

5
READER 2

FW 2014/2015

studio all

*My Mother's wisdom is so rare
In every branch of science
That in her wisdom I can trust
And place a firm reliance.*

*My Mother is a carpenter
She hews the crooked stick
And she will have it strait and squair
Altho it cuts the quick.*

*My Mother is a Joiner wise
She builds her spacious dome
And all that trace her sacred ways
Will find a happy home.*

Shaker song

SENNELIER B
D & J SIMONS B
TESTRETE BC
WINSOR & NEWTON B.

ET'S ROGER JULIAN BF
HOUBEN BF
LERNANC &
BOURGEOIS BF
MAIRERI A
JIM PAILLARD BF
PERBO A
E PLOTON A

Questions



teachings were entirely at fault, exceedingly interested. I was later to discover that they constituted an essential part of his doctrine.

The sitting being finished, I prepared to take my leave, congratulating myself on having escaped the kind of prolonged torment and tedium that I had anticipated. To my delight, I found that I was expected to stay for lunch; I was enormously flattered. The rest of the morning was filled, splendidly filled with talk. In my time I have had the good fortune to listen to many people who could talk well, people who were intelligent, lucid, amusing and, in some cases, brilliant; but I have never heard anyone who could produce the kind of dazzling performance with which Sickert entertained me that day. It was the conversation of one who had been on the stage and never quite got off it, talk that was conceived as performance rather than argument, and it appeared to me to echo, in some degree, the sallies and the felicities of another age. It was the rhetoric of one who had been on intimate terms with Wilde and Whistler, Beardsley and Max Beerbohm and all their no doubt numerous imitators and epigoni, people for whom, I think, conversation, for better or worse, was an art, for whom malice was amply excused by wit, and for whom each observation was a pyrotechnic device, at the very least a squib. For them dullness was an unforgivable crime; they had no patience with the long thoughtful silences, the clumsy but sincere adumbrations, the inarticulate groping for truth which was to be so much cultivated by a later generation reared, not in Oxford or the Café Guerbois, but beside the deep, slow Cam. The thought that I was listening to a vanished age of brilliance and decadence added to my pleasure in the encounter. It was for me a day of unforgettable delight, the talk – the monologue rather – which filled the morning and flowed majestically over chicken and champagne, continued in splendid abundance through the afternoon until presently the lamps were lit and I could make my way home, no longer a sartorial oddity, but rather a normal if battered ingredient of the urban scene. Throughout that long session Sickert proceeded on the theory that he was developing a single observation, but one which was diverted by rather a large number of very considerable digressions. 'Thérèse will gather up my parentheses all in good time,' he observed.

I wish I could remember more of that magical day. Those who knew Sickert better than I will probably be able to divine the nature of the subjects on which he touched.

The "Kitsch-Man"

As I have pointed out earlier, the phenomenon of kitsch cannot be adequately understood if the role of the consumer of fake art is disregarded. This requires us to discuss the intricate problem of what has been called the "kitsch-man." We note that authors with widely different backgrounds like Hermann Broch, Ludwig Giesz (a representative of phenomenology), Gillo Dorfles (an aesthetician and art historian), Richard Egenter (a Roman Catholic theologian), and others, have devoted much attention to the concept of the "kitsch-man." A kitsch-man, to put it bluntly, is one who tends to experience as kitsch even nonkitsch works or situations, one who involuntarily makes a parody of aesthetic response. In the tourist's role, for instance, the kitsch man will "kitschify" not only cultural monuments but also landscapes, and especially great sights, such as the Grand Canyon, which are advertised as wonders or freaks of nature. What characterizes the kitsch-man is his inadequately hedonistic idea of what is artistic or beautiful. For reasons that can be analyzed in historical, sociological, and cultural terms, the kitsch-man wants to fill his spare time with maximum excitement (derived from, among other things, "high culture") in exchange for minimum effort. For him the ideal is effortless enjoyment.

The notion of a kitsch-man becomes clear if we think of him not only in aesthetic but also in ethical terms. This combined approach, whatever its theoretical difficulties, is almost unavoidable because the aesthetic attitudes of the kitsch-man—and of the kitsch-artist as well—imply a basic moral ineptitude. Hermann Broch makes a valid point: "The kitsch system requires its followers to 'work beautifully,' while the art system issues the moral order: 'Work well!' Kitsch is the element of evil in the value system of art."⁴¹

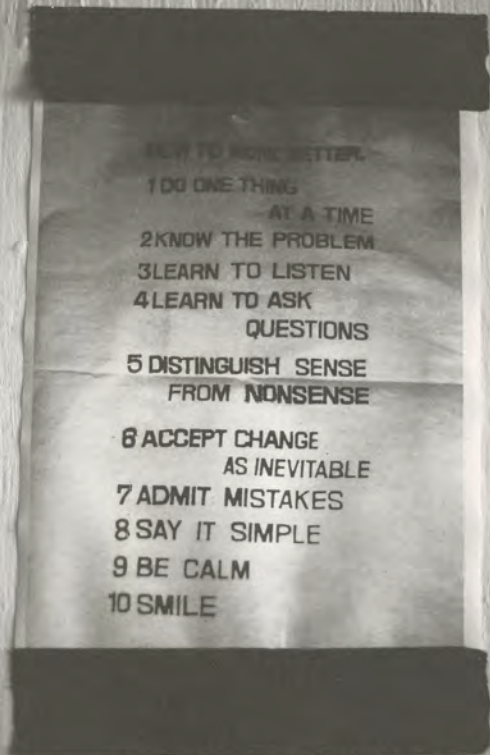
This element of evil can be identified in the fundamental characteristic of kitsch, that of lying (for the equation of kitsch = "aesthetic

Taped to the wall of my studio is an A4 photocopy of a short ten-point manifesto by Fischli and Weiss entitled *How to Work Better*. I don't know who put it there but it has been there for at least three years. It's a tongue-in-cheek work using a motivational statement, which I believe they lifted from a real motivational poster from an office in Zurich that they subsequently enlarged and had painted on the building's exterior as part of a public commission. I sometimes show it to students at the beginning of slide lectures and always point it out to assistants that come to the studio.

I like it quite simply because it acknowledges their awareness of the idea of practice rather than production, which indirectly points to the main aspect of what they do that I find really endearing. It's relatively easy to stumble around making a good work now and again, sandwiched between disasters that never leave the studio, but it's hard to attain 'good practice'. Theirs isn't about making good artworks, but about how to mould the conditions for artworks to be made possible. Although I have been asked to talk about a work that I am interested in, it seems wrong to look at a singular thing when it is so apparent that their approach to working could be interpreted as a work unto itself.

The 'Fischli and Weiss Practice' is a trajectory or a path that one could marvel at: swerving madly but not out of control, considered but swift, valiant and stealthy. This path that they present the spectator can't always easily follow, never quite being able to understand how one work arrived directly after another, with their knowledge of how ideas evolve it would make sense but for us the gaps are simply too great filling each encounter with a new work with revelation. (If I was to illustrate their diversity of practice and it's consequence, it would be here. Amongst my examples would be *Busi* (Kitty), 2001, *The Right Way* (Der Rechte Weg), 1983 and *Untitled – Two Identical Groups* (Ohne Titel – Zwei identische Gruppen), 1996. I won't.) Their steps forward are on their own terms. Terms only they can understand. I wish I had their ability to turn my hand to anything, ideas in front of me and nothing but art history behind. I am a fan.

Back to the manifesto on my studio wall. I read it daily but I have often forgotten that this photocopy is their work, it has sort of moved beyond being something that I can put their name to, and has gone full circle and come back to being just one of a countless other amazing things that exist in the world. Similarly, although I'm a fan, I often confuse many of the works of Fischli and Weiss with those of other artists. Their lack of stylistic signature and their snaking objectives makes their work kind of slippery and hard to get a hold of, a land mine for curators, a grenade about to go off. That really makes me smile, because when you think you have it in your clutches they're off somewhere new to try something else.



Work, I imagine, is not a good in itself. There is nothing laudable in work for work's sake. To work voluntarily for a worthy object is laudable; but what constitutes a worthy object? On this matter, the oracle of which your contributor [Carlyle] is the prophet has never yet been prevailed on to declare itself. He revolves in an eternal circle round the idea of work, as if turning up the earth, or driving a shuttle or a quill, were ends in themselves, and the ends of human existence. Yet, even in the case of the most sublime service to humanity, it is not because it is work that it is worthy; the worth lies in the service itself, and in the will to render it – the noble feelings of which it is the fruit; and if the nobleness of will is proved by other evidence than work, as for instance by danger or sacrifice, there is the same worthiness. While we talk only of work, and not of its object, we are far from the root of the matter; or, if it may be called the root, it is a root without flower or fruit.

([1850] 1984: 90–91)



How To:

- ✓ Avoid Useless Work
- ✓ Work For Yourself
- ✓ Rework Anything

FUNCTION PLEASURE



AVOID USELESS WORK.



REWORK
ANYTHING



WORK FOR
YOURSELF.



WITH

PETER FEND
COLEEN FITZ GIBBON
JENNY HOLZER
PETER NADIN
RICHARD PRINCE
ROBIN WINTERS

↑ →

Pages from the publication *Pleasure / Function*,
*Practical Aesthetic Services Adaptable to Client
Situations* (1980).

A Word About Failure

If your personality is one that cannot run the risk of failure, you may be in for some psychological trauma. Frequently, your early work will be failures. If you are working with someone who has had previous experience with the materials, perhaps he can tell you why. Don't look to your

They happen. If the shelf life of some products is exceeded, they may not give the expected results. If some plastic chemicals become contaminated, they will not work as expected. If you work for a long time with resins, the time will surely come when

The Western Enlightenment followed both the photographic procedure and another path to understanding. The limits of language can be overcome through active involvement in a practice. Diderot's solution to the limits of language was to become himself a worker: "There are machines so hard to describe and skills so elusive that . . . it has often been necessary to get hold of such machines, set them in operation, and lend one's hand to the work."²¹ A real challenge for a man used to salons. We don't know precisely what manual skills Diderot attempted, though in his professional circumstances they were likely those of setting type and pulling etchings. His plunge into manual labor was logical if unusual for a culture in which the ethos of sympathy urged people to get out of themselves, enter other lives. However, enlightenment through practice—or as modern educators have it, learning by doing—raises the question of one's talent to act and so the possibility of learning little, because one is not good at actually doing the work.

Many of Diderot's collaborators were scientists for whom trial and error was a guiding method of experiment. Nicolas Malebranche, for example, imagined the process of trial and error as following a path from many to fewer errors, a steady and progressive improvement through experiment. "Enlightenment" dawns as error decreases. The commentary Diderot provides on his experiences in workshops seems at first to echo this scientific version of failure corrected: "Become an apprentice and produce bad results so as to be able to teach people how to produce good ones." "Bad results" will cause people to reason harder, and so improve.

But trial and error can lead to quite a different result if one's talents prove insufficient to ensure ultimate mastery. So it was for Diderot, who found that by plunging into practice, many of his faults and errors proved "irremediable." Exposing oneself to practice, daring to do it, one may have then to make sense of *failure* rather than of *error*, reckon limits on skill one can do nothing about. In this light, learning by doing,

so co
recipe
it acti
T
poses
engag
matte
happe
work.
quate
of inh
Agenc
you ca
O
progre
reers
tion o
easily
the lo
ing at
like Ra
of tale
most g
ment l
afford
Talent
derot's
them;
at grea
"S
essays.
what v

had previous experience with the materials, perhaps he can tell you why. Don't look to your mentor expecting godlike qualities—he will have failures too. Usually the "old timer" will know enough to use an untried system or process in private until he is comfortable with it. Then he can show it off without spoiling his reputation as an expert. Well, good for him! That technique is, in itself, one that is acquired as the result of experience.

You must expect occasional unusual results.

work for a long time with resins, the time will surely come when you forget to use a mold release, or you will use the wrong catalyst, or you will forget again and use no catalyst at all. These mistakes will bring predictably unsuccessful results. You will be able to understand immediately why your casting failed as soon as you realize your mistake. But there will also be the times that you will run into freakish, unreasonable problems that defy explanation.

MACHINES 97

so comforting a nostrum in progressive education, may in fact be a recipe for cruelty. The craftsman's workshop is indeed a cruel school if it activates our sense of inadequacy.

To the social philosopher, the intersection of practice and talent poses a general question about agency: we are minded to believe that engagement is better than passivity. The pursuit of quality is also a matter of agency, the craftsman's driving motive. But agency does not happen in a social or emotional vacuum, particularly good-quality work. The desire to do something well is a personal litmus test; inadequate personal performance hurts in a different way than inequalities of inherited social position or the externals of wealth: it is about you. Agency is all to the good, but actively pursuing good work and finding you can't do it corrodes one's sense of self.

Our ancestors too often turned a blind eye to this problem. The progressive eighteenth century strongly proclaimed the virtues of "careers open to talent"—talent rather than inheritance the just foundation of upward mobility in society. Proponents of this doctrine could easily neglect, in their drive to destroy inherited privilege, the fate of the losers in competition based on talent. Diderot was unusual in paying attention to such losers, from his earliest books to mature works like *Rameau's Nephew* and *Jacques the Fatalist*; in them, the inadequacy of talent rather than social circumstance or blind chance begets the most grinding form of ruin. Still, the effort of exposure and engagement has to be made. In a letter, Diderot remarks that only the rich can afford to be stupid; for others, ability is a necessity, not an option. Talent then runs its race. This is the outline of a tragedy, but in Diderot's pages the losers can gain something as well. Failure can temper them; it can teach a fundamental modesty even if that virtue is gained at great pain.



First of all, work now presents itself as an event – in other words as an *excedence*, as a living excess. The event detaches itself from the continuity of the ordinary horizon of life, and yet it is within that horizon, it even represents its centre. In this artificial depth in which you find yourself when you plunge into the world of immanence, that is, in this entirely constructed world in which the 'natural' no longer exists, the event is not an 'outside' but an internal explosion. The impossibility of 'going-outside': this is, then, what announces creative *excedence*.

Second: biopolitical labour is a multidimensional happening. We have already stressed the ontological profundity of artistic labour and the fact that this ontological depth is still marked by a *Kunstswollen*, overdetermined by an *episteme*. Now, the event which we identify and interpret through the production of biopolitical labour has the same collective and cultural characteristics as those displayed by present-day industry. This confirms the multidimensional character of cognitive labour. However, we should beware: this character does not express merely something of the order of interactive cooperation. The hermeneutic schools (from Gadamer to Eco and Jauss) have stressed this element; and the inter-individual or trans-individual reading of Simondon has described its physiognomy and its movements through the constitution of the technical objects

themselves. But all this is not sufficient for us to grasp and understand the particular consistency of the artistic phenomenon produced by cognitive labour. In reality, this phenomenon presents itself as something which goes beyond itself, which transcends – in a world which no longer knows an 'outside' – the independence and autonomy of its production: it is in this respect that it is given as multidimensional *excedence*.

This brings us to the third point, as we follow this 'ontological depth' which the Vienna School had described, with such force, as the interpretative sign of artistic production. In effect, we have to specify the multidimensional event as an *excedence* which opens to the common. Now, artistic production traverses industry and constructs common languages. All production is consequently an event of communication; and the common is construed through multidimensional events. And this is how it comes about, this capacity to renew the mechanisms of knowledge and action which – today, in the epoch of cognitive labour – we call artistic.

I would like to consider one last problem before I stop. I have stressed biopolitical. Let us take a look at the classical poets in this light; and in particular let us look at Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Here we find ourselves again immersed in a mythical representation of life which



The Overqualified

Freelance is just another word / for nothing left to lose
—Noa Tsaushu rephrasing Kris Kristofferson and Fred
Foster's "Me and Bobby McGee"

Virno's understanding of Marx's "general intellect," Michael Hardt's notion of "affective labor," Lazzarato's articulation of "immaterial labor," and Jodi Dean's conception of "communicative capitalism" are but a few examples of diverse Marxist proposals that provide varying perspectives on what labor has become in the last half-century. Although not all of these authors make it explicit, we can nevertheless read their descriptions and analyses in relation to labor beyond employment. Here, I mean mainly unsalaried and unremunerated labor, but also other daily practices that are considered consumerist or cognitive, which in reality make new forms of labor.¹²⁴

According to Arendt's scheme, labor refers to the world of necessity—organic, repetitive, and cyclical—as well as to growth and decay, pain and birth. For Arendt, work corresponds to the world of artificial things and has to do much more with a product, a "work"—which is able to surpass the human lifespan. But as Lazzarato explains, under

124 We can call this sentimental labor—that is, labor that is performed along the lifespan of the commodity, and together with the commodity. This is a social relation that is materialized in the commodity from production to consumption.

the debt economy, "it is no longer possible to distinguish labor from action," as Arendt was able to.¹²⁵

A telling example of the meshing of labor and work under this economy of labor beyond employment is overproduction. Some of our most celebrated figures, men and women of great quality, have become synonymous with overwhelming productivity: the careers of Hans Ulrich Obrist, Žižek, and Rem Koolhaas personify this overproduction.¹²⁶ But for the rest of us, this labor beyond employment means overproduction of the self. As the Invisible Committee writes in *The Coming Insurrection*:

Producing *oneself* is becoming the dominant occupation of a society where production no longer has an object: like a carpenter who's been evicted from his shop and in desperation sets about hammering and sawing himself. All these young people smiling for their job interviews,

125 Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, 32; and Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 94–101. For Arendt, "works of art are thought things, but this does not prevent their being things." Ibid., 168–69. When combining the Arendtian conception of natality with the meaning of labor today, we resort to the question babies pose to us with their cuteness. Babies are cute not only because they are "the miracle that saves the world" (Arendt, 247), but also because this miracle is our belief of them being temporarily free of debt. Yet, in our birth we are already indebted to our ancestors, to Mother Nature, and to the gods that gave us life. This is how we can read, for example, the Jewish and Christian stories of the sacrifice of the son in the name of the Holy Spirit (Isaac, Jesus). See also Graeber, *Debt*, 77–78. Lazzarato writes that every French child is born 22,000 Euros in debt. Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, 65.

126 One notices how we enact the matters that we analyze. This is especially apparent within the discussion on immaterial labor within the art world, where analysis becomes another symptom of the epidemic. Freud's famous statement on negation being a form of affirmation seems to work well here. See Sigmund Freud, "Negation," in *Pelican Freud Library*, vol. 11, *On Metapsychology* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 435–42.

who have their teeth whitened to give them an edge, who go to nightclubs to boost their company spirit, who learn English to advance their careers, who get divorced or married to move up the ladder, who take courses in leadership or practice "self-improvement" in order to better "manage conflicts"—"the most intimate 'self improvement,'" says one guru, "will lead to increased emotional stability, to smoother and more open relationships, to sharper intellectual focus, and therefore to better economic performance."¹²⁷

Ohad Meromi's recent body of work spans from geometrical figuration and architectural installation elements to participatory performances and videos. In Meromi's, *Rehearsal Sculpture* (2010–ongoing), *Stepanova* (2011), and *Stand Like a Sculpture* (2011), he has been able to harness constructivist sensibilities and practices to examine contemporary management techniques and labor protocols of post-Fordism. By tracking the working body at rest and addressing the body of the viewer in his video piece *Stand Like a Sculpture*, Meromi draws trajectories from contemporary privatization processes back to the history of colonization and enslavement. In his work, Meromi moves from the sculptural and spatial to the social with the basic element being the human body—in scale but also in the promise it holds for gathering people.

In *Rehearsal Sculpture*, a collaborative space-movement experiment, the gallery and the objects facilitate a community at work: "My idea of work is closely tied with

play, but that's another issue. The rehearsals never become performances. In *Stand Like a Sculpture* you do encounter a temporarily static situation, but it does not mean that the work is done. One still has to work with it. Almost all of the work in the show presents itself in a tentative state."¹²⁸

Part of this experiment involves a collaboration with Anna Craycroft: a plywood mannequin is operated by Meromi following Craycroft's dance and movements. This object is called the "Instructor." The movement of Craycroft turns into instructions for the mannequin Meromi operates. With this plywood avatar the dance then turns into a script, notation, stage, prop, and guide.

His interest in previous languages of potentiality, like Vsevolod Meyerhold's biomechanics, has brought him to produce mimetic and repetitive scenarios for gestures—or what he calls "a community at work":

When operating within the performative, I start with the mimetic because it is a simple and coherent place to begin; then repetition goes against the mimetic, it abstracts the gesture, or makes it separate, its own thing. A group exercise of an assembly line is all about repetition. Only after a pretty long time elapses, when the exercise starts feeling uncomfortably close to exploitation, it gets interesting, and the "interesting" parts come from the gestures having a relation to the original task, but simultaneously being removed enough from it. These are the gestures that have potential to become new images, words. Maybe the words we need.¹²⁹

128 Joshua Simon, "Ohad Meromi," *Flash Art* 284 (May–June 2012): 96–97.
129 Ibid.

127 The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), 49–50.

THE FUTURE

More playhouses are being planned and built – some in open stage form, some arena, some flexible. Not many are being built with the conventional proscenium shape, because at last the local authorities, the universities, the amateurs and the architects are catching on to what has been proclaimed for close on sixty years – that our theatres are incapable of adaptation to the many kinds of drama available and also to experiment; they are, in fact, out of date.

In London, the long struggle for a National Theatre, started by Granville-Barker and William Archer in 1904, has at last been resolved, and building should have begun by the time these words are in print. Everywhere there is the same tremendous upsurge of interest in the theatre.

How can the designer contribute? Not by building mountains of naturalistic scenery that the films can do so much better, but by looking at things through a burning glass; by distilling the essence of a play; by selection of the significant detail, and rejection of the unimportant comment; by anger and compassion, by excitement and discipline; by looking and listening; and by trying to understand the world in which we live now.



NEW
YORK

FLÉGER

Th
Th
Th
A
Ch
S
Th
A
Th
A
Ka
T
MID
The
O
The
O
The
Se
The
Er
The
Un
Desi
Ma
Stuar
Geo
Resto
Oxi
Resto
Oxi
The M
Bar
Early
W.
The L
Met
The N
Allen
Theatre
Fabe
The Th
Eyre
Brecht
Meth



HIC IMAGINATION

so. But, as Robert Edmond Jones has said better than anyone else, it can only happen when the scenographer *thinks as a poet* and uses his poetic imagination in his designs.

Furniture and Set Properties

These elements are one step nearer the actor, both in physical proximity and usefulness to him as an artist. Although there are only a few major categories of furniture that man has devised, there are innumerable variations and permutations on these basic forms; he needs something to sit or lie on (chairs, benches, stools, beds), something to hold objects and material for his immediate use (tables in various forms), and storage units, sometimes open, often with lids or doors, in which to keep his needs and possessions (chests, boxes, shelves). All of man's furnishings fall within these categories; the manner in which he fashions and decorates them, however, tells much about him in relation to the age in which he lives and about how he views his position in relation to the world as a whole, past as well as present.

In his book *An Illustrated History of Furnishings*, Mario Praz gives some indication of the close relationship between man and those objects he makes, selects, or uses.

Dickens and Gogol have written about the capacity that objects have for expressing their owner. Podsnap's silver (in *Our Mutual Friend*) was characterized by a "hideous solidity." "Everything was made up to look as heavy as it could, and to take up as much room as possible." Twenty years before, in *Dead Souls*, Gogol described Sobakevitch's house: "Tchitchikov looked around the room again and everything in it, everything was solid and clumsy to the last degree and had a strange resemblance to the master of the house. In a corner of the room stood a paunchy walnut bureau on four very absurd legs looking exactly like a bear. The table, the armchairs, the chairs were all of the heaviest and most uncomfortable shape; in short, every chair, every object seemed to be saying 'I am a Sobakevitch too!' or 'I too am very much like Sobakevitch!'"

This is the house in its deepest essence: a projection of the ego. And furnishing is nothing but an indirect form of ego-worship.

37

Ar
ev
ev
ve
th
sir
ter
ing
fir
po

ur
th
pi
go
its
ca
ei



37. Doors for *Oedipus*

And later he writes: "For this reason, perhaps even more than painting or sculpture, perhaps even more than architecture itself, furniture reveals the spirit of an age." The scenographer, therefore, might be well advised to follow this simple principle in his research into period interiors: Whenever seeking information concerning furniture or set properties, do not just try to find isolated pieces and objects; find, if at all possible, these items as they are being used.

A source picture such as the one shown in figure 38 is much more helpful to the scenographer than examination of each of the objects in the picture individually; as with a work of art, a good research picture is more than the sum of its parts. The items that comprise this present category are far more necessary to the actor than either the general background (which he cannot

use directly) or specific units of scenic architecture. But, as with this latter category, it is possible to create a sense of place and period—its characteristic form and atmosphere—by careful selection and placement of furniture and set properties. In the arena theater and on the open stage, creating this sense becomes critically important to the scenographer since furniture and set properties literally become the scenery.

It was said of Molière that he could place chairs on the stage so effectively that "they could almost speak" (fig. 39). The scenographer, in the selection or design of furniture and set properties, is faced with the problem of making sure each piece is correctly made and finished; the creative scenographer must also, however, spend as much time or more considering the proper relationship of each piece of fur-

niture to the function it will serve—the actor's use of it and its relation to the design as a whole—as well as overseeing its manufacture and its finish. Jean Cocteau, although a man of letters, was keenly aware of the importance of this principle; "A chair," he once wrote, "badly placed on the stage is almost as dangerous as a trapeze insecurely suspended from the roof." It is in this area, the selection and placement of furniture and set properties, that the scenographer and director should expend their greatest effort to communicate with each other. No part of the physical production should take precedence over this most important consideration.

The decisions they make cannot be underestimated in importance to the performer who, in most instances, has an instinctive desire to relate to his immediate environment in a highly personal manner. While it has often been observed that young actors tend to hold on to a piece of furniture, even hide behind it, the mature actor also uses these objects—chairs, tables, set properties—but does so in order to expose his internal thoughts by direct physical contact with them in a meaningful way. The veteran actor (or director) realizes that these objects can, as the French Dauphin of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* demonstrates (fig. 40), show



At first glance, the sculptures look like set models placed upon pedestals. But this turns out to be deceptive. First, the "models" were often bewildering if seen as plans for a stage production. The *Cymbeline* "model," for instance, had no floor on which performers could move. Anyone who has seen the renderings produced by Soviet designers know that the tradition there is to produce conceptual renderings that can stand alone as works of art, not working shop drawings. Though his Soviet training was in architecture, not theater, Tsypin seems to have inherited this sense of theater artistry. Second, the models and the "bases" form a unit. The bases are often made of steel that has been rusted, twisted, and distressed, and the model portion often sits within rather than merely perched atop the base. These bases represent, in a sense, the nonvisible part of the world of the play. "Whenever you build a set," Tsypin explains, "whatever is not onstage is just as important as what is. Sometimes, the imaginary space that you don't

secured plates. Visitors to the g
taped sound score composed by
sounds collected by riding arou
the underside of a car. Tsypin
"Nowhere else in the world do
world as in New York—layers
sense, especially in *Don Giovanni*
gallery space, golden threads, bas
way," he continues, "it's a theate
actor."

The fact that Tsypin takes the t
apart from almost all American d
their work. But Tsypin feels that t
"I don't know how they do it, fif
one after the other," he marvels.

actually see onstage is the actual life essence of the show. For example, in *Don Giovanni*, it's the space below, it's the underworld that haunts our imagination. And in the sculptures, I have the freedom to actually create this. I have a space that is bigger than the stage itself. So in a way, it is the world around them or the space around them that makes the sculptures."

The sculptures are certainly inspired by the plays, but they are concepts or essences, and significantly, they are often completed after a show is over. "When I work on a real show, I don't have time to do something like this. That's why I needed to do these sculptures, so I could eventually realize that need that was taken away months ago," he says, laughing. "You see something in your mind that is not necessarily possible in that particular theater. It's an idealized world that exists only in your imagination. That's what makes it interesting in a way. But here, it takes another leap."

By coming back to the sculptures after the completion of a show, Tsypin creates a sort of memorial or monument to the show, as he describes it: "The show happened. Usually I've dealt with wonderful works of literature or music, yet it just came and went. That's all that's left. There's a tension between the fact that I work with this very solid material and yet it just goes away like this, *whoosh*. You see your sets destroyed and burned. In a way, it's Manhattan."

The gallery show was more than a simple display, however. It was a total environment that reflected Tsypin's vision of New York as a multilayered city. Part of the gallery floor was covered with metal plates—the kind used to cover excavation sites in city streets. Anyone familiar with the city has heard the metallic thumping of cars and trucks riding over improperly secured plates. Visitors to the gallery walking across these plates triggered a taped sound score composed by Bruce Odland, part of which consisted of sounds collected by riding around the city with a microphone attached to the underside of a car. Tsypin referred to these as "underworld" sounds. "Nowhere else in the world do you have such a strong sense of an underworld as in New York—layers and layers. That connects with the whole sense, especially in *Don Giovanni*, of abyss and underworld." Above the gallery space, golden threads, based on *Klinghoffer*, also create sounds. "In a way," he continues, "it's a theater, but there are no actors—you become an actor."

The fact that Tsypin takes the time to create these "monuments" sets him apart from almost all American designers, who keep virtually no records of their work. But Tsypin feels that this is a necessary part of his artistic process. "I don't know how they do it, fifteen or twenty shows in a row every year, one after the other," he marvels. "Then it becomes a job, and you hate it.

CHAPTER 11

necessitate a pedestal width of unsightly size. You must use your own judgment in this case.

Make sure the sculpture and pedestal sit level without wobbling. Either sculpture or pedestal can be shimmed with small pieces of folded cardboard or wood slivers. The sculpture normally has a **sculpture base** of wood or stone screwed to the bottom of the piece. These bases usually have felt covers affixed to the underside to protect surfaces from scratching and to assist in leveling. It is not a good idea to put metal glides or rollers under a pedestal bottom because the glides or rollers can allow a casual jarring to become a major catastrophe — the pedestal might scoot, under a light pressure, upsetting the sculpture.

Generally, sculptures are not fastened to their pedestals. There is no great need if the pedestal is the proper size and the chance of damaging a sculpture while trying to fasten it securely is high. If, however, it is necessary to fasten a sculpture securely to a pedestal (an option which almost always requires the pedestal, in turn, to be fastened securely to the floor under it), there are a number of methods. If you can put screws into the pedestal floor, one way is to place step-clamps on each side of the base, tightly screwed to the pedestal floor at the bottom ends of the clamps. These clamps can be either plastic (virtually invisible but easily broken) or plastic-covered metal. Where the clamps come in contact with the base, they can be covered by plastic sleeves or separated from the base by tiny strips of foam rubber. Flexible plastic tubing in a variety of sizes can be shaped into sleeves to fit over the clamps. The plastic tubing used by most museums to fit over metal clamps is actually the clear plastic air-hose tubing used in home aquariums. The step-clamp method is the most widely used manner of securing sculpture to pedestal, but in some cases, dowels, pegs, or screws in both the pedestal and the sculpture base are the solution. The more elaborate methods of securing the sculpture to the pedestal should be handled professionally. Your local art museum could advise you best on these methods.

ages—the
quality, a
he Appia
identified
mer-artist
ative per-
modernism,
when he
personal,
e expected
n-François
r sociopo-
adiscourse
ern design
world of the
ience; it is
d within a
trap in the
now domi-
ating, often
as come to

ctific, tangi-
alized, the-
as an exten-
ative), then
of view is
hat Charles
iousness, of
ce, ugliness,
continuity,
made aware
st successful
berations of
modernism
tual mecha-
the object is
art from the
and further
tive viewer.

If one tries to describe modern design by looking at all that has been associated with "modern drama," the result will be confusing at best. The hodgepodge of design styles associated with modern drama ranges from detailed realism to total abstraction and thus has little apparent stylistic consistency or theoretical basis. Moreover, with only a few notable exceptions, it is not easily correlated with specific developments or movements within modern art. Although there is a strong tradition in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries of fine and plastic artists designing for the stage—from Paul Sérusier and Picasso to David Hockney and David Salle—these artists have shown, for the most part, a surprising inability to transpose their radical ideas onto the three-dimensional space of the stage in a manner as innovative as their art. Modern art on the stage has tended toward flat representation of the superficial stylistic qualities of particular artists. It is an ironic testament to the overwhelming strength of the stage space that it can dominate and subjugate anything put upon it and create a more or less homogeneous look. The frontal relationship of spectator and performer in most presentations, the usual need for visibility and audibility, and the "reality" imparted by the presence of human beings in most stage productions exert a tremendous pressure on the shape and format of design, thereby limiting innovation. The collaborative nature of theater, the existing architecture of theater spaces, and the economic pressures of both commercial and non-commercial theater also contribute to the essentially conservative nature of the art. These reasons help explain why avant-garde artists have had little impact on the development of stage design, and why evolutions in the art of stage design must be measured in fairly subtle ways. A stage set is still a stage set; there are only a limited number of ways in which the visual elements of a production can relate to the performers and the spectators.]

For all intents and purposes modern design began with the theoretical writings of Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig, starting with Appia's work in the 1890s. In response to the scientific realism that typified the naturalistic drama of the 1870s and 1880s and the two-dimensional but detailed realism of painted sets typical of nineteenth-century romantic realism, Appia and Craig called for a theatricality characterized by simplicity, suggestion, abstraction, and grandeur within the context of a three-dimensional sculptural setting that would unify the performer and the stage space. Important in this modern concept was the plasticity or transformability of the stage through light and, in some cases, movable scenic elements such as Craig's famous screens. Paramount in this approach was the sense of aesthetic pleasure and harmony expressed by Craig in his essay "The Artists of the Theatre of the Future." "It is idle to talk about the distraction of scenery," Craig



received as the "owner" of the desk: the object of her mundane work became an essential part of an art object about which the owner was later interviewed for television. In this way, Slotawa's narrative had a knock-on effect for the "project partners," enhancing their status as employees of an art museum. The former backstage area of the Kunsthalle offices shifted into the limelight of artistic dramatization, becoming the object of media documentation.

Between stage and backstage

The artist's work enters deeper still into the life of Madeleine Schuppli, the director of the Thun art museum. Lacking material of his own, Slotawa shipped the furniture from her apartment into the exhibition space (*Museumsshop Thun*, 2003). Schuppli's private life (and that of her partner) was thus played off against her professional role as curator and art-lover. Her furniture left the shelter of her private living quarters to be put on display in reinterpreted form in her own workplace. Thus both the director and her possessions switched roles, being subjected to the scrutiny of reinterpretation and public viewing.

Slotawa's works can be read as social constructions of objects consisting of different materials and elements which, like the actors in human societies, make their impact in relation to each other and to the audience. What also becomes clear is the creation of spaces and the definition of borders and possibilities for access as a social construct, as emphasized by Georg Simmel: "Social interaction among human beings is—apart from everything else it is—experienced as a fulfillment of space," he notes in his essay on "Space and the Spatial Ordering of Society."¹³ Social relations, also in terms of proximity, belonging, or distance, become sensual and spatial. Space and living spaces, even supposedly "natural" ones, are not givens.¹⁴

In his works, then, Slotawa offers a sensitive mirror image of processes of space-making and territo-

rialization
living spa
archies a

Da

Ma

Da

in his wo
them to r
miliar co
in similar
chair and
Chair), te
Hand—co
apparent
but seem
Holds Ha
and ident
bodies in

201

Participation

David Renggli, *The Train from A to B*, 2008,
Installation view, Nicoletta Rusconi, Milan, 2010

some bases as independent works. In his 1989 monograph, Brancusi (Abbeyville), Eric Shanes writes,

"In the 1926 Brummer Gallery exhibition [in New York] Brancusi exhibited five bases as works of art, rather than merely as supports." A photo of the Brummer Gallery catalogue's checklist is reproduced by Dumitresco and Istrati (p. 176). According to this document, six bases were exhibited.

The Studio and the Self

Pontus Hulten has called Brancusi's studio "a combination of domicile and temple". We know of Brancusi's impulse to create temples, but there is also a more worldly aspect to the art work of his studio: it is that of the *mise-en-scène*. Geist reminds us that the studio was "intended to be visited, [Brancusi] had no dealer in Paris and prospective buyers had to seek him out in his studio". In other words, the artifact of the studio represents the professionalization of the interior life. The traditional

idea of the artist's studio as public location is given a 20th-century twist by Brancusi. It is presented as its own opposite, at once an authentically private place and a Duchampian stage set.

Brancusi's studio, like his individual pieces of furniture, was simultaneously itself and a representation of itself—for the benefit of others as well as for his own benefit. Perhaps his narcissistic photographic self-portraits were one way of being alone yet not alone in the studio, with no one there to make it into decor but himself. A 1923 photographic self-portrait not only shows one of Brancusi's best furniture pieces, a small wooden bench with arms but no back (used here with one of his frequent base and stool forms, the ovally pierced solid), but also provides wonderful information on the appropriate Brancusian posture. The artist presides cross-legged like a pasha, feet up, in a decidedly non-European way. How he is positioned on the seat is as important as the form of the piece.

Brancusi's seats are just as interesting as his tables. In addition to this studio bench there are several carved wooden studio stools: the *Bench* (1915) in the Philadelphia Museum of Art; several stone stools and benches around the park in Tîrgu-Jiu; and, above all the 12 *Table of Silence* stools. They are ellipsoids halved and reversed, like the *Endless Column* module, but round in section, perhaps derived from the flat pedestals with disks and half-disks stacked on edge, like the Museum of Modern Art's pedestal for *Young Bird*. In Brancusi's photographs and drawings of his studio we sometimes see a humble wooden side chair for kitchen or office, called "nondescript" by Dumitresco and Istrati. They recount: "Brancusi painted a gouache of this chair and showed it to us. 'Here', he said, 'is the last trace of conventional furniture around me'."

Originally published in *Art in America*, March 1990.
Courtesy Brant Publications, Inc.





This happily revealing picture gives the true feel of our modestly equipped machine shop, and the working position for pull-over crosscut work at the Dominion. How many hundreds of enjoyable hours I must have spent there!

First the timber moved across and through the machine — by hand for the rip-saw or rebating and grooving, across the overhead planer, and then by automatically fed through the thicknesser. Then found the sections; the pull-over then described them to length, cut tenons and dado housings (shallow grooves across the grain to house, for example, stair treads or book shelves), forked risings or other routed details from the overhead router, and certain related operations.

When using the cross-cut saw, there would be a portable wooden top-surface in place. The rise-and-fall table casting (which of course also takes the rip-saw) would be used for more accurate work, with the timber held firm by the excellent toggle clamp. When tenoning, a 2 1/2 inch or 4 1/2 inch solid cutter head replaces the saw-blade; fixed width dado heads, or a wobble-saw being the alternative. The photograph shows a 2 1/2 inch cross-cut saw set up, and behind it the overhead spindle/router. This makes ordinary router bits or a french head. Given suitable scribing blades, scribed tenon shoulders could be worked in one pass. The router has obvious uses as a fixed head over the table, or for repetition angle routing.

Seen in the background is a Walker Turners' hand planer, used for small sections when the big machine is otherwise engaged; a Dominion hollow-chisel mortiser; and the machine-shop blackboard.

The fine sculptural quality of every Dominion casting. The central support for the traverse bed, just visible here, is splendidly audacious; only an engineer with real knowledge of his material would expect to get away with it. The traverse remains unbending right to its extremity, which for a 1/2 inch width is essential; yet the motorized carriage is immensely heavy, taking two men to lift it with difficulty. It travels very smoothly. Note the generous wing-nut; nothing is dearer about that!

CURTAIN Plywood covered flat with shapes cut out, or canvas covered with gauze reinforcement.

CYCLOPAMA curved backcloth usually painted in one colour, partly encompassing the acting area and indicating sky.

DIMMER general term for various appliances - transformers, rheostats, etc., by which the quantity of light can be graded.

FLY FLOOR *poche*. Small metal trap in stage floor, covering sockets into which the floods, ground row lights, backing strips, fires, etc., can be plugged.

DOCK scene store at the side or back of stage with direct access to street for loading.

EXTENDING BRACE *extension brace*. Adjustable support for a flat.

FALSE PROSCENIUM *portal opening*. Temporary proscenium set within the permanent opening.

FESTOON curtain with several lines passing through rings sewn to webbing on the permanent side. By this means the curtain can be draped in swags.

FLAT wooden frame covered with canvas, usually representing a wall.

FLATS footlights

FLOOD lamp with a diffusing reflector giving a wide spread of light; suspended above stage or used on a stand in wings.

FLY FLOOR narrow gallery above stage (usually on both side walls) from which suspended scenery and lighting can be raised and lowered. Sometimes fly bridge across back connects fly floors on each side.

FLY RAIL *pinrail*. Railing on stage side of fly floor to which hemp lines are made off on a cleat.

canvases to be repaired.

PROFILES *PIAT* flat with plywood edge cut in silhouette.

PROFILE SPOT hard edged spotlight.

PROJECTOR spotlight designed to throw a painter or screen. Also to throw a silhouette across stage of leaves, etc.)

PROMPT SIDE (P.S.) *stage left*.

PROPERTIES (PROPS) pieces used in the action or painted or sewn on any movable object.

PROSCENIUM originally Latin version of Greek (dressing room). Now means the frame dividing RAIL horizontal member of flat frame.

RAKE slope, either of whole stage or of ramped road.

RETURN flat leading off at right angle to another.

REVEAL *thickness*. Surround of arch, window, door.

ROSTRUM *parallel*. Platform for raising a part of the setting.

SANDWICH BATTEN double battening for cloths.

SETTING LINE line parallel with footlights, upstage of scenery is measured. Must be shown on designs.

SILL *saddle iron*. Plaque bar spanning the foot of size stage.

SPOT BAR *light pipe*. Counterweighted barrel from spot line.

SPOT LINE single line dropped from the grid to an STAGE CLOTH *ground cloth*.

STAGE DIRECTOR *production stage manager*.

STAGE SCREW screw for securing stage brace to floor.



Ohad Meromi, *Rehearsal Sculpture*, 2011. Documentation of collaboration with Anna Craycroft; photograph by Ohad Meromi; courtesy of the artist.

As Marx explains, the productive powers of labor under capitalism appear as the creative power of capital. Franco Berardi has made this point explicit by describing how the general intellect has turned into labor:

The development of productive forces, as a global network of cognitive labor that Marx called the "general intellect," has provoked an enormous increase in the productive potency of labor. This potency can no longer be semiotized, organized, and contained by the social form of capitalism. Capitalism is no longer able to semiotize and organize the social potency of cognitive productivity, because value can no longer be defined in terms of average necessary work time. Therefore, the old forms of private property and salaried labor are no

longer able to semiotize and organize the deterritorialized nature of capital and social labor.¹³⁰

Today, with post-Fordist performative labor, we see how many aspects of life have been penetrated to constitute new forms of labor even before entering the employment market.

With labor accessible to capital worldwide, the employment problem was fixed for capital by the de-unionized labor of the debt economy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, not only do we suffer from the de-unionized labor market when entering the employment market, and go into debt through student loans and paying state and life taxes, but we are also *overqualified* for the employment market. Once it might have been enough to master only one field of work. That would have guaranteed a steady job, with a pension, a yearly vacation, and a gift for the holidays from the union.¹³¹

The fact is that we are people who can write code, heal, play an instrument, photograph, translate, teach, as well as master the software of several graphic design and video editing programs. Eventually, we, the people who were just described here, find a day job for a few hours a week teaching art to kids in a private elementary school and work evening shifts waiting tables in a bar.

130 Franco "Bifo" Berardi, "The Future after the End of the Economy," *e-flux journal*, no. 30 (December 2011).

131 The summer of 1939 saw the first paid vacation in France. If we read Benjamin on labor and destruction from that period, it is no coincidence that the vacation for the workers with their families ended with the Nazi invasion of Poland and the beginning of World War II on September 1, 1939. See Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations*, 155–200.

From the other side, the conditions of the generational group of the overeducated and overqualified workforce has been discussed by Libertarian billionaire Peter Thiel, co-founder of the e-commerce and money transfer operation PayPal, who defined the situation as the "Higher Education Bubble."¹³² Zygmunt Bauman has spoken of the phenomenon of rising graduate unemployment and the shrinking of the labor market for holders of higher education credentials. For him, this grave personal reality holds a social opportunity: "the

132 See Sarah Lacy, "Peter Thiel: We're in a Bubble and It's Not the Internet. It's Higher Education," TechCrunch, April 10, 2011, <http://techcrunch.com/2011/04/10/peter-thiel-were-in-a-bubble-and-its-not-the-internet-its-higher-education>. The idea of innovation for the past thirty years has meant the exact operation of the likes of Thiel and PayPal. With the financialization of life itself, innovation came to mean the speeding up of the flow of money, and PayPal does exactly that. The relation between change and debt in this respect is crucial. When we think of an upgrade of a certain electronic appliance, the way we finance the purchase of this new thing is through indebtedness. We go into a program of financing a new thing, say an iPhone, by which the company, Apple, supposedly manufactures change (a new model), and by doing so they actually manufacture debt (we commit to a plan of several dozen months with a fixed price to reimburse the device we bought). By going into debt what we are actually producing is no change. Debt has a time-machine-like quality as it freezes our power relation. In this respect, when thinking of the debt-economy driven bailout of the banks in 2008–2009, it puts the 2008 Obama campaign slogan of "Change" in a ridiculing light. Lazzarato writes:

All financial innovations have but one sole purpose: possessing the future in advance by objectivizing it. This objectivation is of a completely different order from that of labor time; objectivizing time, possessing it in advance, means subordinating all possibility of choice and decision which the future holds to the reproduction of capitalist power relations. In this way, debt appropriates not only the present labor time of wage-earners and of the population in general, it also preempts non-chronological time, each person's future as well as the future of society as a whole. The principal explanation for the strange sensation of living in a society without time, without possibility, without foreseeable rupture, is debt.

Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, 46–47.

vision of the toxins of inequality neutralized, made livable with and rendered harmless by the education driven upward mobility, and yet more disastrously the vision of education able to keep upward social mobility in operation, begin to simultaneously evaporate. Their dissipation spells trouble to education as we know it. But it also spells trouble to the excuse favored and commonly used in our society in the efforts to justify its injustices."¹³³

Bauman's text focuses on the United States and Europe, stating that this deterioration of work prospects happens "perhaps faster yet than the market for those lacking university certificates." Bauman quotes a pre-Occupy Wall Street *New York Times* article on the grim reality facing future graduate and PhD students. William D. Cohan writes a somewhat prophetic conclusion based on the political horizons opened up in the Middle East at that very moment: "One lesson to be learned from the recent uprisings in the Middle East, especially in Egypt, is that a long-suffering group of highly educated but unemployed people can be the catalyst for long overdue societal change. Why should we be immune from feeling the ripple effects of what occurred in Tahrir Square?"¹³⁴

Intellectual workers and the creative classes are an emblematic group of the overqualified—but this category is not merely a sociological one, but rather a paradigmatic one

133 Zygmunt Bauman, "On the Shaky Prospects of Meritocracy," *Social Europe Journal*, March 21, 2011, <http://www.social-europe.eu/2011/03/on-the-shaky-prospects-of-meritocracy>.

134 William D. Cohan, "Degrees of Influence," *New York Times*, March 16, 2011, <http://www.opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/16/degrees-of-influence>.

for the current employment market and labor conditions. We are all overqualified for this employment market. It is not only that we are overqualified for the jobs the employment market can offer us—from indirect employment to corporate professionalism—it is the barbaric nature of our employment conditions that we are overqualified for.¹³⁵

Remember how in the 1990s we were told that we were moving on from the Fordist assembly line, toward flexible managerial regimes? And how parallel to that we were sold the dream of the “one-man show”? Back then it was said that one could do anything one wanted: write, direct, perform, compose a score, play, film, and edit the same piece—remember that promise?¹³⁶ But today we already

135 We should regard increase in personal contracts of the unionized right for collective bargaining as the managerial manifestation of a new mode of primitive accumulation that privatizes the commons, depriving us from our knowledge. Capital, says Dean, does not need so many doctors and teachers—it does not need so many university graduates. Hence the scores of first and second degree graduates making an overqualified workforce in Europe and North America. She writes:

Capitalism in the US and the UK no longer requires a skilled, educated, middle class, so universal education is no longer necessary. It doesn't take as many people to service the top one percent as we have—so most of us are not necessary any more, except perhaps as the field out of which the one can emerge. In a society without skills, who needs a degree? In a setting that reduces education to knowledge, knowledge to information, and information to data, we are told that we can find out anything we want to know by googling it. We don't need professors to tell us, or at least not very many—a couple of great universities can probably supply all the lawyers, scientists, bankers, and novelists a country needs (and if not, well, there is a global elite from which to draw). For the most part, though, things, networked technologies, do it all for us so that we don't have to. We've outsourced basic skills—or, they've been expropriated from us.

Jodi Dean, “Is Democracy Possible? Sure, This is What Democracy Looks Like,” author's manuscript.

136 With the likes of iPhones and iPads, life itself becomes work separated from

realize that the assembly lines did not disappear—today they simply go through us. We are the assembly line—for this project you do video editing, in that school you give a random lecture, over there they post your text online for ten cents per word, ad infinitum. With no end product, are Google Docs and e-mail not the contemporary assembly lines? With the overqualified we see how the “precariat” is the new proletariat. When the assembly lines go through us, we find that slavery is redefined.¹³⁷

production. “I” became a commercial prefix, in the spirit of management guru Tom Peters who coined the phrase “I” is CEOs of Me Inc.” I thank Boaz Levin for stressing this point. Lazzarato quotes Marx's 1844 “Comments on James Mill,” where he writes: “within the credit relationship, it is not the case that money is transcended in man, but that man himself is turned into money, or money is incorporated in him. Human individuality, human morality itself, has become both an object of commerce and the material in which money exists. Instead of money, or paper, it is my own personal existence, my flesh and blood, my social virtue and importance, which constitutes the material, corporal form of the spirit of money.” Lazzarato, *The Making of the Indebted Man*, 60.

137 When writing of the Athenian polis and household in relation to the public and the private realm, Arendt contrasts enslavement with death: “whoever entered the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life, and too great a love for life obstructed freedom, was a sure sign of slavishness.” Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 36–37. This total anachronism seems poignant when proposed in relation contemporary labor conditions—today life itself is slavery.

and his specific *peinture*. He dictated his painting to the foreman of a sign factory, using a color chart and an order blank of graph paper to specify the location of form elements and their exact hue. The transmitted sketch was executed in three different sizes to demonstrate through modifications of density and space relationships the importance of structure and its varying emotional impact (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14. Two compositions on baked enamel, ordered by telephone from color grid ("telephone pictures"), 1923.

When in the winter of 1922 the art gallery *Der Sturm* under the brilliant leadership of Herwarth Walden, gave the first showing of Moholy's work, the obscurity was over. "Compositions of high appeal," wrote *Die Zeitung*, "created with a powerful sense of structure and its varying emotional impact."

There is no place for the independent action of the hand in productive labour because there is no place for the independent action of the hand in productive labour. The hand in productive and non-productive labour is *operative* rather than constructive; it is the fixed point through which the extraction of surplus-value occurs. The hand in productive and non-productive labour is 'unfree', that is, it is limited in its actions and subjective investment in the transformation of materials. In artistic labour art may be subject to the exigencies of general social technique, but this does not imply the diminishment of the autonomy of the hand and therefore the eradication of craft skills *as such*. On the contrary with the development of immaterial forms of production the place and function of the hand changes its role in art.

What the readymade introduces into art in the first decade of the twentieth century is precisely a new set of *cognitive relations* between eye and hand. In early Cubism the artist's reliance on the painting-hand as a continuous process of pushing, dabbing and pulling of paint across the surface, is arrested by the placing of the readymade element (*papier collé*) on the painterly surface. The sense of the painting as an aesthetic totality, driven by the fluid movement of the hand, is broken by the introduction of an interruptive, alien content. Accordingly the hand reaches *into* the picture space. This is the point at which the hand in art shifts its motor function from expressive manipulation in painting, and moulding and carving in sculpture, to the demands of conjunction and superimposition. This small, discreet disturbance of the painterly integrity of the modernist painting, represents a profound transformation, therefore, in notions of artistic value, setting the dialectic of deskilling and reskilling on its modern Duchampian course. It may have taken Duchamp to frame the readymade as a problem *for* painting, and not just in painting, but this does not alter the prescient character of the Picasso and Braque *papier collés*. This is because their collages reveal a glimpse of what was to shape the function of the hand of the artist after the technical assimilation of the readymade: placing, ordering and selecting.¹¹

a conception of labour as sensuous suffers a similar displacement, but, artistic labour does not suffer a diminishment of sensuousness. Rather, the sensuousness of artistic labour is transmuted and deflected into immaterial forms of labour. The traditional eye-hand relations of craft-based artistic skills are subject to a new intellectual and technical base. Calling on traditional craft skills and the integrity of the hand to ward off what is perceived as the craft-less decadence of contemporary art, therefore, not only defies the inexorable force of general social technique, but severely limits our understanding of craft. The place and function of the hand in art needs to be reembedded in an analysis of the relations between deskilling and skill as part of a wider analysis of craft's relations to general social technique. Yet, before we embark on an analysis of this we first need a more detailed physiological and anthropological understanding of the hand.

HUMAN AND HIGHER-PRIMATE

What sets humans apart from other animals is the organ of manipulation and communication: the dexterity of the hands or paws of animals. Indeed it is the opposable thumb which distinguishes human beings. Only human beings have an opposable thumb at the tip of the index finger. This means that humans have the ability and powers of delicacy and precision. In this respect as a guide to tool use, the hand is unique. This is why humans are unique and non-human primates are not. Humans use tools to mediate their interaction with the world. Non-human primates certainly use four-fingered tools to pick, gather and swipe, but importantly they are unable to use tools in a predirected or socially coordinated way. Humans are able to use tools to plan the production of tools.

DESKILLING, RESKILLING AND ARTISTIC LABOUR

89

These new cognitive relations reveal how after the introduction of the readymade the movement of the hand in art is subject to general social technique. But this divergence between skill and expressive movement does not thereby mean a loss of artistic autonomy. The theory of deskilling in productive labour is essentially a theory of the hand's displacement from a conception of labour as sensuous, totalizing practice. In art the hand suffers a similar displacement, but, importantly, unlike productive labour artistic labour does not suffer a diminishment of sensuousness and value. Rather, the sensuousness of artistic labour is transmuted and deflected into immaterial forms of labour. The traditional eye-hand relations of craft-based artistic skills are subject to a new intellectual and technical base. Calling on traditional craft skills and the integrity of the hand to ward off what is perceived as the craft-less decadence of contemporary art, therefore, not only defies the inexorable force of general social technique, but severely limits our understanding of craft. The place and function of the hand in art needs to be reembedded in an analysis of the relations between deskilling and skill as part of a wider analysis of craft's relations to general social technique. Yet, before we embark on an analysis of this we first need a more detailed physiological and anthropological understanding of the hand.

LABOUR AND PRODUCTIVE LABOUR

What the readymade introduces into art in the first decade of the twentieth century is precisely a new set of *cognitive relations* between eye and hand. In early Cubism the artist's reliance on the painting-hand as a continuous process of pushing, dabbing and pulling of paint across the surface, is arrested by the placing of the readymade element (*papier collé*) on the painterly surface. The sense of the painting as an aesthetic totality, driven by the fluid movement of the hand, is broken by the introduction of an interruptive, alien content. Accordingly the hand reaches *into* the picture space. This is the point at which the hand in art shifts its motor function from expressive manipulation in painting, and moulding and carving in sculpture, to the demands of conjunction and superimposition. This small, discreet disturbance of the painterly integrity of the modernist painting, represents a profound transformation, therefore, in notions of artistic value, setting the dialectic of deskilling and reskilling on its modern Duchampian course. It may have taken Duchamp to frame the readymade as a problem *for* painting, and not just in painting, but this does not alter the prescient character of the Picasso and Braque *papier collés*. This is because their collages reveal a glimpse of what was to shape the function of the hand of the artist after the technical assimilation of the readymade: placing, ordering and selecting.¹¹

What the readymade introduces into art in the first decade of the twentieth century is precisely a new set of *cognitive relations* between eye and hand. In early Cubism the artist's reliance on the painting-hand as a continuous process of pushing, dabbing and pulling of paint across the surface, is arrested by the placing of the readymade element (*papier collé*) on the painterly surface. The sense of the painting as an aesthetic totality, driven by the fluid movement of the hand, is broken by the introduction of an interruptive, alien content. Accordingly the hand reaches *into* the picture space. This is the point at which the hand in art shifts its motor function from expressive manipulation in painting, and moulding and carving in sculpture, to the demands of conjunction and superimposition. This small, discreet disturbance of the painterly integrity of the modernist painting, represents a profound transformation, therefore, in notions of artistic value, setting the dialectic of deskilling and reskilling on its modern Duchampian course. It may have taken Duchamp to frame the readymade as a problem *for* painting, and not just in painting, but this does not alter the prescient character of the Picasso and Braque *papier collés*. This is because their collages reveal a glimpse of what was to shape the function of the hand of the artist after the technical assimilation of the readymade: placing, ordering and selecting.¹¹

The machinic painters stressed the following: that they did not paint machines as substitutes for still lifes or nudes; the machine is not a represented object any more than its drawing is a representation. The aim is to introduce an element of a machine, so that it combines with something else on the full body of the canvas, be it with the painting itself, with the result that it is precisely the ensemble of the painting that functions as a desiring-machine. The induced machine is always other than the one that appears to be represented. It will be seen that the machine proceeds by means of an "uncoupling" of this nature, and ensures the deterritorialization that is characteristic of machines, the inductive, or rather the transductive quality of the machine, which defines recurrence, as opposed to representation-projection: *machinic recurrence versus Oedipal projection*. These opposing terms mark a struggle, or a disjunction, as can be seen, for example, in *Aeroplaf(l)a*, or *Automoma*, and again in Victor Brauner's *Machine à connaître en forme Mere*.⁶ In Picabia's work, the finished design connects up with the incongruous inscription, with the result that it is obliged to function with *this* code, with *this* program, by inducing a machine that does not resemble it. With Duchamp, the real machine element is directly introduced, either standing on its own merits or set-off by its shadow, or, in other instances, having its place in the ensemble determined by an aleatory mechanism that induces the still-present representations to change roles and statuses: *Tu m'* for example. The machine stands apart from all representation (although one can always represent it, copy it, in a manner however that is completely devoid of interest), and it stands apart because it is pure Abstraction; it is nonfigurative and nonprojective. Léger demonstrated convincingly that the machine did not represent anything, itself least of

Balanço-Sheet for "Desiring-Machines" / 97

all, because it was in itself the production of organized intensive states: neither form nor extension, neither representation nor projection, but pure and recurrent intensities. It sometimes happens, as in Picabia, that the discovery of the abstract leads to the machinic elements, while at other times, as in the example of many a Futurist, the opposite road is traveled. Consider the old distinction drawn by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, the distinction between representative states and affective states that do not represent anything. The machine is the affective state, and it is false to say that modern machines possess a perceptive capacity or a memory; machines themselves possess only affective states.

Oedipus as you wish to find silence the machines (neces- repressing and the repressed that brings desire to a stands being at a standstill). An ima- It is the compromise, but the namely, the nature of the r the revolutionary desire. It i distorts both parties alike, repressor and the nature of mise, the two parties have desire which remains on the

All these machines are real machines. Hocquenghem is right in saying, "Where desire is active, there is no longer any place for the Imaginary," nor for the Symbolic. All these machines are already there; we are continually producing them, manufacturing them, setting them in motion, for they are desire, desire just as it is—although it takes artists to bring about their autonomous presentation. Desiring-machines are not in our heads, in our imagination, they are *inside the social and technical machines themselves*. Our relationship with machines is not a relationship of invention or of imitation; we are not the cerebral fathers nor the disciplined sons of the machine. It is a relationship of peopling: we populate the social technical machines with desiring-machines, and we have no alternative. We are obliged to say at the same time: social technical machines are only conglomerates of desiring-machines under molar conditions that are historically determined; desiring-machines are social and technical machines restored to their determinant molecular conditions. Schwitters' Merz is the last syllable of Kommerz. It is futile to examine the usefulness or uselessness, the possibility or impossibility of these desiring-machines. Their impossibility and their uselessness become visible only in the autonomous artistic presentation, and there very rarely. Don't you see that they are possible because they are; they are there in every way, and we function with them. They are eminently useful, since they constitute the two directions of the relationship between the machine and man, the *communication* of the two. At the very moment you say "this machine is impossible," you fail to see that you are made possible, by being yourself one of its parts, the very part that seemed to be missing in order for it to be already working, the dancer-dancer. You argue about the possibility or the usefulness, but you are already inside the machine, you are a part of it. You have put a finger inside, or an eye, your anus, or your lips inside. The modern version of "You are in the same boat ...").

It almost appears as though the technical machines and desiring-machine size, or one of adaptation, desiring-size, or large machines suited to small problem of... The current tech- the the... with a... product... which s... capitalist... despite... explo... on o... of pr... and non... utilization... people, the prolif... of the large machines... technic components which w... -producers themselves, and th... of knowledge and of the profe... obvious that things as different as the m... of most areas of medical knowledge, th... automobile engine, and the monstro... comply with any technological necessit... and political imperatives whose aim i... control in the hands of a ruling class. I... to nature when one points out the extre... automobiles in cities, their archaic char... attached to them for show, and the pote... the bicycle, in our cities as well as in the

WORK

With

layoffs, picket
lines, dues, scabs,
goons, finks,
for-kitts, lockouts,
sweatshops,
sweatharts,
closed shops,
downtime,
wobbles, lunch
buckets, hard
hats, black lung,
boilermakers,
benefits, boots,
mills, hard times,
hammers, sickles,
debs, gompers,
boyles, meansys,
hottas, lomans,
Johnny Friendly,
and the company
store.

NATIONAL LAMP⁰⁰ION

NOV. 1975 THE HUMOR MAGAZINE \$1.00

IND
94490

poured part "B" into the cup till the scale indicated 18 g.

When the polyurethane has cured, remove it from the mold. Use a knife blade to pry it out. You may have to turn the mold over to get it from the other side, and then turn it over again to get it from the other side; if you exercise persistence, it will separate. Then there is no need to remove the flexible casting from the mold.

The seam of the casting can be cut with a pair of scissors.

Brush a little liquid latex
blend it into the surrounding
very thin liquid latex rubber
Latex (the product is called R
of balloon quality. Repeated
latex will help to blend out the

As you watch the foam will rise and grow warm. The next step in the operation may be the most difficult for you (it is for many people). You must leave the mold absolutely undisturbed for at least half an hour. Don't touch it. Don't move it. Don't bump the table. Don't slam the door. The situation is analogous to one you may recall, when your mother or grandmother would bake a cake; any jarring of the mold will cause the casting to "fall," until the fragile cells containing the expanded gases have cured and become firm.

mediately and rap-
idly begins to froth —
in twenty seconds
old.

Urethane

Treating the Seam

Mold
Opening is

arm-
the
people).
urbed
Don't
am the
ou may
ould
I would
will cause
ells con-
and be-

Art as Occupation: Claims for an Autonomy of Life

I want you to take out your cellphone. Open the video. Record whatever you see for a couple of seconds. No cuts. You are allowed to move around, to pan and zoom. Use effects only if they are built in. Keep doing this for one month, every day. Now stop. Listen.

Lets start with a simple proposition: what used to be work has increasingly been turned into occupation.¹

This change in terminology may look trivial. In fact, almost everything changes on the way from work to occupation—the economic framework, but also its implications for space and temporality.

If we think of work as labor, it implies a beginning, a producer, and, eventually, a result. Work is primarily seen as a means to an end: a product, a reward, or a wage. It is an instrumental relation. It also produces a subject by means of alienation.

An occupation is the opposite. An occupation keeps people busy instead of giving them paid labor.² An occupation is not hinged on any result; it has no necessary conclusion. As such, it knows no traditional alienation, nor any corresponding idea of subjectivity. An occupation doesn't necessarily assume remuneration either, since the process is thought to contain its own gratification. It has no temporal framework except the passing of time itself. It is not centered on a producer/worker, but includes consumers, reproducers, even destroyers, time-wasters, and bystanders—in essence, anybody seeking distraction or engagement.

Occupation

The shift from work to occupation applies in the most different areas of contemporary daily activity. It marks a transition far greater than the often-described shift from a Fordist to post-Fordist economy. Instead of being seen as a means of

earning, it is seen as a way of spending time and resources. It clearly accents the passage from an economy based on production to an economy fueled by waste, from time progressing to time spent or even idled away, from a space defined by clear divisions to an entangled and complex territory.

Perhaps most importantly: occupation is not a means to an end, as traditional labor is. Occupation is in many cases an end in itself.

Occupation is connected to activity, service, distraction, therapy, and engagement. But also to conquest, invasion, and seizure. In the military, occupation refers to extreme power relations, spatial complication, and 3-D sovereignty. It is imposed by the occupier on the occupied, who may or may not resist it. The objective is often expansion, but also neutralization, stranglehold, and the quelling of autonomy.

Occupation often implies endless mediation, eternal process, indeterminate negotiation, and the blurring of spatial divisions. It has no built-in outcome or resolution. It also refers to appropriation, colonization, and extraction. In its processual aspect occupation is both permanent and uneven—its connotations are completely different for the occupied and the occupier.

Of course occupations—in all the different senses of the word—are not the same. But the mimetic force of the term operates in each of the different meanings and draws them toward each other. There is a magic affinity within the word itself: if it sounds the same, the force of similarity works from within it.³ The force of naming reaches across difference to uncomfortably approximate situations that are otherwise segregated and hierarchized by tradition, interest, and privilege.



French political party Front National is violent avatars as a means of protest against its on



n is named Justine, like the main char-
acter in *The Misfortunes of Virtue*.

Occupation as Art

In the context of art, the transition from work to occupation has additional implications. What happens to the work of art in this process? Does it too transform into an occupation?

In part, it does. What used to materialize exclusively as object or product—as (art)work—now tends to appear as activity or performance. These can be as endless as strained budgets and attention spans will allow. Today the traditional work of art has been largely supplemented by art as a process—as an occupation.⁴

Art is an occupation in that it keeps people busy—spectators and many others. In many rich countries art denotes a quite popular occupational scheme. The idea that it contains its own gratification and needs no remuneration is quite accepted in the cultural workplace. The paradigm of the culture industry provided an example of an economy that functioned by producing an increasing number of occupations (and distractions) for people who were in many cases working for free. Additionally, there are now occupational schemes in the guise of art education. More and more post- and post-post-graduate programs shield prospective artists from the pressure of (public or private) art markets. Art education now takes longer—it creates zones of occupation, which yield fewer “works” but more processes, forms of knowledge, fields of engagement, and planes of relationality. It also produces ever-more educators, mediators, guides, and even guards—all of whose conditions of occupation are again processual (and ill- or unpaid).

The professional and militarized meaning of occupation unexpectedly intersect here—in the role of the guard or attendant—to create a contradictory space. Recently, a professor at the University of

Chicago suggested that museum guards should be armed.⁵ Of course, he was referring primarily to guards in (formerly) occupied countries like Iraq and other states in the midst of political upheaval, but by citing potential breakdowns of civic order he folded First World locations into his appeal. What's more, art occupation as a means of killing time intersects with the military sense of spatial control in the figure of the museum guard—some of whom may already be military veterans. Intensified security mutates the sites of art and inscribes the museum or gallery into a sequence of stages of potential violence.

Another prime example in the complicated topology of occupation is the figure of the intern (in a museum, a gallery, or, most likely, an isolated project).⁶ The term "intern" is linked to internment, confinement, and detention, whether involuntary or voluntary. She is supposed to be on the inside of the system, yet is excluded from payment. She is inside labor but outside remuneration: stuck in a space that includes the outside and excludes the inside simultaneously. As a result, she works to sustain her own occupation.

Both examples produce a fractured time-space with varying degrees of occupational intensity. These zones are very much shut off from one another, yet interlocked and interdependent. The schematics of art occupation reveal a checkpointed system, complete with gatekeepers, access levels, and close management of movement and information. Its architecture is astonishingly complex. Some parts are forcefully immobilized, their autonomy denied and quelled in order to keep other parts more mobile. Occupation works on both sides: forcefully seizing and keeping out, inclusion and exclusion, managing access and flow. It may

not come as surprise that this pattern often but not always follows fault lines of class and political economy.

In poorer and underdeveloped parts of the world, the immediate grip of art might seem to lessen. But art-as-occupation in these places can more powerfully serve the larger ideological deflections within capitalism and even profit concretely from labor stripped of rights.⁷ Here, migrant, liberal, and urban squalor can again be exploited by artists who use misery as raw material. Art "upgrades" poorer neighborhoods by aestheticizing their status as urban ruins and drives out long-term inhabitants after the area becomes fashionable.⁸ Thus art assists in the structuring, hierarchizing, seizing, up- or downgrading of space; in organizing, wasting, or simply consuming time through vague distraction or committed pursuit of largely unpaid para-productive activity; and it divvies up roles in the figures of artist, audience, freelance curator, or uploader of cellphone videos to a museum website.

Generally speaking, art is part of an uneven global system, one that underdevelops some parts of the world, while overdeveloping others—and the boundaries between both areas interlock and overlap.

Life and Autonomy

But beyond all this, art doesn't stop at occupying people, space, or time. It also occupies life as such.

Why should that be the case? Let's start with a small detour on artistic autonomy. Artistic autonomy was traditionally predicated not on occupation, but on separation—more precisely, on art's separation from life.⁹ As artistic production became more specialized in an industrial world marked by an

increasing division of labor, it also grew increasingly divorced from direct functionality.¹⁰ While it apparently evaded instrumentalization, it simultaneously lost social relevance. As a reaction, different avant-gardes set out to break the barriers of art and to recreate its relation to life.

Their hope was for art to dissolve within life, to be infused with a revolutionary jolt. What happened was rather the contrary. To push the point: life has been occupied by art, because art's initial forays back into life and daily practice gradually turned into routine incursions, and then into constant occupation. Nowadays, the invasion of life by art is not the exception, but the rule. Artistic autonomy was meant to separate art from the zone of daily routine—from mundane life, intentionality, utility, production, and instrumental reason—in order to distance it from rules of efficiency and social coercion. But this incompletely segregated area then incorporated all that it broke from in the first place, recasting the old order within its own aesthetic paradigms. The incorporation of art within life was once a political project (both for the Left and Right), but the incorporation of life within art is now an aesthetic project, and it coincides with an overall aestheticization of politics.

On all levels of everyday activity, art not only invades life, but occupies it. This doesn't mean that it's omnipresent. It just means that it has established a complex topology of both overbearing presence and gaping absence—both of which impact daily life.

Checklist

But, you may respond, apart from occasional exposure, I have nothing to do with art whatsoever! How can my life be occupied by it? Perhaps one of the following questions applies to you:

Does art possess you in the guise of endless self-performance?¹¹ Do you wake feeling like a multiple? Are you on constant auto-display?

Have you been beautified, improved, upgraded, or attempted to do this to anyone/thing else? Has your rent doubled because a few kids with brushes relocated into that dilapidated building next door? Have your feelings been designed, or do you feel designed by your iPhone?

Or, on the contrary, is access to art (and its production) being withdrawn, slashed, cut off, impoverished, and hidden behind insurmountable barriers? Is labor in this field unpaid? Do you live in a city that redirects a huge portion of its cultural budget to fund a one-off art exhibition? Is conceptual art from your region privatized by predatory banks?

All of these are symptoms of artistic occupation. While, on the one hand, artistic occupation completely invades life, it also cuts off much art from circulation.

Division of Labor

Of course, even if they had wanted to, the avant-gardes could never have achieved the dissolution of the border between art and life on their own. One of the reasons has to do with a rather paradoxical development at the root of artistic autonomy. According to Peter Bürger, art acquired a special status within the bourgeois capitalist system because artists somehow refused to follow the specialization required by other professions. While in its time this contributed to claims for artistic autonomy, more recent advances in neoliberal modes of production in many occupational fields started to reverse the division of labor.¹² The artist-as-dilettante and biopolitical designer was overtaken by the clerk-as-innovator, the technician-as-entrepreneur, the

WORK TIME AND GAINING RECOGNITION FOR THE SELF (FOR AN INTRUSION OF REPRESENTATIONS OF WORK IN THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE)

1994. *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart* (Barbès-Rochechouart construction site, Pierre Huyghe): In the Barbès district of Paris, Huyghe noticed a billboard in the middle of a new construction site where work on revamping an intersection had just gotten underway. He asked five actors to come in work clothes and stand in for the workers and the site foreman while he took a picture. Actors who appropriated overalls, hard hats, a wheelbarrow, shovels, and pickaxes for a while. A scene of appropriation – of fiction – that became the subject of a photograph ...A photograph immediately blown up to billboard scale. A few days later, after the billposters had put up a commercial billboard, Huyghe came to cover the ad with his picture of five workers on the job. The illegal posting and the act of covering up the commercial image as an intrusion of a representation of work in an advertising space and culture that display products of work but seldom represent their production. Partially hidden by the gray and green barriers that delimit construction sites in Paris, the real workers were barely visible. On the other hand, the billboard had been raised by the billposting company to make sure that the advertisement remained visible from a distance. The picture of workers on the job stayed there for a week before it was covered up by an advertisement. *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*: A billboard that does not display a product, a model of behavior to be adopted, or practical information. The exhibition of a picture of five people working...Five people who are not being instrumentalized by a commercial or an electoral strategy.

In a culture that never ceases to represent its finished products, there is a need to represent the production dimension of work (the construction). If the consumer imaginary represses time that is not related to the use or contemplation of the sublimated product, does it mean that our world is given as such, and need not be constructed? The representation of products only as a negation of work. A society that displays its products (the shop windows) but hides the processes needed for their production. The picture of the Barbès construction site versus a picture of the traffic circle. The representation of work versus the postcard. The representation of a process versus the promotion of finished products. Workers versus sales reps. Recording work time as the point at issue.

If in the days immediately following the appearance of the poster, the state of construction work corresponded more or less to what could be seen on the picture (the *mise-en-abîme* and the illusion of a picture that is synchronous with

280

what is pictured), the gap between the progress of the work on the new traffic circle and the moment represented on the picture gradually began to modify the status and sense of the billboard. In fact, as the traffic circle progressed, the actual work – which was the only visible phenomenon during the first few days – gradually gave way to its product (the new traffic circle). The construction gradually yielded to the constructed. A picture that gradually became the record and memory of a process. Representing work requires a form of live recording. The necessity of a synchronous form of representation.

Work opposite an image of your own work...See an image of yourself that our culture never provides (that it refuses you). An image that is not recognized because the (advertising) image that our culture only recognizes those forms that constitute an image of the productive needs of economic growth: dynamism (new appointments, instructions for Betty with five o'clock (the board room), expansion (conquering new markets). Work did not contribute to the growth movement. Work was measured exclusively in terms of the number of decisions I've made...Strikes as a mode of taking the floor. The possibility of constructing a representation of work (the intrusion) as a mode of questioning the conditions of work. Conditions that are connected to the imaginary, but also to the law of supply and demand...A representation of the middle-class (the buoyant market) of certain forms of work in the advertising industry. The end to the proletariat. If ad men only target customers whose purchase ensures a continued underprivileged classes in financial terms seldom that index-links access – the right – to representation (the representation discrimination). The covering of working classes have been excluded as a political question: How can I get others to recognize me when I am not? The absence of an image of the self as creating belonging to a community that cannot see me. Work as a possibility of gaining recognition for oneself as the sine qua non condition of belonging to the

WORK TIME AND GAINING RECOGNITION FOR THE SELF (FOR AN INTRUSION OF REPRESENTATIONS OF WORK IN THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE)

Barbès-Rochechouart construction site, Pierre Huyghe noticed a billboard in the middle of a new construction site where work on revamping an intersection had just gotten underway. He asked five actors to come in work clothes and stand in for the workers and the site foreman while he took a picture. Actors who appropriated overalls, hard hats, a wheelbarrow, shovels, and pickaxes for a while. A scene of appropriation – of fiction – that became the subject of a photograph ...A photograph immediately blown up to billboard scale. A few days later, after the billposters had put up a commercial billboard, Huyghe came to cover the ad with his picture of five workers on the job. The illegal posting and the act of covering up the commercial image as an intrusion of a representation of work in an advertising space and culture that display products of work but seldom represent their production. Partially hidden by the gray and green barriers that delimit construction sites in Paris, the real workers were barely visible. On the other hand, the billboard had been raised by the billposting company to make sure that the advertisement remained visible from a distance. The picture of workers on the job stayed there for a week before it was covered up by an advertisement. *Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart*: A billboard that does not display a product, a model of behavior to be adopted, or practical information. The exhibition of a picture of five people working...Five people who are not being instrumentalized by a commercial or an electoral strategy.

what is pictured), the gap between the progress of the work on the new traffic circle and the moment represented on the picture gradually began to modify the status and sense of the billboard. In fact, as the traffic circle progressed, the actual work – which was the only visible phenomenon during the first few days – gradually gave way to its product (the new traffic circle). The construction gradually yielded to the constructed. A picture that gradually became the record and memory of a process. Representing work requires a form of live recording. The necessity of a synchronous form of representation.

Work opposite an image of your own work...See an image of yourself that our



distant enough to support for a time certain profused daydreams of happiness.

3.

In truth, the ships' destination is not a single, cohesive port but rather a loose conjunction of terminals and factories untidily lining a stretch of the Thames between Gravesend and the Woolwich ferry. It is here that vessels slip in continuously, during humid summers and fog-bound winters, night and day, to deliver the bulk of London's gravel and its reinforced steel, its soya beans and coal, its milk and its paper pulp, the sugar cane for its biscuits and the hydrocarbons for its generators – an area as noteworthy as any of the museums of the city, but about which the guidebooks are always silent.

Numerous factories are situated on the very bank of the river, close enough to scoop or suck raw materials directly from the holds of ships, and are at work producing some of the less celebrated ingredients behind the smooth functioning of our utilitarian civilisation: the polyols added to toothpaste to help it retain its moisture, the citric acid used to stabilise laundry detergent, the isoglucose to sweeten cereal, the glyceryl tristearate to make soap and the xanthan gum to ensure the viscosity of gravy.

In charge of these processes are engineers who have successfully stamped out their natural laziness to master the austere dilemmas

...of the river, close enough to scoop or suck raw materials directly from the holds of ships, and are at work producing some of the less celebrated ingredients behind the smooth functioning of our utilitarian civilisation: the polyols added to toothpaste to help it retain its moisture, the citric acid used to stabilise laundry detergent, the isoglucose to sweeten cereal, the glyceryl tristearate to make soap and the xanthan gum to ensure the viscosity of gravy.



...of the river, close enough to scoop or suck raw materials directly from the holds of ships, and are at work producing some of the less celebrated ingredients behind the smooth functioning of our utilitarian civilisation: the polyols added to toothpaste to help it retain its moisture, the citric acid used to stabilise laundry detergent, the isoglucose to sweeten cereal, the glyceryl tristearate to make soap and the xanthan gum to ensure the viscosity of gravy.



of chemistry and physics, people who may have spent twenty years specialising in the storage of flammable solvents or the reaction of wood pulp to water vapour – and in their leisure time, leaf through the *Hazardous Cargo Bulletin*, the world's only monthly magazine dedicated to the safe handling and transport of oils and chemicals.

However inhuman the facilities of the port might seem in scale, it is in the end only our own personal and prosaic appetites that have created them. A river-side factory, with tubes like a hydra's tentacles snaking around its midriff and crowned by a chimney wheezing orange smoke, is responsible for nothing more sinister or esoteric than the manufacture of cheddar biscuits. A tanker has crossed the muddy-brown North Sea from Rotterdam carrying carbon dioxide with which to make bubbles for children's lemonade. The steely grey box of the Kimberly-Clark factory at Northfleet, eight storeys high and large enough to shelter an aircraft carrier, is turning out cartons of two-ply toilet roll. It is our collective tastes for sweets and nuts, drinks and tissues which has summoned ships from distant continents and thrown up industrial towers vying with the dome of St Paul's.

So arcane are the operations around the port that no single person could ever hope to grasp more than a fragment of their totality. A ship's captain may enjoy superlative command over the contours of the lower Thames, but no sooner has his vessel docked than he will be relegated to the status of an apprentice observer of the business of jetty engineering and the long-term refrigeration of citrus fruit – his jurisdiction ending as abruptly as the authority of his nautical chart.

However, any sadness we might feel about the demise of the generalist can be offset by the recognition that our age offers us access to unimpeachable masters of specific trades, for example, the storage of bitumen or the construction of ship-loading conveyors –

in itself as comforting as the thought that there exist professors of medicine concentrated solely on the workings of human liver enzymes, or that at any time, several hundred scholars across the world are investigating nothing but the later Merovingian period of Frankish history, writing up their findings for the *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, an academic journal published by the humanities department at the University of Tübingen.

The drift toward specialisation exists at the mechanical level too. The port area is filled with machines unavailable to the general public, which have none of the flexibility, but then again none of the dilettantish weaknesses, of generic conveyances like lorries and vans. They resemble peculiar-looking animals whose isolated habits have rewarded the emergence of strange talents – the ability to suck beetles out of mud through one's nose, for instance, or to hang upside down above an underground river – while forgoing a lack of more pedestrian skills. The R30XM2 lift-truck built by the Hyster Corporation of Cleveland, Ohio, may have a top speed of just five kilometres an hour, but in the restricted context of a warehouse, it skims gracefully along concrete floors and exhibits a balletic agility in extricating rolls of paper from the top shelves on either side of a tight aisle.

It seems natural to admire the patience and nerves of those who have put up the money to build these limbs of industry, for example, the two hundred and fifty million dollars required merely to dip the keel of a trans-Pacific container ship into the water. The investors know that there is nothing implausible or hubristic in their appropriating the life savings of a nation's postmen or nurses and then betting those sums on the financing of warehouses in Panama and back offices in Hamburg. They can let their funds disappear out of sight for a decade or more, leave them in the hands of captains





There is no practical reason for their scrutiny. They are not in charge of preparing her berth for its next occupant or, like the staff at the nearby control tower, assigning her a shipping lane for the journey out to the North Sea. They wish only to admire her and note her passage. They bring to the study of harbour life a devotion more often witnessed in relation to art, their behaviour implying a belief that creativity and intelligence can be as present in the transport of axles around the tip of the western Sahara as they are in the use of impasto in a female nude. Yet how fickle museum-goers seem by comparison, with their impatient interest in cafeterias, their susceptibility to gift shops, their readiness to avail themselves of benches. How seldom has a man spent two hours in a rain-storm in front of *Hendrickje Batbing* with only a thermos of coffee for sustenance.

Admittedly, the ship spotters do not respond to the objects of their enthusiasm with particular imagination. They traffic in statistics. Their energies are focused on logging dates and shipping speeds, recording turbine numbers and shaft lengths. They behave like a man who has fallen deeply in love and asks his companion if he might act on his emotions by measuring the distance between her elbow and her shoulder blade. But in converting a passion into a set of facts, the spotters are at least following a pattern with an established pedigree, most noticeable in academia, where an art historian, on being stirred to tears by the tenderness and serenity he detects in a work by a fourteenth-century Florentine painter, may end up writing a monograph, as irreproachable as it is bloodless, on the history of paint manufacture in the age of Giotto. It seems easier to respond to our enthusiasms by trading in facts than by investigating the more naive question of how and why we have been moved.

But whatever their inarticulacies, the ship-spotters are at least appropriately alive to some of the most astonishing aspects of our time. They know what it is about our world that would detain a Martian or a child. They take pleasure in sensing their smallness and ignorance next to the expansive intelligence of the modern collective mind. Standing beside a docked ship, their heads thrown back to gaze at its steel turrets disappearing into the sky, they enter into a state of silent, satisfied wonder, like pilgrims before the buttresses of Chartres.

Nor are they ashamed to seem eccentric when their curiosity demands it. They crouch low to catch sight of ships' propellers. They fall asleep thinking of where in the ocean a particular tanker might be. Their concentration recalls that of a small child who comes to a halt in the centre of a crowded shopping street and, while passers-by swerve to avoid her, bends down to examine, with the care of a biblical scholar poring over the pages of a vellum-bound book, a piece of chewing gum impressed on the pavement, or the closing mechanism of her coat pocket. They are like children, too, in their upending of conventional ideas of what might constitute a good job, always valuing a profession's intrinsic interest over its relative material benefit, judging with particular favour the post of crane operator at a container terminal because of the vantage point it offers over ships and quaysides, just as a child might aspire to drive a train because of the seductive hiss of the carriage's hydraulic doors, or to run a post office based on the satisfaction of adhering airmail labels onto puffy envelopes.

The ship-spotters' pastime harks back to the habits of premodern travellers, who, upon arriving in a new country, were apt to express particular curiosity about its granaries, aqueducts, harbours and workshops, feeling that the observation of work could be as

stimulating as anything on a stage or contemporary view which tightly therefore steers us away from an and sewage treatment plants in favour of musicals and waxwork museums.

The men down by the river have they freely express their concern the thunder of conveyor belts. When from their pier, see nothing more than a factory yard, they have learnt to receive a shipment of Brazilian cane, brown and now turned into sugar, leaving Silvertown bound for a Derby es cakes. Their satisfactions are akin to on glimpsing through a pair of binoculars people would dismiss as just another ebrate the spring's first sighting of the close of its four-thousand-mile in the marshlands of the Ivory Coast.

5.

How ignorant most of us are by comparison with the processes of which we have no knowledge. We know nothing about gantry cranes and register the economy only as a set of close study of switch gears and wheels. We have a closer acquaintance with the man who pulls the steel cable. How much we might learn from the pier on the edges of London.

of the most astonishing aspects of our
about our world that would detain a
ke pleasure in sensing their smallness
expansive intelligence of the modern
side a docked ship, their heads thrown
disappearing into the sky, they enter
wonder, like pilgrims before the but-

seem eccentric when their curiosity
catch sight of ships' propellers. They
the ocean a particular tanker might
that of a small child who comes to
d shopping street and, while passers-
down to examine, with the care of a
pages of a vellum-bound book, a
d on the pavement, or the closing
They are like children, too, in their
of what might constitute a good job,
insic interest over its relative mate-
lar favour the post of crane opera-
use of the vantage point it offers
child might aspire to drive a train
e carriage's hydraulic doors, or to
faction of adhering airmail labels

ts back to the habits of premod-
in a new country, were apt to
s granaries, aqueducts, harbours
observation of work could be as

stimulating as anything on a stage or chapel wall – a relief from a
contemporary view which tightly associates tourism with play and
therefore steers us away from an interest in aluminium foundries
and sewage treatment plants in favour of the trumpeted pleasures
of musicals and waxwork museums.

The men down by the river have broken free of such expectations,
they freely express their concern for the movement of freight and
the thunder of conveyor belts. Whereas an ordinary onlooker might,
from their pier, see nothing more than three lorries pulling out of a
factory yard, *they* have learnt to recognise the continuing odyssey of
a shipment of Brazilian cane, brought over on the freighter *Valeria*
and now turned into sugar, leaving the Tate and Lyle refinery at
Silvertown bound for a Derby establishment involved in raisin
cakes. Their satisfactions are akin to those of an ornithologist who,
on glimpsing through a pair of binoculars a creature which most
people would dismiss as just another blue-grey bird, knows to cel-
ebrate the spring's first sighting of a *Phylloscopus trochilus*, resting at
the close of its four-thousand-mile journey from its winter habitat
in the marshlands of the Ivory Coast.

5.

How ignorant most of us are by contrast, surrounded by machines
and processes of which we have only the loosest grasp; we who
know nothing about gantry cranes and iron-ore bulk carriers, who
register the economy only as a set of numbers, who have avoided
close study of switch gears and wheat storage and spare ourselves
closer acquaintance with the manufacturing protocols for tensile
steel cable. How much we might learn from the men at the end of a
pier on the edges of London.

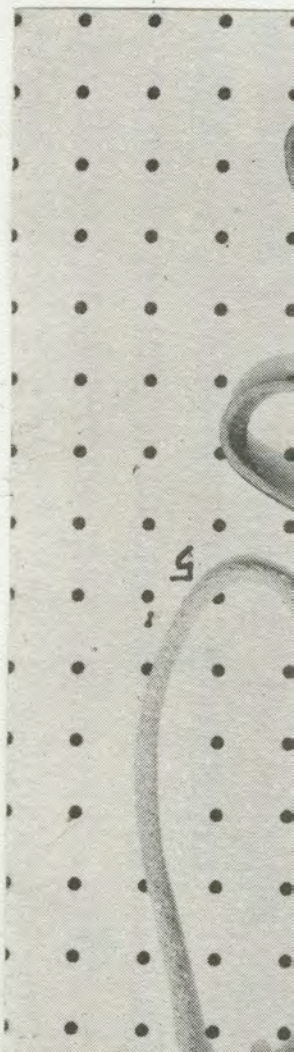
They inspired this book, which the author hopes might function
a little like one of those eighteenth-century cityscapes which show
us people at work from the quayside to the temple, the parliament
to the counting house, panoramas like those of Canaletto in which,
within a single giant frame, one can witness dockers unloading
crates, merchants bargaining in the main square, bakers before their
ovens, women sewing at their windows and councils of ministers
assembled in a palace – inclusive scenes which serve to remind us of
the place which work accords each of us within the human hive.

I was inspired by the men at the pier to attempt a hymn to the
intelligence, peculiarity, beauty and horror of the modern work-
place and, not least, its extraordinary claim to be able to provide us,
alongside love, with the principal source of life's meaning.

use value is subsumed under the mask of exchange value. The point is, that, for the table (and here we remember Marx's table dancing definition of commodity in *Capital Volume 1*) to enter the world as an object to be exchanged, it must be haunted by its commodity form. The phantom, or spectre, of the table qua commodity must be projected, like a spectre in a phantasmagoric play, onto the physical form of the table. It must possess the table as spirits possess mediums. It must speak through it in the language of abstract generalised exchange. Considered this way, Adorno is wrong. The spectre of the commodity does not conceal the real; its appearance manifests the reality of capital. The spirit that possesses the medium's body is capable of prophecies and divination.

In essence, this spectre, this ghost of dessicated life and dead labour, is a product of a certain calculation of time. Each day drops half dead at the altar of Capital and Empire, giving up its ghost. What remains is recycled for the next day. Each day is framed. Every calendrical marking is an index of endurance. Days are shaved, sharpened and divided in labour. The score of the working week is inscribed and erased – between time given over and time taken away, between the time that gets counted and the time that runs out. Overtime gets shorter while normal time gets longer.

What happens when we begin to pay attention to the seconds and the hours? We remember them, tell stories about them, make poems out of tea breaks and songs out of time stolen from labouring. It is the gossip and idle chatter of seconds and hours that makes for society. We know what we know about each other because we tell each other the public secrets of capital. Stretched end to end, this chatter turns into history. This is not a matter of parcelling out epochs to be marshalled into the chronicle of nations. It is rather the matter of constructing the memory of society through stories and testimonies, through the magic lantern show of the archive of the everyday.



Medieval Church Time, Modern Clock Time

Work and time are essential aspects of social structure and function, and control of time, and power over time, are essential components in the functioning of societies (Le Goff 1980: xii-xiii; Harvey 1985: 7). The transition from church time to clock time in the Middle Ages provides compelling evidence for this thesis. Changes in labor time and the conditions of intellectual and economic production accompanied the secularization of human activity (Le Goff 1980: 30).

Christianity is frequently judged to have fundamentally transformed the notion of time. Medieval clerics regarded time in light of biblical texts and Christian tradition: time begins with God and is dominated by Him. Divine action is so naturally connected with time that time cannot pose a separate and distinct problem; it is rather the necessary and natural condition of every divine act. For the early Christians, eternity was not opposed to time; nor was it the absence of time, but merely the extension of time to infinity. The appearance of Christ gave time a historic dimension or center, and the concept of salvation transformed the sense of time's end. During the twelfth century, however, the traditional framework of Christian thought on time was shaken, by merchants who experienced a connection between time and space that undermined the Church's concept of time (Le Goff 1980: 30-4).

The invention of the mechanical clock in medieval Europe was comparable in social and economic significance to movable type, which eventually turned Europe from a weak, peripheral outpost of Mediterranean civilization into a hegemonic aggressor (Landes 1983: 6, 12; Bluedorn 2002: 9-11). Interest in time measurement led to the invention of the clock,

14 From Field to Factory and Beyond

strictly gender differentiated and governed by natural and seasonal rhythms. Nature, season, and gender are still factors, but modern humans contend with the clock. How the clock became so important requires we visit the Middle Ages and the emergence of capitalism.

med by natural and
nder are still factors,
lock. How the clock
he Middle Ages and

h Clock Time

social structure and
ower over time, are
ing of societies (Le
The transition from
iddle Ages provides
nges in labor time and
economic production
man activity (Le Goff

o have fundamentally
dieval clerics regarded
ristian tradition: time
Him. Divine action is
at time cannot pose a
ther the necessary and
or the early Christians,
r was it the absence of
to infinity. The appear-
mension or center, and
the sense of time's end.
the traditional frame-
s shaken, by merchants
een time and space that
f time (Le Goff 1980:

clock in medieval Europe
onomic significance to
ed Europe from a weak,
civilization into a hege-
; Bluedorn 2002: 9–11).
he invention of the clock,

not the other way around, motivated in part by setting prayer times to specific hours of the day and religious concern for punctuality among monks. Benedictine monks in the sixth century had first introduced fixed and pre-set times for each of their activities, a practice revolutionary in its time (Whipp et al. 2002: 13; Zerubavel 1981). Monasteries were the largest productive enterprises of medieval Europe, and the new monastic Orders of the eleventh and twelfth centuries enforced higher standards of punctuality. The purpose of such rationalized conduct was to overcome the natural state; it trained monks objectively as workers in the service of God. Gradually, this concern for rational action and proper timekeeping diffused to the countryside and marketplace until, by the end of the fourteenth century, it became a duty, an integral part of Protestant righteous conduct (Weber 1958; Whipp et al. 2002: 13). New sources of demand for clocks emerged outside the monasteries, especially among the ambitious urban bourgeoisie (Landes 1983: 58–71).

Like the peasants, the merchants were at first subjected to seasonal cycles and unpredictability of the weather. They sought to control this natural order through prayer and superstitious practice. Once merchants organized commercial networks, however, time became an object of measurement. Duration of travel, price inflation or deflation in the course of a commercial transaction, fluctuations in the commercial price of silver, and their workers' labor time all required merchants' attention and became the object of increasingly explicit regulation. Historical documents such as account sheets, travel diaries, manuals of commercial practice, and letters of exchange all show how important the exact measurement of time was becoming to the orderly conduct of business. The material reality of merchants' business superimposed a new, measurable, predictable time on that of the eternally renewed, unpredictable natural environment (Le Goff 1980: 35).

Prior to clocks, bells were used to chime the hours of commercial transactions and work hours, such as in 1355 when the royal governor of Artois authorized the people of Aire-sur-la-Lys, a center of textile trade, to build a belfry whose bells would chime for the aforementioned purposes. As clocks were erected opposite church bell towers, they came to

symbolize a great revolution to the complexity of urban labor time (Le Goff 1980: 35–6, 44).

The unit of labor time in the medieval West was the day.¹ Initially, this was the rural workday – as in “journal,” a French dialect word for the amount of land that can be plowed in one day, or “jour.” The urban workday was defined with reference to variable natural time, from sunrise to sunset, marked off in an approximate way by religious time borrowed from Roman antiquity. Within this basic framework, few conflicts arose over work time with the exception of night labor. In the natural and rural context, night labor was a sort of urban heresy, generally prohibited and subject to fines. On the whole, labor time was still the time of an economy dominated by agrarian rhythms, free of haste, inexact, and unconcerned by productivity (Le Goff 1980: 44).

From the end of the thirteenth century, this system of labor time was under challenge, and conflicts over night work contributed to stricter definition, measurement, and use of the workday, as well as social conflicts over the duration of work. At first it was the workers who wanted a longer workday, to increase their wages during the first monetary crisis when prices rose and wages fell. The problem was especially acute in the textile sector, where wages were a significant factor in production costs and employers' profits. In Paris, Philip the Fair authorized night work on January 19, 1322. In response, employers sought to regulate the workday more closely and to combat workers' cheating. Work bells, rung by hand by pulling a rope attached to the bell, proliferated. Worker uprisings were subsequently aimed at silencing the “werksglocken” in an expression of resentment and mistrust of those who controlled them (Landes 1983: 73–5; Le Goff 1980). Because of these revolts, textile employers took harsh measures to protect the work bell. Workers who seized the bell to use it as a signal of revolt would incur the heaviest fines: 60 Parisian pounds for anyone who rang the bell for popular assembly and for anyone who came armed; and the death penalty for anyone who rang the bell to call for revolt against the king, the aldermen, or the officer in charge of the bell. Urban and suburban vineyard day laborers, on the other hand, agitated for a reduction of the workday, a confrontation that led to a trial before the Parlement of Paris (Le Goff 1980: 45–7).

Work bells assumed regular, normal time of the church bells. Time came to be a measure of labor time, the secularization of time. The invention arose decisively to the north half of the fourteenth century throughout major northern France, so. Despite the fact that time was irregular, and frequently came to be firmly established as a fundamental unit of labor time, the way to a concept of time was paved. Time was associated with natural time, and practice remained the same. The new clock-oriented time was synchronized within an hour and a half in the sixteenth century and caused by the change in time next (Le Goff 1980: 50–7). The secular splits in the time were able in the Middle Ages of “wasting time” was a belief spurred on by the Renaissance merchant's admonition that time was money (Le Goff 1980: 50–7). The aspect of the Protestant cloistered ascetics of the in-the-world ascetics (Landes 1983: 90–2). Probably Europe by the end of the sixteenth century, miniaturization and wearing watch time as a balance of production time and factors in the domestic and industrial activity of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Work bells associated time not to events per se but to regular, normal time. Rather than the uncertain clerical hours of the church bells, there were the certain hours of business. Time came to be integrated into daily life. Creating a better measure of labor was an important factor in the process of the secularization of time (Le Goff 1980: 48).

The invention and spread of mechanical clocks contributed decisively to the notion of "certain hours." During the first half of the fourteenth century city clocks were distributed throughout major urban areas in northern Italy, Catalonia, northern France, southern England, Flanders, and Germany. Despite the fact that the new clocks were fragile, capricious, irregular, and frequently out of order, the 60-minute hour came to be firmly established. It replaced the day as the fundamental unit of labor time. In this sense, the workday gave way to a concept of work hours. During this era, time associated with natural rhythms, agrarian activity, and religious practice remained the primary temporal framework; and the new clock-oriented urban time was non-unified and unsynchronized within and across regions. Travelers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries experienced confusion and disorder caused by the changing origin of time from one city to the next (Le Goff 1980: 49). Although rural/urban and religious/secular splits in the concept and practice of time are identifiable in the Middle Ages, by the fourteenth century the notion of "wasting time" was becoming a serious sin – thus, religious belief spurred on productivity – and at the dawn of the Renaissance merchants were no longer confronted with the admonition that time is a gift from God that cannot be sold (Le Goff 1980: 50–1). Weber overlooked this chronometric aspect of the Protestant ethic. What the clock was to the cloistered ascetics of the Middle Ages, the watch became to the in-the-world ascetics of post-Reformation Europe (Landes 1983: 90–2). Probably dozens of clockmakers were active in Europe by the end of the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century, miniaturization enabled portability and punctuality and wearing watches became fashionable. The shifting balance of production and use of timekeepers were symptoms of and factors in the displacement of the center of commercial and industrial activity from Southern to Northern Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Landes 1983: 7,

81–92). The temporal foundation for market capitalism had been laid, and the chronological net around daily life tightened (Simmel 1950, 1978; Harvey 1985: 6–7).

Clock time was gradually adopted worldwide, and, by the end of the nineteenth century, it was imposed across the globe as standard time, ending the myriad local times and dates used by the peoples of the world. In 1883, the more than 200 local times from Washington, DC, to San Francisco were rationalized, easing the scheduling of rail transport (Kern 1983; Harvey 1985: 8). Greenwich Mean Time, and the division of the earth into 24 equal zones, one hour apart, by 1884, constituted the beginning of the global day. The development of world time was an essential precondition for global trade, finance, transport, and communication (Whipp et al. 2002: 13–14). Night work has been common in factories since the Industrial Revolution to maximize the productivity of machines, but today virtual workdays and nights may be reversed, as among call center workers in India who serve the West (Poster 2007).

81–92). The temporal foundation for market capitalism had been laid, and the chronological net around daily life tightened (Simmel 1950, 1978; Harvey 1985: 6–7).

Clock time was gradually adopted worldwide, and, by the end of the nineteenth century, it was imposed across the globe as standard time, ending the myriad local times and dates used by the peoples of the world. In 1883, the more than 200 local times from Washington, DC, to San Francisco were rationalized, easing the scheduling of rail transport (Kern 1983; Harvey 1985: 8). Greenwich Mean Time, and the division of the earth into 24 equal zones, one hour apart, by 1884, constituted the beginning of the global day. The development of world time was an essential precondition for global trade, finance, transport, and communication (Whipp et al. 2002: 13–14). Night work has been common in factories since the Industrial Revolution to maximize the productivity of machines, but today virtual workdays and nights

which can only be measured by the clock. A commodity represents the labor embodied in its production and the production of a commodity, such as an intricate lace garment is worth more than the raw material, even if the raw material is free.

Profit-seekers (and other capitalists) have a desire to produce commodities in less time than the sum of the commodity's value. This surplus value derived from the labor expended by workers beyond the necessary work time is composed of both surplus and profit time.

To achieve productivity gains, capitalists, for example, require longer workdays, for example, requiring workers to work longer hours, or they seek other improvements that increase the productivity of a period of time. Scientific management, with its emphasis on motion to exact precision movements, inventory storage, and so on, is another example (Clawson 1997: 30–1), as are other forms of scientific management that prescribe the way in which work should be done.

which can only be measured by the clock. A commodity represents the labor embodied in its production and the production of a commodity, such as an intricate lace garment is worth more than the raw material, even if the raw material is free.

Profit-seekers (and other capitalists) have a desire to produce commodities in less time than the sum of the commodity's value. This surplus value derived from the labor expended by workers beyond the necessary work time is composed of both surplus and profit time.

To achieve productivity gains, capitalists, for example, require longer workdays, for example, requiring workers to work longer hours, or they seek other improvements that increase the productivity of a period of time. Scientific management, with its emphasis on motion to exact precision movements, inventory storage, and so on, is another example (Clawson 1997: 30–1), as are other forms of scientific management that prescribe the way in which work should be done.

THE LONG MARCH BACK TO BOREDOM

versions of work. For work, after all, would not be work if it did not have a practical end in mind. And work is the opposite of leisure.

Since the Protestant Reformation we have golloped down the notion that activities that are to be valued should be immediately practical. They should even be moral. This spirit of moral practicality has infected leisure by insisting on the practical and the moral as its basis. Thus such-and-such a leisure activity becomes valued because it is good for the body, or good for the mind, or good for the family, or good for the community. Or, woe betide, good for God. So novels and poetry are bad, biography and self-help are good. Cards are bad, football is good. And so it goes. The popular German-American cultural critic Theodor Adorno, who made his mark on the theory of leisure, takes the conversation beyond Protestantism. 'Free Time', admittedly one of his odder essays, alarmingly links TV with sunbathing, camping holidays and boredom. Most free time is shaped by the demands of work, Adorno believes. But he sees the controlling agent as commerce. Time off, for Adorno, is driven by the same commercialization as is time-on: work generates profits, and so must free time. Theodor Adorno believes that this is why North Americans like me spend a fortune on free time. And maybe, he suggests, that is why we become so bored so often when we are on holiday. North Americans turned free time back into work time. Remember the postcard I received from a friend last August? It read: 'Had a wonderful holiday. Rained the whole time. Didn't have to take the children to the beach once. Got buckets of work done.'



27 Theodor Adorno

Leisure time should be impractical, amoral, pleasurable and sociable. What does all this have to do with boredom? It looks very much as if the current notion of leisure, because it's so tied in with work, is doomed to generate boredom. How could it not? If work is boring, then leisure, as a variant of work, must be boring too. If leisure time is to become a boredom-free

zone, then it'll have to co
no practical, moral or con
has caught the idea best in
when he describes surf
activity, as 'something co

Boredom is a very goo
should never be trivialize
trivial thing. That's becau
humans come to know th
I've mentioned the adapt
so to this extent the usefu
But boredom has other p

Because it can breed di
that are intellectually sh
creativity. Boredom may
the accepted and to sear
case for schoolchildren, a
Priyadharshini in their fas
Schooling'. They believe
ical reflective potential
creativity [for students]
of boredom [in classroo
daydreaming and imagi
return to activity'. And
study 'of the subjective
college students aged 1
that 73% of the partici
sometimes be positive
thought and reflection o

THE LONG MARCH BACK TO BOREDOM

zone, then it'll have to concern itself with activities that have no practical, moral or commercial ends. Perhaps Tim Winton has caught the idea best in his marvellous novel *Breath* (2008) when he describes surfing, the book's preeminent leisure activity, as 'something completely pointless and beautiful'.

Boredom is a very good thing to be able to escape, but it should never be trivialized. No emotion can be treated as a trivial thing. That's because it's through the emotions that we humans come to know the world and come to know ourselves. I've mentioned the adaptive capacity of boredom sufficiently so to this extent the usefulness of the emotion should be clear. But boredom has other positive characteristics as well.

Because it can breed dissatisfaction with views and concepts that are intellectually shop worn, boredom can encourage creativity. Boredom may drive thinkers and artists to question the accepted and to search for change. This can even be the case for schoolchildren, according to Teresa Belton and Esther Priyadharshini in their fascinating survey article 'Boredom and Schooling'. They believe that boredom 'can also contain critical reflective potential and can be a powerful stimulus to creativity [for students]'. They suggest that 'a certain amount of boredom [in classrooms], by allowing for contemplation, daydreaming and imagining alternatives, allows a refreshed return to activity'. And they go on to cite approvingly a US study 'of the subjective experience of boredom of 170 US college students aged 19- to 56-years-old [which] revealed that 73% of the participants believed that boredom could sometimes be positive, especially as an opportunity for thought and reflection or relaxation'.

'ARTIST AT WORK'

Gürsoy Dogtas



Eight photographs, all in the same format, show a man tucked up in bed, tossing and turning whilst trying to sleep. On four of them, he has turned his back to the viewer, so that only his hair is visible. On two others his eyes are half closed, while on the rest they're closed completely. The order of the photographs varies from exhibition to exhibition and in the layout of publications. The most popular version shows the black and white photographs in a grid of three rows with three pictures. This is completed by the title, handwritten on a separate piece of white paper: "Artist at Work" ("Umjetnik Radi" in Serbo-Croatian), Mladen Stilinovic, 1978, Zagreb.

From 2006 onward, almost 30 years later, these photographs suddenly began to appear at international exhibitions, partly to re-evaluate the art of the so-called Eastern Bloc from a socio-political point of view, but

also to demonstrate the prevalent idea of the 2000's being a moment of historical change. Indeed, during the last ten years, change has come in the form of international "art fair art": a continuous stream of fairs, an expansion of the market and a strengthening of private collectors. These new forms of hegemony have shifted the balance of power within the art world.

Some artists reflect this development in their work, often through a rhetoric of irony or subversion. The work of Stilinovic seems predestined for this kind of diagnostic analysis. He experienced the change of political systems from communism to an accelerated form of capitalism firsthand, enabling him to evaluate *a-posteriori* the influence of a 'system' on artistic production. His work reflects, in a rather concentrated way, the shifting social position of the artist, depending on which system is



demonstrate the prevalent
the 2000's being a moment of
change. Indeed, during the
years, change has come in the
international "art fair art":
stream of fairs, an ex-
of the market and a strength-
private collectors. These new
hegemony have shifted the
of power within the art

ists reflect this development
work, often through a
of irony or subversion. The
Stiljinovic seems predestined
and of diagnostic analysis.
enced the change of poli-
isms from communism to an
and form of capitalism first-
bling him to evaluate
ri the influence of a 'system'
production. His work
a rather concentrated way,
a social position of the
ending on which system is

in power, since the artist will necessa-
rily always react to the society in
which he lives.

This artwork from 1978, created in
communist Yugoslavia, is generally
shown in combination with his
manifesto "In Praise of Laziness"
from 1993, produced during the
emergence of a new capitalist society.
If, in 1978, the work could be read as
a form of protest against communist
conformity, now it potentially
becomes a protest against a free
market society. Here, laziness moves
between the abstract idea of an
inactive performance and the
impossibility of turning "doing
nothing" into a sign or image of
protest. Laziness in itself is a metho-
dical refusal to perform, a conscious
withdrawal that should not be
confused with idleness or melancholy,
linked as they are to the romantic
perception of creativity.

Stiljinovic is thinking of real laziness,
not creative revitalisation in the form
of idleness. "Laziness", Stiljinovic says
in his manifesto of 1993, "is the ab-
sence of movement and thought, blunt
time – total amnesia. It is also indiffe-
rence, staring into space, non-activity,
powerlessness. It is simply stupidity, a
time of pain, pointless concentration."

Paradoxically, Stiljinovic presents
systematic laziness as a difficult and
even painful challenge. For him such
repellent laziness is one of the most
important motivating factors in art.
Laziness too, paradoxically, is subject
to the dictates of discipline and
training: "It is not sufficient to know
about laziness, it must be practiced
and perfected."

In other words his manifesto
demands the practice of amnesia and
powerlessness until perfected. But
what could be the advantage for an
artist in choosing powerlessness? Of
what use would total amnesia be? An
artist with no responsibility! Using
laziness, an artist can try to rid
himself of his own aspirations, those
of the art world and society, and
therein, I would argue, lies its
radicality.

Stiljinovic was widely used in the
context of various exhibitions as a
critique of the Western artist, whom
he shows to be estranged from
laziness. Laziness contrasts so
wonderfully with the diligence of the
popular artist type who behaves like
the middle-class entrepreneur,
working hard to further his career
and place his 'products' on the
market.

However, the works of Stilinovic are not interested in a polarisation between East and West. By quoting from the manifesto "Laziness as the real truth of mankind", written by Kazimir Malevich in 1921, he also criticises the communist work ethic. Malevich argues that the fact that socialism is based only on work is its fundamental weakness. Just as the manifesto by Stilinovic reflects the ideological change from one political system to another, Malevich's manifesto is an about-turn, where the artist turns away from utilitarian constructivism and productivism. As long as these movements helped overcome traditional art and classicism they were seen in a positive light, "but as soon as this positive dynamic was turned into a pragmatic ideology it proved to be just as inauthentic as the static museum art of the aesthetic revisionists"¹. Suprematism thus becomes his favoured form. He uses this, for instance, to add a spiritual dimension not only to geometry, but also to laziness – human laziness is no more than a miniature copy of the great calm of God.

The two manifestos are similar; both proclaim laziness to be a primal artistic state and both stylise laziness

as one solution to the problem of work and aesthetics. But while Malevich is still tied to the avant-garde position of form via Suprematism, Stilinovic expresses his disenchantment with every single idea ever connected with avant-garde modernism. For Mladen Stilinovic the artist as defined by the military sense of the word avant-garde, a seismograph of society, is no longer a tenable idea. By the time Stilinovic finished "Artist at Work" in 1978, and proclaimed his manifesto in 1993, no one believed artistic work could change society, whether in the East or West. Here lies the strength of his work, for which he had to sacrifice a few hours of his precious time to laziness. Without any consequences whatsoever.

¹ Ingold, Felix Philipp: Kunst und Ökonomie. Zur Begründung der suprematistischen Ästhetik bei Kazimir Malevich. In: *Wiener Slavistischer Almanach*, 4 (1979), p: 153-193.

Resting.

Working.

Resting.

Working.

Resting?

Work!

Rest!

Have to work.

Working.

Work.

Work.

Work.

Work!

Working.

On holidays, the city falls to silence
with a great population migration.
In the silence the city comes up clean,
as if it has been washed.
The streets, once crowded with people,
now reveal their bare surfaces.
One's field of vision is washed clean.
The mind still runs.
Silence.

One goes on a mission looking for a space
called "holiday."
Perhaps the error is in thinking that
holidays are time.

Because a holiday is a place where faith
submerges ...

No, because faith gets buried under the
marshland called holiday ...

Revolution does not know a holiday.
But, revolutions make national holidays.
Crises do not know rest.

The homeless do not know holidays either.
Crooks do not know holidays either.
I am not sure what holidays are either.

Holidays are a monster.
The thing is, people overlook that.
Also, my identity is ambiguous.
Holidays and my identity take after each
other.

My identity?

Me.

Myself.

Living one's life for oneself?

Working?

For oneself?

Subjectivity?

Work!

Why?

What is it?

For oneself?

When one does not know oneself?

Labor.
Production.
Expression.
Not embarrassing?
It is embarrassing.
It is awful.
This is the space of holiday.

The sound of finishing up work.
The sound of pulling the shutter down.
The sound of packing up.
The sound of putting the package down.
The sound of unpacking.
The sound of opening a box.
The sounds of things do not stop.
It is the same; the world of things does
not stop when the sound is there no more.
So pay attention to the moment when
categories become meaningless!
Thinking about the moment when it seems
as if nothing is happening.

Need a holiday.
Need a vacation.
That's right.

Streets are asleep.
Streets seem as if they are asleep.
The city is asleep.
One expects one will finally have time to
sort out one's thoughts on a holiday or
vacation.

One expects one could have a clear head on a holiday.

This is a likely thought coming out of a head that has spent many sleepless nights preparing for a holiday.

This holiday, one believes one will find the perfect moment to confess one's love. This time, one believes there will be an opportunity to say what was unsaid before.

Or, one believes one could finally explain, once and for all, that subject that was left hanging.

That is probably why you will lose that love over the holidays this time.

In the coming holiday

I swear you will say

there is no more love left between the two of you, that everything is over.

So on this holiday love, the love that supposedly does not exist any more, will continue; and no new love will begin either.

You spend this holiday waiting for the next holiday when you will confess the absence of love.

Since it's a holiday, it would be all right to spend time that way.

Since it's a suspended time.

One can be consoled even if one cannot see
or think.

However, ultimately much happens in this
space of suspended time.

Inside this time where nothing can be seen
or heard,
inside this space, one gets totally
intoxicated with holiday.

One spends this holiday waiting for the
next holiday.

Holidays are the suspension of
continuation.

Holidays are the continuation of delay.

Holidays are not time but space.

Much happens in this space called holiday.

Actually there is nothing that is
suspended.

The space grows inside time.

Time folds.

Space is folded.

become a... (pp. 478, 479). According to Orland's model...

The problem has remained constant since the 1830's: the inability to ground American social reality in a more satisfying integration of work and play. But the terms change, as do the prospects for success. In relation to earlier phases of American culture our contemporary 'postmodernism' is distinctly the culture of play; play with conventional forms in the arts, of play with the products of our economic prosperity in everyday life, yet while American culture has become markedly more playful, critics of that culture have continued to deny the absence of true freedom or creativity. Postmodern condemn the absence of true freedom or creativity. Postmodern consumer culture, they argue, converts play into the engine of insatiable consumption, which drives the economy without leading to personal fulfillment. (p. 484)

...with a smaller scope, *Sport and the Spirit* approaches

...nation... The pleasures of this... leisure. What is important, says... (1974), in a somewhat similar but... "the primary dimension of leisure, more specific, the perceived freedom in which the person feels that he... and because he wants to" (p. 15). engage in activity freely, with spontaneity accompanied by an aura of pleasantness (p. 158). There is, once again, having to do with the free choices... in De Grazia's case there is intimacy as well as that of the freedom

...needs no excuse. Never
...summer Night's Dream

...ment by experts that, theoretically, understand because it is ambiguous. These ambiguities are instigated by the ideological rhetorics of the imaginary, the self, and framing some valid internal coherence. Rhetorics, as well as for their play. In general each rhetoric has a function, a distinctive ludic advocates, and is the context for its own form of play and connections that give the rhetorics summarized in the accompanying

...ous kinds of ambiguity. Obviously, the way the ludic form is played). statement about the value of the conflation of the two. Those of the play are inclined to descriptions of the behaviors

The Seven Rhetorics of Play			Form	Players	Discipline	Scholars
Rhetoric	History	Function				
1. Progress	Enlightenment, evolution	Adaptation, growth, socialization	Play, games	Juveniles	Biology, psychology, education	Vygotsky, Erikson, Piaget, Berlyne
2. Fate	Animism, divination	Magic, luck	Chance	Gamblers	Math	Bergler, Fuller, Abt
3. Power	Politics, war	Status, victory	Skill, strategy, deep play	Athletes	Sociology, history	Sprioso, Huizinga, Scott, Von Neumann
4. Identity	Tradition	Communitas, cooperation	Festivals, parades, parties, new games	Folk	Anthropology, folklore	Turner, Falassi, De Koven, Abrahams
5. Imaginary	Romanticism	Creativity, flexibility	Fantasy, tropes	Actors	Art and literature	Bakhtin, Eagen, Bateson
6. Self	Individualism	Peak experience	Leisure, solitary, extreme games	Avant-garde, solitary players	Psychiatry	Csikszentmihalyi
7. Frivolity	Work ethic	Inversion, playfulness	Nonsense	Tricksters, comedians, jesters	Pop culture	Welsford, Stewart, Cox



the specific performances of the
have opined. If the children are
not so much about personal experi-
ance (Peterson and McCabe, 1983,

szentmihalyi's flow characteristics;
motivation characteristics; emphasis
om; existential phenomenology; and
rformance theory, which I have
ential and ludic dialectics.
eudian play mechanisms (compensa-
cal arousal modulation theories.

ty in this chapter has to do with the
which is supposed to be at the center
n which play is to be defined. The shift
logical definitions is also a source of
most social scientists. More profoundly,
ualization of a structural and perform-
of referential and ludic dialectics be-
worlds, and involving both play and
and ambiguity at the very center of the

Rhetorics of Frivolity

Don't be afraid of talking nonsense, but you must pay attention to
your nonsense.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Play is fun
Sex is fun.
Jokes are fun.
Writing is fun.
Being funny is fun.
So what is fun?
after Mrs. Huizinga

This, the seventh and final rhetoric, is another ancient one, be-
longing with fate, power, and identity. But it has its own particular
place as an opponent to the seriousness of all the other rhetorics,
ancient or modern. The essences of play from this viewpoint are
nonsense and inversion, hence their position at the end of this
work. This chapter could be entitled "The Protestant Ethic and the
Spirit of Capitalism" (Weber, 1930) and be about the role of both
religion and the work ethic in the denigration of play as a waste
of time, as idleness, as triviality, and as frivolity. But that oft-told
tale need not be retold here, except to indicate that the Puritan
ethic of play has been the strongest and most long lasting of all
the rhetorics of play in the past four hundred years. It is the an-

virtuosity, skills, and techniques are qualities no longer called for, it follows that anyone can be a dancer, an actor, a performer. The reasoning behind this theory is that since drama and dance were intended originally to be performed, not seen, what matters is the personal and individual experience of each participant, even though to the outsider it might seem as though nothing is happening. The fallacy of this theory is that both primitive and traditional societies were group-orientated, the actions of the individual reflecting and furthering the ends of the group. In addition we know that primitive societies show a degree of sophistication and skill that would startle many of the advocates of non-art as a return to the origins of drama.

Of course the increasing fragmentation of society today and the spectacular breakdown of traditional values, especially in America, is reflected in the arts. It is this vague yet specific feeling of disorientation that led to an epidemic of non-theatre activities such as Happenings, Events and Activities. The latter, like children's games, are the acting out of situations—without limitations of time—often intentionally meaningless. In *An Anthology of Chance Operations*, Walter de Maria propounds a theory of 'meaningless work'. In discussing his approach to Activities (a name coined by Michael Kirby), he stresses the need to avoid a pleasurable activity—'lest pleasure become the purpose of the work'. He describes the procedure for his work *Beach Crawl*, which involves the systematic placing and displacing of three stones. The final instruction is, 'Then shout as loud as you can, "Well, that's new, isn't it?" Then throw the three stones into the ocean.' In *Mirror* by Chieko Shiomi, the performer is instructed to stand on a beach, facing away from the sea, and while looking in a mirror, to walk backwards into the sea.

One of the most elaborate Activities, described in an issue of the *Tulane Drama Review*, was *Calling*, by Allan Kaprow, carried out in August 1965. Briefly, three people were stationed one Saturday afternoon on different street corners in New York. At a specified time separate cars picked them up. Each of the individuals was then covered from head to foot in tin-foil. The cars were then parked, each in a different spot, and the drivers departed, leaving behind them the human packages.

The process was then repeated with three other drivers and three other individuals, each of whom was wrapped in muslin and tied with cord. Finally, three of the packages were delivered to Grand Central Station and propped against the information booth. Each of the three human bundles then unwrapped himself, went to a telephone booth and dialled the number of one of the participants who had helped to drive or wrap them. For five minutes the three people in Grand Central Station and the three

mental conglomerate to which all participants had certain rights according to the production concept. In the purest sense, anyone who came into the space, whether performer, spectator, technician or attendant, had 'a piece of the action.' The staircase, ramps, ladders and platforms were actively used by all the participants all the time; performers and audience alike were forced by the nature of the environment to engage each other's territory. All groups negotiated with the environment on their own terms. There was little concern for illusion, mood or spectacle in the usual sense; instead the artist's energy was applied to solving architectural problems that derived

Requ

for transformation. They can ignite strange sources of light. If art is about the transformation of the commonplace into some special zone of attention, then the artist's job today is the comprehensive transformation of life itself. This reverses Plato's banishment of the 'maker', the practitioner, the teller of fictions from the realm of citizenship. The artist is the one who stands on the grounds of the commons, not the one who lurks in a private domain of chores and business.

Today, it may not be necessary to be a citizen in order to be an artist, and we are all familiar with the phenomenon of the genius artist who removes himself or herself from society in order to concentrate on the purity of their calling, but it could be said that it is urgently necessary to be an artist in order to be a citizen, if we are to understand citizenship in any fulsome way.

Rancière says:

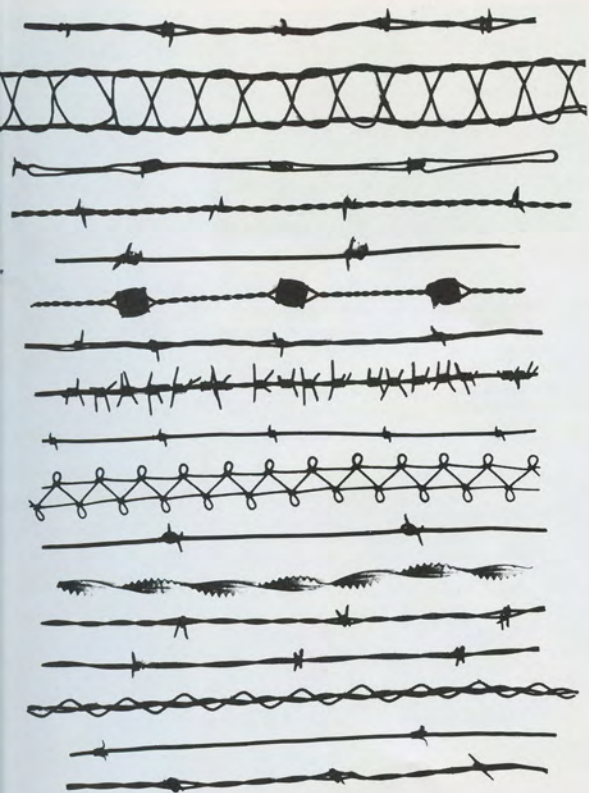
The ordinary becomes beautiful as a trace of the true. And the ordinary becomes a trace of the true if it is torn from its obviousness in order to become a hieroglyph, a mythological or phantasmagoric figure. This phantasmagoric dimension of the true, which belongs to the aesthetic regime of the arts, also played an essential role in the formation of the critical paradigm of the human and social sciences. The Marxist theory of Fetishism is the most striking testimony of this fact. Commodities must be torn out of their trivial appearances, made into phantasmagoric objects in order to be interpreted as the expression of society's contradictions.

The Politics of Aesthetics

The Transformation of the Commonplace

This is a different, more creative understanding of the phantasmagoric in comparison to Adorno's dour definition as the "occlusion of the production by the appearance of the product". The point is not that the product is concealed by the fetish, or that





Barbed wire collection, Monterey, California, 1968

Collectors are a special group of naive artists. They devote a significant part of their lives to the process of gathering discarded objects and materials which they feel are beautiful, rare, or of special nostalgic value. When enough have been collected, they are sometimes assembled into a carefully planned formal presentation.

This collection of barbed wire (opposite) contains over five hundred different strands. The samples are cut in twelve-inch lengths and tied with nylon fish line on a series of canvas panels. The portable panels are transported to "meets" where other collectors gather to admire new finds and barter for extra samples.

These wire rug-beaters (right) were collected for their seemingly endless design variations. The linear elements are shaped in graceful patterns that obviously express more than mere functional requirements.

One of the abiding themes of much Duchampian scholarship on this question of art's relationship to intellectual labour is that the unassisted readymades were not much more than a joke, or more precisely a grim joke at the expense of handcraft. The unassisted readymades' refusal to offer any sensuous rewards and evidence of palpable artistic labour were judged to be a flippant jest, bizarre and adventitious. In *The Popular Culture of Modern Art* (1994), Jeffrey Weiss extends the logic of this argument, but, in a far more sophisticated and critical direction. He believes Duchamp's rejection of the craft of Cubist painting is indebted, overwhelmingly, to two main critical forces which shaped much of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century popular French culture's mediation of high-culture: the *blagueur* (the hoaxer) and the *raté* (the embittered bohemian artist *manqué*, who strives for the immortal 'put down'). Both have the origins in the Second Empire, when modern art was beginning to be subject to various kinds of anxious scepticism within popular culture and amongst artists themselves. Was modern art to be trusted when it appeared so ironic and even infantile in tone? Indeed, the pranks of the *blagueur*, and his cohort the *mystificateur*, who derived humour from the mournful and 'official' delivery of absurd information, and the cynicism of the *raté*, became an established part of Second Empire culture and after, generating a large cast of humorists, chancers and deadpan deflators of modern art and modernism. But *blague* was not unidirectional, a conservative one-way street, it also infected the avant-garde itself. In fact, the *blagueur*, *mystificateur* and *raté* become key parts of the avant-garde armoury in its war of attrition with the forces of bourgeois culture: positivism and propriety; and, perhaps more pertinently, with the official guardians of modern art. For what unites conservative and radical *blague* alike is the pleasure of resisting what is judged to be well thought of, 'of feeling oneself superior by proving that one is not a dupe', as the critic Francisque Sarcey put it.¹⁰ The outcome in pre-First World War France, is a complex array of positions of cultural anxiety on the modern in which popular writers try to outdo the modernists themselves in fabricating avant-garde outrages (in 1877, for example, playwrights Meilhac and Halévy invented an artist Marignan who produced a blank grey canvas

to which was attached a knife); and modernist writers, such as Alfred Jarry, successfully fabricated an absurdist exaggeration of bourgeois efficiency and industry. As Weiss says: 'to the extent that [the *blague*] constitutes a popular experience of modern art, prewar esthetic disorientation can be identified as branch of popular culture, a kind of collective consciousness of sensibility of ambivalence.'¹¹ This ambivalence is Duchamp's early *metier*, making his unassisted readymades utterly believable as interventions, rather than simply the febrile obsessions of a real and witless *raté*. In fact the word *blague* was soon on the lips of his amanuensis Louise Norton after the debacle of the Independence. In 'The Buddha of the Bathroom' she declares: 'And there is among us today a spirit of "blague" arising out of the artist's bitter vision of an over-institutionalized world of stagnant statistics and antique axioms.'¹² Against the aesthetic redeemers of Duchamp, therefore (and de Duve might creep under the wire here), Weiss rightly treats Duchamp's manoeuvres within the pre-war Cubist milieu as fundamentally disaffirmative and disruptive of prevailing notions of craft. The *blague* is disreputable and noisome, it is not the first move of a shiny 'new industrial aesthetic'. In this respect Weiss's emphasis on the context of the *blague* and the *mystificateur* is important in retaining the notion of the readymade as a rebuke to the aesthetic. Weiss certainly is not a recruit to the new painterly paradigm of Duchampian scholarship. Yet, if Weiss sees *Fountain* first and foremost as a mockery of Cubist labour (all that huffing and puffing for meaning), in the form of the *mystificateur* deadpan gesture, the general absence of any systematic understanding of the reflection on labour in Duchamp's work leaves the concept of the *blague* as a mere joke, as bereft from the wider and deeper changes the 'hoax' mediates. As I have argued the unassisted readymades are congeries of simple labour and complex labour, artistic labour and productive labour, alienated labour and non-alienated labour. As such they are not 'mere functional'¹³ things, content with their own deadpan implacability. On the contrary they are sites of conflict, meaning that their irony, humour and *blague* are weakened, and even mystified, when divorced from the broader context of labour which underpins the Duchampian culture of anxiety. This leads us to ask: how do humour and the *blague* come to find their voice in Duchamp's reflections on labour and artistic skill?

Henri Bergson notes that we tend to laugh when we see an inappropriate or unconscious rigidity of movement or thought. What is humorous is an experience of the mechanical and inelastic where we expect to find the

fluidity and liveness of a human life. In the of the automaton that are primary cause inertness where we expect pliability. Inflexibility is dissipated by laughter. 'Rigidity is the core of the comic. Consequently, laughter is a purgative response to unselfconsciousness (the humour of Chaplin are perfect examples of this). This is why, as Bergson says, or as an expression of unthinking high ideas, they are so humorous. Inattentiveness to beauty is a betrayal of such self-esteem and ideals. Laughter always derives from repetition, inflexibility, when the body becomes a machine in a bad sense (as in John Cleese's 'Ministry of Silly Walks'). This is the reason that fluidity of response and dialectical judiciousness are not funny. To fail to remain fluid and non-programmatic, or obsessive they become equally funny. As potentially humorous as the mechanistic, to draw laughter, then, is to imitate those who someone who remains unaware of their own inflexibility. Duchamp's unassisted readymades are comic things: the transformation of labour – into a thing without ostensible meaning, an automaton-comedic effect. By copying labour producing something dead in the name of *Fountain* takes on the appearance of what counts as artistic labour that they object of productive labour as art. The artist, in an attempt to be 'avant-garde', produces the very antithesis of what constitutes art. In stretching for effect the artist bamboozles himself, this falling into the automatic as an accident, a comic to fall into a ready-made category, to become a category oneself into which the ready-made frame.''¹⁴ It is not clear whether the readymade from this comedic context and the *blague*, he must surely have been aware of. Duchamp's withdrawal from art into

ist writers, such as Alfred Jarry, generation of bourgeois efficiency that [the *blague*] constitutes a or esthetic disorientation can be kind of collective consciousness valence is Duchamp's early *metier*, believable as interventions, rather and witless *raté*. In fact the word uensis Louise Norton after the Buddha of the Bathroom' she a spirit of "blague" arising out institutionalized world of stagnant ne aesthetic redeemers of Duch- cept under the wire here), Weiss thin the pre-war Cubist milieu as tive of prevailing notions of craft. t is not the first move of a shiny Weiss's emphasis on the context tant in retaining the notion of the Weiss certainly is not a recruit to an scholarship. Yet, if Weiss sees of Cubist labour (all that huffing f the *mystificateur* deadpan gesture, nderstanding of the reflection on cept of the *blague* as a mere joke, ges the 'hoax' mediates. As I have congeries of simple labour and uctive labour, alienated labour and re not 'mere functional'⁵³ things, cability. On the contrary they are y, humour and *blague* are weakened, om the broader context of labour are of anxiety. This leads us to ask: to find their voice in Duchamp's

laugh when we see an inappropriate or thought. What is humorous is an astic where we expect to find the

fluidity and liteness of a human life. In this respect it is the various effects of the automaton that are primary causes of laughter, for what we see is inertness where we expect pliability. Inflexibility produces unease, which is dissipated by laughter. 'Rigidity is the comic, and laughter its corrective.'⁵⁴ Consequently, laughter is a purgative response to the threat of rigidity and unselfconsciousness (the humour of Charlie Chaplin and Jacques Tati are perfect examples of this). This is why, as the result of preening self-esteem, or as an expression of unthinking high ideals, physical obstinacy and rigidity are so humorous. Inattentiveness to bodily posture tends to produce a betrayal of such self-esteem and ideals. Accordingly, this is why the comic always derives from repetition, inflexibility and stasis, and why we laugh when the body becomes a machine in the pursuit of order, efficiency or good sense (as in John Cleese's 'Ministry of Silly Walks'). Concomitantly, this is the reason that fluidity of response, sensitivity to detail and to others, and dialectical judiciousness are not funny, or rather, are only funny if they fail to remain fluid and non-programmatic. Once they become programmatic or obsessive they become equally rigid, and, in turn, become as potentially humorous as the mechanistic and unconsciously repetitive. To draw laughter, then, is to imitate those rigid and inflexible aspects of someone who remains unaware of their own physical and intellectual inflexibility. Duchamp's unassisted readymades exist in this world of inert, comedic things: the transformation of the 'living' artwork – of artistic labour – into a thing without ostensible artistic qualities, produces the automaton-comedic effect. By copying without copying, and thereby producing something dead in the name of something living, the producer of *Fountain* takes on the appearance of someone who is so unaware as to what counts as artistic labour that they can unselfconsciously pass off an object of productive labour as art. This creates the impression that the artist, in an attempt to be 'avant-garde', has fallen in an unthinking way into the very antithesis of what constitutes a work of art as art: mere repetition. In stretching for effect the artist bamboozles himself. Bergson talks about this falling into the automatic as an actual fall into the readymade. 'It is comic to fall into a ready-made category. And what is most comic of all is to become a category oneself into which others will fall, as into a ready-made frame.'⁵⁵ It is not clear whether Duchamp borrowed the concept of the readymade from this comedic context, but as master of miscegenation and the *blague*, he must surely have been aware of its comedic associations. Duchamp's withdrawal from art into the 'inertia' of the readymade,

therefore, results in an avant-garde gesture, but in a reversal of this ambition in the form of the *blague*, it reveals the stupidity of the avant-gardist who made it.

This gap between desired outcome and actual outcome generates a comedic-effect that is central to Duchamp's reflections on artistic skill: *misjudgements* of labour undertaken. Something is funny when we recognise that there is a disproportion between the result and the labours undertaken to achieve it, for then we notice a lack of awareness or sensitivity on the part of the person who produced or completed the work. For instance the person who spends an inordinate amount of dedicated time on something that fails to produce the desired effect, or any worthwhile effect, yet who professes its magnificence, or charming or sterling qualities. This might be the novice eco-warrior who makes a house out of leaves and straw and proudly shows it off, which then gets blown away with the first gust of wind; or the worker who spends all day dutifully pulling a series of levers, that unbeknownst to her are not connected to anything and therefore her labour does not produce any effect or outcome. Conversely a disproportionate gap between final outcome and process results from the person who, in blithe indifference to their own lack of the required skills and patience, passes off some speedy and incurious activity as skilful. This latter outcome – as a perfect kind of *blague* – is close in spirit to the copying without copying of the unassisted readymade. An object without discernible artistic merit is meretriciously passed off as art in conscious opposition to the blustery labour of the *fine artiste*. But, of course, what distinguishes this kind of *blague* is that it hides a secret: where you look for effort you won't find it; the trick, in the act of judgement, is to *rethink* the object, reanimate it conceptually, in Zukovsky's language, and the efforts of the artist will then reveal themselves. The unassisted readymade performs a perfect transformation of productive labour into artistic labour: what appears effortless becomes effortful. The significance of copying without copying, therefore, is not to eradicate skill from art, but to eradicate *purposeless* skill from art. But, although Duchamp's readymades exist in the world of comedic-automaton effects in the pursuit of these ends, they do not exist in the world of laughter. Duchamp was a *blagueur* without an immediate audience. Because *Fountain* remained on the whole unexhibited, it never had an audience to laugh *at it*. As such *Fountain* was unable to experience that moment of release in an audience that Bergson insists the comic necessarily produces.

Duchamp's early work is clearly in the terfuges of the *blague*, as a way of clear fighting. But it is also clear that the *blague* work. Despite his overdetermination Weiss admits as much. Although the *blague* is an underlying disposition over which cal, literary or scientific resources a process of 'rendezvous' immanent theoretical exchange across different is not an invitation to the dissolution contraries can be performed and m

NOT

- 1 See, for example, the threatening postcard to Ryan and Esther in Patrick Hamilton. Hamilton reproduces the postcard, with magazines, one-third of its original size. narrative structure, these interruptions ha
- 2 Of course this argument is undermined by books incorporating readymades. But these and not books subject to a process of repro of the book, then, faces insuperable probl reproducible elements into its form it stops disseminated and read. One author who c writer, rather than as a producer of *artists'* (Panther Books in Association with Secker logic of the readymade into the structure o box which contained separate sections of a order. Although the box did not contain a down the text into discrete parts, the readym (its printed pages) became intrinsic to the b the play between the reproducible and reproducible form of the book into an un problem with *The Unfortunates*, though, is th shuffling of the pages only produced a lin
- 3 Marcel Duchamp, radio interview with C Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp*, p.
- 4 Marcel Duchamp, interviewed by Katherine Artists, Harper and Row, London, 1962.
- 5 Duchamp, 'Apropos of "Readymades"' (p. 142.
- 6 I borrow 'produced production' from Ro phase. See *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Sciences*, Harvester Press, Brighton, 1979.

gesture, but in a reversal of this reveals the stupidity of the avant-

the and actual outcome generates a champ's reflections on artistic skill: something is funny when we recognise the result and the labours undertaken lack of awareness or sensitivity on the completed work. For instance the amount of dedicated time on something, or any worthwhile effect, yet who or sterling qualities. This might be house out of leaves and straw and blown away with the first gust of day dutifully pulling a series of levers, connected to anything and therefore her or outcome. Conversely a disproportion and process results from the person own lack of the required skills and incurious activity as skilful. This latter *ue* – is close in spirit to the copying readymade. An object without discerned off as art in conscious opposition *te*. But, of course, what distinguishes secret: where you look for effort you of judgement, is to *rethink* the object, ky's language, and the efforts of the the unassisted readymade performs a ve labour into artistic labour: what

The significance of copying without erate skill from art, but to eradicate h Duchamp's readymades exist in the in the pursuit of these ends, they do Duchamp was a *blagueur* without an remained on the whole unexhibited, *ut it*. As such *Fountain* was unable to an audience that Bergson insists the

Duchamp's early work is clearly indebted to the inversions and subterfuges of the *blague*, as a way of clearing out the congestion of Cubist infighting. But it is also clear that the *blague* is only a provisional way into his work. Despite his overdetermination of the joke in Duchamp's practice, Weiss admits as much. Although the spirit of *blague* is unmissable, it is 'only an underlying disposition over which the elaboration of other philosophical, literary or scientific resources are then introduced'.¹⁶ Indeed, the process of 'rendezvous' immanent to the readymade is a process of theoretical exchange across different forms of labour. The *blague*, then, is not an invitation to the dissolution of meaning, but the means by which contraries can be performed and made visible.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, the threatening postcards sent from the con-man Ernest Ralph Gorse to Ryan and Esther in Patrick Hamilton's *The West Pier* (Constable, London, 1953). Hamilton reproduces the postcard, with its cut-out letters from newspapers and magazines, one-third of its original size. In a work that is largely conventional in its narrative structure, these interruptions have the visual character of Futurist poems.

² Of course this argument is undermined by the artist/author who produces a small run of books incorporating readymades. But these are essentially art objects in the form of books, and not books subject to a process of reproduction. The artistic/writerly dematerialization of the book, then, faces insuperable problems: at the point where it introduces external reproducible elements into its form it stops being a book, that is, something to be widely disseminated and read. One author who courted this dematerialization of the book as a writer, rather than as a producer of *artists'* books, was B.S. Johnson. In *The Unfortunates* (Panther Books in Association with Secker and Warburg, 1969) Johnson incorporated the logic of the readymade into the structure of the novel. *The Unfortunates* was published as a box which contained separate sections of a narrative which were to be read in no particular order. Although the box did not contain any extrinsic readymade elements, by breaking down the text into discrete parts, the readymade components of the novel's material form (its printed pages) became intrinsic to the book's content. In a Duchampian invocation of the play between the reproducible and the un reproducible, the reader recasts the reproducible form of the book into an un reproducible (discontinuous) experience. The problem with *The Unfortunates*, though, is that this discontinuity didn't go far enough. The shuffling of the pages only produced a limited number of permutations.

³ Marcel Duchamp, radio interview with Georges Charbonnier, RTF, 1961, quoted in Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp*, p.162.

⁴ Marcel Duchamp, interviewed by Katherine Kuh, *The Artist's Voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists*, Harper and Row, London, 1962, p.90.

⁵ Duchamp, 'Apropos of "Readymades"' (1961), *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, p.142.

⁶ I borrow 'produced production' from Roy Bhaskar, or rather, Bhaskar's early Marxian phase. See *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*, Harvester Press, Brighton, 1979.



There is certainly some semblance of truth in that. But first of all we ought to make a proper distinction between laughter and joy. Joy exists in itself, but it has various manifestations. Sometimes it is almost invisible; at others, it expresses itself in tears. Laughter is only an expression, a symptom, a diagnostic. Symptom of what? That is the question. Joy is a unity. Laughter is the expression of a double, or contradictory, feeling; and that is the reason why a convulsion occurs. And so the laughter of children, which I hold for a vain objection, is altogether different, even as a physical expression, even as a form, from the laughter of a man who attends a play, or who looks at a caricature, or from the terrible laughter of Melmoth—of Melmoth, the outcast of society, wandering somewhere between the last boundaries of the territory of mankind and the frontiers of the higher life; of Melmoth, who always believes himself to be on the point of freedom from his infernal pact, and longs without ceasing to barter that superhuman power, which is his disaster, for the pure conscience of a simpleton, which is his envy. For the laughter of children is like the blossoming of a flower. It is the joy of receiving, the joy of breathing, the joy of contemplating, of living, of growing. It is a vegetable joy. And so, in general, it is more like a smile—something analogous to the wagging of a dog's tail, or the purring of a cat. And if there still remains some distinction between the laughter of children and such expressions of animal contentment, I think that we should hold that this is because their laughter is not entirely exempt from ambition, as is only proper to little scraps of men—that is, to budding Satans.

But there is one case where the question is more complicated. It is the laughter of man—but a true and violent laughter—at the sight of an object which is neither a sign of weakness nor of disaster among his fellows. It is easy to guess that I am referring to the laughter caused by the grotesque. Fabulous creations, beings whose authority and *raison d'être* cannot be drawn from the code of common sense, often provoke in us an insane and excessive mirth, which expresses itself in interminable paroxysms and swoons. It is clear that a distinction must be made, and that here we have a higher degree of the phenomenon. From the artistic point of view, the comic is an imitation: the grotesque a creation. The comic is an imitation mixed with a certain creative faculty, that is to say with an artistic *ideality*. Now human pride, which always takes the upper hand and is the natural cause of laughter in the case of the comic,

turns out to be the natural cause too, for this is a creation mixed that is, of elements pre-existent laughter is still the expression of man over man, but of man is too subtle; that would be difficulty is to find another place fetched and just a little hard caused by the grotesque has and axiomatic, which is much joy than is the laughter caused aside the question of utility, two sorts of laughter as there and the school of art for art's comic from a proportionate h

From now onwards I shall in antithesis to the ordinary comic'. The latter is a clearer the street to understand, and being visibly *double*—art and which comes much closer to the intuition to grasp it. The and that is laughter—immediate comic it is quite permissible no argument against its validity of analysis.

I have called it 'the absolute guard. From the point of view is joy. The comic can only be and it is in this way that I am

IN ITS triple-distilled essence prerogative of those superior to receive any absolute ideas been the most sensitive to the in action in his purely aesthetic



171



172

ce of truth in that. But first of all we between laughter and joy. Joy exists in manifestations. Sometimes it is almost itself in tears. Laughter is only an ex-
 ic. Symptom of what? That is the er is the expression of a double, or the reason why a convulsion occurs. which I hold for a vain objection, is sical expression, even as a form, from s a play, or who looks at a caricature, Melmoth—of Melmoth, the outcast of between the last boundaries of the ntiers of the higher life; of Melmoth, be on the point of freedom from his t ceasing to barter that superhuman r the pure conscience of a simpleton, ster of children is like the blossoming ving, the joy of breathing, the joy of wing. It is a vegetable joy. And so, in —something analogous to the wagging f a cat. And if there still remains some r of children and such expressions of at we should hold that this is because empt from ambition, as is only proper to budding Satans.

the question is more complicated. It is e and violent laughter—at the sight of n of weakness nor of disaster among his I am referring to the laughter caused by ons, beings whose authority and *raison* e code of common sense, often provoke th, which expresses itself in interminable ear that a distinction must be made, and ee of the phenomenon. From the artistic imitation: the grotesque a creation. The rith a certain creative faculty, that is to w human pride, which always takes the ause of laughter in the case of the comic,

turns out to be the natural cause of laughter in the case of the grotesque too, for this is a creation mixed with a certain imitative faculty—imitative that is, of elements pre-existing in nature. I mean that in this case laughter is still the expression of an idea of superiority—no longer now of man over man, but of man over nature. Do not retort that this idea is too subtle; that would be no sufficient reason for rejecting it. The difficulty is to find another plausible explanation. If this one seems far-fetched and just a little hard to accept, that is because the laughter caused by the grotesque has about it something profound, primitive and axiomatic, which is much closer to the innocent life and to absolute joy than is the laughter caused by the comic in man's behaviour. Setting aside the question of utility, there is the same difference between these two sorts of laughter as there is between the *implied* school of writing and the school of art for art's sake. Thus the grotesque dominates the comic from a proportionate height.

From now onwards I shall call the grotesque 'the absolute comic', in antithesis to the ordinary comic, which I shall call 'the significative comic'. The latter is a clearer language, and one easier for the man in the street to understand, and above all easier to analyse, its element being visibly *double*—art and the moral idea. But the absolute comic, which comes much closer to nature, emerges as a *unity* which calls for the intuition to grasp it. There is but one criterion of the grotesque, and that is laughter—immediate laughter. Whereas with the significative comic it is quite permissible to laugh a moment late—that is no argument against its validity; it all depends upon one's quickness of analysis.

I have called it 'the absolute comic'. Nevertheless we should be on our guard. From the point of view of the definitive absolute, all that remains is *joy*. The comic can only be absolute in relation to fallen humanity, and it is in this way that I am understanding it.

VI

IN ITS triple-distilled essence the absolute comic turns out to be the prerogative of those superior artists whose minds are sufficiently open to receive any absolute ideas at all. Thus, the man who until now has been the most sensitive to these ideas, and who set a good part of them in action in his purely aesthetic, as well as his creative work, is Theodore



GRAND
 WEST KENNEDY M.

Here I am led naturally back to the question of beauty. It is not necessary to define the term but merely to remind you of the existence – in certain historical conditions – of two standards of excellence. Return, once more, to the example of Van Gogh and Gustave Doré. In a sense it may be said that both artists sought beauty and that both achieved it, even though their aims seem to be diametrically opposed.

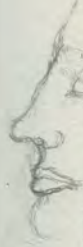
The beauty of Van Gogh is of a kind which, at first sight, seems to the general public to be the very negation of beauty, to be, in fact, unmitigated ugliness. Only by degrees, as we learn to understand the meaning behind the violence of the artist's language, do we learn to accept it. When once it has been accepted we think, not, I hope, unreasonably, that it has become a permanent acquisition (but even in this we may be wrong).

The typical life history of every artistic movement of the past hundred years has consisted of a struggle against hostility and indifference, the good artist has fought against the popular conception of beauty, the bad artist has accepted it at once or after a brief struggle. There have been two measures of excellence and, as a necessary result, a struggle in which the artist must be continually driven to a compromise, to an insincere bargain which results in falsity of sentiment, in bad art. The typical aesthetic history of the child, that is to say, the suppression of pure emotion untroubled by any conscious pursuit of beauty and its replacement by an attitude of social deference allows us to suppose that, in modern society this conflict, and the almost inevitable victory of

during the past two hundred years in the most violent fashion: the beautiful has become hateful and ridiculous. Consider the examples of the last century: *Raleigh* and *When Did You Last See Your Mother?* appear so appallingly ugly that Landseer, Millais and Pre-Raphaelites as young men. Why should we not, in each case, the demand for beauty and enthusiasm. These artists, in their age as to what could be done so, addressed the question of success.

If we look further into the work which, without being considered as a revolution, is still valued as a masterpiece, plates, and the cheap ornaments, we shall find it preferable to the great art of the past, precisely because they are in law in operation even with the masters. If we compare the work of a Millais, a Poynter or a Pre-Raphaelite pictures, we shall realise that they really exerted themselves.

Take another example, the big department store and the decorated objects, the gar-



There exists a Humane Society to protect the rights and feelings of animals. It seems not inappropriate to start a branch to protect the rights and feelings of sensitive human beings, who are hurt by the quantity production of trash.





Dialogues with décor by

Nikolais. Photo: Susan
e Barbara Hepworth
John Webb.

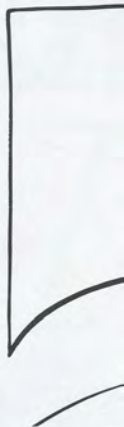


Contemporary Caricature

brilliance. Indeed, it is possible to detect a series of subtle gradations in Picasso's work. The early portraits of Apollinaire are caricature in the fullest traditional sense, quite worthy of standing beside similar drawings by Bernini. The series of drawings made for the magazine *Verve* in the fifties uses caricature conventions less for satiric than for poetic purposes – a cupid uses the mask of an old man with a phallic nose (the mask may be meant as a portrait of Picasso himself) to threaten a beautiful young girl. Finally, there are the late 'transpositions' of masterpieces by other men – Velazquez's *Las Meninas*, Delacroix's *Women of Algiers* – where it is sometimes doubtful whether a tribute or a satire is intended.

Simultaneously, serious art has tried to absorb caricature into itself. Willem de Kooning's series of *Women*, grinning parodies of sexuality often painted on a gigantic scale, could be caricatures but for their monumentality. Similar, but even closer to true caricature, are the paintings of Dubuffet's *Corps de Dame* series, based on the artist's admiration for child art.

Modern art has also had an effect on the audience, as well as on the caricaturists themselves. It has taught people to 'read' images they might previously have found incomprehensible, and has thus enormously widened the caricaturist's sphere of action. Scarfe's wildly distorted caricatures are very much a case in point. For today's satirical draughtsmen, modernism cannot be ignored but their attitudes towards it are distinctly ambivalent. They react towards it in a way Freud would have understood.



Here, as we've seen, the source lay in low imagery. Her big-shoe reliefs have their origins in the oversize shoes that Dagwood wears in Chic Young's *Blondie*. For Murray, Dagwood's shoe became a found symbolic image of her own father, wearing out his shoe leather, searching for a job—failing. Comic disproportion became for her a symbol of defeat, and this association was reinforced by a famous photograph of Adlai Stevenson (the beaten Democrat in both presidential races of the 1950s), with his foot turned up to reveal a hole in the sole. For Murray, this simple comic vessel—Dagwood's shoes, which are the great liberal loser's shoes, which are her father's shoes—have become a motif of defeat and perplexity generally, freeing her to find in the least inflection of the low image new symbolic meaning. The shoelace, reforming itself into a noose, can, for example, embody an elegiac recollection of the suicide of a friend (fig. 7).¹²

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" runs the most incongruous exultation in the Bible.¹³ "How beautiful are the feet"—what Saint Paul meant, of course, was that feet were beautiful because they could go places, propel works that could only be done by one person trudging over to another, to take a new message from town to town in a way that would eventually change the consciousness of an empire. The big, rolling movements of modern culture, those wheels and whirligigs of exchange, in the end turn out to be just such small, pedestrian movements—not foreordained cycles but the consequence of little, prodding, uncertain motions forward. Look at a funny upturned shoe, and, if you are willing, you can see faith, energy, failure, and your father's life. The modern tradition can continue to bring us glad tidings by taking us on extraordinary journeys to familiar places, but only on its own eccentric terms. The deal is that you have to go without a map, and you can only get there on foot.

Let us be frank:

I draw a shelf with glasses on it; a shelf with plates, soup plates, etc.; a shelf with bottles, pitchers, etc. Drawers with automatic storage of silverware. . . .

I draw a shelf with linens, sheets, towels, etc., a shelf with underwear, drawers with lingerie, stockings, etc.

I draw a shelf with shoes, a shelf with hats.

I draw clothing hung on a clothes hook; a dress.

That's all.

The inventory of objects we use is complete.

These objects are in proportion to our limbs, are adapted to our gestures.

They have a *common scale*, they fit into a module [fig. 48].¹⁹

49 KAARE KLEIN
Analysis of various possibilities for the standard tableware within a sideboard



48 LE CORBUSIER
"That's all." From
Précisions (Paris, 1930).

teristics of gender to design motifs. The association of sparseness with masculinity and ornateness with femininity has a long history. A sixteenth-century drawing, for example, substitutes male and female statues, respectively, for Doric and Corinthian architectural columns, illustrating the Vitruvian notion of the humanization of the orders.²⁷ And in contemporary parlance, "hard" and "soft" are often associated with gender orientations – hard and soft rock, for example.²⁸ Continuing this division into the moral sphere, it is obvious that Loos's notion of ornamental "criminality" is coded feminine.

Many modern art works underline the equation of the soft and the decorative with the feminine as a negative, distortion device – a tactic of caricature. Consider Salvador Dalí's softening of the perspectival solidity of objects in the melting forms of his canvases; Claes Oldenburg's softening of consumer products and household objects in his malleable sculpture; and the softened forms in Peter Saul's versions of political representations and fine-art masterpieces. All bear witness to male artists using supposedly feminine softness to attack and destabilize rigid patriarchal order. At the same time, the appropriation of hard or geometric formats by artists such as Sherrie Levine reveals a female co-option of male order. What we confront here is a kind of artistic gender bending. For Komoski, Pittman, and Dunham, the key referents are the essentialist picturing of the blob as an icon of nature and the expressiveness of gestural painting. Yet neither of these rings true: all the signs of meaning turn in on themselves. The references to nature are obviously rooted in popular sources, and the "eroticism" of the decoration is a self-conscious construct, formalized to the point where it actually becomes uncanny. Nature, eros, the horrific, and the body are filtered through the codes of essentialism. This is what gives the work its double edge, and what allows it to escape the bonds of modernism's simplistic dualism.

Another contemporary camp is based around an extension of geometric reductivism, historically the more "masculine," "heroic" kind of abstraction. Here cruelty is more apparent. Perhaps softness calls for restraint. In any case, recent dialogues with the Minimalist paradigm also relate to the tradition of caricature. Reductive, "essentially" heroic primal forms lend themselves easily to the role of authority figure. Thus it is only right that we should want to defame them. Aimee Rankin (now Aimee Morgana), Debby Davis, and Liz Lauer are master sculptors who all defy the chastity of Minimalism to reinscribe

the body. On first view, Rankin's exhibitions resemble rows of Don Judd-like wall pieces, but on closer inspection her cubes reveal themselves as Pandora's boxes, filled with scenes of cruelty and eroticism. Davis reveals the cruelty of the primal form itself by using it to shape casts of dead animals – a cube of cast chicken carcasses, say. Lauer makes antiseptic geometric receptacles to reveal geometry's destructive "soul": a cube is formed of bomb-making materials, or a clear glass rectangle holds a petrie dish of bacteria. The work of John Miller and Meyer Vaisman operates similarly. Miller overlays a politics of anality on geometric formalism. Vaisman pairs a generic stand-in for painting with reference to the taboo, the infantile, and the sexual – rubber nipples, toilet seats, greased holes, and, tellingly, caricatures.

One of the initial attractions of the caricature was the speed with which it could be executed, and if its spontaneity set it closer to the original workings of the mind than a more considered drawing. This aesthetic of haste contributed to the adoration once lavished on Michelangelo's unfinished "slave" carvings, in which the figure, barely freed from the stone, appears to be receding toward the Platonic archetype that gave it birth. In 1981, Charles Ray made a sculpture called *Memory of Adam*, a rectangular steel box positioned on the floor from which a human arm and leg extend. These organic marks on the geometric primal form are a distortion. A fouled primal form is a caricature of the very notion of perfection. When we see this, like the children on *Double Dare* when they see their parents and teachers covered in a disgusting mess, we cannot hold back a shout of glee.

NOTES

1. Ernst Kris and E.H. Gombrich, "The Principles of Caricature," *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York: International Universities Press/Schocken Books, 1964; originally published 1952), 189.
2. Ibid., "The Psychology of Caricature," *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York: International Universities Press/Schocken Books, 1964), 175.
3. Kris and Gombrich, 190.
4. Albert Boime, "Jacques-Louis David, Scatological Discourse in the French Revolution, and the Art of Caricature," *Arts Magazine* 62:6 (February 1988), 72–81.
5. Frances C. Barasch, introduction to Thomas Wright, *A History of Caricature and Grotesque in Literature and Art* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1967), xxiii.

the Roman Empire was literally made.²² "Who made this?" was perhaps a question best left unanswered.

Still the craftsmen found ways of leaving their mark in the work. In part this was possible because in Roman building construction a gap existed between command and execution. Like modern NHS medical staff, a great deal of improvisation occurred on the ground. Many formal "errors" had to be committed to get the houses, roads, and sewers to function. The thinking of menial workmen involved correction and adaptation—and it was a dangerous form of thinking because many guild masters treated these necessary variations as insubordination. Some forms of improvisation were necessary simply because many slaves were distant foreigners with no Roman models in their heads; for these captives, the slave master's whip could not tell them what they were supposed to do.



A maker's mark is a peculiar sign. The Greek maker's mark appeared especially when potters were able to paint elaborate scenes; they then began to sign their wares, sometimes with the name of the place in which they lived, sometimes with their name. Such a signature could add economic value. Marks left by the Roman slave builder would attest only to his presence. In some Roman buildings in provincial Gaul the impressed marks—rarely a name, more often a symbol identifying the place where the maker came from or the tribe to which he belonged—are as dense in the brickwork as are the mason's marks in the Taj Mahal, where the Mogul stamps create a huge decorative surface. Many of the adaptive irregularities in Roman brickwork modulated into expressive decoration, tiny flourishes like a figured tile mortared in to cover over an imperfect joint behind the surface. These also can be considered a maker's mark.

The story of these ancient bricks makes a particular connection between craftwork and politics. "Presence," in the modern way of

thinking, seems to be the only way in which brickwork establishes its presence in detail itself. In the absence of command, the presence could only be asserted in any medium. The medieval mason's mark is the craftsman's signature.

The size of the brick is a matter of historical interest. The historian of brickwork is interested in the brick. A brick was a small object. This implies a history of the object in stone and in brick. The work imposes "a smallness of the object" on the conditions of the classical empire. The material with which the material that the presence known using a modern signals of defiance exist" is perhaps

Anthropology Virtue Discovered

A third kind of brickwork with human quality tells me about a maker. These are an exemplar of the makers at a certain

Who made this?" was per-
 ing their mark in the work. In
 building construction a gap
 Like modern NHS medical
 and on the ground. Many for-
 e houses, roads, and sewers
 en involved correction and
 of thinking because many
 iations as insubordination.
 ssary simply because many
 an models in their heads; for
 ould not tell them what they

reek maker's mark appeared
 elaborate scenes; they then
 h the name of the place in
 me. Such a signature could
 Roman slave builder would
 an buildings in provincial
 more often a symbol identi-
 om or the tribe to which he
 as are the mason's marks in
 create a huge decorative sur-
 in Roman brickwork modu-
 ishes like a figured tile mor-
 hind the surface. These also

kes a particular connection
 ce," in the modern way of

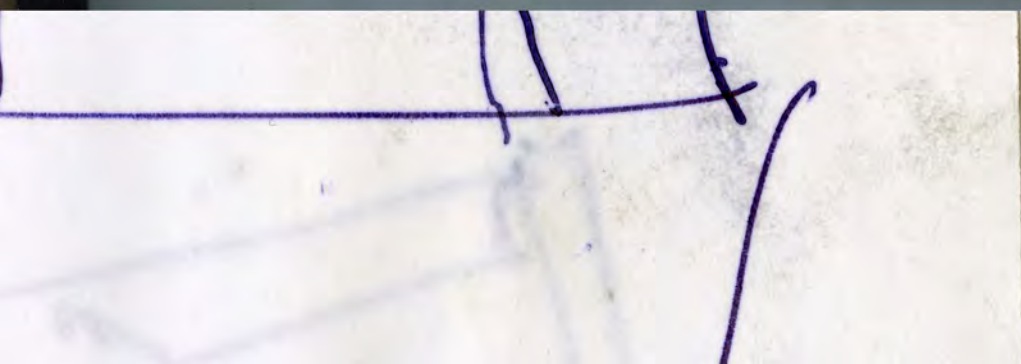
thinking, seems self-referential, emphasizing the word "I." Ancient
 brickwork established presence through small details marking "it": the
 detail itself. In the lowly Roman craftsman's way, anonymity and pres-
 ence could combine. The slave brickmaker had no thought of expres-
 sion in any modern sense; nor was his realm like that of Ruskin's
 medieval mason, whose irregular work symbolized the free agency of
 the craftsman.

The size of bricks also matters in the message they send. The great
 historian of bricks, Alec Clifton-Taylor, observes that what most counts
 about them is their small size, which just suits the human hand laying a
 brick. A brick wall, he says, "is therefore an aggregation of small effects.
 This implies a human and intimate quality not present to the same ex-
 tent in stone architecture." Clifton-Taylor further observes that brick-
 work imposes "a certain restraint . . . brick is anti-monumental . . . the
 smallness of the brick unit was not in tune with the grander . . . aspira-
 tions of the Classicist."²³ Ancient brick workers who labored on the
 classical empire's most grandiose projects still held in their hands a
 material with quite a different physical implication, and it was with this
 material that the anonymous slave brickmaker or mason made his
 presence known. The historian Moses Finlay wisely counsels against
 using a modern yardstick to read ancient maker's marks as sending
 signals of defiance; they declare, "I exist," rather than "I resist." But "I
 exist" is perhaps the most urgent signal a slave can send.²⁴

Anthropomorphosis

Virtue Discovered in the Material

A third kind of material consciousness invests inanimate things
 with human qualities. "She's running real nice," my auto mechanic
 tells me about a transmission repair costing a thousand dollars. Bricks
 are an exemplary study of how anthropomorphosis happens; their
 makers at a certain moment in history began to invest cooked lumps of



clay with human qualities of an ethical sort— as in the “honesty” of brick or the “friendliness” of certain brick walls. This humanizing language bred in turn one of the great dualisms of modern material consciousness: the contrast between naturalness and artificiality.

To understand this anthropomorphic turn, I’d ask the reader to make one of Maynard Smith’s mental leaps in time. The Romans put their brick stamp everywhere they camped in Britain. When the empire ended and the Romans departed, English brickmaking went into decline for nearly a thousand years. During this millennium British builders instead cut forests or quarried stone, and only in the 1400s did something approaching the technological sophistication of Roman brick-building reappear. The resurgence of the craft became a necessity when, in 1666, the Great Fire of London consumed most of its wooden buildings; Christopher Wren, in beginning the task of rebuilding the city, made enlargement of the brick trade an urgent priority.

By the latter seventeenth century English brickmakers became adept at manufacturing large quantities of brick cheaply, but not in London. Development occurred largely thanks to the “cottage kiln,” the small brickworks set up in villagers’ backyards in communities with abundant sources of clay. Brickmaking was an ordinary skill of country life. Cottage kilns had given bricks a new aesthetic quality—color. English brickwork of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was largely red, but red of different shades depending on where the brick clay came from and on variations in firing practices from one backyard brickmaker to another.

Anthropomorphism started here; color issued the first invitation to think of bricks as possessing human qualities. Tudor and Stuart buildings, Clifton-Taylor remarks, resembled on their brick surfaces “the palette of the Impressionist painters,” the subtle variations of red making the walls shimmer in the light.²⁵ These color qualities appeared to contemporaries in the eighteenth century variously as a building’s “shining mane of hair” or its “mottled skin.” Old brickwork in which

red tones veered
weathered face.”

There is not
They deploy the
dawn,” an anth
warmth when it
running a fever.
adjective and ad
radically impover
about the balance
cloud mist that c
human qualities-
aim at explanation
materials themself

Metaphoric richness
century English b
man’s realm; the
practitioners. Co
don’s guilds had by
These latter were
individual craftsm
more technical kn
nical as some of D
case of brickwork,
terns, explained pr
in different provinc

It was in trying
phors of an ethical
brick is brick to wh
The medieval golds

red tones veered to brown or black was described as "an old man's weathered face."

There is nothing remarkable about the descriptions, as language. They deploy the power of metaphor, just as does "the rosy-fingered dawn," an anthropomorphizing metaphor, as does the single word *warmth* when it refers to a trait of personality rather than to a person running a fever. The puritan scorning such tropes would subject every adjective and adverb to a detective's suspicious scrutiny and thereby radically impoverish language. Still, rosy-fingered dawn reveals little about the balance between reflection and absorption of light in the cloud mist that determines its coloration. The attribution of ethical human qualities—honesty, modesty, virtue—into materials does not aim at explanation; its purpose is to heighten our consciousness of the materials themselves and in this way to think about their value.



Metaphoric richness of this sort infused the language of eighteenth-century English brickmaking as the printed book spread to the craftsman's realm; the growth of literacy created a reading public among practitioners. Cookery books were written by working cooks; London's guilds had by the seventeenth century issued professional tomes. These latter were collectively distilled wisdom, though in a few cases individual craftsmen-authors identify themselves.²⁶ All contained far more technical know-how-to than Chambers's *Encyclopedia*, as technical as some of Diderot's volumes but without the philosophy. In the case of brickwork, the new genre of professions book provided patterns, explained procedures, and delved into the merits of bricks made in different provincial kilns.

CREATOR OF CHARACTER



ings and sculptures;
very likely to find an
does abstraction have
decoration it seems
whether it is received

inted a picture called

Socially speaking, no work of art can be entirely satisfactory which offers opportunities for vulgar admiration. If this danger is to be averted it is best that the public at large should be given nothing to admire. The art must lie not in the artefact but in the celebration of an artistic rite in which the artefact plays a completely subordinate role, it being taken from the rubbish bin or any other receptacle for the unconsidered trifles of our civilisation;

183

BAD ART

or, again, the object may be destroyed or simply left to the imagination. It really does not much matter. What does matter is that the entire operation should be incomprehensible and economically futile in order that it may remain socially inviolable. In fact, we have here something much more like an elitist religion than 'art' in the usual acceptance of the term.

Some years ago Piero Manzoni had the excellent idea of selling his own breath; the breath was sealed into balloons and sold for 60,000 lire per balloon. A public gallery purchased one of these balloons only to find, as the years went by, that there was a gradual wastage; the divine afflatus had escaped, and the museum was now left with a shrivelled bladder. The artist could not refill it for he, poor fellow, had ceased to breathe at all. But neither would the gallery supply the missing breath from the lungs of an attendant, nor even a director, for this would have been a kind of fraud. When one considers that the original distended balloon might easily have been inflated by one of Manzoni's friends (or enemies) and that no one could possibly know whose breath was inside the balloon, and that it would make no earthly difference to anyone whether there had or had not been a substitution, the essentially religious nature of the entire transaction becomes apparent.

Perhaps 'religious' is the wrong word – 'fiducial' might be more accurate, for it is the consumer's faith which determines the value of the art; very likely the artist will inspire more trust if he himself believes in what he is doing. But his sincerity or lack of sincerity need not affect a valuation which is determined simply by the condition of the market.

How such a state of confidence is obtained I do not know; clearly it is nothing to do with the artefact – or very little. For if I were to try to make a living by blowing up balloons it is clear that I should soon be out of business, even though my breath is every bit as pneumatic as that of the late Mr Manzoni. In many cases there is no artefact, only faith; but even where there is an exhibitible and tangible object the elitist character of the 'work' requires that it should, in itself, be of negligible interest; otherwise the product might be admired by the wrong people.

In a society which respects money above all things, the mere fact that an apparently absurd operation can be richly rewarded makes it less absurd, so that the artefact, if there is one, may gain

the kind of respect
conceivable that ev
demotic. Meanwhil
Doctor.

I'm not saying that popular taste is bad so that what's left over from the bad taste is good; I'm saying that what's left over is probably bad, but if you can take it and make it good or at least interesting, then you're not wasting as much as you would otherwise. You're recycling work and you're recycling people, and you're running your business as a byproduct of other businesses.²⁰⁰

This pronouncement reverberates today in a thought Paul Chan expressed in a conversation with psychoanalyst Adam Phillips, in which he translates an idea of Adorno's into the present: "Adorno wrote that art is weeping without tears. You could adapt that and say the art market is a parody without laughter."²⁰¹ Here one also thinks of Kelley Walker's sculpture of the recycling symbol, the very emblem of his attitude as an artist: finding, stealing, copying, appropriating, combining, inverting, repossessing, and redistributing in a new context. Both surfaces of the freestanding symbol, made of a laser-cut sheet of steel, roughly the size of the viewer, are treated; one side is covered in gold leaf, the other with scanned images of details from product packaging. Beauty and calculation, attraction and unapproachability, unify in a hermetic object that sees itself in the line of Warhol and radiates the restlessness of being almost original.

The radicality of Warhol's art lies in its direct expression of the process of production. Market mechanisms like circulation, distribution, and dissemination become central aspects of his thinking, and differentiate this practice from a liberal-bourgeois model of production based on the assumption that cultural operations take place somewhere above and beyond the marketplace. When Warhol first enters this space with his double affirmation, it is above all for the sake of inventing alternative possibilities for exhibitions and more contemporary forms of influence and notions of the public, which he achieved in his later work in genres like advertising, television spots, a record label, and his own magazine, *Interview*. Through it, he expanded what Buchloh described as an understanding of the artist within industrial production to an understanding of the artist who has now become partly a media production. In contrast, the radicality of the avant-garde has traditionally involved a tendency to shun social communicability, to excommunicate itself, as it were, through incomprehensibility. Warhol demonstrated that one should not merely utilize the supply mechanisms of pop culture but also incorporate its fundamental forms. He became an expert in simultaneously recognizing and

200 Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)* (1975; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1977), 95.

201 Paul Chan, "Paul Chan, Adam Phillips, and Hans Ulrich Obrist in Conversation," in *Paul Chan: The 7 Lights* (London: Serpentine Gallery, in collaboration with Walther König, Cologne, 2007), 97.

deviating from art's nuances of mediatized culture.

When Rodney Graham persic or Maurizio Cattelan public contemporary art must recognize these products seem to function consumer market, for what they exceeding our traditional understanding products financed through the commercial market. But the successful; although in their own culture's mechanisms of production make effective use of them. Rodney pop songs in his recording studio *Buzz. And Other Short Songs in* zine with the laconic name *Pern* stolen from other magazines, c him and his circle of friends, finally decides the page sequence. Romantic, as containing a secret time such a move performs art's to locate these products within

AUFHEBUNGEN / SUBLATI

Usually being the right thing in the space is worth it, because something I've made a career out of being the thing in the right space.

—Andy Warhol

In Warhol's gold-leaf drawing, e have ceremoniously raised their But we should remember the a heaving," within the Hegelian d comes with a double edge of lifting preserving. Hegel's complex figure which is established in the thesis and antithesis. Then, through the ne

deviating from art's nuances of value and the rules of the game within a mediated culture.

When Rodney Graham performs or produces a CD of his pop music or Maurizio Cattelan publishes his own magazines, specialists in contemporary art must recognize these Conceptual gestures, whereby these products seem to function alongside every other commodity in a consumer market, for what they are. The Conceptual gesture consists of exceeding our traditional understanding of artistic authorship by positioning products financed through moneys generated by the art world on the commercial market. But these are unlikely to become commercially successful; although in their own production they may often reflect pop culture's mechanisms of production and distribution, they mostly fail to make effective use of them. Rodney Graham performed a sequence of pop songs in his recording studio for a CD with the title *The Bed-Bug, Love Buzz, And Other Short Songs in the Popular Idiom*, and Cattelan's magazine with the laconic name *Permanent Food* consists exclusively of pages stolen from other magazines, continuously plundered and collected by him and his circle of friends, from which the artist chooses and eventually decides the page sequence. These gestures could almost be seen as Romantic, as containing a secret desire that the market fail. At the same time such a move performs art's marginalization as soon as one attempts to locate these products within the general commercial arena.

AUFHEBUNGEN / SUBLATIONS

Usually being the right thing in the wrong space and the wrong thing in the right space is worth it, because something funny always happens. Believe me, because I've made a career out of being the right thing in the wrong space and the wrong thing in the right space.

—Andy Warhol

In Warhol's gold-leaf drawing, even more threads converge. The fencers have ceremoniously raised their weapons, a gesture of prelude to a fight. But we should remember the ambiguities of the term *Aufhebung*, "upheaving," within the Hegelian dialectic of thesis–antithesis–synthesis. It comes with a double edge of lifting up and destroying, negating while preserving. Hegel's complex figure is classically described as follows: that which is established in the thesis is neutralized, its meaning negated, in the antithesis. Then, through the negation of the negation, it is reestablished

left over from the bad
ably bad, but if you can
re not wasting as much
ou're recycling people,
her businesses.²⁰⁰

ght Paul Chan expressed
lips, in which he trans-
no wrote that art is weep-
he art market is a parody
ley Walker's sculpture of
titude as an artist: finding,
verting, repossessing, and
of the freestanding sym-
the size of the viewer, are
her with scanned images
calculation, attraction and
at sees itself in the line of
most original.

ect expression of the pro-
culation, distribution, and
inking, and differentiate
production based on the
ce somewhere above and
enters this space with his
e of inventing alternative
porary forms of influence
in his later work in genres
el, and his own magazine,
loh described as an under-
ion to an understanding of
ia production. In contrast,
ally involved a tendency to
te itself, as it were, through
at one should not merely
but also incorporate its fun-
ultaneously recognizing and

to B and Back Again) (1975; New York:

Ulrich Obrist in Conversation," in *Paul*
with Walther König, Cologne, 2007), 97.



avant-garde.

Without Qualities: Design is all about desire, but today this desire seems almost subject-less, or at least almost lack-less: design seems to advance a kind of narcissism that is all image and no interiority – an apotheosis of the subject that may be one with its disappearance. In our neo-Art Nouveau world of total design and Internet plenitude, the fate of “the poor little rich man” of Loos, “precluded from all future living and striving, developing and desiring,” is on the verge of realization. Robert Musil, a Loos con- temporary, also seemed to anticipate this *Style 2000* from the perspective of *Style 1900*. “A world of qualities without man has arisen,” Musil wrote in *The Man Without Qualities* (1930–43), “of experiences without the person who experiences them, and it almost looks as though ideally private experience is a thing of the past, and that the friendly burden of personal responsibility is to dissolve into a system of formulas of possible meanings. Probably the dissolution of the anthropocentric point of view, which for such a long time considered man to be at the center of the universe but which has been fading for centuries, has finally arrived at the ‘I’ itself.”

Xed: Two theoretical models structured critical studies of postwar art above all others: the oppositional logic of the “post-,” of an interdisciplinary postmodernism opposed to a medium-specific modernism, and the recursive strategy of the “neo-,” of a postwar neo-avant-garde that recovered the devices of the prewar avant-garde (e.g., the monochrome, the readymade, the collage). Today, however, these models are played out; neither suffices as a strong paradigm for practice, and no other model stands in their stead. For many this double demise is a good thing: it permits artistic diversity; “weak” theory is better than strong; and so on. But our paradigm-of-no-paradigm can also abet a stagnant incommensurability or a flat indifference, and this posthistorical default of contemporary art and architecture is no improvement on the old teleo- logical projections of modernist practices. All of us (artists, critics, curators, amateurs) need some narrative to focus our practices – situated stories, not *grands récits*. Without this guide we are likely to remain swamped in the double wake of post/modernism and the neo/avant-garde.

The beginnings of ruling taste

More than in the Rococo, in which Louis XV's role was not a very active one, a particular type of man becomes decisive in the Empire: Napoleon. Here phenomena appear, such as the devaluation of symbols, which have been laid at the door of mechanization alone.

The mechanization of adornment

The misuse of mechanization to imitate handicraft production and the use of substitute materials comes to the fore in England between 1820 and 1850. The blurring of the instincts is clearly recognized by English Reformers around 1850. Through criticism and encouragement, attempts are made to influence industry directly.

The reign of the upholsterer

From the upholsterer's hand comes that cushion furniture of the latter half of the century which seems to have lost all structure. These are transitory products of a surprising longevity. To avoid vague judgments, we have thought it useful to consider them typologically.

What types are found? In what way are they connected with mechanization? How is their form related to the introduction of spiral springs? When do they first come into use?

The Surrealists have given us keys to the psychic unrest that haunted mechanized adornment, cushion furniture, and the whole interior.

The constituent furniture of the nineteenth century

Over against the ruling taste stands the unexplored complex of 'patent-furniture.' In this case, mechanization is harnessed to the opening of new fields. Here, where unobserved, the creative instinct of the nineteenth century reveals itself, fulfilling needs formerly without solution. This furniture that answers to the posture of the nineteenth century is the work of the engineer. It is based on movability and adjustability to the body. In America, between 1850 and the late 'eighties there grew a facility never known in Europe for solving motion problems of this kind, which America lost back to the influence of ruling taste after 1893.

The constituent furniture of the twentieth century

The initiative now passes into European hands. The new furniture created in this period is bound up with the spatial conceptions of the new architecture. It is a furniture of types, not of individual pieces. It is the work, with few exceptions, of the architects who at the same time became the leaders of contemporary building.

peak — in the peric
Questions that
Is household r
Quaker or the Purit
The organization
around 1927. It came
We have placed
growing concentration
cooking. This trend se
We shall survey th
and general acceptance
ironing, for dishwashing
cannot be overlooked: si
Only when the mes
did the interest of Amer
Thus emerging in the mic
house.
It was in the time of fi
irreconcilable with democ
the servant problem was th
planned mechanical core of

Mechanization of the b

The history of its technical eq
insight is immediately gained i
moment a choice between type

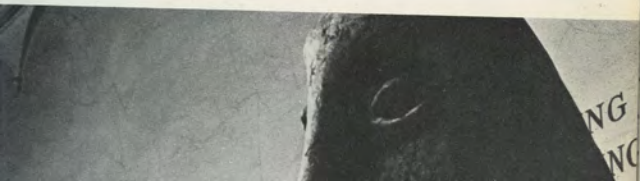
Just as it left no style untoc
scent progress was made, outsid
the masses of the population, on

The chaos around 1900 ap
bathub. But even this would have
bathing a simple ablution, or is it
backward, we find that in past c
Though shortened to the utmost,
Islamic, Late Gothic, Russian reger
interior of Asia.

All these types aim not mere
differentiated means, which vary wi
believed that it can do without a syst
which each civilization in its own way
Mechanization did no more than



42 Masks and puppets in the workshop of the Bread and Puppet Theatre



INTRODUCTION

Courtesy: Pitam & Earles



ralism is striking. Critic Donald Kuspit has noted that today there are multiple uses of art and multiple styles, all with no specific hierarchy. Many furniture makers have used their independent status in the marketplace to explore a number of different directions or to distinguish themselves from others. Yet we should not take the easy path and simply refer to the contemporary furniture field featured in this publication as "pluralistic furniture." That's too vague. Other contextual terms such as Art Furniture, handcrafted furniture, and Modern and Post-Modern furniture do not work, for they have been used to describe furniture in other times.

What we need is a term unique to our own time, not one based solely on form, aesthetics, the intention of the maker, or the hype of the gallery. I favor the term "studio furniture." What really distinguishes the furniture illustrated and discussed in these pages is the background of the furniture makers; their interest in linking concept, materials, and technique; and the small shops in which they work. Studio furniture makers have not learned their skills through traditional apprenticeship systems but rather have mastered design and construction in college (either in dedicated college art programs such as California College of Arts and Crafts or Rhode Island School of Design or in college woodworking shops such as those at Dartmouth or Michigan) or are self-taught. The latter, as well as many of the academically trained, have learned through reading periodicals and books, attending workshops or short-term courses, constant experimentation, and comparing notes with other furniture makers. Unlike the wage-based, task-specialized, restrictive training typical of the furniture trade, most studio furniture makers experience a longer, self-directed, and less constrained learning period.

The term "studio" evokes this type of long-term exploratory learning, but it also suggests a high degree of visual literacy and a vigorous conceptual approach to design and construction. Many of the makers featured in this book have had some education in art or design and draw inspiration from a vast stock of images and ideas—traditional furniture or new industrial design, fine arts or popular culture, the familiarity of wood and joinery or the excitement of new materials and techniques, common notions or private dreams, etc. Constant throughout the design and fabrication process is an intellectual rigor in which a maker fully invests him- or herself to realize an idea.

"Studio" also helps locate the place in which this practice of furniture making takes place. Studio furniture makers use a variety of machinery and handtools, and often assistants or specialists; but they tend to work in smaller spaces set up to

describe the
e by evok-
The work
r instance,
enough of
r "Maloof-
ell Castle,
fully influ-
to only a
ntonian" is
ect connec-
defining the
rms of aes-
pes most of
ch as "Cal-
emic," may
k at a par-
hesive de-
ld further.
change, an
oods, and
sthetic plu-

useum of Mod-
mple of Ludwig
Rohe's "Bar-
made by Knoll
y 1953 (fig. 90),
upholstered in
Stainless steel
Height 29 3/4"
Mies van der
e, The Museum
rt, New York.
International.

ect for
and for
norganic
inish,
texture
pleasant
ers and
es, and
of bran-
ite wall
hanging

pleasure which unspoiled materials and simplicity
of form hold in store for everyone who has eyes
to see and hands to feel, we will develop a more
refined sense of ornament and will learn to prefer
restraint. We will see that we have overburdened
our homes, our cars, our gardens, our dresses, and
our minds with poorly designed, completely meaning-
less decoration; that we have cheapened our sense
of value without realizing it and have thus come
to deprive ourselves of the enjoyment and appre-
ciation of real charm and beauty.

mated, and we should not be too ready to dismiss the sincerity of one of Mark
Leyner's with-it heroes, a postmodern everyboy, when he draws solace from
their aura. A condemned prisoner, he approaches his doom reciting the
dogma of classic modernism: "Luckily, I'd developed an unusually close re-
lationship with the warden. Knowing how much I loved Miës van der Rohe,
he had an electric Barcelona chair custom-built for my execution. And when
the date finally came and I was led into the death chamber, I couldn't help but
marvel at the delicate curvature of the X-shaped legs, the perfect finish of the
plated steel and the leather upholstery, and the magnificent, almost monu-
mental proportions that have made the Barcelona chair timeless."¹⁸



156



157

A FINAL WORD

artist, you involve yourself in the process differently than if you were constructing a joke, a model or a sociological vantage. I'm not interested in making a house to understand the history of LA or something like that. I'm interested in it like a Jackson Pollock or a Donald Judd – this is the work that it wants to talk to. This is the history that it wants to re-engage with and reminisce upon.

Haeg Judd is a great example of an artist whose design work always maintained its art.

Pardo It was design to be looked at, but only half-used, or something. Donald Judd is an interesting artist, he's just not an interesting furniture designer. How usable is the furniture he made? You can't really sit in a Donald Judd chair. If you have a house full of Donald Judd furniture, it means something very different than if you have a house full of my furniture. It's a different attitude towards the problematic of functionalism. Generally, my things work. They either work well or they work okay. It's not easy to make something work really well. If you look at the interesting design fetishes today, less than half of it is comfortable.

Haeg It's sacrificing the practical for a design vision.

Pardo The style overruns it. Most modernist furniture is not stuff you run home to at the end of the day and jump into. Although Arne Jakobson chairs are some of the few things that actually work.

Haeg Judd's work seems like it's sculpture that slowly became functional. Where maybe yours is more like furniture that becomes art.

Pardo Think of Richard Artschwager. He's an artist who's interested in taking the eccentricity of his sculpture and applying it to something that's not supposed to be eccentric. When he makes furniture, it's almost like folk art or something.

Haeg Do you sleep in one of your beds?

Pardo I do actually, but generally speaking, I don't have a lot of my work around. Now, obviously, I'm completely surrounded. I'm inside of it. [...]

Jorge Pardo, Edited version of interview with Fritz Haeg originally published in *LA Design* special section, *Index* (New York, May/June 1999) 13–15.

◆ A FINAL WORD ON DISPLAY ARRANGEMENTS AND intentions: whatever your plan, it should look natural, easy, obvious, and definitely not contrived. Displays should be planned to keep original artwork as safe from human and natural hazards as possible, because damage so inflicted is usually very expensive to remedy. When you hang pictures above a cabinet, fireplace mantelpiece, or other shelf or ledge where three-dimensional objects might also be displayed, try to keep the bottom edges of the picture frames from being visually overlapped by the three-dimensional works. This lessens the accidental introduction of clutter, which is a detriment to a good display. Don't overcrowd group arrangements, especially in a display cabinet. And last, if you create an effect you don't like, it is not permanent — you can always change it.

... sculpture with
... that rises from the
... nation to find the
... fortunate to have
... have a good piece
... much as a picture
... small sizes look
... period of the piece
... marble or wood,
... bronze ornamenta-
... furniture art in
... that approximate
... of shaped blocks of

Mighty Real

Mark Robbins

"To deprive art of its uselessness is to make it other than art."

Richard Serra

BOOKBINDINGS

another binding he filled the tablet forming the thirteen coats of arms in gesso relief, without any ni himself published reproductions of two of his standing this a Joni front cover was published as original two years after the appearance of his

gives a description of his technique: 'At first I edles of various sizes for the worm-holes, pushing ving them out with the aid of pincers, in order to atact. Later I invented a new system, for which I er. The bronze bosses at the corners of the covers by bathing them in ammonia, and for the small h served as clasps in the centre I used iodine, just the right degree of rustiness'²³

rst experiments in the craft to his later achieve- k-covers, which are numerous, can be recognised characteristics. But beyond this the fact must be at nothing like these painted wooden bindings re Joni, neither in Sienna nor anywhere else. The covers of the Biccherna and Gabella, between ts of each term were kept, are thick wooden cover was primed and inscribed with the names o were responsible for the contents. It was f

PART EIGHTEEN

FAKES WITHOUT MODELS



ditional.³ I was hoping that answer would be good enough when he said, "That's interesting, but what does it look like?"

Once, years ago at a party, I was having this same conversation with a small group of people. I had just read one of David Pye's books and it was on my mind, so I explained that my furniture was about the workmanship of risk as opposed to the workmanship of certainty.⁴ As our conversation unfolded, I learned that one of my new acquaintances was a stock broker and another was a surgeon. We had an interesting discussion that night about relative risk, but it was clear that defining what I make in terms of risk hadn't helped.

tion of furniture that wasn't limited by necessity. In fact, when I teach classes in design, I often start the first meeting with "What is furniture?" In those sessions, I'm sometimes able to broaden our frame of reference and break down a few narrow prejudices, but rarely are we able to agree on a definition that is entirely satisfactory.

For example, one of the common definitions of furniture is that it is a class of objects that carry meaning. That's a good definition, except it describes equally well things like jewelry or appliances. For example, in most homes, the refrigerator occupies a place of extreme significance. It is the most visible



At the beginning of last week I thought differently about July. Actually I thought it surely would have to start some time, and bring high summer with it, but it's so cool and rainy, it seems more like May to me. I just take it as it comes – people call it 'temporal disorientation' (in my case, partial 'temporal disorientation') and it's not exactly admired, but I also like art all the more if the concept is not entirely obvious, as in Conceptual Art, which I collect, by the way. 'Collect' doesn't sound good, but I do put it or hang it in my rooms, although not only Conceptual Art, newer things as well. Only yesterday someone asked me if I speculate, but speculation in the visual arts is too spectacular, as often as I can I sit (Dear David, about what we were saying on the phone yesterday: Phaidon, an English publisher, they produce artists' books, and want to do one with me. In it they want, as they said, a focus text on a particular work. There are articles by various authors, and interviews, but nothing about a specific sculpture [I always avoid the designation 'work' wherever possible]).

In April I have two exhibitions in Tokyo; one is a group show called 'Eight People from Europe', curated by Kasper König, the other is in a private gallery. Kasper was in Vienna the day before yesterday and described the space I will be exhibiting in. On the wall there is a beautifully embroidered, precious tapestry called *Guernica*, after the painting, and they have decided to leave it up. Among other things I will be making a podium on casters with seats, which you will be able to push in front of the tapestry [title: *Focus*, see sketch].

The museum has hardly any visitors, so to make it more interesting they have added a new wing. This exhibition is to mark the opening. It's the same architect who did the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

The sitting podium will be dismantled after the exhibition and put on show elsewhere. I've been making things to sit on for a long time now, I mean seats that are shown in galleries and museums. But they are not just shown: unlike Beuys' *Fat Chair* or Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs*, they are also experienced by being sat upon.

But people don't seem to understand that, so I am constantly getting commissions for exhibition spaces or for the Institute for Contemporary Art at the Vienna Academy, for example.

That got me thinking about the etymology of 'seating'

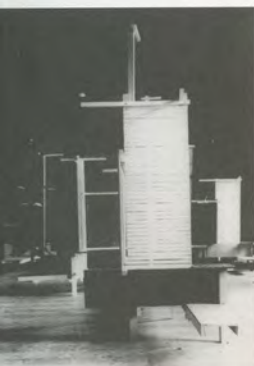
e.g. French: *Chaise* [chair] *Scheisse* [crap]

German: *Stuhl* [stool] *Stuhlgang* [bowel movements]

English: *Seat* *Shit* [ditto]

made me think about 'sitting upon' something, perhaps, etc.





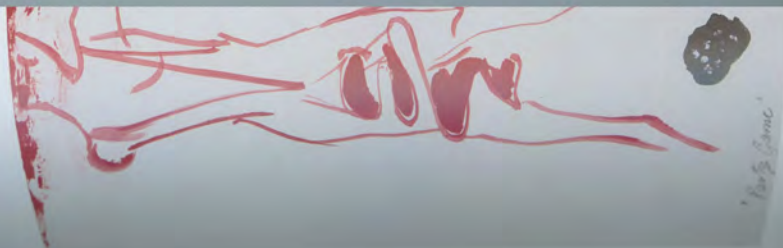
Frederick Kiesler *Leger- und Trägersystem* (1924),
Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik,
München.

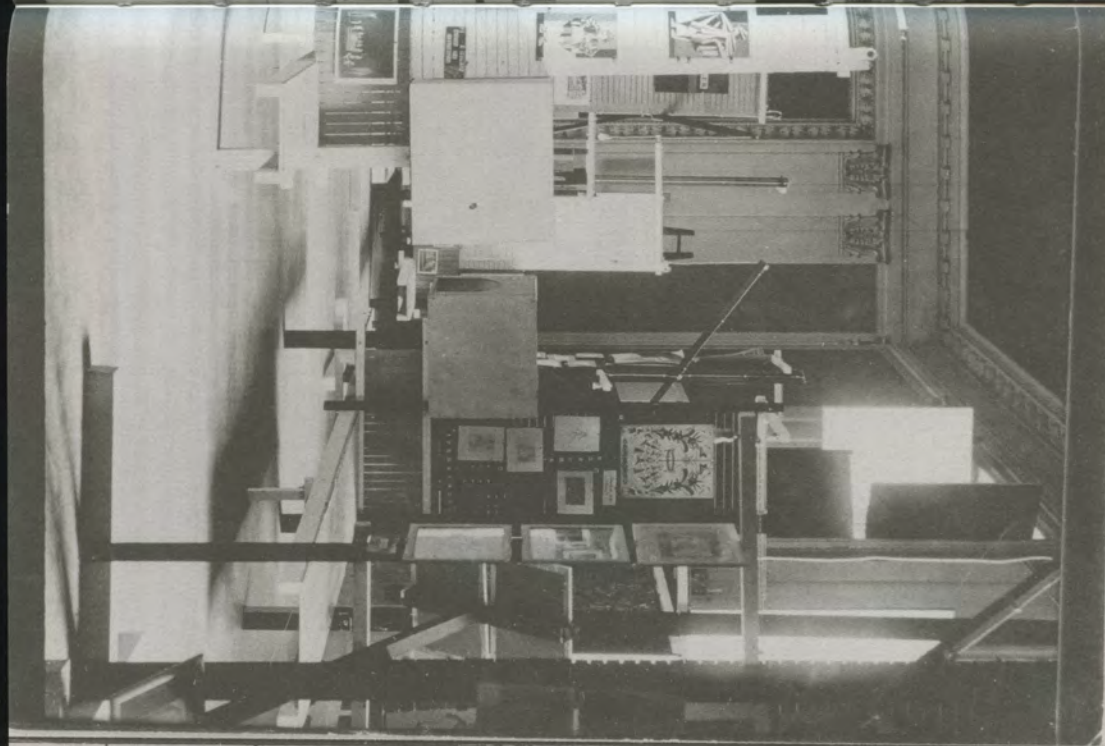
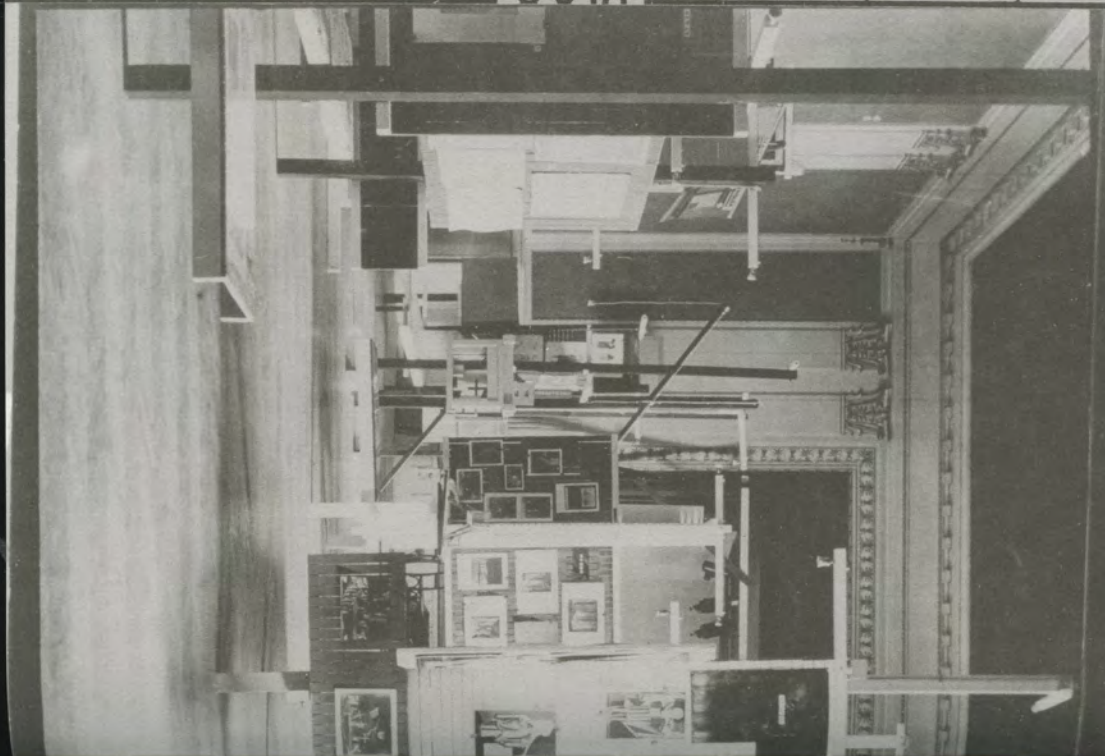
The L-Type and T-Type display systems were an attempt to develop a new language of form for installation through a grouping of freestanding demountable painted wooden structures, described by Mary Anne Staniszewski, in her seminal book *The Power of Display* (1998), as "a new physical framework and ideological scaffolding for exhibition". Each unit deployed a careful balance of vertical and horizontal beams and slatted surfaces with the T-Type units utilising cantilevered diagonal 'arms' for the adjustable positioning of materials for display. The structures carried over six hundred articles of theatre design and material exploring performative space, matched and enhanced by the structural fluidity of their support. Kiesler's intention was to "eliminate the separation between floor, walls, and ceiling and create floors, walls and ceiling as a continuous whole". The experiment was continued in 1925 in the 'Austrian Theatre' section of the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris. Here Kiesler continued the red, black and white painted interconnected structures but to an even greater level of interdependence and mutual support in the guise of an exhibition. *City in Space* was planned as both a support system for Austrian set and theatre design and as a model for a future city bringing to realisation many theoretical and diagrammatic propositions developed out of Constructivism, de Stijl and Neoplasticism. Kiesler's 'floating' city and emerging language of forms informed much of the groundbreaking architectonic practice of the time and was continued into later key works and his own theory of Correalism, developed in the 1930s. Correalism conveyed the sense that reality is not manifest in the thing itself but in its ordered, coordinated correlation to its environment.

The artist and architect Frederick Kiesler had a lifelong occupation with the development of new structural and ideological display concepts. In the 1920s Kiesler started developing continuous environments and built structures with his curatorial and structural work on the 1924 *International Exhibition of New Theatre Technique* at the Konzerthaus in Vienna. Most significantly within the large exhibition Kiesler invented a new system of exhibition design stressing viewers' dependence on their spatial relations with exhibition material and the creation of meaning.



Frederick Kiesler *City in Space*, 1928
Designed by Michael Corder
Choreography by Royal Opera House, London
The Royal Ballet, Royal Opera House, London
The Royal Ballet, Royal Opera House, London







are navigation lines, similar to the trauma lines in the hospital, help the public find their way in the Barbican. ‡ They don't in terms of colour coding, as lines are yellow, but every so signs are painted along the line. This sign is for the Barbican arts centre, and ‡ this one for St. Paul's underground station.



‡ This is a passivity line. It's not so easy to distinguish, but it's here ... you see, it runs horizontally at waist height around the walls of the room. They're usually found in police interview rooms, because sometimes people get restless or violent when they're being interviewed. ‡ The line has been designed by psychologists and employed by the police. If there is a horizontal line running around a room, psychologically we feel that we should be below it or at the same height as it, which means we are less likely to wander around and more likely to sit down and stay seated, to remain passive.



‡ I'm fascinated by these types of spaces ... interview rooms and conference rooms, like the one we're in here today. This lecture theatre shares the same generic identity. We could easily be in any other conference space in the world. ‡ This is mostly to do with the furniture, of course. It's always utilitarian, always easily stackable, moveable, storable, and easily cleaned. There are two classics for the masses that I want to acknowledge here. In Britain, at least, one of these two can be found in every village hall, community centre, school or library. This chair is the Robin Day Polypropylene from 1962 and the other is the Arne Jacobsen Series 7 model 3107, from about 1955. ‡ I took this picture at the London Design Museum where they exhibit them side by side. There have been 14 million of these Robin Days made, and that's excluding all the fakes of which I imagine there could easily be twice as many.



‡ This is at the V&A, the Victoria and Albert museum in London. In the exhibition it was pointed out that this chair was a copy. The text next to it explains its faults—that the plywood is too thick, that the waist is too narrow, that the original didn't have a handle cut in the back and that the fittings are not the same. It seems that the V&A are very good at buying or acquiring fakes of things ‡ because they have dedicated a room to all the bad decisions they've made over the years. Room 46 is devoted to their fakes and forgeries. ‡

to come up with accommodations for people. One of my first ideas was to build a big bunkhouse and I ran into the problems with building and safety that we've been talking about before. I then became interested in what kind of structures I could do without having to get permits. Out here you can build a portable — a 10x10 foot structure — without having to pull a permit. I've been experimenting with different structures that fit those criteria. There was a larger prototype that happened before the "Wagon Stations," called the "Homestead Unit". It was much more spacious inside, but because it had big flat surfaces the wind would pick it up and smash it back down on the ground or the rocks behind it, breaking everything in the process. The "Wagon Stations" are smaller. They're curved so that the wind, in principle, is supposed to go around them. They're just big enough for two people to sleep in. You can keep a camp stove and cool chest and everything you need for camping inside of them. And you can lock them.

Richard

We spoke about the Rough bookshelf earlier. The "Wagon Stations" also have this customization process built into their concept. You go to a certain point with your artwork and then you leave it to somebody else.

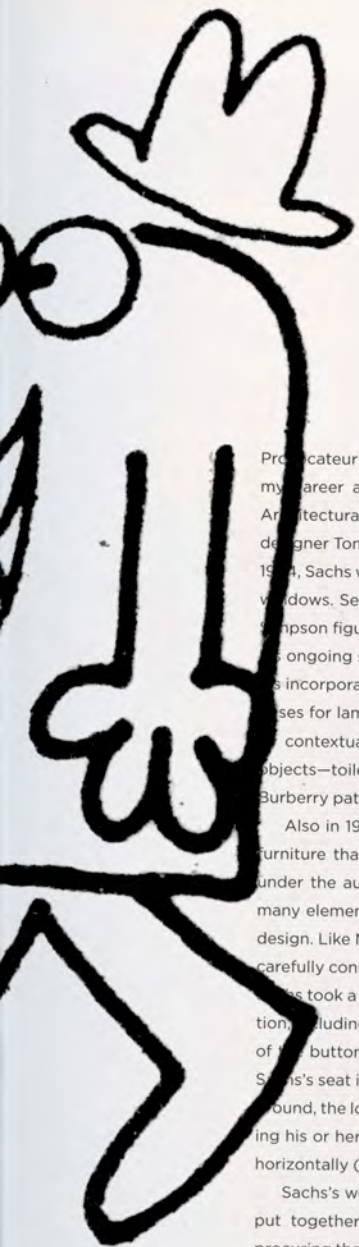
Andrea

That's been an ongoing element to my work since the early 90s. I became interested in ideas of objects having multiple authors. This legacy of authorship starts with the person who designs it, but then the owner or user creates another layer of authorship. You see this all the time with the way that people customize their clothing or how they live with products in their homes in a way that is slightly different from what the original designer may have intended. I started experimenting with different systems that could be left open for customization. I just remembered a panel discussion that was really influential for me in the early 1990s: I think it was a discussion about office systems or something like that, and one participant in the discussion was asked about her vision for the perfect system. She said that a perfect system was one that had flaws because that is when the users began to go in and modify it, and make it theirs. I felt that was a really interesting idea too.

Richard

Which earlier projects of yours are you thinking about?





Protege Tom Sachs calls himself an artisan, noting, "I'm an artist because my career as a carpenter was unsuccessful."¹ Sachs spent two years at the Architectural Association in London before working for furniture company Knoll, designer Tom Dixon, and architect Frank Gehry (on his hockey-stick furniture). In 1994, Sachs was hired by Barney's to decorate its Madison Avenue store's holiday windows. Several of these, such as his Christmas nativity scene with three Bart Simpson figures as the Magi and Hello Kitty as the baby Jesus, caused a furor. In his ongoing sculpture and installations, Sachs continually mixes idioms, such as the incorporation of found objects like telephone books and parking meters into his pieces for lamps (fig. 126). He also recasts objects of consumer "lust and desire" into contextualizing and building, with mundane materials, everyday functional objects—toilets with the Prada imprimatur or skateboards with a swastika and Burberry patterns—into elegant icons of status and prestige (fig. 127).

Also in 1994, Sachs designed a to-scale cardboard prototype for a piece of furniture that he titled *Bitch Lounge*. The work was then put into production under the auspices of *nest* magazine (fig. 125).² Sachs's "anti-couch" contains many elements that reflect the artist's keen interest in the history of Modernist design. Like Mies van der Rohe's *Barcelona Chair*, *Bitch Lounge* is upholstered in carefully considered, tufted leather and mounted on a chrome-plated steel base. Sachs took a great deal of care and interest in the details of the chair's construction, including the density of the foam, the curve of the back, and the placement of the buttons. Despite being produced as a fully functional piece of furniture, Sachs's seat is singularly uncomfortable and difficult to use. Barely raised off the ground, the lounge does not allow the sitter to "sit" conventionally without bending his or her legs so they sit directly under the chin, or having to extend them horizontally (fig. 128).

Sachs's work is often referred to as "bricolage," connoting something that is put together using whatever materials happen to be available, rather than procuring them specifically for a piece or project. When asked whether he makes any distinction today between art and design, his answer is characteristically enigmatic: "If it doesn't look good no one will want to look at it. The distinction between artist and engineer is humiliating. Artists make crippled furniture and functional art."³

BEAUTY AND
THE USEFUL

Verlag Eremiten-Press



use value is subsumed under the mask of exchange value. The point is, that, for the table (and here we remember Marx's table dancing definition of commodity in *Capital Volume 1*) to enter the world as an object to be exchanged, it must be haunted by its commodity form. The phantom, or spectre, of the table qua commodity must be projected, like a spectre in a phantasmagoric play, onto the physical form of the table. It must possess the table as spirits possess mediums. It must speak through it in the language of abstract generalised exchange. Considered this way, Adorno is wrong. The spectre of the commodity does not conceal the real; its appearance manifests the reality of capital. The spirit that possesses the medium's body is capable of prophecies and divination.

In essence, this spectre, this ghost of dessicated life and dead labour, is a product of a certain calculation of time. Each day drops half dead at the altar of Capital and Empire, giving up its ghost. What remains is recycled for the next day. Each day is framed. Every calendrical marking is an index of endurance. Days are shaved, sharpened and divided in labour. The score of the working week is inscribed and erased – between time given over and time taken away, between the time that gets counted and the time that runs out. Overtime gets shorter while normal time gets longer.

What happens when we begin to pay attention to the seconds and the hours? We remember them, tell stories about them, make poems out of tea breaks and songs out of time stolen from labouring. It is the gossip and idle chatter of seconds and hours that makes for society. We know what we know about each other because we tell each other the public secrets of capital. Stretched end to end, this chatter turns into history. This is not a matter of parcelling out epochs to be marshalled into the chronicle of nations. It is rather the matter of constructing the memory of society through stories and testimonies, through the magic lantern show of the archive of the everyday.



Joe Scanlan
Please, Eat the Daisies//2001

Long before John Pawson thought of disguising a sock drawer or Martha Stewart ever dreamed of stuffing a pea, Thorstein Veblen could have told you how expensive something useless could be. Born in Wisconsin to Norwegian immigrants in 1857, Veblen left the family farm for Carleton College before attending Johns Hopkins, Yale and Cornell, eventually settling at the University of Chicago, where he taught economic theory and socialism while editing *The Journal of Political Economy*. It was there that he wrote his first and most famous book, *The Theory of The Leisure Class* (1899), in which he elaborated such lasting concepts as pecuniary emulation, conspicuous consumption and honorific waste. Time and colloquialism have assimilated those concepts as 'Keeping up with the Joneses', 'If you've got it, flaunt it', and *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*.

Not a mere class satire, however, *The Theory of The Leisure Class* also delves into the economics of things themselves, and how their aesthetic merits increase in direct proportion to their apparent uselessness. As Veblen described it, conspicuous waste doesn't necessarily imply that the more ornate an object is the more aesthetic value it has, since an eye for technical proficiency and labour also figured into Veblen's accounting of beauty. Contrary to his contemporary Adolph Loos, the Austrian architect and author of 'Ornament and Crime', Veblen understood that the elimination of ornament from architecture did not necessarily mean a reduction of waste. Since Modern architecture's machine aesthetics required not only the elimination of ornament but also the elimination of that elimination's evidence, Veblen knew that the labour required in fabricating an absence of ornament could be more excessive than ornamentation itself.

We have been pining for Veblen lately because his innate skepticism of all things useless might shed some light on the current trend of design as art. Design art could be defined loosely as any artwork that attempts to play with the place, function, and style of art by commingling it with architecture, furniture and graphic design. A short list of current practitioners, from the obvious (Jorge Pardo, Tobias Rehberger) to the vague (Heimo Zobernig, Gregor Schneider) would also have to include Angela Bulloch, Liam Gillick, Jim Isermann, Joep van Lieshout, Roy McMakin, Regina Moller, N55, Franz West, Pae White, Andrea Zittel and Joe Scanlan. Such distinctions only matter to the extent that the place and function of each artist's work might suggest where their interest in the idea of design as art lies. For Pardo, it is the perpetual reproduction of style; for

Schneider, the erasure of memory; for White, the luxury of self-employment; for Zobernig, a ruthless economy of means. Such classifications are slippery, though, since we could talk just as well of amnesia in relation to Pardo's retro-aesthetics or luxury in relation to Zobernig's particle-board decadence.

What seems crucial to design art in all its forms is that some sort of slippage occur between where art is, how it looks, and what it does. In contrast to the institutional critiques of Michael Asher or Louise Lawler, design art does not call attention to the place and function of art in order to question its cultural authority. Rather, it attempts to expand the accessibility of art by contriving other, more pragmatic ways of engaging its reception and use. Where institutional critique hopes to disrupt the illusion of cultural authority by revealing the mechanisms that buttress it, design art hopes to democratize that authority by providing mood lighting and comfortable chairs. Institutional critique is based on argumentation; design art on salesmanship.

Design art frequently presents itself in direct competition with the commercial fields from which it borrows – architecture, interior design, graphic design, industrial design – and thus runs the admirable risk of being expended just like any other consumable object or style, soiling art just as Veblen soiled economics by introducing real-life contingencies. In its most successful and radical forms, design art pits one human impulse (consumption) against another (preservation) by incorporating a utility in the art object that threatens its physical well being. As good design art plays itself out over time, our desire for beauty and utility coalesce in such a way as to confuse our motivations, making the avoidance of use and the destruction of beauty seem at turns both sensible and perverse.

This can be fun and informative. Unfortunately, much design art does not function well enough to follow through on its promises, a shortcoming that tends to cancel out whatever compelling, self-destructive impulses the design art object has. Andrea Zittel's *A-Z Living Units* are so materially cumbersome and ergonomically cruel as to be laughable as anything other than art. Whenever you see one it always looks a little too shiny, as if no one had ever cared (or dared) to interact with it, let alone actually 'live' in one. And while this is probably fine with the people who own them, a lack of wear is a serious flaw for any artwork that proposes use value as a fundamental aspect of its radicality.

Veblen's theories are helpful in this regard, since he believed that the extent to which an object fails to be useful only enhances its value as art. According to the laws of conspicuous waste, beauty's most basic trait is a lack of utility. For a person, this means the avoidance of any and all productive labour; for an object, it means the elimination of all useful applications save for the pecuniary distinction of uselessness. The more time one devotes to pointless endeavours,

the more beautiful those endeavours become, and so too the pecuniary reputability of those people who produce, admire and own them. By Veblen's logic, art is the ultimate pointless endeavour and thus one of the most flattering things a person can be associated with, since its presence always implies the ability to waste huge amounts of time on something that has no ostensible use.

Whatever is interesting about design art, then, depends not on how well it performs its apparent function, but on how well it performs the function for which it has been consumed. As we know, regardless of whether you're buying Star Trek paraphernalia or a Duchamp readymade, there is a ratio between intended function and symbolic function that determines any object's market price, a mechanism that invariably removes that object from the dangers of circulation when it reaches a certain escalated value. Over time, the practical appeal of utility gives way to the appeal of pecuniary distinction, and such three-dimensional objects as womb chairs and *passtücke* [Franz West's 'adaptives'] take on the character of two-dimensional rarities. There is a monetary value at which any functional object gets flattened into the world of signs, accruing the meaning not of its function but of what that function's social value has come to represent. To update Wittgenstein, the meaning is not the use, but the price.

The rub between a desire for broad social value and an insistence on refined aesthetics has been felt ever since John Ruskin and William Morris launched the Arts and Crafts movement in the nineteenth century. Ever since, from the Wiener Werkstatt and the Bauhaus to Gustav Stickley and Charles and Ray Eames, the moral obligation to impart good sense on the masses has prevailed, however practically useless or prohibitively expensive that aesthetic cultivation might be. From the beginning, Veblen questioned the therapeutic value of the Arts and Crafts movement by exposing the economic contradictions of its naïve social agenda – doubts that are no less valid concerning the socio-economics of design art today.

Thus, Zittel's *Living Units* – or Rehberger's performance frames, or Pardo's bedroom suites – do not fail to be useful as much as they prematurely commit to one value system to the exclusion of all others, thereby demonstrating a faith in institutions and an impatience with the public that contradicts whatever transgressions their works aspire to. In other words, they become art. Ordinarily, that would be a compliment. In this case, it's not, since the inherent uselessness of Richard Artschwager's or Sol LeWitt's work, to take two examples, is acknowledged in the way their sculptures are constructed and displayed. This is especially true for Artschwager, whose *Table With Pink Tablecloth* of 1964 is clearly about the appearance of being furniture rather than the function of being so, although his sculpture very well could be. Because Artschwager truncates the idea of 'table' by sealing off its negative space, the fact that his sculpture could

still support a gimlet or ergonomic limitation, re (Complicating this further bed have allowed the comparison, the inherent either its construction rather annoying (and ex

Therein lies our dis how much we admire nonetheless stems from design and function as a harbour a philosophical practised by design art without the risk of being

In 'Pecuniary Canon of the Leisure Class – Ve mankind's shepherding shepherd whose pasture and moved to the villa which became industr again – the manicure harkened back to the Within this concise so strata of the aspiring c laws in their sufficient waste. So they put deer the appearance of being

Joe Scanlan (with Neal Jackson 2001) 26–9.

and so too the pecuniary
and own them. By Veblen's
s one of the most flattering
presence always implies the
that has no ostensible use.
depends not on how well it
performs the function for
s of whether you're buying
t, there is a ratio between
rmines any object's market
object from the dangers of
ue. Over time, the practical
distinction, and such three-
e [Franz West's 'adaptives']
there is a monetary value at
world of signs, accruing the
on's social value has come to
ot the use, but the price.

and an insistence on refined
William Morris launched the
tury. Ever since, from the
ickley and Charles and Ray
on the masses has prevailed,
ive that aesthetic cultivation
the therapeutic value of the
ic contradictions of its naïve
rning the socio-economics of

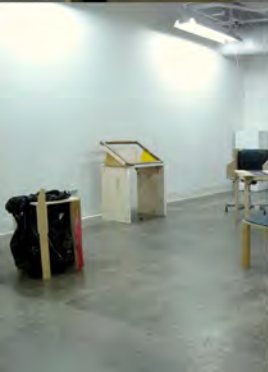
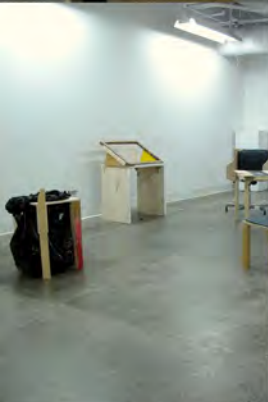
performance frames, or Pardo's
as they prematurely commit
hereby demonstrating a faith
ic that contradicts whatever
s, they become art. Ordinarily,
since the inherent uselessness
s, to take two examples, is
structed and displayed. This is
th *Pink Tablecloth* of 1964 is
her than the function of being
use Artschwager truncates the
e fact that his sculpture could

still support a gimlet or a scrabble board seems a practical bonus rather than an ergonomic limitation, regardless of what someone might have paid for the piece. (Complicating this further, collectors in Chicago who own a Robert Gober dog bed have allowed their Weimaraner to use it for the last ten years.) By comparison, the inherent uselessness of most design art is not made apparent in either its construction or its display, making its eventual ergonomic failure a rather annoying (and expensive) bait and switch.

Therein lies our disappointment with the idea of design as art. No matter how much we admire the perversion of creating useful objects whose value nonetheless stems from the pecuniary distinction of their uselessness, invoking design and function as a foil for making art betrays a troubling lack of nerve. We harbour a philosophical disappointment in the professional double standard practised by design artists themselves, whose need for art to appear useful – without the risk of being so – strikes us as timid and sad.

In 'Pecuniary Canons of Taste' – the best and funniest chapter in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* – Veblen traces the history of the manicured lawn back to mankind's shepherding days, to the root of the esteem that accrued to any shepherd whose pasture was evenly grazed. Having given up our agrarian ways and moved to the village, which became the city, which became modernized, which became industrialized, and which caused us to crave the countryside again – the manicured lawn developed into a lavish, useless object that harkened back to the pecuniary reputability of our shepherding ancestors. Within this concise social history Veblen saves a bit of contempt for a certain strata of the aspiring classes who, having achieved their sufficiently manicured lawns in their sufficiently reputable suburbs, can't stand to see the grass go to waste. So they put deer and antelope statues on their lawns to give them at least the appearance of being used. Today, design artists have become those people.

Joe Scanlan (with Neal Jackson), 'Please, Eat the Daisies', *Art Issues* (Los Angeles, January/February, 2001) 26–9.



Jerszy Seymour These places are absolutely critical for having the time to look at what the alternative positions can really be. The gallery situation is where I do experiments that I can't do in other situations. So it is very interesting. It's a place to do metaprojects.

Burkhard Meltzer Is it more like a test site?

Jerszy Seymour Yes, although the museum can be better. The museum is a Disneyland, really. That's something that artists hate about it. Funny enough, for a designer it becomes very interesting. Because you know that you get a number of people coming and you can work with those people; and with the interaction inside the museum you stay outside the economic logic of the market. It gives a kind of free space.

Burkhard Meltzer Do you collaborate with artists?

Jerszy Seymour Yes, everybody is an artist! I have a simple story about art and design: A man is walking alone across the landscape when he sees the horizon and he is amazed by it. Until this point he has only ever lain down to sleep or stood up to hunt. But now, seeing a stone in front of him, he sits on it so he can think about it. Later, he goes back to his cave, and he was so taken by the horizon, that he looks for a stone and scratches his reflections up on the wall, because he needs to be able to visualize the effect the horizon had on him. Looking at what he has drawn, he is surprised and curious at this representation, and he needs to sit down but there is no stone, so he decides to make something to sit on. And then he looks at what he has made and is also surprised. So the chair also

becomes a moment of reflection. And suddenly these two things are related to each other—impossible to separate them. It's not interesting to separate which one reflects on the other.

There is a text by Liam Gillick from an exhibition *What If: Art on the Verge of Architecture and Design* (Stockholm, 2000). It's nice because he goes through a critique of all the three disciplines. The artist full of potential but without being really effective, the designer quite effective but looking at the narrow view, and the architect trapped as a pop star politician. The conclusion was not how close the disciplines are, but about how much unexplored territory there is in between. That's great. For me, the Situationists International was quite "in between." They said: For art to get out of the gallery and affect the real world, let art be the real function and throw the stone.

Burkhard Meltzer Is it basically about being alive, then?

Jerszy Seymour It could be in the end: imagine the situation living in a cave and scratch my nuts, you know.

Burkhard Meltzer On a raw stone.

Jerszy Seymour It would be a great end.

1 <http://amateurdigram.blogspot.com/>, visited February 21, 2011.



through Christian saintliness. Why these extremes? Is it just a matter of housekeeping? If the studio reflects the mind of its occupant, is one mind an attic, the other a prison cell? Does one introduce us to the aesthetics of redundancy, the other to the aesthetics of elimination—the glutinous studio of ingestion and the anal studio of excretion, the fat and the slender, Laurel and Hardy seeing each other in the studio's distorting mirror? Are studios of accumulation indubitably secular? Do studios of elimination have a yearning for some absolute? Does each indicate a temperament and an aesthetic?

A perfect example of the studio as accumulating artwork is Schwitters's Hanover *Merzbau*, begun in 1923. The artist, like some industrious organism, shed his own exoskeleton as the studio progressively evicted him and limited his visitors to one entry at a time. The agent of the process was compressed by his own crowded studioscape. The studio became a proto-museum as Schwitters worked inside, "wearing" his studio, trying it on for size after every addition or change. Such studios of accumulation have had a didactic, even legendary value with respect to postmodern gallery installations that stuff and insult the white space. As proxies, they take on some of the aura of their creator. Francis Bacon's studio, in a very different way from Schwitters's, was a cumulative, living collage, a "compost heap," as he called it. In *Imagination's Chamber*, Bellony-Rewald and Peppiatt describe "the floor, ankle-deep in books, photos, rags,

covered with photographs), pages torn from a book on Velásquez, postcards of art to sink. This version of chaos, however, was living memory, from which Bacon drew photographs and reproductions that he superimposed on his paintings. The redundant mess had a yearning for the artist. It was a "womb" within which perhaps signified in his paintings by figures which trapped many of his figures.

Every studio has to have some trash. In Bacon's case it was not only photographs and reproductions. It was words. Magazines, books, ingested and digested in that small room of reading, looking, thinking, painting, superimposed one on the other with the consumer who tested everything by asking, "What can it be used? Now preserved in Dublin, Bacon's studio carries such a whiff of chaos that you can hallucinate the large, restless, restless animal inside as you peer through doorways. What happens to this room when it is empty? How does it illuminate Bacon's work? Emblematic, circulating a low-grade aura of artist, persona, studio, and work, end of myth it begot.

Few experiences were as mythopoetic as Rothko's studio on East 69th Street in New York. A couple of chairs, a scruffy couch with

What one has,
has been given one
therefore everything one has
one is entitled to.
The more one has
the better one is
because the more one has been rewarded
for being good.
Therefore I get better and better
through 'making' more and more

the more I make ← ← ←
the more I have ← ← ←
the better I am ← ← ←
the more I am ← ← ←

This morning I visited the place where the streetcleaners dump the rubbish. My God, it was beautiful!

Tomorrow they are bringing a couple of interesting pieces from that muck heap, among other things broken street lanterns, for me to admire or, if you wish, to use as models. The things are rusted and bent. One of the garbage men brings them to me. It would make a fine subject for a fairy tale by Andersen, that mass of garbage cans, baskets, pots, serving bowls, metal pitchers, wires, lanterns, pipes, stovepipes that people have thrown away. I really believe that I shall dream about it tonight, and in winter I shall have much to do with it in my work.

If you ever come to The Hague, it would be a pleasure for me to take you to this place, and to a few other places that are a real paradise for the artist, however unsightly they may be.

From a letter from Van Gogh to Von Rappard, The Hague, 1882

time," the ultimate logical phase of the artistic movement and, from one to the next, each time I reached new conclusions. At the Dresden Academy he learned the matter of harmonizing elements one with another. There followed a period of Impressionistic landscapes sought to reproduce his personal impressions of nature, that it was precisely the impersonal, the objective, that determined its entire expressiveness. In 1917 he painted landscapes in broad all-embracing contours, influenced by the Expressionist painters of the Dresden



with high ceilings (figure 4.3.1) for general illumination because the light source is the light source. In this way, the lighting conditions in different parts of the library are adjusted to add sparkle and interest.

4.3.2 Book areas

Book shelves can be lighted by a combination of the general lighting and by a combination of the general lighting. General lighting has the advantage of being uniform, but it can get too hot. Rows of bookshelves, coffered into sections, can get too hot from getting too hot. Ceiling fluorescent tubes down the length of the bookshelves illuminating the bottom shelves. Better results can be achieved by using a combination of great many manufacturers (figure 4 and 5). Each bookshelf is mounted a fluorescent tube, and the ceiling. To improve the lighting, have a reflecting light color. Individual case lighting is provided in the main aisles and for the aisles between the bookshelves. The lighting is required and turned off at

5. Conclusion

These have been my observations. The librarian should know the different levels of lighting in the brief (building program) and the architect to find the best



n seriousness dismissed everyday
 forts.
 o testing was the hypersensitivity
 was engaged in superimposing,
 micro-decisions, the nineteenth-
 modern void. In that dark studio
 ch the victim of his work as its
 succeeded in his mission, the more
 om his own product, as if he could
 ot share in it. The studio seemed
 entioned secret. This was a source
 ps rage. There was a flow of quiet
 n found the experience tense. As
 k, Rothko would fasten his gaze
 cipher, or thought he could decipher,
 isapproval, puzzlement, even scorn.
 own out because, Rothko said,
 e work." Knowing that respectful
 rstified as to how Rothko came
 The high, shadowy studio seemed
 lence, an ambition easily mocked
 eadly serious. The windows looked
 ular, but the light from them
 was coaxed to deposit itself in a
 on the dark canvases. As you sat
 the light slowly waned, its changes
 til the edges of the painting blurred
 ng he accepted with pleasure.

How different was Duchamp's amiable exhibition of
 an empty studio, presented in his later years as evidence
 that, as he announced, he had given up art. Of course,
 no one knew that in another studio he was finishing his
 last major work, the *Étant Donnés*. The Duchampian
 paradoxes are comical. The empty studio, the site of
 production, is displayed as evidence of nonproduction,
 a mask for an activity in process elsewhere. A creative
 gesture—the invention of an empty studio—is presented
 as evidence of sterility, the paralysis of the creative act.
 Duchamp, whom no one saw working, was practicing
 a secretive art in a secret studio—appropriately, since
Étant Donnés, the work that emerged, reduced the visitor
 (spy?) to a scopophilic stare through an eye-hole.

29

The frugal studio, stripped bare of everything but what
 makes a painting, has its supreme nineteenth-century
 text in Georg Kersting's famous depiction of Caspar
 David Friedrich in his studio, of 1812. This picture exerted
 a hypnotic fascination on Friedrich's contemporaries,
 including the painter Wilhelm von Kùgelen. "Friedrich's
 studio," wrote von Kùgelen, "was absolutely bare...there
 was nothing in it except an easel, a chair, and a table.
 A solitary ruler was the only wall decoration. No one
 could figure out how it had attained that honor. Even the
 necessary paint box with its oil bottles and paint rags
 was banished to the next room, for Friedrich felt that all
 extraneous objects disturbed his interior pictorial world."

30

RESPONSE BY ALLAN ANTLIFF

The *Au Travail / At Work* collective's efforts to subvert the conditions of labour in capitalist economics by reinvigorating creative agency lends itself to an anarchist reading, given that its valorization of subjective freedom is premised on antagonism towards workplace authoritarianism. They are not the first to engage in such an undertaking: a standard feature of anarchist activism, born of necessity in communities that are largely impoverished, is the appropriation of workplace materials, time, and resources so as to realize the anti-authoritarian ends of the protagonists, which is not to say that the activity of workplace subversion is replicating the instrumentalism of capitalist employer-labourer relations through a kind of perverse inversion – far from it. The more one brings a workplace into line with the pursuit of human capacities for imagination, the more it is transformed into a terrain of contestation where working can serve as an invitation to rebel (as opposed to acquiescence). This, to my mind, constitutes the anarchic dimensions of *Au Travail / At Work's* project, which come into play as an inescapable component of its stated purpose. The challenge the collective poses is not to ape the exploitative agenda of the employer: it is to actualize freedom in the workplace as an extension of our social being, bringing work into the flux of rebellion, and intensifying our capacities for self-realization. This is another way of de-alienating artistic activity through concrete means: a decoupling of art from the banal round of capitalization and spectacular consumption, to the degree that the collective realizes itself in the course of doing so, it is insurrectionary.

BB Yes.

GB And, is this working condition to transform the fundamental v

BB Often they things in their at it. People w of doing some to see work is more opportu are bigger. Now work is always might transform way. Not in a d different from during the Fre

AB How is it d

BB Than in the

AB Yes.

BB I mean, wh of our times. It confront the a You will go to v it more interes work in secret, secondary. You directly. You do because shitty find another o work. That is t I mean most pe hate their jobs.

GB You talk ab little more extr that considers, you'll take any

BB Yes.

ARTISTS IN SPITE OF ART



APG: LEGACIES AND AFTERMATHS

The following conversation discusses aspects of the reception and legacy of the Artist Placement Group (APG). In doing so, what unfolds is a range of positions at stake for artists engaged in industrial work-placements, and – more broadly – for those engaged in socially-engaged practices.

Marisa Jahn Claire, you are interested in participatory modes of address. How did you come to know APG's work, and what was it that prompted your investigations?

Claire Bishop When I first began thinking about APG's work, I have to confess that I was not enamoured with their project. A few years previously, I had supervised a Master's student writing a dissertation on APG, and it had left me with the impression that it was all rather boring, grey, and bureaucratic. Lots of writing, lots of theorizing, and interminably complex examples. I had very little point of access into it. But of course, art projects that try to embed themselves in society require a different kind of perspective than the purely visual, and demand an immersive process of research that complements the process-based character of the project.

MJ I think that others have also wondered in which ways to evaluate APG's social engagement – how it shifts ways of looking, and teaches a different strategy of aesthetic reception.

CB Many of the issues around APG's work are very contemporary – social engagement, artists working in society, problems of collaboration and complicity. For the history that I'm currently writing, APG plays a specific role. Most artists become involved in social engagement at a grassroots level, working with specific communities of interest. APG, by contrast, got involved with government departments and big business. This immediately requires us to imagine an alternative framework for participatory art. We are dealing with a couple of artists (Barbara Steveni and John Latham) seeking to place other artists at the highest level of large-scale national corporations and government departments. The



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT PLACEMENT
BY ROGER COMAND. RESIDENTS OF SMALL NEIGH
ARTICULATE THEIR RESPONSE TO CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT POLICY, ADDED BY THE ARTIST,
COUNTY BARBARA STEVENI.

A CONVERSATION WITH CLAIRE BISHOP AND STEPHEN WRIGHT

question of APG's intentionality – the goals that it hoped to achieve through these placements – were very ambiguous, and remain contentious today.

MJ How do you see the legacy of APG's work, and/or how would you characterize the historical significance of their work?

CB I find a number of things extraordinary about APG from a contemporary perspective. Firstly, the idea of a new model of patronage: artists were funded by businesses and government, but without the latter requiring any concrete outcome from the artist in terms of a work of art. The organisations had to be more interested in encountering an artist's perspective on a philosophical basis than in sponsoring the production of an object. As such, it forms part of the rise of corporate sponsorship of visual art in the late 1960s – a situation that we know the consequences of today all too well. Secondly, the APG exhibition *Inno 70* is hugely prescient of so many discursive exhibitions in the last decade. The central component of *Inno 70* (Hayward Gallery, London, 1971) was an area called "The Sculpture" – a large white boardroom table for daily discussion. To turn an exhibition space into a discursive space anticipates so many contemporary exhibitions today, especially in Europe; "The Sculpture" was thus perhaps the first discussion platform of this kind. The critical response to *Inno 70* also reminds us that the type of spectatorship produced by this exhibition was a radical shift in how an audience was expected to engage with this work. The displays were primarily informational rather than artistic, and many critics were disenchanted by the bureaucratic flavour of the exhibition. This is something I can certainly identify with when I go to galleries and see artists present documentation of their process, without resolving this into a meaningful visual experience for a secondary audience. It is telling that the only enthusiastic reviews of *Inno 70* were by journalists in other areas (e.g., business), rather than art critics.

A further aspect of APG's work that I find appealing is the combination of Steveni's hard-nosed pragmatism, and the *loop* theoretical inventions of Latham. When these two ways of thinking coincide, the results are complex and paradoxical. For example, Latham wanted to re-organise art around questions of time rather than space. As such, he believed that you couldn't make a judgment on APG's work until at least 20 years had

gone by. The value of a work of three times by an idea degree or how we a but also a think thro terms? Fi and replac placement view, this their pract

MJ Stephen knowledge epistemic ways that doing. I wo might see t

Stephen W At its best, decreates ic world, and a time, does j merely crea What's n was located activities pre post-Fordism producer, or industrial wo producing ob with the pro using the wo artistic reside was ultimatel the mainstre capitalism, it apparent self- possibility of.

MJ You bring processing inf of "processor," APG's emphas on contextual referred to as involved in AP reason why no This lacuna was in fact con aptly communi

CON SHOP IGHT

that it hoped to
very ambiguous, and

rk, and/or
significance

about APG from a
of a new model of
s and government,
e outcome from
misations had to
's perspective on a
uction of an object.
e sponsorship
that we know
ndly, the APG
many discursive
component of
as an area called
table for daily
a discursive
hibitions today,
hus perhaps the
ritical response to
statorship produced
an audience was
plays were primarily
critics were
the exhibition. This
hen I go to galleries,
eir process,
ual experience for
nly enthusiastic
her areas (e.g.,

and appealing is the
atism, and the loopy
ese two ways of
and paradoxical. For
around questions of
that you couldn't
ast 20 years had

gone by. His idea of the "delta unit" was a way to determine the value of a work of art, by measuring its importance in terms of three types of attention: the number of people affected by an idea; the period of time it remains influential; and, the degree of awareness it induces. So this attempt to rethink how we account for the impact of a work of art is eccentric, but also ambitious — which artists today are bold enough to think through the criteria for analysing their work in these terms? Finally, I think APG are important for short-circuiting and replacing the curator as an intermediary: they organised placements directly, without any mediating negotiator. In my view, this administrative work should be seen as much a part of their practice as Latham's elaborate cosmology.

MJ Stephen, I know you are interested in different forms of knowledge production as counter-examples to normative epistemic currents — in other words, you are interested in the ways that artwork can produce alternate modes of thinking or doing. I wonder then what you might add to this list or how you might see things differently.

Stephen Wright I tend to think of art as a decreative activity. At its best, art decreates apparently self-evident things; it decreates ideas we take for granted about things, about the world, and about art itself. Of course, most art, most of the time, does just the opposite of that, and satisfies itself with merely creating.

What's most striking to me about APG was that its practice was located at the very core of Fordism, whereas the group's activities prefigured what we would today associate with post-Fordism — somehow inserting the informal knowledge producer, or artist, into a very unfamiliar setting, and using that industrial world as an art world. APG's work was not about producing objects, but more generally about experimenting with the production of artistic subjectivity. At the same time, using the workplaces of the industrial economy as sites of artistic residency, production, and exhibition. Although it was ultimately a failure, inasmuch as it neither transformed the mainstream art world, nor made much impact on Fordist capitalism, it was a groundbreaking experiment in rethinking apparent self-evidences about the conditions and places of possibility of art.

MJ You bring up the point that APG's work really emphasized processing information, and positioning the artist as this kind of "processor." In an argument similar to the one you make, APG's emphasis on process over product, and their insistence on contextualist modes of production characterizes what is referred to as an aesthetics of listening.¹ Barbara and others involved in APG have underscored many times that this is the reason why not much "stuff" was produced.

This lacuna forces one to consider the ways that APG was in fact communicating, what media, in fact, most fully communicates the nature of these works, and what

differentiates it from other art practices. As one example, one particular strength characterizing practitioners of embedded practices is that because they are working from empathetic vantage points, they are highly sensitized to moments in an artwork that alienate its participants and spectators.

Going further, one of the main challenges of an embedded art practice is finding a method or medium that (a) retains the contextual vitality of what happened on the inside (within the institution), (b) communicates this to other audiences (and art worlds), and (c) does this in a way that authentically transposes this in an inclusive way that doesn't alienate those involved in the production of the work.

For many embedded practices, documentary fragments serve to partially explain what transpired. But more often than not, for embedded practices, anecdote, rumour, or recollection is, in fact, their main form of cultural currency and primary medium. In fact, Magnus Bårtås writes about the primacy of oral transmission in most kinds of cultural pedagogy.

The fact that works of art to a large extent are tales, points to the folkloric aspect of the art world. In other words, the art world is a place for transmissions: someone has seen or heard of someone who has done something. The story is told and retold. As in any other oral culture there are misunderstandings, adjunctions, displacements, and falsifications. The dependence on "what is on every lip" creates a situation where works that are difficult to talk about run the risk of being neglected and "disappearing."²

In other words, for artists like those involved with APG, operating within a rumour economy is in both the most valuable form of cultural currency, and the most contextually sensitive.

SW Rumour is an incredibly powerful medium, and a performative agent in the shadow economy. What APG has done is found ways for art to prosper outside of the mainstream attention economy. The question then is how to bring those "shadow" practices to light — so that they are not lost to posterity — without betraying their fundamental wish to maintain a low profile. That's where documentation becomes crucial.

There is a great deal of critical indigence around thinking about documentation. If an art practice has such a low coefficient of artistic visibility as to not be perceived as such, then it can only be performed as art through documentation — be it visual, oral, written, or whatever. That gives a very special, and very powerful role to the document: not merely bearing witness to what is no longer present, but actually transforming its ontological status — making it into art, without effecting its primary ontology. We might refer to it as "performative documentation" — which, of course, has nothing whatsoever to do with documenting a performance.

MJ So for you, one of the strengths of APG's work is the way they problematized the productivist bias that informs many

artworks, and, in fact, renders them obfuscating. In other words, APG elided the documentary artifact or the art-object stand-in, and instead focused on the process itself as the ends and the means of a transformation.

SW When we assume that ideas can be produced in the art world, we take for granted two things that APG directly challenged: on the one hand, art's inherent productivism; and on the other, the idea that it is possible to speak of "the" art world – as if others were not only possible but existent. In abstaining from production, APG drew attention to the productivist elephant that was so omnipresent as to be invisible: productivism was and is embedded in both capitalist and socialist ideology (as well as in art). And in inventing another way of looking at host institutions as places for doing art and for being an artist, APG pointed to a different world for art.

MJ So rather than sabotage the workplace, you see that APG is engendering methods to work from within – to expose the fallacy or prevalence of productivist modes and posit alternatives.

SW Yes. The basic logic here is that you don't actually go into the factory and throw in your clogs.⁷ They redefined the primary purpose of being at work as something other than participating in the capital accumulation process for the benefit of your boss – and, at the same time, as something other than challenging that process head on. They redefined being at work as using that interstitial space to do art; more simply, to use that space in that way is already art. The alienating day job can become a place for us to find and found our artistic initiatives.

MJ Can you talk more about the conceit that the workplace itself is or can be the site of artistic production?

SW Sabotage has proven its worth historically as a decreative practice. But it's not always an appropriate strategy. Sometimes a parasitic or epiphytic strategy can be effective if art's mere presence in a particular setting can be exemplary. APG's placements were rather like placing a bunch of Bartelbys in workplaces where people were busily producing. Because although art is often productivist, the placed artists were unproductive labourers, and it's, in fact, this very productive idleness that decreated the unchallenged logic of the workplace. What, after all, is business or industry supposed to make of Robert Filliou's principle to render equivalent that which is *well done*, that which is *poorly done*, and that which is *not done at all*? This idea cuts right to the quick of what is specific to art. Deploying that kind of artistic logic in the workplace is potentially more corrosive, and more infectious than sabotage.

The challenge today is to retool our critical and conceptual vocabulary to accurately describe and analyze these practices, and those stemming from them, without lapsing into the formalist vocabularies of the art-critical establishment. Practices are changing, but our critical lexicon has not kept

pace. The upshot is that these practices are often very poorly served by the available terms inherited from a different century. When we talk about a crisis in art, we are really talking about a crisis in the focusing devices with which we grasp them.

MJ I am inferring that what you mean by "focusing devices" are those behavioural or linguistic ways in which social constructions are reified. To begin with the building blocks, perhaps you can give more examples of other ways to update the vocabulary of the art-critical establishment?

SW There are countless examples, but take another economic term: "redundancy." Redundancy is a term typically used to describe words, mechanisms, or positions that replicate a function already fulfilled by another word, mechanism, or position. It is invariably negatively connoted, particularly when labour is made redundant. But I see redundancy as something much more positive – in fact, redundancy is the concept I propose to best describe non-mimetic, or post-mimetic art practices – art that is deliberately and perfectly redundant with respect to what it also is. One could always say that a Rembrandt was both a picture and an ironing board (to quote an example chosen by Duchamp to instantiate what he brilliantly called the "reciprocal readymade," no doubt because ironing is so ironic).

However, the type of work I refer to as "redundant" inverts the primary-secondary logic: it is first of all a painting business, or a street, or a journal, or anything at all. Only in an accessory way is it a *proposition* of a painting business, street, journal or whatever the case may be. Redundant art is thus creatively and expressively idle – it isn't in any way, shape, or form different from what it would be if it wasn't art. Art used to dream of becoming non-art. Now it appears to have opted for a more caustic form of calculated redundancy. In other words, redundancy is a form of repetition.

But one key difference between redundancy and repetition is its temporality: whereas repetition is based on a temporal deferral, redundancy suppresses this interval in favour of spontaneity. You might say that repetition allows what was to be, whereas redundancy allows what is to exist simultaneously as an "as-if" proposition.

APG didn't so much create art as invent what I would call a plausible art world – one not beholden to the physical and conceptual architecture of the dominant art world. APG's project was to gain agency in the real, rather than satisfy themselves with acting in the symbolic. Many art-related practitioners today feel that need, and APG was really the first to open up that path. Their work had nothing to do with spectatorship, nothing to do with finding an audience or creating something audience-based. They were looking for a different art-sustaining environment for their practice.

ten very poorly
in a different century.
ly talking about a
grasp them.

ocusing devices"
hich social
building blocks,
er ways to update
ent?

another economic
typically used to
that replicate a
mechanism, or
ed, particularly
redundancy as
redundancy is the
imetic, or post-
ately and perfectly
One could always say
an ironing board (to
stantiate what he
ade," no doubt because

as "redundant"
is first of all a painting
thing at all. Only in an
nting business, street,
edundant art is thus
t in any way, shape, or
it wasn't art. Art used to
ears to have opted for
ndancy. In other words,

dundancy and repetition
n is based on a temporal
interval in favour of
tion allows what was to
is to exist simultaneously

invent what I would call
idden to the physical and
nant art world. APG's
al, rather than satisfy
blic. Many art-related
nd APG was really the
k had nothing to do with
nding an audience or
l. They were looking for a
nt for their practice.

It is sometimes said that artists like to bite the hand that feeds them, but they never bite it off. Sometimes that can be frustrating, and seem at odds with art's claim to want to do some damage to the dominant semiotic economy. But groups like APG, in experimenting with such concepts as redundancy, John Latham's notion of an "incidental practice," or the notion of a double ontological status allowed art to function as a secret agent — and, to wait for the right moment to deploy that secret agency.

MJ Can you elaborate further on the relationship between the double ontological status of an artwork, and what you are suggesting is a latent capacity or potential within art?

SW "Double ontological status" is a term that refers to something that, for example, can be both a thing and a proposition of that thing. I'm thinking of the Martha Rosler Library — both a full-fledged, functional, and public library, and at the same time, a proposition of a library. Or take a lesser known example: I've long been an admirer of the work of Bernard Brunon, who for the past three decades has run a house-painting outfit in Houston, Texas, called *That's Painting*. He runs his business as would any small entrepreneur in the rough and tumble Texas economy. The credo of the outfit is entirely businesslike: the work is well done, on time, and competitively priced. On the surface, and even beneath the surface, there is nothing arty about *That's Painting* — except Brunon's self-understanding: he sees what he is doing is as a collective, conceptual art project. The point is that Bernard Brunon wouldn't have done anything differently were it not a conceptual proposition — if it had only a single, stable ontology. When you drive through the streets of Houston with him in his pick-up, he points to the houses on the left and right of the street and says, "That's my work." He doesn't do exhibitions because there's nothing to exhibit. The best way to appreciate his work is to hear him talk about it. Telling a story is perhaps the least reifying way for art to take place. Art after spectatorship. ●

This conversation was prompted by and is partly transcribed from a public program entitled "Art & Economics 2," presented at apexart on Saturday, February 20, 2010, and which featured Claire Bishop, Noa Latham, Julie Martin, Barbara Steveni, and Stephen Wright. The event was in conjunction with the exhibition The Incidental Person, curated by Antony Hudek, on view at apexart from January 6–February 20, 2010. The conversation was editorialized by Marisa Jahn.

APG



- 1 Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, "Functionalism, Yes, But," statement for the symposium "The Pathos of Functionalism," Berlin, 1974, in *Architecture and Urbanism* 47 (November 1974), pp. 33-34.
- 2 Vincent Scully, Introduction, in Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966), p. 13.
- 3 See David Whitney and Jeffrey Kipnis, eds., *Philip Johnson: The Glass House* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993).
- 4 Philip Johnson, "Where Are We At?," [review of *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, by Reyner Banham], *Architectural Review* 127 (September 1960), pp. 174, 175.
- 5 See Charles A. Jencks, "Philip Johnson—The Candid King Midas of New York Camp," in *Late Modern Architecture and Other Essays* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), pp. 146-59.
- 6 Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: The Architectural Press, 1960).
- 7 Reyner Banham, "A Throw-Away Aesthetic," *Industrial Design* 7 (March 1960), p. 63.
- 8 Robert Venturi, *Complexity*, pp. 22-23.
- 9 See Charles F. Stuckey, "Scott Burton Chairs," in Jiri Svestka, ed., *Scott Burton: Sculptures 1980-89* (Düsseldorf: Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, 1989), pp. 55-65.
- 10 Pilar Viladas, "Corbusier Shows His True Colors," *Interiors* 139 (January 1980), pp. 120-21.
- 11 Ludwig Glaeser, *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: Furniture and Furniture Drawings from the Design Collection and the Mies van der Rohe Archive* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977).
- 12 Martin Filler, "Seeing the Forest for the Trees," *Progressive Architecture* 58 (October 1977), p. 58.
- 13 European Furniture Importers, Chicago, catalogue, 1992.
- 14 See Véronique Vienne, "Furniture as Fashion: It's Not What You Wear, It's Where You Sit," *Metropolis* 12 (May 1993), pp. 65-67, 92-93.
- 15 See Carol Vogel, Currents: "Knockoff! Knockoff! Price Wars Are No Joke," *New York Times*, April 12, 1990, p. C3.
- 16 Elaine Louie, "The Many Lives of a Very Common Chair," *New York Times*, February 7, 1991, p. C10.
- 17 Warren Rubin, founder of the Workbench stores, quoted in *ibid.*
- 18 Mark Leyner, *My Cousin, My Gastroenterologist* (New York: Harmony Books, 1990), p. 32.

RESEARCH

When you have read the play you must do your research. This can involve

libraries

halls and

'smell of

by music

or Mor

designed

for a m

inner ear

By re

lifting.

may stu

point, fr

be done

got to de

During

because

discussio

It is p

take plac

last deta

you to fi

about the

Moreo

you know

detail, be

you shou

to acquir

to find th

And in a

you desig

When

can from

the play),

has proba

you in you

tion is a c

ideas are

Your co

most imp

If designe

done man

are no sho

in great de

result will

scenery by

effort. It n

plan, desig

are concern

to invent t

