HIDING MAKING SHOWING CREATION

Edited by
Rachel Esner
Sandra Kisters
Ann-Sophie Lehmann

The Studio from Turner to Tacita Dean

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Foreword

The editors and authors of this volume share a fascination with artistic practices and their representations. In the wake of Ann-Sophie Lehmann's 2009 conference *Showing Making*, and the book publication and exhibition *Mythen van het atelier* (2010), the editors decided it was time to put one of their long-standing hypotheses to the test, namely that such representations have a tendency to oscillate between the two poles of hiding and showing various facets of production – a phenomenon we observed had a certain consistency throughout the history of art, in particular, it seemed, since 1800. Although often appearing to reveal all in their depicitions, artists are never entirely open about their practice, and habitually hide their manual labor in order to present an image of almost magical creative genius. The international two-day conference *Hiding Making – Showing Creation*, which we organized in January 2011 in collaboration with Teylers Museum in Haarlem and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, demonstrated that we had not been wrong. We were impressed, not to say overwhelmed, by the quality of the individual papers and, especially, their homogeneity. The subsequent realization of this volume has been a process of rethinking the original concept and carving out a focus on what might be a new field of research within our discipline: *studio studies*.

Neither the conference nor the book could have been realized without the help and inspiration of our colleagues, first and foremost the authors of the various contributions. A special thanks goes to Marjan Scharloo and Terry van Druten of Teylers Museum and Martijntje Hallmann of the Rijksakademie for their collaboration in the organization of the event that set the ball rolling. We are also grateful to

Sameer Farooq, who provided the original design of the conference materials and generously allowed us to reinterpret his work for the cover of the book. Maaike Groot and Chantal Nicolaes of Amsterdam University Press supported the editorial and production process with enthusiasm and expertise.

We also wish to express our gratitude to SNS Reaalfonds, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the VU University Amsterdam, the University of Amsterdam (KRC), the Institute of Culture and History (ICH) of the University of Amsterdam, the Dutch Postgraduate School for Art History (OSK), the Research Institute for History and Culture (OGC) of Utrecht University, the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), and, in particular, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), which generously funded the book with an Open Access Publication Grant.

Rachel Esner, Sandra Kisters, Ann-Sophie Lehmann
Amsterdam, Utrecht and Los Angeles, May 2013

Introduction

RACHEL ESNER, SANDRA KISTERS, ANN-SOPHIE LEHMANN

> *L'artiste est une exception: son oisiveté est un travail, et son travail un repos [...]. Qu'il s'occupe à ne rien faire, où médite un chef d'œuvre, sans paraître occupé.*[1]
>
> HONORÉ DE BALZAC

> *That left me alone in the studio; this in turn raises the fundamental question of what an artist does when left alone in the studio. My conclusion was that I was an artist and I was in the studio, then whatever I was doing in the studio must be art.*[2]
>
> BRUCE NAUMAN

In his *Traité de la vie élégante* of 1854, Honoré de Balzac described and analyzed the essential qualities of the artist of his day. The modern artist is at work when he seems to be at rest; his labor is not labor at all but repose; and, most importantly, the works he produces come into being as if by magic; they are *mediated* rather than made, without actual *work* (labor) coming into the matter at all. The significance of Balzac's observation can hardly be overestimated, as it seems to provide a kind of model for the modern artist and his relationship to both his place of work – the studio – and what he does there, one which, as Bruce Nauman's famous and programmatic statement testifies, remains relevant far into the twentieth century, perhaps even until today. The complex relationship between process, product, artistic identity, and the artist's studio – in all its various manifestations – lies at the heart of the present volume, *Hiding Making – Showing Creation. The Studio from Turner to Tacita Dean*.

Hiding Making – Showing Creation takes as its starting point the

theoretical dichotomy between the conceptual and material aspects of art production that resulted from the emancipation of the arts from the realm of craft and the transformation of the artist from craftsman to autonomous master in the early modern period. One of the effects of this process was the elevation of "thinking" over "making," and by the nineteenth century the "hiding" of the latter – both literally and figuratively – had established itself as a multifaceted artistic trope. The artist was no longer a man who worked, but a man who conceptualized; his studio was no longer a workshop, but a private, even sacred, place – a place of inspiration rather than labor; and that which was produced there was produced by means other than with the hands. The obviously rhetorical nature of these notions did little to diminish their power as *the* determining factors of artistic identity from the nineteenth century onwards. At the same time, "showing" became more important than ever: released from the bonds of church and state, and so left to earn a living through the sale of his products on the free market, the artist had no choice but to put his works, and even himself – genius or celebrity – on more or less permanent display. The public manifestation of the artist and his creations was more necessary than ever, but what exactly could be "shown" and how has been a matter of much cogitation.

The aim of *Hiding Making – Showing Creation*, then, is twofold. In the first instance, we seek to trace the *Nachleben* of these studio *topoi* from the nineteenth century to today, in particular focusing on how artists have employed them as strategies for *showing* certain aspects of their practice (above all those which perpetuate the notions of artistic genius and autonomy), while carefully *hiding* others from view (routine, failure, craft). In the twentieth century, these same *topoi* have also acted as a foil *against* which to create artistic identity, making an examination of their transformation and even reversal in more recent times equally central to the project. Hiding and showing, thinking and making, private and public, the studio and the exhibition, we suggest, are thus not so much dichotomous as dialectical, in permanent oscillation, a sometimes perverse *perpetuum mobile*.

Secondly, in order to achieve these goals, we have adopted a method that we feel not only does justice to the richness and diversity of the topic but which, we believe, will add a new dimension to the already

abundant and ever growing literature on the artist's studio.[3] Until now authors have mainly concentrated on the function, meaning and representation of the artist's studio in a single period, a single nation, or even a single medium, such as painting.[4] Although of course interesting and fruitful in themselves, such period- or medium-bound case studies tend to fetishize the individual instance and fail to address questions of continuity within the given theme. If, however, we accept that the studio is the crucible of philosophical reflection on some of the most fundamental problems of the artist in the modern world – the nature of the art object, the role of process and materials, the relationship of the artist to the world beyond the studio walls – then it needs to be studied from a variety of perspectives and over the *longue durée*. One could make a case that very little separates the painted meditations of Caspar-David Friedrich or Frédéric Bazille from those of Henri Matisse or Pablo Picasso, or even – despite the different mediums – those of Bruce Nauman or Paul McCarthy. A real understanding of the function of the studio in the various economies of modernity requires an approach that ignores the boundaries of time and space without, however, ignoring the specific conditions under which individual artists work.

Hiding Making – Showing Creation seeks to address this challenge and for the first time takes a trans-historical, transnational and trans-medial approach, looking at the studio from a broader perspective that will facilitate interdisciplinary comparison and dialogue on a subject of great importance for understanding art production, reception, and the image of the artist. As such, this volume is also a contribution to the emerging field of studio studies. To systematically study what happens in spaces of creative practice is not an exclusively art historical endeavor. Methods and models to study creativity-in-action are currently being developed by disciplines ranging from design studies, craft studies, and anthropology to the history of science. By offering a wide array of case-based investigations into the showing-hiding paradigm – which forms such a surprising constant throughout the radical changes artistic production has undergone since 1800 – our volume forms a historical base for such interdisciplinary studio studies.

The book is divided into two sections, comprising the nineteenth

and the twentieth/twenty-first centuries. Each of these is preceded by an introduction, outlining the theoretical issues surrounding the hiding making/showing creation paradigm in these two periods, as well as its *topoi* and *Nachleben*. These texts both introduce and draw together the material presented in the case studies and present the author-editors' over-arching vision of the theme as a whole. Each of the introductions is followed by six case studies, which examine hiding making/showing creation from a variety of methodological perspectives – iconographic, historical, philosophical, and empirical. The epilogue, finally, ties together the dominant strands of the hiding making/showing creation paradigm emerging from both parts, and presents some thoughts on how to approach studio practices from a theoretical viewpoint.

NOTES

1 Honoré de Balzac, *Traité de la vie élegante* (Paris: Delmas, 1952), 16. Balzac's description of the artist is worth quoting in full, as it precisely describes the pose adopted by the modern painter: "L'artiste est une exception: son oisiveté est un travail, et son travail un repos; il est élégant et négligé tour à tour; il revêt, à son gré, la blouse du laboreur, et décide du frac porté par l'homme de la mode; il ne subit pas de lois: il les impose. Qu'il s'occupe à ne rien faire, ou médite un chef d'œuvre, sans paraître occupé; qu'il conduise un cheval avec un mors de bois, ou mène à grandes guides les quatre chevaux d'un britschka; qu'il n'ait pas vingt-cinq centimes à lui, ou jette de l'or à pleines mains, il est toujours l'expression d'une grande pensée et domine la société."

2 Ian Wallace and Russel Keziere, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," *Vanguard* 8 (February 1979) 1–18.

3 A more or less complete list of publications covering the five years prior to 2009 is provided in Wouter Davidts and Kim Paice (eds.), *The Fall of the Studio. Artists at Work* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2009), 3, note 1. Not included in this list but relevant to the present work are also Guido Reuter and Martin Scheider (eds.), *Inside/Outside. Das Atelier in der zeitgenössischen Kunst* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2012); Alex Coles, *The Transdisciplinary Studio* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012); Paolo Bianchi (ed.), "Das Atelier als Manifest," *Kunstforum International* 208 (May 2011); Michael Diers and Monika Wagner (eds.), *Topos Atelier. Werkstatt und Wissensform* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010); Mayken Jonkman and Eva Geudeker (eds.), *Mythen van het atelier. Werkplaats en schilderpraktijk van de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse kunstenaar* (The Hague/Zwolle: De Jonge Hond, 2010); Brian O'Doherty, *Studio and Cube. On the Relationship Between Where Art is Made and Where it is Displayed* (New York: A Buell Center/

FORUM Publication, 2007); Camiel van Winkel, *De mythe van het kunstenaarschap* (Amsterdam: Fonds BKVB, 2007); M. Haveman, E. de Jong, A. Lehmann, A. Overbeek (eds.), *Ateliergeheimen. Over de werkplaats van de kunstenaar vanaf 1200 tot heden* (Amsterdam/Zutphen: Kunst & Schrijven, 2006); and Eva Mongi-Vollmer, *Das Atelier des Malers: Die Diskurse eines Raums in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Lukas Verlag, 2004). Not to mention the dozens of exhibitions and academic conferences on the topic that have taken place since the turn of the century and particularly since 2005, among them our own two-day international symposium *Hiding Making – Showing Creation. Strategies in Artistic Practice from the 19th to the 21st Centuries* (Teylers Museum, Haarlem, and Rijksakademie van beeldende kunst, Amsterdam, 7–8 January 2011), which formed the basis for this publication.

4 A notable exception is the classic anthology of studies of the artist's studio by Michael Cole and Mary Pardo, *Inventions of the Studio. Renaissance to Romanticism* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Old and New Studio *Topoi* in the Nineteenth Century

SANDRA KISTERS

> *The sculptor, Alfred Boucher, a pupil of Paul Dubois, came one day on a business errand to see the decorator. In the studios he noticed Rodin at work on the model of a group of children intended for a cartouche. Boucher [...] observed him with the liveliest interest. He witnessed the rapid, skilful, amazingly dexterous execution producing under his very eye a tender efflorescence of childish flesh on the firm and perfectly constructed little bodies.* And Rodin was working without models![1]
>
> JUDITH CLADEL

It is not clear whether this encounter ever actually took place, but it is telling for the importance of such "studio topoi" in biographies about visual artists. The anecdote, told by Rodin's biographer and admiring friend Judith Cladel, played a crucial role in her description of the controversy about whether or not Rodin had made life casts from his model for *The Age of Bronze* (1877). Although Rodin did his best to prove that he had modeled the work himself, pubic opinion only changed after several established painters wrote a letter in his defense. According to Cladel, the young sculptor Alfred Boucher became convinced of Rodin's claim once he had seen the sculptor at work. Boucher told the story to his master Paul Dubois, who, together with Henri Chapu, came to Rodin's studio, witnessed his expertise and wrote the letter that cleared his name.[2] It is striking that Rodin, who later in life employed several *praticiens* to carve his marble statues – a practice not uncommon in the studios of successful sculptors

– was so anxious to prove that he had done the modeling of his first free-standing figure himself. The modeling of sculptures by a *statuaire* – a status that Rodin sought to claim – was seen above all as *intellectual* artistic labor in the nineteenth century; the execution of the design in bronze or marble was considered a merely manual task. A cast from life was neither. In telling the anecdote, Cladel shows Rodin's ability to create, his genius, and emphasizes his purity and innocence by revealing a scene that was hidden from general view.

The Rodin anecdote is not unique. There are countless stories of artists, such as Tiepolo or Rembrandt, being admired for the speed and apparent ease with which they worked, dazzling or even tricking visitors.[3] Such stories are not limited to Europe or America; a similar one exists about the Japanese artist Hokusai.[4] It is said that Hokusai spent one whole year painting a rooster, but when his client came to collect the painting, there was nothing in the studio. Hokusai then effortlessly executed the painting, taking less than ten minutes and leaving his visitor baffled. Seeing that the execution took so little time, the client, who was a merchant, wanted to bargain on the price. Hokusai then showed him the dozens of sketches that he had made during the year, explaining how they had all contributed to the final painting.

The example of Hukosai calls to mind the famous dispute between art critic John Ruskin and painter James Abbott McNeill Whistler, who in 1878 battled in court over the question whether it was the actual manual labor of two days or the intellectual artistic labor of a lifetime that defined the price and quality of the painting *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (c. 1874).[5] In the nineteenth century, artists increasingly had to defend their work and their artistic practice before the public and the art critic, and this resulted in a growing number of anecdotes in biographies and other texts about artists that illustrated their struggles and misrecognition.

THE AFTERLIFE OF STUDIO *TOPOI*

Stories about the studio practice, persona, special abilities or social standing of artists have been present in artists' biographies and auto-

biographies ever since Vasari's *The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1550–1568). He frequently made use of anecdotes to characterize the personality and artistic qualities of the artist whose life he was describing. Vasari derived this use of anecdotes from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (AD 77–79), an encyclopedic book about natural phenomena of which the chapters on art and artists served as one of Vasari's most conspicuous sources.[6] The hiding/showing paradigm is already present in some of Pliny's stories, for example in the often-repeated anecdote of the painting contest between Zeuxis and Pharrhasios. *How* they painted their respective paintings of the grapes and curtain is not told, only the effect they had on their viewers: Zeuxis' grapes fooled the pigeons, while Pharrhasios' curtain fooled the proud Zeuxis himself. As Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz pointed out in their well-known study *Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (original German edition 1934), the impact of Pliny's, Vasari's, and their followers' texts is far greater than we may realize. Indeed, a great many stories about artists are biographical formulae, fixed anecdotes based on legendary stories of heroes and saints that reoccur in one form or another in almost every text about the life of an artist.[7] These stories are not always true, but they are important for our understanding of the contemporary social conception of art-making and the construction of the image of the artist.

Among these stories are numerous anecdotes that specifically refer to the hiding or showing of artistic practice in the studio. For example, according to Vasari, Giotto once painted a lifelike fly on the nose of a man in one of his master Cimabue's paintings, which Cimabue then tried to chase away in vain. The story took place in Cimabue's workshop, where Giotto was supposedly working as an apprentice, and Vasari used it as an example of Giotto's wit and trickery.[8] Giotto's fooling of Cimabue was meant to illustrate Giotto's more naturalistic style, his surpassing of his master, and the start of a new era in painting. How he painted the fly is irrelevant: Giotto is no artisan but a gifted painter, and, seen from a nineteenth-century perspective, an early example of artistic genius.

In Part I, we trace the afterlife, from the nineteenth century to today, of those *topoi* that refer to the artist's studio and artistic practice.

The essays in Part I deal mainly with the nineteenth century. The focus is on how artists have used these *topoi* to construct their artistic identity – which in the nineteenth century primarily meant the image of the artist-genius. Artists "showed" their skill by appropriating legendary stories about artists at work, but without actually providing any insight into artistic practice and its difficulties. The first essay, "Studio Matters: Materials, Instruments and Artistic Processes," by Monika Wagner, discusses the dialectic, but also the ambiguity, of the hiding and showing processes of production from J.M.W. Turner to well into the twentieth century. This ambiguity is also apparent in the essay by Petra Chu, "Showing Making in Courbet's *The Painter's Atelier*." Chu demonstrates that although the intention of the artist may have been to hide making while showing creation – as in the allegory Gustave Courbet painted of his Paris studio in 1855 – even then, there are subtle traces that refer to the production process.

THE MAGIC OF MAKING

As Kris and Kurz point out, many ancient stories refer to the magic qualities of the artist, both real and mythical. The myth of Pygmalion, who sculpts such a beautiful statue of Galatea that his wish that she might come to life is granted by Aphrodite, gives the artist the divine ability to create the illusion of life. Such a quality, of course, fits perfectly with the new notion of genius and artistic autonomy that developed in the second half of the eighteenth century, and this is one of the reasons it became such a favorite subject for artists. It was Jean-Léon Gérôme who made one of the best-known images of *Pygmalion and Galatea* (c. 1890) (fig. 1). Gérôme was a successful academic painter and sculptor, admired – and criticized – for his Néo-Grec style and meticulous finish, as Matthias Krüger discusses in his contribution, "Jean-Léon Gérôme: His Badger and his Studio." Gérôme made several paintings of his studio, mostly referring to his work as a sculptor, but rather than revealing his working methods and studio practice, these works actually enhance the mystery of what goes on in the artist's place of work. In *Pygmalion and Galatea*, the statue has just come magically to life. Pygmalion has dropped his tools on the floor, where

FIG. 1 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, c. 1890, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Louis C. Raegner, 1927 (27.200)

a few small pieces of marble are scattered about, not nearly enough for the amount that must have been cut away in the sculpting process. We see no *bozzetti*, no pointing machine or other technical aids; there are no unfinished works in the studio, and Pygmalion himself looks more like a classical hero than a serious sculptor. The painting itself is highly finished, and as Krüger argues, this is deliberate: a means of

hiding the painter's craft and emphasizing the conceptual nature of the painting. In fact, it seems Gérôme used Pygmalion as a metaphor to demonstrate his ideas about his own artistic identity: that of a genius painter, sculptor, or even magician.

CULTIVATING THE ARTIST

That artists were keen to hide the craft aspects of their art and emphasize their genius can be related to their changing social position. In the late eighteenth century, artists freed themselves from the strict regulations of court and church, and instead became what Oskar Bätschman refers to as "exhibition-artists," with a need to sell their products to a new, mainly bourgeois, public. The emerging art critic assisted this new art-buying public in their choices.[9] Although in some countries, such as the Netherlands, artists were already used to working for a commercial market, artists in general increasingly had to present themselves to the public in one way or another, and participate in the public debate about art, as Whistler would do.[10] But instead of openly addressing the public to buy their work, artists continued to deny that their art had been made for the market, feigning not to care when their paintings or sculptures sold poorly. As sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has argued: "This is the principle of a prodigious reversal which turns poverty into wealth refused, therefore spiritual wealth."[11] Artists who seemed to comply with the demands of the market were highly criticized; Gérôme, for example, was accused by Zola of making his paintings solely for the sake of profit, garnered through reproductions.[12]

The new social position of the artist, together with the notion of creative genius, which also developed at this time, simultaneously resulted in a kind of cult of the artist. The public became fascinated by artists' personalities; artists' monographs and biographies thrived as a genre; studio visits became a recurrent item in the popular press;[13] the first monuments to visual artists were erected; houses of birth of famous artists were opened to the public; and in 1830 the 300th anniversary of Raphael's death was celebrated extensively. Tellingly, the worship of artistic genius also distracted attention away from the

working process: even in recorded studio visits in the popular press, little was revealed about the actual work that went on there; the emphasis instead lay on the resemblance between the decor and general look of the space and the personality of the admired artist.

Some contemporary artists were revered almost as saints, like the Neo-classical sculptor Antonio Canova, whose body was divided between three places following his death in 1822: his heart went to the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari and his right hand to the Accademia di belli Arti, both in Venice, while the rest of his remains went to his native town of Possagno.[14] The worship of body parts was, of course, part of the Catholic religious tradition, but here it is secularized as part of the nineteenth-century cult of the artist. The treatment of artistic artifacts as relics is also apparent in the making of death masks, casts of artists' hands, and the preservation of painters' palettes, as Terry van Druten discusses in his essay on the painted palette in late nineteenth-century Dutch art. Some of the palettes kept after the artist's death still contained the carefully arranged daubs of paint the artist had placed on it while working, but of the palettes Van Druten discusses, only the *support* refers to making: the painted image on the palette is in reality a finished work.

With the cult of the artist, the fascination with the artist's studio also grew. Although several artists held exhibitions in their studios, or opened them to the public on Sundays or even for nighttime visits by candlelight – a practice followed, for example, by Canova and Thorvaldsen – the idea arose that the studio was inaccessible to the public.[15] Previous conceptions of the studio as a workshop, a place for education, or a place to show off worldly success, were now replaced by the Romantic notion of the studio as an isolated space in which the artist worked in total seclusion.[16] But, as Bourdieu might have argued, less successful artists also used the idea of the isolated studio to deny the necessity of display and action in the public sphere, and instead used it to proclaim their genius, recognized or otherwise.

Frustrated by the demands of the commercial art market and the selection processes of contemporary exhibition practice, artists began to glorify illustrious painters of the past, thereby further contributing to the cult of the artist.[17] They projected their nostalgic vision of the social position and lives of these artists in historical paintings of, among others, the Renaissance masters.[18] Favorite topics correspond with legendary artists' *topoi* of an artistic genius that is displayed, recognized or revealed: the discovery of talent, the infant prodigy, famous patrons, painting contests, and mourning statesmen at the deathbeds of famous artists. An artist's genius granted him access to a higher social standing, a rise from the status of artisan or apprentice to that of a master. Vasari often stressed the social status of artists through anecdotes about kings and noblemen who recognized their talent: the Pope himself supposedly shed tears at the deathbed of Raphael, and Leonardo is said to have died in the arms of François I. These artists were the subject of paintings by Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret (1906), Francois Guillome Menagot (as early as 1781), and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1818). According to art historian Francis Haskell, these paintings were first and foremost a glorification of royal patronage, but they also tell us about the social position that some of the Old Masters, at least, may have had – a position many nineteenth-century artists apparently yearned for.[19]

More important for our topic is the depiction of the recognition artists received during their lifetimes, for example through a royal or princely visit to the studio. There are countless examples: Michelangelo visited by Pope Julius II, painted by Alexandre Cabanel (1859) (fig. 2); or Charles V's visit to the studio of Venetian painter Titian by Joseph-Nicolas Robert-Fleury (1843). Legend has it that the Emperor picked up Titian's brush when the master dropped it on the floor, out of respect for his mastery. Vasari told a similar story about Giotto, who often received King Robert of Naples while working at the chapel of Castel Nuovo. The king apparently loved to watch Giotto work and talk, and according to Vasari he amused the monarch with his conversation. One day, the king supposedly said: "'Giotto, if I were you I would leave off painting for a while, now it's so hot.' And Giotto an-

FIG. 2 After Alexandre Cabanel, *Michelangelo in his Studio, Visited by Pope Julius II*, 1859, Bordeaux, Musée Goupil

swered: 'And so would I, if I were you.'"[20] The anecdote stresses the artist's social standing, but also the ease with which he seems to work, talking and painting masterpieces at the same time. This, of course, is another typical studio *topos* of great antiquity, but one that equally had an afterlife in the nineteenth century. As Petra Chu argues, Courbet cultivated an image of being able to receive visitors while continuing to work on his paintings. Moreover, it is hardly surprising that Courbet also stunned his visitors with the speed of his execution. Chu shows how Courbet in fact seemed to play with the hiding and showing of both his working process and his genius. This dialectic, or even oscillating aspect, of the hiding and showing paradigm turns out to be present in many cases.

In the course of the nineteenth century, contemporary artists also became subjects for glorifying paintings. Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen was the subject of numerous paintings, all of which emphasize his social standing, such as the one by Hans Ditlev Martens of Thorvaldsen visited in his studio by Pope Leo XII in 1826 (1830) (fig. 3). Martens's painting shows no work in progress and gives no insight into Thorvaldsen's studio practice, but is instead a careful presentation of important works from different periods in his oeuvre. In fact, in none of the paintings of Thorvaldsen in his studio is he

FIG. 3 Hans Ditlev Martens, *Pope Leo XII visits Thorvaldsen's Studio near the Piazza Barberini, Rome, on St. Luke's Day, October 18th 1826*, 1830, Copenhagen, Thorvaldsens Museum. Photo: Lennart Larsen

actually at work. Sometimes he is depicted with chisel and mallet, as in the portrait by Horace Vernet of 1833, but then he is pensively looking away from the (often already finished) sculpture, thereby underlining the notion of the artist as an intellectual genius and not an artisan.

It is striking, however, that in the case of contemporary artists, only the successful, academic painters and sculptors were the subject of such glorifying paintings. Non-conformist, frequently unsuccessful painters also made paintings of themselves or their colleagues in their studios, but these were of a totally different character. Eugène Delacroix, symbol of the Romantic painters, portrayed Michelangelo alone in his studio (1849–1850); he is not at work but lost in contemplation; he seems almost melancholic, and is neither glorious nor admired by noblemen. This image, of course, is better suited to a Romantic than to an academic painter. Romantic painters often used depictions of their studios to emphasize their independence from the Academy, but also their struggles, their emotions, and their pov-

erty, as we see in paintings such as *A Corner of His Studio* by Octave Tassaert from 1845. Tassaert has given up working altogether; in this self-portrait we see no trace of making (except perhaps making dinner); what we see is his rejection by society, and therefore the showing of unrecognized genius.

THE PARNASSIAN AND THE BOHEMIAN

Within the artists' *topoi* employed by Vasari and Pliny, Kris and Kurz recognized two types of artists, which they called the Parnassian and the Bohemian, a concept further elaborated by Rudolf and Margot Wittkower in *Born under Saturn. The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (1963). The Wittkowers distinguished between the Mercurian and the Saturnian artist, conceived as an antagonism between the successful established artist and the struggling, failed one. Elements of the hiding of craft and failure and the showing of genius are present in stories about both types of artists. These types are also known as the princely artist – referring back to the tradition of court painters – and the unrecognized, unruly or bohemian artist, a term introduced in the nineteenth century that has been very influential ever since. In the nineteenth century, these two positions were further polarized in the decoration of artists' studios: from the opulent salon-studios of *Mahlerfürsten,* like that of the Austrian painter Hans Makart or the American painter Frederic Church, to the small and bare working studios of less successful artists.[21]

In an article entitled "The Summer Haunts of American Artists," nineteenth-century author Elizabeth W. Champney referred to these kinds of luxurious city studios as *show studios*, studios that demonstrate worldly success and genius, and opposed them to the simpler barn-studios in the country where artists worked in the summer months.[22] In some cases – for example, that of the Belgian painter Ferdinand Knopff – artists had two studios within one house: one "show studio" for receiving visitors, and a working studio, where visitors were not allowed.[23] As the name suggests, artists used their show studios to show off their success, artistic autonomy and genius, to

exhibit and possibly to sell their work, while simultaneously keeping their working process and failures carefully hidden from view.

Of course, independent, bohemian artists did not have show studios; more often than not, they even had to share a studio with a colleague for financial reasons. Of the nineteenth-century studios that have been preserved, the majority are those of academic painters like Frederic Lord Leighton's in London. In Leighton House, the studio is still in its original location, thus offering the pilgrim/visitor a glimpse into the "real" workspace. As Maarten Liefooghe discusses in his contribution on the Musée Gustave Moreau in Paris, in some posthumously realized artists' house-museums, the studio setting has been created in a room that was never the artist's studio in the first place, thereby giving the public a false sense of authenticity. Moreau, in fact, was a very special case. He consciously fabricated the way his oeuvre was to be presented, while carefully hiding himself from view. However constructed this posthumous image of Moreau may be, the fact that in this small museum, a large number of his partially unfinished works are on view, makes a visit nonetheless seem like an experience of making. In Moreau's museum, visitors may look through dozens of unfinished sketches; however, because of the museum-like display, they will probably experience them as finished pictures. So again, the promise of knowledge is not fulfilled; we are left with Moreau's genius and productivity.

CAPTURING THE ESTABLISHED GENIUS

The opposition between the successful academic painter and the bohemian artist was also reflected in nineteenth-century photographs of the studio. One famous series is that of *Artists at Home* (1884), which Joseph Parkin Mayall made of Royal Academy painters like Lord Leighton, Sir Laurence Alma Tadema and George A. Lawson. Leighton and Lawson in particular are shown not in a private home setting, but seated before a carefully composed presentation of their work in their studios. Similar presentations of the artist and his oeuvre were also customary in painting, as in *Thorvaldsen in his Studio at the Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen* (1840), by Ferdinand Richardt.

Photographs and paintings of the show studio have little or nothing to do with providing insight into the practice of painting, even if the studios are crammed with possible subject matter and all the materials needed for painting, plus, as a reference to the academic training the artist had enjoyed, plaster casts of ancient sculptures. Instead, such images are part of the careful construction of the image of the artist, as Mayken Jonkman demonstrates in her essay. Nor, however, were photographs of "bohemian" artists' studios intended to show making. In fact, there are few photographs of nineteenth-century avant-garde artists' studios, and those that do exist were not made for documentary purposes or to offer insight into the artist's production process.[24] As Jonkman discusses, artists such as George Hendrik Breitner, who used photography as a study aid for their paintings and as a way of documenting their personal friendships and artistic collaborations, only indirectly and unintentionally gave insight into their artistic practice through these photographs.

SHOWING MAKING?

With the rise of the new medium of cinema in 1895, and the technological improvements to both film cameras and the photographic film roll, it became easier to register the creative act in the studio. However, we need to be aware of the fact that artists can choose what they want to show or hide even when being filmed or photographed. Moreover, not every artist agreed to work in front of the photographer or filmmaker's camera. And when they did, they were not always pleased with the end result. The story of how the process of being filmed disturbed Jackson Pollock's view of his own artistic process is telling. Still, most of the time the filmmaker was sincere in his effort to capture the making of art in front of the camera. The celebrated documentary series *Schaffende Hände* (1923–26) by Hans Cürlis for instance, was specifically aimed at educating the public; these films were not about the artistic choices an artist makes, but about what "the hand does" in the artist's, but also in the glassblower's, goldsmith's or ceramist's workshop.[25] Interestingly, the way that Cürlis here equates painters with craftsmen overturns all romantic ideas

about the head being more important than the hand. Here the dialectic of hiding and making is reversed.

It is very difficult to truly give insight into the choices an artist makes while working. François Campaux (*Henri Matisse*, 1946) tried to demonstrate Matisse's drawing technique by repeating a scene in which Matisse is shown drawing a model in slow motion, so that we see his hand hesitating in the air before putting the charcoal to the paper in order to draw a firm line. This seems to negate the *topos* of the artist who works rapidly and seemingly without effort. But one only needs to see Henri-Georges Clouzot's film *Le Mystère Picasso* (1955) to know that this studio *topos* is still alive and kicking. One cannot see this documentary and not be amazed about the speed with which Picasso creates (and destroys) new images. This short excursion into the medium of film, however, has brought us to the twentieth century, and therefore to the second part of this book.

It is evident that in the nineteenth century, both the hiding of making and the showing of creation were necessary for artists to create an audience for their work, as well as to create an artistic identity for themselves. But it is also clear that in the process of hiding, some aspects of the artistic process will be shown, albeit in a veiled or coded manner. As we have seen, certain ancient studio *topoi* are still present in artists' own representations or in their representation by others – for example, the *topos* of the artist as a magician who brings his art to life. Although the twentieth century has brought about many changes, one could ask whether the dialectic of hiding making and showing creation has fundamentally changed in the course of the twentieth century. In the second part of this book, we investigate how modern and contemporary artists reflect on, react against or even make use of studio *topoi*; what do they hide and what do they show?

NOTES

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4 Kris and Kurz refer for this anecdote to Arthur Roessler, *Der Malkasten: Künstler-Anekdoten* (Leipzig/Vienna: Tal & Co, 1924).
5 Julie Codell, *The Victorian Artist. Artists' Lifewritings in Britain, c. 1870–1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 104, note 172.
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9 Oskar Bätschmann, *The Artist in the Modern World. A Conflict Between Market and Self-Expression* (Cologne: Dumont Verlag, 1997), 9–10.
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19 Haskell 1987, 90.
20 Vasari 1987, 69.
21 On Makart and several Dutch examples see Ileen Montijn, "De ezel in het boudoir," in: M. Haveman, E. de Jong, A. Lehmann and A. Overbeek (eds.), *Ateliergeheimen. Over de werkplaats van de kunstenaar vanaf 1200 tot heden* (Amsterdam/Zutphen: Kunst & Schrijven, 2006), 282–299.
22 Elizabeth (Lizzie) W. Champney, "The Summer Haunts of American Artists," *Century*

Illustrated Magazine 30/6 (October 1885), 845–860: 846.
23 Linda van Santvoort, "De mis-en-scene van het 19e-eeuwse kunstenaarsateliers," *Ghentse Bijdragen tot de Interieurgeschiedenis* 32 (2003) 113–130: 123–125.
24 Carel Blotkamp mentions this in his series of articles on photographs of the artists' studio "De Werkplaats," in: Carel Blotkamp, *De onvoltooide van Cézanne. 40 korte beschouwingen over moderne kunst* (Warnsveld: Terra Lannoo, 2004), 50–80: 78. For a concise history of photographs of artists in their studios see Michael Klant, *Künstler bei der Arbeit. Von Fotografen gesehen* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz Verlag, 1995).
25 See Karl Stamm, "Der Künstler im Dokumentarfilm. Aspekte der Authentizität," in: H. Korte and J. Zahlten (eds.), *Kunst und Künstler im Film* (Hameln: Verlag C.W. Niemeyer, 1990), 63–68: 64.

CHAPTER 1

Studio Matters: Materials, Instruments and Artistic Processes

MONIKA WAGNER

In 1834, the German painter Johann Erdmann Hummel devoted a drawing to the famous founding myth of fine art (fig. 1), passed down by Pliny and highly popular in the late eighteenth century. Pliny reports that the Corinthian potter Butades had invented portrait-like

FIG. 1 Johann Erdmann Hummel, *The Invention of Drawing*, 1834, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett

pictures in clay with the help of his daughter Debutadis, who "for the love of a departing young man, outlined on the wall the shadow of his profile by the light of a lamp."[1] While most other pictures of the subject from around 1800 concentrate on Debutadis and thus on *disegno* as the master art,[2] Hummel shows us a twofold scene.[3] We see the potter's workshop, where the old Butadis is seated at a potter's wheel. While his hands form useful vessels out of formless clay, his eyes follow his daughter's drawing. In Pliny's story, Butadis thereupon filled the outline on the wall with clay and fired the likeness along with other sundry items. Clay, the "primordial material" in Gottfried Semper's terminology, serves for both common objects and for fine art, with its high aim of producing lasting memory. Thanks to the transfer of the outlined picture on the wall into clay, the image became independent of its location and could be traded and transported, like pots. Following Pliny, Hummel combined high and low – drawing and the production of useful things.

As we know, the combination of the working processes of the fine and applied arts within a confined space was disrupted in the course of time, and has been theorized differently. On the one hand, the workshop as a site for handicraft persisted; on the other hand, the studio for the conception and realization of the fine arts emerged. In studio pictures, artists since the Renaissance have staged themselves mainly as intellectuals – as thinkers, not as craftsmen.[4] Hummel, however, who had been a teacher of perspective and optics at the Berlin Academy, here programmatically links both realms. This relates to his conviction that drawing should form the basis for artists as well as for artisans. Ignoring the Academy rules, Hummel's drawing lessons remained open to craftsmen and architects, as well as to artists.[5]

Both those workshops that were dependent on everyday manual skills and artists' studios were public, in the sense that they were usually open to their particular customers. In the case of a pottery producing everyday items, customers consisted of all sorts of people, while those of the art studio were a few selected patrons and clients who came by appointment. In modern times, access to all sorts of production changed. With the transition from craft to industry, the production process disappeared from public view. Since prefabricated color pigments and oil paint in tubes were available, painting, unlike

sculpture, could be practiced in almost any room, regardless of size. It was thus the painter, working in a hidden studio, who became the incarnation of the lonesome genius, and not the sculptor, who generally needed more space, more physical materials and more specific tools (including a transport system). The Romantic conception of the painter, who sits like Wilhelm Camphausen meditating in front of the *tabula rasa* hoping to find inspiration for his picture,[6] was promoted in a variety of paintings and numerous novels, among them the most tragic, namely Honoré de Balzac's *The Unknown Masterpiece*.[7] Originality was conceived as an individually bred competence.

At the same time, for the "exhibition-artist," as Oskar Bätschmann characterized the modern artist, publicity became crucial.[8] This provoked a stern bashing from rivals. Although anecdotes of competing artists carefully hiding their works from each other stretch back to antiquity, the fear of having one's idea stolen seems to have persisted and even increased during the nineteenth century. Rivalry was a driving force behind the isolation of the studio. In addition, there was the long-standing idea that a picture comes as easily as the shadow of Debutates' lover, and nobody should witness the fact that most of the time, *sprezzatura* was hard work.

From Joseph Farington's seventeen-volume diary of the London art scene during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, we learn that it was extremely rare to see a painter painting – even among friends. When artists showed their pictures, they were almost finished. Increasingly, they were presented in specially furnished private showrooms, often called studios, a term that causes much confusion in the literature, as it does not necessarily indicate the artist's place of work.[9]

I would like to illuminate the clandestine artistic working process with an exception. At the end of the 1830s, William Turner unaccustomedly invited the famous surgeon and zoologist Richard Owen, together with the journalist Theodor Hook, to his studio. The following occurred, according to Owen.[10] The men knocked at the door of Turner's house; the door opened only a crack and a suspicious female voice asked them what they wanted. When they replied that they had an appointment with the painter, the door was shut in their faces. Only after some time were they permitted to enter and were directed to a

pitch-dark room, where they were left for a "prolonged interval" so that their eyes might adapt to the darkness.[11] Turner believed this necessary to condition his visitors to experience the nuances of the colors with which he was working. What they saw when they were finally admitted to Turner's studio upstairs shook their faith in artistic creativity: Turner stood in front of several easels beside a circular swivel table; loading his brush with a particular color, he painted on one canvas and then went on to another, until the brush was empty.[12] He repeated this process with another color and a new brush, and so on. Turner's economical serial production of pictures was completely contrary to contemporary ideas about a creative painter's method – but it does explain the thousands of unfinished pictures in the Turner Bequest.

An opportunity to gain insight into the actual working methods of painters outside of their studios presented itself in London during the first half of the nineteenth century. Some days prior to the opening of the Royal Academy exhibitions, the Royal Academians were permitted to varnish their pictures. Some painters took this as an opportunity to repaint their works, which already hung on the walls and could now be viewed in the context of all the adjoining works of their competitors. Other artists dreaded Turner, who sometimes completely reworked his pictures, thereby outplaying the adjacent exhibits. His most important competitor, the landscape painter John Constable, was one of his many victims. Turner made extensive use of repainting: he used to arrive as soon as the exhibition hall opened early in the morning, and left as the very last, late in the afternoon. He temporarily made the exhibition hall his studio.

But colleagues who hoped to observe Turner's working methods as a key to his extraordinary success were mostly frustrated and gave up waiting. For the artist sometimes stared at a painting for several hours without doing anything; then he went away, came back, and finished the picture within minutes, simply by adding an unexpected color. In one case we have a minute description of how Turner repainted a stormy seascape merely by pressing white paint into the bumpy surface of the canvas, transforming it from a gray, stormy-looking work into something brilliant, white and shiny, as if – a colleague noted – he had turned on the light.

These painting performances during the Varnishing Days in the

Royal Academy took place in the presence of the country's artistic elite. Although there was much gossip on the Varnishing Days and the newspapers tried to obtain information about spectacular alterations to the exhibits, such insights into the painters' working process were the exception, and therefore esteemed as well as feared by colleagues. Even in the age of outdoor painting and photography, it was still exceptional to watch a painter painting. Usually it was only nosy peasants and children, that is, laymen, who accompanied the working process. As Michael Klant has shown, the photographers mainly followed the *topoi* of artists' self-staging that had been coined in the history of studio painting.[13]

This did not change until photography and film were fully able to record the process of painting. Gijon Milis's famous lumigram of 1949 constituted the prelude to this transformation. It shows Picasso painting a centaur in the air with the light of a flashlight. The light drawing, which first becomes visible in the photograph together with the artist, whose image was added by means of a final flash picture, was published in *Life* and immediately became a sensation. Milis's lumigram and Hans Namuth's photographic series of Jackson Pollock dripping color on a canvas on the floor in his Long Island studio (1950)[14] for the first time gave visual access to the working process of contemporary artist-titans in their studios. The influential New York-based critic Harold Rosenberg coined the term "Action Painting" as a result of seeing Namuth's shots.[15] These photographic impressions of the working process thus came to define a whole stylistic trend and shifted the interest from the artwork to the artist and his production methods. Pollock, however, became less an artist-as-maker and more an artist-as-actor, as Barbara Rose put it.[16]

Picasso's and Pollock's studios were transformed into semi-permeable spaces, as the transparency of the photographic medium allowed the beholder to peep into the creative sphere, while the artist was kept enclosed in his surroundings. It was Georges Mathieu who, in 1956, first began to perform his paintings outside the studio for a mass public or in live television broadcasts.[17] From the early 1950s, numerous publications on the "artist in his studio" were published (the most renowned of these being Alexander Liberman's *The Artist in His Studio*, 1960).[18] None of them came close to the action concepts

captured by Milis and Namuth, but rather followed the traditional line of studio painting, providing a portrait of the artist surrounded by his works.

The most radical change undoubtedly occurred in the 1960s, when many artists ceased painting and sought new production methods outside the studio. They transferred their artistic production from the studio to public or semi-public spaces where they worked *in situ*. The concept of the studio as a place shrouded in mystery shifted to the studio as a function for creating new experiences.[19] Daniel Buren radically stated: "Mon atelier ... est le lieu où je me trouve."[20] Perhaps studio art was only an interlude. But what is called *post-studio art* initially kept its genesis as invisible as traditional genres. Significantly, artists gave up specific artistic working methods and thus left the canon of classical artistic tools and materials behind. Since they appropriated methods, instruments and practices from fields beyond the fine arts, the term "deskilling" has become widely used. It is worth taking a closer look at some of the new practices.

Many artists began to use common everyday methods, working, for example, with foodstuffs – like Dieter Roth, who handled them like a cook in his kitchen.[21] Instead of casting bronze sculptures in a workshop at a temperature of about 1200 degrees Celsius, Roth used sugar, fat and chocolate to cast self-portraits and other figures. As a consequence, he could install the "foundry" for his ephemeral sculptures almost anywhere (fig. 2). Nothing more was needed than kitchen camping equipment. Studio, workshop and private gallery conjoined, as in the former *Schimmelmuseum* in Hamburg, were Roth lived and worked,[22] and which became an installation in itself. Land artists such as Walter de Maria and Michael Heizer, on the other hand, needed specific instruments and technical equipment for the realization of their gigantic projects in remote areas such as the deserts of New Mexico and Nevada, which they could not operate without professional support. Deskilling is not the keyword here, but cooperation with specialists during the period of production. For both Heizer's *Double Negative* (1969) and De Maria's *Lightning Field* (1977), airplanes were necessary in the first instance, in order to search for suitable locations over vast stretches of land. For the realization of

FIG. 2 Dieter Roth, Kitchen from the installation *Selbstturm, Löwenturm*, situation 1999, Basel, Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Museum für Gegenwartskunst

Heizer's 450–meter long, 9–meter wide, and 15–meter deep excavation on Mormon Mesa, 240,000 tons of sandstone had to be displaced. Heizer engaged the chief blaster of the neighboring borax mines, and hired a number of workers, bulldozers, caterpillar trucks, vans and excavators. Although *Double Negative* is situated in an unrestricted area, only five miles from Overton, Nevada, the construction of the gigantic work remained unnoticed in the art world for 22 years, until the Los Angeles County Museum published an exhibition catalogue in 1991.[23] While the process-related decomposition of the work with its entropic potentials was stressed from the beginning, the genesis of the gigantic negative forms, rivaling the natural incisions formed over millions of years, was completely hidden from view.

In the case of De Maria's *Lightning Field* in the desert of New Mexico, to which the visitor is exposed for 20 hours, everything that could indicate a working process or any everyday commodity is excluded from the field of vision. Four hundred polished stainless steel poles seem to grow out of the ground, appearing to be not the result of human labor in the wilderness but rather of an overwhelming experience of almost supernatural precision. No information about the excavation of the waste land, the casting and lowering of the 400 concrete

blocks for the steel poles, the planning or the calculations that engineering students from the University of Dallas, Texas, carried out has been published to date. This indicates that the processuality to which these works are devoted applies exclusively to the alteration of the work after its completion. The making itself, carried out with external know-how, and the odium of labor bound to it remain omitted, as if the ideal of *sprezzatura* were still valid. The *Lightning Field* is to keep its mystery as an epiphany, not as the result of its making.

At the same time, artists like Robert Smithson or Richard Serra, who felt freed of the studio's burden and "the snares of craft,"[24] became interested in handling the specific materials and the fabrication processes of their works.[25] At first, Serra himself performed his site-specific splashings of liquid lead inside exhibition spaces. Photographs of the early splashings, dating from the late 1960s and early 1970s, show Serra in full action, wearing a respirator. Namuth's photographs of Pollock as an action painter come to mind, but Serra acted not in a distant studio, but in Leo Castelli's Warehouse, a famous New York exhibition space. When Serra, at the request of the Hamburger Kunsthalle in 1996, recreated a splashing for the Galerie der Gegenwart, a local art historian and photographer accompanied the five-day working process with Serra and six professional assistants.[26] While technicians oversaw the oven and the whole melting process of the extremely noxious metal, the actual splashing was performed by Serra and one of his personal assistants. For many years, the photographic documentation of the event accompanied the exhibit of Serra's work. It was of vital interest for visitors because the material, the instruments and the labor all connected the artwork with experiences of the old mechanical industries – an interest that continues to grow as the manufacturing activities of former industrial nations disappear.

The spaces of highly specialized industries that have migrated elsewhere survive as artists' workshops and, at the same time, as museums of industry and craft. Generally speaking, the interest in making has intensified enormously in recent decades, due to some extent to diversified production methods in the fine arts that preserve the knowledge of labor. This complements the growing interest in materials, objects and instruments, visible not only in art history but in cul-

tural studies in general. Exhibition catalogues, books, photographs and films have been published, demonstrating the concern with traditional as well as new forms of production. In the case of Antony Gormley, the artist himself published extensive photographic documentation on the fabrication of *Field (American)* (1993), an installation of 40,000 clay figures, fabricated by around 100 brick workers in Mexico.[27] For three weeks, men, women and children aged between six and sixty were Gormley's intelligent, self-acting instruments in their brick manufactory (fig. 3). Manual labor was outsourced so that the Mexican workers became the hands of the artist, their simple factory his studio.[28] In the age of the mouse-click and the disappearance of manual labor and manual skills in Western industrial societies, Gormley's method seems an exoticism. But the exoticism also seems to indicate a deficiency, potentials that our hands might have already lost, as Richard Sennett observed.[29]

The activities of artists working with physical stuff – as is the case for Richard Serra or Antony Gormley – can be visually reconstructed. The cooperation of studio, workshop and industry make production processes interesting for a public that is no longer subjected to such processes in their daily lives. In works of the new digital media, pro-

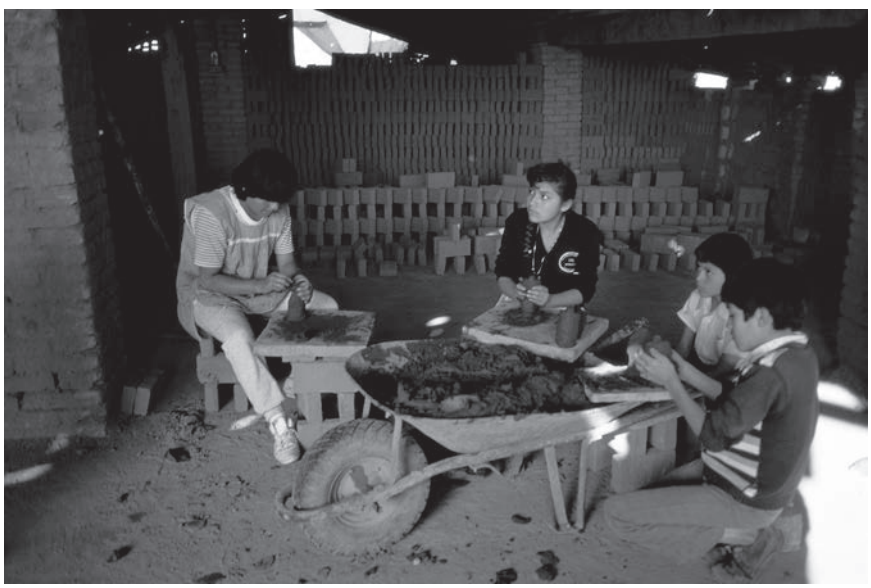

FIG. 3 Antony Gormley, Making of *Field (American)*, 1993, Mexico 1990. © the artist

duction is to a large extent hidden in the programs. Since the hardware cannot show the capacities of the software, the beholder or user of an interactive artwork does not know what to expect; this is even true for a participant in the expanding field of biofeedback.

In an installation such as Ulrike Gabriel's interactive environment *Breath*, one of the trendsetters in biofeedback art dating from the early 1990s, the sensor system is configured to register the participant's breathing; that is, the involuntary activity of the body. Adapting the principle of the eye-tracker, a technique that was originally developed in the context of perception analysis for labor physiology, Gabriel combined it with medical data on the expansion of the lungs while breathing, and with the help of a computer technician translated the movement into an abstract visual pattern. The computer has become the studio where the know-how of different workshops and research fields are integrated. The studio and the workshop are – similar to Hummel's picture – once again combined. But they have both been vitally transformed, as the physical experience of the workshop seems to have been lost.

In his masterpiece of decadent literature, *A rebours*, published in 1884, Joris-Karl Huysmans praised the "horticulturalist" as the real artist of his time: the author considered him able to manipulate the genetic code of plants and effortlessly create previously inconceivable and exciting species. His studio was the greenhouse. Today it seems to be the composer of digital programs who is the creator of new worlds. One would hope that he has the same artistic competence as Huysmans' horticulturist.

NOTES

The author would like to thank Philipp Lange for his work on the translation.

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Opie's 'Maid of Corinth' and the Origins of Art," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37/4 (2004) 629–651.

3 Monika Wagner, "Ein materialistischer Butades. Berliner Plädoyer für Kunst und Gewerbe," *Kritische Berichte* 3 (2011) 29–39.

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5 Marsha Morton, *Johann Erdmann Hummel: A Painter of Biedermeier Berlin* (Diss. New York University 1986, Ann Arbor: UMI 1995), 340.

6 Monika Wagner, "Die *tabula rasa* als Denk-Bild. Zur Vorgeschichte bildloser Bilder," in: Barbara Naumann and Edgar Pankow (eds.) *Bilder – Denken. Bildlichkeit und Argumentation* (Paderborn: Fink Verlag 2004), 67–86.

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9 Anthony Hughes, "The Cave and the Stithy: Artist's Studios and Intellectual Property in Early Mondern Europa," *The Oxford Art Journal* 13/1 (1990) 34–35. Michael Cole and Mary Pardo show the distinction between *studio* and *bottega* in Italian art of the Renaissance; see Michael Cole and Mary Pardo, *Inventions of the Studio. Renaissance to Romanticism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 1–35.

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14 Caroline A. Jones, *Machine in the Studio. Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

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18 Alexander Liberman, *The Artist in His Studio* (New York: Viking Press, 1960).

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20 Daniel Buren, "Fonction de l'atelier," *Studio International* 181 (1971) 181–185. See also Wouter Davidts and Kim Paice, *The Fall of the Studio* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2009).

21 Monika Wagner, "Vom Umschmelzen. Plastische Materialien in Kunst und Küche," in: Beate Söntgen and Theodora Vischer (eds.), *Über Dieter Roth* (Basel: Laurenz Stiftung, 2004), 121–135.

22 Dirk Dobke, *Melancholischer Nippes. Dieter Roths frühe Objekte und Materialbilder 1960–75* (Diss. University of Hamburg, 1997).
23 Richard Koshalek et al., *Michael Heizer: Double Negative, Sculpture in the Land*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles, The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles/New York: Rizzoli Publications, 1991).
24 Robert Smithson, "The Dislocation of Craft – and Fall of the Studio," in: *Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: The University of California Press, 1984), 107.
25 Dietmar Rübel, "Fabriken als Erkenntnisorte. Richard Serra und der Gang in die Produktion," in: Diers and Wagner 2010, 111–136.
26 Dietmar Rübel and Olaf Pascheit, *Richard Serra in der Hamburger Kunsthalle* (Hamburg: Christians Verlag, 2003).
27 Antony Gormley, "Making *Field*," in: Antony Gormley, *Field* (Stuttgart: Oktogon Verlag, 1993), 19.
28 Monika Wagner, "Geliehene Hände. Antony Gormleys *Field*," in: Matthias Krüger and Philippe Cordez (eds.), *Werkzeuge und Instrumente* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012).
29 Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2008).

CHAPTER 2

Jean-Léon Gérôme, His Badger and His Studio

MATTHIAS KRÜGER

BLAIREAU, *BLAIREUTÉ*, *BLAIREAUTAGE* AND *BLAIREAUTEUR*

Jean-Léon Gérôme's painting *Heads of the Rebel Beys at the Mosque El Assaneyn* (fig. 1), shown at the Salon of 1866, prompted the art critic Edmond About to exclaim in awe:

> It is the Orient captured in one of its less endearing aspects. Yet the horror of the subject contrasts in the most unique manner with M. Gérôme's polished and licked execution. The antithesis is as captivating as the contrast of vocals and accompaniment in Mozart's famous serenade.[1]

The quotation contains a pun on the word *exécution*. The painting shows the heads of executed rebels, exhibited as a deterring example at the door of a mosque. For About, the brutality of these killings contrasted most effectively with the manner in which the artist had executed his painting, described as *polie et blaireautée*, here translated as "polished and licked." Both adjectives suggest an immaculately smooth pictorial surface. The latter, *blaireauté,* is a technical term referring to the brush employed by the artist to achieve a perfect smoothness of the picture plane, the *blaireau* (English: badger-brush or blender) – a special tool made out of the long, supple hair of the badger. Resembling a powder puff, such a brush was employed dry, that is, with neither pigment nor binder, and used to efface all traces of brushwork by circling it across the paint surface. The technical vo-

FIG. 1 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Heads of the Rebel Beys at the Mosque El Assaneyn*, 1866, Doha, Orientalist Museum, inv. OM.184

cabulary of the time coined a verb to describe the action of handling this brush: *blairotter*. The action itself was called *blaireautage*.[2]

Blaireautage resulted in *fini* or "finish" – another technical term, used to describe the perfect smoothness of the picture plane. For many critics, *fini* was the hallmark of academic painting.[3] Most commentators strongly disapproved of the use of the badger. Artists who employed it (or were believed to have made use of it) were taunting-

ly given the moniker *blaireauteurs*. It was an allegation often made against Gérôme, whom many believed to foster an excessive love for this utensil. Gérôme's strong affection for the badger brush was notorious: the entry on the word *blairotter* in the Larousse of 1866 quotes the dictum of the critique Paul de Saint Victor: "Gérôme blairotte trop ses tableaux."[4]

Indeed, painting manuals of the nineteenth century warn not to overdo *blaireautage*, as an excessive use of the badger deprives the painting of vigor and energy.[5] Rather than achieving *fini,* the painter would end up with *léché* – a surface that looked as if it had been the result of incessant licking. *Léché* was regarded as a perversion of *fini* and the term was essentially synonymous with *blaireauté*.[6] According to one contemporary dictionary, Adeline's *Lexique des termes d'art* of 1883, the *tableau blaireauté* "seduced the vulgar through its showy finish."[7] Here the implication is that the real connoisseur would despise its meretricious gloss as a wholly superficial quality.[8]

Given Gérômes reputation as a *blaireauteur*, it comes as something of a surprise that neither the catalogue of the huge Gérôme exhibition staged in Paris in 2011 nor other recent publications on the artist pay any attention to the badger brush at all.[9] As technical examinations in this direction have not been carried out, it is difficult to say whether and how much Gérôme really relied on the badger brush when creating his paintings. Even William Bouguereau, for many the *blaireauteur* par excellence, denied having employed a badger brush at all. He claimed to have achieved the *fini* of his paintings with a razor instead.[10]

Let us return to the quotation of the introduction. About's comment on Gérôme's painting *Heads of the Rebel Beys at the Mosque El Assaneyn* is remarkable for two reasons. First, it is the only positive use of the word *blaireauté* I have discovered in contemporary art criticism. In all other instances of its use, the term has derogatory overtones. While About compares Gérôme's *blaireautage* to the accompaniment in Mozart's *Enführung aus dem Serail*, for most others the badger was a tool to which only second-rate artists resorted or, as one critic put it in 1858: "The badger is to the incompetent painter what the pedal is to an impotent pianist" – a means to hide his deficiency.[11]

Second, for About, the *fini* was not something invisible. He did not look *through* the picture surface as through a windowpane, but rather

appreciated its polish and finish for its own sake. For him, the function of *fini* in Gérômes painting was not to render the surface of the picture transparent, but rather to create a contrast with the cruelty of the subject.

About's attitude did not differ from that of the opponents of academic *fini* in this respect. Indeed, few critics really cared about academic theory. Rather than describing the *fini* of academic paintings as an immaterial screen, critics compared it to materials with a smooth surface. Most prevalent were comparisons with porcelain and silk, although more inventive critics gave full reign to their imagination. Thus, in 1878, Emile Zola – to give but one example – compared the shiny perfection of Gérôme's finish with both lacquered carriage doors and painting with enamels on porcelain.[12]

HIDING MAKING

Given its critical reception, one might wonder why academic painters insisted on *fini*. Why was their aim the hiding of making? The most obvious answer to this question would be the one offered by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, for many contemporaries the embodiment of the Academy. It is recorded in Henri Delaborde's monograph on the artist:

> What one calls "touch" [or brushmark] is an abuse of execution. It is but a quality of spurious talents and spurious artists, who have distanced themselves from the imitation of nature in order to show their hand [...]. Instead of showing the represented object it shows the painting technique, instead of the thought it exhibits the hand.[13]

This was academic doctrine in its purest form. The purpose of *fini* consisted in concealing the painter's craft.

Even conservative critics were reluctant to consider Gérôme as a representative of the Neo-classical tradition. If anything, the artist was chided on account of having a penchant for representing frivolous anecdotes, such as is seen in his *Caesar and Cleopatra* (fig. 2), a

painting that hung next to *Heads of the Rebel Beys at the Mosque El Assaneyn* at the Salon of 1866 and which plays a similarly intricate game of showing and hiding.[14] The painting shows Cleopatra, who – having been wrapped in a carpet and smuggled into the chamber of the

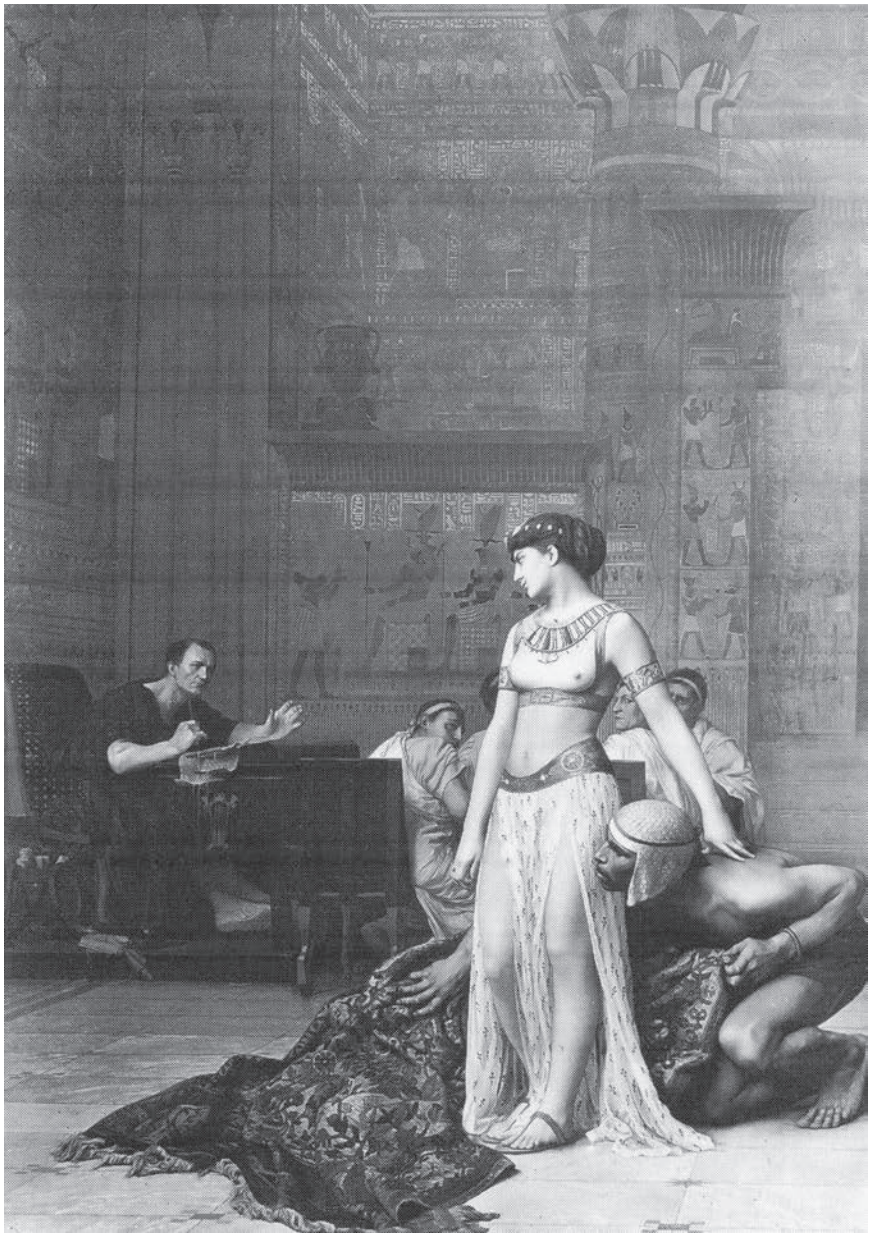

FIG. 2 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Cleopatra and Caesar*, 1866, Private collection

Alexandrian palace hosting Julius Caesar – is now unveiled to him. The blatantly voyeuristic nature of the scene, however, clearly did not prevent the critic Maxime Du Camp from reading the painting's *fini* as an expression of Gérôme's Neo-classicist ideology:

> It is the force of the conception and not the skill of the hand that makes true artists [...]. Unfortunately the general tendency today is towards manual know-how and that is perhaps the reason why the Cleopatra of Gérôme does not attain the success she would merit. Because one does not find those certain impastos that enthuse the pretentious connoisseur in this charming painting, and because it does not offer the violent hues which now seem to be the *ne plus ultra* of art it is claimed that Gérôme is on the decline and that his canvases are not worth as much as before.[15]

The *fini* not only hid making, it could also be interpreted as a conceptual achievement in its own right. Consider for instance the American painter Cady Eaton, who was allowed to observe Gérôme at work. According to Eaton, Gérôme "knew the exact amount of every pigment necessary for the production of any required color, tone, shadow. When the work was finished, his palette was clean."[16]

In the same vein, one might interpret the absence of any impasto as evidence of the strength of the artistic conception. There was not one grain of pigment too much on either palette or painting! In the end, the finished picture corresponds exactly to the image the artist had envisioned in his mind. Hence, the execution followed the conception entirely. The picture of Gérôme painted in words by Eaton is one of an artist who controlled his working process with almost mathematical precision.

Though the *fini* of his paintings refused to acknowledge the fact that the colors he used – to paraphrase Clement Greenberg[17] – "came from tubes or pots," Gérôme actually made pigment the subject matter of one of his paintings. In *The Color Grinder* of 1890–91 (fig. 3), painting subject and paint surface can be interpreted as contrasting with one another. Set in Cairo, the painting shows color grinders in their workshop, thus conjuring up the notion of the Orient as "an ex-

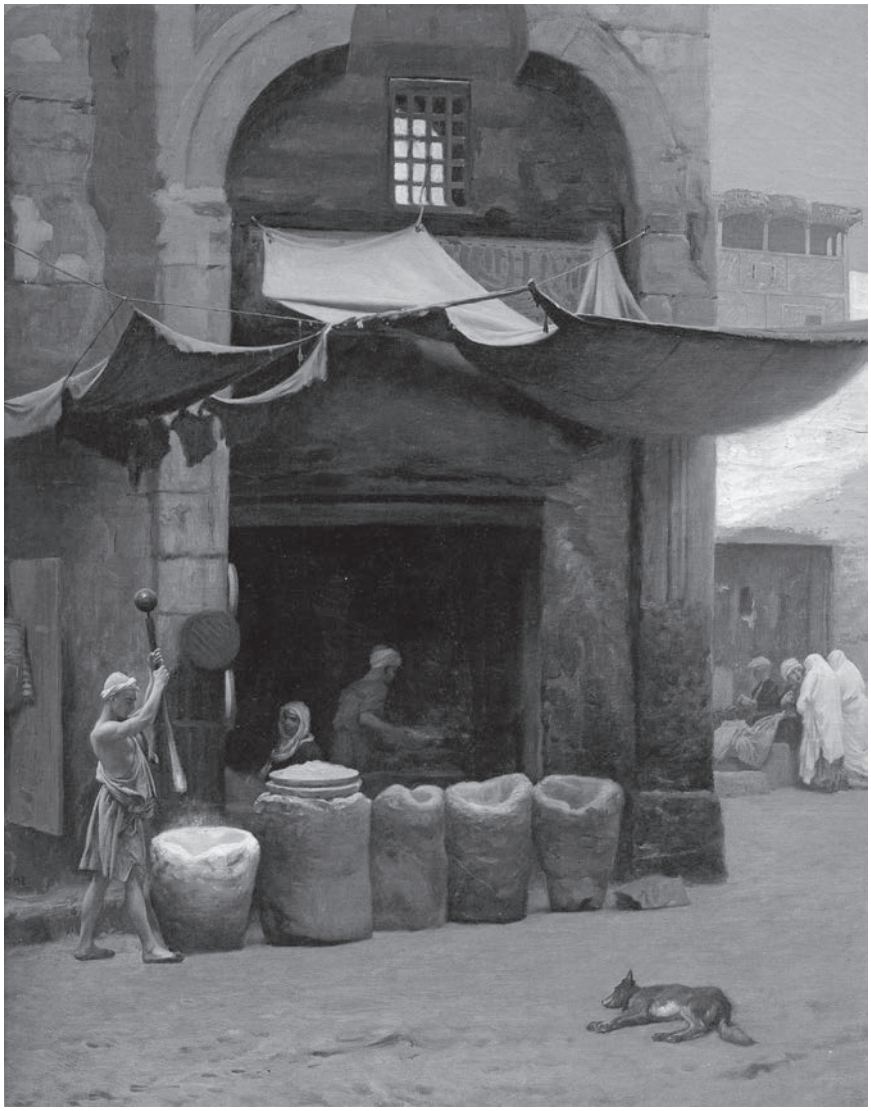

FIG. 3 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The Color Grinder*, 1890–91, Private collection, on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. L-R-2.1995

citing and dangerous repository of colored materials and attitudes."[18] The gaudy colors of the pigments they are producing, however, contrast with the extreme polish of the picture surface: the exotic sensuality of the Orient is tamed and domesticated by the unyielding *blaireau* of the Parisian artist.

The critical discourse on the *fini* was not, however, dominated by idealistic notions such as those put forward by Maxime du Camp. The prevailing understanding was somewhat different and is exemplified by the art criticism of Théophile Gautier, the famous poet, travel writer and journalist, who – in the introduction to his review of the Salon of 1857 – noted a general tendency towards subdued colors and smooth execution:

> The brushwork has disappeared to make room for a more tranquil, unified and subdued execution. We believe to detect here an advice of photography. The wild, turbulent, inspired and sketchy manner, formerly so highly appreciated, has but few supporters today – and they belong to an older generation. The brush and the pencil hide themselves so as to facilitate the emergence of the object.[19]

This passage marks a radical shift in the interpretation of *fini*, showing that it was no longer regarded as an emblem of Neo-classicism, but as an emulation of the transparency of the photographic image. Thus a work of art was not interpreted as being the expression of an idea that the artist had formed in his mind, but rather as a challenge to photography when it came to representing detail with clarity.

For Gautier, no one represented this tendency better than Jean-Léon Gérôme, whose invisible brushstroke and meticulous rendering of detail led many a critic to accredit a high degree of objectivity to his paintings – an asset that served Gérôme particularly well in his Oriental paintings and earned him the reputation of a painter ethnographer.[20]

Although of great importance to Jean-Léon Gérôme's work and its critical reception, the scope of this essay does not allow a comprehensive investigation of the rivalry then emerging between painting and photography and, indeed, this subject has drawn a huge amount of scholarly attention in recent years.[21] There was, however, a further advantage of the *blaireauté* that has escaped attention until now. *Blaireautage* might be seen as a preliminary stage in the reproduction

of a painting. In an article about the latest developments in photography published in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* of 1859, Philippe Burty observed that one of the greatest problems faced by the photographer was that of light catching bumps on the paint surface – such as brushmarks or impastos – which frequently appeared as white spots in the reproduction.[22] In 1861, however, Burty was able to announce a significant step forwards achieved by the photographer Robert Jefferson Bingham:

> Bingham has, through long practice, and with the help of the facilities that allow him to light the paintings of Meissonier, Gérôme and others brought into his studio as he pleases, managed to overcome, if not the insurmountable obstacles that certain tones present, at least the problems caused by the roughness of the paint-media and the furrows of the brush.[23]

It is certainly no coincidence that Burty names two artists who were then famous for their neat application of paint. Gérôme's *blareauté* especially lent itself brilliantly to photographic reproduction, since through *blaireautage* he had removed all unevenness from the surface. One might even venture the thesis that Gérôme, whose paintings were mass reproduced by the art dealer Goupil, saw *blaireautage* primarily as enhancing the reproducibility of his images.[24]

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE STUDIO

Let us return now from the photographic studio to the painter's workshop. While the badger brush belonged to the standard equipment in a painter's *atelier*, it was often rejected by landscape painters. As *blaireautage* was a time-consuming operation and required a lot of patience, the badger brush was hardly a suitable tool when producing paintings *en plein air*. Furthermore, although *blaireautage* was seen as an obligatory stage in painting figures, most painting manuals of the period admitted that there was little use for the badger brush in landscape paintings. Karl Robert's attitude, expressed in his *Traité pratique de la peinture à l'huile* from 1878, serves as a typical example:

> I cannot let the use of the badger brush, which has its benefits, but also inconveniences, go unmentioned. *Blaireautage* renders the tone faint and is detrimental to the solidity and the relief of a landscape [...].[25]

If used at all in landscape paintings, the badger brush was reserved for special tasks such as the creation of a cloudless sky or the calm surface of a pond.[26] The most important reason for banning the badger brush from the landscape artist's toolbox, however, had to do with the new evaluation of the brushstroke as a mark of originality,[27] a tendency that was to climax with the Impressionists, who – as is well known – broke with a time-honored convention when they showed sketches at their first public exhibition in the studio of the photographer Nadar on Boulevard des Capucines.

A proper academic artist presented only finished works to the public, keeping preliminary drawings and oil sketches in his studio. This principle corresponded with a more general social code of behavior that stipulated more formal conduct within the public sphere, as opposed to a more relaxed way of behaving in the privacy of one's home. This analogy is suggestively deployed in a description of Gérôme's outer appearance given by Jules Claretie in his *Peintres et sculpteurs contemporains* of 1873:

> When going out, Gérôme walks upright, keeps himself stiff. He is clean, he is smooth, he is as irreproachable as one of his paintings. [...] He is straight-faced, his suit is conventionally buttoned, the knot of his tie is geometrically tied, and his slightly rough moustache never deviates from perfect regularity. [...] everything is accomplished and licked, not a grain of dust on the suit of the author, not a daub on the canvas [...].[28]

Claretie here compares the *fini* of Gérôme's paintings to the finish of his public appearance. Both paintings and public persona obey the strict rules of the *comme-il-faut*. Though nothing is said about his private conduct, the suggestion is that Gérôme was more relaxed at home. At the same time, however, this mention of Gérôme's strict

adherence to the rules of decorum may imply a critique of the artist, whose true personality is hidden both in public and in the rigid *fini* of his paintings.[29]

WOMEN'S WORK

Blaireautage can thus be compared to a person's toilette.[30] Indeed, the name, the form and the function of the badger brush lend themselves easily to such comparisons. The French *blaireau* can refer both to the brush used by the academic painter to achieve *fini* and to a shaving brush. Furthermore, its form resembles both a shaving brush and a powder puff. And even the function had a lot in common with cosmetics: by eliminating all the marks of the brush, the roughness and furrows, *blaireautage* made the painting presentable and thus served a similar purpose to the toilette. Due to its close affinity to the application of cosmetics, *blaireautage* was frequently belittled as an operation more suitable for a woman than for a male painter – even a pupil of Gérôme's, Thomas Eakins, regarded the finish as "ladies' work."

> Gérôme tells us every day that finish is nothing that head work is all & that if we stopped to finish our studies we could not learn to be painters in a hundred life times & he calls finish needle works & embroidery & ladies' work to deride us. His own studies are rough quick things mere notes & daubs, but his pictures are finished as far as any man's [...].[31]

Gérôme's dictum, as reported by Eakins, shows the contempt for manual labor typical among academic painters of the time. Although considered necessary in a completed painting, *fini* was also regarded as a rather secondary quality – just as the finish of a person's outer appearance was a necessary but also secondary quality in a perfect gentleman. However important finish was in regard to male conduct, its lack was much less tolerated when it came to a woman's behavior.[32]

In 1877, rumor had it that the painter Jean-Léon Gérôme was producing a sculpture. "Gérôme quitte le blaireau pour l'ébouchoir," wrote Marc de Montifaud in *L'Artiste*: "Gérôme abandons the badger brush for the chisel."[33] Gérôme was working on a statuary group of gladiators, taken over from one of his most famous paintings, the *Pollice verso* of 1872. The amazement Gérôme's first sculpture provoked when first shown at the Universal Exhibition of 1878 was enormous. Jules Claretie recalls this event in his biography on the artist:

> Yes, the same hand that handled the badger brush with such delicacy, set out, through great masses, to petrify the clay, and next to his numerous and most interesting works, all cherished and accomplished, in that smooth execution that sometimes makes you think of painting on porcelain, but which is masterly and always sovereign, Gérôme felt obliged to offer the public an admirable statuary group and this fight of the gladiators that Gérôme presented as a sculptor won admiration due to its strong and manly execution.[34]

Claretie adopts the traditional gendering of sculpture and painting, which had its roots in the *paragone* between *scultura* and *pittura* in Renaissance art theory. Since executing a sculpture required more strength, sculpture was usually considered the more masculine art. In the passage quoted above, this contrast is further enforced by the reference to the badger brush, a tool equated with delicacy that had been associated with women's work.

The gendered connotations of the badger brush allow a new interpretation of Gérôme's fascination with the mythological figure of Omphale, the subject of a statue exhibited by the artist at the Salon of 1887. The statue, though lost today, is documented in a series of photographs by Louis Bonnard, which show the artist, his model Emma, and the maquette of the statue in his studio, as well as a painting by Gérôme that was almost certainly inspired by these photographs, his *End of the Seance* (fig. 4). These documents suggest that the figure of Omphale served the artist's self-reflexive ends.[35] Indeed, one might

suggest that the statue functioned as a symbol for Gérôme, the painter who had now morphed into a sculptor.

The myth of Hercules and Omphale is a story about the inversion of gender: Omphale, having made Hercules her slave, seizes his club and his lion skin and forces him to spin while clad in women's clothes.

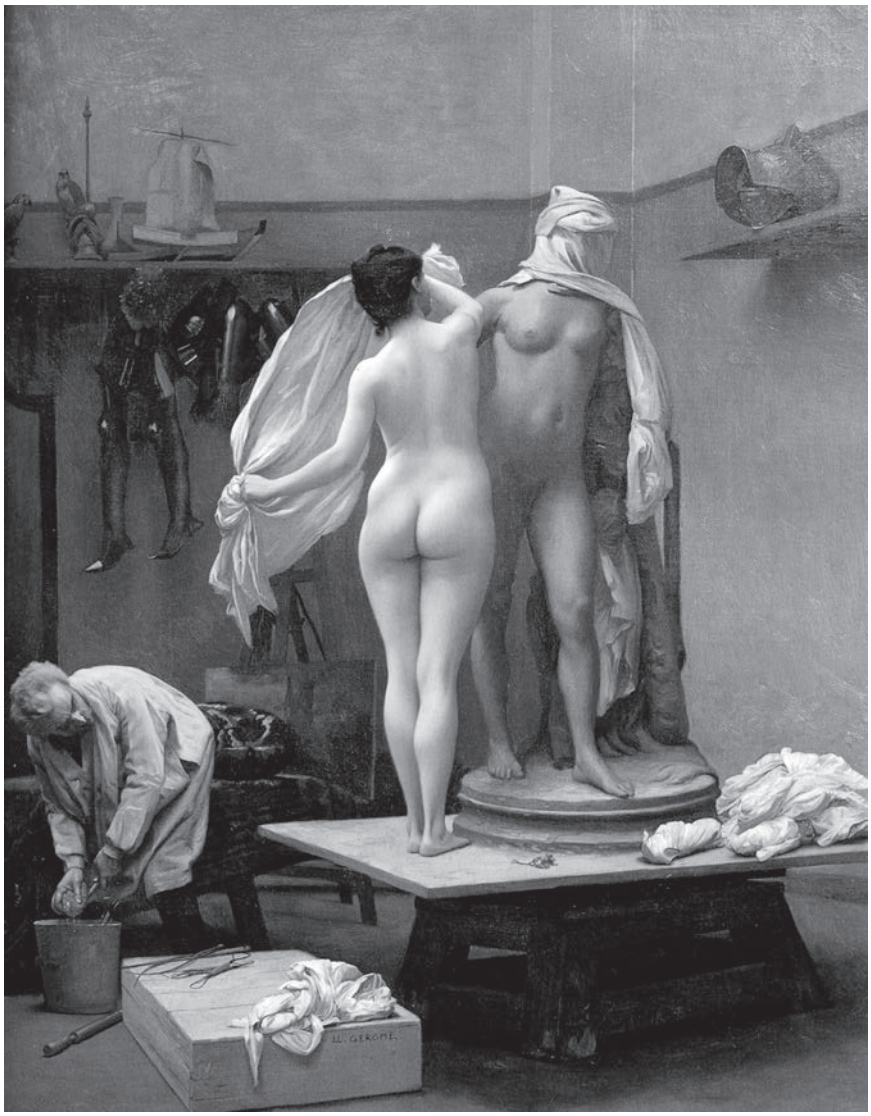

FIG. 4 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The End of the Seance*, 1886, Santa Ana, Frankel Family Trust

Gérôme accentuates the role reversal by representing Omphale in the pose of the *Hercules Farnese*, probably the most famous sculptural rendering of the ancient Greek hero.

The story of Hercules and Omphale was one often depicted in nineteenth-century Salon paintings, most notably by Gustave Boulanger, an artist who was not only Gérôme's fellow student in the atelier of Paul Delaroche, but who was frequently said to be his kindred spirit. Boulanger's version of the Hercules and Omphale theme, shown at the Salon of 1861, was heaped with critical scorn on account of its excessive *blaireauté*. Maxime du Camp joked that he would not have been surprised to discover that the two figures had been copied in the workshop of a sculptor rather than painted after live models, for the Omphale in the painting appeared to have been made out of plaster and the Hercules out of clay.[36] And Léon Lagrange, writing for the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, condemned the work as

> [...] a smooth painting, lacking in force, where the badger brush, this awful leveller, has glossed both flesh and marble in the same monotonous manner. Which form, however strong, could resist this enervating execution? Thus, Hercules, in spite of the exaggeration of his muscles, seems empty and inflated.[37]

Interestingly, Léon Lagrange does not consider the possibility that the artist might have been aiming for the very effect he criticized. Might it not be possible to interpret the obvious tension between the *blaireauté* and Hercules's enormous muscles in the same way as Edmond About had interpreted the contrast between *blaireauté* and horror in Gérôme's *Heads of the Rebel Beys*? Moreover, would not such an interpretation actually be in line with the subject of Hercules and Omphale? As such, the contrast between the athletic body of Hercules and the softening effect of the badger brush could be read as a means to represent the effeminate regression of masculine virility.[38]

The case of Charles Gleyre shows that for nineteenth-century artists, *fini* was indeed such a means to this end. According to his early biographer, Charles Clément, Gleyre had responded to the criticism

of his version of *Hercules and Omphale*, shown at the Salon of 1863, with the following rebuttal: "Have you not, then, understood my painting? What I intended to represent is the *aplatissement*, the 'flattening' of the man by the woman."[39]

Given the obvious self-reflexivity of Gérôme's statue of Omphale, one might ask whether the artist saw a parallel between his becoming a sculptor and Omphale assuming the role of Hercules, between his exchanging the badger brush for the chisel and her trading the distaff for the club. It is worth recalling at this final juncture that Gérôme himself compared *fini* to "needle works & embroidery & ladies' work."[40] Thus, Gérôme's essays into sculpture can be interpreted as an attempt to dissociate himself from the image of a *blaireauteur*. The art critical discourse on Gérôme's badger shows that the importance of tools was not restricted to the working practice of an artist inside his studio. Tools could also play a vital and often strategic role in defining the artist's public persona.[41]

NOTES

I am grateful to Rachel King and Michael Seydel for their excellent proof-reading of the text.

1 Edmond About, *Salon de 1866* (Paris: Hachette, 1867), 205: "C'est l'Orient pris sur le vif dans un de ses aspects les moins aimables; mais l'horreur même du sujet contraste le plus singulièrement du monde avec l'exécution polie et blaireautée de M. Gérôme. L'antithèse est autrement saisissante que celle de l'accompagnement et du chant dans la fameuse sérénade de Mozart."

2 On the *blaireau*, see Anthea Callen, *The Art of Impressionism: Painting Technique and the Making of Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 175–176. See also Matthias Krüger, *Relief der Farbe. Pastose Malerei in der französischen Kunstkritik 1860–1890* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2007).

3 On *fini,* see Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, "The Ideology of the Licked Surface," in: Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner (eds.), *Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth Century Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984). Curiously Rosen and Zerner pay no attention to the technical procedure required to achieve *fini*. On *fini*-paintings as opposed to impasto-paintings, see also Krüger 2007.

4 Pierre Larousse, *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Vve P. Larousse, 1866–76), 786.

5 Jacques-Nicolas Paillot de Montabert, *Traité complet de la peinture* (Paris: Bossange père, 1829), 198–200.

6 On the *léché* as a perversion of the *fini,* see Krüger 2007, 39, 300, note 53.

7 Jules Adeline, "Blaireauter," *Lexique des termes d'art* 51 (Paris: Quantin, 1884), 176. Translation from Callen 2000.

8 The contempt art critics of the nineteenth century expressed for *blaireautage* contrasts significantly with the esteem that was paid to the art of *verdrijven* in earlier art theory. See Ann-Sophie Lehmann, "Fleshing out the Body: The 'Colors of the Naked' in Workshop Practice and Art Theory 1400–1600," *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 58 (2008) 87–109: 94–96.

9 See Laurence De Cars (ed.), *The Spectacular Art of Jean-Leon Gérôme (1824–1904)* (Milan: Skira, 2000); Scott Allan and Mary Morton (eds.), *Reconsidering Gérôme* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010).

10 On this allegation, see Marc Steven Walker, "Bouguereau at Work," in: Louise D'Argencourt (ed.), *William Bouguereau 1825–1905*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée du Petit Palais, 1984), 78.

11 Eugène-Louis-Ernest de Buchère de Lépinois, *L'art dans la rue et l'art au Salon* (Paris: Dentu, 1859), 48–49: "Le blaireau est pour le peintres incomplètes ce que la pédale est pour les pianistes impuissants: un moyen de dissimuler la grossièreté de la trame, les fauses notes du modelé, la pauvreté de l'harmonie." A more favorable comparison between *blaireautage* and playing the piano can be found in Edmond Duranty, "Atélier," in: *Les pays des arts* (Paris: Charpentier, 1881) 189. Here, the painter Marcillon is described as "effleurant sa toile d'une touche délicate, et déposant son pinceau pour la lisser avec un petit blaireau qu'il essuyait à tout moment au coin de sa veste, le tout avec des mouvement précieux comme ceux d'une pianiste."

12 Emile Zola, "Ecole française de peinture à l'exposition de 1878," in: F.W.J. Hemmings and R.J. Niess (eds.), *Salons* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1959), 206.

13 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres quoted in Henri Delaborde, *Ingres, sa vie, ses travaux, sa doctrine* (Paris: Plon, 1870), 150: "Ce qu'on appelle 'la touche' est un abus d'exécution. Elle n'est la qualité des faux talents, des faux artistes, qui s'éloignent de l'imitation de la nature pour montrer simplement leur adresse [...]. Au lieu de l'objet représenté, elle fait voir le procédé; au lieu de la pensée elle dénonce la main."

14 On these two paintings in the Salon of 1866, see Jane Mayo Roos, *Early Impressionism and the French State (1866–1874)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 28–29.

15 Maxime Du Camp, "Le Salon de 1866," *Revue des deux mondes* 63 (1866) 701: "C'est la force de la conception et non point l'adresse de la main qui fait les vrais artistes [...]. Malheureusement, la tendance générale aujourd'hui est vers habilité matérielle, et c'est peut-être à cause de cela que la Cléopâtre de M. Gérôme n'obtient pas tout le succès qu'elle mérite. Comme dans ce gracieux tableau on ne trouve pas certains empâtemens qui font pâmer les faux connaisseurs, comme il n'offre aucun de ces tons violens qui semblent maintenant le nec plus ultra de l'art, on prétend que M. Gérôme baisse et que

sa toile ne vaut pas celles qu'il nous a montrées jadis."

16 Daniel Cady Eaton, *A Handbook of Modern French Painting* (New York: Dodd, Mead and company, 1909), 190.

17 Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in: John O'Brian (ed.), *The Collected Essays and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 86. According to Greenberg, the historical value of the Impressionists was in their abjuration of underpainting and glazes in order "to leave the eye under no doubt as to the fact that the colors they used were made of paint that came of tubes or pots," and thus openly acknowledge the properties of the medium of painting.

18 John Gage, *Color and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 10.

19 Théophile Gautier: "Salon de 1857," *L'Artiste* 1 (1857) 191: "La touche aussi a disparu pour faire place à une exécution plus tranquille, plus unie et plus soutenue. Nous avons cru connaître là un conseil de la photographie. Cette manière heurtée, turbulente, spirituelle, touchée en esquisse, qu'on appréciait beaucoup autrefois, n'a plus que de rares sectateurs, et encore appartiennent-ils à une génération plus ancienne. La brosse et le pinceau se dissimulent tant qu'ils peuvent pour mieux laisser paraître l'objet."

20 Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in: *The Politics of Vision. Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1989), 33–59.

21 On this issue, see Hélène Lafont-Couturier (ed.), *Gérôme et Goupil. Art et Entreprise* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2000); and Pierre-Lin Renié, "Gérôme: Working in the Era of Industrial Reproduction," in: De Cars 2000, 173–178.

22 Philippe Burty, "Exposition de la Société française de photographie," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 2 (1859) 211.

23 Philippe Burty, "La photographie en 1861," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 10 (1861) 245: "M. Bingham, par une longue pratique, par les facilités qu'il a d'éclairer à sa guies les tableaux des MM. Meissonier, Gérôme, etc., transposés dans son atelier, est arrivé à vaincre, sinon les obstacles insurmontables qu'offrent certains tons, au moins les rugosités de la pâte ou les sillons de la brosse."

24 See Krüger 2007, 238–241. See also Wolfgang Ullrich, *Raffinierte Kunst: Übung vor Reproduktionen* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2009) 47–48.

25 Karl Robert, *Traité pratique de la peinture à l'huile: Paysage* (Paris: Georges Meusnier, 1878), 44–45: "Je ne puis passer sous silence l'emploi du blaireau, qui a son utilité, mais qui présente aussi ses inconvénients. Le blaireautage rend le ton mou et nuit à la fermeté et au relief d'un paysage." See Callen 2000, 176. The limited application of the badger brush in landscape painting is stated in a number of other contemporary manuals; see, for example, Frédéric Goupil, *Traité méthodique et raisonné de la peinture à l'huile* [...] (Paris: Le Baily, 1867), 28: "L'excès de blaireautage est un défaut très-grave dans certaines occasions; un terrain ou des rochers de premier plan dans un paysage, ne devant jamais être blaireautés: les rugosités et la rudesse de la pâte dans ce cas feront toujours bien sur le sol ou pour représenter des surfaces qui ne doivent pas être lisses d'habitude. Voulez-vous peindre de belles eaux? blaireautez-les, au contraire, afin

de faire disparaître toutes les aspérités de la pâte."

26 Robert 1878, 44–45.

27 On *touche* as the mark of originality, see Richard Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism: A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

28 Jules Claretie, *Peintres et sculpteurs contemporains* (Paris: Charpentier, 1873), 12: "M. Gérôme, dans la rue, marche droit, se tient raide. Il est propre, il est lisse, il est irréprochable comme une de ses toiles. On le prendrait pour un officier en tenue de ville. Il ne bronche pas ; son vêtement est régulièrement boutonné; le nœud de sa cravate géométriquement fait, et sa moustache, un peu rude, ne s'écarte pas d'une régularité parfaite. [...] tout est parachevé et tout léché ; pas un grain de poussière sur l'habit de l'auteur, pas une tache sur sa toile [...]."

29 See Matthias Krüger, "The Art Critic as Graphologist. Handwriting, Typography and the Painterly Touch in the Era of Impressionism," in: Annamaria Ducci (ed.), *Chirurgia della Creazione. Mano e arti visive* (= *Predella* 29, 2011). http://predella.arte.unipi.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=175&catid=65&Itemid=94 (Accessed January 1 2012).

30 On this comparison, see Krüger 2007, 85–86.

31 Letter from Thomas Eakins to his father Benjamin Eakins from 29 October, 1868, quoted in Sarah Burns and John Davis (eds.), *American Art to 1900. A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) 591. On the feminine connotations of the *fini,* see Rosen and Zerner 1984, 223. Quoting from a letter by Eakins's sister, Rosen and Zerner attribute the association of *fini* with "ladies' work" to Eakins instead of to Gérôme, from whom he had adopted it.

32 See Krüger 2007, 71–73, 92–93.

33 Marc de Montifaud, "Salon de 1877," *L'Artiste* 49/1 (1877) 342.

34 Jules Claretie, *Peintres et sculpteurs contemporains* (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1884), 77: "Oui, cette même main qui maniait le blaireau avec tant de finesse allait, par grandes masses, pétrir la glaise, et, à côté de ses travaux nombreux et des plus intéressants, tous soignés et achevés, dans cette facture lisse qui fait songer parfois à la peinture à porcelaine, mais magistrale et toujours souveraine, Gérôme devait offrir au public un group admirable, et ce combat de Gladiateurs, que M. Gérôme exposait comme sculpteur, emportait l'admiration avec sa facture puissante et mâle."

35 On these photographs and paintings, see Victor I. Stoichita, *The Pygmalion Effect: From Ovid to Hitchcock* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 61–180. Stoichita interprets the photographs and the paintings as modern variations of the Pygmalion theme. See also, more recently, Susan Waller, "Fin de partie. A Group of Self-Portraits by Jean-Léon Gérôme," *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide*, 9/1 (2010). http://www.19thcartworldwide.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=364&Itemid=124 (Accessed Januari 1 2012). Waller argues convincingly that the painting *The End of the Seance* makes a judgment on the old competition between the media sculpture and painting: "Beyond asserting Gérôme's double identity as painter

and sculptor, the self-portrait, which stages a contest between media and replays the paragone of the Renaissance, suggests that for Gérôme the two media were in tension. Here, at least, the award goes to painting: Gérôme's sculpture remains merely a lifeless lump of clay, while his painting brings to life the model's fleshy body and the delicate petals of the rose."

36 Maxime Du Camp, *Le Salon de 1861* (Paris: Librairie nouvelle, Bourdillat, 1861), 31.

37 Léon Lagrange, "Salon de 1861," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 10 (1861) 266: "[...] peinture lisse et sans force, où le blaireau, terrible niveleur, a satiné avec une fadeur égale la chair et le marbre. Quelles formes assez puissantes résisteraient à cette énervante exécution? Aussi l'Hercule, malgré l'exagération de ses muscles, paraît-il vide et soufflé."

38 See the psychopathological interpretation of the theme given by Edward J. Kempf, *Psychopathology* (St. Louis: Mosby, 1920), 140–142. Kempf uses Boulanger's painting to illustrate his book.

39 Charles Clément, *Gleyre. Étude biographique et critique avec le catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre du maitre* (Paris: Didier, 1886 2nd edition), 293: "Vous ne comprenez donc pas mon tableau? Ce que j'ai voulu représenter, c'est l'aplatissement de l'homme par la femme." See Michel Thévoz, *L'académisme et ses fantasmes: Le réalisme imaginaire de Charles Gleyre* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1980), 55–56, especially Thévoz's suggestive question: "Comment ne pas deviner sous ce voile mythologique et dans l'avilissement d'Hercule la position sexuelle de Gleyre lui-même?"

40 A further role reversal is staged in Gérôme's painting *The End of the Seance*, as has been pointed out by Allan Doyle in "Groping the Antique. Michelangelo and the Erotics of Tradition" (Allan and Morton 2010, 15–16): "Hercules' absence from the sculptural group casts Gérôme in the role of the indentured hero. Although his deep bend displays an impressive athleticism for his age, showing himself washing his tools in a bucket of water also hints at domestic servitude. The sponge he holds echoes the task associating him with the administration of the queen's nightly moisturizing regime. Given Jean-Léon's delight in visual jokes and word play, it is no surprise that lions were a favorite motif. Omphale's borrowed lion skin implies she has adopted not only Hercules' but her maker's as well."

41 This importance was not only acknowledged by Gérôme but also by a number of other artists of the nineteenth century as well, most notably perhaps by Gustave Courbet, whose use of the palette knife – often associated with a trowel – contributed strongly to the shaping of his public image as a worker-painter (*peintre-ouvrier*). On Courbet's use of the palette knife, see Petra Chu's contribution to the present volume, as well as Matthias Krüger, "Gespachtelter Zufall. Gustave Courbet und die Messermalerei," in: Philippe Cordez and Matthias Krüger (eds.), *Werkzeuge und Instrumente* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012), 109–127. On Courbet's image as a *peintre-ouvrier* see James Rubin, *Realism and Social Vision in Courbet and Proudhon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1980); and Matthias Krüger 2007, 197–208.

CHAPTER 3

Showing Making in Courbet's *The Painter's Studio*

PETRA TEN-DOESSCHATE CHU

The numerous books and articles that have been devoted to Courbet's well-known canvas *The Painter's Studio* (fig. 1) invariably presuppose that the painting is a pictorial manifesto rather than a factual representation of what went on in the artist's studio – indeed, that *The Painter's Studio* "hides making" and "shows creation." This premise appears to be justified by the work's complete title, *L'Atelier du peintre: Allégorie réelle déterminant une phase de sept années de ma vie artistique* (*The Painter's Studio: Real Allegory Determining a Phase of Seven Years of My Life as an Artist*), which encourages an allegorical reading – though the word "real" appears to suggest that the allegory is constructed from, or may contain, real elements.

In the century and a half since it was painted, the monumental canvas has been interpreted in countless different ways. It has been linked with the ideas of philosophers Charles Fourier and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon;[1] it has been read as a Masonic allegory in which each figure stands for a significant nineteenth-century political personage;[2] and it has been cited as an example of Courbet's "embodiment" in his own paintings,[3] to mention only a few examples. In this article I will not attempt to add yet another explanation of, or layer of meaning to, Courbet's deliberately enigmatic and endlessly polysemic "real allegory" (in a letter to a friend, he wrote that the painting was "passablement mystérieux" and added, "divinera qui pourra").[4] Instead, I intend to subvert not only the standard approach to the painting but also the theme of this collection of essays, by trying to assess to what extent *L'Atelier du peintre*, despite its apparent emphasis on

FIG. 1 Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio*, 1855, Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

"showing creation," reveals something about Courbet's "making" – and does so, I shall argue, deliberately.

In *The Painter's Studio*, Courbet has portrayed himself in the center of his Paris studio. Flanked on the right by a group of patrons, critics, and friends and on the left by a motley crowd of contemporary popular types – hunter, farmer, clown, priest, Jew, veteran – the artist is seated at his easel, which supports a large, nearly finished canvas. (Judging by its relationship to the figures nearby, it must measure a little over a square meter.) Though commonly referred to as a view of the Franche Comté, the painting does not appear to depict a specific site in the region, nor does it resemble any known work by Courbet.

In his left hand, the artist holds a large rectangular wooden palette, covered with small quantities of white, black, green, and terra cotta paints, as well as five brushes of different thicknesses and a palette knife. With his right hand, he adds some touches of paint to the left side of the painting, using a long thin brush. Rather than sitting squarely in front of the canvas, absorbed in his work, Courbet is placed at an angle to it. This makes the painting process seem a bit awkward, as the artist's right elbow and knee risk bumping into the canvas.[5] The oblique placement does, however, emphasize the theatricality of his pose, which is aimed at involving the spectators in the

painting process rather than excluding them from it.[6]

Starting from the premise that *The Studio* is not, or at least not *all,* about showing creation but also discloses, even asserts, something about its making, I intend to demonstrate in this article that the painting highlights two aspects of Courbet's painting process that are well documented in the contemporary literature, though rarely mentioned today. One is the performative nature of Courbet's painting process, the other his practice of working from memory, or, alternatively, completing from memory works begun *in situ*. The latter practice was closely related to Courbet's often-cited virtuosity and speed of execution, which, as we shall see, was based on an incomplete understanding of his process of combining palette knife and brushwork in the creation of his landscapes. In sum, I shall argue that *The Studio* can be read *un*-allegorically as a work that highlights the most prodigious qualities of Courbet's much-vaunted technical ability – his ability to work from memory as well as the virtuosity with which he wielded palette knife and brush, qualities that were so well-known during the artist's lifetime that people came to his studio to watch him paint.

PAINTING AS PERFORMANCE

Courbet's *Painter's Studio* depicts his studio at 32, rue Hautefeuille. It is a vast, cavernous space whose bare stone walls are hung with paintings. Thanks to a detailed nineteenth- century account of the history and inhabitants of the rue Hautefeuille by Henri Baillère, we know that the studio was located in the former chapel of the Collège des Prémontrés at the corner of the rue Hautefeuille and the rue de l'Ecole de médecine.[7] The chapel had been closed during the French Revolution and was subsequently divided into apartments. In the apse and choir, on the ground floor, was a café. The second floor had three apartments that were occupied by artists for most of the nineteenth century. From 1848 to 1870, Courbet had his studio in the apartment above the western part of the chapel's nave.[8]

If we were to eliminate the numerous visitors in *The Artist's Studio*, we would be left with the artist, the painting, and his easel turned to the single window from which the studio receives light. The room

is simply furnished: a curtain to manipulate the light, a table on the right, and a leather manikin in the background. Paintings are hung from the walls and standing on the floor, their backs turned to the viewer. This is clearly a working studio, an *atelier* in the original sense of the word,[9] rather than a showroom – a *studio-salon*, of the kind that had been introduced during the Romantic period (by artists like Narcisse Diaz) and that would reach its apogee during the third quarter of the nineteenth century in the spectacular studio of the Viennese painter Hans Makart. The guests seem to be here to watch Courbet paint, rather than to see and buy his paintings.

It is indisputable that the crowd in *The Painter's Studio* is a construct, an imaginary gathering of people who were never all together in Courbet's studio and whose poses and placement in the studio seem carefully calculated for effect. On the right side of the painting, standing and seated alongside one of the short walls of the studio, on either side of the window, is a group of middle-class men and women to whom Courbet referred as "the people who serve me, support me in my ideas, and take part in my actions."[10] It is a collage of copies of portraits Courbet had painted earlier and of studies of individual figures done especially for the painting. On the left, behind the easel, is a disjointed group of popular types; some of them have connections with Courbet's earlier work, while the majority appear to have been conceived especially for this painting.

Yet, while it is obvious that *The Painter's Studio* does not represent a scenario that ever took place or even could have taken place in Courbet's studio (in fact, Courbet painted the work in Ornans), it *does* appear that Courbet's studio was frequently the scene of numerous visitors. In a literary portrait of Courbet written after the artist's death, Marius Vachon wrote, "His legendary studio in the rue Hautefeuille, that temple of the new artistic religion, was filled with a crowd of admirers and people who were simply curious."[11] These people came to see the artist paint. Courbet, apparently, was not averse to working under such conditions. The German painter Otto Scholderer, who frequently visited Courbet's studio during the artist's stay in Frankfurt, wrote that Courbet was not bothered by people watching him paint: "he does not care if someone is watching him as he works."[12] On the contrary, according to his friend Jules Troubat, the

artist "was pleased to surround himself with large groups of idlers; he would keep on painting, smoke his pipe and, from time to time, drink some beer."[13]

Courbet's creative process, indeed, seems to have had an important performative aspect: the artist liked to show off his prowess as a painter. In a manuscript biography of Courbet, his friend Castagnary wrote, "While he was painting, he smoked, talked, told stories, burst out into laughter, sang pretty notes with his falsetto voice, or intoned a song that he had composed."[14] In another passage, Castagnary, while still mentioning Courbet's smoking, talking, and beer-drinking, emphasized that, in the end, the real performance was the painting process itself. "He painted with marvelous control. I followed the movement of his arms. The hands were long, elegant and of a rare beauty. I took an extreme pleasure in watching him work. [...] I saw how he used the [palette] knife and what marvelous effects he could create with it."[15]

Perhaps the most striking example of Courbet's love of performance is an account, also by Castagnary, of an episode that occurred in 1862. Castagnary and Courbet went to visit Etienne Baudry, a wealthy landowner who lived in the Saintonge region of France. As they drove through the region on their way to Baudry's home, Courbet was quiet and watched the landscape, which was new to him, intensely. After the obligatory long French *déjeuner* at Baudry's home, Courbet lit his pipe and asked his host whether he might have a blank canvas. He was brought several and chose one that was about one meter wide. Then, according to Castagnary,

> [H]e took his palette in one hand, his palette knife in the other, and he started from memory to sketch in elements he had observed on the road so as to create a landscape that he finished in less than two hours, to the great amazement of the bourgeois who were present. What was most curious was not the rapidity of the execution but the character of the work. With its clump of young elms, beautifully modeled, it was a landscape of the Saintonge; but it was the Saintonge expressed by its general traits. A half-hour ride had been enough for this amazing artist to capture this countryside so new to him.[16]

Courbet, according to this anecdote, astounded those who watched him paint not only by the virtuosity and rapidity of his execution, but also by the fact that he painted from memory.

PAINTING FROM MEMORY

One of the frequently noted (though rarely fully analyzed) aspects of *The Painter's Studio* is that the artist, seated inside his studio in Paris, is painting a landscape (paradoxically while turning his back to a nude model standing right behind him). It would seem that the artist is painting from memory, as nowhere do we see a sketch (drawing, watercolor, or oil) that serves him as a model or *aide-mémoire*. Writing to his close friend Champfleury in the late fall or early winter of 1854, while he was still working on *The Studio* in Ornans, Courbet informed him that the canvas on the easel represented "an ass driver who is pinching the butt of a girl he meets, and donkeys loaded with bags in a landscape with a mill."[17] But the landscape that we see in *The Studio* today contains no visible figures, and it appears that some time later the artist repainted this important detail to turn it into a landscape without figures. Descriptions of *The Studio* commonly refer to the canvas on the easel as a view of the Franche Comté, but if it is indeed that, it only resembles the regional landscape scenery in the most generic way. The painting does not appear to depict a specific site, nor does it resemble any known work by Courbet. It is possible that the artist, who may already have been in Paris when he repainted the landscape, did so from memory, combining motifs that readily call to mind the Franche Comté, such as the characteristic Jurassic rock in the background and the brook in the foreground.

Castagnary's anecdote, cited above, implied that a half-hour coach ride had been enough for Courbet to capture in his memory the typical landscape traits of the Saintonge so that he could paint a landscape that looked authentic to the inhabitants of the region. According to Castagnary and others like Gros-Kost,[18] Courbet had a prodigious power of observation, which made him sensitive to the characteristic features of different types of landscapes – features that he stored in his memory and was able to reproduce much later. Re-

ferring to a later episode of Courbet's visit to the Saintonge region, Castagnary expresses his amazement at the fact that the landscape background of the *Return from the Conference* (destroyed), a painting that Courbet executed in the Saintonge, depicts a landscape from the Franche Comté. It leads him to comment that the characteristics of the Franche Comté were engraved in Courbet's memory – he "carried its image with him wherever he went."[19]

Otto Scholderer, who watched Courbet at work during the latter's approximately five-month visit to Frankfurt in 1858–59, likewise commented on Courbet's practice of working from memory, particularly when it came to landscape backgrounds. Referring to a landscape with two hunting dogs and a hare (probably *Hunting Dogs with Dead Hare* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York), he wrote to his friend Fantin-Latour that the "magnificent" (*magnifique*) landscape background was done entirely from memory. The same may have been true for the backgrounds of other hunting landscapes, such as *The Battle of the Stags* (Paris, Musée d'Orsay).

While Courbet's depiction of himself painting a Franche Comté landscape inside his Paris studio may be a reference to his well-known ability to paint "magnificent" and characteristic landscapes from memory, it may also represent his common practice of laying in his landscapes outdoors and finishing them later in the studio. The sculptor Max Claudet, in his account of the genesis of Courbet's painting of the *Source of the Lison River* (probably the version in the Galerie Paffrath in Düsseldorf, Germany), reports that to paint the picture Courbet went to the site, carrying with him a canvas that was about one meter tall. Claudet tells us that Courbet executed this painting outdoors, directly in front of the motif. He carried with him a box containing four jars of paint – white, red, yellow, and blue. Courbet mixed these colors on the palette and then, using his palette knife, applied the paint to the canvas, scraping it on with firm and determined motions. Claudet recounts with astonishment that it took Courbet less than two hours to finish the painting. "We were stunned by that speed of execution! Barely two hours of work to cover a one-meter canvas."[20] Though to Claudet, Courbet's painting looked finished, to the artist it was not. Courbet would subsequently complete it in the studio, working with brushes rather than the palette

knife. Indeed, the numerous contemporary accounts about Courbet's rapid execution of his landscape paintings, such as the accounts by Claudet and Castagnary above, are in contradiction to the complex, highly "worked" surfaces of Courbet's landscapes. These suggests that, back in the studio, Courbet belabored the rapidly done lay-ins, executed largely with the palette knife, to create the rich surfaces for which Courbet's best landscape paintings are known.

Devi Ormond, conservator of the Kröller-Muller Museum in Otterlo, studied several of Courbet's canvases painted between 1860 and 1877. Her analysis confirms the elaborateness of their construction:

> Having looked closely at several Courbet's executed between 1860–1877, I have noticed some common characteristics in his paintings – the application of paint with the palette knife, and with what looks like a heavily loaded, but partially dried, flat brush. The use of scumbles, of the wet-in-wet and wet-over-dry technique. It has been noted that Courbet may have had a tendency to apply an "oiling-out" or varnish layer between paint layers. At times, such intermediate layers (also noted in the works of Corot and Fantin-Latour) can lead to some confusion over what is original and non-original paint.[21]

It appears, then, that Courbet, working either outdoors or from memory, quickly massed in his landscape paintings with the palette knife. In so doing, he achieved such an impression of completeness that his contemporaries often thought of the lay-ins as finished paintings (as Baudry's guests did in Castagnary's anecdote, above). The artist may well have encouraged this impression, as it helped him to build an image as a virtuoso artist, a painter-magician. However, it would seem that, in reality, the completion of the work took place in the studio, perhaps in numerous sessions. A photograph of Courbet's studio on the route de Besançon in Ornans (fig. 2), made by Eugène Feyen in 1864, shows several paintings leaning against chairs in the center of the room, suggesting that the artist may have worked on them simultaneously, touching up one as another was drying. The studio in the rue Hautefeuille resembled the one in Ornans in that it was a workspace that contained several paintings in more or less advanced

FIG. 2 Eugène Feyen, *Courbet's Studio on the route de Besançon in Ornans.* Photo from Jean-Jacques Fernier *et al.*, *Courbet et Ornans* (Paris: Herscher, 1989), 21

states of completion. Baillère, who visited Courbet's studio several times between 1865 and 1866, described it as follows:

> Instead of being filled with *bibelots*, like the studios of fashionable painters, the studio of Courbet was decorated only by the master's paintings. They were everywhere, hung on the walls from the baseboard to the ceiling, on easels, several were stacked against the platbands.[22]

His description was confirmed by Zacharie Astruc, who described Courbet's studio as "full of canvases [*emcombré de toiles*]," and Castagnary, who wrote that the studio was submerged under an avalanche of paintings.[23]

CONCLUSION

Despite the apparent emphasis in Courbet's painting on showing creation, the artist is in no way hiding making. On the contrary, he is making a show of it for the group of critics and collectors on the right side of the painting who seem to have come to see him paint.

His virtuosity with the palette knife and the brush, as well as his ability to work from memory, were qualities of Courbet's work that were much praised in his time and that drew people to his studio to watch him perform. This aspect of his making is one that Courbet may have want to flaunt rather than hide, even in a painting that was to be read as an allegory. Perhaps *The Painter's Studio*, that "real allegory," may be said to show creation as well as making.

NOTES

1 Linda Nochlin, in her doctoral thesis, made the link with Fourier. See *The Development and Nature of Realism in the Work of Gustave Courbet: A Study of the Style and its Social and Artistic Background* (New York: Garland, 1976), as well as "The Invention of the Avant-Garde: France 1830–80," in: Thomas B. Hess and John Ashbery (eds.), *Avant-Garde Art* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 3–24. For the painting's connection to the ideas of Proudhon, see James H. Rubin, *Realism and Social Vision in Courbet and Proudhon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), esp. chs. 5 and 7.

2 See Hélène Toussaint, "Le Dossier de 'L'Atelier' de Courbet," in: *Gustave Courbet*, exh. cat. (Paris, Grand Palais, 1977), 241–271. The ideas of Toussaint were further developed by Klaus Herding in "Das Studio des Malers: Treffpunkt der Welt und Ort der Versöhnung," in: Klaus Herding (ed.), *Realismus als Widerspruch: Die Wirklichkeit in Courbets Malerei* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1978), 223–247.

3 Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 49, 156–164.

4 Petra ten-Doesschate Chu (ed.), *Correspondance de Courbet* (Paris: Flammarion, 1996), 124. The last sentence is difficult to translate. In the English edition of Courbet's letters, this author translated it as "It will keep people guessing." See Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 135. Literally translated, the sentence reads as "[s/he] will guess who will be able to."

5 Courbet's strange position vis-à-vis his canvas was noted by Fried (1990, 159), who explains it as one more example of Courbet's embodiment into his own paintings.

6 Courbet himself suggested that the pose was related to his desire to show off his "Assyrian profile." See Chu 1996, 122: "...moi peignant avec le côté assyrien de ma tête."

7 Henri Baillère, *La Rue Hautefeuille: Son histoire et ses habitants* (Paris: Baillère, 1901), 330ff.

8 Next to him, from 1858–1869, was the studio of the Czech painter Jaroslav Czermak, while in the apartment above the café, in the former apse, was the studio of the Bavarian-born painter Alexander Laemlein. Ibid.

9 The word *atelier* comes from the Old French *astelier*, which referred to a carpenter's woodshop.

10 Chu 1992, 131.
11 "Dans son légendaire atelier de la rue Hautefeuille, le temple de la nouvelle religion artistique, se presse toute une foule d'admirateurs et de curieux [...]." Cited in Pierre Courthion (ed.), *Courbet raconté par lui-même et par ses amis* vol. 1 (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, 1948–1950), 148. Unless otherwise noted, the translations of French quotations are the author's.
12 "[...] cela lui est égal si quelqu'un regarde comme il travaille[...]." Mathilde Arnoux, Thomas Gaehtgens, and Anne Tempelaere-Panzani (eds.), *Correspondance entre Henri-Fantin-Latour et Otto Scholderer, 1858–1902* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences, 2011), 63.
13 "Courbet se laissait volontiers entourer d'une nombreuse compagnie de flâneurs: il continuait à peindre, à fumer sa pipe, et, de temps en temps, à boire de la bière." Jules Troubat, *Plume et pinceau* (1878); cited in Courthion 1948–1950, vol. I, 29.
14 "Tout en peignant il fumait, causait, racontait des histoires, éclatait de rire, lançait de jolies notes de sa voix de tête, ou entonnait un couplet de sa composition." Cited in ibid., 166.
15 "Il peignait avec une justesse merveilleuse. Je suivis le mouvement de son bras. Les mains étaient longues, élégantes, et d'une rare beauté. J'eus un plaisir extrême à le voir travailler. Pour la première fois je vis comment il se servait du couteau et quels effets merveilleux il en tirait." Cited in ibid., 155–156.
16 "[...] prenant sa palette d'une main, son couteau de l'autre, il commença de souvenir, avec les éléments qu'il avait observés sur la route, un paysage qu'il termina en moins de deux heures au grand ébahissement des bourgeois qui étaient présents. Le curieux n'était pas dans la rapidité de l'exécution, il était dans le caractère même de l'oeuvre. Avec son massif d'ormeaux superbement modelés, c'était bien un paysage de Saintonge; mais c était la Saintonge exprimée par ses traits généraux. Une promenade d'une demi-heure avait suffi à l'étonnant artiste pour s'imprégner de cette campagne si nouvelle pour lui." Cited in ibid., 166.
17 See Petra ten-Doesschate Chu 1992, 131.
18 Gros-Kost, *Courbet. Souvenirs Intimes* (Paris: Derveaux, 1880), 63–68.
19 "[...] il en emportait l'image avec lui [...]." Courthion 1948–1950, vol. 1, 170.
20 "Nous étions stupéfaits de cette rapidité d'exécution. A peine deux heures de travail pour couvrir une toile d'un mètre." Courthion 1948–1950, vol. I, 200.
21 See http://cool.conservation-us.org/byform/mailing-lists/cdl/2005/0738.html (Accessed January 16 2013).
22 "[...] au lieu d'être encombré de bibelots, comme les ateliers de nos peintres à la mode, l'atelier de Courbet était décoré uniquement des tableaux du maître; il y en avait partout, il y en avait sur les murailles, superposés depuis la plinthe jusqu'au plafond; il y en avait sur les chevalets, il y en avait plusieurs empilés le long des plates-bandes." Baillère 1901, 349–350.
23 Cited, respectively, in Courthion 1948–1950, vol. I, 138, 143. In Castagnary's wording, the studio was "à demi submergé sous une avalanche de tableaux."

CHAPTER 4

Making and Creating. The Painted Palette in Late Nineteenth-Century Dutch Painting

TERRY VAN DRUTEN

A drop of water is large enough to contain the image of the sun, why then would a palette not be able to give a notion of our school of painting?[1]

ANONYMOUS

One of the most striking works in the oeuvre of the famous French Impressionist Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) is a painting of a landscape with farmers. Not because of its subject matter, but because Pissarro painted this picture on one of his palettes (fig. 1). It is a telling example by an internationally renowned artist of a phenomenon that occurred throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, albeit mostly unnoticed by critics and art historians.[2] Admittedly, Pissarro's work clearly stands out when compared to the average palette-with-picture from the period. When looked at from an aesthetic point of view, these works very often hardly seem to deserve any attention at all. What gives them special interest, however, is the fact that these little artworks use the palette as their support. They are artworks painted on – and thereby literally shaped by – a tool that embodies the act of painting itself. This essay aims to provide insight into the position and meaning of this phenomenon in nineteenth-century Dutch painting.

FIG. 1 Camille Pissarro, *The Artist's Palette with a Landscape*, c. 1878, Williamstown, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, inv. no. 1955.827

MIXING PAINT

The simple answer to the question why painters as diverse as Jan Hendrik Weissenbruch, Carel Storm van 's-Gravesande, Louis Apol or Henriette Ronner-Knip all produced painted palettes in the second half of the nineteenth century would be that earlier painters simply could not have done so, due to their very different working methods.[3] For artists up until the mid-nineteenth century, making paint and mixing color was a time-consuming and expensive business, carried out in the painter's workshop. Artists therefore used only a limited range of colors at any one time – different "palettes," so to speak – which were selected especially for the part of the painting they were working on. It is therefore highly unlikely that they could have created the type of painted palette discussed here, as they would never have had all the colors necessary available on their palette for a full painting.

Pissarro's palette still exhibits the colors he used for building up his landscape. From the upper right to the lower left, following the

edge of the palette: first white, then yellow, red, purple, blue, and finally green. Indeed, this is a very wide range of colors, some of which a painter like Rembrandt would only have used on very special occasions. Such occasions did exist however. For painting flesh, for example, one of the most prestigious parts of a painting, it was necessary to use no fewer than ten pigments: lead white, light ochre, gamboge, vermilion, red lake, red-brown ochre, green earth, umber and carbon black.[4] Certainly enough for painting a little landscape, had Rembrandt so desired. It seems unlikely, though, that he or his contemporaries would have wasted their precious pigments in such a frivolous way.

For painters in the late nineteenth century, things were a lot easier. They could – and usually did – buy their paints pre-mixed from specialized merchants and in the newly invented paint tube, instead of making them themselves.[5] There is no doubt that Pissarro's six colors also came out of a tube. The new availability of paints and their improved characteristics, thanks to new chemical compositions, led to a definitive change in the way artists dealt with their material. In 1880 Johan Gram wrote about Andreas Schelfhout (1787–1870):

> [...] Schelfhout, at ending a day's work, deftly made use of the remaining paint on his palette to paint some sky and greenery on a small panel, which together with the leftovers from the next day, might then already be completed.[6]

This gives us a glimpse of a studio practice that was certainly efficient – no leftover paint, or *palet-kliekjes*, as Gram nicely puts it in Dutch. Such efficiency was nevertheless of a completely different nature from the – also fairly efficient – color and pigment management employed by Schelfhout's predecessors and contemporaries. Instead of carefully planned painting-in of the different parts of a picture with colors limited to that part, it was now possible to work on the whole painting simultaneously, using all colors at once. If at the end some paint was left over, this was much less of a financial loss for painters like Schelfhout, let alone for his successors.[7] Likewise, making it easier to "waste" a bit of paint and a palette by turning them into a little painting itself.

FIG. 2 Henriette Ronner-Knip, *Two Cats Playing with a Peacock Feather*, 1881, present location unknown. Photo: The Hague, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD)

In fact, several of the painted palettes known today give the impression of having been created as a part of an ordinary artistic routine. A seascape on a palette by Jan Hendrik Weissenbruch (1824–1903), for example, gives the clear impression of having been made at the end of a day's work from the last leftover paint on that very palette.[8] The directness of its execution is easily compared to the way in which Schelfhout, according to Gram, dealt with his leftovers. Only in the case of Weissenbruch is it the palette that serves as the – not illogical – stand-in for the panel used by Schelfhout. A painted palette by Louis Apol (1850–1936) seems to be more like a quickly executed *plein-air* study, perhaps done after he had run out of paper or canvas while working outside.[9] A clearly demarcated rectangular winter scene rests on a mash of unmixed colors – rather reminiscent of the way in which the painting on Pissarro's palette is surrounded by a row of pure paint dots. Both works seem to be the logical outgrowth of the use of a palette while painting a "proper" picture on panel or canvas.[10]

This, however, is clearly not the case with a palette supporting a picture painted by Henriette Ronner-Knip (1821–1909) (fig. 2), famous for her pictures of cats.[11] Here, the palette seems to have been used especially for the purpose of creating the image, rather than as the by-product of working on a traditional support. The palette had probably never been used for anything else, or had been carefully cleaned beforehand. This makes it seem quite unlikely that the picture was the result of a spontaneous creative act, as was perhaps the case with the palettes discussed above.[12] This palette has clearly been deliberately chosen by Ronner-Knip as the preferred support for the picture of the two cats.

THE EMBLEMATIC PALETTE

By the time Ronner-Knip painted her two cats on her palette, this piece of painting equipment already had a long history, not only as a tool but also as an iconographic element. In Cesare Ripa's famous and influential *Iconologia,* the personification of painting, Pittura, was already equipped with a palette, although it was just one among several other attributes such as a pencil, a wild hairdo and raised eyebrows

as signs of inspiration. In the frontispiece of the first Dutch translation of the book (published in 1644), Pittura is given a place of honor on the right-hand side of the page.[13] However, the image clearly indicates that the palette was of limited importance in recognizing her as the personification of painting: the brushes she holds are far more prominent, with the palette itself just visible behind them on her left arm. Similarly, the palette was not even part of the attributes of the personification of art: Arte carries nothing but a chisel and brush.[14] The personification of Europa, finally, does have a palette at her feet (again with large brushes), but it is only one among a number of symbols of this, in Ripa's words, "most excellent" part of the world.[15]

By the nineteenth century, however, the role of the palette as an emblem for painting had gained considerable importance. Its growing significance can be traced over the centuries by studying painters' portraits and self-portraits. In 1532, Maarten van Heemskerck's (1498–1574) palette still played a minor part in his *Self-portrait as Saint Luke Painting the Virgin and Child*, in line with the minimal role of the palette in Ripa's book.[16] In her self-portrait of a century later, Judith Leyster (1609–1660), on the other hand, holds her palette in a way already reminiscent of many painters' portraits from later periods.[17] An interesting element here is the palette's "modern" kidney shape, a type that over time gained such prominence in these portraits that it almost completely overshadowed the square palette (although the latter never disappeared completely). Not only did the kidney-shaped palette become the preferred shape in the studio, by the end of the eighteenth century it also had become a standard reference, appearing in painting, sculpture and architecture as an emblematic sign for the art of painting. Very likely this was aided by the much greater visual appeal of the kidney shape as opposed to the square.

ARTISTIC SIGNBOARDS

The increased emblematic significance of the palette makes it unlikely that painted palettes were nothing more than just playful jokes at the end of the day with some leftover paint. This becomes clear when we realize that most of these palettes are actually signed. Appar-

ently, artists themselves considered them worthy members of their oeuvres. It thus comes as no surprise that all of the painted palettes discussed so far bear images that more or less exemplify the different artists' bodies of work. Louis Apol's palette shows one of his typical winter scenes, Weissenbruch's a seascape, and Ronner-Knip painted two cats. All these were very familiar subjects for these artists, so that the palettes in some way actually appear to be a kind of advertisement for their work.

A key to a better understanding of the painted palettes is found in the inscription Henriette Ronner-Knip placed next to her signature: "keepsake". The palette must have been designed as a souvenir for someone the artist knew personally – a recurring element in other known painted palettes as well. About ten years ago, a palette by Albert Roelofs (1877–1920) was auctioned that until then had remained in the family's possession,[18] indicating the personal significance it had had for the artist and his descendants – perhaps because it may portray one of Roelofs's sons. A second palette was painted by Albert's older brother Willem (1874–1940), together with three fellow painters: Frans Langeveld (1877–1939), Tony Offermans (1854–1911) and Ernst van der Ven (1866–1944). The three men had made the palette together as a gift to their tailor.[19] A palette by Thomasine Doffegnies (1865–1937), now in Museum Het Valkhof in Nijmegen, shows several horses' heads. It was very likely made especially for her husband, Hendrik Willem Cornelder, who was a horse fancier and the director of a riding school.[20] Finally, the initials "P.F." next to the signature on Apol's palette may also indicate a personal dedication.

These more private meanings are also in accordance with the apparent minimal commercial value of the painted palettes. The account books of the Hague branch of art firm Goupil, for example, do not mention anything in the way of a painted palette.[21] The art gallery begun in 1885 by the painter Jan ten Kate (1859–1896) and a colleague in the Paleis voor Volksvlijt in Amsterdam did have some "small sketches on palette" for sale, among other "fine pieces" by both the owners and other artists.[22] However, Ten Kate's business venture seems to have been of limited financial importance and can again be seen to confirm the fact that painted palettes were very much an artist's affair: after all, they were offered for sale in a gallery run by two painters.

Taken together, this might seem to indicate that the painted palette had a rather low artistic status; nonetheless, it would be wrong to see them as nothing but sentimental and personal painterly frivolity. In March 1893 the sculptor Henri Teixeira de Mattos (1856–1908) held a big auction of all the contents of his studio, on the occasion of his emigration to London. The object that attracted the most attention by far was an outsized palette of more than a meter, with images painted on it by at least sixteen different artists. All were renowned painters. The most prominent among them were Jozef Israëls (1824–1911) and Hendrik Willem Mesdag (1831–1915), but it also included work by the brothers Jacob (1837–1899) and Willem Maris (1844–1910); even members of the younger generation were mentioned as contributors, such as George Hendrik Breitner (1857–1923).[23] After being presented in the shop window of the Van Wisselingh art gallery in the heart of Amsterdam, the palette was eventually auctioned for over a thousand guilders to an anonymous private buyer (an apparent exception to the limited commercial value of these objects).[24] We do not know why this palette was made, but it clearly shows the genre was not shunned by even the most prominent Dutch artists of the period.

THE PALETTE AND THE CULT OF THE ARTIST

The reason Henri Teixeira's palette fetched such a good price probably lies in what Oscar Bätschmann has called "the cult of the artist." By the end of the nineteenth century, public attention had turned from *what* was represented in an artwork to *who* had represented it, and this in turn stimulated interest in all kinds of objects connected to the artist, his artistic genius, and to the "miracles" he produced in the studio.[25] The tools that were part of the creative process came to be considered of special importance. They were especially suited to being transformed from simple artifacts to objects with an almost relic-like significance.[26] While in other countries, even a painter's body parts could become the focus of idolization – where, for example, plaster casts were made of the face or hands of renowned artists – this seems to have been a little too extreme for the rather bourgeois culture of the Dutch nineteenth century. The one exception is the – perhaps ac-

tually more German – "priest of nature," Barend Cornelis Koekkoek (1803–1862), whose right hand was cast in plaster at sometime during his life.[27]

Nevertheless, even in the Netherlands the palette came to serve as a perfect stand-in for the artist, thanks to its emblematic shape and meaning. Giving palette-shaped gifts for a painter's jubilee was standard practice in the second half of the nineteenth century. Already in 1842 Koekkoek had received a silver palette on the first anniversary of the Klever Mahlverein. It was a token of gratitude for all that their famed fellow townsman had meant for the artists of Cleve.[28] Forty years later in The Hague, Herman ten Kate (1822–1891) received an "artfully carved ivory palette" for painting a commander's official portrait.[29] And in 1876 Johannes Bosboom (1817–1891) and his wife received a silver sculpture shaped like a palette for their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. The palette rested against a horn of plenty, with a brush and a pen resting on top, as signs of the professions of both the painter and his wife, writer Geertruida Bosboom-Toussaint.[30] A similar gift of veneration was given to history painter Christoffel Bisschop (1828–1904) on his seventieth birthday in 1898. His "brothers in art" at the art society Pulchri Studio gave him a palette – once again in silver – engraved with his portrait and the signatures of all the Pulchri members. It is now part of the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden, Bisschop's place of birth.[31] After the artist's death in 1904, the living quarters and studio from Bisschop's grand villa in The Hague were donated to the museum by his wife Kate Bisschop-Swift (1834–1924), herself an artist as well.[32] Together with the silver palette, Bisschop's last actual palette became part of the museum installation, presented in his paintbox as if laid in state as the holy remains of the late master (fig. 3).[33]

We find many more such instances of dealing with the "last palette" following the artist's death. When a painter died in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the palette often played a role of honor in his commemorations, again in line with its emblematic meaning. Anton Mauve (1838–1888) was carried to his grave in a hearse with a shrouded palette attached to the back, once more an homage to a fellow painter by the members of Pulchri Studio.[34] More often, a deceased painter's actual last palette was placed on top of the

coffin, where – at least according to a reporter reviewing the funeral of Alexander Hugo Bakker Korff (1824–1882) – it drew a lot of attention.[35] In the case of socially very successful artists like Nicolaas Pieneman (1809–1860) or Jan Adam Kruseman (1804–1862), the palette would be accompanied by the awards and decorations won by the artists during their lifetime.[36]

FIG. 3 The paint box and palette of Christoffel Bisschop, Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, inv. no. I05882. Bisschop bequest, on loan from the Province of Fryslân

Given its connection to relic-like objects such as casts of artists' hands and death masks, it does not seem unlikely that the painted palette also played some role in the nineteenth-century glorification of the artist as genius, albeit self-glorification in this case. It can be seen as the material counterpart of the studio visits that were carefully staged for representation in magazine articles and photographs.[37]

The painted palette is simultaneously itself a work of art and a reminder of the creation of that work. The very present graphic and emblematic shape of the palette continually denies any possibility of actually believing in the reality of the image painted on its surface. However convincing or artistically appealing these images may be, they are always rudely interrupted by the black space of the palette's thumbhole right in the center. These paintings will never be windows into a different world, but will always remind the viewer of the fact that they are man-made, pointing away from the painted landscapes, playing cats or horses' heads to the person that painted it, reminding us of the artist at work, creating in the studio.

Aside from the technical reasons for their existence (such as the development of industrially produced paints and paint tubes), these palettes therefore could have only been made at a time when the artist's individuality was considered of the utmost importance. A painted palette was the perfect personal souvenir any painter could give as a gift. At the same time, it represented the epitome of the painter's body of work, and was a constant reminder of his or her ability to transform paint into image. However kitsch and old-fashioned these palettes might now seem, in this sense they are thoroughly modern, melding the image with its support, which is at the same time an artwork, an artist's tool, and an emblem of the art of painting in general. It turns these odd objects into the conceptual intermingling of a finished artwork and the actual making of that work, mixing the artist's genius with his or her practical abilities, and as such perhaps not so much hiding or showing but rather conflating making and creating.

NOTES

1 "Een waterdruppel is groot genoeg om het beeld van de zon te bevatten, waarom zou een palet dan geen denkbeeld kunnen geven van onze schilderschool?;" Anon., "Een zeldzaam palet," *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 10 March 1893 (evening edition).

2 For a discussion of Pissarro's palette see Franziska Ulig, "Farbe – Medium oder Material? Fragen des Sehens am Beispiel Camille Pissarros und Ernst Ludwig Kirchners," in: Andreas Haus, Frank Hofmann and Änne Soell (eds.), *Material im Prozeß. Strategien ästhetischer Produktivität* (Berlin: Reimer, 2000), 227–240. See also Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts and Joachim Pissarro, *Pissarro. Critical Catalogue of Paintings* (Paris: Wildenstein, 1995), no. 562.

3 Painted palettes by the latter three artists can be found via the database RKDimages when searching under "support" for the Dutch word *palet*; see http://www.rkd.nl (Accessed January 2013). A painted palette by Storm van 's-Gravesande is in the collection of the Dordrechts Museum (inv. no. DM/963/420).

4 Ernst van de Wetering, "De paletten van Rembrandt en Jozef Israëls, een onderzoek naar de relatie tussen stijl en schilderstechniek," *Oud Holland* 107/1 (1993) 137–151: 146. With thanks to Nadia Kersten-Pampiglione for the translation of the pigment names.

5 For examples of the large number of Dutch artists making use of the materials sold by art supply merchants see Michel A.A.M. van de Laar, "...met verf van Claus & Fritz. Onderzoek naar een Amsterdamse firma in schilder- en tekenbehoeften (1841–1931)," *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 43/3 (1995) 195–208: 195–198. See also Brian Dudley Barrett, "Apothekers, scheikundigen, verfhandelaren of leveranciers voor kunstenaars?," in: Mayken Jonkman and Eva Geudeker (eds.), *Mythen van het Atelier. Werkplaats en schilderspraktijk van de negentiende-eeuwse Nederlandse kunstenaar* (Zwolle/The Hague: De Jonge Hond, 2010), 207–215.

6 "Zoo gebeurde het zelfs, dat Schelfhout, bij het eindigen zijner dagtaak, van de overblijvende verf van zijn palet nog fluks gebruik maakte om een luchtje en groen op een klein paneeltje te schilderen, dat met de palet-kliekjes van den volgenden dag misschien reeds voltooid zoude zijn." Johan Gram, *Onze schilders in Pulchri Studio* (Rotterdam: Elsevier, 1880), 44.

7 Gram actually tells the anecdote about Schelfhout to create a contrast between Schelfhout's efficient painting method and the more sketchy manner of painting employed by Jozef Israëls a generation later. Ibid., 43–44.

8 Amsterdam (Sotheby's), 19 April 2005, lot no. 196.

9 Ibid., lot no. 197.

10 For the arrangement of the palette, see Eva Geudeker, "Het palet," in: Jonkman and Geudeker 2010, 148–149.

11 London (Phillips), 1 December 1998, lot no. 25.

12 Pissarro actually made his painted palette as a commission for a collector in exchange for the (small) sum of 50 francs; see Janine Bailly-Herzberg (ed.), *Correspondence de Camille Pissarro* vol. 5 (Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône: Valhermeil, 1980–1991), 399–400.

13 Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia of Uytbeeldinghen des Verstants*, trans. Dirck Pietersz. Pers (Amsterdam: 1644), frontispiece.
14 Ibid., 256.
15 Ibid., 602.
16 Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, inv. no. OS I-134.
17 Washington, National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1949.6.1.
18 Amsterdam (Sotheby's), 22 October 2002, lot no. 204.
19 Amsterdam (Christie's), 3–4 February 2004, lot no. 196.
20 Nijmegen, Museum Het Valkhof, inv. no. 1993.02.09.
21 The Goupil & Cie stock books are accessible online through http://www.getty.edu (Accessed January 2013). With thanks to Renske Cohen Tervaert.
22 *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 4 September 1885 (evening edition).
23 The painters mentioned are: [Nicolaas] Bastert, [George Hendrik] Breitner, [Eduard] Frankfort, [Jozef] Israëls, Hobbe Smith, [Jacob Simon Hendrik] Kever, [Baruch] Laguna, J[acob] and W[illem] Maris, [Hendrik Willem] Mesdag, [Ferdinand] Oldewelt, [Geo] Poggenbeek, and [Jan Hillebrand] Wijsmuller. See "Henri Teixeira de Mattos," *Algemeen Handelsblad,* 3 February 1893 (evening edition). An advertisement for the palette mentions furthermore: Therèse Schwartze, [Théophile] de Bock, [Albert] Neuhuijs, and H[endrik] W[illebrord]. See *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 14 March 1893 (evening edition).
24 "Een zeldzaam palet," *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 10 March 1893; "Kunst en letteren," *Het nieuws van den dag*, 15 March 1893 (evening edition). The palette has recently resurfaced; as it turns out, Breitner did not actually contribute. See Amsterdam (Christie's), 29 May 2013, lot. no. 93.
25 Oskar Bätschmann, *The Artist in the Modern World. A Conflict Between Market and Self-expression* (Cologne: DuMont Verlag, 1997), 81–121.
26 Bernhard Maaz, "Künstlermythen," in: Bernhard Maaz (ed.), *Im Tempel der Kunst. Die Künstlermythen der Deutschen*, exh. cat. (Berlin: Alte Nationalgalerie 2008), 25–26.
27 Cleve, Museum Haus Koekkoek.
28 Cleve, Museum Haus Koekkoek. See Angelika Nollert and Guido de Wert, *Barend Cornelis Koekkoek (1803–1862). Zijn familie, zijn school en het B.C. Koekkoek-Huis in Kleef*, exh. cat. (Cleve: Museum Kurhaus, 2000), 80–81.
29 *De Amsterdammer*, 6 May 1883.
30 *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 8 April 1876.
31 Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, inv. no. Z05859.
32 Hugo Kingmans, "De verzameling-Bisschop in het Fries Museum," *De Vrije Fries* 65 (1985): 7–20, 8.
33 Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, inv. no. I05882.
34 "Uitvaart Mauve," *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 10 February 1888.
35 *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 3 February 1882.
36 *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 4 January 1861; *Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's Gravenhage*, 23 March 1862.
37 See the contribution of Mayken Jonkman to this publication.

CHAPTER 5

14, rue de La Rochefoucauld. The Partial Eclipse of Gustave Moreau

MAARTEN LIEFOOGHE

His house was already almost a museum, his person was nothing more than the site where his oeuvre was achieved.[1]

MARCEL PROUST

Moreau represents a singular equation between odi profanum *and* sinite venire*; between the pedagogue's stool and the ivory tower.*[2]

ROBERT DE MONTESQUIOU

STRATEGIES OF SECRECY BEYOND "HIDING MAKING"

Oedipus and the Sphinx, the work that gave Gustave Moreau instant notoriety when it was exhibited at the Salon of 1864, and which remains the artist's best-known work, is not a powerful image because of the action it depicts. It captures the viewer with its evocation of the paralyzing power of the sphinx's riddle that is central in this trial of strength. Similarly intriguing is the name of Gustave Moreau, even though more than a century has passed since a state-run museum first made public his unparalleled bequest of a house-cum-oeuvre. To some extent, this unresolved, mysterious air is related to the mythic universe of Moreau's work, inhabited by Salomes, Jasons and Medeas, androgynous poets, and all sorts of chimeras. Another factor is that of the puzzling difficulties art historians confront when attempting to classify this Parisian painter: Moreau saw himself as

the renewer of the dying tradition of history painting, but was later claimed as a Symbolist, a proto-abstract painter, and the forefather of surrealism.[3] Much of the enigma surrounding Moreau also results from a number of the artist's secretive traits, much discussed during his lifetime. The "obscurely famous" Moreau was not only noted for not allowing visitors to enter his studio and thus hiding his *making*;[4] to a considerable extent, Gustave Moreau was also secretive in hiding away his *creation*. Joséphin (Sâr) Péladan quotes Moreau as saying that he was more jealous about the 200 works concealed in his townhouse than a caliph might be about his women.[5] As regards women, or for that matter Moreau's private life in general, the artist seems to have been just as reticent, both during his life and in the way he prepared the memory of his own person. In order to understand Moreau's hiding and showing strategies, which were aimed at modeling his artistic persona as part of a politics of positioning himself vis-à-vis the art world, we thus need to adopt a perspective that looks beyond Moreau's tactics during his life. Since he was just as secretive about his creation as about his making, just as secretive about his life as about his work, we can only interpret this artist's policies of hiding and showing when they are taken beyond the politics of controlled access to the process of making in the studio, to comprise the politics of a posthumous auto-museumization. Within this broadened perspective, not only spaces and moments but also space-time configurations of hiding and showing can be distinguished. This allows us to interpret Moreau's strategic arrangements, which actually came into effect mainly posthumously and which exploit significant potentialities of this transfer beyond the artist's death.

The overall image that Moreau's arrangements produced was that of the man eclipsed by the artist, and the artist in turn disappearing behind his oeuvre. In 1900, Ary Renan wrote that "his belief was that the artist's personality should under no circumstances be a matter for the public and that it was right and proper for the man to vanish behind his work."[6] Although invited to do so, Moreau refused to send a self-portrait to be hung in the Uffizi's famous gallery of artists. He also banned the posthumous publication of any photographs or reproductions of his likeness. In order for his work to appear as a singular contribution to art, as a *life's work*, an oeuvre behind which to disappear,

various measures had to be taken. His refusal to exhibit individual works from 1880 onward was one such measure; the constitution of an "oeuvre-collection" and the elaboration of a museological strategy to display this oeuvre was another. The house-museum in Moreau's former home at 14, rue de La Rochefoucauld – posthumously realized but anticipated in detail by Moreau himself – serves as a *dispositif*, as both an institutional and physical framework to convey his artistic production as an oeuvre and to eclipse Moreau the man. The "museumized" artist's house was the museological device that allowed Moreau to perform his (disappearing) act. Analysis of the house-museum provides an important way in to studying Moreau's strategies. Yet an analysis of how the *maison-musée Gustave Moreau* enabled the execution of Moreau's well-planned tactics of self-representation should not blind us to the ways in which at certain moments, the museum as device could also somehow turn itself against Moreau's own ideas. The expansion of the visitor's route over the years illustrates how Moreau inevitably lost control over his own creation. Is not Gustave Moreau better known today for his curiously stuffed house-museum, just a stone's throw from the Opéra Garnier, than for his contribution to Art? The effectiveness of the museum as a monument to Moreau's name is beyond doubt; yet does this medium of the "museum" not also threaten to eclipse the precise message Moreau wanted to leave behind, the project he sought to realize in his oeuvre?

"CE MUSÉE ENTROUVERT"

In a crucial paragraph of his testament, Moreau describes his bequest of his house and all it contains, making explicit the goal his bequest was to serve:

> I bequeath my house, situated 14, rue de La Rochefoucauld, with all it contains, paintings, drawings, cartoons, etc., etc., work of fifty years, and likewise what is enclosed in the named house by the old apartment formerly occupied by my father and my mother, to the State or in default of the former to the city of Paris or in default of the former to the École des Beaux-

> Arts or alternatively to the Institut de France (Académie des Beaux-Arts) on the explicit condition of the preservation forever – that would be my dearest wish – or at least as long as possible, of this collection, maintaining the integral character that allows the sum of the work and the efforts of the artist during his life to be recognized [*constater*] in perpetuity.[7]

According to the testament, maintaining the integral character of the house and its contents would allow the oeuvre and the artist's efforts during his lifetime to be judged for all time. On his death in 1898, Moreau therefore bequeathed his house, including a suite of private living quarters, as well as a two-floor studio containing more than 1,000 paintings, *cartons* and watercolors, and thousands of drawings. Moreau's lifelong personal assistant Henri Rupp was appointed *légataire universel* of the bequest, while Georges Desvallières, one of Moreau's former students at the École des Beaux-Arts, was appointed as executor of the testament. Rupp, together with Desvallières, took care of the hanging and overall arrangement of Moreau's paintings and drawings in the former studio spaces on the two upper floors of the house.[8] In January 1903, the Musée Gustave Moreau finally opened its doors to the public as a national museum, following several years of negotiations with the French State over the acceptance of Moreau's bequest.

Newspaper articles reporting visits to the nearly or recently inaugurated museum express a sense of revelation, a sense of clarification of a mystery. The very quantity of finished and unfinished works accumulated in Moreau's house-turned-museum was not only baffling, but it also seemed to explain Moreau's obstinate refusal to allow anyone to visit his studio, where he had retreated in an attempt to finish a gigantic oeuvre. What had remained a mystery for so long was revealed: in the presence of Moreau's immense works, "which would take ten artists' lives to finish," a reporter for *Le Petit Parisien* found it understandable that Gustave Moreau had locked himself up in his studio and had never wanted to receive any guests.[9] Only a few years before Moreau's death, Joséphin Péladan had condemned the painter for refusing to exhibit. Eager to show the artist's work as exemplary of the Symbolism he championed, Péladan could not reconcile himself

to Moreau's own explanation on the occasion of a visit around 1895. At that time, Moreau had told him that from year to year he was adding augmenting details to his some 200 works, because he wanted his art to appear suddenly, all at once, after his death.[10] Refraining from public exhibition in the final decades of his career, Moreau seemed to put his trust solely in posterity to make a rightful judgment on his artistic project. In an elaborate note on his own future reception, Moreau wrote, assuming the voice of humanity and oddly referring to himself in the third person, that we would only be able to make this assessment "about what has been added to the beautiful heritage of the masters" once the artist had disappeared, "leaving behind but these so noble testimonies to his passage on this earth."[11] Statements such as this make understandable the phrase in the testament, "this collection, [...] that allows the sum of the work and the efforts of the artist during his life to be recognized in perpetuity." Moreau aligned himself with the dogmas of the Religion of Genius, which Edgar Zilsel would dissect several decades later. Misunderstood in his own time, the genius's *marche en avant*, his individual contribution to art's progress, can only find true appreciation in the *Nachwelt*, on the basis of the work left behind.[12]

In his 1895 account of his visit to Moreau, Péladan stressed not only Moreau's uncompromising resistance to showing Péladan his work, but also the formal politeness with which he received his guest: "he appeared to be exclusively occupied with dismissing me with respectful remarks. I was only able to obtain a glance – and I don't believe it would have been possible to do more than this – at what was hanging on the wall."[13] Visitors like Péladan had to make their peace with the crumbs of Moreau's oeuvre displayed in the rooms where he received them. Following the extension and remodeling of his house in view of its future use as house-museum, which took place between 1895 and 1896 and which mainly added the two vast studio floors to Moreau's parental home, Moreau had a *cabinet de réception* at his disposal where he could receive guests.[14] This small office was situated on the first floor, at the immediate end of a staircase leading from the entrance hall, so that the artist did not have to receive visitors either in his private living quarters or in the studios above. When de Montesquiou characterized this cabinet as a "museum set ajar"

("Musée entrouvert"), he aptly phrased how the office opened only onto the margins of Moreau's oeuvre:

> His friends, his visitors, those rare privileged ones, remember the décor of this antechamber, where, with both pride and modesty, his glorious name offered nothing but pretty or charming replicas. [...] a Museum set ajar [...].[15]

Just as the access to Moreau's studio floors would remain barred until these had posthumously been transformed into museum galleries, so the access to the oeuvre is limited in this *cabinet de réception* to juvenilia and copies; works that did not really belong to Moreau's oeuvre, but which nonetheless suited his self-representation as an artist both gifted and rooted in the classical tradition.

Péladan remarked on the contradiction of Moreau's hiding away his oeuvre while at the same time agreeing to the role of a public artist by teaching at the École and accepting his election to the Institut in the last years of his life.[16] It is to reproaches such as these that Alexandre Arsène seems to allude in his report in *Le Figaro* on the future Moreau museum, published in the first months after Moreau's death. For Arsène, the fact that Moreau would now make public nearly his entire oeuvre negated any accusation of disdainful pride on Moreau's part in not letting his work be judged during his lifetime.[17] Soon the museum would make evaluation of the artist's lifework possible for everyone. Yet, the opposition between severely limited access to an accumulating studio oeuvre during Moreau's lifetime and complete and revealing access to the entire oeuvre-collection once the artist's house had begun to function as a museum proves to be too simple. In certain ways, even after it had opened its doors to the general public, 14, rue de La Rochefoucauld remained a "Musée entrouvert."

GALLERY (OEUVRE)/STUDIO (EFFORT)

The route visitors could take through the house-museum when it opened in 1903 traversed the building's four floors, which can already be imagined from the street thanks to the structure of the Italianate

façade added on the occasion of the 1896 enlargement. Yet the accessible spaces consisted mainly of Moreau's former studios on the second and third floors, and of some extra rooms on the ground floor as a bonus at the end of the visit. The entire first floor, with the artist's apartment and the *cabinet de réception* (now used as the museum curator's office), remained closed to the public.

The exhibition commenced immediately upon entering the front door. The entrance hall presented some of Moreau's copies after the Old Masters, such as Poussin's *Death of Germanicus*, executed in Rome in 1859 and epitomizing Moreau's ideal of *la peinture d'histoire*. The museum's first *catalogue sommaire*, published in 1902, suggests that visitors first continue their tour with the upper floors, saving the other spaces on the ground floor for last.[18] The first-floor landing displayed some large *cartons* of Moreau's major works, among them *Oedipus and the Sphinx* and *Prometheus*. Another staircase led to the second floor – one large room with an impressive spiral stair providing immediate access to the third floor, itself divided into two rooms of still-considerable size. All three rooms on the second and third floors catch the northern light via large windows, as befits a proper studio; however, their pinkish walls are hung floor-to-ceiling with pictures, as in a conventional nineteenth-century exhibition. Apart from a triad of three monumental works – *Tyrtaeus Singing during Combat* (1860) on the left, *The Daughters of Thespius* (1853 and 1883) in the middle, and *The Return of the Argonauts* (1897–1897) on the right – the large canvasses in this floor were hung in two to three rows. The smaller works in the upper rooms filled the walls in three rows. The overall effect was that of an immersion in Moreau's oeuvre. Each of the themes that haunted Moreau's work – all his mythological figures and oneiric landscapes – appear here, one next to the other. Robert de Montesquiou spoke of an enchanting, simultaneous manifestation of all the deities and their descendants: "these two vast rooms, where the opaque walls appear transparent, illuminated, like those windows upon which the sun plays, with the resplendent appearance of all the gods and goddesses."[19] On one occasion Moreau had compared his paintings to iconostases, but these Byzantine screens could just as well be a striking metaphor for the installation of Moreau's paintings as a room-filling oeuvre.

In a far more powerful way than a chronological hanging could achieve, the manner in which the paintings were fit together on the walls presented Moreau's oeuvre as an unshakable whole, the single creation of a singular author. Contrasting with the air of timeless permanence created by the symmetrical arrangements of the canvases were several paintings positioned on easels in each of the galleries. This odd combination was but one of the instances where the double nature of the studio/gallery floors manifested itself. It revealed a museological ambiguity that was significant in regard to both the issue of "hiding making, showing creation" and the unfinished nature of much of Moreau's oeuvre, which startled so many contemporary critics. Although conforming to the established studio typology in their architecture, in reality the rooms on the second and third floors were not the spaces where Moreau had worked during the "fifty years" he refers to in his testament. In fact, Moreau had worked there for only two years, the new studios having been built on top of the old apartment and replacing the much smaller attic studio where he had indeed worked for most of his career. Testimonies recall this latter studio as a small and cramped space where hundreds of works must have been accumulating.[20] To claim, however, that the spaces one visits today are not Moreau's real studio would be an exaggeration, as we know Moreau worked there feverishly in the last years of his life, attempting to finish dozens of canvases all at once, with over 100 easels scattered all over the place.[21] Nonetheless, there remains a good deal of doublespeak here, for what were actually constructed at the end of Moreau's life were future museum galleries in the guise of extensive studios. Having been turned into museum galleries, the rooms could still present themselves as former studio spaces. Some of Moreau's and Henri Rupp's museological choices further enhance the ambiguity of the script offered to visitors in interpreting these two upper floors and the works presented there.

Moreau's instructions to his pupil and companion Rupp about how to arrange his future museum reveal that the artist himself may also have been ambiguous about certain aspects. Some of his notes concerning the organization of the studio galleries throw an interesting light on the issue of the spaces' semantic ambiguity. In one of his late "to-do" lists, for example, Moreau reminds himself to put catches on

all his paintings on easels, and to fix them in a permanent way to easels of sufficient strength.[22] Had the works indeed been exhibited on easels, the studio spaces would have appeared much less like museum galleries than they do today, while the "unfinished" character of many of Moreau's paintings would have been underlined by the museological arrangement. Yet even if Moreau did think of arranging his paintings permanently on easels, he clearly did not intend to leave behind a studio as if caught in the act of making. A late note to Henri Rupp orders:

> Studios neatly arranged [...]. Let nothing lie around, whether they are drawings, small paintings, sketches, unmounted cartoons, tracings etc. etc. etc. everything must be labeled and arranged in perfect order by genre and family.[23]

In addition, an undated drawing – the only known one of its kind – which visualizes a museum-like hanging in the studio/gallery gives no indication that the presentation on easels was meant to be permanent; on the contrary (fig. 1). The sketch shows the short wall of the large gallery opposite the spiral staircase with three monumental paintings hung next to each other above the *cimaise*. Closer inspection proves that this corresponds with the current hanging of the triad described above, with the exception of the *Moses* in the sketch, which was eventually replaced by the *Argonauts*. This larger canvas probably fitted better next to the meanwhile enlarged versions of both *Tyrtaeus* and *The Pretenders*.[24] The details of the future museological organization Gustave Moreau and Henri Rupp may have discussed in Moreau's last years are not recorded. What we do know is that, in a 1903 meeting of the museum's administrative board, Rupp proposed selling all but seven of the easels, together with other studio furniture such as pieces of protective linoleum and some stools.[25] Far from evoking the landscape of easels Desvallières described, the occasional easels museum visitors encounter support framed pictures and never threaten the prevailing museum-like order of the whole. They merely color the museological situation with some reminders of the galleries' (brief) previous lives as studios (fig. 2).

Far more important than the easels in potentially subverting the

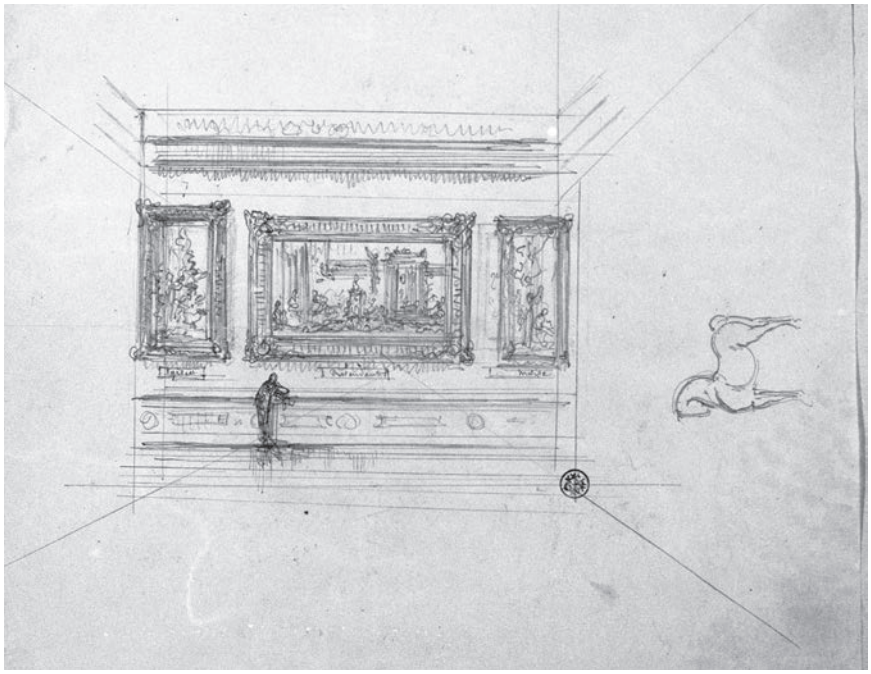

FIG. 1 Gustave Moreau, sketch for the hanging on a wall in the gallery on the second floor, n.d., Paris, Musée Gustave Moreau, inv. no. Dessin 5054. Photo: Agence photographique de la Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris

script of visiting museum galleries is the unusual furniture that Henri Rupp had installed. These cabinets, containing thousands of drawings, color studies and watercolors that can be leafed through, invite visitors to assume a more active role than in most museums. And whereas the gallery walls create an epiphany of Gustave Moreau's oeuvre in its ultimate coherence, these cabinets challenge this illusion, opening up instead onto an archive that actually documents the process of making and its by-products. Reports underlining the way in which the museum allowed visitors to understand Moreau's working process relate in particular to this material: "One thus assists in the gestation of these works, one follows their various phases up to the moment of their definitive form, which appears like a magnificent synthesis of all the power of the artist's efforts."[26]

If Moreau's creative process is indeed extensively documented in the thousands of preparatory drawings, color studies and cartoons, any reconstruction of this process must depend on the museum vis-

FIG. 2 Musée Gustave Moreau, view from the first gallery looking into the second gallery on the third floor, with some of the remaining easels. Photo: Maarten Liefooghe

itor's initiative. The fact is, however, the various documents relating to the creation of a particular painting are not presented together in a logical sequence, but are dispersed over several cabinets containing drawings, oil sketches and watercolors, respectively. A series of eight wall cabinets situated under the windowsills on both floors disclose

4,831 drawings. These sketches and studies in pencil and charcoal cover the whole of Moreau's life, from his study trip to Italy in 1841 to the preparatory drawings for his last painting, *Les Lyres mortes*, but their organization is more iconographical than chronological. A free-standing wooden cabinet in the first gallery on the third floor contains a wealth of small oil paintings mounted on both sides of panels that can be pulled out. A similar piece of furniture can be found in the second gallery. It contains the pick of Moreau's watercolors, and can be turned on its axis so as to allow viewing of the framed and hinged watercolors on each of the four sides in optimal light (fig. 3). This presentation according to medium gives a broader significance to the drawings, oil sketches and watercolors than merely preparatory material. A claim to their status as works in their own right might also be indicated by the fact that in his last months, Moreau himself selected 4,831 drawings (out of 8,000 preserved) to be permanently displayed, and even signed them.

It appears that the staging of the artist Moreau in the "studio galleries," both by himself and by his intimates, transcends the hiding

FIG. 3 Musée Gustave Moreau, rotating cabinet with hinged panels for the watercolors in the second gallery on the third floor. Photo: Maarten Liefooghe

making/showing creation opposition. This corresponds to some of Moreau's ideas about artistic identity. Once again, the phrasing of his bequest is significant: it had to permit the assessment of "the sum of the work and the efforts of the artist during his life" in perpetuity. In his writings, Moreau links the concept of genius with a life dedicated to art, stating that between two equally gifted artists, genius will be apparent in all its splendor in the artist who has lived the fullest artistic life.[27] For Moreau, the opposition between *creation* and *making* resolves itself, as he argues that an artist's true greatness must be measured by an evaluation of both his dedicated *effort* and the *oeuvre* that results from it. Nonetheless, Moreau's acts – for example, pre-selecting those drawings to be exhibited and those to be merely stored – demonstrate how he remained conscious of the tension between making and creation, between the work (labor) in or outside the studio and the work (oeuvre) that remains and will be assessed time and again after the artist's death. Traces of this consciousness had already appeared early in Moreau's life. In letters written during his stay in Italy, Moreau, then little more than 30 years old, informs his parents of his plans to conceive a life's work and of the consequences of this resolution: "I am certain, I believe, that I have something new and very grand to say in painting, but it will take more than an oeuvre to understand this something. It will take the work [*oeuvre*] of my life to prove it."[28] The consequence of according this weight to his entire production is that even the smallest piece of work obtains a significance in the light of posthumous evaluation: "I am now very afraid of leaving behind something that is bad or easily criticized. Even my most insignificant sketches preoccupy me terribly."[29]

ARCHIVAL POLITICS

In contrast to the oeuvre the studio galleries made public "in its entirety" and at once following the house's (partial) opening as a museum, the artist's archives, preserved behind the scenes of the museum, only became public gradually in the course of the century after Moreau's death. The documents that came to light are the product of a dual archival politics: the memorial politics of Moreau on the

one hand, and those of the posthumous guardians of the archives on the other. Moreau's papers are obviously critical with regard to the artist's aspired double yet partial disappearing act, with the oeuvre masking the artist and the artist supplanting the man.

Moreau's instructions to Rupp were first of all to burn all of his intimate correspondence. Against this intended "hiding" stands the intentional "showing" of correspondence with regard to Moreau the artist. Moreau expressed the hope that the preservation of such letters would militate against his image as an inaccessible and antisocial hermit – for example, in Joris-Karl Huysmans's famous description of him as a mystic secluded in the center of Paris. In a note to Henri Rupp, Moreau wrote:

> I intend to show that I was not an unapproachable and asocial savage, as certain spiteful imbeciles would have us believe. Set aside, to be kept quite apart and safely locked away, that group of letters and cards that deal with my profession and my relations as a painter with art lovers and dealers, as well as those of my male and female friends that contain nothing intimate or secret. These proofs of my good relations with both my dear friends or even those more distant ones should be preserved – under lock and key.[30]

Similarly, a substantial part of Moreau's writings, the *notices* of 1897, seems to aim at correcting another "misunderstanding." These commentaries, in which Moreau interprets his own works, were written and edited with great care and clearly in the light of posterity, as an integral part of Moreau's bequest.[31] Nevertheless, it was only little by little that fragments of Moreau's writings were made available. In the months after Moreau's death, Henri Rupp claimed that the artist had prohibited the publication of his writings, although Moreau's testament contains no such indications. Until the first publication of a substantial selection of Moreau's writings in 1984, his notes became public only indirectly, for example in the 1904 edition of the museum catalogue where the descriptions of the paintings were based on Moreau's own notes.[32] Another case of Rupp hiding what Moreau had left in his archives concerns a set of photographs of models posing

in the old studio. These photographs were only discovered in the 1980s by curator Geneviève Lacambre, as Rupp had – in Lacambre's words, chastely – hidden most of them in a box entitled "photographies appartenant à M. H.R. [Henri Rupp]."[33] Lacambre's account of the discovery reveals a shift in position of the guardians of the artist's archives from that of perhaps over-loyal intimates to the more distant position of later curators, a shift also from pious respect for Moreau's presumed wishes to a validation of art historical interests. This shift is also apparent in the museological handling of the apartment on the first floor. Probably the most intimate part of Moreau's bequest, this apartment was added to the visitor's circuit only 90 years after the house opened as museum.

MAKING INTIMACY PUBLIC

The apartment consists in large part of the living quarters of Gustave Moreau's parents. After the death of his widowed mother, Moreau appears to have kept the spaces untouched, as a personal memorial to his family. When the building was altered in the 1890s, the apartment remained undisturbed at the core of the building. Yet the state in which these interiors entered the house-museum was far from that of a mere document of the artist's family's living habits. In his last months, Moreau symbolically remodeled the interiors into what Geneviève Lacambre described as his "petit musée sentimental." Moreau's proscriptions regarding the posthumous fate of these spaces seem to aim at perpetuating the apartment's character as a holy shrine. Whereas the artist allowed Rupp to continue to occupy a second apartment on the ground floor, as well as to take his place in the small office on the first floor, he was required to respect the sanctification of the apartment interior. He was not to use it himself and was to watch over all who entered it: "The only solitary places, unvisited except in order to clean them, and he [Rupp] knows as well as I do, are the family rooms and apartment where no one is allowed except with special permission."[34]

The apartment thematizes the memory of Moreau's life and of the people who were dear to him: his family, his mistress, and artists he

admired or who were his friends. Selected decorative objects, photographs and small works of art add a dense symbolic layer to the furniture arrangement typical of a salon or a dining room. Each room appears to be dedicated to a theme in Moreau's life. In the previously discussed *cabinet de réception*, for example, this appears to be his absorption of the classical tradition. Apart from the copies the artist made during his stay in Italy there are also glazed cupboards containing antiquities and antiquarian editions of architectural treatises that Moreau had inherited from his father Louis Moreau, an architect who also took care of Moreau's private education. A series of small and varied artworks decorate the modest hallway. Small paintings by Moreau hang next to works by – or portraits of – friends such as Fromentin or Berchère, and drawings or reproductions of artists that he admired – figures as diverse as Rembrandt, Poussin, Chassériau and Burne-Jones. A group of photographs and engravings of Moreau's own best-known works hangs in the dining room – those that had established his name at the Salons of the 1860s. This group in some sense complements the oeuvre presented on the upper floors. The next room is often called the bedroom because it contains a bed, but it was actually the living room used by Moreau's parents. It is full of portraits and reminders of family and friends, mostly of Moreau's parents, but also of his sister (who had died as a child), his grandparents, and Henri Rupp. There is a series of townscapes of Italian cities by Victor-Jean Nicolle, probably belonging to the original living room interior, as did most of the furniture, as well as a number of small pictures of the estate of Moreau's grandfather. Here, too, is the portrait of Moreau painted by Edgar Degas in Rome in 1859, a souvenir of a friendship that had cooled considerably by the time Moreau remodeled these interiors. The organization of the souvenirs in this room culminates in a large glazed frame containing miniature objects, photographs, medals of honor, jewelry, and toys. The last room, the boudoir, preserves the memory of Moreau's "unique et meilleure amie," Alexandrine Dureux. Her presence is evoked with furniture that had once belonged to her and in a series of watercolors that Moreau had given her, and which he later purchased back from her heirs shortly after her death. The subject matter of many of the artworks exhibited here – *Conversation amoureuse*, *Leda and the Swan* – is as program-

matic as the presence of two photographs of Alexandrine by Nadar.

There is an obvious paradox in the combination of Moreau's meticulous autobiographical arrangement of this apartment and his explicit instructions to Henri Rupp to close it off from public view. The care Moreau invested in this biographical "shadow museum" makes his disappearing act far less unequivocal than is often suggested. The man Moreau is only partially eclipsed by the artist and his oeuvre, all the more so as, although against Moreau's wishes, the apartment was opened to the public in 1991.[35] Still, the intimate spaces now added to the house-museum do not suddenly reveal the man; instead they constitute just another mask the artist left behind to be interpreted. The interiors constitute a coded autobiographical text which museum visitors can enjoy nosing through, but they can never penetrate it to find the private man beneath. The museum's violation of the restrictions on accessibility instituted by Moreau does not alter the text itself. What is altered by the apartment's unconditional exposure to the visiting public is the readability of the subtle constellation of masks that Moreau upheld to shape his public artistic image. In the studios transformed into museum galleries, Moreau and Rupp could stage an oeuvre never completely detached from the demonstration of the efforts of its making. And, on the level below, everyday living quarters could be turned into a family memorial. Yet the meaningful constellation of both spaces involved more than just a spatial division of different aspects of Moreau's subjectivity; it also involved a significant differentiation in access to these spaces, which has now been leveled out. With each shift of the boundary between stage and the reduced offstage, 14, rue de la Rochefoucauld confirms itself as a public house-museum that forces Moreau to simplify his posthumous performance of hiding and showing.

NOTES

1 "Sa maison était déjà presque un musée, sa personne n'était presque plus que le lieu où s'accomplissait une oeuvre." "Notes sur le monde mystérieux de Gustave Moreau," in: Frédéric Chaleil (ed.), *Gustave Moreau par ses contemporains* (Paris: Les Éditions de Paris, 1998), 103.

2 "C'est que Moreau représente une singulière équation entre l'*odi profanum* [...] et le *sinite venire* [...]; entre la chaire d'enseignement et la tour d'ivoire." From Robert de Montesquiou, *Altesses Sérénissimes*, reprinted in ibid., 81.

3 Peter Cooke, "Gustave Moreau and the Reinvention of History Painting," *Art Bulletin* 90/3 (2008) 394.

4 "Gustave Moreau fut obscurément célèbre." Ary Renan, "Gustave Moreau (premier article)," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (1899) 6.

5 Sar [Joséphin] Péladan, "Gustave Moreau," *L'Ermitage* X/1 (1895) 30.

6 "Son sentiment était que l'individualité de l'artiste ne doit en aucun cas se produire en public et qu'il convient à l'homme de disparaître derrière son oeuvre tout entier." Ary Renan, "Gustave Moreau," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (1900) 129; quoted in Pierre-Louis Mathieu, *Gustave Moreau* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 221.

7 "Je lègue ma maison sise 14 rue de La Rochefoucauld avec tout ce qu'elle contient, peintures, dessins, cartons, etc, etc, travail de cinquante années, comme aussi ce que renferment, dans ladite maison, les anciens appartements occupés jadis par mon père et ma mère: à l'Etat ou à son défaut à la Ville de Paris ou à son défaut à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts ou à son défaut à l'Institut de France (Académie des Beaux-Arts) à cette condition expresse de garder toujours, ce serait mon vœu le plus cher, ou au moins aussi longtemps que possible, cette collection, en lui conservant ce caractère d'ensemble qui permette toujours de constater la somme de travail et d'efforts de l'artiste pendant sa vie." The testament is published in full in Geneviève Lacambre, "Maison d'artiste, maison-musée: l'exemple de Gustave Moreau," *Dossiers du Musée d'Orsay* 12 (Paris: Ministère de la culture et de la communication, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1987), 47–48.

8 See Marie-Cécile Forest, "Le Musée Gustave-Moreau a cent ans. Les coulisses d'une ouverture," in: Marie-Cécile Forest (ed.), *Gustave Moreau. Mythes & chimères* (Paris: Paris Musées/Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2003), 27–54.

9 "Ce qui demeura si longtemps un mystère nous est de la sorte révélé. On comprend maintenant, en présence de ces travaux immenses, dont l'achèvement occuperait dix existences d'artistes, pourquoi Gustave Moreau s'enfermait dans son atelier où il n'admettait aucun familier et ne voulait recevoir aucune visite." Valensol, "La Maison d'un Artiste," *Le Petit Parisien*, 9 October 1902.

10 "D'année en année, j'ajoute des détails augmentatifs, suivant que l'Idée vient, à mes deux cents oeuvres posthumes, car, je veux que mon art apparaisse tout à coup, et tout entier, un moment après ma mort." Quoted in Péladan 1895, 30.

11 "Mais nous ne le pourront que lorsque cet artiste tant méconnu d'abord, malgré quelques caresses apparentes, aura disparu, ne laissant après lui que ces témoignages si nobles de son passage sur cette terre. Alors on jugera, alors on jaugera, alors on comprendra et on verra, comme ce fut de tous temps, et ce que l'on a perdu et ce qu'on possédait, ce qui aura été ajouté à ce bel héritage des maîtres." Quoted in Peter Cooke (ed.), *Ecrits sur l'art par Gustave Moreau* (Fontfroide: Fata Morgana, 2002), 170.

12 Moreau in ibid., 167. See Edgar Zilsel and Johann Dvorak (eds.), *Die Geniereligion.*

Ein kritischer Versuch über das moderne Persönlichkeitsideal, mit einer historischen Begründung (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990 [1st edition 1926]).

13 "[…] il m'apparut exclusivement occupé de m'éconduire avec égards. Je ne pus obtenir, et je ne crois pas qu'on ait obtenu davantage, que de voir ce qui était au mur." Quoted in Péladan 1895, 30. Geneviève Lacambre situates this first visit to Moreau in 1885: Lacambre 1987, 16.

14 See Lacambre 1987; Maarten Liefooghe, "The Musée Gustave Moreau: Collecting Life and Work as Proof of a Genius's Contribution to Art," *Journal of the History of Collections* 21/3 (2009) 195, 197.

15 "Ses amis, ses visiteurs, rares privilégiés se souviennent du décor de son cabinet de réception, dans lequel fièrement et modestement, son glorieux nom ne s'offrait à lire qu'au-dessous de belles ou charmantes répliques. […] ce Musée entrouvert […]." Quoted in Chaleil 1998, 71–72.

16 "Il y a évidemment un illogisme dans cette conduite d'un artiste qui refuse de montrer son oeuvre en acceptant d'enseigner son art officiellement, qui semble dédaigner le suffrage de ses pairs pour accepter la banale distinction de l'Institut." Péladan 1895, 30.

17 "Ah! que ce serait méconnaître ce caractère si pur, que d'attribuer à je ne sais quel orgueil cette résolution de ne se laisser juger après la mort et de disparaître entièrement derrière son oeuvre accomplie!" Arsène Alexandre, "La maison d'un maître," *Le Figaro*, 25 November 1898.

18 *Catalogue sommaire des Peintures, Dessins, Cartons et Aquarelles exposés dans les galeries du Musée Gustave Moreau* (Paris: Musée Gustave Moreau, 1902).

19 "[…] ces deux vastes salles, dont les opaques parois semblent transparentes, enluminées, illuminées, tels que des verrières sous lesquelles le soleil jouerait, de la resplendissante comparution de toutes les Théogonies." Quoted in Chaleil 1998, 70.

20 No photographs are known of this studio, except for a series of photographs of posing models in which the studio appears in the margins. See below.

21 Moreau's close friend Desvallières recalled his impressions when visiting the studio for the first time after Moreau's death and mentions how that it was encumbered with more than 100 easels, each bearing a canvas. See Lacambre 1987, 28.

22 Annexe X, "Extraits des notes écrites par Gustave Moreau dans un petit carnet noir à la fin de 1897 ou en 1898," reprinted in ibid., 49.

23 "Ateliers bien rangés […] Ne rien laisser trâiner quoique ce soit dessins petites peintures, croquis, cartons non tendus calqués etc etc etc tout doit être étiqueté et rangé avec un ordre parfait par genre et par famille." Annexe XI, "Notes rédigées par Gustave Moreau le 2 février 1898 et destinées à Henri Rupp," reprinted in ibid., 50.

24 See Geneviève Lacambre, *Gustave Moreau. Maître sorcier* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 95.

25 Forest 2003, 41.

26 "On assiste ainsi à la gestation de ces oeuvres, on les suit dans leurs phases diverses, jusqu'au cadre définitif où s'accuse en une magnifique synthèse toute la puissance de l'effort." Valensol 1902.

27 "Si Dieu a beaucoup donné, certes, l'artiste sera supérieur à l'artiste qui aura beau-

coup acquis . . . mais, à don égal, le génie sera dans toute sa splendeur chez l'artiste qui aura le plus vécu." Quoted in Cooke 2002, 173.

28 "J'ai certes, je le crois, quelque chose de bien neuf et de très élevé à dire en peinture, mais il faudra plus d'une oeuvre pour faire bien comprendre ce quelque chose. Il faudra l'oeuvre de toute ma vie pour le prouver." Luisa Capodieci, *Gustave Moreau. Correspondance d'Italie* (Paris: Somogy, 2002), 236.

29 "[...] je crains très fort maintenant de laisser quoi que ce soit derrière moi qui soit ou mauvais ou trop critiquable. Mes croquis les plus insignifiants même me préoccupent beaucoup." Ibid., 172.

30 "Je tiens à montrer que je n'ai pas été un sauvage inabordable et insociable comme certains imbéciles, malveillants ont souvent cherché à le faire croire. On mettra de coté et bien à part dans un lot qu'on renfermerait à part les lettres cartes écrites ayant trait à ma profession et à mes rapports de peintre à amateurs et marchands comme aussi les lettres d'amis hommes & femmes qui ne renfermeraient rien d'intime ou de secret. Ces preuves de bons rapports d'amis connaissances intimes ou d'autres même mondains doivent être conservées – mis sous clef." Annexe XI "Notes rédigées part Gustave Moreau le 2 février 1898 et destinées à Henri Rupp," reprinted in Lacambre 1987, 49–50.

31 This is Peter Cooke's conviction; see Cooke 2002, 25.

32 Pierre-Louis Mathieu (ed.), *L'assembleur de rêves. Écrits complets de Gustave Moreau* (Fontfroide: Fata Morgana, 1984).

33 "Pudiquement cachées." Lacambre 2008, 23.

34 "Les seuls endroit sollitaires, invisités excepté pour les nettoyages, et il [Rupp] comprend cela aussi bien que moi, seront les chambres et appartement de famille où personne n'entrera que d'après ses ordres." Annexe IX, "Brouillon de note rédigée à l'encre par Gustave Moreau à l'intention d' Henri Rupp vers 1897–98?" reprinted in ibid., 48.

35 Ragnar von Holten's 1960 publication of a series of photographs of the apartment in a little monograph meant a first breach of the apartment's secret status. The *cabinet de reception* was added to the visitor's circuit in 2003, on the occasion of the museum's centenary celebration. Ragnar von Holten, *L'art fantastique de Gustave Moreau* (Paris: Pauvert, 1960).

CHAPTER 6

The Artist as Centerpiece. The Image of the Artist in Studio Photographs of the Nineteenth Century

MAYKEN JONKMAN

In the winter of 1903 and during the spring of 1904, the Dutch photographer Sigmund Löw (1845–1910) and one of his assistants, Henry Jan Bordes (1870–1963), visited at least 35 artists with the intention of capturing their image in the studio. Both photographers worked for Atelier S. Herz, an Amsterdam studio that had a lucrative sideline in the fabrication of mirrors and, more interestingly, in the sale and framing of artworks. At some point around 1900, Herz began to focus on photography, mostly turning out portraits on demand and publishing photos as picture postcards, as well as acquiring an offset machine and setting up a distribution system. The subjects of the picture postcards were mostly cityscapes made either by Herz's own employees or by other photographers, such as Pieter Oosterhuis (1816–1885). Herz also did a brisk trade in the sale of portraits of celebrities, for example actors. By 1903 Atelier Herz had become a professional photography studio, abandoning the mirror factory and other activities.[1]

Löw and his assistants preferred a sober, documentary style of photography: the actors, for example, are dressed for their role of the moment, but the acting itself, the gestures and facial expressions which were so often part of actors' photographic portraits, was mostly absent. Herz's photographs were not marred by the fancy pictorialism or strange angles so typical of the art photography of the time. The soberness of Herz's photography extended to the series of art-

ists' portraits, showing the painters and sculptors at the heart of their studio with as much of the workspace as possible visible within the frame. By placing the artist in a corner of the room with all his tools, the studio seemed larger than in reality was the case.

The selection of artists chosen by Atelier Herz is interesting. Most were members of the Hague School circle; glaringly absent is the younger generation of the Amsterdam School who by 1903 were established and respected artists in their own right. One is surprised, for example, to find no photograph of either George Hendrik Breitner or Willem Witsen's studio. If the photographers' aim had been to capture the 30 best artists of their time, we would today have chosen rather differently. Nevertheless, around 1900 these artists were probably very well known. There are, however, a few exceptions: Eduard Frankfort and Constant Alban were little known for their painting. Löw and Bordes might have photographed them because they were personally acquainted, possibly through their activities as art dealers.

Also striking is the apparent absence of a reason for making the photographs. Considering the fact that Atelier Herz was a commercial business, the most obvious suggestion would be that the photos were made to be sold. Herz had had several photographs published in magazines and newspapers and it is possible that this series was intended for the same purpose. However, only three of them were ever published, of which two more than 20 years after being taken. Another option might be that Löw, who had owned the studio since his marriage to Herz's widow, was compiling material for a publication on Dutch artists in their studios in the manner of Joseph Parkin Mayall's *Artists at Home* of 1884, or Ralph Winwood Robinson's *Members and Associates of the Royal Academy of Arts, 1891, Photographed in their Studios*. The same genre was practiced in several other countries, such as France and Germany, around that time.[2] Whereas Robinson focused on the artist sitting at his easel, leaving out the surroundings of the studio, Mayall and Löw concentrated on the studio space itself. The resemblance between Mayall's photos and those of Löw is remarkable. Interesting is also the critique that Mayall received when his series was published. The reviewer for the *Art Journal* wrote: "[...] these plates do not show us the artist really at home; or, at least, they show

them only as they are at home to the photographer. All the handsome furniture has been piled into that part of the room which is represented in the plate, while the owner of the studio has posed himself gracefully at the right point."[3]

Whether or not Löw intended to publish his series is pure speculation, as no such a book ever saw the light of day. All the same, one can imagine that the series published in a book, using a beautiful reproduction technique such as photogravure, with a richly decorated leather binding, would have made a completely different impact on the viewer than the photographs as published in a magazine, with their grainy texture. Photographs, and images in general, played a role in the way artists presented themselves. This chapter will look at how artists built their image, and what can be deduced from photographs and the manner in which they were distributed. It will focus on the Dutch situation within the context of the images made by Mayall in particular, and on studio photographs in general.

DISGUISING PRACTICE

Löw's choice of composition and framing in his studio series was very common, as the comparison between Mayall and Löw has already shown. In France and Great Britain, such photographs were published as early as 1880. In the Netherlands, similar scenes only gained popularity at the end of the century. This type of photography can be seen as an extension of the *cartes de visites* of well-known men and women that were published between 1850 and 1870, for example, the series *Galerie des contemporains* by the Parisian photographer A.A.E. Disdéri (1819–1889) or the Dutch photographer Maurits Verveer (1817–1903) in *Tijdgenooten in Kunsten en Wetenschappen*. These were collected in special albums. By the time magazines started using photography for illustration, the general public had become interested in glimpses behind the scenes of artists lives. Many family magazines and newspapers in Europe therefore carried items on painters' studios in the second half of the nineteenth century. The articles, mostly written in the form of a visit to the studio and with a lengthy description of the workspace, were initially accompanied by prints and later by photo-

FIG. 1 Atelier Herz, *Julius van de Sande Bakhuyzen in his Studio on the Huygensstraat 19 in The Hague*, 1903, The Hague, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD)

graphs. Most such articles can be considered puff pieces, portraying the artist almost as a caricature: amicable jolly fellows with twinkling eyes, offering cigars and drinks to the visiting journalist. On the other hand, they were also presented as artistically inspired and living for their work (fig. 1). The Löw photographs underwrite this idea in an obvious nineteenth-century fashion by picturing the painters in the midst of their creations and with palette in hand, some of them touching the brush to the canvas although the work is already framed. One should here take into account the fact that even after a work had been framed, painting was often done as a way to judge its light and shadow effects on the picture, and that the final painterly touches were mostly made just before the work left the studio or even while already hanging on an exhibition wall – the term "varnishing day" or *vernissage* derives from this practice.[4] Most of the paintings before which the artists are seated, however, are clearly already finished. It is clear that these artists did not want a casual observer to see their work in progress. The same applies to the photographs made by Mayall, with

the obvious difference that whereas the photographs of the Dutch artists attempt to give the *impression* of working, most of the British artists prefer to read, study examples or simply lean on the mantelpiece, having cast aside their palettes altogether. The obvious exception being the sculptor William Hamo Thornycroft, who is shown with his hands immersed in clay, the sleeves of his velvet working-jacket dirty up to the elbow.[5] To what extent, therefore, do photographs reflect the reality of studio practice?

It was not only the pose of the artist that defined their self-conception; clothing was also an indication. Most of them are shown wearing suits more appropriate for an outing. Even when they did don a smock of some sort, they chose a clean one. The sculptor Jozef Mendes da Costa's overalls, for example, still bear the evidence of the iron. Almost all the artists are pictured with as many artworks as possible gathered into the frame; there is, in fact, hardly any elbowroom left to work.

As we have seen, most of the painters are shown only with finished work, and quite a lot of it already framed, ready to be hung on exhibition or art dealers' walls. There are a few exceptions, however, such as Isaac Israels and Jozef Mendes da Costa. Israels's studio is a sparsely and functionally decorated space without any knickknacks, antiques or floor coverings. All the paintings in the photograph are unframed, and some of them are clearly unfinished. Mendes's studio also stands in stark contrast to the workspaces filled with antiques, furniture and *bric-à-brac*. Only two works are shown and the wall at the back is covered with water stains. This might have something to do with the fact that he was a sculptor; these studios often seem more like a working environment, with all the dirt that entailed, than a showroom. An additional argument could be that both Israels and Mendes da Costa were of a younger generation than most of the artists photographed and consequently had different ideas as to how an artist should present himself. What is interesting is that such studios are entirely absent in the other photographers' series: all Mayall's artists, for example, have beautifully decorated interiors.

Evidence from photographs and descriptions seems to indicate that artists of the Hague School had a preference for seventeenth-century furniture, whether it was original or nineteenth-century copies. To understand this inclination, we have to examine the Dutch political and economic situation as it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century and how this influenced the desired image of the artist.

The Netherlands was in a political turmoil around 1800 following several wars with the British and an internal struggle for power between Orangists and Patriots, ending in victory for the latter, who were supported by the French. Within a few years, the French became oppressors, a situation that ended only with the defeat of Napoleon I and the return of William I as King of the Netherlands and Belgium. In 1830 the Belgians revolted, and by 1839 they had become independent. During this whole period one financial crisis followed the other. People began to look for an example worthy of following in order to rebuild the nation's confidence. It will come as no surprise that the seventeenth century was selected. During that period Holland was one of the most powerful countries in the world, not only in the political arena, but also on an artistic and scientific front. Nineteenth-century artists were encouraged either to paint in the manner of their great predecessors or to picture scenes from history, focusing on the Dutch Golden Age. For the latter, painters had to try and capture seventeenth-century reality – as perceived in the nineteenth century, of course – as closely as possible.

An interesting example in this case is a painting by Hendrik Johannes Scholten of the studio of Bartholomeus van der Helst, depicting the artist receiving Princess Mary Stuart, whose portrait he had been painting. Looking at Scholten's version of the studio, one notices the similarities with the portrait the seventeenth-century artist had painted of Mary Stuart in 1652. Her clothing and brooch are the same, as is the carpet on the floor. Scholten allowed himself some artistic freedom by also showing Van der Helst's well-known portrait of the civic guard, now in the Amsterdam Museum. Van der Helst had finished that painting some four years earlier than the portrait of the widow of stadholder Willem II. The cabinet in the background can be

found in several of Scholten's paintings; it is very likely that it stood in the artist's studio.[6]

Indeed, most Dutch history painters collected antiques with the intention of using them as props and scenery in their art. This was reflected in the way they decorated their studios and quite a few became famous connoisseurs, their collections often ending up in museums. Although the historical background differs from that of Great Britain, the studios Mayall photographed also show artists who collected with the intention of using their studio decoration as props for their paintings. Good examples in this case are Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema and Frederic Lord Leighton.

As the interest in the seventeenth century was so strong in the Netherlands, exhibitions were organized on the subject, often with artists as major lenders. Writers and historians started doing research into the lives of artists from the Golden Age, revising the stories that had long circulated about them, for example that Rembrandt was a miser and a lout, originally written down by artists and theoreticians such as Arnold Houbraken.

During the course of the nineteenth century, history painting became less and less popular and the focus shifted to landscape and genre painting. Although having an antique interior was no longer necessary for an artist's work, artists nevertheless maintained seventeenth century furnishings for their studios. This indicates an ulterior motive: antiques were not simply collected with the intention of being used in works of art.

The deep interest in the seventeenth century and the burgeoning knowledge about the period gave it an unprecedented popularity. So much so that people who could afford to would decorate parts of their houses in this style. This was especially true for the last quarter of the century, when interior decoration was linked to the use of the space in question, and depended on whether the rooms were reserved for the man of the house or his wife. The boudoir, for example, mainly the domain of the female side of the family, was decorated in soft, ornate styles, such as Rococo or Louis XVI. The study and the library, on the other hand, usually reserved for the male counterpart, were done up in a heavier, darker manner, more often than not in the seventeenth-century Dutch style. One should take into account that in

the nineteenth century, antiques were not viewed with the same reverence as today. According to the taste of the time, "neo" was just as acceptable and often even preferable because it was in pristine condition. There, at least, artists had an edge over the public in general, preferring real antiques and probably seeing the beauty of the originals long before it became fashionable to collect them. Antiques were also much more affordable. Only in the last quarter of the nineteenth century did prices rise, mainly because British dealers came to the Netherlands and began buying in bulk.

Those who did collect real antiques started quite early on. For example, the art collector Abraham Willet decorated his study with Old Dutch furniture, wall hangings and weapons around 1870. Another collector, J.F.S. Esser, who collected modern art from the first quarter of the twentieth century, including early works by Piet Mondrian, furnished his cellar with all the trappings of a seventeenth-century barroom, complete with a supposed Frans Hals.

In 1888, Hendrik Petrus Berlage, architect of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange (1903), designed a studio-house for an architectural contest. Berlage won the first prize with his design for a studio in antique Dutch style. Although artists were the first to start decorating their studios in this manner, mainly as an end to furnish their paintings, it was the public who made the Dutch seventeenth-century style so extraordinarily popular. I would like to suggest that artists in the second half of the century catered to their public, among other things by decorating their studios in the same fashion as their prospective clients and thereby mirroring their aspirations, primarily their respectability. After all, artists specializing in landscapes had no need of antiques for their paintings. It could have been their taste or passion for collecting, but that does little to explain the immense number of studios decorated in this manner during the second half of the century. Even in 1903, as Löw's photographs demonstrate, this was still the style used by most Dutch artists. They sought to create an image of themselves as upstanding bourgeois citizens and used their studios to do so.

By using the Dutch seventeenth-century style for their studio interiors, artists, by association, presented themselves as learned. As already noted, the studies of upper-middle-class potential art buyers had same decorative scheme, so the connection was quickly made. By

extension, the artist demonstrated that his art belonged to the *artes liberales*, thereby answering the centuries-old question about whether painting and sculpture should be viewed as an art or as a craft, and the artist as someone who works with his mind or his hands, in favor of the former.

Even in the nineteenth century, the position of artists could be a sore point, and during most of the period, artists strove to create an image of themselves as gentlemen. Painters portrayed themselves as successful, well-dressed *burghers*. As noted above, the Dutch situation differs from the British one, but it is interesting to see that Mayall's and Robinson's photographs show the same preoccupation with the artist as an upstanding gentleman: hardly any of them show the slightest inclination for working at all. On the contrary, most of them are shown as if they were men of leisure.

GENTLEMEN ARTISTS

The image of the gentleman-artist was sustained during the whole century. Artists set so much store by this self-presentation that they began literally hiding their manual labor, physically separating the workspace from the formal presentation of their person and their work. The "show studio" was introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century. This was where the artist received the public who were both curious to see his work and eager to be seen in good company. Certain artists' studios became very fashionable, for example those of Hans Makart, Alma Tadema and Émile Auguste Carolus-Duran. These studios were seen as outstanding examples of interior decoration, filled with antiquities, potted palms and the inevitable *Makart bouquet*, consisting of peacock feathers, dried flowers and annual honesty (*Lunaria annua*), which was copied and found in salons throughout Europe during the latter part of the century. Although the show studio was widespread, in the Netherlands it seems that while quite a few artists had two or more studios, their functions were mixed. This could be the result of the Dutch nineteenth-century idea of the interior: in the Netherlands, the drawing room, where company was received, was never as fancy as in other Western European coun-

tries. The space was used for different occasions as well, as was the show studio.

Around 1880, the notion of the artist changed. The younger generation claimed they were no longer interested in public opinion and just wanted to make art for art's sake. These views were accompanied by a completely different image. The gentleman was replaced by images of artists that emphasized their manual labor, presenting themselves in smocks and working in studios that were bare and functional. At most, some studies were hung on the walls. The elaborate decorations of their predecessors disappeared.

Although this new generation of artists may have put more emphasis on their craftsmanship, the fact remains that the images of their studios do not necessarily show us more painterly practice than the pictures of the gentleman-artists. When looking at Löw's series we can deduce one or two things: for example, several artists are shown with works on paper – probably preliminary studies – on the floor. In some photographs, these are spread out rather artificially, but in reality many artists did lay their studies on the floor for inspiration and also used them to compose the final painting. The same goes for the studies on the wall. At first glance this might seem to be the showing of painterly practice, but in truth it was just another chance to show their finished, and thus saleable, work. By the time Mayall, Löw and Robinson made their photographs, preliminary studies had become acceptable for show and sale, viewed as full-fledged artworks in their own right.

All in all, the amount of information on studio practice that can be derived from photographs in the manner of Löw is disappointing. Looking at Mayall's and Robinson's work, daily practices are even harder to detect. No studies are in sight. The one exception is John MacWhirter, who is seen to be working after a sketch propped on a chair. A quaint detail in this photograph is that of the fur-lined slippers he is wearing (fig. 2).

The reason for this obfuscation probably lies in the fact that the photographs were intended for use as promotional material in journals or newspapers. Magazines had large audiences, and artists were probably wary of breaching the myths surrounding the making of a work of art. Interesting in this case, however, is the fact that Dutch

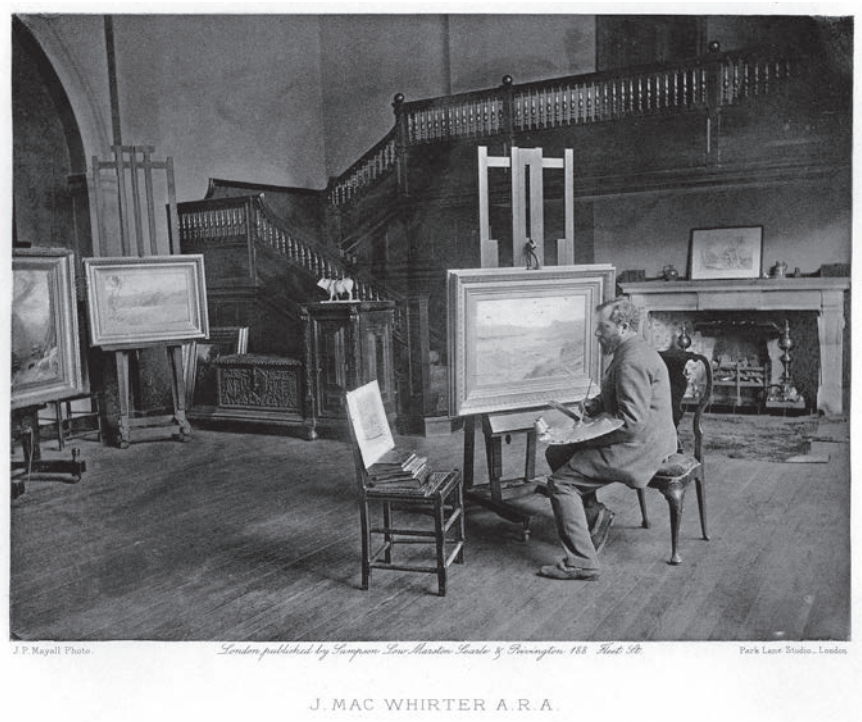

FIG. 2 Joseph Parkin Mayall, *John McWhirter in his Studio*, 1883, London, National Portrait Gallery

artists do seem to exhibit their painterly practices in the *painted* portrait, especially in comparison with other European countries. With the greatest ease, Dutch painters show their canvases in various states of the painting process. Some even show a blank canvas, while in the self-portraits of French, British and other artists, we only see the back of the support, hiding the picture in progress.

STUDIO SKETCHES

Another set of photographs, not intended for a large public, seems to show more of the working practices of the nineteenth-century artist. George Hendrik Breitner (1857–1923), who was not only a talented painter but also an enthusiastic photographer, made several photographs in his studio on Lauriergracht during the period that he worked on his *Kimono* series, between 1893 and 1895. The series of a

girl dressed in, alternately, a white, a red, and a midnight-blue kimono was well received in the press in 1894, although the critics were less than charmed by Geesje Kwak, Breitner's model: "the girl, with her plebian looks, deformed arms and hands, clashes with the richness of her Japanese surroundings."[7]

How Breitner actually made these pictures can be partly deduced from the photographs he took of his workspace and the models that came to pose for him. Breitner kept his studio functionally equipped: a few Persian carpets were scattered about the bare floorboards; sketches, mirrors and an animal skin hung on the walls. Below the large window was a divan, over which a kilim was spread. This sofa was used in posing sessions and simply moved around to wherever the light was most advantageous. There were also various Oriental folding screens, at least one with cranes and another one with flowers. Folding screens were often used to give models some privacy while changing. Breitner, however, may have bought them, just like the carpets, for the sake of his kimono-girl pictures. From a photograph it appears that Geesje for one did not always make use of the folding screen: Breitner photographed her after she had taken off her clothes and casually tossed them onto a chair, the screen standing in the background without having been used.

The kimonos in which the sixteen-year-old hat seller posed did not only feature in the painted series. Various photographs reveal that Breitner also had his models lie on the kimonos while he photographed them. The kimonos may also have served as dressing gowns when the models took a break: nineteenth-century studios were not exactly known for their agreeable room temperature.

Along with the divan, other objects in the studio were used when composing the paintings and the photographs. For instance, a large mirror can be seen in two photographs of a nude: in one, it hangs on a wall, and in the other, it is placed behind the model while she reclines on the daybed (fig. 3). The interior of Breitner's studio comes together in the kimono-girl pictures, in which almost all the objects played a role.

FIG. 3 George Hendrik Breitner, *Reclining Nude in the Studio of the Artist*, The Hague, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD). Photo: RKD

CONCLUSION

Breitner's photographs show us that painterly practice can be deduced only indirectly from images that actually had a different purpose. Breitner made the photographs as aids, as studies for his paintings. The photographs made by Atelier Herz, Mayall and others did not record the workings of the studio, but were taken with the intention of creating an image, a myth of that artist. Artists used their studios to accomplish this, primarily through interior decoration. The Dutch interior of choice in the second half of the nineteenth century was seventeenth-century, with dark, heavy furniture and wall coverings. Although painting materials, artworks and other objects were shown, the artist's everyday practice was concealed. These photographs show the artist as he wanted to be seen, but also how the photographers wanted to depict him. The sameness of the photographs is tedious, although it shows the influence the photographer had in the composition of the images. The artworks depicted were probably

chosen by the artists, and most of them preferred finished paintings already in the frame. The same goes for the clothing and pose. Although Mayall's photographs show more inventiveness and variation, making them more pleasing to the eye, they are even better at hiding making than Löw's. The photographs were created by both the photographer and the artist depicted, to project an idea of the artist and his studio and not to provide insight into the work in progress.

NOTES

1 Tineke de Ruiter and Steven Wachlin, "Atelier Herz," in: Ingeborg Leijerzapf (ed.), *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse fotografie* 39 (March 2008) 1–11.

2 Ibid., 10–11.

3 Anon., *The Art Journal* (1884) 256. Cited in Joanna Milk, *Artists at Home: Artifice and Presence*, http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/researchforum/projects/collecting-collections/documents/ArtistsatHome.pdf (Accessed 2 September 2012).

4 Hanna Melse, "Vernis: beschermer en aantaster der verf," in: Mayken Jonkman and Eva Geudeker (eds.), *Mythen van het atelier. Werkplaats en schilderpraktijk van de negentiende-eeuwse kunstenaar* (Zwolle/The Hague: De Jonge Hond, 2010), 204–205.

5 Joseph Parker Mayall, *Artists at Home* (London: Appleton, 1884).

6 Mayken Jonkman, "Couleur Locale. Het schildersatelier en de status van de kunstenaar," in: Jonkman and Geudeker 2010, 14–17.

7 Anon., *De Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 23 October 1894.

PART II

INTRODUCTION

Forms and Functions of the Studio from the Twentieth Century to Today

RACHEL ESNER

> *If you see yourself as an artist and you function in a studio and you are not a painter, if you don't start out with some canvas, you do all kinds of things – you sit in a chair or pace around. And then the question goes back to what is art? And art is what an artist does, just sitting around in his studio.*[1]
>
> BRUCE NAUMAN

In 2012, the British artist Damien Hirst complemented his first major retrospective at Tate Modern with a live internet feed to his London studio. Visitors to his personal website were offered a view into a bare working space, containing nothing but a round piece of wood or canvas, painted black, balanced on a set of legs; a couple of chairs; and several trolleys containing materials.[2] On the wall directly opposite the main webcam hung a large painting of one of Hirst's colorful trademark skulls. The artist himself was nowhere to be seen; instead, two assistants, working systematically but at a rather relaxed pace, covered the round canvas with small bits of shaped metal and paint in a regular, somewhat Orientalizing pattern. A second webcam, hung from the ceiling, allowed the viewer to track their progress. But what was it we actually saw? Not the artist at work, but his idea, his *concept*, carried out by others. Hirst himself was entirely absent, represented only by his monumental finished painting, which, with its brilliant bursts of neon yellows, blues and pinks, stood out boldly against the white wall. The public's desire for knowledge of the studio and its go-

ings on is apparently undiminished, and hiding making – even as it seems to be on display – while showing creation seems to be as actual a strategy today as it ever was in the past.

Central to the following essays is the question of the nature, function and meaning of the studio for artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In how far does it differ from the studio of the nineteenth century? What new roles and connotations has it acquired over the course of the past hundred years? And, above all, what part has been played by the hiding/showing dialectic that forms the leitmotif of this volume?

The "studio *topoi*" outlined by Sandra Kisters in her introduction to the first section and their relation to the oscillating tensions of hiding making and showing creation have remained relevant to artists in the modern and contemporary periods, as the essays in Part II demonstrate. The notion that thinking takes precedence over making – that the mind is privileged over the hand – remains the foil against which both the work of art and the image of the artist are defined. The studio itself, if not as a workspace then at least as a concept, remains a determining factor, even for those who claim to undermine its discourse or leave it behind altogether.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY AFTERLIFE

The twentieth century boasts many a studio picture that continues to conform to the long-standing notion of the artist's place of work as the private domain of the autonomous master. Paintings such as Henri Matisse's *The Red Studio* (1911) or Pablo Picasso's *Studio with Plaster Head* (1925) and *Artist and Model* (1928), or even the latter's series of depictions of his studio *La Californie* from the mid-1950s, give the viewer a classic image of the studio space. Present are all the ingredients needed for identification of the painter, his artistic leanings, his links with the past and desires for the future. His traditional tools – pencils, brushes, easel, canvas, palette, plaster casts – are more or less prominently on view; there is a gallery of his work on display (finished or in progress – the latter above all a sign of ongoing creative potential[3]); there is no link with the outside world and the

artist himself is (still) an isolated genius struggling to give form to his thoughts and ideas.

Matisse and Picasso provide quintessential examples for the continuing relevance of notions of hiding making while consciously displaying one's creativity and artistic persona. Brassaï's famous series of photographs of Matisse, taken in 1939 and later published in the photo-book *The Artists of My Life* (1982),[4] seem at first to be designed to provide insight into the artist's working process. Tellingly, however, the first image we see shows Matisse not at work, but "deep in concentration"[5] (fig. 1), gazing at something in the studio to which we as viewers have no access. In the following photographs, we see Matisse seated, pencil and sketchbook in hand, his nude model before him; however, either his drawing hand or the paper are carefully hidden from view, or, if the paper is exposed, it is entirely blank or placed at such an angle that whatever is on it remains invisible for us.

Similarly, Gjon Mili's photographs of Picasso (1949) cast the artist as a god-like ("let there be light") – and speedy – magician, as the images appear to the viewer in a flash. Attempting to retrace the process by which these light-drawings have been made, we are confronted instead with the concentrated face of the artist, looming up from the same total darkness out of which, without any point of reference, these perfectly legible pictures have emerged. It is thus not making that these photographs document, but rather the artist's imaginative and creative prowess.[6] Likewise, while holding out the promise of knowledge and transparency – the title sequence even goes so far as to claim that to understand what goes on in the artist's mind, one need only follow his hand – Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Le mystère Picasso* (1955) permits us to witness the design, composition, destruction and recreation of *The Beach at La Galoupe* but provides no insight into the painter's motivations. Instead, Picasso appears to be possessed by some unseen power that is responsible for both his creative and destructive acts, so that once again a *gap* is suggested between conception and execution; the artist and his "genius" remain a mystery.[7] While the films of Hans Cürlis in the early 1920s had made a sincere attempt to investigate and indeed show the creative process, Clouzot and popular publications like *Life* – where the Mili photographs were first published[8] – or *Art News*, with its series "[X] Paints a Picture" (in

FIG. 1 Brassaï, Matisse in his studio, c. 1939, Private collection. © Estate Brassaï – RMN-Grand Palais/Michèle Bellot

the 1950s devoted to the "heroic" artists of the New York School),[9] perpetuated the myth of the ingenious artist, alone in his studio and in eternal struggle with himself.[10] The culmination of such mystifying tendencies may be seen in the photographs and films Hans Namuth made of Jackson Pollock, which, although they do provide insight into

his painting technique, came to stand in the popular and art-historical imagination for the heroic dimension of Pollock's personality and for the artist as the quintessential "action" painter. A final example is the publication of Alexander Liberman's photo-book *The Artist in his Studio*, which appeared in 1960 – interestingly, just at the moment when artists were beginning to reject both this image and the studio itself.

NEW MODELS, OLD MYTHS

At the same time this high-Romantic image of the artist and the studio continued to be propagated, new models were also being developed – models that, however, still relied to varying degrees and in various ways on the artistic *topoi* developed over the centuries. From the 1920s onward we see the studio take on different guises and its role in the creative process become more complex. The hiding/showing dialectic takes on new dimensions, while nonetheless remaining the touchstone of artistic identity. These new models interact and overlap, creating, at least in some cases, an alternative understanding of the studio and of the artist.

THE STUDIO AS LABORATORY

The association of artists with magicians and art-making with magic, perhaps even a form of alchemy, is, as Kris and Kurz have pointed out, an ancient *topos*.[11] In general, this link appears to have derived from the perceived ability of the artist to create the illusion of life in his works. Coupled with the notion of the studio as *studiolo*, a place of (private) study set apart from the hustle and bustle of the traditional workshop,[12] there is a strong argument for understanding the artist's studio as a kind of laboratory, a space of experimentation as well as (or even: rather than) personal expression. In the early twentieth century, a number of avant-garde artists both perceived and used their studios in exactly this way. One of the first to do so was Marcel Duchamp, as Frank Reijnders discusses in his contribution: for Duchamp, the

everyday objects in his New York studio were not works of art, nor even at this stage ready-mades, but rather aesthetically indifferent material, instruments useful for his research into the fourth dimension.[13] The choice of prefabricated objects obviously eliminates the question of making altogether, while the artist himself disappears behind the façade of the scientist or researcher. Somewhat later, however, both manage to *re*appear in the famous *Boîte-en-valise* (1935–1941): the ready-mades in the form of miniature porcelain reproductions, the studio itself in the form of retouched photographs, and the artist as the singular creator of this autobiographical collection.

Two of the most important figures of the De Stijl movement also employed their studios in a similar fashion. Piet Mondrian's studio at 26, rue du Départ in Paris, also discussed by Reijnders, was as much a demonstration of his Neo-plasticist principles as the pictures themselves, and – thanks to the mobility of the paintings, pieces of colored cardboard, furnishings and easels – could be continually transformed, creating ever-new compositions in space as well as in oil on canvas. Paul Delbo's photographs, published in *Internationale Revue 010* in 1927, however, show us not the studio's experimental character, but the studio as a finished work of art and a triumphant artistic manifesto.

Theo van Doesburg also treated his studio as a laboratory, as demonstrated by Matthias Noell. His investigations into new ways of depicting objects and space are carefully documented in a number of photographs of his early studios, these images themselves then serving as research tools and building blocks for the next phase of experimentation. The artist here visualizes and documents his thinking process, if not his actual making. The photographs of his last studio, in Meudon, by contrast, must be read as manifestos of the ultimate failure of his ten-year effort to unite painting and architecture. Here, one might say, the hiding/showing dichotomy is reversed.

Although never stated as such, there can be no doubt that the Surrealists saw their studios as fulfilling an experimental function – one need only think of the elaborate games of *cadavre esquisse* played in them – and, in the immediate postwar period, it was the barn-like space of Jackson Pollock's studio that propelled him towards painting with the canvas on the floor. Francis Bacon, however, was explicit in

his understanding of his extremely messy studio as a catalyst to his work, stating "chaos breeds images to me."[14]

That some contemporary artists view their studios in a similar fashion is demonstrated by Sarah de Rijcke. Although created by a professional photographer rather than the artists themselves, the documentation of the studios of residents at Amsterdam's Rijksakademie are viewed by the subjects not as fixed records, but rather as active interfaces that mediate between past, present and future work. As with Van Doesburg, the photographs provide new resources and materials, facilitating ways of ordering and arranging information. While, following the stipulations of the artists themselves, revealing little of the creative process, they nonetheless show how the studio can be a catalyst to production, rather than a showcase for the artist as autonomous individual. The notion of the studio as a laboratory for individual or collective projects has also been promoted by museums and exhibition spaces, which in recent years have offered artists locales for research of varying sorts, ranging from the Royal Academy's Artists' Laboratory series to the City of Dreams by the British artists' collective Stanza (2010)[15] to Thomas Hirschhorn's social experiments in the suburbs.

THE STUDIO AS STAGE

The studio as the stage of self-realization and self-presentation is more or less inherent in every self-portrait in which the artist appears in his working environment, from Rogier van der Weyden's *Saint Lucas Painting the Madonna* (1439) through Rembrandt's *Self-Portrait in the Studio* (1626–28) to Courbet's *The Artist's Studio* (1855). The hiding making/showing creation dialectic is clearly an essential ingredient of such images, made manifest to various degrees and in differing forms as the centuries progress. The treatment of this trope in modern and contemporary art, in particular the ways in which it has been used for the expression of artistic identity, exhibits elements of continuity with the past, but also seems at times to challenge, if not to entirely overturn, more traditional notions of artistic activity and the possibilities for its representation.

The self-consciousness with which modern artists have approached the staging of their persona and work in the studio and their efforts to retain control over their image as it enters the public domain are legend. Classic examples include August Rodin as he worked together with Edward Steichen, or Francis Bacon and the many photographers and filmmakers who attempted to document his studio and his painting practice, instances where there can be no doubt that the masking of making and the demonstration of artistic genius were paramount – in the case of Bacon undoubtedly despite the best efforts of those who visited him.[16] Notwithstanding the fact that Constantin Brancusi's studios appears, both in his own photographs and those of others, to be purely a working space – it is messy, dusty, apparently full of tools and materials – closer inspection reveals the incredible care with which the (mostly finished) sculptures have been staged. The artist himself, when he appears, sits calmly, his hands idle; in one instance, he poses with an enormous saw and a block of marble, but even here the promise of "showing making" turns out to be an illusion: in order to actually operate the saw, two men would have been required, so that once again it is the individual and heroic artist who comes to the fore (fig. 2).[17] Although one might argue that where the creative act is deliberately staged as a public event – as in the cases of Georges Mathieu in the 1950s and Yves Klein in the 1960s – process is finally revealed;[18] both the process itself and the artist, who is here a kind of impresario, are nonetheless fetishized.

The studio has also, however, become the stage for what, at least at first glance, appears to be a resounding critique of just these notions of art, art-making and the artist. Despite its alleged dismissal by conceptual, land and performance artists, since the 1960s the studio has been the arena for a critical inquiry into artistic identity, whereby hiding and showing again play a crucial role. Bruce Nauman's early studio films, the subject of Eric de Bruyn's essay, for example, are as much about failure – of the body, of the Romantic notion of the artist, of tradition and traditional art-making – as anything else. By exposing his artistic practice in this manner, Nauman also unmasks the long-standing ideology of the studio as the artist's comfortable *habitus* and the artist as someone endowed with special skills, whether manual *or* mental. As De Bruyn puts it: "The studio has become

FIG. 2 Constantin Brancusi, Brancusi working on the *Colonne sans fin*, c. 1924–25, Paris, Musée national d'Art moderne-Centre Georges Pompidou. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka

spectacle: showing has trumped hiding." What this means for the status of the artist remains unclear, but the films in any case clearly map a moment of crisis on several fronts.

It would seem, however, that this unambiguous reversal of the hiding/showing paradigm is highly unusual. Following in Nauman's footsteps, Matthew Barney sought to undermine his manual facility by placing various physical limitations on himself in his series of studio performances entitled *Drawing Restraint*, executed in different media between 1987 and 2007. This disciplining of artistic labor seems initially to divest the act of creation of its magical properties: the artist is no longer a thinker, but a doer, and the studio no longer a *studiolo* but a gym. Nonetheless, while "making" seems to be the subject, what is actually being promoted is the creative act itself, here the result of an abstract but nonetheless highly personalized artistic force. The heroic (male) artist thus remains central.[19] Similarly, while Paul McCarthy's *Painter* of 1995 ostensibly challenges all aspects of

the studio and the myth of the artist as transcendent genius, revealing both masculinity and artistic identity to be inherently unstable, the relentless self-referencing of both the video and McCarthy's other work around the subject of the studio – most notably *The Box* (1995) – serves to reinstate the traditional function of the romantic *atelier* as symbolic and representative space.[20]

THE STUDIO AS A WORK OF ART

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the studio has functioned as more than a workspace; very often it has been transformed into a – at times autonomous – work of art in itself. It seems that it was particularly at the moment when artists began both to criticize the traditional studio and, allegedly, to leave it behind – declaring with Daniel Buren that the studio was where the artist found himself at any given moment[21] – that the studio and the work of art came more and more to coincide. In such works, the difference between the private domain of the studio and the public domain of exhibition is often erased. The studio as a site of production becomes itself an object of display, with interesting consequences for the hiding/showing paradigm.

The studio as work of art and as exhibition can overlap in many ways, some more critical than others. Designed to help her overcome her six-year "painter's block," Tracey Emin's 1996 studio performance in Galleri Andreas Brändström in Stockholm ostensibly promised the revelation of practice and a deconstruction of the myth of the artist. For two weeks, visitors to the gallery could observe Emin through a series of fish-eye lenses fixed to the wall that separated the studio from the gallery space; they watched as she engaged in various activities – from talking on the phone to taking up poses reminiscent of her male predecessors to painting in the nude. The voyeuristic aspect and the artist's relentless focus on herself made the work less a parody of the traditional trope of the studio as the isolated sanctuary of artistic genius than a restitution and, ultimately, appropriation of it. Similarly, Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Tomorrow is Another* Day (1996) – a recreation of his New York working and living space – opens up the studio to the everyday and the public gaze, but in the end reveals

nothing but the artist at its heart, who styles himself here (and elsewhere) not only as magical master-chef but as a kind of savior and bringer of social cohesion.

It was in 1968 that Marcel Broodthaers first transformed his studio on rue de la Pépinière in Brussels into a "museum"; the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* would eventually encompass twelve "sections," appearing over the course of several years at different locations.[22] Like other conceptual artists of his generation, Broodthaers' aim here was to demonstrate that the work of art only comes into being in the public sphere and in the context of highly specified group relations. One of the museum's incarnations was the *Section Cinéma*, an ever-changing installation of the artist's working space at Burgplatz 12 in Düsseldorf, which functioned at the same time as an open-ended exhibition. What was shown here was not a reified, autonomous "work of art," but rather creation's constitution in the social process of museum and exhibition display. Something similar was accomplished in the artist's *Salle Blanche* of 1975 (fig. 3), a "reconstruction" of his rue de la Pépinière studio as a museum object, which simultaneously undermined its own mythic status through artistic clichés stenciled onto the walls and photographic reproductions of the studio's furnishings. As Beatrice von Bismarck shows, Tacita Dean's *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers* (2002), which "documents" Burgplatz 12 as it is today, extends Broodthaers' strategy to include the formation of the artist as author and, indeed, as a celebrated figure of art history. As she records what is left of Broodthaers' activities – fetishizing the remnants of making – it becomes clear that what is here being enacted is the process of recognition that takes place within art historical discourse. As von Bismarck writes, in Dean's work, "Hiding the artistic working processes here makes the processes of the production of the artist even more visible."

As the quotation from Bruce Nauman cited as an epigraph to this introduction indicates, uncertainty is the condition of the artist after Duchamp – above all, uncertainty about what to do with oneself in the studio and therefore uncertainty about one's artistic identity. It is thus not surprising that Nauman continues to seek inspiration in the studio itself, with all its myriad connotations, most recently in his six-hour-long video *Mapping the Studio* I (Fat Chance John Cage), of 2001.

FIG. 3 Marcel Broodthaers, *La Salle blanche*, 1975, Paris, Musée national d'Art moderne-Centre Georges Pompidou. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/All rights reserved

Drawing on the centuries-old tradition of the empty studio as a form of self-portraiture,[23] which posits an intimate connection between the artist's self and the studio space, the studio here becomes the work of art and, simultaneously, as if by magic, its own author. Nauman may be absent, but his studio is alive, not just with mice and a cat, but with the artist's own traces – the minimal shifts in the objects in the studio over the course of the video – so that the space comes to stand for him as the creating subject. Acknowledging the dilemma of the modern

artist, Nauman also makes it the foundation of his practice; in so doing, he of course once again reinstates the myth of the artist as genius or magician, only, however, to undermine it again almost instantly through the irony of his imagery.

A related, but also finally rather different answer to the identity crisis that has plagued artists since at least the 1960s, is offered in the work of Gregor Schneider, discussed in the contribution by Wouter Davidts. Schneider's *House ur*, an obsessive and ongoing replication and transformation of the German artist's living and working space, is also an exploration of the question of "inspiration" (what to do with oneself in the studio) and the anxiety caused by the lack of self-evidence in contemporary artistic practice. While Nauman accepts the consequences of the post-medium condition that condemns artists to nothing but perpetual reflection on their own doings, however, Schneider opts for radical action. His answer to the uncertainty of the modern artist, his not knowing "what to do," Davidts writes, is to elevate doing to a higher, if somewhat neurotic, form of thinking. Schneider is motivated by a desire for results and a kind of Protestant work ethic – making for making's sake. The artist is a doer, a deranged handyman, and no longer Balzac's mediator, the man who produces masterpieces without seeming to be occupied.

As the essays in this section show, throughout the twentieth century, and even into the so-called post-studio era, the studio, with its many connotations, tropes and *topoi*, has remained the foil with and against which artists have thought through questions of production and identity. The paradigmatic issue of the relationship between thinking and making, and what role these should play in creation and (self-)presentation, thus remains relevant to this day.

NOTES

1 Coosje van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1988), 14.

2 See http://www.damienhirst.com/live-feed. (Accessed 6 April 2012).

3 Beatrice von Bismarck, "Künstlerräume und Künstlerbilder. Zur Intimität des

ausgestellten Ateliers," in: Sabine Schulze (ed.), *Innenleben. Die Kunst des Interieurs: Vermeer bis Kabakow*, exh. cat. (Frankfurt a.M.: Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, 1998), 318.

4 Brassaï, *The Artists of My Life* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982), 129–133.

5 The caption to the image on p. 139 reads: "Deep in concentration in his studio. (1939)."

6 Michael Klant, *Künstler bei der Arbeit, von Fotografen gesehen* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz Verlag, 1995), 166.

7 Bismarck 1998, 319.

8 *Life Magazine*, 30 January 1950.

9 See Caroline A. Jones, *Machine in the Studio. Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 51–52.

10 Jones 1996, 1–59.

11 Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist. A Historical Experiment* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1979), 61–90.

12 Michael Cole and Mary Pardo (eds.), *Inventions of the Studio. Renaissance to Romanticism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

13 See also Herbert Molderings, "Nicht die Objekte zählen, sondern die Experimente. Marcel Duchamps New Yorker Atelier als Wahrnehmungslabor," in: Michael Diers and Monika Wagner (eds.), *Topos Atelier. Werkstatt und Wissensform* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010), 21–44.

14 See Sandra Kisters, "Orde in de chaos. Het atelier van Francis Bacon," *Kunstlicht* 28/2–3 (2007) 14–18. Bacon made similar statements in numerous interviews, the most important being David Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 190.

15 See http://www.stanza.co.uk/laboratory; http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibitions/artists-laboratory. (Accessed April 6 2012).

16 On Rodin and Bacon see, most recently, Sandra Kisters, *Leven als een kunstenaar. Invloeden op de beeldvorming van moderne kunstenaars* (Ph.D. diss. VU University, Amsterdam, 2010), chapters 8 and 10.

17 On Brancusi's studio and the photographs see Marielle Tabart, *L'Atelier Brancusi*, exh. cat. (Paris: Center Pompidou, 1997); Marielle Tabart (ed.), *Brancusi Photographe*, exh. cat. (Paris: Center Pompidou, 1977); Elizabeth Brown, *Brancusi photographs Brancusi* (London: Assouline, 1995).

18 See Monika Wagner, "Der kreative Akt als öffentliches Ereignis," in: Wagner and Diers 2010, 45–57.

19 Julia Gelshorn, "Creation, Recreation, Procreation. Matthew Barney, Martin Kippenberger, Jason Rhoades, and Paul McCathy," in: Wouter Davidts and Kim Paice (eds.), *The Fall of the Studio. Artists at Work* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2009), 142–147.

20 Ibid., 154–159.

21 Daniel Buren, "Entretien avec Phyllis Rozenzweig," in: Jean-Marc Poinsot (ed.), *Les écrits* vol. 3 (Bordeaux: Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, 1991) 358. See also

Wouter Davidts, "My Studio is the Place where I am (Working)," in: Davidts and Paice 2009, 63–81.

22 Jürgen Harten and Peter-Klaus Schuster (eds.), *Marcel Broodthaers. Cinéma*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf/Berlin: Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, 1997), 132–172; Rachel Haidu, *The Absence of Work. Marcel Broodthaers, 1964–1976* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 2010), 163–209; Benjamin Buchloh, "The Museum Fictions of Marcel Broodthaers," in: A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (eds.) *Museums by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 39–56; Douglas Crimp: "This is Not a Museum of Art," in: *Marcel Broodthaers*, exh. cat. (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center/New York: Rizzoli 1989), 71–92.

23 See Rachel Esner, "Presence in Absence. The Empty Studio as Self-Portrait," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 56/2 (2011) 241–262.

CHAPTER 7

The Studio as Mediator

FRANK REIJNDERS

> *If ever a man had an "ivory tower," well defended by bars and bolts, it was Eugène Delacroix [...]. Others may seek privacy for the sake of debauchery; he sought it for the sake of inspiration, and he indulged in veritable orgies of work.*[1]
>
> CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

> *The bourgeois public of the 1470s respected the artist as a master of technical tricks [...] who painted and sculpted in his back workshop, but who had a front shop in which he sold all that anyone might need: belt buckles, painted marriage chests, church furnishings, votive waxes, engravings. It was not then the practice to visit the artist, remote and abstracted in his studio, and to strike an aesthetic pose beneath his northern light while feeling most profoundly the malaise of world-weary, civilized men. Then, people used to drag their goldsmith-painter out of his workshop into the real world whenever the cycle of life itself demanded a new form: a building, a jewel, a utensil, a festive procession.*[2]
>
> ABY WARBURG

EXCHANGING ANACHRONISMS

These two quotes provide two entirely opposing images of the function of the studio, and both are intended to serve as a kind of model. For Baudelaire, Delacroix is the quintessential example of the artist who chooses a solitary existence in his studio, concentrating solely

on his art, making works that will only leave the studio when they are finished, works destined only for the annual Salon. Here, there is a strict and hierarchical distinction between the public and the private. Baudelaire describes his visit to Delacroix's studio almost as an invasion. What strikes him most is the austerity of the artist's surroundings: "no trinkets, no old clothes, no bric-à-brac." The only presence in this otherwise empty studio is the *art of painting*.

By contrast, Aby Warburg describes the open studio of the early Florentine Renaissance. For Warburg, the fact that in this period art had been rooted in everyday life gave it the potential for continual renewal. Even a goldsmith's workshop might produce a great artist. Warburg well understood that the modern artist was born when he had closed his door to the curious, and even to his erstwhile assistants. He refuses, however, to see this as a sign of progress. Warburg expressly employs the anachronism of the pre-modern workshop as a foil to the modern concept of the autonomous artist's studio. The former strikes him as far healthier than the dusty places where the artists of his own day celebrated the poses of decadence. Delacroix, by the way, did not regard himself as the first modern artist. That had been Michelangelo, who was the first to draw attention to his own individuality and locked himself up alone in his studio in order to concentrate without distraction. According to the legend, he even refused to work with assistants. This is how Delacroix portrays him in his famous painting of 1849–50, with only two finished sculptures for company, deep in melancholic reflection and his chisel lying unused on the ground. This work may be regarded as a painted manifesto, with Michelangelo marking the definitive break with the notion of the studio as workshop, the craftsman's *bottega* so beautifully described by Warburg.

In New York in 1961, Claes Oldenburg rented a storefront-studio at 107 East 2nd Street. He then re-transformed the space into a store, displaying and selling his imitation foodstuffs and clothing – all under the pseudo-sponsorship of the "Ray Gun Manufacturing Company." Like a Florentine artisan, he created his plaster products in a backroom workshop. Oldenburg's aim was to bypass the gallery-dominated exhibition circuit. He also rejected the notion of the closed and isolated studio. Ray Gun, Oldenburg's alter ego, explicitly

championed the notion of the *open* studio: "RG as the street, RG as the store. RG as the factory!"[3] Andy Warhol accomplished something similar when, in 1963, he moved into an industrial loft at 231 East 47th Street and rechristened the space "The Factory." For Oldenburg and Warhol, however, the studio was not just an open workshop where art objects were made: there was a *visible* relationship between the studio space, the location, and the artists' manner of working. The *studio* is explicitly foregrounded.

Warhol's Factory as it was used between 1963 and 1968 is without a doubt the strangest studio that ever existed. It was a large open space, entirely covered in aluminum foil – even the windows and pipes. Where wrapping had not been an option, as was the case with lamps, chairs or the toilet, silver spray-paint was used instead. All the rooms and everything in them were incorporated into the working process. The bathroom was simultaneously a darkroom; the couches became part of the décor for many a film, not just the infamous *Couch* (1964). The "shop floor" was the perfect place for the serial production of silkscreens and Brillo boxes, but was also used as a film set and as a stage for rock concerts. Warhol made sure that the material conditions were such that work could be done in assembly-line fashion and carried out by anyone: "I think everybody should be a machine." Moreover, the space articulated a transition between public and private. Warhol conceived his "images" expressly with an eye to their role in the world beyond the studio, a world where, for the first time, art had become part of the spectacle of mass consumption and the media – the exact opposite of Delacroix's ivory tower.

The production methods used for the works made in the Factory were even repeated in Warhol's early exhibitions. The *Brillo Boxes* were not only lined up in the studio to facilitate working on them, but were also installed in the same manner in the gallery. The *Dance Diagram Paintings* were both painted flat on the floor and then displayed this way in the gallery. The public was invited to stand on the paintings in the positions indicated. The Factory in full working swing can be seen as a multimedia artwork in itself, and in this sense as Warhol's ultimate creation. In the last frames of the Slate and Davis film made in 1966, we see the Velvet Underground in action, while Gerard Malanga performs his "whip dance" and Edie Sedgwick puts

on her makeup in front of a mirror. As the credits roll, Warhol himself appears, a silver balloon floating like a cloud in front of his face and busy talking on the phone. Here, the artist is a business manager and impresario, a rock promoter, a movie producer, a product endorser, and a magazine publisher. But he is also a manager who dons a mask of neutrality, thereby maintaining a certain distance between his studio and the outside world, and between the studio and himself: "I don't really feel all these people with me every day at the Factory are just hanging around me, I'm more hanging around *them*."[4]

Since the early 1960s, a transformation has taken place and one is tempted to view the *closed* studio as the anachronism, a relic of the Romantic era. From that moment on, even Warburg became linked to the intentions of the historical avant-garde, in as much as he had sought in his studies to abolish the boundary between art and daily life.[5] "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie," the source of the quotation cited at the beginning of this essay, attempted to reconstruct the socio-economic and psychological dimensions of the Florentine *quattrocento*, and to rid the image of the era of typical nineteenth-century inventions. It is not so easy, however, to simply oppose the closed studio and the open workshop. As paradoxical as it may seem in our post-studio era, the studio has been an important mediating factor in almost all radical attempts to make a connection between art and the public; a public that still needed to take shape, a *new* public. The Paris Salon created a public space for art, with the studio developing into its intimate and exclusive counterpart. Salon and studio formed an inseparable duo – an unthinkable combination before the nineteenth century. Delacroix's studio marks the starting point.

Painters were dependent on the Salon for their success. They needed to meet the demands of "the public" for large and – in the academic sense – finished history paintings. Delacroix, however, put independence and individual integrity before his career. This explains his conscious rejection of the as-yet undefined public, who visited the Salon *en masse* for their supposed improvement. He sought to revive the great Baroque tradition and to compete with Rubens, the Venetians or Michelangelo. Although he was a great storyteller who never shied away from spectacular effects, he believed that the public must be drawn to a work in the first instance only by the virtuosity of the

brushwork and the orchestration of color. Even the history paintings he exhibited at the Salon had to preserve all the qualities of a first sketch. In this way, the public could come into direct contact with the painting as it had first taken shape in the studio. In preserving a sketch-like character, he sought to capture the eye with the movement of the paint, or seduce it with a picturesque detail. As the work would thus appear "unfinished," the public would be encouraged to look more closely. But the public and the critics – with the exception of Baudelaire – regarded this as mere provocation, an insult to "true art." Delacroix pitted the studio against the Salon. By positing a productive tension between the studio and the public exhibition, however, he played a crucial role in the creation of "factories" like those of Oldenburg and Warhol.

RESTRICTED ACCESS

In 1915, Marcel Duchamp moved from Paris to New York (fig. 1), where he was fascinated by the shop windows, "exhibiting" the latest products of industry and technology as if they were art objects. Art seemed to extend into everyday life, and Duchamp became obsessed with shopping. In a hardware store he purchased a simple snow shovel. He labeled it *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, signed it "[after] Marcel Duchamp," and hung it by the handle from the ceiling of his temporary studio. A few weeks later he purchased a chimney ventilator. He signed it in the same manner, gave it the equally dissociative title *Pulled at 4 Pins*, and installed it in the studio as well (the object itself has been lost and is not documented in photographs). Around the same time, Duchamp came up with the idea of calling these elected objects "ready-mades": mass-produced, machine-made articles with no aesthetic qualities whatsoever, chosen on the basis of their total "visual indifference." This in contrast to the *Bicycle Wheel* of 1913, which is now usually considered the first of the ready-mades. Whenever he would spin the wheel in his Paris studio, it produced in the artist the same pleasure he felt while staring into the flames of a fire in a fireplace.

According to Duchamp himself, this construction was initially

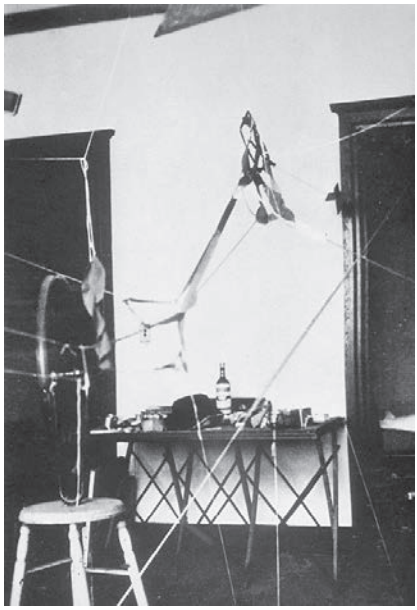

FIG. 1 Marcel Duchamp's studio at 33 West 67 Street, New York, 1918 (with *Sculpture de Voyage*). Photo from Arturo Schwartz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 303

nothing more than a studio prop. In 1916, however, he made a second version. Interestingly, he took the ready-mades with him everywhere he went. In October 1916, he finally moved into a more permanent studio at 33 West 67th Street, soon transforming the space into one of the strangest "installations" ever seen. In 1917 he hung a hat rack (*Porte-chapeau*) from the ceiling, and bolted a coatrack (*Trébuchet*) to the floor. The idea behind this experiment was to "escape from the conformity, which demands that works of art be hung on the wall or presented on easels."[6] In 1918, finally, he bought a stock of brightly colored bathing caps, cut them into strips, tied them together at random points, and strung them from the four corners of the studio, thereby making the space partially inaccessible with a kind of colorful spider's web. As this object could be easily dismantled and packed in a suitcase, Duchamp called it *Sculpture de voyage*. When in 1918 he left New York for Buenos Aires, this "traveling sculpture" was the only "artwork" he took with him and re-hung.

Thanks to about a dozen black-and-white photographs, the New York studio is relatively well documented. If one makes the effort to look closely at these often out-of-focus pictures, a number of other objects can be discovered. Even the urinal appears in two of the images, hung on its side from a doorjamb and thus appearing in an entirely

different fashion than in the famous photograph by Alfred Stieglitz. He put the urinal on a pedestal, lit it artistically, and placed it in front of a painting by Marsden Hartley – thereby moving it in the direction of sculpture. Not knowing who the "author" of the object was, however, he failed to realize that Duchamp had in some sense tricked him into giving a normally vulgar thing an unintended aesthetic quality.

In his studio, Duchamp experimented not only with the spatio-temporal relations between objects that had become disconnected from their normal roles in everyday life, but also with their functional relationship. He was able to underline aspects of their appearance, their place in the space, and the space itself by arranging them relative to one another. As the photographs reveal, the angle from which an object was meant to be viewed was of great importance. The isolation of the studio is embraced and even intensified, as Duchamp himself rejected the culture of exhibition and the commercial interests with which it went hand in hand. The studio functions as a secret laboratory, a location for experimentation with unknown forms and dimensions, but also a space that only exists thanks to its photographic documentation. Among the photos is one that shows nothing but shadows, projected onto the two-dimensional wall by the three-dimensional objects and representing, for Duchamp, images of the fourth dimension. His fascination in this period with the non-measurable and the *n*- dimensional leads one to suspect that there is a conceptual connection here with *The Large Glass,* the only large-scale project Duchamp worked on, albeit intermittently, after 1915.

There is no indication whatsoever that any of these objects were ever intended to leave the studio, to become "works of art" in an exhibition. The one exception is the urinal, which was, however, meant as a kind of comment on the exhibition/non-exhibition issue. For strategic reasons, *Fountain* was not shown in 1917. Duchamp withdrew it when it became clear that the generous invitation by the Society of Independent Artists had turned into a farce. The signature "R. Mutt" refers to Mott and Co., one of the many companies at the time that advertised its plumbing products as works of art. The only two ready-mades that were shown in the Bourgeois gallery in 1916 (it is not known which these were) garnered no critical attention – undoubtedly much to Duchamp's satisfaction.

Duchamp's New York studio (1916–18) was completely unique at the time of its "creation" and, oddly enough, is not included in *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*, Arturo Schwarz's *catalogue raisonné*. Maybe it is not in fact a work of art; nor, however, is it a studio. And, of course, the artistic status of the ready-mades is a matter of much debate. It remains interesting to speculate on the role the studio played in the birth of this new art form. Several of the aforementioned photographs were later included in Duchamp's portable "private museum," the *Boîte-en-Valise* (1935–41). For this occasion, some of them were retouched, highlighting various objects while reducing the sense of contrast in the surrounding space. The photographs were also hand-colored, further underlining this effect. When Duchamp was later asked to contribute to the installation of the international group exhibition of the Surrealists, he continued to elaborate on these studio gestures. In Paris in 1938, he hung 1200 empty coal sacks from the ceiling of the darkened hall. His earlier idea to do this with upside-down open umbrellas turned out to be unworkable, as there were not enough umbrellas available. Once again, the idea seems to have been to subvert the laws of gravity, and to frustrate the visual, and even physical, expectations of the public – this time within the shared sphere of the exhibition. In New York in 1942, part of the exhibition was cordoned off with a sixteen-mile long cotton rope installed as a kind of web, making the spaces where the works were hung difficult to access. One can easily imagine the slapstick effect produced by visitors who wanted to have a closer look at the works anyway.

There are several other examples of early twentieth-century artists who regarded their studios as more than just places of work. From 1920 onwards, for example, Kurt Schwitters filled his studio at Waldhausenstrasse 5 in Hannover with "sculptures" made from the detritus of his everyday life. In no time, these had amalgamated into one huge pillar in the middle of the room. The Dadaistic *Cathedral of Erotic Misery* remained the central element in the *MERZbau*, but was given an entirely new visual aspect when, around 1925, Schwitters provided it with a constructivist exoskeleton of wood and plaster. In the years that followed, he continued to transform his studio until he was forced to flee Germany in 1937. The ensembles created by the

sculptor Constantin Brancusi in his various studios (Paris, Impasse Ronsin nos. 8 and 11), beginning in the 1920s, seem also to take on a life of their own. Hundreds of photographs, shot by the artist himself,

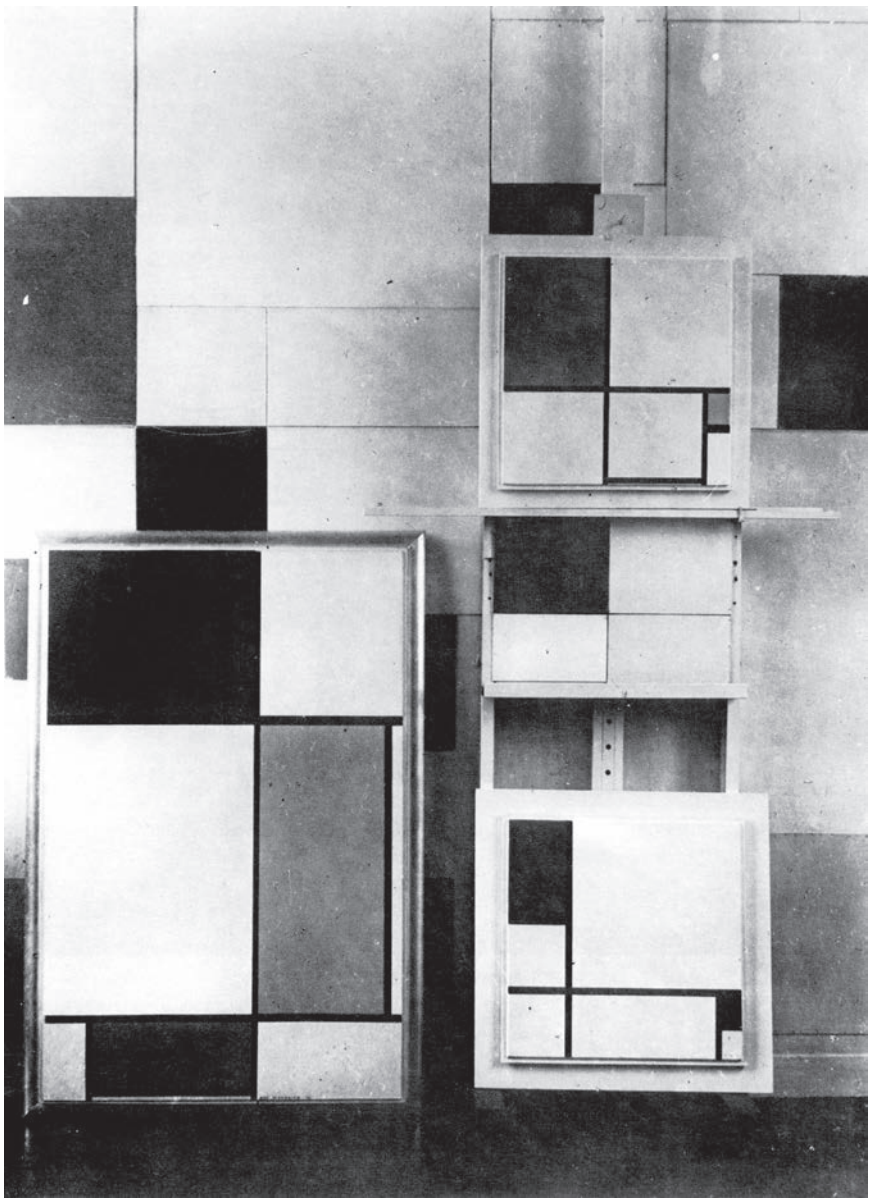

FIG. 2 Piet Mondrian's studio at 26, rue de Départ, Paris, 1929. Photo from Harry Holtzman (ed.), *L'atelier de Mondrian: recherches et dessins* (Paris: Macula, 1982), 79

document this process and reveal a studio that over time came to look less and less like a workshop, with its tools, blocks of wood and stone, and dust. Around 1930, every finished work was given a permanent place in the studio space, forming an "installation" that might be seen as a work of art in itself. An intervention such as the painting of part of one of the walls in Pompeian red to make the smoothly polished bronze of the *Bird in Space* stand out more sharply points in the same direction.

The famous studio (fig. 2) Piet Mondrian inhabited at 26, rue du Départ (Paris) between 1921 and 1936 functions in a similar way. The studio demonstrates the artist's Neo-plasticist principles as convincingly as the paintings themselves. The spacious, light-filled room with its high ceiling had a somewhat awkward pentagonal floor plan, which, in ingenious fashion, Mondrian "optically corrected" by placing a black-painted cupboard and an unused easel across from the door, but parallel to the wall to the right. On the easel, he set large pieces of cardboard painted in red, grey and white, thereby partially hiding the bed, located behind the easel, from sight. The rest of the sparse furnishings were also made to conform to this strict regime, including a curvaceous basket-willow armchair, which the artist painted white. Most important, however, were the walls, in particular the large, unbroken expanse diagonally across from the entrance. The walls were decorated with a rhythmic play of rectangles in various formats, executed in the primary colors red, yellow and blue, and the "non-colors" white, grey and black. These were either painted or made from loose pieces of cardboard that could be moved back and forth, creating ever-new patterns and situations. Set against the walls, the paintings themselves also had a prominent role to play. They were subjected to the same strict rules of optical two-dimensionality, but in a more condensed form. By standing out from the wall, they created a certain tension with it. This was intensified by the way in which the frames retreated from the painted surface. The paintings no longer unfolded inwardly, but gradually advanced forward. At the same time, the (widened) frames served to curb the expansionism of the lines, so that the paintings maintained their pictorial integrity: "an image in and through itself." They were the point of anchorage from which a link with the space could develop. This created a distinctive

aesthetic unity, which had nothing to do with either ornament or "design." At the same time, the studio stood in sharp contrast to the chaos and fragmentation of the city of Paris and urban life in general, anticipating the spatial totality in which painting as a separate discipline would disappear, theorized by Mondrian in *Le Home, La Rue, La Cité* of 1927.

Mondrian had this studio photographed several times between 1926 and 1930. Each of these staged photographs, with their emphasis on frontality, has something extremely strict about it. They contain remarkable details, such as a black easel set against the back wall. Mondrian never used an easel when painting: he laid his canvas flat on a table across from the large window, and only used the easel to display his work for visitors. In the photographs, the easel thus seems to stand for a type of studio that had become outdated. As a formal element, however, it serves to emphasize the horizontal and vertical lines of the wall. In order to create the desired asymmetry, Mondrian even went so far as to paint parts of the easel black or white (1927); or to saw off its back feet in order to mark the transition from wall to room, in this way simultaneously dispelling any sense of perspective (1930).

But not everything was subjected to Mondrian's strict regimen. Remarkable, for example, are the mirrors hung at certain points along the wall. They must have disturbed the clever harmony of the large wall, just opposite. Moving through the space, visitors were undoubtedly sometimes surprised by these unexpected reflections of the studio space. The lozenge-shaped paintings Mondrian executed in this period created a sense of spatial disorientation similar to the effect produced by the mirrors. Hanging the works from their pointed ends while on the surface maintaining the horizontal and vertical lines creates a dual orientation, one issuing from the rhombus, the other from the grid. The position the painting occupies in space seems to have been crucial for this type of work. On the back of *Foxtrot A* (1929), for example, Mondrian wrote precise instructions as to how the picture was to be hung, at what height, and in what relation to the spectator's field of vision. Even in his most strict period, Mondrian was never the dullard for which many still take him.

It seems that it was exactly this more playful side that André Kertész sought to capture when, in 1926, he photographed Mondrian's

living quarters. His most famous photograph shows the spiral staircase leading to the studio; just beside the front door is a table with a round vase containing a single flower. Given that this is a black-and-white photograph, one might easily overlook the fact that this an artificial flower; Mondrian even went so far as to paint the stem and leaves white, "in order to expel that impossible green from my interior."[7] This studio prop is no less bizarre or Dadaistic than Duchamp's bicycle wheel; and it is equally intended to enhance the living space. At the same time, however, with a simple coat of white paint Mondrian manages to eliminate the natural, with all its impurities and contingencies, from the field of vision. In their studios, both artists were driven by an excessive logic: the absurd rules of the dream resulted in Duchamp's case in a "surrealist" game with the dimensions of everyday life; while Mondrian even subjected a common flower to his Neo-plasticist principles of interiority and abstraction.

DANCING FOR THE CAMERA

When Jackson Pollock died, he left behind a studio that was nothing more than a warehouse. Without the artist, his paintings and his painter's tools, it was simply empty. A few years ago, the studio in Springs, Easthampton, was returned to its original state and turned into a museum – albeit without the art. Visitors are asked to take off their shoes when entering. It was here that between 1947 and 1950, Pollock executed a series of masterpieces that literally changed the face of painting: works that carried the visible traces of their making – drips, handprints (*Number I*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles), the junk on the floor (*Full Fathom Five*, Museum of Modern Art, New York). While the sometimes-enormous canvases lay spread out before him, Pollock sprinkled and showered them with paint, resulting in intriguing webs of drops, splatters and lines. Pollock understood perfectly the way to capture the painterly gesture itself, aided by the laws of gravity. Never before had the act of painting produced such spectacle. It was only logical that people felt compelled to penetrate the studio and to seek the means to try and seize the artist in the process of creation.

In 1950, Hans Namuth succeeded in capturing Pollock at work in a set of 500 photographs and two films. This was the first time that the process of art-making had been caught in such detail. Namuth's second film, from 1951, was shot partly outdoors, in order to make filming in color possible. This film contains the famous sequence of Pollock painting on glass. He is unaware of the viewer, but we look him right in the face, the camera gazing upward through the transparent surface. In this way, both Pollock and we are literally "in the painting." These two films had a greater impact on the course of American art than Pollock's pictures themselves. What remained in the collective consciousness was the image of Pollock performing a kind of ritualistic dance. The films were the inspiration for a number of new art forms, including performance art, body art, environments and happenings; forms which, for the rest, need not necessarily be produced in the studio. Among his colleagues, Pollock was esteemed for having destroyed painting; but what actually led to the death of *his own* painting was, ironically enough, the voyeurism of the photo- and film camera. In order to carry out his experiments, Pollock needed contact with the materiality of paint and the solitude of the studio. The arrival of the camera put the painter rather than the paintings at the center of attention, transforming him into a mere actor. From this point onwards, Pollock saw himself as the performer who actually got in the way of the real painter.

Allan Kaprow set the tone when, at the end of the 1950s, he began to see the huge paintings grouped together in the studio as environments, and Pollock's destruction of convention as "a return to the point where art was actively involved in ritual, in the magic of life."[8] He thereby took a first step out of the studio, moving towards the happening, the installation and the environment, which allowed him to treat real life in the city as a canvas for action. Kaprow had begun his career as a painter, as had Eva Hesse, Richard Serra, and Bruce Nauman. In the 1960s, they too were inspired by Pollock's purported break with painting. They started to "do things" in their studios, using materials that, at the time, were highly unusual – rope, felt, glass, rubber, and lead. Their "actions" were documented in film and photographs. The famous photograph by Gianfranco Gorgoni, in which Richard Serra appears wearing a dust-mask and goggles and about

to throw a ball of molten lead, clearly owes much to the films of Hans Namuth. *Splashing* (1968) exists as a "sculpture" only thanks to the fact that Serra's gesture was recorded. This vision of the artist as a kind of lightning-throwing Zeus makes a nice picture, but is actually intended to raise the viewer's awareness of the conventionality of the studio space and the work that takes place there. As far as the latter is concerned, the most provocative move was made by Bruce Nauman when he asked himself what an artist does in his studio if, even though he is trained as a painter, he has no canvas, paint or brushes at hand: "If you see yourself as an artist and you function in a studio and you're not a painter, if you don't start out with some canvas, you do all kinds of things – you sit in a chair or pace around. And then the question goes back to what is art? And art is what an artist does, just sitting around in the studio."[9]

Nauman was fascinated by the empty studio. What does someone do when he calls himself an artist, but has nothing to work with but himself? He begins to ask what he's doing there: walking around, sitting on a chair and staring, drinking coffee, and so on. He becomes fixated on his own behavior. What had once seemed secondary suddenly became the whole point. In the winter of 1967–68, Nauman made several 16 mm films in which he registered a number of his studio activities: *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square*; *Playing a Note on the Violin While I Walk Around the Studio*; *Bouncing Two Balls between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms*; and *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square*. These black-and-white films were shot with a static camera and each lasts about ten minutes. They show nothing but the literal performance of their titles. The viewer experiences Nauman's actions in the same "real time" as they were carried out before the camera. The most crucial aspect of the films is that the studio is empty, creating a discrepancy between the mythical image the spectator has of the "creative" artist – as visualized in the Namuth films – and that which is actually happening before our eyes.

In the winter of 1968–69 Nauman made a number of videos in which the medium more or less emancipates itself from the behavior it registers. Here, the artist rotates the camera, or turns it upside down, as in *Slow Angle Walk* and *Pacing Upside Down*. These videos last an hour, putting the viewer's endurance to the test as well. At times

we see nothing but the empty studio and hear nothing but the artist's footsteps, as he has moved beyond the camera's range. Nauman also invented situations that purposefully frustrated his activities. *Walk with Contrapposto* (1968), for example, was filmed in a narrow wooden corridor, closed at one end. The camera was set up in such a way that only the walls of this bizarre studio decor were visible; the rest of the space is out of sight. Seen from behind, Nauman moves slowly towards the camera and back. With his hands crossed over his head and a certain exaltedness to his movements – a result of trying to hold the *contrapposto* pose – he appears to be carrying out a kind of ritual dance.

A year later (1969), he exhibited the corridor as an autonomous installation in the Whitney Museum of Art in New York, under the title *Performance Corridor*. Nauman himself had withdrawn from the work, instead inviting the audience to take the same walk he had taken in his studio in front of the camera. In this way, Nauman transferred his studio experiment to the public sphere in a manner similar to the way in which Delacroix had created a shared context for his sketch-like pictures. Time and again, the viewer is asked to "complete" the work of art; always, however, within the parameters set by the artist. As was the case with many of his contemporaries, Nauman was interested in relativizing the ego involved in "being an artist" and undermining audience presumptions with regard to viewing art. The power of these early films and videos lies in the fact that Nauman did not leave the studio – as had many of his generation, thereby creating what has been called the "post-studio condition" – but instead transforms it within its own parameters. On this basis, he then relocated art-making out of the private sphere and into the public and institutional domain.[10]

STAGE SETS AND PROPS

For the Venice Biennial of 1980, Joseph Beuys created an installation comprising 30 props that he had used in previous *Aktionen* and 50 school chalkboards, covered in notes and diagrams. The title of the work, *Das Kapital, 1970–1977*, partially refers to Gustave Courbet's famous studio picture, rejected for the Salon of 1855 and then shown,

on the artist's own initiative and in competition with the official exhibition, in a pavilion outside the grounds of the World's Fair. The painting purported to be a résumé of seven years of Courbet's artistic life, and depicted the studio in a completely new way – as the central location from which the artist could both survey the structures and give form to society. In the Venice work, Beuys, too, claimed to have brought together everything that over the previous seven years had occupied him as an artist. In contrast to Courbet, however, Beuys did not first turn his studio into a work of art in order to confront the public with it at a later stage. What he wanted to show, he could create directly in the exhibition space. A number of sketches and a few notes were sufficient material. Beuys conceived of his installation as a kind of catalyst, meant to spur the viewer to creativity, to help find the solution to the present crisis of capitalism, and to realize the artist's vision of the future, his so-called *soziale Plastik*.

The division between the isolation of the studio and the public space of exhibition had been transcended. From this point onwards, the artist could make his working space anywhere and at any moment. The studio had entered the public domain. One of the most remarkable phenomena of the last decades has been the appearance of the studio in the gallery and museum. When Rirkrit Tiravanija made a reconstruction of his New York studio and living space in a Cologne gallery – including the kitchen and bathroom – he did it in order to be able to share his life with visitors in what was for him a foreign city. He encouraged them to simply do what they always did: eat, sleep, play or simply potter about. Without the traces they leave behind, there would be no work of art. Although in Tiravanija's installation *Tomorrow is Another Day* (Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1996), the artist is present and even prepared to serve up a tasty Thai meal, the fact that he in many ways effaces himself is also an important aspect of the work. The willing opening of "his studio" to the public is the exact opposite of the narcissistic closure of the space that had been typical of most modern artists since the nineteenth century. Tiravanija's reconstruction derives its effect from the almost impossible task of isolating the studio from daily life.

Another example is Tracey Emin, who, invited for an exhibition in Stockholm, also used the gallery to create a (closed) space where she

lived for a period of two weeks, sleeping, eating, and hanging up the laundry, but also realizing an exhibition: *Exorcism of the Last Painting I Ever Made* (Galeri Andreas Brändström, 1996). The public was invited to spy on her through sixteen fish-eye lenses inserted into the wall. By turns walking around naked and painting, Emin played the role of both artist and (nude) model. In taking up poses that her male colleagues had transformed into clichés, she made fun of these traditional roles. She instrumentalized both the public's desire to see and her own tendency towards exhibitionism in the hope of being liberated from the inability to paint that had dogged her for a number of years. In the cases of both Emin and Tiravanija, the studio is expressly installed as a "work of art." The inescapable context of the gallery and museum transforms the daily lives of the artist and the viewer into an artificial paradise. But this led to a new and paradoxical challenge, namely: how to maintain the productive tension between private and public when, in the most objective sense, the distinction has been eliminated?

> What is Art? [...] In reality I do not believe it is legitimate to seriously define Art other than in the light of one constant factor – namely the transformation of Art into merchandise. In our time this process has accelerated to the point at which artistic and commercial values are superimposed. If we are concerned with the phenomenon of reification then Art will be a particular representation of that phenomenon – a form of tautology.[11]

Marcel Broodthaers realized early on that in the thoroughly institutionalized art world, it was pointless to try and escape from the studio, or to try and operate outside the museum. The studio was merely transferred to the factory, the street, or the desert. The museum then fed on everything that in principle was intended to threaten it, seeking to ensure its continuing existence – and so the circle was closed. Joseph Beuys became the "exhibition artist" *par excellence*, not in spite of but because of the political utopia proposed by his *soziale Plastik*, his alternative to capitalism. Broodthaers understood that within capitalism there was no alternative to the museum. Art knew

only one context and was forced to function within that context, as a tautology. According to Broodthaers, since Duchamp the artist had become nothing more than the author of a definition.

Oddly enough, in order to attack the museum, Broodthaers used the studio as a weapon. In 1968 he installed a museum in his studio in rue de la Pépinière in Brussels. His *Musée d'Art Moderne* existed for four years and appeared in a variety of locations and in various forms. The museum eventually comprised twelve "sections." Broodthaers himself was the director. In its first manifestation in September 1968, *Section XIXème Siècle*, the installation consisted of empty fine-art crates, labeled with the words "picture," "keep dry," "handle with care" or "fragil(e)." Postcards with reproductions of famous nineteenth-century paintings by artists such as David, Ingres, Courbet, Wiertz, and Meissonier were hung on the walls. Finally, a slide show was projected onto the crates, again showing nineteenth-century paintings and caricatures. According to the artist, thanks to the leveling effect of the exchange-value system, the museum was nothing more than a framework for framed works of art. This was the reason the artworks themselves were absent. The visitors to the studio were confronted with a critical analysis of "the museum" in the form of a work of art. The most famous "section" of the museum, the *Département des Aigles*, was created in 1972, when Broodthaers presented his *Section des Figures (Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute)* in the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf. He fulfilled his self-appointed task as director by bringing together more than 300 objects and images on the theme of the eagle – both famous works of art and more mundane articles of everyday use. All the works exhibited were accompanied by a plastic label with a number and the caption "This is not a work of art" – alternately in French, German and English. As the objects underwent the neutralizing effect of seriality, they became empty signs. But because Broodthaers opposed the cynical museological context with a kind of "museum fiction," the same objects could also take on a poetic quality, with an ability to seduce the viewer. For the duration of the exhibition, the things displayed could be both "works of art" and "not works of art" at the same time. Here, Broodthaers exhibited "an experimental exhibition of his museum of modern art." A duplication by which he made visible the reality of the museum, but at the

same time articulated a potential that, due to this reality, usually remained hidden.

"Reconstitution, la plus fidèle possible (?), d'un ensemble fait par l'artiste en 1968 qui s'attaquait, à l'époque, à la notion de musée et à celle de hiérarchie. M.B. Paris 1975." Seven years later, Broodthaers reversed the hierarchy by exhibiting in an official context the part of the studio where in 1968 he had first opened his museum: *La Salle Blanche* – a container made of unpainted wood, installed in a museum gallery. A space that could not be entered, but only looked at: a work of art. An exact (?) reconstruction of his earlier studio, complete with doors, walls, windows, a fireplace and two radiators, which were actually *trompe-l'oeil* (namely photographic reproductions). This was not a studio, but a fiction; an ironic commentary on the cult status of the studio as a sacred space that remains intact even after the artist's death and may well become a place of pilgrimage. The title of course refers to the "white cube," the museum gallery with its white walls; for Broodthaers this was nothing more than a stage set, but for most of his contemporaries it still represented the optimal condition for the exhibition of works of art. *La Salle Blanche* is an empty shell, a mold, much like the packing crates. Here too we are given single words, in large numbers and in perfect penmanship, covering the walls and the floor: *copie, collectionneur, portrait, pourcentage, prix, amateur, eau, paysage, brillant*, *toile, chevalet, galerie, perspective, abc, lumière, soleil, nuages, musée*... What does an artist do in his studio when he has no materials but also no desire to pace back and forth or to carry out useless actions? Broodthaers' studio is empty in a different way than Nauman's. All that is left is a bare room and a bunch of words, which, thanks to their arbitrary arrangement and repetition, quickly lose their meaning and become interchangeable. But in certain combinations they are also able to conjure up images – for example, the image of the painter when first confronted with the effects of industrial capitalism. Thanks to the production of paint in tubes and the lightweight easel, the artist was suddenly able to leave the studio and work in the open air. Such a consciously archaic image might be seen as an ironic confirmation of the desire of his American contemporaries to lock up the studio forever. Other combinations, however, cause "the studio" to reappear in all its richness and complexity. Broodthaers' empty

studio is like the mold represented by his much-loved mussel. And the artist is the mussel, perfect, because he himself creates the shell that gives him form; from the inside out.

Of course, Broodthaers had not fallen prey to some nostalgic desire to return to the isolation of the studio. The studio was an anachronism; it had been completely superseded. But this is precisely the reason that the artist was fascinated by it, and by other phenomena of the nineteenth century. His guiding lights were Baudelaire and Mallarmé. He was obsessed with technical media in its infant forms: slide projectors, early cinema. The models for the public spaces he created in his installations were panoramas and winter gardens. Broodthaers found the nineteenth century more interesting than his own time because it was the period when all the forms of expression then still in use had been discovered. He believed art history, too, could best be understood by looking backwards: "I have the impression that from a certain point we began to travel back in time."[12] It seems clear that Broodthaers here mobilizes the anachronism of the nineteenth-century studio much as Warburg had done with the Renaissance workshop. But the playful reversal of "art history" demonstrates equally that Broodthaers no longer believed in the irreversibility of its historical progression. He understood that a belief in the real existence of history could do nothing but produce such anachronisms. He was intrigued by forms of anachronism exactly because they do not exist, unless it is as fictions.

Translation by Rachel Esner

This article was originally published under the title 'De tussenkomst van het atelier' in *De Witte Raaf* (November 2001). It is included in this volume, in translation and with only the original references (in English versions where appropriate), as one of the earliest essays to deal with the many varieties of the studio phenomenon in trans-historical perspective, but which has, until now, remained unknown to an international scholarly audience.

NOTES

1 Charles Baudelaire, "The Life and Work of Eugène Delacroix," in: Charles Baudelaire, *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, P.E. Charvet (trans.) (London: Penguin Classics, 1972), 379.

2 Aby Warburg, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie (1902)," in: Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 202.

3 Claes Oldenburg, *Store Days* (New York: Something Else Press, 1967), 28.

4 Gretchen Berg, "Nothing to Lose. Interview met Andy Warhol," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 10 (May 1967) 40.

5 William S. Heckscher et al., "The Genesis of Iconology," in: *Stil und Überlieferung in der Kunst des Abendlandes. Akten des XXI. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte in Bonn, 1964* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1967), 239–262.

6 Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 469.

7 Quoted in *Mondrian: From Figuration to Abstraction*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: The Seibu Museum of Art, 1987), 32.

8 Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," *Art News* 57 (October 1958) 56.

9 Bruce Nauman, in: Coosje van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman* (New York, Rizzoli International Publications, 1988), 14.

10 On the development from a studio-bound, modernist isolation towards the limitlessness of the post-studio condition in the post-modern period, see Caroline A. Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996). Because Jones categorizes this development as a form of *liberation* from the confines of the studio, she exactly mimics the intentions of the American artists she discusses: Stella, Warhol, and Smithson. For her, the studio is always a negative point of reference. The emphasis on this particular discourse prevents the studio as such from becoming a matter of debate. The present text may be seen as a kind of answer to Jones' otherwise fascinating study. For a more fundamental critique of her metaphysical assumptions regarding history ("If my aims have a single name, it is history," p. xvii), see Frank Reijnders, *Kunst – Geschiedenis/Verschijnen en verdwijnen* (Amsterdam: Socialistische Uitgeverij Amsterdam, 1990).

11 Marcel Broodthaers, "To Be A Straight Thinker or Not to Be," in: exh. cat. *Le Privilège de l'Art* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1975), n.p.

12 Anna Hakkens (ed.), *Marcel Broodthaers aan het woord* (Ghent and Amsterdam: Ludion, 1998), 16.

CHAPTER 8

Accrochage in Architecture: Photographic Representations of Theo van Doesburg's Studios and Paintings

MATTHIAS NOELL

SURFACE AND SPACE

In addition to his varied activities as a painter, theoretician, architect, critic, Dadaist and author, Theo van Doesburg was also an occasional photographer – an area of his work that has so far remained largely unknown. On the assumption that his photographs of his studios not only record changes in his private surroundings but also accompany and explain the artistic positions he was developing, the aim of this essay is to examine the surviving photographs in which Van Doesburg (but also other photographers) staged both the rooms and spaces in which he worked, in order to investigate what they reveal about his conception of modern art.[1] First, however, we must acknowledge that only a few photographs from Van Doesburg's estate can be designated as the artist's own work; we must therefore conclude on their authorship by reconstruction, without being able to achieve complete certainty in this regard. Only for some of these original photographs – no glass negatives have survived – do we have positive proof: Van Doesburg's self-portrait with Nelly and camera in front of a mirror, for example, was evidently shot in Mondrian's studio at 26, rue du départ in Paris (1515 AB 9748) in 1921.[2] Some of the photographic prints have inscriptions on the back: 1597 AB 9878 shows Hans Arp and Nelly in the garden of Paul Eluard; on the back, Nelly – assuming it was her – noted "photo Does." Aside from a few preserved "artistic" or exper-

imental prints, Van Doesburg produced most of his photographs for the purposes of documentation: in order to print them with his own articles or in journals, or to send them to colleagues and friends such as Piet Mondrian or people at the Bauhaus with whom he wished to discuss the progress of his art. There are entire passages in letters to friends dealing with the technical difficulties involved in reproducing colored paintings in black-and-white.[3] Although an autodidact in photographic procedures, Van Doesburg was still able to think the problems through and make use of colored filters to correct the conversion of chromaticity in prints. In 1922 he explained to Evert Rinsema how to use this photographic technique: "They must use a yellow filter for the colors, otherwise the blue will come out entirely white and the yellow entirely black. If you use a yellow filter everything is correctly in balance."[4] Some months later, in 1923, he wrote to Antony Kok: "The colors have come out quite balanced in the photograph."[5] Van Doesburg also had a now-lost compilation of slides at his disposal, which he used for his frequent lectures – as did other colleagues with their collections, notably architects like Erich Mendelsohn or Walter Gropius.[6]

In most photographs of Van Doesburg's studios of the 1920s we may observe that his paintings are not shown hanging or standing randomly in the background, but are always arranged in a close and well-balanced relationship to each other, to the visible parts of the room and its furniture, and – last but not least – to the artist himself, when he appears. By the time of the founding of the "De Stijl" movement at the latest, Van Doesburg no longer regarded the making of autonomous art as a meaningful and valuable activity. His interest was focused on the possibilities of process-related creation through art, not on art as a result of the process of creation. Showing the making of art or the circumstances under which it was made was therefore not the point; photography for Van Doesburg was not a medium to document a situation in his own life and career, but, on the contrary, was to be used to show the simultaneity of movement in time and the complex task of artwork in modern perception. Colored planes (i.e. painting), space (i.e. studio or architecture) and individual (i.e. artist) can be seen as parts of a spatiotemporal modernist game, which can be arranged experimentally in the photographic representation. We

may describe hiding the making in order to demonstrate the impact of modern art as the essence of Van Doesburg's photographic performance and the presentation of his works of art in his photographs.

Although at the start of his career Van Doesburg still adopted the pose of the bohemian, wearing a student beret and cravat, with brush and palette, in front of his easel (1504 AB 9705), from 1917 he began to present himself in the midst of regional or "reform" furniture – two turned armchairs with a similar table – and modern arts-and-crafts objects. A double-portrait photo (fig. 1) shows Theo van Doesburg in April 1917 with Lena Milius in his studio in Kort Galgewater 3 in Leiden, where he lived for the relatively long period of three years. The painting *The Card Players*, still unfinished, is seen in the background, standing on Van Doesburg's easel – a group of four figures around a table. The reference to the series of the same title by Paul Cézanne (*Les joueurs de cartes*, around 1890/92) at first seems obvious, but the photograph in fact turns out to be a visualization of art-theoretical

FIG. 1 Theo van Doesburg, Self-portrait with Lena Milius in the studio at Kort Galgewater 3 in Leiden, April 1917, The Hague, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Van Doesburg Archive, inv. no. 1508 AB 9719

ideas about ways of representing the relationship between surface and space. It is therefore only at first glance that Van Doesburg's photograph itself appears to be a domestic scene of a couple in a studio flat. In fact, the scene should be viewed as an interpretation or reduplication of the painting, which the artist has captured along with his work and an additional mirror image, reflecting Lena's back and, in the center of the mirror, an unidentified painting on the opposite wall. Van Doesburg uses the pictorial medium of photography to carry out a formal experiment in order to solve pictorial issues – the essential problem between figure and background in a painting *and* the way in which a flat painting affects the space with persons in front of it. Only six months later, on the basis of *The Card Players* and its photographic interpretation, Van Doesburg painted *Composition IX* – a much more abstract, "reconstructed" version of the image, although the four figures from the first picture are still recognizable.[7] In a photograph from the same period we see a woman, Miss J. Th. M. Schoondergang, sitting in front of an abstract portrait, *Composition XIII: Woman in the Studio*. The photograph formed the starting-point for another portrait and for a series of abstract works leading to the *Composition in Dissonances* of 1919 – an abstract portrait in front of another abstract portrait. Van Doesburg staged another scene shortly afterwards. In the photograph, Lena Milius is seen seated directly in front of *Composition XVIII (Autumn red)*, an abstract landscape. It is possible to identify amongst the paintings Van Doesburg's *Composition X, Composition XII*, as well as an unidentified work and an unknown and remarkable piece of De Stijl furniture, probably a wooden stool or side table.

Van Doesburg arrived in Weimar in April 1921, and from July 1922 until the end of that year he rented a studio at Am Schanzengraben 8, today An der Falkenburg 3. This sparsely furnished studio, known only through a single photograph (1566 AB 10066) and some statements by his friends, was painted completely white. The photo shows nothing that recalls the artist's creative process – no easel, no palettes or brushes, and no model. In the middle of the room and in the very center of the photograph we see a drawing table with four rolls of paper, a letter balance, and a plotting board with a sheet of paper on it – we know that Van Doesburg frequently used tracing paper to copy, develop and abstract his compositions. The back of a stretcher frame

or painting and two stained glass compositions lean against the wall, with only two abstract works hung. The huge sketch for a stained glass window may be read as a reference to the exaggeratedly dramatized, neutrally glazed, large-format studio window. Van Doesburg traced over some of the iron bars and introduced new ones in the positive photograph – altering the distribution of the bars to make it resemble the De Stijl aesthetic. He posed directly in front of the abstract dancers in *Composition in Grey (Rag-Time)* of 1919, a similar situation to that in his photograph in front of the *Card Players*. Rather than a De Stijl publication, he is holding a volume of Lajos Kassák's Hungarian avant-garde journal *Ma* – most probably the current issue published in the same year, 1922 – thereby aligning himself with a very specific aspect of the Constructivist avant-garde. This particular issue included not only the famous manifesto "Bildarchitektur" (architecture of the image), but also Kassák's theory of flat painting developing into the space – a direct analogy to the ideas of Van Doesburg and designed to propagate against Walter Gropius at the Bauhaus in Weimar. On his right we see Nelly van Moorsel sitting in an armchair, on his left the philosopher Harry Scheibe reading another journal or book; several other publications lie on an additional table in the right corner.

Van Doesburg photographed himself and his friends not only in front of his paintings in his studio and in domestic situations, but also in front of urban settings that could be described as accidental ready-mades. A picture taken during an outing with his wife Nelly, his dog Dada and their friend Antony Kok along the Loire shows the three posing against the background of a rusticated façade (1589 AB 9850). Upright and horizontal rectangular fields form a background that is surprisingly similar to Van Doesburg's painted compositions dating from 1919 – first and foremost *Composition in Dissonances*, the "double portrait abstraction" of Miss Schoondergang sitting in front of *Composition XIII: Woman in Studio*.

Up to this point, most of Van Doesburg's paintings emerged from abstract depictions of human figures in a progressive evolution. His photographs trace this developmental process, form its starting point, or experiment with the effects of the paintings in space – sometimes ironically treated, as in his holiday snapshot with Nelly and Antony Kok in front of a kind of "naturally abstract" architecture.

In the photographs of the studio in Leiden, Theo van Doesburg only touched on the question of two-dimensional surface and space – the mirror was a central theme of his visual experiments in this period.[8] With the interleaving image planes – consisting of photographed three-dimensional (sculptural or architectonic) parts, and painted as well as mirrored two-dimensional parts – Van Doesburg expanded and challenged the subject of his paintings and experimented with their solution in order to advance the question of modern abstract art.

From about 1926, Van Doesburg began to move on: he now also used the method of negative montage in his photographs. His self-portrait in the studio he rented in the Villa Corot (2 rue d'Arceuil) in Paris (July 1928–December 1930) – a small, shabby complex of half-timbered buildings that still exists today – shows him working on his painting *Peinture pure*, which at that point had actually already been finished for eight years (1544 AB 9978). The artist's blurred outline indicates that the paper was moved during the exposure of the second negative, while the already exposed background appears mostly stable. In addition to the aforementioned topics, Van Doesburg now expanded his interest into the issue of movement in space – defined by the planes of his canvases. No later than 1923, the year of his important exhibition at the Galerie Rosenberg in Paris, the artist began to conceive of a new kind of architectural space, built up by moving bodies in time. This concept referred to the hyperspace-philosophy of the mathematician Charles Howard Hinton and the architect and theosophist Claude Bragdon.[9] It was especially Hinton's idea of the hypercube, the "tesseract," that inspired Van Doesburg's own translation into architectonic-sculptural projects. A principal element was the realization of a four-dimensional space, which Van Doesburg sought to achieve by defining all the surfaces of his drawn architecture by colored planes.

A small series of photographs with double exposures and montage was especially significant for the development of this spatial concept, as it is only in these pictures that it becomes clear that the artist conceived his spaces not as mere pieces of art, but viewed the presence of moving spectators as a constitutive element. The painting *Con-*

tra-Composition XVI plays a special role in this series. The photographic self-portrait with a blurred Dada might initially be seen as a simple snapshot, with the dog apparently having moved during the exposure, but other similar pictures in front of the same *Contra-composition* indicate Van Doesburg's deeper interest in the interaction of fore- and background, of artwork and human being. A multiple-exposure photograph published in *De Stijl* by Van Doesburg himself in 1926 shows that the large-format painting once again formed more than merely an accidental backdrop in the studio. In 1925, Theo van Doesburg photographed two professional dancers in front of the vertically positioned *Contra-Composition XVI*. In the case of the Russian choreographer, musician, author and dancer Valentin Parnac (Parnakh), Van Doesburg attempted to realize a stable photograph of the dancer in front of the canvas, which he used two times for the print. In one of the two surviving prints (1684 AB 10236), Parnac appears in front of the painting, which has been positioned behind him. In the other, a second exposure of the painting has also been superimposed on top of him. Here, movement in space, architecture and the painting correlate and mutually determine one another. Van Doesburg uses the artificial technique of double exposure as an alternative to the mirrors, with their reflecting spatial layers. The painting *Contra-Composition XVI* seen in the photograph is in turn also closely linked to the model for the Aubette dance-hall in Strasbourg (1926–28), in which the dancers moved in front of and within a spatial painting, with a row of mirrors reduplicating the scenery on one wall.

The multiple exposure of Nelly van Moorsel that Van Doesburg made in 1926 shows another context for these ideas (fig. 2). On the back of the photograph he wrote the following, in somewhat awkward German: "Simultan Porträt von Nelly-Pétro, und die Hunde u Kätze" ("Simultaneous portrait of Nelly, with dogs a[nd] cats); and again: "Aufnahme Théo van Doesburg 1926" ("Photograph by Theo van Doesburg"). It is a very sophisticated composition showing a small Nelly sitting cross-legged within the black bar at the left edge of the canvas in *Contra-Composition VIII*. At the same time, Pétro – the alter ego of Nelly, whose full first name was Petronella – sits in front of the painting in the studio with two or more animals. Van Doesburg may have used several negatives for this print, as we see some "flying"

FIG. 2 Theo van Doesburg, double-portrait of Nelly van Moorsel in the studio in Clamart (64, avenue Schneider), 1926, The Hague, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Van Doesburg Archive, inv. no. 1535 AB 9921

bottles and glasses and a round table that do not jive very well with the other planes.

This photograph was published as an illustration to an article by Hans Möhring, in which the German graphic designer reviewed modern graphic-design solutions. Möhring discusses a (now probably lost) poster by Van Doesburg (80 x 55 cm) that used the photo with Nelly-Pétro. This poster was an advertisement for the artist's own play of the meaningful title *La double vision*, which he had published under the pseudonym of I.K. Bonset as *Het andere gezicht. Abstracte, sur-humanistische roman* (*The Other View. An Abstract Sur-humanistic Novel*).[10] Möhring writes:

> Only by means of photography – including the techniques of developing and copying – can a dramatic event be represented and used effectively as propaganda; its intensity tells the people of today all the more in the measure that it recognizes and experiences all appearances and all time-bound events.[11]

We do not know if the play was actually performed, nor if Nelly was involved in it, but the photograph seems to have been a perfect visualization of the content: the title – "Double vision" – could be interpreted as the simultaneous perception of two images of a single object or person, as in the photograph; but also as an unconscious – "superhuman" – apparition.

This second interpretation leads to another photograph, already mentioned, with Nelly and Hans Arp (1597 AB 9878). The double exposure shows the nearly completely bleached-out portrait of Nelly and, implanted in her head, a superimposed Hans Arp, seated at a table in the garden of Paul Eluard.[12] "Ensemble inseparables," Eluard wrote in a poem of the same period.[13] And, on another photograph (AB 10210) depicting an unknown woman and two superimposed portraits of Frederick Kiesler, Van Doesburg wrote: "Kiesler umarmt von dieser jungen Dame verdoppelt sich" ("Kiesler, embraced by this young woman, duplicates himself.")

Such superimpositions were not restricted to photography: Van Doesburg used the same strategy in the field of typography – with letters printed in two sizes and colors layered one upon the other, or

text laid over photographs. He had already begun experimenting with overlapping typographic elements in 1920, for example for the cover of his book *Klassiek – Barok – Modern*.[14] A well-known example of the procedure of combining photographs and typography is the cover of the anniversary issue of *De Stijl*, from 1927, in which Van Doesburg printed quotes from friends and critics about the journal over his own portrait. The original exposure (1543 AB 9972 B) shows him in front of *Contra-Composition XIII* of 1925/1926 – shot in his studio.[15]

Van Doesburg found his way back to painting in the course of 1929. He translated his superimpositions, double exposures and simultaneous portraits into so-called "Simultaneous Compositions" and "Simultaneous Contra-Compositions," with their two systems of color planes and black bars separated from one another but overlapping, like the two negatives in the photographic prints.

ACCROCHAGE IN ARCHITECTURE: MEUDON

In December 1930, the Van Doesburgs moved into a studio-house in Meudon, which Theo had designed for himself. For the first time, he now had an opportunity to conceive, produce and present his paintings not in pre-existing rooms, but in a building he had designed specifically for the purpose. In a period of just under two months, between his move into the new building and his death, Van Doesburg himself most probably hung his paintings or placed them on picture-rails, installed lamps, and furnished the studio.

Before and shortly after the building and the interior decoration were finished, Van Doesburg made a small series of photographs of both the exterior and the interior. These are characterized by the use of a focal length not short enough for normal architectural photography and by an original focus on the object – thus simultaneously unprofessional in a conventional sense and precise in the choice of the motif. Some of them have been retouched to hide the technical additions to the house or things lying in the foreground (for example 1391 AB 9637). Amongst these are at least three marked with details for publishing (for example 1391 AB 9639A), but none of them appeared after Van Doesburg's death.[16] Only two of the series, both with nor-

mal retouches, were printed in Abraham Elzas's article for the last issue of *De Stijl*, which appeared in January 1931; these show only the more general views of the building. All our remarks make it plausible that Van Doesburg was the sole author of this particular photographic series and their additional markings.

We also know of a few pictures taken by the Société Solomite, the company responsible for the building's construction, who undoubtedly hoped to gain new customers by publishing pictures of the construction process and the finished modern dwelling. The Van Doesburg Archive contains some of these photographs and of other buildings realized by the Société Solomite (like 1388 AB 9617).

Probably before August 1935 – when they were published in another article by Abraham Elzas – Nelly commissioned yet another series of photographs, showing the studio with Van Doesburg's paintings on the wall (1393 and 1392 AB 9658).[17] In one of these, a plaster mask – perhaps Van Doesburg's death mask – appears on the wall between the windows. Five small prints (1393 AB 9660), stuck together on a sheet of black cardboard, show the same hanging, but in a more cluttered studio, with a provisional drawing table with drawing paper and a T-square lying on it – most probably Theo's rather than Nelly's tools.

We have to conclude, then, that the interior of the studio-house was most probably completed before Van Doesburg died in March 1931. Between 24 February and 7 March 1931, the day of his death, Nelly and Theo van Doesburg were in Davos, due to his grave illness. Some weeks later – Nelly had still not returned to France – Alexander Dorner visited the house in Meudon with their neighbor and friend Hans Arp. On this occasion, the director of the Provinzialmuseum in Hanover chose a painting for his collection, *Simultaneous Composition XXIV*. He described it in a letter to Nelly as the one "[...] hanging in the studio by the stairs leading to the roof terrace."[18] We must therefore consider the hanging of Van Doesburg's paintings as his own work, even if *Simultaneous Contra-Composition*, seen in an orthogonal photograph of the east wall at top of the metal staircase, was sent to Antony Kok after an exhibition in Barcelona in January 1930 and was only officially reacquired by Nelly some years later. But, as in the case of *Contra-Composition XX*, sold to Otto Carlsund after the same exhibition and quickly returned the same year, it is difficult to inter-

pret the presence of this canvas in his studio. Van Doesburg had sold both of the works seen in the photograph, and he wrote to Kok that he could easily exchange it for another of his paintings.[19]

The three aforementioned and larger photographs – one of which is not preserved as a print in the Van Doesburg Archive, but published in a volume of *De 8 en Opbouw* – depict different walls of the studio and thus respond to the specific situation of Van Doesburg's works shown; these in turn appear to explain the architecture of the studio and of the building as a whole. Three different angles have been chosen for the three details, and the resulting surface composition is rendered legible in the process by analogy to the paintings. The building's diagonal, vertical and horizontal lines are carefully balanced with those of the paintings, creating a dialogue in the photograph between the building, the art and the way in which it is hung.

The first photograph was shot nearly orthogonally to the east wall. The architectural elements of the gallery, with its railings, the iron staircase and the concrete-built stairwell to the ground floor, reflect on the one hand the orthogonal pictorial structure of *Peinture pure*, seen in the lower right corner of the photograph, and, on the other, the diagonals of *Contra-Composition V* (1924) and *Simultaneous Contra-Composition* (1929). Van Doesburg's "Simultaneous compositions" emerged from the superimposition of two independent levels of painting: the colored surfaces and a scaffolding of black lines. The railing can therefore be read as a counterpart to the "Simultaneous compositions" on the wall, which are extended into the space of the room through these references.

The second photograph, which was taken at an oblique angle looking down from the gallery into the room, shows a compositional principle that contrasts with that of the first. The distribution of the furniture on the floor surface initially corresponds to the right-angled surfaces of *Composition XX* on the wall. However, following the compositional principles of Van Doesburg's "Elementarism" (consisting mainly of inclined surfaces, disequilibrium, tension, and dissonance of colors) – and *Contra-Composition VIII* in particular is a key work here – the photograph shows an arrangement of surfaces lying at right angles to each other within a diagonal view of the room. While the alignment of the swing-arm lamp (a design by Bernard Albin Gras

from the beginning of the 1920s) is subordinated to the lines of *Contra-Composition VIII*, the shadowed empty space of the floor, the window sill and the niche appear to translate the two black bars in the painting onto the photographic surface. Thus, while the works from the Composition-series in both photographs form an analogy with the arrangement of the paintings and furniture on a surface, the task assigned to Contra-Compositions and Simultaneous Compositions is to structure the space.

The third photograph, a diagonal view of the south wall of the studio, cuts into both the stairwell and the gallery, as well as into the west wall, and shows the studio door opening onto the hallway. Here we see numerous paintings standing on three wooden ledges, gathering together Van Doesburg's most recent paintings from 1929 and 1930, but accompanied by a whole series of older sketches.

Through the way in which he hung *Arithmetic Composition* (1930), Theo van Doesburg sought to elucidate the analogy between architecture and painting. The building, with its two diagonally superimposed rectangles, developed from a quite comparable shifting of a quadratic surface through space. This becomes particularly clear in the way in which the building's black and white axonometry is juxtaposed with *Arithmetic Composition*. Van Doesburg had already published a sequence of six preliminary stages for the painting in the German journal *Die Form* in 1929. The caption to the illustration reads: "Von der Fläche zum Raum. Sechs Momente einer raumzeitlichen Konstruktion (mit 24 Variationen). Gestaltung schräger Dimension."[20]

Abraham Elzas, the young Dutch architect and Van Doesburg's short-term assistant who most likely drew the axonometry for him, understood this context and published the painting together with the axonometry in an article in *De 8 en opbouw* in 1935. This comparison also makes particularly clear the close link between Van Doesburg's architectural work and the *Art concret* group, inaugurated in 1930, with their principles of precisely calculated and mechanically executed, "non-accidental" art. Against this background, the diagonal arrangement of the two blocks of the house can also be described as the progression of a quadratic surface through space in an oblique dimension. However, thanks to the way in which it is hung on the central axis of the studio door, *Rhythm of a Russian Dance* can also be related

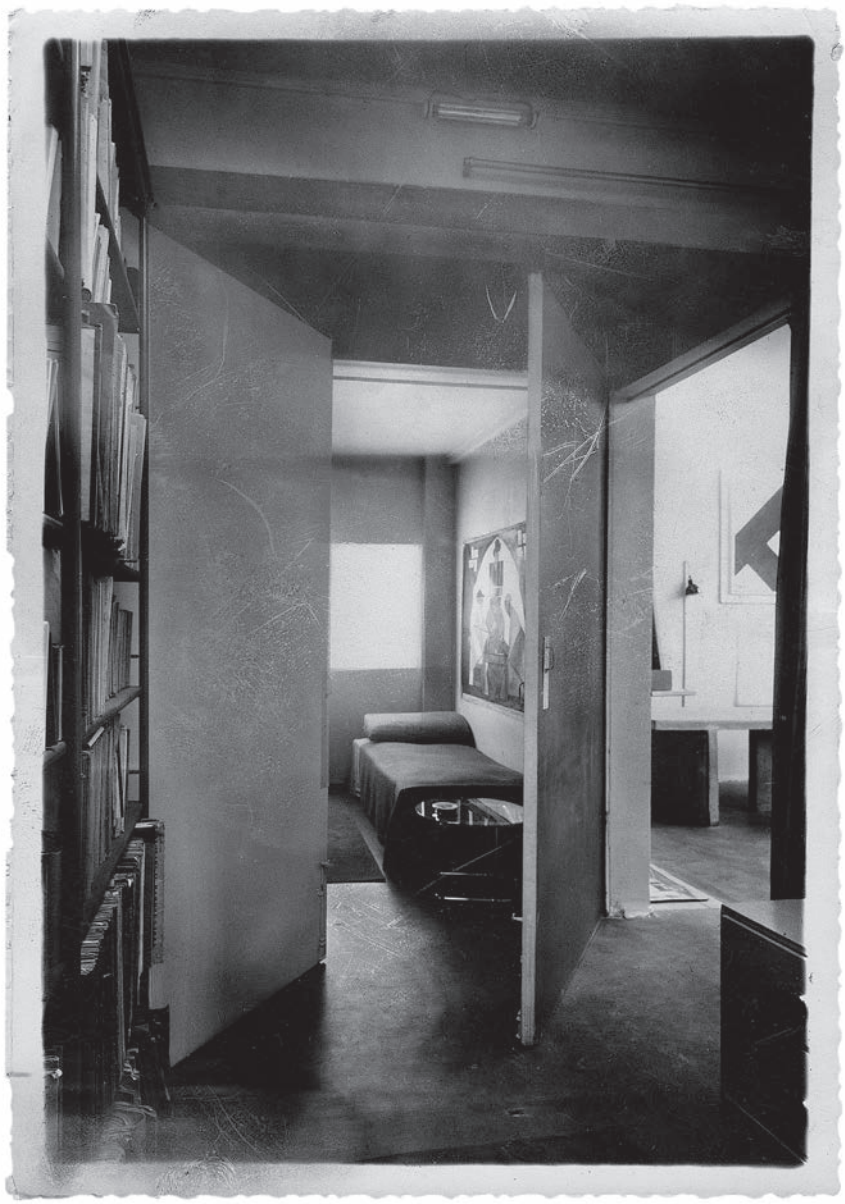

FIG. 3 Theo van Doesburg, view from the library into the music room and the studio in Meudon (41, rue Charles Infroit), 1931, The Hague, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), The Van Doesburg Archive, inv. no. 1392 AB 9659

directly to the building's architecture and in particular to its rotating doors. Each movement of the ceiling-high doors alters the relationship between front and back, interior and exterior, room and intermediate room, human being and space. However, for people within the rooms, the alignment of the space itself also changes with the doors.

The close relationship of the paintings to the real architectural situation in Meudon becomes even clearer through a direct comparison of the painting *Interieur* with another photograph of the building (fig. 3). A view from the library into the hallway, music room and studio is provided when the rotating doors are opened diagonally into the space – that is, half-open, half-closed. Architecture, the photographic representation of the architectural space, and the paintings go hand in hand here. For a short time – presumably only for this one photograph – Van Doesburg rotated *Contra-Composition VIII* by 45 degrees, so that its diagonal appears to respond to the diagonal bar on the right edge of the painting.[21] Showing the broader context of Van Doesburg's creative process in each individual painting, as well as explaining the development of a concrete artistic language ("peinture concrète et non abstraite"[22]), the arrangement of the works leads furthermore to a more precise perception and reading of architectural, Euclidean space, and to Van Doesburg's own creation of a four-dimensional space. The three photographs of his studio also create a kind of "retrospective" of his work, adding an additional layer of creation.

STUDIO AND PAINTING – ARCHITECTURE AND COLOR

The compilation and consolidation of many years of experimentation in the form of his studio residence for the first time brought actually built architecture within the orbit of Van Doesburg's theory. The rotation of spatial alignment is given a conceptual counterpart in external space as well. In his triple axonometry, he transferred the concept of the simultaneity of space and time from painting and photography to the graphic medium of representation that he had introduced into modern architecture together with Cornelis van Eesteren in 1923. It was this concept's dissolution of the viewer's perspective that first

made possible a rotation on one and the same ground plan. The superimposition of the three axonometries dissolves spatial boundaries that were previously firmly defined and leads to a dissolution of form in favor of a purely temporal presence of space. The figure of Valentin Parnac, dancing through the various layers of *Contra-Composition XVI*, is therefore comparable to the rotating interior space of the studio residence. The barely legible axonometry and sketch for the 1923 *Maison d'artiste*, which is itself the first sketch plan for his own studio residence, mutually explain their own origins. While in the older, conceptual sketch, Van Doesburg was actually attempting to develop mobile space in every direction, the later and ultimately practicable design for Meudon freezes the space into a single state. However, it continues to move along with its user in the interior.

On closer comparison of interior and exterior, however, an unsolvable problem emerges. If the movable door surfaces on the white exterior are kept in what Van Doesburg called the active primary colors – thereby attesting to the role that Van Doesburg assigned to color in a four-dimensional design – the studio is reduced to the "passive" color-shades of white, black and grey. Just as Van Doesburg's ten-year effort to unite painting and architecture failed, so too did the studio in achieving this goal. In the year in which the building was completed, his work on the studio and in architecture led to the manifesto of Concrete Art – to an autonomous art independent of architecture. In Van Doesburg's words, creation is a result of the intellect, not a work of the hand, emotion or sensitivity: "The evolution of painting is nothing but the intellectual search for truth through the culture of the optical."[23] This almost inevitable development is inscribed into the photographs of his first and last self-designed studio. Van Doesburg's *accrochage* eliminates the making of his art, but it shows the development and progress of his radical conception of "the clarity that will form the basis of a new culture."[24]

NOTES

1 Only a few historians refer to Van Doesburg's photographic work as an artistic statement or experiment: Herta Wescher, *Die Collage. Geschichte eines künstlerischen*

Ausdrucksmittels (Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1968), 159–160, ill. 263; Erika Billeter, *Malerei und Photographie im Dialog von 1840 bis heute* (Bern: Benteli, 1977), 274–303, mainly 290, ill. 682, and 304–319; Kees Broos and Flip Bool, *De Nieuwe Fotografie in Nederland* (The Hague: Fragment, 1989), 15 and 42; Mattie Boom and Janine Dudok van Heel, "Theo van Doesburg," *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse fotografie* 1/21 (1993) 1–13, ill. A-f (loose-leaf collection). On experimental photography in general, see for example Klaus von Beyme, *Das Zeitalter der Avantgarden. Kunst und Gesellschaft 1905–1955* (Munich: Beck, 2005), 472–492. For general information on Theo van Doesburg see Els Hoek et al. (eds.), *Theo van Doesburg. œuvre catalogue* (Otterlo: Centraal Museum Utrecht and Kröller-Müller Museum Otterlo, 2000); Joost Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg* (London: Studio Vista, 1974); Allan Doig, *Theo van Doesburg. Painting into Architecture, Theory into Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Evert van Straaten, *Theo van Doesburg. Painter and Architect* (The Hague: SDU, 1988); Sjarel Ex, *Theo van Doesburg en het Bauhaus. De invloed van De Stijl in Duitsland en Midden-Europa* (Utrecht: Centraal Museum, 2000); Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker (ed.), *Theo van Doesburg. Maler – Architekt* (Munich: Prestel, 2000). The topics of this essay are addressed in a broader context in Matthias Noell, *Im Laboratorium der Moderne. Das Atelierwohnhaus von Theo van Doesburg in Meudon – Architektur zwischen Abstraktion und Rhethorik* (Zurich: gta Verlag, 2011) and in Matthias Noell, "Konkrete Gesellschaft. Zum Verhältnis von Mensch, Raum und Architektur bei Theo van Doesburg, Franz W. Seiwert und Max Bill," in: Julia Friedrich, Nina Gülicher, Lynette Roth (eds.), *Form und Gesellschaft* (Cologne: Museum Ludwig, 2008), 31–42.

2 The Van Doesburg Archive (VDA), in the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD), The Hague, holds all of Van Doesburg's photographs.

3 Hoek et al. 2000, no. 621f: 504, letter from Theo van Doesburg to Antony Kok, 17 March 1930: "Spoedig foto's!"

4 Letter to Evert Rinsema, 19 June 1922, VDA, English translation in Hoek et al. 2000, no. 672.II: 300.

5 Letter to Antony Kok, 6 August 1923, VDA, English translation in Hoek et al. 2000, no. 715: 371.

6 See Theo van Doesburg, "Data en feiten," *De Stijl* 7 79/84 (1927) 53–71, esp. 55–56.

7 The painting was referred to by Van Doesburg as a "reconstruction" of the *Card Players*; see Hoek et al. 2000, 206.

8 See also the photograph 1543 AB 9971.

9 Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidian Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

10 I.K. Bonset [= Theo van Doesburg], "Het andere gezicht. Abstracte, sur-humanistische roman. Voorwoord. Hoofdstuk 1. Hoofdstuk 2," *De Stijl* 7/77 (1926/27) 66–70, 505–507; see Hoek et al. 2000, no. L218: 725–726; no. L220: 727–731.

11 Hans Möhring, "Das photographische Bild im Dienste der Reklame," *Offset. Buch- und Werbekunst* 5/11 (1928) 447–451: 451. "Nur mit den Mitteln der Photographie – einschließlich des Entwicklungs- und Kopierverfahrens – wird ein dramatisches Geschehen

dargestellt und propagandistisch zur Wirkung gebracht, deren Intensität sich dem heutigen Menschen umso mehr mitteilt, je stärker seine Existenz in allen Erscheinungen und allem zeitbedingten Geschehen erkennt und erlebt."

12 Van Doesburg used a negative with Hans Arp and Nelly van Moorsel in the garden (1597 AB 9877) and a second with Nelly with trees in the background. Compare a similar photograph in Hans Richter, *Filmgegner von heute – Filmfreunde von morgen* (Berlin: Reckendorf, 1929), also published in *Die Form. Zeitschrift für gestaltende Arbeit* 4/10 (1929) 251.

13 Paul Éluard, *L'amour la poésie* [1929], published in *Capitale de la douleur, suivi de L'amour la poésie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009), 161.

14 Theo van Doesburg, *Klassiek – Barok – Modern* (Antwerp: De Sikkel, 1920).

15 For similar designs see: Arthur A. Cohen, *Herbert Bayer. The Complete Work* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 1984), 221; Heinz Hajek-Halke, *Form aus Licht und Schatten* (Göttingen: Steidl 2005), 27 and 40. In general: Kees Broos, "Das kurze, aber heftige Leben des Rings 'neue werbegestalter'," "*Typographie kann unter Umständen Kunst sein." Ring "neue werbegestalter." Die Amsterdamer Ausstellung 1931* (Wiesbaden: Spangenberg 1990), 7–10, 8; Christine Kühn, *Neues Sehen. Fotografien der Zwanziger Jahre* (Berlin: SMB Kunstbibliothek, 2005), 169–170. See also László Moholy-Nagy, *Malerei, Fotografie, Film* (München: Langen 1925); Jan Tschichold, "fotografie und typografie," *Die Form. Zeitschrift für gestaltende Arbeit* 3/3 (1928) 140–150; Yvonne Brentjens, *Piet Zwart. Vormingenieur* (Zwolle: Waanders 2008); Dick Maan, *Paul Schuitema. Beeldend organisator* (Rotterdam: 010, 2006); Max Bill, *Typographie, Reklame, Werbegestaltung* (Sulgen/Zürich: Niggli, 1997); Max Bill, *Aspekte seines Werks* (Sulgen/Zürich: Niggli, 2008).

16 See again the letter from Theo van Doesburg to Antony Kok, 17 March 1930, in Hoek et al. 2000, no. 621f, p. 504.

17 It may have been Elzas himself who took these photos. See Abraham Elzas, "Theo van Doesburg," *De 8 en opbouw* 6/17 (1935), 173–184. Wies van Moorsel attributes some of the pictures to Ad Petersen, who took some photographs during the 1970s. See Wies van Moorsel, *Nelly van Doesburg 1899–1975, "de doorsnee is mij niet genoeg"* (Nijmegen: Sun, 2000), here cited in the German edition (Sulgen/Zürich: Niggli, 2002), 270.

18 Letter from Alexander Dorner to Nelly van Doesburg, 2 May 1931; cited in Hoek et al. 2000, 499: "[…] das i. Atelier an der Treppe zum Dachgarten hängt."

19 See the letters to Otto Carlsund in 1930 and to Antony Kok, 23 January 1930, both VDA.

20 Theo van Doesburg, "Film als reine Gestaltung," *Die Form. Zeitschrift für gestaltende Arbeit* 4/10 (1929) 241–249: 241. The translation is roughly: "From surface to space. Six instances of a spatio-temporal construction (with 24 variations). Formation [of a] diagonal dimension."

21 Compare Van Doesburg's photographic portrait of Branko Ve Poljanski, taken in 1925 in front of the turned *Contra-Composition VIII* in his studio in Clamart, published in Irina Subotic and Vida Golubovic, *Zenit and the Avant-Garde of the Twenties* (Belgrade:

Narodni muzej, 1983), and in *œuvre catalogue* 2000, 407.

22 [Theo van Doesburg], "Commentaires sur la base de la peinture concrete," *Art concret* 1/2–4 (1930) 2.

23 Ibid., 3. "L'évolution de la peinture n'est que la recherche intellectuelle du vrai par la culture de l'optique."

24 Ibid., 4. "[...] clarté qui sera la base d'une nouvelle culture."

CHAPTER 9

Studio, Storage, Legend. The Work of Hiding in Tacita Dean's *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)*

BEATRICE VON BISMARCK

An attic-like space: bare, low and tightly packed with stacked furniture, with chairs, tables, cupboards, sofas, lamps, boxes and ship models, partially covered with sheets and plastic tarps (fig. 1). The camera traces in stills the room's shape, fixes on some sections of the wall, shows markings on its white and black surface: "fig. 1," "f. e." or "fig. 12," "museum," "silence," "section cinema" – markings which appear enigmatic within the surrounding cramped and blocked space.[1] The site is the basement of Burgplatz 12, Düsseldorf, the year is 2002, and 16 mm color film is the tool British artist Tacita Dean uses to approach the former studio and exhibition-space of Marcel Broodthaers. Thirty years earlier, the Belgian artist had rented and used it in preparation for his show "Section des Figures" at the Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf.[2] Now transformed into the storage space of the Düsseldorf City Museum (Stadtmuseum), in 1971–72 it had also served as the "Section Cinéma," as the seventh episode of Broodthaers's twelve-part exhibition project *Musée d'Art Moderne. Département des Aigles*, carried out between 1968 and 1972, which the show at the Kunsthalle was part of as well.

In the context of the discourse surrounding the contemporary meaning of the artist's studio, Tacita Dean's 13–minute continuous loop paradigmatically gives rise to the question of what can be seen or shown in the working space of a conceptual artist of the 1960s. What does the image of the studio present to the viewer? What does

FIG. 1 Tacita Dean, *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers*), 2002, 16 mm color film and optical sound, 13 min. © Tacita Dean

it represent, and which aesthetic and social functions does it contain? Dean's film *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)* (2002) demonstrates that immateriality and process-orientation – key characteristics of artistic conceptual work since the 1960s – transform any attempt to depict or exhibit the procedures and techniques of the actual occurring work into a veiling screen, which in turn is ready to receive and project back to the viewer preexisting notions of the nature of artistic creativity (fig. 2). Camouflaging the activities that lead up to an artistic utterance, conventionally located in the studio, the act of exhibiting focuses instead on those that are mere ciphers. "Showing making" thus turns simultaneously into a precondition and a proof of the conceptual nature of the practice that takes place; furthermore, it particularly emphasizes the social constitution of art as a subject of artistic practice. Withholding information by giving it a veiled appearance proves to be tightly interwoven with social contextualization. Since the artist's work itself cannot be seen, what comes into focus instead is how this veiling works.

Only after having overcome a number of administrative obstacles was Tacita Dean able to enter the basement of Burgplatz 12.[3] In the

FIG. 2 Tacita Dean, *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)*, 2002, 16 mm color film and optical tone, 13 min. © Tacita Dean

course of the preparations for her own solo show at the Kunstverein in Düsseldorf in 2002, she had become aware of the site that Broodthaers had rented for two years – between the autumn of 1970 and autumn of 1972 – and turned into a multifunctional space: first into his studio, but over time also into a storage space, a showroom, a cinema, a museum, a meeting place, and a work of art in itself.

Initially, the basement was the site of artistic production, defined by conceptual working procedures and techniques, their conception, development and realization. Here, Broodthaers then opened "Cinéma Modèle" to the public on 15 November 1970, closing it again after five weeks and the public screening of five of his own films.[4] "Cinéma Modèle" was a prelude to the continuous transformation process to which Broodthaers then continuously subjected his studio under the title "Section Cinéma." Open to the public from January 1971, it consisted, among other things, of two screens; two film-director's chairs and a piano; shelves (on which films and film equipment were stored); a variety of smaller objects – such as a pipe, a clock, a photograph of an eagle and a globe; and, finally, words – "fig. 1," "fig. 1&2" or "museum" – stenciled on the wall. Some walls were painted black, some white; the floor was done in grey. Two specially constructed walls di-

vided the room into two sections: one larger one, with the projection screens, and a smaller one containing the aforementioned assemblage of objects.

Almost immediately after the opening, Broodthaers decided to remove the collection of objects from the installation and sell them separately. Later – around June 1972 – once the museum at Mönchengladbach had bought them, Broodthaers began to rearrange their former space: in four different places he added the stenciled word "silence"; he applied a sequence of numbers ("21." "12," "0" and "2") to the beam on the ceiling; on the inner side of the entrance door he wrote "département des aigles"; and, right after entering the room, one could now read "SECTION CINEMA." The installation remained in this state until it was closed in October 1972.

With "Section Cinéma" Broodthaers transferred the concept of processuality, which he had examined and tested in different media – above all in writing and film – into the medium of installation. By integrating the installation into endlessly changing processes of rearranging and re-ordering, installing and de-installing, opening and closing to the public, he continuously reworked the system of references, characterizing the installation as a moving, dynamic and open-ended system, ready to change form, structure, place and context at any given time. Broodthaers's conceptual work in the studio thus consisted of making constellations. It is decisive for this procedure that it is not only characterized by its use of the medium of installation, but also by the exhibition as medium. With "Section Cinéma," Broodthaers transformed the basement of Burgplatz 12 into an installation (a work of art) and, at the same time, into an exhibition. Like the acts of writing and filming, those of installing and exhibiting were marked by their temporality.

As a site of artistic production and presentation in equal measure, "Section Cinéma" demonstrates Broodthaers's specific method of turning the publicity of art into a work of art itself. A number of conceptual artists in the 1960s highlighted the way in which art needs to become public as a precondition for its appearing as art at all. In the context of Seth Siegelaub's presentational activities, Douglas Huebler, Robert Barry, Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner made visible art's orientation towards and address of an audience – the

self-marketing for which attention is the reward.[5] Broodthaers's conception of the studio not only as a work of art but also an exhibition pursued a related strategy. Already in the very first episode of the *Musée d'Art Moderne. Department des Aigles* – the "Section du XIXe siècle," installed in his Brussels studio at rue de la Pépinière in 1968 – the space of production merged with the installation and the exhibition space. As in the later "Section Cinéma," the work and its public perception become one. The artwork depicts its own indispensable and constitutive public nature; being and showing are inseparable. With Broodthaers in mind, the way in which the conceptual artists around Siegelaub thus also exposed the commercial grounding of artistic visibility – as Alexander Alberro has shown – can be extended to the accumulation of other forms of capital as well. Brought to the fore is not only the acquisition of economic capital, but also – and perhaps even more so – social and symbolic capital, here shown to be indispensable conditions within the artistic field.[6] Broodthaers's multifunctional studio-as-installation-as-exhibition is structured within this network of mutual relations, which it depicts as well as establishes through its techniques and processes. It exposes the premises, conditions and effects of art's "becoming public," as he would declare in the last stage of his "museums fictions" in 1972 at documenta 5 in Kassel: the explicitly addressed vanishing point of his museum project, "Section Publicité."[7]

In Tacita Dean's *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)*, however, it is exactly these aspects that seem to be missing. Broodthaers's specific constellational working process – the acts of composing, arranging, making connections and producing meaning which are, according to the conventional notion of the artist's studio as workplace, supposed to have taken place in the basement of Burgplatz 12 – remains hidden in her filmic adaption. Nor can the different stages of the installation – and thus the characteristics of his relational method – still be traced. In Dean's filmic depiction, Broodthaers's system of referencing between objects, films and architectural segments, but also the previous stages of the museums fictions and more generally the conditions of presentation within the field of art, have lost their relevance. Gone are the functional specificities of the historic

site that had initially guided Dean's attention to it, namely its function as artistic production site, artistic installation, and exhibition. In 2002 the actual activity that had taken place in the room appears to have been omitted, as if bracketed through the film: the art work is stretched in a balancing act between, on the one hand, the space that initially enabled the production, installation and exhibition of "Section Cinéma"; and, on the other, the surviving traces of what has happened there – between a "before" and an "after." Missing are the acts of the production of meaning linking studio, installation and show with one another.

Reading Dean's work through the perspectives offered by Broodthaers, her approach appears not only as a retrospective homage to the Belgian artist, but also as an extension of his method. One aspect among the relations of art and its public nature in particular comes to the fore: the sociological perspective on the public constitution of art. What is at stake is the function of the studio in the context of processes of social recognition. This specific role designates that the depiction of the studio oscillate between the categories of still-life, portraiture, genre, self-representation, artistic manifesto, and exhibition. In the context of conceptual art and institutional critique, Daniel Buren's seminal text on the function of the studio (1979) insisted that among all the institutions of art, the studio was the site where the work was most closely linked to an authorial subject, and thus his or her more or less exclusive control over meaning production – the generation, arrangement, presentation and distribution of the work.[8] It is therefore hardly surprising that within the discursive context arising from the "death of the author" proposed by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, not only the artist's body but also the artist's studio – understood as an extension of the artist's bodily presence, constitution and effects – gained heightened relevance for artistic production in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[9] Fuelling the hope for authenticity deduced from a physical re-connection, the artist's work space, like the artist's body, promises a renewed bond between author and work; control over the practices of meaning production; and the reclamation of the privileges attributed to the author-status threatened by the development of poststructuralist theory.[10]

Understood as an extension and a surrogate of the artist's body,

which, as source of inspiration and site of production in one carries out the creative process, the studio came to stand in for the artistic subject. In particular, the depiction of the empty studio, the creative site without creator, visualizes this substitutive potential. The magic that the image of the romantic artist had bestowed on the deserted studio – expressed in its purest form in Carl Gustav Carus's *The Artist's Studio in Moonlight* (1826) – retained decisive aspects of its power even into the twenty-first century.[11] In Bruce Nauman's *Mapping the Studio II* (Fat Chance John Cage) (2001), which can be seen as emblematic for this contemporary attitude, the artist's workspace takes on the character of an animated room, intrinsically alive, wherein various assembled objects (and animals) take the place of the absent artist. In contrast to the reconstructions of artistic working spaces such as Constantin Brancusi's, Nauman's studio – as that of an artist still living – enters the structure between author and work as an independent animated element. In this constellation, expectations regarding artistic work, creativity and the extra-ordinary status of the artistic subject become intertwined. In line with his examination of issues of authorship in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Nauman here again sets both affirmative and skeptical statements on the notion of being an artist in an oscillating relationship with one another, staging his own studio as a space not visible to himself and of an independent, living nature.[12] While the actual artistic working process has (temporarily) come to a standstill, the studio adopts the creative potential of the artistic subject.

Tacita Dean's filmic description of the basement at Burgplatz 12 shows us just such a studio space replacing the artist, and thereby underscoring the previous owner's presence through his absence. The fragments of the work that had once been done here are transformed into stand-ins for Broodthaers himself. They conjure up the magic with which the history of the site as a place for creative production is imbued. Metaphorically doubled, the space serves as storage for the Stadtmuseum and for the spectator's memories alike. Pursuing analogues to mnemonic techniques and filtering out all Broodthaers's related traces from the other remaining (stored) information, Dean's film thus – to borrow from Aleida Assmann – brings forth specific, subjectivized recollections out of the larger, unordered and unspe-

cific reservoir of memory.[13] It carries out a work of remembrance directed towards Broodthaers, for the purpose of which the markings in the basement function as cause, reference and container at the same time.

Remembering by way of homage is a recurring method in Dean's practice. Robert Smithson, Mario Merz, Cy Twombly and Claes Oldenburg are among the art-historical predecessors she has worked on, herself elaborating on specific aspects of their working procedures through filmic translation.[14] Moments of loss and disappearance are closely connected to Dean's own filmmaking, as are her examinations of time, defined exemplarily through the homage.[15] In *Manhattan Mouse Museum* (2011), she conveys in an endless loop the attentive care and rearrangement Claes Oldenburg granted to his collected objects, taking up – as she did with Broodthaers's museum fictions – an artistic project which at the time of its conception was meant to offer an alternative to the existing conditions and relations within cultural archives; their procedures of inclusion and exclusion, their functions within identity processes, and their power effects. To show these artistic strategies as open-circuited, as Dean does in her films on Oldenburg and Broodthaers, is to replace artistic techniques with the artist's personality.

This shift in accentuation allows social processes of recognition to gain in weight and corresponds to the format of homage: a social ritual usually performed in honor of outstanding members of society in cultural, religious or political contexts. For communities within the artistic field, the homage takes on the function of defining a circle of followers around an artistic personality, among which the author of the homage him/herself is to be counted as well.[16] Thus the homage fulfills two functions: on the one hand, it attributes a special status to the person honored – be it as a guiding authority, as forerunner and influential founder of a school, or an extraordinary personality. On the other, being partially documentary and partially performative, it also marks out a circle that symbolically participates in this special status. Homage generates identity through aesthetic, but also social, criteria, and participates in the formation of legends and myths.[17]

Dean's *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)* retraces this mystifying process of reception. She attributes meaning to the objects

that had been in touch with Broodthaers and are only meaningful in relation to him, a process which the French sociologist Natalie Heinich has described as the last stage in the formation of a legend. In her exemplary study on the production of fame within the art field and taking Vincent van Gogh as her case study, she claims that the sixth and final stage on the road to fame becomes obvious when "the places [the artist] went, as well as the objects he touched, were made into relics."[18] Dean's focus on the surviving traces of Broodthaers's use of the space proceeds accordingly, redefining the space in terms of a relic of the man. In his absence, Broodthaers thus becomes all the more present – an act that can, beyond merely honoring the elder artist, also be read as a continuation of his practice and an expansion of his own referencing techniques. To the various cross-references between the models, objects, films, the different stages of his artistic work, their presentations and contexts, as well as the indicators "figure" or "fig. 1," Dean now adds the person of Broodthaers himself. Her act carries the same signifying ambivalence that the artist had once bestowed on his objects and inscriptions; it possesses a similar mobility between sites and contexts; and it appears in different roles, which further condenses the relational structure that contextualizes art in the status of its public presentation. Furthermore Broodthaers is the focal point of Dean's reference system, which carries out the shift of attention from the work to the artist. *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)* can thus be understood as a broadening of Broodthaers's own examination of the function of the public constitution of art, through which he himself exhibited the social processes of recognition. The format of the homage thus exposes the necessity of social consensus on the value and meaning of artistic practice for its appearance as art and its survival in posterity. To the institutions which Broodthaers addressed with his "Section Publicité" in 1972 – the ones that decide on the conditions of publicity within the art field, from the studio, to the commercial gallery to the museum – Dean adds the work of the institutions of reception: art history and art criticism. Hiding the artistic working processes here makes the processes of the production of the artist even more visible.

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NOTES

1 Tacita Dean *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)*, 2002, 16 mm color film, optical sound, 13 min., continuous loop.

2 For the succession of stages in Broodthaers's museum fictions, particularly the installations in Düsseldorf – "Cinéma Modèle" (1970) and "Section Cinéma" (1971–72), both at Burgplatz 12 – as well as the exhibition at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, entitled *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section des Figures: Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute* (1972), see, among others, Jürgen Harten and Peter-Klaus Schuster (eds.), *Marcel Broodthaers. Cinéma*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf/Berlin: Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, 1997), 132–172; Rachel Haidu, *The Absence of Work. Marcel Broodthaers, 1964–1976* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 2010), 163–209.

3 On the development of Dean's *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)* see Tacita Dean, "(o.T.)," *Displayer* 02 (2008) 148–149.

4 For the films shown at "Cinéma Modèle" see Eric de Bruyn, "The Museum of Attractions: Marcel Broodthaers and the Section Cinéma," *Medien Kunst Netz/Media Art Net*, http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/themes/art_and_cinematography/broodthaers (Accessed 8 September 2012).

5 On the relationship between conceptual art and publicity see AlexanderAlberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 2003). On the constitution of the art object through its public presentation see Martin Seel, *Ästhetik des Erscheinens* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2000), esp. 156–160.

6 Pierre Bourdieu differentiates between economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital; see Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in: J. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241–258.

7 On the complex of works that were part of Broodthaers's so-called "museum fictions" see, among others, Benjamin Buchloh, "The Museum Fictions of Marcel Broodthaers," in: A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (eds.), *Museums by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 39–56; Douglas Crimp, "This is Not a Museum of Art," in: *Marcel Broodthaers*, exh. cat. (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center/New York: Rizzoli 1989), 71–92.

8 Daniel Buren, "Fonction de l'atelier," *Ragile* 3 (September 1979) 72–77.

9 The recent publication on contemporary research on the artist demonstrates the intertwined discourses on artistic authorship and the site of artistic work, see Sabine Fastert, Alexis Joachimides, Verena Krieger (eds.), *Die Wiederkehr des Künstlers.*

Themen und Positionen der aktuellen Künstler/innenforschung (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011).

10 For more details see Beatrice von Bismarck, *Auftritt als Künstler* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2010).

11 For an elaborate discussion of Carus' depiction of his studio see Karl Heinz Nowald, *Carl Gustav Carus "Malerstube im Mondschein" (1826). Schriften der Kunsthalle zu Kiel* 2 (Kiel: Kunsthalle zu Kiel, 1973); Jutta Müller-Tamm, *Kunst als Gipfel der wissenschaftlichen Naturaneignung bei Carl Gustav Carus* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1995) esp. 188. A recent restoration of Carus's painting has, however, revealed that the studio is not empty after all: the artist can be seen hiding among the shadows. See Sabine Rewald, *Rooms with a View. The Open Window in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2011), 108 and note 144.

12 On Bruce Nauman's use and depiction of his own studio, both around 1970 and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, see Beatrice von Bismarck, "Performanz nach 1960: Bruce Nauman," in: Bismarck 2010, 57–102 and the contribution by Eric de Bruyn to this volume.

13 See Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: C.H. Beck Verlag, 1999), 130–142.

14 The films that relate to artistic predecessors beyond *Section Cinema (Homage to Marcel Broodthaers)*, in particular to Robert Smithson, Mario Merz, Giorgio Morandi, Merce Cunningham, Cy Twombly, Claes Oldenburg, and Julie Mehretu are: *Trying to Find the Spiral Getty* (1997); *Mario Merz* (2002); *Day for Night* and *Still Life* (2009); *Craneway Event* (2009); *Edwin Parker* (2011); *Manhattan Mouse Museum* (2011) and *GDGDA* (2011). See also Tacita Dean, *Complete Works and Filmography 1991–2011*, as part of the box set Tacita Dean, *Seven Books Grey*, Vienna/Göttingen 2011.

15 In conversation with Marina Warner about *Trying to Find the Spiral Getty*, Dean explained: "For me, making a film is connected to the idea of loss and disappearance;" see "Marina Warner in Conversation with Tacita Dean," in: Jean-Christophe Royoux, Marina Warner and Germaine Greer (eds.), *Tacita Dean* (London/New York: Phaidon Press, 2006), 7–47, here 17. On the homage films to Merz and Smithson in relation to the one on Broodthaers, see also Jean-Christophe Royaux, who understands them as demonstrating three main aspects of Dean's reflection on time as the conceptual basis of her work: as a lasting face- or character-object; a suspended story on an non-findable destination; and a discourse on method combining the paradigm of the archive with the form of the puzzle; see Jean-Christophe Royaux: "Cosmograms of the Present Tense," in ibid., 78–79. In the context of "loss and disappearance" see also Dean's exhibition and catalogue project for Tate Modern, which was devoted to the survival of analogue film threatened by digital media; Nicholas Cullinan (ed.), *Film. Tacita Dean* (London: Tate Modern, 2011).

16 For the history of pictorial homage see Barbara Hattendorff, *Künstlerhommage: Ein Bildtypus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Reimer Verlag, 1998).

17 On the myth of the artist, see, among others, the introduction to Part 1 of this volume. For a sociological perspective on communities of followers, see Emile Durkheim,

Die elementaren Formen des religiösen Lebens (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 1981), esp. 75.

18 Nathalie Heinich, *The Glory of Van Gogh. An Anthropology of Admiration* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 141.

CHAPTER 10

The Empty Studio: Bruce Nauman's Studio Films

ERIC DE BRUYN

Imagine the following scene: it is the summer of 1966 and we are standing before a somewhat derelict storefront in San Francisco (fig. 1). Above the ripped awning a sign reads "California Grocery" and adjacent to it a "Drink Coca-Cola" advertisement is still in place. The former storeowner has clearly vacated the premises and whereas the space appears to have a new tenant, its current function is not apparent. Therefore, let us step inside, uninvited, in order to investigate. There are not many intelligible signs of activity that strike our eye upon entry. The room is furnished in a sparse manner with a single table and chair. In the far corner an untidy group of various objects – cans, bags, bottles, and cups – are randomly dispersed along the wall or perch precariously upon a few wooden shelves. The walls are devoid of decoration, the floor unswept. The messy interior is occupied by a solitary figure, not as a dwelling apparently, but as a place of work. Yet in the absence of any recognizable tools, in so far as we can detect, it becomes difficult to ascertain his trade. And if we stay long enough, his conduct provides no obvious clues to his profession, either, as he is not so much indolent, as engaged in highly repetitious, seemingly mundane forms of activity. His customary behavior appears to consist of sitting in the chair while sipping coffee or, alternatively pacing back and forth across the floor. There is little work being done of any recognizable fashion.

This strange little tableau provides a fictional glimpse into the artist's studio of Bruce Nauman. Although the scene is meant to convey

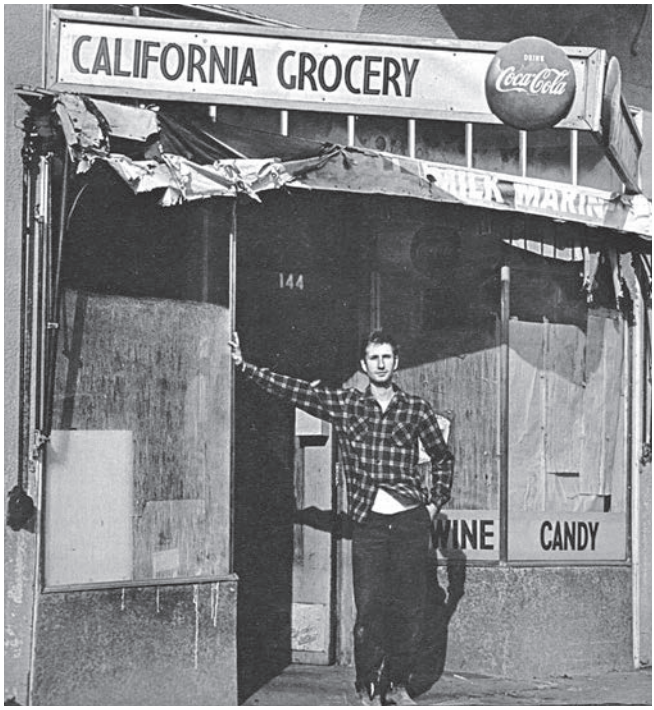

FIG. 1 Nauman in the doorway of his San Francisco studio, c. 1966

a kind of phenomenological "limit-experience" of the studio space, which, as I shall argue, Nauman explored in the later sixties, my description of the young artist's studio space is not purely fictional. It has been compiled from such diverse sources as contemporary photographs that Nauman took to record his earliest works – many of which were ephemeral in nature and subsequently destroyed – and from the various interviews the artist gave in these years (fig. 2). Taken together, these photographic and verbal testimonies provide a remarkable insight into Nauman's working methods or what I shall call, in a very precise meaning of the word, his studio habits.[1]

No doubt, the tableau I have drawn of Nauman's studio is a piecemeal one, assembled from fragmentary and disparate sources. The artist did adopt a former grocery store in San Francisco as his first studio upon graduation from art school,[2] but my description also draws upon certain recurrent features of a series of studios that Nauman temporarily occupied during the sixties and beyond. What is key in the above description is the impression of emptiness; that is to say, the lack of customary, artistic tools, such as brushes, paint tubes,

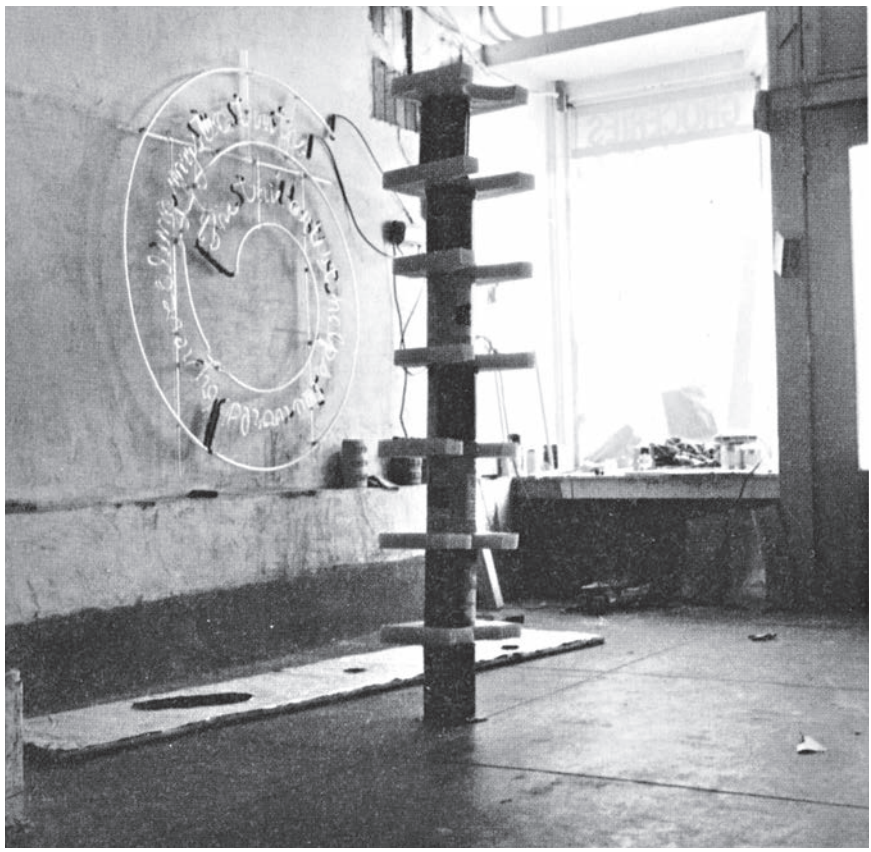

FIG. 2 Interior view of Nauman's studio, San Francisco, c. 1967. In the foreground: *Wax Templates of the Left Half of My Body Separated by Cans of Grease* [destroyed]. On the wall: *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths (Window or Wall Sign)*

canvasses and picture easels; but also the disorderly distribution of objects and, finally, the spasmodic, restless behavior of its occupant. The studio inhabitant seems to exist in a homeless state, ill at ease in a space that, according to traditional accounts of the modern studio, should be the most intimate and authentic domain of the artist's existence. This domain may be designated, in a very precise sense of the word, as the artist's *habitus*. In doing so, I am making a deliberate reference to the currency of this term within phenomenological thought and, in particular, within the writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.[3] Yet my reasons for doing so are both critical and historical in nature. Whereas it shall become clear how the notion of the habitus provides a heuristic tool of investigation in the present context, it may be con-

sidered equally obvious that I have chosen to employ an oddly outmoded term of analysis. For Merleau-Ponty, writing in the 1950s, the notion of the habitus does not constitute a historical category of existence; however, to implement this term in the emerging "post-studio" conditions of artistic production in the later sixties, forces the actual historicity of this term into view. In short, the heuristic tool of the studio-as-habitus must be treated as an object of critique in turn. Indeed I shall maintain that Nauman's artistic strategy presents us with a kind of "phenomenological project in ruins." According to a familiar law of history, it is only at the moment of its demise that a specific *dispositif* of cultural practice becomes susceptible to conceptualization and, to a certain degree, material manipulation.[4] Furthermore, in applying the notion of habitus to Nauman's studio practice, I am not only rubbing the term, as it were, against the grain, but proposing that Nauman breaks in an unforeseen manner with his guiding examples, the recent practices of minimal sculpture and dance in so far as the latter can be said to be predicated, in accordance with a existential phenomenology of the habitus, upon the universal bedrock of the "lived body."

To be sure, I am eliciting a familiar, if not undisputed discussion of minimal art in terms of phenomenological theory, which has been pioneered by Rosalind Krauss, Annette Michelson and Robert Morris.[5] In the present context, however, I find no reason to deviate from this now dominant account of minimal art. Let me summarize the fundamental aspects of this phenomenological model of minimalism: by distributing identical, machine-tooled elements in space according to serial or permutational systems, minimal art invites spectators to immerse themselves within the spatio-temoral contingency of a particular situation. That is to say, spectators are solicited to *inhabit* a spatio-temporal environment in a bodily sense. Thus, minimalism might be understood to develop an uneasy dialectic between the body and technology; between, that is, the natural substratum of the body with its habitual rhythms of existence and the historical substructure of industrial society with its serialized modes of production and affect. Such is the well-known "crux" of minimalism, as defined by Hal Foster,[6] yet, as we will see, the minimalist strategy of inhabitation is placed in parentheses by Nauman's own post-minimal prac-

tice; a practice that unfolds in the interface between body and media. For instance, the spectators of Nauman's early video installations are submitted to highly disorientating forms of mediated experience.[7] To explain his procedure of *dis-habituation*, Nauman draws a comparison to climbing a staircase in the dark:

> [...] when you think there is one more step and you take the step, but you are already at the top [...] It seems that you always have that jolt and it really throws you off. I think that when these pieces work they do that too. Something happens that you didn't expect and it happens every time. You know why, and what's going on but you just keep doing the same thing.[8]

It is not Nauman's video installations, however, that will constitute my primary topic here, but his studio practice of the late 1960s, which is infiltrated first of all by the mechanical apparatus of film. I shall explore how the bodily technics of inhabitation, which are historically rooted in the studio, but transplanted to the gallery environment by minimalism, become profoundly questioned in a set of four 16 mm films which Nauman shot in 1966–67 and are collectively known as the *Studio Films*. They consist of *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square*, *Bouncing Two Balls between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms, Playing a Note on the Violin while I Walk around the Studio*, and *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square*.[9] In each film, the artist engages in a repetitious, bodily task, a kind of learning exercise. Yet this disciplinary task is never fully mastered or brought to completion. Furthermore, these iterative performances take place in the denuded environment of a studio, which was not even his own. The Studio Films, namely, were shot in the workspace of the painter William T. Wiley, which Nauman temporarily occupied himself.

Before looking at these films in more detail, let me first return to the opening scene – the semi-fictional account of Nauman's studio, which will figure here as a kind of primal scene. By this, I do not mean the position of this scene within a chronological sequence – the "first" studio of the artist – nor do I wish to imply that such a tableau

provides direct access to the inner motivations or exact methods of the artist. I am not about to repeat the familiar scenario of the studio visit that opens a window onto the inner world of the creative process. Like its Freudian prototype, our primal scene works with all kinds of historical delay and it refuses to nestle comfortably within any conventional discourses of the studio. What it achieves, instead, is to complicate, if not completely annul, the dialectics of showing and hiding that organized the standard discourse of the modern studio during the major part of the twentieth century.

It is symptomatic, for example, that Nauman's studio in San Francisco openly retained the traces of its former commercial function. His studio constitutes a makeshift situation where, so it appears, the artist struggled to impose his own material imprint, producing precarious stacks of body casts that now only exist in the spectral form of grainy snapshots. Or, in a more deliberate response to the camera, Nauman submitted himself to an absurdly futile act of "transcending" the studio environment. *Failing to Levitate in the Studio* is a black-and-white photograph of 1966 that shows a ghostly, de-materialized image of his rigid body, arms pressed against the thighs, supported only at its extremities by two folding chairs. Artlessly superimposed on this first image by means of double-exposure is a second image of the sagging body of the artist with his legs spread-eagled across the floor. Only the most fleeting glance would be taken in by such a glaring subterfuge. Here photography served Nauman not only as a means of documentary evidence, recording the transient products of his daily studio activity, but it yields a more fabulatory aspect, invoking the early cinematic tricks of George Méliès as well as the pranks of later slapstick comedy.[10]

It is a well-known fact that Nauman's studio photography deliberately confuses the status of the documentary and the staged image, allowing Jeff Wall, for instance, to make an insightful play on the double meaning of studio photography as both documentary and commercial practice in the margins of his important essay on conceptual photography.[11] This mingling of fact and fiction in Nauman's studio photography, which is linked to his punning use of titles, is quite pertinent to my argument, which will not attempt to reconstruct the artist's studio in any, strictly empirical sense of the word. If the following

presents a kind of archaeology of the studio, then its purpose is not to excavate a particular physical site where a specific set of artistic skills and discipline were exercised, maintained and developed. Rather, its aim will be to analyze the studio as a place where a certain "truth" of artistic activity is produced, even if the advertised knowledge amounts to no more than a deliberate cliché, as the neon "shop sign" that Nauman fashioned in 1967 self-consciously declares: "The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths."[12] Nor, for that matter, does our *arche-scene* point towards the silence of the studio, a visibility or "mystic truth" prior to all language.

Following Michel Foucault, we need "to substitute the enigmatic treasure of 'things' anterior to discourse, [by] the regular formation of objects that only emerge in discourse."[13] I understand the studio, in the first place, as the locus of a series of performative or discursive events. An approach that prompts the following questions: what are the particular rules, practices, and functions that constitute the "local knowledge" of the studio? What expressions of truth become possible (or obsolete) in this place during a given period of time? In short, how to define the studio as *dispositif*: a system of heterogeneous discourses and practices governed by immanent rules of enunciation.

What I have called the local knowledge of the studio becomes embodied in the various myths of the studio that circulate in art historical discourse. I shall discuss, in particular, two alternative fictions of the studio that demonstrate how the rules of the game underwent a rapid mutation in the late 1960s. In fact, my description of Nauman's studio already juxtaposed two different myths of the studio, which I shall provisionally designate as that of the cluttered and the empty studio. I shall develop the first model of the studio by drawing on the phenomenological notion of the habitus, whereas the latter model counters the former. These twin myths of the studio are not, in fact, mirror images of each other: each myth is indexed to different historical *dispositifs* of the studio. Thus the topos of the cluttered studio has its roots in the nineteenth century and is even associated in phenomenological theory with the pre-industrial workplace, which precedes the Fordist rationalization of labor. The cluttered studio must therefore be understood as the complementary image of the disciplinary institutions of industrial society; it forms, as it were, the after-image, of the factory.

The empty studio, on the other hand, presents a kind of threshold condition, a limit-experience", where the institutional stratifications of a disciplinary society, its divisions between public and private, begin to collapse. Yet the empty studio does not figure as a functionalist retooling of the private studio as public laboratory. Rather the empty studio points beyond a disciplinary *dispositif* in which both the modern studio and the factory hold a share. Which brings me to the second component of my argument, which is of a genealogical rather an archeological nature. As Foucault famously stated, the *dispositif* is not only "linked to certain limits of *knowledge* that arise from it and, to an equal degree, condition it, but the nature of the apparatus is essentially *strategic* ... [it] is always inscribed into a play of *power*."[14] That is to say, the local knowledge of the studio is always intertwined with specific, subjectifying forms of power, whether as site of resistance or affirmation. The studio is a site where subjectivity is produced. Think in this regard of the disciplinary apparatus of formalist aesthetics, which invested the spectator of modernist painting with the status of a transcendental subject who mirrored himself in the self-enclosed, autonomous object of art. The empty studio, on the other hand, does not act as a theater of identification, but stages the interminable travails of individuation that lack an absolute object of self-reflection. As a result, Nauman's studio practice shifts the terms of cultural debate, displacing our attention from a formalist ontology of the medium to a political ontology of subjectivation. To be sure, I do not claim that Nauman is *alone* in having done so, nor do I suggest that the full implications of this shift were visible at the time. The full genealogy of the empty studio remains to be written.

A few words on the phenomenological model of the studio as habitus are required, before we look more closely at the role of the empty studio in Nauman's *Studio Films*. To this purpose, I shall briefly turn to another, earlier description of the artist's studio, namely Paul Valéry's "Degas Dance Drawing." This fragmentary text compiles memories of several visits to the painter's studio, presumably during the early part of the twentieth century. Significantly, Valéry wrote the text at a much later date, during the early 1930s, and he reflects upon the past in a wistful manner, casting the painter's studio as the allegory of a form of life nearing extinction in the present.

Valéry's personifies the familiar figure of the intruder, breaching the private domain of the modern artist:

> When I rang his door... He would open mistrustfully and then recognize me ... He would take me into a long attic room, with a wide bay window (not very clean) where light and dust mingled gaily. The room was pell-mell...[a shelf piled with] all the nameless odds and ends that might come in handy one day.[15]

Perhaps Valéry expected to receive some kind of illumination upon entering the inner sanctum of the artist. Instead he appears baffled by the disorder of the scene he encounters, overwhelmed by the confusion of the place. Yet the pivot on which his narrative turns is the conceit that Degas possesses a subliminal means of mobilizing the chaotic environment:

> It sometimes seems to me that the labor of the artist is of a very old-fashioned kind; the artist himself a survival, a craftsman or artisan of a disappearing species, working in his own room, following his own homemade empirical methods, living in untidy intimacy with his tools, his eye intent on what is in his mind, blind to his surroundings; using broken pots, kitchenware, any castoffs that come to hand...[16]

Degas is blind to his surroundings, yet the inchoate accumulation of stuff coheres as an organized whole around the artist's body. The artist inhabits his studio like a spider its web, even if the intruder cannot detect the delicate tracery of the intentional patterns he spins.

What will be of use to us is the embryonic, phenomenological theory of objects that Valéry's text unfolds, a theory that is binary in character. On the one hand, we have those things that stand out from a formless background of nameless odds and ends: objects that are designated, for instance, as "broken pots" – discarded utensils of no further use. And on the other hand we have those objects that possess a pre-ordained place within an equipmental network of intentional activity. That is to say, the "broken pot" acquires a new purpose as

artist's tool. The two object-types may therefore be nominally the same, but they are situated within different fields of signification.[17]

Valéry is blind to this second aspect of the object and he knows it. Degas' blindness, however, is of a different kind. The artist is not only blind to those who intrude upon his private space (Valéry is shocked, for instance, that the painter undresses in his presence), but he dwells within the cluttered studio like a person who without fault can traverse a familiar room in the dark. But let me take these thoughts a step further. Valéry's musings may easily be related to similar reflections on the dual identity of the object in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, a text that preceded Valéry's by almost a decade.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger defines two ontologies of the object, namely the *zuhanden* – that which is "available" – and the *vorhanden* – that which is "occurrent."[18] Availability designates those objects that are embedded within a network of possible assignments as a piece of equipment that is fitted for specific tasks. We do not perceive the available object as a figure that stands out in isolation amongst the accumulated "stuff" of the world. We do not consciously name, that is, the available object a "broken pot." As long as we remain absorbed within the daily realm of availability or purposeful behavior, objects emerge only in so far as they correspond to our intentions, just like the tools of a craftsman that lie about the workshop, but are always "available" or *zuhanden*.

Availableness refers, therefore, to a manner of incorporating space; that is, a corporeal fashion of extending ourselves into the world by means of a habitual set of skills, techniques and instruments. It is this dilation of our body into the world that Merleau-Ponty, for instance, refers to as the habitus. But there is another point that needs stressing: availableness namely also refers to the worldliness of everyday existence; that is, to the subject's implication within a nexus of practices and significations that is public, not private. Availableness relates to a shared form of life, whereas one might mistake habitual behavior as belonging to an exclusively personal "style of life." Such confusion will be the result, for instance, of conflating the notion of the studio-as-habitus with a modernist conception of the artist's studio as a figure of pure inwardness. A phenomenologist would most likely argue, however, that the latter, modernist model of the autonomous

studio is an idealist construct and all artistic activity is "enmeshed in a single, identical network of Being."[19] Which is why, according to Merleau-Ponty, "the very first painting in some sense went to the farthest reach of the future." But it is not to such a habitual continuum of the body that Nauman subscribes.

Heidegger offers us a slightly more historicized version of the habitus. His example of availableness is that of the pre-industrial workshop, a communal space of labor unlike, for sure, Degas's studio (although modernism produced its own versions of the public studio). In the workshop, instruments remain ready at hand, waiting in their assigned place until needed, at which point the worker quickly reaches for the correct tool without needing to actively look for it. By way of contrast, Heidegger provides a number of scenarios where the object becomes estranged from the subject's realm of intentionality. A tool, for instance, might become misplaced or malfunction. The tool is then disclosed as a distinct object as it has fallen out of the active rhythms of the work process. Transformed into a passive object of contemplation, the occurrent object assumes the stubborn presence of a natural thing. But the object might also be disclosed as occurrent to the stranger who enters the workshop, but does not participate in the same horizon of intentionality shared by the artisans.

And so we return to the previous scene of Valéry's intrusion upon the artist's studio. Valéry is excluded from Degas' habitus: it can only show itself as occurrent to the writer. Yet, for that matter, Valéry's gaze is not exactly neutral. It spreads its own opaqueness around itself. Valéry, in other words, is the carrier of a transcendent gaze that invades the habitus and is capable, as phenomenology would theorize, of estranging the subject from his own projects. The effect of such an objectifying gaze, as Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, is to open a drain-hole in the middle of the world through which being is perpetually flowing off.[20] This transcendent gaze reappears in the *Studio Films*, where it becomes internalized by the artist, rather than blindly deflected as in the case of Degas. Transported into the studio by the mechanical eye of the film camera, Nauman's solitary gestures in the empty studio are exteriorized by the camera's fixed stare.

The *Studio Films* show a sequence of mundane activities repeated over and over again until the film reel runs out (fig. 3). Nauman shot the films alone, placing the stationary camera at, or slightly above, eye-level, in order to show a section of empty wall and floor. The frame of the camera is mirrored by the outline of a square fastened to the floor with masking tape.[21] In relation to this geometric boundary, Nauman performs the particular task described by the title of each film. For instance, in *Bouncing Two Balls between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms*, Nauman alternately throws a ball against the floor in an attempt to let it bounce off the ceiling, and tries to catch another ball that is already bouncing back. It is not a mastery of this game, however, that Nauman displays, but the opposite. The balls skids off in an unexpected directions and he is unable to sustain a constant rhythm. At a certain moment he vents his frustration by throwing the ball away. This film reveals a flaw on another, mechanical level as well: the sound track goes out of sync.[22] These faults, however, are not purely accidental, but quite elemental to the significance of these films. They are, that is to say, not merely deficient documents of a failed performance.

What is common to the *Studio Films* is the deliberate execution of a

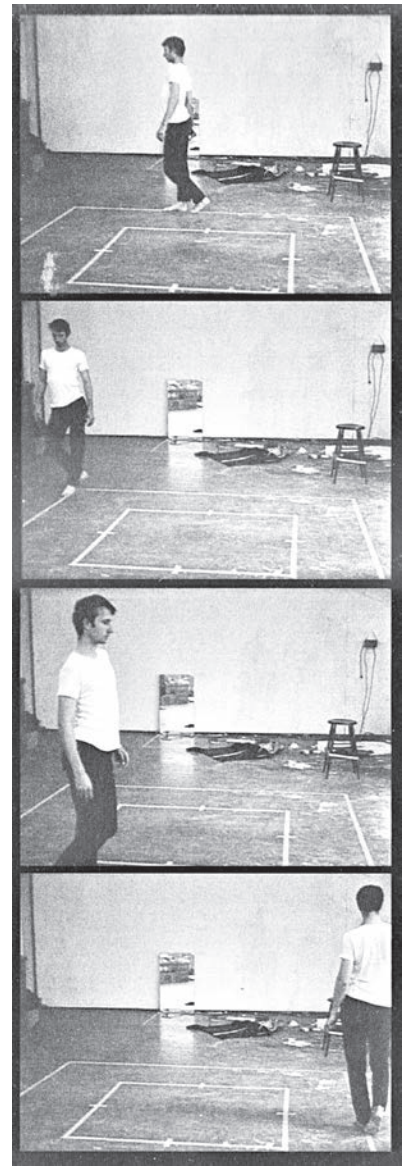

FIG. 3 Bruce Nauman, *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square*, 1967–68, 16 mm film, black and white, sound, 10 min. © Pictoright Amsterdam 2013

repetitive task that is situated somewhere between a habitual performance and a disciplinary exercise.[23] Nauman's tasks have one constant function, however: they enact, or seem to enact, a corporeal mode of appropriating the studio space. It is not insignificant in this respect that the studio in which the films were made was *not his* and that it appears to have been exceedingly *empty,* aside from some scattered debris in the background. Nauman's fascination with our daily acts of incorporating space is highlighted by the following anecdote:

> It's like a woman I saw once in a restaurant. She sat down in a chair, sprawled out in it, dropped a cigarette lighter at one spot on the table, and threw her handbag down in another – in herself, and with all her belongings she took up a huge amount of space.[24]

What the woman's behavior illustrates is nothing else than the phenomenological operation of inhabitation: the dilation of our being-in-the-world through the habitual performances of our body.[25] According to Merleau-Ponty, one can in fact differentiate three, sequential levels of inhabitation: a biological, a choreographical and a cultural.

On the most primary level, the habitus will simply concern those actions necessary for the preservation of life. Thus the woman who distributes various objects – the handbag, the lighter – around her is not setting up territorial boundaries, but expanding her bodily sphere of awareness. The woman pays these objects no conscious heed, but they express to her "potentialities of volume, the demand for a certain amount of free space."[26] Following Merleau-Ponty's general scenario, the woman may now elaborate on these primary gestures of extension, providing them with a figurative meaning. As a result, her milieu becomes suffused with "a core of new significance." More than establishing an elemental radius of action, she has invented a primitive kind of dance.

The woman's scattering of her possessions establishes an *expressive space* around her. Her basic habits become the medium of expressive movement; they allow things to begin to exist under her hands and eyes. When Nauman observed the woman, therefore, he was looking at her as a choreographer might. And here a question of

learning or the acquisition of new habits becomes crucial. To learn a dance it is not enough, so Merleau-Ponty maintains, to conceive its ideal formula in an analytic fashion. Rather, one must reconstruct the new movement on the basis of previously acquired movements, such as walking and running. There is a catch, however, because working backwards in this manner, from dance to habit, inverts the true order of cause and effect. The formula of a new dance can only incorporate elements of general motility because it already has "the stamp of movement" set upon it, as Merleau-Ponty declares. It is the body that comprehends movement, not the intellect. Therefore, our intention – "what we aim at" – and our performance – "what is given" – must be experienced as existing in simultaneous harmony.

If we now consider Nauman's *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square*, we might appreciate how Nauman counters the logic of Merleau-Ponty. In *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square* Nauman starts in one corner of the square, gingerly stepping along the taped line. At times his body is turned towards the center of the square and at other moments it faces the wall, providing the camera with only an intermittent glance of his face. Again, as in the former film, Nauman's movements are not dictated by any internal rhythm. He regulates his step by the beat of a metronome. This film shows Nauman, therefore, acquiring the patterned gestures of a dance, but it is the awkwardness of the "exercise" that counts and not the ideal formula of the "dance."

Does Nauman truly approach the body and its techniques as a choreographer would? This film is often cited as a demonstration of Nauman's interest in the work of the choreographer Merce Cunningham.[27] Cunningham is known to mix choreographed moves with everyday gestures, but also to combine professional and non-professional performers.[28] Thus Cunningham downplayed the need for acquired technique in dance, calling it too constrictive, and suggesting that movement in itself is expressive "regardless of intentions of expressivity."[29] Cunningham, in other words, desired to return to the "biological" realm of untutored, if habitual movement. Yet, something is different in Nauman's performance: it is executed in a contradictory fashion. His gestures are both too controlled and regulated as well as too unrehearsed and awkward. What strikes me about the *Studio Films*

in general is that Nauman's conscious effort stands at odds with his performance: his movements become schematic, almost mechanical at times, subject to an external or imposed force of discipline, rather than habitual learning process of dance. Furthermore, they also succumb to the entropic energy of the body, repeatedly failing at their task. Nauman becomes, in the end, fatigued.

Dance or disciplinary exercise? This ambivalence is fundamental to the *Studio Films*. They are symptomatic of a changed, historical condition of the studio: a cultural institution that now seems to both demand and resist conscious appropriation. Indeed there is a third level of the habitus, beyond that of the biological or choreographic, as Merleau-Ponty maintained, namely that of the cultural space: "sometimes, finally, the meaning aimed at cannot be achieved by the body's natural means; it must then build itself an instrument, and it projects thereby around itself a cultural world." The artist has long occupied the habitus of the studio with his equipment in an unquestioned manner. But now the studio has been emptied out and reverted to a blank state. As a result the artist had to resort to other techniques, both corporeal and technological, in order to re-posses the studio space, yet perhaps it is precisely such processes of re-territorialization that have become deeply problematical to Nauman and other artists of his generation. Perhaps *that* is the drama of the *Studio Films*?

All that we may surmise is that the empty studio provides us with a liminal figure of the erasure of a particular form of life – the "natural" performances of the artist that are no longer available in the precise, phenomenological meaning of the word. Any number of statements by Nauman from this period hint at such a state of unsettledness: "That's the thing about going into the studio to experience the quiet. All that's there is you, and you have to deal with that. Sometimes it's pretty hard."[30]

In the absence of a conventional set of instruments, the empty studio has become in a certain sense uninhabitable. The empty studio rebounds upon the subject occupying it.

We know that the *actual* emptiness of Nauman's studio, that is, its lack of traditional artist's tools, resulted from his decision in 1965 to abandon painting. Starting with a series of fiberglass casts, Nauman attempted to rid himself of the artistic skills he had acquired as

an art student. In effect, Nauman sought to dislodge the modernist equation between artistic practice and specific discipline: one is either a painter or a sculptor, but not an artist in general. Challenging this convention, Nauman would justify his work in a strictly performative manner: the work of art is simply the product of someone working professionally as an artist: "Art is what an artist does, just sitting around in the studio. And then the question goes back to what is art? And art is what an artist does, just sitting around in the studio."[31]

The spiraling logic of Nauman's statement might seem evasive, to say the least. Yet it does address the contradictions of its own historical moment, if leaving them unresolved. Nauman's spasmodic disruptions of the stillness of the studio mimic on one level the habitual iterations of the subject: "If you see yourself as an artist and you function in a studio and you're not a painter, if you don't start out with some canvas, you do all kinds of things – you sit in a chair or pace around."[32] Yet by introducing the camera, Nauman has punctured the private shell of the studio. Even though no one is actually present behind the camera, Nauman's gestures are performed to another's gaze. His body is framed from without, caught between the borders of the screen and the taped square on the floor.[33] Even his feeble attempts to evade the gaze of the camera by moving off-screen only underscore the continuity of on- and off-screen space, demonstrating that there is no true place to hide.[34] The studio has become a spectacle: showing has trumped hiding.

Are we left, then, with a choice – impossible to decide – between inhabitation and instrumentalization? Both options present a mode of (re-)territorialization, proving how the modern body is always caught up in a bio-political nexus of power and knowledge; invested by social techniques of discipline and control. Even phenomenology's pre-industrial idyll of the workplace cannot dispel this historical truth.[35] What *the Studio Films* portray, therefore, is not an appropriation, but a de-territorialization of space: "I wanted to find out what I would look at in a strange situation, and I decided that with a film and camera I could do that."[36] They document a glitch within the instrumental network of assignments – or what Foucault would identify as a disciplinary *dispositif* – the repercussions of which will only become evident at a later stage.

Perhaps we also need a different set of terms: words such as "puncturing" or "invading" do not accurately describe what happens to the studio space in the case of the *Studio Films.* These films do not so much present a set of boundaries that are breached, as a topological space that is folded inside out, where the interior is always in touch with the exterior. Here the repetitions of the body no longer operate as a means of mastery, whether habitual or disciplinary in kind, but subvert the function of the studio as a site for the construction of the artist's self. The *Studio Films* exhibit a laborious faltering of the body and its techniques. But what historical lesson can be drawn from such a learning behavior without issue? Does this placement of body within a spiraling loop of negative feedback provide an exit from a specific historical *dispositif* of the studio or does it merely suspend its internal contradictions?

Nothing can be decided on the basis of these four films alone. But should this be to conclude on too colorless a note, there is another possibility that comes to mind. A possibility that I raised before, if only in passing, and that ties the deadpan *Studio Films* in a compelling, if indirect fashion to a cinematic tradition that was much admired by the historical avant-garde, namely slapstick comedy. For Walter Benjamin, among others, the reason for this admiration of the pratfalls of Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton was obvious: just as the jerky gestures of Charlie Chaplin's body mimicked the flickering, intermittent motion of the projected image, the social function of slapstick comedy was to assist the spectators in their accommodation to modern life, to steel the human sensorium against the shocks and innervations of the expanding industrial society. Yet we cannot simply graft such an avant-gardist pleasure in physical comedy onto the *Studio Films,* despite their similar fascination with the faulty movements and fumbling gestures of the human body. Rather than anticipating a future in which humanity would establish a new social habitus whereby an equitable organization of productive forces would not cause the alienation of man and machine, the *Studio Films* may be considered to participate in that long farewell to the Fordist model of social organization that was initiated during the 1960s. Like a prisoner in his own studio, Nauman, in a painfully slow fashion, paced out the perimeter of the square taped onto the floor. But even while he enacted

this almost maniacal parody of disciplinary behavior in 1967, quite different modes of modulating subjectivity were already being implemented within the emergent workspaces of a post-Fordist society, where it was not the physical, but the *linguistic* performances of the human subject that were to become capitalized. Perhaps the violent scenes of communicative breakdown in later video installations such as *Clown Torture* (1987) may be said to respond to such changed historical conditions, but that is a discussion for a different time.

NOTES

1 For Nauman's earliest accounts of his work environment and methods, see Joe Raffaele and Elizabeth Baker, "The Way Out West: Interviews with 4 San Francisco Artists," *Art News* 66/4 (Summer 1967) 39–40, 75–76; Willoughby Sharp, "Nauman Interview," *Arts Magazine* 44/5 (March 1970) 22–27; and Willoughby Sharp, "Bruce Nauman," *Avalanche* 2 (Winter 1971) 23–31. Another well-documented source is Coosje van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988).

2 Bruce Nauman received his MFA degree in June of 1966 at the University of California, Davis. Upon graduation he moved to San Francisco.

3 Although the two are not completely unrelated, the phenomenological concept of habitus should not be confused with Pierre Bourdieu's perhaps more famous appropriation of the same term, which was prompted by the latter's translation of Erwin Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* [1967].

4 Although I shall not develop my argument in quite these terms, it is possible to describe the studio-as-habitus as a particular, historical *dispositif* or formation of the various discursive, institutional, socio-economic and equipmental conditions that determine both the possibilities and limits of studio practice during a given historical period.

5 The classic texts are Robert Morris, "Notes On Sculpture, Part I," *Artforum* 4/6 (February 1966) 42–44; "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," *Artforum* 5/2 (October 1966) 20–23; Annette Michelson, *Robert Morris: An Aesthetics of Transgression* (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1969); Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977). With his infamous attack on minimalism, Michael Fried would begin to develop a counter-model of phenomenological critique (See "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* 5/10 (June 1967) 12–23). One may already deduce from this list of publications how the phenomenological model of minimal art has been strongly determined by the work of Robert Morris. Donald Judd proposed another theoretical model of minimal art, which may be loosely referred to as "empirical skepticism." However, this does not invalidate the phenomenological model I shall adopt in the following.

6 Hal Foster, "The Crux of Minimalism," in: Howard Singerman (ed.), *Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art 1945–86* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986).

7 See, for instance, the description of Bruce Nauman's *Corridor Installation (Nick Wilder Installation)* of 1970 in *Bruce Nauman: Catalogue Raisonne*, 241.

8 Sharp 1970, 30. Not even the visibility of the technical apparatus prevented this decentering effect: "When you realized that you were on the screen, being in the corridor was like stepping off a cliff or down into a hole … You knew what had happened because you could see all of the equipment and what was going on, yet you had the same experience every time you walked in. There was no way to avoid having it" (ibid., 30). For a recent discussion of the video installations see Parveen Adams, "Bruce Nauman and the Object of Anxiety," *October* 83 (Winter 1998) 97–114.

9 The films are all shot on black-and-white 16 mm stock and they last the length of one 400–foot reel (that is, circa 10 minutes). They all have sync sound except for *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square*.

10 On Nauman's interest in the slapstick routine and magic tricks, see, for instance, the later work "Falls, Pratfalls & Sleight of Hands" of 1993.

11 Jeff Wall, "Marks of Indifference: Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art," in: Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer (eds.) *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965–1975* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), 247–267.

12 This work was not only inspired by the neon signs hanging in the shop window of his studio, but its spiral configuration also refers to the rotating discs in Marcel Duchamp's film *Anemic Cinema*. The punning phrases inscribed on the discs in Duchamp's film are mostly sexual in nature and their movement before the spectator's eyes causes language to turn inwards on itself in an almost physical act of auto-affection.

13 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, A.M. Sheridan Smith (trans.) (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 47–48.

14 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. C. Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 194–196. See also Giorgio Agamben, "What is an Apparatus?," in: *What is an Apparatus and Other Essays*, David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (trans.) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 2.

15 Paul Valéry, "Degas Dance Drawing [1935]," in: *Degas Manet Morisot*, David Paul (trans.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 19.

16 Ibid., 19–20.

17 In an interesting early essay on cinema, Louis Aragon describes his fascination with the camera image as driven by the same procedure of de-familiarization that is used by poets: "Poets without being artists, children sometimes fix their attention on an object to the point where their concentration makes it grow larger, grow so much it completely occupies their visual field, assumes a mysterious aspect and loses all relation to its purpose. Or they repeat a word endlessly, so often it divests itself of meaning and becomes a poignant and pointless sound that makes them cry." Louis Aragon, "On Décor," in:

Paul Hammond (ed.), *The Shadow and Its Shadow: Surrealist Writings on Cinema* (London: BFI, 1978), 29.

18 I will adopt the terminology suggested by Hubert L. Dreyfus, rather than the more standard but awkward translation as "ready-to-hand" and "present-at-hand." See Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division 1* (Cambridges, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

19 Maurice Merleau-Pony, "Eye and Mind," in: *The Primacy of Perception* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 189.

20 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, Hazel E. Barnes (trans.) (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 343.

21 While Coosje van Bruggen remarks that the framing of the image is accentuated by the cropping of the square in *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner around the Perimeter of a Square*, oddly enough she maintains that the use of the square is somewhat arbitrary and only serves to formalize and provide direction to the "exercise." She therefore continues to view the film as primarily a "straight" documentary of a performance-like activity, while I shall maintain that the Studio Films are medium-specific works. See Coosje van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 228.

22 Speaking of *Bouncing Two Balls between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms*, Nauman remembered that: "[I] started out in sync but there again, it is a wild track, so as the tape stretches and tightens it goes in and out of sync. I more or less wanted it to be in sync but I just didn't have the equipment and the patience to do it." Sharp 1971, 28.

23 At least two of Hollis Frampton's films from this period deal with similar themes, but in a more oblique fashion, namely *Process Red* (1968) and *Maxwell's Demon* (1968), which uses a found instructional film of a man performing Canadian Air Force exercises.

24 Coosje van Bruggen, "The true artist is an amazing luminous fountain," in: *Bruce Nauman Drawings 1965–1985* (Basel: Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 1986), 19.

25 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Colin Smith (trans.) (London: Routledge, 1989), 143.

26 Ibid., 143.

27 Here is Bruce Nauman on Cunningham: "I guess I thought of what I was doing as a sort of dance because I was familiar with some of the things Merce Conningham and others had done, where you take a simple movement and make it into a dance just by presenting it as a dance." From an unpublished interview with Lorraine Sciarra (Pomona College: January 1972), as quoted by Jane Livingston in *Bruce Nauman: Works from 1965 to 1972* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art), 16.

28 Coosje van Bruggen describes a performance at Brandeis University in 1952 where Cunningham used both professional dancers and students. The second group of performers was asked to execute simple, ordinary gestures, such as washing their hands, filing their nails, combing their hair, and skipping. Cunningham stated that he did not want "to separate the human being from the action he does, or the actions which surround him, but … [to] see what it is like to break these actions up in different ways,

to allow the passion, and it is passion, to appear for each person in his own way." From Merce Cunningham, *Changes: Notes on Choreography* (New York: Something Else Press, 1968) n.p., as quoted by Van Bruggen 1988, 230.

29 Ibid., 230.

30 Van Brugggen 1988, 18.

31 Ibid., 14.

32 Bruce Nauman as cited in Van Bruggen 1988, 14.

33 In fact the *Studio Films* were originally intended as performances, but Nauman had no audience. He was turned down by numerous museums, so he decided to film them instead. He has noted that while he knew many filmmakers in the Bay Area at the time, he felt that these films were unique in the fact that they only recorded an activity. Other filmmakers were involved in making either narrative or abstract films.

34 Already in 1965, Nauman had presented a performance at the University of California, Davis, which shares a similar dialectic of individualization versus objectification: "I did a piece at Davis which involved standing with my back to the wall for about forty-five seconds or a minute, leaning out from the wall, then bending at the waist, squatting, sitting, and finally lying down. There were seven different positions in relation to the wall and floor. Then I did the whole sequence again standing away from the wall, facing the wall, the facing left and facing right. There were twenty-eight positions and the whole presentation lasted for about half an hour... [they were related to] the fibreglass pieces that were inside and outside, in which two parts of the same mold were put together ... I was using my body as a piece of material and manipulating it." Sharp 1971, 26.

35 Marcia Tucker and Coosje van Bruggen both draw a comparison between the films and the *Animal Locomotion* studies of Eadweard Muybridge. See Tucker's catalogue essay in *Bruce Nauman: Work from 1965 to 1972* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art/Praeger: New York, 1972) and Van Bruggen 1988.

36 Van Bruggen 1988, 225.

CHAPTER 11

Home Improvement and Studio Stupor. On Gregor Schneider's *(Dead) House ur*

WOUTER DAVIDTS

Laisse, je travaille.[1]
ALBERT CAMUS

There are people who are really skilled with lines, letters and words, and there are people who build a house.[2]
GREGOR SCHNEIDER

In 2003, the BBC produced a documentary on the work of the German artist Gregor Schneider.[3] The film, entitled *House of Horror,* documents the work of Schneider in general, but first and foremost *Dead House ur*, the project with which he had gained international fame. *House ur* is the name of Schneider's dwelling in the German village of Rheydt, a desolate town in the vicinity of Düsseldorf. Between 1985 and 2003, the artist secretly reconfigured this house from the inside, duplicating and transforming its interior spaces. He isolated rooms with rock wool, foam and lead, copied rooms within those same rooms, placed false walls in front of existing ones, reconfigured the location of walls and doors, made secret hallways, corridors and openings, built rotating rooms, and installed moving floors and ceilings (fig. 3). The list of the delivered works reads as a staccato of absurd architectural interventions, acts and undertakings, and is best cited in its original German:

> Wand vor Wand – Wand hinter Wand – Gang im Raum – Raum im Raum – roter Stein hinter Raum – Blei um Raum – Blei im Boden – Licht um Raum – Figur in Wand – Wand vor

Wand – Decke unter Decke – Wandteil vor Wand – Kubus in Wand – bewegliche Decke unter Decke – 3 Wände in Raummitte – Fenster zeigt nach Osten – Fenster zeigt nach Norden – Fenster zeigt nach Westen – Pfeiler im Raum – 6 Wände hinter Wand.[4]

Behind the banal façade of a prototypical middle-class German house, Schneider surreptitiously constructed a labyrinthine, indecipherable and highly mysterious architectural tangle. No space was original or genuine: every room turned out to be a kind of copy, a reconstruction, a reconfiguration or a transformation. *House ur* occupied and secreted the original dwelling with a replica that was actually not one. There was no way to distinguish between the original and its double, between the initial structure and the new construction, between the existing building and the added-on artistic work, as Schneider himself indicated:

FIG. 1 Gregor Schneider, *u r 7, ATELIER, Rheydt 1990–93*, room within a room, plaster boards on a wooden construction, plastering, 1 door, 3 windows, 2 lamps, grey wooden floor, white walls and ceiling (333 x 662 x 289 cm (LxWxH), S 1.8 -56 cm), HAUS u r, Rheydt 1985 – today. © Gregor Schneider/VG Bild-Kunst Bonn

> The sheer amount that I have built in here means that I can't distinguish any more between what has been added and what has been subtracted. There is no way now of fully documenting what has happened in the house. The only way now would be to measure the hidden spaces. No one could get to the original structure any more without systematically drilling apart and destroying the house. The layers of lead even mean you couldn't X-ray it.[5]

Since the mid-1990s, Schneider has reconstructed both larger and smaller sections of this replica inside museums and art galleries. For the Venice Biennial of 2003, he rebuilt *House ur* almost in its entirety inside the German Pavilion – and received the Golden Lion for this gigantic enterprise. He carefully dismantled the entire interior (or at least most of the spaces) of the two-story residential house in Rheydt and transferred the pieces to Venice, where he meticulously reassembled and reconstructed the project within the pavilion's architectural shell. Visitors entered the reconstruction from the outside via the original doorway, set into the pompous neo-classical pavilion. Abruptly, one came into the inner spaces of an everyday German house (fig. 2).

Every piece that has "left" the house has been lumped together by Schneider as *Totes Haus ur* or *Dead House ur*. Every exhibition, the artist stated in an interview with Ulrich Loock in 1996, deprives the work of its lifeblood: "Exhibitions are always the death of the work."[6] Once the numerous alterations have robbed the interior of every degree of originality or authenticity, it dies off permanently during the move and subsequent reconstruction for display purposes. Within an exhibition gallery, the rooms emerge as merely empty, deserted, uninhabited, numb, completely deadened spaces.

HAUNTED HOUSE

Most of the critical reception of Schneider's *(Dead) House ur* – whether based on a privileged account of the house in Rheydt or on a visit to one of its exhibitions – stresses the eccentric and uncanny character of the project. Even though the house looks normal from the outside,

FIG. 2 Gregor Schneider, *TOTES HAUS u r*, 24 rooms from developed and doubled rooms of the House u r, Rheydt 1985–2001, mixed media (8,5 x18,5 x22m), 49th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy 10 June 2001–04 November 2001. © Gregor Schneider/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

the visitor immediately senses that something is wrong. The strange combination of banality and artificiality – taken to the extreme within the exhibited reconstruction, the *Dead House ur* – converts every visit into a sinister adventure. The BBC's *House of Horror* – the title is already telling enough in this respect – exemplifies this mode of interpretation. Reporter Ben Lewis even makes mention of an architectural thriller: "It was as if Hitchcock had become an abstract sculptor." Yet, more importantly, the horror is systematically tied to the psychology of the artist. When Schneider elaborates on his fascination for the backside of walls and for the holes in walls, Lewis remarks: "This was modernist art theory with a psychological twist. [...] Gregor Schneider is one of the most original and acclaimed artists today, but he's also one of the strangest." After another difficult conversation with Schneider, Lewis no longer doubts that "something terrible has happened to Gregor." Schneider's grim silence, whenever Lewis sounds him out on his motivations and intentions, only adds to this impression.

This kind of smarmy discourse is, of course, not exceptional in television documentaries. The art-critical literature, however, hardly escapes the psycho-biographical reading either. This can perhaps be blamed on Schneider himself. He speaks of a "dead house" and "deadened rooms"; he gives his works titles like *Totally Isolated Guest Rooms* (*Total isoliertes Gästezimmer*, 1995), *The Last Hole* (*Das Letzte Loch*, 1995), *The End* (*Das Ende*, 1999), *The Big Wank* (*Das grosse Wichsen*, 1997), *Love-Nest* (*Liebeslaube*, 1995–96); and he has given the total project the suffix *ur*. *Ur* is not only an abbreviation of the address of the house in Rheydt (Unterheydener Strasse), but *ur* also stands for *Umbauter Raum* (Reconfigured Room), *Unsichtbarer Raum* (Invisible Room), or it can evoke alternate associations (*ur* signifying origin in German).[7]

It is perhaps not so surprising, then, that many critics have eagerly pounced on this last aspect. Jens Hoffman connects *ur* to the notion of birth and reads it as "a generator, a womb, a matrix"; Daniel Birnbaum understands the house as a "more or less autistic psychogram" or a "sexual battleground"; Ralph Rugoff believes that *Dead House ur* delivered "a stunning psychological portrait of domestic space at the turn of the millennium, offering a potent and beguiling reminder

that home just isn't what it used to be"; while Ulrich Loock interprets Schneider's work as a home for the creepy: "Schneider's work gives the uncanny a place (no banishment, no exorcism)."[8] Elisabeth Bronfen elaborates on this aspect quite extensively in the catalogue for the Venice Biennial, again by means of a comparison with Hitchcock: "[...] both artists, after all, are obsessed with the familiar turning uncanny."[9] Bronfen then connects *Dead House ur* to the notion of the uncanny within the writings of Freud and Heidegger, borrowing what might be considered one of the central stratagems of psychoanalysis, namely that the ego, to grow into a mature subject, must acknowledge that it will never become master of its own house. All of these interpretations place Schneider's indefatigable building activities in a pathological perspective.

Dead House ur can no doubt be seen as a personal reflection on the domestic regime and its hidden aspects – the house as a sinister site of terror and discomfort, of fear and subversion. The project fits neatly within a rich anti-domestic tradition in modern art – comprising, amongst others, often rather literal examples of adapted and transformed houses like Gordon Matta-Clark's *Splitting* (1974), Vito Acconci's *Bad Dream House* (1984) or Rachel Whiteread's *House* (1993).[10] But this reading, I would argue, is monotonous. Instead of approaching Schneider's *Dead House ur* from a psychoanalytical point of view, I would advocate a resolutely art historical and art theoretical perspective. This mode of "analysis" allows many other aspects to surface. After all, Schneider's house not only served as his living space, but also as his workplace. Schneider not only made his home in his studio, he worked in his house as well. When we initiate a reading that focuses on the artistic rather than the domestic regime of the project, a totally different kind of horror or stupor in Schneider's work is brought to the fore.

THE STUDIO AS PRACTICE

House ur, the house in Unterheydener Strasse, belonged to Schneider's father. In the early 1980s it was deemed uninhabitable due to its proximity to a lead factory in Rheydt, where five generations of

Schneider's family had worked. When Schneider was sixteen, his father allowed him to use it as a studio, later permitting him to live there as well. The house has therefore served as the place where Schneider started out and gradually matured as an artist. It was here that he made his first artistic experiments – mostly expressionist performances – and where he took key decisions about the further development and content of his work. Of crucial importance in this context is that Schneider, from very early on, chose to engage in *building* activities.

Modern art history knows many examples of artists who have – some more manically than others – rearranged, rebuilt or extended their studios. Numerous artists consider their studio not only as a place to practice their art, but also as a practice in itself. Historically, and even to this day, the studio has served not only as the place where art is made, but, as Michael Cole and Mary Pardo have brilliantly demonstrated, first and foremost as the place where art-making itself is forged.[11] Artists have subjected the space and architectural framework of the studio to all forms of rhetoric and iconography in order to construct, represent and reflect on their own artistic identity. This has resulted in a wide range of scenarios in which the traditional differences between work and workshop, between art and décor, between private workplace and public showcase, between external or shared expression and internal or private experimentation have dissolved. Well known are the studios where artists showed off their artistic personality and self-confidence by obsessively decorating the interior. The exuberant decoration and *mise-en-scène* of the studios of late-Romantic artists such as William Meritt Chase in New York, Franz von Lenbach in Munich or Hans Makart in Vienna, were designed to express the artist's genius and civic status. Other, mostly wealthy artists, commissioned spacious studios, or had their existing studios transformed into personal museums. Frederic Lord Leighton's house in London expanded along with his artistic reputation and social status, while towards the end of his life the French painter Gustave Moreau turned his studio in Paris into a personal mausoleum – an enterprise that was driven by his fear of being forgotten by art history.[12] An opposing strategy involves not so much the expansion or "rebuilding" of the studio, but rather the studio being folded back

on itself, by contraction, by "building inwards."[13] Brancusi's patient arrangement of his sculptures in his studio was accompanied by a meticulous and ongoing reorganization and gradual compression of the interior of his barracks in the Impasse Ronsin in Paris. Another grand and frequently mentioned predecessor to *Dead House ur* is Kurt Schwitters's *Merzbau*. Between 1923 and 1937 this architectural collage steadily came to occupy the entire interior of Schwitters's apartment and studio in Hannover.[14]

But where should we situate Schneider's project within this wide panorama of architectural transformations and adaptations of the studio? Clearly, Schneider's building activities radically coincide with his artistic practice. During the first 20 years of his career, the rebuilding of the house was simply what made up his art. In this respect, the construction job certainly reveals much about (the development of) Schneider's artistic identity. Above all, however, it makes his grim silence – or his refusal to speak about the motivations and intentions behind his frantic building activities – frankly suspicious. Either this silence is strategic, and thus aimed at augmenting the existing mythology and subsequent speculations regarding the (psychological) depth and origination of the work. Or it is simply maladroit: we are confronted with an artist who is "extremely busy," but somehow fails to express himself accordingly.

Looking more closely at the BBC documentary and re-reading the published interviews, we cannot but suggest the latter: Schneider reveals little about the intellectual aims and conceptual stakes of *Dead House ur*. His discourse is full of factual descriptions of the tasks he has performed, the materials used, and accounts of the resulting spaces – leading Daniel Birnbaum to describe the artist's statements as merely "workman-like descriptions of dimensions, materials, and tools."[15] Apparently, Schneider can only talk about the labor involved, while the meaning of it all remains unarticulated.

BUSY IN THE STUDIO

When Ulrich Loock questioned Schneider about his "real motivations" in 1996 – the moment *House ur* entered the public arena for the

first time – the artist answered laconically: "there was nothing else I could do."[16] While this answer seems blunt at first, it hardly falls into an art historical vacuum. Schneider's reply brings to mind Bruce Nauman's description of his activities in 1971, when he stated that it is was "something to keep him busy."[17] Interestingly, in the years just prior to this, Nauman had produced a series of works that directly engaged with the studio both as a space and an art-historical trope.[18]

In the late 1960s, the young artist Bruce Nauman had sat in his studio and wondered about what it meant to be an artist, what he actually was supposed to do in his studio, and how these acts might in fact become meaningful: "If you see yourself as an artist and you function in a studio and you are not a painter, if you don't start out with some canvas, you do all kinds of things – you sit in a chair or pace around. And then the question goes back to what is art? And art is what an artist does, just sitting around in his studio."[19] This lucid insight resulted in a series of films in which Nauman recorded exactly this "sitting around in the studio": he danced and exercised on the perimeter of a square (*Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square (Square Dance)*, 1967–68); he bounced a ball between floor and ceiling (*Bouncing Two Balls Between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms*, 1967–68); and bounced himself in the corner of the room (*Bouncing in the Corner, No. 1*, 1968). He stamped around in the studio (*Stamping in the studio*, 1968); played a chord on his violin (*Violin tuned D E A D*, 1968); or enacted and mimicked with his own body a series of canonical artworks (*Wall Floor Positions*, 1968). Nauman thus overcame the anxiety that haunts every (modern) artist now and then: to know you are an artist, but to be faced with the sudden terror of not knowing what to do – the result of the inevitable event of being out of inspiration. One needs only to think of the desperation of Frenhofer, the protagonist of Balzac's *Le Chef d'oeuvre inconnu* (1832) or the sadness that marks Delacroix's *Michelangelo in his Studio* (1849–50). Nauman encountered a similar stupor – as we could call it – but sought refuge in precisely that space that granted him legitimacy as an artist, even before the institutional space of the museum. He first and foremost found solace in the very space believed to house the artistic imagination: the studio. Rather than isolating himself in the studio to find inspiration, he was inspired by the (framework of

the) studio itself.[20] He projected Duchamp's tautologies – art is what is shown in the museum – and Donald Judd's – "if someone says it's art then it's art" – onto the infrastructure and framework of his own artistic production.[21]

Nauman's studio works of the late 1960s culminated in 2001 in the video installation *Mapping the Studio* I (Fat Chance John Cage).[22] In the summer of 2000, Nauman had suffered from another existential crisis: "I was sitting around the studio being frustrated because I didn't have any new ideas, and I decided that you just have to work with what you've got."[23] This time the artist fixated not only on his own lethargic behavior, but rather on the huge number of mice which – due to a plague – had invaded and populated his studio in Galileo, New Mexico:

> What I had was this cat and the mice, and I happened to have a video camera in the studio that had infrared capability. So I set it up and turned it on at night and let it run when I wasn't there, just to see what I'd get. I have all this stuff lying around in my studio, leftovers from different projects and unfinished projects and notes. And I thought to myself, Why not make a map of the studio and its leftovers? Then I thought it might be interesting to let the animals, the cat and the mice, make the map of the studio.[24]

Nauman decided to film his studio for one hour each night, intermittently over a period of several months between July 2000 and February 2001. He set up an infrared camera successively at seven different locations in his studio, in order to "map" the space. He started the camera just before he left the studio and had it record during the night. The resulting 42 hours of tape, recorded over 42 nights, were then compiled into seven different projections, each six hours in length.

Due to the fact that the images were shot during a period of several months, the view changes a little every hour:

> Because I wasn't shooting every night, every hour the camera moves a tiny bit. The image changes a little bit every hour re-

> gardless of any action that's taking place. I was working in the studio during the day all the time, and I would unconsciously move things around. Maybe organize a few things – what do you do in a studio when you're supposedly not making art. So the areas that I was shooting tended to get cleaner or have fewer objects in them over the six hours. I thought that was kind of interesting.[25]

With *Mapping the Studio*, Nauman radically subverted the traditional genre of the self-portrait in the studio. We do not see the artist (or perhaps only for a split second, when, after starting the camera, he exits the studio). Nauman's "work" appears only in the negative, in the tiny jump of the image between two hours of tape. Although he was troubled by his lack of inspiration – the simple but dramatic fact that he did not know what to do – he did not sit still. He started to clean up and "organize" his studio – what else do you do when you are "supposedly not making art"?

Returning to Gregor Schneider's Dead *House ur*, we encounter a similar manifestation of the artist's efforts or "activities." With Schneider we are equally unable to locate the artist's actual "work," or to be more precise, the labor that has been or is being done by him. It is no coincidence that in the *House ur* in Rheydt, as well as in its reconstruction or replica in *Dead House ur* in Venice, the very space that is (publicly) designated as "the studio" appears to be *empty* (fig. 1). The actual "work" – when understood as activity – takes place at the imaginary point where the original house and its reconstruction overlap and concur. The work simply cannot be pinned down to one particular spot, let alone be discerned in the residual or interstitial spaces that Schneider has created. The intriguing realm between the actual house and its replica contains the traces and imprints of (the) work, but are – as Schneider has repeatedly stressed – not the work's actual content.[26]

Both Nauman and Schneider deconstruct the spatiotemporal framework of art production, as embodied in and represented by the studio. While Nauman maps the *temporal* interstice or the residual time of art-making – he records what happens "in the meantime" – Schneider explores the *spatial* interstice, the residual space

FIG. 3 Gregor Schneider, *u r 8, TOTAL ISOLIERTER TOTER RAUM*, soil, lead, glass wool, sound-absorbing material in the room, 2 wooden constructions, 1 door, Giesenkirchen, Germany 1989–91. © Gregor Schneider/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

of art-making; he explores the space in between. Both demonstrate that artistic production never fully coincides with the spatiotemporal regime of the studio: neither with the time that one spends in the studio, nor with the architectural space that the studio delimits and demarcates. Both the authentic moment and the original space of artistic practice cannot easily be pinned down. They can merely be reconstructed as the mirror images of the peripheral, deserted or dead moments and spaces within that practice. They only appear out of the negative. Whereas Nauman evokes the workplace by mapping what goes on in the studio *ad interim*, Schneider does so by continuously building around it. But, most notably, both convey that while since the advent of conceptual art – or since the so-called post-studio era – the space of the studio may have ritually been abolished, might have become vacant, it has never disappeared. The studio is a *condition* that pervades every question regarding the content and meaning of artistic production.

WORKAHOLICS

Despite their analogous approach, there remains a crucial difference between Schneider's and Nauman's use and understanding of the space and trope of the studio. Each of them exploits the studio as a means of dealing with the problem of "inspiration," yet in radically different ways. Comparable to Nauman, Schneider's continuous rebuilding of his studio serves as an answer to the crisis of the modern artist. Schneider, too, is haunted by the anxiety of what an artist is supposed to do in the studio, as, since Duchamp, it is no longer self-evident to either paint or sculpt:

> It's about a simple way of working that leads away from Painting, away from Sculpture and away from Space. [...] For a long time it looked as if one could not recognize what the work was – even in the house. It defied every reference to Sculpture, Image and Space.[27]

But Schneider refuses to accept the consequence that the post-medium condition has forced all artists into a fundamentally conceptual reflection on their practice.[28] Instead, he opts for radical action, for mere doing, for a laborious approach. His answer to the uncertainty of the modern artist – that is, not knowing what to do – consists simply of elevating "doing" to a higher form of thinking: "Doing is a form of thinking, and really very tangible. The work is visible, on a one-to-one scale. It can't be about simply coming up with concepts."[29] Schneider does not intellectualize his problem, but – in a Freudian sense – works it through: "The work doesn't exist in my head. I also regard doing as a higher form than thinking." His artistic practice is motivated by an obsessive work ethic, by a plain predilection for actual results: "We can't just do nothing, we are always doing something. That's why I don't believe that something is there when you haven't made it yet." But in the end, his activities merely epitomize his own urge to be busy, or the pure need to keep himself busy at all times: "My work is really about the fact that I am always starting work again." He is troubled by a compulsive urge to work and nearly neurotic need to build – and he knows it: "I am always making. I always have to be making things. That is my personal problem."[30]

Schneider conquers the conceptual doubt of the artist by submerging himself in mere doing: he drowns himself in his work. And precisely at this point it becomes fascinating and significant that Schneider's working environment is a house. His domestic building activities – the ongoing home improvements – are not in fact that exceptional. Many – mostly men – start to do odd jobs around the house precisely in order to kill time. Lots of people who do not know what to do during the weekend or on their holidays begin to tinker, to rebuild their garage, to paint their porch, to construct a garden house, to lay a terrace, or to redecorate the bedroom, to name but a few common domestic chores. A house both dictates and legitimates the work that is done to it.

In this respect, it is all too easy to read Schneider's Dead *House ur* – and his artistic practice in general – as the outcome of a personal trauma; it simply has too many affinities with the doings of a derailed do-it-youselfer or handyman. Dead *House ur* doubles the postmodern artistic lack of inspiration with a common male penchant for tinker-

ing. The true horror in Schneider's work is the menace of lethargy, the hazard of boredom. Schneider truly suffers from studio stupor. The incessant circular legitimation of his work – through the act of working itself on the very framework of the studio – points undeniably in this direction. Schneider is in dire need of Nauman's cynical lucidity. The latter consciously faces the purposelessness and uncertainty of being an artist and then lucidly exploits both syndromes as the foundation of his practice, ultimately making critical artworks out of them. Schneider, on the other hand, hides it with relentless exorcism. He kills time out of frantic self-preservation.

NOTES

1 Albert Camus, *Jonas ou l'artiste au travail* (1957) (Paris: Collection Folio, Gallimard, 2005), 61.

2 Gregor Schneider in Amine Haase, "Gregor Schneider: 'Man baut, was man nicht mehr kennen kann'," *Kunstforum-International* 156 (2001) 300: "Es gibt Leute, die mit Linien, Schrift und Worten handwerklich gut umgehen, und es gibt Leute, die bauen ein Haus."

3 Gregor Schneider [video], *House of Horror/Presented and Directed by Ben Lewis* (London: BBC/Hilversum: NPS, 2003).

4 See *Gregor Schneider, Arbeiten 1985–1994*, exh. cat. (Krefeld: Krefelder Kunstmuseen, 1995).

5 Gregor Schneider, "... Ich schmeisse nichts weg, ich mache immer weite ... Gregor Schneider und Ulrich Loock," in: *Gregor Schneider*, exh. cat. (Bern, Kunsthalle Bern, 1996). This original interview has been reprinted many times. I have here used the English translation, reprinted as "I never throw anything away, I just go on..." in: *Gregor Schneider* exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Charta/Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004), 35–68. Note the significant difference between the original German title of the interview and the English translation, whereby "weiter machen" is translated simply as "to go on," a literal translatation that misses the crucial connotation of *actual making* implied in "ich *mache* immer weiter."

6 Ibid., 100.

7 *ur* is written either with or without spaces (*u r*). For a definition of the term and the difference between *Haus ur* en *Totes Haus ur*, see ibid., 226.

8 Jens Hoffmann, "Gregor Schneider," *Flash Art* 216 (January-February 2001) 107; Daniel Birnbaum, "Before and After Architecture: Unterheydener Strasse 12, Rheydt," in: Udo Kittelmann and Gregor Schneider (eds.), *Totes Haus ur* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2001), 63–87; Ralph Rugoff, *Gregor Schneider's Museum of Home*, at www.

eyestorm.com (Accessed September 8 2012); Ulrich Loock, "Gregor Schneider. Junggesellenmaschine Haus ur," *Kunstforum-International* 142 (October-December 1998) 204: "Schneiders Arbeit gibt dem Unheimlichten einen Ort (keine Bannung, kein Exorzismus)."

9 Elisabeth Bronfen, "Chryptotopias. Secret Sites/Transmittable Traces," in: Kittelmann and Schneider 2001, 33–60.

10 For a concise reading of (anti-)domestic attitudes in modern art and architecture, I refer to Christopher Reed (ed.), *Not at Home. The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996).

11 Michael W. Cole and Mary Pardo (eds.), *Inventions of the Studio. Renaissance to Romanticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 35.

12 For an intricate reading of Moreau's building activities as a peculiar form of self-ingratiating and voluntaristic art historiography, I refer to the essay by Maarten Liefooghe in this volume.

13 Here I paraphrase the title of an article on Gregor Schneider by Renate Puhvogel, "Bouwen naar binnen. Het huis van Gregor Schneider," *Archis* 5 (1996) 66–70.

14 The most radical option is perhaps the demolition of the studio and its consequent resurrection on the site of intervention – Daniel Buren's credo "mon atelier est où je me trouve" being a good case in point. See Daniel Buren, "Fonction de l'atelier (1971)," in: Daniel Buren and Jean-Marc Poinsot (eds.), *Daniel Buren. Les Écrits (1965–1990)* (Bordeaux: CAPC Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, 1991), 204. For a critical reading of Buren's position vis-à-vis the studio, see Wouter Davidts, "'My Studio is the Place where I am (Working):' Daniel Buren," in: Wouter Davidts and Kim Paice (eds.), *The Fall of the Studio: Artists at Work* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2009), 63–83.

15 Birnbaum 2001, 146.

16 Schneider 2004, 35.

17 Bruce Nauman, "Interview with Elizabeth Béar & Willoughby Sharp," *Avalanche* 2 (Winter 1971) 31.

18 For an in-depth discussion of these early works, see the contribution by Eric de Bruyn in this volume, as well as MaryJo Marks, "Seeing through the Studio: Bruce Nauman," in: Davidts and Paice 2009, 93–118.

19 Bruce Nauman, as cited in Coosje van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1988), 14. During an interview with Ian Wallace and Russel Keziere, Nauman describes the challenge in similar terms: "That left me alone in the studio; this in turn raises the fundamental question of what an artist does when left alone in the studio. My conclusion was that I was an artist and I was in the studio, then whatever I was doing in the studio must be art," *Vanguard* 8/1 (February 1979) 18.

20 Charles Baudelaire, "L'Oeuvre et la vie de Delacroix," in: Claude Pichois (ed.), *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 761.

21 Donald Judd, as cited in Joseph Kosuth, *Art after Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 17.

22 The piece *Mapping the Studio* exists in several versions, dependent on the place

where it has been installed: *Mapping the Studio* I (Fat Chance John Cage), 2001, Dia Foundation, New York; *Mapping the Studio II with Color Shift, Flip, Flop & Flip/Flop (Fat Chance John Cage)*, 2001, Tate Modern, London; *Mapping the Studio* I (Fat Chance John Cage) All Action Edit, 2001, Friedrich Christian Flick Collection, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; *Mapping the Studio II with Color Shift, Flip, Flop & Flip/Flop (Fat Chance John Cage) All Action Edit*, 2001, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

23 Bruce Nauman, "A Thousand Words: Bruce Nauman Talks About 'Mapping the Studio'," *Artforum* (March 2002) 120–21.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Amine Haase, "Gregor Schneider: 'Man baut, was man nicht mehr kennen kann'," *Kunstforum-International* 156 (2001) 290.

27 Ibid., 298.

28 I am here indebted to Camiel van Winkel's statement that after conceptual art, all art has to come to terms with conceptualism as a generic condition for its production and reception; see Camiel van Winkel, *During the Exhibition the Gallery Will Be Closed. Contemporary Art and the Paradoxes of Conceptualism* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2012).

29 Ibid., 292.

30 Schneider 2004, 36.

CHAPTER 12

Staging the Studio: Enacting Artful Realities through Digital Photography

SARAH DE RIJCKE

INTRODUCTION

As part of a larger project on visual knowing around databases of images on the web,[1] this essay discusses results from fieldwork at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, the post-graduate academy for visual arts in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The Rijksakademie runs an esteemed two-year residency for 50 artists from all over the world. The following addresses the transformation of these artists' studios into exhibition spaces during the "RijksakademieOPEN," an annual event in November when the academy opens its doors to a larger audience. What do these transformations from studio to "white cube" entail? What do the artists put on display, and what do they hide from view? My contribution subsequently focuses on the photographic documentation of the Open Studios by artists and academy employees. What role does documentation play in the constitution of knowledge about artworks for the academy and the artists themselves? How does photography mediate this documentation process? Lastly, I will address the role of artists' websites as "spaces of display." What role do photographic representations of studios and artworks play for resident artists? Should the photographs they present online be seen as part of a web-based portfolio, as a PR-tool, or as an (perhaps incomplete) archive of finished work?

The fieldwork at the Rijksakademie was undertaken in 2009–10

and consisted of systematic participant observation; open-ended interviews with employees and artists; a detailed scrutiny of new initiatives around the artists' visual documentation practices and that of the academy; and an examination of official policy documents, archival material and funding applications relating to documentation and information management.

Conceptually, I draw on three bodies of work: new media studies, science and technology studies (STS), and empirical ontology. I use new media studies to analyze the co-existence of different frameworks of mediated interactions with images.[2] New media studies also offer an awareness of how "ways of knowing"[3] are intertwined with media storage and retrieval technologies.[4] STS enables an understanding of images as situated, embodied practice,[5] emphasizes the importance of treating a variety of actors symmetrically,[6] and highlights material and institutional aspects in the embedding of new forms of knowledge.[7] Finally, I draw on empirical ontological analyses to problematize the epistemological dominance of representation in capturing the complex empirical world.[8]

TRANSFORMING THE STUDIO

> The RijksakademieOPEN offers visitors a view on the future of art and a chance to look inside the 'artist laboratories' that are normally closed. Over 50 artists present new work in studios, technical workshops and project spaces.[9]

A telling statement on the Rijksakademie website, not least because of the way the academy stages the artists' studios as laboratories as inaccessible, almost sacred spaces in which to do research. This is a way of giving meaning to the studios, based on the premise that artists are researchers, who should be allowed to work in the privacy of their own labs for extended periods of uninterrupted time.[10]

The statement on the website is also intriguing because of the suggestion that at the RijksakademieOPEN event, visitors will get to see artistic production "in action." In practice, this is not really the case. Visitors do get to see the studios and the technical workshops, but

these spaces have undergone important transformations. As we will see, the result is much more polished than the metaphor of a visit to a lab suggests.

Brian O'Doherty captured some of the crucial differences between artists' studios on the one hand and gallery spaces on the other, labeling the former as an "agent of creation" and the latter as an "agent of transformation." He subsequently argued that it is "one of the primary tasks of the gallery [...] to separate the artist from the work and mobilize it for commerce."[11] Commodification is not the primary goal of the RijksakademieOPEN event, but the transformation of "sacred" lab into an exhibition space and the separation of artist from work were indeed described by a number of artists interviewed. One of the interesting aspects of open studios is that the move from "agent of creation" to "agent of transformation" does not entail a move *elsewhere*; in the case of open studios, the same space morphs from the one into the other. This offers a unique perspective on the transformation process. Artist A (a painter)[12] had the following to say on the topic:

> A: My interventions in this space have arisen from the idea that the space itself would be exhibited. But in the first instance I intervened to improve my workspace, or to change it in such a way that it would be easier to be here, and with the hope of making better work, or different work. [...] Because I have been painting for quite some time now, I felt that I had been dealing with it in a formalistic manner. I also think that the more you paint, the more you become aware of any formal peculiarities or typical problems involved in painting. [...] [At the start of the residency] I didn't really know how to continue. I had actually started painting and got stuck in the process, and then I started doing other things. And in particular, uhm ... to get closer ... to ... in one way or the other get closer to myself.
>
> Paintings ... they hang on a white wall, and then you look at them ... well ... in a very detached manner, and then you're able to judge whether or not the composition is solid, if the

colors work, but I found it all much too rational or too ... Well ... that you never really come close to the work, and that it always stays in your head.

SdR: As an artist, you mean?

A: Yes. What I have strived for is a situation, for the spectator but also for myself, a situation in which the space itself already hampers taking an objective or detached stance. So I literally painted everything, there was mess on the floor, the lights were not working properly so there was no formal white light, so I was really looking for a situation that was not that formal or objective, but more physical, that engages you physically.

SdR: So really with the idea of ... So what did you do first?

A: Well, at one point I simply started to paint those walls over there, yes, simply because uhm ... It also had to do with the fact that you find yourself in an Institute, in a room, and that it is subsequently uhm ... expected of you that you will produce something. To me it was a kind of statement, like ... I do not want it like this, I don't want to be in this ... I want to be in control, want to be able to define my own rules.

These interview excerpts point to some of the potential regulative interactions between the artist and the space of the studio. The artist described how the studio acted as a disciplining force, as a result of the space's embedding in the Rijksakademie. Simultaneously, the artist tried hard to "tame" the studio and to come to terms with the material and techniques at his disposal. Despite these efforts, some inconsistencies arose in the equilibrium of the "messy studio" when the artist started to stash away some tools that were spread around the room:

A: The moment you realize that other people will come to your studio and will see it, something happens that puts you

> at a remove from the work after all, and that turns you into a detached observer, and you start seeing things: Oh, these two things over here do not go well together. [...] I removed a lot; furniture, sculptures I couldn't exactly place yet ... And I was aware of it and tried to keep the ... to a minimum [...]. In hindsight, it may have been better if I hadn't removed anything at all.

One of the stated goals of the RijksakademieOPEN event, expressed in the quote at the beginning of this section, was to open the doors to the artistic lab. In theory it should be possible for artists to do just that: leave everything as it is and keep working. But the interview material indicates that even artists who were acutely aware of the potential undesirable effects of the transformation from studio to "cube" could do nothing but go along with it. Though the trope of the autonomous artist-researcher suggests otherwise, some of the elements that influence whether (and when) a studio is ready for display may be beyond an artist's control.

CAPTURING THE CUBES

Around the yearly open studios, resident artists at the Rijksakademie intervene in interesting ways in the transformation from studio to exhibition space. But, as we have seen, other factors may also come into play, such as the disciplining and enabling forces of the technique used (painting, installations), the spatial particularities of the studio, and the institutional requirements to produce work and participate in the Open Studios. Neither artists nor academy employees take the RijksakademieOPEN event lightly; much is at stake. The Open Studios-weekend attracts a large international crowd. In addition, and perhaps even more importantly, special previews are held for sponsors, experts, dealers, academic relations and the press in the three days prior to the weekend. During the Open Studios, visitors have access to all studios and technical workshops. They are also encouraged to take a look at the portfolios of resident artists in one of the project spaces. This room is furnished with computers that provide access to relevant

photographic documentation on every artist. The documentation is put together by the academy's documentation center.

For a number of reasons, photographic documentation is crucial for the academy and resident artists.[13] First of all, the photographs have an *epistemic* function: they are said to consolidate and preserve what we know about works of art. Second, several interested parties (e.g. the academy, the artists, dealers) make use of these images for the *valorization* of artworks. The images are also crucial in trajectories of *obtaining funding*, both on the part of the academy (demonstrating the ability to find talent) and on the part of the artists (demonstrating their talent, for instance, when applying for fellowships). In addition, the images are also used as part of artists' portfolios in order to obtain *access* to cultural institutions like the Rijksakademie or interested galleries. In both of the two latter instances, the images may serve as *legitimization* for work done in a certain period.

As part of the fieldwork, a month was spent at the Rijksakademie documentation center, where the daily routines of the staff documentalists were observed. I also followed the freelance photographer who is hired each year around the time of the RijksakademieOPEN event to make overviews of the studios, and take photographs of individual works. These photos are subsequently uploaded to the institute's collection database at the documentation center. The photographer visits all the studios over a period of two weeks. During my fieldwork, he started the day before the first round of previews, a hectic day for all involved. Based on previous experience, he knew it would be a good idea to wait as long as possible before taking the first shots. This would increase the chance that the works were finished and the exhibition spaces straightened out. He began a day before the kick-off, since it is much easier to take the photographs without an audience present. Together with employees at the documentation center, the photographer made a list of studios to visit first. They based their decisions on the staff's estimates as to which artists would have completed their preparations. Upon entering an artist's studio, the photographer checked with the artist whether or not he had access. However, on several occasions the artists involved were not present, and were also not answering their phones. In principle, the artists themselves had the final say as to when their studios were ready for documentation.

But in several instances the photographer made the decision, after he had failed to get in touch with the artist. Artist B's studio, for example, was photographed in his absence:

> B: The fact is that these pictures are taken by that photographer, and that they automatically end up at the documentation center, and that that documentation is publicly available, and that no selection is made by them or by the artist himself. [...] An example of how this works is the typical situation around the Open Studios, that the pictures [...] are put in portfolios in folders on desktops of the computers in the project space, and that it was up to us to let them know if you wanted to diverge from this routine practice. [...] In my case these pictures were not very good representations of the paintings, because they were studio overviews, and that is not what I wanted to show. The folder also contained material that I used for the initial applications rounds to gain access to the Rijksakademie ... I would have preferred to have left out half of these pictures. So ... this is something I need to be more alert to.

All artists interviewed had very particular ideas about the way their work should (and should not) be documented. Surprisingly, most of them seemed unaware of the fact that the photographer was hired to document their studios and the works on display. Artist C:

> C: I don't recall receiving an e-mail about it.
>
> SdR: It took you by surprise. So what did you think about it?
>
> C: Uhm ... well, if it is just for the Rijks, then it's OK of course, and yes, I was not really done yet, but in the past I once had ... I mean, if you know that it is for internal use, and that you can look at the result at a later stage ... But I once experienced ... Do you know, websites like Trendbeheer, they had my work on it ... I was making an installation, and three days before the opening of the exhibition, when the work was not finished at all, they showed all kinds of things that I really rather would

not have shown at all, there were photos on the website, really very annoying, that's really incredibly rude, that someone had put them online without consulting me first.

In interviews, resident artists made implicit or explicit distinctions between the Rijksakademie documentation, for "internal" use, and their own documentation. This distinction was partly brought about by the fact that they were used to managing their own documentation. In the words of one of the artists: "Taking care of the proper presentation of your work is simply a routine part of any professional artistic practice." That the academy also likes to keep track of what is shown at the RijksakademieOPEN event came as a surprise to many. Artist C explicitly mentioned that he does not appreciate it when photographs of his work circulate in the public domain without his approval. During the fieldwork, the Rijksakademie management began to consider making fundamental changes to the institute's website. As part of the plans, they weighed the possibility of making much more of the current work done at the institute available online (for example, by displaying photographs of collaborations at the technical workshops). In the interview, I asked artist C for his opinion. He was not enthusiastic: he did not like the idea of presenting semi-finished works of art. He felt that in opening up the working process to public scrutiny, there was a risk of giving the wrong impression about the work. Artist D also indicated that her work was not about showing the process, and she therefore failed to see the relevance:

D: I don't think it is about the process of making a work, like, I never show, and never have the need to show, for instance images of how the studio ... I mean, I have the studio, but it is not about how a work is being made.

According to the artists interviewed, the process of making a work was irrelevant for the subsequent attribution of meaning. Insight into the process could even be potentially harmful. Ideally, the "eye of the beholder" was only to be granted access after the artist had hidden irrelevant aspects of the production process, and after he or she had made the decision that the work was really finished.

At first glance, it seems obvious that the exhibition and documentation of art implies a particular moment in time, a moment one can pinpoint, a moment when all relevant decisions have been made about what an artist may or may not want to show, and when what takes center stage can be photographically recorded. In practice, presentation and documentation do not necessarily coincide (for chronological reasons, but also owing to personal variations in how people go about the documentation; the particularities of the medium; and the type of artwork that is documented). Documentation can be characterized as a signification process that is related to, but also distinct from, the act of display. It contributes in important ways to making meaning about artistic work. Taking recent discussions about photographic representation and documentation of art as a starting point,[14] let us now analyze the role played by photography as a signifying technological medium at the Rijksakademie.

Based on the fieldwork at the academy's documentation center and the interviews with the freelance photographer, it became clear that both put forth a promise of a "catch-all" photographic archive, which posits the artworks as referents. At the documentation center, photographs were treated as indexical records, as valuable "raw data" collected in the "field" by the photographer.[15] These practices are largely consistent with a modernist inclination to sustain archives with ideational techniques that tend to be somewhat traditional.[16] The photographic conventions that the photographer drew on were also in line with this predisposition. To varying degrees, he used the trope of mechanical objectivity, a certain type of photorealism tied to an optical photography:[17] As came to the fore in the interviews, his photographs were to be as neutral as possible; essential parts of the artwork should be in focus, and the representation should as a whole be properly framed. What he deemed to be just below the threshold of acceptable interventions boiled down to "only what was already possible in the darkroom." The way he mobilized photography fits the standard epistemic trope around photorealism – intentional selection, mediation, and (post-) processing should be avoided as much as possible.

Interestingly, what the photographer saw as minimally invasive was sometimes experienced quite differently by the artists whose studios he documented. In the previous section, I briefly pointed to potential misunderstandings that could arise over decisions as to whether or not a particular artwork or studio set-up were "done" and "documentable." Below, I will consider more comprehensively a discussion between the freelance photographer and one of the resident artists over how to properly document her studio and her works of art.

A few weeks after the RijksakademieOPEN event, I came across artist E in the hallway of the academy. During the open studios I had accompanied the photographer while he was making overviews of her studio and installations (figs. 1 and 2). I asked her what she thought about the documentation commissioned by the academy. Among other things, she told me that she did not trust the photographer to properly capture her installation of large swimming-pool objects, photographs, and other smaller objects on the wall. At a later stage, during an interview, I reminded her of this statement and asked if she cared to clarify:

> E: Well, I probably said that I didn't trust him and it sounds a bit harsh, but I know the work, and also, like, things that I think are important about it. The photographer doesn't want to do post-production; he uses a tripod that is about 1 meter high and a wide-angle lens, so that the room doesn't really get distorted. But the effect is that the sculptures look even bigger, heavier, and everything else in the space is reduced to something in the background. For me, the sculptures were like obstacles to get to things on the wall [...] I ended up asking him to do photos from a normal perspective – eye-height – and offered to do post-production, and give them back to the documentation center. I still have to check if he sent them to the documentation center. [See figs. 3 and 4 for the photographer's studio overviews at the documentation center. They are taken with the tripod and not at eye level]. And of course I also took shots myself [with an analogue camera].

FIGS. 1 AND 2
iPhone snapshots taken by the author during fieldwork on 3 December 2009. The photographer was working on artist E's studio overviews, photographs of an installation including swimming pool fragments, photographs and other small objects on the wall.

FIGS. 3 AND 4 Studio overviews (artist E) taken by the freelance photographer hired by the Rijksakademie on 3 December 2009. Though the artist asked for other pictures to be included in the academy's documentation center archive, the photographs above are the only two studio overviews in her portfolio.

The two "practices of representation" diverged radically. While the photographer was mostly worried about lens- and spatial distortion, turning representation into a technical issue, the artist was more concerned with meaning-distortion.

Who was right? At first sight it may seem obvious that the position of the artist should prevail over that of the photographer. In the end, she is the creator of the works. But by asking who made the best representations of the studio, we assume that in principle there is only one way to arrive at "perfect" photographic representations. As it turns out, however, quite different photographic practices can coexist, despite major differences in bestowing meaning on the work of art and the role of photography in that signification process.

An alternative way to understand the discussion between artist and photographer takes seriously the *constitutive, formative powers of photography*.[18] In the examples discussed above, we saw complex interactions and moments of disagreement, and attempts at managing this complexity through dialogue or avoidance. It is very important that we acknowledge this management, because it "opens up possibilities for considering contrasting ways it might be achieved."[19] This approach does not assume that there is a studio "out there," waiting to be captured in a photograph. Instead, it assumes that photographs "intervene in an always already organized phenomenon by establishing a measure against which the phenomenon is articulated further."[20] We already saw that artists and photographer alike differ in how they experience the exhibition spaces and the works on display, and in how they subsequently articulate these experiences photographically. These differences matter. Their positions, resulting from distinctive experience, interests and skills, profoundly structure the next steps taken in the documentation process. After the transformation of private studio to public exhibition space, the studios are once again opened up for signification in the act of documenting. The studio acts as a site for the production of meaning, where the agency of the artist, the photographer, the works of art, and the photographic equipment quite literally come together to produce something different.[21]

What role do photographs play in the signification process that occurs when studios and artworks are documented? As we have seen, it is not productive to treat them as transparent windows or mirrors. Instead, the photographs are "condensations or traces[2] of multiple practices of engagement,"[22] in which certain elements are highlighted and others downplayed – differences that are subsequently further articulated. To wit, the performative dynamics involved in visual documentation do not stop at documenting studio overviews or "finished work." Visual documentation becomes increasingly multilayered, due in part to the ubiquity of digital images, as well as to new modes of visual mediation as a result of their embedding on the web.

The interviews routinely addressed the question of the resident artists' websites. Although not all artists have their own website, most of them use their sites as additional, web-based portfolios. These websites are heavily edited spaces of display, which show their work and those aspects about themselves they feel best represent what they stand for as artists (hiding the other parts from view).

Artists F and G both told me they had opted for a website with a homepage that effectively served as an overview of all the work on the site. In artist F's case, the homepage displayed small photographic icons of all the works on his website.

> F: I find this encouraging in a sense, that if you see all the work at one glance, together, that it works. That, apparently, there are themes I've been pursuing throughout the years, and that keep coming back.

Artist G chose a similar approach, though she executed it differently. All works could be accessed via a list of names of all the works on the site.

> G: It took a while before I found a form that I liked. Other artists' websites often have a lot of layers. I prefer to see everything at once, so that you don't have to go through all the information.

She arranged the work alphabetically rather than chronologically, and visitors only get to see text not images. Once a name is clicked, a new window opens, showing the photograph, the title of the work, the technique and the year. The choice of an alphabetical order was partly due to the fact that she thinks of her work as a "circular" process.

> G: Some works are not important to me right now, but they might be again, but right now they're not so close to my heart. [...] [W]hen the work is done, in the sense of like ... not being still in the making, then ... that's ... like ... then that's when this question of documentation comes up, and that, in a way, is when this process starts of, like, linking things to other works, so that's the big process.
>
> SdR: So that's really a moment in time, it's a decision about when something is finished?
>
> G: Yeah.
>
> SdR: So when you get back to things, it doesn't ...
>
> G: I think there are maybe two processes, one, the process of making the work; two, the process of working on the more ... like figuring out what my work is about [...] and then the more distant works start to come together, [...] a process of linking, a process that doesn't really end, [...] like when I add a new work the whole process changes.

These exchanges reveal that websites can be hybrid spaces: akin to a gallery when they act as spaces of display, and akin to a studio when what artists put on them alters future production. For most of the artists interviewed, their websites served the obvious purpose of acting as an archive or portfolio. But putting new documentation online also helped them discover patterns in their oeuvre, a process that sometimes also fed back into studio work. Effectively, these images become forms of engagement and of (material, technological, social) embedding that shape the access to and production of knowledge

about art.[23] They do not only "hide making" and "show creation," but also have the potential to be "creative" themselves.

CONCLUSION

In this essay I have analyzed some of the particularities of the complex relationships between artistic creation and forms of documentation and display. I have done so through the lens of fieldwork done at the Rijksakademie for the visual arts in Amsterdam in 2009–10. The fieldwork started approximately four weeks before the annual RijksakademieOPEN event. On the basis of observations and interviews, I first discussed how artists and Rijksakademie staff (and in particular the photographer hired by the academy) themselves invest in these practices of presentation and documentation. By focusing on the transformations the artists' studios underwent in preparation for the Open Studios, I demonstrated that it is not only up to the artist to decide what to display and what to hide from view. The particular artistic technique, the space of the studio, the institutional context, and the audience's gaze are all important stimulating or restraining conditions in this transformation process.

Second, I focused on the photographic documentation of the studios presented at the RijksakademieOPEN event by the academy and the artists themselves. Documentation presumes that the transition discussed above, from studio to exhibition space, has taken place, and that the artworks are ready for display. But, as we have seen, documentation and display are not necessarily congruent. In fact, the practices of artistic documentation analyzed were *themselves* generative of meaning, and photography played a large role in this signification process. This signals an additional layer of modes of disguise and display in which the notion of fixed, mechanically obtained representations of the studio may have little purchase.

Third, I discussed the ways in which the process of artistic meaning-making does not end after the studios and artwork(s) have been documented. More than serving a merely reductive function, the photographs were themselves new resources and materials; they facilitated new ways of ordering and arranging knowledge about artworks.

For example, when they were displayed on websites – online spaces of display that renewed the process of hiding making and showing creation. The photographs on artists' websites were not only the main material presented, actively mediating between past, present and future works. The same image, when brought into relation with other elements on the website or other information on the web in general, could – by virtue of their relationality – simultaneously stimulate innovation *and* be part of an archive of "finished" works.

Acknowledging that photographs play a role in "symbolic mediation"[24] entails a departure from a clear-cut dichotomy between representation-of-object and object-represented (in this case a studio, an installation, a work of art). Like the artists, artistic techniques, academy infrastructure and the space of the studio, these photographs actively shape what gets obscured and what gets exposed, what becomes figure and what ground, what turns into the typical and into the accidental. In short, they have ontological consequences that deserve serious scholarly attention.

NOTES

1 The project was called *Network Realism* and was pursued together with Anne Beaulieu from 2009 to 2011. More information can be found on www.networkrealism.wordpress.com.

2 Lisa Cartwright, *Screening The Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Jose van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (Paolo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2007); Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

3 John V. Pickstone, *Ways of Knowing: A New History of Science, Technology, and Medicine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

4 See Maaike Bleeker, "What If This Were an Archive?," *Notation/RTRSRCH* 2/2 (2010) 3–5. Mark B.N. Hansen, *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with Digital Media* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006); Ann-Sophie Lehmann, "Showing Making: On Visual Documentation and Creative Practice," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 5/1 (2012) 9–24; Brian Rotman, *Becoming Beside Ourselves: The Alphabet, Ghosts, and Distributed Human Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

5 Cf. Morana Alac and Edwin Hutchins, "I See What You Are Saying: Action as Cognition in fMRI Brain Mapping Practice," *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 4/3 (2004)

629–661; Michael Lynch and Steve Woolgar (eds.), *Representation in Scientific Practice* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 1990).

6 Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch (eds.), *How Users Matter: The Co-Construction of Users and Technology* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 2003).

7 Anne Beaulieu, Sarah de Rijcke and Bas van Heur, "Authority and Expertise in New Sites of Knowledge Production," in: Paul Wouters et al. (eds.), *Virtual Knowledge* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 2012).

8 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Donna J. Haraway, *Modest Witness@Second Millenium. FemaleMan Meets OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (London: Routledge, 1997); Annemarie Mol, *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Casper Bruun Jensen and Kjetil Rodje, *Deleuzian Intersections: Science, Technology, Anthropology* (Oxford/New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Helen Verran, *Science and an African Logic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

9 Http://www.rijksakademie.nl/NL/agenda/RijksakademieOPEN-4 (Accessed August 28 2102). Translation by the author.

10 "Spaces obtain their meaning from social agreements, confirmed by usage, which can change. Implicit in each studio is an ideology derived from that agreement. So we can 'read' studios as texts that are as revelatory in their way as artworks themselves." Brian O'Doherty, *Studio and Cube: On The Relationship Between Where Art Is Made and Where Art Is Displayed* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), 7.

11 Ibid., 5–6.

12 The interview data have been made anonymous for the purpose of confidentiality.

13 This chapter focuses on visual documentation of studio overviews, installations, sculptures, paintings, drawings, photographs and videos. See the special issue of *Notation/RTRSRCH* 2 (2010), 2, for analyses of the particular dynamics around documenting performing arts.

14 A. Dekker, G. Wijers, and V. van Saaze, "The Art of Documentation," *Notation/RTRSRCH* 2/2 (2010), 22–27; Joanna Zylinska, "On Bad Archives, Unruly Snappers and Liquid Photographs," *Photographies* 3/2 (2010) 139–53.

15 Claire Waterton, "Experimenting with the Archive: STS-ers As Analysts and Co-constructors of Databases and Other Archival Forms," *Science, Technology & Human Values* 35/5 (September 1, 2010) 645–676.

16 Nigel Thrift, "Space," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23/2–3 (2006) 142. Although the expertise is available at the Institute and the academy is at the moment in the middle of changing existing routines, it requires time and resources to experiment with other types of documentation that are not always available.

17 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

18 See Aud Sissel Hoel, "Thinking 'difference' Differently: Cassirer Versus Derrida on Symbolic Mediation," *Synthese* 179/1 (2011) 75–91.

19 Verran 2001, 114.

20 Hoel 2011, 88.
21 Barad 2007, 67.
22 Ibid., 53.
23 Sarah de Rijcke and Anne Beaulieu, "Image as Interface: Consequences for Users of Museum Knowledge," *Library Trends* 59/4 (2011) 663–685; Sarah de Rijcke and Anne Beaulieu, "Networked Neuroscience: Brain Scans and Visual Knowing at the Intersection of Atlases and Databases," in: Catelijne Coopmans et al. (eds.), *New Representation in Scientific Practice* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, forthcoming).
24 Hoel 2011, 75.

EPILOGUE

"Good Art Theory Must Smell of the Studio"

ANN-SOPHIE LEHMANN

"The bottom line is that artists work where they can, and how they can," writes the former curator of the MOMA, Robert Storr, in the anthology *The Studio Reader* (2010). "There is nothing mysterious about this, since artists must be pragmatic even when they pretend not to be or do the best they can to disguise themselves or conceal their process."[1] In other words: however much artists may hide or display, deconstruct or stage, leave behind or return to the studio, turn its presence into a symbol of status[2] or its absence into a symbol of critical engagement, or its temporary availability into a nomadic strategy,[3] there will always be a place where artists work. To provide an all-encompassing definition of the studio, we might therefore state that studio spaces emerge wherever the artist chooses to unfold her practice.[4] Moving beyond the description, categorization and analysis of these extremely hybrid and dynamic spaces themselves – the successful strategy adopted by many recent publications on the studio[5] – this definition allows us to concentrate on the work of art-making that goes on within.

This epilogue aims to answer some of the questions which arise when studying this work. Why, we may ask, is the motif of "hiding making/showing creation" so incredibly robust? Can we overcome the "mind vs. hand" dichotomy that still dominates most studies of artistic practice? And where might we find useful approaches outside the field of art history to study this practice?

THE MOTIF OF SHOWING CREATION – FETISH OR EPISTEMIC PROJECT?

If the general definition of the studio is that it is a place generated by the artist at work, a general definition of this work itself could be that it comprises the interaction between maker, materials, tools, ideas and concepts.[6] To trace the representations of these interactions has been the key aim of this book. Not only have the case studies unraveled the ongoing dialectic between showing and hiding the work that actually goes on inside the studio, they have also shown that artists as disparate as William Turner and Theo van Doesburg have employed surprisingly continuous strategies when it comes to representing and "depresenting" their practices in various visual media. "Depresentation," a term coined in media studies, relates to the way in which pictures, although they show a process, can at the same time serve to hide other elements of this very same process.[7] Notwithstanding the radical changes in the societal position of the modern artist, the self-referential practices of hiding and showing have roots that go back all the way to antiquity – as Sandra Kisters points out in the introduction to Part I. But what, we may ask, are the reasons for the apparent stability of the hiding/showing paradigm and the robustness of the visual genres pertaining to it? In other words, why do artists want to draw attention to their working practice in the first place?

One possible explanation is socio-economic in nature. The necessity for artists to live off their work has compelled them to put their talent on display or, alternatively, to draw attention to it by withdrawing it from view – like the magician, who, by showing a bit of his trick makes the result appear all the more mysterious and desirable. In art history and media studies, the genres pertaining to this paradigm – such as the studio painting or the "making-of" features that accompany the release of movies (and increasingly also that of contemporary artworks) – have accordingly been described as "celebrity" or "parasite" genres, which do nothing but serve the purpose of promoting the "real" artwork and its maker.[8] This slightly disparaging interpretation does not explain why the commodity of process, which artists offer in order to promote the result, is in such permanent demand. If "showing creation" had merely a promotional value,

it would long have succumbed to the rules of advertising, which is all about being different and better than before. The display of practice, however, remains rather constant, as we have seen throughout this book, apparently never boring the viewer.

Rather than being an economically-driven bonus feature, we may ask if the work of art does not always already, and therefore intrinsically, embody the mechanism of hiding and showing process: as the finished work swallows up the process that generated it, it makes us want to unravel or rewind the work in order to understand the process that gave rise to it.[9] If that is indeed the case, it may explain the public's relentless fascination with artistic process and the stability of the hiding/showing paradigm: looking at art instills a desire to know about its making.

While this hypothesis may explain the robustness of the phenomenon at stake here, it does not fully explain the fascination with creation *per se*. One very popular (and also very problematic) explanation derives from Freud, as well as Aristotle, and deserves a closer look. Artistic creation, it argues, commences in the mind, where the idea for a work of art is formed. Witnessing creation is therefore essentially impossible, as we cannot see or experience it. The representation of artistic practice therefore substitutes for this non-representable "inner" act of conception the outward act of execution. This substitution has also been described as *fetishization*, because pictures that show making supposedly disguise the fact that actual creation (the one that supposedly takes place in the mind) remains out of reach.[10] A fetish functions by taking the place of the thing we want but cannot have, making us desire the fetish instead. But because the fetish is a replacement, it can only ever satisfy us superficially, thereby making the fetish (and our desire for the real thing it disguises) endlessly persist. This Freudian *perpetuum mobile* seems to fit the dialectic of showing/hiding very well, and could provide a convincing explanation for the unceasing interest in the representation of process.

The fundamental flaw in this interpretation, however, is that it rests entirely on the assumption that creation does in fact take place in the mind of the artist, and is therefore inaccessible to our experience. We owe this assumption to a hierarchical reading of *hylomorphism*, the Aristotelian doctrine that form (*morphe*) and matter (*hyle*)

come together in the formation of physical objects.[11] Initially devised as a balanced model, its inherent dualism invited a hierarchical structuring, which quickly came to place form above matter, theory above practice, art above craft, line above color, male above female, and so forth. Consequently, in art theory the assumption that ideas impregnate passive matter has been dominant for centuries.[12] Challenging the rigidity of this doctrine, those engaged in artistic practice would certainly argue that creation is a reciprocal phenomenon, rather than a one-way street from mind to hand. During a tour of Tony Cragg's impressive studio in the hills near Wuppertal, I witnessed a convincing demonstration of this principle.[13] After Cragg had guided our group of art historians through the various workshops where his sculptures were assembled, dressed, sanded and stored, one of the participants asked the artist where he got the initial *ideas* from, implying that this could certainly not occur in his messy workplace. Turning to the wall, Cragg exclaimed: "I hate ideas! If I have one, I bang my head against the wall," and mimed the action. This comical rebuttal to a query about the locus of "real" creation fits well with Cragg's understanding of the creative process, as he has described it in various interviews. According to Cragg, his ideas do not occur prior to material creation, but are themselves a kind of material, like wood, stone or plastic – or the artist himself for that matter: "As soon as I look at any material, I combine my thoughts with that material, and so I'm changed because I become influenced by everything that's around me."[14]

While the influence of materials on art-making has certainly been acknowledged in art theory, the notion that creation commences as an immaterial idea continues to be "[...] the foil against which both the work of art and the image of the artist are defined" – as Rachel Esner writes in her introduction to the second part of this volume.[15] To discard this notion allows us to see representations that hide and show the work of the artist in a different light. Rather than fetishes standing in for a mystical event out of reach, such representations can also be viewed as essential to the understanding and appreciation of artistic creation. As such, they are part of a larger epistemic project that gathers knowledge about what art is and what it is about. However, the dominance of hylomorphism has left art history with

few theoretical tools to develop this project. While the discipline is rich with theories about aesthetics, style, meaning, context, display, perception, and so forth, it lacks a consistent theory of *making*.

KUNSTWOLLEN AND *KUNSTWERDEN*

It is this lack and the tendency of art theory to produce rather "odorless" interpretations of art that Rudolf Arnheim was criticizing when he wrote that "Good art theory must smell of the studio, although its language should differ from the household talk of painters and sculptors."[16] The assumption that the messiness of production is not worthy of theoretical interpretation has a long tradition, but became part and parcel of the discipline when German idealist philosophy described artistic creation as a process in which material substance was to be overcome, effaced or annihilated in order to achieve the purest possible expression of thought.[17] In the effort to turn art history from an applied science rooted in the museum or the archaeological dig into an intellectual and academic discipline, art historians continued to suppress art's material nature well into the twentieth century. A telling example is Alois Riegl's criticism of Gottfried Semper, whose emphasis on artist's materials and techniques had led his followers, Riegl argued, to neglect the creative input of human beings in the process of making art. To counter this development, Riegl introduced the concept of *Kunstwollen* (will to art), which presented form, style and meaning as expressions of the intellect.[18] *Kunstwollen* was wholeheartedly embraced by modernism, as it allowed art to be seen as a conceptual practice freed from the necessity of skill and the doctrine of the Academy. Erwin Panofsky, who, as Pierre Bourdieu phrased it "represses the question of artistic production" in favor of an artwork's internal structure as based on a "transcendent code," put the finishing touches to the "dematerialization" of art history, which would henceforth "read" artworks as texts rather than approaching them as material artifacts.[19] In recent years, the scientific analysis of the material conditions of works of art within technical art history has developed into a strong and interdisciplinary division of art history and could stimulate a (re-)turn to a more process-based approach for

the discipline on the whole.[20] But technical art history does not engage much with art theory (and vice versa), and mutual skepticism often imposes the divide between idea and matter yet again.

The current academic interest in the studio promises an imminent change and offers the opportunity to reconcile theory with practice as part of a larger "material turn" in the humanities.[21] In fact, investigations of the studio are so manifold these days that a new field called *studio studies* seems to be emerging – this book might be considered part of it. So far, studies of the studio have yielded many concrete and conceptual insights, yet they still lack a solid methodological framework. This might be achieved by consulting neighboring disciplines that already employ theories of practice, a few examples of which will be discussed briefly below. There is also a need to reinvestigate art-theoretical concepts that argue in favor of art's materiality but that have been marginalized in the canon of art theoretical writings, such as John Dewey's *Art as Experience* and Henri Focillon's *La Vie des Formes* (both published in 1934) or Gottfried Semper, who built a solid base for a material-based art theory in the middle of the nineteenth century. In the introduction to his seminal *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts* (1860–63), Semper described the work of art "as a result of all the factors involved in its creation," and expected to uncover art's general, generative principles through detailed observations of *Kunstwerden* (becoming of art).[22] As Mari Hvattum has recently summarized: "For Semper, the kind of making that takes place in art, craft, and architecture [...] is a mode of history never directly available for observation, yet it exercises a continuous effect on our thinking and making."[23] By reconstructing making, then, we may grasp the meaning of art and culture. If contemporary art theory is to start smelling of the studio, the concept of *Kunstwerden* is extremely useful – although it should by no means replace that of *Kunstwollen*. A short definition of contemporary artistic practice by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei can explain why. Weiwei starts out by describing his making in rather Rieglian terms as "coming up with an idea," – a conceptual approach that "frees the artist from having to master particular skills" – but then continues to foreground processes, materials and technologies as art's main constituents.[24] Weiwei's production note demonstrates that the dualism of idea and matter is difficult, if not

impossible, to discard. It also shows that the hierarchical positioning of the two has in some instances indeed been rejected in favor of perceiving thinking and making as two sides of the same coin, and therefore completely inseparable.

INGREDIENTS FOR "STUDIO STUDIES"

A fair number of disciplines have developed approaches toward the study of creative processes that may be useful for art history. Media studies has recently carved out the field of *production studies*.[25] Production studies aims at unraveling the complex networks of human actors and technologies as well as cultural, social and economic factors that constitute a movie or television show and impact their meaning and aesthetic appeal. To this end, production studies combines ethnographic fieldwork and participatory observation with archival studies and sociological methodologies such as Actor-Network Theory,[26] an approach that can readily be applied to artistic production as well. When Caroline A. Jones, for example, writes that Olafur Eliasson's studio "incorporates wildly disparate forms of expertise: digital parametric draftsmen, lighting technicians, architects, an archivist, a documentarian, babysitters," production studies could help map the relations between these diverse actors and their impact on the work of art.[27] A large but more traditionally structured studio like that of Tony Cragg, mentioned above, would form an excellent case for production studies as well, laying bare the relation between the steering role of the artist and the input of his assistants, or determining the elements active in Cragg's sculptures' "becoming," from bronze and wood all the way down to the dangerous dust particles generated by the sawing of plastic or MDF. Moreover, production studies are extremely sensitive to the self-reflective presentation of labor and technology in media, and include the aesthetics of making in their methodological framework.[28]

Important developments with regard to a methodological and historical study of artistic practice are currently also taking place in craft studies and design studies.[29] Interestingly, both these fields have been developed in an effort to escape the marginalized position that their

objects have traditionally been assigned in art history. Apart from sophisticated analysis of creative practices, craft studies has also taken on the historiographical project of collecting relevant writings that address issues of creativity, more often than not demonstrating the close relation between the making of craft objects and the making of art objects.[30]

Investigations into the more general nature of creativity have recently been undertaken in anthropology and archaeology.[31] A concept that could be particularly useful to studio studies is that of "material engagement." The archaeologist Lambros Malafouris explains how this notion can help us to understand what actually happens during making, and how creative agency is distributed between the mind and hand, tools and materials, knowledge and intuition: "[...] while agency and intentionality may not be properties of things, they are not properties of humans either: they are the properties of material engagement, that is, of the grey zone where brain, body and culture conflate."[32]

Art historians, as this volume has demonstrated, are well equipped to enter this "grey zone" and to study material engagement through the careful analysis of art objects, textual, and visual sources. A more interdisciplinary approach to making can enrich such historical and scientific reconstruction as well as heuristic interpretation of making, and help art history to develop meaningful studio studies. It could also help move the field beyond the "usual suspects" we encounter in studies of the studio, as we tend to investigate those artists who have deliberately reflected on their practice and created what William T. J. Mitchell has termed "metapictures."[33] Metapictures, according to Mitchell, reflect on the nature of pictures and provide a "second-order discourse." While all pictures, from a cartoon to a Renaissance painting, can be metapictures, there is a class of them that seem to "encapsulate an entire episteme, a theory of knowledge," which Mitchell has called "hypericons."[34] Velazquez's *Las Meninas*; Kersting's *Caspar David Friedrich in his Studio*; Courbet's *The Painter's Studio*; Nauman's studio films; Antonioni's *Blow Up*; and Paul McCarthy's *The Box* would all qualify as hypericons, and art history keeps revisiting them in order to find out how artists think about making. The continuous and often very rewarding return to the hypericon, how-

ever, can also make us forget that *all* artists work, and that *all* practice can be studied. Once we realize this, the epistemology of art-making can be further developed and with it, an art theory that really smells of the studio.

NOTES

1 Robert Starr, "A Room of One's Own, a Mind of One's Own," in: Mary Jane Jacob and Michelle Grabner (eds.), *The Studio Reader. On the Space of the Artist* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 49–62, here 62.

2 The German photographers Thomas Ruff and Andreas Gursky had their studios built by the prestigious architects Herzog & de Meuron; see Philip Ursprung, "I Make my Picture on the Surface: Visiting Thomas Ruff in Düsseldorf," in: Philip Ursprung (ed.), *Herzog & de Meuron. Natural History* (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2005), 157–165.

3 Peter J. Schneemann, "Das Atelier in der Fremde," in: Michael Diers and Monika Wagner (eds.), *Topos Atelier. Werkstatt und Wissensform* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010), 175–190.

4 See for a comparable argument Lars Bang Larsen, "Cosmology of Composites: Mixing and Making in Dave Hullfish Bailey," in: Emily Pethick (ed.), *What's Left* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2008) n.p.; Petra Lange-Berndt, "Besetzen, Abwandern, Auflösen...," in: Diers and Wagner 2010, 75–92.

5 See the introduction to this volume.

6 Ann-Sophie Lehmann, "Showing Making – On Visual Documentation and Creative Practice," *Journal of Modern Craft* 1/5 (2012) 9–24, esp. 10.

7 Marianne van den Boomen uses the term "depresentation" to explain how desktop icons function: while they perform an action for us when clicked, they also hide "the procedural and material complexity" of that very action; see Idem, "Interfacing by Iconic Metaphors," *Configurations* 16 (2008) 33–55, esp. 40.

8 Wolfgang Ullrich, "Art as the Sociology of Art," in: Martina Weinhart and Max Hollein (eds.), *The Making of Art*, exh. cat. Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2009), 98–101; Vinzenz Hediger, "Spaß an harter Arbeit. Der Making of-Film," in Vinzenz Hediger and Patrick Vonderau (eds.), *Demnächst in ihrem Kino: Grundlagen der Filmwerbung und Filmvermarktung,* (Marburg: Schüren Verlag, 2005), 332–341.

9 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency – An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13.

10 Philip Hayward, "Echoes and Reflections: The Representation of Representation," in: Philip Hayward (ed.), *Picture This: Media Representations of Visual Art and Artists* (London: John Libbey, 1988), 1–26.

11 Timothy Ingold most convincingly makes this argument in "Materials against Mate-

riality," *Archeological Dialogues* 14/1 (2007) 1–16. See also Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (London: Allen Lane, 2008).

12 See Monika Wagner, *Das Material der Kunst. Eine andere Geschichte der Moderne*, (München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 2001).

13 This studio visit was part of the conference "Mapping the Studio" at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in January 2010, organized by Martin Schieder and Guido Reuter.

14 See also Tony Cragg, *In and Out of Material* (Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2006) 15.

15 See here p. 122.

16 Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 4. The book was first published in 1954.

17 Wagner 2001.

18 Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen. Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (Berlin: Siemens 1893, repr. Mittenwald: Mäander, 1977). Riegl's criticism was directed at those followers of Semper who exclusively focused on materials ("Post-Semperisten," vi-vii). For a well-informed discussion of the concept of *Kunstwollen* and its impact on modernist art theory see Paul van den Akker, *Looking for Lines. Theories on the Essence of Art and the Problem for Mannerism* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), ch. 12.

19 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1.

20 Erma Hermens, "Technical Art History: The Synergy of Art, Conservation and Science," in: Matthew Rampley *et al*. (eds.), *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe: Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 151–165.

21 See for instance Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce (eds.), *Material Powers. Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn* (London/New York: Routledge, 2010).

22 Gottfried Semper, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts* (Berlin 1860–1863), introduction and translation by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Michael Robinson (Los Angeles: Getty Publications Programs, 2004), 77. Semper 1860–1863, p. vi. I have recently argued that Riegl's criticism should not be read as a dismissal but as an extension of the term *Kunstwerden*; see Ann-Sophie Lehmann, "The Matter of the Medium. Some Tools for an Art-Theoretical Interpretation of Materials," in: Christy Anderson, Anne Dunlop and Pamela H. Smith (eds.), *The Matter of Art: Materials, Technologies, Meanings, c. 1250–1650* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

23 Mari Hvattum, *Gottfried Semper and the Problem of Historicism* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 182.

24 Caroline A. Jones, "The Server/User Mode," *Artforum* (October 2007) 315–325, here 324.

25 Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks and John Thornton Caldwell (eds.), *Production Studies. Cultural Studies of Media Industries* (New York/London: Routledge, 2009).

26 On the use of ANT for art history and media studies, see *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, Schwerpunkt Akteur-Netzwerk-Theorie*, vol. 57/1 (2012).

27 Cited in Jones 2007, 322.
28 John T. Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).
29 See, for instance, Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2008); Ilpo Koskinen *et al*., *Research Through Practice: From the Lab, Field, and Showroom* (Waltham, MA: Morgan Kaufmann, 2011). See also the academic journals *The Journal of Modern Craft* (Berg Publishers), *Craft Research* (Intellect), *Design Studies* (Elzevier) and *The Journal for Design Research* (Inderscience).
30 Glenn Adamson (ed.), *The Craft Reader* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2010).
31 Timothy Ingold and Elisabeth Hallem (eds.), *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation* (London: Berg Publishers, 2007); Timothy Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013).
32 See Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris (eds.), *Material Agency. Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach* (New York: Springer, 2008), 22.
33 William T.J. Mitchell, "Metapictures," in: William T.J. Mitchell, *Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (London/Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 35–82.
34 Ibid., 49.

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