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Learning To Refuse: Pedagogy, Protest, And Lecture-Performance, 1964-1975

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Abstract

This study examines how artists in the US reimagined aesthetic practice through performances of refusal from 1964 to 1975. Attending to the emergent genre of the lecture-performance, I analyze pedagogical projects that articulate dissent through interventions into existing models of knowledge, asking: what is to be learned from saying no? These projects respond, in part, to artists' encounters with university training. They redefine artistic activity through critical engagements with the labor of the information worker, a figure sartorially invoked by the bespectacled uniform of a professorial archetype. Artists deployed the lecture format to imagine how knowledge might be assembled otherwise: within counter-institutional frameworks, beyond authorized discourse, through embodied tactics of performativity, and toward socially transformative ends. They did so at a moment when artists' academicization proceeded as an explicitly gendered project that privileged masculine-coded cognitive labor over and against modes of work coded as feminized craft. Jettisoning these divisions, the lecture-performance situates knowledge in the specificity of embodied agents. In this way, lecture-performance renegotiates the discursive practices that regulate bodies of knowledge and knowledgeable bodies. Placing these developments in conversation with the agitational speech of artist activism, my study focuses on affiliates of the 1970 Art Strike Against Racism, Sexism, War, and Repression. It tracks forms of pedagogy and protest across a range of media beyond the lecture-performance, including video lectures, pamphlets, and photographic series by Robert Morris, Adrian Piper, Faith Ringgold, and Andy Warhol. Its case studies toggle between artworks, performative speech acts, and direct action, arguing for the porousness of their categorical boundaries in this period. Redressing the claim that artists' strikes, protests, and boycotts foreclose possibilities for productive engagement, I route practices of refusal toward their generative, dialogic capacities. Charting the convergence of movements in art and activism from 1964 to 1975, this study asks what we have to learn from statements of refusal delivered at the interstices of academic lecterns, political podiums, and sites of artistic display.

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LEARNING TO REFUSE: PEDAGOGY, PROTEST, AND LECTURE-PERFORMANCE, 1964-1975

Mashinka Firunts

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LEARNING TO REFUSE: PEDAGOGY, PROTEST, AND LECTURE-PERFORMANCE, 1964-1975

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Beyond "Sensible Dialogue": On Statements of Artistic Refusal

I Can't Work Like This

At first blush, Natascha Sadr Haghighian's *I Can't Work Like This* (2007) stages what seems a totalizing withdrawal from discourse [fig. 1]. In its depopulated tableau, we encounter a scene that speaks of having been vacated by speaking subjects. The installation comprises a wall of nails spelling out the work's title in negative space. Discarded construction materials lie scattered hither and thither. Two hammers rest demonstratively on the gallery floor, left behind as traces of an allegorical worker's strike. "I can't work like this" hovers in the air, indexing the labor of its own making in the same instant that it announces the refusal of that labor. The gesture is not imbued with finality. Its absent maker's tools have not been stored away, out of sight. Rather, they rest where they can be taken up again, at a future moment when the task at hand might be reinitiated under different working conditions. Affective residue lingers within the statement, conjured by the image of each word taking shape through the bodily application of a hammer's striking force. In the same breath, an absurdist humor suffuses the piece. It enacts a performance of embodied labor as a notice of withdrawal from performances of embodied labor.

Formulated as an elliptical riddle, the installation deploys work as a means to declare a work stoppage. It nevertheless remains recognizable as a canny aesthetic representation of labor revolt, far afield from the realm of labor revolt as such. The longer the spectatorial encounter, the more rapidly its indeterminacies multiply. How, then, to

account for its ellipses? What are the classificatory criteria that demarcate the piece from a straightforward incitement to protest? Does its sentiment gesture toward silence, or toward a recalibration of the terms of existing discourses? What effects does its statement produce, and do they resound beyond the delimited frame of the artwork? What do we have to learn from articulations of refusal like this one?

These questions resonate throughout my study, which analyzes how artists reimagined aesthetic practice through performances of refusal from 1964 to 1975. Attending to the emergent genre of the lecture-performance, I examine pedagogical projects that stage dissent through interventions into existing ways of knowing and working. In the process, these projects index a redefinition of artistic activity through an orientation toward speech, education, and protest as arenas of action. Placing these developments in conversation with the rise of artist activism throughout the 1960s and 70s, I focus on their relation to the 1970 Art Strike Against Racism, War, and Repression. For affiliates of Art Strike, refusal often proceeded as a rejection of conventional artmaking itself, a category jettisoned in favor of pursuits associated with the roles of educator and organizer. In that way, their speech acts prefigured contemporary announcements in the vein of: "I can't work like this."

My study tracks these shifts across a range of media beyond the lecture-performance, including video lectures, pamphlets, installations, and photographic series. Its case studies toggle between artworks, performative speech acts, and direct action, evading the definitional criteria by which they are conventionally mapped in discrete relation to one another. Reading across these varied coordinates, I argue for refusal as a pedagogically generative tactic that reorganizes discourse under conditions of pervasive

crisis. Informed by current debates on politically engaged practice, my study attends to the period between 1964 and 1975 in order to produce mutually illuminating relations that might inflect our approach to aesthetics and politics in the present.

Moving backward from the present through Haghighian's installation, we might begin more plainly by asking: what is the nature of the "work" to which her piece alludes? Most saliently, Haghighian's language-based installation nods toward the affinities between art work and knowledge work. In the tableau it arranges, the artist's implicit task lies in generating linguistic content by completing the statement "I can't work like this." Whereas art work might tentatively be defined as the production and circulation of aesthetic content, knowledge work can broadly be identified through a slight modulation, as the production and circulation of information.[1] Their resemblance owes to the fact that the distinction between the two proves increasingly tenuous in the present. Providing a taxonomy of knowledge work, Alan Liu calculates its contours through the arithmetic of "academic intellectuals + (technical professional managerial) intelligentsia + [the] trailing edge of clerical workers."[2] To this equation, my study adds the art worker.

Casting workers as informational delivery personnel, this formula demands the labor of virtuosic performance. Both art work and knowledge work routinely trade in *talk value*, a term Simon Sheikh borrows from the business sector to denote staging speech as an aesthetic form and extracting "endless communication" from the worker.[3] Similarly,

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[1] As Alan Liu writes, information work sustains and undergirds knowledge work. See Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 9-10.

[2] Liu, *The Laws of Cool*, 392.

[3] Simon Sheikh, "Talk Value: Cultural Industry and the Knowledge Economy," in *On*

Hito Steyerl frames the artist as a content provider who delivers "total social labour" in the format of lectures, Q&As, and embodied live appearances distributed within economies of presence.[4] In Jan Verwoert's succinct account of contemporary art: "we, all of us, are the communications industry."[5] From that vantage, Haghighian's installation might be read as a visual allegory for interventions into the communicative apparatus of the art field.[6] It absents the embodied figure from whom its statement originates and announces that further utterance will be withheld.

Proceeding further along this line of inquiry, my study examines how the invocation of "work" intersects with the variegated terrains of art and politics. In order to approach the triangulation of these terms, we might look to the historical emergence of the contemporary art worker. Julia Bryan-Wilson traces this figure to the recoding of art as politicized labor undertaken by groups like the Art Workers' Coalition in the 1960s and 70s.[7] To position artists as art workers acknowledges that their activity is embedded within fraught arenas of economic exchange, where mechanisms of institutional funding

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Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art, eds. Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi (Utrecht: BAK, 2008), 188.

[4] Steyerl links the conflation of artists and information delivery to the proliferation of talks, lectures, and other informational formats that "seem to have become more important than any other form of work." See Hito Steyerl, "The Terror of Total Dasein: Economies of Presence in the Art Field," *DIS Magazine*, 2015, http://dismagazine.com/discussion/78352/the-terror-of-total-dasein-hito-steyerl.

[5] Jan Verwoert, "Control I'm Here: A Call for the Free Use of the Means of Producing Communication, in Curating and in General," *in Curating and the Educational Turn*, eds. Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (London: Open Editions, 2010), 28.

[6] Notably, the work is currently held in the collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

[7] Bryan-Wilson stresses the frictions inherent to artists' cross-class identification with blue collar laborers, which often involved artists' elision of the stark economic discrepancies between their respective positions. Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 89.

and display overlap with the interests of state, corporate, and military entities.[8] Beyond

this, it counters outmoded notions of cultural production's autonomy from the political

sphere, and advocates for art as a transformative agent in the social field. Read in that

context, Haghighian's installation demonstrates how the act of withdrawing artistic labor

has, itself, come to be classified as an aesthetic product.

I rehearse the staging of *I Can't Work Like This* as a productive entry point into

recent debates on aesthetics of refusal that circulate around artists' protests, boycotts, and

performative interventions. Notably, Haghighian's piece lends its title to the collection *I

Can't Work Like This: A Reader on Recent Boycotts and Contemporary Art*, where it also

features as the frontispiece.[9] The volume is one of two edited collections released in 2017

on the topic of artists' boycotts and protest, alongside *Assuming Boycott: Resistance,

Agency and Cultural Production*.[10] Their appearance within the same year attests to the

vitality and timeliness of the discussions they circulate. What generative potential, they

ask, might lie in artists tactically withholding participation? How might artists' refusal to

generate discourse result in transformative discursive possibilities? Given the framing of

contemporary art as a discursive arena where speech acts reverberate with uncommon

force, both collections attune readers to the need for foregrounding the structural logic of

art speech and its emplacement within fields of power. In the process, they insist that if

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[8] For an examination of the economic entanglements that characterize the contemporary art field, see Hito Steyerl's *Is the Museum A Battlefield?* (2013). In this lecture-performance, Steyerl traces the trajectory of a bullet found on a battlefield in Van, Turkey through circuits of funding that lead her back to a donor supporting an exhibition that she, herself, is participating in. Hito Steyerl, "Is the Museum a Battlefield?," 13th Istanbul Biennial, 2013, https://vimeo.com/76011774.

[9] Joanna Warsza et al., eds., *I Can't Work Like This: A Reader on Recent Boycotts and Contemporary Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017).

[10] Kareem Estefan, Carin Kuoni, and Laura Raicovich, eds., *Assuming Boycott: Resistance, Agency and Cultural Production* (New York: OR Books, 2017).

contemporary art is to be understood as dialogical in its orientation, it is crucial to probe whose contributions to dialogue it enables, and whose it precludes. Animated by the urgency of these questions in the present, my study examines their prefiguration by artists' boycotts, strikes, and protests in the 1960s and 70s.

Conversations on refusal in contemporary art often frame the tactic as a foreclosure of speech and meaning-making. As Tirdad Zolghadr observes, artists' enactments of withdrawal are habitually coded as "silencing, anti-dialogical things."[11] In the context of these discussions, art is ascribed an *a priori* pedagogical status and liberatory function. Correspondingly, refusal is classified as an anti-pedagogical gesture. Saying *no*—whether to a cultural institution; an exhibition; an economic model; or a certain mode of working—is construed as antithetical to the categorical aims of artistic practice. Redressing such claims, my study routes the analysis of refusal toward the tactic's generative, pedagogical capacities. It organizes itself around the question of how refusal might serve not as a foreclosure, but as a springboard for assembling knowledge in contemporary art. Put otherwise, it asks, *what is to be learned from saying no*?

These questions coincide with a broader reorientation toward dialogical aesthetics in the art field and an interest in establishing communities of interlocutors through strategies of intersubjective encounter. A proliferation of recent "turns" have been diagnosed in relation to this shift, spanning the educational turn, the social turn, and the privileging of participation. Against this backdrop, the decision to issue statements of refusal can be received as a kind of feckless professional misconduct, an absconding from duty, and a willful obstruction of opportunities for participatory—and thus nominally

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[11] Tirdad Zolghadr, "Belletristic Embargo," in *I Can't Work Like This: A Reader on Recent Boycotts and Contemporary Art,* eds. Joanna Warsza et al. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017), 31.

democratic—engagement. Or, as Luca Belgiorno-Nettis puts it in a statement about the artist boycott of the 19th Biennale of Sydney, refusal is perceived as leaving "little room for sensible dialogue."[12]

What, then, are the modes of speech deployed in refusal? First, they effect a disruption of the nebulous vocabularies of contemporary art. That is to say, the languages of striking, protest, boycott, and nonparticipation are perceived as intrinsically opposed to the language valorized within current artistic practices.[13] If contemporary art falls on the side of uncertainty, of holding space open for boundless interpretive engagements, then the voicing of dissent stands accused of delimiting meaning-making. Protest speech interrupts the infinite semantic deferrals of artistic discourse. It eschews the tendency to suspend determination until an unspecified future *then* in its claim that resistance is called for *now*.

Zolghadr traces this problematic to a shift toward indeterminacy as the "hallmark of contemporary art."[14] Within this milieu, ambivalence is privileged alongside a propensity for "indefinite postponement, always withholding the last word."[15]

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[12] Belgiorno-Nettis was the chairman of the Sydney Biennale, and the director of Transfield Holdings. Prior to the Biennale opening, Transfield Services (an affiliate of Transfield Holdings) secured a contract to manage Australia's offshore immigrant detention centers, known for systematic human rights violations. Participating artists protested Transfield's involvement in the Biennale in solidarity with asylum seekers, leading Belgiorno-Nettis to resign his post as chairman two weeks before the launch of the event. See Belgiorno-Nettis, "Statement of Luca Belgiorno-Nettis," in *I Can't Work Like This: A Reader on Recent Boycotts and Contemporary Art*, eds. Joanna Warsza and the Participants of the Salzburg International Summer Academy of Fine Arts (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017), 288.
[13] Tirdad Zolghadr recounts that "…even the curators of the small Kunstvereins will insist on it: 'I'm not a fascist, I don't tell people what to think. My work is open.' What I learned from boycotts is quite the opposite: namely, how, as a curator, you can make a simple proposal saying 'this work was trying to do this, and this exhibition is trying to do this.'" See Zolghadr, "Belletristic Embargo," in *I Can't Work Like This*, 30.
[14] Zolghadr, "Belletristic Embargo," 24.
[15] Zolghadr, "Belletristic Embargo," 25.

Intervening in this field of indeterminate utterance, resistant speech is often identified as

an adversary of the dialogic. Direct action, correspondingly, is received as a disturbance

to the multiplication of indirect readings, meanings, and valuations that drives the motor

of the art market. My study considers how resistant speech and direct action reconfigure

the conditions under which dialogic encounter may occur, rather than foreclosing them

altogether.

The languages of boycott are calibrated toward a register far less abstruse than the

rhetoric of the institutional press release. David Beech burlesques the linguistic practices

associated with the former, framed as an onslaught of staccato imperatives:

> Boycott the Biennale of Sydney! Boycott Manifesta 10! Withdraw from the
> Whitney Biennial! Protest against the corporate sponsorship of Tate by
> BP!...Boycott all art materials suppliers in the name of art's 'dark matter'!
> Boycott the Creative Time exhibition! Campaign against unpaid internships in art
> institutions!…A near constant sequence of cries to Boycott! Withdraw! Protest![16]

The statements of refusal my study addresses prefigure this deliberately hyperbolic

inventory of the present. They confront the listener in direct address replete with

imperatives, injunctions, and exclamatory punctuation. Such formulations may seem less

at home in the gilded salons of what Lee Lozano once called art world "'uptown'

functions," than in the pages of an agitational pamphlet.[17] Rather than accept refusal's

imputed tonal incongruity as evidence of its misalignment with the art field, we might

inquire into the criteria by which this incongruity is determined. Why, in other words,

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[16] David Beech, "Notes on the Art Boycott," in *I Can't Work Like This: A Reader on Recent Boycotts and Contemporary Art*, eds. Joanna Warsza et al. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017), 13.
[17] Lee Lozano, *General Strike Piece* (Started February 8, 1969), quoted in Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 78.

does the language of refusal seem to lie beyond the categorical boundaries of artistic discourse?

Attending to propositions like these, my study inquires into whether certain conditions of working may render "sensible" dialogue untenable, and instead necessitate radically revised terms of speech. Along these lines, Haghighian's installation might also be translated into the sentiment: "I can't produce discourse like this."

Pedagogy, Protest, and Lecture-Performance

This study examines a period during which statements of refusal were increasingly constitutive of aesthetic practice. The dematerialization of art is by now a markedly familiar discourse. Within that well-trod terrain, little attention has been accorded to artists' concentrated deployment of pedagogical, politicized speech as a medium, initiated in response to concurrent encounters with the university and collective organizing. Across lecture-based works and oratorical interventions, I analyze the cross-pollination of pedagogical performance with protest speech toward aesthetic modes of refusal. In the 1960s, amidst the rise of social movements and the entry of artists into the academy, speech was coded as a primary site of aesthetic intervention for many artists in the US. These artists sought to position themselves at once as educators and agents of political transformation. Charting the convergence of artistic and protest movements from 1964 to 1975, my study asks what we have to learn from statements of refusal delivered at the interstices of academic lecterns, political podiums, and arts institutions.

In my study, the histories of the lecture-performance are inextricably interwoven with histories of refusal. "Refusal" operates capaciously in this context, flickering among

campaigns of collective direct action and instances of individual noncompliance and

nonparticipation. As described above, refusal broadly denotes a turning away from the

outcomes and forms of labor traditionally ascribed to aesthetic practice. Refusal might

manifest as a strike, a work stoppage, a withdrawal, a protest, an engagement with

tactical opacity, a feminist performance, or an oratorical intervention.

In the period I address, the term carries echoes of the "Great Refusal" proposed

by Herbert Marcuse: art as a "protest against that which is."[18] For Marcuse, refusal is also

aligned with nonstandard modes of utterance and expression, with locating nonnormative

ways "to sing and sound and speak."[19] Marcusean negation operates as a palpable

influence on artists in my study like Robert Morris, who announced that the "first

principle for political action, as well as art action, is denial and negation. One says no. It

is enough at this point to begin by saying no."[20] However, the parameters of refusal in my

study extend beyond those outlined by Marcuse, encompassing a broader array of

theoretical models and practices.

In several of my case studies, refusal proceeds as a rejection of the modes of

speaking and knowing prescribed by civility discourse. In that way, they might

productively be read alongside Tavia Nyong'o and Kyla Wazana Tompkins's

contemporary framing of incivility as "affective disruption…a sign of an as-yet untapped

intellectual vitality still in political formation."[21] They probe the pedagogical effects of

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[18] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Routledge, 2007), 66.

[19] Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Routledge, 2007), 66.

[20] Morris quoted in Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 118.

[21] Tavia Nyong'o and Kyla Wazana Tompkins, "Eleven Theses on Civility," *Social Text* Online, July 11, 2018, https://socialtextjournal.org/eleven-theses-on-civility/.

affectively charged utterance that declines the dictates of standardized institutional speech. For Art Strike affiliates like Faith Ringgold, this mode of agitational speech was aligned with the techniques of militancy, deployed as a way of speaking back to the nominal ideological neutrality of cultural institutions and their racialized exclusions. Similarly, I consider how for given speakers, speech itself constitutes a feminist tactic of refusal. Or how, as Sara Ahmed observes, "to speak is already a form of defiance if you are supposed to recede into the background."[22] Across a heterogeneous terrain of articulations of dissent, I trace artists' statements of refusal alongside the contemporaneous eruption of artist activism, framing them at once as corollaries to new systems of cognitive labor, and as tactics for dissolving the boundaries that demarcate performative speech acts from direct action.

As a reaction to compulsory academicization, informational formats proliferated in artistic output of the 1960s and 70s.[23] They manifest in the dematerialized objects theorized by Lucy Lippard, the linguistically dense aesthetic of administration outlined by Benjamin Buchloh, and the managerially inflected techniques identified by Alexander Alberro.[24] Many of these practices also pursue what Luis Camnitzer describes as the meta-discursive conviction that "teaching should address itself as much or more as it does

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[22] Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 61.

[23] Howard Singerman chronicles the concurrent academicization of artistic practice and the eruption of pedagogical formats in visual art in the 1960s and beyond. As he notes, "the university and its practices appear in the work of a number of conceptual artists in the late 1960s and through the 1970s." See Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 167.

[24] See Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (1990): 105-43; Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

content."[25] These transformations in the art field occurred against a political backdrop marked by military violence in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia; state-sponsored racialized violence in the US; civil rights and the movement for black liberation; the rise of feminist organizing; and widespread labor revolt. Responding to an ongoing maelstrom of injustice and its correspondent protest movements, artists turned to communicative methods conventionally confined to the purview of activism. Prominent among these methods was embodied dissident oratory.[26]

Alongside these developments, the lecture-performance emerged as a vital aesthetic form. Throughout the period, artists deployed the format to imagine how knowledge might be produced and disseminated outside the academy: within alternative institutional frameworks, beyond authorized communicative forms, through embodied modes of performativity, and toward socially transformative ends. At the same time, assuming the role of lecturer and visiting artist increasingly became a technique for legitimizing oneself as a practitioner. At its core, this technique demanded the performance of virtuosic speech. For Howard Singerman, the visiting artist in that period is fundamentally "the artist who speaks," whether "before the performance, *as the performance*, or after it."[27] From the first, pedagogical oratory was pursued simultaneously as a resistant tactic, a medium of aesthetic practice, and a strategy for accruing professionalization in the art field.

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[25] Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 113.

[26] Other forms traditionally associated with activism that were pursued by artists at the time include pamphlets, press releases, written statements. For a discussion of aesthetic works in these modes in the context of the 1970 Art Strike, see the third chapter of this study.

[27] Emphasis added. Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 156, 162.

Today, the lecture-performance has become a ubiquitous feature of global

exhibitions and biennials, following a recently diagnosed "educational turn" in visual art.

Broadly construed, the educational turn denotes an expansion of creative practice into the

presentational formats associated with the academy. Works in this vein take the form of

schools, symposia, lectures, and panel discussions, all executed under the loosely invoked

rubric of artmaking. A selection of examples might include the Copenhagen Free

University (founded 2001), Tania Bruguera's *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* (2002-2009),

Anton Vidokle's *Unitednationsplaza* (founded 2006), and Gordon Hall's Center for

Experimental Lectures (founded 2011), among many others. A suite of recent exhibitions,

essays, and edited collections accompanies and theorizes these developments. In *On*

Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art, Maria Hlavajova, Jill

Winder, and Binna Choi identify the "'intellectualization' of the art field…palpable in the

proliferation of discursive events (lectures, panel discussions, conferences, artists' talks,

and the like..."[28] Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson observe in their introduction to *Curating*

and the Educational Turn that "discursive productions" now characterize exhibition-

making, "framed in terms of education, research, knowledge production and learning."[29]

In Sven Lütticken's critical account, "artistic 'research' functions as a parody of

instrumentalized academic knowledge production, falling short of even its eroding

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[28] Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi, "Introduction," in *On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, eds. Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi (Utrecht: BAK, 2008), 7.

[29] Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, "Introduction," in *Curating and the Educational Turn*, eds. Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (London: Open Editions, 2010), 12.

criteria," in what may be a productive set of failures.[30] Claire Bishop's influential work in

this vein situates educational aesthetics within a broader social turn. In dialogue with Irit

Rogoff, Bishop draws out the internal contradictions of projects where "the radical

strands of the intersection between art and pedagogy blur easily with the neoliberal

impetus to render education a product or tool in the 'knowledge economy.'"[31] What

emerges across these accounts is a slipperiness within contemporary educational projects

that can reproduce the institutional structures of knowing in which they hope to intervene.

My study addresses these tensions in the context of earlier pedagogical performances,

examining the ways in which many remained tethered to the systems they sought to

undermine.

Along similar lines, contemporary lecture-performances toggle between the

pursuit of alternative forms of embodying knowledge and the instrumental imperative

toward information delivery. As Patricia Milder describes it, the lecture-performance

invokes a conception of "teaching-as-art," melded with the conviction that "teaching and

learning can lead to a new way to live in society."[32] Like other modes of institutional

critique, lecture-performances dissolve the outmoded categorical boundaries of aesthetic

practice to allow their effects to reverberate beyond spaces of artistic display and

reception. Tracing the lecture-performance further back, Rike Frank describes its

iterations in the 1960s and 70s through artists' "desire to devise alternative networks of

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[30] Sven Lütticken, "Unknown Knowns: On Symptoms in Contemporary Art," in *On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, eds. Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi (Utrecht: BAK, 2008), 85.
[31] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 242.
[32] Patricia Milder, "Teaching as Art: The Contemporary Lecture-Performance," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 33, no. 1 (2011): 13.

communication, information and distribution in response to established institutional

models and forms of knowledge."[33] Addressing the same period, Jenny Dirksen draws

out the connection between lecture-performances and the rise of the artist as a theorist

who meta-discursively frames their own practice. As Dirksen notes, this foments a

scenario where "statements on art can as justifiably be made in the context of art itself as

the realm of academe."[34] Similarly, for Marianne Wagner, a close relation obtains

between artists' research-based education and subsequent lecture-based works as "the

result of university instruction."[35] While my study builds on scholarship that traces the

links between artists' entry into the university and their recourse to the lecture as a

medium, it departs from previous analyses by showing how these developments are also

crucially inflected by artists' encounters with the discourses of political organizing. In the

case studies I examine, artists speak not only to and from the university, but from

positions of resistance that might resound beyond the discursive arenas of a given

institution.

Despite its prominence within recent exhibition practices, the origins of the

lecture-performance remain critically neglected beyond a limited number of essays and

articles. This stems, in part, from the tendency to classify pedagogical projects as

extrinsic, auxiliary, or supplementary to official products of artistic labor. As Gordon

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[33] Rike Frank, "When Form Starts Talking: On Lecture-Performances," *Afterall* 33 (2013): 6.
[34] Jenny Dirksen, "Ars Academica – The Lecture Between Artistic and Academic Discourse," in *Lecture Performance*, eds. Kathrin Jentjens, Radmila Joksimović, Anja Nathan-Dorn, and Jelena Vesić (Berlin: Revolver Publishing, 2009), 14.
[35] Marianne Wagner, "Doing Lectures Performative Lectures as a Framework for Artistic Action," in *Lecture Performance*, eds. Kathrin Jentjens, Radmila Joksimović, Anja Nathan-Dorn, and Jelena Vesić (Berlin: Revolver Publishing, 2009), 22.

Hall puts it, "lectures are and aren't the work."[36] A central argument of my study is that

given the lecture-performance's basis in speech, its appraisal as a work of art or non-art

remains contingent on the value more broadly ascribed to its speaker's utterance. Put

otherwise, the pedagogical oratory of an artist whose coordinates of identity predispose

the listener toward a dismissal of their speech is also predisposed to being bracketed out

from the annals of art history. Many of the case studies I consider are not indexed as

formal entries in the oeuvre of the artist from whom they originate.[37] Addressing these

scholarly lacunae, my study brings the neglected histories of the lecture-performance into

focus.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One
Of Speech Acts and Direct Action:
Lecture-Performance in and Beyond the University

      The first chapter opens onto the image of student demonstrators in the 1964 Free

Speech movement festooned with IBM punch cards that spell out the word "STRIKE."

This image serves as an entry point into lecture-performances as a refusal of the

automation of learning associated with institutional pedagogies. Here, I stage a

conversation between a set of interlinked historical phenomena whose relations have not

previously been mapped. To that end, I triangulate the rise of the Free Speech Movement,

the reorientation of arts education toward the verbal staging of expertise, and the

subsequent emergence of the lecture-performance as a genre. Reading across these

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[36] Gordon Hall, "Read me that part a-gain, where I disin-herit everybody," gordonhall.net, 2015, http://gordonhall.net/files/read_me_that_part_a-gain_where_I_disin-herit_everybody_gordon_hall.pdf.
[37] For example, Faith Ringgold's 1969 lecture-demonstration at MoMA.

coordinates, I inquire into how speech became a site of political and performative intervention for subjects of the academy. As universities were recoded into "knowledge factories" and "information machines," artists and students alike orchestrated refusals of the standardization of cognitive labor, discourse, and political agency.

An eruption of artists' speech accompanied these transformations, executed in the form of straightforward lectures and talks, as well as under the categorical rubric of performances and artworks. Looking askance at this eruption, I press against the question of whose speech was amplified in that moment, and whose utterance was afforded the opportunity to be coded as an artwork. Put otherwise, I ask how these enactments of resistance hinge on the invocation of gendered and raced coordinates of discursive authority. To refuse the discursive codes of the academy, I contend, first requires legitimation as a subject of the academy. Here, I turn to the case study of Robert Morris's *21.3* (1964), a work often identified as a punctual origin of the genre. I contend that at the level of form, *21.3* stages a rejection of the banking model of education outlined by Paulo Freire, and declines the discursive authority associated with the pedagogue as a knowing subject.[38] I consider the formalist refusal of institutional pedagogy in this work alongside Luis Camnitzer's formulation of the meta-discursive and self-reflexive tendencies of North American conceptualism. Following along this line of inquiry, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of critical pedagogy in Latin American art, asking whose speech is rendered audible in prevailing art historical accounts of pedagogical aesthetics in the 1960s.

Chapter Two

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[38] See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2000), 72.

Lessons in Queer Opacity:
Andy Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* (1964) and Lecture Tour (1967)

The second chapter in the study approaches the refusal to make oneself visible as a knowing subject or an object of knowledge, tracking tactics of queer opacity across Andy Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* (1964) and 1967 lecture tour. This chapter opens by examining Warhol's public mural for the Tent of Tomorrow at the 1964 World's Fair, a site that imagines the future as a terrain of continuous vision and informatic control—framing the public as a target of practices of monitoring. I draw out affinities between the site's formal and architectural rendering of surveillant futures and the broader milieu of surveillance, policing, and protest that surrounded the World's Fair—situating Warhol's revised *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* as a resistant intervention within that historical context. Revisiting the silvering-over of the mural's avatars of nonnormative desire, I contend for this gesture as a deployment of queer opacity that can productively be read alongside contemporary counter-surveillant tactics of defacing and biometric evasion. Finally, I consider the withdrawal from representation in the state-sponsored arena of the World's Fair in relation to artists' withdrawals from state-sponsored cultural initiatives through groups like the Emergency Cultural Government.

Turning to the University of Utah stop in Warhol's 1967 lecture tour, I examine the lecture as a site for performing opacity. Here, I assemble archival documents and historical media coverage to assemble a tentative outline of the event, which has been broadly coded as extrinsic to Warhol's oeuvre. After agreeing to deliver a talk at four universities in the US, Warhol sent the actor Alan Midgette to impersonate him and deliver performances of unintelligibility in his stead. My analysis of the lecture tour triangulates queer opacity as a rejection of the verbal incitement to discourse, recent

conversations in surveillance studies, and the coding of the university-trained artist as a

knowing subject of discursive authority. Reading across these coordinates, I argue for the

lecture tour as a refusal of the artist-educator's embodied performance of knowledge and

staging of the self as a figure who might be known. Concluding with the talking Warhol

automaton fabricated by engineers and IBM mathematicians to give lectures in the artist's

stead, I contend for the lecture tour as a prefigurative exercise in what Hito Steyerl terms

"proxy politics," a mode of striking performances of embodied labor within the art field's

economies of presence.

Chapter Three
A "Proper Place at the Podium":
Feminist Interventions in the 1970 Art Strike

The third chapter in this study attends to the role of speech acts and speech-

giving practices in artists' networks of collective resistance through the case study of the

1970 Art Strike Against Racism, Sexism, War, and Repression. The Art Strike was

formed in May 1970 in New York as a vehicle for collectivizing artists' responses to a

constellation of events spanning US military intervention in Cambodia, state violence

against protestors nationwide, and the continued racialized and gendered exclusions

enacted within cultural institutions. The group's subsequent actions were coded as

withdrawals from institutional participation and from the arena of state-sponsored

initiatives. Examining artists' output across a range of media including pamphlets,

handbills, and embodied interventions, I argue for the tactics of striking, boycott, and

protest as techniques oriented not toward totalizing negation, but toward the generative

recoding of the art field and of aesthetic practice. Like the lecture-performance—a genre

deployed by multiple Art Strike affiliates—these modes of aesthetic practice sought to

extend the effects of artmaking beyond its given institutional parameters. I trace the reception of Art Strike's interventions as attacks on civility and civic engagement, drawing out contemporary resonances with what Yates McKee describes as a dialectical interplay between "the *unmaking* of art" as it is understood within existing "discourses, economies, and institutions," and the "*reinvention* of art as direct action."[39] Within this broader terrain, the chapter presses against the questions of which artists in the group were afforded a platform for voicing dissent. Departing from previous scholarship on Art Strike, this chapter focuses not on its designated spokespeople, but rather on those participants who sought to reshape its collective discourses through attunement to how race, gender, and class inflect the structures of both the art field and of organizing itself.

To that end, I focus my analysis of Art Strike on what has retroactively been coded, to borrow from Michele Wallace, as "histories of the 'minor.'"[40] First, I consider contestations surrounding the designation of spokespeople at the group's inaugural convening, where what Lucy Lippard calls "a very good speech or something about the war" resulted in the election of artist Robert Morris as Art Strike co-chair.[41] Turning to the specific example of Art Strike's Liberated Venice Biennale, I surface Art Strike's implicit claim to speak for a generalized category of "voiceless" subjects while withholding platforms for interventionist speech from women artists of color. Responding to the exclusions of the Liberated Venice Biennale, Faith Ringgold, Michele

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[39] Yates McKee, *Strike Art: Contemporary Art and the Post-Occupy Condition* (New York: Verso, 2016), 6.
[40] Michele Wallace, "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash," in *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (London: Verso, 2016), 189.
[41] Emphasis added. Sue Heinemann and Lucy Lippard, Oral History Interview with Lucy Lippard, 2011 Mar. 15, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Wallace, and Barbara Wallace formed the ad-hoc group Women Students and Artists for

Black Art Liberation (WSABAL) to agitate for inclusive representation within the

Biennale boycott exhibition. Attending to the unfolding of the "liberated Liberated

Venice Biennale"[42] that followed, I trace histories of Art Strike attuned to internal

articulations of protest offered by affiliates who ultimately refused its collective discourse

altogether, establishing new locutionary possibilities and platforms for resistant feminist

speech.

Chapter Four
"Talking to Myself"/"Talking To Yourself":
Articulating Refusal in the Work of Faith Ringgold and Adrian Piper

The final chapter in this study considers the aesthetics of resistant speech in the

work of Adrian Piper and Faith Ringgold through the lens of their respective encounters

with artist activism and the 1970 Art Strike. "Work" is deployed capaciously in this

context to denote both the products of conventional artmaking and the gendered labor

that sustains political organizing. The case studies I address in this vein include Faith

Ringgold's lecture tour of the Museum of Modern Art (1969) and *Feminist Series* (1972),

and Adrian Piper's statement of withdrawal (1970) and *I/You (Us)* (1975). Each set of

case studies places an ephemeral, counter-institutional action in conversation with works

that have been indexed as formal entries in the artists' oeuvres. In particular, I consider

how their respective interjections into the omissive conversations surrounding artist

activism were inflected by the gendered and raced reception of their contributions as

women artists of color. Invoking Sara Ahmed's formulation of the feminist killjoy as a

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[42] The "liberated Liberated Venice Biennale" is the title Faith Ringgold uses to refer to the resulting exhibition. See Faith Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 178.

figure who speaks out in a willingness to cause disturbance, I frame their works from this period as refusals of exclusionary discursive arenas, which carve out platforms for resistant utterance.

Turning first to Faith Ringgold's 1969 lecture tour at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, I assemble archival fragments and first-person accounts of its activist public pedagogy. This unauthorized event addressed itself to community members excluded from the museum's conception of its publics, while surfacing the racialized exclusions that undergirded the institution's collections and curatorial program. Tracing documentation of the museum's response to the action, I chart the circumstances surrounding Ringgold's recollection, "It was like you were talking to yourself."[43] I examine this pedagogical address alongside other modes of gendered labor performed by Ringgold that were similarly rendered invisible across institutional sites and sites of artist activism, situating the lecture tour and accompanying questionnaire as vital interventions into histories of institutional critique and performance.

I place Ringgold's recollection of "talking to yourself" in conversation with Adrian Piper's essay on 1970, entitled "Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object."[44] Whereas Ringgold was an active participant in Art Strike's activities, Piper ultimately elected to pursue nonparticipation in networks of artists' organized resistance. The second half of this chapter addresses Piper's nonparticipation as a refusal of existing terms of collectivity and shared discourse. For Piper, the internal dialogue

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[43] Faith Ringgold quoted in Susan Cahan, *Mounting Frustration: The Art Museum in the Age of Black Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 209.

[44] Adrian Piper, "Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 29-53.

implied in "talking to [your]self" functions as a technique for denying the external

constraints placed on one's utterance in a regulatory discursive field. Reading the

photographic series *I/You (Us)* through this lens, I contend for the work as an exercise in

unlearning the habitualized modes of response ingrained in an addressee who would

dismiss her speech. Across six photographic panels, Piper hails the viewer in direct

address and offers didactic instruction in how to engage with the utterance of a speaker

whose position may differ from one's own, imputing urgency to the act of listening. In

this way, *I/You (Us)* surfaces the stakes of learning from statements of refusal: it proposes

that attending closely to an interlocutor's pedagogical speech might incite the

restructuring of social relations and the formation of new horizons of political possibility.

CHAPTER 1
OF SPEECH ACTS AND DIRECT ACTION:
LECTURE-PERFORMANCE IN AND BEYOND THE UNIVERSITY

Introduction

In 1964, students at the University of California, Berkeley determined that they had been reformatted into IBM punch cards. They announced the university as a technocratic information processing facility where students' speech, political agency, and cognitive labor were computed as so many automated units. During demonstrations, they visualized this condition by festooning themselves with punch cards whose holes were manipulated to spell out the slogan "STRIKE" [fig. 2]. These détourned cards became the emblem of a student movement, repurposing a standardized academic format to turn it against itself. They literalized the possibility of linguistic rupture in a rigidly mechanized context. They suggested that agitational data could be introduced into seemingly totalizing systems, even those that appear to preclude resistant utterance.

Defying a ban against racial justice advocacy on campus, Berkeley students organized under the banner of the Free Speech Movement (FSM). Through direct action and occupation, they brought the institution's operations to a halt in order to imagine how knowledge in the university might be assembled otherwise. Far from ushering in the cessation of learning, the FSM became a site of pedagogical encounter, dialogical engagement, and dissident oratory. Amidst the strike against the learning institution, learning proliferated.

This chapter opens by tracing the university's transformation into a "knowledge factory," a phenomenon concurrent with artists' entry into the university system en masse. The chapter proceeds to examine a genre of generative refusal temporally proximate to the FSM strike: the refusal of institutional pedagogy in the emergent medium of the lecture-performance.

Often identified as a punctual origin of the lecture-performance, Robert Morris's *21.3* (1964) was staged in the same year the FSM formed, and functions as a focal point in this study.[45] Burlesquing the linguistic codes of the university system, *21.3* denies standardized scholarly discourse to gesture toward alternative, embodied modes of pedagogical address. Four years following the performance, artists like Morris would join the 1970 Art Strike to call for the shutdown of cultural institutions in solidarity with student-led social movements nationwide. For a brief time, Art Strike members withdrew their output from museums to replace it with protest speech and direct action. In the space carved out by the absence of artistic products, Art Strike members sought to realize new aesthetic forms of learning and collective resistance. Articulating the aims and affinities of the group, Morris noted, "We identified with the students. Museums are our campuses."[46]

This chapter begins by examining US artists' entry into the university system amidst the rise of student movements. Members of these movements drew out the intersections of war, racialized violence, and the role of the university as a technocratic associate of corporate and military agents. Deploying the lecture as a site of aesthetic

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[45] Critic Rike Frank notes that *21.3* is "frequently cited as the first lecture-performance, as well as its historical model." See Rike Frank, "When Form Starts Talking: On Lecture-Performances," *Afterall* 33 (2013): 6.

[46] Ralph Blumenfeld, "Daily Closeup: Show Mustn't Go On," *New York Post*, June 4, 1970, 37.

intervention, artists reimagined themselves simultaneously as educators and activists, cross-pollinating pedagogical performance with protest speech to denaturalize the forms of the university. Bringing examples from the hitherto nebulous history of lecture-performance into focus, I situate the genre vis-à-vis artists' critical responses to encounters with the university.

Tracing the convergence of aesthetic and student movements, this chapter listens anew to lectures delivered at the interstices of academic lecterns, political podiums, and gallery spaces. The lecture-performance, I argue, represents a tactical aesthetic form. Amidst discourses on the technologically-enabled immateriality of information, the lecture-performance grounds knowledge in the material specificity of embodied agents and the attendant coordinates of race, gender, sexuality, ability, and class.

Following the "educational turn" in contemporary art, lecture-performance has become a ubiquitous component of exhibition making and programming.[47] Despite its current prominence, the origins of the lecture-performance in the 1960s—particularly as an aesthetic correlate to student protest—remain critically neglected. Present conditions of pervasive crisis within the academic and political fields demand that we revisit these earlier pedagogical provocations. What, in this climate, does the lecture-performance have to teach us? What role might speech acts play in direct action?

Looking askance at historical exempla, I put pressure on the question of who was afforded the right to refuse. How was the opportunity for refusal distributed along the coordinates of race, gender, class, and sexuality? Which artists spoke, and for whom did they speak in their acts of resistance? What role did institutional training and affiliation

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[47] For an extended account of the educational turn, see Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, eds., *Curating and the Educational Turn* (London: Open Editions, 2010).

play in the amplification of a given speaker's voice? How did the institutional context of a given refusal shape its effects? These questions structure my analysis of the artists' lectures through the volume *Artists Talk: 1966-1977*. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of critical pedagogy in Latin American art, asking whose speech is rendered audible in prevailing art historical accounts of pedagogical aesthetics in the 1960s.

Throughout these discussions, I address the coupling of direct action with performative speech acts in artist-initiated resistance movements. Why does pedagogical speech so often accompany artists' protest? What is to be learned from art workers' exhortation to strike; to say no; and to subsequently reorganize the terms and aesthetic forms of discourse?

Artists and Data Processors:
Lecture-Performance in the 1960s

The Uses of Artists in the University

"I went to sleep one day a cultural critic and woke the next metamorphosed into a data processor."[48] With this Kafaesque scenario, media theorist Alan Liu narrativizes the condition of the scholar in the twenty-first century academy. Liu's statement also cannily resonates with the narrative of artists in the twentieth-century university. Following World War II, a precipitous influx of artists flooded the academy. They described what they found there as a postindustrial factory where they were cast simultaneously as the workers and products of new systems of cognitive labor. What they found, like the students of the FSM, was that they had been reformatted into both IBM punch cards and the knowledge workers who operate them.

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[48] Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 4.

In universities redefined as information processing facilities, artists' institutional training directly informed the rise of pedagogical aesthetics.[49] This porous term denotes a field of practices that evoke or borrow from scholarly formats.[50] Such practices in the 1960s and 70s are often classified under the rubric of conceptual art, and tend to foreground informational, didactic, and dematerialized forms of working. Fomented by encounters with the university, lecture-performance emerged as a critical medium of artistic activity. While linked to academic institutionalization, artists' newly acquired linguistic orientation often activated critical models of speaking back to sociopolitical processes. In the vein of IBM punch cards manipulated to read "STRIKE," artists' entry into the academy catalyzed aesthetic forms that turned the academy against itself.

How, then, did artists in the US come to invest in pedagogy and to view education as a site of aesthetic intervention? The institutionally accredited artist—professionalized to a high gloss finish—first appeared on the scene in the years following World War II. It was then that artists began to filter into US universities en masse. Coding oneself as an artist in this climate became synonymous with internalizing the protocols of formalized arts education.[51] The accredited artist emerged as the standardized product of research-

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[49] The claim that the university had become an "information machine" was circulated by members of the Free Speech Movement. The implications of this are discussed at length later in the following sections. See Steven Lubar, "'Do Not Fold, Spindle or Mutilate': A Cultural History of the Punch Card," *Journal of American Culture* (Winter 1992): 46.

[50] In his study on the institutionalization of art education, Howard Singerman, among others, notes that "the university and its practices appear in the work of a number of conceptual artists in the late 1960s and through the 1970s." See Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 167.

[51] These protocols were determined by a wide swath of institutional and accrediting bodies. They included organizations like the College Art Association, government agencies like the Office of Education, and newly formed initiatives like the National Association of Schools of Design.

based graduate education and the newly popularized M.F.A.[52] By 1960, the College Art Association sanctioned the M.F.A. as the terminal degree for graduate studio work. Within a decade, thirty-one new M.F.A. programs had been established across the country—roughly a fifty percent increase from previous numbers.[53] What they promised was not only training, but the acquisition of professionalized status. Art historian Howard Singerman extensively diagnoses this condition in *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*, calling it the refashioning of "artistic practice as an academic discipline."[54]

To speak of artists' professionalization at this time is also to speak of their masculinization. As Singerman shows, professionalization was, in other words, an explicitly gendered project.[55] The dual-pronged imperative to professionalize and to masculinize the discipline of art practice was partially a byproduct of war veterans entering degree-granting programs in the 1940s. G.I. Bill funding enabled wide swaths of subsidized enrollees—of whom 90% were men—to receive art education sponsored by the U.S. government.[56] A caveat accompanied G.I. financing: funds had to be used toward training for formal accreditation and credentialing. Put otherwise, for the acquisition of professionalized subjectivity.

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[52] Several scholars and critics have noted the correlation between graduate training for artists in the 1960s and the rise of pedagogical projects. See Jenny Dirksen, "Ars Academica – The Lecture Between Artistic and Academic Discourse," in *Lecture Performance*, eds. Kathrin Jentjens, Radmila Joksimović, Anja Nathan-Dorn and Jelena Vesić (Berlin: Revolver Publishing), 9-14; Frank, "When Form Starts Talking," 5-15; and Marianne Wagner, "Doing Lectures: Performative Lectures As A Framework For Artistic Action," in *Lecture Performance*, eds. Kathrin Jentjens, Radmila Joksimović, Anja Nathan-Dorn and Jelena Vesić (Berlin: Revolver Publishing), 17-30.

[53] That is, a fifty percent increase from the amount that preceded the College Art Association's announcement. Singerman, *Art Subjects,* 6.

[54] Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 203.

[55] Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 128.

[56] Norman Rice quoted in Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 129.

Gaining eligibility for state-funded students and approval from the Office of Education took on vital importance to learning institutions. Independent accrediting agencies were formed to establish educational standards and arbitrate how those standards were upheld. The National Association of Schools of Design, inaugurated in 1948, was one among these. In a bid to secure fiscal resources and legitimacy, departments streamlined their courses of study. They relied on reproducible metrics to generate a uniformly credentialed labor force whose economic value would be legible to governmental agencies. Students who received this standardized instruction would, presumably, be properly equipped to enter the marketplace and contribute to the nation's accumulation of fiscal and cultural wealth. In effect, the situation of the state-funded artist in the university enacts Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's assertion that "professionalization — that which reproduces professions — is a state strategy."[57]

Professionalization does not only determine what can be said and how it can be spoken. As Singerman puts it, professions "control at the level of practitioners; their rules of credentialing and certification govern *who* can speak."[58] In the 1960s, the university system credentialed a study body narrowly delimited by race, gender, and class; and trained to gain proficiency in verbal discourse. Courses of study privileged masculine-coded cognitive labor to the exclusion of manual work. The latter came to be associated with outmoded and maligned forms of "feminine" craft. Practices that foregrounded the body were feminized, jettisoned, rendered *démodé*. They were deemphasized in favor of the now-masculinized art of speaking about one's work from the position of the licensed

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[57] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions/Autonomedia, 2013), 32.

[58] Emphasis added. Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 201.

expert. Summarizing this condition, Singerman writes, "the goal of professional art training in the university, then, might be read…as making artists into *professional men*."[59] The gendered dimension of this language is deliberate, reflecting the disproportionately male G.I. Bill-subsidized students enrolling in art programs.

Reflecting on his own graduate education, Singerman recounts that though he holds a Master of Fine Arts in sculpture, he was not trained in any of the manual skill sets conventionally associated with sculptors. Over and above studio instruction, art departments offered a curriculum that centered on "theorization and a verbal reenactment of the practices of art."[60] Artists, in turn, became performers of "talk value." Critic Simon Sheikh borrows the term talk value from the corporate sector to denote a neoliberal shift toward aestheticizing speech and extracting "endless communication...from the worker."[61] In a similar vein, artists in the university increasingly focused not on the production of art objects, but on the production of discourse around artwork, often *as* artwork.

Building on Singerman's claims, an institutional tableau emerges wherein members of a predominately white, male student body were cast as ace orators. They converted visual output into a set of informational products for spoken transmission. They became visiting lecturers who did not go door-to-door, but university-to-university, purveying verbally transmitted linguistic wares. In this context, the lecture was already coded as a performance: the performance of expertise and gendered mastery, a venue to

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[59] Emphasis added. Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 45.
[60] Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 6.
[61] Simon Sheikh, "Talk Value: Cultural Industry and the Knowledge Economy," in
On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art, eds. Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi (Utrecht: BAK, 2008), 188.

highlight one's credentialing and circulate the immaterial products acquired through university training. In this structure, we find echoes of virtuosity as described by Paulo Virno, the activity of a "persuasive orator, or a teacher who is never boring" that does not fully accord with the category of a "'finished product.'"[62] The lecture was an opportunity to put knowledge assets on verbal display for public appraisal. Beyond this, it was an opportunity to code oneself as what Jacques Rancière calls a "master explicator."[63] In this way, the informational logic of the knowledge industry seeped into arts education in the 1960s.

The transformation of the university system into an information processing facility was contemporaneous with the university's military partnerships; racialized exclusions; juridical regulation of speech; and legislation of political organizing. To be clear, my aim is not to advance a model of the university as a monolithic entity governed by a single agency, or to suggest that a collective political identity was shared by all faculty or all administrators. Dissent among faculty members was evident throughout student revolts of the 1960s, during which many faculty members joined students in sit-ins and at picket lines to call for reform at the administrative level. At Berkeley, for example, faculty members would vote in favor of student demonstrators to remove the university's ban on political advocacy on campus. Nevertheless, prevailing conceptions of

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[62] Paulo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, trans. Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito, and Andrea Casson (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 52.

[63] Jacques Rancière opposes the figure of the master explicator to the model of emancipatory pedagogy he outlines in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. See Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

the US university at the time are gestured toward in oft-repeated critiques of its status as a "knowledge factory."

Myriad factors contributed to this particular conjuncture of the academy. As World War II waged, the US government came to recognize the "uses" of the university. Learning institutions were enlisted as allies in military initiatives like the Engineering, Science and Management War Training Program and the National Defense Research Committee.[64] By 1960, universities were awarded approximately 1.5 billion dollars in federal funding, roughly one hundred times more than they had received twenty years prior.[65] Unsurprisingly, this led to a closer resemblance between the academic labor force and knowledge workers in the corporate and military spheres. Scholarly work, in turn, was converted into the labor of informating.[66]

In 1963, UC Berkeley president Clark Kerr published an influential account of shifts occurring in higher education entitled *The Uses of the University*. Describing the university as a "multiversity," Kerr hails its prominent role in the burgeoning "knowledge industry," citing its unprecedented influx of military funding. He conveys that in the 1960s, "major universities were enlisted in national defense and in scientific and technological development as never before."[67] At the core of Kerr's exhilaration is the degree to which knowledge, the university's "invisible product," was being monetized. He writes:

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[64] Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 39.

[65] Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 40.

[66] "Informating" derives from Shoshana Zuboff's account of the transformation of labor through information technology, and the transformation of laborers into information workers. See Shoshana Zuboff, *In the Age of the Smart Machine: The Future of Work and Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1989).

[67] In Kerr's account, the university's "common-law marriage" with federal agencies represents a mutually prosperous union. Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 37-38.

The production, distribution, and consumption of "knowledge" in all its forms is said to account for 29 percent of gross national product…and "knowledge production" is growing at about twice the rate of the rest of the economy. Knowledge has certainly never in history been so central to the conduct of an entire society.[68]

As Arindam Dutta observes, the university's entanglement with the knowledge industry precipitated a sweeping reorientation of research institutions. In particular, toward an emphasis on "assembling, collating, and processing larger and larger amounts of data."[69] Media scholar Alan Liu diagnoses this condition in *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information*, identifying it as "merger between academic humanities 'research'... and corporate, government, media, medical, and military knowledge work."[70] He also traces this to the "boom after World War II when the relation between the academic sciences and the military-industrial-government complex" became increasingly prominent.[71] In Liu's formulation, this precipitated a new taxonomy of knowledge work where previously discrete spheres of labor commingle. He tabulates the taxonomy as follows:

knowledge workers =
academic intellectuals +
(technical + professional + managerial) intelligentsia +
trailing edge of clerical workers[72]

Linked to these factors, a redefinition of scholarly inquiry was underway in the academy, swerving toward activity that furnishes both quantifiable data and knowledge workers who increasingly resembled enfleshed data processors. This newly minted

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[68] Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 66.
[69] Arindam Dutta, "Linguistics, Not Grammatology: Architecture's *A Prioris* and Architecture's Priorities," in *A Second Modernism: MIT, Architecture, and the 'Techno-Social' Moment*, ed. Arindam Dutta (Cambridge: MIT Press: 2013), 3.
[70] Liu, *The Laws of Cool*, 6.
[71] Liu, *The Laws of Cool*, 6.
[72] Liu, *The Laws of Cool*, 392.

template for academic labor eventually finds its model employee in contemporary AI

educators like Jill Watson.[73] These dynamics are brought to the fore in Clark Kerr's 1963

schema, wherein higher education is accorded value in proportion to its effects on

"spectacular increases in productivity" and "worldwide military and scientific

supremacy."[74] Or, in direct proportion to its economic utility for mechanisms of state

power. To be a subject of the academy, then, was to be subject and party to processes of

militarization and corporatization.

With a convulsive eruption of speech, vast swaths of Berkeley's student

population announced their refusal of the university as an agent of technocratic control.

One year after the publication of *Uses of the University*, they issued strikes that recoded

the learning institution as a site of agitation. In 1964, Berkeley would bear witness to

what was, up to that moment, "the longest, most disruptive act of civil disobedience ever

seen on a university campus in the United States."[75] Its instigators contended that the

university manufactured pliant workers to populate a marketplace characterized by

economic, racial, and political injustice.

Accordingly, students dubbed Berkeley a "knowledge factory."[76] An image

generated by the Berkeley W.E.B. DuBois Club—a chapter of the national communist

youth organization—exemplifies this sensibility [fig. 3]. It depicts a cadre of

caricaturized technocapitalists in top hats, with dollar signs etched where their faces

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[73] Jill Watson, an algorithmically programmed teaching assistant, is discussed in the coda to this chapter.
[74] Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 199.
[75] Robert Cohen, *The Essential Mario Savio: Speeches and Writings That Changed America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 2.
[76] See, for example, the speeches of Mario Savio, quoted in Robert Cohen, *Freedom's Orator: Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 202.

ought to be. Drawn as puppeteers, they are stationed atop a pedestal holding string that directs the motion of a bespectacled administrator. The administrator himself grasps marionette strings connected to two austere, professorial figures of discipline. These faculty members in turn oversee the operation of what is presumably an IBM machine, which spits out a row of walking punch cards outfitted in graduation caps. As Steven Lubar describes, the drawing equates Berkeley with a cardpunch machine regulated by corporate interests, whose products are "students as identical to one another as IBM cards."[77]

Within the university's cardpunch machine, students identified as knowledge workers in training and convened a strike as a withdrawal of their cognitive labor. The automation of learning, Berkeley students argued, was knotted up with administrative attempts to extinguish on-campus struggles for racial justice.[78] They posited a link between the university's contributions to "military...supremacy" and the institutional structures upholding white supremacy. They formed alliances in solidarity with civil rights activists locally and nationwide, participated in direct actions, and organized under the banners of groups like the Campus Congress of Racial Equality and Berkeley's Friends of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.[79]

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[77] Lubar, "'Do Not Fold, Spindle or Mutilate,'" 46.

[78] Michael Fabricant and Stephen Brier, *Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), 78.

[79] Throughout 1963-64, Berkeley students mobilized across the Bay Area in protest of racial inequality, at business including Mel's Drive-In, the Oakland Tribune, and the Sheraton Palace Hotel. In response, the university instituted a ban on all on-campus advocacy, classifying politicized speech acts as a punishable infraction.

To decelerate the growth of student movements for racial justice, the Berkeley administration instituted a ban on political speech and advocacy on campus.[80] Speech was therewith marked not only as a medium for demonstrating professional fluency—as I have thus far framed institutional discourse—but also as a contested activity whose content was subject to surveillance, regulation, and punitive measures. Implicit in the administrative injunction against political speech was the fear that it might galvanize embodied action.

In defiance of the ban, on October 1, 1964, Jack Weinberg—a member of the campus Congress of Racial Equality—was arrested for distributing civil rights literature on campus. As officers dragged him to a police car parked in Sproul Plaza, approximately fifty students initiated a sit-in, creating a blockade around the vehicle. Their calls for immediate direct action catalyzed what Robert Cohen calls "an unprecedented oratorical marathon, a kind of free speech festival" structured as a "surreal car-top rally."[81] Acrobatically perched atop vehicular podiums, students issued speech acts that mobilized thousands in a 32-hour sit-in that held a police car gridlocked in human traffic [fig. 4]. This oratorical marathon is often identified as the inaugural moment of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement (FSM). Throughout its unfolding, the FSM would retain verbal address as its motor.

Mario Savio, often identified as a figurehead of the FSM, indicted the postwar university as a technocratic associate of the military-industrial complex. He emphasized

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[80] As Berkeley's Dean of Students, Katherine A. Towle, later revealed, the ban's express intent was to curb student involvement in civil rights activism. Towle stated that the memo banning political advocacy was a result of backlash stemming from student involvement in the Cow Palace and Oakland Tribute civil rights pickets. See Cohen, *The Essential Mario Savio*, 11.

[81] Cohen, *The Essential Mario Savio*, 3, 2.

that Berkeley under the leadership of Clark Kerr was a processing facility where

undergraduates were treated as so many "IBM cards used for data processing."[82] In

Savio's usage, the IBM card was not only a "metaphor for information society" but also

emblematic of the university as "an information machine" whose products were students

themselves.[83] Underscoring this sentiment, student demonstrators' IBM punch cards also

bore slogans like, "I am a student. Please do not fold, spindle, or mutilate." This tactic

aligned the automation of Kerr's "multiversity" with the prohibition of protest; the

preemption of student dissent; and attempts to extinguish the struggle for social justice.[84]

Addressing a multitude of striking students, Savio delivered a now-canonical speech that

announced:

> There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part; you can't even passively take part. And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop. And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all.[85]

Just as a punch card reading "STRIKE" threatens to jam the gears of an IBM machine, in

Savio's address, speech threatens to disrupt the operations of the university as an

information machine.

The immediate aftermath of the sit-in was the largest collective arrest in the

history of California at the time.[86] Afterward, Berkeley faculty voted to adopt a resolution

stipulating that "the content of speech or advocacy should not be restricted by the

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[82] Cohen, *The Essential Mario Savio*, 29.
[83] Lubar, "'Do Not Fold, Spindle, or Mutilate,'" 46.
[84] Fabricant and Brier, *Austerity Blues,* 78.
[85] In 2011, this speech was excerpted by artist Silvio Lorusso in a captcha artwork entitled *We Are Human Beings!* Mario Savio quoted in Cohen, *The Essential Mario Savio*, 188.
[86] Between 761 and 814 protestors were detained by the police, a number that was unprecedented at that point in time. Cohen, *The Essential Mario Savio*, 3-4.

University," signaling the victory of the FSM's intervention.[87] In effect, the FSM's strike was not the catalyst for the foreclosure of dialogue, but instead for policies that would enable the proliferation of speech. Its profusion of oratorical acts mobilized thousands of bodies in dissent, radically remapping the boundaries of what could be spoken at the site of the university, and beyond.

Iterations of this scenario confronted artists upon their entry into the university system. In the academy, artists became fabricators of the invisible products that, in Clark Kerr's estimation, were central to the nation's worldwide "supremacy." Spurred by these conditions, artists pursued experiments that expropriated the aesthetic and discursive forms of the university's information machine.

Analog Computing Machines Can Be Made to Unlearn:
Robert Morris's *21.3* (1964)

In the year that marked the formation of the Free Speech Movement, Robert Morris staged *21.3*, a performative rejection of institutional speech. That same year, Berkeley students would festoon themselves with IBM punch cards spelling out the slogan "STRIKE." The 1964 lecture-performance refuses the linguistic codes of the university's "information machine" and rejects its automated scholarly discourse. Instead, *21.3* pursues the self-reflexive query of how teaching might denaturalize its own aesthetic forms. It stops short, however, of imagining what teaching might do beyond this, or explicitly probing education within a framework of social transformation.

In *21.3*, the artist-educator who recognizes they have been reformatted into an IBM punch card makes an early appearance on the scene. Notably, Morris presented the lecture-performance roughly two years before completing a Master's Thesis on

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[87] Quoted in Cohen, *The Essential Mario Savio*, 4.

Constantin Brancusi and receiving an M.A. from Hunter College.[88] An image from the

thesis demonstrates Morris's interest in the systematic codification of sculptural form in

Brancusi's corpus [fig. 5]. Directly citing Morris's experience in the academy, the title of

21.3 derives from a numerical class listing for a course he taught at Hunter. In *21.3*,

Morris sets the stage for a pedagogical spectacle where the university-trained artist will

demonstrate bravura fluency in scholarly discourse. Here, the expert knowledge worker

who purveys linguistic wares is placed on public display. Almost immediately, the

spectacle dissolves into a Brechtian mist of defamiliarization and disrupted information

transmission.

Many cite Robert Morris's *21.3* as a point of origin in scarce existing literature on

lecture-performance.[89] In addition to identifying *21.3* as the inception of the medium,

many accounts also trace the medium's genealogy through the informational aesthetics of

conceptual art. Redressing this oft-repeated claim, critics like Gordon Hall rightly note

the necessity of mapping alternate lineages of the lecture-performance that approach it

through the lens of dance and feminist performance, foregrounding the contributions of

artists like Simone Forti and Adrian Piper.[90] Hall calls *21.3* a "dance of a lecture" whose

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[88] Rosalind Krauss, "The Mind/Body Problem: Robert Morris in Series," in *Robert Morris*, ed. Julia Bryan-Wilson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 91.

[89] Maurice Berger's influential *Labyrinths* opens with a brief account of *21.3*, framing the piece as a "theater…of negation." See Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 3. Eve Meltzer's *Systems We Have Loved* includes an account of *21.3*, which is further discussed below. While certain of Meltzer's claims have been generative for my study, her deemphasis of the political as a rubric for reading Morris' work differs from my own approach. See Meltzer, "Turning Around, Turning Away," in *Systems We Have Loved: Conceptual Art, Affect, and the Antihumanist Turn* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 71-116.

[90] Hall's suggestions include Adrian Piper, Simone Forti, and Scott Burton. Hall, "Read me that part a-gain, where I disin-herit everybody," gordonhall.net, 2015, http://gordonhall.net/files/read_me_that_part_a-gain_where_I_disin-herit_everybody_gordon_hall.pdf.

exploration of embodiment in relation to the academic podium links up with the "sculptural understanding of dance" perceived in the work of Forti.[91] Rather than trace the genealogy of *21.3* through works of conceptual art produced by a primarily white, male coterie, its guiding influences and immediate predecessors can instead be found in the spheres of feminist dance and performance. The indebtedness of this lecture-performance to dance is further underscored by the context of its staging—a program of experimental choreography with offerings from Deborah Hay, Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, and others.

I turn to *21.3* not as a "canonical" work or an originary moment in lecture-performance. Instead, I attend to this work to surface two lessons it offers to contemporary discourses on art, pedagogy, and protest. One the one hand, the lecture-performance indexes what I argue for as an early, aestheticized refusal of the university and its automated utterance. On the other hand, it demonstrates the ineffectual nature of performative refusal decoupled from structural and systemic analysis, or from a consideration of the bodily coordinates that inflect how a given speaker refuses, and to what effect.

Hosted at New York's Stage 73, *21.3* was presented in conjunction with the Surplus Dance Theater series curated by Steve Paxton, with lighting design by Robert Rauschenberg.[92] Lights were lowered as the artist appeared, crisply attired in suit and glasses, the standard issue uniform of the "university man" [fig. 6]. He assumed his

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[91] Hall also notes that Forti and Morris were interlocutors and partners at the same time that Morris's 1964 exhibition at Green Gallery offered a "profound visual echo" of Forti's output. See Hall, "Read me that part a-gain."

[92] Surplus Dance Theater was an offshoot of the Judson Dance Theater. See Jennifer Sarathy et al., "Performance History," Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, http://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/artist/performance-history.

position at the podium onstage, and gave an abridged rendering of art historian Erwin

Panofsky's canonical essay, "Studies in Iconology" (1939), a text that outlines how to

codify visual information.[93] Rather than recite the text live, Morris lip-synched to a

recording of himself reading Panofsky's paragraphs. Choreographed by prerecorded

audio, his utterances had been automated in advance. Bit by bit, Morris demonstratively

de-synchronized his live delivery from the recorded address, inserting friction into the

flow of information. What followed was a deliberate misalignment of mimed speech and

bodily gesture in relation to the prerecorded material. The artist's execution introduced a

disconnection between the pedagogical authority his visual persona courted on the one

hand, and a tactical failure of discursive mastery on the other.

When it was first performed, *21.3* posed a challenge to aesthetic classification. In

the 1965 essay, "Notes on Dance," Morris himself includes *21.3* among the five dances

he'd choreographed up to that point. In each of these, his primary engagement was "with

the body in motion" and approaching "'problem solving' as a process of thought."[94]

Extrapolating from this claim, Morris' theory of dance takes shape as one of spatialized

and embodied cognition. This formulation echoes the practice of members of the Judson

Church, reflecting the influence of both Forti and Rainer.

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[93] See Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939). Eve Meltzer considers the possible relationship between the content of Panofsky's essay and the form of the lecture-performance in her study of affect in Morris' work. See Meltzer, "Turning Around, Turning Away," 71-116.

[94] See Robert Morris, "Notes on Dance," in *Robert Morris*, ed. Julia Bryan-Wilson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 1-6.

Its opaquely esoteric dimensions place *21.3* firmly within the realm of conceptual

projects that Luis Camnitzer describes as aimed at a "narrow peer audience."[95] Allen

Hughes, a reviewer for the *New York Times*, presents a one-sentence summary of the

work without venturing any further embellishment: "Morris…stands at a lectern and for

six minutes mouths the words of a pre-recorded excerpt about esthetics."[96] Reviewing the

performance for the *Village Voice*, critic Jill Johnston is self-professedly uncertain about

how to account for the piece. She seesaws in its designation, calling it a "dance *or*

lecture," highlighting that the work resists being parsed through available idioms. Her

either/or classification also points to the inextricability of bodily labor and cognitive labor

in this staging of knowledge work. Johnston continues:

> The written paper is a product, and Morris illustrates the product in the process of
> a lecture, which in turn becomes a product illustrating the process of the paper. It
> all turns around on itself. I'm turning some verbal cartwheels myself here, and I
> wouldn't mind if the whole thing began to sound absurd. This is definitely an
> absurd commentary. I'm having a good time. No doubt the point is to have a good
> time. I might be having a better time now than I had at the concert. No . . .[97]

Implicit in the do-si-do ambiguity of Johnston's writing is the sense that *21.3* has short-

circuited her attempts to conclusively render the event as transmissible data. Its

irreducibility to data, I contend, is where the potential for generative refusal in *21.3* lies.

The interlocking systems of art-as-information and the university's information

machine placed a premium on the personage of the expert. It is the same avatar of

neoliberal expertise whom *21.3* targets. This avatar is ubiquitous in accounts of

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[95] Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 113.

[96] Allen Hughes, "Dance: An Avant-Garde Series Begins," *New York Times,* February 11, 1964, 45.

[97] Emphasis added. See Jill Johnston, "Pain, Pleasure, Process," *Village Voice*, February 27, 1964, 9.

conceptual aesthetics. In Sol LeWitt's writing, the artist appears as a bureaucratic

functionary whose aim "would be to give viewers information."[98] In Alexander Alberro's

influential study, conceptual art is parsed as a companion to the postindustrial

multinational corporate sphere, embedded in a political economy that casts the artist as a

managerial supervisor.[99] In Benjamin Buchloh's account, conceptualism manifests an

aesthetic of administration that mimics the "operating logic of late capitalism."[100]

Speaking to the relation between informational aesthetics and the professionalized expert,

Morris summarizes the artist as a figure whose "'professional self' is bought and sold."[101]

While Morris's corpus is frequently articulated through conceptualist rubrics,

many have noted that such an affiliation only tenuously obtains in certain of his works.[102]

This is emphatically spotlighted in projects stemming from Morris' engagement with

dance and feminist performance, including collaborations with artists like Forti, Carolee

Schneemann, Yvonne Rainer, and Lynda Benglis. In his critical writing, Morris furnishes

a critique of conceptual practice on the grounds that "the verbal formalism of

Conceptualism…serve[s] as a perfect comfort to a middle class willing to pay for a

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[98] Sol LeWitt, "Serial Project #1, 1966" *Aspen Magazine,* nos. 5-6, ed. Brian O'Doherty, 1967, n. p.

[99] Alberro writes that artists "increasingly resembled personnel in other specialized professions in which success came to those who managed and publicized their work most strategically." See Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 1.

[100] Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (1990): 143.

[101] Quoted in Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 103.

[102] Jon Bird, for instance, discusses the ways in which Morris' "position in relation to conceptual art remained (and remains) problematic." See Bird, "Minding the Body," in *Robert Morris*, ed. Julia Bryan-Wilson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 171.

spectacle of nonpolitical risks."[103] Expanding on earlier claims by Annette Michelson, I

contend that in *21.3*, Morris rejects the disembodied information aesthetic associated with

the conceptual idiom.[104] He draws, instead, from dance and theater, positing the bodily

nature of linguistic utterance and thought. Rooting perception within the corporeality of

the embodied viewer, the artist describes his practice as one of "phenomenological

formalism."[105] His insistence on embodiment in *21.3*, I contend, is a refusal to wholly

occupy the role of the information worker—a worker called upon to deemphasize the

body to facilitate identification with a technical system. Importantly, this approach to

embodiment brackets out race, neglecting to address how the artist's own bodily

coordinates enable the possibility of performative refusal in the guise of a pedagogical

figure of authority.[106]

Counterparts to *21.3* in Morris's own corpus can be found in *I-Box* (1962), a

lampooned and deflated display of Morris's nude body that depicts masculinity as a

semiotic construct, nested within unmotivated systems of signification [fig. 7].[107] Or, in

Untitled (*Cunt/Cock)* (1963) [fig. 8], which deploys a pair of moveable rulers to suggest

the absurdity of coding gender and desire through arbitrarily derived tools of pseudo-

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[103] Morris, "Some Splashes in the Ebb Tide," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 133.

[104] Michelson's account centers on Morris's interest in aesthetic experience as a mode of knowing "through the body." See Annette Michelson, "Robert Morris—An Aesthetics of Transgression," in *Robert Morris*, ed. Julia Bryan-Wilson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 25.

[105] Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Robert Morris, "A Conversation with Robert Morris in 1985," in *Robert Morris*, ed. Julia Bryan-Wilson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 61.

[106] The following two sections offer an extensive account of how pedagogical aesthetics in the 1960s intersect with race, gender, class, and institutional access.

[107] Meltzer also includes *I-Box* in her study of Morris' relationship to systems. See Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, 80.

scientific measure. This sampling sets the stage for the performance of effaced

professionalized masculinity in *21.3*.

Prior to his 1964 performance, Morris addresses the status of the artist's lecture as

a transactional exchange within the knowledge industry [fig. 9]. Writing a postscript into

his letter to John Cage dated January 1, 1963, he says:

> P.S. I am now teaching at Hunter College. I have mentioned to the head of the Art
> Department that I would like very much to have you give a lecture at the Bronx
> campus. When I mentioned this plan I did not know of course how much money
> you would need to come up and give a lecture, but if you would be interested in
> this and could let me know what funds would be necessary I would approach the
> department again – I would very much like to have you give a lecture (maybe you
> would prefer a concert?)[108]

Implicit in Morris' note is the acknowledgment that a lecture involves the extraction of

cognitive labor from a speaker, and a transfer of informational assets. His repeated

assurances of securing funding recognize this transfer as a monetized exchange.

The score for *21.3* reveals the performance as a work of precise scholarly

choreography [fig. 10]. Handwritten marginalia scrawled by Morris on Panofsky's text

determines each of his micro-gesticulations in advance. As Eve Meltzer notes, the

accompanying audio also includes a flurry of "superfluous sounds," from the swallowing

of liquids to the speaker's exhalations.[109] Each of these fails to intelligibly signify within

systems of academic thought, and represents no value added. On the first page of the

script, Morris reminds himself to "come on with glasses <u>on</u>." Underlining the final word,

he indicates the urgency of making himself visually legible as an intellectual archetype

from the outset. A note directly below the cue mandates "both hands on stand," dictating

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[108] Robert Morris, letter to John Cage, January 12, 1963, John Cage Collection, Northwestern
University, Box 4, Folder 12, Sleeve 1.
[109] Meltzer*, Systems We Have Loved*, 74.

an aggressively upright stance. In a carefully administered arrangement of the artist's

body, Morris' spread arms signaled command of the podium and its surrounding space,

counteracted by ambiguous facial expressions that telegraphed a comical inability to

process his own speech. In fact, this play at failure was at once a semi-virtuosic

enactment of a predetermined script.

For Rosalind Krauss, *21.3* presents a tableau wherein the "the professor turns

clown."[110] Writing on a related note, Morris elsewhere argues that "nothing demolishes

meaning like laughter."[111] To be sure, there's something in the affective register of *21.3*

that's not altogether serious. Yet, as Jack Halberstam reminds us:

> terms like *serious* and *rigorous* tend to be code words, in academia as well as
> other contexts, for disciplinary correctness; they signal a form of training and
> learning that confirms what is already known according to approved methods of
> knowing.[112]

Put otherwise, these terms are the purview of institutional structures concerned with

credentialing, licensing, and accreditation. *21.3.* is not a "serious" work because watching

someone fail can produce droll effects. The tactical failure this work enacts is the failure

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[110] This phrase is borrowed from Krauss, but her analysis extends beyond the scope of this observation. Krauss notes, for instance, that *21.3* produces important slippages in linguistic communication. Krauss, "The Mind/Body Problem: Robert Morris in Series," in *Robert Morris*, ed. Julia Bryan-Wilson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 76. Morris struck a similarly farcical note in *War*, a 1963 dance-based collaboration with Robert Huot performed at the Judson Church. Hyperbolizing the costumed pageantry of combat, they were festooned in streaming epaulets, medieval helmets, and makeshift armor hiding a fleet of white doves. They proceeded to do battle, brandishing wooden swords to a noise composition performed by La Monte Young. Some received the work as an affectively evocative critique of heteromasculinity and militarization. Others, like Steve Paxton, incredulously asked, "What was this political cartooning that was going on?" and suggested that the performance could not be seriously invested in antiwar sentiment because its form was "just preposterous." See Paxton's Unpublished interview quoted in Sally Banes, *Democracy's Body: Judson Dance Theater, 1962-64* (Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press, 1983), 101.

[111] Robert Morris, "American Quartet," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 247.

[112] Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 6.

of professional excellence. Here, the absence of seriousness undermines the discursive authority of a professionalized speaker. It depreciates the value of the "knowledge assets" he transmits. Traditional pedagogy, by contrast, is the virtuosic performance of absolute knowing.

In 1963, Morris's *Memory Drawing* series prefigured *21.3* by visually undermining the methods of traditional pedagogy. Beginning with *First Memory Drawing* [fig. 11], Morris memorized a text on the physiological structures undergirding memory, and transcribed its content in ink on gray paper.[113] To generate the following iterations in the series, he duplicated as much of the original document as his memory had retained. With each new version, errors were inserted and content was lost. Each subsequent instantiation crept further away from the original. Failing to perform accurate recall, Morris cast himself in the role of a pupil who has forgotten the material they are asked to reproduce on a standardized exam. To invoke Halberstam's writing on the politics of memorialization, *Memory Drawings'* forgetting resists "the heroic and grand logics of recall."[114]

Halberstam derives this model, in part, from the critical pedagogy of Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire articulates the centrality of teaching and learning to organized resistance. "The revolution," he declares, will bear an "eminently pedagogical character."[115] He condemns the "banking" model of education, a correlate to the university's entanglement with the knowledge industry:

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[113] Meltzer offers an extended discussion of Memory Drawings in relation to Morris' *Blind Time Drawings* series. See Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, 107.

[114] Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 15.

[115] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2000), 67.

> Education…becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.[116]

Freire describes a scenario where knowledge has been modified into a fiscal asset, transmitted from teacher to student the way one might insert a check into an ATM. Students, in this context, stand in for the passive receptacles of knowledge assets. On command, they eject deposits in the condition that they were delivered, identically reproducing the input they received via standardized testing and recitation. Operating at the core of this model is a colonial tendency to "projec[t] an absolute ignorance onto others."[117] As a corrective, Freire outlines a dialogical model of critical pedagogy that positions students as active interlocutors. Crucially, Freire positions critical pedagogy not as an end unto itself, but as a sphere of praxis that builds toward collective social liberation.

Dimensions of *21.3* suggest that the work seeks to jam the gears of the banking model of education. It stages a vignette where a deposited knowledge asset—in this case, the text of Panofsky's essay—has been shredded, denuded of its value, and ejected in disintegrated form. My framing of lecture-performance through Freire is indebted to Karen Redrobe, who discusses the lecture-performance of Coco Fusco through a Freirean configuration of pedagogy and power.[118] Morris's de-synchronized lecturer also mimes Rancière's ignorant schoolmaster, delcaring, "I must teach you that I have nothing to

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[116] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 72.

[117] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 72.

[118] See Karen Beckman, "Gender, Power, and Pedagogy in Coco Fusco's Bare Life Study #1 (2005), A Room of One's Own (2005), and Operation Atropos (2006)," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 50, 1 & 2 (Spring and Fall 2009): 125-38.

teach you."[119] Sporting the accessories of professorial prestige ("come on with glasses

on") while eroding the wearer's discursive authority, *21.3* destabilizes the pedagogical

figure Rancière dubs the "master explicator."[120] Rebinding scholarly speech to an

embodied speaker, Morris détournes the academic address by conspicuously rooting it in

a body whose expressions fail the tests of mastery and legibility. However, if there is

something like a queer art of failure operating here, it is enacted in a context that poses

little risk—and in fact offers the possibility of professional success—through its

invocation.

    Just as he fails to reproduce the initial text of *Memory Drawing*, so too does

Morris "forget" how to manage his body in relation to the audio media that serves as his

vocal prosthetic. With a performative display of memory's dissolution, he falls short of

the information worker's absolute identification with the technical system.[121] Consider the

textual content of *Memory Drawing*. It concerns physiological theories of memory rife

with the technologized language of coding, computation, and information storage:

> Theories attempt to discriminate between types of memories, assigning the coding
> of some to physical alteration of the molecular structure of brain cells and others
> to reflect electrical circuits…Analog computing machines can be made to learn –
> a process impossible without storage of information.[122]

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[119] In this widely circulated text, Rancière outlines a model of pedagogy based on the methods of nineteenth century teacher, Joseph Jacotot. Arriving at a teaching assignment in Belgium, Jacotot was confronted with a scenario where his Belgian students spoke no French, and he spoke no Flemish. He recognized that he occupied a position of diminished knowing, a condition traditionally associated with the student rather than educator. From this, he devised an anti-authoritarian method of teaching. Following Jacotot, Rancière advocates for pedagogy that doesn't position the educator as one who knows, but rather presupposes an equality of intelligences between pupil and teacher. This presupposition, in turn, cultivates the conditions of possibility for intellectual emancipation. Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 15.

[120] Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, 46.

[121] In Shoshana Zuboff's account, identification with technical systems is a trademark of information technology and the knowledge workers who encounter it daily.

[122] Transcribed from Robert Morris, *Memory Drawing*.

I want to pause for a moment on the thought that "analog computing machines can be made to learn." Likening human learning to the force that drives analog computing, Morris sets the stage for the glitches he would code into his own information delivery. Put simply, the term "glitch" denotes the malfunction of a technical system.[123] In the digital context, glitches appear when data has been corrupted. Glitch aesthetics, a genre that flourished with the rise of the internet, destructively edits the code of digital files in order to prompt deliberate errors. Its valences are political: as Caetlin Benson-Allott summarizes, the glitch "suspends the smooth operation of technoculture" and exposes the operational logic of informational environments.[124] What it produces, to invoke Alan Liu, is "information designed to resist information."[125] I want to argue, then, that *21.3* explores the tactical affordances of the pedagogical glitch. It rejects the information storage sought by standardized instruction, favoring pedagogy premised on operational malfunctions.[126] Confronted by a milieu where scholars increasingly resemble computing machines, *21.3* imagines that it might be possible to afflict those machines with intractable data errors. If the mission of art school was the making of "professional

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[123] Many have traced the glitch through the generative dimensions of queer failure. For a recent example, see, Legacy Russell, "Elsewhere, After the Flood: Glitch Feminism and the Genesis of Glitch Body Politic," *Rhizome.org*, March 12, 2013, http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/mar/12/glitch-body-politic/.

[124] I borrow this formulation from Caetlin Benson-Allott's essay on digital failure. See Benson-Allott, "Going Gaga for Glitch: Digital Failure @nd Feminist Spectacle in Twenty-First Century Music Video," in *The Oxford Handbook of Sound and Image in Digital Media*, eds. Carol Vernallis, Amy Herzog, John Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 127-39.

[125] Liu, *Laws of Cool*, 356.

[126] Few studies have explored the pedagogical possibilities of the glitch. For two notable example, see Ernesto Peña and Kedrick James, "A Glitch Pedagogy: Exquisite Error and the Appeal of the Accidental," *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* vol. 14, no. 1 (2016): 108-127; and Juliana Luchkiw, "Situating Glitches: Networks of Knowledge Production," *signal/noise: collected student works from a feminist docc* vol. 1, no. 1 (April 2016): http://femtechnet.org/publications/signalnoise-collected-student-works-from-a-feminist-docc/.

men" in the service of the state; for the duration of *21.3*, Morris appears to unmake

himself as a professional and a locus of masculinist expertise.

Before probing further, I want to pause on the gendered dimensions of *21.3*.

Writing on male theatricality, art historian Amelia Jones cautions against ascribing an *a*

priori feminist sensibility to the performance of embodiment by male artists. On the one

hand, Jones observes that the male body artist

> expos[es] to view the body as locus of interpretive desire that must be hidden for
> modernist criticism to play its "disinterested" (and ultimately masculinist) game
> of aesthetic judgment.[127]

Yet, as Jones cautions, male theatricality is not necessarily constitutive of a radical

intervention. In the first place, early instantiations of body art were circumscribed by the

coordinates of race and class. That is, they were "almost exclusively practiced by *white*

men" who, effectively established "themselves within [the] educated ranks of social

privilege" associated with the art field.[128]

Beyond this, body art by figures like Morris and Vito Acconci did little to

dislodge the masculine-coded performer as an agent of discursive authority. To the

contrary, they often reinforced binary configurations of gender in the act of parodying or

deliberately failing to perform normative masculinity. Furnishing examples in this vein,

Jones points to Morris's 1974 photographic collaboration with artist Lynda Benglis,

wherein he assumes a visual identity linked to the queer hypermasculinity of

countercultural BDSM communities. Jones writes, "through such parodic 'masculine

masquerade,' masculinity is clearly unhinged but still tends to maintain its place as the

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[127] Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,
1998), 113.
[128] Emphasis in original. Jones, *Body Art*, 114.

hyperbolic *self* to feminine's *other*."[129] I want to suggest that a similar dynamic obtains in *21.3*. Whereas the lecture-performance lampoons the masculinist pedagogue in something like a parodic masquerade, it does so in a field where the artist accrues cultural capital precisely by burlesquing pedagogical discourse.

In effect, *21.3* sketches an intervention into pedagogical form. In that respect, it furnishes an ideal correlate to Luis Camnitzer's formulation of North American pedagogical artwork in the 1960s. Camnitzer writes, "It was as if school authority was now to be challenged mostly on aesthetic grounds."[130] An exclusive focus on formalist inquiry in *21.3* considerably attenuate its relation to critical pedagogy. To be sure, the lecture-performance's data errors disrupt central tenets of the banking model of education as described by Freire. For example, that "the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing," or that "the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority."[131] However, these disruptions proceed in seeming isolation from a structural critique of the university system, or from an analysis of why *this* artist's body, in particular, is legible as an archetypal teaching body. In that regard, *21.3* remains far afield from Freire's formulations of pedagogical praxis. In *A Pedagogy for Liberation*, Freire observes that social transformation through education entails

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[129] Emphasis in original. Jones, *Body Art*, 114. Julia Bryan-Wilson offers a related discussion of gender in *Site* (1964), a collaboration between Morris and Carolee Schneemann. Bryan-Wilson writes that *Site* reveals "the feminized component of the cube of minimalist sculpture" though, "with its exaggerated role playing, that feminization is partial and compromised." See Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 90-91.

[130] Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 113.

[131] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 73.

much more than an individual or psychological event. It points to a political process by the dominated classes who seek their own freedom from domination, a long historical process where education is one front.[132]

By contrast, *21.3* pursues the individual investigation of pedagogical aesthetics in a scenario where the transformation of one's own cognition appears an end unto itself. In an influential 2012 essay, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang assert that merely highlighting the connection between structures of thought and structures of colonial encounter—recently exemplified in the call to "decolonize your mind"—does not *de facto* represent a meaningful gesture of resistance.[133] Citing Frantz Fanon, theorist of decolonization and a direct influence on Freire, Tuck and Yang emphasize that "decolonizing the mind is the first step, not the only step toward overthrowing colonial regimes."[134] That is, the development of critical consciousness (*conscientization* in Freire's term), alone, should not be mistaken for a solution to social justice struggles.

It is important to ask: which elements of *21.3* enable its interpretive translation into a refusal of institutional pedagogy? Which narratives of art history and of student protest does the piece reinforce? The archetype Morris calls up in *21.3* is the hallmark New Left figure of the "theorizing...white male academic authority" described by Michele Wallace in "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash."[135] If this lecture-performance evokes a Rancièrean ignorant schoolmaster; it is able to do so because

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[132] Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1987), 112.

[133] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 19-22.

[134] Tuck and Yang also parse important differences in Fanon and Freire's formulations of social transformation. Specifically, they note the discrepancies between Fanon's careful attention to the "particularities of colonization" and Freire's more generalized and abstracted paradigm of oppressor/oppressed. Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 19-20.

[135] This figure is discussed further in the following section. See Michele Wallace, "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash," in *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (London: Verso, 2016), 192.

Robert Morris's bodily coordinates—coupled with scholarly accouterments—

immediately signify as avatars of pedagogical authority. Put otherwise, the artist in *21.3*

is able to assume and volitionally refuse the position of the "master explicator" because

this position is readily available to him.

Excursus:
Speaking Back to *21.3*: Gordon Hall's *Read me that part a-gain, where I disin-herit
***everybody* (2014-5)**

21.3 reappears fifty years after its initial staging as a disinherited reference in

Gordon Hall's lecture-performance, *Read me that part a-gain, where I disin-herit*

everybody (2014-5) [fig. 12]. Hall is the founder of the Center for Experimental Lectures,

through which they provide a para-institutional "platform for artists, theorists, and other

cultural producers to engage with the public lecture as a format."[136] In a metadiscursive

history of the medium, *Read me that part a-gain…* explores what it means to frame

thinking as "something you do with your body," as corporeal acts grounded in material

structures.[137]

Hall's utterances issue forth from nonbinary coordinates, speaking back to the

historical gendering of the professionalized artist-educator. Hall delivers the script as a

mobile performer navigating a shifting set of spatial parameters, moving across a stage

set of white, geometric sculptures that suggest academic podiums in various stages of

construction.

Early on in the piece, the artist projects a poster they produced in 2012 that reads

"WORK NOT WORK." Unraveling this statement, they point to the uncertain status of

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[136] Gordon Hall, *Center for Experimental Lectures*, 2016, http://experimentallectures.org.
[137] Hall, "Read me that part a-gain."

lecture-performances as aesthetic products that "are and aren't the work."[138] The

indeterminate, dialogic nature of this aesthetic form exists on the periphery of "real

work," alongside the queer sociality of "werk." Hall proposes conditions under which

"talking politics on the naked gay beach" might be reclassified as meaningful cultural

output: business that disturbs the order of business. A nude, affectively charged, and

informal expenditure of cognitive labor that precludes the disembodied logics of

information transmission.

On Who Speaks in *Artists Talk*

While the Free Speech Movement assembled a panoply of voices organized in

resistance, it is often metonymically represented through a single figure: Mario Savio.[139]

He is the subject of biographies like *Freedom's Orator*, whose title notably omits the

plurality of speakers involved in the FSM.[140] Iconic photographs capturing Savio barefoot

atop a police car in Sproul Plaza often circulate as quintessential visual documents of the

FSM [fig. 13]. In another popular image set, Savio addresses a crowd flanked by no

fewer than two speakers and a journalist's microphone [fig. 14]. Such archival ephemera

reflect an asymmetrical amplification of voices in prevailing narratives of the FSM.

In a similar vein, popular histories of student movements in the 1960s like Seth

Rosenfeld's *Subversives: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to*

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[138] Hall, "Read me that part a-gain."

[139] Savio, a working-class second-generation Italian immigrant, is described as the car-top rally's instigator. Savio's speech acts posed what the state deemed to be a palpable threat. They garnered the attentions of the FBI, whose agents monitored and interpreted Savio's oratorical style.

[140] See Robert Cohen, *Freedom's Orator: Mario Savio and the Radical Legacy of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Power and Robert Cohen and Reginald E. Zelnik's *The Free Speech Movement:*

Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s each feature an image of Savio on their cover. [141]

Without deemphasizing Savio's considerable contributions, it is possible to ask why a

single individual appears to stand in for the vast, heterogeneous collectivity of a student

movement.

This metonymic substitution is symptomatic of a broader tendency in the study of

protest and student movements in the 1960s. Michele Wallace, black feminist cultural

critic and a participant in 1960s and 70s artists' protests, diagnoses this tendency as the

"Great American Whitewash."[142] Enumerating histories of resistance authored by Todd

Gitlin, James Miller, David Caute, Sara Evans, and others, Wallace surfaces the

racialized and gendered exclusions performed in their accounts. She writes:

> As recollections of the 1960s mount up...we are again facing the Great American
> Whitewash. Not only has the breadth of the Afro-American cultural presence and
> contribution almost ceased to exist, but also black, Latino, Asian, feminist, and
> gay 'minorities' have become minor' again, as though the revisions of the 60s and
> 70s in the way we conceptualize 'history' had never happened.[143]

To frame resistance in these ways, Wallace notes, enables scholars to bracket out

"the importance of race, or the vital contribution black artists and intellectuals have made

to the discussion."[144] The dynamic described here extends to art historical narratives of

pedagogical aesthetics in the 1960s. Probing further, it is crucial to establish which artists'

critical pedagogies and resistant speech acts from this period are rendered audible today.

By the same token, it's necessary to ask which artists were granted privileged access to

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[141] Seth Rosenfeld, *Subversives: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power* (New York: Picador, 2013); Robert Cohen and Reginald E. Zelnik, *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
[142] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 197.
[143] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 197.
[144] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 195.

the university and, by turn, to its generic forms. If pedagogical aesthetics developed amid

entanglements with the academy; it is vital to underscore that entry to the academy was

distributed along coordinates of race, gender, and class. The widely circulated lecture-

performances of this period tend to correlate to those artists who were coded as legitimate

habitués of the university.

To wit: the oft-cited lecture-based works of the 1950s and 60s include John

Cage's *Lecture on Nothing* (1950), Henry Flynt's *From 'Culture' to Veramusement*

(1963), Robert Morris' *21.3* (1964), and Robert Smithson's *Hotel Palenque* (1969-72).

These artists' institutional affiliations include Harvard University (Flynt), Hunter College

(Morris), and the New School (Cage).

The collection *Artists Talk: 1969-1977* serves as an instructive case study in this

regard. It features transcripts of fifteen "exemplary" artists' lectures delivered at the Nova

Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) in Halifax between 1969 and 1977.[145]

Throughout that period, NSCAD functioned as a prominent platform for artistic

discourse, assembling high-profile speakers drawn from North American and European

contexts. Critic Bryne McLaughlin identifies the institution as the gold standard in radical

pedagogy and conceptualism, a "transitory nexus for the leading edge of contemporary

art."[146] As such, *Artists Talk* offers a microcosm of prevailing discourses of the time. It is

telling, then, that the collection's roster of fifteen speakers programmed between 1969

and 1977 exclusively comprises white male artists based in North America and Europe. It

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[145] Peggy Gale, "Introduction," in *Artists Talk: 1969-1977*, ed. Peggy Gale (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 2004), viii.
[146] Bryne McLaughlin, "Why the NSCAD Legend Mattered—And Still Matters," *Canadian Art*, March 1, 2016, https://canadianart.ca/features/why-the-nscad-legend-mattered-and-still-matters.

is effectively a who's-who of North American and European conceptual art, spotlighting

contributors like Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth, and Lawrence Weiner.

Branded as a bastion of experimental art education, NSCAD was a preeminent

destination for what art historian Howard Singerman calls the gendered figure of the

"journeyman artist": one who travels along a lecture circuit of geographically dispersed

speaking engagements.[147] Ad Reinhardt, Robert Morris's teacher at Hunter College,

characterizes this figure as a peripatetic vaudevillian in his text, "The Artist in Search of

An Academy, Part Two." He articulates the artist-lecturer in explicitly masculinist terms

as the

> traveling design salesman, the *Art Digest* philosopher-poet and Bauhaus exerciser,
> the avant-garde huckster-handicraftsman and educational shopkeeper, the holy-
> roller explainer-entertainer-in-residence.[148]

Like gallery representation and media coverage, speaking engagements were increasingly

recognized as an avenue for artists' accrual of prestige. The conferral of cultural capital

operated as a feedback loop wherein university-trained artists were legitimized as

potential visiting lecturers, then legitimized once more through the fact of having

presented lectures at esteemed institutions. NSCAD functioned as a distinguished site in

that regard.

An excerpted conversation between critic Claude Gintz and dealer-doyen Seth

Siegelaub prefaces the introduction to *Artists Talk*. In the quoted passage, they discuss

the passage of art into dematerialized "linguistic form."[149] It is no accident that, as

Singerman observes, language was also "the defining attribute of the university" during

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[147] Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 157.
[148] Ad Reinhardt, "The Artist in Search of an Academy. Part Two: Who Are the Artists?" *College Art Journal* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1954): 315.
[149] Claude Gintz quoted in Gale, "Introduction," vii.

the academic training of artists in this period.[150] Or, more straightforwardly, that "the

university demands language" from its subjects.[151] For Siegelaub, conceptualism's

language-based experimentation represents a democratizing and deskilling of visual art.

In his account, the linguistic turn heralds "accessibility and production by all," because

"what could be more accessible than language?"[152] The volume's list of homogenous

contributors reveals the contradictions latent in Siegelaub's proposition.

While the selected lectures are not explicitly framed as artworks, their content

overlaps with the set of concerns associated with lecture-performance as a genre. That is,

they position art as idea (or, in Joseph Kosuth's words, "art as idea as idea.")[153] Many of

the presentations self-referentially interrogate how knowledge is produced. By doing so

in the context of an institutional lecture series, they invoke the lecture-performance's

meta-discursive dimensions. These are rooted in what Rike Frank calls "the desire to

devise alternative networks of communication, information and distribution in response

to established institutional models and forms of knowledge."[154]

It comes as no surprise that speakers who sought to intervene in institutional

knowledge production were those who, themselves, had been granted access to learning

institutions. To tally the educational histories and affiliations of US artists included in

Artists Talk yields results that span Wayne State University (James Lee Byars),

University of Michigan (Douglas Huebler), School of Visual Arts (Joseph Kosuth),

Syracuse University (Sol LeWitt), and Brown University (Alan Sondheim).

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[150] Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 155.
[151] Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 155.
[152] Seth Siegelaub quoted in Gale, "Introduction," vii.
[153] Gale, *Artists Talk*, x.
[154] Frank, "When Form Starts Talking," 6.

Remarking on the uniformity of the lecturers' identity coordinates with respect to gender, editor Peggy Gale writes that the composition of NSCAD's visiting artist roster is "a reflection of the international art scene" of the time.[155] As Gale suggests, the roster also reflects the composition of NSCAD's faculty, where all but four of forty-three faculty members were men in 1972. Notably, no further specifications are given with respect to race.

Artists Talk overlaps a historical period that also witnessed the 1971 publication of Linda Nochlin's "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?"[156] The landmark essay serves as a feminist intervention into well-worn art historical narratives. Nochlin identifies the absence of nineteenth-century women in these narratives as a direct result of their institutional exclusion from the rarefied pedagogical spheres of formal academies. Beyond providing training, such academies also conferred professionalized status upon their students, authorizing their status as practitioners. *Artists Talk* compiles lectures at a considerable historical remove from the period Nochlin analyzes. Nevertheless, the collection's roster of speakers compels the question: why have there been no women and nonwhite lecturers at NSCAD whose speech was deemed sufficiently "exemplary" for inclusion in this volume, and by extension in prevailing discourses on twentieth century pedagogical aesthetics?

During a period putatively marked by a proliferation of artists' lecturing, women's speech was too often omitted from the lectern. In one example, the art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson describes the devaluation of feminist critic Lucy Lippard's verbal

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[155] For further discussion on the implications of an "international art scene," please see below. Gale, "Introduction," viii.

[156] Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *ARTnews* (January 1971): 22.

contributions at a talk by Clement Greenberg. After Lippard issued a challenge to Greenberg on the subject of quality and evaluation, Greenberg announced, "Oh, you're Lucy Lippard. I thought you were a schoolteacher from the Bronx."[157] As Bryan-Wilson observes, the gendered and classist rhetoric of this statement "demoted [Lippard] to a dilettante, and his pink-collar choice of profession further reduced her to the ultimate outsider in this educated, predominantly male, Manhattan crowd."[158] At the time, Lippard already held an M.A. from New York University. Thus, even when women fulfilled the classist criteria associated with institutional credentialing, they nevertheless continued to be delegitimized as interlocutors.

To subvert the linguistic codes of the academy, it is often necessary to know what the linguistic codes of the academy are. The prospect of refusing the university system presupposes the possibility of entering it. That is to say, when we propose that the lecture-performance represents a radical reorientation toward artists' speech, it is vital to specify *whose* speech it enables.

The "Input of Pedagogy" in Latin America

When the introduction to *Artists Talk* observes that NSCAD's homogenous roster of speakers reflects "the international art scene" of the time, it designates North America and Europe as the geographical referents of the term "international." In actuality, many of the earliest experiments in pedagogical aesthetics were conducted in the context of Latin America, where they diverged from US counterparts in form, content, and aim.

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[157] Clement Greenberg quoted in Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 162.
[158] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 162.

Uruguayan artist and critic Luis Camnitzer chronicles these pedagogical practices in the influential text, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation*. As Camnitzer outlines, critical discourses on education circulated throughout Latin America during and before the period following World War II. Camnitzer refers to the effects of this phenomenon as "the input of pedagogy," and traces its reach across discrete Latin American milieus.[159] In the early 1960s, for instance, the Argentinian members of the collective *Group de Recherche d'Art Visuelle* (GRAV) established participatory tactics for public pedagogy, distributing the means of aesthetic production to an array of co-creators. In Brazil at the time, Francisco Julião, a movement leader with the *Ligas Campesinas* (Peasant Leagues), advocated for "*de-institutionalized* teaching" that would foster greater political participation among agricultural workers.[160] Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator and philosopher, theorized radical models of learning that recognize students as active agents of instruction. First published in 1968, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* trafficked widely and became a guidebook for artists, educators, and organizers.[161]

As scholars have observed, US and Latin American pedagogical aesthetics crucially diverge in their respective relation to movement-building. Whereas artists in the latter context deployed pedagogy as a tool of social liberation to be collectively wielded against state power, many artists in the US tended to privilege individualized investigations of pedagogical form. That is, US artists who approached education often

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[159] "The Input of Pedagogy" refers to the title of a chapter on pedagogical aesthetics in Camnitzer's *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 109-116.
[160] Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 112.
[161] Camnitzer notes that *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was "as much a manual for teachers as it was for artists." Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 112.

did so within medium-specific, meta-discursive, and self-referential rubrics. Additionally,

as noted above, Camnitzer points out that these artists' "art historical speculations [were]

aimed at and consumed by a narrow peer audience."[162] Such speculations were

customarily sited in institutional environments or art spaces positioned at a remove from

the issues of public accessibility and community engagement. Broadly speaking, artists

working this context were less interested in how education might dismantle state power

than in the tautology of how "teaching should address itself as much or more as it does

content."[163]

Examples in this vein abound in the catalogue of North American conceptual art,

with John Baldessari's video artwork *Teaching a Plant the Alphabet* (1972) prime among

them [fig. 15]. Its overt, winking humor renders it a particularly germane case study. In

his response to Joseph Beuys's influential *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*

(1965), Baldessari uses instructional flashcards to teach a plant the letters of the English

alphabet, rhythmically repeating each letter aloud in an affect-less, automated tone.

Adding an additional layer of self-referentiality, the length of the work corresponds to the

number of letters in the alphabet.[164] It is at once a structuralist commentary on semiotic

linguistics, and a critique of traditional learning models wherein knowing subjects project

ignorance onto inert and unknowing pupils. Whereas the video denaturalizes the forms

that govern learning, it disengages from explicit inquiry into how education can be

marshaled to mobilize collective networks of political actors.

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[162] Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 113.
[163] Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 113.
[164] "Teaching a Plant the Alphabet," Video Data Bank, http://www.vdb.org/titles/teaching-plant-alphabet.

Tucumán Arde (Tucumán is Burning) (1968), a landmark research initiative and a "denunciation-exhibition," provides an instructive point of comparison to the North American practices to which Camnitzer alludes.[165] The Argentine collective *El Grupo de Artistas de Vanguardia* (the Vanguard Artists Group, alternately known as the Rosario Group) staged the project in Rosario and Buenos Aires. It was held at the site of the *Confederación General de Trabajadores de los Argentinos* (CGT; General Workers Confederation of the Argentines.) At its core, *Tucumán Arde* was a pedagogical intervention into the economic violence perpetrated by the military dictatorship of General Juan Carlos Onganía in the Tucumán province known for sugarcane production. Through the denunciation-exhibition, the Vanguard Artists Group and its collaborators sought a campaign of "counter information." This campaign was intended as a corrective to the state distribution of falsified narratives suggesting that prosperity reigned in the region of Tucumán.[166] *Tucumán Arde* pursued informational methods not as a contemplation of aesthetic form, but toward a "revolutionary art" premised on producing "modifications as effective as a political act."[167] Prior to this, artists in Argentina announced their withdrawal from state- and corporate-sponsored events in a refusal to comply with official cultural narratives of the military regime. They outline a commitment to "nonparticipation" in a collective statement, marking

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[165] The group uses the terms "denunciation-exhibition" and "denunciation-operation" in a collective statement on the project. See the Avant-Garde Artists Group, "Tucumán Arde*,"* in *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*, eds. Will Bradley and Charles Esche (London: Tate Publishing, 2007), 161.

[166] Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 64.

[167] María Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolás Rosa, "Tucumán Burns," trans. Trilce Navarrete, in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 76.

a greater will to NOT PARTICIPATE in any act (official or apparently non official) that signifies complicity with all that represents, at various levels, the cultural mechanism that the bourgeoisie has put in place to absorb any revolutionary process.[168]

The methodologies of *Tucumán Arde* drew from the realm of institutional scholarship, placing its strategies in the service of a campaign against state violence. The project enlisted the involvement of scholars whose disciplines spanned sociology and economy. Over forty individuals contributed, numbering workers, organizers, and artists who included Graciela Carnevale, María Teresa Gramuglio, and Nicolás Rosa. Operating at the interstices of art and activism, *Tucumán Arde* was coordinated in direct dialogue with labor union organizers. It spoke to and with interlocutors beyond the art field. While structured as a research initiative, *Tucumán Arde* included an array of non-scholarly voices and para-institutional pedagogies. As Camnitzer puts it, the effort was driven by an impulse to move beyond "what a formalist education could do."[169]

A plan was drafted to bring the project to fruition, segmented into four sequential stages. They were:

> 1) Gathering and study of documentary material on the *Tucumán* problem and the social reality of the province...with a prior fact-finding trip [...]
>
> 2) Confrontation and verification of the Tucumán reality, for which the artists travelled to Tucumán accompanied by a technical team and journalists, where inquests, interviews, reports, recordings, filmings, etc. were done [...]
>
> 3) The denunciation-exhibition...[where] all the documentary material gathered in Tucumán was used in a montage of audio-visual media [...]

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[168] Julia Bryan-Wilson draws a parallel between Argentinean artists' commitment to nonparticipation and the tactics of the Art Strike in New York two years later. Juan Pablo Renzi et al., "We Must Always Resist the Lures of Complicity," trans. Marguerite Feitlowitz, in *Listen! Here! Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Inés Katzenstein (New York: MoMA, 2004), 295.

[169] Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 71, 61.

4) The closing of the information circuit on the Tucumán problem...a) gathering and analysis of documentation; b) publication of the results of the analysis; c) publication of bibliographic and audio-visual materials; and d) founding of a new aesthetic and evaluation.[170]

What the collaborators describe suggests the phases of collective academic inquiry in the social sciences. By contrast to institutionally located research, *Tucumán Arde* makes explicit the position of its researchers vis-à-vis the military regime. It does not propose to impose knowledge from the vantage of a distanced, outside observer, or to transmit information from omniscient producers to unknowing recipients. Rather, *Tucumán Arde* stages learning as a communal, participatory process that foregrounds indigenous knowledge through dialogue with Tucumán's communities. Translating the research process to the exhibition space resulted in rooms replete with printed matter, mural-sized photographic documentation, walls lined with newspaper articles, graffitied slogans, and protest banners [fig. 16]. Bitter coffee was served to performatively spotlight the erasure of the province's agricultural economy. Lights were dimmed at regular intervals corresponding to the temporal frequency of children's deaths in the region, accompanied by loudspeaker announcements.[171]

Lucy Lippard encountered *Tucumán Arde* in its early stages during a trip to Argentina. In the experimental study *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, Lippard would offer the succinct summary:

November. Tucuman, Argentina: The Rosario group of artists undertakes a political "exhibition" in conjunction with the labor unions (CGT) to protest workers' conditions in Tucuman, in northwest Argentina.[172]

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[170] Avant-Garde Artists Group, "Tucumán Arde*,"* 161-62.

[171] Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 65.

[172] Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 59.

Julia Bryan-Wilson observes that Lippard's meeting with the Group was a formative one, highlighting the politicized dimensions of what it could mean to refuse the production of art objects in favor of informational tactics.[173] This encounter would inform her theorization of the possibilities for resistance afforded by conceptual practice.

Amid escalating conditions of repression, the early closure of *Tucumán Arde* in Buenos Aires brought about what Camnitzer calls a "de facto art strike" among contributors.[174] "De facto" because the strike was not a coordinated withdrawal of artists' labor intended to exercise the political agency of cultural workers. Rather, it was externally imposed by a repressive military regime that threatened dissenters with retaliatory action and state violence. The strike persisted throughout a period that would be known as the Silence of *Tucumán Arde*.

Today, the "input of pedagogy" continues to inflect contemporary artistic practices in Argentina. Its effects were keenly evident at the 2017 the Pacific Standard Time Festival (PST) in Los Angeles, in an exhibition and research project entitled "Talking to Action: Art, Pedagogy, and Activism in the Americas."[175] Departing from the touchstones of US and European writings on the educational turn, the exhibition dislodges prevailing narratives of critical pedagogy grounded in "northern-transatlantic

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[173] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 137.

[174] It should be noted that scholars like Julia Bryan-Wilson and Blake Stimson have drawn parallels between *Tucumán Arde* and Art Strike. Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 68.

[175] The Festival was initiated by the Getty Research Center and entitled "LA/LA." It was framed as an examination of "Latin American and Latino art in dialogue with Los Angeles." Among the dozens of exhibitions staged in conjunction with PST, the thematic of critical pedagogy resurfaced regularly. "About," Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, http://www.pacificstandardtime.org/lala/en/about/index.html.

thinking," Instead, the show draws its theoretical scaffolding from Paulo Freire.[176] It is organized around the conviction that an exhibition is "attempting to *learn* something and that this learning should take the form of a dialogue."[177] Foregrounding community-based practices, "Talking to Action" potently extends Freire's claims that dialogical forms can serve as agents of liberation struggles.

Archives proliferate across the gallery space, confronting the viewer with a profusion of rich textual content, with many contributions visually recalling the installations of *Tucumán Arde*. The artist-designer Giacomo Castagnola was invited to execute the exhibition design with displays that dislocate works from the gallery walls to orchestrate intimate engagements with the materials.[178] At the entrance to the gallery, Castagnola's hanging wire structure, *Estructura Vertical de Alambrería,* houses the constituent pages of a do-it-yourself gallery guide that initiates viewers into the exhibition's participatory ethos of assembling knowledge [fig. 17].

This ethos threads throughout the show, manifesting in libraries, diagrams, and mapping exercises. The latter appear in the output of Iconoclasistas, an Argentine duo whose project distinctly resonates with the tactics of *Tucumán Arde*. Iconoclasistas comprises graphic artist Pablo Ares and educator Julia Risler, and carries out experiments in collective cartography. In their practice, mapping is conducted in communal workshops. For Iconoclasistas, the map is understood as a "key instrument that enables

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[176] Bill Kelley, Jr., "Talking to Action: A Curatorial Experiment Towards Dialogue and Learning," in *Talking to Action: Art, Pedagogy, and Activism in the Americas*, ed. Bill Kelley, Jr. with Rebecca Zamora (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2017), 7.
[177] Kelley, Jr., "Talking to Action," 8.
[178] Karen Moss, "Talking to Action: An Introduction to the Project and its Platforms," in *Talking to Action: Art, Pedagogy, and Activism in the Americas*, eds. Bill Kelley Jr. and Rebecca Zamora (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2017), 4.

[them] to work with workshop participants using a common platform that triggers

intervention" and encourages "situated knowledge through exchange."[179] Ares and Risler

theorize collective cartography as Freirean praxis: critical reflection inextricably

interwoven with action. By visualizing conditions of pervasive crisis within specific

communities, these maps assemble the informational tools needed to direct "resistance

and transformation practices."[180]

Their 2013 manual, *Collective Mapping in Two Stages: Tools for medium-sized gatherings with the aim of bringing together and presenting shared information and knowledge*, is among the group's contributions to the show. It outlines Iconoclasistas' methods for peer-to-peer knowledge distribution in collaborative environments [fig. 18]. In the group's *Mega-mining in the Dry Andes* (2010), for instance, collective cartography illustrates how multinational corporations extract resources from the Andes region while laying waste to its ecologies and endangering local residents. Projects like these insist on education as a public, communal undertaking, to be performed alongside community members and stakeholders rather than by individual artist-explicators working in isolation. In this way, they recall the collective pedagogies of *Tucumán Arde*, and recalibrate its tactics to speak to the present conjuncture.

Remarking on the model of conceptual art espoused by US critics—a model that frequently redacts Latin American contributions from the 1960s onward—Vanguard Artists' Group member Juan Pablo Renzi announced, "this conceptual art of today is no more than a content-less (and sense-less) variation of our efforts to communicate political

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[179] Pablo Ares and Julia Risler, "Iconoclasistas," in *Talking to Action: Art, Pedagogy, and Activism in the Americas*, eds. Bill Kelley Jr. and Rebecca Zamora (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2017), 135.
[180] Ares and Risler, "Iconoclasistas," 133.

messages."[181] Camnitzer echoes his sentiment in "Contemporary Colonial Art," pointing to the ways in which information is inequitably distributed across discrete global contexts. In this scenario, the artist functions as a conduit for "the informative pressure" of imperial power.[182] As Camnitzer notes, explicitly politicized projects like *Tucumán Arde* are conspicuously absent from prevailing narratives of conceptual art crafted by US scholars. He attributes this to "a narrowness of interpretation that has been applied to conceptualist strategies in general and particularly to those that took effect on the periphery."[183] Thus, when making reference to the radical pedagogies of an "international art scene," it is crucial to specify *whose* radical pedagogies, and which nations, have been selected for inclusion under this heading.

Reading across *Tucumán Arde* and the cartographies of Iconoclasistas, alternative rubrics for pedagogical aesthetics come into view. These rubrics foreground a communal process of mutual instruction, sited in accessible space, and structured around dialogic engagement. They expropriate the informational tactics of scholarly research and deploy them in the service of collective refusal as a precursor to collective world-making. In these contexts, critical pedagogy is not figured as an aesthetic end unto itself. Rather, it is imagined as the catalyst for a sustained process of social transformation, for rewriting the university and the state not through the forms of teaching, but of learning-*with*.

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[181] Renzi quoted in Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 71.

[182] See Camnitzer, "Contemporary Colonial Art, in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 225.

[183] Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 72.

CHAPTER 1 CODA
BOT PEDAGOGY

Jill Watson Dreams of the Multiversity

Recently, students enrolled at the Georgia Institute of Technology began to speculate that their teaching assistant might be a nonhuman agent. In 2016, Jill Watson served as a teaching assistant for a Georgia Tech online course entitled "Knowledge-Based Artificial Intelligence." Watson interacted electronically with the class's globally dispersed participants. She displayed the kind of communicative efficiency found only in the fondest dreams of technocapital: cognitive labor performed so continuously that it sparked ontological uncertainty. The stunning professionalism of her thirteen-minute response time led certain students to conjecture that she was, in fact, a robot. Which is to say, students found themselves in the position of suspecting that their educator might be disembodied code.

Writing on the course discussion forum, one student remarked, "I'm beginning to wonder if Jill is a computer." Watson's reply:

[Empty text box][184]

Students' speculations were not out of order. Pulling back the curtain, it was announced that the teaching assistant was an automated agent. The class had been a camouflaged experiment in cognitive computing, and Jill Watson was programmed to optimize information delivery to its 300-odd students. Her name aptly derives from

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[184] Quoted in Ashok Goel, "A Teaching Assistant Named Jill Watson," Tedx Talk, Herbst Theatre, October 6, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbCguICyfTA.

IBM's eponymous question-answering "Watson" technology, which uses natural language processing to enable data retrieval.

She was designed as a solution to a quandary in digital learning: the course's transnationally located students were cumulatively asking approximately 10,000 questions.[185] Data sets were being generated at a volume that no human agent could effectively parse. Confronted by global economies of scale, education had to "scale up" accordingly.[186] Enter Jill Watson.

A virtual avatar of informational capital, Watson's programming enables the endless extraction of new modes of cognitive labor while precluding the articulation of protest. A bot, by definition, runs an automated script.[187] In this sense and many others, she represents a marked departure from the oppositional cyborg or the posthuman subject articulated by Donna Haraway and N. Katherine Hayles, respectively.[188] Watson appears precisely as a blitzkrieg of strikes, sit-ins, walkouts, marches, rallies, and proclamations of dissent issue forth from the university and beyond. In tandem with multi-terabyte efficiency, a faculty of Jill Watsons would surely assuage anxieties around the twenty-first century professoriate—anxieties that afflict both for-profit administrators and organizations like Turning Point USA, a conservative "activist" network targeting college campuses. To name only a few: the effort to unionize contingent workers, to organize for

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[185] Ben Gose, "When The Teaching Assistant Is a Robot: Faculty Members Experiment with Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 23, 2016, http://www.chronicle.com/article/When-the-Teaching-Assistant-Is/238114.

[186] Goel, "A Teaching Assistant Named Jill Watson."

[187] To be clear, this critical discussion of bot-driven pedagogy is neither intended to suggest the intrinsic ontological primacy nor coherence of the human subject.

[188] See Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); and N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

social justice, and to register dissent under the ever-mushrooming cloud of dataveillance. It is difficult, for instance, to imagine a chatbot's conduct occasioning her inclusion in the neo-McCarthyist Professor Watchlist. It's equally difficult to imagine a chatbot independently initiating mass protest, calling for campus-wide walkouts, or, even, speaking out.[189] By whom is Jill Watson made to speak? And toward what ends?

Watson's communiqués seem indistinguishable from those of fellow teaching assistants. The fiction of Jill Watson was sustainable in part because educators already communicate with students the way a software system might.[190] Another assistant's comments attest to this: "I have been accused of being a computer...I don't take it personally."[191]

We know by now, the fiction of virtual disembodiment only extends so far. A student in the course recalls picturing Watson as a "friendly Caucasian 20-something on her way to a Ph.D."[192] One wonders how, interacting with a software system, course participants came to imagine their interlocutor as young, amiable, and white. Borrowing from Lisa Nakamura, even in the absence of an enfleshed host, whiteness "like new

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[189] In a different capacity, technologies like Resistbot have been effectively deployed in progressive advocacy campaigns. Resistbot enables constituents to contact their congressional representatives by texting "RESIST" to 50409. Their messages are subsequently delivered to the appropriate representative in two minutes' time.

[190] Teaching assistants for the course were instructed to maintain a "deadpan" tone in their communications to avoid distinguishing themselves from Watson. Conversely, Watson was programmed to write informally and colloquially. Melissa Korn, "Imagine Discovering That Your Teaching Assistant Really Is a Robot," *Wall Street Journal*, May 6, 2016, http://www.wsj.com/articles/if-your-teacher-sounds-like-a-robot-you-might-be-on-to-something-1462546621.

[191] Lalith Polepeddi quoted in Korn, "Imagine Discovering That Your Teaching Assistant Really Is a Robot."

[192] Korn, "Imagine Discovering That Your Teaching Assistant Really Is a Robot."

media itself, reproduces and spreads virally."[193] This reproduction might explain why, encountering a virtual avatar, whiteness surfaced as the category projected onto Watson's "radical lack of identity."[194]

A deluge of headlines ushered in the news, among them, "Meet Jill Watson, Your New Robot Teaching Assistant." They are laced with apocalyptic unease, projecting the obsolescence of a precarious academic labor force faced with ever-dwindling funding and the accelerating imperatives of a globalized knowledge economy. Imperatives that human agents, as they are currently constituted in the popular imaginary, are ill equipped to meet. Franco "Bifo" Berardi distills this broader scenario: "The result of neoliberal politics is a general reduction of labor cost and an impoverishment of the cognitarians."[195] Or, "more information, less meaning. More information, less pleasure."[196]

In 2004, media scholar Alan Liu provided a useful taxonomy of knowledge work. He diagrammatically rendered knowledge workers as the sum of "academic intellectuals + [the] (technical + professional + managerial) intelligentsia + [the] trailing edge of clerical workers."[197] To this formula, we might add "+ chatbots."

Watson's arrival augurs a new phase of programmed pedagogy. In lieu of critical inquiry or the interrogation of knowledge production, she accesses terabytes of working memory to initiate information retrieval. Her co-creator, Georgia Tech professor Ashok

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[193] Lisa Nakamura, *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 98.
[194] Nakamura, *Digitizing Race*, 98.
[195] Franco "Bifo" Berardi, "Cognitarian Subjectivation," *e-flux* 20, November 2010, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/20/67633/cognitarian-subjectivation/.
[196] Berardi, "Cognitarian Subjectivation."
[197] Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 392.

Goel, emphasizes that Watson frees—rather than *replaces*—other assistants by responding to rote inquiries that constitute cognitive busywork. For an educator working full time, he calculates it would take a full year to reply to the course's 10,000+ student posts.[198] Eliminating the cost of this labor could increase the affordability of education on a global scale. Beyond this, a minimum confidence rate of 97% accompanies Watson's responses.[199] Uncertainty is ultimately foreclosed by her coding. What this suggests is a pedagogical encounter between teacher and student that is reducible to a unidirectional data stream.

If, as Paulo Freire argued, the "character of the revolution" will be fundamentally pedagogical, it remains to be seen what forms of revolutionary sensibility might surface through automated pedagogy.[200] Or, what kinds of thinking subjects might be constituted in the space of these encounters. Insofar as bot pedagogy positions the educator as an algorithmic agent and intersubjective exchange as a computational process, it also produces students who aspire to the condition of the bot.

The case of Jill Watson raises a host of questions plucked from the pages of a techno-dystopian tome. Are educators now synonymous with container technologies and information delivery systems? If that is the case, how did it come to be so? Do educators in the contemporary learning institution need bodies? And finally, which transformative dimensions of pedagogy might be foreclosed by their disembodiment?

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[198] Goel, "A Teaching Assistant Named Jill Watson."
[199] Korn, "Imagine Discovering That Your Teaching Assistant Really Is a Robot."
[200] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2000), 67.

I wondered how an automated agent might approach this line of inquiry. I posed

these questions to The Professor, a crudely rendered educational chatbot. Like IBM's

Watson, The Professor accesses Wikipedia to retrieve information.

Q: Are educators now synonymous with container technologies and information delivery systems?

A: Humans are an endangered species - they may be wiped out by global warming.

Q: Do educators in the contemporary learning institution need bodies?

A: I don't understand. Can we talk about chatbots?

And so on.

To be sure, these questions are older than a computerized educator. Circulating

for decades, they've intensified in lockstep with the automation of pedagogy and

pedagogues. In the 1960s, they marked the milieu where the lecture-performance

emerged as an aesthetic form, amidst organized resistance to the learning institution as an

"information machine." Responding to discourses on the technologically-enabled

immateriality of information, the lecture-performance grounds knowledge in the

specificity of embodied subjects—subjects who are constituted through and alongside

information technologies. Probing lecture-performances from the 60s to the present

occasions further questions. What is the relationship between performative speech acts

and direct action? ["*A: Performative speech acts does not relate to direct action.*"] Is

embodiment a precondition of the pedagogical encounter? ["*A: I don't understand, can

we talk about science?*"] Or, what can an embodied address do, at the academic lectern

and at the political podium? ["*A: Aren't you interested in science?*"]

Performing Programming Languages (Everything You've Heard Is Wrong)

"OK, Sir, I can offer you a range of information."
— Call Center Agent, Transcript from Carey Young, *Nothing Ventured* (2000)

Were Jill Watson to mount a performance, it might look something like Carey

Young's *Everything You've Heard Is Wrong* (1999). Staging bot pedagogy *avant la*

lettre, Young assumes the pose of educator as information delivery system, one whose

communicative methods have been programmed to ensure frictionless flow.

For five years, Young was the habitué of an information technology and

consulting multinational. She describes her employment there as a process of

technosocial subjectivation, a rhizomatic "becoming-corporate."[201] Achieved via

intensive training, the merger of her subjectivity with the conglomerate was indexed by

her use of the pronoun "we" in simultaneous reference to herself and the organizational

mechanisms that exceed her. For the knowledge worker, a nebulous "we" also includes

the bots, databases, PowerPoints, Slack Chats, Google spreadsheets, and always-on

devices of daily encounter.

For this "we," individual enunciations are drawn from a collective vocabulary, a

shared repository of what can be spoken, a delimited lexicon that determines the field of

possible utterance. In *Positive Buzz* (2001) [fig. 19], a vinyl text piece, Young assembles

the most egregious of these collective statements. "Seems like a winner!" "Hmm, looks

like we could push that idea further." "Let's stay with that idea longer and see what

mileage we can really get from it." The phrases are culled from an instructional text

published by What? If!, a London-based business consultancy who offers them up as

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[201] Carey Young and Liam Gillick, "Gap Analysis," 41.

guidelines for the efficient management of brainstorming discussions. Here, as elsewhere, Young enacts what Martha Buskirk calls the loosening of terminology "from operational efficacy" in order to open it to "a fluid multiplication of meaning."[202] Dislocated from the business-casual discourse of the conference room, these statements are unmoored from their given functions.

What *Positive Buzz* dramatizes is the imperative to select your speech acts from a communal pool of finite combinatorial possibilities. If automated agents draw their articulations from a database, knowledge workers choose their utterances from a storehouse of field-specific standardized rhetoric. One wonders if the latter would pass the Turing Test. ["*A: Shall I tell you something about the Turing Test?*"]

Within this schema, verbal displays of discursive mastery are convertible into fiscal assets, the "talk value," identified by Simon Sheikh as a feature of post-Fordist labor that characterizes both the business sector and art field. Workers in this vein produce "endless communication and language games, which requires virtuosity of a performative, and thus political, kind."[203] It's through talk value that chatbots, educators, and managerial technocrats come to be assessed through the same evaluative criteria: bravura fluency in the linguistic field.

Optimizing talk value lies at the crux of *Everything You've Heard Is Wrong* [fig. 20]. Its title is lifted from Tony Campolo's business manual of the same name. The performance is situated against the backdrop of Hyde Park's Speakers' Corner, a site

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[202] Martha Buskirk, "Contract With the Audience," in *Carey Young: Subject to Contract*, eds. Raphael Gygax and Heike Munder (Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2013), 116.
[203] Simon Sheikh, "Talk Value: Cultural Industry and the Knowledge Economy," in *On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, eds. Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi (Utrecht: BAK, 2008), 188.

historically designated for unrestricted public address and protest speech. Young arrives

at the location arrayed in the anonymized regalia of the knowledge worker. She could be

lifted from a Getty Stock Image: an administrator presenting to a conference room of

employees whose expressions signal an inexplicable excess of affect [fig. 21]. Or a

clerical worker posed sculpturally at their console, fingers in mid-keystroke. Through

sartorial means, Young plays to expectations of executive excellence and

professionalized oratory. Burlesquing these tropes, she reveals how affectionately

intertwined the spheres of corporate training and institutional pedagogy have grown. That

is, she underscores that students are taught through the same procedures that govern

employee training and data management.

Cue cards in hand, she announces, "Hello, my name is Carey Young, and I'd like

to talk to some of you about presentation skills. I'd like to *teach* you about presentation

skills." Echoing the Beuysian adage that anyone can be an artist, she assures her meager

audience that anyone can be a public speaker. The claim deliberately registers as heavy-

handed satire. Because for info workers, academics, and chatbots alike; modes of speech

have to be carefully encoded through programming languages that are inaccessible to

"anyone."

Delivering a failed tutorial on successful presentation-giving, Young exchanges

the august scholarly podium for a precarious perch atop a folding stool. A persuasive

public speaker should effectively route the audience's cognition and orchestrate their

affect, she suggests. Young deliberately falls wide of the mark. She fails even to attract a

sizeable assembly of listeners, or to recite her lines in the stentorian, masculinist tones

that underwrite legitimacy. Instead, enfeebled tutorials issue forth from a site designated

for forceful proclamations of political certainty. All of this unfolds against the backdrop of a site of historical protest. How easy to monetize speech, Young suggests, and how difficult to mobilize it.

Speechcraft, a later series of performances, thematizes speech-giving as a form of embodied, cognitive labor that demands specialized training [fig. 22]. In *Speechcraft*, Young transplants Toastmasters Club meetings —gatherings focused on polishing the art of public speech—to gallery environments. One participant in Young's Toastmasters proceedings describes the origins of the club as a venue for "businessmen" to maximize their earning potential by professionalizing their modes of address. The instrumentalization of speech under semiocapital—and *pedagogical speech* in particular—courses through both performances.

Preened and polished speech assures listeners that a given speaker is equipped to transfer assets of value, assets that can subsequently be put to use. In *Everything You've Heard*, Young waxes forth, "You need to also be able to give your audience something useful." "You're giving them information, it's *got* to be useful to them." Here, the notion of "giving" evokes anything but a gift economy. Instead, it's tantamount to a transactional exchange. Not incidentally, *Everything You've Heard* was performed in 1999, the same year that the Bologna Declaration was signed. Amidst widespread critique and student resistance, the Declaration streamlined curricula across Europe's universities to increase the employability of a uniformly credentialed labor force. That is to say, it refashioned education into a more explicit functionary of the market. As such, it's an ideally suited corollary to the kind of pedagogy Young enacts at Speaker's Corner: a pedagogy tantamount to standardized utterance issuing forth from an automated agent.

In this way, Young's performance recalls the banking model of education described by Freire as a scenario where knowledge has been modified into a fiscal product, transmitted from teacher to student the way one might insert a check into an ATM. Bot pedagogy, like the banking model, imputes "an absolute ignorance" to students, suppressing criticality through the algorithmic imperatives of data retrieval; moving informational units from one delivery system to another.[204]

[Empty Text Box] (I Am a Revolutionary)

In this next scene, Carey Young is being taught to speak. She appears, again, in an anonymous paintsuit, this time joined by a vocal coach [fig. 23]. Together, they rehearse her delivery of the Beuysian dictum from which the 2001 performance draws its title: "I Am a Revolutionary." Their lesson takes place against a floor-to-ceiling window that looks out onto gridded officescapes populated by workers at their consoles.

The coach offers instructions for effective vocalizing. They are delivered with a no-nonsense disciplinary austerity, and are completed immediately by their addressee. In the resulting vignette, a live demonstration of banking model pedagogy ensues. He teaches and Young is taught; he knows everything and Young knows nothing; he disciplines and Young is disciplined.[205]

"You want them to remember that you, Carey Young, are a revolutionary," he tells her. She mimes back, "My name is Carey Young, I *am* a revolutionary." The line is

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[204] In Freire's account, the banking model of education also hinges on the teacher/student dyad mapping onto the subject/object dyad. Receiving instruction from a chatbot clearly turns these subject/object relations on their head.
[205] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 73.

spoken and re-spoken, the coach occasionally recalibrating its intonation and volume. Content becomes irrelevant; it is repeated until it has been denuded of all meaning.

The strangeness of this scene arrives through this repetition. In an early manifesto, Young declares, "I am for an art that operates like software."[206] Here, the scene of training begins to sound like someone programming a synthetic speech agent to persuasively modulate their voice—playing it back over and over with minor adjustments applied each time. Her enunciations seem to be evaluated by how closely they map onto a pre-mapped waveform; by how far they deviate from a graphical representation computed in advance. With each consecutive utterance, the vignette looks less like a vocal lesson and more like a software system being taught to approximate an illocutionary speech act. As Young gradually aspires to the condition of the bot, her performance illustrates how an exemplary scene of bot pedagogy might unfold.

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[206] Carey Young, "I am for an Art... (after Claes Oldenburg)," careyyoung.com, 2006, http://www.careyyoung.com/i-am-for-an-art.

CHAPTER 2
LESSONS IN QUEER OPACITY:
ANDY WARHOL'S *THIRTEEN MOST WANTED MEN* (1964) AND LECTURE TOUR (1967)

Introduction: The Tent of Tomorrow

I want to begin from a viewing platform at the Tent of Tomorrow: the buoyant, Technicolor prototype for a future characterized by the continuous vision of a disembodied gaze [fig. 24]. The Tent of Tomorrow comprised one-third of the New York State Pavilion for the 1964 World's Fair. Conceived as a multipurpose pleasure dome, the exterior of its elliptical architecture at once recalls the carnival tents of mass spectacle and the alien aircrafts that dot narratives of interplanetary conquest [fig. 25].

Designed by Philip Johnson, the Tent was patterned on the Fair's mission of consecrating "man's [sic] achievements on a shrinking globe in an expanding universe."[207] Its crowning attraction was a 130 x 166-foot Texaco road map of New York State, installed as a set of terrazzo tiles along the interior floor [figs. 26-7]. A "you are here" signpost let viewers know that they, too, were included among the data sets that had been processed and cartographically charted to produce the map. To survey the topographical rendering, spectators assumed a bird's-eye view with respect to the image: a vertical gaze now associated with satellites, drones, and other technologies of surveillance.[208] Underscoring the effort to offer a view from above, a steel mezzanine platform was erected in the Tent where visitors could appraise broader swaths of the

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[207] Quoted in Sabine Höhler, *Spaceship Earth in the Environmental Age, 1960–1990* (London: Routledge, 2016), 6.

[208] In 1967, a view from above might have conjured up the satellite images of the globe circulated during the "Our World" broadcast, transmitted across twenty-four countries. See Lisa Parks, *Cultures in Orbit: Satellites and the Televisual* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 21-45.

map's territory at once—as well as fellow fairgoers ambling below—from an ever-elevated vantage [fig. 28]. Further belaboring the point, the second component of the tripartite Pavilion took the form of three observations towers—the tallest stood at 226 feet, over 100 feet in excess of the allowable limit for Fair structures [figs. 29-30].[209] Distributed across various outlook points, the public materialized in what Michael Warner might call "a crowd witnessing itself in visible space."[210]

These architectural structures are catalogued in the NBC-TV film "A World's Fair Diary."[211] Traversing the sites described by the dyspeptic voice of the film's narrator, the footage depicts fairgoers who indulge in the pleasures of aerial viewing otherwise reserved for nonhuman subjects and state surveillance apparatuses. Its vistas call up the views thematized in recent artists' projects like James Bridle's *Dronestagram*, which aggregates Google Satellite View images of drone strike locations [fig. 31]; and Hito Steyerl's *How Not To Be Seen*, shot at a former military testing site used to calibrate resolution for state aircrafts and satellites [fig. 32].

Looking downward from aloft, the detached orientation of World's Fair attendees is emblematic of what Lisa Parks describes as the attempt to

> disembody vision and construct seemingly omniscient and objective structures of seeing and knowing the world...positing the world (or the cosmos) as the rightful domain of Western vision, knowledge, and control.[212]

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[209] Lauren Walser, "New York State Pavilion: The World's Fair Site that Broke the Rules," *National Trust for Historic Preservation*, July 16, 2014, https://savingplaces.org/stories/new-york-state-pavilion-worlds-fair-site-broke-rules/#.WM9Puo61t8X.
[210] Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 50.
[211] "Rare Color Film Transports You to 1964 World's Fair," *NBC News*, April 22, 2014, https://www.nbcnews.com/video/rare-color-film-transports-you-to-1964-worlds-fair-234321987510?v=railb&.
[212] Parks, *Cultures in Orbit*, 14.

What the Pavilion staged as tomorrow looks much like the possibility of pleasurable

identification with the elevated gaze of the state. Programming the future also implies an

expansion of vision. As Michel de Certeau puts it, "To be able to see (far into the

distance) is also to be able to predict, to run ahead of time by reading a space."[213]

Invoking the spectatorial models Tony Bennett draws out from the nineteenth-century

exhibitionary complex, attendees were granted the opportunity of "seeing themselves

from the side of power."[214] The terror of being watched was thereby converted into mass

visual pleasure, a speculative and specular tomorrow wherein subjects would enjoy a

view of themselves distributed across a complex of surveillant agencies.

Thirteen Most Wanted Men (1964)

Descending from these raised viewing platforms, I want to attend to a public

artwork commissioned for the Theaterama, the third component of New York's State

Pavilion: Andy Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*. My discussion of the widely

publicized *succès de scandale* pursues the question of what it means to recognize oneself

as a subject who is rendered vulnerable to a monitoring gaze. How might relations to

public space be negotiated accordingly, through tactical performances of opacity?

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[213] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 36.

[214] Bennett writes that the Great Exhibitions of the nineteenth century enabled visitors to be "both the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows, and knowing themselves as (ideally) known by power, interiorizing its gaze as a principle of self-surveillance and, hence, self-regulation." See Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 76.

Warhol was among the ten artists commissioned by Philip Johnson to produce a 20 x 20-foot work for the Theaterama facade.[215] Invited to enshrine "man's [sic] achievements on a shrinking globe," the artist sought inspiration in a brochure of the thirteen most wanted criminals of 1962. He blew up FBI mug shots to 4 x 4 feet, reproduced through silkscreen on Masonite [fig. 33]. Notably, Warhol would become a target of state surveillance himself four years later when the FBI compiled a dossier on his film *Lonesome Cowboys*. The resulting file contains unlikely entries, like agents' laconic scene synopses of vignettes that depict "a cowboy fondling the nipples of another cowboy."[216]

From a certain angle, the artist's approach was apropos of the Fair's prompt to highlight recent "achievements on a shrinking globe." His contribution brought into relief how state agencies had made gains in codifying criminality via imaging technologies— technologies that index a "shrinking globe" by rendering its populations more proximate, more readily available to techniques of visual capture [fig. 34].

Arranging the NYPD portraits in a gridded formation, Warhol's composition positions its photographic subjects as the objects of one another's desiring gaze, establishing circuits of nonnormative longing between the diagrammed figures. In Richard Meyer's analysis, *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* "cross-wires the codes of criminality, looking, and homoerotic desire" to transmute police photography into "a

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[215] The other nine artists were Peter Agostini, John Chamberlain, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein, Alexander Lieberman, Robert Mallary, Robert Rauschenberg, and James Rosenquist.

[216] Quoted in Wayne Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol: A Biography* (New York: Open Road Media, 2015), 145.

countermodel of visual power (and pleasure)."[217] In this sense, it turns the techniques and technologies of the state against itself. At the same time, as Hal Foster suggests, it "evokes the mass subject through its figural projections."[218]

The countermodel of pleasure offered up by Warhol in public space is animated by the possibility of queer counterpublics. For social theorist Michael Warner, a public represents a discursive arena whose members are constituted as such *by virtue of being addressed*."[219] Within that rubric, counterpublics are distinguished by their attempt to reconfigure, rather than replicate, existing modes of discourse.[220] Their interventions aim to restructure dominant forms of relationality. Warner specifies that queer instantiations of counterpublics offer a circulatory space where "the presumptive heterosexuality that constitutes the closet for individuals in ordinary speech is suspended…freed from heteronormative speech protocols."[221] If, as Warner argues, "the addressee of public discourse is always yet to be realized," then Warhol's public mural speaks to a not-yet-realized addressee oriented toward queer discursive codes.

By starkly sidestepping the Fair's ideological program, Warhol's contribution brought to the fore not only the criminalization of queer desire broadly construed, but the Fair itself as a zone of policing political and sexual agency.[222] After its installation, the artist was instructed to withdraw the mural or to furnish a suitable substitute. In the

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[217] Richard Meyer, "Warhol's Clones," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 7, no. 1 (1994): 83, 87.
[218] Hal Foster, "Death in America," *October* 75 (Winter 1996): 51.
[219] Emphasis in the original. Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," 50.
[220] Warner specifies that counterpublics "supply different ways of imagining stranger-sociability… spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poesis of scene making will be transformative." Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," 88.
[221] Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," 86-7.
[222] I refer here to police raids targeting New York's queer communities in connection with the Fair, and to the policing of racial justice activists whose anti-Fair organizing was met with the threat of incarceration. These dynamics are further discussed below.

interim, *Thirteen Most Wanted* was concealed beneath a black shroud [fig. 35]. Far from an isolated exercise of state power in the unfolding of the World's Fair, the directive was embedded in a maelstrom of repression and protest surrounding the event.

Descended from the nineteenth-century exhibitionary complex, the 1964 World's Fair explicitly took up its predecessors' colonial legacy of a "rhetoric of progress."[223] As Tony Bennett shows, this rhetoric taxonomically classifies its ideal avatars of evolutionary development from the vantage of a white, Eurocentric arbiter.[224] Coco Fusco reminds us that this nineteenth-century model also featured ethnographic displays of nonwhite people from colonized regions, juxtaposed against the implied progress of science and industry.[225] In effect, the exhibitionary complex gave taxonomic visual form to the "civilizing mission" of colonization in a bid to rationalize its violent interventions.

Given its status as a massive publicly funded endeavor, the relationship of the 1964 World's Fair to a notional public was a fraught one. That is, it imagined a highly specific formation of "the public" and structured itself as a space where that desired public might materialize. Relying on governmental agents to enforce the vision of Fair officials, the project conceived the public as a totality whose constituent actors could be brought into alignment with the tomorrow of its displays. "Tomorrow" curated as a technologized horizon whose specific coordinates of race, class, gender, and sexuality follow a blueprint for programmed futures.

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[223] Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 93.

[224] As Bennett puts it, the exhibitionary complex operated through "an order which organized the implied public - the white citizenries of the imperialist powers - into a unity…constructing a 'we' conceived as the realization, and therefore just beneficiaries, of the processes of evolution and identified as a unity in opposition to the primitive otherness of conquered peoples." Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," 92.

[225] Coco Fusco, "The Other History of Intercultural Performance," *TDR* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 148.

Correspondingly, the Fair was preceded by campaigns to police figures in the

city's queer countercultural networks, and to repress organized resistance to the project.

Discussing the former, Douglas Crimp observes that the censorship of Warhol's mural

occurs

> in the context of a wider crackdown on queer life in New York in preparation for
> the World's Fair. As was the case prior to the World's Fair of 1939, New York
> authorities stepped up their harassment of public gay establishments and activities
> in the period leading up to the 1964 fair. A New York Times feature article of
> December 1963, "Growth of Overt Homosexuality in City Provokes Wide
> Concern," provides official period background and flavor.[226]

On March 3, 1964, the District Attorney's office ordered a raid on a screening of queer

filmmaker Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* and Warhol's newsreel on Smith's *Normal

Love*. In the process, both movies were confiscated—along with the screen and

projector—and several arrests were made. Protests subsequently sprung up outside the

District Attorney's office, organized by the New York League for Sexual Freedom.[227]

Incidents like these attest, as J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum suggest, that "during

the spring of 1964, the underground nearly went under."[228] For Fair organizers and state

representatives, the visible presence of queer counterpublics in New York posed a

palpable threat to the future imagined in its exhibitions.

So, too, was racial justice a contested terrain for Fair officials. Their position is

well illustrated by the response of Fair president Robert Moses to protests coordinated by

the Brooklyn Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), a civil rights organization with

chapters across the country. In the months preceding the opening, CORE mobilized

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[226] Douglas Crimp, "Getting the Warhol We Deserve," *Social Text* 59 (Summer 1999): 61.
[227] David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution: An Unfettered History* (London: Routledge, 2016), 47.
[228] J. Hoberman and Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Midnight Movies* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1983), 60.

toward large-scale direct action against the Fair, identified as an agent of racial injustice.

A flyer circulated by the Congress carries the heading "How CORE Views the Fair:

Symbol of American Hypocrisy" [fig. 36]. It weighs the multimillion-dollar expenditure

of the project against the urgent economic inequities facing people of color in the US. It

asks who was counted among the publics for whom public funding had been allocated.

Foregrounding the act of viewing in its title ("How CORE Views the Fair"), the flyer

entreats its reader to recognize that practices of looking are always executed from an

embodied vantage, and shape the visual field to which they attend.[229]

Not by happenstance, the CORE protest was conceived as a vehicular stall-in. As

Erin Pineda writes, the Fair's "master builder" Robert Moses was widely known as

> the man who believed cities to be "created by and for traffic" …the mastermind
> and architect behind New York's congested highway system, and the urban
> planner associated with the notorious "urban renewal" and "slum clearance"
> programs of the 1950s...[230]

CORE's stall-in, then, would obstruct Moses's vision for the city, preventing the flow of

traffic to the fairgrounds [fig. 37].[231] It would jam the symbolic space represented by the

topographical Texaco map in the Tent of Tomorrow, blockading its fictive open

roadways with bodies assembled in dissent.

Acting as a functionary of Fair officials, the New York Traffic Commissioner

promised penalties of incarceration and exorbitant fines for demonstrators, and succeeded

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[229] Here, I take my cue from Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, who argue that "through looking we negotiate social relationships and meanings." Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 10.

[230] Erin Pineda, "Present Tense, Future Perfect: Protest and Progress at the 1964 World's Fair," *The Appendix* 2, no. 3 (July 2014), http://theappendix.net/issues/2014/7/present-tense-future-perfect-protest-and-progress-at-the-1964-worlds-fair.html.

[231] Pineda, "Present Tense, Future Perfect."

in repressing the stall-in. Addressing CORE's plans, Moses announced, "The fair will not become a stage for irresponsible interference with visitors, secondary boycotts and demonstrations not related to the proper conduct of the fair."[232] How can we understand the contrast between "secondary boycotts" and the nebulous category of "proper conduct" articulated here? For Michel de Certeau, the "proper" implies a calculation in relations of power. It

> seeks first of all to distinguish its "own" place, that is, the place of its own power and will…The establishment of a break between a place appropriated as one's own and its other is accompanied by important effects…The "proper" is a triumph of place over time. It allows one to capitalize acquired advantages, to *prepare future expansions*...[233]

Invoking the proper, Moses differentially marks out a space of relationality extrinsic to it: a zone of non-belonging inhabited by noncompliant subjects who are de facto excluded from privatized, heterosexist, and white formations of "the public."

Returning to Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*, I want to situate the work in the wider context of protest, direct action, and policing that surrounds the World's Fair. Its noncompliance with the regulatory mandates of officials unfolds against a coordinated monitoring of dissent. It mounts what Benjamin Buchloh calls "realistic sabotage of a state government's desire to represent itself officially."[234] Defying the directive to withdraw or replace *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*, Warhol covered its thirteen figures in silver-aluminum paint, camouflaging their faces beneath a swath of silver [fig. 38]. While they had not been removed, they were no longer legible to a scrutinizing gaze.

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[232] Robert Alden, "CORE Maps Tie-Up on Roads to Fair," *New York Times*, April 10, 1964, 1.
[233] Emphasis added. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 36.
[234] Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art: 1956-1966," in *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, ed. Kynaston McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 54.

For Buchloh, the aluminized visages "speak of having been silenced into abstract monochromy."[235] This silver monochrome is far afield from a conciliatory move of artistic passivity. As I contend, this maneuver represents a canny response to an encounter with state power, one that speaks to contemporary techniques of counter-surveillance while also displaying selective affinities with discourses of artistic withdrawal. If the Tent of Tomorrow imagines a future subjected to totalized imaging, then the aluminized *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* visualizes methods for navigating that future as a noncompliant subject who remains unseen before a surveillant gaze.

As I have suggested, tactics of opacity offer a generative lens through which to examine the contestations around *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*. They also furnish a fruitful entry point from which to approach the 1967 speaking tour Warhol launched three years later. Arranging to deliver the talk "Pop Art in Action" at four college campuses across the US, Warhol sent the actor Allen Midgette to appear on his behalf as an impersonator. For a time, the substitution was undetected by campus officials and university audiences. In lieu of a standard lecture, the pedagogical impersonator issued strings of vague, unintelligible utterance. Remaining unseen himself, Warhol interjected performances of opacity into the discursive arena of the academic lecture hall.

Queer Opacity and Counter-Surveillance

Before proceeding further along the lecture circuit, I want to pause to situate opacity vis-à-vis recent discourses across queer theory and surveillance studies. In the context of my study, the operations of opacity cannot be considered in isolation from the queer dimensions of Warhol's practice. As scholars including Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan

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[235] Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art: 1956-1966," 54.

Flatley, José Esteban Muñoz, and Marc Siegel have observed, queerness was long treated as extrinsic to Warhol's oeuvre, a subject "outside the realm of critical consideration."[236] Taking my cue from their interventions, I want to argue that a crucial effect of Warhol's performance of opacity is to render him unclassifiable as a coherently desiring agent. Looking to the 1967 lecture tour, I link its invocation of queer opacity to anticipatory models of counter-surveillance, as well as to the striking of virtuosic, embodied performances of presence.

To consider how opacity and queerness commingle in Warhol's output, we might turn to Nicholas de Villiers's study on opacity and the closet.[237] Drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's writings, de Villiers rejects the hermeneutic of the closet as an interpretive framework for establishing a fictive, stable ground of truth for queer subjects.[238] As de Villiers outlines, this requires denying a binary opposition between speech and silence, a binary that incites putatively silent figures to produce confessional utterance through which they might be sorted as objects of knowledge. Dislodging this dichotomy, de Villiers proposes

> a concept of "opacity" as an alternative queer strategy or tactic that is not linked to an interpretation of hidden depths, concealed meanings, or a neat opposition between silence and speech.[239]

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[236] See Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley, and José Esteban Muñoz, introduction to *Pop Out: Queer Warhol,* ed. Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley, and José Esteban Muñoz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 6; and Marc Siegel, "Doing it for Andy," *Art Journal* 62, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 6-13.

[237] Nicholas de Villiers, *Opacity and the Closet: Queer Tactics in Foucault, Barthes, and Warhol* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

[238] Kosofsky's *Epistemology of the Closet* "aims to resist in every way it can the deadening pretended knowingness by which the chisel of modern homo/heterosexual definitional crisis tends, in public discourse, to be hammered most fatally home." See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 12.

[239] de Villiers, *Opacity and the Closet*, 6.

Whereas one approach mandates verbal accounting, the other refuses to vocalize desire in the form of a legible informatic record.

Efforts to plumb the psychic and biographical depths of Warhol's oeuvre in order to arrive at a fixed, knowable subject characterize much scholarship on the artist. These efforts extend to his interviews, isolated as texts that might yield revelatory insights through attention to his acts of verbal self-disclosure. Jettisoning that tendency, Jonathan Flatley cautions that "the attempts to find stable ground from which to determine the real Warhol obscure his actual practices, whose queer appeal and queer effects vanish under this identificatory gaze."[240]

Taking a similar tack, I focus my analysis of his 1967 lecture tour on its effects rather than its disclosive properties. I track what the project has to tell us about how illegible speech circulated in the art field and in the university system, rather than how it may allow us to issue conclusive statements on the artist's behalf. Put otherwise, my interest is in what the lecture tour teaches about the unintelligible performance of pedagogy, rather than what it teaches us about Warhol—an artist about whom, it might reasonably be argued, we already know enough.

Speech occupies a prominent role in de Villiers's outline of opacity, a model sketched in dialogue with Michel Foucault's emphasis on the incitement to discourse.[241] Foucault famously chronicles a "discursive explosion" around the subject of sex that coincides with the development of new methods for "analysis, stocktaking, classification,

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[240] Jonathan Flatley, *Like Andy Warhol* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 33-4.
[241] To that end, de Villiers closely attends to the role of the interview format in Warhol's output. De Villiers characterizes the interview as a "multi-mediated object," an enactment of opacity rather than the textual trace of a fixed, biographical subject. See de Villiers, *Opacity and the Closet*, 151.

and specification."[242] To verbalize one's position as a desiring subject under these conditions is to make oneself available to procedures of listening, recording, and parsing—to classificatory operations that render a subject knowable from the vantage of power.

While the aluminized *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* "speak of having been silenced into abstract monochromy," they do not correspond to a voice that has been muted. Rather, they articulate a relation to speech purposively geared toward unintelligibility. If there is a "subject who speaks" here, that subject continues to speak, albeit in encrypted terms. So too do the mural's specters of queer desire persist beneath a mask of aluminum that enables them to sidestep decipherability.

To approach the use of aluminum in this context requires rehearsing silver as a ubiquitous motif of Warholian aesthetics. His 47th Street Factory was coated in foil to the degree that, as Caroline Jones notes, "if objects…could not be covered with silver foil, they were sprayed silver."[243] Frequently privileged in the chromatic spectrum of Warhol's silkscreen paintings, the color makes its way into the titles of works like *Silver Marlon* (1963) and *Silver Clouds* (1966). Writing on the latter, Buchloh suggests that Warhol's helium-inflated *Silver Clouds* signal the "climax" of a critical engagement with the tradition of the painterly monochrome.[244] In the former, silvering commingles with the coding of Brando as an avatar of queer desire. Per Jones, "the gleaming chrome of Brando's bike rears up between his legs, the classic symbol of sexuality-made-

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[242] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 17, 24.
[243] Caroline A. Jones, *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 194.
[244] Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art: 1956-1966," 47.

metallic."[245] In Jones's analysis, Warhol's machinic metallics evoke the "shimmering projections of the 'silver screen,' the space age, and the silvered walls of his very own Factory," part and parcel of a "performative technological sublime."[246] Reading across these exempla, silver cannot be understood in isolation from desire broadly construed, or the specific desire to become a machine—articulated by an artist who, in Thierry de Duve's language, appears as "the machine perfected."[247] Discussing the pornographic dimensions of Warhol's work, Jennifer Doyle observes that "mechanization and mediation are not obstacles to being 'excited about people' but the very mechanisms by which that arousal happens."[248]

Silver in *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* evokes many of the above listed associations, but to highly particular effect. Amidst the World Fair's technologized displays of tomorrow, the aluminized mural speaks back to the monitoring—and, effectively, programming—of desire. Here, silvering might be loosely likened to the tactics described by Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker as a prefigurative entry into "techniques and technologies to make oneself unaccounted for," like a laser pointer that

> can blind a surveillance camera when the beam is aimed directly at the camera's lens. With this type of cloaking, one is not hiding, simply nonexistent to that node. The subject has full presence but is simply not there on the screen.[249]

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[245] Jones, *Machine in the Studio*, 242.

[246] Jones, *Machine in the Studio*, 212, 191.

[247] Thierry de Duve, "Andy Warhol, or the Machine Perfected," trans. Rosalind Krauss, *October* 48 (Spring 1989): 12.

[248] Jennifer Doyle, "Tricks of the Trade: Pop Art/Pop Sex," in *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, eds. Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley, and José Esteban Muñoz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 197.

[249] Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 135.

That is, the glimmering metallics of the monochrome cloak its subjects from

intelligibility before a surveillant apparatus. Or, as Wayne Koestenbaum reasons, the

aluminized men enact a certain "style of civil disobedience…When confronted by

authority, go limp. Vaporize. Turn silver."[250] Put otherwise, what we find here is not a

totalizing foreclosure of utterance imposed from without, but the deliberate exercise of

tactics from within a given space of power.

> I borrow my usage of tactics here from Michel de Certeau's oft-cited formulation:
>
> The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a
> terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not
> have the means to keep to itself at a distance, in a position of withdrawal,
> foresight, and self-collection: it is a maneuver "within the enemy's field of
> vision…"[251]

By rendering specters of nonnormative desire faceless in *Thirteen Most Wanted Men*,

Warhol enabled them to hide in plain sight, "within the enemy's field of vision." In lieu

of seeking out representation within the Fair's state-sponsored regimes of visuality, he

enacted the prospect of becoming unrepresentable.

I rehearse de Villiers's account of queer opacity above in order to place it in

conversation with models of opacity found in surveillance studies. If the disciplinary

societies Foucault theorizes demand techniques of verbalization, then the societies of

control Gilles Deleuze later describes demand continuous informatic record-keeping.

Here, "individuals become '*dividuals,*' and masses become samples, data, markets, or

'*banks.*'"[252] Against this backdrop, earlier structures of regulation are reformatted into

"apparently free-floating control," a model that directs us to the disembodied, floating

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[250] Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol*, 107.

[251] de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 37.

[252] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on Control Societies," in *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin
 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 180.

vertical gaze of contemporary surveillance technologies. Under these conditions, what cannot be seen or represented becomes useless, impossible to instrumentalize, an entity Deleuze might call *a vacuole of noncommunication*. Or, as Giorgio Agamben reasons: "A being radically devoid of any representable identity would be absolutely irrelevant to the State."[253]

Redressing Deleuze's claims about the totalizing reach of power, media theorist Wendy Chun emphasizes that systems of control also house the possibility of system failures. Chun observes that Deleuze's analysis

> unintentionally fulfills the aims of control by imaginatively ascribing to control power that it does not yet have and by erasing its failures. Thus, in order to understand control-freedom, we need to insist on the failures and the actual operations of technology.[254]

Revising Deleuze's propositions, Tung-Hui Hu moves beyond the control society to contend for the "sovereignty of data."[255] Hu demonstrates that contemporary technologies do not constitute a radical break with earlier formations, but instead continue to rely on infrastructures that precede them. He writes that "the cloud grafts control onto an older structure of sovereign power, much as fiber-optic networks are layered or grafted onto older networks."[256] This hybrid scenario triangulates "sovereign, disciplinary, and governmental power (or control)" without erasing the effects of any given one.[257]

Media theorist Rita Raley charts the transmutations of earlier modes of surveillance through "dataveillance": a regime that emphasizes the "disciplinary and

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[253] Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 86.
[254] Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 9.
[255] Tung-Hui Hu, *The Prehistory of the Cloud* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015), xvi.
[256] Hu, *The Prehistory of the Cloud*, xvi.
[257] Hu, *The Prehistory of the Cloud*, xvi.

control practice of monitoring, aggregating, and sorting data."[258] Unfolding at the scene

of cybernetic capitalism, dataveillance mandates a surrender of information not wholly

unrelated to preceding forms of compulsory self-disclosure. As Raley describes, "our acts

of…self-communication themselves become data."[259] Earlier incitements to discourse

required translating oneself into an object of knowledge for analysis, stocktaking, and

classification. In the present, "self-communication" generates data destined for

computing, parsing, and monetization.

As contemporary technological forms renovate previous architectures of

panopticism, visibility often remains a trap.[260] In our present conjuncture, the face has

become a privileged target of visual capture.[261] Understood as a site for data extraction,

the face is routinely scanned by biometric recognition technologies coded into mobile

computing devices as well as national security checkpoints.[262] As with previous

technologies of surveillance, the gaze of biometric recognition is asymmetrically

distributed across the coordinates of race, gender, sexuality, and class. As such, Simone

Browne has recently argued for the urgency of a "critical biometric consciousness" that

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[258] Rita Raley, "Dataveillance and Countervailance," in *"Raw Data" Is an Oxymoron*, ed. Lisa Gitelman (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 124.

[259] Raley, "Dataveillance and Countervailance," 126.

[260] I refer to Foucault's oft-cited statement on the architecture of the panoptic prison, where "visibility is a trap." Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: *The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), For an early discussion of the relationship between panopticism and societies of informatic control, see David Lyon, *The Electronic Eye: The Rise of Surveillance Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

[261] Raley distinguishes between dataveillant techniques and those of biometric recognition. She deploys the term dataveillance specifically to denote "data mining (capture and aggregation), as opposed to the whole suite of techniques and technologies of a contemporary electronic surveillance regime, ranging from CCTV to biometrics, though they are by no means unrelated." Raley, "Dataveillance and Countervailance," 141.

[262] For example, the iPhone X now features Face ID, allowing users to unlock their phone through biometric facial recognition technology. Across multiple airports, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol now uses facial biometrics to identify travelers.

understands biometrics as an acquisition of bodily data by state and corporate actors, and

recognizes the historical antecedents of this process in "the racial framing of blackness as

property."[263] Our biometric present does not only disproportionately target people of

color, Browne reminds us, but builds on structures with origins in the monitoring and

control of nonwhite bodies.

Formulating a model of "queer darkness," artist and scholar Zach Blas maps the

stakes of facial biometrics for queer subjects. To understand the urgency of those stakes,

we might turn to a Stanford University research study published in 2018. Its findings

suggest that biometric software called VGG-Face can algorithmically compute the sexual

orientation of a given face with 71-81% accuracy.[264] Researchers note that the facial

recognition software examined in the study is already widely in use by state and

corporate agencies, and presents "serious risks to the privacy of LGBTQ people."[265]

What this confirms is that certain faces are rendered more vulnerable to a monitoring

gaze than others, and that the subjects to whom they correspond are mined for bodily data

at disproportionate rates.

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[263] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 91.

[264] The study finds that "Given a single facial image, a classifier could correctly distinguish between gay and heterosexual men in 81% of cases, and in 71% of cases for women." As many critics note, the study's flaws included that researchers exclusively examined images of white faces, and also limited its scope to individuals who self-reported as gay or straight. Yilun Wang and Michal Kosinski, "Deep Neural Networks Are More Accurate than Humans at Detecting Sexual Orientation from Facial Images," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 114, no. 2 (2018): 246.

[265] Michal Kosinski and Yilun Wang, "Authors' Note," September 28, 2017, https://docs.google.com/document/d/11oGZ1Ke3wK9E3BtOFfGfUQuuaSMR8AO2WfWH3aVk e6U/edit#.

For practitioners of counter-surveillance, the face has thus become a primary site of concealment. The face, Blas argues, can be weaponized toward "a force of refusal."[266] For Blas, the "common enemy is representation"—understood as that which "makes something intelligible, visible, and classifiable on the state's terms."[267] Through the project *Facial Weaponization Suite*, Blas translates the critical position of queer darkness into a set of collaborative aesthetic tactics. After conducting workshops where participants' facial data are mapped, Blas aggregates this data into wearable "collective masks" that short-circuit biometric recognition, nodding toward the protest masks adopted by social movements from the Zapatistas to the black blocs [fig. 39].

Adam Harvey's CV Dazzle technology—whose name derives from WWI naval camouflage techniques—proceeds in a similar, though somewhat more whimsical vein [fig. 40]. It recodes the face to offer "camouflage" from algorithmic detection, cosmetically concealing the nodes required for biometric mapping. De-facing the subject, CV Dazzle allows them to circulate undetected by surveillant mechanisms (while rendering them hypervisible to a human gaze).

In an oft-circulated tract on withdrawal from representation, "The Spam of the Earth," artist and media theorist Hito Steyerl suggests that spaces of corporatist representation are also spaces of "the vanishing of the people."[268] As such, the aim should be to "escape this visual territory of threat and constant exposure."[269] These propositions are further parsed in her video, *How Not To Be Seen*, a counter-surveillant beauty tutorial

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[266] Zach Blas, "Queer Darkness," in *Depletion Design: A Glossary of Network Ecologies*, eds. Carolin Wiedemann and Soenke Zehle (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2012), 130.
[267] Blas, "Queer Darkness," 127.
[268] Hito Steyerl, *The Wretched of the Screen* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 167.
[269] Ibid.

outlining models of disappearance for viewers who have become fully embedded in

digital networks [fig. 41].

How can we read—or *not* read—the aluminized faces of *Thirteen Most Wanted*

Men alongside these propositions? Appropriating NYPD mug shots, *Thirteen Most*

Wanted is animated by the legacies of Alphonse Bertillon, the nineteenth-century

biometrics researcher and originator of the mug shot. He is best known for innovating

systems of anthropometric measurement toward the efficient management and control of

populations. Mark Maguire credits Bertillon with standardizing the gaze of policing, and

identifies him as a crucial early protagonist in the birth of biometric security.[270]

Bertillon's methods of classification turned "the body into a code," a code now updated

across contemporary software platforms and algorithmic systems of surveillance.[271]

Thirteen Most Wanted Men is thus doubly encoded by state surveillance. It confronts the

policing of queer subjects that surrounds the World's Fair, while also nodding at the early

biometric strategies of police vision through its deployment of mug shots. The tactics of

opacity enacted here do not exclusively address themselves to Fair and state officials.

They extend farther back, perhaps inadvertently, to occlude a gaze that would seek to

taxonomize, classify, and finally *to know* queer subjects. Obstructing the extraction of

bodily data, the de-facing[272] of Warhol's *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* can be read

alongside tactical uses of the face in the present.

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[270] Mark Maguire, "The Birth of Biometric Security," *Anthropology Today* 25, no. 2 (April 2009): 12.
[271] Maguire, "The Birth of Biometric Security," 13.
[272] Jonathan Flatley also considers practices of de-facing in Warhol's output, from a different tack. For Flatley, Warhol's preoccupation with portraiture is bound up with "learn[ing] how to give *himself* a face" as a queer subject, to counter "his own absence from the already recognizable world of public images." See Jonathan Flatley, "Warhol Gives Good Face: Publicity and the

Opacities and Withdrawals

If what I have been discussing constitutes the withdrawal from a field of surveillant vision, that withdrawal does not occur in isolation. To the contrary, an eruption of withdrawals from state representation dots the art field in the 1960s and 70s. In many respects, Warhol is an outlier in these discourses, and in my study more broadly. Scholars like Hal Foster caution against the attribution of politicized content to Warhol's output. For Foster, the "reading of Warhol as empathetic, even *engagé*, is a projection," and "an essay could be written on the desire of left critics to make Warhol over into a contemporary Brecht."[273] While it is not my intention to argue for Warhol as a biographical subject who was either *engagé* or avowedly apolitical, I want to suggest that if queer opacity in *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* is concerned with evacuating zones of state-regulated representation, it bears certain affinities with artists' investment in disengaging their labor from the arena of state-sponsored circulation.[274]

In 1970, a coalition of artists inaugurated the Art Strike Against Racism, War, and Repression. For a brief time, Art Strike pursued the conviction that the only plausible

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Politics of Prosopopoeia," in *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, eds. Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley, and José Esteban Muñoz (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 103, 106-7.

[273] Here, Foster responds to analyses like those of Thomas Crow, who argues that Warhol's works were involved in "dramatizing the breakdown of commodity exchange. These were instances in which the mass-produced image as the bearer of desires was exposed in its inadequacy by the reality of suffering and death." See Foster, "Death in America," 39; and Thomas Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 51.

[274] As Isabelle Graw puts it, "Especially by socializing with politically dubious and extremely conservative members of the international jet set in the '70s…Warhol seemed to have cut all ties with the leftist and progressive ethos of the avant-garde and underground artist." My interest here is far afield from mining the archive for revelatory, stable evidence of the artist's radical political subjectivity. Rather, I attend to the tactics of opacity across my two case studies in order to chart what their effects have to tell us about the discursive arenas in which they unfold. See Graw, "When Life Goes to Work: Andy Warhol," *October* 132 (Spring 2010): 109.

relation to the state is one of fleeing visibility within it.[275] This ethos is well illustrated in an encounter between the coalition's members and the Senate Subcommittee on the Arts and Humanities. When senators at the meeting allegedly queried what they could do "to help," Robert Rauschenberg replied, "Put on more government shows we can withdraw from."[276] Invoking a similar logic, Art Strike's anonymously produced posters announced, "If art can't help the revolution, get rid of it."[277]

In an unlikely turn, Warhol would come to participate in one of Art Strike's collective actions, though he was not a member of the group. At a May 18, 1970 meeting, attendees voted to establish an Emergency Cultural Government (ECG). The functions of the ECG were explicitly coded through the refusal of state representation. Its sole objective would be "to sever all collaboration with the Federal Government on artistic activities."[278] To that end, ECG members organized the withdrawal of twenty-six artists selected for the American Pavilion of the 1970 Venice Biennale. The Biennale boycott was announced as a protest of "the U.S. government's policies of racism, sexism, repression and war."[279] As it happens, Warhol was among the twenty-six artists who

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[275] I borrow the language of "flee[ing] visibility" from the Invisible Committee's tract. See Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), 112.

[276] Quoted in Grace Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," *New York Times*, July 5, 1970, 65.

[277] Anonymous poster quoted in Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 114.

[278] Grace Glueck, "Art Community Here Agrees on Plan to Fight War, Racism, and Oppression," *New York Times*, May 19, 1970, 30.

[279] July 14, 1970 press release quoted in Maurice Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 113. The artists who withdrew were Richard Anuskiewicz, Leonard Baskin, Herbert Bayer, Robert Birmelin, John Cage, Raymond Deshais, Jim Dine, Sam Francis, Ron Kitaj, Nick Krushenick, Roy Lichtenstein, Vincent Longo, Sven Lukin, Michael Mazur, Deen Meeker, Robert Morris, Robert Motherwell, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, Lucas Samaras, Frank Stella, Carol Summers, Ernest Trova, Andy Warhol, Jack Youngerman, and Adja Yunkers.

elected to remove their work from the American Pavilion.[280] The collective action proceeded through the conviction that withholding aesthetic products from governmentally-sponsored arenas would prevent them from being made to signify support of the state and its policies.

How might we consider the politics of withdrawal alongside queer opacity? If artists' protest in the 1960s often hinged on Marcusean negation—on saying *no*—then Warhol's World's Fair monochrome represents an enunciation of a different order. It performs an utterance whose indeterminacy allows it to persist in public space, to circulate illegible and undetected. Like the space stations of General Motors' Futurama or the picture phones installed in the AT&T Pavilion, the aluminized *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* looks toward a future where it's increasingly urgent to scramble verbal and visual codes. That is, these tactics gesture toward speaking in a language unintelligible to power. Consider, in that vein, an exchange between Warhol and Gerard Malanga. Malanga inquires, "What is beyond your control?" As though encountering the term for the first time, the artist responds, "What's that mean?"[281]

"Unable to Appear":
Reprogramming the Lecture Circuit

If *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* might speculatively be read within early histories of queer opacity, then the 1967 lecture tour continues along that trajectory. It withholds bodily data from public view and delivers verbal address that cannot be parsed as a

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[280] For an extended discussion of ECG's boycott the 1970 Venice Biennale, see chapter three of this study.
[281] Andy Warhol and Gerard Malanga, "Andy Warhol: Interviewed by Gerard Malanga," in *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews: Thirty-seven Conversations with the Pop Master*, ed. Kenneth Goldsmith (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2004), 48.

legible informatic record. In the process, it unsettles the pedagogue as both a knowing subject and a knowable point of origin to whom information can be traced.

The lecture tour's byzantine narrative opens with Warhol's acceptance of official invitations to appear at four campuses: University of Utah, Linfield College, the University of Oregon, and Montana State University.[282] When the artist sent Allen Midgette to speak in his stead, none among the four institutions realized they had witnessed the didactics of an impersonator. It was only after Midgette had returned to New York that individuals at the University of Utah began to suspect they had encountered a facsimile. The University of Utah was the only institution to launch an investigation into the lecturer's identity, and constitutes the focus of my analysis in the pages that follow.

Assembling archival fragments into a tentative outline of the event, I consider what the lecture tour might have to say to a future addressee embedded in networks of informatic capture. Its speaker's temporary anonymity was facilitated, in part, by an absence of the algorithmic data retrieval systems that characterize our present. To explain Warhol's ability to operate through a proxy lecturer without being detected, contemporary commentators observe, simply: "there was no Google."[283] In that regard, an aversion to searchability is encoded into the structure of the project itself.

Without digital repositories of searchable data, the lecturer's identity could be neither determined nor verified by the public. As it happens, the lecture took place shortly

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[282] Joe Bauman, "Andy Warhol Exhibit Recalls Impostor's Trip to U," *Deseret News*, January 3, 2008, https://www.deseretnews.com/article/695240896/Andy-Warhol-exhibit-recalls-impostors-trip-to-U.html.

[283] Richard Horgan, "Andy Warhol's Utah Stand-In," *Adweek*, March 21, 2015, https://www.adweek.com/digital/andy-warhol-university-utah-1967."

before a local milestone in technologically-enabled connectivity. Two years after the tour

made its stop in Salt Lake City, ARPANET—a predecessor of the internet—would link

the University of Utah to the Stanford Research Institute.[284] Six years earlier in 1961,

Utah had witnessed what Tung-Hui Hu calls the "first act of sabotage directed against the

nation's transcontinental communications circuits," which "signaled a shift in the way the

nation understood communications."[285] By 2014, Utah would host a massive NSA Data

Center, also known as the Intelligence Community Comprehensive National

Cybersecurity Initiative Data Center. It holds the distinction of being the first data storage

facility in the world expected to gather and house a yottabyte—one thousand trillion

gigabytes of data.[286] Located roughly half an hour from the University of Utah, the Data

Center processes "all forms of communication…as well as all sorts of personal data

trails."[287] As one state official posits, "'everybody with communication is a target.'"[288]

The building makes an appearance in a recent photographic series by artist Trevor

Paglen, documenting the headquarters of governmental intelligence agencies [fig. 42].

Shot from a bird's-eye view, it thematizes the vertical vantage of the Data Center's

surveillant apparatus in order to turn it against itself. In effect, this stop on the lecture tour

would become a primary infrastructural site for enabling the continuous vision of a

disembodied gaze: a contemporary rendering of the futures imaged in the Tent of

Tomorrow.

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[284] Hu, *A Prehistory of the Cloud*, 5.

[285] Hu, *A Prehistory of the Cloud*, 12.

[286] Gary R. Herbert, "2012 Energy Summit," 2012, https://governorblog.utah.gov/2012/02/2012-energy-summit.

[287] Anonymous official quoted in James Bamford, "The NSA is Building the Country's Biggest Spy Center," *Wired*, March 15, 2012, https://www.wired.com/2012/03/ff_nsadatacenter/all/1.

[288] Anonymous official quoted in James Bamford, "The NSA is Building the Country's Biggest Spy Center," *Wired*, March 15, 2012, https://www.wired.com/2012/03/ff_nsadatacenter/all/1.

Articulating the logic of the 1967 lecture tour, Wayne Koestenbaum observes: "Warhol's body was perpetually in hiding."[289] To sketch the origins of the Utah lecture, we might look to a correspondence between Paul Cracroft, Director of the Lectures and Concerts department at the university, with Warhol's representatives at the American Program Bureau (APB)—a company whose letterhead announces the slogan: "presenting the world's distinguished lecturers."[290] A contract dated June 9, 1967 outlines that the university would compensate Warhol for his appearance in the considerable sum of one thousand dollars [fig. 43]. It contains a stipulation that would later prove significant:

> If for any reason beyond the control of AMERICAN PROGRAM BUREAU, the performer is prevented from or unable to appear, then this agreement shall be deemed cancelled and terminated without further obligation, or liability by either party.[291]

From the outset, the lecture was poised in an indeterminate space between pedagogy, spectacle, and the contractually mandated performance of embodied labor. Its promotional copy toggles between the promise of amusement and instruction, less concerned with suggesting that audiences would "be taught" than implying they would be able to appraise the artist as an object of knowledge. Consider an advertising booklet distributed in advance of the artist's arrival:

> The *New Yorker* says that he's part of the "put-on" crowd…There's only one fair way to judge an artist: sample his work and, if possible, hear him explain it in his own terms. That kind of opportunity comes rarely. But wave that flag and warm up that soup! Andy Warhol will be on campus at the University of Utah on Monday, October 2, with an incomparable film lecture entitled "POP ART IN ACTION." See and hear the man whose films are on everyone's "must see" list. . . especially in this Age of Hard and Soft Selluloid [figs. 44-45].[292]

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[289] Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol*, 129.
[290] Paperwork identifies the APB's role as an "agent for the Sponsor for procuring the services of the performer." Transcribed from fig. 43.
[291] Transcribed from fig. 43.
[292] Transcribed from figs. 44-45.

Below the text is a tear-away order form corresponding to a tiered ticket system.[293] The advertising copy attests to a broader tendency to collapse an artist's aesthetic output into their skill in generating virtuosic meta-discourse. That is, it deemphasizes formal entries in the artist's oeuvre in favor of his explanatory speech—effectively packaging that speech and its delivery as a product by extension. It positions the artist as a bravura performer of what Simon Sheikh calls talk value: here, an embodied enactment of "endless communication…which requires virtuosity of a performative, and thus political, kind."[294]

Printed advertisements for the event echo the exuberance of the booklet, announcing "ANDY WARHOL in person! / "POP ART IN ACTION" / *A lecture illustrated with his famous motion pictures* / One Night Only" [fig. 46].[295] If its promotional rhetoric seems redolent of the turn-of-the-century vaudeville poster, it is because the tour exemplifies the phenomenon that Howard Singerman describes through the gendered "journeyman artist."[296] Not unlike a vaudevillian entertainer, this artist-educator travels along a lecture circuit of geographically dispersed speaking engagements. Or, as Ad Reinhardt puts it, the artist was an "educational shopkeeper, the holy-roller explainer-entertainer-in-residence."[297] Accordingly, the artist's lecture carried

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[293] Ticket prices range from one dollar for university students, to two dollars for a reserved seating section.

[294] Simon Sheikh, "Talk Value: Cultural Industry and the Knowledge Economy," in *On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, eds. Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi (Utrecht: BAK, 2008), 188.

[295] Transcribed from fig. 23.

[296] Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 157.

[297] Ad Reinhardt, "The Artist in Search of an Academy. Part Two: Who Are the Artists?" *College Art Journal* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1954): 315.

with it the expectation of spectatorial pleasure, predicated on the view of learning as a

leisurely pastime. It presages contemporary modes of "edutainment" that Alan Liu

ascribes to a "new regime of knowledge work" with "no true recreational outside."[298] To

that end, an effervescent "30 second public service spot" announces:

> On Monday, October second, the swingin'-est artist of them all…ANDY
> WARHOL…is coming to the University of Utah. He'll appear in person to give a
> lecture entitled "Pop Art in Action." The talk will be illustrated by some of those
> frantic Andy Warhol movies.[299]

Modified versions of the thirty-second public service spot alternately proclaim "you

can see and hear him in person…have something to tell your grandchildren"; "Want a

slightly psychedelic experience…without fighting the fuzz? Get your tickets today for an

illustrated lecture by ANDY WARHOL…"; and most emphatically: "There is no

tomorrow…so get your tickets right now..."[300] Notably, the text rhetorically aligns

Warhol's oratory with a "slightly psychedelic" scene of transgression, ascribing nebulous

subversive force to his speech.

One common feature threads through nearly all the promotional paratexts that

circulate around the lecture tour. Namely, that audience members would be granted the

opportunity to weigh the artist's mediated performative identity against the implied

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[298] Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 77.

[299] Paul Cracroft, "30 Second Public Service Spot X," 1967, DCE Lectures and Concerts Records, 1960-1978, Acc. 513, Box 4, University of Utah Libraries, Archives and Records Management, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

[300] Paul Cracroft, "30 Second Public Service Spot IV," 1967, DCE Lectures and Concerts Records, 1960-1978, Acc. 513, Box 4, University of Utah Libraries, Archives and Records Management, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah; Paul Cracroft, "30 Second Public Service Spot III," 1967, DCE Lectures and Concerts Records, 1960-1978, Acc. 513, Box 4, University of Utah Libraries, Archives and Records Management, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah; and "25 Second Public Service Spot VI," 1967, DCE Lectures and Concerts Records, 1960-1978, Acc. 513, Box 4, University of Utah Libraries, Archives and Records Management, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

authenticity of his embodied presence. To wit: "The *New Yorker* says he's part of the 'put-on' crowd"…"there's only one fair way to judge"…"see and hear the man whose films are on everyone's 'must see' list"…"everyone…should see and hear Warhol if only to decide for himself [sic] whether he's a real artist or an artist of the great 'put-on.'"[301] Each of these statements reiterates the refrain that a live appearance would furnish the necessary evidence for making conclusive determinations about the artist. They intimate that the artist's body has something to tell the audience that cannot be communicated through its mediated expressions. They promise an occasion for verifying personal data authenticated through the speaker's embodied presence. They imply that the artist will be compelled to provide a verbal accounting. Put simply, that Warhol will be made to perform intelligible speech. Moreover, that speech is simultaneously brought under the categorical purview of artistic labor and of action in the title of the lecture, "Pop Art in Action."

How might this context allow us to approach the tactics of opacity in the academic lecture hall? Extending de Villiers's claims, a refusal of coercive verbalization suffuses the 1967 lecture tour. Putting specific Foucauldian formulations to one side for a moment, an incitement to speech of a different order marked the university in the 1960s.[302] Here, we might turn from techniques of verbalization toward what Howard Singerman calls "verbal reenactment of the practices of art."[303] What Singerman describes is a reorientation in artists' education toward training that emphasizes expertise

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[301] Transcribed from fig. 21.
[302] Transformations within arts education and the US university system are discussed at length in the first chapter of my study.
[303] Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 4.

in discourse. "Speech," Singerman tells us, "characterizes the artist in the university."[304]

Beyond the university, speech becomes the currency through which the artist

demonstrates their credentialing as a virtuosic knowledge worker. When Warhol later

discussed the decision to conscript Midgette as a proxy, it was through the rhetoric of

"antistar identity games."[305] Reading across these coordinates, I want to argue that the

1967 lecture tour withholds standardizable utterance tethered to a speaker's fixed

identity. It stages a refusal of the voice of a coherently desiring subject, at the same time

that it rejects the institutionally accredited artist-educator who shuffles knowledge assets

and purveys verbally transmitted linguistic wares.

Consider, in that vein, the disciplinary procedures of cross-examination

authorized in the academic presentation. Prior to the launch of the official lecture tour,

Warhol conscripted Allen Midgette to serve as his doppelganger at an earlier 1967

University of Rochester speaking engagement. In the question-and-answer session that

followed the presentation, Midgette recalls that the first query he received at the podium

was, "Mr. Warhol, are you gay?"[306] The second was, "Why do you wear so much

makeup?"[307] Midgette responded, simply, "Oh, I never think about it." According to

Midgette, "it went on kinda like that."[308] In this anecdote, the techniques of verbalization

meet the mandate toward a verbal reenactment of the arts. An artist on the lecture circuit

stages an embodied performance of knowing while, at the same time, compelled to

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[304] Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 154.
[305] Quoted in Flatley, *Like Andy Warhol*, 33.
[306] Allen Midgette quoted in Sharon Nichols, "Being Andy Warhol," *Chronogram Magazine*, December 27, 2006, https://www.chronogram.com/hudsonvalley/being-andy-warhol/Content?oid=2193186.
[307] Midgette quoted in Nichols, "Being Andy Warhol."
[308] Midgette quoted in Nichols, "Being Andy Warhol."

disclose himself to the audience as an object of knowledge. Read in that context, failing

to appear preempts live verbal interrogation. To deliver scrambled linguistic content is to

operate in the terrain of what Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker might call

"'disingenuous' data…data in camouflage."[309] The artist who is "unable to appear"

declines to verbally account for himself, denying university audiences the opportunity to

subject him to the modes of cross-examination brought together under the rubric of the

academic Q&A.

"Switch-the-superstar" was a well-known pastime of Warhol's at both social

gatherings and institutional engagements outside the lecture tour.[310] But why select actor

Allen Midgette as a doppelganger? In an article entitled "Warhol Hoax Confirmed!," the

artist explains:

> Because I don't really have that much to say, he was better than I am…he was
> what the people expected…They liked him better than they would have me
> because I have been going on tours since then, because they would rather have
> someone like that than me.[311]

Elsewhere, the artist notes that Midgette "'was so good-looking…they might even enjoy

him more.'"[312] In the context of the lecture tour, the substitution's effects extend beyond

the artist's trademark simulacral interventions into structures of celebrity. By casting the

Bernardo Bertolucci actor in a starring role, the lecture tour recognized that pedagogical

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[309] Galloway and Thacker, *The Exploit,* 136.

[310] Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1980), 247.

[311] Andy Warhol quoted in Kay Israel and Angelyn Nelson, "Warhol Hoax Confirmed!," *Daily Utah Chronicle*, February 8, 1968, 1.

[312] As Flatley and many others have noted, conscripting doppelgangers to impersonate him was a common practice for the artist that extended beyond the lecture tour. Quoted in Flatley, *Like Andy Warhol*, 32.

oratory demanded virtuosic displays of embodied labor, and outsourced that labor to an agent whose skill sets were calibrated to its performance of presence.

For Paulo Virno, virtuosity relates to "the special capabilities of a performing artist…a persuasive orator, or a teacher who is never boring."[313] While Warhol succeeds in striking the post-Fordist social labor of virtuosic lecture-giving, he does so through reliance upon the labor of a figure who received little remuneration or recognition for the work he performed. Midgette would later recall, "I helped Andy become recognized, but he helped me to remain unrecognized."[314] In this way, the lecture tour participates in the broader models of inadequately compensated—and frequently gendered—labor that pervaded Warhol's Factory.[315]

Midgette recalls that he had made no effort to plumb the depths of Warhol's biography or psychic interiority in preparation to impersonate him. He remarks on the irony of "explaining your art and you really don't know anything about the person. I'd never studied Warhol's past because I wasn't even interested in his present."[316] Had Midgette wanted to cooperate with audience demands for confessional discourse regarding Warhol's personal narrative or queer identity, he would not have been able to, because he himself knew nothing about them. In that way, Warhol remained as opaque to his proxy as he did to potential cross-examiners who might seek to make him knowable.

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[313] Paulo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*, trans. Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito, and Andrea Casson (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 52.

[314] Midgette quoted in Nichols, "Being Andy Warhol."

[315] Pointing to the gendered nature of the division of labor in the Factory, Caroline Jones notes that "the role of women in the Factory was to work hard for no pay, suffer beautifully, and 'tell all'; in films, to the press, and over the telephone, to serve as conduits of gossip—that 'nonce taxonomy' practiced by subjugated peoples charting power relationships in the larger world." See Jones, *Machine in the Studio*, 255.

[316] Midgette quoted in Nichols, "Being Andy Warhol."

When Midgette arrived in Utah, he emphatically maintained that no pictures were to be taken of him. By evading the visual capture of a photographic lens, the actor hoped to maintain anonymity. The student who greeted him recalls, "someone with him insisted that I absolutely could not take a photograph. Warhol was far too shy."[317]

On October 2, 1967, approximately 1,100 students, faculty, and staff convened at the Ray Olpin Union Ballroom at the University of Utah for a presentation entitled "Pop Art in Action."[318] The event played to a sold-out crowd. When the lecturer arrived, it was forty-five minutes after start time, attired in sunglasses and a black coat.

Midgette began by screening a segment of the film **** (1967), also known as *Four Stars* and *Twenty-Four-Hour Movie*. After approximately forty minutes, the lecturer approached the podium for a question-and-answer session.

Long before the substitution of Midgette for Warhol was discovered, university officials and attendees already imputed a fraudulent quality to the lecture. A news report indicating that refunds were being demanded en masse notes: "The thing that alienated the audience…is that he didn't try to sell himself."[319] This might route us to Isabelle Graw's suggestion that Warhol's practice centrally foregrounds "a post-Fordist dream put on the stage of a biopolitical theater," where production demands communication skills and affective labor.[320] Read in that light, the lecture tour's noncompliance with the mandate to sell the legible linguistic wares of its speaker presents an intervention into the

[317] Bauman, "Andy Warhol Exhibit Recalls Impostor's Trip to U."

[318] Scotti Hill, "The Artist is Not Present: Andy Warhol's 1967 Utah 'Hoax' as Performance and Self-Portraiture," Masters Thesis, University of Utah, 2011, 6.

[319] Unnamed audience member quoted in Sylvia Kronstadt, "Warhol Flops, 'Fans' Demand Refund," *The Daily Utah Chronicle*, October 4, 1967, no. 8, 1.

[320] Graw, "When Life Goes to Work," 101.

performative arena of knowledge work. Accordingly, the speaker's one-thousand-dollar

honorarium was initially withheld, and later withdrawn when his identity was discovered.

Accusations of unintelligibility uniformly characterize accounts of the

pedagogical oratory that ensued:

> Warhol gave brief, pointless answers.[321]

> He gave these really inane answers, or hardly any answer at all.[322]

> In the Q-and-A that followed the movie, Warhol, wearing a dark coat and dark sunglasses, only offered up brief — and what many remember as mostly monosyllabic answers — to questions from the crowd.[323]

> The whole thing was quite unintelligible.[324]

The university had been promised verbal accounting, and instead confronted

linguistic opacity. Palpable frustration marks media coverage of the lecture. One *Salt

Lake Tribune* article announced "Pop Art in Action Fails to Cheer U. Audience,"

touching on the thwarted expectations of affective labor attached to the lecture. Its author

recounts that the speaker

> did not bring any examples of the work which made him famous, nor did he, *despite the considerable urging of the audience*, discuss his work beyond simple "yes" or "no" answers to questions…[the] question and answer period produced absolutely nothing.[325]

These verbal stylistics are of a piece with the indecipherable and

programmatically self-contradictory modes of address practiced by Warhol himself in

public space. As de Villiers suggests, verbal tactics of queer opacity operate through

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[321] Bauman, "Andy Warhol Exhibit Recalls Impostor's Trip to U."

[322] Angelyn Hutchinson quoted in Schrage, "Andy Warhol's Lecture at the University of Utah."

[323] Schrage, "Andy Warhol's Lecture at the University of Utah."

[324] Paul Cracroft quoted in "When Andy Warhol Doesn't Happen, The Victims Get a Last, Costly Laugh," *Daily Utah Chronicle*.

[325] John Thomas, "Pop Art in Action Fails to Cheer U. Audience," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 3, 1967.

linguistic interventions that "stymie the speech acts used to interrogate the person that might otherwise seem to be behind them."[326] For every speech act performed by Warhol, there exists a nullifying or opposed speech act in the archive.[327]

To appear in disguise, the proxy lecturer relied on cosmeticized camouflage involving hairspray, talcum powder, and makeup.[328] But most saliently, as Warhol recounts: "Allen with his hair sprayed silver flew out to Utah."[329] The silver spray was applied in such abundance that when Midgette made his arrival at the Salt Lake City airport, the student who greeted him observed that "a cloud of white dust blew off Warhol's hair."[330] As noted above, silver has been mined in interpretive accounts of Warhol's output as a visual correlative to becoming-machine, an invocation of the celestial allegories of the Hollywood star system, and a unifying aesthetic for the Factory. Silvering would seem to serve a different, if closely related, function in the lecture tour. A lecturer "sprayed silver" marks a refusal to appear, to make oneself visible as a legible subject. In order to hide in plain sight, the *Thirteen Most Wanted Men* were cloaked in silver-aluminum paint. So too in the lecture tour, we might approach silvering as a tactic of queer opacity: a masking technique for a lecturer who withdraws from the position of the knowing subject, and who refuses to be known.

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[326] De Villiers observes that these same dynamics mark Warhol's interview tactics. See de Villiers, *Opacity and the Closet*, 7.

[327] For example, Kelly Cresap argues that "of all the naif-trickster social styles to emerge during the sixties, Warhol's remains the most enigmatic…" See Kelly M. Cresap, *Pop Trickster Fool: Warhol Performs Naivete (*Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 3.

[328] Nichols, "Being Andy Warhol."

[329] Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1980), 248.

[330] Bauman, "Andy Warhol Exhibit Recalls Impostor's Trip to U."

Responding to the grievances of university officials regarding the proxy lecturer, Warhol's manager Paul Morrissey announced: "I just hope you look upon it as an experiment."[331]

Conclusion:
Proxy Politics and The Lecture Tour of Tomorrow

Fifteen years after the conclusion of the lecture tour, Warhol conceived a proxy lecturer of a different order in the form of a talking automaton [fig. 47].

To conclude by introducing this automated orator, we might turn to Hito Steyerl's recent essay on economies of presence in the art field. Steyerl argues for the performance of embodiment as a central feature of artistic labor in the wake of digital networks, distributed across the formats of the Q&A, the live lecture, and the artist's staged encounter with the public. For Steyerl, the task of the twenty-first century art worker is aligned with what Sven Lütticken calls "total social labour."[332] This reorientation of labor emerges alongside structures of technological mediation that confer value on presence in direct correlation to its increasing scarcity. Against the demand for continuous visibility before the gaze of publics, Steyerl proposes the possibility of proxy politics, "a politics of the stand-in and the decoy."[333] She writes:

> A stand-in or proxy is a very interesting device. It could be a body double or a stunt double. A scan or a scam. An intermediary in a network. A bot or a decoy.[334]

What might a bot or decoy allow an artist to do? First, a bot may mitigate against the need for virtuosic performances of intellectual labor, or continuous displays of

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[331] Paul Morrissey quoted in Israel and Nelson, "Warhol Hoax Confirmed!," 1.
[332] Hito, Steyerl, "The Terror of Total Dasein: Economies of Presence in the Art Field," *DIS Magazine*, 2015, http://dismagazine.com/discussion/78352/the-terror-of-total-dasein-hito-steyerl.
[333] Steyerl, "The Terror of Total Dasein."
[334] Steyerl, "The Terror of Total Dasein."

hypervisibility. For Warhol, a robotic doppelganger would also relieve him of the confessional labor of verbal self-disclosure: a "robot that could give lectures and interviews."[335] In the talking automaton, we find a retooling of the oft-cited desire to become machine. Here, to initiate becoming machine is also to initiate a strike in the field of social labor.

An early rendering of the automaton costing $400,000 was fabricated in 1982 by Alvaro Villa, a former Disney Imagineer.[336] His body is composed of silicone, hydraulics, electronic actuators and "aluminum bones," an interiorization of the silvering that reappears across Warhol's output.[337] The final version, appraised at $1.2 million, was never built. It was conceived as a talking machine set to star in the multimedia stage spectacle, "Andy Warhol's Overexposed: A No-Man Show." Robert Shapiro, a mathematician at IBM, was conscripted to program the microprocessors through which Warhol's speech would be encoded. The automaton would operate by shuffling recordings of the artist's own voice, retrieving statements from a mechanized repository of possible utterance. About this, Warhol had to say: "'I think if the robot goes on talk shows for me, it'd be great.'"[338] Extending the tactics of the 1967 lecture tour, the lecture tour of tomorrow imagined a proxy pedagogue who afforded his human doppelganger the opportunity to refuse the positions of knowing and being known.

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[335] Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol*, 202. Along those lines, he conveyed the "hope that his mechanical counterpart could take over the burden of public appearances." See Al Ridenour, "The Automated Andy Warhol is Reprogrammed," *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 2002, http://articles.latimes.com/2002/may/16/news/wk-town16.
[336] Ridenour, "The Automated Andy Warhol is Reprogrammed."
[337] Ridenour, "The Automated Andy Warhol is Reprogrammed."
[338] Warhol quoted in "Will the Real Andy Warhol Please Stand Up and Say Something?" *Popular Mechanics* 161, no. 4 (April 1984): 61.

CHAPTER 3
"A PROPER PLACE AT THE PODIUM":
FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS IN THE 1970 ART STRIKE

Introduction: "Information! !Information!"

My study of the 1970 Art Strike Against Racism, Sexism, War, and Repression

opens with a handbill that measures fourteen by eight-and-a-half inches. Composed in

direct address, the document speaks with the collective voice of an abstracted and

unspecified "we" [fig. 48].[339] Attending to the staging of this nebulous "we" offers an

instructive entry point into the discussion of which speakers were amplified in Art

Strike's first-person plural.

Art Strike was the collective effort of artists and cultural workers in New York

who sought to intervene in the political field through direct action. Its activities targeted

state and cultural institutions identified as agents of injustice. The formation of Art Strike

in 1970 responded to the US bombing of Cambodia and subsequent state violence against

antiwar protestors.[340] Its inaugural public act was to demand the closure of museums and

galleries in New York on May 22, 1970, in "an expression of shame and outrage at [the]

government's policies of racism, war, and repression."[341] As Julia Bryan-Wilson outlines,

Art Strike's platform corresponds to a redefinition of aesthetic practice as labor, and to

the concurrent identification of artists as "art workers." Striking was predicated on the

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[339] John Bowles notes that the tactics of direct address deployed in this handbill were a common feature of artist activism in 1970. See Bowles, "The 1970 New York Artists' Strike that Prefigured #J20," *Hyperallergic,* January 18, 2017, https://hyperallergic.com/352184/the-1970-new-york-artists-strike-that-prefigured-j20.

[340] An extended discussion of Art Strike's historical contexts follows in the subsequent section of this chapter.

[341] Art Strike Announcement, ca. 1970. Michael Goldberg Papers, 1942-1981. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

notion that artistic activities were "*productive* and that their stoppage would interrupt the functions of economic or social life in some crucial way."[342] Some regarded Art Strike as an abortive effort "to deprive the affluent of their playthings for a very short time," while others viewed it as the igniting of new political imaginaries among cultural workers.[343] In the months following its inaugural strike, the group's activities assumed the form of demonstrations, boycotts, agitational materials, and protest speech.

What Art Strike's platform did not meaningfully address was that following a temporary withdrawal, its participants would be returning their artistic products to a marketplace embedded in the state and economic sectors they had explicitly identified as their adversaries. Additionally, Art Strike's high-profile participants voiced little recognition of the fact that they were direct beneficiaries of the matrices of power from which they oratorically distanced themselves. In a potent illustration of this dynamic, Cindy Nemser recalls the pronouncements of one emboldened Art Strike meeting attendee: "'Down with imperialistic, capitalistic systems,' intoned [an] artist, who recently showed in a biennial sponsored by a fascist government."[344]

When Art Strike announced its withdrawal from cultural institutions, many assessed the gesture as a totalizing negation of discourse. Museum administrators expressed polite outrage as the group rallied for a day-long, citywide cultural shutdown. They dismissed the maneuver as a petulant assault on civility, civic exchange, and the

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[342] Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 117.

[343] The former position was articulated by critic and activist Cindy Nemser in 1970. See Nemser, "Artists & the System: Far From Cambodia," *Village Voice*, May 28, 1970, 21.

[344] See Nemser, "Artists & the System," 21.

public sphere.[345] Refusal to speak within the existing terms stipulated by institutions was

deemed tantamount to silence. Closer examination, however, reveals a markedly different

scenario. Far from enacting a foreclosure of discourse, Art Strike incited a cacophony of

voices whose dissident speech continues to resound into the present.[346] In a cancellation

of business as usual, Art Strike rallied for public pedagogy at museums through

politically engaged "information activities" made available to attendees free of charge

[fig. 49].[347] Its members advocated for dialogical programming to serve expanded publics

and economic measures to increase the accessibility of cultural resources.[348] What

museum officials objected to, then, was less a call for silence than a call to broaden their

sphere of interlocutors.

Invoking that ethos, the above-mentioned handbill hails the reader as an addressee

in a pedagogical exchange. Announcing "we are here," the handbill orchestrates a

communicative encounter unfolding in the present tense.[349] Vocalizing in an uppercase

stentorian boom of capitals, it declares: "INFORMATION! !INFORMATION!"[350] In

printed form, it stages the "information activities" Art Strike demanded of arts

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[345] Institutional responses to Art Strike are discussed at length in subsequent sections of this chapter. See, for example, John Hightower quoted in Julie Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures, Spaces, Artists' Groups, and Organizations in New York City, 1965-85," in *Alternative Art New York, 1965-85*, ed. Julie Ault (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 29.

[346] One example of the 1970 Art Strike's impact on contemporary artist activism is the J20 Art Strike Speak Out held at the Whitney Museum of American Art on January 20, 2017. For an account of the events and conversations surrounding the 2017Art Strike, see Hrag Vartanian, "Should the Art World Strike on Inauguration Day?," *Hyperallergic*, December 15, 2016, https://hyperallergic.com/344820/should-the-art-world-strike-on-inauguration-day/.

[347] Art Strike Call for a General Strike on May, 22, 1970, ca. 1970. Michael Goldberg Papers, 1942-1981. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[348] Art Strike contended that these discussions should foreground the input of artists and students as facilitators. Art Strike Call for a General Strike on May, 22, 1970, ca. 1970, Michael Goldberg Papers, 1942-1981.

[349] Emphasis added.

[350] Transcribed from fig. 48.

institutions. The poster is signed "ART STRIKE against racism, sexism, repression, and

war," and telegraphs many of the group's central features.

First, the production of the handbill itself, coupled with its informational density,

challenge the claim that members sought an absolutist negation of cultural output or a

"creative blackout."[351] Offering a profusion of linguistic content, the document serves as

a trace of acts of thinking and making. Here, "INFORMATION!" has been dislodged

from the university's "information machine" as the currency of a postindustrial

knowledge economy.[352] Instead, (counter-)information is taken up as a catalyst for

activating political participation.

Notably, the document does not communicate in the spare visual vocabulary of

the bureaucratic memorandum or institutional press release. Rather, it aestheticizes its

call for action though multiple typefaces, varying capitalization, and typographical

flourishes. The decorative font selected for the first iteration of "INFORMATION!" is

associated with printed advertisements for mass spectacles in the early twentieth-century.

This citation signals attention to the visual coding and aesthetic framework of Art

Strike's activities. Beyond that, it telegraphs the group's blurring of the classificatory

criteria that distinguish performance from political action. In this vein, Bryan-Wilson

remarks on the categorical ambiguity of Art Strike with respect to the genre of

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[351] Karl Katz, director of the Jewish Museum, acknowledged artists' claim that it would, in fact, be the destructive policies of the administration that would lead to a "creative blackout." Quoted in Glueck, "Art Community Here Agrees on Plan to Fight War, Racism, and Oppression," *New York Times*, May 19, 1970, 30.

[352] In the 1960s, the university was branded an "information machine" colluding with military and corporate forces in a burgeoning knowledge-based economy. This sensibility was prominent among members of the Free Speech Movement at the University of California, Berkeley. The first chapter of this study offers an extended discussion of information in the university. See also Steven Lubar, "'Do Not Fold, Spindle or Mutilate': A Cultural History of the Punch Card," *Journal of American Culture* (Winter 1992): 46.

performance. She suggests that if "Art Strike could be described as a conceptual performance, it was at the same time a performative act aimed at political intervention."[353] Along the same lines, my study does not pursue a resolution of this categorical indeterminacy. Instead, I consider the evaluative mechanisms, institutional arbitration, and forces of capital that participate in demarcating artists' commodity objects from their performative acts of resistance.

Most saliently, the handbill's six-item list encapsulates Art Strike's multipronged objectives and its stated interest in art as an agent of coalition-building.[354] Not incidentally, the injustices that the document enumerates are numbered. The first three items correspond to war, racism, and sexism, and are positioned in hierarchical and discrete relation to one another. This numerical structure poses a number of questions: Who was responsible for determining the order of the itemized inventory, and what criteria did they implement? Who selected the placement of racism and sexism relative to war? Who composed the language of item 3, which refers to the "discrimination and exploitation of women" without further specifying "women" as a category that intersects with race, class, and other coordinates?

This returns us to the handbill's repeated recourse to the pronoun "we," calling up a vexed collectivity within Art Strike. Here, "we" implies a monolithic agency that coheres in the moment of enunciation. It glosses over the reality that the capacity to

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[353] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 118.
[354] An early press release notes that the group comprised the Art Students' Coalition, the Art Workers' Coalition, Women Artists in Revolution, United Black and Puerto Rican Artists, and the Artists and Writers Protest Group. In subsequent sections, I attend specifically to the contestations that emerged in Art Strike's coalitional organizing. See New York Artists' Strike Press Release, ca. 1970. Michael Goldberg papers, 1942-1981. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

exercise a voice was unevenly distributed among the group's participants. Who is indexed by the universality of the "we" who proclaims "we are here"? Given Art Strike's foregrounding of agitational speech as a tactic, these concerns take on particular significance in the study of its unfolding. A foundational and contested moment in the group's formation, for example, was the election of spokespeople who would verbalize its collective grievances.[355] Whose pedagogical utterances, then, directed its knowledge production? These questions structure the chapter that follows. Jettisoning prevailing histories of Art Strike and the "spokesmen" who articulated its official platform, I track feminist genealogies of the resistant speech that drove artist activism in 1970 and that continues to reverberate into the present.

Art Strike in Context(s)

A linear, chronological narrative of Art Strike's unfolding does not appear in the pages that follow. Instead, I address the group from a palimpsestic multiplicity of vantages, attending to its various precedents, contexts, and influences. I sidestep a conventional history of Art Strike given, as cultural critic Michele Wallace puts it, the penchant for "'history' in the major sense" to align with the hegemonic accounts of specific historical subjects.[356] Put otherwise, rehearsals of "official" history too often reproduce the discourses of its privileged actors. In lieu of a monolithic history of Art

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[355] The election of Art Strike's spokespeople is further discussed below.
[356] Michele Wallace, "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash," in *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (London: Verso, 2016), 188-89.

Strike, I turn to what has retroactively been coded, to borrow from Wallace, as "histories

of the 'minor.'"[357]

Discussions of Art Strike often commence with a précis of the sociopolitical

forces contributing to its formation. These inventories include labor revolt in the 1960s

and 70s, the prominence of the New Left, the rise of student movements, and artists'

activism in the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC). The impact of civil rights, feminist

organizing, and artist-activists like the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition (BECC) are

often accorded decreased prominence by comparison.[358] The omission of the BECC is

particularly conspicuous as it precedes Art Strike by one year, and serves as a model for

the tactics—as well as the institutional targets—that the latter would foreground. Beyond

this, there was also overlap in the groups' membership, with the artist Faith Ringgold

acting as a participant across both organizing efforts.[359]

The BECC formed in 1969 to protest the exhibition *Harlem on My Mind:*

Cultural Capital of Black America 1900-1968 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Though the show purported to represent Harlem's communities, which were

predominantly black, it failed to include the work of a single black artist. In this way,

Harlem On My Mind exemplifies the practices that critic Aruna D'Souza classifies under

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[357] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 189.

[358] There are important exceptions to this tendency. For example, John P. Bowles's monograph on Adrian Piper foreground race and gender in its study of Piper's involvement with Art Strike. An extended discussion of Bowles's account appears in subsequent sections of this study. See Bowles, *Adrian Piper: Race, Gender, and Embodiment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 125-61. Julia Bryan-Wilson foregrounds the role of gender in artists' organizing in a study of Lucy Lippard's feminist labor and contributions to the Art Workers Coalition. See Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 127-71.

[359] Caroline V. Wallace notes the essential role that Ringgold played as a contributor across the BECC, Art Workers' Coalition, and the Ad Hoc Women's Committee. See Wallace, "Exhibiting Authenticity: The Black Emergency Cultural Coalition's Protests of the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1968-71," *Art Journal* 74, no. 2 (2015): 6.

the rubric of "whitewalling." D'Souza coins the term to describe institutional acts of

"covering over that which we prefer to ignore or suppress; the idea of putting a wall

around whiteness, of fencing it off, of defending it against incursions."[360] Thomas

Hoving, who was then the Director of the Met, claimed that the exhibition intended to

start a conversation about race, and to furnish both "education" and "dialogue" in the

process.[361] As D'Souza points out, Hoving was in fact "stepping into a conversation that

had already started," one where he performed the erasure of existing interlocutors.

Scholars like Bridget Cooks have since elucidated the ways in which *Harlem On My*

Mind was less interested in speaking *to* community members than in speaking on their

behalf through an ethnographic lens.[362] Effectively, the exhibition was not so much a

dialogical undertaking as one that enacted the silence of the communities for whom it

spoke.

In response to the exhibition's racialized exclusions, artists and cultural workers

including Benny Andrews, Romare Bearden, and Henri Ghent formed the BECC. The

Coalition launched a large-scale demonstration at the entrance of the Museum on January

12, 1969, where protestors were confronted by police barricades. There, they distributed

leaflets and wore sandwich boards that read "Whose image of whom?"[363] As Cooks

observes, their efforts provided a crucial "model for institutional critique and activism in

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[360] Aruna D'Souza, *Whitewalling: Art, Race & Protest in 3 Acts* (New York: Badlands Unlimited, 2018), 9.
[361] D'Souza, *Whitewalling*, 106.
[362] For example, Bridget R. Cooks notes that "Racial difference was constructed in the [Metropolitan Museum of Art] galleries as ethnography and the people of Harlem as a collective cultural specimen." See Cooks, "Black Artists and Activism: Harlem on My Mind (1969)," in *American Studies* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 22.
[363] Cooks, "Black Artists and Activism," 23.

the American art world."[364] This model of direct action would inform the subsequent

activities of Art Strike, among many others.

Only sixteen months after the BECC's protest at the Metropolitan Museum, Art

Strike staged a demonstration at the same site to protest the Met's noncompliance with its

May 22 citywide shutdown.[365] Separated by roughly one year, the agendas of these two

direct actions vastly differ. Whereas BECC advocates for the visibility and inclusion of

systematically underrepresented artists, Art Strike's platform explicitly privileges

discourses of withdrawal. As Susan Cahan notes, "The BECC sought inclusion as a

matter of ethics, favoring negotiation and peaceful protest over confrontation."[366] The

discrepancies between their tactics are also on display in members' respective

interactions with the Whitney Museum. In April 1969, the BECC lobbied the Whitney for

reforms like curatorial programs showcasing black artists and the appointment of black

exhibition consultants.[367] One year later, in May 1970, the artist Robert Morris requested

the closure of his solo exhibition at the Whitney to protest recent state-sponsored

violence.[368] Whereas the BECC agitated to be represented in the Whitney's galleries,

Morris clamored to be removed from them.

These two actions—executed one year apart at the same museum—are

instructive. They invoke the complexities and assumptions latent in the tactics of

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[364] Cooks, "Black Artists and Activism," 32.

[365] An extended discussion of Art Strike's demonstration at the Metropolitan Museum follows in a subsequent section of this chapter.

[366] Susan E. Cahan, *Mounting Frustration: The Art Museum in the Age of Black Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 178.

[367] Cooks, "Black Artists and Activism," 30.

[368] Notably, many scholars and critics identify Morris's withdrawal from his exhibition at the Whitney Museum as the act that initiated the formation of Art Strike. For example, see Matthew Israel, *Kill For Peace: American Artists Against the Vietnam War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 148-51.

withdrawal. Namely, they reveal how the opportunity to refuse institutional participation is contingent on vectors of access selectively conferred upon particular artists, and structurally inflected by the dimensions of race, gender, and class. These conditions are brought to the fore in Adrian Piper's statement, "I hardly had enough power as an artist to effect any significant change by withdrawing from shows."[369]

Advocating for the withdrawal of work from institutions presupposes a subject who has been granted entry to them. At the Whitney Museum, it was largely through the efforts of the BECC that occasions for withdrawal became available to artists of color. In 1971, the Whitney launched a fifty-eight-person exhibition entitled "Contemporary Black Artists in America." Under-resourced and under-researched from the first, the show prompted BECC protests that were coordinated as early as six months in advance of its opening.[370] Ultimately, sixteen artists decided to withhold their work from the exhibition. Their intervention marked a period when withdrawal was, as art historian Kellie Jones remarks, becoming "one very visible means for black artists to register their disagreement with institutional actions and real world events."[371]

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[369] Adrian Piper, "Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992*, 29-53 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 31. This statement is temporally coincident with the period when Piper began meeting curators who expressed surprised at realizing that she was a black woman, a period that resulted in her subsequent exclusion from participation in the art field. As Piper recalls it, "I repeatedly had this experience of curators coming to New York to visit me to see my work and just being completely shocked when they realized that I was not a white male. Because of the spelling of my name, many people made the assumption that I was." The following chapter addresses Piper's output in relation to the milieu of artist activism in 1970. See Adrian Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 262.

[370] As Kellie Jones notes, it appears to have been marked by an "abandonment of critical and intellectual responsibility" by the Whitney. Kellie Jones, *EyeMinded: Living and Writing Contemporary Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 415-6.

[371] Jones, *EyeMinded*, 417.

A series of temporally proximate events in May 1970 are identified as the point of origin for Art Strike's withdrawals, each hinging on exercises of state and military violence. They include the US bombing of Cambodia; the subsequent killing of protesters at Kent State University; the killing of protestors at Jackson State University; and the police killing of six black men in Augusta, Georgia who had been demonstrating against the murder of a black inmate at the Richmond County Jail. Within histories of Art Strike, these events are characterized as historic ruptures that radicalized the group's members.[372] Supporting this claim, Morris issued the statement, "The catalyst was the deaths of the students. A lot of us had strong feelings about Vietnam and Cambodia, but Kent State galvanized us into action."[373] Similarly, the group's collective call to strike recognizes "those slain in Orangeburg, S.C., Kent State, Jackson State, and Augusta."[374] Notably, Orangeburg, S.C. is the only event included in the announcement that predates May 1970. The question is not why the group recognized the events of 1970 as catalysts for political activation, but why it did not foreground preceding, related catalysts in its platform of grievances. Put otherwise, why was a structural analysis of 1970 as continuous with earlier state violence largely absent from the official discourses of Art Strike?

There is no question that the exercise of state, military, and police violence in May 1970 was ubiquitous, and spurred many artists to action. However, to suggest that

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[372] For example, Julie Ault writes that Art Strike's members were "catalyzed by the Art Workers' Coalition and the killings at Kent State, at Jackson State, and in Cambodia to plan a join anti-war campaign." See Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures," 29.

[373] Ralph Blumenfeld, "Daily Closeup: Show Mustn't Go On," *New York Post*, June 4, 1970, 37.

[374] Orangeburg, S.C. refers to the 1968 killing of three black students by highway patrol officers at South Carolina State University during a protest against racial segregation. Art Strike Announcement, ca. 1970. Michael Goldberg Papers, 1942-1981.

this period represents a radical departure from operational norms in the US is to obscure

the realities of pervasive racialized violence that preceded it, and to present a selective

reading of history. Scholar and activist Angela Davis writes on this subject in an account

of the 1969 assassination of Black Panther leaders Bunchy Carter and Jon Huggins. The

murder transpired on UCLA's campus, and would later be traced to the FBI's

COINTELPRO. Describing reactions to their deaths, Davis recalls:

> In a sense…we always expected the violence, we knew it was coming, though we
> could never predict the next target. Yet each time it struck, it was equally
> devastating to us. No matter how many times it was repeated, there was no getting
> used to it.[375]

The "we" invoked by Davis calls up a collectivity who continuously bears witness to

state-sponsored violence, a "we" for whom it is not coded as an anomaly. In a similar

vein, it is important to underline that many Art Strike members did not acquire a sudden

awareness of state-sponsored violence in 1970. Instead, they had been cognizant of its

systematic effects for many years.[376] In effect, underscoring the extraordinary "shame

and outrage" announced by Art Strike in 1970 tacitly codes the years preceding it as

ineligible for the same affective response. This suggests a selective *writing* of history

from the vantage of participants for whom the events of May 1970 would have seemed

wholly exceptional. Related tensions surface in Art Strike's internal contestations over

which instances of state violence should be mourned as exceptional deaths. They came to

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[375] Angela Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1974), 195.
[376] For example, Art Strike member Faith Ringgold dates her political activity back to the early 1960s, when she would participate in fundraising for the SCLC, a group that encountered systematic police brutality. See Faith Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 161.

a head, for example, during Art Strike's May 22 Metropolitan Museum demonstration.[377]

As John Bowles notes, "When a group of artists arrived…with a wreath commemorating

only the students killed at Kent State, who were all white, they had to be reminded that

the Art Strike also memorialized blacks killed at Augusta, Jackson, and Orangeburg."[378]

In lieu of venturing my own précis of Art Strike's historical contexts, I want to

pause on the impossibility of furnishing historical narratives isolated from specific

historical actors. This commonplace is particularly germane to the study of Art Strike,

given the heterogeneity of the group's membership and its coalitional structure. Art

Strike does not constitute a cohesive, uniform historical subject. The effects of its

historical moment were thus not uniformly experienced by its participants. As such, the

group does not possess a single relation to its sociopolitical conjuncture, but rather

various relations contingent upon a given member's coordinates. That is, Art Strike is

marked not by a single history, but as Michele Wallace suggests, by a multiplicity of

histories.

Writing from the vantage of an Art Strike participant, Wallace spotlights the

erasure of these histories in the crucial text, "Reading 1968: The Great American

Whitewash." Here, Wallace outlines the vital contributions of women of color to artist

activism in the late 1960s and early 1970s. She chronicles the whitewashing of Art Strike

both throughout its unfolding and in its subsequent translation into an art historical object

of study. As Wallace observes, the overlapping histories of Art Strike have been

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[377] An extended discussion of Art Strike's Metropolitan Museum demonstration follows in a subsequent section.
[378] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 145.

separated out into prevailing major histories and deemphasized minor histories—where

"minor" histories tend to correspond to the lifeworlds of minoritarian subjects.

While May 1970 may have represented an initiation into the political sphere for

many Art Strike contributors, this was not the case for those women artists of color

whose lived experience did not afford the privilege of imagining themselves as outside

the political.[379] Consider, in this vein, Wallace's recollection of the early activism of

Faith Ringgold (her mother). She writes that Ringgold's politicization began not in 1970,

but in 1968, following Martin Luther King's assassination. For Wallace, this—rather than

1970—was the year "when every black artist and cultural worker in the country was

galvanized into action."[380] Ringgold herself traces her initial political activity further

back to the early 1960s, when she was compelled to volunteer with the Southern

Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), arranging a speaking engagement for

community organizer Fannie Lou Hamer.[381]

By contrast, white gallerist and Art Strike affiliate Klaus Kertess describes the

period prior to 1970 as follows:

> Well, because I had spent like—for the better part of my life, making fairly clear
> perimeters for my life and assuming that, you know, I had the world that was
> separate from the rest of the world […] And everything outside of that, I could
> take it or leave it. But I tended, simply put, to think that what was outside wasn't
> affecting my world. At a certain point, that world versus the outside world, burst

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[379] To be clear, I am not suggesting a cohesive or monolithic experience of 1970 held in common
by women artists of color affiliated with Art Strike. Adrian Piper, for example, marks the spring
of that year as a transformative moment that politicized her practice and shifted its objectives.
Piper, "Talking to Myself," 30.
[380] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 196.
[381] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 161-2.

into my world. And I felt very threatened by it and totally horrified at what was going on.[382]

Kertess's recollections sketch a realm of daily encounter seemingly barricaded from the incursion of the political by "clear perimeters." They gesture toward the political as a set of external forces—"everything outside"—that threatened to pierce a world whose boundaries were mapped to keep them at bay. The discrepancies between these accounts highlight the need for attunement to the multiple histories of Art Strike, and to how they may vary depending upon the position of its historical actors.

Similarly, the intellectual histories of Art Strike are undergirded by a multiplicity of theoretical ballasts. Julia Bryan-Wilson outlines several of these in the important volume, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, to which my own study is indebted.[383] In tracing theoretical influences on Art Strike—vis-à-vis Robert Morris (its spokesperson and co-chair)—Bryan-Wilson, Maurice Berger, and James Meyer hone in on the impact of German theorist Herbert Marcuse.[384] Marcuse's influential *One-Dimensional Man* and *An Essay on Liberation* both appeared in print in the 1960s, serving as references for many artist who became involved in organizing.[385] Morris was

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[382] Paul Cummings and Klaus D. Kertess, Oral History Interview with Klaus D. Kertess, 1975 Oct. 1. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[383] For an account of the formation of the Art Workers' Coalition, see Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 13-39.

[384] See Maurice Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 123.

[385] Studies of Marcuse's influence on this period extend back to Maurice Berger's *Labyrinths*. More recently, James Meyer traces artists' "fundamental distrust of technology" to Marcuse's 1964 text, *One-Dimensional Man*. See Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (*New Haven: Yale University Press,* 2001), 250-51. Julia Bryan-Wilson associates Morris' activities with the Marcusean notion of a "Great Refusal," elaborated in *Essay on Liberation* (1969). See Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 118. Eve Meltzer also acknowledges Morris scholars' frequent recourse to Marcuse as an interpretive aid. See Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved: Conceptual Art, Affect, and the Antihumanist Turn* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 91.

among the members of Art Strike who were in explicit dialogue with Marcuse's

formulation of radical practice. Invoking Marcuse's model of aesthetic activity, Morris

ventured that artists "should be integrated into society" and "improve the quality of

life…[as] Marcuse has [advocated]."[386] The "Great Refusal," Marcuse's insistence upon

art as an instrument of protest, was of particular interest to cultural workers.[387] Echoing

this sentiment, Morris asserts that the "first principle for political action, as well as art

action, is denial and negation. One says no. It is enough at this point to begin by saying

no."[388] The strike and boycott, then, follow as correlative performances of "saying no."

Artists' commitment to Marcusean refusal is well illustrated in an anecdote about

the Emergency Cultural Government, a subdivision of Art Strike co-steered by Morris. In

June of 1970, the group organized a visit to Washington D.C. to meet with the Senate

Subcommittee on the Arts and Humanities. Summarizing his outlook on relations

between artists and the state, Morris declared, "We didn't want any more lollypops."[389]

When senators at the meeting allegedly asked what they could do "to help," Robert

Rauschenberg replied, "Put on more government shows we can withdraw from."[390] Here,

the departure point of artists' activism crystallized in preemptive negation and

withdrawal, in the act of saying no.

Theorizing the mechanized landscape of advanced capital, Marcuse sketches a

tableau where technological rationality has all but foreclosed the possibility of resistant

thought and utterance—of "saying no." In this scenario, modes of discourse and

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[386] Robert Morris quoted in Berger, *Labyrinths*, 123.
[387] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Routledge, 2007), 66.
[388] Quoted in Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 118.
[389] Grace Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," *The New York Times*, July 5, 1970, 65.
[390] Quoted in Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.

structures of cognition give way to "one-dimensional thought," forged by "purveyors of mass information" among whom political power is concentrated.[391] Anticipating Gilles Deleuze's dividual in "Postscript on Control Societies," Marcuse contends that the data bodies of advanced capital contain "few secrets and longings which cannot be sensibly discussed, analyzed, and polled."[392] Within this techno-dystopian schema of mechanized utterance, Marcuse holds space open for the transformative possibilities of aesthetic practice. He writes:

> …art contains the rationality of negation. In its advanced positions, it is the Great Refusal—the protest against that which is. The modes in which man and things are made to appear, to sing and sound and speak, are modes of refuting, breaking, and recreating their factual existence.[393]

The aim of aesthetic activity, in other words, should be to sing and sound and speak so as to "disturb the order of business."[394] Or, to refuse "the impossibility of speaking a non-reified language."[395] The echoes of Marcuse's rhetoric keenly resonate in Art Strike's proclivities toward agitational speech.

Marcuse was a key force within the New Left and a palpable influence on cultural workers.[396] He was also an interlocutor for figures like Angela Davis, who studied with him in the 1960s. At the same time, an array of thinkers beyond Marcuse informed artist activism in that period. Reflecting on 1968, Michele Wallace enumerates that

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[391] Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 16.
[392] Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 74.
[393] Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 66.
[394] Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 64.
[395] Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 71.
[396] Todd Gitlin, for example, describes Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* as an influential "Hegelian dirge for the Marxist dream of an insurgent proletariat," and emphasizes that "its reputation swelled among the New Left for its magisterial account of a society that, Marcuse argued, had lost the very ability to think or speak of opposition." See Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), 246.

such political figures as Angela Davis, Stokely Carmichael, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Ron Karenga, and such writers as Langston Hughes, Sonia Sanchez, Amiri Baraka, and Harold Cruse, and such performers as Harry Belafonte, Nina Simone, Odetta and James Brown were crucial to how politically engaged people in the period imagined their goals.[397]

In Faith Ringgold's outline of the earlier period of 1963, its primary cultural markers comprise James Baldwin's publication of *The First Next Time*, the discourses circulated by Malcolm X, and the marches led by Martin Luther King Jr.[398] Ringgold proceeds to chart how these developments shifted the aims of her painterly practice toward preserving a moment that she "knew was history."[399]

Despite the crucial contributions of Ringgold and Wallace to Art Strike—and despite their explicitly stated engagement with the figures above—the voices of those thinkers are seldom foregrounded in analyses of the group's intellectual histories.[400] Wallace surfaces these omissions in "Reading 1968," aligning them with the broader tendency toward theorizing 1960s and 70s activism through the lens of the "'Great American Whitewash.'"[401] Here, Wallace refers to accounts of resistance that "minimize the importance of race, or the vital contribution black artists and intellectuals have made to the discussion of that issue."[402] Adrian Piper's characterization of the New York art field of the 1960s affirms these tendencies. She writes that "in those days, conceptual art was a white macho enclave," one whose privileged actors benefited from "a fun-house

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[397] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 188.

[398] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 146.

[399] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 146.

[400] As Wallace observes, redressing this phenomenon is "a crucial step to be taken prior to any meaningful examination of the phenomenon of 1968 and its consequences for the present." See Wallace, "Reading 1968," 189.

[401] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 195.

[402] For example, Wallace surveys intellectual histories of 1960s protest by authors like Todd Gitlin, James Miller, and David Caute, remarking that their framing of resistance is one wherein "'minorities' have become 'minor' again, as though the revisions of the 60s and 70s in the way we conceptualize 'history' had never happened." Wallace, "Reading 1968," 195, 197.

refraction of the Euroethnic equation of intellect with masculinity."[403] To author

intellectual histories that further entrench the primacy of such actors, then, is to reassert

their discursive authority over minoritarian subjects who are thereby constituted as

"'voiceless.'"[404]

A "Proper Place at the Podium"
And "A Very Good Speech or Something About the War"

"Talk as mere talk is the most unstable of trivialities because it can suddenly accelerate to such
great density, initiate such profound consequences."
—Robert Morris, "Some Splashes in the Ebb Tide"[405]

"My role here is to contest…yet another attempt to universalize white male intellectual authority
over the 'voiceless.'"
—Michele Wallace, "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash"[406]

From the first, speech-giving determined the operations of Art Strike. The group

was formalized at a gathering of over one thousand artists at New York University's

Loeb Center to determine a collective course of action in response to the events of May

1970. A maelstrom of activity preceded and surrounded this initial convening.

Contributors to the Jewish Museum exhibition "Using Walls" had called for the early

closure of the show on May 18, 1970.[407] Adrian Piper withheld her contribution from an

exhibition at the New York Cultural Center, substituting a statement of withdrawal in its

place.[408] Robert Morris sent a communiqué to the Whitney Museum informing them that

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[403] Adrian Piper, "Introduction: Some Very FORWARD Remarks," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), xxxv.
[404] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 189.
[405] Robert Morris, "Some Splashes in the Ebb Tide," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), 121.
[406] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 189.
[407] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 142.
[408] The following chapter offers an extended discussion of Piper's withdrawal.

he was "on strike," and asking that his solo exhibition be closed in "unified action within the art community against the intensifying conditions of repression, war and racism in this country."[409] On May 17, the show was withdrawn two weeks in advance of its scheduled date.

At the Loeb Center meeting, as the story goes, "a name was soon heard on almost every lip: 'Robert Morris, Robert Morris.'"[410] Posing a laconic query, Cindy Nemser— founding editor of *Feminist Art Journal*—asks, "Who would be a better man for the occasion?"[411] Morris's bona fides, coupled with a speech he delivered to the assembly, resulted in his election as the chairperson of Art Strike. Prior to this moment, Morris had no involvement with artist activism. Two years earlier, in 1968, he had "denied any interest in politics."[412] Nevertheless, "amidst much applause and a few inharmonious but prophetic boos," he took "his proper place at the podium."[413] Lucy Lippard recounts that

> …apparently they had a big meeting at Loeb Student Center, and Bob Morris, for no good reason, because he hadn't been involved with the [Art Workers' Coalition] or anything, was elected as the figurehead. *But he'd given a very good speech or something about the war*.[414]

From its first convening, "a very good speech" and the status of the speaker in question would influence the course of Art Strike. Despite his distance from the realm of political organizing prior to May 1970, Morris was catapulted to a central position in the group

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[409] When Morris' call for early closure was received, the Whitney initially declined his request. After the artist warned that he would otherwise use their building as the backdrop of a large-scale sit-in, the museum reversed its decision. Whitney Press Release quoted in Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 113.

[410] Nemser, "Artists & the System," 20.

[411] Nemser, "Artists & the System," 20.

[412] Israel, *Kill for Peace*, 148.

[413] Nemser, "Artists & the System," 20.

[414] Emphasis added. Sue Heinemann and Lucy Lippard, Oral History Interview with Lucy Lippard, 2011 Mar. 15.

through a combination of oratory and institutional credentialing. When he was named

chairperson, women artists present at the Loeb Center meeting interjected. As Lippard

tells it, "some woman in the audience leapt up and said, 'What about women!'"[415] In

what Bryan-Wilson describes as a maneuver of "gender conciliation," the artist Poppy

Johnson was subsequently elected co-chair.[416]

Members of New York's art communities remained ambivalent toward Robert

Morris's revolutionary persona. While some perceived the closure of his Whitney

exhibition as an earnest gesture of institutional noncompliance, others read it as a canny

foray into self-branding. Additionally, Bryan-Wilson suggests that because Morris's

Whitney exhibition performed explicit identification with construction workers, his early

withdrawal may have been a prudent move that responded to the Hard Hat Riot of May

8th.[417] In a 1970 *Village Voice* article, Cindy Nemser writes:

> Robert Morris, indefatigable art theorist, Castelli superstar, veteran of museum
> shows around the country, had shut down his extraordinary exhibition at the
> Whitney Museum…Greater sacrifice hath no man than to shut down his art show
> for his fellow man.[418]

Laconically echoing her sentiments, stickers with the slogan "Robert Morris, Prince of

Peace" were anonymously plastered throughout downtown New York.[419]

At the same meeting where Morris and Johnson were elected, attendees voted to

pass four resolutions: first, that a one-day strike that would shut down galleries and

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[415] Sue Heinemann, Oral History Interview with Lucy Lippard, 2011 Mar. 15. Archives of
American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
[416] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 114.
[417] Bryan-Wilson asks, "Was there, perhaps, another reason that Morris was so eager to shut
down his Whitney Museum show on May 15? In the aftermath of the hard-hat riots, construction
was no longer a viable metaphor for the new relations between work, labor, and politics that
Morris sought in 1970." Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 119.
[418] Cindy Nemser, "Artists & the System: Far From Cambodia," *Village Voice*, May 28, 1970, 20.
[419] Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.

museums in an antiwar protest on May 22, 1970; second, the formation of an Emergency

Cultural Government to sever artists' involvement with state-funded cultural initiatives;

third, the occupation of art institutions to radicalize museum visitors; and fourth, the

implementation of a tithe on all art sales, to be put toward mobilizing for peace.[420]

Certain speakers intervened to voice their dissent, deeming the resolutions reformist

rather than radical.[421]

Nemser describes the scene as a discordant cacophony of verbal address wherein

attendees "came forward to voice their dissatisfaction with what they considered rather

mild palliatives."[422] She records the meeting's aural landscape as follows:

> What had started as a show of the art community's ability to unite in a common
> cause soon deteriorated into a cultural free-for-all. Radical demands were
> followed by suggestions for reform, which were followed by pleas for reason,
> which were followed by applause, cheers, boos, and hisses.[423]

From the earliest inception of the group, it had to contend with the questions: Who would

speak for Art Strike? For whom would Art Strike speak? Which voices would be deemed

intelligible and which would be recorded through the nonverbal register of the hiss?

It is telling that the apocryphal moment of Art Strike's founding revolves around

the determination of its spokesperson(s). It is equally telling that the decision was

predicated on one artist's purportedly virtuosic verbal address, and that the speaker who

delivered it was otherwise a novice to artist activism. In light of this, it is difficult to miss

echoes here of the scenario diagnosed in Howard Singerman's *Art Subjects: Making*

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[420] Grace Glueck, "Art Community Here Agrees on Plan to Fight War, Racism, and Oppression, *The New York Times*, May 19, 1970, 30.
[421] Those who objected included affiliates of the Art Students' Coalition, AWC, Artists and Writers in Protest, and Women Artists in Revolution.
[422] Nemser, "Artists & the System," 20.
[423] Nemser, "Artists & the System," 20.

Artists in the American University. Singerman's study chronicles the professionalization

of artists in the university system in the period following World War II, when

accreditation became a precondition of authenticating oneself as a practitioner. At the

time, artists' instruction began to emphasize proficiency in expert discourse and

standardized art speech. In turn, legitimizing one's speech as an artist required being

proximate to institutions and to their cachet. Professionalization was thus a raced,

gendered, and classed project of determining who would acquire fluency in the prevailing

vocabularies surrounding visual art. Per Singerman, professions exerted "control at the

level of practitioners; their rules of credentialing and certification govern *who* can

speak."[424] The anecdote of Art Strike's founding suggests that credentialing governed

who could speak not only within the university or institutional space, but also in the

milieu of artists' coalitional politics.

The contestation of who would speak for Art Strike manifests in the variability of

the group's name itself. References to the collective run the gamut from "Art Strike

Against Racism, War, and Oppression,"[425] "New York Art Strike Against Racism, War,

and Repression,"[426] and "New York Artists' Strike Against Racism, Sexism, Repression,

and War."[427] John Bowles outlines these fraught dynamics in his important monograph

on Adrian Piper, which has been instructive to my study. Bowles recalls that initially,

there was a reluctance to highlight gender among Art Strike's primary concerns.[428]

According to Grace Glueck—an art editor for the *New York Times* who covered Art

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[424] Emphasis added. Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University* (Berkeley University of California Press, 1999), 201.
[425] Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures," 29.
[426] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 114.
[427] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 137.
[428] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 145.

Strike extensively—"sexism" was appended to the group's platform and name "as an afterthought."[429]

Art Strike's internal contestations surrounding its spokespeople and talking points are particularly notable given its public-facing platform, which emphasized attending to a broadened sphere of interlocutors. While the group rallied for measures against racism, sexism, war, and repression in the art field; it reproduced those formations within its own organizational structure. At the same time that many Art Strike participants faced the muting of their speech, the group issued demands for institutions to reconstitute themselves as sites of dialogic exchange.

It is necessary to pause here on the tension between Art Strike's stated affinity for the dialogic and its institutional reception as an instigator of silence. John Hightower, Director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was a particularly vocal opponent of the group's interventions. Redressing his position, an Art Strike letter to Hightower reads, "You fail to understand the meaning of symbolic denial (closing the museum for ONE DAY!) which speaks to the actual denial of life by forces of violence."[430] Here, we might hear the echoes of the "raging revolutionary" formulated by feminist theorist Sara Ahmed. For Ahmed, the activist who exhibits affect in excess of what is commonly allowable "teaches us something."[431] Their pedagogical function is dismissed, however, through the citation of their charged modes of address. By the same maneuver, many institutions across New York declined to hear remarks on their collusion with state-

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[429] Glueck, ""Strike Front Keeps Its Cool" 65.
[430] Art Strike to John Hightower, May 25, 1970, Art Strike file, Museum of Modern Art Archive. Quoted in Bryan Wilson, *Art Workers*, 119.
[431] Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 170.

sponsored systems of violence, on the tacit basis that those assessments were marked by

explicitly negative affects. These dimensions of Art Strike's unfolding offer a case study

in the dismissal of resistance through the invocation of civility discourse.

In a printed announcement of collective demands [fig. 50], Art Strike calls on

museums to

> 1) Issue a statement of position with regard to racism, war, and repression […]
>
> 3) Make available their main floors to the public, free of charge, for information activities against war, racism, and repression…to be coordinated by the community of artists and students […]
>
> 4) Directly engage in initiating meetings and discussions with the staffs of museums throughout the country so that they can make similar activities possible on a national level.[432]

While the announcement agitates for the cessation of business as usual, it decidedly does

not position withdrawal on the side of silence. Instead, it stipulates a profusion of

community-engaged dialogical programming, proposing "information activities" and

platforms for public pedagogy. Its rhetoric resonates with Eve Meltzer's observation that

"what Art Strike withheld from public consumption—quite literally, works of art in their

conventional spaces and as conventional modes of viewing—it replaced with forms of

information."[433]

To those ends, a Ground Floor Committee was established within the larger

group. Its goal was "the 'politicization' of artgoers by the distribution of anti-[racism,

sexism, repression, and war] literature in museum and gallery lobbies."[434] Beyond

conventional demonstrations and protests, Art Strike also forayed into subversive modes

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[432] Art Strike Call for a General Strike on May, 22, 1970, ca. 1970. Michael Goldberg Papers, 1942-1981.

[433] Meltzer, *Systems We Have Loved*, 51.

[434] Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.

of spectacle. In one unauthorized performative action, the group threw agitational leaflets from the top of the Guggenheim's spiraling rampway. At MoMA, they rallied for "a 'liberated' lobby area" for political exchange.[435] These actions were not geared toward negation as an end unto itself. Instead, they sought to cancel out the purported ideological neutrality of institutional space in order to appropriate its resources toward public, pedagogical uses.

While a "creative blackout" was both implicit and explicit in the group's call to suspend cultural activity on May 22, it features as only one component of Art Strike's multipronged agenda.[436] The group's platform hovers in a space whose definitional parameters resist clear demarcation: between art and non-art, action and non-participation, engagement and disengagement. Despite these ambiguities, its members' tactics were condemned wholesale as an assault on the functions of art institutions. Rather than grapple with the substance of Art Strike's demands, many administrators dismissed the group altogether, frequently on the pretext that its rhetoric lacked the air of civility. Civility, as Sara Ahmed suggests, often serves as a mechanism for concealing the operations of violence and power.[437]

Several participants within Art Strike itself opposed the group's "negativism" and militantly "coercive" tactics.[438] Morris, for example, allegedly "wince[d]" at the guerrilla intervention performed at the Guggenheim.[439] Gallerist and Art Strike affiliate Klaus Kertess decried the group's methods and reasoned that its "paranoia and hysteria has to

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[435] Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.
[436] Karl Katz quoted in Glueck, "Art Community Here Agrees on Plan to Fight War, Racism, and Repression," 30.
[437] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 86.
[438] Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.
[439] Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.

be overlooked."[440] Metropolitan Museum of Art President, C. Douglas Dillon,

determined that the measures Art Strike advocated for were simply not "institutionally

appropriate.'"[441] John Hightower, director of MoMA, disputed the group's obstruction of

museums on the grounds that they "nurture freedom."[442] In a perplexing comparison, he

posited that "the irony of conducting a strike against arts institutions is that it puts you in

the same position of Hitler in the 30s and 40s. Stalin in the 50s."[443] Curiously, resistance

to state violence by a coalition of art workers was deemed tantamount to the *exercise* of

power by state entities. As Bryan-Wilson suggests, Hightower's statement fails to

recognize that the group's aim was to increase the accessibility of cultural resources and

to mandate dialogue between institutions and expanded publics.[444] Here, what

commentators branded as a withdrawal from discourse might instead be interpreted as an

opening up of discourse to previously excluded speakers.

In a similar vein, many equated the cessation of artmaking-as-usual to an all-out

cancellation of aesthetic activity. This sensibility manifests across multiple public

statements underscoring the "positive" functions of visual art, positioned in differential

relation to the negative functions of Art Strike. Responding to Art Strike's May 22

protest at the Met, the museum distributed leaflets that argued for the "salutary effect [of

art] on the minds and spirits of all of us."[445] Hightower, for instance, remarked that

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[440] Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.
[441] Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.
[442] John Hightower quoted in Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures," 29.
[443] Hightower quoted in Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 118.
[444] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 118.
[445] Quoted in Berger, *Labyrinths*, 107.

"museums provide all of us with a *positive* form of intensely human communication."[446]

Kertess echoes this sentiment, arguing that "the activity of artists is a *positive* one…art is

one of the first things repressed by a totalitarian regime."[447] Defined against the de facto

"positive" functions of institutions, Art Strike's direct actions were coded as exercises in

negation.

When Art Strike advocated for the rerouting of cultural products away from the

marketplace and toward public and para-institutional sites, it did so in recognition of what

Stevphen Shukaitis calls "the connections between the art economy and the war

economy."[448] What resulted was not an absolute erasure, but a remaking of practice

within a new idiom. In that respect, its activities prefigure the twenty-first century

aesthetics of collective resistance Yates McKee describes in *Strike Art: Contemporary

Art and the Post-Occupy Condition*. In particular, Art Strike anticipates a dialectical

interplay between "the *unmaking* of art" as it is understood within existing "discourses,

economies, and institutions," and the "*reinvention* of art as direct action."[449] To be clear,

Art Strike does not map neatly onto the contemporary modes of working McKee

describes, particularly given its inattention to a sustained reconstruction of the

commons.[450] As McKee notes, Art Strike was "imagined as a temporary, exceptional

withholding of art" that limited "its exclusive horizon" to the art field.[451] As mentioned

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[446] Emphasis added. Grace Glueck, "Art World Seeks Ways to Protest War**." *New York Times*,
May 20, 1970, 34.
[447] Emphasis added. Glueck, "Art World Seeks Ways to Protest War," 34.
[448] Stevphen Shukaitis, *The Composition of Movements to Come: Aesthetics and Cultural Labor
after the Avant-Garde (*London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 94.
[449] Yates McKee, *Strike Art: Contemporary Art and the Post-Occupy Condition* (New York:
Verso, 2016), 6.
[450] McKee, *Strike Art*, 6.
[451] McKee, *Strike Art*, 32.

above, Cindy Nemser furnished a related critique in 1970, observing that Art Strike's

scope was limited to "to depriv[ing] the affluent of their playthings for a very short

time."[452] Rather than draw false equivalences, I want to suggest that the group anticipates

a tension between performance and direct action, art and non-art, that resonates with

many recent discourses on the categorical indeterminacy of politically engaged practice.

Consider, for example, an Art Strike document urgently requesting political

artworks for public distribution [fig. 51].[453] It opens with the entreaty, "We need art work

for the following:." The word "need" is thrice underlined to convey the exigency of the

call. Solicited contributions include posters; flyers; advertisements to be placed in art

magazines; and postcards "for distribution in galleries or through the mail." What this

document represents is far afield from a realm of totalizing negation. Instead, it petitions

for an outpouring of visual products articulating the coalition's platform. To ask whether

these products constitute legitimate aesthetic objects or "merely" agitational materials is

to privilege institutionally arbitrated categories, and to gloss over the porousness inherent

to those categories.

Art Strike was, of course, coincident with the dematerialized practices ascribed to

conceptual art.[454] Given the reorientation of aesthetic practice toward textual and

linguistic modes of working, the objects generated by Art Strike often bore a formal

resemblance to contemporaneous art objects. Visually, there was little to distinguish the

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[452] Nemser, "Artists & the System," 21.
[453] New York Artists Strike Against War, Racism, Repression, and War, List of Art work Needed for Protest, ca. 1970, Michael Goldberg papers, 1942-1981, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
[454] Lucy Lippard chronicles this process of dematerialization in Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

byproducts of Art Strike's "information activities" and the informational strains of

conceptualist output that were legitimated through their proximity to the market. Eve

Meltzer points to the affinities between the radical information distribution of Art Strike

and the aesthetics showcased in exhibition-making of the time. In particular, Meltzer

draws out connections to the 1970 exhibition *Information*, curated by Kynaston McShine

at the Museum of Modern Art. In a curatorial statement, McShine suggests that artists

turned to new idioms when traditional aesthetic methods were deemed inadequate for

addressing the geopolitical landscape of 1970. He writes:

> If you are an artist in Brazil, you know of at least one friend who is being
> tortured; if you are one in Argentina, you probably have had a neighbor who has
> been in jail for having long hair, or for not being 'dressed' properly; and if you
> are living in the United States, you may fear that you will be shot at, either in the
> universities, in your bed, or more formally in Indochina. It may seem too
> inappropriate, if not absurd, to get up in the morning, walk into a room, and apply
> dabs of paint from a little tube to a square of canvas.[455]

In McShine's account, refusing the production of art in conventional media is not a

gesture to be disregarded through claims of affective excess, but an ethical response to

conditions of pervasive crisis. The exhibition includes several figures affiliated with Art

Strike and Art Workers' Coalition to varying degrees, including Lucy Lippard, Robert

Morris, and Adrian Piper.

Piper's participatory contribution, *Context #7* [fig. 52], comprised a blank

notebook and an invitation for viewers to record "any response suggested" by the

exhibition. Her instructions stipulate that "the information entered in the notebook will

not be altered." Opening up onto a discourse with attendees, the project provides a

service by extending the means of information transmission to spectators. Notably, much

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[455] Kynaston McShine, "Essay," in *Information*, ed. Kynaston L. McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 138.

of the input submitted by participants in the project was explicitly political in content.[456]

In Bowles' analysis, Piper "transformed a museum pedestal into the proverbial soapbox,

creating a forum for public debate by relinquishing some of the control that both she and

the museum wielded over her work."[457] Her instructions to attendees take the form of an

unembellished typewritten sheet of paper, which looks no different from an institutional

memorandum. Its entreaty to museumgoers to produce information presents prefigurative

affinities with Art Strike's imagining of the museum as a site of "information activities."

It is difficult, then, to sustain the claim that Art Strike represented a wholesale erasure of

artmaking, given its proximity to aesthetic tendencies of the 1960s and 70s.

An alternate reading of Art Strike might point to its attempts to imagine an

expanded field of politically engaged practice. Though the byproducts of Art Strike's

efforts bore frequent resemblance to art objects, they were not often appraised as such.

That is to say, evaluative divisions persisted for demarcating the labor of political

organizing from the monetizable output of the art worker. As Faith Ringgold puts it, art

nevertheless continued to be defined as a "conceptual or material process, a commodity

and not a political platform."[458]

"Liberating the Liberated Venice Biennale":
Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation

The question remained, who would articulate this political platform in the context

of Art Strike? A possible answer might be sought in the documentation of its direct

actions. When Art Strike called for the shutdown of institutions, responses varied. The

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[456] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 157.
[457] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 156.
[458] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 154.

Jewish Museum, the Whitney Museum, and over fifty galleries closed in a show of

solidarity.[459] The Metropolitan Museum of Art, however, elected to remain open for five

additional hours in a maneuver dubbed a "very defiant act."[460] Responding to the Met's

noncompliance, Art Strike organized a large-scale demonstration on the steps of the

Museum. The protest grew from a meeting of thirty-five artists at Yvonne Rainer's loft to

discuss how to proceed with the May 22 strike. In his description of the gathering,

cultural historian Maurice Berger echoes Cindy Nemser's emphasis on the contestations

that surfaced during Art Strike's convenings. Berger's account bears quoting at length:

> The committee was split in some areas. The two black artists present, for
> example, attempted without success to reconstitute the steering committee to
> include equal numbers of blacks, Hispanics, and whites. Women—shamefully
> ignored by much of the New Left in the 1960s—were characteristically
> underrepresented at the meeting (one of the few women present was invited to
> serve as the recording secretary), eliciting another unsuccessful proposal to
> establish gender as well as racial quotas.[461]

The scenario outlined here calls up Sara Ahmed's scenes of the feminist killjoy's

intersubjective encounters: speakers interjecting in the nominally shared affects of

collective resistance by pointing to the exclusions enacted therein. As Ahmed writes,

"The feminist killjoy…is a spoilsport because she refuses to convene, to assemble."[462]

Here, a group of unnamed artists voiced opposition to assembling under the umbrella of a

radical coalition until the opportunity to assemble extended beyond a limited coterie of

participants. They expressed sentiments articulated by Wallace in her account of the

period: that "radical" objectives cannot be considered without "altering the composition

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[459] Grace Glueck, "500 in Art Strike Sit on Steps of Metropolitan." *New York Times*, May 23, 1970, 18.
[460] Robert Morris quoted in Glueck, "500 in Art Strike Sit on Steps of Metropolitan," 18.
[461] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 112.
[462] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 65.

of the community that considers the problem of 'objectives.'"[463] Despite interjections like

these, Morris and Poppy Johnson were appointed spokespeople for the protest.[464]

Approximately five hundred participated in the action at the Metropolitan

Museum, and were met by a "battalion" of twenty helmeted police officers.[465] Protestors

held signs that read "Art Strike Against Racism War Repression" ("sexism" was

conspicuously absent from the placards), and distributed leaflets to museumgoers. Early

on in the event's unfolding, the Met's vice-director, Joseph Noble, emerged to address

the demonstrators. He told them that "the museum has a great deal to offer and we feel

our staying open is a positive gesture."[466] Blockading the entrance, protestors succeeded

in reducing attendance from the usual 4,000 to roughly 1,600 visitors.[467] As Berger

suggests, the driving motor of the event was the desire to probe "the extent to which the

voice of the artist could serve as a vehicle for change."[468] This was a contested line of

inquiry given a milieu where, two days before, the *New York Times* had published an

editorial insisting that the artist's "voice speaks through his [sic] creations—his paintings,

his poems, his sculpture, his music and his prose."[469]

One particular photograph of Art Strike's demonstration at the Metropolitan

Museum circulates widely [fig. 53]. This image, like many other documents of the action,

features Morris as its primary protagonist.[470] In the photograph, Morris delivers remarks

[463] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 192.
[464] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 114.
[465] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 107; and Glueck, "500 in Art Strike Sit on Steps of Metropolitan," 18.
[466] Glueck, "500 in Art Strike Sit on Steps of Metropolitan," 18.
[467] Glueck, "500 in Art Strike Sit on Steps of Metropolitan," 18.
[468] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 109.
[469] "The Politics of Art," *New York Times*, May 20, 1970, 40.
[470] As Bryan-Wilson puts it, the images positioned "Morris at the center of the event." Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 115.

addressed to Joseph Noble. Hands encircle Morris's mouth to amplify his speech. The

artist Art Coppedge, who agitated for the institutional visibility of black and Puerto Rican

artists with AWC, stands beside the Met's vice-director.[471] Johnson is positioned to

Morris's left as a bullhorn is lifted in his direction. In the moment indexed by this

photograph, it would appear that Morris is the only figure talking. Looking askance at the

image, it would be difficult not to recognize it as an illustrative example of the dynamics

sketched by Michelle Wallace: a figure who speaks with an institutionally legitimated

voice publicly performing the act of speaking for "the 'voiceless.'"[472] When the

demonstration came to an end, Morris requested a minute of silence from remaining

participants. At its conclusion, he announced: "I think we have been heard today."[473]

At the same time that Art Strike rallied on behalf of a nebulously defined

assemblage of voiceless subjects, it exhibited a reluctance to examine which of its

participants were allowed to take their "proper place at the podium." Nowhere is this

tendency more fully on display than in the byzantine unfolding of the group's Liberated

Venice Biennale.

The Liberated Venice Biennale was orchestrated by the Emergency Cultural

Government (ECG), a subdivision of Art Strike co-steered by Robert Morris, Irving

Petlin, Frank Stella, and Max Kozloff. The ECG had formed with the imperative "to

sever all collaboration with the Federal Government on artistic activities."[474] To that end,

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[471] Bryan-Wilson notes that Coppedge centrally features in other images from the demonstration, as in one photograph where he raises a fist while standing beside Noble. Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 115.
[472] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 189.
[473] Morris quoted in Berger, *Labyrinths*, 109.
[474] Glueck, "Art Community Here Agrees on Plan to Fight War, Racism and Oppression," 30.

its members orchestrated the withdrawal of twenty-six artists selected for the American

Pavilion of the 1970 Venice Biennale. The Biennale boycott was framed explicitly as a

protest of "the U.S. government's policies of racism, sexism, repression and war."[475] It

followed the logic of striking and work stoppages by withholding art workers' labor, and

its corresponding products, from the state economy.

Following the artists' withdrawal, the ECG planned to open a counter-exhibition

dubbed the Liberated Venice Biennale on July 6, 1970 at the School of Visual Arts in

New York. A poster for the event announces the desire of its contributors "to deny the

U.S. Government the use of their art as a cultural veneer to cover policies of ruthless

aggression abroad and intolerable repression at home" [fig. 54].[476] By withdrawing,

participating artists sought to disengage from the artwashing of military violence enacted

by the US government. What resulted is alternately recalled by Berger as "Art Strike's

most successful boycott" and by Wallace as an exemplary display of the "Great

American Whitewash."[477]

Despite its claims to protest the American Pavilion, the Liberated Venice

Biennale aimed to replicate—with absolute fidelity—the Pavilion's curatorial program,

which exclusively comprised white men.[478] The ECG intended to proceed with this plan

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[475] July 14, 1970 press release quoted in Berger, *Labyrinths*, 113. The artists who withdrew were Richard Anuskiewicz, Leonard Baskin, Herbert Bayer, Robert Birmelin, John Cage, Raymond Deshais, Jim Dine, Sam Francis, Ron Kitaj, Nick Krushenick, Roy Lichtenstein, Vincent Longo, Sven Lukin, Michael Mazur, Deen Meeker, Robert Morris, Robert Motherwell, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg, Lucas Samaras, Frank Stella, Carol Summers, Ernest Trova, Andy Warhol, Jack Youngerman, and Adja Yunkers.
[476] Transcribed from Fig. 54.
[477] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 113; and Wallace, "Reading 1968," 195.
[478] As Michele Wallace summarizes, Art Strike "expected to mount a counter-Biennale in New York without altering the all-white male composition of the show." Wallace, "Reading 1968," 195.

against the vocal objections of many Art Strike affiliates, who rallied for the expansion of

the roster with respect to race and gender. Those who interjected cited the bewildering

logic of reproducing state-sponsored racism and sexism in an exhibition whose sole

objective was to combat those entities.[479] As Ringgold observes, "Even though it was the

racist and sexist policies of the United States that were being protested, the government's

prejudices were still dictating the show."[480] According to Nemser, the ECG's "white male

leaders were aghast. 'But you don't understand,' they cried, 'It's the Venice

Biennale!'"[481] Among many of Art Strike's affiliates, this stirred the question: for whom

was the Biennale to be liberated?[482]

It thus became necessary to liberate the Liberated Venice Biennale. With that aim

in mind, Faith Ringgold, Michele Wallace, and Barbara Wallace formed the ad-hoc group

Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL).[483] Issuing a press

release, WSABAL articulated the hope that "this new liberated show will go a step

beyond the mere renunciation of government sponsorship by a few known artists in an

international show."[484] WSABAL further demanded a minimum of fifty percent women

artists in the Liberated Biennale, and called for at least half of them to be women of

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[479] Ringgold recalls an exchange with a grew of women artists who participated in organizing the show: "'But there were no women in the original group that withdrew from Venice, and no blacks,' they explained to me condescendingly. I explained: 'That's because the committee which selected the artists for the Venice Biennale was racist and sexist, and we are not.'" Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 176.

[480] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 176.

[481] Cindy Nemser, "The Women Artists' Movement." *Feminist Art Journal* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1973-
74): 8.

[482] Wallace notes that it is not incidental that the ECG, which organized the Liberated Venice Biennale, comprised "a group of famous white male artists." Wallace, "Reading 1968," 195.

[483] Ault, "A Chronology," 30.

[484] WSABAL press release for *Open Show*, issued on July 14, 1970. Quoted in Berger, *Labyrinths*, 113.

color.[485] Additionally, they outlined that a minimum of twenty-five percent of

contributors should be students.[486] These stipulations attest to an intervention that

foregrounds the intersecting dimensions of race, gender, and class. They spotlight the

absence of a meaningful consideration of those coordinates among Art Strike's Biennale

organizers. For Wallace, the Liberate Venice Biennale was a limit case in the internal

contradictions of "Western cultural avant-gardism: while it can no longer deny its own

white male supremacist presuppositions, it cannot be rid of them either."[487]

What followed were scenes that might have been drawn from Sara Ahmed's

account of women who speak out. Ringgold describes one such scene:

> The white women at the AWC, including most of the [Women Artists in
> Revolution] women, were against us. They didn't seem to understand the real
> meaning of the feminism they were espousing. Some "girlfriends" of the
> superstars were verbally abusive and physically threatening to us. We stood toe-
> to-toe at meetings in open confrontations. One woman became so irate at the
> prospect of having women and blacks included in the superstars' show that she
> screamed, "Don't you understand, we can't have that shit in this show!"[488]

Confrontation with the dissenting voices of minoritarian participants shifted the affective

milieu of Art Strike. Many who were most vociferous in their rejection of WSABAL's

demands were white women participants who had previously espoused feminist solidarity

with Ringgold. Ringgold recalls, "These women, many of whom had spoken to me at

length about feminism and the women's movement, could see nothing politically wrong

with presenting the show 'as is' — with no women and no blacks."[489] The problem, they

suggested, was the failure of Ringgold and others to "understand" the collective

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[485] Grace Glueck, "Foes of Biennale Open Show Here." *New York Times*, July 25, 1970, 29.
[486] Glueck, "Foes of Biennale Open Show Here," 29.
[487] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 195.
[488] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 177.
[489] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 176.

objectives of an amorphously sketched "we." That is, the problem resided in those who

spoke out, and not in the conditions against which they spoke. Per Ahmed, the feminist

killjoy "may even kill feminist joy, for example, by pointing out forms of racism within

feminist politics."[490] Further invoking Ahmed, WSABAL's members might be identified

as "ones who ruin the atmosphere" in "disturbing the fragility of the peace."[491] They do

so by introducing a disruption into the nominally shared affects of collective resistance, a

disruption that reveals what is not shared in common.

While the Emergency Cultural Government was unwilling to hear dissenting

voices, it was keen to prevent dissenters from staging public direct action. When

WSABAL promised to mount a demonstration if the exhibition remained unaltered, the

organizers conceded. They subsequently opened the show to any artist who wished to

participate. Moreover, the show was relocated from the School of Visual Arts to

Museum, an artist-run space founded in 1968 as a platform for community

engagement.[492] The reconfigured exhibition featured more than fifty percent women

artists, and rostered more artists of color and students than any previous American

Pavilion. It was informally referred to as "the liberated Liberated Venice Biennale."[493]

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[490] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 67.
[491] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 65.
[492] The exhibition was relocated from the School of Visual Arts to Museum given policies at SVA that manifested in a dearth of black faculty and funding for students of color. See Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 177. Museum was founded in 1968 by artists including Arthur Hughes, Gary Smith, Sharon Brant, and Robert Resnick. It was subtitled "A Project of Living Artists." Julie Ault describes it as a venture that aimed "to make available services, facilities, a meeting place, a social environment, information, and exhibition space." See Ault, "A Chronology," 21.
[493] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 178.

Remarkably, many of the original artists elected to withdraw from the open show when the revised roster was announced.[494] These artists and their dealers chose to withhold their works on the grounds that the updated show was now "fraught with too much confusion."[495] What is perhaps most peculiar in this vexed narrative is the decision of women artists in Art Strike to perform an artnapping so as to prevent the open exhibition from moving forward.[496] One of these artists, Brenda Miller, absconded with works by the original group of artists boycotting the Biennale, the blue-chip artists who had been officially chosen by American Pavilion curators for inclusion. Presumably, the selectiveness of this artnapping aimed to prevent the output of high-profile artists from commingling with the show's new additions on the gallery walls. The gesture is distinctly redolent of the whitewalling described by D'Souza: a literal defense of the works of white artists from the incursion of works by artists of color.[497] When the pieces were retrieved, the exhibition proceeded as scheduled. However, after a second attempt at kidnapping was made under inexplicable circumstances, the liberated Liberated Biennale came to an unceremonious end.[498]

A *New York Times* review of the liberated Liberated Biennale aligns itself with those who objected to revising the exhibition. It characterizes works by originally selected artists like Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg as "looking listless

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[494] Artists who withdrew included Claes Oldenburg, Richard Anuszkiewicz, Ernest Trova, Nicholas Khrushenick, and Adja Yunkers. See Glueck, "Foes of Biennale Open Show Here," 29.

[495] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 178.

[496] Ringgold identifies Miller as "one of the women artists against the revised show" and indicates that she "kidnapped the original show and took it to her loft in New York's Westbeth." Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 177.

[497] Here, I refer back to D'Souza's formulation of whitewalling as "the idea of putting a wall around whiteness, of fencing it off, of defending it against incursions." D'Souza, *Whitewalling*, 9.

[498] For an account of this second kidnapping, see Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 178.

in…lackluster company."[499] After detailing the events that led to the reconstitution of the

show as an open exhibition, the review notes:

> The resulting potpourri, its professionalism hopelessly diluted by a plethora of propaganda posters, political rhetoric, slapdash invective, and some raw amateur work, is one of the most unrewarding art exhibitions of this—or any—season.[500]

I want to pause here on the rhetoric of "professionalism." Given the context in which it is

invoked—in tacit, differential relation to women artists, artists of color, and students—

"professionalism" cannot be extricated from vectors of race, gender, and class. The newly

added artists, this rhetoric suggests, did not carry the credentialing required to speak in

the art field. The amateurish "potpourri" of their voices is received as particularly

discordant given the exhibition's proximity to the cachet of a global Biennale, and to its

state-sanctioned roster. These artists, in other words, were evaluated as ineligible for a

proper place at the podium.

Conclusion: "We Recognize No Spokesmen"

Just as the Liberated Venice Biennale came to an unanticipated close, so too did

Art Strike meet an alacritous end only months after its initial formation. At the root of its

demise was a growing commitment to feminist organizing among its women members,

and particularly its women members of color—a mode of organizing that had been

conspicuously absent from Art Strike's activities. They proceeded to withdraw from the

coalition en masse. In Cindy Nemser's analysis, the Biennale controversy brought to the

fore internal fractures that were irresolvable among the group's membership. It exposed

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[499] Glueck, "Foes of Biennale Open Show Here," 29.
[500] Glueck, "Foes of Biennale Open Show Here," 29.

the incompatibility of intersectional discourse with the positions of Art Strike's

membership. She writes, "Of course, most of the white male superstars pulled out [of the

Biennale], but they had to take their dearly prized dreams of revolutionary leadership

with them."[501] As Robert Morris tells it, "'there were no common actions that could be

agreed upon. It just began to dissipate very quickly.'"[502] Lucy Lippard succinctly

recounts, "'The women became politicized and the men went back to their careers.'"[503] It

is Grace Glueck, however, who offers what is perhaps the most pointed account of Art

Strike's dissolution. In a 1970 *New York Times* article, she writes:

> Some of [Art Strike's] original School of Visual Arts participants have dropped
> out in resentment, as one defector put it, "of the group's claim to speak for
> everybody." In fact, a statement of clarification is being circulated for signature
> by artists and writers. It declares that while the signatories oppose repressive
> government action each must speak for himself [sic], even when acting in concert.
> "*We recognize no spokesmen or agencies*," the statement concludes."[504]

Denying the muting of their speech within the coalition, women artists, artists of

color, and students withheld their labor and participation. In doing so, they initiated a de

facto strike within the Art Strike.[505] Turning to other collective efforts, they continued to

organize through Women Students and Artists for Black Arts Liberation; Women Artists

in Revolution; and the Ad Hoc Women's Artists Committee. Following the revolt of

these members—who had performed the bulk of its unwaged work—the group came

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[501] Nemser, "The Women Artists' Movement," 8.
[502] Morris quoted in Berger, *Labyrinths*, 114.
[503] Lippard quoted in Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 160.
[504] Emphasis added. Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.
[505] Bryan-Wilson calls the development a "large-scale defection." See Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 160.

apart at the seams.[506] It is instructive that Art Strike's disintegration was catalyzed by the withdrawal of participants whose utterance was deemed extrinsic to its official platform.[507] All along, the labor of those who interrupted Art Strike's omissive discourse had been vital to the coalition's operations. Refusing the articulations of protest offered by appointed "spokesmen," they proceeded to establish new locutionary possibilities and intersectional feminist platforms for resistant speech.

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[506] Discussing the dissipation of the Art Workers' Coalition, Bryan-Wilson notes that it was devastated "without the active participation of many of its women members, which raises questions about who, exactly, was doing the sorts of secretarial and organizing labor necessary to keep it going." Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 160.

[507] Later, Art Strike co-chair Poppy Johnson would point to the "'factionalism' that resulted, she says, from 'these little questions, like if the Black and Puerto Rican group was going to cooperate in the next action or not.'" Quoted in Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 146.

CHAPTER 4
"TALKING TO MYSELF"/"TALKING TO YOURSELF": ARTICULATING REFUSAL IN THE WORK OF FAITH RINGGOLD AND ADRIAN PIPER

Introduction: On Interjecting

What does the speech of a figure who interjects have to teach us? For philosopher Maurice Blanchot, to speak is precisely to interrupt, to enter a space of "sequences that are interrupted."[508] Interruption signals moments when a platform is transferred from one partner to another, when "the power of speaking interrupts itself."[509] A figure who speaks out in interruption holds space open for unanticipated entries. They perform an act essential to sustaining conversation. Interrupting, in this account, enables and undergirds speech. "Interrupting for the sake of understanding, understanding in order to speak."[510] To this, we might add: interrupting to refuse the force of monologic utterance.

Interjecting in order to speak is also the purview of those whose speech is preemptively coded as an intrusion: interrupting to enter a conversation that allots no space for you as an interlocutor, interrupting in a field that seeks to mute your speech in advance. As feminist theorist Sara Ahmed observes, "to speak is already a form of defiance if you are supposed to recede into the background."[511] Ahmed sketches feminist genealogies through "genealogies of women who…speak out," formulating the figure of

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[508] Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 75. Monika Szewczyk considers the relationship between Blanchot's formulations and the dialogical turn in visual art in "Art of Conversation, Part I," *e-flux* 3, February 2009, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/03/68546/art-of-conversation-part-i.

[509] Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, 75.

[510] Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, 76.

[511] Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 61.

the feminist killjoy.[512] She describes this figure as one who makes trouble, one who obstructs her interlocutors' pleasure by steering discourse in the direction of negative affects, by surfacing the operations of power lodged beneath the veneer of civility, by reorienting instruction toward alternative formations of knowledge. To vocalize a complaint from this position is to disturb the discursive order of business, to speak with a voice that is received as a disruption. Ahmed underlines these conditions as amplified for racialized figures who speak out.[513] How we hear interventionist speech, Ahmed reminds us, is inflected by the embodied coordinates of the speaker.

In the art field, another way of putting these questions is to ask whose speech comes to be appraised as an aesthetic product, or discarded as an interruption. This means tracing which utterances become canonized as objects of study, and which are bracketed out. In the annals of art history, whose speech accrues what Simon Sheikh calls "talk value"?[514]

To follow this line of inquiry, we might turn to the interventionist oratory that unfolded at New York's Museum of Modern Art on April 13, 1969. On that day, visitors encountered the artist Faith Ringgold conducting a guerrilla lecture tour of the Museum's first-floor galleries. This unauthorized performance of public pedagogy interjected in the knowledge production of the Museum. Staging an interruption of the Museum's

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[512] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 59-60.

[513] Ahmed writes, "to speak out of anger as a woman of color is to confirm your position as the cause of tension." Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 67-8.

[514] For an extended discussion of talk value, see first chapter in this study. Critic Simon Sheikh borrows the term from the corporate sector to denote a neoliberal shift toward aestheticizing speech and extracting "endless communication...from the worker." Simon Sheikh, "Talk Value: Cultural Industry and the Knowledge Economy," in *On Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, eds. Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi (Utrecht: BAK, 2008), 188.

institutional scripts, it surfaced the racialized exclusions contained therein. Both literally

and figuratively, MoMA declined to hold space for Ringgold's speech.[515] She

summarizes the Museum's response to the intervention with the phrase: "It was like you

were talking to yourself."[516]

Two years after Ringgold's lecture tour of MoMA, she would participate in the

1970 Art Strike Against Racism, Sexism, War, and Repression. The coalition's aim was

to collectivize artists' response to US military violence in Cambodia and state violence

against protestors nationwide. Art Strike emerged alongside the redefinition of the artist

as an art worker, and the conviction that withholding artistic labor could catalyze

transformative effects within the political field.[517] It remains oft-cited in histories of artist

activism in the US, and has been alternately described as "the largest and broadest

coalition…mobilized in the art field since the 1930s," and "the largest collective protest

action organized by American artists during the twentieth century."[518] However, the

accounts of those participants who staged interjections within Art Strike—who spoke out

and "stood toe-to-toe at meetings in open confrontations" with other members—furnish a

history of the group that markedly diverges from the prevailing narratives that circulate

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[515] MoMA denied a request to allocate the space of their auditorium for use by Ringgold and co-organizers of the lecture-tour. MoMA's refusal is extensively discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter. See Grace Glueck, "Dissidents Stir the Art World," *New York Times*, April 12, 1969, 41.

[516] Ringgold quoted Susan E. Cahan, *Mounting Frustration: The Art Museum in the Age of Black Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 209.

[517] Julia Bryan-Wilson chronicles the events that led to the shift toward artists' identification with other forms of labor in *Art Workers*. See Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 117.

[518] For an extended discussion of the formation and organizational structure of Art Strike, see the previous chapter in this study. Julie Ault, "A Chronology of Selected Alternative Structures, Spaces, Artists' Groups, and Organizations in New York City, 1965-85," in *Alternative Art New York, 1965-85*, ed. Julie Ault (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 29; Matthew Israel, *Kill for Peace: American Artists Against the Vietnam War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 148.

around it.[519] In Ringgold's account, for instance, Art Strike's "purpose, though not stated in quite this way, was to give superstar white male artists a platform for their protests."[520] A platform, like a podium or a lectern, is a site that facilitates the conferral of value on one's speech.

This chapter turns to those affiliates of Art Strike whose speech was coded as an interjection, and who subsequently positioned their aesthetic practice as a platform for voicing protest.[521] My study centers on figures who, at turns, sought to vocally reorient the coalition's aims, called for its attunement to the intersections of race, gender, and class, or went the route of nonparticipation. Borrowing from Ahmed's formulation of the feminist killjoy, I chart Art Strike through those affiliates who were willing "to cause a disturbance" and were also decidedly unwilling to assent to selectively defined solidarities in "order to get along."[522] Reading against the grain of accounts that position artists' collectivity as an *a priori* good, this chapter identifies moments when collective identifications—either with the "public" imagined by institutions or with the membership of a coalitional entity—become untenable. In these moments, collectivities are jettisoned so that they might be reconstituted anew. To speak of entities like Art Strike, I contend, requires listening closely to the "sequences that are interrupted."

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[519] Faith Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge: The Memoirs of Faith Ringgold* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 177.

[520] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 176.

[521] Here, I refer to projects like Ringgold's *Feminist Series* (1972), which is, partially, a response to New York art communities' reception of her "outspoken" activism. An extended discussion of this dynamic follows in the subsequent section of this chapter. See Lisa E. Farrington, *Art on Fire: The Politics of Race and Sex in the Paintings of Faith Ringgold* (New York: Millennium Fine Arts Publishing, 1999), 117.

[522] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 64-65.

Within that framework, I attend to tactics of resistant speech in projects by Adrian Piper and Faith Ringgold, two women artists of color working in varying proximity to Art Strike. "Work," in this context, capaciously denotes both artwork and the affective labor of political organizing. My analysis toggles between art objects, speech acts, and direct action in an effort to evade the definitional criteria by which these categories are mapped in asymmetrical relations of value to one another. The case studies I address include Faith Ringgold's lecture tour of the Museum of Modern Art (1969) and *Feminist Series* (1972), and Adrian Piper's 1970 statement of withdrawal and *I/You (Us)* (1975). Each set of case studies places an ephemeral, counter-institutional action in conversation with works that have been indexed as formal entries in the artists' oeuvres.

To be clear, my study does not propose to treat the two artists' discrete perspectives as if they constituted a monolithic viewpoint held in common. Nor is my aim to posit similitude where there is little, given the distinct and divergent idioms my comparanda inhabit. To the contrary, while both Piper and Ringgold explicitly engage the politics of race and gender in their output, they do so within markedly different visual vocabularies and aesthetic traditions. Beyond this, Ringgold and Piper also diverge in the nature of their involvement in political organizing. Ringgold was a vocal affiliate of Art Strike who spoke out against its racialized and gendered exclusions, and ultimately elected to break with the group to form Women Students and Artists for Black Art Liberation (WSABAL).[523] To date, no study of Art Strike has prominently foregrounded Ringgold's contributions or offered an account of the coalition that centers her vantage as

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[523] For an extended discussion of Ringgold's interventions in the 1970 Art Strike, see the preceding chapter.

a participant.[524] Piper, on the other hand, attended Art Strike's meetings and engaged

tactics of institutional withdrawal aligned with the group's efforts, but chose not to

become an active participant in its direct actions. Instead, she pursued what John Bowles

calls "work that privileged personal responsibility over collective action while also

recognizing the potential of organized protest."[525] Without proposing a cohesion across

Piper and Ringgold's practices, I consider their output of the late 1960s and early 1970s

alongside their discrete encounters with Art Strike. Such encounters—in both

institutional milieus and in the counter-institutional networks that opposed them—were

inflected by the raced and gendered reception of their contributions. Their respective

decisions to underscore speech in this period have much to teach us about whose voices

were foregrounded within circuits of artists' organizing. Accordingly, I position their

interventionist utterance not as extrinsic to the discourses of Art Strike, but as vitally

constitutive of them.

　　　　While my study limits its scope to Piper and Ringgold, speech was a motif widely

deployed by artists associated with activist networks of the 1960s and 70s in the US. Lee

Lozano, an Art Workers' Coalition affiliate, approached dialogue as a primary site of

aesthetic intervention. In *Dialogue Piece* (1969), Lozano staged discussions in her studio

coded as performative acts rather than finished "piece[s]," in a gesture that Helen

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[524] Maurice Berger includes a chapter on Art Strike in his monograph on Robert Morris, which chronicles its unfolding through the lens of Morris's involvement. See Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 107-27. Julia Bryan-Wilson's discussion of Art Strike in *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* approaches the group in the context of Robert Morris's Whitney Museum exhibition and the question of art workers' cross-class identification with blue collar laborers. See Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 83-125. Matthew Israel's chapter on Art Strike attends to Art Strike through Morris's contemporaneous projects. See Israel, *Kill for Peace*, 147-60.
[525] John P. Bowles, *Adrian Piper: Race, Gender, and Embodiment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 138.

Molesworth reads as the privileging of communicative process over commoditized product.[526] The project was initiated two months after Lozano's *General Strike Piece*, a withdrawal from conventional artmaking in order to pursue "total personal and public revolution."[527] It thus investigates dialogic exchange as a tactic of resistance to be carried out in tandem with striking. Nancy Spero, a member of the Art Workers' Coalition and Women Artists in Revolution, produced *Codex Artaud* between 1971 and 1972—a series of scroll-based works deeply concerned with orality. Art historian Mignon Nixon characterizes the project as an amplification of "the voice of the silenced subject that yet speaks."[528] Howardena Pindell's video *Free, White, and 21* (1980) was produced one year after her involvement in protests against the racism of a 1979 Donald Newman exhibition held at Artist Space. The video assumes the form of a back-and-forth discussion staged between an undisguised Pindell and an avatar described by Uri McMillan as "a caricature of a white feminist."[529] Each time Pindell recounts autobiographical instances of injustice she experienced as a woman of color in the art field and beyond, her avatar responds by dismissing her utterance as affective excess, falsification, or both. These are only three among an extended list of possible examples. As described by art historian Cherise Smith, "the strategy of staging a dialogue—whether

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[526] Helen Molesworth, "Tune in, Turn on, Drop out: The Rejection of Lee Lozano," *Art Journal* 64, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 66.

[527] See Lozano's *General Strike Piece* (1969) reprinted in Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 78.

[528] Mignon Nixon, "Book of Tongues," in *Nancy Spero: Dissidences* (Barcelona and Madrid: Museo d'Art Contemporáni and Museo National Centro de Art Reina Sofia, 2008), 23-4.

[529] Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 155. For an account of the relationship between Pindell's 1979 activism and the production of *Free, White, and 21,* see McMillan, *Embodied Avatars*, 166-180. For a discussion of the protests surrounding the 1979 Artist Space exhibition, see Aruna D'Souza, *Whitewalling: Art, Race & Protest in 3 Acts* (New York: Badlands Unlimited, 2018), 65-103.

presented as a conversation between like-situated interlocutors, a proclamation to

adversaries, or an argument with rivals" was commonly used by politically engaged

artists from the 1960s onward.[530] Linking approaches like these to generalized practices

of feminist organizing, Lucy Lippard suggests they emerge from "interaction techniques

adapted (and feminized) from revolutionary socialist practice—techniques on which the

women's movement itself is based: consciousness-raising, going around the circle with

equal time for all speakers, and criticism/self-criticism."[531] Within that broader rubric, I

attend specifically to women artists of color whose work interrupts or declines to

participate in the vexed modes of collective discourse characterizing much artist activism

of the period—modes of discourse that structurally omitted the vectors of race, gender,

and class.

My study draws on recent scholarship in art history and performance studies;

critical texts and first-hand accounts by Michele Wallace, Adrian Piper, and Faith

Ringgold; institutional documents and primary sources; and archival interviews. I place

particular emphasis on the autobiographical and auto-theorizing texts authored by Piper

and Ringgold. As Smith puts it, such texts can function as crucial platforms where artists

like Piper articulate subjectivities and "make visible formerly invisible topics."[532]

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[530] Cherise Smith, *Enacting Others: Politics of Identity in Eleanor Antin, Nikki S. Lee, Adrian Piper, and Anna Deavere Smith* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 97.

[531] Lippard does not indicate which configurations of feminism or specific groups within the broader "women's movement" are referenced here. It is important to note that feminist organizing and its techniques are not a monolith, but rather widely heterogeneous and contingent upon a particular group's recognition of the intersections of gender with race, class, and other coordinates. Lucy Lippard, "Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s," Art Journal 40, no. 1/2: Modernism, Revisionism, Plurism, and Post-Modernism (Autumn-Winter 1980): 364.

[532] Smith, *Enacting Others*, 23.

Accordingly, Smith posits that these writings fundamentally "*are* performances."[533]

Taking my cue from this position, I approach Piper and Ringgold's works as vital sites of

performative engagement and inquiry rather than as paratextual supplements. Similarly, I

also consider printed ephemera, archival documents, and speech-giving practices not

formally identified as entries into the respective artists' oeuvres. Reading across these

coordinates, I sketch perspectives on artist activism in 1970 through the oft-omitted

interventions that crucially informed it. Attending to the "sequences that are interrupted"

by Piper and Ringgold's articulations of resistance offers refusals from which we have

much to learn.

"Talking to Yourself":
Faith Ringgold's Walking Tour of the Museum of Modern Art (1969) and *Feminist Series* (1972)

"During the years from 1968 to 1970, I was caught up in a steady stream of activities protesting MOMA's exclusion of black artists. I stayed up many nights typing press releases. I spent many days at the museum distributing questionnaires to museum-goers in an attempt to expose the racist exclusion of black art from the MOMA exhibition schedule. Needless to say I did not produce much art during this time."
—Faith Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*[534]

A biographical précis is needed to contextualize the epigraph above. Faith

Ringgold was born in Harlem, and attended the City College of New York. She studied

art in its School of Education after learning that women were prohibited from declaring a

major in the School of Liberal Arts.[535] In 1959, she received an MA in art from CCNY

and was later granted an honorary doctorate from the institution.[536] Throughout the

1960s, Ringgold made efforts to join artists' collective and para-institutional endeavors

cropping up in New York at the time, with varying results. She was an active contributor

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[533] Smith, *Enacting Others*, 23.
[534] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 171.
[535] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 34.
[536] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 35.

to Harlem's cultural communities, participating in programs and exhibitions organized

through Amiri Baraka's Black Arts Theater. In 1964, she made a rebuffed attempt to

establish a dialogue with Spiral, a politically engaged collective of black artists that

comprised "thirteen men and one woman" at the time.[537]

Ringgold's concentrated involvement in artist activism began in 1968, when she

attended a meeting of cultural workers organized by Henri Ghent that predated the

formation of the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition.[538] The gathering was arranged to

discuss collective response to the exclusion of black artists from the Whitney Museum

exhibition, "The 1930s: Painting and Sculpture in America." Arguing that "no language

could be strong enough to protest this obvious racism," Ringgold introduced the prospect

of collective direct action, and it was thereafter agreed that a protest would be held

outside the Whitney on November 17, 1968.[539] In the lead-up to the action, Ringgold

secured Spectrum Gallery as the headquarters for the event, produced picket signs, and

served as a key organizer. In spite of all this, Ringgold was not included among the artists

named in the *New York Times'* media coverage of the event, who were uniformly men.

Offering a brief gloss of attendees, the article reads:

> Artists participating in yesterday's demonstration included Mr. [Romare] Bearden, Tom Lloyd, whose "light sculptures" are currently on view at the Howard Wise Gallery, and William Williams, a young sculptor who directs the artist-in-residence program at the Studio Museum.[540]

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[537] In response to her query and the submission of her work, Ringgold received a letter from Romare Bearden that conveyed "best wishes for [her] continued success." Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 150-51.

[538] An extended discussion of the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition appears in the preceding chapter of this study. For a history of the BECC, see Bridget R. Cooks, "Black Artists and Activism: Harlem on My Mind (1969)," *American Studies* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 5-39.

[539] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 167.

[540] Grace Glueck, "1930's Show at Whitney Picketed by Negro Artists Who Call It Incomplete," *New York Times*, November 18, 1968, 31.

Bearden, who is included in the inventory above, held a picket sign during the

demonstration that had been produced by Ringgold.[541] Ringgold's absence from the list is

conspicuous given her role as the originator of the action. The media's absenting of her

participation is also notable considering that Ringgold, herself, had been the one to

coordinate media outreach.[542]

Recalling the circumstances under which she first proposed the Whitney protest,

Ringgold gestures toward the gathering's vexed dynamics of verbal exchange. She

recounts making an intervention in the discussion and "expecting to be interrupted."[543]

Then, in surprise: "Since no one did, I continued to speak."[544] What resulted from her

speech was, in Ringgold's own words, "the first black demonstration against a major

museum in New York City."[545] If the distinctions between artists' creative works and

their political organizing were becoming increasingly porous at the time, then the

omission of Ringgold from media narratives might be interpreted as an improper

attribution of authorship—a failure to accurately credit the role of her intellectual and

affective labor. Similarly, if we accept the categorization of artists' protest as a

collectively authored performance, then these events route us to the limits of collective

identification for figures whose contributions face structural erasures. In the years

immediately following the Whitney demonstration, Ringgold would continue her

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[541] Ringgold notes that she arrived early to the demonstration headquarters to make picket signs, including one for Romare Bearden. Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 167.

[542] Ringgold recounts that after producing picket signs for other artists and participants, she "called to notify the media of the demonstration." Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 167.

[543] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 167.

[544] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 167.

[545] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 168.

organizing through the BECC, Art Strike, and Women Students and Artists for Black Art

Liberation (WSABAL). She co-founded the latter in 1970 as a response, in part, to the

dearth of space accorded to the voices of women artists of color within Art Strike

itself.[546]

Returning to this section's epigraph, I want to pause on the line that concludes

Ringgold's inventory of the labor-hours she expended in arts activism: "Needless to say I

did not produce much art during this time."[547] Her statement acknowledges a

dichotomous relation between the invisible and devalued work of organizing on one end,

and the potentially visible, monetized work of artmaking on the other. Binary divisions

demarcating art from non-art persisted despite the increasing categorical indeterminacy of

aesthetic practice and its diffusion into informational, putatively democratized, and

everyday forms. As Ringgold reasons, art nevertheless continued to be delimited as "a

conceptual or material process, a commodity and not a political platform."[548] Lucy

Lippard affirms this sentiment in the postface to her study, *Six Years: The

Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*. There, she concludes that

"whatever minor revolutions in communication have been achieved by the process of

dematerializing the [art] object," it nevertheless retains its "market-orientation."[549] These

formulations shed light on Ringgold's claim the she "did not produce much art during

this time," given definitional criteria that continued to tether aesthetic practice to

commodity objects circulating in the marketplace.[550] What she describes pursuing in lieu

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[546] An extended discussion of WSABAL appears in the preceding chapter of this study.
[547] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 171.
[548] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 154.
[549] Lippard, *Six Years*, 263.
[550] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 171.

of "art" is the gendered labor that sustains movement-building as well as social

reproduction. Put otherwise, a mode of labor that falls disproportionately to women

routed through the intersecting coordinates of race and class: the service of telephoning

media contacts, navigating the affects of collective organizing to make verbal

interjections, conceiving slogans for picket signs, and so on. A mode of labor rarely seen

or heard, and rarer still properly attributed to the figure who performs it.

The work described above may invoke Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's

taxonomy of immaterial labor: "the communicative labor of industrial production that has

newly become linked in informational networks, the interactive labor of symbolic

analysis and problem solving, and the labor of the production and manipulation of

affects."[551] However, as Silvia Federici contends, their model tends to generalize

affective labor toward a deemphasis of its gendered dimensions.[552] Here, my interest is in

how the job of communication and information distribution is designated as gendered

labor in artist-activist networks. Particularly, I am interested in a comparative analysis of

how the products of Ringgold's intellectual labor were assigned value in contrast to the

appraisal of informational art objects produced by a coterie of conceptualists working in a

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[551] See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 30.

[552] Federici writes that Hardt and Negri's formulation of affective labor largely omits questions of "'female labour' as such, whether paid or unpaid, inside or outside the home, though we may describe it as the largest pool of 'affective work' on the planet." Federici concludes that "the generalization of affective labor…takes us back to a pre-feminist situation, where not only the specificity but the very existence of women's reproductive work and the struggle women are making on this terrain become invisible again." See Federici, "On Affective Labor," in *Work: Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Friederike Sigler (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2017), 188.

milieu Adrian Piper calls "a fun-house refraction of the Euroethnic equation of intellect with masculinity."[553]

The forms of labor under discussion here overlap with forms of social reproduction that, as Federici puts it, rely primarily "on women's unwaged work."[554] Marxist-feminist critiques of gendered labor thread throughout the 1970s, prominently crystallized in the global Wages for Housework campaign launched by the International Feminist Collective in 1972. Federici, a member of the collective, asserts in the tract *Wages Against Housework* that "not only is wages for housework a revolutionary perspective, but *it is the only revolutionary perspective from a feminist viewpoint and ultimately for the entire working class*."[555] In an important critique of Wages for Housework, Angela Davis surfaces its elision of the experiences of working-class women of color who execute both unwaged domestic work in the home as well as waged work beyond it. Their identifications with the category of the "housewife," understood as a figure whose labor occurs exclusively in the sphere of her own home, are correspondingly inflected. This is particularly the case for women employed as domestic workers. Davis notes that "in the United States, women of color – and especially Black women – have been receiving wages for housework for untold decades."[556] Any analysis of labor struggle, Davis points out, should be attuned to how this struggle is informed not only by gender, but also by race and class.

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[553] Adrian Piper, "Introduction: Some Very FORWARD Remarks," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), xxxv.

[554] Federici, "On Affective Labor," 188.

[555] Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework* (Montpelier: Falling Wall Press, 1975), 2.

[556] Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 237.

The inequitable distribution of labor across coordinates of race, gender, and class

was ubiquitous in collectives like Art Strike and the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC). Julia

Bryan-Wilson chronicles this dynamic in Lucy Lippard's encounters with the AWC.

Bryan-Wilson conveys that the task of sustaining the AWC was delegated

disproportionately to women like Lippard and Virginia Admiral, who "did much of the

work of transcribing texts, taking notes, and editing recordings of meetings."[557] Similarly,

we might recall Maurice Berger's record of a 1970 Art Strike committee meeting, where

participants voiced dissent regarding the lack of women and people of color selected to

participate. Despite this airing of grievances, one of the meeting's few (unnamed) women

attendees was asked to serve as its "recording secretary."[558]

Redressing the asymmetrical distribution of labor among women in the art field

and beyond, the artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles asks in her 1969 feminist manifesto,

"After the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?"[559]

Ukeles displaces the "development" model of cultural production by emphasizing

"maintenance," identifying the former with the unremitting novelty that accompanies the

forward march of capital. Asking who will pick up the post-revolutionary garbage

positions questions of service at the forefront of dissent. Her query suggests an aesthetics

of resistance decoupled from the fanfaronade of heroic and hypervisible articulations of

protest. In lieu of this, Ukeles orients the reader to the tasks of maintenance personnel

and service workers: invisible, continuous labor that enables institutionally valorized

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[557] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 160.
[558] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 112.
[559] Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto: Proposal for an Exhibition, 'CARE,'" in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 122.

forms of activity. As Ukeles remarks, "Maintenance is a drag; it takes all the fucking time."[560] Noting the affinities between the processual focus of conceptual art and processes of maintenance required to sustain the social and domestic spheres, Ukeles proposed a transvaluation of the latter by performing it in rarefied institutional spaces.[561] Nevertheless, Ukeles's formulations in her manifesto do not meaningfully account for how maintenance labor is distributed not only along the coordinates of gender, but also those of race and class. In projects like *Hartford Wash* (1973), where she scrubbed the floors of the Wadsworth Athenaeum, the artist sought to give visual form to what Miwon Kwon calls "work that renders itself invisible, and is rendered invisible."[562] Here, Kwon refers to workers whose labor sustains the operations of the "white cube" while remaining wholly unseen.

While Ringgold was engaged in a constant hum of collective action and labor, that labor was less often placed on display than it was occluded from view. Reflecting on the immediate effects of her activism, Ringgold voices the ironic realization that her work created conditions of possibility for exhibitions featuring her men co-organizers in institutional sites that continued to exclude her and other women of color. In Ringgold's analysis, "all the men got something—a show, a sale, a grant for a community project. I got nothing, but that did not surprise me."[563]

Ringgold's recollection that she did not produce much art at the time reflects a broader quandary related to working in coalitional contexts. Lippard recounts that "artists

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[560] Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto," 123.

[561] Ukeles writes that "Conceptual & Process art, especially, claim pure development and change, yet employ almost purely maintenance processes." Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto," 123.

[562] Miwon Kwon, "In Appreciation of Invisible Work: Mierle Laderman Ukeles and the Maintenance of the 'White Cube,'" *Documents* 10 (Fall 1997): 17.

[563] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 172.

who work with groups, as do so many feminists, always seem to be looking wistfully over their shoulders at the studio. 'I've got to get back to my own work' is a familiar refrain, because, as it stands now, art and life always seem to be in competition."[564] Taking into account Ringgold's encounters within artist activism, there may be more to the wistfulness of the artist who seeks to extricate herself from given modes of collectivity. Rather than entrenching the division between the aesthetic and political fields, the desire to return to "get back to my own work" might also be read as a desire to return to labor that is recognized as such.

Yet, as Ringgold was performing the uncompensated work described in the epigraph above—preparing press releases and questionnaires—the products of similar modes of labor were legitimated as artworks through proximity to institutional sites of display. One year after Ringgold was "distributing questionnaires to museum-goers" at MoMA, Hans Haacke's installation *MoMA Poll* (1970)—widely recognized as a "foundational moment in the artistic movement of 'institutional critique'"—was on display at the same museum [fig. 55].[565] Haacke was actively involved with the Art Workers' Coalition, and among its founding members.[566] *MoMA Poll* accordingly reflects a conception of art as inextricably bound up with the political. It stages a tableau that aims to model voter participation through an interactive visitor survey. Haacke's work

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[564] Lippard's statements do not qualify how this experience might be inflected by factors of race or class. Lippard also notes that "artists (like women) stay home (in self and studio) and pay for this 'freedom' by having their products manipulated and undervalued by those who control the outside world." Lippard, "Sweeping Exchanges," 363.

[565] To be clear, the crux of this examination is not whose use of the questionnaire came first, but rather how two works with clear affinities, staged at the same institutional site within approximately one year of each other, came to receive such differing appraisals. Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 192.

[566] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 178.

invited museum attendees to weigh in on the question, "Would the fact that Governor

Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's Indochina policy be a reason for you

not to vote for him in November?" In effect, the important and oft-cited work petitioned

viewers to engage in a performative vignette of democratic ballot-casting.[567] At the time,

Rockefeller was also a member of the MoMA Board of Trustees. As such, the question

was not only an indictment of Rockefeller's position regarding the war and his ties to

napalm manufacturing, but also of MoMA's economic entanglements in military

violence. In this way, *MoMA Poll* casts the artist as a figure responsible for collating

politically resonant data sets.

As Bryan-Wilson points out, while the piece critiques the institution in which it is

sited, its very "inclusion also bespeaks a certain tolerance toward critique within the

institution."[568] Here, we might return to Ringgold's statement, "I spent many days at the

museum distributing questionnaires to museum-goers in an attempt to expose the racist

exclusion of black art from the MOMA exhibition schedule."[569] This poses the question:

whose critique was tolerated within the institution at the time? What are the evaluative

criteria by which *MoMA Poll* becomes canonized as an art historical object of study and

display, while Ringgold's questionnaires are translated into ephemeral artifacts displayed

in the file folders of an institutional archive?

To read these questionnaires in context requires turning to the lecture tour

Ringgold conducted at the Museum of Modern Art on April 13, 1969. The event and

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[567] It is important to note, as Claire Bishop does in an account of recent participatory aesthetics, that oftentimes "artistic models of democracy have only a tenuous relationship to actual forms of democracy." Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (New York: Verso, 2012), 5.

[568] Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*, 192.

[569] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 171.

questionnaires both share the pedagogical aim of assembling knowledge that might

catalyze transformations in the social field. Because the lecture tour appears not to have

been recorded, its traces are now dispersed across multiple archival fragments and first-

hand accounts offered by Ringgold and other participants. I analyze notable selections

from these fragments in the pages that follow. Sketching an outline of the event's

unfolding, I position the lecture tour at the interstices of pedagogical performance, direct

action, and institutional critique.

The lecture tour was convened by Ringgold and artist Tom Lloyd in association

with the AWC, approximately one year before the formation of Art Strike.[570] Lloyd was

among AWC's few members of color, and advocated for foregrounding race in the

group's platform. In Ringgold's recollection, Lloyd "had an interesting relationship to the

Art Workers' Coalition; as its only black artist, he functioned like a separate

committee."[571] Ringgold also credits Lloyd with cultivating forms of agitational speech

within AWC's practices that would prove crucial to their counter-institutional efforts. She

writes:

> The MOMA people were masters of self-composure — something in the
> bloodline I'm told — but we were not intimidated by their reserve. It was fun to
> watch Tom talk 'bad' about what he would do if he had some power. 'Talking
> bad' was one of the techniques of the militant — keep 'em so busy worrying
> about what you say you're going to do, that you won't have to do anything. In
> other words: 'Whip 'em with words.'[572]

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[570] For a history of the Art Workers' Coalition, see Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers*; and Lucy
Lippard, "The Art Workers' Coalition: Not a History, *Studio International*, November 1970,
reprinted in Lucy Lippard, *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (New York: E.
P. Dutton, 1984), 10-19.
[571] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 168.
[572] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 169-70.

What Ringgold's account broadly attests to is a collective interest in the political force and transformative potential of voicing dissent. Accordingly, agitational speech would be central to the tactics of the April 13 lecture tour at MoMA. Ringgold and Lloyd staged the tour to call for a Martin Luther King Jr. Wing at the Museum that would showcase the work of black and Puerto Rican artists. Though organizers eventually succeeded in persuading the museum to lend serious consideration to the wing, it was ultimately never realized. As Wallace describes, the wing was conceived as

> an exhibition space that would revolve around a cultural education center and would train blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Native Americans in art history and museum administration…its main intention was to promote an increase in the number of young people of color who would be drawn to careers in art and art education.[573]

Bates Lowry, then the Director of MoMA, opposed the Wing on the grounds that work in the Museum was "grouped according to stylistic affinities without regards to the artist's religions, race, political affiliation, or the country in which he [sic] was born."[574] One year earlier, similar logic marked the Whitney's response to protests of its "Painting and Sculpture in America" exhibition. Whitney Director John I. H. Baur explained that the Museum operated under the principle that "art has nothing to do with color of skin or race…the work was picked solely on an esthetic basis."[575] As Lowry had it a year later, MoMA's curatorial framework and modes of display were designed to ensure "the

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[573] Michelle Wallace, "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash," in *Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory* (London: Verso, 2016), 196.
[574] Bates Lowry quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 208.
[575] Glueck, "1930's Show at Whitney Picketed," 31.

convenience of [their] visitors."[576] Lowry gives no further indication of how the term

"convenience" might be understood to signify in this context.

Turning to the questionnaire produced by Ringgold and Lloyd in conjunction with

the lecture tour, it is notable that Lowry figures as a primary addressee, identified by

name as its recipient [figs. 56-8]. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. Its

instructions stipulate that the first half should be mailed to Ringgold or Lloyd, and the

second to Lowry at his MoMA office. The prefatory header implicitly attributes the

questionnaire's authorship to the group Students and Artists United for a Martin Luther

King, Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art at the Museum of Modern Art of the City

of New York. Below the header, the project is unflinchingly summarized as "A

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION OF THE MUSEUM IN ITS DEFAULT OF

CULTURAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC AND CULTURAL INTEGRITY

TO ITSELF AND THE ART COMMUNITY OF THIS CITY, THE NATION AND THE

WORLD."[577]

Part I consists of six questions almost uniformly composed in a yes/no/uncertain

format [fig. 56]. They include:

> 2. Do any exhibitions in the galleries relate to black and Puerto Rican experience
> as to subject matter, means of expression, or personal identification? […]
>
> 4. Are there any publications (1st floor), films (Auditorium), or other visual aids
> that relate to the black or Puerto Rican experience?[578]

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[576] Lowry quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 208.
[577] Students' and Artists' Protest Letter to Bates Lowry, New York, N.Y., ca. 1969. Lucy R. Lippard papers, 1930s-2010, bulk 1960s-1990. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
[578] Students' and Artists' Protest Letter to Bates Lowry, New York, N.Y., ca. 1969.

Both are followed by a line where the survey-taker can mark either "yes," "no," or "uncertain." Polling MoMA attendees one year in advance of the appearance of *MoMA Poll*, the questionnaire anticipates the tactics deployed in Haacke's visitor query. Like Haacke's 1970 project, the questionnaire offers its taker the chance to position themselves vis-à-vis a binary proposition (or to identify themselves as "uncertain.") Unlike *MoMA Poll*, its results were not collated or made visible in the space of the Museum's galleries. Without the opportunity to display the survey's findings in plain view of visitors, Lowry's mailbox served as the ersatz Plexiglass ballot box for its results. In *MoMA Poll*, museum guards were tasked with assisting in the execution of the project by distributing ballots to visitors.[579] In the lecture tour associated with Ringgold and Lloyd's effort, guards hovered nearby as functionaries of the Museum administration.[580] Importantly, the structure of the questionnaire did not hinge on a static installation that poses its question through a wall placard, but on the spatiotemporally co-present distribution of documents to individual visitors. This necessitated a durational, embodied performance of presence. Ringgold gestures toward the time-intensive labor it required in the line: "I spent many days at the museum distributing questionnaires to museum-goers."[581] Given these affinities with aesthetic practices of that period, how did Ringgold's embodied, performative labor subsequently come to be deemed extrinsic to the sphere of artistic production?

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[579] Hans Haacke, "Proposal: Poll of MoMA Visitors," in *Information*, ed. Kynaston L. McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 57.
[580] Michele Wallace notes "security guards standing helplessly by" as Ringgold conducted the lecture tour. Wallace, "Reading 1968," 196.
[581] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 171.

Lowry contended that "as in all museums, the works in [MoMA's] galleries are selected for their quality as works of art," tacitly positioning the museum as an ideologically neutral civic institution.[582] Calling into question the basic assumptions implicit in "quality" as a criterion, Ringgold and Lloyd's questionnaire pointedly asks, "How does the Museum define 'quality' as a standard used in selecting works?"[583] If, as Lowry suggests, the Museum operates in nonpartisan service of the public good, then implicit in his statement is the suggestion that disrupting its operations correspondingly represents a disturbance of the public good and of civic exchange. Here, again, it is useful to turn to Sara Ahmed's formulation of feminist consciousness as "consciousness of the violence and power that are concealed under the languages of civility."[584] In defiance of the museum's attempt to withhold a platform for her speech, Ringgold appropriated its galleries as a site for instruction—a space for pedagogical inquiry into the power concealed under the institutional scripts of civility and quality. Gesturing toward these institutional scripts in a pamphlet announcing the April 13 tour, Ringgold writes:

> We have been 34 years at the Museum waiting to be free without being separate…If our art is not to be mixed with the art of whites, well, so be it! Give us our own wing, where we can show our Black and Puerto Rican artists…Give it to us, or tell us that we have no place at all in your museums, just as we have no place in your churches and clubs and cooperatives! Can the Museum of Modern Art at least be that honest about it?[585]

On April 13th, Ringgold and Lloyd offered a critical survey of MoMA that spoke directly to the absence of nonwhite artists from the Museum's collections.[586] Echoing Ringgold's exclusion from press coverage of the 1968 Whitney Museum protest she had

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[582] Lowry quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 208.
[583] Students' and Artists' Protest Letter to Bates Lowry, New York, N.Y., ca. 1969.
[584] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 86.
[585] Ringgold quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 208.
[586] Glueck, "Dissidents Stir the Art World," 41.

conceived, only Lloyd's name is mentioned in a *New York Times* article on the MoMA

gathering.[587] A crowd of 200 artists, students, and secondary school children was

expected to attend.[588] Lloyd announced that the group, comprising primarily people of

color, would not pay for entry: the admission fee was identified as a mechanism for

withholding access on the basis of race and class.[589]

The artists intended the lecture tour intended to speak specifically to a community

of interlocutors who were systematically bracketed out from the art field. In particular, it

addressed students of color and aimed to highlight the need for their representation in one

of the city's most frequented pedagogical sites.[590] It performatively enacted the functions

that would be served by the Martin Luther King Jr. Wing, "to foster a more meaningful

relationship to museums and 'high culture' for the throngs of nonwhite public school

children who were obliged to visit the museums every year."[591]

A pamphlet announcing the tour read:

The differentness of other Americans is recorded and preserved in the art of their group; their children and our children see it, and this fosters identification and a sense of worthwhileness. Our children and we ourselves are entitled to this same identification, respect, and sense of worthwhileness enjoyed by others. The public vehicle for helping to sustain and encourage all of this is the museum.[592]

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[587] Glueck, "Dissidents Stir the Art World," 41.

[588] Glueck, "Dissidents Stir the Art World," 41. A memorandum from MoMA Director Bates Lowry suggests that the audience consisted of roughly 25 people, though the count is an unofficial one. Bates Lowry, Memorandum to Museum Staff, April 16, 1969, Barr Papers, 1.489, MoMA Archives, NY.

[589] Glueck, "Dissidents Stir the Art World," 41.

[590] A statement released by the lecture tour organizers foregrounds the prominence of the Museum in this respect, arguing, "the foremost vehicle in the world for telling the story of cultural contributions is the Museum of Modern Art." Quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 183. See "Students and Artists United for a Martin Luther King, Jr. Wing for Black and Puerto Rican Art at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City," pamphlet, April 1969, reprinted in Art Workers' Coalition, *Documents/Open Hearing*, n.p.

[591] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 196.

[592] Quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 183.

For tour organizers, the event was not a formalist exploration of pedagogy. Nor was it, to borrow from Luis Camnitzer's description of conceptual pedagogical aesthetics in the US, a self-referential inquiry into how "teaching should address itself as much or more as it does content."[593] The lecture tour appears to have been uninterested in establishing itself as an aesthetic product, or in claiming the terrain of institutional critique. Instead, the event explicitly positions itself on the side of pedagogy as a tool of liberation, aiming to create conditions wherein students would see themselves reflected in their sites of learning.

Organizers requested MoMA's auditorium as a gathering venue, but were denied on the pretext that the Museum does not offer space for "such uses."[594] For Ringgold's speech to unfold in the Museum, it would have to unfold as unauthorized speech, an unsanctioned disturbance of institutional discourse.

Michele Wallace describes the lecture tour as follows:

> I can remember museum administrators and security guards standing helplessly by as Faith led a walking tour through MoMA's first-floor galleries during which she lectured on the influence of African art and the art of the African Diaspora on the so-called modern art displayed there. The manner in which academic and critical expertise and the museum's curatorial staff conspired to render the importance of that influence either invisible, trivial, or merely instrumental shaped her remarks. When we finally came to a room in which the works of a black artist were displayed...Faith designated it the location for the Martin Luther King Wing.[595]

Ringgold's intervention sites itself at the interstices of lecture-performance, community engagement, and direct action. Its content surfaces knowledge suppressed by the

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[593] Camnitzer also emphasizes that these formalist pedagogical inquiries were often conducted for a "narrow peer audience." The opening chapter of this study offers an extended discussion of Camnitzer's critique of pedagogical aesthetics in the US. See Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 113.
[594] Glueck, "Dissidents Stir the Art World," 41.
[595] Wallace, "Reading 1968," 196.

Museum's educational program: the production of European modernism as an aesthetic correlative to the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It unravels the instructional format of the docent tour two decades before Andrea Fraser's widely circulated *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk* (1989). Here, Ringgold deploys the format toward movement-building, the redistribution of cultural resources, and agitation for the visibility of artists of color.[596]

To be clear, Ringgold never claimed the lecture tour as an artwork or performance, as she did with later masked performances including *Being My Own Woman: An Autobiographical Masked Performance Piece* (1980).[597] It is notable, however, that the lecture-performance rose to popularity in the period immediately preceding Art Strike, and its practitioners overlapped with the group's membership. There are discernible links between the lecture-performance as an aesthetic form that détournes information transmission in the university, and Art Strike's agitational speech acts as a disruption of information transmission within art institutions. Maurice Berger writes, "Just as university campuses were places of learning for students, so museums were places where artists were educated."[598] Ringgold's intervention performs a related refusal of the museum's narrowly delimited models of education. Nevertheless, it is not my intention to identify artmaking as a privileged category of activity by considering Ringgold's lecture tour in relation to it. Rather, my aim is to question why and how this

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[596] See Andrea Fraser, "Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk," *October*, vol. 57 (Summer 1991): 104-122.
[597] Describing her decision to work in the medium of performance, Ringgold recalls, "It occurred to me that performance art was a good way to have an oral publication of my autobiography." Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 237.
[598] Berger, *Labyrinths*, 118.

event is absented from discussions of lecture-performance in the 1960s and 70s, when it features so many affinities with related works from that period and after.

Consider, for example, Fraser's *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*, staged in 1989 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) [fig. 59]. Posing as gallery educator Jane Castleton, Fraser interrogated the museum's discursive practices by leading a docent tour that surfaced the fiscal and ideological interests undergirding its public pedagogy. She destabilized the docent's status as a knowing subject, rendering it impossible to conclusively parse the data sets she verbally transmitted. By extension, she cast suspicion on the systems of value and evaluation offered within the institution her fictive docent represented. Perusing the Museum's galleries of European art, Fraser bestowed the same breathless praise upon their artifacts ("resplendently…amazingly flawless…among the finest and most beautifully creations") that she conferred upon the building's exit signs ("a brilliant example of a brilliant form.")[599] Through these acts of categorical unsettling, she called into question the neutrality and legitimacy of the knowledge produced within the museum's galleries.

By contrast to the unauthorized lecture tour of MoMA conducted by Ringgold in 1969, Fraser's performance twenty years later was invited and sanctioned by the PMA. It thus bore the stamp of institutional legitimation. Like Ringgold's lecture tour, *Museum Highlights* was centrally concerned with the modes of identification invited by the museum. In a footnote to the published script for the performance, Fraser underscores that the docent functions as a "figure of identification for a primarily white, middle-class

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[599] Fraser, "Museum Highlights," 112, 115.

audience."[600] She characterizes Castleton not as an individual, but as a "site of speech constructed within various relations constitutive of the museum."[601] In this way, both lecture tours take up the tangible, material effects generated by what appears to be immaterial discourse within arts institution. Along those lines, Alexander Alberro's analysis of *Museum Highlights* draws out its interest in "the type of viewer the museum produces and the process of identification that artists embody."[602] The same viewer, presumably, whose "convenience" Lowry had in mind in his explanation of MoMA's curatorial program.

In this way, Ringgold and Fraser both investigated the mechanisms through which cultural institutions hail their ideal addressee, and queried how this addressee is imagined as a raced, gendered, and classed figure. Set twenty years apart, their interventions received vastly differing appraisals within the respective institutions where they were enacted, and within the art field more broadly construed. One is indexed as a vital contribution to the aesthetics of institutional critique, while the other is catalogued in brief textual accounts and across assorted archival documents.[603] This scenario attests to a formulation issued by Aruna D'Souza: "If you want to find women artists and artists of color in museums, don't look in the galleries—look in the archives."[604]

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[600] Fraser, "Museum Highlights," 107.

[601] Fraser, "Museum Highlights," 107.

[602] Alexander Alberro, "Introduction: Mimicry, Excess, Critique," in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), xxvii.

[603] In a recent post for the Museum of Modern Art's blog, Michelle Elligott surfaces Bates Lowry's memorandum regarding the walking tour from the archives. See Elligott, "From the Archives: Faith Ringgold, the Art Workers Coalition, and the Fight for Inclusion at The Museum of Modern Art," *Inside/Out: A MoMA/MoMA PS1 Blog*, July 29, 2016, https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2016/07/29/from-the-archives-faith-ringgold-the-art-workers-coalition-and-the-fight-for-inclusion-at-the-museum-of-modern-art.

[604] Aruna D'Souza, "Beverly Buchanan," *4Columns*, November 4, 2016, http://4columns.org/d-souza-aruna/beverly-buchanan.

Ringgold's public pedagogy also cannily prefigures contemporary entries in the genre of educational aesthetics. Her interruption of institutional scripts represents a prescient model for later projects in the vein of institutional critique. Nevertheless, Ringgold's oratorical provocation remains largely under-studied in art historical scholarship. It is indexed, however, in an archived memorandum sent by MoMA Director Bates Lowry to Museum staff, dated April 16, 1969 [fig. 60]. In Lowry's statement, which makes frequent recourse to quotation marks, he describes the event as "a 'walking tour' of the Museum to call attention to…demands for a 'black wing.'"[605] The speech of a figure who interjects faces orthographical dismissals: quotations, parentheses, brackets, and deletions. Taken together, these encounters with Lowry and the Museum occasioned Ringgold's recollection, "It was like you were talking to yourself."[606] Confronted by institutional mechanisms of power that endeavored to gloss over her speech, Ringgold maintained a position of noncompliance. Her resistant utterance would resonate in subsequent activism through and against the 1970 Art Strike, and beyond.

In "Reading 1968: The Great American Whitewash," Michele Wallace chronicles the tendency to imagine resistance in the 1960s through the heroic fanfaronade of valorized agents speaking for the "'voiceless.'" Elsewhere, Wallace argues that "the problem of silence, and the shortcomings inherent in any representation of the silenced, need to be acknowledged as a central problematic in an oppositional black feminist

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[605] Bates Lowry, Memorandum to Museum Staff, April 16, 1969, Barr Papers, 1.489, MoMA Archives, NY.
[606] Ringgold quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 209.

process."[607] Offering a corrective to the figure of the "voiceless" subject on whose behalf

others are compelled to speak, Faith Ringgold (Wallace's mother) generated a cycle of

paintings in 1972 that visualize genealogies of black feminist speech, entitled *The*

Feminist Series.

Earlier, in December of 1967, Ringgold opened her first solo exhibition at

Spectrum Gallery, "American People." It featured paintings from an eponymous series

that depicted scenes from civil rights struggles and the development of black power. In

one large-scale painting, *U.S. Postage Stamp Commemorating the Advent of Black*

Power, Ringgold diagrammatically charted a grid of one hundred faces diagonally

bisected by the phrase "black power" in all capitals (1967) [fig. 61]. Ten of these faces

portray people of color, "roughly approximating the percentage of African Americans to

Anglo-Americans in the United States at that time."[608] On careful inspection, it becomes

clear that what appears at first to be negative space is an outline of the phrase "white

power" inlaid vertically into the grid, in sizeable letters that dominate the field of the

picture plane once ascertained. In Lisa Farrington's analysis, "size hierarchy" is used here

as "an indicator of supremacy."[609] What emerges, then, is a visualization of invisible and

naturalized systems of power that seek to circumscribe the articulation of resistance.

Describing the act of painting *U.S. Postage Stamp,* Ringgold recounts:

> My own need to feel a sense of personal as well as public power was in direct
> contrast to a world that ignored women of all races. For me the concept of Black
> Power carried with it a big question mark: Was it intended only for the black men

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[607] Here, Wallace refers to claims to "speak *for*" subjects deemed to have been "silenced,"
including related claims within black feminist critique. Wallace, "Negative Images: Towards a
Black Feminist Cultural Criticism," in *Cultural Studies*, eds. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson,
and Paula A. Treichler (London: Routledge, 1992), 663.

[608] Farrington, *Art on Fire*, 43.

[609] Farrington, *Art on Fire*, 43-4.

or would black women have power, too?[610]

Ringgold's account emphasizes the complexity of positioning oneself in the political and cultural milieu of the 1960s as a subject who navigates the intersecting coordinates of race and gender. Related complexities threaded through Ringgold's participation in artist activism.

The *Feminist Series* was initiated in 1972, roughly two years after Ringgold's involvement with Art Strike. To invoke Sara Ahmed, the project sketches feminist genealogies as "genealogies of women who…speak out."[611] Each painting in the series emblazons the words of black feminist thinkers and activists across its canvases in golden acrylic hues. Its format is modeled on the thangka, a Tibetan practice of painting on fabric that serves ceremonial and pedagogical functions.[612] As Lisa Farrington observes, its chromatic field of reds, blacks, and greens calls up the color spectrum associated with the Black Power Movement.[613] Farrington conveys that the non-horizontal placement of words on the picture plane was chosen by Ringgold "because of the effort required to read them—vertically, rather than in the usual Western fashion."[614] In effect, to read these transcriptions of speech requires reading carefully and closely. It necessitates precisely the kind of rigorous attention to the speech of women of color that Ringgold describes as absent from her encounters with artist activism in the period preceding the series.

The project's source materials derive from documents collected in Gerda Lerner's *Black Women in White America*.[615] In making selections, Ringgold was particularly drawn to figures who radically reconstituted the terms of discourse in the public sphere, like Maria Stewart, "credited with being the first American woman public speaker."[616] Among the texts excerpted by Ringgold was a statement by Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman to be elected to Congress and to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, in *Feminist Series #10* [fig. 62].[617] Notably, Ringgold contributed to Chisholm's fundraising efforts in 1972 by donating the profits from the sale of one of her *Political Landscape* works to Chisholm's campaign. In this way, her painterly output from the period was both representationally and economically invested in providing platforms for black feminist figures. Outlining the impetus for the *Feminist Series*, Ringgold emphasizes her desire to amplify the voices of women in intellectual histories of black liberation.[618]

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[610] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 158.

[611] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 59-60.

[612] Both portable and cost-effective, working with thangkas enabled Ringgold to transport her pieces independently. Farrington, *Art on Fire*, 92.

[613] Farrington, *Art on Fire*, 92.

[614] Farrington, *Art on Fire*, 113.

[615] Gerda Lerner, ed., *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

[616] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 195.

[617] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 196.

[618] Ringgold recalls, "This made it very important for me to put the words of these valiant black feminists in my art so that people could read them and be as inspired as I had been." Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 196.

By interrupting hegemonic discourses that bracketed out the utterance of crucial thinkers, the *Feminist Series* also created space for Ringgold's own speech. As Farrington puts it, "Her painted words, adopted from her feminist predecessors, doubled for the artist's own voice. Ringgold decided to let her paintings speak for her."[619] How might this gesture be read in relation to systematic attempts to bracket out Ringgold's voice in her temporally proximate organizing efforts? Two years earlier, Art Strike's organizational structure had required Ringgold to stand in "open confrontations" in order to interject in its discussions. Her experience coordinating the 1968 Whitney protest occasioned surprise at being granted the opportunity to speak without interruption.[620] Along similar lines, the reception of Ringgold's 1969 activist pedagogy at the Museum of Modern Art had led her to conclude she had been "talking to [her]self."[621] Per Farrington, Ringgold's "declamatory political activism" was received by critics as "unnecessarily outspoken."[622] This was also often the case with those critics who espoused nominal solidarity with her position. As Wallace and Ringgold's accounts show, artist activism throughout the 1960s and 70s often structurally muted the voices of women participants of color. This was the case not only in the institutions that artists critiqued, but in the counter-institutional organizing networks through which those critiques were launched. The *Feminist Series* thus stages an intervention into this exclusionary discursive milieu, visually carving out a platform for hitherto omitted utterance. Finding existing modes of collectivity untenable, Ringgold not only established new networks of organized protest through WSABAL, but also turned to aesthetic practice as a site for voicing dissent.

Though the words emblazoned throughout the *Feminist Series* had been removed from the site of the political podium and rerouted to the picture plane, they retained their capacity to threaten the operations of power. This became evident in an incident where one college student was, presumably, so unsettled by their encounter with a work from the series that they felt compelled to destroy it. The target, *Feminist Series #6*, featured text drawn from a speech delivered by Harriet Tubman in 1869: "There was one of two things I had a right to liberty or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man would take me alive."[623] Ringgold discovered that the wooden dowel that served as the support for the piece had been broken in half. The articulations of refusal etched onto the picture plane, however, remained intact.

"Talking to Myself":
Adrian Piper's 1970 Statement of Withdrawal and *I/You (Us)* (1975)

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[619] Lisa E. Farrington, *Creating Their Own Image: The History of African-American Women Artists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 155.
[620] Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge*, 167.
[621] Ringgold quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 209.
[622] Farrington, *Art on Fire*, 117.
[623] Tubman quoted in Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge,* 196.

"It was like you were talking to yourself."[624] With this phrase, Faith Ringgold encapsulates the reception of her lecture-demonstration in 1969. Chronicling 1970, Adrian Piper outlines her vantage on the year's events in an essay titled "Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object."[625] Ringgold's invocation of "talking to yourself" alludes to the attempted foreclosure of her agitational speech, specifically MoMA's bid to dismiss her dissident oratory. In Piper's usage, "talking to myself" might be interpreted in the literal sense—a way to describe auto-theorizing one's artwork in essayistic form. The construction also carries valences that exceed the level of denotation. It suggests turning utterance inward in the absence of external interlocutors inclined to listen: speaking to oneself so as to speak in a voice precluded by existing collective discourses.

Consider the concluding paragraphs of Piper's foreword to her collection of writings, *Out of Order, Out of Sight*:

> …you earn the riches and satisfactions of interiority, the blessed, invaluable side effect of repeatedly thwarted communications…within the walls of a friendly private club that rejoices in the abstract theoretical sleepwalking of its members. For those of us still applying to get in, such indulgence in response to the coercive requirement of massive self-censorship could cost us our lives, our sanity, or at least the linings of our stomachs. So instead we *consider* what we see but are prevented from voicing. We take it into our selves, we muse on it and analyze it; we scrutinize it, extract its meaning and lesson, and record it for future reference. Our unspoken or unacknowledged contributions to discourse infuse our mental lives with conceptual subtlety.[626]

Piper's interior voicing emerges as a rebuttal to silences imposed from without. Talking to oneself so as to speak freely, talking to oneself to preempt "thwarted

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[624] Ringgold quoted in Cahan, *Mounting Frustration*, 209.
[625] See Adrian Piper, "Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 29-53.
[626] Piper, "Some Very FORWARD Remarks," xxxix.

communications," talking to oneself to obviate the need for streamlining contributions toward the standardized speech of a private club that extols "abstract theoretical sleepwalking." Put simply, internal dialogue as a technique for refusing the constraints placed on one's utterance in a regulatory discursive field.

 In "Talking to Myself," Piper outlines the politicization of her artwork in 1970 alongside her decision not to participate in artists' networks of organized resistance. Read in that context, "talking to myself" also announces a denial of the nominally shared discourses of artist activism. Far afield from the pursuit of silence, it signals speech acts issued in a scenario whose terms are set by Piper alone. "Talking to myself," then, denotes the purview of a speaker who refuses to participate in omissive solidarities "in order to get along."[627] Attending to this nonparticipation, coupled with dialogical encounters whose conditions are determined by Piper herself, furnishes a generative lens through which to approach her practices of resistant speech.

 Piper writes, "In the spring of 1970 a number of events occurred that changed everything for me."[628] The four events she enumerates span the bombing of Cambodia, feminist organizing, the killings at Kent State and Jackson State, and the closure of the City College of New York (CCNY) amidst student protest. At the time, Piper was studying in CCNY's philosophy department. She had completed her earlier education at schools "populated by upper middle-class white children who lived in Manhattan's Upper East and West sides."[629] She would go on to receive a doctorate in philosophy from Harvard in 1981, and would become the first black woman to be tenured in the discipline

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[627] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 65.
[628] Piper, "Talking to Myself," 30.
[629] Smith, *Enacting Others*, 38.

in the US. In the 1960s, Piper worked in the gallery of Seth Siegelaub, and located her

aesthetic proclivities in conceptualism's terrain. Her works in this mode were initially

afforded a degree of visibility, and she exhibited in several high-profile conceptual

exhibitions in the 1960s.[630] Fomented by the events of 1970, Piper's artmaking shifted

from a "pure conceptual art tradition" to incorporate her body as a "catalytic" agent.[631]

John Bowles characterizes this period as one replete with politicized interruptions

of Piper's realm of daily encounter.[632] Campus-wide revolt halted business as usual at

CCNY, and Piper's interpersonal exchanges were otherwise increasingly marked by

appeals for political participation. The artist compiled the material traces of these

interruptions in the form of printed agitational materials distributed to her by activists.

She titled the resulting project *Context #8: Written Information Voluntarily Supplied to

Me during the Period of April 30 to May 30, 1970* (1970). In Bowles's analysis, *Context

#8* envisions new presentational formats for an art of interruption, and for "art *as*

interruption."[633] An orientation toward the transformative capacities of interjection

threaded through her subsequent endeavors. Across various media, Piper sought to

reproduce the interruptions she had witnessed in 1970 and to transplant them to the space

of spectatorial encounters with her work. As Fred Moten puts it, she generated

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[630] Cherise Smith notes that she "had been included in some major group exhibitions of conceptual art, such as 557, 087 at the Seattle Art Museum (1969), Plans and Projects as Art at the Kunsthalle Bern (1969), and Information at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1970)." Smith, *Enacting Others*, 38.

[631] Adrian Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 262.

[632] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 144.

[633] Emphasis added. Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 141.

confrontations wherein the viewer's "internal dialogue is interrupted by a voice from outside."[634]

Because "marching and picketing seemed futile" to Piper, she elaborates that she spent the period immersed in "a lot of thinking about [her] position as an artist, a woman, and a black."[635] While she attended meetings of the AWC and Art Strike, she abstained from participating in their direct actions.[636] As Uri McMillan notes, a possible reason for Piper's nonparticipation in groups like the BECC might be found in the misalignment between her early conceptualist aesthetic and the "didactic and figurative" forms privileged in the Black Arts Movement.[637] In a similar vein, Cherise Smith emphasizes that both "women's art and black arts movement activists advocated a collective aesthetic program."[638] Given that Piper operated in a terrain poised "productively between several stylistic traditions," working according to the parameters of a single idiom would have posed a dilemma.[639] Reflecting on feminist programs of the 1970s, Lucy Lippard also recalls the difficulty of establishing collaboration "without denying the powers of the individual within the collective."[640] As evidenced by the internecine conflicts that dotted the landscape of Art Strike, artists' collectivity often necessitated the suppression of individual positions in concession to a platform determined by designated "spokesmen." Initiating a de facto strike within Art Strike, participants from the School of Visual Arts

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[634] Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 239.
[635] Piper, "Talking to Myself," 31.
[636] Bowles notes that Piper may have attended two or more meetings of Art Strike, but did not participate in its May 22 demonstration at the Metropolitan Museum. Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 138.
[637] McMillan, *Embodied Avatars*, 117.
[638] Smith, *Enacting Others*, 35.
[639] Smith, *Enacting Others*, 38.
[640] Lucy Lippard, "Sweeping Exchanges," 363.

brought these dynamics to the fore by condemning its spokespeople's "claim to speak for everybody."[641] In a circulated statement, they insisted that "while the signatories oppose repressive government action each must speak for himself [sic], even when acting in concert."[642] Their withdrawal attests to the fact that entering into collectivity, for many, also meant entering into a situation of being spoken for.

Discussing her abstention from artist activism from a different tack, Piper conveys, "I hardly had enough power as an artist to effect any significant change by withdrawing from shows, denouncing collectors, signing petitions, and so on."[643] Piper thus chose to privilege what Bowles calls "personal responsibility over collective action" which enabled her to address what was then framed as the "sometimes-competing objectives of feminist, civil rights, and antiwar activists.[644] Put otherwise, the platforms of artist-activist networks in 1970 often precluded the opportunity to speak at once to the intersecting concerns that characterize Piper's discourse.

At the same time that Piper was negotiating the prospect of collective identifications within artist activism, she was "dropped" from the art world in 1970, as curators increasingly became aware of her race and gender.[645] She recounts being visited by a German curator who earlier made assumptions about her identity given the ambiguity of her name. The curator remarked to her companion, "'*Aber sie ist doch nu rein Mädchen* (She is just a girl)!'"[646] Such encounters with the exclusionary mechanisms of the art field unfolded alongside Piper's selective participation in organized action, and

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[641] Grace Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," *New York Times*, July 5, 1970, 65.
[642] Glueck, "Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," 65.
[643] Piper, "Talking to Myself," 31.
[644] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 138.
[645] Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," 262.
[646] Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," 262.

inflect the statement that she "hardly had enough power as an artist to effect any significant change." Piper's approach, then, might then be read as a resistance to mobilizing within a system that structurally occluded her "unspoken or unacknowledged contributions to discourse."[647] Declining to collaborate under these circumstances can also mean declining to leave one's position unvoiced. Here, again, is Moten on Piper: "To act on the desire to be the opposite, the desire not to collaborate, is to object."[648] To object, to interject, to interrupt, to withdraw: each of these signals nonparticipation as a refusal of existing terms of speech.

That same year, Piper would stage the iconic performance *Catalysis IV* (1970) [fig. 63]. Dislocating herself from institutional sites of display like the museum or gallery, she rode the Second Avenue bus in New York with a towel lodged in her mouth that prevented her from speaking. Remarking on the *Catalysis* series, Piper explains that the "symbology of these pieces had a lot to do with my emerging sense of myself as a woman, as having been silenced in various ways, as having been objectified and as being a black person as well."[649] Art-as-catalysis in turn positioned the artist as a "catalytic agent inducing change in the viewer."[650] Conceiving aesthetic activity as a catalytic agent also required turning away from traditional evaluative criteria, and from given systems of value. Formalist measures of the success or failure of a work were now supplanted by concerns over the potency of effects it generated in the social field.[651]

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[647] Piper, "Some Very FORWARD Remarks," xxxix.

[648] Moten, *In the Break*, 239.

[649] Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," 263.

[650] Piper, "Talking to Myself," 34.

[651] As Piper puts it, "The value of the work may then be measured in terms of the strength of the change, rather than whether the change accords positively or negatively with some aesthetic standard." Piper, "Talking to Myself," 34.

Amidst the reorientation of her practice, and despite misgivings about the efficacy of her direct interventions, Piper withdrew *Hypothesis: Situation #18* from the New York Cultural Center exhibition, "Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects" on May 15, 1970.[652] In its place, she drafted a statement that read:

> The work originally intended for this space has been withdrawn. The decision to withdraw has been taken as a protective measure against the increasingly pervasive conditions of fear. Rather than submit the work to the deadly and poisoning influence of these conditions, I submit its absence as evidence of the inability of art expression to have meaningful existence under conditions other than those of peace, equality, truth, trust and freedom.[653]

Piper characterizes the statement "as a political protest against Cambodia."[654] Its opening line is emblematic of performative utterance: it announces her withdrawal from the exhibition as it enacts that very withdrawal. In this way, the statement hovers in an indeterminate space between performance, speech act, and direct action. These tactics unfolded against a propulsive program of interventions, boycotts, and work stoppages, and preceded the formation and first convening of Art Strike.[655]

It is unclear whether Piper's statement was displayed in the galleries of the Cultural Center. Possibly, as Bowles observes, the "Cultural Center staff closed off the empty space in the gallery with 'a black band and a notice,' and 'at the direction of the artists…draped black foam rubber bands over the [remaining] conceptual art

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[652] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 142.

[653] Adrian Piper statement reprinted in Lippard, *Six Years*, 168. As John Bowles notes, an earlier draft of this statement made explicit reference to racism. Notably, the reference was removed in the final version. Bowles suggests this might have been due to a philosophical imperative to universalize, and specifically "to universalize in order to avoid jeopardizing friendships and relationships." The decision is a pointed one in a milieu marked by contestations over which political concerns ought to be foregrounded in coalitional organizing. Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 146.

[654] Piper, "Talking to Myself," 30.

[655] John Bowles examines the legacy of Piper's withdrawal in a discussion of the J20 Art Strike convened in 2017. See Bowles, "The 1970 New York Artists' Strike that Prefigured #J20," *Hyperallergic*, January 18, 2017, https://hyperallergic.com/352184/the-1970-new-york-artists-strike-that-prefigured-j20.

displays.'"[656] However, the statement was effectively classified as an artwork when it was reprinted in Lucy Lippard's *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972.*

Importantly, Piper's gesture does not operate as a purely subtractive one. It does not take the form of a straightforward deletion or erasure. Rather, her statement replaces what it redacts with information that paratextually assumes the status of an aesthetic product through its intended site of reception (the Cultural Center's galleries). In effect, the removal of the original work enables the display of a new mode of working. It makes room for reinserting a discourse that was omitted, for previously absent language. Here, to withdraw is to remove that which takes up urgently needed space: a carving away in order to carve *out* new possibilities. Piper's statement, then, does not so much offer silence as it does a recoding of speech.

Generating conditions for unregulated utterance would become a central aim of Piper's practice. Aesthetic activity came to function as a platform where her speech could unfold without the interference of an external, regulatory entity. This process is another way of describing the concept of catalysis. In Piper's eponymous series, her work serves as a "catalytic agent, in that it promotes a change in another entity (the viewer) *without undergoing any permanent change itself.*"[657] Again, Piper's role in the series is at once "the artist and the work" itself.[658] Reading across these two assertions, *Catalysis* comes into view as a project wherein the artist-as-work can produce transformative effects in the

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[656] See Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 143.
[657] Emphasis added. Piper, "Talking to Myself, 32.
[658] Piper, "Talking to Myself, 42.

social field without allowing her own actions or speech to undergo any permanent

changes, or to be obstructed by external mechanisms of control.

Piper reflects on the use of monologic form in *Catalysis* during a 1972 interview with Lucy Lippard:

> I hold monologues with myself, and whenever anyone passes near me, within hearing distance, I try to direct the monologue toward them without changing the presentation or the content of what I'm saying. Usually, when I know that someone is approaching me, I find that I'm psychologically preparing myself for their approach. I'm turning around to meet them, and I have a whole presentation for their benefit, because they are there, and I'm aware of them. I'm trying ***not*** to do that.[659]

What emerges in this account is the endeavor to talk to another as though talking to

yourself. To confront an unknown interlocutor with an interruption from which they have

something to learn. It is the act of a figure unruffled by the prospect Sara Ahmed

describes, of a will that does not or may not "coincide with that of others."[660] It is the

performance of one who is "willing to cause disturbance."[661] It is, put otherwise, an

invitation to encounter speech that may be difficult to hear and more difficult still to

parse within the listener's schemas of knowledge.

Just as *Catalysis* directed its monologic utterance explicitly at the viewer while

striving not to be transformed by that viewer, so too did the iconic *Mythic Being* series

stage its spectatorial encounters in unflinching direct address. From 1973 to 1975, Piper

assumed a visual identity she called "a third-world, working-class, overtly hostile

male."[662] Embodying the Mythic Being, the artist generated pieces dispersed across a

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[659] Emphasis in the original. Lucy Lippard and Adrian Piper, "Catalysis: An Interview with Adrian Piper," *The Drama Review: TDR* 16, no. 1 (March 1972): 76.
[660] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 64.
[661] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 64.
[662] Adrian Piper, "The Mythic Being: Getting Back," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 147. In later writing,

range of media, from *Village Voice* advertisements, to photographic series, to performance and documentation thereof. Attired in what McMillan describes as "blaxploitation-inflected male drag," Piper orchestrates scenarios where spectators are called to confront their racialized modes of parsing the visual field.[663] Many entries into the series foreground verbal address, deploying the motif of speech bubbles whose text explicitly hails the audience as addressee. In this way, the project attunes viewers to the racialized and gendered perceptual schemas that condition how they hear a speaker whose remarks may issue from a position distinct from their own.

Consider, in that vein, the series *I/You (Us)* (1975) [figs. 64-69].[664] Its panels' six sequential speech bubbles read as follows:

> Be sure to attend very carefully to what I have to say to you. For if you do not, I will make a sincere effort to kill you.
>
> We will confront each other as aliens: hostile, because we evince only our mutual indifference.
>
> And then we will both be worse off: you, because you will not understand my silence; I, because I will not trust you with my thoughts.

Piper identifies the Mythic Being as "a young black male." See Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," 263.

[663] McMillan links Piper's mode of drag to the "terrorist drag" formulated by José Esteban Muñoz in relation to the work of Vaginal Davis as a practice that generates "uneasiness in desire, which works to confound and subvert the social fabric." See McMillan, *Embodied Avatars*, 96, 139; and José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 100. Piper discusses xenophobia as a visual phenomenon in relation to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. She writes that xenophobia is the fear of "someone who does not look the way one is used to having people look," and connects this tendency to Kant's claims that "if perceptual data are presented to us that do not conform to the categories of experience, then we can't have any experience of that perceptual data at all." Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," 255.

[664] By contrast to entries like *The Mythic Being: I Embody Everything You Most Hate and Fear* (1975), *I/You (Us)* has received comparatively little attention. Notably, two works from the series serve as the cover images volumes one and two of Piper's *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, and have circulated widely in that capacity.

You will regret even my noticing that your eyes are glazing over while I try to explain to you, you will be sorry because these signs will prevent my explaining what you want me to explain.

Also be careful not to nod too rapidly, avert your eyes too often, yawn, blink, hum, or sigh deeply. I will not tolerate it. I will make you wish you hadn't.

Take care that you do not interrupt me before I am finished. For that will indicate to me that you were not paying careful attention to what I was saying.[665]

Locking eyes with the viewer, the artist asks: to whom are you willing to listen? Speech, in this context, is understood in relation to the speech act—not necessarily confined to the verbal utterance of a spatiotemporally co-present speaker, but defined more capaciously as a communicative mode that also functions in the register of action. The flat-affected matter-of-factness of her tone is tactical, and probes the conditions under which the beholder is willing to attend to her remarks. As Piper writes, "When very young children talk in the objective voice, we are indulgent because they are young. When actual upper-middle-class het WASP males…talk in in this voice, we listen."[666] However, she continues, when the speaker who wields this voice is a young woman of color, "she is apt to get put in her place, very quickly and very rudely."[667] Piper explains that *I/You (Us)* positions itself against "learning to use language and speech behavior as a weapon of diminution rather than a tool of communication."[668] Consistent with Piper's "aesthetics of direct address," the "you" invoked in its speech bubbles targets the spectator as its interlocutor, exceeding the parameters of the photograph to orchestrate a performative

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[665] Transcribed from figs. 64-69.
[666] Piper, "Some Very FORWARD Remarks," xxxiv.
[667] Piper, "Some Very FORWARD Remarks," xxxiv.
[668] Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," 265.

scenario that includes the beholder.[669] It thereby initiates an exercise in unlearning the

habitualized modes of response ingrained in an addressee who would dismiss her speech.

Listening, the work suggests, carries with it socially resonant force. Along those

lines, we can recall Lippard's linking of 1970s feminist aesthetics to concurrent models

of feminist organizing, "techniques on which the women's movement itself is based:

consciousness-raising, going around the circle with equal time for all speakers…"[670]

I/You (Us) recodes these techniques into a participatory situation wherein attending to an

unknown interlocutor's speech might incite the restructuring of social relations. Its title,

composed exclusively of shifters, allows for a mutable and expansive set of encounters

between a multiplying configuration of speakers.

The speech bubbles' purposefully hyperbolic rhetoric ("..if you do not, I will

make a sincere effort to kill you") challenges the viewer to impute anger to the work. On

this subject, Piper observes:

> A[n]…audience response that deserves more extended treatment is the comment,
> uttered reprovingly, that my work is actually very angry. This leads me to wonder
> what emotional stance toward racism would be appropriate, according to this
> response: Humor? Resignation? Detachment? Cynicism? This audience response
> implies that art that expresses anger about racism commits a faux pas. This, in
> turn, presupposes that the prevailing racism social practices that elicit such anger
> are a standard of normalcy or social acceptability, relative to which anger is a
> social gaffe.[671]

Piper vocalizes a familiar accusation leveled at the feminist killjoy: that her anger

registers as an undesirable interruption of collective discourse. Returning to Ahmed, "To

speak out of anger as a woman of color is to confirm your position as the cause of

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[669] John Bowles characterizes Piper's work through, and as, an "aesthetics of direct address."
Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 257.
[670] Lippard, "Sweeping Exchanges," 364.
[671] Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I: Essay," 251.

tension; your anger is what threatens the social bond."[672] Within that logic, the anger of a figure who speaks out is dismissed as an affectively excessive disturbance of discursive order. So, too, are the generative, pedagogical functions of anger dismissed. Consider Audre Lorde's vital text on the subject, which proposes that "anger is loaded with information."[673] Anger tells the listener something they "had better learn from."[674] Refusal, in this formulation, can be instructive. Beyond mere listening, Piper's mode of engagement demands *learning*. As the artist observes, her oeuvre tends to "seem excessively confrontational or didactic to some viewers."[675] Exaggerating the tropes imputed to her work, she confronts the viewer with their own presuppositions. If there is a threat of violence here, it is a violence that originates and resides within the beholder, rather than in the work beheld.

The visual content and framing of the panels seem deliberately misaligned with the force of the words contained in their speech bubbles. Piper's portrait occupies roughly one-sixth of the compositional plane. Lighting has been adjusted to achieve a stark tonal binarism between the figure of the artist and the background against which she is set. Compressed in the bottom-left corner of the image, scale and shadow lend to the sensibility that she is engulfed by her surroundings. Within this spatial configuration, it becomes difficult to draw a neat line between the artist's visual presentation and the tone of the textual, implicitly spoken content that appears alongside it. As Bowles puts it, Piper "embraced conditions of excess, performing them in order to challenge the norms

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[672] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 67-8.
[673] Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 8.
[674] Lorde, "The Uses of Anger," 8.
[675] Piper, "Introduction: Some Very FORWARD Remarks," xxxi.

against which she felt judged."[676] In *I/You (Us)*, the artist responds to the perception of her excessive speech precisely by performing speech in excess of normative utterance. Above all, Piper insists on the urgency of its pedagogical content. "Be sure to attend very carefully to what I have to say to you," she warns, otherwise you may "prevent my explaining what you want me to explain."

Piper takes up a verbal encounter that unfolds in the flash of an instant and extends it across six photographic panels. The familiar accoutrements of the Mythic Being—his sunglasses, mustache, and wig—have been jettisoned. Instead, the same photograph of an undisguised Piper reappears in each of the panels, telegraphing the instantaneity of the exchange. Drawing from Nathalie Sarraute's strategy of literary dilation in *Tropisms*, the work enlarges "minute interactions"—the minute interactions that characterize embodied speech—in order to examine them through a lens calibrated to microscopic detail.[677] Its duration spans what Piper calls the "split second of the indexical present."[678] Broadly speaking, the concept denotes the "concrete, immediate here-and-now."[679] More specifically, the indexical present appears in the artist's oeuvre as "the particular, personal, immediate transaction between ethnic or cultural others."[680]

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[676] Bowles, *Adrian Piper*, 239.

[677] Piper notes that when she made the piece, she "had been reading Nathalie Sarraute and thinking a lot about tropisms." Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," 264. Discussing *Tropisms,* Sarraute describes that her aim in the text was "to take hold of the instant, by enlarging it, developing it." See Shusha Guppy, Nathalie Sarraute, and Jason Weiss, "Nathalie Sarraute, The Art of Fiction No. 115," *The Paris Review* 114 (Spring 1990), https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2341/nathalie-sarraute-the-art-of-fiction-no-115-nathalie-sarraute.

[678] Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present II: Lecture," 264.

[679] Adrian Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I: Essay," in *Out of Order, Out of Sight Volume I: Selected Writings in Meta Art 1968-1992* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 247.

[680] Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I: Essay," 247.

For Piper, the immediacy of intersubjective encounter is a terrain rife with transformative possibilities. Her practice pivots on the capacity for immediate confrontations with otherness—on the street, in the gallery, or in spaces like Max's Kansas City—to produce effects that reverberate beyond their temporal frame. She writes, "My work springs from a belief that we are transformed—and occasionally reformed—by immediate experience."[681] Here, then, are the stakes of hearing resistant speech in the here-and-now: its instructive echoes continue to reside within the receiver, inciting modulations in their attunement to the social field. The title *I/You (Us)* might thus be read as a gesture toward the potential for such transformation. It orthographically demarcates a binary "I" and "You" from one another, but parenthetically allows for the possibility of an "Us" that may emerge in pedagogical speech, in the act of attending very carefully to what is spoken.

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[681] Piper, "Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I: Essay," 247-8.

CONCLUSION

"Strike Today," "Who Approved the War in Vietnam?," "The American President Might Have to Call in the National Guard to Put This Revolt Down," "Nothing Will Be As Before." If you were navigating public space in New York over nine days in November 2005, you might have encountered a figure holding a placard emblazoned with one of these slogans. Each statement is inscribed on the signs carried by artist Sharon Hayes for the project *In the Near Future*, executed between 2005 and 2008 [fig. 70]. Most are historical resistance slogans derived from contexts like antiwar activism in the 1960s and second-wave feminist organizing in the 1970s. They refer back to a moment whose meanings appear to us as sealed, whose outcomes appear foreclosed.

In a series of actions convened at sites like Union Square and City Hall, Hayes deploys the statements to probe their transformative potential in the present. Researching the archives of twentieth-century social movements, she transposes their vocabularies onto the contemporary to imagine how they might resignify today, to investigate the tactical uses of the speech act, understood broadly here as communication that functions at once as action.[682] Put otherwise, to ask what embodied speech can do.

For each iteration of the performance, Hayes positions herself in public space holding a protest placard. Onlookers are invited into a dialogical exchange to clarify her

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[682] This description reflects the wall text used to delineate Hayes' approach to speech acts in her 2012 Whitney exhibition, "There's So Much I Want to Say to You." See Jillian Steinhauer, "Unexpected Sounds of Protest," *Hyperallergic*, August 22, 2012, https://hyperallergic.com/55895/unexpected-sounds-of-protest/. Elsewhere, Hayes states that her "interest is in the act of protest as a speech act." Hayes quoted in Julia Bryan-Wilson and Sharon Hayes, "We Have a Future: An Interview with Sharon Hayes," *Grey Room* 37 (Fall 2009): 87.

intervention and to pose questions. Hayes discusses the pedagogical dimensions of the

project, which she distinguishes from a unidirectional transmission of information:

> It is not didactic, but it is pedagogic. The demonstration is a communication and a telling: it's a narrativizing that recognizes the position from which it's narrating.[683]

In a performative staging of pedagogical encounter, each interlocutor collaboratively

assembles and reassembles the lessons of history—an enactment of what Patricia Milder

calls "lecture-performance as activism through education."[684]

Notably, Hayes identifies the project as an action, rather than a performance,

describing it as "a certain kind of demonstration that asks for a form of critical

viewership."[685] The one piece of information Hayes withholds from interlocutors is that

she is an artist. She explains, "I don't say I'm an artist. That's the only thing I don't say. I

say I'm interested in protest. I say everything but I am an artist…[b]ecause then they

think they know what I'm doing."[686] What this suggests is a potential misalignment

between onlookers' perception of the work that art does, and the pedagogical, political

work that this series seeks to do. Orchestrating a tableau where collective learning might

take place, *In the Near Future* revivifies earlier direct action through the force of verbal

utterance in the present. Julia Bryan-Wilson routes us to the queer dimensions of this

gesture, linking it to Elizabeth Freeman's notion of temporal drag, "the pull of the past

upon the present."[687] Hayes rearticulates the futures envisioned by speakers in the past as

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[683] Bryan-Wilson and Hayes, "We Have a Future," 88.
[684] Patricia Milder, "Teaching as Art: The Contemporary Lecture-Performance," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 33, no. 1 (2011): 14.
[685] Bryan-Wilson and Hayes, "We Have a Future," 85, 87.
[686] Bryan-Wilson and Hayes, "We Have a Future," 88.
[687] Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Openings: Sharon Hayes," *Artforum*, May 2006,

futures that might be activated in the here-and-now, increasing their proximity and drawing them nearer to us than they may seem at first blush.

In an old dissident Soviet anecdote, a radio host announces that their listeners asked, *is it true what they say, that a socialist utopia is so close at hand, you can see it on the horizon? If so, what is a horizon? Where is that horizon?* The radio host answers, *yes, it is true. And the horizon is that imaginary line that is always receding further away as you try to approach.*

Bracketing out the specificities of the Soviet socialist context, this anecdote attests to a broader sensibility—one that regards transformation in the political field as endlessly deferred, indefinitely postponed to an indeterminate future, perpetually beyond the reach of a collective ability to articulate it. By contrast, Hayes's series codes the future as a horizon of possibility closer at hand, as one that might be reconstituted through speech. In *that* near future, nothing will be spoken as it was before. This study has been animated by a related set of impulses—to listen again and listen anew to historical articulations of refusal, to attend to what earlier pedagogical performance might have to teach a temporally dislocated addressee, to consider how they resound today, to imagine how they might resignify in the present.

The study of artists' pedagogical aesthetics also leads into a reflexive examination of teaching itself, into questions around the models of pedagogy and knowledge work practiced within the twenty-first century university, and the models of intellectual labor around which artistic activity is increasingly structured. By denaturalizing the forms that teaching might take, artists' pedagogical projects underscore that it is also always at once

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https://www.artforum.com/print/200605/openings-sharon-hayes-10867; and Elizabeth Freemen, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 62.

an aesthetic and a political undertaking, rather than a neutral terrain of information

transmission. By the same token, they turn our attention to pedagogy as a potential site of

transformative effects, of reconstituted discourse—a site where it may be possible for

nothing to be spoken as it once was.

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