [1853], 198). Fundamental to the male maintenance of capitalism was to retain girls and women "in their role as *producers* of the domestic symbolic nation," their exclusion "from the political sphere and their interpolation as naturally domestic creatures … masking much of the process of its construction" (Auslander 1996, 412; 416). As in Cézanne's painting of female piano playing and needlework, inside, masculinity does not have to be visible to be present.

For the regime of "nice" young girls in nineteenth-century France was, as writers of conduct and etiquette manuals never ceased to remind their subjects, to "be summarized in two words: *Devotion! Self-abnegation!* which necessarily incurs permanent sacrifice of oneself to others." This was the counsel of the Countess Antoinette Joséphine Françoise Anne Drohojowska in her dauntingly titled *Conseils à une jeune fille sur les devoirs à remplir dans le monde comme maîtresse de maison – Advice to a Young Girl Regarding the Duties Required of Her in Society and as Mistress of the House* (1867, 73). To achieve these, bourgeois girls should be entirely circumscribed, as another guardian of girlish morality, Madame Emmeline Raymond, insisted: "they live surrounded by the protection of their family, which makes up for any shortcomings. It is necessary to retain … old-fashioned ways, and to comply unerringly to the rules they dictate" (1875, 289).

Playing the piano was one aspect of this carceral regime. Ernest Legouvé, in *Our Sons and Daughters*, 1881, makes the following analogy: "politeness is like learning to play the piano; if not begun in youth, it can't be acquired" (Volume II, 8). Thus Louis Maurice Boutet de Monvel's conduct manual of 1887 maintains that "above all it's in their piano lessons that little girls manifest their sweetness of spirit and impeccable upbringing" (1887, 22). He proceeds to rehearse the regimented aspect of these lessons: "make sure you're in 4:4 time. Get counting: one, two, three, four." He stresses the importance of decorous deportment: "Place your hands carefully. Stretch out your little fingers." He approves the little girl's perfect obedience: "look how our dear little Jeanne applies herself. She even goes for her scales with good grace." The desirability of pleasure in pain is hinted at: "even though they're not in the least fun." Unremitting patience is evidently a virtue: "and, if she needs to loosen up her fingers, she'll repeat them ten times over."

Is this how we are supposed to read Cézanne's extraordinarily compressed picture space of the drawing room? Are the protagonists "trapped" by the impossibly crowding furniture, and "stifled" by the encroaching tendrils of the wallpaper; the shallow stripes of the floor indicating their "suffocating" proximity, one to the other; the predominantly dark palette and apparent lack of light source offering little relief? This is the view of much of the literature, but an enquiry into the contemporaneous meanings of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* suggests there may be other readings.

Wagner's Tannhäuser

First performed at the Paris Opéra on 13 March 1861, *Tannhäuser* proved "too avant-garde for the clubs that controlled the Opéra, and it was retired after three performances"

(Tinterow and Loyrette 1994, 348). *Tannhäuser* thereby became an immediate *succès de scandale*. Baudelaire expatiated on it in an essay "Richard Wagner and *Tannhäuser* in Paris" published the month after it was first performed, his writing a model of criticism in his own terms: "partial, passionate, political"; "entertaining and poetic" (1972b [1846], 50).

Although *Tannhäuser's* perceived celebration of the excessively sensual and orgiastic was what fixed it in the popular memory, and initially commended it to the Parisian avant-garde, Baudelaire's essay – still sometimes misunderstood – was quite different. What appealed to the poet, and more discerning cognoscenti, was not its excesses, but its ultimate equilibrium. Detailing what it was that rendered Wagner a truly "modern man," who had created "*The Art-work of the Future*," Baudelaire claimed that Wagner had succeeded in balancing the "infinities": "*Tannhäuser* represents the struggle between the two principles that have chosen the human heart as their main battle-ground, the flesh and the spirit, hell and heaven, Satan and God" (1972a [1861], 341; 355; 333; 342). Wagner, indeed, was for Baudelaire the musical equivalent of "the painter of modern life," required to translate "the perpetual correlation between what is called the soul and what is called the body." Both are able "to distil the eternal from the transitory" (1964a [1863], 14, 12).

The essay on *Tannhäuser* is one of Baudelaire's clearest exposés of his theory of "correspondences" in which he uses his 1845–1846 poem of the same name as a touchstone to explore Wagner's modernism:

> Without the poetry Wagner's music would still be a poetic work, endowed as it is with all the qualities that go to make a well organised poem … In music, as in painting, and even in the written word … there is always a gap, bridged by the imagination of the hearer.
>
> (1972a [1861], 351, 328)

As well, therefore, as "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent," "correspondence" (or "transposition" as it is sometimes termed when applied to the arts) was another maneuver that for Baudelaire constituted the modern in the arts of his time. In 1863, two years after the essay on Wagner, he wrote one on Eugène Delacroix, a painter who influenced Cézanne's particular modernisms, and to whom is attributed a gouache sketch of Act I, Scene 2 of *Tannhäuser* (W. Coninx collection, Zurich). Here Baudelaire expanded on his idea of correspondences: "it is one element in the diagnosis of the spiritual climate of our age, be it added, that the arts strive, if not to substitute for one another, at least to lend each other new power and strength, by the help of their own" (1972c [1863], 361).

Baudelaire's "essentially two-sided" essay, utilizing the very correspondences he claimed so special in Wagner, prefigures Clark's later claim that to separate "practice" from "signification" in accounts of modernism is myopic (1984, 48). Baudelaire's words re-deploy the qualities he finds in the music. At some points he piles up sensation upon sonorous utterance as he describes its "whole onomatopoeic dictionary of love":

> languorous delights, lust at fever heat, moments of anguish, and a constant returning towards pleasure, which holds out hope of quenching thirst but never does; raging palpitations of heart and senses, imperious demands of the flesh.
>
> (1972a [1861], 342)

At others he relaxes into quiescence:

> I felt freed from the *constraint of weight*, and recaptured the memory of the *rare joy* that dwells in *high places* … I evoked the delectable state of a man possessed by a profound reverie in total solitude, but a solitude with *vast horizons* and *bathed in a diffuse light;* immensity without other decor than itself.
>
> (1972a [1861], 331)

Baudelaire marveled particularly at how "the duality" he saw in *Tannhäuser* – "the frenzied song of the flesh" and the "redemptive beatitude" – "is immediately indicated by the *overture*" (1972a [1861], 341, 342, 343, 341). Cézanne was undoubtedly aware of this when he painted two females bounded by the sexual mores of their time and class; one, nonetheless, apparently playing the most *risqué* music of the day. For as Dombrowski notes:

> the title must have been coined for reasons beyond … some quick inspiration for it was established as a shorthand for a series of at least three paintings … the sharp divergence between scene and text must have mattered to Cézanne.
>
> (2013, 139)

Indeed, Cézanne was a devotee of Wagner as letters during the run-up to, and evolution of the *Tannhäuser* paintings prove (Tinterow and Loyrette 1994, 348). Cézanne was indubitably familiar with Baudelaire's piece on Wagner, published in 1861 first as an article then as a pamphlet, for when he begged Morstatt to come and play for him during Christmas 1865, and cause "our accoustic nerves to vibrate to the noble tones of Richard Wagner" he was using "language unmistakably reminiscent of the poet's: 'From the first measures, the nerves vibrate in unison with the melody; all flesh that remembers is set trembling'" (Loyrette 1996, 112). In 1868 he told Morstatt of his "happiness" on having heard the overtures to *Tannhäuser, Lohengrin,* and the *Flying Dutchman* (Loyrette 1996,). Later to join the Wagner society in Marseille with Émile Zola, Cézanne's picture is "one of many testimonies to the fervent Wagnerism of the 1860s. With more or less passion, most of the artists of the New Painting sacrificed to this deity" (Tinterow and Loyrette 1994, 382).

Cézanne's response, however, is especially remarkable for the ways in which it aligns with the modernism of Baudelaire and Wagner. Marion recognized this in Cézanne's first attempt at the *Tannhäuser* theme: "it belongs to the future just as much as Wagner's music" (Loyrette 1996, 110). Unlike, for instance, Henri Fantin-Latour's *Tannhäuser on the Venusberg* which Cézanne would have seen at the Salon of 1864, reveling nymphs, dancing and playing music in what Théophile Gautier deemed a "hot debauch of the palette" (1994, 382), "Cézanne's painting is not 'Wagnerian' in any programmatic sense" (Loyrette 1996, 112). Whilst Fantin's painting is little more than mere illustration of *Tannhäuser's* "satanic titillations" in subject and form, by contrast Cézanne, in Baudelairean mode, holds in tantalizing apposition the opera's "infinities": "flesh and spirit, hell and heaven, Satan and God," eschewing literal ekphrasis (Baudelaire 1972a [1861], 342, 341). Nor can Cézanne's protagonists be reduced to simple portrayals of the opera's female protagonists, Elisabeth and Venus, despite attempts in the literature to do so. Instead "Cézanne the *refusé* answered the 'music of the future' so reviled in Paris with his own 'painting of the future'" (Loyrette 1996, 112). The ways in which the painting is

"*concatenated*" – as Baudelaire coins Wagner's corresponding achievement in the opera, are multiple, open to contestation – like modern life itself (1972a, 351).

Veritably one of "these over-stuffed rooms … in which the formal was combined with the comfortable," typical of French nineteenth-century bourgeois taste in furnishing, the painting refuses to reconcile its antitheses, small and large, in any easy way (Samoyault-Verlet 1978, 76). The somber upright of the piano is offset by zany "baroque" rills where it meets the loose mass of the skirt; the right angles of the sofa by the warmly colored upholstery and yielding cushions and the irregular looseness of the "confortable" – the floral armchair (Samoyault-Verlet 1978, 76). The carefully placed slatback chair against the gleaming wainscoting is relieved by the gentle curve in its top strut, the severity of the wainscoting by the dancing wallpaper. The stripes of the carpet would be straight but are not. One female is palely upright, yet inclined; the other, in contrasting tones, is also still but pliant. One's hands are slender and expressive in contrast to the summary, darker hands of the other.

Baudelaire's essay and Cézanne's painting then, enact via their own correspondences how a player of *Tannhäuser*, especially its overture, might experience an extraordinary gamut of emotions. This response can be traced in the cultural and social history of female piano playing. In Alexandre Dumas *fils' Francillon,* for example, the young heroine, Annette de Riverolle, not only found in her piano a wonderful instrument of defiance, but also "out of pure resentment gave herself up to the difficult harmonies of Wagner" (1887, Volume I, i, 271).

Wagner himself rated the piano supreme in its ability to express the self, and, as the first to transcribe the opera for piano (and voice), clearly saw no inferiority in the remove. (Dombrowski 2013, 169–171). Piano playing, then – and perhaps especially that of Wagner – despite the negative connotations I have hitherto majored on, might provide some, albeit limited, means of escape for the bourgeois girl or woman, into at least an interior world of liberation, even if it did not extend to "botanizing on the asphalt" (Benjamin 1969 [1938], 36).

Interiorities: The Female Pianist and Modernist Painters

For whilst it might reduce the female subject to the familial and specular, playing the piano might also – partially, temporarily – liberate her from her inner and outer frustrations. Michelle Perrot summarizes "the piano … can be seen to fill the roles of friend, confidant, soul mate, and aid to self-expression" (1990, 553). Honoré de Balzac described it as "this confidante of so many young girls who, via the nuances of how they play, tell to it their gripes as well as their desires" (1913, Volume 4, 201). Safely non-verbal, yet supreme vehicle of expression, to the piano could be poured out with impunity the young girl's deepest feelings – even those which she herself might be barely conscious of. Balzac also noted how "the traditional pastime can become an irreplaceable means of expression." Edmond de Goncourt's youthful Chérie, as she plays her piano, is "stirred deep within herself by the sadness of the music she played; she felt, for the first time, the ecstatic intimacy the music offered…" (1884, 77). Renée Mauperin is moved to sobs by "that naughty beast – music – that Chopin thing" (Edmond and Jules de Goncourt 1906 [1875], 196–197).

Playing music at a certain level can be a dual process. Whilst giving out, the player may also undergo a profoundly immanent experience, which might provide a female with a free realm in which occasionally to escape the burden of that exterior "devotion and

self-abnegation" I have earlier quoted as enjoined of her. This kind of wordless interiority has a modern tinge to it that in turn evokes Wagner's philosophical hero Arthur Schopenhauer. In *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Human Interiority 1780–1830*, Carolyn Steedman describes a new, modern perception of the human subject as an "interiorised subjectivity, a sense of the self *within*," replacing a previous stress on an individuality created upon a *tabula rasa*, from external impingements, largely unaware of its deeper self (1995, 4).

Paramount in this new realization was the "discovery of the unconscious": "dredging through the detritus" of the past to realize the new (Steedman 1995, 12). In Freudian vein Michael Fried pinpointed "consciousness itself" as the modernist subject (1992, 774 n.2). Again there are similarities to playing the piano. Drawing upon what has been learned, which resides deeper than merely in the body, the outcome is a unique enaction of the present moment. To push the analogies further, Cézanne also draws upon his own, and other painters' pasts: the thickly applied paint, slabbed on the white dress, scumbled on the wainscoting behind, fat and lush on the wallpaper, piano, and carpet; the hint of a dreamlike or dramatic scenario; the brownish tonalities. But he simultaneously engages with the new: the squeezed yet expanded space; the geometrization of the pianist; the constructive stroke hinted at on the armchair and the sewer's skirt; the decorative illusionism. Clement Greenberg would call this using "art to call attention to art" (1992 [1961], 775). Cézanne's "subject matter," too, takes from the centuries but wrests it into the modern of his day. He had likely seen James Abbott McNeill Whistler's *At the Piano*, 1858–1859, of a similar size and palette to his own rendition, recognized as a milestone in Whistler's apprehension of modern painting. For Richard Shiff this melding of old with new defines the "fundamental strangeness" of Cézanne's modernism: "Cézanne exaggerates a notorious feature of Western representation – the play between the literal surface and figured depth, or between signified and signifier" (1991, 140). Again, none of this would have been strange to Wagner – or Schopenhauer – in their pursuit of an immaterial art.

To labor the point then, Cézanne's modernism in *Tannhäuser* has him "engage with the experiences of modern life, with modernity, by means of a self-conscious use of experiment and innovation," and to play on various types of interiorization co-opted as properties of modernist painting (Frascina *et al.* 1993, 127). The inner seclusion of both protagonists in Cézanne's picture is matched by their physical seclusion which initially I posited as a negative signifier of their actual positioning in society and the family. But there is now room for alternative readings not usually allowed in the literature. Fried's tension (1988) between "absorption" and "theatricality" is, for instance, a useful additional framework, operative in numerous paintings of girls at their pianos in general. Rather than mechanical stiffness, is there, in fact, a quiet radiance about the contained visage of the pianist focused so utterly on her music, upon whom the light primarily falls, enhanced by the off-white tones of her dress; and a similar calm absorption about the inclined head of the needlewoman? Their absorption might even help us to age the sitters, as it was often commented upon as a particular trait of adolescence. "Youth is … the subject of an inward working which absorbs" wrote Gabriel Jean-Baptiste Ernest Wilfried Legouvé (1881, Volume I, 257).

Maybe this dreamy inwardness is evocative of someone who finds, like Taine, that "it is so sweet to think to music"– accompanied by the gently floating curlicues of the wallpaper which themselves suggest musical notation (Taine 1902, 210). Cézanne melds the register of black notes in a liquid greenish-blue and there is the suggestion of a landscape loosely painted on the inside of the piano lid as if the outside has come, refreshingly, inside. The extremely shallow space in the right half of the picture is offset by a marked recession in

the left half behind the pianist, where the small chair at the back, against the wainscoting, suggests considerable depth between. The fact that neither space is entirely legible is, perhaps, not simply a formal, "modernist" device, but a kind of parallel to the contrasting readings of the inner worlds of the protagonists I have suggested. Fried's marker of modernism, "consciousness itself," exemplified by the process of playing music, and by youth, has become Cézanne's subject (1992, 774 n.2).

Cézanne's modern "consciousness and self-consciousness," his "self-awareness," thus interweave with and find expression in the same in his represented sitters (Fried 1992, 774 n.2). The viewer is caught between representer and represented, only partially able to enter into their enclosed worlds, inner and outer. S/he is blocked by the barrier of the armchair (however comfortable it might potentially be for Henri Matisse's modernist viewer to dream in) and by the sheer impenetrableness of the crowded picture space and its disorientating contrasts of depth (Matisse 1908). Imaginative and intellectual empathy is continuously short-circuited by the reminder that this is a picture. "Je sais bien, mais quand même …" (Mannoni 1969, 9).

Just as the viewer is compromised, it has to be said that escape via the interiority of piano playing was similarly compromised for the youthful player – in temporal duration, and dependent upon her opportunities, inclination, and skill. Bishop Dupanloup perceptively summarized:

> The greater number of girls spend seven or eight years of their education in practising the piano, two and often three hours a day. But this accomplishment, to which so much time is given up, and which might enlarge the mind and the soul to so great an extent, usually only ends in those "soulless talents" … which derive their existence from vanity alone … almost always given up after marriage … "Music" says the Père Gratry, "has been transformed into a brilliant noise, which does not even soothe the nerves."
>
> (1868, 77–78)

Whilst furtive pleasures tended to be allowable for young males, anything that might be enjoyed in private was usually frowned upon – even feared – in a respectable young girl. As well as playing the piano, writing one's diary, excessive religious observance, and reading, were especially singled out. The discourses surrounding these are particularly complex as they could be adduced either for good or evil. "Precisely by dint of the influence that it exerts on our innermost beings, reading can become the most active element in our downfall" warned the Countess Drohojowska, though she also advocated a carefully monitored, highly limited, choice of "improving" reading for young girls (1867, 83). Similar warnings were issued about piano playing. Carl Czerny, whose pianistic method was law in nineteenth-century Europe proclaimed: "you must not permit your fingers any caprice, or become dissolute over them" (Czerny 2014, 181). Eva Gonzalès' lost painting of 1877–1878, *In Secret,* portraying a young girl sneakily reading a novel whilst at the piano (Figure 26.3), which she hides amongst the larger pages of her music, humorously brings the two together (Sainsaulieu and Mons 1990, no. 90). The inference is possibly also there in a little drawing by Marie Bashkirtseff in the Petit Palais, *Woman Reading,* where the reader is half concealed by the upright piano against which she leans.

Parker and Pollock (1984) discussed how even something as apparently dutiful as stitching might be turned to subversive intent in female hands. Whilst I have chosen to focus on the pianist in this chapter, her companion may also be interpreted in ways illuminative of the modern as Dombrowski amply demonstrates.

FIGURE 26.3   Eva Gonzalès, *In Secret*, 1877–78. from La Renaissance, XV, June 1932, page 114. *Source*: Copyright © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. All Rights Reserved.

The Hysterical Pianist

Earlier I stressed ways in which the piano became a metonym for femininity in the modern period. This was closely linked to analogies between women and music *per se*: the emotional and impenetrable qualities of both. "Music is now for women what Mathematics, Latin, etc. are for men, something set apart and indefinite" parrots Taine/Graindorge (1863, 321). His terms are by now well-researched. *A part* stresses woman's "otherness" to the male norm. *Indéfini* was a typical way of distinguishing between the *sensibilité* of women from that of men. Self-appointed commentator on the differences between male and female youth, one Jean-Baptiste Fonssagrives, described girls' "greater susceptibility; marvellous aptitude to respond to the least stimulus; gift for tears and easy laughter … lively sensibilities.… Magnify each of these qualities or faults," he explained, and "that's woman for you.… Hysteria …" (1869, 134).

Whilst perceived to be natural in all ages of girls and women, hysteria was supposedly particularly febrile during female adolescence – though "adolescent" was a term usually reserved for boys and particularly to designate their psycho-sexual development. When discussing the same periodization in girls, "hysteric" was the preferred term, creating a neat stasis, which Baudelaire, as we have seen, called women's "immortal … puerility." And hysteria, of course, was about sex; understood, indeed, to be the key to female sexuality – both "normative" and non. In his *Dictionary of Received Ideas*, probably begun around 1850, Gustave Flaubert noted under "Hysteria" that it was "part and parcel of nymphomania" (1966, 89). As it also supposedly gave rise to self-absorption, hysteria in all its imagined outlets and manifestations was thus a prime justification for men's infantilization

of women, for it was thereby self-evident that they needed to be managed. "Women are big children; their evil tendencies are more numerous and varied than men's, but generally remain latent. When they are awakened and excited they produce results proportionately greater," claimed the criminologists Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero (1895, 151).

Hysteria – its notional diagnosis, perceived outbreak, and apparent increase in the nineteenth century – was also essentially modern. "Once one didn't develop 'nervous sensibility' until one was fifteen" wrote Fonssagrives, but "these days … eight-year-old hysterics charge around the streets … more in large cities" (1869, 114; 137). Chérie's menses are early because she is a modern, hysterical, adolescent *Parisienne*. Significantly, her precocity is also attributed to her music making: "the musical vibrations, which the little girl experienced as still reverberating within her being, precipitated and accelerated her development into a woman" (Edmond de Goncourt 1884, 102). Contemporaries warned "against music's power to arrest moral consciousness" (Dombrowski 2013, 171).

Just as the youthful female piano player could excite male spectators, so the hysteric: "the stuff of the pervert's dreams" noted Flaubert (1966, 89). But – if male accounts are to be believed – the piano seemed also to unleash seductive depths in the *player*. Ironically the piano, considered to be the most decorous instrument for young girls, could nevertheless be an outlet for her hysterical tendencies. Sigmund Freud (1930) was shortly to claim that "the satisfaction derived from one's own genitals … is usually alluded to by any kind of *playing*, also by *piano playing*" (in Daub 2014, 180).

"Only a girl in love can compose such melodies … she's demon-possessed" observes Balzac of Modeste Mignon (1913, 201; 207). Taine remarks of young female pianists: "the fine tuning of their sensibilities takes the place of education and experience; they intuit what we have to learn" (1863, 30). Clothilde in Zola's *Restless House*, 1882, is captivating as she plays the piano because "in her grey eyes alone music had lighted a flame – an exaggerated passion"– no dry classical sonata, moreover, but a Chopin *Nocturne* (1953, 90). Most highly keyed, however, are the Goncourts (1875). In a passage employing all the senses, and colored in a spectrum from flesh to fire, taking place – inevitably – in the evening, they describe Renée Mauperin at the piano, "the fire of the dance in her eyes and her cheeks." "Her body rippled as if in an embrace" (1906 [1875], 40–41). The writing becomes increasingly sensual. "She appeared to ravish the notes, or caress them, murmur to them, chastise them, smile upon them, cradle them, rock them to oblivion … by turns she moved tenderly or acted passionately; she sank down and rose up" (1906 [1875], 42, 41). In sympathy "the two candles on the piano shuddered … Her earrings cast a flickering shadow on the skin of her neck" (1906 [1875], 78).

The piano, in Renée's hands, is the outlet for the choked voice of oppression Baudelaire perceived to be fundamental to that other famous hysterical pianist-reader, Emma Bovary (1972d [1857]). For Renée the piano is like a lover; for Chérie it is masturbatory: "The girl derived the most delicious satisfaction from it … her body, gently ravished … dissipated and lost itself in a harmonic welter into which she had apparently plunged … absorbed in her pursuit, her lips moving" (de Goncourt 1884, 78). Such tendencies to self-absorbed pleasuring were particularly in evidence, it was also argued, during adolescence. In tardy wake of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's famous earlier exposition in *Émile*,[3]

the notion of adolescence as a critical moment was revived repeatedly in the nineteenth century as a danger not only to the individual, but also to society. The adolescent in search of his own identity is a narcissist seeking his own moral and physical image.

(Perrot 1990, IV, 213)

"The age of fourteen to fifteen years is one of crisis for the spirit as much as the body" wrote Legouvé (1869, 17).

Chérie suffers a striking fate. "Utterly passionate in body and soul, and living in extreme purity, Chérie could not defend herself against the vexatious visitations of *desire* … she could not prevent voluptuous dreams from violating the chastity of her nights" (de Goncourt 1884, 121). Chérie finally dies prematurely from her unsatisfied sexuality. A Dr Debay, whose extraordinarily popular *Hygiène et physiologie du mariage*, 1848, had made 125 reprints by 1881, resoundingly supported this modern shift in perception, asserting: "hideous neuroses attack the majority of girls who consecrate themselves to chastity despite the ardour of their temperament" (Gay 1984, Volume I, 150). Probably more typical were those who believed that girls were so naturally innocent they needed to be kept so, with the aim of purifying the race. "It is of paramount importance to keep women faithful to their husbands … So it is our wish that girls will bring into the world the bounty of angelic ignorance which will keep her firm in the face of all temptations" explained one Edmond About (1864, 131–132).

Whether credited with an impossible saintliness or an irrepressible sexuality, either rationale justified keeping unmarried females within the purview of familial and societal panoptica – thus retaining the patriarchal *status quo*. The same Graindorge/Taine who titillated himself by observing girls at their pianos ironized, with pre-Foucauldian relish, that young girls were: "precocious in their unbridled imagination. Thus they need the convent … or the home organised like the convent … repression … the same regimentation as in politics" (1863, 82).

Playing the piano, however, might allow surreptitious respite whereby the young girl was not simply the eternally immature, trammeled figure of Marxist-feminist readings which I first rehearsed, but once in a while – perhaps – that more positive subject-in-process of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the "becoming-woman" (2004, 303).

Cézanne and the Family

There are unavoidable parallels between the modern qualities I have thus far isolated in the painting, and Cézanne himself, especially in the period before and during its conception, when he seems to have sought to express his contradictory emotions, at least partially, via art rather than life. Theodore Reff (1960) and Meyer Schapiro (1968) led the way with thoroughgoing psychoanalytical interpretations of his work. In many of the paintings of the 1860s and early 1870s they revealed a young man fascinated yet disgusted by the world of adult sexuality which he had not yet experienced. Orgies, abductions, "temptations" and odd pastoral picnics appear to have given the tormented young Cézanne a means of projection, as did letters and (fairly awful) poetry. Considering how abnormally far into manhood these continued, "adolescent" is a term that might fairly be used of Cézanne at this time, despite his actual age.

In his work of the 1860s and early 1870s in particular, into which the *Tannhäuser* painting falls, Cézanne was accused by contemporaries, like Wagner, of "an immoral mystification of the public, or the results of mental alienation that one can do nothing but deplore"(Montifaud 1974, 235, 267). Descriptions of both men continue to be framed in terms of hysteria to this day (Moore 2008, 246–266; Gowing 1988, 12). Baudelaire's rare – for the time – extension of the concept of hysteria to males is particularly apt when applied to Cézanne, especially during the pre-1872 period: "it produces, in men of

nervous temperament, every form of impotence and also a capacity for all kinds of excess" (Baudelaire 1972d [1857], 252).

It is commonplace to ascribe these complex behaviors of Cézanne's to his dominating father, whom "he feared greatly and who destined him, as the only son, for the family bank, sending him to law school against his wishes" (Schapiro 1952, 22). When Cézanne *père* finally ceded to Paul's aspirations to become a painter, he gave him no financial freedom. It is again well understood that Cézanne seems to have found a kind of outlet for his feelings about his father, too, in paintings and writing.

Michel Foucault's contention that "the family's" "role is to anchor sexuality and provide it with a permanent support" with the dual function of conveying both "the law … and pleasure" (1978, 108) fits particularly with Cézanne's negative experiences of his family's "black avarice," as Renoir was to describe it, where there was one sexual standard for the son and one for the father (Venturi 1939, I, 138–139, no. 34). Paul and his sister Marie were both illegitimate, yet Cézanne did not dare tell his father of his liaison with Hortense Fiquet nor of the birth of his son around the time of this painting. We do not know why Cézanne lived more at the family home throughout his life than with Hortense, even after marriage.

The first version of *Tannhäuser* included "an old father in an armchair in profile: a young child with an idiotic air, listening in the background"; the second a portrait of Marion; the third and last retaining only the pianist, accompanied by a new female companion (Loyrette 1996, 110). We remember, also, how Cézanne was dissatisfied with the earliest rendition. It is hardly surprising that the "family painting" did not seem to come. A couple of months after he embarked on the first version in 1866 Cézanne wrote to Camille Pissarro: "here I am with my family, with the most disgusting people in the world … stinking more than any" (in Rewald 1976, 114). Certainly no "straightforward" or traditional picture would have fitted his bill.

But perhaps it did actually come, in a depiction less desperate and more veiled in its allusions than the earlier *couillarde* fantasies. For here, if not explicitly of his own family, are nonetheless familial subjects, rather than the "slut" models he confessed to Renoir put him so much on the defensive he lost the motif (Renoir 1962, 106). And here – as so often in avant-garde renditions – is a fractured family, with the father's presence insistent through absence, and underscored by the fact that his chair – the one his father sits in, in the portrait of 1866, *Reading l'Événement* in Washington – the one most *confortable*, and thus "familial" in a traditional sense, is also one of the two empty ones, unsettlingly anthropomorphic in aspect. Inclusion of a figure like the grimly factitious *Portrait of my Father*, 1862 (National Gallery, London), gaze typically averted, would have been just as strange. It is also a more generally understandable alternative to a "regular" family picture in this modern period when the more shrilly the model of the bourgeois nuclear family was insisted upon, the clearer it is that the model failed. [4] Clark's more negative analysis of modernism is that it may be,

> extraordinary and desperate … the sign inside art of this wider decomposition … an attempt to *capture* the lack of consistent and repeatable meanings in the culture … and make it over into form.
>
> (1985, 54)

Maybe the family portrait did come, then, and with it some kind of substitution for what Richard Wollheim called the "most florid symptom" of what may be loosely designated as Cézanne's own "hysteria": his "hatred of being touched" (Green 1996). In *Tannhäuser*

the *couillarde* troweling is largely supplanted by a calmer stroke of the brush; the fear-some landscape comes inside, and is contained; the excessive subjects of former paintings are regulated and relegated to willful wallpaper decorations, foreshortened thrusts of the carpet, frothing scallops where the dress meets the body of the piano, and a fecund chair cover. That the balance is febrile is underscored by the widely opposing interpretations I have allowed myself to give it. "Evenness is always just the other side of disequilibrium" Clark observed of Cézanne (Green 1996).

The painting Cézanne did produce, it is worth summarizing for one last time, is uncannily – or understandably – close to the situation of Cézanne himself as he produced it. A young unmarried female pianist, lost in the modern antinomies of *Tannhäuser,* is accompanied by another absorbed female also of ambiguous age – perhaps youthful – at her sewing. Their pursuits might signify either oppression or liberation, ontology or decoration, the pain or the pleasure of creativity – perhaps with implications of sexual and artistic frustration. They are interiorized both in their own psychic worlds, and in a seemingly claustrophobic or disorientating picture space devoid of explicit human interaction. In drawing these parallels I am not suggesting that Cézanne's attitude towards women *per se* was necessarily "modern"; rather that at some level, perhaps not conscious, the painting mediates these similarities.

Cézanne and Modernism

It is a truism of Cézanne scholarship that "Cézanne plays a major part in modern art history and different interpretations of his work have been central to the means by which critics and theorists have characterized modernism in painting" (Harrison and Thomson 1984, 24). Whether Cézanne's modernism is deemed to be constituted qualitatively from his "primitivism" or his "classicism," his "feeling" or his "intellect," his "surface flatness," or his "full imaginative world," his relationship to Realism, Impressionism, or Symbolism, or any other conceptual terminology, it is almost always temporally located after his "Impressionist phase," when the "constructive stroke" has become established as the building block (Harrison and Thomson 1984, 24–25; Harrison and Smith 1993, 16; Shiff 1984). For writers of widely divergent persuasions – Maurice Denis, Émile Bernard, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Greenberg, Mary Louise Krumrine, Reff, Adrian Stokes, and Lawrence Gowing, to mention only a few – Émile it is both a quality and a point in time in his "development" which ultimately determines or defines Cézanne's modernism. For most, whether implicitly or explicitly, although the trajectory towards modernism may be in evidence earlier, manifest in what is usually loosely recognized as the "originality" of his earlier work, it is when he has successfully "mastered" his inner torments via a corresponding control in facture; has "progressed" from the early "Romantic" or "Baroque" fantasies; through the "turning point" of his "most purely Impressionist phase" to a systematized construction – in brushstroke and composition – some time in the 1870s; that he has truly made it in modernist terms (Reff 1962, 214–226; Harrison and Thomson 1984; 24–25; Gowing 1988).

In this familiar teleology *Tannhäuser* tends to fall into three camps, though frequently expressed in contradictory ways. It may be relegated to a premodernist phase as in Mary Tompkins Lewis' claim for it to be simultaneously "one of several versions of his Realist paintings of a young woman at a piano" but also part of his "Romantic first decade" (1988, 37). For others there is something special about it within the early oeuvre but it remains liminal – on the way to modernism but not quite there. Kurt Badt describes it as "executed

in the epic manner … with archaic heaviness" though "the allusions latent in the subject are drowned by those of colour and form and by the evenly progressing rhythm which carries the weight of the whole" (1965, 301). For yet others it has arrived as modernist, but the a-historical vocabulary is mightily confusing as in Gowing's account:

> The Baudelairean reading of Wagnerism, the fact that extremism would achieve the artistic greatness from which moderation was for ever debarred, reached its full expression at last. Several aspects … leave one wondering whether Fauvism is about to be prematurely born before one's eyes. Some masterpieces seem to set the centuries at nought. Then we realise that a great painter has created the future single-handed. Cézanne … offers a timeless monumentality … an observed domestic subject, rather than merely portraiture, has been given an enduring form.
>
> (1988, 14–15)

Whilst the desire to periodize Cézanne's work is understandable – even necessary in certain contexts – the attempt to do so *vis-à-vis* modernism is particularly fraught. It is microcosmic of both the wider problem of times and dates, which Raymond Williams' "When was Modernism?" warned against a long time ago, and of qualification as to what the form, content, and meanings of modernism might be (1979, Volume I, 175). *Tannhäuser* is a highly redolent exemplum to frustrate neat and tidy accounts both for Cézanne's modernism – not reducible simply to a point in time, particular formal properties, or transmuted subject matter – but also for modernism more generally. Modernism is hydra-headed, elusive, contingent, and *particular* – and best described in the plural, as I hope this chapter has suggested. *Tannhäuser* offers an especially rich case of modernisms' multi-faceted liminalities of practice and signification, both fundamental and adiaphoral.

Tannhäuser is indeed "exceptional for a work from the 1860s" but not because it is modernism *avant la lettre* (Loyrette 1996, 110). Right at the end of his life, Cézanne was still quite sure that he had not yet "arrived" (Doran 1978, 57). It should be clear by now that I do not intend to arrive, either, at one or other interpretation of Cézanne's modernisms *vis-à-vis* this extraordinary painting, which exemplifies that final elusiveness of lexical explanation Wagner perceived to be true *par excellence* of music. It bears qualifying, however, that this breadth and contingency of signification does not allow simply *any* interpretation. As Charles Harrison put it, our job is to enquire "not only of the painting as object, but of the rich but determinate range of metaphorical meanings the surface of that object, in all its plenitude and its particularity, is enabled to sustain" (1996, 99). The qualifications here – "determinate"; "enabled to sustain" – are as important as the permissions.

Coda: *Le Haschisch des Femmes*

Edmond de Goncourt described Chérie's sexual stirrings via her piano: "the physical caresses of the sound filled her with a mysterious intoxication … whipped up her imagination, engorged her senses, climaxed ineffably" (1884, 78–79). He concluded with a wonderfully suggestive phrase: "music is nothing other than *hashish* for women." In what senses might making music at the piano resemble taking hashish for a woman? Both provide covert pleasures stimulating the faculties in ways not necessarily obvious to the perceiver, who may only guess at them. Both may release the user from a regularized, inhibited existence into imaginative realms virtually impossible to regulate. Both may produce mobile, amorphous, or rampantly florid figurations which elude categorization. But both,

in a feminist or Adornesque reading at least, return the user to more of the same, with a double poignancy applied to women, as the Goncourts surely intended. For hashish-smoking was primarily a male pastime in nineteenth-century France; the kinds of women who did partake of it were almost always from the working or dangerous classes.

Baudelaire similarly used the motif of escape via drugs in his essay on Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, but his interest was in the audience: "sometimes the sound of that ardent, despotic music seems to recapture for the listener, against the background shadow torn asunder by reverie, the vertiginous longings of the opium smoker" (1972a, 332). The notion of a hashish-induced fantasy might also extend to the imaginative figurations of viewer and painter. Cézanne's first version of *A Modern Olympia*, indeed, was described as

> presented in an opium-filled sky before an opium smoker … an impression caused by oriental vapours … a weird sketch from the imagination … it is only one of the excessive formulations of haschisch borrowed from a swarm of zany visions which should still be concealed from sight in the hotel Pimodan.
>
> (Montifaud 1974 [1874], 235, 267)

"Le haschich des femmes" is the subtitle I have given to this chapter, for the broad imaginative scope it evokes. And if wallpaper, carpet, and loose cover seem simply too quotidian to bear the weight of such intoxicating interpretation, then I invoke Freud's essay on the "Uncanny" (1919, 364) where he argues with chilling resonance: "this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression."

Notes

1   *Couillarde* is purported to be Cézanne's crude term for his own painterly virility, meaning guts or testicles. "Ballsy" might be the closest translation. See Ambroise Vollard (1914). *Paul Cézanne* (Paris: Galérie A. Vollard), 22. For "constructive" see Theodore Reff. Autumn 1962. "Cézanne's Constructive Stroke," *Art Quarterly,* Vol. 25, No. 3, 214–226. Unless otherwise specified all translations are by the author.

2   Literary historians seem to recognize this much more clearly than art historians. In *The Land of Lost Content: Children and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century French Literature*, Rosemary Lloyd notes that "figures of children abound" in certain areas of nineteenth-century painting such as Impressionism, extrapolating "the artistic exploration of the child's kaleidoscopic vision, of its freedom from the shackles of rationality, and of its imaginative linguistic transformations still appears as a major enabling factor in that joyous acceptance of change and the irrational that lies at the heart of modernism" (1992, 170, 245).

3   "We are, so to speak, born, twice: once to exist, and once to live; once for our species and once for our sex … As the roaring of the sea precedes a tempest from afar, this stormy revolution is proclaimed by the murmur of the nascent passions. A mute fermentation warns of danger's approach." (Rousseau 1991, 211–212)

4   Two paintings by Degas from this period are interesting here. *The Belleli Family,* 1858–1867, includes the whole family, but asserts its fracturedness at the same time, and might have prompted the positioning of the father in the original versions of Cézanne's picture, though it is not certain it was actually exhibited at the 1867 Salon, probably the only place Cézanne could have seen it. Additionally, there is the curious case of Degas's truncated *Édouard Manet, Mme Manet at the Piano*, 1867–1868, with its suggestions of familial disease.

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