

CUJAH

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Modern European Painting

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CUJAH Vol. 13:

Editor's Letter

This journal (and every volume that precedes it) owes itself to the dedication, initiative, and vision of the undergraduate students of Concordia University's Faculty of Fine Arts. Whether they were involved in the production of the publication as a member of the Executive Team, submitted their writing to the journal, attended one of the journal's events, or taken their own copy of the journal home with them, CUJAH was created and continues to exist because of students whose creative energy extends beyond the classroom.

In an effort to keep pace with the interests and potential of the Fine Arts students, which diversify and grow every year, CUJAH has extended far beyond its original print journal. This year, in addition to Vol. 13, CUJAH also hosted a workshop for students interested in applying to graduate school, organized the three-day long SUBVERSIONS: The 6th Undergraduate Art History Conference, and produced an interdisciplinary publication in collaboration with Art Matters which documents both the conference and the festival.

Although it is in its thirteenth iteration, CUJAH continues to evolve in an effort to affirm itself as an essential contribution to student life at Concordia. Through collaborations on conference workshops and a publication, CUJAH had the opportunity to work with members of Art Matters, the Fine Arts Reading Room, and Yiara Magazine. Despite having different mandates, as student-run projects we all share a commitment to promote and engage with the work of our peers. From month-long arts festivals, to resource centres, to platforms for feminist art/art history, CUJAH benefits tremendously from being a part of such an inspiring and active student community.

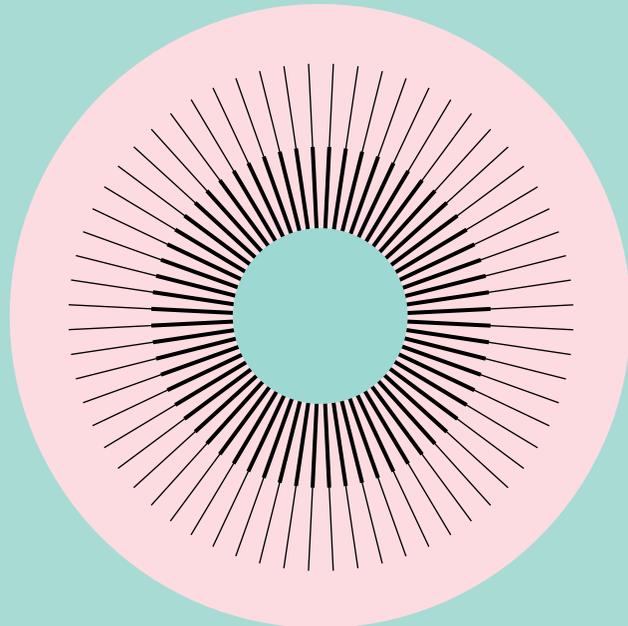
This volume contains eight essays written by undergraduate students in the field of art history. While the essays present a variety of topics and concerns, they each reflect a keen sense of interest and conviction on the part of their authors. On behalf of CUJAH's team, I offer the authors my congratulations. I also extend my regards to all of the candidates who submitted their work to the journal.

In the field of art history, it is easy to fix our gaze on to the past. This journal represents the work of students who are interested in art's history, engaged in its present, and creating its future.

--- Mattia Zylak

Ophelias and Crazy Kates: Images of Madwomen in Modern European Painting

Written by: Stephanie Barclay
Edited by: Kimberly Glassman



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In Michel Foucault's seminal text *Madness and Civilization*, the development of cultural, medical and psychiatric institutions for the insane are contextualized amidst eighteenth century Enlightenment society's exaltation of reason and condemnation of unreason. The madperson was a product of the intellectual movement of the eighteenth-century and was to be separated from general society due to their contrariety to reason and logic as judged by a hegemonic social structure. But what of those who were subdued by multiple social institutions, by both reason and patriarchal

authority? Depictions of insane women in European visual culture provide a unique perspective into the politics of sanity and gender while raising further questions such as: how does the female subject perform both their madness and their gender? How do artists inscribe insanity onto the body? And how do portraits of madwomen reinforce or complicate gender roles and normative femininity?

During the course of the early nineteenth century, Elaine Showalter argues that three distinct visual forms of the madwoman arose: “the suicidal Ophelia, the sentimental Crazy Kate, and the violent Lucia.”¹ This paper will expand upon these three archetypes by identifying three meta-archetypes within each listed above: the eroticized melancholic, the virginal love-melancholic, and the infanticidal madwoman in addition to exploring the ways in which male artists used them to express their society’s and their own anxieties surrounding female sexuality and motherhood.

The body as a site of madness has preoccupied intellectuals for centuries. Early scholars such as Aristotle (b. 384 BCE - 322 BCE) and Galen (b. 129 CE - 210 CE) sought to depose the characteristics of unreason upon the

perceivable body through the science of physiognomy: the study of one’s moral character based on the appearance of the face and skull. Insanity, a condition now understood as an incorporeal affliction, has historically been attributed to an imbalance in the humorous liquids of the body. Johann Caspar Lavater’s rediscovery of classical physiognomy and the publication of his *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1774-1778) heralded a resurgence in the scientific study of the body as a site of madness in the late eighteenth century. As the study of physiognomy progressed into the mid-nineteenth century there occurred a switch from generalized attributes of psychopathologies to individualized studies of asylum patients. Books such as Alexander Morrison’s *The Physiognomy of Mental Diseases* (1843), comprised of before-and-after sketches of patients

undergoing treatment accompanied by descriptive texts, is such an example of this new practice. Portraits of inmates at the Salpêtrière asylum by French artist Théodore Géricault (b. 1791-1824) are another example of a more individualized study of madness. The science of physiognomy culminated in the use of photography, invented in 1835 and adopted by psychiatrists in 1850, to study the insane.² However, for the purposes of this essay psychiatric photography will not be discussed in favour of a focus on artistic renderings that reflect an aesthetic and culturally construed image of the madwoman.³

While there was no notable statistical difference between male and female admissions to insane asylums during the 1800s, madness in the sexes did take on gendered differences within medical and cultural discourse.⁴ Violence as well as sexual aggression were common symptoms of mania; as Jane Kromm writes, “contemporary assumptions about gender would always be critical elements in the dynamics of mania.”⁵ Indeed, psychiatrists believed that women were more prone to mental disturbance due to both their feminine susceptibility to melodrama and the “instability of their reproductive systems.”⁶ G. Fielding Blandford in his 1871 text *Insanity and Its Treatment* states, “[t]he sympathetic connection existing between the brain and the uterus is plainly seen by the most casual observer.”⁷ Menstruation, pregnancy, birth, and menopause were all believed to elicit

instability of the passions in the female patient. Additionally, female madness, particularly mania, was perceived as a threat to Victorian ideals of femininity. Their aggressive “masculine furor,” while acceptable qualities in men and warfare, were entirely disruptive to the domestic sphere which women were expected to occupy and maintain.⁸ The female lunatic displayed “talkativeness, violation of conventions of feminine speech, and insistence on self-expression,” qualities which threatened conventions of decorum and further necessitated their confinement and separation from society.⁹ Seemingly contradictorily, the madwoman simultaneously reinscribed the extremes of her feminine nature biologically and psychically while also threatening the gender order through masculine and un-ladylike behaviour.

Artists and scientists worked symbiotically to construct an image of the madperson through characterizations of the face, the body, and gesture to reflect varied states of mental illness.¹⁰ By the seventeenth century, the development of visual stereotypes of female madness had adopted nakedness and dishevelled hair as symbolic signifiers of unreason and mania as well as facial expressions of fear or anguish. Jusepe de Ribera’s (1591 - 1652) portrait of a *Desperate Woman* (1638) is one such example of how posture, expression and hair were construed to elicit an unstable mind. Jane Kromm writes that ornaments of straw, feathers and flowers, “traditionally given to roaming fools in continental art...was adapt-

ed to the incarcerated madman over the course of the seventeenth century,” in reference to the straw-bedding of asylum cells such as in London’s Bethlem Hospital.¹¹ During the eighteenth century the insane were attributed with a new performative role as spectacles for visitors willing to pay for a visit to the asylum.¹² This changing attitude towards the visibility of the mad-person accompanied a conflation of madness with the inhuman. Foucault states, “[i]t has doubtless been essential to Western culture to link, as it has done, its perception of madness to the iconographic forms of the relation of man to beast.”¹³

Eighteenth-century English artists Robert Edge Pine and Sir Thomas Lawrence provide two examples of the culturally produced stereotype of the beastly madwoman. The *Madness* (1772) and *Mad Girl* (1786) portraits have many iconographic and compositional similarities: both female subjects have a head of unkempt hair adorned with straw and leaves; both are disrobed at the breast; both are shackled within the asylum cell and are illuminated by a single window in the left frame; and both share the similar physiognomy of heavy brows furrowed above large eyes that are lost in an unseeable distance. However, the critical difference between the two women lies in their agency as prisoners of unreason. As Kromm points out in her text, *The Art of Frenzy: Public Madness in the Visual Culture of Europe, 1500-1850*, the portrait of *Madness* displays a markedly masculine female

subject whose “exposed breast [recalls] the bestial and amazonian undercurrents of furor,”¹⁴ while Sir Thomas Lawrence’s *Mad Girl* is rendered as passive and void of any immediate threat.¹⁵ These gendered signifiers – exposed breasts, tangled hair, and a crown of straw – would continue to develop into the nineteenth century and oscillate between aggressive and passive inscriptions.

The Romantic Movement of the following century would initiate a shift from the imprisoned asylum patient of the 1700s towards a more idealized and archetypal image of madness. The Romanticists attributed madness, especially in the archetype of the male ‘Mad Genius,’ with a spiritual potency and went so far as to be “sympathetic with those afflicted.”¹⁶ Literary accounts of insane women were coloured as “[victims] of parental tyranny and male oppression, and as an object of enlightened sensibility,” according to Tim Blanning.¹⁷ In his sonnet “Written in Bedlam: On Seeing a Beautiful Young Female Maniac” (1801), George Dyer writes: “Sweet maid! when sickness pales that angel face/Like the rude worm that riots on the rose/While goodness in thy gentle bosom glows.”¹⁸ Dyer continues, “[a]ll-hopeless pity here shall take her stand:/Pity for thee shall spare her softest sigh;/ For thou waste pity’s child, the friend of misery.”¹⁹ The madwoman then frequently began to be pictured outside of the hospital in natural and domestic settings. This is perhaps a reflection of the asylum reformations that followed

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several public scandals surrounding the brutal and inhumane treatment of patients at the beginning of the nineteenth century.²⁰

Ophelia exemplifies the essential paradigm of the madwoman: she is both the victim and the criminal, morally deplorable yet sexually desirable. In fact, Showalter argues that Ophelia is the source of all images of madwomen.²¹ As Polonius suggests in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Ophelia is imbued with the qualities of both piety and sinfulness, is both the chaste maid and the devil herself.²² Ophelia images frequently pinned her character as either that of an “innocent flower girl” or as a “close-to-nature erotomaniac.”²³ In this way the permeation of Ophelia images reflect the artist’s own desires

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just as Hamlet “painted” her in his mind’s eye and as Gertrude emphasized her decorative elements rather than her human tragedy.²⁴

John Everett Millais’ *Ophelia* (1851), the most popular image of Shakespeare’s fallen woman, emphasizes the floral adornments and lush environment over the figure of Ophelia herself whose presence is rendered naturalized with her surroundings. Her association with flower imagery “[calls] attention to her past distracted wandering and preoccupation with natural and sexual imagery” and locates her suicide in relation to “female vanity.”²⁵ Indeed, Elaine Showalter writes that “[f]emale lunatics were expected to care more about their appearance than males,



Fig 1: Leopold Burthe, *Ophelia*. 1852. Oil on canvas. Available from: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oph%C3%A9lie_de_L%C3%A9opold_Burthe.jpg



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and ... their sanity was often judged according to their compliance with middle-class standards of fashion.”²⁶ Additionally, “too much attention to dress and appearance was a sign of madness as well.”²⁷ The eroticization of Ophelia in images such as Leopold Burthe’s *Ophelia* (1852) ultimately derives itself from an allegorical tradition of painting courtesans as the Goddess Flora (Fig. 1).²⁸ Burthe’s *Ophelia* is highly sexual. Her figure is rendered with an emphasis upon her exposed breast and the curves of her thighs beneath wet linen. Suicide by drowning was commonly associated with prostitutes at the time of the painting’s creation. This pictorial allusion further reinforces Ophelia’s image as a ‘fallen woman.’ In comparison, Arthur Hughes’ *Ophelia* (1851-53) posits the madwoman as a naive innocent in waif-like form. The malleability of Ophelia’s image, whose love-madness oscillates between virginal and sexual display, mirrors an idealized construction of the madwoman who is submissive, aestheticized and ultimately consumable.

The Crazy Kate archetype originates from the 1785 poem *The Task* by William Cowper which narrates the downfall of a woman who lost her lover to the sea and ceaselessly wanders its shore awaiting his return.²⁹ In paintings of the era, the adoption of the crazed Kate motif are commonly sympathetic in nature and recycle traditional signifiers of the passive melancholic. Thomas Barker of Bath’s *Crazy Kate* (1794-1803) is pictured

clutching a tattered blue shawl with pieces of loose hair blowing in the wind beneath a weathered hat. She looks forlornly at the viewer as she aimlessly walks along the cliff of a sea that spreads out behind her. Her physiognomy resembles Pine’s *Madness* but the melancholy pallor of her skin and languid eyes express the hopelessness of her cause. The clenching and hiding of her hands hails from a medieval visual tradition in depictions of the melancholic subject.³⁰ A painting of the same name by William James Bishop likewise pictures Kate hunched forward clenching her hands to her chest (Fig. 2). Additionally, in the background is yet another allegorical symbol of madness in medieval visual culture, a tree split in two. Interestingly, Richard Dadd’s *Sketch of an Idea for Crazy Jane* (1855) was painted of the artist’s fellow male inmate at Bethlem Hospital who posed as a model.³¹ The male model is adorned with the straw, feathers, and vines of the madwoman which are held aloft and entwined in their hair but the anatomy of the figure, especially the muscular arms, are broad and masculine. Dadd’s *Sketch* provides a unique case study in the performance of both gender and madness. This image and John Henry Fuseli’s *Mad Kate* (1806-07) deter from typified depictions of Crazy Kate with the latter embracing an expressive and monstrous interpretation of the distraught madwoman.³² Despite these deviations the majority of the Crazy Kate images present a passive and melancholic madwoman. The nature of Crazy Kate’s madness,

Fig 3: Antoine Wiertz, *Faim, folie et crime*. 1853. Oil on canvas. 155 x 164 cm. Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Bruxelles / photo : J. Geleyns / Ro scan.

of a bereaved lover condemned to a modest torment, allowed the creation of a virginal madwoman that remedies Ophelia's fallen woman and evokes pity from the creator and the viewer.

By the mid-nineteenth century a new image of the madwoman took hold: that of the mother who murders her own children. By the 1860s urban infanticide was believed to be at epidemic levels in England with 150 reported cases of dead infants in London alone.³³ However, the infanticidal mother was not a new phenomenon of popular discussion as seen in William Hogarth's mid-eighteenth century dip-tych *Beer Street and Gin Lane* (1751). The two images intend to contrast the merits of beer-drinking with the evils of the gin craze that prompted anti-gin legislation.³⁴ *Gin Lane* places a drunken mother's negligence of her child at the center of its composition, heightening the infanticidal mother to the gravest of sins produced by drunkenness and by women in general. A later image by German artist Wilhelm Kaulbach features the infanticidal mother clutching a pile of sticks swaddled in a blanket as if it were her own child. *The Madhouse* (1835), in comparison to *Gin Lane*, emphasizes the unreason of the murderous mother rather than selfish negligence as in the former. The placement of the mother within the image's asylum scene cements her position within the visual tropes of madwomen.

The arrival of the image of the madwoman who murders her own children was a product of increasing anxiety surrounding changing gender roles and rising industrialization in the latter half of the 1800s. Author Rosemary Gould theorizes that the pervasive coverage of infanticide in nineteenth century urban centers can be attributed to "the high infant mortality rate among children of the poor, especially illegitimate children born in workhouses" and financially destitute mothers who resort to a violent form of late-term abortion.³⁵ Impoverished women were seen as the perpetrators of infanticide and evidenced society's moral bankruptcy. The infanticide epidemic required the creation of a new classification of madness termed "puerperal insanity" to explain "phrensies of despair" in pregnant and postpartum women. As previously discussed, outbreaks of insanity in women were commonly attributed to their reproductive anatomy. The bodily stress of pregnancy was believed to "[deprive] them of all judgment and rational conduct" leading new mothers to mania, melancholy, or violence towards their newborns.³⁶ In this way, the creation of puerperal insanity as a psychiatric condition common only to women not only disregarded economic circumstance but also perpetuated the long-held belief that women are more prone to unreason. Likewise, in the words of Marie-Anne Kilday, it "provided an explanation for female criminality that stepped outside the boundaries of 'acceptable' behaviour," thus disbanding the infanticidal woman from agency and choice.³⁷

A particularly gruesome depiction of the infanticidal woman can be seen in Antoine Wiertz's *Faim, Folie, Crime* (Hunger, Madness, Crime) (1864) (Fig. 3). The painting's madwoman is seen in manic ecstasy, holding aloft a bloodied knife used to dismember the swaddled dead infant in her lap whose leg can be seen protruding from a cooking cauldron. The woman's state of undress—possibly in reference to breastfeeding—her wild hair, manic physiognomy and the bifurcated branch seen through the window all ascribe to typical visual signifiers of a woman driven to madness. Interestingly, as the title indicates, the mother's cannibalistic violence is postured as the product of extreme poverty. The introduction of economic circumstance as a contributing factor to the madwoman's unreason is unique and is further illustrated by the poor state of her dwelling and an overturned basket offering but a single rotten fruit. As a graphic social critique *Faim, Folie, Crime* allows the viewer a voyeuristic gaze into the contemporary society's anxiety surrounding the gravest of rebellions against maternal femininity.

In conclusion, images of madwomen reveal much more about the artist's perception of the female gender than it does the women who they painted. The archetypes of the love-melancholic, rendered both passive and sexually available, courted pity from the consumer and allowed the domestication of the subversive nature of female madness. In comparison, images of the violent, infanticidal mad-

woman do not attempt to tame her into submission but rather emphasize the absence of morality in the woman who abandons her maternal nature and responsibility. The artist equipped himself with a cultural knowledge of physiognomy and the psychiatric discrepancies between the biological sexes to produce an iconography that allowed his female subjects to perform both their gender and their madness simultaneously. As discussed in the context of the Ophelia image, the madwoman became the site of male artist's and patriarchal culture's own fantasies/phantasies of female unreason and inflicted upon them changing degrees of morality to either subvert or accentuate their threat to normative femininity. As such, the madwoman model has served to reinforce the authority of patriarchal 'reason' over women in modern European visual history.

Endnotes

- ¹ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 10.
- ² Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the Insane*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 164.
- ³ However this is not to say that psychiatric photographs were not modeled after preconceived images of madness. There exist many examples of female asylum patients adorned with flowers and posed to resemble Ophelia.
- ⁴ The lack of statistical difference between gendered admissions is argued by Joan Busfield in opposition to Elaine Showalter's theory in *The Female Malady* that madness in the nineteenth century can be generalised as feminine. Joan Busfield, "Female Malady? Men, Women, and Madness in Nineteenth Century Britain," in *Sociology* 28:1 (February 1994), 165.
- ⁵ Jane Kromm, *The Art of Frenzy: Public Madness in the Visual Culture of Europe, 1500-1850*, (A&C Black, 2003), Preface x.
- ⁶ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 55.
- ⁷ G. Fielding Blanford quoted by Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 56.
- ⁸ Jane Kromm, *The Art of Frenzy*, (A&C Black, 2003), 156.
- ⁹ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 81.
- ¹⁰ Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the Insane*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), Preface ix.
- ¹¹ Jane Kromm, *The Art of Frenzy*, (A&C Black, 2003), 132.
- ¹² Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, (New York: Random House Inc., 1965), 69.
- ¹³ Ibid, 77.
- ¹⁴ Jane Kromm, *The Art of Frenzy*, (A&C Black, 2003), 135.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, 151.
- ¹⁶ Tim Blanning, *The Romantic Revolution: A History*, (Random House Publishing Group, 2011), 86.
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 10.
- ¹⁸ George Dyer, "Written in Bedlam: On Seeing a Beautiful Young Female Maniac," *Poems*, (London: Longman and Press, 1801).
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Michael Brown, "Rethinking Early Nineteenth-Century Asylum Reform," *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 2 (Jun., 2006), 437.
- ²¹ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 10.
- ²² William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 127.
- ²³ Jane E. Kromm, "The Feminization of Madness in Visual Representation," *Feminist Studies* 20, no. 3 (1994), 513.
- ²⁴ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 234-235.
- ²⁵ Jane Kromm, *The Art of Frenzy*, (A&C Black, 2003), 132.
- ²⁶ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 84.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Jane E. Kromm, "The Feminization of Madness in Visual Representation," *Feminist Studies* 20, no. 3 (1994), 513.
- ²⁹ William Cowper, *The Task: A Poem, in Six Books. By William Cowper, of the Inner Temple, Esq... To Which Are Added, by the Same Author, An Epistle* to Joseph Hill, Esq. *Tirocinium, or a Review of Schools, and the History of John Gilpin* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1785).
- ³⁰ Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the Insane*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 12.
- ³¹ "The Ghost of Crazy Jane" by William Nicholson tells a similar tale of love-madness as *The Task*. In it, the ghostly figure of the widowed Jane haunts the grave site of her dead lover. Crazy Jane, Kate, and Ann are all common to a similar European folk culture so for this reason I have included their representation under the auspices of a Crazy Kate archetype. William Nicholson, "The Ghost of Crazy Jane," in *Tales in verse and miscellaneous poems: descriptive of rural life and manners*, (Guthrie and Anderson, 1814), 223-225.
- ³² The British translation of Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* involved the help of Henry Fuseli and William Blake. "Their contact altered the earlier British visualization of the insane in a manner which was indicative for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially in Great Britain." Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the Insane*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 120.
- ³³ Rosemary Gould, "The History of an Unnatural Act: Infanticide and 'Adam Bede,'" in *Victorian Literature and Culture* 25, no. 2 (1997), 265.
- ³⁴ "William Hogarth, Beer Street and Gin Lane, two prints (1751)," *The British Museum*, Web, accessed Jan. 26, 2017.
- ³⁵ Rosemary Gould, "The History of an Unnatural Act," in *Victorian Literature and Culture* 25, no. 2 (1997), 266.
- ³⁶ Marie-Anne Kilday, *A History of Infanticide in Britain, C. 1600 to the Present*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 168.
- ³⁷ Ibid, 172.

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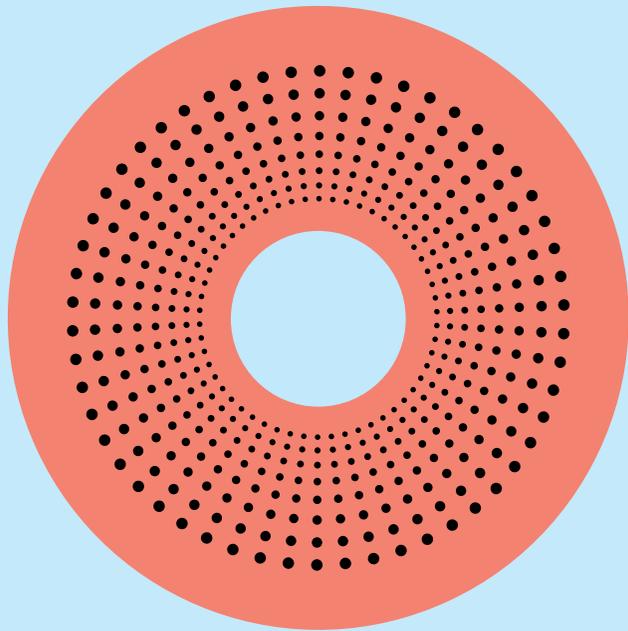
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You Can't Be a Palm Tree in Copenhagen:& Other Postcolonial Thoughts About Superkilen

Written by: Nick Cabelli
Edited by: Cynthia Hill



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Superkilen is a 322,000 sq. ft. /33,000 sq. m urban space in the Copenhagen neighborhood of Nørrebro, described by Danish architects Bjarke Ingels Group as “the toughest hood in town.”¹ Commissioned by philanthropic organization Realdania in partnership with the city of Copenhagen, Superkilen spans a length of 750m comprised of three zones of mixed public programs: The Red Square with a program of outdoor fitness, sports and benches; The Black Market which functions as a

conventional town square with fountain, trees and benches; and The Green Zone which is designated for sports and play, consisting of a few grassy hills and outdoor sports facilities. The length of the park is crossed by bike paths which extend off into the rest of Copenhagen. Installed throughout the urban park are 108 fixtures from around the world,² branded as “a world exhibition of furniture and everyday objects.”³ Superkilen formed part of a larger renewal project in the area, combining four different public spaces at the cost of 58.5 million DKK.⁴ The designers stated that they wished to give something to the area which the residents could be “proud” of, a “surrealist collection of global urban diversity that... reflects the true nature of the local neighborhood.”⁵ Its program unfolds in a local climate of political and social tension. It has been demonstrated in an exhaustive analysis by Brett Bloom that the design and implementation was completed without

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meaningful participation or feedback from the community, who envisioned a park with trees and grass and instead received concrete painted green, slippery when wet.⁶

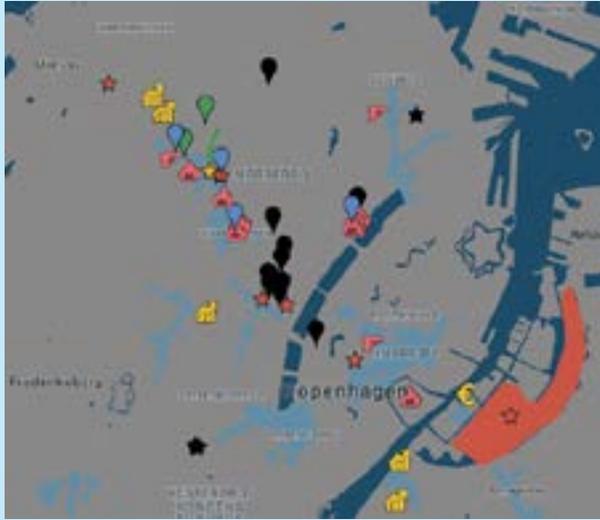
Officially unveiled in 2012, Superkilen remains unfinished—“perhaps will never be finished”⁷—and is in need of constant repair.⁸ Rather than a true polyfocal, pluralistic space of conviviality and hybridity, Superkilen and its sponsors aim to wield the brand of multiculturalism to integrate the current and future residents of Nørrebro into the mainstream agenda. Superkilen can also be seen “as a public way for the status quo power structure to process demographic shifts through a charade of multiculturalism.”⁹ Bloom argues it spatializes neo-liberal values and aims to intervene in the formation of individual and collective subjectivities in the neighbourhood’s residents.¹⁰ Adopting the viewpoint of Gerardo Mosquera, this paper will argue that through a mix of banal, transparent, ornamental tokenism the ultimate program of this funky yet ideologically charged public space renewal project “[strives] not to confront diversity but to control it.”¹¹

Superkilen is the initiative of Danish philanthropic organization Realdania. Publically committed to “projects in the built

environment: cities, buildings, and the built heritage,” Realdania receives its philanthropic funds from the profits generated by real estate holdings and investments.¹² It has been argued that it is “essentially a financial investment company.”¹³ The organization has enormous power in Danish public life, described as a “parallel structure” to the Danish government in terms of influence on what gets built in the country.¹⁴ Realdania approached the city of Copenhagen with the idea of the alien Superkilen appearing and re-orienting the civics and subjectivities of the neighbourhood:

“Realdania came to Københavns Kommune [The City of Copenhagen] and said, ‘We want to do an experiment. We want to see if we can change the social behavior or standard, the perception of the area by making a new city room.’ To us it was a bit like a UFO landing because it was a top-down approach.”¹⁵

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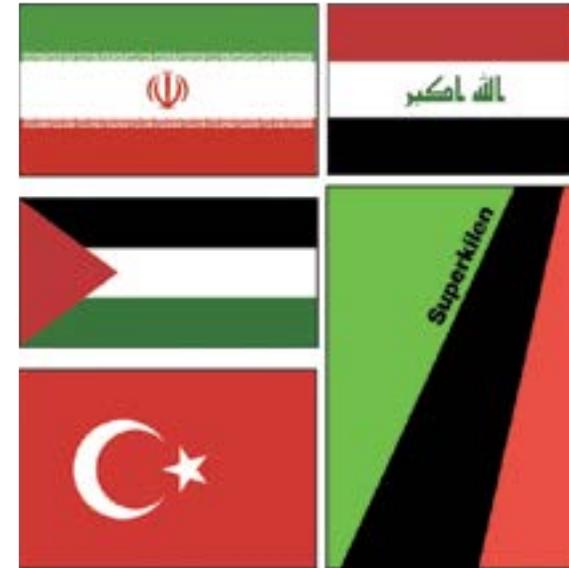


Fig 1. *across top* Research Map of Copenhagen, 2016. Map data copyright 2017 Google, location data care of the author. (CC BY-NC 3.0). Map available at <http://bit.ly/2lhcxPS>. Legend: YELLOW STAR: Superkilen; SQUATS (former squats are black pips, current squats are red pips, stars represent the squat was held for more than 3 years. Free Town Christiania is the highlighted red zone); LITTLE FIRES: riots, demonstrations; BLUE PIPS: Major police interventions / tear gassings; YELLOW GRAPHS: Bjarke Ingels Group designed projects in Copenhagen; EURO SYMBOL: Realdania sponsored projects in Copenhagen without BIG; RED GUNS: 2015 "Terror" shootings; GREEN PIPS Non-Western protests and street actions

Fig 2. *across bottom* Ungdomshuset Riot, Nørrebro, Copenhagen, Denmark, March 2007. Photo available from San Francisco Bay Independent Media Center, accessed 13 February 2017. <https://www.indybay.org/news-items/2007/03/21/18380467.php>

Fig 3. *top* (clockwise from top left): national flags of Iran, Iraq (2008), the logo of Superkilen (2012), national flags of Turkey, Palestine. Flags courtesy of Wikicommons. Superkilen logo available from Superflex, <http://superflex.net/superkilen>.

Nørrebro is renowned as a hotbed of leftist activism and a growing hub of non-Western migration from Muslim-majority countries. The accompanying map [Fig. 1] charts some of the history of the neighbourhood. After the founding of anarchist squatter city Free Town Christiania on a former military base across town in the Copenhagen harbour, in the 1980s and 1990s, Nørrebro was a bastion of political agitation for autonomous communities.¹⁶ Nørrebro was the major site of buildings squatted by the BZ movement, who occupied multiple buildings at various times between 1981 and 1995.¹⁷ Various pro-autonomy, anti-police, anti-EU, alter-globalization demonstrations (including even a party-style Reclaim the Streets event) erupted into full-scale rioting across Nørrebro and the bordering communities at least five times in twenty-five years, with countless other skirmishes between radicals and the state.¹⁸ At the same time, Nørrebro was the location of a major concentration of non-Western migrants in Copenhagen the bulk of asylum seekers arriving in the 1980s from Iran, Iraq, and the Occupied Territories and in the 1990s from Somalia and Bosnia.¹⁹ In Denmark, it is illegal to register religious affiliation, but it is estimated there are some 170,000-200,000 Muslims in Denmark, about 3.7% of the total population.²⁰

In a span of six months both of these local communities—squatters and Sufis, anarchists and aniconists, intellectuals, agitators, adolescents,

grandparents—erupted into the streets in the form of unrelated international campaigns of media-aware networking, demonstrations, protests, public pressure, international lobbying and smouldering riots. In January through the summer of 2006 Muslim-majority governments and Islamic diasporas became enraged by what was perceived as blasphemous cartoons published in Copenhagen the previous year by the far-right newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. Unleashed by savvy networking of the Danish Muslim community leaders, the rage around the world at the cartoons—often paired with local grievances—resulted in worldwide protests and attacks on the Danish embassies in Lebanon and Syria, resulting in 200 deaths around the world.²¹ In December of the same year the youth/squatter/activist/leftist/punk element raged at the demolition of Unhlushuset—Nørrebro’s center of leftist activism and punk concerts since it was initially occupied in 1984²²—resulting in rioting in December 2006 and March 2007 [Fig. 2]. Seven months after the general rioting ended, BIG’s winning Superkilen project was submitted for the initiative to redevelop a 750m stretch of urban corridor in Nørrebro just down the street from the former site of Unhlushuset, now an empty lot. To this fractured environment, to a district rife with insurgent energies, what could be nicer than a pleasant stroll through a “modern romantic garden?”²³

Regardless of official Superkilen marketing texts which present itself as a benevolent and positive force, the core

program of the park is the integration of Nørrebro residents into controllable behaviour. Bjarke Ingels is open about this in the official Superkilen monograph: “This project was all about integration: it was like six months after the riots, after the Mohammed cartoon crisis. It was so present in

Superkilen’s is a token tolerance, something to ease the ambiguity of tolerance—a monument to tolerance and thereby alleviate the Danes of that responsibility.²⁹ Its collection of park items are generally those which “explicitly manifests difference or that better satisfies the expectations of otherness held by neo-exoticism.”³⁰ Superkilen is replete with an Orientalizing gaze which aims to control the Other by controlling its representation in the neighbourhood in the press and within popular consciousness. The Afghan swing has been modified, “you can’t go as high in Copenhagen as you can in Kabul,”³¹ the Jordanian bus stop sign from the land where “buses never come on time,” some soil from Palestine, uninspiring Cold-War era sculptural plop from Kazakhstan. Even the colours of the Superkilen promotional materials and the park themselves can be a space of activating subjectivities through iconography, ornamentation, and the powerful associations of colour,³² as seen in Fig. 3. Superkilen “wants to take credit for pointing out diversity and equate this recognition with supporting it, [the park] and its enablers are paternalistic about democracy, difference, and making city spaces.”³³



Nørrebro is renowned as a hotbed of leftist activism and a growing hub of non-Western migration from Muslim-majority countries. The accompanying map [Fig. 1] charts some of the history of the neighbourhood. After the founding of anarchist squatter city Free Town Christiania on a former military base across town in the Copenhagen harbour, in the 1980s and 1990s, Nørrebro was a bastion of political agitation for autonomous communities.¹⁶ Nørrebro was the major site of buildings squatted by the BZ movement, who occupied multiple buildings at various times between 1981 and 1995.¹⁷ Various pro-autonomy, anti-police, anti-EU, alter-globalization demonstrations (including even a party-style Reclaim the Streets event) erupted into full-scale rioting across Nørrebro and the bordering communities at least five times in twenty-five years, with countless other skirmishes between radicals and the state.¹⁸ At the same time, Nørrebro was the location of a major concentration of non-Western migrants in Copenhagen the bulk of asylum seekers arriving in the 1980s from Iran, Iraq, and the Occupied Territories and in the 1990s from Somalia and Bosnia.¹⁹ In Denmark, it is illegal to register religious affiliation, but it is estimated there are some 170,000-200,000 Muslims in Denmark, about 3.7% of the total population.²⁰

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Multiple Choice

Superkilen is: _____
(choose all that apply)

- insidious, interpassive counter-postcolonial playground
- interdisciplinary, affectivist, socially-engaged, conceptual art-informed brainwashing
- relational indoctrination
- urban renewal de-agit-prop slash marketing campaign slash ornament on the scale of the city slash web app hashtag #onlyincapitalism-LOL #wenttobilbaotookselfieinwashroom
- détournement, détourned! (back into regular ol' spectacle) + "Globalization is only possible in a world drastically reorganized by colonialism."
- 2 scoops of occupied territories, a cynical reflection of the shrinking Palestinian realpolitik
- now arriving at the bus stop to nowhere: nothing
- you can't be a palm tree in Copenhagen
- 

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program of the park is the integration of Nørrebro residents into controllable behaviour. Bjarke Ingels is open about this in the official Superkilen monograph: "This project was all about integration: it was like six months after the riots, after the Mohammed cartoon crisis. It was so present in this neighbourhood, and people in Denmark were suffering a bit from the ambiguity of being tolerant."²⁴ BIG's own tolerance can be questioned, describing Nørrebro as "a potent mixture of frustrated youth culture and maladapted immigrants;"²⁵ and a tolerance contingent on the maladapted intruders first adopting mainstream so-called "Danish" values.²⁶

In the tightly controlled appearance of the physical space of the park and the curation of exotic yet banal objects, individual and collective subjectivities are moulded. Superkilen "[orchestrates] social behaviour by providing scripts for encounters and assembly... by reinforcing relatively stable cues about correct behaviour."²⁷ As Brett Bloom describes:

"When you spend time in Superkilen, you are not simply enjoying a public park when you stroll, play a game of chess, or watch your children frolic, you are 'being creative' and you are 'being integrated.' You are participating, (extremely) in a magic machine for producing individual and collective subjectivities."²⁸

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The paternalistic microcosm of power relations between Superkilen's creators and end-users can also be seen on the scale of the continent:

“Seen as a threat to social cohesion... or to the secular character of European societies... adherence to Islam or declaration of some sort of Muslim identity by Muslims in Europe has come to be viewed as a deficiency, as something that had to be rectified through adaptation to European cultures or to be contained through various forms of exclusion. Featuring prominently in the process of construction of societal insecurity in most European societies, Islam, and more specifically, Europe’s Muslims, have unavoidably borne the brunt of public scrutiny and condemnation.”³⁴

Superkilen's objective to integrate the maladapted is demonstrative of what Gerardo Mosquera dubbed Marco Polo Syndrome: “[Perceiving] whatever is different as the carrier of life-threatening viruses rather than nutritional elements.”³⁵ There exists a body of academic text describing Denmark as “one of the most staunchly anti-Muslim nations in the west,”³⁶ just as there exists a smaller, weaker body of academic work (and right-wing popular press) defending “Danish values” and “Danish humour” and criticizing the first critique’s method-

ology.³⁷ Thus we can see how this form of cultural xenophobia is a “complex disease that often disguises its symptoms.”³⁸ The multicultural integration

that Superkilen strives for is not an enlightened, postcolonial “new consciousness”³⁹ but more of “a tolerance based on paternalism, quotas and *political correctness*.”⁴⁰ Rather than an earnest attempt at a multicultural public space or meaningful participatory creation of the park, Superkilen is seen as “a monument to globalization, petroleum, and neoliberal city making [neither] ecologically, socially or environmentally, appropriate to its climate.”⁴¹ Towards these quotas, espousing the accepted and expected rhetoric of human rights

and diversity Superkilen responds with empty gestures.

Superkilen is a space which attempts to make capitalism more beautiful⁴² while still being purposely ugly enough to avoid *too* much accelerated gentrification.⁴³ To paraphrase Vito Acconci, Superkilen belongs to the people and they, in turn, belong to the state⁴⁴ (and perhaps the state belongs to Realdania). As Antoine Picon explains, “to be believable, respected and operative at moments other than those marked by the exercise of sheer

force, authority has to be adorned.”⁴⁵ The politics of Superkilen can be seen as the articulation of systems of signs and power—the signs of token multiculturalism, urban ornamentation and renewal.⁴⁶ Here the ornamentation serves as a reminder of the state’s power to intervene in the urban landscape, and globalization’s ability to “impose homogenized, cosmopolitan cultural patterns built on Eurocentric foundations, which inevitably flatten, reify, and manipulate culture differences.”⁴⁷ The subjectivities Superkilen desires for its users replicate and continue the power relationships which programmed their subjectivities in the first place.

Superkilen is a street battle where the postcolonial melancholia of Denmark faces off against the double consciousness of Nørrebro residents. The concept of “double consciousness” refers to an individual’s awareness of both the functioning of idealized roles and their simultaneous exclusion from those systems, “a concept in social philosophy referring, originally, to a source of inward “twoness” putatively experienced by African-Americans because of their racialized oppression and disvaluation in a white-dominated society.”⁴⁸ The idea of “postcolonial melancholia” stems from former colonial powers’ malaise in the face of ethnic plurality in their own formerly homogenous societies, or as Gilroy explains: “[the] inability to mourn its loss of empire and accommodate the empire’s consequences... the elemen-

tal challenge represented by the social, cultural and political transition in which the presence of postcolonial and other sanctuary seeking people has been unwittingly bound up.”⁴⁹

Critics point to BIG and Realdania’s selection of trees: non-native species of flora which aren’t appropriate for Danish ecology, glowing red reflections bouncing into adjacent homes, broken and fading furniture, unforeseen expensive repairs, sound system unwanted and unplugged, a folded concrete canopy which was never installed, near-instant graffiti removal while real Nørrebro outside the confines of the park is left to be scrawled upon endlessly, etc.⁵⁰ But what if this series of inappropriate selections stems not from a stubborn, paternalistic indifference or a busy starchitect oversight diet of missed details, but rather emanates from a calculating, politically savvy and theory-based gesture specifically aimed at engaging the double consciousness of Nørrebro migrants and their descendants?

Endnotes

- ¹ Bjarke Ingels Group, "Re-Squat," in *Yes Is More: an Archicomic on Architectural Evolution* (Köln; Taschen, 2010): 250.
- ² Superkilen, "Superkilen's 108 Objects and their Meanings." Available from Superflex, accessed May 5, 2016 http://superflex.net/files/superkilen_objects_EN.pdf
- ³ Bjarke Ingels Group, "Superkilen Masterplan." Accessed May 10, 2016 http://cdn.big.dk/projects/suk/slides/project_sheet_S_UK%20KLA-VIKA%20UK_original.pdf
- ⁴ About \$11.4 million USD with the exchange rate of June 8, 2016. "Dates and Facts," in Superkilen—*Social Infrastructure: Public Space Through Social Interaction*, ed. Barbara Steiner (Stockholm; Arvinius Förlag, AB, 2013): 215
- ⁵ BIG, "Masterplan"
- ⁶ Bloom, "Superkilen: Participatory Park Extreme!" *Kritik*, no. 207 (April 2013): 8-12.
- ⁷ Bjarke Ingels, "Kick," 68
- ⁸ Brett Bloom, "Superkilen: Participatory Park Extreme!" *Kritik*, no. 207 (April 2013): 5.
- ⁹ Ibid 8
- ¹⁰ Ibid
- ¹¹ Mosquera warns: "Power today strives not to confront diversity but to control it." Mosquera, "Alien-Own/ Own-Alien," 167
- ¹² The core of Realdania's wealth was established during the merger of the national bank and private mortgage-credit institution. With nearly €3,000,000,000 in holdings in 2014 Realdania's investment strategy "built on value creation through active management"—moving money around to make money, in non-financial jargon, with a portfolio which includes Danish real estate, equities, and disaster derivatives. References: Gail Moss, "Equities Drive 16% Annual Return at Denmark's
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- ¹³ Richard Tomlinson, "Danish Real Estate Charity Build Balance," Top 1000 Funds, published May 8, 2013, accessed May 20, 2016. <http://www.top1000funds.com/profile/2013/05/08/danish-real-estate-charity-builds-balance/>
- ¹⁴ Bloom, "Superkilen," 15
- ¹⁵ Troels Glismann, interview with Brett Bloom, as cited in Bloom, "Superkilen," 13
- ¹⁶ Geroge Katsiaficas, "European Autonomous Movements." The Subversion of Politics: *European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ; Humanities Press International, 1997: 121-140.
- ¹⁷ Flemming Mikkelsen and Rene Karpantschhof, "Youth as a Political Movement: Development of the Squatters' and Autonomous Movement in Copenhagen, 1981-95," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, no. 25.3 (September 2001): 609-628
- ¹⁸ A. Hunsicker, *Behind the Shield: Anti-Riot Operations Guide*. Location; Universal-Publishers, 2011.
- ¹⁹ "Islam in Denmark." Euro-Islam.info, project sponsored by GSRL Paris / CNRS France and Harvard University. Accessed May 28, 2016, <http://www.euro-islam.info/country-profiles/denmark/>
- ²⁰ Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integrations Affairs, "Facts and Figures," (July 2009): 7 as seen in "Islam in Denmark," Euro-Islam.info
- ²¹ Jason Burke and Luke Harding, Alex Duval Smith, Peter Beaumont. "How Cartoons Fanned Flames of Muslim Rage." *The Guardian*. Published Sunday, February 5, 2006. Accessed May 23, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2006/feb/05/pressandpublishing.religion>
- ²² Mikkelsen and Karpantschhof, "Youth as a Political Movement," Appendix
- ²³ BIG, "Re-Squat," *Yes Is More: an Archicomic on Architectural Evolution* (Köln; Taschen, 2010): 255.
- ²⁴ Bjarke Ingels, "Kick to the Nuts," 70
- ²⁵ Bjarke Ingels Group, "Re-Squat," 252
- ²⁶ Bloom, "Superkilen," 8
- ²⁷ Ibid 6
- ²⁸ Ibid 15-16
- ²⁹ James E. Young, "Counter-Monument," WHERE?
- ³⁰ Mosquera, "Alien-Own," 165
- ³¹ "Superkilen's 108 Objects"
- ³² Bjarke Ingels, "Imagine a Moroccan Fountain! (Selection and Research.)" In Superkilen—*Social Infrastructure: Public Space Through Social Interaction*, ed. Barbara Steiner. Stockholm; Arvinius Förlag, AB, 2013.
- ³³ Bloom, "Superkilen," 8
- ³⁴ Spyros A. Sofos and Roza Tsagarousianou, "Muslims in Europe: Balancing Between Belonging and Exclusion," *Islam in Europe: Public Spaces and Civic Networks*. London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013: 10
- ³⁵ Mosquera, "Marco Polo," 35
- ³⁶ "Islam in Denmark," Euro-Islam.com, where it is also explained discrimination against individuals of "foreign" backgrounds is endemic in the Danish labour and housing markets, a country where legislation can decree that non-residents cannot be married before 24 years of age to combat arranged marriages. There is no separation of church and state in Denmark, which is an officially Christian nation, where a new law commands religious leaders must speak Danish and uphold

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(the so-called "imam" law), a country who had a whole parliamentary commission investigate how many women wear the burka in Denmark: three.

- ³⁷ Bloom, "Superkilen," 23
- ³⁸ Mosquera, "Marco Polo," 38
- ³⁹ Mosquera, "Alien-Own," 165
- ⁴⁰ Ibid 165. Emphasis in the original.
- ⁴¹ Bloom, "Superkilen," 23
- ⁴² Hito Steyerl laments: "If contemporary art is the answer, the question is: how to make capitalism more beautiful? "The Politics of Art: *Contemporary Art and the Transition to Post-Democracy*," e-flux journal 21 (December 2010): 2. Accessed February 1, 2016 <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/politics-of-art-contemporary-art-and-the-transition-to-post-democracy/>
- ⁴³ Martin Rein-Cano of Topotek 1 in interview with Bjarke Ingels (BIG), Lorenz Dexler (Topotek 1), Astrid Bruus Thomsen (Realdania), Tina Saaby (City Architect), "A Kick in The Nuts of Good Taste (Conflict and Consensus)," in Superkilen—*Social Infrastructure: Public Space Through Social Interaction*, ed. Barbara Steiner (Stockholm; Arvinius Förlag, AB, 2013): 73
- ⁴⁴ Vito Acconci, "Leaving Home: Notes On Insertions into the Public." In *Public Art: Kunst Im Öffentlichen Raum*, ed. Florian Matzner. 45-49. Ostfildern/Ruit; Hatje Cantz, 2001.
- ⁴⁵ Picon, "Politics of Ornament," 121
- ⁴⁶ Ibid
- ⁴⁷ Mosquera, "Alien-Own" 163
- ⁴⁸ John P. Pittman, "Double Consciousness," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, published March 21 2016, accessed 28 January 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/double-consciousness>
- ⁴⁹ Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* [New York; Columbia University Press, 2005]: 102
- ⁵⁰ Bloom lists these complaints and many more.

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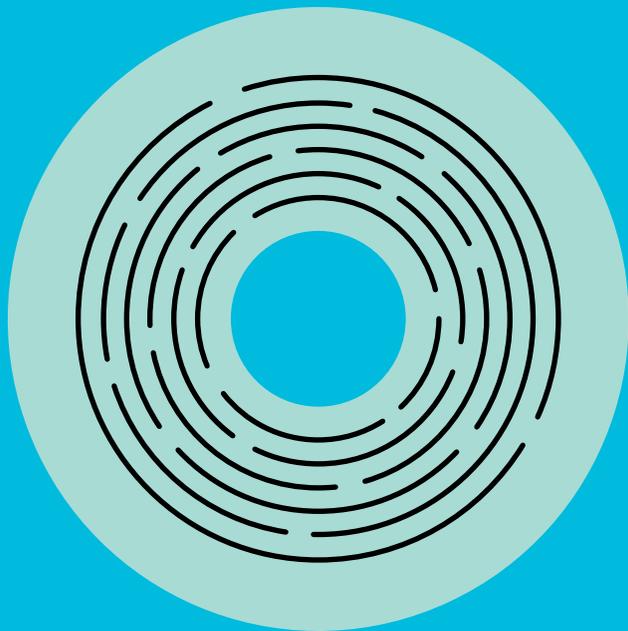
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Corridart & Murale: The Shift From Conflict Inside the Institution Towards Institutionalized Conflict

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In 1976, the city of Montreal saw the arrival of a true mega-event of the 20th century, the Olympic Games. With its flow of capital and infrastructure development, certain points of tension, friction and revolt occurred. While the city was becoming a construction site, the Montreal arts sector received a small sum of Olympic money. Under the guidance of The Olympic Culture Program

of the Museum of Contemporary Art) proposed the concept of an “outside exhibition composed of vibrant works which would line a Montreal street, creating a corridor effect.”¹ Melvin Charney, a professor in the Architecture Department at the University of Montreal and engaged political artist, was subsequently named the organizer and coordinator of the event. Thus the street art event named *Corridart* was born. The work was originally intended to last from the 7th until the 30th of July 1976 but controversy struck and the mayor ordered the whole thing to be torn down on the night of the July 13th. A few months after the act of censorship occurred, Melvin Charney described the function of *Corridart* as a “crowd-pleasing even[t] [...] used to soften public hostility to the staging of the costly games.”² While his explanation for *Corridart* is useful it nonetheless brushes over

large sections of the city’s contextual reality. I propose to position the event in relation to its historical framework in order to understand what kind of tactical instrument the city’s governing body considered the arts to be. Understanding the event beyond its ‘supposedly’ pacifying function will give us insight into how and why art was being deployed in the city of Montreal at the end of the twentieth century.

Corridart was part of a number of strategies to improve the city-image of Montreal—foreign investment, city identity and urban planning. Used a divisive tactic, *Corridart* contributed to a series of broader civic strategies at play. However, when the project ‘failed’ to realize these objectives, the mayor, in one swift strike, tore down the entire event. Comparatively, today the city of Montreal uses *MURAL*, a street art event, in much the same way as a policing tactic. One may analyse Montreal’s current use of street art through an understanding of *Corridart* and its historical context as art serving as political device. In doing so, I identify the lines of continuity, but with the new modes of its implementation.

Mayor Jean Drapeau, often described as a great moralist, had been in office for sixteen consecutive years (and would continue for another ten) when the Olympics arrived in Montreal. Amongst his numerous mega projects, he was responsible for the construction of the Montreal metro and the organization of Expo 67. In his mind the metro system brought Montreal one step closer to his dream, of holding an international status comparable to that of other famous North American cities such as New York. He championed a number of projects aimed at cleaning the city of criminals, gay men and women, junkies and other individuals he deemed unacceptable through reforming the police

force, and destroying large parts of the city that he (amongst other moralist reformers of the time) considered to be slums i.e., poor working class neighbourhoods, such as the *faubourg m'lasse* and goose village.³ He famously demolishing 30 000 homes⁴ in order to build larger boulevards in the hopes of aiding the flow of traffic, “*puisqu'il s'agissait simplement d'enlever des laideurs de taudis.*”⁵

Drapeau is famed for numerous grandiose statements such as, “[i]f things happen in this city, it is because I capture the real wishes and needs of the people at large.”⁶ And if by people at large he meant pan-Canadian and international developers, he may not have been completely incorrect. Like the Georges-Eugène Haussmann of past days, his conception of ‘at large’ failed to take into account certain Montrealers, namely middle and poor working class city dwellers. Melvin Charney, regarding the way Montreal was being run, prophesized “[t]he next few years will decide whether this is to become another homogenized North American city, or whether it will retain its human scale [...] [if so] we are going to have to stop tearing it apart.”⁷ The homogenized North American city would be the New York of its day – the real world-class city, as Drapeau would undoubtedly say. The backdrop of Montreal in the 1970s was an ever-changing one. Buildings were going up and buildings were coming down. It was a developer’s dream: “the downtown [was] up for grabs.”⁸ High-rise buildings were the

fad as they brought in more residents per square foot of land, which led to more tax revenues per year for the city. Fewer three-storey gray brick family homes meant more money in the city’s pockets, thus guaranteeing the perpetual cycle of demolition. However, as the high-rises went up, so did the property taxes on the homes next to them, and eventually “the owner of a private house in the midst of high-rise developments [could] find himself unable to pay taxes in his increasingly valuable property.”⁹

The urban renewal policies of the Drapeau administration were not unilaterally agreed upon. Advocated by private developers, such a mentality saw the city as a personal sand box waiting to be dug up and exploited for profit. Numerous government entities welcomed such development as it increased annual tax revenues and made for good business. “The city’s urban renewal policy in such cases has traditionally followed the bulldoze and rebuild approach,”¹⁰ where the rebuilding would make capital trickle down and pool amongst the masses, helping the economy. The “trickle-down theory”¹¹ of economics had a fervent follower—the mayor himself. The urban planner Vincent Ponte was also in favour of Drapeau’s policy stating:

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“We admire London now, but at one time Queen Elizabeth I thought it was growing too fast [...] [b]ut London grew despite the Queen. [...] All great cities of the world were created by kinds and emperors—who had taste. [...] [Y]ou just can’t stop everything. You have to let development continue. There are too many investments, too much money at stake.”¹²

However, those against Drapeau’s policy argued for a master plan of the city that would regulate its development. The city would be assessed zone-by-zone, focusing on individual boroughs and their specific needs.¹³ They wanted to implement “a system of controlling profits and land values”¹⁴ that would protect and be profitable not to a handful of contractors and hotels, but to a large portion of the population.

Those against Drapeau actively responded resulting in the emergence of numerous citizen-driven movements. There was a growing number of organizations aimed at saving historical sites, green spaces and low-income housing. The Olympics exacerbated such tension, being responsible for the destruction of cherished spaces and causing a new phase of urban destruction to occur. The disappearance of green spaces across the downtown core and its close vicinity, Viau Park for example, was replaced by Olympic necessities such as the Olympic Village. Thus *Corridart* emerged on a

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political battlefield—a fight between two camps pitting two very distinct conceptions for Montreal’s future development. The city’s very identity—its present and past, but also its methods of preparing for the future of art and policy—was the center of the project’s struggle.

Corridart was created out of this tumultuous political context, and while Charney insists he planned the event as a “double-edge show,”¹⁵ i.e. as being in service of the government and the people, this next section tries to understand the outdoor exhibition’s function in the eyes of the city officials. In others words, I plan on understanding why one would fund such a project and ask whether it was intended to serve any other tactical purpose other than being a public pacifier? The original premise of the event was to explore the city’s problems while serving as a “place of festivity and visual animation as well as a portrayal of the historical realities of its site, as it incorporated two factors [...] : Sherbooke Street as a symbol of Montréal; and its past processional role [...]”¹⁶ However, somewhere between the planning and realization of the project, the event was hijacked. Charney took over and placed more emphasis on exploring the problems, or ‘historical realities’ of the city rather than on the festivities. This inevitably led to the exhibition being taken down by city workers in a quasi-covert operation. Compared to its predecessors, such as ceremonial outdoor presentations that “includ[ed] vast

floats that showed the accomplishment and past of a ruler, his genealogy, his mythic and ancestral forbears,” *Corridart* was definitely perceived as a “dramatic shadow to the sunlit gaiety of the Olympics.”¹⁷ *Corridart* did not come close to exuding the joviality expected of such events typical of St-Jean Baptist or Santa Clause parades that had adorned Sherbrooke Street in the past. What is clear is that whatever problems *Corridart* explored they were not what the mayor had expected and fearing the bad light it would cast on the city, he was quick to censure the exhibition.

In numerous instances, budget cuts seem to have been at play, causing works like André Ménard’s *Pine Forest* (1976) to turn sour. What was at first to be a work aimed at “bringing ‘man’ back to nature”¹⁸ by creating the “impression of a park,” was later transformed into a few trees, planted in sand (that eventually died) wrapped in barbed wire with a “Danger, Radiation”¹⁹ sign attached to them. For McConathy it came to be “[a]n emblem of the fallen Nature from which the Church sought to rescue the savage.”²⁰ While the work was placed, like many others on vacant lots, it was not obvious in its written proposal that an overt political message was at play. In fact, it might simply be a failed attempt at recycling a work in the face of a lack of funds. Was it budget cuts or was the artist’s original proposal done in bad faith, as the 1981 court ruling suggests? In 1981, after having their work censored, a lawsuit was filed

against the city. The judge ruled the verdict against the *Corridart* organizers, arguing that the event had in fact been done in bad faith. In his eyes, the artists involved had created works that had a specific political message that went against the original conception of the exhibition. Although the original idea was vague, the ruling came down to the fact that the event was not festive enough to accompany the Olympics and gave a tainted view of the city. Thus according to the court ruling, the event was not what the city had expected nor did it perform its intended function.²¹

Jean-Pierre Séguin’s *Intervention* (1976) was another work that the court interpreted in a very narrow way. Like Ménard’s work, Séguin’s original draft and description had seemingly nothing to do with urban policies. He wished to explore the “paradox between value of something contained versus its container and the waste often associated with packaging.”²² His work consisted of two groupings of cardboard boxes, one protected by a clear plastic while the other was left outside to deteriorate under the elements, which was evidently not the most festive of works but not overtly done in bad faith. Similarly, Danyelle Morin’s work, consisting of banners burnt by blowtorches,²³ and Charney’s *Maisons de la rue Sherbrooke* (1976)²⁴ were seen in the same light of destruction and ruin. Charney built a building’s façade out of plywood and scaffolding. It looked like a typical grey stone house that inhabited the streets of Montreal; the same houses that had been the target of demolition.²⁵ The

bright yellow scaffoldings that were erected at diverse locations around the city, which served as support for various photographic works, added to the half-built/half-demolished look that city officials abhorred. More specifically the court had this to say about Charney’s work: “[o]n ne peut pas s’empêcher de penser qu’un sinistre, soit un incendie ou autre désastre, est passé par là. [...] C’est une horreur.”²⁶

Moreover, the court in their verdict chastised the curatorial texts that accompanied much of the works. Such written components are often forgotten in the writing on the subject but they definitely shocked the mayor and his officials.²⁷ The works of Kevin McKenna and Marc Cramer, for example, were accompanied by write-ups describing the East End as being full of killers, stench, deforested green spaces and above all lacking housing.²⁸ Marc Cramer’s piece *Une Rue Montrealaise* (1976) was not spared from criticism either. His reference to the bleak standardised future awaiting the citizens of the high-rise towers seems to have added fuel to the court ruling.²⁹ In sum, the artworks went against what the city wanted and were thus counter-productive to the outdoor exhibition’s conceived function.

In fact, the arts as a whole had seen a shift in the decades preceding the Olympics. More specifically, ever since the mid-20th century the function of art in Canada changed. If in the early 20th century museums were funded by the elite and served as a way of

civilizing the working class, by the 1950’s the unification of Canada under a single nationalist identity had become the tactical aim of art.³⁰ This is what Charney did not account for when he defines *Corridart* as a “crowd-pleasing even[t] [...] used to soften public hostility to the staging of the costly games.”³¹ In the 1960s, art went beyond acting as a mere social analgesic for city dwellers and tourists. It was caught up in a complex interplay between civic and provincial nationalistic identity and a desire for foreign investment and growth. The province of Quebec in particular had seen a rise in separatist sentiments throughout the 1970’s but especially in 1976 when the Parti Québécois, a political advocate for Quebec separatism, won the provincial election. Moreover, the province’s political disposition came to a radical change with the creation of Bill 101, reinforcing French as Quebec’s official language. Quebec was in need of an identity separate from the rest of Canada—a provincial nationalism—and tactically the Olympics would serve to both “put French Canada at centre stage in the world and help attract large-scale foreign investment.”³² While the concept of hosting an art event in the street did not emerge directly out of such a nationalist and pro-foreign investor mentality, *Corridart* was the only unavoidable outdoor art exhibition to take place on one of Montreal’s busiest streets. In staying true to a ‘provincialist’ desire, it just so happened to be the only sponsored art event to feature a purely Quebec based roster of artists.³³

Thus, while other exhibitions such as *Mosaïcart* and *Artisanage* featured pan-Canadian artists, *Corridart* emerged on the scene as an evident advocate for the representation of Quebec and its artists.³⁴

Although, there seems to have been a certain “je m’en foutisme” in regards to the exhibition, *Corridart* received “less than 10% of COJO’s total visual arts budget,”³⁵ which was very little to achieve the project’s desired results. Moreover, this sum was acquired only after certain members on the *Corridart* board went from one provincial and territorial government to the next “asking for contributions.”³⁶ Specifically, if the city officials intended the event to promote and depict the city’s history in a positive light, why would anyone allow Melvin Charney—an overt political actor against the city’s urban expansion—to organize the event? Why did no one ask any questions when the issue of exploring Montreal’s problems in *Corridart* was put forth? In light of this, the court had this to say about *Corridart*: “Il faut se souvenir que l’exposition *Corridart* n’a été qu’une organisation secondaire et accessoire aux Jeux Olympiques.”³⁷ In sum, the arts in the 1970s were not conceived as stand-alone instruments for social action. They were supplementary in nature to other larger, more effective tactics of social change.

The city’s governing body had a typical conception and value of the arts for its time. The city wanted a

docile collection of works that pushed forward “un esprit de fête, une atmosphère de sérénité [...] de charme et d’harmonie.”³⁸ When the destruction of unwanted neighbourhoods was no longer an effective political tactic, art was employed instead. In an interview, Charney once summed up the mayor’s conception of the relation between slums and the arts as, “you put art in front of them and the kind of art that no one understands”³⁹ in order to bring people’s attention away from reality. It is closer to “interior decorating as opposed to art.”⁴⁰ Thus, art was used to increase the value of a building, and by extension a neighbourhood without having to actually do any physical change. The arts were indeed, like parades and festivities, conceived as a ‘docilising’ technology, but they were also attached to a whole other set of tactical aims. In other words, art served as a nationalist appendage to the reshaping of the city, its identity and attracting foreign investors. Instead, a political message with some actual weight and visibility threatened the very goals it was created to aid, or as the court defined it:

“Une image déformée a été présentée dans *Corridart* des problèmes d’urbanisme de Montréal. [...] *Corridart* aurait dû propager la joie. Il était plutôt de nature a engendrer la tristesse. [...] Ce fut un échec. Trop d’oeuvres exposées dans *Corridart* présentaient des images défavorables de la ville, sa population, de son éducation.”⁴¹

Art was understood as a mask to cover up tensions in the hopes of reshaping the identity of the city and its neighborhoods. With this understanding of the function of the arts, *Corridart* within its context became a social tactic gone rogue. In recent years, however, the city of Montreal has appropriated a new instrument for social and urban change—street art.

Ever since *Corridart*, we have seen a shift take place in the way public art is used in Montreal. Though outdoor public art exhibitions such as the ones born out of the late 1960s and 1970s can still be found, street art has emerged as a new art medium in recent years. The once ostracized, non-legitimate and illegal art, known as graffiti, has now become a new tool in urban planning. Of course, the term ‘graffiti’ was dispelled for its criminal connotations and has been revamped in Montreal as ‘murals’ celebrated in a collective annual event we call *MURAL*. These public works of art are meant to fit into a long tradition of wall paintings instead of the illegal markings that are often associated with impoverished and dangerous areas. In this sense, street art is a new form of policing. If art was meant to appease, supplement and attract, it now has a fourth dimension: to censure from within. While *Corridart*’s censorship came from a governing body and made itself visible through slight tyrannical moments, censorship comes from below, seemingly giving freedom of expression to artists while conventionalizing street art as art medium instead of vandalization.

Graffiti, like the works of *Corridart*, is something that goes against the city’s urban planning agenda by devaluing neighbourhoods and tainting the city’s image. In Jean Drapeau’s own words, such art was “un ensemble qui pollue la rue.”⁴² However, unlike the somewhat ancient manner of handling ugly, dissident voices, the city has changed its manner of approach. The old manner of crushing anti-institutional messages with an iron fist, like in the case of *Corridart*, by paying night workers overtime to destroy and drag artworks to the dump is somewhat over. Of course, the city of Montreal still has an active anti-graffiti task force at work day and night, but there has been a shift in the way the city utilizes art. Whereas power used to come crashing down and censure works it deems inappropriate, now it has the ability to come from below – from the people. Drapeau was the epitome of this top down use of force and for a long time this approach was utilized towards curbing graffiti. The city was caught up in a zero sum game where it had to crush and erase all forms of illegal street art the very instant they appeared. The rationale behind such a method was the faster we take it off, the less likely the ones committing the crime will want to do it again. However, this technique was bound to fail.

The solution found was to invert our problem and grant the form of non-art (graffiti) a legitimate status. We opened up a certain field for graffiti, one that was acceptable, docile, with little to no protest mes-

sage involved in legalizing it. We created a release valve where graffiti artists (or muralists) can be commissioned to paint a legal wall and receive funding for creating their art. According to Jaime Rojo and Steven Harrington, “[t]ransgressive themes, as in many street festivals around the world, are almost disappeared or nearly imperceptible—an irony of sorts considering the rebellious street culture that many of these artists evolved from.”⁴³ Government actors have taken advantage of the inner workings or the pre-existing social codes of graffiti and made them work to their advantage. Graffiti has an aesthetic hierarchy that loosely goes up in respect starting from tags to throw-ups to full pieces (murals). These hierarchies more often than not are protected as one does not go over a piece with a throw-up or a tag. In other words, Murals are relatively protected from other forms of graffiti. Thus by sponsoring certain types of works the city is insuring that other undesirable works will not go up on the same wall. Therefore, instead of visibly crushing dissident artistic voices as Drapeau famously did, city officials pre-emptively saturate the field with murals, which prevents unwanted dissident works of graffiti emerging in targeted neighbourhoods. In doing so, the city has managed to advance their urban renewal policies neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood, mural-by-mural – by working on the inside.

In sum, the city has managed to infiltrate the very fabric of protest art—always in the name of urban economic interest—and managed to police it in a new fashion. As Taïka Baillargeon and Sylvain Lefebvre argue, “la petite histoire des murales, ces dernières sont d’ailleurs souvent commandées pour éviter les graffitis, dans la foulée de mouvements anti-graffiti,”⁴⁴ or as Jeanne Corriveau puts it:

“Si les murales transforment le paysage urbain et préviennent les graffitis intempestifs, elles semblent aussi avoir le pouvoir d’inciter les citoyens à une plus grande discipline en matière de propreté, indique Mme Samson: ‘On se rend compte que les secteurs où il y a des murales, les dépôts sauvages disparaissent parce que les gens ont un respect pour ce mur qui est maintenant habité.’”⁴⁵

While *Corridart* was part of the old function of art in service of the city, the one that was rooted in reshaping the slums by “put[ting] art in front of them” in the hopes of beautifying the space, today certain forms of art can be at once aesthetically pleasing and disciplinary. It is no longer simply entertainment for the masses; art, as a tactic, has a new set of targets and has replaced the need for exterior disciplining, by policing itself from the inside. There is a considerable lack of critical scrutiny in Montreal concerning street arts overall effects on the city and its inhabitants.

Mostly murals are taken at face value and applauded as of long overdue sign of acknowledgement from the art world. And for the most part it does encapsulate positive aspects. Murals help finance a major underappreciated group of artist but if we consider their genealogy, we realize that they also serve as a coercive urban planning tactic. By studying *Corridart* within its context it is possible for us to comprehend the city’s political agenda in the legalization and conventionalization of street art today.

Endnotes

- 1 Kim Louise Gauvin, "Corridart Revisited – Excavating the Remains" (master's thesis, Concordia University, 1996), 11.
- 2 Melvin Charney, "Corridart: Art as Urban Activism," *Architectural Design*, v. 47, no 7-8 (July-August 1977), 314.
- 3 Alanah Heffez, "Get to Know Your Jean Drapeau," *SpacingMontreal*, last modified October 21, 2009, <http://spacing.ca/montreal/2009/10/21/get-to-know-your-jean-drapeau/>.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Richard Bergeron, "Que ferait Jean Drapeau?," *Project Montréal*, accessed November 12, 2016, 3, http://projet-montreal.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/document/Drapeau_versionlongue_fr.pdf.
- 6 Donna Gabeline, Dane Lanken and Gordon Pape, *Montreal at the Crossroads* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1975), 9.
- 7 Gabeline, Lanken and Pape, *Montreal at the Crossroads*, 10.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid., 173.
- 10 Ibid., 175.
- 11 Nick Auf der Maur, *The Billion-Dollar Game: Jean Drapeau and the 1976 Olympics* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1976), 34.
- 12 Gabeline, Lanken and Pape, *Montreal at the Crossroads*, 175.
- 13 Gabeline, Lanken and Pape, *Montreal at the Crossroads*.
- 14 Ibid., 173-174.
- 15 Charney, "Corridart: Art as Urban Activism," 314.
- 16 Gauvin, "Corridart Revisited – Excavating," 18-19.
- 17 Dale McConathy, "Corridart: *instant archaeology in Montréal*," *Artscanada* 3, no.2 (July/August) 1976, 36-37.
- 18 Gauvin, "Corridart Revisited – Excavating," 52.
- 19 McConathy, "Corridart: *instant archaeology*," 43.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Pierre Ayot et Al. v. *La Ville de Montréal et le COJO*, 1981, TP11, S2, SS2, SSS2 dossier: 05 025220-76 BANQ Archive du Vieux-Montreal Fonds de la cours supérieure de Montréal (Cour Supérieure du Québec).
- 22 Gauvin, "Corridart Revisited – Excavating," 69.
- 23 Ibid., 61.
- 24 Charney's piece, while critical, was only created out of residual budget funds and not intended to be included from the beginning. See. Gauvin, "Corridart Revisited – Excavating" for further explanations.
- 25 McConathy, "Corridart: *instant archaeology*," 45.
- 26 Pierre Ayot et Al. v. *La Ville de Montréal*, 28.
- 27 Charney, "Corridart: Art as Urban Activism," 319.
- 28 Pierre Ayot et Al. v. *La Ville de Montréal*.
- 29 Ibid., 23.
- 30 A partial and loose paraphrase of Anne Whitelaw's thesis presented in the context of Johanne Sloan's Urban Art Histories (ARTH 373/2) course, November 1, 2016.
- 31 Charney, "Corridart: Art as Urban Activism," 314.
- 32 Auf der Maur, *The Billion-Dollar Game*, 34.
- 33 Gauvin, "Corridart Revisited – Excavating," 18.
- 34 Ibid., 114-118.
- 35 Gauvin, "Corridart Revisited – Excavating," 17.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Pierre Ayot et Al. v. *La Ville de Montréal*, 49-50.
- 38 Ibid., 50.
- 39 Christine Redfern, "Interview: Melvin Charney," *CanadianArt* (Winter 2001), last modified December 15, 2001, <https://canadianart.ca/features/11-2/>.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Pierre Ayot et Al. v. *La Ville de Montréal*, 54, 57.
- 42 Bergeron, "Que ferait Jean Drapeau?," 7.
- 43 Jaime Rojo & Steven Harrington, "Montreal Arts Festival Keeps the Quality for Year Two," *The Huffington Post* last modified 19 August 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jaime-rojo-steven-harrington/montreal-mural-festival_b_5509868.html.
- 44 Taïka Baillargeon and Sylvain Lefebvre, "Quand une forme d'art subversive se normalise," *Le Devoir* last modified 17 June 2016, <http://www.ledevoir.com/culture/actualites-culturelles/473622/le-festival-mural-quand-une-forme-d-art-subversif-se-normalise>.
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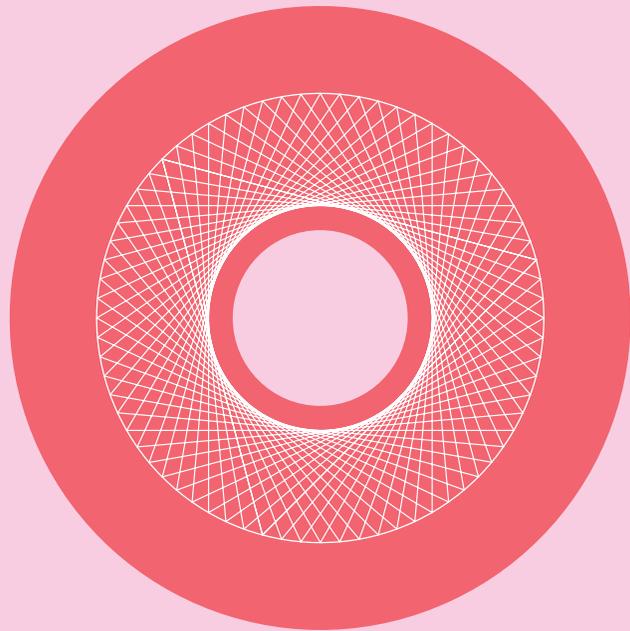
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Small World; entre vrai et hyperréel, conception du monde et du moi

Written by: Zoé Dion-Van Royen
Edited by: Éloïse Brunet

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Si Francis Firth a fait découvrir le monde oriental aux européens du XIXe siècle avec les photos de ses voyages, Martin Parr, (fig.1, fig. 2) avec sa série Small World en 1995, attaque un monde déjà connu par la plupart. L'artiste anglais, plutôt que d'immortaliser les monuments qu'il visite, capture plutôt les nombreux Francis Firth que sont devenus les touristes de ce monde. D'un œil moqueur, il fait voir une population de

consommation génératrice d'images sans âmes, mais qui se veut témoin du phénomène du « avoir-été-là » de Roland Barthes¹. En photographiant le touriste dans son milieu naturel, le voyage, Parr démystifie l'espace romantique que tente de créer le touriste dans son décor acidulé, presque kitsch. C'est ce qui constitue son réalisme : des sujets qui prennent des photos à perte de vue, qui se reposent après leur promenade, observent les décors en quête d'aventure. En juxtaposant la scène cadrée par le touriste et le touriste lui-même en train de prendre la photo, Martin Parr montre le statut de la photographie dans un contexte urbain mais surtout touristique et met en jeu les thèmes de réalité et d'authenticité, là où l'hyperréalité prend le dessus sur la réalité. D'abord, il démystifie le décor romantique du tourisme en jouant sur la perspective et l'angle de ses photographies et accuse une réalité qui n'existe que sur image. Puis, il dénonce une société spectacle dans laquelle le citoyen n'est que le pion

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Fig 1. Martin Parr, *Small World GREECE. Athens. Acropolis. 1991.* Photographs. Magnum Photos.

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d'une stratégie de marketing et finalement, introduit la notion de la surproduction de la photographie qui finit par mettre en jeu la crédibilité de l'image documentaire et celle du photographe.

Dans l'œuvre de Parr, le sujet principal est l'acte même de photographier et de se photographier. Pour ce faire, il met en valeur des photographes amateurs durant leurs captures d'images. Ainsi, on croise des groupes devant un temple grec, des visiteurs à Pise feignant de retenir la tour ou encore des portraits individuels devant d'immenses monuments. En agrandissant la prise de vue de la photo, le photographe fait lumière sur l'ensemble des visiteurs qui prennent la même

était. Il est la manifestation de ce que Barthes appelle l'« avoir-été-là » ou le « ça-a-été », c'est-à-dire un concept où la photographie devient un nouvel espace-temps, où l'« immédiat spatial » et l'« antériorité temporelle » deviennent la conjonction illogique d'un « ici-maintenant » et d'un « ici-à ce moment-là »². Par ses photos, le sujet prouve tangiblement ce qui a été, officialise son voyage. Ce que le touriste ne voudra pas montrer, par contre, c'est ce que Parr photographie ;



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en train de photographier. Parr met surtout en scène ce thème de l'authenticité où l'on se trouve sur la scène du décor en jouant avec ses photos. Cette authenticité qui dénonce la quel

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Fig 2. Martin Parr, *The Pyramids, Giza, Egypt*. 1992. Photographs. Magnum Photos.

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était. Il est la manifestation de ce que Barthes appelle l'« avoir-été-là » ou le « ça-a-été », c'est-à-dire un concept où la photographie devient un nouvel espace-temps, où l'« immédiat spatial » et l'« antériorité temporelle » deviennent la conjonction illogique d'un « ici-maintenant » et d'un « ici-à ce moment-là »². Par ses photos, le sujet prouve tangiblement ce qui a été, officialise son voyage. Ce que le touriste ne voudra pas montrer, par contre, c'est ce que Parr photographie ; c'est-à-dire la non-originalité, étant donné que tous les autres touristes sur le site ont pris exactement les mêmes photos et qu'ils ramèneront dans leurs valises les mêmes souvenirs à montrer à leur famille. L'authenticité qu'il proclame n'existe en réalité pas. Cette absence d'authenticité est directe et même peut-être cruelle, puisque rien n'est mis en scène par le photographe, qui ne veut faire voir que ce qui est toujours là.

La photographie du touriste devient alors un lieu où une réalité idéale prend place. Ce que montre

Parr, c'est une volonté incessante de faire voir une expérience, de créer un moment spécial qui ne prend forme que dans la photo prise, mais pas vraiment dans la réalité. Dans son ouvrage *Le Photographique* ; *Pour une théorie des Écarts*, Rosalind Krauss parle d'une tautologie de la photographie, et l'illustre en prenant l'exemple des réunions de familles :

On sort l'appareil photo pour « éterniser » les réunions de famille, les vacances, les voyages. [...] L'appareil photographique est un outil que l'on considère comme s'il ne faisait qu'illustrer, qu'enregistrer de façon passive le fait objectif de l'intégration du groupe familial. Mais son effet est bien entendu plus important que cela. C'est en partie la photographie qui motive ces réunions familiales. Elles participent au fantasme collectif de la cohésion familiale et l'appareil photographique est, en ce sens, un instrument projectif et un élément du théâtre qu'élabore la famille pour se convaincre qu'elle est rassemblée et indivisée.³

Cette notion vient mettre en doute le réalisme de la photographie. Krauss continue en questionnant l'objectivité de la photographie qui, selon elle, n'est vraie que dans le cadre d'une tautologie et fait voir le besoin de prouver l'objectivité du témoignage.⁴

Ce comportement est souligné dans *Small World*, par exemple sur

cette photographie où une femme, son sac à la main, pose devant deux pyramides. À ses pieds, des ombres « rendent le sujet plus petit et plus vulnérable qu'il ne prétend être »⁵, ce qui fait apparaître l'« authenticité arrangée » de MacCannell rappelée aussi par un homme tenant un plateau de petites reproductions de bustes égyptiens, à vendre évidemment. À cet égard, Parr montre une autre facette du

tourisme : celle de la consommation, de l'achat effréné du voyageur. L'achat de bibelots et de souvenirs devient une preuve de pèlerinage. Alors apparaît une notion de *m'as-tu-vu*, une volonté de concrétiser, en plus de la photo, son voyage par un objet tangible qui y était aussi. C'est ce que Guy Debord désignerait de société du spectacle où le vrai et le faux se mêlent pour donner place à une vie extraordinaire (le voyage) qui tend cependant à ne pas paraître touriste, ce que MacCannell met en mot par l'équation « Ils sont touristes, pas moi »⁶. Le projet fait valoir au photographe une réception de son œuvre plutôt négative, la critique juge son travail populaire et amateur. Plusieurs choses sont accusées : « manque

de respect envers ses modèles, absence de conscience politique, refus de traiter de sujets graves du monde contemporain »⁷. Mais c'est justement cette absence de conscience politique que Parr dénonce et en choisissant minutieusement ses sujets, il montre les scènes qu'on ne remarque pas ou plus. Il montre la volonté des sujets d'être vus, leur volonté de se mettre en spectacle, justement, et ce rien que par le

fait de se prendre en photo. Que ce soit par ses vêtements, ses activités, ou même son comportement, le touriste est touriste, parce qu'il n'est pas chez lui, parce qu'il prend littéralement congé de sa réalité pour vivre entre parenthèses, le voyage n'étant pas réellement un mode de vie mais plutôt un entredeux.

Le comportement touriste amène vers une société du faux. Comme il est mis en avant sur plusieurs photos de la série, le touriste n'est pas une personne de *tous-les-jours*, il est plutôt un état d'esprit, un statut temporaire ; on ne verrait personne se tenir de la sorte au bureau ou dans une épicerie. C'est une façon d'être qui tente d'être vraie, qui tente de ressembler à la façon de vivre du pays hôte, mais qui constamment est ramené à sa nature. Martin Parr exploite ce faux par plusieurs détails : d'abord il utilise le flash de jour comme de soir, ce qui rend l'image légèrement surexposée et par conséquent fausse ou ratée. Il met aussi l'accent sur les motifs, ceux des vêtements

(où l'on peut voir des fleurs, des motifs tropicaux, etc.) ou du décor (les planchers, les architectures) qui rappelle tout du *kitsch*. Ce vocabulaire visuel engendre toute une connotation : le mauvais goût, le populaire, le parodique. En fait, on y voit l'intention du sujet d'atteindre un idéal sans en avoir les moyens. Ici, le touriste aura beau vouloir s'intégrer au pays hôte, il est trop ancré dans le spectacle et l'éphémère pour passer inaperçu.

En continuation avec le kitsch, on aperçoit sur plusieurs photos des reproductions d'objets miniatures ou bien de plus grandes envergures, c'est-à-dire de villages fictifs qui reproduisent une idée de la réalité romancée. Ce genre de parc peut s'étendre sur la superficie d'une vraie ville, mais n'est faite que de fausses maisons, de faux quartiers, et d'attractions. Ces villes fictives se situent en fait à l'opposé de la réalité, c'est-à-dire dans l'hyper-réalité dont l'exemple le plus extrême est sans aucun doute *Disneyland* (que Parr photographie d'ailleurs en 2006). Umberto Eco traite de ce sujet dans son essai *La cité des automates*, où il explique une tension ambiguë entre le visiteur et le décor, entre ce qui est vrai et ce qui est faux. Seulement, bien que tout ce qui l'entoure soit une exagération de la réalité, demeure dans son sac ou sa poche quelque chose de vrai : son argent. En effet, même si tout est faux, le magasin, lui, est bien fonctionnel. En parlant de ces parcs-villages, Eco souligne :

[...] les magasins sont ouverts, parce que la *Berry Farm*, comme *Disneyland*, intègre la réalité du commerce dans le jeu de la fiction, et si l'épicerie est feinte et la vendeuse habillée comme une héroïne de John Ford, les nougats, les noisettes, les objets pseudo-artisanaux indiens sont réels et réels sont les dollars qui sont demandés en échange. [...] le client se trouve plongé dans la fantaisie à cause de sa propre authenticité de consommateur.⁸

Le touriste n'est alors dans cette société factice qu'un pion au milieu d'un engrenage de marketing où l'enjeu n'est pas le divertissement mais bien le gain financier qui dépend du montant d'argent dépensé. Ce qui lie cette relation fautive avec le site et la réalité, c'est l'œuvre de Parr exposée dans un musée que visitera le touriste avec en tête l'équation « Ils sont touristes, pas moi » de MacCannell. Parr se dissocie lui-même de cette idée et va jusqu'à adhérer à la surconsommation d'images, à se proclamer lui-même rouage de la société d'images. Dans une entrevue, il explique : « Rappelez-vous, il y a chez moi une certaine hypocrisie. Je ne m'exclus pas de cela. »⁹ En effet, si Parr dénonce une société-spectacle qui vit dans le faux et l'image, c'est pourtant en y participant activement. L'artiste continue :

Ce que j'essaie de faire, ce n'est pas tant de l'anti-propagande, puisque je contribue moi-même à cette propagande ; j'essaie plutôt de voir les choses le plus honnêtement possible [...]. Nous avons besoin d'une interprétation directe et honnête du monde pour contrer tous les mensonges qu'on nous impose sans cesse.¹⁰

Le médium est le message de Marshall McLuhan prend ici tout son sens. Les idées de l'auteur s'appliquent à plusieurs niveaux dans *Small World*.

D'abord par l'utilisation de la photographie pour dénoncer la production massive de celle-ci. Mais aussi, Parr est lui-même un médium dans son travail qui devient performatif : il interprète le touriste qu'il dénonce. Et le message, lui, se rend directement au principal intéressé, puisqu'il siège dans une de ses destinations : le musée.

Outre le sujet de l'image, Parr dénonce autant la prise d'image en soi. De plus, on remarque le ton de banalité que prend le voyage. Ce n'est plus quelque chose que l'on considère extraordinaire : dans toute bonne famille, un voyage par année est de mise. Cependant, celui-ci n'a pas l'air d'avoir la même valeur qu'à l'époque. Marshall McLuhan est d'avis que les américains ne changent pas au cours de leurs nombreux voyages. Selon lui,

leur expérience est « diluée dans l'arrangé et le préfabriqué » et ce à cause de la photographie. Ainsi, McLuhan accorde au photographe la part de responsabilité de la photographie dans la modification de notre perception du monde. Et si le voyage est devenu si banal, c'est peut-être parce que l'image, surutilisée, engouffre la réalité et rend celle-ci obsolète. McCarthy, dans son ouvrage sur Venise, aborde la ville comme si elle s'était abandonnée à elle-même. En fait, abandonnée à sa carte postale et au tourisme incessant, « La Venise

des touristes est Venise [...]. Venise est un accordéon de cartes postales d'elle-même. Et bien qu'effectivement deux cent mille personnes vivent là une

existence quotidienne, laborieuse, ils y sont également touristes ou guides. »¹¹ Suivant cette idée, le véritable site, un monument d'archéologie ou même une ville pourrait devenir ce que *Disneyland* représente : une hyperréalité, un monde où le faux empiète sur ce qui est vrai. McLuhan, de son côté, continue sur l'idée du voyage préfabriqué : « Le monde même devient ainsi une sorte de musée d'objets déjà vus dans un autre médium. [...] C'est ainsi que le touriste, devant la Tour de Pise ou le Grand Canyon d'Arizona, peut se contenter de vérifier ses réactions devant ce qui lui est depuis longtemps familier et en prendre sa photo. »¹²

Ainsi, l'image s'accumule. Il suffit de visiter des réseaux sociaux comme *Flickr* ou *Instagram*, de rechercher avec un mot-clé un site touristique et apparaissent des milliers, si non pas des millions de photographies du même bâtiment, de la même rue, du même coucher de soleil. Aujourd'hui, ce que Parr dénonce s'est multiplié de façon astronomique, et ce probablement à cause de l'utilisation de l'Internet pour le partage d'images et d'expériences de voyage. Ceci implique cependant plusieurs conséquences qu'Hal Foster explique dans son essai *Return of the Real*. En utilisant comme exemple l'œuvre d'Andy Warhol, l'auteur voit la répétition de l'image comme un catalyseur de sens, où l'image devient dépourvue de signification. Warhol utilise la sérigraphie pour dresser le portrait de la culture populaire. Cette pratique questionne non seulement l'authenticité de l'œuvre d'art, mais

aussi la préciosité de ce que l'on représente. Ceci s'applique également aux sites touristiques : la tour de Pise, par exemple, n'a plus vraiment de surprise à offrir lorsqu'on finit par la voir en vrai parce qu'on l'a vue sur Facebook, sur Instagram, ou sur Twitter, sous tous les angles et toutes les luminosités possibles.

Aussi, la photo touristique enlève de l'authenticité à la photographie elle-même, en la rendant amateur. Martin Parr, photographe membre de Magnum, agence de photographie, ne peut être que soucieux de l'avenir du médium. On en vient à questionner la validité de la photo-documentaire. Le photographe appartient à une génération très soucieuse des médias, où la photo de mode prend de plus en plus d'expansion. Mais maintenant que les photographies de téléphone font les publicités dans toute la ville, comme on le constate avec le dernier iPhone, comment l'artiste peut-il encore s'en sortir ? Martin Parr utilise cette menace comme une arme et prend des photos floues, mal exposées ou mal cadrées. Ainsi, il s'écarte de la carrière photographique plus traditionnelle de ses collègues et par la même occasion rappelle que « le médium est le message ». L'œuvre devient le message aussi par le fait qu'aucune photographie n'est mise en scène, ce qui ajoute une dimension documentaire au projet. N'oublions pas que l'artiste lui-même devient un médium, comme un acteur dans son œuvre, puisque de photographe professionnel, il devient le touriste. Pour prendre les photos qui

constituent l'œuvre, il a dû lui-même visiter les sites et prendre des photos dans la masse. Avec *Small World*, Martin Parr réussit à mélanger d'une part, la culture populaire où les sacs-bananes, les crèmes glacées molles et les appareils photos abondent et où la haute culture, la conception du réel, l'art de l'image et de musée prennent part à un débat de société par rapport à la consommation, et d'autre part, l'image et l'excès.

En d'autres termes, le photographe anglais *dézoome* des scènes de tourisme pour faire voir une multitude de concepts qui gravitent autour des notions de la réalité et du faux, sur ce que l'on peut cacher grâce à la photographie mais surtout, ce qu'elle nous permet de montrer ; c'est-à-dire une réalité idéalisée. Un idéal qu'il crée par l'arrangement de la photo : le cadre, la prise de vue, un arrangement que MacCannell nomme l'authenticité. Par ses photos presque hyperréalistes, où les couleurs sont criantes et les sujets parfois ridiculisés, Parr montre une société en quête d'aventures et d'authenticité. Il pointe du doigt cependant l'arrangement de cette même société et dénonce comment le sujet principal se laisse entraîner dans un engrenage de marketing construit en fonction de sa volonté. La série, terminée en 1995, dénonce des enjeux de plus en plus présents dans la société occidentale. C'est d'ailleurs ainsi que Parr devient réaliste. C'est qu'au lieu de partager cette euphorie du voyage et du tourisme comme les peintres classiques ont pu idéaliser l'Histoire,

il pose un œil objectif, du moins tant qu'il peut l'être, sur le phénomène. En effet, gorgés dans l'image, la publicité et les applications de partage de photos sur les téléphones intelligents ou ordinateurs, notre conception du réel est peut-être en train de changer. De plus en plus, on agit pour prendre en photo, pour la mettre en ligne et récolter l'appréciation des autres par les *likes*. La photo que les familles prenaient pour faire exister un esprit familial et idéal se répand maintenant jusqu'à l'individuel, ce que la culture populaire a nommé le *selfie*. Ainsi, on se montre dans un décor que l'on arrange, avec notre profil préféré. Au même titre que Venise qui devient sa carte postale, l'homme semble devenir sa propre photo de profil Facebook, comme si Narcisse devenait son reflet dans l'eau.

Endnotes

¹ Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image." dans *Image, Music, Text*, 44.

² Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image." dans *Image, Music, Text*, 44.

³ Rosalind Krauss, *Le Photographique ; Pour une théorie des écarts*, 213.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Sandra S. Philips, *Martin Parr*, 64.

⁶ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 107.

⁷ Quentin Bajac, *Le mélange des genres*, 8.

⁸ Umberto Eco, « La cité des automates », dans *La guerre du faux*, 45.

⁹ Martin Parr, *Le mélange des genres*, 70.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Mary McCarthy, *En observant Venise*, 14.

¹² Marshall McLuhan, *Le médium est le message*, 220.

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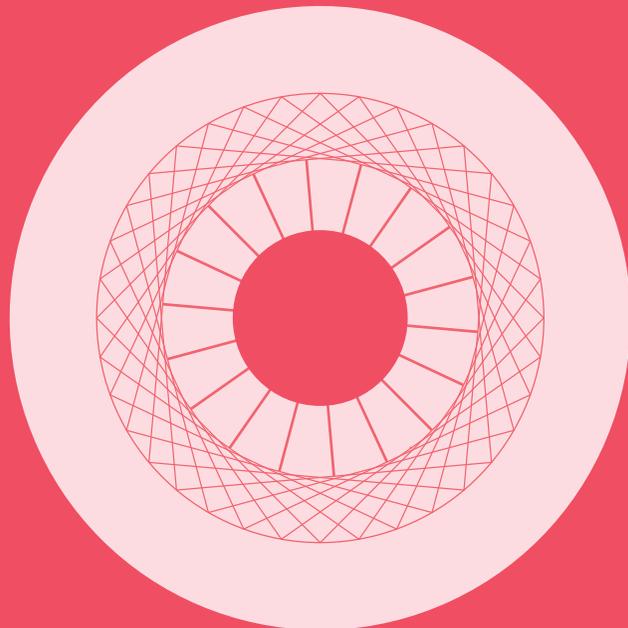
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La scène artistique de London, Ontario, en 1968

Written by: Marianne Lebel
Edited by: Valérie Hénault



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Malgré sa petite taille par rapport aux grandes métropoles canadiennes, la ville de London en Ontario a une riche histoire artistique. Depuis les années 1960, celle-ci se démarque du reste du Canada par son régionalisme artistique qui se traduit par l'intérêt des artistes pour les sujets locaux et la subjectivité plutôt que pour le style international. En 1968, le Canada découvre les artistes de London grâce à l'exposition *Heart of London* au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada à Ottawa.¹ 1968 est donc une

année où la scène artistique de cette petite ville canadienne est déjà bien établie.

Si le régionalisme londonien a une telle reconnaissance, ce n'est pas seulement en raison des références que les artistes font à leur quotidien : c'est surtout que leur rejet flagrant et audacieux des tendances formalistes entre en discours avec la scène internationale des années 1960. À partir de cette décennie, la scène artistique de London marque donc sa place dans le monde de l'art comme étant marginale, d'où son importance.

En 1968, ce dialogue contestataire entre local et global s'inscrit dans le contexte plus large des révoltes étudiantes de mai 68 en France. À London, il se manifeste plutôt dans les institutions locales fondées par les artistes comme le magazine *Alphabet* du poète James Reaney. On le retrouve également dans la pratique et dans la production artistique de l'iconique artiste londonien Greg Curnoe, ardent régionaliste. Finalement, ce dialogue entre global et local est aussi présent dans l'exposition *Swinging London: Being an Exhibition of 24 London Eccentrics* tenue à la galerie 20/20 et organisée par l'artiste Tony Urquhart.

Si la ville ontarienne connaît du succès en 1968, c'est peut-être grâce à un mouvement mondial d'opposition aux institutions qui commence par les révoltes de mai 68. À l'origine,

les institutions universitaires sont la cible des révoltes, mais les critiques se tournent ensuite vers le conservatisme des institutions gouvernementales, religieuses et capitalistes en général.² Le mouvement débute donc en France, où les étudiants de l'Université de Nanterre protestent contre la « consommation du savoir » : ils affirment que l'université ne devrait pas être un bien de consommation, mais un lieu d'apprentissage critique. Le mouvement s'étend ensuite dans la population ouvrière française et s'oppose à toute forme d'institution. Puis, il traverse les frontières mondiales et se répand notamment en Europe de l'Est, aux États-Unis, en Amérique du Sud et en Italie.³ Comme l'indique Sylvère Lotringer dans un article sur ce mouvement, les revendications des étudiants français « signalled the rise of a distinct sensibility that transcended differences in language, nationality, and ideology. »⁴ La révolution de 1968 semble donc représenter le point culminant d'une opposition généralisée à l'ordre politique et culturel dominant.⁵ C'est une année de grande importance pour la contre-culture mondiale et pour le rejet des institutions traditionnelles, jugées dépassées par les manifestants.⁶

Le monde de l'art connaît aussi des oppositions au statu quo pendant ces années-là. Comme explique Irving

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Sandler dans un texte sur le postmodernisme, jusque dans les années 1970, c'est le formalisme qui domine la scène artistique globale, malgré le fait que ce type d'art soit alors devenu trop familier pour pouvoir être considéré avant-gardiste. Les idées de Clement Greenberg, selon qui l'art doit être autonome, autoréférentiel et se limiter au médium qui le compose, sont contestées par de nombreux artistes. Cependant, grâce à un support des grandes institutions muséales ainsi que des critiques et historiens de l'art influents, le formalisme demeure dominant.⁷ L'art formaliste est considéré comme une « culture internationale homogène », ce à quoi s'oppose l'art postmoderne : cette « culture internationale » est plutôt imposée au reste du monde par les États-Unis et l'Europe. Selon les opposants à Greenberg, l'art doit plutôt prendre en considération son « contexte social spécifique », le particulier plutôt qu'une universalité irréaliste.⁸

À London, cette opposition au statu quo dans le monde de l'art prend la forme du régionalisme. Traditionnellement, le régionalisme désigne l'art américain plutôt conservateur produit en région entre les années 1920 et 1950.⁹ Comme le régionalisme traditionnel, le régionalisme londonien tire ses sources de l'expérience locale et régionale. Cependant, le régionalisme londonien n'a pas de style unificateur¹⁰ et représente surtout l'audacieux refus de se plier aux modes internationales.¹¹ Il est marqué par une affirmation de l'importance du sujet en art et rejette

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par le fait même l'autonomie de l'œuvre d'art, qui est fusionnée avec son contexte à travers son sujet.¹² Le régionalisme londonien ne se limite donc pas à produire des œuvres d'inspiration locale, mais existe en relation avec la scène internationale formaliste; il entre en dialogue avec ce à quoi il s'oppose afin de mieux le contester.¹³ Greg Curnoe, important artiste régionaliste londonien, décrit le conservatisme artistique de London comme un avantage pour lui et la communauté artistique régionaliste puisque le désintérêt du monde de l'art pour la petite ville et sa production locale permet aux artistes régionalistes de créer librement, sans intervention des cercles officiels.¹⁴ Ainsi, la scène régionaliste londonienne semble avoir une visibilité accrue en 1968 en raison de son opposition à l'institution conservatrice.

Au Canada, dans les années 1960, la création de « petits magazines » (désignant une publication indépendante) est une manière de s'opposer au conservatisme institutionnel et d'améliorer la visibilité des auteurs ignorés par les grandes maisons d'édition. Parmi les plus importants petits magazines créés à cette époque, on compte notamment le magazine londonien *Alphabet*, qui fait ses débuts en 1960 et prend fin en 1971.¹⁵

Comme plusieurs autres contre-institutions fondées par les artistes londoniens dans cette décennie, ce magazine cherche à proposer une alternative au monde de l'art conser-

vateur.¹⁶ C'est dans ces organisations contestataires que sont formulés les premiers objectifs du régionalisme londonien : utiliser le local comme source d'inspiration afin de « produire de l'art qui transcende la signification locale »,¹⁷ c'est-à-dire atteindre l'universalité par le spécifique. Si l'art formaliste cherche aussi à être universel en étant abstrait, James Reaney, fondateur du magazine et poète londonien, croit que cet objectif s'atteint par l'étude du particulier.

Pendant ses onze années d'activité, le magazine est entièrement réalisé par James Reaney dans une petite imprimerie du centre-ville de London.¹⁸ Dans une thèse sur *Alphabet*, Douglas I. Brown décrit cette revue comme étant un type spécifique de petit magazine qu'il appelle le « one man magazine » : un magazine édité, publié, conçu, produit, distribué et financé par une seule personne¹⁹. Le contenu d'*Alphabet* est déterminé par la vision de Reaney selon laquelle l'art et la vie sont intimement reliés : il voit une connexion entre le mythe (l'art, ou les concepts universels) et le documentaire (le particulier, l'expérience locale).²⁰ Pour chaque édition, Reaney choisit un mythe sur lequel des artistes soumettent articles, poèmes et autres textes qui s'inspirent de leur expérience directe du monde,²¹ le tout donnant un résultat fort éclectique et personnel.²² Ainsi, la vision de Reaney quant à la connexion entre l'art et la vie (ou entre le mythe et le documentaire) ainsi que l'importance qu'il accorde à l'expérience individuelle

et locale font d'*Alphabet* un magazine résolument régional, en opposition avec la scène artistique internationale mettant de l'avant l'art impersonnel et autoréférentiel. Cependant, le magazine demeure en communication avec celle-ci par son intérêt pour l'universel (le mythe).

À partir du mois de décembre 1967, le magazine, jusqu'alors publié de manière semestrielle,²³ n'est édité qu'une fois par année. Graduellement, les mythes abordés dans chaque édition d'*Alphabet* deviennent moins spécifiques : plutôt qu'imposer un mythe clair pour organiser les poèmes, Reaney laisse les textes parler eux-mêmes d'un concept plus large.²⁴ Ce sont les articles et les poèmes qui, en apparence désorganisés, font ressortir un concept général qui structure le tout,²⁵ mettant encore plus en évidence la quête du principe universel par le particulier. La quinzième édition d'*Alphabet*, publiée en décembre 1968, porte sur « le feu », un thème vague que les lecteurs peuvent déduire d'après les textes qui forment le contenu de l'édition.²⁶ On y trouve notamment des poèmes de George Bowering, de Gwendolyn MacEwen et de Jay MacPherson, des poètes canadiens dont le titre des textes fait souvent allusion à l'expérience spécifique, comme le démontre la prose de MacEwen intitulée « Fragments From a Childhood. »²⁷

Les changements que subit le magazine dans la seconde moitié des années 1960 sont principalement dus aux difficultés financières du magazine²⁸ et à la

difficulté de rassembler assez de textes pour publier deux fois par années sous un mythe unificateur précis.²⁹ Jusqu'à la fin, Reaney est toutefois resté attaché à son idéal de magazine indépendant qui unit mythe (idées universelles) et vie réelle (particulier).

Parmi les nombreux contributeurs à *Alphabet*, on compte notamment Greg Curnoe, probablement le plus important artiste londonien des années 1960. Certains considèrent qu'il soit celui qui aie lancé la scène artistique de la petite ville depuis son retour à London, en 1960, après trois décevantes années à l'Ontario College of Art (OCA) de Toronto.³⁰ Selon Curnoe, l'OCA avait une approche trop américaine, promouvant les conventions de la peinture abstraite³¹ et étant trop axée vers le succès et la compétition.³² L'artiste décide donc que ce n'est qu'à London, sa ville natale, qu'il pourra créer un art qui s'oppose à l'idée de culture internationale.³³ L'art de Curnoe, qui influence également la production des autres artistes de la ville, est un art radicalement régionaliste qui cherche à résister à l'impérialisme culturel américain en se fondant sur l'expérience locale individuelle³⁴ et en réaffirmant l'importance du sujet par ses revendications.³⁵ Ainsi, contrairement au poète Reaney, Curnoe cherche à mythifier le quotidien plutôt que de trouver le mythique dans la vie quotidienne,³⁶ bien que les deux artistes prônent la fusion de l'art et de la vie.³⁷ Qualifié de « gourou » de la scène artistique londonienne en 1968, Curnoe est très engagé dans la communauté artistique.³⁸

1968 est une année marquée par deux projets artistiques d'importance dans la pratique contestataire de Curnoe. Le premier est *Homage to the R 34*, une murale commissionnée en 1967 par le gouvernement canadien pour le corridor des arrivées internationales à l'aéroport Dorval, à Montréal.³⁹ La murale devait avoir pour thème « les gens en transit », mais Curnoe lui a donné une tournure très personnelle et politique. Elle représente le dirigeable géant R 34, premier à avoir traversé l'Atlantique, qui est peint dans des couleurs très vives, typiques de l'art de Curnoe.⁴⁰ À bord du dirigeable, on retrouve des portraits de la famille et des amis londoniens de Curnoe, des références beaucoup trop subjectives pour le spectateur international moyen.⁴¹ Ce qui choque le plus, cependant, est le caractère anti-américain de l'œuvre : elle critique ouvertement la guerre du Vietnam par un segment textuel sur Mohammed Ali, athlète ayant perdu son titre en raison de son refus de participer à la guerre, et par la présence d'une figure ressemblant étrangement au président Johnson et dont la main a été fraîchement tranchée par une hélice du dirigeable.⁴² Évidemment, un tel contenu provoque les visiteurs américains dès leur arrivée en territoire canadien. La murale, ayant reçu de nombreuses plaintes, avait été démontée quelques jours après son installation, en mars 1968.⁴³ Pour l'artiste, cet épisode de censure représente la regrettable soumission du Canada face à la puissance des États-Unis.⁴⁴

La même année, Curnoe commence à travailler sur *View of Victoria Hospital, First Series*. Il s'agit de six grandes toiles sur lesquelles l'artiste étampe une description textuelle exhaustive de ce qu'il voit depuis les fenêtres de son atelier, dans le centre-ville de London. Pour réaliser ces toiles, il a tendu une corde au-travers des fenêtres de son atelier et a minutieusement noté tout ce que cette corde traversait dans le paysage.⁴⁵ Cette série de toiles est en quelque sorte du régionalisme poussé à l'extrême puisqu'elle porte une attention incroyable aux détails locaux. En 1968, Curnoe est un artiste déjà bien établi qui a beaucoup de reconnaissance au Canada. Cette œuvre est ainsi sélectionnée pour représenter le Canada à la biennale de São Paulo de 1969.⁴⁶ Devant cette reconnaissance internationale, Curnoe prend des précautions pour que son travail ne soit pas confondu avec les beaux-arts traditionnels, que toute sa pratique artistique s'applique à contester. Ainsi, dans le catalogue de la biennale, il n'y a pas d'images de son œuvre, mais plutôt des photos de lui en train de travailler sur sa série de peintures.⁴⁷ De cette manière, l'accent est mis sur le procédé et sur son environnement plutôt que sur le résultat final et sur le processus d'articulation d'un sentiment d'appartenance à London plutôt que sur un chef-d'œuvre autonome.⁴⁸

Ce contact entre l'art résolument local de Curnoe et le contexte international de la biennale donne lieu à d'importants questionnements dans le

catalogue quant au rapport entre l'art local et la scène internationale : « Are we always in balance between the macrocosm and the microcosm? »⁴⁹ Cette question résume bien le régionalisme de Curnoe, où la production locale s'inscrit en relation avec ce qui se passe au niveau mondial.

Ce dialogue entre local et global a de l'importance pour Curnoe ainsi que pour l'ensemble de la scène artistique londonienne. C'est en travaillant en communauté que London et ses artistes arrivent à créer un art résolument local qui communique avec l'art mondial. Greg Curnoe joue un rôle clé dans l'organisation de cette communauté : son atelier, situé dans le même édifice qu'*Alphabet*, est un lieu où les artistes londoniens peuvent se rassembler pour partager librement leurs idées.⁵⁰ De plus, en 1968, c'est à Curnoe que dix autres artistes londoniens doivent leur présence dans l'exposition *Heart of London* au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada. L'exposition devait à l'origine porter uniquement sur Greg Curnoe et Jack Chambers, mais Curnoe a tenu à exposer aux côtés des artistes de sa ville.⁵¹ C'est ce sens important de la communauté qui pousse les artistes à créer eux-mêmes plusieurs institutions activistes.

En 1968, London compte déjà un nombre impressionnant de magazines, de galeries et d'organisations qui servent d'alternatives aux institutions jugées trop conservatrices comme la London Art Gallery.⁵² 1968 voit notamment l'établissement de la Cana-

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dian Artists' Representation (CAR), fondée par les artistes londoniens Jack Chambers, Kim Ondaatje et Tony Urquhart, à laquelle se joint rapidement Curnoe.⁵³ La CAR a comme objectif d'assurer la rémunération des artistes exposés dans les galeries publiques et de protéger la propriété intellectuelle des artistes canadiens.⁵⁴ Cette entraide est centrale dans la fondation des contre-institutions, qui est une manière de réaliser la vision du régionalisme des artistes de London. En créant leur propre plateforme pour pouvoir continuer de produire leur art longtemps boudé par les institutions, les artistes locaux peuvent malgré tout diffuser leur travail. Ces contre-institutions dont fait partie Curnoe et l'importance qu'il accorde au communautarisme sont également un moyen de résister à l'impérialisme culturel américain. Leur enthousiasme envers ce nouveau modèle d'institution locale permet aux artistes londoniens de s'identifier comme résolument canadiens, en opposition à l'approche carriériste et compétitive des États-Unis.⁵⁵ La communauté et les contre-institutions favorisent donc l'oscillation entre microcosme et macrososme dont parle Curnoe dans le catalogue de la biennale de São Paulo.

En 1966 est fondée la galerie 20/20 par, entre autres, Jack Chambers, Greg Curnoe et Tony Urquhart.⁵⁶ En 1992, Curnoe déclare que cette galerie « was consciously set up as an alternative to the local public art gallery [...], and consciously exhibited work that would never have appeared

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there or in the local commercial galleries ». ⁵⁷ Il s'agit également d'une des premières galeries à rémunérer les artistes exposés. Ce modèle de galerie coopérative indépendante, fréquent à London, peut être considéré comme un prototype pour les premiers centres d'artistes autogérés au Canada.⁵⁸

En 1968, la galerie 20/20 présente une exposition intitulée *Swinging London: Being an Exhibition of 24 London Eccentrics*, organisée par l'artiste Tony Urquhart. Cette exposition présente les œuvres d'artistes régionalistes londoniens, qui ont en commun l'importance qu'ils accordent à l'utilisation du quotidien et du local comme source d'inspiration, mais qui, malgré toutes les idées qu'ils partagent, n'ont pas de style unificateur.⁵⁹ On y trouve notamment des œuvres de Greg Curnoe, de Jack Chambers, de Tony Urquhart, de John Boyle, de Murray Favro et de Kim Ondaatje.⁶⁰ Les vingt-quatre artistes exposés dans *Swinging London* forment le cœur de l'activité artistique et activiste londonienne. À cette époque, Chambers réalise de nombreux films dans lesquels London occupe une place importante : il y documente la ville et les environs, les personnes qui y vivent, son entourage et son quotidien.⁶¹ De plus, sa production picturale est largement basée sur des photos qu'il a prises pour immortaliser des moments personnellement importants.⁶² Son travail est donc fortement subjectif et régional. Les peintures d'Urquhart, comme celles de Curnoe, ont comme source l'expérience personnelle de l'artiste, son monde

immédiat,⁶³ ce qui lui permet de s'éloigner du modernisme envahissant de l'époque.⁶⁴ Il y a aussi John Boyle, un jeune artiste qui affirme que la dominance de l'art formaliste américain est due à un canon artistique artificiel qui omet tout ce qui ne correspond pas à la ligne directrice privilégiée.⁶⁵ Selon cette logique, il est également possible de créer de l'art d'importance en périphérie. L'art de Boyle réfute la supériorité américaine par l'utilisation de sujets issus de sa vie personnelle⁶⁶ et par sa condamnation du baseball.⁶⁷ Il serait impossible de passer tous les artistes en revue, mais cet échantillon donne une idée du ton de l'exposition, qui correspond aux ambitions de la galerie 20/20 d'entretenir un dialogue entre global et local.⁶⁸

On remarque notamment l'aspect global de l'exposition dans le titre, *Swinging London*, qui est une expression désignant la scène très vibrante de Londres, en Angleterre.⁶⁹ Ce titre trace donc un parallèle avec la scène internationale. Ensuite, *Swinging London* a voyagé dans la région pendant deux ans après son passage à la galerie 20/20, favorisant la visibilité des artistes.⁷⁰ Hors de London, c'est le régionalisme, l'affirmation locale qui est mise à l'avant par l'éclectisme impressionnant des artistes exposés. *Swinging London* cherche donc à promouvoir l'expression individuelle et le particulier comme alternative aux expositions des institutions traditionnelles. Comme le remarque Robert C. MacKenzie, éditeur du *20 Cents Magazine* (un autre petit magazine

londonien), *Swinging London* démontre qu'une petite galerie coopérative « could mount a show of its own artists without big-gallery initiative, and organize its circulation, and allow the exhibiting artists to be the only ones to benefit financially from its circulation ».⁷¹ *Swinging London* est un effort d'introduire le local dans le global, plutôt que le mouvement inverse qui se passe dans les grands musées.

Au MoMA, en 1967, a lieu une exposition intitulée *Canada '67*. Dans le communiqué de presse, le musée est fier d'annoncer qu'il s'agit de sa première exposition entièrement canadienne et énumère en première page des artistes des grands centres urbains canadiens tels que Molinari, Gaucher, Riopelle, Michael Snow et Les Levine.⁷² Cette exposition présente donc des artistes formalistes canadiens qui suivent les tendances internationales. Comme l'a dit Curnoe en 1966, les artistes réagissent à ce qui les entoure, et comme l'influence américaine est très forte durant les années 1960, ils doivent faire un choix : se camper dans leurs propres racines, comme Curnoe l'a lui-même fait en s'établissant à London, ou bien aller à la source de l'influence, comme ont fait Snow et Levine en s'installant à New York.⁷³ L'exposition *Swinging London* est donc un exemple de la première option puisqu'elle montre qu'il est possible de faire de l'art qui soit à la fois local et sérieux, et d'avoir une place sur la scène plus globale sans se conformer aux styles dominants.⁷⁴

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En conclusion, on peut dire que la scène artistique de London en 1968, caractérisée par le magazine *Alphabet*, par l'art de Greg Curnoe et par l'exposition *Swinging London*, est très cohérente sur le plan idéologique. Ces trois éléments ont en commun une mise en valeur du régionalisme et de l'inspiration locale en art, qui sont des aspects visant à ouvrir un discours avec la scène artistique mondiale homogène contre laquelle ils agissent. C'est la communauté artistique londonienne qui, ayant à cœur le travail collectif et l'entraide, rend possible l'articulation et l'établissement d'une telle philosophie régionaliste.

Dans un article intitulé « What London, Ontario, Has That Everywhere Else Needs », publié en 1969 dans la revue *Art in America*, l'auteur Barry Lord identifie la scène artistique de London comme étant la plus importante au Canada, plus encore que celle des grands centres urbains.⁷⁵ Selon lui, l'art de London, qui s'inspire de l'expérience locale tout en étant connecté au monde global, représente un changement nécessaire de la conception du monde comme universel vers une vision du monde composé de « global villagers », c'est-à-dire un monde sans capitales artistiques, un monde de l'art composé de régions ayant chacune des différences à exploiter⁷⁶.

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Endnotes

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¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Brown, 7.

²⁰ Ibid., 11-12.

²¹ Ibid., 37.

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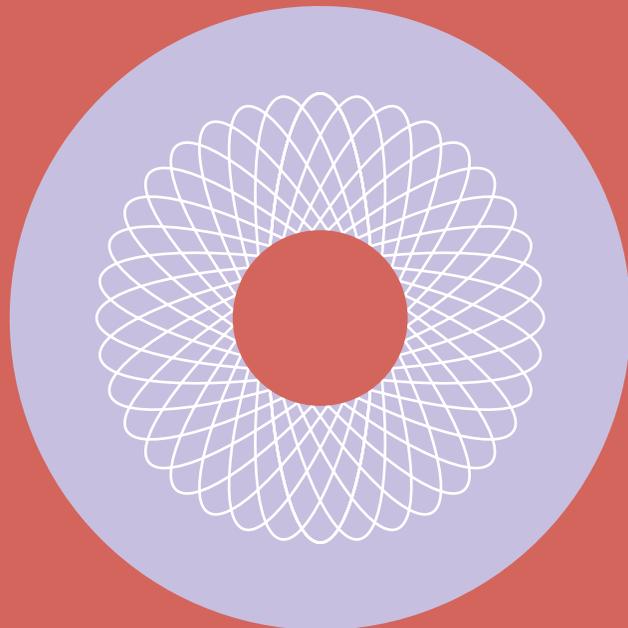
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- ²⁹ Ibid., 36.
- ³⁰ Dennis Reid, « Some Things I Learned from Greg Curnoe », dans *Curnoe: Life & Stuff*, édité par Dennis Reid et Matthew Teitelbaum (Toronto: Art Gallery of Toronto, 2001), 111.
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- ³² Milroy, 19.
- ³³ Pierre Théberge, *Greg Curnoe: Retrospective* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1982), 11.
- ³⁴ Régimbal, loc. cit.
- ³⁵ Gurney, 191.
- ³⁶ Régimbal, loc. cit.
- ³⁷ Gurney, 184.
- ³⁸ Geoffrey James, « The Heart of London », *Vie des Arts 53* (1968-1969): 46.
- ³⁹ Reid, 114.
- ⁴⁰ Milroy, 61.
- ⁴¹ Rodger, 26.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Reid, 114.
- ⁴⁴ Milroy, 62.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 64.
- ⁴⁶ Reid, 116.
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- ⁴⁸ Théberge, 119.
- ⁴⁹ Milroy, 64-65.
- ⁵⁰ Théberge, 6.
- ⁵¹ Milroy, 62.
- ⁵² Gurney, 193.
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Soft Bodies, Hard Porn. Queer Desire in the Work of George Platt Lynes & Samuel Steward

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In the period following WWII, a proliferation of queer erotic images and narratives were created and circulated throughout the United States. From coded forms of homoeroticism found in beefcake magazines such as Bob Mizer's *Physique Pictorial*, to erotically charged paintings by artists like Paul Cadmus and Jared French, representations of queer male sexuality were surreptitiously disseminated. Two artists from this period provide particularly illustrative examples of queer male experience in

social and artistic realms. The photographer George Platt Lynes (1907-1955) and the professor, tattooist, illustrator, and erotic novelist Samuel Steward (1909 -1993) both took part in establishing their own subversive records of queer experience, submitting homoerotic artwork under aliases to underground publications abroad, and providing the infamous sex researcher Alfred Kinsey (1894-1956) with an abundance of material for his studies on human sexuality. While the two men were both upper-middle class and part of circle of friends, strikingly different representations of sexuality appear in their work. Lynes' male nudes are heavily aestheticized and shrouded in artistic reference, offering an elegant vision of eroticism that sets itself apart from the pornographic. Conversely, Steward obsessively documented his sexual encounters, creating an explicit visual archive that indulged in the appeal of sexual subversion and exploitation. Using evidence found

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in their letters and diaries along with social histories of the period, I will demonstrate that Steward and Lynes construct divergent perspectives in their photographic work, reflecting the repressive and exploitative potential of queer male experience during their era.



Fig 1. George Platt Lynes, *Christopher Isherwood*, 1940. Kinsey Institute Collections, Indiana University.

From the start of WWI through the years of WWII, queer individuals risked a loss of employment, rejection from the army and even incarceration for their engagement in same-sex sexual acts. As George Chauncey elaborates in his study *Gay New York*,

with WWI came an increasing number of moral reformers who believed that a growing vice in the city was directly related to 'perverse' sexual acts.¹ With its apparent threat to moral decency, homosexuality was being regarded as a significant social problem. These

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attitudes led to a crackdown on homosexual activities and vigilant surveillance of same-sex meeting places. This patrolling of sexual activity continued through WWII, with regular occurrences of arrests, raids on gay bars, and police chasing men from cruising areas.² Queer individuals were not only being policed for their behaviours in public places, but were also being sought out in their private lives.³ The threat of persecution was ever looming which can be seen in Steward's journals. Steward recalls several neighbours at the San Francisco YMCA being arrested during his stay in 1953, with one resident getting three to five years in prison for committing sodomy. Lynes himself never signed his letters to Steward for fear of persecution due to the letters' erotic content, choosing instead to end all correspondences with the signature "Thine".⁴

In part, this intimidating atmosphere stems from a misunderstanding of the cause of homosexual inclinations, leading to the fear of 'regular' men being corrupted by homosexuals. Evidenced in multiple sources of this period, an attitude prevailed that most if not all men were susceptible to a type of homosexual perversion.⁵ Due to the 'high sexual drive' of men, it was believed that a loss of strength might occur during extended periods spent in the company of the same-sex, a phenomenon common to long stints in the army or Navy. Yet as seen in Chauncey's *Gay New York*, not all men who engaged in same-sex acts

were considered to be homosexuals. On the contrary, it was fairly normal for working-class men to take other men as sexual partners in New York in the early twentieth century. As long as they assumed the dominant rather than receptive role, it was believed that their masculine identity and heterosexual status was not compromised.⁶ Thus it was their gendered behaviour rather than same-sex acts that classified their orientation. Effeminacy, or submissiveness, was the true indicator of homosexuality.

Due to the stigmatization of queer sexualities, several strategies were developed to disguise homoerotic content as heterosexual material. As homosexuality was believed to be directly related to effeminacy, this may have permitted the circulation of men's physique magazines whose depictions of sculpted, muscular (nearly nude) professional and amateur bodybuilders were created under the pretence of masculine athleticism. This form of content was acceptable as it presented a masculine ideal in line with popular perceptions of men as strong, athletic beings. Consumers of these materials could arguably be men who admired and wished to emulate this ideal. Another tactic to disguise the homoerotic content was the association of the magazine's nude male figures with fine art. Aligning their male nudes with classical figures and referencing Ancient Greek ideals of physical development drew attention to the beauty of the male form, beckoning to a time when male nudity was a source of pride rather than shame.⁷ This recognition of

Grecian ideals of beauty, meaningful references to classical art, validated the appreciation of contemporary nude male bodies.

Magazines like *Grecian Guild Pictorial* and *Physique Pictorial* acted as forums to discuss issues unique to the homosexual community such as discrimination and blackmail, in turn nurturing a shared sense of identity. Providing "a useful cover for queer content, including regular reviews of gay themed books,"⁸ these publications were directed to a collective readership that understood and benefitted from representations of queer experience. Along with these covert collections of erotic content, underground homoerotic publications existed in more liberal societies, such as *Der Kreis* (The Circle) from Switzerland. This magazine was founded by Karl "Rolf" Meier in 1942, and running until 1967, it published a variety of visual and literary material with homoerotic themes. More than serving erotic purposes, this publication was meant to create a sense of community between marginalized queer individuals.⁹ Lynes and Steward were among its regular contributors, along with friends of theirs such as the painter Paul Cadmus. Although a strict prohibition of obscene content was in effect during this era in New York, we can see that artists and writers managed to engage with like-minded individuals through their contributions and subscriptions to such homophile publications. This act of sharing was not limited to underground magazines. Lynes and Steward

regularly exchanged erotic stories and photographs in their correspondences.¹⁰ In spite of the risk of having mail seized for its illicit content, Steward would recount his erotic experiences in detail for Lynes, occasionally typed over "Cocteau-inspired line drawings of two men having sex."¹¹ Lynes would reciprocate by sending Steward some of his own erotic photographs.

Beyond queer circles, the sex researcher Alfred Kinsey was compiling all manner of evidence to better understand homosexual behaviour and reveal its widespread practice. Due to the publication of *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* in 1948, Kinsey was seen as sympathetic to queer experiences and was respected by members of Lynes' and Steward's circle of friends. The trust he gained allowed him to establish a prolific archive of hetero and homoerotic material and histories, housed in the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University. His archive of erotic photographs included the work of Lynes, who as a fashion photographer would sell Kinsey much of his commercial photography along with hundreds of his homoerotic prints.¹² Although Lynes was producing his male nudes without Kinsey's encouragement, he noted that the sex researcher had asked him to produce pornographic documentation (to which Lynes declined).¹³ Kinsey not only elicited sexual histories and photographs from individuals, but also orchestrated the creation of much of the material that would become part of his collection. As Weinberg notes

in *Male Desire*, “the archive influenced the form and content of the representations it claimed to be objectively studying.”¹⁴ This was certainly true in the case of Steward participated in the filming of a homosexual sadomasochistic scene at Kinsey’s request.¹⁵ Consequently, in some form queer experiences were being encouraged institutionally. It is not clear how much of this material would have been created without Kinsey’s support, but the close relationship the two maintained undoubtedly encouraged Steward’s daring pursuit of recording his sexual history.

Kinsey’s interest in Steward’s record keeping began with his discovery of the *\$tud File*: an elaborate account of Steward’s sexual history accompanied by an explicit collection of polaroids. Details of Steward’s sexual partners and experiences were memorialized on cue cards using an intricate system of code that he developed. According to Spring’s Secret Historian, these photographs were not meant as fine art or pornography, but as evidence of same-sex sexual encounters during an era that forbade these forms of expression.¹⁶ More than simply proving the existence of such experiences, these images are laden with signification, and they reveal complex dynamics of Steward’s sexual encounters and desires. Typical icons of masculinity such as the sailor and thug appear repeatedly in Steward’s *\$tud File*. These archetypes are distinctly related to characters of Jean Genet’s *Querelle de Brest* (1947), a

novel which Steward admired so much that he took the initiative to illustrate and translate it. Spring stated that this novel “surely appealed to Steward for its sexual glorification of the sailor, as well as its descriptions of rough, often violent sex between working-class heterosexually identified men.”¹⁷ Although Steward occasionally adopts these personas himself, it is more often his sexual partners who dress as dominant, working-class types, with Steward taking a receptive or passive role. This may be due to Steward’s preference for a submissive position, or perhaps it is the result of his subjects feeling more comfortable being photographed in a ‘masculine’ or authoritative position. In either case, Steward’s sexual partners are nearly always dressed as hyper-masculine characters, donning the uniforms of working-class men and adopting the assertive or dominant sexual role.

Commenting on a cinematic adaptation of Genet’s book, Patrick Schuckmann expands on the appeal of the character *Querelle*, whose erotic desirability comes not from his subjection to a dominating gaze, but from the lack of reciprocated sexual desire he feels towards the male partners he engages with.¹⁸ With this in mind, one can consider history as told in Chauncey’s *Gay New York* in which ‘using’ queer individuals for sex only enhanced a heterosexual male’s masculine status. According to Chauncey, “sexual penetration symbolized one man’s power over another.”¹⁹ This structure of power is complicated in the relationships

Steward engaged in, as Steward often bragged about soliciting sex from heterosexuals. In a correspondence to Lynes, he recounted the story of a drunken soldier who allowed Steward to perform oral sex on him, stating: “how he could manage to face his wife and two children twenty minutes after was not my problem, of course.”²⁰ In another questionable act of exploitation, Steward drew up a contract with a student, George Reginato, in which Reginato was awarded ‘A’ grades for allowing Steward to perform oral sex on him once a month.²¹ From these examples, we can see that Steward was aroused by his manipulation of heterosexual men.

Several polaroids in the *\$tud File* take on new meaning in light of these findings, especially those in which the men Steward performs oral sex on seem utterly disinterested in what is happening. While many of the works feature explicit plays with power relations, such as those where individuals are whipped or handcuffed, certain images feature men reading books, eating bananas or even staring into the distance with noticeable indifference. It is hardly possible to tell whether these images were intentionally posed in such a manner, or if these individuals were simply not aroused. Still the lack of reciprocated sexual desire hints that some form of manipulation may be at play, causing one to question the distribution of power between the characters. While Steward is the receptive partner assuming a submissive role, he is simultaneously the

photographer who commands the image and his erotic object. The erotic object receives sexual gratification and is meant to maintain a sense of masculinity in his dominant role, but in reality he may be an unwilling partner enticed by money, academic benefits, or simple drunkenness. This repeated theme of the disinterested sexual object disturbs our expectations of the balance of power seen in these same-sex sexual performances.

While Steward’s photographs appear to be the documentation of a sexually subversive lifestyle, revelling in the seductive image of ‘perversity’, Lynes’ heavily aestheticized photographs draw attention to the beauty of his autonomous, powerful male subjects. Photography necessitates a level of spectatorship on the part of the viewer, and an underlying dimension of power exists between the photographer/viewer and the subject/object. Thomas Waugh labels Lynes’ work as glamorous, defining *glamour* as the “contradictory mix of intimate identification and unfulfillable voyeurism” considered to be the basis of homoerotic spectatorship.²² This comment is reminiscent of Laura Mulvey’s seminal text on the male gaze, where the voyeuristic role of the viewer was proved to be a dominant, masculine position. In Mulvey’s text, the viewer is meant to identify with the heroic male figures in the narrative, with the erotic object being a feminine character on display for the viewing pleasure of both the male characters in the film and the presumably male

viewers.²³ This becomes complicated in homoerotic images as the viewer is meant to both desire and identify with the erotic object displayed. In most cases, the male subject still retains his agency by being shown in active roles or possessing a defiant gaze.

Lynes' eroticized male subjects are comparable to the commanding bodies portrayed in men's fitness magazines. His models are posed appealingly while still appearing incredibly powerful. Often flexing in motion, their muscles are highlighted by a deep chiaroscuro that emphasizes their definition. Even though their gaze is often cast aside rather than directly at the viewer, a certain tension is felt in their body that alludes to its potential for movement or action. This may be due to Lynes' professional work as a photographer of the New York ballet, whose athletic male dancers often became subjects of Lynes' erotic photography, or "private complements to a public *oeuvre*."²⁴ It is notable that Lynes always reconstructed scenes rather than capturing them during actual performances. In his theatre and fashion photography, Lynes staged moments that played with light and shadow to define the contours of the models' muscles, creating movement in bodies posed in an otherwise motionless scene. This proficiency was paralleled in his male erotic nudes that maintain an aesthetic awareness which sets them apart from other erotic or pornographic images of the time.

More than confounding traditional subject/object relationships, Lynes seemed to pioneer a genre of photography which Waugh termed the "gay artist in a narrative dream tableau."²⁵ His portraits of artists such as *Christopher Isherwood* and Marsden Hartley feature deeply psychological, internal spaces that appear to use the artist and their erotic object to reflect on the nature of queer intimacy and desire. In Christopher Isherwood from 1940, a nude male figure lounges behind Isherwood as the writer stares back at the viewer (fig 1). While Isherwood is recognizable and fully clothed, the character behind him is sprawled nude with eyes closed, giving the sense that this man is an unidentified, idealized figure of male beauty in Isherwood's erotic tale. Isherwood's face is directly beside the man's genitals, creating a subtle reference to oral sex.²⁶ A cloudy sky merges with the indistinguishable space that separates the young man and Isherwood. The two seem to exist on separate planes, inducing an irrational sense of timelessness. Instead of evoking a sense of danger which would surely be the case in a realistic setting, the subjects' apparent proximity is presented as both acceptable and comfortable. In this dreamlike setting, the nude male can be seen as a manifestation of Isherwood, or Lynes', homoerotic desires.

Lynes' use of a surreal atmosphere can be considered a tool to explore queer subjectivity, but it also reveals his desire to remain in the avant-garde artistic milieu. Lynes was a prominent figure in Surrealist photography,

taking part in the 1931 exhibition of Surrealist work, "Newer Super-Realism," held at the Julian Levy Gallery in New York. His alignment with the Surrealist movement is evident in the dream-like, internal spaces that Lynes presents as well as his allusions to repressed or subconscious thoughts.²⁷ As such, Lynes' work cannot be considered solely as documentation of queer male experience or homoerotic desire. Lynes was adamant that his photography was not pornographic, claiming in the best instances it was not erotic at all.²⁸ His work is much more related to the academic male nude than to the men found in bodybuilding magazines or Steward's objectifying Polaroids. While his nude male photographs contain homoerotic themes and Lynes shared them wherever he could safely, he did not want his work to stagnate unseen in Kinsey's archive. Lynes ultimately considered his erotic photography a formal exploration and an artistic pursuit. Still, an appreciation for the male physique and subtle references to same-sex intimacy and desire are discernible in his work, however restrained or sanitized they may appear. As such, his photographs present a burgeoning sense of queer identity, obscured by his aestheticized style and his alignment with the Surrealist movement.

Steward and Lynes represent two opposing approaches to expressing and documenting queer male identities. Steward seemed to be enthralled with the image of deviance, arousing himself through plays of power and

discipline and priding himself in the seduction of heterosexual men. In an era where his sexuality was condemned, Steward embodied the lifestyle of a 'pervert', bravely accumulating an archive that epitomised his sexual interests without disguising the work as an artistic pursuit. Meanwhile, Lynes distanced his work from the pornographic, persistently documenting the aesthetic beauty of the masculine physique. His resulting body of work subtly engaged with queer male eroticism while remaining in the artistic avant-garde. While both men shared erotic encounters through their stories and photographs, the erotic documentation they produced differed greatly in style and purpose. Through underground publications and the encouragement of Alfred Kinsey, along with a wide circle of queer and sexually liberal friends, these two artists disseminated their work. In a subversive act, they memorialized their experiences of intimacy, sexual desire, repression and exploitation.

Endnotes

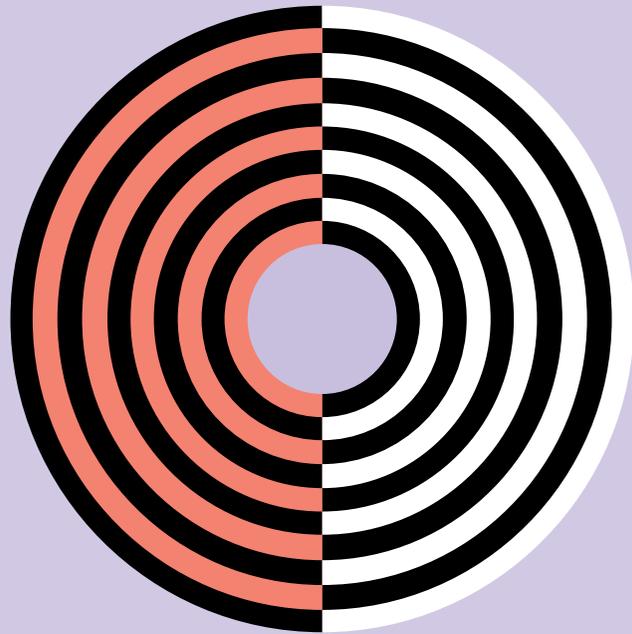
- 1 Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 141-149.
- 2 Crump, *George Platt Lynes*, 152.
- 3 See Weinberg, *Male desire*, 85; Spring, *Secret Historian*, 132.
- 4 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 171-174.
- 5 See Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 147; Brickell, "Homoerotic Subjectivities," 91-92.
- 6 Chauncey, *Gay New York* 65-70.
- 7 Weinberg, *Male desire*, 95.
- 8 Aletti, "The Masculine Mystique," 56-57.
- 9 Weinberg, *Male desire*, 85-106.
- 10 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 159-179.
- 11 Ibid., 161.
- 12 Crump, *George Platt Lynes*, 145-150.
- 13 Ibid., 150.
- 14 Weinberg, *Male desire*, 87.
- 15 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 138-141.
- 16 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 116.
- 17 Ibid., 135.
- 18 Schuckmann, "Male Spectator and the Homoerotic Gaze," 673.
- 19 Chauncey, *Gay New York*, 81.
- 20 Spring, *Secret Historian*, 160.
- 21 Ibid., 134.
- 22 Waugh, "Posing and Performance," 59.
- 23 Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 835-837.
- 24 Waugh, "Posing and Performance," 98.
- 25 Ibid., 64.
- 26 Ellenzweig, *The homoerotic photograph*, 92.
- 27 "Surrealism." *Grove Art Online*.
- 28 Crump, *George Platt Lynes*, 150.

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Craft as Maintenance, Maintenance as Craft: The Work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles

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Mierle Laderman Ukeles' series of *Maintenance Art* performances from 1972 represents a conceptual gesture that called attention to the devaluation of certain kinds of labour in the context of artistic discourse as well as in society at large. Ukeles' performances were premised on a manifesto she penned in 1969 that laid out the basis for her artistic engagement with labour. In her *Manifesto for Maintenance Art*, Ukeles argues for the understanding of Western cultural production as based on a hierarchical dichotomy between development and maintenance. The attention

Ukeles calls to the devaluation of maintenance in this context illuminates the historical devaluation of craft. Her categories reveal the gender and class dynamics that contribute to the devaluation of skilled handicraft, and the marginalization of craft discourses, among numerous other kinds of labour and cultural production. At the same time, framing Ukeles' work through craft theory unlocks its radical potential as a comment on the art world and the critical discourse surrounding the production of politically engaged works, including those of institutional critique and conceptual art. Aligning Ukeles' work with craft opens up a mutually beneficial relationship that does not construct artistic discourse hierarchically in relation to craft, but reveals the potential for these traditions to inform one another, specifically for feminist, anti-capitalist ends.

Ukeles' artistic practice fits into a framework that takes up craft as a position rather than the practice of creating objects through skilled labour. Ukeles developed her theoretical stance around the notion of development's privileged status over maintenance. With these two categories, the artist provides a useful dichotomy through which to analyze craft's marginalization in relation to the contemporary art world, and the uneasy relationship between these two spheres.

Ukeles' work exhibits a preoccupation with waste (she has been the official unsalaried artist in residence at the New York Department of Sanitation since the 1970s), and brings forward the notion that our culture's propensity to replace rather than reuse is bringing us to disaster. This is linked to the problem of objects being created to be disposable, which is resisted by the slower, more thoughtful patterns of production and consumption associated with craft. Ukeles' work directly addresses power dynamics and hierarchies. For her, this means calling attention to the interdependent but hierarchically differentiated systems of development and maintenance. Ukeles seeks to show through conceptual art performances the ways in which maintenance labour is undervalued and exploited in the service of development. Ukeles was invested in this dynamic specifically in relation to the art world. Her series of *Maintenance Art* performances at the Wadsworth Athenaeum investigate the gendered power dynamics involved in what kinds of objects or gestures are consecrated as art by institutions. Ukeles' work has been misaligned with conceptual art practices, as well as with institutional critique. Both of these frameworks for considering her

work sever it from the conditions that give rise to its radical potential. Analyzing Ukeles' *Maintenance Art* performances at the Wadsworth Athenaeum through a craft lens provides a critical framework and historical precedents in which to ground Ukeles' gestures.

Craft ethics and craft thinking tend to make visible labour that falls under the banner of maintenance: obscured, undervalued and/or unrecognized. Creating a sense of continuity between craft movements and marginalized artists like Ukeles, who are addressing similar kinds of issues and similar dynamics (undervalued, feminized labour) is important. Craft as an ongoing discourse can be informed by Ukeles' artistic practice and theoretical premise, just as it forms a lens through which to analyze Ukeles' work as a rich text aimed towards deconstructing hierarchies in the art world and in society at large. The artist's practice fits into a discourse around craft, providing a framework and rhetorical tool (with the term maintenance art) for understanding the potential place for craft ethics in the contemporary art world.

Ukeles' *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* provides the theoretical basis for her interventions at the Wadsworth Athenaeum three years later. After outlining the dichotomy she perceives between development and maintenance, Ukeles turns her attention to artistic discourse, pointing out the ways in which artistic gestures are falsely discussed solely in terms of development. She states, "Avant-garde art, which claims utter development, is infected by strains of maintenance

ideas, maintenance activities, and maintenance materials."¹ From the outset of her engagement with labour, Ukeles lays out fundamental issues within artistic discourse, describing how the work of development is valued, and that of maintenance, the work that reproduces the conditions of everyday life, is obscured. Art historian Helen Molesworth takes up the political ramifications of maintenance's invisibility in her critical writing on Ukeles, which I discuss below.

The series of maintenance performances at the Wadsworth Athenaeum consisted of three phases. In *Washing Tracks: Maintenance Inside*, Ukeles scrubbed the floor of the gallery during visiting hours, while gallery attendees observed (fig. 1). In *Washing Tracks: Maintenance Outside*, she similarly scrubbed the steps of the gallery and the pavement outside (fig. 2). The element of duration is essential to both performances. The element of duration and the physical toll of the labour on her body are essential to both performances. She spent a total of eight hours scrubbing the gallery floor. She later commented on the significance of the labour she invested in the performance, emphasizing the hard work involved in cleaning the gallery space.² These first two works specifically function to draw attention to labour that is consistently invisible in the context of the gallery space, which is presented as a pristine, self-contained entity.

Both performances were attended by significant photographic documentation. A photograph of Ukeles during the performance of *Washing Tracks: Maintenance Inside* shows

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Fig 1. Mierle Laderman Ukeles *Hartford Wash: Washing, Tracks, Maintenance (Inside)*, 1973 Part of Maintenance Art performance series, 1973-1974 Performance at Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, CT © Mierle Laderman Ukeles Courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, NY



Fig 2. Mierle Laderman Ukeles *Hartford Wash: Washing, Tracks, Maintenance (Outside)*, 1973 Part of Maintenance Art performance series, 1973-1974 Performance at Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, CT Courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

several onlookers, including a trio of young children, standing over Ukeles, who is barefoot and stooped on her hands and knees. In another striking image, Ukeles is shot in profile in the same pose, before a fountain with a sculpture of a female nude on a raised plinth at its centre. The framing of this picture, as well as the pathos of Ukeles' pose and choice of costume, draws emphatically back to the fundamental premise outlined in Ukeles manifesto. The white, marble statue signifies the grandiose gesture of development. The work is consecrated as art and contained within the pristine space of the gallery, as a static object severed from contemporary social context. Ukeles as the artist is situated in the picture as a stooped, shadowy figure, her head bent over the work of scrubbing the floor on which she performs.

In this sense, the photographic record of Ukeles' intervention at the Athenaeum provides not simply a record, but a poetic language through which to engage with the theory articulated in the artist's manifesto. Through her performances, Ukeles successfully rendered the drama and intensity of maintenance, and it is through this kind of framework that her work is taken up in artistic discourse. Despite this, the artist herself acknowledges the frustration of engaging in this kind of labour, stating:

What the performances gesture towards is not only the injustice of main-

tenance's invisibility, but what might happen if maintenance were considered more deeply, and if greater value were ascribed to the labour performed by all maintenance workers.

Ukeles explicitly ties her experience as a mother to her artistic practice. A particularly poetic element of her performance is her use of diapers, a tool of art conservators, to clean parts of the gallery. A further double entendre can be found in her performance *Transfer: The Maintenance of the Art Object*.⁴ The work involved Ukeles cleaning the glass case enclosing an Egyptian mummy, the most popular object at the Athenaeum. Following her cleaning of the case, Ukeles pronounced the object as an original maintenance art piece. In this performance, Ukeles deliberately meddles with rules put in place by the museum about what kind of worker is permitted to touch artworks. Her cleaning of the case and pronouncement of it as an art object means that only the conservator is allowed to perform maintenance on it in the future. As with her *Washing Tracks* performances, Ukeles seeks in *Transfer* to make visible the dynamics related to maintenance work that are deliberately obscured from gallery visitors.

Helen Molesworth discusses the radical nature and politicized character of Ukeles' series of performances at the Athenaeum. Calling attention to the systems Ukeles invokes in her critique of the treatment of mainte-

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**"Maintenance is a drag; it takes all the fucking time
The mind boggles and chafes at the boredom
The culture confers lousy status on maintenance
jobs = minimum wages, housewives = no pay."³**

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nance, she states, "it is absolutely structural to patriarchy and capitalism that the labor of maintenance remain *invisible*."⁵ In Molesworth's conception, drawing attention to this labour, as Ukeles does, means doing battle with these systems. Molesworth discusses Ukeles' *Manifesto for Maintenance Art* in terms of how it calls attention to the undervalued labour of maintenance. While Ukeles' Athenaeum performances have implications that relate specifically to gendered labour, Molesworth aptly positions Ukeles' concept as an attempt to critique the devaluing of maintenance in general, stating, "Ukeles' manifesto insists that the ideals of modernity (progress, change, individual creation) are dependent on the denigrated and boring labor of maintenance... Incisively, Ukeles does not refer to maintenance labor as domestic labor, or housework, for it is evident that such labor is not confined solely to the spaces of domesticity."⁶ Molesworth discusses Ukeles' work in relation to feminist art practices from the 1970s, while also highlighting the ways in which the artist diverges from this tradition through her concern with undervalued labour at large. Although Ukeles attributes her revelations regarding labour to her experience as a mother,⁷ her considerations extend beyond this field. Molesworth additionally points out how Ukeles' work diverges from feminist art practice in the 1970s that tends towards essentialist discourse around the female body, like that of Judy Chicago.⁸

The nature of Ukeles' performances as far as they are invested in critiquing capitalism and patriarchy, as well as hierarchies of labour, aligns her practice with craft as a historically and ideologically loaded term. Craft has historically referred not only to objects rendered by hand or the practice of skilled labour, but also a set of ideas. From the initial writings of figures associated with the Arts and Crafts movement like William Morris and John Ruskin to the contemporary context, craft is frequently linked with expressions of discontent with capitalist production, and an emphasis on the value of all kinds of labour. While this kind of attitude does not situate craft as necessarily oppositional to the art world, it is responsible for troubling the value of labour and production in this field. Ukeles' practice has been marginalized in "high" art discourse,⁹ as well as engaging with issues of labour. Reading her work through a craft lens situates it as a rich site for interpretation.

Glenn Adamson argues that craft as a category was invented in contradistinction to modernity, to refer to that which was not industrial, not mass-produced, that was nostalgic and gestured towards the past.¹⁰ Craft can also be understood as providing a category against which to define modern art. In this sense, Ukeles' work is revealing. She manages to access a central question of craft ethics in relation to art through her conceptual performance, that calls attention

to labour performed with the body, that is actual work employed towards accomplishing a goal (the maintaining of the space). Without performing the kind of work that would traditionally be named “handiwork,” Ukeles works with her hands, in order to call into question the same kinds of issues that contemporary ethics highlight. What Ukeles’ performance accomplishes, on some level, is the same thing that making questions around craft public and visible can accomplish.

Ukeles’ performance can be interpreted as a radical gesture employing craft thinking, as opposed to a work of art engaging with everyday life. As Helen Molesworth points out, Ukeles “insists on the structural aspect of everyday maintenance labor.”¹¹ This means that she is calling attention to a flaw in society’s organization, as opposed to reproducing everyday circumstances for aesthetic contemplation. Ukeles’ work is thus positioned in a staunchly politicized conception of what a closer inspection, opened up through artistic practice, of the actual conditions of everyday life might reveal. Through her discussion of Ukeles’ work, Molesworth advocates for collapsing the distinction between art and life.¹² Ukeles aspired to be an artist like her heroes Jackson Pollock, Marcel Duchamp, and Mark Rothko, until she became a mother and decided to merge the ongoing (never-ending) project of maintenance that became so central to her life, and her artistic practice.¹³ This gesture is very similar to the question that lies at the heart of

craft ethics: is it right to incorporate art into one’s daily life, as an ‘ordinary’ person? Morris highlights this aspiration in his own writing on craft, wherein he calls attention to the importance of having access to beautiful, artistically rendered objects for all.¹⁴ Molesworth takes this position a step further in relation to Ukeles work by arguing in favour of collapsing altogether the distinction between these two poles.

Ukeles’ performance and manifesto were realized independently and in a decentred fashion, reminiscent of the circumstances giving rise to contemporary craft practices.¹⁵ The space for contingency and the independence of Ukeles’ practice during this time allow her work to be situated as an intervention into dominant artistic and museological discourses. The structural devaluation of maintenance labour remains a relevant issue in today’s context and has ramifications when applied to contemporary craft. The issue of the devaluation of maintenance labour that Ukeles calls attention to is the same notion that the marginalization of craft is premised upon in contemporary artistic discourse. Moving away from craft discourse as object-based, Ukeles’ work can be aligned with the notion of ‘craft thinking’ in the sense that her investigations into maintenance work call into question societal dynamics that contribute to the devaluation of (feminized) maintenance labour.

Thinking through Ukeles’ performances in relation to theories around craft production first entails uniting the

apparent dissonance between feminist conceptual art and craft discourse. This unification must occur on two fronts: first, the apparent immateriality of conceptual art, a discourse through which Ukeles’ work is framed and taken up, must be problematized. Secondly, it is essential to rethink craft’s apparent reliance on an object. The argument for taking up Ukeles’ work in relation to craft theories and the notion of craft ethics hinges on the possibility of applying this theory to a realm not typically associated with craft, as well as on the actual materiality of conceptual practices that Ukeles herself highlighted in her series of performances.

Lucy Lippard, the curator responsible for bringing Ukeles’ art to the Wadsworth Athenaeum as part of a group show titled *C. 7500*, frames conceptual art in the following terms: “In conceptual art, the idea is paramount - permanence, formal or decorative values are secondary or of no concern.”¹⁶ Such thinking about the nature and function of conceptual art is fundamentally oppositional to the way that craft is usually taken up— as having links to repetition, materiality and skilled labour. It is also antithetical to what Ukeles attempted to draw attention to through her performances. Ukeles herself points to the obscuring of maintenance in the discourse around conceptual art, stating in her manifesto, “[c]onceptual and process art, especially, claim pure development and change, yet employ almost purely maintenance processes.”¹⁷ Awareness

of this dynamic is part of what Ukeles seeks to draw attention to in her work, just as a focus on labour and process is promulgated in discourse around craft.

The intrinsic nature of the object, especially an object carefully created through skilled labour, in relation to craft is something that has been called into question in contemporary scholarly work on craft. In the introduction to the volume *Sloppy Craft*, Elaine Cheasley Paterson and Susan Surette highlight the intersecting concerns between art and craft discourse. The hierarchical nature of the relationship between these two spheres is most problematized when craft is considered as a position as opposed to a set of practices or aesthetic concerns. Paterson and Surette state, “The *dematerialization* of the craft object accompanies many current considerations of craft and, while not new, has been used recently to position craft as a methodology, as a form of knowledge, as a performance.”¹⁸ Thinking about craft as a position and way of thinking as opposed to a term that refers to particular kinds of production and conditions of production makes space to incorporate Ukeles’ performances into a craft context. Paterson and Surette define craft as a critical stance, a position within the context of cultural production, visual culture, processing modernity and mass-production that is very much in dialogue with the art world, and increasingly less peripheral to it.¹⁹

Maria Elena Buszek takes up the political nature of contemporary craft in her text “Labour is my Medium.” Buszek advocates for craft as a position as opposed to a set of practices, and goes on to state, “a dominant aspect of contemporary craft has been the artists’ focus upon its economic, gender and class associations in relation to the labour necessary for its production.”²⁰ In this way Buszek makes clear the consequence of thinking through labour and taking labour seriously as necessarily political.

Deploying craft thinking in relation to Ukeles’ practice highlights the continuity that exists between her work and other movements to promote craft and critique hierarchies of cultural production based around gender and class. Ukeles is invested in exploring the hierarchies between different kinds of social and cultural production as well as the underlying causes for these hierarchies. This makes her a relevant artist to talk about in relation to craft ethics, because her practice embodies the same kind of critiques developed in craft discourse around labour and exploitation and, more recently, around the hierarchical divide between art and craft. This kind of thinking about craft works in strong contrast to the discourse surrounding craft emerging from high art discourse. The way that craft is taken up in this context, i.e. by art critics, is often as a notion deployed in order to make a point about art. A notable example of this attitude comes from art critic John Perreault’s assertion that the

simple gesture of taking craft seriously is an inherently radical one. In an essay titled, “Craft is Art,” Perreault states, “[t]o tamper with categories, even if the categories are painfully inadequate, is to tamper with power.”²¹ This kind of thinking has nothing to do with craft, as Perreault himself admits in the text. An argument for Mierle Ukeles’ practice as a manifestation of craft thinking and craft ethics operates in opposition to the way that craft is taken up in artistic discourse, where critics presume to elevate craft by relating it to a discourse of high art. Taking up Ukeles work in this way reveals how craft works as a tool for radical developments and gestures, as opposed to talking about craft as a way of critiquing the art world whilst still remaining enamored with it.

Along a similar line of artistic discourse that gestures towards critique of the art world but remains enamored with it is Miwon Kwon’s writing on Ukeles’ performance in her essay, “In Appreciation of Invisible Work.” Kwon emphasizes the distinction between Ukeles’ practice and art emerging from the 1970s and 80s falling under the umbrella of institutional critique. She highlights the mutually beneficial nature of the relationship between the artist and the institution that has commissioned them to formulate such a critique. In relation to the response of institutions to supposedly critical artworks housed therein, Kwon states,

She indicates the inability of conceptual practices to bring forth effective critique to the space of the institution.

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“The loud objections may in fact be exclamations of institutional pleasure... What begins as a vehement assertion if difference can become the most effective stabi-lizing force in the (re)affirmation of sameness and continuity (i.e., business as usual).”²²

Ukeles counters this tradition through her work, which engages with repetition, duration and physicality and calls attention to undervalued, feminized, invisible labour, duration, and physicality. Through Kwon, it is possible to understand the ways in which Ukeles’ marginalized status in the art world and artistic discourse arises from her radical politics, but also the ways in which her radical politics inform her practice, in a symbiotic formulation. Further, following Kwon, Ukeles’ alignment with craft ethics can similarly be ascribed in part to her marginalized position, as far as it informs the character of her work.

Taking up craft as a discourse that is oppositional to capitalism and that seeks to draw attention to labour relations and the conditions of production, it is clear that Ukeles’ categories of maintenance and development offer a framework through which to situate contemporary craft practices. When craft thinking and craft ethics are situated as a set of discourses invested in muddying the hierarchical distinction between development and maintenance labour, Ukeles’ artistic practice

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is opened up and strengthened through an alignment with this discourse. This kind of thinking about craft is informed by contemporary understandings of craft as having always been rooted in a set of political concerns and investments, as opposed to merely formal and aesthetic considerations. The marginalization of craft in relation to artistic discourse is another example of a development/maintenance distinction.²³ There was a lack of concern for Ukeles’ work within the art world in the 1970s, a period that simultaneously saw growing encouragement and space for conceptual art, and institutional critique.²⁴ This imbalance speaks to the art institution’s inability to foster meaningful critique of its own role and function in society, despite the flourishing of conceptual practices during the era.

Endnotes

- 1 Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969! Proposal for an Exhibition 'Care,'" *Ronald Feldman Fine Arts*, accessed December 13, 2016, 2, http://www.feldmangallery.com/pages/home_frame.html
- 2 Julie Akerat, *Not Just Garbage*, videorecording, 28 minutes, 1986.
- 3 Ukeles, "Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969!" 2.
- 4 There is no photographic record of the work, but Ukeles drew a chart outlining the actions performed as well as her premise (see fig. 5).
- 5 Helen Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," October 92 (2000): 88.
- 6 Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," 78.
- 7 Akerat, *Not Just Garbage*, 1986.
- 8 Molesworth, "House work and Art Work," 71-2.
- 9 Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," 78.
- 10 Glenn Adamson, *The Invention of Craft*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), xv-xvi.
- 11 Moleworth, "House Work and Art Work," 78.
- 12 Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," 88.
- 13 Julie Akerat, *Not Just Garbage*, videorecording, 28 minutes, 1986.
- 14 William Morris, "The Revival of Handicraft," in Isabelle Frank (ed.) and David Britt (trans.) *The Theory of Decorative Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 176.
- 15 Shu Hung and Joseph Magliaro, *By Hand: The Use of Craft in Contemporary Art*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 11-12.
- 16 Lippard, Lucy. *Issue: Social Strategies by Women Artists: An Exhibition*. London: Institute of Contemporary Artists, 1980.
- 17 Ukeles, "Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969!" 2.
- 18 Elaine Cheasley Paterson and Susan Surette, *Sloppy Craft: Postdisciplinarity and the Crafts*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 9.
- 19 Cheasley Paterson and Surette, *Sloppy Craft*, 9.
- 20 Maria Elena Buszek, "Labour is my Medium: Some Perspective(s) on Contemporary Craft," *Archives of American Art Journal* 50:3-4 (2014): 73.
- 21 John Perreault, "Craft is Art: Tampering with Power," in *Objects and Meaning*, ed. M. Anna Fariello et al., (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press), 70.
- 22 Miwon Kwon, "In appreciation of Invisible Work: Mierle Laderman Ukeles and the Maintenance of the 'White Cube,'" *Documents* 10 (1997): 15.
- 23 Cheasley Paterson and Surette, *Sloppy Craft*, 9.
- 24 Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," 78.

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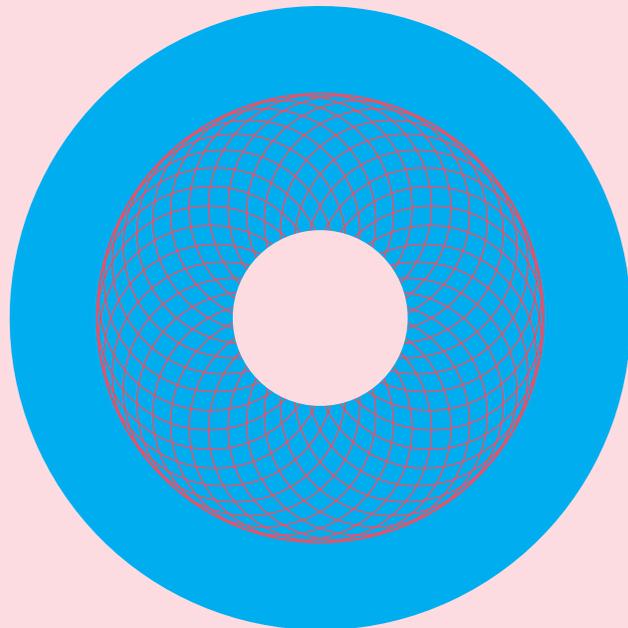
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Getting the Gold of It: The Found Object in Self-Taught Art

Written by: Reagan Petty
Edited by: Genevieve Baldassarre



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When considering the case of a man from isolated, rural Alabama who transforms discarded materials into complex sculptural assemblages and expressive mixed-media paintings, questions of classification and terminology naturally arise. Is this man an artist? If so, what kind of artist? Should he be called a naïve artist, a primitive artist, or a folk artist? What if his assemblages and paintings make their way into mainstream art institutions, complicating his classification? Should he then be called an outsider artist, because he emerged from outside of the traditional art

scene, or a self-taught artist, because he never attended a formal art school? Should he simply be called a contemporary artist, all other labels aside? The discourse surrounding self-taught artists, especially on the topic of classification and terminology, has produced various responses from scholars and institutions, leading to what curator Katherine Jentleson calls, "term warfare."¹ One way to discuss the relationship of self-taught artists to mainstream artists is through their use of non-traditional materials. The use of found objects is a defining feature of the work of many self-taught artists, including the mixed-media paintings of Thornton Dial and the assemblages of Lonnie Holley, but the use of found objects is also present in the work of canonical artists from the Western tradition, like Marcel Duchamp and Robert Rauschenberg.

There is a popular movement among scholars and institutions to appropriate self-taught artists into the mainstream Western tradition based on their similarities, but the work of artists such as Dial and Holley emerges from a tradition that is distinct from that of traditional Western art. Examining the roots of the use of found objects in the work of self-taught artists reveals that this type of art stems from the traditions of African Kongo culture and Southern yard art, which effectively forms a parallel and independent artistic tradition to that of the mainstream West. By comparing the use of the found object in self-taught art to its use by mainstream artists, looking at the distinct traditions, intentions, and artistic philosophies that lead up to the use of the found object, conclusions can be drawn about the proper classification of self-taught artists within the wider conversation on contemporary art.

As dealers and collectors are discovering more self-taught artists, their work has been widely accepted and has appeared in the exhibitions and collections of many mainstream institutions. While the work of self-taught artists had already made its way into the artistic mainstream by the 1930s, as evidenced by the 1937 solo exhibition of William Edmondson at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York,² the 1980s showed a "boom" of unprecedented interest in self-taught artists.³ Most scholars attribute the genesis of this fascination with self-taught art in the

United States to the 1982 exhibition *Black Folk Art in America* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art.⁴ While this exhibition has been criticized for its use of "Folk Art" as a misnomer and its conglomerative attitude toward the art of the self-taught tradition, it does mark the first instance that self-taught art, particularly African-American self-taught art, was taken into serious critical, scholarly, and institutional consideration. From this exhibition onward, interest in self-taught art increased as many prominent institutions scrambled to acquire this art of significant and newfound importance. The work of self-taught artists made its way into the collection of the Museum of Modern Art,⁵ the High Museum of Art in Atlanta designated a curator specifically for self-taught art in 1994,⁶ and the work of self-taught artist Howard Finster was even included in the album art of the Southern alternative band R.E.M.⁷ The attention paid to self-taught art by scholars and institutions opened a dialogue to discuss the proper place of self-taught artists in the world of mainstream contemporary art that is yet to be resolved. One artist who has been accepted into mainstream institutions and whose utilization of the found object invites comparisons to the work of trained artists, is Thornton Dial.

Dial was born in rural Emelle, Alabama in 1928 to Mattie Bell, a sharecropper, on an Alabama plantation. He began working in the field under the instruction of his grandmother at about the same age he learned to

walk. Around the age of three, he went to live with his second cousin, who he called Uncle Buddy Jake Dial. At the age of 12, Dial moved to Bessemer, Alabama. For thirty years, Dial worked at the Pullman Standard Railcar Factory where he learned to work with metal, which later became an important skill in his mixed-media assemblages.⁸ At a very young age, Dial began to produce what he called “things” out of found materials.⁹ He cites the first “thing” he ever made as two grasshoppers attached to a matchbox by a thread because he wanted to have his own miniature horse and buggy.¹⁰ While this specific “thing” has been lost, it marked the beginning of his creative use of the found object, which evolved into its use in his large assemblages and mixed-media paintings.

His work titled *Quilting* (Fig. 1) is an example of one of his mixed-media works. In it, he incorporates used and discarded clothing which is twisted and laid expressionistically across a plywood base. While this piece does



Fig 1. Thornton Dial, *Quilting*. 1997. Mixed-Media. 60 x 36 inches. The Johnston Collection, Spartanburg, SC. <http://thejohnsoncollection.org/thornton-dial-quilting/>

not share the extensive and socially charged titles that accompany most of his later works, it does share visual similarities with common symbolic references. Primarily, the cheetah print fabric that Dial includes in *Quilting* likely symbolizes his favorite motif, the tiger, which he uses to comment on the struggle that the African-American faces living in the American South.¹¹ This work exhibits his ability to recycle found objects into a wholly new creation. Thornton Dial's mixed-media paintings, like *Quilting*, are comparable, from a visual standpoint, to the work of contemporary trained artists like Robert Rauschenberg.

Robert Rauschenberg's 'combine paintings' bear a striking resemblance to the mixed-media paintings of Thornton Dial in their use of the found object. They also show his ability to recycle discarded materials into cohesive works of art. Rauschenberg began his formal art training at the Kansas City Art Institute before studying at the Academie Julian in Paris, France.¹²

After his studies in Paris, Rauschenberg attended Black Mountain College in North Carolina where he studied under Josef Albers.¹³ By the 1950s, Rauschenberg had reached maturity, and began to produce his famous “combine” paintings. Rauschen-

berg's combines typically included various two- and three-dimensional

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objects attached to a canvas with paint. His most famous example may be *Canyon* (Fig. 2). This work from 1959 incorporates, among other found materials, a collage of flannel and floral fabric, metal, and even a stuffed bald eagle protruding out from the canvas.¹⁴ Notably, these objects were not constructed specifically for the piece, but were discovered upon walking around New York City, making them truly 'found' objects. Rauschenberg's combine paintings produce a thought-provoking result in that they blur the lines between art and everyday objects and

between paintings and sculpture, to make a self-referential statement about the nature of art itself. Rauschenberg serves as an important practitioner of the use of found objects in Western Art, bringing this practice to the forefront of mainstream contemporary art.

The tradition from which Rauschenberg's use of the found object emerges starts with artists like Picasso, who incorporated found materials into his sculptures like his *Verre d'absinthe* (Fig. 3), which utilizes glass and a found silver spoon.¹⁵ Picasso heralded

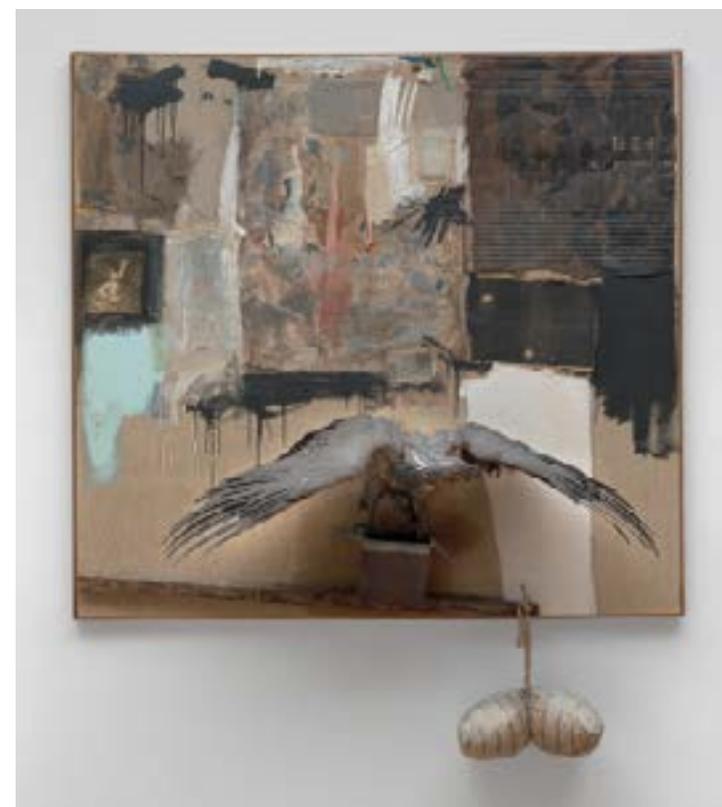


Fig 2. Robert Rauschenberg, *Canyon*. 1959. Mixed-Media. 82 x 70 x 24 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/165011>



Fig 3. William Arnett, *Junk Pile in the Yard of Fermon Griffen, Brent, Alabama, built 1910*. 1997. Photograph. Thornton Dial in the 21st Century. Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2005.

the use of found objects in Western art, using it to explore his interest in the dichotomy of found materials, like the spoon, and constructed materials, like the glass. Even more influential in bringing the use of found objects into the tradition of Western art, however, is Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp created “ready-mades,” which are wholly found objects asserted as works of fine art by the artist, including his most famous example, *Fountain*, from 1917. This work is essentially a urinal turned upside down and signed “R. Mutt.”¹⁶ *Fountain* exhibited the air of absurdity that was present in art movements of the time, such as Surrealism, but the oeuvre went beyond pure absurdity to question the nature of art and the artist’s role in the creation of a work of art. Duchamp’s radical use of found objects was characterized by an attitude of self-consciousness and a disregard for artistic conventions. In the 1938 abridged Surrealist dictionary, André Breton cites Duchamp as a precursor for the Surrealist use

of objects saying that his ready-mades were an, “object raised to the dignity of a work of art by the artist’s will alone.”¹⁷ Duchamp’s revolutionary gesture put the object at the forefront of modern Western art, paving the way for later artists, like Rauschenberg, to use found objects conceptually. This is the tradition from which the use of the found object in Western art emerges, and the tradition in which trained artists like Rauschenberg are working. The use of found objects in mainstream Western art, which is characterized by a questioning attitude about the nature of art and the role of the artist, differs greatly from the use of these materials in the work of self-taught artists like Thornton Dial, who are working in a very different tradition.

Thornton Dial is nearly illiterate and from an isolated, rural area, and yet he creates works that are visually similar to and equally as inventive as those of trained artists like Robert Rauschenberg. He thus presents an interpretive

difficulty for scholars and institutions. While it seems tempting to say that the impressive work of this illiterate, Southern artist who was relatively isolated from the world of Western Art emerged from the purity of his imagination, adopting this romanticized vision of the self-taught artist ignores the influences and traditions from which this art emerged. It also seems easy, based on the visual similarities between the works, to appropriate artists like Thornton Dial into the Western art tradition to join artists like Rauschenberg. The examination of the influences and traditions that led up to Thornton Dial’s use of the found object serves as a counter-point to these romanticized notions, and it also provides a case-study that, when applied to the wider tradition of Southern self-taught art, sets these artists apart from their mainstream contemporaries.

The first notable influence on Thornton Dial’s artistic production is the work of his second cousin, Buddy Jake Dial, who produced assemblages of yard art made from found materials that would usually be described as “junk.”¹⁸ Dial, and his cousin Buddy, found inspiration in the longstanding tradition of Southern African-American yard art. The ubiquity of works of Southern yard art becomes apparent upon driving around residential areas in the rural South. These homemade assemblages of found objects fill the landscape of the American South, usually emerging in impoverished, predominantly African-American

communities.¹⁹ At first glance, these assemblages of found objects appear to be mere junk piles, as common assemblages in Southern yard art utilize wheels, tires, bottles, and scraps of metal. While these assemblages have the appearance of junk to outsiders of the tradition, the makers of these assemblages usually find meaning and aesthetic value in the objects they choose and the assemblages they construct.²⁰ This tradition is especially prevalent in the industrial town of Bessemer, Alabama. When Dial moved to the area, he was enthralled with the yard art that appeared around the town.²¹ The tradition of Southern yard art serves as an informant and a precedent for Thornton Dial’s use of the found object.

While the roots of Dial’s assemblages may lie in part in the tradition of Southern yard art, this tradition itself has deep cultural roots that further ground the use of found objects in self-taught art. In his article “The Road from Emelle,” William Arnett delves into the tradition of Southern yard art, tracing the beginnings of the tradition all the way back to the time of slavery in the South.²² He notes that the enslaved, coming from Africa, were steeped in a distinct cultural tradition, but their confined situation required them to alter their cultural output to avoid detection by their overseers. This attempt to maintain a specific cultural identity without being detected led to the development of new art forms, including spiritual songs with cryptic meanings and

folktales that escaped the attention of their overseers. Arnett cites the origin of visual art traditions such as cemetery art; according to Arnett, this type of creative production was not questioned out of respect for the deceased, giving African-Americans an outlet for creative production to flourish.²³ While graveyard art remains an important African-American tradition, the visual techniques and the intentions of elusiveness moved from the cemetery to the yard through assemblages of unassuming materials that were imbued with meaning by the enslaved. The result is the assembled materials found across yards of the South, as well as “junk piles” that serve as meaningful art for the African-Americans who construct them. Arnett provides an analogy that serves as a way of thinking about this tradition when he writes, “These are African American vernacular monuments. African Americans in the rural South do not have bronze generals on horseback, nor obelisks, plaques, or commissioned commemorative sculptures. But a system emerged out of slavery that served black people the way white people were served by their own art, music, and literature.”²⁴ In this light, the assemblages that make up Southern yard art have become a sort of African-American monument. In his own assemblages and his mixed-media paintings, Dial works in these traditions that utilize found objects in meaningful ways beyond the self-referential and questioning attitude that is developed in its use in

the Western tradition. This system of Southern Yard art has evolved to create an important and unique facet of American art, but its development may not have been confined to American soil.

The tradition of Southern yard art likely emerged out of the attempts of the enslaved to continue cultural production inside the boundaries of what was acceptable to their overseers. Additionally, these attempts may have grown out of even deeper African traditions that were transported overseas with the American slave trade. A 1993 exhibition at the Diggs Gallery at Winston-Salem titled, *Ashe: Improvisation & Recycling in African-American Visionary Art*, directly relates the work of artists like Thornton Dial and fellow Birmingham-Bessemer school artists like Lonnie Holley, Thornton Dial Jr. and Ronald Lockett back to African creative traditions.²⁵ The organizers of this exhibition saw the importance of the tradition of Southern yard art, but they trace this tradition even further back to West African Kongo influences. In the catalogue of the exhibition, the curator, Tom Patterson, writes, “[t]o the untrained eye, a yard show is simply a collection of ordinary objects—old car tires, hub-caps, mirrors, empty jars and bottles, toy dolls, stones or other items—arranged and displayed in the area immediately surrounding a house. But to one who knows the Kongo references, it exemplifies an independent African-American aesthetic of immense consequence and influence.”²⁶ Patterson

notes the meaning that is found in objects that are used in Southern-yard assemblages, but he sees this meaning as an extension of an even deeper tradition emerging from African Kongo creative practices.

The exhibition draws many of its concepts from a book called *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy*, in which Robert Farris Thompson attempts to connect Yoruba, Kongo, Vodun, Mande, and Ejagham influences to the aspects of the art and culture of the Americas.²⁷ Each chapter focuses on one of these specific African traditions and ties it to related practices in Western Afro-culture. For example, the chapter on Kongo art and philosophy associates Kongo ‘charms’ with African-American cemeteries in the American South. While the relationship drawn in the book becomes complicated and intimate, an important element of the connection that is drawn out in this chapter is the continuity of the practice of using found objects in grave markers. Thompson writes, “[b]oth Kongo and Kongo-American tombs are frequently covered with the last objects touched or used by the deceased.”²⁸ These objects, such as cups and plates, are imbued with personal and spiritual value because of their relationship to the deceased. The chapter also makes note of the continuity of the Kongo “Bottle Tree” tradition, which consists of adorning trees with bottles and other objects, in the American South. The exhibition, *Ashe*, relates these continuities directly to artists like Thornton Dial

through his relationship to Southern yard art traditions and his use of the found object as a meaningful entity. It may be incorrect to assume that artists like Dial were knowingly influenced by their African ancestors, or that there is a connection based on race or ethnicity that naturally draws these artists to styles rooted in African traditions. Despite this, it seems like continuities have survived that influence artists like Dial, directly or indirectly, and provide a specific foundation for their use of the found object.

This exhibition included the work of another Alabama artist, Lonnie Holley, who worked in these traditions, and served as an influence to Dial as his close friend. Holley began his creative endeavors when he started carving out of sandstone that was discarded by a Birmingham foundry. He began creating sculptures from discarded materials that he arranged around his property, creating a monumental example of a Southern yard show.²⁹ Like Dial, his works provide social commentary on the state of African-American life in the South, and he uses these found, discarded materials to create a rich narrative through his art. His assemblage, *The Cause of the Accident* from 2011, is constructed of a tire, hubcap and wire, which together, “serve as a cautionary reminder of the laws of cause and effect.”³⁰ This work utilizes specific materials that are commonly found in Southern yard art, but Holley reinterprets them with new symbolic meaning. Alison Weld, in her essay “Aesthetic Language of Self-Taught Art,” comments on his use of

the found object stating, “[t]o Holley, each individual element, whether a worn shoe, cast iron skillet, or bicycle spoke, evokes a narrative about the African-American world—about the rampant use of drugs, the importance of a strong family structure, or the tensions affecting children today.”³¹ Holley is an example of an artist who uses discarded objects and imbues them with newfound value in an artistic context. Additionally, he can be seen as a direct representative of the traditions of Southern yard art brought into a fine art context and a fellow ambassador of the traditions that led up to the use of the found object in the art of Thornton Dial.

Dial, as well as other self-taught artists like Lonnie Holley, were not only inundated with this tradition of Southern yard art merely as a visual influence. Additionally, it seems that they follow in the footsteps of their ancestors in intention as well. These artists use found objects, not only because they are readily available resources, but also because they find or create value in these previously used materials. This is a characteristic of the use of non-traditional media in the work of many Southern self-taught artists. Expressing the meaning that he finds in found objects, Thornton Dial says, “I only want materials that have been used by people... that have did people some good.”³² Expressing a similar sentiment, Lonnie Holley comments on his intentions in using found objects saying, “I dig through

what other people have thrown away... to get the gold of it.”³³ The use of found objects in the work of self-taught artists, like those who preceded them in the tradition, is based on a highly personal and meaningful connection with objects based on their previous uses and symbolic value. It is not mere recycling for the sake of frugality or a lack of materials. Additionally, this practice did not emerge from a vacuum. Rather, it is rooted in a deep tradition going back to Southern yard art and possibly even to African creative culture. These influences form a distinct divergence from the traditions, intentions, and philosophies that are associated with the use of found objects in the Western tradition, and this realization has bearing on the classification and terminology associated with self-taught artists.

Because of the similarities in the use of non-traditional media, artists like Thornton Dial and Lonnie Holley invite comparisons to artists like Robert Rauschenberg. Like in Dial’s mixed-media paintings, Rauschenberg also uses non-traditional materials and found objects in his ‘combine paintings.’ The mixed-media assemblages of these two artists share striking visual similarities, and the two aforementioned works, *Quilting* and *Canyon*, are both mixed-media assemblages incorporating fabric united by paint. While it would be easy to place these two artists in the same category based on their visual and material similarities, it is clear that these uses of found objects emerge from entirely different artistic

traditions. Dial’s use of the found object comes from a unique progression of the use of the found object that can be traced back to Southern yard art, art of the American enslaved, and even to African Kongo visual traditions. Rauschenberg, on the other hand, is a product of a Western art tradition, working from the precedence of Picasso, Duchamp, and their successors in their use of the found object. The differences in these traditions, although they have produced visually similar results, have actually produced uses of the found object that vary considerably in meaning and intention. The use of found objects by Dial and Holley is characterized by the meaning that these artists find in previously used materials, while the use of the found object in Western art is defined by the importance that the artist assumes in creating a work of art. The self-taught artist uses meaningful objects to add significance to their work, or they utilize an object in order to ‘get the gold of it.’ The Western artist takes the position that their assertion of an object as art alone imbues it with meaning. It is not ‘getting the gold of it,’ but rather, it is an attitude of ‘everything I touch turns to gold.’ The difference between the use of found objects by self-taught artists differs from its use by mainstream artists in the tradition from which it emerges as well as the intentions for which it is used.

The temptation to form an aggregate of the work of self-taught artists and the wider world of the mainstream

contemporary art has developed into a major push from scholars and institutions alike. Many are calling for an abandonment of labels like ‘self-taught’ or ‘outsider’ to describe artists like Thornton Dial. At the Melbourne Conversation titled “Is Out the New in? What’s Up with Outsider Art?,” speaker after speaker called for self-taught artists to be included in the category of “contemporary art” without the label of “self-taught” or “outsider,” which, to them, are exclusionary.³⁴ At the conference, professor Lynne Cooke from the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. centered her talk on the question: when talking about outsider art, is there even a subject to discuss? In other words, have these ‘outsider artists’ been so consumed into the mainstream that there is no longer a group of ‘outsider artists’ to talk about? She concludes by saying, “... if there is an answer that I would propose to my question, do we have a subject? I would say the subject of outsider art may be coming to an end, and we have a great deal of vital and lively contemporary art.”³⁵ This sentiment is echoed by many scholars, who would do away with these labels altogether.

While it is exclusionary and detrimental to the narrative of contemporary art to leave these important self-taught artists out of the conversation, the solution may not be to abandon the labels altogether. The Curator of Folk and Self-Taught at the High Museum in Atlanta, Katherine Jentleson,

finds terms that distinguish self-taught artists to be empowering rather than exclusionary. When asked in an interview about the current “term-warfare,” she responded,

“Given the convergence of the output of self-taught and classically trained contemporary artists, and our present sensitivity to the ideological baggage that art labels carry, there is increasingly a call to get rid of all of these terms—outsider, folk, visionary, what have you—altogether. I admire the democratic spirit of this argument, but I also think it is crucial to think about self-taught art as a field in the way you think of American art as a field, or modern art as a field. Self-taught art intersects with those fields, but part of giving it the respect and credence it deserves also means recognizing its uniqueness and historical trajectory.”³⁶

While self-taught artists form a significant facet of the wider conversation about contemporary art, retaining their designation as ‘self-taught’ acknowledges the significance of their work and the important traditions that sets it apart. If these labels were taken away altogether, these artists would be denied an element of their individuality and an acknowledgement of the traditions from which their art emerged. To avoid placing artists like Thornton Dial and Lonnie Holly into the Western tradition, it is important to grant these artists the recognition of their unique backgrounds, coming from Southern yard art and even from African Kongo creative culture. The ‘term-warfare’ seems to emerge from the idea that self-taught artists are excluded from the conversation on contemporary art if they are classified under labels like ‘self-taught’ and ‘outsider,’ but, as Jentleson questions about Thornton Dial, “[w]hy can’t he be all of the above?”³⁷ The traditions, intentions, and artistic philosophies that distinguish artists like Thornton Dial from mainstream trained artists like Robert Rauschenberg sets these artists apart, rendering the abandonment of labels and classifications that acknowledge their distinctions limiting to the understanding of these artists. Self-taught artists should not be denied entrance into the wider conversation of contemporary art, however the use of labels and classifications that acknowledge their uniqueness allows for a better understanding of these artists and their varying traditions.

¹ Katherine Jentleson, “Cracks in the Consensus: Outsider Art and Art World Ruptures,” in *When the Stars Begin to Fall*, ed. Thomas J. Lax (New York: Studio Museum Harlem, 2014), 106.

² Sarah Boxer, “The Rise of Self-Taught Artists,” *The Atlantic: Culture*, September 2013.

³ Jentleson, “Cracks in the Consensus,” 107.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵ Daniel Cottom, *Why Education is Useless*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 90-91.

⁶ Katherine Jentleson, “Gatecrashing,” by Raphael Koenig, *Art Papers*, July/August 2015.

⁷ Matthew Sutton, “Little America: Howard Finster and the Southern ‘Outsider Art’ Aesthetic,” *Studies in Popular Culture* 30, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 4.

⁸ John Beardsley, “His Story/History,” in *Thornton Dial in the 21st Century*, (Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2005) 274-290.

⁹ Thornton Dial, “Thornton Dial,” *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art*, vol. 2, (Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2001)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Amiri Baraka, “Revolutionary Traditional Art from the Cultural Commonwealth of Afro-Alabama,” in *Thornton Dial in the 21st Century* (Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2005), 172.

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¹² “Robert Rauschenberg,” *Guggenheim*, Accessed November 20, 2016.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Ileana Sonnabend, “Robert Rauschenberg, *Canyon*, 1959,” *Museum of Modern Art*, Accessed

November 15, 2016, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/165011>.

¹⁶ Margherita Leoni-Figini, “The Object in 20th Century Art,” Centre Pompidou, May 2007.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Didier Ottinger, curator, “Surrealism and the Object,” (Paris, France: Publications of the Centre Pompidou, 2013).

¹⁹ William Arnett, “The Road from Emelle,” in *Thornton Dial in the 21st Century* (Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2005), 10-11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

²² *Ibid.*, 10.

²³ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁶ Tom Patterson, curator, “Contemporary Art Beyond the Mainstream,” in *Ashe: Improvisation & Recycling in African-American Visionary Art*, Diggs Gallery (Winston Salem State University, NC, 1993).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁸ Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1983).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

³⁰ Susan B. Harris, “Contemporary Self-Taught Art,” *Art Education* 51, no. 2 (March 1998): 27, 30.

³¹ Anne Doran, “Lonnie Holley at James Fuentes, New York,” *Art in America: Reviews*, December 2013.

³² Alison Weld, “The Aesthetic Language of Self-Taught Art,” in *Self-Taught Art: The Culture and Aesthetics of American Vernacular Art*, ed. Charles Russell (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 172.

³³ Andrew Russeth, “Thornton Dial, Pioneering Artist Who Channeled Everyday Materials into Intricate Constructions, Dies at 87,” *ArtNews*, January 26, 2016.

³⁴ Tom Patterson, curator, “Contemporary Art Beyond the Mainstream,” 24.

³⁵ *Is Out the New in? What’s Up with Outsider Art?* Podcast Audio, Melbourne Conversations, November 9, 2014.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Katherine Jentleson, “Gatecrashing,” By Raphael Koenig, *Art Papers*, July/August 2015.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

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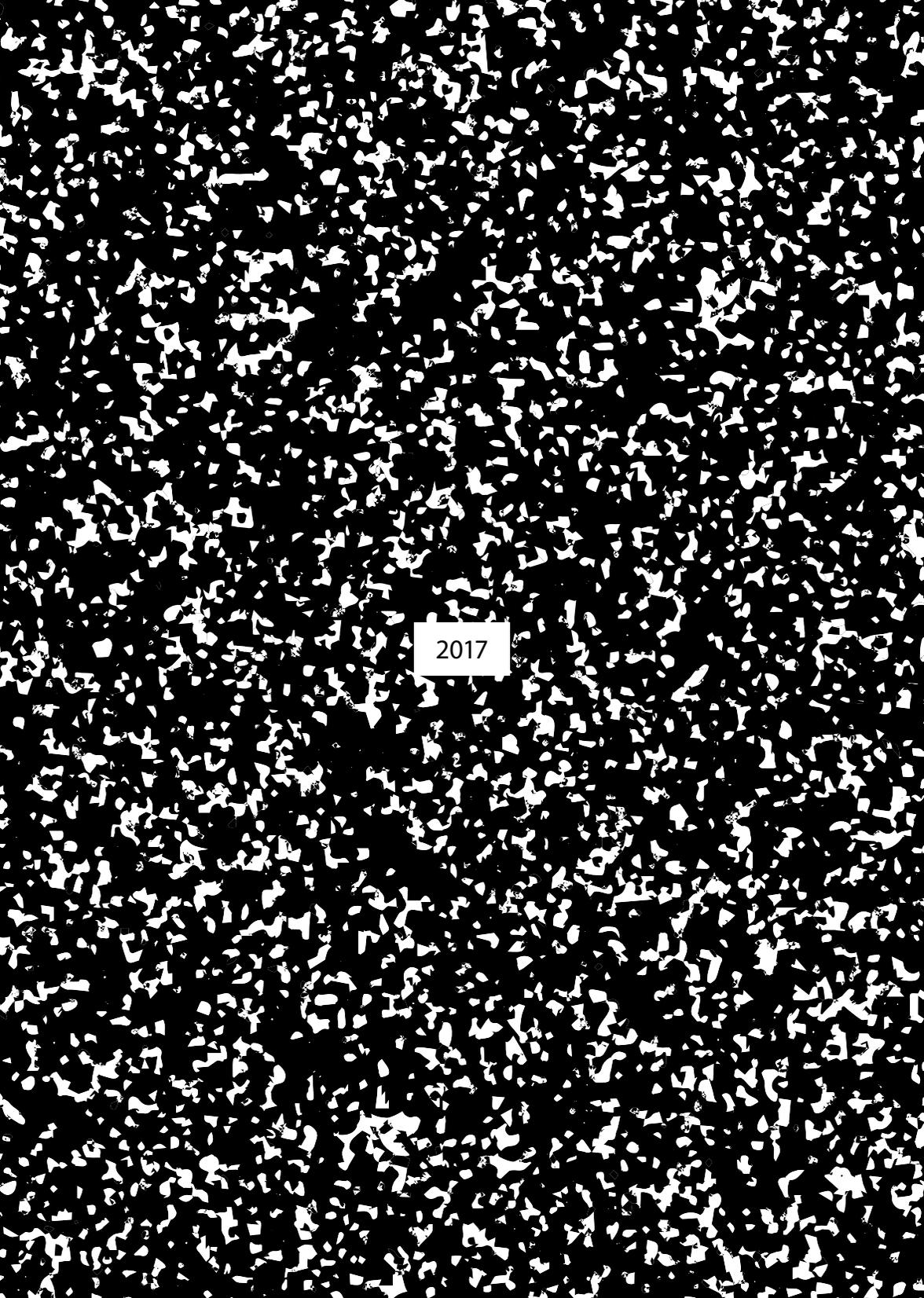
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