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Edited by Pam Meecham

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Contemporary Displays of Modern Art

Pam Meecham

Convoluted Chronologies

Recent, current, and forthcoming modern art exhibitions[1] are prefigured by publicity peppered with plenty of gerunds and prefixes with "re" and "un" doing most of the work: reconfiguring, revisiting, revising, rehanging, reforming, revisioning, recreating, reintroducing, reconceptualization, reinterpretation, reclamation, reimagining, reestablishing, reillumination, rewire, unsettling, and so forth. Such exhibitions are accompanied by marketing superlatives: unprecedented, groundbreaking, epoch-making, milestone, and so on. And fresh from storage we see artworks from the modern period outed as the "seldom seen" and "often unknown," in tandem with the art of the recidivist[2] finally rehabilitated to avant-garde status. While chary of inflating the few to the many, as liberal institutions glory in internal contradictions and a lack of unity, it is nonetheless possible to draw together enough international exhibitions to warrant a closer look at the staging of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century art. Witnessing the recasting of modern art there is much to reflect on including institutional change, exhibitions and audiences, the primary concerns of this chapter.

The project "*museum global?*" (2015–2017) and related conference "*museum global? 2016: Multiple Perspectives on Art 1904–1950*" at Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf is part of an overhaul of its classic modern art collection[3] "from a newly won perspective" (http://www.kunstsammlung.de/en/investigate/museum-global.html). Kunstsammlung NRW intends to extend and differentiate the grand narratives of the Western modernist canon by critically interrogating its collection, seeking revision and reillumination of its own history, to offer more diverse voices from non-European regions. Revisiting the modern art canon and its historiography, the museum is taking a diachronic approach, particularly attentive to the continuous transformation and development of language and cultural definitions in global contexts, that, it argues, can hinder transnational understanding.

In a similar vein the reopened Stedelijk Museum,[4] Amsterdam looked to its collection (Modern and Contemporary, Art and Design) for a framework: "Although museums often … frame their collections in the context of art history, this publication [*Stedelijk Collection Reflections* 2012] does the opposite: it surveys the history of modern and contemporary art *through* the … collections" (Goldstein 2012, 11). New essays "offering a kaleidoscopic overview of art history told from the perspective of the present day"

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(Goldstein 2012, 11) use the collection to revisit art historical orthodoxies. For instance Christopher Green focuses on works in the collection by Kazimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian[5] to reconsider the notion, firmly imbedded in traditional art historical consensus, of a "true Cubism" preferring to be open to conflicting truths and to exhibitions contextualized beyond the limitations of "the provincial category of art 'influenced by Cubism'" (Green 2012, 89). Through the Stedelijk collection Green extends Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque's "Cubist adventure" to locations, temporalities, avant-gardes, and artists outside a Paris conventionally bracketed by 1908 and 1911 (see Chapter 24, this volume).

Renewing its modern art collection in 2014 was the Musée National D'Art Moderne Centre (Pompidou), Paris. The Pompidou exhibition *Modernités plurielles 1905–1970* was curated by Catherine Grenier as an "off-centre vision of 20th century art" (Grenier 2014, 16). In a catalogue chapter "An upside-down world?"[6] (Grenier 2014, 15), Grenier states the "milestone" new hang, was not intended to be canonical or canon forming. In the *exhibition-manifesto* she continued the show "… breaks with long years of consensus on the uniform, linear and progressive narrative proposed by all Western museums, with slight national differences. This consensus is now undergoing a crisis, and needs to be … re-established on new foundations" (Grenier 2014, 15). She addresses interconnected concerns: a reinterpretation of Western modernity within the context of globalization. Wide-ranging geographically with over 1,000 works by almost 400 artists, the aesthetically and medium diverse exhibition included painting, sculpture, architecture, experimental film, photography, and atypically a smattering of applied arts. Rewiring the art/artefact dichotomy of Western art is not accomplished without some dithering[7] as medium specific curating has a long history although modernism always had anti-specialism exhibitions seen, for instance, in Russian Constructivism, Dada, Surrealism, and CoBrA. Although medium specific boundaries largely ceased in art production conventionally around the 1970s the curatorial framework is undergoing tentative revision.[8] Challenging mainstream discourses and hierarchies, Grenier maintains the existing historic narrative is inadequate, charged with partiality and obsolescence: that it embraces neither the gamut of global modernity or the richness of Western modernity. Rejecting the simplification and exclusion processes that have contributed to this procedure she calls for multifaceted reform and the replacement of one narrative by many to "reintroduce a complexity and diversity that will enrich our understanding of the modern period" (Grenier 2014, 17).[9]

Although globalization has all but excluded as anachronistic, the nation-state from the global display of contemporary art (witnessed in thematically driven transnational Documenta, Triennale, Biennale), historic national collections have not been immune from change seen in their own muted forms of denationalization. Markedly less prone to national triumphalism, a hallmark of earlier displays,[10] *America is Hard to See*, the 2015 inaugural exhibition of the new Whitney Museum of American Art,[11] New York also represented its 150-year narrative. More than 600 works were curated through themes rather than an unfolding, evolutionary route to unsettle assumptions about the American art canon. Notably the curating included works that directly addressed issues of social and political significance, devalued in the immediate postwar period as propagandistic when many artists conceptualized *social relevance* as personal revelation through painterly actions and spontaneous imagination (Rosenberg 1952). The Whitney's roughly chronological hang was divided into twenty-three thematic "chapters" (Machine, Ornament, Circus, Love Letter from the War Front and so on) and noticeably less dependent on "breakthrough" moments and keynote works.

Bearing comparison with *Modernités plurielles* at a national level, no claim was made for either "comprehensive survey or tidy summation" rather the exhibition revisits and revises "established tropes while forging new categories and even expanding the definition of who counts as an American artist" (Whitney Museum of American Art Web site). Acknowledging the difficulty of definitions, the Whitney too relinquished a single historic story. Re-narrativizing by routinely sidestepping medium specific and avant-garde curating, the formerly feted now sit alongside historic protagonists and the unsung. The result according to Walter Robinson "… is democratically revisionist, putting … iconic masterworks … side by side with unfamiliar things by lesser-known artists, many of them women and people of color. Several alternative histories coexist with the mainstream" (Robinson 2015, n.p.). Multiple genealogies and a cautious retraction of hierarchical displays does allow for a more expansive, less didactic story of modern art than is familiar but recent archival research indicates the often contingent nature of such change: for instance, waves of interest and dormancy in showing artists of color according to Susan E. Cahan closely correlate with racial politics in the United States (Cahan 2016, 3). It remains to be seen if the current unsettling is irreversible or just part of "a persistent belief that token inclusion is synonymous with institutional change" (Cahan 2016, 2).

Another long-term exhibition *Reimagining Modernism: 1900–1950* (on view indefinitely) opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2014 with the expressed purpose of expanding the narratives of modern art. For the first time in the museum's history it integrated European and American modernist collections, and included art with design again utilizing the strategy of putting iconic works "in-dialogue" with art works more accustomed to storage. It too includes more art by women, Helen Torr and Mexican artist Elizabeth Catlett, and artists of "not strictly European or Euro-American Nexus" including African American, Hale Woodruff and Japanese, Bumpei Usui, and several self-taught and folk-artists rarely seen in the company of Master works (Griffey 2015, 1).

There have been earlier integrated "no narrative" shows closer to the eclecticism of seventeenth-century cabinets of curiosity than the current crop of revisions: seen in London's Royal Academy millennial exhibition *1900: Art at the Crossroads*, a collaboration with the The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (Guggenheim). The show reprised the *Décannale* exhibition shown at Paris's *Exposition Universelle* of 1900: although a slender version of the original six and a half thousand works. It "… displayed, without preferential hanging or curatorial nudge, a cross-section … regardless of school, affiliation or subsequent critical judgment. Bouguereau and Leighton were hung alongside Degas and Munch; inert academicism and tedious storytelling next to the airy freedoms of impressionism, diligent and didactic realism beside fervent expressionism; sleek porniness and naively unaware erotic musings next to the newest thick-brushed attempts to render the body truthfully" (Barnes 2015, 7–8). For Julian Barnes the disparate display was a reminder of the "noble necessity" of modernism (Barnes 2015, 7–8): for the informed perhaps but the strategy asks both too much and too little of burgeoning contemporary audiences a point to which I'll return.[12]

In 2016 the newly extended Tate Modern opened: its ambition, trumpeted a year in advance, to "challenge the traditional story of modern art and offer a fresh perspective on artists working around the world in a re-hang of the whole building" (Tate publicity 22 September 2015): the conjunction of modern art and world art articulated again. A rejection of a singular birthplace for modern art and its canon, and a redaction of institutionally sanctioned selection procedures is evident across gold standard international institutions with historic modern art and developing, mandatory, global contemporary collections. The linearity, narrative, and subject of modern art's established history is, according to its

custodians, being radically re-envisioned. Subject to skepticism since at least the mid-1960s, belatedly the *official* terms of modern art, historically ratified by the museum and gallery in streamlined exhibitions, now demand caveats and qualifications. Modern art however was never a coherent project, with a seamless CV stable definitions or tidy geopolitical boundaries but rather a loose confederation of contradictory practices and beliefs: historically plural in practice although not always presented as such on the gallery wall or through dissemination in popular publications.

It could be argued that former hangs of modern art no longer correspond to current heterogeneous tastes and mining museum holdings to refresh exhibitions amounts to no more than tinkering with eclipsed reputations, supplying culturally omnivorous audiences with diversity or belatedly redressing selected sins of omission. However the ubiquity of change indicates more fundamental assessments of modern art as the period recedes and jostles for a place globally in the "myriad forms of connectivity and flows linking the local (and national) to the global-as well as the West to the East and the North to the South" (Steger 2013, 2). Increased global, social connectivity enabled by the development of communication technologies and an understanding of the importance of earlier historic antecedents[13] have unsettled the received history of modern art usually *exhibited* post-1945 with an unruffled compelling coherence.[14] The current revisions are some distance from observations in the 1990s that those unwilling "to acknowledge [the] power and coherence [of US Modernism] condemned themselves to 'a kind of carping provincialism'" (Harrison 1991, 14). Inverting the binary of provincial and urban center, a broader project of provincializing Western modernity "through a process of destabilizing its claims to universalist idioms" has been underway for some time (Gaonkar 1999, 14). However it remains to be seen, given most art institution's historic complicity in the simplification and exclusions of canon building, if there will be a major "recuperation of that earlier moment of a multiplicity of politically inflected modernisms that Greenberg doctrine had excised" (Cottington 2013, 106). Omissions fashioned during the collecting of modern art are not easily remedied.[15]

The contemporary quests for less-hierarchical display is often couched in radical terms although devising ways to frame modern art against the *status quo* was an important part of the modern project. Institutional change at Brazil's Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) is described by Director, Adriano Pedrosa: "… we are coming to understand MASP as a museum that is múltiplo, diverso e plural. This is the expression that I'm using, multiple, diverse and plural" (Pedrosa 2016, n.p.). More inclusive displays (again echoing a modernist past) will include exhibitions of kitsch, pre-Columbian art, comics, work by patients from psychiatric hospitals and works by children. Pedrosa also returns to the 1960s for curatorial strategies to support the long-term installation "Picture Gallery in Transformation" initiated in 2015 (Figure 8.1). In 1968, modernist architect Lina Bo Bardi created a display of what were termed glass easels: the artwork was contained by a pane of glass supported by a concrete cube. The easels were an innovative system to move art off the walls and break with art historical groupings of schools and movements (although still within a chronological order) to create a non-hierarchical and non-linear narrative. Situated closer to its audiences, the zig-zag or serpentine floor-based display for Bo Bardi created opportunities for "chance encounters between the works" (Pedrosa 2016, n.p.). Although charged with nostalgia and problematic in relation to the scale of works, Pedrosa insists the glass easels and the museum are moving away from "all encompassing, totalising histories" (Pedrosa 2016, n.p.). The challenge as Pedrosa sees it is to "insert non-European works in the display up until the mid-20th century, and to insert non-Brazilian works in the display from the mid-20th century onward" (Pedrosa 2016, n.p.). Inserting works into entrenched narratives without resorting to historical amnesia is a complex business.

FIGURE 8.1 Museu de Arte de São Paulo, exhibition view, 2015. *Source*: Museu de Arte de Sao Paolo, photo by Eduardo Ortega./Emiliano Di Cavalcanti: © DACS 2016; Marie Laurencin, Fernand Leger, André Lhote: © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2016; Anita Malfatti: © Estate of Anita Malfatti; Pablo Picasso: © Succession Picasso/DACS, London 2016; Candido Portinari: Portinari, Candido/© DACS 2016; Diego Rivera: © Banco de México Diego Rivera Frida Kahlo Museums Trust, Mexico, D.F./DACS 2016.

"The Call of the Canon" (Halbertsma 2007, 16)

Canonical change then is nowhere more publicly evident in contemporary culture globally than in the art gallery, however the so-called democratic[16] pluralistic hangs outlined above should not inure us to the reality of business as usual outside survey exhibitions.[17] Assessing the shows that dominate US institutions, Julia Halperin and Nilkanth Patel calculate "Museums dedicated a disproportionate number of exhibitions to men, painters and artists represented by top commercial galleries. Of the 590 solo shows during this six-year period, 429 – around 73% – featured male artists" (2015, 5). The authors suggest however such a discrepancy is not a reflection of audience values, rather research indicates audiences don't make distinctions between male and female artists or show a preference for exhibitions of painting (2015, 5).

Change (considering the crisis in modern art's canon was evident from 1968) has been slow and tempered: Marlite Halbertsma maintains "The Grand Narratives may have been surpassed but the Great Masters remain" (Halbertsma 2007, 17) and while surveys and publications such as Foster *et al. Art Since 1900* (2004) questioned traditional categorization of historical styles and artistic disciplines they tended to confirm the canonical status of the art historical masterpiece: "New interpretations are spun around the traditional canon of masterpieces, and new great masters, women and 'world artists' have nestled in the folds" (Halbertsma 2007, 17). Nonetheless Halbertsma is not alone in suggesting that without the canon art history would be impossible.

The traditional modern art canon has its defenders if only for the debates that it fosters and for the weight of its contested history. At the turn of the millennium writing a new undergraduate art history course, Steve Edwards recognizing that "canonical art history is a serious adversary that cannot simply be swept away" suggests that "it is important and productive to work against the canon's[18] closures, silences, and priorities. The canon and its critique, for some time to come, exist in a necessary tension … [raising] difficult

intellectual questions to which there are no straightforward answers" (Edwards 1999, 14). In the same year Richard R. Brettell also questioned the utility of modern art movements such as Realism, Cubism, or Expressionism, and terms such as Nabis, Synthetism, and Orphism concluding that with retrospective critical detachment we could consider abandoning them, however "Avant- or anti-garde groups or larger movements are so pervasive a feature of modern scholarship that even their detractors use them, often unconsciously, as easily understood categories" (1999, 12). A decade later James Elkins concerned with art history's structure and politics too insists on a continued engagement with avant-garde culture: "It is crucial to continue engaging the main trajectory and the entire institutional, critical, and historiographic apparatus that supports it, as outmoded and ideologically limited as they may seem, because they still underwrite the conditions under which modernist practices can appear as history" (2010, 2). The avant-garde was Janus faced, at times challenging the *status quo* or contributing to its authority, but whichever way Cottington reminds us, "For over a hundred years [the avant-garde] has governed critical and historical assessment of the quality and significance of fine artist or a work of fine art- to the extent that, *if these have been judged to be avant-garde, or to belong to 'the avant-garde', then they have been worthy of consideration*. If not, then (with very few exceptions) they have not, and neither critics nor historians have paid them much attention. In short, modern art is and has been very largely whatever the 'avant-garde' has made, or has said it is" (Cottington's italics) (2013, 2).

"A Familiar Anxiety of Influence" (Stephens 2014)

While an institutionally endorsed avant-garde may have circumscribed historic displays its exclusivity as evidenced by the exhibitions cited has been called into question. Although dictionaries of art typically attach avant-gardism to authenticity, originality, and innovation, Johanne Lamoureux contends "unfortunately for the avid believer in a stable art lexicology, originality and innovation no longer survive unscathed" (Lamoureux 2006, 197). Avant-gardism was conceptualized as both evolutionary and developmental and so timing was paramount: the consequences of "belatedness" have been widely written about in postcolonial and cultural studies (see Fanon 1952). Innovation and originality were a matter of being first or court the charge of derivative: an impediment to success for many art forms or cultures considered of minor importance. Being subject to the category of *influenced by* was not confined to European colonies. Challenges to exclusion from the main trajectory of modern art came from a wide range of mutable peripheries only some of which can be included here. The 2014 Tate St Ives *International Exchanges: Modern Art and St Ives* exhibition and catalogue, rather than focus on the seaside town's remote location, reinstated the internationalism of the modern art produced there: the catalogue includes a Timeline of Key Encounters.[19] Clear about the challenges curator Chris Stephens maintained the exhibition "does not seek to dislodge an existing canon … Its aim … to demonstrate that the art made in Cornwall in the 1940s and 1950s was both specific to that place and time and can be-often was-seen as part of longer and wider artistic developments elsewhere" (2014, 15). In attempting to reinstate the strength of international connections over a localism that has dominated many accounts of St Ives, Stephens suggests that such exhibitions are rare because of a "familiar anxiety of influence. For a long time, such was the power of one historical account that it was difficult to position British- or, even, … European-art alongside American without inviting predictable assumptions and accusations of influence" (2014, 15).[20]

FIGURE 8.2 IRWIN, *Retroavantgarde*, 120 × 200 cm, mixed media, 1996. First exhibited in January 1997 in Kunsthalle Wien. *Source*: Courtesy: Galerija Gregor Podnar.

Challenging the historicism of an evolutionary framework and overcoming the anxiety of influence and the problem of originality itself seemed insurmountable to those clinging to the margins unable to breach modernism's self-referentiality and artworks ratified through radical estrangement (Kapur 2000; Williams 1989). By 2014 however qualifying criteria for inclusion once predicated on terms such as "modern, anti-modern, pioneering, late, major, minor, and so on" are no longer legitimated by all museums. New dynamics are "ending the disregard of art in 'undeveloped' or 'provincial' cultural zones. The study of influences gives way to the study of exchanges, transfers and resistances" (Grenier 2014, 18).

Displaying exchange, transfer and resistance rather than a history of influences requires remapping and pluralizing (Figure 8.2). While dispensing with the avant-garde is one possibility, Van den Berg proposes "Avant-gardes in the plural" as a solution that allows for a range of practices that embrace diverse and incompatible claims to radical art practice (Van den Berg 2006, 340). The two-dimensional map according to this logic is replaced by three-dimensional non-hierarchic rhizomatic structures that offer a degree of cohesion and yet are marked by "heterogeneity, diversity … and incoherence" (Van den Berg 2006, 341). Piotr Piotrowski too has asked for methodological revisions in ways to write about East European art: suggesting the adoption of a "horizontal art history," rather than the Western "vertical" paradigm (Piotrowski 2009). And the move from the linear to the horizontal can be seen in exhibitions that use expansive horizontal charts visualizing wider global connectivity. MoMA's 2012 exhibition *Inventing Abstraction 1910–1925* (Dickerman 2012) moves away from Alfred Barr's influential, albeit provisional 1936

diagram on the dust jacket of the catalogue to *Cubism and Abstract Art* which (the horizontal placing of dates notwithstanding) has a vertical trajectory. Most exhibitions cited above map a set of coordinates that tentatively unsettle the hierarchies enshrined in art historical orthodoxies and embedded in their own historic collections.

Continuity and Change

The rewriting, editing, or wholesale rejection of the canon takes place against the art establishment's belated attempts to frame or incorporate the variability and diversity of non-Western world art: calls to create new frameworks from the former periphery are ongoing.[21] Recent displays then are taking account of multi-linear international, national, and regional dialogues without seeking confirmation from any central, unitary voice enabling other trajectories and tributaries to flourish. Less mediated exhibitions adopt multiple temporalities, with expanded and retro avant-gardes operating in trans-disciplinary contexts.[22] The place of modern art within such transformations is uncertain. Defending the notion of continuity between contemporary art and the revolutions that produced it, Kirk Varnedoe writing on the *Modern Contemporary* in a millennial roundup of MoMA's collection in 2000 insisted new contemporary acquisitions at MoMA are "collected and presented at this Museum as part of-as belonging within and responding to, and expanding upon the framework of initiatives and challenges established by the earlier history of progressive art since the dawn of the twentieth century" (Varnedoe 2000, 12). *Modern Contemporary: Art at MoMA since 1980* was reissued and expanded to chime with the opening of Yoshio Taniguchi's new MoMA building in 2004. In the foreword, director Glenn D. Lowry is perhaps more muted on the relationship of the contemporary collection to the museum's historic "peerless" modern collection and instead emphasized the rapid acquisition and expansion of contemporary art display and "the complex dialogue that exists between the immediate past and the contemporary" (Lowry 2004, 9). Terry Smith argues "By the mid-twentieth century, modern art had become singular, even conformist, in its artistic orientations, and had concentrated its disseminative infrastructure (markets, museums, interpreters, publicists) in the great cultural centers of Europe and the United States" (2011, 8). However it could also be argued that modern art even at the height of its singularity and conformism outlined above was always more complex in practice and, away from scrutiny, innovation, and even militant forms of modernism, flourished (Craven 2002). Rather than seeing canonical modernism as a one-way process and therefore easily dismissed as hegemonic it is also the case that modernist innovations were global. If from the turning-point of the millennium the historic modern collection provided an implicit framework within which to present contemporary art, the relationship between modern and contemporary art is now less certain and combined exhibitions sometimes elide the history of the former to allow space for the latter.

While modern artworks were typically displayed pedagogically adhering to the chronological[23] charts constructed to inform a public unfamiliar with the new[24] more recently thematic curating across movements charting non-sequential narratives popularized at the turn of the millennium are now commonplace. It is worth remembering the contentious transition in the enterprise to over-ride institutionally established tradition. Franco Moretti described some of the curatorial changes as a market-led assault on the principle of modernism: the 2000 thematic hang at MoMA, New York (*People, Places and Things*) invoking the charge of capitulation. Moretti deplored curating in "modern *starts*" "that reduces a hundred years of defiguration to a stroll through an aesthetic department

store" (2000, 102). He saw the thematic hang and the downplaying of abstraction (that is "the old and difficult Modernism") (2000, 102) in favor of figuration as part of a counter-modernist reaction and with the return of figuration, a loss of technical freedom and with it the art market "slowly resumed its control of aesthetic production" (2000, 102). Jacob Birken more recently observed "the transfer of artworks into and out of the canon can be equalled to the cycles of fashion, with inclusion being the necessity for introducing new products into the market; the lower the former worth of the product, the higher the added value" (Birken 2015, 217).[25] John Roberts, writing of art history's implosion and reformation in the early 1970s argues "most art history survives largely as a servant of the intimate relationship between the market and the museum, in which the business of attribution, evaluation and judgment-towards-procurement makes the market safe for the museum and the museum safe for the market" (Roberts 2013, 33; West, 2011).[26] If the new art history sought to reshuffle and expand the canon it soon became clear that this was what the market desired. "Expanding the canon, reversing the hierarchies and opening up aesthetic judgment to objects traditionally excluded from its purview simply revivified the relations between the market and the museum" (Roberts 2013, 33).

Audiences and Value Neutral Exhibitions

To return to a point left hanging earlier, audiences' experiences of current exhibitions, it is worth noting how much visitor figures and profiles have changed. In contemporary terms Yayoi Kusama's *Infinite Obsession* was seen by over 2 million people in South and Central America in 2014 and since opening in 2000, Tate Modern has had over 40 million visitors. Both statistics stand in sharp contrast to William Rubin's observation in 1984 when director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA, that the modern tradition had been "essentially a private one, addressed to a small public of the artist's friends and collectors" with implications for display. With intimacy in mind Rubin argued, "Modern pictures were not destined for large public areas … but for artists' studios and collectors' homes and apartments; these spaces are their natural habitat" (Rubin 1991 [1984], 46).

In the present less confident age, modern art is not alone in being presented to the public within hesitant even uneasy frameworks that do not propose a single or unified vision and bring together disparate artworks and a range of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary positions. Okwui Enwezor, curator of 2015's fifty-sixth Venice Biennale *All the World's Futures* describes the orchestration of co-produced interdisciplinary exhibitions within the current upheaval of contemporary global reality as a process of "constant realignment, adjustment, recalibration, motility, and shape-shifting" (Enwezor 2015, 18). It can be argued that the current more sociological, anti-categorical display where theoretically no category is any more relevant than another encourages a relationship of co-production where the viewer's subjective experience takes precedent over institutionally ratified definitions of quality. The open-ended, coexistence of different and often conflicting narratives can be seen in what was previously titled the *BP Walk through British Art*[27] (now *Walk through British Art*) at London's Tate Britain until January 2023. Introduced in 2014, the re-hang of British art from 1500 to the present day is framed within a comprehensive chronology.[28] It takes a sequential approach (termed the chronological circuit) with periods closer to the present day organized by decades and allocated separate rooms with smart brass plates on the floor and wall maps for orientation purposes. It is a less didactic, less mediated, almost deregulated hang (and subject to regular change) and arguably

presented as "value neutral." It too presents a cross-section of artworks chosen by the date they were made with no particular narrative, chronology defined as neutral, and displayed with substantially reduced wall-texts (Curtis 2014). The stated intent is to allow more time for individual looking and bears comparison with the no-narrative strategy at the Metropolitan Museum in New York (Wagstaff 2016). Visitors to the Tate have long been encouraged to read artworks from multiple view-points (Morris 2006) albeit within an art historical framework that harked back to MoMA's genealogical tree (Belting 2009). The 2014 hang removes this framework although much of Tate's modern art collection was amassed under its mandate and so is already hobbled in terms of fulfilling a comprehensive recuperation of art from the modern period.

The curating strategy outlined above at Tate Britain and evident in earlier examples while removing the confrontation between avant-garde and the overshadowed, taxonomically subordinate seen in the complexity of clustering forms of realism together fails to engage the viewer beyond the most generalized stylistic oppositions. Forms of figuration and works involving any mimesis were scorned as conservatives by advocates of high modernism[29] and are still subject to hierarchies as indicated by Moretti cited above. Modernist innovation was often (but not always) countenanced in terms of denaturalization, that is in attacks on naturalism with stylistic experimentation and a break with tradition creating a false binary: social content in art has never been dependent on descriptive or realistic description/naturalism. Figuration[30] was often reduced to English eccentricity in the case of L. S. Lowry whose *The Pond*, 1950 is juxtaposed in Tate Britain's 1950s room with Josef Herman's *Three Miners*, 1953, a form of socially engaged expressionism and Wilhelmina Barns-Graham's abstract work *Glacier Crystal*, *Grindelwald*, 1950, alongside Francis Bacon's *Study for a Portrait*, 1952. The balance given to the art historical explanation of artworks and value judgments around quality and intuitive personal interpretation needs further research but current curating and revisions of frameworks present an opportunity, as Roberts suggests in other contexts, of "making the artwork visible as a site of conflict … [that] means that the artwork cannot be seen in terms of the mystification of self-expression" (Roberts 2013, 35). The new display of modern art may elide past differences and more forms of modern realism are visible but a nuanced picture of modern art and clarification of art's social role is still wanting.

Ahistoric displays that purport *dialogue as a framework* may need to move beyond benign presentation: the rise and fall of modernism is not self-explanatory, works jettisoned from the art historical narrative need a hearing. Greater transparency is needed if the much-touted democratic potential of dialogue and the reconceptualization of the relationship between learner and teacher (crucial facets of the work of Brazilian, Paulo Freire[31] and popularized in museums and galleries internationally) is to be more than rhetoric. Making sense of exhibitions, once certified by experts, is now (at least theoretically) left to audiences but can fall into the arbitrary and random although estrangement and de-familiarization can provoke new insights: and the more inclusive exhibitions do look startling. However such displays may also ratify institutionally entrenched hierarchies while maintaining a discreet distance from overt mediation. Against the decontextualization of art and making the case for greater historical context Stephen Bann argues "… The preconditions of Postmodernism cannot be understood without reference to the preconditions of Modernism, [itself] misunderstood if we are only imperfectly aware of Modernism's structural connection to what went before" (Bann 2007, 68). Faced with the narrow modern art canon traditionally on display some of the contemporary curatorial strategies appear radical in no small part because of the dominance of an overstated formalist tradition.

Delegitimizing a Critical Paradigm

While the current culture of curating advocates an expansion of the canon it is chary of embracing critical thinking, once a corner stone of modern art and of emancipatory pedagogy that bowed under the weight of censure from amongst others Bruno Latour and Jacques Rancière (Foster 2012).[32] Writing in the journal *October* on the post-critical and appraising the retreat from critical thinking set in motion by the culture wars of the previous thirty years, Hal Foster argues that in part corporate sponsorship has produced a culture in which critical debate once crucial to "the public reception of advanced art" has resulted in a careless museum culture and although "the post-critical is supposed to release us from our straitjackets (historical, theoretical, and political) … it has abetted a relativism that has little to do with pluralism" (Foster 2012, 3).

It is not just the retreat from theoretical and historic perspectives that militate against critical thinking in the art gallery. Workplace practices, privatization and outsourcing of museum services, where progressive thought and action seem outdated in the face of market forces, have arguably created a workforce unable to voice dissatisfaction. With the rise of precariat[33] (Standing 2011) and casualization we witness the grateful, unpaid intern and increasing numbers of people on temporary or informal contracts, overseen by an expanded management bureaucracy marshaled to micro-manage in place of trust. Zero hour contracts, and the marginalization of the unions have both played their part in creating a compliant workforce. Critical theory has been relegated to the periphery of the art gallery where the modernist culture of risk-taking has been institutionalized into a cliché. In a technocratic culture where de-radicalization appears inevitable with a flexible workforce framed by employment insecurity it is difficult to see how the potential of the gallery as a discursive space can be achieved (Kleinknecht, Kwee, and Budyanto 2015). Museums and galleries have survived because of their adaptability and capacity to neutralize dissent. Andrea Fraser, moving beyond the institutional critique she largely set in motion, writing on the Whitney Biennial (2012) against a backdrop of the Occupy Wall Street movement argues,

> I have ascribed to institutional critique the role of judging the institution of art against the critical claims of its legitimizing discourses, its self-representation as a site of contestation and its narratives of radicality and revolution. The glaring, persistent, and seemingly ever-growing disjunction between those legitimizing discourses-above all in their critical and political claims-and the social conditions of art generally, as well as of my own work specifically, has appeared to me as profoundly and painfully contradictory, even as fraudulent.
>
> (Fraser 2012, 28)

"From the Infinite Unmapped" (Curtis 2015, 134)

However the rules of engagement between the art establishment and its detractors have become increasingly multifaceted, even the institutionalization of art once a taboo is offered redemption through the Situationist concept of "recuperation" and a rethinking/contesting of the institution by occupying its spaces differently (Beech 2006, 1). Railing against the institutionalization of art has rarely been effective besides avant-garde and counter-culture tropes and strategies have been assimilated into art institutions. In a period of post-institutional critique there have also been calls to move to a critical museum[34] benefiting not retreating from the damning assessment of the art gallery as an implement of

the knowledge-power nexus (Bourdieu 1984; Bennett 1995; Fraser 2005; Wallach 1998). Could the art gallery become a space of public and civic assembly and a site of resistance rather than ritual? (Murawska-Muthesius and Piotrowski 2015). Shifting to "the possibility of a critical establishment" the position from the inside is not sanguine (Curtis 2015, 129) evidenced by some of the curatorial initiatives outlined above that aim to reform and rewire the canon. Calling for greater skepticism of consensus, Penelope Curtis (former Director of Tate Britain) expresses frustration with cautious, corporate administration and a financial model geared towards popular exhibitions often at the expense of municipal and local collections. Expanding the canon and "learning from the margins" Curtis suggests is restricted by corporate culture's risk averse mandate. The blurring of exhibition design with fundraising activities and calls for transparency no doubt play their part as audiences move from fringe to core. Yet "Despite all the recent work done on mapping, inventorizing and in-putting, the establishment's artistic inventory seems instead to become ever shorter and simpler, as the same few artists and artworks are re-staged, re-photographed and re-broadcast to bring to the public. From the infinite unmapped, we increasingly are presented with 100 or 10 favorite works, and with false democracy we avoid questions of quality or meaning, by plumping instead for most-liked" (Curtis 2015, 134).

Caught between agora and the tail end of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) neoliberal "experience economy" (that is the institution's responsibility to orchestrate a memorable experience for its "customers") the transformation of exhibitions can also be seen against a backdrop of the so-called educational turn (see O'Neill and Wilson 2010). In brief, the educational turn focuses on process over product giving primacy to a range of actors/participants: viewer, curator, and artwork. With widespread promotion of co-produced, participatory experiences the art gallery itself is being re-conceptualized as an educational platform that seeks collaborations to democratize the experience of artworks through shared knowledge and discursivity calling into question the core-values and responsibilities of curators.[35] Informed by anti-hegemonic/anti-bureaucratic practices that put the needs of the public before the artwork[36] institutions seeking the promise of new social relations with audiences through well-being agendas are developing more embodied approaches to experiencing artworks.

The Return of the Museum as Laboratory

The relationship between curator and audiences is currently couched in non-didactic terms, visiting the art gallery a "very democratic and liberal ritual": the curator's role "making the best work accessible for everyone" within a participatory laboratory (Obrist 2014).[37] While the laboratory has become a prerequisite for interdisciplinary experimentation in the service of stimulating visitor participation it has a long provenance (Bishop 2004). Slipping from view for much of the late twentieth century as the art gallery concerned itself with stewardship the laboratory dates back to the museum's origins. During the seventeenth century Elias Ashmole's (1617–1692) "elaboratory" in Oxford formed part of the oldest public museum in Britain. Formed across three floors, what became the Ashmolean was part proto-scientific laboratory (chemistry), an education facility for undergraduates, with a cabinet of curiosity-type collection making up its third constituent.[38] Science and the laboratory also dominated the language of the early Russian avant-garde with artworks intended to prompt active viewers. And as first director of MoMA, Barr too declared "The Museum of Modern Art is a laboratory: in its experiments the public is invited to participate" (Barr 1939, 15).

Activating the viewer as producer (with its nod to Walter Benjamin[39]) is underpinned by an assumption that participation leads to agency and emancipation although participation remains at a superficial level in many museums.[40] Looking at artworks in the modernist museum has been characterized as primarily a detached optical experience. Such experience has been negatively equated with contemplation and passivity drawn into a false dichotomy with inter-activity that requires literal physical engagement.[41] However the role of the imagination, key to the modernist project was understood as having emancipatory potential particularly in the spirit of opposition. Optical contemplation neuro-science, too, tells us is not passive; nonetheless Nina Simon details the world of participatory projects where institutions develop platforms for audiences to have multi-directional experiences. Here differentiated visitors become connected: "content creators, distributors, consumers, critics, and collaborators" (Simon 2010). Co-produced experiences are the order of the day with the art gallery not for the first time potentially a site for radical transformation although participation is no guarantee of power sharing: boundaries between the professional and public stay largely intact.

It was the ways that personal and class-based aesthetic choices functioned in relation to social mobility that occupied Pierre Bourdieu conducting his influential sociological research in France during the 1960s. The two surveys that became *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* was published in 1979, in English in 1984. In brief, Bourdieu sought to understand the relationship between social divisions and cultural taste. He famously elaborated the consequences of "cultural capital" acquired through access to *legitimate* culture that conferred, in 1960s France, advantage through cultural hegemony to a dominant class. Bourdieu's findings undermined any notion of *taste* being a natural consequence of birth and identified the determining role of social background and higher educational achievement in art gallery attendance. Bennett, Savage, Silva, Warde, Gayo-Cal, and Wright revisited Bourdieu's historic survey in 2009 and highlighted a significant omission in the earlier survey that has a bearing on this chapter. The collection of ethnic identifications was illegal in France in the 1960s moreover the whole survey was circumscribed by a particular construction of the nation-state. As a consequence transnational movements of people and cultures were elided from the survey (Bennett *et al.* 2009, 234). And it is to the increasingly mobile and less deferential populations (migrant, tourist, and the transnational) that the art gallery now reacts. The extent to which "legitimate" culture matters in the twenty-first century is debatable but future audiences lacking traditional subservience will demand more cosmopolitan experiences and a more symbiotic relationship to the art gallery: a visit variously a life-style choice, shopping opportunity, site for learning or a space for personal reflection.

Museums are on the cusp of change: alert to the power of contemporary global art and changing visitor demographics and seemingly burdened by modern art narratives now discredited as too partial to represent the complexity of the modern period and the globalizing present (Grenier 2014, 17). It can be argued that the current reclaiming, reimagining, reestablishing, reexamination, and reassessments of modern art are recognition of epistemic inequalities in historic displays and in a still globalizing world are attempts to redress the legacies of an imperial, patriarchal past that reproduced the *status quo* and invested in existing social hierarchies. Ahistorical,[42] decontextualized approaches with depoliticized paradigms of inquiry stand in stark contrast to former art historical narratives of modern art no longer deemed fit for purpose. To what extent then should modern art's contested fractious, contradictory and entangled history be confined to the catalogue and art history departments and visiting exhibitions become a dominantly visual experience with the adjudicating role of the curator repurposed as facilitator? Or does the curatorial orchestration

of workshop/laboratory/theater environments recalling some of the radicalism of early modernism create emancipation in the viewer? What are the limits of open-ended, cross-section curating? If the art gallery is to stand for anything beyond its own organizational survival, reactivating its historic civic role and playing a part in global social transformation rather than gentrification might be one way forward.

In 2015 the National Gallery Singapore (NGS) opened as part of a fiftieth year celebration of independence from Great Britain. The world's largest public collection of modern art from Southeast Asia is housed in two converted colonial buildings: City Hall and Supreme Court. Unsurprisingly the model for the museum was the National Gallery, London. In 2016 NGS, too, opened a groundbreaking, landmark exhibition: *Reframing Modernism: Paintings from Southeast Asia, Europe and Beyond*. Co-curated with Centre Pompidou it brings together canonical European modernist, including Wassily Kandinsky, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Marc Chagall to sit alongside Southeast Asian artists such as Tang Chang (Thailand), Hernando R. Ocampo (the Philippines), and Georgette Chen (Singapore). NGS director and co-curator Eugene Tan suggests the exhibition contributes to further understanding of modern art from Southeast Asia by placing it within a global context. This exhibition "reframes modernism because it challenges assumptions about it – that modernism started in Europe and then spread elsewhere, but modernization also happened all over the world. Modernity was something every country experienced" (Tan 2016, n.p.). In 2009 Tan expressed concerns about the consequences of globalization specifically in relation to the instrumentalization of art as a driver for economic development. He anticipated such an approach might result in: "… cultural homogenization, the establishment of an international language of contemporary art, or more specifically, a reinforcement of the hegemony of art discourses originating in Europe and America" (Tan 2009, 388). Further he too was concerned about the consequences of Southeast Asian artists' belated adoption of artistic styles and languages derived from the West, registering the need to find relevant approaches to "understand and perceive the art of Southeast Asia" (2009, 389). Both concerns may be read out of *Reframing Modernism* that eschews the formalist linear progression of styles and concepts (from realism to abstraction) for other temporalities. It focused on dialogue between individual artists rather than comparison between movements and so away from a framework of passive influence to more active appropriation. Centre Pompidou curator Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov expands "… there is no sense in giving a scale of value: it's not a competition. It's just different worlds, and each world has its own temporality. So I don't really see the point of saying that one artist did something before another artist, in fact they both came from different worlds" (in Wee 2016, n.p.). It is doubtful that Cottington's recuperation of a multiplicity of politically inflected modernisms can be accommodated under such a mandate. However if in the West, forms of realism have been negatively represented as conservative and, in Greenbergian rhetoric, even a failure of nerve it is possible to experience in NGS's *Reframing Modernism*'s diverse artistic responses to representation including forms of socially inflected realism. However given the exhibition's lack of context and the promotion of artistic individualism, comprehending the political, social, and historic complexity of artworks is stymied.

There has been some disquiet locally about the unprecedented displays of Southeast Asian art at NGS: Bharti Lalwani concerned about the "dubious" rewriting of Southeast Asian art history in NMS's long-term displays argues that the viewer has been "short-changed" by exhibitions that fail to show how artists variously critiqued and contested political and social change in a tumultuous historic period of anti-colonialism and the Cold War. The exhibitions failed to address: "The merging of foreign subject matter,

artistic styles, or religious iconography with indigenous forms … or the ways that artists broke away from colonial art academies" (Lalwani 2016, n.p.). Moreover "the silence over the history of communism in Singapore and Southeast Asia is deafening," with no mention made of the "symbiotic relationship between the anti-colonial movements and communism" although evident in works such as Chua Mia Tee's "Epic Poem of Malaya" (Lalwani 2016, n.p.).

Cultural homogenization through the globalizing of curatorial practices (the "white cube" the West's most ubiquitous "framing" export) can be read out of international collaborations but there are also other possibilities. While old art historical frameworks are being dismantled, extensive archive research buttresses many of the exhibitions cited above generating narratives that refute the "norms" of history. Accessible digital archives are enabling new forms of democratic, public scholarship that will be needed if a critical art gallery is to play an active role "encouraging the public to understand the complexity of the present world and to acknowledge the significance of memory and the past for the development of a civil society which is transnational … and diverse" (Murawska-Muthesius and Piotrowski 2015, 2). It remains to be seen what of modern art and modernism will be remembered, recovered and exhibited and what role such displays will play in the development of global societies.

Notes

1 Modern art has multiple time-lines but in most of the exhibitions cited these straddle the late 1900s to around 1970.
2 The English Pre-Raphaelites historically snubbed by avant-garde critics, in Tate Britain's 2013 *Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: Victorian Avant-garde* was lauded as Britain's first innovative, proto-modernist art movement. PRB's literary links, pictorial narratives, and moralizing enunciations were usually considered regressive and anti-modern.
3 A roll call of the modern canon from Picasso to Pollock, the collection also includes 100 works by Paul Klee whose tenure at the Düsseldorf Art Academy was an infamous casualty of National Socialism's purge of so-called degenerate artists.
4 The Stedelijk Museum reopened in 2012 after a nine-year closure for refurbishment.
5 Green's specific focus is Malevich's *Lamp/Musical Instruments*, 1913 and Mondrian's *Tableau No. 3: Composition Oval*, 1913.
6 Since the twelfth century Mappa Mundi that incorporated other temporalities (the ancient, mythical and contemporary worlds) with Jerusalem at its spiritual centre to Torres Garcia's *South America's Inverted Map* 1936, and George Maciunas' *Atlas of Russian Art*, 1953, maps have become a cartographic metaphor for seeing the world otherwise.
7 Textile work by Man Ray (*Tapestry*, 1911) was prominent in the show as well as work by Jean Arp, and Sophie Taeuber-Arp (*Symétrie pathétique*, 1916–1917).
8 Originally devised in 1929 as a multi-departmental museum MoMA quickly moved to disciplinary hierarchies but currently seeking interconnectivity it has also reviewed curating by media: "… over the last 40 years we've separated media – photography here, prints there, drawings there, architecture and design, film, and so on. That was an arbitrary set of decisions … What happens if we start creating a much more porous and synthetic relationship that allows photography, prints, drawings, film, and especially media and performance to connect to the other practices that are taking place? […] a much more interesting and rich experience for our viewers" (Lowry 2015, n.p.).

9 For earlier challenges to institutional frameworks at the Pompidou see Hervé Fischer's 1979 performance *The End of the Art History*.
10 See *The American Century* Part I and II at the Whitney Museum of American Art 2000.
11 The new Whitney, Renzo Piano building, opened March 2015 moving from its 1966 Marcel Breuer, Brutalist building that has become Met Breuer: an outpost of the Metropolitan Museum of Art which shows modern and contemporary work. It opened with two shows: Nasreen Mohamedi and *Unfinished Thoughts Left Visible*.
12 Many artists have refreshed collections from Joseph Kosuth, *The Play of the Unmentionable* 1991 at the Brooklyn Museum, New York to *Give and Take "Mixed Messages"* 2001 Hans Haacke at the V&A and the then Serpentine Gallery, London both taking to task institutional history and chronological curating.
13 The advocates of a range of opinion on the historic scope of globalization: from ancient trade routes, modern industrialization and post-1989 and beyond are examined by Steger (2013).
14 Although many modern art exhibitions postwar included figurative and folk-art they were often displayed as stations along the way to abstraction.
15 Well-intentioned incorporation of the formerly unrecognized into iconic collections is not unproblematic as seen in the case of Tate Modern's 2013 exhibition of pioneer Lebanese abstract artist, Saloua Raouda Choucair (b.1916). Elliot and Ellis concluding "although the curators aimed to disrupt dominant Western-centric gallery discourses … the exhibition was in many ways co-opted by, and reproduced, existing power relations" (2015, 1). See also Griselda Pollock on belatedly addressing Mary Cassatt (2002).
16 A democratic hanging system was used at the 1874 *First Impressionist Exhibition*: works hung by size in groups and spaces allocated by the drawing of lots (Altshuler 2008, 37). The claims for democratic revisions for modern art display need to be placed in the context of modernism's own innovative exhibition formats: beyond white cube orthodoxy. Historic modernist displays counter the claim of new, ground-breaking, and non-hierarchical. Zurich Dada and the Surrealists' disruptive, unsettling displays in particular are well-known but also see El Lissitzky's *Abstract Cabinet*, 1927–1928, developed for the Landesmuseum in Hanover and the Gutai group's first exhibition in a pine forest 1955: 13 days, 24 hours a day "Experimental Outdoor Exhibition to Challenge the Mid-Summer Sun."
17 *The Art Newspaper's* Visitor Figures 2014 edition: "Top Artists Male and Pale: guess who got the most solo exhibitions?."
18 See counter-canons and Andrew Hemingway and the defence of the 1930s USA New Deal and John Roberts "Art History's Furies" both in Carter, Haran, and Schwartz (2013, 32–47).
19 The Barbara Hepworth exhibition Tate Britain 2015 also foregrounded the international aspects of her work specifically through her inclusion in *Abstraction-Création* an international association of abstract artists set up in Paris during the early 1930s. See Donaldson and Stephen (2012).
20 English art during the early twentieth-century had also retrospectively adopted continental modernism resulting in similar anxieties about the modest scale of local artworks.
21 Claire Bishop proposed re-thinking the twentieth century through the lens of theater rather than painting (Bishop 2012, 3).
22 Some twenty years following post-colonial theory art, MoMA created research platforms such as C-MAP to challenge "the judgments that grow out of the assumption that artistic modernism is or was determined solely by Western European and North American narratives of early-20th-century avant-gardes" (MoMA post at MoMA.org. *Critical Digital ucr* Feb. 20th 2013).

23 The chronological approach adopted by art historians followed the practice of structuring collections by centuries implemented by Alexandre Lenoir at the Musée des Monuments Français following the French Revolution.

24 A Chronological Chart was constructed by Arthur B. Davies for the legendary Armory Show in New York (1913). It showed the *Growth of Modern Art* entirely dominated by French Classicists, Realists, and Romantics and implied a progressive movement leading to Post-Impressionists, on to Cubists Picasso (classic) and Futurists (feeble realists) (Published in *Arts and Decoration* New York, March 1913). Davies' chart not only established a francophile trajectory for the modern movement but gave it an honorable historic pedigree necessary to ensure funding and credibility for audiences unfamiliar with modern art.

25 Graw concurs: "… once a gallery declares certain art works worth looking at they are involved through intellectual activity/capital in the art market. The dichotomy of art market bad and publicly funded art gallery as good, immune to crass commercialism was always fictional but once seemed defensible. Currently the dichotomy is subject to more widespread skepticism. Moreover the increased interest in the artist's artist is totally marketable as the more secret and remote the artist seems to be the more interesting the market becomes" (Graw, 2010).

26 Shearer West has argued for a renewed investment in the linking of political and intellectual agendas that was a core element of the new art history that has been recently "undermined" by a hegemonic and depoliticized scientific discourse, and by the "instrumentalizing" tendencies of current public debate (West 2011).

27 British Petroleum's (BP's) sponsorship of Tate has been the subject of protests by environmental activists. In 2017 BP terminated its 26-year sponsorship of Tate.

28 Although atypical of his later stance on the value of realism and abstraction, John Berger's exhibition *Looking Forward* held at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London in 1952, 1953, and 1956 presented British art across a wide-range of artistic practices.

29 See Alfred H. Barr on artists preferring "impoverishment to adulteration" (that is abstraction to figuration) in *What is Modern Painting* p 86.

30 In particular Greenbergian modernism under which painting was to purge itself of any imagery, left figurative forms remaindered as illusionistic and therefore lacking the seriousness of overall abstract works: See Greenberg's (1960) *Modernist Painting*.

31 Freire's 1968 *Pedagogia do Oprimido* was globally influential and published in English as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1970 and is considered the foundational text for critical pedagogy where the kind of dialogue being set up epistemologically moves beyond dialogue being merely a strategy for student participation.

32 In brief it is argued that proponents of critical theory were too often contradictory and part of a vicious circle that was not reflexive about its own claims, moreover awareness doesn't necessarily lead to transformation and claims for emancipation are too dependent on a characterization of the spectator as passive.

33 The precariat debate has centered around disenfranchised cheap labor that demographically may be coming to an end but nonetheless at present, employment in the art gallery requires higher and higher educational qualifications with fewer securities.

34 The critical museum was the brainchild of Piotr Piotrowski and grew out of the margins of East-Central Europe: the museum was conceptualized as a forum but now has wider-implications (foreword Murawska-Muthesius and Piotrowski 2015).

35 See Straughn and Gardner "Good work in Museums Today … And Tomorrow" for a summary of the changing relationships between galleries and audiences since the end of the twentieth century.

36 Such strategies are frequently related to the Free International University of Joseph Beuys.

37 See Hans Ulrich Obrist and Barbara Vanderlinden's 2001 *Laboratorium*.

38 The Ashmolean Museum at the outset included the John Tradescant collection from the Ark at Lambeth.
39 See Walter Benjamin's "Author as Producer" and Angela Dimitrakaki Chapter 13 in this volume.
40 See McSweeney and Kavanagh (2016).
41 For a longer debate see Ranciére's *The Emancipated Spectator* and Claire Bishop's 2006 *Participation*.
42 See Lowry (2015) for a defense of the ahistorical museum.

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23

A Modern Art Education

Claire Robins

"Couldn't modernism be taught to children as a series of Aesop's fables?" begins the second chapter of Brian O'Doherty's, 1976 *Inside the White Cube*. He proceeds with a tongue-in-cheek list of possible titles for this imagined pedagogic project, "such fables as 'Who Killed Illusion?' or 'How the Edge Revolted Against the Center.' 'The Man who Violated Canvas' could follow 'Where Did the Frame Go?'" (1999 [1976], 35), and to his list we might offer additions, such as "What Did Education do when Art took its Objects Away?," "Who Ate Art and Culture?" and "Coyote, Hare and the Free International University."

O'Doherty's question, pertinent here, is not whether modernism can be taught to young people in the form of parables. It clearly can, albeit in an often reductive and soulless form (see British secondary school (11–18 years) art examination outcomes which often emulate selective artists from the early modern canon). Rather, as the residue of modern art's educational project shakes and judders into a new era the question is more about what might be learned from some of the parables that this period of fractured educational ideals has provided; but where to begin and end in a search for a modern art education. If once a Western orientation appeared to provide neat temporal perimeters for locating modern art we must now acknowledge the cultural myopia of such proclamations. Our temporal understanding of the modern, postmodern, and the contemporary have all been open to substantive global revision and as Preziosi and Farago reminds us, in a global purview the very designation "art" *qua* fine art is, in itself, a Western concept of cultural production (2012, 53). Therefore, to say that this chapter considers a period from 1693 to 1968 is both purposeful and arbitrary true and something of a fiction. The period is vast and this chapter is short and has also been written in London, which undoubtedly shapes its trajectory. Time as a framing device therefore takes secondary significance to the re-occurrence of selective temporalities that appear to intersect as reminders of persistent debates and projects not yet completed. Fables of modern art present both conditions for reflection and possibilities for mapping alternative futures.

The Tail End of the Tale

By 1968 it was becoming clear to many artists and educators in Europe and America that the giddy days of modernism's influence on art education were already on the ebb tide, for others this was less of a certainty. Stuart Macdonald had begun researching his

A Companion to Modern Art, First Edition. Edited by Pam Meecham.

comprehensive and scholarly volume *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (1970), in which he wrote,

> Art education today is becoming increasingly analytical, logical and thematic. This development originates from the Preliminary or Basic Course initiated by Johannes Itten in the autumn of 1919 at the Bauhaus, which was planned to liberate students from second-hand traditional information …
>
> (Macdonald 1970, 365)

Macdonald identified a Britain in the late 1960s that was just coming to terms with developments almost half a century before in Germany. However, liberation in the form of "Basic Design" or a "Foundation Year," as the Bauhaus Vorkurs became known, was both a little too early and rather late. If British art schools seemed impervious to Bauhaus' principles of design this was largely because it was little known and viewed with circumspection. Artists teaching at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London empathized with abstract work but as a teaching philosophy Bauhaus principles emerged in the North of England in Leeds and Newcastle. Preliminary or Foundation courses were established in Leeds by Hubert Dalwood and Harry Thubron, assisted by Tom Hudson, Wendy Pasmore, and Terry Frost, and in Newcastle by Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton.

However, in a mere eight years from the publication of William Coldstream's 1960 report, an unprecedented and much documented restructuring process had begun. Coldstream, a realist painter and educator[1] decreed that the outmoded and resolutely conservative National Design Diploma (NDD) was to be replaced with a Diploma in Art and Design (Dip AD), intended to match university awards. In this moment of overhaul the floodgates were opened and it became possible to institute a more forward-thinking art education. In fact art education in the United Kingdom was playing a serious game of catch-up. The lessons it was learning had traveled via a number of routes but if they were indebted to Johannes Itten (1888–1967) and the Bauhaus' Vorkurs then it wasn't the analytical and logical version that Macdonald had in mind. It was the Bauhaus processed through alternative educational experiments taking place in America and elsewhere in Europe.

Some Art Lessons

1968 was an auspicious year for bringing forth new parables for art education: a large percentage of the student body and some staff at Hornsey College of Art, London, took control of the college in order to implement a new educational structure. This well documented[2] higher educational revolt was one of many happening in Britain and elsewhere.

It was in 1968 too that nine professors of the Kunstakadamie Düsseldorf signed a mistrust manifesto against their colleague Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) in which they reproached him for, "Presumptuous political dilettantism, passion for ideological tutelage, demagogical practice [amongst other things] an uncollegial spirit aimed at the dissolution of the present order" (Schmuckli 2004, 165).

Dissolution was the order of the day and like many others (lecturers and students) Beuys was contesting institutional authority. He had already begun to stage performances that vanquished established art-world conventions. In *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, 1965, Beuys performed a "lesson" in interpretation at the Alfred Schmela Gallery. It was a

chilly November evening in Düsseldorf but the attendees of the "private view" remained locked outside while Beuys sat in a corner of the gallery, his head coated in honey and gold leaf, tenderly cradling and mumbling to the hare.

Initially Beuys' controversial[3] "performances" were not explicitly related to his teaching. At the Kunstakadamie he favored more conservative approaches, advocating drawing and modeling.[4] He was a stickler for attendance and time keeping but even at the outset, as former student Petra Richter testifies, "Beuys expected students to work but he refused to provide his students with the kind of framework they had been accustomed to … consequently most of them were at a complete loss" (Richter 2006, 3). If Beuys's aim was a direct critique of what he perceived as the "complete trust in the teacher that was at the root of his students paralysis" (Richter 2006, 3), then did his methods liberate them? As with many aspects of Beuys' art that rely on an autobiographical account, contradictions surface, particularly with regard to power. Jan Verwoert detects a "problematic of auratic authority in Beuys' oeuvre" (Verwoert 2008), and suggests that as Beuys continued to hone a persona as a "mythic messianic healer with a seamless worldview appropriated from anthropsophy" (Verwoert 2008) in effect he replaced one form of authority with another, namely his own.

In the late 1960s developments such as performance, conceptualism, and minimalism (to some extent) had abjured the traditional crafting of objects. In education it followed that making art objects as autonomous entities began to be questioned. This didn't mean they disappeared altogether but that discussions, studio critiques (or "crits" as they became known), and recourse to theory, gained increasing status and teaching time. By 1966 Beuys's teaching was almost totally in a forum or seminar format. His Ring Discussions "not only changed the content of the teaching curriculum but also affected the working atmosphere and entire organization of the class. Compared with Beuys's first years at the art academy, any concentrated artistic work in class was now virtually impossible" (Richter 2006, 9). Ultimately, at the academy and in his "Free International University,"[5] Beuys proposed language and teaching as forms of sculpture. It was this presumptuous bypass of the artefact, as much as his overt criticisms of the academy, that provoked such vitriolic complaints about his conduct.

During the 1950s to the 1960s the tail end of modernism's uneven attempts at a universalizing project prompted contestation through a range of disruptive strategies in art schools. Significantly the instigators were often artist/lecturers. At New York's Brooklyn College the American abstract painter and political activist Ad Reinhardt was instructing his drawing students to make self-portraits in pencil and charcoal on a sheet of paper. When complete he asked them to erase them and begin again. So ensued an iterative process, re-enacted on the same sheet of paper that was intended to occupy students for an entire term, drawing and erasing, erasing and drawing, a sort of frustrating intonation of possibilities as yet unseen and un-thought. Reinhardt's lesson forms just one in an array of exercises for creating situations and propositions to refute students' previous expectations of more traditional art educational models. It is noteworthy that the conceptual foundations of these seemingly bizarre lessons became subject to a process of crystallization, which saw them fixed as art works in museum collections. *Erased de Kooning*, 1953,[6] in which Robert Rauschenberg erased not his own drawing but that of the older artist Willem de Kooning, preserves Reinhardt's lesson and simultaneously captures a "dialogue" between two generations of artists.

In Britain, artist John Latham (1921–2006), visiting tutor at St. Martins School of Art, London was performing another sort of erasure. Along with some of his students he chewed and spat-out pages from the college library copy of American critic, Clement

FIGURE 23.1 John Latham, *Art & Culture*, 1966–1969. Assemblage: leather case containing book, letters, photostats, etc., and labeled vials filled with powders and liquids, 3 1/8 × 11 1/8 × 10′ (7.9 × 28.2 × 25.3 cm). New York, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). *Source*: Blanchette Rockefeller Fund. 511.1970.at. © 2016. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence / John Latham Foundation.

Greenberg's seminal formalist tome *Art and Culture* (1965). The masticated paper pulp was then returned to the library in a small vial, in lieu of the book (Figure 23.1). For this transgression of borrowing conduct, so the parable continues, Latham had his teaching contract terminated[7] and *Still and Chew* or *Art and Culture*, 1966–1969, as it is also known, returned instead to America, to enter the collection of MoMA, New York in 1969.

Artist Richard Long, a student at St. Martins from 1966–1968, establishes the context for Latham's irreverent gesture.

> When I first went to St Martins the house teaching style consisted of a famous artist leading a discussion around a newly minted welded metal or (fiberglass) student sculpture, in Clement Greenberg formalist language. […] we had no interest in this by now old school of mannerism.
>
> (Long cited in Westley 2010, 47)

For Long and his contemporaries, as for Latham, modernism in the manner of Greenberg was already passé; sculpture was taking a different turn. At St. Martins, according to Long, "the one person [students] could turn to for academic discourse and rigor" (Westley 2010, 47) was Peter Kardia, who reshaped the curriculum to gain the Dip AD accreditation initially denied. Famously in 1968 Kardia devised a teaching experiment where students

disappeared into a "locked room" (1969). Artist Richard Deacon, a contemporary student, recounts,

> The padlocked door was opened and we were invited to enter. As we did each of us was given a cube of polystyrene […] wrapped in brown paper, secured with brown sticky tape. Inside the room there were a set of rules posted prominently on the wall,
>
> > No verbal communication between students.
> > No drawing or writing materials to be used.
> > No documentation within the project area.
>
> (Deacon cited in Westley 2010, 54)

Kardia's intentions were serious. The locked room was not an ironic gesture or performance it was a project that lasted for a term. Once inside students were left to their own devices and what they made was largely thrown away as new materials were provided on a regular basis. Although there was always a tutor in the room no feedback or instructions were given. Ian Kirkwood a former student remembers the shock of,

> … not being provided with models of what to do; that the expectations of staff as determinants of what or how to make work had been taken away. This was both liberating and alarming. Until that point I had not appreciated the role that the expectations of others had played. It undoubtedly forged many of us as artists and teachers without handing out a prescription.
>
> (Kirkwood cited in Westley 2007)

Yet not all students had such positive memories. For some Kardia's strategy, which literally dematerialized the art object's centrality, remained a disappointment. The project drove sculptor Greg Powlesland to the welding basement in search of the tangible reassurance of constructed metal and while David Millidge, was left with a sense of gratitude for the way Kardia's teaching "shaped his personality" he expresses a residual sadness for all "those fantastic, sensual, provocative, real sculptures that [he] never made" (Westley 2007).

Institutionalizing Ambiguity

Perhaps it is inevitable that parables of charismatic tutors, unorthodox methods, deliberate confusion and "rites of passage" education are cherished most keenly by those students who return to education as teachers, for these are often the individuals who thrived under such conditions.[8] In fact, according to Austerlitz *et al.* (2008), what twenty-first-century art educators still hold most dear from this legacy, is a, "pedagogy of ambiguity." By this they refer to the ways in which art education (particularly for undergraduates) continues to foster a culture in which the learner's route to success is far from explicit. As one of the lecturers cited in their study states, "students will often ask if what they are doing is 'right' and our response will be to explain that rather than 'right' or 'wrong,' we are expecting students to engage with the themes of the brief and develop a position in response to that engagement" (Austerlitz *et al.* 2008, 132).

A "pedagogy of ambiguity" stems from deeply rooted values that have been nurtured in the hothouse of modernist art education. It is here that risk-taking[9] became prized

above certainty and the ability to risk aspects of one's own "identity" in a transformative and often performative self-making process, constituted half of the learning. Enlightenment theories of freedom, self-determination, and personal and cultural transformation or Bildung (von Humboldt 1791–2; Hegel 1807) and the modern concept of self-actualization (Goldstein 1939; Maslow 1943), become particularly compelling when harnessed to the arts. As Klafki writes, "a qualification for autonomy, for freedom for individual thought, and for individual moral decisions, creative self-activity is the central form in which the process of Bildung is carried out" (2000, 87).

A learning trajectory embracing an essence of self-formation through creativity is in keeping with modernism's avant-garde. And a desired outcome of creating and perpetuating newness and difference is, according to Boris Groys, what learning at its most radical, in the modernist art school encompasses. Groys characterizes this transformative pedagogy as a strengthening of the student's immune system by being "infected by otherness" (2009, 27). He provides a useful metaphor but interestingly it is one that he borrows from Kazimir Malevich's essay, "An Introduction to the Theory of an Additional Element in Painting" *Essays on Art Vol. 1* (1915–1933). Malevich refers to new, modern phenomena and responses in modernist art as part of a virus to which the art student will need to succumb. The art school in this characterization aims to literally re-constitute the individual through a sometimes dangerous and painful process of re-making the self as much as through the making of art-work. Accordingly, as Groys writes, "the closed world of the art school keeps the bacilli [art] permanently circulating and the students permanently infected and sick" (2009, 28).

A sea change in educational conditions has left modern art education's values washed up on a postmodern, neoliberal, shoreline. With escalating fees and universities run as businesses, such ambiguity, denying as it does a direct correlation between monetary expenditure and concrete outcomes, appears fragile. Simultaneously that oxymoron: a formula for teaching creativity is being sought, particularly by Asian countries such as South Korea and China who have strong manufacturing bases. Turning their sights to those who have excelled in innovation in art and more particularly design, they look to invest in a pedagogy that will foster quintessential modernist tropes: unbridled creativity, individuality, and originality. But these narratives of art education are now problematized from within and like Aesop's *Goose that laid the Golden Eggs* they are experiencing if not total dismemberment then serious wing clipping.

Fables and Early Educational Reform

So perhaps Aesop's fables are not such a bad place to start in an attempt to bridge the gaps between the lessons of discontent with modernism's promise (recounted from the late 1960s) and the lessons that shaped education in the last half of the nineteenth century, when a modern art education began to properly take shape.

The circulation of Aesop's fables caught the attention of early educational reformers and it was in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) that the early Enlightenment philosopher, John Locke (1632–1704) advocated targeting children as a special audience, for whom the fables would be "apt to delight and entertain" (Locke 1824 [1692/3], 87). Until then Aesop's fables were used by a predictable coterie of teachers, preachers, speechmakers, and moralists and were largely directed at adults.

Pre-dating the arguably more influential educational writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), Locke drew connections between children's play, pleasure, and learning.

Significantly, he seized on play's educative capacity and aligned it to the formation of a spirited, autonomous subject, capable of exercising individual agency.[10] As much as Locke became convinced of the potential for learning through play and the significance of enjoyable learning he simultaneously saw possibilities to put this to more instrumental ends.

In essence, pre-dating Foucault or Bourdieu by over 250 years, Locke recognized in education its power as a marker of distinction. He writes,

> The great skill of a teacher is to get and keep the attention of his scholar […] To attain this, he should make the child comprehend (as much as may be) the usefulness of what he teaches him, and let him see, by what he has learnt, that he can do something, which he could not do before; something, which gives him some *power and real advantage above others* who are ignorant of it.
>
> (Locke 1824 [1692/3], 158, my italics)

The ideals perceptible in Locke's vision situate education as both a process of moral, intellectual, self-formation and as a strategy to "get ahead," forming part of a regime that would prepare certain young men for leadership and greatness.[11] These dualistic values became an inheritance that remained pertinent when more precise questions concerning art education's purpose came to the fore in an early or proto-modern art education of the nineteenth century.

Modern Art Education at a Cross-roads

With influential Victorians Henry Cole (1808–1882) and Richard Redgrave (1804–1888) in the industrialists corner and John Ruskin (1819–1900) in the social and moral certitude corner, art education was wrestled in different directions. Significantly, these oppositional protagonists were as one in attempting, with varying degrees of success, to move away from the beaux-arts[12] or fine art academic model that had hitherto dominated art education.

At the outset it was certainly the influence of the pragmatic, national reformers Cole and Redgrave, with an eye to production and mass schooling's potential to feed its needs, who gained most ground. Art, and in particular the application of art to design and mass manufacturing was part of their plan. As an ambitious civil servant and erstwhile ceramic designer,[13] Cole took over the reins of the failing design schools and as Minister for Education in the mid-nineteenth century he championed the then radical introduction of drawing into elementary schools. In *Drawing for Children* his rationale for extending these approaches to a younger audience was published in the *Journal of Design and Manufacturers* 1849:

> The time is not far distant when drawing will become part of elementary education in schools of all grades for the working classes, where writing is taught. We think every carpenter, mason, joiner, blacksmith, and every skilled artisan, would be a better workman if he had been taught to see and observe forms correctly by means of drawing.
>
> (Cole cited in Bermingham 2000, 233)

The specific objective to produce skilled manual workers was determined by an emphasis on observation and exactitude. It was an anti-intellectual curriculum of geometric shapes, straight lines, and simple perspective. The exercises advocated by the manual *Teaching*

Elementary Drawing (1863) were dull and mechanical, with inaccuracy in representing objects, mistakes in perspective, and untidiness generally almost the only, and certainly the main grounds for assessment.

In Cole's newly formed art schools, that rose from the ashes of the schools of design, things were hardly more stimulating and the twenty-three closely administered educational stages and their assessed competencies were to become an industry in their own right. All the time this elaborate system was moving further away from its stated aim of having relevance to the design industry's employment needs.

The nineteenth century continued to witness a rise in the wealth and political influence of the middle classes, aided by the repeal of laws excluding dissenters from public life.[14] If a "Protestant work ethic" underpinned the utilitarian institutional projects of Cole and Redgrave's design schools so too was it present in the new elementary school curriculum for the middle and lower-middle classes, which had strong links to the Prussian "Realschule" instituted by Protestant and Lutheran industrialists.

This is not to say that there was a free flow of ideas into Britain from Europe and beyond. The xenophobic Redgrave in particular found much to complain about in the art education of other nations. Somewhat misguidedly he criticizes the Japanese for their lack of symmetry and the French for an absence of foundational principles (Macdonald 1970, 240). All the while problems with his own plans seemed to elude him. He recognized that English art and design students lacked abilities in manipulation, free spirit, and creativity, yet he failed to connect this to the laborious and mind numbing repetitiveness of the exercises his system had put in place for them to follow.

Art Education and the Beautification of the World

Ruskin has been proposed as the antidote to Cole. He stood for education's more lofty ideals in which art was a force for social and spiritual good. His conviction of an inherent synonymy between art and moral values did much to promote art's efficacious promise. Ruskin believed that there were prerequisites for "civil culture" and one of these was obtaining first the right moral state, without which "you cannot have art" (1904 [1870], 80). His adherence to assiduous loving craftsmanship linked him with the values of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement and to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Ruskin championed vernacular craft traditions such as the linen, lace making, and embroidery of the Lake District, through which he sought to improve the local economy by providing work for women. His influence was also widely received in America, particularly in the elite women's colleges where his ideas were interpreted as the beautification of the world.

Today Ruskin's emphasis on close observation of nature and loving attention to detail seem so deeply emblematic of the past that it is hard to view him as anything close to radical. However, artist William Bell-Scott's (1811–1890) visit to a drawing class led by Ruskin at the Working Men's College, London gives some perspective. Bell-Scott witnessed, "Ruskin's students bent over desks trying to put on small pieces of paper imitations by pen and ink of pieces of rough stick encrusted with dry lichens and he was, profoundly shocked by what he saw" (Bell-Scott cited in Owens 2014, 109). "Why were they wasting their time laboring over such trifles when they could have been drawing conventional art school props like cones and spheres and casts of classical sculpture" (Owens 2014, 109), which despite reforms was still the main diet of the day.

Ruskin's views set him apart from the fast paced developments that were taking place around him. As a man who believed that, "all travelling becomes dull in exact proportion

to its rapidity" (Ruskin 1889 [1874], 143) he clearly didn't anticipate the intoxicating spell that speed would cast on the twentieth century, nor the place it might play in the modern artist's mindset, but his views on the environment and his fundamental attitudes to education were prescient. For example, Ruskin felt that it was better "to teach people not to 'better themselves' but how to 'satisfy themselves' …" (Ruskin 1889 [1874], 140), a sentiment that would rise again and again in the next century. In this he had more in common with his European counterparts who viewed education less as a sprint to an economic finishing line and more as a life's work.

The Child

Largely through Ruskin's lack of interest in the government art schools, he failed to exert much immediate influence on the course of art education in Britain (Macdonald 1970, 265) but his legacy was more successfully implemented in schools by his Working Men's College student, Ebenezer Cooke (1853–1911). Cooke's main criticism of the elementary school curriculum for children, devised under Cole, was that it did not take into account the age and developmental stage of the pupil or student. Ideas of "stages of development" detected here owe much to Cooke's friendship with the psychologist James Sully. An escalating interest in child psychology had begun to position the child at the foreground of learning and there was an enthusiasm for the art works and "visualizations" of younger children. In particular drawing was regarded as a direct conduit to the child's developing cognitive faculties, which set it at odds with interventionist approaches aiming to shape able draughtsmen. Cooke made the case that "child art" and children's education should be distinct from the education or training of the professional artist.

Cooke's views on art, in no small part influenced by his former tutor Ruskin, were also shaped by the work of Swiss educationalist, Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827) whose ideas Cooke circulated in 1894 by publishing the first English edition of Pestalozzi's *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*.[15] Pestalozzi's significance for art educators stems from his adherence to methods that foster individual development and privilege concrete, tangible experience. Like Locke and Rousseau, Pestalozzi believed that thought began with sensation and that teaching should engage the senses. What became known as Pestalozzi's "object lessons" involved exercises in observing and drawing from plant, mineral, and animal specimens. Fundamental to his approach was a teaching method that related closely to his doctrine of "Anschauung," or sense-perception, literally "looking at" from *anschauen* to look. In Pestalozzi's lessons words were forbidden until sufficient time had been given over to this sensory perception or "Anschauung."[16]

It is possible to link this early teaching method with continuing contemporary concerns in art education in which the suspension of spoken and written language are commonly employed. This has long been recognized in Western philosophical thought as Rachel Jones comments adding that, "to work without knowing where one is going or might end up is a necessary condition of creation, of generation of difference rather than the reproduction of the same" (Jones 2013, 16). The insistence on silence in Kardia's "Locked Room" experiment, as we saw earlier, is another example of conceptualizing through the "sensual, embodied" practice of making. It is perhaps unsurprising that Kardia, who was drawn to phenomenology, also cites Kantian aesthetics as a lasting influence on his teaching. In particularly the eighteenth-century philosopher's view that an aesthetic idea is a "representation of the imagination which induces much thought but without the possibility of any definite thought whatsoever, that is, concept, being adequate to it, and which

language, consequently, can never get on level terms with and render completely intelligible" (Kant cited in Kardia 2010, 92). The Enlightenment intellectual hierarchy, which placed abstract thought at its apex and regarded the senses as in need of both regulating and relegating, has proved particularly tenacious in educational thought.

Teacher Training

An educational hierarchy that relegates the senses subordinate to the cognitive is antithetical to Pestalozzi's belief that education could change society for the better and that sense and intuition are essential components in preparing individuals to create a better world. His influence on teacher education, which emphasized a broad liberal education, followed by a period of educational research and professional training, relates directly to the postgraduate training model adopted in Britain, Europe, and the United States by the start of the twentieth century.

Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852) who first studied architecture at Frankfurt University benefited greatly from his time at Pestalozzi's educational institute in Yverdon, Switzerland, between 1808 and 1810. Although Froebel is best known for starting the original kindergarten school in the spa town of Bad Blankenburg in 1837, his influence on the world of art education has been profound. The dual significance of two mentors, crystallographer Christian Samuel Weiss[17] and social reformer and educationalist Pestalozzi set Froebel on his way to create an approach to learning that examined structures, privileged making, and encouraged individual development and respect for a divine order. Teaching children about a "God-given" geometry underlying all life was Froebel's main educational goal and a seemingly endless possibility for structural configuration and invention had a substantive impact of the first and second generation of artists and designers who experienced his "gifts" as they passed through kindergarten education.

Norman Bronsterman's writings on Kindergartens (1997) traces Froebel's development of pre-school education and his "gifts" (a series of twenty, simple two- and three-dimensional educational "toys" with component parts allowing for invention, construction, and discovery) to modernism's central principles for learning about art, design, and architecture. Bronsterman argues that many of the modernist artists and designers including Buckminster Fuller, Georges Braque, Piet Mondrian, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier were greatly influenced by their early kindergarten experiences of playing and learning with Froebel's "gifts." Cutting through the more usual art historical trajectories Bronsterman's analysis of modernism proposes a direct link to educational innovation, arguing that some of the most influential and radical developments came not from "artistic argument over absinthe and Gauloises in Montmartre cafés, nor was it taught at the tradition-bound academies. It has been largely ignored because its participants, three-to seven-year-olds, were in the primary band of the scholastic spectrum" (Bronsterman 2002/3).

When Invention Overtook Imitation

Despite the tender age of the learners, it is beyond dispute that Froebel's educational methods utilizing elements of design with simple construction components for young children had a direct influence on the formation of education for young adults at the Bauhaus, in Weimar Germany. The Bauhaus, literally meaning house of construction, was

at the core of modernist design philosophy in the first decades of the twentieth century and its legacy became essential to much that happened in the name of modern art education for the rest of the century. It was formed in high octane revolutionary times, shortly after the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II in November 1918[18] and the beginnings, in 1919, of the Weimar Republic. Froebel's belief that education should be free from derivation in order to bring forth each learner's inner "spiritual essence" and the "spark of divine energy" was at the core of Bauhaus pedagogy with its radical ethos of invention over imitation; a mantra that still has a place in art education today, albeit tempered by contestations of originality and authenticity that have informed art practice and theory since the 1960s.

By bridging the distinctions and hierarchies between craft, fine art, and design, the Bauhaus had strong methodological and philosophical connections to William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement but this is not the whole story. Teaching at the Bauhaus, as Singerman attests, was in every way addressed to the imperatives of the contemporary moment but it also "had its roots in the Gestalt which ties it to a broad discourse on psychological aesthetics that had, by the end of the late nineteenth century, become one of the dominant strands in German intellectual thought" (Singerman 1999, 98).

On Seeing and Seers

The first Bauhaus director, architect Walter Gropius (1883–1969) was of the opinion that art cannot be taught. In 1923 in his "Theory and Organisation of the Bauhaus" he wrote, "the artist has been misled by the fatal and arrogant fallacy that art is a profession that can be mastered by study. Schooling alone can never produce art" (Singerman 1999, 22). The trickiness of a modern art education starts to surface here with a question that would see much iteration in decades to come. Strictly speaking "art" was not Gropius's major concern. The Bauhaus to his mind was producing socially useful designers not artists *per se*.[19]

It is noteworthy that the influential Bauhaus preliminary course progenitor Johannes Itten was introduced to both Walter Gropius and to Eastern and Indian religions by the pianist Alma Mahler, later Gropius's wife. Noteworthy because Itten's devotion to neo-Zoroastrian philosophy, which heavily influenced his teaching, was also part of the wedge that drove the two men apart. Gropius's adherence to what he saw as the democratizing potential of designing for mass production also contrasted sharply with Itten's belief that, "the end and aim of all artistic endeavor [was] liberation of the spiritual essence of form and colour from imprisonment in the world of objects" (Itten 1970 [1961], 95). At the Bauhaus Itten developed work on the association of color with "emotional energy," elaborating Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1810) analysis, in his "Theory of Colours," which had employed the diagrammatic use of a polychrome star. It is Itten's version of this visual aid that demonstrates properties of color, such as warmth and coolness, complementary colors and color mixing that became a standard point of reference in schools and colleges throughout the twentieth century. Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee, who Itten persuaded to join him at the Bauhaus also collaborated to deepen work on perception and color theory, honing it to their teaching programs.

But Itten's lessons were not simply about color, painting, drawing, and designing in isolation. They involved meditation, breathing, and physical exercises that were intended to align the "mind and body balance" (Figure 23.2). As a member of the Mazdaznan sect,[20] Itten lived on a vegetarian diet, followed a strict health regime, and wore monk-like attire, all of which contributed to his mystical quality and established him as something

FIGURE 23.2 Johannes Itten teaching morning exercises on the roof of the Itten School, Berlin, 1931. *Source*: Photo Estate of Johannes Itten/© DACS 2016.

of a charismatic guru. An extract from Bauhaus student Gunta Stölzl's diary (1919), only a few days into her studies, captures something of Itten's mystical, holistic teaching.

> Great things are starting to become clear to me: mysteries, wider contexts appear visible … His first words were about rhythm … Drawing is not replicating what we see, but letting flow through the entire body that which we feel through external stimulus (as well as through pure internal stimulus of course) it then comes out again as something that is definitely one's own … when we draw a circle, the emotion of the circle has to vibrate throughout the whole body.
>
> (Stölzl 2012 [1919], 51)

Itten was certainly not the only artist drawn towards spiritual values, mysticism, and philosophical ideas that sat outside Western thought. The early twentieth century was marked by a fascination with invisible phenomena. Scientific discoveries, such as x-rays that could reveal internal human organs, and electromagnetic waves that led to the development of radio and the telephone, were to most people just as mysterious as the notion of a "fourth dimension" or séances in which mediums could converse with the departed. Here too was a possibility for artists to become the cyphers through which divine knowledge, uncoupled from organized religion, might be made manifest in symbolic form.

While Helena Blavatsky's theosophy and its offspring, Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, had a considerable impact on many artists and educators Clement Greenberg was famously

hostile to any affiliation with spiritualism, dismissing it in "Towards a New Laocoön" (1940) as "metaphysical pretensions."

If the excesses and irrationalities of the spiritual and occult unsettle the sleek scientific and formalist efficiency that generally characterizes the onward trajectory of modernity then one serious claim should be made for theosophy's modernizing outlook: it was the first spiritual organization in Europe that did not discriminate against women. Visionary watercolours and drawings by leading Victorian medium, Georgiana Houghton (1814–1884), preserved by the Victorian Spiritualist Union in Melbourne, Australia, are only recently attracting due curatorial attention. In the art world gender inequalities were pervasive, as can also be seen in the later case of Swedish painter Hilma af Klint[21] (1862–1944) who was deeply affected by spiritualism, theosophy, and later anthroposophy (see Chapter 9, this volume). Af Klint's art, which reflected her academic training in naturalistic portraiture and landscape, was pulled in another direction in the 1890s when together with four other women artists she began to visualize in paint what the eye could not see. In common with Kandinsky, af Klint, saw the artist's role as akin to a prophet, not reflecting the contemporary milieu but shaping the future.

Despite inconsistencies in reception, a strong sense of belief in the "power" of art is evident in the writings of many artists working in the early twentieth century. Kandinsky, who stayed at the Bauhaus until its closure in 1933, wrote in "Concerning the Spiritual in Art" that, "art which is capable of educating springs from contemporary feeling … but also has a deep and powerful prophetic strength" (1977 [1933], 4).

Conceptual Leaps

If in the nineteenth century Cole and Ruskin had been arguing over the worth of educating students to draw a straight line (Cole thought it was "a disgrace to everyone who affects to be well educated if he cannot draw a straight line" (in Macdonald 1970, 233), Ruskin averred that "a great draftsman … can draw every line but a straight one" (in Carline 1968, 96). By the twentieth century Klee's "Pedagogic Sketch Book" was taking "an active line on a walk moving freely, without a goal. A walk for a walk's sake. The mobility agent is a point, shifting its position forward" (Klee 1972 [1953], 16). The conceptual leap in which drawing as a process becomes subject to analysis is substantive, and no less important is the emergent sense of art as an autonomous activity detached from context. This decisive break with the concerns and methods of classical art education was propelled by a profound desire for a better future in which the limitations, inequities, and stuffiness of the past would be transcended.

Kandinsky and Klee, along with Itten, Gropius, and Albers all produced influential publications that were distinct from didactic art teaching manuals. Often idiosyncratic and indicative of individual philosophies, these publications reveal the galvanizing force of modern ideas struggling against a dominant conservatism; they also reveal the discursive nature of these artists' relationships with each other.

Why Art is Taught

If many changes in art education were afoot in Europe relatively few had reached the shores of conservative Britain. Since the development of French Impressionism in the nineteenth-century anti-academic momentum had gathered apace giving rise to an unprecedented

diversity of stylistic and conceptual approaches to creating art. Moreover, modern art's "permanent revolution" boasted an antithetical relationship to the old regimes of bourgeois cultural certainty. The Slade School of Fine Art in London, under Edward Poynter (1836–1919) led the way in promoting a more progressive outlook, with life drawing encouraged at the outset rather than viewed as a distant promise after years spent copying carefully selected classical exemplars. But elsewhere in Britain modern art's shape shifting phenomena caused a sense of panic concerning the direction and quality of the Nation's art education. When considering the education of younger students of school age, this cause for concern persisted well into the first decade of the twentieth century.

Reporting on the 1908 congress for the Development of Drawing and Art Teaching, London Lucy Varley, Chair of the "Art Teachers' Guild" captures this anxiety well. She reflects on a very competitive international forum in which the "English contingent" was put upon its mettle and goes on to register her dismay at the "inadequacy" of the English Art Education system in contradistinction to the "energy and enthusiasm and personal initiative which American and Continental teachers were putting into their work" (Varley 1908, 1–2).

Rapid changes in early twentieth century art practices could have presented art education with significant challenges, but an inherent conservatism resisted modernism and stasis prevailed. It was from small pockets of progressive thought and practice that key questions concerning why, how, and if, art should be taught began once again to surface.

Art, A Language?

In Britain, the sweeping changes can be read out of the work of early art educators such as Marion Richardson (1892–1946) who encouraged children to understand art as a vehicle for the expression of their own ideas. Richardson advocated art as, "a language which exists to speak of things that cannot be expressed in words" (Richardson cited in Holdsworth 2007, 166). So, in Richardson's classroom, even for older children, skills and techniques were of marginal concern. Fostering children's confidence, the development of art from mental imagery, remembered, invented, and constructed from her narrations took precedent.

"Autonomy to select and responsibility for the way in which the materials might afford the desired impression of the events portrayed was for Richardson a prerequisite for a successful and original outcome" (Holdsworth 2007, 163). Yet the freedom offered was also one with parameters. Richardson's teaching methods were intended to allow the child to produce an untainted vision and it might be imagined that this would lead to an array of vastly differing outcomes, yet there is a surprising consistency in the stylistic appearances of her students' artworks. The children's imagery reflects both its cultural context and its time. Richardson nurtured a predominantly free painterly style that was not a million miles away from the avant-garde work promoted in Britain from the second decade of the twentieth century: namely Post-Impressionism. Her work with school children corresponded to the manner in which a number of adult artists, trained in more conservative art making process, were attempting to free themselves by casting off academicism to obtain a "purer" vision. This was exactly what the artist, critic, and curator Roger Fry and his Bloomsbury Group contemporaries prized most highly, therefore it is unsurprising that Richardson's encounter with Fry, at the Omega Workshop exhibition of children's art, marks a significant boost to her self-belief as a teacher. Richardson writes, "he [Fry] made me feel that we [herself and her students] were … part of the modern movement in art of which he was so great a leader" (Richardson 1948, 32). It

is rare for school pupils' art to have more in common with the avant-garde than with the educational establishment's ideas of what children should be learning.

Richardson's art teaching and teacher training synthesized the zeitgeist and to leading-edge modernist curators and painters her pupils' work appeared as vivid and vital as the avant-garde itself. Through her pioneering work as a teacher educator at the London Day Training College, later to become the Institute of Education, Richardson established the art teacher's influence as a key factor in pupils' achievements in art. In this she stands in contradistinction to the Austrian art educator Franz Cizek (1865–1946) who regarded children's art making as a distinctive developmental phase unrelated to adult art making and hence one that should be free from interference.

Exhibitions of child art[22] also played an important part in disseminating these new approaches to children's art education. Such an exhibition at County Hall, London in 1938 was visited by 26,000 people, and did much to secure Richardson's influence, which reached its pinnacle in the late 1930s and 1940s. One of the earliest child art exhibitions was mounted in 1912 by Alfred Stieglitz at the 291 gallery in New York, significantly programming the art of the child between an exhibition of Picasso's paintings and one of African art. In modernism the naïvety esteemed in children's art was related to a misplaced quality attributed to the so-called "primitive." Partha Mitter astutely observes that this was a myth so powerful and potent that it "helped emancipate Western artists from the constraints of classical taste bringing about a remarkable paradigm shift" (Mitter 2014, 542).

By the latter half of the 1920s the pendulum had swung away from the ideas of training tradesman and craft workers in the school sector, according to the Hadow Report (1926) "the art room would have a character and atmosphere of its own" (cited in Ashwin 1975, 67) and in the Primary School Report of 1931 art education would be put to a new task, "To cultivate in children sufficient skill to enable them to express their own ideas in some form of art, and also stimulate the growth of such sympathy and sensitiveness as may lead eventually to aesthetic appreciation" (Ashwin 1975, 67). These reports reflect the weight of educational psychology and also chime with the views of art critic Herbert Read. Read was concerned to address what he perceived as an imbalance in education where fact dominated feeling and reason became uncoupled from "emotional intelligence." His pleas for sensitivity and his belief that insensitivity was "a disease of the endocrine system … like sclerosis" (1945, 303) point once more to a perception of art's palliative role.

Retreats from the Center

At a time when Europe was still reverberating from a catastrophic and futile loss of life in the First World War and America was heading for the "Great Depression," a number of progressive educational initiatives began to burgeon. Although such endeavors were not solely focused on art education, most formed around an arts and humanities curriculum. The consciousness of inhumanity and a desire to overcome its devastating legacy were forces in resisting tradition. New forms of education often aligned to radical (and not so radical) politics and technologies for understanding art emerged. Displacement, migration, and the search for a better way of life drove the principles that would undermine traditional educational structures. Flux and movement of artists and educators also led to transnational exchanges. Individuals forced into exile by the rise of the Third Reich took with them vestiges of practices and hopes that could be reshaped in a new freer environment.

The countryside and wilderness also offered something restorative and an apparently more neutral ground for ventures to take root. A series of experimental, educational retreats took place in the early to mid-twentieth century, away from centers of commerce

and culture. In the West the 1920s and 1930s were a dynamic period of intense uncertainty in which students' expectations of education would inevitably change. So too would the art educator's role and identity, caught, as it so often was, in the relationship between their art practice and their teaching practice.

In Britain, Dartington Hall School in rural Devon was founded with the aim of creating a utopian community. Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst, who founded the alternative school in 1926, took inspiration from a number of precedents including the Bauhaus, Ascona in Switzerland, Summerhill in Britain, and significantly from poet and painter Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan[23] the rural university he founded in West Bengal. Dartington, like Santiniketan placed a high premium on the arts and on learning in the natural environment. The nurturing calm of the "un-spoilt world" was thought to help maintain the intensity of student experiences. In 1961 the school spawned Dartington School of Arts, which until its contested closure in 2010 specialized in performance art. Dartington Hall's founding principles directly challenged educational practices of the day by rejecting punishment, prefects, uniforms, gender segregation, and held no truck with mandatory curriculum elements such as sports, religion, or Classics.

Significantly it is the words of John Locke that cut through 300 years of educational thought to illuminate the home page of Dartington's alumni Web site,

> If the mind be curbed and humbled too much in children, if their spirits be abased and broken by too strict an hand over them, they lose all their vigour and industry … dejected minds, timorous and tame, and low spirits are hardly ever to be raised, and very seldom attain anything …
>
> (http://www.dartingtonhallschool.co.uk)

Dartington, like other rural educational "retreats," sought an alternative community, unshackled from over-determined knowledge and incremental measurements of progress. In keeping with the metaphor of "infection" referred to at the outset of this chapter, such sealed communities (for there was little local integration) could foster new values and approaches away from the barbs of wider cosmopolitan criticism and hostility.

Similar progressive educational experiments appeared at Bennington College in Vermont, which opened in 1932 to 85 women and was the first to include the visual and performing arts as fully-fledged elements of the liberal arts curriculum. Wisconsin Experimental (1927), an autonomous faculty of the University of Wisconsin, was established by philosopher and educational reformer Alexander Meiklejohn and had students and teachers living and working together in the same residence hall with no fixed schedule, no compulsory lessons, and no semester grades.

Not dissimilar to later pedagogic attitudes, which informed the art schools of 1960s and 1970s in Britain, Wisconsin Experimental while not actively encouraging, certainly tolerated, non-conformity and behavior that would have been too rebellious, destructive, and radical in other educational contexts. Inevitably this was also to play a role in the demise of the short-lived project which closed in 1933, the same year in which the legendary Black Mountain College in North Carolina welcomed a remarkable ratio of twenty-three students to ten lecturers.

If the usual hierarchical divisions between staff and students were instantly unsettled, then similarly, an absence of assessment and no powers of accreditation made open-ended experimentation at Black Mountain College easy to legitimize. Owing much to the educationalist John Dewey's democratizing ideas, the structural interrelationships between

learning and teaching, staff and students, work and play, art and life was central to the college ethos. Dewey championed many alternative educational ventures and wrote in 1940 specifically in support of Black Mountain College's experimental standpoint, "The work and life of the college (and it is impossible to separate the two) is a living example of democracy in action. … The College exists at the very 'grass roots' of a democratic way of life" (Dewey cited in Füssl 2006, 82).

It was MoMA's director, Alfred H. Barr Jr. and the founder of its Department of Architecture and Design, Philip Johnson, who recommended exiled Bauhaus tutors Joseph and Anni Albers to fill the key teaching positions at Black Mountain. John Andrew Rice, founder and first rector of the College welcomed them with open arms in recognition of the kudos their rigorous modernism could bring to his pioneering mission. "The Ashville Citizen," a local paper, was more circumspect, heralding their arrival with the headline "Germans to Teach Art Near Here" (Harris *et al.* 2005, 24).

Black Mountain College thrived on a multidisciplinary approach to the arts that echoed the Albers' experiences at the Bauhaus where art education had also been a catholic affair encompassing music, theater, literature and drama alongside the more usual expectations of drawing, painting, construction and design. Here, while both Joseph and Anni Albers were able to refine and develop their ideas for a community of learning, a wholehearted embrace of this more unstructured, Dewey inspired, version of democratic learning was not necessarily something they accepted. Freedom was something Joseph Albers, in particular, recognized as hard won. It was certainly not to be acquired through the mere emulation of early modernists: a mistake that merited his scornful chiding that students had contracted, "Picassophobia," "Matissetisis," and "Klee(p)tomania" (Albers cited in Füssl 2006, 85).

Albers countered ideas fostered in progressive educational circles, which designated art as synonymous with self-expression, uncoupled from the rigors of drawing skills and techniques of perceptual attunement. Such "laissez-faire" approaches were not part of Albers' classes at Black Mountain College where his continual assertion that he was teaching students "to see not to draw" also paid homage to Ruskin's nineteenth-century maxim "to see clearly is poetry, prophesy and religion all in one" (1899 [1856], 333), which Albers would regularly recite. Moreover, Pestalozzi's aforementioned *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* was a set text which Joseph Albers would have read as part of his teacher education in Büren, Westphalia, and Füssl argues that its ethical messages of interior growth, step-by-step learning and ethical objectives were the sustaining influence on his approach to education at Black Mountain College.

Arguably, it is Albers' desire for educational rupture that designates him as more clearly modern often declaring, "I am here to destroy your prejudices" and "if you have a style don't bring it with you, it will only be in the way." These are the enduring precepts on which Art Foundation Courses have been based. An ethos of purported liberation from prior knowledge has stood as a cleansing-rite between school and art school (Robins 2003), a time when students are asked to forget everything they have learned in school for a promise of an alternative that is truer, freer, or just not yet known.

Black Mountain College closed its doors in 1957[24] with only 1,200 students having passed through them. It is therefore surprising to find the college positioned as one of the most halcyon and innovative moments of modern art education. If this fabled legacy appears disproportionate in relation to the college's realistic potential for direct influence it may reflect O'Doherty's point that, "fables give you more latitude …" (1999, 35). They do so by providing a generalized territory that seems "equally true and fictitious" (1999, 35). Fables are "out of time," or to put it another way, not dependent on the anchoring limitations of a historicity or teleology. For all its many flaws arguably we need this fable of

a utopian modern art education to pose questions germane to our current concerns and possible futures.

Conclusion

O'Doherty's fables for ingénues of modernism encapsulate the central tenets of twentieth-century avant-garde art. There is rebellion, "How the Edge Revolted Against the Centre," then desecration, "The Man Who Violated Canvas," annihilation, "Who Killed Illusion," loss "Where Did the Frame Go?" (O'Doherty 1999, 35). I suggested that a modern art education might add some tales of de-materialization: "What did Education do when Art took its Objects Away?," irreverence: "Who Ate Art and Culture?" and modernism's enthusiasm for charismatic leaders: "Coyote, Hare and the Free International University." Of all these fables it is perhaps the de-materialization of the art object in the wake of conceptualism that did most to de-stabilize modern art education. When art took its objects away, education (itself a modern project) was unsure what to do with this troublesome subject, art.

In 1970s Britain, Macdonald's bleak warning of art's imminent educational demise was precipitated, no doubt, by his awareness of the radical departure from traditional educational methods in art schools such as St. Martins School of Art, along with short lived but influential educational experiments such as Roy Ascott's "Ground Course" at Ealing School of Art and the "Art Theory" course at Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry, initiated by members of the collective Art and Language.[25] All of which, in Macdonald's opinion, exhibited "articidal tendencies"[26] what he perceived as the demise of beauty, craft and the artefact in education, brought about not simply by government officials but from within, by art educators, who he argued, had "been busy demolishing the subject, which supports them" (1973, 99).

With hindsight the demise of the artefact in the twenty-first century was a partial and temporary affair, overstated just as much as the death of painting. Beauty and craft didn't disappear either but it is fair to say that nothing was ever quite the same. The Greenbergian promise of certainty and authority *qua* "art for art's sake" was, as Richard Long testified, "old school" by 1968 and instead an over-riding desire for cross-contamination with the worldliness of the everyday and the political and social conditions of art's production and dissemination, took root. Subject matter and content, which Greenberg warned should "be avoided like the plague" (1965, 6), had once more infected art and art education.

Developments in British secondary schools were no less troubled. Richardson's ideas about the expressive language of art did not translate well in the hands of less informed teachers often resulting in formulaic work. Expression diminished in significance as learning in art became something akin to the acquisition of a grammar, or vocabulary of form. Art educators argued "that a truer balance must be sought between concern for the integrity of children and concern for the integrity of art" (Field 1970, 55). Modernism's apotheosis formalism, soon became an instant curative for child-centric approaches and replaced the emphasis on freer forms of "expression." By the end of the 1960s, according to Meeson, formalism had become "an almost universally accepted ideology" (1991, 107). This method perfectly fitted the desire for standardization across school subjects. Students "mastered" line, tone, and color in much the same way as they identified verbs, adjectives, and nouns. Art lessons became an exercise in visual design. Color wheels proliferated, along with exercises in hue, tone, and perspective still seen today. For despite many changes and efforts by spirited teachers and reformers a more contemporary art curriculum

for schools remains elusive, and the continuity between the school and higher education is at best beset by different values and at worse entirely antithetical.

In the art school, teaching and learning throughout the decades from the 1970s onwards became progressively threaded through more theoretical understandings of both art and art world. The reflexivity needed to examine art education however has moved at a slower pace. By the 1990s the effects of socially engaged art practices and cross-disciplinary initiatives had proposed art as part of a wide ranging social agenda. Under the auspices of "post-modernism" the past too ceased to be another country and instead became a territory to be mined and recycled. This included mining art education's parables for the alternatives they might offer to resist an increasingly corporatized pedagogy.

A Tale of Two Centuries…

In February 2015 I visited the exhibition "Really Useful Knowledge" at the Reina Sofía National Art Centre in Madrid. Curatorially, this was another in a growing list of contemporary art exhibitions that focus attention on education. The "educational turn"[27] has thoroughly permeated the art-world and renewed relationships and exchanges between art and pedagogy. This particular exhibition curated by "What, How and for Whom" (WHW), in collaboration with educational and curatorial staff at the Reina Sofía, promised to consider, "the museum as a pedagogical site devoted to the analysis of artistic forms interconnected with actual or desired social relations" (Garces 2014).

During the exhibition thousands of demonstrators descended on Madrid's city center to take part in a massive rally against their current government. In common with a number of European countries an economic downturn and swinging austerity measures have left the Spanish populus reeling. Its young people are most cruelly affected, with 55% of 16- to 24-year-olds out of work (Buck 2014).

"Really Useful Knowledge" took its title from a moment of radical grassroots activism that included mass protests and demonstrations in nineteenth-century Britain. Industrialists had begun investing in their companies' development by funding their employees training in "applicable" skills and disciplines. Workers' organizations allied to "Chartism"[28] used the term "really useful knowledge" in contradistinction to the supposedly "useful knowledge" their employers had in mind for them, which often turned out to be "merely useful" or in many cases "really useless." Significantly, the education sought by these protagonists encompassed various "unpractical" disciplines such as politics, economics, and philosophy.

As a term "Really Useful Knowledge" gained more widespread currency in the 1970s, largely through Richard Johnson's writings. Johnson's (1988) historical excavation of working-class education sought to distinguish ethical and democratic education from dominant educational policy-makers' less egalitarian priorities. In the twenty-first century these same issues command an urgency to seek alternative models and once more necessitate the retelling of a history of educational inequity. This is particularly the case for arts education. In the West, seeking to understand the art education of the 1960s and 1970s and its contestation of canonized cultural values is important for the present. It is timely to return to the unsettling of stable points of reference by a largely working-class contingent, who in this moment of inclusivity gained free access to art education.

Ultimately, the big questions, which were there at the outset of the modern period, remain pertinent today. Who has access to art education? In what ways will art education benefit individuals and society? Noteworthy too are the public spaces in which these

questions are now most visibly debated. Tony Bennett's (1995) term the "exhibitionary complex" might best describe the arenas in which purposeful discussions are taking place and alternative pedagogies are emerging.

Nevertheless Dean Kenning's warning, that there is a "tipping point between art-related educational practices which confront social mechanisms of conformity and exclusion in order to offer real alternatives, and those which slide back into education-themed art events" (Kenning 2013, 333) should be heeded when appraising these initiatives. It is in the extended realm of this "exhibitionary complex," in galleries, art museums, studios, biennales and project spaces, that narratives (both past and future) have been mobilized and allowed to freely flow in the search for alternative possibilities for art education. Despite the benefits of accountability that university status bestowed on former art schools, there is little doubt that in many of today's academies, art education is experiencing a crisis of contemporary currency just as it did once before in the moribund academies of the nineteenth century. And today in Britain, the academy's reach goes further as the conversion of comprehensive schools to new "academies"[29] brings attendant powers to marginalize the arts.

Twenty-first century art education has reached another precarious moment and this chapter has been written with a heightened sense of current dangers. In a moment of rampant bureaucracy the education system from primary schools to universities has been subject to an unprecedented process of standardization and performance-based assessment in which the arts fair badly. Simultaneously the free market economy has left little space for the social values once attached to the arts or for art's unrealized democratic aspirations.

If it appears increasingly utopian that the art school, or indeed the school, might forge a more critical and ethical and imaginative relationship between art and society, then it's not for the first time. Nor is it the first time that an imperative to circumvent the over-controlling hand (so clearly understood by Locke to "abase the spirit" and "tame the mind" [1824 (Locke 1692/3), 46]) will find art education seeking out heterotopias, those alternative mental and physical spaces of discursivity proposed by Foucault (1998 [1967]) which offer intense, unpredictable, and transformational possibilities.

Notes

1 Victor Pasmore, Graham Bell, Claude Rogers, and Coldstream founded the "Euston Road School" in 1938. Coldstream became director of University College London's Slade School of Fine Art.
2 For a comprehensive account see Lisa Tickner (2008).
3 Joseph Beuys' work, 1960s onwards, received mixed critical reviews some enchanted by his messianic role as healer of modern society, e.g., Kuspit (1980). Others, notably Benjamin Buchloh (1980) repudiated Beuys' account of his experiences as a pilot in the Second World War which he had mythologised into a fable of healing.
4 Beuys insisted that all students should model a clay head as part of their studies.
5 Set up in 1973, the aim of the Free International University, as its manifesto states, "is not to develop political and cultural directions, or to form styles, or to provide industrial and commercial prototypes. Its chief goal is the encouragement, discovery, and furtherance of democratic potential, and the expression of this" https://sites.google.com/site/socialsculptureusa/freeinternationaluniversitymanifesto
6 Robert Rauschenberg asked de-Kooning, an artist whom he respected, for a drawing telling him of his plan to erase it. Somewhat surprisingly de-Kooning obliged selecting

one with crayon and other media that it would be hard to erase. *The Erased de Kooning*, 1953, is now in the collection of San Francisco MoMA.

7 The notion that the termination of Latham's contract was directly linked to this incident has been contested see Stewart Holmes (2006). In confluence with Latham and Steveni's Artist Placement Group's maxim: "Context is half of the work," in this instance, the fable is at least half of the work.

8 Ian Kirkwood, for example, became a university head of fine and applied art.

9 For a thoughtful commentary on risk taking see Jeff Adams' iJADE editorial (2014).

10 This sense of self-actualization chimed with the thinking of influential European contemporary Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827).

11 The letters "Some thoughts about Education" (1693) were written for a minority aristocratic readership.

12 Art education in the academies followed a program of copying prints of classical sculptures to master principles of contour, light, and shade as a precondition of being an artist. Successful completion of drawings meant progress to plaster casts of classical sculptures and eventually entry into the life class. Drawing was a prerequisite of painting before joining an academician's studio.

13 Cole successfully designed and produced tableware under the pseudonym of Felix Summerly.

14 This was a drastic diminution of rights for articulating and disseminating working-class opinions resulting in punitive political acts silencing dissent which had increased following the "Battle of Peterloo" (1819).

15 The book explained Pestalozzi's educational concepts (1894) and had a substantive impact on progressive education.

16 Kant's use of the term also refers to pre-cognitive intuition.

17 Froebel was Weiss's assistant for nearly two years and according to Jane Insley (2015), his pedagogic "gifts" correspond directly to diagrams of crystal models that Froebel would have observed whilst working with Weiss (cited in Haüy's *Treatise on Crystallography* of 1822).

18 His abdication was in response to uprisings in Berlin and a mutiny in the German Imperial navy.

19 As Frayling (1987) asserts the Royal College of Art tentatively sought Gropius's guidance when he came to Britain in 1934, Gropius ultimately left Britain in 1937 for a professorship at Harvard University.

20 This was a hybrid religion founded in America that amalgamated Asian philosophical ideas and behavior.

21 For a detailed account of af Klint's work see Chapter 19, this volume.

22 Exhibitions of children's art were mounted in Russia, across Europe and in the USA, see Chapter 24, this volume.

23 The school was expanded into a university in 1921 and by 1951 became one of India's central universities housing the highly respected art college of Santiniketan, Kala Bhavana.

24 Just like Wisconsin Experimental, Black Mountain College's financial sustainability proved hard to achieve.

25 Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin, and Harold Hurrell, all teachers at Lanchester Polytechnic in Coventry formed the initial *Art and Language* collective in 1966 and their eponymous journal was first published in 1969. They aligned conceptual art with art theory signaling the limits of both and opening new intellectual debate.

26 "Articidal Tendencies" is the title of Macdonald's 1973 chapter published in Piper.

27 The "educational turn" describes tendencies within art practice and curation, which since the late 1990s have concentrated attention on the structures and institutions of learning and teaching and the knowledge generation capacities of art and research. It can be traced back to critical pedagogy, institutional critique, and self-reflexive arts and curatorial projects often dating from the 1960s and 1970s (see Lee Podesva 2007; Rogoff 2008; O'Neill and Wilson 2010).
28 A working-class movement (1836 to late 1840s), it sought to extend franchise beyond property owning classes.
29 Academy schools were introduced in England at the start of the twenty-first century. They are funded directly by the state, thereby circumventing local authority control (see Ball 2013).

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3

Mining the Dutch Golden Age
The Avant-Garde Enterprise

Johanna Ruth Epstein

Introduction

It is to nineteenth-century France that we owe a compelling vision of Dutch art that continues to draw crowds to exhibitions like "Art in the Age of Rembrandt," "Vermeer and the Delft School," and "The Glory of the Golden Age." Texts and exhibitions proclaim, as if it were self-evident, that the focus of Dutch art is on *humanity*, and Rembrandt as the most potent disseminator of this central aim.[1] This was not always the dominant perception, however. The story of Dutch art as we know it originated in nineteenth-century France. This chapter examines how the construction of that powerful narrative, in tandem with the formation of modernism, informed the work of three artists: Jean-François Millet, Gustave Courbet, and Vincent van Gogh.

First, however, let us consider how the Dutch school went from being perceived as little more than the subject of critical condescension, always Italian painting's inferior, to being considered the wellspring of modernism. One of the earliest and most scathing dismissals of Netherlandish painting is attributed to Michelangelo:

> It will appeal to women, especially the very old and very young, and also to monks, nuns and certain noblemen with no sense of true harmony.… They paint stuffs and masonry, the green grass of the fields, the shadow of trees, and rivers and bridges, which they call landscapes.… And all this, though it pleases some people, is done without reason or art, without symmetry or proportion, without skillful judgment or boldness, and, finally, without substance or vigour. (Holanda 1928, 15–16)

Michelangelo's remark set the tone for later observers, who continued to perceive an absence of refinement in the Dutch aesthetic. In 1707 André Félibien, art advisor to the French crown, relegated the Dutch to the bottom of his hierarchy due to their

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consistently choosing "the most base and common" subjects, either because they did not know any better, or lacked the imagination to do otherwise (Félibien 1684). The notion that the Dutch might have consciously rejected the academic ideal of beauty is largely absent from these discussions.

Until the nineteenth century, most academics agreed that Dutch art's best qualities culminated in the work of Gerard Dou and other *fijnschilders* (fine painters), who painted with tiny brushes in a meticulous style coveted in the eighteenth century across continental Europe. Before that time, the Dutch were often commended for their patience and craftsmanship in the patronizing manner of Eugène Fromentin's 1876 characterization of the typical Dutch master as "an attentive man, a little bowed, with a fresh palette, clear oils, and clean, well-kept, fine brushes … above all, hating dust … like Gerard Dou" (Fromentin 1965, 104).

French academics also generally agreed that Dutch art addressed the eye rather than the mind, and was not substantial enough to satisfy men of higher learning. The exception was Rembrandt, whose reputation had evolved somewhat separately from the rest of the Dutch school, "a rather bizarre genius," according to the Hermitage in 1823 (Wheelock 1997, 15).

Even those who applauded Rembrandt cited fatal deficiencies in draftsmanship and aesthetic judgment. In 1844 the art historian C.H. Balkema wrote: "though Rembrandt can be counted among the greatest painters, his drawing is often incorrect, and his works lack the beautiful ideal of antiquity" (Balkema 1844, 274). In Planche's 1855 ranking of the six "immortal" painters Rembrandt came in last (Michelangelo was number one, followed by Leonardo, Raphael, Titian, Correggio, and Rubens). In Roger de Piles's theoretical criteria of artistic merit, out of twenty possible points Rembrandt scored a six in drawing, but an impressive seventeen in color (Wheelock 1997, 21). Another problem was that Rembrandt's earthy impressions of saints often offended French Catholics. In 1846 Alfred Michiels wrote: "the mind simply cannot get used to seeing the mother of Christ in the form of an ungainly peasant, Saint John the Baptist a cowherd, Magdalene a milkmaid…" (Michiels 1845–1848, 134).

Until the mid-eighteenth century, fondness for Dutch art was limited, for the most part, to the European craze for Dutch and Flemish cabinet pieces (Bailey 2002, 18). During that century, a widening disjunction between scholars and the market became evident when the prices of Dutch and Flemish works escalated, often exceeding those for Italian pictures. The Louvre even had to install protective glass to keep its Dutch and Flemish cabinet pieces safe from exploring hands, and in 1748 Comte de Caylus complained that the fad for these pictures, "which should have no bearing on taste, has nearly banished Italian paintings from our collector's cabinets" (Caylus 1748).

A crucial intermediate step between old and new perceptions of Dutch art was marked by historian Arsène Houssaye's *Histoire de la peinture flamande et hollandaise* (1848). Houssaye celebrated the prevalence of representations of the working class in Dutch art, and argued that this was an expression of a free society (Houssaye 1848, II, 153).

Still, French academic writers disparaged Dutch art, particularly in relation to Italian and French painting. As Francis Haskell summarizes, "almost everyone admitted, usually with some dismay, that Dutch and Flemish cabinet pictures were more popular with most collectors than large-scale Italian paintings of the Renaissance or Baroque periods." But, notes Haskell crucially, "no one ever wrote … that they were of higher moral—and hence aesthetic—quality" (Haskell 1980, 5).

Thoré

Enter Etienne Joseph Théophile Thoré (1807–1869), a radical journalist forced into exile by Napoleon III in 1848. Thereafter, Thoré threw his energy into contemporary art criticism and extensive research on Dutch art, which he used as a mouthpiece for his political convictions. His ground-breaking study *Musées de la Hollande* (1858–1860) focused on four Dutch collections (Rijksmuseum, Mauritshuis, Van der Hoop, and Musée Mesdag). No mere chronological review of artists and styles, it constituted a complete overhaul of the literature on Dutch art and re-evaluation of its reputation, aims, and essence.

Placing unprecedented importance on the political, social, and geographic circumstances from which the Dutch Golden Age emerged, Thoré explained in his introduction to the first volume: "I have sought to become familiar with the country itself, to the customs of its inhabitants, to its history and present life, for one cannot understand art without nature and humanity" (Thoré 1858–1860, I, xvi). While earlier critics had sidelined Dutch art, damning it with faint praise, *Musées de la Hollande* redefined it as an expression of resistance against monarchy and Catholicism. The substance of Thoré's argument emerged in the introductions to his volumes, in which he extolled the virtues of seventeenth-century Dutch society, and the nation's freedom, egalitarianism, and prosperity. Non-hierarchical structure, according to Thoré, is an essential feature of the Dutch school: "Other schools have hierarchies, the Dutch school is a *panarchy*.… In Holland, each painter is master of his own genre, each according to his own sensibility … each lays equal claim to his role in creation" (Thoré 1866, 135).

Having broken free from the confines of a structure that permitted them to address only a narrow range of subjects, Dutch artists had turned their attention to the everyday world and its people, regardless of social status. As Thoré put it: "Man's role is to invent, to be himself and no one else." The Dutch had recognized the inherent value of resisting convention in order to take the sort of risks that might result in artistic breakthroughs. With a single sentence, Thoré staked a claim for Dutch art that has stood for generations as truth: "The art of Rembrandt and the Dutch is, quite simply, ART FOR HUMANITY" (Thoré 1858–1860, I, 326).

Thus, prior to the nineteenth century, critics generally considered Rembrandt as an anomaly rather than the foremost representative of Dutch painting. *Musées de la Hollande* positioned him squarely at the center of Dutch art, a risk-taker setting a bold example for contemporary Realist painters. Thoré's book opened with a detailed description of *The Night Watch*, Rembrandt's lively painting of a militia company. Noting its impressive size and scale, Thoré wrote:

> It is impossible to anticipate the impact of this singular picture.… The whole throng seems to press toward the spectator, as if marching directly into his space.… Those who see *The Night Watch* for the first time stop dead in their tracks, and fall down upon a great couch that faces it at the center of the room. (Thoré 1858–1860, I, 6–7)

He then referred to the figures "advancing at the head of the party," in a lengthy discourse in which the picture served as a literal illustration of an avant-garde, hailing the picture as a decisive breakthrough: "Never, in any other school, had a painter dared risk such naturalism" (Thoré 1858–1860, I, 205). Thoré's adulation of Rembrandt may have been a departure from contemporary norms, but it was not revolutionary.

His treatment of the story of Dutch art was, however, and it involved three calculated moves. The first, as we have seen, was to shift Rembrandt's role from exception to exemplar (McQueen 2003, 16).

Thoré's second move was to declare Rembrandt as essentially a portraitist. In *Musées de la Hollande* he asserts that 80% (a hyperbolic exaggeration) of the master's oeuvre consisted of "[p]ortraits, which capture directly and succinctly the man, the woman, the child—seizing humanity in its entirety, in the act of living" (Thoré 1858–1860, I, 322). For Thoré, Rembrandt embodied freedom of expression and resistance to tyranny. Accordingly, he de-emphasized religious scenes in Rembrandt's work, claiming that the artist rarely painted them, and that when he did his sole purpose was to illuminate the human condition: "In his entire painted oeuvre, from six to seven hundred catalogued works, if one finds fifty biblical subjects" (a gross underestimate, as Thoré was no doubt aware), "it is but a pretext to place there, as elsewhere, man of his own times and of all times" (Thoré 1858–1860, I, 320).

Thoré's third move involved promoting Frans Hals, hitherto considered a minor portraitist, alongside Rembrandt as the second greatest Dutch master of all time (Thoré 1866). He christened them the lion (Rembrandt) and the eagle (Hals) of art. Hals's *Regents of the Old Men's Alms House* stirred in Thoré profound sentiments: "I know of no painting executed with comparable ardour, not by Hals himself, nor by Rembrandt.… The figures with their natural grandeur, modeled with large, flamboyant strokes, stand out from their frames in relief. It's superb, almost frightening" (Thoré 1868, 438).

In emphasizing portraiture, Thoré's intended to call attention to the segment of Dutch art that historically had received the least attention: large group portraits of middle class citizens. This emphasized the concern with everyday, working class life he felt should be the main concern for the artists of his own time. Instead of focusing on precision, once prized as the essence of Dutch skill, Thoré extolled passionate expression in a new set of painters who exemplified his more robust vision of the Dutch school. Thoré enlarged the scale that came to mind when people thought about Dutch art. In *Musées de la Hollande*, he repeatedly employed the expression "natural grandeur," emphasizing a greatness that transcended the work's physical dimensions.[2]

For Thoré, a profoundly humanitarian, democratic message characterized the essence of Dutch art. He used this as a weapon in his attack on the state-sponsored, largely conservative French Academy. Throughout *Musées de la Hollande*, descriptions of individual painters and paintings called attention to qualities that reinforced these virtues. In addition to his adjustments to the story itself, Thoré intended for *Musées de la Hollande* to reach a broader and somewhat different public from other art books. Both volumes were portable, unillustrated, and inexpensive, in contrast to Charles Blanc's lavishly illustrated *École Hollandaise* (1858), too heavy to carry and unaffordable to the average middle class reader. Students traveling through Europe could, and did, read Thoré en route to Holland, and as they walked through Dutch museums. The paintings themselves were Thoré's illustrations, and he intended the experience of looking to accompany the experience of reading. The emerging generation of artists and critics who responded enthusiastically to this idea included Wilhelm Bode, future director of the Berlin Museum, who committed most of the book to memory as a young man in the mid-1860s, and Vincent van Gogh, for whom Thoré became a kind of patron saint (Jowell 2001, 47).

Thoré's impassioned prose helped recast the public's perception of Dutch art and artists. His two favorite painting metaphors were knitting and fencing. The first—feminine

and negative—occurred liberally in Thoré's dismissals of academic artists he considered irrelevant, obsessed with detail, and purveyors of outmoded ideals of perfection ("long-ruminating, patient knitters"). He employed the second—masculine and positive—in his descriptions of brushwork as a metaphor for combat. An example of this occurred in his description of Frans Hals's *Singing Boy with a Flute*, "dashed off [literally sliced through, *sabré*] in one go … Frans Hals, we might say, paints as if he were fencing, wielding his brush as if it were a foil" (Thoré 1860, 13–14).

Not all Dutch painters received Thoré's accolades, however. We do not encounter Gerrit Dou, previously the most celebrated Dutch painter, until a third of the way through the first volume of *Musées de la Hollande*. Thoré preferred previously underappreciated Dutch masters whom he himself had discovered, and compared them to the Italian masters who had always served as models for French art. In his second volume, Thoré recounts flipping through the pages of an old magazine and finding profile portraits of Rembrandt and Raphael. He cut them out and placed them back to back, forming a Janus-faced emblem "the intuitive summary of my thoughts, Raphael looking backward, and Rembrandt looking ahead" and highlighting the salient feature of Dutch art: its "turn toward the new. That is its essential value, over and above technical finesse, temperament or clarity" (Thoré 1858–1860, II, x–xi).

Thoré's defense of Dutch art functioned as an historical anchor for a growing body of contemporary art focused on unidealized images of laborers. Dutch artists, rejecting the picturesque, had produced artworks that were already accepted masterpieces. This justified to Thoré the pursuit of a similarly frank and inclusive outlook in nineteenth-century French art. Thoré was also the first writer to interpret in a positive light the legendary dissolute lifestyle of painters shown in Dutch tavern scenes, linking it to contemporary bohemian subculture in Paris. *Musées de la Hollande* was the first French text that hailed Adriaen van Ostade, a specialist in bar-room brawl scenes, as an "excellent painter," offering the following quip: "Let's leave Italy to her gods and heroes; when we want to see men and bohemians, we must turn to Holland" (Thoré 1858–1860, I, 93). Demoting gods and heroes to an inferior position and elevating scenes of everyday life as most desirable inverted the traditional hierarchy of pictorial subject matter.

In addition to Thoré's impressive retelling of the story of Dutch art, he also urged avant-garde painters to consider it a model. Voicing disgust with the prim bourgeois manners of his own time, Thoré measured contemporary portraits against the sitters of seventeenth-century Holland, finding the latter's informality superior: "superb vagabonds … great philosophers … Diogenes of the tavern.… They pose not with their hands on their hips, but with their elbows on the table" (Jowell 1977, 153). This identity seemed tailored to suit nineteenth-century bohemians, and many eagerly embraced it.

Thoré redefined Dutch art as exciting, daring, virile, and the array of robust Dutch subjects "weathered sailors, brave militiamen … honest, good-natured workers, the entire throng, everyone, in a nation of equality" as an excellent model for contemporary artists (Thoré 1858–1860, II, xiv). He positioned Millet and Courbet as the heirs of Rembrandt and Hals. He recast Dutch art in the vivid language of social reform, and Rembrandt as an icon of social justice. He succeeded in making not just its premier painter, but the entire Dutch school seem so *avant la lettre* as to remain unsurpassed in the nineteenth century, and presenting the ultimate challenge to the artists of his own time. After Thoré, defenders of avant-garde artists made full use of historically unfavorable

reactions to Dutch painters, frequently choosing examples from Dutch art. Just as the long-misunderstood Dutch were now embraced as great masters, so the Realists would come to be appreciated as visionaries.[3]

I shall now investigate how three artists—Millet, Courbet, and van Gogh—responded to Thoré's challenge and how Dutch art assisted them in shaping the aims of the avant-garde.

Millet

Nearly every major study of Jean-François Millet acknowledges a Dutch aesthetic in the artist's style. Robert Herbert goes so far as to refer to the 1850s as Millet's Dutch period, and Alexandra Murphy has observed that *Morning Toilette* "specifically recalls Johannes Vermeer's *Woman with a Pearl Necklace*," a painting Thoré owned at the time (Herbert 1970; Murphy 1999, 91). Direct copies of older art are extremely rare in Millet's work after his student years. Nonetheless, among Millet's pencil sketches from the 1840s one finds drawings of the central figures in Rembrandt's *Christ among the Doctors* (1652) and *Jupiter and Antiope* (1659).[4] As early as 1837, Millet's first year as an art student in Paris, his signature appeared in the visitors' registry of the print room at the Bibliothèque Nationale.[5] He maintained a correspondence with the library clerk in his hometown of Barbizon and in a letter dated April 7, 1865 requested visual material prior to the clerk's departure for Italy in 1865, asking him to bring back "whatever you find, figures and animals … take of course those that smack least of the Academy and the model" (Sensier 1881, 182–183).

Millet's collection of prints and photographs served as a resource for his choice of themes, palette, and compositional structure.[6] Millet borrowed some of his most iconic peasant images from tiny figures in obscure Dutch prints. Wishing to project the impression that his work reflected unmediated observations from contemporary peasant life, Millet insisted he was "too wise to attempt a copy, even of something of my own; I am incapable of that sort of thing" (Sensier 1896, 52). In reality he was an excellent copyist, and more than happy to reproduce compositions of his own on several occasions.

Listed in a posthumous inventory of items from Millet's home are forty-five engravings by Dutch artists. Only three artists are mentioned specifically: Rembrandt, Ostade, and Jan Luyken (Drouet 1894). While early critics compared Millet's work to Rembrandt and Ostade, they did not realize that Millet's work contained direct quotations from Luyken, a late seventeenth-century Dutch book illustrator who was all but unknown in France at the time Millet acquired his prints. Millet's compositions suggest that he had access to Luyken's books, including *Het Menselyk Bedryf* (a book of trades) and *Het Leerzaam Huisraad* (a practical manual for housewives).[7]

Millet employed a fairly consistent method of borrowing, often from several illustrations at once, revising the forms and bringing them up-to-date with his own aesthetic sensibility and contemporary conventions. Consider *The Cooper* (Figure 3.1), which marks a decisive shift toward the Realist's powerful single-figure compositions of the late 1840s. Millet borrowed the seventeenth-century Dutch laborer (Figure 3.2), a small motif on a busy printed page, and transformed it into a stark, hieratic form. He emphasized muscles, amplified gestures, and lowered our perspective so the figures rise above us, assuming monumental stature. Describing Millet's works as "the prayers of

FIGURE 3.1 Jan Luyken, *Kuiper (Cooper)*, 1694. Engraving, 9×8 cm. *Source:* Het Menselyk Bedryf, 1694, p. 40.

simple men, their heads bent towards the earth," Mathilde Stevens wrote in her review of the Salon of 1859, "Labor is the holiest and most fertile form of prayer. That is why Millet's paintings make such an intense and deep impression" (Stevens 1859, 99). The instructional purpose of Luyken's illustrations conformed to Millet's focus on the moral rectitude of labor. If Millet sought to endow contemporary events with moralistic overtones and create an aura of suspension outside time and place, he was well on his way to achieving this by quietly borrowing motifs from Luyken.

Millet's transition from mythological themes toward scenes of labor, inspired by Luyken, lent definition and substance to a new movement, Realism. By the mid-1840s he and the somewhat younger artist Gustave Courbet had begun to receive critical acclaim from Thoré, who must have known how closely both artists were looking at Dutch art. Courbet visited The Netherlands in 1846, justifying the trip in a letter to his parents as career advancement: "I have to go and see what they like, study their old masters, see what their contemporary painters are doing, and get to know their art dealers." In the same letter, he mentions that his recently completed

FIGURE 3.2 Jean-François Millet, *Cooper Tightening Staves on a Barrel*, c.1848–1850. Sanguine Crayon on buff paper, 41×28.1 cm (16 1/4×11 1/4 inches). Private collection. Photo: Alex Jamison.

portrait for a patron in Bordeaux received "the greatest compliment … painters maintained that it reminded them very much of Rembrandt" (Chu 1992, 64).[8]

Courbet

Unlike Millet, who happily allowed critics and other artists to intercede on his behalf, Courbet indulged in lively public speaking, ponderous letter writing, and carousing with "bohemians" in Paris at the Brasserie Andler and Café Momus. This circle included the philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who compared the negative reception of Courbet's paintings to the historical neglect of the Dutch school: "The kind of repulsion that fills many for the paintings of Courbet is only the result of what was initially

associated with the Dutch, his predecessors and masters" (Proudhon 1865, 92). Proudhon conceived his treatise *Du principe de l'art et sa destination sociale* (On the Principle of Art and Its Social Purpose) as an introduction to Courbet's painting *The Priests*, or *The Return from the Conference* (1863, destroyed), praised Rembrandt as the ultimate role model for the modern artist. The contemporary artist's "principle must be: *substitute idealism of thought for the idealism of form* … presaged by Rembrandt who said: 'When I cease to think, I cease to paint'" (Proudhon 1865, 249).[9] Champfleury (Jules Fleury-Husson), a regular at the Brasserie Andler, heartily endorsed Courbet's controversial *Burial at Ornans* (1849–1850; Musée d'Orsay, Paris) with a comparison to the works of Adriaen Brouwer, David Teniers, and Adriaen van Ostade.

Courbet's bohemian circle also included Thoré, whose preference for "elbows on the table" bluntness in Dutch portraiture, as we have seen, indicated his embrace of Paris's gritty counterculture. By 1847 Courbet was actively courting the critic's approval. "I'm going to gather my paintings and go look for Thoré," he wrote to his parents, after being refused from the Salon that year (Courbet 1992, 68).

Rembrandt's non-conformist, anti-establishment persona achieved high definition during the 1840s, when Courbet was forming his identity as a painter. Largely ignoring the facts, Rembrandt's biographers from this period created the impression that he was a self-taught artist who painted for himself alone (McQueen 2003, 47). Enthralled with this autobiographical reading of Rembrandt's work, the Louvre's curators affixed imaginative titles to the artist's otherwise untitled works that forged speculative links to his life: *Portrait of Rembrandt with his Wife and Children* (in reality an anonymous family group), *Portrait of Rembrandt's Wife* (bust of an anonymous woman), and *Portrait of Rembrandt's friend Coppenol* (a man trimming his quill) (ibid., 23).

Courbet visited the Louvre regularly during these years, sometimes in the company of François Bonvin, a painter deeply indebted to the Dutch masters, and who encouraged Courbet to pay close attention to Rembrandt (Courthion and Cailler 1950, 195).[10] While Courbet's subdued palette and broad, expressive brushwork owed much to Dutch art, his debt to Rembrandt was greatest in his obsession with self-portraiture. Between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-four, Courbet generated more self-portraits than any European artist since the seventeenth century, with the notable exception of the Dutch master.[11] Courbet placed great importance on these self-portraits, to which he referred in a May 3, 1854 letter to his patron Alfred Bruyas as "my autobiography" (Chu 1998, 122).

The capacity to see self-portraiture as autobiography is linked to the nineteenth-century re-evaluation of Rembrandt. Audiences of the 1840s viewed the Dutch master's work as intimately biographical, and his self-portraits as the ultimate expression of the proto-modern persona (Chu 1998, 61). Rembrandt's experimental role-play and informality form the obvious precedent for Courbet, who appeared in a variety of guises and attitudes from the outrageously fictive to the frankly biographical. Many consist of an unkempt head and shoulders lurching into the frame, a feature of many of Rembrandt's early self-portraits. See, for example, *Man with a Pipe*,[12] which purposefully invokes a prevalent theme in Dutch genre painting: pipe smoking (Clark 1973, 42). Poised at the very threshold of the frame, the artist exhales, as if formulating a visual response to Thoré's 1846 proclamation that "The smokers of Adriaen Brouwer are preferable to the madonnas of Sasso-Ferrato" (Nochlin 1966, 8). Scruffy, proud, defiant, and free from the trappings that served as indicators of conventional identity, Courbet's

self-portraits aided in the construction of a persona that justified his alliance with Rembrandt, one of painting's most celebrated renegades.

Though Courbet's position evolved in relation to his aims as a painter, Dutch art remained particularly useful as a reference point for conveying unorthodox ideas. Late in his career, two outright copies of Dutch works, Hals's *Malle Babbe* (1635; Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) and a self-portrait thought to be by Rembrandt (1669; National Gallery, London), reveal the extent of Courbet's admiration for these two Dutch masters, Thoré's lion and eagle.[13]

Van Gogh

Until now we have been following the story of the Dutch Golden Age as re-envisioned by a French critic and interpreted by the two French Realists. It is perhaps not surprising that the artist most affected by Thoré's narrative was the late nineteenth-century Dutchman Vincent van Gogh, who read *Musées de la Hollande* five years before becoming an artist. "Everything he says is true," he wrote to his brother Theo in 1875 (van Gogh 2000, LT14).[14] Van Gogh read both volumes multiple times, and the critic's ideas and phrases—some of which he committed to memory—reverberate throughout van Gogh's letters.

Two concepts gleaned from Thoré particularly impressed van Gogh: the first was that seventeenth-century Holland was a kind of utopia, and second, that these utopian values might be revived through a close study of Dutch portraiture. The privileged position Thoré accorded Rembrandt and Hals helped soothe van Gogh's initial fear that his lack of technical training would prevent him from competing with his French colleagues. He set his sights on cultivating painterly verve and rejecting the demand for painterly precision. This idea motivated him, and erupted into the pyrotechnics of his paintings from the south of France.

It was not until he moved to Arles in 1888 that van Gogh had sufficient capital and stability to embark on a project he had long wished to pursue: founding an artist's colony inspired by seventeenth-century Holland. As he wrote to his brother in 1888: "a whole school of men working together in the same country, complementing one another like the old Dutchmen, portrait painters, genre painters, landscape, animal, still-life painters" (van Gogh 2000, LT519). Forty-nine portraits—the largest number from any period in van Gogh's career—survive from Arles (1888–1889). Convinced that the true character of French provincial life (*la France profonde*) survived in the countryside, he aimed to salvage what he could in portraits of the robust citizens of Arles. By painting likenesses of Arlesian citizens, he intended to channel the spirit of Dutch portraiture, paying tribute to the great masters Hals and Rembrandt. These portraits owe less of a stylistic debt to seventeenth-century Dutch art than one might assume, focusing instead on thematic relationships. Van Gogh's labels for his subjects at Arles, such as *The Peasant* (Patience Escalier), *The Poet* (Eugene Boch), *The Arlesienne* (Marie Ginoux), and *The Lover* (Lieutenant Milliet) are social types that recall the titles of Dutch masterpieces in European collections: *The Merry Drinker*, *The Gypsy*, *The Jewish Bride*, and *The Traveler* were some of van Gogh's favorite Dutch works. Overcome with emotion when Patience Escalier broke into "La Marseillaise" (the French national anthem) during one of their sittings, van Gogh proclaimed the ruddy-faced

gardener's spirit to be "straight from the old Dutchmen" (van Gogh 2000, LT520), and urged Theo to hang his portrait of Escalier beside that of a pale, malnourished urbanite by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec in Theo's gallery, "because the sunlit and sunburned quality of the huge sun and the open air would show to advantage beside the rice powder and the chic dressing table" (van Gogh 2000, LT520). Berating (gently in this case, since Toulouse-Lautrec was a friend) urban artifice as effeminate while praising unrefined, rural subjects as healthy and masculine, van Gogh had adopted Thoré's critical strategy.

Thoré's emphasis on the force and independence of the Dutch school fueled van Gogh's obsession with what he considered the virility of Dutch painting. Van Gogh's thoughts on this subject are most fully expressed in letters to Émile Bernard, whom he met in Paris in 1887, and with whom he carried on a correspondence that continued for two years after van Gogh left Paris in 1888. To van Gogh, his mild-mannered friend seemed the perfect specimen of a contemporary Parisian: cultured and just a bit too refined for his own good. Bernard was also the age van Gogh had been when he first read *Musées de la Hollande*. Perhaps van Gogh hoped the younger man would be similarly captivated by its ideas. Without specifically referring to Thoré's book, van Gogh paraphrased much of it in his letters to Bernard. Lifting Thoré's favorite metaphor for masculine painting, he wrote: "Is a calm, well-regulated touch always possible? Goodness gracious—as little, it seems to me, as during an assault in a fencing match," a reference implicitly linking his own bravado with the slapdash fearlessness of Hals (van Gogh 2000, LB09).

On October 7, 1888, van Gogh encouraged Bernard to produce portraits: "I strongly urge you to study portrait painting, do as many portraits as you can and don't flag. *We must win the public over later on* by means of the portrait; in my opinion it is the thing of the future" (van Gogh 2000, LB19, original emphasis). In a lengthy statement to Bernard from Arles on August 4, 1888, van Gogh aligned the breadth of humanity portrayed by Hals and Rembrandt with Realism (in this case the writer Émile Zola) and against the ideals of the Italian Renaissance:

> Let's talk about Frans Hals. He never painted Christs, annunciations to the shepherds, angels, crucifixions or resurrections…, He did portraits, and nothing, nothing else.… He does not know greater things than that; but it is certainly worth as much as … the Michelangelos and the Raphaels.… It is as beautiful as Zola, healthier … because his epoch was healthier and less dismal. And now what is Rembrandt? The same thing … a painter of portraits. (van Gogh 2000, LB13)

By then, Bernard already had more traditional studio training than van Gogh ever would, but still van Gogh looked upon him as a protégé whom he could entice into helping establish an artists' colony in southern France. Channeling Thoré's emphasis on portraiture and humanity, van Gogh urged Bernard to pay close attention to the Dutch masters, particularly Rembrandt and Hals, "these two brilliant Dutchmen, equal in value." He continued:

> I am just trying to make you see the great simple thing: the painting of humanity, or rather of a whole republic, by the simple means of portraiture. Hammer into your head that master Frans Hals, that painter of all kinds of portraits, of a whole gallant, live, immortal republic. Hammer into your head the no less great and universal master

> painter of portraits of the Dutch republic: Rembrandt … that broad-minded naturalistic man, as healthy as Hals himself. (van Gogh 2000, LB13)

Van Gogh's assertions regarding the virility of Dutch portraiture often accompanied insinuations that Bernard was deficient in both. On August 4, 1888, when he learned Bernard was considering joining the army, van Gogh—who had escaped military service (bought out by his father in 1873)—supported the idea, framing it as an ideal opportunity for Bernard to toughen up. In preparation, he urged Bernard to focus on "[t]his question of Dutch painters:"

> As soon as virility, originality, naturalism of whatever kind come into question, it is very interesting to consult them.… The Dutch paint things just as they are, apparently without reasoning.… If we don't know what to do, my dear comrade Bernard, then let's do as they did, if only to prevent our rare creative force from evaporating in sterile, metaphysical meditation.… I know that the study of Dutch painters can only do you good, for their works are so virile, so full of male potency, so healthy. (van Gogh 2000, LB14)

In a letter four days later (August 8), van Gogh pointed to Rembrandt's middle-aged self-portrait in the Louvre as a source of strength, using Thoré's designated term, "lion," in his praise for the composition: "Alas, nature takes it out of the animal, and our bodies are despicable and sometimes a heavy burden.… Ah! and what a feast for the eyes all the same, and what a smile of the old lion Rembrandt, with a piece of white cloth around his head, his palette in his hand!" (van Gogh 2000, LB15). When it became clear that Bernard would not be joining him at Arles, van Gogh retaliated by insinuating that Bernard was not man enough for the job. "My dear comrade," van Gogh wrote to Bernard, "we are most sorely in need of men with the hands and the stomachs of workmen. More natural tastes … than the decadent dandies of the Parisian boulevards" (van Gogh 2000, LB19a).

One can hardly blame Bernard for tiring of these crazed mini-lectures on how to paint like a man. His wordless rebuff to the advice of van Gogh came in the form of photographs of his recent compositions, *all* religious scenes. "My dear fellow, those biblical paintings of yours are hopeless," van Gogh wrote back, ending their correspondence (van Gogh 2000, B21).

Van Gogh's unrealistic plan to build an artist's colony unraveled on all sides. Gauguin joined him briefly but fled after two months (fall 1888). Abandoned by the two men he once envisioned as cofounders of a creative refuge that would revive the spirit of old Holland, a utopian community that was not to be, van Gogh grew despondent. In 1889, from the hospital at Saint-Remy, he posed the rhetorical question, "What is left of the old Dutchmen except their portraits?" (van Gogh 2000, B21). Nonetheless, he remained steadfast in his allegiance to immortalizing the faces of his own era. "What impassions me most," he wrote to his sister Wilhelmina from Auvers-Sur-Oise in 1890 toward the end of his life, "is the portrait, the modern portrait.… I *should like* … to paint portraits which would appear after a century to people living then as apparitions" (van Gogh 2000, W22).

Van Gogh's conviction that Dutch portraits offered protection against the collapse of society did not prevent his own dramatic collapse, which led to his famous act of self-mutilation on December 24, 1888. While fighting to regain his psycho-emotional

stability, van Gogh painted *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Pipe*[15] with a "white cloth around his head" and leonine composure that recall Rembrandt's in the self-portrait van Gogh had recently described to Bernard (van Gogh 2000, LB15). Van Gogh was too fragile a soul to build the contemporary artist's community Thoré had imagined, but in heeding the critic's admonition to look back at his ancestry as a source of strength, he achieved two goals: haunting future generations and evoking the spirit of "that old lion Rembrandt."

Conclusion

We have been examining the new definition of Dutch art that emerged in mid-nineteenth century France and its impact on three artists central to the development of modern art. Thoré was by no means the first writer to acknowledge the merits of Dutch art, but his compelling vision transformed it, for the first time, into a model for contemporary painters. This encouraged Courbet and Millet to emulate aspects of Dutch art. Millet, a surreptitious borrower, magnified the small figures in Dutch genre scenes, while Courbet modeled his proto-bohemian persona on that of Rembrandt. More importantly, these two founders of Realism thrust everyday subjects into the realm of history painting, portraying them on a scale hitherto reserved for gods, saints, and historical heroes. As van Gogh explained to Bernard, Dutch scenes of everyday life, once dismissed as plebian, had become emblems of defiance, "atoms of chaos" (van Gogh 2000, LB14).

By the late nineteenth century, van Gogh's own scenes from daily life, ravaged with a loaded brush and improbable color, adhered to the new value system set in motion by this new vision. Gone were the days when viewers scoffed at paintings of apples, smokers, or open fields against the sky. Brushwork, identified as a mark of independence as opposed to compensation for weak draftsmanship, had made its way into the foreground. In the following generation, Henri Matisse, Maurice Vlaminck, and André Derain could be "wild beasts"—an attractive moniker for the increasingly viable position as painter/outcast—without being labeled heretical. The nineteenth-century redefinition of Dutch art helped usher in a new era in art, and ensured that new subjects and modes of expression could be seen as revolutionary.

Notes

1 For example,the *Albany Times Union* found in Dutch art "unique charm rising from its humanity" (*Times Union*, Albany, NY, Sunday, September 29, 2002. "Review of the Albany Institute of History & Art's *Matters of Taste*."), and the overall aim an exhibition of the Dutch master's works in Budapest in 2006 was to showcase: "the moving humanity of Rembrandt's art."

2 In Volume I alone (1858) the term "natural grandeur" occurs on pages 58, 71, 211, and 197.

3 To the best of my knowledge, Peter Demetz was the first to notice this. In 1963 he observed that critics defending Realist literature used examples from Dutch art. See Peter Demetz, "Defenses of Dutch Painting and the Theory of Realism," *Comparative Literature* 15/2 (Spring 1963): 97–115. For Demetz, this raises two questions

"worthy of future attention": "Who was responsible for lending dignity to a kind of art which had been barely tolerated for centuries? What tactical lines of defense did the new apologists choose?" I address both questions, identifying the chief architect responsible for the elevated importance of Dutch art in mid-nineteenth-century discourse, and also the tactical lines of defense, as manifested in criticism and nineteenth-century art.

4 The latter inspired the sleeping peasant couple in *Noon*, a print issued as part of Millet's Four Hours of the Day series in 1865. For a detailed discussion of correspondences between Millet's compositions and works at the Bibliothèque Nationale, see Epstein (2013).

5 As a pupil of Academy professor Paul Delaroche, Millet could request access to the library's innumerable treasures.

6 Compare, for example, Millet's *Women Sewing by Lamplight* (1872; New York, The Frick Collection) with Judith Leyster's *The Proposition* (1631; The Hague, Mauritshuis) or his *Seated Spinner* (1854; Boston, MA, Museum of Fine Arts) with Gerard Terborch's *A Woman Spinning* (1652–1653; Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen).

7 *Het Menselyk Bedryf* (*The Book of Trades*) was published in 1694 and *Het Leerzaam Huisraad* (*The Tutelary Household*) in 1711.

8 The specific portrait to which Courbet refers in this letter has not been identified.

9 On Courbet's relationship with Proudhon, see James Henry Rubin, *Realism and Social Vision in Courbet and Proudhon* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

10 Quoted in Nochlin 1963, 124–125.

11 One can hardly believe that this is the case, but it does seem that between Rembrandt and Courbet no other artist explored the genre of self-portraiture as frequently or as thoroughly. One might think of expression studies by Charles le Brun (1619–1690), but these were not self-portraits.

12 https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/35/Courbet_Autoportrait.jpg.

13 Both copies date from 1869. The copy after Hals is in Hamburg (Hamburger Kunsthalle) and the copy after Rembrandt in Besançon (Musée des Beaux-Arts).

14 References to Van Gogh's letters appear with abbreviations corresponding to *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh* (2000; Boston, MA: Little, Brown).

15 https://courtauld.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/port/ol/P-1948-SC-175-tif-10587-e1468233592690.jpg.

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14

Sculpture and the Public Imagination

Nineteenth-Century Site-Specific Art of the Cemetery, the Garden, and the Street

Caterina Y. Pierre

Introduction

The most significant and enduring political art of the nineteenth century was found, and can often still be found, in public spaces. Cemeteries, public gardens, parks, city streets, and squares became the modern venue for portraits of great leaders, symbols of democracy, and memorials to those lost in the tumultuousness of the period. Artists, and those commissioning them to make such monuments, seriously considered the location, orientation, and placement for their sculptures while creating them. "Site specificity" in art is often discussed as having begun in earnest in the twentieth century, most notably with the Land Art movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, if we are to define "site-specific art" as work that is made to exist in a precise and permanent location, and for which the artist takes this location into consideration while constructing the artwork's intent and meaning, then site specificity cannot be limited only to art made in the late twentieth century.

In the nineteenth century, people had a greater sense of ownership of the public art placed in their communities. Specific locations and sites within that community, already imbued with meaning, were made more apparent and significant by being marked with a political sculpture, as in ancient times. The placement of sculptures was planned with great levels of specificity given not only to the historical significance of the site, but also to the direction and positioning of the artwork. Many public sculptures were devised to provide civic and national edification to a public more attuned to their surroundings, less distracted, as well as less formally educated, than people who followed them. These public sculptures were commissioned and strategically placed in an effort to provide history lessons to the men, women, and children who passed by these sculptures in their daily walks, their promenades through cemeteries, and their moments of leisure, however brief those moments may have been. Additionally, public subscriptions that

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helped to fund many sculptures contributed to the public's sense of ownership of the artworks. The newspaper-reading public in Western Europe and the United States were frequently asked to submit donations to open subscriptions established to fund sculptures, thus giving people a sense of ownership of the art that populated their surroundings. These sculptural "markers" were also meant to spark, in the words of the Italian poet Ugo Foscolo, "the urns of strong men stimulate strong minds to deeds of great distinction" and to inspire the public imagination into doing great things, emulating their forebears (Foscolo 2011, 59).

The artworks discussed in this chapter were intended to serve a communal purpose; they were meant to intervene within a space and encourage the viewer to stop and reflect upon the event that occurred there and the person, persons, or themes involved in the event. The sculptures discussed here are the "x" that marks the spot, so to speak. While it may seem troublesome to use the term "site specific" with regard to nineteenth-century public sculpture and monuments because of the term's connections to twentieth-century art, it is a more accurate term than "community specific" or "culturally specific" (Nettleship 1989, 172). The latter two terms do not fully suggest that the sculpture of a specific place was necessarily installed on a site or faced a direction of politically charged importance, but instead were situated somewhere within a community or culture where the meaning of the artwork would be understood by its inhabitants, regardless of its exact location in the community.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief survey of key European and American site-specific public sculptures of the nineteenth century, giving specific attention to works created after 1870, which served a civic, nationalistic, and/or pedagogical purpose. The second half of the nineteenth century, especially after the great year of revolutions, 1848 (Wilson 2006), saw the creation of a Federal Constitution and the end to "Kulturkampf" (the struggle between Church and state) in Switzerland; the Unification of Italy through the campaigns of Giuseppe Garibaldi and under the governance of Victor Emmanuel II and Umberto I; the surrender of the United States Confederate Army at Appomattox; and the upheaval of the Franco-Prussian War and the later civil war in France known as the Commune. These and other, sometimes earlier, political struggles and interventions fueled the need for political monuments, which were placed in carefully selected public spaces to educate the community about world politics and to create sites of communal memory. As Albert Elsen noted, "periodically these sculptures become the focus of national rituals, patriotic occasions for reaffirming what they stand for" (Elsen 1989, 292).

Artworks placed on important sites, places where oaths were taken, where battles were fought, where nations and nationhood were reclaimed and reconsidered, or where the remains of the person memorialized lay, will take precedence here. It will be shown that the didactic purpose of sculpture could be made all the more powerful when the site itself, or the direction toward which a sculpture was placed, was already imbued with meaning. Locations such as the cemetery and the public garden, sites less often treated in academic studies of nineteenth-century public art, will be given serious attention here (Lindsay 2012). While it would not be possible to cover all site-specific public sculptures created during the nineteenth century in this short survey, an attempt to discuss some well-known, as well as some lesser-known, politically motivated works will be provided. In a large majority of studies on nineteenth-century public art, emphasis is usually given to French sculpture, and while French public sculpture cannot be ignored, this chapter will attempt to turn the focus slightly away from France, with

public works from Italy and the United States highlighted as examples of civic, nationalistic, and pedagogical site-specific sculpture. The point of nineteenth-century public sculpture depicting heroic figures "was to inspire the young to emulate their deeds and, quite literally, give them something to look up to" (Elsen 1989, 291).

Unfortunately, sculptors who happened to be female did not often win commissions for public sculptures; when they did, the subjects given to them were less politically charged; the lack of women sculptors in this chapter will be felt. For the greater part of the nineteenth century, women sculptors were considered inferior to their male counterparts, and they usually lacked the important connections with officials and architects necessary to gain public commissions and contracts (Sterckx 2008). Marjan Sterckx has noted that "literally and figuratively, women sculptors were allowed to operate largely at the margins of the public space, making works with less weighty subjects, in less important formats and genres and for less prestigious venues, frequently for what may be called semi-public spaces—border zones that themselves were in-between the public and the private" (Sterckx 2008). In exceptional situations, women might obtain an important commission for a monument to a political figure, such as the full-length statue of Abraham Lincoln (1871) located inside the United States Capital in Statuary Hall, by the American sculptor Lavinia Ellen Ream Hoxie (known as Vinnie Ream, 1847–1914). Ream was the first woman and youngest artist to receive a congressional commission for the United States Capitol, and she received a second in 1875 for a street sculpture of David G. Farragut, still found in Farragut Square in Washington, DC.[1] Some women faced serious criticisms from those who felt they did not deserve to receive orders for major public statuary, and could even have their commission taken away from them, as Anne Whitney did in 1875 when her winning blind submission for a statue of Charles Sumner was cancelled when it was learned that the sculptor was a woman (Dabakis 2014, 203). In Whitney's case, judges for the commission considered it inappropriate to publically display a sculpture of an important political man that was created by a woman. Whitney's sculpture was eventually cast in bronze and placed in Cambridge Commons twenty-five years later (ibid., 204). Similarly, the Board of Commissioners of Central Park refused an already-commissioned statue of Christopher Columbus by Emma Stebbins (1815–1882) in 1869.[2] These examples of important commissions given to women, however, were not made with a politically charged, site-specific location in their plans. Thus, commissions for sculptures of important and historical male figures were very rarely given to women, and, when they were, the completed works were often challenged or simply not given important or site-specific public placements.

The Cemetery

No site is more "site specific" than a burial ground. In the twenty-first century, cemeteries, for many people, are to be avoided except on parents' holidays, memorial days, and religious feast days. In the nineteenth century, however, people of all levels of society visited what became known as "picturesque" or "garden" cemeteries more regularly, to visit their deceased loved ones, clean and care for their graves, and take leisurely strolls among the large, impressive tombs and the natural surroundings that resembled parks and gardens. The relocation of the remains of the deceased, traditionally buried close to town and or in churchyards within close proximity to the living, was

important to the creation of urban cemeteries during the nineteenth century. Once Napoleon I established a law specifying that no burials could take place in churches or within cities after 1807 (Ragon 1983, 98), the trip to the cemetery to visit departed loved ones doubled as a trip to the countryside. The public relationship with cemeteries, especially after the rise of the garden cemetery movement, which began with the opening of Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris in 1804 (followed by Montparnasse Cemetery in 1824 and Montmartre Cemetery in 1825), and with the opening of Mount Auburn Cemetery near Boston in 1831, was similar to that which they had with gardens and parks (Etlin 1984, ix). People also commonly visited, on political holidays, the tombs of fallen heroes (Lindsay 2012). Few places can claim to have more powerful site-specific significance than the cemeteries containing the remains of the persons being remembered.

Prior to the nineteenth century, large and impressive tombs to heroic or simply wealthy citizens were placed within churches. *The Monument to Captain Richard Burgess* by British sculptor Thomas Banks (1802, St. Paul's Cathedral, London) or the *Tomb of the Archduchess Maria Christina* by the Italian Antonio Canova (1798–1802, Church of the Augustinians, Vienna) are famous examples. During the nineteenth century, however, funerary art became more secular. Artists began to abandon allegories in favor of reality, truth, and the larger mysteries of death, and the common person began to be seen as an individual and political force (Pierre 2012). As stated by Michel Ragon in his classic text *The Space of Death*: "From the monument for a king to the monument for all, the development of the funerary site corresponds to other mass phenomena.… The urban cemetery-museum grew up with the claim to political rights" (Ragon 1983, 84).

The gisant tomb design, which shows the departed in eternal repose, works to reveal the body of the dead, and arguably his soul, to the living. Although the gisant format was more traditionally reserved for the tombs of members of European royalty, the recumbent motif was evocatively revived in funerary art at the end of the nineteenth century, in both European and American funerary monuments. The modern use of decorative, above-ground sarcophagi and portrait busts as funerary monuments earlier in the century gave way to the image of the entire body in various stages of death, and life, at the *fin-de-siècle*. As common people began to perceive themselves as individuals, the desire to create a "permanent" identity spread widely, and artists were commissioned to make "death portraits" in various media (Héran et al. 2002). Within this history, sculptors reclaimed the gisant as the ultimate expression of modernity in the realm of funerary art.

The most significant and modern type of gisant sculptures created for cemeteries are those depicting physical traumas. Unique to the nineteenth century, these recumbent sculptures are typically used when the deceased met a violent but heroic end. These sculptures speak to the interest in the bodily state of suffering, which was revered in the nineteenth century. People who suffered bodily and heroically, or died as martyrs for a belief, a cause, or a country were exalted. Suffering in death was associated with the suffering of Christ, and when depicted thusly, the deceased becomes a substitute for Christ. One of the early examples of this type includes René de Saint-Marceaux's *Tomb of Abbé Eugène Charles Miroy* (1873, Cimitère du Nord, Reims, France), depicting the moment when the curate has fallen to his death during the Franco-Prussian War while protecting the citizens of, and fighting for the liberation of, the city of Reims. Saint-Marceaux shows Miroy with his face pressed down into the earth and his limbs twisted,

his murder presented to us without any idealization or glorification. We look down upon his murdered corpse with shock and sympathy, as if we witness his death at the hands of the Prussians. In fact his corpse does lie beneath the sculpture, and the viewer does stand over his remains.

Probably the most famous and most visited "trauma" gisant in France is Jules Dalou's sculpture for the tomb of Victor Noir (Figure 14.1), a radical, anti-Bonapartist journalist killed by Louis Napoleon during an argument that began in the press over the latter's uncle, Napoleon III. Noir was murdered in January of 1870 and later celebrated as the first casualty that led to the end of the Second Empire (Pierre 2010). Dalou depicted Noir at his last breath, his eyes seemingly closing one last time. Like the physician Alphonse Baudin and the political socialist activist Auguste Blanqui before him, Noir was considered a "man of the people" in the 1860s. Their tombs acted as political propaganda, were paid for through national subscriptions, and were created to inspire, incite, and even enrage the viewer who sympathized with the same political cause. Noir's supporters had hoped that his moral remains would be buried in Père Lachaise right after his death, but to protect those remains and his final resting place from destruction, Noir's body was placed in a family plot in Neuilly-sur-Seine, just outside of central Paris. However, his remains were eventually moved from the cemetery at Neuilly-sur-Seine to Père Lachaise in 1890, and Dalou completed the gisant for his tomb during a different political regime, long after the turmoil of the early 1870s had dissipated (Pierre 2010). The tombs of these heroic men who died for political causes position them as modern heroes, and in this respect they are similar to the fallen soldiers and rulers who died in the Middle Ages.

The gisant of Noir is not the only gisant depicting trauma in Paris of a contemporary man fallen to his death. Aimé Millet's *Tomb of Alphonse Baudin* (1872) and Jules

FIGURE 14.1 Aimé-Jules Dalou, *Tomb of Victor Noir*, 1889–1891, bronze. Père Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, France. Photo: Caterina Y. Pierre.

Franceschi's sculpture for a Polish soldier, *Tomb of Miecislas Kamienski* (1861), are nearby in Montmartre Cemetery. The tombs of Baudin and Kamienski, however, are both placed on high pedestals, which evoke a feeling in the viewer of reverence for the fallen figure. In contrast, the gisants of Noir and Miroy are placed much lower toward the ground, making their death more real and more disturbing, and they induce a greater sense of pathos in the viewer. The sculpture of Noir has attracted many viewers due to its lower placement, and often people want to connect with it through the act of touching. Women in particular are found touching the gisant of Noir, particularly on his groin, which has been made more prominent by the loss of patina around that area of the sculpture. More knowledgeable visitors, however, place their fingers on Noir's chest, where there is an indentation underneath his blouse suggesting his injury (Pierre 2010). They dip their fingers in his wound, as if in the hope of being redeemed by his martyr's blood.

One of the most important site-specific tomb sculptures in America was not dedicated to a soldier or a general, nor does it clearly depict an allegorical figure or even a clearly defined gender. It does not show the way in which the person died, and it does not seem to glorify a specific person, because it is not a portrait. Augustus Saint-Gaudens's *Adams Memorial* (1891), located in Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, DC, was dedicated to Marian Hooper (known as "Clover") Adams (1843–1885), wife of the writer Henry Brooks Adams. The sculpture was designed by Saint-Gaudens with much input from Adams, who took a trip to Japan with the artist John La Farge six months after his wife's death. While there, Buddhism and the themes of peace, calm, and understanding inspired them. Adams wrote to Saint-Gaudens that he wanted a monument that symbolized "the acceptance, intellectually, of the inevitable" (Mills 2014, 87). Adams visited Père Lachaise, Montmartre, and other Parisian cemeteries in 1889, which may have inspired his instructions to Saint-Gaudens regarding the tomb's appearance (ibid., 91). While remaining figurative, the *Adams Memorial*'s merging of Western and non-Western sources and the emphasis on Eastern spirituality over literal subject matter set the precedent for symbolic and conceptual grave markers in the twentieth century. More than any other cemetery sculpture from this period, the *Adams Memorial* reminds us that Death is the great equalizer: no matter the person, heroic or tragic, male or female, all will someday meet this universal and eternal teacher.

Some site-specific locations are difficult to compartmentalize because they act as both burial grounds and national parks. In the United States, Pennsylvania stands out as one of the key places where a certain dedication to memorial art and urban renewal originated. In 1872, the Fairmont Park Art Association was founded as the first private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to public art and urban planning (Cartiere and Willis 2008, 232). Some 150 miles (241 km) east of Philadelphia, one finds the Gettysburg National Military Park in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The park contains the largest collection of battlefield monuments in the world, many of which mark the particular positions reached, and the locations of specific military confrontations and deaths. Pilgrimages to the battlefield and cemetery site remain a civic ritual: over 1.2 million people visited the park in 2012.[3] Adjoining the park/battlefield is the Soldiers' National Cemetery, designed in 1863 by the landscape architect and botanist William Saunders (1822–1900). The land on which the cemetery was created already contained both fallen Union and Confederate soldiers buried in it, but they were placed in graves so shallow that their bodily remains could still be discerned beneath the dirt (Craven 1982, 6). Therefore, the creation of a proper cemetery was necessary, and President

Abraham Lincoln dedicated it just over four months after the Battle at Gettysburg, thereby giving his famous Gettysburg Address (Craven 1982, 6). The military park began to be decorated with memorial sculptures after 1880 and it officially became Gettysburg National Military Park in 1895 (ibid., 7). Thus, although many of the monuments at Gettysburg were installed after 1900, one of the first to be inaugurated there, *73rd New York Infantry Monument* (1897) by the Sienese sculptor Giuseppe Moretti (1857–1935), provides an example of a sculpture placed there in the late nineteenth century to mark a spot reached by a military infantry during the Civil War. The sculpture is situated in a large field, on the spot where the 73rd New York Infantry, also known as the Second Fire Zouaves, fought the Confederate Army on July 2, 1863, and where 10% of their men were killed on that day (Zouaves were light infantry volunteers in a military corps). In this sculpture, a Civil War soldier with a rifle stands closely beside a Fire Zouave with a bugle; logically, they face north, but slightly and more accurately, their direction is northwest (SIRIS, 2015, collections.si.edu). It is one of ninety monuments that were eventually placed at Gettysburg to honor New York commands. In a place so revered in United States history, one that was so soaked with the blood of America soldiers, it was clearly noted by Lincoln in his Address that no attempt to dedicate or consecrate the ground, and no sculptures or monuments could ever make the site more important than it already was: "The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract" (Bliss copy, Gettysburg Address).

The Garden and Park

As noted by David Lambert in his essay on the meaning of sculpture in Victorian public parks in England, "The construction of public parks in the nineteenth century has been convincingly analyzed as an exercise in social control: high quality public open space was not only a green lung to keep the new working population healthy and productive, but also an opportunity to regulate leisure, to enlist it in the dominant ethos" (Lambert 2006, 99). Patriotism, imperialism, hard work, temperance, and duty were the central ideals memorialized through public sculpture, and public green spaces proved the perfect spaces for art intended for contemplation.

In France, the development of new municipal parks during the Second Empire (1851–1871), under the direction of the Emperor Napoleon III and his Prefect of the Seine, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussman (1809–1891), provided relief from the slums, cholera outbreaks, and the claustrophobic streets of old Paris (Pinkney 1958). The small squares and gardens they planned were modeled after those found in London, and were based on the traditional, free-growing, unmanicured English garden model. Napoleon III believed that if the general public had access to outdoor park space, morale would rise among the working class (ibid., 94). Sculpture situated in the park, particularly that depicting heroic or national figures, served to edify visitor who contemplated them there. By 1870 in Paris, there was an acre (0.4 hectares) of parkland for every 390 inhabitants (ibid., 104).

Certain directional positions of public sculptures helped orient visitors to their surroundings and added to their knowledge of the world. In 1867 Jean-Antoine-Gabriel Davioud (1824–1881), city architect for the Office of Promenades and Plantings in Paris, commissioned Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux (1827–1875) to design the sculpture

known as *The Four Continents Upholding the Celestial Sphere* (1867–1874) for the fountain of the Observatory Gardens (Margerie 2014, 156). The administration, not wanting a sculpture whose back faced one of the neighborhoods of Paris (ibid., 156), appreciated Carpeaux's composition for *The Four Continents*, in which four female figures support a sphere; in other words, it was a "circular" sculpture without a back side. The female figures originally represented, according to Carpeaux "the four cardinal points turning, as if to follow the globe's rotation" (Chesneau 1880, 121). They later came to represent the four continents: Africa (traditionally associated with the cardinal point south); America (west); Asia (east); and Europe (north). *The Four Continents* is placed so that Europe in fact faces north, and all other figures are positioned around the sphere so that they face their appropriate cardinal directions; thus, the sculpture acts as a compass. While Carpeaux wanted the sculpture painted so that the color of each figure matched their race, Davioud did not approve this (Margerie 2014, 167). Unlike the previous works discussed here *The Four Continents* did not depict great male heroes of a particular war or era; still, the power of allegorical figures to assist the viewer in understanding their surroundings as well as larger national themes cannot be understated.

Certainly the most famous site-specific allegorical sculpture of the nineteenth century is Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi's *Liberty Enlightening the World* (*La Liberté éclairant le monde*) known more commonly as the "Statue of Liberty." Elsen called it "the most dramatic, successful, and influential public monument in America" (Elsen 1989, 292). Located on the former defensive fort known as Bedloe's Island, the site is now maintained by the National Park Service. This personification of Liberty was given as a gift to the people of the United States from the citizens of France; however, money had to be raised to fund a pedestal for the sculpture and for other costs related to the monument, and members of the general public were encouraged to send donations in to Joseph Pulitzer's newspaper, the *New York World* (Trachtenberg 1976, 183–184). Pulitzer promised that every donation, no matter how small, would be announced in the paper with the name of the donor; donations flooded in as people enjoyed recognition for their modest donations for the sculpture's base. The funds denied by the United States Government for the construction of the base were realized nonetheless through donations from members of the public, many of them children, which commonly amounted to less than $1. The pre-eminent American architect Richard Morris Hunt (1827–1895) eventually completed the construction of the base for the sculpture.

Marvin Trachtenberg studied the site intensively in his authoritative book on the sculpture, noting that Bartholdi believed the best viewpoint from which to view the sculpture was from the upper deck of a ship passing through the opening of the Narrows from the Atlantic Ocean, with Staten Island to the viewer's left and Brooklyn to their right. The ship would then enter New York Harbor, and proceed toward the Hudson or East River (Trachtenberg 1976, 106). "Bartholdi perceived," Trachtenberg notes, "not only the romance and grandeur of the setting but the significance of the site as the main gateway to the New World. He must have appreciated how a statue in New York Harbor would burn into the memory of all the travellers and immigrants who would be greeted by it after weeks on the Atlantic" (ibid., 105–106). "All travelers" is an exaggeration, however, since only wealthy travelers would have access to the upper decks of a ship. In any event, while some viewers seemed to believe that the face and body of Liberty was turned toward Brooklyn specifically (Higgens 1920), Bartholdi's actual intention was to have the sculpture face the Narrows, toward the ships' entry point and the "oncoming spectator" (Trachtenberg 1976, 114). A fortunate outcome

of this placement was that the sculpture would not have its back facing France, which might have insinuated negative connotations directed toward the sculptor's birthplace. The impact of entering New York from the Atlantic and into the Narrows is lost today, since new immigrants no longer enter New York through the Narrows on a ship, and today's visitors to Liberty Island take a boat from Battery Park at the tip of Manhattan and reach the sculpture from the opposite direction than originally intended (unless the boat captain circumnavigates the island for the visitors, simulating a short ride up from the Narrows). Though the sculpture is rarely experienced today as intended by the artist, its positioning is integral to the understanding of its meaning as a beacon of hope and a promise of freedom to newly arriving immigrants.

The Street

In the nineteenth century, public art, whether site specific, cultural, or communal, was intended to be permanent. Many sculptures were commissioned for new urban spaces, and were meant to glorify and perhaps sanctify the sites where they were placed. The sites of the sculptures also became, and remained to a large extent, places for the public to engage in civic rituals and public actions. Even in the twenty-first century, public protests seem to commence more commonly around established nineteenth-century political and figurative street sculptures than around non-figurative, non-representational public art. Crowds gathered for weeks around Henry Kirke Brown's *Equestrian Monument of George Washington* (1853–1856) in Union Square, New York, after the events of 9/11. Unfortunately some members of the public defaced the sculpture with graffiti and protest symbols that were removed when the sculpture was cleaned and restored. During the protests surrounding the Charlie Hebdo Massacre on January 11, 2015, thousands gathered around the *Monument to the Republic* (1879–1883) in Paris, created in 1879 by the brothers Léopold Morice (sculptor) and François Charles Morice (architect). The brothers won a public commission for a monument to the Republic of France; their sculpture was completed in 1883. While many of the Occupy Wall Street protests of 2011 were located around Mark di Suvero's non-representational sculpture *Joie de Vivre* (2006), the sculpture itself was not the attraction to the site; instead Zuccotti Park where the sculpture is located provided a large staging site for protest actions and is located in close proximity to Wall Street itself. It is interesting to note that in 2012, although there were many parks where protesters could have relocated, many Occupy Wall Street actions moved to Union Square and, similarly to the 9/11 protests, were staged beneath the *Equestrian Monument of George Washington*.

Of the three types of sites mentioned here, it is most difficult to maintain the site specificity of a street, since roads are built, tall buildings alter sightlines, and vehicles now dominate the landscape. The statue of George Washington by John Quincy Adams Ward (1830–1914), found at 26 Wall Street in Manhattan, New York City, is a rare example of a site-specific sculpture whose original placement has not been altered (Figure 14.2). *George Washington* was unveiled on November 26, 1883, ninety-four years after the inauguration of the first president of the United States, and the work commemorates that event on the very site where it occurred (Gayle and Cohen 1988, 25). The monument is linked in subject with one of his earliest projects, as the assistant of Henry Kirke Brown (1814–1886), the leading American sculptor by mid-century. Ward assisted Brown in the completion of the first "permanent outdoor public sculpture

FIGURE 14.2 John Quincy Adams Ward, *George Washington*, 1883, bronze. 26 Wall Street, New York City, United States. Photo: Caterina Y. Pierre.

installed in [New York] City since the British left the colonies" (Lemmey 2005, 1235–1236), the *Equestrian Monument of George Washington* (1853–1856), located two and a half miles north of Wall Street in Union Square (Figure 14.3). The equestrian monument is the oldest sculpture in the collection of the New York City Parks Department. Paid through a public subscription and originally located in a site-specific space, the equestrian monument by Brown was originally placed at Broadway and 14th Street, the spot where Washington officially reclaimed the city from the British on November 25, 1783. Later, Brown's sculpture of Abraham Lincoln was placed in Union Square in 1870, at the southwest corner of what today is University Place and Union Square West. After his work with Brown, Ward himself became known as the "Dean of American Sculpture" by the time of his death in 1910.

Ward's own *George Washington* at Wall Street was also funded through public subscription, an important way to involve the general public in helping to pay for, and thus feeling

FIGURE 14.3 Henry Kirke Brown, *Equestrian Monument to George Washington*, 1853–1856, bronze. Union Square, New York City, United States. Photo: Caterina Y. Pierre.

the right of ownership of, important political monuments; the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York organized the subscription for this work (Gayle and Cohen 1988, 25). Ward depicted the moment of the swearing-in ceremony, with Washington's right hand held outward and over an invisible Bible—the actual Bible on which Washington took his oath is located inside the Federal Hall building behind the sculpture, along with a piece of a stone on which Washington actually stood during the ceremony. Ward spoke of the importance of selecting men of honor and consequence for public memorials and the pitfalls of memorializing someone too soon after their death:

> As soon as a man dies in this country, his friends and admirers raise a fund to erect a statue for him, instead of waiting to see whether the public will be at all interested in him twenty-five years afterward. The committee which chooses the sculpture is often without taste in matters of art, and the result is often a piece of work which is neither

> valuable of itself nor of interest in perpetuating the memory of a man to whom history will give no place. We lack homogeneity. It is certainly very incongruous for us to glorify in bronze some Brigadier General of the late war whose name will soon be confined entirely to history books, while some of the immortal men of the Revolution are not remembered by so much as a tablet. (*New York Times* 1910)

Unlike Ward's George Washington at Wall Street, which has remained in its original place since its creation, Brown's equestrian monument of Washington was moved from its original location, which has affected its original meaning. As noted above, Washington recaptured New York City from the British at the intersection of Broadway and East 14th Street; this event happened at Fourth Avenue and the southeast corner of Union Square where the equestrian sculpture was originally located (to mark the spot), not in the middle of East 14th Street closer to Union Square West, where Brown's sculpture now stands. According to Karen Lemmey, Brown wanted his equestrian monument to "resurrect the memory" of Washington addressing New Yorkers at the war's end (Lemmey 2005, 170), which it did, at the exact site where Washington stood in 1783.

The placement of Bartholdi's *Lafayette* directly across from the *Washington* helps viewers to visualize the two statesmen and their historical partnership. In 1876 therefore, the sculpture of Lincoln faced his illustrious predecessor, Washington, and the placement of Bartholdi's *Lafayette* added another level of historical depth to the installation ("Notes," 1876, 320). Lafayette made his voyage to the New World to help in the fight for independence, to taste victory against tyrants, and to breathe the air of freedom. The charged symbolism of an image of a military officer foreigner who was willing to fight, and possibly die, for a foreign country could hardly have been lost on the city officials in charge of placing Bartholdi's monument, or on the over 12 million people who immigrated to the United States between 1870 and 1900. As noted by the *New York Times* at the moment of the inauguration of Bartholdi's sculpture, "setting it up here, in this most frequented of the public places in the City, and in the immediate neighborhood of the statues of Washington and Lincoln, [together with these sculptures] summoned all mankind to reverence the examples they had left" (*New York Times* 1876, 1–2).

The disruption of this triumvirate of sculptures of civic virtue in Union Square came in 1930 with the proliferation of the automobile and the construction of the new subway at Union Square (Lemmey 2005, 180). Not only was there growing concern that cars and trolleys might crash into the Washington sculpture, but new types of pollution were coating public sculptures and Union Square East (which would now run into Park Avenue South) was slated to be widened; as a result, Brown's equestrian sculpture of Washington was moved to the central entrance to Union Square Park, where it stands today. Bartholdi's Lafayette now looks away from, its back turned toward, *Washington*, and Brown's Lincoln was placed at the back of the park, directly behind Washington, where it now stares at the hind quarters of Washington's horse. The re-siting of the sculptures in Union Square Park disrupted their interaction and cohesion as a symbolic ensemble; they now function as three independent and seemingly unrelated sculptures; the sculptural program, once so pregnant with meaning and so cleverly designed by the sculptors, organizers, and city officials by 1876, has been erased with the effect that today the sculptures appear merely decorative and commemorative, with no clear relationship to one another.

Such decisions leading to the dismantling of an artwork's meaning through its physical displacement were not exclusive to the United States. One of the most egregious examples of a sculpture being repositioned, and therefore detached from its original meaning and intention, is the *Monument to Giuseppe Garibaldi and the Como Days of March 1848*, sculpted by the Swiss artist Vincenzo Vela (1820–1891), and inaugurated at the Piazza Vittoria in Como, Italy, in 1889 (Figure 14.4). Paid for through public subscription, the sculpture was part of a veritable "Garibaldimania" after the death of the revolutionary leader in 1882, which triggered a flood of sculptures commissioned in his honor across newly unified Italy. A relief on the base of the sculpture, also by Vela, reproduces the Piazza Vittoria in detail, marking the site of the place where Garibaldi stood when he entered Como in 1848 (Zanchetti 2009, 18). An observer in 1889 looking at the relief sculpture could move their head slightly to the right and see the exact landscape of Como in front of them and just behind the sculpture that was carefully reproduced

FIGURE 14.4 Vincenzo Vela, *Monument to Giuseppe Garibaldi and the Como Days of March 1848*, 1889, bronze. Piazza Vittoria, Como, Italy. Photo: Caterina Y. Pierre.

by Vela in the relief with help from a photograph of the site (ibid., 18). The standing figure of Garibaldi atop the base originally faced north, toward Switzerland, thus positioned as a nod of thanks to Swiss volunteers and to the place where he fled after retreating from Como. This positioning toward Switzerland was important to Vela, both as a native of Switzerland and as someone who sympathized with Garibaldi's principles. (Vela may have fought as a volunteer with Garibaldi during the Five Days of Milan in 1848).

Fifty-two years after the sculpture by Vela was inaugurated, Italy, under the leadership of Benito Mussolini (1883–1945), allied itself with Nazi Germany. In order to gain popular support, Mussolini used public sculpture as propaganda to align his National Fascist Party with Garibaldi and the earlier Risorgimento period in Italy. In 1932, Mussolini created a memorial site to honor Garibaldi and his first wife Anita on the Janiculum Hill in Rome overlooking the Vatican, to Pope XI's chagrin (Forlenza and Thomassen 2011, 270). Fascist Headquarters in Como were located on the Piazza del Popolo in the Casa del Fascio, designed by the architect Giuseppe Terragni (1904–1943), approximately 900 meters (a little over a half mile) from the Piazza Vittoria where Vela's Garibaldi monument stood. Heavy fighting between the Nazis and 16 000 Italian guerrilla forces occurred in Como in mid-November of 1943, by which time latrines for troops were placed in Piazza Vittoria on the site of Vela's *Monument to Giuseppe Garibaldi and the Como Days of March 1848*. In order to make room for the latrines, the sculpture was moved across the street. When the monument was returned to its original location after the war, it was situated so that Garibaldi faced away from Switzerland, thereby negating the original intent of the sculptor, who wanted the sculpture to face the country, his country, that aided Garibaldi in his time of need (MVV Archives). Today, returning the sculpture to its original, Switzerland-facing orientation would not correct the issue, since a large modern apartment building was erected in the Piazza Vittoria after the Second World War; the sculpture would now face the apartment building rather than the lush green hills just behind the building separating Italy from Switzerland, as it once had.

Conclusion

These examples show how the placement of site-specific sculpture was undertaken with great care in the nineteenth century. The continued growth of cities, however, led to the relocation—in most cases to the detriment of the artworks' visual and symbolic significance—of sculptures, either completely out of view or to a place that changed their intended meaning. Increased vehicular traffic forced the alteration of many streets and parks. As new roads were built and dependence on vehicles escalated, the once direct relationship of commemorative sculptures with the street and its pedestrians was compromised. Gardens, in fact, might be the best-protected space for sculptures because they are less affected by traffic and urban development; they constitute the most public of the public spaces mentioned here. Nonetheless, sculptures are removed from parks from time to time, and rearrangements are made to better facilitate an ever-growing population. Population growth also negatively impacted burial grounds because it led to their becoming overcrowded to the point that many great nineteenth-century garden cemeteries could no longer accommodate new residents or large-scale tomb monuments. The rise of the memorial park, with its flat to the ground markers

and sanitized presentations, effectively ended the earlier tradition of the garden cemetery and with it the opportunity to adorn them with large-scale tomb sculpture. While taxpayer funds are still used to pay for some public sculptures, citizens are rarely asked to support specific pieces of public art through state- or nationally organized subscriptions, through the media, or through personal giving. Thus, the public no longer feels the same direct sense of ownership of modern public memorials as their nineteenth-century predecessors once had.

The politics of public monuments were also causes for concern. The sculptures selected for discussion here are monuments not only to men who motivated the poor and working classes to rise up against their oppressors, they are monuments to liberty and freedom, and perhaps most dangerously, they glorify free thought, and are therefore disliked by opponents to free speech. No wonder so many nineteenth-century public sculptures promoting freedom and democracy were destroyed, purposely melted down, or removed from public view in the twentieth century, the bloodiest, most conflict-ridden, and most destructive century in human history (Sempa 2007).

In our own time, we have lost much: the pedagogical purpose of public art, the connection we might have with a physical site, the sense of ownership of public art, and the pride of nation that they once inspired. And yet we still congregate communally around nineteenth-century public art works, which continue to retain some of their original meaning and purpose to modern viewers, especially in times of national crisis. The inspiration that public sculpture once provided may yet lead us to emulate great deeds. Nineteenth-century sculptures of the cemetery, the garden, and the street, through the inherent meaning of their original site, continue to have the potential to inspire the public's ever-changing imagination.

Notes

1 http://collections.si.edu.
2 New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (2015), www.nycgovparks.org.
3 www.gettysburg-chamber.org/business-resources/tourism.

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