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ALTERATIONS

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ALTERATIONS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts
Visual Art

by
Michael Marks II
May 2010

Accepted by:
Todd McDonald, Committee Chair
David Detrich
Dr. Andrea Feeser
Heidi Jensen

ABSTRACT

My work is an investigation into the physical and cognitive spaces that painting occupies as both image and object. By transplanting fragments of mechanical and digital reproductions into formal and conceptual participation, I seek to disrupt the significations of culturally accepted iconography and probe the locations of acceptance they normally inhabit. I employ strategies of manipulation, framing, and juxtaposition to visually suggest the presence of the original object through the parameters of the reproduced composite and implicate the presence of the institution by incorporating the gallery wall directly into a number of my compositions. By utilizing imagery from the art historical domain and redeploying it in the manner of a quotation out of context, I suggest to the viewer an awareness of the many lenses of cultural criteria that are used to evaluate, appreciate, and understand these images and other works of art. While either directly using or evoking the historical image as a point of departure for this dialogue, this work contributes to an understanding or awareness of our location in the present by considering both the physical and virtual divisions that constitute our contemporaneous understanding of the past. These strategies speak to the difficulties of interpreting the original through the language of the reproduction, the fallibility of this system, and its frequently absurd outcomes. The purpose of this document is to: I.) Introduce and outline the biographical information used to formulate the conceptual procedure of the work, II.) Explicate the characteristics of the reproduction and its manifestation through the mechanisms of the work, III.) Signify the importance of the contemporary institution in our understanding of how images operate culturally, and IV.) Explain the historical and contemporary discourses that inform the work.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research and body of work to my wife and children, without whom I would know very little about history, art, or myself.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis body of work was realized with the support of my family, fellow graduate students, and professors here at Clemson University. Through the candor of our conversations, the acuteness of your observations and the challenges they presented me, I am fortunate to have had such incredible peers, mentors, and (most importantly) friends. I would like to thank my thesis committee, Dave Detrich, Dr. Andrea Feeser, Heidi Jensen, and Todd McDonald, for your feedback, criticism, and guidance. Your enthusiastic contributions to this work, stimulating and inspiring, consistently provided direction both in and out of the studio. I am grateful for your guidance. I thank my fellow graduate students for your invaluable advice, unique perspectives, and studio efforts. Your work ethic and critical rigor has influenced my own, and our occasional silliness in the guise of intellectual pursuit helped to create a studio dynamic balanced in profundity and hilarity. I would especially like to thank my fellow painting grads, Hanna Kozlowski-Slone and David Rigdon, and my fellow exhibitors, Matt Rink and Brian Nogues. Most importantly, I thank my wife and children. I cannot begin to adequately describe the scope of your love, support and the immensity of your influence. I am forever in your debt.

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I. INTRODUCTION

“But a painting is a painting, and not the words describing the artist or the place it was made or the people who commissioned it.”

What Painting Is (Elkins, 2)

Like most artists, my work originates from personal experience. Given my current location within the academic institution, my exposure to art as an adolescent would have been considered minimal. Until my first visit to a museum the physical experience of viewing art resided solely in the mechanical reproduction of the book or the digital reproduction of the computer monitor. Weekend visits to both my grandparent's house and the library provided the opportunity to scour these images, and it was in these locations that I first began to learn of the conventions of painting and the meanings attributed to them. Attempting to duplicate these images eventually became routine; exercises in training and looking, and translating the work of the hand rendered by the mechanical apparatus back into the realm of the tactile.

It was on this first visit to a museum that a unique paradox presented itself. Viewing paintings in the direct, physical space of the museum was an experience completely foreign to me. The magnitude of the object was now expanded from the compressed scale of the reproduction and free from the pages of the book and monitor. The subtlety of these surfaces, their colors, textures and hidden details, were revealed and no longer denied presence by the distortion and clumsiness of the reproductive process. I had seen these images before, but I had never really *seen* them. It wasn't until much later that I realized I had been confronted by the inadequacies of the reproduction.

These early interactions with the prodigious sphere of the reproduced image and the institution of the contemporary art museum have continued to be beacons for my artistic and intellectual development and consequently, largely inform this body of work. These early attempts at mimicry, part interpretation, part homage, provided the early foundation of my artistic training

and education. My current studio practice has largely been centered on these concerns- that of the original object, its reproduction, and the positioning of both in physical and virtual space. By utilizing strategies from the reproduction, framing device, institution, and the physical act of vision as unifying factors, I am free to conceptually traverse areas of content that are divergent in technique, unrelated stylistically, or separated historically. This approach is twofold: to link the disparate representations and cultural connotations of the allocated image and to visually suggest the multitude of images available in the domain of the reproduction. Thus, the outcomes of this research and body of work are linked in conceptual character and sacrifice visual homogeneity for these objectives.

II. MECHANISMS AND QUOTATIONS

“The world is filled to suffocating. Man has placed his token on every stone. Every word, every image, is leased and mortgaged. We know that a picture is but a space in which a variety of images, none of them original, blend and clash. A picture is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.”

Statement [incorporating appropriated phrases] (Levine)

Copies, and copies of copies, ad infinitum, are everywhere. The images, products, and objects that constitute contemporary society and the manifestations of these devices within our culture intrigue me. The images we see in books, the consumable goods that fill our homes, the virtual spaces we navigate; all incorporate the reproduced image as an integral part of their understanding and, on our behalf, dictate an interaction with their likenesses.

Within this sphere, the reproduced art historical image has become paramount in how we understand, evaluate, interpret, and validate works of art or historical and conceptual frameworks. Throughout this work I draw upon the mechanical and digital reproductions of these images, which I call quotations, as a starting point for my own image making. However, unlike the linguistic convention of quotation, which denotes the unaltered reference to a passage of text, I quote images as sources and alter the mechanical or digital image back into the tactile realm of the painted or drawn. This strategy - resulting in the production of unique objects – escalates the unseen or overlooked tension between original and reproduction and combines my dual interest in historical and critical understanding of images with creation of visual product. Like a quote out of context that utilizes our understanding of intention while displacing it, this procedure challenges the positions of familiarity, acceptance and interpretation that such iconography inhabits. Thus, my work questions the authentic stance of the duplication and the original’s authoritative stance of signification by merging both in singularity. By painting mass produced images from unique and authentic sources I heighten the residue between original and reproductive, critique and

accommodation. I present viewers with familiar fragments in unfamiliar environments and produce alternate interpretations by grafting sources that usually exist in contrast to one another, such as paintings created by Diego Velázquez and Andrew Wyeth, Leon Golub and Norman Rockwell, or Thomas Kinkadee and Caspar David Friedrich. These quotations, their manipulations and juxtapositions, invite comparison and allow one to contemplate the respective roles these images inhabit and to consider the relationship between that of the reproduction and its original counterpart.

To visualize these quotations, technical processes that relate to the inherent distortions of reproductive technologies are used throughout the work. The book sculpture, *Supportive Images and Logics* (Fig. 2.1), is a key to the various images of works of art these quotations draw upon. A standard art history survey book, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages, 5th Ed.*, is reconfigured so that its pages are a physical representation of a text's contents sustaining and supporting its cumulative knowledge. These contents (whether the written words describing the works or the black and white reproductions of the works themselves) are paged buttresses that form the object itself. The color reproductions visible amidst the pages of this sculpture are reproductions of paintings used as source imagery for other works in the exhibition, revealing that this body of work draws upon the images of high art as well as the academic, institutional, and critical discourses surrounding them.

One of the images from this text is a colored reproduction of Velázquez's *Las Meninas* with circular cuts through the page (Fig. 2.2). These extractions, resulting in eleven holes that can be seen through, encompass the faces of the figures. These circular cuts reference natural and mechanical lenses by becoming the eyes of the figures in the painting, as well as being echoed in the profiles of several other works. This Velázquez arrangement is the layout for the group of paintings, *The Impressionists, Incorporated* (Fig. 2.3), placed into the adjacent gallery wall directly alongside the work. Viewers looking through these circular cuts in the image cohesively frame the others, becoming accomplice to the completion of the work and incorporated in a matrix that also

frames how we view art through the lens of the reproduction (the printed page), other art (*Las Meninas*), and our cultural products (the book itself).

In this group of paintings (Figs. 2.3, 2.4), digital manipulation and production technique replaces the physical and cognitive experiences associated with the genre of Impressionist landscape painting. I altered digital reproductions of well known Impressionist landscape paintings in Photoshop by converting them to grayscale, reducing their scale, and printing them directly onto primed canvas, creating a digital primatura, or underpainting. This process substitutes the foundation of a direct experience from nature (Impressionist plein-air painting) with a fabricated and virtual one, and also corresponds to the production of over painted Giclée prints by the contemporary artist Thomas Kinkade. By embedding the paintings in the gallery wall, the interior of the institution (discussed further in Chapter III) is transformed into a frame or “peephole” to view the exterior subject matter of nature. I emphasize the disparities between physical and virtual space by stripping the direct and immense Impressionist experience of capturing light and reducing it to a digital black and white version of itself in reduced scale. This setting directs attention to both the fallibility of understanding an image through its virtual counterpart and to how the parameters of critical establishment frame or influence our modes of perception. Additionally, this alteration breaks down the reconcilability between reproduction and original; the palette or brushstroke of Monet cannot be differentiated from Seurat, and all that remains is little more than an artificial view of the land through the wall.

The surface quality and color of my paintings are analogous to the characteristics found in the reproductive image. The process of painting directly onto a white ground parallels the mechanical printing process of layering ink onto a substrate of white paper and is further intensified by using a palette consisting of mostly synthetic oil paints. Additionally, I link the smoothness of the printed page to the surface in my paintings by gradually building translucent color and denying the physicality of the paint itself, producing a uniform surface free from texture. Through a manipulated glazing technique, which produces a soft veneer on the surface of the

paintings, this effect reproduces the sheen or glare found on the printed page or computer monitor.

In the painting *H-ang the Vogue* (Fig. 2.5), which derives from a painting by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres of Françoise Poncelle, who is more commonly known as Madame Leblanc, representational portraiture is probed through the language of the digital reproduction. The title of this painting references a phonetic play on the artist's name, violence towards a prevalent style, and the act of attaching pictures to walls. The foundation of this painting by Ingres, who is routinely held as a master of form and portraiture, has undergone several modifications. A painted form that follows the silhouette of the figure emphasizes the anatomical incorrectness in the neck of the original painting. While the contour of this edge leads from the bottom of the painting towards its center, ambiguous chord-like shapes, derived from the pendant in the original image, mirror this contour in opposing directions and direct the viewer's eye back to this area. Through glazing, the temperature and tint of the skin has been distorted, producing flesh that appears bronzed or overexposed in a tanning bed. Square shapes, which relate both to pixels, color swatches, and conceivably ethnicity, are additional layers of information glazed over and into the image of the Ingres painting, providing little differentiation between authentic and invented.

These distortions refer to contemporary retouching techniques in digital photography. In most cases these inaccurate manipulations and retouches go undetected; in extreme cases they erupt into "Photoshop Cover Controversies", as with the publications *W*, *Vogue*, and *Glamour*. A celebrity's missing hip, finger, or elongated neck, while potentially or initially overlooked, serves to reinforce unattainable and anatomically distorted ideals to its readers. We, the viewers, can no more know the authentic look of the celebrity through the reproduction than the authentic painting through the reproduction; both images are malleable, subject to alterations, distortions, and the projected ideals of a culture within a given moment.

The shifting nature of society and the movement of the cultural zeitgeist inform the juxtaposition of selected imagery in the painting *Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell*

(Fig. 2.6). Using two artists renowned for their mastery of realistic figure painting, Diego Velázquez and Andrew Wyeth, this painting grafts two of their most infamous sitters, the Infanta Margarita and Helga Testorf, into formal and cognitive dialogue. While the combination of these two images naturally invites a comparative and contrastive analysis other formal devices in the work direct the viewer to reconsider the spaces, both physical and cognitive, that each image and artist inhabit.

By utilizing a complementary color (blue and orange) schematic in the painting I link each image to a chromatic foundation that reinforces this analysis. By painting printed images from digital reproductions, fabricated by adjusting color levels in Photoshop, I exacerbate the space or gap between the original image's chromatic schema and its relative reproduction. Since the complementary color of a primary color (blue) is the mixing of the two remaining primary colors (red and yellow- resulting in orange), these images are chromatically and cognitively connected. Paradoxically (since complementary colors are often called opposite colors and are frequently used in conjunction with opacity to increase a color's relative luminosity or brightness), I balance the saturation and intensity of the color, contradicting this technique and allowing neither image to have chromatic brightness or precedence. Compositionally, inverting the figures head to head in an hourglass configuration reinforces this neutrality, so neither image takes priority.

The square shapes between the two images, which relate to the digital pixel, are remnants of attempts to duplicate the digital colors of the reproduction. The use of predominately Prussian blue in the painting matches a color filter constructed in Photoshop and links the image to the photographic process of the cyanotype. The overall anemic quality of the paint also recalls faded or aged slides. Vague silhouettes outlining the areas where the figures of the Infanta and Helga reside displace the photographic precision and accuracy of realism present in the original paintings. The digital manipulation of Jean-François Millet's *The Angelus* in the foreground, which overlaps the graphic and false edge of the painting, utilizes the same complementary and compositional devices present in the underlying figures and directs the eye back to these "real" figures in unrealistic space. As with the image of Madame Leblanc, this painting further probes

the reproduction's capacity to translate authenticity, despite imagery comprised from two masters of realism that is diametric in technique.

The title of the painting, quoted from the title of an article by Jacques Derrida, "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell: Paul de Man's War", an eloquent defense of the writings of his close friend and colleague Paul de Man, references the validity and merit attributed to discourses surrounding one's work after death. In spite of drastic critical positioning, Andrew Wyeth's oeuvre is the subject of current debate, as some scholars are seeking to, "examine the breadth of Wyeth's work from a contemporary perspective, distanced from the modernist position from which he has often been measured" (Greben 148). Unlike Velázquez, whose critical role is relatively well defined, Wyeth's position in the historical canon is subject to influence by present-day ruminations regarding his work and life.

The relative roles and positions of iconography in the historical canon is a continued theme throughout this work and is addressed by the drawings *The Airborne Toxic Event* (Fig. 2.7) and *A Culture of Culture* (Fig. 2.8). The former (Fig. 2.7) places the figure from Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* into the landscape of Thomas Kinkade's *The Sea of Tranquility*. The combination of these images (and artists) into the unified space of an epic and transcendental moment indicates the various routes one may take to the spiritual and metaphysical ideal of Romanticism.

Although these icons typically lie in opposition, these two images draw upon a similar abstract language to describe the intended effects towards their viewers. As Nicholas Mirzoeff expounds in his book, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, popular culture discourses draw their merit and necessity from their opposition to high culture although both draw upon the same framework of images, so "it is just as banal to dismiss everyone who ever looks at art as it is to celebrate every consumer of mass culture." (Mirzoeff 11). Contrasting the profundity of the scene with the kitsch of the matte and frame reinforces this dichotomy. The striations in the Kinkade image, referencing the distortions produced by a monitor or television, disrupt a conventional figure/ground relationship in this panorama. While Friedrich's wanderer is ostensibly standing

before a screen or mere simulation, he is still participating in its content and message and still implicit in its historical underpinnings. The title of the work, *The Airborne Toxic Event*, describes these technical devices as well as the fear from one sphere of a culture towards another; the impending occurrence that punctuates the academic novelty and life of the protagonist in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, questioning of one's mortality and spiritual truth, and the nature of reality and simulation.

In *A Culture of Culture* (Fig. 2.8), eyes from the self-portraits of numerous artists are combined to create an absurd collection of historical perception. By utilizing a drawing technique that emphasizes tone and value to describe the space of the eye and separating each eye of the artist, the unique chromatic properties of the original portraits have been disrupted and unified into the drawing plane so each image and artist is indecipherable. Our understanding of these historical images is revealed as an ambiguous archive of authenticity, originality, and vision (Fig. 2.9). Although many of the figures throughout this body of work look directly at the viewer, this drawing's scale and subject matter increase the viewer's self-awareness of looking and being looked at. Coupled with the inclusion of other art-historical imagery throughout this work, this awareness speaks to our limitations of understanding the images of the past despite an ever-growing archive of knowledge surrounding them.

III. THE FRAME AND THE INSTITUTION

“When one of Leon Golub’s grisly Third World torture scenes find their way into the collection of the Saatchi brothers (the British advertising moguls who also brought us Margaret Thatcher), we must begin to wonder if there is any difference between accommodation and opposition.”

Appropriation and the Loss of Authenticity (Heartney 15)

To dismiss the role of the institution in a thorough discussion of art would neglect the capacity of this apparatus in shaping how we evaluate, appreciate, or understand its contents in cultural spheres. While many contemporary scholars have written extensively on the features of culture and economics, Julian Stallabrass’ synoptic statements, “the economy of art closely reflects the economy of finance capital”, and “it is no accident that the world’s major financial centres are also the principal centres for the sale of art” (4-5), derive from surveying global markets and not the interpretation of art. Furthermore, Benjamin Buchloh’s assertion that, “ever more imposing museum buildings and institutions emerge all around us, but their social function, once comparable to the sphere of public education or the university, for example, has become completely diffuse” (679), is a critique of the contemporary museum’s obedience to trustee boards and adherence to growth and profit margins.

While these observations are not without criticism, they are useful in providing context as to how the contemporary institution, specifically the museum, functions as instrument of preservation and center for storage. These institutions - as centers for profit, culture, and collecting - are significantly invested in maintaining and increasing the visibility of their stored iconography. Michel Foucault notes this in a lecture as early as 1967 amidst a boom of cultural expansion, “Museums and libraries have become heterotopias in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit. By contrast, the idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its

ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity.”

The function of preservation by the institution is most evident in the role of the accredited conservator. As objects, paintings are in continual decay, preserved and made anew by the institutions they inhabit. The restoration of the conservator implies returning something to an original state or condition, but I envision this procedure as distortion, appropriation and manipulation of the original. The photographic documentation of these actual changes is the first step in an extensive procedure of alteration that culminates inside the digital realm. While the conservational methods of the institution physically change the object inside, our understanding of the image culturally changes outside. The image records these changes; endless digital and mechanical reproductions exacerbate them until they arrive in front of me, compressed into a single image of uncountable layers in which I cannot differentiate real from fabricated, original from reproduction. This decay and age of the object in physical space is suggested by the cracks and disintegration of surface in the two paintings (Fig. 2.5, 2.6). Like a conservator who works in reverse, or with the cognizance that his or her actions reposition or alter a work of art, I imbue the image of the original with its reproductive residue and implicate the presence of the institution in how we frame (both physically and cognitively) the object itself. Consequently, these tightly controlled networks of craquelure are metaphors for actual decay, our historical understanding of imagery, and fragmentation of the original object.

Despite the massive marketing campaigns and corporate sponsors of these institutions, museum attendance remains relatively low as more of the general public utilizes mass media in lieu of physical attendance (NEA). Considering this shortcoming, the reproduction and virtual experience become paramount in how an institution transmits its contents to larger social spheres. By displacing the physical encounter with a virtual one, as Spain’s Prado has done by integrating high-resolution scans of its masterpieces with Google Earth (Google), viewers can now access these vaults of culture and participate in a viewing experience uniquely different than the institutional offering.

I cite the existence of these institutions by incorporating the gallery wall directly into the surfaces of my paintings. In the oil on canvas paintings (Figs. 2.5, 2.6, 3.3), I have left the commercially primed, white ground of the canvas untouched so that the surface of the wall on which the works are hung is chromatically linked to the actual surface of the paintings. Thus, the object constitutes the division between the painted image and the wall on which it is displayed. In the central panel of the painting, *The Accidental Poetry of America and Machines* (Fig. 3.1), this effect is achieved by mounting the painted surface behind three layers of real and fictitious wall, and by mounting the eleven paintings (Figs. 2.3, 2.4), directly into the wall and creating a peephole. The wall (and by extension, the gallery, building, and institution) is a physical frame implicit in how we view, interpret, and understand not only the context of the original image, but also the context of this work's quotation and reconfiguration. Like my own work placed inside the gallery while analyzing it, these gestures result in a cyclical logic that feeds product back into process, mirroring the self-perpetuating role of imagery and appropriation inside the walls of the institution. Like the central panel of this painting (Fig. 3.1), they are engaged and implicit in this contextualization, whether we realize their activity - the spinning of the wall (Fig. 3.2) - or not. The panel, as textured and inconsistent as the walls around it, is rendered as smooth as the surface of my paintings or the printed page by this accelerated movement.

The painting *Explaining Bodies of Work with Bodies at Work* (Fig. 3.3) addresses the difficulties of a critique by the accommodating institution through the language of the reproduction. Images of artworks from Leon Golub, Francisco Goya, Fernando Botero and others are intermingled in an illustrative or graphic style evocative of a political cartoon while an image of Norman Rockwell in the foreground hopelessly attempts to relay the graphic nature of the volatile political and social imagery to his canvas. This absurd situation parallels the difficulty of projecting the immensity of politically charged imagery and objects (Golub) through a reproductive or painterly strategy used for mass consumption (Rockwell). The problem of translation visualized here, as Eleanor Heartney notes in her skepticism of the gestural critique, "is that post-modern

culture's capacity to assimilate anything makes such subversive tactics into an empty game.”

(Heartney 15).

IV. CONTEXT: PAST AND PRESENT

“A self-critical digression: when I, in this day and age, write about a 200-year-old painting, I know more than the people thinking about it back then, more even than the artist. As time passes, the meanings to be found in a work of art increase in a manner that its maker and the wider public could never anticipate.”

The Whispering Zeitgeist (Wyss)

Throughout the art-historical canon and the rise of a culture’s historical consciousness, paintings have continuously had a fascination with representations of themselves. Whether the strategy involves a picture within a picture, or an appropriation of a stylistic or historical period, or both (as with Guercino’s *Saint Luke Displaying a Painting of the Virgin*, 1652-1653), paintings can raise complex questions about their double identities as physical and illusory objects (Danto). I cite the historical ability of painting to examine the relationships between reality and illusion into an investigation of the relationships between original (reality) and reproduction (illusion). Like the contemporary artists Mark Tansey and Glenn Brown, whose work similarly manipulates pictorial and historical conventions, my paintings and drawings use the art historical image and reproduction to examine the lenses of cultural criteria that comprise our understanding of these representations.

The work of American artist Mark Tansey uses the descriptive style of illustration to describe enigmatic engagements and impossible situations. His paintings are rich in detail and draw heavily upon discourses of history, art, philosophy, and allegory to create confrontations between imagined environments and critical candor. Like Tansey, I introduce disparate historical periods into formal and conceptual participation, and share a comparable absurdity and humor in my compositions. While initially obvious, this strangeness provides an opportunity of contemplation for the viewer to evaluate the roles of the original, reproduction, depiction, and illusion in reconciliatory effort. Additionally, I utilize a synchronistic vocabulary in my paintings,

from the incompatibility of images that draw upon similar metaphysical ideals (Fig. 2.7), to the deployment of the allegorical, as in the use of the soldier (Fig. 3.1) and helmet atop the easel (Fig. 3.3) as a reference to the military idiom of the avant-garde in art historical vernacular.

The British artist Glenn Brown also relies upon the connotations of art historical discourse and uses the reproduction solely as the basis for his image making. By painting images of well-known works of art and twisting the figures into specters of flattened “physical” paint in minute detail, Brown distorts the expressionist and impasto mark into a smooth and controlled illusion. Like Brown, my work shares the art-historical image, the intimacy of detail, as well as empathy for marginal or supposedly ‘low’ art. Brown, who creates grandiose paintings from lowbrow science-fiction illustrations, admits to identifying with kitsch and unfashionable or outmoded images (Brown). I also identify with artists like Norman Rockwell, Andrew Wyeth and Thomas Kinkade, who have been relegated to marginal lines in contemporary discourse or neglected altogether. As a contemporary artist, this empathy speaks to the necessity of an awareness of the criteria that are used to evaluate, appreciate or understand works of art.

Like Tansey and Brown, I employ the strategy of appropriation to investigate these works of art and the location of the iconographic. This procedure – using the reproductive image as source material and deriving a unique object from it – creates tension between original and copy. This process reveals the authentic stance that duplicative technologies imply and the authoritative position of the original, fusing both in visual product. Appropriation, born out of the Dadaist sensibility of critique, is now but one aesthetic form among many. Although punctuated by periods of great social or political unrest (the Café Voltaire in Zürich during World War I, the Neo-Dada movements in the U.S. during Vietnam), the political agendas of artistic movements have not fully materialized. After the failure of the Surrealists (and later the Situationists), the division of appropriation as an ideology is politically ineffective, though it retains value by preserving the dialect of critique. Although this criticism, as Eleanor Heartney has already stated, is problematic and easily incorporated by the institutional apparatus, the strategy of appropriation highlights the

disparities that exist between fine and low art, original and reproduction, and critique and accommodation.

V. CONCLUSION

Prompted by personal experience, this body of work stems from the interactions and study of paintings in physical and virtual space and draws equally upon my deep affection for historical study, critical understanding, and devotion to painting and studio production. These positions, which I view as analogous components of contemporary studio practice, result in a dense and nuanced matrix for discerning viewers to probe. This work contributes to an understanding or awareness of our location in the present by considering the spaces – both physical and virtual – that constitute our contemporaneous understanding of the past. I employ strategies of the reproduction, juxtaposition, framing, and the physical act of vision to cue these spaces. This awareness, while addressing the lenses of cultural or institutional criteria that comprise the scope of the iconographic, speaks to the difficulties of interpreting the original through the language of the reproduction or virtual space, signifying the disparities between the two. Utilizing the languages of painting and drawing as a quote out of context, my work speaks to the traditions and tactility of these mediums by asserting their relevancy in contemporary discourses of virtual, communicative, and reproductive technologies. I ask my viewers to consider the roles of these physical and virtual spaces, the positions of the iconographic, and to reflect upon these locations with the intent of increasing one's awareness of the lenses of criteria that are used to evaluate, appreciate, and understand these images and other works of art.

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FIGURES



Fig. 2.1 *Supportive Images and Logics*
book (*Gardners Art Through the Ages, 5th Ed.*) and reproductions
70" h x 72" w



Fig. 2.2 Detail, *Supportive Images and Logics*
with *The Impressionists, Incorporated* (background)



Fig. 2.3 *The Impressionists, Incorporated*
oil on canvas over inkjet prints, mounted into wall
individual diameters 1.25", 72" h x 120" w overall

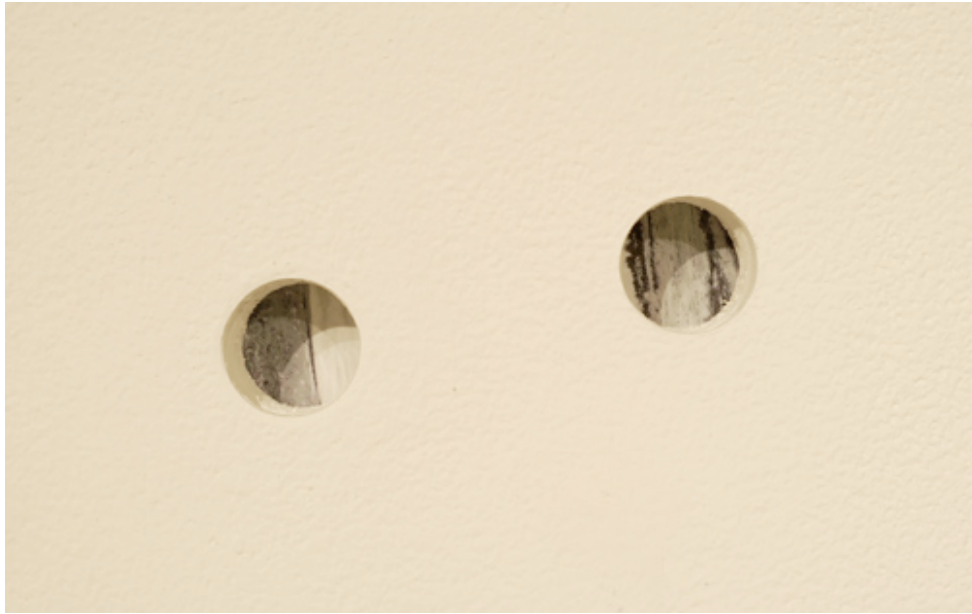


Fig. 2.4 Detail, *The Impressionists, Incorporated*

circle diameter 1.25" x 1.5" d



Fig. 2.5 *H-ang the Vogue*

oil on canvas

15" h x 12.5" w



Fig. 2.6 *Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell*

oil on canvas

24" h x 16" w



Fig. 2.7 *The Airborne Toxic Event*
graphite on Pescia paper, matte, frame
32" h x 38" w

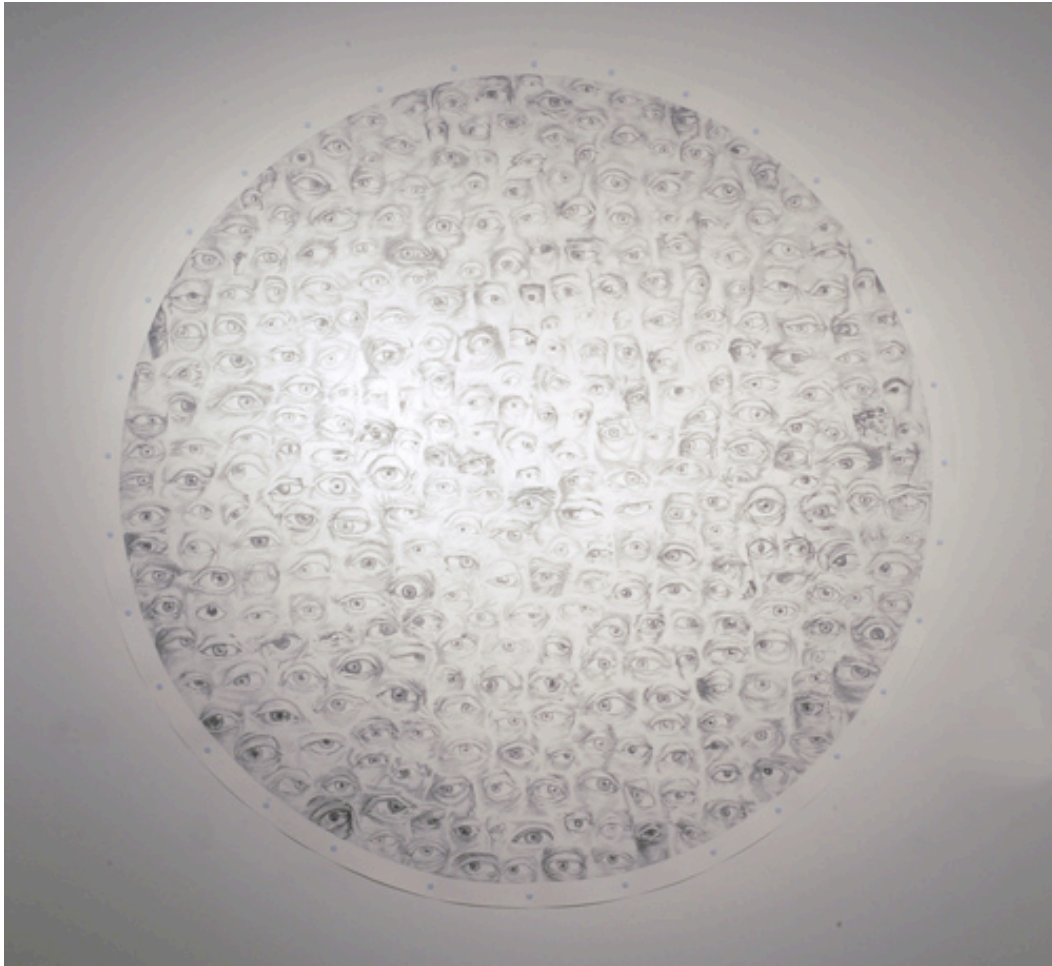


Fig. 2.8 *A Culture of Culture*
graphite on Fabriano paper
58" diameter



Fig. 2.9 Detail, *A Culture of Culture*



Fig. 3.1 *The Accidental Poetry of America and Machines*
oil on canvas, triptych, wood, motor, and spinning panel
each canvas 10" diameter, central panel 5" d



Fig. 3.2 Detail, *The Accidental Poetry of America and Machines*
central panel



Fig. 3.3 *Explaining Bodies of Work with Bodies at Work*

oil on canvas

36" h x 36" w