

Table of Contents

- xx **Territorial Acknowledgement**
- xx **CUJAH Mandate**
- xx **Letter from the Editor**
- xx **Volume XIV Teams**
- xx **Silent, Present: The Subaltern's Afterlife in Art**
Sophie Wonfor
Editor: Raven Spiratos
- xx **L'art montre ce que la maladie ne voit pas**
Chloé Fortier-Devin
Éditrice : Cassandra Lavoie
- xx **Big Beautiful Wall: Bordermyths and Killer Architecture in the Divided States of North America**
Nick Cabelli
Editor: Raven Spiratos
- xx **Politicized Pop: Latin America's Response to the American Pop Art Movement**
Zoe Johnston
Editor: Catherine McRae
- xx **L'exposition d'art dégénéré de 1937 à Munich et la persuasion en faveur des politiques nationales-socialistes d'hygiène raciale**
Marianne Lebel
Éditrice : Véronique Morin
- xx **Redefining the Holy Land Through Architecture: The Dome of The Rock**
Stephanie Dallaire
Editor: Maggie Mills
- xx **The Orientalization of Bosnian Textiles During the European Arts and Crafts Movement**
Serena Desaulniers
Editor: Maggie Mills
- xx **Destruction, Regeneration, and the Objection of Permanence in the Infinite Installations of Felix Gonzalez-Torres**
Alyse Tunnell
Editor: Sophia Arnold
- xx **Liz Maqor: Repair and Regeneration**
Vania Djelani
Editor: Oona Ostrowski
- xx **Alexander Scriabin: A Life In Conflict**
Roosbeh Tabandeh
Editor: Oona Ostrowski
- xx **Acknowledgements**

Territorial Acknowledgement

We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

CUJAH Mandate

The Concordia Undergraduate Journal of Art History (CUJAH) is a student-run association that aims to showcase the talents of Concordia University's undergraduate Art History and Fine Arts students. CUJAH strives to provide students with academic and professional opportunities through workshops, events, and online resources. CUJAH is composed of an executive team, an editorial team, a design team, and is assisted by faculty members in the Department of Art History.

As a journal, we strive for academic excellence. Through a blind-review process, CUJAH selects essays for our published volumes which best exemplify the diversity of talents within the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Concordia community at large. We have been publishing since 2004-2005 and this year will mark our fourteenth volume.

In addition to the publication of our annual journal, CUJAH hosted—in collaboration with the Fine Arts Student Alliance (FASA)—Concordia University's 7th Annual Undergraduate Art History Conference, (Dis)CONNECT: *Alienation & Art*. We were proud to welcome among our professional panels Nathalie Bondil (Chief Curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), Jennifer Dorner (Director of the FOFA Gallery), Dr. Cristian Zaelzer (Founder and Director of *Convergence, Perceptions of Neurosci-*

ence), and Dr. Emanuel Licha (Associate Professor of Art History at the Université de Montréal) in addition to Concordia professors Dr. Michael Lantz (from the Department of Psychology), and Dr. Maya Rae Oppenheimer (from the Department of Art History).

As an extension to this year's conference, CUJAH also partnered with the 2018 Art Matters Festival and Nuit Blanche to curate an exhibition of undergraduate artists from Concordia in order to address the gap between emerging art historians/critics and practicing artists.

Letter from the Editor

Behind every artwork is an artist; behind every history, a writer. As the field of art history becomes ever more interdisciplinary in nature, incorporating geopolitical, socio-cultural, scientific, postcolonial, and migratory studies into the field (to name only a few), these writings are increasingly creating new space for critical thinking and something dialogue. As such, in addition to offering insightful analyses of artists, artworks, and artistic movements, the ten essays featured in the present volume exemplify acute critical engagements with contemporary and historical art.

Celebrating the many different approaches to the history of art, CUJAH's fourteenth volume houses a range of essays focusing on exhibition reviews and criticism, politically contextualized period analyses, and monographic-esque artist case studies. Though eminently different in subject matter, writing style, and approach, each work calls attention to the important role the art historian plays as a purveyor of critical thought. Serena Desaulniers and Zoe Johnston, for example, highlight the implications of historical influences of dominant cultures on minority arts movements, in keeping with Sophie Wonfor's admonition to always "keep unlearning, to keep listening" in her study of the subaltern subject. Remembering the voices of the past when historicizing them in the present reminds us that history is never

fixed, and that the process of contextualizing and re-contextualizing the arts is essential in order to continue discussions in the realm of visual culture today.

It has been an honour to serve as Editor-in-Chief for CUJAH Vol. XIV this year. I would like to extend my warm congratulations to all the authors, editors, graphic designers, and executive members who contributed to CUJAH's activities. I would also like to thank you, the reader, for your support. Your readership is essential for the continued propagation of new pieces of art historical scholarship as well as for the development of renewed critical discourse with the subjects brought forth in the current volume.

Yours sincerely,
Kimberly Glassman
Editor-in-Chief | CUJAH Volume XIV
BFA Art History major (Co-op),
Psychology minor

volume XIV teams

Executive Team

Kimberly Glassman

Editor-in-Chief

Short Bio
Short Bio

Autumn Cadorette

Managing Editor

Short Bio
Short Bio

Hannah Braithwaite

Permissions Editor

Short Bio
Short Bio

Diane Wong

Events Coordinator

Short Bio
Short Bio

Luna Restrepo

Conference Coordinator

Short Bio
Short Bio

Eleni Speal

Communications Coordinator

Short Bio
Short Bio
Short Bio
Short Bio
Short Bio
Short Bio
Short Bio

Design Team

Alexey Lazarev
Head Graphic Designer

- Short Bio

Annie Dutremble
Assistant Graphic Designer

- Short Bio

Editorial Team

Catherine McRae Finnegan
English Editor

Maggie Mills
English Editor

Oona Ostrowski
English Editor

Raven Spiratos
English Editor

Sophie Arnold
English Editor

Cassandra Lavoie
French Editor

Veronique Morin
French Editor

Julie Brown
Copy Editor

Lisa Massa
Copy Editor

Silent, Present: The Subaltern's Afterlife in Art

Sophie Wonfor

Third year, Art History & Studio Art major (BFA)

Editor: Raven Spiratos

The present is defined by a history we have all collectively experienced, a culmination of traces left by the lives of those we have never known. Though apparently crowded with experience, sentiment, and memory, the histories we are taught are full of lapses and voids which induce longings. Inheriting colonial histories, we soon learn they are written by the colonizer, so it is for the voice of the colonized we yearn—those who are made silent, whose lives may end undocumented, falling into the gaps of state systems. To Indian literary theorist and cultural critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, these are “subaltern” subjects; they cannot exist in popular culture, they cannot speak and, consequently, they are afforded no identity.¹ The subaltern subject is marginalized into near-oblivion, silenced and spoken for in such a way that they are doubly-silenced.² Though they are invisible in dispiriting ways, their presence does not altogether vanish. Traces of subaltern subjects exist in social consciousness and can motivate great social change. But how do we access this social consciousness? As the cavities and flaws of written histories continue to be exposed, art is increasingly important as a medium through which the subaltern can affect us. It could be that through art the subaltern subjects are given an afterlife, one which could outweigh the silence that suppressed them in life.

This paper discusses two artworks in exhibitions which both opened early last year. The first, the representation-defying installation *En el aire* (2003), was part of an exhibition of work by Mexican artist Teresa Margolles titled *Mundos*, which opened at the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal in February 2017. This artwork, as well as most of the exhibition, centres around violent deaths: specifically *feminicidios*,³ a

term coined in response to the pervasiveness of violent murders committed against women in Margolles' home country.⁴ The following month, in March, the Whitney Biennale opened and faced immediate public backlash for including American artist Dana Schutz' *Open Casket* (2016), a depiction of a deeply significant, and traumatic, moment in Black American⁵ history. Her treatment of the painting's subject elicited multiple calls for its removal through active protests staged in the gallery space it was exhibited in. Schutz, though American, is not embedded within the subaltern community she references in her painting: victims of racially-driven violence, specifically against Black Americans in the United States. By contrast Margolles, a Mexican woman making artwork about the murder of Mexican women, is embedded in the community she refers to.

“As the cavities and flaws of written histories continue to be exposed, art is increasingly important as a medium through which the subaltern can affect us. It could be that through art the subaltern subjects are given an afterlife, one which could outweigh the silence that suppressed them in life.”

Positionality of the artists is an important component in this discussion, and in writing about both of these artists and their work, I feel it is critical to be explicit that I myself am not embedded in either of the communities being referred to. At many instances in writing and editing this paper I have questioned and doubted the validity of my outsider analysis of both of these artists and the subjects they reference. I engage with this work as a woman, a Canadian of white settler-heritage, an artist, and foremost, as a student. It feels essential to be clear that the intention of this paper is not to speak for either community, nor either of the two artists, but to compare their divergent approaches to their respective subaltern subjects and how these approaches affect the presence within the work.

Unique to Margolles in this comparison is that she does not actually attempt to represent the subaltern subject, while Schutz does by offering a representation of a subaltern subject in her painterly abstraction of a photograph taken of Emmett Till's open-casket by American photographer David Jackson. In doing so, Schutz, however inadvertently, places herself in an uncomfortable position wherein she appears to be either speaking for them, on their behalf, or through them, and this is what is so troubling in the work shown at the Biennale. Spivak has already concluded that the subaltern cannot speak, so for Schutz to take it upon herself to use what presence they have posthumously to represent them could be understood as casting a second silence on them. Therefore, a representation could undermine the possibility (or fact that) they have a presence.

In evaluating this suggestion, that the subaltern can be (or are) present posthu-

mously, that even if a voice's echo is decidedly not heard, as the subaltern cannot speak, there are nonetheless traces left behind after their death. Whether traces captured in photographic documents or physical material, these are still undeniably powerful. It is in these that a subaltern presence can be sensed. In understanding how the presences in these traces might function, Spivak's explanation of *darstellen*, a German term that means 'speaking as,' compared to *vertreten*, meaning 'speaking for,' proves helpful in this discussion.⁶ Both terms conflate in the English translation as 'representation,' losing the nuance which is particularly critical in the practice of art. *Darstellen* is better articulated as re-presentation: a direct line from subaltern to audience, the artist being merely a medium for their connection. This directness can be understood in the work of Margolles, whose work effectively speaks for itself. She circumnavigates the predicament of 'speaking for' a subaltern subject (*verteten*) through the bare simplicity of their presentation. This enables access to a collective pain, immersive and inescapable, as in *En el aire*. Machines placed in the ceiling hum quietly, eerily like a sustained exhale. From these cascade bubbles, apparently benign. In fact, these bubbles are composed of water that has been used to wash the corpses which pass through a morgue Margolles had worked at in Mexico. Suddenly, the viewer feels surrounded. It is possible to conjure the sensation that this is a room crowded with spirits, and consequently the experience takes on a more complicated tone. The bubbles not only catch the light and vanish into thin air, to then melt into the skin of the viewer, they contain traces of the dead. In this way it is almost a cheeky response to Spivak's legendary question "Can the subaltern speak?" *En el aire* opts

"In doing so, Schutz, however inadvertently, places herself in an uncomfortable position wherein she appears to be either speaking for them, on their behalf, or through them, and this is what is so troubling in the work shown at the Biennale."

for another sense, touch: can the subaltern be felt? In this vein, Margolles explains she works with "emotion, not reason."⁷ Of course, the experience demands a certain level of presence in the viewer. If they are not seeking the experience Margolles creates, the weight of the many deaths that inhabit the project may be neither heard, felt, or understood as a component. For a project with such a dolorous subject, and the intention to awaken the viewer to a story they may not have known (for certainly Margolles cannot assume a viewer's intimacy with the content), the line is very fine between the viewer leaning in to listen or the viewer turning away.

Most of Margolles' work, and certainly within *Mundos*, centres a subaltern presence by simply presenting their traces. Their deaths have been approached with a degree of respect, subject to Margolles' moral-compass, that is disturbingly unparallelled by the systems that are meant to pursue justice, resolution and seek prevention of *feminicidios*.⁸ In this regard, some see Margolles as an "art saint"⁹ but this overwhelms the practical methods of her work. It is not about glorified representation, nor truly representation (*darstellen*) at all. Even in photographic work such as *Pista de baile de "Nightclub Irma's"* [*Dance Floor from "Nightclub Irma's"*] (2016), the

function of the artist is as a mechanism of documentation. The image can still be read as a raw document which centres the individual pictured and their story. As far as Margolles' personal implication in the work goes, it is an exhuming of her own sorrow around the violence rampant in her own country, but in such a way that it becomes about all of us, "my misery is your misery."¹⁰ As German author Klaus GÖrner remarks, her work reminds us that we are alive,¹¹ and that in living we can act, speak and be heard. Standing in *En el aire* encourages the viewer to understand fear, misery, and death by confronting it, by literally being in it. Margolles believes we can level ourselves, moving past prejudice and discrimination, "through sharing our misery,"¹² and perhaps only then can we understand how to move forward.

Art can act as an access point to the individual and collective pain of violence. Mexican writer Gabriela Jauregui points out that portraiture and death have always been connected, but navigating depictions of death is still riddled with tripwires.¹³ On view at the Whitney's 2017 Biennale in New York City was Schutz' *Open Casket*, a painting which sparked a veritable firestorm of debate and discussion. It depicts Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old Black American boy who was kidnapped,

To represent this photograph (a trace of Till's presence) through a painting suggests that it had not been an adequate representation to begin with, that it is the role of the painting (and inextricably the painter) to reinsert its subject into social consciousness."

tortured, and brutally murdered after being accused of whistling at a white woman at a convenience store in 1955. Till's mother, Mamie Till Mobley, insisted on an open casket funeral; she wanted her son's brutalized corpse to be seen in order to show the world what racialized violence looked like. "Let the people see what I've seen."¹⁴ She consented David Jackson to photograph his body and the funeral, images which would inspire Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights Movement. Till's mother is present in some of these images, her pain directly communicated by her expression and her body language. Jackson's photographs, which were presumably meant by Mobley to be the final visual documentation of her son's death, are problematically represented (*vertreten*) by Schutz. Her painting is compositionally based off of the open-casket photograph, but Till's presence is dislocated. His body underwent a horrific distortion by way of the violence he suffered, but when translated through Schutz' dashes of flesh-toned paint, this abstraction is almost benign. The paint is thick over his mouth, a disconcerting manifestation of how the painting of this image usurps the autonomy of Till's subaltern presence within the photograph. We might pause at the rose pinned to the lower right corner of the painting before

the sharp angles of his black suit against his white shirt guide our eyes back to his face. What was challenging and powerful in the photograph is smoothed by oil paint. Without any context of who this is, our eyes might have slid off the canvas and moved on, but Schutz has hit a nerve. To represent this photograph (a trace of Till's presence) through a painting suggests that it had not been an adequate representation to begin with, that it is the role of the painting (and inextricably the painter) to reinsert its subject into social consciousness. Arguably the critical responses to the work have been more effective on that front than the painting itself.

Schutz' sentiments surrounding Till's death, embedded in her personal experience, are not an inappropriate focus for artistic process. Centering these on a personal level is a vital component of the 'unlearning' that Spivak calls for in the continuous efforts towards decolonizing our desires, responses, and emotions. Schutz' selection of the open-casket photograph of Emmett Till does in some ways draw attention back to his story, but his image does not need to be recaptured. Sixty-two years later, when Carolyn Bryant, the woman who originally made the accusation, confessed that it was predom-



Fig 1. Teresa Margolles, *En el aire*. 2003. Photo by Axel Schneider, courtesy of the Peter Kilchmann Gallery, Zurich.

inantly untrue,¹⁵ what needs to be looked at is how this event is present in our lives, what the traces of death mean to us, if we have learned anything, and if the way we address racialized violence has changed. What Schutz inadvertently puts into focus—and what British writer and artist Hannah Black's accusation of "tone-deafness" points to—is not herself, her motherhood, her fear, nor her shame, but to the spectacle of death, and more specifically

the death of Black Americans.¹⁶ Though not calling for the painting's destruction or removal as Black has,¹⁷ American artist Parker Bright attempted to intervene, standing in front of the work, his back to the gallery space, his t-shirt bearing the words "Black Death Spectacle" (fig. 1).¹⁸ It is a call to look away, in order to respect that the silenced subaltern subject can still be, and deserves to be, *felt* rather than gawked at.



Fig 2. Michael Bilsborough, *Parker Bright's protest at the Whitney Biennale*. 2017. Photo courtesy of Michael Bilsborough.

It is necessary to give Schutz' work some context within her own practice, though this does little service to her in defense of *Open Casket*. She is known for works dealing with gory or absurd imagery, most of which is invented and imaginary. As such, what is most disconcerting in the moment of painting Emmett Till, is the break from painting fictitious events. If we are to consider that the painting *Face Eater* (2004), a portrait of a fleshy-head whose mouth is (as the title suggests) eating its own face, shares the same strata of unfolding time as her work in the Biennale, we are left with even more disheartening questions—the painting style is the same, so what does she mean to say? What does it mean when

an artist strays from her usual fictive gore to tackle a historic subject whose death is both tragic and inescapably horrific? The troubling nature of this painting is only further compacted when the artist, inheritor of a colonial American culture that has a history of exploiting Black Americans and their culture for its own gain, simply perpetuates these racially insensitive notions. In a conversation with Calvin Tomkins for *The New Yorker*, she uncannily wonders out loud, “[h]ow do you make a painting about this and not have it just be about the grotesque?”¹⁹ Is this question hypothetical? Is it directed toward herself? Ultimately, she nonetheless painted an image of intense pain sourced from a racialized

community she is not a part of. One seriously questions if she ever consulted with the source community for guidance, perspective, or to engage in a conversation around her permission to use this image. Till's death signifies far more than just a loss of life; it was a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement. Why did Schutz turn to depict such a sensitive moment in history when she is known for the grotesque and absurd? In *The New Yorker* interview she expressed her doubts in doing so, but then extends, “I really feel any subject is O.K., it's just how it's done.”²⁰ Art critic Karen Rosenberg wrote “[a]gain and again Ms. Schutz has challenged herself to come up with a subject that's too awkward, gross, impractical or invisible to paint. But she has yet to find one that stumps her.”²¹ But this was in 2011, naively projecting that Schutz' confident strides would not misstep over a subject that seemed ‘invisible,’ but had in fact been being listened to and fought for, for decades. Rosenberg did not anticipate that Schutz would approach a subaltern subject embedded in social consciousness, the only element carrying on the thread of fiction within her oeuvre is no longer her subject, but the testimony which spurned her subject's murder. This is a distressing irony.

American artist and professor Dr. Lisa Whittington, who has also painted Till, responds to Schutz' work with a sense of fellow-artist-based respect and inquiry, acknowledging that as artists it is their role to document experience and this is what they both sought to do in representing Till.²² The distinction between them is most importantly in the responsibility of their intentions, as informed by personal experience. Schutz' has explained that her intentions were to communicate the pain of Till's mother in having lost her child.²³

As a mother herself, this is how she can personally relate to the pain around Till's story. However, her painting does not read only, if it all, as a contemplation of a mother's grievance. Painting Till certainly is a response to the disproportionate violence still experienced by the same communities of colour who fought for their rights during the Civil Rights Movement and to this day; it does reference these things, but only by using Till's image as a kind of synecdoche, as representative of the whole violence inflicted against Black Americans. Whittington counters that her own painting is directly related to Emmett himself, his personal experience; through the process of painting his portrait she expresses having asked, “What did they do to you Emmett? Why is your ear missing? Where are your clothes? Were you afraid? Were you lonely?”²⁴ This is a haunting series of queries that allows Whittington to validate her painting, which is no more flattering than Schutz' in terms of aesthetic abstraction. Nonetheless, she avoids the problem of speaking for (*vertreten*) Till by speaking, instead, to him. In both cases, the paintings insert themselves between subaltern subject and the viewer which, while possibly cathartic for the artist, induces a dangerous space for metaphor, and by extension abstraction and distance. While creating metaphor is to Jauregui intrinsic to our methods of creating meaning in art, it is not the only way.²⁵ Whereas Margolles problematizes distance and abstraction from subaltern subjects,²⁶ *Open Casket* shows a figure whose death is illustrated in a way that seems to efficiently collapse history, condense experience with a visual summary, as if to say it *looked something like this*, so that the viewer, as Whittington remarks, may “close the casket and move on.”²⁷

Of course, this was never quite the intention with Schutz, nor with the original open casket. It is worth taking the time to consider that Till's casket is now on view at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., having been exhumed in 2005.²⁸ The casket has a direct presence, akin to the material proximity in Margolles' oeuvre. A close friend and peer of mine who has seen it described it to me as evocative of an immense cultural sadness, recalling Margolles' phrase, "my misery is your misery." It is not about academia, scholarship, or art; it is about our history, it is about people's lives. Mirroring the thousands who paid respect to Till in 1955, the museum visitors are escorted through the space and aside from the sounds of shuffling feet, weeping and breathing, it is silent, "like a chapel."²⁹ This transformation of the museum, resonates with how Margolles' work transforms the logic of the gallery space into a place for mourning.³⁰ Death levels us. It is also vital to

"Writers Josephine Livingstone and Lovia Gyarke ask, 'how will you hear the dead boy's voice, if you keep speaking over him?'"

note here that photographs, which are encouraged elsewhere in the museum, are prohibited in Till's space; Jackson's were meant to be the last visual documentation.

Till's image certainly does not need Schutz to highlight it as if it were lost in an archive of forgotten history. Indeed, Till is not amplified in her work but silenced. Writers Josephine Livingstone and Lovia

Gyarke ask, "how will you hear the dead boy's voice, if you keep speaking over him?"³¹ But even Schutz' voice remains unquenched in her painting: what does she have to say about being a white woman in America right now? For her, this painting was the only way she felt she could engage as a painter, she asks Tomkins, "Is it better to try to make something that's impossible, because it's important to you, and to fail, or never to engage with it at all? I just couldn't do it any other way."³² But what if Schutz had painted her own face distorted with the pain she feels in contemplating Till's death, would it have better expressed the effect of a subaltern's traces? This effect is recognized by Spanish artist Santiago Sierra in Margolles' work, it is a reminder that "this Mexican who got killed could be any one of us."³³ This forces the consequent acknowledgement of our responsibility to do better. But how? There remains a lingering thirst for solutions. Perhaps this can only be assuaged with the acknowledgement that artistic responsi-

bility is heavy, the ethics of representation are fragile, and the future is uncertain. An art practice seeking to engage a public scarred by colonialism, must find footing between these or reject representation altogether. Doing so explains both the documentary trend of postmodern practices and the success of Margolles' subaltern *presentations*, preferable for their direct engagement with subject matter.

While *En el aire* is wholly focused on the victims of *femicidio*, women whose lives were taken from them, the visitor is asked to meditate on their lives, and may come to recognize in Margolles' work their own humanity, their affinity with life and death, and that it is never separate from them.

"However we are able to become aware of them, as history's voices clamour over each other, their potent presences remind us to keep unlearning, to keep listening."

In death and in art, the subaltern occupies a complicated space, eliciting both reverence and repulsion. Though apparently antonymic, both attitudes subscribe to the fact of the subaltern's presence. Spivak is certain to make clear how profoundly the subaltern, and particularly the gendered subaltern subject, cannot speak. However, when considering the effect of the display of Till's casket and of *En el aire*, it can be understood that their presences (both spiritually and in physical traces) still can, and do, affect us. Their presence fills a room, or pulses around a trailing of bubbles, catches our eye as they glisten, and then evaporates in the gallery. This invisibility and silence is central to the subaltern, to *En el aire*'s installation, to

the atmosphere of the room in which Till's casket is housed. The impact of the subaltern presence is a kind of power that is best felt rather than depicted. To borrow a line from activist and American artist David Wojnarowicz, "When I put my hands on your body on your flesh I feel the history of that body."³⁴ These invisible histories, these subaltern afterlives, are embedded within us. However we are able to become aware of them, as history's voices clamour over each other, their potent presences remind us to keep unlearning, to keep listening.

⁰¹ Gayatri Spivak, "Gayatri Spivak: The Trajectory of the Subaltern in My Work," Youtube video, 1:28:55, keynote lecture at University of California, Humanities Department Lecture Series "Voices," September 2004, posted by "University of California Television (UCTV)," February 8, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZHH4ALRFHw>.

⁰² Tammer El-Sheikh, "Third World Feminism and Representational Politics: Spivak and British India," (class lecture, Postcolonial Theory for Art History from Concordia University, Montréal, QC, February 15, 2017).

⁰³ I use the term *femicidio* for its emphasis on the complicity of state authorities in Mexico, as this is the focus of Margolles' work. An explanation of this nuance of the term is made clear in Martha Patricia Castañeda Salgado's explanation of the terms in her article "Femicide in Mexico." Martha Patricia Castañeda Salgado, "Femicide in Mexico: An approach through academic, activist and artistic work," *Current Sociology* 64, no. 7: 1054-1070.

⁰⁴ 'Women' is not limited to cis-women but extends to all trans-women, girls, femme-identifying folks in acknowledgement of the disproportionate violence committed against them.

⁰⁵ I use the title 'Black American' throughout the essay, partially for the sake of consistency, but most importantly because, as I understand it, using the term 'Black' acknowledges the fact that the term 'African-American' is not comparable to other hyphenated American identities. As Hari Ziyad articulates, "many do not have access to their historical roots the way most white people do," and this is not for some arbitrary reason, it is because of slavery. Lori L. Tharps explains how 'African' itself was imposed collectively (by white people, according to Western geography) onto the individuals forcibly stolen from their homelands across the continent of Africa, enslaved and brought to America. This robs their identities as it disregards not only the diversity of their cultures but also how they identified themselves. In using the title Black American, my intention is to honour this. I do not by any means intend to suggest that Black American feels true to the whole, diverse, and multiple communities that identify as Black, African-American, or otherwise, nor that 'Black American' ought to be the only term used across the board. That is resolutely not mine to say. I

believe every person has the right to choose how they self-identify and that there is no wrong way to do so. Finally, I agree with Tharps on the importance to capitalize Black. To quote her explanation, "Black with a capital B refers to people of the African diaspora. Lowercase black is simply a color." Hari Ziyad, "Word of the Day: Black (With a Capital 'B')." *Racebaitr*, April 21, 2015, <http://racebaitr.com/2015/04/21/word-of-the-day-black-with-a-capital-b/>; Lori L. Tharps, "The Case for Black With a Capital B: Commentary," *The New York Times*, Late Edition (East Coast), November 19, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/the-case-for-black-with-a-capital-b.html>.

⁰⁶ Gaytari Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 276.

⁰⁷ Teresa Margolles, "Santiago Sierra," Interview, *BOMB Magazine* 86 (2004), trans. by Kerry Hegart, <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2606/santiago-sierra>.

⁰⁸ Howard Campbell, "No End in Sight: Violence in Ciudad Juárez," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 44, no. 3 (2011): 20.

⁰⁹ Gabriela Jauregui, "Necropolis: Exhuming the Works of Teresa Margolles," in *Teresa Margolles: Muerte sin fin*, 176-190, (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004), 186.

¹⁰ Margolles, "Santiago Sierra."

¹¹ Klaus Görner, "Muerte sin fin," in *Teresa Margolles: Muerte sin fin*. (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004), 43.

¹² Margolles, "Santiago Sierra."

¹³ Jauregui, "Necropolis: Exhuming the Works of Teresa Margolles," 186.

¹⁴ Mamie Till Mobley quoted in Allyson Hobbs, "The Power of Looking, from Emmett Till to Philando Castile," *The New Yorker*, August 5, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-power-of-looking-from-emmett-till-to-philando-castile>.

¹⁵ Rory Carroll, "Woman at center of Emmett Till case tells author she fabricated testimony," *Civil rights*

movement, *The Guardian*, January 27, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/27/emmett-till-book-carolyn-bryant-confession>.

¹⁶ Hannah Black, "Please read & share Hannah Black's open letter to the curators and staff of the Whitney Biennial," submission via *Blackcontemporaryart*, March 21, 2017, <http://blackcontemporaryart.tumblr.com/post/158661755087/submission-please-read-share-hannah-blacks>

¹⁷ Black, "Please read & share Hannah Black's open letter to the curators and staff of the Whitney Biennial."

¹⁸ Oliver Basciano, "Whitney Biennale: Emmett Till Casket Painting by White Artist Sparks Anger," *Art, The Guardian*, March 21, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/mar/21/whitney-biennial-emmett-till-painting-dana-schutz>.

¹⁹ Dana Schutz, quoted in Calvin Tomkins, "Why Dana Schutz Painted Emmett Till," *The New Yorker*, April 10, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/10/why-dana-schutz-painted-emmett-till>.

²⁰ Schutz quoted in Tomkins, "Why Dana Schutz Painted Emmett Till."

²¹ Karen Rosenburg, "The Fantastic and Grisly, Envisioned," *The New York Times*, October 6, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/07/arts/design/dana-schutz-at-neuberger-museum-review.html>.

²² Lisa Whittington, "#MuseumsSoWhite: Black Pain and Why Painting Emmett Till Matters," *NBC News*, March 26, 2017. <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/news/museumssowhite-representation-black-pain-why-emmett-till-painting-matters-ncna737931>.

²³ "I don't know what it is like to be black in America, but I do know what it is like to be a mother." Dana Schutz quoted in Basciano, "Whitney Biennial: Emmett Till Casket Painting by White Artist Sparks Anger."

²⁴ Whittington, "#MuseumsSoWhite: Black Pain and Why Painting Emmett Till Matters."

²⁵ Jauregui, "Necropolis: Exhuming the Works of Teresa Margolles," 177.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Whittington, "#MuseumsSoWhite: Black Pain and Why Painting Emmett Till Matters."

²⁸ Simeon Wright, interview by Abby Callard, "Emmett Till's Casket Goes to the Smithsonian," *Smithsonian*

Magazine, (2009): 1, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/emmett-tills-casket-goes-to-the-smithsonian-144696940/>.

²⁹ Noni Nabors, telephone conversation with the author, March 31, 2017.

³⁰ Jauregui, "Necropolis: Exhuming the Works of Teresa Margolles," 185-6.

³¹ Lovia Gyarkye and Josephine Livingstone, "The Case Against Dana Schutz," *The New Republic*, March 22, 2017, <http://newrepublic.com/article/141506/case-dana-schutz>.

³² Schutz quoted in Tomkins, "Why Dana Schutz Painted Emmett Till."

³³ Santiago Sierra, "A Short Appendix," in *Teresa Margolles: Muerte sin fin*, 213-215, (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004), 214.

³⁴ David Wojnarowicz, *When I put my hands on your body*, gelatin silver print and silkscreen text, 1990.

Bibliography

Basciano, Oliver. "Whitney Biennial: Emmett Till casket painting by white artist sparks anger." *Art, The Guardian*. March 21, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/mar/21/whitney-biennial-emmett-till-painting-dana-schutz>.

Black, Hannah. "Please read & share Hannah Black's open letter to the curators and staff of the Whitney Biennial." Submitted via *Blackcontemporaryart*. March 21, 2017. <http://blackcontemporaryart.tumblr.com/post/158661755087/submission-please-read-share-hannah-blacks>.

Campbell, Howard. "No End in Sight: Violence in Ciudad Juárez." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 44, no. 3 (2011): 19–22.

Carroll, Rory. "Woman at center of Emmett Till case tells author she fabricated testimony." Civil rights movement, *The Guardian*. January 27, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/27/emmett-till-book-carolyn-bryant-confession>.

El-Sheikh, Tammer. "Third World Feminism and Representational Politics: Spivak and British India." Class lecture, Postcolonial Theory for Art History, Concordia University, Montréal, QC, February 15, 2017.

Görner, Klaus. "Muerte sin fin." In *Teresa Margolles: Muerte sin fin*, 41–47. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004.

Gyarke, Lovia and Josephine Livingstone. "The Case Against Dana Schutz." *The New Republic*. March 22, 2017. <http://newrepublic.com/article/141506/case-dana-schutz>.

Hobbs, Allyson. "The Power of Looking, from Emmett Till to Philando Castile." *The New Yorker*. August 5, 2016. <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-power-of-looking-from-emmett-till-to-philando-castile>.

Jackson, David. *Emmett Till*, 1955. Photograph. <http://100photos.time.com/photos/emmett-till-david-jackson>.

Jauregui, Gabriela. "Necropolis: Exhuming the Works of Teresa Margolles." In *Teresa Margolles: Muerte sin fin*, 176–190. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004.

Margolles, Teresa. *En el aire/In the Air*, 2003. Bubbles made with water from the morgue. *Mundos*, Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. February 16–May 14, 2017.

— **En el aire**, 2003. Bubbles made with water from the morgue. Photo: Axel Schneider, Courtesy the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich. <http://dowse.org.nz/exhibitions/detail/teresa-margolles-so-it-vanishes>.

— **Mundos**, 2017. Exhibition. Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. February 16 – May 14, 2017.

— **Pista de baile del "Nightclub Irma's"** [Dance Floor from "Nightclub Irma's"], 2016. Colour print on cotton paper. Transgender sex worker standing on the ruins of the dance floor of a demolished nightclub in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. 125 x 185 cm. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich.

— **"Santiago Sierra,"** Art: Interview, *BOMB Magazine* 86, (2004). Translated by Kerry Hegart. <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2606/santiago-sierra>.

Nabors, Noni. Telephone conversation with the author. March 31, 2017.

Rosenburg, Karen. "The Fantastic and Grisly, Envisioned." *The New York Times*. October 6, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/07/arts/design/dana-schutz-at-neuberger-museum-review.html>.

Salgado, Martha Patricia Castañeda. "Femicide in Mexico: An Approach Through Academic, Activist and Artistic Work." *Current Sociology* 64, no. 7 (2016): 1054–1070.

Schutz, Dana. *Open Casket*, 2016. Oil on canvas. Collection of the artist. *Whitney Biennale 2017*, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, March 17 – June 11, 2017.

— **Face eater**, 2004. Oil on canvas, 23 x 18 inches. Petzel Gallery, New York. <http://www.petzels.com/artists/dana-schutz/>.

Sierra, Santiago. "A Short Appendix." In *Teresa Margolles: Muerte sin fin*, 213–15. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271–313. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

— **"Gayatri Spivak: The Trajectory of the Subaltern in My Work."** Youtube video, 1:28:55. Keynote lecture at University of California, Humanities Department Lecture Series "Voices," September 2004. Posted by "University of California Television (UCTV)," February 7, 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZHH4ALRFHw>.

Tharps, Lori L. "The Case for Black with a Capital B: Commentary." *The New York Times*. November 19, 2014. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/the-case-for-black-with-a-capital-b.html>.

Tomkins, Calvin. "Why Dana Schutz Painted Emmett Till." *The New Yorker*. April 10, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/04/10/why-dana-schutz-painted-emmett-till>.

Whittington, Lisa. "#MuseumsSoWhite: Black Pain and Why Painting Emmett Till Matters." NBCBLK, *NBC News*. March 26, 2017. <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/amp/museums-so-white-representation-black-pain-why-emmett-till-painting-matters-n737931>.

Wojnarowicz, David. *When I put my hands on your body*. Gelatin silver print and silkscreen text. 1990.

Wright, Simeon. "Emmett Till's Casket Goes to the Smithsonian." By Abby Callard. *Smithsonian Magazine*, (November 2009): 1–2. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/emmett-tills-casket-goes-to-the-smithsonian-144696940/>.

Ziyad, Hari. "Word of the Day: Black (With a Capital 'B')." *Racebaitr*. April 21, 2015. <http://racebaitr.com/2015/04/21/word-of-the-day-black-with-a-capital-b/>.

L'art montre ce que la maladie ne voit pas : critique d'exposition en contexte hospitalier

Chloé Fortier-Devin

Quatrième année, Majeur en Photographie (BFA)

Éditrice : Cassandra Lavoie

Introduction

L'organisme d'art-thérapie Les Impatients qui aide les personnes atteintes de problèmes de santé mentale fête ses vingt-cinq ans¹. Le Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal inaugure la première Ruche d'Art². L'Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue offre maintenant un programme en art-thérapie à Montréal³. Les applications de l'art comme thérapie prennent de l'expansion, de la distribution aux champs d'application. Dans le domaine de la santé, on assiste à un changement de mentalité⁴ où les murs des hôpitaux se transforment en galeries d'art. Fruit des recherches interdisciplinaires en arts et en sciences⁵, ce phénomène s'explique par une nouvelle compréhension des besoins des patients⁶. L'exposition *Grandir dans l'adversité* est présentée au Centre du cancer des Cèdres du Centre universitaire de santé McGill (CUSM), sa mission est de partager l'expérience des artistes qui fréquentent cet hôpital. Pour débiter, l'exposition sera présentée brièvement, suivie d'une description de l'aspect collaboratif des arts et de la science, puis de la présentation d'expositions dans le contexte hospitalier, pour finir avec la difficulté d'accéder aux informations concernant l'exposition.

Présentation de l'exposition

Les thèmes principaux de l'exposition *Grandir dans l'adversité* sont: l'espoir, la croissance, la dualité, la réconciliation et le soutien⁷. Selon Katelyn Brinkman, l'art-thérapeute en fonction au CUSM, les œuvres présentées ont été réalisées partiellement dans des séances libres

d'art-thérapie, mais sont principalement le résultat d'un travail réalisé en dehors du cadre thérapeutique. Les artistes expérimentent deux pratiques différentes. Brinkman fait remarquer que les détails et l'application témoignent d'un investissement supérieur à la période de création allouée dans les ateliers d'art-thérapie⁸. La chercheuse et auteure Cathy Malchiodi définit l'art-thérapie comme étant « *a form of expressive therapy that combines psychotherapeutic theories and techniques with an understanding of the psychological aspects of the creative process or art making*⁹ ». L'art-thérapie est guidée par un art-thérapeute professionnel, dont l'intervention vise à atteindre certains objectifs, alors que la réalisation d'art thérapeutique peut exister selon l'initiative de l'individu¹⁰.

L'exposition présente une vingtaine d'œuvres de patients en oncologie, de leurs proches et de cliniciens, sélectionnées sur appel de soumissions¹¹. Plusieurs médiums sont employés, tels que la peinture, le collage, le dessin, la sculpture et l'origami¹². Les thèmes abordés dans les descriptions présentent l'expérience du diagnostic ainsi que les thèmes présents, passés et futurs¹³. Un souci de présentation est observable dû aux encadrements mettant en valeur les œuvres et une mise en disposition agréant l'aire commune (fig. 1).

Cet espace est le fruit d'une collaboration de recherches entre Rosemary Reilly, professeure de Sciences humaines à l'Université Concordia, Kate Laux, art-thérapeute, et Virginia Lee, infirmière chercheuse au centre de services pour patients atteints du cancer *CanSupport* des Cèdres¹⁴. Publiée par Rosemary Reilly à l'été 2017, cette étude intitulée « *[t]he power of art to promote psychological and existential growth during adversity*¹⁵ », porte sur l'expérience



Fig. 1. Vue de l'exposition. 2017. Photo gracieuseté de l'auteur avec la permission du Centre universitaire de santé McGill.

des femmes atteintes du cancer du sein. Les fonds du projet de recherche ont été utilisés pour la création de l'exposition permanente *Nous. Ensemble à travers l'art*. L'équipe a également informé le public des applications de l'art à des fins thérapeutiques par une série de conférences et d'ateliers d'art ouverts à tous¹⁶. L'exposition, chapeautée par le *CanSupport* du Centre du cancer des Cèdres, a pour mission d'apporter un support à ceux qui fréquentent l'hôpital.

Le titre de l'exposition actuelle *Grandir dans l'adversité* réfère à la mission de l'exposition qui est le partage d'expériences et la connexion humaine des différents individus touchés par la maladie¹⁷. Reilly décrit sa vision de l'espace comme rassembleur: « *It will be a collective space for and by the members of the CanSupport community, to face and heal together from the adversity of the disease*¹⁸. » L'art est utilisé pour apaiser les patients, partager leurs voix et permettre aux visiteurs de s'identifier aux expériences véhiculées par les œuvres.

Des informations livrées par les œuvres et les textes accompagnateurs

À travers les descriptions, le visiteur découvre l'expérience des artistes, ce qui illustre une reconnaissance des bienfaits de l'expression artistique, comme la relaxation ou l'apport de bonheur dans des moments difficiles. Il y est question de thèmes propres au département de cancérologie tels que les étapes de la maladie surmontées par le patient ou l'expérience du diagnostic¹⁹.

L'expression par les arts est chargée d'informations émotionnelles, celles-ci permettent d'acquérir une meilleure compréhension de l'artiste vis-à-vis de la maladie. Une étude sur des patientes atteintes de problèmes cardiaques révèle que les créations artistiques amènent à mieux comprendre leur cheminement:

*The drawings were considered as both visual products of the women's knowledge about heart disease and processes of embodied knowledge production. It was concluded that having individuals draw how they visualized their condition was an insightful method with which to explore understandings of illness*²⁰.

En somme, l'art aide le patient à mieux comprendre ses conditions médicales et informe les professionnels qui l'accompagnent.

Dans le cas de l'exposition présente au CUSM, certains textes d'accompagnement utilisent le pronom « je » et abordent le diagnostic du point de vue du patient, dans d'autres cas, le visiteur se retrouve dans l'incapacité d'identifier la voix de l'artiste. Une des œuvres, nommée *Hors de Portée* et réalisée par Achaymaa Taha, dépeint le portrait d'un individu du corps médical regardant ses mains (fig. 2). Il y décrit l'impuissance et le désespoir face à certaines situations²¹. Bien que l'initiative valorise différents acteurs, il aurait été intéressant de mieux identifier le statut de l'artiste, de sorte à ce que le visiteur puisse situer le point de vue amené dans l'œuvre.

De plus, il serait bénéfique pour le visiteur d'avoir accès à des informations biographiques sur l'artiste. Un groupe d'œuvres est particulièrement intéressant à ce niveau, il s'agit de sculptures en origami d'Anita Raj (fig. 3). Ses sculptures sont décrites dans un article du journal *Montreal Gazette* qui dresse le portrait de cette patiente qui fréquente les hôpitaux pour une tumeur au cerveau depuis l'âge de 6 ans²². Son histoire, d'une détermination incroyable, l'amène à poursuivre ses études universitaires. Malgré les répercussions

de la maladie, elle en est aujourd'hui à sa troisième année de médecine à l'Université McGill et travaille au CUSM. Elle fait partie du groupe *The McGill Humanities and Arts in Medicine* qui a organisé l'exposition *Voyage au travers de l'univers de la santé* précédant l'exposition actuelle²³. La description accompagnant son œuvre consiste en un témoignage sur l'apport de l'origami dans sa vie. Cependant, le visiteur n'est pas informé du parcours de la jeune femme, qui représente un exemple de persévérance et de courage.

D'un autre côté, le choix de l'institution de présenter une courte description est légitime d'un point de vue éthique. L'inclusion d'informations biographiques ou sur la nature du diagnostic dans un contexte d'exposition d'art-thérapie est « typiquement considéré hautement confidentielle²⁴ ». D'ailleurs, les participants des ateliers d'art-thérapie ne sont pas identifiés dû à la nature des rencontres²⁵. Comme cette exposition présente des œuvres créées non-exclusivement dans le cadre de la thérapie, le participant est considéré comme autonome dans la divulgation des informations. Les textes accompagnateurs de l'exposition ne dévoilent donc pas de façon factuelle les bienfaits de l'art sur la santé ce qui amène le visiteur à construire sa compréhension de l'expérience des participants grâce aux œuvres et aux descriptions.

Une collaboration favorisant la santé

La collaboration des arts et de la science est à la base de l'utilisation de l'art comme thérapie. Les effets positifs de l'art sur la santé peuvent être constatés aux niveaux physiologiques et psychologiques²⁶. Ce

type de collaboration sert comme espace de réflexion et d'expression, car elle comporte des informations complémentaires. C'est ce qu'expliquent Alexa Wright et Alf Linney:

Whilst science is, for the most part, focused on altering our physical relationship with the natural world, art is orientated more towards a philosophical and emotional understanding of that relationship²⁷.

Le domaine de la médecine apporte le diagnostic de la maladie et les informations factuelles tandis que l'art laisse place à la création d'un espace d'expression. Cela permet aux participants de « définir de leur identité à l'extérieur de la maladie, de se concentrer sur des expériences de vie positives et d'explorer leurs émotions d'une façon symbolique²⁸ ». Cette collaboration apporte donc un équilibre entre les aspects physiques et psychologiques de la maladie.

D'ailleurs, l'expérience des personnes malades et de leurs proches est l'idée principale du projet *Hybrid Bodies* présenté par Ingrid Bachmann. Échelonnée sur plusieurs années, cette contribution d'une équipe issue des arts et de la science vise à mettre en lumière les difficultés vécues par les personnes qui ont reçu une transplantation cardiaque. Bachmann explique comment la vie des receveurs était différente après la transplantation et comment il leur était difficile de le verbaliser au corps médical²⁹. Le projet *Hybrid Bodies* donne une voix à ce qui n'est pas discuté dans le contexte hospitalier. L'art leur permet d'exprimer cette transformation en la matérialisant dans la création.

La présence d'arts dans le milieu hospi-

talier témoigne des nouvelles préoccupations du réseau de la santé soucieux de fournir un environnement accueillant pour favoriser le bien-être et la rémission de tous. Une étude démontre que les patients en contact avec des expositions d'œuvres d'art durant leur rétablissement de chimiothérapie expérimentent 20% moins d'anxiété et 34% moins de dépression que ceux d'un groupe pilote³⁰. Les effets bénéfiques de la présence des arts sur la santé sont de plus en plus développés à travers le pays³¹. C'est en partie pourquoi le réseau sans but lucratif *Arts Heal Network Canada* a été fondé en 2010. Celui-ci ayant pour but de « créer un réseau de partage de connaissances pour promouvoir le développement des initiatives relatives aux arts et à la santé au Canada³² ». La création de ce réseau illustre cet intérêt récent qui demande plus d'attention de la part des instances gouvernementales.

Une exposition d'art dans un contexte hospitalier

L'hôpital, comme emplacement choisi pour l'exposition d'art, apporte une crédibilité à l'utilisation du médium artistique dans un cadre thérapeutique. Cet environnement est symbole de la recherche, de la science médicale et de l'innovation. Les études scientifiques ne sont pas présentées au visiteur, elles sont sous-jacentes à l'exposition et contribuent à la création de tels espaces d'exposition³³.

L'art est très présent au CUSM et prend différentes formes. En plus de l'exposition *Grandir dans l'adversité*, la visite se pour-



Fig 2. Taha Achaymaa, *Hors de portée*. 2017, acrylique sur toile. Photo gracieuseté de l'auteure avec la permission de l'artiste.

suit sur d'autres œuvres qui agrémentent l'espace à proximité. En effet, l'œuvre d'art *Prendre le pouls* est une sculpture créée par le duo d'artistes Cooke-Sasseville et représente un gigantesque stéthoscope. Elle fait partie de la collection regroupant onze autres œuvres conçues par des artistes québécois et canadiens dans le contexte de la *Politique d'intégration des arts à l'architecture*. Cette politique stipule que les nouvelles constructions de bâtiments publics doivent consacrer 1% du budget de la construction du bâtiment à l'intégration d'art public³⁴. Dans un corridor adjacent, soit celui du département d'oncologie, des reproductions d'œuvres d'artistes connus, tels que Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse et David Hockney égayent les murs de l'hôpital. Quelques lignes informent le

passant quant à l'histoire du peintre et de son œuvre. Près de la cafétéria, une série de photographies de Nik Mirus illustrant d'anciens instruments médicaux sur fonds colorés sont affichés. Ces images mettent en valeur l'aspect esthétique de ces outils scientifiques. Le photographe décrit celles-ci comme une représentation de l'art et de la science³⁵. Ces trois formes d'expositions, bien que très différentes visuellement, ont le but commun de mettre en contact les personnes côtoyant l'hôpital avec l'art.

Il est possible de remarquer que les œuvres d'art public proposent le point de vue d'un artiste sur un thème, alors que les reproductions touchent à l'aspect culturel et que les photographies d'instruments



Fig 3. Vue de l'exposition Vitrine avec la sculpture d'Amita Raj au premier plan. 2017. Photo gracieuseté de l'auteure avec la permission du Centre universitaire de santé McGill.

scientifiques sont plutôt formelles. La présentation des œuvres dans l'exposition *Grandir dans l'adversité* se distingue du reste des œuvres présentées, par sa connexion avec l'expérience et les émotions des artistes. Dans le contexte hospitalier, une attention particulière est portée sur la sélection des œuvres à afficher. Certains thèmes sont évités par les comités de sélection, de peur d'affecter les patients³⁶. On évitera, par exemple, des œuvres qui rappellent l'humanité des patients, et donc la mort, ainsi que certaines couleurs, comme le rouge, qui peut être associé au sang³⁷. Cependant, certaines œuvres considérées comme étant déprimantes peuvent apporter une forme de support, le patient peut ainsi associer son expérience aux émotions véhiculées par l'œuvre³⁸. Les œuvres de cette exposition présentent donc une expérience similaire et ont un potentiel d'identification qui peut être bénéfique pour l'observateur.

Des informations difficilement accessibles

La création de contextes inhabituels d'exposition, en dehors des murs d'une galerie ou d'un musée, amène les organisateurs et les visiteurs à reconsidérer le cadre institutionnel propre aux milieux des arts. Cette mixité demande donc une adaptation au visiteur issu du milieu des arts, dû aux différences de standards. La mission de l'espace d'exposition y est brièvement décrite comme servant à « aborder différents thèmes pour aider à faire face à la maladie³⁹ », mais le processus de sélection ou la méthodologie derrière la production des textes ne sont pas décrits. Aussi, les deux expositions précédentes sont décrites sur le site web, mais celles-ci ne figurent pas sur la liste⁴⁰. De plus, les personnes interrogées sur place ou par téléphone au Centre du cancer des

Cèdres n'étaient pas en mesure de fournir des informations sur l'exposition en cours. Lors d'une conversation téléphonique avec l'auteur, le personnel du Centre du cancer des Cèdres a pu uniquement lui indiquer le lieu approximatif de l'exposition et l'informer de son accessibilité au public selon les heures d'ouverture du centre⁴¹. On observe donc une certaine contradiction entre la valorisation des arts par l'institution et le manque d'information concernant ceux-ci. Par conséquent, il peut être difficile pour le public de prendre connaissance de l'existence de cette exposition et de mieux la comprendre dû au manque d'accessibilité aux informations.

Lors du vernissage de l'exposition, une conférence fût organisée en la présence des membres du projet de recherche original : Virginia Lee, Rosemary Reilly, le docteur Manuel Borod et Kate Laux. Le conférencier Pierre Plante, psychologue et art thérapeute, y fut également convié⁴². Cet événement est crucial dans la dissémination de la recherche et dans le rayonnement interdisciplinaire de l'art dans un contexte thérapeutique. Ainsi, il aurait été important de la rendre accessible à l'ensemble des visiteurs, afin que ceux-ci aient accès aux informations discutées, essentielles à une meilleure compréhension des bienfaits de l'art-thérapie. En effet, des informations factuelles sur les bienfaits physiques de la pratique artistique dans la vie d'un patient atteint du cancer, les répercussions psychologiques sur les proches de la personne malade ou l'importance de l'expression des défis interpersonnels du clinicien auraient été pertinentes pour le futur visiteur, uniquement en contact avec l'exposition. Une vidéo de la conférence mise en ligne sur le site web du Centre du cancer des Cèdres aurait pu servir de support à l'exposition, permettant ainsi de contextualiser le processus de création en fonction du milieu hospitalier.

Conclusion

L'exposition *Grandir dans l'adversité* présentée au CUSM donne une voix aux patients, à leurs proches et aux cliniciens afin de partager leurs expériences de la maladie à travers la création artistique⁴³. Créée à partir d'un projet de recherche en art-thérapie, l'espace d'exposition représente une collaboration entre l'art et la science⁴⁴. Le visiteur acquiert des informations sur l'expérience de création artistique des participants pour les aider à cheminer à différents niveaux. Les œuvres sont accompagnées de textes des artistes qui témoignent au visiteur les bienfaits de l'art sur leur santé⁴⁵. Les études dans ce domaine ne sont pas révélées au visiteur, mais celles-ci supportent l'initiative de création de l'espace d'exposition⁴⁶ et encouragent la présence des arts, visibles sous plusieurs formes au CUSM. Se distinguant des autres formes d'art par sa connexion avec les émotions de l'artiste, cette exposition permet aux visiteurs ainsi qu'aux personnes fréquentant l'hôpital de s'identifier au vécu de celui-ci. Cette initiative permet d'aborder le côté psychologique de l'expérience médicale, qui est parfois oublié au profit des blessures physiologiques. Un parallèle peut être fait avec le projet d'Ingrid Bachman mettant l'accent sur l'expérience des participants. Le contexte hospitalier est un lieu inhabituel d'exposition qui demande une adaptation, d'un autre côté, il apporte une crédibilité aux thérapies alternatives par les arts dû à l'instance de l'institution en recherche et en innovation médicale. Une meilleure accessibilité à l'information est toutefois souhaitable, pour qu'un plus large public puisse bénéficier des œuvres et que les recherches en art-thérapie circulent plus librement.

Notes de fin de document

¹ Stéphanie Dupuis, « Les impatientes : vingt-cinq ans d'impatience. » *La Presse*, consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <http://www.lapresse.ca/arts/arts-visuels/201705/26/01-5101662-les-impatientes-vingt-cinq-ans-dimpatience.php>.

² Une Ruche d'Art est un espace de création communautaire libre, gratuit et accessible à tous, qui met à la disposition du visiteur des matériaux d'art. C'est un concept créé par Janis Timm-Bottos, professeure associée au département des Creative Art Therapies à l'Université Concordia, afin de rapprocher les communautés au moyen des arts. « Qu'est-ce qu'une Ruche d'art? » *Les Ruches d'art*, consulté le 20 novembre, 2017, <http://lesruchesd'art.org/>.

³ Nancy Ménard, « Un nouvel espace créatif à Montréal pour l'enseignement des programmes en art-thérapie de l'UQAT, » *Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, consulté le 20 novembre 2017, <http://www.uqat.ca/universite/medias/communiques/index.asp?RefCom=1319>.

⁴ Heather L. Stuckey et Jeremy Nobel, « The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature, » *American Journal of Public Health* 100 no. 2 (2010): 254.

⁵ Lukasz M. Konopka, « Where Art Meets Neuroscience: A New Horizon of Art Therapy, » *Croatian Medical Journal* 55, no. 1 (2014): 73-74.

⁶ Victoria Hume, « Creative Care: The Role of the Arts in Hospital, » *Nursing Management* 17, no. 5 (2010): 16.

⁷ « Grandir dans l'adversité : Un nouvel espace d'exposition permanente ouvrira ses portes au Centre du cancer des Cèdres, » *Centre universitaire de santé McGill*, consulté le 30 novembre 2017, <https://cusc.ca/newsroom/evenement/grandir-dans-l-1%E2%80%99adversite%C3%A9>.

⁸ Katelyn Brinkman, entrevue téléphonique avec l'auteure, 22 novembre 2017.

⁹ Cathy Malchiodi, « Trauma informed art therapy and sexual abuse in children, » *Handbook of Child Sexual Abuse: Identification, Assessment, and Treatment*, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2012).

¹⁰ Elisa M. Pamela, « Therapeutic Art-making and Art Therapy: Similarities and Differences and a Resulting Framework, » Thèse de doctorat, (Bloomington: Université d'Indiana, 2015), ii.

¹¹ Downey, « Concordia University professor and a team of medical researchers champion art therapy's potential for dealing with adversity. »

¹² « Grandir dans l'adversité : Un nouvel espace d'exposition permanente ouvrira ses portes au Centre du cancer des Cèdres, » *Centre universitaire de santé McGill*, consulté le 30 novembre 2017, <https://cusc.ca/newsroom/evenement/grandir-dans-l-1%E2%80%99adversite%C3%A9>.

¹³ Description murale d'exposition, *Nous, ensemble à travers l'art*, Centre universitaire de santé McGill, Montréal, Québec.

¹⁴ Downey, « Concordia University professor and a team of medical researchers champion art therapy's potential for dealing with adversity. »

¹⁵ Elisabeth Faure, « The power of art and the resilience of the human spirit, » *Université Concordia*, consulté le 20 novembre 2017, <http://www.concordia.ca/cunews/main/stories/2016/10/05/cancer-support-organization-new-permanent-exhibition-rosemary-reilly.html>.

¹⁶ Downey, « Concordia University professor and a team of medical researchers champion art therapy's potential for dealing with adversity. »

¹⁷ Description murale d'exposition, *Nous, ensemble à travers l'art*.

¹⁸ Faure, « The power of art and the resilience of the human spirit. »

¹⁹ Étiquette descriptive des œuvres, *Nous, ensemble à travers l'art*.

²⁰ Stuckey et Nobel, « The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature, » 257.

²¹ Étiquette descriptive de l'œuvre, *Hors de portée*, en *Nous, ensemble à travers l'art*, Montréal, 20 novembre 2017.

²² Susan Schwartz, « Former patient, future doctor finds companionship and purpose in her art, » *Montreal Gazette*, consulté le 20 novembre 2017, <http://montreal-gazette.com/life/patient-finds-companionship-and-purpose-in-her-art>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Randy M. Vick, « Ethics on Exhibit, » *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* 28, no. 4 (2011): 152.

²⁵ Brinkman, entrevue téléphonique avec l'auteure.

²⁶ Stuckey et Nobel, « The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature, » 254.

²⁷ Alexa Wright et Alf Linney, *The Art and Science of a Long-term Collaboration* (Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2006), 59.

²⁸ Stuckey et Nobel, « The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature, » 257.

²⁹ Ingrid Bachmann, *Hybrid Bodies*, conférence, Université Concordia, 16 novembre 2017.

³⁰ Rosalia L. Staricoff, Jane P. Duncan et Melissa Wright, « A Study of the Effects of Visual and Performing Arts in Health Care, » consulté le 20 novembre 2017, <https://www.publicartonline.org.uk/resources/research/documents/ChelseaAndWestminsterResearchproject.pdf>.

³¹ « Arts & Health 101, » *Arts Health Canada*, consulté le 20 novembre 2017, <https://artshealthnetwork.ca/arts-health-101/introduction>.

³² Ibid.

³³ Faure, « The power of art and the resilience of the human spirit. »

³⁴ « Centre des arts et du patrimoine RBC, » *Centre universitaire de santé McGill*, consulté le 20 novembre 2017, <https://cusc.ca/muhc-heritage/profile/centre-du-patrimoine>.

³⁵ Texte mural, « Art in Medicine », *Nous, ensemble à travers l'art*, Centre universitaire de santé McGill, Montréal, Québec.

³⁶ Hume, « Creative Care: The Role of the Arts in Hos-

pital, » 18.

³⁷ Ibid., 16.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Description murale d'exposition, *Nous, Ensemble à travers l'art*, Centre universitaire de santé McGill, Montréal, Québec.

⁴⁰ « Le vernissage du site Glen rend hommage à une collection d'art prestigieuse, » *Expositions, Centre universitaire de santé McGill*, 9 octobre 2015, <https://cusc.ca/muhc-heritage/article/vernissage-du-site-glen-rend-hommage-%C3%A0-collection-dart-prestigieuse>.

⁴¹ Communications personnelles, Centre du cancer des Cèdres, 20 novembre 2017.

⁴² « Grandir dans l'adversité, » Pamphlet d'exposition, *Nous, Ensemble à travers l'art*, 20 novembre 2017.

⁴³ Description murale d'exposition, *Nous, ensemble à travers l'art*.

⁴⁴ Faure, « The power of art and the resilience of the human spirit. »

⁴⁵ Étiquette descriptive des œuvres, *Nous, ensemble à travers l'art*.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Bibliographie

Alexa Wright and Alf Linney. (2006) « The Art and Science of a Long-term Collaboration » Proceedings of « New Constellations: art, science and society, » DC Rye & SJ Scheduling (eds.), Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, 54-60.

Art Gallery of Ontario. « Art As Therapy. » Exhibitions. Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <http://www.ago.net/art-as-therapy>.

Arts and Health. « Prospectus For Arts Health. » Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <http://www.artsandhealth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/A-prospectus-for-Arts-Health-Arts-Council-England.pdf>.

Bachmann, Ingrid. « Hybrid Bodies. » Conférence. Université Concordia. 16 novembre 2017.

CUSM. Description murale de l'exposition. Montréal, Centre Universitaire de Santé McGill, 20 novembre 2017.

— **Étiquette descriptive des œuvres.** Montréal, Centre Universitaire de Santé McGill, 20 novembre 2017.

— « **Grandir Dans L'adversité | Centre Universitaire De Santé McGill.** » Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <https://cusc.ca/newsroom/evenement/grandir-dans-l%E2%80%99adversit%C3%A9>.

— « **Le vernissage du site Glen rend hommage à une collection d'art prestigieuse.** » Expositions. Mis à jour le 9 octobre 2015. <https://cusc.ca/muhc-heritage/article/vernissage-du-site-glen-rend-hommage-%C3%A0-collection-dart-prestigieuse>.

— « **MUHC Heritage Centre | Centre Universitaire De Santé McGill.** » Centre des arts et du patrimoine RBC. Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <https://cusc.ca/muhc-heritage/dashboard>.

— « **Voyage À Travers L'univers De La Santé | Centre Universitaire De Santé McGill.** » Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <https://cusc.ca>.

[ca/muhc-heritage/article/appele-%C3%A0-tous-les-patients-personnels-soignants-employ%C3%A9s-et-%C3%A9tudiants-du-cusc%C2%A0-envoyez-nous-v](http://cusc.ca/muhc-heritage/article/appele-%C3%A0-tous-les-patients-personnels-soignants-employ%C3%A9s-et-%C3%A9tudiants-du-cusc%C2%A0-envoyez-nous-v).

Downey, Fiona. « Concordia University Professor And A Team Of Medical Researchers Champion Art Therapy'S Potential For Dealing With Adversity. » Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <http://www.concordia.ca/cunews/main/releases/2017/08/09/10-breast-cancer-patients-find-space-to-grow-and-learn-from-thei.html>.

Dupuis, Stéphanie. « Les Impatients: Vingt-Cinq Ans D'impatience. » Mis à jour le 26 mai 2017. <http://www.lapresse.ca/arts/arts-visuels/201705/26/01-5101662-les-impatients-vingt-cinq-ans-dimpatience.php>.

Faure, Elisabeth. « The Power Of Art And The Resilience Of The Human Spirit. » Publié le 5 octobre 2016. <http://www.concordia.ca/cunews/main/stories/2016/10/05/cancer-support-organization-new-permanent-exhibition-rosemary-reilly.html>.

Hume, Victoria. « Creative Care: The Role Of The Arts In Hospital. » *Nursing Management* 17, no.5 (2010): 16-20. doi:10.7748/nm.17.5.16.s26.

Hybrid Bodies. « Welcome. » Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <http://www.hybridbodiesproject.com/>.

Konopka, Lukasz M. « Where Art Meets Neuroscience: A New Horizon Of Art Therapy. » *Croatian Medical Journal* 55, no.1 (2014): 73-74. doi:10.3325/cmj.2014.55.73.

« **Les Ruches D'art.** » Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <http://lesruchesdart.org/>.

Malchiodi, Cathy. « Trauma informed art therapy and sexual abuse in children. » *Handbook of child sexual abuse: Identification, assessment, and treatment*, 341-354. Extrait. Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2012. Consulté le 20 novembre 2017.

McGill. « MSS Humanities And Arts In Medicine. » *McGill Medical Students' Society*. Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <http://www.mcgillmed.com/club/mss-humanities-and-arts-in-medicine-mcham/>.

Ménard, Nancy. « Un nouvel espace créatif à Montréal pour l'enseignement des programmes en art-thérapie de l'UQAT. » *Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue*. » Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <http://www.uqat.ca/universite/medias/communiques/index.asp?Ref-Com=1319>.

Owens, Ann. « Exhibition Explores Role Of Art Therapy In Mental Health Recovery. » Publié le 10 novembre 2016. <https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2016/11/10/exhibition-explores-role-of-art-therapy-in-mental-health-recovery/>.

Pamelia, Elisa M. « Therapeutic Art-making and Art Therapy: Similarities and Differences and a Resulting Framework. » Thèse de doctorat, Université d'Indiana, 2015.

Staricoff R. L., Duncan J. et Wright, M. Lelchuk Staricoff, Rosalia. « A Study of the Effects of Visual and Performing Arts in Health Care. » Consulté le 20 novembre 2017. <https://www.publicartonline.org.uk/resources/research/documents/ChelseaAndWestminsterResearch-project.pdf>.

Stuckey, Heather L., and Jeremy Nobel. « The Connection Between Art, Healing, And Public Health: A Review Of Current Literature. » *American Journal Of Public Health* 100, no.2 (2010): 254-263. doi:10.2105/ajph.2008.156497.

Schwartz, Suzan. « Former Patient, Future Doctor Finds Companionship And Purpose In Her Art. » *Montreal Gazette*. Modifié le 23 avril 2016. <http://montrealgazette.com/life/patient-finds-companionship-and-purpose-in-her-art>.

Reilly, Rosemary C. « Emergence from the rubble... The found poems and artwork of women living through breast cancer engaging in art therapy. » Publié par l'auteur. 2017. doi:10.11573/spectrum.library.concordia.ca.00982600

« **Can Art Be Medicine?.** » Vidéo YouTube, 9:35. Mis en ligne par « [arttherapyblog](http://arttherapyblog.com), » le 6 novembre 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=272&v=NVXK3p42aHU>.

Vick, Randy M. « Ethics On Exhibit. » *Art Therapy* 28, no.4 (2011): 152-158. doi:10.1080/07421656.2011.622698.

Big Beautiful Wall: Bordermyths and Killer Architecture in the Divided States of North America

Nick Cabelli

Third year, Art History major (BFA), Diversity and the Contemporary World minor (BA)

Editor: Raven Spiratos

“The greatest surprise: the wall was heartbreakingly beautiful. [...] [It] suggested that architecture’s beauty was directly proportional to its horror. [...] a very graphic demonstration of the power of architecture and some of its unpleasant consequences.”

—Rem Koolhaas commenting on the Berlin Wall.¹

The Big Beautiful Wall is an imaginary spectre, its form less important than its spirit. The name ‘Big Beautiful Wall’ is intended as a cynical sneer which I borrow from the 2016 American presidential campaign of Donald Trump, who when announcing his campaign in June 2015 promised to “build a great, great wall on our southern border, and [...] I will make Mexico pay for that wall,”² referring to it endlessly as a “big, beautiful, powerful wall.”³ At the time of writing this essay, the Big Beautiful Wall resides in the borderland between the United States (U.S.) and the *Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (Mexico), but the underlying bordermyths can be perceived far from that location, including in the undefended waters and forests which separate the U.S. and Canada. Throughout this text, I use the spelling borderwall, borderculture, and bordermyths to suggest at a symbolic level of language the imbrication of border and life, and the inseparability of the two blended terms. The Big Beautiful Wall is the subject of this essay; it is the unit of narration through which I explore what it means when borderwalls are described as beautiful, as well as what a beautiful border could be.

Different people have intervened in both the imaginary and actual borderwall’s existence. Though Trump’s repeated promise of a Big Beautiful Wall certainly gave the idea new momentum, the militarization of the border had been an official U.S. policy for nearly a decade before he became president. Moreover, for nearly a decade interdisciplinary

activist-architects like Estudio Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman, as well as the duo of Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, in opposition to this new regime of border policing, have been imagining a more emancipatory paradigm of international limits.

These different interpretations of the borderwall represent what cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai would call the trajectory of the Big Beautiful Wall.⁴ From his perspective, the Big Beautiful Wall has a life story which we can help guide or participate in, but never fully control. Appadurai suggests that a study of the borderwall’s trajectory allows interpretation of the “human transactions and calculations that enliven things ... [as] it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context.”⁵ Going a step further than Appadurai, we could also imagine the Big Beautiful Wall not solely as the product of human creation but—as Bruno Latour and Bill Brown have suggested—as a “quasi-object” and “quasi-subject” itself, which even in an imaginary state is the greatest influence on the “temporality of the animate world,” within the borderzone.⁶ The present case study derives from the U.S./Mexico boundary because of the high-profile way in which the specter of the hypothetical Big Beautiful Wall has influenced what art historian Andrea Huyssen would call the *social imaginary* of the frontier, informing—even in its speculative state—the way Mexicans, Americans, and many others imagine this borderzone and those countries as “place[s] of everyday life.”⁷

“The Big Beautiful Wall and the existing border architecture become the subjects and sites of a new critical stance towards its underlying ethics of exclusion, with architects even questioning the perceived neutrality of nonparticipation in the design of border infrastructure.”

Donald Trump's catchy campaign promise of a Big Beautiful Wall represents the populist conception of the borderwall as a necessary and effective barrier against social ills.⁸ Even statements about the imaginary wall become both the symptom and cause of bordermyths within and beyond the borderzone. As described by political philosopher Yves Citton, the “xenophobic, nationalist, racist agendas collected by political analysts under the vague category of ‘populism’⁹ can produce and exploit the symbolic, narrative, and affective qualities of myth-making to advance their agendas. Citton explains:

If demagogical agendas need to be denounced, it is not because they rely on myths (simplifications, exaggerations,

fictions), but because they mobilize bad myths, that is, political attractors that promote policies resulting in a decrease of our collective agency, either due to the suicidal nature of their injunctions, or due to the injustice they impose on some of us.¹⁰

The injustice of the borderzone is palpable in the work of poet Gloria Anzaldúa who describes the U.S.-Mexico borderzone as the place “where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds.”¹¹ This heart-breaking description is part of an ongoing discourse influenced by postcolonial migration realpolitik with aims of social justice to counter populist conceptions of the borderzone. The work of architects Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello aims to address “the spatial, psychological, social, and architectural repercussions”¹² of the borderwall, in opposition to the actual borderwall and the imaginary Big Beautiful Wall of Trump's rhetoric. The Big Beautiful Wall and the existing border architecture become the subjects and sites of a new critical stance towards its underlying ethics of exclusion, with architects even questioning the perceived neutrality of nonparticipation in the design of border infrastructure. The production of the activist-architect, informed by postcolonial mobility studies, could be said to mobilize ‘emancipatory myths’ in their work on the borderzone. In Citton's estimation, populist myths are resistant to “accurate facts and rational arguments”¹³ because the current “post-truth” political climate is seen as one where “objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”¹⁴ Emancipatory bordermyths are needed to fight populist bordermyths: rather than engendering injustice, emancipatory myths promote agency. In short, to argue

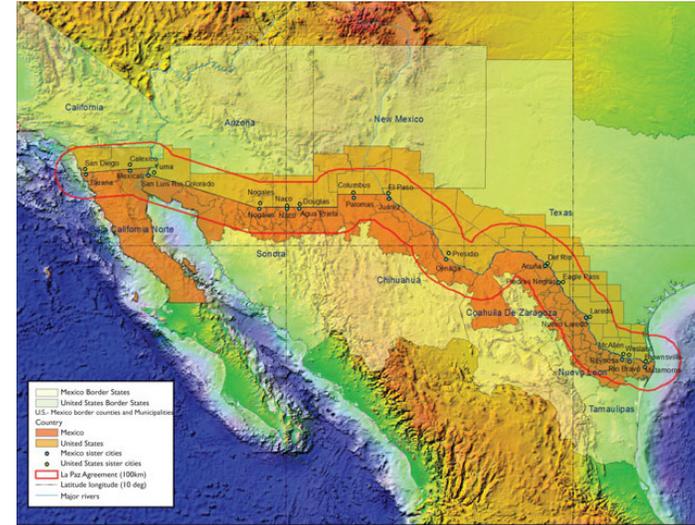


Fig 1. United States-Mexico border region. Image courtesy of the ©PAHO-WHO.

against the Big Beautiful Wall is insufficient in this post-truth era: emancipatory bordermyths are therefore necessary in reimagining the shared spaces of borderzone as places of participation, imbrication, hybridization, and ingenuity.

The U.S./Mexico borderzone can be best imagined as fifteen pairs of sibling cities divided by the border, strung out along an arbitrary line from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico (fig. 1). The Pan-American Health Organization describes this borderzone as a:

[B]inational geo-political system based on strong social, economic, cultural, and environmental connections governed by different policies, customs, and laws [which determine] commerce, tourism, sister-city familial ties, Mexico's assembly plants or maquiladoras (plants that import components for processing

or assembly by Mexican labor and then export the finished products), ecological services, a shared heritage, social partnerships, and immigration.¹⁵

The population of the borderzone is fifteen million, and the numbers are projected to rise to twenty million by 2020.¹⁶ The vast majority (84%) of the people in the borderzone live in these fifteen pairs of cities. The permanent land bases of five Indigenous groups, the “Kikapoo peoples in Texas and Arizona; the Kumiai peoples in Baja California, known as the Kumeyaay in California; and the Papago, Cucapá, and Yaqui peoples in Sonora, known as the Tohono O’odham, Cocopah, and Pascua Yaqui, respectively, in Arizona,” are also found within the borderzone, which together represent approximately 130,000 people along the Mexican side and 80,000 on the U.S. side.¹⁷ Estimates suggest the popula-

“to argue against the Big Beautiful Wall is insufficient in this post-truth era: emancipatory bordermyths are therefore necessary in reimagining the shared spaces of borderzone as places of participation, imbrication, hybridization, and ingenuity.”

tion of the borderzone cities could double by 2036.¹⁸

Though the two nations of Mexico and the U.S. have shared the present-day border since 1854, until 2006 only a few dozen miles were fenced. Within thirty years of gaining independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico had lost “more than a third of its territory through sale and invasion by the [U.S.], including most of what is now the American Southwest,”¹⁹ hence the often-heard phrase: “we didn’t cross the border, but the border crossed us.”²⁰ Before 2006 the border took on many forms: despite stern metal walls in cities and wire fences in the suburbs, most of the border was an imaginary line.²¹ A major shift in American policy after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 prompted American politicians to see the undefended border as a major security vulnerability. The U.S. Secure Fence Act of 2006 mandated the construction of 654 miles (1,046 kilometers) of fortification at the U.S./Mexico limit, where the two countries meet. Approximately one-third of this frontier has been walled or fenced with a “series of aggressive metal fences and enormous concrete posts.”²² Through thirty-five points of entry—POEs, in the nomenclature of the borderpolice—an average of 666,000 people cross daily.²³

The purpose of the borderwall was initially to stop terrorism, but it quickly also became about controlling migration. As Amber Phillips describes in the *Washington Post*, the policy of walling the border was “an acceptable and even desirable policy solution to illegal immigration.”²⁴ More than a decade later, this is still the mainstream policy. In his failed campaign for the presidency, the Republican Senator from Texas Ted Cruz also promised a wall, stating the “unsecured border with Mexico invites illegal immigrants, criminals, and terrorists to tread on American soil.”²⁵ Trump’s campaign promise of a Big Beautiful Wall is tinged with fantasy or allegory—a “tactical symbol”²⁶ that can pick up new meanings. As president, Trump tweeted that the Big Beautiful Wall would “help stop drugs, human trafficking etc.”²⁷ Trump goes on to opine that the wall would “help Mexico” by deterring migrants from South America passing through Mexico on their way to the U.S.²⁸

I suggest that all of these accounts of the Big Beautiful Wall, real and imaginary, are instances of the populist bordermyth. In the populist mythology, the idea of the Big Beautiful Wall exists as a site of domination over Mexico, geography, and globalization itself. To call this borderwall acceptable, desirable, or beautiful is an in-

herent value judgment about the functions it serves regarding its real, perceived, and symbolic functions in fostering so-called ‘security,’ which is to be read as a populist code for social engineering. At the core of the populist bordermyth is the implication that biopower is beautiful—that political limits can be fortified in architecture and enforced on the ground and in people’s actions in order to protect certain social traits while avoiding others.

The borderwall is **killer architecture**. It is not designed to stop people, but to control their flow. The borderwalls built by the U.S. since 2006 and the ideology of the Big Beautiful Wall contribute directly to an increased number of deaths in the borderzone. As explained by Robert Lee Maril in his book-length investigation of the social history of the borderwall, the current and future designs are devised to kill some of the people trying to bypass it. He explains that “[s]ince shooting illegal border crossers is not an option...the bureaucratic solution...is to push them into locales where nature pulls the trigger.”²⁹ The borderwall can be imagined as a “selectively porous border that only produces death and suffering.”³⁰ In the towns around it, like Ciudad Juarez, the borderwall produces what journalist Sergio Gonzalez Rodriguez has described as a “Femicide Machine,” which is “inscribed within... [the] structure of the neo-Fordist economy[...] [...] [a] set-up [which] presents a new, complex, interconnected spectrum of procedures for exploiting material and human resources.”³¹ The result of the borderwall turned Ciudad Juarez into a machine “composed of hatred and misogynistic violence, *machismo*, power and patriarchal reaffirmations,” where violence against women “multiplied for more than ten years, while at the same time, a veil of

impunity was constructed.”³² As described by an ex-desert-aid worker, the borderwall is “a power structure, a system of control. [...] The border does not divide one world from another. There is only one world, and the border is tearing it apart.”³³ The Big Beautiful Wall is the shameful inheritance of global politics predicated on division and exclusion.

In opposition to these populist bordermyths, there exists a swarm of discourses advocating for alternative imaginings of the borderzone: people who employ alternative tools, with which to influence not just the borderzone imaginary but how one considers their own position within the global system and the privileges of citizenship accumulated via the lottery of

“At the core of the populist bordermyth is the implication that biopower is beautiful—that political limits can be fortified in architecture and enforced on the ground and in people’s actions in order to protect certain social traits while avoiding others.”

birth. Operating within a body of knowledge influenced by postcolonial migration studies, cultural producers, who have come to be known as ‘activist-architects,’ insert themselves into the borderzone to denounce its horrors. Rem Koolhaas’ assertion that the Berlin Wall “was a script, effortlessly blurring divisions between tragedy, comedy, [and] melodrama”³⁴ is taken up indirectly by Cruz and Forman, as well as Rael and San Fratello, who rewrite the Big Beautiful Wall to create a script for the borderzone as a potentially empowering zone of exchange, hybridity, and ingenuity with more laughs, more sharing, and less needless deaths and existential injustice.

Architect Cruz and political scientist Forman have led the charge in an empowering reinvention of the borderzone happening alongside its actual construction over the past decade. They suggest that to be politically active as architects requires “a commitment to exposing the conditions of conflict inscribed in a particular territory and the institutional mechanisms that have perpetuated such conflict.”³⁵ The

“Rael and San Fratello’s subversive designs use the borderwall against itself, redesigning the barrier to highlight the absurdity and vulgarity of its existence.”

borderwall is the ultimate institutional mechanism at play in the borderzone. As Forman explains:

*The physical barrier is one way to understand the divide that exists, somewhat arbitrarily, between the two countries. But it’s important to know that the border is reproduced in multiple ways—physically, socially, and psychologically—in other parts of both countries. The border has always been a way of reinforcing antagonism that doesn’t always exist. In many ways, it’s artificial. But it has been hardened into norm.*³⁶

Landscape architects and urbanists participating in sustaining this norm explain that “[c]reative practices need to infiltrate existing institutions in order to transform them from the inside out, producing new aesthetic categories that problematize the relationship between the social, the political, and the formal.”³⁷ Though Cruz and Forman’s own research-interventions problematize the borderzone and are relevant and worthy of research, I focus instead on investigating the work of Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello, who I propose fulfill Cruz’s suggestion for the adoption of new creative practices to infiltrate the borderzone.

Rael and San Fratello’s subversive designs use the borderwall against itself, redesigning the barrier to highlight the absurdity and vulgarity of its existence. Their creative practices at first appear as a satirical *detournement* of border fortification design, while problematizing the idea of borders themselves. Rael describes their research as a “protest against the wall... manifested as a series of designs that challenge the intrinsic architectural element



Fig 2. Ronald Rael, Virginia San Fratello, Volley Ball Wall from the series *Recuerdos: Snow Globes*, 2012. Ronald Rael, *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017, image no. 42, page 75. Image courtesy of Rael San Fratello, <http://www.rael-sanfratello.com/?p=1623>.

of a wall charged by its political context.”³⁸ Nearly a decade of research-creation has been collected in the recently-published book, *Borderwall as Architecture* (2017), while their designs have also been featured in a 2015 online exhibition by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, entitled *Design and Violence*.

Rather than dividing people, Rael and San Fratello’s designs offer alternative realities of the borderwall as a shared space - a place to grab a burrito, play a game of volleyball (or as the architects put it, “wall y ball,”) over the wall (fig. 2), or enjoy a teeter-totter within the structure of the wall itself. These satirical provocations have been described by MoMA curator Judith Torrea as tactical micro-rebellions against the oppressiveness of the wall. In the cruelty of the borderzone, their designs mimic the borderzone inhabitants who “survive the pain mostly by transforming adversity into strength... [where] a token

of irony, become[s] [a] shield [...] against desperation.”³⁹ At the symbolic level, these practical though unlikely-to-be-implemented designs promote bordermyths about shared spaces, shared cultures, and shared futures. Rael and San Fratello investigate the shared futures of the U.S. and Mexico in other designs as well by imagining a division of the two nations by means of shared green infrastructure projects, such as a borderwall made of cacti or solar panels.

Beyond just parodying the Big Beautiful Wall and rebuffing its populist bordermyths, the alternative designs of Rael and San Fratello envision a new, emancipatory mythology of a space for sharing. Through their blending of architectural design, postcolonial studies, art, and activism, Rael and San Fratello create imaginary borderwalls which enter into dialogue with the other existing and imaginary borderwalls to critique and challenge the

assumptions made in their construction and the worlds generated by their existence. This is what Torrea describes as the “dialogic” nature of their work, producing work that forms “a continuous dialogue with other discourses.”⁴⁰ In their provocative practice, Rael and San Fratello remind us that there is nothing natural about the borderwall, and if it seems absurd or funny to construct a volleyball net out of a metal barrier, then it should feel cruel to wall the world. Comparing their visions of the borderwall to Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, Torrea suggests that the goal of both is to “explai[n] humanity as it truly is, not as some wish it to be.”⁴¹ In exposing the arbitrary cruelty of the borderwall, Rael and San Fratello’s work gestures towards a personal reflection on the nature of the border itself, pushing each viewer to contemplate not just the structures which exist to divide, but also to reflect on what structures that exist to unite might look like. If citizens are not playing volleyball around the borderwall, what *are* they doing? To paraphrase Donna Haraway, the work of Rael and San Fratello asks us to consider

who will live and who will die as a result of the borderwall—and how?⁴² Their work is a critical questioning on what a border is, who decides where it goes, what it does, who benefits, and who does not.

In the first year of Trump’s unlikely and ever-astonishing presidency, a tender to build two types of borderwall was extended, one made of reinforced concrete and one of materials of the designer’s choosing. Both were required to be thirty feet tall and must be “aesthetically pleasing in color,”⁴³ at least on the American side. Ten selected prototypes were announced in June 2017 by the United States Department of Customs and Border Protection, of which eight were built in thirty-foot segments between October 2017 and January 2018 in San Diego, California, as documented by the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (fig. 3).⁴⁴ One prototype is stockier at the base, another has a concrete wall floating above a ground-level fence, and a few have the iconic no-grip rounded tops of the Berlin Wall. An entire essay could be devoted to studying the photos of them in



Fig. 3. Manu Albrecht. Ground views of different Border Wall Prototypes as they take shape during the Wall Prototype Construction Project near the Otay Mesa Port of Entry, October 2017. Public Domain. United States Customs and Border Protection’s Flickr account.

“Their work is a critical questioning on what a border is, who decides where it goes, what it does, who benefits, and who does not.”

a line in the desert by the mountains, each uniform and yet different, none of them beautiful, and all of them big.

President Trump’s first Secretary of Homeland Security, John Kelly, explained that although the U.S. will probably not build a “physical barrier from sea to shining sea,”⁴⁵ it seems probable that more borderwalls will be built—up to twenty-five billion USD worth. Attempting to avoid the three-day January 2018 government shutdown, Democratic Minority Leader Senator Chuck Schumer discussed the possibility of fully funding Trump’s borderwall in exchange for a path to citizenship or permanent residency for The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) “dreamers,” children brought to the U.S. in contravention of U.S. law by their parents.⁴⁶ This indicates how the once fantastical and unlikely campaign promise of the right-wing party has now also become accepted by the leftist American politicians within a short twenty-four months. The populist bordermyth has been endorsed by both the right and left-wings of American politics, and the whole of the mainstream now uses the Big Beautiful Wall as the symbolic spectre of the United States’ might: a dematerialized boogeyman, the projection of total control in a realm where total control is impossible.

The tensions present even in the imaginary Big Beautiful Wall are not just between two specific countries, but are between the core and periphery itself. The U.S./Mexico bor-

derzone is far from the only walled border: in 1989, before the Berlin Wall fell, there were fifteen borderwalls around the world whereas today there are seventy.⁴⁷ The work of Cruz, Forman, Rael, and San Fratello offers the opportunity to reimagine not just the physical borderwalls themselves but the current social, political, and ethical regimes which support them. The emancipatory bordermyth at the core of their work is simple, yet poignant: how we wall is up to us.

Bibliography

Anonymous Ex-desert-aid-worker. No Wall They Can Build: A Guide to Borders and Migration Across North America. Salem, OR: CrimethInc. Ex-Workers' Collective, 2017.

Appadurai, Arjun. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value." In *The Social Life of Things Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Arieff, Allison. "Design Competition—or Ideological Crisis?" *New York Times*. March 10, 2017. Accessed June 21, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/opinion/design-competition-or-ideological-crisis.html?_r=0.

Brown, Bill. "Thing Theory." *Critical Inquiry*, no. 28. 1 (2001): 1-22.

Carrie-Wong, Julia. "Trump's Border Wall: Prototypes Loom Large, but where are the Protestors?" *The Guardian*. January 29, 2018. Accessed February 2, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/29/trump-border-wall-prototype-protest>

CBS News. "30 of Trump's Wildest Quotes." *CBS News*. Updated 2018. Accessed February 6, 2018, <https://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/wild-donald-trump-quotes/>.

Citton, Yves. "Populism and the Empowering Circulation of Myths." *Open! Platform for Art, Culture & The Public Domain*. January 17, 2011.

Cruz, Teddy. "Untitled." In *Urban Future Manifestos*. Editors Peter Noever and Kimberli Meyer. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010. Produced in conjunction with the Los Angeles MAK Center for Art and Architecture's Urban Future Initiative.

Cruz, Teddy and Jonathan Tate. "Design Ops—A Conversation between Teddy Cruz and Jonathan Tate." In *Architecture at the Edge of Everything Else*. Editors Esther Choi and Marikka Trotter. Cambridge, MA, London: The MIT Press, 2010.

C/S Cultural Sovereignty. "We Didn't Cross the Border, the Border Crossed Us." *Notes from Az-*

tlán. January 11, 2014. Accessed February 22, 2018. <http://www.notesfromaztlán.com/2014/01/10/we-didnt-cross-the-border-the-border-crossed-us/>.

Diamond, Jeremy. "Trump Orders Construction of Border Wall, Boosts Deportation Force." *CNN*. January 25, 2017. Accessed May 15, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/25/politics/donald-trump-build-wall-immigration-executive-orders/index.html>.

Di Cintio, Marcello. "Pilgrims at the Wall." In *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

Gonzalez Rodriguez, Sergio. "Introduction: Border and Vector." In *The Femicide Machine*. Los Angeles: Semiotext[e], 2012.

Haraway, Donna F. "Staying with the Trouble: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene." In *Anthropocene of Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Edited by Jason Moore. Oakland: PM Press, 2016.

Huyssen, Andreas. "World Cultures, World Cities." In *Other Cities, Other Worlds*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

Iglesias-Prieto, Norma. "Transborderisms: Practices That Tear Down Walls." In *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

Jones, Reece. "Death in the Sands: the Horror of the US-Mexico Border." *The Guardian*. October 4, 2016. Accessed May 21, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/oct/04/us-mexico-border-patrol-trump-beautiful-wall>.

Joshi, Anu. "Donald Trump's Border Wall - An Annotated Timeline." *Huffington Post*. February 28, 2017. Updated March 1, 2017. Accessed May 12, 2017. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/donald-trumps-border-wall-an-annotated-timeline_us_58b5f363e4b02f3f81e44d7b.

Kayyem, Juliette. "Trump's Bogus Border Wall." *CNN*. January 26, 2017. Accessed May 1, 2017. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/25/opinions/trumps-bogus-border-wall-kayyem/index.html>.

Koolhaas, Rem. "AA Memoir: The Berlin Wall as Architecture." In S, M, L, XL, Rem Koolhaas, OMA and Bruce Mau. New York: The Monacelli Press, 1997.

Livingston, Abby. "Texans in Congress Offer Scant Support for Full Border Wall." *Texas Tribune*. December 20, 2016. Accessed May 21, 2017. <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/12/20/where-texas-congressional-delegation-stands-trumps/>.

Maril, Robert Lee. "Crossing to Safety." In *The Fence: National Security, Public Safety, and Illegal Immigration Along the U.S./Mexico Border*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2012.

Misra, Tanvi. "The Border Is a Way of Reinforcing Antagonism That Doesn't Exist." *CityLab / The Atlantic*. January 11, 2017. Accessed May 22, 2017. <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/01/the-urban-laboratory-on-the-san-diego-tijuana-border-teddy-cruz-fonna-forman/512222/>.

MPI Staff. "The U.S.-Mexico Border." *Migration Policy Institute*. June 1, 2006. Accessed February 6, 2018. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/us-mexico-border>.

Oxford Dictionaries. "Word of the Year 2016 Is Post-Truth." *Oxford Dictionaries Blog*. Accessed February 2, 2018. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>.

Pan-American Health Organization. "United States—Mexico Border Area." *Health in the Americas*. Last updated July 10, 2015. http://www.paho.org/salud-en-las-americas-2012/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=63%3Aunited-states-mexico-border-area&catid=21%3Acountry-chapters&Itemid=173&lang=en.

Phillips, Amber. "History Suggests Donald Trump's Big, Beautiful, Brick-and-Mortar Border Wall may not be so Outlandish." *Washington Post*. September 1, 2016. Accessed May 12, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/06/09/history-suggests-donald-trumps-big-beautiful-border-wall-may-not-be-so-outlandish/?utm_term=.96c0525c2b58.

Rael, Ronald. "Borderwall as Architecture: The Divided States of North America." In *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

— "Introduction: The Revolving Door." In *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

Sacchetti, Maria. "Trump's Budget Proves that U.S. Will Pay for Border Wall, Mexican Governor Says." *Washington Post*. March 18, 2017. Accessed May 3, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/trumps-budget-proves-that-us-will-pay-for-border-wall-mexican-governor-says/2017/03/18/d991fb58-0c0a-11e7-93dc-00f9bdd74ed1_story.html?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.497a325d3213.

Shear, Michael D. and Maggie Haberman. "How Trump and Schumer Came Close to a Deal Over Cheeseburgers." *New York Times*. January 19, 2018. Accessed January 19, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/19/us/politics/trump-government-shutdown.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=b-lede-package-region®ion=top-news&WT.nav=top-news>.

Sheffield, Matthew. "Republicans in Congress don't want the wall! Democrats Taunt Trump as he Drops Funding Fight for his 'Big Beautiful Wall.'" *Salon*. April 28, 2017. Accessed May 12, 2017. <http://www.salon.com/2017/04/28/republicans-in-congress-do-not-want-the-wall-democrats-taunt-trump-as-he-drops-funding-fight-for-his-big-beautiful-wall/>.

Torrea, Judith. "Borderwall as Architecture (Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello)." *Design and Violence. Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)*. November 19, 2014. Accessed May 11, 2017. <http://designandviolence.moma.org/borderwall-as-architecture-ronald-rael-and-virginia-san-fratello/>.

Politicized Pop: Latin America's Response to the Pop Art Movement in the United States

Author: Zoe Johnston

Second year, Art History major, Film Studies minor (BFA).

Editor: Catherine McRae

In an act of cultural cannibalism,¹ artists in Latin America appropriated the style of Pop Art which originated in the United States; this was a way for Latin American artists to forge their identity as an autonomous national culture capable of its own artistic styles and narratives. That is not to say that Latin American Pop Art was derivative of the United States' movement. Pop Art in the southern hemisphere differed greatly from the movement originating in the north, largely due to the embrace of Pop Art as intrinsically political in the south. American Pop Art was presented as an absolute commodity, embracing symbols of American consumerism in order to develop an artistic genre that could be understood by Americans of all social and economic classes.² It was also created with the intention of establishing a style directly opposed to that of Abstract Expressionism, a movement promoting intuitive work that reflected the artist's experience of painting in the studio. The individualistic style of Abstract Expressionism alienated the greater public, causing it to be deemed as created by and for the elite of society.³ The arrival of Pop Art abolished the elitist aspect of art, as was its painterly quality: the art object itself was placed in the same 'hedonistic' category as that of the depicted consumer object.⁴ American Pop Art was created in bulk, often in a factory-like setting. The works strove for an industrial finish, denying the presence of any human manipulation. Essentially, American Pop Art's apathetic production presented reification, the abstract nature of materialism, as the style's unchanging value.⁵

Latin American Pop Art, however, embraced capitalist imagery as an opportunity to express outrage at a range of regional sufferings including dictatorship,

repression, and poverty. Latin American Pop artists used consumerist symbols to adopt an anti-capitalist stance, defining Latin American Pop Art as much more than just an imitation of the formalized version prevalent in New York. These artists adopted strategies of American Pop Art, such as the use of corporate icons, mass produced products, and figures from popular culture in order to formulate an actively political movement, distinguishable from the passive political implications of the U.S. style.⁶ With this essay, I will demonstrate how Latin American Pop artists used a variety of devices borrowed from American Pop Art to create significant work that reflected on—and contributed to—the political landscape of the artists' respective regions.

The seminal works of the Latin American Pop Art Movement contain political implications specific to their region, most readily seen in the works of Cuban artist Raúl Martínez (1927–1995). Martínez's work is a clear example of the artistic potential of appropriation; he used aspects of American Pop Art, but also incorporated symbols unique to Cuba, making his work particularly effective in political rallying. Martínez studied in Chicago in 1952 and worked in advertising in both the U.S. and Cuba.⁷ His exposure to both American and Cuban culture was reflected in his symbolic depiction of the Cuban Revolution (1953–1959). Due to the fact that Cuban media and industry were manipulated by the state, Martínez chose not to promote popular media and consumer symbols in the same manner as the iconic American Pop artist, Andy Warhol, did. To depict consumer icons would give the impression that he supported both the dictatorship and the Americanization of Cuba, and by extension, all of Latin America. Instead,



Fig 1. Cildo Meireles, *Insertions into Ideological Circuits: Coca-Cola Project*, 1970. © Cildo Meireles, through the Tate Modern.

Martínez employed political icons to promote the ideals of the revolution and, in turn, to defy the dictatorship of Fidel Castro (1926–2016). Martínez used Pop devices, such as adopting celebrity figures as subjects and using bright, contrasting colours and print-based media, to insert political icons into the realm of popular consumption.⁸

The work of Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles (b. 1948) expressed a resistance towards commodification through a process of circulating veiled political messages amongst the public via cycles of capitalist production. Meireles proposed a form of civil disobedience that directly confronted two major capitalist symbols: banknotes (representing the financial system) and Coca-Cola bottles (symbolizing multinational corporations).⁹ His work from

1969–1970 consisted of taking these two products out of circulation, printing political messages on them, and later re-inserting them into their regular circuit of consumption.¹⁰ In the case of *Insertions into Ideological Circuits: Coca-Cola Project* (1970) (fig. 1), Meireles used a white ink and a silk-screen process to transfer text onto empty Coca-Cola bottles. The text was aligned to match the bottle's logo, making it almost invisible when the bottles were filled in the factory and the white ink became legible against the dark liquid.¹¹ At this point, the process of circulation had already begun, and no one would interrupt it to extract the graffitied bottles.

Meireles' decision to disseminate ideas anonymously was necessary due to threats

of censorship and persecution. In its participatory nature, this project shifted focus from the individual to the collective, revealing Brazil's political realities while allowing the public to partake in his work. While not aesthetically linked to American Pop Art, Meireles' projects used everyday commodities to make art more accessible to the public. The consumption of Coca-Cola bottles transcends the boundaries of class in almost every country in the world. As Warhol once said: "A Coke is a Coke and no amount of money can get you a better Coke than the one the bum on the corner is drinking."¹² While Warhol employed this statement to unify Americans of all classes in their shared consumer habits, Meireles used the symbol of the Coca-Cola bottle to anonymously declare disobedience against governmental powers. Meireles' vandalization of the Coca-Cola bottle, a powerful American icon, was thus a means to protest the U.S. government's support of dictatorships all over Latin America.¹³

Similar to how Meireles appropriated consumerist materials within his work,

the Peruvian artist collective, Colectivo Huayco, created large-scale images using discarded milk cans. This group worked in a style that developed throughout the 1970's called *Pop chicha*, which refers to "traditional ways of life that clash and fuse with various cosmopolitan influences."¹⁴ The Huayco Collective embodied this definition, rejecting traditional artistic institutions in favour of creating new artistic circuits. The collective merged Andean tradition with social revolution to produce modern works that operated as social idioms. These works appealed to both upper and lower classes, traditional and revolutionary publics, and religious and political viewers. The term *huayco* comes from the Quechua¹⁵ word for the destructive avalanches that descend from the mountains onto Peruvian lowlands during the rainy season, leaving both fertility and devastation in their wake.¹⁶ Similar to this dualistic nature, *huayco* also refers to the flood-like urban migration of millions of Andean peasants to the capital of Lima. This concept was the basis for the collective's artwork, *Sarita Colonia* (1980) (fig. 2), a portrait of a popular saint by the



Fig 2. Taller E.P.S. Huayco, *Sarita Colonia*, 1980, documentation of the painting of the portrait of unofficial saint Sarita Colonia on the surface of 12,000 empty cans of evaporated milk. Photo by Marianne Ryzecck, courtesy of Francesco Mariotti.

same name who was viewed by the Huayco Collective as the face of new syncretic culture and modernity in Peru. Her cult of followers consists mostly of the broad community of migrants to Lima, as well as the marginalized workers of the informal economy; sex-workers, street-vendors, clandestine manufacturers, etc.¹⁷ Huayco Collective created her image out of 12,000 evaporated milk cans aligned on a carpet-like grid. The use of empty cans in the work can be read as a commentary on the practices of transnational companies, such as Carnation and Nestle, who harshly inflated the price of basic household items such as milk.

The use of milk cans in *Sarita Colonia* became a perfect symbol for the exploitation and poverty of Lima's marginalized workers—while the milk cans served as a political commentary, the repurposing of recycled goods was also seen as a creative practice, a survival strategy, and a form of cultural invigoration.¹⁸ The piece was placed on a hillside facing Lima's southern entryway, one of the preferred routes of many migrants entering the city. Her image served as a symbol of hope and faith to the marginalized community and acted as an avant-garde comment to the well-educated public regarding the miserable modernity of Lima. Those who are aware of the piece's material components are more likely to understand Huayco's comment on transnational corporations' exploitation of impoverished people—many who cannot even afford fresh milk—for their financial gain. Nonetheless, the piece serves as a uniting symbol of Andean migrants and the politically radicalized sectors of the middle class in a shared desire for progress, modernity, and growth. Serving as both a political and religious representation of hope, *Sarita Colonia* effectively

appropriates a local, popular image, realizing it in a cosmopolitan manner familiar to Lima locals. The stippling effect created by the grid of cans could be taken as a reference to the Ben-Day dots used in comic books, and the cans themselves could be seen as a reference to Warhol's soup can paintings. Huayco's project, however, extends beyond the iconography of Warhol, engaging the material of the work as a powerfully pointed cultural and political argument.¹⁹

Martínez, Meireles, and the Huayco Collective all demonstrate the artistic and political advantages of appropriating the style and devices of American Pop Art. Using some of the most iconic aspects of American Pop Art, these artists were able to express overtly political statements with respect to their respective regions. This would not be possible without the artists' use of capitalist consumer products, celebrity imagery, and the industrialized finish of Pop Art. With the works of these innovative Latin American Pop artists in mind, cultural commentator Luis Camnitzer's observations present a fitting description of an internationally encompassing definition of Pop: "Pop art is to be seen as using not only everyday commodities as art icons, but also as a broader movement that addresses the web of relations between consumer and object and consequently operates in a political context."²⁰

Endnotes

¹ This term is used in the context of "colonial oppression" and within the mentality of "eat or be eaten." Kristen Guest, "Introduction: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Identity," *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 2.

² Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America," in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, ed. Héctor Olea (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) 145.

³ Alastair Sooke, "Introduction," *Pop Art: A Colourful History* (London: Penguin UK, 2015), 3-4.

⁴ Luis Camnitzer, "Political Pop," in *On Art, Artists, Latin America, and Other Utopias*, ed. Rachel Weiss (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 30.

⁵ Ramírez, "Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America," 145.

⁶ Camnitzer, "Political Pop," 33.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Claudia Calirman, "Interventions in the Social Landscape: Parallels Between Brazilian Artistic Actions and the Chilean 'Avanzada,'" *Notes in the History of Art* 31, no. 3 (Spring 2012), 37-38.

¹⁰ Camnitzer, "Political Pop," 33.

¹¹ Calirman, "Interventions in the Social Landscape," 38.

¹² Andy Warhol, "POPism (1975)," in *The American Studies Anthology*, ed. Richard P. Horowitz (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 229.

¹³ Calirman, "Interventions in the Social Landscape," 38.

¹⁴ Gustavo Buntinx, "The Power and the Illusion: Aura, Lost and Restored in the 'Peruvian Weimar Republic' (1980-1992)," in *Beyond the Fantastic, Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (Cambridge: MIT, 1996), 302.

¹⁵ *Quechua* is a native language spoken by several Indige-

nous groups in South America. Willem F. H. Adelaar and Pieter Muysken, "The Inca Sphere," in *The Languages of the Andes* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 179.

¹⁶ Buntinx, "The Power and the Illusion," 303.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 306.

²⁰ Camnitzer, "Political Pop," 35.

Bibliography

Adelaar, Willem F. H., and Pieter Muysken. "The Inca Sphere." In *The Languages of the Andes*. Cambridge, UK, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Buntinx, Gustavo. "The Power and the Illusion: Aura, Lost and Restored in the 'Peruvian

Weimar Republic' (1980-1992)." In *Beyond the Fantastic, Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, edited by Gerardo Mosquera. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1996.

Calirman, Claudia. "Interventions in the Social Landscape: Parallels Between Brazilian Artistic Actions and the Chilean 'Avanzada.'" *Notes in the History of Art* 31, no. 3 (2012): 36-42. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23208593>.

Camnitzer, Luis. "Political Pop." In *On Art, Artists, Latin America, and Other Utopias*. Edited by Rachel Weiss. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010.

— "Tucumán arde: Politics in Art." In *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation*, 60-72. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.

Guest, Kristen. "Introduction: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Identity." In *Eating Their Words: Cannibalism and the Boundaries of Cultural Identity*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.

Ramírez, Mari Carmen. "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960-1980." In *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*. Edited by Héctor Olea. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Warhol, Andy. "POPism (1975)." In *The American Studies Anthology*. Edited by Richard P. Horowitz. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.

L'exposition d'art dégénéré de 1937 à Munich et la persuasion en faveur des politiques nationales-socialistes d'hygiène raciale

Auteure : Marianne LeBel

Art History (BFA) (Diplômé printemps 2017)

Éditrice : Véronique Morin

Quiconque entend les mots « Seconde Guerre mondiale » pense nécessairement à la catastrophe humanitaire que représente cet épisode de l'histoire. En Allemagne et en Europe, l'obsession du Parti national-socialiste envers la pureté raciale s'est avérée considérablement destructive. Ce génocide ne se limite cependant pas à la population : la culture est elle aussi victime des idées racistes nazies, comme en témoigne la fameuse exposition d'art dit « dégénéré, » *Entartete Kunst*, tenue à Munich en 1937.

Initiée par Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945), ministre de la propagande, *Entartete Kunst* est une campagne de diffamation de l'art moderne au profit d'un art national-socialiste ancré dans l'idéal classique¹. Cette exposition ridiculisant le modernisme n'est toutefois pas un simple événement de propagande culturelle : elle comporte de fortes visées sociales quant à la transformation du peuple allemand vers l'idéal nazi de la *Volksgemeinschaft*, la « communauté du peuple. »² *Entartete Kunst*, de pair avec la *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung*,³ une exposition d'art national-socialiste tenue au même moment à Munich, vise à convaincre le peuple allemand quant à la nécessité des politiques d'hygiène raciale du Parti national-socialiste en se fondant sur des faits prétendument scientifiques et historiques de dégénérescence sociale et en cherchant à provoquer un sentiment d'abjection.

L'exposition *Entartete Kunst* a lieu en 1937, une année qui se situe dans la période de consolidation des idéaux du Parti national-socialiste. Cette période se caractérise notamment par un raffinement des méthodes de répression et de propagande ainsi que par un appui grandissant pour le

Führer.⁴ Au cours des années précédant *Entartete Kunst*, le Parti cherche à gagner encore davantage l'approbation du peuple afin de pouvoir le manipuler selon ses désirs. Parallèlement à cela, sur le plan artistique, la bureaucratie culturelle se consolide également.

Les politiques raciales nazies, qu'on perçoit aujourd'hui comme étant particulièrement inhumaines, tirent leurs origines d'une idéologie alors déjà existante en Allemagne : la doctrine *völkisch*, qui apparaît en réaction à la modernité, à la fin du dix-neuvième siècle. La doctrine *völkisch* encourage un retour dans le passé afin de retrouver l'essence spirituelle et raciale du peuple, le *Volk*, qu'on considère alors perdue⁵. Il s'agit d'une idéologie nationaliste romantique et utopique prônant la pureté raciale, l'esprit de communauté et, nécessairement, la haine de l'Autre⁶.

Dès son arrivée au pouvoir, en 1933, le Parti national-socialiste cherche à initier une « renaissance nationale ⁷ » suivant les principes de cette doctrine *völkisch*, à laquelle il adhère. Son objectif est de créer la *Volksgemeinschaft*, la « communauté du peuple », dans laquelle chacun renonce volontairement à son individualité et à son appartenance à tout groupe social ou religieux dans le but de former une nation unie.⁸ Afin de restructurer la société selon les idéaux *völkisch*, le Parti créé, dès 1933, divers programmes sociaux visant à influencer positivement l'opinion publique quant à ces valeurs et, ainsi, faciliter la réalisation de ses politiques. Des programmes tels que *Kraft durch Freude* (La force par la joie), qui offre aux Allemands de tous milieux sociaux des activités de loisir, promeuvent le patriotisme et l'idée que tout Allemand « pur », peu importe son milieu social d'origine, a droit à l'égalité sociale⁹. Il



Fig 1. Anonymous, Hitler à l'exposition "L'Art dégénéré" ("Entartete Kunst"), 1937. Photograph courtesy of BPK©, Berlin, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / image BPK

s'agit d'installer un « sens de la race » dans la communauté, ce qui va de pair avec la doctrine *völkisch* adoptée par le Parti¹⁰.

Ces mesures ont notamment pour objectif d'influencer positivement l'humeur populaire¹¹. Pour restructurer la société et créer la *Volksgemeinschaft*, Goebbels, ministre de la propagande, sait qu'il doit constamment avoir l'approbation du peuple et qu'il ne peut pas utiliser la propagande de manière isolée¹². Cela concorde avec les idées du sociologue Jacques Ellul, qui affirme qu'une campagne de propagande doit être, entre autres, « lente » pour être efficace : il s'agit de créer un climat favorable à la manipulation populaire et à la réception de la propagande dite « directe », où le propagandiste cherche à modifier des opinions¹³. *Entartete Kunst*, qui est un exemple de propagande directe, est donc rendue possible par la mise en place d'un climat de camaraderie favorable à la moquerie de l'Autre.

Entartete Kunst est toutefois plus qu'un événement de propagande isolé, puisque l'art occupe une place de grande importance dans la révolution nationale du Parti nazi : la *Volksgemeinschaft* est en soi une oeuvre d'art dont le Führer est l'artiste¹⁴. Ce Führer-artiste croit que l'art a le pouvoir de changer la société par imitation¹⁵ et associe « l'effondrement politique » à « l'effondrement culturel »¹⁶. La renaissance de l'Allemagne, doit donc nécessairement s'accompagner d'une centralisation du domaine culturel, évitant ainsi toute tendance divergente qui nuirait à la réalisation du projet d'Hitler¹⁷.

Cette centralisation culturelle doit obligatoirement s'accompagner d'une position claire quant à l'art de la *Volksgemeinschaft*, qui s'avère ardue à définir. Goebbels, qui appréciait initialement la « force spirituelle » de l'expressionnisme¹⁸, change radicalement d'opinion en 1935 pour garder les faveurs du Führer, dont les goûts sont conservateurs¹⁹. Dès lors, le Parti promet

un art fondé dans l'idéologie *Blut und Boden* (sang et terre), qui « exprime les vraies valeurs spirituelles de la race aryenne, purifiée de toutes les influences bolchevistes et sémitiques »²⁰. De façon générale, cet art présente des sujets moralisants dans un style conservateur²¹ qui glorifient la beauté physique nordique, dite héritière de l'antiquité grecque²².

C'est donc de façon totalement arbitraire que l'art avant-gardiste devient l'ennemi artistique officiel. On associe son succès des dernières décennies à la presse et au marché de l'art, prétendument contrôlés par les Juifs qui cherchent à s'enrichir²³. Cette corruption de l'art est, surtout, considérée comme une « tentative des Juifs et Bolchevistes de créer l'anarchie culturelle et politique en détruisant les valeurs traditionnelles »²⁴. Ces théories mènent à l'abolition de la critique d'art, jugée nuisible²⁵, au renvoi des professeurs d'art modernistes et à la confiscation des collections publiques d'art dans les musées. Ces œuvres contribueront à former le contenu d'*Entartete Kunst*²⁶, exposition initialement proposée par Goebbels, et dont la tenue représente la cristallisation des positions culturelles du régime.

Goebbels a l'idée de tenir une exposition sur l'art « dégénéré » en juin 1937, alors que le Parti prépare la première *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung* (GDK), une exposition présentant l'art approuvé par le Parti²⁷. *Entartete Kunst* a donc un statut de contre-exposition : elle est reliée de près à la GDK sur plusieurs aspects afin d'instruire le public allemand, le *Volk*, sur les positions artistiques officielles du Parti²⁸. La GDK ouvre ses portes à Munich le 18 juillet 1937²⁹. *Entartete Kunst*, uniquement annoncée dans le guide d'exposition de la GDK³⁰, accueille gratuitement les visiteurs

dès le lendemain³¹. Ces deux expositions portent exclusivement sur l'art allemand, que le Parti divise entre l'art « of our days » et l'art « of those days », créant ainsi une séparation nette entre le passé et le futur glorieux de la nation³². *Entartete Kunst*, qui présente 730 oeuvres par 112 artistes³³, demeurera à Munich jusqu'en novembre 1937 et voyagera ensuite dans treize villes du Reich jusqu'en 1941³⁴.

Les expositions *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung* et *Entartete Kunst* sont tenues à Munich afin de redonner à cette ville son statut de capitale artistique allemande, qu'elle avait perdu suite à la chute du Deuxième Reich, en 1918³⁵. La GDK, qui deviendra un événement annuel, a lieu dans la *Haus der Deutschen Kunst*, un bâtiment de pierre néoclassique monumental construit expressément pour l'exposition. Ce « temple de l'art allemand » est un lieu d'exposition des plus modernes : ses galeries sont très spacieuses et les œuvres sont isolées sur des murs blancs afin de leur donner une allure intemporelle³⁶. L'art présenté à la GDK se veut lui aussi intemporel ; sauf pour les représentations du Führer, il est dénué d'iconographie contemporaine³⁷. Les œuvres sont exécutées avec soin et témoignent de l'idéologie *Blut und Boden*, exprimant les valeurs spirituelles de la race aryenne dans le style de la peinture de genre austro-bavaroise du dix-neuvième siècle³⁸ ainsi que la moralité et la pureté du Troisième Reich à laquelle tous doivent aspirer³⁹.

Entartete Kunst, quant à elle, est tenue en face de la *Haus der Deutschen Kunst*⁴⁰, est le contraire parfait de la GDK par sa mise en exposition et par l'art qui y est présenté, qui cherchent à provoquer le dégoût du visiteur. Les œuvres d'art dites « dégénérées » sont installées dans neuf pièces



Fig 2. Hoffman Heinrich, Day of German Art, Haus der Deutschen Kunst, Prinzregentenstraße 1, Munich, 1937. Photographs. © BPK, Berlin, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / image BSB

de l'Institut Archéologique de Munich⁴¹, un endroit qui, par sa fonction, associe l'art moderne au passé et contraste avec la nouveauté et l'allure soi-disant éternelle du bâtiment voisin⁴². L'art moderne choisi pour l'exposition témoignerait, selon Goebbels, d'un déclin en art depuis 1910 quant à la qualité et au contenu⁴³, exposant l'incompétence des artistes ou valorisant les déformations physiques et la décadence morale⁴⁴. Ces œuvres représenteraient ainsi une menace pour la moralité et la tradition allemandes⁴⁵. L'art dégénéré est donc celui des artistes comme Kirchner, Grosz, ou Kandinsky et des mouvements cubiste, dada, surréaliste, expressionniste, etc⁴⁶.

À *Entartete Kunst*, l'accrochage varie selon les pièces, mais, de façon générale, les tableaux sont accrochés sur les cloisons par

des cordes, placés aussi haut et aussi près les uns des autres que possible, donnant ainsi une impression de chaos au visiteur⁴⁷. Certains tableaux sont exposés sans leur cadre ; cela pourrait signifier que l'œuvre mérite d'être protégée⁴⁸. Sous les tableaux, directement sur le mur et sur les piédestaux des sculptures d'*Entartete Kunst*, les informations de base de l'œuvre, leur prix d'achat (qui ne mentionne pas l'inflation des années 1920) et, souvent, l'institution en ayant fait l'acquisition sont inscrits à la main. Cette étiquette, qui s'accompagne d'une note rouge disant que l'institution a acheté l'œuvre avec les taxes des travailleurs allemands⁴⁹, vise à provoquer le dégoût du visiteur et à blâmer les institutions et la critique dites corrompues par l'influence juive⁵⁰. Cette attaque à la critique se retrouve dans les nombreuses inscriptions ironiques sur les murs, ce qui

ajoute à l'effet chaotique. On y trouve des extraits de critiques d'art, jugées absurdes, qui contrastent avec la « voix de raison »⁵¹ de Goebbels et d'Hitler dans des phrases courtes, efficaces et strictement horizontales, qui poussent le visiteur allemand, souvent inculte⁵², à lire la critique d'art comme du non-sens et à interpréter les œuvres exposées de la « bonne » manière, celle du Parti⁵³. Le visiteur peut lire des commentaires tels que « Voici comment les esprits malades voyaient la nature⁵⁴ ». La mise en exposition d'*Entartete Kunst* cherche donc à exploiter l'incompréhension du grand public allemand quant à l'art moderne, que le Parti dépouille de son aura afin de pouvoir l'utiliser à des fins politiques⁵⁵.

Considérant l'obsession du Parti nazi avec la pureté raciale, deux faits par rapport au contenu d'*Entartete Kunst* peuvent paraître problématiques. D'une part, de toutes les œuvres ridiculisées dans cette exposition, seulement quelques-unes, regroupées dans une petite pièce à part, proviennent d'artistes juifs. D'autre part, l'artiste le plus représenté dans l'exposition est Emil Nolde, un membre de longue date du Parti national-socialiste⁵⁶. En fait, l'adjectif « dégénéré » qui qualifie la totalité des œuvres exposées, bien que relié de près aux Juifs pour les Nazis⁵⁷, n'est pas *exclusif* à une race et réfère plutôt à une situation historique⁵⁸. On considère donc que le problème de dégénérescence sociale affecte l'ensemble de la société, ce qui fait de la *Volksgemeinschaft*, l'œuvre d'art du Führer, une nécessité pour le salut du peuple allemand. La fonction d'*Entartete Kunst* est donc de montrer au peuple les conséquences tangibles de ces faits dits historiques et scientifiques.

Le concept de dégénérescence sociale ap-

paraît dans la seconde moitié du dix-neuvième siècle. Il s'agit d'une idée, reprise comme un fait historique par le Parti national-socialiste, selon laquelle la société serait en état de déclin depuis l'ère industrielle. De façon générale, on remarque une augmentation de la criminalité, de maladies physiques, mentales, et d'autres troubles comme l'alcoolisme, qui sont dus aux mauvaises conditions de vie de la population ouvrière grandissante. Au lieu de blâmer l'industrialisation qui, étant synonyme de progrès, ne peut simplement pas engendrer de déclin social, on trouve une cause « médicale » commune à tous ces problèmes : la dégénérescence⁵⁹. La dégénérescence serait donc aussi la cause de toute déviance morale ou caractéristique physique anormale⁶⁰.

Pour remédier à la situation et sauver l'avenir de l'Allemagne, le Parti national-socialiste croit qu'il est nécessaire d'intervenir. La Loi de stérilisation entre donc en vigueur dès 1933 afin d'empêcher la reproduction des personnes jugées génétiquement inférieures et, ainsi, d'améliorer l'humanité en général ; c'est ce qu'on appelle « hygiène raciale »⁶¹. À la base, l'eugénisme allemand ne vise aucune « race » en particulier⁶², or si la *Volksgemeinschaft*, cette communauté du futur, est caractérisée par le type Aryen pur, alors il est logique de conclure le soi-disant déclin de la société allemande soit davantage relié aux autres « races », dont les Juifs.

L'art « dégénéré » exposé dans *Entartete Kunst* témoignerait de ce déclin de l'Allemagne et, conséquemment, de l'importance des politiques d'hygiène raciale. En Allemagne nazie, on considère que l'art moderne exprime l'héritage biologique de l'artiste. Cette théorie est bien établie depuis la publication de *Kunst und Rasse*

de Paul Schultze-Naumburg, en 1928⁶³. L'auteur, aussi membre du comité responsable de la création de la politique raciale du Parti⁶⁴, soutient que la représentation picturale est comme la reproduction corporelle. L'artiste se reproduirait sur la toile : l'image qu'il crée refléterait son bagage héréditaire plutôt que sa personnalité⁶⁵. Par exemple, les artistes qui peignent le ciel en vert le feraient à cause d'un défaut de la vue⁶⁶, tandis que les artistes exposés à la GDK peignent des figures gréco-romaines parce qu'ils descendraient de la race aryenne (c'est, du moins, ce qu'on cherche à prouver)⁶⁷. Dans son livre, Schultze-Naumburg juxtapose des exemples d'art moderne (surtout des portraits et des nus) et des photographies de personnes malades défigurées afin de prouver que les modernistes sont des malades mentaux dont l'idéal de beauté est la déformation et la faiblesse génétique⁶⁸. Pour le Parti national-socialiste, la culture sert donc à mesurer la valeur d'une race⁶⁹.

Cependant, si l'art moderne est le produit d'un bagage génétique inférieur, comment se fait-il donc que plusieurs oeuvres d'Emil Nolde, membre du Parti national-socialiste, soient présentées à *Entartete Kunst*? Ici, le mot *séduction* est la clé. Pour récapituler, l'art moderne est, à la base, réalisé par ceux considérés inférieurs génétiquement par le Parti, et doit son succès aux institutions artistiques, prétendument contrôlées par les Juifs. C'est ce marché de l'art juif qui serait à l'origine des grands mouvements modernes du vingtième siècle et qui pousserait les bons Allemands comme Emil Nolde à produire un art « dégénéré⁷⁰ ». Ce principe d'influence explique donc l'importance accordée au marché et à la critique d'art moderne dans la mise en exposition d'*Entartete Kunst* :

les nombreux artistes allemands exposés ne sont pas tenus responsables de faire de l'art dit dégénéré⁷¹.

En bref, *Entartete Kunst* influence l'opinion publique quant au phénomène de la dégénérescence en trois étapes. Tout d'abord, les visiteurs constatent concrètement les dangers que représente la dégénérescence sur la communauté allemande, puisque l'art reflète directement ce déclin. Ensuite, ils constatent la nécessité de se sauver de la dégénérescence, puisque le peuple allemand est présenté comme étant la victime de ce phénomène social. Finalement, *Entartete Kunst* montre au public que le salut de la race allemande peut être rendu possible par l'élimination des facteurs de dégénérescence sociale ; dans le pamphlet accompagnant l'exposition en tournée, notamment, la purification de la nation des Juifs, des malades, des « crétins, » etc. est mentionnée presque à chaque page⁷². En somme, *Entartete Kunst*, en exposant les dangers de la dégénérescence, promeut l'hygiène raciale comme moyen de réaliser la *Volksgemeinschaft*.

À l'ouverture de l'exposition d'art dégénéré, Adolf Ziegler, président de la Chambre des beaux-arts du Reich, proclame : « Volk allemand, venez et jugez de vous-mêmes ! »⁷³ Si le visiteur d'*Entartete Kunst* croit qu'il constate lui-même la réalité et les dangers de la dégénérescence sur le peuple allemand, c'est parce qu'il est amené à penser de la sorte. Les deux expositions de Munich sont, évidemment, conçues à des fins de propagande, cherchant à orienter l'opinion populaire en faveur de l'art officiel et, conséquemment, des politiques raciales du Parti⁷⁴.

C'est par le contraste qu'*Entartete Kunst* et la GDK cherchent à articuler clairement

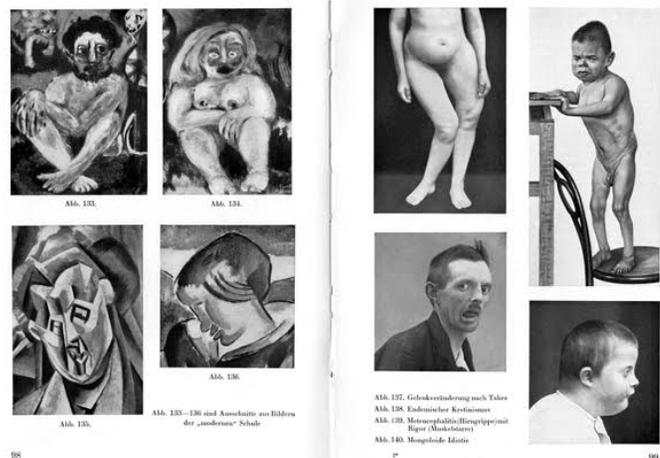


Fig. 2. Paul Schultze-Naumburg, *Kunst und Rasse*, Munich: J. F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1928, pp. 98-99.

la distinction entre l'art décent et l'art « dégénéré ». Dans son article « 'Judge for Yourselves!'—The Degenerate Art Exhibition as Political Spectacle », Neil Levi, spécialiste de l'Holocauste, démontre comment le contenu des deux expositions de Munich se complète afin de diriger l'opinion populaire : si un thème est présent dans la GDK, on trouvera sa version « dégénérée » dans *Entartete Kunst*, et vice versa⁷⁵. Le visiteur de la GDK et d'*Entartete Kunst* peut donc directement comparer les images de femmes aryennes idéales aux représentations dites « dégénérées » des femmes, comparer les soldats glorieux de la GDK aux représentations qui « insultent les héros de la guerre », observer les images de nobles fermiers aryens et celles peintes d'un « point de vue Yiddish » et voir des paysages décents et d'autres peints par des « esprits malades »⁷⁶.

Les images déformant la religion présentée dans *Entartete Kunst* trouvent leur contrepois dans les portraits du *Führer*

à la GDK : le Parti est la religion du Volk⁷⁷. Dans son texte, Levi étudie le cas de John Heartfield, dont les photomontages dénigrant Hitler et le Parti Nazi, qui auraient pourtant pu offrir une version « dégénérée » des portraits du *Führer*, sont absents de l'exposition. Ces images, destinées à la reproduction et à la diffusion, ne sont pas des commodités hors de prix : elles ne cadreraient pas avec les accusations du marché de l'art dans l'exposition, et ne seraient donc pas symptomatiques de la dégénérescence de la même façon que le reste des œuvres d'*Entartete Kunst*⁷⁸. Cela n'est qu'un exemple de plus qui démontre comment le contenu des deux expositions est organisé de manière fort didactique, rendant impossible toute réflexion autonome⁷⁹.

La manière dont les deux expositions sont conçues, avec un contenu s'opposant directement grâce à l'exclusion de certains artistes problématiques, témoigne, selon Levi, de la volonté de « construire l'art

moderne comme un *abject* »⁸⁰. L'abjection, concept défini par Julia Kristeva en 1980, est « la partie de soi qui doit être rejetée » afin de se définir comme un être décent ;⁸¹ c'est un processus de formation identitaire. Si l'on se fie à la théorie structuraliste appliquée à l'anthropologie, cette définition identitaire n'est possible que par un processus négatif : la culture, comme le langage, ne se définit pas par des qualités qui lui seraient intrinsèques, mais plutôt par contraste⁸². S'il a été relativement simple pour le Parti de définir quel art est indésirable, l'idéal artistique national-socialiste, lui, n'a jamais été clairement défini ;⁸³ il est vaguement décrit comme « *eternal, stemming from the inner being of a people*⁸⁴ ». De la même manière, la communication de l'identité de la *Volksgemeinschaft* doit forcément passer par son opposé afin de rendre l'idéal plus tangible. Par l'abjection, la complémentarité des expositions permet donc à la communauté d'identifier clairement l'élément « dégénéré » à rejeter de la société du futur, et ainsi de définir l'idéal vers lequel se tourner. Certes, le terme « abject » au sens de Kristeva n'existait pas en 1937, mais le principe demeure utile pour analyser la manière dont *Entartete Kunst* influence le public.

L'utilisation de l'art moderne « abject » dans le but de promouvoir la nouvelle identité du Troisième Reich est également efficace en termes de propagande. D'abord, le choix de l'art moderne est stratégique : *Entartete Kunst* exploite le sentiment d'incompréhension populaire déjà existant quant à l'avant-garde à des fins politiques⁸⁵. Comme toute bonne campagne de propagande, *Entartete Kunst* cherche à renforcer des sentiments déjà existants plutôt qu'à en créer de nouveaux⁸⁶. Ensuite, le fait que l'art moderne

soit présenté comme abject relève d'une stratégie de propagande mentionnée par Jacques Ellul, qui consiste à « absorber » l'ennemi, à le « faire participer à l'action »⁸⁷. L'art moderne, qui aurait pu être simplement éradiqué, ce qui aurait potentiellement pu en faire un martyr⁸⁸, est mis à l'avantage du Parti et contribue, par contraste, à créer une volonté populaire de former la *Volksgemeinschaft*. Ainsi, l'utilisation de l'art moderne contribue à mener une campagne de propagande totale, c'est-à-dire que le Parti utilise tous les moyens mis à sa disposition pour influencer l'opinion publique⁸⁹.

En somme, le contraste direct entre la GDK et *Entartete Kunst*, qui montre au public un art et une vision du monde à rejeter, est ce qui lui permet d'avoir l'impression d'« évaluer » les cultures « dégénérées » qu'on lui présente, tout en rendant plus concrète l'idée de *Volksgemeinschaft*. De cette manière, *Entartete Kunst* est un outil de propagande qui contribue à gagner l'appui du peuple quant aux politiques raciales du Parti national-socialiste⁹⁰.

Puisque *Entartete Kunst* ne représente qu'une technique de propagande parmi d'autres faisant la promotion de la communauté du peuple et de l'hygiène raciale, il est ardu de déterminer quel rôle précis cette exposition a joué dans la réalisation relative des objectifs du Parti. Il est toutefois possible d'évaluer, dans une certaine mesure, l'efficacité d'*Entartete Kunst* comme campagne de propagande en observant la réception de l'exposition ainsi que les développements historiques et politiques des années suivantes.

L'exposition d'art dégénéré de Munich a eu un grand succès populaire : avant sa fermeture, en novembre 1937, plus de deux

millions de personnes l'avaient visitée, ce qui représente un nombre jusqu'alors inégalé pour une exposition d'art moderne⁹¹. L'entrée gratuite et le caractère non élitiste de l'exposition ont sûrement joué en sa faveur. La GDK, quant à elle, a reçu cinq fois moins de visiteurs, ce qui en fait tout de même l'exposition d'art contemporain la plus populaire de son temps⁹². Malgré le grand nombre de visiteurs que ces deux expositions ont attiré, l'impact qu'elles auraient pu laisser sur eux s'est avéré limité par certaines incohérences. À cause de l'organisation hâtive d'*Entartete Kunst* et de la difficulté du Führer à définir l'art officiel (qui relève de ses préférences plutôt que d'un consensus général)⁹³, il était notamment possible de voir les œuvres d'un même artiste dans les deux expositions⁹⁴. Puisque la limite entre l'art « dégénéré » et l'art décent n'était, au final, pas clairement définie, le visiteur pouvait être confus quant au message qu'on cherchait à lui transmettre⁹⁵.

À court terme, *Entartete Kunst* s'est néanmoins avérée efficace pour inhiber la production d'art moderne. Si les artistes du Reich n'étaient jamais certains d'avoir l'approbation du Parti⁹⁶, les artistes modernes, eux, savaient que leur art était voué au rejet⁹⁷. En Allemagne, le modernisme est donc catégoriquement rejeté jusqu'à la fin de la guerre. Quand elle se termine, cependant, il est rapidement réhabilité, et doit probablement son succès à l'iconoclasme nazi, auquel le monde de l'après-guerre s'oppose⁹⁸. *Entartete Kunst*, pendant et après le Troisième Reich, témoigne donc de l'importance de l'art comme expression d'une vision du monde.

Le fait qu'*Entartete Kunst* représente un moyen de transmettre au peuple un désir pour la *Volksgemeinschaft* se rapproche

du principe d'« orthopraxie » de Jacques Ellul, défini comme étant le fait de provoquer une action. Le peuple ne doit pas seulement penser comme le parti ; la propagande doit « déclencher des réflexes⁹⁹ ». On peut donc supposer qu'*Entartete Kunst* a pu contribuer à la radicalisation populaire graduelle qui culmine en 1938¹⁰⁰ avec la Nuit de Cristal et l'augmentation drastique du vandalisme de maisons, de commerces juifs et de synagogues¹⁰¹.

Dans le contexte de l'Allemagne nazie, l'inaction aussi peut être une forme d'engagement populaire. La propagande en faveur de la *Volksgemeinschaft* s'avère efficace pour gagner le support passif du Volk quant au régime et à ses politiques raciales¹⁰². Les gens à l'héritage génétique jugé indésirable sont stérilisés systématiquement et, en 1939, le programme d'euthanasie débute¹⁰³. *Entartete Kunst*, en identifiant le bon et le mauvais art et, ainsi, les gens qui ont leur place dans le Troisième Reich, peut avoir contribué à l'indifférence populaire quant à la disparition de nombreux innocents¹⁰⁴.

Ainsi, étant minutieusement construite pour présenter au public un théâtre des horreurs de la dégénérescence à éradiquer du futur de la nation allemande, l'exposition d'art dégénéré *Entartete Kunst* a sûrement contribué à l'implémentation des politiques d'hygiène raciales du Parti national-socialiste en convainquant le peuple de la nécessité de telles mesures. Au final, *Entartete Kunst* n'accomplit toutefois que partiellement ses buts : elle s'avère efficace pour inhiber la production d'art moderne dans les années suivantes et pour mobiliser le peuple, mais l'idéal de *Volksgemeinschaft* n'est jamais réalisé¹⁰⁵.

Notes de fin de document

¹ Anita Kühnel, « Entartete Kunst », *Grove Art Online*, *Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press, consulté le 29 mars 2017, <http://0-www.oxfordartonline.com.mercury.concordia.ca/subscriber/article/grove/art/T026387>.

² Éric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 150.

³ Grande exposition d'art allemand.

⁴ Norbert Frei, *National Socialist Rule in Germany : The Führer State 1933-1945* (Oxford/Cambridge MA : Blackwell, 1993), 99.

⁵ Petteri Pietikainen, « The Volk and its Unconscious: Jung, Hauer and the 'German Revolution' », *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 4 (2000) : 524-525.

⁶ David Welch, « Manufacturing a Consensus: Nazi Propaganda and the Building of a 'National Community' (Volksgemeinschaft) », *Contemporary European History* 2, no. 1 (1993) : 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

¹⁰ Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 143.

¹¹ Welch, « Manufacturing a Consensus : Nazi Propaganda and the Building of a 'National Community' (Volksgemeinschaft) », 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³ Jacques Ellul, « Les caractères de la propagande », dans *Propagandes* (Paris : Economica, 1990), 26.

¹⁴ Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 5.

¹⁵ Philippe Sers, *Totalitarisme et avant-gardes* (Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 2001), 26.

¹⁶ Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 13.

¹⁷ Mary-Margaret Goggin, « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art :

The National Socialist Case », *Art Journal* 50 (1991) : 84.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁹ Jonathan George Petropoulos, « Art as Politics: The Nazi Elite's Quest for the Political and Material Control of Art », Thèse de doctorat, (Harvard University, 1990), 64-65.

²⁰ Goggin, « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art : The National Socialist Case », 86. Traduction libre.

²¹ Ines Schlenker, « Defining National Socialist Art : The First 'Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung' in 1937 », dans *Degenerate Art : The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*, ed. par Olaf Peters (Munich, New York, Londres : Prestel, 2014), 99.

²² Sers, *Totalitarisme et avant-gardes*, 41.

²³ Petropoulos, « Art as Politics : The Nazi Elite's Quest for the Political and Material Control of Art », 73.

²⁴ Goggin, « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art : The National Socialist Case », 88-89. Traduction libre.

²⁵ Petropoulos, « Art as Politics: The Nazi Elite's Quest for the Political and Material Control of Art », 72-73.

²⁶ Goggin, « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art : The National Socialist Case », 89.

²⁷ Olaf Peters, « Genesis, Conception, and Consequences: The 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937 », dans *Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*, ed. par Olaf Peters (Munich, New York, Londres : Prestel, 2014), 113.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

²⁹ Schlenker, « Defining National Socialist Art : The First 'Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung' in 1937 », 90.

³⁰ Mario-Andreas von Lüttichau, « Crazy at Any Price : The Pathologizing of Modernism in the Run-up to the 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937 », dans *Degenerate Art : The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*, ed. par Olaf Peters (Munich, New York, Londres : Prestel, 2014), 49.

³¹ Peter Guenther, « Three Days in Munich, July 1937 », dans *Degenerate Art : The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*, ed. par Stephanie Barron (Los Angeles : Los Angeles County Museum of Art/New York H. N. Abrams, 1991), 36.

³² Neil Levi, « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle », *October* 85 (1998) : 43.

³³ Petropoulos, « Art as Politics : The Nazi Elite's Quest for the Political and Material Control of Art », 75.

³⁴ Stephanie Barron, « 1937: Modern Art and Politics in Pre-war Germany », dans *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*, ed. par Stephanie Barron (Los Angeles : Los Angeles County Museum of Art/New York H. N. Abrams, 1991), 20.

³⁵ Peters, « Genesis, Conception, and Consequences », 106.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

³⁷ Schlenker, « Defining National Socialist Art : The First 'Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung' in 1937 », 99.

³⁸ Goggin, « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art : The National Socialist Case », 86.

³⁹ George L. Mosse, « Beauty without Sensuality: The Exhibition Entartete Kunst », dans *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*, ed. par Stephanie Barron (Los Angeles : Los Angeles County Museum of Art/New York H. N. Abrams, 1991), 25.

⁴⁰ Barron, « 1937: Modern Art and Politics in Prewar Germany », 20.

⁴¹ Lüttichau, « Crazy at Any Price: The Pathologizing of Modernism in the Run-up to the 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937 », 37.

⁴² Levi, « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle », 42.

⁴³ Lüttichau, « Crazy at Any Price: The Pathologizing of Modernism in the Run-up to the 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937 », 37.

⁴⁴ Goggin, « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art : The National Socialist Case », 89.

⁴⁵ Barron, « 1937: Modern Art and Politics in Pre-war Germany », 19.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁷ Lüttichau, « Crazy at any Price : The Pathologizing of

Modernism in the Run-up to the 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937 », 38.

⁴⁸ Olaf Peters, « From Nordau to Hitler: 'Degeneration and Anti-Modernism between the Fin-de-Siècle and the National Socialist Takeover of Power », dans *Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*, ed. par Olaf Peters (Munich, New York, Londres : Prestel, 2014), 28.

⁴⁹ Lüttichau, « Crazy at any Price : The Pathologizing of Modernism in the Run-up to the 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937 », 38.

⁵⁰ Levi, « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle », 48.

⁵¹ Lüttichau, « Entartete Kunst, Munich 1937 : A Reconstruction », 46.

⁵² Lüttichau, « Crazy at any Price : The Pathologizing of Modernism in the Run-up to the 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937 », 38-39.

⁵³ Levi, « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle », 48.

⁵⁴ Lüttichau, « Crazy at any Price : The Pathologizing of Modernism in the Run-up to the 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937 », 38.

⁵⁵ Levi, « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle », 57.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁸ Peters, « From Nordau to Hitler : 'Degeneration and Anti-Modernism between the Fin-de-Siècle and the National Socialist Takeover of Power », 16.

⁵⁹ André Pichot et Jacques Testart, « EUGÉNISME », dans *Universalis éducation [en ligne]*, *Encyclopædia Universalis*, consulté le 25 mars 2017, <http://www.universalis-edu.com.proxy.bibliotheques.uqam.ca:2048/encyclopedie/eugenisme/>.

⁶⁰ Mosse, « Beauty without Sensuality: The Exhibition Entartete Kunst », 26.

⁶¹ Pichot et Testart, « EUGÉNISME ».

⁶² Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA, Londres : Harvard University Press, 1988), 96.

⁶³ Peters, « From Nordau to Hitler : 'Degeneration and Anti-Modernism between the Fin-de-Siècle and the

National Socialist Takeover of Power », 24.

⁶⁴ Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis*, 95.

⁶⁵ Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 129, 133.

⁶⁶ Goggin, « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art : The National Socialist Case », 89.

⁶⁷ Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 130.

⁶⁸ Lüttichau, « Entartete Kunst, Munich 1937 : A Reconstruction », 44.

⁶⁹ Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, 76.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 42.

⁷¹ Levi, « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle », 48.

⁷² Lüttichau, « Entartete Kunst, Munich 1937 : A Reconstruction », 48-49.

⁷³ Levi, « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle », 41.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 50-51.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 43, 57.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 43.

⁸¹ Ibid., 43-44.

⁸² Terence Hawkes, « Linguistics and Anthropology », dans *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Londres : Routledge, 2003), 21.

⁸³ Peters, « Genesis, Conception and Consequences... », 109.

⁸⁴ Schlenker, « Defining National Socialist Art : The First 'Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung' in 1937 », 90.

⁸⁵ Goggin, « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art : The National Socialist Case », 85.

⁸⁶ David Welch, « Introduction », dans *Nazi Propaganda : The Power and the Limitations*. ed. par David Welch (Londres : Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2015), 2.

⁸⁷ Ellul, « Les caractères de la propagande », 32.

⁸⁸ Barron, « 1937 : Modern Art and Politics in Pre-war Germany », 22.

⁸⁹ Ellul, « Les caractères de la propagande », 21.

⁹⁰ Levi, « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle », 63.

⁹¹ Jean-François Poirier, « DÉGÉNÉRÉ ART », dans Universalis éducation [en ligne], *Encyclopædia Universalis*, consulté le 28 mars 2017, <http://www.universalis-edu.com.proxy.bibliotheques.uqam.ca:2048/encyclopedie/art-degenere/>.

⁹² Schlenker, « Defining National Socialist Art : The First 'Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung' in 1937 », 92.

⁹³ Sers, *Totalitarisme et avant-gardes*, 57.

⁹⁴ Schlenker, « Defining National Socialist Art : The First 'Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung' in 1937 », 100.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Sers, *Totalitarisme et avant-gardes*, 57.

⁹⁷ Barron, « 1937 : Modern Art and Politics in Pre-war Germany », 22.

⁹⁸ Ruth Heftrig, « Narrowed Modernism: On the Rehabilitation of 'Degenerate Art' in Postwar Germany », dans *Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*, ed. par Olaf Peters (Munich/New York/Londres : Prestel, 2014), 258.

⁹⁹ Ellul, « Les caractères de la propagande », 36-37.

¹⁰⁰ Petropoulos, « Art as Politics », 71.

¹⁰¹ Frei, *National Socialist Rule in Germany*, 109.

¹⁰² Welch, « Manufacturing a Consensus : Nazi Propaganda and the Building of a 'National Community' (Volksgemeinschaft) », 15.

¹⁰³ Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis*, 114-115.

¹⁰⁴ Ronald S. Lauder, « Preface », dans *Degenerate Art : The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*, ed. par Olaf Peters (Munich/New York/Londres : Prestel, 2014), 8.

¹⁰⁵ Welch, « Manufacturing a Consensus : Nazi Propaganda and the Building of a 'National Community' (Volksgemeinschaft) », 14.

Bibliographie

Barron, Stephanie (ed.) *Degenerate Art : The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*. Los Angeles : Los Angeles County Museum of Art/New York H. N. Abrams, 1991.

Ellul, Jacques. « Les caractères de la propagande ». Dans *Propagandes*, 15-44. Paris : Economica, 1990.

Frei, Norbert. *National Socialist Rule in Germany : The Führer State 1933-1945*. Oxford/Cambridge MA : Blackwell, 1993.

Goggin, Mary-Margaret. « 'Decent' vs. 'Degenerate' Art : The National Socialist Case ». *Art Journal* 50 (hiver 1991) : 84-92.

Hawkes, Terence. « Linguistics and Anthropology ». Dans *Structuralism and Semiotics*, 8-43. Londres : Routledge, 2003.

Kühnel, Anita. « Entartete Kunst ». Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online. Oxford University Press. Consulté le 29 mars 2017. <http://0-www.oxfordartonline.com.mercury.concordia.ca/subscriber/article/grove/art/T026387>.

Levi, Neil. « 'Judge for Yourselfes!' — The 'Degenerate Art' Exhibition as Political Spectacle ». *October* 85 (été 1998) : 41-64.

Lüttichau, Mario-Andreas von. « Crazy at Any Price: The Pathologizing of Modernism in the Run-up to the 'Entartete Kunst' Exhibition in Munich in 1937. » Dans *Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*, ed. par Olaf Peters. Munich, New York, Londres : Prestel, 2014.

Michaud, Éric. *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*. Stanford, CA : Stanford University Press, 2004.

Peters, Olaf (ed.) *Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*. Munich/New York/Londres : Prestel, 2014.

Petropoulos, Jonathan George. « Art as Politics: The Nazi Elite's Quest for the Political and Material Control of Art ». Thèse de doctorat, Harvard University, 1990.

Pichot, André et Jacques Testart. « EUGÉNISME ». Universalis éducation [en ligne]. *Encyclopædia Universalis*. Consulté le 25 mars 2017. <http://www.universalis-edu.com.proxy.bibliotheques.uqam.ca:2048/encyclopedie/eugenisme/>.

Pietikainen, Petteri. « The Volk and its Unconscious: Jung, Hauer and the 'German Revolution' ». *Journal of Contemporary History* 35.4 (2000) : 523-539.

Poirier, Jean-François. « DÉGÉNÉRÉ ART ». Universalis éducation [en ligne]. *Encyclopædia Universalis*. Consulté le 28 mars 2017. <http://www.universalis-edu.com.proxy.bibliotheques.uqam.ca:2048/encyclopedie/art-degenere/>.

Proctor, Robert. *Racial Hygiene : Medicine under the Nazis*. Cambridge, MA, Londres : Harvard University Press, 1988.

Sers, Philippe. *Totalitarisme et avant-gardes*. Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 2001.

Welch, David. « Manufacturing a Consensus : Nazi Propaganda and the Building of a 'National Community' (Volksgemeinschaft) ». *Contemporary European History* 2, no. 1 (1993) : 1-15.

Welch, David (ed.) *Nazi Propaganda : The Power and the Limitations*. Londres : Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2015.

Redefining the Holy Land Through Architecture: The Dome of The Rock

Author: Stephanie Dallaire

Second Year, Art History major (BFA), Honours in Diversity and the Contemporary World minor (BA).

Editor: Maggie Mills

The Temple Mount in Jerusalem holds an important role in the spiritual tradition of the three Abrahamic faiths. At various moments in its history, the location has been a sacred place of worship for the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions. The Jewish population inhabiting the land of Jerusalem up until the 597 BCE¹ first enshrined the land with the Great Temple of Solomon (960-586 BCE).² So grand and magnificent was its architecture that it would remain a reference to which future emperors measured their own architectural exploits.³ Its destruction by the Babylonian army in 586 BCE still weighs heavily upon the collective memory of the Jewish people.⁴ Mount Zion would remain an inferior reflection of its glorious past until the Roman emperor Herod the Great claimed control of Judea (37-4 BCE) and erected his own Temple (c. 1st century CE).⁵ Many religious monuments would occupy the location as various empires assumed power over the Holy Land. Looking down upon the city of Jerusalem, these monuments served as visual representations of power and authority. Accordingly, when the Umayyad Caliphate conquered Jerusalem (during the Siege of Jerusalem in 636-637 CE), they appropriated the site and reworked its significance to their own religious beliefs.⁶ Consequently, under the authority of the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik (r. 685-705 CE), the Dome of the Rock was inaugurated in 691 CE.⁷ With its vibrant colours and rising dome, al-Malik's monument served to proclaim the proliferation and presence of the Islamic faith in a land where opposing religious factions had already established a history as well as a long-standing cultural, aesthetic, and religious influence.

The topographical location of the Dome of the Rock, in addition to its elaborate ornamentation, is a testament to the significance imbued in the structure by the Islamic faith. Its intended use, however, remains a great source of debate for contemporary historians. This paper aims to demonstrate how the influences of Byzantine aesthetics on the architectural and decorative composition of the Dome of the Rock, as well as the appropriation of the location of the Temple Mount, serve as visual representations of Islam's religious and socio-political motivations. Firstly, I will explain the meaning and importance of the Dome's location for both the Jewish and Christian faiths and how it was re-attributed to the site of Muhammad's Ascension. I will then explore the aesthetic theories of Neoplatonism and how they were appropriated for the decorative and structural composition of the Dome as it adhered to the Islamic Church's proscription against the visual representation of living and religious figures. I will also compare the architectural similarities between the aforementioned faiths which suggests the influence of the Christian mausoleum on the Dome's central floor plan. Finally, this essay will uncover why the various architectural and decorative influences that have contributed to the Dome's visual composition reflect the Qur'anic belief of Islam as the new and final faith.⁸

When the Umayyads (supporting the Islamic faith) assumed control of Jerusalem, they claimed a land that had already been shaped by and ingrained in a religious and cultural past.⁹ Jerusalem became an important pilgrimage site for the Christian faith when the religion was adopted and sanctioned by the Byzantine Emperor



Fig 1. VanderWolf Images, Western Wall at the Dome Of The Rock on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Israel. Photo courtesy of @Shutterstock.

Constantine the Great (r. 306-337 CE) in 313 CE.¹⁰ Furthermore, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was later inaugurated by Constantine as a mausoleum for the tomb of Christ.¹¹ According to art historian Oleg Grabar, the Emperor's church "opened up toward the empty and ravaged space where the Second Jewish Temple [...] had once stood [...] this monument [thus] had a socio-political agenda: to proclaim victory over Judaism and paganism."¹² The physical church was thus a medium for the Christian Church to propagate and instate its power and authority over the Pagans and Jews that inhabited the city of Jerusalem. The Umayyad Caliphate would replicate this political move when they in turn took power. Like the Christians before them, they used the Temple Mount to their own socio-political agenda, proclaiming themselves as successors and victors of the Holy Land.

Sitting above Temple Mount, the Dome of the Rock overlooks the city of Jerusa-

lem. Its aesthetics, however, are a curiosity amongst the natural and architectural landscape of the city. While the majority of Jerusalem is enveloped in a harmony of earthly and subtle hues, the Dome of the Rock shines brightly, light reflecting off its vibrant, cool colours (fig. 1). Purples, blues, golds, and greens all figure predominantly on the painted marble panels found on the interior and exterior surfaces of the Dome. The reflection of light and colour offers visual similarities with the mosaics that adorned the Byzantine churches and cathedrals in Constantinople. The aesthetics of light and colour were seen as a medium for divine communion and spiritual introspection by the Byzantine Orthodox Church. The Byzantine Church's theories were founded on the reinterpretation of Neoplatonism by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (5th- 6th century CE) and its subsequent appropriation by the Christian Church. Neoplatonic theory argues that "it is through perceptible symbols that the divine is made accessible and knowable. At

the same time, symbols can never be identical with God himself: they are but a weak reflection of the divine essence hidden in matter."¹³ According to this theory, the limits of the earthly body leads to the human need for material representations in order to access the higher spiritual self. To avoid the hermeticism of idolatry, however, Byzantine art sought to capture the essence of its subject rather than its physical form. Neoplatonism was thus well suited to Islamic aniconism as the reflection of light and colour could create a strong sensory impact without involving any forms of human or animal representations.¹⁴

Following in the tradition of Islamic art, The Dome of the Rock is adorned with abstract and geometric motifs. The supporting beams above the interior arches of the Dome are inlaid with sheets of bronze and brass with vegetative motifs.¹⁵ The material composition thus draws similarities with the sheets of gold leaf that are incorporated into the background of many Byzantine mosaics. Both decorative techniques favour the reflection of light and colour across the interior space. Grabar observes that the bronze sheets in The Dome of the Rock "serve to enrich architectural surfaces with contrasts of colour and light modulated by vegetal patterns."¹⁶ The sculptural vine-like scrolls and leaf patterns create indentations in the surface of the beams. The interlacing lines of these motifs disperse light at varying angles across the blue, purple, and green marble tiles and gold mosaics. The resulting effect immerses the interior space, bathing it in light and colour meant to elevate the spirit and inspire the viewer to divine communion. The technique is similar to Byzantine mosaics where pieces of glass tesserae were positioned at various angles to maximise the illumination of the

space.¹⁷

The golden dome that encircles and sits above the Dome of the Rock serves both imperial and symbolic purposes. Firstly, the dome acts as a visual representation of the Umayyad's conquest over the Holy Land. Byzantine patrons had already recognized the visual power of the dome structure; emperors such as Justinian (r. 527 - 565 CE), and noble patrons such as Anicia Juliana (462-527 CE), contributed significant innovations to its construction for their own socio-political motivations. Hence, when Emperor Justinian's imperial succession was threatened by the political motivations of Anicia Juliana's family, he commissioned a dome whose sheer size and magnificence sought to obliterate the dome at his opponent's Church of St. Polyeuktos (c. 628 CE). With the construction of the Umayyad dome on Temple Mount, al-Malik and his architects were thus following a long Byzantine tradition of using pious patronage to further their own political and social ambitions.¹⁸ In fact, the caliph's architects took careful consideration of the dimensions of the dome at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in their architectural planning. The almost identical dimensions to the Dome of the Rock is a testament to their meticulous measurements.¹⁹ The Umayyads, however, reinterpreted its significance to comply with their own religious beliefs.²⁰ To them, The Dome of the Rock served as a representation of their prophet and his divine light, of the unity between Earth and Heaven, and as a place for divine communion and spiritual contemplation.

Due to the strict rules against the visual representation of human and animal form, Islamic art and architecture favours abstract patterns and symbols for the rep-



Fig 2. VanderWolf Images, The Dome of the Rock on the temple mount in Jerusalem, Israel. Photo courtesy of @Shutterstock

resentation of divine figures. Imagery and symbolism are thus chosen according to their ability to capture essence and inspire spiritual introspection. It is therefore Muhammad's divinity and not his bodily form that Islamic artists seek to reproduce. The colour infers the *Nur* (divine light) of the Islamic God and his Prophet Muhammad.²¹ However, unlike the circular shape of the Christian halo, the Islamic symbol resembles a beacon of light.²² The Quran [24:35] teaches that "God is the light of the Heavens and the Earth."²³ The rising form of the Dome, and the light that radiates from its surface, mirror the unity of the heavens with the earth under God's power and offers another reference to Muhammad's ascension to heaven.

Moreover, the sixteen windows along the drum of the dome allow the exterior light to shine into the interior space. Though the structural and decorative elements are incorporated in an even grander scale

in the Byzantine Church of Hagia Sophia (632-637 CE), they are here akin to the aesthetics of Justinian's church in their effect on the viewer's sensory experience. In the Dome of the Rock, "the windows of the drum and the dome itself are invisible from most of the building"²⁴ due to the brightness of the light as it shines through the windows, which effectively confounds the viewer's vision. Similarly, in his book *On Buildings*, Procopius (500-565 CE) observed that Justinian's dome does not seem to "rest upon solid masonry, but to cover the space with its golden dome suspended from Heaven."²⁵ As a result, the dome that adorns both al-Malik's and Justinian's monuments leaves the viewer with the impression that, as their gaze moves upwards, they contemplates not a solid form of masonry, but a manifestation of the Divine. As the exterior light penetrates the interior, it radiates upon the glass mosaics and marble panels thus shifting the direction of the natural light and creating

a flickering and shimmering pattern that connects with the coloured marble and glass. A further reference to Neoplatonic influences can be made as this architectural configuration was also intended to maximize the aesthetic of light.²⁶

The corinthian columns on the exterior and interior architecture of the Dome infer influences from the late Roman period. A few metres away from the main monument, the columns at the Dome of the Chain are adorned with Byzantine basket capitals (fig. 2).²⁷ This ornamental style was introduced a century earlier in Anicia Juliana's (426-527 CE) Church of St. Polyeuktos. Erected in 528 CE, Juliana's church announced a stylistic departure from the corinthian columns that had adorned the Late Roman temples and the early Christian churches. A few years later, Justinian would appropriate the basket capital for the glory of his own church and claim its innovation by incising it with his imperial monogram.²⁸ It is possible that the basket capitals at the Dome of the Chain were directly influenced by the churches that Justinian had commissioned in Jerusalem. Furthermore, the involvement of Byzantine artisans in the construction of the Dome of the Rock may be another factor that led to the inclusion of the basket capital into the architecture of the smaller monument. Finally, the abstract and vegetative motifs that are emblematic to this architectural style respects Islam's rules against the depictions of figurative and supernatural beings.

Perhaps the largest source of debate concerning the Dome of the Rock's true significance and purpose is the uniqueness of its architectural plan. In fact, at the time

of its completion, its structural form was a novelty in Islamic architecture.²⁹ The floor plan of the Dome indeed seems more closely related to the Christian mausoleum and martyrrium than to other Islamic monuments dated around the same period. Most importantly, the Church of the Ascension (c. 380 CE), devoted to Christ's own journey to heaven, was also constructed along a central plan. Similar to the Christian martyrrium, the Dome of the Rock is shaped by two vertical cylinders that culminate in a dome ceiling. The mound on which Muhammad is believed to have embarked on his *Mi'raj* is positioned below the Dome and in the centre of the interior space. The appropriation of the Christian martyrrium plan by Islamic architects may have been motivated by the need to validate the ascension of their prophet and thus, to rework the Christian and Jewish significance of the location into the beliefs of the Islamic Church.³⁰

The octagonal shape of the Dome of the Rock follows the Islamic principles of material form and function. According to author Saphic Omer, Islamic architecture should always seek to favour function over ornamentation; form must strive to be in harmony with the function of its space.³¹ Accordingly, the Dome's octagonal form follows the circular shape of the rock it enshrines. If form is the visual representation of function in Islamic architecture, then an argument can be made that the Dome of the Rock was indeed intended as a shrine to Muhammad's *Mi'raj*. Additionally, the octagonal shape of the floor plan offers a symbolic reference to the eight gardens and gates of Heaven.³² Author Ali Wijdan offers another explanation as he proposes that the eight sides of the Dome



Fig 3 VanderWolf Images, Dome of the Rock, Temple Mount, Jerusalem. Photo courtesy of @Shutterstock.

may refer to the “eight angels described in the Qu’ran as bearing the Divine throne.”³³ The relationship between form, function, and ornamentation in the Dome of the Rock therefore represent the harmonious and immanent unity of Allah.

The architecture of the Holy Land tells the story of the cultures and religions that have defined the city of Jerusalem. Consequently, the decorative and structural design of the Dome of the Rock embodies the unification of influences from all the cultures and religions that have considered its location sacred. For Islam, the very location of the Dome serves to validate their place and role amongst the religious history of Jerusalem. It thus appropriated a location whose significance had previously shaped the Christian and Jewish faiths and imposed its own beliefs to further develop the site’s meaning and identity (fig. 3). The appropriation of Byzantine aesthetics served as a political message of superiority for a religion that viewed itself as the culmination of all faiths.³⁴ Thus, in its architectural familiarity, the Dome of the Rock was also an invitation for all to join the new faith.³⁵ The principle of Byz-

antine aesthetics were adapted to the needs of Islam as it provided a medium of visual representation that did not disobey the religion’s strict rules against the representations of human and animal figures. The interpretation of Neoplatonism and its aesthetic of light as well as the vegetative and geometric patterns of the basket capitals are reflections of influences from the Byzantine Empire. Furthermore, the architectural plan of the Christian martyrrium was appropriated by al-Malik and his architects to validate the ascension of Muhammad. The eight sides of the octagonal structure, the ascending golden dome, and the exterior light shining into the interior space all serve to induce contemplation of the celestial and therefore, enable the memory of the Ascension of Muhammad to Heaven. Despite its location in the relatively newly formed Jewish nation of Israel (established after the Second World War), the Dome of the Rock remains under the control of the Islamic Church. To this day, the many claims over the ownership of the sacred land continue to be a source of violent political and social conflicts between religions.³⁶

Endnotes

- ¹ Questions remain surrounding the first Jewish Diaspora, but some scholars pinpoint it to their deportation by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, which resulted in the end of the First Temple. “Ancient Jewish History: The Diaspora,” *The Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed November 17, 2017, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-diaspora>.
- ² Oleg Grabar, “The Seventh Century: An Empty Space Full of Memories,” *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 36-37.
- ³ R. M. Harrison, “The Church of St. Polyuktos in Istanbul and the Temple of Solomon,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983): 277-279.
- ⁴ Katharina Galor, “The Temple Mount / Haram Al-Sharif,” in *Finding Jerusalem: Archaeology between Science and Ideology*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 148.
- ⁵ Grabar, “The Seventh Century: An Empty Space Full of Memories,” 37.
- ⁶ Bissera V. Pentcheva, “Eikon and Identity,” in *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2010), 60.
- ⁷ Oleg Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 115.
- ⁸ Qu’ran 9:33 or 61:9.
- ⁹ Oleg Grabar, “A New Building, Its Sources, Meanings, Impact,” in *The Dome of the Rock*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 113.
- ¹⁰ Grabar, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem*, 167.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 31-32, 54-55.
- ¹² Grabar, “The Seventh Century: An Empty Space Full of Memories,” 25.
- ¹³ Nadine Schibille, “The Function of Art in the 6th Century,” in *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience*, (New York: Routledge, 2016), 210.
- ¹⁴ Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, (638-1099)*, eds. Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai, (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 404.
- ¹⁵ Grabar, “Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem,” in *Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. H.W. Janson, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 66.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.
- ¹⁷ Widjan Ali, “The Umayyads 661-750,” in *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art: From the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries*, (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999), 23-26.
- ¹⁸ Grabar, “The Seventh Century: An Empty Space Full of Memories,” 25.
- ¹⁹ Rina Avner, “The Dome of the Rock in Light of the Development of Concentric Martyria in Jerusalem: Architecture and Architectural Iconography,” *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 31-33.
- ²⁰ Grabar, “The Seventh Century: An Empty Space Full of Memories,” 49-53.
- ²¹ Christiane Gruber, “Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nūr): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting,” *Muqarnas* 26 (2009): 230.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ Qu’ran 24:35.
- ²⁴ Grabar, “Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem,” 77.
- ²⁵ Procopius, “Buildings,” trans. H.B. Dewing, (London: William Heinemann LTD, 1940), 21.
- ²⁶ Bissera V. Pentcheva, “Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics,” *Gesta* 50, no. 2 (2011): 93-113.
- ²⁷ Prawer and Ben-Shammai, *The History of Jerusalem*, 398.
- ²⁸ Peter N. Bell, “Hagia Sophia: Ideology in Stone—A Case Study,” in *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian: Its Nature, Management, and Mediation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 329.
- ²⁹ Grabar, “Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem,” 52.
- ³⁰ Grabar, “The Dome of the Rock,” 54-55.
- ³¹ Omer Saphic, “Towards Understanding Islamic Architecture,” *Islamic Studies* 47, no. 4 (2008): 486.
- ³² Ali, “The Umayyads 661-750,” 25-26.
- ³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Qu'ran 9:33 or 61:9.

³⁵ Grabar, "Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem," 77.

³⁶ Katharina Galor, "The Temple Mount / Haram Al-Sharif," in *Finding Jerusalem: Archaeology between Science and Ideology*, (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 158-62.

Bibliography

Avner, Rina. "The Dome of the Rock in Light of the Development of Concentric Martyria in Jerusalem: Architecture and Architectural Iconography." *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 31-49.

Bell, Peter N. "Hagia Sophia: Ideology in Stone—A Case Study." In *Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian: Its Nature, Management, and Mediation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Galor, Katharina. "The Temple Mount / Haram Al-Sharif." In *Finding Jerusalem: Archaeology between Science and Ideology*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017.

Grabar, Oleg. "The Seventh Century: An Empty Space Full of Memories" in *The Dome of the Rock*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.

— "Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem." In *Islamic Art and Architecture*, edited by H.W. Janson. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc. 1976.

Gruber, Christiane. "Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nur): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting." In *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* XXVI. 229-262.

Harrison, R.M. "The Church of St. Polyeutos in Istanbul and the Temple of Solomon." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983): 276-79.

"History of Jerusalem: Timeline for the History of Jerusalem." *Jewish Virtual Library*. Accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-for-the-history-of-jerusalem-4500-bce-present>.

Omer, Spahic. "Towards Understanding Islamic Architecture." *Islamic Studies* 47, no. 4 (2008): 483-510.

Pentcheva, Bissera V. "Hagia Sophia and Multi-sensory Aesthetics." *Gesta* 50, no. 2 (2011): 93-111.

Pentcheva, Bissera V. *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium*. University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2010.

Prawer, Joshua, and Haggai Ben-Shammai. *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, (638-1099)*. New York: New York University Press, 1996.

Rodley, Lyn. *Byzantine Art and Architecture*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Rosen-Ayalon, Myriam. "The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, 638-1099." In *Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi*, edited by Joshua Prawer and Haggai Ben-Shammai. New York: New York University Press, 1996.

Schibille, Nadine. "The Function of Art in the 6th Century." In *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Stokstad, Marilyn. "The Early Byzantine Period: The First Golden Age." In *Medieval Art: Second Edition*. Colorado: Westview Press, 2004.

Widjan, Ali. "The Umayyads 661-750." In *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art: From the Seventh to the Fifteenth Centuries*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999.

Wildberg, Christian. "Neoplatonism." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Edited by Edward N. Zalta, 2016. Accessed April 24, 2017. <https://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>.

The Orientalization of Bosnian Textiles During the European Arts and Crafts Movement

Author: Serena Desaulniers

Third year, Communications major (BA), Art History minor (BFA).

Editor: Maggie Mills

My grandmother and great-grandmother took pride in their Yugoslavian heritage, largely associating themselves with cultural practices through their own participation within the artistic sphere, which is evident in their textile work in particular. The specific area that they inhabited, Bosnia-Herzegovina, has been the site of numerous wars and waves of colonization, which consequently affected the artworks created within it. One of the most influential occupations of Bosnia was that of the Ottoman Empire, which was known to have inhabited the area as early as the sixteenth century.¹ Historic Turkish and Arabic documents tell us of the link Bosnia had to the Ottoman rule, stating that their garrisons inhabited Southeastern Europe.² In 1878, the Congress of Berlin “decided that Austria-Hungary should be allowed to ‘occupy’ Bosnia-Herzegovina.”³ The Ottoman Empire, however, retained sovereignty until 1908;⁴ it was during this conjoined occupation that the European Arts and Crafts Movement first began. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, Bosnia was a unique contact zone where Islamic and European art styles clashed with one another. Even though Bosnia was a European country itself, its Islamic influences led the area to become Orientalized by Europe during the Arts and Crafts Movement who played on its Otherness as a means to make profit and impose its own ideologies of authenticity on Eastern European crafts. By analyzing my grandmother’s embroideries, I am able to gain a better understanding of the cultural shift in Bosnia which was caused by the European Arts and Crafts Movement.

In this paper, the term ‘Orientalize’ is used in reference to Edward Said’s book *Orientalism* (1985). Said defines one of the

core elements of Orientalism as a “corporate institution of dealing with the Orient [...] [which allows for] a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”⁵ The term will here be used to reference the specific exoticizing of Bosnian wares by Western Europe during the Arts and Crafts Movement.

The Ottoman occupation in Bosnia generated an air of mysticism which caught the attention of adjoining European countries due to their lack of knowledge on Middle Eastern culture. A popular Czech metaphor used around the time Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia claimed that, “[i]n terms of geographical science, Bosnia and Herzegovina [had] been very much like the great white spaces on the maps of central Africa;” this was used to explain Europe’s perception of Bosnia as an unknown landscape waiting to become civilized and probed for resources.⁶ Due to its Islamic influences, Bosnia was Othered in the eyes of its European neighbours, who believed that it needed help from the countries who viewed themselves as more civilized.⁷ An article dating back to 1909 discusses the emergence of Islam in Bosnia, describing the religion as being “strange” and different from other religions foreign to Europe.⁸ The perception of Islam as strange continued to exoticize Bosnia to its European neighbours, further Othering it from the rest of Europe. By looking at popular metaphors and texts dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s, it is clear that Bosnia was Othered by the rest of Europe due to its historical occupation by the Ottoman Empire and by the resulting manifestation of Middle Eastern cultural influences.

Austria-Hungary Orientalized Bosnian textiles at the start of the Arts and

Crafts Movement in order to boost their craft production and thereby increase their profit. During the beginning of Austria-Hungary's occupation, Béni Kállay (1839-1903), the civilian administrator of Bosnia, recognized a decline in local handicrafts due to cheap Western imports, and began to focus on the "vivification and purification" of the artisanal traditions of the region in order to make them a source of income for both local peoples and the Regional Government.⁷⁹ Multinational Austrian ideals pushed for the production of ethnic folk designs from numerous countries ruled by the monarchy, including that of Orientalized Southern Slavs, across former Yugoslavia, including Bosnia.¹⁰ Numerous schools were established with the goal of preserving the "artistic sense of the people;" in Bosnia, this initiative manifested itself in classes which taught the production of old Turkish designs in carpet-weaving, embroidery, and metalwork, enforcing European ideals in the production of authentically-made, Islamic-influenced goods.¹¹ This demonstrates how Europe's Oriental labelling of Bosnia served as a source of economic income for the country. By classifying Bosnia as the Other, Austria-Hungary was able to market carpets, embroideries, and metalworks as exotic, elevating their worth to that of Oriental carpets from the Middle East.

During the Arts and Crafts Movement, the Austro-Hungarian Empire aimed to replicate the value of Middle Eastern works through its depiction of Bosnia as an Oriental country close to home. Indeed, due to its proximity to other European countries, Bosnia was interpreted as "frontier Oriental."¹² However, it was never held in as high esteem as the Orientalized works originating from other countries. Artwork created in Bosnia simply served to enhance

the depiction of an easily accessible European tourist destination which presented an Othered, Orientalized peasant lifestyle to a society that considered itself to be at a higher level of civilization.¹³ Kállay tried to mimic these types of representations by pushing for exhibitions of costumes that originated from Sarajevo (the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina), as well as other folk artwork.¹⁴ Due to Bosnia's emergence as a tourist destination, many of the crafts were sold as souvenirs since the country belonged to "a larger administrative program of the arts and crafts reform."¹⁵ This also helped to provide a source of income for the country.

Even though Bosnian artwork was in demand due to its exotic touristic appeal, it was never held in the same esteem as 'fine art' due to its Oriental, utilitarian origins. Although schools were established in Eastern Europe to educate the population on how to refine their craft, exhibitions of their work during that time were referred to as ethnographic and historical,¹⁶ and were never regarded as high art. The interpretation of Bosnian artwork as not belonging to the category of fine art reflected Europe's longstanding ideologies surrounding the limitations of what was considered to be 'high art'. Philosophers such as Charles Batteux (1713-1780) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) claimed that fine art consisted only of paintings, sculptures, architecture, poetry, and music, and looked at art "as a [form of] production through freedom."¹⁷ The original utilitarian purpose of Bosnian carpets, embroideries, and metalworks led to them being ignored within the fine arts sphere, even if certain crafts no longer served strictly functional purposes. As the intended goal of artists working during the Arts and Crafts Movement was to earn a profit — and given the



Fig 1. Sarajevo carpet manufacturer (Sarajevo ćilimara). Kilim carpet, end of 19th - beginning of 20th century. Photo courtesy of the Islamic Arts Magazine, islamartsmagazine.com/magazine/view/the_art_of_carpet_weaving_in_bosnia_and_herzegovina/.

fact that the objects were mass produced and labour-intensive — their works were further removed from being perceived as fine art. Moreover, the imposition of Western ideologies on Bosnian works enforced the assumption that Bosnian people created crafts — not art — since they were seen as replicating the design of others rather than creating the designs themselves.¹⁸ Due to the accumulation of both utilitarian and touristic sentiments surrounding Bosnian works, the works were never considered as a higher artform. Instead, the various forms of craft either generated sales from travelers or were used to represent their culture in ethnographic museums.

Similar to Middle Eastern knotted rugs, Bosnia produced its own flat weave carpets, called *ćilim* (fig. 1);¹⁹ however, during

the Arts and Crafts Movement, the production of such carpets was used to feminize and enforce false images of Bosnian Orientalized folk designs. Bosnia's *ćilim* rugs were a successful source of income; they were able to compete in the Western market because they were a relatively inexpensive and practical alternative to the Oriental knotted rugs. This allowed poorer urban consumers to purchase and own such products.²⁰ The designs that emerged between the late 1800s and early 1900s depicted specific motifs that followed an "official canon" that allowed museum directors such as Josef von Storck (1830-1902) to publish their own carpet designs for locals to recreate.²¹ The detrimental aspect of this practice was that Storck—and possibly other designers—were inexperienced with the region's designs, drawing images from a limited number of Southern Slavic



Fig 2. Mira Jankovic, Floral Embroidery. 1964, embroidered textile. Photo courtesy of the author.

aprons.²² This demonstrates Austria's imposed ideologies of Bosnian authenticity, changing its art historical background to align with "aesthetic principles of the West" in order to boost sales in urban areas.²³ The carpets themselves gathered immense attention when they were first shown at Vienna's Museum for Art and Industry's Twenty-fifth Anniversary exhibition in 1889, and were referred to as the "ball gown" of the exhibition they were presented in.²⁴ The feminizing of Bosnia through its artwork and cultural practices helped portray the country as docile and harmless, emphasizing its compliance with the Austro-Hungarian occupation to the rest of the world.²⁵ Austria's imposition of motifs further served to administer control over the population by dictating the terms and manifestations of Bosnian culture. Implementing the production of imagery that was seen to be authentic and feminine in Bosnia therefore not only served as a source of income, but as a

means to symbolically tame the unknown Othered country next door.

On the other hand, the dying practice of peasant embroidery in Eastern Europe experienced a sudden revival across the whole of Europe during the beginning of the Arts and Crafts Movement, exposing villages to a culture they were leaving behind. Lou Taylor claims that "as small countries struggled to free themselves from the political domination of the powerful"—in this case the Austro-Hungarian Empire — peasant art and dress became "potent symbol[s] of the struggle for national identity."²⁶ Peasant culture was seen as having undergone a "slow, but constant absorption of external ideas...[which] superimposed ancient customs with their ritualized sartorial symbolism and re-interpreted to suit an alternative set of values."²⁷ This is evident in the continued practice of "simple red and blue embroideries, on plain white linen grounds, with

plain lace [which eventually] gave way to chemical dyes, in hard synthetic colour," as well as the cross-stitch red rose motif, which originated in Russia before spreading across Eastern Europe.²⁸ Geometric, peasant-style embroideries eventually began to gain new ground during the Arts and Crafts Movement influencing Western European embroidery.²⁹ These new embroideries, however, were not considered to be authentic replications of folk embroidery due to the "chemical dyes, and gaudy ribbons...seen as positively vulgar and corrupted" by those who sought authenticity in naturally dyed products.³⁰ This again exemplifies how Western Europe subjected Bosnia to its own ideas of authenticity, while ignoring the nature of the artwork in practice. The gradual absorption of new or modern techniques within Eastern peasant embroideries reflected a culture of adaptation. However, the dissemination and imposition of rudimentary embroidery styles as authentic

representations of the craft contributed to the country's 'compliant' characterization.

Bosnia presents a unique area of transculturation, as seen in its incorporation of Islamic motifs and visible influences from both Eastern and Western Europe. By analyzing my grandmother, Mira Jankovic's, embroideries created in 1964-1969, I am able to gain a better understanding of the cultural shift in Bosnia caused mainly by the European Arts and Crafts Movement. One example of my grandmother's work (fig. 2) demonstrates a different take on Eastern European embroideries, using vibrant yellow, indigo, teal, and lavender threads as well as fluid floral motifs to contrast with the typically red and blue geometric motifs found in traditional folk art.³¹ The use of vibrant colours and abstract floral images is found frequently in her work, displaying the "absorption of external ideas" characteristic of peasant culture in Eastern Europe.³²

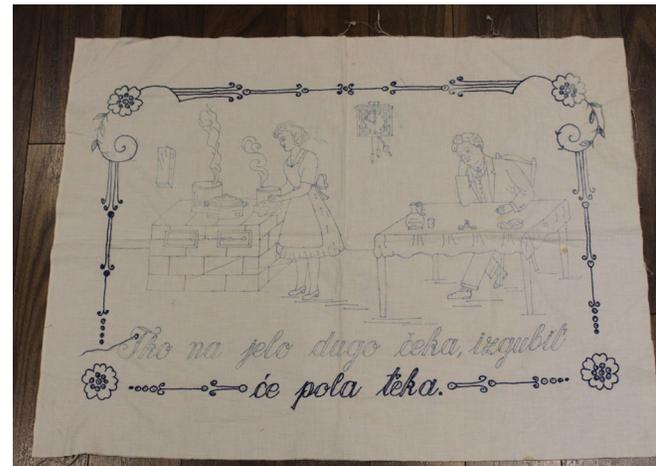


Fig 3. Mira Jankovic, Stenciled Embroidery. 1969, embroidered textile. Photo courtesy of the author.

In contrast to the evolutionary portrayal of folk art shown in the aforementioned example, a second, unfinished embroidery by my grandmother (fig. 3) depicts the enforced ideals of femininity similarly created through decorative textiles during the European Arts and Crafts Movement. This embroidery depicts a man sitting at a kitchen table with his head rested on his arm while a woman cooks a meal on the stove. Below the embroidery is written: "Those who eat for a long time there will be half whim." This embroidery explicitly demonstrates the influence of a woman's role in the house through the use of a stenciled outline that my grandmother purchased. The imagery within the work displays its domesticating nature, which is enforced through the historical long-standing links between femininity and embroidery.³³

Western Europe's influence on Bosnian textiles during the late 1800s and early 1900s is detrimental to analyzing historical Eastern European art due to its imposition of perceived authentic ideas from the West. In Carl Schuster's text, *Some Comparative Considerations About Western Asiatic Carpet Designs*, he claims: "oriental folk art must have found its way into Southeastern Europe with the westward expansion of Islam in the general area of Western Asia."³⁴ Schuster came to this conclusion in his study of a series of Western Asiatic embroideries which have similar traits to a Bosnian embroidery of a bird created in the early 1900s.³⁵ Although Schuster's theory on the diffusion of Islamic culture is strong, he fails to account for the aforementioned influence of Western Europe on Bosnian textile production during the Arts and Crafts Movement. For instance, he describes this embroidered towel as making use of gold and silver me-

tallic threads;³⁶ the use of these materials in Eastern Europe originated from the Arts and Crafts workshops that generated pieces which moved away from the "peasant based" practices of contrasting traditional geometric style embroideries, falling into the category of the untraditional Empire-Romantic style.³⁷ Embroidery organizations during the 1880s designed and sold a wide variety of non-traditional products, including embroidered towels, tablemats, and blouses.³⁸ The towel that Schuster examines in his text falls into the category of these non-traditional textiles which were produced in Arts and Crafts based workshops that sold 'increasingly contemporary';³⁹ sanitized peasant crafts that did not comply to actual practices within such communities.⁴⁰ The strategic enforcement of designs on Bosnian embroideries hinders our ability to accurately trace the specific lineage of Bosnian works that emerged during and after the Arts and Crafts Movement, as additional designs were added to the Bosnian canon of motifs and techniques.

In conclusion, the Orientalization of Bosnia — due in part to its historic occupation by the Ottoman Empire — led to its Othering by Western Europe during the Arts and Crafts Movement. By doing so, Austro-Hungary was able to make a profit off of Bosnian works because of Western Europe's ideologies regarding 'authentic' Islamic goods and Eastern European crafts. Despite boosting the Austro-Hungarian Empire's economy, it also made the country appear docile and harmless due to the feminized nature of the craftwork being produced. These imposed ideals were detrimental to Bosnian artwork: since most of the textiles produced during the Arts and Crafts Movement contained notions of authentic materials and subject matter

delineated by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it is now difficult to determine which motifs were traditionally part of Bosnian crafts and which ones were enforced. Analyzing more recent mid-twentieth century Bosnian embroideries makes it clear that works depicting the feminized ideals associated with a peasant lifestyle had initially been encouraged by the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a means to portray Bosnia as a tamed colony.

Endnotes

¹ Tasha Vorderstrasse, "The Archaeology of The Ottoman Empire and Its Aftermath In The Middle East," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 77, no. 4 (2014): 292.

² Ibid., 295.

³ Archibald R. Colquhoun, "Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 57, no. 2934 (1909): 258.

⁴ Diana Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914," *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015): 34.

⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (England: Penguin Group, 1985), 3.

⁶ Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914," 31.

⁷ Ibid., 32.

⁸ Colquhoun, "Bosnia-Herzegovina," 257.

⁹ Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914," 35.

¹⁰ Ibid., 48.

¹¹ Colquhoun, "Bosnia-Herzegovina," 259.

¹² Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914," 34.

¹³ Colquhoun, "Bosnia-Herzegovina," 258.

¹⁴ Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914," 43.

¹⁵ Ibid., 35.

¹⁶ Ibid., 36.

¹⁷ Kathy M'Closky, *Women of the First Nations Power, Wisdom, and Strength* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 116.

¹⁸ M'Closky, *Women of the First Nations Power, Wisdom, and Strength*, 115.

¹⁹ Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914," 40.

²⁰ Ibid., 40.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 37.

²⁴ Ibid., 41.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Lou Taylor, "Peasant Embroidery: Rural to Urban and East to West Relationships 1860-1914," *The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society* 1850 - the Present 14 (1990): 44.

²⁷ Ibid., 43.

²⁸ Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914," 37.

²⁹ Ibid., 41.

³⁰ Taylor, "Peasant Embroidery: Rural to Urban and East to West Relationships 1860-1914," 48.

³¹ Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914," 37.

³² Ibid.

³³ Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of Feminine* (Toronto: The Women's Press Limited, 1984), 1.

³⁴ Carl Schuster. "Some Comparative Considerations about Western Asiatic Carpet Designs." *Artibus Asiae* 9, no. 1/3 (1946): 72. DOI:10.2307/3247946.

³⁵ Schuster, "Some Comparative Considerations about Western Asiatic Carpet Designs," 71.

³⁶ Schuster. "Some Comparative Considerations about Western Asiatic Carpet Designs," 81.

³⁷ Taylor, "Peasant Embroidery: Rural to Urban and East to West Relationships 1860-1914," 46.

³⁸ Ibid., 49.

³⁹ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 49.

Bibliography

Colquhoun, Archibald R. "Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 57, no. 2934, (1909): 253-263.

Groot, Marjan. "Crossing the Borderlines and Moving the Boundaries: 'High' Arts and Crafts, Cross-Culturalism, Folk Art and Gender." *Journal of Design History* 19 no. 2, (2006): 121-136. DOI:10.1093/jdh/epl002.

M'Closky, Kathy. "Art or Craft: The Paradox of the Pagnirtung Weave Shop." In *Women of the First Nations Power, Wisdom, and Strength*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996.

Parker, Rozsika. *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Reynolds-Cordileone, Diana. "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878-1914." *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015): 29-50. DOI:10.1017/s0067237814000083.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. London, New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

Schuster, Carl. "Some Comparative Considerations about Western Asiatic Carpet Designs." *Artibus Asiae* 9, no. 1/3 (1946): 68-92. DOI:10.2307/3247946.

Taylor, Lou. "Peasant Embroidery: Rural to Urban and East to West Relationships 1860-1914." *The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society* 1850 - the Present 14 (1990): 43-51.

Vorderstrasse, Tasha. "The Archaeology Of The Ottoman Empire And Its Aftermath In The Middle East." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 77, no. 4 (2014): 292-298. DOI:10.5615/neareastarch.77.4.0292.

Destruction, Regeneration, and the Objection of Permanence in the Infinite Installations of Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Alyse Tunnell

Sixth year, Art History major (BFA).

Editor: Sophia Arnold

This work originated from my fear of losing everything. This work is about controlling my own fear. My work cannot be destroyed. I have destroyed it already, from day one... That is how I made this work. That is why I made this work. This work cannot disappear. This work cannot be destroyed the same way other things in my life have disappeared and have left me. I destroyed it myself instead. I had control over it and this is what has empowered me.

—Felix Gonzalez-Torres, 1995 Interview with Nancy Spector.¹

It seems deeply intuitive that as humans we try to create art that is permanent. Legacy in objects and ideas is a way to ensure our remembrance for generations and counteract our own mortality. The desire for permanence is embedded in our existential anxiety, both on the part of the individual who wants to make a lasting contribution or be remembered, and the institution who wants to collect, create, and assign objects with economic and cultural value. This is demonstrated in the decisions individuals and institutions make when creating or handling art objects, from material choices to the employment of conservation tactics. The creation of permanent art objects also establishes and perpetuates an economy of art possession that has become intertwined with capitalism and consumerism, fostering a disparity between the accessibility of art ownership and viewing.

However, since the mid-twentieth century, numerous artists have found ways to radically subvert permanence and its implications through various modes of art-making. Perhaps the most poetic examples being the installations of Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957-1996), whose work explores mortality, desire, relationships, love, and absence through sculptures that

are in a continuous cycle of loss and regeneration. Often open about his personal life and political views, Gonzalez-Torres was not hesitant to share in interviews his intention to subvert systems of power within his art practice; thus, I have centred my reading of his work around these interviews. As an innovator of Relational Aesthetics and critical Post-Minimalist, Gonzalez-Torres' work is unprecedented in its elegant fusion of personal and political subject matter with everyday objects and emphatic formalism. By rejecting permanence in his installations, Gonzalez-Torres integrates a socially conscious art practice with a formal Minimalist aesthetic and Conceptualist sensibility while subverting normative ideas around ownership, audience engagement, and curation in institutional spaces.

Born in 1957 in Guaimaro, Cuba and living in Spain and Puerto Rico before immigrating to the United States, Gonzalez-Torres moved to New York City in 1979 to attend the Pratt Institute of Art and Design. There, he studied interior design and photography, during which time he also partook in the Whitney Independent Study Program twice. After attending Pratt, he pursued a master's degree in photography at New York University, where he lat-

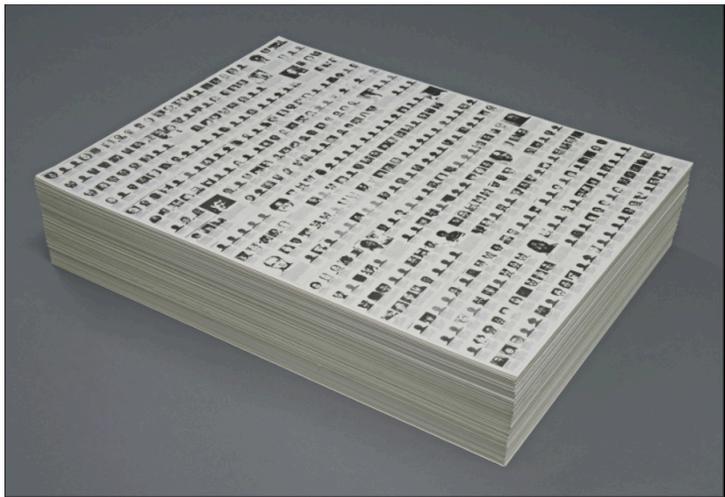


Fig. 1. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled" (Death by Gun), 1990, print on paper, endless copies, 44.15/16" x 32.15/16", initial height as 9", New York, Museum of Modern Art <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/61825?lo-scale=en>

er taught, graduating in 1987.² However, he was highly critical of his time spent at these institutions, both as a student and as an instructor.³ Along with his prolific art practice, Gonzalez-Torres was also a thoughtful essayist and cultural commentator. Being a gay, HIV-positive, Latinx,⁴ Cuban immigrant, as well as an outspoken feminist, anti-capitalist, and leftist-activist, Gonzalez-Torres was acutely aware of contemporary politics and engaged with political issues in the majority of his work. He was also actively political outside of his practice as a member of Group Material.⁵ Though he only worked professionally for approximately eight years, he remained active in art and activism until his death (caused by AIDS-related illness in 1996).

It was in New York in 1983 that Gonzalez-Torres met his life partner and muse, Ross Laycock. Laycock's death had a profound impact on his work, the artist often stated in interviews that Laycock was the person he made his work for.⁶ Further-

more, it seems that Gonzalez-Torres used his practice to process the death of his partner. In an interview with Tim Rollins he stated: "In a way this 'letting go' of the work, this refusal to make a static form, a monolithic sculpture, in favor of disappearing, changing, unstable, and fragile form was an attempt on my part to rehearse my fears of having Ross disappear day by day right in front of my eyes."⁷ This grief, a sense of desire and loss tragically intertwined, is at the heart of Gonzalez-Torres' work. Through these themes and his strategic use of Minimal aesthetics, Gonzalez-Torres created work that was profoundly personal, yet non-specific and contextually mutable, making it all the more relatable.

In the case of Gonzalez-Torres, I specifically use the phrase *rejects permanence* to describe his work, as his installations have a certain transcendent quality that goes beyond immateriality or impermanence. By creating works like "Untitled" (Death by

Gun) (1990) (fig. 1), "Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.) (1990), and "Untitled" (Placebo) (1991) (fig. 2) that are in a constant state of material decay at the hands of the viewer, necessitating participation while also never fully dissipating, Gonzalez-Torres subverts both the substantial nature of a static object as well as the finiteness of ephemeral art. As long as there is an audience for it, his work is infinite. Gonzalez-Torres described it best himself when stating:

All these pieces are indestructible because they can be endlessly duplicated. They will always exist because they don't really exist or because they don't have to exist all the time... If I am trying to alter the system of distribution of an idea through an art practice it seems imperative to me to go all the way with a piece and investigate new notions of placement, production, and originality.⁸

With this, we can see how Gonzalez-Torres actively rejected and criticized the no-

tion of permanence and the economy it enables, creating an ever-changing sculpture only present and performing for its public.

Living in this liminal space between the boundaries of existence, his work is both indestructible and constantly in flux. For each exhibition, as mandated by the artist, the materials, whether they be candy, clocks, curtains, or light bulbs, must be locally sourced and accessible.⁹ Thus, the work morphs with every iteration, giving it a sense of life—a conscious act on the artist's part. Gonzalez-Torres' work embraces site and temporal specificity by incorporating materials from where the exhibitions take place, subverting the tendency to memorialize art as time passes. This allows the work to remain accessible in that the people seeing the work have access to the same materials. Further, by working from universal human experiences such as loss and desire, Gonzalez-Torres created his impermanent installations to be both open-ended and layered with



Fig. 2. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled" (Placebo), 1991, candies individually wrapped in silver cellophane, endless supply, New York City, Andrea Rosen Gallery.

meaning in order for them to remain relevant and relatable as time passes. Every time you experience one of his installations, its material qualities will be changed by the hands of others; you will never taste the same candy, see the same clock, or take home the same print.

With great nuance, Gonzalez-Torres used these strategies of impermanence to explore intangible subjects in works like “Untitled” (*Portrait of Ross in L.A.*) and “Untitled” (*Placebo*), which address loss, desire, love, death, as well as AIDS. Specifically, when representing his lover’s waning body with a mountain of multicolored, hand-wrapped candy in “Untitled” (*Portrait of Ross in L.A.*), he made tangible the effects that AIDS had on Laycock’s body by inviting the viewer to partake in its depletion. The installation begins with approximately 175 pounds of candy—Laycock’s ideal body weight—but the pile diminishes as viewers are invited to take a piece to eat or keep, implicating them in this action of remembrance, violence, and loss. Laycock died of an AIDS-related illness shortly after the piece was finished. Similarly, “Untitled” (*Placebo*) is comprised of a starting weight of approximately 1,000 to 1,200 pounds of hand-wrapped candy in silver cellophane arranged on the floor. This piece directly references the AIDS crisis and the lack of medication available for those who were suffering—an issue that persists today. For this piece, the type of candy also has a particular importance. Art critic Robert Storr explains: “It is no accident that one must actively suck the hard-shelled morsel to release its flavor, nor that the flavor is bittersweet, nor that the center is soft and clotted. All of these performative requirements and sensations recall oral sex.”¹⁰ This need to be seen, touched, taken, and eaten creates a fleet-

ing intimacy where desire and loss are inextricable, and deterioration is inevitable. Gonzalez-Torres used the physical object of the piece of candy as a tangible piece of loss, thereby creating an incredibly intimate interaction in the gallery. Further, by making it edible, Gonzalez-Torres’ work becomes part of the viewer, transgressing normative boundaries of art and the body, as we are compelled to consume his and our own losses, therein disintegrating it. Through these subtle performative acts, his work captures a humanity that is lost in art that is static, monumental, and/or object-oriented.

Gonzalez-Torres wanted his work to remain open-ended. In the words of curator and close friend to Gonzalez-Torres, Nancy Spector: “because Gonzalez-Torres’ own stance as an artist was multivalent—simultaneously romantic, optimistic, critical and political—his work could mean many things to many people, and that was very much the point.”¹¹ Gonzalez-Torres’ candy installations have consequently been interpreted as an act of communion, a virus contracted and spread by the viewer, a commentary on the result of complacency during the AIDS epidemic, an act of socialist resistance, and a gift. Each of these readings is based on Gonzalez-Torres’ invitation for the viewer to partake in the creation and destruction, or, in the words of visual studies professor John Paul Ricco, the “unmaking” of his work.¹² Moreover, Gonzalez-Torres chose to keep his works labelled as *Untitled* so as not to impose meaning, but rather to suggest it.¹³ With his aesthetically Minimal approach and his tactical use of impermanence, Gonzalez-Torres left room for viewers to project themselves and their experiences onto his art.

These works also exemplify how his practice circumvents traditional modes of ownership and the relationship between art, the institution, and the viewer. As previously stated, these works are activated by public interaction and thus do not necessarily exist as a cohesive artwork until they are publicly exhibited. Influenced by theatre theoretician Bertolt Brecht, who believed that art should not be a cathartic release so much as a point of inspiration for rousing political thought,¹⁴ Gonzalez-Torres wanted viewers in turn to be activated by the work. He put a great deal of thought into how his work would interact with the public and how he could create not ‘public art,’ but rather art for the public.¹⁵ With this, his installations were truly made by and for the public, even if they were not in public spaces. To a degree, in doing so he devalues personal ownership of his work: to own a Felix Gonzalez-Torres work is to own a piece of paper that has the artist’s certified instructions. Further, Gonzalez-Torres left explicit instructions for the curators and owners of his work, often specifying how the work is meant to be physically handled and distributed, while also leaving room for curators to make aesthetic and functional decisions around the displaying of his work. Gonzalez-Torres, in effect, wanted to subvert the institution from the inside out, stating:

*At this point, I do not want to be outside the structure of power, I do not want to be the opposition, the alternative. Alternative to what, to power? No, I want to have power. It’s effective in terms of change. I want to be like a virus that belongs to the institution. If I function like a virus, an imposter, an infiltrator, I will always replicate myself together with those institutions.*¹⁶

This sort of resistance to the authority of ownership and the private art market could only be achieved through his sustained rejection of permanence.

As art historian Dr. Camila Maroja explores in her book, *The Permanence Of The Transient: Precariousness in Art*, precariousness, immateriality, and impermanence have often been used in experimental art practices to question traditional expectations of art, particularly the staunch ideology of Modern Art.¹⁷ This is certainly true for Gonzalez-Torres, who was an outspoken left-leaning activist and often cited Marxist, Feminist, and Post-Structuralist theories in interviews, explicitly stating that his art had a political agenda.¹⁸ As Dr. Maroja goes on to explain, precariousness democratizes art in numerous ways; first, by subverting the value attached to physical objects; second, by circumventing technical skill and formalist elitism; third, by incorporating everyday objects into art and/or incorporating art into everyday life; and last, by destabilizing normative relations between the viewer and both the art object and institutional space.¹⁹

Many of these issues surrounding the politics of materiality were brought into question through experimental practices, such as the Conceptual Art movement, which began in the 1960s. Until the mid-twentieth century, object permanence was mostly taken for granted in traditional art practices. However, the development of performance art as a new mode of artistic expression combined with a heightened criticality towards materiality and consumerism created a crisis of *objecthood*,²⁰ disparately inspiring two of the most influential art movements of the twentieth century: Minimalism and Conceptual Art.²¹ Minimalism controver-

sially attempted to bring art objects into a new realm of objecthood, neither fully engaging with painting or sculpture, but rather attempting to create objects which related to 'real' or everyday objects. It also brought new attention to the phenomenological aspects of art, taking into consideration how an object affects the viewers and their perception of space. Conceptual Art, in turn, de-emphasized the materiality, instead looking to process, concept, and interaction as art forms, rather than a specific object.

Thus, it was the interactivity of Conceptual Art that led to the development of Relational Aesthetics wherein artist like Gonzalez-Torres created works that break down physical and social barriers of traditional art practices focusing instead on social contexts.²² In his 1998 book, *Relational Aesthetics*, Nicolas Bourriaud, defines the term as "a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space."²³ An early proponent of Relational Aesthetics, Gonzalez-Torres' installations embraced the notion that participation can be a political act;²⁴ he implicates the viewer in the political context of his work by encouraging engagement and participation. Relational Aesthetics re-creates the artist as a facilitator and allows for the art to exist in its interaction with the viewer often more so than in its own material existence. In doing so, artists like Gonzalez-Torres break through normative barriers between art and the viewer.

Capturing the radical qualities of both movements, Gonzalez-Torres combined the formal aesthetics and exploration of *objecthood* and phenomenology of Mini-

malism with an emphasis on the conceptualism and interactivity of Conceptual Art. This critical interaction between movements places Gonzalez-Torres within the canon of Post-Minimalism—a movement known for politicizing and humanizing Minimalism, often creating site-specific and body-oriented artworks as well as employing relational tactics.²⁵ Further, both Minimalist and Conceptual Art influenced Gonzalez-Torres' use of readymade objects as sculptures. His candy pieces are a cogent example: on the one hand, they are mass produced, easily accessible, everyday objects, and on the other, they are individual gifts for the viewer wrapped in shiny cellophane by human hands. This puts much of his work in an almost paradoxical instance of being both mass-produced and individually realized. Combined with his emphasis on local sourcing, these works bring readymade sculpture into a new, more personal context, and in doing so, pushes past the cold, industrialized feelings of Minimalism. With these works as well as others, Gonzalez-Torres subtly imbued his material choices with radical politics, furthered by his exploration of the implications of form, which he believed were just as pertinent to politics as materiality.²⁶

A work that is both formally minimalistic as well as unabashedly political (and sadly just as relevant today as it was in 1990) is Gonzalez-Torres' paper stack piece, "Untitled" (*Death by Gun*). In addition to its critique on gun violence, this work draws attention to the lack of political engagement in traditional Minimalist art. This work consists of a stack of poster-size papers that viewers are welcome to take a copy of, each of which has the picture, name, age, and circumstances surrounding the death of 460 people at the hand of

gun violence in a single week in the United States. The stacks of paper in "Untitled" (*Death by Gun*) were instructed to be refilled throughout the exhibition at the discretion of the curator. With this sculpture, Gonzalez-Torres employed a Minimalist aesthetic, deconstructing the previously-immutable white cube and evoking comparisons to prominent artists such as Donald Judd and Carl Andre, both known for their sculptures presented on the floor and emphasis on materiality.²⁷ As it is displayed on the gallery floor, seen from afar this work could be mistaken for a solid object or Minimalist floor sculpture; however, once you discover its contents, you are confronted with its political meaning. Gonzalez-Torres believed that "aesthetic choices are [always] political" and cannot be disassociated from politics, as cultural context, steeped in politics, inevitably influences aesthetics.²⁸ With "Untitled" (*Death by Gun*), as well as the aforementioned works, Gonzalez-Torres created intimate, political, formal, and formless minimal sculptures.

While Minimalism affected the formal elements of Gonzalez-Torres' art practice, Conceptual art influenced his way of interacting with his audience and his use of impermanence as a form of resistance. Participatory art practices started in the 1960s with artists such as Lawrence Weiner and Sol LeWitt, both of whom made work centered on giving specific instructions to the viewer, therein creating a new form of viewer interaction.²⁹ As previously discussed, Gonzalez-Torres similarly employed these tactics by requiring certain actions from the curators while allowing for open-ended interpretations on the part of the viewer. Gonzalez-Torres' work therefore creates situations where viewers are invited to forsake normative ex-

pectations of the gallery space and physically engage with the work and even take it home. Encouraging interaction at every junction, the artist also wanted there to be curatorial intervention and openness. Instead of giving exact specifications for his works, he presents the curator with ideals for things such as weight, height, and placement. Referencing his light bulb installation "Untitled" (*Toronto*) (1992) (fig. 3), this quote from the Museum of Modern Art reveals the agency he encouraged curators to take: "I don't necessarily know how these pieces are best displayed. I don't have all of the answers—you [the owner] decide how you want it done. Whatever you want to do, try it... Play with it, please. Have fun. Give yourself that freedom. Put my creativity into question..."³⁰ Through a number of his instructional works it is therefore evident that Gonzalez-Torres built a practice that invites all to be implicated in the making and unmaking of the art, without allowing any one person to truly own it.

As we move past the twentieth anniversary of Felix Gonzalez-Torres' death, certain aspects of how to exhibit his work today, and in the future, have become subject to contention. Some curators and historians believe that his work should be shown with objects as similar as possible to the ones displayed when the artist was alive; however, others believe that the materials should be adapted to modern-day standards. For instance, in the case of the light bulbs in "Untitled" (*Petit Palais*) (1992), the artist specified that they should be 15-watt incandescent bulbs, but in certain parts of the European Union, those bulbs are disallowed.³¹ Thus, in the *Specific Objects without Specific Form* exhibition (2010-2011), the curator, Elena Filipovic, opted to use locally available halogen bulbs.³² Sim-

ilarly, though his paper stacks pieces have traditionally been photocopied, curators are now considering using scanned documents as technology progresses, which has been a contentious point of debate.³³

When discussing both the historic and contemporary context of viewing Gonzalez-Torres' work, it is also important to address issues of censorship. It was amidst a moment of intense controversy surrounding queer censorship that Gonzalez-Torres' career gained traction. In 1989, only two years after Gonzalez-Torres graduated from NYU, one of the most infamous cases of contemporary censorship took place. The posthumous retrospective of Robert Mapplethorpe's work, which had been given a \$30,000 USD grant by the National Endowment for the Arts, was cancelled by The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. due to social pressure.³⁴ Highly aware of the hostile reception of explicit work by gay artists, Gonzalez-Torres wanted his work to capture a certain ethos of queerness without being obscene. He stated:

Two clocks side by side are much more threatening to the powers that be than an image of two guys sucking each other's dicks, because they cannot use me as a rallying point in their battle to erase meaning. It is going to be very difficult for members of Congress to tell their constituents that money is being expended for the promotion of homosexual art when all they have to show are two plugs side by side, or two mirrors side by side, or two light bulbs side by side.³⁵

Here, Gonzalez-Torres revealed his tactics for subverting expectations of what constitutes as 'gay art' and exemplified his

ability to take up institutional space while maintaining his politics—an impressive feat given the conservative atmosphere of the era.

However, this lack of explicit queerness also allowed for aspects of the artist's life and beliefs to be whitewashed or erased entirely as they became historicized. Thus, the ways in which curators have decided to contextualize Gonzalez-Torres' work has been polemic, particularly in reference to his involvement with AIDS, the epidemic, and AIDS activism. Because his work is exceptionally successful both aesthetically and ideologically, there is sometimes a dichotomy in its portrayal: either it is grounded in biography, where Gonzalez-Torres and his work are idolized for their radical queer politics and the effects they continue to have on feminist practices, or it is characterized as conceptual art, masterful in its nuance and poeticism, awesome in its beauty and affect. This sort of conservative, aesthetic-focused presentation of his work was manifested in a retrospective exhibition in March 2017, at the David Zwirner Gallery in New York City, where the term AIDS was not mentioned anywhere.³⁶ This, to me, is appalling, and inadvertently or not, is an act of queer censorship. Art critic Darren Jones describes it as feeling like "a violent erasure" of Gonzalez-Torres' identity as not only an HIV-positive, gay artist, but also as a Cuban immigrant and Latinx man.³⁷ It is understandable that galleries do not want to pigeonhole Gonzalez-Torres' work as 'AIDS art' or relegate their reading of the work to selective facets of the artist's identity, but not addressing the context of the AIDS epidemic de-politicizes these works, which does not seem like something the artist would have wanted.

For me, Felix Gonzalez-Torres' work is indelibly queer: it is formless, uncategorizable, dissident, playful, a call to action and for subversion, as well as, ultimately – whether or not the viewer sees this in his work – a portrayal of radical queer love and resistance. With this, he subverts a myriad of aspects of hegemonic power, leaving the work in the hands of its viewers. One of the most compelling descriptions of Gonzalez-Torres' work is from Jennifer Krasinski of the *Village Voice*, who writes: "It's a beautiful performance: art slowly atomizing into the world, disappearing and then regenerating, unable ever to be lost or destroyed."³⁸ With this, Krasinski compares his installations to the fundamental aspect of the universe—matter itself. I feel that this is a particularly apt metaphor, as the feelings that Gonzalez-Torres' work expresses are those which are essential to human existence: to be alive is to experience desire, loss, and death. By confronting us with these thoughts, his work invites us to consider life and love in the face of mortality. Thus, through his rejection of permanence, Gonzales-Torres and his practice live on infinitely so long as we are here to consume it.

- ¹ Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Nancy Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 1995), 122.
- ² The Art Story Contributors, "Felix Gonzalez-Torres Biography, Art, And Analysis Of Works," *The Art Story*, accessed 10 November 2017, <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-gonzalez-torres-felix.htm>.
- ³ Felix Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Ross Bleckner, *BOMB Magazine*, no.51 April 1, 1995. <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/felix-gonzalez-torres/>.
- ⁴ The author has decided to use the term "latinx" to describe Gonzalez-Torres though there is not a record of the artist himself using such a term. However, as he often worked with queer subject matter and was of latin origin, the author opted to use the more gender-neutral term 'latinx,' which is defined as "the gender-neutral alternative to Latino, Latina and even Latin@" and is part of the "linguistic revolution." Tanisha Love Ramirez and Zeba Blay, "Why People Are Using The Term 'Latinx,'" *The Huffington Post*, October 17, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/why-people-are-using-the-term-latinx_us_57753328e4b0cc0fa136a159.
- ⁵ The Museum of Modern Art website describes Group Material as "a New York-based group of artists whose intention was to work collaboratively, adhering to principles of cultural activism and community education." "Group Material," *Art and Artists*, [moma.org/artists/2233](http://www.moma.org/artists/2233), accessed November 8, 2017, <https://www.moma.org/artists/2233>.
- ⁶ Felix-Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Robert Storr, January 1995, *MIT.edu*, 5, accessed October 20, 2017, <http://www.mit.edu/~allanmc/gonzaleztorres1.pdf>.
- ⁷ Felix-Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Tim Rollins, 1993, *Orienteering.tumblr.com*, accessed November 5, 2017, <http://orienteering.tumblr.com/post/14659295748/excerpts-from-an-interview-with-felix>.
- ⁸ Felix-Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Tim Rollins.
- ⁹ Art Basel, "Salon | Artist Talk | Felix Gonzalez-Torres Specific Objects without Specific Form," Filmed [2010]. YouTube video, 39:38. Posted [January 2013] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mljMo06dV_g.
- ¹⁰ Julie Ault, "Introduction," in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, ed. Julie Ault, 2nd ed (Göttingen: Steidl, 2016), 8.
- ¹¹ Nancy Spector, *America: Felix Gonzalez-Torres* (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2007), 35.
- ¹² John Paul Ricco, *The Decision Between Us* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 175.
- ¹³ Felix Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Robert Nickas, 1991, in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, ed. Julie Ault, 2nd ed, (Göttingen: Steidl, 2016), 40.
- ¹⁴ Felix Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Tim Rollins, 1993 in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, ed. Julie Ault, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Steidl, 2016), 69.
- ¹⁵ Felix Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Robert Storr.
- ¹⁶ Felix Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Joseph Kosuth, October 10, 1993, in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, ed. Julie Ault, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Steidl, 2016), 348.
- ¹⁷ Camila Maroja, "Introduction," in *The Permanence Of The Transient: Precariousness in Art*, ed. Camila Maroja, Caroline Menezes, and Fabrizio Augusto Poltronieri, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), xviii.
- ¹⁸ Felix Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Tim Rollins.
- ¹⁹ Maroja, "Introduction," xviii.
- ²⁰ The term *objecthood* comes from Michael Fried's 1967 essay, *Art and Objecthood*, which puts art and objects as binary classifications—a thing, in theory, can only be art or be an object. The notion of objecthood pertains to the ways that things relate to the context of the space that they exist in; art objects ostensibly are more cohesive and thus are more separate from things that become part of their banal environment, However, Fried suggests that certain forms of Minimalism embrace their objecthood, essentially devaluing their status as art. Fried, Michael, *Art and Objecthood*, 1967, 3, accessed November 20, 2017, <http://atc.berkeley.edu/201/readings/FriedObjcthd.pdf>.
- ²¹ Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, 3.
- ²² Kyle Chayka, "WTF is... Relational Aesthetics?," *Hyperallergic*, 2011, accessed November 25, 2017, <https://hyperallergic.com/18426/wtf-is-relational-aesthetics>.
- ²³ Chayka, "WTF is... Relational Aesthetics?"
- ²⁴ The Art Story Contributors, "Felix Gonzalez-Torres Artist Overview and Analysis," *The Art Story*, 2018, accessed October 30, 2017, <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-gonzalez-torres-felix.htm>.
- ²⁵ Doug Singen, "Post-minimalism," *Grove Art Online*, 12 November 2017, accessed December 1, 2017, <http://0-www.oxfordartonline.com/mercury.concordia.ca/groveart/view/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oa-9781884446054-e-7002090791>.
- ²⁶ Felix Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Tim Rollins, 74-75.
- ²⁷ Keith Potter, "Introduction," in *Four Musical Minimalists: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8.
- ²⁸ Felix Gonzalez-Torres, interview by Tim Rollins, 74-75.
- ²⁹ Ian Burn, "The Sixties: Crisis And Aftermath (Or The Memoirs Of An Ex-Conceptual Artist)," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 400, accessed November 9, 2017, http://veramaurinapress.com/pdfs/alberro-stimson_conceptual-art.pdf.
- ³⁰ Museum of Modern Art, "Felix Gonzalez-Torres." "Untitled" (Toronto), 1992 | Moma," *The Museum Of Modern Art*, 2017, accessed November 10, 2017, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81313?locale=en>.
- ³¹ Art Basel, "Salon | Artist Talk."
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ Barbara Gamarekian, "Corcoran, To Foil Dispute, Drops Mapplethorpe Show," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), June 14, 1989, accessed November 14, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/14/arts/corcoran-to-foil-dispute-drops-mapplethorpe-show.html>.
- ³⁵ This statement references *Perfect Lovers* (1987-1990), which is an installation comprised of two identical clocks hung touching and set to the same time. As the installation progresses they fall out of sync until one of them eventually stops. Nancy Spector, *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, 2nd ed., (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2007), 73.
- ³⁶ Jennifer Kaminski, "Two Decades After His Death, The Legacy Of Felix Gonzalez-Torres Lives On," *The Village Voice*, 2017, accessed November 6, 2017, <https://www.villagevoice.com/2017/05/31/two-decades-after-his-death-the-legacy-of-felix-gonzalez-torres-lives-on/>.
- ³⁷ Darren Jones, "Galleries Representing Felix Gonzalez-Torres Are Editing HIV / AIDS from His Legacy: It Needs to Stop," *Art Slant*, 2017, accessed November 6, 2017, <https://www.artslant.com/ew/articles/show/47997-galleries-representing-felix-gonzalez-torres-are-editing-hiv-aid-from-his-legacy-it-needs-to-stop>.
- ³⁸ Jones, "Galleries Representing Felix Gonzalez-Torres Are Editing HIV / AIDS from His Legacy."

Bibliography

Art Basel. "Salon | Artist Talk | Felix Gonzalez-Torres Specific Objects without Specific Form." Filmed 2010. YouTube video, 39:38. Posted January 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mL-jMoo6dVg>.

The Art Story Contributors. "Felix Gonzalez-Torres Biography, Art, And Analysis Of Works." *The Art Story*. Accessed November 10, 2017. <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-gonzalez-torres-felix.htm>.

Ault, Julie, ed. "Preface." In *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*. 2nd ed. Göttingen: Steidl, 2016. ix-xiii.

Burn, Ian. "The 'Sixties: Crisis And Aftermath (Or The Memoirs Of An Ex-Conceptual Artist)." In *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*. Edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999. 392-409. Accessed November 9, 2017. http://veramaurinapress.com/pdfs/alberro-stimson_conceptual-art.pdf.

Chayka, Kyle. "WTF is... Relational Aesthetics?" *Hyperallergic*. 2011. Accessed November 25, 2017. <https://hyperallergic.com/18426/wtf-is-relational-aesthetics/>

Fried, Michael. "Art and Objecthood." *Art and objecthood: essays and reviews*. Chicago, Ill: The University of Chicago Press, 2011. 148-172.

Gamarekian, Barbara. "Corcoran, To Foil Dispute, Drops Mapplethorpe Show." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), June 14, 1989, Accessed November 14, 2017. <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/14/arts/corcoran-to-foil-dispute-drops-mapplethorpe-show.html>.

Gonzalez-Torres, Felix. "A Conversation." Interview by Joseph Kosuth. October 10, 1993 in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, edited by Julie Ault. 2nd ed. Göttingen: Steidl, 2016.

— "Excerpts from Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Interview." Interview by Tim Rollins. 1993 in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*, edited by Julie Ault. 2nd ed. Göttingen: Steidl, 2016.

— "Felix Gonzalez-Torres by Ross Bleckner." Interview by Ross Bleckner. *BOMB Magazine*, no. 51 April 1, 1995. <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/felix-gonzalez-torres/>.

— "Felix-Gonzalez-Torres: All the Time in the World." Interview by Robert Nickas. 1991 in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*. Edited by Julie Ault. 2nd ed. Göttingen: Steidl, 2016.

— "Interview with Felix Gonzalez-Torres." Interview by Robert Storr. January 1995, MIT.edu. Accessed October 20, 2017. <http://www.mit.edu/~allanmc/gonzaleztorres1.pdf>.

Gonzalez-Torres, Felix and Nancy Spector. *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*. New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 1995.

"Group Material." *Art and Artists*, moma.org. Accessed 8 November, 2017. <https://www.moma.org/artists/2233>.

Jones, Darren. "Galleries Representing Felix Gonzalez-Torres Are Editing HIV/AIDS from His Legacy: It Needs to Stop." *Art Slant*, 2017. Accessed November 6, 2017. <https://www.artslant.com/ew/articles/show/47997-galleries-representing-felix-gonzalez-torres-are-editing-hiv-aids-from-his-legacy-it-needs-to-stop>.

Krasinski, Jennifer. "Two Decades After His Death, The Legacy Of Felix Gonzalez-Torres Lives On." *The Village Voice*, 2017. Accessed November 6, 2017. <https://www.villagevoice.com/2017/05/31/two-decades-after-his-death-the-legacy-of-felix-gonzalez-torres-lives-on/>.

Maroja, Camila. "Introduction." In *The Permanence Of The Transient: Precariousness in Art*. Edited by Camila Maroja, Caroline Menezes, and Fabrizio Augusto Poltronieri. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.

Museum of Modern Art. "Felix Gonzalez-Torres." *Untitled* (Toronto), 1992 | Moma." *The Museum Of Modern Art*, 2017. Accessed November 10, 2017. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/81313?locale=en>

Potter, Keith. "Introduction." In *Four Musical Minimalists: La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Ricco, John Paul. *The Decision Between Us*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Singsen, Doug. "Post-minimalism." *Grove Art Online*. 12 November 2017. Accessed December 1, 2017. <http://0-www.oxfordartonline.com/mercury.concordia.ca/groveart/view/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oao-9781884446054-e-7002090791>.

Spector, Nancy, ed. *America: Felix Gonzalez-Torres*. New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2007.

— **Felix Gonzalez-Torres**. 2nd ed. New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2007.

Liz Magor: Repair and Regeneration

Author: Vania Djelani

Second Year, Art History & Studio Art major (BFA).

Editor: Oona Ostrowski

Art of the twentieth century has undergone a wide range of visual and conceptual changes, all prompted by the question: what is art? Dada and Cubist works from the early twentieth century exhibited artists' explorations with new collage and photomontage genres.¹ Assemblage art developed out of this tradition, drawing from the techniques of collage and applying them in three-dimensional form, a means of expression that allowed for the use of nontraditional methods and materials. Featuring works created out of found objects and everyday ephemera, junk art emerged from these practices in the late twentieth century.² Exposed to the wastefulness of an increasingly consumerist culture, artists became aware of the abundance of mass-produced and short-lived matter that surrounded them, a realization that, in turn, was reflected in their work.³ One such artist that explores and redefines the usage of junk in their sculpture and installation practice is Canadian artist Liz Magor (b. 1948). As art of the nineteenth century was mainly valued for its formal qualities in accordance with Modernist theories, Magor's works of the twentieth century can be regarded as Postmodern, counteracting the formalist focus and creating a dialogue between the work of art and its social background.⁴ As Modernist thought of this period valued form over context, an emphasis was placed on the viewer's aesthetic experience and filled no practical purpose other than to experience the presence of the object.⁵ Thus, it was essential for artists to be aware of the quality of the materials they used in order to produce the best formal effects. Following the consumerist tradition, which dictates that everything must be new, materialism became the societal standard putting physical matter

in flux.⁶ By using disregarded materials drawn from urban waste and rearranging them, Magor reevaluates the significance an object would have had, and potentially still has, at a particular moment in history and provides a Postmodern commentary on waste produced by consumerist culture.

Magor began working in the 1970s and continues her practice to this day. Her work often addresses memory, history, and endurance in a domestic environment by applying the techniques and ideas of assemblage practice. Looking at Magor's use of new and found objects, as well as natural detritus, this paper aims to discuss the evolution of her sculptures and how they break away from the "disruptive, transgressive art form"⁷ commonly associated with the use of ephemeral and filthy substances. While at a glance, her earlier works may seem to discuss the process of decay and degeneration in the natural world, acts of reparation can be seen in the way the artist gathers and classifies elements found in nature. In doing so, Magor attempts to preserve the identity of living things as they change over time. Through her carefully constructed installations and her distinct style of categorizing the natural world, Magor's early works can be seen as an attempt to repair the damage done to the natural environment by keeping it contained and identifiable.

After graduating from the Vancouver School of Art (now the Emily Carr University of Art and Design) in 1971, Magor moved to Hornby Island, British Columbia, where she began to gather artistic resources drawn from nature.⁸ Following in the tradition of 'junk art', Magor turned to organic, 'found' material for art making. By working exclusively with what was

available on hand, the artist contemplated the value of these everyday and discarded objects and expressed her reflections in her work. In an installation titled *Sowing Weeds in Lanes and Ditches* (1976), Magor meticulously organized and, in a way, confined the natural world in order to preserve a past identity. The artist placed boxes containing envelopes, newspapers, and plastic sacks full of seeds on an open wooden cupboard. Each box is labelled using the common names of plants, as well as illustrations of flowers, indicating the type of plant that is to emerge out of each particular seed.⁹ A variety of clay pots, gardening equipment with dried weeds, and flower stalks also adorn the bottom shelves. By highlighting the temporality and disposability of ephemeral materials, *Sowing Weeds* provides a sense of fragility that Magor often portrays in her work. The choice to use decaying organic materials in her art practice, rather than focus on their disintegrative qualities, speaks to Magor's patience and attention to detail. The use of such objects also calls to mind the traditional idea of "women's work" that symbolizes a nurturing and reparative nature.¹⁰ Magor does not draw attention to the rotting appearances of the work's dirty substances, instead they appear clean and delicate. While garbage is still the focus of the work, the careful isolation of each piece of debris by type and size effectively imbues them with value and alludes to each object's distinct life story.

In another one of her early works entitled *Time and Mrs. Tiber* (1976), Magor deals again with the life and process of organic materials. Presented on a wooden shelf, Magor placed jars of preservatives along with handwritten recipes taken from an

abandoned house in British Columbia.¹¹ Originally found on a crumbling shelf in the home of the late Mrs. Tiber,¹² Magor noticed that while everything Mrs. Tiber owned had been altered or demolished over time, her jars of preservatives remained as physical evidence of her existence.¹³ While this piece clearly references the process of decay, in reinventing a new home for these abandoned objects, a sense of livelihood and usage is also restored within the jars of preservatives. In displaying the human desire to save what is lost to the passage of time, writer Sherri Irvin, who specializes in the aesthetics and philosophy of art, claims that *Time and Mrs. Tiber* then becomes a commentary on opposing the natural order of death.¹⁴

While artists who work with ephemeral materials are often regarded as showing an interest in their disintegration, Magor's work moves away from this tradition, focusing more on objects and their materiality. As Magor stated in an interview, the materials that she incorporates within her work can be divided into two distinct categories: ephemeral materials taken from the environment that surrounds her, and replicas that she creates in her controlled studio environment.¹⁵ Moving away from organic material, Magor's later work deals more directly with the creation, as opposed to the preservation, of identity and history. When Magor moved from the rural areas of Hornby Island, she was exposed to the increasingly consumerist culture and materialistic nature of urban life.¹⁶

Foregrounding these themes in her later works, Magor began to work more with second-hand textiles, fabrics, and other by-products of urban waste. Similar to the



Fig 1. Liz Magor, *Being This (La Vida)*, 2012, paper, textiles, found materials, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver. Photo courtesy of Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver.

way weeds were picked and categorized to reassert their presence in the world, old garments were presented in new ways that reinscribed them with value. As a result of the consumerist glorification of the 'new,' waste increases, landfills expand, and garments are accumulated only to be discarded after the smallest rip or stain. In her installation *Being This* (2012), twenty-four boxes constructed by the artist were mounted on a wall. They contain a variety of fabrics, textiles, and found objects. These are lined with gift papers and contain a single glove, or glove shape, above neatly folded coats or sweaters (fig. 1). *Being This* looks at the space within consumerist culture that does not glorify the new, but rather revisits what was once desired but are now considered 'bargains.'¹⁷ Alluding to the consumerist culture of the twenty-first century, each gloved hand shape that Magor constructed points to a specific corner of her

thoughtfully constructed gift box, indicating where the focal point can be found within each composition.¹⁸ Using this gesture, Magor suggests that in each box, the viewer should take notice of the carefully printed label attached to the garments. Targeting the notion of value, each label indicates a brand name and the garment's original price along with a sticker showing a lower discounted value (fig. 2). As every garment featured in *Being This* was rejected and left unidentified in massive piles of clothing at thrift stores, Magor's selection and individual repackaging of each item to appeal to retail standards exemplifies a type of nurturing behavior. By relabelling each item and using the glove shape to indicate the item's identity, Magor's gift boxes also gives a voice to each forgotten garment.

Similar acts of reparation can be seen within Magor's other sculptures, like



Fig 2. Liz Magor, *Being This* (detail), 2012, paper, textiles, found materials, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver. Photo courtesy of Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver.

Leather (4 cigs) (2008) (fig. 3). In this piece, Magor places a neatly folded grey leather jacket atop a white ground and sticks four cigarettes into its surface. The jacket acts as an ashtray; the ashy dirtiness presents an allusion to garbage and a sense of repulsion. However, upon further inspection the piece seemingly creates a distinction between junk and art, thus giving 'junk art' new meaning. In *Leather (4 cigs)*, rather than directly re-using found pieces of clothing in the sculpture as she had in *Being This*, Magor casts the jacket out of polymerized gypsum to recreate the found object.¹⁹ Similar to how the food is preserved in *Time and Mrs. Tiber*, exact replicas of the clothing are herein created using a more long-lasting material which, in effect, preserves them as well. Though Magor still worked with refuse, the artist went a step further by creating casts of it, thus building a commentary on the types of materials that are deemed 'acceptable' in art practices. While Modernist theorists weigh the value of art objects by the qual-

ity and form of materials used, works like Magor's *Leather (4 cigs)* are Postmodern in that the artist appeals to the aesthetics of junk while manipulating its materiality and, consequently, our perception of it. Magor states that by changing the materiality of an object, a viewer's understanding of what debris is can easily be manipulated.²⁰ Presented as aesthetic objects made from plaster casts, both the cigarettes and the jacket assume the same materiality, transitioning between appearing as garbage and as art object.

Throughout Magor's artworks, the role of identity becomes key. Whether she is invoking a person's identity in a specific moment in history, or the cycle of an object as it moves from 'new' to 'garbage,' many of Magor's works aim to preserve a sense of placement within an ever-changing world. Through these concepts the artist is able to place sentimental value on seemingly random or inanimate objects. Since most of her works are displayed separately

from the people or settings they originated from, Magor adds independent value by implying the objects' ontology. What differentiates Magor's works from others within the scope of junk and assemblage art is her emphasis on notions of *repair*, as opposed to that of destruction, when using ephemeral materials. By including organic matter that has been gathered from her surrounding environment, Magor's earlier works demonstrate an interest in repairing and preserving elements of nature against the passage of time. When Land Art emerged in the 1960s and 70s, large-scale works were situated in remote landscapes and their exposure to the general public depended on photographic documentation.²¹ Evidence of works like Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) are only seen through periodic photographs as nature continues to intervene and reshape his work over time. In contrast, with *Sowing Weeds*, instead of documenting the seeds and flower stalks as they changed over time, Magor's act of displacing nature into a domestic environment preserves the materials from ever changing. Instead of viewing trash as irrelevant, Magor takes this opportunity to reconstruct a sense of identity and dignity left behind by the

materials. Just as *Sowing Weeds* becomes indicative of a 'weed sower' persona, *Time and Mrs. Tiber* celebrates the life that Mrs. Tiber left behind.

In conclusion, when Magor moved from a rural environment to an urban environment, the knowledge that she gathered from working with materials available in the world around her remained visible in her work. In creating a Postmodern dialogue on the glorification of the 'new' embedded in consumerist mentality, Magor drew her materials from second-hand stores to examine the valuation, devaluation, and accumulation of garments. Both Magor's later casts of everyday objects and earlier works deal with issues of preservation and the desire to protect ourselves from the effects of time. These notions are displayed in the use of objects that have been regarded as useless trash until Magor brings them into her studio. Magor's careful and delicate handling of her artwork exhibits a nurturing characteristic that, when paired with the concepts behind the creations alongside the destroyed materials, becomes an apt representation of the act of repair.



Fig 3. Liz Magor, *Leather (4 cigs)*, 2008, polymerized gypsum, cigarettes. Photo courtesy of Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver.

Endnotes

¹ Gillian Whitely, "The Cultural Life of Detritus: From Objet Trouvé to the Art of Assemblage," in *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 37.

² Ibid., 40.

³ Ibid., 40–41.

⁴ Anne Wolcott, "Is What You See What You Get? A Postmodern Approach to Understanding Works of Art," in *Studies in Art Education* 96, no. 37 (1996): 71.

⁶ Whitely, "The Cultural Life of Detritus: From Objet Trouvé to the Art of Assemblage," 40.

⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁸ Marla Culjat, *Installation as Power Field: historical precedents and contemporary practice with Canadian examples and a case study of the art of Liz Magor* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1994), 116–117.

⁹ Ibid, 121.

¹⁰ Ibid, 122.

¹¹ Sherri Irvin, "The Artist Sanction in Contemporary Art," in *Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism* 63, no. 4 (2005): 316.

¹² Marla Culjat, *Installation as Power Field*, 122.

¹³ Ibid, 122.

¹⁴ Irvin, "The Artist Sanction, in Contemporary Art," 317.

¹⁵ Liz Magor et al., *Liz Magor* (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2017), 17.

¹⁶ Marla Culjat, *Installation as Power Field*, 119.

¹⁷ Ibid 143.

¹⁸ Ibid, 142.

¹⁹ Ibid, 102.

²⁰ Rachel Rosenfield Lafo, "The Potency of Ordinary Objects: A Conversation with Liz Magor," *Sculpture* 31, no. 9 (2012): 38.

²¹ Kathleen Merrill Campagnolo, "Spiral Jetty through the Camera's Eye," *Archives of American Art Journal* 47, no. 1/2 (2008): 18.

Bibliography

Campagnolo, Kathleen Merrill. "Spiral Jetty through the Camera's Eye." *Archives of American Art Journal* 47, no. 1/2 (2008): 16–23.

Culjat, Marla Alexandria Strong. *Installation as Power Field: Historical Precedents and Contemporary Practice with Canadian Examples and a Case Study of the Art of Liz Magor*. Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1994.

Irvin, Sherri. "The Artist's Sanction in Contemporary Art." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63, no. 4 (2005): 315–26.

Lafo, Rachel Rosenfield. "The Potency of Ordinary Objects: A Conversation with Liz Magor." *Sculpture* 31, no. 9 (November 2012): 36–41.

Magor, Liz, Dan Adler, Lesley Johnstone, Heike Munder, and Bettina Steinbrügge. *Liz Magor*. Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2017.

Whitely, Gillian. "The Cultural Life of Detritus: From Objet Trouvé to the Art of Assemblage." In *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010.

Wolcott, Anne. "Is What You See What You Get? A Postmodern Approach to Understanding Works of Art." *Studies in Art Education* 37, no. 2 (1996): 69–79.

Alexander Scriabin: A Life in Conflict

Author: Roozbeh Tabandeh

Third year, Specialization in Music Composition major (BFA),
Langue Française minor (BA).

Editor: Oona Ostrowski

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) (fig. 1) is one of the most controversial and problematic composers of the twentieth century, not only because of his compositional techniques and personal harmonic language, but also for his ideological and (pseudo-) philosophical beliefs, as well as his extravagant lifestyle. The variety of critical and musicological perspectives about his character and his music portray a love-hate relationship between the artist, his audience, and scholars. Even with a short glance at the repertoire of papers written on his music and style in the past one hundred years, it becomes evident that each argument provides a basis for a responding counterargument.

This essay does not aim to add to the debate of the so-called ‘mass of controversies.’ Instead, it seeks to furnish a platform to read some of these opposing arguments in parallel, and through this survey, provide a chance to put the facts together. The cited literature includes a variety of texts, from newspaper reviews to biographies, academic articles, and books. The dates of publication range from the composer’s time, moving towards the Russian revolution, post-war period, post-modern era, and more recently, books published in the twenty-first century, up to 2017. The parallel reading of these sources provides a chance to observe waves of acceptance and rejection of the composer in relation to the socio-political revolutions that have swept through the past century. Scriabin’s spiritual assertions had a significant impact on his popularity in Russia, Europe, and the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. However, the same mystic beliefs, paired with some other in-

cidents that will be discussed, resulted in a revitalization of his music in the second half of the twentieth century.

The primary goal of this paper is to re-examine Scriabin’s mindset in the musical context of post-war aesthetics up to the twenty-first century. This article aims not to examine exclusively the composer’s mystical beliefs, but also their impact on his artistic output. A century full of extravagant artists with eccentric behaviors and ideas situates Scriabin’s beliefs and provides a fair and impartial basis for their judgement. Finally, the foremost area of interest in this essay, besides the ideologies themselves, lies in the relationship between the composer’s mystic beliefs and his musical language, and the impact this connection had on his popularity. It might come to mind that today, a hundred years after his death, there exists an overwhelming amount of studies and analyses, as well as enough historical distance, to provide a solid and conclusive judgement on the subject matter. Nevertheless, despite having access to all these available resources, the case of Scriabin remains a controversial one because of conflicting points in his aesthetics and philosophy.

In most cases, a composer’s explanations or theoretical justifications tend to remove obscurity and provide a better understanding of their style, the complexities of their aesthetics, or their compositional techniques. However, in the case of Scriabin, it seems that his spiritual reflections and explanations were intended to enhance this ambiguity rather than remove it. According to Faubion Bowers (1917-1999), Scriabin always asserted that his music adhered to strict laws, although



Fig 1. Leonid Pasternak, Portrait of Alexander Scriabin, 1909, charcoal on paper. Public domain through Wikimedia Commons.

he refused to provide any explanation. Bowers refers to an anecdote from Alexander Goldenveizer, who said that “one day [Scriabin] invited Taneyev (Scriabin’s teacher) and me to his apartment so he could explain his theories of composition. We arrived, and he dilly-dallied for a long time. Finally, he said he had a headache and would explain it all another day. That another day never came.”¹

In the absence of technical clarifications, Scriabin exhausted his friends and audiences with semi-philosophical ideas about the apocalyptic role of the artist to unite the world, which furnished a fertile ground for skepticism in both Europe and the United States regarding the real value of his artistic output. In the first half of the

twentieth century, his ideology and mystic beliefs had a deprecating effect on his reputation as a composer of serious art music. As the historian Martin Cooper (b. 1928) describes, “Scriabin, like many other idealists, was occasionally guilty of a bombastic rhetoric which leads even his admirers to mistrust a little his apparently sincere utterances for purely emotional and illogical reasons.”² According to many biographers, Scriabin believed that the whole universe was waiting to be united by means of art in the hands of a Messiah, and, as Cooper indicates, “he was convinced that this Messiah was himself.”³ Cooper concludes that, “highly strung to the verge of a perpetual neuroticism, he became the victim of an *idée fixe* which he could not afford, in the end, to renounce, for he had

staked so much upon it.”⁴ These “illogical reasons” were not acceptable even for the admirers of his time such as Arthur Eaglefield Hull (1876–1928). One year after Scriabin’s death, Hull wrote a glorifying survey of his piano works. The article starts with this phrase: “No revolution in musical art—perhaps in the whole history of the arts in general—is more striking than that effected by Alexander Scriabin, the great musical genius of the Russia of today.”⁵ Worship of Scriabin’s art is apparent in every section of Hull’s essay. However, even within such a piece of glorifying praise, Hull seems to deem the composer’s philosophical inclinations as unnecessary. Later, he criticizes: “But why did he ticket his symphonies with the labels of a queer pseudo-theosophy? I prefer my music without labels and even without titles. Everyone hears music differently, and ought to do so.”⁶ Paying attention to the dates of articles and books cited until now in this essay (1916, 1935, and 1973) demonstrates a chain of negative reactions among musicologists to Scriabin’s mystic beliefs for much of the twentieth century.

Scriabin was not the only prominent Russian mystic individual around the turn of the century. He was born two years after one of the most well-known mysterious characters of the era, Rasputin (1869–1916), who had a close relationship with the Czar’s family and especially the Czarina. Rasputin’s bizarre nature and rapidly increasing influence on the royal family led to his assassination, which happened one year after Scriabin’s death. The existence of such a mysterious character in the highest level of Russian government as well as the superstitious character of the Czarina, which led her to trust Rasputin, are only a few instances among many which prove that Scriabin was not alone.

As Cooper indicates:

*At one extreme society, led by the Czarina herself, surrendered itself the pseudo-religious ravings and the erotic excesses of Rasputin: the other, artists and intellectuals developed a prophetic, apocalyptic sense, dimly foreseeing the near end of the world they knew and the birth of some new era of which social reform and a universal heightening of spirituality were the only two clearly distinguished traits.*⁷

These claims were not far from reality, considering that the October Revolution (1917) and the First World War (1914–1918) were turning points that heavily influenced the socio-political relations of the following century. Cooper continues: “the chief guide and inspirer of this movement was the mystic and philosopher Solovyov; its greatest exponents in the arts were the poet Alexander Alexandrovich Blok and the composer Alexander Nikolaevich Scriabin.”⁸

In the first chapter of the *Alexander Scriabin Companion*, John Bell Young (1953–2017) claims that, with few exceptions, most of musicologists and historians dismissed the composer’s mystical beliefs as “pathological, egocentric, and unworthy of serious discussion.”⁹ In his opinion, Boris Fyodorovich Schloezer (1881–1969), a historian and the composer’s brother-in-law, was the only exception. All others simply viewed Scriabin as “a product of his time and national environment.”¹⁰ For the same reason, he is considered as part of the ideologies and the socio-political mechanisms of the Russian empire, which collapsed in the October 1917 revolution, two years after his death. This series of events might have had an overwhelming influ-

ence on the image of Scriabin as one of the last leftover Russian romantic artists. For decades after his death, the regulations of the communist party were a huge barrier that blocked the path of many artists, including Scriabin.

Much like the fluctuations in popularity of composers Anton Webern (1883–1945), Alban Berg (1885–1935), Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), and Richard Strauss (1864–1949), the nuances of Scriabin's acceptance were deeply related to political issues of the time, in parallel with aesthetical concerns. Although Scriabin had less to do with the politics himself, his compositional style and especially his ideological justifications provided grounds for the Bolsheviks to find his music to be in opposition with the realistic goals of the Russian Revolution.¹¹ As a result, an extended period of denial began, lasting about four decades. The revival of his music in Europe and the United States happened around the same time as the rise of the counterculture movement in the United States after the 1960s.¹² Thus, several decades after his death, the revitalization of romantic paradigms turned the page in favour of both his music and his mystical beliefs.

In his article, *A Russian Mystic in the Age of Aquarius*, Lincoln Ballard (b. 1975) provides a useful calendar of Scriabin's popularity in the United States. Ballard delineates four extensive periods while describing the relation between public audience, music critics, and the composer. He starts from Joseph Hofmann's concert of Scriabin preludes in 1898 at Carnegie Hall, which impressed the audience. This first promising opening was followed by a series of shows where Scriabin took on the soloist role in his piano concertos and

other individual works until around 1907.¹³ As Ballard admits:

Although he ultimately failed to win over critics, he gained confidence in his public offerings and carved out a modest reputation in the United States...his reputation as an innovative composer and spiritual guru became solidified in the United States in the decade after his death. However, Scriabin's halcyon days were numbered, and these enthusiastic supporters would soon be drowned out by the noisy protests of critics.¹⁴

After this first period of complicated relationship with the critics, Ballard labels the period of 1925–1965 as an “inevitable decline.”¹⁵ However, around 1965, with the rise of neo-romanticism in the United States, Scriabin's music came out of oblivion after four decades.

The revitalization of Scriabin's music was the result of several incidents: one reason, among many, was the impact of his mystic beliefs. As Ballard explains, “the composer's metaphysical preoccupations, a source of embarrassment only a few years ago, had become a selling point.”¹⁶ On January 6, 1972, Carnegie Hall was at capacity, packed with concertgoers for the centennial of Scriabin's birth. In parallel with the neo-romantic revival, the rise of American Psychedelia from the 1960s onwards seems to be another case in which Scriabin's association with mysticism and theosophy revived his legacy. These associations “satisfied counterculture members' curiosity about alternative spiritual practices and his alleged synesthesia bears qualities that resemble the altered states of perception hippies sought through meditation and hallucinogens.”¹⁷

Another influential factor was the publication of an analysis of Scriabin's music in 1984 by music theorist George Perle (1915–2009), although this was not the first published analysis on the subject, Russian analyst Varvara Dernova's comprehensive essay published in 1948, *Scriabin's Harmony*, certainly bears mentioning. In Perle's article, the primary focus is Scriabin's strange orthography which was simply considered as transcription error by some publishers and has been “corrected” accordingly.¹⁸ Perle analyzed Scriabin's music separately from his beliefs. For him, the lack of clear explanations from composers is commonplace. He even questions any composer's assertions regarding their own music as he opens the article with the following sentence: “What authority does a composer have as analyst of his music?” He continues later, “we cannot always trust the relevance of the vague and spacious generalities they give us instead [of analysis] or the motivations behind these.”¹⁹ By putting the composer's assertions aside, he provides a detailed explanation to prove the relevance and punctuality of the orthographies in Scriabin's music. Although Cheong Wai-Ling justified some inaccuracies in Perle's analysis about a decade later, it was through Perle's explicit rationalizations that Scriabin's music regained academic attention. The proof nourished a counterattack against those critics like Gerald Abraham (1904–1988), who “mercilessly mocked ‘the whole of the later development of Scriabinesque harmony’ as ‘a mere side-track in the history of music as a whole.’”²⁰ Perle's article was an example of similar efforts to prove that, although Scriabin's aesthetics were mixed with ambiguous and even suspicious messianic assertions, the music is strict and well organized in itself. This argument paved the way for studies of Scri-

abin's music that are disconnected from his personal life and beliefs.

Indeed, for many analysts of the past century, the music can be analyzed separately from the man. As mentioned earlier, in many cases scholars writing about Scriabin either distrusted or did not show interest in his prophecies for one reason or another. In his massive book on Scriabin's music, the analyst James Baker (b. 1930) believes that as we become more distanced from the composer's time, it becomes more difficult to comprehend Scriabin's messianic character and beliefs; today, we have no choice but to refer only to his music to discover the truth. However, even Baker does not deny the impact of the composer's ideologies on his musical language. As he declares: “Although his visions were the primary motivation for his experimentation and innovation, what remains today is his music...Much as he might have been disappointed; it is through the study of his musical structures that we can best know him today.”²¹

Conversely, some historians like Young believe that one cannot study Scriabin's music outside the context of his mystic beliefs. Young finds it unacceptable that “even theorists favourably disposed toward the music have chosen to toe academia's official party line: the music, not the mysticism, is all that matters.”²² In his opinion, those who ridiculed the composer for his theosophical ideologies and his ideas of combining sound and colour have forgotten that the roots of the same ideas can be traced back to ancient Greece and in this respect, he refers to Friedrich Nietzsche as a source of the quotation. For Young, “in the household of symbolism and psychology, Scriabin's music is inseparable from the spiritual ideology that informs it.

Mystery, sanctity, myth and transfiguration seek symbolic expression in the music of Scriabin—these are the metaphors of his legacy.²³ Richard Taruskin (b. 1945) provides the roots of this perspective in his detailed review of two major Scriabin biographies of the past century: books by James M. Baker and Boris de Schloezer. In the final paragraph of his essay, Taruskin comes to the same conclusion as some did thirty years earlier when he asserts: “Those who have professed to dig deeper have all too often seemed attracted to the music not out of any greater understanding of it, but because in its details it exhibits its conspicuous technical ‘progress.’ It is really only those who have taken seriously Scriabin’s ‘cosmic hocus-pocus,’ to recall Hugh MacDonald’s appreciative comment, to whom Scriabin’s music really seems to have spoken.”²⁴

Finally, rather than simply examine the validity of the ideologies themselves, it becomes important to investigate their profound impact on the final artistic output. The history of the twentieth century is a collection of examples of famous strange artistic behaviors from the Dadaists and Surrealists to the Futurists, among others. For instance, in the Manifesto of Futurism (1909), Filippo Tommaso Marinetti declares that: “Let’s break out of the horrible shell of wisdom and throw ourselves like pride-ripened fruit into the wide, contorted mouth of the wind! Let’s give ourselves utterly to the unknown, not in desperation but only to replenish the deep wells of the Absurd.”²⁵ As Scriabin asserted to one of his friends: “I cannot understand how to write just music now. How boring! Music, surely, takes on idea and significance when it is linked to a single plan within a

whole view of the world.”²⁶ His so-called “cosmic hocus-pocus” is neither less rational nor less pertinent than hundreds of thousands of assertions and emotional writings of the artists of the first half of the twentieth century, it can even be regarded as their precursor. Whether valid or invalid, these semi-religious beliefs altered Scriabin’s mental state, bringing him to imagine himself as a creator-god and changing his musical language. Based on Bower’s explanation, the evolution of his aesthetics is highly associated with his various encounters with theosophical texts, including Helena Blavatsky’s book *The Key to Theosophy* (1889), which he first read in 1905, and later her two-volume manifesto titled *The Secret Doctrine* (1888).²⁷ As Bowers indicates: “He already knew that sounds had colours, but now he added to his palette Theosophy’s colour for vowel sounds and emotions[:] red for anger, yellow for intellect, green-gray for deceit, black for hatred, etc. All this was according to Theosophy.”²⁸

One other area where the impact of his ideologies seems inevitable is in his harmonic structure. One of the characteristic elements of Scriabin’s harmony is the central role of his *mystic chord*.²⁹ Although analyzing the harmonic properties of the chord is not the focus here, one must investigate the connection between this compositional strategy and his mental state. As Ballard indicates in a later book, “since Symbolists believe that art imparts divine wisdom and reveals hidden realities, the mystic chord provides a sonic analogue for an alternate existence or a higher state of consciousness. With its harmonic scheme based on unconventional chord relationships, the sonori-

ty could be interpreted as transcending consciousness or an approximation of the cosmic world.”³⁰ Although some might not agree with Ballard and disagree with the mystic chord’s supposed ‘mysticism,’ it is hard to deny the fact that the chord is the result of a specific state of mind which was unimaginable in the absence of Scriabin’s spiritual beliefs. The core of the argument here is not the mysteriousness of the mystic chord, as the composer labelled it himself, but its impact on Scriabin’s sound.

Musical influences come from diverse sources of inspiration, which are fundamentally different for each composer based on their cultural, political, and social connections. In most cases, the source is not the primary area of importance, and inspiration is not usually enough by itself. Music is the product of the composer’s craftsmanship. Without this essential mastery, inspiration evaporates into thin air. The so-called musical craftsmanship is precisely Scriabin’s area of expertise, as numerous analysts have proven the accuracy and punctuality of his compositional technique and particular harmonic structure. No matter how they are analysed by critical investigations, Scriabin’s spiritual

beliefs acted productively and directly influenced his musical concepts.

After all, it is not hard to notice the paradox in the aesthetics of the composer asserting that everything in his music has a logic, while at the same time overhanging his compositional concepts with the vague ideologies of theosophical beliefs. These two sources of artistic creation belong to two opposite sides of the intellectual mindset. One has roots in a scholastic and pedagogical perspective which can be considered as an initial sector of the new age around the turn of the nineteenth century, while the other is the antidote to the rational spirit behind modern society which portrays the ambiguity behind the myth and spiritual reflections of ego. However, this essay has aimed to demonstrate that it is through the clash of these opposing components that the aesthetics of Scriabin can be justified retrospectively. Even today, Alexander Scriabin stands at the summit of the list of problematic artists of the past because of the existence of these persisting controversial and conflicting ideologies.

Endnotes

¹ Faubion Bowers, *The New Scriabin, Enigma and Answers* (London: David & Charles Ltd., 1974), 129.

² Martin Cooper, "Scriabin's Mystical Beliefs," *Music & Letters* 16, no. 2 (1935): 114, accessed February 5, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/727346>.

³ Cooper, "Scriabin's Mystical Beliefs," 112.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁵ Arthur Eaglefield Hull and Alexander Scriabin, "A Survey of the Pianoforte Works of Scriabin," *The Musical Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1916): 601-14, accessed February 5, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/737943>.

⁶ Hull and Scriabin, "A Survey of the Pianoforte Works of Scriabin," 609.

⁷ Cooper, "Scriabin's Mystical Beliefs," 110.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Lincoln Ballard, Matthew Bengtson, and John Bell Young, *The Alexander Scriabin Companion: History, Performance, and Lore* (United States of America: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Georges Dimitrov, "Music history, Post-romantic to Present" (Music history course lectures at Concordia University music department, Montreal, Quebec, November 2017).

¹² Lincoln M. Ballard, "A Russian Mystic in the Age of Aquarius: The U.S. Revival of Alexander Scriabin in the 1960s," *American Music* 30, no. 2 (2012): 215, accessed February 6, 2018, doi:10.5406/americanmusic.30.2.0194.

¹³ Ballard, "A Russian Mystic in the Age of Aquarius," 215.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 197, 201.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹⁸ In editing Scriabin's piano works for Edition 1960s and early seventies, Gunter Philipp briefly mentioned 'orthographical mistakes' contained therein. Cheong Wai-Ling, "Orthography in Scriabin's Late Works," *Music Analysis* 12, no. 1 (1993): 47, accessed February 10, 2018, doi:10.2307/854075.

¹⁹ George Perle, "Scriabin's Self-Analyses," *Music Analysis* 3, no. 2 (1984): 101, accessed January 30, 2018, doi:10.2307/854313.

²⁰ Ballard, "A Russian Mystic in the Age of Aquarius," 190.

²¹ James M. Baker, *The Music of Alexander Scriabin*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 270.

²² Ballard, "A Russian Mystic in the Age of Aquarius," 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁴ Richard Taruskin, "Reviewed Works: The Music of Alexander Scriabin by James M. Baker; Scriabin: Artist and Mystic by Boris de Schloezer, Nicolas Slonimsky," *Music Theory Spectrum* 10 (1988): 168, accessed January 28, 2018, doi:10.2307/745797.

²⁵ Marry Ann Caws, *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 186.

²⁶ Bowers, *The New Scriabin, Enigma and Answers*, 108.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Sabaneiev commented on Scriabin's use of the 'mystic' chord, displaying it as a vertical formation of superimposed fourths: C-F# -Bb-E-A-D. This particular spelling and spacing of the 'mystic' chord has since acquired a conventional status in the literature. Wai-Ling, "Orthography in Scriabin's Late Works," 60.

³⁰ Ballard, "A Russian Mystic in the Age of Aquarius," 203.

Bibliography

Baker, James M. *The Music of Alexander Scriabin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Ballard, Lincoln, Matthew Bengtson, and John Bell Young. *The Alexander Scriabin Companion: History, Performance, and Lore*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

Ballard, Lincoln M. "A Russian Mystic in the Age of Aquarius: The U.S. Revival of Alexander Scriabin in the 1960s." *American Music* 30, no. 2 (2012): 194-227.

Bowers, Faubion. *The New Scriabin, Enigma and Answers*. London: David and Charles LTD., 1974.

Caws, Marry Ann. *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.

Cooper, Martin. "Scriabin's Mystical Beliefs." *Music & Letters* 16, no. 2 (1935): 110-15. Accessed February 5, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/727346>.

Dimitrov, Georges. "Music history, Post-Romantic to Present." Music history course lectures at Concordia University Music Department, Montreal, Quebec, November 2017.

Hull, Arthur Eaglefield, and Alexander Scriabin. "A Survey of the Pianoforte Works of Scriabin." *The Musical Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1916): 601-14. Accessed February 5, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/737943>.

Perle, George. "Scriabin's Self-Analyses." *Music Analysis* 3, no. 2 (1984): 101-22.

Taruskin, Richard. "Reviewed Works: The Music of Alexander Scriabin by James M. Baker; Scriabin: Artist and Mystic by Boris de Schloezer, Nicolas Slonimsky." *Music Theory Spectrum* 10 (1988): 143-69.

Wai-Ling, Cheong. "Orthography in Scriabin's Late Works." *Music Analysis* 12, no. 1 (1993): 47-69.

Acknowledgments

All efforts were made to contact the owners of the images printed in this journal. If you are the current copyright holder of the images that we were not able to secure permission for, please contact us at cujah@concordia.ca for further inquiries.

The CUJAH wished to thank the following individuals and institutions for the permissions to use their images in Volume XIV of the journal:

Roosbeh:

Nick: ©PAHO-WHO, Rael San Fratello,

Alyse: The Museum of Modern Art, the Andrea Rosen Gallery

Vania: Catriona Jeffries

Serena: ©the Islamic Arts Magazine

Zoe: Francesco Mariotti, ©Cildo Meireles, and The Tate Modern

Stephanie: @Shutterstock.

Sophie: Michael Bilsborough

Marianne: BPK Berlin and RMN grand-palais

Chloe: La Centre Universitaire de Santé de McGill, Taha Achaymaa

The CUJAH Team would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to all those who made Volume XIV possible: Drs. Nicola Pezolet, Maya Rae Oppenheimer, and Elaine Cheasley Paterson for their moral and material support; the faculty and staff of the Art History Department for their endless encouragements; members of FASA and Art Matters for their collaborative efforts in the production of the CUJAH Conference

and Exhibition, specifically Jeremy Blinkhorn, Cleopatra ..., Diana Tapia, Jordan Beaulieu, and Mattia Zylak; and finally a special thank you to Dr. Anna Waclawek and Candice Tarnowski who helped with our day-to-day operations, answered our never-ending questions, and supported all of our outrageous ideas without hesitation.

CUJAH would also like to acknowledge Concordia's Faculty of Fine Arts and Department of Art History, the Fine Arts Student's Alliance (FASA), the ... INSERT FUNDING WE GOT FOR CONFERENCE + BESS (JMSB?)

LOGOS

Printed in Montreal, QC, Canada

Insert printer information