

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

As a journal, we strive for academic excellence and believe in the importance of undergraduate research and creation. Through a blind review process, CUJAH selects essays for our published volumes which best exemplify the diversity of talents within the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Concordia community at large. We have been publishing since 2004–2005.

In addition to the publication of our annual journal, CUJAH hosted, in collaboration with the Fine Arts Student Alliance (FASA), Concordia University's 8th Annual Undergraduate Art History Conference, (dis)location: art in a mobile age.

**The CUJAH team would like to
dedicate this volume to**

Dr. Anna Waclawek

**Your encouragement, guidance, and
no small amount of humour has
been invaluable to CUJAH. We wish
you nothing but the best in your
new position, you will be greatly
missed by the entire Department of
Art History.**

Volume: XV

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

For more resources please visit:
<https://www.concordia.ca/about/indigenous/territorial-acknowledgement.html>

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Volume XV, fifteen years, wow. Not only am I amazed at the endurance of CUJAH's existence, but also at its growth through the perseverance of undergraduate students. I often get asked by peers outside of the department, "what do you do in art history?" Following this question is usually a set of predetermined assumptions of what art history is understood to be. But as modes of communication and knowledge circulation become ever more rapid and accessible, there are gaps surrounding preconceived ideas of what art and culture is which emerge and allow for new questions to develop. In order to do Concordia's student body justice, we have selected a wide range of texts, reflective of the diversity of interests among students—but also the diverse ways in which we can critically engage with the cultural sphere which we shape and shapes us.

Working with CUJAH for the past two years has been a major highlight of my undergraduate degree, but also a fundamental element in shaping my experience at Concordia. It has been a privilege to guide this team of wonderfully committed and critically engaged students. I wish to thank all those who made this possible and embarked on this journey with me, as well as express gratitude to all those who have helped CUJAH develop and evolve over the past fifteen years, particularly Kimberly Glassman and Diane Hau Yu Wong. While CUJAH as a journal is celebrating its fifteenth year, this year also saw the 8th Annual Concordia University Undergraduate Art History Conference, exploring the theme of (dis)location: art in a mobile age, coordinated by two of the most positive and perseverant students, Alisa Haugen-Strand, conference coordinator extraordinaire, and Anneka Jin, event

coordinating guru. Special thanks also goes out to our conference graphic designer, Annie Dutremble, for bringing our conference theme to life in print. The conference would not be possible without the support of the Fine Arts Student Alliance (FASA) and their collaborative efforts in the production of the CUJAH Conference, specifically Jordan Beaulieu and Daisy Duncan. To Eleni Speal, thank you for providing invaluable tech support and keeping CUJAH's presence on the web persistent and engaging! Thank you to Véronique Morin for your french expertise! We would also like to extend our thanks to Professor M. Wright for forging a connection between CUJAH and students in the Department of Design and Computation Arts, and to thank our talented graphic designers Andi Hernandez, Gavin Park, Émilie Brunet, and Van Le for visualizing what CUJAH is all about.

The CUJAH team would like to express their utmost gratitude to all of the Department of Art History: Drs. Nicola Pezolet and Maya Rae Oppenheimer for their material support and guidance, and to Dr. Anna Waclawek and Candice Tarnowski, MA, who have continually assisted us in our day-to-day operations, giving clarity and support through the many layers of university administration. Final thanks go out to Sophia Arnold, this year's Managing Editor, and Editor-in-Chief to-be, I hope this year has provided you with the foundation to bring CUJAH forward into another exciting year.

It is with great pride that I invite you to read what this team has put together,

Sincerely,
Autumn Cadorette
Editor-in-Chief
CUJAH Volume XV

LETTER FROM THE DESIGNERS

Volume fifteen of CUJAH is a benchmark issue. We wanted to honour this occasion with a publication that highlights this idea of volume in its myriad meanings. Volume can describe a mass or quantity of space, it can quantify the degree of loudness (or quietness) of noise, or it can refer to a series or an edition in print. For this year's journal we created volume through typographic verticals, contrasting scale and "loud" colour, all of which is encapsulated in CUJAH's largest format to date.

CUJAH also gives volume to undergraduate research, providing a platform for Art History writing that feature non-normative themes and topics. Art history at Concordia disrupts past narratives through the breaking of and restructuring of contexts, revealing new insight on the often complex and asymmetrical representations of past. This concept of disruption was used to play with breaking hegemonic and modernist standards of graphic design through the use of experimental typography, layering and layout. By breaking from the rigidity of the typographic grid and the traditional flow of academic journals, we aim to disrupt the reader's perception of how academia and art history can be presented.

Sincerely,
The Design Team

CUJAH

XV

TEAMS

Autumn Cadorette, Editor-in-Chief

Autumn is completing her fourth and final year in Art History and Studio Arts. Her research examines feminist and queer studies, craft, methods of national display, the archive, and community building through artistic practices. Her studio practice is largely fibres based, focused on exploring personal narratives of life cycles through materiality. During her time at Concordia she has been heavily involved in student initiatives, including Art Matters, the Ethnocultural Art Histories Research Group (EAHR), the Fine Arts Student Alliance (FASA), and she has contributed to the FOFA Gallery's Undergraduate Student Exhibition catalogue and Interfold magazine.

Sophia Arnold, Managing Editor

I am a fourth-year student majoring in Art History and Studio Arts, with a minor in Human Environment. Throughout my studies, I have become passionate about topics such as post-war modernism in England, craft and identity, and political activism—all of which I have incorporated into my painting practice and research. This is my second year working with CUJAH, after participating as an editor for the previous edition, and presenting research at the 7th Annual Conference. Alongside this, I have contributed to the FOFA Gallery's Undergraduate Student Exhibition, Interfold magazine, and The Void, as well as interning at the 16th Annual Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale and OPTICA, centre d'art contemporain.

Véronique Morin, Associate French Editor

Véronique is the Associate French Editor for CUJAH this year. Being a second year dance major, she is interested in the cohabitation of performative arts and visual arts in gallery spaces and on stage. Véronique also considers herself as a writer because it is the best way for her to share the diversity of art creations to the audience. Véronique has worked on several cultural projects in the past year such as the Artival Festival and the blog Vinyles Collectifs. She also worked with CUJAH last year as a French Editor, and she wishes to take the experience further this year.

Eleni Speal, Communication Coordinator

As a third year in Art History and Computer Science, I've developed a curiosity towards technology and the fine arts. My main interest lies within the scope of UX/UI Design – one of many overlaps between my two passions. I'm so happy to be CUJAH's Communication Coordinator. I loved working on the team last year and love what we've accomplished this year!

Anneka Jin, Events Coordinator

Anneka Jin is in her second year of study at Concordia University. Pursuing a BFA in film studies, her research focuses on female perspectives on morality and metaphysics in cinema and narrative media. Her work has appeared in shows at Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Twist Gallery, and Clint Roenisch, and online in Oni Magazine.

Alisa Haugen-Strand, Conference Coordinator

Having grown up across Canada, Alisa Haugen-Strand is entering her sixth year in Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal, interspersed with bi-annual drives to New Brunswick. She is currently completing her final year of her BFA in Art History at Concordia, having also studied at Mount Allison University and the Canadian College of Performing Arts in Victoria, BC. Alisa is this year's CUJAH Conference Coordinator, as well as Administrative and Financial Coordinator for the Art Matters Festival. With a background in dance and theatre, she is passionate about movement research and community engagement, with hopes to pursue a masters in dance/movement therapy.

English Editors:**Sophie Wonfor**

Sophie grew up near the Elbow river in Calgary and studied printmaking at NSCAD before transferring to Concordia, where she's been trying to understand how she has been taught to see land(scape) and pay attention to all things quiet. She's been drawn to study artists who work with plants and with traces, while herself exhibiting work in corners. Her poetry has been in *The Void*, her writing in *CUJAH XIV*, and she has edited for *Interfold*. Now in her final year of the Art History and Studio Art bachelor's program, she aspires to become some kind of gardener.

Gemma Lavoie

Gemma Lavoie is a third-year undergraduate student studying Art History. She has earned a certificate in International Studies from Sciences Po university in France on an academic exchange. Her research interests include craft and decorative arts, archives, and museum studies.

Oona Ostrowski

Oona Ostrowski is an Art History and English Literature student and art writer from Poland/Toronto with interests in curating and owning a gallery.

Madeline Bogoch

I am an art history student currently enrolled in a qualifying year for the Art History MA at Concordia University. Prior to this, I completed my BA at the University of Winnipeg. In my academic career, my research has been focused primarily on materiality in post-internet art, circulation and dispersion, the relationship between soundscape and memory, and issues surrounding the preservation of born-digital artworks. In addition to my academic work, I was the Assistant Curatorial Intern at Gallery 1C03 (Winnipeg, MB) during the summer of 2018, and have been a member of the programming committee for the Winnipeg Underground Film Festival (WUFF) since 2014.

French Editor:**Meriem Rial**

Je m'appelle Meriem Rial et je suis née en 1996 à Alger la Blanche, ville millénaire de la méditerranée. J'ai passé mon enfance à vagabonder entre les ruelles de ce carrefour historique, m'imprégnant des diverses cultures qui s'y sont succédées. Cette quête du passé a forgé ma passion grandissante pour l'histoire de l'art. Aujourd'hui, c'est à Montréal que font escales mes pérégrinations intellectuelles. L'effervescente scène artistique multiculturelle de cette ville m'ouvre les yeux vers de riches horizons. Étudiante en histoire de l'art à l'université Concordia, je souhaiterai orienter ma carrière vers une profession en muséologie afin de faire revivre le passé et immortaliser le présent.

Copy Editors:**Elizabeth Sanders**

Elizabeth Sanders is a fourth year student in a double major of Art History and Film Studies at Concordia University. Elizabeth is passionate about knowledge dissemination and research creation, particularly among cultural objects, which is why she enjoys participating in conversations surrounding art and film. Elizabeth has been lucky enough to work within the arts and has held jobs at galleries, worked in a professional theatre company and is currently interning at the Robin Rosenberg Fine Art Firm here in Montreal. As a Copy Editor, Elizabeth is excited to participate in a community of motivated individuals who are equally devoted to critical thinking and knowledge production.

Hannah Ferguson

Hannah Ferguson is a second year Art History and Studio Art student at Concordia University. In her artistic practice she has been primarily exploring drawing and printmaking, in which she looks to incorporate ideas of the mundane, the ephemeral and the liminal. She enjoys the interplay between the visual and textual that emerges in the space between creating and writing about art and is interested in exploring that fluidity. Other topics of interest include material culture and the idea of art-as-research/research-as-art. Hannah also has a background in theatre criticism. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Art Matters Festival.

Permissions Editor:**Chloë Lalonde**

Pursuing a double major in Art Education and Anthropology, Chloë Lalonde has been spending her time teaching painting and drawing, organising workshops at Concordia University's Centre for Creative Reuse (CUCCR) as their Project Archivist, and writing about art as *The Concordian's* art editor. Chloë's personal artwork is rooted in her synaesthesia, translating words, concepts, feelings, and sounds into colours. She aims to be as sustainable and waste-free as possible in her artwork and all aspects of her life, which often means many lulls in her making process. Other than that, Chloë enjoys paper-making, book-binding, researching, and writing about all things arts and culture.

Journal Graphic Designers:**Andira Hernandez**

Andira Hernandez-Ramdwar is a multidisciplinary designer, artist and photographer currently itching to finish their BFA in Design at Concordia. Their body of work focuses mainly in the realm of social justice issues and their experiences growing up as a racialized, AFAB individual. They described themselves as a "jaded ex-punk who prefers to spend time with their dog" and wishes they had more time to work on personal projects.

Gavin Park

Specializing in print, publication and web design, Gavin Park is a multidisciplinary designer whose work highlights and critiques the banal, commonplace and overlooked. With projects that put analog and digital techniques in conversation, new and unexpected outcomes often emerge.

Émilie Brunet

Émilie Brunet is a graphic and user interface designer based in Montreal. Her approach to creation has been greatly influenced by her studies in design research, international contemporary art, and sustainability. Outside of her formal education, she has gained experience through freelance collaborations and internships with NGOs, local businesses and software development companies in both Montreal and Ottawa. Émilie works with relevant digital and print mediums to create responsibly engaged and compelling works. She is interested in bringing an empathetic approach to relevant issues with the goal of inciting meaningful conversation and active engagement with diverse audiences.

Van Le

Currently completing her fourth year majoring in design and minoring in computation arts, Van's practice and research revolves around design activism, speculative design theory, postcolonialism and intersectionality. She was previously the technical coordinator / co-director at the VAV Gallery but now occupies most of her time in between classes as a librarian at the FARR and as technical director of Art Matters Festival. If you would like to inquire more or would like to see examples of her work please visit www.toyota.com/minivan

SITUATING TRISTAN
BIOHACKING
WITHIN THE
HIV/AIDS ART

ROBERTS'
LIVESTREAM
HISTORY OF
ACTIVISM

In October 17, 2017 Tristan Roberts self-administered HIV gene-therapy during a Facebook livestream titled “Biohacker Self-Administers Attempt at Gene-Therapy HIV Cure” (fig. 1, fig. 2) that was hosted by the page News2Share.¹ Tristan Roberts, a biomedical researcher, had been living with HIV for five to six years before attempting the experimental gene-therapy. Roberts was joined by Aaron Traywick, a leading figure in the biohacking and transhumanist movements, and Machiavelli Davis, a biohacker² who had at the time been working on “the production of gene therapy vectors using bio reactors.”³ Ford Fischer, an independent journalist and co-founder of News2Share, filmed and conducted the interview. The experimental gene-therapy was developed using N6 antibodies that had been identified and studied by the United States’ National Institute for Health (NIH) and found to have strong effects against most strains of HIV.⁴ The NIH published the sequences for N6 antibodies in scientific journals, making it possible for anyone “with the know-how and the tools” to reproduce them.⁵ While the biochemistry behind this process is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note these notions of open-access and democratic science which are foundational principles in the biohacking community, of which all three interviewees are members.

Before injecting the treatment, Roberts dedicated the dose to “all the people who have died while not being able to access treatment, even though those treatments were available.”⁶ Although this gene-therapy treatment was clearly born out of the biohacking community, I will argue that the political opinions

Before injecting the treatment, Roberts dedicated the dose to “all the people who have died while not being able to access treatment, even though those treatments were available.”

1 “News2Share,” Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/N2Sreports/>.
 2 Biohacking is also commonly referred to as DIYbio, Bodyhacking, or Kitchen biology.
 3 Ford Fischer, “Biohacker Self-Administers Attempt at Gene-Therapy HIV Cure,” News2Share, Facebook, livestreamed, 17 October 2017, 1:04.
 4 Fischer, “Biohacker Self-Administers Attempt at Gene-Therapy HIV Cure,” 9:00.
 5 Ibid., 39:00.
 6 Ibid., 52:14.



Figure 1. Ford Fischer, “Biohacker Self-Administers Attempt at Gene-Therapy HIV Cure,” October 17, 2017, 6:15 PM. “News2Share,” Facebook, livestream video, 1:03:08. Screen capture by author at 49:46.



Figure 2.
Ford, Fischer. "Biohacker Self-Administers Attempt at Gene-Therapy HIV Cure,"
October 17, 2017, 6:15 PM. "News2Share," Facebook, livestream video, 1:03:08.
Screen capture by author at 53:12.

expressed in the video, in particular Roberts', originate and participate in the discourse of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that began in the 1980s. By examining the history of and the activist response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, specifically the development of medical treatments (or lack thereof), as well as Lauren DeLand's concept of "the useful corpse,"⁷ as seen through artist David Wojnarowicz's (1954–1992) work, I will situate Roberts' action of self-administration of the treatment within the history of HIV/AIDS art and activism.

Throughout her chapter "Life Makes Itself at Home: The Rise of Biohacking as Political Action," Sophia Roosth, associate professor of the History of Science at Harvard University, draws similarities between biohackers and craftspeople who seek "to regain lived experiences, a romantic attachment to nature, and artisanal proficiency in the wake of industrialization."⁸ Roosth's version of the biohacker responds "to industrialization, automation, and speed with craft, artisanship, and slowness."⁹ Although Roosth does discuss the importance of decentralizing and democratizing the bioengineering field, she returns again in her conclusion to the notion that biohackers exist to "offset the scaling up and acceleration of biotechnology, bioengineering, synthetic biology, and allied sciences."¹⁰ Contrary to this representation of biohackers as being "not after facts so much as after acts – 'doing' hobbyist biology," Roberts and his peers are indeed interested in scientific facts.¹¹ Roberts' intentions are made clear when discussing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is responsible for the control and regulation of prescriptions and over-the-counter medication, during his livestream he states:

I totally understand why people support the FDA and only want substances that have gone through that process, but at the same time it's hard to deny that the amount of roadblocks that these [processes] have certainly caused many viable therapies to not reach people who need them.¹²

The FDA uses a five-step drug approval process which usually takes about ten years to complete.¹³ These obstacles that stand between patients and their

necessary medication are why Roberts, Davis, and Traywick employ biohacking methods. The Ascendance Biomedical biohackers are clear about their intentions to research and develop treatments for HIV, herpes, and infertility by using tools and methods learned from the biohacking community. During the interview, Davis cited SciHub as an example of a website that gives anyone with an internet connection access to "some of the most important information that humans have been able to figure out about how our bodies work."¹⁴ These websites have given biohackers access to experimental treatments and research, which HIV/AIDS activists have been demanding since the beginning of the epidemic.

In June of 1981, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention published the first official report on the AIDS epidemic before it was known as such.¹⁵ As both the Canadian and the American government were slow to act and the number of new diagnoses increased rapidly each year, "[f]rom 1982 to 1985, gay community organizing in response to AIDS intensified."¹⁶ The primary focus of these groups was "the provision of services and the development of safe sex education programs for gay men."¹⁷ As the community groups developed different methods to obtain their objectives, some tensions arose between them. Overall, however, there was "considerable agreement among groups that the top-down style of health regulation and the way in which medical service is normally meted out to those afflicted by disease must be challenged."¹⁸ We can see this consensus in action during the Fifth International Conference on AIDS

7 Lauren DeLand, "Live Fast, Die Young, Leave a Useful Corpse: The Terrible Utility of David Wojnarowicz," *Performance Research* 19, no. 1 (2014): 33–40.

8 Sophia Roosth, "The Rise of Biohacking as Political Action," in *Synthetic: How Life Got Made* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 134.

9 Roosth, "The Rise of Biohacking as Political Action," 130.

10 *Ibid.*, 145.

11 *Ibid.*, 137.

12 Fischer, "Biohacker Self-Administers Attempt at Gene-Therapy HIV Cure," 10:30.

13 "How the FDA Drug Approval Process Works," *Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition*, February 20, 2018, <http://diabetespac.org/fda-drug-approval-process/>.

14 Fischer, "Biohacker Self-Administers Attempt at Gene-Therapy HIV Cure," 14:23.

15 "A Timeline of HIV and AIDS," HIV.gov, last updated 2016, <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/history/hiv-and-aids-timeline>.

16 David M. Rayside and Evert A. Lindquist, "AIDS Activism and the State in Canada," *Studies in Political Economy* 39, no. 1 (1992), 39.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*, 38.

There were, and are, many factors that could lead to an HIV/AIDS patient not receiving proper medication, particularly in the 1980s, including government inaction leading to delays in medical research, placebo trials, and excessively high prices due to patent monopolies.²¹ In light of this, Roberts' decision to become a biohacker was made expressly to undermine and bypass these exclusionary medical systems.

held in Montreal in 1989, in which AIDS ACTION NOW! Toronto and ACT-UP New York handed out the "Montreal Manifesto."¹⁹ The majority of the Manifesto was dedicated to presenting the "Declaration of the Universal Rights and Needs of People Living with HIV Disease" in English, French, and Spanish. The declaration is a list of ten demands, of which three reference the necessity of access to medication. One demand states that placebo trials are "inherently unethical," and one requests the creation of an "international data bank to make available all medical information related to HIV disease."²⁰ There were, and are, many factors that could lead to an HIV/AIDS patient not receiving proper medication, particularly in the 1980s, including government inaction leading to delays in medical research, placebo trials, and excessively high prices due to patent monopolies.²¹ In light of this, Roberts' decision to become a biohacker was made expressly to undermine and bypass these exclusionary medical systems.

Addressing the art community's response to the epidemic in the 1987 publication of *October*, art historian Douglas Crimp writes that, "AIDS does not exist apart from the practices that conceptualize it, represent it, and respond to it."²² Crimp argues that "cultural producers" and the art made in response to the AIDS epidemic are not separate from but, rather, a part of how we understand the sickness and its discourse.²³ While Crimp criticizes art fundraisers, such as Art against AIDS, as passive responses which "perpetuat[e] the idea that art itself has no social function (aside from being a commodity), that there is no such thing as an engaged, activist aesthetic practice," he also acknowledges that the money they raise saves lives and is necessary due to the "criminal negligence on the part of the government."²⁴ Crimp insists that, separate from its role as a fundraising commodity, "art does have the power to save lives, and it is this very power that must be recognized, fostered, and supported in every way possible. [...] We don't need a cultural renaissance; we need cultural practices actively participating in the struggle against AIDS. We don't need to transcend the epidemic; we need to end it."²⁵

David Wojnarowicz's immensely

19 ACT-UP (New York) and AIDS ACTION NOW! (Toronto), "Montreal Manifesto," AIDS Activist History Project, accessed October 9, 2018, <https://aidsactivisthistory.onelake.net/items/show/167>.

20 "Montreal Manifesto," only 10 percent of all pharmaceutical research focuses on diseases that account for 90 percent of the Global Burden of Disease), 186. The patent system was designed as an incentive for invention but has led to a profit driven industry which "favours the rich over the poor," the centre over the periphery, developed over developing nations," 2. "Increasing Access through Incentives for Innovation: The Health Impact Fund," in *The Global Governance of HIV/AIDS: Intellectual Property and over developing nations*, edited by Obijior Egenhan, Edward Elgar, 2013).

21 John Harrington, and Peter X. Yu (Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2013).

22 Douglas Crimp, "Introduction," *October* 43 (1987): 3.

23 *Ibid.*, 6.

24 *Ibid.*, 4.

25 *Ibid.*, 7.

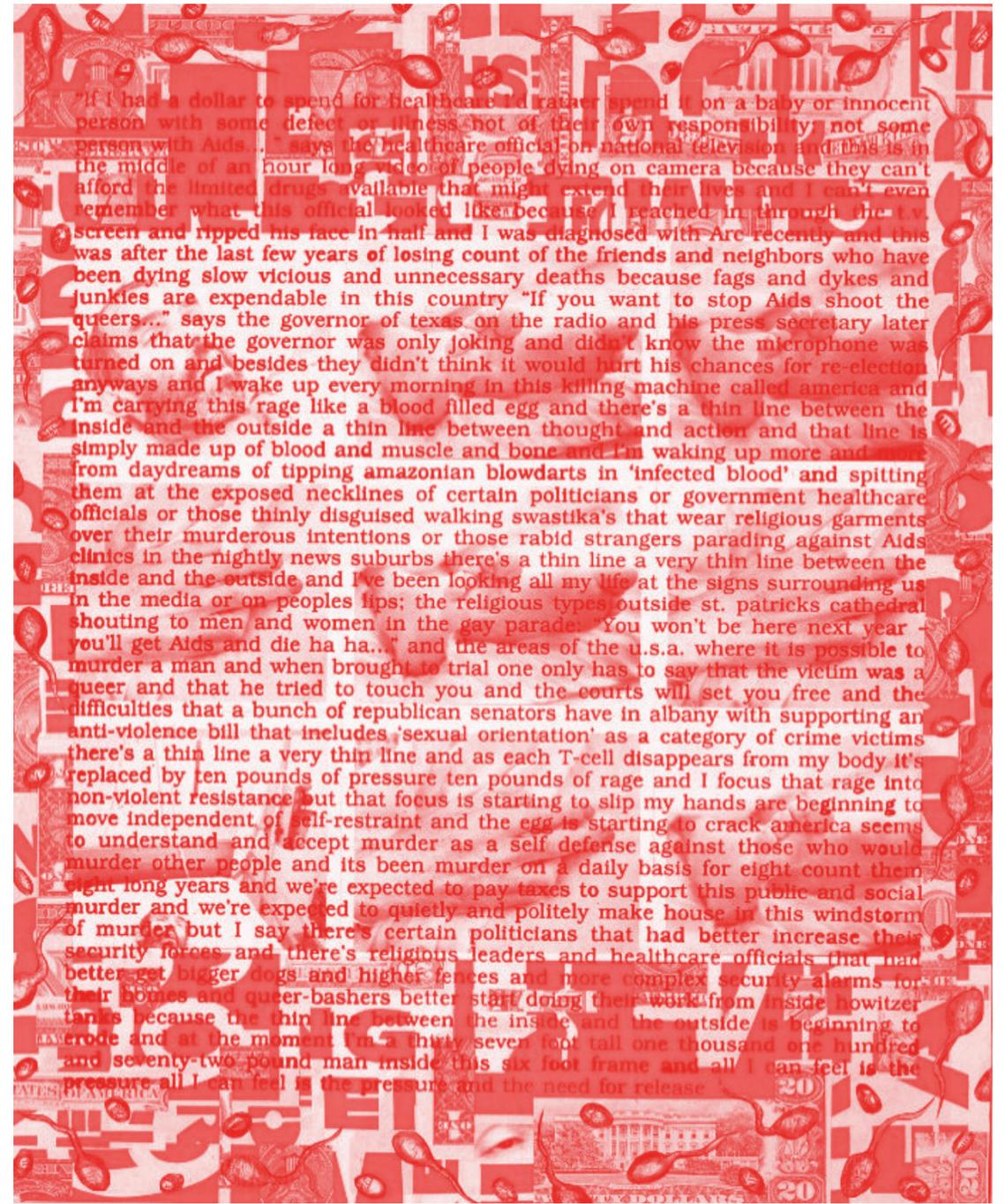


Figure 3. David Wojnarowicz, *Untitled (Hujar Dead)*, 1988–89. Black and white photograph, acrylic, screenprint, and collage paper on masonite, 99.06 x 81.28 cm. Photo: Collection of Steven Johnson and Walter Sudol, courtesy Second Ward Foundation, courtesy the Estate of David Wojnarowicz, and P.P.O.W, New York.

influential work as an artist, activist, and art activist took up Crimp's call to action until his death from AIDS-related complications. His practice was critical of the American government and pharmaceutical industries and worked towards ending the epidemic. Wojnarowicz's piece, *Untitled (Hujar Dead)* (1988–9) (fig. 3), features black and white photographs of the artist Peter Hujar's (1934–1987)–Wojnarowicz's mentor and lover–face, hand, and feet, taken after his death. Around these photographs are a border made up of fragmented twenty-dollar bills, unreadable pieces cut from white text on a red background, and more American bills cut into the shape of sperm. Overlaying the entire image is a text²⁶ that begins,

“If I had a dollar to spend for health-care, I'd rather spend it on a baby or innocent person with some defect or illness not of their own responsibility; not some person with AIDS,” says the healthcare official on national television and this is the middle of an hour long video of people dying on camera because they can't even afford the limited drugs available that might extend their lives and I can't even remember what this official looked like because I reached in through the TV screen and ripped his face in half and I was diagnosed with AIDS recently and this was after the last few years of losing count of the friends and neighbors who have been dying slow and vicious and unnecessary deaths because fags and dykes and junkies are expendable in this country.²⁷

This excerpt, addressing politicians' lethal apathy and the lack of access to medication, is printed across the face of his dead friend and lover. Art historian Lauren DeLand identifies this piece as utilizing a concept she terms the “useful corpse.”

The useful corpse has three manifestations in art and activism:

The corpse, presented graphically and didactically through the filter of photo, video or filmic media; the corpse itself, whole or in fragments, positioned by the living in strategic proximity to indict those responsible for perpetuating the

political crisis of HIV/AIDS; and those still-living bodies who cluster in such politically charged spaces in a pantomime of mass graves.²⁸

Untitled (Hujar Dead) confronts the viewer with Hujar's body moments after he has died of AIDS. Wojnarowicz renders Hujar's corpse “useful” as an illustration of the loss and trauma being experienced by their community.

Wojnarowicz also embodied the concept of the useful corpse by participating in an ACT-UP die-in on the FDA's lawn in 1988, and is said to have had a direct influence on the first Ashes Action in 1992 with his “call to mark the political chicanery of the living with the remains of the dead.”²⁹ Four years later, after his death from complications resulting from AIDS, Tom Rauffenbart would scatter Wojnarowicz's ashes on the White House's lawn at the 1996 Ashes Action, condemning then President Bill Clinton.³⁰ These actions exemplified what DeLand argued is the power of the useful corpse to have “exploited productively the hypervisibility of the person with AIDS in the discourses of American politics and mass media [...] and refashioned this vilified corpse into a political weapon to be detonated at the door of those directly responsible for perpetuating the epidemic.”³¹

Roberts' self-administering of an experimental gene-therapy through livestream replicates DeLand's notion of the useful corpse present throughout Wojnarowicz's body of work. Through the use of his own body as a site for experimentation and the utilization of the visibility made available through a public Facebook livestream, Roberts brings renewed attention to issues surrounding pharmaceutical research, development and access

to medication. Just as Wojnarowicz publicized Hujar's dead body in “the hope that displaying the bodies of the fallen could garner support for the living,” essentially donating his body to the cause, Roberts broadcasts the exact moment he donated his own body to the search for a cure.³² Roberts performs the useful corpse while still living, by using his body for activism as well as scientific advancement. He finds a ‘use’ for his body that will hopefully garner support for issues facing today's HIV/AIDS community, such as the inadequacies of the pharmaceutical industry's efforts to research new treatments, the high cost of available treatments, and the lack of access to information and experimental drug trials.

As opposed to using biohacking to slow down and deindustrialize the field of bioengineering, Roberts publicly performs the useful corpse to speed up the process of discovering a cure for HIV by bringing attention to the faults in the current pharmaceutical research and development industry. As Crimp writes, “[w]e cannot afford to leave anything up to the ‘experts.’ We must become our own experts.”³³ Roberts embodied this, building upon the work of the artists and activists that came before him to advance their shared objectives using technologies not available to previous generations. Rather than being simply a biohacker with HIV experimenting with genes, Roberts is an HIV/AIDS activist in the biohacking era. When Roberts injected himself with an experimental HIV gene-therapy, he was not only injecting himself with proteins and antibodies, but the whole history of HIV/AIDS—the “Montreal Manifesto”, the scientific research both developed and undeveloped, and Wojnarowicz's entire body of work including his death—because “AIDS does not exist apart from the practices that conceptualize it, represent it, and respond to it.”³⁴

As opposed to using biohacking to slow down and deindustrialize the field of bioengineering, Roberts publicly performs the useful corpse to speed up the process of discovering a cure for HIV by bringing attention to the faults in the current pharmaceutical research and development industry.

²⁶ The entire text can be read at <https://whitney.org/audio/guides/1980?language=english&type=general&night=false&stop=16>, also available as a recording.
²⁷ David Wojnarowicz, “*Untitled (Hujar Dead) Transcript*,” David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night, Whitney Museum of American Art, audio guide, accessed October 9, 2018, <https://whitney.org/audio/guides/1980?language=english&type=general&night=false&stop=16>.
²⁸ DeLand, “Live Fast, Die Young, Leave a Useful Corpse,” 34.
²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.
³⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.
³¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

³² DeLand, “Live Fast, Die Young, Leave a Useful Corpse,” 37.
³³ Crimp, “Introduction,” 6.
³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

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L'IMPACT D'UN PORTRAIT

Dans la période contemporaine, le terme « portrait » renvoie à une définition artistique pratiquement universellement partagée et comprise. D'ailleurs, dans nos sociétés occidentales, la création de portraits par le dessin, la peinture, la photo ainsi que la modélisation, n'aura jamais connu un débit aussi grand. La place du portrait ne se limite plus à l'art noble auquel il peut être historiquement associé. Avec l'apparition de nouvelles technologies, la facilité d'accès aux différents procédés, tels la peinture et le dessin, ainsi que la déprofessionnalisation de tous ces processus de création, chaque individu est aujourd'hui capable de créer son portrait. Ainsi, il ne faut pas sous-estimer l'importance de la présence d'Internet et de l'influence des réseaux sociaux pour partager sur l'espace public ce type de création. Toutefois, ne réduisons pas le portrait à la définition populaire actuelle. Il est intéressant pour mieux comprendre son évolution à travers les siècles de se rappeler l'histoire du portrait, tout comme les inégalités passées et les symboliques antérieures lui étant parfois associées. En effet, la place du portrait ne se limite plus à la vision romantique et eurocentrique que l'on peut lui attribuer. Il est possible que son histoire influence la façon dont nous concevons le portrait d'aujourd'hui. Quelle est l'influence de l'Histoire du portrait occidental sur la représentation actuelle de portraits d'individus considérés comme non occidentaux? Pour amener à mieux comprendre cette dynamique, ce point sera abordé en prenant en considération le portrait créé par Dimani Mathieu Casendo pour la campagne électorale de Québec solidaire de l'automne 2018. Plus précisément,

il sera question de son affiche représentant une personne de couleur, et ayant pour titre « Une assurance dentaire pour tout le monde ¹ » (annexe 1). Ce portrait était le fruit d'une collaboration entre Québec solidaire, parti politique souverainiste de gauche², et différents artistes de la province de Québec qui avaient carte blanche pour illustrer le programme du parti³.

Dans un premier temps, un lien important sera établi entre l'échange marchand de la peinture et le pouvoir. En second lieu, il sera question d'une analyse de l'iconographie du pouvoir dans le portrait à travers l'utilisation de certains objets, ainsi que de la manière d'illustrer différentes ethnies au sein de portraits occidentaux afin d'amplifier la notoriété du pouvoir occidental de l'époque. La dernière partie mettra l'accent sur l'influence que les concepts historiques ont pu avoir sur le portrait créé par Dimani Mathieu Casendo afin de commenter la critique médiatique insinuant que le travail de l'artiste et du parti politique Québec solidaire comportait une dimension raciste.

1. La peinture et son utilisation socio-économique; ou le portrait main dans la main avec le pouvoir

Pour commencer, avant de discuter de l'importance et de l'influence passées du portrait, il est nécessaire de déconstruire l'image romantique de l'artiste créant pour répondre à un besoin viscéral et de comprendre l'intérêt socio-économique de l'échange client-peintre durant la Renaissance⁴. Un exemple datant du 15^e siècle en Italie permet de comprendre l'importance de cet échange. En effet, les écrits de Michael Baxandall, chercheur et enseignant en histoire de l'art au Royaume-Uni⁵, décrivent la création de peinture comme étant : « Le dépôt d'une relation sociale. D'un côté, il y avait un peintre qui faisait le tableau, ou du moins

supervisait sa réalisation. De l'autre côté, il y avait quelqu'un d'autre qui lui a demandé de le faire, qui lui a fourni les fonds nécessaires pour le faire et qui, une fois qu'il l'a fait, a pensé l'utiliser d'une façon ou d'une autre.⁶ ». L'aspect marchand et l'échange social représentent des enjeux importants selon Baxandall. Ainsi, différentes contraintes viennent supporter cette logique résultant de l'influence économique de l'époque : « (i) [le client] précise ce que le peintre doit peindre, en l'occurrence par son engagement à un dessin convenu; (ii) il est explicite sur la manière et le moment où le client doit payer, et quand le peintre doit livrer; (iii) il insiste pour que le peintre utilise une bonne qualité de couleurs, particulièrement l'or et l'outremer.⁷ » La peinture est donc associée à un échange de services comme un autre. De plus, ces paramètres sont

La peinture est donc associée à un échange de services comme un autre.

- 1 Alain Tremblay, « Affichez vos couleurs, » Québec solidaire, modifié en 2018, <https://monaffiche.quebecsolidaire.net/>
- 2 Alain Tremblay, « Nos principes, » Québec solidaire, modifié en 2019, <https://quebecsolidaire.net/propositions/nos-principes>
- 3 Lia Lévesque, « QS présente ses affiches électorales artistiques, » *maPRESSE*, <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/elections-quebec-2018/201808/24/01-5194145-qs-presente-ses-affiches-electorales-artistiques.php>
- 4 Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in 15th Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 6-8.
- 5 Martine Vasselin, « BAXANDALL MICHAEL — (1933-2008) », *Encyclopædia Universalis*, consulté le 27 novembre 2018 <http://www.universalis-edu.com/encyclopedie/michael-baxandall/>
- 6 Traduction : the deposit of a social relationship. On one side there was a painter who made the picture, or at least supervised its making. On the other side there was somebody else who asked him to make it, provided funds for him to make it and, after he had made it, reckoned on using it in some way or other. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in 15th Century Italy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 1.
- 7 Traduction : (i) it specifies what the painter is to paint, in this case through his commitment to an agreed drawing; (ii) it is explicit about how and when the client is to pay, and when the painter is to deliver; (iii) it insists on the painter using a good quality of colours, specially gold and ultramarine. Ibid., 6-8.



Annexe 1.
Dimani Mathieu Cassando, « Une assurance dentaire pour tout le monde, » 2018. Québec Solidaire, consulté le 26 novembre 2018, <https://monaffiche.quebecsolidaire.net/>.

déterminés initialement par les pigments de valeurs, la technique de l'artiste et le prestige de celui-ci⁸.

Pour continuer, les toiles du quinzième et seizième siècles pouvaient aussi être le résultat d'une démarche de propagande qu'il était possible de voir sur tout le territoire européen. D'après l'iconographie des œuvres, force est de constater que les clients souhaitaient être représentés d'une façon subjective. Bon nombre d'œuvres possèdent une symbolique rattachée à la puissance. Les vêtements de fourrure portés par les individus présents dans la toile *Les Époux Arnolfini* (1434) (annexe 2), peinte par l'artiste néerlandais Jan Van Eyck, ainsi que les couleurs nobles employées pour leurs habits en sont un exemple⁹. Les objets inclus dans les portraits portent également cette symbolique. Par exemple, *Les Ambassadeurs* (1533), peint par le créateur allemand, illustre des objets symbolisant les connaissances et le pouvoir des aristocrates présentés¹⁰.

Par conséquent, les peintures utilisées dans le cadre de cet essai illustrent une réalité sur l'art de cette époque, soit l'échange marchand et la volonté d'un client de vouloir être dépeint avec la symbolique de la richesse l'entourant. Il désirait voir ses avoirs, ses connaissances, et donc, indirectement son pouvoir illustrés lorsqu'il commandait son portrait à l'artiste. Cela amène donc le spectateur à accorder, consciemment ou non, une certaine notoriété à la personne représentée.

2. La relation Oppresseur-Opprimé par la peinture et les différences ethniques

En second lieu, le contexte culturel dans lequel l'artiste évolue conditionnerait de façon non négligeable les portraits qu'il réalise. Entre autres, l'utilisation de personnes de couleurs afin de témoigner d'une certaine puissance et d'une richesse est amenée dans différents contextes propres à la colonisation. Les relations entre les Occidentaux, soit dans ce contexte les Européens, et les Orientaux, décrits comme étant les « Autres » sont définis dans les écrits du livre *Orientalisme* de l'anthropologue Edward Saïd, paru en 1978¹¹, comme entretenant des rapports de type Oppresseurs-Opprimés. L'auteur

met de l'avant le rôle des Occidentaux dans la représentation de l'image de l'Orient. Ainsi, Saïd dépeint les « Autres » à travers le regard des Occidentaux. Ceci donne lieu à la représentation d'une image stéréotypée des Orientaux : leur exotisme, leur mystère et leur population étant une incarnation de tous les interdits¹².

Cette figuration d'une population perçue et interprétée par un regard extérieur amène à déformer ce qu'elle est vraiment. Dans le contexte du portrait, il est possible d'observer l'illustration d'autres communautés de couleurs, soit les Non-Occidentaux, par les colonisateurs, soit les Européens, pour représenter la présence de leur pouvoir. Un des nombreux exemples supportant cette théorie vient des peintures illustrant les Indiens lors de la colonisation de l'Inde par l'Angleterre. Le portrait datant de 1763, *George Clive with his family and Indian Maid-servant* (annexe 3) par Joshua Reynolds dépeint une servante indienne. Cela amène à mieux comprendre le pouvoir de la famille occidentale représentée¹³. George Clive était connu comme étant le cousin de Robert Clive¹⁴, fondateur de l'Empire britannique en Inde, et avait fait fortune en l'Inde¹⁵. De ce fait, la présence de la servante indienne est une façon de représenter les richesses de George Clive découlant de l'Inde. Cet exemple n'est pas le seul. En effet, les portraits montraient différentes communautés qui pouvaient être, à l'époque, sous l'emprise d'un quelconque empire européen.

Ainsi, les travaux précurseurs d'Edward Saïd sur le mouvement orientaliste ont permis d'exposer la tendance artistique d'utiliser les Orientaux pour accentuer la suprématie de l'Occident au sein des portraits anglais. Il aura été le premier en Histoire de l'art à déclencher le discours autour de ces types de portraits occidentaux provoquant une représentation biaisée des populations opprimées amplifiant ainsi le pouvoir des oppresseurs.

8 Ibid.

9 Suzie Hodge, *100 Chefs-d'œuvre de l'Art* (Montréal: Éditions Hurtubise, 2017), 18-21.

10 Hans Holbein, « *Les Ambassadeurs*, » 1533, *The National Gallery*, Londres, consulté le 26 novembre 2018, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/hans-holbein-the-younger-the-ambassadors>.

11 Edward Saïd, *Orientalism* (New York: First Vintage Books Editions, 1978), 3.

12 Ibid.

13 Emil Krén et Daniel Marx, *George Clive and his Family with an Indian Maid*, Web Gallery of Art. Consulté le 5 novembre 2018, https://www.wga.hu/html_m/r/reynolds/family.html.

14 « CLIVE, Robert (1725-74), » *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1754-1790*, ed. L. Namier, J. Brooke, 1964, modifié 2017, <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/clive-robert-1725-74#end-notes>.

15 Emil Krén et Daniel Marx, *George Clive and his Family with an Indian Maid*, Web Gallery of Art. Consulté le 5 novembre 2018, https://www.wga.hu/html_m/r/reynolds/family.html.



Annexe 2.
Jan Van Eyck, *Les Époux Arnolfini*, 1390–1441. Courtoisie de Bildindex Der Kunst & Architektur.



Annexe 3.
Joshua Reynolds, *George Clive and his Family with an Indian Maid*, 1765–66. Courtoisie de Bildindex Der Kunst & Architektur.

« Une assurance dentaire pour tous », créée par D. Mathieu Cassendo, serait aux premiers abords à la fois le résultat d'un échange marchand entre un parti politique et l'artiste, ainsi que l'utilisation du portrait d'une personne non occidentale.

3. L'influence des concepts historiques du portrait sur le travail de D. Mathieu Cassendo

Pour continuer, il est possible de considérer le portrait de Dimani Mathieu Cassendo afin d'axer l'analyse sur un sujet d'actualité. Son travail créé dans le cadre de la campagne électorale de l'automne 2018 du parti politique Québec solidaire est une nouvelle ouverture sur la discussion apportée par la représentation du portrait. En tenant compte des deux caractéristiques élaborées précédemment, l'affiche « Une assurance dentaire pour tous », créée par D. Mathieu Cassendo, serait aux premiers abords à la fois le résultat d'un échange marchand entre un parti politique et l'artiste, ainsi que l'utilisation du portrait d'une personne non occidentale.

Tel que discuté, les portraits sont souvent source d'échanges commerciaux, de propagande et de représentation du pouvoir. Cela suggère une compréhension de l'interprétation du travail réalisé par D. Mathieu Cassendo, critiquée sur l'espace public pour son possible caractère raciste¹⁶. Certes, ses affiches étaient utilisées dans le but de partager un projet de loi¹⁷, ce qui pourrait être considéré comme de la propagande¹⁸. Cependant, à l'instar des peintres italiens du 15^e siècle, l'artiste était totalement libre de choisir son sujet¹⁹. Son choix était donc de représenter une personne de couleur.

La deuxième caractéristique précédemment abordée était l'utilisation de portraits de personnes de couleur pour mettre de l'avant le pouvoir occidental. Un des aspects enrichissants de cette affiche est qu'elle est présentée dans un espace public québécois colonisé initialement par la France et l'Angleterre, appartenant aujourd'hui au Canada. Le contexte de cette affiche a beaucoup à voir avec la réaction du public étant en contact avec lui. Dans le cas du Québec, cette province est reconnue comme étant revendicatrice et protectrice de son identité. De plus, l'histoire majoritairement européenne de ces lieux fait partie d'une homogénéité à laquelle le portrait de Dimani Mathieu Cassendo n'appartient pas. Le portrait illustrant un

individu Noir ne fait appel à aucune autre forme de représentation propre aux caractéristiques des colonisateurs initialement au pouvoir. En considérant que cette démarche est entreprise par le parti Québec solidaire à des fins de communication visuelle de leurs idéaux politiques, cela pourrait être perçu comme une appropriation culturelle, un stéréotype et donc du racisme²⁰. C'est ce que voulait souligner la développeuse de jeux vidéo Aneasha Crawley qui perçoit le portrait comme étant une mauvaise blague aux arrières goûts racistes²¹. Mathieu Cassendo a répondu à ses critiques en affirmant qu'il s'agissait d'« un autoportrait »²². Il n'y a donc pas de relation Oppresseur-Opprimé ici puisque Québec Solidaire n'aurait pas utilisé le visage d'une personne Noire pour illustrer son pouvoir politique. Au contraire, le portrait créé relève de la volonté de l'artiste de présenter son portrait sur l'espace public et d'associer sa démarche au discours amené par le projet de Québec solidaire de vouloir « [u]ne assurance dentaire pour tout le monde ».

En conclusion, les arts visuels, incluant les peintures de portraits, étaient historiquement une source d'échange marchand entre un artiste-peintre et un client. Cette réalité trouve son fondement dans le désir du client d'être représenté à son avantage et ainsi de commander à l'artiste une réalisation de cette image de pouvoir qu'il souhaitait renvoyer. Ainsi, les artistes ont dû associer des caractéristiques artistiques reflétant la puissance et une certaine notoriété financière. Pour cela, ils utilisèrent des pigments rares, puis améliorèrent des techniques complexes et ajoutèrent des objets symbolisant la richesse. De plus, lors des grandes périodes de colonisation, les techniques de représentation propres aux peuples européens ont été utilisées en ajoutant la présence d'individus non occidentaux pour mettre de l'avant le pouvoir occidental. Ces deux dimensions, soit la sphère socio-économique et culturelle du portrait, permettent de porter un regard critique sur les portraits actuels.

En associant ce type de pratique avec le travail de Dimani Mathieu Cassendo, commissionné par le groupe Québec Solidaire pour les élections provinciales d'automne 2018, il est possible de faire un rapprochement entre l'Histoire du portrait et l'interprétation de l'affiche

soulevant son caractère possiblement raciste. Toujours est-il que, malgré l'échange marchand, Québec solidaire avait laissé la liberté d'expression aux artistes dans l'illustration de leurs affiches électorales. Par conséquent, cet autoportrait est le fruit de la volonté propre à l'artiste de représenter au mieux le message qu'il devait illustrer, et non en amont d'une influence politique. Puisque, dans cette optique, l'artiste décide de s'impliquer personnellement dans le débat politique, il met sur la place publique sa volonté de faire partie du mouvement d'amener un service de santé pour tous.

Finalement, les portraits de personnes de couleurs sont sous-représentés sur la sphère publique du Québec. Cette absence de représentation amène à créer des remous dans des sociétés de couleurs qui sont historiquement habituées à être utilisées comme accessoires du pouvoir. Toutefois, la démarche de D. Mathieu Cassendo rejoint l'idée amenée par l'écrivain américain Brian Keith Jackson : « Peindre, c'est témoigner du monde dans lequel nous vivons. Les Noirs vivent en ce monde. J'ai choisi de les intégrer. C'est ma façon de nous dire oui.²³ » Ainsi, le travail de Mathieu Cassendo devrait être perçu comme une démarche vers une meilleure représentation des Québécois²⁴.

16 Steve Rukavina, « Is this election poster racist? », CBC news, 14 septembre 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-solidaire-dental-care-poster-1.4821889>
 17 Lia Lévesque, « OS présente ses affiches électorales artistiques », *maPRESSE*, 24 août 2018, <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/elections-quebec-2018/201808/24/01-5194145-os-presente-ses-affiches-electorales-artistiques.php>
 18 « Propaganda », Oxford Reference, 27 novembre 2018, <http://0-www-oxfordreference.com/mercury/concordia.ca/view/10.1093/oj/authority.20110803100349558>
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20 Steve Rukavina, « Is this election poster racist? », CBC news, 14 septembre 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-solidaire-dental-care-poster-1.4821889>
 21 Ibid.
 22 Traduction : « It's a self-portrait », Steve Rukavina, « Is this election poster racist? », CBC news, 14 septembre 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-solidaire-dental-care-poster-1.4821889>
 23 Brian Keith Jackson, « B-boy Stance », *Vibe*, août 2003, 117.
 24 Steve Rukavina, « Is this election poster racist? », CBC news, 14 septembre 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-solidaire-dental-care-poster-1.4821889>

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Cassandra Lavoie
De mère immigrante sino-mauricienne de première génération et de père québécois originaire de Sacré-Cœur au Saguenay, Cassandra a toujours été en contact avec la multi-culturalité. Cette diversité lui permet comparer les réalités du quotidien et de porter attention aux questions propres à l'identité Québécoise, tant sur la nécessité de catégoriser pour mieux définir, que sur la définition par opposition. C'est en abordant les sujets propres à l'orientalisme et au post-colonialisme que Cassandra comprit son besoin d'approfondir les questions d'identités culturelles dans les Arts. Elle souhaite ainsi participer à l'inclusion culturelle au sein de la définition de l'identité Québécoise.

THE ART OF INVISIBILITY IN THE SURVEILLANCE STATE

HITO STEYERL'S
'HOW NOT TO BE SEEN:
A FUCKING DIDACTIC
EDUCATIONAL .MOV FILE'

Hito Steyerl (b. 1966) is a German filmmaker, video artist, writer, and academic. Her work explores topics such as globalization, digital technologies, militarization, and capitalism through film and video. She expertly sifts through complex networks of data to reveal their secrets. Recently, Steyerl has been concerned with our culture's relationship to images and information, which is becoming an increasingly pertinent aspect of our lives and society as we become ever more digitally connected. Steyerl describes our era as "an age that is defined by planetary civil war, growing inequality, and proprietary digital technology,"¹ and notes that, as a consequence of these conditions, we live in a world that is increasingly surveilled. She pursues these themes in her 2013 video work *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* by asking the question "How do people disappear in an age of total over-visibility?"² The video essay attempts to present answers to this questions, while also revealing the question's inherent irony. In this paper, I will consider the didactic value of the video through its use and critical consideration of the digital image, its cultural and political context, and its theoretical framework.

As a filmmaker and video artist, Steyerl's practice is concerned with the medium itself, and how video technology has contributed to our current cultural climate. Her concern for truth and representation relates to her background in essay documentary films, which she carries into her video and installation practices. Film and photography have a complex history that is fundamentally political, because the photographic image has been and continues to be perceived as a depiction of reality. Presented as incontestable fact, these images upheld a certain authority that no other representational media had before. The camera has become a symbol of our era: it has come to define our understanding

of the modern world. *How Not to Be Seen* is "fueled by her critical examination of the production, use, and circulation of images from the mid-twentieth century into the Information Age."³ These images are disseminated by individuals willfully, but are also collected by governments and corporations as data in order to track and monitor global citizens. Ominously, the ubiquitous optical technologies used for smartphones are also used for drones, satellites, and other military surveillance technologies, which is of particular interest to Steyerl because of how it relates specifically to the politics of representation and globalization, to who is seen, and why.

In their book *Liquid Surveillance* (2016), philosopher Zygmunt Bauman and sociologist David Lyon discuss how the "liquidity" of modern surveillance has allowed it to seep into every aspect of our lives.⁴ Steyerl utilizes this idea as *How Not to Be Seen* asks: is it possible to go unseen when we are being systematically watched? Playing with this contradiction, Steyerl "opens a dialogue with the spectator built upon non-conventional systems such as jokes and estrangement," in the format of a tutorial.⁵ She breaks up this dialogue into five chapters: Lesson 1: "How to Make Something Invisible for a Camera," Lesson 2: "How to be Invisible in Plain Sight," Lesson 3: "How to Become Invisible by Becoming a Picture," Lesson 4: "How to be Invisible by Disappearing," and Lesson 5: "How to Become Invisible by Merging into a World Made of Pictures."

In the first three chapters, Steyerl introduces technologies that measure (in) visibility and tactics of disappearance. In Lesson 1, Steyerl stands in front of a resolution target, an image that she will return to many times throughout the video. The resolution target, or test chart (fig. 1), acts "like an eye chart at the optometrist, where the smallest group of bars that can be resolved marks the limit of the

resolution for the optical instrument that is being used."⁶ The shot then pans out, revealing a resolution chart that is located in a desert. In the late 1950s, as the United States was racing to reach the moon, the Air Force set up resolution targets for aerial photography in various deserts across America.⁷ These charts, as pointed out by the video's narrator later on, were "decommissioned in 2006 as analog photography lost its importance."⁸ They now exist as relics of early aerial photography and surveillance research. The video continues to pan out as the narrator states "resolution

Ominously, the ubiquitous optical technologies used for smartphones are also used for drones, satellites, and other military surveillance technologies, which is of particular interest to Steyerl because of how it relates specifically to the politics of globalization, to who is seen, and why.

1 Hito Steyerl, "A Tank on a Pedestal," in *Duty Free Art* (London: Verso, 2017), 1.
 2 "Hito Steyerl. *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*." *Museum of Modern Art*, accessed November 17, 2018, <https://www.moma.org/learn/moma-learning/hito-steyerl-how-not-to-be-seen-a-fucking-didactic-educational-mov-file-2013/>.

3 "Hito Steyerl. *How Not to Be Seen*," *Museum of Modern Art*.
 4 Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon, introduction to *Liquid Surveillance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 3.
 5 "How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File," *Tate*, accessed November 17, 2018, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/steyerl-how-not-to-be-seen-a-fucking-didactic-educational-mov-file-t14506>.
 6 "Photo Calibration Targets: Terrestrial Test Patterns Used For Aerial Imaging," *The Center for Land Use Interpretation*, accessed November 17, 2018, <http://www.clui.org/newsletter/winter-2013/photo-calibration-targets>.
 7 *Ibid.*
 8 Hito Steyerl, "How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File," video, *Artforum*, 15:52, 2013, <https://www.artforum.com/video/hito-steyerl-how-not-to-be-seen-a-fucking-didactic-educational-mov-file-2013-51651>.

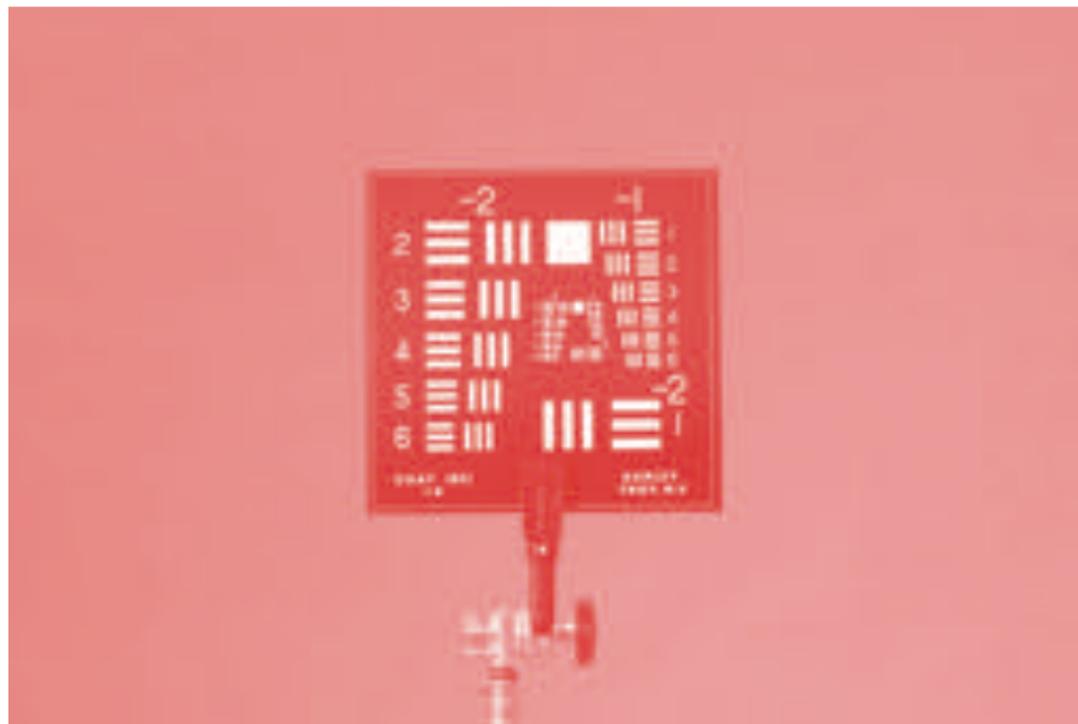


Figure 1. A resolution test chart, the opening motif in the video. Hito Steyerl, *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013. HD video, single screen in architectural environment, 00:22. Image CC 4.0 Hito Steyerl. Image courtesy of Hito Steyerl, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and Esther Schipper, Berlin.

determines visibility; whatever is not captured by resolution is invisible”⁹—a statement that recurs throughout the video like a mantra.

Steyerl reasserts her interest in representation and resolution throughout the video. In Lesson 2, she discusses tactics of real and virtual disappearance. Methods include “to hide in plain sight,” but also “to scroll, to wipe, to erase, to shrink,” relating to disappearing online. To scroll past something, to wipe, to erase, to shrink—all are motions used to make things disappear on smartphones and tablets. These words “refer to a familiar lexicon of gestures that mark our interface with digital images on touchscreens, hand movements that the artist demonstrates for us while squarely facing the camera.”¹⁰ Following this, in Lesson 3, Steyerl explores the green screen. Unlike the analog resolution chart, the green screen is still an active tool in film and photography. In video practices, the green screen is used to create an illusion: it can make images appear as well as disappear, which Steyerl utilizes continually in *How Not to Be Seen*. She paints green lines on her own face—the lines of a resolution chart—which then become part of the backdrop (fig. 2). In this shot she is “becoming” a picture; to paint oneself in green is to digitally camouflage.

Steyerl then moves from the resolution chart and introduces the pixel chart (fig. 3). Pixels determine digital resolution, and measure visibility; now that most surveillance technologies are digital, it is pixel count that matters. The computer generated voice of the narrator explains the importance of the pixel chart, stating: “Around 2000, a new standard for resolution targets is introduced. [...] In 1996, photographic resolution in the area is about twelve meters per pixel. Today it is one foot. To become invisible one has to become smaller or equal to one pixel.”¹¹ The characters in the video then embody the pixel chart, engaging in a strange and humorous dance as human-pixels. This transition from resolution chart to pixel chart “offers an articulated but ironic reflection on the transition from the analogue to the digital era, and the role of the digital image in the representation and production of reality.”¹² This ease of the digital image’s reproducibility is central to Steyerl’s writing, and is notably the topic of her seminal essay “In Defense of the Poor

⁹ Steyerl, “How Not to Be Seen,” *Artforum*, 15:52.
¹⁰ Kaegan Sparks, “To Cut and To Swipe: Understanding Hito Steyerl Through ‘HOW NOT TO BE SEEN,’” *MOMUS*, last modified May 12, 2015, <http://momus.com>.
¹¹ Steyerl, “How Not to Be Seen,” *Artforum*.
¹² “How Not to Be Seen,” *Tate*.



Figure 2.
The artist paints her face with green paint, blending into the green screen behind her. Hito Steyerl, *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013. HD video, single screen in architectural environment, 04:48. Image CC 4.0 Hito Steyerl. Image courtesy of Hito Steyerl, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and Esther Schipper, Berlin.

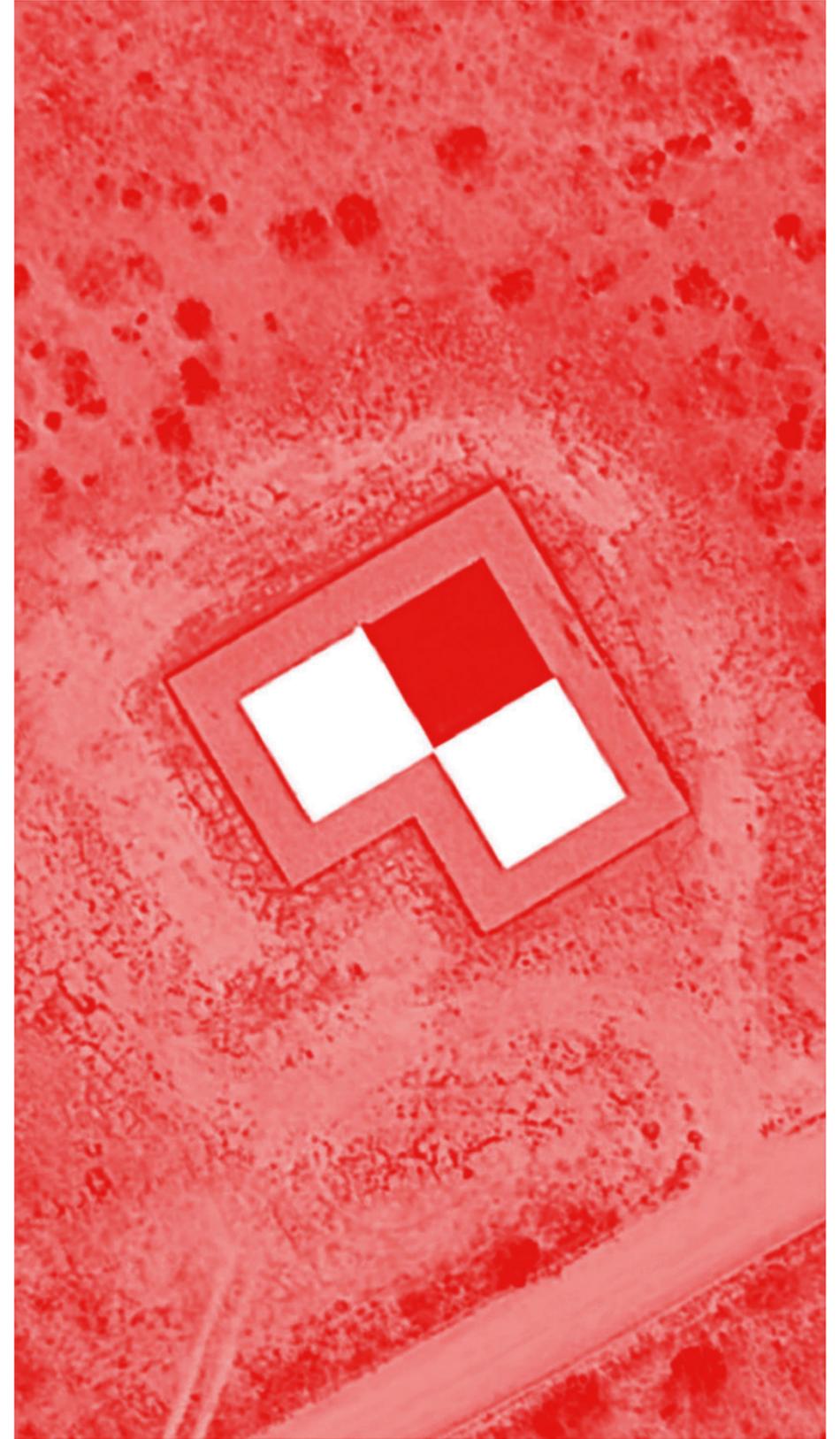


Figure 3.
A pixel-based resolution chart in the desert: the modern version of the tri-bar resolution chart. Hito Steyerl, *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, 2013. HD video, single screen in architectural environment, 05:41. Image CC 4.0 Hito Steyerl. Image courtesy of Hito Steyerl, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and Esther Schipper, Berlin.

Image" (2009), which considers the role of images in "capital's semiotic turn."¹³ *How Not to Be Seen* builds upon Steyerl's critical writing practice and translates these issues to the screen, introducing methods of disappearance that affect the body, such as hiding ourselves, camouflaging ourselves, or shrinking ourselves, presenting the impossibility of invisibility from the digital eye.

The final two lessons explain the overarching mechanisms of the surveillance state, looking at political identities and locations. In Lesson 4, Steyerl considers the physical act of disappearance. Certain people are more prone to surveillance, while others benefit from the privilege of being unseen. As Lyon states in the introduction of *Liquid Surveillance*, "If surveillance is not just about the growing grip of new technologies, then isn't it about the way that power is distributed? [...] As power moves with the speed of electronic signals in the fluidity of liquid modernity, transparency is simultaneously increased for some and decreased for others."¹⁴ Steyerl illustrates this distribution of power by comparing different sites and identities that are made invisible in the interest of the surveillance state. She lists sites such as gated communities, military zones, and the dark web, and individual identities such as "being a woman over the age of fifty, being undocumented or poor, and being a disappeared person as an enemy of the state."¹⁵ Each of these sites and identities relate to certain privileged and unprivileged positions, especially in the Western context. Gated communities are privileged sites for the rich, and surveillance, in this case, is meant to keep people out as opposed to keeping people in—a facet of surveillance that French academic Didier Bigo calls the "ban-opticon."¹⁶ Military zones are surveilled in the same way: they are 'invisible' to the outsider. These locations benefit from their status within the neoliberal state, meaning surveillance is used to protect their privileged position as unmarked locations. Alternatively, she lists identities that are invisible because they suffer from this distribution of power—invisibility becomes a tool to oppress. Claiming, as she does in the video, that a woman over the age of fifty is invisible points to feminist

concerns of sexism and ageism. Undocumented people and "enemies of the state" are often forced into invisibility due to their vulnerable position, because "exposure has become more of a threat than a privilege."¹⁷ This lesson, therefore, points to how technologies of surveillance are subjective and selective, serving the interests of the surveyor. This brings Steyerl to conclude in the fifth lesson that to be invisible, one must merge into a world made of images or become a pixel. She poetically suggests that somewhere, "rogue pixels hide in the cracks of old standards of resolution. They throw off the cloak of representation."¹⁸ These rogue pixels are people who have successfully obscured themselves from surveillance, and therefore representation.

As the video comes to an end, the 1973 song "Precious Moments" by The Three Degrees begins to play. In it, the singer longs for a lover who has disappeared from her life. In 1998, one of Steyerl's own friends, Andrea Wolf, who was a part of a Kurdish rebel group, disappeared without a trace, presumably abducted.¹⁹ This incident precipitated the making of *How Not to Be Seen*. At the end of the video, Steyerl's camera crew "disappears;" rogue

Certain people are more prone to surveillance, while others benefit from the privilege of being unseen.

13 Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *e-flux Journal*, #10 (November 2009), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/>
14 Bauman and Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance*, 10.
15 Steyerl, "How Not to Be Seen," *Artforum*.
16 Bauman and Lyon, *Liquid Surveillance*, 60.
17 Kaegan Sparks, "To Cut and To Swipe: Understanding Hito Steyerl Through 'HOW NOT TO BE SEEN,'" *MOMUS*, last modified May 12, 2015, <http://momus.ca/to-cut-and-to-swipe-understanding-hito-steyerl-through-how-not-to-be-seen/>.
18 Steyerl, "How Not to Be Seen," *Artforum*.
19 Göksu Kunak, "Interview // Hito Steyerl: Zero Probability and the Age of Mass Art Production," *Berlin Art Link*, accessed November 18, 2018, <http://www.berlinartlink.com/2013/11/19/interview-hito-steyerl-zero-probability-and-the-age-of-mass-art-production/>.

pixels have kidnapped everyone. Considering the video as a whole, the ending can be interpreted in this fashion: power determines visibility. Those in control of the distribution of power can, at any point, make you disappear; they can revoke your right to self-representation. Steyerl calls this "the state of zero probability,"²⁰ meaning that "whatever is impossible—like people being swallowed from the face of the earth—happens all the time and nobody thinks twice about it."²¹ If the camera, and surveillance, are symbols of our era, then the state of zero probability is the paradox of our era. Thus, *How Not to Be Seen* illustrates the core concerns of her practice as a whole—globalization, digital technologies, militarization, and capitalism—through the lens of the surveillance state.

Finally, the work is important in regards to understanding the implications of autonomous vision systems. If we are being surveilled by cameras, which are ultimately machines, we should be able to understand how they manage to see us. Machines decode images "to trigger actions and to create reality," and are becoming increasingly independent.²² Steyerl's work is an attempt at understanding autonomous vision, and anticipates the idea that "the art history of the twentieth century can be understood as an anticipatory tutorial to help humans decode images made by machines, for machines."²³

20 *Ibid.*
21 *Ibid.*
22 Hito Steyerl, "Media: Autonomy of Images," in *Surveillance*, ed. Laura Poitras (Cambridge: Yale University Press, 2016), 167.
23 *Ibid.*, 168.

Those in control of the distribution of power can, at any point, make you disappear; they can revoke your right to self-representation.

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GHOST IN THE MACHINE (AGE)

GENDER, SEXUALITY,
AND THE BODY
IN EILEEN GRAY'S E.1027

In Eileen Gray's (1878–1976) *E.1027*, there is both an initial acknowledgement of bodily inhabitation and a continued consideration for individualized bodily needs. Eileen Gray's existence as someone who was both queer and female shaped this concern for the body in the architecture and design of *E.1027*, which led to the dissolution of hierarchical gender binaries within the work. This individualized approach to corporeal inhabitation of space is in contrast with the functionalist methodologies championed by heterosexual male avant-garde architects, namely Le Corbusier (1897–1965) and Adolf Loos (1870–1933), whose treatment of the body in constructed space reinforced heterosexuality and its associated hierarchical binary of gender.

Gray created *E.1027* between 1926 and 1929 in Roquebrune at Cap Martin, France. The period of its construction coincided with the avant-garde movement, the philosophy of which diminished the value of domesticity in architectural spaces. During this period, domesticity was associated with privacy, bodily comfort, and family life, and these were understood to be feminine associations.¹ Private domestic spaces were the realms of women, who were supposed to concern themselves with family and the individualized decoration of their home. Women's spaces, such as boudoirs, bathrooms, and bedrooms, were placed in opposition to the public, masculine world of work that was most valued in avant-garde modernist architecture. Feminine space was private, revolving around bodily activities such as rest, sex, and adornment.² In avant-garde architecture, heterosexual conventions of gender were enforced, and the feminine and all of its spatial associations continued to be understood as subordinate to the intellectual pursuits of heterosexual male values and experiences centered in public spaces.

Le Corbusier, in his 1920s essays for the avant-garde journal *L'Esprit Nouveau*, rails against the “sentimental hysteria” surrounding the “cult of the house.”³ He instead promotes the values of conventional heterosexual masculinity found in the industrial public sphere, taking inspiration from virile, “useful” engineers, and businessmen involved in the logic of “mathematical exactness” and “straight, hard thinking.”⁴ Working life and domestic life, public

and private, and masculine and feminine associations, are presented in oppositional binaries that were informed by heterosexual gendered expectations: the woman is sentimental, decorating the domestic, private world of the home with bric-a-brac, and the man is logical, involved in the unornamented public world of work. This opposition enforces conventional expectations of traditional femininity, continuing to relegate women to bodily domestic spaces in a hierarchical binary that soothed post-war concerns about the stability of strict gender divisions.⁵

Loos' essay “Ornament and Crime,” originally published in 1913, similarly asserts that a lack of ornamentation, championed by avant-garde functionalism, is a sign of intellectual strength.⁶ Where Le Corbusier contrasts the clean rationality of men with the sentimental hysteria of women, Loos defines masculine values of space in opposition to what he refers to as “degenerate aristocrats,” who were at this point in history, shorthand for homosexual men. For Loos, men who dress in silk, velvet, and lace, and design wallpaper patterns are anti-intellectual and anti-masculine because of their preoccupation with the ornamentation of the body and the home.⁷ These men, whose interests in the private spheres of the body and interior decoration, do not conform to heterosexual masculinity, so their destabilization of gender was a supposed threat to civilization. In avant-garde architecture, both women and non-heterosexual men are put in opposition to masculinity and its values in order to affirm heterosexual understandings of gender and its hierarchy.

An emphasis on the highly public world of heterosexual masculinity manifested in homes that were transparent and

spatially continuous. They were made of industrial materials, steel and glass, which both rejected domestic notions of embodied comfort and privacy.⁸ These were homes that were meant to realize the masculinity associated with the industrial world, while simultaneously stripping away the privacy in which non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality might be hiding.⁹ Architectural discourse and practice during the mass industrialization of the Machine Age reflected heterosexual male values and experiences.¹⁰ The removal of privacy and enforcement of strict notions of what masculinity should be, in complete opposition to anything associated with the feminine, makes avant-garde Modernist architecture inhospitable to both female and non-conforming queer bodies. These walls are meant to define bodies along strict, hierarchical binaries of gender and sexuality.

1 Christopher Reed, Introduction to *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, ed. Christopher Reed (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 7–8.
 2 Ibid., 8.
 3 Ibid., 9.
 4 Ibid.

5 Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime*, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1998), 174–175.
 6 Jasmine Rault, *Eileen Gray and the Design of Sapphic Modernity: Staying In* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 28.
 7 Loos, *Ornament and Crime*, 174–175.
 8 Reed, “Introduction,” 10.
 9 Lynne Walker, “Architecture and Reputation: Eileen Gray, Gender, and Modernism,” in *Women's Places: Architecture and Design 1860–1960*, eds. Brenda Martin and Penny Sparke (New York: Routledge, 2005), 96.

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However, Gray's architectural theory is antithetical to avant-garde architecture; Gray opposed the notions, championed by Le Corbusier and Loos, that the mind should dominate the body in the construction of space, and that the feminized interior world of decoration exists in subordinate opposition to the masculinized exterior world of architecture. As a queer woman, Gray questioned why "external architecture seems to have absorbed avant-garde architects at the expense of the interior."¹¹ She instead asserted that human needs and the well-being of a house's inhabitants were just as essential as theory, which "is not sufficient for life and does not answer to all its requirements."¹² In doing so, she rejected the Machine Age architectural values of heterosexual masculinity which set the mind and the body, the interior and the exterior, and architecture and decoration in a gendered hierarchy—resulting in a space that is built to affirm non-normative needs.

In the living-room of E.1027, the importance of the body and bodily experience in the space is highly visible (fig. 1). The chairs are plush, and their shapes cradle the body. The rugs are thick and textured, in pleasant tactile contrast to smooth tiles. The plush bed has a comfortable padded headboard, and is piled high with pillows and blankets. The importance of the bodily relationship to Gray's furniture is described by Jan Wils in a 1924 issue of the architecture magazine *Wendingen*: "this furniture is the result of a dream... which can only be experienced when one is in close contact with the body itself."¹³ The living-room is the first space that is entered into in E.1027, and when the curtains are open, it is visible from the outside. It is a public area of the house that can be used for hosting guests and business associates, yet, the most dominant piece of furniture is the bed, which has strong associations with the private feminine sphere because of how overtly associated with human bodily

¹¹ Caroline Constant, "E.1027: The Nonheroic Modernism of Eileen Gray," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53, no. 3 (1994): 265.
¹² *Ibid.*
¹³ *Ibid.*, 268.



Figure 1. Eileen Gray and Jean Badovici, E.1027, 1926–1929. Living room (Cap Martin, France). Courtesy of the Eileen Gray Archive, National Museum of Ireland.

needs it is, both in form and function. The padded headboard of the bed is part of the wall, and therefore part of the architecture. Where padding—ornamentation in service of bodily comforts—would be considered superfluous in avant-garde Modernist architecture, it now becomes an essential part of the architectural structure.

This material decadence, prioritizing experience of space, is an expression of gender nonconformity through sexual difference. The supposed 'degeneracy' of material and ornamental luxuries had no place in functionalist spaces because of their associations with homosexuality and its accompanying destabilization of gender.¹⁴ The rejection of this subjugation of the body by the mind, as seen in E.1027, was often capitalized on in spaces of female sexual dissidence.¹⁵ It is a room that can be for both work and pleasure, hosting and resting. These luxurious furnishings are also multifunctional, and can be rearranged to suit whichever way the room might be used, emphasizing how the body controls the purpose of the space, as opposed to the space determining how it is occupied and used by the body.

This room is multifunctional, rejecting conventional notions of gendered space. A heterosexual binary of the masculine sphere (public spaces, work, architecture) and the feminine sphere (private bodily spaces, the domestic, decoration) are dissolved in a space that does not adhere to these conventions of bodily occupation and experience of space. As seen with the dominant presence of the bed, the private, resting space of the body blends with public areas of the home where the supposedly intellectual realm of work can be pursued. This renunciation of spatial binaries, which would not accommodate the body of E.1027's queer female architect, create space in which the body's individualized needs, which may not comfortably fit into normative gendered spaces defined by heterosexuality, can be realized.

In E.1027, feminine and bodily spaces are not restricted to the private realms within the home. Privacy exists, but it is not a gendered aspect of the architecture. This consideration removes the restrictive connections between bodily, female spaces, and the private, interior world, while not exposing the entirety of the space in a way that would be hostile to a queer body. There is a

bathroom which is not visible from the living room, but is physically adjacent to it. The wall between them does not go all the way to the ceiling, and their proximity allows for sound to travel between them. The enmeshing of feminine space—the bed and the bathroom—into the public spaces of the home emancipates the feminine from presupposed binaries. The versatile needs of bodies are accommodated. Therefore, Gray's rejection of avant-garde Modernist principles, which disregard bodily needs and experiences, is evident.

Hidden within E.1027 is a boudoir (fig. 2). This is a space that is historically gendered as feminine, associated with the body because of its connotations of sexual pleasure.¹⁶ It is private, the feminine counterpart to intellectual masculine spaces such as the study.¹⁷ The boudoir of E.1027 maintains a protective privacy, but this privacy is not gendered, and allows for movement into the exterior world without the usual physical constraints of interior private spaces. An out-of-sight balcony and hidden staircase to the garden allow for privacy in the exterior world. This exterior privacy is hospitable to queer bodies, unlike the avant-garde architecture in which privacy of interior spaces were removed to impose sexual norms.¹⁸ Dissolving the binary between public and private is also a subversion of the gendered dichotomy of private, interior spaces. Here, the boudoir can be as much a place of work as it can be a place of rest and physical pleasure. The intellectually stimulating work activities of the studio desk space exist harmoniously alongside the bodily comforts of the fur-laden bed, and bathroom vanity corner. Again, the room is multifunctional and adaptable for the inhabitant's physical needs, mixing the supposedly public and masculine sphere of the mind and work with the feminine, bodily, private space of repose and adornment. The furnishings of this space and the architectural structure are interdependent: the bed folds out from the wall, and its headboard is a part of that wall while simultaneously being furniture, as it possesses lighting fixtures, storage compartments, and an extendable table top. The closet,

¹⁴ Rault, *Eileen Gray and the Design of Sapphic Modernity*, 28–29.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁶ Katerina Bonnevier, "A Queer Analysis of Eileen Gray's E.1027," in *Negotiating Domesticity: Spatial Productions of Gender in Modern Architecture*, eds. Hilde Heynen and Gülsum Baydar (New York: Routledge, 2005), 166.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Reed, "Introduction," 10.

Figure 2. Eileen Gray and Jean Badovici, E.1027, 1926–1929. Courtesy of the Eileen Gray and Jean Badovici (Cap Martin, France). Courtesy of the Boudoir with view of bed (Cap Martin, France). Eileen Gray Archive, National Museum of Ireland.

which stores bodily adornments, is built into the wall. Concerns for the physicality of the inhabitant inform the interior and its furnishings, and overlap with the supposedly pure structural realm of architecture. Privacy for the body is maintained without physical restriction, and intellectual activities do not require a lack of bodily comfort.

The hierarchical separations of the mind and body, architecture and decoration, work and home, public and private, exterior and interior, and their masculine and feminine connotations, are collapsed in this multifunctional and interdependent space. E.1027's boudoir space values the presence of an individual body, but is not marked feminine because of this association, and is not physically restricted from the exterior world, nor is it placed in opposition to intellectual space. The traditional gendered notions of a boudoir being restricted by its privacy within the interior domestic world, without space for work or access to the exterior world, are not reinforced by Gray in E.1027. This rejection of the categorizing gendered space creates a room where privacy and the elevation of physical experience does not preclude freedom of movement or intellectual stimulation.

The dissolved binaries of gendered space in E.1027 can be contrasted with Le Corbusier's ironically named Pavillion de l'Esprit Nouveau, first presented in the 1925 Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs. In photographic documentation, viewers are shown a study for the male occupant off of the dining room, a realm for the mind in the shared space of the home, featuring an oversized globe of the world that further tied this male space to the public. The boudoir for the expected lady of the house remains cloistered in a second-floor corner, off of the bedroom and bathroom, relegated to the private world of bodily functions. This woman's space is also in proximity to labeled children's bedrooms, further enforcing the heterosexual expectation of motherhood on the female. Spaces of work and rest are gendered and separated from each other. It is worth noting that there are several easily accessible photographs of the study, from different angles, but none at all of the boudoir space, which can only be seen indirectly through the floor plan. This Modernist, avant-garde space reinforces

Concerns for the physicality of the inhabitant inform the interior and its furnishings, and overlap with the supposedly pure structural realm of architecture.

traditional cultural norms surrounding bodies and their occupation of space. There are stable and strict gendered oppositions created between public and private; work and home; as well as mind and body, all physically incorporated into the structure of the pavillion, as well as persisted through the choice of which spaces were documented. This hierarchical binary subjugates the feminine, therefore devaluing the bodily experience of space. This is in stark contrast to the spaces of E.1027, in which privacy and exposure are not gendered, but changeable to suit the inhabitant, meeting alternative and individualized needs and removing hierarchical divisions between mind and body, and work and home.

As seen in Pavillion de l'Esprit Nouveau, avant-garde architecture reinforces cultural norms. The architecture has determined bodily experiences defined by hierarchical notions of heterosexual masculinity and femininity. The walls define the bodies.¹⁹ In E.1027, the non-normative identity of Gray has defined its walls, which then affirms that embodied identity and rejects normative expectations. The elevated treatment of the body in E.1027 is the result of the acknowledgment of this difference. Queer space, as expressed by Christopher Reed, is defined by the queer body's inhabitation and gaze.²⁰ The space created by Gray, as a queer woman, inherently rejects the hierarchy of heterosexual gendered binaries that place body below mind. Gray's architectural philosophy instead allows for the body to shape the space to its needs, which is remarked upon by Duchess Élisabeth de Gramont (1875–1954) in a 1922 issue of *Les Feuilles d'Art*: "She seeks to create interiors that conform to our existence, to the proportions of our rooms and to the aspirations of our sensibility."²¹ It is important to contextualize this quote with de Gramont's status as a queer woman. She was a writer and a partner of Natalie Barney, part of an intellectual and creative circle of women, which included Gray, who did not conform to expectations of gender and sexuality imposed on women. When she says that Gray's interiors conform to our existence, to the aspirations of our sensibility, the existence in question is that of the queer female body. How Gray approaches the body in architectural space is a break from the

treatment of bodies in spaces meant to affirm normative gender and sexuality.²² The value of bodily experience in E.1027, and the possibility for its architecture and furnishings to be altered based on those varied needs, is the result of Gray's experience as a queer woman.

Exploring E.1027 along the parameters of how gender and sexuality shape the relationship between the body and constructed space means that Le Corbusier's vandalism of it takes on a violent quality (fig. 3). How Le Corbusier's and Gray's relationship evolved from one of friendship to disdain on the part of Gray is well documented. This shift was a result of Le Corbusier's obsession with E.1027, his eventual unpermitted residence within the home after Gray fled from France's Nazi occupation, and the murals he created in E.1027's which defaced Gray's design and caused the architecture to be miscredited to him, in some cases even to this day.²³ In one of the murals titled *Three Women (Graffiti à Cap Martin)* (1938), Lynne Walker discusses Beatriz Colomina's explanation of the piece and notes that Le Corbusier identified the left figure as Gray—an overtly sexual depiction of a female body—the right figure as Jean Badovici (1893–1953) (the partner Gray was with when the house was designed), and in the middle, an unconceived "desired child."²⁴ The illustrations in the graffiti impose a rigid heterosexual male vision of the female body into a space that was created to reject expectations of bodily conformity. Le Corbusier depicted Gray's body as naked and distorted, shaped

This hierarchical binary subjugates the feminine, therefore devaluing the bodily experience of space.

¹⁹ Bonnevier, "A Queer Analysis of Eileen Gray's E.1027," 168.
²⁰ Christopher Reed, "Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment," *Art Journal* 55 no. 4 (1996): 64.
²¹ Constant, "E.1027: The Nonheroic Modernism of Eileen Gray," 267.
²² Bonnevier, "A Queer Analysis of Eileen Gray's E.1027," 167.
²³ Beatriz Colomina, "Battle lines: E.1027," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 39, no. 1 (1996): 95–105.
²⁴ Walker, "Architecture and Reputation: Eileen Gray, Gender, and Modernism," 96.



Figure 3.
Michelle Brown, "A mural by Le Corbusier under E.1027." Courtesy of Michelle Brown.

for the needs of a heterosexual man. The body in the graffiti is conformed to heterosexual expectations of traditional, feminine, and maternal womanhood: it is entwined with a man, their expected child between them. This vandalism seems symptomatic of how Gray's architectural vision is irreconcilable with the methodologies of Modernist avant-garde architecture, where the treatment of the body is meant to enforce heterosexuality and its hierarchical gender binary.²⁵

Attempts by contemporaries of Gray to define her work within the philosophy of the avant-garde erases the role of the body and its experiences of gender and sexuality in order to elevate the mind, as a way of adhering to avant-garde notions of genius in Modernist architecture.²⁶ Architect Jean Badovici and critic Louis Vauxcelles (1870–1943) are quoted in a 1924 issue of *Wendungen*, and describe Gray's work as "an architecture that expresses the strong will of modern man" and as "simple, straight-forward, and functional" respectively.²⁷ In contrast, Gray felt that avant-garde architectural theory was impoverished by an atrophy of sensuality, that internal vision should not dominate the senses.²⁸ Distinguishing Gray from this movement risks dismissing her from the architectural canon entirely and erasing her intellectual processes, reinforcing the gendered hierarchy of architecture and interior design. Placing Gray alongside the likes of Le Corbusier elevates her work within the hierarchies of the art historical canon, but identifying her with these avant-garde Modernists conflates the work of a queer woman with philosophy that suppresses and conforms bodies to normative sexuality and its associated binaries of gender.

Gray's treatment of the body in E.1027 can be aligned with the various creative endeavours of other queer female Modernists in her intellectual circle, such as Romaine Brooks, Eyre de Lanux, Evelyn Wyld, and many others. Their works affirmed individualized bodily experiences through a reimagining of space.²⁹ Decadence, expressed in Gray's work through the richness and bodily sensuality of materials like fur, lacquer, and lush textiles, has been used in the works of these women to accommodate the physical needs and pleasures that Gray criticized functionalist architecture for lacking. E.1027 stands alongside interior

designs, crafted furnishings, and visual arts that build affirmative spaces for queer female bodies.³⁰ Sapphic Modernity, as defined by Jasmine Rault, can be characterised by the connections between female non-heterosexuality and modernity as expressed through creative and intellectual work of queer women during the early 20th century.³¹ Sapphic Modernism acknowledges the bodily experiences that result from gender and sexuality as creative forces in Gray's work. This acknowledgement is not meant to slot Gray and E.1027 into any distinct category. As seen in the continuous rejection and dissolution of binaries in E.1027, and the unsuccessful attempts to by Badovici and Vauxcelles to define Gray's work, it is difficult to categorize Gray and her work. However, discussing Gray within the parameters of E.1027's relationship with the body in space highlights the fundamental dissimilarities between her theories and those of avant-garde architecture, dissimilarities which are not present in the work of Sapphic Modernists.

E.1027 values the experience of the body and its individualized needs in constructed space, in contrast with the architectural theories of the avant-garde Modernist movement. Avant-garde functionalism entirely disregards the body within space, through the use of hierarchical binaries that enforce normative sexuality and gender. In E.1027, the hierarchical, gendered binaries of architecture and decoration, public and private, interior and exterior, and mind and body are all dissolved. As a queer woman, Eileen Gray's body did not conform to the prescribed principles of avant-garde architecture, and the affirmation of bodily experiences in E.1027 acknowledges this difference.

²⁵ Rault, *Eileen Gray and the Design of Sapphic Modernity*, 28.
²⁶ Brent C. Brolin, "Appendix: Some Thoughts on the Modern Notion of 'Genius,'" in *Architectural Ornament: Banishment & Return* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 270–271.
²⁷ Constant, "E.1027: The Nonheroic Modernism of Eileen Gray," 268.
²⁸ *Ibid.*, 269.
²⁹ Rault, *Eileen Gray and the Design of Sapphic Modernity*, 30.
³⁰ Jasmine Rault, "Designing Sapphic Modernity: Fashioning Spaces and Subjects," in *Fashion, Interior Design and the Contours of Modern Identity*, eds. John Potvin and Alla Myzeley (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 193.
³¹ *Ibid.*, 185–86.

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ERWIN WÜRME.

L'HOMME
AGISSANT

RÉFLÉCHI
OU MACHINAL?

Deconstruction: “If a word signifies, it signifies by differing, and what it differs from becomes a trace - an inevitable, absent part of its presence.”

Ethics demonstrated in geometrical order,
by Erwin Wurm
Lehmann Gallery, New-York—Mai 2017

Écho aux sculptures éphémères des années 80.

Célébration des 20 ans de la première présentation officielle de One Minute Sculptures de l'artiste autrichien Erwin Wurm. Sa signature.

Au détour des pièces blanches de la galerie new-yorkaise, se dévoile un corpus d'œuvres qui explore encore une fois l'objet « anodin », l'installation et le corps performant l'inédit, l'absurde...



Fig.1
Erwin Wurm, *Ethics demonstrated in geometrical order*. Vue de l'installation, Lehmann Maupin, New York. Courtoisie de l'artiste et Lehmann Maupin, New York et Hong Kong. Photo: Elisabeth Bernstein..

Un objet, ou plutôt un meuble juché sur un socle rectangulaire blanc et bas. Une ronde-bosse?¹ Puis, on doute. La pièce de mobilier est préparée. À quelle fin ?

Sur ce mobilier un trou incongru, visiblement surdimensionné pour faire partie d'un design utilitaire, a été, on le croit, ajouté ou plutôt soustrait par l'artiste sur la surface supérieure droite du simili-buffet.



Fig.2
Erwin Wurm, *Head TV*, 2016. Vue de l'installation, Lehmann Maupin, New York. Courtoisie de l'artiste et Lehmann Maupin, New York et Hong Kong. Photo: Eva Würdinger..

On se rapproche.
À quelques centimètres de l'ouverture, sous forme de dessin à l'encre blanche et d'inscription éponyme de l'œuvre, on retrouve la représentation du même ameublement ainsi que celle d'un individu qui se contorsionne pour introduire sa tête dans la surface ajourée. Pour obtenir une posture similaire, si le compte est bon, le visiteur doit :
1. Faire face au côté droit du meuble ;
2. Passer sa tête par l'ouverture et
3. Avoir les mains sur les genoux.

1 Ronde-Bosse : “Dans le langage courant, une ronde-bosse est souvent définie comme une sculpture « dont on peut faire le tour ». L'expression « ronde-bosse » associe d'ailleurs au mot « bosse », équivalent ancien de sculpture, un adjectif qui implique que l'œuvre ainsi qualifiée est un volume fermé autour duquel un circuit est possible.” Jean-René Gaborit, « RONDE-BOSSE, sculpture », *Encyclopædia Universalis* [en ligne], consulté le 6 février 2019. URL: <http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/ronde-bosse-sculpture/>

Fig. 3.
Erwin Würm, *Head TV*, 2016 (detail). Courtesy de l'artiste et Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong.
Photo: Eva Würdinger.



Les gens défilent, encouragés à imiter cette inscription le plus fidèlement possible.
Mais analysons plus en détails le dispositif choisi.

Le rangement ou meuble télévisuel, ici détourné, est caractérisé par un style iconique du milieu du vingtième siècle ou de manière plus familière « vintage », rappelant une conception potentiellement européenne ou hypothétiquement scandinave. Posé sur un socle, l'objet ménager, tout comme le touriste de galerie qui s'y penche de manière éphémère, semble être délimité par un espace et une temporalité contiguë et implicite. Celle d'une œuvre, de l'Art.

Et alors?
Des questions se posent ...

Il y a l'individu libre, puis une invitation, une consigne un peu idiote, donc un choix conscient, celui d'adopter une position stupide, cinoque, puis de les ancrer dans une temporalité concrète par un cliché. Puisqu'il se laisse manipuler par une entité extérieure, l'artiste, est-ce alors réellement le visiteur qui peut être qualifié de ridicule? En extirpant de leur contexte familial ces articles du quotidien, et en mettant en scène des interactions loufoques, Würm chercherait-il à nous libérer des rituels et gestes acquis?²

Et ici? En nous invitant à faire fi des convenances habituelles pour en contrepartie s'assimiler à un autre système de règles, le sien, l'artiste se jouerait-il en toute connaissance de cause de notre volonté, cette capacité à se déterminer de manière intentionnelle, ainsi que de la dignité de ses visiteurs?

(Hypothèse) L'homme, ou dans ce cas le créateur, sait ainsi, comme de fameux dictateurs, Mao, Hitler... projeter ces idéologies sur les masses via l'objet iconique, le geste ou la simple représentation gribouillée; N'est-il pas, sous le couvert de l'amusement et du ridicule, en train de démontrer l'effrayante fragilité de notre sens critique? De nous aliéner au lieu de nous émanciper et de nous divertir?

Il y a l'individu libre, puis une invitation, une consigne un peu idiote, donc un choix conscient, celui d'adopter une position stupide, cinoque, puis de les ancrer dans une temporalité concrète par un cliché.

² Audrey Watchs, « In new exhibition, Erwin Würm uses mid-century furniture to subvert your free will », *The Architect's Newspaper* (AN), <https://archpaper.com/2017/03/erwin-wurm-ethics-geometrical-or-der/#gallery-0-slide-1>.

Derrière le scrupule de cette mise en scène, le spectateur s'émancipe alors de son plein gré de sa lucidité.

01. Portons attention aux alentours. Le meuble et le commun. Le statut de l'icône.

L'enfilade danoise (scandinave) est entourée dans cette exposition de mobiliers du milieu du siècle, des pièces de design d'Alvar Aalto, de Jan Andersen et de Terence Harold (T.H Robsjohn-Gibblings) pour la plupart acquis à un encan privé de Chicago.

Aujourd'hui, tels des « égéries » des magazines d'intérieurs et collatéralement de nos aménagements personnels, ces objets « modernes » ont vieilli et sortent désormais de la normalité pour acquérir le statut symbolique d'icône du design moderne. Ils arborent ainsi une esthétique et une histoire particulières issues de cette époque où l'architecture, comme le design industriel, avait pour objectif central de réunir le beau et l'utile ; et ce, en parallèle d'une recherche technique visant à améliorer la qualité et intégrer les méthodes de production industrielle. Obsession de l'histoire moderne, technique et formelle, leur usage, bien que similaire à celui des enfants du design contemporain, est donc dominé par une qualité unique et précieuse que seul le temps apporte³.

Ironiquement, ce goût du spécifique et du « vintage » n'en est plus un lorsqu'il s'agit de l'image dominante véhiculée.

On se demande comment un simple ottoman peut se vendre aujourd'hui pour la « modique » somme de 4000\$, alors que ces designers reconnus prônaient l'importance de concevoir suivant des préceptes de fonctionnalité et d'accessibilité? Il faut ainsi croire qu'au-delà du souci esthétique, le charme nouveau du processus industriel a fait basculer leurs projets, dès leur époque, d'un public cible à un autre, de la classe ouvrière à la société mondaine.

Par contre, n'oublions pas que le prestige s'acquiert

³ Ásdís Ólafsdóttir, Le mobilier d'Alvar Aalto dans l'espace et dans le temps: la diffusion internationale du design, 1920-1940, Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998, 224-225.

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soit par la propagande, ou dans le cas présent, par les médias de masse. Icône de la consommation et du prestige, le décor est une invention en forte effervescence durant l'ère industrielle, plus précisément au début du 20e siècle. Ces meubles doivent ainsi leur nom et leur « valeur » ajoutée, leur forme si caractéristique, au manufacturier de l'époque, aux Herman Miller, Inc. (1905), au Thonet (1853) et à toutes les publicités, aux catalogues d'articles et aux expositions dont ils ont été les organisateurs.

Head Tv et ce buffet. Ce n'est pas le goût particulier d'une classe ou d'un individu, mais un goût commun à une société et à une époque. Une envie généralisée de se rapprocher d'un idéal glorifié dont Wurm lui-même se dit victime. Jouant des archétypes et du goût collectif, il tend ici à lever le voile sur la poésie du processus industriel, de nos rituels inconscients⁴.

En plaçant notre corps à la place du téléviseur, de l'outil de divertissement, Wurm étudie le geste commun, primaire, à la fois engagé et sensible avec une réflexion sur notre quotidien et sur l'expérience de l'objet. Il y a ainsi décortication de l'usuel. Dans cet acte performatif, le mobilier ne possède alors plus l'utilité entendue par son titre, et cette absence de caractère fonctionnel force à constater sa charge esthétique, son statut stylistique, et à le voir pour ce qu'il est également, un choix décoratif influencé.

02. Réfléchissons à notre performance. Aliénation ou divertissement? Sens critique et conscience.

Définissons.

Aliénation : Processus par lequel un individu devient logiquement aliéné, et par aliéné, on sous-entend étranger à ses propres envies et/ou besoins. On parle d'une perte d'authenticité. D'un état de dépossession de soi. D'une privation du libre arbitre ; lorsque les fondements essentiels d'un groupe ou d'un être sont supplantés au profit des fantaisies d'un autre, d'une entité supposée « idéale » et dominante. Un assujettissement imposé ou volontaire.

Divertissement : Action de se divertir ou de se distraire. S'amuser en se détournant de ces occupations (activités quotidiennes) et préoccupations (pensées) à l'aide d'une activité ou action quelconque, propre aux envies et plaisir de l'individu. Passe-temps. Appropriation de son temps libre à une action personnelle apportant le plus souvent plénitude et contentement.

Ainsi. Au centre de l'installation.

Dans une position post-performative, la dimension « aliénante » apportée par la consigne gribouillée, semble au premier regard superficielle puisque le spectateur s'y soumet de son plein gré et avec un certain enthousiasme. Pourtant, la qualité saugrenue et amusante de l'ordre inscrit n'en efface pas moins son caractère aliénant. Par le principe de l'instruction, invité, l'individu exécute une action totalement extrinsèque à sa conscience individuelle. Il suspend alors son intégrité, en l'espace de seulement 60 secondes⁵. Le divertissement en amont de l'action est donc bien réel, mais n'est pas transposable dans l'action même. Le laps de temps durant lequel notre corps est en position performative et statique est un moment où nous perdons une qualité essentielle à tout « divertissement », notre liberté intrinsèque. Notre temps est alors au service des envies de l'artiste et non plus des nôtres.

Le laps de temps durant lequel notre corps est en position performative et statique est un moment où nous perdons une qualité essentielle à tout « divertissement », notre liberté intrinsèque.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Stephan Berg, « The ridiculous human tragedy », Erwin Wurm: Gurke. Cologne: DuMont, 2009, 46-54.

Le paradoxe de cette décision consciente. Une fatalité? Une conséquence de la complexité de la psyché humaine telle qu'explicitée par Sigmund Freud? Pour le penseur, la conscience n'est pas à la base de tous nos actes mentaux. Dans son dossier « The Unconscious » tiré de l'ouvrage *General Psychological Theory : Papers on Metapsychology*, Freud argue que certains phénomènes ne peuvent être attribués qu'à un état d'inconscience et/ou d'une mémoire latente. Il y affirme que « experience shows that we understand very well how to interpret in other people (that is, how to fit into their claim of mental events) the same acts which we refuse to acknowledge as being mental in ourselves⁶ ». Ainsi, discerner les signes de toutes pulsions ou activités inconscientes et sous-jacentes chez soi demanderait un recul faramineux sur soi qu'il est beaucoup plus facile de projeter sur autrui.

Voilà un point important de l'œuvre de Wurm. La durée minimale de l'œuvre, comme notre psyché, nous induirait à croire que parce que nous avons consciemment suspendu notre libre arbitre, nous sommes encore dans une posture de divertissement et de contrôle, alors qu'au contraire, ce sont 60 secondes inconsciemment aliénées, transies sous le joug de l'artiste.

03. Regardons aussi les autres. Psychologie sociale. Le spectateur non émancipé.

Il y a certainement une distinction entre le voir et le faire. C'est d'ailleurs cette séparation entre l'œuvre et le regardeur que semble abolir Wurm en prêtant au visiteur une place si capitale au centre même du podium et de l'exposition.

Le spectateur contemporain est ainsi confondu devant une œuvre qui ne lui demande plus seulement de raisonner, mais de s'engager dans celle-ci sans aucune distanciation entre lui et la pièce. Mais cette stratégie active domine-t-elle réellement l'expérience du spectateur? Le philosophe français Jacques Rancière était le premier dans son écrit *Le spectateur émancipé* à reconnaître que c'est « la volonté de supprimer la distance qui crée la distance », car « être spectateur n'est pas la condition passive qu'il nous faudrait changer

⁶ Sigmund Freud, « The Unconscious (1915) », *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology*, Collier Books, 1963, 120.

en activité », en Homme agissant, « mais notre situation normale »⁷.

Il n'y aura ainsi pas d'inégalité de position entre celui qui regarde et celui qui fait. Vouloir uniquement effacer cette séparation par l'action serait aussi discutable que le refoulement de conscience freudien. Lorsque le visiteur regarde un autre performeur, il n'est pas inactif puisqu'il analyse, critique, réfléchit et recompose les éléments à sa portée. Encore une fois, dans l'œuvre de Wurm, sa plus grande part d'infirmité est lorsqu'il exécute les instructions. Là est son plus grand drame. Une émancipation du spectateur passerait véritablement par « l'affirmation de sa capacité de voir ce qu'il voit et de savoir quoi en penser et quoi en faire » plutôt que par l'action elle-même⁸. Là réside la nuance.

Alors que Wurm critique avec ce corpus le pouvoir du travail, de l'argent, de la publicité ou de la consommation sur le choix conscient de l'individu⁹, Rancière, lui, exprime également des craintes face à une vendetta « révolutionnaire », voulant de façon utopique arracher les regardeurs à leurs cavernes platoniciennes par l'action, la révolte. Puisque ce ne sont pas nécessairement eux les « aliénés », et que de vouloir répondre au désordre des masses en pointant du doigt l'excès d'images n'est pas toujours des choix des plus judicieux, l'ordre dominant la foule n'est alors pas nécessairement celui qui produit les images, mais celui qui les dicte¹⁰. L'acteur qui exécute le script ou suit les instructions est celui qui est pris au jeu, alors que le spectateur est probablement le plus apte à en être conscient.

...58,59,60.

Le moment de retirer sa tête du mobilier.
De se redresser.
De descendre du podium.

Metteur en scène ou artiste? Würm détourne bel et bien dans cette œuvre autant l'objet que l'humain. Mais quel que soit la notice, le résultat est le même dans cette exposition : un corps et un esprit contraints à s'adapter, s'aliéner, à se perdre dans une avenue non-naturelle.

L'expérience est singulière.

À la fois une vision critique et utopique de l'art et de la société, la performance courte et éphémère touche divers enjeux liés à une philosophie mais aussi à une esthétique de l'émancipation, ou plutôt de la perte de soi dans les désirs de l'autre. Mais n'oublions pas que cette fois, après 60 secondes d'action, nous redevenons spectateurs. Qu'une dimension humoristique, absurde et divertissante demeure. Que rien n'est jamais total et que c'est cette limite si poreuse, si rapidement et facilement franchie qui trouble et étonne. Entre le rire et le silence ; la réflexion et la transe.

⁷ Jacques Rancière, *Le spectateur émancipé*, Paris : La Fabrique Éditions, 2008, 25-26.
⁸ Ibid., 26.
⁹ Peter Zuspan, *Erwin Wurm Interview*, Museo Magazine, 2008. <http://www.museomagazine.com/following/museo/ERWIN-WURM>
¹⁰ Jacques Rancière, *Le spectateur émancipé*, 28-30.

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Alicia Turgeon s’intéresse à la matérialité, le procédé technique et la perception cognitive de la forme et son espace. Elle poursuit par ailleurs une majeure en sculpture à l’Université Concordia. Précédemment, elle a aussi étudié en histoire et civilisation, ainsi qu’en design de l’environnement. Dans l’optique d’investir le milieu de l’art de Montréal, elle a également complété des stages au Centre Clark, à la Galerie-Boutique Bref, ainsi qu’au centre de production d’Eastern Bloc, et ce en plus d’être chargée Aux Expositions pour le Festival Art Matters 2019. Ses recherches actuelles portent sur la réutilisation, la restructuration et l’usinage de matériaux artistiques inhabituels ou délaissés.

UNPACKING HOME

IN

HANNAH

CLAUS'

'UNSETTLEMENTS'

How does one define the home? The concept of a home is nuanced and complex, as it is deeply intertwined with identity and belonging. It can be understood both physically and conceptually; it is a term that holds a vast range of connotations and definitions. As Elizabeth Kalbfleisch states, “home can be understood variously as a building, a style, a form of representation, an ideology, a material object, a symbolic representation.”¹ Being deeply tied to identity formation and sense of belonging, the home is inseparable from the urgent issues of refugee crises, migration, colonialism, and assimilation, therefore making it highly politicized. Rich with symbolism and significance, the idea of a home is potent for interpretation, exploration and consideration, as is fabricated by artist Hannah Claus. The house becomes a recurring motif of home in her body of work, specifically in *Unsettlements* (2004). Claus is a multidisciplinary artist based in Thiotia:ke/Montreal, of Kanien’kehá:ka/Mohawk (a nation of the sovereign Haudenosaunee people) and English ancestry. Her body of work is conceptual and ephemeral in form, exploring her own indigeneity as it manifests in various realms.² *Unsettlements* is a work that uses these ideas in conjunction with the motif of home in order to address various components of personal and communal identity. By integrating designs from both European and Indigenous histories, Claus explores how the home is intricately intertwined with histories of belonging and expressions of the self.

Unsettlements is a gallery installation made up of several components, predominantly an arrangement of miniature house forms (fig. 1, fig. 2). The uniform, simple house structure is repeated in the installation, mirroring what may be considered a ‘traditional’ Western idea of a house. These miniature homes are decorated with wallpaper designs sourced from the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, UK—a museum developed through histories of colonial accumulation. On the wallpaper, in the form of pin-pricked holes, are traditional Haudenosaunee beading patterns. These details are

1 Elizabeth Kalbfleisch, “Women, Home, and Home in Contemporary Canada: An Aboriginal Art,” *Frontiers* 33, no. 3 (2012): 1.
 2 Hannah Claus, “Hannah Claus,” <https://www.hannahclaus.com/>, accessed October 20, 2018.



Figure 1.
 Hannah Claus, *Unsettlements*, 2004. Screen print on kozo, linden wood, glue, seed beads, pre-existing quilt, infrared sensors, electrical components, circuit, end-light fibre optics. Photo courtesy of Hannah Claus.

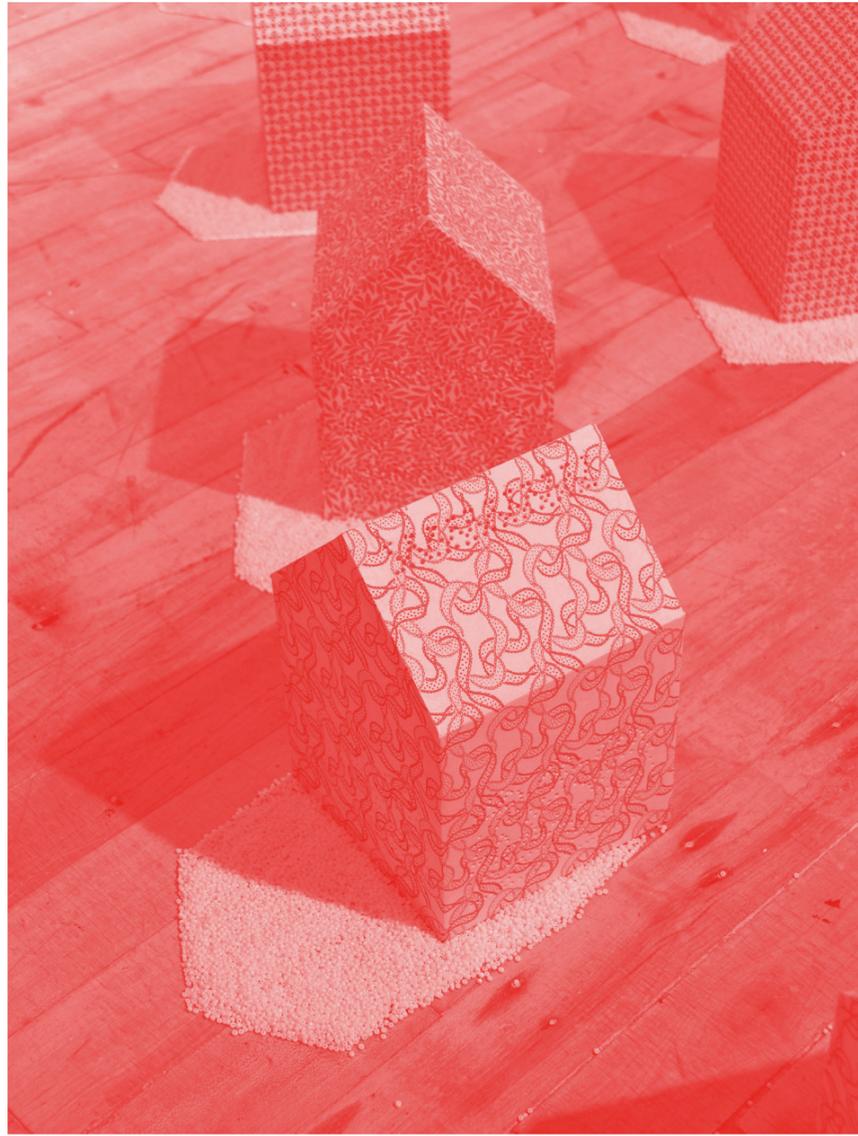


Figure 2.
Hannah Claus, *Unsettlements* (detail), 2004. Screen print on kozo, linden wood, glue, seed beads, pre-existing quilt, infrared sensors, electrical components, circuit, end-light fibre optics.
Photo courtesy of Hannah Claus.

almost invisible, being overwhelmed by the larger, bolder designs of the wallpaper, so that the miniscule pin-pricks require the viewer's careful and committed attention. This mode of viewing is vital to appreciate the contextual subtleties that resonate throughout the installation. The houses trail across the floor, leading the viewer to a pink and blue quilt. Woven into the quilt are end-light fibre optics evoking the beading motifs which disrupt the wallpaper on the houses. Whereas the pin-pricks let light in, the quilt casts light out.

Through the subtle incorporation of these cross-cultural design details, *Unsettlements* addresses greater issues of political and social history. Specifically, it engages in a conversation around the presence and effects of colonialism and assimilation. Perhaps most poignantly, *Unsettlements* takes up the act of reclaiming the home as a method of decolonization. This gesture is initiated in the title of the work, provoking viewers to reconsider what "unsettlements" represents in the context of settler-Indigenous relations. The title could be read as a reference to settler homes, yet un-settlements describe the undoing of settler home structures, both physically and conceptually. The word "unsettle" denotes uneasiness or disruption. This uneasiness is vital to the process of decolonization which necessitates disruption of colonial order. The title effectively alludes to the major themes and points of discussion within *Unsettlements*.

Through the motif of "home," which frames the identities present in Claus' installation, the personal and the communal are brought together. "[H]ome is, an elastic concept, home encompasses more than the domestic sphere's historicity allows [...] The concept of home, also relates to identity, as narratives of identity correspond to narratives of home."³ As art historian Elizabeth Kalbfleisch states in her text "Women, House, and Home in Contemporary Canadian Aboriginal Art," each individual component of Claus' installation holds a symbolism and significance that further ties into the whole of the work and its focus on cross-cultural identity in a country with an ongoing colonial history. Many components make reference to European and Indigenous cultures and histories,

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³ Kalbfleisch, "Women, House, and Home," 21.

However, the lack of characteristics is a misnomer. The seemingly innocent shape of the house holds imperial and colonial influences in the very structure of its walls. It is not a natural evolution that something as complex and culturally specific as the structure of a home can be viewed as neutral or generic; it is politically charged.

and most importantly, the crossover between both identities that reflects the artist's own heritage and experience. As the title *Unsettlements* suggests, these histories and identities are not quite at peace. The histories of colonialism and imperialism in so-called Canada include genocide, assimilation, and decades of mistreatment and inequality against Indigenous peoples, though the scarring legacies of colonialism affect countless other international locations where its governments and settlements were imposed. Through the motif of the home and the materiality of the installation, which combines both European and Indigenous components, these complexities are confronted.

The core of the critique within *Unsettlements* is developed by the miniature wallpapered houses. The house's form has no apparent distinctive characteristics, it is a simple geometric box with a peaked roof. The lack of a clearly distinguishable identity, may simply point to the changeability of the concept of home, if the form of this house is to be considered as neutral. However, the lack of characteristics is a misnomer. The seemingly innocent shape of the house holds imperial and colonial influences in the very structure of its walls. It is not a natural evolution that something as complex and culturally specific as the structure of a home can be viewed as neutral or generic; it is politically charged. As Kalbfleisch writes: "The single family house [...] is haunted by empire; representationally, it remains a potent symbol of assimilation."⁴ Therefore, this architecture is not only symbolic of colonial settlements, but also efforts to assimilate Indigenous peoples through reservation systems, put in place as a way of structurally imposing Western culture and beliefs into Indigenous communities.

Of course, these houses are only aesthetically plain in form. They are completely covered in wallpaper and beading patterns, immersed in visual culture. The Victoria & Albert Museum wallpaper pattern is what the viewer sees first as they look at the miniature houses; it is only upon closer observation that the traditional Haudenosaunee beading patterns come into focus. The subtlety of this detail can be read as symbolic of colonial, assimilationist policies,

⁴ Kalbfleisch, "Women, House, and Home," 5.

with settler patterns seemingly overriding Indigenous designs. The wallpaper pattern comes from the Victorian Era (1837–1901), which has particularly potent significance for its investment in acts of colonization. Towards the end of the Victorian Era in England, the Reservation Era (1880–) in Canada was beginning. This period was rife with pressure and action to make Indigenous peoples conform and assimilate to Victorian expectations and ways of life. As measures of assimilation to colonialist expectations and values were heightened, this precipitated policies and actions which led to a diminishing of the traditional territories, compromising the ways of life of Indigenous communities.⁵ By using a wallpaper design that is aesthetically tied to colonialist values, Claus summons this specific time in history through the artwork and its materiality. She conjures an important conversation between the Victorian wallpaper and the Haudenosaunee beading patterns. A reminder of the project of assimilation, which irreversibly affected Indigenous communities, is unquestionably present within these designs. Components of Indigenous culture, craft, and history are almost invisible here, overrun by an adamant European presence, evoking a stirring metaphor for the history of assimilation in Canada. It is necessary to also consider that despite the near-invisibility of the Haudenosaunee beading patterns in contrast to the overwhelming Victorian wallpaper designs, both are present, and the dialogue they engage in is personal to the artist.

As mentioned before, these designs are not free-standing choices, but specifically drawn from the artist's own heritage—English and Mohawk. Evocations of these identities interact powerfully in Claus' work as not only historical and political narratives, but also as her own representations and connections to her community, culture, and heritage. Within Haudenosaunee communities, the practice of beading is a significant tradition and is primarily the craft of women. In a sense, as described by Kalbfleisch, "Claus [...] stitches herself to this older generation of female [Haudenosaunee] artists. [...] Claus links an [Haudenosaunee] artistic activity [...] with relations to settlers."⁶

The presence of beading also cleverly draws on both settler and

Indigenous histories as this is a practice with a shared past, foundational to Canada's earliest economy of trade. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beading became a source of income for the nation as a "cross-cultural tourist trade."⁷ At that point, beadwork was transported from a traditional cultural craft into a consumable commodity whose target audience was settler tourists with both financial means and purchase power. Again, therein lies a connection between these two different identities. The history of beading is couched within the history and context of colonialism. With the arrival of colonizing European settlers, the beading practices which existed in Haudenosaunee communities were transformed. This was, at first, simply because of the cultural influence of contact itself, but eventually from the pressures of assimilation. Traditional materials such as quills, feathers, and natural pigments, were replaced with glass beads, trade cloth, and new designs introduced by settler contact. As author Carmen Robertson explains, "beads, then, operate as floating signifiers for the land, narrative traditions, and ceremony, but also for how colonial presence cross-pollinates to create meaning."⁸ As Robertson remarks,

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⁵ Ibid., 5.
⁶ Ibid., 5.
⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Carmen Robertson, "Land and Beaded Identity: Shaping Art Histories of Indigenous Women of the Flatland," *RACAR: Revue D'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review* 42, no. 2 (2017): 16.

beading patterns can be interpreted as a material sign of cultural change.

In Robertson's article "Land and Beaded Identity: Shaping Art Histories of Indigenous Women of The Flatland," she explores the histories and meanings within the practice of bead work made by Indigenous women, noting: "An intergenerational relationship emerges between them, one that reveals how epistemological understandings of place, and specifically the land, serve to facilitate interplays of generational, cultural, artistic, and colonial narratives that resituate the beaded expressions."⁹ There are ties between beading and the land, the land itself holding inexplicable importance to Indigenous identity formation in so-called Canada. To this effect, Robertson shares the following quote from Cree activist Lewis Cardinal: "The land is paramount for all Indigenous societies. Their relationship to that land, their experience on that land shapes everything that is around them... land is another word for place, environment, your reality, the space you're in."¹⁰ Adding to this, Robertson writes, "[i]t is one thing to say that land exerts itself in the making of beadwork [...] but it is another to fully engage the concept of the land as an active, embodied aesthetic presence in the beadwork [...] It is inextricably linked to the notion of stillness associated with beading."¹¹ This valuation of land enlivens *Unsettlements*, furthering its connections to the reclamation of both space and identity as an important successor to the legacy of colonialism and assimilation.

In a very literal sense, home and housing are situated in the physical landscape—especially in terms of borders, nations, and boundaries—and land is inherently intertwined with notions of identity and home. Taking this into consideration, home and land are hard to divide. These ideas of physical space, and its significance, emerge in the artwork. The collection of houses and the quilt are spread out, covering the floor of the exhibition space and asserting a presence which demands attention. In her text "On Resonance in Contemporary Site-Specific Projection Art," Shana MacDonald addresses the physicality of art, and how this effectively translates the artist's message to the viewer. She argues that, "by fostering

intersubjective engagements, this work [–site-specific projection art as a genre–] produces resonant spaces that confront a range of marginalized discourses and histories. This is one area where contemporary art productively counters the flattening of the political and promotes a sense of connectivity."¹² *Unsettlements* commands recognition and acknowledgement from the viewer by taking up space, which in itself can be viewed as an act of reclamation. The installation creates a platform from which Indigenous identity, history, and art practices can be heard and considered, while also physically occupying the environment of a nation with a potent history of assimilation and displacement.

The quilt, like the beading patterns, references women's long-standing artistic practices. The artist explains that "the quilt refers to parallel activity, accomplished by women as a communal activity. End-light fibre optics are integrated to the quilt, so that the light appears as beading motifs within its surface."¹³ Beading is present again, as Claus explains, through the lighting. This creates a cohesion amongst the installation's individual components, while underscoring the importance of beading to *Unsettlements*. Both beading and quilting are mediums traditionally tied to women. It is through these mediums that Claus invokes the presence and histories of women. Specifically, Claus presences the art practices of Indigenous women

Both beading and quilting are mediums traditionally tied to women. It is through these mediums that Claus invokes the presence and histories of women.

⁹ Robertson, "Land and Beaded Identity," 14.
¹⁰ Lewis Cardinal quoted in Robertson, "Land and Beaded Identity," 14.
¹¹ Carmen, "Land and Beaded Identity," 14.
¹² Shana MacDonald, "On Resonance in Contemporary Site-Specific Projection Art," *Performance Research* 19, no. 6 (2014): 64.
¹³ Claus, "Hannah Claus."

since time immemorial, throughout settler-colonial history and, finally, in contemporary practices. Robertson explains how use of craft practices and mediums can combat Western and settler-colonial perceptions and definitions of art. "Like quillwork and beading," Robertson writes, "sewing in the history of Indigenous arts resists criteria founded on [Western] categorization."¹⁴

The inclusion of beading and quilting, with their ties to both indigeneity and womanhood, and the space that the installation takes up physically functions to engage in a larger conversation around decolonization which considers how art can be used as a tool to that end. As discussed in the curatorial statement for the Ottawa Art Gallery's 2012 exhibition *Decolonize Me*, curator and Inuk scholar Heather Igloliorte states the importance of claiming Indigenous identity and refusing to accept tropes that erase the specificity of Indigenous experience and histories.¹⁵ In the same vein, Mohawk-Jewish art historian Steven Loft argues that in working to further decolonize art history, it is pertinent to also build an Indigenous art history that produces "self-defining narratives of art and culture."¹⁶ Heeding Igloliorte and Loft's calls, this installation is Claus' personal and "self-defining" presence within art.¹⁷

Through thoughtful use of material and design, *Unsettlements* enters into a larger narrative of decolonizing art while the artwork ultimately originates from the intimacy of her personal identity. It is as profoundly personal as it is evocative on a national scale of Indigenous-settler relations and politics within the arts. Not only does *Unsettlements* address the history of the Canadian nation—which is a history of colonialism, assimilation, and displacement—it also reclaims space and, if only in a conceptual way, land. Claus explores her own heritage of Indigenous and European histories, while also physically creating, and taking up, space with the installation of the work. Though the designs are drawn in part from a European museum, Claus also uses her platform to showcase traditional Indigenous practices of beading—however subtly they appear, their presence is nonetheless powerful. In addition to the quilt, these signify the presence of Indigenous women and their personal and communal traditional practices, which were and are profoundly affected by colonialism, but not lost. First

influenced by contact and subsequently by the constraints felt under the pressure of assimilation, these practices are still strong and evokes a sense of endurance, through their presentation in Claus' work. With an effective and thoughtful use of material, design, and occupation of space, Claus' *Unsettlements* questions and explores the complexities within her own identities as well as the colonial histories of the land she is indigenous to—the land that is her home. Ultimately, *Unsettlements* encapsulates just how complicated the realities of a concept so deceptively simple as 'home' can be.

¹⁴ Robertson, "Land and Beaded Identity," 19.
¹⁵ Anne Whitelaw, "Decolonize Me" by Heather Igloliorte, Brenda L. Croft, and Steve Loft (Review), *Great Plains Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 287–288.
¹⁶ Ibid.
¹⁷ Ibid.

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HAPTIC PROCESSES

AND
DIGITAL

IN CRAFT

MEDIA
PRODUCTION

Our skin mediates our body's engagement with our environment, so it is through contact with the material surfaces of our surroundings that we interpret our world.¹ This mediation can be understood as haptic—that is, relating to sensorial experience associated with the touch of skin, actions of the hand, and wider somatic or bodily experiences.² Focusing on the hand-labour inherent to craft, craftspeople frequently draw on the rhetoric of haptic engagements, as they wield the material forces of the objects with which they work, whether carving, weaving, or sculpting. However, where the tactile production of craft emphasizes the individuality present in hand-made products, the advancements of mass-produced digital technology reveals a continuum in the creation of haptic engagements, which are historically rooted in craft-making practices. Despite these diverging forms of production, craft and digital media have become intertwined with one another through their reliance on haptic processes and responses, with both mediums drawing on the user's awareness of their own bodily interaction with the materials and objects at hand. Through the necessity of tactile engagements in processes of production, there is an opportunity for alternate experiences of tactile consumption to occur. By defining the ways in which haptics plays a role in craft production, one can achieve a greater understanding of how software development functions as a form of mediated craft production. Through an examination of craft's historical influence on software development, most notably from the Jacquard loom and the current language used in digital computation practices, the debt owed to textile production is proven to be considerable. It is through this haptic connection between both disciplines that one can understand how notions of 'authenticity' within craft production are drawn from the maker's

1 Mark Paterson, "On haptic media and the possibilities of a more inclusive interactivity," *New Media & Society* 9, no. 10 (2017): 1547.
2 *Ibid.*, 1545.

direct bodily engagement with the materiality of the object, whereas mediated haptic engagements enabled by digital interfaces do not garner the same badge of authenticity.

In an article title "On Haptic Media and the Possibilities of a More Inclusive Interactivity," published in 2017 for *New Media & Society*, Mark Paterson defines haptics as an umbrella term for a broad sensorial modality, encompassing "kinaesthesia, proprioception and the vestibular sense," all of which function alongside our sense of touch.³ Although these senses are invisible due to their organs' location within the body, their roles are vitally felt: kinaesthesia relates to one's sensation of movement within the limbs, proprioception is the sense that perceives one's orientation and positioning within space, and the vestibular sense allows for spatial orientation and balance.⁴ Operating from a compound of sensations, one's own awareness of "kinaesthetic elements" and "muscular effort" within haptic processes draws from a set of "feedback mechanisms known as haptic interfaces which engage the user's muscular stretch receptors, and therefore limb or finger movement, in addition to skin pressure."⁵ In this sense, proprioceptive and kinaesthetic elements are "allied to a more general sense of touch," recognized

as being a part of the larger 'haptic system,' but also defined by a "more general bodied perception of the environment."⁶ Through this explanation, we see that haptics does not only rely on one's sense of touch, as it spans across one's bodily surface through aspects of cutaneous pressure and mechanoreceptors, one's bodily interior through proprioceptors and muscle-based stretch receptors, and by means of the touchable, manipulatable facets of objects.⁷ These bodily interactions are felt through the "two-dimensionality of our own skin," in order to explore the three-dimensional spaces within which one's body is found.⁸ Through the sensorial experience of three-dimensional space, mediated by our skin, haptic processes can be understood as an embodied experience and a practice in which our sense of touch functions as more than just a singular modality, as it processes "subsystems of pain, pleasure, and temperature information."⁹ As a result, our touch translates and enables our direct bodily experiences with the materials which surround us.

Craft production is characterized as a haptic medium, as American curator and craft scholar Glenn Adamson writes, it is a product of the crafters bodily engagements "with the internal forces of the material."¹⁰ Crafters rely on their "tactic and haptic knowledge of tools and materials" to give form to the final product, demonstrating how craft production is ultimately dependant on a "close association between the hand, the brain, and the material."¹¹ In craftwork, the use of one's hands as a form of production emphasizes the sense of touch inherent to manual labour. Crafters continually engage with the materiality of the object, gauging its qualities and conformation through interaction—within such kinaesthetic engagements, "materials are not neutral," but "function as active agents in the process."¹² Through his explanation of clay's determining characteristics in the

3 *Ibid.*
4 Amy E. Elkins, "Touching on Modernism," *Journal of Modern Literature* 38, 1 (2014): 184.
5 Paterson, "On haptic media," 1546. Emphasis added.
6 *Ibid.*
7 Cutaneous pressure and mechanoreceptors refer to sensations of pressure in relation to the skin and sensory receptors that are responsive to pressure and distortion. *Ibid.*, 1548.
8 *Ibid.*, 1545.
9 Glenn Adamson, "Skilled," in *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: New York: Berg, 2007), 101.
10 Luis Eduardo Boza, "(Un)Intended Discoveries: Crafting the Design Process," *The Journal of Architectural Education* 60, no. 2 (2006): 4.
11 Alex Miller, "Creative Geographies of Ceramic Artists: Knowledges and Experiences of Landscape, Practices of Art and Skill," *Social & Cultural Geography* 18, no. 2 (2017): 258.

craft of ceramics, Alex Miller, a British scholar of geography, bolsters the value of a bodily exchange with material as it occurs in ceramics. The crafter's embodied experience of working with clay is entirely dependant on the material itself. As Miller explains, the "chemical composition, pliability, [and] changeability," of the matter transforms from a wet and malleable material to one that is dry and brittle when placed in the kiln.¹³ As technicians of this process, ceramicists demonstrate their awareness and understanding of the inner forces of the material throughout the evolution of its pliable and chemical qualities; their haptic engagement with the clay is influenced by its changing materiality. In production, crafters bring forth their own familiarity with the materials they work with, demonstrating the bond between the maker and the material; the physical and biochemical composition of the crafter's materials, as seen in ceramics, shapes the final outcome as much as "the accrual of haptic skills," and the implementation of haptic expertise.¹⁴

Haptic expertise is in and of itself derived from slowly amassed haptic capabilities, tying to notions of skill within craftwork, as tactile knowledge is developed "as 'muscle memory' in the hands [...] through repeated exposure and practice."¹⁵ This is grounded in the phenomenology of "embodied cognition," which suggests that one accumulates knowledge through physical interactions with their environment.¹⁶ Crafting creates an opportunity to investigate the interactions "between material and the embodied mind," by placing emphasis on experiential knowledge, including "the body as a knowledge-provider in practice."¹⁷ Camilla Groth, scholar of embodied cognition in craft and design, ties embodied cognitive practices to a philosophical strand of neuroscience called "enactivism" in order to comprehend the embodied mind. Like experiential knowledge, enactivism suggests that one learns through actions and accumulates knowledge through embodied experiences. In craft production, this translates to the phenomena of tactile skills becoming embodied and embedded within the crafter's body.¹⁸ The body becomes fundamentally all knowing in the sense that one's mind learns and is developed through repeated experiences, in the case of crafters, this results in the ability to better

Like experiential knowledge, enactivism suggests that one learns through actions and accumulates knowledge through embodied experiences. In craft production, this translates to the phenomena of tactile skills becoming embodied and embedded within the crafter's body.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Christopher R. Gibson, "Material Inheritances: How Place, Materiality, and Labor Process Underpin the Path-Dependent Evolution of Contemporary Craft Production," *Economic Geography* 92, no. 1 (2016): 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., 3–23.

¹⁶ Camilla Groth, "Design and Craft Thinking Analyzed as Embodied Cognition," *Form Academic Akademisk* 9, no. 1 (2016): 4.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Gibson, "Material inheritances," 37.

¹⁹ Groth, "Design and Craft Thinking," 4.

"anticipate and predict possible outcomes from future similar actions and interactions."¹⁹ The inherent repetition of craft is conducive to haptic expertise, as experience always makes the crafter increasingly skilled. Groth further emphasizes that through the continued exploration of materials, the crafter is given the opportunity to constantly apply their "embodied preknowledge of the materials."²⁰ Through enactivism, the repetition of haptic gestures allows skills to not only develop, but become ingrained within the crafter's mind and body. As Groth remarks, "craft skill never comes for free [...] [but] must be learned," as repetition over time is an integral component.²¹

While craft is defined as a haptic medium according to the crafter's tactile, proprioceptive, and kinaesthetic engagements, the terminology within computation and communication networks draws on metaphors from textile production with the effect of proving that when interacting with the materiality of the objects, it is a mediated form of haptic production.²² This language is present when "[i]nternet administrators and users [...] 'weave' the 'web' with threaded discussions," partake in "linking" (a term for joining knitted fabrics) sources, create "zipped" files in data structures, construct "patches" to repair software code, and when digital images are "stitched" or "quilted" together "by image-editing programs to produce larger images."²³ Through this terminology, computation programs are revealed to have been continually interwoven with craft processes. Within software development, practices of coding, which are guided through the nodes of gridded circuits and recognized as switch "fabrics," create the cloth of the digital sphere.²⁴ As a result, the act of partaking in computation and communication networks as a mediated form of haptic craft engagement is made all the more explicit by such associations to textiles. The user, mediated by a digital interface, develops the "fabric" of the internet; their manipulation of a digital interface elicits bodily engagements in order to form the structure of programming softwares. In this sense, the digital interface functions as an embodying mechanism, allowing the user to directly manipulate an otherwise intangible cyberspace. Through such technology, digital interfaces are better

understood as haptic interfaces, because they allow one to enact textile inspired gestures within a virtual setting. In this sense, the use of textile terminology within computation and communications networks enables digital programming to stand in for craftwork in a virtual setting.

The haptic gestures of weaving within the virtual sphere of computation arts has, in fact, always had its roots in textile arts. The clearest example of this is how the Jacquard loom served as a model for computers, or in British philosopher Sadie Plant's words, "the vanguard site of software development."²⁵ Charles Babbage (1791–1871), developer of the concept of the digitally programmable computer, recognized the Jacquard loom's capabilities of storing and executing calculations automatically (fig. 1), and applied it to his Analytical Engine. Within the Jacquard loom, punch card mechanisms function in communicating the design to the apparatus, as the holes in the cards are read by a series of pins which then manipulate the warp in order to create the design within the textile. This punch card system was then applied to Babbage's Analytical Engine, resulting in not only the early computer, but also the formation of "the originary mythology of digital culture."²⁶ Media and culture scholar, Stephen Monteiro, draws on this historical connection through the notion that both forms of production (textile and computation) demonstrate

Through such technology, digital interfaces are better understood as haptic interfaces, because they allow one to enact textile inspired gestures within a virtual setting.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Adamson, "Skilled," 74.

²² Stephen Monteiro, *The Fabric of Interface: Mobile Media, Design, and Gender* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017), 4.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Sadie Plant, "The Future Looms: Weaving Women and Cybernetics," *Body & Society* 1, 3–4 (1995): 46.

²⁶ Monteiro, *The Fabric of Interface*, 24–28.

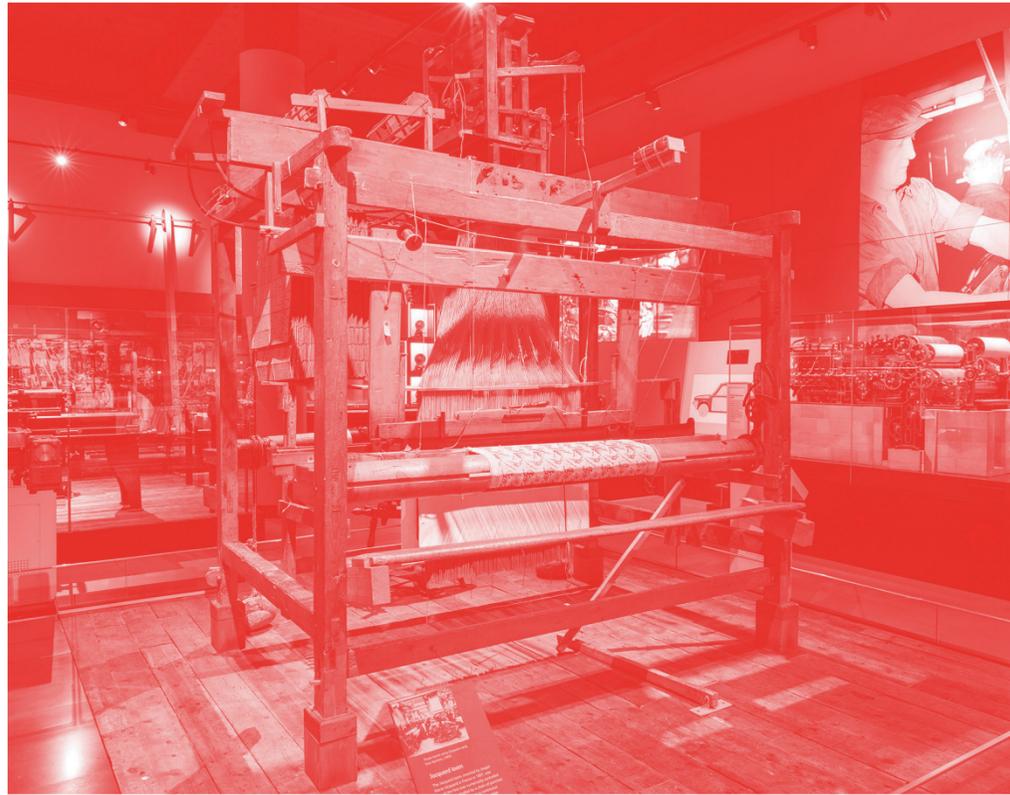


Figure 1.
Jacquard loom. Image courtesy of © National
Museums Scotland.

```
31 def __init__(self, settings):
32     self.file = None
33     self.fingerprints = set()
34     self.logdupes = True
35     self.debug = debug
36     self.logger = logging.getLogger(__name__)
37     if path:
38         self.file = open(os.path.join(path, "requests.txt"),
39                          "a")
40         self.file.seek(0)
41         self.fingerprints.update(requests)
42
43 @classmethod
44 def from_settings(cls, settings):
45     debug = settings.getbool("SUPERFINGER_DEBUG")
46     return cls(job_dir(settings), debug)
47
48 def request_seen(self, request):
49     fp = self.request_fingerprint(request)
50     if fp in self.fingerprints:
51         return True
52     self.fingerprints.add(fp)
53     if self.file:
54         self.file.write(fp + os.linesep)
55
56 def request_fingerprint(self, request):
57     return request_fingerprint(request)
```

Figure 2.
Chris Reid, Coding, accessed January 20, 2019.
Digital Image. Image via Unsplash,
<https://unsplash.com/photos/ieic5Tq8YMk>.

highly structured systems of calculations. He notes that, the conversion of binary code to create meaningful images for the viewer, “conveyed by switching electrical currents on and off” functions similarly to how a loom transforms rows “of perpendicularly stretched thread into meaningful patterns,” as such designs are achieved by the way in which the weaver interlaces the weft in and out of the warp.²⁷ In the case of the Jacquard loom, such processes directly mirror the dual nature behind the 1’s and 0’s of binary code, as the punch cards used within the loom designate up/down and on/off settings to manipulate the weft’s movement in a mechanized manner (fig. 2).²⁸ Mathematician Ada Lovelace (1815–1852), who worked alongside Babbage, remarked that the Analytical Engine itself functioned as an abstract process of weaving, its operations being similar to that of the loom. As Lovelace explained, “the Analytical Engine weaves algebraical patterns just as the Jacquard loom weaves flowers and leaves.”²⁹ As the weaver maneuvers the pedals and shuttles of the loom, they become integrated into the machinery and can be considered as the “most complex human engine of them all,” rivaling even the computer for the reduction of complex procedures into rather simple actions.³⁰

The interrelatedness of looms and software development demonstrates the mechanization of haptic processes of production. What is important to recognize through this process is how one’s body then becomes capable of haptically interacting with the material in both physical and virtual domains. In the case of the Jacquard loom—a development that no longer required the human hand to execute elaborate patterns, as the punch card mechanisms allowed for complex sequencing—the need for real time human calculations was removed. Ultimately, this allowed weaving to be done regardless of the operator’s skill.³¹ This mediated model of engagement allowed for an alternate form of haptic interaction, as some, but not all, of the tactile qualities in the crafter’s handling of the materiality of the objects was removed, changing how the weaver engaged with the loom. However, this evolution has not discredited weaving as a textile craft when produced on a Jacquard loom: the weaver is still expected to experience tactile interactions within their work, as haptic processes are

As the weaver maneuvers the pedals and shuttles of the loom, they become integrated into the machinery and can be considered as the “most complex human engine of them all,” rivaling even the computer for the reduction of complex procedures into rather simple actions.

still present.

Although there is no tactile manipulation of the threads of the textiles—the machine’s punch card mechanism stands in for the user’s direct bodily intervention with the materials—weaving with the Jacquard loom is still recognized as haptic. It is, however, an ‘alternative’ haptic engagement. Jacquard weavers engage instead in mediated forms of tactile interaction with their materials, mirroring the users of digital interfaces so closely that these two must be considered as alternatives. These alternative interactions create an opportunity for different and possibly more complex designs to be achieved in a more efficient manner. The mechanized practices of both mediums characterize processes that step away from the associated notions of ‘authenticity’ and ‘tradition’ found within skilled craft production. Social science scholar Christopher R. Gibson claims that the retention of haptic skills within craft production plays a vital role in developing “the mythology of ‘making,’” therefore “conveying a degree of ‘authenticity,’” to that which is made by hand; craft

production highlights a cultural field where the terms ‘skill,’ ‘handmade,’ and ‘bespoke’ are designated as being “synonymic with creativity, assets for marketing the ‘authenticity’ of finished goods.”³² This designation of authenticity arises from an existing emphasis on craft production’s archaic processes of haptic labour, where the body’s implication in the work produces individuality within each product.³³ In this sense, ‘authenticity’ within craft is demonstrated through the crafter’s “knowledge of their practices [which] is fundamentally tied to their bodies.”³⁴ Value is extracted from the “fleshy bodies of the workers,” in order to emphasize the “quality [of the] materials for which provenance is a source of distinction.”³⁵ This process demonstrates how craft production “‘reveals’ both the material and the maker simultaneously.”³⁶ Gibson goes on to say that machines are unable to replace “the core haptic knowledge of how to manipulate a lively and inconsistent organic material,” which draws on practices of enactivism because there is a requirement for the crafter’s embodied comprehension of the “active and lively role matter plays in making.”³⁷

This emphasis on “authenticity” within traditional craft production contradicts the mass production of both digital and craft objects which are created through processes of mechanization, such as those found within the Jacquard loom and computational softwares. In such mechanized practices, value is not extracted from the act “of making physical objects,” because there is no evidence of the individuality of the maker.³⁸ It is helpful, if not necessary, to consider this through the lens of Marxism, which introduces the notion of spirituality and fetishization in conjunction with the machine. Through this lens, Alyssa Paredes finds that traditionally produced crafts—and their materials—become fetishized for their ties to ‘authentic’ methods of making, whereas mechanical systems imply “a world order of instrumentalism leaving no room for spirituality.”³⁹ Furthermore, she states that though mechanization may be lacking in the sense of spirituality that arises from the slow, silent, and haptic production of ‘traditional’ craft, it is not devoid of substance. In the Marxist concept of fetishism, “the domain of technology exposes machines as another form of contemporary mystification,

instruments of unequal global exchange and the appropriation of space-time.”⁴⁰ The association of mass-produced products, whether constructed by software developers or crafters, dismisses mediated forms of haptic engagements by virtue of the creator’s lack of direct and embodied interactions with the materiality of the products.

Although haptic gestures characterize craft production, the presence of tactile, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive interactions can be found in both craft and digital or computational manufacturing. In both practices, crafters and developers rely on an awareness of their body, regardless of however direct or mediated their engagement with the material process may be. Within ‘traditional’ craft, skill is developed exclusively through enactivism—the repetition of haptic gestures in conjunction with an embodied mind, allowing the body to function as a knowledge provider. Consequently, these practices define conceptions of ‘authentic’ craftwork through the placement of value onto the process of making itself. Significant emphasis is placed on the crafters’ bodies as they are haptically engaged with the materials. This valuation of authenticity does not carry over to software development, though it has been demonstrated as emerging from the mechanized processes of craft production such as the Jacquard loom. Despite software development’s origins in craftwork and its use of referential language towards its influence from textile production, such mediated forms of production carry different associations due to their mechanized processes which exclude them from associations with ‘authentic’ forms of craft. On the other hand, software development demonstrates mediated forms of haptic engagement, as digital interfaces enable interaction with the intangible material of cyberspace. However distant craftwork, such as textile production or ceramics, may seem from computation and digital media, their correlated evolutions prove how both are fundamentally haptic, relying on embodied knowledge which is developed first through tactile engagement.

27 Ibid., 23.
28 Ibid.
29 Plant, “The Future Looms,” 50.
30 Ibid., 51.
31 Monteiro, *The Fabric of Interface*, 26.

32 Gibson, “Material inheritances,” 11, 4.
33 Ibid., 13.
34 Miller, “Creative geographies of ceramic artists,” 257.
35 Gibson, “Material inheritances,” 4.
36 Adamson, “Skilled,” 95.
37 Gibson, “Material Inheritances,” 24; Miller, “Creative Geographies,” 250.
38 Gibson, “Material Inheritances,” 3.
39 Alyssa Paredes, “The Problem of Mechanization: Craft, Machines, and ‘Centering’ in a Japanese Mingei Pottery Village,” *Journal of Material Culture* 23, no. 2 (2018): 144.
40 Ibid., 145.

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THE GENDERING

OF JEANS

HYBRIDITY OF
FASHION, ART, AND
HYPERMASCULINITY
IN TEXTILES

Since their emergence in the nineteenth century, denim jeans have become among some of the most globally worn clothing in the world.¹ Due to denim's broad appeal, versatility of application and innovation, it has become entrenched in the narratives of progress and the American Dream as a clothing "icon linked to particular generations and values."² From the worker's uniform, to couch upholstery, to formal attire suitable for wear on the red carpet (such as Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake's iconic matching denim ensembles from the 2001 American Music Awards), denim has had a consistent presence in the Zeitgeist across two centuries of changing fashion epochs.

The first generation of denim-wearers were blue-collar, working-class males in the western USA of the nineteenth century, establishing strong associations between denim and masculinity,³ an association which continued to course strongly throughout the twentieth century. Denim departed from these practical origins to become a canvas for an interdisciplinary decorative practice, considered folk art, which became an iconic part of the 1960s and 1970s hippie movement. Soon after, it was adopted by urban youth and reintegrated into the hyper-masculine gang culture prevalent during the rise of hip-hop in the late 1970s and early 1980s in America's largest urban centers, originating in New York City. Today, despite the influential and widely-adopted innovations contributed by women to the life of the textile, denim remains a dominantly masculine medium. From the largest designers and fashion houses, to the manner in which it continues to be marketed, and to its entry into high-art through the work of artists like Ian Berry, denim continues to operate within Western ideals of heterosexual hyper-masculinity, and the male gaze.⁴

While denim is most commonly believed to have originated in the United States with Jacob W. Davis' and Levi Strauss' practical denim menswear, Levi Strauss & Co.'s denim production was actually inspired by a textile practice indigenous to Nîmes,

Languedoc-Roussillon, France. Levi's recreation of this technique in the United States involved a process of weaving together two components of America's dark colonial history, as his denim was made from the weaving of white, low-twist cotton weft and indigo, high-twist warp threads.⁵ The abundance of cotton in America in the nineteenth century, its affordability, and its availability to a white male entrepreneur such as Strauss, existed as a result of the American plantation system which was "entirely structured around slavery—enforced transportation, genocide, multi-generational trauma—in the south; and the sweated exploitation of women and children workers—often recent immigrants—in the north."⁶ Furthermore, the weaving of this cotton with indigo, "colonial South Carolina's second-most important cash crop," positions denim as a deeply exploitative textile with a violent colonial history.⁷ As Sophie Mayer notes, "West African textiles are rich in indigo, signifying wealth and status from Tuareg *alasho* to Yoruba resist-dyed *adirę*. Slavery appropriated the value and status of West African dyers' skills, and turned once prized creative work into torture."⁸ Moving forward into analysis of denim's American history then, these questions of who's story is being told, who benefited from denim as commodity, who had access to it, and who has been able to reclaim its function time and time again, must be kept in mind.

Blue denim jeans, the textile's most common form, were born in 1870 in Reno, Nevada, when a woman approached Jacob W. Davis's horse blanket shop in search of strong, durable pants for her husband to wear while performing manual labour.⁹ In the late nineteenth century, Reno was thriving as a result of the American Gold Rush and a new Central Pacific railhead bringing railroaders and labourers into its center. Therefore, as stated in Ed Cray's 1978 book *Levi's*, the working men of Reno "had little use for fine clothing" and instead required

strong, durable garments to wear while performing manual handiwork.¹⁰ Davis chose to employ the strongest fabric he had in his shop for the creation of these work pants: ten-ounce duck twill purchased from the San Francisco dry-goods shop, Levi Strauss & Co.¹¹ Once he had stitched the tough fabric into the sturdy pants he had promised his female patron, David added metal rivets to all the intersecting seams of the pants, primarily the corners of the pockets. Davis then began experimenting with colour by using nine-ounce blue denim also from Levi Strauss & Co.¹² Here, denim blue jeans were born, and the overwhelming demand for Davis' worker's pants galvanized a partnership between himself and his source, Levi Strauss, to meet the needs of the large population of male labourers during the late nineteenth century.¹³

Following their inception, and Davis and Levi Strauss' patenting of the metal rivets for the clothing, blue jeans continued to be regarded solely as the male labourer's garment through the turn of the twentieth century. A shift began to take place during the Great Depression, when the struggling American economy influenced the popularity of denim. Up until the 1930s, denim jeans had been a class-marking garment, indicative of the working-class male.¹⁴ During the Depression however, "the undistinguished working-class dungaree started to become a gender- and class-blurring icon of the American people."¹⁵ Women's denim jeans were not available for purchase in commercial stores, as women's clothing at this

1 Daniel Miller and Sophie Woodward, Introduction to *Global Denim*, eds. Daniel Miller and Sophie Woodward (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2011).
 2 Charles Alan Reich, *The Greening of America*, 1970, 1.
 3 Ed Cray, *Levi's* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978), 17.
 4 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Feminisms: Diversity, Difference, and Multiplicity in Contemporary Film Cultures*, eds. Laura Mulvey and Anna Backman Rogers (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 432–42.
 5 Sophie Mayer, "Denim," *Wasafiri* 33, no. 1 (2018): 22–25.
 6 *Ibid.*
 7 *Ibid.*
 8 *Ibid.*
 9 Cray, *Levi's*, 17.
 10 "Historic Landmarks Relating to the First Transcontinental Railroad," *Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum*, accessed November 26, 2018, <http://cprr.org/Museum/Landmarks.html>.
 11 *Ibid.*, 18.
 12 *Ibid.*, 19.
 13 *Ibid.*, 21.
 14 Sandra Curtis Comstock, "The Making of an American Icon: The Transformation of Blue Jeans during the Great Depression," in *Global Denim*, 24.
 15 *Ibid.*, 23.

time was strictly formal. As women entered the workforce in the 1930s, however, there grew a distinctive demand for women's casual wear, reminiscent of the workmen of 1870s Reno. Department stores began to market jeans to middle-class women as a symbol of modernity, emphasizing their popularity with Hollywood icons such as Katherine Hepburn.¹⁶ Though this marked a dramatic shift in women's progress toward gender equality, "working-class women's interest in these themes [of modernity] did not directly translate into a desire on their part to emulate Hepburn's blue jeans. Working-class women associated jeans with male toil," a communal male gloominess resulting from the lack of factory work during the Depression.¹⁷ While they were now available for women, jeans were still heavily rooted in the hypermasculine image of the working-class, rural, man's man of the West, until their adoption by the ensuing youth counterculture revolution.

As youth culture swept America in the mid-twentieth century, jeans came to symbolize the sexuality of young, male pop culture icons of the 1950s. As encapsulated by Laird Borrelli-Persson in his 2017 *Vogue* article "From the Archives: Denim in *Vogue*":

The "jeans generation" is perhaps better defined by age than by years. Although Levi's was advertising its denim Koveralls, to "keep [very young] kids klean" in *Vogue* in 1920, jeans' affiliation with teen fashion was cemented in the fifties, when James Dean, Marlon Brando, and Elvis Presley, explained Joe Keenan in a 1992 article, "bestowed an aura of sex and rebellion" onto "once nondescript work clothes."¹⁸

Denim as a textile was pushed beyond its blue-collar roots to establish itself as part of the sexual revolution of the late 1960s, reclaimed by youth as a symbol of the freedom and liberation of their counter-culture. However, it remained within the prerogative of the heterosexual male to establish denim as such, beginning with its adoption by the 1950s male "greaser," continuing into the 1960s and 1970s where it served as the basis for a new "American folk art" within the hippie movement, and then through the 1980s and 1990s where it was established

as representative of the hip-hop and gang culture emerging in American city streets.¹⁹

In all cases, denim remained highly associated with masculinity. However, this connotation was subverted by 1970s hippie culture, in which practices such as embroidery and beading, traditionally considered domestic, feminine crafts, were applied to the typically male textile.²⁰ In his 1975 book *American Denim: A New Folk Art*, Peter Beagle compiles the best of post-1960s American denim, as it existed as perhaps the most recognizable component of the bohemian wardrobes of the hippies' counter-culture. During the rise of all things youthful, flamboyant, and free, denim in the late 1960s and early 1970s became subject to a large population of youth seeking a distinct aesthetic to embody the twentieth century American hippie (fig. 1).²¹ In the creation of this aesthetic, decorative arts techniques were applied to the hypermasculine fabric, drawing on the ideologies of the sexual revolution, which encouraged homosexual expression, queer liberation, and second wave feminism.²² In his discussion of Peter Beagle's 1975 book, Richard Owens explains:

There's a wide range of techniques here: applique, embroidery and other needle-point techniques, distressing, integration of other fabrics, painting, studding. The intentions of the artists here are varied. Some of them are coming straight out of the hippie "I drew on my dirty jeans" school. Others are clearly fabric artists interested in seeing how they can transform garments into something new. Some of them are fashion designers, looking to take street wear to a fashion-conscious and upscale place. And some are just pure folk artists—"I wanted to have two naked chicks with pubic hair on my jacket so I made this."²³

The primary, shared motivation behind these DIY denim garments was a distinct rejection of the patriarchal, conservative ideals of the modernist pre-1960s American Dream rooted in conformity and consumerism. The hippies reimagined society as a "homegrown civilization rooted in self-expression, self-reliance,

an affirmative connection to nature, and ideas of love and community that deviated from the values of the traditional nuclear family," a sentiment explored in the expression of queer identities through traditionally female, domestic craft.²⁴ The use of the all-American, working man's textile for something as feminine as floral embroidery or reconstruction as a bra top is a direct result of 1960s sexual liberation and second wave feminism. This work, however, regardless of its wide-reaching presence in fashion and culture, remains relegated to the realm of folk art due to its deeply feminine roots. The queering of the fabric, causing it to acquire the categorization of "decorative," highlights the notion of the masculine norm in relation to the female other.²⁵ Once denim is feminized and queered, it becomes folk art; when heterosexual men experiment with the textile, however, it reaches the higher status of high fashion or fine art. It must be recognized here that the hippie counter-culture, and second wave feminism itself, is now criticized for its accessibility only to the white middle-class, which remains in the control of the heterosexual white male even today, therefore, regardless of the flamboyance and femininity applied to denim by the hippies, the presence of patriarchal cultural systems remained.²⁶

Nevertheless, denim would be firmly reclaimed by its hyper-masculine fathers during the rise of urban hip-hop culture in the late 1970s and through the turn of the century. After women of the hippie culture had demonstrated the many possibilities available to denim as clothing besides its most common form as jeans, heterosexual cis males were able to take these ideas and sexualize them for the benefit of the male gaze. The male gaze, as explained by Laura Mulvey in her famous 1975 essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', refers to the notion of the active/male and the passive/female, where men perform the action of looking, and women are the object to be looked at.²⁷ This became apparent in the advertising of

¹⁶ Ibid., 27.
¹⁷ Ibid.
¹⁸ Laird Borrelli-Persson, "From the Archives: Denim in *Vogue*," *Vogue*, February 1, 2017, <https://www.vogue.com/article/from-the-archives-denim-in-vogue>.

¹⁹ Richard M. Owens, Peter Beagle, Tony Lane, and Baron Wolman, *American Denim: A New Folk Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution: An Unfettered History*, (London: Routledge, 2001), 9.

²³ Richard M. Owens, "American Denim: A New Folk Art," *Press*, accessed November 27, 2018, <https://pressworksonpaper.com/products/american-denim-a-new-folk-art>.

²⁴ "MAD Spotlights the Convergence of Fashion and Craft in the Counterculture Movement of the 1960s and '70s," *The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD)*, accessed November 27, 2018, <https://www.madmuseum.org/press/releases/mad-spotlights-convergence-fashion-and-craft-counter-culture-movement-1960s-and-70s>.

²⁵ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 432–42.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

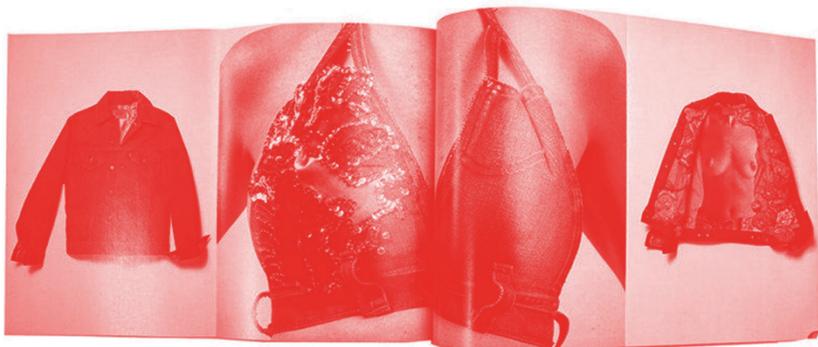


Figure 1. Peter Beagle, page spread in *American Denim: A New Folk Art*. New York: Harry N. Abrams., 1975.



Figure 2. Ian Berry, *House Beautiful*, part of the "Behind Closed Doors" series, 2016: Denim on denim, 150x70cm. Photo courtesy of Ian Berry, www.ianberry.org.

denim during the latter half of the twentieth century, where the market for jeans became an entirely patriarchal industry. In a 2011 article, Bodil Birkeboek Olesen claims: "It was the robustness, durability and availability at a low price that made jeans the workwear of choice with nineteenth century frontier miners and farmers and this early adoption became articulated in advertisement as originality and authenticity that continue to important to the Levi's as a brand."²⁸ While Levi's was still at the forefront of the denim industry, brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Guess Jeans were among the most profitable in the fashion industry. Their advertisements were all founded on the principle of reinforcing denim as empowering when worn by men and sexualizing when worn by women for the pleasure of men, as demonstrated by the Calvin Klein ads of the 1990s. Furthermore, the hyper-masculinity of late twentieth century gang and hip-hop culture claimed denim as a means of embodying the strength and "robustness" of the nineteenth century man's man, in their contemporary, urban setting.²⁹ In this way, the aforementioned patriarchal fashion apparatus' embedded in the denim industry claimed the authority to position denim for women as available only in relation to denim for men.³⁰ A study of denim advertisements over the past thirty years confirms the ongoing sexism in advertisements today. Comparing the striking similarities between Calvin Klein ads from the 1990s, of Kate Moss's topless body draped in bulky denim,³¹ to the photos from Bella Hadid's 2018 True Religion campaign acts as evidence of this.³² Despite decades of female empowerment and criticism of advertising, the denim industry still centralizes in an 'old boy's club' mentality.

As hyper-masculinity and heterosexuality remain woven into the fabric of Western denim, it influences not only fashion, but also as fine art. The work of male British artist Ian Berry epitomizes this phenomenon. Berry uses denim as his medium for composing collage-like images of "melancholic urban scenes, often depicting a lonely or less glamorous side of city living. He says denim is now such an urban fabric, after having such rural origins. What better way to capture everyday urban life."³³ The question recurs throughout his work, however: urban life

for who? It becomes clear when looking at Berry's work, such as *House Beautiful* (2016) (fig. 2), that while Berry works beautifully in denim, it nevertheless enforces the material's extremely gendered traditions; a less-than-clothed female model, situated in domestic space, only able to access denim through sexuality. His figures wear and utilize the textile as one would see in the aforementioned Calvin Klein and True Religion advertisements. The female figures in *House Beautiful* as well as these advertisements do not wear denim as practical clothing, but rather hold it draped over their nude breasts, enforcing the framing of denim as a practical, masculine medium to be offered to the female only for the sake of male visual pleasure. Berry's work is masculine enough to step outside the realm of folk art, and to transcend boundaries between fashion and high art, and this is precisely the result of denim's roots as they remain deeply ingrained in the active/male labourer of the nineteenth and twentieth century hyper-masculinity.

From its birth, denim has been rooted in two centuries worth of heterosexual, hypermasculine "myths and ideals of American culture."³⁴ Regardless of its creative repurposing and use by marginalized groups in society, such as the hippie movement queering and feminizing of the fabric, denim remains the garment of the strong, robust male. To achieve the status of high fashion and art, it must conform to an aesthetic of virility prevalent in the patriarchal art world and American society at large, from the time of denim's founders until today. Any femininity whatsoever is folk art; utilization of denim must be tough, conventional and emblematic of Western, hypermasculine ideals in order to be considered high art.

²⁸ Bodil Birkeboek Olesen, "How Blue Jeans went Green: The Materiality of an American Icon," in *Global Denim*, 70.
²⁹ Ibid.
³⁰ Elisabeth Caldwell Hirschman, *Branding Masculinity: Tracing the Cultural Foundations of Brand Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 3.
³¹ "Here Come The Girls! The Rise Of Calvin Klein Underwear For Women," *BANG STRIKE*, accessed November 28, 2018. <https://www.bangandstrike.com/bangtalk/here-come-the-girls-the-rise-of-calvin-klein-underwear-for-women/>.
³² Sarah Potter, "Here Come the Girls! The Rise of Calvin Klein Underwear For Women," *Bang Talk Magazine*, January 29, 2016, <https://www.bangandstrike.com/bangtalk/here-come-the-girls-the-rise-of-calvin-klein-underwear-for-women/>.; Martina Todorovska, *Bella Hadid Designed Capsule for True Religion*, "Fashionisers", August 22, 2018, <http://fashionisers.com/fashion-news/bella-hadid-is-the-new-face-of-true-religion-4/>.
³³ Ian Berry, "Art in Denim," *Ian Berry*, accessed November 28, 2018, <http://www.ianberry.org/about/>.
³⁴ Olesen, "How Blue Jeans went Green," 69.

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Taylor Neal is a transdisciplinary artist, writer, scholar and costume designer based in Montreal, who combines her background in dance and performance, her passion for textile design and fibre art, and her curiosity of contemporary visual art, videography, and photography with her studies in Communications, Art History and Design for Theatre at Concordia University. Her cumulative artistic and scholarly practice comes together as a wholistic exploration of identity, sexuality, the body, and how the human subject navigates space and the material world. With her identity as an artist rooted firmly in dance, Taylor's work centralizes on performativity, where she draws from her multifaceted artistic and intellectual background to connect theory and abstract thought with the body and understanding of the self in visual art and public life.

CONFRONTING THE
JEWISH NATIONAL
ECOLOGICAL
OF PALESTINE

FUND'S
COLONIZATION

A STUDY OF PERSONAL
ARCHAEOLOGY

In the front hall closet my mom keeps an old shoebox of collected badges, pins, and buttons. Among the 1960s brownie badges, various ribbons with her high school crest, and miscellaneous buttons she acquired in university, a tiny brooch stood out (fig. 1). It appeared older, distinct from the rest of the accumulated objects in the box. A silver-coloured piece of metal about the size of my thumbnail, in the shape of an acorn—or maybe a leaf—with embossed shapes of branches and three symbols that were slightly raised from the tarnished surface. My mom told me it belonged to her mother and the letters were Hebrew, but she was not sure what it signified.

I put the pin on the collar of my jacket with the stem of the acorn facing upwards. A while later I asked my little sister's friend Sarah, who spoke Hebrew at home, if she could read what the pin said. She informed me I was wearing it upside-down, but she could not decipher the letters. She told me, "it could mean lots of things... I can't say for sure."

The next time an opportunity arose to consult a Hebrew-speaker, it was my track and field coach, Mr. Tepper. On the bleachers at the first meet of the season, I showed him the pin (now set with the stem facing downwards and the letters right-side-up) and asked him if he could tell me what it said. He squinted at it for a while but could not translate it for me, "my Hebrew is a little rusty," he apologized.

I wore the pin for several years without knowing what it was. I liked the shape, the details, and the delicacy of it. I liked that it belonged to my Grandma Barbara, who, like all my other grandparents, had died before I was born. I liked that it had a Jewish history, a small piece of material culture found in the archaeological deposit of my parents' house.

For two years I have identified as an anti-Zionist Jew. I've been reading up on the history and the making of the settler-colonial State of Israel. I have been keeping up-to-date on news from Gaza, and trying to read Edward Said and Judith Butler in my leisure time. I will

My mom told me it belonged to her mother and the letters were Hebrew, but she was not sure what it signified.



Figure 1. Jewish National Fund pin, ca. 1950s. 1.2 × 1.5cm. Photo courtesy of author.

The JNF's afforestation pins present a seemingly positive exploit. This guise of an environmental mission, however, hides or green-washes Israel's extended military occupation of Palestine.

not go to Aroma Espresso Bar or buy Sabra brand hummus! Yet all this time, I realized, I have been wearing the logo of the Jewish National Fund, the Hebrew letters for “JNF” on a tree-shaped pin.

The saying “make the desert bloom” echoed in my head as I discovered that my grandmother’s brooch was likely a small reward for a donation to the JNF. A contribution towards a cause that plants Israeli trees on occupied Palestinian land. It represents the Zionism enforced in twentieth and twenty-first century Jewish culture that I have tried to distance myself from. I was unable to find the exact year of the object’s production, but I found a similar pin listed on an antique Judaica website that was dated to the 1950s. It was likely made in Israel and then sent to donors in the Jewish diaspora, or it could have been acquired by my grandmother on a trip to Israel. The object, which is no larger than 2 cm in width and 1 cm in length, embodies a history of settler-colonialism, nationalism, and Zionism.

The Jewish National Fund, like many other organizations, gave out pins to thank donors and advertise their cause. The practice of receiving a token for an honourable deed is somewhat militaristic, echoing the awards granted to stand-out soldiers. Around Remembrance Day, passersby are offered red poppies for their donations, often situated in public spaces, such as grocery stores and metro stations. These symbols can be worn to represent support of a cause: pink ribbons for breast cancer awareness, red ribbons for HIV/AIDS. Such symbols act as medals for monetary acts of charitable service, and allow wearers to perform as good samaritans, or to “show awareness.” Pins form a language with which supporters of a cause can identify.¹ In the example of Remembrance Day poppies, these symbols are commonly understood to represent support of war veterans, but also display connotations of militarism and nationalism. The JNF’s afforestation pins present a seemingly positive exploit. This guise of an environmental mission, however, hides or green-washes Israel’s extended military occupation of Palestine.²

Between the years of 1881 and 1914, there was a mass migration of Jewish people from Eastern Europe to North America and Palestine.³ This migration, largely due to the pogroms and persecution they were victim to in Europe,

converged with the beginning of modern Zionism. The recurring archetype of the ‘Wandering Jew’ entered into Zionist discourse—a figure created by the age-old trend of Jewish flight from persecution in addition to the tendency for Jewish men to work as peddlers, unable to find stable work or own property. This archetype entered into Zionist discourse with the goal to create (or redeem) a nation that would be home for the “lost” Jewish people.⁴ The Wandering Jew had no roots, he had no home, he had no permanence. The creation of Israel would provide him with land that, in Zionist view, was rightfully his. Here, the Wandering Jew would settle, wandering no more.

The name, Jewish National Fund (JNF) or Hebrew, Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael (KKL), implies the validity of Israel as a Jewish nation. It was created in 1901 as a non-profit organization but has developed into a sort of concealed corporation, in the control of the World Zionist Congress.⁵ By 1948, the JNF was the second largest landowner in Palestine, following the government.⁶ The Fund was created with the goal of buying up land for the Jewish people in Palestine and Syria.⁷ During the twentieth century, the iconic blue tin donation boxes bearing the JNF logo and slogan “Redeem the Land of Israel” were distributed to Jewish families around North America, Europe, and Palestine. The blue JNF box became part of Jewish households, and Zionist ideas entered into mainstream Jewish culture throughout the diaspora.⁸

The desire for an ethno-national Jewish state was shared by early Zionist organizations. The 1917 Balfour Declaration announced the British support of the creation of a “national home for the Jewish people” in what was then Ottoman Palestine.⁹ The 1919 presentation of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) continued to put this desire into action, as WZO president Chaim Weizmann declared his intention “to make Palestine as Jewish as England was English.”¹⁰ The JNF brooch falls into a political context somewhere in the period between Israel’s creation in May 1948, after the British withdrew their rule over Palestine, and the Six Day War in 1967, when Israel took control over more land including the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, the West Bank, and Jerusalem. As stated by Eric

Walberg, the aforementioned territorial shifts are a product of the immense growth in support for Israel that resulted from the events of the Second World War. The Shoah (a Hebrew term for the Nazi Holocaust) is commonly used to excuse the occupation of Palestine, and to legitimize the existence of a Jewish Nation. While many equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, Zionism itself is partially rooted in anti-Semitic thought, as much of its support has been provided by non-Jewish individuals and governments who wish to be relieved of their “Jewish problem.”¹¹ Following the issue of what to do with Jewish refugees who had fled Nazi-occupied Europe, and where to put those who had survived the Nazi Holocaust, the settled Jewish diaspora presented a new anxiety in the minds of those from a white Christian background: that Jewish people owned all of the businesses and were plotting to gain both economic and political control.

The design of Jewish *shtetl* communities of Eastern Europe forged a framework for the Israeli settlements in pre-1948 Palestine. Early Jewish settlements (like modern-day kibbutzim) in Palestine were communal, agricultural, and constitutionally Jewish.¹² The desert landscape of Palestine was seen as vacant, untouched, and ripe with unharvested potential; early twentieth century maps of Palestine represented the “empty landscape” in order to validate Zionist colonization and Palestinian dispossession.¹³ The JNF’s afforestation campaign fills the empty landscape with donated trees, most commonly “fast-growing conifers,”¹⁴ symbolically representative of the Jewish people putting down roots in Palestine. Biblical, nationalist, and

1 Sarah E.H. Moore, *Ribbon Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 31.
 2 Alon Tal, “The Greening of the Jewish National Fund,” *Tikkun* 20, no. 4 (2005): 26.
 3 Gur Alroey, “Two Historiographies: Israeli Historiography and the Mass Jewish Migration to the United States, 1881–1914,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 105, no. 1 (2015): 101.

4 Israel Idalovichi, “Creating a National Identity Through a Legend: The Case of the Wandering Jew,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 11, no. 12 (2005): 14.
 5 Tal, “The Greening of the Jewish National Fund,” 23–26.
 6 Walter Lehn, “The Jewish National Fund,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 3, no. 4 (1974): 75.
 7 Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 97.
 8 Irus Braverman, “Planting the Promised Landscape: Zionism, Nature, and Resistance in Israel/Palestine,” *Natural Resources Journal* 49, no. 2 (2009): 319.
 9 Ernst Frankenstein, “The Meaning of the Term ‘National Home for the Jewish People,’” in *The Jewish Yearbook of International Law* 1948, ed. N. Steinberg and J. Stoyanovsky (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1949), 26.
 10 Eric Walberg, *The Canada-Israel Nexus* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2017), 58–59.
 11 *Ibid.*, 19–22.
 12 Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 58.
 13 Joanna C. Long, “Rooting Diaspora, Reviving Nation: Zionist Landscapes of Palestine-Israel,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34, no. 1 (2009): 63.
 14 “Afforestation in Israel,” Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael Jewish National Fund, accessed January 14, 2019, <http://www.kkl-jnf.org/forestry-and-ecology/afforestation-in-israel/>

physical metaphors of afforestation in Palestine connect back to the story of the Garden of Eden as a beginning of civilization.¹⁵ In Irus Braverman's article "Planting the Promised Landscape," she interviews former JNF director, Yechiel Leket, who said, "when you plant the tree there is a physical connection. If you take the metaphors of land and forests you will find out that there are many sexual metaphors.... [Indeed,] many people say 'I want to hug the trees,' or 'the trees hug me.'... You take a tree and put your hand in the soil—it's a physical intimacy, all of these things."¹⁶ As stated above, planting trees in Israel has been described as an emotional, familial, and even sexual experience; like planting a flag on unclaimed territory, the act is symbolic of "homecoming" or fulfilling a "birth-right" for many Jews.

The pine trees, reminiscent of the lush forests of Eastern Europe, are symbolically Jewish trees, whereas olive trees are Palestinian. There have been many cases in which Palestinian villages and olive groves are demolished, and in their place, illegal Jewish settlements are built with tree-filled gardens and yards. The ecological colonization of Palestine has caused Palestinian lives to be uprooted and replaced by mighty Israeli pine trees. There is a national park in Israel called Canada Park, which was built over three Palestinian villages and expands illegally onto part of the West Bank—it was created by the JNF and paid for by 15 million dollars in charitable donation from Canadian Jews.¹⁸ The park, much like Canadian national parks, offers hiking trails through pine forests, picnic areas, lookouts, and archaeological sites. Ironically, these sites only present evidence of Roman, Jewish, and Christian civilizations, with no mention of Islamic history, despite its presence in the area.¹⁹

The attempted erasure of Palestine by Israel is in part due to the land that was purchased and stolen by the JNF. Edward Said, in his canonical book *The Question of Palestine* wrote, "just as no Jew in the last hundred years has been untouched by Zionism, so too no Palestinian has been unmarked by it."²⁰ This statement illustrates the prevalence of Zionism in everyday Jewish and Palestinian life, a reality that propels me to be critical about and engage with Jewish and Palestinian

history, especially in relation to my own family. Like many Jewish families, my own historically and contemporarily takes part in the colonization of Palestine. My grandmother's JNF pin is an material evidence of this process, an artifact of Zionist ecological propaganda. The tree, symbolic of the JNF and Israel, was used as a weapon of colonialism. Many describe the Israel-Palestine conflict as a complicated issue, and in many ways it is, but in my overall view, it boils down to a colonizer/colonized situation, wherein the colonizers had no right to colonize an existing country and its population.

Many describe the Israel-Palestine conflict as a complicated issue, and in many ways it is, but in my overall view, it boils down to a colonizer/colonized situation, wherein the colonizers had no right to colonize an existing country and its population.

¹⁵ Long, "Rooting Diaspora, Reviving Nation," 63.
¹⁶ Braverman, "Planting the Promised Landscape," 328.
¹⁷ Irus Braverman, "Uprooting Identities: The Regulation of Olive Trees in the Occupied West Bank," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 32, no. 2 (2009): 238.
¹⁸ Jonathan Cook, "Canada Park and Israeli 'memoricide,'" *The Electronic Intifada*, last modified March 10, 2009, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/canada-park-and-israeli-memoricide/8126>.
¹⁹ Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 213.
²⁰ Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 114.



Figure 2. Grandma Barbara (centre, in grey shirt and slacks) on a Hadassah (Women's Zionist Organization of America) trip in Jerusalem, ca. 1980s. Photo courtesy of the author.

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“YOU COULD LOSE
ALL YOUR INSIDES”

RECLAIMING
IN ARTEMISIA
OF THE
KIKI SMITH'S

FEMININE CORPOREALITY
GENTILESCHI'S 'CONVERSION
MAGDALENE' (1615—16) AND
'MARY MAGDALENE' (1995)

The prostitute, the sinner, the penitent saint, the ecstatic, the wild ascetic, the alter-ego of the Virgin Mary, the wife of Christ—all these labels have been thrown at Mary Magdalene, a figure “characterized more by myth and metaphor than historical fact.”¹ Catering to the male gaze, the Magdalene conventionally appears in various states of erotic undress as a seductive, yet repentant, sinner. Despite emerging from radically different periods of history, Artemisia Gentileschi’s (1593–1656) 1615–16 painting *Conversion of the Magdalene* (fig. 1) and Kiki Smith’s (b. 1965) 1994 sculpture *Mary Magdalene* (fig. 2) reorient and reclaim conventional dialogues surrounding the Magdalene through their emphasis on female corporeality, particularly within Catholicism. While Gentileschi and Smith have differing approaches to the body of the Magdalene—through gesture and abjection respectively—both works perform a reclamation of the Magdalene’s corporeality, rejecting the eroticized female body in favour of one with agency.

The significance of the Magdalene’s body in myth and metaphor has been in constant flux. One might know her as the prostitute, the woman who tempted Christ, or a pious figure clothed in yellow. She is surely controversial, being any of these figures. In fact, the Mary Magdalene that has endured through the centuries is an amalgamation of several Marias: an unnamed sinner who anoints Christ’s feet with oil; Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus who also anoints Christ’s feet (or alternately, his head); Mary of Magdala, a close follower of Christ who witnessed his Crucifixion and subsequent Resurrection; and the Mary of Egypt, a prostitute from Alexandria who converted to Christianity

While Gentileschi and Smith have differing approaches to the body of the Magdalene—through gesture and abjection respectively—both works perform a reclamation of the Magdalene’s corporeality, rejecting the eroticized female body in favour of one with agency.

1 Victoria Turvey Sauron, “Mirror: Mary Magdalene Through the Looking Glass,” in *Conceptual Odysseys: Passages to Cultural Analysis*, ed. Griselda Pollock (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 36.



Figure 1. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Conversion of Magdalene*, c. 1615–16. Oil on canvas, 146 × 93.5 cm. Courtesy of Bildindex Der Kunst & Architektur.



Figure 2. Kiki Smith, *Mary Magdalene*, 1994. Silicon bronze and steel, 152.4 × 52.1 × 54.6 cm. Photo courtesy of the Lenore and Richard Niles Collection, San Francisco.

and lived as a hermit for the rest of her life.² These figures form the basis of the composite Magdalene: a former prostitute who atones for her sins and becomes an avid follower of Christ, witnessing his Resurrection, and subsequently retreating to the wilderness to live an ascetic life. The story of the Magdalene is one of reclamation, of agency over her own corporeality, and of female agency in her less-remembered role in the dissemination of Christianity. Mary Magdalene was, after all, the one to witness the Resurrection and share the news, and yet in visual culture, she is remembered only as a sexualized, repentant sinner.³

The image of the composite Magdalene has been manipulated through the years by the clergy, theologians, historians, novelists, and especially by artists. The Medieval Magdalene, for example, was revered because she had overcome sin, and thus acted as a patron of salvation.⁴ Her ability to aid people in overcoming sin took precedence over her so-called sinful past, and this was reflected in depictions of her.⁵ The late-Medieval painting *Saint Mary Magdalene Preaching* (c. 1500) by a Flemish Master of the Magdalene Legend illuminates her position in Christian culture at the time as a teacher of penitence: the saint is depicted mid-oration, a crowd of enrapt listeners surrounding her.⁶ In the Baroque period, however, as Ingrid Maisch observes, “she was interesting precisely as an exciting, seductively beautiful sinner,” rendered with sensual detail by every artist from Titian to Orazio Gentileschi (Artemisia’s father).⁷

As Ann-Sophie Lehmann notes, the Magdalene’s multiplicity and mutability render her image “pliable and thrilling.”⁸ This is most distinct in the tension between the Magdalene’s body depicted as the wild ascetic, versus as the reformed, yet still erotic, sinner. While Donatello, in his 1453–1455 sculpture, provided a faithful rendition of the elderly ascetic found wearing only hair on her body, this image of the Magdalene’s body faded in popular myth in favour of a more suggestive corporeality. Lehmann notes that, “the prostitute is superimposed onto the elderly hermit,”⁹ which is evidential through Orazio Gentileschi’s 1628 painting *Mary Magdalene*. She reclines in a landscape, partially nude, contemplating her belief, and, as Lehmann

states, “a paradox is the result: the story of the female hermit, which refers to religious contemplation and repentance, is suddenly charged with eroticism.”¹⁰ The Magdalene, despite being a guide for asceticism and repentance, nonetheless presents a corporeality that is always manipulated and eroticized.

On the contrary, Artemisia Gentileschi and Smith’s renditions of Mary Magdalene are respectively distinct in their presentation of the saint’s devoted penitence and wild asceticism. Rejecting eroticism, both pieces perform a reclamation of the Magdalene’s corporeality through the artists’ subversion of traditional iconography. Gentileschi’s *Conversion of the Magdalene* (1615–16) acknowledges the composite Magdalene’s ‘sinful’ occupation by alluding to the pursuit of earthly or material pleasures rather than emphasizing overt sexuality. The sumptuous yellow dress, the luxuriously decorated chair, and the prominent pearl earring all suggest the accumulation of wealth amassed from a ‘life of sin.’ Her disheveled hair, bare feet and the drooping shoulder of her dress could also be construed as alluding to her former livelihood. Keith Christiansen and Judith Walker Mann highlight these aspects as evidence of her “physical transformation” of despair and contrition—the Magdalene here is present, in intense but focused contemplation.¹¹ Her state of mind is manifested in her physical posture; she does not idly gaze heavenwards, as in Titian’s 1533 rendition of the same subject (fig. 3), but rather leans earnestly forward,

2 J. Andrew Overman, “Mary Magdalene,” in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), [http://0-www.oxfordreference.com/mercury.concordia.ca/view/10.1093/acref-9780195046458.001.0001/acref-9780195046458-e-0464?rsk=1&rskey=fviZMe&result=1](http://0-www.oxfordreference.com/mercury.concordia.ca/view/10.1093/acref/9780195046458.001.0001/acref-9780195046458-e-0464?rsk=1&rskey=fviZMe&result=1); David Hugh Farmer, “Mary of Egypt,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), <http://0-www.oxfordreference.com/mercury.concordia.ca/view/10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001/acref-9780199596607-e-1113?rsk=1&rskey=MtTpLH&result=1>; Mark 14:50; Matt. 27:55–56; Luke 23:49; John 19:25.

3 Diane Apostolos-Cappadolla, “From Apostola Apostolorum to Provençal Evangelist: On the Evolution of a Medieval Motif for Mary Magdalene,” in *Mary Magdalene in Medieval Culture: Conflicted Roles*, ed. Peter Loewen and Robin Waugh (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 163.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ingrid Maisch, *Mary Magdalene: The Image of a Woman Through the Centuries* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 65.

7 Ann-Sophie Lehmann, “The Rising of Mary Magdalene in Feminist Art History,” in *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture*, ed. Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuin (New York: Routledge, 2009), 136.

8 Ibid., 143.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Keith Christiansen and Judith Walker Mann, *Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 325.



Figure 3.
Titian, *The Penitent Magdalene*, 1533. Oil on
canvas, 85.8 × 69.4 cm. Courtesy of Bildindex
Der Kunst & Architektur.

her slightly oversized legs connoting engagement and action. Mann analyzes the profound difference between Titian’s allusion to the Venus Pudica type and Gentileschi’s: Titian’s Magdalene, in the act of covering herself, draws attention to her breasts, conveniently and sensuously exposed despite her abundant tresses. While Titian’s is an example of a contemplative gesture, one alluding to both her sins and her repentance, it is undeniably erotic. Gentileschi’s Magdalene, by contrast, “is shown in an active rather than contemplative mode, thus turning what could be a quiet meditative image into one with dramatic energy.”¹² Indeed, the Magdalene’s gesture of clutching her right arm to her chest connotes penance and acceptance, rather than functioning in service of objectifying her body, as in Titian’s.¹³ Gentileschi’s Magdalene also rejects the mirror, and its association with vanity, with her left arm. This act of simultaneous embracing and pushing creates a sense of both strength of will and corporeal agency.¹⁴ The inclusion of clothing—as opposed to flowing locks of ill-covering hair—also reorients the gesture more clearly towards penitence rather than eroticism. Gentileschi’s portrait of the Magdalene is undeniably gesture-oriented, wrenching an internal spiritual experience into the physical realm without resorting to conventionalized erotic nudity.

Smith’s Mary Magdalene, a representation of the saint as a wild ascetic, is similarly intensely physical. Covered in hair, the ascetic Magdalene roams the country in mourning for the Ascended Christ, as Helaine Posner suggests, “her upturned head and limp body virtually wracked with grief.”¹⁵ Smith was certainly influenced by late Gothic art, particularly Matthias Grünewald’s (1470–1528) altarpieces, which fuse spirituality with intense human emotion.¹⁶ Smith’s Magdalene is not bound to being the suffering, devoted wanderer nor the punished sinner: she drags with her a broken chain, as if she was, in Smith’s words, “chained like a dancing bear.”¹⁷ There is the implication of having physically broken from bondage; her “upturned head and limp body” evoke a feeling of release rather than one of grief. The return to the

precedential, hairy Magdalene-as-hermit nods to this sense of liberation, as the hairs themselves “can be read as symbols of purity and return to the original state of innocence,” rejecting the history of using the Magdalene’s hair as an erotic device to expose rather than protect her body.¹⁸ Depictions of the hairy Magdalene were increasingly rare post-Renaissance, due to their divorce from conventional, patriarchal standards of beauty.¹⁹ Smith was certainly entrenched in the concept of abject bodies, investigating “the female body as one of resistance and transgression,” one that excretes bodily fluids and grows hair.²⁰ In returning to the wild, animal-like version of the Magdalene, Smith reorients the image of the saint as resisting the Baroque projections of eroticism onto hermeticism with her hairy body, despite the exposure of her bare breasts and belly. As Posner notes of Smith’s abject body sculptures, “these are sexual beings, not erotic objects.”²¹ Her

In returning to the wild, animal-like version of the Magdalene, Smith reorients the image of the saint as resisting the Baroque projections of eroticism onto her hairy body, despite the exposure of her bare breasts and belly.

- 12 Judith Walker Mann, “Caravaggio and Artemisia: Testing the Limits of Carravagism,” *Studies in Iconography* 18 (1997): 172.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Helaine Posner, “Approaching Grace,” in Kiki Smith, ed. Helaine Posner (New York: Bulfinch Press, 1998), 9.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 David Frankel, “In Her Own Words,” in Kiki Smith, ed. Helaine Posner (New York: Bulfinch Press, 1998), 39.
- 18 Lehmann, “The Rising of Mary Magdalene in Feminist Art History,” 143.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Posner, “Approaching Grace,” 20.
- 21 Ibid.

hair has also been interpreted as having “grown like a coat providing protection against the elements,” transforming the hair into a source of power rather than as a sign of seduction.²² This Magdalene strides forward, her corporeality enhanced by the physicality of her existence as a sculpture, cast in long-lasting bronze. Like Gentileschi, Smith created a Magdalene that finds agency in her corporeality, rejecting the sexualized hermit-Venus Pudica type in favour of raw, unbound physicality.

Gentileschi and Smith’s depictions of the Magdalene arose out of periods of turmoil in which debates about the body took center stage. Smith emerged from the 1980s New York art scene where, in the wake of second wave feminism, “the representation of the body as a tool to assert the politics of gender and identity began to play a significant role.”²³ It is in the space of abjection, nascent post-structuralism, and feminism that Smith situates her work, engaging with “the fragmentation and dualism that pervade both our individual bodies and our culture as a whole.”²⁴ Smith said that “everything is split, and presented as dichotomies—male/female, body/mind—and those splits need mending.”²⁵ Her work thus aims to reunite body and spirit through unflinching investigations of the body’s interior and exterior, their functions and emotional qualities. In this context, her Mary Magdalene denotes an effort to mend the fracturing of the Magdalene myth, both restoring to her a pious return to purity and unchaining her from the sexualized impositions on her corporeality.

In the case of Gentileschi, impositions of eroticized penitence were characteristic of the changing dialogues surrounding Mary Magdalene during the Baroque Period and the Counter-Reformation. As part of the larger conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism regarding iconography, the Council of Trent (1545–1563) pushed for less luxurious, sensuous depictions of the Magdalene, aiming to reconstruct her as a symbol of the sacrament of penance. While resulting in a surge in representations of Mary Magdalene, this mandate to de-eroticize the saint did not entirely take, evidently demonstrated by Valero Marucelli’s casually sensual 1609 painting, *Saint Mary Magdalene in the Desert*²⁶ and Gentileschi’s father, Orazio Gentileschi’s, 1628 unabashedly erotic *Mary Magdalene*.

As Maria H. Loh points out, paintings of Venus were transformed into images of the Magdalene, and “a lascivious image is thus transformed into a saintly one” while still retaining the Pudica-type sensuality.²⁷ She notes that such a strategy of conversion failed in fulfilling the Council’s decree, as “the early modern spectator could still sense the spectre of the unreconstructed Venus lingering in the shadows.”²⁸ While emerging at a time in which the demand for images of the Magdalene as the beautiful sinner rather than the pious, penitent saint was at the fore, Gentileschi’s *Conversion of the Magdalene* restored to her a sense of corporeal agency.

Despite its vastly different time period, Gentileschi’s *Conversion of the Magdalene* arguably functions as a precursor to Smith’s liberated Magdalene, in its nuanced merging of the mind and body. Elizabeth Cohen asserts that as an early modern woman, Gentileschi would have had a “view that distinguished between the higher, eternal soul and the lesser, mortal, material body.”²⁹ Yet, in her portrait of the Conversion of the Magdalene, the opening of the Magdalene’s soul to God is communicated most powerfully through gesture and the body. While the body may have been related to the material world, here it is used as a crucial bridge between earthly pleasures and spiritual pleasure, at once to push away the mirror and extend a gesture of penitence. Gentileschi, like Smith, utilizes the Magdalene’s corporeality to communicate emotional and spiritual upheaval, thus negotiating a similar kind of dualism and reclaiming the Magdalene’s body as a site of spiritualism rather than eroticism.

Concepts of the body within Catholicism is an influential element in both Gentileschi and Smith’s work. Smith has stated that Catholicism is “a religion that’s [...] about taking emotional and

spiritual ideas and making them physical.”³⁰ The state of specifically female corporeality within Catholicism, however, is more complex. The two most prominent women in the Bible, the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, often function in contrast to each other, at opposite ends of the spectrum of female corporeality and sexuality: the Virgin presents an impossibly pure standard while Mary Magdalene is the penitent, disgraced woman. The resulting meanings created for the female body are contradictory, and distinct in their polarization from those created for the male body.³¹ Yet the body of Christ has also been associated with the female body. Caroline Walter Bynum has argued that the relation made between women and the body—“spirit is to flesh as male is to female”—extends to the body of Christ, with Medieval Catholic women going “so far as to treat Christ’s flesh as female.”³² Therefore, Mary Magdalene is related to Christ in a particularly embodied way, being one of the only disciples to touch him, bridging the gap between the physical and spiritual.³³

These kind of contradictions between the physical, the spiritual, and the sensual are what occupy the “Catholic imagination,”³⁴ a mindset that both Gentileschi and Smith engage with. Gentileschi was a professional artist active in the wake of the Council of Trent, which mandated the proliferation of specific images of devotion. Biblical images were thus what she was immersed in. Smith was raised Catholic, and has explored the topic in different capacities throughout her career, “interested in how belief becomes object; how the rich vocabulary of the spiritual becomes manifest in Catholicism.”³⁵ That both artists should approach the subject of Mary Magdalene, then, is not unexpected, but the ways in which the Catholic imagination manifests itself in their renditions of the saint are strikingly contrary to historical precedents. In this context, their reorientation of the Magdalene’s corporeality is brought into sharper focus, given the paradox of not only the Magdalene but of expectations for women within Catholicism. Gentileschi’s Magdalene binds her spirituality to her physicality, with the use of the body as the site of rejecting material pleasures and embracing the holy realm. Smith’s abject, ascetic Magdalene was presented in an installation opposite her 1992 *Virgin Mary*,

emphasizing at once the storied contrast and the biological similarities between the two. Unchained, the Magdalene breaks away from contradictory perceptions and objectifications of her body, thus reclaiming her corporeality. Smith and Gentileschi make the spiritual physical; the two Magdalenes assert a physical dominance that conveys the potency of not only holy flesh, but specifically female flesh.

Kiki Smith once said that she was troubled by the often submissive poses of the Virgin Mary, by her vulnerability, that “to be vulnerable is to lose insight [...] you could lose all your insides.”³⁶ Hers and Artemisia Gentileschi’s renditions of Mary Magdalene—sinner, saint, disciple, ascetic—perform a reclamation of not only the controversial figure’s mentality, but her entire body, restoring to the saint the corporeality that was so often coloured by male desires. In this reclamation of the body, Gentileschi and Smith restore the themes of agency that are present in the stories of Mary Magdalene, from her rise to one of Christ’s most active and loyal disciples to her decision to cast off all material pleasures to live an ascetic life. These Magdalenes are powerful in their rejection of eroticism, presenting sites in which raw physicality and spirituality converge.

22 Jo Anna Isaak, “Working in the Rag-and-Bone Shop of the Heart,” in *Otherworlds: The Art of Nancy Spero and Kiki Smith*, ed. Jon Bird (Islington: Reaktion Books, 2003), 64.
 23 Posner, “Approaching Grace,” 9.
 24 *Ibid.*, 13.
 25 *Ibid.*
 26 Mary D. Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi Around 1622* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 42.
 27 Maria H. Loh, “Disciplining Desire in Post-Tridentine Italian Art,” in *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*, ed. Marcia B. Hall and Tracy E. Cooper (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 106.
 28 *Ibid.*, 109.
 29 Elizabeth S. Cohen, “The Trials of Artemisia Gentileschi: A Rape as History,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 1 (2000): 65.

30 Posner, “Approaching Grace,” 22.
 31 Eleanor Heartney, “Thinking through the Body: Women Artists and the Catholic Imagination,” *Hypatia* 18, no. 4 (2003): 9.
 32 Caroline Walter Bynum, *Mirror: Mary Magdalene Through the Looking Glass*, 39.
 33 Sauron, “Mirror: Mary Magdalene Through the Looking Glass,” 39.
 34 Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 1.
 35 Kiki Smith, in Joyce Beckenstein, “Personal Curiosity: A Conversation With Kiki Smith,” *Sculpture Issue* 2 (2016): 25.
 36 Kiki Smith, in Claudia Gould, “Interview with Kiki Smith,” in *Kiki Smith, ed. Linda Shearer and Claudia Gould* (Williamstown: Williams College Museum of Art, 1992), 3.

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