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Providence College Art Journal

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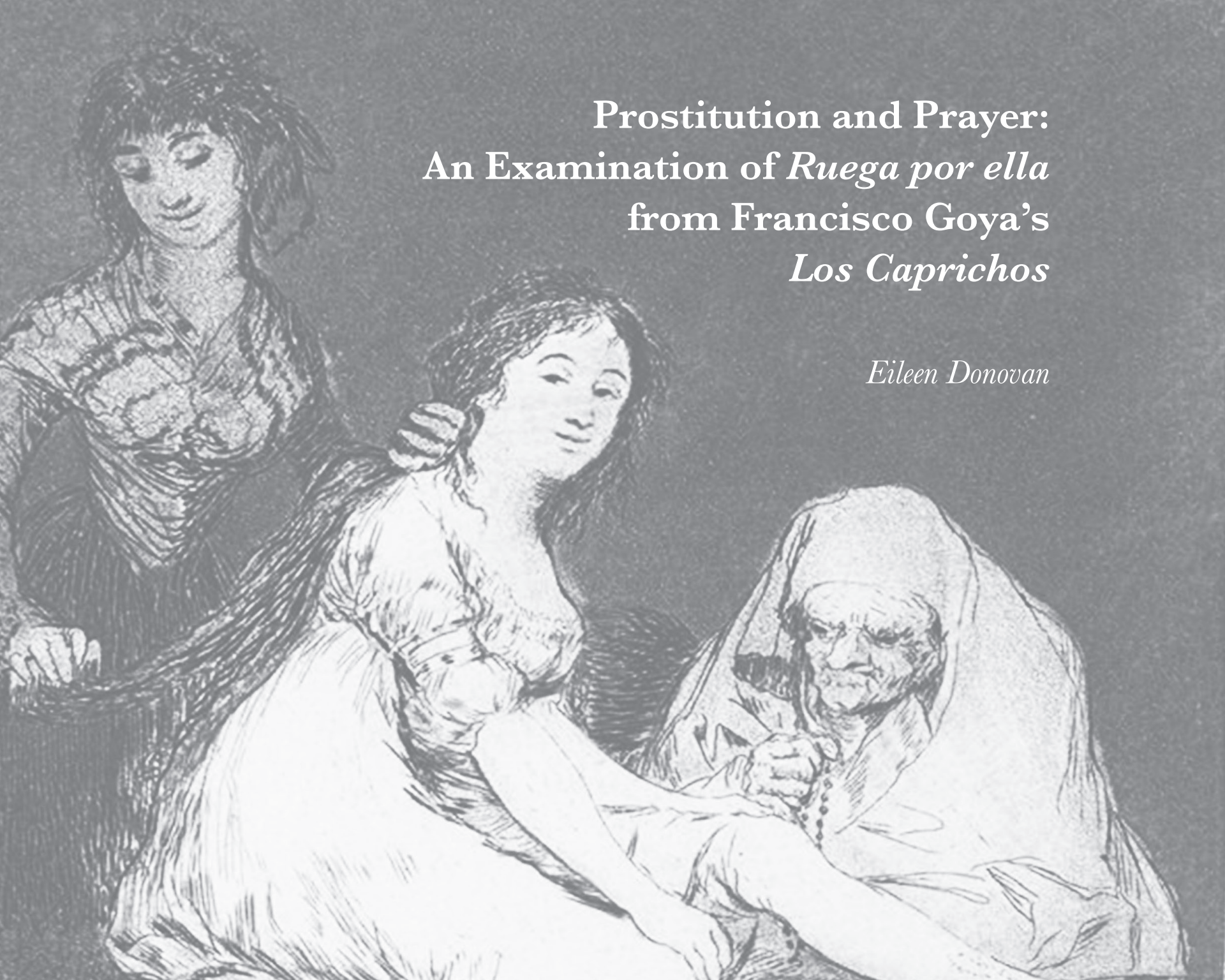

Prostitution and Prayer: An Examination of *Ruega por ella* from Francisco Goya's *Los Caprichos*

Eileen Donovan

The groundbreaking nature of Francisco Goya's cultural criticism in his 1799 series *Los Caprichos* established it as one of the most important print series ever created. Goya's presentation of the many vices of his contemporary Spanish society through a combination of realistic and fantastical scenes epitomized Enlightenment attitudes in its scope and social commentary. The majority of the images in *Los Caprichos* can be categorized into broad genres of subject matter including bourgeois frivolity, exploitation of the opposite sexes, and hypocrisies of the Catholic Church. Art historians have focused on the generalities of these critiques, but because Goya has always been presented as an innovator in concept and in printmaking technique, less attention has been given to how Goya might have found inspiration for his images in established visual traditions. Plate 31of *Los Caprichos* (Figure 1) combines conventional toilette and prostitution genre scenes, but moves beyond these precedents in a surprising way, for it also connects to the visual tradition of Bathsheba. This combination of traditions reveals Goya's review in Plate 31 to encompass not just a social commentary on prostitution, but also a critique of the Catholic Church and certain commonplace religious customs.

The nature of Goya's criticism in *Los Caprichos* is complicated in its breadth, as it addresses social practices through a mixture of genre elements, fantasy, and historical subjects. The series has eighty prints that critique the immoral customs of eighteenth-century lower and upper Spanish classes.[1] Many of the prints can be grouped by the subject matter they address. The prints of Courtship often show how men and women are more interested in taking advantage of the opposite sex instead of forming true relationships. Prints of the Catholic Church often demonstrate the fallibility of Church officials and their hypocritical lifestyles.[2] The many prints of Prostitution show a mixture of prostitutes preparing for their profession, pimps and procuresses that sell the wares, and the patrons of the night. Scenes like Plate 17, titled *It is nicely stretched*, fit within the tradition of prostitution genre scenes as they present man and women encouraging and participating in situations of lust and sex. Throughout the eighty plates of *Los Caprichos* Goya offered a moralized critique of people, but did not present solutions or examples of good behavior. The series could be perceived as a mere dictionary of vices that eventually crosses between the realms of reality and fantasy.

Goya's endeavor is consonant with Enlightenment moral philosophy regarding social activities that loosened the Catholic Church's control and allowed capricious lifestyles to emerge. At this time, the Catholic Church's nearly 300-year-long Inquisition was waning with the growth of secular philosophies of the Enlightenment. While the original purposes of the Inquisition were intended to ensure the practice of Catholic doctrine with converts, it had transformed into a persecution of non-Catholics, censorship of "heretical" literature, and the suppression of certain gender expression and sexuality.[3] As the Church was very closely linked to the monarchy in Spain, the Church also had tight control over social and legal activities deemed immoral by Catholic standards.[4] Prostitution faced a drastic reinvention as brothels had been declared illegal in the seventeenth century. As they were forced to the streets, prostitutes became a more visible element of society. However, while the women were publicly visible, the church still censored portrayals of prostitutes in literature and art. As the Enlightenment movement emerged, people less often looked to the Church for guidance and rule and the Inquisition grew less effective as a means of controlling social norms.

Goya demonstrated his understanding of Enlightenment thought in *Los Caprichos* through his depiction of ridiculous Catholic Church characters.[5] Goya critiques both the feeble-minds of the common people, who were susceptible to such simple trickery and illusionary religion, and the Catholic Church, for taking advantage of those who did not know any better. Goya's series demonstrated the prevalence of Enlightenment theory through his moralization of the corrupt practices of the Catholic Church.

Though complex to a modern audience, the nuances of *Los Caprichos* would have been understood by the society it both presented and criticized. While a direct translation of "Caprichos" simply means whimsy, the forces behind the capricious life implied a more complicated change in social behavior and practices. Men and women saw a change in fashion that emulated and fantasized the dress of the lower class Majos and Majas.[6] The men's stylish broad hats hid their appearance while the female mantilla draped over their features. This allowed the upper class to sneak amongst the lower class in an anonymous manner.[7] However, true anonymity amongst the classes was not likely due to the inequality of the clothing fabric and general demeanor. Either way, the upper classes found a new boldness in their actions and activities. Men could visit places of ill repute without facing the same social repercussions as they would have had their identities been open. Behavioral "Caprichos" were also evident in the prominent literature of the time.[8] Books and plays featured fanciful and complicated love triangles crafted secret rendez-vous and unexpected interactions. Two of Goya's most prominent patrons, the Duke and Duchess Osuna, dubbed one of their palaces "El Capricho."[9] The title for Goya's series was likely in honor of his friends. The series of *Los Caprichos* would have been recognized and understood as part of a general social movement in eighteenth-century Spanish society.

The Church in Spain had long frowned upon visual representations of nudity or any sexual content, including prostitution, so Goya had no local tradition on which to draw from for *Los Caprichos*. He therefore looked to the artistic traditions of the Netherlands, France, and England for approaches to critical and moralizing genre subjects. Seventeenth century Netherlandish artists established a visual tradition of brothel and prostitute scenes, which were readily available to Spain as the Low Countries of Holland were subjects of the Spanish Crown.[10] Many of these scenes, like *The Procuress* by Dirck van Baburen and *A Merry Company at Table* (Figure 2) by Hendrick Pot, feature a mixture of figures including prostitutes, procuress, and male patrons. The procuress is featured for her ugly and elderly qualities as she encourages relations so that she may collect her coin. She is also presented as sexually lacking and undesirable compared to the other women. Later eighteenth-century English traditions varied in their methods of portraying prostitutes. William Hogarth created a series of prints and paintings that revealed the *Progress of a Harlot* (Figure 3) by the examination of a young woman who found herself destitute in London. Her progress included a rise in prosperity and fame before she was imprisoned and died suffering from venereal diseases. This plain presentation of the consequences of immorality leaves little room for interpretation. Hogarth also conversely presented the *Progress of a Rake* to show the penalties that can happen to men. Nudes from these three cultures were also often presented in historical and mythological situations like "Susanna and the Elders" and "Diana at her Bath." These recurring visual themes of prostitution and historical subjects in European art would have provided Goya plenty of fodder for him to follow.

Plate 31 of Francisco Goya's *Los Caprichos* presents a central beauty who knowingly smiles as she glances out of the room at her voyeur. Her heavily lidded eyes bat slowly as she challenges the stares before she continues getting ready. She coyly arches her back, pushing her chest forward, as she raises her skirt and lifts her bare leg to wipe off the mess on her ankle. She is helped by another woman who shares in her smirk. The shaded assistant brushes the sitting woman's long hair, making sure everything is in place for later. Beside the two of them mutters a hunched hag who grips a rosary with her gnarled fingers. The ugliness of the hag temporarily distracts from the beauty, but one must go to the hag first before meeting the beauty for the night. The shadowed room provides the epitome and antithesis of sexual desire through the presence of the women inside. The scene differs from the Hogarth, van Baburen, and Pot works as Goya's image lacks a described narrative and male figures. To see how it diverged from these precedents it is necessary to examine the process of creation of Goya's composition.

The nature of the represented subject of Plate 31 of Francisco Goya's *Los Caprichos* went through a drastic evolution as composition and storyline changed leading to the final *Ruega por ella* in the series. Based on two preliminary drawings, a proof state of the etching, and the final version of the print, it is clear that Goya altered a seemingly simple bathing scene to make a larger commentary on prostitution and religion in late eighteenth-century Spanish society. The first drawing, part of his Madrid Album created before the official *Los Caprichos* series, presents a young beauty as she is dressed with the assistance of a maid (Figure 4). She tantalizes the viewer with her scantily clad body and glowing eyes. The composition and situation of the scene allows the work to be easily categorized into the toilette genre, which focuses on bathing and dressing women. Goya's first alteration of the image changed the genre away from toilette to prostitution (Figure 5). The addition of the hag in the first sketch for *Los Caprichos* changed the two initial characters of the woman and maid into a trio of prostitute, assistant, and procuress. The visual presence of the procuress immediately makes the scene more sinister because of her harsh visage and crouched body, even though the prostitute remains beautiful and coy like in the Madrid Album. From the sketch, Goya once again changed the scene to create a print proof (Figure 6). Goya darkened the lighting of the scene, placing the assistant and procuress in the shadows of the room, with light only placed on the upper half and leg of the central prostitute. By focusing on her body, and subsequently her sexuality, this change downplays the role and presence of the procuress, once again making the work appear to be more of a toilette scene. The final stage of the image places the hag and beauty more prominently together as they are both entirely lit up, once again placing it in prostitution genre.

The inclusion of the hag, not present initially, magnifies the aesthetic beauty of the younger women while emphasizing her own ugliness, thus placing emphasis on her actions and purpose in Plate 31. The hag symbolically opposes the beauty to become the procuress. The hag taken alone in other types of imagery was not seen as a procuress, instead, she represented the lower dregs of impoverished society. The hag was also often seen as a witch because of the stigmas surrounding old women.[11] While the prostitute is youthful, the procuress is the epitome of how the years cause wear and tear. The position of the hag foretells the future of the beauty, as beauty is lost with age. This visual tradition is seen most often in the Dutch art previously mentioned. However, continued focus on this image reveals details that were not realized from the earlier draft pieces that add to

the genre traditions. The detail of the procuress shows that she is holding a rosary. This object adds confusion to the prostitution scene, as it seems odd for a procuress to be praying.

The inclusion of the rosary, title of the plate, and text of the Prado manuscript, gives the subject a broader and more complex narrative. Plate 31, entitled *Ruega por ella*, translates to *She Prays for her*. This title places emphasis not on the prostitute, who is most prominent in the visual hierarchy, but on the procuress, and more particularly, on the rosary in her hand. As the title fails to provide complete explanation for the scene and rosary, the image requires more background. The Prado manuscript, released several years after *Los Caprichos*, was written as an accompanying text to the series to give each individual image more depth as to what it shows. It elaborated on the brief titles that were placed beneath each plate to clarify the subject and the direction of Goya's critique. The text from the Prado Manuscript for the *Ruega por ella* image says, "And she is quite right to do it, so that God may give her good fortune and spare her from the mischief of surgeons and constables, and that she may become as sharp and able on all accounts as her mother was, God rest her soul."[12] What is most notable from this text is that the hag does not pray that the young woman ceases to be a prostitute; she prays that the young woman is not caught. Her prayers are therefore words of encouragement to her companions. Therefore, the procuress demonstrates misplaced her piety as her prayers do not follow what is typical to Catholic doctrine. The texts of the title and Prado manuscript give complexity to Plate 31 as they focus on the procuress and rosary, deviating from the simple toilette and prostitution genres.

Goya's print *Ruega por ella* must be situated outside of conventional toilette and prostitution narratives to better identify and address his combination of prostitution characters with prayer and voyeurism. One possibility is that Goya was reflecting the story of La Celestina in this *Los Caprichos* print.[13] *La Celestina* was a novel written in 1499 Fernando de Rojas. This story follows Celestina, an old procuress in charge of two prostitutes in a brothel, as she stirs trouble amongst some courtly lovers. The male protagonist approaches her not for her role as a procuress, but because she is rumored to have magical powers. Celestina is noted to have held a rosary as she used it to count the lovers her employees took.[14] Goya would have certainly been aware of this story as it was one of most highly regarded pieces of Spanish literary works, raising the question of whether he was portraying the famed procuress.[15] However, even if it was part of his inspiration for Plate 31, there is not direct correlation as *Ruega por ella* follows different visual traditions than those of Celestina. Years after the printing of *Los Caprichos*, Goya made two works about Celestina in 1808 and 1824. The first work, *Maja and Celestina on a Balcony*, depicted the devious procuress and woman in an open environment (Figure 7). They are standing on the balcony in full view, and not as objects of secretive voyeurism. The Maja depicted is also not strictly one of Celestina's two prostitutes as she could be one of the other women in the tale. Goya's later *Maja and Celestina* was a miniature painting done on ivory (Figure 8). The forms of the women are slightly rougher than the prior painting. They are positioned more casually, and although the work is a detail of the top of the women, they appear to be leaning and looking out of a window like in the prior painting. So while the print *Ruega por ella* seems to follow the same storyline as the tale of Celestina, it is visually different from his other works. As Plate 31 does not fall in line with Goya's other depictions of Celestina is possible that the work can be placed in other visual traditions

of other female characters.

The same combination of characters of the beauty, hag, and assistant, coupled with the voyeuristic aspect of the conspicuously absent man, can be found in the visual tradition of Bathsheba. The narrative of Bathsheba derives from the second book of Samuel. The story revolves around the wise King David during a time of impropriety and cruelty. From the roof of his palace, David spied on the woman Bathsheba as she bathed. She became pregnant after he invited her over for relations. This brought much trouble to David in later years as it strained his relationship with God. While Bathsheba was not technically a prostitute, she was often shown as seducing David with her nudity, the ultimate sexual downfall of the revered king. She failed to save her husband from the conspiracies of King David and therefore was an accomplice to the crime. Although it was David's choice to summon Bathsheba and his decision to send her husband to his death, Bathsheba was held to blame.[16] Therefore, Bathsheba is remembered as a woman of ill repute who used her sexuality against the king.

Images of Bathsheba typically showed her at her bath with attendants who take care of her feet and hair. Her sexuality is highlighted as her body is often twisted with one leg raised. One of the attendants is often young while the other is old. While the old attendant is not strictly a motherly figure, she is the person who watches her mistress and is somewhat responsible for her behavior. This type of composition was first seen in the mid-to-late sixteenth-century. Some Bathsheba compositions include an image of King David spying upon the bathing Bathsheba, while others just show the woman. This was done to emphasize the voyeurism of the scene, as neither David, nor the viewer of the artwork are supposed to see Bathsheba in her otherwise private moment.

Among the many, many traditional depictions of Bathsheba, Goya's composition must have been directly influenced by Rembrandt's 1643 version of *The Toilet of Bathsheba* (Figure 9). While Goya may not have seen Rembrandt's original painting, a reproduction of Rembrandt's work was made in 1763 by Jean Michel Moreau the Younger, and printed copies would have been available to Goya in Spain (Figure 10). The two images seemingly mirror each other in composition with the placement of the characters and situation of the scene. Rembrandt's Bathsheba and Goya's prostitute are framed by the assistant brushing their hair, and old maid at their feet. Their body positions and hand placements emphasize their sexuality, which is contrasted with the covered women next to them. Most importantly, they stare out of the scene challenging the gaze of their voyeur. The voyeur is anyone who looks at the images, who seemingly adopts the roles of patrons of Goya's brothel and King David. The similarities between these two scenes point to a direct relationship moreso than any other representation of Bathsheba, and even the differences are easily accounted for. Goya focuses his work specifically on the characters he presents, as he did for all of the *Los Caprichos* prints, while Rembrandt gives more depth to the landscape as he was only creating a singular work. Rembrandt's Bathsheba is fully nude while Goya's prostitute is clothed. This is best explained by placing Goya within a historical timeframe. When he was printing *Los Caprichos* for public sale, the governors of the Spanish Inquisition would have not allowed him to present a nude female figure. Therefore, Goya covered up the chest of the woman for the final version of the print, even though the original woman seen in the sketch of the Madrid Album was partially bare. Finally, although Goya's handmaiden is not black like

Rembrandt's, she is darker as she is physically placed in the shadows of the scene. Despite their differences, Goya's work heavily reflects Rembrandt's image in its composition and in its voyeuristic quality.

The addition of prayer to the contemporary situation is what gives Goya's work religious purpose and context so it can be compared to biblical text and imagery. Goya's presentation of Bathsheba as a prostitute in contemporary society does not make the work lose its moral value. As previously noted, Bathsheba had been established as a symbol of lust and sin since the Old Testament was written. Prostitutes were viewed the same way in their contemporary societies. As it reflects a religious story, the whole piece can be taken as a greater metaphor against the dangers of adultery. David's relationship with Bathsheba caused a great many problems for his kingdom and his relationship with God. The King committed adultery against the already established Jewish doctrine of the Old Testament which forbade such things. He then conspired to commit murder and the break in his relationship with God caused the death of the son that he had had with Bathsheba. These consequences from the life of David would have been known to the religious and lay people of Goya's day. People of Spain could, in part, confer that relations with a prostitute outside of a blessed marriage would cause personal and public downfall. This concept relates back to Goya's image and the prayers of the procuress described in the Prado Manuscript. As the procuress prays that the prostitute is safe from the constables and surgeons, the she is in fact hoping that the prostitute and patrons will not have to face the same biblical-sized consequences as Bathsheba and David.

By alluding to the visual tradition of Bathsheba, Goya not only addressed the problems of prostitution, he also raised questions regarding a critique of popular faith and the efficacy of Catholic doctrine. King David's relationship with Bathsheba was fundamental in the development of Christian morality as he committed the sins against God of lust, pride, and adultery; sins that were later committed by contemporary Spaniards. Men of Goya's day were able to visit the brothels and view women because the growing trend of the capricious lifestyle—the concept in which the title of Goya's series is rooted—favored anonymity and secrets over personable relationships. What they had to look to was the Catholic Church, who still presented David as an inspirational figure because of his many other deeds and his typological connections to Christ. The Church's generally positive value given to David as an inspirational figure is problematic, to say the least. The sins of the common contemporary Spanish man are recognizable, yet also forgivable and easily overlooked because they are reflective of the sins of King David. *Ruega por ella* therefore emerges as an complex critique of society and religion through Goya's divergence from traditional toilette and prostitution scenes, and his innovative transposition of a biblical story to contemporary society.

Endnotes

[1] Jose Lopez-Rey, *Goya's Caprichos: Beauty, Reason & Caricature* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1970), 1-80.

[2] Eleanor A. Sayre, *The Changing Image: Prints by Francisco Goya* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1974), 20-40; Plate 79 of the series, titled "Nadie nos ha visto" or "No one has seen us," features several monks as they imbibe a barrel of wine and libations. The sheer size of one of the monks indicates a life full of gluttony. Goya demonstrated the hypocrisies of the clergy to show his critique of the Catholic Church.

[3] Helen Rawlings, *The Spanish Inquisition* (Malden: Blackwell Pub, 2006). 91-112, and Licht, Fred, "Goya and David: Conflicting Paths to Enlightenment Morality" *Goya and the Spirit of the Enlightenment*, ed. Sanchez and Sayre (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1989). lxxvii-lxxxv.

[4] Sanchez, Alfonso E.P. and Eleanor A Sayre, *Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment*, (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1989). xviii-l.

[5] For example, Plate 52 demonstrates how the corrupt clergy of Catholic Church led people astray in their piety and faith. The image shows a young woman praying on her knees to what appears to be a hooded monk. Close inspection reveals that the monk is just cloth that is swathed about a tree, and that the people are praying to a false icon. Several plates have similar scenes regarding impiety and corruption.

[6] Dorothy Noyes, "La Maja Vestida: Dress as Resistance to Enlightenment in Late-18th-Century Madrid," *The Journal of American Folklore* vol. 111, no. 440, 17th-20th Centuries (1998), 197-217.

[7] Ibid.

[8] John Dowling, "Capricho as Style in Life, Literature, and Art from Zamora to Goya," *Eighteenth Century Studies* vol. 10, no. 4 (1977), 413-433.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Museo del Prado, *Flemish Painting*. http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/painting/flemish-painting/

[11] V. Holloway, "Goya's Caprichos, the Church, the Inquisition, Witchcraft, and Abjection," *Dieciocho: Hispanic Enlightenment* [serial online] (Spring 2012) 35(1): 21-48.

[12] Francisco Goya, *Los Caprichos* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969).

[13] Fernando De Rojas, *La Celestina: Tragicomedia De Calisto Y Melibea* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2000).

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

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3.

Figure 1 Francisco Goya. "Ruega por ella (She prays for her)" in *Los Caprichos*. Aquatint print. 1799.

Figure 2 Hendrick Pot. *A Merry Company at Table*. Oil on canvas. 1630.

Figure 3 William Hogarth. *A Harlot's Progress*. Engraving. 1732.

Figure 4 Francisco Goya. *Madrid Album*. India Ink. 1796-1797.

Figure 5 Francisco Goya. *Drawing for Los Caprichos*. Pencil on paper. 1797.

Figure 6 Francisco Goya. Proof for "Ruega por ella (She prays for her)" in *Los Caprichos*. Aquatint print. 1799.

Figure 7 Francisco Goya. *Maja and Celestina on a Balcony*. Oil on canvas, 1808.

Figure 8 Francisco Goya. *Maja and Celestina*. Carbon black and watercolor on ivory. 1824-25.

Figure 9 Rembrandt van Rijn. T*he Toilet of Bathsheba*. Oil on wood. 1643.

Figure 10 Jean Michael Moreau the Younger, after Rembrandt. *The Toilet of Bathsheba.* Engraving. 1763.

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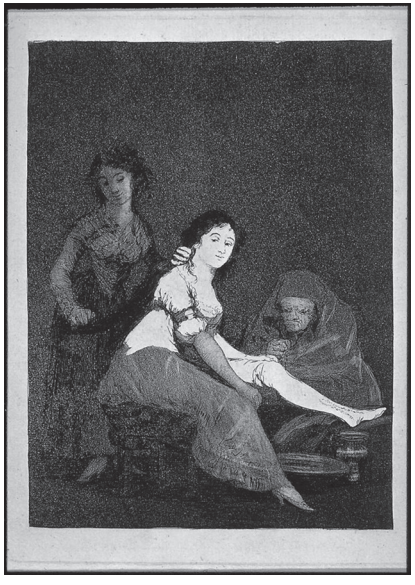

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Gino Severini's Dancers and His Theatrical Milieu

Maria Haidinger

Gino Severini created over a hundred works portraying dancers in various settings between 1910 and 1914.[1] While Severini was a major Figure within the Futurist movement that embraced the speed, technology, and industrial products of Modernity, only a minimal amount of research has been conducted concerning his personal relationship to theatre and dance performance. His dematerialization of form articulates the same movement, energy, and expression that Futurist performers personified in the performing arts. Severini set himself apart from standard Futurist ideology that glorified machinery by using dancer and dancehall subject matter to generate a mood and sense of "collective consciousness" that was equated with modern Parisian social life.

Severini's complex dance paintings are rooted in an array of cultural artistic, literary, and philosophical grounds that were fertile at the moment in each place where he lived. Studying in Rome from 1899 to 1906, and moving to Paris after that, Severini served as an intermediary between Futurists in Italy and the Parisian avant-garde. Prior to Severini, Seurat and other Post-Impressionists such as Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec had been compelled by dance imagery within cabarets, dance halls, and theaters of Parisian nightlife. Severini developed a fondness for the work of Seurat and explained:

> "It was Seurat who first and most successfully established a balance between subject, composition and technique…the modern world that Seurat wished to paint…I chose Seurat as my master for once and for all."[2]

Seurat's color and line theories, exemplified in his *La Chahut* of 1889 (Figure 1) are also revealed in Severini's selection of complementary colors such as red and green in his *Dance of the Pan Pan at the Monico* of 1911 (Figure 2). Severini's aim was to create a visual sensation of movement, the same energy experienced within the modern day dancehall. He focused on integrating the spectator into the painting to achieve "active intervention of the outside world."[3] While each of Severini's dance paintings can be analyzed as an intricate composition of notions, enlightened by the styles and theories of former artistic periods, they simultaneously express an aspiration to diverge from the same tradition and assert a new Modernist vision of dance. He adopted similar stylistic attributes in Paris, selecting dancers as subject matter to embody a modern urban setting amidst a political and social rebellious culture. For those eager to defy traditional expectations, the dancehall served as a place to escape aristocratic conformity and meld into a new exciting crowd.

In 1906, Severini settled himself within the Montmartre district of Paris, a thriving entertainment location that put him in direct proximity to the neighboring Théâtre de L'Œuvre where he contributed to stage designs.[4] Like the many 19th-century scenes of everyday life, Severini followed a genre painting compositional structure to illustrate the atmosphere within the room similar to Renoir's *Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette* of 1876 (Figure 3). During these years, Severini's styles were rapidly changing, as were all avant-garde artists. However, his subject matter remained consistent. Through experimentation, Severini's style progressed into a more individualistic portrayal of Futurism, greatly influenced by Cubism. When Severini's *Blue Dancer* of 1912 (Figure 4) is compared to Picasso's *Violin and Grapes* of the same year (Figure 5), the similarities are clear but the differences in the two approaches are magnified. Within his first year in Paris, he attended a young artist circle that

included Picasso and Braque. There they discussed the doctrines of Nietzsche and other philosophers in order to formulate artistic theories more in tune with modernity.[5] The majority of Severini's paintings post 1910 reveals Cubist characteristics, including multiple deconstructed geometric Figures arranged in a flat manner to deny three-dimensional depth and traditional linear perspective.

Both images here include subject matter that reference musical connections as well as visual systems that simultaneously suggest multiple points of view. Picasso's composed layers of geometric forms construct a bow, a scroll, and strings that when put together, generate the idea of a violin. The *Blue Dancer* not only illustrates everyday life, but also shows space, time, and movement through the dynamic overlapping forms that swirl over each other. The dominant blue takes over the composition intensifying the intimacy a viewer experiences with the rhythmic atmosphere of a dancehall. Severini explained that Picasso and other Cubists had just begun "to dismantle objects, in order to present different points of view."[6] However, while Cubists were "satisfied with such movement as a chair," Severini was more "thrilled by the movement of a dancer and boulevard filled with people."[7] The juxtaposition indicates that Severini found Cubism lacking in atmosphere and human engagement. The subject matter and associated compositional structures for Cubists followed mostly portrait and still life conventions, whereas Severini employed narrative subject matter and compositional devices of genre-painting to communicate movement, interaction, and time sequences.

The *Blue Dancer* also demonstrates Severini's Cubist adoption of adding ornamental sequins to the canvas to give a synesthetic tangibility to the subject matter. Severini commented that sequins were "not meant to describe the real, but to express it in a transcendental way."[8] He included in a letter to Marinetti in 1913, that he chose sequins for its ability to reflect light into the observer's realm to achieve "ever-purer realities."[9] The interaction between light and sequins produce a deeper internal experience between viewer and image.

Although Futurists preached to rebel against the "spineless worshiping of old canvases, old statues, and old bric-a-brac," according to a group manifesto of 1910, it can also be suggested that mosaics inspired Severini's flattening of space and use of sequins.[10] Severini was certainly familiar ancient Roman and Byzantine mosaics. The sequins present similar purpose as the glass, gold, or mirrored tesserae in mosaics by reflecting iridescent light to bedazzle the viewer. Additionally, the flat shapes are broken down into repetitive geometric patterns that appear as tiles of a mosaic.

Paris was the headquarters of aesthetic and creative experimentation as well as philosophical critique in the early 20th -century. Technological advancements such as automobiles, airplanes, and war machinery forged an optimistic contemporary lifestyle.[11] The Futurists, as their nomenclature indicates, emphasized movement away from tradition more than any other group of ideologues. Filippo Marinetti, the founder of Futurism, was the first to publish Futurist manifestos that were shocking in their devotion to the machine, the new phenomenon of speed, and the call for the ruin of museums and 'old' artwork of Italian antiquity.[12] "Great crowds excited by work, by pleasure, and by riot" that supported the Futurist ideals of the adoration of war, speed, and industrialization became the staple images in Futurist artwork as seen in Boccioni's *The Charge of the Lancers* of 1915 (Figure 6).[13] Even though Severini officially joined the movement in 1910 and was influenced to praise modernity,

machinery, and activity within the urban environment, he differentiated himself from his colleagues by choice of subject matter and by his motive to evoke mood. While the majority of Futurist paintings portray images of machinery, Severini instead chose the dancer. It is fair to say that no other painter of the movement shared his enthusiasm for this type of subject.

In 1914 Severini recorded the theoretical foundations of his works into a manifesto, *The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism*.[14] His manifesto asserts that the chosen subject of an artist must generate a mood and visual reality. Through the means of emotion, memory, and awareness of the external environment, the artist should produce metaphysical forms that shed light on a "plastic equivalent of reality."[15] A piece of artwork can revive a memory of an unrelated past event or image, which becomes blended into a new idea. To Severini dance posed as the ultimate subject to visualize Futurism and to capture an apparition of modernity.

Some of the ways Severini diverged from the more commonplace paradigms of the Italian Futurists can be attributed to his literary circle in Paris. Severini was introduced to Paul Fort, an influential poet in Parisian literary groups who organized weekly discussion circles where artists and writers conversed about art subjects.[16] Through these meetings, Severini met Jules Romains, who introduced him to the literature of Stéphane Mallarmé.[17] Both writers played an influential role in Severini's artwork.

The scholar Marianne Martin has asserted that the manner in which Severini's paintings capture metaphysical forms closely aligns with Romains' modernist art philosophy called unanimism.[18] Although it was relatively a minor movement, unanimism was influential for select avant-garde artists. A primary principle put forward was that each individual person partakes in a shared "collective consciousness," where separate feelings and impressions toward a given experience are fused with the mutual thought of those surrounding.[19] "Collective consciousness" would occur in a crowd setting so that each individual is fused together with the whole to share a universal experience. Similar to Nietzschean philosophy, not everyone had the ability to experience "collective consciousness," which empowered artists to communicate such shared feelings through their artwork. The Futurists likewise developed a Nietzschean philosophy that artists were superior to the average common man. It was the artist's duty to act as *supermen* by communicating the sensations felt in the spiritual nature of life through their images.[20] Thus, environments such as a dancehall—and the special abilities of the artists and performers within that crowd—took on special significance, a value for Severini that was not appreciated by other Futurist artists who did not participate in this literary milieu or understand the concepts of unanimism.

Returning to *Dance of the Pan Pan at the Monico*, we can see how the painting exemplifies Romains' philosophy of unanimism where human forms fill the composition, merging together on the dance floor as a single entity. The choice of complimentary colors emphasizes various planes that interchange amongst each other, creating a rhythm and sense of movement, music, and dance. As Romains wrote, "the noise, the odor, the moistness, the breath, come together to fill the illuminated space; the limbs, and nerves and muscles of all work to forge the great and unique joy. And the individual dissolves."[21] Each individual is fused together to make up the collective conscious experience in a dancehall setting.

Martin also denotes that the connections drawn between Mallarme and Severini suggest that Severini had an interest in the American Futurist dancer Loie Fuller. Mallarme had written about her in his literature regarding dance, which Severini would have likely known. His 1912 painting titled *Dancer at Pigalle* (Figure 7) reflects Mallarme's report: this "woman associates the flight of clothes with the powerful or vast dance to the point of sustaining them, to infinity, like her expansion."[22] The canvas is developed with layers of plaster to malleably capture the dancer's motion and costume by projecting them out into the viewer's realm. Severini explained the folds of his dancers dress in the Marlborough Gallery exhibition of 1913 as encapsulating:

> These folds preserve their exterior form, modified in a uniform manner through the rotary movement. In order to better convey the notion of relief, I have attempted to model the essential portions in a manner almost sculptural. Light and ambiance act simultaneously on the forms of movement.[23]

When compared to Loie Fuller's butterfly (Figure 8) dance costume photograph, similar visual traits are apparent. The way in which Severini depicted the dancer's attire mimics the circular flow, tempo, and movement portrayed in Fuller's costumes.

As Mallarme put it, "a dancer is not woman dancing but an idea of form."[24] To Severini the dancer was a metaphor for the mood and atmosphere of the fast-paced Parisian social life around him. Severini stood at the intersection of several movements in art and literature, fusing his ideas with his Italian Futurist colleagues, bringing them together with the avant-garde styles of Paris, including Post-Impressionist expressivity and Cubist form, and differing from them by his association with Romains' concept of unanimism and Mallarmé's appreciation of dance. For Severini, both dancer and dancehall had the Nietzschean capability to morph into the spectacle of the collective conscious experience.

Endnotes

[1] Daniela Fonti, *Gino Severini: The Dance 1909-1916*, (Milan: Skira, 2002).

[2] Gino Severini, *The Life of a Painter*, trans. Jennifer Franchina, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 35.

[3] Gino Severini, "The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism," in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Umbro Apollonio, (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2001), 125.

[4] Gino Severini, *The Life of a Painter*, 44.

[5] Gino Severini, *The Life of a Painter*, 41.

[6] Gino Severini, *The Life of a Painter*, 63.

[7] Gino Severini quoted by Daniela Fonti in *Gino Severini: The Dance*, 15.

[8] Gino Severini quoted by John Gage in "Severini's Socks or the Dancing Colours," in Daniela Fonti, *Gino Severini: The Dance 1909-1916*, (Milan: Skira, 2002), 40.

[9] Letter from Severini to Marinetti in Anne Coffin Hanson, *Severini Futurista: 1912-1917*, (Connecticut: Yale University Art Gallery, 1995), 145.

[10] Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carra, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, and Gino Severini, "Manifesto of the Futurist Painters," (1910) in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi, and Laura Wittman, (Yale University Press, 2009), 62.

[11] Stephen Kern, *Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 113.

[12] Gunter Berghaus, *Italian Futurist Theatre 1909-1944*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 45.

[13] F.T. Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909), in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi and Laura Wittman. (Yale University Press, 2009), 49.

[14] Gino Severini, "The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism," in *Futurist Manifestos*, 125.

[15] Gino Severini, "The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism: Futurist Manifesto 1913," in *Futurism An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi and Laura Wittman. (Yale University Press, 2009), 166.

[16] Severini, *The Life of a Painter*, 126.

[17] Marianne Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 102.

[18] Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory*, 102.

[19] Dennis Boak, *Jules Romains*, (New York: Twayne, 1974), 22.

[20] Berghaus, *Italian Futurist Theatre*, 46.

[21] Jules Romains poem, *Le Theatre* quoted in *The Dance* by Daniela Fonti, 19.

[22] Dee Reynolds, "The Dancer as Woman: Loie Fuller and Stephane Mullarme" in *Impressions of French Modernity: Art and Literature in France 1850-1900*, ed. Richard Hobbs (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 164.

[23] Daniela Fonti, *Gino Severini Catalogue Ragionato*, (Milan: Edizione Phillipe Daverio), 130.

[24] Mallarme quoted in *Poet and Dancer before Diaghilev*, (London: Routledge, 1963), 1-28.

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Figure 1 Georges Seurat. *La Chahut*. Oil on canvas. 1890.

Figure 2 Gino Severini. *Dance of the Pan Pan at the Monaco*. Oil on canvas. 1911. (Original destroyed, copy produced in 1959.)

Figure 3 Pierre Auguste Renoir. *Moulin de la Galette*. Oil on canvas. 1876.

Figure 4 Gino Severini. *Blue Dancer*. Oil on canvas. 1912.

Figure 5 Pablo Picasso. *Violin and Grapes*. Oil on canvas. 1912.

Figure 6 Umberto Boccioni. *The Charge of the Lancers*. Oil on canvas. 1915.

Figure 7 Gino Severini. *Dancer at Pigalle*. Oil on canvas. 1912.

Figure 8 Artist unknown. *Loie Fuller in Butterfly Dance Costume*. photograph. 1893.

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Impropriety, Informality and Intimacy in Vigée Le Brun's *Marie Antoinette en Chemise*

Kelly Hall

The portrait *Marie Antoinette en Chemise* by Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun was viewed as scandalously improper in its reception at the Salon of 1783 (Figure 1). This debut for Vigée Le Brun as a member of the Academy was noteworthy not only in that she was a woman receiving this honor but also for the response her submissions elicited. The negative reaction to the portrait prompted its removal soon after the Salon opened. The Queen of France was presented in a loose-fitting dress reminiscent of the garment typically worn under one's clothes. This costume was associated with the queen's retreat, the Petit Trianon, where she played hostess to an exclusive group of intimates. Frivolity of this nature had been ushered out in the preceding decade with the end of the Rococo style; the portrait therefore did not match the moral aesthetic associated with more recent Salon submissions. This study will closely examine the political climate at the time the portrait was made; compare this work to contemporary models of regal, especially female, portraiture; and explore the relationship of Vigée Le Brun and Marie Antoinette as expressed through the artist's memoirs written late in her life. In order to see beyond the initial negative critiques, the portrait must be looked at through multiple perspectives. This investigation will reveal how *Marie Antoinette en Chemise* came to be regarded by the Queen as her favorite likeness and how it served as the fulcrum for Vigée Le Brun's lifelong project of self-promotion.

Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun would come to be known throughout Europe and in history as a premier portrait painter for the men and women of eighteenth-century court life. However, her 1778 appointment as the portraitist to Marie Antoinette was nearly as surprising as her later *académicienne* status. Prior to her time with Marie Antoinette her subjects included the sisters of the king, various counts and countesses, and artists such as Joseph Vernet. Portraits of queens were not yet in her repertoire. Nevertheless, the 1778 portrait of the queen, *Archduchess Marie Antoinette, Queen of France*, demonstrates that the artist was more that capable of fulfilling the demands of her new office (Figure2). Marie Antoinette at this point was flirting with the good graces of those at court, often forgoing what was expected of her in favor of more entertaining prospects. In this context, her appointment of Vigée Le Brun as her official portraitist was yet another move to further her own motives and contradict the customs of French court life. This manipulation was evident at the 1783 Salon.

The Salon of 1783 was the debut of not only Vigée Le Brun but also Adélaïde Labille-Guiard. The significance of this is twofold; there were two new female members to the Academy and for the influence the queen had securing one of these positions for her court painter. In 1706 the regulation of membership in to the Academy barred any women from new admittance, prompted by the fact that, at that moment, there were six existing female members. The king however never sanctioned this rule and as a result a revision was created. In 1770 the statute was reworded, carefully stating that while the academy would reserve four spaces for women, those positions need not be filled at any one time. It is important to note that female artists were accepted on a case-to-case basis between 1706 and 1770; these exceptions were either wives of artists or foreign artists passing through.[1] When the new limitation was accepted in 1783 the female members included Madame Valleyer-Coster and Madame Vien, who would not show in the 1783 Salon. Despite the vacancies Vigée Le Brun's appointment was further challenged by director d'Angiviller who brought up her marriage to an art dealer. This was basis for denial as was in conflict with a statute that said artists of the Academy

could not participate in commerce. Marie Antoinette herself went to the king who consequently made an exception on behalf of her portraitist.[2] The benefits from this relationship with the queen did not end there for Vigée Le Brun; she would enjoy the reverberations from this time throughout her life. Marie Antoinette's clear involvement in this affair was indicative to the role she created for herself in the court of France.

Marie Antoinette was a "tool of Austrian foreign policy," as historian John Hardman put it, a pawn caught in the middle of France and her homeland of Austria.[3] In 1756 an alliance was struck between France and Austria. The manifestation of this partnership was the 1770 marriage of the dauphin of France to the Hapsburg Archduchess Maria Antonia. The Archduchess shed her Austrian heritage and was ushered into a new court as Marie Antoinette. Despite a French name and training in French customs Marie Antoinette would remain the *"L'Autrichienne"* in her new home.[4] Her reception was not aided by the prolonged consummation of the union, which contradicted the mark of a consort: to bear royal children. In 1781, after producing a male heir and thereby securing the Bourbon line, she was free to skim the surface of court life. However, deeper motives were at work and officials at court suspicious of her allegiance marginalized her. Moreover, she did not help matters with her own machinations. As a foreign consort the public was wary of her role in court this was exacerbated by the history of France and Austria as enemies. Consequently placed in the margins of court life Marie Antoinette was urged by her mother, the Empress Maria Thérèse, and the Austrian Ambassador Mercy Argenteau to secure 'favorites' in influential court positions, thereby gaining influence in political affairs. This strategy was unsuccessful at *this* point in time. Marie Antoinette remained an outcast in her court and even reflected on the futility of her political role in correspondence with Madame Campan, "…the Queens of France are only happy when they meddle with nothing, just keeping enough 'crédit' to set up their friends and few devoted servants."[5] This reveals that Marie Antoinette found issue with the ways of court and she even acknowledges how she would rather spend her time. This statement additionally supports her already-displayed tendency to become involved in the affairs of her artist, Vigée Le Brun. Marie Antoinette challenged the role of a 'foreign' queen that had been outlined in the previous century by Marie de' Medici. The promotional tone of the Peter Paul Rubens Medici Cycle bolstered the reputation of the outsider consort, attempting to prepare France for a 'foreign' queen. While ultimately ineffective the propagandistic nature of this series shows the office an artist must fulfill to their patron and sovereign. Vigée Le Brun seemingly showed no concern for her queen's position when pushing her 1783 portrait into the public arena. Eventually, Marie Antoinette's foreign status would fuel the accusations that marked her as a catalyst of the Revolution.

While other studies have acknowledged the prophetic nature of this portrait and its neat situation at the dawn of Marie Antoinette's status as the hated queen, an accurate political framework must be the basis for any subsequent understanding derived from this painting. The focus of the portrait and its negative reception being viewed as the harbinger of Marie Antoinette's later difficulties has obscured our ability to understand it properly in its moment. At this time, despite the urging from her mother and ambassador, Marie Antoinette's pull in court matters was minimal. Politically she would not gain influence until 1787 when Louis XVI, having suffered a near breakdown following a reform rejection, sought consolation and council from his

wife rather than exclude her from future decision-making.[6] Regardless of this late-coming favor from the king, the early role of Marie Antoinette was fueled by contradictory messages. Her brother Joseph II urged her to maintain a low profile so as to not upset any ministerial politics. On the other side Ambassador Mercy thought it best if she had her hand in the goings on at court, specifically gaining the favor of the prime minister. These inconsistent instructions would no doubt have impacted the young queen, who sought refuge in frivolous intrigues, namely in exploits at the Petit Trianon. Consequently her failure to gain a political voice at this time, whether from being barred by court officials or through her own disinterest, has been reflected in the way she was presented.

At the Petit Trianon, Marie Antoinette entertained an intimate circle of friends with an apparent disregard for proper queenly conduct. Vigée Le Brun's portrait *Marie Antoinette en Chemise* captured the escape Marie Antoinette sought from political life. The queen is dressed in a loose fitting *chemise* that at this time was a popular style in England. This light garment was reserved for country picnics and other exploits that many would have deemed unsuitable for a queen to be engaging in. The fact that this was an unstructured *English* dress was outrageous to the precise, heavily powdered, and corseted French court. However, being depicted in such a fashion was not necessarily a calculated action undertaken by Marie Antoinette as a means to under-mind the court that shunned her. Incidentally a peace agreement was newly formed between France and England, having been sign on September 3, 1783. Therefore I suggest, that the wearing of a quintessentially English garment in a portrait that would be received openly in a Salon setting at this sensitive time for the two countries, could then be read as a metaphorical olive branch.

While in the margins, unable to engage in the roles the ambassador and her brother wanted, Marie Antoinette instead turned to the role that she saw herself capable of being a success. As a queen in an influential European court Marie Antoinette would have been privy to the high fashion of the day. The *chemise* style of dress was new to France and it would soon gain popularity like many of the queen's more outrageous fashion choices. Like the *pouf* hairstyle that garnered increased prevalence in France following the wearing of it by Marie Antoinette, by 1785 the *chemise* would be deemed an acceptable daywear ensemble.[7] While critiques in the art and social realms would comment on indecency of this dress, within two years of Marie Antoinette being painted in one, it was a regarded as a popular style. This was then a critique on a dawning fashion trend not rather the setting of a monarch's political favor. Though the animosity towards her was on the rise in 1783 it was nowhere near what it would reach in the years following 1787. Moreover when courtiers where condemning Marie Antoinette's actions a contemporary noted a popular theme and wrote, "They continued frenetically to imitate her. Every woman wanted to have the same *déshabillé*, the same bonnet, that they had seen her wear."[8] Being an instrument of foreign policy, a politically active queen, or a maternal figure of moral uprightness were possible roles for Marie Antoinette to pursue. She went against these models and became an influential ambassador of fashion, changing the court of France to her liking, more so than any other French Queen did before her. Marie Antoinette eliminated the heavily structured garments of French court, notably the *paniers* and restrictive whalebone corsets. These formal modes of dress that were reserved for daily use by the Queen of France were even noted by the lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette as being "extremely bothersome and fatiguing."[9] While the criticism over this break from tradition was

staggering in immediate years, the acceptance garnered from this move was liberating to the women of court.

A problematic aspect with *Marie Antoinette en Chemise* was that it was shown in a public venue. Marie Antoinette at this time would have known that her Austrian status made her situation at court precarious, as evident from Ambassador Mercy's insistence that she become better equated with the politics of France. The decision therefore to show the portrait was due to the myopic nature of Marie Antoinette's reading of her place in court. Additionally, the debut revealed the naïveté of both Marie Antoinette and Vigée Le Brun. Marie Antoinette would have needed to approve of the painting, the pose as well as the costume would have all come from her consent. Vigée Le Brun on the other hand, whose minimal experience with monarchial portraits was clear from her resume, would have not anticipated the implications read from a portrait of this nature. Representations of queens at this time were in some cases taking a more relaxed attitude but none so glaring as this avoidance of duty on the behalf of Marie Antoinette.

The representation of Marie Antoinette presented to the public was seemingly not of a queen at all; critics dwelt on the un-regal aspects of the portrait. Even Vigée Le Brun comments in her *Souvenirs* that criticism focused on the belief that the queen was depicted in her "underwear."[10] Compared to her European counterparts, Marie Antoinette could be deemed lacking a quality of providing a moral benefit to society. Where other monarchs were represented as models of virtue, maternal sovereigns and undeniable authority, Marie Antoinette was rendered as an idle shepherdess. The garment was not the courtly dress of France's aristocracy and standards of formality were set aside to show a wayward queen set on her amusements and follies. This atypical royal portrait therefore posed a problem. If the depiction of a queen was expected to exemplify the moral or social condition of the state, then comparisons made between Marie Antoinette's portrait and those of contemporary female counterparts could be interpreted as a precarious situation for France. A 1777 Benjamin West portrait of Queen Charlotte of England depicted the monarch as a stout pillar of noble responsibility. In 1783 Maria Carolina of Naples, Marie Antoinette's sister, was depicted by Angelica Kauffman in *King Ferdinand of Naples and His Family* (Figure 3). The queen is the central Figure who encompasses her family, showing her as the balancing force both to the composition and to her family. The painting therefore stands to demonstrate that as she provides stability to her family so too she stabilizes her state. Formality as seen in the Kauffman was not necessary for a painting to render a message of stately duty. Allegorical representations could also translate to the audience a positive view of their sovereign. Catherine the Great of Russia was represented as a deputy in the Temple of Justice in 1783 by Dmitry Levitsky, the allusion to Catherine's ability to serve justice was important in affirming her ability as a ruler, and as a woman. These portraits represented models of austerity and duty to family and country that a queen should emulate. Political affirmations were absent in the Vigée Le Brun portrait of Marie Antoinette; instead a superficial image of a supposed vain queen was all that was offered. This apparent renouncement of obligation was staggeringly clear to the audience of the 1783 Salon.

Marie Antoinette's naïveté towards the portrait's public reception might be justified by a series of precedents of less formal portraits of her beginning in childhood. Her mother, Maria Thérèse, had kept these informal portraits for her own study and private rooms. These relaxed portraits

were reserved for non-official private collections often kept by family members; they were not publicly displayed, especially in a Salon setting. One of these portraits depicts another unconventional fashion choice. The pastel *Marie Antoinette en Amazone* (Figure 4) by Joseph Krantzinger from 1771 has the young archduchess in a costume reminiscent of a man's riding habit. Maria Thérèse herself was noted to have expressed her contentment regarding this painting in that it shows her daughter "enjoying her activities." The same can be expressed with regard to *Marie Antoinette en Chemise*. The queen having established her pleasure retreat at the Petit Trianon and the chemise as the attire of choice while there, represents a similar sentiment, i.e., being depicted "enjoying her activities."[11] This 'costumed' representation also follows suit with the portrayal of noble role-playing that was more common in Northern and Central European traditions than in France, in particular following an informal manner of nonchalant postures established by Van Dyck in England. Nevertheless traditionally the costumes of these subjects left nothing to be imagined in regards to their status. Sumptuous attire was worn regardless of how relaxed the pose was. While the court of Charles I produced paintings that embodied this less formal sensibility, France strictly adhered to the practice of representing their kings and queens in the most austere attitude. From Marie de' Medici in the 1620s until Marie Antoinette's 1783, portrait no French Queen was represented so casually where the pose and air of the painting would contradict the austerity of her status as sovereign mother.

In order to understand why *Marie Antoinette en Chemis*e could be shown in the Salon of 1783, a return to the context of Vigée Le Brun's acceptance into the Academy is necessary. Marie Antoinette was responsible for the painter's admittance. She went to the king personally and asked for an exception to be made, despite that the artist's marriage to an art dealer would normally have rendered her ineligible as it violated the commerce statute of the Academy. The Mémoires of the Academy never formally recorded Vigée Le Brun's reception piece, but her *morceau de reception* is noted in the Salon livret as *Peace Bringing Back Abundance* (Figure 5).[12] This redacted information comes along with the added affronts on Vigée Le Brun: Pierre, the first painter to the king, and d'Angiviller, the director of the academy, directly opposed the admission of Vigée Le Brun while favoring the admittance of Labille-Giuard. If this was of personal interest to Marie Antoinette her involvement could have prompted the two to select a piece that they knew would be received with much backlash. Marie Antoinette was even marked by Ambassador Mercy to have reacted more out her own volition, punishing those who she disliked, while helping those she admired.[13] This sentiment leads back again to why Marie Antoinette would chose to employ a inexperienced monarch portraitist, and later retain her services even after one of her portraits proved to be detrimental to her reputation! With this explanation of events, then a flagrant disregard for the French court and its customs was the motivation behind submitting *Marie Antoinette en Chemise*.

The memoirs of Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun compiled near the end of her life in 1835, long after her service under Marie Antoinette, offer another portrait of the Queen, this one created through the artist's words rather than her brush. Caution must be used in discerning the truth of the *Souvenirs*, since it is a construct of a talented artist to augment her own reputation, but nonetheless it offers insights and parallels to her efforts as a painter in this case. In an effort to create an intimacy between herself and her most beloved queen the portrait serves as a link to the queen's most intimate circle of friends at the Petit Trianon retreat. The portrait suggests

that Vigée Le Brun had access to this idle time with the monarch, hence implying that she, above other courtiers, enjoyed unencumbered access. The bond is strengthened by the similarities among the portraits of the Queen, her "favorite" the Duchess de Polignac (Figure 6), and the artist's *Self-Portrait with a Straw Hat* (Figure 7, that were exhibited together at the 1783 Salon. The three women are essentially undistinguishable from one another. The three portraits feature straw-hats with flower and feather accoutrements. The women are in the chemise dress, fitted with what appears to be the same sash around their mid sections. Their eyes look out of the picture plane directly at the audience, nearly challenging the viewer to second guess their close bond with one another. Nevertheless the relationship formed between these women was not imagined and was now clear in the paintings. With a reading of visual content along with study of the memoirs, *Marie Antoinette en Chemise* can be understandably viewed as suggestive of the impropriety suggested by the criticism.[14]

Souvenirs was an outlet of an elderly painter to recount her times under the patronage of one of the most memorable European monarchs of the eighteenth century. The endless anecdotes of portrait sittings with Marie Antoinette are infused with an air of nostalgia and awe for the queen who was the epitome of kindness and always accommodating towards Vigée Le Brun. Even when describing her times in other European courts Vigée Le Brun cannot help but draw comparisons to her most beloved patroness, especially when at the court of Maria Carolina in Naples. Her royalist loyalties run deep throughout the Memoirs, and the passion with which she regrets what happened to Marie Antoinette is palpable. However the compassion that she employs when talking about the queen is noticeably absent when discussion turns to the receptions of *Marie Antoinette en Chemise*. Having been aware of the removal of the portrait from the Salon and knowing the commotion it elicited from critics Vigée Le Brun could not have been ignorant to the effect the painting had on Marie Antoinette's reputation at that moment, especially considering she claims to have been "on very pleasant terms" with the queen.[15] The portrait, which brought to the public arena the aloofness of the monarchy, was not a shame to Vigée Le Brun's reputation but rather a fuse to ignite her own status. The response to the painter immediately following the portrait's reception was not all negative.[16] She lovingly recounts a venture to the Vaudeville Theater immediately following the exhibition during which the actress who represented Painting appeared on stage as Vigée Le Brun painting a portrait of the queen. At that "moment everyone in the parterre and the boxes turned toward me and applauded to bring the roof down," she wrote.[17] This apparent pride in the response to her portrait is an apparent disregard for the person of Marie Antoinette when considering the effect the portrait had on the public reputation of the queen. The queen, stable in that position, was therefore to Vigée Le Brun a stepping stone, a dispensable casualty on her path to fame. At the core of this relationship a symbiotic correlation is evident: while Vigée Le Brun used the status of Marie Antoinette to bolster her own reputation, Marie Antoinette used Vigée Le Brun in order to further upset the French Court. Each woman gained from this relationship a self-serving end. Both were navigating predominately male worlds where the voice of a woman was qualified and censored. By using one another Marie Antoinette gained attention in the court in which she had been marginalized and Vigée Le Brun gained entry into the circles of the French elite and eventually other European courts.[18]

The closeness that Vigée Le Brun discusses at length

can be attributed to several motives, even if they are not entirely true or happen to be colored with nostalgia. Firstly the intimacy Vigée Le Brun enjoyed as a courtier, privy to the idle times of the queen, would have demonstrated her qualifications to other courts in Europe as a confidant to her patrons. Her skill as a portraitist coupled with her ability to be a close intimate while painting would have been an appealing characteristic. Secondly as much as the *Souvenirs* is a marketing tool of Vigée Le Brun's own career, it also works to paint Marie Antoinette in a more convivial light. Vigée Le Brun is never critical of Marie Antoinette in the memoirs with the exception of noting the queen's tendency of singing off key when they participated in duets.[19] Marie Antoinette and Vigée Le Brun were both marginalized in the roles they found themselves. Marie Antoinette was forever known as an Austrian Archduchess before being a Queen of France. Vigée Le Brun was a woman in a man's world, getting by through her own machinations and taking advantage of every opportunity yielded to her. This included using the safety net of the permanence of a French crown in order to augment her good standing in society. Marie Antoinette could easily absorb the criticism resulting for this painting without risk of losing her position over something so trifling; after all it was not the painting in itself that would cause the public outcry against her.

Subsequent Marie Antoinette portraits done by Vigée Le Brun depicted the queen in formal poses, and even sought to fix the queen's damaged reputation. *Marie Antoinette and Her Children* of 1787 (Figure 8) is more fitting to standards of royal family portraiture. In this painting Vigée Lebrun promotes the maternal aspects of the queen, taking similar role depicted by Maria Carolina (Figure 3). The date of this painting is significant in that it demonstrates Marie Antoinette's attachment to Vigée Le Brun, otherwise the painter's dismissal would have occurred after the responses garnered from *Marie Antoinette en Chemise*. Retaining Vigée Le Brun demonstrates the success of the 1783 portrait in regards to Vigée Le Brun's career. This choice also enforces the personal nature of the two women's relationship.

The role-playing that Marie Antoinette was engaged in at the Petit Trianon, now publicly confirmed in the portrait, to her critics was too obviously a shirking of responsibility. The intimacy of the costume, the informality of the pose and the question of improper relations with the closeness hinted at in the memoirs combine to create an understandable, and perhaps unavoidable, interpretation of inappropriateness. On the other hand, the levity of the portrait was what Marie Antoinette desired: to be captured in a state that was entertaining to her. The judgment of the success of this portrait can therefore be summed up in the words of the Queen herself who called the painting the "most life-like that has been made," showing that it pleased her very much.[20] Vigée Le Brun benefited from the portrait's reputation as an indicator of her privileged status in the court of Marie Antoinette, and it ultimately served to introduce her other European courts following the Revolution.

Endnotes

[1] Mary Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigee-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago, 1996), 79. This courtesy would be extended to Vigée Le Brun herself when she was in exile. Additionally only one third of one percent of the artists admitted to the Academy were women.

[2] Ibid, 82, Sheriff questions the nature in which Marie Antoinette was beseeching the King on her artist's behalf confusing the terms 'request' and 'insistence' thereby questioning the sincerity of Marie Antoinette's actions: was this a personal request to her husband, or an insisting command as a peer and queen?

[3] John Hardman, *French Politics 1774-1789: From the Accession of Louis XVI to the Fall of the Bastille*. (London: Longman) 1995, 198.

[4] Ibid,198.

[5] Madame Campan, *Memoirs ser la vie privée de Marie-Antoinette, Reine de France et de Navarre*. (London, 1823) 2 vols, II, 29.

[6] Hardman 198-199.

[7] Laura Aurrichio, "Self-Promotion in Adelaide Lebille-Guiard's 1785 *Self-Portrait with Two Students*," *The Art Bulletin* 89.1, 2007, 51.

[8] Félix Montjoie, *Histoire de Marie Antoinette Josèphe Jeanne de Lorraine, Archiduchesse d'Autriche, Reine de France*. (Paris, 1797), 101.

[9] Henriette-Lucie Séraphin Dillon, Marquise de La Tour du Pin de Gouvernet, *Mémoires: Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans (1778-1815)*, ed. Christian de Liedekerke Beaufort, (Paris: Mercure de France), 1989 [2007].

[10] Vigée Le Brun, *Souvenirs*, 24

[11] C*orrespondance secrete entre Marie-Thérèse et le Comte de Mercy-Argenteau*, Introduction and Notes by M. le Chevalier Alfred d'Arneth and M. A. Geffroy, 4 vols (Paris: Didot, 1874), 1:196.

[12] Sheriff, 77.

[13] Hardman, 198-19.

[14] Later Marie Antoinette's reputation would be sullied once again by lascivious gossip involving lesbianism and a relationship with the Duchess de Polignac

[15] Vigée Le Brun, *Souvenirs*, 24.

[16] As previously mentioned the authorship of the artist's work was questioned at the Salon; critics denied that she could have been a female creating such works.

[17] Vigée Le Brun, 24.

[18] Much in the way Diego Velázquez was influenced by Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Libero del Cortegiano* (Book of the Courtier) of 1528 to manipulate his career through the Spanish court during the 1600s, Vigée Le Brun employs similar stratagems to forge her way both as a woman and a painter.

[19] Vigée Le Brun, 24.

[20] Ieonically, in regards to the controversy *Marie Antoinette en Chemise* raised, the final portrait of Marie Antoinette was completed in a sketch by Jacques Louis David as the queen was being brought to the guillotine in none other than a white *chemise*.

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2.

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Figure 1 Vigee Le Brun. *Marie Antoinette en Chemise*. Oil on canvas. 1783.

Figure 2 Vigee Le Brun. *Archduchess Marie Antoinette, Queen of France*. Oil on canvas. 1778.

Figure 3 Angelica Kauffmann. *King Ferdinand of Naples and His Family*. Oil on canvas. 1783.

Figure 4 Joseph Krantzinger. *Marie Antoinette en Amazone*. Pastel on canvas. 1771.

Figure 5 Vigee Le Brun. *Peace Bringing Back Abundance*. Oil on canvas. 1780.

Figure 6 Vigee Le Brun. *Duchess de Polignac*. Oil on canvas. 1782.

Figure 7 Vigee Le Brun. *Self-Portrait with a Straw Hat*. Oil on canvas. 1782.

Figure 8 Vigee Le Brun. *Marie Antoinette and Her Children*. Oil on canvas. 1787.

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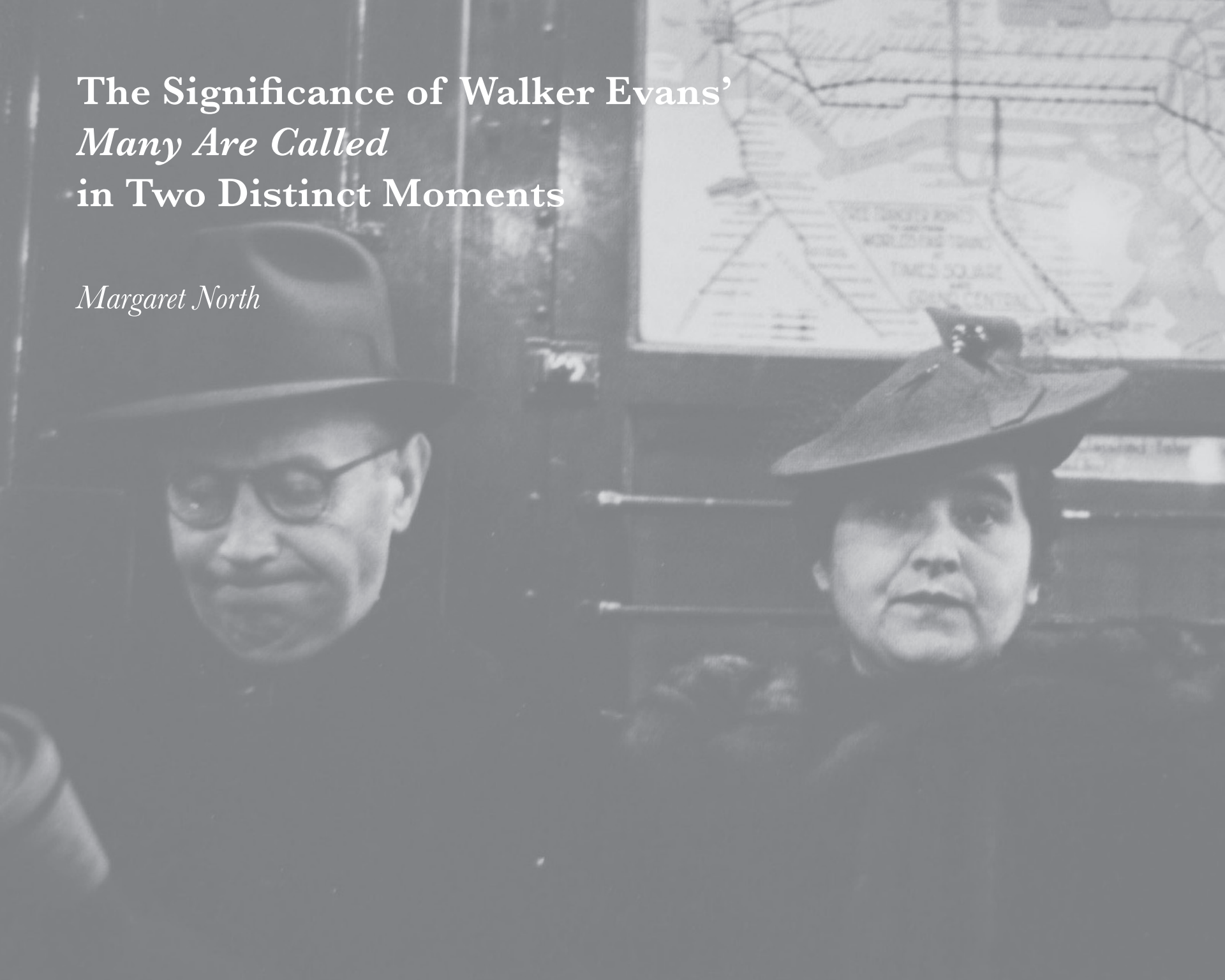
The Significance of Walker Evans' *Many Are Called* in Two Distinct Moments

Margaret North



She looks straight ahead, tight jaw and distance in her eyes. The man to her right may be disgruntled but unsurprised as he glosses over today's headlines. In the subway, nobody pokes or pries or stares. Unseeing, she gazes on as her neighbor tilts his head down another notch and the train jostles along. In this public yet unsocial subway car, most passengers retreat into their own interior world (Figure1). There's a constant coming and going, a procession of sitting and standing that proves this place is not meant for permanence. With a cord slipped down his sleeve and attached to a hidden shutter release, photographer Walker Evans must have been thrilled to preserve a momentary snapshot of an unknowing private life.

Evans first ventured into the depths of New York City's underground subway in 1938 with a small-format Contax camera hidden beneath his coat. For the next three years, he continued to photograph subway scenes, fascinated by the "naked repose" that he found on anonymous passengers' faces.[1] Intrigued by the distant psychological states, the absolute mystery and variety that he saw in his subjects, Evans explored what he later called his idea of "what a portrait ought to be […] a straightforward picture of mankind."[2] The final product is a set of portraits that are often crooked and blurred at their edges, but each face seems to transcend its frame, allowing the viewer the privilege to stare and question. The tone and technique that Evans employed was ahead of his time; Robert Frank and others would not popularize this kind of candid photography until the 1950s. Despite its groundbreaking potential, the project finished quietly and the influence of Evan's new methodology was not felt. In fact, Evans' subway photographs were not to be exhibited until *Many Are Called* was published in 1966.[3]

In an exhibition press release from the Museum of Modern Art on October 5th, 1966, Evans gave what seemed to be a straightforward explanation for the long delay: "The rude and impudent invasion involved has been carefully softened and partially mitigated by a planned passage of time."[4] However, James Agee's 1940 introduction to the series and Evans' 1941 Guggenheim Fellowship renewal letter that described his plans for a book of "semi-automatic record of photography of people" point to an initial intent to publish and call this *planned* passage into question.[5] From the late 1930s on, there was a great deal of anxiety surrounding espionage and national security that made the role of spy-photographer especially devious and potentially unethical. In 1942, the Port Authority actually outlawed photography without a permit on bridges, tunnels, and "other public places" in New York.[6] Therefore, concerns about legality and ethics certainly would have made Evans hesitant to publish right away, but the stylistic newness of the photographs presented theoretical challenges as well. As visual history would have it, *Many Are Called* would bear more resemblance to the photography of the 1960s than 1930s and '40s. Given these factors, Evans' claim to the "*planned* passage of time" may well have been an after-the-fact-excuse that glossed over the difficulty of publishing the series at the time of its creation.

Although Mia Fineman, Jeff L. Rosenheim and Sara Greenough have treated the subway photographs in some depth, scholarship on the series today pales in comparison to that of Evans' better-known work. A multifaceted consideration of its radical technique and unusual timeline is still needed. In order to complete the story, this mysterious gap must be considered not only as the years from 1941 to 1966, but in terms of two distinct moments: creation and publication. The central question of this delay is really

two questions: *why not 1941?* and *why 1966?* This series is differentiated from Evans' other works to such an extent that it must have been ill-fitting as a photo documentary series in 1941. By 1966, biographical and social changes finally allowed for *Many Are Called* to be published. Through an investigation of these factors, the significance of the series in its moment—indeed, its two moments—can be more fully revealed.

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In order to reassess the importance of *Many Are Called* in its moment of creation, a narrow biographical account is necessary, along with recognition that this series was very different in its intention and the nature of its creation than Evans' better-known FSA-sponsored photography. The subway photographs were taken almost immediately after Evans' most widely-known work had concluded, the documentary-style photographs of the American south taken during the Great Depression that culminated with a publication titled *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. While solemn faces stare back at the viewer from each set of images, the two series are clearly differentiated with respect to subject, technique, patronage, formal structure, and publication.
After a formative year of depression-era work for the Farm Security Administration and a brief period of time in New York, Evans traveled south with writer and friend James Agee.[7] With Evans on loan from the government, the two took on an assignment from *Fortune* Magazine.[8] Agee describes the well-defined mission in the preface to Let Us *Now Praise Famous Men*:

> It was our business to prepare, for a New York magazine, an article on cotton tenantry in the United States, in the form of a photographic and verbal record of the daily living and environment of an average white family of tenant farmers.[9]

Evans and Agee did their best to share in the pain of the tenant farmers who were their hosts and subjects. The goal was a non-intrusive, transparent portrayal of people and place.[10] This work helped Evans to establish his photographic philosophy and prefigured an interest in realism that would carry through to his subway experiment. In Alabama, however, realism was a prescribed condition of a sponsored assignment. The literary and photographic project that emerged was *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a thick book filled with prose and prefaced with photographs. Together but separately, text and images document the wretched suffering of the poor tenant farmers in Alabama.

Although Evans and Agee both made it clear that they did not want their work to be intentionally 'propagandistic or journalistic' like work like that was found in some New York Business Magazines of the time, their creation succeeded in communicating poverty that was simply present.[11] One photograph of the Fields Family, taken in 1936 (Figure 2) illustrates this poverty. The family has gathered together in a room that suggests survival rather than "living." They are centered in the frame, look directly at the camera and strike their own pose. With a sense of shameless formality, the signs of their degradation are on display in the glass box of Evans' frame. Belinda Rathbone, in her biography of Walker Evans, comments on a Fields portrait, saying that despite "tangled hair, soiled bedclothes, sore feet […] Evans conveyed the stately proportion and pride of a family worth of the Old Masters of royal portrait painting."[12] In this portrait empathy and dignity coincide. Even if the images are not a critique, their visual poignancy evokes sorrow and the context of their assignment naturally bears a social burden, which is shifted to the viewer. To this day, these photos of farmers and their homes present a harsh, raw truth and therefore serve to advocate for the tenant families.

In a recent article called "Documentary Photography and Social Welfare History," Peter Stzo concludes that even if a photograph can function like a pure document, its context informs and assigns meaning.[13] In order to demonstrate that even simply revealing a social truth is a project of welfare advocacy, he quotes the Walker Evans Project: "If I could tell the story in words, I wouldn't need to lug a camera."

The storytelling came to an end in 1937, when Evans was told that the government no longer needed him. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* would be compiled and published in the next few years.[14] Evans was ready for something independent and different: Many Are Called was the answer, a project of love and freedom for Evans. It makes sense then, that these photographs lacked clarity and a sense of social purpose that was fundamental to the patronage—and ultimately to the success—of the previous project. Instead, the experimental, anonymous nature of this project bestows the images in *Many Are Called* with an intriguing sense of displacement: an ability to communicate without spatial or temporal immediacy, things that are not here and now.[15] While this element of displacement is found in modern art, it was not commonly found in successful documentary photography of the late 1930s.

Visual clues and the technology through which Evans communicates them are also central to the dichotomy that separates *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* from *Many Are Called*. After developing an interest in portraiture in Alabama, Walker Evans explored candid portraits by taking advantage of brand new technology that encouraged mobility and secrecy: a compact and quiet 35mm.[16] Unlike a large format, it was operated indirectly from a switch in Evans' pocket that actually prohibited the artist from fiddling with the frame of the photo. His choice of a 35mm enabled him to remove most of the obligatory subjectivity and that physical adjustments to the 8x10 required. With a large format, meticulous set up means that most "editing" is done as the photograph is taken.[17] If Evans had focused on architecture or interiors, a different sense of disengagement via the 8x10's clarity could have been achieved, but the 35mm was required to capture a *person* unaware, unengaged.[18] Such a clear-cut rejection of the artist eye's participation in his photographs had also much to do with Evans' distaste for the ultra-aesthetic salon photography that Alfred Stieglitz had made so popular in the 1920s and beforehand.[19] While Stieglitz stressed craftsmanship, Evans believed in staying out of his art and his 35mm contraption came close to making total disengagement with human subjects possible.[20]

In contrast, the photograph of the Fields family and others were arranged and posed by Evans, who was also known to reorganize furniture and adjust lighting.[21] Centered and knowing, the Fields family addresses the camera and the hooded man behind it. A formal deconstruction of compositional choices and visual signs like carried objects or tattered clothing links the Fields Family to traditional portraiture and a traditional subject-artist relationship. In *Many Are Called*, however, people appear off center, at different altitudes within their frame. While passengers like in Figure 3 look towards the camera, others gaze into the distance as in Figure 4, but none seem to address the photographer, and thereby the viewer, in the way that the families in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* do. With no consent from the *Many*, the relationship between the artist and subject transforms into a non-relationship in the subway and any "old masters" employment of iconological meaning or semiotic understanding becomes mere guesswork. The faces of the *Many* are disengaged, unidentified, and for all we know, unwilling.

Major dissimilarities become evident in this comparison and serve as a testament to the radical newness of the subway series, making *Many Are Called* difficult to assess in relation to *Let us Now Praise Famous Men*. Contexts and impacts stand in opposition. The divergent nature of patronage, technique, subject-artist relationship and correlation with traditional portraiture help us make sense of Evans and his oeuvre up until this point. *Many Are Called* was a departure for Evans and highly unusual for photography in the late 1930s and early 1940s, a point that ties back to the central question of "the gap" between creation and publication. Rather than attaching the people represented to a specific place and time, the faces of *Many Are Called* are diverse, anonymous, and transient. Experimental, unhindered by information, and displaced in time, these faces and the psychological states they convey transcend their surroundings rather than define their era.

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In 1941, there was simply no market for this type of transient experiment. Rather, the 1930s were familiar with a tradition of "artsy" salon photographers and were welcoming another circle of photographers who participated in more serious documentary work that set out to spread awareness about some social fact. Lewis W. Hine's images of immigrants and child labor, Dorthea Lange's photos of personal devastation caused by the Great Depression, and even the photographs from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* are deemed documentary.[22] For example, the iconic face of Allie Mae Burroughs in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* is now still recognizable as a picture of poverty in the Great Depression (Figure 5). These documentary works are bound to the 1930s social and economic conditions in which they were made, but historical attachment fails to impress a similar time-and-place-stamp on the images in *Many Are Called*. Even though Evans draws attention to the anonymous individuals on the subway by taking their photograph, he forbids them from telling their story. Mystery and transcendence then, have everything to do with the photographer's concealment. The series better fits into the story of American Photography with the emergence of candid and stealth photography.

To understand what motivated Evans to put down his 8x10 and take interest in the subway in 1938, it is helpful to consider his sources of inspiration. When asked about the subway series in interviews, he frequently cited two influences. The first of these is Honoré Daumier's *Third Class Railway Carriage*, circa 1860-62 (Figure 6).[23] The connection is easy to make, as both are sketches of commuters sitting at eye level, facing the artist. It is clear that European Realism offered a precedent for a new American Social Realism.[24] While the subway is not exactly a "third class carriage," both Daumier and Evans draw attention to a common, commuting population; one that Evans calls "ladies and gentleman of the jury."[25] The second notable influence is *Blind* (Figure 7) by Paul Strand, an image that Evans may have encountered the image while working at the New York Public Library as a young adult. In a 1974 interview, Evans recalled that Strand's image of a blind woman excited him because it was "shocking" and "brutal."[26] This radically unsentimental approach was, like Daumier's example, charged with a strong dose of reality and spiced with anonymity.

As with Walker Evans' own work, his sources of inspiration to captured a transparent, unglamorous reality. An interest in realism is one common thread can be traced through *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* and *Many Are Called*. Transparency, a totally sly technique, and the most transient of settings allowed Evans to generate the impression of something new—an unknown and unattached moment, but an honest one that is recognizable enough to be intriguing.

Stealth photography, which mimics this type of instant as it is unknowingly captured, or the "snapshot aesthetic" as it was also called by Mary Warner Marien, came into its own in the 1950s and 1960s.[27] Marien pointed to the year 1966, the same year that *Many Are Called* was published as a year for "the appearance of a new photographic trend, indifferent to social reform but acutely focused on the qualities of camera vision."[28] While Marien could well have been talking about Evans' subway experiment, which came first, she instead looked to an exhibition at Brandeis University of *Twelve Photographers of the American Social Landscape* that also put the snapshot aesthetic to use. Lee Friedlander and Gary Winogrand would also turn away from aesthetics and towards social fact and transparency around this time.[29] Evans, then an editor at Fortune Magazine and preparing to take a professorship at Yale University, would have recognized that he'd been doing this back in 1938.[30] His senior status in the field at that time likely helped to eliminate some initial concerns about stealth photography that would have existed when the photographs were taken.

One series that is truly indebted to *Many Are Called* is Robert Frank's *The Americans*, a 1958 series that paid homage to the underbelly of America, as seen on a road trip, rather than in the tunnels below NYC. Frank offered captivating sometimes telling, glimpses into daily life that were true snapshots: couples in their cars, drive thru windows and gas stations. Frank, who knew Evans well, even publicly credited Evans' other work with tremendous influence on his *The Americans*. Naturally, scholar Leslie Baier investigates the Evans-Frank connection by starting with Evans' 1938 *American Photographs*, but unlike most she delves deeper. Knowing that Frank would have had access to the subway photographs, Baier has also endorsed *Many Are Called*'s major thematic influence on *The Americans*. Although her treatment of the *Many Are Called* is not central to "Visions of Fascination and Despair: The Relationship between Walker Evans and Robert Frank," Baier did suggest that *Many Are Called* must have laid groundwork for Frank's portrayal of two dominant motifs: transcendence and alienation.[31] Baier has struck a chord here, but her article still stands as the exception that proves the rule. *Many are Called* still remains under-recognized and while this technical and thematic connection between Evans and Frank is essential, a more wide-reaching appreciation is also required. *Many Are Called* makes an impressive contribution to the whole of candid, covert photographs that force the viewer to consider the average or unfamiliar faces of America. Street photography, stealth photography, and portable photography were unimaginable and too new 1941, but in the 1960s, Frank and others had generated interest in and market for transient images of the average person and lifestyle.

We find, amongst these candid snapshots of America, a more appropriate stylistic and thematic trend that continues today. In a recent article, Daniel Palmer discusses with contemporary artists Evans' interest in a "naked" psychological state. Most notably, Philip-Lorca diCorcia's *Heads* (1999-2001) are portraits of unaware individuals and bear theoretical and formal resemblance to *Many Are Called*.[32] By making contemporary connections, Palmer shows the current relevance of the ethics of spectatorship and anonymous photographs.[33]

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Shifting focus from style, technique, and themes to subject matter of the series discloses a final element of the displacement that characterizes *Many Are Called*: the topic of diversity. Diversity, and a "melting pot" vision of New York City was long described in literature and even performing arts, but rarely featured in the visual arts or material

culture imagery in 1941. Surely, Evans was influenced and intrigued New York's mixed population, and there is connection between Evans' attempt at objectivity and the unfiltered community that converges in the subway. James Agee's 1940 introduction to *Many Are Called* reverberates with a celebratory view of the diverse people that are found in this setting:

> Those who use the New York subways are several millions. The facts about them are so commonplace that they have become almost meaningless, as impossible to realize as death and war. […] They are members of every race and nation of the earth. They are of all ages, of all temperaments, of all classes, of almost every imaginable occupation. Each is incorporate in such an intense and various concentration of human beings as the world has ever known before. Each also, is an individual essence, as matchless as a thumbprint or a snowflake.[34]

The subway demographic was not bounded by the words found in the preface for the *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, like "three," "white," or "tenant farmers." Instead, the space within the train is a non-discriminating, even if it is subject to the locations along the line where certain populations enter and leave. Among the eighty-nine images, children and adults, young and old, wealthy and poor are represented. A nun, one young woman who is disabled, two presumably black individuals, and single man of Asian descent can be picked out of *Many Are Called*. Whether or not Evans' *selection* of photographs is an absolutely accurate representation of New York City's population should be called into question in a thorough examination of this issue, but simply the fact that an attempt was made to portray diversity is helpful in explaining *why 1966?*

A bold acknowledgment of the diversity issue may have been admirable for Evans, but the definition of diversity was constantly changing in 20th-century America. Once again, a historical assessment of the two distinct moments: 1941 and 1966, provides us with one more way to speculate on the creation-publication gap. With the civil rights movement in full swing, America was finally coming to head with its ethnic diversity in 1966, when *Many Are Called* was published. However, in 1939 "the melting pot" usually described the mix of European immigrants in New York City at the time. An article in the July 1939 issue of *Fortune* celebrated the World's Fair this type of melting pot, entirely leaving African Americans out of the picture.[35] The fact that there are only two black people among *Many Are Called's* eighty-nine photographs could be a lingering mark of the 1930s definition of diversity since the issue of race as it pertains to our contemporary view of diversity only became central in the 1960s with the civil rights movement.

The subway photographs provide some clues about the subway line on which the photographs were taken that help to more thoroughly analyze Evans' intent in relation to the diversity he portrays. For example, plates 84 and 59 show lettering that reads part or all of "Lex. Ave Local."[36] At the outset of his subway photography, Evans had been living at 441 East 92nd Street, a building that would become home to other photographers and artist-types like his old friend James Agee.[37] In late 1939 he relocated to 1681 York Avenue, just a few blocks down.[38] The Lexington Avenue Line's proximity makes it unlikely that Evans traveled far out of his way to find a line that captured some abnormally diverse population sample (Figure 8). Surely, demographic differs by line, train, or day, but the Lexington Avenue Line, while diverse in some respects, did not travel to Haarlem or the outer boroughs. If Evans edited his selection of faces

based on a desire to capture "every race and nation of the earth," it is more likely that he did so after the fact, when he chose which photographs to publish.[39]

This leads to a second factor that further complicates Agee's description of the series in terms of such wide-reaching diversity: the fact that Evans had to make a selection. Relatively cheap 35mm film and rapid succession capability allowed Evans to take over six hundred photographs in the subway.[40] Of these hundreds, eighty-nine were chosen for publication. Evans' power to assort faces that he published certainly further complicates the project's unbiased pretense. In Evans' defense, he believed that his selection could claim "some kind of chance average."[41] However, Agee's text does more to evoke a sense of the city's concentrated and varied humanity than the photographs do. In a 1991 article on *Many Are Called*, Charles Hagen at the New York Times seemed unconvinced about the objectivity of the series. Hagen reviewed records of Evans' many preliminary croppings and alternative arrangements that preceded the final 1966 format of *Many Are Called*, concluding that if Evans let his eye in, he did so after the photographs were taken.[42] Hagan doesn't dwell on the topic, but summarizes: "most of the passengers are white and represent a range of social classes."[43] At the end of the day, Evans was nearly able to omit subjectivity from his process, but not his product. If many are called, the argument can be made that few were chosen.

If a discussion of *the many* involves a discussion of diversity, as the preface implies, this leads to a consideration of Evans' title. *Many Are Called* is a biblical reference: although many are called to the Kingdom of God in the final hours, the few who have received Christ "are chosen (Matthew 22:14)." Like the series as a whole, the title is far less clearly egalitarian when contextualized. In fact, it is indicative of the overwhelming tension that permeates the topic of diversity in *Many Are Called*. While the topic may have seemed like a push forward in 1941, the European American "melting pot" definition was outdated by 1966: it lacked the crucial consideration of race that the Civil Rights Movement had made paramount by that time. In this respect, the series was unsuccessful in producing a satisfactory representation of *the many* even then. So, whether the images celebrate or stifle whatever demographic was truly present on this subway in 1938-1941 is difficult to be sure of, but the title *Many Are Called* gives the issue special importance. Admittedly, placing the series in this framework brings up questions that are speculative, but also deeply compelling. Even without certainty about every detail that the issues of demographics and diversity present, the questions surrounding diversity root *Many Are Called* in both 1941 and in 1966, a placement that experiences a simultaneous push and pull between moments.

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A detailed analysis of Evan's work, changes in American photography, and socio-economic realities that surrounded the series proves that Evans' explanation for the delayed publication of *Many Are Called*—his "planned passage of time"—does not tell the whole story. Although Evans and America were better prepared to receive the series in the 1960s, neither the climate of 1941 nor 1966 perfectly frames *Many Are Called*. The result is a series that transcends its creation date, attaches a sense of displacement to its publication date and points forward to the legacy of candid and stealth photography in America. Understanding the delayed publication is necessary to appreciating the significance and integrity of this series, but is also crucial to our understanding of America's changing identity politics and its documentation through photographs. On a

personal level, too, the investigation grounds the shockingly modern way that a viewer connects with these images. If we feel ourselves being drawn in by the anonymous faces of the many, yet held back by the lack of information they provide, there is a reason for this. Like the subway itself, the individuals aren't tethered to a departure point or a destination; the series can be better explained by the themes and questions that surround its dates of creation *and* publication. The gap between the two explains a sense of transcendent, unhindered existence in Walker Evans' *Many Are Called*, complicates Evans' identity as a documentary photographer, accounts for tension, and finally gives this significant series due credit.

Endnotes

[1] Jeff L. Rosenheim, Afterword to *Many Are Called*, by Walker Evans (New Haven: Yale University Press in Association with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 198.

[2] Walker Evans, interview by Paul Cummings, *Archives of American Art* (Smithsonian Institution), October 13 and Dec. 23, 1971.

[3] Before the series was published in 1966, Evans had mocked up several maquettes and organized the series in several different formats. Suggested titles for the arrangements include *The Unposed Portrait*, *A Season in the Subway*, *The Passengers, Lexington Avenue Local*. More on this evolution can be found both in Sara Greenough's *Subways and Streets* as well as Jeff L. Rosenheim's Afterword to the 2004 edition of *Many Are Called*. It is also important to say that between 1956 and 1962, two magazine articles did make use of a total of fourteen of Evans' subway photographs. Since the photographs were seen in such limited contexts, the publication of *Many Are Called* still marks the true release of the series and project.

[4] Department of Public Information, "Walker Evans' Subway." Museum of Modern Art Press Release (October 5, 1966).

[5] Rosenheim, Afterword, 201.

[6] Tracy Fitzpatrick, Art and the Subway: New York Underground (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2009), 125.

[7] Jeff L. Rosenheim, "'The Cruel Radiance of What Is': Walker Evans and the South," in *Walker Evans* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art in Association with Princeton UP, Princeton, 2000), 86.

[8] Ibid.

[9] James Agee, Introduction to *Let us now praise famous men; three tenant families*, by James Agee and Walker Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), xiii.

[10] Belinda Rathbone, *Walker Evans: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), 120.

[11] Rosenheim, "'The Cruel Radiance of What Is': Walker Evans and the South," 87.

[12] Rathbone, *Walker Evans: A Biography*, 134.

[13] Peter Szto, "Documentary Photography in Social Welfare History," *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* XXXV.2 (2008): 108.

[14] Rosenheim, "'The Cruel Radiance of What Is': Walker Evans and the South," 87.

[15] In linguistics, "displacement" refers to a characteristic of language that allows humans to communicate that which is not necessary immediate or present. This linguistic definition of the term most closely matches its meaning in this paper, as it accurately describes the way that the photographs in *Many Are Called* communicate with their viewer. More on the linguistic use of this term can be found in C.F. Hockett "The Origin of Speech." *Scientific American*, 203 (1960): 88-96.

[16] Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 220.

[17] Mia Fineman. "Notes from Underground: The Subway Portraits" in *Walker Evans* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art in Association with Princeton UP, Princeton, 2000), 91.

[18] Photographers like Stephen Shore, who turned to the large format camera for its clarity, were also were able to produce a feeling of disengagement in their photographs. For example Shore presents his viewer with such true, transparent, stagnant scenes that it is possible to forget that the camera lens has even mediated our view. This, of course, differs from Evans' technical disengagement of his eye from the lens.

[19] Rathbone, *Walker Evans: A Biography*, 39.

[20] Sarah Greenough, *Walker Evans: Subways and Streets* (Washington, D.C: National Gallery of Art, 1991), 13.

[21] Rosenheim, "'The Cruel Radiance of What Is': Walker Evans and the South," 91.

[22] Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present*, 235-244.

[23] Fineman, "Notes from Underground: The Subway Portraits,"110.

[24] James G. Todd Jr, "Social Realism." *Grove Art Online* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

[25] Fineman, "Notes from Underground: The Subway Portraits," 110. Fineman traces this quote back to "Walker Evans: Forty Years," exh. cat., Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, December 9, 1971 – January 16, 1972.

[26] Evans, interview by Paul Cummings, 1971.

[27] Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History* (Upper River Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 347.

[28] Ibid, 349.

[29] Ibid, 350. Also pointed out in a *New York Times* Review from 1991.

[30] Fineman, "Notes from Underground: The Subway Portraits,"117.

[31] Leslie Baier, "Visions Of Fascination And Despair: The Relationship Between Walker Evans And Robert Frank," *Art Journal* 41.1 (1981): 55.

[32] Daniel Palmer, "In Naked Repose: The Face of Candid Portrait Photography," ANGELAKI *Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 16.1 (2011): 115.

[33] "In Naked Repose" by Daniel Palmer is an excellent article that further explores modern interest in candid, stealth photography as this interest relates to *Many Are Called* and its themes. Issues of privacy, ownership, and the ethical underpinnings of this type of work are, here, addressed in a modern context.

[34] Agee, Introduction to *Many Are Called*, 15.

[35] Fitzpatrick, *Art and the Subway: New York Underground*, 107.

[36] Evans, *Many Are Called*.

[37] Rathbone, *Walker Evans: A Biography*, 178.

[38] Ibid, 184.

[39] James Agee and Walker Evans. *Let us now praise famous men; three tenant families*, xiii.

[40] Rosenheim, afterward, 197.

[41] Greenough, *Walker Evans: Subways and Streets*, 27. Greenough traces this footnote back to a draft of introductory text for Evans' "Subway" printed in *Evans at Work* 1982, 161.

[42] Charles Hagen, "Review/Photography: What Walker Evans Saw on His Subway Rides," *New York Times*, December 1, 1991."

[43] Hagen, "Review/Photography: What Walker Evans Saw on His Subway Rides."

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Figure 1 Walker Evans. Plate 81 from *Many Are Called.* January 26, 1941.

Figure 2 Walker Evans. "Fields Family" from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. 1936.

Figure 3 Walker Evans. Plate 66 from *Many Are Called*. 1941.

Figure 4 Walker Evans. Plate 87 from *Many Are Called*. 1941.

Figure 5 Walker Evans. "Allie Mae Burroughs, Wife of a Cotton Sharecropper, Hale County, Alabama" from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. 1936.

Figure 6 Honore Daumier. *Third Class Railway Carriage*. Oil on Canvas. 1864.

Figure 7 Paul Strand. *Blind*. Platinum Print. 1916.

Figure 8 1939 Rapid Transit Map of Greater New York. Cropped and marked with Evans' residence at 441 East 92nd Street.

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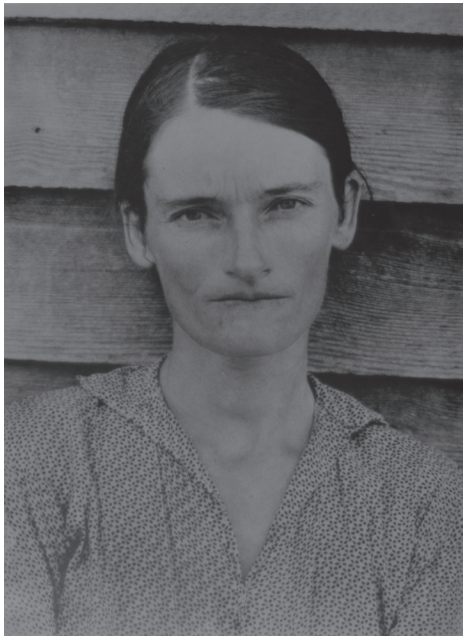

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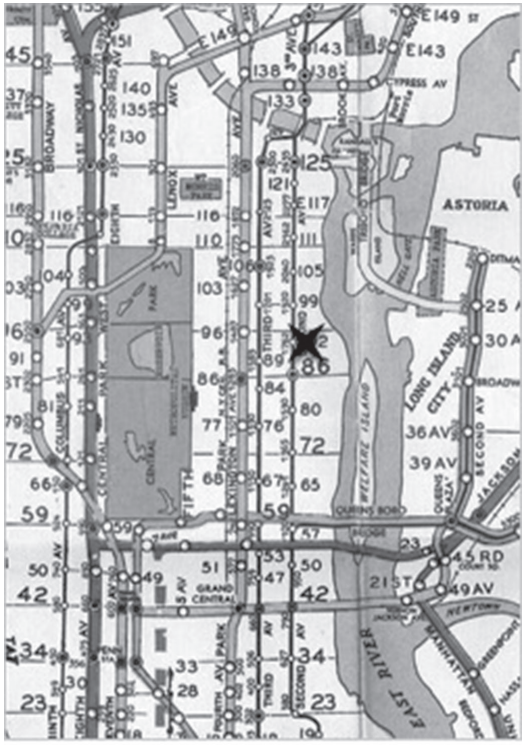
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The Places Between Events: "Architectural Interest" and the Shifting Cultural Definition of America in Stephen Shore's *Uncommon Places*

John Ronalter

It does not matter what one first notices in Stephen Shore's photograph of Kalispell, Montana (Figure 1), whether it is the bank, the light poles or the cracked pavement, because the image does not have a central subject; each detail, no matter how large or small, demands nearly equal attention. Beyond any individual observation, the viewer will notice how close to reality this photograph appears: it was properly exposed, its color is balanced, the sharp focus extends deep into the background, and its perspective is from eyelevel. The buildings, parking meters, sidewalks, and other urban forms are precisely structured to create complex visual relationships between the objects in the image. The overall scene is in no way exceptional—really, it is not even a scene at all, because that would imply that this location is in some way significant. Rather, this photograph is simply a view of an everyday place: a place between events.

Shore included the Kalispell photograph in his 1982 monograph *Uncommon Places* as one of forty-nine photographs taken on a series of road trips across North America. Critics and art historians have praised Shore's precise formalism and conceptual influences, but the content of this series has been relegated to a minor role in the scholarship. Shore deserves recognition for constructing a definition of America in line with the illustrious tradition begun by Walker Evans' 1938 *American Photographs* and Robert Frank's 1958 *The Americans*. If the road trip and the book format established by these works can be viewed as the parameters for photographically defining America, *Uncommon Places* fits into this tradition as an appropriate iteration for the 1970s by photographing the vernacular built environment. The combined effect of his thought process and his technical approach eliminate the photographer's visual interpretation of the content and when applied to the subject of the built environment, the concept of "architectural interest" provides a key to understanding architecture as cultural indicator. Evans photographed America through social observation and Frank furthered this vision through symbolism and identity, but Shore's dispassionate photographs of the built landscape construct his definition. Each image contributes a piece of significance—a limited piece, due to a lack of grandeur, symbolism, and narrative events—that accumulates importance only through the cumulative experience of the series. Shore's photographs of the built environment serve as an indicator of cultural forces and thus define America as the deliberate awareness of the places between events.

Walker Evans and Robert Frank established the tradition of photographically defining America in their series *American Photographs* (1938) and *The Americans* (1958), respectively. The relationship of these works has been well established and written about at length demonstrating that the two are worthy objects of comparison because each create a definition of America appropriate to its era created through the road trip and use the book format to communicate this end.[1] Evans defined America through social observation; he photographed plainly, but with the intent to present gritty, depressed, unseen places (Figure 2). Frank's emotional and provocative images defined America by employing mainstream objects, like the flag, to become symbols of the American identity (Figure 3). New York Times critic Philip Gefter stated, "If Walker Evans and Robert Frank established an 'on the road' tradition in photography, then Stephen Shore ranks among their natural heirs."[2] Gefter suggested the connection between these artists, but he did not elaborate on how Shore's series builds on this tradition.

"Architectural interest" is the key to understanding

Stephen Shore's role in this tradition by demonstrating how the built environment communicates cultural forces and thus defines America. In 1997 Shore wrote:

> For artists of different times, intentions and inclinations, the idea of 'architectural interest' has held a variety of meanings. Since the very beginnings of the medium, photographers have recorded buildings that were considered in some way architecturally special. This might have meant monuments of the ancient world, significant examples of fine architectural tradition, or architecture in exotic locales. At the same time, dating also from the early days of photography, there was a different, more topographic photographic approach to architecture. In this tradition, the built environment was photographed as a record of what a place looked like. Underlying this was the understanding of architecture as a visible face of forces shaping a culture.[3]

Shore was not discussing his own works, but it is useful to consider *Uncommon Places* in this way because it demonstrates that the appearance of the built environment has a direct connection to cultural definition. The nonjudgmental, balanced look of the photographs allow the viewer to engage with the built objects that occupy the frame and allow them to visually convey these forces. To the viewer the individual houses, intersections, parking lots, drive-ins, and other places Shore photographs are entirely meaningless in the Panofskian sense. The objects do not hold any specific or symbolic meaning, but "architectural interest" allows the viewer to extrapolate significance through the appearance of the buildings that occupy the frame and the overall effect of these images is a specific vision of America. Shore used a highly precise 8x10 camera and color film to ensure the photographs did not convey a subjective interpretation of the content.

Shore's conceptual foundation involved a contemporary understanding of the relationship of the individual image to the whole series, and consequently tension between form and content emerged. This thought process allowed Shore to formally arrange the objects within the frame to establish spatial relationships and create a balanced structure throughout the picture without compromising the integrity of content-based meaning. Besides this focus on arrangement, he created nearly meaningless individual photographs that do not interpret the content, or change how the content is understood based on how it was photographed, for the viewer in any way. The images are simple, structured views of the ubiquitous everyday American landscape that possess no significance for the average viewer. Shore did not have a master plan for the series; it was an organic artistic process, one that involved awareness and even pleasure: "A picture happens when something inside connects, an experience that changes as the photographer does. When the picture is there, I set out the 8 x 10 camera, walk around it, get behind it, put the hood over my head, perhaps move it over a foot, walk in front, fiddle with the lens, the aperture, the shutter speed. I enjoy the camera."[4] Any individual image is created as an independent study in Shore's abilities to create a well balanced, highly aligned photograph.

Shore began to think differently about photography after viewing Ed Ruscha's 1966 book *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* because, as he later commented, it "marked a radical departure from the conventional uses of photography."[5] Ruscha, primarily known as a painter, occasionally experimented with photography, and created

several books of collections of buildings in or around Los Angeles. Alexandra Schwartz described *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* as "a near-literal record of exactly what the title promises: every single building—including cross-streets, trees, and passing traffic—on the strip…Together, they make up a strange series of specimens, laid out for display."[6] Rather than attempt to filter the subject, Ruscha presented the buildings as they appeared directly to the eye. This book instantly provided Shore with a new photographic agenda and a counterbalance to the documentary nature of Evans' *American Photographs*.[7] Now Shore began working with photography in terms of its technical and analytical abilities rather than the poetic sensibilities and stigma of social change that had dominated the medium to that point and thus began to create series where form superseded compositional precision.[8]

American Surfaces was the most significant of his conceptual series prior to *Uncommon Places* because it challenged the significance of traditional photography by introducing the snapshot into the fine art realm. Rather than photograph landmarks and friends and family members, like typical snapshots, his stated intent was, "to keep a kind of visual diary of the trip—to record every person I met, and every meal, and every bed."[9] Shot in 1972 with a 35mm Rollei and developed by a Kodak lab, the pictures are blurry, unaligned, and depict the many normal—yet somewhat odd—events, people, places, and objects that Shore experienced on this trip. In many ways the series is biographical, but it serves a greater conceptual end by challenging the emotive documentary qualities of Evans' work and whole heartedly accepting the intrinsic formal qualities of the 35mm camera—its imprecise compositions, unbalanced colors, and momentary haphazardness.

John Coplans' *Serial Imagery*, a book published in 1968, also directly influenced Shore's thought regarding the relationship of the individual photograph to the whole series. Coplans strictly defined serial imagery as "a type of repeated form or structure shared equally by each work in a group of related works made by one artist."[10] The book specifically dealt with painting, but Shore adapted its ideas to photography for both *American Surfaces* and *Uncommon Places*. The idea of serial imagery allowed Shore to create a photograph devoid of meaning or significance with the full assurance that its role in a series would allow it to possess some value through its participation in the whole. Exhibited in grids of hundreds of 3 x 5 prints in its original gallery setting, *American Surfaces* was an appropriate first attempt at constructing a definition of America because it allowed Shore to understand the ability of the series to convey a particular meaning as well as experience photographing on the road. John Szarkowski's commentary on *American Surfaces*, as he recounted in a 1979 article, profoundly affected Shore's thought process and technique, "We went through the pictures together and he said whatever came to his mind. He 'oohed' and 'aahed' at a number of pictures…Then at one point he asked, 'How accurate is your viewfinder?' This remark got me started on what I've been doing ever since. I understood that what he was asking me amounted to: 'How carefully are you framing your photographs?'"[11] Although *American Surfaces* raised important formal questions, Shore began to resurrect the role of content in his work by using a large format camera in response to Szarkowski's question.

Serial Imagery helped Shore to understand that a series of images can construct a meaning without the individual images possessing tremendous importance beyond their form or structure. Indeed, Shore's photographs deal with everyday objects and places presented as naturally and

as balanced as the equipment would allow, forcing the individual photograph to become simply a basic record of the visible world. Coplans' definition of serial imagery allows this meaningless visual document to construct a meaning when placed in relation to other similar works. In a essay accompanying the second edition of *Uncommon Places*, Stephen Schmidt Wulfen wrote, "Understood in this way, the serial principle not only changes the traditional concept of the autonomous work of art; each individual photo loses its aura and content, becoming an indexical element that makes sense only in relation to its neighbor."[12] Shore composed and structured the individual photograph with an eye towards form understanding the final series of images would effectively communicate cultural meaning, rather than any one image. Countering the Henri Cartier-Bresson "decision moment," Shore created a "suspended" moment that retained the same significance that Cartier-Bresson and Frank achieved in the individual picture.[13]

In contrast, Robert Frank's conscious display of specific common objects as symbols, like the flag and jukebox, make the individual photograph an independently meaningful artistic work (Figure 3). For Frank, meaning was attributed directly in the work through the specific archetypal objects, people, and events depicted. Tod Papageorge wrote about Frank, "All events, in fact – the rodeo, the Fourth of July picnic, Yom Kippur, the graduation, the charity ball, the highway death, the funeral – serve only as reasons to gather and for Frank to condense us into a symbol."[14] Shore, on the other hand, uses the individual photograph to study form, not content. While they both use the whole of the series to communicate his vision of America, each of Frank's individual photographs possess definitive meaning, whereas Shore's do not. Even the individual photographs of Evans' *American Photographs* with their frontal, direct perspectives and visual clarity convey meaning. Douglas Nickel wrote that any photograph in Evans' series, "has an excess of potential meaning…[it] is a book of photographs presented as autonomous images, where the necessary repression of those meanings exceeding the book's intentions is effected only through the picture's placement in a sequence of similarly presented photographs."[15] The role of the series is important for both Frank and Evans, but the individual photograph also functions as a communicator of artistic meaning unto itself. Conversely, the formalism of Shore's thought process and the realism of his technique cause his images to be devoid of meaning and can only communicate his definition of America as a series.

Where Shore's theoretical approach sought to understand the relationship of structure and meaning between the individual photograph and the series, his technical approach contributed to the balanced, natural look of his photographs by eliminating the visual artistic influence. Visual artistic influence refers to a photographer's deliberate technical decisions to create an interpretation of reality. Some typical decisions a photographer makes are whether to make color or black and white prints; what type of camera to use; how much grain should appear in the prints; how deep or shallow the field of vision should appear; how short or long the exposure should be made; and the length of the lens. The effects of these decisions create a specific interpretation of the subject within the frame of the photograph. Stephen Shore deliberately chose the combination of these elements most closely mimicked reality as possible, which eliminated his judgment upon the subject matter, ultimately allowing the built environment to indicate cultural forces.

The most fundamental difference between *Uncommon*

Places and previous fine art photography series is color, which asserted a new nonjudgmental realism in the medium. Kevin Moore asserts, "[Robert] Frank's proclamation that black and white represented 'the alternatives of hope and despair' revealed a telling assumption: monochromatic photography held inherent social purpose."[16] Prior to the 1970s photographers embraced this aspect of the medium and proclaimed its supremacy over color. A dispassionate, nonjudgmental photograph was impossible as long as photographers continued to use black and white because its very creation held meaning. By the 1970s a wave of young artists with an interest in the "everyday" began using color photography to fit these ends. At the fore, William Eggleston and Stephen Shore, as well as Joel Sternfeld, and many others experimented with color photography in the 1970s while using everyday objects as subject matter. Shore had already exhibited *American Surfaces* in 1972, but color finally broke through in 1976 when the Museum of Modern Art exhibited a selection of William Eggleston's photographs. It met heavy criticism especially after photography curator John Szarkowski's strong claims in favor of the photographs, but the trend continued to gain traction amongst this group of artists.[17] Color allowed Shore to photograph dispassionately, removing the "inherent social purpose" from the photographs, especially with an eye towards his formal interests. Color photographer Joel Sternfeld claimed, "We have never seen the world in black and white except in photographs or in film. To encounter a black and white photograph is to encounter something instantly abstract."[18] Shore wanted to recreate what the human actually saw in reality and thus naturally chose to work in color. His images are balanced in color, not over or under saturated, and capture the subtlety and nuance of light in its fullest, most natural state.

Walker Evans' images from *American Photographs* resemble those from *Uncommon Places* in the precise structure and emphasis on the built environment, but where Shore uses these elements conceptually; Evans uses them socially, most readily demonstrated by his use of black and white (Figure 2). In an essay appearing in the original edition, Lincoln Kirstein advocates for the book to be viewed as a series where sequence and the deliberate selection of photographs are significant artistic statements, principles that were not readily accepted in the 1930s. "Looked at in sequence they are overwhelming in their exhaustiveness of detail, their poetry of contrast, and, for those who wish to see it, their moral implication," he added, further supporting the social intention of the series.[19] The absence of color in Evans' work is the most significant visual indicator of social intention, especially in relation to Shore's vivid color pictures. Despite the number of details in Evans' work, the abstract qualities of black and white imbue his photographs with a social or moral purpose.

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One can properly acknowledge and discuss Shore's definition of America after understanding how he communicated this idea through an accumulation of meaning of the entirety of the series. Influential Postmodern architect Robert Venturi wrote an essay that appeared on the book jacket of *Uncommon Places*, stating:

> Stephen Shore captures the essence of the American landscape by framing particular, ordinary elements so that they reveal the universal and extraordinary. The viewpoint of his camera is never special, it is that of our own absent-minded eyes as we wander through familiar places doing ordinary things—waiting for a bus or driving on an errand. In Shore's photographs

> we discover the mislaid images that we ignored because of their very familiarity or rejected because of their banality…In Shore's art we confront what we usually do not notice, streets and facades at once well known and remote, half-remembered and half-forgotten.[20]

Venturi thus described Shore's definition of America: one where the ubiquitous corporate gas station, the cracked pavement of a downtown intersection, and suburban ranch form average everyday sights. The constant use and presence of these places in our lives normalize them in the American consciousness, which in one sense causes numbness to them, but it also reflects their tremendous functional and aesthetic importance. In an interview with Lynne Tillman, Shore said, "what architecture does is it shows in a form accessible to photography certain cultural influences."[21] Shore's technical approach to photograph as realistically as possible allows the place to illustrate these forces without his artistic interference; he simply frames the structures and objects within the frame. The raw, dispassionate attention paid to the generic, ubiquitous built landscape in *Uncommon Places* constructs his definition of America.

The transparency created by Shore's compositional balance and precise technical approach allows the buildings to be set out for display rather than filtered through a secondary artistic tone. The choices Shore made in photographing specific buildings describe the American cultural forces of the 1970s and through the appearance of the buildings in Shore's photographs—its style, its color, its degree of maintenance, and function—one can begin to understand this culture. The viewer gains a small amount of information from each picture in the series and by digesting the entire forty-nine plates, one can construct a definition of America from the appearance of the architecture.

Structure and form dictated the creation of each individual image, but as a series Shore made deliberate choices to include almost exclusively photographs of the built environment. The 1982 production of *Uncommon Places* forced Shore to reduce the hundreds, possibly thousands of exposures he made throughout the ten years he photographed the series, down to forty-nine that would ultimately be included in the book. This reduction process is essential to understanding Shore's definition of America because the majority of the images he included represent the built environment rather than portraits, interiors, or meals. The expanded second edition of *Uncommon Places* published in 2004 added one hundred plates to the series and includes these other types of subjects more than the first edition. Rather than demonstrate Shore's desire to diversify the series, this difference reflects Shore's deliberate choice to focus solely on the built environment in the 1982 edition. Rather than portraits or food, he included pictures of architecture because he recognized how these particular photographs communicated the cultural tendencies of the 1970s.

The road plays a significant role in these photographs because the vastness of the continent combined with American individualism make automobile travel an essential part of life outside of the city. Shore's photograph of La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles perhaps best reflects the car culture of the 1970s (Figure 4). The road, like architecture, is a human construction and perhaps the most significant element of the built environment in *Uncommon Places* because, as this photograph depicts, it changed the land, decided where new businesses would be erected and even how they would look. Venturi shared a similar vision of America where the focus on the car and the road affected architecture. Buildings beside highways, like this Chevron

station, used large signs either on the building itself or at the edge of the road, which to Venturi was a more honest, accurate representation of social forces influencing architecture and design. Heroic Modernist styles were the product of grandiose aesthetic and philosophical ideas that did not properly reflect American society, whereas one could learn most from vernacular architecture; and in the 1970s the most pertinent of these buildings bordered the "strip." Venturi along with Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour asserted these ideas in their book *Learning From Las Vegas*, which directly challenged Modernism and ushered in the Post-modern era in architecture. Shore's nonjudgmental photographs visually capture Venturi's academic assertions because they demonstrate the way the car culture and capitalism affected architecture and the built environment as a whole.[22]

The definition of America one understands from *Uncommon Places* is an everyday America, one where the road, the suburb, and the overhead power line are constantly in our vision. Shore continued his thoughts on the advantages of photographing architecture in the Tillman interview, "It's one building next to another that was built at another time with another set of parameters, and it's on a street that I can see today—all of which has gone through exposure to time and the elements."[23] New buildings are adjunct to old buildings indicating a sense of history, the cumulative effect of hundreds of years of human society. Shore's photograph of Fort Worth, Texas from 1976 depicts three buildings: a Baroque-style church, a simple brick four-story office building, and a towering Modern glass skyscraper, which is so tall that it does not fit within the frame (Figure 5). These three buildings when presented realistically, plainly, and directly, as Shore has done, illustrate a rough history of North American architecture, but also how these vastly different buildings exist together in the present as a fragmented unity. The urban environment is not simply the history of individual buildings, but also the relationships of the buildings to one another and the city as a whole. The American city is the result of many people's different intentions and values and becomes a conglomerate of ideas manifested through architecture.

Shore is not interested in America as a political or social entity though; rather the entire North American continent is an appropriate subject, a place to be experienced through the road trip and only limited by how far one can drive. Unlike Frank or Evans, Shore does not restrict himself to the United States, but also photographs in Canada as well. Shore is not interested in the American identity as it relates to place like Frank, but rather how the built environment can indicate the nature of place and culture. Shore's definition of America is not one of social observation like Evans', but one that simply wants to pay attention to the appearance of the average American landscape; a landscape only limited by how far Shore can drive. The photograph of Gull Lake, Saskatchewan is a good example of how it was equally as possible for Shore to create photographs with interesting, complex forms in Canada as it was in the United States, making the border distinction a negligible one to him (Figure 6). In the series, the Canadian photographs fit seamlessly into the whole and communicate a greater, more universal understanding of America, one not defined by borders and politics, but rather one defined by the land, the continuity of the built environment and the forces that created them.

Uncommon Places is a fitting definition of America in the 1970s that deserves recognition within the road trip tradition established by Walker Evans and Robert Frank. The photographs span the entirety of the decade as well as

reaching throughout North America, but it is Shore's artistic abilities—his theoretical approach, technique, and selection of photographs—that make this a truly impressive and representative monograph of the decade. The influence of contemporary conceptual art demonstrates a thought process rooted in the 1970s, while his technical approach of the application of color to a documentary project is also a progressive, even radical, artistic decision. Most representative is Shore's unabashed tendency to photograph the banal, generic places of everyday life of the 1970s. Through the application of the concept of "architectural interest" the significance of the places he photographs is revealed not in individual images, but in the series as a whole. Like Venturi's ideas about vernacular architecture, Shore's places are not simply commonplaces; rather, they accrue value through the viewers' deliberate awareness of their ubiquity in the modern environment, and thus are transformed through art into uncommon places.

Endnotes

[1] Tod Papageorge, "Walker Evans and Robert Frank: An Essay on Influence," in *Core Curriculum: Writings on Photography* (New York: Aperture, 2011), 66.

[2] Philip Gefter, "Travels with Walker, Robert and Andy." *The New York Times* 4 July 2004.

[3] Stephen Shore, "Photography and Architecture," in *Stephen Shore* (London: Phaidon, 2007), 138.

[4] Stephen Shore, *Uncommon Places* (New York: Aperture, 1982), 63.

[5] Christy Lange, "Nothing Overlooked," in *Stephen Shore* (London: Phaidon, 2007), 47.

[6] Alexandra Schwartz, *Ed Ruscha's Los Angeles* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2010), 146.

[7] Lange, *Stephen Shore*, 47.

[8] Ibid., 48.

[9] Ibid., 59.

[10] John Coplans, *Serial Imagery* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1968), 10.

[11] Tony Hiss, "The Framing of Stephen Shore," *American Photographer*, February 1, 1979, 35.

[12] Stephen Schmidt Wulfen, introduction to *Uncommon Places: The Complete Works*, by Stephen Shore (New York: Aperture, 2004), 8.

[13] Stephen Shore, "Stephen Shore in Conversation with Lynne Tillman," in *Uncommon Places: The Complete Works* (New York: Aperture, 2004), 174.

[14] Papageorge, "Walker Evans and Robert Frank," 72.

[15] Douglas R. Nickel, "American Photographs' Revisited," *American Art* (1992): 81-82.

[16] Kevin Moore, *Starburst: Color Photography in America* 1970-1980 (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010), 8.

[17] Ibid.,10.

[18] Joel Sternfeld, "Holden Street, North Adams, Massachusetts, July 13, 1974," in *Stephen Shore*. London: Phaidon, 114-121. 118.

[19] Lincoln Kirstein, afterward to *American Photographs*, by Walker Evans (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938), 193.

[20] Shore, *Uncommon Places*, back cover.

[21] Shore, "Stephen Shore in Conversation," 182.

[22] Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1972).

[23] Shore, "Stephen Shore in Conversation," 182.

1.

Figure 1 Stephen Shore. "Second Street East and South Main Street, Kalispell, Montana, August 22, 1974" from *Uncommon Places*, 1982.

Figure 2 Walker Evans. "Birmingham Steel Mill and Worker's Houses, 1936" from *American Photographs*, 1938.

Figure 3 Robert Frank. "Navy Recruiting Station, Post Office – Butte, Montana" from *The Americans*, 1958.

Figure 4 Stephen Shore. "La Brea Avenue and Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, June 21, 1975" from *Uncommon Places*, 1982.

Figure 5 Stephen Shore. "Sixth Street and Throckmorton Street, Fort Worth, Texas, June 13, 1976" from *Uncommon Places*, 1982.

Figure 6 Stephen Shore. "Proton Avenue, Gull Lake, Saskatchewan, August 17, 1974" from *Uncommon Places*, 1982.

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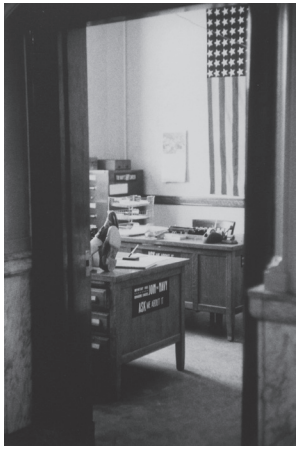


4.

Chevron
STAND
Beverly Bl
TEXACO
NO STAMPS
NO STAMPS

BUS LANE

5.

ESSO

6.

Imperialism, Economics and Sacred Experience in the Golden Mosaics of San Marco

Alexandra Steadman

La Chiesa D'Oro, the Church of Gold, the Basilica of San Marco has stood for centuries as a striking symbol of Venetian aesthetics, culture and glory. The façade has commanded attention with its ornamentation of vibrant colorful marbles, detailed bronze and stone statues and reliefs, and most importantly, rich golden mosaics. These are just a prelude to the interior where the enormous expanse of golden mosaics inside of the basilica has fabricated an incomparable experience for its visitors. The late-eleventh-century construction of the basilica we recognize today (fig. 1), replacing a smaller, earlier structure from the ninth century, marked one of the first steps in the establishment of Venice's international presence. Over the course of the twelfth century, the basilica was expanded and enhanced with Eastern references, particularly the onion-shaped domes and the Greek cross form. Consecrated in 1094, San Marco was meant to embody Venetian power and piety.[1] The golden mosaics added in the 13th century served as a physical manifestation of Venice's new political and economic power and intensified the sacred experience of the church. Scholars have studied the essential history, politics and iconography of the mosaics, but still lacking is an in-depth iconological analysis that accounts for the Venetians' overpowering appropriation of Byzantine imperial forms and material objects and the formation of a particular local Venetian style. Moreover, the manner of this appropriation and local style needs to be seen in relationship to religious practice and experience within the Basilica. The sacred experience of San Marco was enabled and mediated by Venice's political economy and dominated by the aesthetic experience of the golden mosaics.

The basilica of San Marco was central to the rise of Venice as an imperial power. Imperial use of gold in architecture had numerous precedents going back to antiquity, for example in Nero's Golden palace in Rome, and always had been used as a vehicle of status. This palace, the *Domus Aurea*, was covered extensively in gold leaf and the ceilings were covered in gems and ivory. It was designed as a setting for entertainment and luxury, displaying Nero's prosperity and status. Throughout were representations of the emperor as the Sun god, so the shimmering golden palace would be fitting for such a title. The Venetians desired this same status, and eventually manifested their own sovereignty through gold in San Marco. Before the 13th century Venice was only a small city-state, but the beginning of this century was the turning point for the Republic. This century was taken over by the fourth crusade, known as the "Crusade of the Venetians." Before going off to the East, crusaders from all over Europe assembled in San Marco in order that they might gain divine protection and aid in battle. After the sack of Constantinople in 1204, Venice was transformed from a small city-state to a major political force. The conquered Byzantine lands were split up and the Venetians gained a substantial amount of new territory.[2] The *modus appropriandi* of the Venetians during the fourth crusade was politico-commercial expansionism. Even though they proved to be stronger militarily than their Eastern Orthodox counterparts, the Venetians understood that the might of the Byzantine culture was so great that they had to steal it, literally and figuratively, and adapt it to their own ends.

The Venetians admired the Byzantine theocratic conception of government, thriving economics, and magnificent art. The Byzantine Empire had produced numerous golden architectural and decorative representations of sovereignty. Hagia Sophia, with its golden depictions of great Byzantine emperors and symbols of status, and the Church of the Holy Apostles, with its golden ceilings and domes, were two manifestations of imperial power from

Constantinople that the Venetians desired to emulate. The Venetians halted and crippled the growth of the great Empire yet they saw themselves as heirs to Byzantium and pursued new trade, diplomacy, and pilgrimage with the East.[3] They had a bond to Byzantium because of trade and a comparative lack of relations with the Italian mainland. Venice could thus be considered something of an Eastern state in the West.[4]

The Venetians pillaged and plundered art, relics, and treasures that had been symbols of Byzantine sacred rule and displayed them in San Marco as physical representations of the Venetian Republic's hegemony over the East. Many of the other *spolia* were displayed outside of the basilica to confirm their conquest, including the four gilded bronze horses from the Hippodrome in Constantinople that grace the entryway to the basilica. Most of these valuables were stored in the treasury inside of San Marco; their possession and occasional display legitimized and glorified Venice's role in the crusades against the Eastern Orthodox Church. The most important relic acquired by the Venetians, albeit at a much earlier date, was the body of St. Mark himself.

The Venetians used the subject matter in the San Marco mosaics to confirm their claim to the body of the Evangelist, thereby making their homeland not just militarily and economically powerful but also a sacred city. St. Mark was martyred in Alexandria, which became his initial burial place. According to legend, in 828, two Venetian merchants, Buono of Malamocco and Rufino of Torcello, stole the body from the city after the Saracen prince of the time destroyed the small chapel that contained the saint. To make sure the Islamic customs officers would not profane the body, they covered the basket containing his remains with pork. St. Mark was safely transported to Venice.[5] There was a strong belief in Italy that the worth of a city depended on its patron saint. This bond surpassed the domain of civic relations, religion, and politics. The mosaic of the *Praedestinatio* (fig. 2), completed in 1270 in the Capella Zen, explicitly claimed that Christ designated Venice as the final resting place for the saint. The Venetians believed that the Evangelist was the true founder of Venice. According to legend, St. Peter sent Mark to evangelize the northern Adriatic area before he went on to Alexandria. The *Praedestinatio* depicts St. Mark in the midst of a dream, while in Venice, in which Christ came to him and prophesied that his body was going to be rescued from the Muslim infidels in Alexandria to find a safe resting place in the city of Venice. This legend was meant to justify the theft of his body from Alexandria. The Venetians glorified this religious conquest and even depicted the theft itself in gold, in the mosaic of the *Translatio* (fig. 3) and also in the Pala d'Oro. The documentary nature of the subject was extremely rare for the period.[6] The *Translatio* does not depict a religious ceremony, or a story of the life of St. Mark; it chronicles the theft. Venice localized its own style through the representation of momentous events specific to their civic history and stature. It is significant that this image was not created right after the theft, but in the 13th century. The construction of a nation's own history is an important step in the maturation of a state, and at this time Venice was in the process of transformation into an Imperial power. The *Translatio* highlights the Venetian sentiment of the time, civic pride and patriotism.

The beginning of a particularly Venetian iconography is thus evident throughout the golden mosaics in San Marco, but the emergence of a local style can also be discerned by comparison to important historical precedents from other parts of Italy and the Byzantine world. The historical, political, and sacred nature of the mosaics

become more transparent when put in the context of similar representations from elsewhere. Comparing the *Reception of the Body of St. Mark into Venice* (fig. 4) to the mosaic of *Justinian and his Attendants* (fig. 5) from San Vitale in Ravenna helps to illuminate Venice's claim of authority.[7]

The *Reception* is the only 13th-century mosaic preserved on the facade of the Basilica. It is depicted in a semi-dome above the Porta di S. Alipio, an extremely prominent portal for visitors entering the basilica. On the facade, the brightness of the gold in the mosaics mingles with symbols of glory.[8] The body is received by the doge and his retinue in a holy procession that advances in front of a representation of the basilica itself. Christ guides the procession of the doge, dogeressa, bishops, noblemen, ladies of the court, and others into the church. An inscription frames the portal apse: COLOCAT HUNC DIGNISPLEBS LAUDIBUS ET COLIT HYMNIS UT VENETOS SERVET TERRAQUE MARIQUE GUBERNET ("The people place him [here] with worthy praises and reverence him with hymns in order that he guard the Venetians and rule over land and sea.") The phrase "Protection from the enemy" was added to the inscription in the 13th century as a justification of the Venetian conquest over the Eastern Church. This ideology of "protection" reinforced the authority of Venetian imperialism; that Christ entrusted Venice to protect "both land and sea." The Patronage of St. Mark thus extends beyond the religious sphere into the duties of their new hegemonic power. With this newfound rule came added responsibility that spread beyond the islands of Venice. These claims of authority are documented in the medium of mosaic for all to see.

Justinian and his Attendants represented the emperor's glory and divine right to power. Like in the Porta di S. Alipio it combined politics and religion. At the time that this mosaic was constructed in 547, Justinian was in the process of expanding the Byzantine Empire beyond the eastern Mediterranean, an effort to reclaim the original lands of the Roman Empire. Compositional details of the two mosaics align: Justinian was shown in an imaginary procession as well and he is surrounded by a bishop, two dignitaries, guards, and two deacons. They are portrayed as if advancing towards the center of the apse in which the mosaic is placed. Similarly, in the *Reception of the Body of St. Mark into Venice*, the figural procession is placed not within, but in front of the church itself, just as the physical location of the mosaic is in an exterior portal rather than in the apse. The *Reception* mosaic effectively made the Doge Giustiniano Partecipazio the new Justinian because of his similar placement, in the center flanked by bishops and noblemen. Justinian is adorned with purple imperial robes, a crown and a halo. Even though Christ is not present in the *Justinian* mosaic, as he is in the Porta di S. Alipio, the insertion of the halo was an explicit statement that God had called him to be a saint, and thus a savior to his people. The figures represented in both mosaics are dressed in contemporary attire adding to the documentary style, which legitimized the veracity of the claims made by each image. These two processions were set on a glittering golden background signifying the wealth, power, and prosperity attributed to the respective Imperial powers. Both of these ornate, golden, and intricate representations explore the relationship between politics and religion, and both express a divine right to rule. Even though the Byzantine influence is quite evident, there is still a particular style that differentiates this mosaic and makes it "Venetian." This is seen through the manner of dress, contemporary figures, colors, and the depiction of the eclectic basilica. Much has been said and written about the direct influence of Byzantium on Venetian art, but it is

better characterized as a Byzantine transmission that Venice appropriated to localize a style of its own.

Understanding the additions made to the Basilica in the 13th century, the acquisition of gold and marble, and the manner of production of the mosaics further illustrate the story of Venice's rise as a political and economic power. The golden mosaics of San Marco embody their authority and wealth, but more importantly, helped Venice to construct its own identity by their direct reference to and triumph over Byzantine heritage. They adapted the Byzantine method of mosaic production, seen in Ravenna, from the making of the golden tesserae to pressing of the mosaic by hand. At San Marco the result is a dazzling, independent statement of wealth and status. The tesserae started as small circular pieces of glass, produced locally in Venice. A thin layer of gold leaf or actual gold was then layered on top of the glass and was fused to the glass once put into an oven. Next a layer of fine blown crystal was put on the surface. This was what enabled the tesserae to truly sparkle. The glass pieces were then cut into smaller pieces with a hammer and hardie. Then each individual tessera was embedded into a lime-putty base, all pressed in at different angles to allow them to pick up and reflect light. The artists made mosaics knowing that it must reflect light to get the desired effect. This entire process would have been done on site at the basilica.

The fact that San Marco's enormous expanse of ceiling was covered completely with gold—45,622 square feet—stood as an overwhelming testament to Venice's robust economy. While the specific geographic source of the gold for the basilica remains uncertain, it can be assumed that it came through the Venetian control of the eastern trade routes.[9] When a city or country has control of trade and source locations for precious natural resources, they have control as to where items end up, and in this case, the Venetians would have had control of most of the trade of the gold throughout the Mediterranean and Europe. San Marco was a reference point for traveling merchants and sailors. As these pilgrims passed through, they contributed art, marble, gold, and other precious gifts.[10] The wealth of the treasury of San Marco grew throughout the centuries and contained the finest collection of sacred and precious objects in all of Europe. The treasury of San Marco held and preserved relics, gems, and gold from the sack of Constantinople and continued to grow as a result of gifts or debts of visiting nobles, Popes, and Emperors.[11] This notion is reminiscent of the heavenly kingdom in Revelation, "The nations will walk by its light, and to it the kings of the earth will bring their treasure" (Rev. 21:24). The Venetians would have been familiar with biblical passages such as this one, especially since they included imagery from Revelation in the mosaics. This acquisition of earthly treasures proclaimed that Venice was rewarded for carrying out their God-given duty to protect both land and sea. San Marco exemplified the convergence of a golden sacred space and a symbol of prosperous imperialism. According to Paul Hills, one should not treat the golden mosaics as a "background" but as "clothing of the building itself." [12] The aesthetic experience of the golden mosaics shaped the sacred nature of the basilica.

The practice of blinding and dazzling the viewer with gold and light and its association with the heavens goes back to antiquity and continued to dominate the vista of Jerusalem in the form of the Dome of the Rock (fig. 6). Biblical precursors referenced this relationship between gold and the divine. Images of gold are everywhere in the Biblical description of heaven, also known as the New Jerusalem: "The wall was constructed of jasper, while the city was pure

gold, clear as glass… the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made from a single pearl; and the street of the city was of pure gold, transparent as glass" (Rev. 21:18-21). Religious precursors like the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem also made this hierophanous association between gold and divinity. The great dome was made of tiles and an ultra-thin golden glasure. The golden dome is reminiscent of the golden city of heaven. San Marco invited participation in a heavenly aesthetic experience defined first and foremost by gold. As visitors stepped into the blinding, light reflected off the gold was meant to give a foretaste of the transcendent. This effect was a highly engineered experience for the viewer, as discussed above, since every single gold tessera had been meticulously and deliberately crafted and set to reflect the incoming sunlight.

These mosaics act as a mediator between the divine and humanity, but this experience is not only a solitary one; more often than not, the experience of the mosaics of San Marco was communal and public. The Venetian citizenry, and every merchant and pilgrim visitor to the city, each played a role in forming the relationship between the golden space and the local identity of Venice. The entire city was involved in the production of religious feast and festivals. However, the relationship between the basilica and the Doge deserves special consideration, because it exemplifies the two natures of the church: political and sacred. The Doge was presented as a living representation of the city of Venice, and therefore the glory of Venice was inseparable from the magnificence of the doge. San Marco had always been considered the chapel of the Doge, "*Solus Dominuspatronus et verus gubernator S. Marci*," literally translated as, "God's patron alone and the true pilot of St. Mark." The doge had total patronage over it. Both the economic and political power and the religious experience was mediated and commanded by the doge. Since Doge Giustiniano Partecipazio received the body of St. Mark and decided to build the first church at the site in the ninth century, the doges had been directly involved in every aspect in the creation, rebuilding and maintenance of the basilica. With the name "Giustiniano", translated as "Justinian", one cannot help but make the connection to the great byzantine Emperor. This doge spent much time in Constantinople and would have been familiar with the great conquest and desires of Justinian. One could again compare the desires to build San Marco with the motivations behind Ravenna. With both political and religious authority entrusted to the doges, and the desire for Venice to mimic the great Byzantium, the doges should be seen as new Justinians. The Doge entrusted the maintenance of the church to appointed Procurators. They never failed to impress and display the imperial and religious glory of Venice to visiting emperors and dignitaries. The doges took this as their personal duty to reinforce the splendor of the city. According to Henry Maguire and Robert Nelson, one illustrious guest commented, "marvelous in the extreme, rich and varied and golden . . . and worthy of limitless praise."[13] The Doges' intimate connection with the church extended from their election, to their burials, both of which took place inside the basilica. This relationship combined a religious and political preeminence, on the election of the doge, "a ray of heavenly glory from the patron saint illuminated the figure of the head of the state."[14] His burial was symbolic of his final farewell to his beloved church.

Venice desired to become a holy pilgrimage site echoing great sacred destinations like the *Loca Sancta* in the Holy Land, or Alexandria. They used the eastern decorative devices, especially gold, to evoke these comparisons, while the narrative of the acquisition of holy relics portrayed in the golden mosaics further justified the sacred authority of the

basilica. The Venetians made sure St. Mark was intertwined with Venetian identity. Therefore, his image was portrayed throughout San Marco and around the entire city. The Porta di Sant' Alipio was one of the pilgrimage highlights of the basilica, and also advertised the principle point of pilgrimage, the shrine of St. Mark. San Marco did not just display relics in various side chapels like other pilgrimage churches; the entire church acted as a reliquary. The body of the evangelist was not revered and displayed in a special chapel, but rather centrally placed in the church under the main altar. Reliquaries had to be made of precious material to reflect the sacredness of the relic inside. The interior of San Marco, completely covered with gold, was a fitting final resting place for the great evangelist.

The experience of the glittering gold mosaics of the Basilica of San Marco gives one a glimpse into the transcendent and metaphysical and into the wealth and glory of Venice. The political economy of Venice during the 13th century set the stage for the opportunity to exhibit the power of the Venetian state through the Basilica of San Marco. This manifestation was expressed through the medium of gold, which directly allowed for the ability to express the sacred nature of the church. The grand golden mosaics separate the basilica from the mundane, everyday world and place the viewer in the presence of the divine, connecting the material directly with the immaterial. Were it not for the earthly gains of the Venetians, one would not be able to experience and participate in the sacred space of the *Chiesa d'Oro*.

Endnotes

[1]Angelo Maria Caccin, *St. Mark's the Basilica of Gold* (Venice: Trevisanstampa, 1964), 21.

[2]This included the Levant and islands of Crete and Euboea. The Aegean islands came to form the Venetian Duchy of the Archipelago.

[3] Henry Maguire, editor and Robert S. Nelson, editor, *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice* (Washington D.C.: Dumberton Oaks Research Library and Collection), 37.

[4] Geographically the city of Venice is not connected to the Italian Peninsula. The lack of relations with Italian mainland was also due to the absence of a strong classical tradition. See "Basilica Di San Marco, Venice and the East," http://www/basilicasanmarco.it/eng/index.bsm/

[5] Caccin, *St. Mark's the Basilica of Gold*, 125.

[6] Maria Georgopoulou, "Late Medieval Crete and Venice: An Appropriation of Byzantine Heritage," *The Art Bulletin* 77.3 (1995): 479-96.

[7] Otto Demus, *The Mosaic Decoration of San Marco, Venice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 66-70, 108, and Maguire, *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice*, 66, 70. The *translatio* of the saint's body to Venice and its reception there was illustrated in the Pala d'Oro and in the vault of the south choir chapel dedicated to Saint Clement.

[8] Paul Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble Mosaic, Painting and Glass, 1250-1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 64.

[9] The gold may have come from Alexandria or central Europe.

[10] http://www.basilicasanmarco.it/eng/index.bsm.

[11] Caccin, *St. Mark's Basilica of Gold*, 125. The treasury contained seven centuries worth of treasure but was later destroyed in a fire.

[12] Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass*, 47.

[13] Maguire, *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice*, 193. When the council of Ferrara and Florence arrived in Venice in 1438, one of the members of Emperor John VIII Palaeologus's entourage commented on the city's beauty.

[14] Caccin, *St. Mark's Basilica of Gold*, 14.

1.

2.

Figure 1 Basilica di San Marco, Venice. Façade.

Figure 2 *The Praedestinatio*. Basilica di San Marco. Mosaic.

Figure 3 *The Tranlatio*. Basilica di San Marco. Mosaic.

Figure 4 *The Reception of the Body of St. Mark into Venice*. Basilica di San Marco. Mosaic.

Figure 5 *Justinian and His Attendants*. San Vitale Basilica, Ravenna. Mosaic.

Figure 6 Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem. Façade.

4.

COLLOCATHUNCOIGNISPERSIADOIBUS7COLITHYMNS DTVENETOS SEMPER SERVET AB HOSTE SIBOS

MARCVM FVRANTVR·KANZIR·LIVOCIFERANTVR·
CARNIB· ABSCONSV·VVERVNT FVGIVNTQ·RETRORSV·

3.

MAXIMIANVS

5.

6.

STUDIO ART

GRANT BAY

head first only

As an artist, my primary medium is painting. For reference, I look at found photographs and captured video stills, coupled with ideas from my imagination and sketchbook. I take compositions that are populated with objects and figures that are recognizable and make them strange. My intent is to make a viewer feel at once engaged and disoriented, with visual surprises and logical discontinuities in spatial relations.

My paintings seem fictionalized, containing passages that are clearly not from observed reality. I am interested in the experience of longing for a relationship that cannot be attained. Relationships between individuals can be imagined to create a fiction that is both appealing and impossible. My painted works call this to mind by presenting a level of improbability of visual elements that could only be conceived in one's mind.

In my practice, painting is a process that lives in a realm of its own. Regardless of a given painting's subject, I am inspired by innumerable sources ranging from music to literature to art history. I execute paintings intuitively, trying to see everything that paint can do and become; I strive to engage painting headfirst, overemphasizing color, pattern and texture and exulting in the potential of the medium.

Formally, my work lives in the nebulous spectrum between abstraction and representation: there are always commonly discernible objects or figures, but they are in contrast with abstracted areas of color and mark-making. Rules of mark-making and spatial construction are set up and subsequently violated in the same work. This yields an inability to fully establish a sense of one's bearings within the painting, a condition that is engaging and fascinating but tragically impossible.

stop making sense, oil on canvas, 68" x 78", 2013

double portrait, oil on canvas, 60" x 60", 2013

legs, oil on canvas, 72" x 66", 2014

KARA FLANAGAN

Plainville

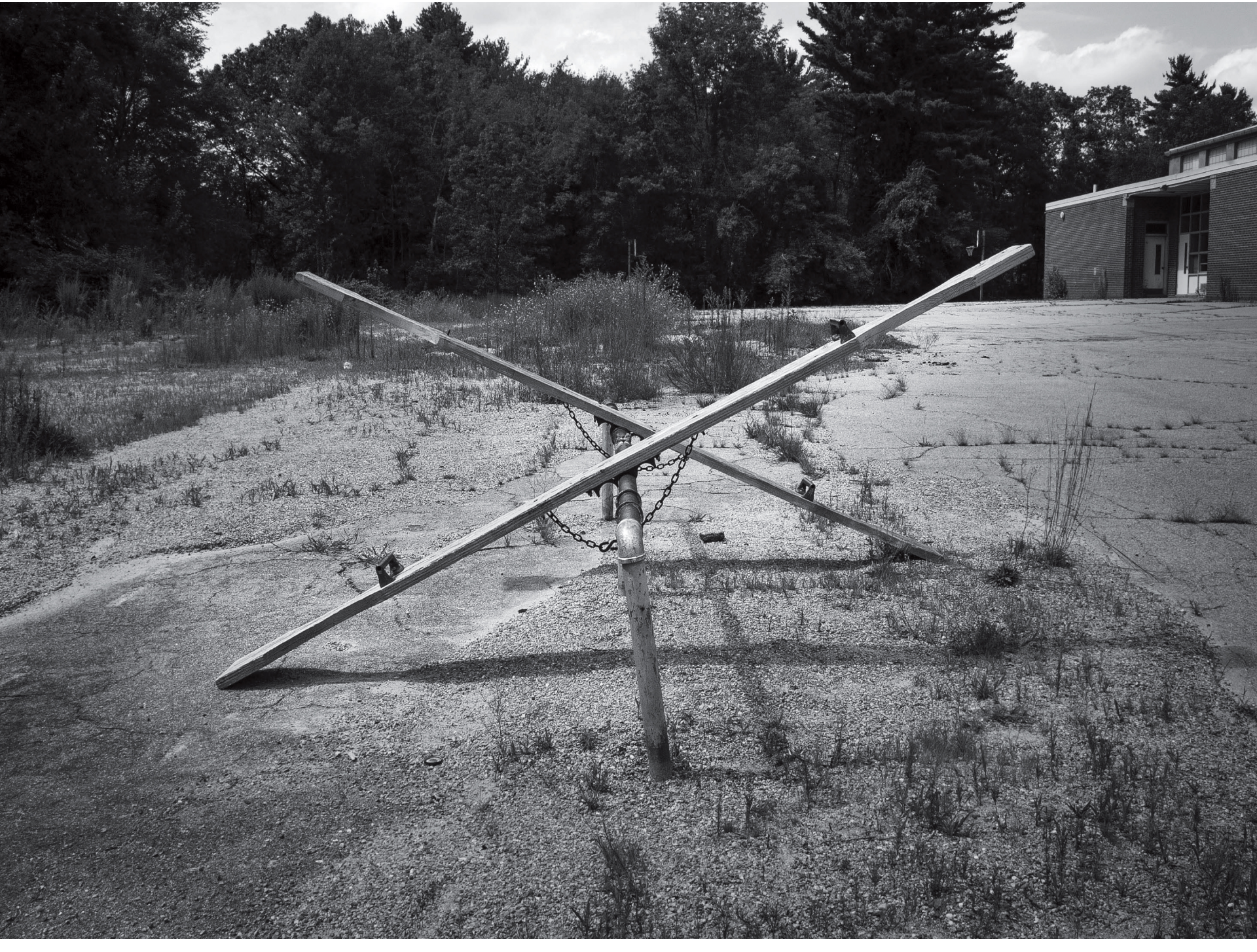
In my work I explore a dimension of my childhood that is usually not spoken of. I photograph sites that I inhabited as a child, many of which are abandoned today. These places refer to the psychological experience of being left behind by a parent and they bring back specific memories of events that occurred there. Additionally, the act of rexposure to the sites is a way of trauma intervention that is the core to this work.

When I revisit the sea-saw I used to ride, the elementary school I attended, or the church I got baptized at, I have both positive and negative associations: these places were refuges from my dysfunctional home and places of comfort but they also generated anxiety in reminding me what I sought refuge from and what I would be returning to. My dual interest in art and psychology make these sites particularly appropriate as a subject matter.

My photographs demonstrate the act of looking back. I have printed the images in black and white to produce a sense of skepticism. This is further emphasized by the geometric compositions, which suggest symbolic characters, like letters or numbers. I want to suggest a story to be decoded; however, since the characters are illegible the story remains a mystery. By making larger prints, it provides a way of inviting the viewer to invade the space.

The sense of abandonment has a personal meaning but can also transcend that, communicating with an individual viewer and recalling his or her own experiences. I want to provide a flashback into my personal history of abandonment and also invite the viewer to look back on their own childhood memories. My work encourages viewers to consider the act of recollection-- I hope that it helps enable viewers to retrieve their own early memories.

Teeter-Totter, pigment based archival inkjet print, 44" x 28", 2013



Metal Slide, pigment based archival inkjet print, 44" x 28", 2013

Bridge Leading to Nowherseville, pigment based archival inkjet print, 44" x 28", 2013

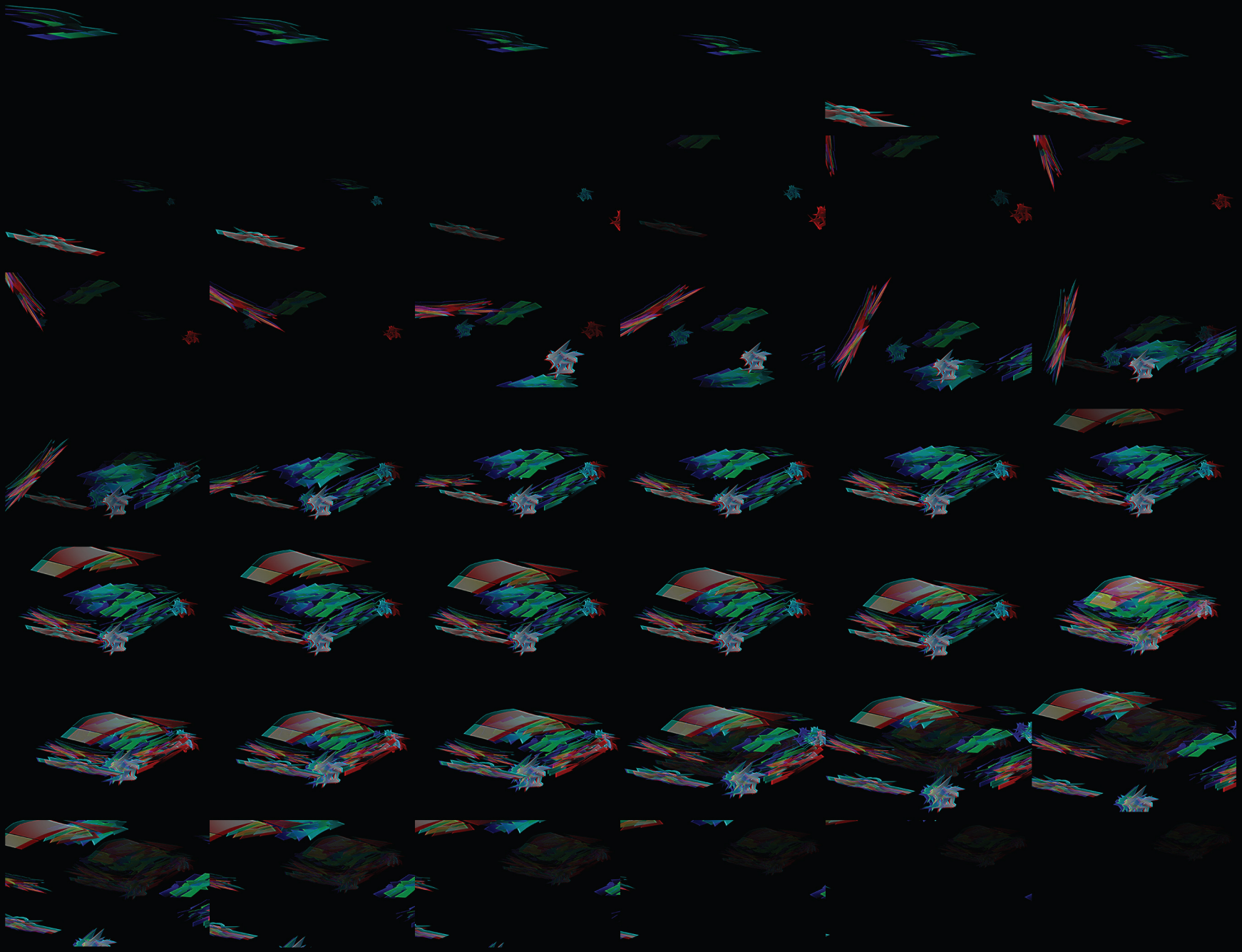
JESSICA HO

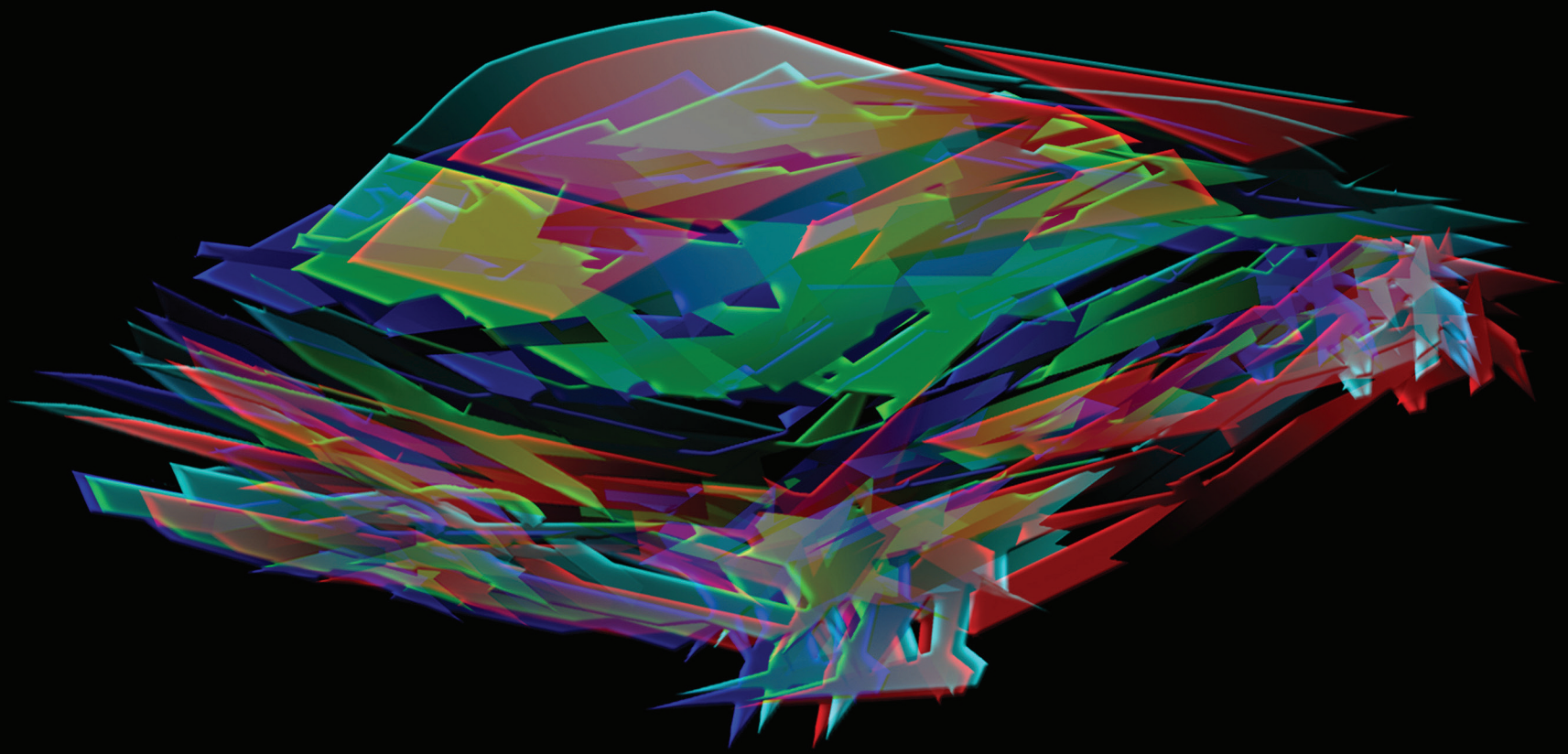
The Auto Show

I intend to create an auto show displaying the various cars of my own design. The palette of colors and the mosaic surfaces give the cars more personality and also emphasizes the various characteristics of the car that make it a unified whole. Overall, my work combines my interests in both automotive and digital imaging to portray the cars as works of art, rather than just a means of transportation.

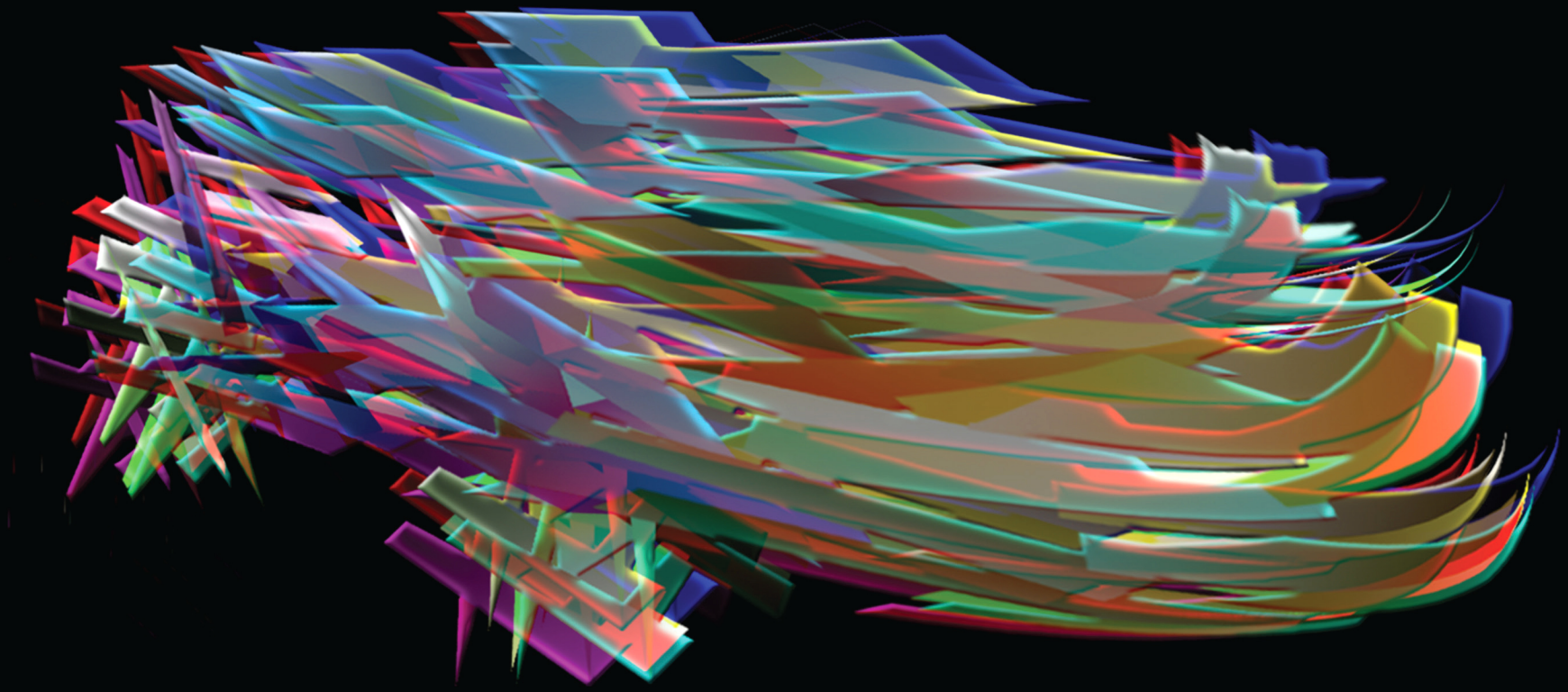
I would like to show that every automobile has its own unique personality, because each car has a distinctive shape, color, height, engine design, gear ratio, driving wheel, and a million other details. Cars have for me another characteristic: they are everyday objects that I want to turn into pieces of art.

As someone who loves going to auto shows and admiring the different cars, I am interested in understanding the different layers of each one, and the functionality of each car. A car is a work of art, an architectural masterpiece on wheels. We are often asked the question: Does the form follow the function? Every car has a unique design. Every detail no matter how small has a purpose. If we just consider the function of a car, it is meant to help people get around. Every car can do that, so why are there so many different models? The answer is simple. A car reflects its owner's personality.

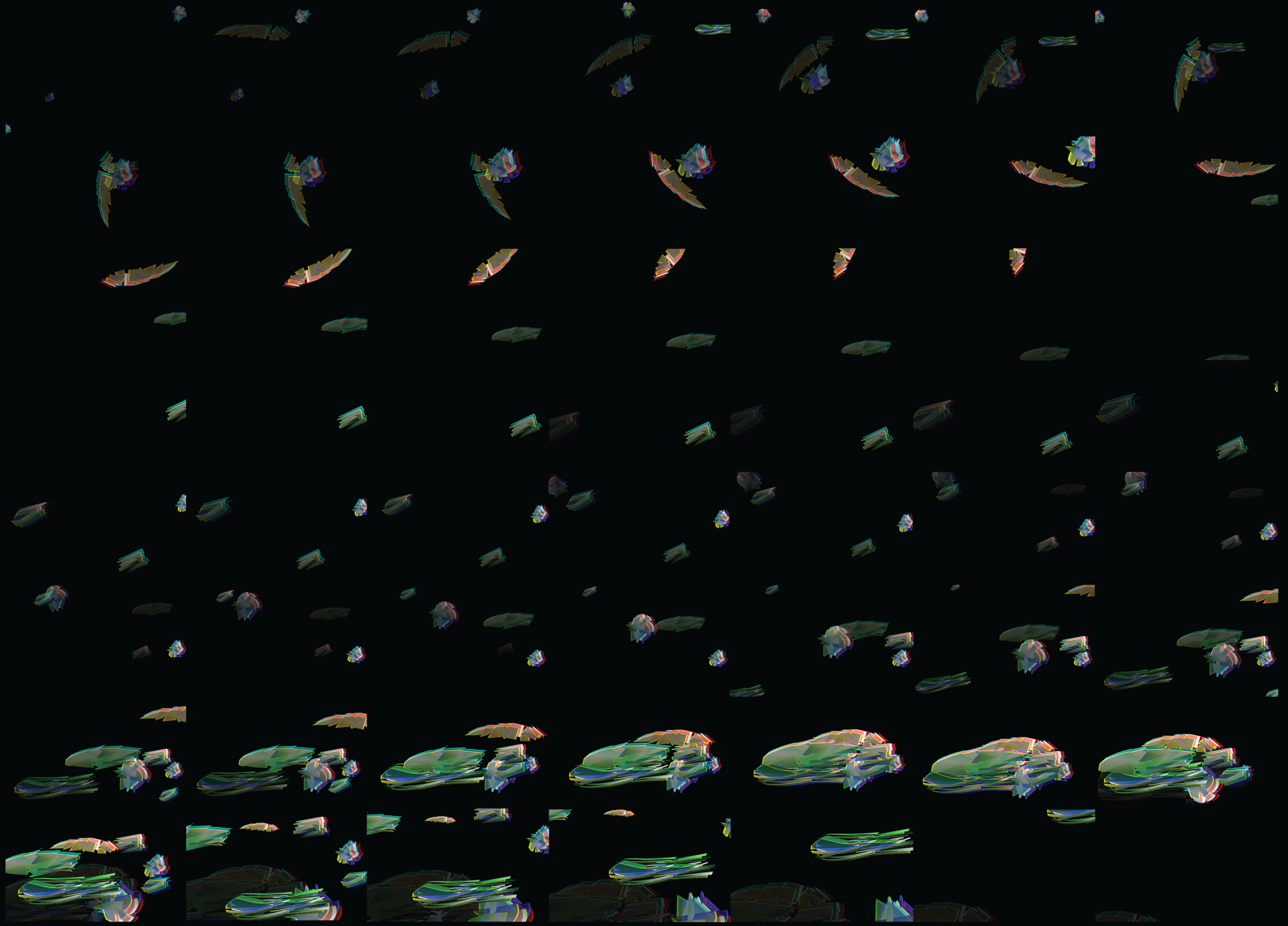


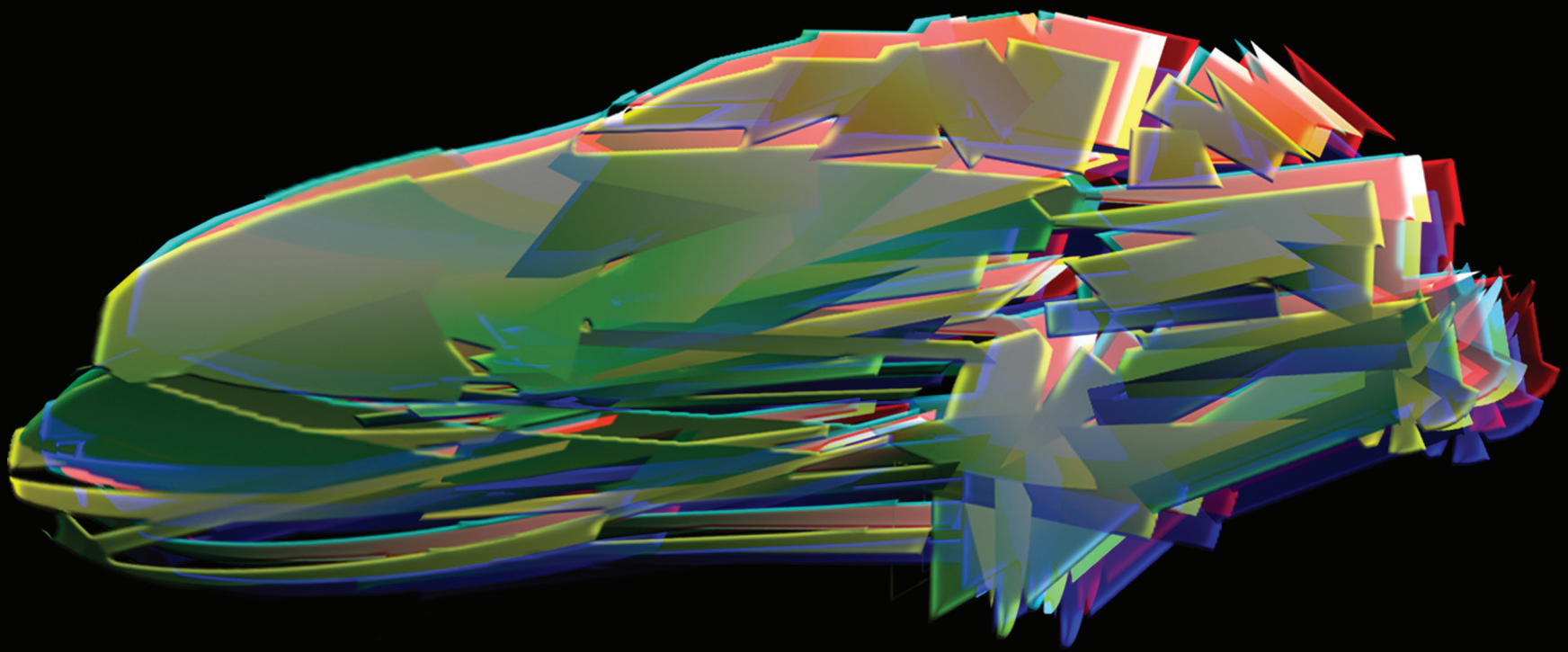


Car Concept # 7, digital projection, 21' x 13', 2014



Car Concept # 13, digital projection, 21' x 13', 2014





Car Concept # 21, digital projection, 21' x 13', 2014

JESSICA HO

Journey

Through my work, I would like to show that even though we are our own individuals, we are also all part of a global culture. As a Chinese American, I am part of a community in which Kung Fu is prevalent and I have spent a great deal of time studying it, along with many of my family members and friends. I believe that Kung Fu is a unique way to bridge cultural gaps; it aids in a mutual understanding in a way that language often fails to do. It is an art that is able to cross existing cultural barriers through practiced movement and shared experience. Photography, like Kung Fu, requires discipline and determination and the achievement of excellence through resilience and fortitude. Both forms of art teach the body and mind to work as one.

Each photograph explores a unique Kung Fu form. They portray the intensity and the clarity of each of the forms in juxtaposition with a background that is meaningful to each person. The backgrounds symbolize a place that defines them as an individual today. The poses are the pivotal points of a much longer form that they have worked to perfect. Each subject wears comfortable clothing of their choosing instead of traditional garb. These modern clothes contrast with the ancient traditions of Kung Fu and bridge the time gap, showing that Kung Fu is an enduring art form that has touched the whole world.

Kung Fu and photography are methods of communication. They provide alternatives to the spoken or written word, and a way of uniting many different lives and backgrounds without fear of a communication barrier.

Xia, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Nickolas, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Sarina, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Steven, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Kristina, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Paul, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Albert, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Kayla, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Albert, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Henlee, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Vladimir, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

Mesan, archival inkjet print, 24" x 36", 2014

KATHERINE KAISER

Kinetic Meditation

My goal as an artist is to produce work that is compelling as well as tranquil, that invites exploration and immersion. There is a certain familiarity that is portrayed by my work: the marks often reference environmental forms such as leaves, twigs, roots and branches. However, I purposefully paint in an ambiguous fashion, leaving the mind open to wander in a dreamlike state.

I want to connect to the energy found in nature by implementing two types of painting languages. The juxtaposition between the serenity of pouring paint and the sharp kinetic energy of my hand-drawn marks creates a balance in the composition. The combination of mark making puts me in a meditative state where everything is connected as if it is one continued journey.

Having traveled to both China and Japan has influenced my painting both visually and conceptually. The cultural depth in both countries is accompanied by a balance between the old and the new. Seeing an ancient Japanese temple, completely surrounded by the modern city of Tokyo initiated my interest in duality. Achieving this harmonious balance is what I strive for in my work. I want the viewer's gaze to seamlessly wander from an energetic mark to a temperate area of paint, enjoying the visual engagement and allowing the mind to slip into the same meditative state that I enter during my own process.

Untitled, oil, solvent, pastel, conte crayon, graphite, spray paint, 32" x 49", 2013

Untitled, oil, spray paint, 52" x 40", 2014

Untitled, oil, spray paint, 44" x 64”, 2014

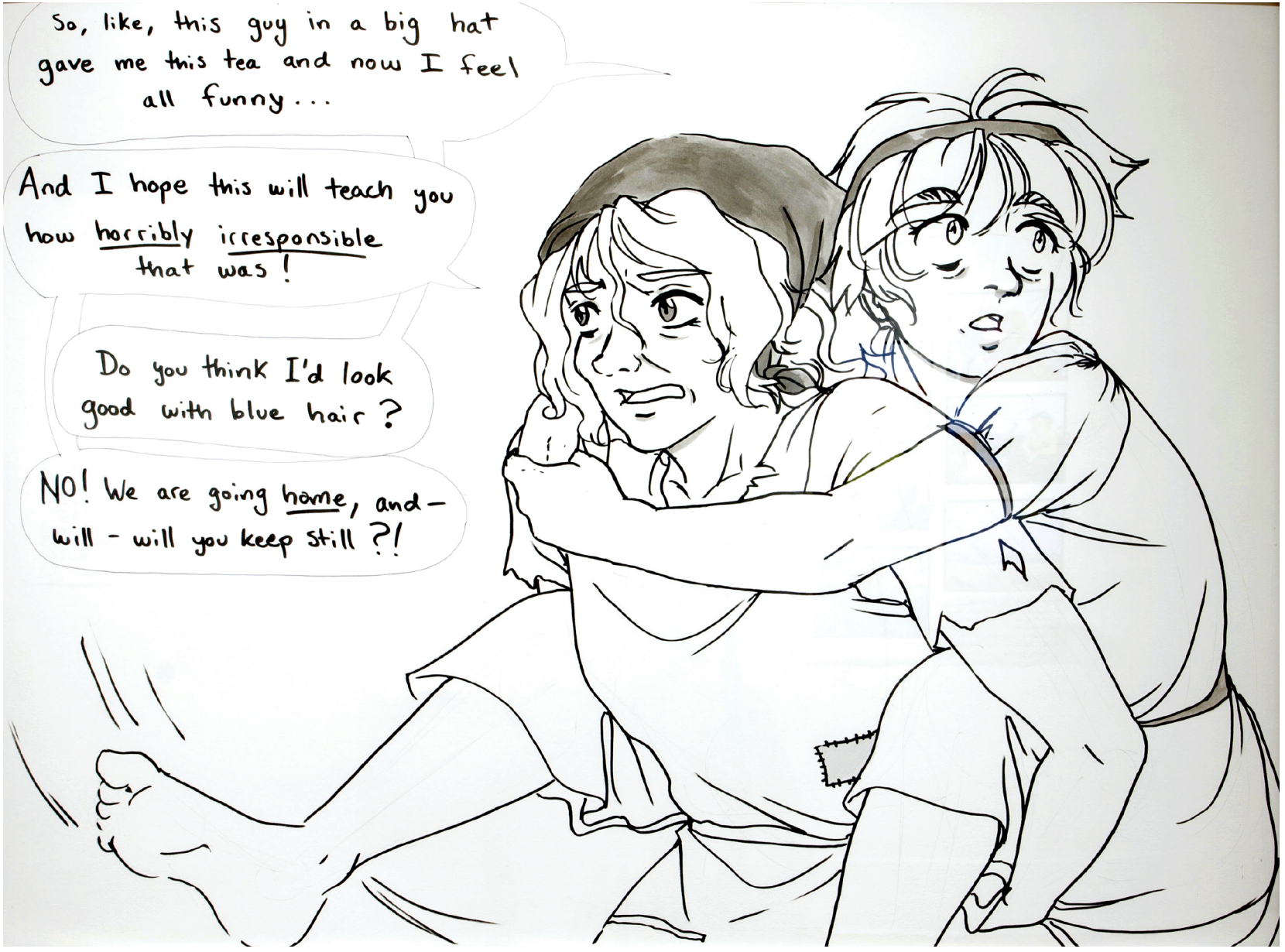
KRISTEN KERN

Arsy Varsy

My goal in my work is to connect to people through stories. I use my characters and narratives to turn people inward towards their own lives; my drawings may remind them of a person, a place, an event, or an experience or emotion. I use ink and Photoshop, which are clear, easy to read, and familiar. This is one way in which my art evokes the feel of comics, cartoons, video games, and other geek-culture influences from my childhood and today. I gravitate most noticeably toward the aesthetic of Japanese manga, applying various elements of this aesthetic to nearly all of my work.

As I experimented these past months with new ways of exploring my interest in cartooning, I began creating backwards fairy tales. These are several well-known stories, many made popular by the ubiquitous animated Disney films from the 1930's to the present. Extracting the major plot elements, I reverse the order, and thus create an entirely new tale. The results are comic-like drawings which use immediately familiar visuals to first draw the viewer in, and then subvert expectations as the viewer notices that the known story is somehow off. My new fairy tales offer something that is at once accessible and off-beat. In these pieces, I play with the gray area between the comfortable and familiar, and the strange and unexpected.

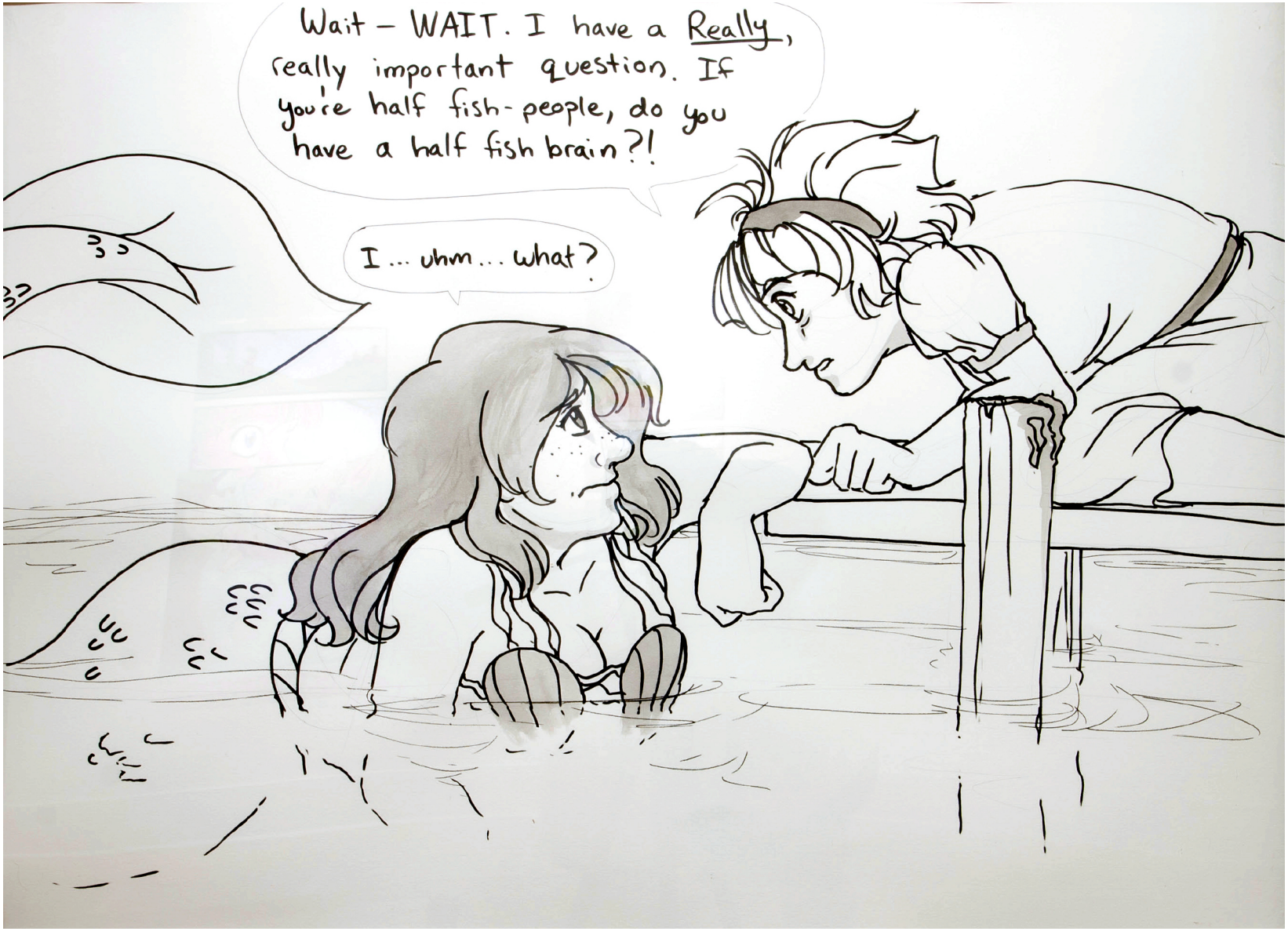
This body of work is particularly focused on the characters built from these backwards stories. As I reversed their narratives, I realized that the people within them changed dramatically as well. I began to develop these characters more fully, getting to know them better through their contexts and interactions. Through this work, I became very familiar with them as individuals, down to how they speak, how they carry themselves, or even their favorite colors. My drawings aim to introduce my characters, communicate their unique personalities, and invite the viewer to get to know them as well as I do.



Cinderella and Alice-- Weird Tea, ink on paper, 22" x 40", 2014

Alice in Wonderland, Rapunzel, Beauty and the Beast, ink on paper, 2' x 4', 2014

The Little Mermaid Backwards, digital print, 55" x 39", 2014



Little Mermaid and Alice-- Important Question, ink on paper, 22" x 30", 2014

Arsy Farsy Exhibition, Hunt-Cavanagh Gallery, Providence College, April 21-25, 2014

2-14-14
"If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe."
5 DI intro images
5 backwards stories
~ 6 interactions
(3 DI, 3 drawn?)
FEB
S M T W Th F Sa
you are here
figure out medium, scale, etc.
check w/ Mr. J about the DI and the things
6 weeks from here
MAR
S M T W Th F Sa
finish
Spring focus on DI (be ready to discuss research with printing)
have postcards ready for printing this week
6 weeks
Plan to be printing by the start of April
2-20-14

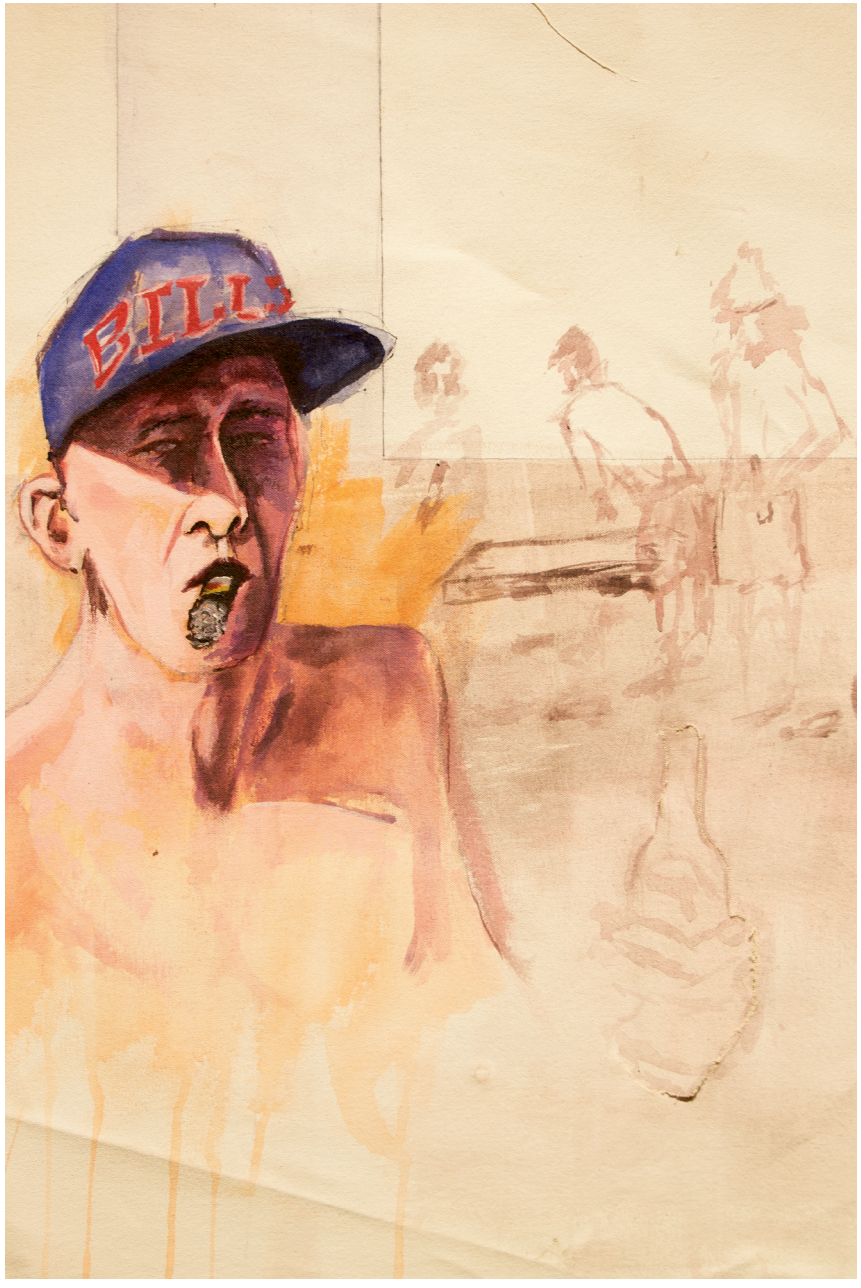
RYAN MARTIN

Thanks for Having Us

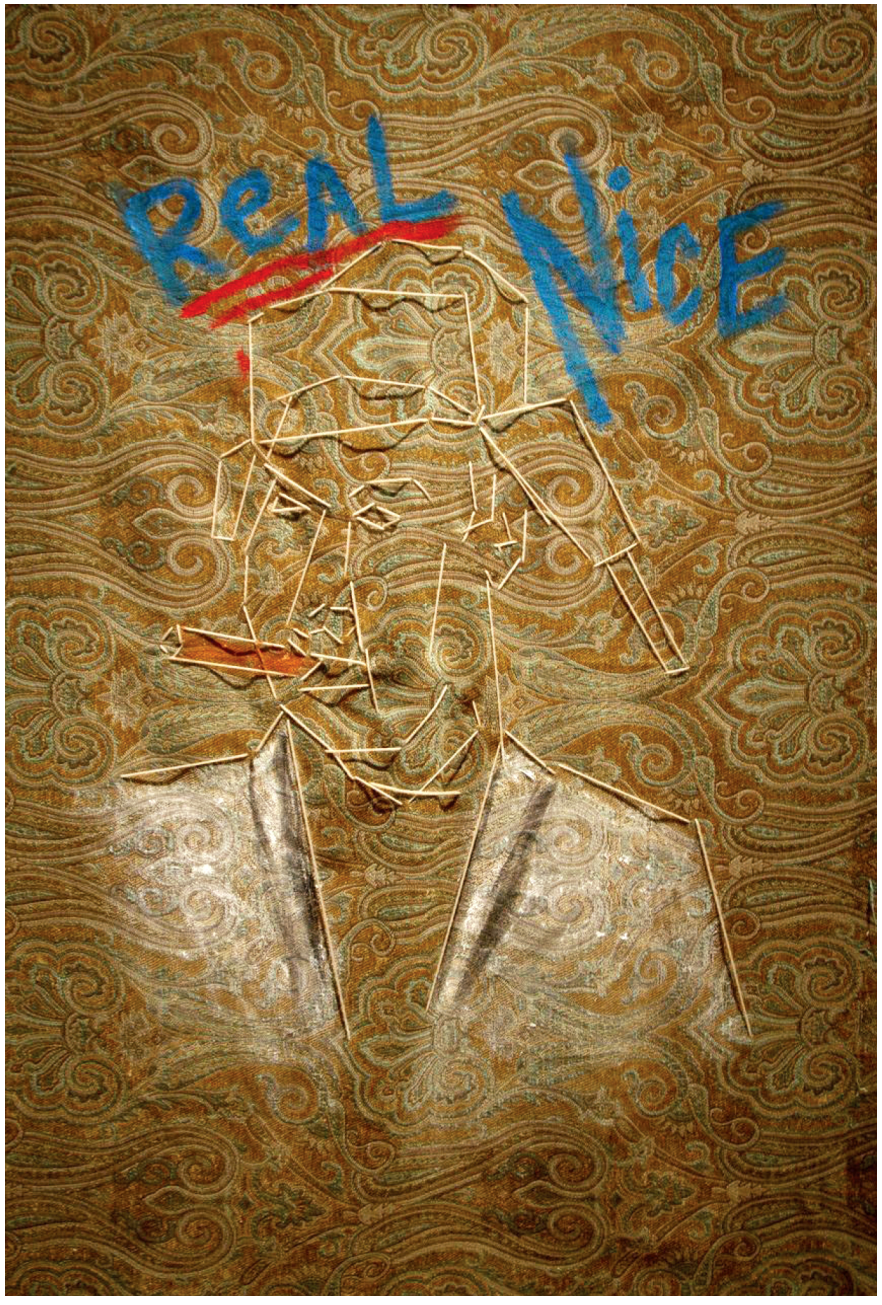
My work depicts late-adolescent masculinity and the sometimes suspect behavior attached to it. I represent a type of lifestyle that is generally familiar from college sports and chum movies, which I treat with humor and aggression. I approach it in a personal way, recording my own daily life with my friends and describing these moments with found materials and messy demanding mark-making. I often select imagery from the past that deals with male role models, for example my heroic Grandfather, Evel Knievel, movie characters, and manipulate those pictures through cutting, painting, embroidery, digital drawing, and wood burning. My work uses text to give life to the characters and interact with the viewer. I enjoy a wide variety of materials; I use vernacular materials like discarded plywood, fabric, and yarn in combination with oil and acrylic paint, and view everything around me as a potential art material.

Bowl
BANG
3 AM
THERE
you GO
LAHEY
The Joker
FUCK
YOU

We Want Mas, yarn on fabric, 30" x 62", 2014



Chillin, acrylic on un-stretched canvas, 24" x 26, 2013



Real Nice, yarn on fabric, 30" x 60", 2014

Thanks for Having Us, yarn on fabric, 30" x 60", 2014

OLIVIA MEYERS

Skeptical Magnetism

My work examines the idea of distortion of the human face. Many of my drawings focus on the nose, the element of the face that I find most structural. The idea of the face as a flat object and the nose protruding out, almost looking as if it is placed on the face, is very interesting to me, perhaps connecting back to my fascination with architectural structures. I have used the nose as the main focus of distortion, oversized and often asymmetrical. These exaggerations should make the viewer feel as if they could crawl into this opening and explore its interior.

Drawing on a large scale allows me to move around the surface with my whole body, using my arms to create gestural marks. I begin the construction of forms on some sort of charcoal-covered surface that I render prior to the constructing process. I don't consider my work to have started until I have covered most of the paper's surface with some sort of charcoal mix: this becomes my blank page, where I can begin drawing. The marks left by my body's gestures provide the framework from which each arrangement emerges. Process is extremely visible in my work; bodily structures emerge from my body's movement, revealing both the early gestures and secondary rendering. Older drawings are torn or cut up and collaged onto the surface of new drawings, complicating and interrupting the continuity of forms. Moving between multiple types of mark making, I want the viewer to feel the duality of scale and style, creating a connection and relationship to recognizable facial features, familiar yet made strange.

These drawings are not intended to portray a specific emotion or elicit a certain feeling in the viewer. Instead I aim to interest the viewer by creating a feeling of uncertainty, and to invite him or her to form a personal understanding of each individual work, both visually and emotionally.

Untitled, charcoal, graphite, and acrylic, 50" x 60", 2014

Untitled, charcoal, graphite, and acrylic, 50" x 60", 2014

Untitled, charcoal, graphite, and acrylic, 50" x 60", 2014

KATE RYAN

.psd

When I began this project, I was equipped with an extensive Photoshop vocabulary; I decided that my thesis would involve expanding this vocabulary and establishing new personal ways of making an image. My goal is to create a body of work that cannot be replicated on any other platform. I use color, texture, shape, line, and layering to showcase Photoshop and my firm grasp of the program. My work has seen many transformations, and this is where the success of each piece lies. I have always been attracted to the ability within Photoshop to infinitely edit and layer my projects. This process is unique to Photoshop, and allows me to convey a sense of energy and movement throughout my work. My work aims to intrigue, and invites a viewer to investigate each piece further. As a result of this work, I feel as though I have created new textures and color combinations that make me see Photoshop as an artist's tool as opposed to a photo editing software.

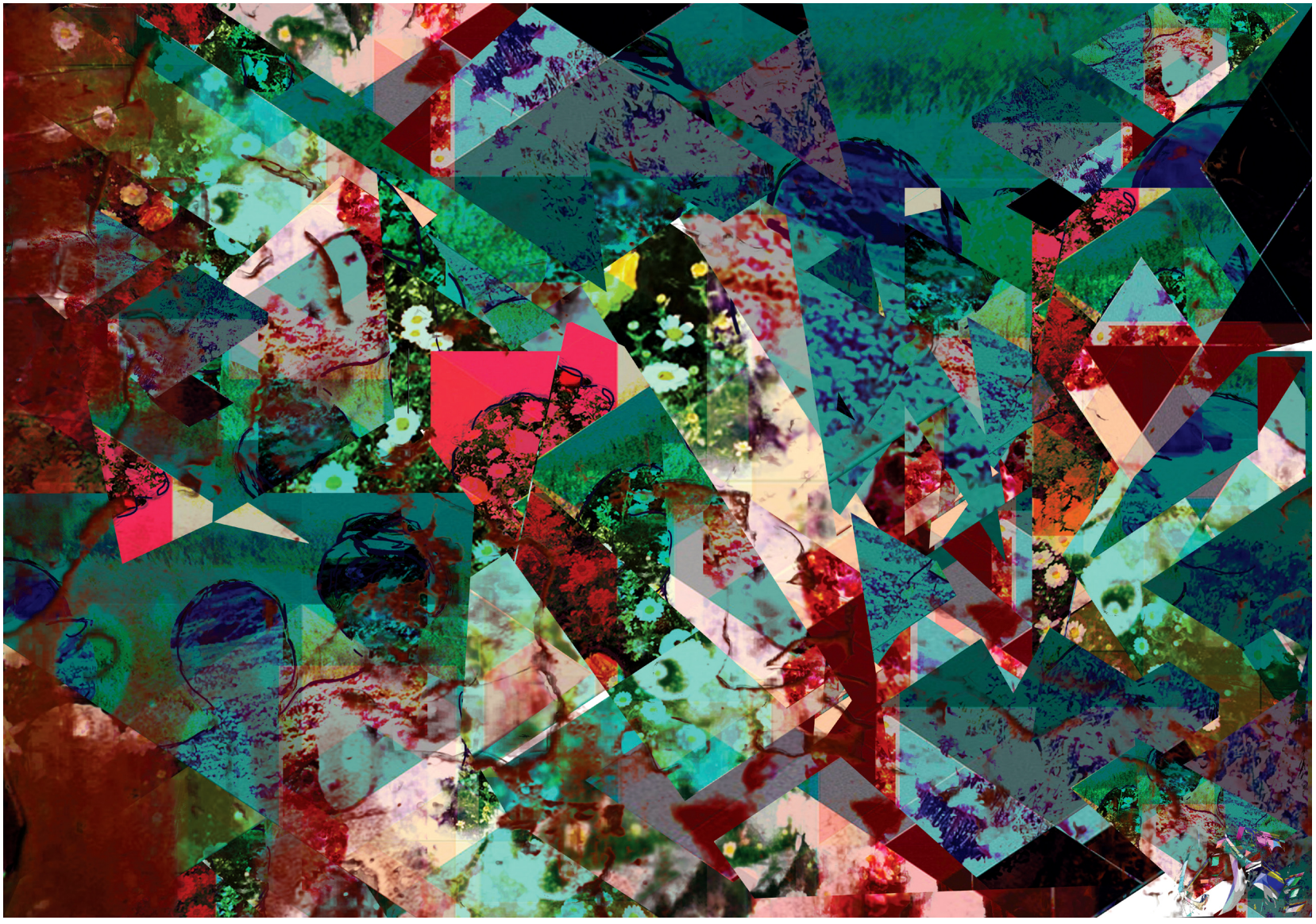
Untitled, digital print, 40" x 60", 2014

Untitled, digital print, 40" x 60", 2014

Untitled, digital print, 40" x 60", 2014

Untitled, digital print, 40" x 60", 2014

Untitled, digital print, 40" x 60", 2014



Untitled, digital print, 60" x 40", 2014

EMILY SMITH

Subliminal

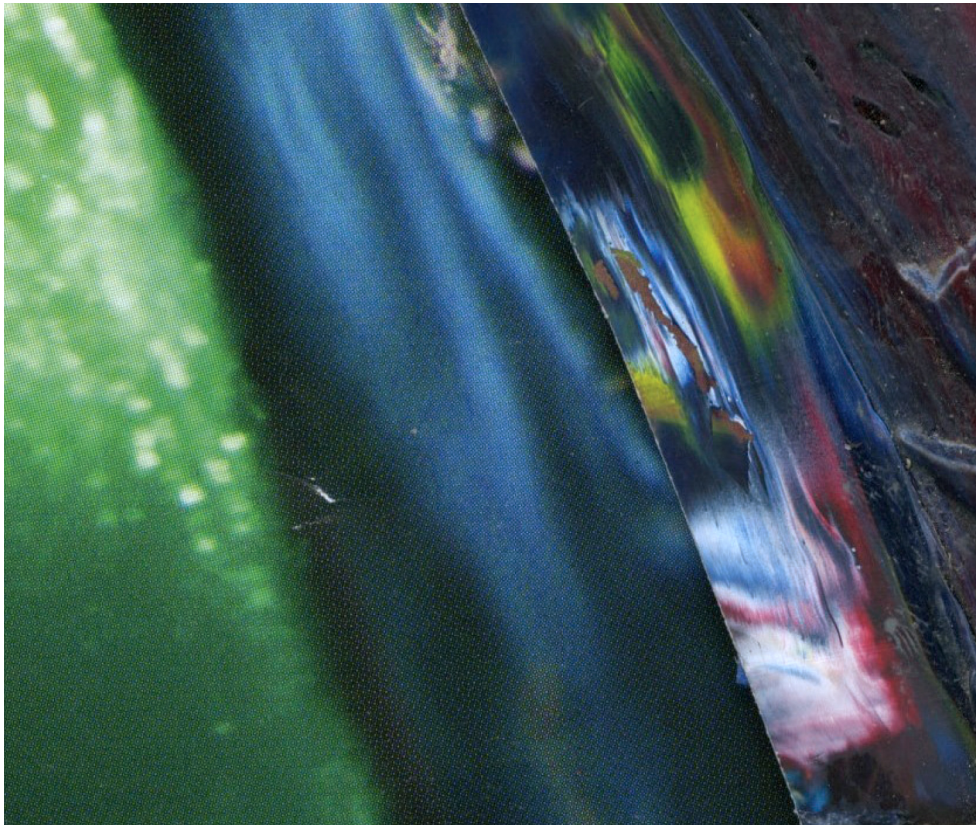
In all of my work I have a common goal. I want to change a picture's identity by altering its original state. I observe color and space within an image and then interfere with it in order to camouflage what is originally being shown. I work on canvas, photo paper, and magazine paper.

In my paintings, the marks created mimic textures found within the photograph. I want there to be a particular tension between the painted mark and image. For example, an orange smear of paint will melt into a tangerine silk blouse; a pink and blue slather will slide against a blurry image of a multicolored coat. These paintings are meant to have a discrete, subliminal sensation. There is visual fluidity and physical illusion through explosion of color on top of image.

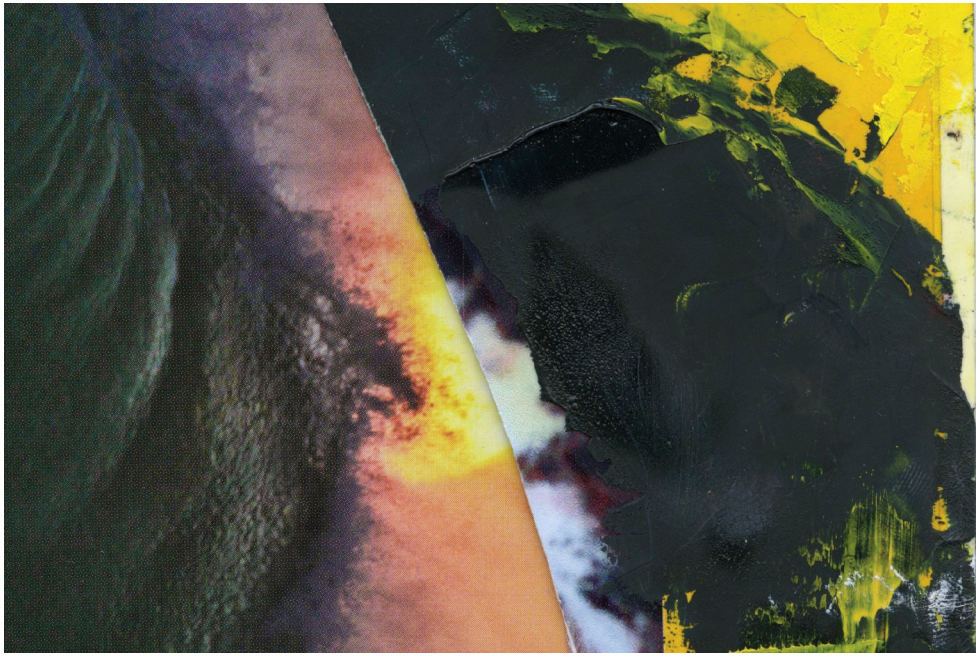
I constantly recycle bits of my past work into the present, churning out new variations and re-combinations. I destroy and recreate my own work, treating the things I've made as raw material. For example, I will slice out a painted mark from an old painting to then use that cut out as a form of paint.

I collect fashion and surf magazines- the images within ignite my artistic process and serve as the physical surfaces for my paintings. I go through an intensive preparation process in order to facilitate an active, fluid, and spontaneous type of painting. I paint quickly; consciously, but quickly.

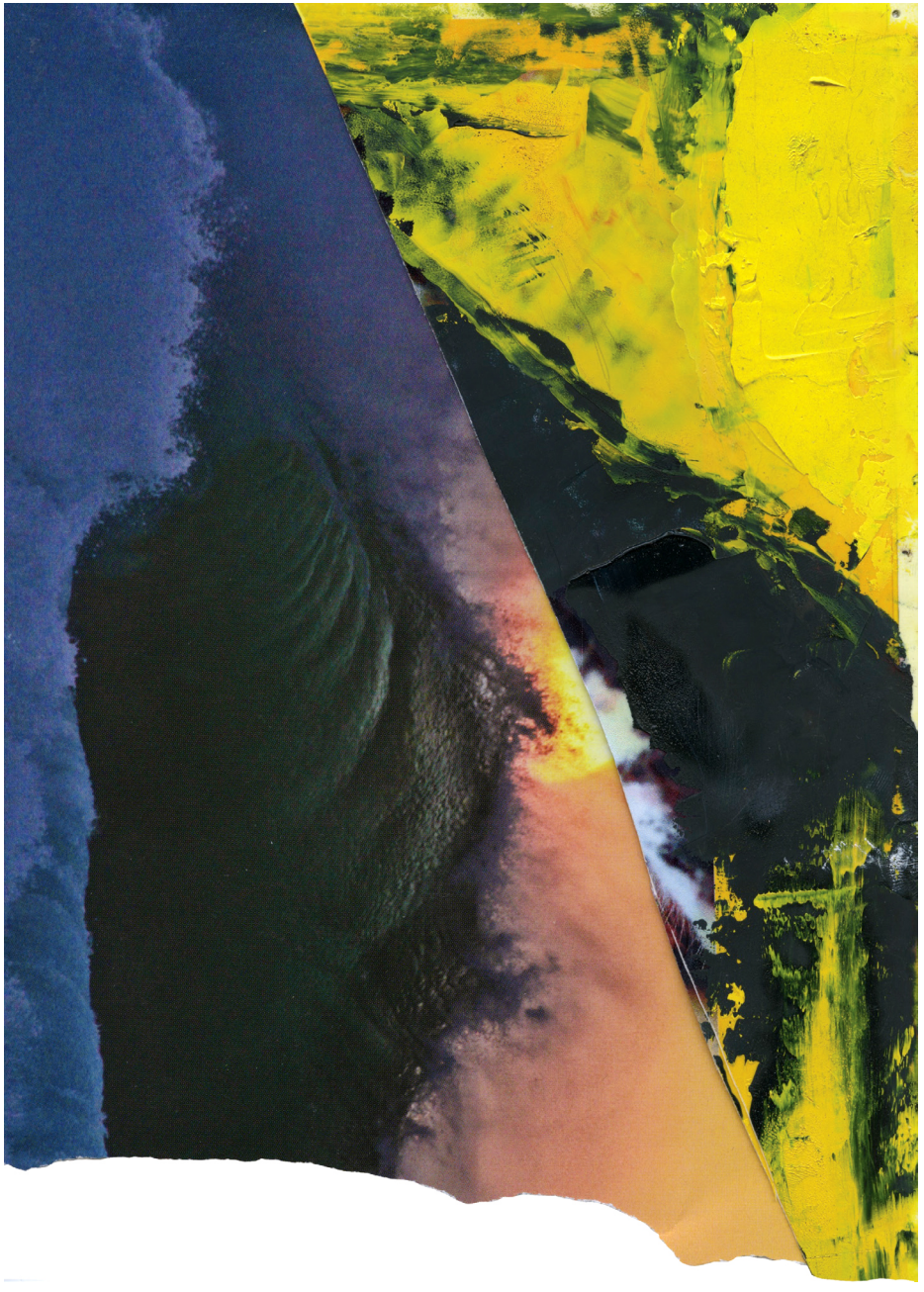
Cart, oil on photo paper, 8" x 9", 2013



Biquini, oil on photo paper and magazine paper, 6" x 8", 2014



Fendi, oil on photo paper and magazine paper, 4" x 5", 2014



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