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Erased, Spoiled, Obliterated, and Defiled: Young Artists' transition to Maturity through Marking and Un-marking

APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor:

____
Linda Dalrymple Henderson

____
Richard Shiff

Erased, Spoiled, Obliterated, and Defiled: Young Artists' transition to Maturity through Marking and Un-marking

by

Asa William Hursh, BFA; MBA

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 Abstract

Erased, Spoiled, Obliterated, and Defiled: Young Artists' transition to Maturity through Marking and Un-marking

Asa William Hursh, M.A.

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Supervisor: Linda Dalrymple Henderson

At certain moments in the creative development of an artist, experimentation leads to creative acts that on their face can appear negative because they are the actions of a young artist responding to the establishment. This thesis is an investigation of such works: a spoiled print, an erased drawing, a set of artist proofs stained by paint, and a painting wiped away with turpentine. Despite these negations, each of these works was pivotal to the career of its respective artist, and they were immediately cited by their makers as works of consequence. The four selected art works did not influence one another and the circumstances surrounding their creation are also distinct. Each work and artist developed independently from one another, in distinct spaces and times. However, there are notable parallels among the works. Each was created as the artist transitioned into the mature phase of his career. Additionally, each of the works is a layering of distinct images. The sub-images relate to an external artist, style, or dogma, and the superimposed image relates to the artist's own work and his mature style. Further, each of

the works is an indexical record of the artist's activity. Each emphasizes the artist's hand in the making of the super-image's mark and even goes so far as to highlight the performative nature of the mark making. The marks of the super-image are so pronounced as the subject of each work and the performative element so emphasized that the artist himself is drawn into the work's subject matter. In short, I investigate whether these images function as a commentary, a critique, a declaration, or simply as part of a process and a dialogue between the artist and his artistic environment.

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Introduction

This thesis is an investigation of a spoiled print, an erased drawing, a set of artist proofs stained by paint, and a painting wiped away with turpentine. Despite these negations, each of these works was pivotal to the careers of their respective artists, and they were immediately cited by their makers as works of consequence. James Gillray ran multiple editions of his seemingly canceled plate, including a run in special deluxe ink. This was also the first plate on which he signed his given name. Robert Rauschenberg erased a Willem de Kooning drawing, but then set it within a gold frame and kept it enshrined on his bedroom wall for decades.[1] Hermann Nitsch marked his return to the fine arts by tarnishing a series of artist's proofs that he had completed four years earlier, just prior to his renouncement of the art form. And Gerhard Richter placed his effaced painting as the first work in his oeuvre catalog.

The four selected works did not influence one another, and the circumstances surrounding their creation are also distinct. Each work and artist developed independently from one another. However, the pieces do form parallels to each other. They were each created at transition points in their maker's evolution. Specifically, each was created as the artist transitioned into the mature phase of their careers. Additionally, each of the works is a layering of distinct images. The sub-image relates to an external artist, style, or

[1] See Pace Gallery's Arne Glimcher interviewed by ARTINFO and Streeter Phillips, discussing Rauschenberg's "Erased de Kooning Drawing"; undated interview, likely recorded in 2010, accessed March 27, 2011, http://sea.blouinartinfo.com/video/paces-arne-glimcher-on-robert-rauschenbergs-erased-de-kooning-drawing-1953

dogma, and the superimposed image relates to the artist's own work and mature, developed style. Further, each of the works is an indexical record of the artist's activity. Each emphasizes the artist's hand in the making of the super-image's mark and even goes so far as to highlight the performative nature of the mark making. The marks of the super-image are so pronounced as the subject of each work and the performative element so emphasized that the artist himself is drawn into the work's subject matter.

Yet, with each work it is unclear if it functions as a commentary, a critique, a declaration, or simply as part of a process and a dialogue between the artist and his artistic environment. What is the subject? Who is the subject? Is it meant to scandalize the audience? Is it the work of a brash young artist eager to tear down the world and replace it with images of his own making?

My interest in these transitional acts of negation began with a research paper for Art Historical Methods that investigated Gillray's 1781 print, *Sketched by Humphrey Spoil'd by Gillray* (fig. 1). The work has been classified as a self-satire as well as a serious engraving, but has never resulted in a great deal of scholarship. My own analysis concluded that the work was a reflection of Gillray's struggle to suppress his very identifiable mark making during a time in British printmaking history when the most successful engravers suppressed their own hand in order to diligently reproduce the work of another. The imagery and text within the print are filled with puns and gags, though it was made at a point in his career when he really had no audience outside of his immediate circle of friends. The canceling gesture and its provocation appear modernist in tone or even go so far as to raise the question of universality. In other words, is this

esoteric print an outlier or, if it is instead grouped with other artists' works, is it instead a reflection of something more universal? This study attempts to answer that question by juxtaposing the Gillray print with three twentieth-century works that are also outliers—or "one offs"—within their artist's body of work. When collected together, do these objects offer fresh insights into the works and their makers?

The examination of Gillray's *Sketched by Humphrey, Spolied by Gillray* is the first chapter of this thesis. From there I look at the work of the three mid-century artists: Robert Rauschenberg's *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, Hermann Nitsch's series of *Hundred Guilder Prints*, and Gerhard Richter's *Table*. In chapter two I place the works in the context of the artists' careers, and in chapter three I carefully examine each piece by breaking apart the layered images. When taken apart in this way each work can be analyzed and compared to the others in an effort to provide a fresh perspective and a framework in which to approach the other objects.

Chapter One: Spoiled by Gillray

Today, James Gillray is best known for his satirical prints and caricatures, work that is highly regarded and thoroughly researched. Yet early in his career, Gillray focused earnestly on serious engravings. In 1781, at the age of twenty-five, Gillray engraved *Sketched by Humphrey Spoil'd by Gillray*, which conforms to neither satirical nor serious conventions and instead uses characteristics and composition types of both styles.[2] Thus, while his other works can be immediately placed within these models and interpreted accordingly, *Sketched/Spoiled* cannot.

The first scholarly account of *Sketched/Spoiled* is included in Thomas Wright's *The Works of James Gillray, the Caricaturist, with the History of his Life and Times*, published in 1874. A catalogue raisonné, it provides an exhaustive account of Gillray's art and places the subjects of his caricatures in the context of Georgian England. *Sketched/Spoiled,* however, does not make its way into the main text of the book. It is included in the appendices, classified under the heading "Works, not belonging to the province of caricature or satire, executed by James Gillray as an engraver."[3] Other than in a review of Wright's work in *The London and Westminster Review*, the identification of *Sketched/Spoiled* as a serious engraving has not been repeated.[4]

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[2] Hereafter I will refer to *Sketched by Humphrey Spoil'd by Gillray* in shorthand as *Sketched/Spoiled*

[3] Thomas Wright, *The Works of James Gillray, the Caricaturist: With the History of his Life and Times* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1873), 372.

[4] Unattributed, *The London Quarterly Review*, American Edition, 136 (January – April 1874): 243.

In 1935, while cataloguing the satirical print and drawing collection of the British Museum, Mary Dorothy George revisited the work, coming to the alternative conclusion that it is intended as satire. She writes, "A satire by Gillray on his own work as an engraver. A portrait of William Lamb, afterwards Lord Melbourne (b. 15 Mar, 1779). The plate has been defaced by scratches."[5] George does not elaborate on her conclusions, nor does she justify her reasoning. In the most recent discussion of *Sketched/Spoiled*, Draper Hill agrees with George that the work displays Gillray's dissatisfaction with his own skill as a serious engraver, but he does not specifically label the print satirical.[6]

This range of opinion demonstrates the complexity involved in determining Gillray's intention in this work. I will argue here that the print is indeed intended as a satire, but that the intended target is not limited to the artist himself. Rather, the print is meant to lampoon hierarchical British printmaking culture, famed and successful contemporary engravers, and the British aristocracy. Put simply, I believe that Gillray is employing the visual mechanics of serious engraving in order to lampoon it.

Sketched by Humphrey Spoil'd by Gillray

Sketched by Humphrey Spoil'd by Gillray can be divided into three components: a stipple reproductive image of a young boy, title and text, and etched gestural lines.

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[5] Mary Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires: Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in The British Museum* (London: The Museum, 1935), 537.

[6] Draper Hill, *Mr. Gillray, The Caricaturist, A Biography* (London: Phaidon Press, 1965), 26.

Thomas Wright was the first to identify the portrait of the young boy as William Lamb, the son of a well-known aristocratic family in London.[7] The commission of child portraiture was common and fashionable. The dress of the child and pose of the figure are typical of the period. All of these characteristics are perhaps best exemplified by a second portrait featuring William Lamb still as a child and accompanied by his two brothers. Francesco Bartolozzi engraved *The Affectionate Brothers* after a drawing by Sir Joshua Reynolds (fig. 2). There is no doubt that this is a serious engraving, because there is no dispute about its attribution, and neither Bartolozzi nor Reynolds ever engaged in satire. In *The Affectionate Brothers*, William is seen at right standing with his left foot upon a rock. He stands in ready support of his younger brother Frederick, who appears here to be about the same age as William when depicted in *Sketched/Spoiled*. The similarity between the dress and manner of Frederick in Bartolozzi's print and Gillray's depiction of William demonstrates the apparent serious nature of this portion of Gillray's print.

Additionally, the construction of both Bartolozzi's print and Gillray's portrait are similar: each consists of a series of small dots and sometimes small dashes, made by the artist directly puncturing the copper plate with his burin. This technique is known primarily as stipple engraving, but is also referred to as crayon- or chalk-manner because of its ability to imitate those mediums, particularly when printed in raw sienna, which

[7] Wright, *The Works of James Gillray*, 372.

softens the constructed image.[8] According to Timothy Clayton, the technique "dominated" British printmaking in the late-1770s.[9]

The title and text included in *Sketched/Spoiled* more closely resemble Gillray's later non-political satires that focus on society and fashion. In these, the title is in script similar in size to the other text, rather than larger block capital letters, a format he often used for his political subjects. In *Sketched/Spoiled* the title and text can be distinguished by engraving method. The apparent title: "Sketched by Humphrey Spoil'd by Gillray" is written in stipple technique, whereas the additional text is etched. It reads:

"Dedicated to all Lovers of your bold, Masterly Touches,

& Publish'd Nov. 1st 1781 by J. Gillray, to shew the

bad effect of Cobbling & Altering.

'Fool that I was thus to Cobble my Shoe.'

Sold by R. Wilkinson, No. 58 Cornhill, London 1 November 1781."

Within the title and text, Gillray references names that would have been recognizable to contemporaries well versed in the London printmaking scene. First, we assume that Humphrey is William Humphrey, a London print maker and publisher. He worked primarily with mezzotint portraits, but also produced some satire himself. He was Gillray's principal publisher until 1780 and remained his friend long after.[10] And "by

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[8] For a thorough discussion of late 18th century British print culture and the dominance of the stipple technique see Timothy Clayton, *The English Print 1688-1802* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[9] Clayton, *The English Print,* 216.

[10] Hill*, The Caricaturist*, 18-19.

1789 Gillray was working almost exclusively for William's sister Hannah . . . the most important satirical printseller in London."[11]

Gillray's second reference is to Robert Wilkinson who published non-satirical works exclusively. Gillray began work for him as a letter engraver, writing text at the bottom of other artists' plates.[12] Gillray went on to publish a number of prints with Wilkinson between 1781 and 1794, including several large historical stipple engravings after Northcote.[13] Of all the Gillray prints published by Wilkinson, only *Sketched/Spoiled* is satirical. On November 1, 1781, the date recorded within *Sketched/Spoiled*, Wilkinson published a second Gillray plate, *The Return* (fig. 3). Like *The Affectionate Brothers*, this print, demonstrates the fashionableness of child portraiture. Although this is not a portrait of a particular individual, the young girl is typical of the British aristocratic class. We can assume that the return, referred to in the title, was from afar, as she wears a riding dress and holds a riding whip in her right hand.[14] *The Return* is also engraved in the stipple manner and exemplifies the type of work published by Wilkinson. Additionally, *Sketched/Spoiled* is the only work that links Gillray, Humphrey, and Wilkinson.

The third component of *Sketched/Spoiled* is the mass of wiry gestural etched lines that are scrawled across both the image and the text. All accounts of the image agree that these marks indicate the artist's dissatisfaction with the image. Wright notes, "the

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[11] Clayton, *The English Print*, 216.

[12] Clayton, *The English Print*, 305n68

[13] Clayton, *The English Print*, 223.

[14] See curator's notes at the British Museum collection website, item **registration number:** 1851,0901.1345 accessed Nov 2, 2010: http://www.britishmuseum.org/.

engraver has scratched a tangle of wiry lines across the work, giving it the effect of a drawing that was unsatisfactory to the artist, who had, in a fit of impatience, destroyed the work by scribbling across it with his pen."[15] However, the "fit of impatience" is complicated by the fact that the plate would have had to be re-prepared for etching before the artist could release his destructive urge. This is the plate's second stage etching. The etched portion of the text was completed before these wiry gestural lines. We can be sure of this because the British Museum has, in their collection, an impression of this work without these wiry negating lines, and the etched text is already complete (fig. 4). The establishment of a timeline of mark making is important in attempting to uncover the artist's intention. However, Gillray declares his dissatisfaction with the image even before the first trip to the etching bath. In the stippled text of the title the artist had already declared the print "Spoil'd." Then in the additional etched lines of text he refers to himself as a "fool" and his effects as "bad." The latter addition of wiry markings only underscores this already established disapproval. Thus, at every point of production, stipple engraving and both etching phases, we find commentary by the artist on the work itself. This commentary disrupts the original reading by Wright: that the print is serious.

The methodic destruction and critique of the image discredits the assertion that this is merely a demonstration of an artist upset with his own production technique. The plate was not scratched or marked out in order to identify it as not worthy of printing and publication. The one surviving impression of the print without these markings functions

[15] Wright, *The Works of James Gillray,* 372.

more as a printing proof. There are multiple surviving impressions of the "completed" image. The British Museum has two impressions of *Sketched/Spoiled* which include the wiry scrawling lines, and both are printed in black ink (figs. 5 & 6). The "completed" impression in the Blanton Museum of Art's collection is printed in DeLuxe ink, which is raw sienna in color and distinguishes this impression as a special series run intended specifically for print collectors.[16] Thus, not only are there additional impressions of the "completed" plate, but there are also at least two printing runs marked with the intention of selling. This ought to establish a portion of the artist's intent. He felt it necessary to broadcast his dissatisfaction with this image and to provide some commentary. So far, what not been determined is the focus of the artist's dissatisfaction and satire.

Self-Critique

The reading of the print as a self-critique of talent may hold some truth, but is at least an incomplete and problematic account. This reading clearly stems from the text of the image: "Spoil'd by Gillray," "Fool that I was," and "to shew the bad effects," as well as from the wiry negating lines. However, two main problems complicate this interpretation.

First, Gillray had honest aspirations of becoming a serious reproductive engraver. He received between two to three years of formal training at the Royal Academy,

[16] Jonathan Bober, Senior Curator of European Art at the Blanton Museum of Art, identified this impression's ink as DeLuxe, October 20, 2010.

beginning in 1778. Hill writes, "There is no doubt that Gillray took his role as a stipple engraver earnestly. In skill as well as industry he was at least the equal of many who were able to ask vast sums for their reproductions of paintings. This was a thriving business; artists of reputation could safely expect more profit from their engravings than from the sale of their originals. Good engravers were at a premium."[17] Although Gillray's career began with him switching back and forth between satire and engraving, beginning in 1783 Gillray published almost no satirical prints for two and half years.[18]

Gillray's earnestness as an engraver is best demonstrated through his personal letters regarding his 1789 portrait engraving of Prime Minister William Pitt, which was entered into competition to become the official state portrait. Gillray's entry, *The Right Honorable William Pitt*, was not received well, not even by his publisher Samuel William Fores (fig. 7).[19] There is a debate as to whether or not the print was an accurate likeness. Gillray's opinion is expressed in a letter to Fores, "[I] am convinced that my likeness is a striking one therefore, I will not alter an Iota for any Mans Opinion of Earth."[20] The German journal *London und Paris* provides an outsider's account: "Because Gillray captured [Pitt's] features exactly, reproducing the cold darkness of his features, a more

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[17] Hill, *The Caricaturist*, 27.

[18] Katherine W. Hart, "Gillray in Context," *James Gillray: Prints by the Eighteenth-Century Master of Caricature* (Hanover, NH: Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, 1994), 53.

[19] Diana Donald & Christine Banerji, eds. *Gillray Observed: The Earliest Account of his Caricatures in London und Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 31-35.

[20] Direct transcription of text, grammar has not been corrected. A letter from Gillray to the plate's publisher Samuel Fores, undated postmarked letter, printed in Donald & Banerji, *Gillray Observed*, 260-265.

flattering portrait was demanded."[21] Fores either withdrew the plate from the competition or it was rejected outright, in favor of a portrait produced by John Keyes Sherwin after Thomas Gainsborough (fig. 8).[22] The harsh criticism Gillray received from his own publisher and broader rejection exposed his "habitual sense of humiliation, his anxiety and wounded sensibilities."[23] The demonstration of raw emotions by an artist struggling for success and recognition, who is confident in his own talents, is very different than the self-critical cynicism proposed by George and Hill.

The second complicating problem to the self-satire theory is that early in Gillray's career he did not sign or similarly mark the vast majority of his works.[24] In George's British Museum catalogue volume that spans the years 1771-1783, she writes, "With one exception (No. 5912 [*Sketched/Spoiled*]) all the prints here catalogued as by Gillray are anonymous or pseudonymous, and while some of the initials or names used by him may indicate those who supplied him with ideas or sketches, others seem due to a peculiar sensitiveness or obscure sense of humor, possibly, of course, to engagements with printsellers."[25] Gillray's dismissal of identifying signature was not uncommon practice: most political satires and caricatures of the time were published anonymously.[26]

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[21] Donald & Banerji, *Gillray Observed*, 31.

[22] Hill, *The Caricaturist*, 32-33.

[23] Donald & Banerji, *Gillray Observed*, 35.

[24] Hill, *The Caricaturist*, 18.

[25] George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, xxxvi.

[26] Amelia F. Rauser, *Caricature Unmasked : Irony, Authenticity, and Individualism in Eighteenth-Century English Prints* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 97.

However, Gillray's anonymity carried over to many of his serious engravings as well. In *The Return* for example, released by Wilkinson concurrently with *Sketched/Spoiled*, Gillray signs the print: "J. Kent." In 1781, neither Gillray nor Humphrey were major players in the London print scene. In fact Gillray was virtually unknown at the time. So, there would likely have been a limited, or more accurately, a non-existent market for a spoiled Gillray print or a satire on his lack of talent.

Satire

Although *Sketched/Spoiled* is formally unconventional, thematically it does relate to Gillray's other satires, particularly in its satire of aristocratic fashion. This was a common practice for many English satirists during the 1770s and is best exemplified by the image of the macaroni (fig. 9). The macaroni slur was first used to describe wealthy young men who traveled to Rome and returned with a transformed taste in food, fashion, and culture. But the slur quickly expanded to anyone who indulged in overly extravagant fashions, characterized as effeminate and inauthentic.[27]

An early etching by Gillray has similarities to the macaroni image. *Female Curiosity*, published in 1778 by William Humphrey, displays a rather bizarre sense of humor, yet there's no doubt that Gillray is mocking an obtuse and exaggerated fashion style (fig. 10).[28] This brazen satire boarders on the pornographic. The figure positioning

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[27] Rauser, *Caricature Unmasked,* 58.

[28] Richard Godfrey, *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* (London: Tate Pub, 2001), 52.

the absurd hairpiece on her backside is identified by historian Richard Godfrey as a harlot.[29] Her giggling maidservant holds a mirror in place for the woman to admire her coifed backside. And her audience recoils. A cat in the lower right arches it back and hisses at this monstrosity, and a dog at left hides his head within the woman's discarded corset.

Another common theme for Gillray's satires was the appropriation of compositions, styles, figures, and details from the best known painters of the day, including Joshua Reynolds, Henry Fuseli, Benjamin West, and Thomas Williamson.[30] Gillray's motivation for adopting these artists' compositions and conventions in large part stems from the usefulness of placing contemporary personalities into already symbolically rich settings. However, as Katherine Hart notes, Gillray was also intent on "cannibaliz[ing] contemporary artistic trends," she adds that, "he rarely failed to debunk a single heroic stereotype, moralizing posture, or pious gesture."[31]

An illustration of Gillray's artistic appropriation is his 1787 etching *La Belle Assemblée*, which borrows heavily from Joshua Reynolds' 1765 painting *Lady Sarah Bunbury Sacrificing to the Graces* (figs. 11 & 12). To understand Gillray's appropriation, it is first useful to understand Reynolds' commissioned portrait.[32] In the portrait of Lady

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[29] Godfrey, *The Art of Caricature*, 52.

[30] Hart, *Master of Caricature*, 11. Hart provides several specific examples of Gillray directly appropriating broadly recognizable imagery.

[31] Hart, *Master of Caricature*, 9.

[32] Malcolm Warner, "The Sources and Meaning of Reynolds's "Lady Sarah Bunbury Sacrificing to the Graces." *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 15, no 1 (1989), pp. 6-19, 82.

Bunbury, Reynolds robes the figure in classically inspired dress and places her within a classical architectural setting. Lady Bunbury, well known for her beauty, had previously attracted the attention of King George III when she was just fifteen years old. Nothing came of that interest, however, and she later married Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, by whom this portrait was commissioned. In this painting, Lady Bunbury pours an offering to the Three Graces into a smoking tripod. The Graces appear as a statue directly above, and they seem to come to life, offering the Lady a wreath as a symbol of friendship and trust. In turn, Lady Bunbury's pose mimics that of the central Grace, and just as the Graces appear somewhere between life and classical eternity, the Lady's coloring on her robe fades below her mid-section to give her a certain statuesque or marble tone.

Gillray's appropriation, *La Belle Assemblée*, adopts a similar setting. The Three Graces appear here as a bas relief on a wall, behind five well known "painted ladies of fashion," each providing an offering to the Alter of Love.[33] Each Lady is, however, caricatured and mocked; for example, Lady Archer "brings a lamb as an offering, a contrast it appears, to her own temper."[34] Compared to Lady Bunbury, these women are not idealized, and they each clearly lack grace—each of their face's scowl. There is no metaphysical communication occurring in Gillray's print and no chance that there ever will be.

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[33] Godfrey, *The Art of Caricature*, 210.

[34] R. H. Evans and Thomas Wright. *Historical & Descriptive Account of the Caricatures of James Gillray: Comprising a Political and Humorous History of the Latter Part of the Reign of George the Thrid* (New York: B. Blom, 1968), 373.

La Belle Assemblée, like *Female Curiosity*, is a critique of fashion and aristocrat culture. But by appropriating Reynolds it is also a direct attack on the stylistic conventions that he advocated. Reynolds, founder of the Royal Academy and director during Gillray's attendance, argued for a neoclassicism known as the Grand Manner. Over the course of fifteen annual lectures, titled the *Discourses*, he advocated for a universal beauty, stating, "the whole of beauty and grandeur of the art consists, in my opinion, in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind."[35] Gillray directly confronts this notion in *La Belle Assemblée*. The women in this work represent the vain fashionable posturing of the day, they are stripped of idealized form, and, at the same time, their classical setting is transformed and reveals itself as just another passing vogue. The classical form loses its link to the metaphysical and is revealed to be trite, banal, and an almost political convention.

Gillray's satires often highlight the absurdity of artistic conventions. Biographer Draper Hill notes that Gillray "mocked Reynolds' grand manner, the tableau histories of West, and the nightmares of Fuseli."[36] The Grand Manner and the classical ideal are the antithesis of caricature, which is bold, accosting, fresh, exciting, and current. For caricature, "excess is the watchword, not the restraint of classicism; abbreviation, not

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[35] Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses* (London: Penguin, 1992), 106.

[36] Hill, *The Caricaturist*, 3.

careful finish; physical imperfection, not graceful form; and distortion, not controlled and idealized forms."[37]

Sketched/Spoiled can in part be regarded as an attack on the stipple technique—which is a convention of fashion, as well as of art. The technique was primarily used for decorative prints, or so-called furniture prints, and bought largely by women for display in the home, rather than by the connoisseur for a collection.[38] Historian Richard Godfrey describes the stipple engraving's intended purpose as providing a tasteful incident on a wall, and not arousing any stimulating or uninvited connotations.[39] Thus, the subject matter for these prints was often portraiture or familiar neoclassical scenes. By 1781 the market for stipple engravings was booming in Britain; even Parisian print publishers were copying British engravings or importing them directly from London.[40] The Royal Academy had multiple ties to this booming market. Besdies Reynolds' link to neoclassicism, the most prominent stipple engraver was Francesco Bartolozzi, an instructor of Gillray's.[41] Bartolozzi often worked with Reynolds, for example; the previously mentioned print *The Affectionate Brothers* was a collaboration between the two.

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[37] Ronald Paulson, *Representations of Revolution, 1789-1820* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 182.

[38] Clayton, *The English Print*, 246.

[39] Richard Godfrey, *Printmaking in Britain: A General History from Its Beginnings to the Present Day* (New York: New York University, 1978), 55.

[40] Clayton, *The English Print*, 274-275.

[41] Godfrey, *Printmaking in Britain*, 54.

The portraiture of *Sketched/Spoiled* allows for critique of the aristocratic class. A fashionable portrait of a particular child draws attention more to who would have commissioned the work than to who the sitter is. The young boy's mother, Lady Melbourne, and her salon were renowned and widely considered as one of the most "recherché" houses "in all the fashionable world."[42] In a biography of William Lamb, who would grow up to become a Prime Minister of England, historian Leslie Mitchell writes that "by birth, [Lamb] was at the centre of everything of interest in literature, politics, and the intellect."[43] We do not know whether the stipple portrait began as an actual commissioned portrait or not, but we ought to be suspicious. We know of the family's demonstrated willingness to commission portraits by the most highly regarded and expensive talents of the day, such as Bartolozzi and Reynolds. Humphrey and Gillray, by contrast, were unknown at the time. Symbolically, Gillray's stippled portrait presents an image that would have immediately been a pinnacle of child portraiture, simply due to the commissioning family.

Lady Melbourne and her son were not without controversy. William Lamb's paternal legitimacy was widely and immediately questioned. In fact, it seems that there was little doubt among the gentry of the time that William's father was not Viscount Melbourne, but Earl Egremont.[44] Contemporary Whig morality did not condemn

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[42] L. G. Mitchell, *Lord Melbourne, 1779-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 7.

[43] Mitchell, *Lord Melbourne*, 7.

[44] See both: Mitchell, *Lord Melbourne*, 14-7 & Philip Ziegler, *Melbourne: A Biography of William Lamb and Viscount Melbourne* (London: Knopf, 1976), 13-16.

adultery, as marriage was seen more as a joint venture between families than as a romantic relationship, and Lady Melbourne had already provided her husband with a male heir.[45] This raises a British double standard of morality, determined and differentiated by class structure. Gillray would have been keenly aware of these differences. He had been raised in a very poor Moravian sect in Chelsea. And morality continued to be central to his life while at the Royal Academy, where printmaking students, in particular, were instructed to continue in the moralizing tradition of William Hogarth. According to Draper Hill, "Young artists streamed from the [Royal Academy] ordained to instruct, although most soon followed the vastly more rewarding path of portraiture."[46] This is not to say that Gillray's print is necessarily didactic. Gillray frequently lampooned aristocrat hypocrisy and detached morality. The word "spoil'd" in the title of *Sketched/Spoiled* can be read as ironic, referencing moral corruption. Because a person can become spoiled and lose good or effective qualities with over-indulgence or as a result of undue lenience. Gillray is joking here about spoiling the spoiled.

In other sections of the print's text, it is difficult to decipher the artist's intended meaning. The line "to shew the bad effect of Cobbling & Altering" and the quotation, "Fool that I was, thus to Cobble my Shoe," could have multiple meanings and points of contemporary reference. Gillray frequently used ironic word play in his texts, relying on ambiguity and shifting contexts. This was often a source of his humor. His quotation has not yet been attributed. This may be for several reasons. First, Gillray was not fastidious

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[45] Mitchell, *Lord Melbourne*, 4-5.

[46] Hill, *The Caricaturist*, 3.

at transposing quotes. And second, Gillray collected quotes from a vast array of sources, including esoteric or unrecorded sources, like newspapers, rumors, or political speeches.[47] Without evidence to support a definitive claim, any interpretation of the artist's use of the word "cobbling" is primarily conjecture.

That said, one potential explanation of the print's quotation is the adage: "Let the cobbler stick to his last."[48] The saying is attributed to the Greek painter Apelles and is included in Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia.* The story goes that the painter Apelles took the advice of a cobbler on the depiction of a shoe. But when the cobbler, feeling full of himself, extended his advice to the human form, he was rebuffed by Apelles and told to stick to his last. The last is a wood or metal foot form on which cobblers craft and mend shoes. Essentially the adage means: stick to what you know. In this context, Gillray's claim, "Fool that I was, thus to Cobble my Shoe," would thus be read as Gillray extending himself outside of the realm of his expertise. This is likely the reason for the print being interpreted as Gillray critiquing his own efforts as an engraver. As previously stated, this reading is not without merit, but it is significantly complicated by other factors and is likely only a portion of the desired meaning. This quotation, like the print, and many others by Gillray, was likely meant to allow multiple readings.

For example, another possible explanation for Gillray's use of "cobbling," is a reference to cobbling together something from multiple parts—as in a pastiche. In this

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[47] Hart, *Master of Caricature*, 10.

[48] "Cobbler." John Simpson and Jennifer Speake, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), *Oxford Reference Online*, accessed November 14, 2010.

case, Gillray is demonstrating the ill effects of cobbling together the artistic hands or styles of two artists, his own and Humphrey's. The word cobbling necessarily refers to clumsy handling, resulting in bad effects. The word "altering" can be read with a similar meaning.[49]

Continuing with an analysis of the print's text, a careful reading reveals that Wilkinson never published the plate, despite the British Museum listing Wilkinson as the publisher.[50] The plate reads: "*Publish'd* Nov. 1st 1781 by J. Gillray . . . *sold* by R. Wilkinson" (emphasis added). This is likely the only plate that Gillray ever published himself. Only the most famous engravers of the day—Francesco Bartolozzi, William Woollett, Robert Strange, and William Wynn Ryland—could publish their own plates, because they already had the broad recognition to attract collectors and connoisseurs on their own.[51] Here, Gillray is playing the part of a famous engraver. Perhaps he is suggesting that there is a market for any work by a famous printmaker, even so-called spoiled work. But then this determines value for the engraver's distinguishable mark. Here, Gillray reveals the absurd paradox of British printmaking culture. Since the trained eye can readily distinguish a Bartolozzi print from a Strange or a Woollett or a Gillray, each has a certain personality. What collectors desire is a matter of taste and not so much a matter of impartial reproduction.

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49 "Cobble," "alter," and "pastiche" word uses, word etymologies, and timelines are sourced from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition, 1989.

50 See British Museum item numbers: 1851,0901.1343; 1855,0512.333; 1868,0808.4779, accessed October 2, 2010, http://www.britishmuseum.org

51 Clayton, *The English Print*, 210.

To explain further, in late-eighteenth century British printmaking culture, the engraver was to take on a "servile role."[52] Engraving was by definition submissive to painting, since it was often used to reproduce paintings. The engraver was taught to remain faithful to the painter's original and remove or mitigate any self-identifying marks and gestures.[53] The Royal Academy initially excluded printmakers from the institution and then only later allowed admission in an inferior capacity, although they would gain some prominence over time, as evidenced by Bartolozzi.[54] The subdued engraving contrasts totally with caricature printmaking. There the artist invents the image himself, and successful satirists often demonstrate a particular and recognizable style. Gillray appears to be at once deeply attracted to engraving and simultaneously repelled.

In 1781 he was already receiving criticism at the Academy for his distinguished line.[55] And his inflexible personality, as witnessed in his interactions surrounding the portrait of Prime Minister Pitt, made him difficult to commission specific works from. Further, the Pitt portrait and *The Return* engraving both reveal that Gillray typically did not use a painting by another artist to guide his engravings. Gillray was not submissive or "servile" in his engravings or in his caricatures.

Returning to *Sketched/Spoiled*, Gillray's wiry etched marks do intentionally corrupt and ruin the work, another form of spoiling. He corrupts the stipple technique and

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[52] Godfrey, *Printmaking in Britain*, 43.

[53] Draper Hill, *Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures by James Gillray* (London: Phaidon, 1966), 10.

[54] Godfrey, *Printmaking in Britain*, 43.

[55] Hill, *The Caricaturist*, 27.

debases the cloyingly sweet child portrait. In doing so, Gillray bluntly asserts his identity as printmaker. This plate is in all likelihood the first satire in which his name is included in the plate, as a signature or otherwise. Additionally, in this print Gillray's identifiable and individual line takes precedence, asserting itself over the rest of the image and text.

Surprisingly, these etched lines sometimes formally mimic the constructed stipple gestures, specifically those that make up the oval frame, the boy's costuming, and the bird that the boy holds in his hands (fig. 13). At times it is possible to mistake a stippled mark for an etched and visa versa. Thus, as viewers we might mistake the engraver's individual expressive mark for the engraver's attempt at dispassionate reproduction. The "spoiling" of the print only further complicates any judgment of it. Which of the stipple marks are accurate representations of the source image and which are spoiled marks? Gillray revels in this confusion and irony. He dedicates the print to "all Lovers of your bold, Masterly Touches." But could even a lover or connoisseur of Humphrey's determine which of the stipple marks are accurate reflections of the original?

Gillray's choice of script style for *Sketched/Spoiled* is unique. It contains more embellishment and calligraphic flourishes than any of his other works. Each of the letter "d"s feature extended strokes, as do many of the other letters and the ampersands. The "n" at the end of "London" features a particularly expressive extended stroke. Humphrey's name ends with the longest and most complex flourish, although I think it more accurate to refer to the mark here as a paraph. Paraphs are a particular and repeatable flourishes made after signatures, originally employed as a precaution against forgery (fig. 14). Although they were common for the era for handwritten signatures, they

were not often used in prints. The source artist's name is typically stated as a matter-of-fact, since their signature would not be reproduced. Gillray's choice to do so here is unusual and therefore we can assume purposeful. He marks his spoiled or inaccurately reproduced image with the mark of authenticity in order to highlight his ironic gesture. And, like the gestural stipple lines of the sketched image, we can easily mistake the etched negating lines for the gestural calligraphic marks of the paraph. In fact, the etched wiry lines of Gillray are perhaps as much a paraph as they are negating signifier. They are the engraver's signature—his individual line—an authentic expression of his personality.

Read in this light, the etched lines are as much a generative creative act as they are a negating one. They represent the pursuit of individual creative acts by the printmaker, who faces a banal consumer and fashion driven marketplace that simultaneously rewards individuals like Bartolozzi, while claiming that they remove the individual engraver's touch from the print. The print lampoons the aristocracy and the power structure of contemporary British printmaking, and simultaneously offers the solution of an empowered individual printmaker.

The print presents a curiously modern sensibility. Specifically, the negating destructive gesture doubles as a powerful creative one that positively represents Gillray's individual artistic talent. And not only does the engraver move beyond the role of subservient reproducer, but he becomes the primary subject matter of the work. He is featured prominently in the title as the source of the action. It is his spoiling that gives it "value." Hence, the collector's edition printed in sienna ink. Any viewer cannot help but

imagine the artist's action and the artist's intentions—just as Thomas Wright, Mary Dorothy George, and Draper Hill have done—therefore ascribing performative qualities and readings to an obscure eighteenth-century engraving. It is these qualities—appropriation, creative acts through negating actions, and inserting the artist's identity and body into the work's subject matter—that not only suggest a remarkably modern approach by Gillray, but also allow his work to be compared with twentieth-century artists interested in similar practices.

Chapter Two: Rauschenberg, Nitsch, and Richter: A Career Turning Point

Prior to examining the three specific works of Rauschenberg, Nitsch, and Richter, it is useful to examine their early careers, because the context in which these works were created aids in identifying parallels and divergences between the artists. Each has the commonality of a typical early career and student work characterized by experimentation, a rapid transition through ideas including total abandonment of some and unbridled surprise at new discoveries, and an engagement with established artists' ideas in order to build upon them. However, each artist was also working through a unique set of artistic problems and challenges, brought on by the specifics of where and when they were working.

Introducing the Three Artists

Robert Rauschenberg (1925 - 2008)

Rauschenberg enrolled at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, in the fall of 1948 after brief stints as a student at both the Kansas City Art Institute and the Académie Julian in Paris.[56] At Black Mountain he studied under Josef Albers for what would be the final year of Albers' tenure, receiving a disciplined, formal, Bauhaus-style arts education. During Rauschenberg's time at Black Mountain he met John Cage, Cy Twombly, Ray

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[56] For the definitive text on Rauschenberg's early career see Walter Hopps' *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s* (Houston: The Menil Collection, 1991).

Johnson, Kenneth Noland, Ben Shahn, Robert Motherwell, Jack Tworkov, Aaron Siskind, Harry Callahan, Arthur Siegel, among others. The experimental atmosphere and talent-laden environment of Black Mountain led Rauschenberg to produce a broad array of works: photographs, wood-block prints, sculptures, monoprints made by exposing blueprint paper, and many paintings. After spending a year and a half at Black Mountain, in the spring of 1951 Rauschenberg showed several abstract expressionist style oil paintings at the Betty Parsons Gallery in New York. His output from this period has been described as "brash and unresolved work by a decidedly young and rapidly evolving artist."[57]

Amidst Rauschenberg's diverse production from this period are several works which contain a conceptual element that would inform the later *Erased de Kooning Drawing* (fig. 15). First is a series of works that examine process by demonstrating the artist's actions through time as the subject of the piece, exemplified by the wood-block print *This is the First Half of a Print Designed to Exist in Passing Time*, the monoprint *Automobile Tire Print*, and the series of photographs titled *Cy on Roman Steps.* Second is a series of paintings titled *White Paintings*. The series originally totaled six works, all but one consisting of multiple panels.[58] These are stark canvases, simply painted in a single tone of white oil paint.

This is the First Half of a Print Designed to Exist in Passing Time was completed in 1949, early in Rauschenberg's stay at Black Mountain (fig. 16). The print examines the

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57 Christopher Knight, "Enlightening Look at Early Rauschenberg." *Los Angeles Times,* May 20, 1992.

58 Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, 80.

process of erasing—or turning an image white, blank. The print consists of fourteen impressions. Each is an individual print in succession from the same wood block. The first image is a black square. The second image has a single white line that runs at a slight diagonal from one vertical edge of the plate to the other. Each impression thereafter adds a single horizontal line, though incised at an angle. None of the lines cross each other, but some do bleed into one another, such that there is a band that grows as the print progresses through time. Rauschenberg's title informs the viewer that this is but the first half of the print, though by now we can see the simple pattern that has developed and understand that the second half will eventually result in pure whiteness. The black square that began the series will have been erased one strip at a time until nothing is left.

Rauschenberg continually returned to this interest in cataloguing time, the evolution of the image, and placing the artist's action as the subject of the finished static piece: the finished image becomes a relic of that action. In the fall of 1952 Rauschenberg took a series of photographs of Cy Twombly on stone steps in Italy. Like the *First Half of a Print Designed to Exist in Passing Time, Cy on Roman Steps* is a series of square images (fig. 17). In this set the first image is almost entirely a set of horizontal gray bands, the steps. There is no context, no railing, no building, just steps, just bands of color. In the upper portion of the first image there are two perpendicular and parallel bands of darkness. In the next image they grow larger, by the third they are clearly the legs of someone wearing jeans, and now accompanied by hands. The figure continues to grow and take up a greater portion of the image until in the final image the figure's midsection is the dominate imagery, nearly erasing the steps from view. Though as in the

First Half of a Print, Rauschenberg does not take the image to a final conclusion, the figure does not fully block the steps from view; rather he has established a pattern and then leaves it to the viewer to mentally continue that pattern and imagine the conclusion.

Rauschenberg created *Automobile Tire Print* the following year, 1953 (fig. 18). The monoprint is on a twenty-two foot long strip of a paper, sixteen and a half inches high. It was made by a car tire whose treads were continually coated in black paint, so that as it rolled horizontally along this long strip of paper, it left its tread mark. The car, a Model A Ford, was slowly driven by its owner, John Cage, while Rauschenberg applied black paint to the rear tire and carefully directed the process.[59]

Automobile Tire Print examines a process similar to the woodcut and the photograph. However, Rauschenberg's approach here is remarkably different. In his earlier two works he serialized the process through a changing pattern, so that the viewer responds by conceptually finishing those patterns and fully erasing the original image in their own minds, either black to white or steps to Twombly. However, *Automobile Tire Print* is a pattern within a single image. Thus, if the viewer were to mentally continue this print, she would likely imagine the print extending in perpetuity with minor alterations in form. However, what is more likely is that the viewer will want to create a mental image of the car and person driving the car over the piece of paper. So the commonality in all three of these works is that the viewer is encouraged to think about the artist's action. In the woodcut we mentally continue the artist's carving; in the photograph we continue the

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[59] Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, 160

figure's march toward the camera lens; and in the monoprint we imagine the artist driving across the page. In each the artist and his actions through time enter the space of the final image.

The *White Paintings* are objects more than they are paintings and, like the series of works just described, they too suggest a different type of viewer experience (fig. 19). The series of paintings does not exist to depict something; it exists as something. As evidence of this, Rauschenberg gave permission to others to create *White Paintings* and has stated that a new coat of paint should occasionally be laid on to preserve their whiteness.[60] Rauschenberg felt as if he had logically reduced the artist-provided elements to a minimum in order to allow the focus to shift to how the paintings were subject to their environment and how they were affected by ambient light and shadow.[61] As he stated in 1964, "I always thought of the white paintings as being not passive but very—well, hypersensitive. So that one could look at them and almost see how many people are in the room by the shadows cast, or what time of day it was."[62] John Cage, writing about the series in 1961, wrote, "The white paintings were airports for the lights, shadows, and particles . . . a painting changing constantly."[63] Thus, instead of leading the viewer to mentally complete the work as Rauschenberg had in his print and photography series

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[60] Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, 80

[61] Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, 65

[62] Calvin Tomkins, "Profiles: Moving Out [Robert Rauschenberg]," *The New Yorker,* February 29, 1964, 59.

[63] John Cage, "On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist, and his Work," in *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, 98-105 (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 102-103.

above, with the *White Paintings,* the act of viewing—noticing shadows, changes in light—is the work.

Rauschenberg implored Betty Parsons to show his *White Paintings* in 1951, writing her that it was "almost an emergency," but she refused.[64] Two years later, in September 1953, two of them were included in a solo show at the Stable Gallery.[65] They were not received well. Eleanor Ward, the gallery owner, recalls, "One well known critic was so horrified that he came out literally clutching his head. I lost a lot of friends over that show. A great many people really thought it was immoral. . . . Nothing sold, of course, and I had to remove the guestbook, because so many awful things were being written in it."[66] It was that fall that Rauschenberg approached Willem de Kooning to ask for a drawing that the young artist could erase.

The resulting object itself can easily leave the viewer uninspired. It is a ghost of a drawing, only small bits of marks remain. The materials are listed as follows: traces of ink and crayon on paper, with mat and label hand-lettered in ink, in gold-leafed frame.[67] Rauschenberg implied to Leo Steinberg during a telephone conversation in 1957 that he did not think all that much of the visual importance of the

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[64] Letter reproduced in Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, 230.

[65] Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, 80.

[66] Tomkins, "Profiles: Moving Out [Robert Rauschenberg]," 64.

[67] "Erased de Kooning Drawing," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, accessed March 2, 2014, http://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/25846

object either, remarking that it probably wasn't necessary for the critic to see the work in order to understand it.[68]

But *Erased de Kooning Drawing* is more than a blank piece of paper, more than the erased drawing. It also includes a label, mat, and simple gold-leafed wooden frame, all of which were created by Rauschenberg's partner Jasper Johns.[69] Without the label and framing, the paper object loses all power. Without these elements, the erased page could easily be mistaken for an unfinished work, or worse, trash.

Additionally, the title, which Johns also suggested, dictates the viewer's reading of the work. For example, the inclusion of the original artist's name is pivotal, because they could have agreed to have titled it *Erased Drawing* or *Eraser Drawing*. Because of the *Erased de Kooning Drawing* title, we look for what is missing and we want to re-complete the work. We reverse the process of Rauschenberg's earlier *First Half of a Print* and want to move back from white, imagining the young artist erasing a master's work.

Hermann Nitsch (1938 -)

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[68] Leo Steinberg and Robert Rauschenberg, *Encounters with Rauschenberg: (a Lavishly Illustrated Lecture)* (Houston: Menil Collection, 2000), 22.

[69] The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, which acquired the piece from Rauschenberg in 1998, lists the materials as: traces of ink and crayon on paper, with mat and label hand-lettered in ink, in gold-leafed frame. The full dimensions therefore include the mat and frame: 25 ¼" x 21 ¾" x ½". (See http://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/25846) Jasper Johns actually collaborated on this work, although, he is not formally listed as a contributor. Rauschenberg describes this part of the narrative, "So when I titled it, it was very difficult to figure out exactly how to phrase this. And Jasper Johns was living upstairs, so I asked him to do the writing." (See interview with Rauschenberg at SFMOMA in late 1998, upon acquiring the work. The video was released in January of 1999. It can be found at: *www.sfmoma.org/multimedia/videos/24. Accessed February 21, 2011. "SFMOMA interview.")*

Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch's earliest work was academic, consisting of conservative paintings and prints. But taken as whole, his early career output, before 1960 when he turned twenty-two years old, was like Rauschenberg's: brash, unresolved, and experimental. During this period Nitsch was abandoning categories of art in search of something that could speak to his contemporary vision. First he abandoned the fine arts in favor of poetry, and then he abandoned poetry in favor of theater, finally abandoning that as well, in an effort to create a new platform for art.

Nitsch's artistic career began at the Vienna Higher College for Graphic Art where he studied literature, art, and philosophy.[70] His work from this time was pedantic: he copied El Greco and Rembrandt and focused on religious-themed subject matter. The training was traditional and likely followed the French Academy model of copying prints and drawings before moving onto drawing from plaster casts and finally working from live models. Nitsch's exposure to modernism was quite limited, to the degree that he even remained unexposed to the work of Cézanne, Corinth, van Gogh, Hodler, Munch and Renoir until the end of his studies.[71] He was also detached from his mid-century contemporaries in Europe or the United States.

Yet, near the end of his studies the young Nitsch took this limited, new knowledge of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century artists and applied it to his existing scholastic subject matter. For example, in 1956 Nitsch painted *Crucifixion (after*

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[70] Dieter Schwarz, "Chronology," in *Viennese Actionism, Vol 1, From Action Painting to Actionism, Vienna 1960-1965,* eds. Dieter Schwarz, Veit Loers, and Hubert Klocker (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1988), 91.

[71] Ibid., 91.

Rembrandt), a reinterpretation of Rembrandt's etching and drypoint *The Three Crosses* of 1653 (figs. 20 & 21).[72] Nitsch reworked the image in modern form, borrowing from early Art Informel and earlier Austrian and German Expressionism. Perhaps most notably he drew on the work of Oskar Kokoschka, whose painterly expressionist forms are built through a structure of color bursts.[73] Nitsch's image is dominated by primary colors: yellows are used for most of the light areas and maroons for most of the dark ones, with a few splashes of blue distributed through the image.

In many ways, Nitsch's delayed exposure and conservative approach was a product of Austria's culture as a whole during this period. Between the World Wars, Austria had grown more conservative, and modernist and avant-garde trends were stunted, stigmatized, or disqualified, as were the philosophical and political outlooks associated with them.[74] Then, with the onset of World War II Austria was occupied for nearly two decades. This began with the Nazis in 1938 (the year of Nitsch's birth) and continuing with the Allied forces in 1945, who divided the country between French, Soviet, American, and British forces, including a four way division of the city of Vienna. Austria did not re-establish sovereignty until ten years later, in 1955, with a Declaration of Neutrality.

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[72] An image of the painting can be found in Wolfgang Denk, ed., *Museum Hermann Nitsch* (New York: Distributed Art Partners/Hatje Cantz, 2007), 205.

[73] Jane Kallir, *Austria's Expressionism* (New York: Galerie St. Etienne/Rizzoli, 1981), 33.

[74] Lóránd Hegyi, "Drawing Between Totality and Sensuality: The Graphic Oeuvre of Hermann Nitsch in the Context of his Synthesis of the Arts," in *Hermann Nitsch: Structures-Architectural Drawings, Musical Scores and Realizations of the O.M. Theatre* , ed. Carl Aigner (Vienna: Brandstätter, 2011), 24-25.

The multi-faceted occupation of the country and the capital city created a variety of ideologies that, in some ways, cancelled each other out. Simultaneously, there was a cultural, artistic, philosophical, intellectual, and political separation from Western Europe and North America.[75] Because of the occupation, the Austrians' post-war response tended to be internalized. Günter Brus, Nitsch's friend and fellow artist, remarked, "The entire Viennese art [scene] after 1945 was shaped by the Nazi period. In Germany it was much more political. The artists openly attacked the Nazis or their successors, whereas in Austria it was more of an aesthetic and psychological development."[76]

Upon Austrian independence in 1955, the art scene slowly learned to distinguish between Art Informel, Tachism, and action painting.[77] The European movements differ from the American. For the first few years following the war the two continents developed new forms of gestural abstraction in relative isolation from each other. The European development is characterized by a number of similar movements: *art informel* or "formless art," *tachisme* or "stainism," lyrical abstraction, and *un art autre* or "another art." Two of the four terms, *un art autre* and *art informel*, were coined by the French critic Michel Tapié. Sometimes these labels overlap or are used synonymously, although often a dividing line is the use of figurative forms in the work. For these movements, just as for Abstract Expressionism, it is impossible to condense their impact into a single

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[75] Ibid., 22-24.

[76] Sydny Norton, "Making Art in the Present with an Eye to the Past," in *The Immediate Touch: German, Austrian + Swiss Drawings from Saint Louis Collections, 1946-2007*, Francesca Consagra and Sydney Jane Norton (St. Louis, MO: Saint Louis Art Museum, 2008), 27.

[77] Wolfgang Denk *"My Roads to Nitsch,"* in *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 27.

detailed account because of each's intrinsic diversity and varied impacts on subsequent artists.[78] Perhaps one way to examine the differences across the Atlantic is to compare a representative artist from each, Jackson Pollock and Wols (the pseudonym of Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze). Pollock used monumental proportions, created an engulfing bodily experience, and pushed the composition beyond the edge of the canvas with the impulsive brushwork of action painting. Whereas Wols used small canvases, pulled the viewer into his universe, drew with his brush, often building up forms in the center of the canvas keeping his forms contained within the picture plane.[79] Neither artist epitomizes the diversity of abstract painting's development, but both begin to characterize the variation in styles on either continent.

Returning to Nitsch, in 1956, after completing his training at the Vienna Higher College for Graphic Art, Nitsch decided to give up painting in favor of poetry and then drama.[80] Nitsch has said, "I started as a painter and later I started on abstract paintings. Then the first ideas of a theater project began to take shape in my mind."[81] Nitsch's abandonment of painting was linked to his inability to sufficiently evoke present-day

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[78] For examinations of Abstract Expressionism see David Anfam's book by that title or his updated version included in his 2008 exhibition. In David Anfam's essay "A World Elsewhere," which accompanied the 2008 exhibition that he curated, he explained that among the issues that Abstract Expressionism helped to lodge into the mainstream artistic practice are: the use of monochrome, monumental proportions, a concern with the body and its dynamics, the pursuit of spirituality and absolutes, and the exploration of the psyche and individual identity. See David Anfam, *Abstract Expressionism: A World Elsewhere* (New York: Haunch of Venison, 2008), 10.

[79] Toby Kames, "Seeing Wols" in *Wols: Retrospective*, eds. Ewald Rathke, Toby Kamps, Patrycja de Bieberstein Ilgner, and Katy Siegel (Houston: The Menil Collection, 2013), 64.

[80] Schwarz, "Chronology," 93.

[81] Denk,"My Roads to Nitsch," 39.

emotions and reflect authentic experiences through this medium. Nitsch explained that his early experiments in theater still reflected ideas stemming from the avant-garde painting movements that Austria was then finally being exposed to. For example, he wrote of the influence of Tachism: “Originally, I understood my concept of theater as the realization of tachist theater and tried to explore tachism to the full using theatrical means, to penetrate the depths of its psychological consequences.”[82] However, within a few years Nitsch also abandoned the language-based arts of theater and poetry, arguing that they too, were inadequate mediums to reach the raw and true emotions that he was looking for. As he has asserted, “The memory of sensual experience, which was activated by the language, was not enough. The desire for real experience pushed through the language, the language actually became a barrier, for sensual, intense experience.”[83] This position was again reflected by fellow artist Günter Brus, who wrote in 1960, “Language has lost its way. You can still find it snarling, hissing, in screams and in swallowing—language was the touchstone of art—and then art and language died together and everything else, almost even including the action of a madman. From expression to the printed word and from there to death.”[84]

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[82] Hermann Nitsch “The Consequence of Tachism” original date or excerpt not noted, reprinted in *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 54.

[83] Hermann Nitsch “The Development of the O.M. Theater,” reprinted in *Museum Hermann Nitsch,* 51.

[84] Schwarz, “Chronology,” 128.

It was during these transitions between art forms that Nitsch developed his idea for the *orgies-mysterien theater* (hereafter referred to as the *o. m. theater*).[85] The *o. m. theater* was conceptualized as a six-day festival that built from an analogy of the Old Testament's creation story and that could "demonstrate in dramatic form that our psyche is built up in layers, comparable to geological strata."[86] Nitsch's resulting intention was to mine these strata and uncover primordial truths of our psyche and our humanity. Additionally, Nitsch desired the *o. m. theater* to evoke the myth of Dionysus in order to provoke excess and descend into animality and chaos, so that "the hecticness of the subconscious that is pushed outwards, and that is implemented in formal, and to a certain extent even conscious terms, a mental cleansing process takes place (catharsis)."[87] Beyond religion and myth, Nitsch pulls from the writings and theories of the psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, the anthropologist of myths and comparative religion James Frazier, experts in Greek mythology and religion Walter F. Otto and Karl Kerenyi, and religious scholar Helmut von Glasenapp.[88]

It was not until after Nitsch conceived of the *o. m. theater* that he became aware of American Abstract Expressionism. In 1959, Nitsch saw the exhibition "The New American Painting," curated by the Museum of Modern Art's Alfred Barr, that was then traveling through Europe and contained works by Pollock, de Kooning, Francis, and

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[85] Susan Jarosi, "Traumatic Subjectivity and the Continuum of History: Hermann Nitsch's *Orgies Mysteries Theater*," *Art History* 36 (September 2013): 841-842.

[86] Nitsch "The Development of the O.M. Theater," 51.

[87] Hermann Nitsch, "On the roots of tragedy" circa 1963, reprinted in *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 48.

[88] Schwarz, "Chronology," 92.

others. [89] Interested in these painters' apparent ability to channel the unconscious, Nitsch began to paint again, seeing it now as a component of his theater projects and merging the two forms of artistic production in what he termed *Malaktionen,* or painting actions, and *Scüttbilder,* or poured pictures.[90] As the artist explained the process of combining the *o. m. theater* with action painting: "I thereupon tried with renewed intensity and more analytically to pour, splatter and splash the liquids . . . a form of action painting, which had a dramatic function because it entailed a lapse of time and occasionally ecstatic, creative processes."[91]

In 1960, at the moment when Nitsch began combining his interest in the religiously inspired *o. m. theater* with action painting, he returned to a set of academic prints that he had worked on four years earlier. The prints consist of an earnest reproduction of Rembrandt's *Hundred Guilder Print* [*Christ Preaching*] (fig. 22), an etching that Rembrandt had continuously worked and reworked the plate throughout the 1640s. Nitsch however, had never completed his example. The series of prints by Nitsch appear to be genuine artist's proofs, in which he was checking his progress and satisfaction with the plate. Through these three impressions we see that Nitsch had been working his plate from right to left (the printed image then appears to develop from left to right). In the second print, the etching is about halfway complete, with Christ in the

[89] Thomas McEvilley, *The Triumph of Anti-Art: Conceptual and Performance Art in the Formation of Post-Modernism* (Kingston, N.Y.: McPherson & Co, 2005), 322.

[90] Schwarz, "Chronology," 119.

[91] Ibid., 119.

center and the group of figures to his left. In the third print the image is nearly complete: the figures are all represented, but the background and some of the foreground are not fully finished, and the dimensions slightly different; here the Rembrandt image runs out with about a tenth of Nitsch's plate still there. Nitsch's plate is also roughly fifty percent larger, measuring 42.5 x 54.5 cm, compared to Rembrandt's 28 x 39.4 cm.

In 1960, Nitsch overpainted the three proofs, one with black paint, the second with red paint, and the third with black ink (figs. 23, 24, and 25). Nitsch splattered, smeared, and spilled the media across each image. Each of the overpaintings stresses the hand of the artist, the action, and performance of the application of medium. Each is an example of Nitsch's converging histories: his training in traditional art, a departure for avant-garde theater, and a recent exposure to Abstract Expressionism.

Gerhard Richter (1932 -)

Born in Dresden in 1932, Gerhard Richter's family soon after moved to the countryside of what is now Poland, which is where Richter was raised. At nineteen, after World War II, Richter returned to his hometown to begin studies at the Dresden Art Academy in what was then Soviet-occupied East Germany. The divided sections of occupied Germany had taken on the artistic movements of their occupiers such that East German artists were trained in Soviet Realism and those in West Germany looked to the French Art Informel and American Abstract Expressionism.[92] Richter's East German

[92] For a diverse and textured understanding of postwar German art see: Eckhart Gillen, *German Art: From Beckmann to Richter : Images of a Divided Country* (Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1997). In particular

education was no different, as he has stated: "The goal was socialist realism and the Dresden Academy was especially obedient in this regard."[93] Prior to the rise of the Third Reich, Dresden had been known for its vibrant modern art scene. But like Nitsch's Austria, East Germany, too, had become artistically isolated following the war. Pre-war German avant-garde artists had emigrated, died, or been silenced by the regime. And again, similarly to Nitsch, Richter first learned about art with very limited availability of twentieth-century movements. As he has remarked, "We weren't able to borrow books that dealt with the period beyond the onset of Impressionism because that is when bourgeois decadence set in. The only exceptions were artists who declared their commitment to Communism: Guttuso, Picasso, and a few others."[94] During this period Richter aspired to live in harmony with the system.[95] For roughly the first decade of his career he painted in East Germany, under the allowed style of Social Realism. Much of this time he spent painting murals, including several major commissions, such as the German Hygiene Museum, various schools, and a mural at the Socialist Unity Party regional headquarters in Dresden.[96] As Robert Storr has argued, "To this day,

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see, Eckhart Gillan's essay in that anthology, "Tabula Rasa and Inwardness: German Images Before and After 1945."

[93] Dietmar Elger, *Gerhard Richter: a life in painting* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 12.

[94] Gerhard Richter's 2004 interview with Jan Thorn-Prikker, in Gerhard Richter, *Gerhard Richter: Writings 1961-2007,* eds. Dietmar Elger and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2009), 468.

[95] Ibid., 468.

[96] Some have argued that Richter's mural painting was already challenging East Germany's rigid artistic position. See John Curley, "Gerhard Richter's Cold War Vision," in *Gerhard Richter: Early Work, 1951-* 1972, eds. Christine Mehring, Jeanne Anne Nugent, and Jon L. Seydl, (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 17.

understandably, Richter downplays his apprenticeship and early achievements as a Social Realist, but there can be no doubt that he worked hard to make the best of the formulas he was expected to apply and struggled within the strictures imposed upon him by Party discipline and official aesthetics to find his own voice."[97]

By the time that Richter decided to move to the West German city of Düsseldorf, which offered the opportunity of making a different kind of art, it also offered a different economic life. When Richter arrived in Germany in 1961, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), was a decade into what is known as *Wirtschaftswunder*, or the "economic miracle." The post-war recovery was largely due to a recapitalization of West Germany through a currency reform that led to rapid industrial growth and the emergence of a broad consumer-based middle class.

In the FRG, Richter enrolled at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, the city's arts academy. The academy attracted some of Germany's most talented artists due to its close proximity to France, direct access to the international art market, and a handful of well-known professors, including Joseph Beuys.[98] At the academy Richter met Sigmar Polke, who also came from East Germany, as well as Konrad Lueg, who was later known as the gallerist Konrad Fischer.

Richter arrived in Düsseldorf with a self-described, naïve goal of finding a compromise between the Social Realist work he had done and the art of the west.[99]

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[97] Robert Storr, *Gerhard Richter: The Cage Paintings* (London: Tate Pub, 2009), 46.

[98] Norton, "Making Art in the Present with an Eye to the Past," 35n21.

[99] Schwarz, "Chronology," 468-469.

Richter explained this goal to Benjamin Buchloh during a 1986 interview, while also admitting that it was full of "false deference . . . to traditional artistic values," and a very limited understanding of the history of the twentieth century avant-garde.[100] Back in Dresden, Richter had viewed the work of artists like Jackson Pollock and Lucio Fontana as a "formalistic gag." But after seeing the work in person, Richter changed his position, instead viewing their work as "truth and liberation, that this was an expression of a totally different and entirely new content."[101] Following this reversal, Richter consumed avant-garde abstraction and developed it within his own skillset. In a 2002 interview, he explained that he "painted through the whole history of abstraction. I painted like crazy, I had some success with all of that, or gained some respect. But then I felt that it wasn't it, and so I burned the crap in some sort of action in the courtyard. And then I began. It was wonderful to make something and then destroy it. It was doing something and I felt very free."[102]

It was at that time, at the end of 1962, that Richter embarked on his first photography-based pictures. He wrote, "I had had enough of bloody painting, and painting from a photograph seemed to me the most moronic and inartistic thing that

[100] Gerhard Richter's 1986 interview with Benjamin Buchloh in Gerhard Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting: Writings and Interviews,* 1962-1993, ed. Hans-Ulrich Obrist (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995), 132.

[101] Ibid., 133.

[102] Gerhard Richter interview with Robert Storr, conducted with the assistance of Catharina Manchanda, on April 21-23, 2001; trans. Philip Glahn, in Robert Storr, *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 27.

anyone could do."[103] Richter ends another note from this period with a comment that aids in understanding his thinking: "To believe, one must have lost God; to paint, one must have lost art."[104] Clearly, he was an artist frustrated by his output—as evidenced by the burning of work and by his comments of exasperation. But there is great optimism in that comment, as he affirms his belief in his progress as an artist and the destructive process that it had required.

Because of the realism inherently involved in Richter's photography-based paintings, they can be read as returning to what he described as his "naïve" goal with which he had come to Düsseldorf, "this grand illusion of a 'third way.' That was the promising mixture of Capitalism and Socialism."[105] Storr has augmented this reading of the photo-based paintings, asserting that Richter's "third way" was not so much intended to be political, but artistic—not a mixture between two economic systems but "between tradition and the avant-garde."[106] Richter himself has been contradictory on this position. For example, despite framing his artistic intentions in economic and political terminology, he has also insisted that his intention was not political and said, "Politics don't suit me . . . because all I can do is paint."[107]

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[103] Gerhard Richter, "Notes, 1964," *The Daily Practice of Painting*, 22.

[104] Gerhard Richter, "Letter to a newsreel company, 29 April 1963," in *The Daily Practice of Painting*, 15.

[105] Richter interview with Thorn-Prikker in 2004, *Gerhard Richter: Writings 1961-2007*, 468-469.

[106] Storr, *Forty Years of Painting*, 27.

[107] Richter interview with Buchloh, *The Daily Practice of Painting*, 153.

An alternative position has been offered by Susanne Küper in her essay: "Gerhard Richter: Capitalist Realism and His Painting from Photographs, 1962-1966."[108] Here she argues that when carefully examined, Richter's early photo-based paintings are surprisingly political. Küper placed his source imagery in context and parsed Richter's comments on his selection process of the photos to compellingly reveal this layer of Richter's practice. For example, Küper linked two contemporaneous paintings from 1965, not only pointing out specific political overtones, but also rooting them in a personal past that Richter had left behind in East Germany. *Aunt Marianne* (fig. 26) is based on a family photograph of Richter's schizophrenic aunt who is assumed to have been a euthanasia victim under the Third Reich. The other painting, *Herr Heyde* (fig. 27), is based on a newspaper clipping of the former National Socialist Werner Heyde giving himself up to authorities after the war. Heyde was charged with being chiefly responsible for the deaths of more than 100,000 euthanasia vicitims during the war. Despite the subjective nature of the imagery, Küper concluded that Richter also negated this subjectivity by applying the same blurring technique to each, equalizing the images. She explained, "Richter looked for photographs, whose subject occupied him personally, only the working over leads to a generalization and objectivization."[109] Thus, there is a personal politics, or semi-political imagery, that Richter was using as subject matter for

[108] Susanne Küper, "Gerhard Richter: Capitalist Realism and his painting from photographs, 1962-1966," in *German Art: From Beckmann to Richter*, 233-236.

[109] Ibid., 236.

these early photography-based paintings; but in Küper's estimation, he was then negating that subjectivity or personal bias.

In addition to Küper's work, other recent scholarship has worked to divorce Richter's early 1960s paintings from the idea of functioning primarily as an inevitable precedent to the remainder of his career. Instead, this work grounds them in their contemporary context and German Pop Art in particular. For example, Lauren Hanson has looked at the historical and economic environment of Düsseldorf and demonstrated that Richter's interests transcended the aesthetics and practice of painting and included a study of the emerging German middle-class lifestyles and popular imagery.[110] Hanson demonstrates that German Pop Art was integral to Richter's photo-based painting practice during the first half of the 1960s. Because of Germany's radically improving economic situation consumerism was supplanting former notions of patriotism and nationalism, a circumstance that would have likely been exaggerated for Richter after moving from Dresden.[111] In fact, at times, Richter refers to Pop Art as "Capitalist Realism," a term that first appears in a press release written by Richter in 1963.[112] Richter was likely using the term as an ironic play on Social Realism, which would offer a new understanding of what is perhaps his not-so-naïve goal of a third way. But just as

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[110] Lauren Elizabeth Hanson, "How to Live with Pop Contextualizing the Early Works of Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, and Konrad Lueg" (Austin: University of Texas, 2010).

[111] Erica Carter, *How German is She? Post-war West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 21.

[112] The press release is on page 16 of *Gerhard Richter: Writings 1961-2007*, but also see the editor's notes about the press release and terms on pages 536-537.

soon as we might like to make that claim, it is likely too much of a recasting of history, knowing the result and making the proceeding acts lead to that end, because it was not Richter alone bringing the idea of German Pop out from behind the Iron Curtain. Richter was not working in isolation, as he wrote in a note to himself in 1964: "'Capitalist Realism:' Contact with like-minded painters—a group means a great deal to me: nothing comes in isolation. We have worked our ideas largely by talking them through. . . . And so the exchange with other artists—and especially the collaboration with Lueg and Polke—matters a lot to me: it is part of the input that I need." [113]

Therefore, these paintings are cunning ironic criticism, on the one hand, and straightforward paintings of snapshots and news images on the other: they are personal and political images. But they are also images of the mundane and banal, and they are traditional painting techniques that are perhaps being recast through the lens of a camera. This multitude of sometimes contradictory readings can allow Richter's early work to be recast in a many different ways, often depending on the objective of the interpreter. However, what does remain clear is that Richter was interested in contradiction and ambiguity in his paintings. He was experimenting, taking risks, and he "has lost art."

Among Richter's first photo-based paintings is *Table [Tisch]* from 1962 (fig. 28). It features a stark table, painted in greys, with only floor and wall for its environment; and Richter has obliterated the center of the image by wiping it away with a turpentine-soaked rag dragged across the surface in circular motions. Enough of the table is spared

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[113] Richter, "Notes, 1964," in *Gerhard Richter: Writings 1961-2007*, 23.

from the turpentine that it is recognizable without having to rely on the painting's title. The majority of the table top is left unobscured; it is white, rectangular, and unembellished. The base of the table is black and appears to be metal, with two legs each expanding out at the base. The table has a simple straight form, yet Richter's representation is imprecise—the table top flares from right to left, the darker grey floor lightens in a series of broad brush strokes around the base of the table, and the base of the table that extends out to the right of the obliteration is not a flat black, but contains a series of grey brushstrokes. Additionally, the background colors, though mostly flat, have texture created by the artist scraping the canvas and dripping paint as well as by his leaving remnants of newspaper stuck to the surface. Richter has explained, "I painted it, but was dissatisfied with the result and pasted parts of it over with newspaper. One can still see by the imprint where the newspaper was stuck to the freshly painted canvas. I was dissatisfied because there was too much paint on the canvas and became less happy with it."[114] Likewise, it seems natural to read Richter's taking turpentine to the painting's surface and wiping out the center of the image as a reflection of his dissatisfaction with this painting. Yet, after all of this, Richter selected the painting as the first entry in his catalog raisonné, despite its lack of chronological sequence.

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[114] Gerhard Richter, "Comments on Some Works, 1991" in *Gerhard Richter: Text. Writings, Interviews and Letters 1961–2007*, 259.

Chapter Three: Layered images

Sub-Image

A Willem de Kooning drawing (Rasuchenberg)

The underlying image of *Erased de Kooning Drawing* is an original Willem de Kooning drawing. But why did Rauschenberg select de Kooning? This question was never directly answered by Rauschenberg. But there are some likely possibilities: 1) de Kooning was accessible and willing to participate; 2) de Kooning was talented and famous; 3) de Kooning regularly used erasure as a drawing marking.

Willem de Kooning and Rauschenberg just missed crossing paths at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. De Kooning was a hired to teach for the summer of 1948 as a last-minute replacement, and Rauschenberg began as a student there that fall.[115] Rauchenberg requested the drawing from de Kooning five years later in New York while the younger artist was staying with Jack Tworkov in his studio, adjacent to de Kooning's.[116] In a 1965 interview Rauschenberg remarked, "I still think that Bill de Kooning is one of the greatest painters in the world. And I liked Jack Tworkov, himself and his work."[117] But then why not ask Tworkov? Rauschenberg was closer to him. Both

[115] Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1987), 146.

[116] Hopps, *Robert Rauschenberg: The Early 1950s*, 71.

[117] Dorthy Seckler, "*Oral history interview with Robert Rauschenberg, 1965 Dec. 21," Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.*

Tworkov and de Kooning had established careers, both had taught at Black Mountain, and both were of the preceding generation.

This leads us to believe that the piece truly is about de Kooning. He is the subject as much as anything else. Rauschenberg admired de Kooning, saying, "Bill de Kooning was the best known, acceptable American artist that could be indisputably considered art."[118] Although this phrase is clumsily worded, the statement is full of value terminology, so we can presume that Rauschenberg's intention was to confirm the fact that at the time de Kooning was widely regarded as one of the greatest living artists.

In addition to the artist's proximity and notoriety, there was de Kooning's agreeability. Rauschenberg knew that the senior artist would not deny his request—however outlandish it was. Rauschenberg acknowledged this in an interview with Leo Steinberg just a few years after the work was made. Rauschenberg is quoted as saying, "He would not have wanted to hinder my work, if that is what I wanted to do."[119]

Enough of the drawing has been erased that a reconstruction of the original image is impossible. But, we can assume that the work by de Kooning was fairly recent and that it was of good quality.[120] We can also assume that it was an image of a woman's figure. At the time, de Kooning was working on the "Woman" series, and there is a drawing of a woman's figure on the verso of *Erased de Kooning Drawing*. De Kooning's drawing

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[118] See San Francisco Museum of Modern Art interview with Rauschenberg at SFMOMA in late 1998, upon acquiring the work. The video was released in January of 1999. Accessed February 21, 2011. It can be found at: *www.sfmoma.org/multimedia/videos/24. "SFMOMA interview."*

[119] Steinberg, *Encounters with Rauschenberg,* 19.

[120] Rauchenberg quotes the older artist as saying, "No, it will have to be something that I'll miss." See SFMOMA interview referenced in n118 above.

Woman, from 1951, is a good example of what may have been given to Rauschenberg (fig. 29).

Perhaps the most interesting reasoning for why Rauschenberg selected de Kooning may be that many of his drawings from this period include eraser markings. In fact, erasing seems integral to the making of de Kooning's drawings. Thomas Hess recalls watching de Kooning draw in 1951: "He made a few strokes, then almost instinctively, it seemed to me, turned the pencil around and began to go over the graphite marks with the eraser. Not to rub out the lines, but to move them, push them across the paper, turn them into planes. The method to destroy (erase) was being used as the means to create."[121] De Kooning had been utilizing this technique since the mid-1940s with a series of abstract drawings, but its use intensified around 1950 as he applied it to his "Woman" series. Sixteen drawings from the series were exhibited at Sidney Janis Gallery, across the hall from Betty Parsons' Gallery, in March 1953—de Kooning's first solo show at Janis. This coincides with Rauschenberg's return to New York from his travels in Italy with Twombly. And so, with this in mind, not only is de Kooning the subject of Rauschenberg's work, but the younger artist co-opts his method and usage of erasers as well. It is as if Rauschenberg creates one all-encompassing plane that obscures the entirety of the de Kooning, rather than "turning lines into planes."

Rembrandt's *Hundred Guilder Print* (Nitsch)

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[121] Thomas B. Hess, *Willem De Kooning Drawings* (Greenwich, Conn, 1972), 16-17.

Instead of starting with another artist's original work as Rauschenberg had done, Nitsch used a replica that he had made as a student. So, if de Kooning is an intentional subject for Rauschenberg, who is the subject here? Is it Rembrandt or is it Nitsch's earlier self as an inexperienced art student to whom the artist is responding?

Rembrandt was a favorite subject for Nitsch during his training at the academy in the early to mid-1950s. Rembrandt's work was subject matter for several pieces. In addition to the *Hundred Guilder Print*, Nitsch also did his own engraving of the *Three Crosses,* in addition to the oil painting based on that composition mentioned already (fig. 30). Nitsch's reproduction of the *Hundred Guilder Print* is an attempt at a pure copy, whereas the two works that use Rembrandt's *Three Crosses* depart from the original in style and form. Thus we see that Nitsch readily used Rembrandt's work as a framework or starting point from which he could then experiment or develop his own stylistic overlays and image alterations. And so, Nitsch's return to Rembrandt's imagery (albeit through his own hand) in 1960 may be as simple as Nitsch returning to what had been a common practice for him, of using Rembrandt's works as a sort of stock imagery, available to his manipulations.

Nitsch likely viewed the Rembrandt directly in order to make his own impression. He would have had ample access to original Rembrandt prints at the Albertina Museum in Vienna. The Albertina houses one of the largest print rooms in the world with about one million Old Master prints, including 231 Rembrandt prints—essentially his entire oeuvre. During Nitsch's schooling the Albertina had an impression of the *Hundred Guilder Print* and three impressions of Rembrandt's *Three Crosses*.

The *Hundred Guilder Print* is among Rembrandt's greatest accomplishments, a fact documented by the work's popular title that developed due to the print's expensive selling price. The print has also been referred to by what it depicts, *Christ Healing the Sick* or *Christ Preaching*. The imagery does not portray a precise moment from the Bible, but is rather a combination of several different episodes from the New Testament's Book of Matthew.[122] The figures are arranged almost as if on the stage of a theatrical performance, with Christ at the center of the composition, his head above all others. The various figures each vary in the manner of depiction. Lightness of form breaks from left to right across the print with the figures at left emerging largely through line and those at right through chiaroscuro. Rembrandt was among the more experimental of the Baroque artists, and this print demonstrates his breadth of line and mastery of form in a single work. Imitating it was no doubt a monumental challenge for Nitsch.

In addition to a concern with Rembrandt, Nitsch was also deeply interested in religious imagery, and Christianity in particular, as a theme or direct subject for his work, even as he switched between fine art, poetry, and theater. And just as he used Rembrandt as a point of departure or framework, Nitsch used Christian imagery and pageantry in a similar way, layering it and altering it with a mixture of ancient myths and contemporary psychoanalytic theories. The point is that Nitsch was continually using religious imagery throughout the 1950s, and so in his return to fine art it was logical to continue that trend and layer it into his new techniques.

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[122] Marian Bisanz-Prakken, Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn: Das Hundertguldenblatt, Inv. DG 1926/1640, Katalogtext 2009, in: Sammlungen Online http://www.albertina.at/Sammlungenonline (accessed March 25, 2014).

Nitsch's return to his student work is a return to a medium—painting, drawing, and printmaking, and a return to his last works in these media. He was picking up where he left off. But Nitsch was also bringing with him a radically different approach that now incorporates his other practices.

Photograph from *Domus* (Richter)

Richter has explained that "the photo for *Table* came, I think, from an Italian design magazine called *Domus*," a leading international design magazine.[123] The source image for *Table* is from the August 1956 issue. It does not appear in Richter's *Atlas*, his collection of photographs from 1962 to 1968, many of whose images he reproduced precisely in paintings. For the most part these photos have been unaltered, though several do have a Cartesian coordinate system drawn over top in order to mathematically transfer the image to the canvas. The three images that Richter used for *Table* are mounted separately onto another piece of paper and exist both as a finished work and as a maquette (fig. 31). The top image is closest in resemblance and perspective to Richter's *Table*, but the proportions are clearly different. The table expands with a sliding leaf system and in the photograph, at the perspective that Richter used, the table is expanded to about double the length. Richter has also altered these source image clippings. Just as in the paintings, Richter has wiped solvent—either turpentine or benzene—directly onto each magazine clipping in a circular motion working out from center.[124] Thus, the small

[123] Richter, "Comments on some works, 1991," 259.

[124] Storr, *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting*, 29.

photographs act as direct parallels to the completed painting. And as in the painting, the solvent lifts the pigment and moves it around, obliterating the image in a neutral haze. The treated magazine clippings are finished works in and of themselves. They are mounted and appear to be signed by the artist in 1962, the same year as *Table*. However, Storr dates the images to 1959 in the first edition of *Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting*.[125] In subsequent editions of Storr's book, he dates Richter's maquette to 1962. Additionally, in a note from John J. Curley's essay "Gerhard Richter's Cold War Vision" which appears in *Gerhard Richter: Early Work, 151-1972*, the author also dates *Maquette for Table* as 1959. Either way, it remains likely that Richter was at least experimenting with wiping or blurring photographs clipped from the pages of magazines prior to his painting *Table*. As Storr writes, "Richter became himself as an artist by applying the lessons learned from his ongoing experiments in wiping out reproductions of architectural photographs with turpentine or benzene applied directly to the inked page."[126] As such, it is likely that Richter was using an already obliterated image, altered with solvent, as his source material for *Table*.[127]

So why a photograph of a table from *Domus*? The subject here is more multilayered than is the case with Rauschenberg, whose interest in de Kooning as subject

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[125] Ibid., 29.

[126] Ibid., 29.

[127] It is also worth noting that this technique and its results is very different than the ways in which Rauschenberg later popularized using solvent on magazine imagery. During the 1970s, Rauschenberg used solvent to transfer magazine images to another surface, either paper or textile. In both cases, Rauschenberg and Richter, the solvent lifts the ink from the page, but whereas Rauschenberg moves that ink to another surface, Richter keeps the ink within the single plane, changing the single image.

matter can be established. In the case of Nitsch, a targeted subject is obscured because the sub-image could reference both Rembrandt and his own student work. Richter's sub-image could be the table's designer, the photographer, the magazine, or some other idea invoked by these.

Richter does not seem to have been particularly interested in the table's designer, the Italian brand Gardella. Richter was, however, concerned with advertising in general, and *Table* has been associated with another of Richter's paintings from 1962, *Folding Dryer* (fig. 32), because it, too, uses an advertisement of an everyday object as its source material.[128] Richter is quoted in an interview from 1990, saying that the dryer "represented life in low-cost housing" and that he used the image because he personally owned the object in the advertisement.[129] During this time period, Richter typically searched "family photo albums (preferably his own) or illustrated magazines, especially the ones with the widest circulation at the time (*Stern, Quick, Neue Illustrierte*), the world of ordinary people and everyday reality."[130] But whereas the image of the dryer comes from the newspaper, a source consumed by a broad and general public, *Table* is clipped from the pages of *Domus*, a journal for an elite cultured class. For example, an annual

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[128] Gerhard Richter and eds., www.gerhard-richter.com, "The official website of Gerhard Richter," is controlled by Richter and Dietmar Elger, author of Richter's Catalogue Raisonné. Elger is a key contributor, and so, despite disclaimers otherwise; the website does function as a pseudo-catalogue raisonné. Accessed March 26, 2014.

[129] Gerhard Richet *interview with Sabine Schütz, 1990* in *Gerhard Richter: Text. Writings, Interviews and Letters 1961–2007*, 253.

[130] Uwe M. Schneede, "Gerhard Richter's Images of an Era," in *Gerhard Richter: Images of an Era,* eds. Uwe M. Schneede, Hubertus Butin, Ortrud Westheider, Michael Philipp, B. H. D. Buchloh, Russell Stockman, Ingrid Schädtler, Dietmar Elger, and Dietmar Rübel (Munich: Hirmer, 2011), 15.

subscription to *Domus* in 1962, the year *Table* painted, cost $23.00 US (₤14.250) for 12 issues.

Domus first appeared in 1928 and provided a platform for the modern movement in Italy as well as design, architecture, and art throughout the world.[131] The work presented in the magazine "embraced the prevailing modernist aesthetic of clean, abstract forms spiritually attuned to modern life, materials, and technology."[132] An August 1962 issue, for instance, featured articles on a church covered in exposed concrete, an architect's private home in Ghana, fabric selections for Herman Miller, and new flooring constructed from foam rubber mattresses. And although *Domus* did suffer through World War II, it quickly regained its prewar importance as its founder, Gio Ponti, regained the helm of the magazine.[133]

An argument could be made on behalf of *Domus* as a subject of *Table* for any of the three readings of Richter's photography-based paintings discussed in the preceding section: tradition versus the avant-garde, the personal and political selection of imagery, and German Pop or Capitalist Realism. Storr's reading of the traditional versus the avant-garde requires the underlying painting to relate to Social Realism. Stylistically, it might do so because the handling of paint is closer to Social Realism than to American Pop, even though flattening the image with broad swaths of atonal color would have been

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[131] Jonathan M. Woodham, *Twentieth Century Design* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 55.

[132] Ibid., 55.

[133] Martin Eidelberg, "Postwar Modernism," in *Design 1935-1965: What Modern Was : Selections from the Liliane and David M. Stewart Collection* , eds., Martin Eidelberg, Paul Johnson, and Kate Carmel (Montreal: Musée des arts décoratifs de Montréal, 1991), 150.

simpler for Richter instead of the brushy painting style applied here. Although there are no known personal or political ties to this image, personal ties are plausible and political implications exist for a magazine like *Domus*. The magazine was halted during the war, and it references the legacies of many of Germany's former avant-garde that emigrated throughout the world. And third, there are clear ties to commercialism and consumerism that link it to a Pop aesthetic. Richter would not have been exposed to a magazine like *Domus* in Dresden. The affluence and commercialism were a result of the economic boom in Italy that paralleled the *Wirtschaftswunder* in Germany.

Super-image: the overlaid marking and unmarking

Erased (Rasuchenberg)

My concluding remark of the sub-image Rauschenberg section suggested that the he used erasure to create a plane, just as de Kooning would do in his drawings by using the eraser as a drawing tool. If considered in this manner, we can think of this as an overlay of Rauschenberg's mark on de Kooning's—i.e., that the younger artist creates a new plane of whiteness overlaid on a de Kooning drawing.

This seems odd because we are more likely to think of erasers as removing, because they physically do remove graphite or other material rather than marking whiteness. And Rasuchenberg does not assist this layered plane reading with his choice of title. If this additional, white-plane reading were the intention of the artist, then a title like *White Drawing over a de Kooning* would have better aided the viewer's

understanding. But, Johns is the one who added the title, albeit with Rauschenberg's blessing, so perhaps the title should be discounted. And without the label the work remains a piece of paper, and it maintains the reading that Rauschenberg has regularly described; that *Erased de Kooning Drawing* is a derivation of his *White Paintings*, moving across mediums. However, there is no record of Rauschenberg making this connection until a 1987 interview with Barbara Rose.[134] And in another later interview he states, "As ridiculous as this may seem, I was trying to figure out a way to bring drawing into the all-whites."[135] Perhaps one reason why Rauschenberg did not explain the erasure in this manner earlier in his career is because, as already mentioned, the *White Paintings* had been very controversial prior to the onset of Conceptual Art and Minimalism.

Another possible reason for the artist's delay in linking this drawing and his earlier paintings is the simple fact that an erased de Kooning creates a lot more buzz and excitement for a young artist than a drawn version of his seemingly failed all-whites could ever have done. And so, Rauschenberg adjusts the work's narrative because this component could not be dropped. It was and is exciting. And it continues to inspire writing and criticism about the work. Even though it may, in fact, be contradictory to the artist's original intentions.

In the first published account of the *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, Calvin Tomkins wrote, "The implications were so blatantly Freudian, the act itself so obviously a

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[134] Robert Rauschenberg and Barbara Rose, *Rauschenberg* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 51.

[135] Rauschenberg is referring to his *White Paintings* as the all-whites. "Rauschenberg discussing *Erased de Kooning Drawing*," *undated interview,* accessed February 2, 2011, http://artforum.com/video/mode=large&id=19778/.

symbolic (if good-natured) patricide."[136] Leo Steinberg also considered the possibility of the erasure as an oedipal gesture when he recounted a conversation with the artist in the late 1950s.[137] There is little known about the actual agreement made between de Kooning and Rauschenberg. The junior artist's summation of the gifting of the drawing shifted slightly over the years, and de Kooning never discussed the drawing, the agreement, or the final erasure. The only reference from de Kooning's perspective is far removed from its original source. In the popular (nonacademic) biography *De Kooning: an American Master* by Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan, the authors conclude their section on the piece with a surprising series of lines: "Later, de Kooning became angry when the younger artist publicly exhibited Erased de Kooning [*Drawing*]. De Kooning believed the murder should have remained private, a personal affair between artists, rather than splashed before the public. He was from an older generation."[138] Clearly, this retelling is dramatized and should therefore be accepted cautiously. The authors note, "De Kooning's irritation, once he learned of Rauschenberg's public exhibition of the work, is rarely mentioned. Emilie Kilgore, interviews with the authors, July 24-26, 2003, and Susan Brockman, interviews with the authors, Apr. 24, 1992, and Jan. 14, 1998."[139] De Kooning was intimately involved with Brockman between 1963 and 1965 and with Kilgore in 1970. Again, any conclusions drawn from this may be regarded as tenuous.

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[136] Tomkins, "Profiles: Moving Out [Robert Rauschenberg]," 96.

[137] Steinberg, *Encounters*, 16.

[138] Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan, *De Kooning: An American Master* (New York: A. A. Knopf: 2004), 360.

[139] Stevens and Swan, *De Kooning: An American Master*, 663n360.

But it is certain that the work was rarely exhibited until after de Kooning's death in 1997.[140] It was the following year that the work was bought by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, certainly raising the question that there might have been some sort of gentleman's agreement, or conditions, about the exhibiting of and Rauschenberg's profiting from the *Erased de Kooning Drawing*.

However, if the work's intention was strictly oedipal, or even mostly so, then it seems unlikely that de Kooning would have agreed to it in the first place. What seems more likely is that Rauschenberg genuinely approached de Kooning with the idea of making all-white drawings through erasure and wanted to experiment by using the work of a famous artist, to which de Kooning agreed with conditions. Further, there is too much cynicism in assuming that Rauschenberg tricked the senior artist into giving a piece solely for destruction. Thus, the reading of the work has been impacted by the powerful cancelation gesture that was emphasized by the wording of the title. However, when considered carefully, while this element does exist, the erasure ought to be considered more of a dialogue than an opposition.

So, if we take the late career statements by the artist as factual however delayed, then we should follow with the question: does an erased drawing relate to the all-whites? White monochromes function differently from monochromes in other colors. They tend to have a blank element because they reference a blank canvas—simply primed—and

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[140] Until very recently it was thought that *Erased de Kooning Drawing* was not exhibited publicly until the 1960s. However, Johns has said that it was exhibited in a group drawing show at the Elinor Poindexter Gallery, New York in 1955. See Sarah Roberts, "Erased de Kooning Drawing," *Rauschenberg Research Project at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art*, published July 2013, accessed July 31, 2013, http://www.sfmoma.org/explore/collection/artwork/25846/essay/erased_de_kooning_drawing/.

ready to accept those first brush strokes. This is why the all-whites are often described as attracting and receiving ambient information. On the other hand, another color would be read as filling the visual field. A red or blue monochrome cannot be mistaken for a blank canvas as a white monochrome can. And a red or blue monochrome is less likely to promote a type of viewing where the monochrome is receiving information; more likely, the monochrome will in turn be affecting its surroundings.

A white/blank monochrome drawing is difficult to make. Traditional drawing techniques often only apply darker pigments, which form shades, allowing the white paper to act as highlights. Alternatively, white pastel could be applied, but this would likely be read as a color filling the space. It would not achieve the blank effect of the all-white paintings. But by using the eraser as a marking tool, it can be argued that Rauschenberg is offering a formal solution for drawing both a white and blank monochrome.

Both *Erased de Kooning Drawing* and the *White Paintings* promote careful looking because they are subtle images. But with the drawing the viewer strains to discover traces of de Kooning's work and maybe even attempt to reconstruct mentally what might have been there. This is a shift from the viewing encouraged by the paintings, because it is also a cancelation of another image.

As noted earlier, in addition to being a prompt to imagine what marks were originally on the page, the viewer is also prompted to imagine Rauschenberg performing the erasure. And the artist has explained that he was solely interested in erasing. He explained, "If it was my own work being erased, then the erasing would have only been

half the process, and I wanted it to be the whole."[141] Rauschenberg's focus on process is not surprising during this period, as already demonstrated in his prints and photographs. But it also points to just how critical the performative portion of making is for the artist—it is as much a part of the work as the finished object. Leo Steinberg has recounted his realization of this in 1957: "I suddenly understood that the fruit of the artist's work need not be an object. It could be an action, something once done, but so unforgettably done, that it's never done with—a satellite orbiting in your consciousness, like the perfect crime or a beau geste."[142] And so, as much as the work may be about de Kooning and he was a careful selection of Rauschenberg's, Rauschenberg is also the subject of the work.

Splattered, spilled, and smeared (Nitsch)

When Nitsch returned to painting in 1960 after abandoning it four years earlier, he brought his experience in theater back into the studio. His focus was on reducing action to a still image—the painted image—and to document the performance of his painting actions through film and photography.[143] At times his *Malaktionen* were even performed in front of an audience. Historian Wieland Schmied has written of Nitsch's painting performance, "*In nuce*, every act of painting contained the entire drama of human

[141] Tomkins, "Profiles: Moving Out [Robert Rauschenberg]," 66-71.

[142] Steinberg, *Encounters*, 22.

[143] Veit Loers, "When Pictures Learnt to Walk," in *Viennese Actionism*, 21.

activity."[144] The painting performances are "spontaneity taken to extremes, the excessive discharge of pent-up energies; creativity to the point of total exhaustion."[145]

Based on the drips in each of the *Hundred Guilder Prints*, it appears that the materials were applied to the paper while the paper was hanging on a wall. However, it looks as if the three different mediums were clearly applied in particular manners. The black ink, the least viscous of the mediums, flows down the page, with almost no splashing, as if Nitsch poured or spilled the ink across the surface. The black paint, much more viscous and the most opaque, looks as if it were thrown at the surface, with splatter marks streaking across the paper. It then appears to be reworked somewhat with a brush, darkening about a third of the image. The red paint is the most viscous, and the marks are made with smears, drips, and splatters, but it also has finger and hand marks. The red paint was likely wholly applied by Nitsch's hand covered in paint and smearing it across the plane.

Each of the overpaintings concentrates on filling the empty space of the unfinished plate. And each gives the impression that the medium was applied in a passionate burst of creativity, but there is an underlying delicate deliberateness as well. In each of the images the Christ figure's face has been obscured completely, in what almost appears as an afterthought. For example, in the inked image there are two apexes of what seems to be two different pours, and the pour that covers Christ is the much smaller of the

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[144] Wieland Schmied, "Images Between Spontaneity and Calculation: The Role of Painting in Hermann Nitch's Work," in *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 213.

[145] Ibid., 218.

two. In the black painted image there are splatters around the Christ figure but the splatter is enlarged (most likely with the aid of a brush) at the face in order to completely conceal it. And in the red version the smear is all but completely to the side of the Christ figure, the smear juts out at his face in order to conceal it.

As noted, Christianity played an important role in Nitsch's development of the *o. m. theater*. He used it as a reference point, a building block, and as a foil, particularly the crucifixion. In the actions of the *o. m. theater*, participants were regularly affixed to wooden crosses, naked, and then had blood, paint, or wine poured over them—the cross was then brought down to a horizontal position and they were covered with animal carcasses and entrails (fig. 33). Nitsch's orchestration of these actions was comparable to that of a religious leader. He wrote, "My conviction that the artist's work is equal to that of a priest, moved me to put on a simply cut, white smock, similar to a monk's habit."[146] And following performances, either the *o. m. theater* or *Malaktionen*, the painter's smock became a relic of the artist's actions, now covered in paint, blood, and wine. Often the garment was displayed flat against the wall with arms straight out so that they formed a constant line with the neck to form a "T," again referencing the crucifixion (fig. 34).

We know that Nitsch's thoughts about Christianity and the Catholic Church were influenced by a number of contemporary thinkers, including the writings of C. G. Jung. For example, Jung's contemporary and controversial text of 1958, *Answer to Job*, reflects many of the questions with which Nitsch was struggling. The purpose of Jung's inquiry

[146] Hermann Nitsch, "The Painter's Smock," written in the last week of September in Asolo, 1991, reprinted in *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 128.

was to investigate "the way in which modern man with Christian education and background comes to terms with the divine darkness which is unveiled in the Book of Job, and what effect it has on him."[147] Among Jung's findings was that, in contrast to the evangelical view, the God of the Old Testament had an imperfect nature, that there are evil parts as well as good. Jung concluded that by understanding this irrational union of opposites, we can better understand our own psychology and create a more enlightened whole. In his essay, Jung uses the story of Job as his framework, but additionally pulls examples from the Book of Enoch and even the New Testament's Book of Revelation—a return of the Old Testament God. Throughout, Jung carefully makes the case for reinterpreting the Bible through symbolism and, specifically, as it relates to psychology. In his interpretation Christ becomes a reflection of the self, man acts as ego and God the subconscious.

In reading Jung's "Answer to Job," it is easy to find passages that parallel Nitsch quotes or imagery from the *o. m. theater*. For example, both discuss their works as a exploring the many layers of the conscious and subconscious. And Jung's analysis of the symbolism and carefully highlighted imagery of the Book of Revelation relates directly to Nitsch's *o. m. theater*: "the winepress of the the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" or the white robe "dripped in blood."[148] Jung makes the leap that John the Revelator is the same John who wrote the gospel—therefore giving him a duality parallel

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[147] C. G. Jung, "Answer to Job" in eds. R. F. C. Hull, and Sonu Shamdasani, *Vol. 11 of the Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 3.
[148] Ibid., 84.

to God. Additionally, Jung admits that it is easy to view the writings of John as those of a psychopath, but that they should instead be viewed as the writing of a passionately religious person whose intense relationship with God allows for this transcendence and that the "really religious person, in whom the capacity for an unusual extension of consciousness is inborn, must be prepared for such dangers."[149] Passages like this may have supported Nitsch, who early in his career was viewed as a psychopath by many and was arrested multiple times for his performances and actions.[150] Further, if Nitsch did find solace or connection with Jung's combined John (Apostle and Revelator), then it may have also spurred him to take on the priest-like persona with a peculiar and dangerous relationship with religion, Christ, and belief. Nitsch explained this priest-like role of the artist in a statement written two years after he reworked his *Hundred Guilder Prints*:

> "Through my production, I take on all that appears to be negative, unappetizing, perverse, obscene; the rutting and the resulting hysteria of sacrifice, so that YOU ARE SPARED the bloody, shameless descent into extremeness. I am the expression of the entire creation, I have dissolved in it and identified with it, with

[149] Ibid., 88.

[150] For an excellent discussion on the role of scandal in Nitsch's work see: Adrian Daub, "HERMANN NITSCH - AUSTRIA IN THE AGE OF POST-SCANDALOUS CULTURE," *German Life and Letters* 67, no. 2 (April 2014): 260-278.

> all its pain and lust, mixed into a single de-materialized state of intoxication which will permeate me, and through me, YOU."[151]

This descent into extremeness and expression of the entire creation was the primary focus of Nitsch's work. And his search to uncover it was what took him from art to theater and ultimately to his combination of the arts. Nitsch often refers to this expression as "abreaction" or the release of emotional tension. That operates for the artist in at least three distinct ways. The first expression of abreaction parallels the creative actions of artists. As already mentioned, Nitsch was influenced by Abstract Expressionism and what he viewed as authentic channeling of the subconscious. Second, historian Kristine Stiles has researched the role of catharsis as a primary driver of the emotional releases, like Nitsch's, particularly in postwar Europe. She has explained that the work contains a survival ethos, that "it is an aesthetic response to a genocidal mentality and human emergency."[152] And third, is abreaction's religious expression. Nitsch has written that the "essential elements of the Eucharist are shown by psychology and anthropology to be rooted in the human desire for abreaction."[153] In fact, among Nitsch's desires seems to be to replace the outmoded religious model of the church by

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[151] All caps included in Nitsch's original document. Extract from Hermann Nitsch, "The Development of the O.M. Theater," reprinted in *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 44.

[152] Kristine Stiles, "Survival Ethos and Destruction Art," *Discourse* 14, no. 2 (1992): 97. Stiles is the foremost scholar on Destruction Art, Survival Ethos, and the Destuction in Art Symposium (DIAS). Destruction art is term that she has "adapted to identify the presentational works that situate the body in the center of the question of destruction and survival." Stiles, "Survival Ethos and Destruction Art," 75.

[153] Reproduced in *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 91. Specifically, Nitsch is referencing Christ's self-sacrifice and that his body and blood is eaten and drank by the faithful and Nitsch specifically references the connections that this practice has to primitive cultures and the totemic feast.

reintroducing abreaction. According to Nitsch in his essay “Being,” “With the palling of the Christian myth and the obsoleteness of many of the philosophical systems that were linked to the Christian concept of ethic and its belief in the afterlife, mankind was roughly shaken out of the sense of security that this understanding of the world had offered.”[154] In other words, the dominant religions and philosophies did not protect us from the horrors of World War II and so Nitsch is offering his alternative.

In that same essay, Nitsch argued, “The only referential point is subjective being. The point is to comprehend this accessible and attainable reality of being, this only reality that we have and that is our very own. All our facilities should concentrate on this, on our very own being, on the complete experience of our being alive, so that we can penetrate BEING.”[155] It is this concentration on being that fully circles back to abreaction, because Nitsch viewed it as a fundamental desire of humanity that has been harnessed in the past by religion, but over time has ceased to wholly function as originally intended. Thus he co-opted imagery and form in order to recreate and fulfill a base desire.

Because the artist functions as priest, conductor, or performer in his work, he, too, becomes the subject. And similarly to the way in which Nitsch repurposes religious imagery, his work also reframes the role of the artist’s body in the work. Again, Stiles has written that performances like this have recuperated “the body as a medium from the various orthodoxies of nineteenth-century academic figuration and twentieth-century social realism. In this way, I think, performance art has reconstituted and affirmed the

[154] Reproduced in *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 73.

[155] Ibid., 73.

human body as a significant form and subject matter."[156] In the *Hundred Guilder Prints* the artist or his body is not directly seen, but his presence is undeniable as the indexical markings overpower the image. Just as Nitsch uses the painter's smock as a remnant of action, so do these prints register such actions. The viewer imagines the artist performing his mark making. We see the hand prints and therefore see the immediate, direct engagement of artist's flesh with his materials.

Obliterated / wiped (Richter)

Richter's wiping away, or obliteration, of the center of *Table* has the potential to be read as either an erasure or as an overlaid mark. Like Rauschenberg's erasure of the de Kooning drawing, a reading of the action as an overlay is odd because the obliteration is negating and we typically only associate an overlay with an additive function. However, the obliteration can easily be misread as a large brushstroke because it does more than remove paint from the plane: it also moves wet paint and blurs the image. The edges or outer portions of the wipe especially tend toward blurring because the rag was neither soaked enough to allow all of the pigment to flow together, nor applied with too much force to wipe all of the pigment off. Additionally, we know that the wiping event must have occurred in relatively short succession to the newspaper adhesion and removal because it is clear that some of the paint was in the process of drying as traces of newspaper adhered, but much of the paint was still wet enough to be pushed around as

[156] Stiles, "Survival Ethos and Destruction Art," 91.

opposed to simply removed. The center portion of the wipe reads as the rag having been saturated in solvent, because the pigment that it comes in contact with is released from its suspension in oil. For example, at the center left of the image, there was so much turpentine that it continued to dissolve the paint after the hand of the artist left the work, eating away at the paint and producing a crystalized pattern.

Table's obliteration has the possibility of being read as an emotional outburst, similar to Richter's then-recent Art Informel experiments and the subsequent burning of those experiments. That burning and destruction of images, which was largely a self-critique of the work, is the potential parallel of this obliteration, albeit with a far less extreme outcome. And the idea of self-criticism in *Table* has been supported by Richter's statements. For example, in a 1996, interview with Robert Storr, Richter explains that *Table* was his first "canceled painting," wiped out because "it looks so stupid . . . I can't quite stand it anymore."[157] Richter goes on to discuss further how, later in his career, he would "cancel" paintings with his blurring technique if he was unhappy with the output. Richter gives an illustration of this: *Reader* (fig. 35) from 1994 is "almost the way I wanted it, but that is a rare example; it is not too imprecise." And so there is no need to blur or cancel this image. However, there is an earlier version of *Reader* (fig. 36) that was canceled by scrapping or dry brushing the painting's drying surface. Without both images, the canceled painting is blurred to the point where a viewer begins to have difficulty understanding the figuration of the image. However, when the two paintings are

[157] Robert Storr, "Gerhard Richter: The Day Is Long," *Art in America.* 90 (2002): 66-75.

viewed side by side it is very easy to understand the image of the canceled one: it is the same figure of a woman, only the angle has changed so that her back is turned, and we peer over her shoulder to see what she is reading.

Richter, in a 2002 interview, used the same term—cancel—for both the obliteration and the blur. Yet the techniques and their resulting marks are completely different from one another. Richter is often playful with language, but he is rarely loose with it. If there is a similarity between the two marks it is likely found in their intentions rather than the physical outcomes. Richter clearly abandoned the obliteration technique in favor of the blur which he has continued to use throughout his career, to the point where it has almost become a signature mark. Because of this, it can be argued, that the obliteration of *Table* acts as a starting point, an early step toward Richter's blur. The significance of this step may be one of the primary reasons that the artist plucked *Table* out of chronological sequence in order for it to begin his catalogue raisonné. Similarly to Rauschenberg's erasure and Nitsch's splatters, Richter's gesture and final image is not the embodiment of a mature career, but a transition piece in which their significant ideas are beginning to form.

If we accept the notion that the obliteration is on Richter's spectrum of cancelation most commonly resulting in blurs, then it is useful to examine his remarks on blurs in order to also better understand the obliteration. In a collection of artist notes compiled between 1964 and 1965, Richter explained his intentions with blurring:

"Blurring is not the most important thing; nor is it an identity tag for my pictures. When I dissolve demarcations and create transitions, this is not in order to destroy

> the representation, or to make it more artistic or less precise. . . . I blur things to make everything equally important and equally unimportant. I blur things so that they do not look artistic or craftsman-like but technological, smooth and perfect. I blur things to make all the parts a closer fit."[158]

From these remarks there are at least three points to make. First, this passage helps clarify that the cancelation of the image is not a wholesale destruction of the image. This helps explain why *Table* holds its prominent position in Richter's official oeuvre and was not burned in a courtyard. For Richter, this cancelling action is merely creating another image, a different image.

Second, both the blur and the obliteration act to equalize parts of the paintings by dissolving demarcations. The blur goes further in creating transition, but one could argue that the obliteration does in fact do this as well. Both techniques certainly act as a type of visual entropy, the evolution toward a state of inert uniformity or in this case, gray. This equalization is fundamental to Richter's work and has been interpreted differently by various scholars, sometime using it to refer to equalization of styles or as an equalization of politics or as an equalization of form. For example, Küper's essay, noted earlier, discusses the blur as an objective overlay of subjective images. Another example comes from a 2010 essay by John J. Curley, in which he makes the point that "in German, '-istisch' is a suffix that often corresponds with the English 'istic.' And by titling the work '*Tisch*,' the German word for table, "Richter collapses adjectival distinctions: this

[158] Gerhard Richter, "Notes, 1964-1965," in *The Daily Practice of Painting*, 35-37.

painting is neither 'sozialistisch,' 'kapitalistisch,' 'realistisch,' nor 'formalistisch,' but rather just 'tisch.' It is all and none of these labels—it serves as a 'Third Way.'"[159] Richter has held a continued interest in distancing himself and his practice from ideology. He has discussed how painting promotes personal autonomy and how it can create the absence of authorities, or God, or ideology.[160] For example, in a 1966 interview, Richter stated, "I pursue no objectives, no system, no tendency; I have no program, no style, no direction. I have no time for specialized concerns, working themes, or variations that lead to mastery."[161]

Richter's disdain for ideology is also a disdain for a thesis. Or to put it in a positive tone, a penchant for ambiguity. Hal Foster has written about this and explained that Richter "is valued as 'Europe's greatest modern painter' precisely because he lets us have it both (indeed many) ways—anti-aesthetic and pro-painting, avant-garde and tradition, banality and beauty, indifference and affect—in a quasi-schizoid pleasing of all parties."[162] This remark resembles another, written by Andre Breton in 1921, about Marcel Duchamp: "For me, and I have said this before, the thing that constitutes the strength of Marcel Duchamp, the thing to which he owes his escape alive from several perilous situations, is above all his *disdain for the thesis*, which will always astonish less

[159] Curley, "Gerhard Richter's Cold War Vision," 19.

[160] Richter interview with Buchloh, in Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting*, 150.

[161] Gerhard Richter, "Notes, 1966," in *The Daily Practice of Painting*, 58.

[162] Foster, *October Files*, 129

favored men."[163] Linking Richter to Duchamp is a significant task, but what is not is Duchamp's cascading effects through Europe in the early 1960s. Specifically, the avenue that would have opened Richter to these ides is the Fluxus movement which was influenced by Duchamp, by way of John Cage, and in turn disseminated Duchampian ideas.[164] We know from Richter himself that he became familiar with the work of Fluxus shortly after moving to West Germany and was particularly interested in the group's ability to open up the definitions of art through an anti-aesthetic impulse.[165] Richter's wiping gesture can certainly be read in Fluxus terms—as a radical transgression that has social implications, rather than aesthetic ones, and is opposed to tradition and professionalism in the arts.[166] Richter's words have confirmed these gestures. Even in 1986, while talking with Buchloh, Richter insisted that among his primary goals of painting was an interest in how painting promotes personal autonomy and how it can create the absence of authorities, or God, or ideology.[167]

The third insight that can be gleaned from the above passage is that the blurring or cancelation is a commentary by the artist on the underlying image. Just as in the *Reader* example, there is an intention to resolve something that is unsatisfactory. And here he

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[163] André Breton, "Marcel Duchamp" (1921) in *The Dada Painters and Poets; An Anthology*, ed. Robert Motherwell (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, 1951), 211.

[164] Estera Milman, "Fluxus History and Trans-History," in *The Fluxus Reader,* ed. Ken Friedman (Chicester, West Sussex: Academy Editions, 1998), 160-164.

[165] Richter interview with Buchloh in Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting*, 139.

[166] Craig Saper uses these terms to define Fluxus in his essay: "Fluxus as a Laboratory" in *The Fuxus Reader*, 136.

[167] Richter interview with Buchloh in Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting*, 150.

explains that the dissatisfaction stems from the painting looking too artistic or craftsman-like. Richter also makes explicit reference to painting techniques in this note. Writing that the blurring technique was superior to other traditional techniques, and explaining that "an *alla prima* impasto would be too reminiscent of painting, and would destroy the illusion."[168] And as already mentioned, handling of paint in the sub-image of *Table* is reminiscent of wet-on-wet or the *alla prima* technique. Although the wipe or obliteration of that image does not provide a more technical, smooth, or perfect solution, it may be a critical first step toward his recognizing his displeasure with the underlying technique and his acknowledgement that it must be addressed.

The presence of the artist's hand in the overlaid mark is the significant difference between the obliteration and the blur. The artist's hand disappears in the blurred *Reader* painting. The painting becomes uniform, mechanical, and smooth.. Because of this difference it maintains a primary reading as an image rather than a relic of an action, even though both the blur and the obliteration are an after-the-fact commentary by the artist. But with the wipe of *Table*, the action of the artist is not only present but dominant. It is easy to imagine the artist attacking his own image. Thus, akin to the three other works in this essay, this artist's involvement in the piece becomes performative and the overlaid markings read, at least in part, as a commentary on the sub-image, so that the artist too becomes a subject in the work.

[168] Richter, "Notes, 1964-1965," 37.

Conclusion

The four art works presented here have commonalities. Each of the works develops a dialogue between sub- and super-image, with the super-image acting as a commentary on the underlying image. Each of the works brings the artist into the subject matter of the work through their superimposed gestures, because the act of mark making is at the forefront of any reading. For Nitsch, that personal insertion became a standard of his practice, whereas Richter changed his cancelation of images to the more mechanical blur. As Nitsch said, "there is no doubt that the action is the most captivating element—nothing else even comes close."[169] Those actions and their resulting marks each relate to the artists' developing artistic identity. Each is a record of the artist's practice and each a cataloguing of process. Each of the sub-images relates to a dominant force or figure whether that is chalk-style, Rembrandt (perhaps representing the academy), Willem de Kooning who at that moment was at the peak of his fame, and *Domus*. *Domus* is the hardest read, because it could stand for several things—consumerism, a lost German avant-garde, a play on social realism, or a personal / political meaning for the artist. Additionally, each of these four marks can be read as a negating or destructive act. And, although some of these four works offer a form of satire or critique, others are more ambiguous and none are pure negations of the sub-image. Instead each offers a dialogue between the artist and external force. Gillray longed to be recognized and rewarded for

[169] Reprinted in Nitsch, *Museum Hermann Nitsch*, 134.

his talents by the same group that he pokes fun at in his spoiled image. Rauschenberg revered de Kooning. Nitsch continually turned to Rembrandt, religious imagery, and eventually abstract painting for inspiration. And Richter has flatly stated his lack of pure negation in his obliteration.

The primacy of the moment in each and the creation-destruction dichotomy relates to the creative process of any artist and to the avant-garde in general. As Robert Storr has noted, "Much of the avant-garde's legacy had been one of cyclical or simultaneous destruction and construction, of ending history, of running away from or ahead of it."[170] And this is at least somewhat atemporal. Writer and art critic Carl Einstein, a key source for the European avant-garde in the first half of the twentieth-century, believed that the objective of contemporary art should be nothing but uninhibited protest against the aesthetic benchmarks of the past.[171] Couched in Dada, his tone is iconoclastic and focused on the destructive nature of art as a means to generate positive returns. In the *Fluxus Reader*, Estera Milman provides an excellent history of the concept of the modern avant-garde, dating back to 1825 and the French writer and diplomat Saint-Simon, and the avant-garde's continuation in post-war twentieth-century movements like Fluxus.[172] Seminal Fluxus member Ken Friedman also argues for the trans-historical nature of Fluxus and the avant-garde at the outset of his 1989 essay "Fluxus and

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[170] Storr, *Cage Paintings*, 86.

[171] Uwe Fleckner, "The Real Demolished by Trenchant Objectivity: Carl Einstein and the critical world view of Dada and 'Verism'," in *The Dada Seminars*, eds. Leah Dickerman and Matthew S. Witkovsky (Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, in association with D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 2005), 64.

[172] Milman, "Fluxus History and Trans-History," 156-157.

Company," dating the avant-garde back to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, 6th century Chinese Zen philosophy, and the scientific ideas of the late 1800s.[173]

The reason for this excursion into the ahistorical nature and basis of the avant-garde is two-fold. First, young emerging artists have a tendency to want to place themselves in dialogue with existing parameters, because their own work has not yet been developed. And, like the avant-garde, an emerging artist's primary goal is to create something new. I argue that this is what each of the four artists presented in this essay were working through at the moment that they created these in specific works and that the objects in turn reflect that. And, second, these works potentially act as a personal manifesto of sorts. Like a manifesto for a movement, they come at a transition point and they embody a public declaration of beliefs, intentions, views, or motives. Each develops a conversation with the existing order—a dominant artist, the academy, the prevailing style.

Tristan Tzara began the "Dada Manifesto" in 1918 with the line, "To put out a manifesto you must want: ABC, to fulminate against 1, 2, 3, to fly into a rage and sharpen your wings to conquer and disseminate little abcs and big abcs."[174] Tzara then went on to offer a typical Dada manifesto that is full of contradictions. And the manifestos presented here, if they are manifestos, are filled with contradictions as well. They certainly proclaim ABCs and they can be read as fulminating against something,

[173] Ken Friedman, originally written to accompany an exhibition by the same title at Emily Harvey Gallery, reproduced in *The Fluxus Reader*, 237.

[174] Tristan Tzara, "Dada Manifesto 1918," in *The Dada Painters and Poets; An Anthology*, 76.

but a careful reading of each demonstrates that they are in an exchange more so than a total rejection. Though each of the four works offers similarities to a manifesto, they are personal in nature. These artists are not proselytizing—each is merely offering a better alternative for themselves and for their work. And as such, each work is as much a guidepost for the artist in their own artistic journey as a finished piece of art. Rauschenberg is not advocating for others to perform erasures, nor is Nitsch arguing that other artists take up the *o. m. theatre* as their method of art making. Each is finding their own personal aesthetic solution to his own unique set of problems, and these works embody that key transition in the artistic process.

FIGURE 1: James Gillray, *Sketched by Humphrey Spoiled by Gillray*, 1781. Stipple and etching print on paper, 25.5 cm x 19 cm, The Blanton Museum of Art. Photographed by the author.

FIGURE 2: Francesco Bartolozzi after Joshua Reynolds, *The Affectionate Brothers*, 1791. Stipple and etching print on paper, 43 cm x 31.1 cm, The British Museum collection.

FIGURE 3: James Gillray, *The Return*, 1781. Stipple print on paper, 22.8 cm x 17.8 cm, The British Museum collection.

FIGURE 4: James Gillray, *Sketched by Humphrey Spoiled by Gillray*, 1781. Stipple and etching print on paper, 25.5 cm x 19 cm, The British Museum collection.

FIGURE 5: James Gillray, *Sketched by Humphrey Spoiled by Gillray*, 1781. Stipple and etching print on paper, 26.9 cm x 20.2 cm, The British Museum collection.

FIGURE 6: James Gillray, *Sketched by Humphrey Spoiled by Gillray*, 1781. Stipple and etching print on paper, 27 cm x 20.2 cm, The British Museum collection.

FIGURE 7: James Gillray, *The Right Honorable William Pitt*, 1789. Engraving and etching on paper, 47.5 cm x 34.3cm, The British Museum collection.

FIGURE 8: John Keyes Sherwin after Thomas Gainsborough, *William Pitt*, 1789. Engraving and etching print on paper, The National Portrait Gallery Archive, Engravings Collection, London.

FIGURE 9: Philip Dawe, *The Pantheon Macaroni* or *The Macaroni, a real character at the late masquerade*, 1773. Mezzotint print on paper, 35.1 cm x 25 cm, The British Museum collection.

FIGURE 10: James Gillray, *Female Curiosity*, 1778. Etching on paper, 35.8 cm x 25.5 cm, The Library of Congress collection.

FIGURE 11: James Gillray, *La Belle Assemblée*, 1787. Etching on paper, 24.8 cm x 35.1 cm, The British Museum collection.

FIGURE 12: Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Lady Sarah Bunbury Sacrificing to the Graces*, 1763–1765. Oil on canvas, 242 cm x 151.5 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago.

FIGURE 13: DETAIL, James Gillray, *Sketched by Humphrey Spoiled by Gillray*, 1781. Stipple and etching print on paper, 25.5 cm x 19 cm, The Blanton Museum of Art. Photographed by the author.

FIGURE 14: At top, detail of James Gillray, *Sketched by Humphrey Spoiled by Gillray*, 1781. Stipple and etching print on paper, 25.5 cm x 19 cm, The Blanton Museum of Art. Photographed by the author. The five lower signatures are detail images taken from the United Stated Declaration of Independence, 1776.

FIGURE 15: Robert Rauschenberg, *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953. Drawing with traces of ink and crayon on paper, 64.14 cm x 55.25 cm. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

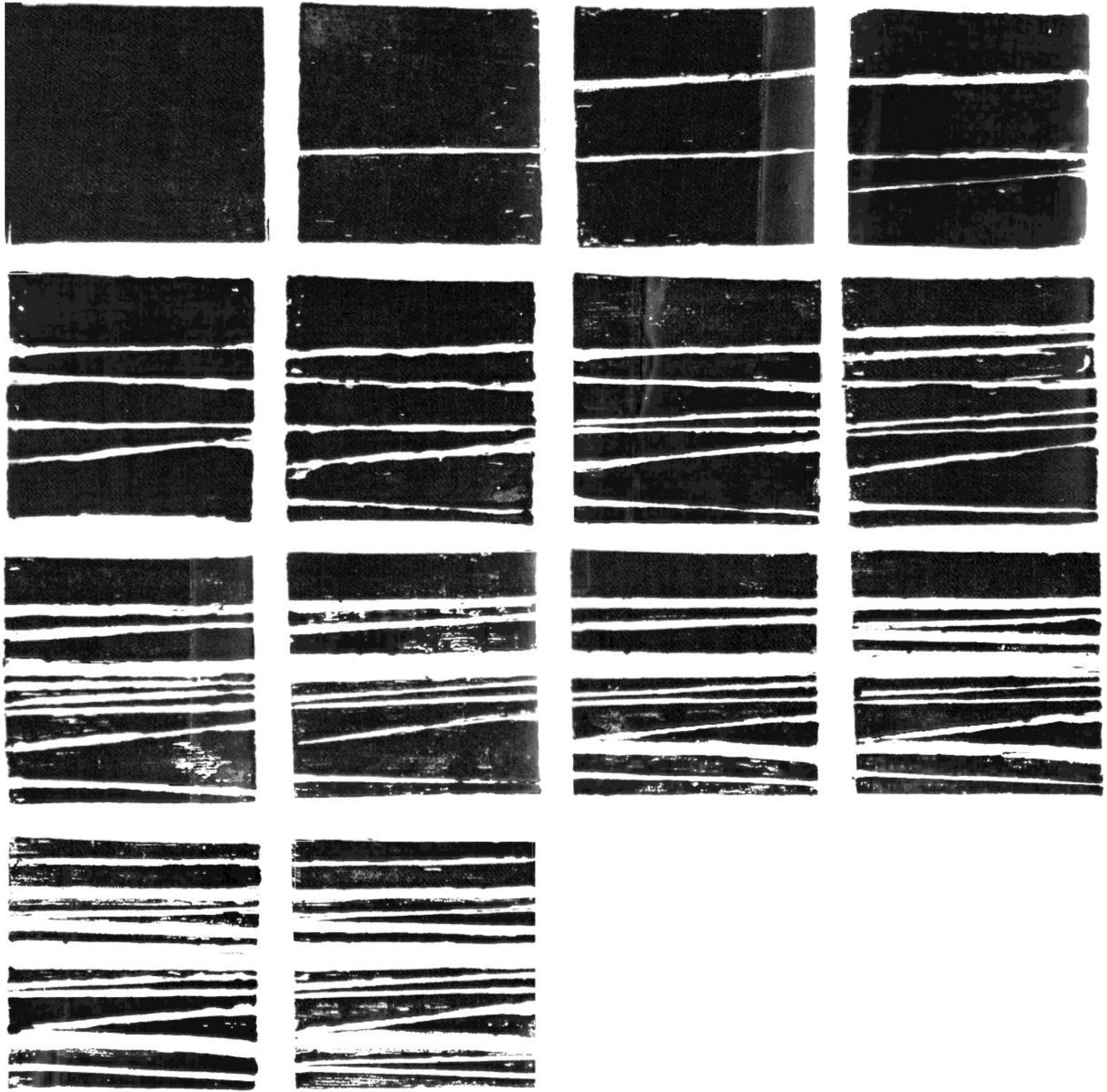

FIGURE 16: Robert Rauschenberg, *This Is the First Half of a Print Designed to Exist in Passing Time*, ca. 1949. Pencil on tracing paper and fourteen woodcuts on paper, bound with twine and stapled, 30.8 x 22.5 cm. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

FIGURE 17: Robert Rauschenberg, *Cy + Roman Steps (I-V)*, 1952; suite of five gelatin silver prints, 50.8 cm x 203.2 cm. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

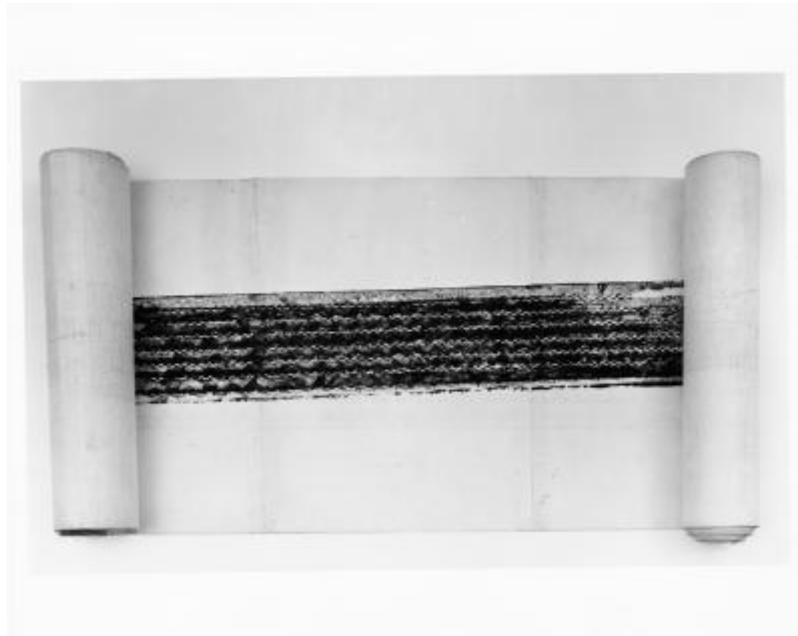

FIGURE 18: Robert Rauschenberg, *Automobile Tire Print*, 1953; paint on 20 sheets of paper mounted on fabric, 41.91 cm x 671.83 cm. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

FIGURE 19: Robert Rauschenberg, *White Painting [three panel]*, 1951; latex paint on canvas, 182.88 cm x 274.32 cm. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

FIGURE 20: Hermann Nitsch, *Crucifixion (after Rembrandt),* 1956; oil on canvas, 136 cm x 156 cm. Hermann Nitsch Museum.

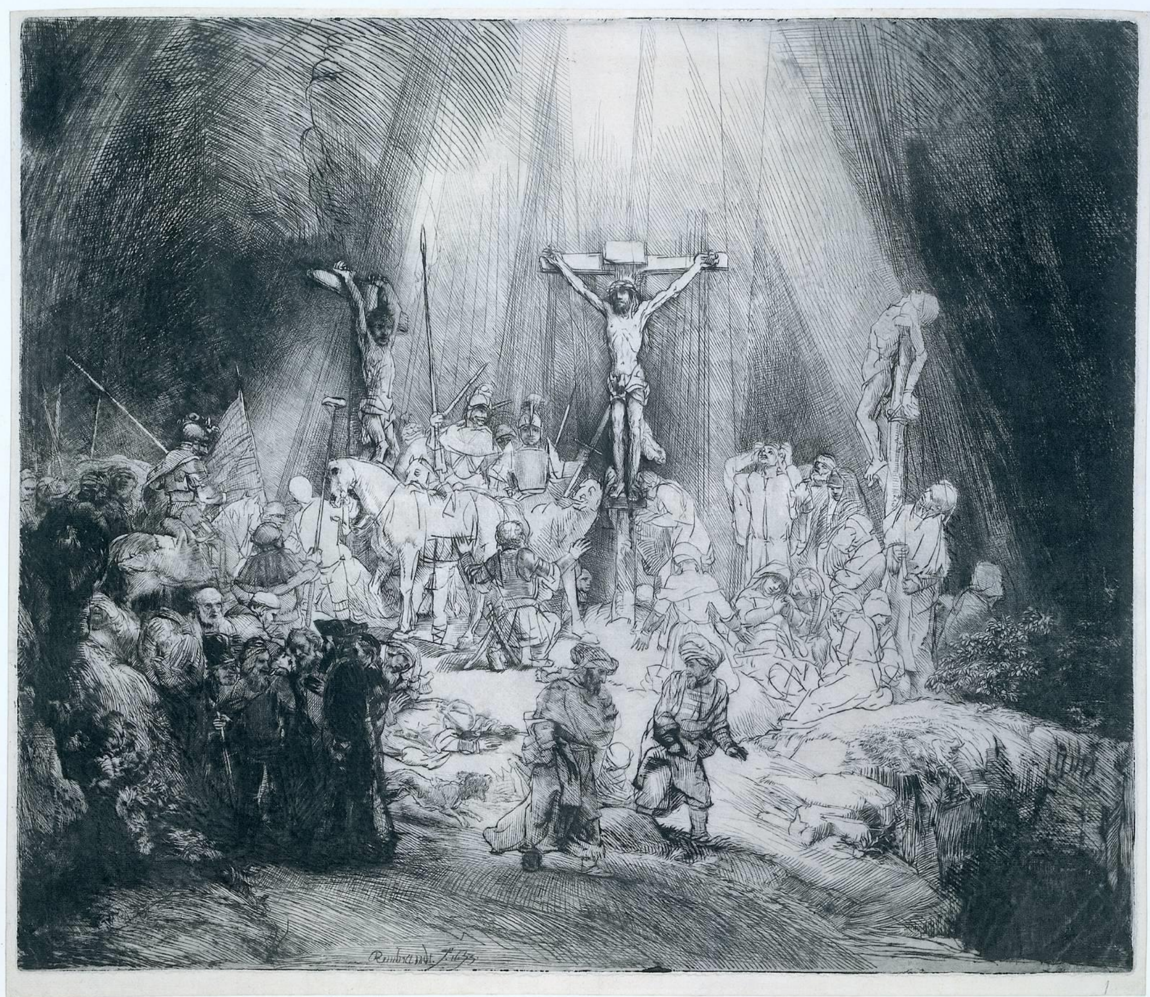

FIGURE 21: Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *The Three Crosses,* 1653, drypoint, 38.7 cm x 45.2 cm. The Albertina Museum.

FIGURE 22: Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *Christ Preaching (The Hundred Guilder Print),* 1646-1650, etching, drypoint, and burin on paper, 28.2 cm x 39.5 cm. The Albertina Museum.

FIGURE 23: Hermann Nitsch, *Reworking of print made after Rembrandt's "Hundred Guilder Print*," 1956-1960, emulsion paint on etching on paper, 42.5 cm x 54.5 cm. Galerie Heike Curtze, Vienna.

FIGURE 24: Hermann Nitsch, *Reworking of print made after Rembrandt's "Hundred Guilder Print*," 1956-1960, emulsion paint on etching on paper, 42.5 cm x 54.5 cm. Private collection of Udo and Annette Brandhorst.

FIGURE 25: Hermann Nitsch, *Reworking of print made after Rembrandt's "Hundred Guilder Print*," 1956-1960, ink on etching on paper, 39.9 cm x 50.2 cm. Saint Louis Art Museum. (black ink)

FIGURE 26: Gerhard Richter, *Aunt Marianne*, 1965, oil on canvas, 100 cm x 115 cm.
Private collection, Stuttgart.

FIGURE 27: Gerhard Richter, *Herr Heyde*, 1965, oil on canvas, 55 cm x 65 cm. Private collection, Wolfsburg.

FIGURE 28: Gerhard Richter, *Table [Tisch]*, 1965, oil on canvas, 90.2 cm x 113 cm. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art on extended loan from a private collection.

FIGURE 29: Willem de Kooning, *Woman*, 1951. Charcoal and pasel on paper, 21½" x 16", in the collection of Ruth and Paul Tishman, New York.

FIGURE 30: Hermann Nitsch, *Reworking of print made after Rembrandt's "The Three Crosses*," lithograph on paper, 34.5 cm 39 cm. Hermann Nitsch Museum Prinzendorf.

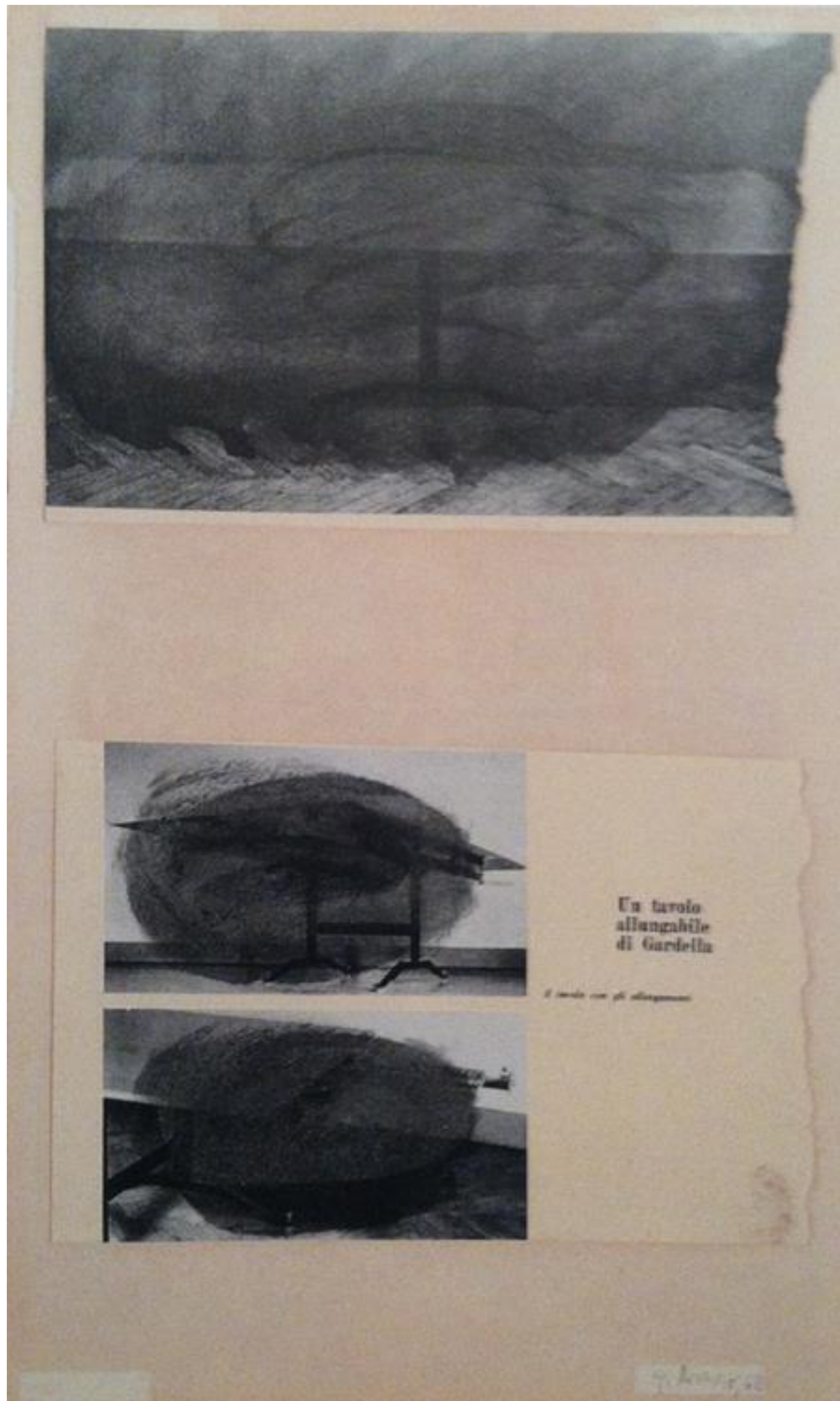

FIGURE 31: Gerhard Richter, *Maquette for Table*, 1959, magazine clippings with annotations by the artist, 48 cm x 30 cm. Private collection, Frankfurt.

FIGURE 32: Gerhard Richter, *Folding Dryer*, 1962, oil on canvas, 99.3 cm x 78.6 cm. Private collection, Stuttgart.

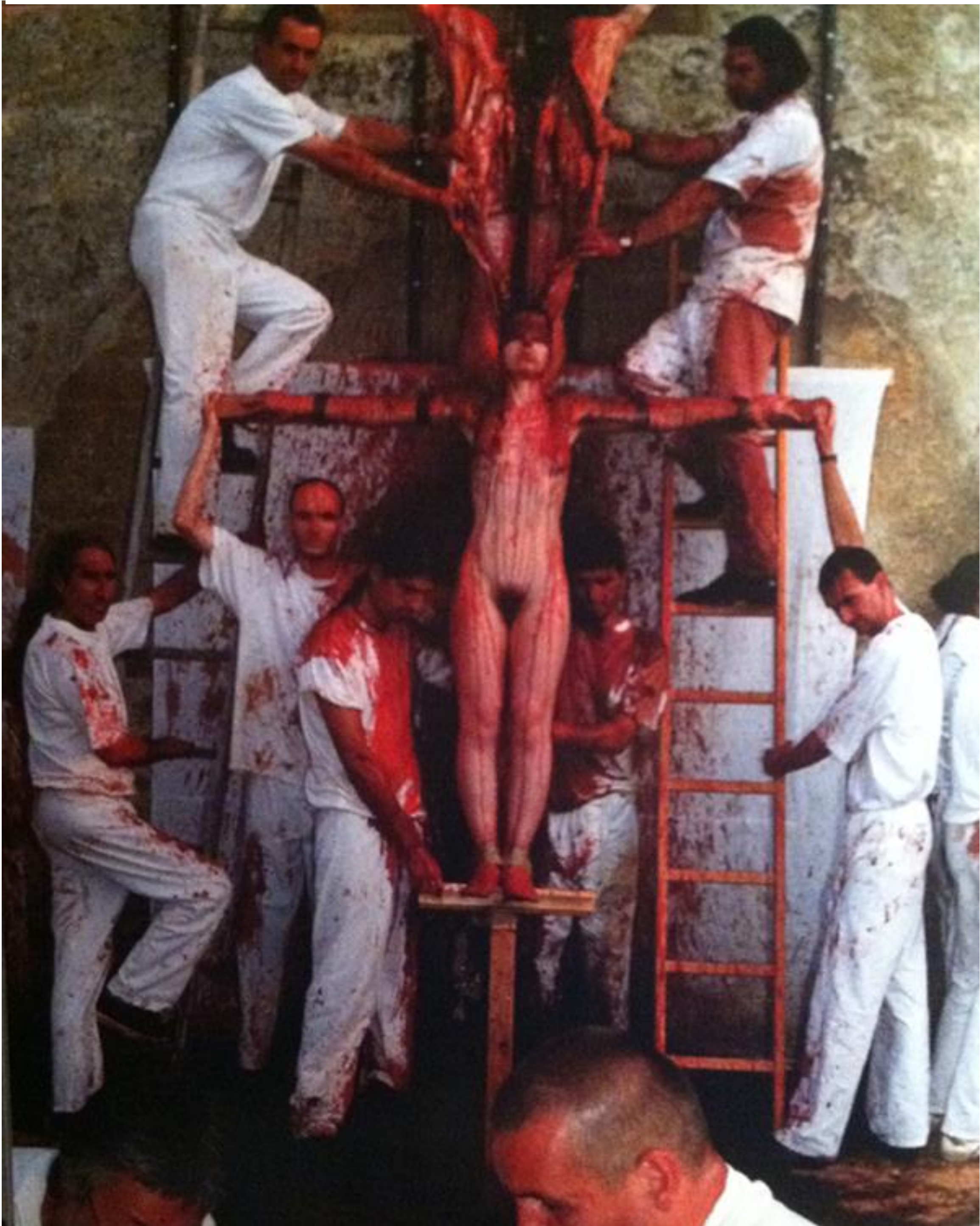
FIGURE 33: Hermann Nitsch, 100th action, 6 day play, 1998.

FIGURE 34: Hermann Nitsch, Painting performance, Vienna Secession, 1987.

FIGURE 35: Gerhard Richter, *Reader*, 1994, oil on canvas, 72 cm x 102 cm. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

FIGURE 36: Gerhard Richter, *Reader*, 1994, oil on canvas, 51 cm x 71 cm. High Museum of Art.

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