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ART HISTORY

The image shows three panels of a triptych painting by Jheronimus Bosch. The central panel is the largest and depicts a complex scene of judgment, with a large, ornate structure resembling a stage or a chariot, filled with figures and musical instruments. The left panel shows a landscape with a small building and a figure in a red cloak. The right panel shows a landscape with a large, circular building and a figure in a red cloak. The text is overlaid on the central panel.

Alec Scungio

Salvation Spectacle:
The Judgment Paintings
of Jheronimus Bosch

A man is pulverized on an anvil by a demonic blacksmith while another is goaded towards them as if he were next. A person is roasted on a spit by a rotund monster who nonchalantly pours broth over the cooking corpse. Several bodies are ground to a bloody pulp in an oversized medieval-style grinder powered by the forced labor of few unfortunate souls. Naked figures are maimed and tortured by the fantastical demons and creatures spawned from the mind of the late-fourteenth/early-fifteenth century painter Jheronimus Bosch, whose works earned him the title of “Devil Maker” over the course of his career. His monsters inhabit many of his paintings, but take center stage in each of his two *Last Judgment* triptychs. Despite having been finished roughly twenty years apart, the piece completed in 1486 that resides in Bruges, Belgium (Fig. 1), shares much in the way of presentation with its cousin residing in Vienna, Austria, created in 1505 (Fig. 2). While the Bruges painting was long ascribed to the artist’s workshop, recent technological examination has reopened the debate and suggested Bosch’s own authorship. Both of these works break the mold of the typical judgment piece from this time period by emphasizing the fate of the damned souls, while ignoring those saved by Christ. This shift in focus towards damnation transforms them into fantasies dominated by violence and destruction overwhelming the viewer to the point that the beholding of the spectacle drowns out the essential message that the works were meant to convey. To further understand this phenomenon, the theories of Guy Debord and Roland Barthes are useful in analyzing the nature of this staggering overstimulation. These *Last Judgment* pieces, seen as stepping stones over the course of Bosch’s career, build towards a salvation spectacle that reaches a crescendo in his late masterpiece of 1515, *The Garden of Earthly Delight*.

Bosch’s *Last Judgment* altarpieces, together with the majority of Bosch’s oeuvre, were on display in early 2016 during the “Jheronimus Bosch: Visions of Genius” exhibition in the artist’s hometown of Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands. The event that drew nearly half a million people to the Noordbrabants Museum was organized in celebration and reverence of the five-hundred-year anniversary of Bosch’s death. It also spawned an explosion of new scholarly material, much of it based on the endeavors of the Bosch Research and Conservation Project. This team of technical art historians have revealed what lay below the surface on many of Bosch’s works by means of infrared reflectography, revealing the work-in-progress drawings and other details covered up by the outer layers of paint. Thanks to the dedicated work of the BRCP, this influx of technical information has allowed for further interpretation on the part of art-historians, leading to new viewpoints in old debates. This is particularly true of Bosch’s Bruges *Last Judgment*, which had previously been considered workshop piece. BRCP coordinator Matthijs IJssink claimed in his 2016 publication that in light of the new technical information, the piece can safely be classified as original to Bosch himself.¹ IJssink bases his claim on several factors related to the underdrawings of the work, but mainly on the nature of the artist’s signature at the bottom of the central panel (Fig. 3). While his enthusiasm for re-attributing this piece to Bosch has been echoed by other scholars, claiming that these underdrawings can settle the debate on their own remains a difficult case to make.²

The iconography of the subject matter in both of the pieces has its roots in the cataclysmic Second Coming foretold of in the biblical New Testament. The description in the Gospel of Matthew provides a blueprint of the iconology found in many *Last Judgment* works of art, while the Book of Revelation emphasizes its importance and finality in the last pages of the bible. These verses describe Jesus returning with an ensemble

of angels to sort the souls of the righteous from those of the damned, for a final time.³ It also mentions how those in good standing with the Son of God will be placed to His right, while the rest sorted to His left.

The *Last Judgment* painting by Stephan Lochner, completed in 1435 (Fig. 4), captures this scene in a more traditional way, but may still have influenced Bosch's pieces as well. Lochner's work features mortals being escorted into Heaven, while others are dragged towards fire and brimstone on the opposite side of the panel, and very little space is left in between the two groups. This middle area is occupied partially by an angel that wrestles for control of a man in the foreground, directly underneath the massive depiction of the Virgin Mary. Bosch furthered this idea of bridging the middle ground, as he removed this divider in his judgment pieces completely. Lochner's "tug-of-war" over the mortal takes place so far to the left, because the entire area underneath Christ is taken up by a horde of souls pleading for mercy, as demonic figures escort them towards Hell. The damned souls not only outnumber those who are saved, but are also allotted nearly twice the amount of space on the panel. While Lochner's depiction pushes the boundaries of the typical judgment piece without breaking away from them, it sets a precedent for the ways that Bosch's Vienna and Bruges Last Judgments would later deviate from the standard iconography.

The Heaven panel on the earlier Bruges *Last Judgment* lacks the cohesive narrative of its cousin in Vienna, and its iconography is more difficult to discern. In this version, the foreground of the left portion depicts an angelic figure preaching to a trio of kneeling mortals, while another group explores an enlarged plant. Behind them, a ship of naked mortals sail on a pond in the company of trumpeting angels, with a smaller sized ship suspended above them. The background of the panel is less coherent, with a large tower extending up above the horizon, while several nude individuals

frolic about. Winged figures resembling angels dot the sky, potentially symbolizing that only a handful of souls were saved in this version of the Last Judgment.

While the foreground introduces what seem to be two separate scenes, it could be argued that they represent the theme of sinfulness vs. piety that defines the Last Judgment. The threesome of mortals that kneel penitently before the angelic figure seem to be reveling in her presence as she sits and plays music. Cloaked in the same shade of pink as the robes of Jesus, she wears a golden tiara adorned with a golden cross (Fig. 5), as she gently flicks the cords of the harp in her hands. Both the wings on her back, and her large size, imply that she is not a mortal like those that pray with her, but rather an angel sent to instruct the pious. These figures represent the kind of subject matter that is normally found in the Heaven panel of judgment paintings, but are mirrored by another group of mortals who are entranced by the huge plant. This piece of alien flora is a staple motif in the oeuvre of Bosch, and they have been interpreted mainly as symbols of the unnatural nature of sin and evil.⁴ Like those seen in the central panel of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* (Fig. 6), the plant serves as a distraction for the trio of humans that are enthralled by its size and shape. Placed next to the angel and her flock, the bloated plant acts as a dubious distraction on the path of righteousness. The pink hue of the petals even matches the color of the angel's dress (and the cloak of Jesus) but with a cracked or veiny texture, implying that it offers merely an imitation of God's grace. The person scaling the proboscis of the plant while reaching for the stem on top even draws the attention of one in the angel's group, as the pious man demonstrates where their attention should be focused. The dove landed on his outstretched hand further implies that the salvation being offered is real. While a comparison between good and evil would appear appropriate in a

depiction of the Last Judgment, the fact that it takes place in a panel normally reserved for the gates of Heaven disrupts the typical arrangement of an apocalyptic piece. Like the later Vienna version, the Bruges *Last Judgment* exhibits a darker presence in the left panel that threatens the idea of salvation for all.

The same section of the Vienna altarpiece also clashes with the typical iconography, and it replaces the smaller vignettes of its predecessor in Bruges with a cohesive narrative. This version, completed nearly twenty years later, features several scenes from the book of Genesis, with the creation of Eve taking center stage in the foreground. Behind the depiction of God as a human, Adam and Eve are shown accepting fruit from a serpent emerging from a tree. The final creation scene depicts an angel chasing the couple into the blackness of a forest, while brandishing his sword. God is also shown amongst the clouds at the top of the panel, gazing at the conflict between the angels of Heaven, and those of Satan. Showing this battle seems to have been without precedent in a Last Judgment, and it introduces elements of conflict that have no place in Heaven. Not only does this melee happen in a space normally reserved for the saved souls, the customary parade of those who were judged favorably is absent as well. Nils Büttner pointed out that the minute figures stashed in the uppermost portion of the center panel appear to be angels carrying other non-winged individuals up to Heaven.⁵ If these figures represent those who earned God's salvation, then Bosch drastically reduced their numbers compared to what was usually seen, and replaced them with a higher amount of damned souls in the other two panels. This artistic choice leaves the hordes of Hell-bound individuals unbalanced in the composition.

While these features alone would render a judgment piece irregular with regard to the standard iconography,

the Genesis scenes of Bosch's Vienna piece offer a darker conclusion that breaks from tradition. With the inclusion of Adam and Eve accepting the fruit of the serpent coiled around the Tree of Life, Bosch has transplanted the inception of Original Sin into the only optimistic portion of this painting. Given that the repercussions Original Sin stain the souls of even the most pious, according to Catholic thought, its depiction here in the Heaven panel renders it the darkest and most vile of the three, and decidedly more severe than the vignettes present in the left portion of the earlier Bruges work.

Both of Bosch's judgment pieces take on a darker mood without the optimistic presence of mortals parading into heaven under divine supervision. With the ratio of good versus evil tilted heavily towards the damned, the Vienna and Bruges paintings seem to serve a different function than merely warning people that a life of sin will cause them to miss out on salvation. Larry Silver makes the case that one of Bosch's strongest artistic motivations was the manifestation of evil on Earth, and perhaps reconciling with its creation under God's watch.⁶ This assertion rests not on guessing the mindset of a fifteenth century artist, but through an examination of the themes that permeate his oeuvre. For example, Bosch's *Wayfarer* depicts a weary traveler making a pilgrimage, and passing the temptation that lay in a dilapidated tavern, while trying his best to stay on the correct path (Fig. 7). Representations of these earthly evils are to be found in nearly every painting produced by the artist, with the motifs adapting to fit the subject matter. In the judgment pieces, evil and sin appear to be the only themes that can unify the three panels on the two triptychs, but they are pushed to the extreme. Through the immense number of smaller scenes and figures in these works, and their explicitly violent nature, the Bruges and Vienna Last Judgment paintings project their own spectacles that are capable of over-stimulating the viewer, and obfuscating their appreciation of the meaning behind the compositions.

The French writer Guy Debord conceived of the “spectacle” in the 1960s to explain the emergence of the “mass-media”, and its effect on society’s vector towards consumerism, but his theory is also useful in decoding the messages projected by Bosch’s *Last Judgments*.⁷ Debord’s spectacles existed as mere representations of experience, that demanded a person’s total attention before completely cutting them off from reality. An example of this phenomenon is the relentless stream of advertisements that drive the modern person’s need to accumulate more possessions, to the point that materialism becomes a sort of religion. The person develops a relationship with the product to the point that eventually, living one’s own life and pursuing their interests is secondary to “having,” and one worships by continually acquiring. Such an existence, Debord might argue, is a mere caricature of real life. This confusion of priorities is Debord’s spectacle at play, as it blinds the modern person and prevents them from perceiving the real world. Roland Barthes, another French author from the same era, applied Debord’s theory in branding professional wrestling a spectacle. What troubled Barthes about wrestling as entertainment, was that while the audience understands that the outcome is predetermined, they are still captivated by the performance. Barthes argued this represents an abolishment of deep thought, as the audience is concerned not with what they think, but what they see.⁸

The spectacle of Bosch’s judgment pieces presents a trap that is capable of completely obscuring the significance of the subject matter, in the same way that Barthes recognized the lack of analytical thinking in professional wrestling. Like many of Bosch’s works, but even more pointedly due to the subject, these paintings offer a warning to the viewer about the slew of evils that threaten to mislead and condemn them during their lives on earth. In the *Last Judgment*, this warning is cloaked by the deluge of creatures and demons, that torture the human figures in frightfully creative ways. The spectacle born from these

depictions of chaos, draws its energy from the dozens of smaller scenes that pose as equally engaging works of art. Should a viewer focus only on the man pounded by the demonic blacksmith and feel satisfied by its creativity, or stare wide-eyed at the entire triptych and its hundreds of figures without processing much at all, Bosch’s warning regarding the many vices and few virtues available during life would be left un-pondered.

From the Bruges work in 1486, through the Vienna piece in 1505, to Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights* completed around a decade later, the evolution of Bosch’s “salvation spectacle” can be tracked as it developed over the artist’s career. In the Bruges *Last Judgment*, Bosch laid the groundwork for this phenomenon by introducing moral ambiguity into the left panel, while dashing the motif of souls entering heaven. Hell iconography is also expanded into the central panel, a development that was further amplified in the later Vienna version, where the colors of Hell are more representative of “fire and brimstone.” The scenes from Genesis are also featured in the Vienna’s left panel, representing a much more severe depiction of evil, in Original Sin. These features are all furthered in the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, as the Genesis scene in this work sees the addition of a slew of Bosch’s creatures, and the central panel is packed even further with groups of humans and animals all cavorting in fantastical fashion. These figures are arranged to fill almost every empty space with a dizzying *horror vacui* that strengthens the draw of Bosch’s spectacle. Though the *Garden of Earthly Delights* shares much of its compositional structure with the Bruges and Vienna altarpieces, it does not fit squarely into any traditional pictorial subject, and lacks a depiction of Christ to pass judgment on the mortals, like its cousins in Bruges and Vienna. The fact that this key difference is all that truly disqualifies it as a *Last Judgment* highlights just how far

away his pieces stand from the traditional judgment iconography, but does not alter the warning behind their spectacle. Like the judgment works before it, Bosch's masterpiece offers a warning regarding the sinful temptations of the mortal world, but this time without Christ to even hint at possibility of salvation. Without the depiction of Jesus and his retinue in the central panel to elevate or damn the figures beneath him, the spectacle becomes the subject of the painting, and the narrative of the last judgment is lost, to the point where one can even question its validity as an altarpiece. While Bosch's depictions in this altarpiece will always remain uncanny, a closer examination of Bosch's *Last Judgment* pieces clarifies how he came to create the outlandish *Garden of Earthly Delights* in his twilight years.

NOTES

- ¹ Ilsink, Matthijs, *Hieronymus Bosch: Visions of Genius*, 164-170.
- ² Till-Holger Borchert confirms that the signature in lower right of the central panel is in the same style as those on Bosch's *Temptation of Saint Anthony and Haywain* and those works are considered authentic. He does not go so far as to label the *Last Judgment* in Bruges as authentic, however.
- ³ Matthew 25:31-33: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left."
- ⁴ Walter Gibson's study on Bosch's strawberries goes into detail regarding how the fruit symbolizes life and fertility in medieval times, but later came to be seen as a sinful entity.

He interprets the oversized fruits in the central panel of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* as symbols of lust whose alluring forms are impossible to resist.

- ⁵ Büttner, Nils, *Hieronymus Bosch: Visions and Nightmares*, 149.
- ⁶ Silver, Larry, Jheronimus Bosch and the Issue of Origins, 5.
- ⁷ Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 47-67.
- ⁸ Barthes, Roland. "The World of Wrestling." *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 1-4. Barthes argues that this quality is paramount in the function of a spectacle, as it reduces three-dimensional thought to mere surface thinking.



Fig. 1
Jheronimus Bosch, *Last Judgment*, 1486, Bruges



Fig. 2
Jheronimus Bosch, *Last Judgment*, 1505, Vienna

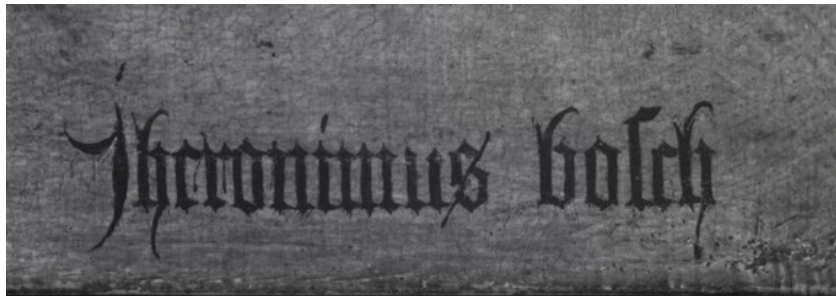


Fig. 3
Signature of Jheronimus Bosch on the *Last Judgment* in Bruges, Belgium



Fig. 4
Stephan Lochner, *Last Judgment*, 1435



Fig. 5
Woman kneeling in Bruges *Last Judgment*



Fig. 6
Jheronimus Bosch, *Garden of Earthly Delights*, 1515



Fig. 7
Jheronimus Bosch, *Wayfarer*, 1500

Cecelia Lahiff

Aemulatio and *Sprezzatura*:

Palladio and the
Legacy of Vitruvius



Tension and unease stirred in the minds of the 15th and 16th-century architects in Italy. Though surrounded by the physical remains of antiquity, they were unsure of how to make use of the most substantial treatise on architecture from ancient Rome, Vitruvius's *De Architectura*. Written around 27 B.C.E., it gained fame during the Renaissance due to both the learned commitment to Ancient art and the critical new technology of the printing press (Fig. 1). This renown increased the sense of the book's authority, but also amplified its inadequacy. Writers such as Leon Battista Alberti, author of a 1443 treatise on architecture first printed in 1486, and Sebastiano Serlio, author of a popular treatise on architecture published in 1537, grappled with the legacy of antiquity. However not until the ascendancy of Andrea Palladio (Fig. 2) in the 1550s did anyone embark on a sustained and intensive critique of Vitruvius through ruthless editing and reformatting of Vitruvius's descriptions, and in the production of what he believed to be a perfected form of architecture. In the process, he sought to promote his own theories and practice. The concepts of *aemulatio*—the act of improving and building upon another's creative production, and *sprezzatura*, or nonchalant expertise, were central to Palladio's strategies. This thesis will explore Palladio's writings, illustrations, and one of his most significant built structures to see how he purposely used the legacy of Vitruvius to complete his self-fashioning as an architect.

In 1416, Italian humanist scholars Poggio Bracciolini and Cencio Rustici discovered copies of the original Vitruvian manuscripts from *De Architectura*.¹ In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, humanist scholars held Vitruvian architectural theory in high regard due to the unusual way Vitruvius described building processes. Leonardo da Vinci even produced a drawing known as the *Vitruvian Man* (Fig. 3), in which he reconstructed

Vitruvius's metaphor relating the ideal proportions of the human body to architecture. Renaissance architects sometimes sought to re-create ancient Roman buildings on the basis of these ekphrastic descriptions, but for the most part Vitruvius proved difficult to follow in actual building practice.²

Leon Battista Alberti and Sebastiano Serlio took different routes to incorporate the work of Vitruvius into their treatises. Alberti's treatise was largely based on architecture he had actually seen, and he used *De Architectura* anecdotally, and only with difficulty.³ He described Vitruvius as "A Writer indeed of universal Knowledge, but so maimed by Age, that in many Places there are great Chasms, and many Things imperfect in others. Besides this, his Style is absolutely void of all Ornaments, and he wrote in such a Manner, that to the Latins he seems to write Greek, and to the Greeks, Latin."⁴

Serlio described himself as a follower or disciple of Vitruvius, revering him in almost a religious way.⁵ "All those architects who might condemn the writings of Vitruvius," he wrote, "...would be architectural heretics."⁶ Serlio sought to create a harmony among the extant ruins of ancient buildings and what was recorded in *De Architectura*, but even he had to admit, "I find a great discrepancy between the buildings in Rome and other places in Italy and the writings of Vitruvius." When correcting *De Architectura*, he nonetheless deferred to the ancient authority, writing that "we should uphold the doctrines of Vitruvius as an infallible guide and rule, provided that reason not persuade us otherwise."⁷

A new kind of critique entered the architectural dialogue when Andrea Palladio published his *Quattro Libri* in 1570 (Fig. 2). He had already published two earlier treatises on architecture both published in 1554. . Palladio already knew from reading Alberti and Serlio that *De Architectura* was full of instructions about how to construct buildings that would last in various climates and other useful information, but was lacking in separation between structure and appearance. Unlike

Alberti's historiography and short edits and Serlio's devout following of Vitruvius, Palladio undertook the first sustained and intensive critique of *De Architectura*.

Palladio grappled with Vitruvius's separation between appearance and structure in Vitruvian theory. In the first book of the *Quattro Libri*, Palladio states, "That work, therefore, cannot be called perfect, which should be useful and not durable, or durable and not useful, or having both these should be without beauty."⁸ He realized that the Vitruvian methods of measurement that relied mostly on the anatomy of the human form would lead to a building that was perhaps beautiful to look at but would lack a durable structure. He also refused to agree with Vitruvius's opinion that columns should reflect the human body.⁹ This problem is evident from a 1999 translation of *De Architectura* where author Ingrid Rowland attempted to illustrate the Vitruvian method of creating columns (Fig. 4); while imaginative, Rowland's illustration is not structurally viable. Vitruvius's approach seemed too abstract and realistically unattainable for Palladio.

While earlier editions of Vitruvius were not illustrated, in 1556 Palladio designed images, including a title page, for a new translation and commentary by his patron Daniele Barbaro (Fig. 1).¹⁰ A triumphal arch frames the title page, its austerity strongly adhering to the Classical tradition. These illustrations were corrective actions in themselves. It could even be said that in creating images that corresponded and highlighted the text of Vitruvius, Palladio had already begun to improve what had been outlined only in writing by the ancient architect. He drew from but did not strictly adhere to the principles and measurements set out in Vitruvius's work.¹¹ He even stated his intent: "The measures and proportion of each of these orders [of columns] I shall separately set down; not *too much* according to Vitruvius..."¹² Palladio thus imitated Vitruvius only to a point, and he felt obliged and authorized to edit and perfect his predecessor. The rhetorical concept of *aemulatio*

The rhetorical concept of *aemulatio* is commonly misunderstood as only being the desire to imitate the work, persona, and other attributes of another, but is more properly understood as the mastery of the work of a person to the extent that authoritative improvements and additions can be made.¹³ By picking and choosing what aspects of Vitruvius' work to endorse and reject, Palladio engaged in *aemulatio* within a larger act of self-fashioning.

In contrast to his severe renderings for the edition of Vitruvius, the title page of his own 1570 publication of the *Quattro Libri* is imaginative and detailed, rich in allegorical symbolism that moves beyond Classical architectural style. The Queen of Virtue splices the pediment in half and sits enthroned, as winged angels announce Palladio's fame. At the sides, two female personifications of architecture raise their architectural tools in salute to Palladio.

The pediment is supported by the revision of the famous Corinthian order column that Palladio constructed after mastering Vitruvius's calculations (Fig. 5). This is noteworthy because he directly denounced the measurements Vitruvius sets forth in *De Architectura* regarding the Corinthian order, and placing them on the title page of his own architectural treatise shows a definite break with Vitruvian tradition. Below the banner bearing the title and dedication is an inset cartouche with Lady Fortune, standing and holding a sail to direct a ship carrying a king, symbolizing the height of patronage and honor.¹⁴ Palladio also included a depiction of Father Time to symbolize the legacy of his treatise in the bottom left-hand corner, and in the bottom right-hand corner is a depiction of Jupiter and Io, perhaps to signify the connection with antiquity.

One never-before noted detail on the armband of the personification of architecture sheds light on Palladio's endeavor (Fig. 6). The tiny inscription, written in Greek

says “λοις” or “improvement” in Greek. Through this subtle element, one might suggest that Palladio acknowledged his aim to not only imitate but exceed the accomplishments of his predecessors. Palladio believed himself to be an architect superior to Vitruvius, and wished his audience to understand that his purpose for writing the treatise was to fashion himself as an architect who bested even the most renowned ancient Roman architect.

Palladio also challenged Vitruvian architecture in his built structures, when he created expanded upon ancient Roman principles through his own license. One of Palladio's most significant commissions was the Villa Barbaro (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8), which he designed and constructed between 1560 and 1570 for the brothers Daniele and Marcantonio Barbaro.¹⁵ Daniele, as noted earlier, was the humanist scholar and translator of Vitruvius whose publication Palladio illustrated. Thus, it is not surprising that the engagement with Vitruvius is quite evident. The front of the Villa is akin to an ancient temple façade with four evenly spaced Ionic columns and a pediment with nude figures. However, it differs from anything seen in antiquity in placing a balcony above the central doors, and the fact that the arch of the balcony breaks through the entablature. Palladio indicated in the *Quattro Libri* that he used measurements for the columns of the Villa Barbaro that were not in accord with those of Vitruvius, but instead blended Vitruvian ideas regarding temples with contemporary ideas regarding homes for the wealthy.¹⁶ He stated, “ancient temples are to be seen, that have fixed columns in the front, and have no porticos round them...”¹⁷ Here, rather than porticos Palladio added loggie that extend horizontally, expanding his temple front. He thus showcased his flexibility in adapting Roman forms and styles to cater to the demands of his antiquarian patrons for a modern country villa.

As we have seen to this point, Palladio engaged with the legacy of Vitruvius in multiple forms—writing, illustration and

built structures—establishing himself as a superior architect through a process of *aemulatio* and self-fashioning. In closing, I would suggest that Palladio went beyond *aemulatio*, augmenting his project of self-fashioning by performing in the Renaissance courtly manner of *sprezzatura*, or nonchalant expertise, that was defined by Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, published in 1528. This book by Castiglione, portrayed by Raphael in a masterly portrait (Fig. 9), quickly became one of the most popular publications of the sixteenth century. It becomes clear that Palladio tried to improve the calculations of Vitruvius not only for his own interest but also for the utility of his book to other architects. Surely he gained not only popularity but also some personal satisfaction in projecting himself as the superior architect. In this way, Palladio set himself apart from his contemporaries and constructed an identity for himself as an intellectual who believed he could challenge the ancient authority, perhaps because he understood him better than others, and thus was able to recognize Vitruvius's shortfalls more acutely. Palladio's interpretation of Vitruvian architecture was unprecedented in scope and sustained engagement, and that enabled him to nonchalantly dismiss ancient precedent whenever he desired. The criticism and refinement in the *Quattro Libri*, and Palladio's illustrations and built structures support the idea that he not only endeavored to improve upon the measurements and calculations of Vitruvius, but that he was able to do it so audaciously that his own and better measurements seemed effortless, virtually subsuming the ancient elements with his own stylistic flair.

Palladio fashioned himself as an intermediary between *De Architectura* and his own time. The emulation and improvement of Vitruvian architectural theory were premised less on the idea that his structures stood in the

place of ancient architecture and more on the concept that he was justified in fusing antiquarian understanding about planning and design with his idiosyncratic revisions to those calculations. This type of self-fashioning allowed Palladio to present his genius to his audience. Though he described Vitruvius as his mentor in *Quattro Libri*, Palladio made an intentional and definitive improvement upon the calculations and ideas outlined in *De Architectura* and in so doing, presented himself as the greatest architect of all time, ancient or present.

NOTES

¹ Carol Hersell, *Seventy-Eight Vitruvius Manuscripts*, London, 1967, 26.

² Alberti mentions the Church of Saint Mark in Venice c.1092 (12); Serlio mentions that parts of Europe closely adhered to the “doctrine of Vitruvius” in the architecture (155); and Palladio mentions his own structures of the Basilica Palladiana c.1549 and the Villa Barbaro c.1560-1570 (49); (Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria*, Florence, 1443).

³ “I like Vitruvius’s Method too, which I find was observed by the ancient Architects all over Rome...” (Alberti, 12); “Vitruvius says, that the Holm Oak and Beech are very weak in their Nature against storms, and do not endure to a great Age” (Alberti, 29); “It is Vitruvius’s Opinion, that Sand, especially that which is in Tuscany...” (Alberti, 38); “Vitruvius and Pliny are for mixing sand thus...” (Alberti, 45); “These Things already mention’d, we have gathered from Pliny and Vitruvius especially...” (Alberti, 62); “In other Respects I am very well pleased with Vitruvius, who says the Wall ought to be built thus...” (Alberti 73); “Vitruvius says that in Winter Parlours it is ridiculous to adorn the Ceiling...” (Alberti 106); Leon Battista Alberti,

De Re Aedificatoria, Florence, 1443.

⁴ Alberti on Vitruvius: “A Writer indeed of universal Knowledge, but so maimed by Age, that in many Places there are great Chasms, and many Things imperfect in others. Besides this, his Style is absolutely void of all Ornaments, and he wrote in such a Manner, that to the Latins he seems to write Greek, and to the Greeks, Latin”, Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria*, Florence, 1443, 111.

⁵ Sebastiano Serlio, *Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospetiva*, Venice, 1537, Volume 2, xxxiv-xxxv.

⁶ Serlio, 1537, fol. 69v.

⁷ Serlio, 1537, Book III fol. 69v.

⁸ Andrea Palladio, *I Quattro Libri*, Venice, 1570, 1

⁹ Marcus Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, Italian edition published in 1498, Book IV, i. 11.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Palladio’s books printed in 1554 were not heavily illustrated, which points to his desire to improve upon Vitruvius’s works with his illustrations for the Barbaro translation and commentary, as well as his own treatise on architecture, the *Quattro Libri*.

¹¹ Palladio, 1570, Book I Chapter XII, “The measures and proportion of each of these orders I shall separately set down; not so much according to Vitruvius, as to the observations I have made on several ancient edifices.”

¹² Palladio, 1570, 11.

¹³ “Rivalries also occur between a living artist and an acknowledged master of the past, a phenomenon known as *aemulatio* (emulation)” Oxford Art Online Grove Dictionary Entry “Competition”, 2007-2017.

¹⁴ This is not included merely by accident, and most likely done as a reminder for the patron that Vitruvius worked for Augustus who paid him very well.

¹⁵. For further reading on the Villa Barbaro, see David Watkin, *A History of Western Architecture*, 2005, 246.

¹⁶. For further reading on Classical-styled villas built for Venetian aristocrats see Watkin, *A History of Western Architecture*, 2005, 246.

¹⁷. Palladio, 1570, 83.



Fig. 1
Title page of Daniele Barbaro's translation and commentary on *De Architectura* illustrated by Andrea Palladio published 1556.



Fig. 2
Andrea Palladio, *I Quattro Libri* Title Page, 1570 edition.

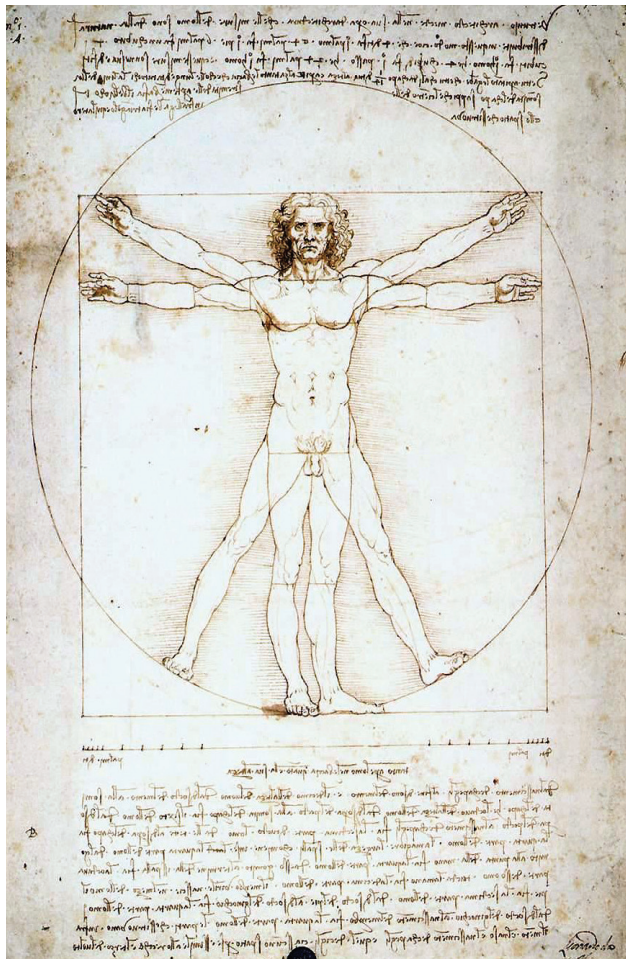


Fig. 3
Leonardo Da Vinci, *Vitruvian Man*, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, c. 1490

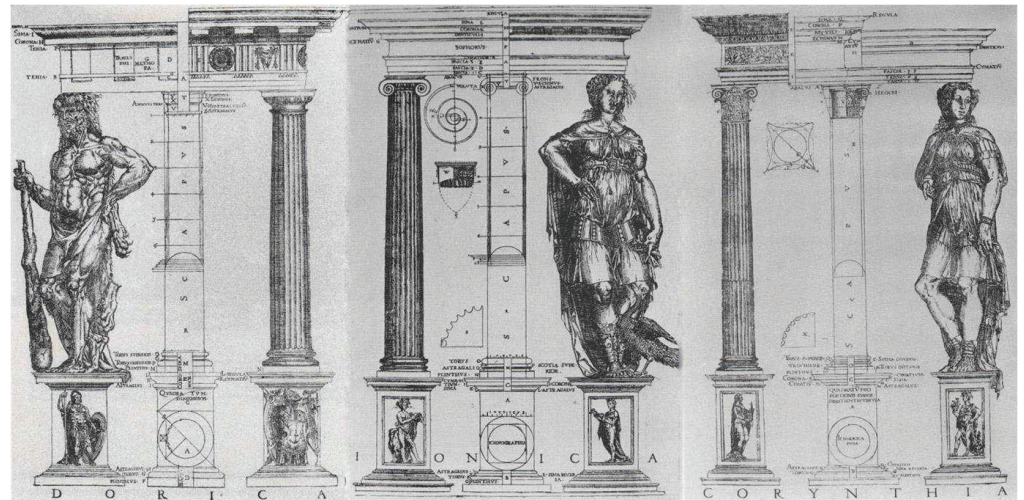


Fig. 4
Ingrid Rowland, *Vitruvian Columns*, published 1999.

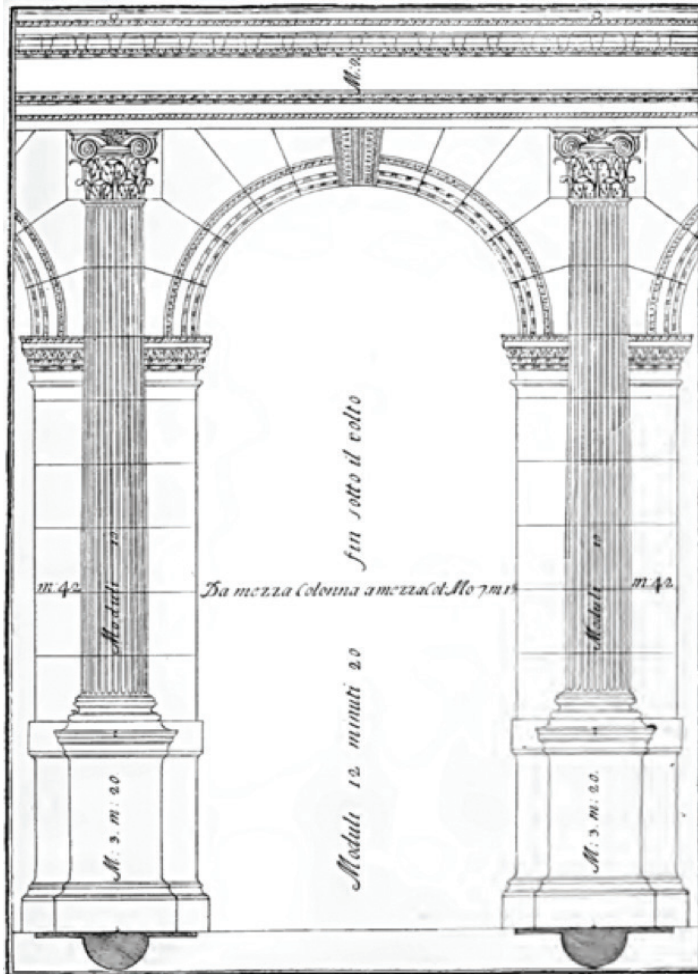


Fig. 5
Illustration 2 following discourse on rejecting the Vitruvian plan for column construction, Andrea Palladio, *I Quattro Libri*, Book I, image IX



Fig. 6
“Λοις” “Lois” meaning “better” in Greek



Fig. 7
Villa Barbaro, built by Palladio, c. 1560-1570

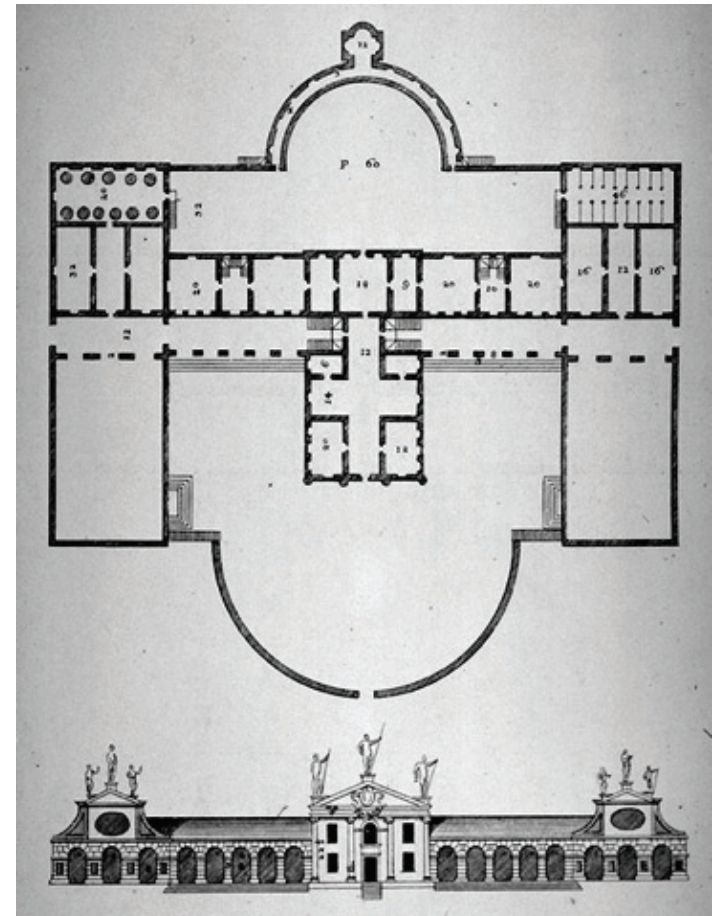


Fig. 8
Floor Plan of the Villa Barbaro, constructed between 1560-1570, Andrea Palladio, *I Quattro Libri*, Book II, p 51



Fig. 9
Raphael, *Portrait of Baldassare Castiglione*, c. 1514-1515, Musée de
Lourve

Josef Riccio

In God We (Dis)Trust:
George Washington in
the Capitol Rotunda



A six-year-old child asked his mother: “Mama, why is George Washington not wearing a shirt?” When his mother did not respond he asked again, and again, with increasing volume and intensity in his voice each time he asked, until it reached a frantic, “MAMA, WHY IS GEORGE WASHINGTON NOT WEARING A SHIRT?” Last summer in the Smithsonian Museum of American History, I witnessed this child’s intuitive response to Horatio Greenough’s statue (Fig. 1) which was similar to the responses of many Americans who viewed it in 1841, when it was first placed in the Capitol Rotunda. The visual traditions and the iconography of Washington that were established in the time of his presidency stuck with American artists for decades. While many dignified and heroic images of Washington had been made, none were like Greenough’s statue where Washington was likened to the imagery of a Roman Emperor or God. Greenough’s use of classical imagery was not well-received or understood by the American public and the statue drew much controversy. It was removed from the rotunda in 1843, after it cracked the floor. Greenough’s work offered a radical and unpalatable departure from the traditional way that Washington had been shown in American art. Perhaps surprisingly, two decades later another image of Washington was created in the capitol rotunda that was directly influenced by Greenough’s work, Constantino Brumidi’s *Apotheosis of Washington* (Fig. 2). Brumidi drew on similar iconography as Greenough, but handled it in a different way, learning from the earlier controversy to create a work that would be celebrated. Greenough fundamentally misunderstood how Americans would respond to the classical imagery in his work, while Brumidi better understood the American mindset and created a work that moderated classical allegory with current American sensibilities.

Before Greenough, the visual tradition of Washington was heroic, but not godly. Rhode Island-born portraitist Gilbert Stuart was one of the first men to paint Washington and would create hundreds of images of Washington during his career.¹ The copies that Stuart made helped to cement Washington’s image into the American consciousness, as these images were widely distributed throughout the young nation. Washington’s visage was one of a dignified statesman, a man of status but also humility. In larger works such as the 1796 *Lansdowne Portrait*, Stuart worked in some references to classical civilizations, incorporating details such as the column in the background, which was a traditional symbol of fortitude. Stuart used these details to draw parallels between the ancient Roman Republic and the American Republic. Stuart’s representations of Washington would shape the way that subsequent artists depicted Washington.

Even before Stuart painted the severe image of a president in office, John Trumbull reconstructed Washington’s days as the leader of the Continental Army and painted many grandiose scenes of him both on and off the battlefield. Trumbull’s 1792-1794 painting, *Washington before Trenton*, displays the artist’s romantic memory of the Revolution. Washington stands with a stoic determination even as there is a sense of anxiety in the background. The Battle of Trenton was one of Washington’s great triumphs and many artists would follow Trumbull back to this battle, most notably Emanuel Leutze, who painted his *Washington Crossing the Delaware* in 1851.

Following Washington’s death in 1799, several images of Apotheoses of Washington circulated as memorial material. The engraver David Edwin made a print of Washington ascending into heaven (Fig. 3) in 1800. While Washington is shown here in Roman dress and a cherub goes to place a crown of laurels on his head, the artist has imbued Washington with a sense of humility. In 1802, John James Barralet produced a

second, widely distributed image of the apotheosis of Washington (Fig. 4). This image is more iconographically challenging than Edwin's as Barralet filled his image with allegorical figures. In the center, Washington is lifted from his tomb by an angel and by Father Time to be brought to heaven.² Barralet showed Washington in Roman dress but like in Edwin's work he is shown fully clothed.³ This respect for modesty in classically-influenced images of Washington would not always be the case.

Greenough's *Washington* presented a dramatic departure from the iconographic tradition of Washington in American art. In 1832, the United States Congress commissioned Greenough to make a statue for the centennial of Washington's birth. Nine years later, after much anticipation, the marble statue arrived in America from Greenough's Florence studio, and was placed in the rotunda of the Capitol building. The statue was larger than life size, showing the former president bare chested and seated on a throne with one hand pointed up to the heavens and the other holding a sword. This statue is imbued with messages about the American republic, and its initial location of inside of the Capitol rotunda amplified these messages, but perhaps not in a way that the sculptor had intended or anticipated.

Greenough's statue incorporated ideas from past artworks in its presentation of Washington. There are striking similarities to Phidias' Zeus that once stood in the temple at Olympia (Fig. 5). While this statue was lost in antiquity, it was still known by artists in the 1800s through ancient accounts and later drawings. French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres modeled his 1811 painting, *Jupiter and Thetis* (Fig. 6), after Phidias' statue. A letter from Representative Edward Everett "urged Greenough to study it," likening the United States Capitol to a Greek Temple.⁴ Everett also told Greenough "Your Washington may be to the people of America...what the great national statue was to the Greeks."⁵ Greenough would certainly

achieve a statue in a Phidian style but would miss his mark on how his work would be received in America.

Greenough lived and worked in Europe for most of his adult life spending only about three years in America.⁶ In Italy he became attuned to the tenets of Classicism that were prevalent in European art. As seen in Ingres' highly-praised painting, European audiences would not object to the artistic use of nudity. Such a display of the human form appealed to European audiences and was fully expected as part of the artistic skill set. Thinking in these terms is what set Greenough up for his statue's rough reception in America, where the audience was less concerned with the skillful execution of form than they were with emotional and religiously-based response to subject matter.

In January 1841, an artist (whose name was not reported) saw the statue in Greenough's Italian studio and wrote a letter to the *New York Signal* praising it as "...strikingly grand and appropriate—both republican and Christian."⁷ This artist likely referenced the Colossus of Constantine (Fig. 7) in the letter.⁸ This Roman statue, like Ingres' painting, drew on Phidias' Zeus for inspiration of its form, furthering the connection that Everett urged Greenough to make between his work and Phidias's. While the statue did not survive in its entirety, the remaining pieces are the head, hand, part of an arm, and a foot.⁹ From these pieces, it is known that the statue of Constantine would have been seated in a throne and pointing up with his right hand. In the statue of Constantine this was a reference to divine providence, as he was the Roman Emperor who embraced Christianity. According to the author of the letter, Greenough's Washington is meant to mirror the statue of Constantine in both form and in message, but this is not entirely correct. The author applied the term "republican" to the comparison of Washington to Constantine, but Constantine was an Emperor, not a

Senator or Consul. The attribution of “republican” does not fit who Constantine was as a historical figure, but it fit Washington, and drawing this parallel, the artist set the tone that he thought Greenough intended for his statue. History views Constantine as a pillar of civic and religious virtue, and in mirroring Constantine’s pose in his work, Greenough forged a link between Washington and Constantine as important men in both affairs of state and morality. The story of Washington and the Cherry tree, published in Mason Locke Weems’ 1800 book, created an image of Washington as a pillar of morality and this idea is reinforced through the parallels to Constantine in Greenough’s work.¹⁰

The imagery on the back and sides of the throne also communicate a message of morality and wisdom. The armrests of the throne are in the shapes of lions, which is a common symbol associated with King Solomon who was a wise and just Biblical ruler. The theme of wisdom is compounded by the relief sculpture on the right side of the throne, where Apollo is shown in his chariot (Fig. 8). The inclusion of Apollo references the ideas of enlightenment thinking and reason, both things for which Washington and America stood. On the left Greenough included a relief of Hercules as a child, wrestling with a snake to save his brother (Fig. 9). This scene acts as a reference to the American triumph over England in the struggle for independence and exemplifies the bravery and strength of the American people. Sculpted into the back of the throne are the figures of Christopher Columbus and a Native American (Fig. 10). Columbus, like Washington, wears a Roman toga. Columbus acts as a reference to the first European to come to America, linking him to Washington who was the first president of the United States. The decision to clothe Columbus in a toga underscores Greenough’s commitment to allegorical language in a

classical style in his work. The Native American is bare chested, wearing only a vest and skirt; in this way he is also dressed like Washington, as they are both partially nude.

Despite the initial excitement over the statue, public opinion of the statue rapidly changed. Critics were very vocal in their reactions to the statue. Philip Hone, a politician from New York, said that Washington was “undressed with a napkin lying in his lap,” which was a jab at the figure’s Roman dress.¹¹ Congressman Henry Wise, who had been a supporter of Greenough before seeing the statue said that “He would keep the head of Greenough’s figure and throw the body in the Potomac.”¹² The visual tradition was one where important figures wore clothes, which stemmed from America’s Puritan roots. Americans also lacked the long art historical legacy that Europeans had and were far less comfortable with showing the naked body in their art. Until this point, nudity in American art had been reserved for Native Americans and slaves. There was an unconscious association with nudity in art with “the other” and seeing George Washington shown in this way was not well received by the public.

The parallels to imperial iconography were also unsettling, as there was a monumental figure of imperial majesty sitting in the middle of the still young nation’s legislative branch. While the public railed against the statue, Greenough believed that these complaints came from the poor lighting in the rotunda, not from complaints regarding the form of the statue.¹³ The immense weight of the statue eventually cracked the floor of the rotunda leading to its removal to the East Lawn two years after its installation. Greenough’s statue remained on the East Lawn for several years before being placed in the Smithsonian Castle.

The removal of the statue because critics objected to Washington’s partial nudity would make sense if Greenough’s statue were then moved to storage. But the statue was placed on display on the East lawn, arguably a more visible and

certainly more open-access spot than inside the Capitol Building. This move suggests a deeper political problem than Washington not wearing a shirt. The imagery used by Greenough is akin to representations of Greek gods and Roman Emperors and perhaps having this imperial imagery in the heart of the United States legislative branch was not the best idea for the still-young democracy. This conflict between republican and imperial ideals could be the larger reason for the relocation of Greenough's statue. Displaying the statue outside of the Capitol allowed the public to look upon Greenough's Washington and see it as a representation of American ideology infused with Roman imagery, while removing the implication of an imperial image trying to eclipse American democracy.

Given the reception and removal Greenough's statue it may seem strange that a few decades later another deification of Washington was created inside of the Capitol rotunda. Constantino Brumidi completed *The Apotheosis of Washington* in 1865, as America was embroiled in a brutal civil war. While Brumidi's image of Washington draws on ideas similar to Greenough's, he clothed Washington from the waist up in a military jacket and from the waist down in a purple cloth, making reference to both his military service and civil authority in America. Seated next to Washington are the figures of Liberty and Victory. Liberty sits to his right and holds an open book and a fasces, which was a symbol of power in ancient Rome. On Washington's left, Victory plays a horn trumpeting the triumph of Washington and America. Given the date near the conclusion of the Civil War, the Revolutionary victory could have been seen as a prelude to the Union's victory over the Confederacy. In the circle below the pantheon there are six personifications of aspects of American life, starting above Washington with Commerce, and continuing clockwise with Mechanics, Agriculture, War, Science, and Marine. Each of these scenes combine historical and mythological figures. Brumidi likely learned from the controversy surrounding

Greenough's statue and created his image in a way that would not offend American sensibilities, while still incorporating classical imagery in a more palatable glorification of Washington.

Similar to Greenough, Brumidi drew on European images as a source of inspiration for his image of Washington. Brumidi was influenced by Correggio's *Assumption of the Virgin*. Brumidi's fresco follows the same composition as Correggio's with a spiraling scene that draws the eye of the viewer upwards to the figure who is being honoured.¹⁴ While Brumidi was influenced by Correggio's style, he does not copy it directly, as he chose not to place Washington at the center of the image, instead placing him on the same level as the personifications of Liberty and Victory.

The center in most apotheosis images is the place of highest honor, as it was viewed as being representative of heaven in the work. In Correggio's piece, Mary is being raised into heaven and is placed in the center. Brumidi places Washington within a circle of figures, instead of the direct center. His decision to do this was twofold. In earlier versions Washington was in the center, but Brumidi decided against placing him there, as a figure in the center would require Brumidi to build the scene around him, giving the sense of the work having a right side up.¹⁵ The second part of this decision was to avoid making the same missteps as Greenough, placing a figure in the direct center of an apotheosis scene sent a signal that the figure in the center was no longer a human person, but was now a spiritual or holy entity. Placing Washington outside of the center allowed Brumidi to still honour Washington, without defying him outright. While both men drew on European art for inspiration, Brumidi was able to tactfully blend European symbols with American style to create a successful work.

The use of classical imagery in both Greenough's and Brumidi's works defied American conventions and were a bold shift in the iconographic legacy of George Washington. Greenough tried to connect to American traditions in his work, but he did so in a way that disconnected the American public from the art. Greenough's language was allegorical, and his style classical, both of which were incompatible with American sensibilities. Brumidi, while inspired by Greenough, learned from the controversy surrounding his statue and created an image that better blended classical allegorical language with images of American ideals. Brumidi understood American taste in a way that Greenough did not. This is reflected in his art as he avoided the ridicule suffered by Greenough, and his work remains in the Capitol rotunda today.

NOTES

- ¹ A prime example of this is the 1792 *Athenaeum Portrait*, off of which Stuart would base many of his images of Washington.
- ² "Online Library of Liberty." Presidents Day and the Apotheosis of Washington - Online Library of Liberty, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/presidents-day-and-the-apotheosis-of-washington>.
- ³ Ibid. There was a note about this being a funerary shroud.
- ⁴ Letter from Everett to Greenough, July 29, 1832.
- ⁵ Nathalia Wright, Horatio Greenough: the first American sculptor. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963, 124-125.
- ⁶ Ibid, 37.
- ⁷ "Letter to the Editor of the New York Signal." Alexandria Gazette, 2 Jan. 1841. America's Historical Newspapers.
- ⁸ The letter was reprinted in many different newspapers, with some referring to an artist friend of Greenough, and

others simply saying "an artist."

- ⁹ The body of the statue would have likely been made of wood and would not have survived.
- ¹⁰ Katie Uva, "Parson Weems." George Washington's Mount Vernon, www.mountvernon.org/digital-encyclopedia/article/parson-weems/.
- ¹¹ Dan Lubin and Margaretta M. Lovell. American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity. London: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2008.
- ¹² Nathalia Wright, Horatio Greenough: the first American sculptor. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963.,145.
- ¹³ Ibid., 148.
- ¹⁴ Barbara A. Wolanin, and Constantino Brumidi. Constantino Brumidi: artist of the Capitol. U.S. G.P.O., 1998., 132.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.,142.



Fig. 1
Horatio Greenough, *Washington*, 1841.

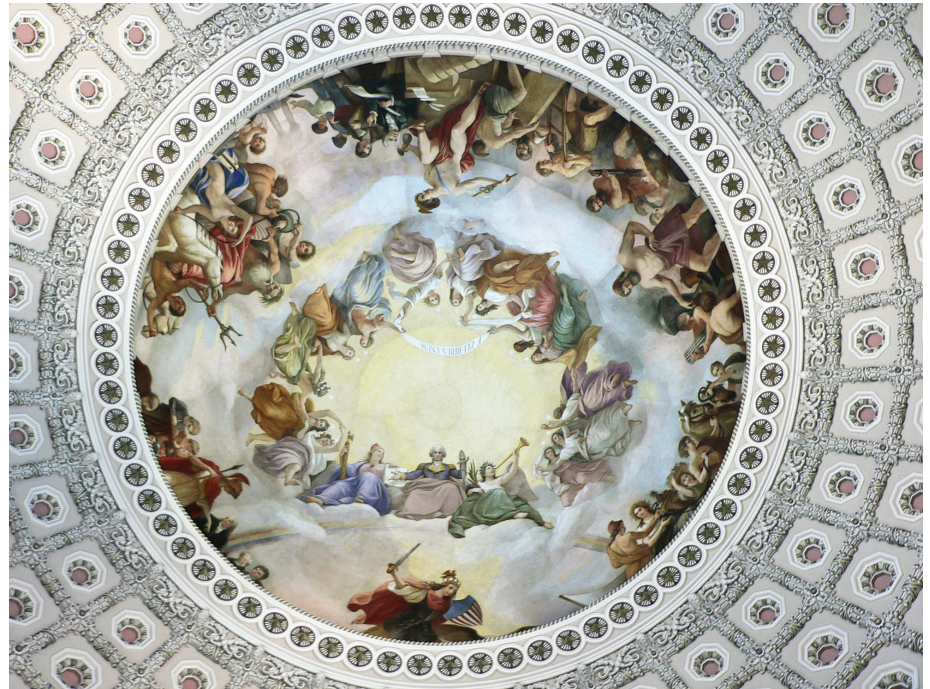


Fig. 2
Constantino Brumidi, *Apotheosis of Washington*, 1865.



Fig. 3
David Edwin, *Apotheosis of Washington*, 1800.



Fig. 4
John James Barralet, *Apotheosis of Washington*, 1802.



Fig. 5
19th Century Engraving of Phidias' *Zeus*.



Fig. 6
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Jupiter and Thetis*, 1811.



Fig. 7
Remaining pieces of *The Colossus of Constantine*, 312 - 315 AD.



Fig. 8
Detail of Greenough's *Washington*, showing Apollo in his chariot.



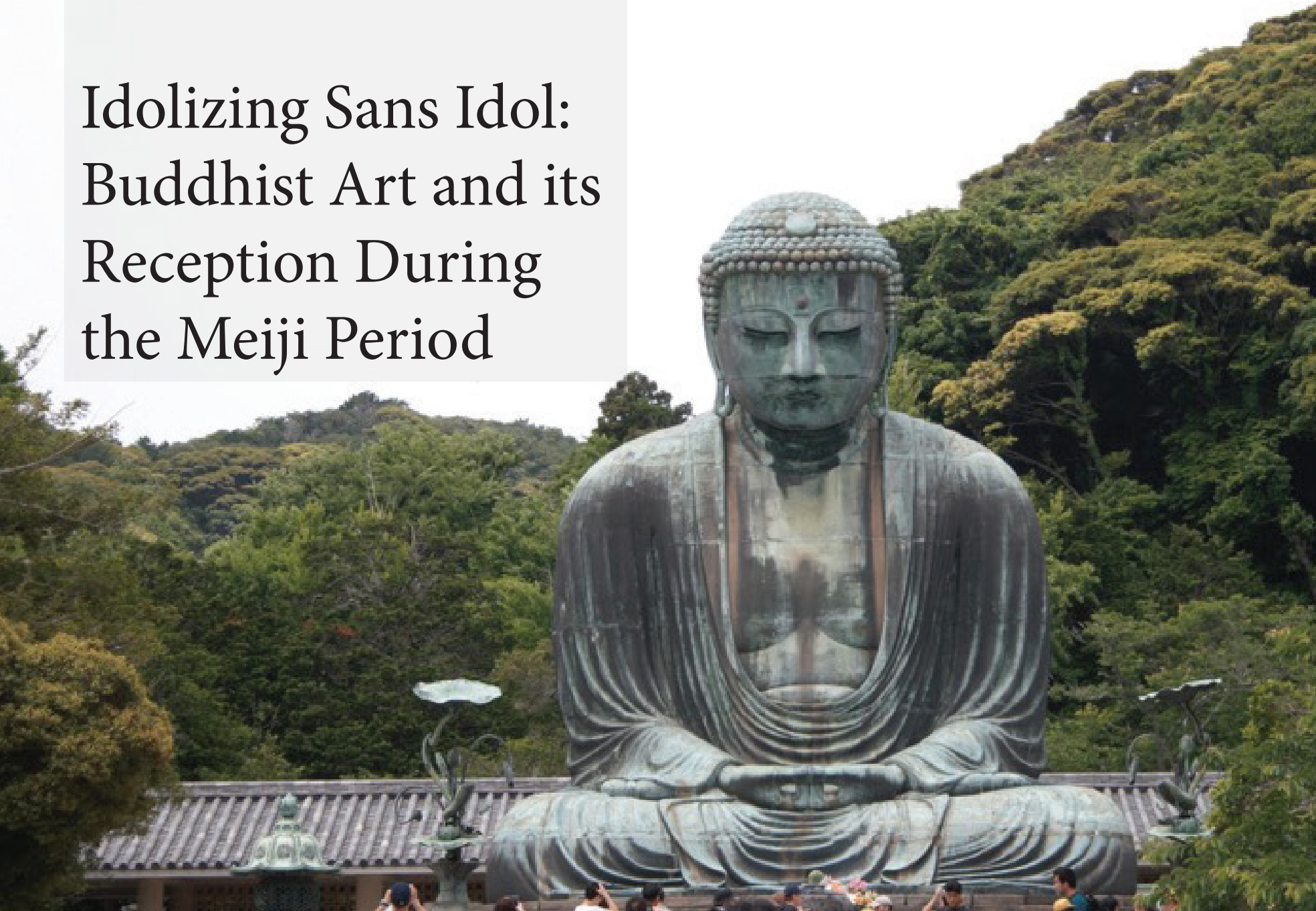
Fig. 9 Detail of Greenough's *Washington*, showing the infant Hercules wrestling snakes.



Fig. 10
Detail of Greenough's *Washington*, showing the figures of Columbus and the Native American.

Joan Miller

Idolizing Sans Idol:
Buddhist Art and its
Reception During
the Meiji Period



A churning crowd of shouting school children, darting selfie sticks, frenzied gesticulations between customers and salesmen, snatches of over a dozen different languages echoing off the verdant mountains of Kamakura, Japan. At the heart of this corybantic activity? An elegant, refined colossus. The *Kamakura Daibutsu* (Fig. 1), constructed in the eleventh century, is today the epitome of what the Japanese tourist industry has to offer, a monument to the heights reached by Buddhism and Buddhist art in Japan in the early and mid-centuries of the millennia. But how did the colossal Amitābha go from the embodiment of spiritual enlightenment and inspiration to a statue of impressive dimensions, the perfect backdrop for tourists' photos documenting their travels?

Enjoying vast popularity among the people and the government through the Edo period of Japanese history, Japanese Buddhism was shoved from its place of prominence during the Meiji Restoration of the 1860s, when the governing body of the Shogunate was replaced by the restoration of Emperor Meiji to the throne, and the country was opened to foreign influences for the first time in over two hundred years; events which rocked the geopolitical, social, and religious foundations of Japan and Japanese culture. Suddenly viewed by many as an invasive religion, Japanese Buddhism was quickly put on the defensive, as the enactment of *Shinbutsu bunri* led to the removal of Buddhist elements from Shintō shrines and the often-catastrophic destruction of hundreds of Buddhist temples and artifacts at the hands of Shintō authorities. Thrown from their pedestal, Buddhist thinkers and artists would spend the next several decades rebuilding and rebranding the religion for a country that more and more desired to modernize, Westernize, and secularize itself to fit more clearly into the Western world outlook.

This reconstruction of the perception of Buddhism

necessitated an evolution in two directions: all remaining artifacts and sacred sites would have to be reinterpreted in a way that made them relevant to a public that no longer valued the spiritual worth of the Buddha, while any new artwork with Buddhist subjects would have to be able to function dually as objects for religious purposes by those who remained faithful and as aesthetic objects for the newly secularized market. Through comparative analysis of pieces made before and during the restoration and by incorporating theories of post-colonialism, marginalization, and deconsecrated space, this study will examine the manner in which Buddhist art was reconfigured during the Meiji Restoration. The pieces examined in this study will bear witness to how the Restoration government's stance against Buddhism, the increased tourism within Japan, and the Japanese-born desire to conform to Western standards coupled with the West's desire for traditional Japanese styles combined to change the way in which Buddhist art, both old and new, was interpreted and made, by sterilizing older Buddhist art of its religious significance and creating new works which emulated Western traditions and styles.

I. Reinterpretation

With the restoration of the Emperor to the throne in 1868 came the crumbling of Buddhism as a government backed religion. In the first months of the restoration, the government mobilized to enact *Shinbutsu bunri* (Fig. 2), a series of edicts through which the removal of all 'evil customs of the past' was achieved through the elimination of all Buddhist positions from Shinto shrines and in subsequent laws, forbade the use or presence of Buddhist statuary as images of the kami in the shrine compound. This edict was soon expanded to order the removal of all Buddhist imagery from all Shinto shrines.¹ In the months that followed, hundreds of Buddhist pieces were destroyed at the hands of Shinto authorities overzealously enacting the laws put forth by the Meiji government.

In a landscape still dotted with Buddhist temples despite this destruction, the reinterpretation of all remaining Buddhist sites became imperative in the government's attempts to separate and deemphasize Buddhist ideas from Shintō ones.² In one of many vicissitudes that would characterize the ensuing era, the years following the *Shinbutsu bunri* saw the Meiji government recognize its error in its compliance with these acts of destruction and move to identify and protect Buddhist sites it deemed to be of cultural, but not necessarily religious, significance. Fully operational by the 1880s, this program of restoration was carefully created to highlight and align the identity of these sites and relics with the cultural identity of Japan, effectively secularizing ancient sacred sites.

The government's first move was to deconsecrate Buddhist works by moving them out of the temples into a national museum, in order to give primacy to their historical significance over their religious importance. In placing the works in a museum, the government neutralized their power as religious objects by removing them from the context in which they were originally intended to be viewed.³ As such, the government was taking the first step in changing the way viewers understood the objects by framing them as culturally significant and beautiful objects but not emphasizing their religious importance.⁴ In preparation for government-funded programs of restoration, temples were also ordered to inventory important material goods and significant buildings on temple sites.⁵ Soon after began an extensive program of temple restoration, spearheaded by the first generation of Japanese architects trained in Western techniques and styles at what is now Tokyo University.

As temples were restored, more and more objects were placed in museums, which were increasingly within the temple sites themselves. One such object was Hōryūji's *Kudara Kannon* (Fig. 3); a wood and polychrome statue dating to the second half of the seventh century. A willowy figure of exaggerated

height with a quixotic smile and peaceful air, the statue is today approached from a large exhibit hall filled with various temple relics before narrowing into a smaller chamber where the *Kudara Kannon* singularly commands the room. The statue itself is enshrined in protective glass; cast in a dim, fluorescent light. This viewing platform strips the object of its original intent, where it was meant to occupy the same space as the worshiper. Taking it out of the temple and constructing an artificial status as an aesthetic object fundamentally changes the way in which viewers interact with and understand the object, robbing it of its status as an icon and reducing it to a mere art piece. This juxtaposition of religious object in secular space has colored the comments of viewers of the *Kannon*, many of whom sense an incompleteness to the exhibit, as not fully religious, but not fully secular either.⁶ Even if today's viewers understand that something is wrong about viewing the *Kannon* by itself in a dark room shrouded behind museum glass, they nonetheless walk away with the idea that the object is in a museum, not a temple, and therefore that the object is not so much religious in nature as cultural or aesthetic.

The desire of the Meiji government to begin creating museums for Buddhist works is indicative of yet another influence which helped to bring Buddhism from the heights of religious prominence to its secularized, cultural role in today's world. With the borders suddenly flung open to Western visitors, more and more Buddhist sites were becoming increasingly linked with the burgeoning tourist industry. This drastic change in policy is evincive of the dire necessity of suddenly defunded Buddhist temples to increase revenue for the upkeep of their properties. The tourist industry had perhaps the biggest influence on disarming Buddhism of its religious context and no site more effectively chronicles this change in view than the

Kamakura Diabutsu (Fig. 1).

As early as 1863, Western visitors to the site began to describe the *Diabutsu* with language which reflects an aesthetic understanding with little to no regard for the religious significance carried by the statue. Aimé Humbert, arriving as part of a Swiss mission to Japan, wrote of the *Diabutsu*, “There is an irresistible charm in the attitude of the Daiboudhs, as well as in the harmony of its proportions. The noble simplicity of its garments and the calm purity of its features are in perfect accord with the sentiment of serenity inspired by its presence.”⁷ This analysis, one of the first made by a Westerner following the opening of the country, reflects a relatively dual reading of the statue, with words like ‘harmony,’ ‘charm,’ and ‘noble simplicity’ undoubtedly referring to the aesthetic value of the object, while words like ‘purity’ and ‘serenity’ indicate some understanding of the religious aspect of the work, but only vaguely and without specific reference to Buddhist concepts or practices.

Over time however, these secondary observations became lost in travelers’ accounts and the *Diabutsu* became merely a statue in the eyes of the beholders. In 1874, Théodore Duret related his impression of the statue and a similar work found in Nara:

“The Buddha of Kamakura, near Yokohama, which is known to us, is less high than that of Nara, but owing to its different pose and gesture it appears much less colossal. Yet one should not imagine this to be a statue with no other merit than its dimensions. On the contrary, we are in front of a true work of art...It is less agreeable in form than that of the Buddha of Kamakura, but one finds there a great character of simplicity, no less than the obligatory expression of calm and abstraction that the type of Buddha requires. This colossus produces

a great impression of when one discovers it for the first time, and this impression grows as one studies it and moves around it.”⁸

This later description of the statue categorizes both the Kamakura and Nara statues as art works, discussing their relative aesthetic merits and faults, with no regard in either case for the religious purpose, space, or understanding of the object which was crucial to their interpretation in their originally intended contexts. This interpretation is exactly what the Meiji government was hoping to establish; allowing Buddhism to continue to carry the cultural significance which would be necessary for an art style, but divorcing it from any religious significance which caused political difficulty and disunity.

II. Creation

While the reinterpretation of ancient Buddhist sites was integral to the rebranding of Buddhist art that occurred during the Meiji Restoration, it was by no means the only venue in which Buddhist art was being discussed. With their only government funding allocated to the restoration of older artifacts, new works created during this time period were commissioned by individuals, either for use in private worship or as collection pieces, many of which were destined for Western consumption. This change in targeted markets would free up many artists working in the decades following the Meiji Restoration to a more open representation of Buddhist icons and themes, as is evident in the work of Hada Teruo (1887-1945), an artist who trained and worked during the height of the Meiji period following the restoration.⁹

Teruo’s 1937 work, *Bukka kai’en no Zu* (Fig. 4), displays many modernized, Western references, whilst still depicting Buddhist themes. The presented story is itself an old theme, often depicted well before the modern era. In Teruo’s version, a churning mob of religious hopefuls, including school children, businessmen and priests, many dressed in Westernized style

and carrying large banners, rush toward the pure land where the Buddha awaits, traversing what appears from a distance to be a sturdy bridge, but which ends abruptly at the water's edge, where figures are pushed into the churning waters by those at the back who do not yet know the peril which awaits them. Meanwhile, on the left side of the composition, a solitary woman in traditional kimono glides effortlessly over a rickety bridge, safely carried along by a pair of hands symbolic of the Buddha, assuring the viewer that she will reach the pure land. This work, while sharing some similarities with premodern versions of the tale, is notably different. The mob's signs profess a multitude of political systems and outlooks, including Socialism, Pessimism and Opportunism.¹⁰ It is clear that the work is representative of the change occurring during the years following the Meiji restoration in which Buddhist works began to be able to function dually as objects for worship and objects of art, where subject and narrative could be provocative and critical, narrative, or allegorical instead of merely instructive or reflective. The ambiguity of intended meaning is itself reflective of the dual nature in which this work was expected to function; the left side is easily read as a religious work, while the right side complicates the reading, allowing viewers to discern a political or social commentary and warning.

In a similar vein to what was happening in paintings, architectural restorations or rebuilding of ancient sites also allowed architects opportunities to explore a more Western, Beaux-Arts understanding and depiction of structure. While most reconstruction efforts strove to maintain the original appearance of the temple site, not all temples were reconstructed in a traditional manner, particularly those that were near epicenters of international activity. One such project was the 1934 reconstruction of Tsukiji Honganji in Tokyo, designed by Ito Chuta (Fig. 5). The temple's location in the heart of Tokyo indicates why this building was rebuilt in a modernized style with modern materials, allowing it to be seen

by foreign travelers as a westernized structure and thus projecting the sense of modernity the Japanese desired to indicate to the rest of the world.

Looking at the temple, the departures Chuta took from the traditional wood frame structure are obvious. It is a synthesized conglomeration of Eastern and Western elements; masonry construction, stained glass windows, concrete, even a pipe organ.¹¹ With its sweeping, curved ceiling and ornamental carvings along the façade, the Japanese elements of this piece remain visible, but they take a back seat to the modernized, Westernized structure, which looks as though it would be at home in any of the great cities of Europe. The temple even goes so far as to include columns which are reminiscent of the Doric and Ionic orders, further hinting at a Westernized outlook and which are conspicuous in their absence from traditional temple architecture. Viewed as a whole, the temple is highly aesthetic, symmetrical and rhythmic in a way which is evocative of the traditional temples and pagodas, but which also evokes a stability and solidarity found more often in Western architecture.

Many of these changes invoked by artists following the restoration were founded on a nationally-rooted desire to modernize and Westernize in attempts to create a more favorable image of Japan in the eyes of the West, who in many ways were perceived as viewing Japan as a backwards country of secondary status in trade implications.¹² These artists did not employ a methodical, selective approach to their acquisition of Western elements, instead subsuming Western traditions with no regard to their distinguishing elements; creating a heterogenous conglomeration of various period styles and cultural influences.

In a desperate bid to be viewed as equal with the Western powers with whom Japan was now trading, Japan embarked on a rapid process of Westernization which took

on an almost post-colonialist quality. Japan desired so much to be the West's equal that they embraced every Western tradition which was brought to their attention, as can be seen in their sudden desire to adopt two-point perspective and other Western art techniques which previously the Japanese had shown no desire in developing. The Japanese fervently believed that if they could please the West by emulating the West, then they would be able to have a more active role in trade negotiations and exert more power in the Pacific and Far East.

In art, this attempt at Western emulation meant a drastic change in style. The Japanese government attempted to down play, if not suppress, the production of *ukiyo-e* prints, the most accessible form of Japanese art in the West. Japan believed these did not convey the intended message to the West of a Western style civilization in the Far East, and encouraged artists to pursue more Western style compositions and techniques, even setting up schools to teach this style of painting to the next generation of artists, fully anticipating that this style would be what would catch the West's eyes and give Japan greater influence in international affairs and a recognized position among the Western powers.

In an ironic turn of events, however, the Western art market preferred the traditional arts and techniques, most readily available in the form of *ukiyo-e*. The undying popularity and appreciation in the West for this style of art lead the government to quickly abandon their previous course of blatant Westernization and mobilize to define a Japanese aesthetic which incorporated elements seen in *ukiyo-e* and which would inform future artistic endeavors and be used to move Japanese Buddhist arts from the 'crafts' portion of world exhibitions to the 'Fine Arts' category, a category which had been traditionally denied to Asian countries. Both Teruo and Chuto exhibit this new aesthetic,

which clearly draws on and is linked to traditional Japanese arts and techniques, but which also includes Western motifs which indicate a sense of contemporariness and an attempt to bespeak a worldly outlook.

Japan's desire to modernize was fueled in part by a desire to be accorded the same honors as Western nations at world's fairs. Though Japan would begin exhibiting at world's fairs as early as 1873, it would take until the World's Colombian Exhibition in 1893 to have any works exhibited in the fine arts portion, as opposed to the handicrafts exhibit.¹³ From their very first exhibition, Japan was highly aware of their perceived shortcomings, particularly in art, with one 1872 article stating that, "Our painting methods still lack detail and refinement, so that attempts at copying real scenery remain poor...In recent years oil painting methods have made tolerable progress, and there are some now which are quite worth looking at."¹⁴ Japan was so certain of their need to modernize their art technique and assimilate it to Western standards that they couldn't fathom the notion that Western audiences actually preferred the more traditional style, with one anonymous writer even saying that "contrary to what one might expect, [the Western audiences] do not like the grand new Western-style patterns. Thus in our country we must not expel this distinctive art but instead further develop those techniques which differ from other countries, and knowing more and more that there are arts in Japan which cannot be imitated, it will be easy to increase the success of our industries."¹⁵ Here the key phrases are 'contrary to what one might expect' and 'must not expel this distinctive art.' Japan was fully intent on ending the traditional art form for which it is best known, hence the sudden fervor for including Western style and technique in artistic endeavors. This desire was fueled by a conviction that the purpose of the World Fairs was to showcase the best trade goods a country could offer. In comparison with objects like steam engines and other feats of technology, the Japanese government saw its exhibitions at the

fair as small handicrafts which would not help to increase trade or prestige among the Western nations. When they came to realize that Westernized goods were not in fact the profitable desired option for increased Western consumption, the country immediately synthesized this new information into their creation of style, leading to figures like Chuto and Teruo, whose works include modernized Western ideas while also retaining a sense of timeless tradition which became the prescribed style for Buddhist artists working in the roughly half century following the Meiji Restoration.

The political, cultural, and social turmoil which racked Japan during the Meiji Restoration and ensuing decades profoundly changed the way Buddhist art was understood and created from that period forward. Demoted from religious relic to aesthetic object, existing Buddhist works were reinterpreted to appeal to modern, westernized audiences seeking traditional Japanese styles without the burdensome scriptures and stories originally associated with such relics. In the same vein, active artists attempted to ride the waves of cultural change as they developed a new style which combined the Western desire for old techniques with the Japanese desire for modernity and the governmental desire for a Buddhism neutered of its religious significance but still full of cultural prominence, a trend which continues to this day.

NOTES

¹ James Edward Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton: Princeton Press, 1990), 9.

² To be clear, the edicts enacted by the government in 1868 which have come to be known as the Shinbutsu bunri called only for the separation of Buddhist and Shinto elements at shrines and temples. Though this was destructive in its own right, as it forced pieces to be moved from their original

settings, the resulting destruction of Buddhist sites and artifacts was the result of a long building tension between Buddhist and Shinto authorities. While this history will not be discussed in detail in this study, Ketelaar's study is a good starting point for understanding the changing relationship between Shinto and Buddhist thinkers in Japanese history.

³ This technique of saving the artifact but destroying the original context is one which has been employed throughout the world, notably in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, when religious art works were removed from churches and reinstalled in secular public spaces, such as guild halls, or sold into private collections.

⁴ For more information on the development of Japanese museums in the Meiji Era, see: Alice Y. Tseng, *The Imperial Museums of Meiji Japan* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2008).

⁵ Jane Patricia Graham, *Faith and Power in Japanese Buddhist Art* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 193.

⁶ Ibid. While there is a large time gap between the date of the Kannon's reinterpretation by the government and the viewer comments discussed above, there can be little doubt that the reactions of today's largely secular audience reflect clearly the reactions that would have been made by viewers at the time of its reinstallation, who understood the statue as a religious object and were suddenly jarred into seeing it in a museum setting.

⁷ Hiroyuki Suzuki, "The Buddha of Kamakura and the 'Modernization' of Buddhist Statuary in the Meiji Period" *Transcultural Studies*, 2, no. 1 (2011): 5

⁸ Ibid, 8.

⁹ For more information, see: John D. Szostak, "Two Paths to the Pure Land: The Niga-byakudo Theme and the

Modernist Buddhist Art of Hada Teruo,” *Archives of Asian Art* 57 (2007).

¹⁰. John D. Szostak, “Two Paths to the Pure Land: The Nigayakudo Theme and the Modernist Buddhist Art of Hada Teruo,” *Archives of Asian Art* 57 (2007), 26.

¹¹. Graham, *Faith and Power*, 200.

¹². Ever since the enactment of the treaties which opened Japan’s borders, namely the Harris Treaty of 1858, Japan had chafed under the unequal terms to which she was subjected by the Western parties, such as fixed low import taxes on goods brought into the country, among other economic implications. Japan believed that if it could quickly adopt to the Western model it would be able to negotiate for itself a more equal treaty; a belief which continued to influence Japanese thought and culture though the second world war and even beyond. In every way possible, Japan began to encourage citizens to embrace Western models of society. For more information on the history of the opening of Japan to the West, see *Clash: U.S. – Japanese Relations Throughout History* by Walter LaFeber.

¹³. Graham, *Faith and Power*.

¹⁴. Chelsea Foxwell, “Japan as Museum? Encapsulating Change and Loss in Late-Nineteenth-Century Japan,” *Getty Research Journal*, 1 (2009), 4.

¹⁵. Ibid.



Fig. 1
Kamakura Daibutsu, c. 1252



Fig. 2
Temple Bells Being Smelted for Bronze, Tanaka Nagane, 1907



Fig. 3
Kudara Kannon, 7th Century



Fig. 4
Bukka kai-en no Zu, Hada Teruo, 1937



Fig. 5
Tsukiji Honganji, Ito Chuta, 1934

STUDIO ART

SOPHIA FORNERIS

Not Paid to be Here

The cultural and social conditions I grew up with in Guayaquil, Ecuador informs my perception of what I see around me in Providence, Rhode Island. In my work, I examine social subjects in my immediate environment from the viewpoint of my culture and upbringing. For example, I documented the Women's March in New York City in the winter of 2016; I made a series of works dealing with campus harassment and the repercussions of sexual assault; most recently, I interviewed and photographed a fisherman in Narragansett, Rhode Island to explore the economic issues of this area. In all of these projects, I try to respect my subjects as I find formally compelling ways to communicate difficult issues.

My thesis exhibition focuses on the psychological effects experienced after an abuse or assault. Many victims have a hard time discussing their experiences, (this usually means that they will not seek therapy after the incident). As a community, it is our duty to guarantee these students are provided the help necessary in order to continue their lives after college.

Many of my projects incorporate a documentary style and a candid quality; whether using digital or film photography, I avoid drastic alteration or manipulation of the image. When shooting, I try to make my subjects comfortable and to create individual connections. This helps to create a sense of truth and directness in the final product.

My intention is to create a dialogue with my viewers around the issues I present in my projects, while questioning problems through the lens of human emotion and relationships. In my work, I explore our treatment of one another and consider whether our interactions on a small scale can be related to many of the larger concerns we face today.



Untitled, Photograph, 12.5" x 8.5", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 12.5" x 8.5", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 8.5" x 12.5", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 12.5" x 8.5", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 12.5" x 8.5", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 8.5" x 12.5", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 8.5" x 12.5", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 8.5" x 12.5", 2018

KRISTINA HO

Hidden Depths

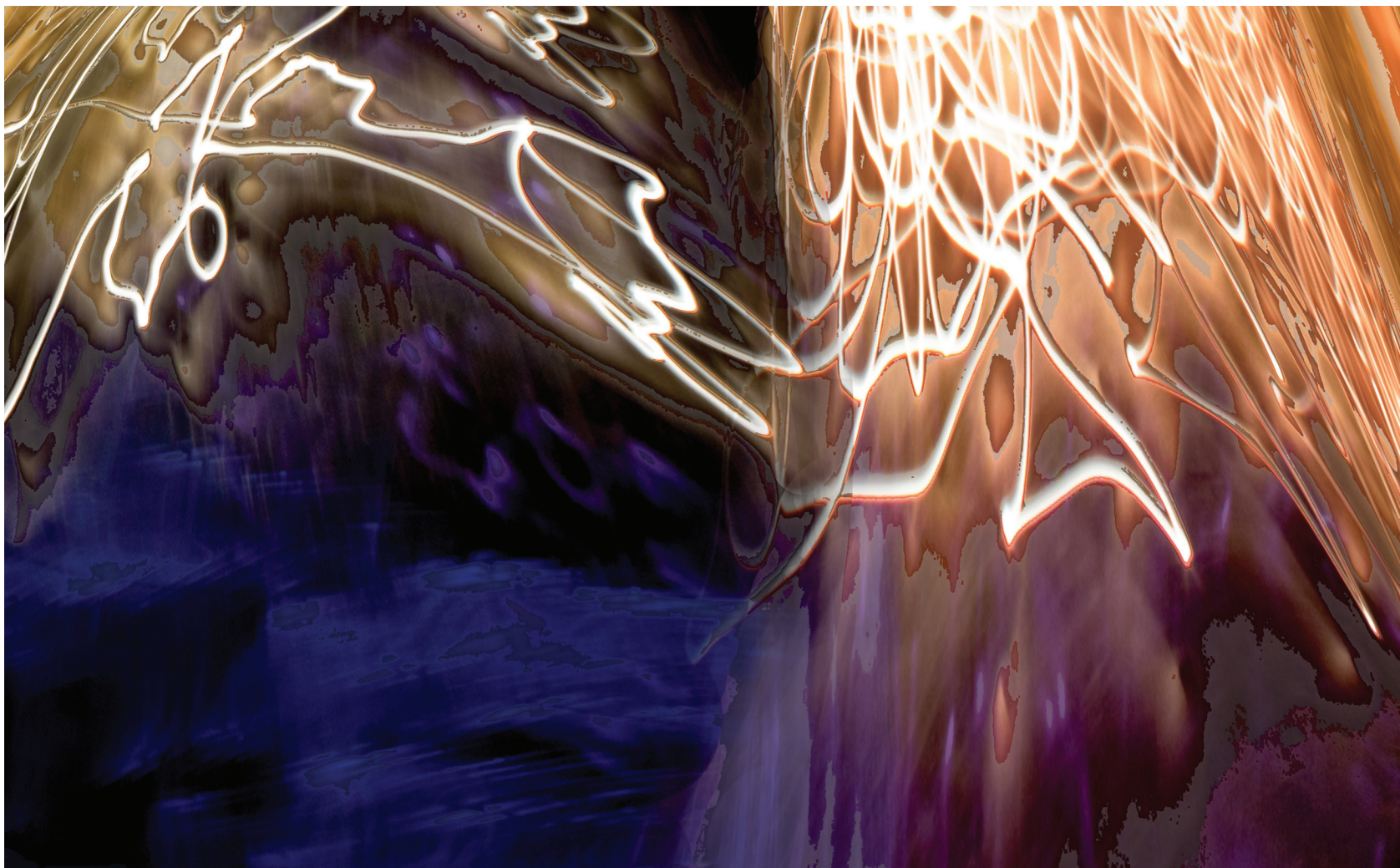
When I was younger, I took Chinese language classes where I memorized and recited nursery rhymes every week. Initially it was fun, however, I could not understand what I was reciting, and eventually I lost interest and stopped going. When I traveled to Taiwan and China in the summer of 2008, I was lost and confused due to my lack of fluency. I was embarrassed—how could I not know my own culture? Although I learned basic phrases and words before traveling, I was not able to communicate and comprehend what was going on around me. English was my first and only fluent language.

I am currently enrolled in basic Chinese courses to learn everything I missed out on studying when I was younger. In the studio, this has led me to explore the formal and cultural meaning of Chinese characters through the rearrangement of words. As I make my work, I reinvent language through calligraphic qualities within and through space forming my own positive and negative shapes.

I begin my studio process by responding to Chinese characters through digital rendering. On Photoshop, I make hybrid compositions of characters. As I place each individual word or fragment in a certain way, the negative spaces create unique polygonal shapes. I then transfer the composition onto a slab of clay and cut it out. The positive spaces produced create a unique branching network of lines.

My digital work is also a response to Chinese calligraphy. Using a camera at night and long exposure, I focus on available light and make “drawings” by moving the camera itself. I then digitally alter each photo to create a specific environment for my calligraphic script to live within.

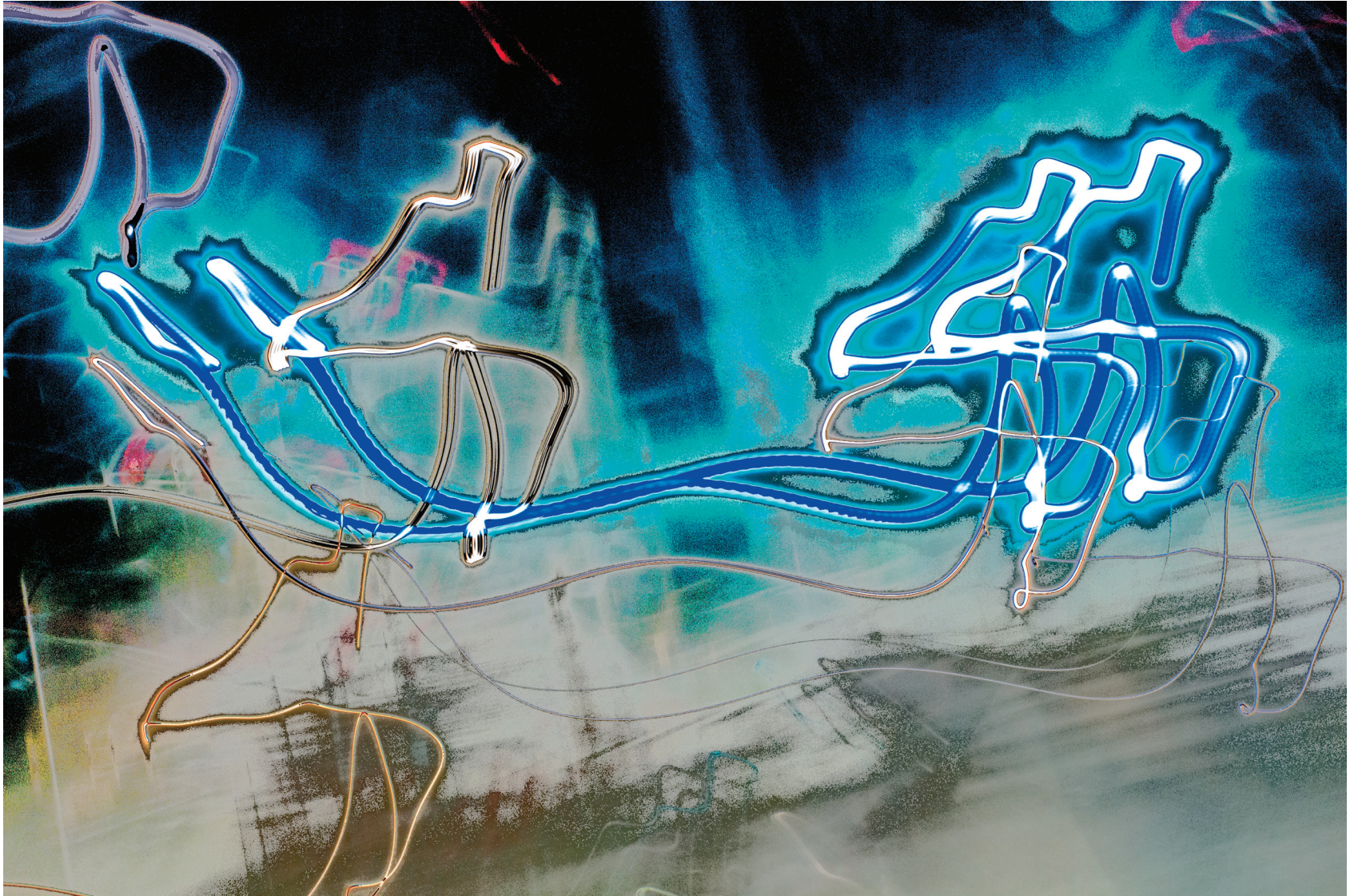
Whether on clay or the computer, I use my Chinese heritage as inspiration to reinvent communication through language, shape and pattern. I am learning the language of Chinese, but the language of space as well, as I participate and intervene. Language inspires me to learn and find new meaning as I create my own dialect.



Optimism and Hope, Digital Inkjet Print on Foam Core, 23" x 38", 2018



Dancing in the Rain, Digital Inkjet Print on Foam Core, 25" x 38", 2018



Doppelgänger, Digital Inkjet Print on Foam Core, 25" x 38", 2018



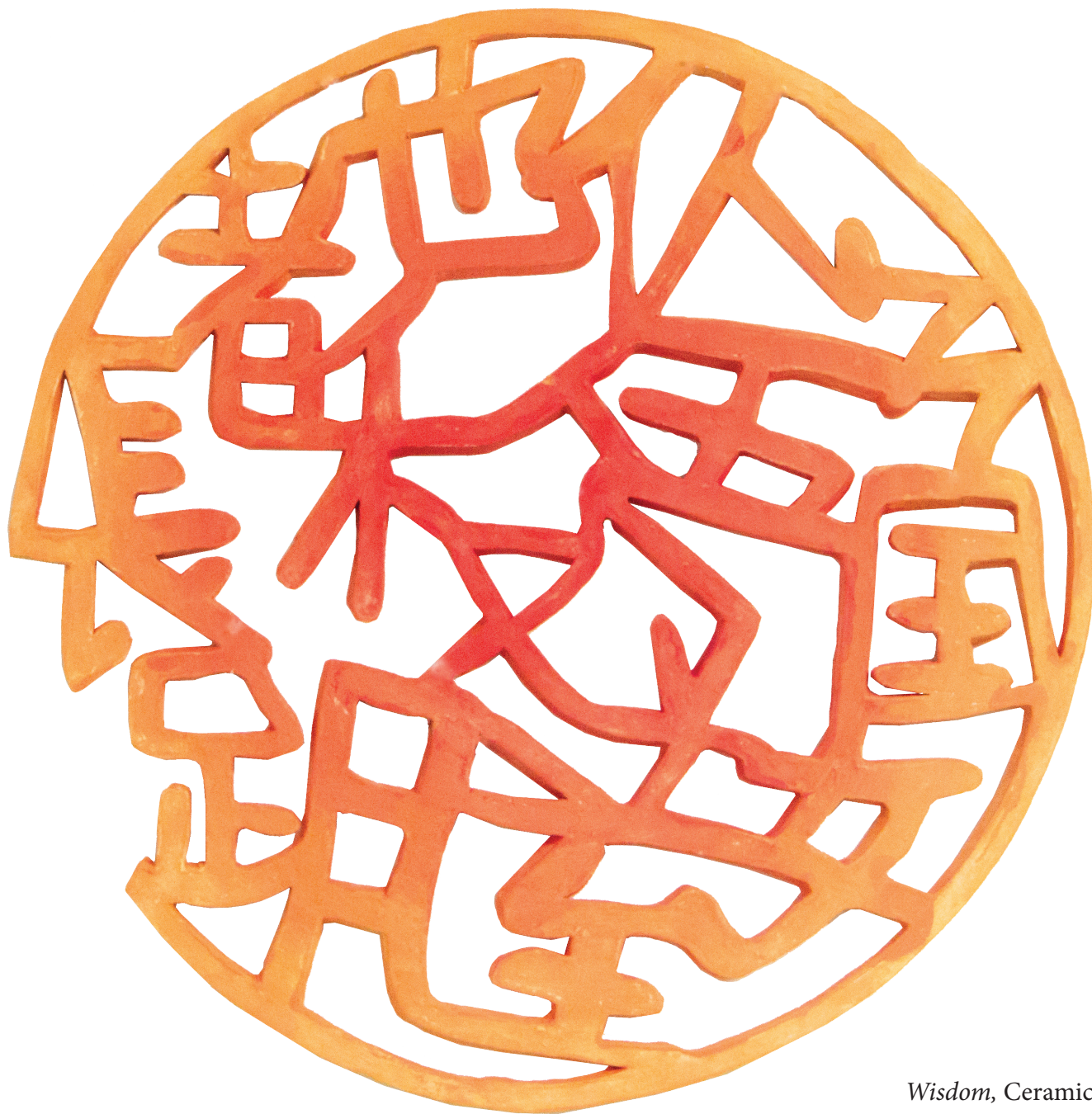
Rush Hour, Digital Inkjet Print on Foam Core, 24" x 36", 2018



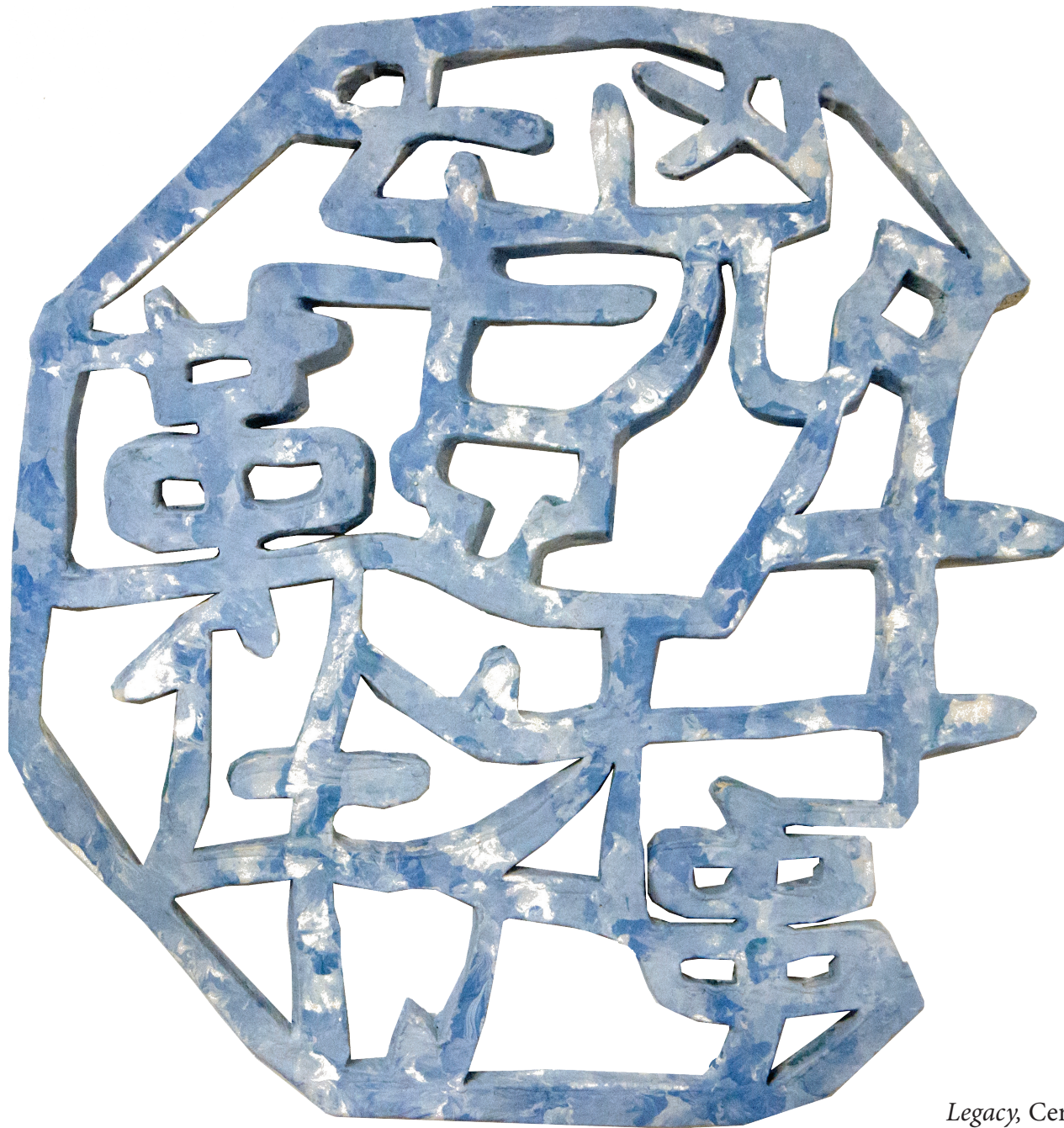
Street Dance, Digital Inkjet Print on Foam Core, 24" x 36", 2018



City Lights, Digital Inkjet Print on Foam Core, 24" x 36", 2018



Wisdom, Ceramics, 20" x 20", 2017



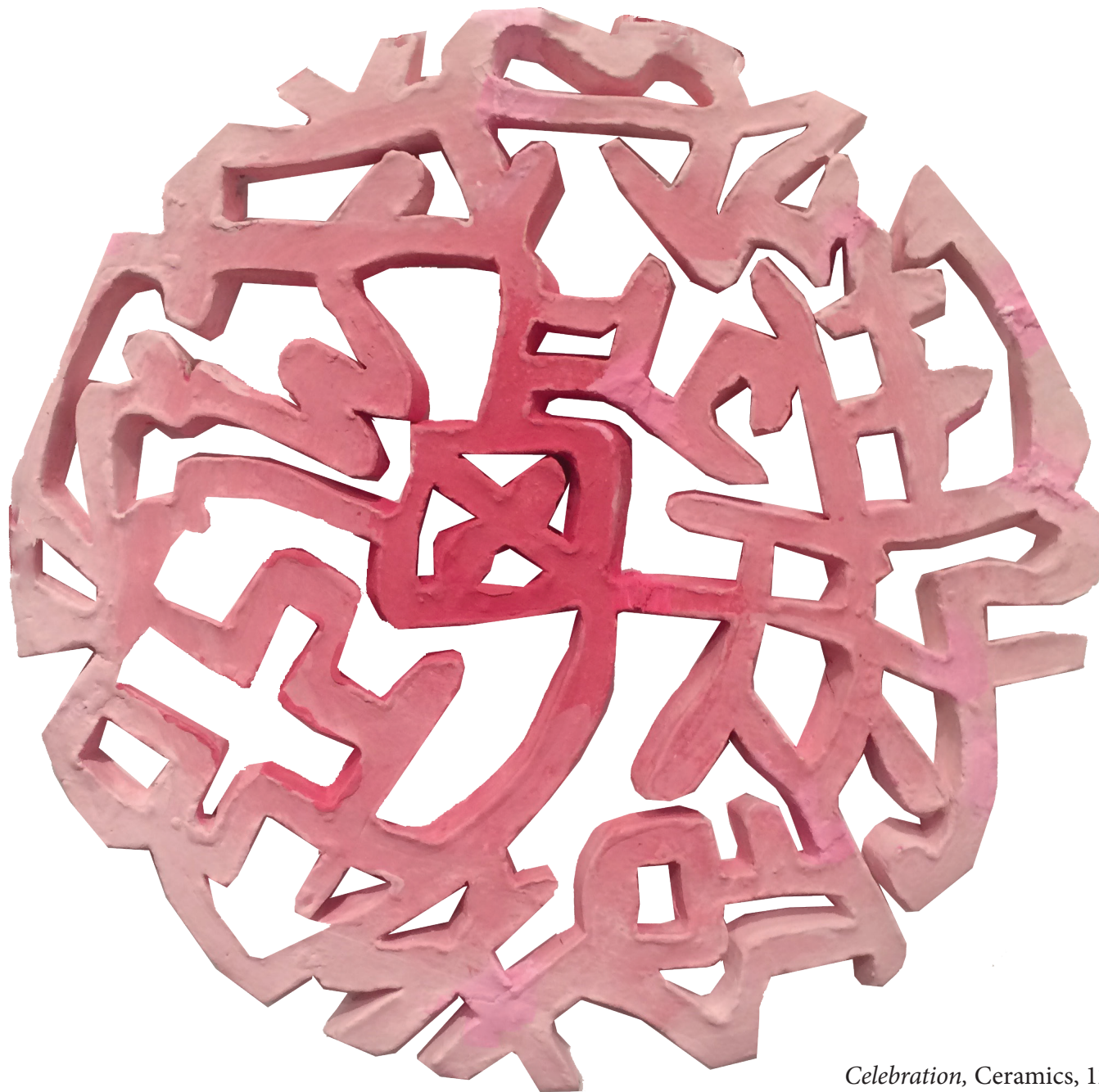
Legacy, Ceramics, 16" x 16", 2017



Immortal, Ceramics, 15" x 16", 2017



Harmony, Ceramics, 16" x 16", 2017



Celebration, Ceramics, 12" x 12", 2018



Cosmos, Ceramics, 16" x 16", 2018

MAALIK MBATCH

Archives

Given the traumatic series of events that I have experienced in my life, I use my artwork as a confessional venue to talk about emotions that are difficult to articulate through words. In the studio, I work to reconcile with my inner self and heal mental wounds related to my identity. I am of African descent, yet I was born and grew up in England, raised by an American white mother, in a majority Afro Caribbean neighborhood. My perspective makes my work unique, as I am able to explore concepts of trauma, suffering, heartbreak, loneliness and all the darkest spaces that exist in our universe from multiple points of view.

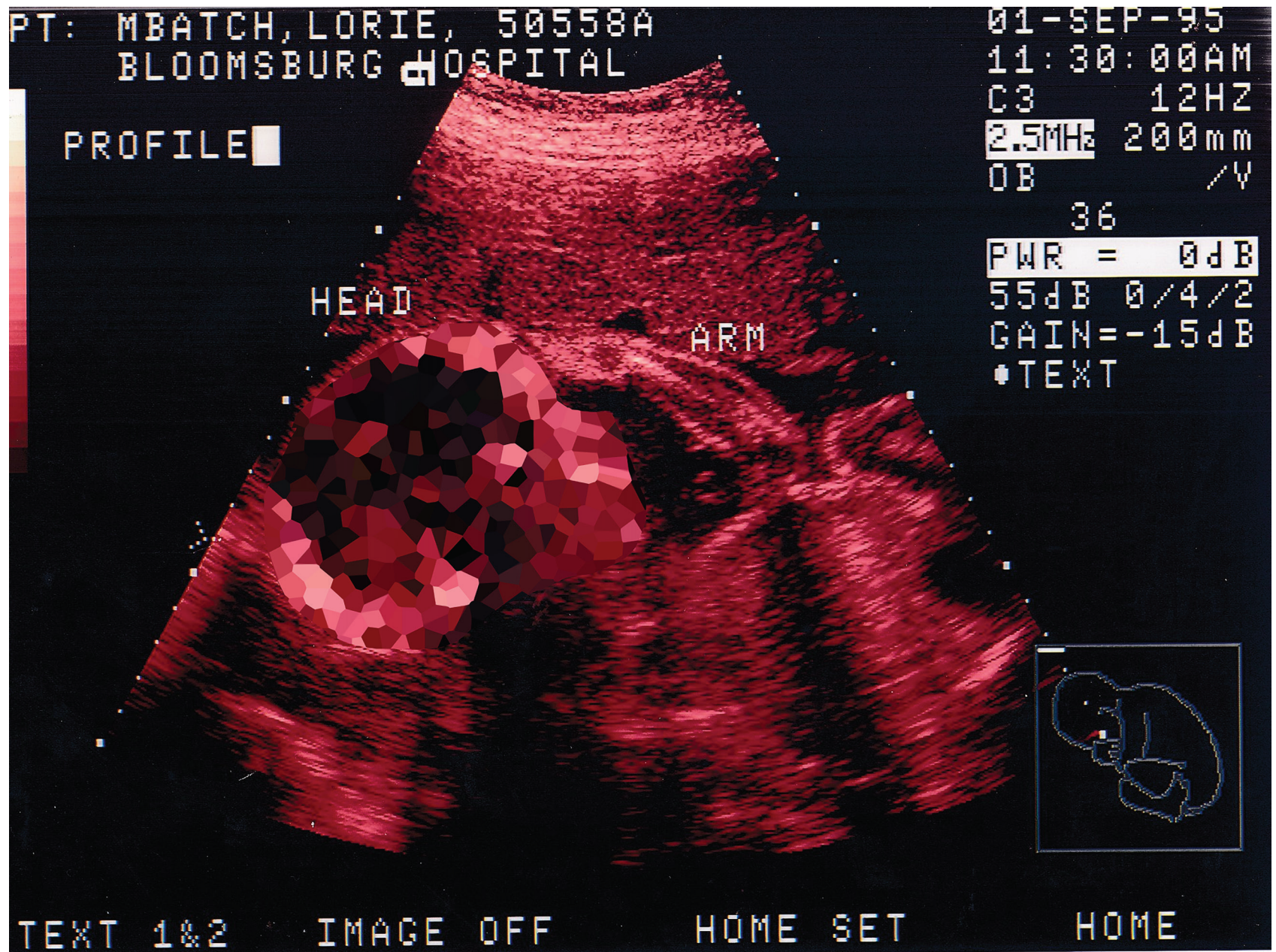
My viewpoint is made evident in the black and white photography series that speaks to the feeling of loneliness in Providence College classrooms and lecture halls for ethnic minorities in our student population. This topic stems from my experience as one of seven students of Afro Caribbean descent attending a private high school in London, and part of a slightly larger minority here at Providence College. In bringing this work forward to be viewed by an audience I want to engage in public therapy between my internal and external self.

All the work I create is based on internal narratives, such as the series of archival family photos I have altered through Photoshop by removing faces and filling the void with background elements of the scene. In removing specific elements I acknowledge the fragility of memories, and the many changes we experience in our lives. In a distinct but related body of work I have used long exposure light drawing images, taken in a kitchen setting, to create my interpretation of a self portrait which finds me engaged in an activity that is a significant part of my life and my culture. It is an important part of the only two things my father taught me. I was shown what not to do in life, and secondly the importance of food in our Gambian culture.

In the end I work to reconcile my spiritual fractures, and embrace the idea that I am my greatest enemy and harshest judge. Once I make peace with myself I have achieved my goal.



Untitled, Photograph, 18" x 24", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 18" x 24", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 24" x 18", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 24" x 18", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 24" x 18", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 24" x 18", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 18" x 24", 2018



Untitled, Photograph, 18" x 24", 2018

GABRIELA SHORT

I use photography as a means to connect with my subjects. I create a formula, which I repeat countless times to build over time an overwhelming number of images. I set the stage and let my subjects do as they wish. The lighting and the studio remain untouched and subjects come and go. I ask my subjects to become vulnerable in front of my lens. My goal is to connect with them in this moment; to bring them joy, comfort, freedom or a feeling of carelessness for at least a minute.

My choice in subject comes from my interest in the body, different ideas of beauty, my subjects' internalized feelings and femininity. As I can relate the most with those who identify as female, I photograph mostly women. The idea of femininity has always intrigued me, the qualities of empathy, calmness, inner confidence and self-belief fascinate me.

Currently I am asking women to allow me to photograph their biggest physical insecurities in hopes that they feel more comfortable after the session. By putting multiple pictures of insecurities together I minimize the perceived imperfections my subjects are troubled by. I seek to show them that what troubles them the most is part of who they are and by doing so I attempt to normalize their scars, stretch marks, ribs, stomachs.

I produce an image and I repeat it, over and over again with different subjects so the point becomes somewhat overwhelming to the viewer, it draws them in. My prints vary in size, yet the small ones are there to promote that moment of intimacy and make my audience get close enough to see my subjects' vulnerabilities.

My photographs are driven by the connection I develop with my subject. I consider them to be artifacts of an experience; my central passion lies in the process of photographing and interacting with my subjects.

GABRIELA SHORT



Her, Photography, 38" x 23", 2018



Her, Photography, 31" x 26", 2018



Her Ear, Photography, 14" x 9", 2018



Her Rolls, Photography, 14" x 9", 2018



Her Back, Photography, 14" x 9", 2017



Her Thighs, Photography, 14" x 9.5", 2018

