NEW ART examiner

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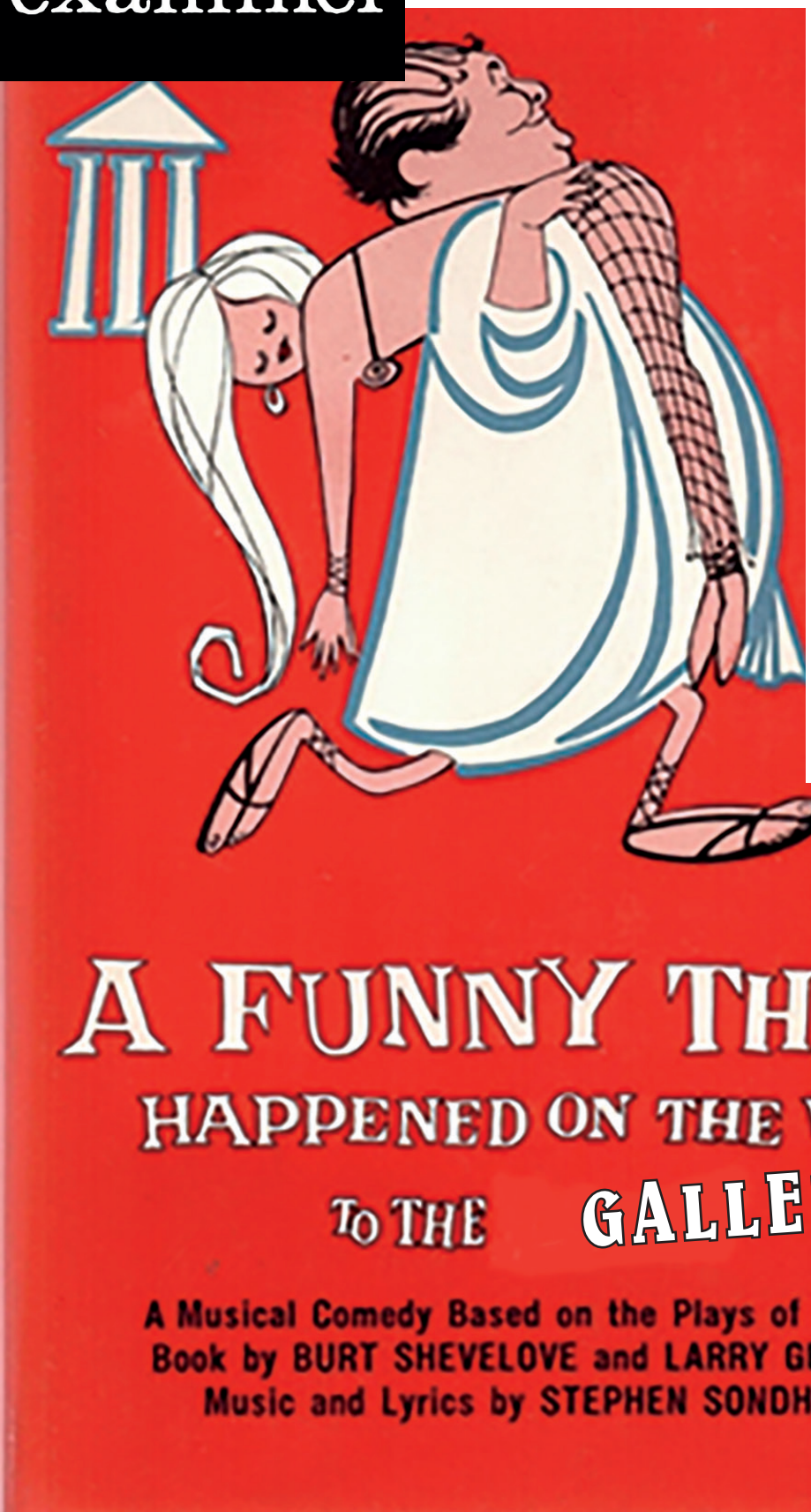
IS THE SONDHEIM STYLE THE FUTURE OF THE BROADWAY MUSICAL? *Scott Winfield Sublett*



The New Art Examiner is the product of the thinking and life-long contribution of Jane Addams Allen. We thank you in her name for reading this independent journal of art criticism.
If you have an interest in our venture, please consult Google, also Art Cornwall, for an interview with the publisher, Derek Guthrie, a painter who keeps his art practice private.
The New Art Examiner has a long history of producing quality and independent art criticism. Any art scene, needs writers to keep a professional eye on art activity. Otherwise, insider trading will determine success in this troubled art world.
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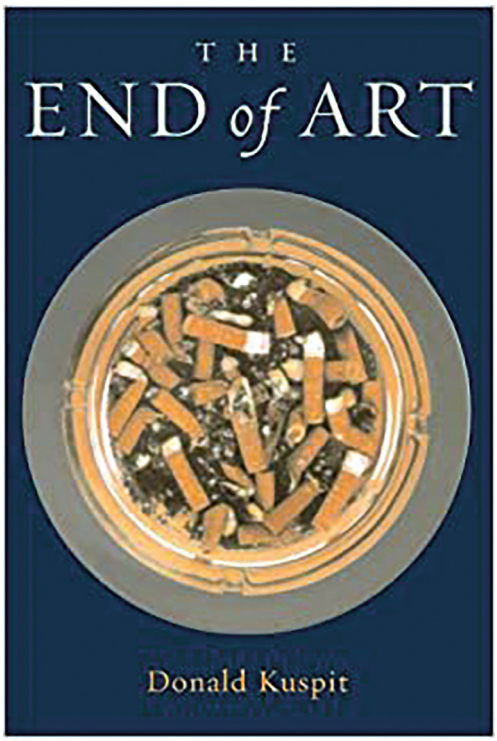
The Attentive Artist



In *The End Of Art* Donald Kuspit argues that art is over because it has lost its aesthetic import. Art has been replaced by 'postart', a term invented by Alan Kaprow, as a new visual category that elevates the banal over the enigmatic, the scatological over the sacred, cleverness over creativity. Tracing the demise of aesthetic experience to the works and theory of Marcel Duchamp and Barnett Newman, Kuspit argues that devaluation is inseparable from the entropic character of modern art, and that anti-aesthetic postmodern art is its final state. In contrast to modern art, which expressed the universal human unconscious, postmodern art degenerates into an expression of narrow ideological interests. In reaction to the emptiness and stagnancy of 'postart', Kuspit signals the aesthetic and human future that lies with the New Old Masters. A sweeping and incisive overview of the development of art throughout the twentieth century, *The End Of Art* points the way to the future for the visual arts.

The End Of Art by Donald Kuspit, Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-0-521-83252-6

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The New Art Examiner is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to examine the definition and transmission of culture in our society; the decision-making processes within museums and schools and the agencies of patronage which determine the manner in which culture shall be transmitted; the value systems which presently influence the making of art as well as its study in exhibitions and books; and, in particular, the interaction of these factors with the visual art milieu.

IN THIS ISSUE YOUR CONTRIBUTORS ARE:

Daniel Benshana is the European editor of the *New Art Examiner*, author of many children's books and sometime poet. He runs www.footstepsbooks.com.

Michael Bonesteel is an independent scholar, curator, and contributing editor to *Raw Vision*. He is the author of *Henry Darger: Art and Selected Writings* (Rizzoli International) and was an art critic for *Art in America* and *Artforum* magazines, and managing editor of the *New Art Examine*r. His writing appears in the recent book, *Nonconformers: A New History of Self-Taught Artists* (Quarto Publishing).

Mary Fletcher is a multimedia artist flaneur: www.axisweb.org/p/maryfletcher She has an MA in contemporary visual art and writes the blog: 4maryfletcher.blogspot.com. She is a humanist, feminist and socialist, influenced by psychotherapy. She lives in St Ives, Cornwall, UK.

Christian Hain studied philosophy and literature in Germany before moving to Paris for a postgraduate course in art history/art market, afterwards working in a gallery as an independent curator/art dealer. Since returning to his native Germany, he's been editing the bilingual blog www.wartsmagazine.com

Pabloe Halguera is an artist, performer, author, and educator. From 2007 to 2020 he was Director of Adult and Academic Programs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. He is currently an Assistant Professor at the College of Performing Arts at the New School.

Al Jirikowic is a long-time cultural observer and participant, commentator and humorist lurking in the fringes of Washington D.C. Designer of bars and restaurants as an oasis from the untold stresses of the city ... free spaces where hopefully humans could interact on human terms, on art terms ... and maybe relax.

Margaret Lanterman lives in Chicago, Illinois, and has taught at the School of the Art Institute, the University of Illinois, and for the last 35 years at DePaul University in Chicago. She received an M.F.A in sculpture from the University of Illinois, Chicago, and an undergraduate B.F.A. in painting from Miami University in Ohio. She also pursued post graduate study in Ethology at Purdue University, Indiana, which she has augmented with extensive research and work in the field of animal behavior, historical research into philosophies such as animism and the observation of the natural world around her.

Miklos Legrady is a visual artist, writer, anti-hero and protagonist who's expecting trouble. He steps out of the art world's blind spot, uncovering myths and deconstructing fictions. He has a B.Sc. in visual studies workshop, Rochester, N.Y and an M.F.A from Concordia, Montreal. He is co-founder of N.Y. performance group The Collective Unconscious.

Liviana Martin was born in Northern Italy and lives in Milan. She has a degree in Philosophy and she taught for many years. She is keen on ancient and contemporary art, because she is absolutely confident that "beauty will save the world".

Frances Oliver has published seven works of fiction and self-published three memoirs. She was born in Vienna, grew up and married in the USA, and has since lived and travelled in a number of countries. After her husband's death she and their daughter settled in Cornwall, where she devotes much time to environmental campaigns.

Scott Winfield Sublett is a screenwriter, playwright, film director, professor at San Jose State University in California, and author of *Screenwriting for Neurotics*.

Letters

7 Baltimore Curators Proving That Curating is no Longer Enough

Editor,
Good points but I'd like to add the following which is equally important. While racial issues are of prime importance, if art was about social justice then we could dispose of the word propaganda. In A*utopsy of an Art Magazine* I pointed out how focusing on social justice killed an art magazine that had published for 83 years. So if art is not about social justice and politics, what is it for? Curators are often intellectuals working in the territory of verbal language, but in art the only verbal language is writing. In images it's visual language, in dance it's body language, and in music it's acoustic language, and there is no way to explain those in words. In fact, art is often what we could not say in words. Art is also what we cannot think about but have to experience.
Now Walter Benjamin said the only true art is that which is made by a committee of the working class. I think dialectic materialism is cultural tunnel vision. While curators who are socially conscious are necessary, art is about something that has little to do with politics but is just as important. Art is also about the individual's reach for a higher purpose, a higher expression, it's about soul, as in Miles Davis, Oscar Peterson, Louis Armstrong, Prince… The etymology of art is specifically value-descriptive. It describes an impressive quality of spiritual expression, achieved through an outstanding mastery of skills by extraordinary people.

Miklos Legrady 3/04/2022

Did Marcel Duchamp Pave the Way For Donald Trump?

Miklos,
Then there's this little tidbit re: the translation of 'R. Mutt'.

[Ger.] armut = poverty [Eng.]

In the urinal context, is the polyglot pun possibly related to the clichéd saying in English, '…so poor there wasn't even a pot to piss in?'
The fact that the signature read aloud sounds like a German word is also a good argument for its being the brainchild of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven.
Too bad I can't remember where I read that, but for sure it was either
1) in another article on the same subject by Miklos, or
2) directly related to Miklos' ongoing inquiry into the Duchamp question.

Matt Harley 26/04/2022

We publish all letters unedited to give artists and readers a fair say. If you would like to start a conversation, or enter one please visit

www.newartexaminer.net

or write an email to

letters@newartexaminer.net

QUOTE of the MONTH:

"Whoever produces kitsch … is not to be evaluated by aesthetic measures but is ethically depraved; he is a criminal who wills radical evil."

Rudolph Amheim, *Entropy And Art (1971)*

NEW ART examiner CiC

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EDITORIAL

There are many ways in which painters see differently to those who do not draw or paint. Just as musicians hear sound in ways non-musicians cannot. It is not just the myriad of colours, tones and hues in things. It is the ability to detect realities behind reality. Let me take you on a journey.

Politically we have been told that Democracy and Communism are poles apart in their approach to managing nations. However, they are both capitalist entities for at no time did communists build society without money, and its powerful abused their privileged status to garner riches to themselves, just as in capitalist societies. Money is an enclosed system bearing no relationship to anything outside of the human race. As an enclosed system its demands have brought us into conflict with nature, and are directly attributable to the climate crisis. Economic values are not those of nature. Its ethical values are always in conflict with our aspirations, its empathetic values are so broken it has been the cause of some of the worst events in human history and its intellectual status it nothing more than a series of wants in spite of needs.

If we analyse it properly we all have the freedom to think, and in democratic societies we have freedom of speech – an essential for evolving nations. But because we are in an enclosed system the only other freedoms we have are to make money and spend money. That's it.

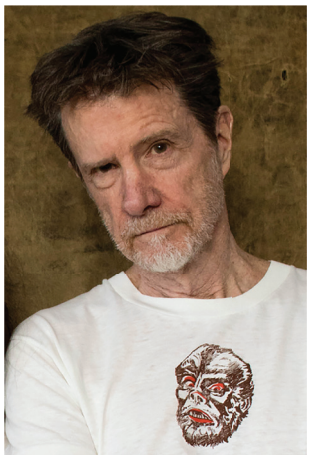
We are all aware that the relationship to money of artists around the world and down history has never been easy. For every artist who has become wealthy there are a dozen who struggle. Many who die in poverty. It is not because they do not have the potential to make money; it is because money cannot recognise them. In our system money does our thinking for us. What is affordable? What does affordable mean to an animal struggling with the challenge of having an intellect and foraging for ethical behaviour?

Artists have struggled with issues of nationhood and been a part of every nation; with ideas of patriotism and been involved in every war or individuality in a community, or injustice and the means employed to gain justice and above all, communication, on every level.

If you can see any of the things I have outlined here, if you can judge them to be close to insight, you have begun to see like an artist.

Daniel Benshana

SPEAKEASY



Each issue, the *New Art Examiner* invites a well-known, or not so well-known, art world personality to write a speakeasy essay on a topic of interest.

Michael Bonesteel is an independent scholar, curator, and contributing editor to Raw Vision. He is the author of *Henry Darger: Art and Selected Writings* (Rizzoli International) and was an art critic for *Art in America* and *Artforum* magazines and Chicago Bureau Chief *New Art Examiner*. His writing appears in the recent book, *Nonconformers: A New History of Self-Taught Artists* (Quarto Publishing).

A RECOVERING ART CRITIC

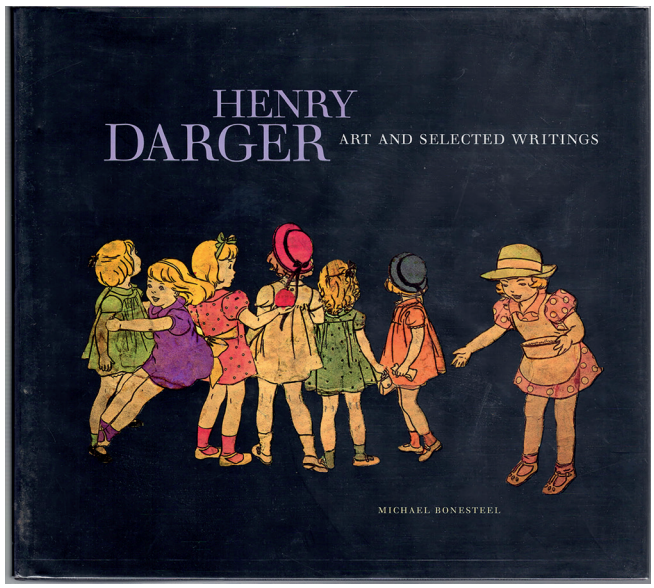
I sometimes describe myself as a 'recovering art critic' because I've been increasingly uncomfortable with the role. I'm essentially a self-taught critic and art historian and was never trained as one. My undergrad background was in English literature and creative writing, with a minor in psychology. I made two stabs at finishing my graduate studies but dropped out both times. There were various reasons for this, but paramount among them was the fact that I wanted to be a full-time writer and not a teacher. I was publishing poetry in small magazines during my immediate post-college years, but I knew, of course, that I could never make a living at it. So rather than fall back on teaching – which is generally what most practicing poets and artists resort to – I aimed at becoming an arts journalist.

I was doing poetry readings in art galleries, and as time went on these evolved into performance art pieces. Hanging out with artists and devouring art magazines gradually gave me a practical education in contemporary visual art, while reading up on classical art history filled in the gaps. Soon I was regularly publishing freelance art criticism in local newspapers. I might have pursued employment as a film critic, rock critic, theater critic, or literary critic since I enjoy almost all the arts. Why a critic? Because for freelancers in the 1970s, writing criticism was about the only game in town. Why an art critic? Because, paltry as it was, art publications paid the best. So, to survive as a writer, I sold my soul and embraced that most hated (at least by artists) of occupations.

Once I had my foot in the door of art critical writing, I was allowed to write longer 'think' pieces. I really preferred these because I could stretch out and explore more ideas about the art and artists that excited me. I worked at menial day jobs and wrote at night for many years until I scored a job as a full-time publicist at an art museum in 1977. My big break came in 1980 when the *New Art Examiner* hired me as a bureau chief to hold down the fort in Chicago while it expanded nationally to Washington DC. Following that, I took a job as an arts journalist and editor with a suburban Chicago newspaper chain and made a pretty decent living for 27 years. Having written literally thousands of art reviews throughout my career, it seemed to me that art criticism, as I defined it, was basically just one person's personal taste and educated opinion informed by intuitive insight and intellectual argument. My approach was to try to offer my readers an entry into the artist's work from my own perspective, and the vast majority of my reviews were generally supportive in nature. Yet I felt it was my job to not only point out what was effective in an artist's work, but also what did not work by my lights

I confess that in moments of weakness I tried to show off at the artist's expense, entertaining the reader with clever word plays or snide remarks. At my best, I offered constructive criticism; at my worst, God help me, I indulged in hatchet jobs. For the latter, I have definite regrets. Hence, my need to be in a critical recovery mode. At times I've questioned how important the role of an art critic really is. Beyond being a sort of cheap publicist for the artists reviewed, I wonder if my or anyone else's judgments, positive or negative, really make any difference at all. Every once in a while, an artist who I've written about will surface on Facebook and tell me how much she/he/they appreciated (and in at least one instance, did **not** appreciate) a review I'd written decades ago. That can be gratifying ... or not.

Things came to a head in 1988 when a sea change began to roil the art-world waters, eventually building



to a tsunami. For most of the 1970s and 1980s, there had been a healthy eclecticism of expression, when many different types of art were being investigated. However, as the 1980s drew to a close, French post-structuralism and deconstructionism took hold among many younger and emerging artists and critics, and I knew that this vice-grip of conceptual intellectualism was not for me. It seemed like we were experiencing the 1950s/'60s era of Greenbergian and Rosenbergian art theories all over again but dressed in the latest fashion of emperor's new clothes. At the same time, I was becoming attracted to the ignominious yet wildly original and independent group of art brut practitioners – the so-called 'outsider' artists – and most particularly the astonishing oeuvre of one very controversial Chicago figure: Henry Darger. I held as my credo Wassily Kandinsky's pronouncement from *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*: "I value only those artists who really are artists, that is, who consciously or unconsciously, in an entirely original form, embody the expression of their inner life; who work only for this end and cannot work otherwise." I came to a momentous decision. I drastically curtailed my writing of art criticism and eventually began writing longer articles almost exclusively devoted to Outsider art for select American, British, and European publications. By the time my monograph about Darger was published in 2000, I had transformed myself professionally.

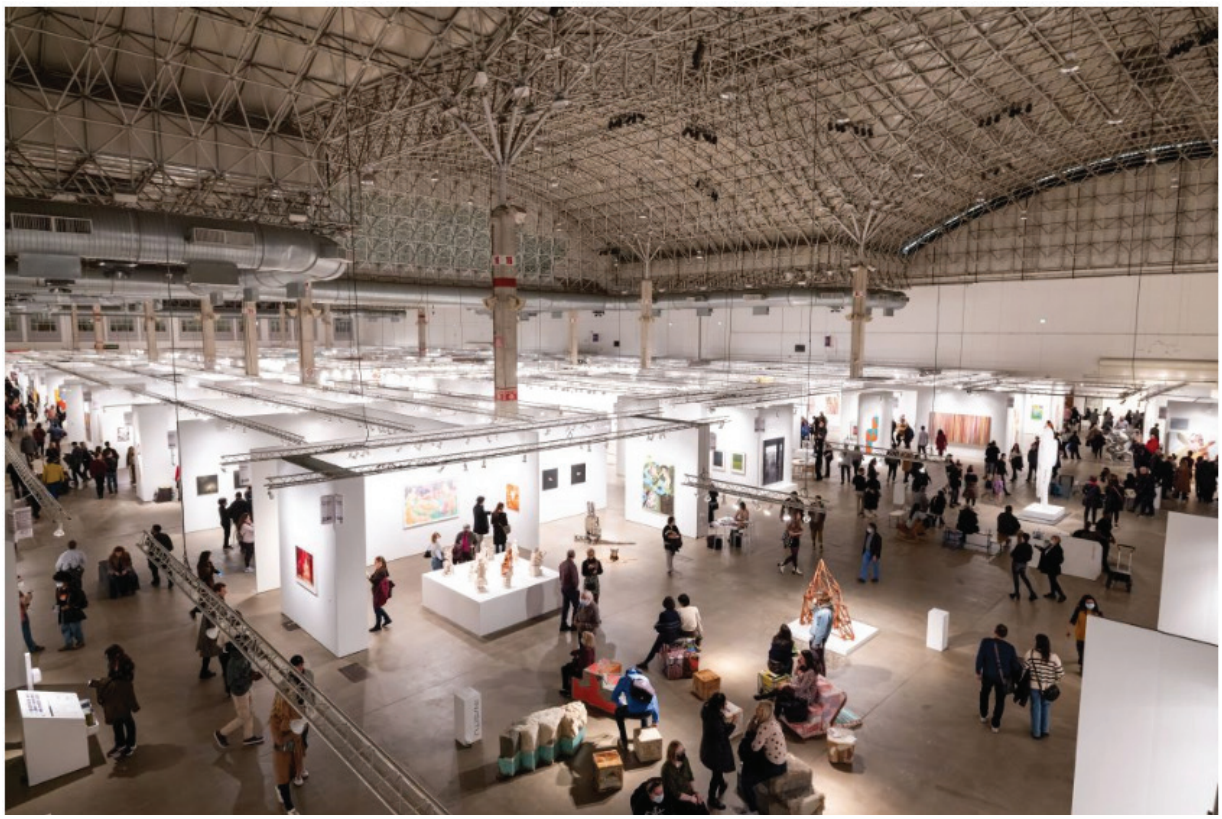
Having become a scholar in the field of self-taught art, I began teaching classes in 2003 as an adjunct professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. My late *New Art Examiner* cohorts Kathryn Hixon and Jim Yood tried to lure me into teaching art criticism courses for the department of art theory and practice, but I demurred. For the 14 years I taught classes in Outsider art (and sequential art/comics at the suggestion of my department chairman), I exposed my students to legitimate artistic work beyond the academy. My classes filled to capacity and had waiting lists every semester. The intention was to advocate for all forms of art: from insider to outsider, conceptual to kitsch, fine art to the art of popular culture. I operated under the mistaken notion that the traditional walls between high and low art were crumbling in the post-postmodern art-world and that the academy was opening up to other artistic expressions outside the margins of the formalist canon. How wrong I was!

There is not space enough here for me to go into the litany of examples, but it soon became apparent that everything I found so objectionable about the self-serving snobbery of my professors in graduate school was still very much alive and thriving among many of my art school colleagues. In the end I resigned – dropping out yet again – for reasons other than those discussed here (see 'The Offender' in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 10, 2017).

As for being an art critic, I am still in recovery although old habits die hard. I fall off the wagon once in a while and publish a critical review, but for the most part I no longer have the stomach for it. To paraphrase a corny old adage, if I can't write about something I like, I don't write anything at all. Then again, I've obviously failed miserably at that with this little gem of passive-aggressive invective, so there you go.

Experiencing the Uber-Bustle of Art Expo 2022

Margaret Lanterman



EXPO Chicago 2022:
Photo Justin Barbin, (Courtesy EXPO Chicago)

Spring in Chicago brings weather that varies between blustery snow and 80-degree sunshine, and that abrupt dichotomy was also the feel of the most recent Art Expo, the International Exposition of Contemporary and Modern Art. Alongside migrating birds and drifts of tulips and jonquils, we once again had a mile of art to explore after a hiatus of two Covid years and the draining necessity of virtual, non-contact art viewing. Work spanned the whole gamut from venerable classics to young break-out artists.

This year the ninth enactment of Expo hosted over 140 leading galleries representing 25 countries and 65 cities world-wide. Beyond the established galleries, both commercial and grass roots, the exhibit also featured solo booths, focused projects, and special exhibitions of non-profit institutions, museums, and organizations. Countries represented at the 2022 exposition include: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and United States of America. It was a world art exploration in a single weekend.

As usual the Expo was installed at Chicago's 55-acre Navy Pier, built as part of the Daniel Burnham 1909 Plan for Chicago, and since used for commercial shipping and recreation. The original name, Municipal Pier was changed to Navy Pier as a result of a strong Naval presence during the first and second World Wars, when sailors and pilots were trained there at the same location where aircraft carriers were based.

Every year there seems to be a new theme threading through the show. Two Expo's back social conscience

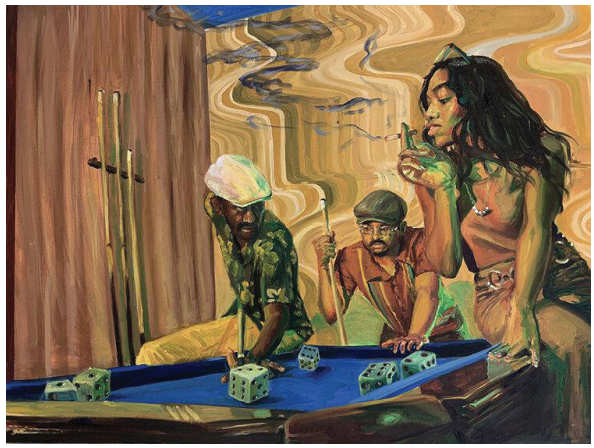
and environmental awareness predominated and last Expo presented a decorative preponderance. This year was more reserved and the theme was a little harder to pin-point, unless it was blow-back art- a luscious walk down memory lane of elegant neo-modern sculptures and satisfyingly familiar painting favorites. We saw representation of Diebenkorn and some of the everyday objects painted by Wayne Thiebaud, fat Boteros and melodic Bertoia sculptures activated by air motion. There was less mixed media, precious little fabric art and more integrated art that included photo collage.

In between all of that there also seemed to be a focus on Black Art which was often embodied in showy work that addressed true social problems. The content was sometimes emphasized over the art aspect, but this did not deny a real effort to use art as a connector to ideas, as a visual expression of persistent relevant issues.

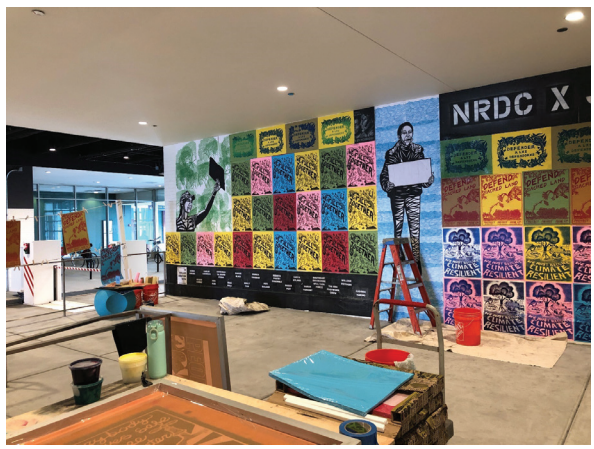
One notable presence came from the museum of Science and Industry, with the ambitious intent to present the contributions, culture and heritage of Black people in the arts by bringing representation from their annual juried exhibit, *Black Creativity*. This was an exhibit initiated in the 1970's by local artists and staff members of the *Chicago Defender* newspaper and supported by the Museum. Originally called *Black Aesthetics*, a juried art exhibit has always been at the core of this program, which claims to be the longest running platform for Black Art in the country. 2022 is the first year that *Black Creativity* was represented at Navy Pier's Chicago Art Expo, and this exhibit was organized by Manny Juarez, Director of Science and Integrated Strategies at the museum of Science and Industry, Chicago. *Black Creativity* now encompasses education and careers in science, tech, engineering, art, design and medicine. One of the artists represented in this booth space was the painter Raven Smith. These sophisticated, packed paintings combine realism with surreal components, both in the visuals and also in the comprehension of the culture being presented. While Ms. Raven aims to desegregate Black art from the larger field of art, she also highlights aspects of heritage and culture that emphasize that existence and perpetuates some long-held impressions. The work is rich in the culture, color and texture of Black life.

An exception to the content laden work was *When the Land in Plumage*, the lushly bejeweled, obsessively ornate, three-dimensional peacock made of sparkly mixed media objects with a hugely elaborate, vertical tail, by the Jamaican born artist Ebony G. Patterson. This piece took up a major section of

Giò Pomodoro: Forma Distesa, *1965, Presented by Eduardo Secci Gallery, Milan 19 ¼ x 33 1/2 x 8 5/8"*



Trick Shot, *2020, 36 x 48", oil on canvas*



Natural Resource Defence Council Exhibit (installation view)

Hugo Evan Juarez - working on a print in progress

Magdalena Abaconowicz: 1973, dyed woven sisal, 135 x 206 cm.

Margaret Wharton: *Kaleidoscope,* 1993
Oil on inlaid wood panel, 58x58"

Still from Inner Telescope Video *(View of gravity free sculpture, earth and other aspects of the craft)*

Rules # 8, *oil on panel, 2021. 12" x 12" x .75"*

nator of NRDC and Julie Yost as Arts Consultant, many young artists and activists put their all into catching the attention of the greater art world. The exhibit was a bold, no-nonsense display and visitors had the added impact of being able to watch the posters being printed.

It was unfortunate that the Expo committee did not designate a more visible location for this very worthy and active exhibit, which perpetuated one of the major tenets of art from the onset, the communication of important values and current issues.

Collaborators included: Aaron Hughes, Artists Commit, Carlos Bareberena, Erik Ruin, Experimental Sound Studio, Grae Rosa, Kahari Black, Molly Fair, Monica Trinidad, Pete Railand, Rebirth Poetry Ensemble, Roger Peet, Sanya Hyland, Sarah Farahat, Southeast Environmental Task Force, The era of Footwork Crew, William Estrada, Andrea Narno.

Fabric art was hard to find, but was represented by Richard Saltoun Gallery, London, with some wall pieces designed by Columbian born Olga De Amaral and constructed by members of her shop in the 1980's of wool and horse hair. These vibrant wall hangings daringly combined unlikely materials with their voluptuous presence and deep colors. An important figure in post war Latin American abstraction, De Amaral is known for her daring and success in using paint, gesso, precious metals and natural fibers to bring her 2-dimensional work off the wall and into a fuller spatial awareness. This work existed alongside examples of the incomparable fabric and sculpture artist Magdalena Abakanowicz, 1930-2017. With her penchant for more somber colors and an awareness of the angst of the culture, her work never ceases to impress.

The Jean Albano Gallery presented a full court tribute to the beloved and accomplished artist Margaret Wharton (1943-2014) who was known for her long interest in clever and beautiful de-constructed chairs of great inventiveness and complexity. Her craft and skill were irreproachable, and her many accomplishments included being one of the founding members of the pivotal Chicago women's collaborative Artemisia Gallery, 1973 - 2003. During its life Artemisia Gallery supported and exhibited local, national and international women artists, presenting cutting edge art of hundreds of artists.

Space travel was not necessarily on everyone's mind as they walked through these earth-bound exhibits, but space art was a focus for the artist Eduardo Kac, with Galerie Charlot, Paris, who featured an installation concerned with an event that he had planned and negotiated for ten years before it reached fruition. This art, *Inner Telescope Video*, was highly re-

Eduardo Kac at his Expo exhibit

markable - not for the actual art itself, which was modest, but for the concept, the deep thought process and the audacity of the idea which he finally brought to fruition.

Two main elements of the installation consisted of the display of an unspectacular paper sculpture homed inside of a simple, well-crafted box, and a video. The video initially seemed of mild interest to this viewer as a puzzle to solve - what programs and manipulations were used to create the illusion of this paper object floating in space.

Then Mr. Kac appeared to explain that this was no trick or illusion, that it was an actual video of the sculpture floating in gravity-free space, with an amazing view of earth through the spacecraft window.

The fascinating backstory unfolded. Kac was quick to point out that this was not a conceptual piece, but that space art was the focus for this work. He was fascinated with the idea that the situation of zero gravity caused special circumstances to exist; common experiences are gone and semantics that we anticipate have changed.

Kac realized two things: first, that art is inseparable from human function; that it is and always has been and will continue to be a present aspect of our humanity. Second, that heading into space is simply inevitable now that we have already started on this path which will soon involve ever increasing numbers of humankind. In fact, Russia has been shuttling 'guests' to our shared space station for years, and NASA recently approved the trip for three American businessmen.

And so, Eduardo Kac set himself the task of designing an artwork for his endeavor, systematically working with the International Space Station to devise a plan, and recruiting an astronaut to work with him on the project. Permission requests, proposal development and preparations were finally approved and the agreement for the project was sealed. Kac gave the French astronaut, Thomas Pesquet, instructions on how exactly to prepare the sculpture from a single piece of paper already onboard the craft and then release and monitor the object as it moved through the space vehicle, being filmed. After ten years of work this art was born in space, and it was a first.

Eduardo Kac was born in 1962 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and is a veteran artist who has worked with unique and sometimes morally challenging ideas since the mid 80's. Although he does claim not to be a conceptual artist, his work has consistently been more important for the ideas communicated than for the artness of the objects themselves. His works have used biotechnology and genetics and so he refers to himself as a 'transgenic' or 'bio' artist.

Looking at break-out artists, the University of Chicago had a strong showing of three young artists with a mind to pushing boundaries. Holden Head regaled the audience with giant colorful popsicle sticks featuring printed messages on one end and on the other, what at first glance appears to be an answer that in fact instigated more questions. In his work we see humor, curiosity and requestioning of set ideas and values.

We now encounter ever more sophisticated original art works in hotels and public spaces replacing tired prints, and a renewed effort from the museums and galleries to stay in the new and in the know. Art Expo can of course never represent all the fine work that exists internationally and it's true that this year was an enthusiastic but limited party, but it was a party worth attending.

Daisy Schultz is frustrated with the tradition of photos confined by the 2-D plane and so creates architectural structures on which she attaches her abstracted, gently nuanced grey-scale photos of human body segments. We can surely look forward to the further ground that she will cover as she develops

Raphael Barontini: Capois la Mort Chaps*, 2020*
Courtesy of Mariane Ibrahim, Chicago, Paris.

her investigations of space, form, and the photographic media.

At once dainty and powerful, the expressionistic, impasto oil on panel paintings of Krista Varsbergs are arresting for their impassioned interpretation of human form, and their quiet conveyance of values through painting. Colors are warm, thick and muted. In *Rules #8* the disassociated legs are clearly the focal point, yet Varsbergs was successful in fully integrating the entire surface of the painting as she created a rich and soulful 98.6 presence. She states that "wresteling with control … of the medium, the mind, the present, the future and the powers that be" is the struggle that permeates her thinking as she works. This is an artist worth keeping track of.

Hundreds of worthy art works laid in wait of discovery at Expo and throughout the city during Expo week. It was a joy to see some old familiars and a delightful to meet some of the legions of artists new to the scene.

Chicago is a vibrant art city with much going on, from a massive year-long student photo documentation project like the 100 Views of Lake Michigan, supported by UChicago Public Arts and a College Curricular Innovation Grant under the direction of Laura Steward, Curator of Public Art at the University of Chicago to the endless fun-to-see pop-up shows in small storefronts and other venues. We now encounter ever more sophisticated original art works in hotels and public spaces replacing tired prints, and a renewed effort from the museums and galleries to stay in the new and in the know. Art Expo can of course never represent all the fine work that exists internationally and it's true that this year was an enthusiastic but limited party, but it was a party worth attending.

Is the Sondheim Style the Future of the Broadway Musical? Reflections on the Legacy of a Master

By Scott Winfield Sublett

When Stephen Sondheim died last winter at 91, people said, "It was a punch in the gut," and there followed a burst of eulogism that probably exceeded anything any practitioner of the musical ever received. Considering that almost nobody in the US goes to the theatre anymore, it was pretty remarkable. Further note that Sondheim, after *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (which opened 60 years ago and is still his biggest hit), wrote mostly flops, so where were the adoring mourners when the box office was open? Given those ironies, to what degree does his legacy determine the future of the Broadway musical?

Even at the moment of his death, a revival of the triumph that was the fulcrum of his career, *Company*, graced Broadway. Still running strong as of this writing, it's the gender-swapped version that originated in London. Criticism that setting the 52-year-old show in the present was a mistake, and that turning Bobby into female 'Bobbie' was little more than switching pronouns, were swept away in waves of adulation from audiences that whooped, cheered, and thoroughly ignored the apostical carping of The *New York Times*. The cult of Sondheim lives, and maybe the whole notion of a 'canon' is out of fashion, but Sondheim's in it. He'll be revived—but will the Sondheim style live on?

It might help to characterize that style, and how it differs from what came before it. Teen-aged Stephen was famously mentored by family friend Oscar Hammerstein II, who devised the books for *Show Boat* and *Oklahoma*, thus transforming forever what was then called (and would be called for a few more years) musical comedy. He achieved a synthesis that married well-made, three-act plot structures to songs that were essential to the narrative—songs not always "forwarding the plot," but at least taking the story deeper or higher, and always, always, perfectly spotted within the plot, and necessary, never forced or arbitrary. With seeming effortlessness, he, with Rogers wrote long plays that never bored (apart from the very occasional flop). The Hammerstein style was inevitable, timeless, and with him the

Broadway musical achieved a kind of classical perfection. The 'book musical' a la Hammerstein, if you date it from the opening night of *Oklahoma* in 1941, has been with us more than 80 years, and if you date it to *Show Boat*, it's been about a century.

"I was 11 years old, I met Oscar Hammerstein, and he became a surrogate father, and I just wanted to do what he did," Sondheim said. "And he was a songwriter for the theater, so I became a songwriter for the theater. If he was a geologist, I would have become a geologist. Which is, I'm sure, an exaggeration, but not tremendously."

Tutored by a genius, Sondheim pretty much knew everything there was to know about the classical book musical while still in his teens, and worked brilliantly within that tradition in his 20s as the lyri-

cist for *Gypsy* and *West Side Story*. He was hardly more than 30 when he did the lyrics, and music, too, for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, the longest running show he would ever write. So much mastery, so soon, and if the restlessly brilliant son was to move beyond what the father had taught, there was no choice but to venture beyond the pale—a dangerous place for a practitioner of an expensive art form. Sondheim had to do new things (new to the Broadway musical if not to theatre in general) and the Sondheim Style (he'd deny there was such a thing because he consciously tried not to repeat himself, but even rule-breakers make new rules) employed elements that mitigated against popular acceptance. Such as:

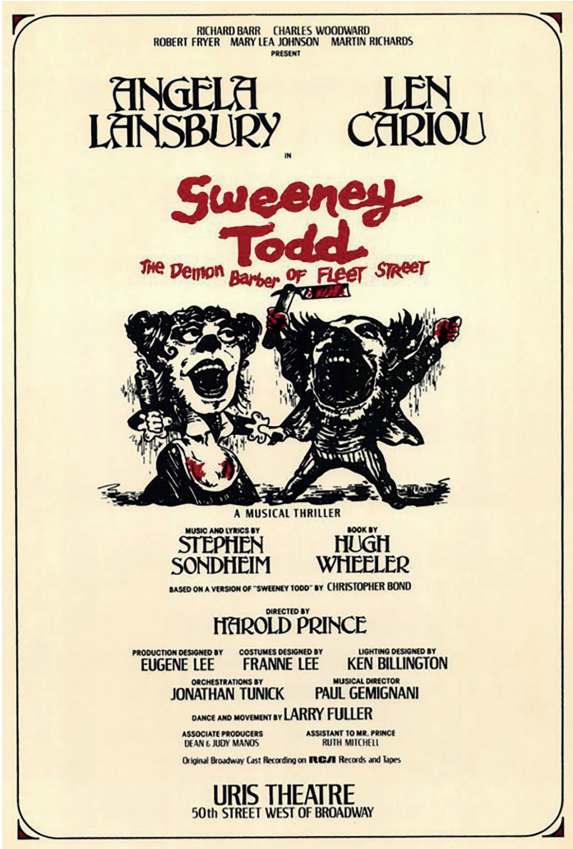
1) When it comes to theme and tone, cynicism and darkness are smart, while sentiment, romance and optimism are childish. Never would Sondheim write a lyric like Oscar Hammerstein's wholesome confession from a character that she's "stuck like a dope with a thing called hope." The song was an explicit (and faux apologetic) denunciation of the sophisticated pessimism Sondheim would embrace. He reveled in regret, ambivalence, solitude, and grimness to the point of grand guignol. And, of course, less-than-happy endings: Bobby doesn't get the girl and Bobbie doesn't get the boy. In that, Sondheim starts to look prescient. In the newest musicals in the New York pipeline, it seems that, more often than not, the couple doesn't wind up together. And that's not presented as a wholly unhappy outcome: rejecting the suitor is a triumph of feminism, or maybe independence of spirit. Even revivals aren't safe. The 2018 *My Fair Lady* at Lincoln Center ended with Eliza walking out on Henry Higgins! Sure, she did that in *Pygmalion*, but in *Pygmalion* they hadn't just spent two hours singing I-hate-you-till-I'll-love-you-at-the-end-of-the-play songs to each other. Romantic failure shows signs of becoming entrenched in the musicals that win awards, for example *Hadestown* and *A Strange Loop*.

2) Dialogue is bad; the more sung-through the musical, the better. The "sung through musical," which is to say no dialogue (or a little bit scattered throughout) used to go by other name – 'operetta' and 'opera.' It's certainly not Sondheim's sole mode, but after *Sweeney Todd* a lot of people were convinced that the sung-through musical was somehow more pure than a musical festooned with a lot of nasty scenes of spoken drama. This article of faith seems akin to the notion that the more silent a movie is, the more "cinematic" (so much for *Casablanca* and *All About Eve*). *Evita, Hamilton* and *Hadestown* demonstrate the ascendance of the no-dialogue style. Can musicals achieve complexity of character, real conflict, and thematic depth if no dramatic scenes are served along with the music?

3) Chronological, linear plotting, also called 'three-act structure,' is corny and limiting. Plot is somehow inimical to honesty and seriousness. A story that moves ahead through conflict, a chain of events connected by cause and effect, is thought to be less serious and honest than non-linear, non-chronological, experimental plotting, organizing the play around a theme rather than a plot. Near the end of his life, Sondheim had been wrestling with for many years with *Square One*, a musical in which act one would be based on surrealist Luis Buñuel's *Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,* and act two based on Buñuel's *Exterminating Angel*. If you know those two (great) films, which are about stasis, you know that less likely source material for a Broadway musical could hardly be found – but then again, who would've predicted that the dark, rambling documentary *Gray Gardens* could be made into a ravishing musical?

Critics and artists are always saying people hate things because they're new, but sometimes, after a while, they're no longer new and people still hate them. What's more, sometimes the people don't hate newness; *Oklahoma* was new, and nobody was scared and everybody loved it. It's possible that linear, chronological, cause-and-effect storytelling is something the human brain is wired to prefer (and has preferred in theatre for over two millennia – and it's still liked on TV, too). Then again, technology is rapidly re-wiring our brains, and little dribs and drabs of tenuously connected information are less disconcerting than they once were, and may indeed come to seem preferable. And that's certainly an easier way, for the writer, to organize a narrative. Classical plotting is hard. A musical is an incredibly complex mechanism – plot, character, theme, style, music, lyrics, dance, all integrated into a whole that moves ceaselessly through the dimension of time. Does that become easier if we ease out plot? Are meaning and plot really enemies? Is classical plotting really "too easy," or in fact, too hard?

It's worth noting that Sondheim's favorite musicals – *Porgy and Bess, Carousel, She Loves Me,* and *The Wiz* – all have strong, classically constructed plots.



That kind of musical isn't going away, but neither is the Sondheim Style. The continuing popularity of musicals that are (at least partially) thematically and episodically organized, such as *Chicago, A Chorus Line,* and more recently, *A Strange Loop,* prove that even Broadway audiences are open to experimentation and anti-narrative. And Sondheim's most successful experiments – masterworks such as *Company, Follies* and *Sunday in the Park with George* – will always be important milestones. Asked, in his last major interview, where he thought the Broadway musical was headed, Sondheim was cagey: "Whither Broadway? I don't answer the question. Who knows. I don't really care. That's the future. Whatever happens will happen."

For over 60 years, what happened … was Sondheim.

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WELCOME TO DYSTOPIA – II

Frances Oliver

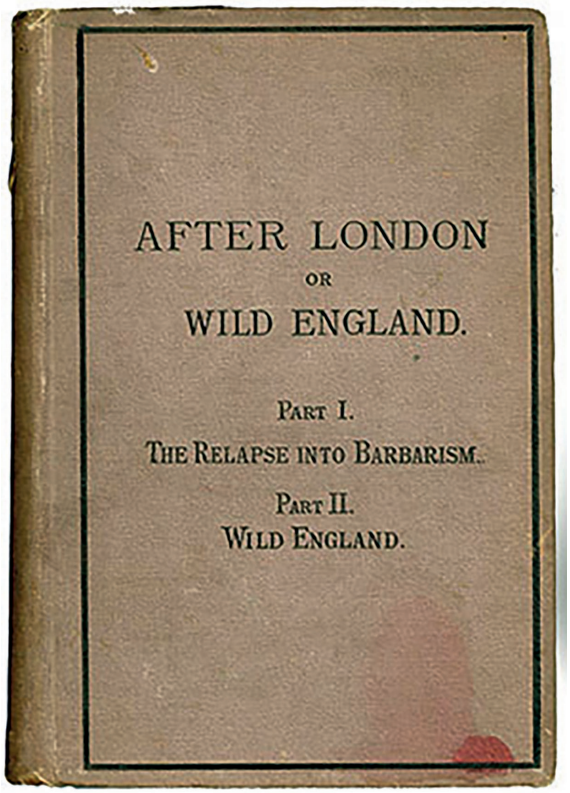
Two dystopias written a century and a half apart are set in an inundated England, where nature has produced a great rising of waters. The contrast is fascinating; in one case, the danger is the sea outside, in the other, a giant inland lake in which the great cities of England have been drowned.

Lake-filled England is the dystopia of Richard Jefferies (1848-1887) who wrote essays, autobiography, and fiction. He grew up on a small Wiltshire farm; that background and a great love for nature were seminal to his writing, as was his experience of poverty and ongoing illness. He was tubercular for most of his years. *After London* or *Wild England*, his one work of science fiction, was published in 1885, not long before his death.

The first part of Jefferies' book is devoted to a kind of pocket-encyclopedia delineation of the much diminished country. This pedagogical treatise sits a bit awkwardly with the adventure tale that follows. Yet there is something touching and very plausible in the narrator's attempt at a natural science account of a world in which scientific knowledge has disappeared.

Jefferies describes the flora and fauna of this new England, the fauna mostly wild descendants of the old; domestic cattle gone wild, cats become bigger and feral, many humans gone wild as well, the 'bushmen' or 'hunter-gatherers' and bandits, the expanded, now warlike, tribes of Roma. Farmers and small towns are subject to their predations. Settled society, such as it is, exists on the great lake's periphery, much as it did along rivers in medieval times. It is in fact a medieval scene, rather like in Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, but we find no monasteries as keepers of civilization. There are little kingdoms with castles, vying for power and frequently at war. Except for merchants, whose literacy is needed for trade, literacy is confined to the elite. Most of the population live in a state of servitude, always working off debt (the nobles see to this) and servitude seems to be the common penalty for crime. The one religious person in the book is hero Felix's beloved, Aurora, who clings to some replica of Christian faith.

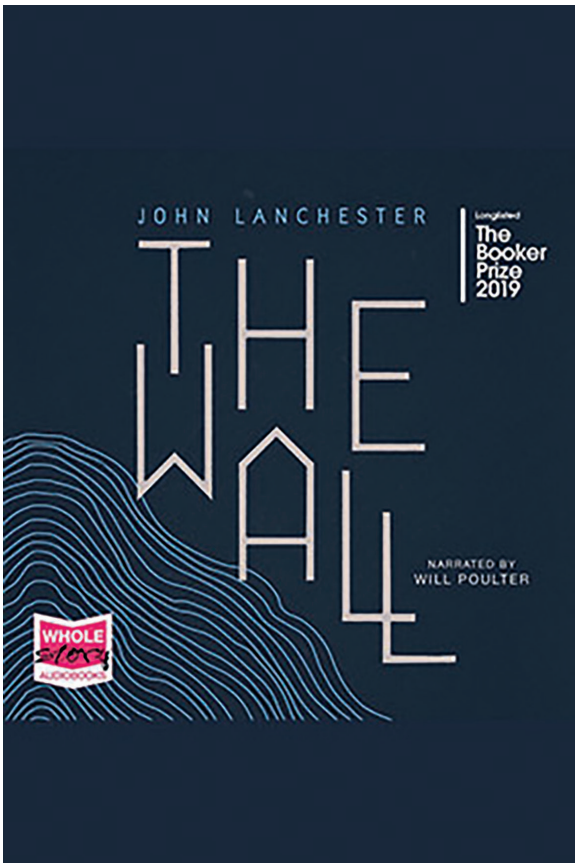
The rest of Jefferies' novel is devoted to the story of Felix, the lonely and unappreciated younger son of a local great house. He is scholarly and reflective, neither liking nor excelling in the macho virtues that mark his older brother and are admired by the popu-



lace. He loves Aurora, daughter of a rival castle, but how can he win her with no triumph to show and an impoverished noble family behind him?

After much gloomy introspection, Felix makes a brave and eccentric decision. He will build a canoe and explore unknown distances of the great inland lake.

Felix's journey is described with a map-like precision, so this imagined crater lake becomes very real to the reader following Felix on his quest. And indeed from here the story becomes the classic quest of fairy tales. Felix is captured in a foreign kingdom and made to serve an evil ruler, but soon escapes. Again in his canoe, he is swept over the dreadful poisonous waters that cover London, and nearly dies. He is rescued by a group of sheep herders, good simple people who welcome him. His prowess with the longbow, scorned in his own country, enables the herders to win a battle against the invading Roma, and the herders make him their king. He sails back home in anticipation of bringing back Aurora as his queen and building a new kingdom he will rule with benevolence. So this Victorian dystopia does end on a note of hope.



In John Lanchester's *The Wall*, published in 2019, the risen waters are those of the sea, and a high wall protects England from the surrounding ocean and the desperate outsiders seeking entry. These outsiders are 'the Others' who live on the water or in now unknown deprived, shrunken lands where what reigns is anarchy, hunger, misery, death.

Inside the Wall this England seems very like the England of today (or should I say the England of 2019 – pre-Covid, pre-cost-of-living crisis, pre-Ukraine?). There appears to be adequate food and a stable and fairly quiet population. People go on picnics, eat in restaurants, play sports etc. as they do now. It is the Wall that keeps them secure and at peace – the Wall and a post climate-change political system that is simple, efficient and brutal.

The Wall is patrolled by teams of conscripts. All fit adults, male or female – no gender distinctions here – must serve two years as Defenders on the Wall. They must push back or kill any Others who make it to the top. For every Other who does get over, a member of the team that failed to stop her or him will be lowered down the wall in a boat, with a few supplies, to survive as long as possible on the sea. The Others who do make it are allowed to stay – but as part of the lowest class, who must work as 'servants' to the legitimate residents. Some few especially skilled or enterprising do eventually gain regular citizenship.

The parallels with present-day refugees and policies such as the Government's Rwanda scheme are obvious. When the myriad hordes of climate refugees appear, as they soon must, will patrol boats and sentries with big guns, rather than life-saving equipment, be the next step?

One such is the captain of Kavanagh, the narrator's, team.

It is a tribute to Lancaster's own skill that he dwells on the discomfort, anxiety, cold and sheer boredom of the long shifts on the Wall, transmitting all the sensation - but not the boredom - to the reader. One way to avoid service on the Wall is to become a Breeder. Kavanagh and the girl he meets on the Wall decide to apply. Being a Breeder "is a pretty sweet deal. If you can get used to the thought of bringing another person into the broken world".

But before Kavanagh and his girl Hilfa can leave the Wall there is another attack by the Others. The Defenders on their section of the Wall are betrayed by the last person anyone imagined could be a traitor. A few Others do get over and although Kavanagh overpowers and downs the traitor he and Hilfa, with two others, are lowered into a boat on the sea. With them also is the Captain, the traitor who has survived Kavanagh's wounding, and a 'Politician' whose empty words they have heard before. With unexpected luck and the Captain's navigation, they find a group of people who have learned to live off their part of the sea and form a community together. But this little enclave is soon overwhelmed by ruthless pirates; all are killed or enslaved except Kavanagh and Hilfa who manage to escape and are adrift once more. They come close to an abandoned-looking oil derrick whose sole occupant, lonely and liking the amicable look of this young couple, lowers his ladder. He invites them, after their precarious climb, to share his accommodation and still large supply of food tins. Not a happy end, but at least a happy respite, and perhaps the most that anyone off the Wall can hope for.

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The War Began in Art

Al Jirikowic

Otto Dix. The War *(Der Krieg). 1924*

Considering the calamity of the past few days, or last eight years, or last two hundred years, or whenever, it has given me pause to, once again, yes,think about art (as if I do much of anything else)

I'm referring to the art we used to know and make. So hear the old voices.

The art that means something of substance, of ideas, of feeling, of mystery, of beauty, of nuance ...when it steals my time and I am deeply grateful. That art that arrests me for a million different reasons. The art that does this well with confidence and vision and verve and new imagination; that seeks me out. Now I know I might sound rather stiff here and uncool and old fashioned but art lately has been under whelming me and has been lulled and adrift in very predictable modes, even stuck. All over. This is not a secret. This has to do with modernism and the perils there in … all the tech and panoplies of imaging appearing everywhere … for anything, anywhere. A rabbit hole we can go down indefinitely. But not now.

We need to set up the older voices.

Art is a human trait intrinsic to our species and needs to be reclaimed, consciously. This is an issue we need to address.

Once again, as we confront the reality of horrible war.

I say, we need something to boost our spirits and remind us how we really are in contradistinction to war. How human we are, good humans, despite our problems. Art is made of an from problems. Art is how we deal with problems.

Presumptuous? I think not. Civilization is largely defined in art's problem solving on many levels.

Although we may posture the 'evil' that men may do, and we will do evil again and again, it is right in front of all of us, again, and it is scary. We shan't deny this as war is always going on but as Americans and Europeans, and for all global citizens it is in our face. So ...

Hence we make art. We have been making art to

Azov Neo-Nazi Battalion Helmet

know ourselves for sixty thousand years, last count. And yes for many reasons but principally to remind us, ourselves, we are not the beasts we are capable of being - or I would like to think so - whether we know it or not we can still wonder about it. Difficult.

I know this sounds simplistic but sagas of war are an old story now and massively regrettable. Especially when it seems so absurd and profoundly stupid. I do not need to moralize about this and it really need not be said but voila! here we are again and so I feel a bit freed up to think about art in this light. Indulge me. War and Art in our face, in out time.

I think what we are largely ill at ease with in discussing the problems of art lately; how defused and sidelined art is in importance; how art has been highjacked out of what was its identity as our culture and made to serve many different rich masters. And, in so doing, robbing the power of art away from its inherent nature and then delegating it to another purpose much farther down its once high influence as espousing our human identity. We all know art has become a store of monetary value. This has traduced us to a corrupted sense of the relationship between art and money and it's very cruel complications. All down to the artist being supported, to art as an investment, to art being materially mythologized, to art markets and stock markets and public concerns and private holdings of wealth to tax dodges to just about anything of ego and pretence, celebrity and despair etc.

The mystical experience of cave painting is a testimony to the mark making presence of human-kind. Be they affirmations or exchanges of what animal is running or important to kill or questions ... do you know who I am or might be?

The average person would be shocked to know how many great works of art are being privately kept in free ports around airports and ports the world over, hidden from public view, to avoid individuals being taxed. Or how many art works are forged - but the enlightened owner has to pretend it is authentic to avoid an embarrassment of financial loss once the truth is revealed about his 'masterpiece'. This happens all the time. Or the phenomenon of NTFs - non fungible tokens - a digital recognition on the ethereal block chain that determines that only one original image is certificated despite the fact it can be reproduced ad nauseam, or course, ,digitally. NTFs are, as one prominent broker stated, nothing but a scam. I reported on the Beeple NTF that sold for $69 million. Or members of the board of a public museum influencing the director to buy an artist's work while other members may own works of said artist, thus increasing their value as assets. Shameless. And I am certain most of you could add to this list that cheapens art ... or derails it . All this is not to mention what happens to the idea of art on the academic and community level. There art focuses inward. Art as a community project is given the job in identity politics and virtue signaling or promoting very tightly constructed instant fads with no substance but the image. Art is not a muscle to ride the mythology of superficial change on, especially when the larger paradigm that it lives in is not held up to high scrutiny or analysis or even actual confrontation to actually make real change; not mask it in what passes for art today. If we do not search deeper in the sea we swim in we may unknowingly drown in a surface squall of unpredictable fury and invisible rip tides, creatures we never knew of but which hold us captive.

The mystical experience of cave painting is a testimony to the mark making presence of human-kind. Be they affirmations or exchanges of what animal is

running or important to kill or questions ... do you know who I am or might be? These were the unbridled scribbling of these people who had no conscious audience except one another. But we know it meant something to them. They certainly were about something that we know was important to them hence our fascination with the art of the caves of early people, for they appear as discussions and dialogues around the world. Something they were conscious of and passed on.

So the mystical experience of art rides up the historical ladder. I would never tell anyone to stop drawing or painting or imagining creativity. I would, however, ask some questions to individuals who believe themselves to be serious about their art. Because art in history is not disposable but an anchor to who we are and aspire to be. I think we should take our art making as a very necessary phenomena not a detached, money orientated activity.

I would ask the artist if they has a sense of aspiration about their art. Most art I see now has no saddle on the arrow of destiny or a vision that will conjure my mind in some greater sense. Am I delusional ? Most art seems to be practice for the questions the artist has not yet lived himself or herself or they-self or selves. Like some sort of 'who cares?' We need to once again trust art at its heart.

I would ask the artist if they has a sense of aspiration about their art. Most art I see now has no saddle on the arrow of destiny or a vision that will conjure my mind in some greater sense. Am I delusional ? Most art seems to be practice for the questions the artist has not yet lived himself or herself or they-self or selves. Like some sort of 'who cares?' We need to once again trust art at its heart.

What self is this art of me? Rembrandt never failed to confront his issues and it is alive in his work for us to see. And true, as a member of the community of failed artists, a dues paying member, I am left with myself as I gaze upon art. I often feel betrayed by myself. Now if somehow an artist is trusting of his art and it needs to move on to the great ocean of views, another question rings in our minds. If somehow the arrow of destiny is fired off to the larger spheres of viewing, one must ask personally, yes my arrow flies but to what end?

This is where the might of history may take over. We have a planet of hungry eyes and minds waiting for a human 'brake on time'. This certainly has prevailed in our history before and we certainly seek this now and we may be surprised but this is Earth and as Beckett said 'there is no cure for that'

And so it goes. May our arrows fly well and high to their destiny....

The Plaza and the Occupied Square

Pablo Halguera

THE ORIGINAL TEXT IS MORE ACADEMIC IN NATURE AND SOME OF THAT ASPECT IS RETAINED HERE; FOR THAT REASON, THIS TEXT DEPARTS SLIGHTLY FROM MY USUAL TONE, BUT I STILL FELT IT WOULD BE WORTH SHARING IT AS IT TOUCHES ON SOME TOPICS I HAVE ADDRESSED IN THE PAST PARTICULARLY REGARDING SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART.

In recent years, in the United States the term 'creative placemaking' has gained widespread usage in the spheres of urban design, public art, cultural development, and art education. The term is defined as 'when artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work – placing arts at the table with land-use, transportation, economic development, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety strategies.'

The term 'creative placemaking' never entered into our lexicon until fairly recently. Rather, the focus of the debates over the last decade have included dialogic practices, the mediation between the visual and performance studies, spectatorship and antagonism and cooperation. Furthermore, the ideas around social practice over the last two decades have focused on people, not places, while remaining responsive to localities, the primordial principle is to follow common-held goals around topics like social justice and the transformative role of art in community work.

This recent new term usage by cultural policymakers in the United States has made the need to define the exact role of 'place' particularly important. The term place, in its most conventional usage, refers to a physical location, not a metaphorical one, and the term creative implies (but not exclusively refers to) art making. The liberal use of 'creative placemaking' as a catchphrase to attract funders and city governments, is used so widely to the point of meaning very little as a progressive form of art practice, particularly in the sense that the emphasis on physical location at times appears to displace people (for whom the place is ostensibly conceived to benefit). Most importantly – and this is why I believe this topic is relevant to the context of this biennial – it presents the question of what is the role of the term place in socially engaged art, and what does it mean to do socially engaged placemaking.

I.

My early experiences of public space dynamics is the public square in Mexico. The Spanish built cities that followed the predominant urban plan of the period in 16th century in Europe. This primarily meant that the most important buildings would be adjacent to one another in the center of the town. The organizing structure was the public square or plaza. (It is important to note that the governmental and religious and ceremonial center in Aztec culture was also located at the center of the city, as it was the case of the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlán, today's Mexico City, although the main center did not function in the same way of the European plaza).

Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco - Main Plaza
(Jardín de los Constituyentes)

Part of my family is from Lagos de Moreno, a medium-size town in the state of Jalisco. Every year or so we would visit relatives there. In contrast to the vast and chaotic metropolis that is Mexico City, Lagos was (and is) comparatively quaint and peaceful – a place where time seems to stretch for long periods. For us it was a place to get some rest, and there was not much to do other than walking around the town. At night, it was customary to walk to the main square where one would often socialize with others. My father, who had been going to Lagos since the 1930s, explained to me the dynamics of the plaza which to that day still held: teenage women in packs, paleta in hand, would walk around the plaza, and young men

would interact them. The plaza was in this sense the location for romantic encounters and courtship.
Henri Lefevre (1974) argued that public space can be understood in three modalities: as 'perceived space', 'conceived space' and 'lived space', or rather, the space as it is intended, understood and used through daily practice. The plaza in Lagos, intended for public use, ostensibly was not 'conceived' for this kind of 'lived' courtship approach, albeit it could be argued that this particular use is comprised within the larger intention of making the urban space available for public use.
For those of us who work in the realm of either socially engaged art or architecture, we share an awareness of the gap between what is conceived or intended by the artist and the way it is inhabited, understood and used by others, and as such we need to be very intentional in the construction of those spaces, allowing that freedom of use as well as the malleability that others will give to that space. This means that a successful participatory model needs to take into consideration the agency of the potential user in adapting the environment to something that would meaningfully work for them.

II.
The use of the square as an intentional pedagogical structure is particularly important in early education systems like Reggio Emilia. A system developed in the early years of the postwar era, Reggio Emilia educators sought to create a type of pedagogy that fully acknowledged and respected the identity and the human rights of the child and invited their creativity and their agency in the attainment of their own education, but at the same time promoting the idea that even at an early age an individual should understand and assume their role in civic society, thus hopefully becoming a good future citizen of the world.

This principle of the Reggio Emilia approach is best exemplified by the design of their schools, and modeled by the central Diana school, perhaps the most famous of all Reggio Emilia schools. The Diana, surrounded by beautiful gardens (the connection with nature is also an important component of the Reggio Emilia system) welcomes children every morning into an open space known as the Piazza, which functions as a microcosm of the public square. In the piazza, children gather for a range of learning activities that can be reconfigured by the instructors. The piazza system is central to the learning approach in several ways, as it offers children a level of agency to select the activities they will engage in, but also introduces, in a simple way, the public stage onto which we all need to engage with as part of civil society. In contrast to other systems that are very individually-oriented, the collaborative nature of many of the Reggio Emilia activities provide a practical way for children to appreciate the educational potential of cooperation and mutuality.
The teaching artists in the classroom guide the students through collective play to pursue their own ideas without losing sight of the uniqueness of each child. In referring to the multiplicity of ways by which we all learn, Loris Malaguzzi, a founding thinker of the Reggio Emilia approach, spoke of the "100 languages of children", an idea that was later developed in cognitive psychology by Howard Gardner with his theory of multiple intelligence (Gardner, 1983). Last, but definitely not least, the concept of the piazza in Reggio Emilia is the crucial basis for the notion of the environment as a third teacher.

III.
In September 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement emerged as a protest to the increasing economic inequality that had been greatly exacerbated by the 2008 recession and the greed shown by the

Reggio Emilia school 'piazza'.
Photograph: Reggio Children®

corporate, mortgage, and financial services sector of the United States. Protesters had difficulty finding a location in the Financial district of New York City where to stage their activities, and finally centered on Zuccotti Park, which is a public space (POPS) owned by Brookfield Properties and Goldman Sachs. Protesters occupied the park four about two months. It is important to note here that Occupy Wall Street protests, by virtue of their own existence, laid bare the fact that the notion of public space in American cities is very restrictive, as even when a place technically a public location (such as a city park) it is not possible to use it for a wide range of purposes.

Aside from its political/historical importance, what I want to note here is the particular kind of cooperative culture that emerged in Zuccotti Park. Quite a range of collective, communal and democratic activities were organized with the purpose of supporting the movement. These included the use of progressive stacks, allowing members of certain minorities the right to speak before the simple majorities, the use of the human microphone, whereby a single speaker's voice is amplified by repeating their words by a whole group of people to give it greater volume, and the use of a wide range of communal resources, such as a people's library, free workshops, activities for children, food, and many other forms of support.

Occupy Wall street was embraced and supported by many artists, but in the spirit of the movement, it did not have a specific leader nor a hierarchical structure.

I have laid out a brief description of three different dynamics in public spaces. One of them, the Mexican town plaza, was laid out by urban planners in a traditional way, leading to specifically developed rituals that are not exactly intended, but not entirely unexpected. The second is an intentionally constructed, and fictionalized, version of that space inside a Reggio Emilia school, with the explicit hope that the structure will allow for a certain level of agency by the user (the child) through pretend play but ultimately with the hopes that it will lead with the learning of a civic purpose (i.e., the child becoming a future good citizen). And the third (Occupy Wall Street in Zuccotti Park) is a public space that was completely – albeit temporarily – reimagined in terms of its public use to produced conditions of mutuality.

None of these examples are explicit instances of architecture or art making, even if conventional aspects of urban or architectural design were sometimes part of the equation. Nonetheless, they offer a simplified taxonomy of models about the socially engaged role that the artist/architect can play in the construction of the socially engaged commons, a space that can integrate the free interpretive impulses of human beings in shaping their own environment without being overly prescriptive. Going back to Lefevre, intentionality, perception and actual use of the space are components that are all relevant in the construction of a project that could have the necessary malleability for its community of users to inhabit and transform it, while at the same time offer a structure that would encourage and support the social processes of bonding and conviviality that result in communal unity.

Occupy Wall Street in Zuccotti Park, 2011.
Photo: David Shankbone

Practicing socially engaged 'placemaking' with these considerations in mind, and with the tools of architecture, can make the now oft-employed term of creative 'placemaking' truly become meaningful – no longer as an urban development strategy with a vague reference to cultural production but as an approach that explicitly embraces its role as an art form and also offers physical and situational conditions for communities to become stronger in their collaborative spirit.

A version of this text was written as a catalogue contribution for the Philippines Pavilion at the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale titled Structures of Mutual Support, a project by architects Alexander Eriksson Furunes & Sudarshan Khadka. Erikson and Khadka developed the project around the term Bayanihan, a Filipino word used to refer to the spirit of mutual unity and cooperation and used to refer to the beautiful tradition in the Filipines of having a whole group of neighbors helping a relocating family by carrying their entire house on their shoulders.

'Canell' Pleasures Under the Sea:

NINA CANELL'S TECTONIC TENDER AT BERLINISCHE GALERIE

Christian Hain

Just in time for Berlin Gallery Weekend - which happened again almost as normal this year, Berlinische Galerie opened a small exhibition by Swedish artist Nina Canell. The long and narrow corridor that often hosts installations here poses a special challenge to artists, not least because visitors may enjoy the bird's view perspective from the museum's upper levels. Canell chose a new embodiment of the ephemeral seafood installation *Muscle Memory* that she first served in 2021 and the title left us wondering whether there might have been some mishearing involved – could she have said 'Mussel' (?) then decided to stay with muscles.

The installation consists of a big sandbox held together by light partition walls that are remotely reminiscent of a shipping container – not filled with sand but its earlier state of matter: Seven tons of mollusc shells from the North Sea, mostly mussels. Visitors take a walk inside and crunch them under their feet, thus destroying the creation by their mere presence. Like a stone desert, shades of grey dominate and we're told, no molluscs have been harmed for the art: Dedicated companies pillage the ocean floor and sell the resource to makers of building materials who use it in concrete – and also to the odd artist.

The art collector's connoisseur eye will detect a handful of oyster shells hidden among the remains whereas we espied, and touched, mere pebbles too (those companies' small print probably mentions, 'may contain traces of inorganic mater'). At least all (micro-)plastic and oil chunks have been filtered out. In a way, *Muscle Memory* works as a sound installation, the slow but inevitable destruction of the work by admirers, viz. museum-goers, won't happen in silence, on the contrary, their every step is audible from afar. Is this the sea crying of pain, a swan song metaphorically speaking?

Numerous iron tubes that cannot all be needed for technical reasons keep the sandbox in place. They

Nina Canell, Drag Out, *2021, synthetic rubber, synthetic polymer*
Photo:© Antonio Maniscalco

hint at a scrap press, which would accelerate the process of smashing the shells. The wall panels display a lot of technical information, the manufacturer's name (a company called 'de Konig',) Anyway, although we see and hear the art under our feet, we don't smell the sea, and lifting a specimen to our ear, we cannot hear it either.

A museum representative tells of intrusions into nature that 'prevent the ocean from healing itself' but won't provide any more detail. Today everybody's supposed to know, i.e. 'feel', that man can only ever be an intruder and destroyer of nature, which might be a little over simplistic. Gladly, this installation and the exhibition as a whole don't appear too one-dimensional, no in-your-face propaganda as is sadly often the case with environmentalist art.

Muscle Memory *(7 Tonnes), 2022, hardscaping material from marine molluscs*
Photo: Robin Watkins

"We break stuff to make stuff", says the artist, and, well, isn't that nature's most basic law? Everything changes, Samsara in Buddhism, and without death there can be no (re)birth. Nature formed these shells, indeed. But she's also shed them. Walking on broken shells, our feet are protected by technology, by shoes that 'man, the deficient being' (A. Gehlen) made from (more or less) organic matter: Technology is our shell, our snail house.

The film closes with images of a lonely plant in a potentially not species-appropriate bucket, controlled by man who in a way has created its life. Slug life. Around the screen, we find cut parts of cables that once lay buried 20.000 miles under the sea to facilitate human communication and in this new context, they resemble dead giant molluscs.

Some crushed mollusc shells will eventually turn to sand, others dating from prehistoric times can still be found in deserts today where there was once an ocean. New deserts might be a result of the global climate changing again like it did so often before – simultaneously turning deserts into rain forests with all the biodiversity that is characteristic of warmer times as opposed to cold periods. Yet, human civilisation might not be able to cope; 'nature' is literally everything that happens on this planet, and it will survive everything we do without a doubt. Leaving the installation, some pieces stick to our soles and break with a different sound, while we take a look at the rest of the show: A video on a large screen features an unexpectedly beautiful slug creeping over some technical apparatus and no, that's not slow motion. The images change to the same Hong Kong skyscraper with a drive-through hole for dragons on a road trip that we've seen in Berlin before, in American/Chinese artist collective Wang Shui's exhibition at Stoschek Collection 2019. Is this every little slug's dream: to grow wings like a proper lindworm? Might tell something about humanity, too: from slug's speed to High Tech and yet there's still some invertebrate in us, at least as long as we believe in our 'dragons'. Despite all modern technological wizardry, the average Chinese still clings on to his old-fashioned truths, not only (and of

Energy Budget *2017-18 video 16.03 minutes*

course only meant symbolically) dragons but also Feng Shui building techniques. I'm not sure, if you should mock this, isn't it rather refreshing and reassuring to learn, that locals hold a Sir Norman Forster designed skyscraper accountable for bankruptcies because the *chang bi zi* (long nose) didn't follow those rules? The totalitarianism of science enforcing only one mathematical truth for the whole world is so boring and ultimately futile, limiting human might and impoverishing world and mind alike. When all's said and done, who'd cares about truth?
Only when the Chinese dragon coughs, you'd better run as fast you can these days.
The film closes with images of a lonely plant in a potentially not species-appropriate bucket, controlled by man who in a way has created its life. Slug life. Around the screen, we find cut parts of cables that once lay buried 20.000 miles under the sea to facilitate human communication and in this new context, they resemble dead giant molluscs.
Canell says, she regularly uses naturally found materials in her art (for example in a little sculpture next to the door). Upon entry we noted, 'splattered death star with a water balloon, or amphora putting its tongue out', but having seen the installation, it seems more like – well, you've guessed it: another, and rather large, mollusc; hit by a water balloon. All parts of the assemblage have washed on shore before the artist found and gave them new life in a new form.
Let's get back to the interpretation: The entire exhibition's title is *Tectonic Tender*, and we immediately think of a tenderly destructive hate-love relationship between Man and Mother Earth – make no mistake, this really goes both ways: nature's out to get you (if not with a lion, than with a virus; earthquakes are naturally deadly, too) forever feeding on herself. It's called the circle of life.
Yet there are more meanings to the term tender. Beside the thoroughly fashionable view of man only ever being of an invasive and destructive nature, there's the more conventional one of a warden, a forester, '(at-)tending' to nature, but the role of a predator to regulate overpopulations is often ignored (while the overpopulation of humanity itself lies at the core of so many problems, and gets hardly ever addressed). Paradoxically, those who cry for the protection of nature the loudest and mourn its every change, abstract it the most, putting themselves out of the circle, as if man were an alien without a role to play in this planet's ecosystem.
Outside again, we noticed a familiar but different feeling under our feet, once more crushing organic structures. Looking down, we discovered ant colonies breaking through the pavement and (involuntarily) building pyramids of sand. Sometimes, an exhibition stays with you even after you've left the gallery.

Nina Canell, Tectonic Tender, 30 April-22 August 2022, Berlinische Galerie

Anish Kapoor in Venice

Liviana Martin

Pregnant White Within Me
Courtesy of Attilio Maranzano

The maze that is Venice streets has bewitched one of the most influential artists of our time, who has chosen in this lagoon-like city a historic 18th century building as the seat of his Foundation.

Anish Kapoor, born in Mumbai in 1954, moved to London in the 1970s, where he lives and works. Famous for his powerful installations (*Cloud Gate* or *The Bean* of Chicago, *Marsyas* at the Tate Modern in London, to name only the most iconic), in Venice he was celebrated with a great retrospective, at the Accademia Galleries and at Palazzo Manfrin during the 59th Biennale.

The choice of locations is not accidental: the Galleries, which constitute the world's most important collection of Venetian painting from the 14th – 18th centuries have also had a contemporary art program for years, in which Kapoor's exhibition is being held. Palazzo Manfrin was purchased by the artist as the ideal place for the Anish Kapoor Foundation: once renovated, this 18th century building will become a laboratory for contemporary art.

Observing his works the viewer becomes disoriented. The mirrored surfaces, where sky and earth merge, present us with an inverted world. High and low swap roles; the spectator enters the work together with the surrounding environment.

In his large canvases, the paint clumps together, as if it were organic; it stretches and folds up, forming depressions or dispersing into very small coloured particles.

Shooting in the corner is an installation that occupies two rooms, scattered with blood-red wax projectiles fired from a cannon. Red is the predominant colour here, a symbol of vital energy and flowing blood. It is said that as a teenager he suffered a nervous breakdown: a relative had advised his mother to put red soil underneath his bed. After healing, in memory of this episode, the red pigment became a fetish colour for the artist, a symbol of life but also of injury and death.

The artist's other favourite colour is black. He purchased the patent to obtain absolute black, a nanotechnological acrylic paint capable of absorbing 99.9% of natural light and of making objects disappear. It is Kapoor black; the paint is toxic and must be worked with using special precautions. Enclosed in the display cases, objects with a flat geometric shape transform to cones, pyramids, and protuberances after a minimum displacement, changes we would never have seen when standing in front of them. It is certainly not a game, of illusions, but a way to transcend the human dimension, to go beyond matter, beyond the limit between visible and invisible. Is it the cosmic black hole? The visitor gets an impression of an absence, of a void or a chasm that swallows up reality; a sense of death. Kapoor says, "Venice is like Varanasi, where dying is a sacred privilege."

Image: the writer

Instead, other works are permeated by a generative energy, such as the large installation *Pregnant White Withint Me*, where the white of a huge perfect egg transforms, viewed from the side, into a prominent belly. It is the life full of promises, female fertility, that the artist seems to celebrate. In an interview, he says that creating artwork is not like procreating, which is why he envies maternity as one of the most powerful acts of humanity.

Life and death are also present in the second exhibition space, the beautiful Manfrin Palace. In the entrance hall, there is a site-specific work, *Mount Moriah at the Gate of the Ghetto* (the Jewish ghetto is on the other side of the canal). It displays a mountain of solidified lava that pierces the ceiling. A volcano from which a dripping mass of silicone and paint emerges in a vital explosion, the mystery of matter that explodes from the depths of the earth.

All the rooms converge in the 18th century music room: the central installation, *Simphony For A Beloved Sun*, is a gigantic sun that sets or rises,on a mass of red wax, once again the primordial substance of life and death.

"What was wild on this earth we have banished, transforming everything into a beautiful garden", says Kapoor . His warrior spirit, his creativity, as well as his amazing technical expertise make this exhibition one of the most beautiful exhibitions outside the Biennale in Venice

Gallerie dell'Accademia & Palazzo Manfrin 20/04 2022 to 9/10/2022, Tickets 12 euro.

Infantalising Visitors

Mary Fletcher

Image: Tate St Ives

Walking into the big gallery the colours are very strong – it seems to be an era of painting the walls at Tate St Ives, with the Sol le Witt work that took weeks of meticulous work in the curved gallery and now this design which contains the Ad Minoliti pictures, mostly very flat arrangements of shapes with some recognisable elements such as Pac-Man, simple flower motifs etc.
There used to be packs of sticky paper cut into brightly coloured shapes for children to use and it is of this that the paintings remind me. There are three figures of toy animals which I can see appeal to very young visitors. There are tables set out for what is called a 'feminist school of painting', and a rack of 'zines on various subjects such as witch hunts in the Middle Ages and other subjects on queer or feminist topics. There are colouring books on the tables and felt tip pens. The carpet has bold shapes and colours also. The vibe comes from 1970s design, the intent is apparently to contest stereotypes of gender and binary categories – but I get this more from the free booklet and the ten minute talk than from looking around.
The artist has entered the mysterious category of those on the international exhibiting list and fits right in with the contemporary concern to be gender non specific, with a pronoun choice of 'they/them' but attendants keep forgetfully calling Ad 'she'. I so share the desire to combat stereotypes. I respect the effort- but – but– the show looks like a play area in a department store or an airport or maybe a gender reassignment clinic for children and mostly strikes me as an excellent set in which people photograph themselves and their children.
It does bring out my rebellious side as I refuse to fill in the colouring book neatly and write on one that I won't keep within the confines of its lines. The attendant says twice that we can stay as long as we like - but surely that's a feature of art galleries in general. Why the seventies? (The artist is 42.) Is it saying anything other than that Ad presents some playful designs to look at or to colour in? And should I be content with that?

Mary Ad Minoliti exhibition at Tate St Ives 28 May to Oct 30, 2022

Feelings in London

Daniel Benshana

Arriving in London for a book launch for Bloomsbury I had time to spare and visited a few Mayfair galleries. At the Bastian there were some watercolours by Emil Nolde titled *'Anatomy of Light and Water.*

The work was interesting in its own right because it was unusually colourful for Nolde, but that was not the interesting part of the day. The more interesting part was a man sitting beside the front of house clerk, saying one of the paintings had brought him to tears. So, I engaged with his sensibility and found out he was a collector, had made quite a lot of money, but did not think he could write, and certainly never had done so. It is not as rare as one might believe for people to be brought to tears by a painting but it is unique in my experience to hear someone admit to it in public.

William was a man of deep sensitivity and while I left him my email I don't expect to hear from him so I will relay his other story ... of buying two paintings by an artist when he didn't even have a chair in house and coming in from work and looking at them propped up against the wall. In two weeks of sitting cross-legged in front of them he broke through and saw what the painter was trying to achieve and why his other works were so different.

I then met an American collector, who did collect to sell later for profit but only bought works he responded to. He was much affected by our philosophy here at the *New Art Examiner* than each individual's response to the visual inexperience is as valid as anyone else's. I don't know if he will write for us but I asked, as collectors rarely write while they are young and looking.

For the rest of my visit I went to see Damien Hirst whose abattoir early works were on show at the Gagosian in Britannia Street. The one in Grosvenor Hill has an eclectic mass of established names and a high density of unarmed, suited guards. I didn't see anything they couldn't have shown in the last thirty years. And there seems to be a trend of 'in the style of' works in which unknowns are reworking Salvador Dali, Man Ray and others. A beast that devours itself ends up dead.

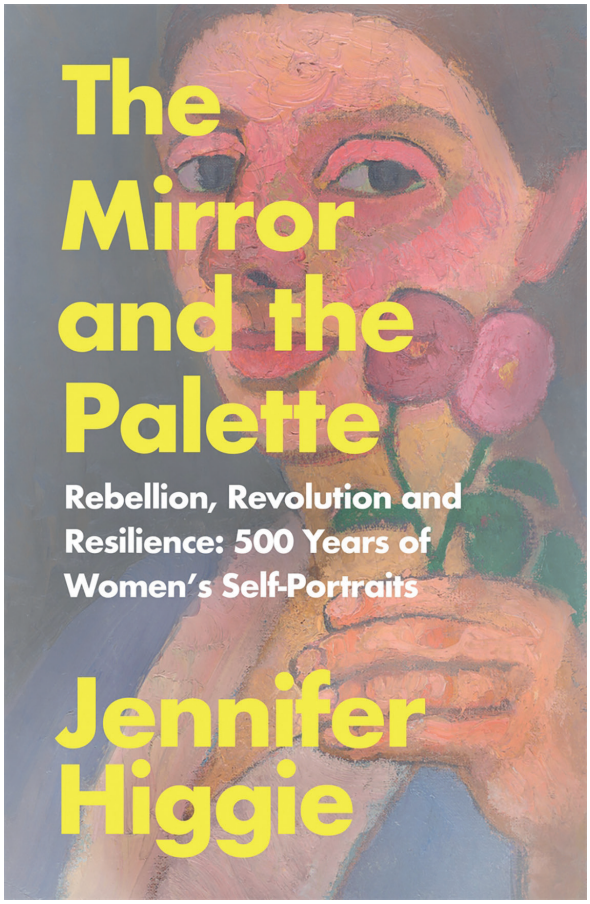
Govaert Flinck: A Young Archer*, c1639–1640*

I last visited Wallace House many years ago a light lunch followed by François Boucher, Michael Sweerts, Govaert Flinck Rembrandt van Rijn, Joshua Reynolds and dozens of others is a quiet return. A history of changing sensibilities; the over romantic poses of women, the repeated dead animals in still lives which Hirst no doubt would get a kick out of, and the discourse of figurative art that criss-crosses central London.

The intense need to have the same names appearing in all the major cities in the world following the buyers around like lap dogs is avoided in Wallace House where nothing is for sale. It was traditional, some might say boring, yet strangely refreshing. But spend two weeks every evening in front of just one of them and you may end up being brought to tears, who knows?

The Mirror & The Palette

Mary Fletcher



Jennifer Higgie is from Australia and works as an editor of *Frieze* magazine.

In this book Higgie introduces women who have made self portraits and places them in a historical context, grouping them by themes such as 'Allegory' or 'Hallucination'.

She tells us about their other works, which are described but frustratingly not illustrated so the reader has to do their own internet searches. There are illustrations of self portraits by each of the artists chosen for lengthier mentions.

I enjoyed the writing which flows easily and as I knew of most of the artists mentioned I was reminded of their stories, with some new information being offered.

I was pleased that eventually this author mentions Frances Borzello's *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self Portraits,* 1998, which covered many of the same artists.

Jennifer chooses to refer to the artists by their first names after the first mention of their full names. This hinders the reader in remembering their names to find out more about them or be able to refer to them and thereby does not help the progress of spreading knowledge of them.

I am disappointed that Higgie does not break much new ground because it would have been fascinating to learn of women artists in Africa or China, South America etc, but she does include women from Australia and New Zealand.

Also I would have liked the scope of the book to include more recent artists. Tracey Emin would be an obvious contemporary choice. Maybe someone else will take this up.

For anyone who knows little of the subject this book will be a useful introduction.

The Mirror and the Palette - Rebellion, Revolution and Resilience: 500 Years of Womenâ€™s Self-Portraits. Jennifer Higgie, Published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2021

The *New Art Examiner* welcomes reviews on books of visual cultural significance.
Please send you review 500- 800 words to:

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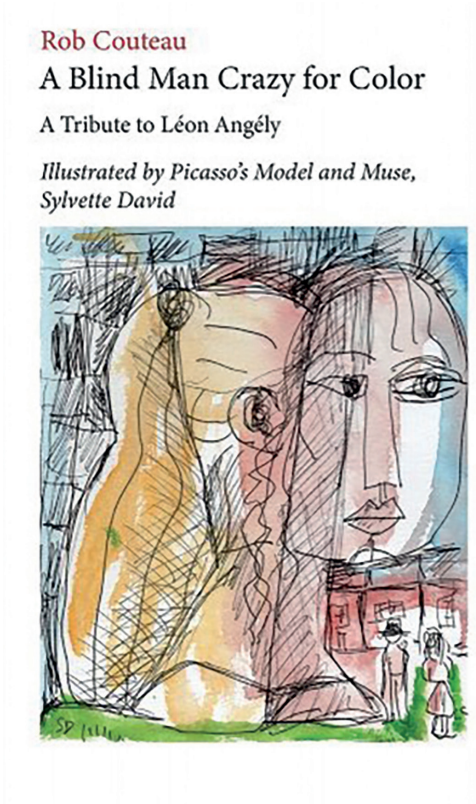
Subject headed BOOK REVIEW
Please include the full details of the title, author, publisher, date and ISBN.

A Blind Man Crazy for Color: A Strange Tale from the Annals of Art Collecting

Scott Winfield Sublett



In Paris of the 1910s, when hungry artists would take almost any pittance for their work, an old man of extremely limited means scooped up Picassos, Modiglianis, Utrillos, Matisses and Cezannes, each painting bought for the price of a couple of good restaurant meals. The prescient old man's collection would, today, be worth hundreds of millions, if not billions, and one might say the old man had a superlative eye, were he not blind.

In his strange, fascinating new book, *A Blind Man Crazy for Color*, writer-painter Rob Couteau assembles and unearths what little can be known about the mysterious collector Léon Angély, a bald, fat, retired solicitor's clerk who gambled what small money he had on the dream of assembling a collection that could someday finance a luxurious retirement in Nice.

When Père Angély started collecting, he was already myopic but could still see. Over a period of about 20 years, though, his vision disappeared. "I have only one fan, and he's blind," Modigliani is quoted as saying. (In the book's footnotes there's another lovely Modigliani quotation: "I do at least three paintings a day in my head. What's the use of spoiling canvas when nobody will buy?")

Rather than let blindness end his Sunday afternoon visits to studios, Angély continued collecting with the help of a poor, unschooled young girl, on whose shoulder his hand rested as they made their way through Montmartre. Little Joséphine would describe the paintings, and on the basis of her simple descriptions, he would choose.

Figures as distinctive as Léon and Joséphine were certainly noticed. Couteau quotes John Richardson's *A Life of Picasso* as asserting that the painter was fascinated by the old, blind collector, and Richardson goes on to speculate, quite plausibly, "Picasso may have drawn on his memory of the sightless art lover and his child guide when in 1934 he depicted a blind Minotaur being led around by a little girl."

It's likely Léon and Joséphine were beloved Montmartre characters, despite the old man's tightness with a franc.

Adding another layer of resonance to Couteau's slim volume are the charming illustrations by Lydia Corbett, also known as Sylvette David, the pony-tailed model and muse who inspired Picasso's Sylvette Period (and whose hairstyle was copied by Bridgette Bardot). Now 87 and living in Devon, Sylvette had a show seven years ago at London's Francis Kyle Gallery.

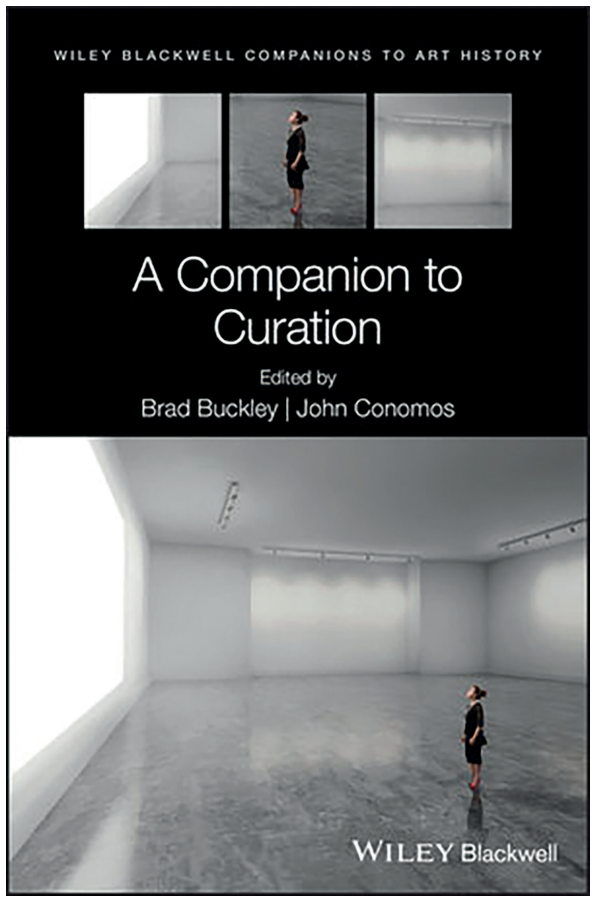
It may seem tragic that Angély died in 1921, before the artists he discovered skyrocketed in value. To keep body and soul together in inflation-racked post-World War I Paris, he disposed of his collection for little more than he had paid. Still, for decades he had the aesthetic thrill of some of art history's greatest accomplishments covering his shabby garret walls, and for some of that time, he could see them.

Companion to Curation

(EDS.) BRAD BUCKLEY AND JOHN CONOMOS

WILEY BLACKWELL COMPANION SERIES IN ART HISTORY, 2020

Miklos Legrady



If there was ever a book that should be top of the reading list for students studying art institutions and curatorial practice(s) of the past, present and future – curators in training – this is it.: *A Companion to Curation* edited by well-known Australian artist academics Brad Buckley and John Conomos.

The editors acknowledge the challenges of providing a companion to curating, one of the most overused terms in the contemporary art world. Similar to the terms 'creative', 'art' and 'performance' the verb 'curate' derived from cura, meaning "to take care" which, defined conservatively, represents the roles of manager or overseer, but now covering and conveying multiple meanings associated with degrees (no pun intended) of art education and practice. And the associated nouns, 'curator', 'curation' and adverb 'curatorial' are readily available as descriptors – euphemisms – for organisations and activities anywhere. including travel, food and drink, furniture, clothing, fashion activities of various kinds and so on. This reviewer was amused recently when he read a report in the Globe and Mail, Canada's national newspaper on the specific roles of the 35 curators work for the ROM (Royal Ontario Museum) and the new curatorship they had established for Climate Curation. Perhaps the individual who applies for this position should have a degree in Climate Change Meteorology. What Sean Lowry intimates in his chapter should be a warning and possibly a comforter during this COVID19 pandemic. "To be sure, in at least a basic sense, everyone who uses a smartphone or personal computer is now a curator and archivist ... of sorts."

The one major issue that determines the difference between artists and curators is money.

As has been noted in dozens of recent books and articles, including the critic William Deresiewicz's *The Death of the Artist: How Creators are Struggling to Survive in the Age of Billionaires and Big Tech,* artists are members of the 'precariat' and typically receive little if any compensation from the presentation of their work in exhibitions. The curators receive a salary or honoraria for professionally organizing museum and gallery exhibitions, biennales, art fairs etc., and yet artists may even have to pay for the privilege of having their work exhibited.

The editors of the *Companion to Curation* are acutely aware of the political economy of the art world, having recently published an anthology of *Who Runs the Art World: Money, Power and Ethics (*Libri Publishing 2017). In the curatorial anthology they have divided the essays from 19 international contributors into four parts, representing what the editors describe as the four broad conceptual sections that govern the wide net of curatorship today. Perhaps the postmodern plural "nets" would be a more appropriate description for this companion study of curatorship which covers a vast array of research.

Carnegie Museum of Art - Pittsburgh

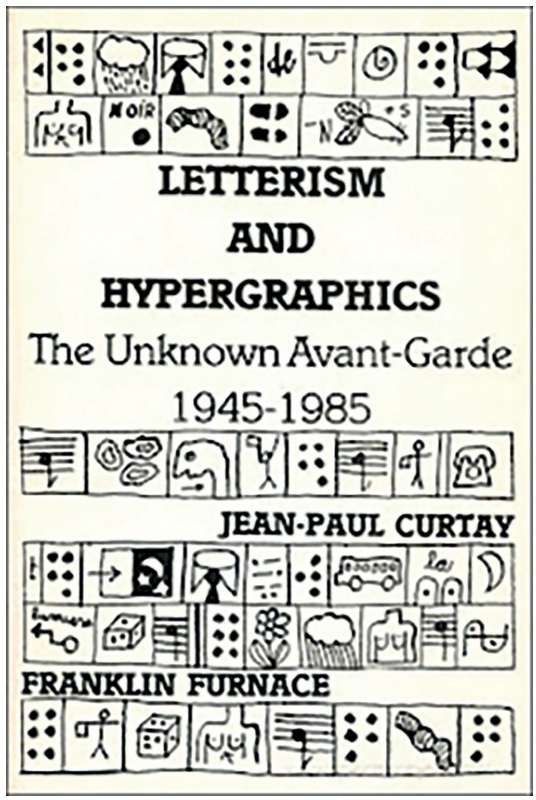
In Part I topics regarding the origin of the curator, curating, curatorial practice, history theory and practice and politics are intelligently explored by the writers David Carrier, Adam Geczy, Andrew McClellan and Carole Paul; even the 'death of the curator' is usefully introduced in these chapters that together would provide an excellent pedagogical introduction to a university course. Carrier provides a very well researched *A Select History of Curating in Pittsburgh: The Recent Story of the Carnegie International* an engaging critique of the Carnegie International that was first established in Pittsburgh in 1896. As this reviewer's mother's family's origins are in Dunfermline Scotland, the birthplace of Andrew Carnegie, I found this historical overview of his capitalist enterprises, philanthropy and the founding of the Carnegie international art fair very interesting. Geczy, artist and author of *Art: Histories, Theories and Exceptions* (Berg, 2008) who teaches at the University of Sydney, provides in his chapter *Curating Curiosity: Imperialism, Materialism, Humanism, and the Wunderkammer* an intriguing history and meaning of the canonical construct of art historical research – the cabinet of curiosities Wunderkammer as a basis for curatorial enterprise. Andrew McClellan's. *Professionalizing the Field: The Case of the United States* is somewhat Americophile but his essay reveals the powerful influence on professional curating of Paul Sachs (of Wall Street's Goldman Sachs) noting that his students obtained positions as directors of many of the galleries and museums throughout America and a few even in Canada. Like the death of painting, the death of the artist, the death of the curator is surely exaggerated, but curators of the future will certainly need a broader skill set and more flexible profile than Paul Sachs would have envisaged or thought desirable. In *The Emergence of the Professional Curator* Carole Paul, Director of Museum Studies in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at the University of California further usefully explores the professionalizing of the roles of the curator in galleries and museums from the Renaissance to the early nineteenth century.

In Part II, the editors provide an excellent introduction to each of the author's essays, advancing the notion that 'curators, have shaped our understanding of contemporary art since the 1960s and the context in which they worked. It begins with the various liberation movements in the 1960s, such as civil rights, gay and lesbian rights, and, particularly, the women's movement, and examines the influence these had on the politics of the art world.'
In respect of these necessarily contemporary themes Juli Carson, Professor of Art at UC Irvine, in *Curating as a Verb: 100 Years of Nation States* presents her thesis that curation has moved from being a profession to being an action for agents of intervention and real change in the theatre of art praxis. Elke Krasny Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna provides another important contribution to this section *Curating without Borders: Transnational Feminist and*

Queer Feminist Practices for the Twenty-first Century. And Maria Lind's *Displacements and Sites: Notes on a Curatorial Method* is an arresting account of two art exhibitions in Stockholm: one-day performance T.451 by artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and composer and musician Ari Benjamin Myers. Chris Spring's chapter, *Africa, Art and Knowing Nothing: Some Thoughts on Curating at the British Museum*, brings to mind the importance of post colonialism, indigeneity and outsider artists who challenge the Europhile imperialism of many curatorial endeavours of the early 19th and 20th centuries. Martha Wilson's chapter on New York's iconic centre Franklin Furnace brought back many memories for this reviewer, as it reflected upon her relationship with NSCAD where I taught for 38 years and Franklin Furnace where I had my first New York exhibit in 1977. Wilson's *Curatorial Crisis* is the author's historical and personal overview of the origin of the non-profit arts organization in her loft in Lower Manhattan. Her chapter documents the important curatorial role Lucy Lippard, Jacki Apple, and other feminist artists and curators played in the development of Franklin Furnace, now in its 4th decade of operation.

Part III opens with Thomas Berghuis a curator and art historian, based in Leiden, the Netherlands and author of the monograph Performance Art in China in 2006. The author's *We Care as Much as You Pay – Curating Asian Art* is an account of curating Asian art and its complexities over the last three decades. Biljana Ćirić an independent curator based in Shanghai and Belgrade provides some other vectors on curatorial practice in China during the 1980s, and how they affected knowledge production and public discourse. Gregory Galligan is an independent curator and art historian and director/co-founder of the non-profit research platform Thai Art Archive in Bangkok. His *Curating the Contemporary in Decolonial Spaces: Observations from Thailand on Curatorial Practice in Southeast Asia* provides more insights into political art practice beyond the traditional centres of cultural power. Alex Gawronski an artist, writer, gallerist, and academic based in Sydney is also a founding member of KNULP whose chapter *Curated from Within: The Artist as Curator* proposes curating more specifically as an interventionist activity in the art world and in culture in general. "It is a little-recognized fact that artists curated many of modernity's most iconic and influential exhibitions." (p232)

Curiously, the history of artist-run spaces, also known as artist-run initiatives, has been read in the



same terms as the emergence of the new field of independent professional curating in the 1960s: as a continuation of the avant-garde. He suggests that the one of the distinguishing characteristics of curatorial activities of artists in their own establishments is their independence from institutional constriction.(p248)

Canadian indigenous CRC and Professor at OCAD U Gerald McMaster has contributed much to the *Decolonizing the Ethnographic Museum* in Canada and his chapter provides insights into the recent history of this project which has begun to challenge the hegemony of colonialist narratives in the constitution and interpretation of Canadian art history which for too long was perceived as centred around The Group of Seven. McMaster's chapter is well balanced by Djon Mundine's intriguingly titled *The Creature from the Id: Adventures in Aboriginal Art Curating,* which is a useful historical account of Aboriginal curating in Australia, review of the history of Aboriginal art, curating, colonialism, and dispossession in six phases of historical development. Fatoş Üstek's *The Impact of Context Specificity in Curating amidst the Forces at Play in a Globalized World of Realms* examines the curatorial politics of display in several key exhibitions in Turkey, South Korea, and the U.K. Finally, in this section Lee Weng-Choy's *The Neglected Object of Curation,* provides inside information to discussions on the role of the Biennale in the international contemporary art world, specifically in

Southeast Asia – Singapore, Hong Kong, and Vietnam. The editors write that 'It mainly focuses on Peter Osborne's theory that the biennale is symptomatic of neoliberal ideology and the geopolitical totalization of the globe.'

Part IV is oddly prescient, a situation which the editors describe as 'looking at how best to curate, present, distribute, and know new media art and related online modes of art.' It is crucial to know their concepts, characteristics, and behaviors rather than to impose a top/down theory of art.' The chapter written by Sara Diamond President of OCAD University in Toronto, *Parallel Processing: Public Art and New Media* is described as a timely cartography of the subject. As she writes 'New media public art curation occurs through the work of artists, art consultants and commissioners, and curators, through festivals, platforms, agencies, and collaborations with institutions such as universities, galleries, museums, and new media art centers. Processes include creating and understanding the context for the artwork, establishing the slate of artists or choosing artists, defining and understanding audiences, and planning audience outreach and education. Curators and consultants manage the highly regulated nature of public space, establishing access to private spaces for the public.' (p325)

Arnau Gifreu-Castells, research affiliate at the Open Documentary Lab (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and part of the i-Docs group (University of the West of England) provides a detailed *Approach to the Curatorship of Virtual Reality Exhibitions* focusing on VR exhibitions specific to curating issues and concerns. This chapter provides an interesting overview of VR technology and its entrance into the worlds of museums and galleries but with its voluminous listing and multi bulleted items this reads like an application for funding from a Federal agency. Eric Kluitenberg's *Tracing the Ephemeral and ntestational: Aesthetics and Politics of The Living Archive* explores practice-oriented research conducted in the collaborative research project The Living Archive, a joint project of De Balie, center for culture and politics in Amsterdam, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, and University of Portsmouth. 'The project was initiated by artist and researcher David Garcia and me to address the apparent condition of selective amnesia that seemed to afflict the diverse coalition of experimental media artists, political activists, dissident lifestylers, radical theorist, and community media makers that met up in the Next 5 Minutes festival series (Amsterdam and Rotterdam, 1993–2003), which gave Tactical Media its name.' (p382) What is most interesting in this essay is the progressive political praxis of artists in oligarchic countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia Lebanon.

Melentie Pandilovski's *Arts and Science: The Intersection (Re)engineered* is another detailed discussion of the intersection of the arts, science and technology, and philosophy from a contemporary curating perspective, where professional curatorial training seems somewhat redundant. Sean Lowry's *Curating with the Internet* discusses the emerging Internet-based and Internet-activated approaches to curating art. 'For more than half the world's population, the Internet is a definitive shaping condition of everyday life. Yet despite its ubiquitous and still growing influence across virtually every sphere of activity in developed societies, its magnitude is still being processed by artists and curators. To be sure, in at least a basic sense, everyone who uses a smartphone or personal computer is now a curator and archivist – of sorts."Tthe truth of this statement is being compounded.

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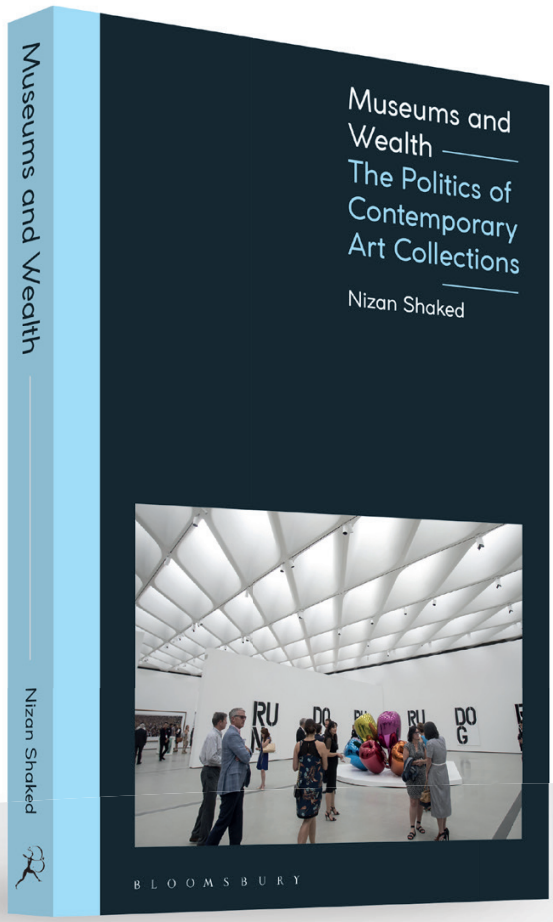
Tribute to Magdalene Odundo, *ink and pencil on paper, 1996, Courtesy of the author, Chris Spring (page 145)*



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