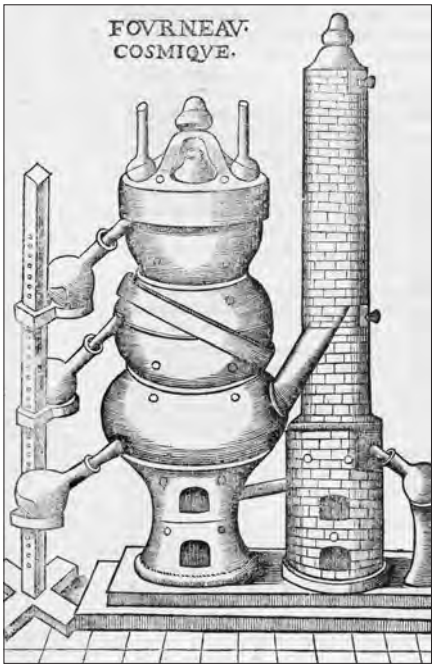
ATHANOR XXXVII

Florida State University • Department of Art History

ATHANOR XXXVII

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY



Cosmic oven or Athanor from Annibal Barlet,
Le Vray Cours de Physique,
Paris, 1653.

Cover: Walter Lawrence and Gustav Manz, *Ornamental Comb*, 1900, gold, ancient glass, gem stones, tortoiseshell, The Cleveland Museum of Art.

ATHANOR XXXVII

Editor
Preston Mclane

Technical Editors
Laura Miller and Matthew E. Hunter, FSU Libraries

Designers
Jean D. Young
Justin Sosnicki

Graduate Editorial Assistant
Emily McLean

Papers Copyright 2019 by the Authors

Athanor XXXVII Copyright 2019 by
Florida State University / Tallahassee, FL 32306
All Rights Reserved
L.C. #81-68863

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

John E. Thrasher
President
Sally E. McRorie
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
James Frazier
Dean, College of Fine Arts

Graduate Faculty in the History of Art and Architecture:

Art History

Doron Bauer, PhD
Johns Hopkins University
Assistant Professor
Early Medieval and Islamic Art and Architecture

Karen A. Bearor, PhD
University of Texas at Austin
Associate Professor
Modern American Art and Theory
History of Photography and Film

Tenley Bick, PhD
University of California, Los Angeles
Assistant Professor
Global Contemporary Art

Michael D. Carrasco, PhD
University of Texas at Austin
Associate Professor
Pre-Columbian Art and Architecture

Kristin Dowell, PhD
New York University
Associate Professor
Contemporary Native American Art, Indigenous Film, Visual Culture

Jack Freiberg, PhD
Institute of Fine Arts,
New York University
Professor
Italian Renaissance Art and Architecture

Adam Jolles, PhD
University of Chicago
Associate Professor and Chair
Modern European Art and the History of Photography

Lynn Jones, PhD
University of Illinois
Associate Professor
Byzantine and Medieval Islamic Art and Architecture

Kyle Killian, PhD
Columbia University
Assistant Teaching Professor
Medieval Art and Museum and Cultural Heritage Studies

Stephanie Leitch, PhD
University of Chicago
Associate Professor
Northern European Renaissance Art and the History of Prints

Robert Neuman, PhD
University of Michigan
Professor
17th- and 18th-Century Art and Architecture

Paul B. Niell, PhD
University of New Mexico
Assistant Professor
Spanish Colonial Arts and Architecture and Material Culture of the African Diaspora

Lauren S. Weingarden, PhD
University of Chicago
Professor
Modern Art and Architecture
Word and Image Studies

Art History Faculty Emeriti

J. L. Draper, PhD
University of North Carolina

Richard K. Emmerson, PhD
Stanford University

Paula Gerson, PhD
Columbia University

Roald Nasgaard, PhD
Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Patricia Rose, PhD
Columbia University

Museum of Fine Arts

Preston McLane, PhD
Florida State University
Director, Museum of Fine Arts
Editor-in-Chief, Museum Press

Meredith Lynn, MFA
University of Iowa
Assistant Curator and Director of Galleries

John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art

Steven High, MA
Williams College, MBA, Virginia
Commonwealth University
Executive Director

David Berry, DPhil
University of Oxford
Assistant Director, Academic Affairs

Sarah Cartwright, PhD
Institute of Fine Arts, New York University
Ulla R. Searing Curator of Collections

Christopher Jones, MA
University of New Mexico
Assistant Curator of Exhibitions

Rhiannon Paget, PhD
University of Sydney
Curator of Asian Art

Ola Wlusek, MA
Goldsmiths, University of London
Keith D. and Linda L. Monda Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art

Athanor and the Museum Press

In 1980 Professor François Bucher (University of Bern, *Medieval Art*) asked Allys Palladino-Craig to take on the responsibility of general editor and publisher of the first volume of *Athanor* (1981). Professor Bucher served as faculty advisor until his retirement. During that time, Palladino-Craig won several grants for the publication, and in 1994 established the Museum Press of the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts with Julienne T. Mason as principal editorial assistant and graphic designer. Beginning in 2018, Jean D. Young became the designer for *Athanor* XXXVI, and Carey E. Fee joined the editorial team. From 1998-2002, Patricia Rose served as faculty advisor to this annual journal, which is a project of the Museum Press. For volumes 26 - 27, Richard K. Emmerson, the Editor of *Speculum* from 1999 to 2006, served as co-editor. In 2019 Preston McLane, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum Press at Florida State University, took on the role of editor of *Athanor.*

This issue of *Athanor* is made possible with the support of Dean James Frazier and Interim Dean Scott Shamp of the College of Fine Arts, the Museum of Fine Arts Press, and the Florida State University Libraries.

Athanor is indexed in *Bibliography of the History of Art* and *ARTbibliographies Modern*.

Manuscript submission: Readers are invited to submit manuscripts for consideration. Authors should consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* for matters of form. The University assumes no responsibility for loss or damage of materials. Correspondence and manuscripts may be addressed to the Editor, *Athanor*, Department of Art History, 1019 William Johnston Building, 143 Honors Way, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1233, or sent electronically to the Department of Art History. <arthistory@fsu.edu>

To obtain copies: *Athanor* is published annually by the Department of Art History as a project of the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts Press. Past issues are available for a suggested minimum donation of $10.00 to cover handling and contribute to subsequent issues; please request volumes through the Department of Art History, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1233.

The next Art History Graduate Symposium will be held in March 2020; symposium paper sessions cover a wide variety of topics. Students from universities nation-wide make presentations which frequently become published essays in *Athanor*. The format of the symposium includes a keynote address by major scholars. Since 1993 keynote speakers have been: Fred Licht, Boston University and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice (1993); Gerald Ackerman, Pomona College (1994); Marcel Roethlisberger, University of Geneva (1995); Robert Farris Thompson, Yale University (1996); Oleg Grabar, Institute for Advanced Study (1997); Phyllis Bober, Bryn Mawr College (1998); Carol Duncan, Ramapo College (1999); Bogomila Welsh-Ovcharov, University of Toronto at Mississauga (2000); Neil Stratford, ret. Keeper of Mediaeval Antiquities, British Museum (2001); Debra Pincus, Professor Emerita, University of British Columbia (2002); Jonathan Brown, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU (2003); David Summers, University of Virginia (2004); Thomas B.F. Cummins, Harvard University (2005), W.J.T. Mitchell, University of Chicago (2006); Michael Leja, University of Pennsylvania (2007); Pamela Sheingorn, City University of New York (2008); Alexander Nemerov, Yale University (2009); Richard Shiff, University of Texas at Austin (2010); John T. Paoletti, Wesleyan University (2011); Maria Gough, Harvard University (2012); Magali Carrera, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (2013); Felipe Pereda, Johns Hopkins University (2014); Claire Farago, University of Colorado at Boulder (2015); Barbara Mundy, Fordham University (2016); and Edward J. Sullivan, Institute of Fine Arts & Department of Art History, New York University (2017). For details of date and for précis submission, please contact: Department of Art History, Florida State University, 1019 William Johnston Building, 143 Honors Way, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1233. <arthistory@fsu.edu>

The essays contained in *Athanor* are articles by graduate students on topics of art history and humanities. As such, *Athanor* exists as a critical forum for the exchange of ideas and for contrast and comparison of theories and research and is disseminated for non-profit, educational purposes; annotated allusions, quotations, and visual materials are employed solely to that end.

Günther Stamm Prize for Excellence

Lauren Lovings-Gomez was awarded the Günther Stamm Prize for Excellence for "Antiquity, Exoticism, and Nature in *Gold 'Lotus and Dragon-fly' Comb with Cyprian Glass Fragment*" presented at the 2018 Art History Graduate Symposium.

ATHANOR XXXVII

The Friction of Recognition: Information and Illegibility in Drew Bacon's Life

John Semlitsch

Life began for me at a point different from where it began for the visitor in front of me. The work started at yet another point for someone arriving later than I did. The footage may have already begun again for some early arrivals to the exhibition. That evening, *Life* (2017) began again for all of us, probably more than once. Drew Bacon's most recent animation started for viewers as it was constantly refreshed and reinvigorated through the sporadic recognition of his images. When I first witnessed Bacon's *Life*, I thought the footage ran continuously forward, taking new material for its own figuration as it swept through a limitless digital inventory.

I came to realize that the images flitting and shuffling across the wall were not digitized before Bacon's endeavors. Acrylic paint and strategic tears accent the pages, the units of the animation, to draw our attention to the stuff of which the artist's latest projection is composed: thousands of photographs made of thousands of pages and images from *LIFE* magazine's golden era during the fraught 1960s up until 1972. Bacon's marks and arrangement of the material render *LIFE* magazine's vast amounts of reporting indiscernible, closing off any possibility of a complete reading. The artist highlights the tension between the amount of information presented and the amount of information left legible - a conflict repeated throughout contemporary society, especially as we digitize and publish our records online.

Bacon cut pages from *LIFE*, painted on them in patterns, and documented his accents with a digital camera - photographing each mark stroke-by-stroke. He then sequenced and animated the modification of the documents into a continuous loop. After editing the video with meticulous attention to the pixels through which the images are rendered, Bacon broadcasts his work across several yards of wall space, often using more than one projector (Figure 1). In the gallery, the projection occupies a blank wall, enveloping viewers as they move in and out of the projectors' light.

The following critique addresses the theatrical response of spectators to both projection and the animation it presents. Despite its utter ubiquity, the essay "Art and Objecthood" by Michael Fried provides lasting insight into the efficacy of projection as artists such as Bacon search vast source materials for trends in imagery from our nation's collective memory and ideology. It is possible to deploy projected light on large scales, as the instruments can replicate animation in perfect loops without diminishment in resolution. Thus, the medium of projected light exerts itself as a natural choice for literalizing our subjective, theatrical interaction with the records through which our histories are recorded.

Bacon's characteristic preparation of documents is not exclusive to *LIFE* magazine, nor is this most recent work the first time he has deconstructed the authority of published pages to create his animations. His technique has found purchase on the encyclopedia, the dictionary, recent issues of the *New York Times*, and now, the pages of this iconic publication. His choice of *LIFE* magazine as the source material for this most recent work is eerily intimate - even seen briefly in the animation, the pages still retain the personal ethos characteristic of the publication. At the height of its distribution in the early 1970s before changing to monthly circulation, thirteen million issues of *LIFE* were home-delivered each week. Often, the issues of *LIFE* were "passed along" to four or five individuals after the initial subscriber read the magazine, reaching a secondary audience of more than forty million.[1] The magazine purported to consolidate a world of information into one source, where news of the Civil Rights Movement, the War in Southeast Asia, the Space Race, and other national endeavors were juxtaposed with sleek advertising complicit in an insulated American dream.

Bacon's preparation of *Life* took place over months in which he rifled through issues, cut out and set aside interesting pages, documented their transformation, then set them aside again - laden with paint, warped, and isolated. Occasionally, he has admitted, a day in the studio was spent engrossed in reading the un-altered magazine, and no marks, cuts, or tears were made.[2] Bacon begins his mark-making by casting accents on pages in a way that exemplifies the "message" of the whole. This involves painting forms that reverberate the visual qualities of the folio: vertical brush strokes to mimic a wood fence featured on one page, a spiral composed of line segments painted over the smug face of a war criminal on another. As a result, the audience gleans a sense of the content of the page without reading it, though the synthesis presented is not an objective reading of the facts. Rather, the markings are one reader's (Bacon's) own resonance with the information.

---

1 Erika Doss, "Introduction: Looking at *Life*: Rethinking America's Favorite Magazine, 1936-1972," in *Looking at* Life *Magazine*, ed. Erika Doss (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 1.

2 Drew Bacon. Interview by John H.P. Semlitsch. Houston, TX. October 21, 2017.

It would require a lifetime of work to parse out and read Bacon's images as they have been arranged in this sequence. The original magazines are no longer entirely legible either. Even if a viewer could stop *Life* and take from it one of the pages on the wall without paint obscuring its contents, the document would still be far from its rightful context in the curated periodical. The interface of the projection consolidates years of archived material, though in doing so eliminates the chronology and editorialization that structured *LIFE* as a conduit for the world's news.

Bacon's mark-making is an eclipse of the coherent message of the page; his arrangement is a blurring of the narrative constructed by the original issue of *LIFE*. If the editors of *LIFE* succeeded in disguising their reinforcement of mainstream American values behind the veil of objective reporting, that guise is betrayed by Bacon's projection of the materials. Bacon's presentation reinforces the human and personal quivering just below the surface of *LIFE* - recognition, memory, ideology. In his own estimation, Bacon has composed his story of life: how we come to be born, live, work, and eventually return to dust.[3] Watching Bacon's dissolution of the myth of objectivity into the reality of subjectivity on such a large scale, the audience comes to feel what it is like to *live* life at this moment.

In a gallery, the animation leads a life of its own, drawing viewers back to it continuously throughout the night to see where it has led since they last glimpsed it. The animation is a unified, though not a "Specific Object," as Michael Fried defines the "literalist" sculpture of the late 1960s in his well-known essay of the time.[4] For Fried, the object reduces to its shape; for Bacon, it could be said that the object becomes the forms that rise to the surface and repeat throughout the course of *LIFE*'s publication.

Unlike the literalist sculpture of Robert Morris or Donald Judd, Bacon's animation poses no physical inhibition to being navigated. Spectators make themselves at home in the projection's glow, chatting and drinking, not having to raise their voice in *Life*'s presence. As onlookers move toward and away from the wall to get a closer look at a cover from *LIFE* or one of Bacon's marks, the light shifts and softly falls on their bodies.

Discussing the work as it is "happening" is good for conversation. The vintage material inspires conversation and incites questions. Patrons cluster together in groups to reveal and brag about what they recognize in the sequence, or to ask about the identity of a product featured in a truncated ad. As soon as an answer to any number of questions is formulated, a dozen more rise to the surface of the churning body of information.

Finding familiarity in Bacon's animation is almost as natural a process as watching it. In fact, to watch Bacon's work is to latch on to what is familiar, even if the image is on the wall for a fraction of a second. The recognizable tidbits scattered throughout the work (different for each individual who chances upon it) are what keep spectators interested and expectant. If Bacon had simply sequenced every page from a certain range of issues of *LIFE* magazine, we as viewers would be inclined to do what Bacon has already done with his projection: break down the whole of *LIFE* into what resonates with the viewers' experience and memory. Bacon's aestheticized presentation across the gallery wall highlights something familiar and appealing for a moment, all the time that is needed to recognize the image from across the room. These units (the pages and images from the magazine) are linked together in the narrative of Bacon's animation and are the objects of our interaction.

Even as we watch Bacon's animation, memories of earlier parts of the footage become operative as they reappear in the sequence again and again. Maybe in waiting for this image to return, we recognize another. And another. *Life* expands when we recognize an image to anchor our looking. It begins many times throughout the animation, as I trust it is impossible to recognize only one out of the thousands of visual signs presented. I cannot say what another viewer may recognize - this is an individual experience mandating access to the memories of a vivid past.

To look more critically at the effects of these techniques in Drew Bacon's *Life*, I have paused the work at what I feel to be a pivotal image, one crucial for our understanding of Bacon's methods, though perhaps most central to my own understanding of the effects of Bacon's work. Fried criticized literalist work for its indistinct relationship to the parts of its composition; Bacon has related every object within his arrangement to each other simply by way of presenting the pages of *LIFE* magazine through the format of projection. As a result, we are able to recognize distinctly subjective qualities of the publication as we might recognize "gestalt" forms arranged in a gallery.[5]

One image now recognizable to me is that of former Army Lieutenant William Laws Calley. After panning over his arm, and before his face is obscured with a centrally-focused spiral of line segments, the man is visible. He is reclined and even relaxed, his head highlighted against the foreground of his soft blue tracksuit. To his right appears a painted oblong resembling the outline of a seed or a heart. To his left, and in between the outlines, appear exclamation points painted over images of young boys playing with toy rifles.

3 Ibid.

4 Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 837. Fried notes that part-by-part composition of sculpture is anathema to the immediacy of literalist forms. Bacon subverts this anxiety by binding his disparate objects into the whole of an animation, which occupies three-dimensional space with light, rather than solid matter.

5 Fried, "Art and Objecthood," 837. Fried conceptualizes *gestalt* as Morris does: The "constant, known shape" which Bacon deploys is the recognizable imagery and reporting from the iconic *LIFE* magazine. Included is our reaction to it, an aspect of our ideology conditioned and reinforced by "objective" presentation of news in diverse publications. Morris's sculpture may afford the viewer the chance for insight into their body's relationship to literalist forms in the gallery. Bacon's projection enlarges the content of *LIFE* magazine and confronts us with our own subjective responses.

In March of 1968, United States Army infantrymen destroyed the village of My Lai, located in the central highlands Vietnam. Operating on false information, two platoons (one of them Calley's) proceeded to infiltrate the reportedly "hostile" village. Despite establishing that those present in the village were civilians, and not North Vietnamese Army or VietCong combatants, the soldiers proceeded to carry out one of the largest and most infamous massacres in our military history. Acting under orders from Calley, United States servicemen opened fire upon hundreds of peaceful villagers, raping and torturing some before ending their lives.[6]

Calley was court-martialed and tried between the years 1969 and 1970 for his actions at My Lai. In 1971, the Lieutenant was convicted for the premeditated murder of twenty-two out of the estimated five-hundred dead Vietnamese civilians at My Lai. He was sentenced to life in prison and to hard labor at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, before this sentence was altered one day later by President Richard Nixon himself. Nixon ordered that Calley instead be transferred and confined to house arrest in Fort Benning, Georgia, where the Lieutenant served only three and one-half years of his sentence.[7]

It was during his house arrest that Calley, who was twenty-six years old at the time, was interviewed and photographed for *LIFE* magazine (Figure 2). The article and Calley's image were published at a time when the American public and many politicians believed that the Lieutenant was unjustly blamed for the events at My Lai. Among supporters of the war, the objection that a soldier could not be held responsible for the consequences of "following orders" ran rampant. Calley remained a recognizable figure in the years following the massacre at My Lai. The reporting surrounding his conviction and his sentence further galvanized the public's attention toward him and the supposed truth behind all being fair in war. Even as the nation protested the war's expansion deeper into Southeast Asia, *LIFE* magazine remained at the forefront of the war's justification.

Today, perhaps out of intentional furtiveness, Calley's visage is nearly indiscernible amid the plethora of photos and articles presented in Drew Bacon's *Life*. I myself did not recognize him until Bacon's father pointed him out at *Life*'s opening, asking me, "no one in your generation knows who William Calley is, do they?"

I recognized the name, and because of the name, I recognized his face. I formed a substantiated connection with the work. Incidentally, I learned about Calley and his actions years before from my own father, who at age seventeen enlisted in the Marine Corps and was deployed in the central highlands of South Vietnam, not far from, and just four months after Calley's massacre. News of the killings was obscured for months after the crime, though eventually the facts could not be contained. Perhaps after his tour of duty, and while serving as a drill-sergeant at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, my father came to know what had been done on that day by American servicemen not dissimilar from himself or the ones he was now responsible for training.

What I remember most clearly about my father's brief comments on William Calley was that he believed no one is capable of reconstructing and accurately evaluating the significance of that terrible day: that objective judgment of the murders was impossible, no matter how heinous they were. (I believe his words were something to the effect of, "If you're mad about what Calley did, you're not thinking hard enough about what we did to Vietnam.") What I understood was that any attempt at reconstructing the events of that day or the days after would be mere projection.

Whether Bacon intended Calley's presence in the animation to act in this way, the inclusion of his image brings to the forefront the kind of uncertainty about fact and embellishment that is repeated throughout Bacon's work and throughout *LIFE* magazine. The recognition of Calley's image begins an internal debate on the nature of crime and atrocity, and sets into motion the distraught contemplation of what is just and right. I am left with questions on the uncertainty of regulating the events, perhaps all of them crimes, that transpire among young boys during war. It is possible that this reflection is exclusive to my reading of Bacon's *Life*, though the large scale and repetitive imagery of the projection allow for constantly refreshed consideration from all viewers.

Outside of my vigorously personal connection to it, Calley's image is important for another reason: it is one of the few images in the work that is abstracted by "zooming" close to it. First, Calley's arm is depicted as a combination of nondescript geometric forms; to the right a matador seems to shout as Bacon paints and animates red triangular forms emanating from his mouth. As the video continues to play, his entire upper body comes into view and is eventually eclipsed by the red and white spiral abutted by images of falling bombs. From the first depiction of Calley's body, his significance is abstract, regardless of how much one viewer may know about him, or how quickly they are able to recognize him out of the distortion.

Bacon's work, composed out of fragments of characteristically American journalism, elicits the intensely subjective responses the editors of *LIFE* might have worked to suppress. The medium of projected light is particularly suited for the magnification of this information. Bacon is able to animate his altered pages from *LIFE* at life-size, aggrandizing and making literal our personal relationship to the periodical. The word *projection* itself bears many associations. A *projection* is an image presented on a surface; it is also defined as a mental image viewed as reality. As a psychological term, *projection* describes the transfer of our unconscious desires and fears onto the perceived characteristics of our peers.

All of these denotations are centered on projection's capacity for illusion. By figuring an image through a projection, the operator is able to subject the image to modification depending on the circumstances of the environment in which it is displayed. Projection's representational, and therefore

6 Seymour M. Hersh, "Coverup - I," *New Yorker*, January 22, 1972.

7 Douglas Linder and Andrew Morgan, "The My Lai Massacre Trial," accessed June 11, 2019, https://www.jurist.org/archives/famoustrials/the-my-lai-massacre-trial/

illusionistic, faculties are born out of its overlapping reality. In the case of Drew Bacon's *Life*, the projection occupies the gallery wall, and occasionally the skin of passersby (Figure 3). The artist can scale his images to more directly confront, and incorporate, the viewer. As the images and articles from *LIFE* magazine are projected into the audience's space, Bacon's animating - his literal "making alive" the material - facilitates a subjective confrontation of presence, as though the pages of *LIFE* magazine were standing in the room with us.

Projected animation subverts Fried's critique that an object confronting its viewer physically (as the geometric volumes of Robert Morris did) is not entirely self-contained. In Bacon's animation, the disparate objects of his arrangement are the pages and images from *LIFE* magazine that he has selected. His repeating sequence ties the pages together in a new volume, and as they are presented at such a large scale, viewers are confronted with their own memories and subjective response more urgently than when reading through a single issue. *LIFE* magazine's figuration had always been performative to a receptive audience of millions during the height of its publication. Rather than diminishing the impact of Bacon's artistic enterprise, the theatricality witnessed in the glow of *Life*'s projection is the crux of the project.[8]

LIFE magazine figures prominently in a past undertaking along the literalist and confrontational lines identified by Fried. From 1967 through 1972, Martha Rosler cut images from *LIFE* magazine and arranged them within interior scenes from the aspirational magazine *House Beautiful*. The resulting photomontages were distributed to other women at anti-war demonstrations, providing Rosler's audience with a collision of memories and desires. One such photomontage, *Tron (Amputee)* (Figure 4) combines the image of a wounded Vietnamese girl, the eponymous Tron, with a pristine American interior.

The original cover of *LIFE* magazine Rosler used as the source for her work features the caption, "Nguyen Thi Tron, 12, caught in the war, watches her new wooden leg be made" (Figure 5). By projecting Tron into the space of the American living-room, Rosler makes literal the country's relationship to the media flowing out of our ongoing conflict in Southeast Asia. The editor writing on the cover of *LIFE* only makes mention of "the war," leaving it to the readers' imagination which conflict could be the one that took Tron's leg. Printed within the issue are all of the advertisements and editorials one would expect from *LIFE* magazine's reporting. Perhaps some of the images and pages have been included in Bacon's animation.

Just as Rosler's photomontages compress vast distances between "the war" and where its images were consumed (journalists nicknamed the war in Vietnam "the living room war") Bacon's animations, and the drawings of which they are composed, heighten consciousness. They are constructed out of the thinly-veiled propaganda contained in *LIFE* magazine, now subjected to the artist's touch. Whether it is living and carrying out its figuration in a gallery in Houston, or transmitted and projected simultaneously across the state, Bacon's altered images compress the distance between objectivity and subjectivity - they are new information derived from the old. Bacon's *Life* is the new story - the only story - your story, formulated at the moment of its recognition, time and time again.

Life becomes relegated to mythology as accounts of the work are disseminated. The facts contained within it are as infinitely indistinguishable as the number of individuals capable of describing what they see in Bacon's projection. The artist has set into motion something that will never stop, a phenomenon that is no longer his to control. Since its official unveiling in October of 2017, *Life* has started again an inconceivable number of times. Viewers have taken bits of information from Bacon's presentation away with them into their homes and into conversation for the next lifetime. You could live with Bacon's work for years, as I have been fortunate to do, and never realistically decipher its messages. Memory is all that is yours to keep; I suspect that everyone who has watched Bacon's *Life* feels a connection, and remembers it.

In this way, the artist has literalized the process through which we can appropriate objective information - pick it out, frame it, and highlight what we recognize – be it literalist sculptural forms or images placed in our midst. In the time you watch *Life*, its lively presence elicits and interpolates the audience's past, memories, biases, and beliefs. There is a direct relationship, seen prominently in Bacon's work, though featured prominently in our own psychology, between a world of fact and its instantaneous reaction with our own, very small, lived experience.

We can extend *Life*'s impact just as we extend any fleeting phenomenon – by discussing it, recognizing it, communicating it across our network of acquaintances – by remembering it as we do anything we see. These undertakings make the illegible work more tangible, though no one could ever determine the truth or fiction within *Life*'s composition and influence. Memory, falsehoods, fragments, and (only occasionally) truth – this is life as we know it best.

University of Texas at Austin

8 See Fried, "Art and Objecthood," 839. The author states, "the experience of literalist art is of an object *in a situation* - one that, virtually by definition, *includes the beholder*." While Bacon's *Life* is not minimalist, per se, its effects are immediate as viewers are confronted with large-scale selections from a periodical that had such an intense impact on our cultural memory. By creating a *gestalt* form out of years of reporting, *LIFE* magazine's complicity with American ego-centrism becomes painfully clear.

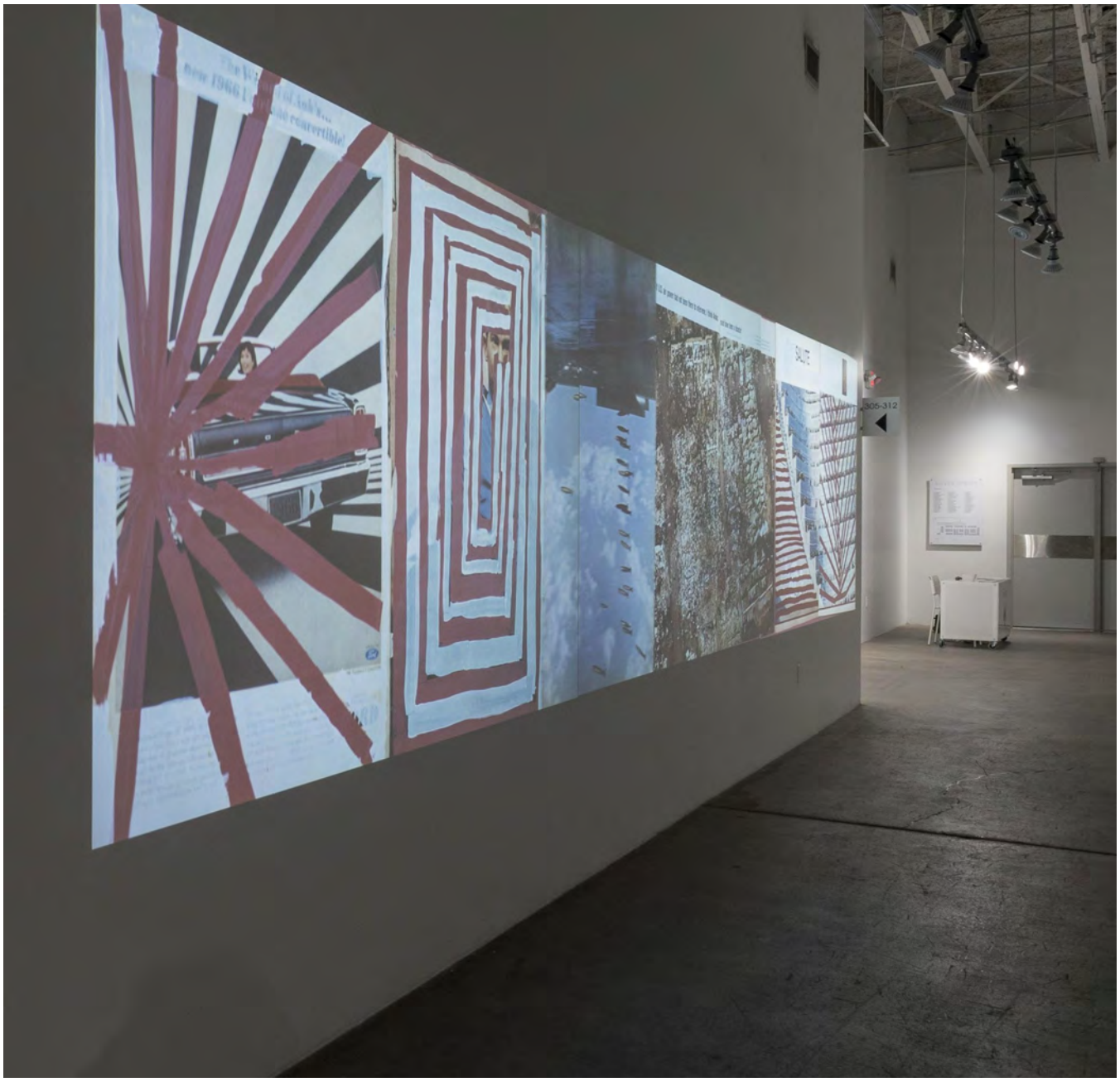


Figure 1. Drew Bacon, (installation detail) *Life*, 2017, Silver Street Studios, Houston, TX. Photo credit: Drew Bacon.

Figure 2. Drew Bacon, details from *Life*, 2017, Silver Street Studios, Houston, TX. Photo credit: Drew Bacon.

Figure 3. Drew Bacon, (installation detail) *Life*, 2017, Silver Street Studios, Houston, TX. Photo credit: John H.P. Semlitsch.

Figure 4. Martha Rosler, *Tron (Amputee)* from the series *House Beautiful*: Bringing the War Home, c. 1967-1972, pigmented inkjet print (photomontage), printed 2011, Collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

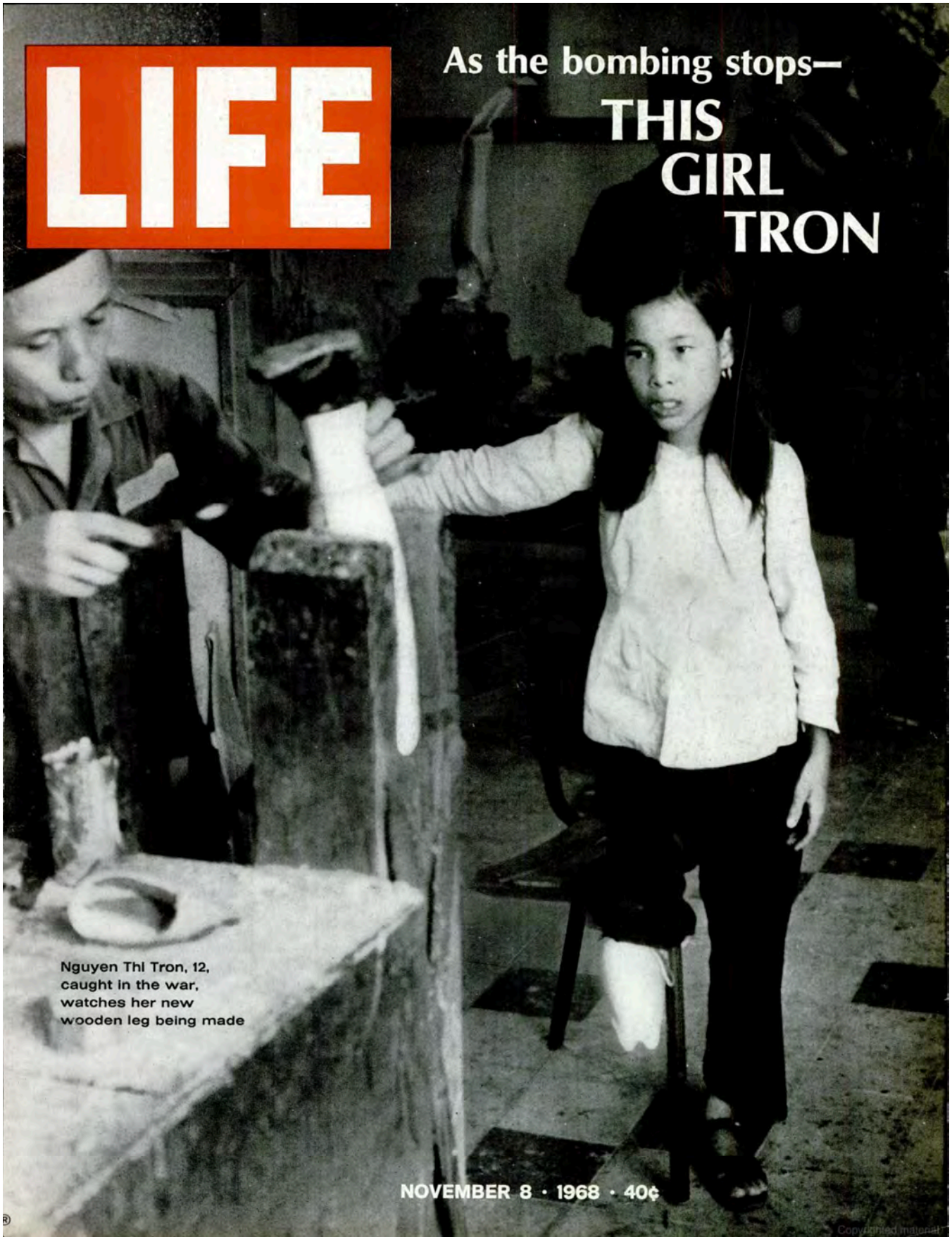


Figure 5. Larry Burrows, cover of *LIFE* magazine, November 8, 1968.

Reflections on Gerhard Richter's Cologne Cathedral Window

Donato Loia

The lost unity between art and religion […] cannot be regained at will. This unity was not a matter of purposeful cooperation, but resulted from the whole objective structure of society during certain phases of history.
Theodor W. Adorno[1]

But although these abstract paintings refer beyond themselves [...] they do not tell us what they are referring to. It is we who must provide the missing term.
Kaja Silverman[2]

In Catholic culture, light has traditionally symbolized the descent of the divine into the human world (Figure 1). Abbot Suger (1122-51), a leading ecclesiastical politician of the twelfth century, equated "Divine Light" with the light shining through stained glass. This philosophy of "Divine Light" reasoned that humans could encounter God as natural light streamed through the panes of brightly colored glass windows. Thus, light, as it illuminated the religious stories depicted in gothic stained glass, played an important metaphorical role, symbolically representing goodness and beauty.[3] When the Cologne Cathedral Chapter commissioned Gerhard Richter to replace a nineteenth-century window destroyed during the Second World War, he knew he would be confronting a daunting tradition.[4] As Richter himself claimed, the location of the Cologne Cathedral window is a special one "which carries a greater burden of history [than others]."[5]

Against the Cathedral Chapter's request for a figurative design of twentieth-century martyrs, Richter decided on a geometric, abstract design, comprised of a randomly distributed grid of 11,500 hand-blown squares of glass in 72 colors matching the existing palette of the cathedral's remaining medieval windows (Figure 2). About five-hundred different chromatic hues appear approximately twenty times in the window and, as Richter explains, "half of the squares [have been] allotted by means of a random generator, the other [are] a mirror image of the ones randomly allocated"[6] (Figure 3). When refracted through the window, the light disperses into a dazzling array of colors. In considering this work, one might be satisfied simply to contemplate the sensuous interplay of light and colors. However, Richter's design is not only meant to captivate but also to provoke. By choosing this design of geometric shapes, Richter deliberately engages with his window's Christian setting, characterizing his work as unconventionally devotional.[7] Thus, the window provokes a number of questions about its religious context: Is Richter's window merely part of the broader cultural transformation of cathedrals from sites of religious pilgrimage into secular tourism?[8] What is the place of Richter's window for the long history of the relation of art and religion? What is the meaning of this window within the context of the cathedral? In this paper, my ambition is to provide some preliminary interpretations of Richter's window exploring the complex triangulation of art, secularity, and religiosity within this work.

Scholars have offered a variety of interpretations. For instance, the Jesuit priest-curator Friedhelm Mennekes con-

1 Theodor W. Adorno, "Theses upon Art and Religion Today," *The Kenyon Review*, New Series, Vol. 18, No. 3/4 (Summer - Autumn, 1996): 236-240.

2 Kaja Silverman, *Flesh of My Flesh* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 178.

3 For a brief overview of the metaphorical meaning of stained glass see Robert Jayson, "Color and Light." *Faith and Form*, vol. 44, Issue 1. Web. Accessed September 18, 2019.

4 The Cathedral Window was not the first time Richter received a religious commission. For instance, Richter completed *Abstract Picture (Rhombus)* in 1998, a project initiated by representatives of the Catholic Church, who approached him with the idea of painting the stigmatization of Saint Francis for a modern church designed by the architect Renzo Piano. For an interpretation of the *Abstract Picture (Rhombus)* and an interpretation of religious themes in Richter's work see Robert Storr, *Gerhard Richter: Doubt and Belief in Painting* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2003), 139-149.

5 Gerhard Richter, "Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, 2006," in *Writings*: 1961-2007, edited by Dietmar Elger and Hans Ulrich Obrist (New York: DAP, 2009), 525.

6 Richter, "Notes for a Press Conference, 2006," in *Writings*, 518.

7 There are many examples of modern and contemporary artists who contributed to a religious space without following or seeking any devotional tradition. See, for instance, Louise Nevelson's chapel in New York or Fernand Legér's window cycle in Audincourt.

8 The sociologist Graham Howes observes that while in many places, particularly in England, "public observance is contracting, church, and especially cathedral, *visiting* is expanding," as they "become sites of essentially *secular* pilgrimage." Graham Howes, *The Art of the Sacred*: *An Introduction to the Aesthetics of Art and Belief* (London and New York: Tauris, 2007).

siders the window as a "membrane" for the transubstantiation of the material into the spiritual.[9] Richter, however, has always been of two minds about the capacity of abstraction to manifest spiritual content. In the late 1990s he confessed in an interview with Mark Rosenthal that he was "less antagonistic to 'the holy', to the spiritual experience [and that today] we need that quality."[10] On the other hand, in an earlier conversation with art historian Benjamin Buchloh, Richter described his abstract works as, "[a]n assault on the falsity and the religiosity of the way people glorified abstraction, with such phony reverence."[11] Hence, even if Richter grants that we need a "spiritual" quality in life, it is speculative to suggest that his abstractions are gateways to the "spiritual," whatever this word might mean. Dorotheé Brill's argument is more elegant, but infers a debatable desire in Richter "to create an image of something that we cannot picture, since it is beyond the limits of our sense experiences [and] Richter's conclusions regarding the nonrepresentable nature of the divine arise not—or not only—from spiritual insight but from [the] preoccupation, for decades now, with the nature of pictures and their limits."[12] Now, the problem of how to figure the unfigurable runs throughout the visual arts in the twentieth century. From Kazimir Malevich (1879-1935)'s investigations of the fourth dimension to Harold Rosenberg's definition of Barnett Newman (1905-1970) as a "theologian of nothingness,"[13] the obsession with what exceeds the limits of our sense experience has been a preoccupation for many twentieth-century artists (Figure 4). However, if we take into consideration the window's compositional strategy and Richter's writings, this window does not share much of this preoccupation. Hence, we must be more specific in explaining if and in which way this abstract window refers beyond itself.

The making of the window is heterodox. Richter found inspiration in his chance-generated *Color Charts*, which he produced between 1966 and 1974 (Fig. 5). As Richter explains, the use of randomly chosen colors in the *Color Charts* was meant to create "meaningless forms."[14] Art historian Robert Storr has correctly noted that "[the *Color Charts*] set aside the issue of composition, and contained and suppressed gesture in favor of a blandly impersonal facture [...]."[15] Less an expression of their own "self-sufficiency" or of any form of Greenbergian modernist narrative, Richter's abstractions actually resist painterly expressivity and subjectivity.[16] Likewise, computer software arbitrarily generated the window's colorful hues. The accidental color relations produced by the software and the rigid grid helped Richter avoid any unintended figures or repeated pattern.[17] In both *Color Charts* and the window, the chance-based process and Richter's sublimation of his hands-on involvement favor the impersonal and the neutral. The generation of early abstract painters, like Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) or Hilma af Klint (1862-1944), rested on the Romantic assumption of the self-expression of the subject and of a spiritual realm beyond the material contingency of the artwork (Figures 6 and 7). On the contrary, Richter's compositional strategy works to deny individuality by using a mechanical, impersonal, chance-based style.[18] Similarly, art historian Benjamin Buchloh has already commented on Richter's window as "aleatory chromatic constellations" characterized by a dialectic of structural "confinement" and the freedom of "random chromatic distribution."[19] Buchloh's valuable insights, however, leave the philosophical, theological, and socio-historical implications of this dialectic unclear.

9 For a discussion of Mennekes's interpretation see Jonathan Koestlé-Cate, *Art and the Church: A Fractious Embrace. Ecclesiastical Encounters with Contemporary Art* (London and New York: Routledge 2016), 79-81.

10 Richter, "Interview with Mark Rosenthal, 1998," in *Writings,* 331.

11 Richter, "Interview with Benjamin Buchloh, 1986," in *Writings*, 169.

12 Dorothee Brill, "That's as Far as it Goes," in *Gerhard Richter Panorama*, edited by Mark Godfrey and Nicholas Serota (New York : DAP, 2011), 253-254.

13 For a relevant discussion of Rosenberg's definition see Mark C. Taylor, *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 90. For more about the essentialist traits of early abstract art and the influence of the fourth dimension see Mark A. Cheetham, *The Rhetoric of Purity: Essentialist Theory and the Advent of Abstract Painting* (Cambridge, New York; Cambridge University Press 1981) and Linda D. Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and the Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* (London, England and Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press 2013).

14 Hal Foster, *The First Pop Age: Painting and Subjectivity in the Art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter, and Ruscha* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 179.

15 Storr, *Gerhard Richter: Doubt and Belief in Painting*, 89.

16 The same might be said about Richter's gestural abstractions: a "strange mechanicity […] does govern the facture of his abstractions no less than of his representations" and demonstrates a "new order of needless and meaningless' design." Foster, *The First Pop Age,* 183-184.

17 For a discussion of Richter's commission and his "compositional" strategy see also Koestlé-Cate, *Art and the Church*, 79-80. For the only monograph-length study of Richter's window see: Museum Ludwig and Metropolitankapitel der Hohen Domkirche Köln, *Gerhard Richter — Zufall, das Kölner Domfenster und 4900 Farben / The Cologne Cathedral Window, and 4900 Colours*, with essays by Stephan Diederich, et al. (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2007).

18 As Richter declared in 1966: "I pursue no objectives, no system, no tendency; I have no program, no style, no direction. [...] I like the indefinite, the boundless; I like continual uncertainty." This statement is a perfect example of a postmodern "poetic" that could be compared to Fredric Jameson's characterization of "postmodernism:" "The great modernisms were […] predicated on the invention of a personal, private style, as unmistakable as your fingerprint [...] Yet today […] this kind of individualism and personal identity is a thing of the past; that the old individual or individualist subject is 'dead'." For Richter's passage see: Storr, *Doubt and Belief in Painting* 60. For an introduction to postmodernism see Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983-1998* (London, New York: Verso, 1998). For a discussion of the resistance to the category of subjectivity in modern art see Jonathan Fineberg, *Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall 2000), 206 and 294.

19 Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Gerhard Richter: Cologne Cathedral" in *Artforum* 46 (4) (2007): 306-309.

It is true that around the year 2000 Richter made some references to his own growing interest in religion,[20] but at the same time Richter himself resists spiritualistic or quasi-mystical interpretations of his work and favors its labor-made quality and simple "beauty." In an interview with curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist, Richter said:

> […] with the cathedral window we're talking about something quite concrete, something real [...] any supplementation with modern art often comes across as inhibited, false, silly or kitsch. In order to avoid this danger, I have taken the place as it is: what does the cathedral look like, how is it used? And in so doing, I've avoided wanting anything special. So: no depictions of saints, no message and, in a certain sense, not even art. It was just to be a radiantly beautiful window, as good and beautiful and with as many meanings as I could make it here and now. […] Nothing like [illustrating or depicting]. Simply this very simple design, realized optimally.[21]

In this statement, Richter reveals at least three major objectives: first, to neutralize any possible association with early abstract art; second, to discourage any symbolic meaning for his work; finally, to emphasize the window's significance not as art, but as labor capable of producing a simple, beautiful experience. But why is Richter so concerned in stressing the beautiful quality of his work, undermining the window's value as art, and resisting any attempt to give it meaning? A first possible reply would take Richter at his word. The window simply provides a beautiful experience, since it is deprived of any iconographic representations or intentions thanks to the random-process escamotage. Therefore, it renders any interpretative account simply redundant. A second reply says Richter's statement has more specific, but not clearly stated, ambitions, which, if we understood them, might allow us to grasp the logic of this window in a more sophisticated way.

We need to keep in mind that the random-process of the software program aroused the ire of Cologne's Archbishop, Cardinal Meisner. What disturbed the Cardinal Meisner was not the window's abstraction as such, but its computer-generated arbitrariness. For the Archbishop, this compositional subjection to chance failed to reflect the spirit of its Christian context.[22] Now, as puzzling as might appear, the Archbishop's interpretation is revelatory when considered within a broader context. Such context will help make sense of what Buchloh implies about the window's dialectic of confinement and freedom of "random chromatic distribution."

Let's consider philosopher Jürgen Habermas's definition of religion: "Every religion is originally a 'conception of the world' or a 'comprehensive doctrine' in the sense that it claims the authority to structure a form of life in its entirety."[23] Now, if every religion is a meaningful conception of the world, Richter's meaningless, random form makes us consider the modern impossibility of detaching a sense of the sacred from skepticism, belief from doubt. This window manifests in its sensuous forms not only the seductive beauty of colorful lights but also the changed conditions of modern religious belief—that is, a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged to one in which God faces the possibility of not-meaning.[24] Indeed, the random juxtaposition of colors in Richter's work represents the changed conditions of modern religious belief, capturing the forced coexistence of faith and doubt, meaning and meaninglessness that exists for believers.

But we can also adopt a less apocalyptic, postmodern stance and read this window in a different light, that is, by considering the place of religion in the modern world. Again, the logic of the window becomes more intelligible if we consult Habermas:

> Under the circumstances of the secularization of knowledge, of the neutralization of state authority, and of the generalized freedom of religion, religion has had to give up this claim to interpretive monopoly and to a comprehensive organization of life. The conception of tolerance in liberally constituted, pluralistic societies demands that believers recognize that they must sensibly reckon with the continued existence of dissent in their dealings with nonbelievers, as well as with those of other faiths. And the same recognition is demanded, within the framework of a liberal political culture, of nonbelievers in their dealings with believers.[25]

My second argument, which draws on this passage from Habermas, suggests that, beyond the sensuous experience of beauty, this window formally materializes the coexistence of religious and secular discourses as a distinctive trait of

20 For example, during an interview in which J. Thorn-Prikker asked him to comment about "the fundamentally religious tenor" in his work, Richter replied: "I sympathize with the Catholic Church. I can't believe in God, but I think the Catholic Church is marvellous. [...] my attitude towards the church had already radically changed, and I had slowly begun to realize what the church can offer, how much meaning it can convey, how much help, comfort and security." Richter, "Interview with J. Thorn-Prikker, 2004" in *Writings*, 471-2.

21 Richter, "Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, 2006," in *Writings*, 525.

22 Koestlé-Cate, *Art and the Church*, 79-80.

23 Jürgen Habermas, "On the relation between the secular liberal state and religion," in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, edited by Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 259.

24 A similar characterization of contemporary religion has been proposed by Jacques Derrida. Derrida's "religion" appears as a religion without God, without certainty and, even without a project (if by "project" we define a path to salvation). For more on forms of postmodern religiosity see Edward Baring, and Peter Gordon, editors. *The Trace of God: Derrida and Religion* (New York: Fordham University Press 2015).

25 Habermas, "On the Relation between the Secular Liberal State and Religion," 259.

modern pluralism.[26] Richter's compositional strategy does not deny the religious, but rather problematizes its existence. Richter's use of a software program might be read as a strategy to avoid any meaningful figuration—for example, the representation of twentieth-century martyrs—as required by the cathedral's commission. But adopting a machine did not help him to create a "meaningless" pattern but instead helped him avoid creating a meaningful representation. In other terms, Richter's window is not strictly "meaningless," but rather not meaningful in the way a religion might claim a "comprehensive organization of life."[27] Richter's window emphasizes in its sensuous shapes not the "meaninglessness" as such, but rather the lack of a strictly referential meaning. In the Cologne Cathedral we find traces of this distinctive form of pluralism in which sacralization and secularization, belief and doubt, face each other and *must* co-exist in the same places. This leaves us to consider: what value is left in the religious sphere once it has been relativized? Perhaps, what is left is a faith without a doctrine in which to place one's faith. Hence, if saintly imageries within traditional stained-glass windows have been an element of a religious dogma, Richter's colored light moves the viewer's attention towards a faith without dogma.[28]

Richter does not acknowledge any of these possible arguments which would help us make sense of his randomly created design. To begin, it well help to consider Richter's idea of beauty. As philosopher Arthur Danto writes, "Of all the aesthetic predicates beauty is the only one that is a value in addition to being a descriptive predicate. Beauty is a value like goodness or truth, and that distinguishes it from *pretty, delicate*, and so on."[29] Thus, Richter's reference to beauty helps him express a quality of his work, without having to address any quality in particular that might make the window controversial for a religious audience and patronage. Beauty is a value and meaning in itself that does not need any further explanation. Therefore, beauty helps Richter escape from further questions about the meaning of his window. But, the reference to beauty provides only a partial understanding of this object which, as I am trying to argue, must be read as part of the historical process of secularization, that is, the reduction of religious beliefs to an option, and not a certainty.[30]

Now, there is at least another important argument implicit in Richter's statement which we must consider in order to make sense of his work. Richter's references to a simple design, "realized optimally," lacking a "message" and, in a certain sense, not even "art," allows him to render this work unique and exceptional within his own artistic career. But why is this so important for Richter? Because in the eyes of the Art World any mixture of art and religion goes against the grain of the history of modern art which is, among other things, the history of the emancipation of art from external authorities. Without any reference to the long history of the "autonomization of art" it is hard to make sense of this window and Richter's statements. To explain briefly, what we differentiate today as art and religion had been for a long time indistinguishable. The process of the "autonomization of art," as studied by a significant number of scholars, is a phenomenon that began roughly during the Renaissance for a variety of reasons, including the rise of the status of the artist, the expansion of the art market, the diminishment of artists' guilds, the progressive institutionalization of the discipline of art history, and so on.[31] As Peter Bürger points out in his *Theory of the Avantgarde*, an autonomous idea of art was inconceivable for the "Sacral Art" and for

26 For more on religious pluralism see José Casanova, "The Karel Dobbelaere lecture: Divergent global roads to secularization and religious pluralism" in *Social Compass*, Vol. 65 (2), (2018): 187–198 and Jürgen Habermas, "The Resurgence of Religion: A Challenge to the Secular Self-Understanding of Modernity," Fall 2008 Castle Lectures, Yale University, New Haven, CT, October 6-13.

27 I owe a debt of gratitude to my colleague and friend Lisa Gulesserian for this observation.

28 Crucial for my arguments here have been Richard Shiff's suggestions on how to interpret the category of "meaninglessness" and, in particular, his consideration that "the true test of faith is to have faith without relying on a doctrine" (personal communication, May 21, 2019).

29 It is questionable that "beauty" is the *only* aesthetic predicate that is a "value" and "descriptive" at the same time. For "beauty" is an historical category that changes over time. Moreover, for some people "naturalness" might be also considered as a descriptive predicate that is also often considered as a "value." Nevertheless, it is also true that in our own historical time "beauty" can be adopted without any further qualification in order to express a value. For a discussion see Arthur Danto, "The Art Seminar" in *Art History versus Aesthetics*, edited by James Elkins (New York: Routledge, 2006), 52.

30 The changed conditions of belief in the modern world have been famously theorized by the philosopher Charles Taylor. For a discussion see Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

31 For a brief but incisive summary of the relation of art and religion from an art historical perspective see Robert L. Nelson, "Art and Religion: Ships Passing in the Night?" in *Reluctant Partners: Art and Religion in Dialogue*, edited by Ena Giurescu Heller (New York: The Gallery at the American Bible Society, 2004), 101–120. See also James Elkins, *On The Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

the "Courtly Art" with their cultic purposes.[32] Now, for the contemporary Art World, every art form that goes against this history of the emancipation of art from cultic purposes is regressive. Hence, the need for Richter to minimize any "meaning," "message," even the presence of "art." Only within this historical, theoretical context, can we understand the paradoxical adoption of meaningless forms, Richter's reference to the category of beauty, and Richter's denial of artistic choice or expression. But why paradoxical? The reference to beauty and the randomizing software allows Richter to preserve that modern capacity of self-determination, that is, to acquire a set of constitutive values different from those obtained in religious and ethical domains.[33] In this way, Richter's preserves an "autonomous," that is, a strictly modern quality in his work. Indeed, beauty itself is a classic modernist category for approaching art. On the other hand, Richter undermines any artistic quality of his work because of its controversial location and, therefore, feels the need to reduce his window to simple craftsmanship, to a "very simple design, realized optimally," and finally, to "not even art."

Richter's own statements and the interpretations of art scholars do not make us fully consider the arguments that I have tried to articulate. Obviously, we could be satisfied with explanations about the sensuous experience of beauty or about correspondence with a transcendental content if we agreed that the "primacy of the reader" (that is, the autonomous and subjective interpretation provided by a viewer) is more valuable than the dialectical relation between object and subject, and their precarious coexistence.[34] My point is that addressing this work only through the category of beauty or a "spiritual" content annihilates its place in a historical context, its compositional strategy, and the specificity of its location.

In an interview that is revealing for the interpretation I'm offering here, Richter told Buchloh:

> If I now think of your interpretation of Mondrian, in which pictures can partly be interpreted as models of society I can see my abstracts as metaphors in their own right, pictures that are about a possibility of social coexistence. Looked at this way, all that I am trying to do in each picture is to bring together the most disparate and mutually contradictory elements, alive and viable, in the greatest possible freedom. No Paradises.[35]

Similarly, I see this abstract window as a metaphor in its own right for the complex coexistence of the secular and the religious, the doubtful and the meaningful, unbelief and belief in our own time.[36]

Even a ray of light exists under the pressure of historical transformation and the "Light" that once entered a Gothic Cathedral is not necessarily the same light which permeates these religious spaces today (Figure 8).[37] Light may refer to sensory experience; it may be a religious metaphor in that Light can be a vehicle by which God manifests His presence in the world. Light may also be the Enlightenment's metaphor of choice in that knowledge is "light" and morality is a guiding lamp. Richter's work demonstrates that "Beyond the Light" there is not non-light, but *light*—that is, a sort of faith that

32 For the dissociation of art from the praxis of life see Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). I cannot fully develop this idea here, but I have begun to notice a parallel displacement of religions from the "public sphere" and the separation of art from the praxis of life. As anthropologist Talal Asad posits, pre-Enlightenment Christian theologians did not formulate a distinction between "speculative" and "practical" religious practices because, in addition to manifesting "participants' interior beliefs," religious practices "were means of producing truths, [...] creating virtuous individuals and defining religious communities." The Enlightenment's separation between "speculative" and "practical" elements of religion motivated the expulsion of religion as *a thing of this world* and the transference of religion to a strictly *sui generis*, otherworldly realm. I believe that both arguments—the separation of art from religion and the internal schism within the religious between "speculative" and "practical" elements—are part of a broader project that Jürgen Habermas calls "diremption" [*Entzweiungen*], that is, the process of specialization, differentiation, and autonomization of spheres of knowledge, a process which was foundational in the development of modernity. For the concept of "Diremption" see Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. *Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, MASS: MIT Press 1990), 19. For the differentiation of the spheres of knowledge see also Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Ben-Habid, "Modernity versus Postmodernity" in *New German Critique*, No. 22, Special Issue on Modernism (Winter, 1981): 3-14. For a summary of Asad's analyses of the distinction between "speculative" and "practical" religious practices see Derek Peterson and Darren Walhof, editors, *The Invention of Religion*: *Rethinking Belief in Politics and History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 3-4.

33 This is an argument that has been noticed by Max Weber in his *Economy and Society*: "the more art becomes an autonomous sphere […] the more art tends to acquire its own set of constitutive values, which are quite different from those obtaining in the religious and ethical domain." Max Weber, "The Tension between Ethical Religion and Art." In *Economy and Society*. *An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 608.

34 For a discussion of the "primacy of the reader" see: Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, translated by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 142-148.

35 Gerhard Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting*: *Writings 1962-1993*, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1995), 166.

36 In this perspective, this abstract window is, *to a certain extent*, a metaphor for Richter's whole career. Storr observes that "The drama of Gerhard Richter's artistic life has consisted of repeated encounters with totalizing systems of thought that dictated how he should conduct himself and what his painting should be. First, these ideological mandates were issued by authoritarian political regimes. By the time he had achieved art-world recognition in the late 1960s, they issued from the avant-garde in whose midst he had landed." The window's neutralizing content actually presents a master narrative in Richter's work. For the quoted passage: Storr, *Gerhard Richter: Doubt and Belief in Painting*, 83.

37 Richter has provided conflicting statements about the role of light in his work. As reported by Foster, Richter says, "The central problem in my painting is light." But in *Writings* he also says, "I was never interested in light. Light is there and you turn it on or you turn it off, with sun or without sun. I don't know what the 'problematic of light' is." Foster, *The First Pop Age,* 199 and Richter, "Moma Interview with Robert Storr, 2002," in *Writings*, 404.

has not an "assured credal object" but instead resembles an "open-ended but risky promise."[38]

Referring to Richter's abstract paintings, Kaja Silverman has noted: "Although they do not make any concessions to figuration, one cannot stand for very long in front of them without beginning to see things […] *they invite us to search within them for phenomenal forms*."[39] The same might be said for the Cathedral's window. Richter asks us to search for "phenomenal forms." But the "unfigurable," the "ineffable" within this window is of a political and existential kind—it has to do with the spiritual and transcendental, but only if we humble our notion of the transcendental, interpreting it in a more ordinary way. What is spiritual in this window, probably, is a quest for meaning where meanings cannot be taken for granted anymore. Perhaps, Richter wants to remind us that God and beauty are only different names for something with the power to undermine meaninglessness, a threat which existed as much for the middle ages as it does for us today. The "ineffable" that appears and disappears constantly within the phenomenal forms of this window, and within the forms of our existence, is only another name for our perennial duty to understand.

University of Texas at Austin

38 This is also the definition of Derrida's religiosity that is provided by Caputo in Baring and Gordon, *The Trace of God: Derrida and Religion*, 154. In general, my overall argument is influenced by the discussion in postmodern circles. For an overview see: John D. Caputo and Gianni Vattimo, *After the Death of God*, edited by Jeffrey W. Robbins, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

39 Silverman, *Flesh of My Flesh*, 176.

Figure 1. Carl Hertel, Cathedral of Cologne, Interior view of center aisle and vault, black and white photography, 23.9 x 19.8 cm. From ArtStor Public Collections.

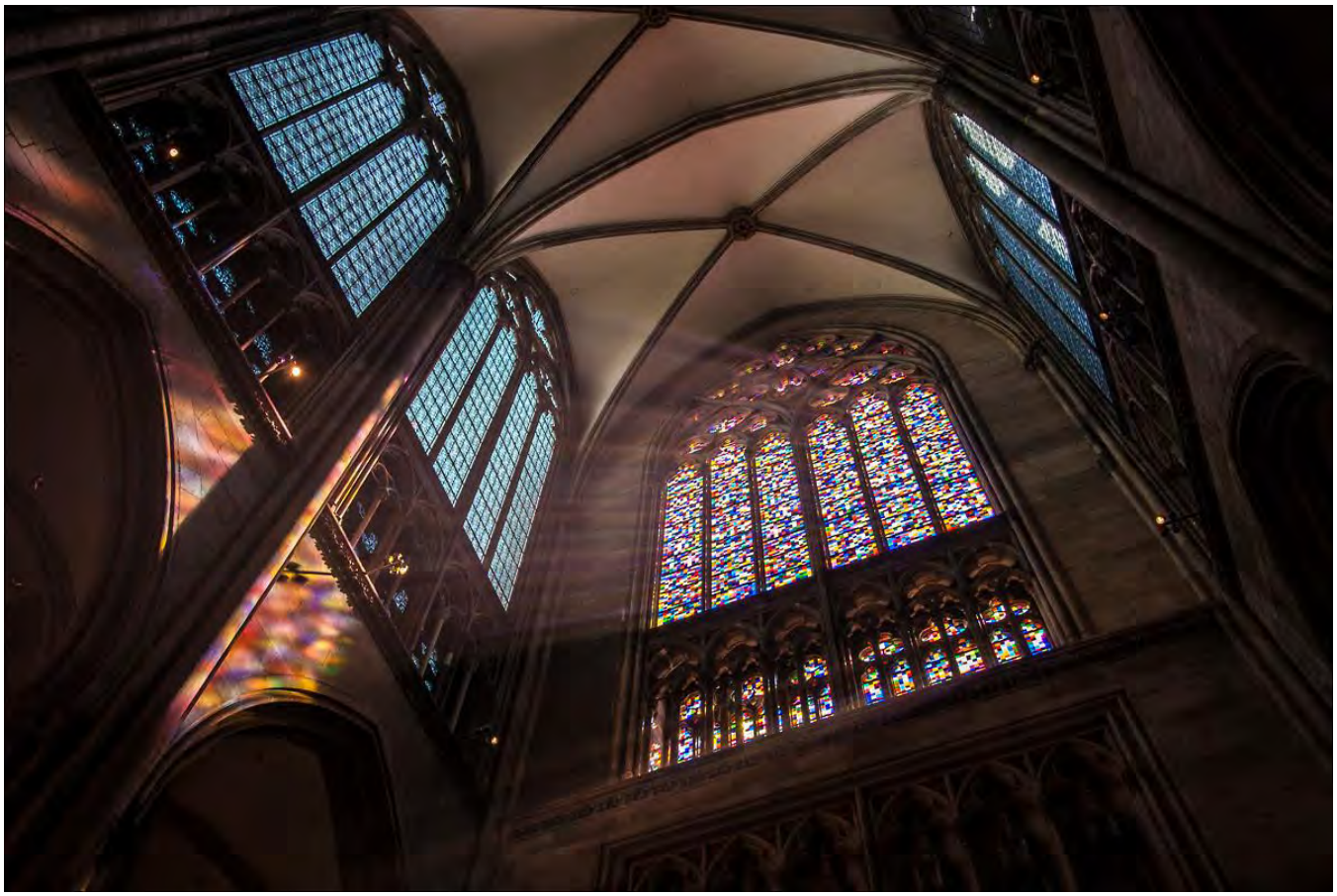


Figure 2. Gerhard Richter, Cologne Cathedral, Stained Glass Window of the South Transept and Quadribbed Vaulted Ceiling, built in 1948 and reglazed in 2007, Cologne, Germany. Photo credit: Frank Krumbach.

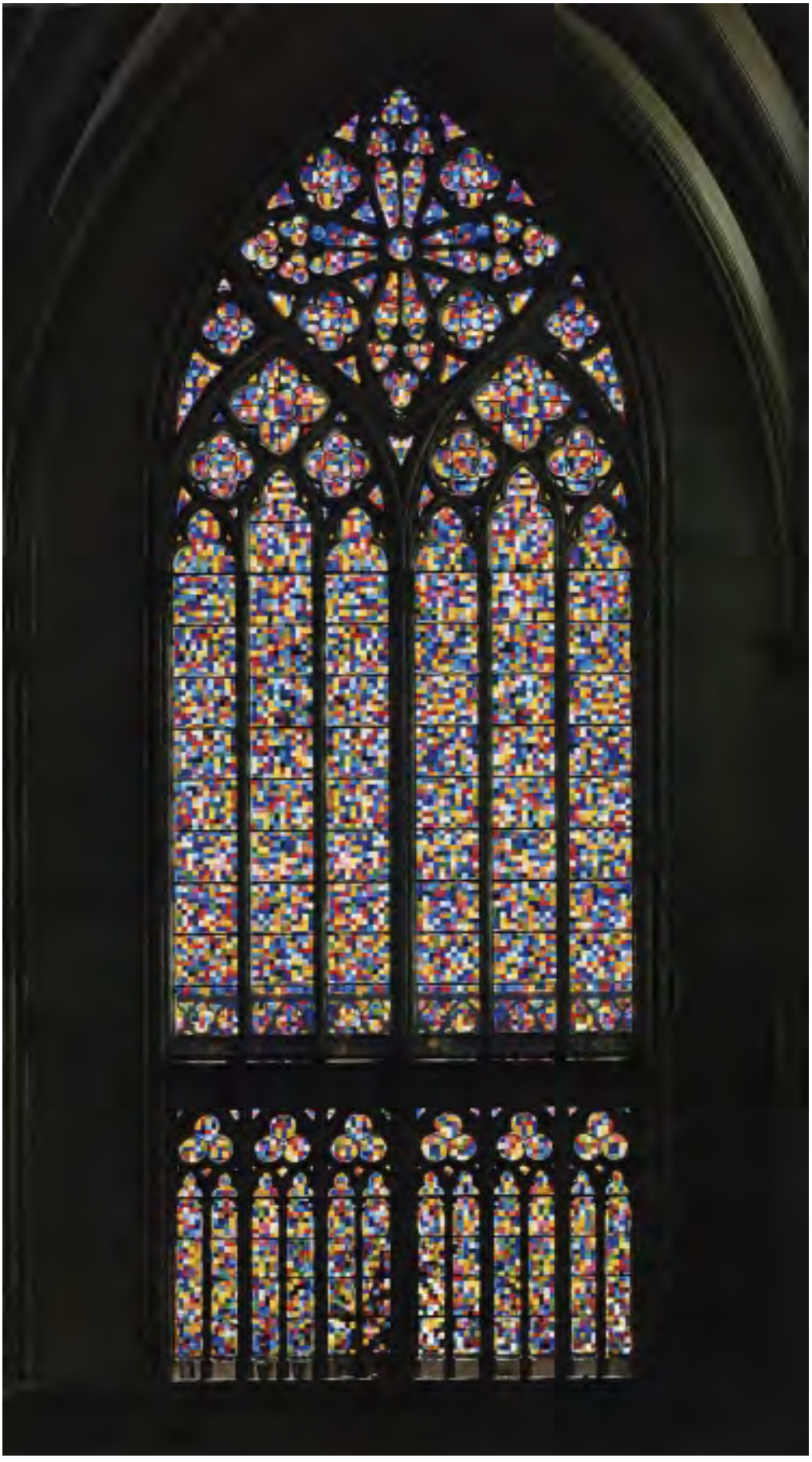


Figure 3. Gerhard Richter, Cologne Cathedral, Stained Glass Window of the South Transept and Quadribbed Vaulted Ceiling, Built in 1948 and reglazed in 2007, Cologne, Germany. Photo credit: Frank Krumbach.

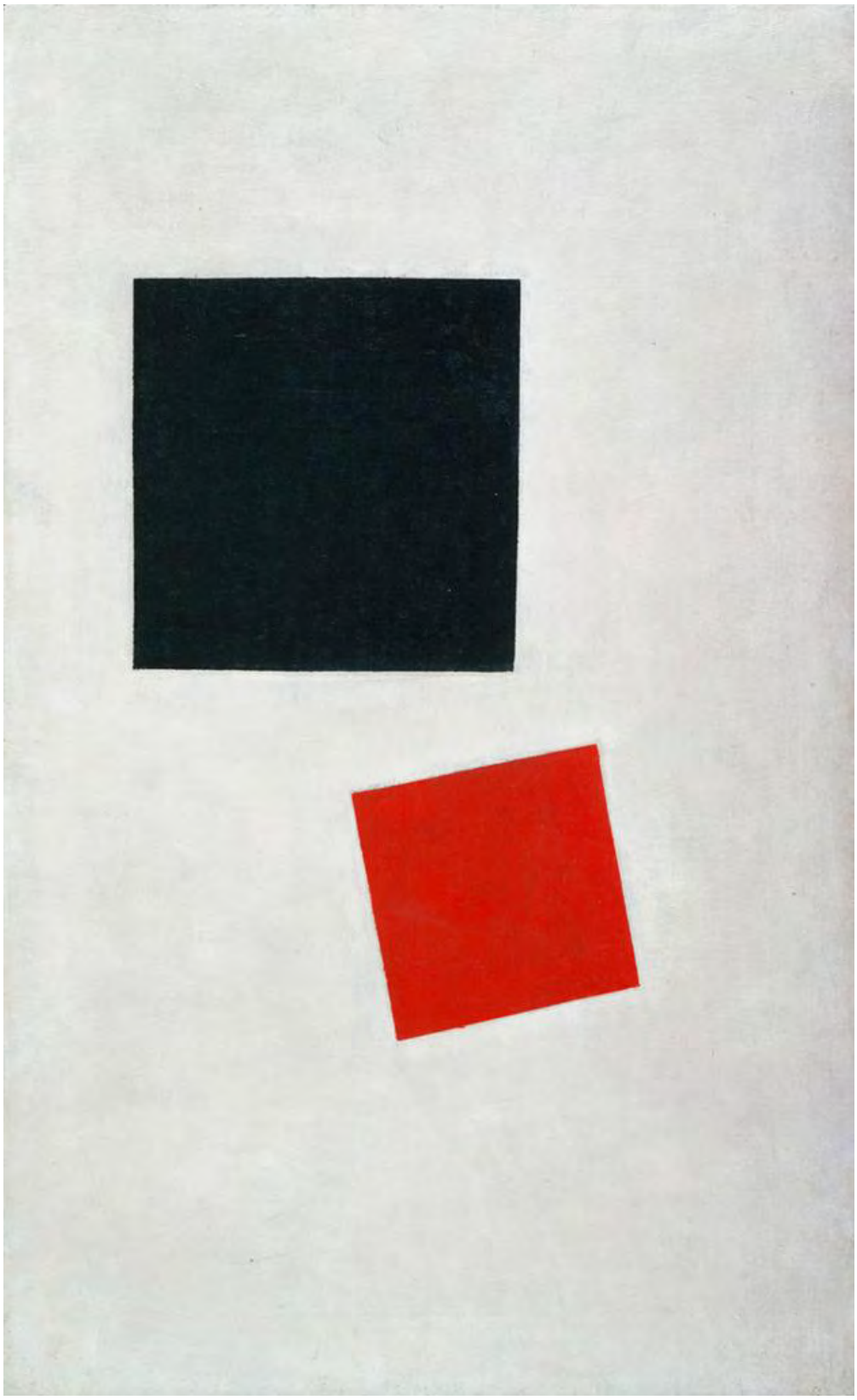


Figure 4. Kazimir Malevich, *Painterly Realism. Boy with Knapsack - Color Masses in the Fourth Dimension*, 1915, oil on canvas, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. From The Museum of Modern Art: Painting and Sculpture Collection.

Figure 5. Gerhard Richter, *4096 Colours*, 1974, 254 cm x 254 cm, Lacquer on canvas, © Atelier Gerhard Richter 2019.

Figure 6. Wassily Kandinsky, *Black Lines*, 1915, Oil on canvas, 51 x 51 5/8 inches (129.4 x 131.1 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, by gift. © 2018 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

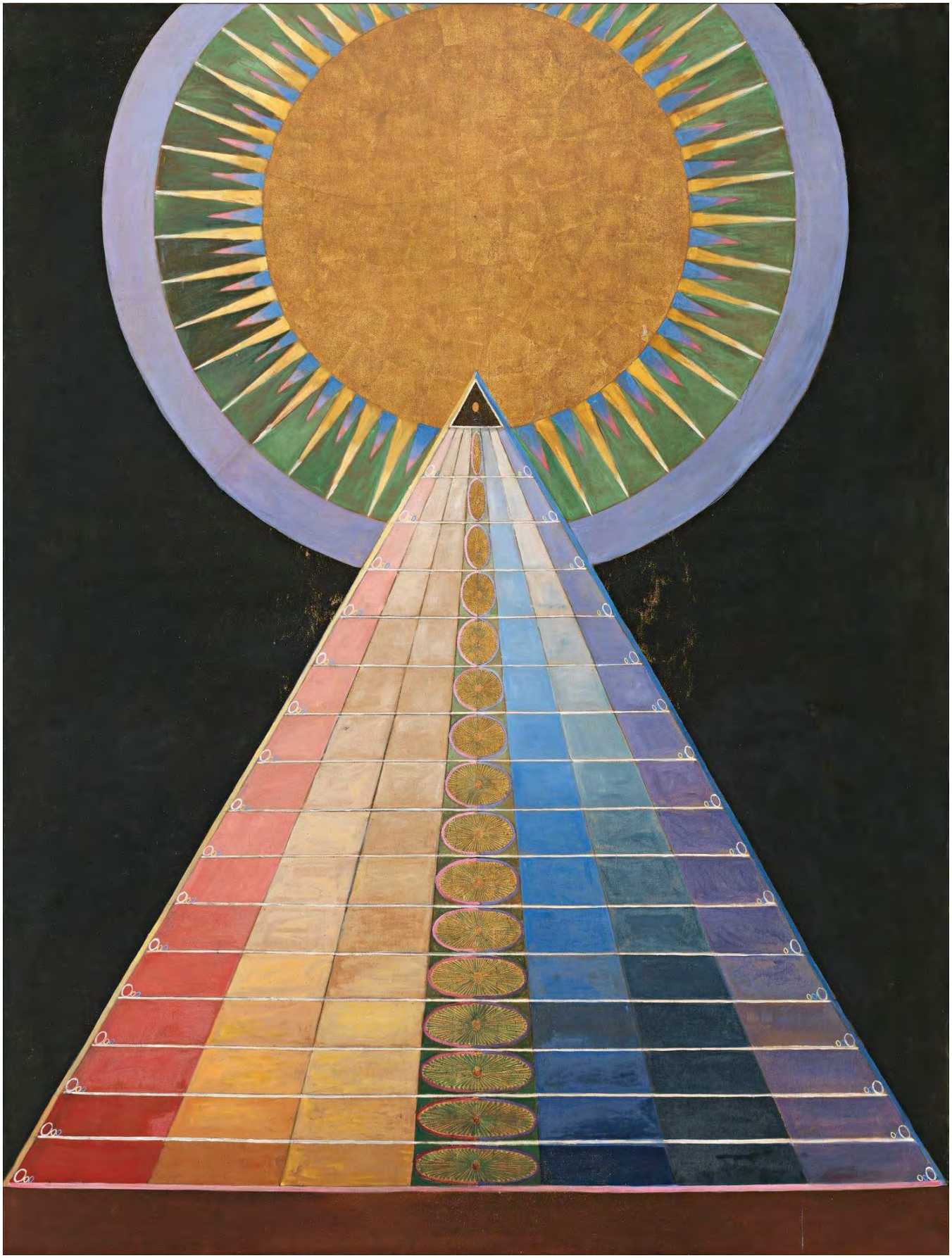


Figure 7. Hilma af Klint, *Group X, No. 1, Altarpiece, from Altarpieces*, 1915, Oil and metal leaf on canvas, 93 1/2 × 70 7/10 in, 237.5 × 179.5 cm.
© Hilma af Klint Foundation.

Figure 8. Gerhard Richter, Cologne Cathedral, Stained Glass Window of the South Transept and Quadribbed Vaulted Ceiling, Built in 1948 and reglazed in 2007, detail, Cologne, Germany. Photo credit: Frank Krumbach.

Injection versus Extraction: Contemporary Chinese SEA in Context Transformations

Yue Ren

Socially Engaged Art (SEA) is a conventional yet emerging phenomenon at the broadest level. On one hand, art practices stimulated by and generated from social issues have taken a vital role along the development of modern and contemporary art, as we can now hardly indicate a single artwork that stands by its pure aesthetics; such situation only intensifies in the era of globalization, urbanization and information-explosion. On the other hand, while clusters of art practices appropriating and rebinding the social reality, a much longer list of analogous terminologies including public art, community art, participatory art, and activism art, are still enriching and complicating the concept SEA in the realm of interdisciplinary scholarship.

SEA and site-specificity are usually tied together in both theory and practice. In her impactful article "One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specificity," Miwon Kwon addresses crucial facets of site-oriented art practices, which are still valued in today's academic debates on SEA. In Kwon's spectrum, site-oriented practices are "not separated but open to social, economic, and political pressures"; this claim presents one of the core values of SEA, which in general weights process over products.

The connection between space and social events might be more easily detected given that site and space are sometimes exchangeable. Immersed by today's globally intertwined social-political realities, artists tend to cast their energies to more concrete sites instead of working between the ceiling and floor of an alienated studio. Each working site serves as a unique locale with its own history and ecology, providing the art practitioners with distinct resources as well as constraints. Complexity fabricated by natural environment (historical and geographical), local politics (governmental and consuetudinary), and public encounters (planned and spontaneous) will demonstrate their bidirectional potentials depending on differently-triggered scenarios, for which reason artists are always seeking a mechanism to work outwards and inwards simultaneously: while intervening the "elsewhere" to experience situational shifts, they also explore more of themselves—personal ways of feeling the changing environment, creative strategies to react to the changes, and professional visions revealed by those reactions.

Because of the aesthetic and presentable qualities rooted in their practices, artists will often return to the institutional contexts with their on-site experience. That said, artists working with social materials usually perform within two sets of apparatuses: the primary locales and the institutional spaces. Art then becomes the intervening medium and switching points during the transforming process, while the concept of site-specificity also needs an expansion: referring to both physical environment and relational nodes, it now involves entangled social forces as well as the artists' own strategic shifts. Similarly, critiques on SEA will better be unfolded through multiple dimensions with a more cautious stance.

Under the SEA genre, the Bishan Commune Project (2011-2016) and Qiuzhuang Project (2012-2015) are two concurrent practices in China that copiously demonstrated the multiple transformations mentioned above.

Initiated by Chinese curators and culture activists Ou Ning and Zuo Jing, Bishan Commune Project was an art-driven rural reconstruction plan implemented in Bishan village, which used to be a part of the ancient Huizhou area of Anhui Province. Once very wealthy in the 11th century thanks to the frequent trading of salt, agricultural goods and handicrafts, Bishan is nowadays left behind by the nation's unceasing economy leap and the rapid urbanization pace (Figure 1). Aiming to explore the local-oriented strategy for public life revival in the rural-hollowing era, the curators designed a conceptual system featuring agriculture & handcrafts resurgence and mutual-aid spirit construction amidst the rural community, and invited professionals working in art, design, architecture, literature and film to facilitate this project with their own expertise.

Ruminating the entire plan the year before they literally settled down in Bishan, Ou Ning had filled out an entire Moleskin notebook with his inspirations, reading notes and design illustrations, some of which eventually formed a visual system for Bishan, consisting the commune logo and member's uniform. Combining two capital letters R and A standing for "Ruralism" and "Anarchism" respectively, the logo looks neat and concise, leaning close to the socialism/collectivism aesthetics with green and magenta background colors (Figure 2). Heavily illustrated, this journal bundled excerpts of renowned manifestations and scholarly works in fields of agriculture, residential and public space design, political studies, as well as the local history and cultural traditions of Bishan village for future reference. Entitling the notebook "How to Start Your Own Utopia," Ou Ning seemed to be confident of the project's feasibility and promising results at the first place.

In 2011, the curators and their colleagues planned Bishan Harvestival (碧山丰年祭) to stimulate the "previously declining public cultural life" in Bishan. "Harvestival" by term combined "harvest" and "festival," conveying the curators' intention to reactivate the agricultural civilization and reestablish the moral-emotional connections among the local community by cultural means. The first Bishan Harvestival featured a rural-themed documentary screening, the traditional Anhui drama (傩戏) performances, and open-air concert led by the local youth (Figure 3). Panel discussions were also organized for visiting artists, musicians, and scholars.

The first Harvestival was considered a recognizable success. Local people were attracted to comprehensive activities and out-of-town attentions aroused. Such achievement could have continued only if the next year's political ambience was not that conservative; in 2012 when the National Election was around the corner, the local government had to cancel a planned photo festival the 7th Yi County International Photo Festival as some proposed works contained "politically sensitive subjects." Under great pressure, the second Harvestival was also turned off as a concurrent event, dimming the future of Bishan Project as a whole. However, according to reminiscence articles from the attendees, we know that some planned programs were not totally suspended but instead went underground, with a few passionate participants staying throughout the process.

Adjacent to the entrance of Bishan village, Bishan Bookstore (碧山书局)served as a prominent part of Bishan Project and keeps contributing to its cultural significance. Its original version was a forsaken memorial temple in typical Hui architectural style. In 2015, Ou Ning's friend Qian Xiaohua bought the entire building and decided to open the 14th sub-branch of Librairie Avant-garde (南京先锋书店) here. According to Ou Ning's design, Bishan Bookstore was refitted to a multi-functional space, containing a reading room, a café, and open storage spaces (Figure 4). During the following two years, reading salons, guest lectures and film screenings were frequently organized in this space, while invited professionals engaging the local community and sharing their knowledge. The ideal scenery in Ou Ning's prospect seemed to come along—although it was not yet a solid commune, the cultural activities had at least broken the ice.

Another intensive program, "Investigation on One Hundred Craftsmen of Yi County" (黟县百工), was moderated by Zuo Jing, the chief editor of Bishan Mook by that time. To learn about the traditional handicraft industry of the Huizhou area on one hand, and to bridge the urban-based designers and the folk artists for potential collaborations on another, the investigation took nearly three years to complete and ended up with a cognominal book (Figure 5). Cataloguing craftsmanship with elaborative texts and photographs, the report allowed the readers to approach the past living textures in Yi County historically and aesthetically.

As Bishan project arousing broader attention and taking more headlines, some critics began to throw opposing opinions. The most noticeable dispute between Ou Ning and Zhou Yun, who was then a Ph.D. candidate of sociology at Harvard University, showed several intriguing points and provoked further debates. After attending a field trip to Bishan village in 2014, Zhou Yun criticized almost vehemently on several social media platforms that Bishan Project not only excluded the local society but also turned it to an enclave of high-profile culture, a garden planted with bourgeois aesthetics. In this sense, Bishan was culturally colonialized by the intellectuals like Ou Ning and Zuo Jing, who, as Zhou Yun assessed, "seek for their own Arcadia using the cultural capital, and address status symbols throughout the process." As more cultural critics and social activists joined their debate, the perplexing situation seemed to put the curators to severe ethical predicaments.

In late 2016, Bishan Project was shut down by the government indefinitely. No one could explain affirmatively how and why the project was sentenced to permanent cease; the villagers I consulted either kept themselves outside this issue or were reluctant to mention it anymore, yet the project's outcome and their attitudes per se should be comprehended from critical aspects.

First of all, there was no stable financial resources to sustain such a comprehensive project. Even if the curators had raised the popularity of Bishan, it was difficult to build a long-lasting effect upon the one-off visits. The conceptual system of Bishan project was also flawed, since in China it is never politically tolerated to refer to anarchism in a leading slogan—Ou Ning crossed the line here. Considering it took time to embrace the value of the intellectuals, the local people was also not satisfyingly motivated to participate the project. Besides, increasing public critiques gave far too much moral crisis to the project and brought great pressure for the local government; the sudden public concentration somehow added to the complexity of local administration, which is distasteful for the authorities.

Although there is still much to battle on the ethical level, we cannot neglect the support from the intellectuals's side. Since Bishan Project was launched, the curators have been bringing the project to different cities for exhibitions, panels, and lectures. Under the summarizing title "Bishan Project," archival materials including working journals, on-site photographs and documentaries were grouped in various formats for different situations, and in some ways more specific sites.

In 2014, Bishan Project was named "Street of Utopia" in the curated show "Cloud of Unknowing: A City with Seven Streets" at Taipei Fine Arts Museum. Re-staging the realistic structure of Bishan village as a U-shaped sloping land (Figure 6), the exhibition showcased archives including Ou Ning's notebook (replica), a documentary reflecting Bishan's local life, and publications of the craftsmanship survey. To encourage the audience's interactions, the curators issued 1000 sets of "Bishan Hours," a temporary currency for objects exchange in the exhibition venue. They also designed a special passport on which the audience can collect 16 stamps, each with a different pattern inspired by the Bishan agricultural goods.

Interestingly, even after Bishan Project was shut down for three years, it was incorporated to the exhibition "Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World" at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2018, in the form of a knowledge map listing the leading concepts and events (Figure 7). The exhibition also more recently travelled to SFMoMA. Such presences marked a continuation of Bishan Project's public read in the clan of Chinese art history, and promoted its participation in the global art ecology as a representative of Chinese SEA practices of the recent decade.

Qiuzhuang Project was devised and implemented by Chinese artist Li Mu (b. 1974) since late 2012. The core idea is that the artist inserting replicas made after renowned artworks selected from the Van Abbemuseum's (Netherland, Eindhoven) collection into different living scenarios of his hometown Qiuzhuang, an undeveloped village located in Jiangsu Province, given the environmental accessibility and compatibility.

After rounds of negotiation with Van Abbemuseum, Li Mu launched the project at the end of 2012, with his cameraman and assistant Zhong Ming documenting the whole working process. He first set out to establish a public reading room called "A Library" (Figure 8), with the expectation that the local people could enjoy some leisure time besides doing farming and manufacturing works. Li Mu had his own book collections distributed to the library, and asked a villager to look after routines within this space. It turned out that "A Library" became a nice space for public gathering; although people came here for chatting more than reading, the continuing conversations helped Li Mu to anchor and dive into the village's normal status.

In March 2013, Li Mu started the reproducing work with his fellow villagers and local workshops. According to Li Mu's plan, the replicas should be placed at different spots through the village, so that people could meet the works as frequent and as casual as possible.

One of fifteen copies of *Untitled, Wall Structure* (Sol LeWitt, 1972) was installed onto a wall facing the main road, while the remaining fourteen were given to local families for free. It turned out that the villagers dealt with these pieces rather creatively: Fan Jingsi put a collection of crafts into each "unit" of the "twisted ladder," since he thought an artwork should be juxtaposed with beautiful things (Figure 9). Li Mu's father had the ladder fixed horizontally to suspend his birdcages, while Li Mu's sister kept another one unmodified, installing it on her stair wall. Li Mu was rather happy to see all these alternations, and considered choices made by the villagers to be important components of his project—an artistically devised and practically reshaped one. "People have their own way to digest, interpret and utilize the artworks. There is no right or wrong." said Li Mu. No matter how aesthetics and practicality combined, each of the options came from someone's fundamental needs or was grounded on personal interests. The villagers' perception of Western art somehow verified Li Mu's principles of selecting the original artworks: they should not have too much precise contents to be incorporated into people's ordinary life with plasticity.

Several videos featuring performances by Yugoslavian artist Marina Abramovic and her partner Ulay (Uwe Laysiepen), including *AAA-AAA* (1977), *Imponderabilia* (1977), *Light/Dark* (1977), and *Rest Energy* (1980), were put to loop screening in a local grocery store run by villager Wang Gaoqi (Figure 10). Li Mu and his assistant also made some flyers to advertise this section, which were in the similar style of other preexisting posters. Local people coming to buy groceries would usually stay for minutes to watch the videos, leaving comments according to their own understanding.

Appreciating art in a professional institution is thought to be more respectful, yet art penetrating into mundane life sometimes brings serendipity with unorthodox interpretations, which also reveal the perspectives of non-regular observers. Li Mu even felt that the dim-lighted grocery store was the best place to show the videos, in which sense his practice has already involved curatorial strategies in representing performance art and its afterlives.

Li Mu was seeking appropriate conditions to reproduce British artist Richard Long's *Wood Circle* (1976-1977, various locations), together with his parents and friends. In the winter of 2013 he finally chose the riverbank for it. Made by tree branches which usually served as firewood, the reproduced version resembled Long's original piece to a great degree: each unit of the circle spread evenly and the whole pattern looked random organized. This trial strikingly noted Richard Long's intention of using natural objects and local materials to (re)forge the artwork, each time "serves as a constant form, always with new content." Li Mu's practice, therefore, continued to introduce new dimensions to the original work, with creation as a tool to unite the local people.

The finished installation was conspicuous due to the color contrast of wood and the snow-covered riverbank, and as time passing the whole piece was incorporated into the land, demonstrating the nature's shaping effects (Figure 11). The completion of Wood Circle also marked the epilogue of all reproducing work, yet Li Mu had obviously gone further than that. At every stage of the project implementation, the artist learned more about the village and its people through different stories told by his local collaborators. The artworks, therefore, became hubs and links between them, without which some valuable conversations would not have opened.

During the execution of Qiuzhuang Project, many friends of Li Mu also paid visits to Qiuzhuang and brought participatory events for the local people as accompanies (Figure 12). While adding to more vigorousness, it seemed that Li Mu's project had stirred up the status quo of the village and put himself into much controversy. Li Mu's sister complained that her younger brother had taken advantage of their ignorance to make art; Li Mu's parents still have no faith in professional artist as a decent occupation with stable income. Li Mu's mother said that all "trifles" brought up by the project had added to her workload which was already very heavy, making it almost unbearable.

Working in mezzanines of multiple misunderstandings and micro-politics was, however, an unavoidable part of SEA practices universally. In every subsection of Qiuzhuang

Project, it was never a mere goal to complete reproducing and installing artworks or to coordinate a public event. A more valuable part was the artist examining his working strategies through all the discussions and unplanned episodes, while enriching his recognition of "art" and adjusting the subsequent tactics. Art itself seems to resign a little from his original intention, while communication and reactions upon uncertainty took a more important role. Li Mu only understood the processual quality of his project after starting to work on-site for quite a while, realizing that the project was not more pedagogical than exploring.

At a later stage, Li Mu set out to make some watercolors to record his working results (Figure 13). Each completed part was depicted by simple lines and transparently bright colors, making the living fragments of the village appear very poetic and inviting. The scenarios became slightly romanticized, greatly contradicting Li Mu's previous recognition of his hometown—brutal, dirty, and frustrating. Footages filming the village's daily activities and the reproducing work were made into a five-hour documentary; Li Mu also neatly filed his diary and correspondences where most reflections of the project were illuminated. These representations interwoven with one another, delineated a typical Chinese village with contemporary art's intervention in flesh and blood.

Through exhibitions, public speeches and panels, those archival materials endowed new appearances to the project and gained it much attention from the domestic and international art world.

In a group exhibition "Reality or –ism" (Xianshi huozhe Zhuyi) in Nanjing, 2013, Li Mu showed ten photographs representing Qiuzhuang's environment with the reproduced artworks installed. Each photograph was covered by a piece of textile, on which the image of selected original work was printed (Figure 14). If interested in a particular work, the audience can uncover the textile and see how its reproduction(s) was displayed in Qiuzhuang. The relationship between the original and the reproduced was also implied by this gesture, and even what is "original" might require a deliberate consideration here.

In September 2015, as the prominent sponsor and long-term cooperator, the Van Abbemuseum released a solo exhibition for the project. The documentary "Qiuzhuang Log" was organized in time order, while the exhibition space was arranged in accordance of this reel: four large screens were organized as rectangular with projectors fixed in different directions above the fenced-up space, each playing the documentary of different seasons (Figures15a and 15b). In this way, the audience would find themselves "wrapped" by the living scenes of Qiuzhuang. Besides, twelve selected watercolor paintings, and the publication A Man, A Village, A Museum (Onomatopee, 2016), were put into a showcase as references. Two speakers playing recorded soundtracks from Qiuzhaung were installed on the outside wall of the exhibition space, reenacting the ambiance of Li Mu's primary working site.

Performance was another pattern to represent Qiuzhuang project. Based on Qiuzhuang project, impressive performance "A Continuous Speech" was presented at Goethe Institute Shanghai (Open Space) in 2016. Two volunteer speakers were employed by this program and got paid for telling the audience about Qiuzhuang Project; each day during the program, the speech contents varied depending on the screening schedule of the documentary and the questions from the audience. It seems that Li Mu kept extending the project, and with every step moved further, he redefined the original work and its representations. A progressive construction of communication was then achieved.

In 2016, local buildings along the main road in Qiuzhuang have been demolished because of the construction plan of a new national road, resulting in the dismantlement of most of the artworks. However, situating itself in an expanded system of contemporary art practice, Qiuzhuang Project demonstrated a strong interest in problem solving, relationship developing, and context transforming/reframing. The reward for the artist will be the reactions from his co-practitioners under each circumstance, be they the professional artists and curators, or the villagers and his family members.

Juxtaposing the two projects which happened at a parallel time with comparable transformations, we could further stage the primary tensions they have negotiated: contextually from the village to institutions, materially from action to archive, and characteristically from the artist identity to some broader social roles. These transformations are tightly integrated, and the reconfigurations and interpretations of "art-work" in different contexts are all the way interactive. Conflicts between the artists' intentions and the external restrictions are unavoidable, but we need to think over in what sense and under what circumstances the collaboration is feasible, concession is acceptable, and sacrifice is desirable. Looking at the comprehensive components of each project, such art-intervened, site/situation-oriented and collaboration-wanted practices have definitely challenged the meaning of "art-work," which no longer pertains to an artificial spectacle appropriating institutional aesthetics, but an organic process casting new lights to the artists' thoughts and labor.

Here is how the injection-extraction dialectics works. When the artists performed the on-site work, they were injecting into the uninformed village with their knowledge and visions, such as the western artworks and theories of rural construction. Simultaneously, entering the real scenes and absorbing another set of living and thinking mode have pushed the artists to explore the social realities at a very specific place, and often through a historical perspective. In their later work at off-site venues, the previous experience was actually extracted from its original context and became the artists' primary materials to build up a new project, which revealed how the artists expected to construct the dialogue between the past and the present, the urban and the rural, and furtherly the east and the west. Represented by multiple exhibitions, the villages are also participating the global mobility with their own characteristics through the artists' endeavors. In this sense, the artists have contributed

to the production of a communicating space, which bridges the local specialty and the outside world.

What bonds the injection and extraction together is the willingness of getting to know, and caring about, the semi-invisible parts of our social ecology. The significance of SEA practices therefore becomes the awareness to the site and the faith in action. And only by paying attention to the exact moment, the very chance where all the potential conditions come in service, could we understand the context under which a strategic choice is made. On another aspect, the emphasis on "entering the scene, approaching the living realities" indicates that we should first learn about the indigenous social complex instead of being so eager to "improve the current condition." While the intention for improvement is good in general, it has fixed the local site onto a linear axis and assumed its backwardness, which indirectly denies the local site's capacity of constructing dialogues with the outside world and promoting an inclusive path for development. This calls for a more cautious standpoint and a fair perspective for scholars and critics to review and sometimes assess the artists' working strategies and "achievements," without missing or isolating any backstage units. To some degree, it might be a more efficient way to approach an alternative understanding of social engagement and site-specificity, and maybe a more responsible phrase could be, situation-specificity.

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Figure 1. Bishan Village, 2019. Photo credit: Yue Ren.

Figure 2. Logo for the "Bishan Commune" in Ou Ning's notebook, 2014. Photo credit: Yue Ren.

Figure 3. Performance at the first Bishan Harvestival. Photo credit: Ou Ning and *LEAP*. Photo credit: Yue Ren.

Figure 4. Bishan Bookstore café, 2019. Photo credit: Yue Ren.

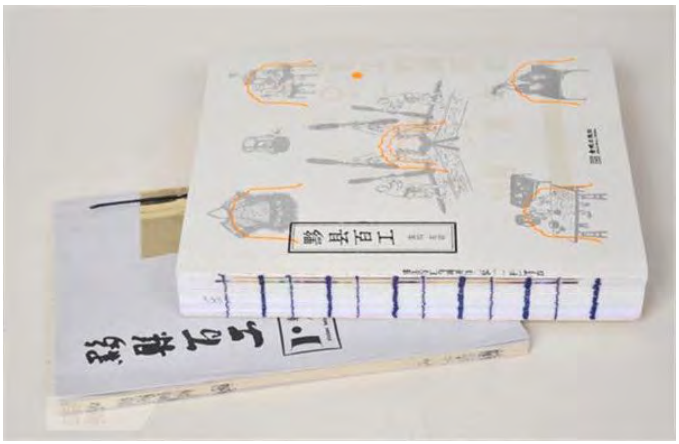


Figure 5. Book cover for *Investigation on One Hundred craftsmen of Yi County*, 2014. Photo credit: Yue Ren.

Figure 6. Bishan Project in the exhibition "Cloud of Unknowing: A City with Seven Streets," Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2014. Photo credit: Yue Ren.

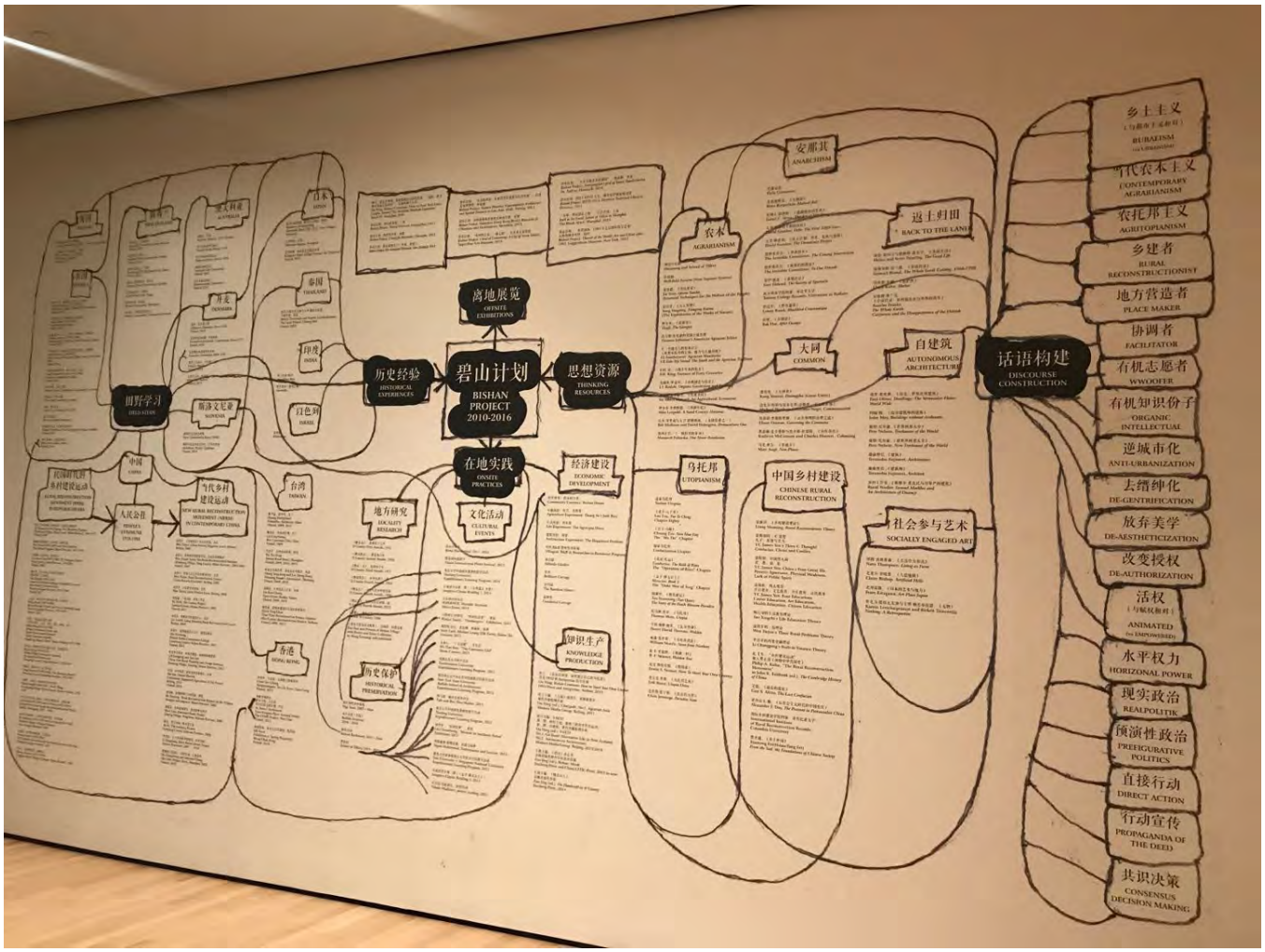


Figure 7. Bishan Project in the exhibition "Art and China after 1989: Theater of the World," Guggenheim Museum, New York. 2018. Photo credit: Yue Ren.

Figure 8. *A Library* in Qiuzhuang. Photo credit: Li Mu.

Figure 9 [*facing page, top*]. Fan Jingsi and his crafts collection with *Wall Structure*. Photo credit: Li Mu.

Figure 10 [*facing page, bottom*]. *Rest Energy* in a grocery store. Photo credit: Li Mu

Figure 11. Reproducing Richard Long's *Wood Circle* with villagers. Photo credit: Li Mu.

Figure 12. Children having a picnic with the visiting artist. Photo credit: Li Mu.

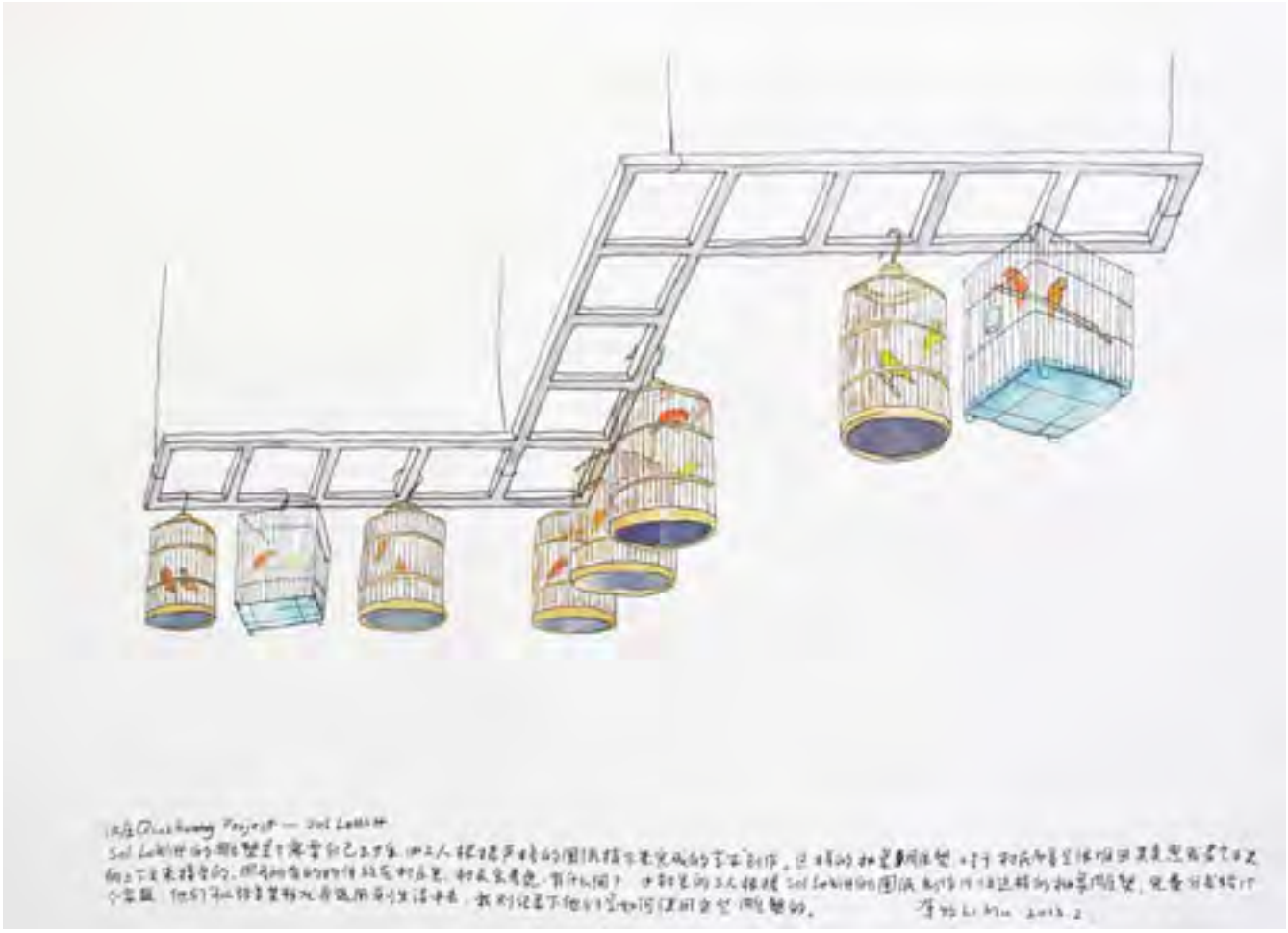


Figure 13. *Qiuzhuang Project*, watercolor on paper, 54 x 39 cm, 2013. Photo credit: Li Mu.

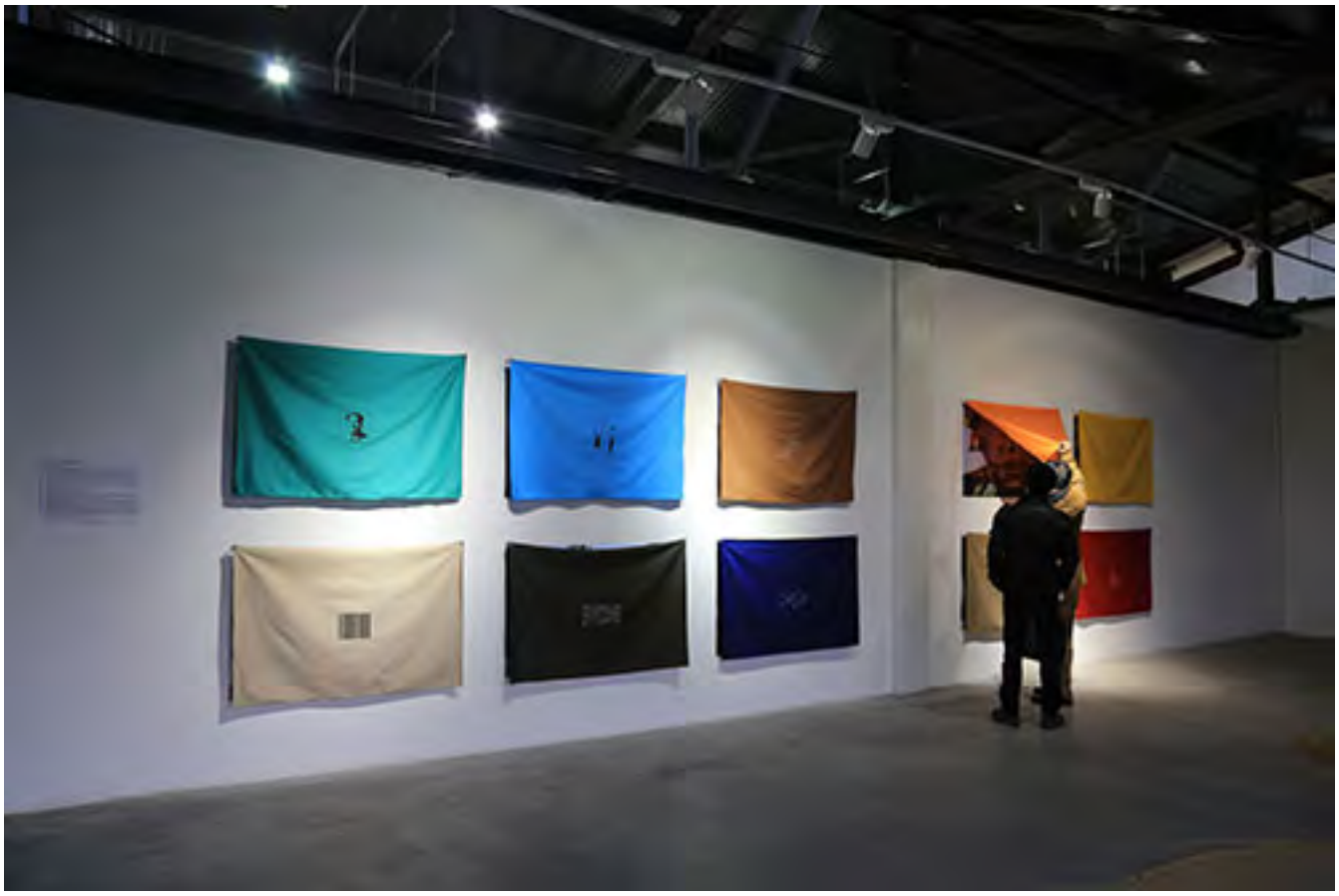
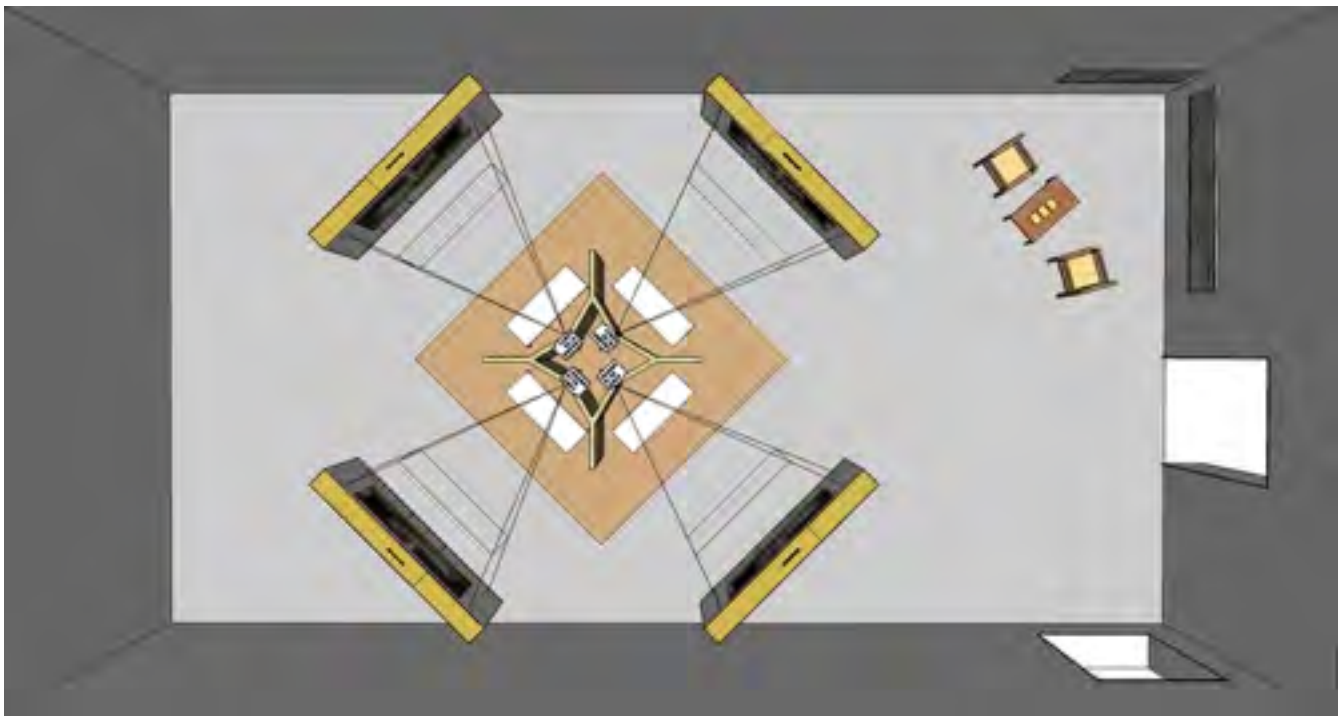


Figure 14. Qiuzhuang Project exhibited in "Reality or –ism," Nanjing Jin-Ying Art Centre, 2013. Photo credit: Yue Ren.



Figures 15a [*above*] and 15b [*facing page, bottom*]. The first spatial design and exhibition scene of *A Man, A Village, A Museum*. Photo courtesy of the Van Abbemuseum.

Beholding Chicano History: Iconography and the Chicanx Movement

Héctor Ramón Garcia

The *Chicano History* mural (Figure 1) is the first chicanx mural produced for a university.[1] *Chicano History* was painted for the University of California Los Angeles Chicano Studies Research Center Library (UCLA-CSRC). At that time, located on the 3rd floor at Campbell Hall. The mural was completed in 1970, about a year after the CSRC was established, and just about two weeks before the August 29th Chicano Moratorium of East Los Angeles. The mural was taken down and put in storage in 1990 when the CSRC was moved to Haines Hall. *Chicano History* was intended to relocate as well but unlike the large walls of the original location of the library at Campbell Hall, Haines Hall is too small to contain the mural so it remained in storage for 28 years.[2] Until 2018 *Chicano History* mural was taken out from the storage, and it was installed at the Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA). The mural traveled with the Crocker Museum's exhibit *Testament of the Spirit: Paintings by Eduardo Carrillo*, since Eduardo Carrillo was one of the collaborators for the mural.

I consider *Chicano History* an ideal mural to expand on the analysis of *form* and *content* considering that it reflects the time in which it emerged: a period of civil disobedience and social unrest in which art, and art making was utilized for social mobilization and people awakening in order to effect social change. According to Ramses Noriega, one of the painters collaborating on *Chicano History,* the mural was intended to be read as a chronological timeline from left to right as the "four eras in la Raza's history" unfold.[3] Starting at the far left with Euardo Carrillo's hand one can observe that the landscape that he painted is full of life. Symbolically depicting the spiritual and fantastic landscape of Aztlán informed by the landscape from Baja California that Carrillo was familiar with since his grandmother was from San Ignacio and he spent much of his time in there.[4] One can observe that Carrillo filled the landscape with endemic species for the American Southwest. On the lower left corner there are various types of cacti as well as reptiles. Above them a river runs through from a waterfall depicted on the middle ground. There are fishes swimming in the river. At one section of the creek towards the middle of the river there is a rabbit jumping across the creek. Opposite to the rabbit there is a deer by the bushes. There are many large birds flying across the open blue sky. I think that all of the particulars for the landscape that Carrillo painted are symbolical of life for the pre-Columbian landscape of Aztlán. There is also the image of a pyramid-like construction towards the center of the composition on the middle-ground. This contrasts with the opposite end of the mural where Saul Solache paints depictions of violence and death. With the details of the endemic species I believe that Carrillo symbolized Aztlán as a consecrated place for life versus the desecration of the landscape after Colonization and Manifest Destiny. Chicanxs found inspiration from diverse Codexes written by the Franciscan monks as narrated by the natives they encountered, such as the Codex Florentino (Sahagún) and the Codex Boturini in which there are accounts for when the Aztecs left the island of Aztlán as commanded by their god *Huitzilopochtli*. They emigrated south changing their name to Mexicas to finally settle in Tenochtitlán in the cycle of the 'new fire,'

1 When I use the term *chicano* is in regards of the context of the time in which that concept empowered politically aware Mexican Americans, specifically during the 1960 Chicano Movement -such as in the title of the mural *Chicano History*. When I use the term *chicanx* is to bring awareness to gender heteronormativity and an attempt to remain inclusive. The power of being able to identify oneself is the most important aspect of this concept. *Chicanidad* is politically charged and socially aware. See Charlene Villaseñor-Black keynote address "Teaching and Writing the Art Histories of Latin American Los Angeles," at the third Pacific Standard Time: Latin America and Latino Art in Los Angeles, 2017. https://youtu.be/gUxOqIJVRPg

2 During archival research at UCLA-CSRC on summer 2019 I visited Campbell Hall and the space where the library was seems greater. The space was sectioned into separate offices for the Linguistics department. The CSRC Library affirms that "the sheer size of [the mural] makes it difficult to display in the current CSRC space" https://guides.library.ucla.edu/csrc/murals.

3 Ramses Noriega in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary." Ramses Noriega explains the different hands that worked on each section representing the different eras of the mural. Sergio Hernandez, another painter for *Chicano History* walked me through the different hands that produced the mural during *Testament of the Spirit* at PMCA.

4 Carrillo not only painted several landscapes similar to the American Southwest of Baja California he also funded a self-sustainable ceramics workshop in San Ignacio. See https://museoeduardocarrillo.org and Celedon, Pedro Pablo, *A Life of Engagement,* documentary on Eduardo Carrillo. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi7QD0Ew-E8.

or the fifth sun.[5] For scholar Gloria Anzaldúa, the imagery and symbolism of our ancestors is still alive in the work of Chicanx artists.[6] This symbolism upon which Chicanx artists elaborate is a strategy to overcome the systematic negation of the Mexican and Chicanx culture in the U.S. which is not only an act of oppression but also an extension of colonialism.

Towards the two central panels of the mural.[7] On the left side depicted on the foreground the monumental images of two *campesinos* standing in profile looking straight ahead towards the right, or the future as the mural unfolds progressively.[8] These two *campesinos*, a man and a woman are intended to represent, according to Noriega, the "Mexican armed revolution… the warrior and the family as the central focus of our people."[9] The male figure is holding what seems to be a Mauser rifle on his right hand while a bullet belt is hanging from his shoulder. There is also a Bowie knife hanging from his waist.[10] They both are standing stoic facing the generational genocide towards the natives of the American continent and their descendants caused by Colonization and Manifest Destiny. The female figure, standing next to him instead of holding a rifle she holds a bundle of corn crops. Right next to her on the background there is the image of a small house and a cornfield which I believe is also meant to represent the family unit and the origins for civilization. The symbolism for corn is widely spread and recognize as the crop for Native peoples: there is the common *sin maíz no hay pais* saying in many Latin American countries including México. These two figures seem to have been filled with humanity contesting the de-humanizing efforts from hegemonical practices of colonial rhetoric. Also, next to her and below the cornfield two other *campesinos* appear to bend over towards the land as if they were working it. This image is very similar to the *Gleaners* painted by Jean-Françoise Millet in the social-realism style, the particular style that influenced the Mexican muralists. However, in this case, these *campesinos* instead of picking up crops they are depicted scavenging human skulls and thus transforming the farming field into a graveyard. The land in itself is very symbolic. The natives, or original proprietors of the land, were removed from their own land and killed or enslaved during the colonial times and later forced to work the land for *hacendados*. In the timeline progression of the mural this represents the period of the 1900 Mexican revolutionary wars.

The image of Emiliano Zapata is depicted unlike in many other murals in existence. The revolutionary hero who later became iconic and a symbol for the Mexican Revolution along Villa, and *la adelita* who later became institutionalized during the new period of *Mexicanidad* after the Mexican Revolution.[11] Zapata who died fighting for "Land and Freedom" trying to establish an Agrarian Reform is commonly known that he claimed that "the land belongs to those who work it." He is depicted laying on the ground dying. One can see that Zapata is in an agonizing death by the gesture of his left arm and hand outstretched towards the viewer while his right hand holds tight to the ground as if reaching for the viewer's empathy.

Right above Zapata's image there is an anthropomorphic apparition that seems to be consuming with fire.[12] This winged male figure is depicted chained by the hands. A snake-like creature threats around his body. I had previously interpreted this figure as referential for ancient mesoamerica cosmogony in regards to *Quetzalcoatl* the god of life who sacrificed himself in order to give life, and for corn to grow for the people to have food. In this sense just like Zapata himself. *Quetzalcoatl* as the twin brother of *Mictlantecutli* has the power to bring the spirit of the warriors who died in battle, and who want to visit the realm of the living in the form of a humming birth. Following this idea, it seems that *Quetzalcoatl* is claiming Zapata's spirit as the warrior who died in battle. During a personal interview Sergio Hernández said that this imagery was meant to represent the phoenix that emerges from the ashes in reference to the spirit of *la raza* who continues struggling and fighting for equality. Although the iconography seems to conflict the rhetoric of the mural the discourse for *La Raza* inspired by the writings of Jose Vasconcelos included the western and native mixture which is reflected in this section.

On the third panel the period for *el movimiento* is represented "in the spirit of a social revolution exposing the vari-

5 Schele, Linda and Julia Guernsey, "What the Heck's Coatépec? The Formative Roots of an Enduring Mythology," in Koontz Rex, Kathryn Reese-Taylor and Annabeth Headrick, *Landscape and Power in Ancient Mesoamerica*. Westview Press: Colorado, 2001., 29-53.; Patrick Johansson, "The Ascension of Mount Coatepetl by Coyolxauhqui and the Centzon Huitznahua: A temple Made of Words," Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2017. http://www.historicas.unam.mx/publicaciones/revistas/nahuatl/pdf/ecn53/1043. [PDF]

6 I include myself as a Mexican with native ancestry living in the United States. Now, after 10 years I can see myself as well as a chicano, inhabiting that third space that Anzaldua positions the state of being in *nepantla*, *ni de aqui ni de allá*.

7 Ramses Noriega attributes this section to Sergio Hernandez in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary." However, during the closing ceremony of *Testament of the Spirit* exhibit Hernandez and I discussed the mural and he mentioned that the only section he painted is the anthropomorphic apparition of a fenix that seems to be consumed by fire while breaking the chains of oppression as discussed later in this paper.

8 There is a conflicting nature on the word *campesino* because it reflects male dominance but I am leaving it as the rhetoric of their time.

9 Ramses Noriega, "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary."

10 I find this very interesting, and I wonder if the artists knew about the history of the Bowie knife. The Texan James Bowie who designed and commissioned the blacksmith James Black to forge a knife that was later to be known as Bowie Knife or Arkansas Toothpick. What is even more interesting is that James Bowie fought and died at the Texan Revolution in 1830. In his honor the Arkansas Confederate 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team depicts a Bowie knife in their insignia to this day.

11 Coffey, K. Mary, *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture*. Duke University Press: Durham & London, 2012.; See especially Adrian Vargas Santiago chapter, "The Evangelio Segun Diego." In the book published for the 80th Anniversary of Rivera's murals at the Institute of Education. *Los Murales de la Secretaría de Educación Pública*. Secretaría de Educación Pública: Ciudad de México, 2018., 191-230. In his essay, Adrian Vargas elaborates on the creation of the image of Zapata as an icon to institutionalize the Mexican identity for *mestizaje*.

12 This is the section that Sergio Hernandez told me he is responsible for painting during our conversation at the closing of *Testament of the Spirit*.

ous issues of the times."[13] There is a fortress depicted on the background with a Mexican flag on it. Right below a group of people is represented at protest. They are depicted dressed as revolutionary farmworkers, the protesters hold banners for Mexican, Mexican-American, and Chicanx struggles. There is a female figure on the far left who holds a "Crusade for Justice" banner, another male figure holds a machete while from behind him a banner of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee emerges from the crowd. There is also a "¡Viva! MECHA" and "¡Viva! La RAZA" banners next to a "¡UNIDOS VENCEREMOS!" large banner held by various individuals. These group of protesters are the embodiment of "a new spirit [that] emanates as Chicanos come forth luchando for justice, peace and truth."[14] The embodiment of *el movimiento* representing the struggle and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement contemporary to the time during the creation of the mural. This group of people could be also interpreted as the inner-directed crowd or of free will from David Reisman's *The Lonely Crowd*.

In Reisman's *The Lonely Crowd* published in 1950, the U.S. society free will or inner-directed subject was shifting to a new state of conformity or other-directed person. Following this postulate for the other-directed crowd within the composition of the mural there is a diagonal line of terrifying marching militarized police depicted in a style very similar to the 1924 Otto Dix *Storm Troopers* directing the eye of the viewer towards the first plane. Immediately after the section of the mural in which the artists are giving back the humanity to the natives who have been dehumanized by hegemony. This side of the mural de-humanizes the embodiment of hegemony. The detail of the U.S. flag with a swastika next to the Los Angeles Police Department on the monster-like figure is a direct protest against the violent militarized police state. This creature is depicted wearing glasses of multiple lenses, with mechanical arms and devouring a person alive. Liberating the head of the human with its fangs and confronting the viewer on the first plane, next to the lying body of Zapata. One can recognize the icon of the Uncle Sam depicted as the terrifying creature that commands the soldiers marching and eating humans. The line of soldiers who are no longer human can be interpreted as the other-directed individual whose conformity attitudes are subjected in this sense to Uncle Sam. This is a direct protest to the violence against Chicanx in U.S. soil, and against U.S. imperialism and war culture, in specific the Vietnam War representing the Chicano men who were dying in vastly disproportionate numbers. This section of the mural is prescient of the Chicano Moratorium of August 29, 1970.[15]

Right next to them, towards the left and in between Zapata and the phoenix apparition there is a representation of a *pieta* in which an elder woman is holding the death body of a younger person. The gesture of the hanging limb and the outstretch head hanging backwards confronts the viewer. There is above them a field with several wood crosses on it representing a burial ground, which is the continuation of the cornfields that became a graveyard on the left section of the mural. Right above them two other figures are represented. A blonde female dressed in red and blind-folded is giving a currency bill – the context of the mural indicates that is a dollar – to the women who is holding the dead body. The other figure next to the blond women is a man dressed as figure of clergy and wearing a mask that is used to symbolize the drama of the theater. The meaning of what these four figures symbolize is a direct condemnation to the capitalist corruption of humanity in which the life of an individual is reified. The death of an individual can be ameliorated by money and the Church puts up on a suffering mask while also being corrupted by capital.

On the right side of the diagonal line formed by the marching troops directs the viewer towards the foreground to a scene of cannibalism; its Saul Solache's "'blond Chicano' eating a mestizo child."[16] He is depicted feasting on the right arm of the little girl depicted next to him. This imagery represents the generation of Chicanxs, or Mexican-Americans, who have become accultured to the U.S. capitalist lifestyle and forgotten their roots and the struggle of their people. In words of Antonio Camejo this kind of Chicanxs who think like gringos are "coconuts:" brown on the outside, white on the inside.[17] This imagery functions as a warning for hegemony cannibalizing the native people by means of selfishness and greed.

The side of the mural I called Manifest Destiny meets the Spanish Inquisition is represented towards the extreme right side of the mural where Ramses Noriega depicted the "emasculating spirit that the Spanish conquest brought which indicts the Catholic Church."[18] This is the most visually engaging composition and a strong condemnation towards Christianity. A white nude male is depicted emasculated on a diagonal that continues towards the top level of the mural. There are two eagles depicted right behind the male figure.

13 Ramses Noriega in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary."

14 Ibid.

15 Eduardo Carrillo was incarcerated at the Chicano Moratorium of August 29th 1970, about two weeks after the *Chicano History* mural was completed. Celedon, Pedro Pablo, *A Life of Engagement,* documentary on Eduardo Carrillo. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vi7QD0Ew-E8. Also, Eva Sperling Cockcroft and Holly Barnet-Sánchez, *Signs from the Heart*. Social and Public Art Resource Center: University of New Mexico Press, 1993.

16 Ramses Noriega in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary."

17 Antonio Camejo, "A report From Aztlán: Texas Chicanos Forge Own Political Power," in Garcia, F. Chris, *La causa política; a Chicano politics reader*. Notre Dame [Ind.]: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974.

18 Ramses Noriega in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary."

One of the eagles secures the body of the male in its claws while lacerating his chest digging for his heart. The other eagle is depicted at fight against a golden rattlesnake. The white male figure is depicted in a way that his head and his left arm had no flesh, dehumanized. On its left skeleton-like arm holds the scale of justice; it is holding a sword towards the ground and on the middle of the sword there is a scale. Below the handle of the sword the globe is depicted in red, and it shows the side of the American continent. Representing the American continent bleeding, "The New World" suffering from the catastrophes of global imperialism. From one plate of the scale of justice there is blood running down the horizon creating this river-like image that flows towards the foreground. This river of blood flows covering different architectural structures to represent the sacrifice and the struggles for freedom and autonomy that Natives and their descendants, including *la raza* had suffered. Right below the left leg of the emasculated white male there is depicted the architectural complex of the *Universidad Nacional Autonoma de México* (UNAM) *Rectoria* located at the *Ciudad Universitaria*. With this detail the mural informs the recent 1968 Massacre of students. Down between the legs of this emasculated figure there is the Cathedral from Mexico City, depicted showered by the blood of this male figure who seems to be holding on his right hand what it seems to be missing in between his legs. This is the site where *Tenochtitlán* was erected by the Aztecs. Right above this imagery there is represented a pre-Columbian architectural complex as well. On the other plate of the scale of justice there seems to be an arrangement of coins or a sort of minerals, such as gold and silver, referencing the minerals that the conquistadores exploited during Colonial times. Whereas the side of the mural depicting the blindfolded blonde female handling down money next to the clergy hiding their face behind a mask represent the individual corruption by capital; this side of the mural represents the same idea but at a global level in which genocide and material wealth can be put in a scale, the scale of justice. The Catholic Church played a key role for the conquest of Mesoamerica and the establishment of the New Spain. In words of Eduardo Galeano: "*Vinieron. Ellos tenían la Biblia y nosotros teníamos la tierra. Y nos dijeron: 'Cierren los ojos y recen.' Y cuando abrimos los ojos, ellos tenían la tierra y nosotros teníamos la Biblia*." Many ancient cities where native people and cultures existed vanished because of colonialism and the Spanish Inquisition determination to expand Christianity. This represents an allegory of the irreversible actions and the disasters of imperialism, colonialism, the Catholic Church in the American continent towards the Indigenous Cultures of the Americas.

The depiction of the eagle punishing the emasculated white male and the eagle devouring the rattlesnake references the modern emblem for the Mexican Coat of Arms in which an eagle is depicted devouring a snake while perched on a prickly pear cactus. This imagery is not only popular to contemporary Mexicans, it was an icon that carried significant value that dates back to ancient times. According to oral histories when *Huitzilopochtli* ordered the Aztecs to walk down south, and later change their name to Mexicas he also ordered them to settle and built *Tenochtitlán* where they found the image of an eagle devouring a snake perched on a prickly cactus. Throughout the history of Mexico dating back to the times of contact in 1492 this icon has been appropriated and changed several times for revolutionary reasons, and ultimately politics.

Chicano History is an allegorical work reminiscent of the style of the Mexican mural movement: incorporating pre-conquest iconography and symbolism, and painted with formal qualities drawn from European and Mexican artistic traditions. It depicts relevant issues by reflecting the contemporary struggles for identity politics during times of civil disobedience and social unrest in Los Angeles, and throughout the U.S.A. during the Civil Rights movements. While condemning colonization and global imperialism, the mural exemplifies the Chicano Civil Rights Movement during its early mobilizations and struggles for political representation, civil equality, social affirmation, and justice. Displaying imagery of the early protests of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, the mural was prescient of the Chicano Moratorium by criticizing the Vietnam War in which Chicanos were dying at disproportionate numbers than whites. The mural depicts the times of social unrest in which it was produced. *Chicano History* concerns the history of a group of people in their attempts to recognize, identify, and embrace with pride the pejorative notion that the term at the time, *Chicanos y Chicanas*, was attributed. Controversial in its content, *Chicano History* is visually engaging and confrontational. The mural depicts forms of violence, cannibalism, and emasculation as it proposes "four eras in la Raza's history." According to Tim Drescher *Chicano History* "expresses the pride and determination of Chicanos seeking self-expression, for the first time defining who they are in their own terms, for their own reasons."[19] During Carrillo's time at UCLA his instructor Jack Hooper introduced him to the works of the Mexican muralists, Diego Rivera, Jose Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros. Hooper had studied in México City at the College of the Americas and worked as a mural assistant to Siqueiros. Influencing Carrillo to draw on both European and Mexican traditions. Also, Saul Solache invited his student at UCLA Sergio Hernandez to collaborate with the mural, Hernandez was a student of Eduardo Carrillo when he was at East Los Angeles College.[20] *Chicano History* a mural created during civil unrest reflects the conflicting national sentiment and struggle for Civil Rights of its time.

A contemporary reading of *Chicano History* needs to address first the issues within Chicanx artists representing what *Chicanidad* was and how it looked like through the

19 Drescher, Tim, "The Los Angeles Murals," in *Testament of the Spirit: Paintings by Eduardo Carrillo*. 2018.

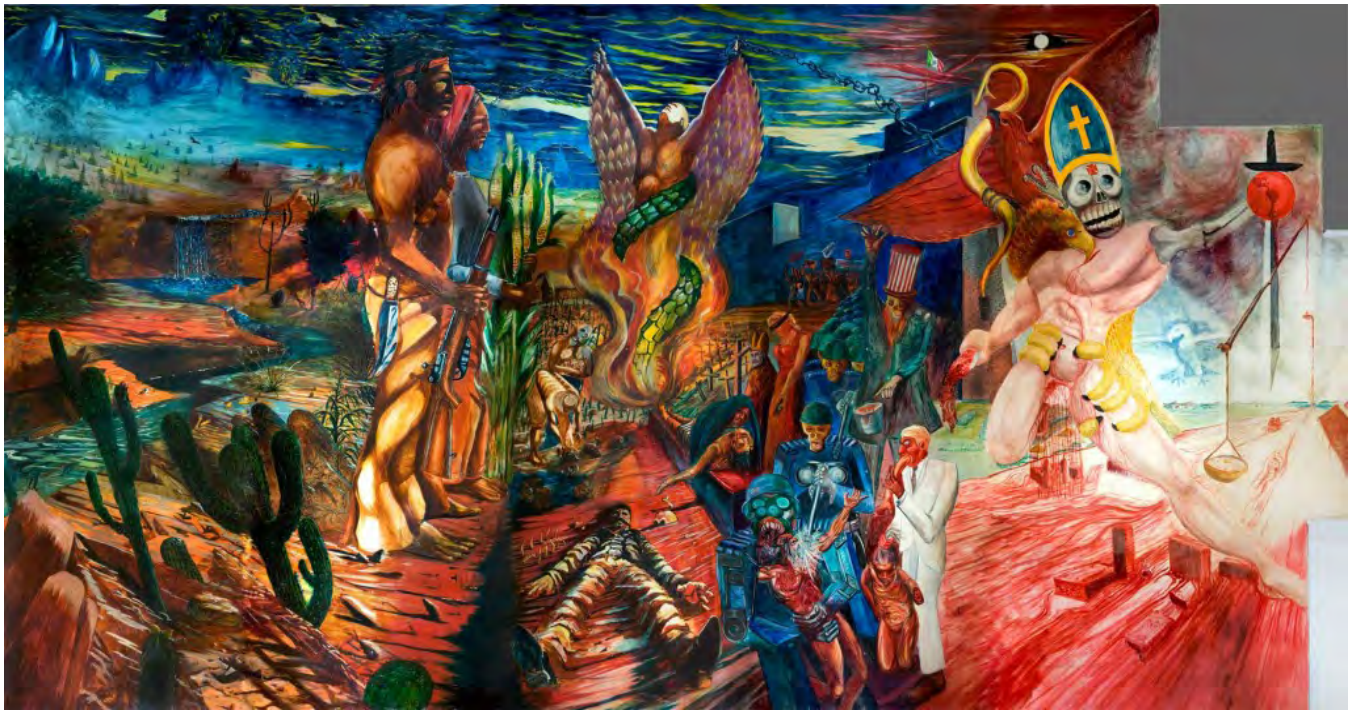
20 Sergio Hernández also mentioned that photographer Oscar Castillo was there documenting the progress, and in a way, also contributing to the mural process; Also in Macías, Reynaldo F., and Carlos Manuel Haro. "UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center 40th Anniversary."

symbols and iconography that – at its early stage- these artists were establishing for the Chicanx public at UCLA-CSRC. The issue of heteronormativity that continues prevalent well through the beginning of the twenty-first century during the early developments of *el movimiento;* in which the title, and allegorically with the human body, Sergio Hernández depicting, according to Ramses Noriega, "two monumental figures representing the warrior and the family as the central focus of our people," is dated. In the book Walls of Empowerment scholar Guisela Latorre argues that many Chicanx artists; working towards the 1960s and 1970s developed a symbolic language that articulated ideas of *mestizaje*, ethnicity, and culture as strategies to counter racist and oppressive ideologies found prevalent in colonial rhetoric. As early as the 1970s along the frontlines of the women liberation movement up to our present time many Chicanx artists such as Judith Baca, Yreina Cervantez, Las Mujeres Muralistas, Alma Lopez, and the contemporary collective of muralists HOOD Sisters, for example, expanded on this idea of *mestizaje* in response to gender oppression to contemporary Chicanas and Chicanxs placing historical meaningful figures contesting the stereotypes of *machismo* and rhetoric of heteronormativity.[21] The *Chicano History* mural is an integral part of this history.

University of Houston

21 Latorre, Guisela. *Walls of Empowerment: Chicana/o indigenist murals of California*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008.

Figure 1. Eduardo Carrillo, Ramses Noriega, Sergio Hernandez, and Saul Solache, *Chicano History* mural, 1970. Oil on panel, 144 x 264 inches (12 x 22 feet). Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles. Image courtesy of the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center. Image credit: Jenny Walters.



Paris-on-Hudson: Artistic Authorship in Victor de Grailly's American Landscapes

Thomas Busciglio-Ritter

In 1969, a curious picture entered the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City, as part of a major bequest by American banker Robert Lehman (1891-1969). [1] Identified as a Hudson River Scene, the painting, undated and unsigned, depicts an idyllic river landscape, surrounded by green hills, indeed reminiscent of the Hudson River School (figure 1). [2] Yet the attribution devised by the museum for might appear curious at first glance, as it does not rule out the possibility of a work produced by a little-known French painter named Victor de Grailly. Born in Paris in 1804, Grailly died in the same city in 1887. [3] Mentioned in several museum collections, his pictures constitute a debatable body of work to this day. But if only a few biographical elements have been saved about the artist, the crunch of the debate lies elsewhere. Indeed, Grailly's views of American nature have long been linked to a set of drawings by British artist William Henry Bartlett (1809-1854), turned into engravings in an 1840 two-volume publication on American Scenery authored by Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806-1867). Since Bartlett had completed, in the mid-1830s, a tour of the United States[4], the conclusion to draw seems to revolve around two options. Either Bartlett had to be the author of both the drawings and oil paintings, or the mysterious painter of the latter, generally identified as Grailly, must have been a copyist of Bartlett's.

The nature of this relationship was at the center of art historian Mary B. Cowdrey's own preoccupations, expressed in a 1941 article in which she intended to debunk the claim that Bartlett had painted a large number of undocumented oils. [5] Briefly mentioning Grailly, Cowdrey depicted him as a talentless copyist with no agency of his own. [6] By contrast, and in a rare 1974 article focused on the artist, historian William Nathaniel Banks Jr. envisioned Grailly's American landscapes as composite images, resulting from a combination of different influences. [7] To Banks, Grailly's paintings were not copies, but independent reinterpretations of Bartlett's motifs, sometimes altering significant elements. [8] Though Banks resorted to connoisseurship[9], his text nevertheless served as basis for the first, and only to date, monographic exhibition devoted to Grailly's works, one year later at the Washburn Gallery, in New York City. Conceiving a leaflet for the show, Banks brought up two new suppositions. One is what he felt to be a genuinely "Gallic" tone in Grailly's views, which he sensed through the figures populating them, "who appear to have strayed from the Bois de Boulogne into the White Mountains." [10] The other is the hypothesis made by Banks about a possible collaborator Grailly could have completed his pictures with. [11] Thus, Grailly's single-hand on the debated landscapes was now thought to possibly be multiple ones. Such approaches underline the difficulty to establish authorship in that case, in what has become a natural impulse of art history in the so-called Western tradition. [12] The purpose of this article is to precisely show why

1 "Hudson River Scene – French or American Artist (possibly Victor de Grailly, Paris, 1804–1889) – 1975.1.245," The Metropolitan Museum of Art – Robert Lehman Collection, accessed October 15, 2018, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/461186.

2 "Hudson River Scene – French or American Artist (possibly Victor de Grailly, Paris, 1804–1889) – 1975.1.245," The Metropolitan Museum of Art – Robert Lehman Collection, accessed October 15, 2018, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/461186.

3 Though American sources often state 1889 as Grailly's death year, Paris Public Records Office documents (or *Archives d'état civil*), now digitized for the most part, indicate that he was indeed born on October 25, 1804 and that he died on September 4, 1887 at the age of eighty-two. For Grailly's birth certificate, see *Archives numérisées, État civil de Paris, Fichiers de l'état civil reconstitué, Naissances, V3E/N 645, DeGrailly*. For Grailly's death certificate, see *Archives numérisées, État civil de Paris, Actes d'état civil, 14e arrondissement, Décès, V4E 7097, act no. 2919, Degrailly*.

4 Alexander M. Ross, *William Henry Bartlett: Artist, Author, and Traveller* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 41-42. See also Ferber, *The Hudson River School*, 50.

5 Cowdrey's project might have been prompted by a July 1941 New York State Supreme Court ruling about the authorship of a series of paintings attributed to W. H. Bartlett, *U. S. Trust Co. of New York v. Michaelsen*, in which Justice Aron Steuer (1898-1985) ruled in favored of a plaintiff who wished to cancel a sale of artworks he had originally purchased as oils from Bartlett's hand, but which had since then been considered doubtful, thus impacting their market value. See transcript of opinion authored by Justice Steuer in Mary Bartlett Cowdrey Papers, Box 3, Folder 50, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

6 Mary B. Cowdrey, "William Henry Bartlett and the American Scene," *New York History* 22-4 (1941), 392.

7 William N. Banks Jr., "The French Painter Victor de Grailly and the Production of Nineteenth-Century American Views," *Antiques* 106 (July 1974), 85.

8 Banks, "The French Painter Victor de Grailly," 88.

9 William N. Banks Jr., "A Charmed Life," *Antiques* 182-3 (2015): 76-85.

10 William Nathaniel Banks, *Victor de Grailly: Views of America, April 2-April 26, 1975* (New York: Washburn Gallery, 1975), 1.

11 Banks, *Victor de Grailly*, 5.

12 Donald Preziosi (ed.), *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1998]), 317.

a pattern of narrow authorship might not be the best option to account for the works attributed to Grailly, as well as for their status among American landscape paintings in the early nineteenth century.

Individuality in matters of attribution primarily comes into question around the idea of school or movement. In the case of the Met picture, the possibility of attribution to Grailly raises, most notably, the notion of collective style. First linked to the French Barbizon school of landscape painting[13], how did Grailly, then, come to be associated with the American Hudson River School? Like most contemporary artists in Paris, Grailly started off learning from an older creator as part of the latter's workshop. His instructor was Jean-Victor Bertin (1767-1842), a proponent of plein-air painting, himself a student of Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750-1819). Both he and Bertin looked back to Italy and neo-classicism in their respective artistic productions. [14] Unsurprisingly so, Grailly's French landscapes reprise numerous elements acquired through contacts with the latter. First participating in the Paris Salon in 1831, Grailly essentially displayed scenes of pastoral life reminiscent of another of Bertin's pupils, Camille Corot (1796-1875). [15] Yet, some of his French pictures seem to employ a different formula. Acquired by the Musée d'Elbeuf, Normandy, an 1831 watercolor of the latter town by Grailly presents an open composition centered on a branch of the river Seine strangely similar to contemporary depictions of the Hudson (Figure 2). [16] The importance granted to the sky and landscape itself places it at odds with many of the principles enunciated by Bertin, which signals a permeability to non-national stylistic influences.

In the case of the Metropolitan Museum oil, one may wonder if an answer to this shift in perception of Grailly may lie in analogies drawn with other works from the Lehman collection, as part of which the work was donated. However, the painting's so-called pedigree does not appear to have had any influence on its attribution. The endeavor of publishing the Lehman collection in a fifteen-volume catalogue eventually helped shed some light on why these works were sidelined. Released in 2009, the third volume of the series namely listed only two American paintings as part of Lehman's bequest, both anonymous. The Hudson River Scene at the origin of this study only seems to have been attributed to Grailly for the first time on that occasion. [17] Faced with such interrogation, it seems necessary to consider back, at this point, the very source material used by Grailly to produce his paintings. Published by George Virtue in London, American Scenery, or Land, Lake, and River Illustrations of Transatlantic Nature took the form of a repository of images of nature, aiming at exciting European imagination about America's wilderness. As such, each picture acted as a miniature promotional advertisement for the country, at a time of transatlantic touristic development. [18] It shall be of no surprise, then, to learn that the publication was quickly translated into three other languages. Working in Paris, Grailly most surely stumbled upon the French version. Its preface made explicit, from the onset, the role of such volume:

> The comparison between valleys and rivers, lakes and waterfalls of the New World and these of the old one […] were advantages only the distant traveler could enjoy. Yet the kind of works among which this one ranks enables he who loves his interior to enjoy the same advantage […]. Seated next to his fireplace, he who is called to a domestic and secluded life, can without much cost enjoy […], and every evening on his table, the wild solitudes of America […]. It is hard to obtain such great enjoyment with so little trouble and expense.[19]

An ode to bourgeois domesticity, it is hardly surprising that the French preface to L'Amérique pittoresque would sound like an invitation to the ears of an aspiring painter. Travel books offered the opportunity for urbane Europeans to expand their horizons without having to physically face up to the perceived ruggedness of the United States. An opinion applying equally to Britain and France, as the two versions offer the same engravings, some of them indeed corresponding to paintings by Grailly. Yet, behind this apparently straightforward influence, one is actually confronted with no less than five different objects in this case: the original Bartlett drawing, the engraving produced from this drawing, the book circulating this image, Grailly's painting using the publication as its source and finally, multiple painted versions by Grailly himself. Hence, Grailly did not copy Bartlett's

13 Banks, "The French Painter Victor de Grailly," 85.

14 Suzanne Gutwirth, "Jean-Victor Bertin, un paysagiste néo-classique (1767-1842)," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* LXXXIII (May-June 1974) , 337-358.

15 "Exposant – Victor de Grailly – Salon de 1831," Base Salons – Musée d'Orsay, accessed October 15, 2018, http://salons.musee-orsay.fr/index/exposant/67776.

16 "Vue d'Elbeuf – Victor de Grailly," Joconde – Portail des collections des musées de France, accessed October 15, 2017, http://www2.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/joconde_fr.

17 Richard R. Brettell, Paul Hayes Tucker and Natalie H. Lee, *The Robert Lehman Collection III, Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Paintings* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009), 405-406.

18 The first steamship to cross the Atlantic was the SS Savannah, completing the journey in 29 days between May 24 and June 20, 1819. See National Museum of American History, "Logbook for First Transatlantic Steamship Savannah, 1819," accessed October 15, 2018, http://americanhistory.si.edu/ collections/search/object/nmah_842432. For a recent study on the emergence of tourism in the early American Republic, see Will B. Macintosh, *Selling the Sights: The Invention of the Tourist in American Culture* (New York City: NYU Press, 2019).

19 "La comparaison des vallées et des rivières, des lacs et des cascades du Nouveau Monde avec ceux de l'ancien […] étaient des avantages dont pouvait seul jouir le voyageur lointain. Mais le genre d›ouvrages, parmi lesquels vient se placer celui-ci, permet à celui qui aime son intérieur de jouir […] du même avantage. Assis près de son foyer, celui qui est appelé à une vie domestique et retirée, peut sans beaucoup de frais jouir […], et le soir sur sa table, des solitudes sauvages de l›Amérique [...]. Il est difficile de se procurer une aussi grande jouissance avec si peu de peine et de dépense." Nathaniel P. Willis and William H. Bartlett, *L'Amérique pittoresque ou vues des terres, des lacs et des fleuves des États-Unis d'Amérique. Ouvrage enrichi de gravures faites sur les dessins de M. W. H. Bartlett…, vol. I*, trans. L. de Bauclas (Paris: Ferrier, 1840), V-VI.

drawings. He copied singular reproductions of engravings after Bartlett's drawings, even further removed from the originals that Bartlett himself did not pursue close relationships with the six engravers responsible for the transition. [20] Thus, Grailly's pictures could totally be considered original objects, as William Banks himself did in his 1974 article. [21]

The Met picture linked to Grailly renders this interrogation even harder to disentangle. Flipping through both the English and French versions of American Scenery, no similar image appears as possible source for the disputed painting. Another parameter to consider then is the significant popularity enjoyed by Bartlett prints. [22] The sheer number of copies made of his designs even prompted the organization of a 1966 exhibition devoted to Bartlett "and his imitators", held at the Arnot Gallery in Elmira, New York. [23] The show assembled loaned works by numerous painters having based some of their productions on Bartlett, "pirating" him, to use the catalog's own words. [24] Included in the exhibition, The Connecticut River from Mount Holyoke, completed in 1855 by American painter Edmund C. Coates (1816-1871) and inspired by a different Bartlett engraving, underlines how important the degree of subversion of an original design can be. This example is all the more remarkable that Grailly too had produced a painting based on the same source ten years earlier. [25] This set proves unsettling in the sheer liberties taken by both painters (Figures 3-5). [26] Yet, while Coates was acknowledged as having "adapted" a design by Bartlett, Grailly remained a mere "imitator." [27]

The ambiguity at play between recognizing an artist's individuality and defining a group known as "Bartlett's imitators" highlights the difficulty to grant each of these artists a proper identity. [28] This intricate process may also explain why a picture like the Entrance to the Highlands on the Hudson (c. 1845) held at the Albany Institute of History and Art and inspired by another Bartlett engraving, has not been linked to Grailly, though presenting similar characteristics (Figure 6). [29] The possible attribution to another French painter, Hippolyte Louis Garnier (1802-1855), illustrates the art historical tension between the safe option of anonymity and a riskier individual authorship. It also highlights the widespread nature of such paintings. The artistic practice of reprising known American landscape designs seems to have been common in early 19th-century Paris. [30] And if artists like Grailly and Garnier focused on this type of works, one could suggest that they might, in return, have been aware of each other's productions. By the same token, the earliest mention of Grailly's name on a painting put up for sale in the U.S., in January 1962, seems to be a View Near Elizabethtown, New Jersey (c. 1850). Yet, the work in question has since then been reattributed to painter Régis Gignoux (1814-1882), expressing, once again, the complexity of distinction between different French hands at work on American landscapes. [31]

In conclusion, the very nature of Victor de Grailly's works seems to resist the need to apply a single authorship pattern to them. Most museums now in possession of the ambivalent works don't seem to have settled over a single way to express their attribution. If engravings produced after Bartlett's landscapes had indeed been stripped of their original authorship upon publication, their status might have equaled that of anonymity to artists encountering them, like Grailly. And if his own versions of the landscapes contained subtle variations, one might also be tempted to witness his own artistic agency at play in their creation. In a similar way, attempts at devising a strict attribution for the Met river landscape at the origin of this study reaches a dead-end. The seemingly widespread nature of the practice of landscape painting copying in the early 19th century invites to consider the possibility of a non-professional or even a collective artwork. But what may sound, at first glance, rather frustrating may actually be beneficial. The intricate case of Victor de Grailly's American pictures might indeed, in the end, compel art historians to reconsider the nature of authorship, whether in design, circulation, reproduction or reception of a given artistic object.

University of Delaware

20 Ross, *William Henry Bartlett*, 27.

21 Banks, "The French Painter Victor de Grailly," 85.

22 Kenneth Myers (ed.), *The Catskills: Painters, Writers, and Tourists in the Mountains, 1820-1895* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University of Press New England, 1987), 99-101.

23 *William H. Bartlett and His Imitators, A Loan Exhibition Comparing Original Works by Bartlett With Copies of His Work by His Contemporaries*, October 23-December 4, 1966 (Elmira, New York: Arnot Art Gallery, 1966).

24 Letter from Mary Bartlett Cowdrey, Passaic (New Jersey), to Mary-Ellen Earl, Elmira (New York), March 7, 1966. MSS 0556, Mary Bartlett Cowdrey Papers, Box 3, Folder 50, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

25 *William H. Bartlett and His Imitators*, 32.

26 Willis and Bartlett, *American Scenery,* vol. I, 117.

27 Marianne Doezema (ed.), *Changing Prospects: The View from Mount Holyoke*, September 3-December 8, 2002 (South Hadley, Mass.: Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, 2002), 36-37.

28 On this note, see also another essay by Martha Hoppin, "Arcadian Vales: The Connecticut Valley in Art," in *A Place Called Paradise: Culture and Community in Northampton, Massachusetts, 1654-2004*, ed. Kerry Wayne Buckley (Amherst-Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 237.

29 Willis and Bartlett, *American Scenery,* vol. I, 37. The Winterthur painting was formerly part of the Henry Francis du Pont (1880-1969) collection, later donated to the museum in 1959. See "United States Capitol, Washington," The Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, accessed October 30, 2018, http://museumcollection.winterthur.org/.

30 On that note, see Kathleen A. Foster, *Thomas Chambers: American Marine and Landscape Painter, 1808-1869* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2008), 98-99. On the institutionalization and importance of copying in nineteenth-century artistic practice, particularly in France, see also Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Phaidon, 1971), 122-127, and Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1985 [1981]), 167.

31 The painting has been part of the collections of the Honolulu Museum of Art, in Hawai'i, since 1972.

Figure 1. French or American Artist (possibly Victor de Grailly, 1804-1887), *Hudson River Scene* (ca. 1830–50), Oil on wood, 10 x 12 in (25.4 x 30.5 cm), New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 3 [*facing page, bottom*]. William Henry Bartlett (1809-1854) (after), *The Connecticut Valley, from Mount Holyoke* (c. 1840), Lithograph Print, Published in American Scenery, vol. I, 117 (London: George Virtue, 1840).

Figure 2 [*above*]. Victor de Grailly (1804-1887), *View of Elbeuf* [Vue d'Elbeuf] (1831), Watercolor on canvas, 11.8 x 20.5 in (30 x 52 cm), Elbeuf-sur-Seine (France), Musée d'Elbeuf.

Figure 4.
Victor de Grailly (1804-1887), *The Valley of the Connecticut from Mount Holyoke* (c. 1845), Oil on canvas, 17 ½ x 23 ½ in (44.4 x 59.7 cm), Amherst (Massachusetts), Mead Art Museum at Amherst College.

Figure 6. Hippolyte-Louis Garnier (1802-1855) (attributed to), Entrance to the Highlands on the Hudson (c. 1845), Oil on canvas, 21 x 25 ¼ in (53.3 x 64.1 cm), Albany (New York), Albany Institute of History & Art.

Figure 5 [*facing page, bottom*]. Edmund C. Coates (1816-1871), *The Connecticut River from Mount Holyoke* (1855), Oil on canvas, 33 ¾ x 48 in (85.7 x 121.9 cm), Amherst (Massachusetts), Mead Art Museum at Amherst College.

"Erotic Nature": John Dunkley's Decolonial Visions

Rebecca Lawder

John Dunkley's *Feeding the Fishes* (Figure 1) conjures an enticing story of human experience and mystery, writ in sign and symbol. Initially appearing as a quiet reflection of Jamaican life at night, the elements of the composition form a clear set of personal, and at once universal, symbols of contemplation within the disquiet of melancholy. This dark scene of a winding river ravine appears set at dawn. Teeming fish in the stream surround the bait as a hunched woman angles, presumably for the first catch of the day. The woman stands precipitously on the cliff, looking down at the fishes. A prominent branch, resembling an erect penis, cuts across her dangling fishing line. Below, a deep ravine opens into a subtle vaginal form. Dunkley's landscape imbues sexual overtones within quotidian performances, and, in so doing, reveals a dark underbelly in paradise.[1]

To decode John Dunkley's dark and sexual landscape is also to reveal a decolonial message in his broader works. Dunkley humanizes nature through both masculinizing phallic and feminizing yonic symbolism as an emancipatory tactic, thereby reflecting a culturally nuanced relationship between people and landscape. Dunkley subverts the expected in Caribbean painting, especially for foreign consumers. By bringing nature to life, his paintings offer subversive anti-colonial themes, too, waiting for decipherment. This paper will examine Dunkley's use of erotic imagery, arguing that the painter's sexual landscapes, through layered poetics and symbolism, ultimately served to challenge every day oppressions in colonial Jamaica.

Both yonic and phallic symbols appear in almost all of Dunkley's paintings, including *Spider's Web (Jerboa)* (Figure 2), *Mountain Edge* (Figure 3), and *Going to the Market* (Figure 4). Unfortunately, Dunkley left no clues to the erotic imagery's meaning. This paper thus aims to offer one possible reading of Dunkley's personal symbolic web, focusing on his humanization of the landscape through sexualized elements. Applying a decolonial lens to Dunkley's paintings and socio-political interests reveals the phallic symbol as a mode of "remasculating" the Black Jamaican man while the yonic sign, in turn, represents the strength of the island's mother culture. Placed together, the signs suggest an image of fertility. The rebirth and continuation of the Jamaican peoples.

Dunkley was born in Savanna-la-Mar, a small port town in rural southwest Jamaica, in 1891.[2] During the period between 1912 and 1929, Dunkley traveled throughout Central America and the Caribbean. Dunkley moved back to Kingston in 1931, where he married Cassie Fraser, fathered at least four children, and opened up a barbershop on Princess Street in an Afro-Jamaican populated neighborhood in Kingston.[3] This one-story wooden building served as his salon, studio, and at times, family home, as the economy declined in Jamaica during the Great Depression. Dunkley began creating work in the 1930s, executing much of his body of work in the 1940s, until his death from cancer in 1947.[4] John Dunkley's artwork was both influential and extraordinary. Despite never rising to financial success, he was well-regarded during and after his lifetime by fellow artists and politicians, including Norman and Edna Manley.[5]

Dunkley worked and travelled throughout the Caribbean and Central America in the early twentieth century, and he was well acquainted with Pan-African ideas then on the rise throughout the Western hemisphere. Dunkley was particularly interested in the teachings of the Jamaican-born activist Marcus Garvey, who pushed for the unification of the African diaspora with Mother Africa. He was responsible for the formation of a universal Black consciousness.[6] This Jamaican national hero was significant in inspiring future movements and forming much of the modern understanding of Pan-Africanism. While Jamaica remained a British colony until 1962, other Caribbean colonies were gaining independence

1 A special thanks to the UMKC Women's Council for providing me with the grant that allowed me to visit Kingston, Jamaica, to experience John Dunkley's artwork firsthand and conduct valuable research on this project. And a special thanks to the National Gallery of Jamaica, particularly Dwayne Lyttle, Monique Barnett-Davidson, and Shawna-Lee Tai, for all their help with research, interviews, images, and support. Additionally, thank you to Dr. Joseph Hartman and the UMKC staff for their guidance and encouragement throughout my studies.

2 David Ebony, "Caribbean Twilight," *Magazine Antiques* 185, no. 4 (August 7, 2018): 88.

3 Cassie Dunkley, "The Life of John Dunkley," reprinted in *Jamaica Journal* 11, no. 1–2 (August 1977): 82. Unfortunately, not much is known about John Dunkley, as he left no writing and only a handful of newspaper blurbs mention his name. The majority of our knowledge of Dunkley's life comes from a short text his wife wrote for The Institute of Jamaica's posthumous "Memorial Anniversary Exhibition of the late John Dunkley, Artist and Sculptor" in 1948.

4 David Boxer, "The Life and Art of John Dunkley," in *John Dunkley: Neither Day nor Night*, (Miami, FL: Prestel, 2017), 19-22.

5 Dunkley, "The Life of John Dunkley," 82.

6 Judith Stein, *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 248.

as early as 1804 (in the case of Haiti).[7] In Dunkley's time, the Great Depression created economic hardships across the island. The Jamaican people, too, grew restless and frustrated at being a Crown Colony and advocated for independence over several decades.[8] During this unrest, Jamaicans called for their own national identity separate from Great Britain. This rising sense of nationalism resonated with Dunkley.

Dunkley's artwork reveals his interest in decolonialism – the desire to confront and challenge Western paradigms of tradition and modernity. Many of the hidden symbols in his landscape speak to his Caribbean peers and call for decolonial action. This theme is carried on through Dunkley's sexualized symbolism. Dunkley's works, although primarily nature scenes, are highly erotic. Dunkley incorporates both female and male genitalia within the landscape, imbuing nature with life to tell its own story. The concept of bringing the landscape to life has a particular resonance in the Caribbean. For many of Dunkley's Jamaican contemporaries, nature was supernatural.[9] Stemming from African beliefs, Jamaicans believed that spirits lived in the forests and that plant life had healing powers.[10]

The Jamaican living landscape itself may have inspired this sexual imagery within nature. David Boxer, prominent scholar of Jamaican Modernism, proposes that Dunkley was inspired by the famous "Pum Pum Rock," or "Pym Rock," at the Rio Cobre, which was on the route to Kingston and well known to Jamaicans.[11] The Pum Pum Rock is famous to this day in Jamaica as an explicitly sexual formation, resembling female genitalia. "Pum Pum" is a Jamaican slang term for vagina still today.[12] This crevice in the side of a gorge contributed to Dunkley's sexualization of the landscape. Dunkley would have certainly been familiar with this natural topography, not only because it was – and still is – quite notorious in Kingston, but also because he painted a scene of the Rio Cobre, in *Flat Bridg*e (Figure 5), a site only a mile south of Pum Pum Rock.[13]

Boxer claims that this strange rock formation "occupies a special place in [the Jamaican] spiritual imagination," especially considering that there was once a phallic rock that stood perpendicular across from Pum Pum rock.[14] Although removed in the 1950s, this erect rock illustrated a metaphor of sexual intercourse with the natural world. This coincidental juxtaposition of erotic imagery inspired Dunkley's sexualizing of the landscape. As Boxer further states: "nature's metaphors, made so by the imagination of man, Pym Rock, and the phallic rock, . . . became principal triggers for Dunkley, giving rise to his anthropomorphizing of the landscape and a visual encoding of sexual fantasy, and perhaps memory, as well."[15]

This erotic and energetic rock formation is likely referenced in Dunkley's *Feeding the Fishes*. This painting depicts a woman bent over a river, fishing, while a large trunk penetrates the foreground of the composition, pointing toward a crevice in the flat rock across the stream. Here, Dunkley created a motif similar to the natural formation of the Pum Pum Rock and its adjacent phallic rock. Dunkley overtly eroticizes and engenders the composition through the natural elements of the landscape.[16] By doing so, he creates a commentary on decolonialism.

Colonizers were fascinated with the non-Western Other, and they sexualized indigenous, African, and Asian subjects as means of domination.[17] French writer Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, famous for validating racist thought, reflects the colonial perception of the non-Western Other. In his infamous essays, *The Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races* and *The Inequality of Human Races*, Gobineau categorizes different races as being "male" and "female," claiming that the majority of non-European races were feminine, and thus inferior.[18] In this white supremacist pipe dream, the white man establishes the pinnacle of an imagined racial hierarchy through the already established European hierarchy of gender: "just as the white male rules at home, so he also lords it abroad."[19] This system, therefore, feminizes both Black males and females alike. The colonizers emasculate non-Western men, and exploit their bodies for labor. The white man's call to power strips the Black man of any agency.

Dunkley's phallic and yonic symbols are more than erotic. They are tools of emancipation. Set amid dark colors and unsettling scenes, Dunkley's use of sex organs helps disrupts the subservient stereotype of the Caribbean subject. In *Feeding the Fishes*, a large phallic trunk interrupts the scene, overpowering the feminine symbols in the background. The imposed masculine energy conquers the scene, reclaiming power. Through Dunkley's composition, the landscape is broken down into fetishized and engendered parts. Dunkley thus uses the colonizer's own language to reverse the emasculation of the Jamaican populous.

As Dunkley asserts the masculine icons in the canvas, he symbolizes a reclamation of power. In *Feeding the Fishes*, the

7 "The Countdown to Independence," *Jamaica Journal* 15, no. 46 (n.d.): 21–23.

8 "The Countdown to Independence," 21-23.

9 John Rashford, "Plants, Spirits, and the Meaning of 'John' in Jamaica," *Jamaica Journal* 17, no. 2 (May 1984): 68.

10 Barry Chevannes, *Rastafari: Roots and Ideology*, *Utopianism and Communitarianism* (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1994) 26-7.

11 Boxer, "The Life and Art of John Dunkley," 29.

12 "Pum Pum | Patois Definition on Jamaican Patwah," Jamaican Patwah, accessed March 16, 2019, http://jamaicanpatwah.com/term/pum-pum/1065.

13 "The Pum Pum Rock," *Jamaica in a Thousand Words* (blog), May 12, 2016, https://jamaicainathousandwords.wordpress.com/2016/05/12/the-pum-pum-rock/.

14 Boxer, "The Life and Art of John Dunkley," 29. In this section of *Neither Day nor Night*, Boxer provides an in-depth psychoanalysis of the phallic symbol, focusing on the possible sexual frustration and fear of impotency of Dunkley.

15 Ibid., 29.

16 Ibid., 29.

17 Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 172.

18 Arthur Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races* (London : William Heinemann, 1915), 92-3.

19 Young, *Colonial Desire,* 104.

phallic symbol penetrates the composition, both taking the central focus away from the figure and energizing the scene. In *Feeding the Fishes*, the penis is prominent. The phallic symbol is incorporated more subtly in the majority of Dunkley's paintings. For example, in *Going to the Market* (Figure 4), the phallus is almost hidden beneath the patterned bush on the right, where sits a tiny cluster of branches that resemble Dunkley's familiar phallic motif. In this subtle incorporation of the male genital organ, Dunkley continues to reclaim both his own and, more broadly, Afro-Jamaican masculinity. In doing so, he takes back power by destroying the prevalent hierarchical system of races in relation to gender.

Through the incorporation of the phallic symbol, Dunkley reinforces Jamaican masculinity, and defies the subordinate and passive role appointed Jamaican men by their oppressors. As Dunkley's phallic symbols are incorporated to reclaim their power, I also argue that the yonic symbol carries an equally emancipatory power in Dunkley's works. In Jamaica, women are regarded as the backbone of society. Nearly half of all households are matriarchal and many women work while domestically caring for their family.[20] Former Prime Minister of Jamaica and cultural essayist, Edward Seaga, noted that "women [are] symbols of achievement in Jamaican folk society … As such, they are more than women or mothers; they are a resource base of cultural identity."[21] Women are especially respected for their fertility, and therefore Dunkley's repeated representation of female genitalia, as seen in *Mountain Edge* (Figure 3), carries strong meaning.[22]

In *Decline of the West* – an influential text, popular in the Americas in the early twentieth century – Oswalt Spengler claims the formation of culture is rooted in the landscape and symbolizes the landscape as the mother of all culture.[23] The symbol of the mother references the origins of culture and life, as he compares the act of birth with the creation of culture "out of its mother-landscape, and the act is repeated by every one of its individual souls throughout its life-course."[24] Additionally, the mother-landscape symbol reflects the future, as the cycle of birth reflects a continuum of fertility and life. The idea of the earth-mother is an ancient metaphor for the life-giving resources the land provides. This, along with the status of women and mothers in the Jamaican working-class, strengthens the mother-landscape metaphor used by Dunkley in his work.

Dunkley uses this proto-feminist metaphor as a subversion of colonialism. By painting the landscape as a fertile giver of life, the land is salvaged from colonial destruction. Despite the introduction of new flora and fauna, and the deforestation conducted on the island, Jamaica still thrives. The life cycle continues. Spengler states, "the symbol of the mother-womb [is] the origin of all life."[25] This idea is exemplified in *Banana Plantation* (Figure 7), as the rabbit hides underground in a burrow. This hollow subterranean home resembles a womb. The rabbit is safe and hidden from the outside dangers and nourished with its fruit. The Jamaican land takes care of its people. They rely on their home for nourishment and protection, even while all around them, colonialism attempts to destroy their home with the revealing setting of a plantation. By referencing the mother in the landscape, Dunkley provides hope for the future of Jamaica. This scene is complete, as a full moon, a symbol of fertility in Jamaican folklore, watches over the *Banana Plantation*.[26]

Returning to Dunkley's *Feeding the Fishes*, the theme of fertility continues. In this painting, a penile tree trunk points towards a vaginal rock formation. The land itself appears engaged in sexual activity; however, this act takes on a different meaning when further examined. Through the combination of both male and female energy, themes of natural procreation emerge, thus painting the Jamaican landscape as literally fruitful and fertile. A metaphor for reproduction emerges within this painting. The landscape is not sexualized solely for erotic purposes, but also for reproductive purposes, thereby reintroducing the theme of fertility.

In this artwork, behind these personified objects, stands a woman, who leans over the edge of the cliff. She is attempting to fish but, presumably, the attempt is futile, and she is merely "feeding the fishes." Dunkley uses wordplay by referencing the outmoded, colloquial idiom "feeding the fishes," which in Jamaica refers to morning sickness.[27] Dunkley rarely depicts figures within his landscape paintings, however he chooses to symbolize the beginnings of new life through this expectant mother. With this knowledge, not only does the figure of the hunched over woman take on a new meaning, but also the environment around her appears to be given new purpose. As the rocky ground around her is mostly barren, new vegetation sprouts all around the impregnated woman. The only plant life in the painting is around the woman's feet and beneath the penis-tree trunk. Thus, these elements that may have at once appeared merely erotic are now the bearers of new life.

Dunkley's *Feeding the Fishes* is one of the most sexually explicit and engendered of Dunkley's paintings. The background suggests a subtle femininity through the crevice in the rock and the implied pregnancy of the figure. The theme of fertility is clear through the sexually explicit phallic tree and yonic rock formation, the plant life emerging from the barren land, and the title of the painting that directly refers to reproduction. This fertility symbolizes the future. As procreation creates generations to come and crops to nourish them, the future of Jamaica is present in this painting. The

20 Edward Seaga, "The Folk Roots of Jamaican Cultural Identity," *Caribbean Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2005): 90.

21 Seaga, "The Folk Roots of Jamaican Cultural Identity," 90.

22 Chevannes, *Rastafari: Roots and Ideology*, 28.

23 Ben A. Heller, "Landscape, Femininity, and Caribbean Discourse," *MLN* 111, no. 2 (March 1, 1996): 393-4.

24 Oswald Spengler and Charles Francis Atkinson, *The Decline of the West* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1926) 172.

25 Spengler and Atkinson, *The Decline of the West,* 82.

26 Chevannes, *Rastafari: Roots and Ideology*, 26.

27 Boxer, "The Life and Art of John Dunkley," 29.

phallic rock interrupts this apparent metaphor for the future and fertility of the island to reclaim their power and assert their dominance once more.

Through his sexualized symbolic code, Dunkley makes the components of his paintings readable, able to convey meaning without verbal language, thus creating a more powerful language with the capacity to say more than mere words. Dunkley's use of the phallic and yonic symbols similarly exemplifies commentary on decolonialism, one that embodies the strength and persistence of the feminine, reclaims power through masculinity, and reflects the tenacity of the Jamaican peoples through the metaphor of reproduction and rebirth.

University of Missouri, Kansas City

Figure 1. John Dunkley, *Feeding the Fishes*, mixed media on plywood, 16.75 x 20.125 inches, ca. 1940. ONYX Foundation. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Jamaica.

Figure 2. John Dunkley, *Spider's Web (Jerboa)*, also exhibited under the titles Jerboa and Spider's Web, mixed media on plywood, 28 x 14 inches, n.d., National Gallery of Jamaica, Kingston. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Jamaica.

Figure 3. John Dunkley, *Mountain Edge*, mixed media on plywood, 20.875 x 16.09 inches, ca. 1940, ONYX Foundation. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Jamaica.

Figure 4. John Dunkley, *Going to the Market*, mixed media on plywood, 34.75 x 14.875 inches, ca. 1943, ONYX Foundation. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Jamaica.

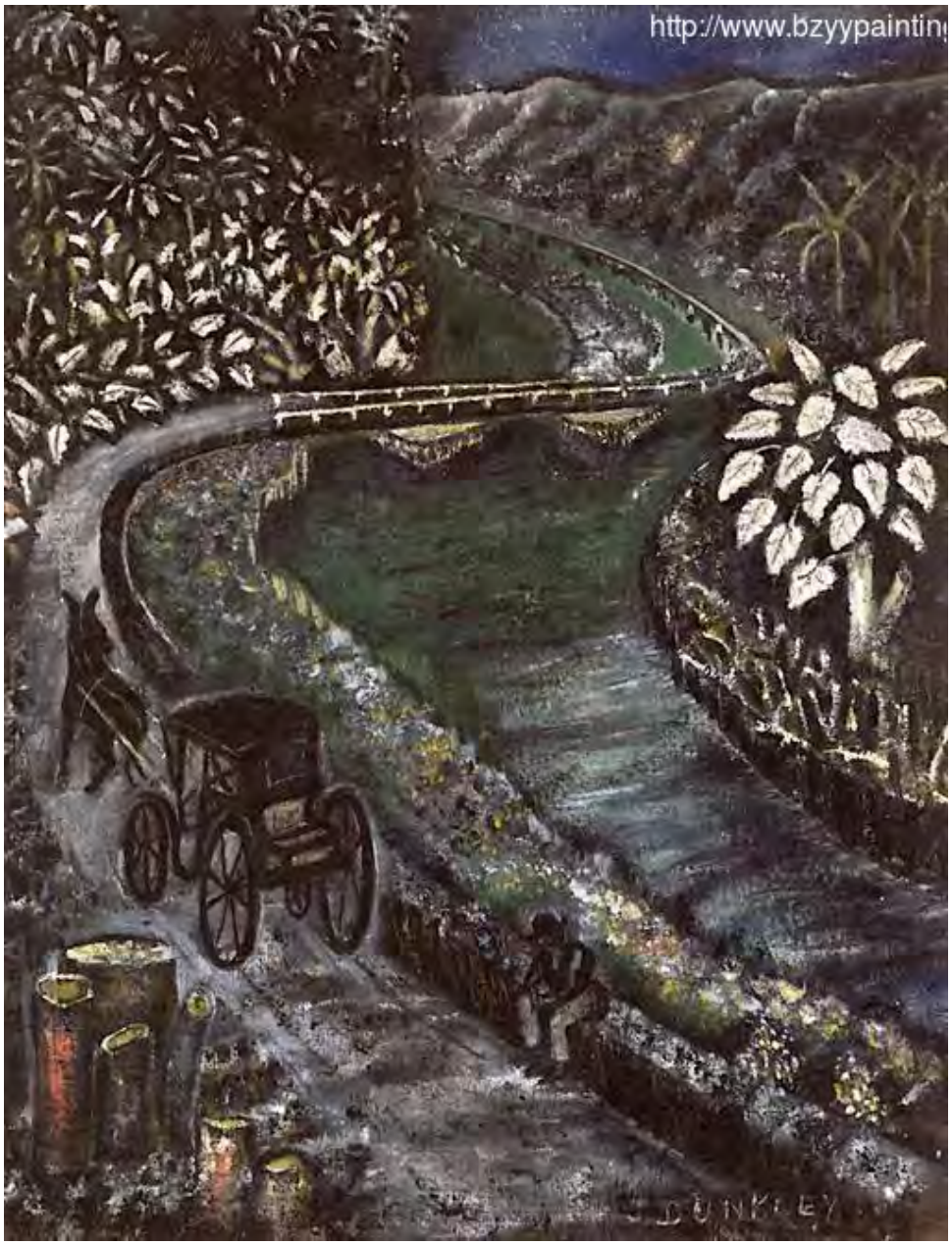


Figure 5. John Dunkley, *Flat Bridge*, mixed media on canvas, 20.625 x 16.5 inches, ca. 1935, The Michael Campbell Collection. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Jamaica.

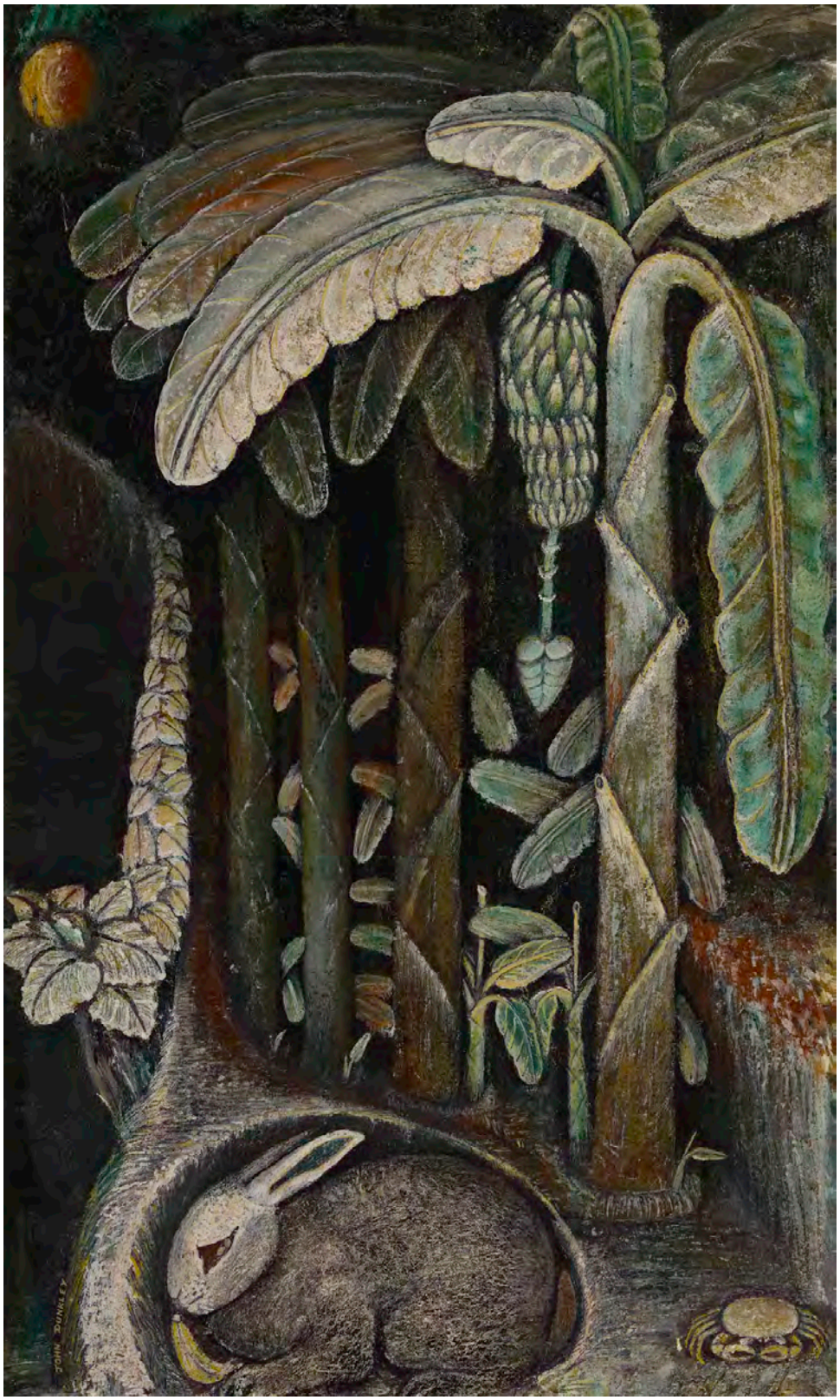


Figure 6. John Dunkley, *Banana Plantation*, mixed media on plywood, 29.125 x 17.625 inches, ca. 1945, National Gallery of Jamaica, Kingston, gift of Cassie Dunkley. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Jamaica.

Open Book, Broken Flesh: The Victoria and Albert Museum's Gothic Ivory Devotional Booklet as Simulacral Wound

Alexa Amore

Dating to c. 1330-1340, the tiny painted ivory devotional booklet in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London offers a number of compelling visual strategies for presenting Christ's Passion. Eschewing the carved diptych or triptych configurational formats—which are attested in fourteenth-century devotional ivories that contain narrative images by a much greater number of surviving examples—it belongs to a small group of extant ivory booklets comprised of carved outer covers and flat leaves painted with religious images and bound together by a strip of leather (Figure 1).[1] Thus, in its format and appearance the ivory object alludes to an illuminated codex. In addition, the internal painted program of the V&A booklet features both narrative and non-narrative images; the first nine leaves show the events spanning from the Last Supper to Christ's Resurrection, while the final five feature images of the Vera Icon and the *arma Christi,* or weapons of Christ's torment (Figures 2 and 3).[2] While the immersive devotional context of the V&A booklet and the semiotic nature of its images of the *arma Christi* have long been recognized,[3] this paper calls attention to the significance of the booklet's physical form in relation to its function as a stimulus of (and channel for) devotion to Christ's Passion. I argue that the underlying conceptual aspects of the booklet related to its codex format work in tandem with the content of its painted images and stood to enhance the efficaciousness of the booklet as a devotional tool by increasing the immediacy of its beholder's encounter with Christ's wounded body.

I am grateful to the organizers and attendees of the 36th Annual Art History Graduate Symposium at Florida State University (especially Kyle Killian and Preston McLane) for inviting me to present this research and for their helpful questions and suggestions. I would also like to thank Elina Gertsman and Robert Maxwell for reading earlier drafts of this paper and providing critical feedback that has helped me to greatly improve upon my original ideas. In addition, I am grateful to Hannah Kirby Wood and Johanna Pollick for inviting me to present a portion of this research at their session "Wounds Visible and Invisible in Late Medieval Christianity" at the 54th International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Debra Strickland and Cynthia Hahn also offered helpful feedback on this occasion. Lastly, I thank Ryan Pinchot for his boundless interest in my research and for serving as the principal sounding board for my ideas.

1 For an overview of gothic ivories, see especially Raymond Koechlin, *Les ivoires gothique français*, 3 vols. (Paris: F. de Nobele, 1968); Paul Williamson and Glyn Davies, *Medieval Ivory Carvings: 1200-1550* (London: V&A Publishing, 2014); and Peter Barnet, ed., *Images in Ivory: Precious Objects of the Gothic Age* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1997). The V&A booklet's next closest of kin, so to speak, is a painted ivory booklet of slightly smaller dimensions now in the Linsky collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1982.60.399). It contains carved scenes of the Passion on its outer covers and painted Marian images inside, though these have mostly worn away. Two further painted gothic ivory booklets are known, including one in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich (dating to c. 1350-1420), and another in the collection of the Museo Nazionale di Ravenna (dated to c. 1350-1425). These objects are published in Renate Eikelmann, *Mittelalterliche Elfenbeinarbeiten: Ausgewählte Werke aus den Beständen des Bayerischen Nationalmuseums* (Munich: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, 2010), cat. 16 and Clementina Rizzardi, Luciana Martini, Cetty Muscolino, and Elena Cristoferi, *Avori Bizantini e Medievali Nel Museo Nazionale di Ravenna* (Ravenna: A, Longo Editore snc., 1990), cat. 20-22. While some scholars estimate that thousands of pocket ivories were produced in the fourteenth century alone, it is difficult to speculate about the popularity of ivory devotional booklets in particular given the paucity of the surviving evidence. Their rarity today may indeed indicate that these objects were relatively uncommon in their time, perhaps specially commissioned rather than serially produced for the open market. On seriality in gothic ivory production see especially Nina Rowe, "Pocket Crucifixions: Jesus, Jews, and Ownership in Fourteenth-Century Ivories," *Studies in Iconography* 32 (2011)," 84 and 90, and Charles T. Little, "Gothic Ivory Carving In Germany," in *Images In Ivory: Precious Objects of the Gothic Age*, 82.

2 Some crucial studies on the iconography of Christ's Passion, the Vera Icon, and the *arma Christi* include Rudolf Berliner, "Arma Christi," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 6 (1955), 35-153; Robert Suckale, "Arma Christi: Überlegungen zur Zeichenhaftigkeit mittelalterlicher Andachtsbilder," *Städel-Jahrbuch* n.s. 6 (1977), 177-208; James Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Van Ghemmert, 1979); Hans Belting, *The Image and Its Public in the Middle Ages: Form and Function of Early Paintings of the Passion*, trans. Mark Bartusis and Raymond Meyer, (New Rochelle, New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1990); Herbert L. Kessler and Gerhard Wolf, eds., *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation: Papers from a Colloquium Held at the Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome, and the Villa Spelman, Florence, 1996* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1998); A.A. MacDonald, Bernard Ridderbos, and R.M. Schlusemann, eds., *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late Medieval Culture* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998); Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny Brown, *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: with a critical edition of 'O Vernicle'* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014).

3 See especially Heather Madar, "Iconography of Sign: A Semiotic Reading of the Arma Christi," in *ReVisioning: Critical Methods of Seeing Christianity in the History of Art*, ed. James Romaine and Linda Stratford (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2013), 114-131; Jeffrey Hamburger, "The Use of Images in the Pastoral Care of Nuns: the Case of Heinrich Suso and the Dominicans," *The Art Bulletin* 71/1 (1989), 30; idem., *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 209 and 340; Michael Camille, *Gothic Art, Glorious Visions* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 118-19; Henk W. Van Os, Eugène Honée, Hans M. J Nieuwdorp, and Bernhard Ridderbos, *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500* (London: Merrell Holberton, in Association with Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 1994), cat. 35; Barnet, ed., *Images in Ivory: Precious Objects of the Gothic Age*, cat. 40; and Williamson and Davies, *Medieval Ivory Carvings: 1200-1550*, cat. 121.

The V&A ivory booklet's images attest to the intensification of Passion devotion that began in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, spurred by theological treatises such as Anselm of Canterbury's *Why God Became Man* and Bonaventure's *The Tree of Life*.[4] This trend continued into the fourteenth century, which saw the emergence of liturgical plays that included dramatic reenactments of the Passion as well as the well-known devotional tract, *The Meditations on the Life of Christ*.[5] Much like the piecemeal images of Christ's Passion and the *arma Christi* contained within the V&A booklet, these texts often feature expanded narrative accounts of the Passion that linger on the gruesome details of each of Christ's bodily torments in order to emphasize the fundamental connection between Christ's bodily suffering on the cross and human redemption.[6] At the same time interest in the Passion increased, so too did private devotion among both monastics and lay people. Outside of the regimented space of the Church, books of hours, rosaries, ivory statuettes, and other individually-sized objects that were meant to be touched and viewed in close proximity, served as foci for meditative prayer, which could take place in a small chapel or in the privacy of the home or monastic cell. Tiny enough to be held in the palm of one hand, the diminutive scale of the V&A booklet confirms that it was intended for handling and viewing in this intimate context, while the appearance of a tonsured figure kneeling before Saint Lawrence, an unidentifiable bishop on the front cover, and a vision of the Coronation of the Virgin on the back indicates the patron and original owner of the booklet was a monk.[7]

It is unclear where the V&A booklet was produced. The apparent disjunction between the style and iconography of the carved outer covers and the painted and gilt images within has led some to suggest that the object was carved in the courtly milieu of Paris and painted slightly later in the Rhineland, most likely in Cologne.[8] Following this scenario, the booklet may have been initially designed as a bound set of ivory writing tablets.[9] Indeed, this would account for the presence of raised borders around the inner leaves, which would have allowed them to hold a thin layer of wax to serve as a temporary writing surface. However, most cataloguers of the V&A booklet agree that this need not be the case; as William Wixom points out, the widespread use of terra cotta models in the production of gothic ivory diptychs allows that the booklet may just as easily have been carved in Cologne—a major center of ivory production in its own right—from a Parisian model, while the image of the monk on the outer covers strongly suggests that the object was made-to-order for a specific patron.[10] Moreover, Paul Williamson suggests that the raised borders around the inner leaves of the V&A booklet may have been adapted from ivory wax writing tablet booklets, deployed in this case in order to protect the delicate painted images from the greasy fingers of its beholders.[11] Ultimately, whether the painted program of images was conceived at the same time as the booklet itself or slightly later, I maintain that the artist who painted the Passion images was in all likelihood sensitive to the medial and material particularities of the ivory codex support when conceiving and executing them—especially given the degree to which late medieval artists seem to have actively harnessed the physical properties of their media and materials to the specific meanings of their works.[12]

An underappreciated aspect of the object until now, the codex format of the V&A booklet has, in my view, both presentational and representational significance in light of the object's original function as an aid for devotion specifically to Christ's Passion. In contrast to other forms of contemporary ivory devotional media such as diptychs, polyptychs, and groups of small statuettes, the V&A booklet outlines a sequential and spatial rhythm for structuring its beholder's meditation on Christ's Passion by means of the codical arrangement of its images. The turning of each tiny ivory page facilitates narrative unfolding through time, while the tactile engagement demanded by the action of turning the pages implicates the beholder not only as a witness but also as a participatory agent in the story. In addition, the format of the codex carried a great deal of conceptual and metaphorical weight in the late medieval Christian imaginary,

4 Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo: Why the God-Man?*, trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Ex Fontibus Co., 2015); Bonaventure, "The Tree of Life," in *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God – The Tree of Life – The Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

5 See Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961). For more on the phenomenon of fourteenth century literature concerning the humanity of Christ and his suffering on the cross, see especially Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (New York: Routledge, 1993) and Thomas Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

6 Furthermore, many of the fourteenth-century texts concerned with Christ's Passion insistently characterize Jews as the principal tormentors of Jesus, a sentiment which can also be discerned in the grotesquely-stereotyped images of Jews that appear throughout the painted program of the V&A booklet. On the depictions of Jews in pocket ivories featuring scenes of Christ's Passion and the relationship between the iconography of gothic ivories and contemporary devotional literature, see Rowe, "Pocket Crucifixions," 98-99.

7 Williamson and Davies, *Medieval Ivory Carvings: 1200-1550*, cat. 121.

8 See for example Barnet, ed., *Images in Ivory,* cat. 40.

9 A representative example of this type of object can also be found in the collection of the V&A museum (804E-1891). Bound sets of ivory writing tablets are attested by a fewer number of surviving examples relative to statuettes, diptychs, and related types of objects, though a healthier number of these types of objects survive relative to the extant number of painted ivory booklets.

10 William Wixom, "Twelve Additions to the Medieval Treasury," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 59/4 (1972), 95-99. On terra cotta models used in ivory production see Little, "Gothic Ivory Carving in Germany," 82 and Rowe, "Pocket Crucifixions," 91-92.

11 Williamson and Davies, *Medieval Ivory Carvings: 1200-1550*, cat. 121.

12 This issue has been taken up extensively in recent art historical scholarship, particularly in relation to the materiality of figural sculpture; see especially Jacqueline Jung, "The Tactile and the Visionary: Notes on the Place of Sculpture in the Medieval Religious Imagination," in *Looking Beyond: Visions, Dreams, and Insights in Medieval Art & History*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 202-240; and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011).

particularly in light of the central subject of the object's image program—Christ's wounding and torment. In medieval Christian exegesis, the *verbum* or *logos* incarnate (that is, "the word made flesh") described at the beginning of the Gospel of John was understood to refer to Jesus; thus, bound parchment Gospel books as inscribed flesh could themselves be seen to both signify and performatively embody the concept of Christ incarnate.[13] In the fourteenth century, moreover, Christ's crucified body was explicitly likened to the process of parchment-making and to the appearance of an open book. For instance, a passage from a fourteenth-century English preacher's manual called the *Fasciculus Morum* reads: "[the Crucifixion] stretched out his blessed body, as a parchment maker can be seen to spread a hide in the sun. In this way Christ… offered his body like a charter to be written on. The nails in his hands were used as a quill, and his precious blood as ink."[14] Similarly, the contemporary English mystic Richard Rolle wrote: "sweet Jesus, thy body is like a book written with red ink; so is thy body all written with red wounds… grant me to read upon thy book, and somewhat to understand the sweetness of that writing."[15] Such metaphors find a striking visual parallel on the continent in an image from a French devotional anthology dating from the early fourteenth century that shows a female devotee at prayer before Christ on the cross, his sinuous body superimposed against the gutter of an open and inscribed book (Figure 4). The Christological import of the codex format to which these contemporary verbal and visual images attest generates a self-reflexive relationship between the central subject of the V&A booklet's painted images and the booklet in its physical totality. Furthermore, the strikingly stark images of the *arma Christi* depicted on the final leaves of the booklet—which represent the events of Christ's Passion obliquely through a system of indexical signs—may have primed the beholder for perceiving the physical form of the V&A booklet as a symbolic representation of Christ as well as a vehicle for presenting images of his Passion.[16]

In concert with its codex format, the ivory material of the V&A booklet enhances the object's symbolic affinity with Christ's body. Like the animal parchment used in book production throughout the Middle Ages, elephant ivory resembles human flesh and responds to human touch.[17] As Peter Barnet has pointed out, the twelfth-century monk Theophilus uses the Latin terms *os* (bone) and *ebur* (ivory) interchangeably in his brief discussion of the material in his treatise on the Various Arts, implying that ivory was recognized by its medieval audience as the literal stuff of bodies.[18] Yet at the same time as ivory resembles flesh in terms of its color and organicity, it suggests transcendence and sublimity in ways that parchment cannot. When polished, ivory's opaque surface gives off a reflective luminosity that makes it an ideal support for representations of the fully human and fully divine body of Christ, while its exotic African provenance may have lent it a further aspect of otherworldliness from the point of view of the Latin west. Finally, the V&A booklet's fusion of the hallmark features of two more common and distinct types of devotional media—that is, the format of the prayer book and the material and outward appearance of the diptych—reinforces the Christological significance of ivory's simultaneous terrestriality and otherworldliness and resonates through its intermediality with Jesus as one being of two natures.

In its presentation of images depicting Christ's Passion, the V&A ivory booklet profits from two further reciprocal characteristics that are inherent to the codex format: that is, its physical articulation of both revelation and rupture. Though ivory diptychs and polyptychs composed of two or more carved ivory panels joined together by means of metal hinges similarly exploit this "trope of unveiling," the spatial economy of the V&A ivory's format has a greater yield in this respect, given its seven consecutive openings.[19] As Elina Gertsman notes, medieval audiences' awareness of the revelatory nature of the codex format is illustrated in many thirteenth-century illuminated Apocalypse manuscripts, in which the seven seals of the book held by the lamb described in chapters five and six of the Book of Revelation are shown dramatically flying open one by one, cultivating a sense of anticipation in the beholder who turns the pages of the book containing these images and emphasizing the allure of esoteric knowledge to which the unsealed book in the image grants access.[20]

Revelation is both accompanied and facilitated by rupture, itself a kind of wounding that in the V&A booklet recursively brings into view successive images of wounding and wounds.[21] The intense interest in Christ's wounds and blood evident throughout the V&A booklet registers the influence of contemporary Franciscan spiritual literature, which figured the bleeding wounds of Christ as gateways to

13 Herbert L. Kessler, "The Book as Icon," in *In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000*, ed. Michelle Brown (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2006), 77-103.

14 Quoted from Nancy Thebaut, "Bleeding Pages, Bleeding Bodies: A Gendered Reading of British Library MS Egerton 1821," *Medieval Feminist Forum* 45/2 (2009), 187-188.

15 Quoted from Thebaut, "Bleeding Pages, Bleeding Bodies," 187-188.

16 On the semiological significance of the *arma Christi* see especially Suckale, "Arma Christi," 177-208 and Madar, "Iconography of Sign," 114-131.

17 Sarah Guérin, "Meaningful Spectacles: Gothic Ivories Staging the Divine," *The Art Bulletin* 95/1 (2013), 71.

18 Barnet, "Gothic Sculpture in Ivory: An Introduction," in Barnet, ed., *Images in Ivory,* 7.

19 I borrow the phrase "trope of unveiling" from Elina Gertsman, *Worlds Within: Opening the Medieval Shrine Madonna* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 42. On the typical spatial and narrative organizations of gothic ivory diptychs and triptychs see Harvey Stahl, "Narrative Structures and Content in Some Gothic Ivories of the Life of Christ," in Barnet, ed., *Images in Ivory,* 94-114, esp. 97-102.

20 Gertsman, *Worlds Within,* 42.

21 The concept of rupture and its pertinence to bodily wounds and openings is explored at length in Gertsman, *Worlds Within,* 57-100.

spiritual nourishment and salvation.[22] As Bonaventure wrote in a spiritual handbook for nuns, for example, "Draw near, O handmaid, with loving steps to Jesus wounded for you… be not satisfied with putting your finger into the holes made by the nails in his hands; neither let it be sufficient to put your hand into the wound in his side... but enter entirely by the door in his side and go straight up to the very heart of Jesus."[23] Notably, the intimate, tactile manner in which the V&A booklet's beholder must interface with the tiny object closely resembles the way in which Bonaventure instructs nuns in this passage to imagine themselves physically entering into Jesus' wounds. Furthermore, the very breaking open of the flesh-like ivory object by the beholder's fingers to reveal its painted images may be understood as a performative echo of the flaying, piercing, and breaking of Christ's skin pictured within.

Continuing with this line of thought (and keeping in mind the wealth of Christological metaphor that attends both the material of ivory and the format of the codex discussed above), the polychromed and gilded ivory leaves of the booklet may be said to be suggestive of bleeding tissue, though admittedly in a vague sense. However, one image in particular—that of Christ's disproportionately-large side wound among the *arma Christi*—literally equivocates blood and paint, flesh and bone (Figure 3). Here, the red wound is figured on the ivory ground as if the ivory were Christ's skin. Though it slightly overlaps the lance with the sponge and is hemmed in by the other instruments of Christ's torture imaged around it, there is no clear delineation between the end of the image and the beginning of the flesh-colored organic support, since we expect the wound to be located on a body. Given its ambiguous boundaries, the visual and tactile resemblance between the matter of ivory and the matter of flesh, and the semblance between ivory's surface effects and the dual nature of Christ, this image of the side wound stands to further transform the V&A booklet itself into an interactive, three-dimensional image of Christ's wounded and bleeding body. More than a collection of images of the events and instruments of the Passion for passive viewing, the booklet offers its beholder a simulated experience of Christ's wounding and torment through a chain of visual and conceptual allusions that brings the events of sacred history forcefully into the present.

In addition to the image of Christ's side wound, the relationship between image and support is rendered ambiguous in one further miniature within the V&A booklet: that of the Vera Icon, or true image of Christ, thought to have been imprinted upon the veil with which Christ wiped his face while carrying the cross to Calvary (Figure 2). Here, the luminous ivory support serves as a substitute in the image for the veil. Thus, it is as if the image of Christ's face has been imprinted directly onto the ivory. In the late Middle Ages, images that reproduced the Vera Icon were felt to retain the power of the original image, whose very origin as a replica safeguarded it from diminishment through a theoretically endless chain of replication.[24] As Jeffrey Hamburger and David Areford have emphasized, images of the Vera Icon in the early medium of print tend to express a self-conscious discourse on the nature of representation that complicates the image's status as a copy.[25] In a similar vein, the ambiguity of the boundaries of the painted image of the Vera Icon in the V&A booklet may reflect the medieval reception of images of the Vera Icon as both an image of the holy relic and the very thing itself. The conspicuous blurring of the boundaries between the image and the support playfully undermines the status of the crafted image as a copy of the original veil, threatening to collapse the distinction between them.

The subtle elision between copy and original in the V&A booklet's image of the Vera Icon introduces a way of seeing that also bears on the image of Christ's side wound as it is enigmatically rendered on the next bifolium. Following the logic of the image of the Vera Icon, the image of Christ's wound upon the metaphorically suggestive page of the ivory codex is capable of being perceived as both an image of the wound and wounded flesh. The multitude of ways in which the V&A booklet foregrounds the formal, tactile, and conceptual affinities between open book and broken flesh express a sense of the latent animacy of the booklet's matter comparable to contemporary sculptural images of Christ, which—in addition to frequently being made out of organic materials and sometimes even enhanced with moveable joints—were sometimes perceived to have come to life in monasteries and convents in the late Middle Ages.[26] While the V&A booklet as an object constitutes a symbolic representation of Christ as the word incarnate, as I show above, its performative image of Christ's side wound underscores its potential to facilitate a simulated encounter with Christ's wounded body in the mind's eye of its pious beholder.

Taking stock of the physical and metaphorical characteristics of the V&A booklet's material and format in relation to its images increases our understanding of how the object cultivated empathetic engagement, bringing its beholder to

22 On devotion to Christ's blood and wounds in the Late Middle Ages see especially Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

23 Quoted from Jeffrey Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 72.

24 On the history and problematics of the representation of the Vera Icon see especially Gerhard Wolf, "From Mandylion to Veronica: Picturing the 'Disembodied' Face and Disseminating the True Image of Christ in the Latin West," in Kessler and Wolf, eds., *The Holy Face and the Paradox of Representation,* 153-179.

25 David Areford, "Multiplying the Sacred: the Fifteenth-Century Woodcut as Reproduction, Surrogate, Simulation," in Peter Parshall, ed., *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe*. Studies in the History of Art 75. Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers LII (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 143-145; and Jeffrey Hamburger, "'In gebeden vnd bilden geschriben': Prints as Exemplars of Piety and the Culture of the Copy in Fifteenth-Century Germany," in Parshall, ed., *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, 155-189, esp. 156.

26 For a detailed discussion of this phenomenon see Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in the Late Medieval Europe*, 44-61 and 105-121.

the brink of encounter with Christ's suffering on the cross. In my analysis of the V&A booklet, the object's materiality holds as much stake as its iconographic content in the production of its meaning. As a case study, this paper reiterates the importance of thinking about the ways in which medieval artists marshalled their materials in the service of the subject matter of their images and further extends this kind of thinking to the configurational support of a series of images. In the V&A booklet, the codex format does both presentational and representational work, transforming the page-turning viewer into a participatory agent at the same time as the object itself transforms into a version of Christ through a series of verbal and visual metaphors. Whether or not it was conceived as a booklet of Passion images from the start, its organic material and codical format were laden with Christological import that made it well-suited to be fashioned into one. Finally, in addition to containing images of wounds, the booklet itself can be understood like the im-age of the Vera Icon that it contains as a simulacrum —in this case, of Jesus' wounded body, its fleshy substance breaking open to reveal bleeding images. In the late medieval Christian world this aspect of the booklet was probably perceived intuitively, but today it only becomes visible when we look beyond the surface.

New York University, Institute of Fine Arts

Figure 1. Devotional Booklet. French and/or German (probably Cologne), c. 1330-1340. Elephant ivory, paint, gilding and leather. Each leaf: 10.5 cm x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (11-1872). Photo credit: Kylie Fisher.

Figure 2. Devotional Booklet, folios 4v-5r. French and/or German (probably Cologne), c. 1330-1340. Elephant ivory, paint, gilding and leather. Each leaf: 10.5 cm x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (11-1872).

Figure 3. Devotional Booklet, folios 5v-6r. French and/or German (probably Cologne), c. 1330-1340. Eleph Figure 4. Devotee in Prayer before the Book of Christ. Made in France, c. 1330-1339. Ink, tempera, and gold on parchment. Paris, BNF MS. Nouv. Acq. fr. 4338, fol. 141v. Source: gallica. bnf.fr / BnF ant ivory, paint, gilding and leather.
Each leaf: 10.5 cm x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London (11-1872).

Figure 4. Devotee in Prayer before the Book of Christ. Made in France, c. 1330-1339. Ink, tempera, and gold on parchment. Paris, BNF MS. Nouv. Acq. fr. 4338, fol. 141v. Source: gallica.bnf.fr / BnF

Living Rivers: Collective Agency in Carolina Caycedo's *Be Dammed*

Tara Kaufman

Carolina Caycedo recognizes rivers as living nuclei of extensive ecological networks. Born in London to Colombian parents in 1978, Caycedo draws attention to the privatization of water in South America and the environmental impacts of large-scale dams, whose construction and subsequent operation displaces millions of people worldwide and lays waste to local ecosystems. Caycedo describes rivers as social agents, a term that aligns with new materialist methodologies, such as those recently written by scholars such as Jane Bennett, that perceive human and nonhuman life, and even objects, as vital and responsive entities within complex networks of exchange.[1] Like Caycedo's work, new materialism disposes of the perception of the environment as simply a resource to be exploited for economic gain and instead recognizes the significance of the innumerable organisms and natural processes that comprise and sustain the world we live in. In this essay I take up a new materialist lens to read Caycedo's project, *Be Dammed* (2013 to Present), in which she works across media to counteract the anthropocentric perception of the environment that deems it subservient to human industry. In *Be Dammed*, Caycedo collaborates with local communities and resistance groups to create videos, multimedia sculptures, and participatory performances that contest the damming of rivers. This essay focuses specifically on Caycedo's *Geochoreographies*, or collaborative performances, and her *Cosmotarrayas*, or hanging sculptures. I argue that by employing memory, collectivity, and performance, Caycedo's *Be Dammed* project invites her audience, and in extension the larger global public, to adapt a greater attentiveness to the lively ecological networks that bind human practices and environmental devastation. In doing so, Caycedo protests the erasure of animate creatures from sites pegged for industrial development.

The Trouble with Dams

Building a towering concrete structure necessitates the clearing of land and everything on it. Consequently, those who live on the river's edge are bribed to relocate or, if they resist, forcibly removed—often violently.[2] In 2009, the construction of Colombia's largest hydroelectric dam, El Quimbo, was given governmental approval by President Álvaro Uribe Vélez after nearly twenty years of rejected permits due to the dam's projected environmental impact on both the area's biodiversity and the communities who depended on it.[3] The approval of El Quimbo instigated the formation of new coalitions who contested the dam's inevitable displacement of people and destruction of ecological health. Of particular concern were the impoverished farming and fishing communities who subsisted on the land and were now forcibly removed from their homes by Enel-Endesa, the corporation spearheading El Quimbo's construction. Unsurprisingly, Enel-Endesa is a Spanish-owned company and a subsidiary of an Italian utility company and their disregard for the local socio-environmental conditions of Colombia therefore continues the neocolonialist practice of foreigners (and especially Westerners) extracting and profiting from Latin American resources with little to no mention of the humanitarian and ecological consequences. Indeed, the systematic removal of bodies from sites of industrial development indicates the priorities of the controlling entity. In the case of El Quimbo (and any of the numerous dams that have been built throughout South America), both the government and corporations such as Enel-Endesa prioritize capital income over the lives of civilians. Enel-Endesa's effort to purchase, privatize, and subsequently profit from a strip of land inhabited by an array of animate beings objectifies and recolonizes a site that has already long been subjected to the whims of Western development.

The corruption of this system has leaked into the press, where little to no reporting of the violent removal of civilians has occurred. Recently over 270 people worldwide signed

1 Caycedo uses the term 'social agents' to describe rivers on her website. See Carolina Caycedo, http://carolinacaycedo.com/esto-no-es-agua-this-is-not-water-2015. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), xiii. Bennett links vitality with affect. "What I am calling impersonal affect or material vibrancy is not a spiritual supplement or 'life force' added to the matter said to house it. Mine is not a vitalism in the traditional sense; I equate affect with materiality, rather than posit a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body.".

2 Large dams are estimated to have displaced over 40 million people worldwide. While all dams inherently affect their surrounding environment, large dams in particular are known to be ecologically destructive and productively deficient. For more on this topic, see Patrick McCully, *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams: Enlarged and Updated Edition,* (London: Zed, 2001). For a deeper look into people becoming displaced due to dam construction, see Rob Nixon, "Unimagined Communities: Megadams, Monumental Modernity, and Developmental Refugees," in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 150-151.

3 Carolina Caycedo, "Be Dammed," *Carolina Caycedo*, accessed October 29, 2018. http://carolinacaycedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/BeDammedDAADBrochure1.pdf.

and released an open letter outlining the brutality that has been invoked on those who resist displacement:

> The region where the [Hidroituango] dam [in Colombia] is being built has been the site of more than 62 massacres in the last 30 years, with more than 3500 dead. These massacres facilitated the displacement of communities to make place for the project. Since the crisis started, several members of the Rios Vivos Movement—a social organization of riverside inhabitants opposing the construction of the dam—have been assassinated.[4]

The murder of resistant civilians is evidently part and parcel of dam construction, to the extent that the construction sites often become equipped with military presence to ward off any lingering or protesting residents. Caycedo's *Geochoreographies*, or collaborative actions, both revitalize the lives that have been disrupted and reconsider individual human subjectivities toward our animated planet and the social, political, and environmental fluctuations that affect it.[5]

Performative Protest

While the structure of the *Geochoreographies* is loose, activist groups, individuals, and Caycedo take part in collaborative actions that seek to reassert bodily presence on sites of displacement. *Be Dammed* is the result of years of field research, interviews, and collaboration with community members and previously established and sophisticated networks of local resistance groups such as Asoquimbo, or the Association of the Affected Peoples of Quimbo, and Jaguos por el Territorio. Within this dynamic Caycedo listens to the stories and lends her voice to their cause.[6] The aesthetic or experiential component of the *Geochoreographies* is therefore formulated both dialogically and performatively, in an effort to make audible the voices that are otherwise silenced.[7] Participants of the *Geochoreographies* therefore take part in community-building activities such as cooking meals together, organizing and participating in protests, and partaking in collaborative performances. In rebinding their own ruptured networks, the *Geochoreography* participants stress the significance of maintaining ecological systems rather than demolishing them in pursuit of capitalizing on natural resources. The *Geochoreographies* therefore often take place on sites of dam construction, where the participants counter the dam's erasure of life by moving their own living bodies in concert with one another to envision the composite and dynamic organism that is the river.

For instance, Caycedo and 250 local community members executed *Geochoreography Ortiguaz* (2015) as a means of exploring Colombia's Magdalena River as a connecting point between species, ecosystems, and social histories.[8] In lying on the sand and linking their bodies to spell out words of resistance, such as "Rios Vivos," the participants asserted the river not only as a habitat for swarms of aquatic organisms, but as a living entity in itself, therefore visibly outlining the intricate ties between lively beings and materials that are disrupted by dam regulation (Figure 1). The participants' nonhierarchical methods of assembly were visibly spelled out when they aligned locally-gathered stones in the shape of concentric circles on the sand, an act that implied a sense of continuance or of becoming-with each other in troubling times.[9] This motion of solidarity was certainly cemented by the materiality of the stones themselves: unyielding, organic, palimpsests of the river's environmental-historical memory (Figure 2).

In considering the histories of the river in a recent interview, Caycedo reflected on the Aymaran term *nayrapacha*, or "past-as-future," a notion that understands time as continuous and cyclical as the stones the participants arranged one after the other in concentric circles on the sand.[10] In referring to the Magdalena as the Yuma River, its indigenously-given name, in another collaborative body-word performance, the *Geochoreography* participants blurred the boundaries between the river's past and present and alluded to its role as an ecological agent that continually evolves with the transforming social and political histories of Colombia. The river retains these histories as the ecosystem within and around it reflects the changes as time, people, and water move forward and disperse. As the participants continued *Geochoreography Ortiguaz,* they repeatedly tossed and retrieved fishing nets into the river, defying their inevitably fishless future by performing a ritualistic carrying on of the quotidian tasks that would soon become irrelevant as the newly-built reservoir subsumed the river's perimeter and depopulated its waters. The river and all of its swimming inhabitants were therefore understood as reactive to the circumstances that impacted it and it is in this way a social agent—a living entity—that manifests the whims of human practices in its very constitution.

Recognizing the river's ecosystem as the complex and agentic network it is aligns with Bennett's theory of vital ma-

4 "Hidroituango Dam Crisis: We Demand Transparent Information that Privileges the People and the Environment, from the Government, EPM, and the Mainstream Media," June 11, 2018, https://www.recuperarelcauce.com/en/.

5 Caycedo mentioned the term 'environmental-historical memory in an interview. Carolina Caycedo (Artist), personal communication, January 31, 2019.

6 Ibid.

7 Grant Kester, "Dialogical Aesthetics" in *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004): 82-123.

8 At the time of the *Geochoreography*, the Magdalena's water was soon to be privatized by the Oporapa Dam, which was part of the Quimbo Hydroelectric Project.

9 I have Donna Haraway to thank for the term 'become-with,' who uses it consistently throughout her book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

10 Caycedo, personal communication, January 31, 2019. For more on nayrapacha, see Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "Aymara Past, Aymara Future," *Report on the Americas* 25, no. 3 (1991): 18-45. DOI: 10.1080/10714839.1991.11723133

terialisms, in which she questions why we perceive objects and materials as lifeless when they do indeed affect other things or beings, even if chemically. The ecological implication of this thinking is the ability to recognize not only the very interconnectedness of living beings in our many ecosystems, but also the agency inherent in even nonliving matter that, though it may not live and breathe, it retains a critical impact on the things that do. Caycedo's description of the river as a living agent is quite prescient considering the river's forceful currents, its cultivation of life and sustaining of elaborate webs of hungry creatures, or its sheer ability (though forced) to produce energy for entire cities of hectic humans to go about their days sending emails and riding subway trains. In recognizing the river as a living entity, Caycedo and her collaborators allude to both the agency and vitality that are hidden but present underneath the murky, moving surface of the Magdalena.

To be sure, while *Be Dammed* is created through conversation with activist groups and community members seeking palpable change, the project does not claim to outline a blueprint for achieving alternative energy production, but rather it focuses on consciousness-raising by offering a distinctive space in which to contemplate human individuals' subjective relations to the natural world, thus accentuating the connectivity between the politics, economics, species, matter, space, and time. Certainly, there are social practices such as the artist collective Ala Plastica that often do seek alternative development solutions to mega-construction projects such as dams. Like Caycedo, Ala Plastica collaborates with local communities to construct new social models to counter corporate privatization and destruction of land. However, the collective focuses on creating achievable alternatives to the corporate models of economic development, such as the cultivation of soil-stabilizing reeds as a natural system of ecological replenishment.[11] While such projects attempt to create sustainable models that counter environmentally destructive practices, Caycedo's work approaches these issues from an intellectual level by reading between the lines that have been fed to the public by the government, corporations, and mainstream media. In this way, her project arguably seeks alternatives to the very discourse of environmental issues.

While the implementation of stricter regulations on corporations would no doubt be welcome, *Be Dammed* instead takes to task the capitalistic and anthropocentric perception of the environment that led to these crises and therefore imagines how human practices could interact differently with our vibrant biosphere. The collaborative, conversational, and aesthetic dimension of the *Geochoreographies* thus operates as a perceptual experience, or as a process of working through the very social and political structures that have determined the river and its inhabitants as subservient to the capitalist economy and subsequently finding new ways to subvert this thinking. The *Geochoreographies* therefore depart from the various activisms already in place surrounding large-scale dams by harnessing the capabilities of ecological utopias to display the ties between social, political, and environmental developments—including our own mobility in forging new (and more sustainable) ways of enacting them. The notion of movement permeates the project both physically, by collectively moving the human body to maintain visibility on recently privatized land, and imaginatively, by creating a new discursive and relational dynamic to the mosaicked and animated networks that sustain our world.

Participation therefore serves as a platform on which to become-with each other in the present moment and envision a future in which humans have formed constellations of animacies and technologies that exist in a state of reciprocity rather than destruction. The *Geochoreographies* would not exist without the community members and activists who share their experiences with Caycedo. Their collective voices and actions therefore subvert the oppression that was imposed upon them by those complicit in the mega-dam construction. In this dynamic, participation becomes a liberating force, or a medium with which to claim agency in the face of the potentially catastrophic ramifications of social and environmental injustice. In maintaining systems of reciprocity, the performances are radical and perhaps representative of the sort of collaboration that humans are capable of taking up in order to build better relationships with our troubled planet.

Cosmic Ecologies

These counter-constellations of ecological reciprocity are continued in Caycedo's *Cosmotarrayas*, or hanging sculptures (Figure 3). Caycedo weaves into fishing nets miscellaneous objects such as shoes, garments, and plants that were relinquished to her by the fisher people whose use for them was rendered obsolete when the dam's construction eliminated the river's fish populations and consequently, their livelihoods. These *Cosmotarrayas* are assembled with one or several tree branches fastened at their centers to provide a support for both the attached objects and the net that is draped across them like an outer skin. Dangled from the gallery ceiling by a single cable, the assembled objects coalesce into corporeal forms that evoke a sense of home, of bodily presence as a means of resisting erasure, or of a continuance of what are otherwise fractured networks of life. The term *Cosmotarraya* is itself assembled from the notion of the *cosmos*, or a vision of the universe as a well-ordered whole, and *atarraya*, a Spanish noun that translates to English as 'a cast net.'

These memory-laden objects recall Colombian artist Alicia Barney Caldas's *Diario* series, in which she compiles found objects into hanging sculptures to question the cycles of growth and decay that objects themselves experience in their interactions with their surrounded environment, as well as how these experiences speak to human practices and memory. Like Caldas's *Diarios*, Caycedo's *Cosmotarrayas*

11 See their initiative *Junco: Emergent Species* (1995) in Grant H. Kester, "Otros-Nosotros: An Interview with Ala Plastica," in *Collective Situations: Readings in Contemporary Latin American Art, 1995-2010*, ed. Bill Kelley Jr. and Grant H. Kester (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 259-278.

raise questions toward the previous owners of the assembled objects. In bridging the past and ongoing experiences of displaced peoples through their discarded objects, Caycedo once again aligns her work with the notion of nayrapacha, or the continuousness of time and the ability to reconsider the past in order to look into the future. The *Cosmotarrayas* therefore speak to the activism that persists even after the dam's completion and exemplify the collaborative and interdisciplinary networks that rebind fragmented publics. In all appearances, the *Cosmotarrayas* evoke a stillness that belies their history as mobile tools that were repeatedly thrown, gathered, and pulled through the water as it rushed through them, containing and sustaining life. In this way, their transformation from a utilitarian object to an art object mimics the dam's regulation of those lively bodies who occupy the river and the water's edge, and through their outward inertness these leftover objects bear the traces of the very forces who immobilized them.

The art-going audience of Los Angeles is therefore presented with otherworldly objects whose stories of displacement in the Global South critique the Western neoliberalist practices that the United States, too, takes part in. The work thus offers a heated commentary on the imbricated histories of colonialism, late capitalism, and environmental ruin that exacerbates loss of life, wealth inequality, and disempowerment. In taking to task these systems, the *Cosmotarrayas* strengthen the resistant voices of the displaced riverine communities in Colombia and push their stories into the national—and even global—memory.

In alluding to the presence of thousands of animated bodies, the *Cosmotarrayas* evoke a hovering and lifelike presence within the gallery, one not unlike the earlier work of Eva Hesse, whose woven work evoked a sense of bodily forms and social commentary. During this modernist moment, sculpture, as argued by Michael Fried, took on a lifelike presence in both its size and its invitation to the viewer to enter its surrounding space.[12] Parallel to this notion of sculptural presence, the bodies of Caycedo's *Cosmotarrayas* seem to levitate in the gallery, equally as adrift in the air between the floor and the ceiling as they were as fishing nets thrown into the air above the river's surface (Figure 4). As they loom above the viewer's head and cast shadows onto the walls of the gallery, the *Cosmotarrayas* both humble the viewer and beckon them closer to examine the objects entangled in the nets of the sculptures. The *Cosmotarrayas* are amalgamated with the very stuff that comprises the riverine communities, capturing within their nets the networks of life that the river fosters, from microorganisms to fish. Indeed, the crisscrossed weaving of the nets quite literally resemble these networks and are occasionally disrupted by an object that reminds the viewer of the human and nonhuman beings who, in reality, were indeed disrupted by dams such as the El Quimbo. With their shadowy, poignant presence in what is otherwise a sterile space, the *Cosmotarrayas* metamorphose into celestial beings—born from a vision of the cosmos—and stand in as liaisons for all entities displaced by the building of dams.

Figuratively speaking, *Be Dammed* opens the floodgates for reinterpreting one's own position in relation to nature in order to develop a sharper criticality toward the financialization of nature and all of its vibrant entities. Despite the project's focus on themes of destruction and domination, it manages to prioritize the regeneration of social and ecological welfare. Theoretically, Caycedo could continue her *Be Dammed* project for years into the unforeseeable future. The global demand for energy production will not slow, and the support for large dams will likely parallel this trend. While one can hope for a rise in clean energy production, projects such as *Be Dammed* at the very least insist upon the entanglement of human practices, politics, and ecological welfare in order to offer new models for living. In joining forces with fellow opponents of ecological devastation, Caycedo illuminates a vision of our world as an exceptionally complex and vibrant mosaic in which even the very objects we carry, our histories, the infinitesimal organisms that go unseen, and materials like water are all vital to earthly experience.

Temple University, Tyler School of Art

12 Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 116-147.

Figure 2 [*facing page, bottom*]. Jaguos por el Territorio with Carolina Caycedo, *Geochoreography La Jagua*, site-specific collaborative action, 2015. Photo credit: Jaguos por el Territorio.

Figure 1. Jaguos por el Territorio with Rios Vivos and Carolina Caycedo, Geochoreography Oritoguaz, site-specific collaborative action with support of Mas Arte Mas Accion, 2015. Photo credit: Jaguos por el Territorio

Figure 3. Carolina Caycedo, *Cosmotarraya Yuma*, mixed media hanging sculpture, 2016. Photo credit: Carolina Caycedo.

Figure 4. Carolina Caycedo, *Cosmotarrayas*, mixed media hanging sculptures, 2016. Installation view at Incerteza Viva, 32nd São Paulo Biennial. Photo credit: Carolina Caycedo.

Sarah Miriam Peale's *Mary Leypold Griffith* and the Staging of Republican Motherhood

Sarah Leary

In 1841, Sarah Miriam Peale painted a portrait of a young Mary Leypold Griffith (Figure 1). Mary sits on the floor. Her left leg is gracefully crossed over the right. Her vibrant, red dress stands out against the nondescript background. She holds a white ribbon that she cuts to form a jagged pattern, and yet looks up from this activity to the viewers. But her mature expression and poise seem incommensurate with her age. Without the benefit of the object label, a viewer would assume that Mary is four or five – old enough to wield scissors and to understand the educational materials that surround her. But in point of fact, Mary Griffith died of Scarlet Fever at the age of two and a half in 1841 – the same year in which Peale painted this portrait. Much of Sarah Miriam Peale's work was done from observation – from life which begs the question: why would Peale depict Mary so very much alive and so mature when she had in fact passed away that year? This essay analyzes Peale's portrait in relation to period ideas about gender, education, and death to argue that Peale aged and animated Mary in order to represent her as a young patriot. Thereby, the portrait aided her mother Priscilla's mourning process, but also served as proof that—despite Mary's premature death—Priscilla had fulfilled her maternal duties. In serving this function for Priscilla, the portrait served it for Sarah Miriam Peale, too. Although Peale had no children of her own, painting young patriots enabled the artist to contribute to the health of the Republic and thereby fulfill her maternal duties as well.

Mary's passing had not been a surprise to the Griffith family. The young girl had been sick for several weeks before finally succumbing to her illness on January 26. Upon her passing, in keeping with upper class practice at the time, the Griffith family commissioned Peale to create a portrait to honor their lost daughter. Two days after Mary's death, Sarah Miriam Peale arrived at the Griffith household to cast a death mask as well as take notes and sketches of Mary's belongings.[1] Unfortunately, Peale's death mask of Mary Griffith doesn't survive, but it would have looked somewhat like the life mask taken a few months prior to Lincoln's assassination (Figure 2). Such masks developed from the tradition of death masks and offer insight into what Peale's mask of Mary may have looked like. The Griffith family also lent Peale a miniature of Mary (also lost) to aid in her representation of their daughter. These aids were supposed to help Peale represent Mary as she appeared and lived in the days before she died, but Peale took several liberties with Mary's appearance that aged her beyond her years and introduced books and symbols that allude to the future role Mary never fulfilled.

Mary's eyes seem disproportionally large, and her nose is sizable and sharply pointed for a child her age. She is graceful and still in a manner beyond her two and a half years. Further, the books and primers around Mary suggest she could read them on her own, but, as Priscilla Griffith notes in her diary, at the time of her death Mary was still learning the alphabet.[2] Additionally, according to scholar of American art Christina Michelon, it was Peale's decision to include educational materials in the portrait.[3] Purchased by Priscilla Griffith as a second birthday gift for Mary, the pamphlets and primer would have prepared the young girl for adulthood. Directly next to Mary rests the book *Dame Trott and Her Comical Cat* and in the lower right corner of the composition laying open is *The History of Dame-Crump and Her Little White Pig*. These books are about a cat and a pig who disrupt their female owners as they perform their household duties. The act of reading these books represents "industrial play," a term Michelon coined to describe children's activities that develop "their morality and their goodness" and help them mature out of the natural mischievousness of childhood.[4] Through industrial play, children engaged in positive activities that contributed to their own personal growth, but also learned to maintain the household.

Various symbols throughout the portrait provide further insight into the qualities a mature Mary would grow to possess. Before Mary lays an alphabet book, whose final pages

My sincere thanks to Florida State University for the opportunity to present this paper and for all the constructive feedback I received; to Christina Michelon for her generosity in sharing the transcript of her lecture on Peale's *Mary Leypold Griffith* with me; and to Dr. Nika Elder whose insight and advice has been invaluable throughout this process.

1 Christina Michelon, "Capturing a Likeness: Labor, Loss, and Recuperation in Antebellum Maryland," May 4, 2017, Smithsonian American Art Museum.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

are visible to the viewer. On the page for the letter "y," a yellow canary is depicted. While most period representations of birds with young girls depict live birds trapped in a cage indoors, Peale represents an illustrated bird that is pictured outdoors. Such live birds trapped in cages spoke to the domestic roles that young women would grow to fulfill.[5] The alphabet book introduces the canary to Mary by proxy, and thereby, attests to an even earlier moment of indoctrination. The formal parallel between Mary and the blue curtain furthers underscores the way in which she was destined for a life lived indoors. Echoing the shape of Mary's body, the curtain speaks to her future stalwart role within the home, and the floral pattern upon it signals the qualities she was to exhibit there. The rich blue curtain is covered with roses in a soft muted red. The rose was one of the most important floral symbols in nineteenth-century paintings of girls. Art historian Claire Perry notes that "the rose represented purity and grace, attributes thought to be essential in the nation's young womanhood."[6] While roses symbolized purity and grace, flowers in general (like those on the rug on which Mary sits) can also represent fertility and children, signifying women's expected roles as mothers and wives in the early Republic. Taken together, the educational materials and emblems around Mary attest to her own intellectual development (imagined as it may be), but also to her future responsibility to birth and raise the next generation of noble citizens and statesmen. In this way, Peale's portrait posits and represents Mary as a "daughter of liberty."

Perry defines a daughter of liberty as a young girl born into privilege who—through education—was versed in republican values and raised to impart these values to her anticipated offspring.[7] Popular lithographs (Figures 3 & 4) printed by Currier & Ives demonstrate how American men were expected to participate in the military, politics or business while women were expected to have and raise children. In *The Life and Age of Man: Stages of Man's Life From Cradle to Grave,* a man goes through the stages of life, and his changing dress indicates his military and civilian roles. Women pictured at the start and end of the man's life serve as his caretakers. Similarly, in the female version of the print, the woman's life revolves around her roles in the family. A well-educated daughter of liberty would mature into a "republican mother" who would then bear her sons who could participate in civic life and/or daughters who could bear sons to serve this role.

Thus, by representing Mary as engaged in, or on a break from, her own educational development, Peale's portrait testified to Mary's mother Priscilla's status as a republican mother. Prior to the nineteenth century, the maternal ideal was the "Spartan mother." Spartan mothers would raise their sons with the knowledge that they need to sacrifice their lives for the good and the future of the nation.[8] As the son sacrificed his life on the battlefield, so the mother sacrificed her son to this fate. At the time of the American Revolution, the role of both mother and son was to prepare for this eventuality. By the nineteenth century, however, maternal sacrifice would no longer center on the potential death of her son in war. Instead, she prepared both her sons and her daughters to dedicate their lives to the health of the Republic.[9] We see such a republican mother on view in Charles Willson Peale's *Mrs. James Smith and Her Grandson* (Figure 5). Demonstrating the broad nature of republican motherhood, the work depicts a grandmother reading with her grandson. Together, they read *The Art of Speaking*. In addition to moral guidance, then, the republican mother would also provide the oratory training a boy would need to grow up to become an ideal American. By depicting the grandson as a corporeal extension of the grandmother, the portrait thus underscores her role in instilling in her grandson the necessary tools to become a patriot and politician.

While scholars, like historian Linda Kerber, stress the republican mother's role in educating young boys to grow up into morally guided American citizens, a daughter's education was essential too. It was understood that young girls like Mary would grow up to guide her future husband in the direction of virtue and raise the next generation of moral citizens. To ensure the stability of the Republic for future generations, a republican mother, like Priscilla, had to teach her daughter to become like herself. Although Priscilla was not able to fulfill this responsibility with Mary, Peale's portrait suggests the mother's commitment to this goal—to her daughter's education and, so, to the Republic.

But as much as the portrait spoke to the future republican mother that Priscilla would have raised, it also helped Priscilla negotiate her daughter's premature death. Nineteenth-century viewers would have seen several allusions to death within the portrait. Objects such as the over-turned chair and the scissors signal a lively, playful young girl, but in this work, they have a second meaning, too. The fallen chair speaks to a life cut short, as does the cutting action in which Mary herself engages, which alludes to classical notions of the fates. Further, curator Anne Sue Hirshorn recognizes red as a symbol of death and mourning.[10] In this respect, the vivid red dress Mary wears might mark her as dead, but—given that she passed from Scarlet Fever—also the cause of her death. Indeed, the notches Mary cuts into the ribbon could attest to her battle with scarlet fever and the multiple times that she seemed to get better and then quickly become ill again.

Yet, despite these allusions to Mary's death, the painting of course animates her and, in this way, enabled Priscilla to keep her memory alive. In the early nineteenth century,

5 For more information on the symbolism of birds in relation to young girls, see Claire Perry, *Young America: Childhood in the 19th-Century Art and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 60-63.

6 Ibid, 47.

7 Perry, *Young America,* 38-40.

8 Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment-An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1976): 188.

9 Ibid, 202.

10 Anne Sue Hirshorn, "Sarah Miriam Peale (1800-1885)," in *American Women Artists, 1819-1947: The Neville-Strass Collection* (Maryland: The Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, 2003), 34-35.

Americans clung to a terminal idea of death in which the presence of the corpse signified the absence of the soul.[11] *Mrs. Peale Lamenting the Death of Her Child (Rachel Weeping)* (Figure 6), which pictures Sarah Miriam Peale's aunt as portrayed by the artist's famous uncle, exhibits this understanding of death. The artist's young daughter lays deceased upon her bed as her mother, Rachel, looks up to the heavens. Peale depicts his daughter's corpse in accordance to period ideas about death, when it was believed that the soul immediately exited the body for an abstruse afterlife leaving the corpse to decay in its wake. The young infant's skin blends into the white bedding as its yellow tint signals the onset of rigor mortis and contrasts with the flushed, lively skin of the deceased girl's mother.

At the time of Mary Griffith's passing in 1841, theological systems of beliefs changed as puritan ideas on the loss of the soul after death waned out of favor. Subsequently mourning practices changed as well.[12] Instead of accepting a deceased person's absence, Americans attempted to keep his or her memory alive and present. This change was evident in the rise of consolation literature that attempted to restore one's connection to the deceased and resolve anxieties about the body's decay. By the mid-nineteenth century, the afterlife served as a place of hope for grieving survivors where they would eventually join their lost loved ones.[13] In her diary, Priscilla speaks of her husband reading such consolation literature to her. Additionally, she made many trips to her daughter Mary's grave.[14] We can understand her commissioning of Peale's portrait as part of this enterprise. The work served as a visual proxy for her daughter herself. Indeed, such efforts were part of a republican mother's responsibility, too. When a mother lost a child, she had to mourn the death for up to a year, during which time she was expected to wear specific black clothing and accessories and to limit her social activities.[15] In keeping with developing approaches to mourning, Peale's portrait enabled Priscilla to mourn her daughter and fulfill this responsibility in perpetuity.

Sarah Miriam Peale would have recognized that her portrait of Mary would need to serve this role. She was among the most popular portrait painters in mid-19th century Baltimore. However, the majority of Peale's portraits are of male politicians and public figures in the Mid-Atlantic region as well as pendant portraits of these men's wives.[16] The couple, Isaac and Susan Avery of Philadelphia (Figures 7 & 8), is a quintessential example. Isaac Avery was a prominent businessman that manufactured luxury items such as combs—an example of which his wife wears as a sign of her husband's success. As seen in the Currier & Ives lithograph depicting the life of the American man, success was defined in political, economic, and military terms. Susan Avery, by contrast, is in large part defined by her husband—her support of his wares and his wealth, which is represented by the jewelry and shawl she dons. By placing Mary Leypold Griffiths in a comparable setting as the Averys inhabit, despite the notes she took on the girl's actual room, Peale further suggested Mary's preparation for republican motherhood.

By picturing Mary as a daughter of liberty and, thereby, a future republican mother, Sarah Miriam Peale, who was childless, thus compensated for her own potential "failure" to serve as a republican mother in her own life. In the early 19th century, it was not common for white male painters to depict children and when they took up the subject, they typically depicted young boys in the country or preparing for their future roles in the military, business, or politics.[17] For female artists, the subject of children reaffirmed the agency and significance of republican motherhood in priming young Americans for their future roles.

Sarah Miriam Peale grew up in an extended family of artists with strong national ties and values and would have been subject to the same social expectations as the children she depicted. Peale's father, James Peale, fought in the American Revolution as a captain. Her famous uncle Charles Willson Peale, who produced *Mrs. Peale Lamenting the Death of Her Child (Rachel Weeping)*, was known for his enlightenment philosophy and dedication to national principles. In the 1840s, Sarah herself began attending sessions of Congress when she visited Washington, D.C., thus demonstrating a significant interest in the political culture of her time.[18] Given this upbringing, she would have been indoctrinated into American social mores and acutely aware of her not having lived up to them. Thus, as Peale's portrait of *Mary Leopold Griffith* served as a proxy child for Priscilla Griffith, so, too, did it serve this role for Peale. It demonstrated the artist's own attempt to serve as a republican mother. She develops the painting, building it up, similar to a republican mother raising her child and molding her or him into a virtuous citizen.

American University

11 For more information on period ideas surrounding death, see Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes Towards Death, 1799-1883* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 52.

12 Ibid, 55.

13 Ibid, 59-61.

14 Michelon, "Capturing a Likeness."

15 Further information on mourning practices can be found in Barbara Dodd Hillerman, "Chrysallis of Gloom: Nineteenth Century American Mourning Costume," in *A Time to Mourn: Expressions of Grief in Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Martha V. Pike and Janice Gray Armstrong (New York: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1980), 95-101.

16 Hunter, Wilbur H., and John Mahey, *Miss Sarah Miriam Peale, 1800-1885: Portraits and Still Life*, (Baltimore: The Peale Museum, 1967), 10.

17 Perry, *Young America,* 38.

18 Anne Sue Hirshorn, "Anna Claypoole, Margaretta, and Sarah Miriam Peale: Modes Of Accomplishment and Fortune," in *The Peale Family: Creation of a Legacy, 1770-1870*, edited by Lillian B. Miller, (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), 240.

Figure 1. Sarah Miriam Peale, *Mary Leypold Griffith (1838-1841)*, 1841, oil on canvas, 35 1/2 × 30 3/4 in. (90.2 × 78.1 cm). Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase made possible by the American Art Forum, the Catherine Walden Myer Endowment, the Julia D. Strong Endowment, and the Pauline Edwards Bequest.

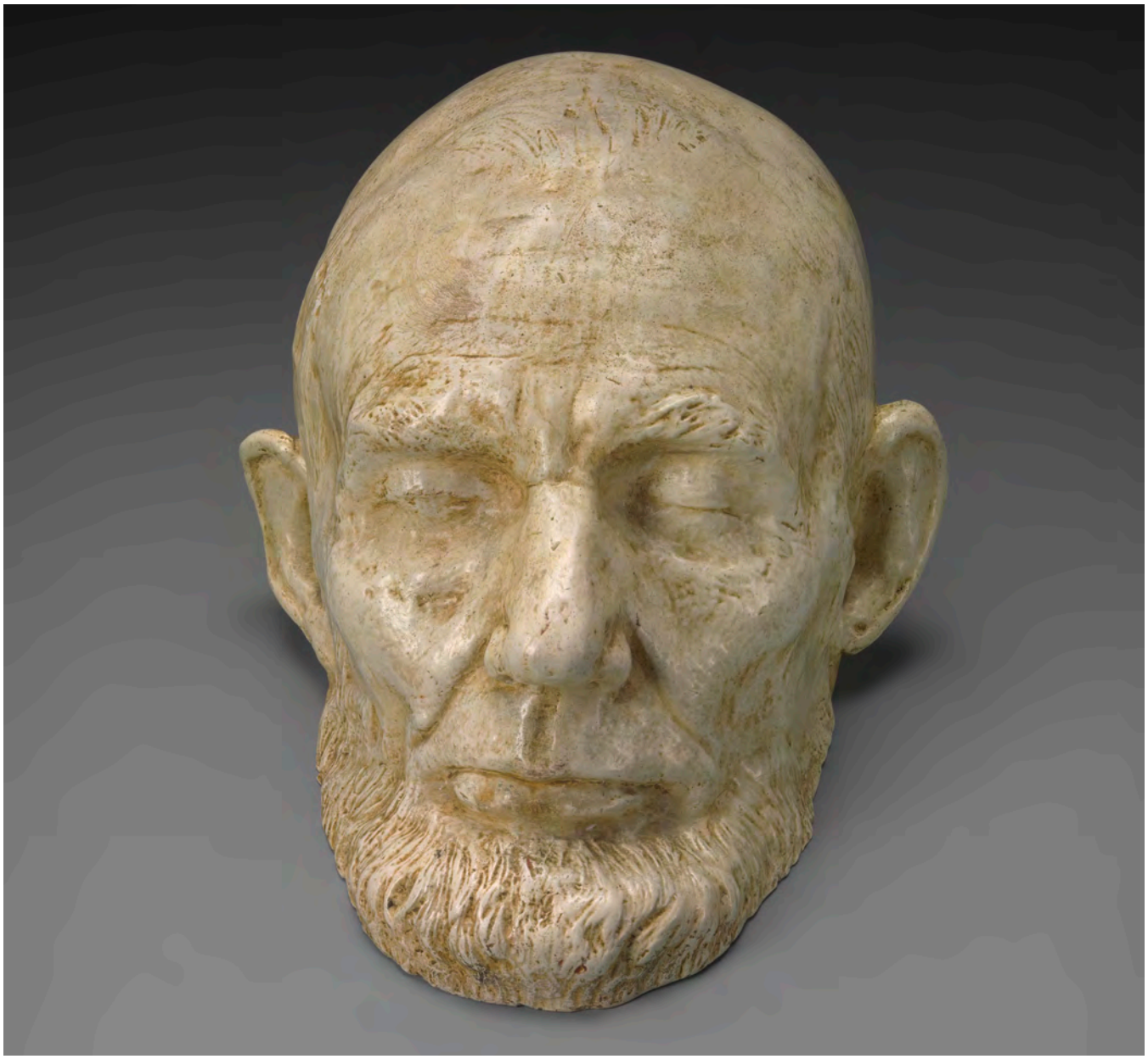


Figure 2. Clark Mills, *Abraham Lincoln*, c. 1917 after 1865 original, plaster, 6 3/4 x 8 x 11 ¾ in. (17.1 x 20.3 x 29.8cm). National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 3. Currier & Ives, publisher, *Life and Age of Man: Stages of Man's Life From the Cradle to the Grave*, c. 1856-1907, lithograph, hand-colored. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-pga-09292.

Figure 4. James Baillie, Life and Age of Woman: *Stages of Woman's Life From the Cradle to the Grave*, lithograph, hand-colored. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-12817.

Figure 5. Charles Willson Peale, *Mrs. James Smith and Her Grandson*, 1776, oil on canvas, 36 3/8 x 29 1/4 in. (92.4 x 74.3 cm.). Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Levering Smith, Jr. and museum purchase.

Figure 6. Charles Willson Peale, *Mrs. Peale Lamenting the Death of Her Child* (Rachel Weeping), 1772, enlarged 1776; retouched 1818, oil on canvas, 36 13/16 x 32 1/16 inches (93.5 x 81.4 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of The Barra Foundation, Inc., 1977-34-1.

Figure 7. Sarah Miriam Peale, *Susan Avery*, 1821, oil on canvas, 35 1/4 x 27 1/2 in. National Museum of Women in the Arts, Museum Purchase: The Louis Pollard Price Acquisition Fund.

Figure 8. Sarah Miriam Peale, *Isaac Avery*, 1821, oil on canvas, 35 1/4 x 27 1/2 in. National Museum of Women in the Arts, Museum Purchase: The Louis Pollard Price Acquisition Fund.

Antiquity, Exoticism, and Nature in *Gold "Lotus and Dragon-fly" Comb with Cyprian Glass Fragment*

Lauren Lovings-Gomez

Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* published in 1857 anthropomorphizes jewels as women in the poem "Les Bijoux." He writes of his naked lover adorned in jewels, describing his attraction to her, but perhaps more so to the jewels she wears.[1] The jewels align with an ideal sense of feminine beauty, for parts of her body are compared to nature: "Her long legs, her hips, shining smooth as oil / Her arms and her thighs, undulant as a swan… / To her belly and breasts, the grapes of my vine."[2] These not only refer to the sexuality of woman, but align her with natural elements often found in Art Nouveau jewelry. In Baudelaire's poem, there are evident ties to the fetishization of feminine beauty and the compulsion to identify that with organic forms in nature.

It does not seem coincidental that these notions are also rendered in objects. Created at the turn of the nineteenth century, *Ornamental Comb* (Figures 1 and 2), so named by the Cleveland Museum of Art, referred to as the CMA from this point forward, is a pastiche object of modernity evoking the ancient, exotic, and natural world through its materiality and design.[3] In this paper, I aim to reconstruct the life of this object, with emphasis on its materiality. I argue that the centerpiece of ancient glass, framed in Art Nouveau ornamentation, transforms into a modern jewel in accordance with avant-garde notions of looking to the past to create something new. Finally, I will contend that decorative art objects, like the CMA's *Ornamental Comb*, disrupt the perceived hierarchy between what is deemed "high" and "low" art at the *fin-de-siècle*.

Ornamental Comb was created in partnership between a jeweler and a goldsmith. The object was designed by F. Walter Lawrence, who was born in Baltimore in 1864, moved to Newark in 1880 to apprentice as a jeweler, and established his own business in 1889.[4] The comb was fabricated by the virtuoso goldsmith, Gustav Manz, who worked in the trade from 1893, when he emigrated from Germany to New York, until 1944.[5] Though both artisans are not well-known today, they were prevalent in their lifetime.[6] Lawrence and Manz specifically made the object for the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, where it would have likely been exhibited in the Palace of Fine Arts. This comb was among the twenty-five that Manz created for Lawrence for the exposition, and the only known piece still in existence.[7] Clearly an esteemed object, the comb was also highlighted in a *Town & Country* magazine article written by Lawrence in 1903 for using a fragment of "old glass, taken from the tombs throughout Syria, where it [had] lain for centuries" and in *Vogue* magazine in 1905 as part of a group of remarkable objects by Lawrence.[8] In the *Town & Country* article, Lawrence discusses the symbolism of his jewelry, stating "the real aim of L'Art Nouveau is to make something new, something beautiful, something that has meaning and history; and in making to accept such mediums as will best express the scheme or theme intended."[9] Lawrence aesthetically and intentionally chose to use the glass fragment's past to give meaning to its future, which I argue transforms into a modern jewel.

The CMA *Ornamental Comb* would have been worn in a woman's bound hair, and there were three common ways for a Victorian woman to wear a comb from about 1860 to 1900. A woman could wear a comb above her bound hair, so that the comb is seen frontally.[10] Another method is to wear the comb tucked into the back of the coiffure as an

A special thank you to: Dr. Andrea Rager for supporting and challenging my research, Heather Galloway for giving me the opportunity write about this object, Colleen Snyder for taking the time to share her knowledge with me, and to Kylie Fisher for encouraging me to apply to the Florida State University Art History Graduate Symposium. This article is dedicated to my husband, Ruben Gomez.

1 Charles Baudelaire, Marthiel Mathews, and Jackson Mathews, *The Flowers of Evil*, (New York: New Directions, 1989), 27.

2 Baudelaire, et. al., *The Flowers of Evil*, 27.

3 Stephen Calloway, Lynn Federle Orr, and Esme Whittaker, *The Cult of Beauty: The Victorian Avant-Garde, 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011), 208.

4 "Obituary – F. Walter Lawrence," *Summit Herald*, March 12, 1929.

5 Courtney Bowers Marhev, "Where Credit is Due: The Life and Jewelry Work of Gustav Manz, 1865-1946" (Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution and Parsons The New School for Design, 2008), 1.

6 Marhev, "Where Credit is Due," 1.

7 *Official Catalogue of Exhibitors. Universal Exposition, St. Louis, U. S. A. 1904. Division of Exhibits. Department B. Art.* St. Louis: For the Committee on press and publicity, by the Official catalogue company, 1904, 82.

8 F. Walter Lawrence, "Symbolism in Jewelry," *Town and Country* 3004 (December 1903), 34; "Embellishing the Fragments," *Vogue* (June 22, 1905): 899. The comb was illustrated in the *Town & Country* article, but not in the *Vogue* magazine article.

9 Lawrence, "Symbolism in Jewelry," 34.

10 Linda Setnik, *Victorian Costume for Ladies: 1860-1900* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2000), 28.

embellishment.[11] Lastly, bang combs were used on both sides of the parted hair line for flatter styles.[12] Due to its long and narrow nature, *Ornamental Comb* was probably worn in the back of a woman's coiffure (Figure 3). On the verso above the stamped "F.W. Lawrence" (Figure 4), a hinge connects the tortoiseshell to the glass through the gold frame, which allows for bending and conforming to the coiffure. Since hairstyles usually remained the same throughout the day, the comb could have been worn with daytime and evening attire, presenting a varied effect with the changing light.[13]

The fragment of ancient glass incorporated into *Ornamental Comb* possesses a dynamic quality, as the colors completely transform under different angles of light. From one point, the glass appears as though ruby and copper have somehow melded together, while at another view it can look like an iridescent piece of emerald and obsidian. The 1904 Universal Exposition catalogue describes exhibit number 345 as "Gold 'Lotus and Dragon-fly comb with Cyprian glass fragment."[14] According to Lawrence in the object's entry form for the World's Fair, the glass fragment is "2,000 yrs. old found in tombs in the old City of Jerusalem."[15] In *The Craftsman* from 1903 he states that archaeologist Ayeez Kayat found these glass fragments within the tombs of Jerusalem.[16] Though there is no extant archaeological documentation, the glass is undoubtedly ancient. The rainbow-like iridescence of the ancient glass is not an intended effect, but ensues from the weathering process, which can be seen in an ancient Roman glass goblet from the CMA's collection (Figure 5).[17] When ancient vessels or pieces of glass are obtained from archaeological digs, this iridescence usually appears to flake. After years of constant air and moisture contracting and expanding the layers of the glass, the laminate structure creates an iridescent quality. For this object, the iridescence was consolidated with an organic varnish, most likely applied by Lawrence or Manz.[18] On the verso (Figure 2), the wavy ribbon of the glass's core is visible. CMA Conservator Patricia Griffin, estimates that "the fragment is from a core-formed opaque purple glass vessel decorated with combed and trail decoration in opaque white glass," perhaps similar to an ancient Greek perfume bottle from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 6).[19]

This ancient glass fragment in the comb is exoticized, originating in the Middle East, adapted by an American designer, and Orientalized through symbolic allusions of Egypt and Japan. The disparate nomination of the glass being from Syria, Cyprus, or ancient Jerusalem also demonstrates the nineteenth-century problematic amalgamation of all things from the "exotic east." *Ornamental Comb* is not the only object that Lawrence designed to incorporate ancient glass. He showed multiple works in 1903 that incorporated "Ancient Phoenician glass" in the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in Syracuse and Rochester, New York (Figure 7).[20] Additionally, objects 336 to 345 in the official catalogue of exhibits for the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 each have a "Cyprian" glass component. Lawrence was, in fact, quite intentional in his use of weathered, iridescent glass. In an article in *The Craftsman*, Lawrence comments that his compositions derive from the color and conformation of the fragments, while the designs derive from their excavation sites (Figure 7).[21] Since, in the CMA's comb, the overall natural aesthetic is a common Art Nouveau design around the object's framework, it seems unlikely that Lawrence is referencing its excavation site, as he so explicitly does in the Egyptian forms illustrated in *The Craftsman* article. This reference and incorporation of the majesty of antiquity alone elevates the object beyond that of decorative art. The organic quality of the fragment's shape in the comb seems to suggest that the fragment was found and used largely without alteration. Moreover, a 1905 article in *Vogue* states that "Mr. Lawrence now buys the broken pieces of Cyprian and Egyptian glass in quantities and careful study of each fragment suggests to his artistic eye the one special design best adapted to its shape and coloring."[22] Based on this *Vogue* article and Lawrence's remarks in *The Craftsman*, he, in all likelihood, used this fragment's elemental essence as the basis and inspiration for the design, adapting to its specific iridescent qualities.

11 Setnik, *Victorian Costume*, 31.

12 Ibid., 145.

13 Ibid., 20.

14 *Official Catalogue of Exhibitors. Universal Exposition, St. Louis, U. S. A. 1904. Division of Exhibits. Department B. Art*. St. Louis: For the Committee on press and publicity, by the Official catalogue company, 1904, 82. Twenty-five of the twenty-seven pieces shown were executed by Gustav Manz.

15 "These fragments of glass are parts of bowls, vases, tear-bottles and cups, found in tombs, in the ancient city of Jerusalem, and brought to this country by Ayeez Kayat, probably the greatest authority on ancient glass in the world, certainly, in this country." F. Walter Lawrence, "Craftsmanship *versus* Intrinsic Value," *The Craftsman* 4 (June 1903): 182; Entry Form, "Information for Records, Applied Arts Division-Department of Art, St. Louis World's Fair," (1904) in Cleveland Museum of Art, Curatorial File, accessed April 5, 2018.

16 Karol B. Wight, *Molten Color Glassmaking in Antiquity* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 5; F. Walter Lawrence, "Craftsmanship *versus* Intrinsic Value," *The Craftsman* 4 (June 1903): 182. It does seem that there was an established trade of ancient glass through Jerusalem that all became referred to as "Cyprian." However, it is problematic to consider the glass fragment as specifically "Cyprian" since there is no extant archaeological documentation in reference to the pieces brought by Kayat. Further, it is not feasible to classify glass vessels into regions of origin based on chemical content due to the fairly consistent nature of ingredients to make glass.

17 Catherine Hess and Karol Wight, *Looking at Glass: A Guide to Terms, Styles and Techniques* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), 47.

18 Patricia Griffin, Conservation Department Loan Examination Report, Aug. 8, 2001 in CMA conservation file. Areas of loss in the varnish can be seen in the top proper left corner, and areas of varnish buildup can be seen in raking light on the top proper right corner and proper left. Further on the varnish, "examination of the surface in longwave ultraviolet light indicates a slight green fluorescence suggestive of a natural resin such as mastic or dammar that were commonly employed for paintings."

19 Griffin, Examination Report, Aug. 8, 2001. Core-formed glass is an early glass forming technique, before glassblowing.

20 At this point in my research, I have not uncovered whether any of these examples are extant.

21 F. Walter Lawrence, "Craftsmanship *versus* Intrinsic Value," *The Craftsman* 4 (June 1903): 183.

22 "Embellishing the Fragments," *Vogue* (June 22, 1905): 899.

In the nineteenth century, a romanticizing of the ancient world and the emergence of glass from excavated sites of antiquity cultivated the desire for artists to test the possibilities of glass color and texture.[23] In 1873, Louis Comfort Tiffany began experimenting to recreate the iridescent aesthetic of ancient Roman glass (Figure 8).[24] Whereas ancient glass has the iridescent effect at the surface, Tiffany's iridescence was within the glass, essentially creating a new process to achieve what age does naturally. This favrile glass was praised at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, increasing this desire of replicating the aesthetic of old glass.[25] Leslie Hayden Nash, Tiffany's Production Manager, describes the public's reaction to favrile glass when it was first displayed in the showrooms as everyone being "completely overcome and speechless at the sight. It gave one a feeling of sitting out in the tropical sun. It was literally a fairyland."[26] This reaction reinforces the jewel-like status and effect of the iridescence of ancient glass desired by the public. Whereas Tiffany's studio focused on innovations in the creation of new glassmaking techniques to recreate this aesthetic, Lawrence continued to experiment with the use of ancient fragments, prized for their authenticity, sense of historicism, and rarity.

Mimicking the organic quality of the ancient glass, wavy golden vines wrap around the glass fragment, framing it like a small painting (Figure 1). Attached to these golden vines are lotus pads, lotuses in bloom and bud form (Figure 9), and a dragonfly hovering over the glass, which is encrusted with white and green gemstones on the edge of each wing (Figure 10). Though Lawrence does not explicitly reference icons of ancient Egypt as he did in the objects from *The Craftsman* article, he does provide symbolic allusions to the culture. The lotus (Figure 9), referencing antiquity and the exotic through its extensive use in ancient Egypt, was the symbol of reproductive power and fertility since it grew upon the generative Nile.[27] Not only can this relate to Lawrence's intent to gather glass from the ancient Near East, it references the geographical region in which the glass fragments were sourced, and begins to call forth notions of the direct connection that exists between nature and femininity.[28] Thus, the use of the lotus, a symbol of fertility, in an object meant for a woman creates a deeper significance of the materiality unifying the exotic, natural, and antique facets. In further exploration of the natural elements of the comb, dragonflies (Figure 10) as figural motif in Art Nouveau jewelry were favored for their short life spans and iridescence, which were symbols for metamorphosis and ephemerality.[29] Here, their iridescence in nature refers back to that of the ancient glass fragment. Furthermore, their chitinous wing structure is layered into multiple plates, just as the ancient glass is to create its colorful iridescence. The encrusted gemstones contribute to the qualities of nature by eliciting the shimmer of a dragonfly's wings.

Yet another exotic material is the tortoiseshell. The materiality of the tortoiseshell comb activates a conversance through nature, antiquity, and exoticism. Tortoiseshell is a remarkably light, precious material, and was considered a luxury product, particularly prized for use in combs throughout the nineteenth century.[30] In addition to their stunning aesthetic quality, tortoiseshell has anti-electrical properties, an ideal quality for hair combs.[31] The tortoiseshell from this comb most likely comes from the Hawksbill turtle, often a habitant of Southeast Asia, China, and Japan, reinforcing the perception of exoticism in the comb.[32] According to American marine biologist, Richard Ellis, "the supportive shell of a turtle is composed of hard, bony plates covered by individual horny segments known as scutes, which are made of keratin, the material of fingernails, hooves, and hair."[33] Therefore, this is an object, made from the stuff of one species' hair, meant to be used in the hair of another species. Accordingly, the natural material of the object conforms to the wearer's own physical substance. Unfortunately, the implications indicate a predation relationship. The predator, or wearer, benefits from the natural properties at the detriment of the prey,

23 "Glass vessels from ancient Rome, the Islamic world, Venice, and Bohemia stimulated the public's appetite for novel forms, colors, textures, and decorations, and glassmakers, including Tiffany, copied them to meet the growing demand." Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, "Louis Comfort Tiffany at the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* (Summer 1998): 53.

24 Martin Eidelberg, Nancy A. McClelland, Leslie Hayden Nash, and Arthur Nash. *Behind the Scenes of Tiffany Glassmaking: The Nash Notebooks: Including Tiffany Favrile Glass* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), xiii.

25 Alastair Duncan, *Louis Comfort Tiffany* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1992, 87. Tiffany did, however, trademark Favrile glass on November 13, 1894, perhaps forcing Lawrence to turn to ancient glass fragments.

26 Martin Eidelberg, et al. *Behind the Scenes of Tiffany Glassmaking: The Nash Notebooks: Including Tiffany Favrile Glass*, 48.

27 Ernst Lehner and Johanna Lehner, *Folklore and Symbolism of Flowers, Plants and Trees* (New York: Tudor Pub. Co., 1960), 35.

28 Tamar Garb, "Renoir and the Natural Woman," *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds (Harper Collins, 1992), 295. In a previous paper, I have explored Garb's ideas of the woman's body becoming a "natural extension" of nature, since "women's very physiology was seen to be closer to nature than men's." Scholars and doctors at the time theorized that since women menstruate, they are in a constant state of instability, as is nature.

29 Hermann Schadt and Ann Potter Schadt, *Goldsmiths' Art: 5000 Years of Jewelry and Hollowware* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche, 1996), 171.

30 Lison de Caunes, Jacques Morabito, and Johannes von Saurma, *L'Écaille* (Dourdan: H. Vial, 1997), 6, 8.

31 Caunes, et al. *L'Écaille*, 15. It became much easier to form tortoiseshell from its raw plates in the nineteenth century. First, the craftsman would draw an outline on the tortoiseshell and cut it out. Then, the fat was removed from the workable piece. Often, other pieces were fitted together using a hydraulic press to create thickness. In order to make the piece flexible, the shell was then plunged into boiling salted water. Next, a machine was used to cut the teeth of the comb. To conform to the lady's hair, a curve was given to the comb by using additional hot salt water. Finally, the comb was polished using a grindstone.

32 Caunes, Morabito, and von Saurma, *L'Écaille*, 19-20.

33 Richard Ellis, *The Empty Ocean Plundering the World's Marine Life* (Washington D.C.; Covelo; London: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2003), 94-95.

or tortoise.[34] This perhaps recalls Baudelaire's predatorial descriptions of his lover, as the poem ends with her amber colored skin drenched in blood.[35]

While Lawrence and Manz were in dialogue with Tiffany, they would also have been responding to the work of French jeweler, René Lalique, especially for his innovations in jewelry design and use of materials. Manz left Germany to attend the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris to view jewelry designs, where he would have certainly seen the work of René Lalique.[36] Lalique was paving the path for jewelry to transform from its precious gemstone focus, to fluid objects that reconnected wearable art to nature. He did so by completely turning to different, unthinkable materials, such as horn and semi-precious stones for their shape, color, and texture.[37] Lalique would have also encountered Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, in which Baudelaire explored themes of eroticism and vice, often using women as his principal source of symbolism. Lalique absorbed these ideals of antiquity superiority into his quest to create avant-garde jewelry. He began to carve combs in horn and ivory in 1897, preferring the translucence, color, and malleability of the material allowing him to render natural subjects.[38] In the CMA collection, René Lalique's *Lily of the Valley Comb* (Figure 11) is displayed alongside Lawrence and Manz's comb. In particular, they share a similar approach to floral imagery, allusions to nature, the typical Art Nouveau curvature, and use of horn material.[39] Art Nouveau jewelers were employing the material to their advantage, and it is evident that for these jewelers, subject, form, and execution originated in nature.[40] In thinking of how Lawrence and Manz's comb references the natural exotic, Lalique's use of nature in jewelry, references the trickling in of Japanese objects into Europe from earlier international exhibitions.[41] Further, plants from Japan came to Europe during the late nineteenth century, filling nurseries and botanical gardens, creating a horticultural boom which manifests through the lotus motif in the CMA comb.[42]

Though many of Lalique's objects focus on the nature of flora and fauna, he was also innovative in using the female form in jewelry.[43] While Lawrence drew subtle connections between woman and nature, Lalique very explicitly morphed woman with nature. It is possible that Lalique was thinking about the Symbolist literary movement, specifically Baudelaire, in conjunction with the aesthetic of the female form at the *fin-de-siècle*.[44] For example, he creates multiple variations of a winged woman broach. In one version (Figure 12), the figure is a hybrid dragonfly-woman, her head and bare chest are her only human remnants emerging from the enamel insect body and wings. The motif of the winged woman was strongly associated with Symbolists, as she was considered the epitome of the spirit of human and animal.[45] Not only was Lalique looking to blur the lines of human and animal, he wanted to push the boundaries of what jewelry women would wear. Accordingly, Lalique's wearable *objets d'art*, were worn by great and daring women of the stage, such as actress Sarah Bernhardt.[46] Ultimately, this exemplifies that Lalique was creating for the new woman, with woman simultaneously becoming the object and subject of his jewelry. Even so, by wearing this type of jewelry, these daring women were reclaiming their agency.[47]

Women were not only wearing hair combs, I claim that they started to be associated with them at the turn of the century. Around 1903, the Société Industrielle de Photographie produced a series of postcards called "Les Bijoux" in which photographs of women by Leopold Reutlinger are set

34 The exploitative use of tortoiseshell in art and decorative objects is rife with the fact that human desire has contributed to the rapid decline of the species, which, as of 1970, has been considered critically endangered: "Hawksbills are highly desired for their beautiful shells, which are polished and hung on the wall as a decorative ornament, or the scutes from their shells ('bekko') used to craft jewelry, combs, and eyeglasses… Commercial exploitation has resulted in overharvesting and in declines or local extinctions of the populations harvested." Peter L. Lutz, John A. Musick, and Jeanette Wyneken *The Biology of Sea Turtles* (Boca Raton, FL.: CRC Press, 1997), 402-403.

35 The materiality of the tortoiseshell can also recall amber fossils, reflecting this idea of ancient, exotic, and natural qualities within the object. Further, "turtles represent a separate group of vertebrates, and one of the oldest of all continuous vertebrate lineages, dating to the Middle Triassic period, about 230 million years ago." The tortoiseshell of the comb thus collaborates within all spheres of antiquity, exoticism, and nature through its materiality. Richard Ellis, *The Empty Ocean Plundering the World's Marine Life* (Washington D.C.; Covelo; London: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2003), 93.

36 Courtney Bowers Marhev, "Where Credit is Due: The Life and Jewelry Work of Gustav Manz, 1865-1946" (Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution and Parsons The New School for Design, 2008), 11-12.

37 Yvonne Brunhammer, *René Lalique: Exceptional Jewellery 1890-1912: [exhibition, Paris, Musée Du Luxembourg, 7 March 2007-29 July 2007]* (Milano: Skira, 2007), 70.

38 Brunhammer, *Lalique*, 25, 73.

39 "Horn is a tough fibrous epidermal substance that consists chiefly of keratin, an albuminoid found in hoofs, nails, tortoiseshell, feathers, and hair…The horn of antelope, bison, buffalo, caribou, cow, deer, elk, goat, ibex, moose, ox, reindeer, sheep, and rhinoceros can all be used…Horn is relatively light in weight, and attractively warm to the touch and on the skin." Oppi Untracht, *Jewelry Concepts and Technology* (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1982), 558.

40 Emmanuel Ducamp, "France: The Ascendancy of Lalique" in *Artistic Luxury: Fabergé, Tiffany, Lalique*, ed. Stephen Harrison (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2008), 114.

41 Yvonne Brunhammer, *René Lalique: Exceptional Jewellery 1890-1912: [exhibition, Paris, Musée Du Luxembourg, 7 March 2007-29 July 2007]* (Milano: Skira, 2007), 152. Japanese plants arrived to London in 1862 and Paris in 1867.

42 Brunhammer, *Lalique*, 152-160.

43 Emmanuel Ducamp, "France: The Ascendancy of Lalique" in *Artistic Luxury: Fabergé, Tiffany, Lalique*, ed. Stephen Harrison (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2008), 126.

44 Ducamp, "France," 127.

45 Yvonne Brunhammer, *René Lalique: Exceptional Jewellery 1890-1912*, 134.

46 Brunhammer, *Lalique*, 88.

47 Emmanuel Ducamp, "France: The Ascendancy of Lalique" in *Artistic Luxury: Fabergé, Tiffany, Lalique*, ed. Stephen Harrison (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 2008), 85, 130.

within pieces of jewelry.[48] In one example (Figure 13), the postcard depicts a woman wearing a strapless dress, with hands above her flower-crowned head holding a cloth that drapes down her back. She is turned slightly and stares off into the distance. Her image is the centerpiece to what is labeled "Peigne Ecaille & Or" or "Shell Comb and Gold." Whereas the comb by Lawrence and Manz frames a piece of ancient glass, the decorative flowers and vines surround the image of the woman, framing her within the comb, and connecting her to the shell of the comb. Further, the flowers framing her image mimic the flowers placed in her hair, while the curving vines mirror the curves of her raised arms. She does not seem to wear a comb; however, she is framed within the comb, becoming a part of it. She symbolizes that women become the jewelry that they wear, and they themselves become ornamental. Since the postcards would have been produced after the Lawrence and Manz hair comb, I contend that the postcard producers were engaging not only with the fashion of this period, but also with what artists were crafting. Women appearing on postcards in the late nineteenth century were idealized, their exemplary image spread to millions as a result of photography, for the male buyers who were able to privately consume them due to the convenient portable size.[49] Not only were they consumed, but surely collected in albums filled with other women alike. Therefore, the feminine object of the comb, seemingly turns the woman into an object via the photographic postcard, creating a tension between women choosing to wear this ornament with the consequential male gaze.

Overall, Lawrence and Manz's *Gold "Lotus and Dragon-fly" Comb with Cyprian Glass Fragment*, its original and more appropriate name, is exceptional for its ambitious incorporation of multiple precious materials: gold, gemstones, tortoiseshell, but especially ancient glass, raising it to a high status of art. Ultimately, this comb is more than a piece of jewelry; it breaks the boundary between the ancient and the modern. It is not only a natural extension of a woman's hairstyle, it symbolically connects nature and femininity. It does not only assert authenticity through its excavated ancient glass fragment, but it looks to antiquity to elevate the glass, creating a new conception of the modern jewel. The Lawrence and Manz hair comb communicates the contemporary features of its time, alluding to the exotic world, while also attempting to refabricate the beauty of antiquity and nature. Through its materiality, this comb is linking art to life. Through its design, the comb generates later commentary on feminine objectification.

Case Western Reserve University

48 *La Belle Otero Sous L'objectif De Reutlinger: Buch* (Monaco: Ed. du Compas, 2005), 9-10; Jean P. Bourgeron, *Les Reutlinger: Photographes À Paris 1850-1937* (París: Jean-Pierre Bourgeron, 1979), 33. Reutlinger first edited these postcards himself, but the demand grew exponentially, and he sought the help of additional distributors, such as la Société Industrielle de Photographie. In 1970, his son, Francois, republished the series of postcards.

49 Serge Zeyons, *La Femme En 1900: Les Années 1900 Par La Carte Postale*, (Paris: Larousse, 1994), 7.

Figure 1. F. Walter Lawrence (American, 1864-1929) and Gustav Manz (German, 1865-1946), *Ornamental Comb*, c. 1900, gold, ancient glass, gem stones, tortoiseshell, overall: 14.3 x 5.8 x 1.9 cm (5 5/8 x 2 5/16 x 3/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Trideca Society 2001.106. Photo credit: Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art, Conservation Department.

Figure 2. F. Walter Lawrence (American, 1864-1929) and Gustav Manz (German, 1865-1946), *Ornamental Comb* (verso), c. 1900, gold, ancient glass, gem stones, tortoiseshell, overall: 14.3 x 5.8 x 1.9 cm (5 5/8 x 2 5/16 x 3/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Trideca Society 2001.106. Photo credit: Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art, Conservation Department.

Figure 3. Art and Picture Collection, The New York Public Library, "Coiffure-Mode, Avec Postiches," New York Public Library Digital Collections, Accessed May 11, 2019. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-0824-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99

Figure 4. F. Walter Lawrence (American, 1864-1929) and Gustav Manz (German, 1865-1946), *Ornamental Comb* (detail), c. 1900, gold, ancient glass, gem stones, tortoiseshell, overall: 14.3 x 5.8 x 1.9 cm (5 5/8 x 2 5/16 x 3/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Trideca Society 2001.106. Photo credit: Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art, Conservation Department.

Figure 5. Roman, *Goblet*, 100-300, glass, overall: 9 x 8.4 cm (3 9/16 x 3 5/16 in.). Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of J. H. Wade 1923.953.

Figure 6. Greek, Eastern Mediterranean, *Glass amphoriskos (perfume bottle)*, late 6th-5th century B.C., core-formed glass, overall: 4 3/4 × 2 7/16 in. (12 × 6.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 7 [*facing page, bottom*]. F. Walter Lawrence, "Craftsmanship *versus* Intrinsic Value," The Craftsman 4 (June 1903): 186.

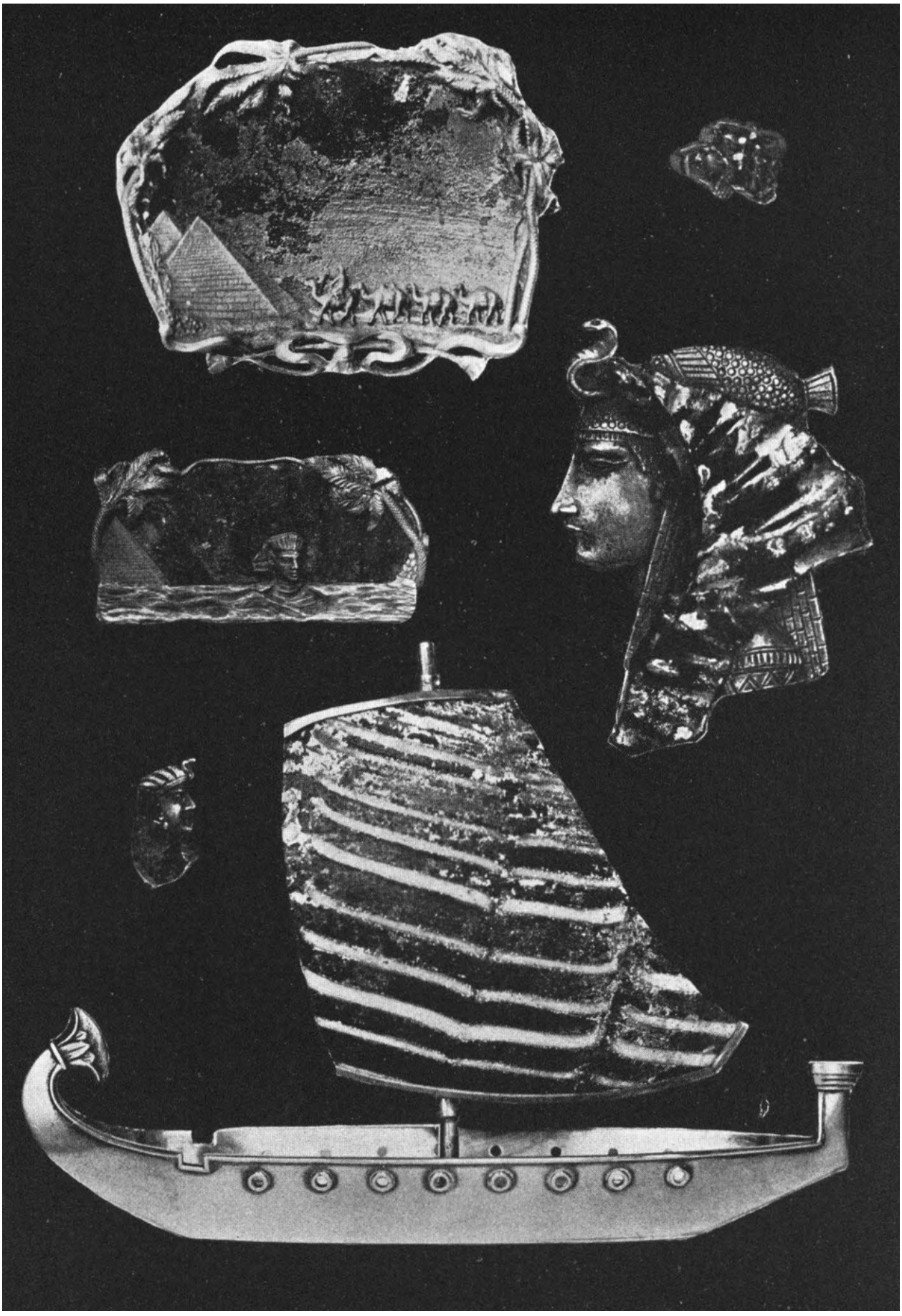


Figure 4. F. Walter Lawrence (American, 1864-1929) and Gustav Manz (German, 1865-1946), *Ornamental Comb* (detail), c. 1900, gold, ancient glass, gem stones, tortoiseshell, overall: 14.3 x 5.8 x 1.9 cm (5 5/8 x 2 5/16 x 3/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Trideca Society 2001.106. Photo credit: Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art, Conservation Department.

Figure 8 [*facing page*]. Designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany (American, 1848-1933), made by Tiffany Studios (American, 1902-1932), *Vase*, c. 1905-10, favrile glass, overall: 15.9 cm (6 1/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Ellen Wade Chinn, Elizabeth Wade Sedgwick and J. H. Wade III in memory of their mother Irene Love Wade 1966.380.

Figure 4. F. Walter Lawrence (American, 1864-1929) and Gustav Manz (German, 1865-1946), *Ornamental Comb* (detail), c. 1900, gold, ancient glass, gem stones, tortoiseshell, overall: 14.3 x 5.8 x 1.9 cm (5 5/8 x 2 5/16 x 3/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Trideca Society 2001.106. Photo credit: Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art, Conservation Department.

Figure 11 [*facing page*]. René Lalique (French, 1860-1945), *Lily of the Valley Comb*, c. 1900, horn, enamel and gold, overall: 15.4 x 9.4 x 3 cm (6 1/16 x 3 11/16 x 1 3/16 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. A. Dean Perry 1981.49 © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

Figure 12. René Lalique (French, 1860-1945), *Large Corsage Ornament in the Form of a Dragonfly*, c. 1897-98, gold, plique-à-jour enamel, chrysoprase, chalcedony, moonstones and diamonds, overall: 23 x 26.5 cm. Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, Portugal.

Figure 13. S.I.P. 117/7, *Les Bijoux, Peigne Ecaille & Or*, c. 1900, postcard with inscription in French, overall: 5.5 x 3.5 in. Collection of the author.

Visual and Textual Narratives: Shifts in the Identity of the Byzantine Croce degli Zaccaria

Caitlin Mims

The True Cross, understood by the Christian faithful as the wood on which Christ was crucified, was legendarily discovered by Helena, the mother of Byzantine Emperor Constantine I, in 362 CE in Jerusalem.[1] This discovery established imperial Byzantine control of the Cross and its relics, limiting their movement out of Byzantium.[2] With the Crusader sack of Constantinople in 1204, reliquaries of the True Cross became more accessible. Many were taken west into the treasuries of Western European churches, where they can still be found today.[3] The reception of these objects varied, but often, western viewers imposed new identities on these reliquaries by refashioning them or assigning them new narratives.[4] One such reliquary of the True Cross that traveled from Byzantium to the west is now known as the *Croce degli Zaccaria* (Figure 1).[5] In the pages that follow I will examine how the Byzantine identity of this reliquary was perceived as it moved through the medieval world.

This staurotheke was commissioned in the ninth century by one Caesar Bardas to be deposited at the Basilica of Saint John in Ephesus, now modern-day Turkey.[6] By 1470 it was documented as being in Genoa, gifted by a family of merchants, and thus had left its Byzantine audience.[7] I argue that the identity of this reliquary underwent two shifts in the medieval period. First, in Ephesus, the Cross was refashioned in conscious imitation of an earlier Byzantine form. I demonstrate that this served to evoke an older tradition of cross reliquaries, emphasizing the object's Greek Orthodox provenance and Byzantine history. Second, when the reliquary was removed from Byzantium, its new owners invented a textual narrative, meant to provide the visually Byzantine reliquary with a western identity.

Early study of this object focused on the description of the reliquary and its iconography, as in the work of Gustave Schulmberger and Silvio Guiseppi Mercati.[8] In his seminal study of the True Cross, Anatole Frolow also describes this reliquary and identifies the likely figures named in the inscription.[9] These works do not discuss the reception of the reliquary, nor its changing identity. When, in more recent scholarship, the *Croce degli Zaccaria* is discussed, it is included in discussions of the history of the Zaccaria family or the tradition of processional crosses.[10] The reliquary itself has not been the primary focus of these studies.

I am grateful for the support of my doctoral advisor, Dr. Lynn Jones, whose graduate seminar on the True Cross allowed me to explore the ideas expressed in this paper. This project would not have been possible without her expertise and encouragement. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the other professors and colleagues who provided feedback during the Florida State University Art History Graduate Symposium and after; in particular, I thank the organizers and editorial board of Athanor, Drs. Kyle Killian and Preston McLane.

1 W. Drijvers, *Helena Augusta: The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of Her Finding of the True Cross* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992). Drijvers provides a thorough studies of the legends surrounding Helena and the discovery of the True Cross.

2 Lynn Jones, "Medieval Armenia Identity and Relics of the True Cross (9th-11th Centuries)," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 12 (2003): 43-53. According to Jones, for much of the medieval period, the imperial Byzantine court exclusively controlled access to relics of the True Cross. Other Christian states could only gain fragments of the Cross through the Byzantine court, which would distribute these relics in order to promote orthodoxy or confer political legitimacy to certain individuals. See also Nicole Thierry, "Le culte de la croix dans l'empire byzantine du VIIe siècle au Xe," *Revista di studi buzantini e slavi* 1 (1999): 205-218.

3 Anatole Frolow, *La Relique de La Vraie Croix: Recherches Sur Le Developpement D'Un Culte* (Paris: Edité par Institut Francais d'etudes Byzantines, 1961). Frolow's seminal study catalogues many of these reliquaries.

4 In this paper I follow the method of study established by Jones in her work on medieval reliquaries of the True Cross, which calls for close analysis of the creation and context of the object, as well as study of primary sources to question contemporary understanding of these reliquaries and the ways in which their identities were manipulated or altered. In particular, I point to Jones, "Medieval Identity," 43-53; Lynn Jones, "Perceptions of Byzantium: Radegund of Poitiers and Relics of the True Cross," in *Byzantine Images and their Afterlives: Essays in Honor of Annemarie Weyl Carr,* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 105-124; and Jones, "The *Enkolpion* of Edward the Confessor: Byzantium and Anglo-Saxon Concepts of Rulership," in *Cross and Cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon World,* eds. Sarah Larratt Keefer, Karen Jolly, and Catherine E. Karkov, (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2010), 369-386.

5 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438-439, cat. 556, provides a description and history of this reliquary.

6 Piotr Grotowski, *Arms and Armour of the Warrior Saints: Tradition and Iconography in Byzantine Iconography (843-1261)* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2010), 338-339. Staurotheke comes from the Greek, *stauros* or "cross" and *theke* "container."

7 William Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert Publisher, 1964), 284-313.

8 Gustave Schlumberger, "La Croix Byzantine Dite Des Zaccaria (Tresor de La Calhedrale de Genes)," *Monuments et Memoires de La Fondation Eugene Piot* 2, no. 1 (1895): 131-136; Silvio Giuseppi Mercati, "Sulla Croce Bizantina degli Zaccaria nel Tesoro del Duomo di Genova," *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* 13, (1959): 29-43.

9 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438-439, cat. 556.

10 The reliquary is discussed in these contexts in Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, 284-313 and Grotowski, *Arms and Armour*, 338-339.

Description and History

In its current form, the *Croce degli Zaccaria* is a 54 by 40-centimeter silver-gilt cross with a tang at its base.[11] The reliquary has flared arms and medallions that extend beyond the end of its arms. Two fragments of wood, arranged in a cruciform pattern, are set in the center, encased in rock crystal. Fifty-seven gemstones, including rubies, sapphires, and amethysts, decorate the reliquary's front.[12] These stones are set in high-relief scalloped prong settings, which elevates them from the gilt base. There are also forty-four large pearls on the front, which are drilled through their center and attached to the reliquary by peg settings. A continuous rope of smaller pearls runs around the edges of the cross (Figure 1).

On the back of the reliquary, at the terminals and in the center, are repoussé bust medallions of holy figures with identifying inscriptions. The *Theotokos*, the mother of God, is in the central medallion. Christ is depicted in the medallion at the top of the cross. On either side of the *Theotokos*, on the cross arms, are medallions with the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Saint John the Evangelist is depicted in the medallion at the foot of the cross. Surrounding these medallions is a repoussé Greek inscription in majuscule which reads, "Bardas had this divine weapon shaped; Isaac, Archbishop of Ephesus, had it restored when it had been degraded by time" (Figure 2).[13]

This inscription reveals much about the reliquary's origins. According to Frolow, the "Bardas" referenced is likely Caesar Bardas (d. 22 Apr. 866), the uncle of Byzantine emperor Michael III (840-867).[14] Bardas held the title Caesar from 862 to 866, providing a date range for the creation of the reliquary.[15] During this period, he gifted the Cross to the Basilica of Saint John in Ephesus.[16] The inscription also tells us that the reliquary was restored by Isaac, archbishop of Ephesus. Frolow identifies an Isaac who occupied that seat in Ephesus from 1260 to 1283, dating this restoration to the late thirteenth century.[17]

Shortly after this refashioning, in 1304, Seljuk forces invaded Ephesus and took the reliquary as loot, later trading it in exchange for wheat in the city of Phocaea, on the western coast of Anatolia.[18] In Phocaea the reliquary became the property of the Zaccaria, a family of Genoese merchants who ruled the city and its surrounding islands after receiving them as a gift from Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII (r. 1261-1282).[19] A member of the Zaccaria family then offered the *Croce degli Zaccaria* to the Cathedral of San Lorenzo in Genoa.[20] Frolow suggests that Ticino Zaccaria offered the reliquary to the church in 1336, while Miller argues that the reliquary was not taken to Genoa until 1459 by John Asen Zaccaria, the illegitimate son of Centurione II Zaccaria.[21] Church documents confirm the reliquary was in the Cathedral by 1461.[22] Based on this history, I distinguish two different identities created by the reliquary's owners: in Byzantium, the reliquary's Byzantine history was visually emphasized, while in Genoa, an invented narrative is textually asserted which distanced the reliquary from its Byzantine provenance.

The Byzantine Use and Identity of the Reliquary

The first shift in the use and identity of the *Croce degli Zaccaria* occurred in the 13th century, when the reliquary was refashioned. Frolow claims that, based on the style of stone settings and metalwork, no original, ninth-century parts of the reliquary remained after this refashioning.[23] I agree with Frolow, but suggest that the reliquary also visually evokes an older tradition of cross reliquaries. The jeweled front of the reliquary matches ninth-century ornamentation of Byzantine jeweled crosses, and the inscription on the reliquary's reverse evokes an older Greek letter form.[24] Despite these archaizing elements, the form of the Cross is in a style popular in the 13th century and the stones on the front are in, what I suggest are, a later technique of Byzantine gem setting. I suggest that, when refashioning the reliquary, Archbishop Isaac of Ephesus sought to mimic an earlier tradition of reliquaries, imitating the material and paleography of the original reliquary, while the workshop that refashioned it updated the form and stone settings. This imitation of earlier cross reliquaries would emphasize the object's Orthodox history at a time when Ephesus faced increasing attacks from both Latin European merchants and Muslim Seljuk forces.[25]

11 This tang suggests that the reliquary was used as a processional cross. Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556.

12 Schlumberger, "La Croix Byzantine," 132, identifies these stones in his description of the reliquary. Mercati, "Croce Byzantina," 29-30, agrees.

13 I follow translations given by Frolow. The original Greek inscription reads, "Τούτο το θειον οπλον Βάρδας μεν ετεκτηνατο. Εφεσου δ' αρχιθυτης 'Ισαάκ παλαιωθεν ανεκαινισεν" See Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556.

14 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556. Frolow suggests that "Bardas" in the inscription refers to Caesar Bardas, rather than another Byzantine Bardas, due to his dating of the object, which fits squarely in the date range that Bardas held the Caesar title.

15 A basic introduction to Caesar Bardas can be found in the Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium. See Paul A. Hollingsworth and Anthony Cutler, "Bardas," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander Kazhdan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

16 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556.

17 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556.

18 Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, 288, discusses how the reliquary came into the hands of the Zaccaria.

19 The Zaccaria family ruled over multiple lands in the Mediterranean, including Phocaea, for several generations. The complex history of this family will not be discussed here, but an in-depth biography can be found in Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, 285-287.

20 Once in Genoa, the reliquary was processed during ceremonial elections of the Genoese Doge until the elimination of that office in 1797. It was also used in processions celebrating the feast day of Corpus Christi. For the use of the reliquary in Genoa, see "Croce Degli Zaccaria," Museo del Tesoro, n.d., http://www.museidigenova.it/en/content/croce-degli-zaccaria.

21 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556. Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, 288.

22 A 1461 commission for a pedestal is extant in the Cathedral archives. Mercati, "Croce Bizantina," 30.

23 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556.

24 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556, claims that the inscription has an "archaic" quality.

25 Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, 285-288.

The *Croce degli Zaccaria* then serves as both visual evidence of the continued practice of Orthodoxy in Ephesus and as a reminder to the faithful of the power of God, reassuring the Ephesians that they would prevail against these invading forces, if it is God's will they do so.[26]

The reliquary's jeweled front is a clear emulation of earlier Byzantine *crux gemmata*, or jeweled cross reliquaries. To my knowledge, there are no extant 13th century examples of these reliquaries, whose frontal decoration consist almost entirely of gemstones. They are instead common earlier in the early Byzantine period.[27] A well-known 6th century example is the *Crux Vaticana*, a processional cross commissioned by Emperor Justin II (Figure 3). This cross has no figural decoration, instead featuring large gems and a Greek inscription. Closer in date to the *Croce degli Zaccaria* is a ninth-century Constantinopolitan *crux gemmata* (Figure 4). Looted from Constantinople in 1205, and now in the treasury of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, this reliquary features bezel-set gemstones in high relief on a gilt base with a rope of pearls running around the edges— much like the *Croce degli Zaccaria*.[28]

The inscription on the *Croce degli Zaccaria* also provides evidence for the importance of its history. Frolow states that the letter form of the inscription has an archaic quality and suggests that the re-fashioner was inspired by the original lettering.[29] I suggest that, in addition to this archaizing script, the wording of the inscription was meant to emphasize the continuity of Orthodoxy in Ephesus. The inscription specifically names two people: Bardas and Archbishop Isaac, drawing attention to their involvement and the reliquary's continued use over a span of five centuries.

A more detailed inscription was once found on a container built to hold the staurotheke. Created in the 11th century at the behest of an Ephesian Archbishop, this now-lost container featured an inscription that read:

"The Caesar Bardas adorns the very precious wood of gold, jewels and pearls and deposits it on the altar of the Theologian; Kyriakos, bishop of this church, fashioned the reliquary of gold. Both of these offerings having been damaged by time; Isaac, first in the celebration of the sacrifices and also in the accomplishment of his duties, has put them in a better state."[30]

The inclusion, in this inscription, of the 11th century bishop, Kyriakos, is evidence of the importance of the reliquary's history. These inscriptions allow us to create a timeline for the Zaccaria Cross—emphasizing the relic's origin in the ninth century and its continued use and refashioning in the 11th and 13th centuries. This history emphasizes the Byzantine identity of the reliquary—authenticating it as a Byzantine piece of the True Cross and making it venerable for both its contact with Christ and its historic lineage.

While these elements of the reliquary are archaizing and therefore emphasize the reliquary's history, other aspects were updated. I suggest that both the form and the method of stone setting of the reliquary were changed as a result of 13th century Byzantine workshop styles.

The form of the Zaccaria Cross is standard for late 12th and 13th century Byzantine reliquaries of the True Cross, which also feature round medallions and protrusions at the end of the cross arms.[31] Examples from the 12th century are a bronze pectoral cross from Constantinople and a bronze enkolpion (Figures 5 and 6). The form of both of these crosses matches the *Croce degli Zaccaria*. Reliquaries of the True Cross created in the ninth century, the suggested date of the original creation of the *Croce degli Zaccaria*, are of a different form, with straight arms and no finials or finial medallions.[32]

The gemstones on the *Croce degli Zaccaria* are set in distinctive prong settings with scalloped supports, which match 13th century Byzantine jewel setting practices. Prong-set stones are soldered to their bases and held in place by claw-shaped tines. I suggest that in the ninth century—when the reliquary was originally created—gems were more commonly bezel set. Bezel set gems are held in place by a metal rim that completely encircles the gemstone. This technique can be seen on the Limburg Staurotheke, which features

26 The militant intercessory power of God is discussed, along with the concept that reliquaries could serve as weapons of war for the Byzantines, as representations of God's power in Robert Nelson, "'And So, With the Help of God': The Byzantine Art of War in the Tenth Century," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 65/66 (2011-2012): 63-90.

27 John A. Cotsonis, *Byzantine Figural Processional Crosses* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994).

28 *Splendeur de Byzance* (Brussels: Musees Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, 1982) 148-149.

29 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556.

30 Frolow, *La Relique*, 438, cat. 556. While the original container is now lost, a seventeenth-century reproduction preserves its inscription, which, in the original Greek, reads: "Βάρδας [ο] καισαρ υπερεντιμον ξυλον/ χοσμει χρυσω τε και λιθοις και μαργαροις/ χειμηλιον θείε εστία Θεηγορο./ Κυριακος δε [την] χρυσην αυτώ θιβην/ προεδρος ειργασατο της εκκλησίας./ Θραυσθεντα [δ'] αυτά τω μαχρω λίαν χρονω/ Ο Ισαάκ ηγαγεν εις χρειπτω θέαν,/ Πρωτος θυμασι[ν], αλλα και τοις πρακτεοις."

31 Brigitte Pitarakis, *Les Croix-Reliquares Pectorales Byzantines En Bronze* (Paris: Picard, 2006) 29-39, describes the forms used in representations of the True Cross and identifies the typical style used for the cross in different time periods. She classifies Byzantine cross reliquaries into ten types. Her formal type 10 has roundels at the end of the arms and teardrop appendages extending beyond the arms, matching the Zaccaria Cross.

32 Pitarakis identifies this as "formal type 1." Pitarakis, *Les Croix-Reliquares*, 30-31. For examples of "formal type 1" reliquaries, I point to Pitarakis, *Les Croix-Reliquares*, 29-39.

dozens of bezel-set stones (Figure 7).[33] A ninth-century Constantinopolitan paten, now in the Louvre, also has bezel-set gems around its rim (Figure 8).[34]

To my knowledge, prong-settings were not used in Byzantium until the 10th century; at which point the technique begins to appear in conjunction with bezel settings on *crux gemmata*. A 10th century Byzantine staurotheke, now in the Treasury of Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice, shows an early use of prong-set stones (Figure 9). There are no extant examples of prong-set stones before the 10th century, but both setting styles continue to be used on Byzantine creations after this point. The use of prong settings on the *Croce degli Zaccaria* reveal the influence of later Byzantine workshop practices after the reliquary's original construction.

Once the Cross was "denigrated by time," Archbishop Isaac of Ephesus made a conscious choice to refashion the object, emulating earlier Byzantine staurothekes. While both the form of the cross and the setting of the gems on the *Croce degli Zaccaria* are in the 13th century fashion, the reliquary displays a conscious mimicry of an earlier style of decoration and an earlier letter form. I argue that the nature of the refashioning connected the object visually and textually to its historic lineage, emphasizing the Orthodox, and therefore Byzantine, identity of the reliquary. This emphasis on the reliquary's history did not displace the relic's importance, rather, the contemporary Byzantine viewer was able to hold these polyvalent understandings simultaneously, valuing the reliquary both for its spiritual significance and historic lineage.[35]

The Genoese use and identity of the Reliquary

As we have seen, the refashioned Cross was taken from Ephesus by Seljuk forces and then traded at Phocaea, where it became the property of the Zaccaria.[36] I argue that the Zaccaria family deemphasized the Byzantine identity of the reliquary, creating a new narrative for the object based on an invented textual tradition of the relic's translation. This textual narrative was used by the *Croce degli Zaccaria*'s western owners to obscure the reliquary's Byzantine creation. However, in the hands of these western viewers, the *Croce degli Zaccaria*'s legitimacy was still visually communicated by the Byzantine reliquary, which communicated the authenticity of the wooden relic as a piece of the True Cross.

The translation narrative invented by the Zaccaria was first recorded in the fourteenth-century chronicle of Ramon Muntaner, a Catalan pirate who invaded Phocaea in 1308.[37] He recorded the legend as told to him by Ticino Zaccaria, Lord of Phocaea.[38] According to Zaccaria, at the time of Christ's death, Saint John the Evangelist took from behind the head of Christ a piece of the True Cross and brought it to Ephesus. He then had it encased in gold and precious stones "of untold value."[39] Muntaner claims he was told that Saint John then wore this relic daily on a gold chain around his neck.[40]

Muntaner conveys this legend as if the relic of Saint John he describes is the exact reliquary the Zaccaria owned. I suggest that the Zaccaria advanced their invented narrative in order to create a western identity for the reliquary, made easier due to the collapse of the Byzantine empire in 1453, roughly the same time they offered the reliquary to the Cathedral of San Lorenzo.[41] This narrative was then accepted and spread in the west.[42]

This new western-focused identity was communicated textually; I stress that in the hands of the Genoese, the Zaccaria Cross was not visually changed. I suggest that the new translation narrative served to balance the Byzantine appearance of the reliquary, which would have been obvious and valued to a merchant population like Genoa, which frequently traded with Byzantium and had their own quarter in Constantinople.[43]

In summary, the Byzantine *Croce degli Zaccaria*, originally created in the 9th century, underwent two changes to its identity in the medieval period as its ownership shifted. The 13th century Ephesian refashioning of the reliquary used an older formal style and stressed the object's history in its inscription in order to emphasize its continued use and power as an intercessory object. When the reliquary moved west, its Ephesian identity was displaced in favor of a new translation narrative, which coexisted with the Byzantine appearance of the object.

Florida State University

33 The dimensions of the Limburg Staurotheke are 48 x 35 x 6 cm. The reliquary has been extensively studied, appearing in Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era*, (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997) and Herausgegeben von Anton Legner, ed., *Ornamenta Ecclesiae: Kunst Und Kunstler Der Romanik* (Koln, 1985), 129-131. To my knowledge, no one has discussed the jewel setting techniques used on this or other reliquaries.

34 Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, 68-69.

35 Nelson, "'And So, With the Help of God'," 178.

36 Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, 287-288.

37 Ramon Muntaner, *The Chronicle of Muntaner*, trans. Lady Goodenough (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1981). Muntaner was a Catalan mercenary who led excursions in the Mediterranean. He wrote a chronicle of his life which records his experiences in the Mediterranean and his interactions with the Zaccaria family.

38 Conflict between Bendetto Zaccaria's sons over the inheritance of Phocaea led to the contraction of a group of Catalan pirates who invaded the city on Easter 1307. Under the direction of Ramon Muntaner (1265-1336), these mercenaries forcefully took the *Croce degli Zaccaria*, along with "infinite" other goods. It is unclear how the reliquary came back into the hands of the Zaccaria—or indeed, if Ramon Muntaner ever truly had it—but *the Croce degli Zaccaria* certainly returned to the family at some point in this century. Miller, *Essays on the Latin Oreint,* 288. The invasion is described in Muntaner, *Chronicle of Muntaner*, 560-561.

39 Muntaner, *Chronicle of Muntaner*, 560-561.

40 Muntaner, *Chronicle of Muntaner*, 560-561.

41 Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, 287-288.

42 For examples of other reliquaries which took on new identities in the west, see Jones, especially, "The *Enkolpion* of Edward the Confessor," 369-386.

43 Miller, *Essays on the Latin Orient*, 283-285.

Figure 1. *Croce degli Zaccaria*, front. Silver-gilt, gems, wood, 54 x 40 cm. Treasury of San Lorenzo, Genoa.

Figure 2. *Croce degli Zaccaria*, reverse. Silver-gilt, gems, wood, 54 x 40 cm. Treasury of San Lorenzo, Genoa. Image source: Gustave Schulmberger, La Croix Bizantine.

Figure 3. Crux Vaticana, front, 6th century. Silver-gilt and gems. Treasury of St. Peter's Basilica, Rome.

Figure 5. Pectoral cross, front, 12th century. Bronze. Constantinople. Image source: Brigitte Pitarakis, *Les Croix-Reliquaires Pectorales*.

Figure 4 [*facing page*]. Cross reliquary, front, 8th to 9th century. Treasury of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris.

Figure 6. Enkolpion, front, 11th-12th century. Bronze. Archaeological Museum, Komotini, Greece. Image source: Pitarakis, *Les Croix-Reliquaires Pectorales*.

Figure 7 [*facing page*]. Limburg Staurotheke, front, lid closed, 920-959 and 968-985. Wood, gold, silver, enamel, gems, pearls, 48 x 35 x 6 cm. Cathedral, Limburg an der Lahn. Image source: Nancy Ševčenko, *The Limburg Staurotheke and Its Relics*.

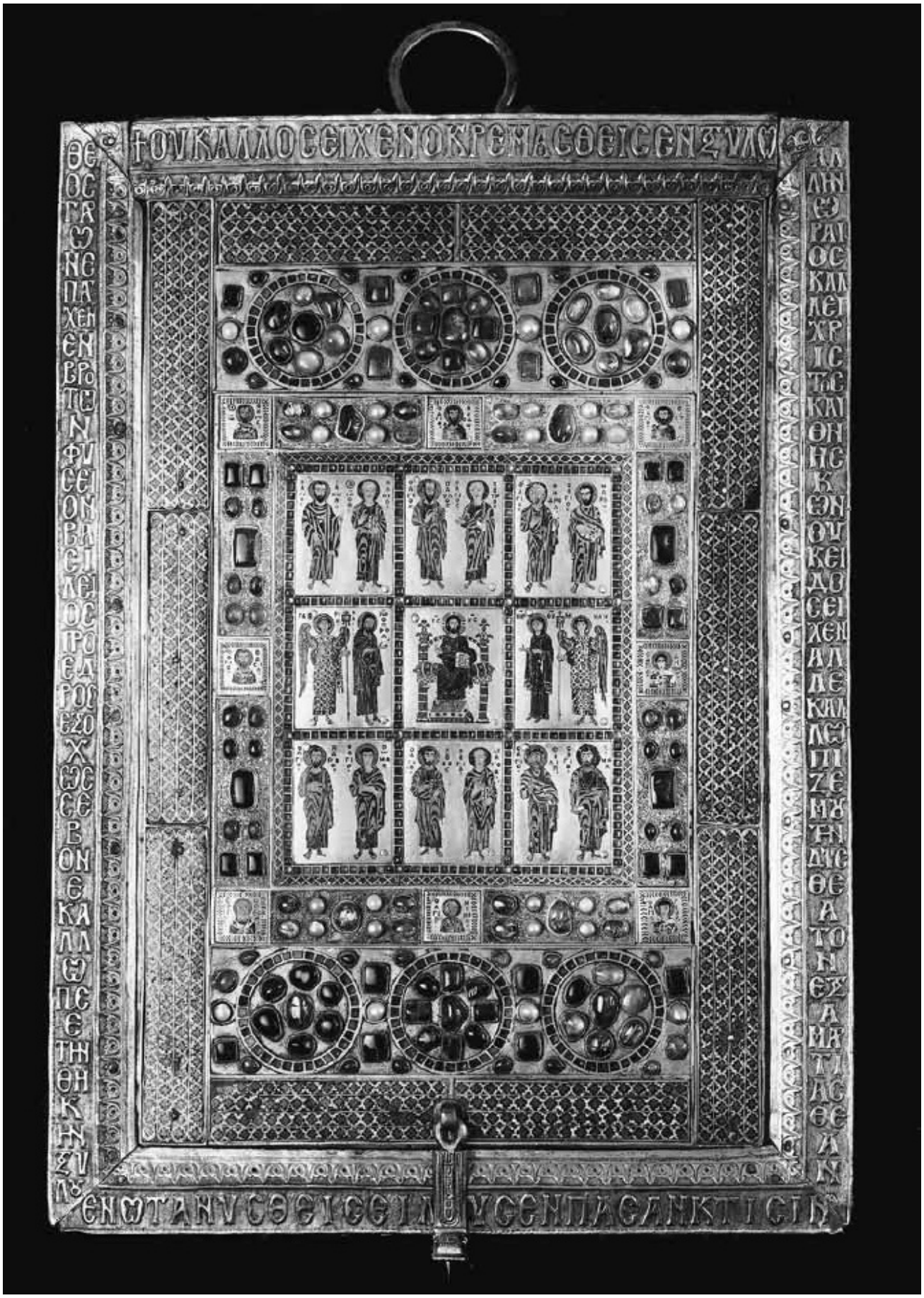


Figure 8. Paten, late 9th-mid 10th century. Agate, silver gilt, cloisonné enamel, and gemstones. Musee du Louvre, Paris.
Image source: *The Glory of Byzantium*.

Figure 9. Reliquary of the True Cross, late 10th - early 11th century. Silver-gilt on wood, gold cloisonné enamel, stones, 270 x 220 mm. Treasury of San Marco, Venice. Image source: Mario Carrieri, *The Treasury of San Marco Venice*.

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS GOLD SOCIETY

Margaret A. and Robert A. Allesee • Charles L. and Margery K. Barancik • Benjamin L. Bivins and Elece Harrison • Brenda G. Boone • Robert D. Bradbury • Terry P. and Linda Holdenor Cole • Betsy R. Coville • Sandra J. and James L. Dafoe • Margaret A. and Scott Douglass • Frank and Jo Ann Fain • Herman H. and Sharon G. Frankel • Steven and Blanche Gordon • Frank D. and Jane A. Grimmett • Nona M. Heaslip • Charles L. Huisking, III • Barbara A. Judd • Herbert E. and Maija U. Kaufman • Donald R. Kerr and Jessie J. Lovano-Kerr • George M. Kole and Judith A. Zuckerberg • Ruth B. Kreindler • Sharon Maxwell-Ferguson and Howell L. Ferguson • James C. McNeil • Jane E. and George D. Morgan • Lucie M. and Charles C. Patton • Maurice Richards and Jack Kesler • Marcia L. Rosal • Julianne R. and David J. Schulte • Alison Stone • Robert L. Ward • Peter D. Weishar and Donna G. Zelazny • Jacqueline C. and Charles L. Whited • Howard W. Kessler and Anne G. Van Meter • Segundo J. and Bobbie C. Fernandez • Edith Winston • Organizations: Barber Marketing, Inc., Ekk & Hamilton Realty, LLC and The Patterson Foundation